

IFA DIVINATION

Communication

Between

Gods and Men

In West Africa

WILLIAM BASCOM

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PREFACE

Ifa is the most respected, in many ways the most interesting, system of divination of five to ten million Yoruba in Nigeria¹ and millions more of their African neighbors and their descendants in the New World.

Unquestionably, the most important of the previous studies of Ifa is that of Maupoil (1943), for Dahomey. Maupoil describes initiations and other rituals, and ritual paraphernalia, in a detail that is not attempted here, where the primary emphasis is on the Yoruba, and not on the worship of Ifa as a deity, but on the method of divination, the manner in which it "works," and the Ifa verses that are of such fundamental importance to the entire system of divination. Neither study should be regarded as definitive, if only because of the thousands of Ifa verses that remain to be recorded before they are forgotten. Fortunately, this work is currently being pursued at the University of Ibadan.

The established Yoruba orthography is followed, with *ɛ* for *ɛ*, *o* for *o*, *ɓ* for *kp*, *ɕ* for *sh*, and with *n* representing nasalization except where it appears initially or between two vowels; *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* have continental values. In translating the verses in Part Two, I have usually taken the liberty of using *sh* instead of *ɕ*. In transcribing the Yoruba texts I have departed from convention, for example giving "n(i)-igba-ti" as "at-time-that" in the inter-linear translation rather than "nigbati" as "when." Parentheses enclose elided sounds; and hyphens join parts of Yoruba compound words and their English equivalents. When two or more English words are required to translate one Yoruba word, they are joined by colons, as in "be:able" for "be."

To avoid confusion it is important to note at the outset that Ife or Ife-Ife is a city and Ifa is both a method of and a deity of divination. Oni is the title of the King (Oba) of Ife, and Orunmila is another name for Ifa, the deity. The Ifa diviners are known in Yoruba as babalawo.

1. The last official Nigerian census in 1952 gave 5,079,746 Yoruba (including 32,947 Itsekiri, a Yoruba subgroup) out of a total population of 31,156,027. Only gross figures have been released for the controversial 1962 census, which gave a total population of 53,200,000 for Nigeria, but with no indication of ethnic affiliation. If one can put any faith in recent statistics, the Yoruba may number 11,000,000. This estimate is reached by multiplying the percentage of Yoruba in the Regions and Provinces of Nigeria in 1952 by the population figures given in Tables 10 and 11 of the Western Nigeria Statistical Bulletin, VI (1-2), 1964: 11-12. If recent figures are exaggerated, as may be the case, those of the 1952 census were probably underestimated and do not allow for interim growth. One recent statement gives 10,250,000 Yoruba (West Africa, December 26, 1964: 1452).

Most of the data for this study were recorded in the city of Ife in 1937-38 on a predoctoral fellowship from the Social Science Research Council; six weeks were spent in Igana during that year. A Fulbright grant in 1950-51 made it possible to spend about three months each in Meko, Qyo, and Ilesa and to work for a day or two in Ilaro, Ilara, Abokuta, Ibadan, Isẹyin, Oke-Iho, Irawo, Ogbomoso, Osogbo, Sagamu, Ijebu Ode, Qndo, and a half dozen towns in Ekiti. Further research was carried on during a two-month visit at the time that Nigeria received her independence in 1960 and during three months in 1965. This later research was financed respectively by grants from the University of California's Institute of International Studies and the Social Science Research Council. An invitation from Cambridge University and a Senior Postdoctoral Grant from the National Science Foundation provided a year in England in 1958 to analyze field notes, during which the texts and translations of the Ifa verses were typed and a preliminary draft of the first section was completed. Ifa divination was by no means the only topic of investigation during these periods of research, but without these grants this study would not have been possible. I am indebted to these institutions, and to Professor Meyer Fortes, a welcome visitor during three years spent in West Africa during World War II, who arranged the invitation to Cambridge.

I am especially grateful to Thomas A. Sebeok and to Michael A. Aronson of the Indiana University Press for facilitating the publication of this study.

The courtesies of government officials and others in 1937-38 have been previously acknowledged (Bascom, 1944: 6-7). By now the list has grown too long to name all those who have given assistance on other trips, but I should particularly like to thank Eoin M. Catto, Mr. and Mrs. John Davies, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. F. P. News, Soba Qyawoye of the University of Ibadan, and Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria.

Thanks are again due my friend Aderemi, the Qni of Ife, for his assistance and cooperation, and to Agbonbon, Amosun, Samuel Elufisoye, Awodire Awoseemo Ife, and the many other diviners who served as informants. Special thanks go to the diviner from whom most of the Ifa verses were recorded, but who remains nameless for reasons explained in Chapter XII. Again I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the late D. O. Rufus Awojodu, who served as interpreter in 1937-38 and whose personal fascination with Ifa divination induced me to become so deeply involved in this most important aspect of the Yoruba way of life. I had long intended to dedicate this book to him, but there is another to whom my debt is even greater.

I dedicate this book to the memory of one who contributed so much to the development of African studies in the United States; who first interested me in Africa, the Yoruba people, and the city of Ife; who made his own work on Ifa in Dahomey available to me in the field before its publication; who guided my training to the Ph.D. degree; and who was a considerate chairman, helpful colleague, and staunch friend during my many years at Northwestern University.

W. B.

Berkeley, California
March 1965

TRUTH AND DEATH

(Epega, n.d.: XI, 4; VII, 14-16)

Qsa Otura says, "What is Truth?" I say, "What is Truth?" Qrunmila says, "Truth is the Lord of Heaven guiding the Earth." Qrunmila says, "Truth is the Unseen One guiding the Earth. The wisdom of Olodumare he is using."

Qsa Otura says, "What is Truth?" I say, "What is Truth?" Qrunmila says, "Truth is the character of Olodumare. Truth is the word that cannot fall. Ifa is Truth. Truth is the word that cannot spoil. Might surpassing all. Blessing everlasting was the one who cast Ifa for Earth. They said they should come and speak the truth. Song:

||| "Speak the truth, tell the facts;

||| "Speak the truth, tell the facts;

||| "Those who speak the truth are those whom the gods will help."

Leaves of Ifa: We should mark this figure in the divining powder; we should mix it with cornstarch gruel and drink it, or put it in palm oil and eat it, so that it will be easy for us to speak the truth. Or we should apply idabọ to the head. What is idabọ? It is divining powder in which we have marked the figure of Ifa.

(Qsa Otura).

* * * * *

"The Omniscient One knows those who wickedly shoot others. People of the farm knowing people of the town; travelers of earth and travelers of heaven; we will see each other again. Termites do not scatter unless they reassemble again" was the one who cast Ifa for us humans who are mourning one who has died.

Where the people of earth have come from is where they are returning to. What are tears for? What is sorrow for? What is raising oneself up and down for? What is fasting for? He who sends one to come is he who is calling him to return home. That which pleases us on earth does not please Olodumare. The people on earth sit on earth and they do evil. Olodumare does not like it; Olodumare does not accept it. Well then, if I say come, you come.

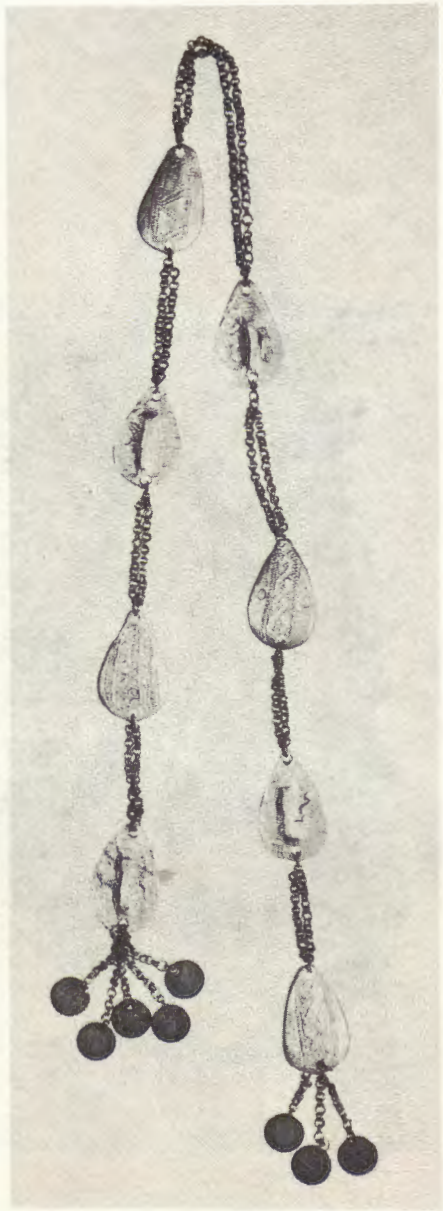
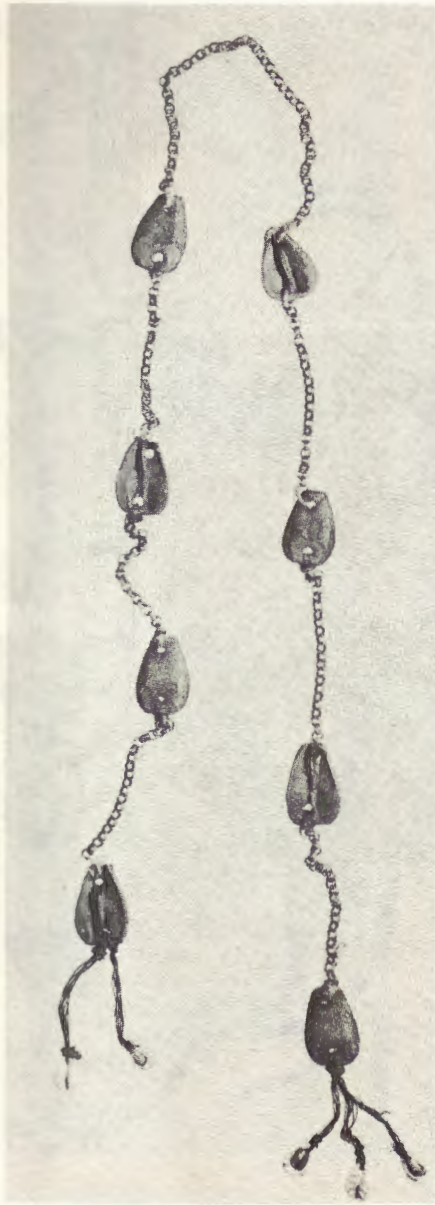
||| If a child does not know his father, the earth is not right. Death is the one who takes a child to know heaven. Who is thinking of Olodumare? If there were no Eshu, who would think of those who eat sacrifices? Everyone is thinking of themselves; they are looking for food and drink. You know darkness; a child does not know his father. Speak to me that I may speak to you; by our voices we recognize each other in the darkness. If a child does not know his father, the earth is not right.

Sacrifice: four white pigeons, four ewes, and two shillings. They heard and they sacrificed so that they might remain long on earth and that they might see blessings. (Otura Qwqnrin).



1A. (Ref. p. 28.) Two carved heads (Ela or irin) of ivory and of elephant bone, one of which may be kept with the diviner's set of sixteen palm nuts as a decoration. Heights: 2.75, 2.25 inches.

1B. (Ref. p. 30.) Two opşle pods, halves of which are widely used in making divining chains. Lengths: 1.75, 2.25 inches.

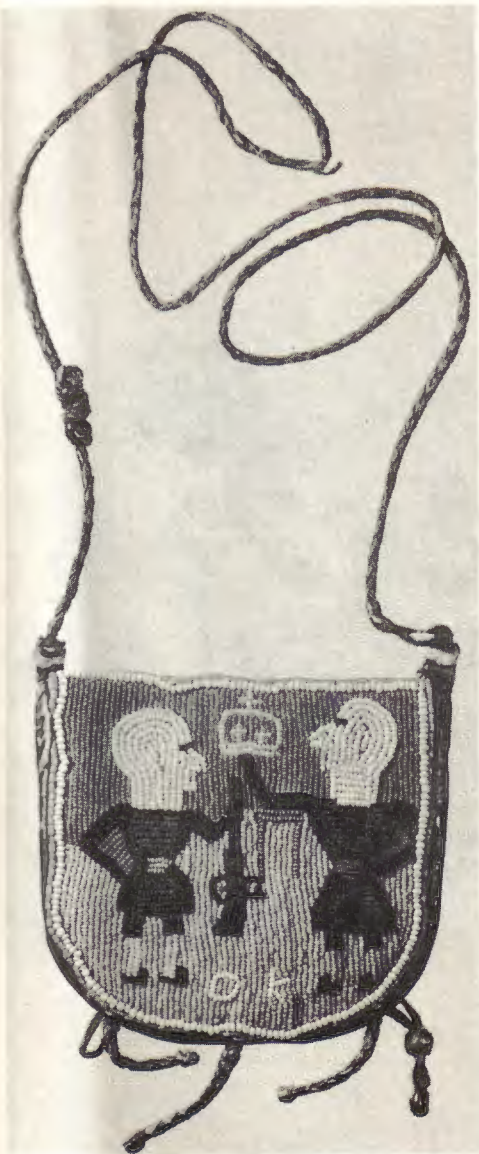


2A. (Ref. p. 29.) A divining chain (ꝓꝓꝓꝓ) from Qyq, made of ꝓꝓꝓꝓ pods and the preferred kind of brass chain, with cowries at each end. The figure shown is Qşş-Ofun. Overall length: 50 inches.

2B. (Ref. p. 31.) A divining chain from Ilara, made of replicas of ꝓꝓꝓꝓ pods cast in a light white metal (probably aluminum) with coins at each end. As shown, the figure also reads Qşş-Ofun, but perhaps this should be reversed (Ofun-Qşş), since one of the coins may have been lost from the right-hand half of the chain. Overall length: 35.75 inches.



3. (Ref. p. 32.) A divining bag (apo Ifa) from Qyq, made of cloth and decorated with cowry shells. Width: 14 inches.



4A-B. (Ref. p. 32.) Two beaded divining bags. One from Igana, on the left, shows a diviner on horseback carrying his iron staff (*q̄r̄ēr̄ē*) in his right hand and with his head covered with a cloth as protection against the sun. In the foreground is a divining tray showing the face of Eshu at the top and with the figure *Ogbe Meji* marked on it. The other from *Qyo*, on the right, shows two men, one holding a gun and the other a crown. The letters *OK* refer to the name of the diviner, *Oke Anigbami*, who made the bag about 1949. Widths: 10.75, 5.5 inches.



5. (Ref. p. 32.) A divining cup (agere Ifa, ajele Ifa) from Deyin, a Yoruba town in Dahomey. It shows a man on horseback accompanied by three drummers and an attendant with a staff. On the lid two cocks are biting two snakes who, in turn, are biting a tortoise. The cup, lid, and loop hinge are carved from a single block of wood. Height: 11.5 inches.
6. (Ref. p. 32.) A lidless divining cup showing a man on horseback accompanied by drummers and attendants. The woman on his right carries a bowl with a hinged lid. (Collection of Mr. and Mrs. William F. Kaiser, Berkeley, California.) Height: 10.75 inches.



7. (Ref. p. 52.) A brass divining cup with a hinged lid, cast by the lost wax method. It represents a man on horseback accompanied by his wife and fourteen attendants. (Collection of The Denver Art Museum.) Height: 12 inches.
8. (Ref. p. 32.) A divining cup from Efon-Alaye representing a female worshiper offering a cock whose back forms a removable lid. The woman is surrounded by attendants whose subordination to the two main figures is indicated both by their diminutive size and by the fact that their carving has not been completed. Height: 14.5 inches.



9. (Ref. p. 33.) A wooden divining bowl (ḡḡon igḡḡḡ) from Ifḡ, showing the central and radial compartments. The triangular designs on the separable lid are markers to indicate how the lid should be positioned on the base. Diameter: 15 50 inches.

10. (Ref. p. 33.) A divining bowl at Igana whose separable lid, decorated with four Eshu faces, serves also as a divining tray. Diameter: ca. 20 inches.



11. (Ref. p. 34.) A circular divining tray (opon Ifa) carved about 1934 by Baba Alawode of Igana. The face of Eshu is at the top, and the figures around the edge represent porcupines, wild goats, and tortoises. The interwoven motif is common in embroidery and beadworking as well as in carving. Diameter: 14 inches.
12. (Ref. p. 34.) A rectangular divining tray carved by Duga of Męko, on which is a set of the sixteen palm nuts (ikn) used in divination. Length: 15.75 inches.



13A-B. (Ref. p. 36.) Three divining bells or tappers (*irọ Ifa*), which are tapped against the divining tray to call *Ifa*'s attention. The ivory one, on the left, is from *Mẹkọ* and has no clapper. The brass pair from *Ifẹ*, on the right, have clappers and were cast by the lost wax method. Lengths: 10.5, 17, 17 inches.



14. (Ref. p. 40.) Beating the set of sixteen palm nuts between the hands.
15. (Ref. p. 40.) Marking a figure (odu) in wood dust (iyęrosun) on the divining tray (ọpọn Ifa) which is placed so that the face of Eshu is looking at the diviner, Samuel Elufișoyi. He is seated on a mat which is partially covered with a locally woven cotton cloth, and holds the set of sixteen palm nuts (ikin) in his left hand. In the foreground is the seventeenth palm nut (odușo or olori ikin), covered with wood dust and resting in the ring of cowry shells known as the "money of Ifa" (aje Ifa). To the left is the cow-tail switch (irukęreę), and to the right is the divining bowl (ọpọn igędeę).



16. (Ref. p. 68.) Before the first cast of the divining chain (opęle), it is dangled over the penny provided by the client as the diviner asks Ifa if he has heard the question which the client has whispered to the coin. Often, as in this case, the chain is lowered so that it coils on top of the penny. The diviner's beaded bracelet in the form of a wristwatch can be seen on his left wrist, and below his left hand is another divining chain and some of the assorted objects (abira) used as symbols of specific alternatives.



17. (Ref. p. 56.) In choosing between specific alternatives—the five kinds of good fortune in this case—the divining chain is touched to the symbol in question before each cast. The client's penny can be seen on the diviner's bag near the piece of china which symbolizes defeat of one's enemies.



18. (Ref. p. 56.) The divining chain is cast on the divining bag (apo Ifa) in one of the five casts to determine which of the five kinds of good fortune awaits the client.
19. (Ref. p. 89.) Samuel Elufisoye is divining for his two "wives of Ifa," who are seated beside him holding calabashes. Also present are a daughter, two young apprentices, and a number of spectators (standing). Divination normally takes place indoors, but an exception was made in this case in 1937 so that photographs could be taken.



104-B. (Ref. p. 61.) At the conclusion of the divination, the two wives took some of the wood dust from the divining tray, marked a line down the center of their heads with it, and then swallowed the remainder.



21A. (Ref. pp. 82, 95, 99.) Two cylindrical odu containers and a divining bowl covered with cloths have been carried into the street during the Egbodo Erio festival at Ifẹ in 1965. Note the beads (ẹdigba or ogbara) worn over the shoulder of the diviner in the center.



21B. (Ref. pp. 82, 84.) Three iron staffs (ọrẹrẹ) decorated with palm fronds have been set into the ground behind an origi in front of an Ifẹ compound during the Egbodo Erio festival in 1965.

Part One:

IFA DIVINATION

I. INTRODUCTION

Ifa is a system of divination based on sixteen basic and 256 derivative figures (odu) obtained either by the manipulation of sixteen palm nuts (ikin), or by the toss of a chain (opęle) of eight half seed shells. The worship of Ifa as the God of Divination entails ceremonies, sacrifices, tabus, paraphernalia, drums, songs, praises, initiation, and other ritual elements comparable to those of other Yoruba cults; these are not treated fully here, since the primary subject of this study is Ifa as a system of divination. The mode of divination will be discussed in detail later, but a brief description is required at the outset.

The sixteen palm nuts are grasped in the right hand, leaving only one or two nuts in the left; if two nuts remain, a single mark is made on the divining tray; if one nut remains, a double mark is made. Repeating this procedure four times will give one of the sixteen basic figures as shown in Table 1, A; repeating it eight times gives a pair or combination of the basic figures, i.e. one of the 256 derivative figures. Alternatively, one of the 256 derivative figures can be obtained by a single cast of the divining chain, with heads and tails instead of odds and evens. The chain is held in the middle so that four half seed shells fall in a line on each side. Each half shell may fall either heads or tails; i.e. it may fall with its concave inner surface upward, which is equivalent to a single mark, or with this surface downward, equivalent to a double mark on the tray. Representing the concave inner side up as O and the convex outer side up as X, the sixteen basic figures (one half of the divining chain) appear as given in Table 1, B.¹ The basic figures are listed in Table 1 in the order recognized at Ifę, but a slightly different order is more widely recognized (see Chapter IV, Table 3, B).

Ifa divination is practiced by the Yoruba and Benin Edo of Nigeria (Dennett, 1910: 148; Melzian, 1937: 159; Bradbury, 1957: 54-60; Parrinder, 1961: 148); the Fõn of Dahomey, who call it Fa (Herskovits, 1938: 201-230; Maupoil, 1943); and the Ewe of Togo, who know it as Afa (Spieth, 1911: 189-225). It is also practiced under the name of Ifa by descendants of Yoruba slaves in Cuba (Bascom, 1952: 170-176) and Brazil (Bastide, 1958: 104-109). The Fõn and Ewe acknowledge as its place of origin the Yoruba city of Ifę, from which the Yoruba themselves claim it has spread. It was at Ifę that the Ifa verses given in Part Two were recorded and that the system of divination was studied in greatest detail. Where information is based on field work in other Yoruba areas, or drawn from the literature, it is so specified.

Ifa divination may be practiced more widely than is indicated above. Thomas (1913-1914: I, 47) reports cryptically that the Ibo of eastern Nigeria "also have the well-known palm nut divination." The Kamuku and Gbari or Gwari are neighboring peoples in Niger Province, Northern Nigeria. Among the Kamuku, "to foretell the future, peas are shaken up in a tortoise-

1. Other conventions for representing the figures are given in Bascom (1961: 677).

TABLE 1

THE SIXTEEN BASIC FIGURES OF IFA

A. Using Sixteen Palm Nuts

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ogbe	Qyẹku	Iwori	Edi	Qbara	Qkanran	Irosun	Qwọnrin
1	1 1	1 1	1	1	1 1	1	1 1
1	1 1	1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1	1 1
1	1 1	1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1
1	1 1	1 1	1	1 1	1	1 1	1
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Ogunda	Qsa	Irẹtẹ	Otura	Oturupọn	Ika	Qşẹ	Ofun
1	1 1	1	1	1 1	1 1	1	1 1
1	1	1	1 1	1 1	1	1 1	1
1	1	1 1	1	1	1 1	1	1 1
1 1	1	1	1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1

B. Using the Divining Chain

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ogbe	Qyẹku	Iwori	Edi	Qbara	Qkanran	Irosun	Qwọnrin
○	⊗	⊗	○	○	⊗	○	⊗
○	⊗	○	⊗	⊗	⊗	○	⊗
○	⊗	○	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	○
○	⊗	⊗	○	⊗	○	⊗	○
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Ogunda	Qsa	Irẹtẹ	Otura	Oturupọn	Ika	Qşẹ	Ofun
○	⊗	○	○	⊗	⊗	○	⊗
○	○	○	⊗	⊗	○	⊗	○
○	○	⊗	○	○	⊗	○	⊗
⊗	○	○	○	⊗	⊗	⊗	○

shell and then gathered into the right hand or left hand. They are counted out and according as to whether an odd or even number remains in the hand a mark is made in the ground. This process is repeated eight times and a meaning come to according to the combination" (Temple and Temple, 1919: 210). "Divination by peas and a tortoise-shell is common among many tribes, notably the Gwari. The peas are shaken up in the tortoise-shell and then gathered in the hand. According as the number is odd or even a mark is made in the ground, and finally, by the combination of the various odd and even marks, a meaning is obtained" (Meek, 1925: II, 70). The Gbari also practice the widespread Islamic form of divination known as "sand-cutting" (Temple and Temple, 1919: 210), which will be discussed later in this chapter.

What may be the earliest report of Ifa divination comes from the coast of what is now Ghana in a description given by Bosman, who served as factor for the Dutch at Elmina and Axim for fourteen years at the end of the seventeenth century. After first discussing a method of divination in which "about twenty small bits of Leather" are used, Bosman (1705: 152) says, "The second way of consulting their Idols, is by a sort of wild Nuts, which they pretend to take up by guess and let fall again: after which they tell them, and form their Predictions from the number falling even or odd."

Another early account comes from Assinie in the southeastern corner of the Ivory Coast, still farther to the west. Loyer (1714: 248-249) describes a method of consultation with the gods which involves the moving of palm nuts (noyеaux de palmistes) which are taken from a wooden or copper cup, making marks with the finger in wood dust on a board a foot long and half a foot wide, and choosing between objects which are held in the hands of an assistant and which represent the good and evil outcome of the consultation.² The recent literature does not record Ifa divination west of Togo.³

Hamilton describes a system of divination observed at Siwah in the Sahara, which is "called 'Derb er raml,' or 'Derb el ful,' according to the medium used, whether it is sand or beans; the latter (with the beans) is the simplest, but both are in principle the same. Seven beans are held in the palm of the left hand, which is struck with a smart blow with the right

2. I have been unable to locate the original, but the passage is quoted in full by Maupoil (1943: 45) and by Labouret and Rivet (1929: 28) and is briefly cited by Parrinder (1949: 161; 1961: 146). Tauxier (1932: 151) and Maupoil date Loyer's visit as about 1700; Bosman (1705: 17) was in Ghana by 1690. For the use of objects to represent good and evil, see Chapter V.

3. Field (1937: 40) reports for the Gan of coastal Ghana "There also attached itself to Labadi, at some time uncertain, a colony of Ewe people from Little Popo, worshipping their own god Okumaga." She gives no details as to the nature of this deity, but as Parrinder (1949: 156) has noted, ogumaga is the Fõn name for the divining chain, or agunmaga according to Maupoil (1943: 196).

half-closed fist, so that some of the beans jump into the right hand—if an odd number, one is marked; if even, two. The beans are replaced in the left hand, which is again struck with the right, and the result marked below the first. This being repeated four times gives the first figure, and the operation is performed until there are obtained four figures, which are placed side by side in a square; these are then read vertically and perpendicularly [sic!], and also from corner to corner, thus giving in all ten figures. As each may contain four odd or four even numbers, they are capable of sixteen permutations, each of which has a separate signification, and a proper house or part of the square in which it should appear. The *Derber-raml* is only distinguished from this by being more complicated, fresh combinations being obtained by the addition of every pair of figures." (Hamilton, 1856: 264-265; cited in Ellis, 1894: 63).

In the use of four rather than two basic figures and in making one line for an odd number of beans and two lines for an even number, *Derb el ful* resembles Islamic sand-cutting rather than Ifa.

According to Frobenius (1924b: 61-62) diviners among the Nupe, who live just north of the Yoruba beyond the Niger river, use a string (*ebba*) of eight pieces of calabash or sometimes fruit shells fastened together, corresponding to the Yoruba divining chain. However, Nadel (1954: 39) describes "eba" as a set of eight strings of four half shells from the shea nut or the *dompalm* kernel.

The Jukun of eastern Nigeria employ a pair of strings or chains (*noko*),⁴ each of which has four pieces of calabash, metal, or nuts from elephant dung. These are equivalent to the two halves of the Ifa divining chain. The divining instrument (*agbendi*) of the neighboring Tiv is made with pieces of seed shells of the native mango (*ive*) and is "identical with that used by the Jukun and all the tribes in the neighbourhood down to, and possibly below, the Cross Rivers" (Downes, 1933: 69). Parrinder (1961: 148) mentions the use of this instrument among the Ibo, as well as the use of four similar strings. According to Mansfeld (1908: 176) the Ekoi of the Cross River region also employ two chains (*ewu*), each composed of four half mango seeds; according to Talbot (1912: 174-175) they use four such strings, known as *ebu* or *efa*. The data are too meager to permit any reliable conclusions, but there is further evidence of an even broader distribution of the sixteen basic figures.

Divination with four strings of four markers each, as mentioned by Parrinder and Talbot, is a related but separate system which is also known by the Yoruba. It involves the same sixteen basic figures and is sometimes called Ifa, but the method of interpretation is different, and it is distinguished as *Agbigba* or *Agbagba*. Short verses comparable to the introductory phrases of the Ifa verses are associated with the figures. Ogunbiyi (1952: 50, 63) illustrates *Agbigba* with two strings like the Ifa

4. In an earlier publication, Meek (1925: II: 70) reported six strings, but this is corrected in Meek (1931: 326-327), cited here, and in Meek (1937: 82), and is correctly reported by Frobenius (1924a: 236).

divining chain (opęęę) thrown side by side. The Agbigba sets I have seen were of four separate strings with four markers each, but again it is of no practical significance whether or not two are joined at the top, as illustrated by the dotted line in Figure 1, C. Effectively Agbigba is a double opęęę or Jukun noko, and half the Nupe eba. Among the Igbira, the Agbigba diviners also produce a quadruple figure marked on an "Ifa board" (Ifapako, Ifa apako) through the manipulation of sixteen ayo or warri seeds (Caesalpinia crista) instead of palm nuts.

The order of the basic figures differs markedly from that of Ifa, but their names are clearly related. Listing the figures in the order given by an Agbigba diviner at Ifę, and numbering them according to the most common order for the figures of Ifa (Table 3, B, below, p. 48), the order for Agbigba reads: 1, 2, 8, 7, 11, 12, 3, 4, 13, 14, 15, 16, 10, 9, 5, 6. Two figures have distinctive names, as in the case of Oyinkan for Ika and Qtaru for Oturupę; two have similar names, as Oji for Edi (which is also known as Odi) and Osa for Qsa; some have identical names, as in the case of Qyęku, Qbara, Otura, Iręęę, and Ofun; and some have identical alternate names, as Oşika or Ogbe, Ogori or Iwori, Qkçna or Qkanran, Orosun or Irosun, Qga or Qwçnrin, Ogunta or Ogunda, and Qkin or Qşę. The order of the figures and the method of interpretation differ, but the similarity in the names for these figures and in the apparatus as well suggests a historical relationship with Ifa.

Agbigba among the Yoruba appears to be confined to the Yagba Yoruba, a northeastern subgroup, although Yagba diviners practice in many Yoruba cities. Four divining chains of this type are known as afa, aha, or efa among the Ibo; as efa among the Ekoi; as ęba among the Idoma; as ęva among the Isoko Edo; and as Ogwęga among the Benin Edo, as well as by obviously unrelated names in these and other Nigerian societies; but the distribution of this method need not be detailed here. Suffice it to say that it is known in parts of Northern Nigeria and as far east as the southern part of what was the British Cameroons, and that Talbot (1926: II: 186) concludes: "The Awpele system, but with four strings instead of two, and with four pieces of each string composed generally of shells of the wild mango (Irvingia Barteri), is in use over nearly the whole of Southern Nigeria."

The significance of these sixteen basic figures extends far beyond the Yoruba and their neighbors. They are obtained in the Sikidy divination in Malagasy either by the manipulation of seeds or by the widespread method of "sand-cutting." The latter involves making a random number of marks in the sand or dust, canceling them off two by two until only one or two marks are left, and drawing a single or double line. In Sikidy, as in Ifa, a double line is made if a single mark remains, while a single line is made if two marks remain. Repeated four times, this procedure yields one of the sixteen basic figures.

Sand-cutting is a widespread form of geomancy, practiced by many Islamic groups in west and north Africa. Its similarities to the Dahomean Fa and Yoruba Ifa have been noted by Fischer (1929: 67-73), Monteil (1932), Trautman (1940), Schilde (1940: 100-164), Maupoil (1943: 49-51), Jaulin

(1966: 156-159), and others, citing analogues in Europe, Persia, and India. As early as 1864 Burton had noted similarities between the Dahomean Fa and the "geomancy of the Greeks, much cultivated by the Arabs under the name of Al-Raml, 'The sand,' because the figures were cast upon the desert floor. 'Napoleon's Book of Fate' is a notable specimen of European and modern vulgarization" (Burton, 1893: I, 222). Napoleon brought back to Europe a manuscript found in upper Egypt by M. Sonini in 1801, and it was subsequently published under this and other titles in a dozen or more editions from about 1820 to about 1925 (Napoleon, n.d.).

Among the Yoruba, sand-cutting (*iyarin titẹ*) is practiced by Muslim diviners known as *alufa*. They speak of it as *Hati Ramli*, or "Atimi" in Yoruba, distinguishing it from Ifa. The names of the sixteen basic figures (*Al Káuseji*, *Aláhika*, *Utúba dahíla*, etc.) clearly differ from those of Ifa but correspond to those given in the Arabic book of Mohammed Ez Zenati, and the order in which these figures were given by an *alufa* at *Mẹkọ*, himself a native of Zaria, is identical with that in which they are listed by Ez Zenati.⁵ There can be no question of a historical relationship of Atimi with Islamic geomancy, but it is probably a recent introduction among the Yoruba, who were at war with their Muslim neighbors to the north throughout most of the last century. Again, listing the figures in the order recorded at *Mẹkọ* and numbering them according to the most common order for the figures of Ifa (Table 3, B), the order for Atimi reads: 14, 7, 10, 12, 1, 15, 11, 8, 5, 4, 3, 6, 9, 13, 16, 2. This is completely at variance with the orders of both Ifa and *Agbigba* divination.

Burton, Maupoil, and others have concluded that Fa and *Sikidy* are derived from Islamic geomancy or earlier non-African methods of divination. The purpose here is neither to deny a historic relation between the many modes of divination employing sixteen basic figures, nor to attempt to determine the ultimate origin of Ifa. These questions require far more data than are presently available. However, as other authors have stressed the similarities between the two methods, including the fact that the figures are "read" from right to left, some of the points of difference may be mentioned.

Among the Yoruba and the Nupe of Nigeria (Nadel, 1954: 57), the Sara of Chad (Jaulin, 1957: 45, fig. 1), the Teda of Tibetsi (Kronenberg, 1958: 147), and the Fulani of Macina (Monteil, 1932: 96, fig. 8), when canceling the random marks in sand-cutting, a single line is made if one mark remains and a double line if two remain; this is the opposite of Ifa and *Sikidy*. The sixteen basic figures have a very different order and completely different names. A quadruple figure is obtained (as in *Agbigba*), which is read crosswise to give a second quadruple figure, and additional figures are derived through further computations,⁶ rather than interpreting a double figure as in the two halves of the Ifa divining chain. Ifa is not

5. Monteil (1932: 89-90). Beyioku (1940: 34-35) and Ogunbiyi (1952: 84-88) simply list the names in the order of the Ifa figures.

6. Cf. Nadel (1954: 54-61). The procedure is similar among the Yoruba

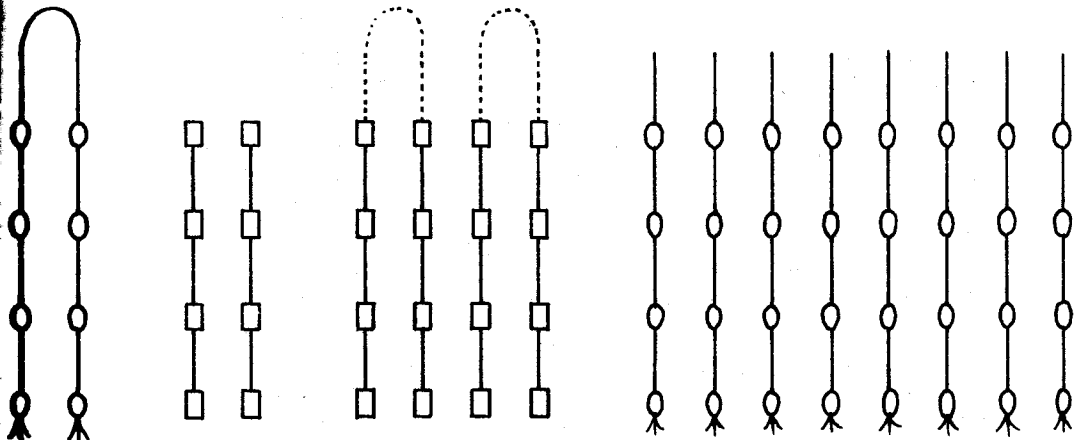
*a. Opele**b. Noko**c. Agbigba**d. Eba**Yoruba**Jukun**Yagba Yoruba**Nupe*

FIGURE 1. OPELE, NOKO, AGBIGBA, AND EBA

associated with astrology, as Burton first observed, but rather with a series of memorized verses and stories upon which their interpretation depends. Islamic geomancy has no verses, at least as practiced by alufa among the Yoruba, as Ogunbiyi (1952: 83-84) confirms; and he also states that it has no sacrifices (ẹbọ) which are of such importance in Ifa. The method of sand-cutting differs from tossing a chain or manipulating palm nuts; but it does involve the question of odd and even numbers, and it should be recalled that at Siwah, among the Gbari, and in Malagasy both sand-cutting and the manipulation of seeds are employed. This is also true among the Yoruba, but here sand-cutting is a distinct system of divination and in all probability a very recent introduction.

The identity of the sixteen figures is a necessary and inevitable derivative from three principles: (1) the figures involve four items; (2) each of them can take two different forms; and (3) their sequence is significant. Given these rules, sixteen and only sixteen basic figures are possible. Accordingly, this identity constitutes only three points of similarity, rather than sixteen, and two of these principles are shared by forms of divination that are widespread in Africa. The first two rules characterize the common African methods of divination, also practiced by the Yoruba, of casting four cowry shells, or four sections of a kola or a bitter kola nut. Each of these can fall face up or face down; but since the sequence is not controlled, only five figures are possible: 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 facing up.

One might control the sequence in which four cowries are read by casting them one at a time. One could also tie them on a string, which is essentially what is done in the case of the Ifa divining chain. One might also control the sequence with four coins by using a penny, nickel, dime, and quarter, casting them all at once but reading the heads and tails in that order. In effect this is what is done in the Hakata divination of the Karanga, Zezeru, Korekore, and other Shona subgroups, some Bushmen groups, and the Venda, Ila, Tonga, Pedi, Leya, Rhodesian Ndebele, and other peoples in southern Africa. Here four pieces of bone or wood with distinguishing marks are identified as man, boy, woman, and girl and are read heads and tails in that order. Here again sixteen "figures" result, which can be equated with those marked with single and double lines.

The Chinese system of I Ching involves the second and third principles stated above, as well as figures composed of single and double lines. However, as it is based on three items rather than four, there are only eight basic figures or "trigrams" and sixty-four derivative figures or "hexagrams," whereas Ifa and the other African systems involve sixteen quadragrams and 256 derivative octagrams. The I Ching figures are obtained by tossing three coins, or by manipulating forty-nine yarrow stalks, which are counted off by fours in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Islamic sand-cutting (Wilhelm and Cary, 1951: I, 392-395). As far distant as Micronesia a system of knot divination, which is also based on counting off by fours, produces sixteen basic figures and 256 derivative figures (Lessa, 1959: 194-195).

Names related to those of the figures of Ifa are also employed for a different set of figures in still another Yoruba system of divination (owo

m̄erindinlogun), in which sixteen cowries are cast on the ground. As in casting four cowries, $n+1$ figures are possible because sequence is of no significance; in this case there are seventeen figures, with zero to sixteen cowries facing mouth up. Some of these are known by names of the basic Ifa figures, like Odi or Edi, Irosun, Qw̄onrin, Qkanran, Ogunda, Qsa, Qṣṣ̄, and Ofun; and some have the names of the derivative figures, such as Eji Ogbe and Ogbeṣṣ̄ (Ogbe Qṣṣ̄). Some of the names employed in this system are also used to designate the five figures derived from the cast of four cowries. As in Ifa the seventeen figures are associated with memorized verses which contain myths and folktales that aid in their interpretation. This method is regarded as a derivative from Ifa by many Yoruba, including the Ifa diviners, who cite a myth according to which the method is based on what the River Goddess Qṣun learned about divination while she was living with Ifa.

Of all the methods of divination employed by the Yoruba, Ifa is regarded as the most important and the most reliable. The honesty or knowledge of individual babalawo may be questioned, but most are highly esteemed, and the system itself is rarely doubted. The number of babalawo is a reflection of the patronage they receive and a measure of the influence they wield. In comparison there are only occasional Agbigba diviners among the Yoruba outside the Yagba area. Whereas Ifa is open to the public in the sense that the babalawo are consulted by the worshipers of any deity, divination with sixteen cowries is usually performed on ritual occasions within the cults of particular deities. This is also true of divination with four cowries, four sections of kola nuts, or four sections of bitter kola nuts; and these three methods are restricted in what they can forecast, primarily because they lack the verses associated with Ifa and the casting of sixteen cowries. Since the end of the Yoruba wars against their Muslim neighbors in the last century, the number of Muslim alufa has increased, but it still does not compare with the number of babalawo. Dreams and other omens are significant, but the babalawo or other diviners are usually consulted to interpret them; in recent years several dream books have been published. Utterances made while under possession by one of the deities are regarded as important, but possession is less widespread and less frequent than Ifa divination. Water-gazing and a few other methods of divination are also practiced by the Yoruba, but compared with Ifa they are of negligible significance.

The real core of Ifa divination lies in the thousands of memorized verses by means of which the 256 figures are interpreted, but their significance has not been fully appreciated. As for the working of the system of divination, these verses are of far greater importance than either the figures themselves or the manipulations from which they are derived. The verses form an important corpus of verbal art, including myths, folktales, praise names, incantations, songs, proverbs, and even riddles; but to the Yoruba their "literary" or aesthetic merit is secondary to their religious significance. In effect these verses constitute their unwritten scriptures.

The verses embody myths recounting the activities of the deities and justifying details of ritual, and they are often cited to settle a disputed

point of theology or ritual. A babalawo is expected to know a larger number of verses than other Yoruba diviners, and he is accepted as an authority on Yoruba religion. He is a professional whose business involves learning about all the deities, not merely the one he himself worships. He functions for the general public, and is consulted by the worshipers of the many different Yoruba deities as well as by many Muslim and Christian converts.

The babalawo constitutes a focal point in the traditional Yoruba religion, channeling sacrifices and worshipers into different cults, recommending sacrifices to the dead or means of dealing with witches and abiku (children who do not wish to live), and preparing protective and retaliatory "medicines." He helps his clients deal with the wide range of personalized and impersonal forces in which the Yoruba believe, and to achieve the individual destinies assigned to them at birth. An indication of the importance of Ifa to the religious system as a whole is the fact that the most striking religious syncretisms resulting from European contact are to be found in a church established in Lagos in 1934, the Ijọ Qrunmila Adulawọ, which was founded on the premise that the teachings of Ifa constitute the Yoruba Bible.

The rules of Ifa divination can be defined as precisely as those of the simpler methods using four or sixteen cowries. In many other types of divination, in Africa and elsewhere, the subjective element in interpretation leaves room for dispute, even among diviners. This would seem to be true in the interpretation of the fall of bones or other divining objects in terms of their relative positions, of the angles at which sticks protrude from holes in joint bones into which they are inserted, of the designs of lines on shoulder blades cracked by fire, of the conformation of the entrails of a fowl or animal, as well as of the patterns of tea leaves or lines of the palm. In crystal- or water-gazing, where no one can confirm or contradict what the diviner says he sees, and in shamanistic performances or states of possession, where a familiar spirit or deity speaks to or through his medium only, interpretations are not subject to check either by the client himself or by other diviners.

In contrast, the babalawo follow a regular system of rules, deviation from which is criticized by their colleagues and condemned by their clients. At least the elementary rules are understood by their regular patrons and, even when they are not known, clients are provided with recognized techniques to prevent a babalawo from departing from the rules in order to employ his personal knowledge of their affairs to his own or any one else's advantage. A client need not even reveal to the diviner the nature of the problem which prompts him to seek his advice. In view of this fact, some of the early descriptions of Ifa are amusing reflections of the naïveté, prejudices, and superstitions of the observers who recorded them.

II. PREVIOUS STUDIES

The two earliest known descriptions of Ifa divination among the Yoruba date from the same year. Speaking of the Yoruba deities, Tucker (1853: 33) says: "One of the principal of these is Ifa, the god of palm-nuts, to whom they ascribe the power of healing, and to whose priests they apply in times of sickness. On these occasions the friends of the sufferer procure a sheep or a goat for sacrifice, and send for the babbalawo or priest, who begins the ceremony by tracing a number of uncouth devices with chalk upon the wall. Then taking a calabash, he puts into it some cowries or some palm-nuts, and placing it in front of the figures he has made, performs his incantations, which are supposed to prevail on the god to enter the palm-nuts or the cowries. The sacrifice is then brought in, its throat is cut, and the priest sprinkles some of the blood on the calabash and on the wall. He then smears it across the sick man's forehead—thus, as they imagine, conveying the life of the creature into the patient."

Irving (1853: 233) says: "Ifá, the god of palm-nuts, or the god of divination, is said to be superior to all the rest. He is consulted on every undertaking—on going on a journey, entering into a speculation, going to war, or on a kidnapping expedition, in sickness, and, in short, wherever there is a doubt of the future. To him are dedicated palm-nuts, as by these the oracle is consulted. Various acts of adoration and prostration, touching the nuts with the forehead &c., initiate the performance. The babbalawo then, holding the nuts, sixteen in number, with the left hand, grasps as many as he can with the right, and according to the number—there are certain rules for this, of course—the answer is favourable or unfavourable: a tally is kept of these, and the result made known. Pieces of crockery-ware, &c., held by the bystanders, are also introduced in the process. If the responses be unfavourable, a sacrifice has to be made; and under these circumstances, it will be readily supposed the answer is very often so."

In view of later accounts, which so often repeat earlier errors, Irving's statement is remarkably accurate. The description of the manipulation of the sixteen palm nuts is correct; and the pieces of crockery held by bystanders are readily recognizable as a reference to the choice between specific alternatives, discussed in Chapter V.

Bowen (1857: 317), usually a good observer, reports only briefly: "The next and last órisha which I shall notice, is the great and universal honored Ifa, the revealer of secrets, and the guardian of marriage and child-birth. This god is consulted by means of sixteen palm nuts. The reason of this is not assigned, but sixteen persons founded Yóruba; the palm nut which they brought produced a tree with sixteen branches; and there is said to be a palm tree with sixteen branches on Mt. Adó, which is the residence of the chief priest of Ifa. The worship of Ifa is a mystery into which none but men are initiated. Neither have I been able to collect much information in regard to the nature of the idol or the ceremonies of his worship."

Later Bowen (1858: xvi) adds that Ifa "is called Banga, the god of palm-nuts." Banga means a "head" or bunch of fruit of the oil palm, but its use as a name for Ifa is not confirmed by informants; Dalziel (1937: 499) concurs: "the word does not seem to be so used at the present."

Campbell (1861: 75-76) says: "Ifa, one of their inferior deities, is much resorted to as an oracle. He has a numerous corps of priests, who realize great profit from the offerings made the god, to induce favorable responses. He is consulted by means of a sort of checkerboard, covered with wood-dust, on which the priest traces small squares. The party consulting the god hands him sixteen consecrated palm-nuts, which all the votaries of Ifa carry constantly. He throws them into a small urn, from which taking a few, the number being left to accident, he disposes them at random on the board, and from the order they assume, determines first whether the offering shall be a goat, a sheep, or otherwise; next he ascertains whether the god is satisfied with the offering; if not, he manipulates further to ascertain whether a pair of pigeons or fowls should not be added. The preliminaries being thus arranged, he enters into his business, all the time holding a free and easy conversation with the applicant, through which he is sure to ascertain the kind of responses most welcome."

This inaccurate description is paraphrased many years later by Stone (1899: 88-89), who disregarded what Burton, Baudin, and Ellis had contributed meanwhile: "All devotees of that god carry sixteen consecrated palm-nuts. The priest takes these nuts and puts them into a wooden urn. He then takes a number at random and scatters them at random on a board covered with wood-dust and marked into small squares. From the position that the palm-nuts take on the board, the priest pretends to find out what kind of a sacrifice Efa demands. This ceremony is repeated to find out if a chicken or something else must not be added to the first thing to be offered as a sacrifice. The priest in the meantime talks to the person consulting the oracle and finds out pretty well what kind of answer is desired. Sometimes the applicant wishes him to interpret a dream or to assist him in a business or a matrimonial enterprise. Priests of Efa are very numerous and they rob people of much of their income."

What might be called the "standard" version of Ifa divination, as given most recently by Abraham (1958) and Lucas (1949), goes back through Farrow (1926) and Dennett (1910) to J. Johnson (1899), and before that through Ellis (1894) to Baudin (1885) and to Burton's works on Dahomey (1864) and the Yoruba (1863).

Burton (1863: I, 189-190), after paraphrasing Bowen, adds: "The priests are known by their bead necklaces, small strings twisted together, with ten large white and green beads, some inches apart. They officiate in white, and constantly use a fly-whisk. Their deity being called Bángá, God of Palm-nuts, they choose as his symbols those that are placental with four holes. The operation of casting lots is intricate, and is variously described by different observers: odd and even, and 'heads or tails,' appear to be the ruling principles.

"The priest brings his nuts in a rhinoceros horn from the upper country. Holding the sixteen in his left hand, he takes them up at random—as we do at a 'bean club'—in his right, and the operation is repeated till either

two, called 'ofu,' or one, called 'ossa,' remains. The chosen nut is then rolled, with the middle finger, over the earth, or over a board whitened with the dust made by tree-worms. Finally, it is marked with certain lines, which, by deciding the value and the nature of sacrifice, procure success.

"An old converted priest thus performed the ceremony in my presence. He counted sixteen nuts, freed them from dust, and placed them in a bowl on the ground, full of yam half boiled, crushed, and covered with some acrid vegetable infusion. His acolyte, a small boy, was then called, made to squat near the bowl, resting his body on the outer edge of the feet, which were turned inwards, and to take from the fetish-man two or three bones, seeds, and shells, some of which are good, others of bad omen. Elevating them, he rested his hands upon his knees. The adept cast the nuts from one hand to the other, retaining some in the left, and while manipulating dropped others into the bowl. He then stooped down, drew with the index and the medius lines on the yam, inspected the nuts, and occasionally referred to the articles in the boy's hand. Thus he was enabled to pronounce an opinion upon what was to happen.

"I cannot flatter myself that the modus operandi has been made quite intelligible to the reader, for the best of reasons—I do not quite understand it myself. The system is far more simple in Dahomey, and at some future time I may explain it."

This Burton did in the following year, explaining in a footnote that "When fate is consulted the 16 nuts are thrown from the right hand to the left; if one is left behind, the priest marks two; if two, one (the contrary may be the case, as in European and Asiatic geomancy); and thus the sixteen parents are formed" (Burton, 1893: I, 220). Burton was the first to record the figures of Fa and their names (in Fõn), referring to the paired figures as the sixteen "mothers" and to the combinations as their children; but there is no evidence that the Dahomean Fa is simpler than the Yoruba Ifa.

Baudin (1885: 32-35) paraphrases Bowen and then adds several Ifa myths and other data of his own: "When they wish to consult fate or to make a grand ceremonious feast in honor of Ifa in the grove sacred to this god, the mother or wife of him for whom the god is consulted carries in a cloth on her back the sixteen sacred nuts, and the fetish-priest before commencing the ceremony salutes Orungan and his wife, saying, Orungan ajuba ô! ('Orungan, I salute you.') Orichabii ajuba ô! ('Orichabii, I salute you.')

"Then he offers sacrifice to Ifa, of which the dates¹ are the symbol. Finally he places before the god a small board on which are marked sixteen figures, each having a certain number of points. These figures are very similar to playing-cards used by fortune-tellers. The fetish-priests use them in almost the same way, bringing out at will good or bad fortune according as they deem it expedient to better dupe the fool who comes to consult them. When he has found the desired figure, he begins to explain whether the enterprise in question will succeed or not, the sacrifices to be

1. This is an error of the translator; Baudin (1884: 224) gives palm nuts (noix de palme) in the original.

offered, the things to be avoided. It is well understood that the higher the price paid the greater the inspiration of the fetich-priest, for there are large and small games.

"Ifa is the most venerated of all the gods; his oracle is the most consulted, and his numerous priests form the first sacerdotal order. They are always dressed in white, and shave the head and the body."

Bouche (1885: 120) treats divination briefly: "Ifa est l'oricha des sorts et de la divination. Ses prêtres sont des devins: on les appelle babalawo, pères du secret, du mystère (awo). Ifa est né, comme Chango, dans la ville d'Ifè. Il a reçu le surnom de Banga ou fétich des amandes de palme, parce que les babalawos se servent ordinairement dans leurs pratiques de divination de seize amandes de palme qu'ils jettent à terre. Ils augurent par la position dans laquelle tombent ces amandes."

Teilhard de Chardin (1888: 158) gives an abbreviated account of Ifa based on Baudin and Burton: "La consultation a lieu au moyen de seize noix de palme, et d'une planchette sur les deux faces de laquelle sont marqués seize figures ayant chacune leur nom, leur symbole, et un certain nombre de points. La réponse plus ou moins favorable dépend de certaines combinaisons des points et des signes, obtenues par le féticheur en jetant les noix d'une certaine façon. En règle générale, plus les honoraires sont forts, plus favorable est l'oracle."

Ellis (1894: 56-64) copies without acknowledgment most of what Baudin, Burton, and Bowen have said. Of the divination itself he says: "For the consultation of Ifa a whitened board is employed, exactly similar to those used by children in Moslem schools in lieu of slates, about two feet long and eight or nine inches broad, on which are marked sixteen figures. These figures are called 'mothers.' The sixteen palm-nuts are held loosely in the right hand, and thrown through the half-closed fingers into the left hand. If one nut remains in the right hand, two marks are made, thus ||; and if two remain, one mark, |. [Footnote: This process is repeated eight times, and the marks are made in succession in two columns of four each.] In this way are formed the sixteen 'mothers,' one of which is declared by the babalawo to represent the inquirer, and from the order in which the others are produced he deduces certain results. The interpretation appears to be in accordance with established rule, but what that rule is is only known to the initiated. . . . From these sixteen 'mothers' a great many combinations can be made by taking a column from two different 'mothers,' and the figures thus formed are called 'children.'"

Cole (1898), a Sierra Leone Yoruba, discusses Ifa in a work which I have never been able to locate but which is quoted in Dennett (1906: 269-271); the quotation is based on Ellis (1894: 58-59) and ultimately on Baudin (1885: 33-35).

J. Johnson's work, published both in Yoruba (1899a) and in English translation (1899b), is important as the first independent account of Ifa divination by a Yoruba author, which has been frequently quoted by subsequent writers. It is also important because he is the first to record the Yoruba names and order of the Ifa figures, though the figures themselves are not represented; and he is the first to note the use of the divining chain and the

importance of the Ifa verses or "stories." Both publications are extremely rare, but very useful extracts from the English edition are included in Dennett (1906: 243-269). The passages of greatest relevance to the method of divination are quoted below:

"The great Oracle of the Yoruba country is Ifa. He is represented chiefly by 16 palm nuts each having from four to 10 or more eyelets on them. Behind each one of these representative nuts are 16 subordinate Divinities. Each one of the whole lot is termed an Odù—which means a chief, a head. This makes the number of Odùs altogether 256. Besides these, there are 16 other Odùs connected with each of the 256, and this makes the whole number of Odùs 4,096. Some increase this large number still by an addition of 16 more to each of the last number of Odùs, but the 16 principal ones are those most frequently in requisition.

"There is a series of traditional stories, each of which is called a road, a pathway, or a course, and is connected with some particular Odù. Each Odù is supposed to have 1,680 of these stories connected with it, and these, together with those of the other Odùs, every one aspiring to the office of 'A Babalawo,' who is a divining or sacrificing priest, is expected to commit to memory, though scarcely has any one been found to perform the feat. Many learn by heart a very considerable number, rather an appreciable number connected with the principal Odùs. Upon the appearance of an Odù on the divining or consulting bowl, the 'Babalawo' thinks of some of the stories attached to it, and from any of them that appears to him to suit the case upon which he is consulted, he delivers his Oracular response, and prescribes the sacrifice that would be accepted" (Dennett, 1906: 246-247).

"Divination is taken by a Babalawo on a highly esteemed broad circular bowl or four cornered fan of a moderate size, which is generally covered with white flour from a dry tree, and upon which he works, and with one of the fingers of the right hand imprints certain signs, representing such Ifa representatives as may be left on the palm of his left hand, after he has attempted with one grasp of the palm of his right hand to take up all the 16, where they were all held. These small signs or marks which would represent a number of efforts, and would be placed one after another horizontally would, according to their number and respective positions, represent one or the other of the principal or subordinate Odùs, or Divinities. From that Odù or Divinity, and one or other of the traditional stories connected with it, and with the aid of lot casting and of Opèlè, divination is taken and delivered" (Dennett, 1906: 249).

"Opèlè, or Opèpèrè, is an Oracle of inferior rank to Ifa, and who is regarded as his constant attendant and is commonly spoken of as his slave. He is always represented by eight flat pieces of wood, or metal, or something else, strung together in two rows of four on each side, placed at equal distances from each other and joined together. The disposition of one or other of these pieces when the whole ensign is thrown and made to spread out upon the ground would represent at once a particular Odù, and one of Opèlè's chief duties is to show to the Babalawo what particular Odù he should consult upon a case referred to him.

"Opèlè is often and frequently thus independently consulted by Babalawos, who usually carry about them its ensigns, because, consulting it carries with it less labour than, and is not so difficult as the work of consulting the Master, Ifa himself; but this would be on matters of minor importance, and its response would be that of a servant for his master, and which is not always absolutely relied upon" (Dennett, 1906: 250-251).

In his own work on the Yoruba, Dennett (1910: 146-150) quotes, rather than simply repeating without acknowledgment, from Ellis, J. Johnson, and others on the method of divination, adding no new information except for his own list of the names of the figures, which he compares with those of earlier writers.

Frobenius appears to be the first to have recorded the figures of Ifa, as well as their names and order, for the Yoruba, ascribing them to the "Central Yoruba," by which he apparently means Ibadan. His description of the divination process follows that of Ellis, J. Johnson, and Burton. Quoting from the English translation (1913: I, 244) of his work, he says that after strewing finely powdered wood upon the divining tray, "The odd or even number of nuts² caught up in falling is recorded in a series of double or single lines, marked on the flour, four of which make up an Odu." This is later amplified by a passage, part of which is confusing both in English and in the German original: "He strews white flour on it, takes all the seeds and throws them up towards his left hand, in which he catches some of them. If the number caught is odd, two vertical lines are drawn thus: ||. If even, a single line is drawn with the right hand finger thus: |. Four throws are made and the marks placed beneath each other. The resulting figure of four such signs is called 'Medji,' or a 'pair'. This proceeding is repeated eight times, so that two Medjis are always marked next to, and also 4 x 2 above, each other. [Achtmal wird dies Verfahren wiederholt, und zwar werden immer zwei Medji nebeneinander, also 4 x 2 untereinander, gezeichnet.] The numbers so noted are the Odus, laid out before the oracle for the day. The picture so drawn upon the flour is read from right to left. . . . Each Medji stands for one Odu, assumed to consist of sixteen Odus, each of which is again composed of sixteen and so on" (Frobenius, 1913: I, 251-252; 1912-1913: I, 280).

"And, lastly, there is the Oquelle. This is a string connecting eight halved palm-nuts,³ and its ends are usually prettily tasselled with beads. The High Priest at Ifé had one with yellow nut-pieces in place of the halved nuts, and would-be adepts in divination mainly used an Oquelle in which pieces of gourd were substituted for the palm-seeds. In fortune-telling by the Oquelle, it is taken by the middle, so that four of the nuts hang down on either side. When it falls, an Odu or figure is formed by the number of convex and concave positions assumed" (Frobenius, 1913: I, 250).

2. The original says kernels (Kerne). Frobenius (1912-1913: I, 271-280) repeatedly says this, palm kernels (Palmkerne), or Ifa kernels (Ifakerne), and only occasionally palm nuts (Palmnüsse).

3. The original again says palm kernels (Palmkerne). Frobenius (1912-1913: I, 278).

"The foundation of the prophecies alone is said to consist of no less than one thousand six hundred and eighty dicta for each of the four thousand and ninety-six different Odus. Of course, no one can remember such an enormous total and, as a prophecy in question naturally depends upon the various positions of the different Odus, there is an absolute freedom of interpretation of this which is no less mysterious than the Pythian or Ammonite Oracle" (Frobenius, 1913: I, 246).

Wyndham (1919: 151-152; 1921: 65-67) gives a brief, but independent description of the method of divination. Ifa's "priests (called Babaláwo) profit considerably by divination, which they perform with sand on a circular board, or with a charm called Okpéllè. Okpéllè consists of eight pieces of bark on a string. These eight are arranged in fours. Each of the pieces of bark may fall either with the outside or the inside showing. Consequently each set of four may fall in sixteen different ways, having different names and meanings." Wyndham then lists these sixteen figures and their names, the names of the sixteen paired figures, or "Messengers of Ifa" and discusses the combinations: "These combinations are called children of the Messenger who appears on the right. Thus, Ogbe Yeku is a child of Ogbe; Oyeku Logbe is a child of Oyeku. From this it will be seen that Okpéllè can show 256 combinations.

"Procedure.—A man comes to a Babaláwo to consult Ifa. He places a gift of cowries (to which he has whispered his needs) before the Babaláwo. The latter takes Okpéllè and places it on the cowries. He then says, 'You, Okpéllè, know what this man said to the cowries. Now tell me.' He then lifts Okpéllè and lays it on the floor. From the messenger or child which appears the Babaláwo is supposed to deduce that his client wants a son, has stolen a goat, or has a toothache, as the case may be. He then tells him what he must bring as a sacrifice to achieve his ends."

S. Johnson (1921: 33) describes the method very briefly. "To consult Ifa, in the more common and ordinary way, 16 palm nuts are to be shaken together in the hollow of both hands, whilst certain marks are traced with the index finger on a flat bowl dusted with yam flour, or powdered camwood. Each mark suggests to the consulting priest the heroic deeds of some fabulous heroes, which he duly recounts, and so he goes on with the marks in order, until he hits upon certain words or phrases which appear to bear upon the matter of the applicant before him."

Meek (1925: II, 69-70) gives a less accurate account: "Ifa can be approached through his priests on certain days. The god uses as his medium sixteen strings of palm-kernels, which have been consecrated to his use by certain elaborate rites. Each string represents some minor divinity and has sixteen kernels attached to it—the total number of kernels being thus 256. With the kernels are associated a great many stories of the gods, and according to the combination of the number of kernels, after they have been passed through the hand, so is the priest able to apply these various tales to the case in point."

Talbot (1926: II, 185-186) draws mainly on J. Johnson: "The actual divining is practised with the help of sixteen palm nuts from the Awpe-Ifa tree, each of which usually possesses four or more eyelets. Everyone of

these palm nuts represents sixteen subordinate powers, called Odu, and each of these latter another sixteen . . . All are associated with parables or traditional stories with which the Babalawo is supposed to be acquainted. A whitened, flat and generally circular wooden bowl or platter, sometimes finely carved, called Opon-Ifa, is used by the diviner, who makes on it certain marks in accordance with the number of nuts remaining in his left palm after he has seized as many as he can hold in his right. This action is repeated eight times, so that a very large number of combinations and permutations is possible. Each grouping has its appropriate story, decoded or translated by the priest into the awaited response.

"Ifa, however, cannot be consulted unless the counsel of an inferior oracle, called Awpele or Awpepere, who is regarded as his attendant, is first taken. This is represented by eight pieces of wood, metal, bone or calabash, which are strung loosely together in two rows, and involves much less thought and knowledge than the first method. The answer depends upon the disposition and the number of the various pieces which fall face upwards, when the two strings are flung upon the ground. Awpele is, however, consulted only on minor matters and by anyone who has learnt the procedure from the Babalawo."

Farrow (1926: 38-39) draws on both Ellis and J. Johnson: "In consulting the oracle, the babalawo uses sixteen palm-nuts, from a special palm-tree (the Opelifa), and a divining bowl, i.e. an engraved circular board, or a rectangular one, with a handle, similar to a Mohammedan writing tablet . . . Sometimes a fan is used, of a square shape. This divining bowl is called Opon-Ifa. Its surface is covered with white flour (iyerosu), or dust, from the irosu tree. Upon this the priest works, and with one of the fingers of the right hand imprints certain signs, to indicate such Ifa representatives as may be left in the palm of his left hand, after he has attempted with one grasp of the palm of his right hand to take up all the sixteen nuts which were held therein. Or, he may hold these sixteen nuts loosely in the right hand and throw them through his half-closed fingers into the left hand. If two nuts remain in the right hand, he makes one mark, thus |, on the board; but if only one remains, he makes two such marks, ||. This process is repeated eight times, and the marks are made in two columns of four each. The complicated nature of this process is shown by the fact that behind each of the sixteen nuts are sixteen subordinate deities. Each such deity is termed an Odu, i.e. a 'chief' or 'head.' There are thus $16 \times 16 = 256$ leading Odus, and each of these 256 has 16 subordinates again, bringing the total number of Odus to 4096. Some increase this again by multiplying each of these by 16 lesser subordinates! Add to these figures the fact that in the 8 throwings, or drawings, of the 16 nuts, there is a possibility of a vast number of different results, and that in connection with each Odu there are supposed to be 1680 traditional stories, each of which is represented by a brief couplet, which must be memorized, and it will be seen that the task of a babalawo is no light one, even if he confines his attention, as is usually the case, to the 16 principal Odus. Most babalawos commit to memory a large number of the couplets, or stories in brief, connected with each of the principal ones. Then, when an Odu appears on the consulting bowl, the diviner thinks

of the most appropriate story attached to it, suitable to the case about which he is consulted, and so gives the oracular response and prescribes the appropriate sacrifice.

"Opele is the name of a lesser oracle, who is regarded as a messenger of Ifa. He is represented by eight small laths of wood, and as it is a far easier task to consult him, the babalawos do so each day and in all lesser causes" (Farrow, 1926: 42).

Southon (n.d., c. 1931: 25-26) draws primarily on Farrow: "Removing the cloth before the wonder-filled eyes of Adebisi, Fatosin revealed an elaborately carved calabash. Opening the top of this, the priest put his hand inside and brought it out again with several small oblongs of ivory loosely clasped within it. Shaking these through his partly opened fingers, so that they fell upon the ground within the circle of light thrown by a hurricane lamp, Fatosin stooped and studied the carved markings upon the various ivory 'nuts'. The side of his divining bowl had been dusted with white powder from the sacred tree used for the purpose, and the Babalawo now made a mark upon the dust with his finger. Again the ivory nuts were shaken out, and the marks noted, with a second mark placed upon the divining bowl. Eight times in all, to fulfil the prescribed number, Fatosin cast his ivory nuts. Then he noted carefully the marks he had placed upon the bowl, and behind his impassive face worked out a complicated sum involving a prodigious feat of memory.

"There were sixteen ivory nuts, each called an 'Odu' or chief, each of which has a subordinate deity, each of these again having an attendant deity of its own, making a total of over 4,000 Odus. Attaching to each of these Odus is a brief story or parable, which every Babalawo is supposed to learn and be able to quote.

"The casting of the ivory nuts eight times resulted in fixing one of thousands of possible numbers. Fatosin's task now was to work out the exact number which was indicated by the throw of the nuts, and to recall the story associated with that number, for this was the answer of Ifa to Adebisi's request for help."

Delano (1937: 178-179) gives a brief independent account: "'Ifa' priests are called 'Babalawos.' Their work is difficult and they must possess a very powerful and retentive memory. There are numberless recitals, dealing with every sphere of life, which they have to memorize by listening to a senior 'Babalawo.' These recitals are called 'Odu.' Inasmuch as human ailments, human anxieties and human goodness vary, and are numberless, so there has not been a single 'Babalawo' who could cover the whole sphere of 'Ifa.' Every sphere of life has an 'Odu' applicable to it. . . .

"When a child is sick and the parents go to a 'Babalawo' to find out the cause of the illness and its remedy, they appear before him without the child and without telling him the cause of their anxiety. When he is asked to be consulted there is no fee payable. He takes out his 'Ifa.' looks at the parents, and begins the recitals while he throws the 'Opele' and makes signs and impressions with his hand on the sand before him. 'Opele' is the guidance by which he arrives at his deductions. Then he looks up and tells the parents that the child is sick. Again he looks up and says: 'It is appendicitis,' or whatever the sickness is."

Price (1939: 134), who served as District Officer in Ife, gives another brief, independent account of the babalawo: "They learned to read omens and give advice to clients from far and near regarding their future. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of these prophets, but I have watched them at work. They use a round wooden platter decorated with carvings at the edge, on which is evenly sprinkled a layer of sand, and sixteen palm-nuts, half of which have four natural holes in them, while the other half only have three. Some of these are shaken like dice and thrown on the ground. In accordance with the way they fall, certain marks are made in the sand with the priest's fingers. After several repetitions of this, he reads the final pattern on the platter and discloses its meaning as regards the question on which he is being consulted. It takes years of hard study to become an efficient babalawo; there being, it is said, ninety-nine degrees to pass before reaching the highest rank." Later he repeats, "The palm-nuts are then shaken and thrown down, just as dice are thrown, and the verdict is read from the way they fall" (Price, 1939: 138-139).

Clarke (1939: 239-252) describes four consultations with diviners which he witnessed, one with palm nuts and three with the divining chain, in addition to giving the figures of Ifa and two listings of their names. Earlier sources are cited, but this is an independent and important account. The divining chain and its use are correctly described, and the choice between specific alternatives "called igbigbo or Obtaining the Ibo" is noted. In using the divining nuts, the diviner took a divination tray and "sprinkled upon it some powder obtained from a tree called Irosun (*Baphia nitida*). Then, after throwing sixteen palm-kernels from the right to the left hand, he had two kernels remaining in his right hand, so with the second finger of his right hand he pressed one mark in the powder on the right-hand side of the tray. Then he again threw the nuts from the right to the left hand and, having one nut remaining, he made a double mark with his first and second fingers on the left-hand side of the tray. This he repeated eight times in all, always making the marks first on the right hand and then on the left of the tray. In this way he obtained a pattern on the tray which corresponded to the patterns made by the Opele—two rows of four things—in this case double or single marks instead of concave or convex pods" (Clarke, 1939: 240).

Since that time there have been several brief accounts by myself (1941; 1942; 1943; 1944: 25-29; 1952; 1961; 1966); a recapitulation of Farrow by Lucas (1948: 75-79); accounts by Parrinder (1949: 152-161; 1953: 31-36; 1954: 119-120; 1961: 137-147) and Abraham (1958: 275-276), who draws on Lucas and other sources; Idowu's work (1962), which says little about divination but cites thirty-one Ifa verses; and articles by Prince (1963) and McClelland (1966). Over the years there has also developed a significant body of literature in the Yoruba language by authors such as Lijadu, Epega, Ogunbiyi, Şowande, and others cited in the bibliography and in Bascom (1961: 681-682). Most of these say little about the technique of divination, which they tend to take for granted, but they are very important because of the many Ifa verses which they record. Unfortunately many of them are ephemera, locally published, and are not widely available for scholarly research.

Meanwhile, a number of studies were being made in Dahomey and Togo. Following Burton (1864) there were the works of Skertchly (1874), Grandin (1895), Spieth (1911) for the Ewe, Le Herisse (1911), Monteil (1931), Quenum (1935), Gorer (1935), Bertho (1936), Herskovits (1938), Trautman (1940), the monumental work by Maupoil (1943), Alapini (1950), Garnier and Fralon (1951) for the Ewe, and a collection of Fa myths in Herskovits and Herskovits (1958). There were errors and repetitions in these works also, but they include a number of important, independent studies. Several drew on published accounts of Ifa divination among the Yoruba; but the related studies among the Yoruba have seldom paid attention to the Dahomean sources except for Burton, whose account is the earliest.

The essentials of the method of divination have been described in the earlier literature, but a number of discrepancies remain to be sorted out. The tedious repetitions in these previous accounts, many of which have been excluded here, show how often prior accounts have been repeated or paraphrased, usually without acknowledgment. The number of times that a statement is made is no measure of its reliability, as in the case of the 16 x 4096 figures and the 1680 verses for each figure, for which there is no indication of any independent verification by subsequent writers of J. Johnson's original statement.

Most of the discrepancies will be dealt with later in the discussions of divining apparatus and procedure, but a few can be resolved here. The statements of Campbell, Stone, Bouche, Southon, and Price that the palm nuts are scattered at random on the divining tray or tossed on the ground and their positions then interpreted, which suggests East African divining bones, is inaccurate. The manipulation of the nuts as given by Meek, Farrow, Southon, Lucas, and Abraham derives from Ellis, who says that they are "thrown through the half-closed fingers," whereas other writers from Burton to Clarke speak only of throwing the palm nuts from one hand to another. Most accurate is the description of J. Johnson, who says that the diviner attempts "with one grasp of the palm of his right hand to take up all the 16."

Baudin's description of the client's wife or mother carrying the palm nuts on her back to the diviner, though repeated by Ellis and Farrow, is not confirmed by subsequent writers and was denied by informants; nor do all devotees of Ifa carry their consecrated palm nuts constantly, as Campbell and Stone maintain. Though a sheep or a goat may be required as a sacrifice, these and other items are not brought in advance, as Tucker and Southon state; the purpose of divination is to determine the nature of the sacrifice which will ensure a blessing or avert an impending misfortune.

References to the use of a Muslim "slate" (wala) as a divining tray stem from Ellis' misinterpretation of Burton's account (1893: I, 220-222), which at no point states it was so employed. What Burton describes is one of the carved tablets or the calendars employed in Dahomey as shown by Maupoil (1943: 209-218); although their origin is ascribed to Ife, they have not been reported for the Yoruba. Statements that sixteen figures are permanently marked on the divining tray also derive from Burton's description of these Dahomean calendars. Campbell's description of the divining tray

as a checkerboard is inaccurate, as is Stone's statement that it is a board covered with wood dust and marked into small squares. Tucker's description of marks made on the wall can refer only to protective medicine made by the diviners (see Chapter VI), and not to the method of divination.

Suspicion of the diviners and skepticism of their methods appear in many of these accounts, and several explanations are offered of the manner in which they arrive at their "predictions." Frobenius maintains that the diviner has an absolute freedom of interpretation of the various positions of the different Odu. Baudin compares the method to fortune telling with playing cards, by which the diviners bring out "at will good or bad fortune according as they deem it expedient to better dupe the fool who comes to consult them." Campbell and Stone state that the diviner talks to the client to find out the kind of answer he would like to hear. None of these statements is correct.

Southon (n.d.: 23-25) offers his readers the choice of two inaccurate explanations: "Neither Fatosin nor his teachers had ever heard the word 'psychology,' but they understood very clearly what the word connotes. To be successful in his chosen calling, and by means of it to rise to wealth and power, he had to understand the minds and hearts of those who come to him in their need. Through assiduous practice and close observation Fatosin could read the minds of those who came to him as clearly as one could read a printed page, and played upon their hopes and fears with the skilled touch of a master of men.

"Such was the priest—half-convinced of the possession of the powers he claimed, half-charlatan—to whom the simple Adebisi came in her desperate need. . . . Fatosin greeted her in a cold, level voice, which somehow made the difference between them seem still vaster, and asked her what she desired that she sought him at this hour. . . . Adebisi came at last to her tale of the sick Abiodun, and her belief that 'a worm was eating into his head,' put there by the magic employed by an unknown enemy. . . . A few questions about the beginning and history of Abiodun's sickness told the astute priest that Abiodun was suffering from nothing more serious than a bad attack of fever, which his herbs could swiftly relieve. . . ."

Wyndham seems to have been the first to state that the client does not reveal his question to the diviner, who is expected to learn it for himself through divination, though he does not suggest how this is done. Delano (1937: 179), who also realized this, offers a somewhat mystical explanation: "It is wonderful how a 'Babalawo' finds out the germ of the matter brought to him. The connections in life, the similarities in nature, and the commonness in humanity are what he puts together, and from them he makes a correct deduction." Gorer (1935: 197-198), who records that in Dahomey the client whispers his request "as quietly as he can" to a palm nut, says of the Fa diviners (bokonon): "I do not think the bokonon are on the whole conscious cheats; it seems to me more probable that they have a hypertrophied sense of hearing, such as is not uncommon with 'telepathic mediums,' and possibly unconsciously overhear the whispered request to the lucky palm nut."

Parrinder (1961: 137) offers much the same explanations: "The secrets of diviners are closely guarded, and it is difficult to tell the extent and manner of their knowledge. They maintain, and some serious writers believe them, that they have esoteric secrets of which modern science is ignorant. It is certain that they sometimes seem to gain knowledge of people's deeds, or the whereabouts of their lost or stolen goods, by methods which are not easily explicable. Some would say that they have secret agents to listen to village gossip and watch suspected people; others claim that they practise telepathy and have powers of prevision." In the first edition of this work, the final sentence is less noncommittal: "There is need of careful investigations into the phenomena of telepathy, prevision, and spiritualism" (Parrinder, 1949: 152).

Clarke (1939: 251) concludes: "If they are honest, we must exclude the hypothesis that, through their associates, they inquire into the affairs of their clients and thus know the probable subject of an enquiry and are enabled to prescribe the measures which should be taken. Perhaps, either by means of telepathy or, as has been suggested, by means of some hyperaesthesia, the Babalawo may know consciously or unconsciously what the enquirer has whispered to the *Opele*." A less mystical explanation, which has been suggested earlier (Bascom, 1941: 51-52), will be given in Chapter VII; but before we leave the earlier accounts, it is worth noting that according to J. Johnson, S. Johnson, Meek, Farrow, and Lucas, the appropriate verse is selected by the diviner.

III. THE APPARATUS OF IFA DIVINATION AND THE PRELIMINARY INVOCATIONS

This chapter is concerned with the palm nuts and the divining chain; the bags, plates, cups, and bowls in which these are kept; and the tray, the powder, and the bell used in divination. It concludes with a description of the morning invocation that precedes the first divination each day. The diviner's cow-tail switch and other materials that serve primarily as insignia of status or as ritual paraphernalia are discussed briefly in Chapters X and XI. In divining with either the palm nuts or the chain, the diviner is seated on a mat (çni); and Epega (n.d.: I, 77) records a verse from Otura Meji which accounts for this usage. However, as any kind of mat will serve, it requires no special description.

The Palm Nuts (ikin)

Sixteen palm nuts are the most important objects employed in Ifa divination, and in Ifa ritual as well. They also distinguish Ifa divination from other systems using different numbers or other kinds of seeds, from Agbigba, sand-cutting, and other systems of divination in which the same sixteen basic figures are employed. Ritually, the sixteen palm nuts symbolize Ifa as the God of Divination, as the prehistoric celts or "thunder stones" symbolize Şango, the God of Thunder. As sacrifices to Şango are offered to these celts, so sacrifices to Ifa are offered to his sixteen palm nuts. In divination, ritual, and myth, Ifa is associated with a special variety of the oil palm.

The oil palm (çpç) or Elaeis guineensis bears fruit (çyin) in large bunches (idi çyin, banga); each fruit consists of a palm nut covered with a reddish-orange pericarp from which palm oil (epo) is extracted for cooking and for export. The nuts (ekurç) themselves are about an inch long, ovoid or egg-shaped, with hard black shells marked with lengthwise grooves. Inside are white kernels which are exported and from which the Yoruba extracted palm kernel oil (adin, adi) for making soap and other purposes. Frobenius to the contrary, palm kernels are not used in place of palm nuts. Both palm nuts and palm kernels are ordinarily known as ekurç, but the palm nuts used in Ifa divination are distinguished by a special term (ikin, iki, çkçn). They are sometimes referred to as the palm nuts of Ifa (ikin Ifa), and the tree from which they come is called the oil palm of Ifa (çpç Ifa) or the oil palm of ikin (çpç ikin).

Dalziel¹ lists this as a distinct botanical variety (Elaeis guineensis idolatrica) known as the King Palm, Juju Palm, Tabu Palm, and Palmier Fetiche; he says that it is easily recognizable by its half-furled leaves,

1. Dalziel (1937: 501). This book is the best source available for the botanical identification of Yoruba terms; identifications are based on it unless otherwise indicated. It should be noted that Dalziel's orthography differs from that used here. He gives ě (ç), ǒ (ç), and sh (ş).

and its foliage is usually darker and less drooping than in the common types. An Ilara diviner said that its leaves all are straight and point upward because they are "folded," which makes them stiff. He added that if the fruit from this tree is mixed with ordinary fruit in making palm oil, the oil will be spoiled, because it mixes with the water instead of rising to the surface; when this happens, they know that there is at least one *ikin* among the palm nuts. It is with reference to this that informants say that Ifa's palm nuts are not eaten.

Some Ife diviners maintained that only nuts with four or more indentations or "eyes" (*oju*) at their bases can be used for divination or for ritual purposes, and that those with three eyes are unacceptable to Ifa. One of the Ifa verses (175-2) recorded in Ife accounts for the four eyes on Ifa's palm nuts. Burton (1863: I, 189) refers to the use of palm nuts with four eyes, and Talbot (1926: II, 185) and Ataiyero (1934: 6) to those with four or more eyes. J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 246) says that Ifa is represented by palm nuts with from four to ten or more eyelets. Elsewhere he says: "There is a particular Palm tree that is known by the name of *Ọpẹ-Ifa*, or the Ifa Palm tree, because that class of palm trees commonly yield nuts carrying four eyelets each, and these are the only nuts employed in Ifa worship, and are devoted to it. They are regarded sacred to this purpose, and are often spoken of as *Ekurọ-aijẹ*, i.e. 'Nuts that are not to be eaten'; and if nuts carrying two or three eyelets should be found among these yielded by such trees, these would be called *Ekurọ-Ọṣṣà*—i.e. the palm nuts whose beauty has deserted them through the loss of one or more eyelets—*ọṣṣ-ṣá*" (Dennett, 1906: 257).

There is general agreement that palm nuts with four eyes are especially appropriate to Ifa, but many diviners find those with other numbers of eyes acceptable. According to an Ilẹṣa diviner, each set should have eight nuts with four eyes and eight with three, as Price (1939: 134) also reports. An Ilara diviner explained that nuts with three, four, and five eyes are found growing on the same tree, and in the same bunch of fruit. Those with four eyes are female and are called *awnrẹn Ifa*; those with three or five eyes are male and, although they have no special name, may be referred to as leopard (*ẹkun*) because they are "strong." Male and female nuts can be mixed either eight and eight, seven and nine, or nine and seven. Maupoil (1943: 180) says that the nuts have from two to six eyes and that in Dahomey those with four eyes are preferred by Fa; those with three eyes are given to initiates, and those with six eyes are saved for chiefs and other wealthy initiates. Epega (n.d.: I, 29) refers to the use of palm nuts with three to six eyes. Nuts with an odd number of eyes were included in most sets of *ikin* examined; one set in Ife had three palm nuts with three eyes and thirteen with four eyes; and another set acquired in Qyq has seven palm nuts with three eyes, five with four, and four with five eyes.

A diviner must have at least two sets or "hands" (*ọwọ*) of palm nuts. One set is buried with him when he dies, and another is inherited by one of his sons if the son becomes a diviner or a worshiper of Ifa. If none of the sons becomes a worshiper, the second set of palm nuts is hung over the father's grave, and if none becomes a diviner, the other apparatus may be discarded. Both sets of palm nuts are ritually consecrated, which involves

washing them in an infusion of the leaves of Ifa (ewe Ifa), and they are washed again each year during Ifa's annual festivals. Some diviners have three, four, or more sets of consecrated palm nuts for divination. They may acquire additional "hands of Ifa" (ṣwṣ Ifa) through inheritance or by being directed to do so through divination; as an Ifẹ diviner explained, Ifa likes to have several sets of palm nuts, as a man likes to have more than one suit of clothes.

S. Johnson (1921: 33) states that according to Yoruba tradition, the first Ifa diviner employed small pebbles and that "In process of time palm nuts, pieces of iron and ivory balls were successively used instead of pebbles." Neither pebbles nor pieces of iron were observed by me, but some Ifẹ informants said that a wealthy diviner may have his set of nuts carved of ivory (ike). A set of sixteen spheroids carved from the bone, not the tusk, of an elephant and marked with crosses to distinguish them readily from palm nuts was seen in Ifẹ; their owner said he used them occasionally for divination but that their main purpose was in the preparation of a good-luck charm (awure). They are known as irin, a term which resembles the word for iron (irin), but which is also applied to the bone and ivory objects used in the worship of the God of Whiteness.

Only sixteen palm nuts are manipulated in divining, but in Ifẹ the diviner has a seventeenth nut that he places opposite him beyond the divining tray on a ring of cowries known as the money of Ifa (aje Ifa) (see Plate 15). Before divining, he sprinkles a small amount of powder from the divining tray on its top because, as with Yoruba kings, "no one should see its bare head." This seventeenth palm nut is known in Ifẹ as the chief of the palm nuts (olori ikin) and as oduṣṣo, which is derived from figure (odu) and "to watch, to guard" (ṣṣo). J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 248), who gives "akin" as a variant of "ikin," cites an aphorism referring to the fact that this nut is never manipulated with the other sixteen in divination: "An Akin is the one we may strike for divination: we have no right to strike an Oduṣṣo" (Akin li a i pà; a kī lu Oduṣṣó). Frobenius (1913: I, 251) describes the oduṣṣo as carved of ivory and recognizable as the head of Eshu by its long pigtail, and says that it is used to stand "sentinel over the Baba-lawo's actions and the fall of the sixteen Ikin" (ikin). One of these is illustrated by Frobenius (1913: I, 231, no. 3). In Ifẹ these small heads are known as Ẹla (see Chapter XI) or as irin, like the elephant bone "nuts"; one is kept with the set of palm nuts "as a decoration," but it is not set out like the oduṣṣo or otherwise employed in divination (see Plate 1A).

J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 248) also refers to a palm nut that is left in the bag or cup as "a keeper of the house both for himself and his comrades, till they should be returned to their place again." He calls this the "Watch Akin" or àdèlé, which would mean that which watches or guards the house (a-de-ile). This was not observed or referred to by informants in Ifẹ, who considered the second set of palm nuts to be the adele; but Maupoil (1943: 182-183) confirms the use of two additional nuts in Dahomey which are known as adele or adele of Ifa (adelefa); and Mẹkọ diviners have eighteen palm nuts in a set, two of which are replaced in the bag before beginning to divine.

The Divining Chain (oṣeṣe, oṣeṣe Ifa)

The divining chain is said to "talk more" than the palm nuts, but it is regarded as an inferior instrument, less reliable than palm nuts for deciding important questions. It is also spoken of as Ifa's servant. Nevertheless it is more commonly used in divination, and a number of Ife diviners employ only the chain, because they dislike using the palm nuts. The reason for this is that the divining chain arrives at the same interpretation through the same set of figures and verses more rapidly, and answers more questions than are usually asked when the slower method with palm nuts is employed.

The divining chains are most commonly and most widely referred to as oṣeṣe. The name oṣeṣe, given by J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 250), was recognized in Ife but not in Meko. One Meko informant claimed that ogumaga was another Yoruba name for it; but this represents influence from Dahomey, where the chain is known in Fon by this name (Parrinder 1949: 156) or as agunmaga or gumagan (Maupoil, 1943: 197). The chains are made by the diviners for themselves and for their pupils.

The divining chain, which is about three to four feet long, usually consists of eight halves of seed shells or pods joined together by short sections of chain three to four inches long (see Plate 2). The middle section of the chain, by which it is held, is somewhat longer. The other sections are of equal length, so that when the chain is held in the middle, the four shells on the right and the four on the left hang down side by side. The chain is thrown with the right hand, which is said to be used consistently in Ifa divination, even by left-handed individuals. It is tossed away from the diviner in such a way that the two open ends fall nearest to him and the two sides fall parallel (see Plate 18). If the shells or pods do not fall side by side in straight lines so that the figures can be easily read, the chain may be adjusted by drawing the two ends toward the diviner, with care taken not to overturn any of the pods. Each half seed shell can fall with either the concave inner surface or the convex outer surface facing up. It is essential that the two surfaces of the shells, or of other materials used in place of them, can be distinguished.

Various objects—including beads, cowries, shells, coins, buttons, rings, small bells, and bits of metal—are attached to the bottom of the pods at either end of the chain. Their purpose is to enable the diviner to distinguish the right and left half of the chain, so that the same half is always cast on the same side, and so that the figure will not be misread—for example, by mistaking Ogbe Oyeke for Oyeke Ogbe. Often an odd number of cowries (one or three) marks the right half and an even number (two or four) marks the left.

In place of a chain, a simple cord of beads of various colors strung on threads may be used to join the seeds together. A single cord is often used on the instruments with which apprentices practice while they are learning divination, but as some cords interfere with the free fall of the seeds, they are considered unsuitable by diviners for actual consultation. The type of chain most highly prized in Ife in 1937, though infrequently available in the

markets in 1951 or 1965, was of European manufacture; it consisted of circular brass links set at right angles to each other, permitting the seeds to fall freely in either the concave or the convex position. With a good divining chain the probability of each of the figures appearing is equal (1 in 256). This is desirable from the point of view of the diviners as well as the clients, though not expressed by either in terms of probability. From their point of view, the fall of the seeds is not left to chance but is controlled by Ifa, the deity of divination, and any interference with the free fall of the seeds, by the instrument or by the diviner, garbles the message which Ifa wishes the client to receive.

In both Ifẹ and Ileṣa the shells of an unidentified dark-colored seed (egbere), said to come from a large tree (igi epú), is most commonly used and most highly regarded; neither is listed in Dalziel. These seeds resemble almond shells in their general shape and markings but are darker, smaller, and much harder. They are found by hunters in elephant dung and sold in the markets, but they have become increasingly rare and expensive since the early trade in ivory. When split open, they show a smooth, slightly concave inner surface readily distinguishable from the roughly wrinkled, convex, outer surface. A small hole is burned through each end of a half of a seed shell with a hot iron, so that the sections of chain may be attached by thread. This seed was unknown in Igana and Mẹkọ, and other materials are often used in place of it.

Most common is the seed pod known as ọpẹlẹ, from which the divining chain takes its name. It comes from the ọpẹlẹ tree, identified by Clarke (1939: 239) as *Schrebera golungensis*.² In Ileṣa this pod is referred to as ewe's foot (ẹṣẹ aguntan, ọṣẹ agutan). Mẹkọ informants claimed that these are the only seeds found in elephant dung, and that they are obtained either from hunters or directly from the tree. This seed pod has a distinctive pear shape and naturally splits open at the base, with the two halves splaying out from the top where they are joined until broken apart (see Plate 1 B). On the concave inner surface of each half is a marked medial ridge, and when two halves are placed side by side with this surface upward they are considered to resemble the figure Ogbe Meji as marked on the tray after the single lines have been joined together (see Figure 2, Chapter IV). According to an Ifẹ diviner, when Ogunda Meji died³ at the town of Oko, a tree called ọpẹlẹ ọga Oko sprang up on his grave, and from it fell a fruit that split open, revealing the figure Ogbe Meji "written" inside.

The use of halves of apon seed shells from the oro tree, the wild or African mango (*Irvingia gabonensis* or *I. barteri*, according to different classifications) was mentioned by informants at Mẹkọ and Ileṣa; and an Ifẹ diviner maintained that Ifa himself originally used them, with egbere shells having been introduced by Ọramfẹ, the Ifẹ God of Thunder, during his reign

2. Opele (not ọpẹlẹ) is given as the Yoruba name of *Schrebera golungensis* and *S. arborea* by Ainslie (1936: 30) and Dalziel (1937: 365).

3. The figures of Ifa are said to have been named after men who lived when Ifa was on earth.

as the *Qni* of Ifẹ. It will be recalled that these seed shells are widely used in Nigeria in the system of divination employing four strings; according to Talbot (1912: 174), they too are found in elephant dung. They are also used in Dahomey, as are the seeds of *Mangifera gabonensis* (Maupoil, 1943: 198; Alapini, 1950: 53). *Mangifera indica*, the only species listed by Dalziel, is the mango, known to the Yoruba as mangoro. Informants say that it is not used, but some said that it could be, as well as any seed shell that can be split in half.

Epega (n.d.: I, 42) reports the use of an unidentified fruit, apuraga. Frobenius describes the divining chain as made of halved palm nuts, but Arrien's sketch of one so identified clearly represents *oṣeṣe* shells.⁴ No chains made of halves of palm nuts have been observed, although an *Ileṣa* diviner said they could be used. There is no evidence to support the statements of Frobenius (1912-1913: I, 278) and Meek (1925: II, 69) that palm kernels are used, and Meek's statement that the babalawo uses sixteen strings each having sixteen kernels is obviously erroneous.

A divining chain purchased from an *Ilara* diviner has markers cast from a light white metal in the shape of *oṣeṣe* pods with the outer surfaces decorated with simple geometric patterns (see Plate 2B). A similar chain, with markers cast in brass (*idẹ*) in the shape of *oṣeṣe* seeds, was seen in Ibadan; these and other metals may be used to form other shapes that can serve as markers. Maupoil (1943: 199) refers to a chain in the Musée de l'Homme with copper markers in the shape of *avini* or *avavini* seeds (unidentified), and the use of copper (*baba*) was confirmed by *Mẹkọ* and *Ileṣa* informants. A *Mẹkọ* diviner mentioned the use of silver (*fadaka*), lead (*oje*), and iron (*irin*), but according to an *Ileṣa* diviner these three metals can be used only for the chain and not as markers. He also said that in ancient times cowry shells were used in place of seed shells.

Pieces of calabash strung together by pieces of cord are commonly employed in Ifẹ and elsewhere by apprentices when they are learning divination; Frobenius (1913: I, 247) illustrates one of these strings, which are spoken of as "older" than the regular divining chain because a diviner begins with them. Pieces of wood or ivory may also be substituted for seed shells. According to *Mẹkọ* diviners scales of the Pangolin or Scaly Anteater (*akika*, *aika*, *aka*, *ayinka*)⁵ are used, though this was denied in *Ileṣa*. Maupoil (1943: 198-199) reports the use of crocodile scales, head bones of a fish, head bones of the crocodile, and sea turtle shell. *Mẹkọ* and *Ileṣa* informants both confirmed the use of crocodile scales (*ipṣṣe ọni*, *ipṣe ọni*), and the head bones of the large-headed fish (*abori*; sacred to the River Goddess *Qṣun* in another context), but denied the use of the head bones of the crocodile. A *Mẹkọ* diviner confirmed the use of pieces of the shell of the sea turtle (*ajapa ewiri*), but this was denied in *Ileṣa*. There may be regional differences in the materials regarded as suitable.

4. Frobenius, 1913: I, 250, 247. Cf. the larger sketch in Frobenius, 1926: 179.

5. *Uromanis longicaudata* Briss. See Maupoil (1943: 280).

The Divining Bag (apo, apo Ifa)

The divining chain is kept and carried in a shoulder bag usually about nine inches deep and fifteen inches broad, with a full-sized flap. It is made of locally woven cloth or sometimes of leather, and it may be decorated with cowry shells or beads. Beaded bags are often smaller (see Plates 3 and 4). A babalawo is one of the very few nonroyal persons permitted to use solidly beaded materials; these are usually reserved to the Yoruba kings, who had beaded cushions, slippers, and gowns, and who alone may wear beaded caps and crowns. Beaded bags, knife handles, hangings for the shrine, and other objects may be made by the diviners themselves, or by the beadworkers who work for the kings.

The divining bag also contains an assortment of miscellaneous objects that serve as symbols of specific alternatives (see Chapter V), including cowries and other kinds of shells, vertebra and other small bones, horns and teeth, broken bits of china and glass, pebbles, and different kinds of seeds. The whole of these objects and the divining chain are referred to as abira, and the divining bag is called apo abira or apo Ifa, the bag of accessories or the bag of Ifa. The divining chain is often cast on this bag (see Plate 18), which is laid out on the mat on which the diviner is seated. The palm nuts, divining tray, and bell may be carried in this bag if it is large enough, but for palm nuts other types of containers are usually provided, which remain at the shrine for Ifa most of the time.

Divining Vessels: Plates, Cups, and Bowls

Several types of containers for the palm nuts are commonly employed, the simplest of which is a pottery plate (awo, awo Ifa). In place of the earthenware black plates (awo dudu) produced by Yoruba women, imported chinaware is often used. In Mękọ palm nuts were sometimes stored in a small cloth bag containing cowry shells. All these are considered perfectly adequate by diviners at Ifę, and at Mękọ and Ilara; but if he can afford it, a diviner may wish to have a carved wooden cup or bowl to decorate his shrine and show his gratitude to Ifa.

The carved wooden divining cup (agere Ifa, oęęęę Ifa, ajęęę Ifa, ajele Ifa), has been widely illustrated because of its aesthetic qualities; and indeed it is probably the most versatile of all the sculptured forms produced by Yoruba woodcarvers (see Plates 5-8). Twenty of these vessels are illustrated in Frobenius (1913: I, 233, 235, 237, 239). They are decorated with various birds, animals, or fish, with human beings engaged in ritual and other activities, or with combinations of these figures; the decorative elements may become so elaborate that any resemblance to a cup is lost. It may be uncovered or provided with a lid, either hinged or separable, which may be the setting of an independent scene or incorporated into the total composition.

Several divining cups portray a woman kneeling before a chicken whose head, back, and tail form a removable lid. A common motif, particularly in Igana and in the area of the old Ketu kingdom in the West, is that of a chicken biting a snake, with the snake striking back at the chicken's

leg. A particularly complex example from Deyin in the Ketu area depicts a chief on horseback surrounded by four attendants on foot, with a hinge and lid carved from the same piece of wood; the lip of the cup and the inside of its circular lid are carved with incised geometric design, and the top of the lid is ringed with two snakes, each being bitten by a chicken, and each in turn biting a tortoise. One from Abẹkuta shows a babalawo marking a figure of Ifa on a divining tray while holding a sacrificial chicken in the other hand, and with his female client kneeling beside him (Bascom and Gebauer, 1953: 32). The designs occasionally are derived from the Ifa cult, as in this instance, but more often they are not. They are considered simply as decorations which the purchaser may specify or which he may commission the woodcarver to execute as suits his individual fancy. A few divining cups are cast in brass.

Although divining cups are found in Mẹkọ, Abẹkuta, Igana, Qyọ, Ileša, Ekiti, and other parts of Yoruba country, they are not employed in Ifẹ, where the divining bowl is preferred; however, divining cups are known in Ifẹ and are referred to in one of the verses (175-2) recorded there.

The divining bowl (ọpọn igẹdẹ), which in Ifẹ is used in place of the cup, is also known in other areas by various names. Aesthetically it is much more formal and restricted, generally taking the shape of a circular covered bowl about fifteen inches in diameter and nine inches deep, with decorations usually in low relief or incised designs (see Plates 9 and 15). Frobenius (1913: I, 257) illustrates five of these, one square in shape, one with high relief carving and three short legs, and one elaborately carved in low relief with geometric and representational designs. In other respects they are more complex than the divining cups, which have only a single cavity; if several sets of palm nuts are to be stored in the same cup, plate, or bag, it is necessary to wrap each in a small cloth bag to keep them apart. The interiors of the divining bowls are usually divided by raised partitions into a round or square central section, surrounded by four, six, or eight radial sections. The "chief palm nut" (olori ikin, ọduşọ) and one set of palm nuts are kept in the central compartment, while the rest are used for other sets of nuts, for divining chains, kola nuts, cowries, and other small accessories. Informants denied Frobenius' statement (1913: I, 254) that they are used to store sulphur, charcoal, chalk, and camwood. Similar bowls are used in Qyọ, where they are known as igbajẹ Ifa or ọpọn Ifa; in Mẹkọ, where they are known as awẹ Ifa; and in Dahomey, where Maupoil (1943: 184, 217) gives their Yoruba name as awofa, meaning "plate of Ifa" (awo Ifa).

A variant form, owned by diviners in Ifẹ and in Igana, combined a bowl of this type with a divining tray (see Plate 10). The interior of the Igana bowl was divided into two concentric circular compartments, surrounded by a number of radial sections. The top of the flat lid was in the form of a circular divining tray and was used as such.

The Divining Tray (ọpọn Ifa)

When divining with palm nuts, the figures of Ifa are marked in powder on the divining tray and, even when the divining chain is used, the tray is

often employed in the course of making the sacrifices or the medicines which are prescribed. It is flat and usually circular in shape, though it may be rectangular or approximate a square or a semicircle. Its dimensions range from about six to eighteen inches (see Plates 11-12). The outer edge is slightly raised and carved in a variety of geometric designs or representations of human and animal forms and objects; these are almost always in low relief, but a divining tray with two snails sculptured on the edge was seen in Mëkọ, and Wescott (1958: pl. V) illustrates a tray with sculptured birds and animals.

The raised edge of the tray has at least one stylized face, identified as Eshu (Eṣu), the messenger of Ifa and the other deities. Trays with one, two, four, and eight such faces have been seen, and Maupoil (1943: pl. VIII) illustrates one from Dahomey with sixteen faces. Where two or more faces of Eshu appear on a divining tray, one must be recognizable by its size or position, or be marked in some way so that it can be placed opposite and facing toward the diviner. For this purpose a bunch of cowries is sometimes attached to the tray opposite it, and the burned hole by which it is attached may serve to orient the tray after the string has broken and the cowries have been lost. The bunch of cowries is used also to spread the divining powder on the tray so as to "erase" a figure marked on it; according to an Ifẹ diviner, it should include at least fifty cowries.

In using the divining tray it is as important to distinguish the right and left hands of a figure as in the case of the divining chain. It is believed that Ifa controls the figures marked on the tray, as he does the fall of the seeds of the chain, and that he sits opposite the diviner watching over the proceedings from the same viewpoint as that of the client. Frobenius (1913: I, 252) states that the diviner "always turns to the East"; and an Ifẹ informant said that long ago diviners faced East; now they can sit facing in any direction so long as Eshu is placed opposite them (see Plate 15; and Maupoil, 1943: plates III and IV).

The divining tray is known as the "tray of Ifa" (ọpọn Ifa) in Ifẹ and elsewhere, though the name atẹfa or atẹ Ifa is recognized in Mëkọ and in Dahomey. A basketry tray used for displaying small merchandise in the market is known as atẹ, but it is not employed in divination, and the Mëkọ term may be derived from the verb tẹ, "to press," which is used to refer to the manner in which the diviner marks the figures of Ifa on the tray; or it may be of Fọn origin. In Ileṣa the divining tray is known also as a plank or board (apako) or as the board of Ifa (apako Ifa). All the divining trays seen were made of wood except one at Ifẹ carved of quartz, like the looped-handled quartz stools of ancient Ifẹ; it was said to have been the tray used by Ifa himself. One verse (175-2) refers to a brass tray (ọpọn idẹ), which Ifa used, and this is also mentioned in a myth. There was no mention of using a fan, or bowl, as reported by J. Johnson.

The Divining Powder (iyẹrosun)

The figures of Ifa are marked on the tray in a powder which is scattered on its surface. This probably comes from Baphia nitida or camwood, as

Clarke (1939: 240) says. There are problems in botanical classification and apparently regional variations in the name of the tree, but iyerosun as the name for the powder is widely recognized. Ifẹ informants explained that this name means iyẹ irosun, or wood dust (iyẹ) made by termites from the irosun tree. Clarke (1939: 240) also gives irosun as the name of the tree, and Farrow (1926: 38) gives irosu. Diviners in Mèkọ, however, knew of no tree named irosun, saying that the termite dust came from the osun tree (igi osun); they explained the term iyerosun as a combination of iyẹri or oyẹri (termite dust) and osun. Abraham (1958: 334) gives both iyẹ as "wood-dust from tree eaten away by borer-insects" and iyẹrẹ òsùn = irosun as "powdered wood of the tree ıròsun sprinkled on the divining board."

Dalziel gives irosun as the name both for Camwood, Baphia nitida, and for Barwood, Pterocarpus osun, which is also known as osun or red osun (osun pupa); Pterocarpus erinaceus is known as black or dark osun (osun dudu). Significantly, he begins his discussion of Pterocarpus with the statement: "Much confusion exists as to the botanical identification of various specimens of Redwoods known as Barwood and Camwood, and, as the native names are not distinctive, they give little assistance to collectors. It is proposed to confine the term Barwood to species of Pterocarpus, and Camwood to species of Baphia" (Dalziel, 1937: 256).

In Ifẹ divining powder is often kept on hand in a bottle or other container. When more is needed, the diviner or his assistant takes a termite-infested piece of irosun wood, pounds it on a flat stone to knock out the dust, and "pans" it on a divining tray so that larger bits of wood can be removed. Mèkọ diviners bring home a piece of the trunk of the osun tree during the dry season and leave it on the ground so that termites can eat it, but not near the spot where they divine. The termites, they explain, eat only the whitish outer parts of the wood, and powder from the reddish heartwood is never used. The heartwood produces osun, the reddish wood powder commonly known in English as camwood, but which would be barwood according to Dalziel's classification if the Mèkọ and Ifẹ terms are distinctive.

In Mèkọ other woods may also be used, including igi ayorẹ and igi idin (unidentified), igi işin (Akee apple or Blighia sapida), and powder from bamboo palm or oil palm rafters; iyerosun is preferred, but the kind of wood does not matter as much as the fact that the dust is made by termites. Ifẹ diviners regard termite dust from any other kind of wood as unsatisfactory, but occasionally they use dust from rafters made from the oil palm tree as a substitute.

Although marking in the sand is basic to the Islamic system of divination, and although Wyndham (1921: 69) and Price (1939: 134) refer to the use of sand on the divining tray in Ifẹ, and Gorer (1935: 196) reports its use in Dahomey, its use in place of wood dust is denied by Ifẹ diviners and is not mentioned by Maupoil. In Mèkọ neither sand nor chalk is used; yam flour (elubọ) may be used, as S. Johnson (1921: 33) notes, but it is not considered good for the purpose of divination. Similarly Maupoil (1943: 194) was told that soot, charcoal, corn flour, and cassava did not work. Marking the figure on a crushed, half-boiled yam as described by Burton (1863: I, 190) was denied by informants and has not been suggested by subsequent observers.

The Divining Bell (irọ, irọ Ifa)

As the figures are considered to be not simply the result of chance but controlled by Ifa, who personally supervises each divination, the diviner may attract Ifa's attention before beginning to divine. For this purpose he may tap a bell or "tapper" (irọ) against the divining tray. This is known as the tapper of Ifa (irọfa, irọ Ifa) in Ifẹ, as the tapper of ivory (irọke, irọ ike) in Ibadan and the Qyọ area, and as ọrunfa (ọrun Ifa) or ọrunke (ọrun ike) in Mẹkọ; but the terms irọfa and irọke are widely recognized. The tapper is generally about eight to sixteen inches in length and carved of wood with the lower end, which is tapped on the tray, shaped like an elephant tusk. The upper end, as it is held, may be simply decorated or carved—for example, to represent a kneeling woman; above this there is sometimes a bell-shaped end that may or may not have a clapper within it. The bell at the top is far less common than the tusklike point with which the tray is tapped. Frobenius (1913: I, 253) reproduces sketches of fourteen Ifa bells, illustrating the range of variation in their form.

Wealthier diviners have their bells carved of ivory or cast in brass. An unusual pair from Ifẹ, cast in brass, is illustrated in Plate 13. A simple stick covered with the tan and light green beads of Ifa is also used for this purpose in Mẹkọ and is known by the same names, or the handle of the cow-tail switch may be used. Many diviners own divining bells, but they are not essential in divination, and in Ifẹ the more experienced diviners often do not use theirs.

The following Ifa myth accounting for the origin of the bell or tapper was told by an Ifẹ diviner who ascribed it to the figure Ogbe Ọkanran:

At one time Ọrunmila befriended Elephant and went to the forest with him. They did any kind of work to get money, but Ọrunmila was not as powerful as Elephant and could not endure the hardships as well. They worked in the forest for three months and three years; but when they returned, Ọrunmila had earned only enough money to buy one white cloth. On their way home, Ọrunmila asked Elephant to hold the cloth while he went into the bush to relieve himself. Elephant did; but when Ọrunmila returned, Elephant had swallowed it. When Ọrunmila asked for it, Elephant denied he had ever been given it. A great dispute arose between them and continued as they walked along the road. Finally they came to the crossroad, where they parted, Ọrunmila going on the road to Ado without his cloth, and Elephant going to Alọ.

On the road to Ado, Ọrunmila met Hunter, who said he was going to hunt elephants. Ọrunmila told him that he knew where he could find an elephant, and directed him along the road to Alọ. He said he would meet an elephant and kill it, and that when he cut it open, he would find a white cloth, which he should bring back to him. Hunter went along the road, met Elephant and killed him. When he cut Elephant open, he found the white cloth inside. He returned the cloth, with an elephant's tusk as a gift, to Ọrunmila.

Since that time, because of the falsehood of Elephant, Ọrunmila and

the babalawo use the tusk of an elephant as *irọfa*. And since that time, any hunter who kills an elephant must take the *ala*⁶ to a babalawo.

Initial Invocations

Before the first divination of the day, prayers and invocations are offered to Ifa and other deities while the apparatus is being arranged. It is convenient to describe this preliminary ritual, which is performed only once during the day, before turning to the actual mechanics of divination and the manner in which the appropriate Ifa verse is selected for the client. As recorded in *Mẹkọ*, the diviner sits on a mat with his tray in front of him. He spreads wood dust on the tray, and places the divining cup in the center of it. The assortment of miscellaneous objects which serve as symbols of specific alternatives are placed on the right side of the tray. Two bags of cowry shells, one of which also contains eighteen palm nuts, are placed in front of the tray.

The diviner takes the palm nuts out of the bag and places them in the divining cup; he raises this in both hands and blows spit on the palm nuts and says: "Ifa awake, oh, *Ọrunmila*. If you are going to the farm, you should come home, oh. If you are going to the river, you should come home, oh. If you are going to hunt, you should come home, oh." [*Ifa ji-o, Ọrunmila; bi o lọ l(i)-oko, ki o wa-(i)le-o; bi o lọ l(i)-odo, ki o wa-(i)le-o; bi o lọ l(i)-oḍẹ, k(i)-o wa-(i)le-o.*] This is to make sure that Ifa supervises the divination and sees that the correct figure is selected.

He then places the divining cup on the ground to the left of the divining tray, saying, "I take your foot and press the ground thus." [*Mo fi ẹsẹ rẹ tẹ-(i)lẹ bayi.*] He then puts it on the mat, saying, "I take your foot and press the top of the mat thus. I carry you to sit on the mat, so you can carry me to sit on the mat forever." [*Mo fi ẹsẹ rẹ tẹ ori ẹni bayi. Mo gbe ọ ka l(i)-ori ẹni, ki o le gbe mi ka l(i)-ori ẹni titi lai.*] He replaces the cup on the divining tray, saying, "I carry you to sit on Ifa's tray, so that you can carry me to sit on Ifa's tray forever." [*Mo gbe ọ ka l(i)-ori ọpọn-(I)fa, ki o le gbe mi ka l(i)-ori ọpọn-(I)fa titi lai.*] These prayers for long life are followed by prayers for children and money.

He draws a line clockwise with his finger in the wood dust around the base of the divining cup, saying, "I build a house around you, so you can build a house around me,⁷ so you can let children surround me, so you can let money surround me." [*Mo kọ-(i)le yi ọ ka, ki o le kọ-(i)le yi mi ka, ki o le jẹki ọmọ yi mi ka, ki o le jẹki owo yi mi ka.*] He erases the line with his cow-tail switch, saying, "I pay homage, oh; I pay homage, oh. Homage come to pass; homage come to pass; homage come to pass." [*Mo ju-(i)ba-o,*

6. *Ala* means both a part of the intestines of an elephant, and a white cloth.

7. Or "I make a fence around you, so you can make a fence around me." [*Mo sọ-(ọ)gba yi ọ ka, ki o le sọ ọgba yi mi ka.*]

mo ju-(i)ba-o; iba s̄s̄; iba s̄s̄; iba s̄s̄.] He takes a little wood dust from the tray and places it on the ground, saying, "Ground, I pay homage; homage come to pass." [Il̄s̄ mo ju-(i)ba; iba s̄s̄.]

He sets the divining cup aside again and marks a line away from him in the divining powder at the center of the tray, saying, "I open a straight road for you, so you can open a straight road for me; so you can let children take this road to my presence, so you can let money take this road to my presence." [Mo la ɔna fun ɔ tororo, ki o le la ɔna fun mi tororo; ki o le j̄eki ɔm̄ɔ t̄ɔ ɔna yi wa s(i)-ɔd̄ɔ mi, ki o le j̄eki owo t̄ɔ ɔna yi wa s(i)-ɔd̄ɔ mi.] He then stirs the wood dust on the ground with the end of the handle of the cow-tail switch, saying, "I do the ground thus." [Mo s̄e il̄s̄ bayi.] In the same way he stirs the wood dust on the tray, saying, "I do the tray thus." [Mo s̄e ɔp̄on bayi.]

Tapping the tray with the divining bell or with the handle of the cow-tail switch, he recites, "To climb and chatter, oh, to climb and chatter. If the West African Grey Woodpecker mounts the top of a tree, it will chatter. To climb and chatter, oh, to climb and chatter. If the Agbe bird⁸ awakes, it will chatter. To climb and chatter, oh, to climb and chatter. If the Woodcock awakes, it will chatter. To climb and chatter, oh, to climb and chatter." [A-gun s̄e-o, a-gun s̄e. Bi Akoko g(un)-ori igi a s̄e. A-gun s̄e-o, a-gun s̄e. Bi Agbe ji a ma s̄e. A-gun s̄e-o, a-gun s̄e. Bi Aluko ji a ma s̄e. A-gun s̄e-o, a-gun s̄e.]

He continues, "Ẹl̄egbara [i.e. Eshu], homage, oh" [Ẹl̄egbara, iba-o] and recites several of Eshu's praise names; "Ogun chatters" [Ogun s̄e], followed by praise names of the God of Iron; "Q̄sun will chatter" [Q̄sun a ma s̄e], followed by praise names of the Goddess of the River Q̄sun; "Ṣango, your homage, oh, homage" [Ṣango iba-̄e-o, iba] and praise names of the God of Thunder. He continues to invoke and recite the praise names of as many deities as he can, the order being unimportant after Eshu and Ogun. He then invokes the living and the dead kings: "Kings on earth and Kings in heaven, your homage, oh" [Q̄ba aiye ati Q̄ba ɔrun, iba yin-o] and the earth: "Ground, your homage, oh." [Il̄s̄ iba-̄e-o.]

He concludes, "Q̄runmila, sacrifice is offered; Q̄runmila, sacrifice is satisfactory; Q̄runmila, sacrifice come to pass"⁹ [Q̄runmila-b̄ɔ-ru; Q̄run-

8. See n. 1, verse 17-2.

9. This very widely known invocation may take the form, "Ifa, I awake, sacrifice is offered; I wake, sacrifice is satisfactory; I awake, sacrifice come to pass" [Ifa, mo-ji-b̄ɔ-ru, mo-ji-b̄ɔ-ȳe, mo-ji-b̄ɔ-ṣ̄iṣ̄e] or "Ifa, sacrifice is offered; Ifa, sacrifice is satisfactory; Ifa, sacrifice come to pass" [(I)fa, b̄ɔ-ru, (I)fa, b̄ɔ-ȳe, (I)fa, b̄ɔ-ṣ̄iṣ̄e]. An Qȳɔ diviner cited two myths in which these invocations are personified as children of Ifa, one of which gives a fanciful explanation of their meaning.

Q̄runmila was summoned before the Sky God to answer six accusations made by the other deities. Before going, he consulted a diviner and was told to sacrifice a monkey, which he did. He was cleared of the accusations and later bore three sons. He called the first "Use monkey to sacrifice,"

mila-bq-yę; Qrunmila-bq-şişę]; he claps his hands and says, "Thank you, oh" [Adupe-o]. The invocation addressed to Qrunmila is a prayer that the sacrifice which is offered will be acceptable to him, and that it will achieve its purpose.

The diviner removes the palm nuts from the divining cup, replaces two of them in the bag with the cowries, and counts the remaining sixteen, saying, "To count again (and again) is how a mad man counts his money." [A tun ka li aşiwere ika owo rę.] As he continues to pass the palm nuts from one hand to another, he invokes the relative who was in charge of his initiation, "Homage to oluwo" [Iba oluwo] or "Honor to oluwo" [Qwq oluwo], and to give homage to his teacher [ojugbqna],¹⁰ to all those who have taught him anything about Ifa [a-kq-(ę)ni-li-(I)fa], to the one who pressed him in the mud [a-tę-(e)ni-l(i)-ęrę],¹¹ to other diviners who take thus [a-ko-bayi], who press (mark Ifa figures) thus [a-tę-bayi], and who do thus [a-şe-bayi]. He offers homage or honor to the termite hill (gbodipęte), ant hill (kukubqlę), king (qba), Whiteman (oyinbo), police (qlqpa), a court case (ęjq), loss (ofq), falling branch of a tree (ayalu igi), gun (ibqn), stone (okuta), slap (ibaju), and a deadly smoke (efin), at the farm (loko), at the river (lodo), in the grassland (lqdan), and so on. There are many such invocations, which the diviner may mention or omit as he wishes.

Finally, the diviner replaces the palm nuts in the divining cup, saying, "One word alone does not drive a diviner from home; one word alone does not drive an elder from home" [Qrę kan řo ko ři awo n(i)-ile; qrę kan řo ko ři agba n(i)-ile]. This is said to ensure that the diviner will not suffer if he has neglected to mention some deity or other entity in his homages. He is then ready to divine.

the second "Use monkey to live," and the third "Use monkey, come to pass" [F(i)-qbq-ru, F(i)-qbq-yę, F(i)-qbq-şişę].

Another time Qrunmila was told to sacrifice but he had no money. He went to his children, and Ibqru gave him two thousand cowries, Ibqyę gave him two thousand, and Ibqşişę gave him another two thousand. With these he bought a she-goat, pigeons, and other things necessary for the sacrifice. After the sacrifice he invited many people to come and eat, and they praised him for spending so much money and giving a feast fit for a king. They thanked him, but he said, "Don't praise me or thank me. Praise and thank Ibqru, Ibqyę, and Ibqşişę."

10. See Chapter IX.

11. This may refer to the point when the initiate is led into a muddy part of a stream, where his head is washed. See J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 253).

IV. THE FIGURES OF IFA

Divination is spoken of as casting Ifa (*dafa, da Ifa*), using the verb that describes throwing corn to chickens or tossing out water. Casting the divining chain (*dapeḷe, da opeḷe*) may be distinguished from casting the sixteen palm nuts (*dakin, da ikin*); more descriptive of the latter is the phrase "beating the palm nuts" (*lukin, lu ikin*), which employs the verb that refers to beating a drum. After selecting the sixteen nuts to be used, the diviner first rubs them together vigorously eight at a time as if to rub off loose pieces, and then inspects them carefully.

He takes them in both hands and rapidly beats them together several times, then attempts to pick up as many nuts as he can with his right hand (see Plate 14). As sixteen nuts form a large handful, and as their ovoid surfaces become polished through use, some usually remain below in his left hand. If none is left, or if more than two remain, or if the grasp is not secure and he feels that some are "trying to slip out," he beats them again and takes another grasp.

Only when one or two nuts remain in the left hand is a trial counted. If one nut remains, the diviner draws two short parallel lines in the divining powder on the tray; if two nuts remain, he makes a single line. In justification of this apparently arbitrary reversal, the diviners say only that this is how Ifa taught them to do. A single line is made using the middle finger of the right hand, and a double line with the middle and ring fingers of the right hand to push or press (*te*) the powder away from the diviner so that the darker surface of the tray can be seen (see Plate 15). The process is called "to press Ifa" (*tefa, te Ifa*), and the marks are known as the eyes of the tray (*oju opon*).

When this process has been repeated eight times, the diviner has made eight single or double marks on the tray. These are arranged in two parallel columns of four marks each, made in the order indicated in Figure 2 as A, giving a configuration such as is represented in B. In practice, when similar marks are vertically juxtaposed, they may be joined together as in C. Thus the figure *Ogbe Meji* may be represented by two long parallel lines, and *Oyęku Meji* by four such lines.

Such a pattern constitutes one of the 256 figures (*odu*) of Ifa, in this case *Qkanran Iręte*. These figures are also spoken of as the "roads of Ifa" (*ona Ifa*), while their more common name, *odu*, is explained as meaning something big or bulky. Each figure is named and interpreted in terms of its two halves, of which the right (*otun*) is regarded as male and "more powerful" than the left (*osi*), which is female; for this reason the name of the right half precedes that of the left. The halves of a figure are spoken of as feet (*ęse*), according to Epega (1937: 10), and as sides or "arms" (*apa*) or hands (*owọ*), according to Ifę informants, but there is no specific term to distinguish the sixteen basic figures from the 256 derivative figures.

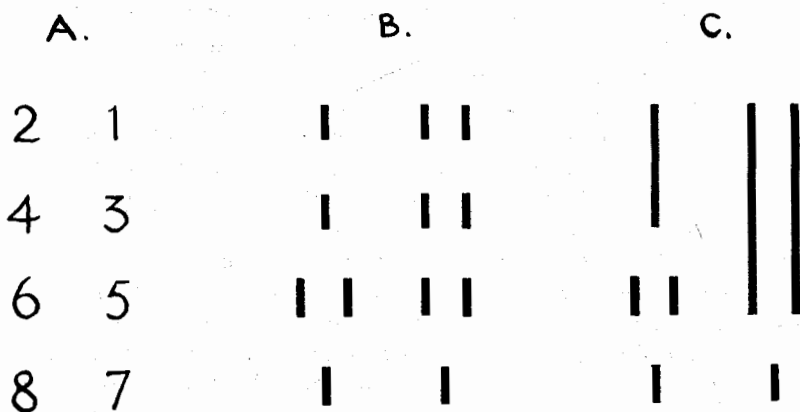


FIGURE 2. MARKING THE IFA FIGURES

Each half of a figure can take one of the sixteen basic forms shown in Table 1 A (above, page 4), according to the formula 2^n for the number of permutations of heads and tails for a coin tossed four times in succession, with 2 being the number of possible alternatives (heads or tails) and n the number of tosses. Each of these sixteen configurations may appear in either half of a figure and be associated either with the same configuration or with any of the fifteen others in the other half. If Ogbe appears on the right, for example, it may be combined with another Ogbe, or with Qyęku, Iwori, Edi, Qbara, and so on in the left hand, giving a total of sixteen figures with Ogbe on the right. As the same holds for each of the sixteen basic configurations, a total of 16×16 or 256 derivative figures (odu) are possible.

Each derivative figure is given a compound name based on the names of the patterns of the right and of the left side. The name of the right side precedes that of the left side, so that in the illustration above (Figure 2) the figure is Qkanran Iręte, and not Iręte Qkanran. Because the latter is another figure, with a different set of predictions and sacrifices, it is essential to differentiate between the two halves of the figure by orienting the divining tray and the two halves of the divining chain properly. It will be noted that the diviner works from right to left in marking the lines on the divining tray, in reading the figure, and in choosing between specific alternatives as described below (cf. Chapter V). Again this is how Ifa taught the diviners to do.

In sixteen of the 256 figures, the two halves are identical, so that one finds Ogbe Ogbe, Qyẹku Qyẹku, Iwori Iwori, and so on. These paired figures are known as Two Ogbe (Ogbe Meji, Eji Ogbe), Two Qyẹku (Qyẹku Meji, Eji Qyẹku), Two Iwori (Iwori Meji, Eji Iwori), and so on. All 256 derivative figures are known as odu; the paired or double figures may be distinguished as olodu, and the others are known as amulumala, according to Ogunbiyi (1952: 9, 20), or simply amulu or combinations, according to Ifẹ informants. The sixteen paired figures are considered most important and outrank the 240 combinations. A number of the paired figures and combinations have alternative names.

One of the 256 figures can be selected by a single cast of the divining chain, whereas eight separate manipulations of the palm nuts are required. Half a seed shell falling in the "open" position (şiju, şi-oju) with the concave inner surface facing upward is equivalent to a single line on the tray; if it falls in the closed or "inverted" position (dojude, di-oju-de) with the convex outer surface up, it is the equivalent of a double mark.¹

Divination with the chain of seeds, though regarded as inferior, is more rapid and permits the asking of questions through specific alternatives, but otherwise the two systems are identical. They employ the same set of figures with the same names and rank order, and the same verses. In both, the first figure cast—known as "post of the ground" (opolẹ, opo ilẹ) because it "stands on the ground"—is remembered by the diviner until it is time to recite its verses, which contain the prediction and specify the sacrifice which the client should make.

As we have seen earlier, many authors have claimed that the figures of Ifa number in the thousands. These claims derive from J. Johnson's account of sixteen principal odu, 256 or 4,096 odu altogether, and, "according to some" 65,536. Farrow would increase even this staggering number by "the fact that in each of the 8 throwings, or drawings, of the 16 nuts there is a possibility of a vast number of different results," a fact which is already accounted for in increasing the number from sixteen to 256. As any reader may verify for himself, however, the system permits no more and no less than 256 figures.

It has been implied by several writers that a particular figure is associated with a particular prediction, sacrifice, or deity, or that each is affirmative or negative, or favorable or unfavorable. These statements are gross oversimplifications of the system of divination, arising from a failure to understand the importance of the verses associated with the figures. Le Herisse (1911: 143-144), for example, lists the figures as "bon" or "mauvaise"; Monteil (1931: 116-117) identifies them as "favorable" or "défavorable"; and Abraham (1958: 276-277) gives them as "favourable" and "unfavourable." The verses known by a single diviner for a particular figure may be predominantly favorable or unfavorable, but predictions of both kinds are usually associated with a given figure, and may even be given in

1. This is the reverse of what Clarke (1939: 240) implies in the passage quoted in Chapter I; but see Clarke (1939: 244-245).

the same verse (e.g. 3-4, 35-3). Clarke's (1939: 242-243) reference to affirmative and negative figures appears to result from a misunderstanding of the technique of specific alternatives, discussed in the following chapter. Bertho (1936: 373-374) and Clarke (1939: 255) imply that there is a single sacrifice for each figure, but an examination of the verses in Part Two will show a variety of sacrifices and predictions for individual figures.

Several deities may be mentioned in the verses for any given figure, although again one may be mentioned more frequently in the verses known to a single diviner. It is probably on this basis that informants may associate a particular figure with a particular deity. In any event a comparison of these associations made by informants in Ife, Mękọ, and Qyọ with those published by Beyioku (1943a: 1-7) for the Yoruba and by Herskovits (1938: II, 214) for the Fọn shows little consistency, even when Fọn deities can be readily equated (in parentheses) with Yoruba ones. Moreover, in a second publication Beyioku (1943b: 41) gives different associations for eight of the sixteen figures (2 Oduduwa, 5 Yemaja, 6 Ferewa, 11^{*} Qya, 13 Egungun, 14 Oriša Oko, 15 Oke, 16 Oro), adding to the variation.

Each listing reflects deities of importance locally, suggesting a considerable regional variation in the Ifa verses because of their adaptation to local belief systems. For example, Qramfę has not been reported outside of Ife, Ieša, and Qyọ, nor Agbona and Oriša Madoga outside of Mękọ. Ošumare, Iroko, and Nana Buruku are important as deities in Mękọ and in Dahomey, but not among the eastern Yoruba, although of course both the rainbow (ošumare) and the iroko tree are known.

Checking these associations with the seven verses recorded in Ife for the figure Iwori Meji, for example, reveals that two of the deities (Nana Buruku and Šopọna) mentioned in Mękọ do not appear, nor does the deity (Ogun) mentioned in Qyọ. Qlọrun and the personified rainbow (Ošumare) are mentioned in the names of the diviner in one verse (35-6). Qrunmila or Ifa is the central character in one (35-7), with Eshu having a prominent role in this and another verse (35-3). In all verses, as usual, it is Ifa who states the prediction and Eshu to whom the sacrifices are offered. Eji Iwori or Iwori Meji, the name of the figure, is personified as the central character in two verses (35-1, 35-5), but no other deities are mentioned, although they might have been if more verses had been recorded.

The meanings of the names of the Ifa figures are unknown. Several suggest similar words in Yoruba, such as the cock's comb (ogbe), camwood (irosun), lagoon (ọsa), wickedness and finger (ika), soap (oşę), and loss (ofun); but all of these are tonally distinct from the names of the figures. Puns on some of these words occur in the verses, for example the cock's comb in a verse of Ogbe Meji (1-6), and finger in a verse for Ika Qwọnrin (Epega, n.d.: VII, 11). Other puns in the verses purport to explain the names of the figures such as "It befits two corpses" [o-yę-(o)ku meji] in a verse for Qyęku Meji (18-10), "Qwọn walks" [Qwọn-rin], "The God of Iron casts" [Ogun-da], "He runs" [o-sa], and "He offends" [o-şę]² but these are not to be taken seriously as etymologies.

2. Epega (n.d.: VII, 11, 7, 8; X, 13).

TABLE 2

THE IFA FIGURES AND THE DEITIES

1. Ogbé Meji Beyioku: Qbatála (Oríṣalá)
 Herskovits: Xẹvioso (Ṣango)
 Ifẹ: Oríṣalá or Qṣun for boy; "wife of Ifa" for girl
 Mẹkọ: Ṣango, Qya, Ogun, Agbona, Qbaluaiye (Ṣopona),
 Buku (Nana Buruku)
 Qyọ: Ṣango
2. Qyẹku Meji Beyioku: Awọn iya mi (witches)
 Herskovits: Mawu (Odua, Odudua?)
 Ifẹ: Ori (head)
 Mẹkọ: Qṣun, Agbona, Qṣọsi, Qya
 Qyọ: Qbatála (Oríṣalá)
3. Iwori Meji Beyioku: Ifa
 Herskovits: Dan, rainbow (Oṣumare)
 Ifẹ: Ifa, Eṣu
 Mẹkọ: Buku (Nana Buruku), Babaligbo (Ṣopona),
 Oṣumare
 Qyọ: Ogun
4. Edi Meji Beyioku: Eṣu
 Herskovits: Hoho, twins (ibeji)
 Ifẹ: Egungun, odu of Ifa
 Mẹkọ: Qbatála (Oríṣalá), Ṣango, Iroko
 Qyọ: Qṣun
5. Qbara Meji Beyioku: Wọrọ
 Herskovits: Dangbe, rainbow (Oṣumare)
 Ifẹ: Egbẹ (abiku) for girl; odu of Ifa for man;
 wash head for old man
 Mẹkọ: Erinlẹ, Arẹ
 Qyọ: Qya

6. Qkanran Meji Beyioku: Erikiran
 Herskovits: Loko (Iroko)
 Ife: Ifa
 Meko: Agbona, Qşosi
 Qyo: Yemoja
7. Irosun Meji Beyioku: Qşun
 Herskovits: Lisa (Orişala)
 Ife: Ifa, Şango
 Meko: Oşumare, Elegbara (Eşu), Iroko
 Qyo: Ibeji (twins)
8. Qwqnrin Meji Beyioku: Qbalufon
 Herskovits: Toxoşu
 Ife: Eşu
 Meko: Elegbara (Eşu), Qşun
 Qyo: Erinle
9. Ogunda Meji Beyioku: Ogun
 Herskovits: Gu (Ogun)
 Ife: Orişala
 Meko: Ogun, Qbaigbo (Orişala), Qşun
 Qyo: Qşosi
10. Qsa Meji Beyioku: Orişala beji, twins (ibeji)
 Herskovits: All deities
 Ife: Orişala
 Meko: Iya mi (witches), Oge
 Qyo: Şango
11. Iręte Meji Beyioku: Qbaluaiye (Şopona)
 Herskovits: Na
 Ife: Qramfe
 Meko: Qşosi, Agbona, Iroko, Oro
 Qyo: Iya mi (witches)

12. Otura Meji Beyioku: Şango
 Herskovits: Kukuṭṭo, the dead (oku)
 Ife: Qşun odo (Qşun where people draw water)
 Mękq: Qlqrun, Ogun, Qşun
 Qyq: Alufa (Muslim diviners)
13. Oturupqn Meji Beyioku: Qya
 Herskovits: Sagbata, smallpox (Şopqna)
 Ife: Ifa
 Mękq: Egungun, Orişa Madoga
 Qyq: Ię (earth, i.e. Ogboni)
14. Ika Meji Beyioku: Onile (Oşugbo, Ogboni)
 Herskovits: Hoho, twins (ibeji)
 Ife: Qna (road)
 Mękq: Agbona, Ogun, Arę Itagun
 Qyq: Ori (head)
15. Qşş Meji Beyioku: Aje (money)
 Herskovits: Dada Zodji
 Ife: Oro, Qşun
 Mękq: Qsanyin, Qşun
 Qyq: Orişa oke (hill)
16. Ofun Meji Beyioku: Orişanla (Orişala)
 Herskovits: Aido Hwedo (Oşumare)
 Ife: odu of Ifa
 Mękq: Orişa Oluwa, Ifa, Eļęgbara (Eşu)
 Qyq: Odu (see Chapter IX)

An examination of 86 lists of the 16 basic figures of Ifa, based on 61 sources, established that these names are standard throughout Yoruba country and, with some modifications in pronunciations and spelling, among the Fõn of Dahomey, the Ewe of Togo and Ghana, and in Cuba and Brazil as well (Bascom, 1961; Bascom, 1966). It was also shown that one order for the 16 paired figures is predominant, being given in 42 of the 86 lists, including 30 of the 60 for the Yoruba, 4 of the 16 for the Fõn, one of the 3 Ewe lists, 5 of the 6 from Cuba, and the single list available for Brazil.³

Although the dominant order accounts for half of the total number of lists analyzed, twenty-one other rankings have been recorded. Some of these are undoubtedly inaccurate, but others strongly suggest regional variations. For the Yoruba these variants are largely associated with the area of Ifẹ, Ilesà, Ekiti, and Igbomina, in the northeast; whereas the dominant pattern is primarily associated with Lagos, Ode Rẹmọ near the Abẹokuta border of Ijẹbu Province, and the provinces of Abẹokuta and Ibadan in the southwest. One of these local variants, which is followed in this study, was given by four Ifẹ diviners and is confirmed by Wyndham (1921; 66) for Ifẹ, Odumọlayọ (1951; 13) for Ilesà, and by Clarke (1939: 252) for Omu in the Igbomina area of Iṣṣrin Province. This order, as shown in Table 1, is compared in Table 3 with the dominant order.

This ranking of the figures, which is important for answering questions asked in terms of specific alternatives (see Chapter V), is said to be based on their seniority, that is, the order in which "they were born and came into the world." One diviner explained that the sixteen paired figures were sons of Ifa by the same mother, whose name he refused to divulge. Ogbe Meji was the father of Ogbe Qyẹku, Ogbe Iwori, and the other combinations beginning with Ogbe, as were Qyẹku Meji, Iwori Meji, and the other paired figures. Other informants added that they lived on earth like human beings, and the figures of Ifa were named after them. They are mythological characters of the period when the deities also lived on earth, but they are not considered as, or worshiped as, deities (ẹbọra, ẹbura, oriṣa). They appear as diviners and as central characters in the verses. One verse (35-5) for the figure Iwori Meji recounts how the other paired figures conspired against him and tried to keep him from coming to earth, and how he was able to attain his rightful position in third place by making a sacrifice.

Ofun Meji, the last of the paired figures, is an exception. It has some of the strongest medicines associated with it and, as it is a tabu for a fly to alight upon it, it is "closed" immediately by turning over one of the seed shells of the divining chain when it is cast, so as to make a different figure. Although listed sixteenth, Ofun is equal in rank with Qwõnrin, in the eighth position.

This was explained by one diviner as due to the fact that Ofun Meji and Qwõnrin Meji were twins, and that when Ogunda Meji, the ninth figure, fought

3. Two additional Yoruba lists in the dominant order have been added by Prince (1963: 3) and McClelland (1966: 422), the latter verified by twenty-two informants.

TABLE 3
THE ORDER OF THE BASIC IFA FIGURES

A. <u>Ifẹ</u>	B. <u>Southwestern Yoruba</u>
1. 1111 Ogbe	1. 1111 Ogbe
2. 2222 Qyẹku	2. 2222 Qyẹku
3. 2112 Iwori	3. 2112 Iwori
4. 1221 Edi	4. 1221 Edi
5. 1222 Qbara	5. 1122 Irosun
6. 2221 Qkanran	6. 2211 Qwọnrin
7. 1122 Irosun	7. 1222 Qbara
8. 2211 Qwọnrin	8. 2221 Qkanran
9. 1112 Ogunda	9. 1112 Ogunda
10. 2111 Qsa	10. 2111 Qsa
11. 1121 Irẹtẹ	11. 2122 Ika
12. 1211 Otura	12. 2212 Oturupọn
13. 2212 Oturupọn	13. 1211 Otura
14. 2122 Ika	14. 1121 Irẹtẹ
15. 1212 Qşş	15. 1212 Qşş
16. 2121 Ofun	16. 2121 Ofun

with Ofun for his position he was peeved and went to the very end, even though he is stronger than Ogunda Meji. Two other diviners maintained that it was Qwọnrin Meji who fought with Ofun Meji. One explained that they are equal because they are still fighting for the eighth position. The other diviner recounted the following myth (noting that today Ogbe Meji is spoken of as the father of all the figures, though this merely refers to his present rank order):

Ofun Meji was the first born of all the figures and the first to come to earth. He was the head of all the other figures and ruled them like a king, but because things went badly under his rule, they sent to Ifa in heaven to tell him how hard things were for them on earth. Then Ifa sent Ogbe Meji down to earth to take Ofun Meji's place as the head of the other figures. When he arrived, Ofun Meji gave him a house to lodge in, and he sent Qşş Otura, the servant of all the paired figures, to go to welcome him.

When Qşş Otura arrived, Ogbe Meji gave him food and drink, and he remained there with Ogbe Meji. Ofun Meji sent another to find out why Qşş Otura had not returned, and he also stayed to eat and drink with Ogbe Meji. One after another was sent to find out what was happening, until all

the paired figures and all the combinations had gone, and Ofun Meji was left alone.

Finally, Ofun Meji himself went and knocked on Ogbe Meji's door. Everyone knew who it was, and he was told to wait outside. Then they gathered the bones from their feasting and threw them outside to him, saying that he was no longer wanted. They told him that he ranked beneath them all and should receive only the last share. Ofun Meji did not agree to this. He came into the house and began to fight his way through the crowd toward Ogbe Meji. He fought with each in turn, defeating all the combinations and the paired figures until he reached Qwɔnrin Meji. These two fought and fought and fought, until the others sent to Ifa in heaven. Ifa ruled that Ofun Meji and Qwɔnrin Meji should be equal in rank, taking turns in priority. This is why Ofun Meji outranks Qwɔnrin Meji when Ofun Meji is thrown first; but when Qwɔnrin Meji is thrown first, it outranks Ofun Meji (see Chapter V).

For the same reason Ofun Ogbe and Qwɔnrin Ogbe are equals, as are Ofun Qyɛku and Qwɔnrin Qyɛku, and so on. The sixteen paired figures outrank all the combinations, which also follow this modified order with Ogbe Ofun and Ogbe Qwɔnrin sharing the twenty-third position, Qyɛku Ofun and Qyɛku Qwɔnrin tied for thirty-eighth, and so on. According to some informants, Qs̄s̄ Otura, as the messenger of the paired figures, follows them immediately and outranks all other combinations; but others regard Ogbe Qyɛku as the senior combination, and one verse (2-1) refers to "Ogbe Qyɛku, father of combinations." Following the latter interpretation, the effective or practical rank order of the first sixty-one figures in selecting between specific alternatives would be as indicated in Table 4.

However, this order is by no means certain. Epega (n.d.: I, 1-28) gives a quite different "Order of the Odu in Ifa" (Eto awɔn Odu ninu Ifa), in which Ofun Meji is in the sixteenth place, followed immediately by Ogbe Qyɛku, Qyɛku Ogbe, Ogbe Iwori, Iwori Ogbe—as does Ogunbiyi (1952: 14-35) and, most recently, McClelland (1966: 425, 428). As the figures involving Ofun rank last in each series rather than as equal to Qwɔnrin, this may be the order in which the figures are learned; rather than their actual rank order. Odumɔlayo also lists Ofun Meji in sixteenth place, followed by Ogbe Qyɛku, Ogbe Iwori, Ogbe Edi.

Because of the uncertainties and because of apparent variations from diviner to diviner, a simpler system has been followed here in numbering the verses, simply as a matter of convenience. Following the Ife order of ranking the basic figures, as given in Table 1, the figures are numbered as follows:

- 1-16. Ogbe Meji, Ogbe Qyɛku, Ogbe Iwori, Ogbe Edi Ogbe Ofun;
- 17-32. Qyɛku Ogbe, Qyɛku Meji, Qyɛku Iwori, Qyɛku Edi Qyɛku Ofun;
-
- 240-256. Ofun Ogbe, Ofun Qyɛku, Ofun Iwori, Ofun Edi Ofun Meji.

Each verse is given a double number, the first part indicating the figure to which it belongs, and the second indicating the order in which it was recorded.

TABLE 4

THE RANK ORDER OF THE FIRST SIXTY-ONE FIGURES

1. Ogbe Meji			
2. Qyẹku Meji	17. Ogbe Qyẹku	32. Qyẹku Ogbe	47. Iwori Ogbe
3. Iwori Meji	18. Ogbe Iwori	33. Qyẹku Iwori	48. Iwori Qyẹku
4. Edi Meji	19. Ogbe Edi	34. Qyẹku Edi	49. Iwori Edi
5. Qbara Meji	20. Ogbe Qbara	35. Qyẹku Qbara	50. Iwori Qbara
6. Qkanran Meji	21. Ogbe Qkanran	36. Qyẹku Qkanran	51. Iwori Qkanran
7. Irosun Meji	22. Ogbe Irosun	37. Qyẹku Irosun	52. Iwori Irosun
8. Ofun Meji	23. Ogbe Ofun	38. Qyẹku Ofun	53. Iwori Ofun
8. Qwọnrin Meji	23. Ogbe Qwọnrin	38. Qyẹku Qwọnrin	53. Iwori Qwọnrin
10. Ogunda Meji	25. Ogbe Ogunda	40. Qyẹku Ogunda	55. Iwori Ogunda
11. Qsa Meji	26. Ogbe Qsa	41. Qyẹku Qsa	56. Iwori Qsa
12. Irẹtẹ Meji	27. Ogbe Irẹtẹ	42. Qyẹku Irẹtẹ	57. Iwori Irẹtẹ
13. Otura Meji	28. Ogbe Otura	43. Qyẹku Otura	58. Iwori Otura
14. Oturupọn Meji	29. Ogbe Oturupọn	44. Qyẹku Oturupọn	59. Iwori Oturupọn
15. Ika Meji	30. Ogbe Ika	45. Qyẹku Ika	60. Iwori Ika
16. Qşş Meji	31. Ogbe Qşş	46. Qyẹku Qşş	61. Iwori Qşş

V. SPECIFIC ALTERNATIVES: IBO AND ADIMU

Ifa's message to the client, which is contained in the divination verses, may be clarified and supplemented by asking a number of specific questions phrased in terms of two or more mutually exclusive alternative propositions; thus Ifa may be presented with the choice between several specific courses of action or candidates for a particular office, or he may be asked questions which must be answered either "Yes" or "No." These questions are posed in terms of two statements, the first affirmative and the second negative, such as "The venture which I am considering will be good for me," and "The venture which I am considering will not be good for me." Such questions are asked following the initial throw but before its verses are recited. The client may ask as many questions as he wishes, so long as they are phrased in terms of specific alternatives, and the answers may help in selecting the verse most appropriate to his case.

Questions of this kind are most frequently asked when the divining chain is employed, because a figure can be selected by a single cast of the chain as contrasted to the eight manipulations required when palm nuts are used. This probably accounts for the common statement that the divining chain "talks" more than the palm nuts, as the client may learn things which are not mentioned in the verses, which are the same in both cases. Nevertheless, and despite some informants' statements to the contrary, specific alternatives are also used with palm nuts, for example in selecting between candidates for an important office, for which palm nuts are preferred because of their reliability. Mèkọ diviners also maintained that palm nuts are better than the divining chain for choosing between specific alternatives, although the latter is quicker. Maupoil (1943: 203) records the use of palm nuts for this purpose in Dahomey.

The choice between these alternatives depends on the rank order ascribed to the figures, as discussed in the previous chapter. The diviner makes two casts, one for the affirmative statement and one for the negative, and the answer is that proposition for which the higher ranking figure is cast. Thus if the first is Qyẹku Meji and the second is Iwori Meji, the affirmative statement is indicated by Ifa to be the correct one. Whether a figure is affirmative or negative, or favorable or unfavorable, in this situation is relative, depending upon the position in which it occurs and the figure with which it is associated. If Qyẹku Meji followed Iwori Meji or if it were followed by Ogbẹ Meji, the answer would be negative.

The choice between two alternatives is illustrated by the examples in Table 5, in each of which the first alternative is selected. Example A again illustrates how the higher ranking of two paired figures is selected, while B illustrates the fact that any combination is outranked by any paired figure.

The important principle that, in the case of "ties," subsequent casts of the same figure confirm the first is illustrated in example C. This same principle is to be seen in examples D to H, which show its application to Ofun and Qwọnrin, which are ranked as equal, and how they "take turns" in

TABLE 5

THE CHOICE BETWEEN TWO SPECIFIC ALTERNATIVES

<u>First Throw</u>	<u>Second Throw</u>
A. Qyęku Meji	Iwori Meji
B. Qşş Meji	Qyęku Ogbe
C. Iwori Edi	Iwori Edi
D. Qwqnrin Qşş	Ofun Qşş
E. Ofun Iwori	Qwqnrin Iwori
F. Qyęku Qwqnrin	Qyęku Ofun
G. Otura Ofun	Otura Qwqnrin
H. Qwqnrin Meji	Ofun Meji

priority (Chapter IV). Thus when Qwqnrin Meji is followed by Ofun Meji, as in H, the first alternative is chosen because the two figures are of equal rank and the second cast confirms the first.

Similarly, if Ofun Meji were to appear on the first throw, it would also take precedence over Qwqnrin Meji on a second throw, although in actual practice this would not happen, because Ofun Meji is one of the figures that are final in the choice between specific alternatives when they appear on the initial cast. There would therefore be no occasion for making a second cast. These figures are not final in that they end the client's questioning through specific alternatives but only by answering the point in question at the moment and only if they appear on the first throw. The figures that are final in this sense, and thus select the first alternative immediately, are Ofun Meji, Iwori Ofun, Qbara Ika, Qwqnrin Ika, Ogunda Ogbe, Ogunda Iwori, Iręę Qşş, Iręę Otura, and Qşş Otura. To this list one diviner added Ogbe Qyęku, and another added Otura Ogbe, Otura Qkanran, and Qşş Iręę. All these informants were Ifę diviners, suggesting that there may be individual variation in this matter, depending upon the teacher with whom the diviner studied.

When Ifa is asked to choose between more than two alternatives—and there are several occasions in which he is presented with five—the appearance of these figures on the first throw again indicates that the first alternative is selected, and no other throws are necessary. But if Ofun Meji should appear on the second, third, or fourth throw, the series is completed; in this case Ofun Meji would be confirmed by Qwqnrin Meji on a subsequent throw, as in example I of Table 6, though it could be outranked by a higher figure on any other throw, as in J. In all the following examples the second alternative is selected, and figures that would be "final" if they occurred on the first throw are indicated by asterisks.

Example K illustrates how Ofun Qşş confirms Qwqnrin Qşş, provided that it is not outranked, while L shows that, however often a figure may be confirmed, it may be beaten by a higher ranking figure. As Ogbe Meji ranks

TABLE 6

THE CHOICE BETWEEN FIVE SPECIFIC ALTERNATIVES

<u>First Throw</u>	<u>Second Throw</u>	<u>Third Throw</u>	<u>Fourth Throw</u>	<u>Fifth Throw</u>
I. Ogunda Meji	Ofun Meji*	Qsa Meji	Qwɔnrin Meji	Irɛtɛ Meji
J. Iwori Meji	Qyɛku Meji	Ofun Meji*	Qwɔnrin Meji	Edi Meji
K. Otura Edi	Qwɔnrin Qṣṣ	Ogunda Iwori*	Qṣṣ Otura*	Ofun Qṣṣ
L. Qṣṣ Ogbe	Iwori Ofun*	Qṣṣ Ogbe	Qṣṣ Ogbe	Qṣṣ Ogbe

higher than all other figures, it constitutes a "final" figure in any single set of alternatives, in whatever position it occurs, as there is no possibility of its being beaten by any subsequent throw.

Two variant patterns, described by a single diviner in each case, should be noted. One held that any of the "final" figures ended the casting for a given set of alternatives regardless of the position in which they occurred. If one appeared on the third throw, for example, the fourth and the fifth throw would not be made, and the highest ranking of the first three throws would be selected. In examples I-L there would be no further casts after the first asterisk in each row, but the figure selected would still be that in the second column.

Another diviner maintained that all combinations are ranked by the right half of the figure alone, which is male, and that it is unnecessary to examine the left or female half of the figure except to determine whether the figure was double or a combination. All double figures outrank all combinations, but all combinations beginning with Ogbe are equal; as the same holds for other combinations as well, there are only thirty-two effective rankings according to this interpretation, the sixteen paired figures and the sixteen kinds of combinations. Maupoil (1943: 203) says that in Dahomey also only the right half of a figure is considered; but Ifɛ diviners say that only diviners who do not know Ifa well do not consider both sides of a figure.

The Symbols of the Specific Alternatives

In presenting Ifa with the choice between two alternatives, a small vertebra is often used to symbolize bad, and a pair of cowries tied back to back to symbolize good. Any two objects can be used, but the bone is associated with death while cowries were formerly used as money. If the client has faith in the diviner and no reason to keep secret what he wants to find out, he may ask the question directly of the diviner. The diviner then touches the ends of the divining chain to the cowries while stating, for example, "This marriage which has been proposed will be successful" and casts the chain, noting the figure that appears. He then touches the chain to the bone and states, "This marriage which has been proposed will not be successful," after which he makes the second cast. When the bone instead of

the cowries is chosen, indicating an unfavorable response, it is said that "Ifa puts the bone in his mouth" (Ifa gbe egungun ha ẹlu¹) or "Ifa cuts the farm and eats" (Ifa ja oko jẹ).

If, on the other hand, the client wishes to conceal his question from the diviner, he asks for two objects from the diviner's bag and whispers these statements to them so that the diviner cannot hear, cupping his hands over his mouth so that the diviner cannot read his lips. To eliminate all possibility of the diviner trying to influence the answer, he may then shake the two objects in his hands, and conceal one in each hand. In so doing, he may reverse the symbols, using the bone to represent the desirable and the cowries to represent the undesirable alternative. It is understood that Ifa will hear his questions and know which object to choose, even though the alternatives that they represent are kept secret from the diviner. In this case, the diviner makes two casts to determine which hand is selected, asking first, "Is it the left hand?" and then, "Is it the right hand?" From the object held in the hand selected, the client knows the answer to his question, but the diviner does not.

It is for this reason that the specific alternatives are spoken of as *ibo*, meaning "covered" or concealed, or as closing or "tying" *ibo* (*dibo*, *di ibo*). Though *ibo* is given in the CMS Dictionary as "casting of lots or dice by the priests in consulting the gods" and by Abraham as "casting lots," it is derived from the verb "to cover" (*bo*), and refers to the fact that the alternatives presented to Ifa may be "covered" in order to conceal them from the diviner.

After the initial cast of the divining chain, the client may inquire whether the general portent is favorable or unfavorable by presenting Ifa with the choice between "Good" and "Bad" as specific alternatives. He can then ask about the particular kind of blessing or misfortune that lies in store. This again is done through specific alternatives, and in terms of a conventionalized view of the five kinds of good fortune and the five kinds of bad fortune that are to be met in the world. These were compared by one of the principal diviners of Ifẹ (*Agbọnbọn*) to the fronds branching from a palm tree. Five fronds on the right hand represent the five kinds of good with long life as the lowest frond, and five fronds on the left hand represent the five kinds of bad, with death as the lowest frond, because all good things come from the right hand, whereas the left hand is the source of all misfortune.

The desirable things in this world are represented by five categories, ranked in order of importance: long life or "not death" (*aiku*), money (*aje*, *owo*), marriage or wives (*aya*, *iyawo*), children (*ọmọ*), and victory (*iṣegun*) over one's enemies. First of all a man desires to live a long life, for if he dies all other blessings become meaningless. If he does not die, he wants to have money, because through this he can be married. If he has money, he wants wives so that he may have children. Finally, if he has children, wives, money, and good health, he will pray only to be able to overcome his

1. Ẹnu is the more common form for "mouth."

enemies. Each of these blessings is of little value without those which precede it.

To represent the five kinds of "good," the diviners use a small stone (okuta), two large cowries (owo) tied together, the tip of the shell of a snail (igbin), a small bone (egun, egungun), which is often a vertebra, and a potsherd (apadi) from a china plate or bowl. The stone represents long life because it does not die. The cowries represent money, having been used as such before the introduction of European currency. The snail shell represents marriage because snails are a part of the gifts which precede marriage, so that a man must have snails before he can get a wife; or, according to one diviner, because a wife brings snails to sacrifice to Ifa. The bone represents children because they are of one's own "bone," as the Yoruba say, whereas we speak of them as of our own flesh and blood. The potsherd represents defeat of one's enemies because, while a china plate or bowl is something fine, it is utterly useless after it has been broken, the implication being that one's enemies will be defeated as completely as the plate is broken.

Similarly, there are five kinds of evil in this world: death (iku), sickness (arun, aisan), fighting (ija), the want of money (aje, owo), and loss (ofun). Death is the most serious because it is the only one that cannot be remedied or alleviated. Sickness is less serious because there are medicines to cure it, though these require the assistance of a specialist. Fighting is third, as anyone can stop a fight and arbitrate an argument. The want of money is something that one can remedy by his own efforts. Finally, loss is the least serious, because if one has nothing, he cannot lose anything.

The same objects may be used to represent these five kinds of misfortune, but the symbolism is different. A vertebra or other piece of bone represents death, because when a man dies, only his skeleton remains. The tip of a snail shell represents sickness because in it, when the shell is broken open, one finds filth and dirt, which are associated with illness. Two cowries, tied together, again, not only represent money but once served as money; some Ife diviners substitute trouble (oran), also symbolized by cowries, for want of money. A china potsherd represents loss, because when a plate or bowl is broken, it is irretrievably lost.

Though commonly employed in Ife, these symbols are not ritually fixed or unalterable. One Ife diviner sometimes used the smooth, almond-shaped seed (qsan) of the African Star Apple (*Chrysophyllum africanum*) to represent both children and illness, because it is a tree that has many children (i.e. much fruit), and because the fruit falls from its mother (the tree) when it is ill. A piece of china represented marriage, because a wife uses a plate to feed her husband. He also used a bone to symbolize defeat of one's enemies, because of the similarities between the word "bone" (egungun, egun) and the verb "to conquer" (şegun, şe-ogun; literally, make-war). In other cases he employed the symbols described above.

Igana diviners similarly use a piece of china to represent wives and marriage because women use plates to feed their husbands and are the ones who make pottery; the star apple seed to represent children because

its tree has many "children"; a bone to represent defeat of one's enemies because the animal from which it came had been "defeated" in the forest by the hunter; a stone to represent long life; and cowries to represent money. They maintained that the piece of china, the star apple seed, and the stone always represented good, as they did not have symbols for the five kinds of misfortune. Maupoil (1943: 205-206) gives other symbols for Dahomey.

This symbolism, which resembles in some ways that employed by the Yoruba in the sending of messages before writing was introduced (Bloxam, 1887), is sometimes based on a play on words, as in the use of a bone (egun) to represent the defeat of enemies (*şegun*), and often on the association of similar ideas in terms of what Frazer called "imitative magic," as in the case of the star apple seed to represent children and illness, the snail to represent illness, or the piece of china to represent loss and the defeat of enemies.

In choosing between specific alternatives, the diviner works from his own right to left, as he does in asking first about the client's left hand and then the right hand when the question is concealed from him. Before each throw he touches the ends of the divining chain to the symbol of the kind of good or bad fortune being investigated (see Plate 17). As viewed by the diviner, the order in which the casts are made and the order in which the symbols are laid out, with the categories of good and evil which they represent, are shown in Table 7. The symbols representing the five kinds of good are shown as they are viewed by the client in Plate 18.

When good fortune is indicated and its nature has been specified, the client usually asks no further questions about it, assuming that it refers to himself, though he could do so if he wished. However, when death or illness, for example, have been foretold, he may wish to learn the nature of the illness or for whom it is in store. For this he uses two objects, such as a stone and a cowry, and asks in turn whether or not the sickness is a headache, fever, dysentery, and so on, mentioning any diseases he thinks of in any order that he wishes, until one is designated as the correct answer. If he himself or someone closely related is ill, it is likely that he will name his illness first. If death has been indicated as the impending misfortune, he usually asks first whether he himself is the one concerned, again using two *ibo*, and then about close relatives in turn until one name is selected. Again he is likely to begin by naming relatives who are ill.

When a choice is made between five specific alternatives through symbols laid out simultaneously, the chances of any of them being selected are equal (1 in 5). They are also equal (1 in 2) when a choice is made between any two specific alternatives, as in the cast to determine whether the portent is good fortune or bad fortune. When a series of choices are presented in sequence through two alternatives to which "Yes" and "No" answers are given, the probabilities are determined by the order in which they are named, being fifty-fifty for the first and less than one in a thousand for an alternative named tenth or later, as shown in Table 8.

Adimu

When the nature of the impending good or evil fortune has been explored to the client's satisfaction, the next step is to ask whether a sacrifice

TABLE 7
THE FIVE KINDS OF GOOD AND BAD FORTUNE

A. Good Fortune

5	4	3	2	1
china	bone	snail	cowries	stone
defeat of enemy	children	marriage	money	long life

B. Bad Fortune

5	4	3	2	1
china	cowries	stone	snail	bone
loss	want of money	fight	illness	death

(*ḡbḡ*) to Eshu will be sufficient, or whether an additional offering is necessary. This asked in terms of two alternatives, *ḡbḡ* and adimu; the latter, which is interpreted as meaning "to take refuge," being understood to mean adimu in addition to the sacrifice (*ḡbḡ*) mentioned in the verse.

If adimu is selected, Ifa must then be asked to whom it should be offered, again in terms of a choice between five specific alternatives. The same objects are used to represent these, and are laid out before the diviner as shown in Table 9, with the numbers again indicating the order in which the divining chain is cast.

Because of the similarity in their names, though they are clearly distinguished by tone, the bone (*egungun*, *egun*) symbolizes the masked dancers (*Egungun*, *Egun*, *Egigun*), who themselves represent the dead during certain funerals. The snail shell represents *Oriṣa*, because snails are sacred to *Oriṣala* and to other "White Deities" (*oriṣa funfun*). Cowries represent Ifa "because it takes so much money to become a diviner," or, as clients might add, because diviners earn so much money. The small stone represents the forehead (*iwaju*) or head (*ori*) because "when a person grows old and his head turns grey, his skull turns into stone." The china potsherd represents the occiput (*ipakḡ*, *ḡrun*) because the back of the head resembles a china bowl.

If *Egungun* is indicated, the adimu is offered to an *Egungun* in the client's compound, if there is one; if not it can be taken to any *Egungun* in town. If an *Oriṣa* is indicated, two objects are used to determine which one through specific alternatives, asking in turn whether or not it is *Oriṣa Agbala* (*Oriṣa* of the Backyard), *Oriṣala* (God of Whiteness), *Oriṣa Oko* (*Oriṣa* of the Farm), *Oriṣa Aḡaṣe* or *Oluorogbo*, *Oriṣa Ikire*, and any of the many other "white deities" (see Chapter XI), and the adimu is taken to its shrine. Adimu is not given to *Ogun*, *Ṣango*, *Ṣoḡḡona*, *Qramḡ*, *Qṣun*, or many other deities who receive offerings only when the verses direct they be given sacrifices (*ḡbḡ*). If Ifa is indicated, the adimu is offered to the palm nuts of the diviner who is consulted. If the forehead or the back of the head are indicated, it is understood that it is the head of the client

TABLE 8

PROBABILITIES FOR TWO ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED IN SEQUENCE

<u>Order Mentioned</u>	<u>Probability</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Cast 1	1 in 2	50.0
Cast 2	1 in 4	25.0
Cast 3	1 in 8	12.5
Cast 4	1 in 16	6.25
Cast 5	1 in 32	3.125
Cast 6	1 in 64	1.563
Cast 7	1 in 128	0.781
Cast 8	1 in 256	0.391
Cast 9	1 in 512	0.195
Cast 10	1 in 1024	0.098

TABLE 9

THE CHOICE OF ADIMU

5	4	3	2	1
china	stone	cowries	snail	bone
occiput	forehead	Ifa	Oriṣa	Egungun

himself to which the adimu should be given; both parts of the head are associated with the individual's multiple souls, and with the destiny assigned him at birth (see Chapter XI).

Again there is some variation in symbolism. In place of the snail shell one Ife diviner used the tip of an elephant tusk, because the symbol (irin oriṣa) of Oriṣala and other White Deities is a piece of bone or ivory. In Igana, the china potsherd represents Oriṣa, because its color, white, is sacred to Oriṣa; and the hoof of a she-goat represents Ifa because she-goat is Ifa's favorite sacrificial food. Only four alternatives are presented in Igana: Egungun, Oriṣa, Head, and Ifa, the other two symbols being the same (see n. 10, p. 114).

The next step is to determine the nature of the offering to be made as adimu. This is again done in terms of five alternatives, represented by any five objects without any symbolism. For Egungun the alternatives are (1) a calabash of cold water; (2) two dried fish and two dried rats; (3) food and drink, meaning lots of stew and yam loaves (4) dry meat, meaning wild game shot by a hunter; and (5) a live animal killed at home. For Oriṣa the

alternatives are the same except that in (2) two snails are added. For Ifa, in (1) kola is added, in (2) bundles or dried fish and dried rats are specified, and in (3) maize beer is added. For both the forehead and the back of the head, in (1) kola is added. If the fifth alternative is indicated, the client may determine which kind of a four-legged animal should be killed by using two alternatives. In this case a forearm of the animal may be sent to the diviner as a gift, but the diviner receives nothing as payment (eru) from adimu.

The general outline of the procedure in divination is as follows. (1) The first cast is made to determine the figure for which the verses are recited. (2) Two casts are made to determine whether the prognostication is for good or for evil. (3) Five casts are made to find out what kind of good or evil is indicated. (4) A succession of double casts may be made to find out in more detail about the evil. (5) Two casts are made to find whether a sacrifice (ẹbọ) is sufficient, or whether adimu is required in addition. (6) If adimu is indicated, five casts are made to learn to whom it should be offered. (7) If adimu is to be made to a "white deity," it is identified by a succession of double casts. (8) Five casts are made to determine what is required as adimu. (9) If a live animal is required, a succession of double casts may be made to find out what kind. (10) The verses of the figure of the initial cast are recited, and the appropriate verse is selected. (11) The correct sacrifice is determined by a succession of double casts. If at point 5 ẹbọ is indicated, steps 6 through 9 are omitted; and if the client wishes, steps 2 through 9 may be skipped; and if palm nuts are used, the process may be reduced to steps 1 and 10 only.

VI. THE SACRIFICES AND MEDICINES

The objective of Ifa divination is to determine the correct sacrifice necessary to secure a favorable resolution of the problem confronting the client, whether or not an adimu is required in addition. Sacrifices are necessary to ensure that predictions of good fortune will come true, as well as to avert the misfortunes which have been foretold. As is made clear in some of the verses (e.g. 101-1, 170-1, 170-3), the failure to sacrifice when blessings are prophesied may result not only in their forfeiture, but in evil consequences.

Except for the offerings known as adimu, all sacrifices (ẹbọ) are offered (ru, rubọ, ru-ẹbọ) to the shrine of Eshu unless otherwise specified in the verses. Eshu, the divine messenger and trickster, is symbolized by a rough chunk of laterite (yangi) set outside of every Ifẹ compound and just outside the room of every babalawo. Any liquid is poured over the laterite, bits of kola nuts are placed on top of it, and the rest of the sacrifice is placed at its base. In Mẹkọ and some other Yoruba towns a crude mud image is the symbol of Eshu; each Mẹkọ diviner keeps such a figure under an inverted pot (cf. Maupoil, 1943: 179). In making the sacrifice the client prays, "Eshu, here is my sacrifice. Please tell Ọlọrun (the Sky God) to accept my sacrifice and relieve my suffering."

A small part of each sacrifice is set aside for Eshu himself as a "bribe" to ensure that he will carry the rest to Ọlọrun, the Sky God, for whom most sacrifices are destined. Eshu does not carry the sacrifices to the other deities; sacrifices to them are made at their own shrines; but again something is set aside for Eshu, so that he will not cause the client trouble. Several verses (6-3, 14-2, 86-2, 244-2, 255-3) state that a sacrifice should be offered to Ifa, in which case it is made to the diviner's palm nuts unless the client has a set of them at home. Some specify that sacrifices should be offered to Şango (4-3), to Olurogbo or Orişa Alaşẹ (17-1), or to a deity that uses the parrot's red tail feathers (247-5). Some instruct the client to care for his own deity (111-1) or to renovate the shrine of a neglected deity in his family (2-2). Others prescribe sacrifices to the client's head (7-4, 247-4), to the head or the grave of his father (7-1, 54-8) or mother (3-1, 170-2), depending upon whether they are alive or dead, or giving a dead person a funeral (101-1, 181-1, 184-1). Some verses instruct that the sacrifice be taken to a crossroad or fork in the path (orita męta), one of Eshu's favorite haunts, and it may be taken there even if this is not specifically stated in the verse (183-4). Some verses state that all or part of the sacrifice should be taken into the forest (1-10), to the farm road (86-1), to a garden by the water-side (167-1), to the bank of a river (120-1), to a flowing river (225-1), to still water (225-2), to a town gate, to a market, or into the street. Sacrifices which have to be disposed of at a specified place, such as these, are known as irabọ.

When Christians and Muslims who consult the babalawo are reluctant to sacrifice to Eshu, whom they have been taught to regard as the Devil, or to the other Yoruba deities, they are told to give alms (sara) instead. In

this case they prepare a feast (sara) with the foods prescribed and invite relatives and passing strangers to partake of it. One verse (248-3) specifically instructs that a feast of this type be given in place of a sacrifice.

In addition to the sacrifices, some verses prescribe the preparation of magic or "medicines" (ogun) of a type known as ayajo. These often include the appropriate leaves of Ifa (ewe Ifa), which vary from verse to verse, some of the divining powder in which the appropriate Ifa figure has been marked on the tray, and an incantation. One Ife babalawo maintained that all incantations (ofe) came from the Ifa verses, although other medicine men (ologun) try to use them without knowing Ifa. The leaves and other materials are compounded and given to the client in a drink or in food (1-8, 2-1, 239-1), or for him to use in washing or rubbing his head or body (111-2, 225-1, 256-1). The medicine may be rubbed into small incisions (gberere) cut in his skin (1-6, 5-4, 6-4), or be used to mark the appropriate figure on the wall of his house (239-2, 256-6). The two latter figures, Qşş Meji and Ofun Meji, are commonly seen marked on the front of a house as protective medicines for its inhabitants. Sometimes the divining powder is simply sprinkled in a line from the client's forehead to his occiput (see Plate 20).

There may be protective and retaliatory medicines ("good and bad magic") for the same verse. For verse 1-2, for example, the proper leaves of Ifa are gathered to make the medicine and Ogbe Meji is marked in the divining powder while pronouncing a good incantation to "open the road" for the client wherever he goes; other leaves are prepared and Ogbe Meji is marked while reciting a bad incantation to keep an enemy from completing anything he undertakes. Other medicines are compounded to protect against witches, avoid death, keep out thieves, kill one's enemies, cause them to go mad, or simply make continual trouble at home for them.

Not all verses have medicines associated with them; but in addition to those which do, the babalawo learn "pure ayajo," which have no verses but which are considered as part of Ifa because they are associated with the Ifa figures. Only one of these is recorded here (256-6); it consists simply of the instructions and the incantations to give it power, and it has none of the usual characteristics of the verses.

The figures of Ogbe Meji, Qyşku Meji, Iwori Meji, and Edi Meji set at right angles to each other as reported by Frobenius (1913: I, 255), Maupoil (1943: 187-188), and Mercier (1954: 255) was recognized by informants as part of Ifa, but only as medicine and without any orientation to the cardinal points of the compass. A Męko diviner identified it as medicine for good luck and success in trading, with color associations running white, black, blue, and red. An Ife diviner denied associations of the figures with either colors or deities, and identified it as "mediator" (oniata), a very strong medicine to spoil the work of one's enemy. One sits at a crossroad facing the enemy's house, draws the four figures with Qyşku Meji toward it and Ogbe Meji toward one's self, and recites the incantations.

The preparation of any of these medicines is spoken of as "making Ifa" for or against someone. The babalawo are herbalists as well as diviners, although divining is their primary function. Clients may come to them for medicine without having a divination, and they pay extra for its preparation. The diviners are very reluctant to reveal these medicines,

not only because some of them are antisocial, but also because they are purchased like other medicines (*ogun*) and some cost dearly. They are the last things that the diviners learn, and they are not compounded or recited in the client's presence. The diviner recites only to the point where the medicine begins, and then stops.

Two verses (1-8, 239-1) prescribe the preparation of medicine without mentioning a sacrifice; some (1-1, 1-2, 18-5, 18-11, 246-1, 249-5) mention neither sacrifices nor medicine; and others (1-4, 1-5, 14-2, 183-2, 183-3) indicate that a sacrifice is required without specifying its content. It is possible that these verses are incomplete, but even if the sacrifice is not recited as a part of the verse, it was memorized along with the verse when the diviner was learning Ifa (see n. 8, verse 1-1). Of the 186 Ifa verses recorded here, only one (248-3) does not require a sacrifice; it calls for a feast (*sara*) instead. No sacrifice is required for text 256-6 either, but this is medicine and not a verse.

The diviners say that there are a few verses which state that the result is inevitable and cannot be altered by sacrifices, although none was actually recorded. These verses state specifically that no sacrifice is necessary for some good fortune to come to the client, or that someone is certain to die regardless of what he may do. This is consistent with the Yoruba belief in a destiny that controls their lives, and in a predetermined life span that can be shortened by evil forces, but never lengthened (see Chapter XI). Delano (1937: 180-181) describes a prediction for the daughter of a friend: "'The illness will prove fatal.' 'Any sacrifices?' we asked him together. . . . 'There is no sacrifice. She will die,' he announced, but he advised the father to get certain medicines which might have a healing effect." It is not clear whether these medicines were a friendly afterthought or whether they were prescribed in the verse. With these few exceptions, every divination should end with the offering of a sacrifice, and it does not only if the client fails to carry out his implicit obligations.

It is considered advisable to make the sacrifice as soon as possible, and a number of verses (e.g. 14-1, 18-2) warn of the dangers of postponing them. As several of the verses (e.g. 35-7, 54-6) make clear, if a client cannot afford to make the prescribed sacrifice, it is wise for him to give at least part of it in order to "appease Eshu" (*pa Eṣu*). If a sacrifice is expensive and requires only materials that are readily available, it is often made immediately. The client may send someone home to get them or give him the money to buy them in the market, waiting with the diviner until they arrive; or he may go for them himself. If the client has difficulty in raising the money or in finding some of the materials, the sacrifice may be made as much as twenty or more days later.

When postponed, a sacrifice is usually offered on the "day of secret" (*oṣo awo*) which is sacred to Ifa, more commonly known in Ife as *Ojaife*, or the day of the market of Ife (*oṣa Ife*). On these days the *babalawo* divine for each other, and in *Mekò* they prefer to cast kola nuts, because they say that the palm nuts and the divining chain call for more expensive sacrifices.

If the sacrifice costs more than the client can afford, if he does not trust the diviner, or if he does not believe the prediction, he simply leaves

and does not return. Even if the verse has specified that the sacrifice **must** be made at once, the diviner has no way of knowing his decision, and in any event he makes no attempt to force him to make it or to induce him to do so by reducing the sacrifice. If the client and diviner meet in the street, the diviner does not refer to the incident, and the client is free to consult him again at any time about other problems. The diviner has no further obligations in this instance, and the client assumes the full responsibility for the consequences of failing to follow Ifa's instructions.

If the client chooses not to make the sacrifice prescribed, the only charge is the small amount of money that he lays down after whispering his problem to it. This is usually only a penny or two or three pennies, but a wealthy man may wish to give as much as five shillings. One or more kola nuts or cowry shells are sufficient also, and in some verses (1-3, 1-7, 33-1, 181-1) five cowries are specified as the amount given by the mythological character. The amount given at this time is left entirely to the client, and the only factors determining it are what he happens to have at hand, how much he can afford, and how much his social position requires him to give. The diviner keeps these cowries and small coins, but they are an insignificant part of his income, which is derived mainly from the sacrifices themselves.

In most verses the things to be sacrificed are specified either in describing a sacrifice made by a mythological character under similar circumstances in the distant past, or in a statement directed to the client. Where different sacrifices for the mythological character and for the client are mentioned, as in verse 123-1, the latter takes precedence. Some verses (e.g. 137-1, 225-3, 247-2, 249-3) mention several different sacrifices, with the choice between them depending upon the client's particular problem.

Some verses (33-5, 33-6) state that the prescribed sacrifice must be complete (pipe), and others (6-3, 6-4, 183-4) say that it must not be reduced (aidin). According to one diviner the prescribed sacrifices must be made without modification when palm nuts are employed, and their cost is higher, suggesting that when the divining chain is used, the modifications suggested are generally less expensive.

In other cases Ifa is usually asked whether the sacrifice is acceptable or whether it should be modified. This is done in terms of two specific alternatives, stating, "The sacrifice is correct" (as specified) and then, "The sacrifice is not correct." When Ifa indicates that it should be modified, it may be either increased or decreased. Again by means of two specific alternatives, the diviner suggests a sacrifice similar to that mentioned in the verse, but altering the quantities or the items involved, and asking whether or not it is acceptable. A series of such variations is proposed until one is accepted by Ifa. If a sacrifice includes two kola nuts, their number may be increased to four, six, eight, or more, or reduced to one or none.

In one instance, when the verse (131-1) called for the sacrifice of a she-goat, three cocks, one hen, and one razor, Ifa first indicated that the sacrifice should be modified, then refused the suggested addition of sixteen

shillings six pence, and finally accepted a reduction of the number of cocks to one and the amount of money to eleven shillings while retaining the other items.

Most sacrifices include money (owo), although many do not. The amounts of money are stated in the verses in terms of cowry shells (owo), which served as money before the introduction of currency. In Part Two the number of cowries required is given in the Yoruba texts and in their interlinear translations; their value is given on the opposite pages in terms of pounds, shillings, pence, and oninis. The onini was a Nigerian coin worth a tenth of a penny, which was in common use in 1937-38, when the shilling was worth \$0.24. Following World War II, it largely went out of circulation as a result of inflation; and the value of the shilling fell to \$0.14 as the result of the devaluation of the pound sterling. A second devaluation of the pound in 1967 reduced the value of the shilling to \$0.12.

Inflation has reduced the value of cowries since the early days of the slave trade. In 1515 the King of Portugal issued a license to import cowries from India to Sao Tome, and by 1522 they were being imported to Nigeria from the Malabar Coast by Portuguese traders (Ryder, 1959: 301). During the seventeenth century the Dutch were importing cowries to Nigeria from the East Indies (Dapper, 1668: 500). During the nineteenth century the value of 2000 cowries was reported as 4 s. 6 d. by Tucker (1853: 26), and as having fallen to between 2 s. and 1 s. 5 d. by Burton (1863: I, 318-319) when still cheaper cowries were being imported from Zanzibar. The Zanzibar cowries (owo ẹyọ) drove the smaller, whiter Indian and East Indian cowries out of circulation as money, although they are still used for ritual purposes. When cowries were replaced by currency, the value of 2000 cowries was stabilized at 6 d., at least for the purposes of divination, or 80,000 cowries to the pound. Cowries were counted in strings of 40, in bunches of 200 (5 strings), in heads of 2000 (10 bunches), and in bags of 20,000 (10 heads) weighing sixty pounds. In the range of money included in the sacrifices the basic unit of counting is 2000 cowries (ẹgbewa, ẹgba).

When money is included in the sacrifice, it is understood that, unless otherwise specified in the verse, it is to be kept by the diviner as payment (eru). Some verses specify that he is to receive no payment at all; others say that he may not keep the money, but must give it away. Some verses (e.g. 35-7, 241-2, 248-1, 248-2) require the same amount from two or more individuals, increasing the potential income of the diviner but not the cost to the individual client. The amounts of money most commonly mentioned in the verses recorded are 7 d. 2 o. (ten instances), 1 s. 3 d. (twelve instances), 1 s. 7 d. 8 o. (fourteen instances), 3 s. (twenty-three instances), and 11 s. (twelve instances). The range is from less than a penny (7.8 oninis) to thirty shillings, with two shillings as the median.

These amounts were far more costly in earlier times before inflation reduced the value of cowries, but they still were not inexpensive in 1937-38. According to Forde and Scott (1946: 91) the daily wage of laborers on Ife cocoa farms was only one shilling plus 4½ d. for food in 1938, following a very prosperous cocoa season; and in 1937 cocoa laborers were being paid as little as six pence a day by Ife informants.

If Ogbe Meji or Qkanran Iwori is the first figure cast for a client, he must pay an additional six pence. Both additional fees are called 2000 cowries (egba, egbewa), and the latter is known as Qkanran, which Egan takes (Qkanran Egan gba). Egan was interpreted as referring to Eshu, but the money is kept by the diviner as part of his payment.

Instead of money, or in addition to it, the sacrifices call for domestic fowls or animals, wild animals or wild meat, dried rats or dried fish, snails, eggs, yams, palm oil, kola nuts, peanuts, beans, leaves, cooked food, maize beer, cloths or clothing, rope, bags, pots, plates, calabashes, digging sticks, hoes, axes, cutlasses, knives, razors, needles, rings, beads, chalk, whips, cudgels, mortars, drums, or other items. The total value of these may exceed that of the money called for in the sacrifice.

Unless otherwise specified in the verse, the entire sacrifice, except for money, in theory belongs to Qlqrun and should be deposited at Eshu's shrine. However, the diviner may ask Ifa through specific alternatives whether he may keep some of the sacrificial materials for himself as part of his payment; and he may suggest giving Eshu only a feather of a chicken or a hair of a goat instead of killing them, or offering only a thread in place of a cloth. In each instance the probabilities are fifty-fifty.

When an animal is sacrificed, its head is given to Eshu, but Ifa must be asked about the disposition of the body. The first question is whether it is to be eaten. If the answer is affirmative, the meat is cooked and eaten by the diviner and his family and visitors, the client receiving nothing. If the answer is negative, Ifa is asked whether it is to be given to another diviner and whether the diviner is an Eḷegan or an Olodu (see Chapter IX); finally, the names of individual diviners are suggested in sequence. If it is not to be given to a diviner, Ifa is asked if the meat is to be roasted and divided among the inhabitants of the diviner's compound. If the answer is negative, Ifa is asked whether it is to be cut up and put in a potsherd with palm oil and left as an offering (ipeṣe) for witches (ajẹ) at a fork in the road, a river, and other specific places.

Because so many questions are left up to Ifa, and because the disposition of the sacrificial materials is often not specified in the verse, there is no easy formula for relating the sacrifices mentioned in the verses to the income of a diviner. The most that can be said is that the amount of money is a rough approximation of the minimum payment he receives, and that the total value of the sacrifice is a rough indication of his maximum payment and of the cost to the client. As the result of inflation, the relative value of these other items has of course increased, but because they may have to be given to Eshu while the money is kept by the diviner unless otherwise specified in the verse, the diviner's net income from individual sacrifices must have declined steadily since European contact. Certainly the worth of the money included in the sacrifice has decreased relative to the value of these other materials.

The favorite sacrificial animal of Ifa is a she-goat, and one verse (204-1) recounts how she-goats were substituted for human beings as sacrifices to Ifa. A different version of how this happened is given in an Ifa myth as told by an Igana diviner.

The King of Benin consulted the diviners and was told to make a sacrifice lest his daughter, Poye (or Poroye) lose her way. He refused to sacrifice, saying that she could never lose her way; but she got lost and wandered about in the forest. At that time Qrunmila's mother had a slave named Şiere. The slave was a harnessed antelope and its work was to cut the facial marks of Qrunmila's children. The slave became tired of seeing them every day, and ran away. Ifa ran after it and chased it for sixteen days. The antelope ran into the forest, and Qrunmila drove it out. It ran into the grasslands, and he chased it out. It ran into the dense forest of Alabę and fell into a pitfall; Qrunmila followed and fell in also. Neither could get out. After seven days in the pit, Qrunmila heard the voice of someone passing by and called out, "Forest is the forest of fire; Grassland is the Grassland of sun;¹ Dense forest which remains is that of Alabę. It is seven days that Erigialę has been in the pit, that Ifa has been rolling in the pit."

It was Poye who was passing, lost in the forest. She looked into the pit and saw Ifa. Ifa begged her to pull him out of the pit, and she agreed. As she pulled him out, he was pulling up the thigh of the antelope. When Qrunmila was out, he announced that the antelope thigh was his walking stick, "My life is leopard, thigh of antelope." Ifa thanked Poye and asked what he could do to repay her for her help. She said that she had no child, so Ifa had intercourse with her. He told her that since his other wives must not know that he had taken another wife, she could not live with him. Poye became pregnant and gave birth to a daughter. They asked her who the child's father was, and she said it was Ifa. She named the child Qlęmę.

In those days Ifa used to sacrifice human beings. He told his people to bring him a slave so that he could sacrifice to his ancestral guardian soul, and they brought him Qlęmę. He said he would make his sacrifice in three days; meanwhile, he ordered Qlęmę to pound cornstarch in the mortar. While she was pounding, she was saying, "I am the daughter of Poye. If I had a father they would not have taken me as a sacrifice." Ifa's three wives (Osu, Odu, and Osun) heard what she was saying and told Ifa that the girl who was pounding cornstarch was strange and that he should listen to what she was saying. When Ifa had heard her, he asked, "How did it happen that you are the daughter of Poye?" The girl replied that her mother had told her, "I helped your father to get out of a pit; afterward he had relations with me and I had you as my daughter." Ifa said, "Sorry, oh! This is my daughter."

His three wives asked, "Oh? When was this that you took another wife and had this daughter?" Ifa replied, "It was not like that. I was in trouble and this woman pulled me out of a pit. She begged me for a child, so I repaid her for what she had done for me." Then he sent them to buy a goat to sacrifice, and he set Qlęmę free.² He said that from that time on, they should not bring any human sacrifices to him; that they should sacrifice only she-goats. Since that time, she-goats have been sacrificed to Ifa.

1. Cf. verse 1-4.

2. Cf. the variant of this tale recorded by Frobenius (1926: 205-207).

The sacrifices are rituals in themselves, varying from one instance to another, which the diviners must learn to perform correctly during their period of instruction. In the following example the verse selected (183-4) for a client contemplating a trip named four pigeons and 16,000 cowries (four shillings) as the sacrifice, to which two lumps of cornstarch and a small quantity of palm oil were added through specific alternatives. Two dried rats and two dried fish had been selected as the *adimu* to be given to *Ifa*. The client gave the diviner four shillings, which constituted his payment, and three shillings six pence for his apprentice to purchase the other materials in the market. The four pigeons cost three shillings, though smaller ones could have been purchased for seven pence each, while six pence covered the fish, rats, porridge, and palm oil.

The figure *Otura Irosun*, which had been cast with the divining chain, was marked in the divining powder on the tray, and four piles of leaves provided by the diviner were laid out in front of the divining bag. The two lumps of cornstarch porridge were broken in half and one half was placed on top of each pile of leaves. The four shillings provided by the client were then placed on the tray, with eight cowries that were to represent them,³ and were stirred intermittently in the divining powder while the diviner repeated all the verses of *Otura Irosun* that he had previously recited, holding the four pigeons in his left hand. Then the cowries were taken out and touched to the client's head, and the four shillings were set aside for the diviner.

Two pigeons were given to each of two assistants, who stood on either side of the diviner. After putting palm oil on the blades of the locally made knife and the imported razor which they used, each cut off the head of one pigeon, cut open its stomach, spilling out the feed, pulled out the heart, and threw it on the ground near the head. It was said that the hearts and heads would be thrown away. The two pigeons were laid on top of the two center piles of leaves and the cornstarch porridge was stuffed inside them.

The two remaining pigeons were returned to the diviner, who held them while casting the divining chain again to ask *Ifa* if he could keep them as part of his payment. *Ifa* refused, and they were killed as the others had been, stuffed with cornstarch porridge, and placed on the outer piles of leaves. Two cowries were then placed on the porridge in each pigeon, divining powder was sprinkled on them, and palm oil was poured on top of each (cf. verse 1-9). The pigeons were then touched to the client's head, two at a time, and placed in a calabash, and some of the divining powder was dropped in a narrow line from the back to the front of the client's head (cf. n. 6, verse 1-5 and Plate 20). That night, after dark, the diviner would have the sacrifice taken to a crossroad, where it would be left for *Eshu*. It would be avoided by people who saw it being carried there, and the first person to see it at the crossroads the next morning would receive the misfortune that had been foretold for the client.

3. As cowries are counted in units of two thousands, four shillings is the equivalent of eight units; each unit, worth six pence, was represented by one cowry.

VII. THE PREDICTIONS

Three principal steps are involved in Ifa divination. The first is the selection of the correct figure, associated with which is the message that Ifa wishes to have conveyed to the client. This is achieved by the manipulation of the palm nuts or by a cast of the divining chain, and can be interpreted in terms of the laws of probability, with each of the figures having one chance in 256 of appearing. As viewed by the Yoruba diviners and clients, the choice is not left to chance; rather it is controlled by Ifa himself. From our point of view, Ifa, rather than Eshu, might be described as the deity of or a personification of chance. The initial figure cast determines the group of verses that will be recited.

Secondly, the correct verse bearing on the client's problem must be selected from those which the diviner has memorized for this figure. The verses deal with a variety of problems that may confront the client, including illness and death, poverty and debt, getting married and having children, taking new land and building a new house, choosing a chief and acquiring a title, undertaking a business venture, taking a trip, and recovering lost property. The verses prescribe the sacrifice to be offered, although this may be somewhat modified, and they predict the outcome of the client's problem. The verses are the key to the entire system of divination; and the selection of the correct verse, containing the message that Ifa wishes to have conveyed to the client, is the crucial point in the procedure.

Finally, it is necessary for the client to offer the sacrifice in the prescribed manner in order to assure the blessings or to avert the evil consequences that have been foretold.

It is not necessary for the diviner to know his client's problem in order for the correct verse to be selected; in fact, clients take pains to conceal their problems from the diviner for the same reasons that they conceal or reverse the symbols of good and bad in working with specific alternatives. Taking the penny or so which they give to the diviner, they cup it in their hands so as to cover their lips and whisper as voicelessly as they can their question to it, and then put it down. Before the diviner makes his initial cast, he dangles the divining chain so that its ends touch the coin (see Plate 16) and asks, "Ifa, have you heard what has been said to the penny?"

Informants in Ife agreed that the diviner's experience gives him a special understanding of human problems, as Herskovits (1938: II, 216) says, but when told that in Dahomey the position of diviner "is one in which complete frankness between him and his questioners is demanded, so that he is able to get at the facts in a given case to an extent which an ordinary adviser would find impossible," they objected. They said it was wrong for the diviner even to know the nature of the problem, because he would be tempted to lie to satisfy the client, either faking a verse bearing on the problem or reciting one which belongs to a different figure from the one cast, and the client would not receive the correct message from Ifa. Both diviners and clients in Ife maintained that a good diviner does not draw

upon his knowledge of the client's personal affairs, though they admitted that there are some unscrupulous diviners who do so. Araba of Igana said that after the correct verse has been selected, the diviner may draw on his knowledge of the client's affairs in advising him; but the client should not tell a diviner why he has come for a consultation, as the diviner will tell him this when he recites the verses.

Actually it is the client himself who selects the verse. The diviner simply recites the verses that he has memorized for the initial figure, while the client listens for one that bears on the problem with which he is concerned. He may either stop the diviner as soon as it has been recited or wait until the end of the verses before deciding which is most appropriate. As each figure has verses bearing on a variety of problems, there is nothing mysterious, as Delano and others have suggested, about the way that the diviner arrives at an answer to the client's problem. The client finds his own "answer," i.e. the prediction and the required sacrifice, when he chooses the verse most directly related to his own problem.

This does not mean that the diviners are charlatans or that the entire system is a fraud, as both European observers and educated Africans have sometimes concluded. What it does mean, however, is that Ifa divination is essentially a projective technique, comparable to the Rorschach Test, in that "its interpretation depends on the client's motivations and other psychological factors," as René Ribeiro (1956: 18-19) says. This parallel was recognized by a priestess of a Yoruba-derived AfroBrazilian cult in Recife, who regarded the Rorschach Test as a divinatory technique and asked Ribeiro (1956: 5-6) to "look Ifa" for her. "Finally it should be pointed out that since Ifa verses are frequently ambiguous entailing the re-structuring of loosely structured stimuli for interpretation, its rapprochement with the best projective methods becomes more than legitimate" (Ribeiro, 1956: 20). The client, depending on his own problem, selects the verse that provides his "answer," and he also interprets the problems of the mythological characters in the verses in terms of his own needs and anxieties. In this connection it is to be recalled that according to three Yoruba authors, J. Johnson, S. Johnson, and Lucas, it is the diviner rather than the client who selects the appropriate verse.

For those who expect that divination will tell them which candidate will win the next election or which horse will win in the third race, a word of explanation is required. It is possible to ask such questions through the technique of specific alternatives, but to do so would be foolish and would neither prove nor disprove the effectiveness of the system of divination, because their frame of reference is quite different from the questions that Ifa answers. These are, in essence, "Which of the candidates proposed should be selected for the best interest of all concerned?" or "Which of the suggested house sites will be best for the welfare of the people who will live there?" and "What sacrifices are necessary to ensure the most favorable outcome?" Answers to these questions are not easily evaluated, either immediately or ultimately, especially since they are given in terms of the destinies that are believed to control the lives of the individuals concerned.

As with other systems of divination, and even with Western medicine and science, the client is rarely able to decide whether the prediction is

accurate. The results are usually known for some time, and even when the sacrifice is followed by misfortune, there is always the reasonable doubt that the consequences might have been worse if the sacrifice had not been made. As one diviner explained, if bad is foretold through specific alternatives and then confirmed in the verse, the sacrifice is made so that the consequences will not be as severe as predicted; and if good is similarly confirmed, it is made so that the blessing will be greater and come more quickly. Even Western science has been plagued by questions of this type, and one may debate whether to follow the advice of one doctor or another, or none at all. Like these other systems, Ifa divination depends upon an underlying foundation of belief frequently reinforced by its successes, while its failures are rationalized or forgotten. A number of sanctions reinforce this belief (Bascom, 1941: 43-54) and shift the blame for failures from the system of divination to other causes, such as the ignorance or dishonesty of the diviner. As in the case of a doctor whose patient dies, a number of explanations are possible, and while the doctor's skill or knowledge may be questioned, the system of medicine itself is not. And as with prayers and rituals, there can be other benefits aside from all questions of actual efficacy.

For clients the immediate advantage of consulting Ifa is the resolution of doubts about the course of action to be taken in any case where he cannot decide for himself between the known alternatives. Except to test the ability of an individual diviner, clients do not ask Ifa a question the answer to which is obvious, or a problem they can solve using their own reason and knowledge of the circumstances. Thus in choosing a house site, only those which seem suitable for the purpose would be proposed in terms of specific alternatives. In effect, the specific choices presented to Ifa are those for which a decision can be reached only with difficulty, because the alternatives are relatively equal in merit and, accordingly, the consequences will be similar regardless of the choice. In this Ifa probably resembles all other systems of divination, or the advice sought of a doctor, a priest, or any authority regarded as having greater wisdom. As a proverb says, "One is not wiser than the person who casts Ifa for him [A ki igbon ju eni-ti o ma d(a)-Ifa fun-(e)ni lo], implying, among other things, that if the diviner did not know more than we do, we would not consult him. Even the tossing of a coin can end indecision and lead to positive action. But when decisions are left to divine guidance rather than chance, the individual has far greater assurance that he is following the correct course of action. He can proceed with greater confidence; and, accordingly, in some cases he probably has a greater chance of success.

In addition, as Park (1963: 196-197) has argued, this divine sanction legitimizes the client's decision on a course of action and shifts the responsibility for its consequences from the client to the gods. If the choice of a house site leads to a physical separation from the lineage and segmentation, this cannot be blamed on the client as an act of his free will, because the choice was made by Ifa.

The cogency of Park's argument is readily apparent when one considers the manner in which the choice between two or more candidates for

office can be "fixed" without the connivance of the diviner, as described in the following chapter. This can be done for personal gain or other ulterior motives by those responsible for the choice, but it also permits them to make certain that the candidate they consider best qualified is selected. In either case they are absolved of personal responsibility and shielded from offending the rejected candidates. Unless the ruse is suspected, the blame is placed on Ifa, on the candidate's own destiny, on Ql̄orun the Sky God, who assigned it, or on the candidate's own behavior, which may have offended his ancestral guardian soul or one of the deities.

An answer that will satisfy the client is built into the system of divination. The diviner cannot fail to arrive at the client's problem, unless he has not learned an appropriate verse. If he knows enough verses for the figure that is cast, he can touch upon the major problems that confront any client in Yoruba society, and many other societies as well. The Yoruba themselves take a similar view, maintaining that answers to all problems are to be found in Ifa, and blaming the ignorance of the diviner rather than the system when he fails to recite a verse applicable to their needs. When this happens, the answer is that the diviner does not know enough, and the obvious solution is to consult another diviner who knows more. A proverb refers satirically to the diviner who hesitates and looks up helplessly because he has not learned enough verses or cannot remember what comes next: "One who doesn't know Ifa is looking up; but there is no Ifa in the attic." [Ai-gb̄o-(I)fa li a nwo-(o)ke, Ifa kan ko si ni para.]

The interpretation of the client's problem depends on the number and the kind of verses which a diviner has memorized for the figure which is cast. In If̄e it is maintained that a diviner must know at least four verses for every figure, or a minimum of 1024 verses, before he can begin to practice professionally on his own. A respected diviner of middle age said that he knew only four verses for most figures, but that more experienced diviners like Agb̄onb̄on knew about eight. More verses are learned for the paired figures than for the combinations.

In Igana a novice is expected to know at least two verses for each figure before he can divine on his own. The Araba of Igana said he knew about four verses for all figures except Eji Ogbe, for which he knew eighty. In M̄k̄o a novitiate is tested by his seniors, but one verse for each figure is regarded as sufficient for him to pass. Two of the principal M̄k̄o diviners admitted that for one figure (Oturup̄on-tewere) they knew only one verse, and for another (Edi Ika) only two, though they knew more for the other figures.

The more verses that a diviner knows for each figure, the more likely he is to be able to recite one that touches on the client's problem. A diviner does not stop studying once his apprenticeship is completed and he has begun to practice on his own. He continues to learn new verses and medicines from his instructor and from other diviners who are willing to teach him, usually for a fee. In effect the period of studying never ends, and a diviner keeps learning until he dies.

It must be stressed, however, that the diviner earns his reputation not by the number of verses he can recite, but by his success in securing

favorable solutions to his client's problems. His reputation and his business depend on satisfied clients, who recommend him to their friends and relatives. An Ife diviner explained that one who can recite a hundred verses for a figure may not be as successful as one who knows only four, because "some verses are better than others." This evaluation refers to the fact that while certain verses may refer specifically to a single problem, some of them have several specific interpretations, and others are very general, foretelling only unspecified good or bad fortune.

To take a specific example, seven verses were recorded from one Ife diviner for the figure Iwori Meji. Of these, the first one recited, though referring to a journey, is the most general in its prediction, stating only that "Ifa says he will not allow us to see evil in the matter for which we have divined" (35-1). The second applies to several different problems, with any of which the client may be concerned, implying good fortune not only in it but in the others as well. "Ifa says he sees the blessing of visitors, the blessing of money, the blessing of children, and the blessing of a title" for the client (35-2). The third specifies two separate problems, referring to something that has been lost and to someone who is about to become a chief (35-3). The fourth is applicable only to someone who is contemplating a journey (35-4), and the fifth to someone who is having trouble with his relatives, who do not allow him to have a home, a farm, or peace (35-5). The sixth refers to three children of the same mother, of whom the youngest is ill or is causing trouble because he is argumentative (35-6); and the last refers to a group of six relatives, one of whom is ill or all but one of whom has died (35-7).

Some systems of divination appear to depend upon vague generalities that are left up to the client to interpret specifically in terms of his own situation. Like the ink blots of the Rorschach test, they are relatively unstructured, rather than structured, like T.A.T. cards. Without verses of the former type, which predict only evil or good fortune in vague terms, even the best babalawo would frequently be unable to answer their client's questions. Understandably, these verses are highly prized by the diviners. The first verse (35-1) cited above is an acceptable answer on ritual occasions such as an annual festival, when the question is whether things will go well during the coming year; and it could be accepted by a client who felt his case was not correctly stated in any of the other six verses.

However, some clients would expect the diviner to be able to mention his problem more specifically, and would be satisfied with this verse only if they were contemplating a journey. Even more highly regarded, for this reason, are the verses that mention several specific problems (e.g. 35-2), all of which may be derived from the precedent case and explanatory tale, as in verse 167-1. Ifa divination depends more upon multiple alternatives, stated in the several verses recited for a figure as well as within single verses, than on unstructured generalities. It is more of a shotgun than a blanket technique, but the blanket covers up when the shotgun misses.

The statements of the client's problems in the verses and the predictions about their outcome reveal not only the many reasons which cause a

person to consult the diviners, but also a great deal about the goals and values underlying Yoruba behavior. In one sense they reflect universal problems faced by human beings the world over and values that are shared by many different systems of belief; in another, they mirror the way in which these common problems are viewed and these common values expressed in terms of Yoruba beliefs.

It should not be surprising that the greatest number of verses are concerned with death, either directly or by implication. These amount to thirty-six verses¹ or almost 20 per cent of the total recorded; but others are concerned with long life (1-1, 1-5, 2-3, 17-3, 183-1, 225-3) and abiku or children who wish to die (1-4, 19-3, 33-1). Illness is also a major concern, mentioned in 14 verses;² others deal with avoiding or overcoming bad medicine (19-1, 167-1, 243-4, 246-1, 247-2), witches (3-3, 34-1, 224-2, 239-2), and evil spirits (3-2, 6-2, 239-1, 244-2, 247-2). One verse predicts the death of anyone who invokes evil on the client's head (248-4); others warn against being confined to one spot (183-2), having a weak voice (181-3), and giving birth to a dumb mute (225-4). Death, illness, and physical disabilities are universal problems, but they were thought by the Yoruba to result from what we would consider to be supernatural causes, rather than germs, viruses, or genes.

The number of verses that express the desire for children reflect a widespread value, but one that is far stronger among the Yoruba and in other African societies with lineage systems than, for example, in the United States. The Yoruba belief in reincarnation gives added importance to the perpetuation of the lineage. In promising children, one verse adds, "Ifa says that the name of this person will not die out" (52-4); and, in all, twenty-eight verses promise children if the sacrifice is made.³ Others are concerned with abiku, as noted above, with keeping the pregnancy from being spoiled (6-4, 19-2, 183-2, 225-4, by witches in the first and last case), and with impotence (9-1, 20-2, 34-1). To have children a man must have a wife, and the more wives he has, the more children he can hope to have. Wives are promised in twenty-four verses,⁴ and two warn against the loss of a wife through death (7-5) and desertion (54-5). Three verses instruct

1. 1-4, 3-3, 7-2, 7-5, 17-2, 18-4, 18-7, 18-9, 18-10, 19-1, 19-3, 33-1, 33-6, 34-2, 35-6, 35-7, 54-7, 86-1, 101-1, 111-1, 123-1, 153-1, 167-1, 170-2, 175-2, 181-1, 181-3, 225-2, 239-1, 239-2, 241-2, 241-3, 243-3, 245-4, 248-1, 256-3. Underlining indicates that the problem is implied rather than stated specifically.

2. 6-6, 9-2, 18-2, 30-2, 33-6, 153-1, 154-1, 170-1, 175-1, 183-1, 241-1, 243-4, 247-2, 256-4.

3. 1-3, 1-9, 4-2, 4-3, 5-3, 6-5, 7-2, 9-1, 18-1, 18-6, 18-11, 19-3, 20-3, 33-4, 35-2, 52-4, 54-2, 54-3, 86-3, 103-1, 137-1, 181-1, 225-3, 246-2, 247-4, 248-2, 249-3, 255-2.

4. 1-9, 1-10, 1-11, 3-4, 7-4, 34-1, 35-2, 52-5, 54-3, 54-5, 101-1, 103-2, 123-1, 131-1, 137-1, 153-1, 175-1, 245-2, 246-2, 247-1, 247-3, 248-3, 249-3, 249-6.

women to become "wives of Ifa" (3-4, 7-2, 17-2), and one (4-3) predicts the birth of a daughter who will marry a diviner. None of the other verses recorded promise husbands, which is not surprising in a polygynous society where all women marry.

To get married, a man needs money to give as bridewealth to his wife's family, and it is also important in his social advancement. Eleven of the verses promise money;⁵ and others promise wealth (3-1, 6-1, 18-3, 18-5, 246-3) or property (1-10, 14-3, 247-3). Several speak of the loss of the money given as bridewealth (7-5, 123-1) or of avoiding debts incurred to pay bridewealth (33-1, 33-2). Some verses promise profits (7-3, 256-2), the repayment of losses (249-2), or that something lost will be found (35-3); or they warn against losses (6-2, 54-4) or a spoiled business deal (241-4).

Money also enables a man to compete for a title or to increase his social status if he is not eligible for one. One verse says that the client will not take a title but will be more important than a chief (245-3); another says that even if he is not made a chief, he will have more honor than those who are chiefs (225-3). Title-taking is mentioned in ten verses;⁶ others simply speak of attaining an important position (2-3, 54-7, 170-3, 222-1, 255-1, 256-1) or becoming important (2-1, 2-2). The loss of a title and the loss of a position are mentioned in two verses (246-4, 255-1). Three verses say that a man will build or own his own house (137-1, 243-1, 256-2), which is a promise of status as lineage head (Bale) rather than of wealth, since houses were lineage, not personal, property. The same promise is implied in three verses which say that the client will take new land for a settlement (33-5, 52-2, 167-1), since it also belonged to the lineage. An important measure of a man's social status is the number of those who follow him when he goes about town (Bascom, 1951: 496-497); and his influence depends on the number of followers and relatives he can count upon for support. Followers are mentioned or implied in nine verses, almost as often as titles.⁷ Other verses promise honor, glory, or fame (1-8, 52-1, 52-3, 54-7, 111-2, 131-1, 243-4, 250-2), making a name (1-6), not being forgotten (1-2), avoiding disgrace or shame (5-2, 168-1, 241-1, 250-3), and avoiding or ending ridicule or insults (20-1, 246-2, 255-3, 256-2).

The sequence of the steps to a successful male career are clearly spelled out in several verses: money, wives, children, and title (35-2); money, wives, children, house, and title (137-1); money, wives, children, title, and long life (225-3). These steps also correspond to the ranking of the five kinds of good in the world, but in it/long life ranks first (see Chapter V).

Other verses are more varied in their predictions. The client should become a diviner or an Ifa worshiper (6-3, 86-2); he will be able to take a rest (1-8, 18-3); he will receive visitors (18-5, 35-2) or make a new friend (1-9). He will avoid or overcome his enemies (35-5, 137-2, 247-2),

5. 1-9, 5-1, 5-4, 9-3, 35-2, 52-3, 137-1, 225-3, 245-3, 249-3, 255-3.

6. 14-3, 17-4, 18-1, 18-3, 35-2, 54-2, 137-1, 181-1, 225-3, 246-2.

7. 7-4, 18-11, 18-12, 131-1, 225-3, 243-1, 249-1, 255-3, 256-2.

an evil wisher (4-1), a trouble-maker (166-1), a tale-bearer (225-2), or an enemy (35-3, 52-2, 54-1, 54-5, 255-1, 256-1). A hunter may kill someone accidentally (167-1), or the client may be taken as a thief (3-4, 14-1, 246-4). He is warned against having to take an oath or trial by ordeal (166-1), being lost on a trip (183-1), or being injured in a storm (33-1, 33-2). His secrets may be revealed (153-1, 168-1), or his promises may become empty (250-1). The client's children may become enemies (5-3), or he may have no peace with his wife (245-2). Something is taking everything away from him (247-5), or he may be left with no one to take care of him (7-1). Several verses warn that the client may not be able to enjoy the fruits of his own labor (120-1, 183-2, 243-2) or receive credit for his own accomplishments (183-2), or that others may destroy what he has achieved (52-2).

Many verses are less specific. The clients will achieve their destiny (14-2, 52-1, 52-3, 225-3, 244-1, 245-1, 255-3, 256-1) or receive a benefit or blessing (18-5, 52-3, 170-1, 170-3, 250-1). They will be successful (1-1, 1-2, 7-1, 14-2, 52-1, 55-1, 222-3, 243-2, 249-1, 250-3), avoid failure (52-4), or not draw a blank in an undertaking (4-4, 18-8). Someone will assist them (120-2, 222-1); they will be provided for (54-8); things will be easy for them (7-2, 250-2) or set right for them (17-1, 24-1). They will find their way in life (247-5), sit down in peace (249-4), find peace of heart (35-3) or contentment (225-3, 256-5). The client will be able to join forces with others so as not to be worthless (181-2); others will not be able to hinder him or have power over him (55-2); no one will outdo him (1-1). Things may be spoiled for him (7-1, 14-2, 54-1), or his efforts may come to an impasse (183-3). The client is troubled (3-1, 170-2, 246-3) or unlucky (255-3), or he is warned against a dire affliction (33-6) or an evil (35-1, 35-4, 86-1, 166-1, 175-1).

In addition, several verses contain specific admonitions about the client's own conduct. A wife is advised to be very considerate of her husband (1-7), and other clients are warned against being overjoyed (170-1, 170-3) or overambitious (244-1), against spoiling something important through a small detail (35-7), or against losing everything through adultery (245-4). Others are warned not to break an oath (256-3), to avoid fights (9-1, 48-1, 154-1), and to beware of someone who has a powerful supporter who will come to his assistance (167-1, 245-4).

Among the occasions on which clients consult the diviners are undertaking a journey (3-2, 14-1, 14-3, 35-1, 35-4, 52-3, 120-1, 175-2, 183-4, 247-2, 256-5) or a business deal (241-4, 256-2), building a new house (137-1), or taking new land (33-5, 52-2, 157-1). The client is troubled by his relatives who will not let him have a house or a farm (35-5), or he is involved in a case in court (246-3, 249-6). Or he is acting as if he had lost his way (247-5), or as if he were cursed (225-1) or insane (243-1).

VIII. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

As indicated in Chapter VI, the sacrifice specified in the verse may be modified; but since the question whether the sacrifice should be altered is asked in terms of two specific alternatives, it can be assumed that there are no modifications in 50 per cent of the cases. The client may not suggest to the diviner how it should be modified, because "one does not bargain with Ifa as one does in the market place." The diviner has complete discretion in making these proposals, but they are subject to acceptance or rejection by Ifa; and once approval has been indicated, no further modifications may be suggested. If the prescribed sacrifice is large and expensive, it is likely that smaller amounts of money or goods will be proposed, and if it is inexpensive, they may be increased; but this decision also depends upon the diviner's estimate of his client's wealth. The diviners say that a goat or a sheep is the most expensive addition that would be suggested unless the client were a king, in which case a cow might be mentioned; a poor man would not be asked to sacrifice a cow, "because Ifa is no fool."

Within certain limits the principle of charging what the traffic will bear is admitted by the diviners and accepted as fair by their clients. In discussing this question, one diviner cited the proverb, "Whatever amount pleases one is what we sell Ifa for." [Oye ti o ba wu-(ξ)ni ni a ta Ifa-(ξ)ni pa.] Nevertheless, even if a client is rich, a diviner is expected to be reasonable in his suggestions and to be guided by the sacrifice mentioned in the verse which he has just recited to the client. The diviners say that it would be unfair to take advantage of a sick person or to charge strangers more than relatives. The clients say that Ifa teaches the diviners to be kind and that if they know a client is poor, they may suggest a hair in place of a horse, some wool in place of a ram, or a feather in place of a chicken; or they may suggest a calabash of water, or sixteen pebbles, or something else of no value. As noted earlier, one informant said that sacrifices are generally more expensive when they are not modified, suggesting that the diviners usually propose reductions. Should a diviner charge too much, he might lose some of his clientele, but the other diviners would do nothing about it. It is significant that none of the Ife diviners had earned the reputation of overcharging.

However, that there are dishonest diviners who falsify their predictions is believed by both clients and diviners, and this belief is confirmed by the precautions that the clients take to conceal their problems (see pp. 68-69). A case in point is cited in one of the Ifa verses (247-2) in which a king's diviner, who was having an affair with the king's wife, heard that another diviner was coming; he instructed that the new diviner was to be killed as a human sacrifice because he feared that his guilt would be revealed, as indeed it was. In another verse (244-2) a false diviner pleased his clients by promising them blessings, whereas a truthful diviner correctly warned them against evil spirits. Wishing to believe the first prophecy, they bound the truthful diviner and left him in the forest until the evil

spirits arrived and they saw that he had been telling the truth. Eshu intervened to save the truthful diviner, who, in turn, saved the clients.

Any diviner who controls the figure that is cast or modifies its interpretation so as to falsify the message of Ifa must deliberately depart from the principles of divination in which he has been trained for many years. To do so defeats the entire purpose of divination by giving a message other than the one Ifa intends for the client to receive, and this is considered strictly unethical. Clients avoid diviners whom they suspect of such practices, while the diviners deny that they themselves engage in them, and both agree that few individuals are actually guilty of them. The diviner's ignorance rather than his dishonesty is the usual excuse for failures.

The clients themselves may control the outcome in some situations without the connivance or even the knowledge of the diviner. If candidates for an office are selected through two specific alternatives, naming them in succession until one is chosen, the one first named has twice the chance of being chosen as the one named second, and the one named tenth has less than one chance in a thousand (see Chapter V, Table 8). Moreover, as the diviners themselves acknowledge, the choice can be "fixed," rather than left to chance, by the individual who conceals the bone and the cowries in his hands. He simply announces that whichever object Ifa selects represents "No" in the case of candidates to be rejected, and that it represents "Yes" in the case of the one agreed upon beforehand. No one can challenge his statement, as he alone knows what he has whispered to the objects. The same deception can be practiced when Ifa is presented with a direct choice between two candidates, and it is probably common practice where a successor to the king or another important position has already been selected after long campaigning and careful consideration and Ifa is asked to confirm the wisdom of the choice.

It is important that the candidate who is to be rejected must not become suspicious, lest he ask that the alternatives be named aloud. He is usually prepared for the occasion by those who arrange this deception, by making him believe that everyone wants him to be selected, and great disappointment is expressed when another candidate is chosen. The conclusion is that it is much safer for a candidate to trust the diviner and insist that everything be done openly than to allow the alternatives to be concealed on the grounds that the diviner might be able to control the figures cast.

It might also be safer to insist that the divining chain, rather than the palm nuts, be used. There is little chance that the fall of the divining chain can be controlled if it is a good instrument that permits the free fall of the seeds, and it is significant that this is the type of chain preferred by diviners (see pp. 29-30), and that choices between specific alternatives are usually made with it.

It is possible that an unscrupulous diviner might achieve sufficient skill in manipulating the palm nuts to be able to control the figure he produces, and perhaps even escape detection by his colleagues. This would be difficult to do directly, as the palm nuts are not easy to handle. However, he might simply continue "beating" them until the desired number remained in his hand. For example, if it suited his purpose to produce the

figure Ogbe Meji, he could pick the nuts up again if two were left as he normally does when three or more are left, and continue beating until only one remained. The rapidity with which the nuts are beaten would make it difficult for an observer to tell the number remaining, and even an expert could not be certain that he had not felt some nuts slipping from his grasp (see Chapter IV). The client's protection against such practices lies in his ability to conceal his problem and in his choice of a diviner on the basis of his reputation for honesty.

It appears easiest for a diviner to falsify the results in the recitation of the verses. Here he might select from all the verses he has learned, regardless of the figures with which they are associated, in order to find one that fits the problem with which he believed the client to be concerned, or he might improvise one to fit it. It would be even easier for him simply to keep on reciting verses memorized for other figures until he came to one that touches on the client's problem; but any of these subterfuges might be detected if his apprentices or another diviner were present. The diviner is expected to recite the verses for the figure as he learned them, without knowing which applies to the client's problem. He may alter their order if he wishes; but if he is honest, he must recite only the verses belonging to the figure that is cast.

An unscrupulous diviner must be subtle enough to avoid arousing the suspicions of his clients, as well as to avoid detection. An informant explained that if the first verse recited for him by a diviner should pertain to housebuilding (e.g. 167-1), he would be suspicious because it was common knowledge at the time that he was building a new house. Even if he had come to ask about a completely different problem, he would distrust the diviner and his advice, and would not make the prescribed sacrifice, believing that the diviner was guessing or was "twisting" Ifa to fit the situation. If the message of Ifa is twisted in this way, neither the prediction nor the sacrifice are relevant to what Ifa intended to convey. Similarly, if a woman who is childless after several years of marriage were told in the first verse that she was going to have a child (e.g. 20-3), she would suspect the diviner whether or not this was what she had come to inquire about. The Araba of Igana said that a diviner may even avoid reciting first a verse that touches on a problem which, he happens to know, concerns the client, because the client would suspect him of lying. Even an honest diviner is not above suspicion. There is an Ifa saying to the effect that "If we cast Ifa today, it must not come to pass today," because people will suspect the diviner whose prediction was accurate.

An apparent contradiction is involved here, for a diviner's skill is judged in part by his ability to recite the appropriate verse immediately while others touch upon it later or not at all. Earlier I concluded that "where a diviner's reputation for honesty is doubted, the fact that he answers the client's question immediately is held against him, whereas if his reputation for honesty is beyond reproach, it is taken as evidence of his skill" (Bascom, 1941: 51). This may be a partial explanation, but the nature of the problem is probably the critical factor. When it is common knowledge that the client is faced by the problem cited in the first verse, he suspects the diviner's honesty; but when the problem is known only to a

few, and perhaps only to himself, he respects his skill. A clever diviner could, of course, also recite several verses before the one he improvises or takes from a different figure to suit the client's known problem.

Aside from his skepticism when the first verse recited refers to his problem, the client is protected in several other ways: by his choice of the diviner he consults, by his ability to conceal his problem, by whatever familiarity he may have gained through prior consultations, by the fact that the diviner's apprentices and colleagues who know the verses are often present, and by the fact that the reputation of a successful diviner could be ruined if he were detected in reciting verses from the wrong figure.

The main protection of the client, however, is that it is unnecessary for a diviner to falsify a prediction if he knows sufficient verses, although clients are not aware of this fact. Whether even the diviners themselves realize it is open to question, although they recognize the advantage of knowing more verses, and they prize some verses that "are better than others" (see Chapter VII).

There is no way of determining the proportion of unethical diviners. Though both clients and diviners believe that they exist, the former are hesitant to make accusations, and the latter are quick to affirm their own innocence. There is no question in my own mind, on the basis of my experience, that most of the babalawo are honest, as both diviners and clients assert. They operate in perfectly good faith, employing a system in which they believe implicitly and in terms of which they themselves offer sacrifices, make decisions, and in fact order their own lives. They believe that they can best serve both their clients' and their own interests by transmitting the message of their deity, Ifa, as accurately as possible.

It is possible for clients to test a diviner's accuracy through specific alternatives, and in two of the verses (35-3, 54-4) this is done by the mythological character. In the latter, when the cow of the Sea Goddess died, she had it covered with cloths like a human corpse, and told her followers to announce her own death. When they called the diviners to learn if any sacrifice was required, they all announced, because they were not skillful in the use of specific alternatives, that the kind of evil with which they were confronted was death. The followers of the Sea Goddess asked if there were not another diviner; and when he came, he announced that the evil involved a loss. The Sea Goddess then revealed herself, rewarded him, and chose him as her diviner.

The diviners themselves may test their divining chains in this way to see whether or not they are telling the truth. Before beginning to divine in the morning, they may find whether a particular chain is "talking" through specific alternatives, asking questions whose answers they already know — for example, whether "The sun will set tonight" or "The sun will not set tonight." Or they may send someone into another room to put one of his hands on the wall, out of sight, and ask whether "It is the right hand" or "It is the left hand." If the wrong answer is selected, they conclude that the chain is "not talking" that day, and test another in a similar fashion. It is for this reason that diviners have several chains. Not all diviners test their chains, one maintaining that "anyone is willing to talk when he

wakes up in the morning," and it is considered unnecessary to test the palm nuts in this way because they are reliable, whereas the divining chains are not.

The reason for maintaining that the divining chain is an inferior and less reliable instrument may derive from the fact that it is more often used for the technique of specific alternatives. If many questions are asked, conflicting answers may be given, and occasionally the answers may contradict what is said in the verse. In the instance cited earlier, where the figure Otura Irosun was cast for a client who wished to learn about taking a trip, the verse selected (183-4) warned that he would lose his way if he did not sacrifice. However, in the inquiries through specific alternatives, good rather than evil was indicated, and the kind of good specified was children. In discussing this with the diviner, he indicated that such contradictions were not infrequent, but when either good or evil is confirmed, the prediction is more certain. Nevertheless a sacrifice would still be required. He was more puzzled by the reference to children in this context, though he showed little concern, pointing out that the correct answer had come out eventually through the verse, and citing the proverb "Like proverbs, like proverbs, is how Ifa speaks." [Bi owe, bi owe n(i)-Ifa s̄oꝛ̄o.]

IX. THE DIVINERS

The Ifa diviners are most commonly called babalawo or "father has secrets" (baba-li-awo) or simply awo, secrets or mysteries. They may also be distinguished from the others who worship Ifa as "fathers of those who have Ifa" (baba onifa). The term onifa or "those who have Ifa" (o-ni-Ifa) refers to all Ifa worshipers, including the babalawo, as does its synonym, *Ọlọrunmila*, or "those who have *Ọrunmila*" (*Ọ-li-Ọrunmila*). The worshipers of Ifa include men who inherit or are initiated into the worship of Ifa without becoming diviners, and women who are told to care for the palm nuts of their father but can never become babalawo. Only men can become babalawo. The babalawo are also the priests of Ifa, serving other Ifa worshipers as well as divining for those who worship other deities.

Some, but not all, of the worshipers of Ifa learn to "recite Ifa" (*kifa*, *ki-Ifa*) without becoming diviners. As a matter of individual choice they may memorize Ifa verses by studying with the babalawo, after which they may be referred to as "those who recite the deity" (*akisa*, *a-ki-orisa*). The full significance of this is not clear, or how it is related to those members of the other religious cults who recite the praise names of their deities. In one verse (6-3), however, the client is instructed either to practice divination or to recite Ifa. In Igana it was estimated that there were about three hundred who knew Ifa verses in 1938, as against twenty practicing babalawo. In *Mẹkọ* in 1951 the estimate was twenty practicing diviners and perhaps two hundred Ifa worshipers. In *Ifẹ* the number of babalawo in 1937 was variously estimated by informants at from two to four hundred; an estimate in 1965 gave 120 babalawo and about one hundred other worshipers. According to the 1952 census, *Ifẹ* had a population of 110,000, Igana 9,000, and *Mẹkọ* 5,000.

All babalawo undergo two expensive initiations, the details of which are too elaborate to be considered here (See Dennett, 1906: 251-253; Maupoil, 1943: 271-332), in the course of which they receive their two sets or "hands," each of sixteen palm nuts. Training in divination often begins before the first ceremony, and it continues afterward until the pupil is released by his teacher to practice divination on his own. Even after his release, a diviner continues to learn Ifa and has obligations to his teacher.

Four grades of babalawo are recognized in *Ifẹ*. The lowest grade of practicing Ifa diviners are known as *ẹlẹgan* or "those who have *ẹgan*" (*ẹ-li-ẹgan*), or as "secret of *ẹgan*" (*awo ẹgan*). The precise meaning of *ẹgan* could not be determined, but *Mẹkọ* diviners say it refers to a bag containing medicine prepared with leaves, medicine calabashes (*ado*), and other unspecified materials; most *Mẹkọ* babalawo are said to prefer to have this rather than the *odu*, which marks the third grade in *Ifẹ*, because it is much less expensive. Unlike the other three grades, the *ẹlẹgan* shave their heads completely, and for this reason they are sometimes referred to as *ajarimodi*, meaning "those who shave their heads but do not tie (their hair)" (*a-ja-ori-ma-di*).

Diviners of the second grade undergo a third initiation ceremony, after which they are known as *adoṣu* or "those who create a tuft of hair" (*a-da-osu*).

a general term for initiates into the cults for the Yoruba gods, or as "those who have a tuft of hair" (oloṣu, o-li-oṣu), or as "secret of tuft of hair" (awo oṣu). They shave their heads, leaving a circular spot of hair (oṣu) on the right side toward the back of the head, as explained in a myth in the following chapter. Formerly the tuft of hair was braided, but in recent times it has been clipped short. To be eligible to become an adoṣu a diviner must belong to a compound that has an origi; this is a mound of earth built in front of the compound containing secret materials, which informants refused to discuss. Frobenius (1926: 171) illustrates one covered with potsherds with a stone projecting from the top, but potsherds are not always in evidence, and some are covered with cement (see Plate 21). The name "origi" was not explained, but Origi appears as the name of the father of Èḷa in an Ifa myth recorded at Ilesà (see Chapter XI). The number of origi in Ifẹ was estimated at more than fifty, all of which are said to have been constructed long, long ago, when Odua and the other deities lived on earth; no new ones have been added, although some have had to be repaired or rebuilt, as was the case about 1894 when the people of Ifẹ returned from Iṣṣya, where they had taken refuge during the wars of the last century.

Diviners of the third grade have gone through a still more expensive initiation which few can afford; Ifẹ diviners said that it costs from £200 to £300. They are known as olodu or "those who have odu" (o-li-odu). Odu is interpreted as meaning something large or bulky, and its composition again is a carefully guarded secret. In Ifẹ it is kept in a special type of container, which is large, cylindrical in shape, fashioned of wood, and either painted red, white, and black with camwood, chalk, and charcoal (see Plate 21) or decorated in the same colors with beadwork. Other diviners may have similar containers, known as apẹrẹ or the apẹrẹ of Ifa (apẹrẹ Ifa), but theirs are unbeaded and unpainted. Both types may be used as stools to sit on, but they are normally kept with the other divining apparatus and materials in the shrine of Ifa, and they are carried out into the street during the Ifa festivals.

In Ifẹ the shrine or "house of Ifa" (ile Ifa) of an olodu is in an alcove (sasara) in the main chamber (akodi ọkankan) of the compound, with a raised mud floor and mud sides and ceiling; it can be closed off from the rest of the room by means of a curtain or mat. No woman is permitted to enter the alcove in which an odu is kept. Both the odu and the origi are important in the worship of Ifa rather than in divination and, as in Ifẹ, diviners believed that to reveal their contents would cause their death, this subject was not pressed; but some evidence from other sources is available.

J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 253) refers to the Igba Odu, or calabash of odu, which he describes as follows: "The Igbadu is a covered calabash, containing four small vessels made from coconut shells, cut, each into two pieces in the middle, and which hold besides something unknown to the uninitiated, one a little mud, another a little charcoal, and another a little chalk, and another some camwood,¹ all which are intended to represent

1. It may be this, rather than the divining bowl, to which Frobenius' remarks about these materials refer. See Chapter III.

certain Divine attributes, and which, with the vessels containing them, represent the four principal Odus—Eji Ogbè, Ọ̀yèkún Meji, Ibara Meji, and Edí Meji—and this calabash is deposited in a specially and well-prepared wooden box called Àpèrè. The box is regarded as very sacred and as an emblem of Divinity, and is also worshipped. It is never opened, except on very special and important occasions, as when perhaps a serious difference is to be settled, and not without washed hands and often the offering of blood to it . . . the room where it is deposited is considered so sacred that no woman nor any uninitiated man is ever permitted to enter into it, and the door opening into it is generally beautified with chalk and charcoal colouring, giving it a spotted appearance."

Epega (1931: 16) refers to the "Igba Odu (Odu Calabash) or, as it is also called, Igba Iwa (the Calabash or Container of Existence) In this calabash wonder-working charms are stored by a great babalawo who gives directions as to how it should be worshipped, with the strict warning, of course, that it should never be opened except the devotee is exceedingly grieved and therefore anxious to leave this world. Igba Iwa is so made as not to be easily opened."

Mẹ̀kọ diviners said that their odu is unlike that sketched and described by Maupoil (1943: 168-170). They said it consists of a covered white calabash containing a crude clay figure like those which represent Eshu, and is kept on a mud platform (itage) in a special room (iyara odu) which only Ifa worshipers can enter. The calabash is opened each year during the annual festival, when an animal is sacrificed to it; but it is very dangerous and women and young men cannot enter the shrine where it is kept. Ilesà diviners also keep their odu in a calabash in a special room.

In Ifẹ̀ the status of olodu is of less significance than elsewhere because there is a still higher category, that of the diviners of the Ọ̀ni or King (Awọ̀ni, Awo Ọ̀ni), all of whom must be olodu. This group, which is discussed in the following chapter, is headed by Araba, followed by Agbọ̀nbọ̀n and fourteen other individual titles.

Diviners of any of the three highest grades are also referred to as oluwo, meaning chief or master of secrets (olu awo); but this term has several meanings. An ẹ̀lẹ̀gan may become recognized as an oluwo by virtue of his knowledge of Ifa and his skill in divination; and the term is also used to refer to the one who teaches Ifa to an apprentice, who is known as a child of secrets (ọ̀mọ awo). Epega (n.d.: III, 3) also notes that anyone who teaches a person Ifa is called his oluwo, and this meaning was also recorded at Ilesà.

Oluwo is also the title of the head of all the babalawo of Qyọ, followed by the second oluwo, third oluwo, and so on. J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 264), followed by Frobenius (1913: I, 244, 251), Farrow (1926: 103), Lucas (1948: 179-180), Abraham (1958: 80, 39), and Idowu (1962: 164), describes the Oluwo as the chief babalawo, with Ajigbọ̀na (or Adjigbọ̀na, Ajubọ̀na) as his chief assistant; however, J. Johnson and Frobenius note that one may speak of the babalawo from whom he received his Ifa as his oluwo. In Mẹ̀kọ the diviner who teaches one how to divine is known as his ojugbọ̀na, a term which in Ifẹ̀ refers to the subordinates who serve as assistants of the King's diviners; the oluwo is a relative who is in charge of the initiation,

and if there is no diviner on either the father's or mother's side the relative is assisted by an unrelated diviner.

The babalawo are distinguished by a beaded bracelet worn on the left wrist and known as *ide* or the beads of *Ifa* (*ide Ifa*), which generally are of imported tan and light green beads, also known as *etutu ọpọnyọ*. These are called *etutu ọpọyọ* in *Ileṣa* and *otutu ọpọn* in *Mẹkọ*, where the green beads are distinguished as dark or "black" (*dudu*) and the tan ones as "red" (*pupa*). One verse (256-3) refers to the use of these beads by *Qrunmila* worn around his neck, and in another (35-3) they serve to identify *Hyena* as a babalawo. In *Ifẹ* the bracelet may also include a palm nut or a light opal-colored glass bead (*emu*) of European manufacture, as well as beads of other colors. The tan and green beads are worn as medicine by others, although not around the wrist, but the opal-colored bead is used only by babalawo.

The cow-tail switch (*irukẹrẹ*, *irukẹ*, *iru*) or fly whisk is another insignia of the babalawo, though similar whisks, made of horse tails, are used by the chiefs. One of the verses (54-4) explains why these are always carried by the babalawo when they go out to divine. A beadworker from *Efọn Alaye* spoke of making beaded whisks for diviners, but in *Ifẹ* and in *Mẹkọ* these are reserved to the King. The divining bell or tapper which the diviners sometimes carry, also serves to identify them.

In addition, the diviners use an iron staff (*ọrẹrẹ*, *osun*, *osu*), to which are attached many small conical bells with iron clappers, which jingle each time the staff is touched to the ground (see Plate 21). On ceremonial occasions it is used as a walking stick, and at other times it is stuck upright into the ground in the patio of the diviner's house, where sacrifices are periodically offered to it. In *Ileṣa* it is known as the "staff of *ọrẹrẹ*" (*ọpa ọrẹrẹ*), and *Epega* (1931: 17) mentions it as *osu*. In *Mẹkọ* the *osun* is a smaller iron standard whose name was interpreted as meaning "not sleep" (*o sun*). Each diviner has one stuck into the ground at his *Ifa* shrine, and it is said to guard him while he sleeps. It must never be allowed to fall over, lest the owner die; and at his death it is knocked down. In *Mẹkọ* it is considered as a symbol of the God of Medicine (*Qsanyin*), who is described as the owner of herbs and leaves and is venerated by the babalawo because they so often use leaves in preparing medicines for their clients. Its Dahomean counterpart (*asen*) is also regarded as representing *Qsanyin* (*Maupoil*, 1943: 175, 218).

Most diviners in *Ifẹ* were trained through a system of apprenticeship similar to that in the arts and crafts.² A father often prefers to have his son learn *Ifa* (*kọ Ifa*) from another diviner, so that he will not be treated too leniently but will be given sufficient discipline to learn well; and if the father is dead, there is no choice but to apprentice the child. No special fees are required, but an apprentice must serve (*sin*) his master by fulfill-

2. A diviner at *Mẹkọ* maintained that children were apprenticed only when a woman who is troubled by *abiku* (successive deaths of her children) is instructed in an *Ifa* verse to give her son as an apprentice to a diviner, so that he may be protected by being close to *Ifa*. Apprenticeship is common in *Ifẹ*.

ing any tasks assigned to him, including running errands, purchasing materials in the market for a client's sacrifice, and carrying his master's divining bag on his shoulder when he goes out. Because of the latter function, a diviner's apprentice is often spoken of as one who hangs a bag (akpo, a-kq-apo). When he goes out with his master, he may be given a small gift out of the payment his master receives, perhaps one penny out of six pence. Some apprentices are fed and lodged by their masters; others sleep and take their evening meal at home. Individuals who learn Ifa as adults may pay a diviner to teach them rather than serving as apprentices; there are no fixed rates for this, but in 1937 one man was giving his teacher food and palm wine, plus a penny a day to teach him for as long a period each day as he wanted.

Whether they learn as apprentices or are taught by their fathers, instruction may begin as early as five, six, or seven years of age. The pupil learns by observing the divinations performed by the teacher for his clients and by specific instruction in which the pupil is first taught to name the figures. The teacher prepares a divining chain, usually of pieces of calabash joined by a simple cord, with which the pupil practices identifying the sixteen paired figures, followed by the combinations. Learning to choose between specific alternatives is followed by the far more tedious task of memorizing the verses, beginning again with Ogbe Meji and the other paired figures. The teacher recites a verse and asks the pupil to repeat it, correcting him when he makes mistakes and prompting him when he forgets. Frequent tests are given by marking a figure on the divining tray or forming it with the divining chain, and asking the boy to give its name and to recite its verses. Some figures like Ofun Ogunda require that an atonement be made before its verses are recited, because they are considered powerful and dangerous. One of the verses (249-1) of this figure says, "To find out if a child is brave enough to recite Ifa, or if he is not brave enough to recite Ifa, we use Ofun Eko (i. e. Ofun Ogunda) to test him."

The sacrifices and medicines or "leaves of Ifa" may be taught with the verses with which they are associated or later when the verses have been mastered. The pupil must be taught to find the required leaves in the forest, and an Ilesa diviner said that he must learn to recognize and use over four hundred leaves. Some of the medicines require atonements or "coolings" (etutu) before their incantations can be recited, and with the medicines not associated with verses they are usually learned late in the apprenticeship or after it has been completed.

In Meko a novice is tested by his seniors before he can practice on his own; they give him a divining tray, powder, and palm nuts and tell him to divine. He marks the figures on the tray, names them, and recites the verses, but one verse for each figure is sufficient for him to pass. A Meko diviner said that if a boy begins to study Ifa at six or seven years of age, he may be able to learn enough to divine for others by the time he is twelve or thirteen. A diviner from nearby Ilara said that he began to study with his father at about the age of ten, and that he knew enough to divine by himself by the time he was about thirteen; nevertheless he had to stay with his father working for him and learning from him until he was about twenty,

when he began to practice on his own, and he has continued to learn from others since his father died.

The duration of the period of training, mentioned by diviners in their own cases, varied from three, four, and five to nine and ten years; but none of them stopped learning when it was completed. The informant who dictated most of the verses had been studying Ifa thirty years, and most diviners continue to study Ifa as long as they live, either by associating with their colleagues while they are divining, or by paying other diviners to teach them specific verses or medicines. In some cases these have fixed prices; more often the teacher can ask any price he likes, and it can be reduced through bargaining. Once a diviner has agreed to teach a particular verse or medicine and payment has been received, he must teach it correctly without holding back any part of it. According to a Męq̄ informant, however, one may pay for the medicines, but there is no charge for the verses.

Ataiyero (1934: 8) states that diviners should serve as apprentices for three to six years or more. Epega (1931: 12) says, "Before a man can become a Babalawo he has to learn Ifa for three to five or seven years. The primary 16 Odu Ifas and their branches are to be learnt in the first year. . . . In the second year the learner has to learn how to receive Ibo [i.e. to use specific alternatives] for Ifa in divination and the procedure in Ifa temple or groves. In the third year he has to learn the way of expressions [i.e. the verses] belonging to each Odu. This is the most difficult part of the Odu Ifas to master."

When the apprenticeship is ended and the new diviner begins to practice on his own, he must give his teacher part of whatever he receives as payment (eru) through divining, and this obligation continues as long as the teacher lives. It seems that the basis of sharing varies, and in Ifę the amount to be given is often left up to the pupil. An Ięsa diviner said that for twenty years he took all his earnings to his teacher, who returned about a fifth to him; afterward he gave his teacher one shilling and some chickens each year until he died. In Ifę he is also expected to go to the assistance of his teacher whenever he is called upon and to stay with him several days if necessary.

In Igana every sixteen days, on the day of secrets (ojo awo) sacred to Ifa, Araba, the diviner of the town chief, feeds his apprentices and those who have studied under him. In 1938 there were five of these in his own compound and twenty-seven outside. Each brings two kola nuts and casts them to ask Ifa about their welfare. Before departing, one of them casts the divining chain for Araba, noting the figure, and then asks Ifa, "Do you accept this day and all that we have done?" using two specific alternatives. If the answer is negative, he will ask through a succession of questions what remains to be done. This is then done, the verses are recited, and Araba provides the materials for the sacrifice in the appropriate verse. After the sacrifice has been performed, the apprentices leave, clapping and singing Ifa's songs. Similar meetings with one's teacher are also held in Ifę between the meetings of the King's diviners.

One becomes a diviner in much the same way that he becomes a worshiper of any other deity: by following the worship (and profession) of his father, by being told through divination that one should become a diviner, or by a combination of these reasons. One of the verses recorded (6-3) indicates that the client should become a diviner: "Ifa says this is a boy who is a diviner; he was serving Ifa when he came from heaven. The rising or setting sun must not find him in the farm, and his feet must not brush the dew from the farm road." It is understood to be tabu for this client to engage in farming, which involves spending nights in the far farms, and that he should devote himself to divining. This is not a general tabu for diviners, however, and must be stated specifically in the verse.

The same tabu is imposed in another verse (86-2) on a client who is instructed to worship Ifa: "Ifa says that this is someone who should not go to farm, and who must not touch the dew with his feet. And we say that Ifa is thinking of someone; he should be sacrificing to Ifa." In this case, because becoming a diviner is not specifically mentioned, it is understood that the client may become a trader, weaver, or carver, or practice some other craft. Some diviners farm on the side; some are so busy divining that they have no time for farming; and some are prohibited from farming by verses of this type (86-2, 6-3). If they break the tabu, their crops will wither and they themselves will become ill. They are allowed to go to the farms to gather the leaves required for medicines, but they must not so much as pull a weed or enter a field of yams or corn.

One of the Ifa verses says that divination is to be preferred to farming and to the gathering of honey: "The fire is very hot on the face of one who gathers honey; the sun is very, very hot on the buttocks of the farmer; the one who gathers honey has losses; the honey bee swarms, and the honey of the Ado bee spoils; but the house of a diviner is never empty" (18-8). Another says, "An elder who learns Ifa does not have to eat stale kola nuts" (131-1). Farrow (1926: 37) refers to a proverb that says, "The wisest priest is he who adopts the worship of Ifa," but Akoda, one of the King's diviners, said that this does not hold in Ife, because divination is none too lucrative.

Amosun, another of the Awoni, has never engaged in farming, because it was tabued for him, though his sons farm for him and give him some of the yams and other produce from his land. Though he refused to go into specific details,³ he estimated that for every shilling's worth of farm produce he receives from his sons, he earns five shillings from divining. "Look at my house" (which was large), he said. "Look at my people" (who

3. He refused even to say how many sons he had, asserting that this knowledge could be used to bewitch them. He did explain that as long as a son works for his father (sin baba), his produce goes entirely to the father, whereas after sons have started working on their own, they may plant 2000 yam heaps for their fathers and 1000 for themselves, or only 200 for their father and 2000 for themselves, just to help him.

were numerous). "I feed them, and what I have comes mostly from Ifa."

A diviner may wish to see his son follow his own profession, as a drummer may want his son to become a drummer, but neither this nor the fact that Ifa has been worshiped in the family is enough to make it attractive for young boys. The boys do not adopt divination as a career, like that of blacksmith or weaver, because the initiations are too expensive and the work of learning the figures and memorizing the verses, sacrifices, medicines, and other rituals associated with the worship of Ifa are too tedious. No one becomes a babalawo to make money, they say. It is usually through misfortune that one becomes a diviner: through illness, losses in trade, the lack of children, or the death of one's wives or children.⁴

Agbõnbon, who was the second ranking of the King's diviners and the most respected babalawo in Ife until his death about 1947, was told by his father when he was about four or five years old that he should study Ifa, but he refused. Later he was sent away from home four times as an indentured laborer or "pawn" (iwõfa). Before he left home the first time, his father told him that although he was a Christian, he had been born to become a babalawo, and explained that he should have been sent to a diviner to study Ifa, though this was no longer possible because it was necessary to pawn him to someone else. According to Agbõnbon, this happened in 1854. When his father redeemed him, he returned to his father and worked his farm for him. While he was in the farm, a ghost appeared to him and commanded him to eat dust. When he did so, he swelled up and became ill, and this happened to him each time he returned home after having been redeemed.

About 1888, while they were at Işõya, about seven miles to the south, where the people of Ife had been driven through war, Agbõnbon's father called him and told him, "I will not return to Ife with you, because I am about to die. You were not made to be a farmer; you were meant to be a babalawo. I have seen this many times during my dreams." He gave Agbõnbon a divining chain. His father was a man "who had been to heaven and returned" (ayõrunbõ) to earth and who had powers to foresee future events, but Agbõnbon was told that before he himself was born, his father had been a babalawo. When his father died, Agbõnbon "inherited" one of his wives, and he acquired another when his brother died, making seven in all with the five he had previously married.

About 1894 the people returned from Işõya to Ife, but after they arrived, all his wives and his children suddenly died. "What can I do?" he asked himself in despair. He wrapped up his set of palm nuts and £2-10-0 that he had, and started out of town to die by himself in the bush. When he had

4. According to the Araba of Lagos this is not the case in Lagos, where boys voluntarily adopt divination as a career. He suggested that Ife may have differed because so many families were converted to Christianity, so that Ifa must "fight with" people to make them come to him. However, the pattern of refusing initiation into the cults until the deity fights with the person is widespread among the Yoruba and applies to many deities.

walked only about three hundred yards, he met chief Jagunoşin at the place where his house now stands. Jagunoşin asked him where he was going and, noting his despondency, asked him if he had been fighting with his wives. Agbõnõn replied, "No. All my wives and my children are dead, and I am going into the bush to die." Jagunoşin said, "You are a coward and a lazy man. Do you know what you were made for?" Jagunoşin took him home, and at his suggestion Agbõnõn consulted a diviner.

He was told that unless he became a babalawo himself, his family and his property would continue to be lost, so he became a diviner. This was about 1895, and since then he has become wealthy and respected. In 1937 he had so many wives that he said he had lost count of them, though there must have been about two hundred, of whom there were only twenty whom he really loved.

According to Agbõnõn, a man becomes a babalawo through his destiny (iwa); afterward he tries to become an Awõni so that he will become important and one whom others cannot "cheat" (rẹjẹ) by taking things from him without payment or by calling on him for free labor (õwẹ). In the old days, he said, there were forty-nine people in Ifẹ who could not be mulcted by any one. At the top was the Ọni, the King of Ifẹ, followed by his sixteen town and palace chiefs (Ijoye Ọni), after whom came the sixteen Awõni, and finally the sixteen Otu priests who dispose of sacrifices made by the Awõni for the Ọni in his palace. Nevertheless, he added, he would rather be wealthy than an Awõni, for with money one can do almost anything.

As another example, the case of an ordinary babalawo may be taken for comparison. Samuel Elufişoye's father had been a babalawo, but he and his family had left Ifa and become Christians when the missionaries came to Ifẹ. About 1913 Samuel's children began to die as soon as they were born, and all his wives died also. He went to Agbõnõn, who divined for him and told him that his trouble would continue unless he returned to the worship of Ifa. He began to study divination; soon afterward a "wife of Ifa" was given to him, and later he was given another (see Plates 19-20). Both of them began to bear children for him, and he began to have money and to dress better. In 1937 he was of middle age, and fairly successful and respected. Both of these wives were still living, and none of his children had died "except those whom Ọlõrun had not created to live long."⁵ Two young boys, whose fathers had died, were studying Ifa as his apprentices. Samuel himself became Agbõnõn about 1950 and held this title until his death on January 18, 1964.

A girl may be told through divination that she is a "wife of Ifa" (aya Ifa, iyawo Ifa), meaning that she should marry a diviner. The diviner gives no bridewealth for her, although he may give her presents before and at the time of marriage, and he is responsible for some of her expenses. This is considered as one of the diviner's "payments" (eru) which, even if relatively infrequent, is of considerable significance, as the cost of bridewealth in Ifẹ in 1937 was £13-0-0.

5. See the discussion of destiny in Chapter XI.

A wife of Ifa is "inherited" like other wives at her husband's death, even if he should die before she has reached the age of marriage. If she should elope with another man, either before or after marriage, it is believed that Ifa will "fight with her" and send her back to her husband through sickness or misfortunes, as it was with her own welfare in mind that she was told by Ifa to marry a babalawo. In Igana it was explained that if a wife of Ifa leaves her husband for another man, the diviner may not claim bride-wealth in court, but he may claim recompense for presents given during the period of betrothal. It is believed that Ifa will bring her back to him by causing illness; when she consults another diviner about her trouble, she will be told that it is caused by the fact that she left her husband, because she was destined to be the wife of Ifa.

When, as may happen, the diviner Ifa selects as her husband is prohibited to her in marriage because of kinship and the rules governing incest, she is married to someone else, but not until after making an atonement to release her from Ifa. Her husband must provide a rat, a fish, a she-goat, a chicken, maize beer, and a length of firewood as gifts to Ifa, and her father pays the diviner £ 2-10-0, £ 5-0-0, or another amount of money less than the value of bridewealth, as determined through specific alternatives. Similar atonements are required if her father begs for her release because she is already betrothed to another man.

A girl may be told to become the wife of Ifa at her first divination or when she is ill during childhood, as in three of the verses recorded here (3-4, 7-2, 17-2); or it may be predicted before she is born when her mother consults the diviners because she has been unable to conceive or because of an illness during pregnancy, and is told that she will bear a daughter who should become a wife of Ifa. If either type of verse is selected as appropriate, the diviner whom she is to marry is determined through specific alternatives. In Igana, where there are no Awṓni, the first question is whether or not the husband-to-be is in the lineage of the diviner consulted. If affirmative, the diviners in this lineage are mentioned in order of their age; if negative, other diviners in town are mentioned in order of their seniority and experience. In Ifẹ the first question is whether the husband-to-be is one of the Awṓni or not, and then names of individual diviners in the category are suggested until one is selected. As the chances of the Awṓni being indicated on the first choice is fifty-fifty, and as there are at most only sixteen of these against several hundred ordinary diviners, the King's diviners benefit more often in this way than the ordinary diviners.

X. THE KING'S DIVINERS

The sixteen babalawo of the King of Ifẹ, known as Awṣni or "secrets of the Qni" (Awo Qni), appear to be a special institution restricted to the Qni and the kingdom of Ifẹ. Other Yoruba kings have their special diviners, but organizations of comparable complexity are not mentioned in the literature, nor were they noted during field research in Qyṣ and Ileṣa or on brief visits to the capitals of other Yoruba kingdoms. Nevertheless, this is consonant with the traditions that Ifẹ was formerly the dominant ritualistic and political center of the Yoruba, that Ifa himself once lived at Ifẹ, and that Ifa divination spread from Ifẹ to other parts of West Africa.

The Awṣni rank above all other diviners in Ifẹ. In the words of one of the latter, all other babalawo "count as nothing" no matter how much Ifa they may know or how skilled they may be in divination. In order to become an Awṣni a man must be a native of Ifẹ; he must be a practicing babalawo; and he must first have become an olodu. Two olodu (Eruda and Oyinnipẹpẹ) whom some informants named as Awṣni could not acquire this status, despite their skill as diviners, because they were foreigners (elu) in Ifẹ. Ifẹ men who acquire odu only because in divination they are told to do so in order to avoid illness or misfortune are also ineligible, because they do not practice divination.

In earlier times there were probably more eligible olodu than could be accommodated in these sixteen positions; but in 1937 the last five titles were unfilled because eligible candidates had been unable to afford the third and most expensive initiation. The son of the former Tẹdimṣle was a recognized oluwo and an old man, but had never been able to acquire the odu necessary for him to take his father's title. Also, although alien religious influences have had less effect on Ifa than on some Yoruba cults, there has still been considerable attrition, because men who would normally have filled these posts have given up Ifa in favor of Christianity and Islam. The Awṣni pointed out that formerly every male in the compound from which Araba is chosen (Oketaṣṣ) would have become a babalawo; but in 1937 there were only five babalawo out of the sixty-seven adult males on the tax roles.

Each Awṣni has an individual title and, although a fifth outlay of money is required, becoming an Awṣni constitutes the taking of a title rather than a fourth form of religious initiation. The sixteen titles are listed below according to the order recognized in 1937:

1. Araba, a title whose meaning was explained as Silk Cotton Tree (*Ceiba pentandra*), which, because of its size, is spoken of as "Araba, father of trees" (araba baba igi), and refers to his importance. Araba is also the title of the head diviner in Igana and other Yoruba towns.

2. Agbṣnṣn, said to mean the one who comes first, and to be the name of the first-born child of Qrunmila.

3. Agṣṣinyṣwa, first held by a man who was wealthy enough to own a horse which he mounted (a-gun-ṣṣin) and rode to the meetings of the diviners.

4. Aşęda, interpreted as meaning the one who makes creatures (a-şe-ęda) because he "creates people in heaven."
5. Akęda, a title which usually means sword-bearer or "one who hangs a sword" (a-kę-ida) but which was interpreted as a corruption of Akęde, meaning one who arrives first, because he is the one who calls the others at the annual festival and thus precedes them. This and the previous title are mentioned in a greeting to Ifa which Epega (1931: 17) translates "Akęda who taught Ifa to the whole world; and Aşęda who taught all the ancients (the) understanding" (Akęda ti nkę gbogbo aiye ni Ifa, Aşęda ti nkę gbogbo agba ni imęran).
6. Amosun, meaning the "one who takes osun," refers to the iron staff (osun, ęręę) which the first Amosun carried for Ifa.
7. Afędigba, explained as meaning "owner of ędigba," refers to the large beads (ędigba) which each of the Awęni own. Afędigba arranges the beads of Araba while he dances, helping him to keep them in place.
8. Adifolu, said to mean one who divines all kinds of Ifa, mixing them together, though in practice he divines as others do.
9. Qbakin, the "king ękin" (Qba ękin), referring to a white bird (ękin) identified by Abraham as an egret, which is spoken of as king of the birds and whose highly valued feathers are worn on the crowns of some Yoruba kings. He is described as the head of deposed kings, with the explanation that when they seek refuge with Araba and eventually leave to settle elsewhere, he serves as their representative or intermediary in Ifę.
10. Olori Iharefa, the "head of the Iharefa," who are the officials in charge of Ifa in the palace. Although the latter do not practice divination, they know a great deal about it, and often more than many diviners.
11. Lodagba, which was translated as "steward," is the one who serves food and drink for the other Awęni, and takes care of any that is not consumed.
12. Jęlęfinpę, meaning "allow the king to remain long (in office)" (ję-Qlęfin-pę) or "Long live the King." His function is to treat the Qni if he is ill. This and the following positions were vacant.
13. Męgbęn, said to mean "I am not wise" (ęmi o gbęn), because the original holder of this title was respected for his rank rather than his skill.
14. Tędimęlę, meaning "press waist against ground (tę idi mę ilę), because in the olden days he remained seated by the shrine of Ifa and could never leave it. In more recent times he had to remain by the shrine in Araba's house during Egbodo Erio, the second annual festival for Ifa.
15. Erinmi, not explained, but perhaps referring to a deity of the same name, whose meaning is "elephant of the water" (erin omi) or hippopotamus.
16. Elesi, also not explained, but perhaps meaning the "one who owns esi (e-li-esi), referring to a carved stone or wooden figurine prepared by the diviners in order to keep evil away from Ifę so that the townspeople will not die.

Effectively only two positions have fixed status, that of Araba and that of Agbęnbęn. The remaining titles are ranked on the basis of the seniority of the incumbents, and unless one of them becomes Araba or Agbęnbęn,

they keep their titles for life. In earlier times all titles were said to have had fixed rankings, and an individual was promoted (reye, re-oye) upward through them as those above him died. There was considerable disagreement among the Awṓni themselves about the earlier ranking, but it was worked out and agreed upon by them (as was the order given above) at one of their regular meetings as 1, 2, 5, 4, 3, 6, 8, 10, 9, 14, 15, 16, 13, 7, 11, 12.

Other evidence suggests that the title Lodagba (11) should have been ranked last, as in effect he did in 1937, with five positions unfilled. Its holder compared his position with the character after whom the figure Qṣṣ Otura was named, who also served as "steward" of all the paired figures (see Chapter IV). He also said that formerly there was one additional title, and that Lodagba ranked seventeenth, with the seventeen titles equivalent to the diviners' seventeen palm nuts, including the oduṣṣ. The diviners claim that the original order of these titles is recorded in the Ifa verses, with each being mentioned in a verse of the figure to which it corresponds in rank. It should be noted, however, that Akṓda is named as a diviner for verse Qṣṣ Meji (239-1) in the fifteenth position, and that Araba appears in a verse for Qyṣku Ogbе (17-4) in the thirty-second position.

A number of informants maintained that the title of Araba was an Qyṣ title introduced into Ifṣ in fairly recent times, and that formerly Agbṓṓṓṓ had been head of the Awṓni; in support of this they quoted the saying, "Agbṓṓṓṓ is the diviner of Ile-Ifṣ" (Agbṓṓṓṓ ni awo Ile-Ifṣ). One of the Awṓni maintained that the first Araba, by the name of Agiri, was the son of the Araba of Irṣsa by Mṓṓṓṓ, a daughter of Arolu who was then the Agbṓṓṓṓ. As the result of a quarrel Agiri left Irṣsa and came to Ifṣ to live in the compound of his grandfather, Arolu. When Arolu died, Agiri said that he wanted to become Agbṓṓṓṓ, but another candidate in the compound challenged his right to do so because he was related to the lineage through a female. To avoid another quarrel, Agiri took the title of his father and settled at Oketaṣṣ near the grove of Ifa (igbo Ifa). According to this informant there had been only eleven Araba in Ifṣ, and the title has not been confined to Oketaṣṣ: (1) Agiri, who came from Irṣsa but was an Ifṣ on his mother's side, (2) Gidiogbo of the Ile Araba Gidiogbo, (3) Kirṓsinla of Ile Kirṓsinla, (4) Budugbu of Ile Olugbodo, (5) Lameloye of Oketaṣṣ, who was driven out by Qni Abeweila and fled to Ifṣwara. He was succeeded by (6) Kinfolarin of Ile Olugbodo, who was Agbṓṓṓṓ when this happened. After King Abeweila died, most Ifṣ people were at Iṣṣya, where they had taken refuge because of war. Lameloye went to Iṣṣya and Kinfolarin restored the title of Araba to him, resuming his former title of Agbṓṓṓṓ. When Lameloye died, Kinfolarin again became Araba, and he was succeeded by (7) Afala at Oketaṣṣ, (8) Jolugbo at Ile Atibi, (9) Fayṣmi at Irṣmṓ, (10) Ogbolu at Ile Ṣeru, and (11) Ipṣti at Oketaṣṣ.

However, it is generally accepted that the title of Araba is restricted to the lineage of Oketaṣṣ compound and to men who can claim descent from it through their mother. The title of Amosun is similarly "owned" by the lineage of Ile Araba Gidiogbo and its two subsidiary compounds (Ile Otutu and Ile Ajagbukṓ), but Amosun himself said that it had rotated between this

lineage and two others (Ile Kirṣinla and Ile Olugbodu) until the title of Araba became more important. Męgbṛn "belongs" to Iręmṛ quarter, Tędi-mṛle to Ilare quarter, and Qbakin to the people of Ijgbę, one of five outlying villages that moved into Ifę during the wars of the last century and perhaps even earlier. All other titles are open to any qualified candidate.

In former times those who were eligible to become Awṛni competed for the position whenever there was a vacancy. If Araba died, the choice of his successor would be made by Agbṛnbṛn, and vice versa; when a lower title was vacant, they would decide together or leave the choice to Ifa in case of doubt or disagreement. The installation of a candidate is marked by a feast (ihaye, iha-oye; iwuye, iwu-oye), which he must provide for all the Awṛni, the chiefs, and the Qni. He must also give the Awṛni money and a case of Gordon's gin. The amount of money has varied, having been £ 3-10-0 in earlier times, raised briefly to £ 5-0-0, and then reduced to £ 2-10-0. One to five shillings out of this is given to the assistants (Ojgbṛna) who serve as messengers of the Awṛni; five shillings six pence is sent to the King's messengers or attendants (Ęmęsę) who are responsible for the Ifa shrine (Ile Qmirin) in the palace; and the rest is divided into two parts. One half is divided between Araba and Agbṛnbṛn, with Araba taking a shilling or two more than Agbṛnbṛn. The second half is divided among the other Awṛni according to their rank. Araba also takes home three bottles of gin; Agbṛnbṛn, two; and the other seven bottles are drunk at the feast.

Except for the Araba and Agbṛnbṛn, each of the junior Awṛni in effect move up one position at the death of an Awṛni who is senior to them. In recognition of this, each of the junior Awṛni give £ 1-0-0 and five or six bottles of gin to those above them. Thus if No. 5 dies, 1-4 share in all the gifts without giving anything themselves; 6 shares in the gifts of 7-16; 7 shares in the gifts of 8-16; and so on. A man chosen to fill the position of Araba must pay £ 20-0-0 and one case of Gordon's gin to the Awṛni, £ 10 to the Qni, and £ 10 to the attendants of the Ifa shrine in the palace.¹ In return he receives payments of £ 10-0-0 and £ 5-0-0 from the Qni during the Qni's installation.

Formerly the Awṛni wore a red tail-feather from the African grey parrot in the braided tuft of hair (oṣu) on their head, but now that the hair is clipped short, the feather is worn in a large European felt hat (ikori). This type of hat can be used by anyone, but if he presumed to wear a red parrot feather in it, he would be asked scornfully, "What kind of a chief are you?" Araba and Agbṛnbṛn, the two highest ranking Awṛni, wear finely plaited straw hats or "miters" (oro, ide oro) of the type that are worn by the principal town chiefs and by Lṛwa, the head of the inner or palace chiefs. Neither kind of hat may be worn until an Awṛni has made the feast that marks his installation.

1. Agbṛnbṛn maintained that payment to the Qni was initiated during the reign of the predecessor of Aderęmi, who intervened in the selection of Ogbolu as Araba, whereas formerly the Awṛni themselves had the final say as to who would be chosen.

Only the Awṓni may wear white headties during their meetings. Other diviners may wear them at other times, but when present at the meetings of the Awṓni they remove them and tie them about their waists; and a diviner of lower rank must bare his head and prostrate himself in greeting when he meets an Awṓni in the street. Formerly these headties were white women's sashes (qja), locally woven by women, but in 1937 imported white toweling was in common use. White headties were common, but the babalawo were not restricted to the use of white cloth, as has been reported. Formerly they often wore light blue garments, because they did not look dirty as quickly as white cloth, and in 1937 they wore whatever cloths they liked, with the wealthier diviners using imported velvet or velveteen of varied colors.

The Awṓni use a special type of whisk made of a ram's beard with a handle an inch or more in diameter, whereas that of the ordinary diviner's cow-tail switch is less than half an inch. When two Awṓni meet in the street, they cross the handles of their whisks, with the handles pointing down, and exchange the greetings "Ogbedu" and "Ogbṓmurin."² Only the two highest ranking diviners, Araba and Agbṓnṓn, are permitted to hold a whisk in each hand when dancing. The Awṓni also have long strings of a special type of large beads (ḡdigba, ogbara), which are worn during the annual festival over one shoulder and across the chest (see Plate 21 A). According to one informant the Awṓni and the Qni must use round divining trays only.

At any time of year the Qni may send for the Awṓni to divine for the good of the town as a whole because there has been an accident or trouble, or because of a dream or other omen. They go to a special chamber (Ile Qmirin) in the palace (afin) that houses a shrine of Ifa and where Ifa is consulted, and use the Qni's divining apparatus. They ask, "What must be done so that the Qni may live long, that the town may be in peace, that there will not be trouble among us Awṓni, that the women of Ifḡ may not be barren, that there may be no sickness or famine in town, and that there may be no deaths among the young people." The Qni provides whatever is prescribed as the sacrifice, which is made in the palace, with animals killed in the open court in front of the council hall. The Qni's sacrifices are disposed of by a special group of priests known as Otu, whose meaning is explained in verse 181-4. Sacrifices for the town as a whole may also be made by the Awṓni as a result of their own divinations, in which case they provide the materials themselves.

The Awṓni are also responsible for the annual festivals for Ifa, which are associated with eating the first new yams (egbodo) of the season. The first festival is Egbodo Qni, or New Yams of the King, before which the Qni and the palace retinue are not permitted to eat new yams. The festival

2. These greetings, which could not be translated, are said to be Ifa's "passwords." "Ogbedu" is said to have been the first thing Ifa said when he wanted to take kola nuts, and the passwords are repeated while casting kola nuts for Ifa and on other ritual occasions.

takes place near the end of June. It is said that formerly the sixteen Awṓni went to the Ifa grove near Oketaṣṣ and built a house of Ifa (ile Ifa). They killed a goat, divided it, and wrapped it in the leaves with which the house was thatched, so that the house lasted only one day and had to be rebuilt each year. This part of the festival is no longer observed.

On the first day all the Awṓni go to the grove and "break the leaves of Ifa" (jawefa, ja-ewe-Ifa); they pick sixteen special kinds of leaves and bring them back to the King's palace. They also bring the first new corn of the season to the palace, with which they make cornstarch porridge (ori, ẹkọ tutu). In the evening they return to the palace to "bury the palm nuts in the cornstarch porridge" (rifa lori, ri-Ifa li-ori). The palm nuts of the Ọni are left in the porridge in a large tub overnight, and the Awṓni remain all night in the palace sleeping near them, except for Araba, who sleeps opposite them on the verandah of the King's messengers (ọdẹ Ẹmṣẹṣẹ). Only Araba is permitted to have a fire, and this night is known as "to sleep without making fire" (asundana, a-sun-i-da-ina).

On the morning of the second day the Awṓni go home, but toward evening they return to the palace again. They take the leaves they have gathered and grind them together in water with the King's palm nuts, which have been taken from the tub of cornstarch porridge. In this way they "wash the Ifa" (wẹfa, wẹ-Ifa) or palm nuts of the Ọni in the leaves of Ifa. The palm nuts are then placed in the King's divining bowl (ọppon igede), which is placed in his Ifa shrine and covered with fine cloths. That evening many animals are killed, including a cow, a she-goat, and a ram. Some of the blood and meat is put on the palm nuts as a "sacrifice to Ifa" (bofa, bo-Ifa) and left in the divining bowl overnight. A small new yam is split in two, palm oil is poured on it, and it is taken to the shrine of Eshu. The rest of the meat is divided among the Ọni, his wives, his messengers (Ẹmṣẹṣẹ), the town and palace chiefs, and Araba and Agbṓnṓn. The meat is taken home and some of it is cooked and eaten with new yams, which are usually two types of yellow yams (ọlọ and igangan), especially good for making yam loaf. Thereafter the Ọni and other participants may eat yams until the end of the season. The Awṓni again remain all night in the palace.

On the third day the Awṓni "eat the top of Ifa" (jẹ irefa, jẹ ire-Ifa); they take the food from the top of the palm nuts, cook it, and eat it. The day is spent in eating and drinking, with gin supplied by the Ọni, and Ifa's drums (kẹrẹgidi) are beaten all day.³ On the fourth and fifth day they rest at home.

On the sixth day the Awṓni, the town chiefs, and the palace chiefs assemble in front of the Ifa shrine in Araba's house, where they are served yams, stew, and drinks. Late in the afternoon Araba—spotted red, white, and black with camwood, chalk, and charcoal—leaves his house and goes

3. In Ifẹ, Ifa has a set of four drums, known as kẹrẹgidi. The individual drums are named firigba, jṓngbondan or regeje, kẹrẹgidi, and another jṓngbondan or regeje. Other kinds of drums are used for Ifa in other Yoruba towns.

with the others to the nearby market in front of the palace. There the chiefs, followed by the Awṛni, dance individually in reverse order of their ranking, and an hour or so after dark they return home.

On the seventh day they return to the palace, and Araba divines for the Ṣni, the chiefs, the Ẹmṛṣe, and all the people of the palace, using the palm nuts and the divining tray of the Ṣni. Each person comes to him in turn, saying, "What shall I do that I may live to make this festival again next year?" The materials required as sacrifices are provided by the Ṣni. On this day the Ẹmṛṣṣ or the Ogungbṣ, who served as police in earlier times, are free to catch sheep and goats wandering about town for the sacrifices that are prescribed. If an owner sees his animal being taken and begs the Ẹmṛṣṣ or Ogungbṣ to leave it, they do so; but if not, the owner has no recourse. One woman came wailing to the palace with her husband, begging to have her goat returned; but the Awṛni denied having it. They asked if she knew which man had taken it, but she said she hadn't been there to see him. She was told that she couldn't even be sure that the Ẹmṛṣṣ or Ogungbṣ had taken it, and that she should go home and look for it. Her husband begged the Awṛni quietly to return the goat, but it did no good even though he was a junior sibling of the Awṛni who was in charge of the animals to be sacrificed.

The appearance of Araba spotted "like a leopard" on the afternoon of the sixth day is in commemoration of an encounter with Odua, the deity who created the earth, as given in the following Ifa myth, ascribed to the figure Ogbe Qṣṣ.

When Odua was King of Ifṣ, Olokun the Sea Goddess was his wife, and Qrunmila was her lover. Qrunmila consulted the diviners to learn what he should do so that Odua would not catch him with his wife. The diviner told him to sacrifice a pigeon, a fowl, camwood, chalk, and charcoal. They took a knife and cut three incisions in his skin, rubbing one of the three powders into each of the cuts. Then they told him he could continue to sleep with Olokun without fearing anything.

One day Qrunmila and Olokun overslept, and Odua came upon them at dawn. But Eshu, to whom the sacrifice had been made, came to Qrunmila's aid; he spoiled Odua's eyesight, so that Odua thought Qrunmila was a leopard. Odua ran away in fright, and Qrunmila returned home safely. Qrunmila began to praise the diviners who had protected them, saying that what they had said had come true. After that, as long as he lived, he spotted himself annually like a leopard; and since his time, Araba has done the same.

Egbodo Erio, the festival of New Yams of the Oluwo, usually takes place in July and generally follows the pattern of Egbodo Ṣni. The first day is known as "Dawn will break good for the babalawo" (ojuṃṃ a ṃṃ awo rire). Early in the morning they gather sixteen kinds of leaves⁴ (jawefa).

4. The names of the sixteen leaves were given as ṃṃriwo (young fronds of the oil palm, *Elaeis guineensis*), tṣtṣ (*Amaranthus spp.*) ewe jṣmijoko or ewe jṣnjoko (*Cissampelos spp.*), ewe banabana (*Albizzia spp.*), ewe alukerese (*Ipomoea involucrata*), ewe ita (*Celtis Soyauxii*), ewe ṃkika

Ifa's drums are beaten all day, and they are beaten every day during the festival. The divining bowls are colored red, white, and black, with camwood, chalk, and charcoal. Toward evening all of the babalawo and other Ifa worshipers in Ife take their palm nuts, divining trays, and bowls and their other apparatus and ritual paraphernalia to the house of an olodu. Here each one puts his palm nuts in cornstarch porridge (rifa lori) made of new corn and leaves them in it overnight; each diviner uses a separate tub so that the sets of palm nuts do not become mixed. The diviners remain at the house of the Olodu for the nine days of the festival, sleeping on the verandah near the alcove for Ifa.

On the morning of the second day, each diviner washes his palm nuts (wefa) and puts them in his divining bowl, which is placed in the alcove that serves as Ifa's shrine. In the evening he kills a she-goat or a fowl, whatever he wishes to sacrifice to Ifa (bqfa), and puts some of the blood and meat on the palm nuts. Some meat is cooked and eaten with new yams, and one new yam is split, sprinkled with palm oil, and taken to Eshu.

On the sixth day the blood is washed from the palm nuts, using a different set of "leaves of cleanliness" (ewe ifin), and the babalawo divine for each other, using their own sets of palm nuts and making the sacrifices that are prescribed. No babalawo can divine for himself; in support of this they cite the proverb: "However sharp the knife, it cannot carve its own handle." [Qbẹ t(i)-o mu ki gbẹ kuku ara rẹ.] On the seventh day, each babalawo divines for his wives, who come to the house of the olodu for this purpose, and makes the sacrifices specified for them. Again the question asked is what must be done in order to be able to live to celebrate the festival again next year, and the women may also pray to have children, money, or other blessings. The eighth day is another day of rest.

On the afternoon of the ninth and final day, a she-goat is killed and blood is allowed to flow on the origi in front of the house as a sacrifice. The head of the goat is taken into the house and, after lengthy prayers, it is touched to the foreheads of the babalawo, their wives, and their children. Kola is cast to determine if the sacrifice is acceptable; a series of figures are marked on the divining tray and recited briefly; and the olodu puts a little of the divining powder in the mouths of those present.

The diviners retire to dress in their finest clothes and ornaments, fastening their headties about their waists, and the Awonni wear their strings of large beads over one shoulder and across the chest. Meanwhile, each Ifa bowl is set on a divining tray and wrapped in fine cloths. When the diviners return, no women must be present; they enter the room walking backward and touch their foreheads to the ground before the wrapped bowls. Selected young people enter the room, and each diviner puts his bowl on the head of his son or daughter, a young "wife of Ifa," or a young

(Spondias Monbin), ewe omu (Cyperus esculentes?), ewe ade (Myrianthus arboreus?), ewe aluginrin (Triclisia subcordata?), ewe ibaigbo (Mitragyna stipulosa?), and rẹnrẹn, ewe orijin, ewe apese, ewe olojongbolu, and eti ologbo (unidentified).

apprentice. This is the day when they "carry Ifa" (gbefa, gbe-Ifa). The children carry the bowls containing the palm nuts of Ifa out into the street in front of the house, where they line up with a child carrying the cylindrical container of odu in front (see Plate 21). They stand in place while the diviners dance about them to drumming and singing, which the olodu begins by calling "O-o-o Şoko," with the others responding "Bani." Afterward they go back into the olodu's house, where they sleep again that night, and the next morning they return home.

After Egbodo Erio the worshipers of Ifa and of the "white deities" can eat new yams, but many people cannot do so until other rituals have been performed. The worshipers of Qramfe are permitted to eat yellow yams but may not eat new white yams until the Edi festival, which comes in October or November. Before Egbodo Erio new yams are taboo to all except the participants in Egbodo Qni, the Christians and Muslims, and those who do not worship anything. All who worshiped Yoruba deities formerly observed this tabu.

Egbodo Ife, the Festival of New Yams of Ife, known also as the Ogido Festival (Qdun Ogido), follows in August when the worshipers of many other deities eat new yams for the first time; but the diviners have nothing to do with this ceremony. Their next ceremony is the Ewunrin Festival (Qdun Ewunrin), which comes in September or October. More sacrifices are offered to Ifa in thanks for having lived through the three new yam ceremonies, and the diviners shave their hair, which has been allowed to go unshaven since the beginning of Egbodo Erio.

The Awqni hold meetings (ajo, ajo Ifa) at Oketafe, the home of Araba, every sixteenth day on Qjaife, the day sacred to Ifa. At these meetings they discuss the affairs of Ifa, sharing their knowledge and teaching each other the verses; they discuss the conduct of their own members, and they eat and drink together. For these meetings each member in turn provides food (prepared at his own home) and drink. In discussing the conduct of their own members, they will decide whether they have obeyed the rules of the Awqni, and, if not, they will try those accused and impose fines on offenders. The rules are similar to those of other guilds in Ife:

1. An Awqni must not seek another Awqni's wife. If the wife of Araba or Agbqnbq is involved, the offender is handed over to the Qni for punishment. In any case he is dismissed from his position, but he may be reinstated later if he comes from a good family and they plead for him. In this case he will have to pay a fine, including forty kola nuts, a she-goat, a case of gin, and an amount of money to be determined. The fine varies depending on his wealth.

2. The Awqni must not "poison" (make bad medicine against) each other. If the person dies, the offender is dismissed and cannot be reinstated, and he is turned over to the Qni for punishment. The same thing happens if Araba or Agbqnbq are poisoned, even if they recover. If another Awqni is poisoned but recovers, the offender is dismissed, but again may be reinstated if he comes from a good family and they plead for him. Again a fine, including gin and money, is imposed.

3. The Awqni must not conspire against one of their members. An

offender is dismissed for this, and if the conspiracy is against Araba or Agbõnḃõn, he is turned over to the Qni for punishment. If several Awõni are jointly guilty of conspiracy, they are not dismissed but fined a case of gin each.

4. An Awõni must not speak against a fellow member behind his back.

5. One Awõni must not leave another when he is in trouble without seeing that things have been set right for him. If an Awõni does this to Araba, it is reported to the Qni; but the Awõni deal with the offender themselves.

6. No Awõni may divulge the discussions at their meetings to an outsider.

If a member is suspected of breaking any of these rules, someone is appointed to watch him. When enough evidence has been gathered, he is brought before the entire group and tried by them. Witnesses are called, and the offender is given an opportunity to question them and to defend himself. If he can prove that he is innocent, then the fine that he was in jeopardy of having to pay is imposed upon the person who falsely accused him. The decision is reached solely on the basis of the evidence, and there is no divination on such occasions. When the evidence has been heard, the Awõni retire to discuss it, and when they have reached agreement, one of the group is sent back to report the verdict.

If the offense is minor, a unanimous decision is not required; if two of the Awõni disagree with the rest, including Araba and Agbõnḃõn, they are simply ignored. In a serious case no decision is reached until there is unanimous agreement; court is adjourned until new evidence is discovered. If the minority is later proved wrong, however, they are each fined four bottles of gin for having persisted in their opinion. If the Awõni are split more or less evenly, even if Araba and Agbõnḃõn are on the same side, court is adjourned and outsiders will be asked to watch the accused and collect new evidence. If Araba and Agbõnḃõn stand alone against the other Awõni, the matter is serious. Court is adjourned and each side meets by itself to reconsider its positions. Agbõnḃõn and Araba will give serious consideration to the fact that all the others disagree with them; and the other Awõni will say to each other, "We must think deeply about this matter. Our elders disagree with us, and they must have a reason for doing so." In the end one side or the other must change its mind, go to notify the other, and beg its pardon.

At one of these meetings the Awõni discussed the past and present ranking of their titles. Araba was seated in front of the alcove that served as his Ifa shrine, facing away from it into the large room in which it was situated. The curtain of the alcove was open, suggesting that some rituals had been performed before I was admitted, at about 11:00 A.M. The Awõni were seated against the wall to the right of Araba, with Agbõnḃõn second and the others in order of their seniority; they extended to the corner and most of the way down the right side of the room. Along the wall opposite Araba and Agbõnḃõn were diviners who had studied under the Awõni, some of whom were elderly oluwo, and young boys who were still apprenticed to those present. Other diviners may come to the meetings, but they are not invited, and all would know that they came only to share in the food. On

the left side of the room were women and children of Araba's compound, many of whom had come to see the Whiteman. Divining bags were hung on pegs in the wall, as were the large felt hats of the Awṓni. Araba and Agbṓnbṓn wore their straw mitres, and the other Awṓni wore cloth headties; the other diviners had removed their headties and fastened them around their waists. Following the discussion, I was invited to stay and watch the proceedings.

The ordinary babalawo and apprentices moved toward Araba, gathering in semicircles and occupying most of the floor. Araba gave a calabash containing water and ten kola nuts to Lodagba, the "steward" of the Awṓni, who knelt at the entrance of the alcove, facing it. He led the singing, beginning with the conventional call "O-o-oh ṣoko" and response "Bani" and a song addressed to Igi, a slave of Ifa, "Igi, open your eyes and see your enemy" (Igi, ṣi-oju ki o ri-odi re). The other Awṓni remained silent, but the other babalawo and the apprentices responded as the chorus and clapped their hands in simple time to the music.

Lodagba held up the calabash and prayed to Ifa. He then took the kola nuts out of the calabash, and poured a little water in front of Araba's odu. He broke one of the kola nuts into its four sections and removed the small bits (iṣṣju obi, iṣṣju obi) near the center and replaced them in the calabash. Holding the broken kola nut up to Ifa, he said, "Ṗrunmila, this is yours. Eat it." He then divined by casting the four sections of kola nut on the ground, determining on the first cast that the augury was good, and then asking in turn about the five kinds of good on successive casts, and finally if a sacrifice was required. Neither palm nuts nor the divining chain were used on this occasion. When he finished, he replaced one section of the kola nut in the calabash and passed the others and the unbroken nuts to the oluwo, who divided them into sections. One of the apprentices took the calabash and touched it to the head of each of the Awṓni, starting with Araba and Agbṓnbṓn, so that any ill luck would leave their heads and could be thrown away with the water.

At this point, after seven songs had been sung, the rhythm picked up and the hand-clapping took on a sophisticated syncopation. Lodagba sang, "Child of the house, you take this to Eshu" (Ṗmṓde ile, ṣ gba yi a Eṣu) and the chorus responded, "Run quickly, Eshu accepts it" (Ire tete, Eṣu gba). The apprentice took the calabash with water and pieces of kola nuts outside and poured some at the shrine of Eshu and some at the iron walking stick (ṣreṣe, osun) that serves as a symbol of Ifa, while the ceremony continued.

The sections of kola and a small calabash of maize beer were placed near a round altar with stones on it which symbolizes Ṗramṣe, one of the major deities of Ife. Araba knelt by the altar, poured a little maize beer on the altar, and took a sip of it himself. He said the password "Agbedu," and the others responded "Ogbṓmurin." He took a section of kola nut, touched his forehead to the ground, and then returned to his seat. He was followed by Agbṓnbṓn and the other Awṓni, and by the oluwo.

After this, the food was served by Lodagba and the assistants. The men gathered in small groups to eat together, and later food was passed

to the women. When the dishes and the leaves in which the food was wrapped had been cleared away, the singing began again, and the syncopated clapping was louder and more precise than ever. One of the oluwo passed a calabash of maize beer to the Awṣni, starting with Araba and Agbṣṣṣ; and as each drank in turn, he complimented them and called out their praise names, pausing while the chorus responded, "Very clean is what the oluwo⁵ drink, very clean" (Toro ni erio mu, toro). When the calabash reached Olori Iharefa, the singing stopped; he drank in silence because he was so junior that "he is only a boy among the Awṣni." Lodagba did not sit and drink with the Awṣni, because his duties as steward kept him busy on the floor.

Finally, the man whose turn it was to feed the group at the next meeting came forward to receive the calabash of maize beer, which is spoken of as the "calabash of meeting" (igba aṣṣ). As he took it, he was told, "Your meeting is seventeen⁶ days away," and he replied, touching it to his head and chest, "My head accepts it, my chest accepts it."⁷ The meeting was adjourned.

5. The word erio, which appears also in the name of the second Ifa festival, Egṣodo Erio, was said to mean the Awṣni plus all the oluwo, i.e. all baba-lawo who wear the special hairdo. One diviner said it meant all the deities (ṣṣbura).

6. Actually sixteen days. The Yoruba, like the ancient Greeks, include both the initial and final days in reckoning time. Thus they speak of their four-day week as having five days (which in Ifṣ are named after the towns major markets): Qjaifṣ, Ireṣṣṣ, Aiyegbeju, Itakogun, Qjaifṣ. In Qyṣ these days are known by names of deities: Qjṣ Awo for Ifa, Qjṣ Ogun for the God of Iron, Qjṣ Jakuta for Ṣango the God of Thunder, and Qjṣ Oṣala for the God of Whiteness. Frobenius (1913: I, 256) erred in adding Qjṣ Qṣṣ as a fifth and holy day or Sunday. Qjaifṣ or Qjṣ Awo is the holy day or Qjṣ Qṣṣ for Ifa, as the other days are for Ogun, Ṣango, and Oriṣala.

7. Ori mi gba, Aiya mi gba. This statement is also made during initiation of a babalawo when he first receives his second set of palm nuts, signifying he takes it with all his heart. See J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 252).

XI. THE SYSTEM OF BELIEF

Some elements of the complex world view of the Yoruba must be discussed at least briefly for readers to understand the many references to them that appear in the Ifa verses, and the significance of Ifa divination itself. This section is primarily concerned with three deities, Ifa, Eshu, and Qlqrun, and with the concept of fate or destiny and its relationship to the multiple souls of mankind. The importance of these two concepts and the role of these three deities stands out clearly in the verses. Ifa or Qrunmila is the God of Divination who informs mortals of the wishes of Qlqrun; Eshu is the Divine Trickster and the Messenger of Qlqrun, delivering sacrifices to him and seeing to it that clients who sacrifice attain their ends while those who fail to do so are punished; Qlqrun is the Sky God, who is revealed in the Ifa verses as the God of Destiny.

Since at least 1800 the Yoruba have been in direct contact with Islam, although during the nineteenth century they were warring against their Muslim neighbors, and for more than a hundred years Christian missions have been established within Yoruba territory. Yoruba beliefs have been influenced by both these religions, but those discussed below are probably as close to those of the pre-contact period as can be hoped for at this date, since they were mainly recorded in 1937-38 from babalawo who had remained apart from both Islam and Christianity. Moreover, their interpretations were drawn from verses they had memorized in their youth, and they were often able to cite verses in support of their statements. As Idowu (1962: 7) observes, the verses "belong to the most fixed and reliable section of the oral traditions." In some cases there are obvious evidences of acculturation, as in the myth below told by Agbqnbqñ, the most respected and very senior diviner of the Qni, which speaks of books, teachers, Whitemen, Christians, Muslims, turbans, airplanes, and chloroform; but these are obvious reinterpretations that have been added to an ancient myth. Finally, much of the following is based on a direct analysis of the verses recorded in Part Two.

There are many deities (qbura, ebqra, imqlq, oriqa) according to Yoruba belief, the full number never having been recorded. Informants frequently speak of 400 Deities, as do the Ifa verses (3-2, 34-2, 111-1, 168-1, 256-3), but this is a mystic number and can be taken only as meaning a great many. The verses also speak of Qrunmila, Eshu, the Sea Goddess, and the 400 Deities (1-11), of the 400 Deities and the Egungun (7-5), and of the 400 Deities on the right and the 200 Deities on the left (249-1). Each deity has special attributes and some have specific functions or powers, but all can give children, protection, and other blessings to their worshipers who are faithful.

The God of Whiteness or Big Deity (Oriqala, Oriqanla, Oqala), also known as the "King who has a white cloth" (Qbatala), who created the first man and woman and who fashions the human form in the mother's womb, appears in a number of verses, as do unspecified members of his pantheon of white deities (oriqa funfun). The word orisha (oriqa) has often been trans-

lated as deity, and it is sometimes used in Ife as a synonym for eburu; but in its more specific sense it means one of the more than fifty members of the pantheon of the God of Whiteness. Many other deities also appear in the verses, including the God of Thunder (Şango), the God of War and Iron (Ogun), the God of Smallpox (Şopona), and the God of Medicine (Qsanyin), but those most often mentioned and those most directly associated with this system of divination are Ifa or Qrunmila, Eshu, and Qlorun.

Qlorun, the Sky God, is the "One who owns the sky" [Q-l(i)-qrun] or "King of the sky" (Qba qrun) and is commonly referred to as Olodumare. The meaning of this name is explained in one of the verses (54-2) as "One who has odu, child of Python" (Ere). However, an Qyq diviner maintained that Ere is simply the name of the mother of the sixteen figures of Ifa, with Qlorun being her seventeenth child. Before Qlorun was born, Ere went to Ifa to report that she had had a sign that she would have another child. Ifa told her that it would be a boy and that it would be an important child, more powerful than anyone else in heaven or on earth. When Qlorun was born, they called him "One who has figure (of Ifa), the child of Ere" (olodu qm q Ere).

Some writers have offered different interpretations,¹ but in Ife this name is clearly understood to refer to Qlorun, and in the Ifa verses Olodumare is identified as "King of the Sky" (256-3).²

Although called child of Python, and although he appears in Ifa myths cited in this chapter as a slave trader, a cuckold, and the brother of Qrunmila, Qlorun has been syncretized with the Christian God and the Muslim Allah. He is equivalent to Nyame among the Ashanti and to other West African "high gods," standing above and beyond all other deities. He has no special worshipers, no cults, and no shrines; prayers are addressed to him, but no sacrifices are offered directly to him. Yet he is neither so remote nor so unconcerned that he does not intervene in affairs on earth.³ In the verses we see Qlorun giving food (241-1), property (14-3), money (255-3), wives (54-3), children (54-2), titles (246-4), honor (243-4), and blessings (250-1, 255-1, 256-1); repaying losses (249-2); and defeating enemies (248-4). As the deity who assigns and controls the individual destinies of mankind, Qlorun has a prominent place in Ifa divination.

1. Lucas (1948: 74) gives Olodumare as a title of Ifa. Epega (1931: 10, 11, 22) identifies Olodumare as Odudua, as God, and as the one to whom Eshu takes the sacrifices. Şowande (n.d.: 31, 33b, 41) regards Olodumare as one element in the Holy Trinity along with Qlorun and Eleda (the ancestral guardian soul). Crowther, J. Johnson, and Farrow equate Olodumare with Qlorun but give as its meaning "the Almighty One" or "the Ever-righteous One." Various other interpretations of its meaning have been suggested.

2. See also the verse from Ogudabede (Ogunda-Ogbe) cited by Lijadu (1923: 8).

3. Idowu (1962) has also argued that Qlorun is by no means as removed from human affairs as he has sometimes been pictured to be.

Eshu (Eṣu, Eṣu Bara, Eṣṣbara, Eṣṣba) is the youngest and the cleverest of the deities. He is the divine messenger (iranṣe), and one of his roles is to deliver the sacrifices he receives to Oṣorun. Understandably, the diviners consider this role important. He is also a trickster, the divine counterpart of Tortoise in Yoruba folktales, who not only delights in trouble-making but serves Oṣorun and the other deities by causing trouble for human beings who offend or neglect them. He is notorious for starting fights (5-3, 48-1, 131-1), killing people by toppling walls and trees on them, and causing calamities to deities and humans alike; but his role in delivering sacrifices to God (see p. 60) is hardly consistent with his identification with Satan by Christians and Muslims, which can only be understood as the result of the failure to find the equivalent of the Devil in Yoruba belief. One verse does speak of Eshu eating a sacrifice (123-1), but another tells how he carries sacrifices to heaven and reports who made them (33-2). In another verse he is identified as the one appointed by Oṣorun to watch the other deities on earth (256-3).

Eshu's reputation for maliciousness is undoubtedly due to his important role as the divine enforcer, punishing those who fail to make the sacrifice prescribed for them and rewarding those who do. He forces a woman to be killed by the 400 Deities because they thought she was spying on them (34-2), leaves Sakeu to die in mid-air (244-1), and causes two friends to die on the same day (18-10), all because of failures to sacrifice. Another pair of friends die on the same day because they failed to appease Eshu, although it is not specifically stated that he caused their death (18-9). Frog is also injured and loses the crown after failing to appease Eshu, without Eshu's intervention being specified (170-1). The King of the Termites sacrifices and is made king, but when he refuses to make a second sacrifice against death, Eshu gathers his band of rascals and they destroy his termite hill, roast him, and eat him (54-1). Ojuro fails to sacrifice and Eshu causes her to lose her way; but when her relatives sacrifice for her, she finds it again (247-5). Another character makes a sacrifice to have children but not a second sacrifice so that they will not become enemies; when her children are born, Eshu causes them to fight, and both are killed (5-3). In only one of the verses recorded does Eshu cause a fight without specific provocation, and even here the implication may well be that one of the two friends failed to sacrifice (48-1).

In as many instances; however, Eshu saves those who have sacrificed or assists them in obtaining what they wanted. He calls a storm to destroy Dove's nest and kill her children because she not only had failed to sacrifice but dared to brag about it; yet Pigeon, who did sacrifice, is spared (33-1). Because Calico sacrificed, Eshu intervenes to save it when all the other cloths, who had failed to sacrifice, are being taken away to heaven (18-4). Only three trees sacrifice when all are told to do so; Eshu carries their sacrifices to heaven and reports their names; and when a storm destroys the others, they are spared (33-2). Qrunmila himself postpones a sacrifice and is taken as a thief; but when he makes the sacrifice, Eshu helps him not only to escape the charge but to be handsomely rewarded for being falsely accused (14-1). Hyena makes a sacrifice and becomes king; and when he fails

to make a second sacrifice, Eshu causes him to be deposed; but when Hyena finally makes the sacrifice, Eshu helps to regain the crown (35-3). When the king's wife has her slave perform a sacrifice for her, Eshu gives the promised child to the slave (33-4). Ajaolele sacrifices, and Eshu causes him to fight with the chief's daughter; but through this he marries her and two other wives without having to give bridewealth (131-1). Eshu intervenes to save the people of M̄r̄ç from Death (6-2), helps Cock win a hoeing contest and thus a bride (123-1), and helps Qrunmila marry Earth (1-10) and a daughter of the Sea Goddess (1-11), all because sacrifices had been made. Under somewhat different circumstances, he clears Qrunmila of the false accusations of the 400 Deities (246-3), captures a false diviner, and saves the one who is telling the truth (244-2).

Much of what Eshu does is done through magical transformations, which he accomplishes by clapping his hands (1-10), throwing dust and clapping his hands (244-2), blinking his eyes (1-11), and pointing his staff (247-5) or medicine (17-10). He also closes pits magically (1-11), transforms water and small pieces of meat into blood and goats' legs (35-3), and intervenes without the use of magic (14-1, 123-1, 131-1, 244-1, 256-3).

Eshu is a close associate of Ifa, and one verse (1-9) refers to the occasion when Ifa was going to befriend Eshu. An Ifa myth, told by a Yoruba informant from a Muslim family who was studying in England, accounts for the close relationship of Eshu and Ifa as follows:

Qrunmila was a very wealthy man. Once when he was entertaining his many companions who had come to eat and drink with him, he asked them, "I wonder, how many friends do I have?" They protested that they were all his friends, but he was not satisfied. He consulted the diviners, who told him to make any sacrifice that he wanted, and he gave them some money. They instructed him to go home, hide himself on top of the ceiling of his room, and have his wife announce that he had died.

When these instructions had been followed, his companions mourned for him, each coming in turn to console his wife, and each pretending to be more sorrowful than the other. After the first one had expressed his sympathy, he said, "Do you remember that large gown that we had made for our society a few years ago?" Qrunmila's wife said that she did, and asked him why he mentioned it. He replied, "Well, Qrunmila asked me to buy it for him, but he did not repay me." The wife asked how much it had cost, and he replied "Forty-five pounds." At this point she excused herself and went to talk to Qrunmila where he was hiding. She asked him if he had heard what his friend had said, and Qrunmila answered, "Yes. Take the money and pay him."

One by one each of his friends came to the house to express their sympathy; each claimed that Qrunmila owed them money, and each received payment. Finally Eshu came, with tears streaming down his cheeks. After he had offered his sympathy, Qrunmila's wife asked, "Isn't there anything more? Didn't Qrunmila owe you any money?" "What?" replied Eshu, "Indeed no! He was always my benefactor, and I owe what I have to him." When Qrunmila heard this, he came down from his hiding place and revealed that he was still alive. Since that time, Eshu and Ifa have been close friends.

The story that Eshu was the one who taught Ifa how to divine—reported by Baudin (1885: 34), Ellis (1894: 58-59), and Cole (1898; quoted in Dennett 1906: 270), Frobenius (1913: I, 229-232), Farrow (1926: 37), and Lucas (1948: 73-74)—was denied by diviners at Qyq and Igana as well as at Ifẹ. However, a Mękq diviner said that he had heard that Eshu had done so and that Eshu had given Ifa his divining tray, but he did not know the myth.

Like other Yoruba deities, Ifa has a number of different names, and dozens of longer praise-names. The name Ifa is interpreted as meaning scraping, because he "scrapes" (fa) sickness and other evils away from those who are afflicted, or because he scrapes the powder on the divining tray in marking the figures. In the verses Ifa is also referred to as Alumq, meaning "To beat and know" or that he beats palm nuts and knows the future (6-3, 18-9).

Most commonly he appears in the verses as Qrunmila, but of the various names only Ifa is used to refer to the system of divination. As a result it has sometimes been maintained that the name Ifa refers only to the system, whereas Qrunmila (or Qrunmla, Qrunla) refers to the deity who controls it.⁴ However, in Ifẹ, Ifa is clearly recognized as one of the names of this deity, and both the morning invocation (Chapter III) and one Ifa verse (1-4, n. 2) make it clear that Ifa and Qrunmila are one and the same person. The name Qrunmila is derived by Ifẹ diviners from an earlier name for Ifa, namely Ẹla, which they interpreted as based on the verb *la*, "to open." The name Ẹla appears in the Ifa myths, including the following one recounted by Agbõnbõn which explains the origin of the name Qrunmila, and its meaning as "Sky God recognizes Ẹla" (Qlqrun mq Ẹla):

Ẹla was the younger brother of Qlqrun, the Sky God, who was a trader who traveled widely and dealt largely in slaves. When Qlqrun was away trading, Ẹla had intercourse with Qlqrun's wives, and the children of these affairs are the "wives of Ifa" who are given to diviners without bridewealth.

One time Ẹla sent his children far away to trade in goods; and when they reached the boundary between heaven and earth, the slaves of Qlqrun fell upon them and stole all their goods. When Ẹla heard this, he asked, "Who can steal my property from my children?" He took his bow and arrow and set out with his other children, his servants, and his slaves; and when they met, they began to fight with Qlqrun's followers. Everyone on earth came to help Ẹla, but the battle continued. On the seventh day a heavy rain fell, beating on both sides, and they both withdrew.

On the following day, Ẹla's followers spread their clothes to dry, and Qlqrun's followers spread out their shirts and turbans. Qlqrun sat in a chair looking at Ẹla in the distance, and Ẹla was looking at Qlqrun, his elder brother. At first neither recognized the other, because Ẹla had been young when Qlqrun left home; but then Qlqrun did recognize his brother,

4. Idowu (1962: 76-77) maintains this distinction, yet on the next page he cites a verse from Iwori Meji which says "Ifá, fix your eyes upon me and look at me well." See also Clarke (1939: 235-236) and Bascom (1942: 43).

and he went to him and embraced him. They ate and drank together, and the next day they announced that there would be no more fighting. As Ẹla's followers were returning to earth, they met people who were still coming to help them and who asked them why they were returning so soon. They replied, "Ql̩run recognized Ẹla yesterday" [Ql̩run m̩ Ẹla l(i)-ana], and since that time Ẹla has been called Qrunmila.

This was discounted as folk etymology by an Ifẹ diviner in 1965 who offered the following explanation: When the deities first came to earth, they had no special powers or duties, and they asked Olodumare to assign them work for which they were gifted. Olodumare said that Ogun did not know his work, and he gave him war (ogun). He said that Oriṣala did not know his work, and he gave him art (ona).⁵ He said that Olokun should be a trader and that Aje, the Goddess of Money, should become a middleman (alarob̩), buying from Olokun and reselling at a profit. All the deities were assigned their specific duties. When they asked Qrunmila what work had been assigned to him, he replied, "Only Ql̩run knows the one the one who will prosper." And that is why they call him "Ql̩run knows the person who will prosper" (Ql̩run m̩ ̩ni ti o la).

However, informants in 1937-38 maintained that this was a misinterpretation and that the explanation that it means "Ql̩run knows the one who will be saved" (Ql̩run m̩ ̩ni ti o la) was a Christian invention. In support of Agb̩n̩b̩n̩'s interpretation it was said that in earlier times diviners were greeted by the people of Ifẹ "P̩l̩ṣ̩, ̩m̩ Ql̩run m̩ Ẹla" (Gently, child of Ql̩run recognized Ẹla), but that this has been contracted to "P̩l̩ṣ̩, ̩m̩ Qrunmila."

Ifa is also known as Agb̩nniregun, a name that appears in several of the verses (1-7, 6-1, 20-1) as well as in an abbreviated form, Agb̩nnire (1-2). Ṣowande (n.d.: 46-47) cites a verse from Ogbe Ofun which interprets the meaning of this name as "This coconut must have a long life!" (Agb̩n̩ yi ma ni iregun o!). An Igana diviner reported that its meaning is explained in a verse from Ir̩ṣ̩ṣ̩ Ogbe as "Coconut that will never be forgotten" (Agb̩n̩ ti o ni regun). Awodire, an Ifẹ diviner, cited the following myth, which gives a third interpretation:

The God of Whiteness and his son Akala (one of his attendants) and Qrunmila and his son Amosun (one of the Aw̩ni) left Olodumare and came from heaven to earth, where they met two hundred people. They placed the two hundred people in charge of Akala and gave him a drum. When they reached Oketaṣṣ̩, Qrunmila planted vegetable seeds and yams for Amosun to eat, and he and the God of Whiteness returned to heaven. Amosun's vegetables and yams grew well, but Akala and his people soon ate what food they had. They were too hungry to dance; one of them tried to beat Akala's drum, but he was so hungry he became dizzy and fell down. Then Akala gave two of his followers to Amosun in return for food; and when that was gone, he gave Amosun two more. Finally, when he had given all his people

5. The allusion here is to the role of the God of Whiteness in fashioning the child within the mother's womb, as a woodcarver fashions a figurine.

to Amosun, he traded his drum for food. Then Akala was left with nothing.

After two years had passed, Qrunmila and the God of Whiteness decided to visit the earth to see how their children were faring. When they reached Ita Yemo (the street of the wife of the God of Whiteness), they asked where they could find Akala, but no one knew him. They asked again at Qjaifę market and again at the house of the Goddess of Money (ile Aje), but no one knew him. Then Qrunmila said "Let us ask for my son, Amosun, to see if anyone knows him." They asked for Amosun and were told, "He stays at Oketaşę beating his drum." When they reached Oketaşę, they saw Amosun wearing a crown, with many people dancing before him. Amosun shook his cow-tail switch at Qrunmila and sent eight people to greet him, saying, "Amosun greets you; he who has food will give you food, those who are hungry for meat. He who feeds a friend with his followers, he greets you." Then Amosun's people took Qrunmila's bag and ate the six coconuts he had inside it.

In disgust Qrunmila reproached his son, "Amosun, I am your father! I looked for you but could not find you. Finally I came here and when I saw you, you would not get up and come to meet me. You only shook your cow-tail switch at me, and your followers took my coconuts and ate them. Ah!" Then the people were sorry and said "Oh, this is the father who brought us coconuts." That is why people say that they took the "coconuts of reproach" (agbõn oniregun).

Qrunmila said that Amosun should always sacrifice to him at that spot, and he left with him the boy whom he had bought to come with him and help carry his load. This boy they called "The one he bought to come" (A-ra-bõ), and he was the first Araba (the highest ranking Awõni). Then Qrunmila tied a cloth around his waist, sank into the ground, and turned into stone. That is why they still sacrifice to Qrunmila at that very spot at Oketaşę until today.

Ifa is often spoken of as a scribe or clerk, "one who writes books" (akõwe, a-kõ-iwe). Like other clerks who serve as secretaries and book-keepers in modern business and government, Ifa "wrote" for the other deities, and he taught the babalawo to "write" the figures of Ifa on their divin-ing trays. In Ilesha he is also described as a learned man or scholar (amuye), because of all the knowledge and wisdom in the Ifa verses, and as the interpreter (agbonfõ) between the gods and humans. In Qyõ he is also spoken of as an interpreter (onitumõ), the one who translates, who explains, or "who loosens knowledge, who hears the Qyõ dialect" (onitumõ gbedegbeyõ, o-ni-tu-imõ gbõ-ede-gbõ-Ẹyõ). Qlõrun gave him the power to speak for the gods and communicate with human beings through divination, and when Şango or Orişala or any other deity wishes a special sacrifice, he sends a message to the human beings on earth through Ifa. Although he serves all the deities in this way, Ifa is not their servant; rather he is the wisest of the deities according to the babalawo, and according to some the father of all the deities except Qlõrun.

The following myth, said to be based on a verse from Ofun Ogunda, tells that Ifa was the inventor of writing, how the Christians came to wear long trousers, and how the oluwo came to wear a tuft of hair on their heads.

Agbõnḡõn, who told it, began by explaining that Qlõrun is also called Aja-lõrun (Aja-li-õrun) or "Ceiling at Heaven," because that is where he was born.

Qlõrun was the eldest of the deities, and the first child of the King of the Air (Qba Orufi). Some forty years afterward the King of the Air had a second son, Ẹla, who was the father of the diviners. In the morning all the Whitemen used to come to Ẹla to learn how to read and write, and in the evening his African children, the babalawo, gathered around him to memorize the Ifa verses and learn divination. Ifa taught them to write on their divining trays, which the Muslims copied as their wooden writing boards (wala), and the Christians copied as the slates used by school children and as books.

At first he taught only people from his own town, Ifẹ, but later understudies were sent to him from the surrounding districts. They were known as "Ifa of Ẹla accepts them" (Ifa Ẹla gba), and sick children were also sent to him, and they studied with him while they were being cured. Those who did not learn from him became the deaf and the dumb.

After his pupils were trained, he placed them in the surrounding towns and called them Tiṣa (teacher, from English). One of these teachers was at Ipẹtẹmodu, a town eight miles from Ifẹ, where one of Ẹla's fiancées lived. She was to marry him in four days, but the teacher liked her and wanted to steal her from Ẹla. Finding no other way to do so, before the wedding day he bought some medicine [di-(ẹ)mi-di-(ẹ)mi] to make her stop breathing; from it the Whitemen learned about chloroform. He gave it to the girl and told her she should put some of it into her nostrils when she reached Ẹla's house. She did as she was instructed, and everyone thought that she had died. Since it was a tabu for Ẹla to see a dead person, she was quickly wrapped in a cloth, carried away, and laid at the base of an iroko tree (*Chlorophora excelsa*).

The teacher and his helpers were waiting there, and they carried her to his house where she revived. She became his wife and began to sell palm oil in the market. One day, one of Ẹla's sons recognized her in the market and told his father about it; but Ẹla said that no one can see the dead, and that anyway he had no wish to see her again because she had been dead.

Later the same thing happened with another teacher at Ẹdunabõn, about two miles away, and then at Moro and at Aṣipa. When Ẹla's fourth bride "died," he was suspicious. He had her body wrapped in a cloth, but instead of having it carried to an iroko tree, he had it placed inside a room in his house. When the girl revived, she began to weep and beg forgiveness. Ẹla threatened to have her killed as a sacrifice to his head, but finally she revealed how the teacher at Ipẹtẹmodu had first used medicine and how the others had learned the trick and obtained medicine from him.

Ẹla sent for the four teachers and asked them why they had stolen his wives. They replied, "Are you the only person in the world who can have wives?" Ẹla told them to leave and never come back to him again. They agreed to this, saying that they had been taught enough about divining, and

Ẹla gave them each a set of palm nuts and the sixteen figures to use on their own. When they went, however, they stole all of Ẹla's fiancées in other towns.

When Ẹla learned of this, he made Ifa against them so that their ankles were covered with sores (elerinja), and these sores drew flies. As a result, they made long trousers to cover them; formerly trousers had reached only to the knees. When this did not stop them from stealing his fiancées, Ẹla gathered his followers and went out to meet them in force. He defeated them and drove them south until they reached the coast, and he stayed there seventy years to prevent their return. There were no houses in those days, only huts.

Finally his people at home began to sing to him, begging him to return:

Palm nuts come home, oh;	Ikin bọ wa-(i)le-o,
The annual festival is calling you, oh;	Qdun ma pe-o,
Erigiabọla.	Erigiabọla.
Palm tree come home, oh;	Qpẹ bọ wa-(i)le-o,
The annual festival is calling you, oh;	Qdun ma pe-o,
Erigiabọla.	Erigiabọla.
Palm nuts come home, oh;	Ikin bọ wa-(i)le-o,
The annual festival is dancing, oh;	Qdun ma jo-o,
Erigiabọla.	Erigiabọla.

When Ẹla heard this song, he used something⁶ and flew back through the air; it is what is now known as an airplane. When he landed, he called his wives and asked how they had been treated by his other pupils, whom he had left behind with them. They said that the ones who had yams had shared them with them, and those who had money had given them some.

Ẹla then called these teachers. He shaved their heads, leaving a spot of hair as he wore his, and in it he put a red feather from the tail of the parrot.⁷ The last man he shaved had a bald spot in the middle of his head, so he left the spot of hair off to one side, and that is the way the Awọni wear their hair until this very day. He placed each of his faithful teachers in a quarter of the town, and told the townspeople to go to the one in their quarter and learn from him. Those whom he had driven to the coast, who wore long trousers, returned their palm nuts and refused to serve him. They are the educated Christians of Lagos; and when they return to Ifẹ, they try to get their revenge by cheating the people Ẹla left there.

Idowu (1962: 101-102) considers Ẹla distinct from and older than Qrunmila, although he cites a saying that Ẹla is the child of Agbọnniregun. At one point Agbọnbọn said that Qrunmila was the son of Ẹla, but he then told the

6. This probably refers to a magical charm known as "carrier medicine" (ogun egbe). See verse 170-3.

7. Later Agbọnbọn explained that Ẹla created this hair style so that his faithful teachers would be taken care of by others, and explained that all who wear it receive free meals.

myth that gives Èla as an earlier name for Qrunmila. These differences of opinion arise from the Ifa verses, which give contradictory accounts. The following myth, ascribed to Ogunda Meji by the Ilesà diviner who told it, makes Qrunmila the predecessor of Èla:

One day Qlqfin, the king, sent for Qrunmila. Qrunmila was just about to prepare a sacrifice with a chicken, and he could not leave it unfinished. After the sacrifice he shared the chicken with his sons. He gave a wing to Ibqru, a wing to Ibqye, and a leg to Ibqsişş (see Chapter III). He took his iron walking stick (qpa qrerę) and stuck it in the ground at Qlqfin's palace. When he had divined for the king, he returned home. Five days later Qlqfin sent for him again.

Meanwhile, Qlqfin's three hunters (Arísítasí, Arísítasí, and Àtàmàtásí) went to the forest to hunt elephant. They shot an elephant together, but it did not die. It came to the square in front of Qlqfin's palace and put its trunk on the palace wall. When they saw this wonder, they called Ogunnipętę, the diviner of the house of the Alara, and Qgbqntęrę, the diviner of the Ajero, and diviner Jewejimq, and diviner Apaja Oji. They cut open the elephant and in its bowels they found a bundle wrapped in white cloth. Inside it was a covered calabash, and in the calabash they found a new-born babe with a beard and with white hair on his head; in each fist were eight palm nuts (ikin). Qlqfin exclaimed that he had never seen such a thing in his life, and then he sent for Qrunmila. When Qrunmila arrived, Qlqfin reported what had happened, and Qrunmila began to sing:

"What do we call the new-born babe?

"He is the one called Èla.

"How can we know the new-born babe?

"He is the one we call Èla, son of Origi."

In accounting for the reason why the worshipers of all other deities consult Ifa, an Qyq diviner cited the following myth, attributed to Qşş Ogunda: Pa bi qsanja, Dęrędęrę bi okun ole, and Onşqkqşş ni ta Qba where the three diviners who cast Ifa for Ifa when Death, Illness, Loss, Court Case, and Fight were coming to attack the people on earth. They told him to offer one he-goat, lots of money, five covered calabashes (igbademu), cudgels (kumq, olugbongbo), palm oil, indigo dye, blood, and cold water as an atonement (etutu). He put the atonement outside his house and waited. Death came and drank the dye. Illness came and drank the blood. Loss came and drank the palm oil. Court Case came and drank the cold water. Fight came, but he found nothing to drink, so he started to fight with the others. The five evils took up the cudgels and began to beat each other, and the people on earth were saved. Since then the ancestral guardian souls of all the people Ifa saved belong to him, and everyone on earth relies on him. This is the reason why the worshipers of the God of Thunder, the God of Iron, the river goddesses, and all other deities consult the diviners and make the sacrifices that they prescribe.

Ifę diviners consistently name Ifę as the town where Ifa lived when he came from heaven, and Oketaşş as his compound. In recent years a large concrete temple for Ifa has been erected at Oketaşş compound, the home of

the Araba of Ifẹ, with funds contributed by babalawo from many parts of Nigeria. Ifẹ is acknowledged by the Fṛn (Herskovits, 1938: II, 202; Maupoil, 1943: 32) and the Ewe (Spieth, 1911: 189) as the source from which Ifa divination was derived.

Sometimes Ifa is associated with Ifẹ or Ado or both, but there are several towns known as Ado. One Mękṛ diviner named Ifẹ as his home. Another said that, although he came from Ifẹ, his proper town is Ado Ewi, which he said was near Ado Ekiti, east of Ilesṛ; here one may see the first palm tree and the figures of Ifa marked on the stones. A diviner from nearby Ilara said Ifa came from the sea to Ifẹ and then went to Ado Ewi near Ado Ekiti, and that Ado Ewi is his proper town, where one can see his sacred palm tree with sixteen fronds. However, as an Ilesṛ diviner pointed out, Ewi is the title of the king of Ado Ekiti, so that Ado Ewi is Ado Ekiti and not a separate town; he held that Ifa came from Ifẹ, but that he traveled around, staying at Ado Ekiti, Ilesṛ, and other towns.

According to an Igana diviner the figures of Ifa are to be seen marked on stone not at Ado Ekiti but at Ado Awaiye, sixteen miles south of Isẹyin; Ado Awaiye is the father of all towns named Ado, and Ifa practiced as a diviner there for a long time; but his proper home is on Oke Gęti⁸ in Ifẹ, where he was born and where he finally became a deity. There is a very large granite outcropping near Ado Awaiye, on top of which I have seen bed-rock mortars ground into the stone; perhaps these holes are referred to as the figures of Ifa, but they are also found in other parts of Yoruba territory, including Igana. Bowen (1858: xvi) says, "The head-quarters of Ifa are at Ado, a village on top of an immense rock near Awaye," which was still inhabited in 1884 (Chausse and Holley, 1885: 89-90). Burton (1863: I, 189) refers to "a mountain near Awaye, a gigantic cone of granite eight to ten miles in circumference, seen from the distance of several days' journey towering solitary above the landscape, and surmounted, it is said, by a palm-tree, bearing sixteen boughs" (see also Maupoil, 1943: 42).

An Qyṛ diviner said that Ifa stayed first in Ifẹ and then in many towns, including Ado Awaiye, where he became a deity and where his palm tree and the sixteen figures are to be seen; Ado Ekiti; and Iręsa beyond Benin; and on Oke Igbeti in heaven. An Ifa verse from Qkanran Edi states that at one point Ifa went to Ado Ayiwṛ (unidentified) to live (Epega, n.d.: V, 11; Lijadu, 1923: 59). Benin City is also known as Ado, and there is still another Ado thirteen miles north of Badagry. Ifa is associated with Ado as well as Ifẹ, but there is disagreement as to which Ado is meant.

Aside from the deities, many other elements of the Yoruba system of belief appear in the verses, including twins (ibeji), children who are "born to die" (abiku), witches (aję, ara aiye, iya mi), and a variety of evil spirits. Also mentioned are dreams (1-7, 7-1, 35-7, 101-1, 175-2) and omens (175-2), oaths (166-1, 256-3) and ordeals (166-1, 246-4), curses (225-1, 248-4, 246-3) and the evil eye (167-1), and various good and bad charms or medi-

8. An Ife diviner also mentions Oke Gęti as the home of Ifa's father, without revealing its location except to deny that it is in heaven.

cines. Prominent in the verses, and more directly associated with the beliefs underlying Ifa divination, are the related concepts of destiny and the ancestral guardian soul.⁹

The Yoruba believe in multiple souls, but beliefs about them vary from place to place and from individual to individual. The breath (*emi*) resides in the lungs and chest and is man's vital force; the shadow (*ojiji*), which follows him about but has no function, is recognized as a second soul in *Oyo* and in *Mekko* but was not mentioned as such in *Ife*; the ancestral guardian soul (*eleda*, *iponri*, *ipin*), which has no sensible manifestation, is associated with the head and is often referred to as the "owner of the head" (*olori*).

The importance of the ancestral guardian soul was repeatedly stressed by informants. "The *iponri* is worshiped by everyone, by kings and by the poor alike." "The head is more important to everyone than their own deity." "It is greater than the deities that turned into stone." Its importance is due in large part to its relationship with the individual's fate and his luck, which is also associated with the head. Good things come to a lucky person with little apparent effort, but an unlucky person is not only unfortunate in his own affairs; he also brings bad luck to his relatives and associates. A lucky person is called "one who has a good head" (*olori rere*) or "one who has a good ancestral guardian soul" (*eleda rere*), whereas an unlucky person is one who has a bad head or ancestral guardian (*olori buruku*, *eleda buruku*). Calling someone *olori buruku* is likely to lead to a fight, because it is an insult to his ancestral guardian soul and thus almost a curse.

The ancestral guardian soul is specifically associated with the forehead (*iwaju*), the crown (*atari*, *ayujẹ*), and the occiput (*ipakọ*). Many Yoruba believe that all three parts of the head are controlled by a single soul,¹⁰ that of the ancestral guardian; but *Ife* diviners maintain they are associated with three distinct souls. According to one, these three souls remain in the head until death, when all three go to heaven, where the ancestral guardian gives an account of all the good and evil that the person did on earth. As in a court trial on earth, a good person is released and then can be reborn, but bad persons are held and punished. It is the ancestral guardian who is a member of his "council in heaven" and who takes to heaven the sacrifices which the person makes to his own head. The only way to sacrifice to the ancestral guardian soul is to sacrifice to the head (*bo ori*), and anything that is given to the forehead or the occiput goes to the ancestral guardian soul in the crown, but is shared with the other two. Another *Ife* diviner said that the ancestral guardian soul is the senior, followed by the forehead, with the occiput the youngest. He maintained that each individual has two ancestral guardians, one residing in his head and the other in heaven. The one in heaven is his individual spiritual counterpart, or double, which is doing exactly

9. For further details see Bascom (1960: 401-410) and Idowu (1962: 169-185).

10. This is true in *Mekko*, and would account for the fact that the diviners there employ only four symbols when asking to whom *adimu* should be offered (see Chapter V).

the same things in heaven that he himself is doing on earth; it is always in adult form, even when the living individual is still a child.

One of the verses (248-1) mentions the character's spiritual double in heaven as "his second person of heaven" (ɛnikeji rɛ ɔrun). Another tells how Ifa came to be the intermediary of the ancestral guardian soul, collecting for him whatever sacrifices he requires and carrying them to him (111-1). To retain the support and protection of the ancestral guardian soul it is necessary to offer sacrifices to the head as prescribed by the diviners, and in Ife an additional annual sacrifice is also required.

Suicides never reach heaven and, having renounced earth, belong to neither; they become evil spirits and cling to the treetops like bats or butterflies. Criminals and other wicked persons are condemned to the bad heaven (ɔrun buburu), which is described as hot like pepper and is sometimes spoken of as the "heaven of potsherds" (ɔrun apadi), referring to something broken beyond repair, for they can never be restored to the living through reincarnation. Those who have been good on earth reach the good heaven (ɔrun rere), which is also called the heaven of contentment (ɔrun alafia) or the heaven of breezes (ɔrun afɛfɛ). Here the air is fresh and everything is good, the wrongs of earth are righted, the multiple souls are reunited, and life is much as it is on earth. Here they remain until they are reborn, returning to earth in another generation, but usually in the same lineage so that they can rejoin their children. As in many other African societies the lineage is a self-perpetuating group that includes the departed ancestors, the living, and those yet to be born; the Yoruba belief in reincarnation gives this notion a cyclical and endless character. An ancestral guardian soul may be reborn again and again in succeeding generations.

One of the functions of Ifa divination is to determine which ancestral soul is reincarnated in a newborn child and what tabus he or she should observe. In Ife it is necessary to identify the ancestral guardian soul in order to know the correct day to offer annual sacrifices to it. For this purpose a diviner, who must be an olodu, is consulted shortly after a child is born, and the verse selected may reveal which occupation he is most likely to be successful in and other elements of his destiny. The figure cast on this occasion is in some ways a chart of the child's future life, and it may be carved into a piece of calabash shell (Figure 3) so that it will not be forgotten; the "feet" at the bottom are so that the figure will not be misinterpreted by being read upside down. As soon as an individual is old enough to memorize the figure, the carving can be thrown away; but if his parents should die while he is still young, he can have the carving interpreted by a diviner when he grows up.

Before a child is born (or reborn), the ancestral guardian soul appears before Qlɔrun to receive a new body (shaped by the God of Whiteness), a new breath, and its fate or destiny (iwa) during its new life on earth. Kneeling before Qlɔrun, this soul is given the opportunity to choose its own destiny, and it is believed to be able to make any choice it wishes, although Qlɔrun may refuse if the requests are not made humbly or if they are unreasonable. Destiny involves the individual's character, occupation, and success, which can be modified by human acts and by superhuman beings and forces; and it

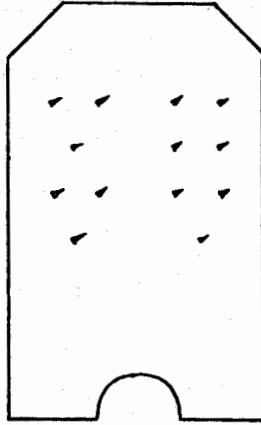


FIGURE 3. PIECE OF CALABASH SHELL
MARKED WITH QKANRAN OFUN

involves a fixed day upon which the souls must return to heaven. This day cannot be altered except by suicide, as noted above. It cannot be postponed by prayers, sacrifices, magic, or any other means. The allotted span of life can never be extended, but it can be shortened by offended deities, by evil spirits, by "witches," by the curses or evil magic of one's enemies, by swearing falsely, at human hands as punishment for crimes, and in other ways. If one has the full support and protection of his ancestral guardian soul, of *Ql̄orun*, and of his personal deity, he will live out his allotted span of life, but if not he will die before his time.

Those who are killed before their time is up become ghosts and remain on earth until their appointed day arrives. Those who die naturally because they are old and have lived out their allotted span of life go directly to heaven. They are spoken of as "one who has (his) day" (*q̄l̄ōj̄q̄*), meaning that he has reached the day assigned by *Ql̄orun*. A child who dies when only a few years or even a few days old may also have done so. As one diviner explained, if a child dies at an early age or is born dead, its breath and ancestral guardian soul report to heaven, and may be sent back to earth immediately to be reborn again, and this time the child may live to a ripe old age. However, there are other children who are *abiku*, or "one born to die" (*a-bi-ku*). If a woman has several children in succession who die at childbirth or in infancy, or even when older, they may not be several sets of souls who die early but one *abiku* being repeatedly reborn only to return shortly to heaven. It has been granted a short life span by *Ql̄orun* because it does not want to remain long on earth but prefers to go back and forth between earth and heaven.

A person's destiny determines, within limits, whether he will be lucky or unlucky, rich or poor, kind or cruel, wise or foolish, popular or unpopular, and it determines the number of children he will have. It also prescribes for him the occupation he should follow. If an apprentice learns

quickly or can do better work than his teacher, people know that his skill was given to him by Ql̩run as part of his destiny. If he is insane, feeble-minded, or sick, and if his affliction cannot be traced to evil-doers, they say that it came from Ql̩run.

A diviner explained that an individual cannot basically change his own destiny, but he can spoil it by breaking a tabu (ewo) and others can spoil it for him through the use of medicine (ogun) or witchcraft (aje). The role of Ifa is to improve one's lot by advising what must be done to keep an evil destiny from being as bad as it might otherwise be, and to ensure that one receives all his blessings if his destiny is good. In one of the verses (225-1) the client is told that "he has come from heaven with a bad head," but that he should sacrifice so that "his luck may not be completely bad."

Destiny (iwa) is specifically mentioned in seventeen of the 186 verses recorded, and there are also frequent references to the head and the ancestral guardian soul. "Head who had knelt and chosen his destiny" is being prevented from achieving it by slanderers (4-1). A son "comes from heaven bearing his calabash of destiny" (52-1). Ql̩run will "put the calabash of destiny into his hands" (245-3), has sent someone a "pouch of destiny" (54-8), will "open the road of destiny for him" (54-1), and "create a large market of destiny" for someone (256-1). "Ql̩run wants to give the lamp of destiny to someone" (244-1), he will "kindle the fire of destiny for him (18-3), and "there is a man to whom Ql̩run will give destiny . . . the fire of his destiny will continue to dance up high" (245-1). Someone's head will "bring him to a place where he will achieve his destiny" (35-3, 52-3, 255-1), he should go seek his destiny (181-4), and he is warned to sacrifice "so that his destiny may not spoil" (225-3). Ifa is involved in a few instances. Qrunmila "gives someone his destiny" (9-1), "Ifa will set his destiny in order" (14-2), and "An Ifa has taken all his destiny and hidden it" (255-3) but will "open the road" if a sacrifice is made.

The verses also speak of someone in trouble "because he has come from heaven with a bad head" (225-1), of "someone who was given an easy lot by Ql̩run when he came from heaven" (250-2), and of someone who cannot be harmed by sacrifices and charms because "from heaven Ql̩run has sent him" (246-1). One verse says, "Whatever Ql̩run has made, he has not left unfinished" (248-1), and another carries the meaning "As the Sky God has ordained things, so they are destined to be forever" (35-6). Informants noted that when destiny is mentioned in the Ifa verses, it almost always means great good fortune: money, wives, children, a fine house, a title, many followers, a good character, a good reputation, fame, long life, and anything else that one might desire. However, it does not mean that one may postpone the appointed day upon which his souls return to heaven.

Ql̩run, the Sky God, rather than Ifa, clearly emerges as the God of Destiny. He assigns each individual's destiny at birth and, if he so pleases, helps him to achieve it. As noted above, he may also intervene in human lives to give wives and children and to bestow other blessings which their destinies have in store for them. An individual's destiny is chosen by the ancestral guardian soul which is reincarnated in him, and which watches over him throughout life and protects him unless it is offended. Except for

the appointed day upon which an individual's several souls must return to heaven, destiny is not fixed and unalterable. It sets a chart for one's life which can bring many blessings if it is followed, but in order to achieve his destiny and to live out his allotted span, one must offer the proper prayers and sacrifices, employ protective medicines, and behave correctly in other ways.

Eshu and Ifa are *Olṣrun's* agents and intermediaries. Sacrifices are not offered directly to *Olṣrun*, but rather through Eshu, who carries them to heaven. Eshu serves both *Olṣrun* and Ifa by punishing those who fail to sacrifice and helping those who sacrifice to gain their rewards. When the God of Thunder is angered, he can kill a person with lightning, and the other deities also have specialized means of "fighting with" those who offend them, but they may also call upon Eshu to use the variety of punishments at his command. *Olṣrun*, apparently, must rely solely on Eshu on such occasions. Despite his reputation as a trouble-maker and evil-doer, which is admitted freely by his own worshipers, in the verses Eshu is remarkably even-handed in his role as a divine enforcer.

Ifa is the one who transmits and interprets the wishes of *Olṣrun* to mankind, and who prescribes the sacrifices that Eshu carries to him. The importance of Ifa divination may well be due to the fact that, except for prayers, it apparently provides the most direct access to *Olṣrun*, who controls man's destinies. It provides a knowledge of what destiny lies ahead in life, what occupation should be followed, what special tabus are to be observed, which ancestral guardian soul is to receive annual sacrifices, and which deity an individual is to worship. (It provides a means of determining what sacrifices are necessary to achieve one's destiny, to receive the blessings that have been promised, and to live out the full span of life that has been assigned.) It also tells when special sacrifices are required by the ancestral guardian soul, by that of one's father or mother or by the many different deities, and when medicine should be prepared. It can give warning against witches, evil spirits, bad medicine, curses, ordeals, and broken oaths. Because the verses and predictions touch on such a wide range of religious beliefs and prescribe sacrifices to so many different "supernatural" beings and forces, Ifa divination is the focal point in Yoruba religion.

An individual had his own personal deity and sometimes worshiped that of his father and mother as well, but he did not give offerings to the hundreds of other Yoruba gods unless he was instructed to do so by a diviner. But all believers in the Yoruba religion turned to Ifa in time of trouble, and on the advice of the *babalawo* all sacrificed to Eshu and through him to *Olṣrun*. This important trinity is public and available to all, and together *Olṣrun*, Ifa, and Eshu grant and assist men to achieve the destiny which is assigned each individual before his ancestral soul is reborn.

The predictions of the *babalawo* also give practical advice for the client's own behavior, and give warning against slanderers, enemies, and other malefactors. Throughout life an individual consults Ifa in case of illness or trouble, when new ventures are to be undertaken, and when important decisions are to be made. When he cannot solve a problem through his own efforts, he may have first recourse to his personal deity or to charms and

medicines, but if these fail or if he wishes to learn what lies ahead or which course to follow, he consults a diviner.

The ancestral guardian soul, the deities, evil spirits, witches, charms and medicines, curses, oaths, and ordeals were matters of serious belief, and religion in its various forms permeated all aspects of Yoruba life. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that the Yoruba were resigned to uncontrollable destinies, or that they were content to rely on divination and other religious practices to solve all their problems. Several Yoruba proverbs clearly convey the message that "God helps those who help themselves," and some show an almost skeptical attitude toward these religious beliefs: "Bravery by itself is as good as magic." "A Chief is calling you and you are casting Ifa; if Ifa speaks of blessing and the chief speaks of evil, what then?" "A charm for invisibility is no better than finding a big forest to hide in; a sacrifice is no better than many supporters; and a deity to lift me on to a platform is no better than having a horse to ride away on."¹¹

11. "Aiya nini to ogun lọtọ." "Arẹ npe ọ o nd(a)-Ifa, b(i)-Ifa rẹ fọ ire, bi Arẹ fọ ibi, nkọ?" "Aferi kan ko ju bi ka ri igbo nla ba si lọ; ẹbọ kan ko ju ọpọ enia lọ; oriṣa gbe mi le atete ko ju ori ẹṣin lọ."

XII. THE DIVINATION VERSES

The verses, containing both the predictions and the sacrifices, constitute the core of Ifa divination. The choice of the correct verse from those memorized by the diviner is the crucial point in any consultation, and it is made by the client himself in full knowledge of his own problem. The figures themselves, which are shared with other widely distributed systems of divination, and the mechanism by which the correct figure is selected, are only means to the end of selecting the correct verse. The verses provide the key to the ultimate goal, that of determining the sacrifice required to solve the client's problem. Once the sacrifice has been offered, matters again rest in the hands of the gods.

The 186 verses published here represent fewer than a fifth of the number that an Ife diviner is expected to have memorized before he begins to practice, yet they constitute a sizable sample and can be regarded as randomly chosen. Except for a test of the relationships between the verses and myths and folktales, described below, the choice of the verses was left up to the informants. It is worth noting that there was strong opposition by some of the diviners to the recording of these verses, which they considered as professional secrets whose publication might be to their economic disadvantage. As a result, nearly all were dictated by a single diviner. While the number published here is insufficient to justify their anxieties, their attitude confirms the importance of the verses to the system of divination.

This study may take some of the mystery out of Ifa divination, but it certainly does not permit the reader to divine for himself, since no verses are presented for 203 of the 256 figures. Had I attempted to record one verse for each figure, publication still would not have provided a satisfactory means of divination. More important, the fact that the client himself selects the appropriate verse might again have been missed, and the mistake of concluding that there is a single prediction, sacrifice, or governing deity for each figure might have been repeated.

Many other Yoruba and Fõn verses have been published in Yoruba, French, and English, but usually in a less complete form. The three major collections of Yoruba verses¹ are in Yoruba. In an attack on the teachings of Ifa, first published in 1901, Lijadu (1923) includes 105 verses. In defending Ifa, Beyioku (1940) gives seventy-four verses, duplicating Lijadu's third verse on page 5. The most important collection by Epega (n.d.), sold as

1. Two additional collections did not appear in time to be included in the following analysis of duplication of verses. The first, by Şowande (1965), contains eighty-nine verses in Yoruba for the first four paired figures and is the first mimeographed publication in a projected series. The second, by Abimbõla (forthcoming), contains sixty-four verses in Yoruba and English for the sixteen paired verses; I do not recall any duplicate verses in this manuscript in a hurried reading of it at Ibadan.

typewritten booklets, contains 621 verses and at least one verse for each of the 256 figures; of these, twenty-five to thirty are clearly duplicates of Lijadu's verses, but without evidence of plagiarism. Of the verses presented here, only three appear to duplicate those in these previous collections, although two more may be variants.

A version of one verse (18-11) is given by Beyioku (1940: 5, 27), whose first sentence is almost identical, letter for letter, but which varies somewhat toward the end. An abbreviated version of 33-1 is given by Epega (n.d.: II, 93-94), with the name *Ḙrukuku* instead of *Elemele*. Epega (n.d.: III, 19) has an abbreviated version of 18-10, but it is ascribed to a different figure, and a variant of verse 181-1 (Epega, n.d.: VIII, 14-16). Lijadu (1923: 26) gives a verse that is both reminiscent of and different from 239-1.

Beyioku (1940: 8) gives a verse that begins like 2-1, and another (1940: 32) whose introductory phrases resemble those of 86-1, but the remainder of these two verses are quite different. Similar introductory phrases are found in different verses (3-1, 3-2; 6-5, 6-6; 33-5, 33-6; 183-1, 183-2), even when they are associated with different figures (1-7, 4-3; 153-1, 167-1; 6-3, 247-4), so that these two need not be considered as variants. In addition, a truncated version of 256-3 is given by Idowu (1962: 52), although it is ascribed to a different figure. Except as noted, the verses are associated with the same figures in these collections as they were by my informants.

It would take years to determine the number of Ifa verses; those which are known vary not only from one diviner to another but also from one part of Yoruba territory to another. It is often stated, both in print and by informants, that there are sixteen verses for each figure, giving a total of 4,096 verses; but as sixteen is a mystical number in Ifa divination, this is only a conventionalized statement and perhaps even an underestimate. In Ife it is often maintained that while a diviner may begin to practice when he knows four verses for each figure, he ought to know sixteen; but both clients and diviners recognize that this is not the case, as diviners usually know fewer than this for most figures and more than this for a few figures (see Chapter VII). Individual diviners claimed to know fifty and eighty verses for *Ogbe Meji*, and one informant estimated that for this figure the total number might be in the neighborhood of two hundred, with considerably fewer for other figures. J. Johnson (Dennett, 1906: 247), followed by Dennett (1910: 148), Frobenius (1926: 184), and Farrow (1926: 39), says that for each figure there are 1680 verses, or a total of 430,080. This is completely unrealistic, but an estimate of 4,000 verses is probably conservative.

Because of the information these verses contain on theology, ritual, and social and political status, and because the information is accepted as truth rather than fiction, their importance extends beyond divination. As indicated earlier, the verses constitute the unwritten scriptures of Yoruba religion and have been aptly compared with the Bible by some literate Yoruba. Beyioku (1940) has attempted to relate them to astrology, the seasons, and modern science. A literate informant in Ife maintained that they contain four branches of knowledge: religion, history, medicine, and science, the latter referring to the explanations of characteristics of birds, animals, plants, metals, and various other objects given in the verses.

Viewed as a form of folklore and verbal art, the verses incorporate praise-names, song texts, incantations, myths or "myth-legends" (Bascom, 1965: 4-12), folktales, proverbs whose meanings are sometimes explained in the narratives (18-9, 170-1, 170-3), and even a riddle, used as a proverb (249-6). Tortoise, the trickster in Yoruba folktales, appears as a character in some verses (166-1, 168-1, 222-1, 225-4, 249-6), though more frequently Eshu, his divine counterpart, appears in this role. In Yoruba folktales Tortoise often replaces the babalawo, serving as adviser to the other animals, and one Fṛn myth tells how Tortoise was appointed by the Creator as the diviner for the birds and animals (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1958: 28).

The narratives in the Ifa verses resemble parables, and their function is similar to that of European exempla, tales used by priests during the Middle Ages as illustrations of their sermons. By providing exemplifications in the form of what happened to mythological characters under similar circumstances, they give added point and meaning to verses which otherwise would be curt or obscure. Frequently they serve to justify the prediction or some of the sacrificial materials, and they consistently suggest the importance of performing the sacrifices promptly and as directed.

Structurally the verses follow several different patterns, but one pattern predominates. Most verses may be considered to consist of three parts, (1) the statement of the mythological case which serves as a precedent, (2) the resolution or outcome of this case, and (3) its application to the client. This structure may be illustrated by one of the briefer verses (181-3):

(1) "One does not have truth in his belly and put wickedness in his stomach for nothing" was the one who cast Ifa for the God of Medicine. They said he should make a sacrifice lest something should stop the voice in his throat. Three cocks and one shilling seven pence eight oninis is the sacrifice.

(2) "When the God of Medicine made the sacrifice, he offered only one cock. From that time on his voice does not carry far, and he talks with a very tiny voice.

(3) "Ifa says that this person should sacrifice so that something will not take away his voice and so that people will not say, "Why is he talking this way with a tiny voice like that of the God of Medicine?"

(1) The first portion of the verse names the diviner or diviners (in quotation marks) and the mythological character (the God of Medicine) who came to consult them. It states his problem or, as in this case, the prediction made for him, and it usually names the items that he did or did not sacrifice. The case of the mythological character serves as a precedent for the client, if his problem is similar. (2) The second part explains what happened to the mythological character as a result of having made, or failed to make, the prescribed sacrifice. This may be stated briefly, or expanded at considerable length by introducing a Yoruba myth. Its purpose is to explain the first portion, which is often obscure. (3) The third portion is a statement made directly to the client, giving the prediction and in some cases stating the sacrifice that is required.

The diviners do not analyze the verses into the three sections above, but they do differentiate between the myth or "history" (itan) which some verses incorporate and the rest of the verse. The verses are known as rows (εσε), and are sometimes referred to as odu, the same word that is used for the figures of Ifa, or as the praise names (oriki, okiki, ekiki) of Ifa.

Occasionally one of the three portions may be omitted and the order of the second and third portions is sometimes reversed. Four verses omit the mythological case that usually serves as a precedent. One of these (18-8) begins with obscure phrases which resemble those identified as diviner's names, but there is no reference to a mythological client or his problem. Another (19-1) begins with phrases referring to attempts to kill someone by magic, which is the prediction made. Neither of these verses has a narrative, but two others (9-1, 247-2) begin simply by naming the two central figures in the tale without reference to their problems.

A different structure is found in nine of the verses (1-1, 1-2, 6-1, 18-5, 18-12, 35-2, 111-2, 137-1). This is illustrated in the first verse (1-1), which begins, "Qrunmila says it should be done bit by bit; I say it is bit by bit that we eat the head of the rat . . ." In this instance neither the sacrifice nor the prediction is specified, though both are in other cases. The introductory "Qrunmila says" (or "He says") is repeated two, three, four, or five times, and in one instance (18-5) a tale about Qrunmila is incorporated.

In the more general pattern, the initial phrases are interpreted by the diviners as praise-names (oriki, okiki, ekiki) of diviners who were consulted by mythological characters in the remote past. Some are similar in form to the praise-names given to animals, plants, and various objects, as in "Smoke is the glory of the fire; lightning is the glory of rain; a big cloth is the glory of Egungun" (18-2). A number are adapted to divination in the following form, "Pouncing, the diviner of cat" (222-2), "Roots, the diviner of the base of the palm tree" (54-5), "Leaf sprouts, the diviner of the top of Eggplant" (166-1).

Like other praise-names, these initial phrases often resemble proverbs in their form of statement. Many also share the exaggerated overstatement characteristic of Yoruba proverbs, and some may well be proverbs that were once in current use: "Two people cannot sleep on a duiker hide" (54-4). "Mud does not float a boat" (183-4). "Eyelashes do not gather dew" (35-4). "An old cow does not speak" (86-2). "Fly does not display beads for sale" (204-1). "A hoe handle has a head, but it does not have brains" (35-1). "The back of Vulture's head resembles an axe handle, but it cannot split wood" (35-5). "A wall covers one's eyes, but does not close one's ears" (33-1). "The one who doesn't go to sleep knows where the sun rises" (55-1). "Thunder does not crash during the harmattan; lightning does not flash secretly . . ." (86-1). "The spittoon with a small mouth is drawn close to the cushion" (111-1). "One who does not build a house still does not have to sleep in the tree top; one who does not hoe yams still does not have to eat dirt; an elder who learns Ifa does not have to eat stale kola nuts" (131-1). Similar phrases are identified in the verses as praise-names of the mythological characters, as, for example, "Farm hut stands watch in the farm but does not catch thieves," a name for the Spotted Hyena (35-3).

The poetic imagery of some of these names is one of the aesthetic features of the Ifa verses. "Thin moon on the side of the sky, thin evening star in the crescent of the moon" (1-6). "Night falls and we spread our sleeping mats, day breaks and we roll them up; one who lays the warp threads must walk back and forth . . ." (14-1). "Horse awakes in the morning; it takes the bit in its mouth" (35-6). "Vulture's feathers reach to his thighs; for the rest he wears trousers" (7-3). "Hips act indifferently but they get to sit on the mat; nets act gently but they hold their loads firmly" (181-1).

On the other hand, these names often contain archaic words whose meanings are not known to the diviners themselves; they have been simply committed to rote memory without being understood. As a result they are sometimes impossible to translate, and there may be unavoidable errors in the translations that have been attempted.

In many cases it is impossible to tell whether the names refer to one or to several diviners, and the informants could not help in this matter. The divisions that have been made in the interests of intelligibility are often purely subjective. A number of verses (e.g. 1-7, 1-11, 2-2, 3-4, 4-1) obviously name only a single diviner, and three (1-4, 244-2, 247-2) clearly distinguish two diviners. In these three cases, moreover, the initial phrases are clearly identified as the names of diviners, supporting the interpretation of the Ife diviners.

The names of the diviners are followed by an indefinite phrase "a da fun" or "a d(a)-Ifa fun," which has been translated as "were the ones who cast Ifa for" the mythological character, who is then named. This might also mean "was cast for" and the initial passages have sometimes been interpreted as the prediction stated in proverbial form (Bertho, 1936: 372; Alapini, 1950: 86-90). This interpretation is suggested by several verses in which the initial passages relate to the problem of the mythological character. ". . . If a friend is exceedingly dear, he is like the child of one's own mother" a da fun Qrunmila when he was going to befriend Eshu (1-9). "Death kindles a fire of epin wood; disease kindles a fire of ita wood; Witches and Eshu kindle a fire of munrun-munrun wood" a da fun Qrunmila when his child's health was not good (256-4). Other examples (2-3, 241-4, 250-1, 250-3) are to be found, but not in sufficient number to justify this interpretation. Generally, there is no recognizable relation between the meaning of the initial phrases and the character's problem or its outcome.

The characters named as clients in the case which serves as a precedent include well-known deities like Şango (243-1), Orişala (5-1, 103-2, 241-3), Olokun (54-4), Qsanyin (181-3), Yewa (183-4), Qramfe, and Oluorogbo or Orişala (17-1), and Qrunmila or Ifa himself who appears in this role in twenty-two of the verses recorded. Personifications of the figures of Ifa appear both as central characters (18-7, 20-2, 35-1, 35-5, 247-1) and as diviners. The 400 Deities are clients in one verse (256-3), and the 400 Deities on the Right and the 200 Deities on the Left in another (249-1). Among the other characters are Egungun (52-4); the Oluyare (247-5); Araba, the head priest of Ifa (17-4); Ojughbede, head of the blacksmiths and a priest of Ogun (7-3); the mother of the priest of Qsara (18-1); Aganna, identified as the assistant rain-maker at Qyq (250-1); Ojigigbogi, the diviner in heaven (33-2), and Witch (3-3).

Unidentified Yoruba kings (Ọlọfin) appear as clients in a number of verses (2-2, 35-7, 225-2, 225-4), as well as in other roles, and in two cases (1-1, 175-2) the reference is to the Ọni of Ifẹ. Of all the kings mentioned specifically by title, the Alara of Ara appears most frequently (6-1, 33-4, 101-1, 225-3, 249-3), but the Ajero of Ijero (249-3), the Ewi of Ado Ekiti (247-2), the Ọlọfa of Ọfa (2-3), and children of the Ọni of Ifẹ (204-1) and of the Alafin of Ọyọ (18-3, 204-1) are also clients. Ọna Iṣokun, an important chief at Ọyọ (18-6), and Lọwa Ijaruwa, the important Ifẹ chief (249-5) are also named as central characters. In some verses the divination was for the people of Ilabesan (222-1), the people of Igbade (244-2), the people of Mọrẹ, a quarter in Ifẹ (6-2, 6-5, 6-6), all the people of Ifẹ (24-1), and all the people of the world (236-1).

Other clients are Banana (1-3), Maize (248-2), Benniseed (86-3), Cactus (6-4), Kola (239-2), and the Ọdan Tree (52-2); Vulture (1-5, 5-2, 241-1, 248-1), Vulturine Fish Eagle (248-1), Orange-Cheeked Waxbill (20-3), Pigeon (19-3, 33-1), Dove (33-1, 33-3), Cock (123-1), the Agbe vird (17-2) and the Olubutu bird (255-1); Lion (2-1), Leopard (167-1), Cat (1-12, 222-2), Hyena (35-3), Treebear (18-2), Grass Mouse (54-8), Porcupine (55-1), Sheep (Ewe) of Ipopo (18-11), Python (54-2), Lizard (54-5), Chameleon (225-1), two kinds of Frog (55-2, 170-1, 170-2, 170-3), Tortoise (168-1), Snail (20-1), a small shell like a periwinkle (54-7), King of the Termites (54-1), and Fly (245-2); Ereje, identified as the mother of Ram, Elephant, and Buffalo (86-1); and Olokunde, the mother of Horse and Breadfruit tree (5-3). He-goat, Ram, and Cock appear together as clients (18-6); as do Brass, Lead, and Iron (35-6), Maize Beer, Palm Wine, and Bamboo Wine (54-6); Urine, Spit, and Semen (241-2); and Month, Grindstone, and the mother of Waterside Garden (250-2). The 165 kinds of animals (166-1, 249-6), the 165 kinds of rats (246-4), the 165 kinds of trees (33-2, 183-1), the 165 kinds of leaves (250-3), and the 165 kinds of cloths plus Calico (18-4) appear jointly as clients. Other clients are Cloth (255-4), Dye and Mordant (183-2), Cutlass (243-2), Hook (4-4), Rod (2-1), Trumpet (246-2), Calabash of shea butter (241-4), Head (4-1), Eye (35-4, 256-1), Penis (4-2), Sun (1-6, 52-1), the Mother of Sun (103-1), the Mother of Rain (18-11), Earth (181-1, 181-4), Fire (222-3, 245-1), Road (17-3), Storehouse (243-4), Termite Hill (33-5, 33-6), Yam Heap (19-2), and Refuse Heap (247-3).

Characters of similar types appear in other roles in the verses, while those named as clients also include a number of whom the diviner may know nothing more than what is told in the verse itself, as, for example, Odogbo (3-1, 3-2), "Quavering Voice" (7-5), the "Seller of bean fritters at Eriwoṅ" (243-3), and Sereke, the child of "Priest who kills eight hundred tortoises to eat" (255-2). In some of these instances the description of the client seems related to his problem, as in the case of Rascal (7-1), "Strong but stupid elder" (7-4), and it is clearly so in the case of Barren Woman (4-3).

It seems likely that there is more meaning in some of the verses than was understood by the diviners from whom they were recorded. The Ọyọ title, Ọna Iṣokun (18-6), cited above, was not recognized, for example, but was interpreted as meaning the road to the town of Iṣokun. In another case (9-2) subsequent work with worshippers of Ṣọpọna and Boromun, the deities

of smallpox and yaws, made it possible to identify the character Olugodo as the Lord of Yaws, and his parent Ẹkunlempe as the God of Smallpox. In a third verse (183-4) the name Yewa was interpreted as a contraction of "our mother" (yeye-wa), which makes sense in its context; but Yewa is also the Goddess of the River Yewa, near the Dahomean border, and is associated with raphia, which is mentioned in the verse. Finally, although the informant's interpretation may have some validity in Ife, the narrative in one verse (153-1) is clearly related to a myth in Mèkọ which explains why the worshippers of Qya, Goddess of the River Niger and principal wife of Şango, the God of Thunder, sacrifice to buffalo horns, and why Qya is also known as Iyansan or Yansan.

The second segment of the verse, stating what happened to the mythological character, may be expanded into a myth, as in this case, or it may be briefly stated as in the example given earlier. As in the earlier example, this may be simply a direct statement rather than a narrative: "from that time on his voice does not carry far, and he talks with a very tiny voice" (181-3), or "ever since she made the sacrifice, witches have had power over human beings" (3-3). Some simply state that the character did or did not make the prescribed sacrifice (e.g. 86-3), and even this may be left unsaid (1-6, 1-9, 5-2, 86-2); but in such cases what the character did and what the consequences were are generally clearly implied. Other verses relate a sequence of events so briefly that they hardly constitute a narrative: "He did not sacrifice. He took the woman as his wife. Afterward sores confined him to his house, and caused him to die" (1-12).

According to some diviners, each verse should have a narrative, even if they themselves do not know it. About fifty of the verses recorded include fairly long narratives, some of which are well-known myths and folktales; about twenty others have briefer tales associated with them. Some of the latter have barely the minimal requirements to be considered as prose narratives: "When these three children of the same mother were told to sacrifice against death, Brass sacrificed and Lead made an atonement, but Iron said that the diviners were telling lies. He said that as the Sky God had ordained things, so they are destined to be forever. The sacrifice that Iron refused to make is what is eating him away. Since that time if Iron has been buried in the ground for as long as four years, he begins to rust and spoil. But the sacrifice that Brass and Lead made is what prevents them from spoiling even if they stay in the ground for many years" (35-6). Only one of these minimal narratives (48-1) appears in the published collections of Yoruba folklore, but other tales of comparable simplicity do (Ogumefu, 1929: 2-3, 5-6, 6-7, 17-18).

Some of these "minimal narratives" are summaries of longer tales. The story of Eshu's two-colored hat (48-1) is given in a much longer version by Frobenius (1913: I, 240-243), while the tale of Pigeon and Dove (33-1) is reduced to the following in the version recorded by Epega (n.d.: II, 93-94):

"'Ẹrukuku of the house' sacrificed; 'Ẹrukuku of the farm' did not sacrifice. 'Ẹrukuku of the farm' bore two children; 'Ẹrukuku of the house' bore two children. 'Ẹrukuku of the farm' said she did not sacrifice, but she had

born children. She built her house in the top of a Silk Cotton tree. A thunderstorm came and the tree fell, and both children of 'Erukuku of the farm' (Dove) died. She cried, 'The first or the second, she does not see (either). 'Erukuku of the house' (Pigeon), she cried, 'It touches the pot with its back; it does not die.'

One wonders in such cases whether the diviner learned only the abbreviated version or whether he simply did not recite the complete narrative.

Most of the myths appearing in the verses are aetiological or explanatory in nature. Malinowski (1954: 108-111) has argued that aetiological myths do not really "explain" anything; rather they state a precedent and provide a sanction for customs and institutions. The latter function is very important, but, as far as I can judge, these tales were accepted formerly as explanations of the characteristics of birds, animals, insects, plants, and other things, as well as of customs and details of rituals. These explanations are stated in terms of precedents, to be sure, as events that were believed to have happened, but this does not mean that they do not explain why something is as it is or should be done as it has been. There is a need to vouch for the antiquity of social and religious institutions, but hardly a need to justify the characteristics of brass, lead, and iron (35-6).

The verses account for the four "eyes" on the diviner's palm nuts (175-2); the fact that the diviners carry cow-tail switches (54-4); the role of Ifa in relation to the ancestral guardian soul (111-1); the use of she-goats instead of humans as sacrifices to Ifa (204-1); why Iwori Meji ranks third among the figures of Ifa (35-5); the "meaning" of the names of some of the Ifa figures (18-10, 20-2, 247-1, 249-2); the meaning of Olodumare, a praise-name of the Sky God (54-2); the meaning of Otu, the name of a group of Ife priests (181-4); and why certain songs are sung by these priests (181-4), for deities (6-5), and at funerals (183-4). They explain the origin of the tabu on the use of red cloths for burials (18-4); the use of the red parrot's tail feathers by the Oluyare, another group of Ife priests (247-5); why some deities are worshiped and others are not (249-1); the tiny voice in which the God of Medicine speaks (181-3); the fact that tortoises are sacrificed to him (168-1); and the fact that witches have the power to harm humans (3-3). They explain why no one on earth or in heaven can face the God of Thunder (243-1) and why Ram, his favorite sacrificial animal, paws the ground when it thunders, and lightning flashes (86-1).

They also explain why some trees live longer than others (183-1); why some are not destroyed by storms (33-2); why some leaves are useful for medicine while others are not (250-3); why *Euphorbia kamerunica* has thorns and is poisonous (6-4); why some plants can be used for fish poison (245-4); and why horses are poisoned by breadfruit (5-3). They explain why Lion is king of the animals (2-1) and Qkin is king of the birds, and why Olubutu, who was deposed, has red feathers (255-1); why Pigeon and Goat live in town and Dove and Leopard live in the forest (33-1, 167-1); how Cock got its long tail feather (123-1); how Vulture got its white head (1-5); why Vulture is not hungry when a catastrophe strikes a town (241-1); and why people kill the Vulturine Fish Eagle but not the Vulture (248-1). They explain why brass and lead do not rust like iron (35-6); why spit and urine do not produce children

like semen (241-2); why mordant drips, and the meaning of the sound of its dripping (183-2). They explain the fly's buzzing (245-2), the dove's call (33-3), the cock's crow (123-1), and the lion's roar (2-1). They account for the lines on the palm of the hand (14-1), and the marks on the shell of the tortoise (166-1, 168-1).

It is not always necessary for the explanations to be spelled out in detail. Thus it is understood that Maize (248-2) and Benniseed (86-3) have many seeds and that the mother of Rain has many raindrops (18-11) because they made the sacrifices prescribed for them in order to have children, as is specifically stated in the case of Banana (1-3). Similarly, it is understood that things do not slip from the claws of Cat (222-2) and that Sun is known "around the world" (1-6, 52-1, 103-1) because they both sacrificed.

In addition to their usual functions in myths and tales, these aetiological elements serve another purpose in the Ifa verses: by referring to the features of plants, animals, objects, or rituals which are common knowledge or which the client can verify for himself, they substantiate the truth of the verse, with its prediction and sacrifice, and the system of divination as a whole.

Furthermore, the explanation of these well-known characteristics is in terms of whether or not they made the sacrifices prescribed by the diviners, reinforcing the belief that sacrifices should be made according to the instructions. An exception is to be found in one verse (1-7), where a different but no less convincing logic is employed. In place of making a sacrifice a wife, whose husband had made a charm against her because she had been insolent to him and refused to prepare food for him, is instructed to wash his clothes, clean his room, prepare yam loaves and palm wine for him, and be especially kind to him.

In almost a third of the verses recorded, the mythological character fails to sacrifice or otherwise disregards the advice of the diviners. Almost inevitably he suffers misfortune as a consequence, whereas the characters who sacrifice as instructed generally prosper. The moral of the narratives in the verses is clear. It is advisable to sacrifice and dangerous not to do so; it is best to make the sacrifices exactly as instructed; it is desirable to make them as soon as possible; and it is better to give something than nothing at all. There is no verse in Part Two in which the character prospers without at least having appeased Eshu.

Some verses specifically state why the characters failed to sacrifice. They did not have enough money (33-2); they suspect the diviners of lying (250-1), of simply trying to increase their own wealth (35-7), or of naming as the sacrifice something they happen to need at the moment (33-1). They say that they will wait until they have seen the promised blessing (170-1), or they postpone the sacrifice on other grounds (3-2, 14-1, 120-2, 183-4). They consider the manner of making the sacrifice beneath their dignity (33-4); they prefer to rely on their own resources to ward off evil (54-1, 167-1), or they argue that the sacrifice is unnecessary because they have done the same thing many times without making one (247-5). They maintain that when the Sky God does something, he does not leave it unfinished (248-1); that, as the Sky God has ordained things, so they are destined to be forever

(35-6); and that the same results will occur whether or not a sacrifice is made (33-1).

It is likely that every possible reason or excuse for not making the prescribed sacrifice is cited in the verses. By stating the possible objections openly, and by showing how failure to sacrifice leads consistently to misfortune, the verses recited for the client reinforce his belief in the system of divination, in which he is already indoctrinated by folktales he has heard from childhood (Bascom, 1943: 45-47).

In two of the above instances the characters actually offered the prescribed sacrifices but refused to offer them in the correct manner. Five of Orunmila's own sons insisted that the diviners should kill their sacrificial goats when they should not have done so, and they themselves were killed (35-7). A king's wife refused to carry her sacrificial goat on her back like a baby, sending her slave to do so for her; the slave received the child for which the goat had been sacrificed (33-4).

In another verse (244-2) there is a clear warning against choosing the verse with an attractive prediction while disregarding warnings of danger through wishful thinking. One diviner promised blessings for the townspeople of Igbade, but another warned them of impending danger. Preferring the former prediction, they seized the second diviner and beat him; but when the evil he had foretold befell them, he intervened to save them.

Many of the verses have an internal consistency which gives them both an aesthetic unity and a sense of logic. This is achieved in various ways, including the relation of the names of the diviners of the clients to the remainder of the verse. More commonly it is done by relating the prediction for the client to the narrative about the mythological character. In one verse (167-1) this is done with great skill: three separate predictions derive from elements in a widespread African folktale.

In other verses the narrative shows how items included in the sacrifices were instrumental (and thus necessary) in bringing the character good fortune or in saving him from disaster. Thus the three hoes and the three pots which Cock sacrificed help him to win a hoeing contest and a bride (123-1). A pot which Pigeon sacrificed is given to her to use as a house, but Dove, who refused to sacrifice, has her nest destroyed by a storm (33-1). Orunmila plants the peanuts he has sacrificed, as instructed, and takes as wives two girls who steal from his field (3-4). A knife which Orunmila has sacrificed is used to keep him from being identified as a thief and to bring him wealth (14-1); and the razor sacrificed by Aja-olele gets him into a fight through which he takes three chief's daughters in marriage (131-1). In these and other verses (1-10, 1-11, 35-3, 120-2, 222-2, 222-3, 225-2, 245-1) the tales provide a justification for specific items being included in the sacrifice.

Conversely, in other cases a part of the sacrifice which the character fails to make is instrumental in bringing about his downfall (e.g. 53-2). One such verse (54-1) does not make the point as effectively as might have been done: the King of Termites made only a part of the prescribed sacrifice, although he did include the hoe and the digging stick which eventually brought about his destruction.

Another means by which internal consistency is achieved is punning or playing on words, which is also a characteristic feature of Yoruba proverbs and other forms of verbal art. Over a century ago Vidal noted that "the point of the proverb very often lies in the fact of two words having a very similar sound with a wholly different sense, making the proverb, in such cases, a play upon the word" (Crowther, 1852: 29). In addition to the numerous cases in which the diviner's names are derived from the name of the figure (e.g. 4-1, 17-3),² there are puns on thunderstorm (iji) and shelter (iji) (33-1), on the kind of yams (egun) sacrificed and a hunter's lookout platform (egun) (153-1); on concerning (nipa) and powerful (nipa) (103-2), on improve in health (san) and benefit (san) (52-3), and on improve in health (san) and clear (ṣan) (101-1). In one verse (246-4), in which rats are accused of stealing locust beans (ji iru), the prediction concerns someone waving a cow-tail switch (ji iru), which would more commonly be given as ju iru or ju irukẹrẹ.

A special type of pun which similarly contributes to internal consistency is that designated here as word magic, in which the name of an object sacrificed resembles the words expressing the result desired by the client. Thus the figure Iwori Meji, who has sacrificed a mortar and tẹtẹ and gbegbe leaves in order to find a place to live, recites the formula "The mortar (odo) will testify that I see room in which to settle (do), the tẹtẹ leaf will testify that I see room in which to stretch out (tẹ), the gbegbe leaf will testify that I see room in which to dwell (gbe)" (35-5). Water (omi) is sacrificed so that the client can breathe (imi), ochra (ila) so that he will gain honor (ọla), and salt, used to make food tasty or "sweet" (dun), so that his affairs will be sweet (dun) (1-8). Pigeon touches her child's head against a pot she has sacrificed while saying, "My child touches the pot (ikoko) with its head; it will not die (ko ku) any more" (19-3, 33-1). In making a charm or "medicine" associated with the figure Irosun Ọṣẹ, divining powder (iyẹ-irosun) is mixed with soap (ọṣẹ) (111-2). A woman who desires to conceive is instructed to sacrifice steamed beans (ọlẹ), the allusion being to an embryo (ọlẹ) (52-4). Twenty cowries (oko) are added to larger amounts of money for characters whose case involves a farm (oko) (3-4, 86-2, 86-3) and for a character identified as Penis (oko) (4-2), though in other verses (4-1, 4-3, 5-1, 6-1) neither word magic nor puns on this word are recognizable.

In Yoruba, myth-legends (itan) and folktales (alọ) are terms for distinct categories of prose narratives. The former are accepted as "history" that is believed to have happened; the latter are regarded as fiction. Diviners describe all Ifa narratives as itan, but some are told as folktales in other contexts than divination (e.g. 225-4). In some instances this may reflect the effects of acculturation on Yoruba beliefs, which have changed rapidly during the past century. Even myths about the deities are regarded as superstitious by Yoruba converts to Christianity and Islam, but formerly they were matters of faith and clearly myths by any definition. The early Yoruba dictionaries define itan as "narration of old traditions; recording of past events"

2. In some cases names of figures appear other than the one to which the verse pertains, as in verse 19-1.

(Crowther, 1852: 164) but give no term for folktales. They define *alọ* as "riddle, enigma," a meaning which it retains today, with the folktale being distinguished when necessary as *alọ alapagbe*, referring to the chorus (*egbe*) of the songs that occur in so many of the tales. It may be tempting to speculate that in Crowther's time there were no folktales, and that as individual myths lost their element of belief, they were classed with riddles as lacking serious content and meant only for children. However, the use of *alọ* to refer to folktales can be traced back at least eighty years (Bouche, 1885: 222 ff.). Apparently the diviners were taught to respect all Ifa narratives, whereas in other contexts the majority of Yoruba have long considered some of them to be amusing fiction.

The diviners are recognized as knowing more folktales than other individuals, but they may not use this knowledge for secular purposes. In Ife it is a professional tabu for diviners to tell folktales (*pa alọ*) for amusement, or even to join in singing the songs in the tales when they are being told by someone else. Nevertheless, the fact that many of these tales, describing the successes and failures of characters who do or do not sacrifice, are heard repeatedly from childhood reinforces the faith in the system of divination. Conversely, the existence of a group of specialists who systematically memorize both myths and folktales, and who recite them daily to outsiders as part of their professional duties, must affect the continuity and perhaps even the quantity of Yoruba folklore. In addition, the appearance of folktales in the ritual context of divination gives them important functions, which go far beyond that of simple amusement (Bascom, 1941, 1943, 1954).

At least thirteen of the narratives in the 186 verses have been published in collections of Yoruba folklore. As an elementary test of this relationship, eleven of the tales published by Frobenius (1926, #33-243, 288-292), selected at random, were cited to one diviner in Ife, who matched six with verses of Ifa as follows:

Frobenius (233-237)	Tale 17, Part A.	Ifa 175-1.
Frobenius (237-238)	Tale 17, Part B.	Ifa 225-4.
Frobenius (238-240)	Tale 18.	Ifa -----.
Frobenius (241-244)	Tale 19.	Ifa 123-1.
Frobenius (244-246)	Tale 20.	Ifa 54-5.
Frobenius (246-247)	Tale 21.	Ifa -----.
Frobenius (247-248)	Tale 22.	Ifa ----- (but cf. 86-1)
Frobenius (248-250)	Tale 23.	Ifa 167-1.
Frobenius (250)	Tale 24.	Ifa -----.
Frobenius (250-254)	Tale 25.	Ifa -----.
Frobenius (288-289)	Tale 44.	Ifa 168-1.
Frobenius (289-292)	Tale 45.	Ifa 222-1.

This informant said that he had heard an Ifa verse with Frobenius' Tale 25 in it, but that he himself had not learned it; and undoubtedly the percentage could have been increased by pursuing the matter with other diviners. In addition to these seven verses three others (48-1, 86-1, 153-1) and variants of three more (14-1, 170-3, 245-2) are found as tales in collections of Yoruba folklore. It is probably quite safe to assume that the fifteen Ifa

myths³ presented here in Part I, and that all Yoruba and Fõn tales which mention Ifa divination or diviners, are to be found in the Ifa verses (e.g. Walker and Walker, 1961: 71-75; Herskovits and Herskovits, 1958: 173-214). Some diviners maintain that all Yoruba myths and folktales are derived from Ifa verses; one admitted that he had heard tales for which he did not know the associated verses himself, but he insisted that there are no folktales which do not have associated verses. It could as easily be argued, and it is more likely in most cases, that traditional myths and tales have been incorporated into the verses.

Many tales and motifs in the verses, in fact, are widely spread in Africa. Not only has the story about Lizard's bride (54-5) been recorded as a folktale by Frobenius, but Motif 2474.1, "Why lizard bobs his head up and down," appears in quite different tales told among the Ekoi (Talbot, 1912: 378-380), the Ibo (Basden, 1921: 278-279), the Fõn (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1958: 324-326), the Ewe (Courlander, 1963: 41-44), and the Ashanti (Courlander and Prempeh, 1957: 70-76), in Togo (Cardinall, 1931: 170-173) and Ghana (Barker and Sinclair, 1917: 45-49; Itayemi and Gurrey, 1953: 99-100), and among the far distant Bemba of Zambia (Courlander, 1963: 98-100).

The narrative about Fly and Birdlime (245-2) may be a variant of the widespread Tale Type 175, "Tar Baby and the Rabbit," whose African analogues often substitute birdlime for tar, pitch, or other sticky substances (Klippel, n.d.: 213-233); more conventional tar baby stories have been reported for the Yoruba in several sources. If more were known about African tale types without foreign analogues, it would probably be possible to identify many of the narratives in the Ifa verses as tale types. In addition to the tale of Fly and Birdlime, it seems likely that the seven Ifa narratives recorded by Frobenius as Yoruba folktales, and seven others will prove to be tale types. Others, of course, may represent tale types also.

Only Yoruba versions have been found for some of these fifteen tales, but of these there are two versions for verses 14-1 and 54-5, three for 170-3, four for 86-1, five for 168-1 and 222-1, and six for 225-4. Some tales, however, are more widely known in West Africa, and can be taken as tale types even though an index of African tale types remains to be compiled.

The tale of Eshu's two- or four-colored cap which causes two friends to fight when they start arguing about what color it is (48-1) has been recorded in four Yoruba versions and in an analogue from the Mpongwe of Gabon which involves a two-colored coat—half red and half blue (Milligan, 1912: 57).

The narrative about the bird or animal who wins a farming contest and a bride (123-1) has been recorded in five Yoruba versions, and among the Ibo to the East (Thomas, 1918: 84-86) and the Fõn of Dahomey to the West (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1958: 418-420). The victor is Cock in all five Yoruba versions, Eagle among the Ibo, and Pig in the Fõn tale.

3. Pages 30, 36-37, 38-39, 39, 48-49, 66, 97, 104, 106, 107-108, 108, 108-109, 110-111, 112 (bis).

The tale of alternate housebuilding or farming (167-1) is known in two Yoruba versions and has been recorded in twelve other African versions: among the Ibo (Thomas, 1913-1914: VI, 90-91), at Porto Novo in Dahomey (Bouche, 1885: 32-33), among the Ewe of Togo (Ellis, 1890: 270-271) and the Ashanti of Ghana (Rattray, 1930: 38-41), in Ghana (Barker and Sinclair, 1917: 141-143), among the Limba of Sierra Leone (Finnegan, 1967: 330-332), the Lamba of Zambia (Doke, 1927: 179-181), and in five Congo versions from the Luba (Bouveignes, 1938: 107-116; Burton, 1961: 50-55, 183-186), the Lulua (Badibanga, 1931: 29-30), and the Lega (Meeussen, 1962: 83-84). (1) Two animals come to the same place on alternate days to build a house (or make a farm), each being surprised at the progress being made in his absence; (2) they live together for a while, and then the apparently weaker animal frightens the stronger away, usually through the evil eye or some other form of magical power. In the Limba tale the stronger animal frightens the weaker by killing six bush cows with the evil eye; the weaker frightens the stronger by being able to carry all of them; and both run away, leaving the house deserted. In one Yoruba version the weaker animal does all of the work in the first half of this story.

Since the first and second parts of this story can be told separately, it probably represents two separate tale types, making a total of sixteen in this selection of Yoruba Ifa verses. The first part, by itself or with a different ending, has been recorded among the Hausa of northern Nigeria (Skinner, n.d.: II, tale 1), in Swahili from Tanzania (Lademann et al., 1910: 84), where it is posed as a dilemma tale, and among the Kamba of Kenya (Augustiny, 1925: 219-223). The second portion has been recorded separately among the Tiv of northern Nigeria (Abraham, 1940: 69) and the Fon of Dahomey (Trautmann, 1927: 35-37). The protagonists are as follows:

Leopard and Goat	Yoruba, two versions
Leopard and Goat	Ibo
Leopard and Ram	Ashanti
Leopard and Ram	Ghana
Leopard and Wolf	Porto Novo
Leopard and Mongoose	Lulua
Leopard and Palm-Rat	Luba (Bouveignes)
Leopard and Squirrel	Luba (Burton)
Leopard and Bushbuck	Luba (Burton)
Lion and Bushbuck	Swahili
Lion and Antelope	Lega
Lion and Hare	Tiv
Lion and Donkey	Limba
Lion and Man	Lamba
Panther and Hyena	Fon
Bush Cat and Hyena	Ewe
Hyena and Monkey	Hausa
Man and Bird	Kamba

The tale of the hunter and his animal wife who resumes her original form when her secret is revealed (153-1) has been recorded in seven

Yoruba versions and in six others among the Popo or Gun (Trautmann, 1927: 45-46) and the Fõn (Trautmann, 1927: 43-45; Quénun, 1938: 39; Herskovits and Herskovits, 1958: 232-235, 235-236), and in Bahia, Brazil (Verger, 1957: 403) where, as in the Yoruba variant from Męko, it is associated with the goddess Qya. Verger, who says that this association does not seem to be known in Nigeria, asks whether the descendants of Yoruba in Brazil have preserved traditions which have been forgotten in Nigeria, or whether a folktale has been blended with a myth; the Męko variant provides an answer (see n. 7, verse 183-1).

The animal changes into a beautiful woman by removing her hide, which the hunter steals; she marries him and later is called an animal, usually by a co-wife who has learned the secret by intoxicating their husband; the animal puts on her skin and returns to the forest. In the Yoruba tales she is an African buffalo, hind, deer, or duiker; in the Fõn versions she is a buffalo, hind, or antelope; in the Brazilian version she is a hind; and in the Gun version she is an unidentified animal. Some of these variations may result from the difficulties of translating African animal names.

This tale is suggestive of the Melusine and Swan Maiden stories, but these versions do not involve a quest, and Klipple does not cite them under Tale Types 400 or 465A. The Hausa also tell tales about a gazelle wife who returns to the forest when her secret is revealed (Skinner, n.d.: I, tales 11 and 81; Tremearne, 1911: 458-459), as do the Bulu of Cameroons about a porcupine wife (Krug and Herskovits, 1949: 358-359). Similar stories are also told about fruit wives by the Ekoi (Talbot, 1912: 134-135), tree wives by the Fõn (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1958: 275-284, 322-324), "Mammy Water" or mermaid wives by the Gun (Trautmann, 1927: 41-42), and fish wives by the Twi-speaking people of Ghana (Ellis, 1887: 207-211) and in Liberia (Camphor, 1909: 235-239). Clarke (n.d.: 158, 141) cites references to somewhat similar stories about vegetable children under Motif C963.3 and to quite different tales about animal husbands under Motifs B650-B659.

The tale of the hunter saved from a forest spirit by his dogs (175-1), known in four Yoruba versions, has twenty-two other African parallels, among the Gola of Liberia (Westermann, 1921: 486-492); the Temne (Thomas, 1916: III, 58-60) and the Limba of Sierra Leone (Finnegan, 1967: 117-124, 143-146); the Ashanti (Rattray, 1930: 164-169); the Fõn (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1958: 186-190, 240-241, 271-272, 275-284, 284-287), the Ekoi (Dayrell, 1913: 11-13; Talbot, 1912: 247-254) and the Hausa of Nigeria (Tremearne, 1913: 298-299; Skinner, n.d.: II, tales 3 and 7); the Digo (Nyika) of Tanzania (Dammann, 1935-1936: 217-219); the Lia of eastern Congo Kinshasa (Mamet, 1960: 114-119); the Yao of Malawi (MacDonald, 1882: II, 365; Stannus, 1922: 335-336); the Sotho of northern Transvaal (Hoffman, 1915-1916: 305); and the Nama Hottentots (Schultze, 1907: 398-399) and the Xhosa of the Republic of South Africa (Theal, 1886: 122-126). It has also been reported in four versions from the Cape Verde Islands (Parsons, 1923: I, 121-125, 125-131, 131 n. 2, 131-132), in one Spanish version (Hernández de Soto, 1886: 249-257), and in eight versions among Afro-American groups, including an Uncle Remus tale from Georgia (Harris, 1892: 91-100), a tale from North Carolina (Parsons, 1917: 189-190).

two from British Guiana (Harris, 1892: v-vi), and four from the Bahamas (Parsons, 1918: 66, 66-67, 67-68, 69-70).

Usually a forest spirit or animal appears as a beautiful woman, marries a hunter, chases him up a tree in the forest, and tries to cut down the tree and kill him; but she is destroyed by his dogs, whom he calls from home by name. The hunter is replaced by two boys in the North Carolina tale, and by two girls in the Xhosa version. This tale type is distinct from other tales cited by Clarke (n.d.: 123) under Motif B421, "Helpful Dog," which deal with the origin of death from a falsified message (Motif A1335.1), the acquisition of fire (Motif A1414), or the discovery of palm wine (Motif A1428).

Even the names of the dogs, when these have been translated, often show striking similarities, a fact that was accepted as decisive in establishing the historical relationships between Little Red Riding Hood and its homologues in French; and where the names of the dogs are not translated or even recorded, their actions are sometimes indicative. My informants could not fully translate the names of the first two dogs which they interpreted as meaning "One who cuts child of kerewu" and "Osopaka takes the child and swallows it"; the name of the third dog was translated as "One who sweeps the ground and sweeps dry leaves (see n. 2, verse 175-1). Fuja (1962: 155) translates the three Yoruba names as Cut to Pieces, Swallow Up, and Clear the Remains. Frobenius (1926: 236) gives them as Abschneider, Zuschnappende und Verschlucker, and Reiniger des Platzes. Walker and Walker (1961: 17-19) do not give the Yoruba names but say that the first dog killed the woman, the second lapped the blood, and the third cleaned up the spot.

Westermann does not translate the Gola names but says that the first dog (Gobla) tore the forest devil in two and devoured the upper part, and the second dog (Kaba) devoured the lower part. Similarly, Thomas says that the two dogs (Kinkoyanduri and Kero) in the Temne tale divided the spirit in the middle. Finnegan gives the names of the dogs as Kondengmukure, Sosongpeng, and Salialoho in the first Limba tale and as Denifela, Sangsangoso, and Tungkangbai in the second. She translates only one name as meaning "jumping well," but she comments that "The recurrence of these unusual and attractive names seemed to be one of the effective points about the story for the audience," and that in the first tale the roles of the dogs were recounted "with great vigour and excitement which the audience found very effective." In the first Limba tale the dogs bit the monster open and tore out the flesh; they split him up; and they scattered the bits. In the second one they bit the spirit to pieces, chewed her up, and "scattered her all." It is significant, as Finnegan notes, that while the names of the dogs are often given, that of the hunter rarely is.

Rattray translates the Ashanti names as Sniff-sniff, Lick-lick, Tie-in-knots, and Gulp-down. Among the unnamed and unnumbered dogs in the second Fõn tale "there were those who ate only blood; there were those who ate nothing but bones; there were those who ate nothing but flesh. One ate nothing but skin, one took what fell. One goes only for the rescue, and one eats only the eyes of animals." In the fourth Fõn tale seven of the forty-one dogs

are named (Loka, Loke, Loki, Wesi, Wesa, Gbwlo, and Gbwloke); they "caught the monsters, tore them in two, and swallowed them." In Talbot's Ekoi tale the wife is torn in pieces by the unnumbered dogs, only one of whom is named (Oro Njaw). In one Hausa tale translated by Skinner the names are Blood-Drinker, Squasher, and Sorcerer; in the other they are Slasher who slaughtered the woman, Blood-drinker who drank up her blood, and Cold Wind who blew away the rest of the blood.

Of the many dogs in the Digo tale only Mimina is named; "das Untier wurde gepackt, getötet und gänzlich aufgefressen." In the Lia tale only two of the twelve dogs are named (Bakolo and Ibenga); the dogs tore the spirit into bits. In the first Cape Verde tale the three dogs (Flower, Hour, and Moment) simply seized and killed the old lady; in the second, three lions (Hour, Wait, and Moment) took the old woman and her children after having been told, "I don't want to see a particle of them left"; for the third tale we have only the names of the three dogs (Caléjon, Seléjon, and Hetéjon); and in the fourth Cape Verde tale there is only one dog, named Little Lion, who is told, "Seize her, and don't let a drop of her blood fall on the ground."

Neither the roles nor the names of the dogs are very suggestive in the Spanish tale (Hierro, Plomo, and Acero; i.e. Iron, Lead, and Steel), the tale from Georgia (Minnie-Minnie-Morack and Follamalinska), the tale from North Carolina (King Kilus and King Lovus), the two tales from British Guiana (Yarmearoo and Gengamaroto; Ya-me-o-ro and Cen-ga-mo-ro-to), or in one of the tales from the Bahamas (Watchman, Tiger, and Lion). But in the three other Bahamian tales the names of the dogs are given as Cut-Throat, Chaw Fine, and Suck-Blood; as Cut-Throat, Chew-Fine, and Suck-Blood; and as Ring-Wood, Cut-Throat, Chew-Fine, Suck-Blood, and Stowit All.

Even the verse (1-7) that gives practical advice to a wife, suggesting that she cook for her husband, wash his clothes, clean his house, and take maize beer to his shrine in order to regain his favor, has a parallel in a Limba folktale from Sierra Leone (Finnegan, 1967: 177-179).

Finally, the tale of the talking skull (or animal) that refused to talk (181-1, 181-4, 249-5) is probably another tale type, or possibly two. In addition to five Yoruba variants (see n. 1, verse 181-4), there is a folktale (unidentified but possibly Yoruba) from Nigeria (Anonymous, 1930: 14-16) of a talking sheep, which resembles verse 249-5. The tale of the talking skull has been recorded for the Efik (Jablow, 1961: 213-214, source unidentified) and the Nupe of Nigeria (Frobenius, 1924b: 150-151; Frobenius and Fox, 1937: 161-162), the Tem of central Togo (Frobenius, 1924c: 234-235), in Swahili from Tanzania (Lademann et al., 1910: 83), among the Yao of Malawi (Stannus, 1922: 322), and the Lamba of Zambia (Doke, 1927: 177). It has been recorded with a singing tortoise in Ghana (Barker and Sinclair, 1917: 119-121) and with a talking leopard for the Bakongo of Congo (Courlander, 1963: 64-66). These tales are distinct from those involving Motif E632.1, "Speaking (singing) bones of murdered person reveal murder" (Clarke, n.d.: 226) and Motifs D1318 ff. "Magic object reveals guilt" (Clarke, n.d.: 192-193), but are related to Motif K1162.+, "Dupe tricked into reporting speaking skull, is executed for lying" (Clarke, n.d.: 392-393). The motif

of the speaking head (D1610.5) appears in a quite different Yoruba tale recorded by Frobenius (1926: 294-296).

Because the verses are recited only as a part of the ritual of divination, and because they should be recited verbatim as they have been memorized, it is to be expected that innovations will be uncommon; but for these very reasons any innovations are of increased significance for the study of cultural change. The question of creativity arises not only with regard to the ultimate origins of the verses, but also concerning the possibilities of their modification and of the introduction of new ones. On the latter two points, at least, some evidence can be presented.

Effects of European acculturation—and, accordingly, evidence of cultural change—are to be seen in the verses dealing with Calico (18-4) and the King who owns a European chair (225-4), and those in which guns are mentioned (153-1, 175-1). Peanuts, introduced from the Americas, figure in two verses (3-4, 55-2), and maize and maize products in a number of others (9-2, 54-6, 55-2, 167-1, 241-2, 241-3, 243-4, 248-2, 256-3). The city of Ibadan, which was not founded until the nineteenth century, is also mentioned (170-3). The references to a deity of the neighboring Nupe (103-2) and to sara (248-3) and the presence of other Hausa loan words are also evidence of cultural borrowing, though in these instances possibly prior to European penetration.

A Mękọ diviner explained that new verses are learned when one dreams that he is divining; when one awakes in the morning, he repeats what he did in his dreams. This is confirmed by Epega, who says that new verses may be derived from dreams, and also that some individuals are born with Ifa verses "inside them," so that as soon as they are taught the figures and a few verses of Ifa, they introduce new verses. Thus while no new figures can ever be added, there is no end to the knowledge of Ifa (Epega, n.d.: XVI, 6). If new verses can be introduced from dreams or through individual creativity, it is clear that all verses need not be derived from the corpus of African folklore.

Four "Ifa verses" recited in jest by Ifę diviners have been included here under the heading of parodies. Railway (257-1, 257-2), Whiteman (257-3), and the owner of a plantain tree (257-4) appear as central characters. Whether or not these parodies are ever accepted as proper verses, they show not only effects of cultural change but also how skillfully Ifa verses can be improvised. The first two may be compared with the following Fọn tale which Alapini (1950: 109-112) records as associated with the figure Oturupọn Otura:

Before the train appeared on earth it came, as souls do, before God; and it was told to sacrifice chickens, eggs, bananas, and seats in a comfortable, luxurious room. Wagon made the sacrifice, but Locomotive refused. When they reached earth, both white and black travelers seated themselves pell-mell on the seats Wagon had set up in his beautiful compartment, singing and shouting, and eating the chickens, eggs, and bananas he had prepared. Well fed, they got out and went to Locomotive. They touched him with the tip of their finger but saw that it became dirty. Then, shaking and grinding, Locomotive pulled, while Wagon followed, singing.

Part Two:

THE VERSES OF IFA

OGBE MEJI¹ - 1

Orunmila ni o di iherehere, m(o)-(n)i iherehere l(i)-a j(ẹ)-ori
 Orunmila say it become bit:by:bit, I-say bit:by:bit be-we eat-head (of)
 eku, iherehere ni a j(ẹ)-ori ẹja, a t(i)-okun t(i)-ọsa la
 rat, bit:by:bit be we eat-head (of) fish; one:who from-sea from-lagoon come
 gb(a)-ori ẹrinla ki kere n(i)-Ifẹ o d(e)-aiye, a ki igba du-du
 accept-head (of) cow not be:small at-Ifẹ it arrive-world; we not take big-big
 t(o)-erin a ki ẹ yẹkẹtẹ t(o)-ẹfọn. ọja ki it(o)-ọja i-gba-le,
 equal-elephant; we not make stubby equal-buffalo; sash not equal-sash to-tie-upon;
 elu-k(u)-elu ki it(o)-Ọni; okun ki it(o)-okun Yemideregbe, Yemideregbe
 king-any-king not equal-Ọni; rope not equal-rope (of) Yemideregbe, Yemideregbe
 l(i)-orukọ a p(e)-O-l(i)-okun.
 be-name we call-One:who-has-sea.

Orunmila ni k(i)-a wọn n(i)-ibu k(i)-a wọn n(i)-iro,
 Orunmila say should-we measure at-breadth should-we measure at-height;
 gbọgbọrọgbọ l(i)-ọwọ yọ j(u)-ori gbọgbọrọgbọ ni mọriwo
 very:long be-hand appear surpass-head, very:long be young:fronds (of)
 ọpẹ yọ j(u)-ọgọmọ, igbo ki-(i)di ki iroko ki o
 palm:tree sprout surpass-palm:fronds; forest not-tie that iroko (tree) should it
 ma yọ, a ki ik(o)-ere jọ ki t(i)-agogo ki o ma yọ,
 not appear; we not gather-play be:together that that-(of)-gong should it not appear;
 t(i)-emi yọ t(i)-emi yọ, l(i)-akọ ke.
 'That-(of)-me appear, That-(of)-me appear,' be-Grey:Heron cry.

Njẹ ti yesi ni o yọ-(o)ri ju?
 "Well:then, that (of) who be it appear-head surpass?"

Dedere ọran ọpẹ ni o yọ-(o)ri ju, dedere.
 "Plainly affair (of) palm:tree be it appear-head surpass, plainly."

B(i)-ọkan yọ a ja-(ọ)na;
 "If-ọkan sprout it reach-road;

Dedere ọran ọpẹ ni o yọ-(o)ri ju, dedere.
 "Plainly affair (of) palm:tree be it appear-head surpass, plainly."

B(i)-ọgan yọ a ja-(ọ)na;
 "If-ọgan sprout it reach-road;

Dedere ọran ọpẹ ni o yọ-(o)ri ju, dedere.
 "Plainly affair (of) palm:tree be it appear-head surpass, plainly."

T(i)-emi yọ t(i)-emi yọ l(i)-akọ ke;
 "That-(of)-me appear, that-(of)-me appear' be-Grey:Heron cry;

Dedere ọran ọpẹ ni o yọ-(o)ri ju, dedere.
 "Plainly affair (of) palm:tree be it appear-head surpass, plainly."

1. Also known as Eji Ogbe; both mean "two Ogbe," or "double Ogbe."

Ogunmila says it should be done bit by bit; I say it is bit by bit that we should eat the head of the rat; it is bit by bit that we should eat the head of the fish. The one who comes from the sea, who comes from the lagoon to receive the head of the cow was not unimportant at Ife¹ long ago. We are not as large as the elephant nor as stout as the buffalo. The sash that is worn underneath is not as fine as the sash that is tied on top. No king is as great as the Oni. No string of cowries is as long as that of Yemideregbe; Yemideregbe is what we call the Sea Goddess²

Ogunmila says that we should measure the length and measure the breadth. The hand reaches much higher than the head; young palm fronds reach much higher than old palm fronds.³ No forest is so dense that the iroko tree⁴ cannot be seen; no music is so loud that the gong cannot be heard. "Mine is important, mine is important" is the cry of the Grey Heron.

"Well then, whose affair is most important?"

"Clearly Palm Tree's affair is most important, clearly.

"Okan sprouts, it reaches the road;

"Clearly Palm Tree's affair is most important, clearly.

"Ogan sprouts,⁵ it reaches the road;

"Clearly Palm Tree's affair is most important, clearly.

"'Mine is important, mine is important' is the cry of the Grey Heron;

"Clearly Palm Tree's affair is most important, clearly.

1. Ife is the Yoruba city where these verses were recorded, and Qsa is the lagoon to the south along the Nigerian coast. The Oni, mentioned below, is the king (oba) of Ife. According to Yoruba mythology it was at Ife that the earth was created by Odua (or Oduduwa), a deity from whom the Oni and other Yoruba kings claim descent.

According to Ife diviners, this is the first verse of Ifa. It is also the first Ifa verse written in a santeria note book from Cuba. See Bascom, 1952: 174-176.

2. Olokun is considered to be masculine by some Yoruba groups, but feminine in Ife. The reference here is to her reputed wealth (Cf. n. 2, verse 249-2). Note also the pun on sea (okun) and the cord (okun) on which cowries and beads are strung.

3. New palm fronds grow out at the top of the oil palm tree (Elaeis guineensis) and stand up, while the old fronds fall down at its side.

4. The iroko or African Oak or African Teak (Chlorophora excelsa) is one of the largest trees of the West African rain forest.

5. Both ogan and okan were described by informants as vines or creeping plants, the former being thorny. Dalziel gives ogan as a name for Combretum platypterum, C. bracteatum, and C. racemosum; and okan for C. mucronatum and C. micranthum. He describes the latter as a small tree which often forms thickets. In any event, from the context here and in verse 35-3, it would seem that they are noted for spreading quickly.

The word yo is used in this verse with a number of different meanings: to appear above, or be higher than; to be heard above; to be more important than; to sprout; and as a part of the cry of the Grey Heron.

A ki ik(o)-ere jọ ki t(i)-agogo ki o ma yọ;
 "We not gather-play be:together that that-(of)-gong should it not appear;

Dedere ọran ọpẹ ni o yọ-(o)ri ju, dedere.
 "Plainly affair (of) palm:tree be it appear-head surpass, plainly.

OGBE MEJI - 2

Orunmila ni o di ẹ-l(i)-ẹsẹ m(u)-ẹsẹ, mo ni o di
 Orunmila say it become one:who-have-row take-row; I say it become
 ẹ-l(i)-ẹsẹ m(u)-ẹsẹ, o ni oko m(u)-ẹsẹ ti-rẹ ko
 one:who-have-row take-row; he say twenty:cowries take-row that-(of)-his not
 ba ja.
 join (it) reach.

Orunmila ni o di ẹ-l(i)-ẹsẹ m(u)-ẹsẹ, mo ni o di
 Orunmila say it become one:who-have-row take-row; I say it become
 ẹ-l(i)-ẹsẹ m(u)-ẹsẹ, o ni ọgbọn-(o)wo m(u)-ẹsẹ ti-rẹ ko
 one:who-have-row take-row; he say thirty-cowries take-row that-(of)-his not
 ba ja.
 join (it) reach.

Orunmila ni o di ẹ-l(i)-ẹsẹ m(u)-ẹsẹ, mo ni o di
 Orunmila say it become one:who-have-row take-row; I say it become
 ẹ-l(i)-ẹsẹ m(u)-ẹsẹ, o ni ọgoji m(u)-ẹsẹ ti-rẹ ko
 one:who-have-row take-row; he say forty (cowries) take-row that-(of)-his not
 ba ja.
 join (it) reach.

Mo ni nje baba mi Agbọnnire ta-ni i ba ẹsẹ ti-rẹ
 I say well:then father my Agbọnnire, who-be he join row that-(of)-his
 ja? O ni ẹwadọta ni-(ọ)kan ni o ba ẹsẹ ti-rẹ ja;
 reach? He say fifty (cowries) at-one be he join row that-(of)-his reach;
 nitori-ti a ki ka-(o)wo-ka-(o)wo k(i)-a gbagbe ẹwadọta.
 because-that we not count-cowries-count-cowries that-we forget fifty (cowries).

Ifa ni o ko ni jẹ-ki a gbagbe ẹni-ti o da Ifa yi,
 Ifa say he not be consent-that they forget person-that he cast Ifa this,
 oluwarẹ si nfe ẹe ohun kan yio ba ẹsẹ ja ni ohun ti o
 person:in:question and wanting do thing one will join row reach at thing that he
 nfe ẹe na yi.
 wanting do the this.

"No music is so loud that the gong cannot be heard;
 "Clearly Palm Tree's affair is most important, clearly."⁶

6. The importance of the affairs of Palm Tree refers to the use of palm nuts in Ifa divination. Otherwise the meaning of this entire verse is obscure, probably because no story accompanies it. It consists solely of phrases comparable to the names of diviners which introduce other verses (Cf. n. 1, verse 35-3); but no divination is cited as a precedent, no sacrifice is specifically stated, and there is no specific prediction. However, the implication is that the client will live for a long time, that no one will excel him, that he will be prominent among his associates, and that he will succeed in whatever he undertakes. The rat and fish mentioned in the verse are the sacrifice, to which snail, kola nut, and cold water are usually added.

1 - 2

Qrunmila says each should take his own row;¹ I say each should take his own row; he says that Twenty Cowries takes his row but cannot finish it.

Qrunmila says each should take his own row; I say each should take his own row; he says that Thirty Cowries takes his row but cannot finish it.

Qrunmila says each should take his own row; I say each should take his own row; he says that Forty Cowries takes his row but cannot finish it.

I say, "Well then, my father Agbonnire,² who can complete his row?" He says Fifty Cowries alone can complete his row, because we cannot count money and forget Fifty Cowries.

Ifa says he will not allow the person for whom this figure was cast to be forgotten. This person wants to do something; he will "complete his row" in the thing he wants to do.

1. The row (ṣṣṣ) refers to a row in the fields to be hoed or weeded. Here, and elsewhere in these verses, it is often used in a broader sense to mean any undertaking, so that "completing one's row" means being successful in a given venture.

2. Agbonnire is a shortened form of Agbonniregun, another name for Qrunmila or Ifa.

OGBE MEJI - 3

Ebiti pa-(i)lẹ n(i)-(i)gbe wọ-(i)lẹ n(i)-(i)gbe tu-(e)rutu
 "Deadfall kill-ground at-punishment drag-ground at-punishment loosen-dust"

a da fun Ọlọmọagbiti ti o tori ọmọ d(a)-Ifa, nwọn ni ki
 (be) who cast for Ọlọmọagbiti that she because (of) child cast-Ifa, they say should
 o ru-(ẹ)bọ koju męrin, eku męrin, ati ẹja męrin. Ọlọmọagbiti ni
 she offer-sacrifice (of) pot four, rat four, and fish four. Ọlọmọagbiti be
 orukọ ti a pe ọgẹdẹ. O gbọ o si ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 name that we call Banana. She hear she and offer-sacrifice.

Ọlọmọagbiti wa ọmọ titi ko ri, o mu eji k(an)-ẹta
 Ọlọmọagbiti seek child until (she) not see (it), she take two against-three
 o lọ s(i)-ọdọ babalawo o si bere bi on (yi) o ti ẹ ni
 (cowries) she go to-presence (of) diviner she and ask if she will that do have
 ọmọ? Nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ, o si ru-(ẹ)bọ; o fi
 child? They say should she offer-sacrifice, she and offer-sacrifice; she take
 awọn (ohu)n-kan ti a da-(o)rukọ nwọn-yi ru-(ẹ)bọ; o si wa
 those thing-one that we break-voice those-this offer-sacrifice; she and come
 di ọ-l(i)-ọmọ pupọ. Lati igba-na ni a ko ti fẹ ọmọ
 become one-who-have-child many. From time-the be we not have miss child
 wẹrẹ ku ni-(i)di ọgẹdẹ. Ọmọ ki itan ọwọ yeye, ọmọ wẹrẹ
 young (1) at-waist (of) banana, Child not finish hand (of) mother, child tiny
 ko ni tan l(i)-ẹsẹ ọgẹdẹ.
 not be finish at-foot (of) banana.

Ifa ni nitori ọmọ ni e-l(i)-eyi ẹ d(a)-Ifa bi o ba
 Ifa say because (of) child be one:who-be-this make cast-Ifa; if she should
 ru-(ẹ)bọ ọmọ ko ni tan ni ọdẹdẹ e-l(i)-eyi lai-lai.
 offer-sacrifice child not be finish at verandah (of) one:who-be-this ever-ever.

1. Fẹ . . . ku means "to miss," or "to fail to find."

OGBE MEJI - 4

Igbo ni-(i)gbo-(i)na Ọdan l(i)-ọdan orun" a da
 "Forest be-forest-(of)-fire" "Grassland be-grassland (of) sun" (be) who cast
 fun Ọrunmila ni-(o)jọ t(i)-Ifa nlọ ki ọwọ a-bi-ku bọ-(i)lẹ
 for Ọrunmila at-day that-Ifa going push hand (of) one:who-born-die enter-ground
 ni koto atitan. Ni-(i)gba-ti Ọrunmila nẹ a-bi-ku, o
 at hole (of) refuse:heap. At-time-that Ọrunmila making one:who-born-die, he
 tọ awọn babalawo Igbo-ni-(i)gbo-(i)na ati Ọdan-l(i)-ọdan-
 approach those diviner "Forest-be-forest-(of)-fire" and "Grassland-be-grass-

1 - 3

"The deadfall punishes the ground by striking it and then dragging the game along it, raising dust" was the one who cast Ifa for Ql̩mq̩gbiti¹ when she cast Ifa because she wanted children. They said she should sacrifice four pots,² four rats, and four fish. Ql̩mq̩gbiti is what we call the Banana. She heard and offered the sacrifice.

Ql̩mq̩gbiti had been trying and trying to have children but had not had any; she took five cowries and went to the diviners, and asked what she had to do in order to have children. They said she should sacrifice, and she did sacrifice. She sacrificed those things we have mentioned, and she became the mother of many children. From that time on, one always finds young children on the banana plant. Children will not be wanting at the hand of the mother, young children will not be wanting at the foot of the banana.³

Ifa says it is for the sake of children that this person has cast Ifa; if she makes a sacrifice, children will never be wanting on her verandah.⁴

1. Analyzed as Q-1(i)-qm̩q̩-agbiti or One:who-has-child-agbiti. The meaning of agbiti was not known to informants.

2. A small narrow-mouthed pot, holding about a cup. These are generally used as containers for the oil applied to the hands and arms.

3. The fruit and the new sprouts are spoken of as the children of the banana plant. This verse thus explains why banana bears so much fruit, and why so many new plants spring up around it.

4. Note the pun here on verandah (q̩d̩d̩) and banana (q̩q̩d̩).

1 - 4

"Forest is the forest of fire" and "Grassland¹ is the grassland of the sun" were the ones who cast Ifa for Qrunmila on the day that he² went to bury medicine against abiku³ in a hole in a refuse heap. When Qrunmila was troubled by abiku, he went to the diviners "Forest is the forest of fire" and "Grassland is the grass-

1. Qdan is the open grassland north of the rain forests (igbo) of the coast of West Africa.

2. From the literal translation it is obvious that in this verse Qrunmila and Ifa are the same individual. See also n. 1, verse 18-5.

3. Children who are destined to die, or "born to die." See Chapter XI, Farrow (1926: 84), and Ellis (1894: 111-114). Another diviner explained that Qrunmila was told to put leaves of Ifa in a pot of water, have his wife pour it over a he-goat, and bury the goat in a refuse heap.

orun lq, nwon si sq fun pe ki o ru-(e)bq, o si
land-(of)-sun" go; they and speak for (him) that should he offer-sacrifice, he and
ru-(e)bq, lati igba-na ni a-bi-ku ti da-(q)wq-duro ni ara
offer-sacrifice; from time-the be one:who-born-die have cause-hand-stand at body

awon obinrin re.
(of) those woman his.

Ifa ni a-bi-ku nba e-l(i)-eyi ja, bi o ba si le
Ifa say one:who-born-die joining one:who-be-this fight, if he should and be:abl
ru-(e)bq yio da-(q)wq-duro.
offer-sacrifice will cause-hand-stand.

OGBE MEJI - 5

Orogbo Oşugbo Aja-ni-mqoq-tipe-tipe a da fun-
"Bitter:kola (of) Ogboni; Ceiling-at-smithy-tightly-tightly"(be) who cast for-
(I)gun, qmq Olojongboloro a-l(u)-afin ba won gb(e)-ode
Vulture, child (of) Olojongboloro one:who-beats-afin join them dwell:at-outside

Qra; a ki r(i)-opepe Igun l(i)-a(ti)tan, orogbo kangę kangęre
(of) Qra; we not see-young (of) Vulture at-refuse:heap; bitter:kola feeble feeble,

kangęre n(i)-Ife, orogbo kangęre. Ifa ni e-l(i)-eyi yio di arugbo,
feeble at-Ife; bitter:kola feeble. Ifa say one:who-be-this will become old:per-

o ni bi a ki iti ri qmqde Igun, be-ni e-l(i)-eyi
son; he say as we not have see young:child (of) Vulture, thus-be-(it) one:who-be-
yio di arugbo.
this will become old:person.

Igun ni kin-ni on yio se ti on yio fi di arugbo? O lq si
Vulture say what-be he will do that he will take become old:person? He go to

qdq awon babalawo, nwon ni ki o ru-(e)bq, ki o si
presence (of) those diviner, they say should he offer-sacrifice, should he and

bu iyę re le ori, ni-(i)gba-ti Igun ru-(e)bq ti o si bu
dip wood:dust its upon head; at-time-that Vulture offer-sacrifice that he and dip

iyę re le ori, ori re si beęre si fun-fun bi ęni-pe
wood:dust its upon head, head his and begin to be:white-be:white like person-that

o wu iwu ati igba-na ni ori Igun ti ma
he become:grey grey:hair, from time-the be head (of) Vulture have (continuative)

nfun-fun ti o si dabi iwu; a ki si mq qmqde
being:white-be:white that it and resemble grey:hair; we not and know young:child

Igun ati agba yatq nitori-ti ori gbogbo won ni o pa.
(of) Vulture and elder different because-that head (of) all them be it be:bald.

land of the sun."⁴ They told him that he should make a sacrifice, and he sacrificed. From that time on, his wives stopped bearing abiku.

Ifa says that abiku are "fighting with" this person; if he is able to sacrifice, they will stop.

4. In this verse it is clear that two diviners are referred to, because of the use of "awon babalawo" and "ati."

1 - 5

"Bitter-kola¹ of the Ogboni society,² very tight ceiling of the smithy" was the one who cast Ifa for Vulture, the child of "Olojongboloro who beats the afin drum³ with those who live at the town of Qra." Vulture's children are never seen on the refuse heap.⁴ Feeble, feeble bitter-kola,⁵ feeble at the town of Ife, feeble bitter-kola. Ifa says this person will live to be very old. He says that as we never see young vultures, even so this person will become very old.

Vulture asked what he had to do in order to live to old age. He went to the diviners, and they said he should make a sacrifice and sprinkle divining powder on his head.⁶ When Vulture sacrificed and sprinkled the divining powder on his head, it became white, like a person whose hair is turning grey. From that time on, Vulture's head has always been white, and it looks like he has grey hair. We cannot tell the difference between young and old vultures, because the heads of both are bald.⁷

1. Garcinia kola.

2. Oşugbo is often an alternate name for the Ogboni society, but in Ife it is said to be the name of a particular status within the society. Cf. n. 3, verse 181-1.

3. Informants could not describe this type of drum.

4. This is not literally true. The statement refers to the fact, elaborated later, that all vultures appear to be old.

5. Note the pun here on bitter-kola (orogbo), and old person (arugbo) which appears later. This pun is emphasized by applying the adjective "feeble" to the bitter-kola, instead of to the old person.

6. In making a sacrifice, the figure (odu) is usually marked in the divining powder on the tray. Then some is given to the client to eat, or to put in a line down the center of his head. See Plate 20.

7. This verse explains how Vulture's head came to be white, and why one cannot tell old and young Vultures apart.

OGBE MEJI - 6

Ina tin l(i)-egbẹ orun, Agunmọla tin l(i)-ẹhin oṣu a da
 "Fire thin at-side (of) sky; Venus thin at-back (of) month" (be) who cast
 f(un)-A-mọ-ka orukọ ti a pe ọjọ. Ifa ni e-l(i)-eyi yio
 for-One:who-known-around, name that we call day. Ifa say one:who-be-this will
 ni orukọ ni ohun ti o da Ifa si yi, yio si ni orukọ ẹgbọn ki o
 have name at thing that he cast Ifa to this, will and have name but should he
 ru-(ẹ)bọ eku kan ẹja kan, akikọ ti o ni ogbe l(i)-ori kan ati
 offer-sacrifice (of) rat one, fish one, cock that he have comb at-head one, and
 ẹdẹgbẹta ati epo. A-(yi)o mu ori eku ati ẹja na, a-(yi)o
 500 (cowries) and palm:oil. We-will take head (of) rat and fish the; we-will
 ge diẹ ni-(i)nu ogbe akikọ na a-(yi)o ko si-(i)nu ewe
 cut small at-belly (of) comb (of) cock the we-will gather (them) to-belly (of) leaf
 ẹla kan; A-(yi)o lọ wọn pọ; a-(yi)o fi sin gbẹrẹ ejilelogun
 ẹla one. We-will grind them be:together; we-will take (them) cut incision 22
 si ori ẹni-ti o wa da Ifa yi.
 to head (of) person-that he come cast Ifa this.

OGBE MEJI - 7

Irọ-(I)fa a b(i)-ẹnu ginginni a da f(un)-Ore ti iṣe
 "Tapper-(of)-Ifa it bear-mouth pointed" (be) who cast for-Ore that make
 obinrin Agbọnniregun. Ifa ni obinrin kan wa ti o nya-(o)ju si
 woman (of) Agbọnniregun. Ifa say woman one exist that she insulting-eye to
 ọkọ rẹ, ki o ma tọ-(o)ju ọkọ rẹ gidi-
 husband her, should she (continuative) care:for-eye (of) husband her completely-
 gidi nitori-ti ori ọkọ na nfe ba ja nitori-
 completely because-that head (of) husband the wanting join (her) fight, because-
 na ki o ni igba iyan mefa, ki o fọ aṣọ ọkọ
 the should she have loaf (of) pounded:yam six, should she wash cloth (of) husband
 rẹ, ki o si ma pa-(i)le ọkọ rẹ ki o si
 her, should she and (continuative) rub-house (of) husband her, should she and
 ni amu ọti ẹkẹtẹ kan ki o gbe si idi Ifa
 have jar (of) liquor maize:beer one, should she carry (it) to base (of) Ifa (of)
 ọkọ rẹ l(i)-oni.
 husband her at-today.

Ore ni-(o)kan soṣo ni aya Agbọnniregun ni akoko yi, ko si fẹran
 Ore at-one only be wife (of) Agbọnniregun at time this, not and love

Agbọnniregun rara, bi o ba lọ si ode, Ore a ma bu
 Agbọnniregun at:all; if he should go to outside, Ore will (continuative) insult (him)

1 - 6

"Thin fire on the side of the sky, thin evening star¹ in the crescent of the moon"² was the one who cast Ifa for "One who is widely known," the name that we use for Sun.³ Ifa says this person will make a name for himself⁴ in the matter for which he has cast Ifa, but that he should sacrifice one rat, one fish, one cock with a comb⁵ on its head, one penny five oninis,⁶ and palm oil. We will take the head of the rat and the fish, and a small piece cut from the comb of the cock. We will put these in an ęla leaf,⁷ and grind them together. We will cut twenty-two small incisions⁸ on the head of the person for whom this figure was cast, and rub this mixture into them.

-
1. Venus, the planet which is seen near the new moon.
 2. Literally "month"; the moon is usually referred to as oęupa.
 3. Literally "day"; the usual word for sun is orun.
 4. It is not necessary to add that the Sun made the sacrifice, and therefore became known round the world. This is referred to in the title given to him, "One who is widely known," and is brought out more specifically in verses 52-1 and 103-1.
 5. Note that a cock with a comb (ogbe) is required as sacrifice for the figure Ogbe Meji.
 6. The onini is a Nigerian coin worth one-tenth of a penny.
 7. Epiphytic Orchidaceae.
 8. Medicines are frequently administered by rubbing them into small incisions (gbęreę) on the body.
-

1 - 7

"Ifa's bell has a pointed mouth"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Ore, the wife of Agbęnniregun.² Ifa says there is a woman who is insolent to her husband. She should be very considerate of her husband, because he is planning to punish her. Therefore she should make six loaves³ of pounded yams; she should wash her husband's clothes; she should rub the walls and floor of his house; and she should take a pot of maize beer today to the place where he keeps his Ifa.

Ore was Agbęnniregun's only wife at this time, but she did not love him at all. When he went out in public Ore would insult him,

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1. Ifa's bell is the instrument with which the diviner taps the tray before he begins to divine (see Chapter III and Plate 13). Its tusklike end is referred to here as a "pointed mouth." See also verse 4-3.
 2. Qrunmila, Ifa.
 3. Pounded yams (iyan or dęmbai) are made into lumps referred to as loaves (igba or araba).

ko si jẹ wa onjẹ de. Ni-(i)gba-ti Agbònniregun ri iwa
 not and consent seek food wait:for (him). At-time-that Agbònniregun see charac-
 aya rẹ yi, o mu-(a)ra o fi ta iku, arun, ofun, iṣẹ
 ter (of) wife his this, he take-body he take (her) sell death, disease, loss, poverty,
 ati iya l(i)-orẹ. Ni oṣo na gan ni Ore sun ti o si la
 and punishment at-gift. At day the identical be Ore sleep that she and dream
 ala; ni-(i)gba-ti ilẹ mọ ti o si ji, o fi eji-k(an)-ẹta
 dream; at-time-that earth clear that she and awake, she take two-against-three
 o lọ s(i)-oḍo babalawo pe k(i)-o yẹ on wo,
 (cowries) she go to-presence (of) diviner that should-they examine her look;
 nwọn ni orun ti o sun ko dara nitori-pe oḳọ rẹ ti fi
 they say sleep that she sleep not be:good because-that husband her have take (her)
 ta iku, arun, ofun, iṣẹ ati iya l(i)-orẹ, nitori-na ki o
 sell death, disease, loss, poverty, and punishment at-gift, because-the should she,
 Ore lọ mu aṣọ oḳọ rẹ ki o fọ, ki o pa ile
 Ore, go take cloth (of) husband her should she wash (it), should she rub house (of)
 oḳọ rẹ ni ẹmeji ki o si gun iyan araba mẹfa si idi
 husband her at twice, should she and pound pounded:yam loaf six to base (of)
 Ifa oḳọ rẹ.
 Ifa (of) husband her.

Ni-(i)gba-ti Ore ẹe ohun gbogbo nwọn-yi tan, ti Agbònniregun de
 At-time-that Ore do thing all those-this finish, that Agbònniregun arrive
 ti o si ri aṣọ ti o fi ibo-(a)ra ti aya rẹ ti fọ, ti
 that he and see cloth that he take (it) cover-body that wife his have wash (it), that
 o ri ile ti o pa, bi o si ti wọ-(i)le ti o de idi
 he see house that she rub (it), as he and have enter-house that he arrive base (of)
 Ifa rẹ ti o ba araba iyan mẹfa ni idi Ifa, Agbònniregun
 Ifa his that he meet loaf (of) pounded:yam six at base (of) Ifa, Agbònniregun
 wa da-(o)hun o ni:
 come break-voice he say:

O ṣoko, nwọn ni bani
 "Oh shoko"; they say "Bani"

Iku ma ma p(a)-Ore mọ, o
 "Death not (continuative) kill-Ore again, oh;

Ore n(i)-iyan, Ore l(i)-gbẹ, Ore
 "Ore has-pounded:yam, Ore has-stew, Ore.

Arun ma ma s(e)-Ore mọ, o
 "Disease not (continuative) make-Ore again, oh;

Ore n(i)-iyan, Ore l(i)-gbẹ, Ore
 "Ore has-pounded:yam, Ore has-stew, Ore.

Ofun ma ma s(e)-Ore mọ, o
 "Loss not (continuative) make-Ore again, oh;

and she refused to prepare food for him. When Agbõnniregun saw his wife's true character, he got ready and gave her away to death, disease, loss, poverty, and punishment.⁴ On that very day Ore went to sleep and had a dream; when dawn came and she awoke, she took five cowries and went to the diviners to be examined. They said she had had a bad dream because her husband had given her away to death, disease, loss, poverty, and punishment. Therefore she should take her husband's clothes and wash them; she should rub his house twice; and she should prepare six loaves of pounded yams and take them to the place where her husband kept his Ifa.

When Ore had done all these things, Agbõnniregun came home. When he saw that his wife had washed his clothes and had rubbed the walls and floor of the house, and as he entered the house and found the six loaves of pounded yams where he kept his Ifa, Agbõnniregun said:

"Oooooh shoko"; they answered "Bani."⁵

"Death do not trouble Ore any more, oh;

"Ore has made pounded yams; Ore has made stew, Ore.

"Disease do not trouble Ore any more, oh;

"Ore has made pounded yams; Ore has made stew, Ore.

"Loss, do not trouble Ore any more, oh;

4. He made bad "medicine" so that she would suffer all of these evils.

5. These words, which could not be translated and were not understood by informants, are the introduction to many of the songs and recitations which appear in the Ifa verses. Even where it is not stated as explicitly as it is here, they always follow the traditional leader-chorus pattern, with the diviner saying "Oooooh shoko" and his students and assistants and others who have gathered to watch the divination responding "Bani."

Ore n(i)-iyan, Ore l(i)-gbẹ, Ore
 "Ore has-pounded:yam, Ore has-stew, Ore.

Iya ma ma j(ẹ)-Ore mọ, o
 "Punishment not (continuative) eat-Ore again, oh;

Ore n(i)-iyan, Ore l(i)-gbẹ, Ore.
 "Ore has-pounded:yam, Ore has-stew, Ore."

Bayi ni Ore bọ l(i)-qwo awon ohun ti Agbonniregun ti fi le
 Thus be Ore slip at-hand (of) those thing that Agbonniregun have put upon (her)

l(i)-qwo pe ki nwon ba on je ni iya.
 at-hand that should they join him eat (her) at punishment.

OGBE MEJI - 8

Orunmila ni o di hin; mo ni o di imi sin-sin, o ni
 Orunmila say it become 'hin'; I say it become breath (of) rest-rest; he say
 ẹni-ti o ba fi omi ru-(ẹ)bọ iše ni sin-(i)mi.
 person-that he should take water offer-sacrifice make (who) have rest-breath.

Orunmila ni o di hin, mo ni o di imi sin-sin, o ni
 Orunmila say it become 'hin'; I say it become breath (of) rest-rest; he say
 ẹni-ti o ba fi ila ru-(ẹ)bọ iše ni ini ọla.
 person-that he should take ochra offer-sacrifice make (who) have have honor.

Orunmila ni o di hin, mo ni o di imi sin-sin, o ni
 Orunmila say it become 'hin'; I say it become breath rest-rest; he say
 ẹni-ti o ba fi iyọ ru-(ẹ)bọ iše ni ọran rẹ dun.
 person-that he should take salt offer-sacrifice make (who) have affair his be:sweet.

Igba omi tutu kan, a-(yi)o da iyọ s(i)-inu rẹ, a-(yi)o rẹ ila
 Calabash (of) water cool one; we-will pour salt to-belly its; we-will cut ochra
 s(i)-inu omi na pẹlu, a-(yi)o fi iyẹ-(i)rosun
 to-belly (of) water the together:with (it); we-will take wood:dust-(of)-irosun (tree)
 tẹ Eji Ogbe, a-(yi)o da s(i)-inu rẹ, ẹni-ti o da Ifa na yio mu
 press Eji Ogbe; we-will pour (it) to-belly its; person-that he cast Ifa the will drink
 n(i)-inu omi na, ẹni-k(u)-ẹni ti o ba fẹ le mu n(i)-
 at-belly (of) water the; person-any-person that he should want, be:able drink at-
 inu omi na pẹlu l(i)-ẹhin na a-(yi)o da eyi-ti o
 belly (of) water the together:with (him); at-back (of) the we-will pour this-that it
 ba ọsiku si idi Eṣu. Ifa ni ẹni-ti a da on fun yi
 should remain to base (of) Eshu. Ifa say person-that we cast him (Ifa) for this
 nẹ i-sin-(i)mi yio si ni i-sin-(i)mi yio si ni ọla pẹlu.
 wanting to-rest-breath will and have to-rest-breath, will and have honor together:
 with (it).

"Ore has made pounded yams; Ore has made stew, Ore.

"Punishment, do not trouble Ore any more, oh;

"Ore has made pounded yams; Ore has made stew, Ore."

It was in this way that Ore escaped from the things which Agbõnniregun had set against her in order to punish her.

1 - 8

Orunmila says we should sigh 'hin';¹ I say we should take a breath and rest; he says that the one who sacrifices water will have a breathing spell.

Orunmila says we should sigh 'hin'; I say we should take a breath and rest; he says that the one who sacrifices ochra will have honor.

Orunmila says we should sigh 'hin'; I say we should take a breath and rest; he says that the one who sacrifices salt will find satisfaction in his affairs.²

One calabash of cold water is required. We will pour salt into it; we will slice ochra into it also. We will mark Eji Ogbe³ in the divining powder; we will add the divining powder to the water also. The person for whom this figure was cast will drink of the water, and anyone else who wishes may drink of it also. Afterward we will pour whatever is left at the base of Eshu. Ifa says that the person for whom we cast this figure wants a breathing spell; he will get a breathing spell, and will gain honor also.⁴

1. "Hin" represents the sound of exhaling air as in sighing.

2. Note the word magic in this verse. Water (omi) is sacrificed so as to get a chance to breathe (imi); Ochra (ila) is sacrificed to gain honor (ola). The play on words with reference to salt is once removed. Salt is added to food to season it properly, to make it "sweet" (dun), and is sacrificed here so that one's affairs will go well, so they will be "sweet" (dun).

3. An alternate form of Ogbe Meji, the name of the figure.

4. There is also the clear implication that he will also find satisfaction in the way things are going for him.

OGBE MEJI - 9

Ponripoṣ ṣigidi ni iṣe awo inu igbo, Ogogoro l(i)-
 "Ponripoṣ shigidi" be (who) make secret (of) belly (of) forest; "Ogogoro" be-
 awo Ijamṣ, b(i)-ṣrṣ ba dun l(i)-a-dun-ju a dabi
 secret (of) Ijamṣ, "If-friend should be:sweet at-to-be:sweet-surpass he resemble
 iye-kan a da fun Qrunmila t(i)-o nlṣ ba Eṣu d(i)-
 (those) (of) mother-one" (be) who cast for Qrunmila that-he going join Eshu be-
 oluku.
 come-friend.

A ki ba Eṣu d(i)-oluku k(i)-oju owo pṣn-(ṣ)ni
 "We not join Eshu become-friend that-eye (of) cowries be:red-(of)-person;

Eṣu ṣe ni mo wa ba ṣ d(i)-oluku
 "Eshu make be (who) I come join you become-friend.

A ki ba Eṣu d(i)-oluku k(i)-oju aya pṣn-(ṣ)ni
 "We not join Eshu become-friend that-eye (of) wife be:red-(of)-person;

Eṣu ṣe ni mo wa ba ṣ d(i)-oluku
 "Eshu make be (who) I come join you become-friend.

A ki ba Eṣu d(i)-oluku k(i)-oju ṣmṣ pṣn-(ṣ)ni
 "We not join Eshu become-friend that-eye (of) child be:red-(of)-person;

Eṣu ṣe ni mo wa ba ṣ d(i)-oluku.
 "Eshu make be (who) I come join you become-friend."

A-(yi)o pa akikṣ ni a-pa-l(a)-aiya a-(yi)o fṣ igbin kan si a-(yi)o
 We-will kill cock at to-kill-split-chest; we-will break snail one to (it); we-will
 bu epo si a-(yi)o gbe lṣ si idi Eṣu. Ifa ni e-l(i)-
 dip palm:oil to (it); we-will carry (it) go to base (of) Eshu. Ifa say one:who-be-
 eyi nfṣ ni ṣrṣ titun kan, ṣrṣ na yio ṣe ni anfan.
 this wanting have friend new one; friend the will make (him) at benefit.

OGBE MEJI - 10

Qmṣ-(ṣ)wṣ tori iyan o yṣ-(i)ke, ataparako ṣe
 "Child-(of)-hand because:of pounded:yam it sprout-hump; thumb make
 ṣhin kokoko pa-(o)bi a da fun Qrunmila ti o ma fṣ
 back stiff kill-kola" (be) who cast for Qrunmila that he (continuative) love
 Aiye ṣmṣ E-l(i)-ewu emure, nwṣn ni ki Qrunmila ru-
 Earth, child (of) "One:who-has-gown pleasing"; they say should Qrunmila offer-
 (ṣ)bo ki o ba ri aya na fṣ, eku kan, ṣgbṣṣṣṣṣṣṣ, ati ayeṣṣ
 sacrifice that he should see wife the love, rat one, 5000 (cowries), and hen
 adiṣ meji. A-(yi)o so ilṣṣṣ-k(u)-ilṣṣṣ mṣ eku na ni idi a-(yi)o lṣ
 chicken two. We-will tie bead-any-bead against rat the at waist; we-will go

1 - 9

"Ponripon shigidi"¹ the diviner inside the forest, "Ogogoro" the diviner of Ijamò,² and "If a friend is exceedingly dear, he is like the child of one's own mother" were the ones who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he was going to befriend Eshu.

"Those who befriend Eshu are not troubled by want of money;

"Eshu, you are the one I am going to befriend.

"Those who befriend Eshu are not troubled by want of wives;

"Eshu, you are the one I am going to befriend.

"Those who befriend Eshu are not troubled by want of children;

"Eshu, you are the one I am going to befriend."

We will kill a cock by tearing it open at the breast. We will break open a snail and pour it and palm oil into the cock. We will carry it to the base of Eshu. Ifa says this person desires to make a new friendship; the new friend will be of benefit to him.³

1. This phrase could not be translated by informants. Shigidi here is something very dangerous, but is not the image (shigidi) used by the Yoruba in sorcery. Ponripón in another connection means thick; but pon describes the degree of redness of anything, and redness is associated with things which are dangerous or powerful.

2. This could be the name of a town, or of a person.

3. There is also the implication of a blessing of money, wives, and children in this verse.

1 - 10

"Because of pounded yams the fingers develop humps;¹ the thumb stiffens its back to split kola nuts"² was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he was in love with Earth, child of "The one with the pleasing gown." They said Qrunmila should sacrifice one rat, one shilling three pence, and two hens so that he might marry her. We will tie any kind of beads about the waist of the rat; we will

1. Pounded yam is served in large loaves. Since it is tough, the knuckles of the fingers appear as humps when small pieces are broken off to eat.

2. Kola nuts are broken into sections before eating. For this the thumbnail is used, and the thumb is held rigid, with the thumb making a right angle.

fi gun-(i)lẹ si-(i)nu igbẹ, Qrunmila ru-(ẹ)bọ.
take (it) stab-ground to-belly (of) forest; Qrunmila offer-sacrifice.

Aiye jẹ ọmọ ọba obinrin, igba aṣọ ni Aiye ro, o si sọ pe
Earth eat child (of) king woman, 200 cloth be Earth wrap, she and speak that
ẹni-k(u)-ẹni ti o ba ri idi on ni on yio fẹ. Ni-
person-any-person that he should see waist (of) her be she will love (him). At-
(i)gba-ti Qrunmila fi eku yi gun-(i)lẹ si inu igbo ni-(i)gba-ti o
time-that Qrunmila take rat this stab-ground to belly (of) forest, at-time-that it
di owurọ ọjọ-(e)keji ti Aiye lọ ya-(i)gbẹ ni-(i)nu igbo, Eṣu
become morning day-second that Earth go split-forest at-belly (of) forest, Eshu
pa-(a)tẹ mọ eku na, o di aye, ilẹkẹ ti Qrunmila so mọ ni
clap-palm against rat the, it become alive, bead that Qrunmila tie against (it) at
idi di sẹgi, ni-(i)gba-ti Aiye ri eku yi pẹlu sẹgi ni idi rẹ,
waist become sẹgi, at-time-that Earth see rat this together:with sẹgi at waist its,
o bẹrẹ si ile kiri, ni-(i)bi-ti o gbe ti nle kiri gbogbo
she begin to chase (it) about, at-place-that she take have chasing (it) about all
igba aṣọ idi rẹ tu, o si wa ni ihoho, ni-(i)bi-ti o gbe
200 cloth (of) waist hers loosen, she and exist at naked; at-place-that she take
ti nsa-re kiri ni ihoho, ni akoko na ni Qrunmila wa bẹ ẹbọ
have running-go about at naked, at time the be Qrunmila come peep:at sacrifice
ti o ru wo, ti o si ba Aiye ni ihoho. Ni-(i)gba-ti Aiye ri
that he offer look:at (it), that he and meet Earth at naked. At-time-that Earth see
Qrunmila, o ni o pa-(o)ri, o ni o ti sọ pe ẹni-k(u)-ẹni
Qrunmila, she say it kill-head, she say she have speak that person-any-person
ti o ba ri idi on ni on yio fẹ; bayi ni Aiye di aya
that he should see waist (of) her be she will love; thus be Earth become wife (of)
Qrunmila, Qrunmila si lọ ko gbogbo ẹru Aiye wa si ile ara-
Qrunmila, Qrunmila and go gather all load (of) Earth come to house (of) people-
rẹ. Aiye si joko ti. Ni-(i)gba-ti Qrunmila fẹ Aiye tan ni
his. Earth and sit:down against (him). At-time-that Qrunmila love Earth finish be
o bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin ti o njo ti o nyọ pe:
he begin to sing-song that he dancing that he rejoicing that:

A gb(a)-Aiye ka-(i)lẹ,
"We take-Earth against-ground,

Awa o lọ mọ, o, e, e.
"We not go again, oh, ay, ay."

Ifa ni a-(yi)o ri aya kan fẹ, ti ire yio wa l(i)-ḡhin obinrin
Ifa say we-will see wife one love, that goodness will exist at-back (of) woman
na, a-(yi)o si ni igba-(o)hun-igba-(o)hun lati ẹṣẹ obinrin na wa.
the; we-will and have 200-thing-200-thing from foot (of) woman the come.

take the rat and stick it into the ground³ inside the forest. Orunmila sacrificed.

Earth was the daughter of the king. She wore two hundred cloths about her waist, and she said that she would marry anyone who saw her bare buttocks. On the morning of the day after Orunmila had stuck the rat into the ground, Earth went into the forest to defecate. Eshu clapped his hands⁴ and the rat came to life, and the beads that Orunmila had tied about its waist became segi beads.⁵ When Earth saw the rat with segi beads on its waist, she began to chase it about. As she chased it, all two hundred of the cloths fell from her waist, and she was naked. At the same time Orunmila came to examine his sacrifice, and he met Earth running around naked. When Earth saw Orunmila, she said, "That does it!" She said she had agreed to marry anyone who saw her bare buttocks. So Earth became Orunmila's wife; Orunmila brought all her possessions to his house, and Earth settled down with him. When Orunmila had married Earth, he began to sing and dance, rejoicing:

"We captured Earth;

"We will never leave her, oh, ay, ay."⁶

Ifa says we will find a woman to marry, and that through her we will receive a blessing. The woman will bring us two hundred of every kind of goods.⁷

3. The dried rats used in sacrifices are impaled on sticks. In this case it is the stick itself which is stuck into the ground, so that the rat stands up.

4. By clapping his hands, Eshu accomplished this magical transformation. Cf. verse 244-2.

5. Segi are very valuable beads which are found buried in the ground.

6. There is a double meaning to this song. The obvious meaning is that we love Earth, our wife, so much that we never want to leave her. The second is that we enjoy life on this earth so much that we never want to die.

7. The number 200 is derived from the number of cloths worn by Earth, and is not to be taken literally. It simply means that we will come to have a great many possessions. Cf. verse 14-1.

OGBE MEJI - 11

Ejinrin fa gburu-gburu wọ-(i)lu a da fun Qrunmila ti o
 "Ejinrin crawl widely-widely enter-town" (be) who cast for Qrunmila that he
 nlọ fẹ eyi Toro ọmọ O-l(i)-okun. Nwọn ni ki Qrunmila
 going love this "Narrow," child (of) One:who-has-sea. They say should Qrunmila
 ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ba le fẹ, akikọ meji, ayebọ kan, eku, ẹja,
 offer-sacrifice that he should be:able love (her), cock two, hen one, rat, fish,
 ọkẹ meji, ati ẹgbafa; o ru-(ẹ)bọ. N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila nlọ
 bag two, and 12,000 (cowries); he offer-sacrifice. At-time-that Qrunmila going
 si ile O-l(i)-okun, o ko ọkẹ meji dani, ni-(i)gba-ti Qrunmila
 to house (of) One:who-has-sea, he gather bag two hold, at-time-that Qrunmila
 fi ma de ile O-l(i)-okun, Eṣu ẹṣ-(o)ju
 take (them) (continuative) reach house (of) One:who-has-sea, Eshu squeeze-eye
 mọ l(i)-ara, ni-(i)gba-ti Toro ri Qrunmila, o ni on ni
 against (him) at-body; at-time-that "Narrow" see Qrunmila, she say he be (who)
 on (yi)o fẹ. O-l(i)-okun ni gbogbo Irun-(i)mọlẹ ti o ti nẹ
 she will love. One:who-has-sea say all 400-Deity that they have wanting
 Toro ti ko gba. Nibo ni Qrunmila mu Toro gba?
 "Narrow" that (she) not accept (them). Where be Qrunmila take "Narrow" take?
 Qrunmila ni on yio mu lọ, bayi ni O-l(i)-okun bẹrẹ si kẹ
 Qrunmila say he will take (her) go, thus be One:who-has-sea begin to indulge
 Qrunmila; o ni lati ọjọ ti gbogbo Irun-(i)mọlẹ ti nẹ Toro, o
 Qrunmila; she say from day that all 400-Deity have wanting "Narrow," she
 jaja ri ẹni-ti yio fẹ.
 finally see person-that (she) will love.

Ni-(i)gba-ti awọn Irun-(i)mọlẹ ri pe Toro fẹ Qrunmila, inu bi
 At-time-that those 400-Deity see that "Narrow" love Qrunmila, belly vex
 wọn, nwọn mu-(a)ra, nwọn fi ọtun ẹ ayẹ, nwọn fi osi
 them, they take-body, they take right (hand) make pit, they take left (hand)
 ẹ iran, nwọn fi okorokoro ẹ a-jin-jin-d(e)-ṣrun.
 make abyss, they take front make to-be:deep-be:deep-arrive-sky.

Ni-(i)gba-ti Eṣu ri eyi, o mu ọkan n(i)-inu akikọ meji ti Qrun-
 At-time-that Eshu see this, he take one at-belly (of) cock two that Qrun-
 mila fi ru-(ẹ)bọ, o sọ si-(i)nu ayẹ ọtun, o di,
 mila take (them) offer-sacrifice, he throw (it) to-belly (of) pit (of) right, it tie;
 o sọ ọkan si-(i)nu iran osi, o di, o sọ ayebọ si-(i)nu a-jin-
 he throw one to-belly (of) abyss (of) left, it tie; he throw hen to-belly to-be:
 jin-d(e)-ṣrun okorokoro, o di; awọn Irun-(i)mọlẹ si ti sọ
 deep-be:deep-arrive-sky (of) front, it tie; those 400-Deity and have speak
 fun o-l(i)-odo ti yio tu nwọn pe bi nwọn ba ri babalawo
 for one:who-have-river that will paddle them that if they should see diviner

1 - 11

"Ejinrin¹ spreads and spreads until it enters the town" was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he was going to marry Narrow, child of the Sea Goddess. They said Qrunmila should sacrifice two cocks, one hen, a rat, a fish, two bags,² and three shillings so that he might be able to marry her. He made the sacrifice. When Qrunmila went to the Sea Goddess' house, he took two bags with him. When he arrived, Eshu blinked his eyes³ at him, making him very handsome. When Narrow saw Qrunmila, she said he was the one she would marry. The Sea Goddess said all the Four Hundred Deities had wanted Narrow, but she had refused them; where then could Qrunmila take Narrow to escape their anger? Qrunmila said he would take her away. Then the Sea Goddess began to be hospitable to Qrunmila. She said that all the Four Hundred Deities had wanted to marry Narrow; but finally she had found someone she was willing to marry.

When the Four Hundred Deities saw that Narrow loved Qrunmila, they were angry; they got ready and dug a pit on the right side; they dug an abyss on the left side; and in front they dug a hole as deep as heaven is high.

When Eshu saw this, he took the two cocks that Qrunmila had sacrificed. He threw one into the pit on the right, and it closed; he threw the other into the abyss on the left, and it closed; he threw the hen⁴ into the hole in front, which was as deep as heaven is high, and it closed. The Four Hundred Deities had already told the ferrymen at the river Qrunmila had to cross that if a diviner

-
1. A creeping vine (Momordica Balsamina, M. Charantia, or M. foetida).
 2. Two empty matlike bags used in carrying and storing money and clothing.
 3. This is different from our wink; both eyes are flicked lightly shut at the same time. By doing this, Eshu has the power to transform a person by making them very ugly or, as in this case, very beautiful.
 4. The two cocks, the hen, and the two bags included in the sacrifice are instrumental in making it possible for Qrunmila to attain his goal.

kan ti o ba mu obinrin kan l(i)-ḡhin, ko gbḡḡḡ tu wḡn; ni-(i)gba-ti
one that he should take woman one at-back, not must paddle them; at-time-that

Qrunmila fi ma de ḡḡḡ o-l(i)-odo o di
Qrunmila take (continuative) reach presence (of) one:who-have-river, he tie

obinrin rḡ Toro ' si-(i)nu ḡkḡ kan o da ḡkan de l(i)-ori, o di
woman his, "Narrow," to-belly (of) bag one, he cover one (1) at-head; he tie (her)

o gbe ru, ni-(i)gba-ti o de ḡḡḡ o-l(i)-odo,
he take (her) carry; at-time-that he arrive presence (of) one:who-have-river,

o-l(i)-odo ko mḡ pe babalawo na ti awḡn Irun-(i)mḡḡ wi
one:who-have-river not know that diviner the that those 400-Deity speak (of)

ni, o si tu wḡn gun oke, ni-(i)gba-ti Qrunmila de ḡja
be (this); he and paddle them climb hill; at-time-that Qrunmila arrive market (of)

Ifḡ, o sḡ ka-(i)ḡḡ, o tu ḡkḡ l(i)-ori obinrin, obinrin na
Ifḡ, he throw (her) against-ground, he loosen bag at-head (of) woman, woman the

si yḡ ja-(o)de ara ta gbogbo awḡn Irun-(i)mḡḡ inu si bi wḡn.
and appear reach-outside, body kick all those 400-Deity belly and vex them.

Qrunmila njo, o nyḡ, o ni:
Qrunmila dancing, he rejoicing, he say:

O ḡoko Bani
"O shoko." "Bani."

Ejinrin fa gburu-gburu wḡ-(i)lu, o
"Ejinrin crawl widely-widely enter-town,' oh,

a da fun emi Qrunmila
"(Be) who cast for me, Qrunmila,

Ti nḡ fḡ Toro, ḡmḡ O-l(i)-okun.
"That (I) going love 'Narrow,' child (of) One:who-has-sea.

Awḡn Irun-(i)mḡḡ f(i)-ḡtun ḡ(e)-ayḡ o,
"Those 400-Deity take-right make-pit, oh;

Awḡn Irun-(i)mḡḡ f(i)-osi ḡe-(i)ran;
"Those 400-Deity take-left make-abyss;

Nwḡn fi okorokoro ḡ(e)-a-jin-jin-d(e)-ḡrun;
"They take front make-to-be:deep-be:deep-reach-sky.

Nwḡn le f(i)-ḡtun ḡ(e)-ayḡ, o;
"They be:able take-right make-pit, oh;

Ki nwḡn f(i)-osi ḡe-(i)ran;
"That they take-left make-abyss;

Ki nwḡn f(i)-okorokoro ḡ(e)-a-jin-jin-d(e)-ḡrun;
"That they take-front make-to-be:deep-be:deep-reach-sky;

K(o)-(ni)-o-n(i)-ile ma re-(i)le gbain.
"Not-(say)-one:who-have-house not go-house, 'gbain.'

traveling with a woman should come to them, they must not ferry them across. When Orunmila was approaching the ferrymen, he put his wife, Narrow, inside of one bag and he put the other bag over her head. He tied her up, and carried her. When he came to the river, the ferryman did not know that this was the diviner of whom the Four Hundred Deities had spoken, and he paddled them across the river. When Orunmila arrived at the market in Ife, he put the bags down and untied them; and his wife stepped out. All of the Four Hundred Deities were disappointed and they were angry; but Orunmila was dancing and rejoicing. He said:

"Oooooh Shoko." "Bani."⁵

"Ejinrin spreads and spreads until it enters the town; oh,

"Was the one who cast Ifa for me, Orunmila,

"When I was going to marry Narrow, the child of the Sea Goddess.

"The Four Hundred Deities dug a pit on the right side;

"The Four Hundred Deities dug an abyss on the left side;

"In front they dug a hole as deep as heaven is high.

"They can dig a pit on the right side, oh;

"They can dig an abyss on the left side;

"They can dig a hole in front, as deep as heaven is high;

"They didn't say one can't go to his own house, 'gbain.'⁶

5. The traditional introduction to Ifa songs and recitations. See n. 4, verse 1-7.

6. An exclamation, the meaning of which is not clear.

Qrunmila gbe mi s(i)-okẹ gbe mi s(i)-ororọ rẹ
 "Qrunmila carry me to-bag carry me to-purse yours;

K(i)-a jọ ma lọ gbẹrẹ-gbẹrẹ;
 "That-we be:together (continuative) go slowly-slowly;

Ni-(i)bi o da l(i)-o da k(i)-a jọ ma
 "At-place it where:be (it) be-it where:be (it) that-we be:together (continuative)
 lọ.
 go."

Ifa ni a-(yi)o fẹ obinrin kan, gbogbo enia ni yio ma doyi
 Ifa say we-will love woman one, all person be will (continuative) spin
 yi-(ẹ)ni ka, ti nwọn yio si ma di rikiṣi si-(ẹ)ni ki
 turn-person around, that they will and (continuative) tie plot to-person, should
 a ma foya, a-(yi)o fẹ obinrin na.
 we not fear, we-will love woman the.

OGBE MEJI - 12

O ku gbe ohun oro, (e)m(i)-a rin dodo ohun ojingbin;
 "He die be:lost voice (of) pain, I-will walk deep:sound (of) voice very:deep;
 ologbo ni fi ọdun ẹ ara a da fun ọmọ a-
 cat be (he) take raphia:cloth make style" (be) who cast for child (of) "One:who-
 r(i)-ẹsẹ ẹsanṣa tu-(ẹ)rupe nwọn ni aya ẹsanṣa kan l(i)-o gba? Nwọn ni
 see-foot very:long loosen-dirt" they say wife slender one be-he take? They say
 afi-bi o ba ru obi merindinlogun, abo adię męta, awo dudu
 unless-if he should offer kola sixteen, female chicken three, plate black
 tun-tun igba-(a)-de-mu tun-tun ẹgbęta; ko ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 new-new, calabash-to-cover-drink new-new, 600 (cowries); not offer-sacrifice.
 O si gba aya na, l(i)-ẹhin eyi egbo da si ile, eyi si
 He and take wife the, at-back (of) this sore cause (him) to house, this and
 mu ki ọkunrin na ku. Ifa ni ẹni-ti a ba da Ifa yi fun
 take that man the die. Ifa say person-that we should cast Ifa this for (him)
 ti ko ba ru, ara-(a)iyе yio ma ba (ohu)n-kan
 that (he) not should offer (it), people-(of)-earth will (continuative) spoil thing-one
 rẹ jẹ.
 his (1).

1. Ba . . . jẹ means "to spoil."

"Qrunmila, carry me in your bag; carry me in your purse,
 "So that we may go together slowly;
 "So that wherever we may be going, we may go together."

Ifa says we will marry a woman. Everyone will try to twist us and turn us, and they will conspire against us; but we should not be afraid. We will marry the woman.

1 - 12

"He is lost to us through death, is a cry full of pain; I will walk, talking to myself in a very low voice;¹ Cat is the one that dresses in style with raphia cloth"² was the one who cast Ifa for "He scatters dirt with very long feet."³ They asked, "Is he going to take a slender woman as his wife?" They said it would be bad for him unless he sacrificed sixteen kola nuts, three hens, a new black plate,⁴ a new calabash for covering drinks, and one penny eight oninis. He did not sacrifice.

He took the woman as his wife. Afterward sores confined him to his house, and he died. Ifa says that if the person for whom this figure was cast does not make a sacrifice, witches⁵ will spoil something he has.

-
1. These two phrases are recited in mourning the death of a relative.
 2. Qdun is a cloth woven of both cotton and raphia.
 3. The "long" feet referred to here are those of the cat.
 4. A plate of locally made black ware.
 5. Ara-(a)iye is a euphemism for witches.

OGBE - (Q)YẸKU - 1

Ogbe-(g)yẹku, baba amulu, O-gbo-a-tọ, awo
 Ogbe-Qyẹku, father (of) combination. To-grow:old-to-live:long, secret (of)
 ẹdan a da f(un)-ẹdan, k(i)-ẹdan iṣe ku, agba Iworo a ku
 Rod, (be) who cast for-Rod; before-Rod make die, elder (of) Iworo will remain
 kata-kaṭa.
 scattered-scattered.

O-l(i)-owo-(i)la ti ik(g)-awun ko gbọdọ kọ-(i)gbin a
 "One:who-has-money-(of)-cut that cut-Miser not must cut-Snail" (be) who
 da fun kiniun ọmọ a-ri-(i)tọ gba-(i)ju ti mbe ni
 cast for Lion, child (of) "One:who-see-urine take-dense:forest" that existing at
 a-pe-yanjẹ ọmọ ẹranko.
 to-assemble-mulct child (of) animal.

Ifa ni o ri ẹni-kan ti ko ni igba ti ko ni awo ti
 Ifa say he see person-one that not have calabash that not have plate that
 gbogbo enia ati awọn ara ile rẹ npe ni o-l(i)-ori bu(ru)-
 all people and those people (of) house his calling at one:who-have-head be:bad-
 buru ti nwọn si nfi ẹ ẹ-l(i)-ẹya; Ifa ni oluwarẹ
 be:bad that they and taking make that:which-be-ridicule; Ifa say person:in:question
 yio di enia nla l(i)-ẹhin ọla ati pe yio si ma
 will become person big at-back (of) tomorrow and that (he) will and (continuative)
 rān oro.
 send spite.

Ni akoko lai-lai gbogbo awọn ẹranko ni ima rẹ kiniun jẹ, bi
 At time ever-ever all those animal be (continuative) mulct Lion (1); if
 o ba sun s(i)-ilẹ, nwọn a ma gun l(i)-ori nwọn ko
 he should sleep to-ground, they will (continuative) climb (him) at-head, they not
 si bikita fun; kiniun wa mu-(a)ra o tọ awọn babalawo lẹ,
 and show:respect for (him); Lion come take-body he approach those diviner go,
 o si bere pe kin-ni ohun ti on le ẹ ti on fi le ni iyi ati ọwọ
 he and ask that what-be thing that he can do that he take can have glory and honor
 l(i)-oju awọn ẹgbẹ on? Awọn babalawo ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 at-eye (of) those companion (of) him? Those diviner say should he offer-sacri-
 keregbe omi kan, eru, kumọ męta, ewe Ifa—ewe ọwọ—
 fice (of) calabash (of) water one, ashes, club three, leaf (of) Ifa—leaf (of) honor—
 nwọn ni ki o gbo ewe Ifa na si-(i)nu omi, ki o da eru
 they say should he crush leaf (of) Ifa the to-belly (of) water, should he pour ashes
 na si, ki o si gbe mu, ati-pe bi o ba dubu-(i)lẹ
 the to (it), should he and take (it) drink; and-that if he should lie:across-ground

2 - 1

Ogbe Qyęku, father of combinations,¹ "He lives to a ripe old age," the diviner of Rod,² was the one who cast Ifa for Rod. Before Rod dies, the elders of Iworo will nearly all be dead.

"The one who circumcises the tortoise must not circumcise the snail" was the one who cast Ifa for Lion, the child of "His urine captures the dense forest,"³ when the other animals were taking advantage of him.

Ifa says he sees someone who owns neither a plate nor a calabash;⁴ everyone, including his own relatives, say he has a "bad head"⁵ and are making fun of him. Ifa says this person will become important in the near future and that he will have his revenge.

From the beginning of time all the animals took advantage of Lion. If he lay asleep on the ground, they climbed on top of him; they never showed him proper respect. Lion got ready and went to the diviners; he asked them what he could do to gain honor and glory among his associates. The diviners said that he should sacrifice one calabash of water, ashes, three clubs, and Ifa's leaves (the "leaf of honor").⁶ They said he should crush the leaves of Ifa in the water, add the ashes to it, and then drink it. And they told him that when he lay down

1. Ogbe Qyęku is regarded as the "oldest" and most powerful of these figures in which both halves are different. It ranks immediately after the "pairs" or double (meji) figures, and is therefore at the head of all the "mixtures" or combinations (amulu). See Chapter IV.

2. A rod of brass or iron, such as is used by the Ogboni society and the worshippers of Qshun. A piece of metal, of course, can "outlive" even the elders of Iworo, who seem to epitomize long life and old age. ♣

3. The meaning of this name is explained later in the verse. One informant included "when the other animals were taking advantage of him" as part of the name.

4. A common idiom indicating poverty.

5. That is, that he has bad luck, and that he is therefore worthless.

6. Brillantaisia patula. Note that in order to gain honor, a leaf known as "leaf of honor" is added to the concoction to be drunk.

si ibi-k(u)-ibi ki o ma tọ yi ara ka. Ni-(i)gba-
to place-any-place, should he (continuative) urinate turn body around. At-time-
ti kiniun si ti ẹ eyi tan, bi o ba ma sun, yio si tọ
that Lion and have do this finish, if he should (continuative) sleep, will and uri-
yi ara rẹ ka; bi awọn ẹranko ba si fẹ lati ma gun
nate turn body his around; if those animal should and want to (continuative) climb
l(i)-ori bi ti at(i)-ẹhin wa, bi nwọn ba ti da itọ
(him) at-head like that (of) from-back come, if they should have go:across urine
rẹ kọja nwọn a ẹbu lu-(i)lẹ nwọn a si di oku, bayi ni
his pass, they will fall strike-ground they will and become corpse; thus be
kiniun di ẹni ẹru l(i)-arin awọn ẹranko, bi nwọn ba si gbọ
Lion become person (of) fear at-middle (of) those animal; if they should and hear
ohun rẹ, ẹru a ba wọn, nwọn a si ma gbọn riri. Lati
voice his, fear will meet them, they will and (continuative) shake 'riri.' From
igba-na ni kiniun ti ma nke pe a fi enia, a fi emi,
time-the be Lion have (continuative) crying that "Unless person, unless me,
afi Q-l(i)-ọrun.
unless One:who-has-sky."

OGBE - (Q)YẸKU - 2

Ogbe-(q)yẹku-yẹkẹtẹ a da f(un)-Q-l(i)-qfin t(i)-opo yẹ
"Ogbe-Qyẹku-Stubby" (be) who cast for-One:who-has-palace that-dais avoid
l(i)-ori rẹ. Ifa ni ẹni-kan ni o wa l(i)-ori oye yi ti
(him) at-head his. Ifa say person-one be who exist at-head (of) title this, that
a-(yi)o pa n(i)-ipo da ti a-(yi)o fi ẹni-ti wa ni ikọkọ
we-will change (him) at-position (1); that we-will take person-that exist at corner
d(i)-ipo rẹ. Ẹni ikọkọ na ni gbogbo ara-(a)iye yio ma
close-position his. Person (of) corner the be all people-(of)-earth will (con-
tinuative) rub hand to (him) that they will and (continuative) pay:homage for (him).
Orisha kan si ni yi ti gbogbo ile ti nsin ti nwọn ko si sin
Orisha one and be this that all house have serving that they not and serve
mọ; igbo si kun bo oju-(ẹ)bọ rẹ; ki a tunṣe ki a
again; forest and fill cover eye-(of)-sacrifice its; should we repair (it) should we
si ta mọriwo si ẹnu ọna rẹ. Ẹni ikọkọ ti
and suspend young:palm:fronds to mouth (of) road its. Person (of) corner that
t(i)-omọde t(i)-agba ti nfi oju tinrin rẹ yio si di
that-(of)-young:child that-(of)-elder have taking eye sneer his will and become

1. Pa . . . da means "change."

anywhere, he should first make a circle of urine about the spot. After Lion had made this sacrifice, when he wanted to sleep, he urinated around the place where he was going to lie down. When the other animals wanted to climb on top of him, as in times past, if they stepped over his urine, they fell dead upon the ground. Thus Lion came to be feared by the other animals; when they hear his voice, they are frightened and tremble 'riri.'⁷ And since then, when Lion roars, he says, "Aside from man, aside from myself, aside from the Sky God, who else is there?"⁸

7. "Riri" describes the way in which a person trembles in fright.

8. This verse explains why the Lion is the king of the animals and why all other animals fear him, and also what Lion says when he roars.

2 - 2

"Stout Ogbe Qyęku"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for a king who had been de-throned. Ifa says there is someone who has a title; he will be removed from office and a person who stays in the corner will be chosen to fill his position. All people will rub their hands² to the person of the corner, and pay homage to him. There is also a deity that was once worshiped by all the people of a house; but they do not worship him any more and the forest has overgrown his altar. We should renovate the altar and tie young palm fronds at its entrance. The person of the corner is someone at whom young children and old people alike are sneering; but he will leave his corner and come

1. The name of the diviner is derived from the name of the figure.

2. The palms of the hands are rubbed together as in a supplication, when asking to be excused from expressing an opinion during a trial or a discussion. The gesture is made to those of higher rank to show that the matter is too difficult for you to decide, or that you have nothing significant to add to what has already been said. The implication here is that everyone will defer to the client and look to him to make the important decisions, because of the position he will occupy.

ẹni-(i)gbangba. Adię kan wa ni ile ẹni-ti o da Ifa
 person-(of)-open:place. Chicken one exist at house (of) person-that he cast Ifa
 yi, adię na ni ọmọ l(i)-ẹhin, ki a ko adię na ti on
 this, chicken the have child at-back; should we gather chicken the that (of) it
 ti ọmọ rẹ ki a fi ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 that (of) child its should we take (them) offer-sacrifice.

OGBE - (Q)YẸKU - 3

Ori ti ko ba ni rin ihoho yio ri a-l(i)-aṣọ ni-(i)gba-ti
 "Head that not should be walk naked will see one:who-has-cloth at-time-that
 ọja ba to a da f(un)-Q-l(i)-ọfa a ta-(a)poti
 market should equal" (be) who cast for-One:who-has-Qfa who sell-box (of)
 aran ọmọ a-wukọ gbinrin bi erin fọn ọmọ a-
 velvet, child (of) "One:who-cough 'gbinrin' like elephant blows," child (of) "One:
 fi-(i)koko wọn-(i)lẹkẹ f(un)-ale rẹ ọmọ a-
 who-take-top:of:calabash measure-bead for-concubine his," child (of) "One:who-
 j(ẹ)-aiye gbẹdẹ-gbẹdẹ bi ẹni nla-(o)yin. Ifa ni ẹni ikọkọ kan
 eat-world wet-wet like person licking-honey." Ifa say person (of) corner one
 yio di ẹni-(i)gbangba yio si de ipo nla kan ti yio si
 will become person-(of)-open:place, will and arrive position big one that will and
 pẹ pupọ ni ipo na.
 be:long much at position the.

Q-l(i)-ọfa a ta apoti aran jẹ arugbo ko si ni igba
 "One:who-has-Qfa who sell box (of) velvet" eat old:person not and have cala-
 tabi awo, ṣugbọn o ni aṣọ nla kan ni-(i)nu odidi ti on papa
 bash or plate, but he have cloth big one at-belly (of) hiding:place that he him-
 ko-jẹ lo, ṣugbọn awọn enia ni ima tọrọ rẹ lọ si ode;
 self not-consent use, but those people be (continuative) request his go to out-

Q-l(i)-ọfa mu-(a)ra o tọ awọn babalawo lọ, o bere pe
 side; One:who-has-Qfa take-body he approach those diviner go, he ask that
 bawo ni on yio ti ẹni ni lari? Nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 how be he will have do have importance? They say should he offer-sacrifice (of)
 obukọ dudu kan, ẹgbarun ati aṣọ nla kan ti o wa ni odidi
 he:goat black one, 10,000 (cowries) and cloth big one that it exist at hiding:place
 rẹ. O gbọ o si ru-(ẹ)bọ. Ko l(i)-ọjọ ko l(i)-oṣu ọba Ọfa ku,
 his. He hear he and offer-sacrifice. Not at-day not at-month, king (of) Ọfa die,
 awọn ara Ọfa mu Q-l(i)-Ọfa a ta apoti aran nwọn fi
 those people (of) Ọfa take "One:who-have-Qfa who sell box (of) velvet" they take

out into the open. There is a hen at the house of the person for whom this figure was cast. This hen has chicks; we should take both the hen and its young to make the sacrifice.

2 - 3

"The head that should not go naked will find a cloth seller when the market opens"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for "The King of Qfa who sells a box full of velvet,"² child of "One who coughs 'gbinrin'³ like the trumpeting of an elephant," child of "One who uses the top of a calabash to measure out beads for his mistresses,"⁴ child of "One who enjoys the world wet and soggy, like someone licking honey."⁵ Ifa says that a person who stays in the corner will come out into the open; he will occupy an important position, and he will remain in office a long time.

"The King of Qfa who sells a box full of velvet" was an old man who owned neither a plate nor a calabash; but he had a large cloth hidden away. He never used this cloth himself, but others borrowed it from him to dress up to go out in. The King of Qfa got ready, and he went to the diviners; he asked them what he must do in order to gain importance. They said he should sacrifice one black he-goat, two shillings six pence, and one large cloth which he had hidden away. He heard and he sacrificed. Soon afterward the King of Qfa⁶ died, and the people of Qfa took "The King of Qfa who sells a box full of velvet" and

1. The implication of this name, like that of a proverb, is much broader than its literal meaning. In this case the meaning is that class or nobility will be recognized; and that each person will get his due. The allusion is to the fact that the legendary character, though at first poor and of no importance, was made King of Qfa.

2. The legendary character is referred to as the King of Qfa even before he assumed that title. The name itself is an allusion to the large cloth mentioned later in the verse, which he had hidden away. The velvet refers to the large cloth and the box (apoti) to the hiding place (odidi).

3. This word is said to be the sound of a cough, or the sound made by iron striking a stone anvil. The reference to elephant, which is associated with royalty, indicates that this is the name of an important person.

4. The lid of a calabash is used in measuring small things of little value. It is not a standardized measure. And while it is appropriate for measuring something like kernels of corn, it would never be used for anything as valuable as beads except by a person who did not have to worry about money. Thus the name implies that the individual is very rich and generous, since he doesn't stop to count out the beads one by one.

5. These are all names of individuals from whom the King of Qfa is descended.

6. That is, the one who was king at the time of the divination; not the legendary client, but his predecessor.

jẹ ọba ni ireti pe ko ni pẹ ki o to ku, ẹgbọni-
 (him) eat king at expectation that not be be:long before he equal die; but at-
 (i)gba-ti o de ori oye tan, kaka ti iba fi ku iṣe
 time-that he arrive head (of) title finish, instead that (he) should take die, make
 ni ara rẹ tubọ nle si; aiye awọn ara Qfa si wa
 be body his continue being:strong to; world (of) those people (of) Qfa and exist
 dun o si, dẹ wọn l(i)-ọrun nwọn ko si tun fẹ pe ki o
 be:sweet it and be:soft (for) them at-neck, they not and then want that should he
 ku mọ.
 die again.

Ifa ni ẹni ikọkọ kan yio di ẹni igbangba yio si
 Ifa say person (of) corner one will become person (of) open:place, will and
 de ipo nla kan ti yio si pẹ pupọ ni-(i)nu ipo na ki
 arrive position big one, that will and be:long much at-belly (of) position the before
 o to ku.
 he equal die.

OGBE - (I)WORI¹ - 1

Ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-erin; ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-
 "Back (of its death) be-we divide-elephant; back (of its death) be-we divide-
 ẹfọn; ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-araba iyan ọmọ
 buffalo; back (of its preparation) be-we divide-loaf (of) pounded:yam," child (of)
 Ologogololo l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa k(o)-Odogbo ni-(ọ)jọ ti o wa ni-(i)nu
 Stark:naked be-who cast-Ifa for-Odogbo at-day that he exist at-belly (of)
 oyikiti ipọn-(o)ju. Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa n(i)-isisiyi ni-(i)nu
 surrounded redness-(of)-eye. Ifa say person-one exist at-right:now at-belly (of)
 ipọn-(o)ju nla, bi o ba ni iya ti o wa ni aiye ki o
 redness-(of)-eye big; if he should have mother that she exist at earth should he
 bọ ori iya na, bi o ba si ku ki o bọ ọ.
 sacrifice:to head (of) mother the; if she should and die, should he sacrifice:to her.
 Nwọn ni ni ọdun yi ni ọrọ rẹ pe. Nwọn ni ki o ru-
 They say at year this be riches his be:complete. They say should he offer-
 (ẹ)bọ; o ru-(ẹ)bọ ẹiyẹ-(i)le męrin, Iwọwọ—akun-k(u)-akun—
 sacrifice; he offer-sacrifice bird-(of)-house four, bead —bead-any-bead —
 męrin, ẹgbarin o le ọgọrin. O ru-(ẹ)bọ, nwọn ni bi o ba
 four, 8000 it upon 80 (cowries). He offer-sacrifice, they say if he should

1. Also known as Ogbe-w(o)-ẹhin (Ogbe-look:at-back). Cf. n. 1, verse 3-4.

made him king, expecting that it would not be long until he would die. But after he took office, instead of dying, he continued in good health; and everything went well for the people of Qfa and everything was easy for them. Then they did not want him to die any more.

Ifa says that a person in the corner will come out into the open and will attain an important position, and he will stay in that position a long time before he dies.

3 - 1

"After it is dead, we cut up an elephant; after it is dead, we cut up a buffalo; after it is prepared, we cut up a loaf of pounded yams," child of Stark Naked,¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Odogbo when he was living in the midst of trouble.² Ifa says that right now someone is in great trouble. If his mother is still alive on earth, he should sacrifice to her head; if she is dead, he should sacrifice to her at her grave.

They said that Odogbo's riches would be complete during that year. They said he should make a sacrifice; he sacrificed four pigeons, four beads (any kind of beads), two shillings, and 80 cowries. He made the sacrifice. They said when he had

1. This refers to the yam loaf, which is completely naked in the sense that its surface is plain, undecorated, and uncovered.

2. As explained later, Odogbo's trouble was poverty.

ru-(e)bọ tan ki o lọ bọ iya rẹ, nwọn ni ile ni
offer-sacrifice finish, should he go sacrifice:to mother his; they say house be
ire rẹ wa ko gbọdọ lọ si ibi-kan.
goodness his exist; not must go to place-one.

Ni-(i)gba-ti Odogbo ru-(e)bọ tan ti o si bọ iya
At-time-that Odogbo offer-sacrifice finish that he and sacrifice:to mother
rẹ, o joko si ile titi di ojo kẹrin, şugbọn ko ri ohun-k(u)-
his, he sit:down to house until (it) become day fourth, but not see thing-any-
ohun bi ire; ni-(i)gba-ti o di ijọ karun Odogbo mu-(a)ra o lọ si
thing like goodness; at-time-that it become day fifth Odogbo take-body he go to
oko igi, o ni o ko ni jẹ-ki ebi ki o pa on ku; ni-
farm (of) tree, he say he not be consent-that hunger should it kill him die; at-
(i)gba-ti o de oko o şẹ-(i)gi dara-dara, o si ru ni a-ru-
time-that he arrive farm, he break-wood good-good, he and carry (it) at to-carry-
t(o)-ẹru bi o ti gb(e)-ẹru ti o mbọ, iya rẹ di ẹiyẹ o
equal-load, as he have carry-load that he coming, mother his become bird she
si bẹrẹ si wi-pe:
and begin to speak-that:

Odogbo da-(i)gi nu
"Odogbo throw-wood be:lost,

Ire ti de-(i)le l(i)-ẹhin rẹ.
"Goodness have arrive-home at-back yours."

Ni-(i)gba-ti Odogbo gbọ, o ni o yio ru eyi de-(i)le bi o ti
At-time-that Odogbo hear, he say he will carry this arrive-house, as he have
de-(i)le ti o fi idi igi sọ-(i)lẹ bẹ-ni o jin si-
arrive-house that he take waist (of) wood strike-ground, so-be it fall:down to-
(i)lẹ akun, bayi ni owo de, ti ọla de ti o si di
ground (of) bead, thus be cowries arrive, that wealth arrive that he and become
o-l(i)-oro. Odogbo wa bẹrẹ, o ni bẹ-ni awọn babalawo wi,
one:who-has-riches. Odogbo come begin; he say so-be those diviner speak,
nwọn ni:
they say:

Ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-erin,
"Back (of its death) be-we divide-elephant;

Ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-ẹfọn,
"Back (of its death) be-we divide-buffalo;

Ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-araba
"Back (of its preparation) be-we divide-loaf (of)

iyan omo Ologogololo
pounded:yam,' child (of) Stark:naked;

finished this sacrifice, he should sacrifice also to his mother.³ They said that his blessing was to be found at home and that he must not go anywhere.

When Odogbo had made the sacrifice and had sacrificed also to his mother, he stayed at home for three days;⁴ but he did not see anything like a blessing. On the fourth day he got ready and went to the farm to fetch wood, saying that he was not going to starve to death. When he reached the farm, he chopped a good pile of firewood and started back with as much as he could carry. As he was returning, carrying his load, his mother appeared as a bird, and she began to sing:

"Odogbo, throw away your wood;

"The blessing came to your house while you were gone."

When Odogbo heard this, he said that he would carry the wood home anyway. When he reached home and dumped the load of wood to the ground, its end broke through the ground into a pit of beads.⁵ In this way money and wealth came to Odogbo, and he became a rich man.⁶ Odogbo began to sing; he said it was just as the diviners had predicted when they said:

"After it is dead we cut up an elephant;

"After it is dead we cut up a buffalo;

"After it is prepared we cut up a loaf of pounded yams,
child of Stark Naked;

3. The first sacrifice goes to Eshu for the Sky God.

4. Note that there is a difference between English and Yoruba in counting days. The Yoruba count both the first and the last days, so that what we would call three days they call four.

5. Beads, especially valuable ones of the kind known as *segi*, are often found in pits in the ground in this way. See n. 5, verse 1-10, and n. 2, verse 249-2.

6. In this case the outcome was successful even though Odogbo did not observe the diviner's instruction that he must not leave his house or his mother's command to throw away his wood. He made the sacrifice, however.

Ni ọjọ ti on, Odogbo wa ni-(i)nu
 "At day that he, Odogbo, exist at-belly (of)

oyikiti ipọn-(o)ju.
 surrounded redness-(of)-eye.

Odogbo da-(i)gi nu,
 "Odogbo throw-wood be:lost,

Ire ti de-(i)le l(i)-ẹhin rẹ.
 "Goodness have arrive-house at-back his."

OGBE - (I)WORI - 2

Ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-erin, ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-
 "Back (of its death) be-we divide-elephant; back (of its death) be-we divide-
 ẹfọn, ẹhin l(i)-a k(un)-araba iyan, ọmọ
 buffalo; back (of its preparation) be-we divide-loaf (of) pounded:yam," child (of)
 Ologogololo l(i)-a da-Ifa k(o)-Odogbo ni-(o)jọ ti o nlọ mu-(i)lẹ-
 Stark:naked be-who cast-Ifa for-Odogbo at-day that he going take-ground-(of)-
 (i)bu-(i)do l(i)-oko. Nwọn ni ibi kan pa-(i)bu-(i)do de
 place-(of)-settling at-farm. They say evil one pitch-place-(of)-settling wait:for
 si ibẹ nwọn ni ki o ma-şe lọ. Nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 (him) to there; they say should he not-do go. They say should he offer-sacrifice
 obukọ kan, ati ẹgbafa. O ni on nlọ, o ni o yio wa ru
 (of) he:goat one, and 12,000 (cowries). He say he going, he say he will come offer
 bi on ba de. N(i)-igba-ti o de oko o ba awọn Irun-(i)mọlẹ,
 if he should arrive. At-time-that he arrive farm, he meet those 400-Deity,
 nwọn ki i mọ-(i)lẹ nwọn bẹ l(i)-ori, nwọn si gbe ori rẹ
 they push him against-ground, they cut (him) at-head, they and carry head his
 ha iwawa ọpẹ; n(i)-igba-ti awọn ara ile reti rẹ titi
 stick:in young palm:tree; at-time-that those people (of) house expect his until
 ti nwọn ko ri, nwọn wa lọ si oko.
 that they not see (him), they seek (him) go to farm.
 N(i)-igba-ti nwọn de oko, nwọn ba ori rẹ n(i)-ibi-ti ẹiyẹ gbe
 At-time-that they arrive farm, they meet head his at-place-that bird take
 nsẹ ẹ. N(i)-igba-ti nwọn ri i, nwọn pada nwọn nbọ wa si ile;
 chirping (at) it. At-time-that they see it, they return they coming come to house;
 nwọn wa bi ara wọn lere pe bawo ni awọn yio ti şe ro bi
 they come asking people their (1) that how be they will have make report if

"On the day that I, Odogbo, was living in the midst of trouble.
"Odogbo, throw away your wood;
"The blessing came to your house while you were gone."

3 - 2

"After it is dead, we cut up an elephant; after it is dead we cut up a buffalo; after it is prepared, we cut up a loaf of pounded yams," child of Stark Naked, was the one who cast Ifa for Odogbo¹ on the day that he was going to take land and settle in the farm. They said evil was waiting there for him; they said he must not go. They said he should sacrifice one goat and three shillings. He said he would go anyway, and that he would make the sacrifice when he came back. When he reached the farm, he met the Four Hundred Deities. They shoved him to the ground and cut off his head. They took his head and stuck it in a young palm tree. The people of his house waited for him, but he did not return; so they went to the farm to look for him.

When they got to the farm, they found his head where birds were chirping at it. When they saw it, they started back home, asking each other what they would report when

1. The names of the diviner and of the legendary character are the same here as in verse 3-1, but the circumstances are different.

awon ba de ile; n(i)-igba-ti nwon ko mo eyi-ti nwon yio se ni
they should arrive home; at-time-that they not know this-that they will do be
won ba berę si k(o)-orin wi-pe:
they should begin to sing-song say-that:

Ẹiyẹ nsẹ-(o)ku oge
"Bird chirping-(at)-corpse (of) neat:person"
Ẹiyẹ nsẹ o ọşęřęşęřę
"Bird chirping, oh 'oşęřęşęřę.'"

Ifa ni ibi kan p(a)-agọ de ęni-kan ni oko tabi ęni-kan nę
Ifa say evil one pitch-tent wait:for person-one at farm or person-one want-
lọ si ibi-kan iba-şe idalę, ibi duro de ni ibi-ti o
ing go to place-one should-make distance, evil stand wait:for at place-that he
ni lọ na ki o ru-(ę)bọ ki o to lọ.
going the, should he offer-sacrifice before he equal go.

OGBE - (I)WORİ - 3

A-joko i-f(i)-ęhin-ti agba bi ęni-ti-o naro n(i)-
"To-sit:down (not) to-take-back-lean elder like person-that-who stand:up be-
iri l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa fun (Q)la-(y)i-l(u)-okun omọ A-
appearance" be-who cast-Ifa for Honor-turns-strikes-rope child (of) One:who-
ş(e)-Oro ş(e)-Qbalufon ti o ni ipa on ko ni ka aiye. Nwon
does-Oro does-Qbalufon that she say strength (of) her not be match earth. They
ni ipa re yio k(a)-aiye. Nwon ni ki o ru-(ę)bọ. O
say strength hers will match-earth. They say should she offer-sacrifice. She
ru akika meji, oruka ọwọ re ati ęgbętalęlęgbon. (Q)la-(y)i-l(u)-
offer pangolin two, ring (of) hand hers and 6600 (cowries). Honor-turns-strikes-
okun ni orukọ ti a ipe aję ati igba-na ni aję ti ni agbara l(i)-
rope be name that we call witch; from time-the be witch have have power at-
ori ęda.
head (of) creature.

Ifa ni aję mu ęni-kan n(i)-isisiyi a fi bi o ba le fi
Ifa say witch take person-one at-right:now unless-if he should be:able take
ębę ti, boya won ko ni mu a lọ.
request push (them), perhaps they not be take him go.

they reached home. Not knowing what to do, they began to sing:

"The birds are chirping at the corpse of a 'dandy,'

"The birds are chirping, oh, 'oşherşherë.'"²

Ifa says an evil has pitched its tent in the farm and is waiting for someone. Or else someone wants to go somewhere, perhaps at a distance; evil awaits him where he is going. He should sacrifice before he goes.

2. The sound of birds chirping.

3 - 3

"An elder who sits without leaning back gives the appearance of a person standing" was the one who cast Ifa for "Wherever honor turns, it finds wealth,"¹ the child of "One who worships Oro and Qbalufon."² She said that her strength was no match for this world. They said her strength would be a match for this world. They said she should sacrifice. She sacrificed two pangolins,³ the ring from her finger, and one shilling seven pence eight oşinis. "Wherever honor turns, it finds wealth" is what we call witches; ever since she made the sacrifice, witches have had power over human beings.⁴

Ifa says witches will seize someone right now unless he can beg them to change their mind by sacrificing; then perhaps they will not take him away.

1. Wealth here is referred to as the cord or rope (okun) upon which cowries are strung.

2. Oro and Qbalufon are deities.

3. Scaly anteaters (*Uromanis longicaudata* Briss). See Maupoil (1943: 280).

4. This verse thus explains why witches can harm humans.

OGBE - (I)WORI - 4

Ogbe-w(o)-ghin wo b(i)-aja rẹ yio ba pa-(i)kun l(i)-o
 "Ogbe-look:at-back look:at if-dog yours will meet kill-squirrel" be-who
 d(a)-Ifa k(o)-Qrunmila ti o nsọ-(ẹ)kun a-l(i)-ai-l(i)-obinrin;
 cast-Ifa for-Qrunmila that he shedding-tears (of) one:who-be-not-have-woman;
 nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ pe ni ọdun yi ni yio ri ire
 they say should he offer-sacrifice that at year this be (he) will see goodness (of)
 aya. O si ru agbọn ẹpa kan, ayebọ adię mejì ati ẹgbajì o le
 wife. He and offer basket (of) peanut one, hen chicken two, and 4000 it upon
 oko.
 20 (cowries).

N(i)-igba-ti o ru-(ẹ)bọ tan, nwọn bu fun n(i)-inu
 At-time-that he offer-sacrifice finish, they share (it) for (him) at-belly (of)
 ẹpa na pe ki o lẹ ma gbin; n(i)-igba-ti ẹpa yi gbo
 peanut the that should he go (continuative) plant; at-time-that peanut this grow:old
 ti o si to wa, Qrunmila bẹrẹ si ri ọwọ n(i)-inu rẹ o si ro pe
 that it and equal dig, Qrunmila begin to see hand at-belly its he and think that
 ikun ni o nwa jẹ, o si bẹrẹ si sọ oko ẹpa rẹ.
 squirrel be who digging eat, he and begin to watch farm (of) peanut his.

Ni ọjọ kan bi o ti nsọ ẹpa rẹ o ri awọn wundia mejì, bi nwọn
 At day one as he have watching peanut his, he see those maiden two; as they
 ti wọ inu oko ẹpa Qrunmila, nwọn bẹrẹ si wu, bẹ-ni
 have enter belly (of) farm (of) peanut (of) Qrunmila, they begin to dig; so-be
 Qrunmila ja-(o)de si wọn o si mu awọn ni ole, awọn wundia yi si
 Qrunmila reach-outside to them he and take them at thief; those maiden this and
 bẹrẹ si bẹ ẹ pe ki o jọwọ ki o ma-şe mu awọn ni ole.
 begin to request him that should he grant:favor should he not-do take them at thief.

Qrunmila da-(o)hun o ni nitori-ti ki on ba ni aya ni nwọn
 Qrunmila break-voice he say because-that should he should have wife be they
 şe sọ fun on pe ki on ki o gbẹ ẹpa yi, şugbọn bi ẹ ti
 do speak for him that should he should he plant peanut this, but if you have
 wa nji wu yi, bawo ni on yio ti şe le fi fẹ obinrin mọ.
 come stealing dig this how be he will have do be:able take love woman again?
 Nwọn ni ki o jọwọ awọn yio kuku fẹ ẹ; bayi ni Qrunmila fẹ
 They say should he grant:favor they will rather love him; thus be Qrunmila love
 awọn mej(i)-(m)ejì.
 those two-two.

Awọn wundia mejì kan wa, aya Ifa ni wọn, ki a mu wọn fun
 Those maiden two one exist; wife (of) Ifa be they; should we take them give
 Ifa ki nwọn ma ba ko abuku ba awọn ara ile wọn.
 Ifa that they not should gather disgrace meet those people (of) house theirs.

"Ogbe, look back¹ and see if your dog will kill a squirrel"² was the one who cast Ifa for Orunmila when he was weeping because he had no wife. They said that he should sacrifice that he might find a wife during that year. He sacrificed a basket of peanuts, two hens, and one shilling, plus twenty cowries.³

When he had finished sacrificing, the diviners put aside some of the peanuts for him to plant. When these peanuts were ripe enough to harvest, Orunmila noticed that someone was stealing them. He thought that a squirrel was digging and eating them, and he began to keep watch over his peanut field.

One day as he was watching his peanuts, he saw two maidens. As they entered his peanut field and began to dig, Orunmila came out from where he had been hiding and caught them in the act of stealing his peanuts. The maidens began to beg him to spare them and not to take them as thieves.

Orunmila replied that it was in order for him to get a wife that the diviners had told him to plant these peanuts;⁴ but if they came and stole them, how would he ever be able to get married? They said that he should spare them; they would rather marry him than be taken as thieves. So Orunmila married them both.

There are two maidens together; they are wives of Ifa;⁵ we should give them to Ifa so that they may not bring disgrace upon their family.

1. Ogbe-w(o)-ghin, an alternative name of the figure Ogbe-(I)wori, is incorporated into the diviner's name.

2. A squirrel is later suspected of digging up Orunmila's peanuts.

3. Though in itself this is not a very convincing example, the sacrifice of twenty cowries (oko) in a verse which involves a farm (oko) of peanuts follows the pattern of word magic. See Chapter XII.

4. It is implied that Orunmila was to use the profit from the peanuts for bridewealth. Although this did not happen, Orunmila nevertheless got two wives, without having to give bridewealth, through planting the peanuts.

5. A woman who is told by a diviner that she is destined to be a "wife of Ifa" must be given in marriage to a diviner without bridewealth being given for her (see Chapter IX).

Okonrin kan si wa ti o nfe fe aya kan yio ri aya na fe bi ofe
 Man one and exist that he wanting love wife one, will see wife the love as free,
 ni obinrin na yio te l(i)-owofe bi o ba le ru-(e)bo.
 be woman the will reach (him) at-hand if he should be:able offer-sacrifice.
 Ki o-l(i)-obinrin kan so-(a)ra ki a ma ba mu ni ole
 Should one:who-be-woman one watch-body that they not should take (her) at thief
 ni odun yi.
 at year this.

OGBE - (E)DI - 1 A

Ogbe di pe(re)-pe(re) l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa k(o)-ori ti o kun-(i)le
 "Ogbe close generous-generous" be-who cast-Ifa for-Head that he kneel-ground
 ti o yan-(i)wa ti e-l(i)-enini ko je-ki o se e. Ifa ni
 that he choose-destiny that one:who-has-enmity not consent-that he do it. Ifa say
 on ri alaromofe kan ti ko fe ki a se (ohu)n-kan eni. Ifa ni on
 he see evil:wisher one that not want that we do thing-one (of) person. Ifa say he
 yio ba-(e)ni se-(o)gun alaromofe na. O ni ki a ru-(e)bo
 will join-person make-war (of) evil:wisher the. He say should we offer-sacrifice
 akiko-(a)di mefa ati egbata o le oko.
 (of) cock-chicken three and 6000 it upon twenty:cowries.

OGBE - (E)DI - 1 B

Ogbe di pe(re)-pe(re) l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa k(o)-ori ti o kun-(i)le
 "Ogbe close generous-generous" be-who cast-Ifa for-Head that he kneel-ground
 ti o yan iwa ti e-l(i)-enini ko je-ki o se. Ifa
 that he choose destiny that one:who-has-enmity not consent-that he do (it). Ifa
 ni alaromofe kan ni yi ti ko fe ki a se (ohu)n-kan eni. Ifa
 say evil:wisher one be this that not want that we do thing-one (of) person. Ifa
 ni on yio ba-(e)ni se-(o)gun alaromofe na. N(i)-igba-ti ori to
 say he will join-person make-war (of) evil:wisher the. At-time-that Head equal
 ru-(e)bo ni ohun gbogbo ti o nse to gun ti o si
 offer-sacrifice be thing all that he doing be:in:order be:orderly that they and
 ni ona. Akuko adie mefa ati egbata o le oko owo eyo.
 have road. Cock chicken three and 6000 it upon twenty cowries (of) eyo.

And there is a man who wants to take a wife; he will marry her without giving bridewealth if he is able to sacrifice. And a woman should be careful lest she be taken as a thief this year.

4 - 1 A

"Ogbe closes very generously"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Head, who had knelt and chosen his destiny,² and enemies prevented him from achieving it. Ifa says he sees an evil-wisher who does not want us to succeed in what we are doing. Ifa says he will aid us in conquering the evil-wisher. He says that we should sacrifice three cocks and one shilling six pence, plus twenty cowries.

1. This name implies that whatever the client wishes will be granted. Note the pun on the name of the figure, Ogbe-(E)di.

2. Each soul, before leaving heaven to be born, is believed to kneel before the Sky God to choose its destiny on earth (see Chapter XI).

4 - 1 B

"Ogbe closes very generously" was the one who cast Ifa for Head, who had knelt and chosen his destiny, and enemies prevented him from achieving it. Ifa says there is an evil-wisher who does not want us to succeed in what we are doing. Ifa says he will aid us in conquering the evil-wisher. After Head had made the sacrifice, everything that he was doing straightened out, and the way was clear to success.¹ Three cocks and one shilling six pence, plus twenty cowries,² is the sacrifice.

1. The Yoruba idiom is "to have a road." Aside from the addition of this sentence and minor differences in wording, this is the same as verse 4-1 A.

2. Owo $\epsilon\epsilon$ are the large cowries used as money.

OGBE - (E)DI - 2

Oni wiri-wiri ija Ogbe- (E)di; ọla wiri-wiri ija
 "Today hazily-hazily fight (of) Ogbe-Edi; tomorrow hazily-hazily fight (of)
 Ogbe-(E)di, akọ ẹiyẹ ni f(i)-apa s(e)-ogan, Ogbo-l(i)-ogbo ọpẹ ni
 Ogbe-Edi; male bird be (it) take-wing make-????, Old-be-old palm:tree be
 w(u)-omu l(i)-ẹhin l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa fun Lukoun ti o ngb(e)-ogun lọ si
 (it) sprout-omu at-back" be-who cast-Ifa for Lukoun that he carrying-war go to
 Il(u)-ẹjẹ. Nwọn ni odidi enia ni nwọn yio mu ti ibẹ bọ.
 Town-(of)-blood. They say entire person be they will take from there come.
 Nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ayebo adie meji, ẹgbaji o le oko
 They say should he offer-sacrifice (of) hen chicken two, 4000 it upon twenty
 owo ẹyọ.
 cowries ẹyọ.
 Lukoun ni orukọ ti oko jẹ. Il(u)-ẹjẹ ni orukọ obo. Ẹni-
 Lukoun be name that penis eat. Town-(of)-blood be name (of) vagina. Person-
 kan ni o nse (ohu)n-kan ọsụ rẹ l(i)-ogwo yi ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 one be she making thing-one (of) month her at-hand this should she offer-sacri-
 ki o ba le di ọmọ. Ọkọnrin kan si nfe ba ẹni-ti
 fice that it should be:able become child. Man one and wanting join person-that
 o nri (ohu)n-kan ọsụ rẹ ni ọrọ pọ ki nwọn ru-
 who seeing thing-one (of) month her have word be:together should they offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ki odidi enia le ti ibẹ ja-(o)de.
 sacrifice that entire person be:able from there reach-outside.

OGBE - (E)DI - 3

Irọ-(Ifa) a b(i)-ẹnu ginginni l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa fun agan
 "Tapper-(of)-Ifa it bear-mouth pointed" be-who cast-Ifa for barren:woman
 ai-bi ti o tori t(i)-ọmọ d(a)-Ifa. Nwọn ni yio bi
 not-bear (child) that she because that-(of)-child cast-Ifa. They say will bear
 ọmọ. Eku meji, ẹja meji, agbebo adie meji, ati ẹgbaji o le oko.
 child. Rat two, fish two, hen chicken two, and 4000 it upon twenty:
 Ifa ni obinrin kan nwa ọmọ. Yio si bi ọmọ-(o)binrin kan a
 cowries. Ifa say woman one seeking child. Will and bear child-woman one we
 ko si gbọdọ pa orukọ rẹ da. Dada ni ọmọ na yio ma jẹ
 not and must change name her (1). Dada be child the will (continuative) eat.
 Ki e-l(i)-eyi ti a d(a)-Ifa yi fun ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 Should one:who-be-this that we cast-Ifa this for (her) should she offer-sacrifice

1. Pa . . . da means "to change."

4 - 2

"Today Ogbe Edi's fight, very hazily,¹ tomorrow Ogbe Edi's fight, very hazily; the male bird is the one that does . . .² with its wings; an old palm tree is the one that has the omu plant³ in back" was the one who cast Ifa for Lukoun when he was making war on the Town of Blood. They said one whole person would be brought from there.⁴ They said he should sacrifice two hens and one shilling, plus twenty cowries.⁵

Lukoun is the name that penis is called. Town of Blood is the name of vagina. Someone is menstruating at this very moment; she should sacrifice that the discharge may become a child.⁶ And a man wants to have an affair with a woman who is menstruating; they should sacrifice so that a complete person may emerge from it.

-
1. Described as being like fog or smoke; or as things appear when the eyes are opened and shut very rapidly. Ogbe Edi is the name of the figure.
 2. Informants could not translate the word *ogan* in this context.
 3. An unidentified plant that is said to sprout out of the base of old palm trees.
 4. The reference here is to the birth of a child.
 5. Cf. n. 2, verse 4-1B. Here twenty cowries (*oko*) are included in a verse involving penis (*oko*).
 6. The Yoruba believe that the menstrual fluid develops into the embryo and later the child. Cf. verses 14-1, 86-3.
-

4 - 3

"Ifa's bell has a pointed mouth"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for the barren woman who divined because she had no children. They said she would give birth to a child. Two rats, two fish, two hens, and one shilling, plus twenty cowries, was the sacrifice. Ifa says a woman is seeking a child; she will give birth to a girl whose name must not be changed. Dada² is what the child will be called. The one for whom this figure was cast should complete the sacrifice

-
1. Cf. n. 1, verse 1-7.
 2. The name "Dada" is given to children born with prominent tufts of hair. Such children are especially sacred to the God of Thunder. Note that the mother is told to sacrifice to the God of Thunder in addition to her sacrifice to the Sky God.

tan ki o si tun lo bo Şongo pelu. Ifa ni on
 finish should she and then go sacrifice:to Shango together:with (him). Ifa say he
 ri ire qm̄q-(o)binrin kan babalawo ni yio si se ok̄q r̄q.
 see goodness (of) child-woman one, diviner be (who) will and make husband her.

OGBE - (E)DI - 4

J̄e (e)mi-lo, s̄e (e)m(i)-bo l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa f(un)-ariwowo ti o ngb(e)-
 "Quiet I-go, smooth I-come" be-who cast-Ifa for-Hook that he taking-
 ogun lo si i-n(i)-iti, nw̄on ni ko ni şan-(o)wo bo. Ēiȳe-
 war go to that:which-have-bunch; they say not be be:empty-hand come. Bird-(of)-
 (i)le meji, akik̄o meji, ati ēgbaji. O ru-(e)bo. Lati igba-na
 house two, cock two, and 4000 (cowries). He offer-sacrifice. From time-the
 ni ariwowo ki iti şan-(o)wo bi o ba na si oke fa ohun-k(u)-ohun.
 be Hook not have be:empty-hand if he should stretch to hill pull thing-any-thing.
 Ifa ni a nna-(o)wo si ohun kan. Ifa ni ki a ru-(e)bo ki
 Ifa say we stretching-hand to thing one. Ifa say should we offer-sacrifice that
 a ma ba p(a)-ofo n(i)-inu (ohu)n-kan ti a nna-(o)wo si
 we not should crack-emptiness at-belly (of) thing-one that we stretching-hand to
 na iba se īş̄e tabi (ohu)n-kan miran.
 the, should make work or thing-one another.

OGBE - (Q)BARA¹ - 1

Didun ni-(i)ş̄e ş̄iȳe gbigb̄on ni t(i)-okunrun, okunrun l(i)-o mo
 "Sounding be-work (of) bird, shaking be that-(of)-invalid; invalid be-who know-
 (i)ş̄e aje le se l(i)-oru, (e)-ku abo ma re-
 work (of) witch be:able do at-night; (you)-be:greeted (of) arrival, (continuative) go-
 wa l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa k(o)-Orişala Qş̄eş̄eş̄e ti yio ba wo na-(o)ja
 come" be-who cast-Ifa for-Orishala Qş̄eş̄eş̄e that will join them spend-goods
 f(i)-ogbo na ti o ma se ḡḡḡe ire aje. Nw̄on
 take-flax spend that he (continuative) make just (like) goodness (of) money. They
 ni ki o ru eku meji, eja meji, igbin meji, ahun meji, adie meji, akik̄o
 say should he offer rat two, fish two, snail two, Miser two, chicken two, cock
 ati ayebo ati egbejilelogun. Orişala Qş̄eş̄eş̄e ru-(e)bo.
 and hen, and 4400 (cowries). Orishala Qş̄eş̄eş̄e offer-sacrifice.

1. Also known as Ogbe Oniwara.

and then go and sacrifice to the God of Thunder also. Ifa says he sees the blessing of a daughter; a diviner will be her husband.

4 - 4

"Quietly I go, smoothly I return"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Hook² when it was waging war against a tangled snarl.³ They said it would not return empty-handed. Two pigeons, two cocks, and one shilling was the sacrifice. He made the sacrifice. Since then, Hook does not return empty-handed when it reaches up to pull anything down.⁴

Ifa says we are stretching out our hands toward something.⁵ Ifa says we should sacrifice lest we draw a blank in that for which we are reaching, whether it is some work or something else.

-
1. This seems to refer to the motions of the hook when it is used to pull something down.
 2. A hook, also known as Ariwq or Arigggo, which is made from a forked stick and is shaped like a Yoruba hoe handle.
 3. As when someone uses a hook to pull down something snarled from a tree.
 4. The verse thus explains why hooks are useful implements for plucking fruit or pulling down things which are out of reach.
 5. Like Hook.

5 - 1

"Noise-making is the task of birds, trembling is that of invalids;¹ an invalid is the one who knows what witches can do at night; welcome, goodbye"² was the one who cast Ifa for the God of Whiteness³ when he was about to trade in the flax market⁴ and do just as well as if he were to receive a blessing of money. They said he should sacrifice two rats, two fish, two snails, two tortoises,⁵ two chickens—one a cock and the other a hen—and one shilling one pence two oninis. The God of Whiteness made the sacrifice.

-
1. The reference is to a person shivering with chills and fever.
 2. Ma re-wa is a salutation used when a person is going away for a short time. It means "come back soon," or "until you return," and should be compared with o-d(i)-abq (it-become-arrival) and e-rin-wa-o (you-walk-come-oh).
 3. Orishala, or Orishanla the "big deity," or Qbatala the "King that has a white cloth" heads a pantheon of "white deities" (orisha funfun) associated with snails, shea butter, white beads, white cloths, and other white things (see Chapter XI). Informants could not translate "Qshęřębo," but presumably it is a praise-name of Orishala, because in verse 241-3 Orishala Qshęřębo states that he was the one who "created both slaves and freeborn" (cf. n. 3, verse 9-1). Epega (n.d.: XIII, 2) and Lijadu (1923: 9) cite verses mentioning Qbatala Qshęřę-Igbo, and Beyioku (1940: 5) gives Qbatala Qshęřę Majigbo in the same verse cited by Lijadu.
 4. Qgbq is the name for both European flax and linen and for a local plant (*Omphalogenus nigritanus*) whose fibers are used in making cord.
 5. Referred to here by his title, "Miser."

Ifa ni a nlọ ẹ owo kan tabi a fẹ ẹ iṣẹ kan ki a
 Ifa say we going make transaction one or we want do work one should we
 ru-(ẹ)bọ ki Q-l(i)-ṣrun ki mu-(ẹ)ni pade aje n(i)-ibẹ.
 offer-sacrifice that One:who-has-sky should take-person meet money at-there.

OGBE - (Q)BARA - 2

Imọnamọna san kan-(i)lẹ san kan-(ṣ)run l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa ko-(I)gun
 "Lightning flash touch-earth flash touch-sky" be-who cast-Ifa for-Vulture
 otuyẹ awo Ilode ni-(ṣ)jọ ti o mbọ l(i)-ode aiye. Nwọni
 feathery secret (of) Ilode at-day that he coming at-outside (of) earth. They say
 oju ko ni ti nwọni ni akoko ti oju ba ma ti
 eye not be push (him); they say at time that eye should (continuative) push (him)
 ti ebi ba ma pa ni-(i)ṣẹṣẹ yio ẹẹ. Nwọni
 that hunger should (continuative) kill (him) be-disaster will happen. They say
 ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ obukọ kan, ẹgbẹdọgbọn, oru epo
 should he offer-sacrifice (of) he:goat one, 5000 (cowries), pot (of) palm:oil
 ati aṣọ ara rẹ. Nwọni o jọ ti o ba w(a)-aiye ni a-(yi)o gbọ
 and cloth (of) body his. They say day that he should come-earth be we-will hear,
 a ko ni gbọ iku rẹ ati pe o jọ ti ebi ba ma pa
 we not be hear death his and that day that hunger should (continuative) kill (him)
 ni iṣẹṣẹ yio ẹẹ.
 be disaster will happen.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan ni, o ni on ko ni jẹ-ki oju ki o ti.
 Ifa says person-one be (it); he say he not be consent-that eye that it push
 O ni bi oju ba ma ti ẹni-(e)keji rẹ ṣrun
 (him). He say, if eye should (continuative) push (him), person-second his sky
 yio ran l(i)-ṣwọ aṣiri rẹ yio si ma bo lati ọdọ
 will send at-hand, secret his will and (continuative) be:covered from presence
 Q-l(i)-ṣrun wa.
 One:who-has-sky come.

OGBE - (Q)BARA - 3

Tẹmutẹmu o b(i)-aiya pi l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa f(un)-O-l(i)-okun-
 "Hassock it bear-chest hard" be-who cast-Ifa for-One:who-has-endurance-
 de ni-(ṣ)jọ ti o nfi ẹkun oju nṣe irahun ọmọ. Nwọni
 arrive at-day that she taking tears (of) eye making moaning (of) child. They say
 ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ko ru-(ẹ)bọ yio bi-(ṣ)mọ ṣugbọn ki
 should she offer-sacrifice, (if) not offer-sacrifice will bear-child but that

Ifa says that we are going to do some business or that we want to do some work, we should sacrifice that the Sky God may lead us to money.

5 - 2

"Lightning flashes; it touches earth; it touches heaven"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Feathered Vulture, the diviner of Ilode ward² on the day that he was coming to earth. They said that he would not be disgraced; they said that when he was in disgrace and dying of hunger there would be a disaster.³ They said he should sacrifice one he-goat, one shilling three pence, a pot of palm oil, and the cloth from his body. They said that we will hear of the day that Vulture came to the earth, but we will never hear of his death,⁴ and that on the day when he is dying of hunger a disaster will occur.

Ifa says there is someone; he says he will not allow him to be disgraced. He says that if he should be disgraced, his spiritual double⁵ in heaven will aid him, and the secret which he has brought from the presence of Sky God will remain covered.

1. This appears to be an adaptation of a Yoruba riddle, "A slender staff touches earth; it touches heaven" [Qpa tẹrẹ kan-(i)lẹ; o kan-(o)run], the answer to which is "Rain." See Bascom, 1949: 10.

2. One of the five major divisions of the city of Ifẹ.

3. Since Vulture feeds off the sacrifices that are made and the animals that die, any disaster is to Vulture's advantage. Cf. verses 241-1, 248-1. It is understood that Vulture made the sacrifice.

4. Informants explained that the bodies of dead vultures are never found. Cf. verse 248-1.

5. The ancestral guardian soul. See also verses 241-1, 241-4, 248-1.

5 - 3

"A hassock has a hard chest"¹ was the only one who cast Ifa for "The one with endurance arrives" when she was weeping and moaning because she had no children. They said she should sacrifice. They said that if she did not sacrifice, she would bear children; but that lest

1. Yoruba hassocks are similar to those made by the Hausa; they are thought of as sticking out their chests as if they were very brave.

awon omọ re ma ba ma ba ara se ota ni ki o
those child hers not should (continuative) with body make enemy be should she

ru-(e)bo fun ewure dudu kan, aso i-te-(i)le-(i)di
offer-sacrifice for she:goat black one, cloth to-spread-(on)-ground-(of)-waist

re, ejielogun, ati akikọ męta. O ru ewure kan, aso i-te-
hers, 44,000 (cowries), and cock three. She offer she:goat one, cloth to-spread-

(i)le-(i)di re, ejielogun şugbon ko ru akikọ-(a)dię
(on)-ground-(of)-waist hers, 44,000 (cowries) but not offer cock-chicken

męta; o ni ki on ga bi-(o)mọ. N(i)-igba-ti o ma bi,
three; she say that she only bear-child. At-time-that she (continuative) bear,

o bi eşin o si bi afon.
she bear Horse she and bear Breadfruit.

Oju omọ tun non eşin o si non afon na gege bi
Eye (of) child then being:red Horse, it and being:red Breadfruit also just as

ti-re. Awon mej(i)-(m)ej i tun to awon babalawo lo, babalawo
that-(of)-hers. Those two-two then approach those diviner go, diviner

si tun ka ebo fun won gege bi ti iya won na, awon na
and then count sacrifice for them just like that (of) mother their also, they also

si tun ru oye ebo ti iya won na ru.
and then offer amount (of) sacrifice that mother their also offer.

N(i)-igba-ti eşin l(i)-oyun, afon bi-(o)mọ, be-ni Eşu
At-time-that Horse have pregnancy, Breadfruit bear-child; so-be-(it) Eshu

wa da-(o)hun o ni Awon omọ O-l(i)-okun-de
come break-voice he say, "Those children (of) One:who-has-endurance-arrive

ti a ni ki iya won ru-(e)bo ti ko ru-(e)bo ni-(e)yi.
that we say should mother their offer-sacrifice that not offer-sacrifice be-this."

O wa da ija si-(i)le ni arin won; ni-(i)bi-ti nwon gbe nja,
He come cast fight to-ground at middle their; at-place-that they take fighting,

eşin te omọ afon pa. Inu bi afon pupo. Ni-(i)gba-
Horse press child (of) Breadfruit kill (him). Belly vex Breadfruit much. At-time-

ti eşin bi, afon lo bu omi fun n(i)-igba-ti omọ eşin mu
that Horse bear, Breadfruit go dip water for (it), at-time-that child (of) Horse drink

tan, omọ eşin ku, ati ojo na ni eşin ati afon ti di
finish, child (of) Horse die; from day the be Horse and Breadfruit have become

ota.
enemy.

Ifa ni eni-kan ni yio bi-(o)mọ yi şugbon ki o ru-(e)bo
Ifa say person-one be (who) will bear-child this but should she offer-sacri-

ki awon omọ na ma ba di ota l(i)-ęhin ota.
fice that those child the not should become enemy at-back (of) tomorrow.

her children become enemies, she should sacrifice one black she-goat, the undergarment² from her waist, eleven shillings,³ and three cocks. She sacrificed the she-goat, the undergarment from her waist, and the eleven shillings, but not the three cocks; she said she just wanted to bear children. When she gave birth, she gave birth to Horse and Breadfruit.

The desire for children troubled Horse, and it troubled Breadfruit just as it had their mother. They both consulted the diviners. The diviners named for them the same sacrifice that had been prescribed for their mother, and they offered the same part of it that their mother had sacrificed before them.⁴

While Horse was pregnant, Breadfruit gave birth to her child. Eshu said, "These are the children of 'The one with endurance arrives' whose mother was told to make a sacrifice but did not do so." He caused a fight between them, and while they were fighting Horse trampled on the child of Breadfruit and killed him. Breadfruit was very angry. When Horse gave birth to her child, Breadfruit brought water for it, and when Horse's child had drunk the poisoned water, it died.⁵ Ever since that day Horse and Breadfruit have been enemies.

Ifa says this is someone who will bear a child, but she should sacrifice lest her children become enemies soon afterwards.

2. This is the general term for the garments worn by women under their clothing; it includes both the tobi of the old women, and the yeri or ilaburu of the maidens.

3. Ejilogun is a shortened form of ejilelogun.

4. They did not sacrifice the three cocks so that their children would not be enemies.

5. This refers to the belief that the African Breadfruit (Treculia africana) is poisonous to horses. See Dalziel (1937: 286). The verse thus explains why this is true.

OGBE - (Q)BARA - 4

Ogbe-(Q)bara da t(i)-ẹ-l(i)-ẹgan l(i)-o ku Ifa ẹe
 "Ogbe-(Q)bara cast that-(of)-one:who-has-contempt be-who remain, Ifa make
 gbogbo ohun nihun-nihun a da k(o)-Qrunmila ti o nlọ
 all things everything-everything" (be) who cast for-Qrunmila that he going
 si apa okun ilaji ọsa, n(i)-Iwọnrán n(i)-ibi-ti ẹja gbe nẹ
 to arm (of) sea middle (of) lagoon, at-Iwọnrán at-place-that fish take doing
 bẹbẹ l(i)-oju omi. Nwọni k(i)-o ru eku męrin, ẹja męrin, ẹyọ
 feat at-face (of) water. They say should-he offer rat four, fish four, loose
 ere, ẹiyẹ-(i)le fun-fun męrin, ẹgbasan.
 bean, bird-(of)-house be:white-be:white four, 18,000 (cowries).

A-(yi)o mu ewe ẹla (efunlẹ); a-(yi)o lọ pẹlu imọ
 We-will take leaf (of) ẹla (efunlẹ); we-will grind (it) together:with palm:leaf
 ọpẹ diẹ; a-(yi)o pa ẹiyẹ-(i)le kan a-(yi)o fi ẹjẹ rẹ po
 (of) palm:tree small; we-will kill bird-(of)-house one; we-will take blood its turn;
 a-(yi)o fi sin gbẹrẹ [oye-k(u)-oye] si ori.
 we-will take (it) cut incision (amount-any-amount) to head.

Ifa ni on ri ire l(i)-ẹhin odi fun ẹni-kan, o ni yio
 Ifa say he see goodness at-back (of) town:wall for person-one, he say will
 l(i)-owo pupọ ti ibẹ bọ, nitori-ti bi igi ba wọ-(e)we, okun
 have-cowry much from there come, because-that if tree should shed-leaf, rope
 a si wọ-(e)we, ẹgbọni ati wọ-(e)we ọpẹ a ma ọoro.
 it and shed-leaf, but to shed-leaf (of) palm:tree it (continuative) be:difficult.

OGBE - (Q)KANRAN - 1

Agbọnniregun ni o di Ogbe-kan, mo ni o di Ogbe-kan, o
 Agbọnniregun say it become Ogbe-touch; I say it become Ogbe-touch; he
 ni ẹsẹ kan ti on kan s(i)-ile A-l(i)-ara ni o fi nla
 say foot one that it touch to-house (of) One:who-has-Ara be he take being:wealthy
 ti o ntu yẹbẹ-yẹbẹ s(i)-ode; o ni eyi-ti o kan s(i)-ile
 that he loosening lavish-lavish to-outside; he say this-that it touch to-house (of)
 a-k(ọ)-apo t(i)-on na, t(i)-ọla ni.
 one:who-hang-bag that-(of)-him the, that-(of)-wealth be.

Ifa ni o ri ire ọla. Ẹiyẹ-(i)le meji ayebo adię meji
 Ifa say he see goodness (of) wealth. Bird-(of)-house two, hen chicken two,
 ati ẹgbaji o le oko. Ifa ni ọla de.
 and 4000 it plus twenty:cowries. Ifa say wealth arrives.

5 - 4

"Ogbe Qbara¹ cast Ifa that the critic² remains; Ifa does all things everywhere" was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he was going to the shore of the ocean, to the middle of the lagoon, at Iwqnrn where fish perform tricks on the surface of the water. They said he should sacrifice four rats, four fish, some loose beans, four white pigeons, and four shillings six pence.

We will take some ęla (efunę) leaf.³ We will grind it with a small piece of palm leaf. We will kill one of the pigeons. We will mix its blood with this. We will cut any number of incisions on the head, and rub this mixture into them.

Ifa says he sees a blessing for someone from beyond the town wall. He says lots of money will come to this person from there. Because while the tree may shed its leaves, and the liana may shed its leaves, for the palm tree to shed its leaves is very difficult.⁴

-
1. Note the reference to the name of the figure.
 2. One who criticises everything and has contempt for everything.
 3. Efunę may refer to one of the many kinds of epiphytic Orchidaceae which are known as ęla.
 4. Note that a piece of a palm leaf is included as one of the ingredients of the medicine that is to be made.
-

6 - 1

Agbqnniregun¹ says Ogbe should touch² you; I say Ogbe should touch you; he says that when Ogbe stopped at the house of the King of Ara for just a moment, he became wealthy and began to spend money lavishly³ in the streets; he says that that which stops at the house of his apprentice⁴ is wealth.

Ifa says he sees the blessing of wealth. Two pigeons, two hens, and one shilling plus 20 cowries is the sacrifice. Ifa says wealth is coming.

-
1. Qrunmila or Ifa.
 2. Note the pun on the name of the figure, Ogbe-(Q)kanran.
 3. The figure of speech used here is "to burst open like a bud."
 4. An apprentice carries his master's bag and runs errands for him (see Chapter IX).
-

OGBE - (Q)KANRAN - 2

Èkikun ki-pẹ d(i)-èkikun erin, Abata ki pẹ d(i)-
 "Èkikun not-be:long become-èkikun (of) elephant," "Mud not be:long become-
 abata ẹfọn, Orere ki pẹ d(i)-orere ọmọ-(o)binrin Ilaun
 mud (of) buffalo," "Street not be:long become-street (of) child-woman (of) Ilaun"
 awọn l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa fun wọn ni Mọrẹ Agbada ni-(ọ)jọ ti e-bi-bi
 they be-who cast-Ifa for those at Mọrẹ Agbada at-day that that:which-push-push
 nbi wọn s(i)-grun. Nwọn ni ki nwọn ru ikoko ẹwa, ayebọ adię,
 pushing them to-sky. They say should they offer pot (of) ẹwa, hen chicken,
 ati ẹgbarun ẹni-(ọ)k(an)-ọkan ni yio se ti-rẹ.
 and 10,000 (cowries); person-one-one be will cook that-(of)-his.

Ifa ni ohun kan ti nṣe-(ẹ)ni ni ofun ẹgbọn Ọ-l(i)-grun se tan
 Ifa say thing one have doing-person at loss, but One:who-has-sky do finish
 ti yio da-(ọ)wọ rẹ duro fun-(ẹ)ni. Ki ẹni-kan ru-(ẹ)bọ ki
 that will cause-hand his stand for-person. Should person-one offer-sacrifice that
 ohun-kan ma ba ma wa ti ode grun ko wọn lọ.
 thing-one not should (continuative) come from outside (of) sky gather them go.

Ki awọn ara kan ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori eburu.
 Should those people one offer-sacrifice because (of) evil:spirit.

Ni akoko kan awọn eburu a ma ti ode grun wa
 At time one those evil:spirit they (continuative) from outside (of) sky come
 ko awọn ara Mọrẹ lọ si grun. Nwọn tọ awọn babalawo lọ; nwọn
 gather those people (of) Mọrẹ go to sky. They approach those diviner go; they
 ni ki nwọn ru-(ẹ)bọ. Nwọn si ru-(ẹ)bọ. Nwọn mu adię
 say should they offer-sacrifice. They and offer-sacrifice. They take chicken
 nwọn-yi, nwọn pa wọn. Nwọn se wọn, nwọn ko gbogbo rẹ le ori
 those-this they kill them. They cook them, they gather all its upon head (of)
 ẹwa na n(i)-inu apadi, nwọn ni ki nwọn gbe e lọ si inu igbo
 ẹwa the at-belly (of) potsherd, they say should they carry it go to belly (of) forest
 ti o kọ-(o)ju si ile wọn, ti a npe ni igbo Ọlọṣẹ. N(i)-
 that it turn:toward-face to house their; that we calling at forest (of) Ọlọṣẹ. At-
 igba-ti awọn eburu de ibẹ ti nwọn ri onjẹ, nwọn bẹrẹ si jẹ-(oh)un.
 time-that those evil:spirit arrive there that they see food, they begin to eat-thing.
 N(i)-igba-ti nwọn jẹ-(oh)un tan, ni Eṣu sọ fun wọn pe awọn ara
 At-time-that they eat-thing finish, be Eshu speak for them that those people (of)
 Mọrẹ ni o se onjẹ na bayi ni awọn eburu na ba pada. Nwọn ni
 Mọrẹ be who cook food the thus be those evil:spirit the should return. They say
 iku ki jẹ-(oh)un ẹni ki o pa-(ẹ)ni.
 "Death not eat-thing (of) person that he kill-person."

Ifa ni ki a p(a)-ese fun eburu. Lati igba-na ni iku ko
 Ifa say should we kill-provision for evil:spirit. From time-the be death not

"It is not long before the  kikun leaf¹ belongs to the elephant,"² "It is not long before mud belongs to the buffalo,"³ and "It is not long before the street belongs to the girl from the town of Ilaun"⁴ they were the ones who cast Ifa for the people of M r  Agbada ward⁵ on the day that something evil was forcing them to heaven⁶ against their will. They said they should sacrifice a pot of boiled corn and beans,⁷ a hen, and two shillings six pence. They said each person should cook his own corn and beans.

Ifa says something is causing someone a loss, but that the Sky God will put a stop to it. Someone should make a sacrifice lest something come from heaven and carry him and his family away. A group of people should sacrifice because of evil spirits.

Once upon a time evil spirits were coming from heaven and carrying the people of M r  ward back with them. They consulted the diviners. The diviners said they should sacrifice, and they sacrificed. They took the chickens they had sacrificed and killed them. They cooked them and placed everything on the boiled corn and beans in a potsherd. They said they should take the sacrifice into the grove of trees that faced their house and which we call the grove of Qlosh .⁸ When the evil spirits arrived at the grove and saw the food, they began to eat it. When they had finished eating it, Eshu told them that the people of M r  were the ones who had cooked it, and that they should go back to heaven. They replied, "Death does not eat a person's food and then kill him."

Ifa says we should prepare food for evil spirits. Since that time death has not

1. The leaf of a tall tree, like a palm tree, which is used in weaving atinrin mats.

2. It is not long after they have appeared before elephants eat them.

3. It is not long before "bushcows" or African buffalos are wallowing in the mud.

4. Cf. verses 6-5, 6-6. Because these names are followed by the plural awon it is clear that several diviners are mentioned. Ilaun could not be identified.

5. M r  is the name of a ward of the town of If , one of its five major divisions. Agbada is a title of that quarter, the meaning of which could not be given by informants.

6. That is, causing them to die.

7. A dish of food made of boiled corn or boiled corn and beans.

8. The name of a deity worshiped particularly by the people of M r  ward in If .

ti nmu awon ara Mọrẹ mọ. Qd(un)-gdun ni awon ara Mọrẹ
 have taking those people (of) Mọrẹ again. Year-year be those people (of) Mọrẹ
 si ma nse iru onjẹ yi lo si igbo Qlọṣṣẹ. Ifa ni awon
 and (continuative) cooking kind (of) food this go to forest (of) Qlọshẹ. Ifa say those
 ara kan ni o wa l(i)-agbo yi, ki nwon ru-(ẹ)bọ ki eburu
 people one be who exist at-flock this, should they offer-sacrifice that evil:spirit
 ma ba wọ inu rẹ.
 not should enter belly its.

 OGBE - (Q)KANRAN - 3

Omi-(i)gbo ni f(i)-oju j(ọ)-aro, omi eluju qdan
 "Water-(of)-forest be (it) take-eye resemble-dye; water (of) field (of) grass:
 ni f(i)-oju j(ọ)-ero adin, ekuro oju ọna o
 land be (it) take-eye resemble-drippings (of) adi; palm:nut (of) eye (of) road it
 fi ara jọ ikin ko ri ẹjẹ mu bi ikin a da fun A-lu-
 take body resemble ikin not see blood drink like ikin" (be) who cast for To-beat-
 mọ ti o nlọ ra ẹda l(i)-ẹru. Nwon ni afi bi o ba le
 know that he going buy creature at-slave. They say unless if he should be:able
 sin ẹda rẹ. O ni on yio sin. Ẹda ni a ipe ikin, A-lu-
 serve creature his. He say he will serve (it). Creature be we call ikin, To-beat-
 mọ ni a-i-pe Qrunmila.
 know be we-to-call Qrunmila.

Ifa ni ọmọ-(ọ)kunrin kan ni-yi, babalawo ni, Ifa ni ọmọ na i-sin
 Ifa say child-man one be-this, diviner be (he); Ifa be child the to-serve
 lati qrun wa. Orun ko gbọdọ ba n(i)-inu oko. Ko si gbọdọ
 from sky come. Sun not must meet (him) at-belly (of) farm. Not and must
 fi ẹsẹ gbọn enini ni ọna oko.
 take foot shake dew at road (of) farm.

Ifa ni a si tun nfẹ ra ohun kan ki oluwarẹ ki o
 Ifa say we and then wanting buy thing one should person:in:question should he
 ma-ṣe r(o)-oju ohun ti yio ra na, bi owo ko ba to ki
 not-do spoil-eye (of) thing that (he) will buy the, if cowries not should equal should
 o fi owo si ohun ti yio ẹ ni anfani ni o fẹ ra yi.
 he put cowries to (them), thing that will make (him) at benefit be he want buy this.
 Qjọ ti enia nfi owo gba ikin ni yi.
 Day that person taking cowries take ikin be this.

Njẹ oko me le yun,
 "Well:then, farm I (not) be:able go,

A-lu-mọ
 "To-beat-know;

taken the people of M̄r̄ę away any more. And every year the people of M̄r̄ę cook this kind of food and take it to the grove of Q̄l̄ōsh̄ę.⁹ Ifa says that this is a group of people who live together in a compound;¹⁰ they should sacrifice lest evil spirits enter their compound.

9. This verse thus explains why the people of M̄r̄ę ward carry boiled corn and beans to the grove of Q̄l̄ōsh̄ę during the Coconut Festival (̄odun agb̄on).

10. A compound is known as a "flock of houses" (agbo ile).

6 - 3

"The water of the forest is like indigo dye;¹ the water of the grassland is like palm kernel oil;² palm nuts embedded in the path are like the palm nuts of Ifa, but they do not drink blood like Ifa's palm nuts"³ was the one who cast Ifa for "He beats palm nuts and knows the future" when he was going to buy Ẹda⁴ as his slave. They said he must serve his Ẹda. He said he would serve it. Ẹda is what we call the palm nuts of Ifa. "He beats palm nuts and knows the future" is what we call Qrunmila.

Ifa says this is a boy; he is a diviner; he was serving Ifa when he came from heaven. The rising or setting sun must not find him in the farm, and his feet must not brush the dew from the farm road.⁵

And Ifa says we want to buy something. The person in question should not be deterred from buying it. If there is not enough money, he should add to it. This thing he wants to buy will benefit him. This is the day he is buying his set of palm nuts.

"Well then, I cannot go to the farm,

"He beats palm nuts and knows the future;

1. The water which gathers in the forest is colored by the rotting leaves so that it resembles the very dark blue of indigo.

2. The oil (adi or adin) made from the white palm kernels is to be distinguished from the orange palm oil (epo) made from the pericarp. Palm kernel oil is used in making soap and in rubbing the body after bathing.

3. Palm nuts embedded in the road and the sixteen palm nuts (ikin) used in divining are both polished through use, but only the ones used in divining receive the blood of sacrifices. Cf. verse 247-4.

4. Ẹda is usually translated as "creature" or "that which has been created," and refers to the ancestral guardian soul. Here, however, it is specifically equated with the set of palm nuts used in divining.

5. He is supposed to devote himself to divining, as is spelled out below.

È wa wo iṣṣ ẹda nṣe
 "You (not) come look:at work creature doing,

A-lu-mọ
 "To-beat-know.

Odo me le yun,
 "River I (not) be:able go,

A-lu-mọ
 "To-beat-know;

È wa wo iṣṣ ẹda nṣe,
 "You (not) come look:at work creature doing,

A-lu-mọ
 "To-beat-know.

Qja me le yun,
 "Market I (not) be:able go,

A-lu-mọ
 "To-beat-know;

È wa wo iṣṣ ẹda nṣe,
 "You (not) come look:at work creature doing,

A-lu-mọ
 "To-beat-know.

Idalẹ me le yun
 "Distance I (not) be:able go,

A-lu-mọ
 "To-beat-know;

È wa wo iṣṣ ẹda nṣe,
 "You (not) come look:at work creature doing,

A-lu-mọ
 "To-beat-know."

Ifa ni ẹda ẹni-kan ki iṣe iṣe kan ju Ifa lọ, iṣe
 Ifa say creature (of) person-one not do work one surpass Ifa go, work (of)
 ẹni-kan ko si ni oko bi ko ṣe ni arin ilu, ki oluwarẹ
 person-one not be at farm if not make at middle (of) town, should person:in:ques-
 pada si ẹhin ki o ma ṣ(e)-awo tabi ki o ma
 tion return to back should he (continuative) do-secret or should he (continuative)
 ki Ifa. Ewurẹ kan, ẹgbawa ai-din ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 recite Ifa. She:goat one, 20,000 (cowries) not-lessen should he offer-sacrifice
 tan ki o lọ ma bọ Ifa rẹ pẹlu ewurẹ kan.
 finish should he go (continuative) sacrifice:to Ifa his together:with she:goat one.

"Won't you come and see what Èda is doing for me?"⁶

"He beats palm nuts and knows the future.

"I cannot go to the river,

"He beats palm nuts and knows the future;

"Won't you come and see what Èda is doing for me?"

"He beats palm nuts and knows the future.

"I cannot go to market,

"He beats palm nuts and knows the future;

"Won't you come and see what Èda is doing for me?"

"He beats palm nuts and knows the future.

"I cannot go to distant places,

"He beats palm nuts and knows the future;

"Won't you come and see what Èda is doing for me?"

"He beats palm nuts and knows the future."

Ifa says the destiny of someone is to do nothing more than Ifa. He must not work in the farm but inside the town. This person should return to what he had been doing,⁷ and either divine or recite the verses of Ifa. He should sacrifice one she-goat and five shillings, no less, and then he should go and sacrifice one she-goat to his own Ifa also.

6. Since Èda here means the palm nuts of Ifa, the request is for people to come and see how he is prospering through divining.

7. It is explained earlier in the verse that he was worshiping Ifa before he was born.

OGBE - (Q)KANRAN - 4

Ita-(i)gbangba n(i)-t(i)-elu a da f(un)-ḡḡ ti
 "Square-(of)-open:place be-that-(of)-stranger" (be) who cast for-Cactus that
 o nlḡ si eluju Igango ti o nlḡ mu-(i)lḡ-(i)bu-do nitori-
 she going to field (of) Igango, that she going take-ground-(of)-place-settle because-
 ti ḡḡ. Nwḡn ni ewurḡ kan ni ḡḡ ati ḡḡbawa ai-din.
 that (of) child. They say she:goat one be sacrifice and 20,000 (cowries) not-lessen.
 Nwḡn ni ki ar(a)-aiye ma ba ma tḡ ijḡ rḡ wo
 They say should people-(of)-earth not should (continuative) taste blood her look:at
 ni oḡ(u)-oḡu. Ḡḡ ru-(ḡ)bḡ ewurḡ kan ḡḡbawa ewe
 at month-month. Cactus offer-sacrifice (of) she:goat one, 20,000 (cowries), leaf
 Ifa.
 (of) Ifa.

A sin ni-gḡḡḡ; oju gḡḡḡ na ni ḡḡn ara ḡḡ
 We cut (her) at-incision; eye (of) incision the be thorn (of) body (of) Cactus
 titi di oni yi. Lati ḡḡ na ni ijḡ ara ḡḡ ko ḡḡ
 until become today this. From day the be blood (of) body (of) Cactus not make
 mu mḡ.
 drink again.

Ifa ni ki obinrin kan ru-(ḡ)bḡ ki ar(a)-aiye ma ba
 Ifa say should woman one offer-sacrifice that people-(of)-earth not should
 ma ki-(ḡ)wḡ bḡ inu rḡ, ki o ma ba ma ri
 (continuative) push-hand enter belly her, that she not should (continuative) see
 inu ni oḡ(u)-oḡu.
 belly at month-month.

OGBE - (Q)KANRAN - 5

Ḡri ki pḡ di ḡri ḡkikun Eluju ki ipḡ di eluju
 "River not be:long become river (of) ḡkikun," "Field not be:long become field
 ḡkun, Ode-(i)gbangba ki ipḡ di ode ḡḡḡde
 (of) leopard," "Outside-(of)-open:place not be:long become outside (of) young:child
 ode Ilaun a da fun wḡn ni Mḡḡḡ Agbada n(i)-ibi-ti nwḡn
 (of) outside (of) Ilaun" (be) who cast for those at Mḡḡḡ Agbada at-place-that they
 gbe tori t(i)-ḡḡḡ da Ifa, nwḡn ni nwḡn a bi ḡḡḡ. Igba
 take because that-(of)-child cast Ifa; they say they will bear child. Calabash (of)
 ḡwa mḡwa, ayebḡ adie mḡwa, ati ḡḡbawa ni ḡḡḡ.
 ḡwa ten, hen chicken ten, and 20,000 (cowries) be sacrifice.

Nwḡn ni ḡḡḡ yio ka wḡn l(i)-ori. N(i)-igba-ti ḡḡn fi ma
 They say child will go:around them at-head. At-time-that year take (continu-

"The open square belongs to foreigners"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Cactus² when she was going to move to the field of Igango because she had no children.³ They said that one she-goat and five shillings, no less, was the sacrifice. They said that witches would not drink her menstrual blood to keep her from having children. Cactus sacrificed one she-goat, five shillings, and Ifa's leaf.

Small incisions were made on the body of Cactus and medicine was rubbed into them. The scars of these cuts are the thorns that Cactus has until this very day. From that time on, the blood of Cactus cannot be drunk.⁴

Ifa says a woman should sacrifice so that witches will not reach into her womb to destroy the embryo, and so that she will not menstruate every month.⁵

1. That is, it is public property. The word "foreigner" or "stranger" (elu) refers to Yoruba who are not native to a given town.

2. Euphorbia kamerunica.

3. Cactus was going to leave her compound and build her own house in hopes that she might bear children.

4. This verse explains how cactus came to have thorns, why it has so many children, and why the "blood" or sap (oje) of cactus is bitter, and can be used as fish poison. Dalziel reports that it is highly purgative and is used as an ordeal and in arrow poison.

5. That is, so that she may conceive.

"It is not long before the river belongs to the ẹkikun leaf," "It is not long before the field belongs to the leopard," and "It is not long before the open street belongs to the child from the town of Ilaun"¹ were the ones who cast Ifa for the people of Mọrẹ Agbada ward where they had cast Ifa because they had no children. They said they would bear children. Ten calabashes of boiled corn and beans, ten hens, and five shillings² was the sacrifice.

They said each of them would have a child. When the year had

1. Because these names are so similar to those in verse 6-2, they have also been interpreted as referring to several individuals. Note that this verse and 6-2 and 6-6 all have several points of similarity. Aside from the names of the diviners, they all refer to Mọrẹ ward and to the worship of Qsara and Qlọshẹ.

2. Since cowries are counted by the two thousand, there are ten units of cowries required, as there are ten hens and ten calabashes of boiled corn and beans.

yi-po gbogbo wọn ni o bi ọmọ si ọwọ. Lati ọjọ yi ni
 (ative) turn-turn all (of) them be they bear child to hand. From day this be
 nwọn ko ti npa ọdun ẹwa jẹ ni Mọrẹ, ti nwọn ma nse ni
 they not have killing year (of) ẹwa eat at Mọrẹ, that they (continuative) doing at
 ọd(un)-ọdun. N(i)-igba-ti o di ọdun-(e)keji ni nwọn bẹrẹ si ima
 year-year. At-time-that it become year-second be they begin to (continuative)
 jo ti nwọn kọ-(o)rin pe:
 dance that they singing-song that:

Ọsara ma k(o)-ọmọ de o
 "Ọsara (continuative) gather-child arrive, oh,

Hin, hin, hin, hin.
 "Hin, Hin, Hin, Hin!

Ọmọ ni (e)m(i)-a ba wọn bi o
 "Child be I-will join them bear, oh,

Hin, hin, hin, hin!
 "Hin, hin, hin, hin!

Q-l(i)-ọmọ ma ku ọmọ o
 "One:who-has-child (continuative) be:greeted (of) child, oh,

Hin, hin, hin, hin.
 "Hin, hin, hin, hin!"

Ifa ni ọmọ npon obinrin kan l(i)-ọju ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 Ifa say child being:red woman one at-eye should she offer-sacrifice (of)
 igba ẹwa mewa, ayebọ adię mewa, ati ẹgbawa. Bi o
 calabash (of) ẹwa ten, hen chicken ten, and 20,000 (cowries). If she
 ba le ru-(ẹ)bọ, ni ida-yi ẹmirin ọmọ ni obinrin na yio
 should be:able offer-sacrifice, at time-this next:year child be woman the will
 ma pọn.
 (continuative) carry:on:back.

OGBE - (Q)KANRAN - 6

Ẹri ki ipẹ di ẹri ẹkikun, Eluju ki ipẹ di eluju
 "River not be:long become river (of) ẹkikun," "Field not be:long become field
 ẹkun, Ode-(i)gbangba ki ipẹ di ode ọmọde
 (of) leopard," "Outside-(of)-open:place not be:long become outside (of) young:child (of)
 ode Ilaun a da fun wọn ni Mọrẹ Agbada n(i)-ibi-ti nwọn gbe
 outside (of) Ilaun" (be) who cast for those at Mọrẹ Agbada at-place-that they take
 njo egemọpati nitori-ti ọmọ. Ifa ni ẹni-kan nse ai-san,
 dancing egemọpati because-that (of) child. Ifa say person-one making not-be:better,
 ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ba le jẹ-(oh)un, tabi ọmọ ọwọ kan
 should he offer-sacrifice that he should be:able eat-thing, or child (of) hand one

run its course, they all bore children. From that day on they have not missed eating boiled corn and beans at M̄q̄r̄ ward; they have done it every year.³ The next year they began to dance, and to sing:

"Qsara,⁴ brings us children, oh,

"Hin, hin, hin, hin!"⁵

"I will bear children with the others, oh,

"Hin, hin, hin, hin!"

"Greetings of children, you who have children, oh,

"Hin, hin, hin, hin!"

Ifa says a woman is troubled by the desire for children. She should sacrifice ten calabashes of boiled corn and beans, ten hens, and five shillings. If she is able to make this sacrifice, by this time next year she will be carrying a child on her back.⁶

3. This verse, like 6-2, explains why the dish of boiled corn and beans is sacrificed every year by the people of M̄q̄r̄ ward.

4. Qsara is a deity who was the husband of Q̄l̄q̄sh̄ (see verse 6-2). He is identified with a body of water in Q̄l̄q̄sh̄'s grove, opposite M̄q̄r̄ ward along the Ilesha road in If̄.

5. These sounds have no meaning, but are added to the song simply to make it "sound sweet."

6. Note the pun on "carry on back" (p̄q̄n) and "be red" (p̄q̄n).

6 - 6

"It is not long before the river belongs to the ̄k̄k̄ikun leaf," "It is not long before the field belongs to the leopard," and "It is not long before the open street belongs to the child from the town of Ilaun"¹ were the ones who cast Ifa for the people of M̄q̄r̄ Agbada ward where they were dancing the egem̄pati² because they had no children. Ifa says someone is not well; he should make a sacrifice so that he may be able to eat. Or a babe in arms

1. Cf. n. 1, verse 6-5, and nn. 1 to 3, verse 6-2.

2. A drum rhythm used at the Coconut Festival (̄dun agb̄n), which is performed by the people of M̄q̄r̄ ward in honor of Qsara and Q̄l̄q̄sh̄.

nṣe amodi, ko jẹ-(oh)un, ki a ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ba le
making sickness, not eat-thing, should we offer-sacrifice that it should be:able
jẹ-(oh)un. Obukọ kan, ọgọfa ori, ẹgbafa.
eat-thing. He:goat one, 120 cornstarch:porridge, 12,000 (cowries).

N(i)-igba-ti nwọn ru-(ẹ)bọ yi ti nwọn gbe si ẹhin-(ẹ)kun-
At-time-that they offer-sacrifice this that they carry (it) to back-door-(of)-
(i)le ibi-ti ọmọ na gbe nṣe ai-san, awọn ẹgbẹ rẹ jẹ-
house place-that child the take making not-be:better, those companion his eat-
(oh)un tan, ni nwọn wa nk(ọ)-orin pe:
thing finish, be they come singing-song that:

Jẹ o egemọpati.
"Eat, oh, egemọpati."

Bi awọn ẹgbẹ ọmọ na ba ti jẹ onjẹ nwọn-yi tan a-
As those companion (of) child the should have eat food those-this finish one:who-
l(i)-ai-san na yio jẹ-(oh)un.
be-not-be:better the will eat-thing.

OGBE - (I)ROSUN¹ - 1

Ogbe r(i)-Osun, Ogun ri A-w(o)-oro a da
"Ogbe sees-Camwood; Camwood sees One:who-look:at-ritual" (be) who cast
fun Nwọnmile ti o ni ọ ri baba rẹ ni oju ala.
for Rascal that he going see father his at eye (of) dream.

Mo ri baba mi l(i)-oni,
"I see father my at-today,

Iba ẹkun
"Father (of) leopard,

Iba ese,
"Father (of) cat,

Iba amọkiṣitẹkun,
"Father (of) panther,

Ababa ti ọrun wa gbe mi,
"Father from sky come assist me,

Iba ọmọ ko ẹ(ai) gbe ọmọ rẹ,
"Father (of) child not do-not assist child his,

Iba ọmọ.
"Father (of) child."

1. Also known as Ogbe t(ẹ)-ọwọ bo osun (Ogbe stretch-hand dip camwood),
"Ogbe dips out camwood."

is ill and cannot eat anything; we should sacrifice so it will be able to eat. One he-goat, 120 lumps of cornstarch porridge, and three shillings is the sacrifice.

When they had made the sacrifice and carried it out behind the house where the child was lying ill, his companions finished eating it and they came back singing:

"Eat, oh, egemopati."

As his companions finish eating the food, the child who is not well will eat something.

7 - 1

"Ogbe sees Camwood;¹ Camwood sees the priest" was the one who cast Ifa for Rascal when he was dreaming about his father.

"I saw my father today;

"Father of leopard,

"Father of cat,

"Father of panther,²

"Father come from heaven to help me;

"The child's father does not refuse to help his child,

"The child's father."

1. Ogbe and Camwood appear here as names of people. Note the pun on the name of the figure, Ogbe-(I)rosun.

2. Amq̄kiṣit̄ekun is a title of a feline identified as a panther by informants and described as about the size of a dog. Its meaning could not be analyzed, but it is also known as a-mq̄-t(o)-ḡkun (one:who-know-equal-leopard), meaning "The one who knows as much as leopard." Note that all the animals mentioned are felines.

Ifa ni ɛni-kan gbagbe baba rɛ ti ko ba tɔ-(o)ju baba
 Ifa say person-one forget father his that not should care:for-eye (of) father
 rɛ, ko ni ri ɛni tɔ-(o)ju on na ni aiye. Agbo kan ati ɛgbaje
 his, not be see person care:for-eye his also at earth. Ram one and 14,000 (cow-
 ni ɛbɔ. Ki a ru-(ɛ)bo tan ki e-l(i)-eyi lɔ
 ries) be sacrifice. Should we offer-sacrifice finish should one:who-be-this go
 fi agbo na bɔ baba rɛ, ɕugbɔn bi o ba wa ni aiye ki o
 take ram the sacrifice:to father his, but if he should exist at earth should he
 lɔ fi bɔ o ni ori ki ɔran rɛ ba le ni ɔna; (ohu)n-
 go take (it) sacrifice:to him at head that affair his should be:able have road; thing-
 kan e-l(i)-eyi yio bajɛ pata-pata bi ko ba tɔ-
 one (of) one:who-be-this will spoil completely-completely if not should care:for-
 (o)ju baba rɛ; yala bi o wa ni ɔrun tabi ni aiye.
 eye (of) father his; either if he exist at sky or at earth.

 OGBE - (I)ROSUN - 2

Tara o b(i)-oju wɛrɛ a da fun ɔrunmila ti o nlɔ gbe A-
 "Pebble it bear-eye tiny" (be) who cast for ɔrunmila that he going take One:who
 ri-(i)ye-wɛ ni iyawo. Ifa ni aya Ifa kan ni-(e)yi, bi a ko ba
 see-mother-be:coy at junior:wife. Ifa say wife (of) Ifa one be-this, if we not should
 mu fun Ifa oku ni. Obinrin kan si tun ni-(e)yi bi o ba
 take (her) give Ifa corpse be (she). Woman one and then be-this if she should
 le ru-(ɛ)bɔ yio bi-(ɔ)mɔ pupɔ.
 be:able offer-sacrifice will bear-child many.

A-ri-(i)ye-wɛ a b(i)-ɔmɔ wɛrɛ
 "One:who-see-mother-be:coy will bear-child tiny;

A-ri-(i)ye-wɛ a b(i)-ɔmɔ wɛrɛ
 "One:who-see-mother-be:coy will bear-child tiny;

ɔrunmila l(i)-o gbe A-ri-(i)ye-wɛ n(i)-iyawo
 "ɔrunmila be-who take One:who-see-mother-be:coy at-junior:wife;

A-ri-(i)ye-wɛ a b(i)-ɔmɔ wɛrɛ.
 "One:who-see-mother-be:coy will bear-child tiny."

Obinrin aya Ifa kan ni-(e)yi, yio bi-(ɔ)mɔ bi o ba le ru-
 Woman wife (of) Ifa one be-this, will bear-child if she should be:able offer-
 (ɛ)bɔ aye bɔ adie marun, ɛgbarun. Ki o ru-(ɛ)bɔ
 sacrifice (of) hen chicken five, 10,000 (cowries). Should she offer-sacrifice
 tan ki obinrin na si ma pa ile Ifa, ni (ohu)n-kan rɛ
 finish should woman the and (continuative) rub house (of) Ifa, be thing-one her
 fi le dɛ l(i)-ɔrun.
 make be:able be:soft (for) (her) at-neck.

Ifa says someone has forgotten his father and that if he does not take care of his father there will be no one on earth to take care of him. One ram and three shillings six pence is the sacrifice. When this sacrifice has been made, this person should go and sacrifice the ram to his father; but if the father is still alive, he should sacrifice the ram to his father's head so that the way to success may be clear for him. Something of the person concerned will spoil completely if he does not take care of his father, whether he is on earth or in heaven.

7 - 2

"Pebbles have tiny eyes"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he was going to take "She is coy when she sees her mother"² as his wife. Ifa says this is a wife of Ifa;³ if she is not given to Ifa, she will die. And then there is a woman who will bear many children if she is able to sacrifice.

"She is coy when she sees her mother will bear tiny children;

"She is coy when she sees her mother will bear tiny children;

"Qrunmila is the one who took She is coy when she sees her mother
as his wife;

"She is coy when she sees her mother will bear tiny children."

This is a woman who is a wife of Ifa; she will bear children if she is able to sacrifice five hens and two shillings six pence. When she has completed the sacrifice, she should begin to rub the house of Ifa;⁴ then things will be easy for her.

1. Informants said that this meant only that they "come in small pieces," but tara refers to pebbles of laterite (yangi), which has a pitted surface.

2. This name carries the meaning that as a girl she turns and shuffles shyly, trying to get her mother to do something or to give her something that she has been denied.

3. See n. 5, verse 3-4.

4. The walls and floor of the room in which the Ifa paraphernalia are kept are rubbed regularly with dung by the women worshipers of Ifa and those who come to Ifa for children.

OGBE - (I)ROSUN - 3

Gunnugun hu-(i)run de gbogbḡḡ itan, o fi (i)y(i)-o-ku
 "Vulture sprout-hair arrive length (of) thigh, he take this-which-remain
 bḡ ṣokoto a da fun Ojugbḡḡ ni-(ḡ)jḡ ti Ogun ma fi
 wear trousers" (be) who cast for Ojugbḡḡ at-day that Ogun (continuative) take
 ḡna ḡwḡ rḡ han. Nwḡn ni ki o ru ḡiyḡ-(i)le meji ati
 art (of) hand his appear. They say should he offer bird-(of)-house two and
 egbejila.
 2400 (cowries).

Ifa ni ohun ti a tori rḡ da-(i)fa yi a-(yi)o ri ire n(i)-
 Ifa say thing that we because (of) its cast-Ifa this, we-will see goodness at-
 inu rḡ, Ifa ni ni ḡdun yi ni Ogun yio fi ḡna ere rḡ han. Ila
 belly its; Ifa say at year this be Ogun will take road (of) gain his appear. Ochra
 ni Ojugbḡḡ ḡbin ni ḡdun na o si ri ere pupḡ l(i)-ori ila na.
 be Ojugbḡḡ plant at year the he and see gain much at-head (of) ochra the.

OGBE - (I)ROSUN - 4

Adepeju ni awo A-l(i)-aran, Okoromu ni awo Ḣsa,
 "Adepeju" be secret (of) Onḡ:who-has-velvet, "Okoromu" be secret (of) Ḣsa,
 Itamḡḡ awo Itamḡpo a da fun agba ḡḡḡḡ ti o nfḡ ori
 "Itamḡḡ" secret (of) Itamḡpo (be) who cast for Elder Stupid that he grinding corn:
 l(i)-odo ni ai-n(i)-igba; nwḡn ni kin-ni o ṣe ti o
 starch:porridge at-river at not-have-calabash; they say what-be it make that he
 nfḡ-(o)ri l(i)-odo ni ai-n(i)-igba? O ni iya
 grinding-cornstarch:porridge at-river at not-have-calabash? He say punishment
 ai-ni enia ni o njḡ on.
 (of) not-have persons be it eating him.

Ifa ni on ri ire enia ati ire aya fun ḡni-ti
 Ifa say he see goodness (of) people and goodness (of) wife for person-that
 o da on yi. Ayebḡ adie meji, obi mḡwa, ati egḡḡrindilogun ni
 who cast him¹ this. Hen chicken two, kola ten, and 3200 (cowries) be
 ḡḡ. A-(yi)o fi ewe ḡḡḡ di obi na; a-(yi)o ma fi
 sacrifice. We-will take leaf (of) hoe tie kola the; we-will (continuative) take
 bḡ ori rḡ ni-(ḡ)k(an)-ḡkan l(i)-oj(umḡ)-ojumḡ.
 (them) sacrifice:to head his at-one-one at-dawn-dawn.

1. That is, Ifa.

7 - 3

"Vulture's feathers reach to his thighs; for the rest¹ he wears trousers" was the one who cast Ifa for Ojugbẹḍẹ² on the day that the God of Iron taught him his handicraft. They said he should sacrifice two pigeons and seven pence two oninis.

Ifa says that we will find a blessing in the thing for which we cast this figure. Ifa says that during this year the God of Iron will show us the way to make a profit. That year Ojugbẹḍẹ planted ochra, and he made a big profit on the ochra.

1. That is, for the rest of his leg, which is not covered with feathers.

2. Ojugbẹḍẹ is the head of the Ifẹ blacksmiths and the God of Iron is their patron.

7 - 4

Adepeju leaf, the diviner of "The one who owns velvet"; Okoromu, the diviner of the town of Eṣa; and Itamọjẹ, the diviner of Itamọpo were the ones who cast Ifa for "Strong but stupid elder"¹ who was so poor that he ground cornstarch porridge at the river without a calabash. They said, "Why are you grinding cornstarch porridge at the river without a calabash?" He said he was suffering because he had nobody.²

Ifa says he sees the blessing of people and the blessing of wives for the person who cast this figure. Two hens, ten kola nuts, and nine pence six oninis³ is the sacrifice. We will wrap the kola nuts in "hoe" leaves; we will sacrifice one each day, at dawn, to his head.

1. An old person who has brawn, but not brains.

2. That is, because he had no relatives or friends to help him financially, even in buying a calabash. Not having a calabash or a plate is a euphemism for poverty. Cf. n. 4, verse 2-1; and n. 4, verse 18-11.

3. Egbẹrindilogun is a shortened form of Egbẹrindinlogun.

OGBE - (I)ROSUN - 5

A-pa-(o)ri awo Egba, Qṣṣṣṣ-n(i)-irun-agbṣn awo
 "One:who-be:bald-head" secret (of) Egba, "Pointed-at-hair-(of)-chin" secret

Ḙsa Abaṣṣo ori rari-rari awo ode-(I)jḗbu
 (of) Ḙsa, "Tuft:of:hair (of) head too:big-too:big" secret (of) outside-(of)-Ijḗbu (be)

a da fun Ololo-l(i)-ohun ti i-ṣ(e)-ṣkṣ ḡbuntun. Nwṣn ni
 who cast for Quavering-at-voice that to-make-husband (of) bride. They say

ki Ololo-l(i)-ohun ru-(ḗ)ḡṣ ki aya rḗ wundia ita ma
 should Quavering-at-voice offer-sacrifice that wife his maiden (of) square not

ba ku, ki gbogbo iṣḗ ati wahala e-l(i)-eyi l(i)-ori
 should die, that all work and difficulty (of) one:who-be-this at-head (of)

obinrin na ma ba gbe. Igiripa obukṣ kan ḗgbafa ada
 woman the not should be:lost. Full:grown he-goat one, 12,000 (cowries), cutlass

ṣwṣ rḗ, ati aṣṣ ara rḗ ni ḗḡṣ. Ifa ni ki e-l(i)-eyi
 (of) hand his, and cloth (of) body his be sacrifice. Ifa say should one:who-be-this

ru-(ḗ)ḡṣ nitori aya rḗ a-fḗ-s(i)-ṣna kan ki o ma ba
 offer-sacrifice because (of) wife his to-love-to-road one that she not should

di ati gbe n(i)-iyawo ki iku ma de ki owo ṣkṣ
 become to take at-junior:wife, that death not arrive that cowries (of) husband

si di egbe.
 and become loss.

N(i)-igba-ti Ololo-l(i)-ohun ḡḡṣ ḗḡṣ ko ru-(ḗ)ḡṣ, ko l(i)-
 At-time-that Quavering-at-voice hear sacrifice not offer-sacrifice, not at-

ṣṣṣ ko l(i)-oṣu aya Ololo-l(i)-ohun, a-fḗ-s(i)-ṣna ko igba
 day not at-month, wife (of) Quavering-at-voice, to-love-to-road, gather calabash

o da ori kṣ odo lṣ fṣ ko si mṣ pe ni ṣṣṣ na gan
 she turn head turn:toward river go wash (them) not and know that at day the iden-

ni awṣn Irun-(i)mṣṣṣ ati awṣn Egun nti ṣrun ḡṣ wa si aiye.
 tical be those 400-Deity and those Egungun leaving sky come come to earth.

N(i)-igba-ti awṣn ba ni odo nwṣn ḡḗḗ si ki bayi pe:
 At-time-that they meet (her) at river they begin to greet (her) thus that:

Ḡbuntun, o ma ku odo yi,
 "Bride, you (continuative) be:greeted (of) river this,

Ṣ(e)-ṣmu lḗ-lḗ, ṣ(e)-ṣmu lḗ-lḗ-lḗ;
 "Make-breast sway-sway, make-breast sway-sway-sway;

O ba f(i)-igba ṣ(e)-omi ko mi,
 "You should take-calabash make-water for me,

Ṣ(e)-ṣmu lḗ-lḗ, ṣ(e)-ṣmu lḗ-lḗ-lḗ;
 "Make-breast sway-sway, make-breast sway-sway-sway;

T(i)-igba t(i)-igba ḡbunrun ngundun,
 "That-(of)-calabash that-(of)-calabash, ḡbunrun ngundun,

"Bald headed one," the diviner of the Eḡba,¹ "Pointed beard," the diviner of the town of Eḡsa; and "Too big a tuft of hair² on the head," the diviner of the town of Iḡbu Ode were the ones who cast Ifa for "Quavering voice,"³ who was engaged to be married.⁴ They said that "Quavering voice" should sacrifice lest his bride-to-be should die and all the work and the difficulties he had been through because of her⁵ be lost. One full-grown he-goat, three shillings, the cutlass from his hand, and the cloth from his body was the sacrifice. Ifa says this person should make a sacrifice because of his bride-to-be, that death should not come to her just as she is about to become his wife, and the money he has given as bridewealth be lost.

When "Quavering voice" heard the sacrifice, he did not make it. Shortly afterward his bride-to-be took her calabashes and went to the river to wash them; she did not know that on that very day the Four Hundred Deities and the Egungun⁶ were coming to the earth from heaven. When they met her at the river, they began to greet her thus:

"Bride, greetings of the river,⁷
 "Make your breasts quiver, make your breasts quiver;
 "Dip me some water with your calabash,
 "Make your breasts quiver, make your breasts quiver;
 "With your calabash, with your calabash, 'gbunrun ngundun,"⁸

1. A Yoruba subgroup.

2. A type of hairdress in which the hair is tied into a tuft or knot. The messengers (Ilari) of the chief of the town of Igana, for example, dress their hair in this fashion.

3. Ololo is the sound that this man made when he tried to talk.

4. After an agreement of marriage has been made, and until the groom has fulfilled his obligations to the prospective father-in-law and the bride comes to live with him, the bride is known commonly as iyaw(o)-ḡna, or junior:wife-(of)-road, indicating that she does not yet live with her husband. In this verse the terms ḡbuntun, wundia ita, and aya a-fḡ-s(i)-ḡna appear, all of which mean the same thing.

5. This refers primarily to the work done by a man for his prospective father-in-law, and his difficulties in raising the bridewealth.

6. The Egungun are a group of deities represented by costumes which completely conceal the body of the wearer. Often referred to as "masquerades," some types of Egungun costumes have masks; others do not. One type of Egungun (alago) is made in honor of a relative who has recently died. (See Bascom, 1944: 48-59). Like other deities, the Egungun receive sacrifices and they can grant children. Cf. verse 52-4.

7. The Yoruba have a large number of similar greetings: greetings of the house, greetings of the farm, greetings of work. These mean, I greet you at the river, at home, at the farm, at your work, etc.

8. This represents the sound made when swallowing the water.

Ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ-lẹ.
 "Make-breast sway-sway, make-breast sway-sway-sway."

Bayi ni o bẹrẹ si fi igba bu omi fun ẹni-(o)k(an)-q̄kan n(i)-inu
 Thus be she begin to take calabash dip water for person-one-one at-belly
 awq̄n Egun nwq̄n-yi ti Egun na si nmu omi ti o si
 (of) those Egungun those-this that Egungun the and drinking water that they and
 ngbe igba mi p̄glu titi gbogbo igba ti q̄m̄q̄-(o)binrin
 taking calabash swallow together:with until all calabash that child-woman
 yi ko wa si odo wa f̄q̄ fi tan. N(i)-igba-ti o kan
 this gather come to river come wash (them) take finish. At-time-that it touch
 o-l(i)-ori awq̄n Egun nwq̄n-yi ori rẹ si f̄r̄r̄ to igba,
 one:who-be-head (of) those Egungun those-this, head his and almost equal 200,
 o bẹrẹ si wi-pe:
 he begin to say-that:

Q̄buntun o ma ku odo yi,
 "Bride you (continuative) be:greeted (of) river this,

Ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ, ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ-lẹ;
 "Make-breast sway-sway, make-breast sway-sway-sway;

O ba f(i)-igba ş(e)-omi ko mi,
 "You should take-calabash make-water for me,

Ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ, ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ-lẹ;
 "Make-breast sway-sway, make-breast sway-sway-sway;

T(i)-igba t(i)-igba gbunrun ngundun,
 "That-(of)-calabash that-(of)-calabash 'gbunrun ngundun,'

Ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ, ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ-lẹ.
 "Make-breast sway-sway, make-breast sway-sway-sway."

Q̄m̄q̄-(o)binrin yi ni igba tan, Egun yi da-(o)hun o ni:
 Child-woman this say calabash finish; Egungun this break-voice he say:

O ba f(i)-q̄w̄q̄ ş(e)-omi ko mi,
 "You should take-hand make-water for me,

Ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ, ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ-lẹ;
 "Make-breast sway-sway, make-breast sway-sway-sway;

T(i)-q̄w̄q̄ t(i)-q̄w̄q̄ gbunrun ngundun,
 "That-(of)-hand that-(of)-hand 'gbunrun ngundun,'

Ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ, ş(e)-q̄mu lẹ-lẹ-lẹ.
 "Make-breast sway-sway, make-breast sway-sway-sway."

Bi q̄m̄q̄-(o)binrin yi ti fi q̄w̄q̄ bu omi fun Egun yi o si gbe-
 As child-woman this have take hand dip water for Egungun this he and take-
 mi, nwq̄n si nba q̄na ti-wq̄n l̄q̄. N(i)-igba-ti iya
 swallow (her), they and joining road that-(of)-their go. At-time-that mother (of)
 q̄m̄q̄-(o)binrin yi gb̄q̄ ni ile o ȳq̄ apasa o si gbati awq̄n
 child-woman this hear at house she pull:out sword (of loom) she and follow those

"Make your breasts quiver, make your breasts quiver."

So she began to dip water with her calabashes for each one of the Egungun, and the Egungun were drinking the water and swallowing the calabashes with it until all the calabashes that the girl had brought to the river to wash were gone. When it became the turn of the chief of the Egungun, whose heads numbered almost two hundred, he began to say:

"Bride, greetings of the river,

"Make your breasts quiver, make your breasts quiver;

"Dip me some water with your calabash,

"Make your breasts quiver, make your breasts quiver;

"With your calabash, with your calabash, 'gbunrun ngundun,'

"Make your breasts quiver, make your breasts quiver."

The girl said that the calabashes were gone; the Egungun answered:

"Dip me some water with your hands,

"Make your breasts quiver, make your breasts quiver;

"With your hands, with your hands, 'gbunrun ngundun,'

"Make your breasts quiver, make your breasts quiver."

As the girl dipped water for the Egungun with her hands, he swallowed her, and the Egungun went on their way. When the girl's mother at home heard what had happened, she took the sword⁹ from her loom and set out after the

9. The wooden piece used to beat up the weft threads on the vertical looms on which women weave.

Egungun na n(i)-igba-ti o ba wọn o bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
Egungun the; at-time-that she meet them she begin to sing-song that:

Eyin l(i)-ẹ gb(e)-omọ mi j(ẹ)-omọ,
"You be-who take-child my eat-child,

Ij(ẹ)-omọ, ij(ẹ)-omọ ọrangun,
"Eat-child, eat-child (of) Qrangun";

awọn ti ọ ba kan a si da-(o)hun pe:
those that she should touch they and break-voice that:

Awa ko l(i)-a gb(e)-omọ rẹ,
"We not be-who take-child your,

Ij(ẹ)-omọ ọrangun
"Eat-child (of) Qrangun."

Bayi ni o nbere ti o si npa gbogbo awọn Egun ti o ba kan
Thus be she asking that she and killing all those Egungun that it should touch

titi o fi ba o-l(i)-ori wọn; n(i)-igba-ti o ba o si
until she take meet one:who-be-head their; at-time-that she meet (him) she and

bere b(i)-akan-na l(i)-omọ rẹ; o-l(i)-ori wọn si da-(o)hun pe:
ask like-one-the at-hand his; one:who-be-head their and break-voice that:

Emi l(i)-o gb(e)-omọ rẹ,
"I be-who take-child your,

Ij(ẹ)-omọ ọrangun.
"Eat-child (of) Qrangun."

Nwọn si fi ija p(e)-ẹta titi obinrin yi fi bẹ gbogbo ori
They and take fight call-three until woman this take cut all head (of)

o-l(i)-ori wọn yi tan ti o si şubu lu-(i)lẹ şugbọn n(i)-igba-
one:who-be-head their this finish that he and fall strike-ground, but at-time-

ti a la inu Egun yi wo ti nwọn ma ba omọ
that they open belly (of) Egungun this look:at that they (continuative) meet child

yi o ti ku.
this she have die.

Ifa ni ki ọkunrin kan ru-(ẹ)bọ ki iyawo rẹ a-fẹ-s(i)-ona
Ifa say should man one offer-sacrifice that junior:wife his to-love-to-road

ma ba ku ki owo ti o şe le l(i)-ori ma ba di egbe.
not should die that cowries that he do upon (her) at-head not should become loss.

Ki a si tun ru-(ẹ)bọ fun omọ-(o)binrin kan ki o ma ba ku
Should we and then offer-sacrifice for child-woman one that she not should die

ni ọjọ ọdun gan.
at day (of) year identical.

Egungun. When she caught up with them she began to sing:

"You are the ones who took my child and ate her,
 "And ate her, who ate the child of Qrangun.¹⁰

Each one that she came to answered:

"We are not the ones who took your child,
 "Who ate the child of Qrangun."

Thus she questioned all the Egungun that she came to and killed them one by one, until she came to their chief. When she met him, she asked him the same question; the chief of the Egungun answered:

"I am the one who took your child,
 "Who ate the child of Qrangun."

They fought and fought until the woman had cut off all the heads of the chief Egungun, and he fell to the ground. But when this Egungun was cut open, they found that the child was already dead.¹¹

Ifa says a man should sacrifice that his bride-to-be should not die and the money that he has spent upon her become a loss. And then we should sacrifice for a girl lest she die during this very year.

10. The title of the king of the town of Ila, which is about 60 miles north-east of Ife.

11. This is reminiscent of many African tales in which a monster is cut open, and the persons he has swallowed are released. While in this case his victim is dead, it is significant that they looked to see. With the tale ending in this way, the prediction of the diviners is fulfilled.

OGBE - (O)GUNDA¹ - 1

Akin ɔmɔ ɔ-l(i)-ɔfin, Awurɛ ɔmɔ ɔ-l(i)-
 Hero child (of) one:who-has-palace; Unassuming child (of) one:who-has-
 ɔfin. Akin mba Awurɛ ja o si fa ni oko tu, l(i)-ɛhin-
 palace. Hero joining Unassuming fight he and pull (him) at penis loosen, at-back-
 na o le Awurɛ si oko n(i)-igba-ti nwɔn fi jɛ ɔba; n(i)-igba-
 the he chase Unassuming to farm at-time-that they take (Hero) eat king; at-time-
 ti o le lɔ si oko o fi obinrin akiriboto kan ran-(i)ɛɛ si
 that he chase (him) go to farm he take woman akiriboto one send-message to (him)
 ni oko awɔn mej(i)-(m)aji si ngbe inu igbo, nwɔn nɛɛ iɛɛ wɔn,
 at farm; those two-two and dwelling:at belly (of) forest, they doing work their,
 nwɔn si jɛ-(oh)un ni oko.
 they and eating-thing at farm.

Ni ɔjɔ kan oriɛa nti iranje ile lɔ si iranje oko, ebi n-
 At day one Orisha leaving iranje (of) house go to iranje (of) farm, hunger it-
 si npa, bi o ti nlɔ o ngbɔ ohun awɔn mej(i)-(m)aji ti
 and killing (him); as he have going he hearing voice (of) those two-two that
 nwɔn ns(ɔ)-ɔrɔ n(i)-ibi-ti nwɔn gbe fɛ gun iyan. Oriɛa
 they speaking-word at-place-that they take want pound pounded:yam. Orisha
 si pa-(a)tɛ si wɔn popo. N(i)-igba-ti nwɔn p(o)-oju w(o)-ɛhin ti nwɔn
 and clap-palm to them 'popo.' At-time-that they turn-eye look:at-back that they
 ri oriɛa nwɔn ni pa-(ɛ)nu mɔ titi ti nwɔn fi gun iyan
 see Orisha they and kill-mouth against until that they take pound pounded:yam
 tan, bɛ-ni iyan ai-fɔ ni oriɛa jɛ.
 finish, so-be pounded:yam not-speak be Orisha eat.

N(i)-igba-ti nwɔn gun iyan tan, nwɔn ko fun oriɛa;
 At-time-that they pound pounded:yam finish, they gather (them) give Orisha;
 o jɛ o yo; n(i)-igba-ti o yo tan, o bi nwɔn lere ohun
 he eat he be:satisfied; at-time-that he be:satisfied finish, he ask them (2) thing
 ti nwɔn nɛɛ ni arin igbo. Awurɛ si da-(o)hun pe, n(i)-igba-
 that they doing at middle (of) forest. Unassuming and break-voice that at-time-
 ti o pɛlu aburo on nja ni o fa l(i)-oko tu
 that he together:with younger:sibling his fighting be he pull (him) at-penis loosen
 ti o si le on si oko ti on si fi obinrin akiriboto ran-(i)ɛɛ
 that he and chase him to farm that he and take woman akiriboto send-message

1. Also known as Ogbe yɔ-(i)nu (Ogbe melt-belly), "Ogbe calms our anger."
 The implication is that the prediction in store for one for whom this figure is
 cast will put him at ease and calm him down.

2. Bi . . . lere means "ask."

Hero, child of the king; Unassuming,¹ child of the king. Hero was fighting with Unassuming, and he pulled off his penis. Afterward when they made Hero king, he chased Unassuming to the farm. When he drove him away, he sent a woman with a constricted vagina² to him. They both lived in the forest, working and eating in the farm.

One day the God of Whiteness was going from Iranje of the house to Iranje³ of the farm, and he was hungry. As he walked along, he heard these two talking where they were getting ready to pound yams. The God of Whiteness clapped his hands 'popo.'⁴ When they looked behind them and saw the God of Whiteness, they kept their mouths closed until they had finished pounding the yams. In this way the God of Whiteness had 'speechless yams'⁵ to eat.

When they had finished pounding the yams, they gave them to the God of Whiteness and he ate until he was satisfied. When he had eaten his fill, he asked them what they were doing in the middle of the forest. Unassuming explained that when they were fighting, his younger brother had pulled off his penis and had driven him to the forest and had sent him this woman with the constricted vagina.

1. Awurę is an abbreviation of Awurętetę, which appears later in the verse. It means a man who goes about his work quietly without making a fuss and without boasting about what he is doing, but who nevertheless does his work surely and well. Others may call him a lazy man, a fool, or 'a farmer,' but he is really the wisest and most competent of them all.

Note that the form of this verse is unusual in that it starts directly by naming the characters of the tale. There is no dialogue with Qrunmila, and no citing of a precedent divination.

2. A woman described as being able to urinate, but not to have sexual intercourse, possibly because of excessive scar tissue forming after clitoridectomy.

3. The meaning of Iranje could not be explained by informants, but it is named in another verse as the place Qbatala Qshęřę-Igbo came from (Epega, n.d.: XIII, 2). Although identified only as Orisha, it is to be understood that this deity is Orishala or Qbatala, the God of Whiteness, who fashions the human form within the mother's womb by opening the eyes, mouth, nose, and ears, and by separating the arms, legs, toes, and fingers much as a woodcarver does when making a figurine. He is also credited with fashioning the first humans, male and female, in a similar manner. Albinos, hunchbacks, cripples, children with six toes or six fingers, and individuals with other deformities are sacred to him. Cf. Chapter XI and n. 3, verse 5-1. Snails and one of his tabus are mentioned in this verse.

4. Popo is the sound made when the hands are clapped.

5. It is a tabu for Orishala to eat yams which have not been prepared in silence.

si on. Orisha sọ fun wọn pe o nlọ, ki nwọn ki o wa igbin
to him. Orisha speak for them that he going, should they should they seek snail
(ọ)k(an)-ọkan de on.
one-one wait:for him.

N(i)-igba-ti oriṣa de, o mu igbin kan, o ni ki ọkunrin bọ
At-time-that Orisha arrive, he take snail one, he say should man take:off
aṣọ rẹ s(i)-ilẹ ki o si la-(i)tan rẹ. N(i)-igba-ti o ẹ be ẹ tan,
cloth his to-ground should he and open-thigh his. At-time-that he do so finish,
oriṣa ẹ ha si igbin na. O si yọ. O si mu o ju mọ
Orisha make 'ha' to snail the. It and appear. He and take (it) he throw (it) against
ni abẹ. O tun ẹ be ẹ na fun obinrin pẹlu, ti-rẹ na
(him) at bottom. He then do so also for woman together:with, that-(of)-hers the
si duro mọ ni abẹ. O si sọ fun wọn pe ki wọn ki
and stand against (her) at bottom. He and speak for them that should they should
o lọ ma sun ti ara wọn bi ti at(i)-ẹhin wa.
they go (continuative) sleep against body their as that (of) from-back come.

N(i)-igba-ti o di oru bi nwọn ti sun, ni igbin ti abẹ
At-time-that it become night as they have sleep, be snail that (of) bottom
ọkunrin ran mọ ti obinrin ti o ti la-(ẹ)nu o si bọ
(of) man fasten against that (of) woman that it have open-mouth, it and enter
s(i)-inu rẹ. Ko l(i)-ọjọ ko l(i)-oṣu inu obinrin bẹrẹ si ga, oyun
to-belly hers. Not at-day not at-month belly (of) woman begin to be:high; preg-
de. Awọn enia ti o ri wọn wa nsọ fun ọba na pe
nancy arrive. Those people that they see them come speaking for king the that
obinrin yi l(i)-oyun sugbọn o j(ẹ)-iyan o ni ko le ri bẹ. N(i)-
woman this have-pregnancy but he eat-dispute he say not be:able see so. At-
igba-ti o si bi, nwọn tun wa sọ fun sugbọn ko gba wọn
time-that she and bear, they then come speak for (him) but not accept them
gbọ. N(i)-igba-ti o tun l(i)-oyun l(i)-ẹkeji nwọn tun wa sọ
hear. At-time-that she then have-pregnancy at-second, they then come speak
fun. O wa da-(o)hun o ni bi o ba ri bẹ ise ni ki nwọn
for (him). He come break-voice he say if he should see so make be should they
wọ on lu-(i)lẹ lati ori opo ti on joko le yi, ki
drag him strike-ground from head (of) dais that he sit:down upon (it) this, should
nwọn ki o si bẹ on l(i)-ori. Awọn ara ilu ran-(i)ṣẹ pe
they should they and cut him at-head. Those people (of) town send-message call
obinrin yi ati Awurẹ. N(i)-igba-ti o de gbogbo ilu pe
woman this and Unassuming. At-time-that they arrive all town assemble
o si joko. Bi Akin, ọba ọ-l(i)-ọfin, ti ri ti obinrin yi
they and sit:down. As Hero, king one:who-has-palace, have see that woman this
dide ti o fẹ lọ tọ, o dide o fẹ sa wọ ile. Awọn ara
arise that she want go urinate, he arise he want run enter house. Those people

The God of Whiteness told them that he was going away, but that they should each find a snail and keep it until he returned.

When the God of Whiteness came back, he took one of the snails. He told the man to take off his clothes and spread his legs. When the man had done this, the God of Whiteness said "Ha!" to the snail. It came out of its shell, and he threw it against the man's groin. Then he did the same for the woman, and her snail stuck to her groin. He told them to go and sleep together as they had done before.

When night fell and they were asleep, the snail from the man's groin fastened itself against the woman's snail, which had opened its mouth, and it entered the woman's belly. Soon afterward the woman's belly began to swell; she became pregnant. The people who saw these two came and told the king that this woman was pregnant, but he contradicted them, saying it could not be so. When she gave birth to her child, they came and told him again, but he would not believe them. When she became pregnant for a second time, they again came to tell him. He replied that if he should ever see this happen, they should drag him from the throne⁶ upon which he was sitting and cut off his head. The townspeople sent word to this woman and to Unassuming to come. When they arrived, the whole town assembled and sat down before the king. When Hero, the king, saw this woman get up to go to urinate, he saw that she was pregnant; he got up, too, and tried to run into the house. But the people

6. A raised platform of mud, or dais, upon which a chief or a king sits. The raised mud sleeping platforms are the same in construction, and are known by the same name.

ilu rẹ fa lu-(i)lẹ nwọn si bẹ l(i)-ori.
(of) town his pull (him) strike-ground they and cut (him) at-head.

Para-para gbi n(i)-ilẹ l(i)-a gbọ;
"Loud-loud gbi at-ground be-we hear;

A-ki igbọ pẹlẹ-pẹlẹ gbi;
"We-not hear soft-soft gbi;

Ẹhin-(ẹ)kun-(i)le Awurẹtẹtẹ l(i)-a ti wọ para-para lọ;
"Back-door-(of)-house (of) Unassuming be-we have drag loud-loud go;

Qrunmila ni o ni a ẹ pẹlẹ-pẹlẹ fi iwa jin-(ẹ)ni;
"Qrunmila say he be who do soft-soft take destiny give-person";

Ifa ni ki a ma-ẹ ja ki ọkunrin-kan ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ara
Ifa say should we not-do fight, should man-one offer-sacrifice that people
ile rẹ ma ba ẹ ni ijamba ni ibi ija. Oko nda
(of) house his not should do (him) at injury at evil (of) fight. Penis causing

ẹni-kan ni-(ọ)jọ ọmọ si nda ẹni-kan ni amu. Ki o ru-
person-one at-day, child and causing person-one at trouble. Should he offer-

(ẹ)bọ si oriṣa kan ki oriṣa na ki fi ọmọ ta l(i)-ọrẹ. Igiripa
sacrifice to orisha one that orisha the should take child sell at-gift. Full-grown

obukọ ati akikọ-(a)diẹ (ti ọkunrin); ewurẹ kan ati ẹrindilogun
he:goat and cock-chicken [that (of) man]; she:goat one and 32,000 (cowries)

(ti obinrin).
[that (of) woman].

OGBE - (O)GUNDA - 2

Kukunduku, pẹtẹnlẹki, igbado ẹgbẹrin, ẹgbẹrin igbado a
"Yam; pẹtẹnlẹki; corn (of) 800 (cowries); 800 corn" (be) who

da fun Oluogodo ọmọ Ẹkunlempe a le Elu w(ọ)-ọya ọmọ
cast for Oluogodo child (of) "Ẹkunlempe who chase Stranger enter-Niger," child

a f(i)-odi ọkọ tẹ-(i)lẹ mọraganniganni. Nwọn
(of) "One:who take-wrong:side (of) spear press-ground 'mọraganniganni.'" They

ni ki o wa ru-(ẹ)bọ nwọn ni ara rẹ ko ya, nwọn ni ni ọdun
say should he come offer-sacrifice they say body his not heal, they say at year

yi ni ara rẹ (yi) o ya. Akikọ-(a)diẹ mẹfa ati ẹgbafa. Oluogodo
this be body his will heal. Cock-chicken six and 12,000 (cowries). Oluogodo

ru-(ẹ)bọ.
offer-sacrifice.

Oluogodo ma de ọmọ Ẹkunlempe o,
"Oluogodo indeed arrive, child (of) Ẹkunlempe, oh,

of his town pulled him to the ground and cut off his head.

"What we hear is the sound of people doing things loudly;⁷

"We do not hear the sound of people who do things quietly;

"We drag the one who does things loudly to Unassuming's door;⁸

"Qrunmila says he does things quietly when he gives someone his destiny."⁹

Ifa says we must not fight. A man should sacrifice so that his relatives will not injure him during a fight. And someone's penis is setting his dates for him,¹⁰ and he is troubled because he has no children. He should sacrifice to a deity so that the deity may give him a child. The sacrifice is a full-grown he-goat and a cock (for a man); and a she-goat and eight shillings¹¹ (for a woman).

7. The word "gbi" was said to mean the sound of someone doing something.

8. To have him pronounce judgment on his offense. The meaning of this, like that of a proverb, is extended far beyond the literal meaning of the words themselves. The implication is that the unassuming man may be committing the same offense as the man whose case he is called upon to judge; but that since he does it quietly without boasting and publicity, others do not know about it and do not attempt to interfere.

9. That is, a person may receive aid from Qrunmila without even knowing what has happened.

10. He cannot have sexual relations regularly. Cf. verse 20-2.

11. Ẹrindilogun is a shortened form of ẹrindinlogun.

9 - 2

"Yam; pẹtẹnlẹki;¹ two pence four oninis worth of corn; 800 kernels of corn" was the one who cast Ifa for Oluogodo, the child of "Ẹkunlempe² who chased the foreigner into the Niger River," child of "He uses the other end of his spear as a walking stick 'mọraganniganni.'"³ They said he should come and make a sacrifice. They said his body was not healing; they said it would heal during that year. The sacrifice was six cocks and three shillings; Oluogodo made the sacrifice.

"Oluogodo did arrive, child of Ẹkunlempe, oh,

1. Informants suggested that this may be the name or title of a type of yam.

2. The informant could not explain or identify Oluogodo or Ẹkunlempe. However, later work with worshipers of Bọrọmun and Ẹppọna made it clear that Oluogodo means "Lord of Yaws" and refers to Bọrọmun, the Goddess of Yaws. Ẹkunl(i)-Empe, meaning "Leopard at Empe" refers to Ẹppọna, the God of Smallpox, whose town is said to be Empe.

3. Mọraganniganni describes the motion of a person using a walking stick.

Igi nda gba ara nya.
 "Tree breaking 'gba,' body healing."

Ifa ni ara ɛni-kan ko ya. Ifa ni ara oluwarẹ yio
 Ifa say body (of) person-one not heal. Ifa say body person:in:question will
 ya bi o ba le ru-(ɛ)bọ.
 heal if he should be:able offer-sacrifice.

OGBE - (O)GUNDA - 3

Mo y(i)-aiye ka l(i)-awo Ẹgba, Qna ni mo rin rin rin titi
 "I turn-earth around" be-secret (of) Ẹgba; "Road be I walk walk walk until
 ti mo de-(I)jẹbu mura, ogborogan n(i)-(i)da, n(i)-ibi-ti nwọn gbe nfi
 that I arrive-Ijẹbu remote, broad at-sword," at-place-that they take taking
 oj(umọ)-ojumọ sun-(ɛ)kun aje. Nwọn ni nwọn yio ni aje l(i)-ọwọ;
 dawn-dawn shed-tears (of) money. They say they will have money at-hand;
 ɛiyɛ-(i)le męrin, ɛfun ado lọpọ-lọpọ, ẹgbarin. Nwọn
 bird-(of)-house four, chalk (of) Benin much-much, 8000 (cowries). They
 ru-(ɛ)bọ. Nwọn bẹrẹ si ni aje.
 offer-sacrifice. They begin to have money.

Ifa ni e-l(i)-eyi yio ni aje l(i)-ọwọ pupọ. Owo de
 Ifa say one:who-be-this will have money at-hand much. Cowries arrive
 sugbọn ki o ru-(ɛ)bọ.
 but should he offer-sacrifice.

OGBE - (I)KA - 1

Ailẹ lẹ a tẹ-(ɛ)ni, ojumọ mọ a ka-(ɛ)ni, a-
 "Evening become:dark we spread-mat, dawn clear we roll-mat; one:who-
 da-(o)wu ni po-yi rẹrẹ ka-(i)lẹ, oku l(i)-o ku ni
 cast-cotton be (he) turn-turn back:and:forth around-ground; corpse be-he die be
 a gbẹ-(i)lẹ l(i)-o jin gbun-gbun l(i)-oju ojo a da fun
 we dig-ground be-it be:deep down-down at-eye (of) coward" (be) who cast for
 Grunmila n(i)-ọjọ ti o nṣ(e)-awo r(e)-ode Ika. Nwọn ni ki o
 Grunmila at-day that he making-secret go-outside (of) Ika. They say should he
 ru-(ɛ)bọ ọbẹ-gbaguda kan ti o wa n(i)-inu akọ, iwọ
 offer-sacrifice (of) knife-gbaguda one that it exist at-belly (of) sheath, fallen
 obi ai-la, ayebo adię meji, eku meji, ẹja meji, ati egbejilelogun
 kola not-open, hen chicken two, rat two, fish two, and 4400 (cowries)

"Wood breaks 'gba,'⁴ his body is healing."

Ifa says someone's body will heal if he can make a sacrifice.

4. Gba is the sound made when wood breaks. This is said to mean that the person will get well as quickly as wood breaks.

9 - 3

"I go around the world," the diviner of the Eḡba, and "I walk and walk and walk along the road until I come to remote Ijḡbu,¹ broad at sword" (were the ones who cast Ifa for them)² where they were weeping every day because they did not have money. They said they would have money. Four pigeons, lots of chalk from Benin, and two shillings was the sacrifice. They made the sacrifice; and they began to have money.

Ifa says this person will have lots of money. Money is coming, but he should make a sacrifice.

1. The Eḡba and Ijḡbu are Yoruba subgroups.

2. This is omitted from the Yoruba text, and the people are not identified. This would seem to indicate that the verse is incomplete.

14 - 1

"Night falls and we spread our sleeping mats, day breaks and we roll them up; one who lays the warp threads must walk back and forth;¹ when someone dies, we dig a hole that is very, very deep in the eyes of a coward" was the one who cast Ifa for Orunmila when he was going to Ika² to divine. They said he should sacrifice one gbaguda knife³ with its sheath, some fallen kola⁴ still in the pod, two hens, two rats, two fish, and one shilling one penny two oninis

1. The warp threads for the men's horizontal looms are laid out by running them around stakes stuck into the ground in two parallel lines in a manner that makes it possible to lay a warp several hundred yards long in a fairly small area. The weaver must walk back and forth between the lines of stakes, winding the warp thread about two adjacent stakes in each line each time.

2. Ika here is the name of a town; note the reference to the name of the figure, Ogbe Ika.

3. A small knife with a straight blade.

4. Kola nuts which had not been picked from the tree, but which had become ripe enough to fall to the ground by themselves.

nitori ki nwọn ma ba mu ni ole ni ibi-ti o nlọ. Qrunmila
 because that they not should take(him) at thief at place-that he going. Qrunmila
 ni o di abọ ki o to wa ru ẹbọ na. Ifa ni ẹni-
 say it become arrival before he equal come offer sacrifice the. Ifa say person-
 kan nlọ si idalẹ kan ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki a ma ba mu
 one going to distance one should he offer-sacrifice that they not should take (him)
 ni ole ni idalẹ ti o nlọ na.
 at thief at distance that he going the.

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila nlọ si ode-(I)ka, o si tọ awọn ba-
 At-time-that Qrunmila going to outside-(of)-Ika, he and approach those di-
 balawo lọ nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ, ẹgbọn o ni o di igba-ti
 viner go they say should he offer-sacrifice, but he say it become time-that
 on ba de ki on to wa ru ẹbọ na; bi o ti nlọ ti
 he should arrive before he equal come offer sacrifice the; as he have going that
 o si de ẹnu ibode ilu na o ri obi ti o so
 he and arrive mouth (of) town:gate (of) town the he see kola that it bear:fruit
 oju rẹ si wọ, o si yọ ọbẹ gbaguda ti o wa ni ọwọ rẹ n(i)-
 eye his and enter (it), he and pull:out knife gbaguda that it exist at hand his at-
 inu akọ, o si fi ka ọkan n(i)-inu awọn eso obi
 belly (of) sheath, he and take (it) pluck one at-belly (of) those fruit (of) kola
 nwọn-yi bi o ti ka tan, bẹ-ni ẹni-ti o ni obi de o
 those-this, as he have pluck finish, so-be person-that he have kola arrive he
 si fẹ mu Qrunmila ni ole, ẹgbọn n(i)-ibi-ti nwọn gbe nja ija-
 and want take Qrunmila at thief, but at-place-that they take fighting fight-
 ka-(i)di, ti Qrunmila nfẹ sa lọ, ọbẹ ti o mu dani bu
 go:around-waist, that Qrunmila wanting run go, knife that he take hold cut (him)
 ni atẹlẹ-l(i)-ọwọ, Qrunmila si sa-lọ. N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila sa-lọ tan,
 at palm-at-hand, Qrunmila and run-go. At-time-that Qrunmila run-go finish
 ẹni-ti o ni obi wa s(i)-ile o si tọ ọba ilu Ika
 person-that he have kola come to-house he and approach king (of) town (of) Ika
 lọ o si sọ fun pe ẹni-kan ji on ni obi ka ẹgbọn n(i)-
 go he and speak for (him) that person-one steal him at kola pluck but at-
 igba-ti o nfẹ mu u o sa lọ; nitori-na ki ọba jọwọ ki
 time-that he wanting take him he run go; because-the should king grant:favor that
 o ba on pe awọn ara ilu jọ ati alejo ati o-n(i)-
 he should he call those people (of) town be:together and visitor and one:who-has-
 ile nitori-pe ole na wa l(i)-arin ilu.
 house because-that thief the exist at-middle (of) town.

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila gbọ eyi, ẹru ba o si tun tọ awọn
 At-time-that Qrunmila hear this, fear meet (him) he and then approach those
 babalawo lọ nwọn si sọ fun pe ki o tun wa ru ẹbọ
 diviner go they and speak for (him) that should he then come offer sacrifice

so that he would not be taken as a thief at the place to which he was going. Qrunmila said he would not make the sacrifice until he returned. Ifa says someone is going to a distant place; he should sacrifice lest he be taken as a thief at the place to which he is going.

When Qrunmila was going to the town of Ika, he consulted the diviners. They said that he should make a sacrifice, but he said that he would not make the sacrifice until he came back. On his way, when he approached the town gate, he saw a kola tree that bore fruit, and he longed to have some. He pulled the gbaguda knife he had in his hand out of its sheath and with it cut off one of the pods of kola.⁵ Just as he had cut it down, the owner of the kola came along, and he tried to catch Qrunmila as a thief; but while they were wrestling with each other, and Qrunmila was trying to run away, the knife that he held cut Qrunmila on the palm of his hand, and he escaped. After Qrunmila had run away, the owner of the kola came home from the farm. He went to the king of Ika and told him that someone had stolen his kola, but that when he tried to catch him, he had run away; therefore, the king should please summon the people of the town, including both the foreigners and the townspeople, because the thief was somewhere in town.

When Qrunmila heard about this, he was frightened, and he again consulted the diviners. They told him that he should make the sacrifice

5. Note that Qrunmila, who was told to sacrifice a gbaguda knife in its sheath and fallen kola lest he be caught in the act of stealing, gets into trouble when cutting kola from the tree (before it was ripe enough to fall) with a gbaguda knife that had a sheath.

ti ko ru ki on to lq şugbõn o ni lati ru ebõ na ni
 that not offer before he equal go but he be in:order:to offer sacrifice the at
 ilõ-po meji-meji; Qrunmila si ru ebõ na gẽgẽ-bi awõn babalawo
 twist-turn two-two; Qrunmila and offer sacrifice the just-as those diviner
 ti sq fun; n(i)-igba-ti o ru ebõ tan, nwõn ni ki o
 have speak for (him); at-time-that he offer sacrifice finish, they say should he
 lq fi qbẽ gbaguda na gun idi Eşu o si şe bẽ.
 go take knife gbaguda the stab base (of) Eshu he and do so.

Ki ilẽ to mõ, Eşu ti mu qbẽ o si ti fi la
 Before ground equal clear, Eshu have take knife he and have take (it) cut
 õwõ gbgõbo awõn enia ti o wa ni ilu ati õyun inu ati
 hand (of) all those people that they exist at town and pregnancy (of) belly and
 aşẽ idi; n(i)-igba-ti ilẽ mõ, ti gbgõbo ilu pe,
 menstruation (of) waist; at-time-that ground clear, that all town assemble,
 qba Ika sq fun wõn pe õkunrin kan ji obi ka, o-l(i)-obi
 king (of) Ika speak for them that man one steal kola pluck, one:who-has-kola
 si ni on mõ nitori-ti qbẽ bu oluwarẽ ni õwõ, qba si
 and say he know (him) because-that knife cut person:in:question at hand, king and
 ni ki o ma wa oluwarẽ na li arin nwõn, bi o
 say should he (continuative) seek person:in:question the at middle (of) them, as he
 si ti nrin arin awõn enia ka, o ri Qrunmila ni arin
 and have walking middle (of) those people go:around, he see Qrunmila at middle
 wõn o si tõ-(i)ka-si pe õkunrin na ni-(e)yi; n(i)-igba-ti Qrun-
 their he and point-finger-to (him) that man the be-this; at-time-that Qrun-
 mila gbõ bayi, o bere pe kin-ni o şe mõ on? O ni nitori-ti
 mila hear thus, he ask that what-be it make know him? He say because-that
 qbẽ kq q l(i)-õwõ ni. Qrunmila ni njẽ ki gbgõbo enia ki
 knife cut him at-hand be (it). Qrunmila say well:then should all people should
 o ma la õwõ wõn ati qba ati o-l(i)-obi pẽlu;
 they (continuative) open hand their and king and one:who-has-kola together:with
 n(i)-igba-ti gbgõbo wõn la õwõ wõn, ila wa ni õwõ gbgõbo
 (them); at-time-that all (of) them open hand their, cut exist at hand (of) all
 wõn pata-pata.
 them completely-completely.

N(i)-igba-ti o-l(i)-obi ri eyi, şru ba, Qrunmila si bẽrẽ
 At-time-that one:who-have-kola see this, fear meet (him), Qrunmila and begin
 si sq-(ẽ)kun pe nwõn d(a)-ole mõ on nwõn si pu-(i)rõ mõ on; n(i)-
 to shed-tears that they cause-thief against him they and tell-lie against him; at-
 igba-ti Qrunmila nsõ-(ẽ)kun Eşu sq fun qba Ika pe Qrunmila ko
 time-that Qrunmila shedding-tears Eshu speak for king (of) Ika that Qrunmila not
 ma gbõdõ sq-(ẽ)kun, nitori-na ki o tete ya-(a)ra
 (continuative) must shed-tears, because-the should he quickly be:quick-body

that he had not made before he left home; but that this time he must make it two-fold. Qrunmila made the sacrifice just as the diviners had told him. When he had finished, they said that he should stick the gbaguda knife⁶ into the base of Eshu; and he did so.

Before daybreak Eshu had taken the knife⁷ and with it cut the hands of all the people who were in the town, including even the unborn embryos and the children still unconceived.⁸ When dawn came and all the people of the town had assembled, the King of Ika told them that a man had been stealing kola; and that the owner of the kola said he would recognize him because his hand had been cut by a knife. The king told the owner of the kola to look for the thief among the people who were gathered there. As he walked about through the people, he saw Qrunmila among them and pointed his finger at him, saying, "This is the man." When Qrunmila heard this, he asked how the owner of the kola could identify him. He answered that he could identify him because the knife had cut his hand. Qrunmila said, "Well then, let everyone open his hands, including the king and the owner of the owner of the kola as well." When they opened their hands, there were scars on the hands of each and every one of them.⁹

When the owner of the kola saw this, he was frightened,¹⁰ and Qrunmila began to cry that they had accused him of being a thief and had been telling lies about him. While Qrunmila was weeping, Eshu told the King of Ika that he must not let Qrunmila weep; therefore, he should hasten

6. There is an inconsistency here. Since the sacrifice was doubled by the diviners because of the postponement, there should be two gbaguda knives; but only one is mentioned.

7. The knife which Qrunmila sacrificed is thus instrumental in extricating him from his difficulties.

8. To ensure that all the people to be born in the future will have lines on their palms. Note the reference in the text to the Yoruba belief that the menstrual fluid develops into the embryo.

9. This verse thus explains how people came to have lines on the palms of their hands.

10. Because he could be charged with having accused someone falsely.

ma bẹ; gbogbo ilu bẹ Qrunmila titi şugbõn ko fẹ
 (continuative) request (him); all town request Qrunmila until, but not want
 gbq, n(i)-igba-na ni nwõn bere l(i)-õwõ Qrunmila pe kin-ni yio
 hear; at-time-the be they ask at-hand (of) Qrunmila that what-be (he) will
 gba? Qrunmila ni igba-(o)hun-(i)gba-(o)hun ati õmõ-(õ)kunrin męwa ati
 accept? Qrunmila say 200-thing-200-thing and child-man ten and
 õmõ-(o)binrin męwa ni on yio gba l(i)-õwõ wõn, õba Ika si ko gbo-
 child-woman ten be he will accept at-hand their; king (of) Ika and gather all
 gbo nwõn fun. N(i)-igba-ti o gba wõn tan ti o ko wõn
 them give (him). At-time-that he accept them finish that he gather them
 de ile ni o ba bęřę si jo ti o nyõ o si nkõ-(o)rin
 arrive house be he should begin to dance that he rejoicing he and singing-song
 pe:
 that:

O şoko; bani!
 "Oh shoko." "Bani!"

Ojumõ a m(õ)-awo rire o!
 "Dawn will clear-secret good, oh!"

Ojumõ a m(õ)-awo rire,
 "Dawn will clear-secret good;

A-ji-bõ-wa-ba l(i)-a ba-(i)la l(i)-õwõ o!
 "To-awake-come-come-meet be-we meet-cut at-hand, oh!"

Ojumõ a m(õ)-awo rire.
 "Dawn will clear-secret good."

OGBE - (I)KA - 2

Eşin gb(e)-ori ga l(i)-ogun a da f(un)-Awo-ş-a-
 "Horse carry-head be:high at-war" (be) who cast for-Secret-pick:up:one:by:

(i)le-ka õmõ Qrunmila ti o nro-(o)ko ti o nş(e)-
 one-house-go:around, child (of) Qrunmila that he hoeing-farm, that he making-
 õdę ti o si nşę owo qja tita.
 hunter that he and making transaction (of) goods to:sell.

Ifa ni ęni-kan wa ti o ję-pe bi o ba na-(õ)wõ le işę
 Ifa say person-one exist that he eat-that if he should stretch-hand upon work
 kan, Ifa ko nję-ki işę na ni oju; Ifa nba oluwarę ja,
 one, Ifa not consenting-that work the have eye; Ifa joining person:in:question fight,
 nitori-na ki o lq bõ Ifa na ki o tğ-(o)ju ikin kan
 because-the should he go sacrifice:to Ifa the, should he care:for-eye (of) ikin one
 pęlu; Ifa ni gbogbo ohun ti e-l(i)-eyi ba nfi õwõ
 together:with (it); Ifa say all things that one:who-be-this should putting hand

to beg him to stop. All the townspeople begged and begged him to stop, but he would not listen. Then they asked Qrunmila what he would take to forget what had happened. Qrunmila said he would take two hundred of every kind of goods¹¹ from them, and in addition ten boys and ten girls. The King of Ika gathered all these things together and gave them to Qrunmila.¹² When he had received them all, and had carried them home, he began to dance, rejoicing and singing:

"Ooooooh shoko." "Bani."

"The dawn will break good for the diviner, oh!

"The dawn will break good for the diviner;

"When we wake up and come to find something, we find scars on the hand, oh!

"The dawn will break good for the diviner."

11. Cf. n. 7, verse 1-10.

12. Cf. the similar tale recorded by Frobenius (1926: 287-288) in which Tortoise, who replaces Qrunmila, is caught and killed.

"A horse carries his head high in battle" was the one who cast Ifa for "Diviner chooses his houses carefully," the child of Qrunmila, when he was farming, hunting, and trading in merchandise.

Ifa says there is someone whom, when he stretches his hands to do something,¹ Ifa does not allow to see his work come to a successful conclusion. Ifa is fighting with this person, therefore he should sacrifice to the Ifa and also take care of a set of palm nuts. Ifa says that he will spoil everything that this person puts his hand

1. That is, when he tries to do anything. Cf. verse 4-4.

le ni on yio ma ba jẹ on yio si ma ja okun
 upon be he will (continuative) spoil (it) (1), he will and (continuative) cut rope
 di l(i)-oju; afi bi e-l(i)-eyi ba tọ-(o)ju Ifa na n(i)-igba-
 close at-eye; unless if one:who-be-this should care:for-eye (of) Ifa the, at-time-
 na ni ọran rẹ yio to ma yan ori; n(i)-igba-ti gbogbo awọn
 the be affair his will be:in:order (continuative) get head; at-time-that all those
 ọmọ ti a bi l(i)-oju rẹ ba ku tan ni Ifa yio to ma
 child that they bear at-eye his should die finish be Ifa will equal (continuative)
 gbe iwa rẹ gun bi o ba le tọ-(o)ju Ifa na ki
 take destiny his be:orderly if he should be:able care:for-eye (of) Ifa the should
 o ma bọ.
 he (continuative) sacrifice:to (it).

1. Ba . . . jẹ means "spoil."

OGBE - (I)KA - 3

Ogbe k(i)-a-re-(i)le ọmọ ọṣin ọmọ ọrun, ọmọ O-
 "Ogbe that-we-go-house," child (of) king, child (of) altar; child (of) "One:who-
 l(i)-Ogun rẹrẹ alede a da fun Ọrunmila n(i)-ọjọ ti o
 has-God:of:iron low (of) outside" (be) who cast for Ọrunmila at-day that he
 nre-(i)le Ijero Ọlọmọ Ọfẹ. Ifa ni ẹni-kan nfe lẹ si idalẹ
 going-house (of) Ijero (of) Ọlọmọ Ọfẹ. Ifa say person-one wanting go to distance
 kan n(i)-ibẹ ni Ọ-l(i)-ọrun ma fi alubarika rẹ si; yio
 one, at-there be One:who-has-sky (continuative) take property his to (him); will
 si di ọba le wọn l(i)-ọwọ; t(i)-ẹru t(i)-ọmọ ilu
 and become king upon them at-hand; that-(of)-slave that-(of)-child (of) town
 na bi yio ma fi ori ba-(i)lẹ fun ti nwon yio si fi
 the be will (continuative) take head touch-ground for (him) that they will and take
 ori s(i)-abẹ rẹ; şugbọn ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ẹiyẹ-(i)le mẹrin
 head to-bottom his; but should he offer-sacrifice (of) bird-(of)-house four
 ati ẹgbarin.
 and 8000 (cowries).

QYẸKU OGBE¹ - 1

Qdẹ ş(i)-apo yọ-(o)ro, arọnimọja tu apo yọ ogun,
 "Hunter open-pouch pull:out-poison; Arọnimọja loosen pouch pull:out medicine;
 agbẹ wa ibi rirọ-rirọ kọ işu si a da fun Oluorogbo ti işe
 farmer seek place soft-soft hoe yam to" (be) who cast for Oluorogbo that make
 i-kọ aja-l(i)-aiye, a lu-(i)kin fun Oluşonşo ti işe i-kọ
 to-hang (of) king-at-earth, who beat-ikin for Olushonsho that make to-hang (of)

to; he will break the string and clog up the beads² unless this person takes care of the Ifa. If he does so, then his affairs will be set in order and will reach a successful conclusion. After all the children born to him have died, Ifa will set his destiny in order, if he is able to take care of the Ifa and to sacrifice to it.

2. A metaphor for spoiling everything, based on the way in which beads are spoiled when their string breaks and sticks in the openings so that they cannot be restrung, or a pipe is spoiled when a match breaks in cleaning it, clogging up the hole so that it cannot be smoked. Cf. n. 4, verse 244-1.

14 - 3

"Ogbe that we go home,"¹ King's child, Altar's child, the child of "He worships the God of Iron beneath a low, wide-spreading tree" was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila on the day that he was going home to Qlòmò Qfẹ ward in the town of Ijero.² Ifa says someone wants to go to a distant place; at that place the Sky God will give him many possessions and he will be king over the people there. Both the slaves and the townspeople will prostrate themselves before him and bow down before him. But he should sacrifice four pigeons and two shillings.³

1. It is possible that this is an alternative name for the figure Ogbe-(I)ka. Note that it is a pun on the name of this figure, and also that it implies that the client, like Qrunmila, is about to go home.

2. Informants were not certain of the meaning of either Qlòmò Qfẹ or Ijero, but pointed out that the former is the name of a ward in the town of Ilesha, about twenty miles away. Ijero is a town east of Ilesha.

3. Since cowries are counted by the two thousand, there are four units of cowries as well as four pigeons.

17 - 1

"The hunter opens his pouch and takes out poison;¹ Arq̄nimoja loosens his pouch and takes out medicine;² the farmer seeks a soft piece of ground in which to plant his yams" was the one who cast Ifa for Oluorogbo, the apprentice³ of "King on earth"⁴ and who beat palm nuts for Olushonsho, the apprentice of

1. Oro (poison) is used by hunters, both as an ingredient in charms and on the tips of arrows.

2. Arq̄nimoja (or Arq̄ni) is a spirit living in the forest; he frequently abducts humans and either kills them or sends them back with a vast knowledge of charms and medicines. It is to this that the phrase refers. Cf. Farrow (1926: 65).

3. An apprentice carries his master's bag and runs errands for him. Cf. n. 4, verse 6-1.

4. Oluorogbo is a title of Orisha Alashẹ, one of the white deities. Aja is said to be a contraction of ọ-1(i)-ọja (one:who-has-market), the "owner of the market," and to refer to the ruler of a town; and some informants identify the "King on earth" with such rulers as the Qni of Ifẹ and the Alafin of Qyọ. However

aja-l(i)-qrun, nwon ni bi o ba da ki aiye bajẹ, Oluorogbo a tun
king-at-sky, they say if it should cause that earth spoil, Oluorogbo will repair

aiye ẹ, bi o ba da ki qrun bajẹ Oluşonşo a tun qrun ẹ,
earth (2), if it should cause that sky spoil, Olushonsho will repair sky (2);

Oluşonşo ni orukọ ti a pe Qramifẹ.
Olushonsho be name that we call Qramfẹ.

Ifa ni Orişa yio tun aiye ẹni ẹ ni qran ti a da Ifa si
Ifa say Orisha will repair earth (of) person (2) at affair that he cast Ifa to

yi. Eku męrin, ẹja męrin, igbin męrin ni ẹbọ; a-(yi)o ru-(ẹ)bọ
this. Rat four, fish four, snail four be sacrifice; we-will offer-sacrifice

tan a-(yi)o lọ di ibo fun Orişa.
finish; we-will go tie covered for Orisha.

1. This figure is commonly known as Qyẹku-l(u)-Ogbe, meaning Qyẹku-
against-Ogbe. Cf. n. 1, verse 17-3.

2. Tun . . . ẹ means "repair."

QYẸKU OGBE - 2

Aşedere awo agbe a da fun agbe ti o nlọ gbe Olukori
"Ashedere secret (of) Agbe" (be) who cast for Agbe that he going take Olukori
ni iyawo, o ni bi eji nşu fẹrẹ bi ojo nku giri o ni on ko
at junior:wife; he say if rain darkening 'fẹrẹ' if rain sounding 'giri' he say he not
ni ẹ(e)-ai-gbe Olukori aya on de ile koko.
be make-not-take Olukori wife his arrive house entirely.

Ifa ni aya on kan wa bi a ko ba mu fun on aya na yio
Ifa say wife his one exist, if we not should take (her) give him, wife the will
ku. Ayebọ adiẹ meji, eku meji, ẹja meji, ati ẹgbaji ni ẹbọ;
die. Hen chicken two, rat two, fish two, and 4000 (cowries) be sacrifice;
n(i)-igba-ti a ba ru-(ẹ)bọ tan a-(yi)o lọ mu obinrin na fun
at-time-that we should offer-sacrifice finish, we-will go take woman the give
babalawo ti ibo ba mu pe ki a mu obinrin na fun.
diviner that ibo should take (him) that should we take woman the give (him).

"King in the sky."⁵ They said that if it should happen that the earth should spoil, Oluorogbo will set it right again; if it should happen that heaven should spoil, Olushonsho will set it right again. Olushonsho is the name that we call Qramfẹ.

Ifa says that a deity⁶ will set the world of this person right again in the matter for which he cast this figure. Four rats, four fish, and four snails is the sacrifice. We will finish making this sacrifice; then we will carry a covered offering⁷ to this deity.

4. (Cont.) here it seems to refer to a deity, the counterpart of the Sky God, who is ruler over the earth; but no details concerning such a deity could be obtained. His association with Orisha Alashe makes it unlikely that the reference is to Ogboni, the Earth God and son of Odua.

5. Olushonsho, as this verse explains, is a title of Qramfẹ (or Qramifẹ), a God of Thunder and the Ifẹ counterpart of Shango. His name is said to mean Qrahas-Ifẹ [Qra-n(i)-Ifẹ] or "Qra owns the town of Ifẹ. "The King in the sky" was interpreted as being Q-1(i)-ṛun, the Sky God. Although some informants equate Qramfẹ with the Sky God, he is specifically described here as his messenger or apprentice.

6. Orisha does not seem to refer to Orishala here, but rather to one of his followers, Orisha Alashẹ, who is mentioned in this verse by his title Oluorogbo.

7. An ibo here is a covered offering, usually of little monetary value (cold water, kola nuts, etc.) which is carried to the deity either enclosed in a calabash with a lid (such as igbademu), or wrapped in a bag or leaf.

17 - 2

"Ashedere," the diviner of the Agbe bird,¹ was the one who cast Ifa for the Agbe bird when he was going to take Olukori as his wife. He said that the storm clouds might grow dark "fẹrẹ," and the rain might beat down "giri,"² but he still would not fail to bring home his wife.

Ifa says that this is his wife,³ if we do not give this woman to him, she will die. Two hens, two rats, two fish, and one shilling is the sacrifice.⁴ When we have completed the sacrifice, we will give the woman to a diviner who is indicated through the use of specific alternatives⁵ as the one to whom the woman should be given.

1. Agbe is identified as "a kind of woodcock" in the CMS Dictionary, as a cockatoo by Bowen (1858), and as "the bird Blue Touraco Musophagidae, i.e. Cuckoo Family" by Abraham (1958).

2. Giri represents the sound made by rain falling heavily; fẹrẹ describes the way in which rain clouds gather.

3. That is, a "wife of Ifa." See n. 5, verse 3-4.

4. Since cowries are counted by the two thousand, there are two units of cowries, as there are two hens, rats, and fish.

5. See Chapter V.

QYẸKU OGBE - 3

Qyẹku-l(u)-ogbe Qyẹku-l(u)-ogbe a da fun ọmọ ti ko
 "Qyẹku-against-Ogbe, Qyẹku-against-Ogbe" (be) who cast for "Child that not
 ku ti o nya l(i)-aye; nwọn ni ibi ti-rẹ ni a-(yi)o fi agba
 die that he turning at-alive"; they say if (not) that-(of)-his be we-will take elder
 dida ti si, nwọn ni aguntan kan ati ẹgbawa ni ẹbọ. Q-
 caused lean to, they say ewe one and 20,000 (cowries) be sacrifice. "One:who-
 l(i)-ọmọ o fi ai-ku ya l(i)-aye ni orukọ ti a pe ọna. Ifa ni ki
 be-child he take not-die turn at-alive" be name that we call road. Ifa say should
 ẹni-kan ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ba le di agba.
 person-one offer-sacrifice that he should be:able become elder.

QYẸKU OGBE - 4

Ọpa irin ba-(i)lẹ ha nana a da fun Araba ti a nlọ
 "Staff (of) iron strike-ground 'ha nana'" (be) who cast for Araba that they going
 fi jẹ oye oju-(i)le; nwọn ni iṣe ni a-(yi)o ma
 take (him) eat title (of) eye-(of)-house; they say make be we-will (continuative)
 pe sin. Ifa ni ki ẹni-kan ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori
 assemble serve (him). Ifa say should person-one offer-sacrifice because (of)
 oye ti a nṣe ni idile rẹ; o ni ẹni-kan ti iṣe ọmọ oye
 title that they eating at lineage his; he say person-one that make child (of) title
 yio jẹ oye na. Agbo kan, ibo-(a)ra aṣọ fun-fun kan, ati ẹgbajọ
 will eat title the. Ram one, cover-body cloth be:white-be:white one, and 16,000
 ni ẹbọ.
 (cowries) be sacrifice.

QYẸKU MEJI¹ - 1

Agada a b(i)-aiya koto a da fun (Q)lasumogbe ti
 "Wooden:sword it bear-chest (of) hole" (be) who cast for Qlasumogbe that
 o nf(i)-ẹkun oju ṣe irahun ọmọ. Nwọn ni ewurẹ kan, iru
 she taking-tears (of) eye make moaning (of) child. They say she:goat one, tail
 ẹṣin, aṣọ kijipa itẹ-(i)lẹ-(i)di rẹ, ati ejielogun.
 (of) horse, cloth homespun spread:on-ground-(of)-waist her, and 44,000 (cowries).

1. Also known as Eji Qyẹ.

17 - 3

"Qyęku next to Ogbe, Qyęku next to Ogbe"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for "The child that does not die but returns to life."² They said no one would be as old as he. They said one ewe and five shillings is the sacrifice. "The child who does not die but returns to life" is the name of Road.³ Ifa says someone should make a sacrifice that he may be able to grow old.

-
1. Qyęku-l(u)-Ogbe is a commonly used alternative name for Qyęku Ogbe.
 2. Is reincarnated in another child. Cf. Bascom (1960).
 3. This verse thus explains why a road "lives" for such a long time, and why it is older than human beings. Road is identified as the character for whom the precedent divination was made, and it is implied that he made the sacrifice.

17 - 4

"An iron staff strikes the ground 'ha nana'"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Araba² when he was going to take a title belonging to his house. They said we must assemble to serve him. Ifa says someone should make a sacrifice because of a title that is to be taken in his lineage; he says that someone who is descended from the chief will be made chief. One ram, one white cloth to cover the body, and four shillings is the sacrifice.

-
1. The sound made by an iron staff, vibrating after its end has been struck against the ground. Cf. n. 5, verse 19-1.
 2. The title of the chief priest of Ifa and highest ranking diviner.

18 - 1

"Toy swords have hollow chests"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Qlasumogbe when she was weeping and moaning because she had no child. They said she should sacrifice one she-goat, the tail of a horse, her homespun² underclothing, and eleven shillings.

-
1. Agada is a toy wooden sword made for children. It is shaped like a short cutlass, and has a groove running along the length of the blade. It is to this groove that the "hollow chest" refers.
 2. A type of cloth made locally of coarse, unevenly spun cotton thread, which in Lagos is looked down upon as "back-woods" or "up-country cloth," așo oke (cloth of the hill).

(Q)lasumogbe gbọ ẹbọ o ru-(ẹ)bọ. Nwọn ni yio bi ọmọ-
Qlasumogbe hear sacrifice she offer-sacrifice. They say will bear child-

(ọ)kunrin kan ati pe ni oju rẹ ni ọmọ na yio ẹ jẹ oye. Ifa ni obinrin
man one and that at eye her be child the will make eat title. Ifa say woman

kan ni-(e)yi ti o nwa ọmọ bi o ba le ru-(ẹ)bọ yio bi
one be-this that she seeking child, if she should be:able offer-sacrifice will bear

ọmọ-(ọ)kunrin kan, ni oju obinrin na ni ọmọ na yio ẹ jẹ oye kan.
child-man one, at eye (of) woman the be child the will make eat title one.

N(i)-igba-ti (Q)lasumogbe nwa ọmọ ti ko ri o tọ

At-time-that Qlasumogbe seeking child that (she) not see (it), she approach

awọn babalawo lọ nwọn sọ fun yio bi ọmọ ẹgbọn ki o ru-
those diviner go; they speak for (her) will bear child but should she offer-

(ẹ)bọ ati-pẹlu pe ni oju rẹ ni ọmọ na yio ẹ jẹ oye;
sacrifice to-together:with (this) that at eye hers be child the will make eat title;

ko l(i)-ọjọ l(i)-oṣu (Q)lasumogbe l(i)-oyun o si bi ọmọ-
not at-day (not) at-month Qlasumogbe have-pregnancy she and bear child-

(ọ)kunrin kan; n(i)-igba-ti o d(i)-agba nwọn si fi jẹ oye
man one; at-time-that he become-elder they and take (him) eat title (of)

Q-l(i)-Qsara; ni ọjọ ti o nlọ gb(a)-oye, ojo bẹrẹ si rọ, o fẹ
One:who-has-Qsara; at day that he going accept-title, rain begin to fall, he want

ya ki iya rẹ ẹgbọn ojo ko jẹ-ki o ya o si bẹrẹ si rọ o
turn greet mother his but rain not consent-that he turn, it and begin to fall it

si nku giri o si bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
and sounding 'giri,' he and begin to sing-song that:

Qlasumogbe mẹ mọ le ya,
"Qlasumogbe I not be:able turn;

A-gbe-(i)ji mọ-(ọ)ba ojo de.
"One:who-dwell:at-thunderstorm" know-king, rain arrive."

Lati ọjọ na ni awọn ara Mọrẹ ti ma nkọ-(o)rin yi n(i)-
From day the be those people (of) Mọrẹ have (continuative) singing-song this at-

igba-ti nwọn ba lọ di agbọn ti nwọn ba si njo.
time-that they should go tie coconut that they should and dancing.

QYẸKU MEJI - 2

Efi ni-(i)yi ina, imọnamọna ni-(i)yi ojo, aṣọ nla ni-(i)yi
"Smoke be-glorify (of) fire; lightning be-glorify (of) rain; cloth big be-glorify

Egun a da fun ọfafa ti iṣe ọmọ ọ-l(i)-ọla
(of) Egungun" (be) who cast for Tree-bear that make child (of) One:who-has-wealth

Qlasumogbe listened and she made the sacrifice. They said she would bear a son and that she would live to see her child take a title. Ifa says that this is a woman who is seeking children; if she is able to make a sacrifice, she will bear a son. She will live to see her child take a title.

When Qlasumogbe was seeking children and could not find any, she consulted the diviners. They told her that she would give birth to a child, but that she should make a second sacrifice so that she might also live to see her child take a title. Soon afterward Qlasumogbe became pregnant and gave birth to a boy. When he grew up, he was made the chief priest of Qsara.³ On the day that he was going to receive his title, rain began to fall. He wanted to stop to greet his mother,⁴ but the rain would not let him. The rain began to fall and to beat down "giri,"⁵ and he began to sing:

"Qlasumogbe, I cannot stop to see you;

"He lives in the rain' knows the king, rain comes."⁶

From that day on, the people of M̄r̄ę ward have sung this song whenever they "tie the coconut"⁷ and dance.

3. A deity. See n. 4, verse 6-5.

4. When a chief or priest is installed, he goes about town accompanied by his friends and followers, visiting and greeting his relatives and the town officials.

5. The sound made by rain falling heavily. Cf. n. 2, verse 17-2.

6. Informants, with considerable uncertainty, interpreted this as meaning that someone by this name saw the king for the first time when it was raining.

7. During the Coconut Festival (̄dun agb̄n), which is performed by the people of M̄r̄ę ward in the city of If̄ę in honor of the deities Qsara and Ql̄osh̄ę (cf. verses 6-2, 6-5, 6-6), the dancers tie to their ankles rattles made of pebbles enclosed in dried coconut leaves. This verse explains the origin of one of the songs used in this festival.

18 - 2

"Smoke is the glory of fire;¹ lightning is the glory of rain; a big cloth is the glory of Egungun"² was the one who cast Ifa for Tree Bear,³ the child of "One who has had wealth

1. In the same sense that we speak of hair as a woman's crowning glory, but also with the meaning "Where there's smoke there's fire."

2. This refers, of course, to the costumes beneath which the Egungun dancers conceal their bodies. Cf. n. 6, verse 7-5.

3. The ̄fafa or ̄wawa (Tree Hyrax) is an herbivorous animal that lives in trees. It is said to eat the leaves of the trees, but only those leaves which do not have holes. Its call, "wa wa wa wa," can be clearly heard at night.

kan igba owurọ ti a ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ojojo, obukọ
one time (of) morning that they say should he offer-sacrifice (of) sickness, he;goat

kan, ẹgbafa, ati aṣọ dudu kan.
one, 12,000 (cowries), and cloth black one.

N(i)-igba-ti ọfafa tọ awọn babalawo lọ ti nwọn si sọ fun
At-time-that Tree:bear approach those diviner go that they and speak for
pe ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori ai-san nla kan, ọfafa
(him) that should he offer-sacrifice because (of) not-be:better big one, Tree:bear
gbọ ẹbọ ko si ru-(ẹ)bọ na ṣugbọn ko pẹ l(i)-ḡhin na ai-
hear sacrifice not and offer-sacrifice the; but not be:long at-back the not-
san bẹrẹ si ẹ ọfafa o fẹrẹ ku; n(i)-igba-na ni o tun lọ
be:better begin to make Tree:bear, he almost die; at-time-the be he then approach
awọn babalawo lọ nwọn si tun sọ fun pe a fi bi o ba le
those diviner go they and then speak for (him) that unless if he should be:able
ẹ ẹbọ ti awọn ti sọ fun pe ki o ẹ ni ilọ-
make sacrifice that they have speak for (him) that should he make (it) at twist-
po meji-meji. Ọfafa ẹẹẹ wa ru-(ẹ)bọ yi, nwọn si sọ fun
turn two-two. Tree:bear just come offer-sacrifice this, they and speak for
pe bi ai-san na ti ẹ to yi, nwọn ni yio ni ohun ati-
(him) that as not-be:better the have make equal this, they say will have voice and-
pe ko si igi ti yio fi ọwọ rẹ le ti ko ni le-gun de ori.
that not be tree that will put hand his upon that not be be:able-climb arrive head.
Ifa ni ẹni-kan gbajumọ ni-(e)yi, ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ti ai-
Ifa say person-one gentleman be-this, should he offer-sacrifice that not-
san ma ba ẹ to-bẹ ti yio fi ta ile ati ọna rẹ tan
be:better not should make equal-so that will take sell house and road his finish
ki ai-san na to san ati-pe ki ai-san na ma ba
before not-be:better the equal be:better and-that that not-be:better the not should
ti si ẹhin odi.
push (him) to back (of) town:wall.

QYẸKU MEJI - 3

O-l(i)-owo wi-(ẹ)jọ omi ile Alake, O-l(i)-
"One:who-has-cowries speak-case water (of) house (of) Alake, One:who-has-
owo ko jẹ-(e)bi omi ọna Ijero, Ko si omi kan ti a ipa
cowries not eat-guilt water (of) road (of) Ijero, Not be water one that we kill
otoṣi si omi Ijero, omi Ojugbe a da fun Awo-
destitute:person to water (of) Ijero, water (of) Ojugbe" (be) who cast for Secret-
bọ ọmọ ọba l(i)-Ẹyọ a j(ẹ)-ori l(i)-oko iṣẹ igbanraye;
come child (of) king at-Qyọ who eat-shea:butter at-farm (of) poverty long:ago;

since the morning of his youth." They said he should make a sacrifice against sickness, of one he-goat, three shillings, and one black cloth.

When Tree Bear consulted the diviners and they told him that he should sacrifice because of a serious illness, Tree Bear heard the sacrifice, but did not make it. Not long afterward, Tree Bear fell ill; he nearly died. Then he again consulted the diviners, and they told him that things would be bad unless he could make the sacrifice they had prescribed for him, and that now he must make it two-fold. Tree Bear made the sacrifice as soon as he could. They told him that since his illness had been so great, he would make himself heard, and that there would be no tree within his reach that he would not be able to climb to the very top.⁴

Ifa says that this is a gentleman.⁵ He should make a sacrifice lest he become so ill that his house and home must be sold⁶ before the illness is cured, and lest the illness drive him out of town.⁷

4. This verse explains why the tree bear can be heard so clearly at night, and why it can climb so well. The idiom "to have a voice" means also "to be listened to" and thus implies that the client will become a person whose opinions are respected.

5. A person of moderate means, but good reputation.

6. To pay the doctor's fees. "House and road" is an idiom for all the property that one owns.

7. That is, so that he may not contract a contagious disease like leprosy, because of which he would have to be isolated, and leave town.

18 - 3

"'The rich man states his case in court,' water near the house of the Alake;¹ 'The rich man is not judged guilty,' water on the road to Ijero;² 'There is no water in which we kill a poor man,'³ water of Ijero, water of Ojugbe" was the one who cast Ifa for "Diviner comes," the child of the King of Oyo, the one who ate shea butter in the farm because of poverty long, long ago.

1. The king of Abẹokuta.

2. A town in Ekiti, east of Ifẹ.

3. The names of these three bodies of water, taken together, have the following meaning: A creditor, or the "one who owns the money" is always given a chance to present his side of the case in a trial, and he is never judged guilty in a suit to collect money, since loaning of money is not a crime. However, in spite of the fact that the courts may operate in favor of the rich, a person cannot be condemned to death simply because he is poor and cannot pay his debts.

nwọn ni ni ọdun-ni ni Q-1(i)-ọrun tan ina iwa fun. Eyiẹ-
they say at year-this be One:who-has-sky kindle fire (of) destiny for (him). Bird-
(i)le męrin, ęgbarun, ati ọkoto idi rẹ.
(of)-house four, 10,000 (cowries), and trousers (of) waist his.

N(i)-igba-ti Awo-bọ ti iše ọmọ ọba ode Eyo ọ
At-time-that Secret-come that make child (of) king (of) outside (of) Qyọ make
yi tan ko l(i)-ọjọ ko l(i)-oşu ọba ode Qyọ ku nwọn lọ mu
this finish not at-day not at-month king (of) outside (of) Qyọ die they go take (him)
jẹ ọba l(i)-ode Qyọ. Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti işẹ nşẹ ti
eat king at-outside (of) Qyọ. Ifa say person-one exist that poverty being:poor that
amu si nda. Ifa ni yio si tun pada di o-l(i)-
trouble and driving (him). Ifa say (he) will and then return become one:who-has-
owo ti gbogbo enia yio ma pe sin yio si j(ẹ)-
cowries that all persons will (continuative) assemble serve (him) will and eat-
oye ile baba rẹ.
title (of) house (of) father his.

QYẸKU MEJI - 4

Ọpa gbongbo ni s(i)-(w)aju a-gbọn-(e)nini, atẹlẹ-(ẹ)sẹ mej(i)-(m)ej
"Staff short be (it) move-front it-shake-dew; sole-(of)-foot two-two
a jija-du ọna gborogan-gborogan, apasa a b(i)-ẹnu
they to:fight-compete:for road hard-hard; sword (of loom) it bear-mouth
bọmbọ, a da fun ẹrunlọjọ aşọ a bu fun kẹlẹku. Nwọn ni ki
dull" (be) who cast for 165 cloth who share for Calico. They say should
ẹrunlọjọ aşọ ru-(ẹ)bọ ki kẹlẹku na ru-(ẹ)bọ ki wọn ki
165 cloth offer-sacrifice should Calico also offer-sacrifice that they should
o ma ba ri iku a-jọ-ku Erunlọjọ aşọ ko ru-
they not should see death (of) to-be:together-die. 165 cloth not offer-
(ẹ)bọ şugbọn kẹlẹku ni-(ọ)kan ni o ru-(ẹ)bọ.
sacrifice but Calico at-one be he offer-sacrifice.

Ko l(i)-ọjọ ko l(i)-oşu ni oluwa awọn aşọ nwọn-yi ku, awọn
Not at-day not at-month be master (of) those cloth those-this die, those
ara-(i)le si pe gbogbo wọn pe ki nwọn ma mu-(a)ra
people-(of)-house and call all them that should they (continuative) take-body
lati ba ba o-l(i)-owo wọn lọ si ọrun; nwọn ko gbogbo awọn
to meet join one:who-has-cowries their go to sky; they gather all those
aşọ nwọn-yi ka-(i)lẹ nwọn si mu kẹlẹku na pẹlu wọn
cloth those-this around-ground they and take Calico the together:with them,
şugbọn Eşu da-(o)hun o ni:
but Eshu break-voice he say:

They said that the Sky God would kindle the fire of destiny for him during that year. Four pigeons, two shillings six pence, and the trousers from his waist was the sacrifice.

When "Diviner comes," the child of the King of Qyq, had made this sacrifice, the King of Qyq died soon afterward, and they took "Diviner comes" and made him King of Qyq. Ifa says someone is living in poverty and is being driven here and there by troubles. Ifa says he will return a rich man; everyone will gather to serve him, and he will take a title in the house of his father.

18 - 4

"When it is held in front, even a short staff brushes the dew from the path; the soles of both feet strive hard with one another to win the road;¹ the sword² of the women's loom has a dull edge" was the one who cast Ifa for the 165 kinds of cloths,³ and who shared it⁴ with Calico. They said the 165 kinds of cloths should make a sacrifice, and that Calico should also sacrifice lest they all meet death at the same time. The 165 kinds of cloths did not sacrifice, but Calico alone sacrificed.

Soon afterward the owner of these cloths died, and the people of his house called all the cloths together to get ready to accompany their owner to heaven. They laid out all the cloths on the ground, putting Calico among them. But Eshu said:

1. That is, to get ahead of one another, to compete as in a race.

2. Cf. n. 9, verse 7-5.

3. Many things are spoken of as having 165 varieties. There are said also to be 165 kinds of trees (verses 33-2, 183-1); 165 kinds of animals (166-1, 249-6); 165 kinds of rats (246-4); and 165 kinds of leaves (250-3).

4. This means that the prediction also applies to a person other than the actual client, as where, later in this verse, a prediction is made about the head of the client's lineage. The word "bu" is also used with reference to the sharing of food.

O şoho;
"Oh shoko";

awon enia ni:
those people say:

Bani.
"Bani."

O ni:
He say:

Kęleş ru o,
"Calico offer, oh;

Kęleş tu,
"Calico atone;

A-fin-(o)ju aşş ki iy(un)-orun.
"One:who-decorate-eye (of) cloths not go-sky."

N(i)-igba-ti Eşu wi bayi tan ni awon enia mu kęleşku kuro l(i)-arin
At-time-that Eshu speak thus finish be those people take Calico depart at-middle

awon aşş (e)y(i)-o-ku ti nwon ma fi sin
(of) those cloth this-which-remain that they (continuative) take (them) bury

oku; lati igba-na ni a ko ti gbodọ fi aşş ti o ba ni pupa
corpse; from time-the be we not have must take cloth that it should have red

tabi ti o ba ję aşş pupa sin oku. Ebo: aşş pupa kan, obukọ
or that it should eat cloth red bury corpse. Sacrifice: cloth red one, he:goat

kan, ati ęgbafa.
one, and 12,000 (cowries).

Ifa ni ki ęni-ti o da Ifa yi ki o ru-(ę)bọ ki o
Ifa say should person-that he cast Ifa this should he offer-sacrifice that he

ma ba ri iku a-jọ-ku. Ki (ba)ba-(i)le ile
not should see death to-be:together-die. That father-(of)-house (of) house (of)

e-(l)j-eyi papa na ki o ru-(ę)bọ pęlu ki
one:who-be-this especially the should he offer-sacrifice together:with (him) that

o ma ba ri iku ni odun yi.
he not should see death at year this.

QYĘKU MEJI - 5

Orunmila ni o yio bi yibi-yibi, nwon ni ki Ifa ki
Orunmila say he will bear greatness-greatness; they say should Ifa should

o ma bi yibi-yibi, n(i)-igba-ti o ma bi
he (continuative) bear greatness-greatness; at-time-that he (continuative) bear

o bi Oko.
he bear Farm.

"Oh shoko";⁵

and the people answered:

"Bani."

He said:

"Calico sacrificed, oh;

"Calico propitiated;

"The fashionable cloth⁶ should not be taken to heaven."

When Eshu finished speaking, the people set Calico apart from the other cloths in which the corpse was to be buried. From that time on, we have been forbidden to bury the dead in a red cloth or any cloth which has red in it.⁷ The sacrifice is one red cloth, one he-goat, and three shillings.

Ifa says that the person for whom this figure was cast should make a sacrifice in order that he and his relatives should not meet death at the same time, and especially that the Bale⁸ of this person's house should sacrifice with him, that he should not meet death during this year.

5. Cf. n. 4, verse 1-7.

6. Calico is compared here to humans who are neat, well-dressed, and careful about their appearance; to a man of fashion.

7. This verse thus explains why no cloths that have any red coloring may be used by the Yoruba in burials, but the usual reason given is that if cloth with red in it were used, the deceased would be reborn as a leper.

8. The lineage head; eldest male member of the lineage of the compound.

Qrunmila said he would beget something great; they said Ifa should beget something great; when he begat, he begat Farm.¹

1. In this verse also it is clear that Qrunmila and Ifa are the same person. See also n. 2, verse 1-4.

Qrunmila ni o yio bi yibi-yibi, nwọn ni ki Ifa ki
 Qrunmila say he will bear greatness-greatness; they say should Ifa should
 o ma bi yibi-yibi, n(i)-igba-ti o ma bi
 he (continuative) bear greatness-greatness; at-time-that he (continuative) bear
 o bi Qja.
 he bear Market.

Qrunmila ni o yio bi yibi-yibi, nwọn ni ki Ifa ki
 Qrunmila say he will bear greatness-greatness; they say should Ifa should
 o ma bi yibi-yibi, n(i)-igba-ti o ma bi
 he (continuative) bear greatness-greatness; at-time-that he (continuative) bear
 o bi Ogun.
 he bear War.

Qrunmila ni o yio bi yibi-yibi, nwọn ni ki Ifa ki
 Qrunmila say he will bear greatness-greatness; they say should Ifa should
 o ma bi yibi-yibi, n(i)-igba-ti o ma bi
 he (continuative) bear greatness-greatness; at-time-that he (continuative) bear
 o bi Qna.
 he bear Road.

Qrunmila ni o yio bi yibi-yibi, nwọn ni ki Ifa ki
 Qrunmila say he will bear greatness-greatness; they say should Ifa should
 o ma bi yibi-yibi, n(i)-igba-ti o ma bi
 he (continuative) bear greatness-greatness; at-time-that he (continuative) bear
 o bi Ile n(i)-ik(an)-ghin wọn.
 he bear House at-stand-back (of) them.

L(i)-ghin eyi Qrunmila se awo lo si ile O-l(i)-okun
 At-back (of) this Qrunmila make secret go to house (of) One:who-has-sea
 o si gbe odun merindilogun l(i)-ghun, ki o to de; n(i)-igba-ti
 he and dwell:at year sixteen at-there, before he equal arrive; at-time-that
 o mbọ ile Ogun ni o kọkọ ya ti o de si; Ogun ki baba
 he coming house, War be he first turn that he arrive to (him). War greet father
 re titi o si fun ni onje pupọ n(i)-igba-ti o je ti o mu tan,
 his until, he and give (him) at food much, at-time-that he eat that he drink finish,
 o so fun Ogun omọ re ti o nfe gbọn-(e)sẹ Ogun si so fun
 he speak for War child his that he wanting shake-foot, War and speak for (him)
 pe eni-kan ki gbọn-(e)sẹ nihin; Qrunmila si tun mu-(a)ra o lo si
 that person-one not shake-foot here; Qrunmila and then take-body he go to
 odọ Qja omọ re na b(i)-akan na pelu ni o si
 presence (of) Market child his also; like-one the together:with (him) be he and
 se ti o je ti o mu ti o si bere pe on nfe gbọn-(e)sẹ ti
 do, that he eat that he drink that he and ask that he wanting shake-foot that
 Qja si so fun pe ko le ri aye gbọn-(e)sẹ; o si tun
 Market and speak for (him) that not be:able see chance shake-foot; he and then

Qrunmila said he would beget something great; they said Ifa should beget something great; when he begat, he begat Market.

Qrunmila said he would beget something great; they said Ifa should beget something great; when he begat, he begat War.

Qrunmila said he would beget something great; they said Ifa should beget something great; when he begat, he begat Road.

Qrunmila said he would beget something great; they said Ifa should beget something great; when he begat, he begat House last of all.

After this Qrunmila went to the house of the Sea Goddess to divine, and he lived there sixteen years before he returned. When he was coming home, War was the first one he stopped to visit. War greeted his father at great length, and gave him lots of food. When Qrunmila had finished eating and drinking, he told his child, War, that he wanted to defecate.² War told him that no one could defecate in his house. Qrunmila then got ready and went to visit Market, who also was his child. He did the same things at the house of Market: he ate and drank and then said he wanted to defecate, and Market told him that there was no place to defecate. Then he

2. To "shake your feet" is a Yoruba euphemism for defecation.

lọ si ọdọ Oko bę gęgę ni o si tun ęe, b(i)-akan-na ni o si tun
go to presence (of) Farm, so just be he and then do, like-one-the be he and then
sọ fun pẹlu; o tun lọ s(i)-ọdọ Qna o si
speak for (him) together:with (the others): he then go to-presence (of) Road he and
tun ri bę gęgę fun ni ile Qna, l(i)-ẹhin na ni Qrunmila mu-(a)ra
then see so just for (him) at house (of) Road; at-back the be Qrunmila take-body
o lọ s(i)-ọdọ Ile.
he go to-presence (of) House.

N(i)-igba-ti o de ọdọ rẹ ti Ile ri baba rẹ, o pa ewurę
At-time-that he arrive presence his that House see father his, he kill she:goat
kan, o na si ęe onjẹ pupọ, o gun iyan o si pe awọn orę
one, he also and make food much, he pound pounded:yam he and call those friend
rẹ pe ki nwọn wa ba on ęe ikẹ baba rẹ; n(i)-igba-ti
his that should they come with him make indulgence (of) father his; at-time-that
Qrunmila jẹ ti o mu tan o ni on nfẹ gbọn-(ẹ)sẹ, Ile sa-re, o
Qrunmila eat that he drink finish he say he wanting shake-foot, House run-go, he
şi yara fun baba rẹ o ni iwọ ni o ni ile on ki baba rẹ lọ
open room for father his he say you be who have house his should father his go
gbọn-(ẹ)sẹ si ibi-k(u)-ibi ti o ba wu ni inu yara na.
shake-foot to place-any-place that it should please (him) at belly (of) room the.

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila wọ yara o ti il(e)-ẹkun mọ ori o si gbọn-
At-time-that Qrunmila ente room he push house-door against head he and shake-
(ẹ)sẹ s(i)-inu yara na. N(i)-igba-ti o ja-(o)de o si tun ti
foot to-belly (of) room the. At-time-that he reach-outside he and then push
il(e)-ẹkun. Ko pẹ o tun sọ fun Ile pe on tun nfẹ ęu
house-door. Not be:long he then speak for House that he then wanting defecate
o si tun ęi yara miran fun pe ki o lọ ęu n(i)-inu rẹ.
he and then open room another for (him) that should he go defecate at-belly its.

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila wọ-(i)le o tun ti il(e)-ẹkun mọ ori o tun
At-time-that Qrunmila enter-house he then push house-door against head he then
gbọn-(ẹ)sẹ bi ti akọkọ.
shake-foot like that (of) first.

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila ęu tan o ni ki Ile ki o lọ ęi
At-time-that Qrunmila defecate finish he say should House should he go open
il(e)-ẹkun yara-(e)kini o ni ki o lọ ko imi ti on ęu,
house-door (of) room-first he say should he go gather excrement that he defecate;
n(i)-igba-ti o wọ-(i)le o ba owo o kun inu yara na gigerọrọ,
at-time-that he enter-house he meet cowries it fill belly (of) room the very:high;
n(i)-igba-ti o ęi il(e)-ẹkun iyara-(e)keji o ba orişi-(o)rişi
at-time-that he open house-door (of) room-second he meet different-different
ilẹkẹ; n(i)-igba-na ni Qrunmila wa sọ pe lati oni lọ gbogbo işę ti
bead; at-time-the be Qrunmila come speak that from today go all work that

went to visit Farm, and did likewise; and Farm told him the same thing that the others had. Then he went to visit Road and exactly the same things happened to him at Road's house. Finally Qrunmila got ready and went to visit House.

When he arrived and House saw his father, he killed a she-goat and cooked lots of food; he pounded yams and he told his friends to come and help him entertain his father. When Qrunmila had finished eating and drinking, he said he wanted to defecate. House ran and opened a room for his father. He said, "You are the owner of my house. My father can defecate anywhere that he pleases in this room." When Qrunmila entered the room, he closed the door after him and he defecated in the room. When he came out, he shut the door again. Not long afterwards he told House that he wanted to defecate again, and House opened another room for him, so that he might go to defecate in it. When Qrunmila went in, he again closed the door after him and again he defecated as he had the first time.

When Qrunmila finished defecating, he said that House should go and open the door of the first room. He said House should go and clean up the excrement that he had left there. When he went in, he found that the room was piled high with money. When he opened the door of the second room, he found many different kinds of beads. Then Qrunmila said that from that day henceforth, the profits of everything that

Oko, Qna, Qja ati Ogun ba ẹse, Ile ni ki o ma jẹ
Farm, Road, Market and War should do, House be should he (continuative) eat
ere wọn.
gain their.

Ifa ni alejo kan nbọ ki a tọ-(o)ju rẹ ki ore ati ire
Ifa say visitor one coming should we care:for-eye his that kindness and good-
rẹ ma ba kọja ẹni nitori-ti anfani wa l(i)-ara alejo na.
ness his not should pass person because-that benefit exist at-body (of) visitor the.

QYẸKU MEJI - 6

Biri-biri l(i)-ọkọ da bẹ-na ni ọmọ ar(a)-aiye ẹ
"Turn-turn be-boat cause so-also be children (of) people-(of)-earth do" (be)

a da f(un)-Qna-(I)ṣokun ti iṣe ọmọ ọba l(i)-ode Qyọ.
who cast for-Qna-Ishokun that make child (of) king at-outside (of) Qyọ.

Iku dudu ni k(un)-osun dudu, iku pupa ni k(un)-osu pupa,
"Death black be (it) rub-camwood black; death red be (it) rub-camwood red;

ai-mọ-kun a kun ilẹ-pa ọrun do-do-do, ọrọ bi eyi bi
not-know-rub (be) who rub ground-be:red (of) sky far-far-far, word like this like

eyi a da fun Itu ti iṣ(e)-ọkọ ewurẹ a bu f(un)-agbo
this" (be) who cast for Itu that make-husband (of) She:goat who share for-Ram

ṣagi-ṣagi ti iṣ(e)-ọkọ I-la-(i)yẹfun, a da fun akikọ Qta
solid-solid that make-husband (of) To-lick-flour, who cast for Cock (of) Qta

galaja ti iṣ(e)-ọkọ agbebọ yanran-yanran.
very:tall that make-husband (of) Hen good-good.

Ẹni-ti o ba nṣ(e)-ojo ki o ma m(u)-ohun ṣ(e)-akin,
"Person-that he should making-coward should he not take-voice make-hero;

ẹni-ti o ba nṣ(e)-akin ki o ma m(u)-ohun ṣ(e)-ojo ọba
person-that he should making-hero should he not take-voice make-coward; king

ko jẹ-ki a ṣ(i)-ogun il(u)-obinrin ki n-ba wọn lọ, k(i)-
not consent-that we open-war (of) town-(of)-woman that I-join them go; should-

ẹni huwa gbẹdẹ-gbẹdẹ k(i)-ẹni ku pẹlẹ-pẹlẹ k(i)-ọmọ ẹni
person behave gently-gently that-person die softly-softly, that-child (of) person

le na ọwọ gbọ-gbọ-gbọ le-(ẹ)ni sin a da f(un)-A-
be:able stretch hand long-long-long upon-person bury" (be) who cast for-One:who-

l(i)-Apa-Moru ọmọ a ji ni oj(umọ)-ojumọ f(i)-ẹja ti o ni
has-Apa-Moru, child (of) "One:who awake at dawn-dawn take-fish that it be

nla ru-(ẹ)bo nitori ọmọ.
big offer-sacrifice because (of) child."

Farm, Road, Market, and War should do would be enjoyed by House.³

Ifa says that a visitor is coming; we should take good care of him lest his kindness and goodness pass us by, because the visitor brings something that can benefit us.

3. The verse thus explains why the produce of the farm, the profit of trading in the market and in other towns, and the spoils of war are all brought back to the house to be consumed.

18 - 6

"Unsteady is the boat; so also are human beings"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Qna Ishokun² who was the child of the king of Qyo.

"Black death rubs his body with black camwood;³ red death rubs his body with red camwood; one who doesn't know how, rubs his body with the red earth of the far distant sky;⁴ words like this, like this" was the one who cast Ifa for Itu, the husband of She-goat and who shared it⁵ with Husky Ram, the husband of "The one who licks flour,"⁶ and who cast Ifa for "Very tall cock of the town of Qta," the husband of "Very good⁷ hen."

"One who is a coward should not talk like a hero; one who is a hero should not talk like a coward; the king does not allow us to make war upon a town of women,⁸ that I go with them; one should behave gently so that he may die quietly, and his children be able to come to bury him"⁹ was the one who cast Ifa for the chief of Apa-Moru, the child of "The one who wakes every dawn to sacrifice a big fish because she does not have children."

1. A fickle person who denies tomorrow what he says today is as unreliable and unsteady as a canoe being tossed upon the waves.

2. Translated by the informants as "Road to Igokun," this was later identified as the title of an important chief and a member of the royal family at the town of Qyo. Cf. S. Johnson (1921: 42).

3. According to the informant, "black camwood" means charcoal. However Dalziel (1937: 357-358) gives osun dudu as a name for Pterocarpus erinaceus and osun pupa, "red camwood" (or, better, barwood), for Pterocarpus osun.

4. The meaning of this entire passage is obscure. Neither charcoal nor camwood are used to rub the body of the dead before burial in Ife, though camwood is used by living people to decorate themselves. The red earth and the far distant sky, however, are said to refer to interment after death, and the passage of the soul to heaven. The only meaning that informants could read into this passage is: "Anyone who doesn't know how to behave correctly must die."

5. See n. 4, verse 18-4.

6. "The one who licks flour" is a praise name of a female sheep; "Husky Ram" is that of a male sheep; and Itu, that of a male goat.

7. Yanran-yanran represents the sound made by a brick which has been correctly baked when it is tested by tapping; it means "good" or "up to the required standard."

8. That is, he will not let us attack a town composed only of women, or take the women of our own town as slaves.

9. This means that a person who lives a good life and treats others considerately will die quietly at home; but a person who behaves badly is apt to die in jail or far from home, so that his children cannot bury him.

N(i)-igba-na l(i)-o wa di o-ni-şę-(i)gba ekinni, mo
 "At-time-the be-it come become one:who-be-make-time first; I
 de ode Aro.
 arrive outside (of) Aro.

Mo ni kin-ni nwọn nşe l(i)-ode Aro?
 "I say, what-be they doing at-outside (of) Aro?"

Nwọn ni nwọn nj(ę)-oye titun l(i)-ode Aro ni.
 "They say, they eating-title new at-outside (of) Aro be (it).

Mo ni O-l(i)-oye yio gbo bi Oluyęyę ti gbo,
 "I say, One:who-has-title will grow:old like Oluyęyę have grow:old;

Mo ni O-l(i)-oye yio gbo bi Oluyęyętuyę;
 "I say, One:who-has-title will grow:old like Oluyęyętuyę;

Yio gbo igbo Oluaso ogbogbo iyawo
 "Will grow:old grow:old Oluaso young junior:wife

O ş(e)-aręwa ş(e)-akin,
 "Who make-beauty make-hero,

Ti o fi omo owu şe ilęķę s(i)-oṛun,
 "That she take child (of) hammer make bead to-neck,

Ti omo owu ję ję ję ti o d(i)-oṛkinni.
 "That child (of) hammer eat eat eat that it become-needle.

Ę pęlę, ara ode Apa,
 "You softly, people (of) outside (of) Apa,

Qmo a-f(i)-oj(umọ)-ojumọ bi-(ọ)mọ bi ęiyę,
 "Child (of) one:who-take-dawn-dawn bear-child like bird,

A-l(i)-Apa omo ęja,
 "One:who-has-Apa child (of) fish,

(Q)mọ-(ę)ja-(ọ)mọ-(ę)ja l(i)-a-ipe A-l(i)-Apa,
 "Child-(of)-fish-child-(of)-fish be-we-call One:who-has-Apa,

A-l(i)-Apa omo ęja.
 "One:who-has-Apa, child (of) fish."

Ęja nla kan, ewurę kan, ati agbebọ adię kan ni ębọ.
 Fish big one, she:goat one, and hen chicken one be sacrifice.

Ifa ni e-l(i)-eyi yio bi-(ọ)mọ pupọ.
 Ifa say one:who-be-this will bear-child many.

QYĘKU MEJI - 7

K(i)-ęni ma f(i)-inu han tan f(un)-obinrin, obinrin l(i)-eke,
 "Should-person not take-belly appear spread for-woman; woman be-liar,

obinrin l(i)-o-da-(i)lę, Olojongbodu l(i)-obinrin iku ję,
 woman be-one:who-break-ground; Olojongbodu be-woman (of) death eat;

"Then for the first time I come to the town of Aro.

"I say, What are they doing at Aro?

"They say they are taking a new title at Aro.

"I say, The chief will grow old like Oluyęyę¹⁰ has grown old;

"I say, The chief will grow old like Oluyęyętuyę.

"He will grow as old as Oluaso, the young wife,

"Who was both beautiful and brave,

"Who used blacksmith's hammers¹¹ as beads for her neck,

"And the hammers wore down and down and down until they were as thin as needles.¹²

"Go softly,¹³ people of the town of Apa,

"Child of One who every morning begets children like birds,

"Chief of Apa, child of fish,

"Child of fish, child of fish is what we call the Chief of Apa,

"Chief of Apa, child of fish."

One big fish, one she-goat, and one hen¹⁴ is the sacrifice. Ifa says that this person will bear many children.

10. The names Oluyęyę and Oluyęyętuyę, whose tones are different, have no meaning, but they apparently stand for someone who lived to a ripe old age.

11. The blacksmith's large hammer is known as owu; the smaller one is known as the "child" of owu.

12. That is, Oluaso lived so long that her beads, even though they were made of blacksmith's hammers, almost wore away.

13. This phrase is used as a salutation in much the same way as the English "hello."

14. Note that all these appear in the names of the legendary characters.

"One should not reveal secrets to women, women are liars, women are the ones who break oaths; Olojongbodu is what the wife of Death is called;¹

1. Note that this identification is repeated in the verse.

ọpẹ tẹrẹ eti ẹba odo akunnu yẹ-(o)ri bẹsẹ, oku
 palm:tree slender (of) ear side (of) river fruitful avoid-head at:once, corpse (of)
 iku gbirimu ni ilẹ a da f(un)-Eji Qyẹ ti nlọ yẹ-(i)ku
 death 'gbirimu' at ground" (be) who cast for-Eji Qyẹ that (he) going avoid-death
 l(i)-ori Alayunrẹ.
 at-head (of) Alayunrẹ.

Njẹ ta-ni yẹ-(i)ku oni l(i)-ori awo?
 "Well:then who-be avoid-death today at-head (of) secret?

Kiki iyẹ l(i)-o yẹ-(i)ku oni l(i)-ori awo.
 "Only wood:dust be-who avoid-death today at-head (of) secret."

A-(yi)o fi iyẹ-(i)rosun tẹ Qyẹku Meji s(i)-ori ọpọn
 We-will take wood:dust-(of)-irosun (tree) press Qyẹku Meji to-head (of) tray;
 a-(yi)o ma bu le ori tabi ki a ma fi fọ
 we-will (continuative) share upon head or should we (continuative) take (it) grind
 ẹkọ tutu mu, tabi a-(yi)o mu ewe arọ a-(yi)o lọ a-
 cornstarch:porridge cool drink, or we-will take leaf arọ we-will grind (it); we-
 (yi)o fi tẹ Qyẹku Meji a-(yi)o ma fi mu ẹkọ.
 will take (it) press Qyẹku Meji; we-will (continuative) take (it) drink cornstarch:
 gruel.

Nwọn p(a)-ero pọ, nwọn pe Olojongbodu ti iṣe obinrin
 They kill-thought together, they call Olojongbodu that make woman (of)
 iku, nwọn bere l(i)-ọwọ rẹ pe kin-ni iku jẹ? O ni iku a ma
 death; they ask at-hand hers that what-be death eat? She say death he (continu-
 jẹ eku, ẹja, ati ẹran; nwọn mu eku, ẹja, ati ẹran fun iku n(i)-igba-
 tive) eat rat, fish, and meat; they take rat fish, and meat for death; at-time-
 ti iku jẹ tan t(i)-ọwọ t(i)-ṣṣẹ rẹ nwa-riri, oku
 that death eat finish that-(of)-hand that-(of)-foot his trembling-'riri,' corpse (of)
 iku wa ṣe gbirimu.
 death come make 'gbirimu.'

A-(yi)o fi eku, ẹja, ati ẹran ru-(ẹ)bọ a-(yi)o gbe lọ si idi
 We-will take rat, fish, and meat offer-sacrifice we-will carry (it) go to base

Eṣu.

(of) Eshu.

QYẸKU MEJI - 8

Ina kan-kan ni-(i)waju a-rẹ-(o)yin; orun kan-kan-
 "Fire fierce-fierce at-front (of) one:who-gather-honey; sun fierce-fierce-
 kan ni-(ẹ)ba-(i)di agbẹ; t(i)-a-rẹ-(o)-yin a di
 fierce at-side-(of)-waist (of) farmer; that-(of)-one:who-gather-honey it become

the slender, fruitful palm tree beside a river ducks its head suddenly so that the body² of Death falls to the ground 'gbirimu'"³ was the one who cast Ifa for the Eji Qyẹ⁴ when he was going to avoid Death on the head of Alayunrẹ.

"Well then, who avoids Death today on the head of the diviner?

"Only divining powder avoids Death today on the head of the diviner."

We will mark Qyẹku Meji in the divining powder on the tray; we will put some on the client's head; or we will take some of it, grind it with cornstarch porridge, and drink it.⁵ Or we will take an arọ leaf⁶ and grind it; we will mark Qyẹku Meji in it; we will drink it with cornstarch gruel.⁷

They consulted together. They called Olojongbodu, who was the wife of Death. They asked her what Death ate. She said that Death ate rats, fish, and meat. They gave Death rats, fish, and meat, and when Death had finished eating, his hands and feet began to tremble "riri," and Death's body fell down "gbirimu."⁸

We will sacrifice rats, fish, and meat; we will carry the sacrifice to the base of Eshu.

2. Even when a living person falls down, it is said that his "corpse" (oku) falls.

3. The sound of a body falling to the ground. Cf. n. 2, verse 19-1.

4. Eji Qyẹ is an alternative name for the figure Qyẹku Meji and here it appears as the name of the character. There is an involved pun on these two names for the figure, "he avoids death" [o yẹ-(i)ku], and divining powder (iyẹ).

5. Cf. n. 6, verse 1-5.

6. Crossopteryx febrifuga.

7. Cornstarch gruel (ẹkọ mimu) is a hot liquid which frequently serves as breakfast. Cornstarch porridge (ẹkọ tutu), mentioned earlier, is a solid which in this case is mixed with cold water so that it may be drunk. Cf. Bascom (1951: 128-129).

8. Gbirimu refers to the sound made by the fall of Death's body; riri describes his trembling. The implication is that Death, having eaten their food, is afraid to kill them. Cf. "Death cannot eat a person's food and then kill him" (verse 6-2). It is further implied that the client, like Eji Qyẹ, can escape death if he makes the prescribed sacrifice.

"The fire is very hot on the face of the one who gathers honey;¹ the sun is very, very hot on the buttocks of the farmer;² the one who gathers honey has

1. The fire used to smoke out the bees. The one who gathers honey is always in danger of being burned.

2. As he bends over, hoeing or weeding in the farm.

egbe, oyin o ši, ado o rẹ, ile awo ko ni gb(e)-
loss, honey:bee it move, Ado (bee) it wither, house (of) secret not be dwell:at-
of.
emptiness."

Ifa ni on ko ni jẹ-ki a p(a)-ofo ni ohun ti a da Ifa
Ifa say he not be consent-that we crack-emptiness at thing that we cast Ifa
si yi. Ayebo adię meji ati ẹgbẹrindilogun ni ẹbo.
to this. Hen chicken two and 3200 (cowries) be sacrifice.)

QYẸKU MEJI - 9

Ọkunrin yakata l(i)-ori igba, igba ku, ọkunrin yakata ko lọ
"Man straddle at-head (of) eggplant, eggplant die, man straddle not go"
a da f(un)-Aro ile a lu-(i)kin f(un)-Aro oko. Ifa ni
(be) who cast for-Aro (of) house who beat-ikin for-Aro (of) farm. Ifa say
ki awọn mej(i)-(m)ejì tabi awọn ọrẹ meji ru-(ẹ)bọ ki nwọn ki
should those two-two or those friend two offer-sacrifice that they should
o ma ba ri iku a-jọ-ku, igiripa obukọ kan, ẹgbafa,
they not should see death to-be:together-die, (of) full:grown he:goat one, 12,000
ati aṣọ i-bo-(a)ra (ọ)k(an)-ọkan.
(cowries), and cloth to-cover-body one-one.
Aro ile ati Aro oko jẹ ọrẹ meji, nwọn ni ki nwọn ru-
Aro (of) house and Aro (of) farm eat friend two, they say should they offer-
(ẹ)bọ ki nwọn ki o ma ba ri iku a-jọ-ku, Aro
sacrifice that they should they not should see death to-be:together-die; Aro (of)
ile kọ ko ru-(ẹ)bọ bẹ-ni Aro oko ko pa Eṣu; Aro
house refuse not offer-sacrifice so-be Aro (of) farm not appease Eshu; Aro (of)
ile ku si ile ti oko ku si oko. Nwọn ni ki nwọn ma
house die to house that (of) farm die to farm. They say should they (continuative)
gbe Aro oko lọ si ile; n(i)-igba-ti nwọn gbe Aro oko de
carry Aro (of) farm go to house; at-time-that they carry Aro (of) farm arrive
ile nwọn ni ki awọn ọmọ rẹ wa ẹ ere oku fun baba
house they say should those children his come make play (of) corpse for father
wọn, nwọn ni awọn pẹ l(i)-oko awọn ko tun mọ ilu lilu,
their, they say they be:long at-farm they not then know drum to-be:beaten,
nitori eyi ni awọn Ifẹ ẹ ma nwi-pe Aro pẹ l(i)-
because (of) this be those Ifẹ make (continuative) speaking-that "Aro be:long.at-
oko ko tun mọ ilu lilu on na ni o si mu ki awọn ọmọ
farm not then know drum to-be:beaten," they also be who and take that those child
tabi isogan ile ma k(ọ)-orin bi oku ba ku pe:
or male:relatives (of) house (continuative) sing-song if corpse should die that:

losses; the honey bee swarms, and the honey of the Ado bee³ spoils; but the house of a diviner is never empty."⁴

Ifa says he will not allow us to draw a blank in the thing for which we are divining. Two hens and nine pence six oninis is the sacrifice.

3. There are two types of bees: (1) the igan or oyin, which lives in trees or hives and whose honey is known simply as oyin or oyin igan; and (2) the Ado bee, which lives underground and whose honey is known as oyin ado. The honey bee moves to a new hive when its honey has been taken.

4. This passage as a whole points out that the life of a diviner is to be preferred to that of the farmer and to that of the person who gathers honey. Note that though these phrases resemble those usually interpreted as diviners' names, no divination for a legendary character is cited.

18 - 9

"The man stands guard¹ over eggplant,² the eggplant dies, but the man still stands over it" was the one who cast Ifa for Aro of the house and beat the palm nuts for Aro of the farm. Ifa says that two people or two friends should sacrifice one full-grown he-goat, three shillings, and one cloth to cover the body each, lest they both meet death at the same time.³

Aro of the house and Aro of the farm were two friends. The diviner said that they should make a sacrifice, lest they both meet death at the same time. Aro of the house refused to sacrifice, and Aro of the farm also failed to appease Eshu. Aro of the house died in the house, and Aro of the farm died in the farm. They said that Aro of the farm should be carried to the house. When they had carried Aro of the farm to the house, they said that his children should come and begin the entertainment for the dead⁴ for their father. But they said that they had been so long in the farm that they no longer knew how the drums should be beaten. Because of this the people of Ife still say that "Aro stayed in the farm so long that he no longer knew how the drums should be beaten."⁵ And they also are the ones whose children or the male relatives in the house⁶ sing, when anyone dies,

1. To stand astride something to keep it from escaping.

2. Solanum incanum.

3. Müller (1902: 280) cites a similar prediction, also from Qyęku Meji, recorded at Atakpame, Togo. Cf. verse 18-10.

4. A part of the funeral ceremonies, spoken of as the "play of the dead," is performed to amuse the deceased; on the surface, at least, it is jolly.

5. This verse thus explains the origin of this Ife proverb, which is used to chide anyone who has forgotten the traditional rituals. It may also be used to ridicule those who live most of the time in the farm and who are despised as ignorant.

6. In terms of age the male clan members of a compound are divided into three groups: the elders (agba ile), the adult males (isqan) who have achieved economic independence from their fathers, and the "children of the house" (qmq ile)—the young men and boys who are still dependent on their fathers. The isqan are responsible for funerals of clan members.

Jorojorojo a-lu-mọ
 "Jorojorojo to-beat-know;

Jo jo a-lu-mọ
 "Jo jo to-beat-know."

titi di oni yi ni ilu Ile-Ifẹ.
 until become today this at town (of) Ile-Ifẹ.

QYẸKU MEJI - 10

Iku te ori igba, igba gbiria ilẹ, alukunrin f(i)-
 "Death alight: on head (of) eggplant, eggplant 'gbiria' ground; alukunrin make-
 ai-wẹ o f(i)-ai-kun o ndan rojo-rojo bi ọmọ a-
 not-wash he take-not-rub he shining brightly-brightly like child (of) one: who-
 l(i)-adi" a da fun Alapa ile o si lu ikin fun Alapa oko.
 have-adin" (be) who cast for Alapa (of) house he and beat ikin for Alapa (of) farm.

Ifa ni ki awọn ọrẹ mejì ru-(ẹ)bọ ki nwọn ki o ma ba ri
 Ifa say should those friend two offer-sacrifice that they that they not should see
 iku a-jọ-ku pọ. Igiripa obukọ (ọ)k(an)-ọkan, ẹgbafa,
 death (of) to-be: together-die together. Full: grown he: goat one-one, 12,000

ati așọ pupa ti nwọn k(o)-ẹgbẹ ra ni ẹbọ na.
 (cowries), and cloth red that they gather-companion buy be sacrifice the.

Alapa ile ati Alapa oko jẹ ọrẹ mejì, nwọn si jumọ ra
 Alapa (of) house and Alapa (of) farm eat friend two, they and together buy
 așọ pupa (ọ)k(an)-ọkan ni i-bo-(a)ra, ẹbọ ya ba awọn ọrẹ mejì
 cloth red one-one at to-cover-body; sacrifice turn meet those friend two

yi pe ki nwọn ru-(ẹ)bọ nwọn gbọ ẹbọ nwọn ko ru.
 this that should they offer-sacrifice; they hear sacrifice they not offer (it).

Eșu si na ẹbọn (ogun tabi i-șa-si) si wọn, nwọn si bẹrẹ si șe
 Eshu and stretch ẹbọn (medicine or to-send-to) to them, they and begin to make
 ai-san ni ọjọ kan na.
 not-be: better at day one the.

N(i)-igba-ti Alapa ile ri pe ai-san na pọ o sọ
 At-time-that Alapa (of) house see that not-be: better the be: great, he speak
 fun awọn ara ile rẹ pe bi o ba ku ki nwọn ki o gbe
 for those people (of) house his that if he should die that they should they carry

on tọ Alapa oko lọ nitori-ti on ni yio mọ etutu
 him approach Alapa (of) farm go because-that he be (who) will know atonement
 on ni sișe. N(i)-igba-ti Alapa oko na ri pe ai-san on
 his be to: be: done. At-time-that Alapa (of) farm also see that not-be: better his

npọ o ni bi o ba ku ki awọn ara ile on ma
 being: great, he say if he should die should those people (of) house his (continuative)

"Jorojorojo,"⁷ 'He beats palm nuts and knows the future';
 "Jo, Jo, 'He beats palm nuts and knows the future'"⁸

until this very day, in the town of Ifẹ.

7. "Jorojorojo" and "Jo, Jo" in the following line have no meaning but are said to be included simply to "make the song sweet."

8. "He beats palm nuts and knows the future" is one of the praise names of Orunmila (see verse 6-3). This verse also explains the origin of a song associated with funerals in Ifẹ.

18 - 10

"Death alights on top of the eggplant, the eggplant falls to the ground "gbiria";¹ the alukunrin bird does not bathe, it does not rub its body, but it shines very brightly like the child of one who makes palm kernel oil"² was the one who cast Ifa for Alapa of the house and beat palm nuts for Alapa of the farm. Ifa says that two friends should make a sacrifice lest they both meet death at the same time. A full-grown he-goat each, three shillings, and the red cloths which they had bought together as comrades³ is the sacrifice.

Alapa of the house and Alapa of the farm were two friends each of whom had bought a red cloth to cover his body at the same time. A sacrifice involved these two friends; they were told that they should sacrifice. They listened, but did not make the sacrifice. Eshu pointed eḅon (medicine or "send to someone"⁴) at them, and they became ill on the same day.

When Alapa of the house saw that his illness was serious, he told his family that if he should die, they should carry his body to Alapa of the farm, because he was the one that knew the atonement that was to be made at his death. When Alapa of the farm also saw that his illness was serious, he said that if he should die, his family should

1. The sound of falling to the ground. Cf. n. 2, verse 19-1, and n. 8, verse 18-7.

2. The oil (adi or adin) made from the kernels of the palm nut is used in rubbing the body (cf. n. 2, verse 6-3). The members of the adin maker's family are kept very shiny, since they have all the oil they wish to use.

3. Friends, or the members of a club, frequently wear identical garments as a symbol of their comradeship.

4. A type or category of charm which, as its name indicates, works on the victim at a distance.

gbe on tọ Alapa ile lọ nitori ti on ni yio mọ etutu
 carry him approach Alapa (of) house go because that he be (who) will know atone-
 on ni ọ́ṣe.
 ment his be to:be:done.

Ko pẹ l(i)-ḡhin na awọn mej(i-m)ejí kú, ọ́ọ́ kan na ni nwọn sí kú,
 Not be:long at-back the those two-two die, day one the be they and die,
 awọn enia Alapa ile di i nwọn ngbe lọ sí oko, nwọn
 those people (of) Alapa (of) house tie him they carrying (him) go to farm; they
 sí fi aṣọ pupa tí on pẹlu ọ́rẹ rẹ jọ ra bo,
 and take cloth red that he together:with friend his be:together buy cover (him);
 awọn enia Alapa oko na sí di i n(i)-igba-ti o kú nwọn sí
 those people (of) Alapa (of) farm also and tie him at-time-that he die, they and
 fi aṣọ pupa tí on pẹlu ọ́rẹ rẹ jọ ra bo, nwọn
 take cloth red that he together:with friend his be:together buy cover (him); they
 sí ngbe lọ sí ile; ọ́gbọ́n kí nwọn to le gbe ọ́kán
 and carrying (him) go to house; but before they equal be:able carry one
 de ọ́dọ ekeji rẹ nwọn ní lati kọ́ja ní arin ọ́ja
 arrive presence (of) second his they be in:order:to pass at middle (of) market
 Eḡigbomẹ́kún; bí nwọn tí o ru awọn okú nwọn-yí tí yọ,
 (of) Eḡigbomẹ́kún; as they that they carry those corpse those-this have appear,
 ọ́kán ní apa eyi atí ekeji ní apa ọ́hún tí nwọn sí fi aṣọ pupa b(i)-akan-
 one at arm this and second at arm there that they and take cloth red like-one-
 na bo awọn okú mej(i)-(m)ejí, awọn ara ọ́ja sí wí-pe o
 the cover those corpse two-two, those people (of) market and speak-that "It
 ma yẹ awọn okú mejí yí o; awọn okú mejí tí o yẹ ní
 (continuative) suit those corpse two this, oh"; those corpse two that it suit be
 a npe ní Qyẹku-Meji.
 we calling at Qyẹku-Meji.

 QYẸKU MEJI - 11

Qyẹ ọ́ṣẹṣẹ nla ọ́mọ ar(a)-aiye ọ́bẹ ọ́jumo l(i)-o
 "Light:of:dawn just opening, child (of) people-(of)-earth suppose dawn be-it
 nmọ a da fun Aguntan-(I)popo tí kó l(i)-okun l(i)-ọ́run tí ọ́mọ
 clearing" (be) who cast for Ewe-(of)-Ipopo that not have-rope at-neck that child
 ar(a)-aiye ní kó l(i)-okun ọ́mọ bíbí n(i)-inu tí o ọ́
 (of) people-(of)-earth say not have-endurance (of) child born at-belly, that it make
 tan tí o nbi-(ọ́)mọ ní yindin-yindin.
 finish that she bearing-child at many-many.

carry his body to Alapa of the house, because he was the one who knew the atonement that was to be made at his death.⁵

Not long afterward both of them died; it was on the same day that they died. The family of Alapa of the house wrapped him and set out carrying him to the farm; to cover him they used the red cloth⁶ that he had bought with his friend. And the family of Alapa of the farm also wrapped him when he died, and to cover him they also used the red cloth that he had bought with his friend. They set out, carrying him to the house. But before they could carry one to the other, they had to pass each other in the center of Ejigbomẹkun market. As they came out into the market carrying the two dead bodies, one on this side and the other on that, and with both bodies covered with the same kind of red cloth, the people in the market said, "This is fitting for these two dead bodies, oh." The two dead bodies for which it is fitting is what we call Qyẹku-meji.⁷

5. In accordance with the Yoruba institution of "best friends" (korikosun), these two had confided in each other what rituals and sacrifices had to be made at their death. The refusal to sacrifice thus not only brought about their deaths, but also caused them to be buried without the proper atonements.

6. Red cloths are tabu for burial. Cf. verse 18-4.

7. Note the pun on the name of the figure (Qyẹku Meji), which takes the form of giving an etymological interpretation of its meaning: o-yẹ-(o)ku-meji (it-suits-corpse-two). Cf. the similar verse recorded by Epega (n.d.: III, 19) for Qyẹku Iwori.

"The first signs of dawn¹ are just appearing; people think that day is breaking" was the one who cast Ifa for Ewe of the town of Ipopo who did not have a rope about her neck, of whom people said that she was no longer able to bear children.² Time passed, and she bore a great many children.

1. Note the pun on the alternative name of the figure, Eji Qyẹ.

2. Believing that she would never again be in heat, people felt that it was no longer necessary for her to be tethered by a rope. Note the pun on "rope" (okun) and "endurance" (okun). Ewe is given as aguntan or agutan.

Ni Şopo-Agada o bi Eyinkoto a da fun Şopere ti işe yeye
 "At Shopo-Agada he bear Eyinkoto" (be) who cast for Shopere that make mother

Ojo.

(of) Rain.

Qwọ l(i)-a b(a)-eji
 "Flock be-we meet-rain,

Eji ki ni-(ọ)kan rin.
 "Rain not at-one walk."

Ifa ni e-l(i)-eyi yio bi-(ọ)mọ yio si di ẹ-l(i)-ẹni.
 Ifa say one:who-be-this will bear-child will and become one:who-has-person.

QYẸKU MEJI - 12

Qrunmila ni o di igbo, mo ni igbo ni, igbo ni ai ba ẹhan,
 Qrunmila say it become crowd; I say crowd be (it); crowd be we meet ẹhan,
 igbo ni ai ba esi, a ki ri a-ni-(ọ)kan-rin nadu-nadu, a ki ri
 crowd be we meet boar; we not see one:who-at-one-walk mum-mum; we not see
 a-ni-(ọ)kan-rin yunrẹ nadu-nadu ni orukọ ti ai pe aguntan; yunrẹ ni
 one:who-at-one-walk greedy; mum-mum be name that we call ewe; greedy be
 orukọ ti ai pe ọya.
 name that we call Cane:rat

Ifa ni e-l(i)-eyi yio di igbo ko si n(i)-ọkan rin. Eku
 Ifa say one:who-be-this will become crowd, not and at-one walk. Rat
 męwa, ẹja męwa, ati agbebọ adię męwa.
 ten, fish ten, and hen chicken ten.

QYẸKU - (I)WORI - 1

E-l(i)-eku nmu eku pe mi l(i)-aiya, aiya mi ko ni gba eku,
 "One:who-has-rat taking rat call me at-chest, chest my not be (it) accept rat,
 aiya Qyẹku-gbiri l(i)-agba, ẹ-l(i)-ẹja nmu ẹja pe mi l(i)-aiya,
 chest (of) Qyẹku-'gbiri' be-elder, one:who-has-fish taking fish call me at-chest,
 aiya mi ko ni gba ẹja aiya Qyẹku-gbiri l(i)-agba, edi pọnrịpọn,
 chest my not be (it) accept fish, chest (of) Qyẹku-'gbiri' be-elder, Edi thick,
 omi di edi nana il(u)-oro, owo ati ọmọ ni aiya mi
 water become Edi vibrating town-(of)-ritual, cowries and child be chest my
 nwa o.
 seeking, oh."

"At Shopo-Agada she gave birth to Eyinkoto" was the one who cast Ifa for Shopere, who was the mother of Rain.

"It is in flocks that we meet rain,
"Rain does not walk alone."³

Ifa says that this person will have children and will have many followers.⁴

3. Rain drops do not come singly.

4. A person's followers includes both his friends and the members of his family—all those upon whom he can count for support in legal, financial, or social matters. Cf. n. 2, verse 7-4. A large personal following is one of the main personal goals of the Yoruba. (See Chapter VII.) Though there are two divinations cited as precedent in this verse, both imply the same prediction. Both rain drops and the children of Ewe of the town of Ipopo are numberless (yindin-yindin). Cf. the versions of this verse recorded by Beyioku (1940: 5, 27).

18 - 12

Grunmila says there will be a crowd; I say there is a crowd. In crowds we find çhan;¹ in crowds we find wild boars. We don't find "One who keeps silent"² walking alone; we don't find "Greedy" walking alone. "One who keeps silent" is the name that we call Ewe; "Greedy" is the name that we call Cane Rat.³

Ifa says that this person will form a crowd⁴ and will not walk alone. Ten rats, ten fish, and ten hens is the sacrifice.

-
1. An unidentified wild animal living in the forest.
 2. One who can talk, but doesn't want to. Cf. verse, 249-5.
 3. Thryonomys swinderianus, popularly called "Cutting Grass." See Abraham (1958: 533).
 4. That is, he will have many followers. Cf. n. 4, verse 18-11.

19 - 1

"Someone who owns rats sends rats at my chest to call me;¹ my chest will not accept them; the chest of Reverberating² Qyęku is the elder;³ Someone who owns fish sends fish at my chest to call me; my chest will not accept them; the chest of Reverberating Qyęku is the elder; Thick Edi,⁴ the water becomes Vibrating⁵ Edi of the town where rituals are held; my chest is seeking money and children, oh!"⁶

-
1. That is, someone is using rats (and fish) to make medicine to cause my death.
 2. Gbiri is the sound of something big and heavy falling to the ground, or of the shot of a cannon reverberating. It may appear as gbiri-gbiri-gbiri, pronounced with decreasing volume, like an echo gradually dying away. Qyęku Gbiri may be an alternative name for Qyęku Iwori. Cf. verses 19-2 and 19-3.
 3. Notes 3-6 appear on p. 261.

Ifa ni ki ẹni-kan ru-(ẹ)bọ ki a ma ba fi ogun
 Ifa say should person-one offer-sacrifice that they not should take medicine
 pa tabi a-pe-ta pa: Obukọ kan, ẹgbafa. Ifa ni on
 kill (him) or to-call-shoot kill (him): He:goat one, 12,000 (cowries). Ifa say he
 ko ni jẹ-ki a ku.
 not be (he) consent-that we die.

QYẸKU - (I)WORI - 2

Qyẹku-gbiri a da fun ebe n(i)-igba-ti o ma
 "Qyẹku-'gbiri'" (be) who cast for yam:heap at-time-that she (continuative)
 ni oyun ij(ẹ)-(oh)un si inu, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki
 have pregnancy (of) eating-thing to belly; they say should she offer-sacrifice that
 ọmọ inu rẹ le gbo: obukọ kan, aṣọ ẹlẹpa kan, ẹgbata
 child (of) belly hers be:able grow:old: he:goat one, cloth lightly:dyed one, 6000
 ọna marun ki o jẹ owo ti iya ati ẹgba owo
 (cowries) (of) road five should it eat cowries that (of) mother and 2000 cowries
 ọmọ inu rẹ.
 (of) child (of) belly hers.

Ifa ni on ko ni jẹ-ki a bi ọmọ ni ọjọ ai-pe;
 Ifa say he not be (he) consent-that we bear child at day (of) not-complete.
 Ifa ni ki a-b(i)-oyun ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ma ba bi-
 Ifa say should one:who-bear-pregnancy offer-sacrifice that she not should bear-
 (ọ)mọ ni ọjọ ai-pe. A ko gbọdọ ki Ifa yi ni oju a-
 child at day (of) not-complete. We not must greet Ifa this at eye (of) one:who-
 b(i)-oyun.
 bear-pregnancy.

Babalawo ko gbọdọ ki Ifa yi ni oju a-b(i)-oyun, bi o
 Diviner not must greet Ifa this at eye (of) one:who-bear-pregnancy; if he
 ba ki Ifa yi ni oju a-b(i)-oyun, oyun na ni
 should greet Ifa this at eye (of) one:who-bear-pregnancy, pregnancy the be
 lati bajẹ.
 in:order:to spoil.

QYẸKU - (I)WORI - 3

Qyẹku-gbiri a da fun ẹiyẹ-(i)le ọmọ a-tẹ-
 "Qyẹku-'gbiri'" (be) who cast for bird-(of)-house, child (of) "One:who-spread-
 itẹ-sun-orun-ọmọ ni Ekiti Ẹfọn ti o da Ifa nitori ọmọ.
 nest-sleep-sleep-(of)-child at Ekiti Ẹfọn" that she cast Ifa because (of) child.

Ifa says that someone should make a sacrifice lest he be killed with medicine or "call and shoot."⁷ One he-goat and three shillings is the sacrifice. Ifa says that he will not allow us to die.

3. That is, my chest, which is very strong like that of "Reverberating Qyęku," will resist the bad medicine; Qyęku will protect me.

4. Edi is the name of one of the sixteen basic Ifa figures, but it appears here in a figure whose name does not involve Edi.

5. Nana describes the way something sways or vibrates, like a clock spring held at one end. Cf. n. 1, verse 17-4.

6. These phrases resemble those interpreted as diviner's names, but no divination for a legendary character is cited.

7. A type or category of charm which can cause death at a distance.

19 - 2

"Reverberating Qyęku"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Yam Heap when she was pregnant with food. They said that so that the child in her belly would be able to mature, she should sacrifice one he-goat, one lightly dyed cloth,² five piles of money of one shilling and six pence each for the mother, and six pence for her unborn child.

Ifa says that he will not let us bear our child prematurely. Ifa says that a pregnant woman should make a sacrifice so that she will not give birth to her child prematurely. We must not recite this verse in the presence of a pregnant woman.³

(The diviner must not recite this verse in the presence of a pregnant woman; if he should recite this verse in the presence of a pregnant woman, the pregnancy is certain to spoil.⁴)

1. Cf. n. 2, verse 19-1.

2. A cloth which has been dipped only once in indigo, and is therefore light blue in color.

3. The diviner must make certain that no pregnant women are present before he recites this verse. If the client herself is present, arrangements will be made for the sacrifice without reciting the verse to her as is usually done.

4. This is not recited as a part of the verse itself, but it is a part of the instructions given to the diviners when they are learning the verse.

19 - 3

"Reverberating Qyęku"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Pigeon, child of "The one who makes her nest and sleeps like a child at Ekiti Efon"² when she cast Ifa because she had no children.

1. See n. 2, verse 19-1.

2. The town of Efon-Alaye, east of Ilesha, which was the capital of Efon, one of the Ekiti Yoruba kingdoms.

Nwọn ni yio bi ọmọ, ẹgbọn ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ. Ikoko titun
 They say (she) will bear child, but should she offer-sacrifice. Pot new
 meji, ayebo adie meji, ati ẹgbaji ni ẹbo.
 two, hen chicken two, and 4000 (cowries) be sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti ẹiyẹ-(i)le ru ẹbo yi tan nwọn gbe ọkan fun
 At-time-that bird-(of)-house offer sacrifice this finish, they take one give
 u n(i)-inu awọn ikoko meji na, nwọn ni bi ọmọ rẹ ba ti fi
 her at-belly (of) those pot two the, they say if child hers should have take
 ori kan ikoko yi ko ni ku mọ. N(i)-igba-ti ẹiyẹ-(i)le ba
 head touch pot this, not be (it) die again. At-time-that bird-(of)-house should
 bi-(ọ)mọ ti ọmọ rẹ ba si fi ori kan ikoko o bẹrẹ si wi-
 bear-child that child hers should and take head touch pot she begin to speak-
 pe:
 that:

Mo ẹ(e)-ẹbo Qyẹku-gbiri, Qyẹku-gbiri,
 "I make-sacrifice (of) Qyẹku-'gbiri,' Qyẹku-'gbiri,'

Ọmọ mi f(i)-ori kan-(i)koko ko ku mọ.
 "Child my take-head touch-pot not die again."

Ifa ni e-l(i)-eyi nwa ọmọ, yio bi-(ọ)mọ ẹgbọn ki o ru-
 Ifa say one:who-be-this seeking child; will bear-child but should she offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ki awọn ọmọ rẹ ma ba ma ku n(i)-igba-ti o
 sacrifice that those child hers not should (continuative) die at-time-that she
 ba bi wọn.
 should bear them.'

QYẸKU - (E)DI - 1

Qyẹku-(E)di a da fun igbin, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 "Qyẹku-Edi" (be) who cast for Snail; they say should he offer-sacrifice (of)
 a-l(i)-a-ẹ(e)-ire: akikọ adie męta ati ẹgbata. Igbin ko
 one:who-be-he-make-play: cock chicken three and 6000 (cowries). Snail not
 ru-(ẹ)bọ. Lati igba-na ni gbogbo aiye ti ma nfi igbin
 offer-sacrifice. From time-the be all earth have (continuative) taking Snail
 ẹ a-l(i)-a-ẹ(e)-ire. Agbọnniregun ni rin-(ọ)wọ-rin-(ọ)wọ
 make one:who-be-he-make-play. Agbọnniregun say squeeze-hand-squeeze-hand
 ni a (yi) o ma he igbin. Ifa ni ki ẹni-kan ru-(ẹ)bọ
 be we will (continuative) pick:up snail. Ifa say should person-one offer-sacrifice
 a-l(i)-a-ẹ(e)-ire. A-l(i)-a-ẹ(e)-ire de.
 (of) one:who-be-he-make-play. One:who-be-he-make-play arrive.

They said she would bear children, but that she should make a sacrifice. Two new pots, two hens, and one shilling³ was the sacrifice.

When Pigeon had completed this sacrifice, they took one of the two pots and gave it to her. They said if her child should touch this pot with its head, it would not die. When Pigeon gave birth to her child, she touched its head against the pot and began to recite:

"I made the sacrifice of Reverberating *Oyẹku*, Reverberating *Oyẹku*,
"My child touches the pot with its head; it will not die any more."⁴

Ifa says that this person is seeking children; she will have children but she should make a sacrifice lest her children die as soon as they are born.

3. As cowries are counted by the two thousand, there are two units of cowries as there are two pots and two hens.

4. There is a play on words and word magic in the use of a pot (*ikoko*) so that the child will not die (*ko ku*) again. The belief is that several children who die very young in succession, as *abiku*, are in reality one child who fails to live in its successive rebirths. (Cf. n. 3, verse 1-4). This verse is to be compared with verse 33-1, where Pigeon begins to live in a pot.

*Oyẹku Edi*¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Snail. They said he should sacrifice three cocks and one shilling six pence² against one who showed contempt for him. Snail did not make the sacrifice. From that time, the whole world has been showing contempt for Snail.³ *Agbõnniregun* says, "Bare handed, bare handed we will catch⁴ snail." Ifa says someone should make a sacrifice against one who shows contempt for him. One who shows contempt for him is coming.

1. The name of the diviner is identical with that of the figure.

2. Since cowries are counted by the two thousand, there are three units of cowries as well as three cocks.

3. No one is afraid of snail since "it has no teeth."

4. The Yoruba word "he" is even more insulting; it is applied to the gathering of fruit. This verse thus explains why no one is afraid of snails, and why people can catch snails without weapons and without any protection on the hands.

QYẸKU - (E)DI - 2

Qna tọ tara ma ya a da fun Qyẹ n(i)-igba-ti o
 "Road be: straight straight not turn" (be) who cast for Qyẹ at-time-that he
 nlọ gbe ọbuntun adugbo wa ile, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 going take bride (of) ward come house; they say should he offer-sacrifice
 ki oko rẹ ma ba d(a)-oju ti: obukọ kan, ẹgba meje.
 that penis his not should break-eye push (him): he:goat one, 2000 (cowries) seven.
 Qyẹ ko ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 Qyẹ not offer-sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti Qyẹ mu iyawo de ile ko le ba sun,
 At-time-that Qyẹ take junior:wife arrive house not be:able join (her) sleep,
 nwọn ni Qyẹ ni? Nwọn ni Qyẹ ti o ti ku ni idi ni; lati igba
 they say Qyẹ be (he)? They say Qyẹ that he have die at waist be (he); from time
 na ni a ti npe ni Qyẹku-(E)di.
 the be we have calling (him) at Qyẹku-(E)di.

Ifa ni ki ẹni-kan ru-(ẹ)bọ arun a fi aṣọ bo
 Ifa say should person-one offer-sacrifice (of) disease we take cloth cover
 mọ-(a)ra; tabi oko nda ẹni-kan ni-(ọ)jọ, ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 against-body; or penis causing person-one at-day, should he offer-sacrifice
 ki o le ri oko do iyawo rẹ ti o nfẹ gbe.
 that he be:able see penis copulate:with junior:wife his that he wanting take.

QYẸKU - (E)DI - 3

Pẹkubẹ, awo Olongo l(i)-o da fun Olongo n(i)-igba-ti o r(un)-
 Pẹkubẹ, secret (of) Waxbill be-who cast for Waxbill at-time-that she grieving-
 agan ai-bi-(ọ)mọ nwọn ni yio bi ọmọ, nwọn ni ki o
 (of)-barren:woman not-bear-child, they say will bear child, they say should she
 ru ayebo adię meji, ewurẹ kan, ati ẹgbawa, o ru. O bi
 offer hen chicken two, she:goat one, and 20,000 (cowries), she offer. She bear
 ọmọ o si bẹrẹ si yọ o nwi-pe:
 child she and begin to rejoice she speaking-that:

Ifa Pẹkubẹ ẹẹ, Pẹkubẹ,
 "Ifa (of) Pẹkubẹ happen, Pẹkubẹ;

Mo l(i)-oyun mo bi-(ọ)mọ, Pẹkubẹ.
 "I have-pregnancy, I bear-child, Pẹkubẹ."

Ifa ni ki a sọ fun e-l(i)-eyi pe o nwa ọmọ ki o
 Ifa say should we speak for one:who-be-this that she seeking child should she
 ru-(ẹ)bọ yio si bi-(ọ)mọ.
 offer-sacrifice will and bear-child.

20 - 2

"The road is very straight, it does not turn" was the one who cast Ifa for Qyẹ when he was going to bring home a bride from his ward.¹ They said he should sacrifice one he-goat and three shillings six pence² so that his penis should not disgrace him. Qyẹ did not make the sacrifice.

When Qyẹ brought his bride home, he was not able to sleep with her. They said, "What kind of an Qyẹ is he?" They said "He is Qyẹ who has died at his waist." From that time on we have been calling him Qyẹku-(e)di.³

Ifa says someone should make a sacrifice against a disease which can be concealed under his clothing,⁴ or that someone's penis is setting his dates for him;⁵ he should make a sacrifice so that he can have intercourse with the wife he wants to marry.

-
1. A neighbor, a girl living in the same ward of the town.
 2. Seven units of 2000 cowries, or 14,000 cowries.
 3. This verse thus explains how this figure got its name. Note the pun which is the basis of the etymology: Qyẹku-(E)di, the name of the figure, and Qyẹ-ku-(i)di, Qyẹ-die-waist.
 4. This refers to social diseases.
 5. That is, he cannot have sexual relations regularly. Cf. verse 9-1.
-

20 - 3

"Pẹkubẹ, the diviner of Waxbill"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Waxbill when she was grieving because she was barren and had no children. They said she would bear children; they said she should sacrifice two hens, one she-goat, and five shillings. She sacrificed. She bore children and she began to rejoice, singing:

"The Ifa of Pẹkubẹ came true, Pẹkubẹ;
"I am pregnant, I bear children, Pẹkubẹ."

Ifa says we should tell this person who is seeking children that she should make a sacrifice and she will bear a child.

1. The Orange-cheeked Waxbill (Estrilda Melpoda M.). The meaning of Pẹkubẹ is unknown.

QYẸKU - (Q)WQNRIN - 1

Qka gbe-(i)nu itẹ ga-(o)ju Ere gbe pa-(a)kurọ
 "Snake stay-belly (of) nest stretch-eye, Python stay beside-waterside:garden
 ga-(o)run oye Oşumare-ẹgọ gbe oju Q-l(i)-orun kẹ
 stretch-neck (of) title, Rainbow-fool stay face (of) One:who-has-sky spread
 yanran-yanran" a da fun wọn ni agbaigbo Ifẹ kiribiti n(i)-igba-ti
 bright-bright" (be) who cast for them at whole (of) Ifẹ all:around at-time-that
 aiye wọn d(a)-oju de bi igba.
 world their cover-face (1) like calabash.

Ifa ni ohun ti a d(a)-ẹbọ si (ohu)n-kan na ti bajẹ, şugbọn ohun
 Ifa say thing that we cast-sacrifice to thing-one the have spoil, but thing
 ti a le şeti o le dara ni ki a ru-(ş)bọ si.
 that we be:able do that it be:able be:good be should we offer-sacrifice to (it).

Ohun mefa-mefa: iti eku mefa, ẹja mefa, aşọ mefa, okẹ owo
 Thing six-six: bunch (of) rat six, fish six, cloth six, bag (of) cowries
 mefa, aguntan mefa, gbogbo ohun mefa-mefa, ati ilu mefa. Nwọn ru ẹbọ
 six, ewe six, all thing six-six, and drum six. They offer sacri-

yi tan, nwọn gbe si Mesi Alukunrin, bi nwọn ti gbe si Mesi
 fice this finish, they carry to Mesi Alukunrin, as they have carry to Mesi
 Alukunrin tan, ni ojo berẹ si rọ, nwọn ba ko ilu mefa na si ita,
 Alukunrin finish, be rain begin to fall, they meet gather drum six the to square,
 nwọn berẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
 they begin to sing-song that:

Ẹbọ l(i)-a şe
 "Sacrifice be-we make,

Ojo ko rọ a ngbẹ-(o)ka
 "Rain not fall, we planting-guinea:corn,

Ẹbo l(i)-a şe
 "Sacrifice be-we make.

Ẹbọ l(i)-a şe
 "Sacrifice be-we make,
 O-n(i)-Igbo-(o)m(o)-ẹkun
 "One:who-has-Igbo-child-(of)-leopard,

Ẹbo l(i)-a şe
 "Sacrifice be-we make,

Ojo ko rọ a ngbẹ-(o)ka.
 "Rain not fall, we planting-guinea:corn.

24 - 1

"The Qka snake stays in its nest stretching out its face;¹ Python stays by the waterside stretching out its neck like one who wants to become a chief; Rainbow, the foolish one, stays in the heavens, spreading very brightly"² was the one who cast Ifa for all the people of Ifẹ when things were going badly for them, when their world was covered like a calabash.

Ifa says that the affair for which we are divining has spoiled, but that we can set it right by sacrificing. Six of everything must be sacrificed: six bunches of dried rats, six bunches of dried fish, six cloths, six bags of money (thirty shillings), six ewes—six of everything—and six drums. The people of Ifẹ completed the sacrifice, and when they carried these things to Mesi Alukunrin,³ rain began to fall.⁴ They brought the six drums to the square and began to sing:

"We are making a sacrifice;

"Rain does not fall, we are planting guinea corn;

"We are making a sacrifice.

"We are making a sacrifice;

"Oh King of the Igbo, Children of Leopard,⁵

"We are making a sacrifice;

"Rain does not fall, we are planting guinea corn."

1. This kind of snake does not run away when hunters come to kill it, but rises up and peers out at them to see what is happening. The CMS Dictionary lists qka as "a species of boa constrictor. See 'Eḷebu' = cobra," and for "cobra" gives qka. Abrahams suggests that it may be the Gaboon viper. It is also called "Nana Buruku's snake" (ejo Buku), and is described in Mẹkọ as small, about a foot long, with black and red markings.

2. As the rainbow is thought of as a python (erẹ), all three statements contain a reference to snakes. Cf. the last with verse 35-6.

3. A place in the square before the palace at Ifẹ (formerly a building within the palace walls) where humans were formerly executed.

4. The implication of this verse, made clear in Yoruba mythology, is that it rains nowadays when planting time comes only because the very early inhabitants of Ifẹ made the sacrifice described here. It is said that at this time there were no yams or maize, and that guinea corn was the only food.

5. The names Igbomekun and Ejigbomekun (cf. verse 18-10) appear in a number of Yoruba myths and are commonly interpreted by informants as referring to an ancient town with the word used here (Onigbomekun) as the title of its ruler. However, an Ifẹ diviner explained Onigbomekun as meaning O-n(i)-Igbo-(o)m(o)-ekun or "Owner of Igbo, Child (or Children) of Leopard"; he identified him as Qsangangan Qbamakin and "Igbo" as his subjects—the people from whom Mọreṃi saved the people of Ifẹ. This interpretation, which is followed here, was confirmed by a priest of Qsangangan Qbamakin, who added that Qsangangan Qbamakin is a deity (ẹbura) who once ruled as an early king of Ifẹ and that the Igbomekun were the original inhabitants of Ifẹ. Cf. n. 6, verse 247-5.

Ifa ni (ohu)n-kan ti a d(a)-ẹbọ si yi ti bajẹ, afi-bi a ba
 Ifa say thing-one that we cast-sacrifice to this have spoil, unless-if we should
 ru ẹbọ ni ohun na le fi dara.
 offer sacrifice be thing the can take be:good.

IWORI OGBE¹ - 1

Iwori a-bọ-gbe.

"Iwori to-sacrifice-aid."

Qrọ bo-(ẹ)ni l(i)-oju ma di-(ẹ)ni l(i)-eti a da fun Elemele
 "Wall cover-person at-eye not tie-person at-ear" (be) who cast for Elemele

ile a lu-(i)kin fun Elemele oko ni-(g)jọ ti nwọn nfi ọmọ ẹ
 (of) house who beat-ikin for Elemele (of) farm at-day that they taking child make
 a-bi-ku.
 one:who-born-die.

N(i)-igba-ti Elemele ile ati ti oko ni ọ da Ifa l(i)-ọwọ
 At-time-that Elemele (of) house and that (of) farm going cast Ifa at-hand (of)

Qrunmila, ni-(i)gba-ti nwọn de ẹhin-(ẹ)ku(n)-(i)le Qrunmila, nwọn
 Qrunmila, at-time-that they arrive back-door-(of)-house (of) Qrunmila, they
 gbọ ti Oşu aya rẹ da-(o)hun o ni ko si ikoko ni ile, o ni ẹni-
 hear that Oshu, wife his, break-voice she say not be pot at house, she say person-
 ti o ba wa d(a)-ẹbọ l(i)-oni ki Qrunmila ki o yan
 that he should come cast-sacrifice at-today should Qrunmila should he choose
 ikoko meji, ọpa-(a)tori (ọ)k(an)-ọkan, işu marun, ọbẹ şilo kan,
 pot two, branch-(of)-atori one-one, yam five, knife for:cutting:food one,
 ati ọgọrun-o-le-marun igbado fun ni ẹbọ.
 and 105 corn for (them) at sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti Elemele ile ati ti oko wọ-(i)le nwọn da
 At-time-that Elemele (of) house and that (of) farm enter-house they cast
 arun si-(i)lẹ nwọn da Iwori a-bọ-gbe; n(i)-igba-na ni Qrun-
 five (cowries) to-ground they cast Iwori to-sacrifice-aid; at-time-the be Qrun-
 mila da-(o)hun o ni: Qrọ bo-(ẹ)ni l(i)-oju ma di-(ẹ)ni l(i)-eti ni-
 mila break-voice he say: "Wall cover-person at-eye not tie-person at-ear" be-
 yi o ni ẹ ngbọ bi aya on ti nwi jọ-(oh)un? Nwọn ni
 this; he say you hearing as wife (of) him have saying resemble-things? They say
 awọn ko gbọ; o ni nitori a-bi-ku ọmọ ni ẹ ẹ wa
 they not hear; he say because (of) one:who-born-die child be you make come

1. Also known as Iwori a-bọ-gbe, meaning Iwori that brings help through a sacrifice. See n. 1, verse 33-1.

Ifa says that the affair for which we are divining has spoiled, and that it cannot be put right again unless we make a sacrifice.

33 - 1

"Iwori which brings help through a sacrifice."¹

"A wall covers one's eyes but does not close one's ears"² was the one who cast Ifa for "Elemele of the house" and who beat palm nuts for "Elemele of the farm" when their children were dying like abiku.³

When "Elemele of the house" and "Elemele of the farm" were going to have Orunmila cast Ifa for them, and when they reached the back door of his house, they heard Oshu, Orunmila's wife, say that there was not a pot in the house. She said that if anyone came to sacrifice that day, Orunmila should name as their offering two pots, one switch⁴ each, five yams, one knife for cutting food,⁵ and 105 ears of corn.

When "Elemele of the house" and "Elemele of the farm" entered the house, they dropped five cowries on the ground and "Iwori which brings help through a sacrifice" was cast for them. Then Orunmila said, "A wall covers one's eyes but does not close one's ears." He said, "Did you hear what my wife was just saying?" They said they had not heard. He said "You have come to divine because of abiku."

-
1. Iwori abogbe is an alternative name for the figure Iwori Ogbe.
 2. Meaning that one can hear but not see what is happening on the other side of a wall. The reference is to overhearing what Orunmila's wife said.
 3. Children destined to die; see n. 3, verse 1-4.
 4. The twig of the atori bush (Glyphaea lateriflora) is used as a switch or whip.
 5. Any knife for cutting food, regardless of its shape; generally the names of different kinds of knives are based on their shape.

d(a)-Ifa; nwɔn ni bɛ-ni nitotɔ. O ni ki nwɔn ʃe ikoko meji, iʃu
 cast-Ifa; they say so-be-(it) truly. He say should they make pot two, yam
 marun, ɔpa-(a)tori (ɔ)k(an)-ɔkan, ɔbɛ-ʃilo kan, ati ɔrunlɔrun
 five, branch-(of)-atori one-one, knife-for:cutting:food one, and 105
 igbado.
 corn.

N(i)-igba-ti nwɔn de ɔna, Elemele oko da-(o)hun o ni on
 At-time-that they arrive road, Elemele (of) farm break-voice she say she
 ko ni ru eyi-ti on fi eti on gbɔ ti aya rɛ nkɔ
 not be (she) offer this-that she take ear (of) her hear that wife his teaching (him)
 yi; o ni adamɔ b(i)-o mɔ Ifa to yi aya rɛ ni o nkɔ ni
 this; she say how if-he know Ifa equal this, wife his be she teaching (him) at
 ɛbɔ ti yio yan? Ati papa nitori iji ti o wi
 sacrifice that (he) will choose? And especially because (of) shelter that he say
 gan, ni on ko fi ni ru-(ɛ)bɔ na, ati pe ni ori iji
 identical, be she not take (it) be offer-sacrifice the, and that at head (of) shelter
 na gan ni on yio lo kɔ ile si. Elemele ile ni ori on
 the identical be she will use build house to. Elemele (of) house say head (of) her
 ko dara to-bɛ; o ni on yio lɔ ru-(ɛ)bɔ ti on; o ru
 not be:good equal-so; she say she will go offer-sacrifice that (of) her; she offer
 iʃu marun, ɔrunlɔrun igbado, ikoko meji, atori kan, ati ɔbɛ-ʃilo
 yam five, 105 corn, pot two, atori one, and knife-for:cutting:food
 kan. ɔrunmila gbe ɔkan fun ni-(i)nu ikoko meji yi, o ja ewe
 one. ɔrunmila take one give (her) at-belly (of) pot two this, he cut leaf (of)
 Ifa si, o ni n(i)-igba-ti o ba ma bi, inu ikoko ni
 Ifa to (it), he say at-time-that she should (continuative) bear, belly (of) pot be
 ki o ma bi awɔn ɔmɔ rɛ si, ati pe bi o ba bi
 should she (continuative) bear those child hers to (it), and that if she should bear
 tan, ki o ma wi-pe "ɔmɔ mi f(i)-ori kan
 (them) finish, should she (continuative) speak-that "Child my take-head touch
 ikoko ko ku mɔ." O ni ɔmɔ na ko si ni ku.
 pot not die again." He say child the not and be die.

N(i)-igba-ti Elemele oko nlɔ o lɔ kɔ-(i)le rɛ s(i)-ori
 At-time-that Elemele (of) farm going, she go build-house hers to-head (of)
 egungun o si bi ɔmɔ meji si ori rɛ; n(i)-igba-ti ɔmɔ rɛ
 silk:cotton:tree she and bear child two to head its; at-time-that child hers
 nd(i)-agba, o ni on nlɔ ki Elemele ile. N(i)-igba-ti o
 becoming-elder, she say she going greet Elemele (of) house. At-time-that she
 de ile o bilere pe o ti bi? O ni o ti bi; o ni
 arrive house, she ask that she have bear? She say she have bear; she say
 ɔmɔ melo ni o bi? Elemele ile ni ɔmɔ meji ni o bi. O
 child how:many be she bear? Elemele (of) house say child two be she bear. She

They said "So it is, truly." He said that they should sacrifice two pots, five yams, one switch apiece, one knife for cutting food, and 105 ears of corn.

When they got outside, "Elemele of the farm" said that she would not make the sacrifice which with her own ears she had heard Qrunmila's wife teaching him. She said, "How is it that if Qrunmila knows so much about Ifa, his wife is teaching him what sacrifice to prescribe?"⁶ And in particular she would not sacrifice because of her shelter, which he had mentioned specifically, but she would build her house in the top of that very shelter.⁷ "Elemele of the house" said that her luck was not that good; and that she would make the sacrifice. She sacrificed five yams, 105 ears of corn, two pots, one switch, and one knife for cutting food. Qrunmila took one of the two pots and put Ifa's leaves into it. He said that she should give birth to her children in this pot, and that when they were born, she should say, "My child touches the pot with its head, it will not die any more."⁸ Qrunmila said that the child would not die.

"Elemele of the farm" built her house in the top of a silk cotton tree, and there she gave birth to two children. When these children were growing up, she said she was going to visit "Elemele of the house." When she reached her house, she asked, "Have you given birth?" and "Elemele of the house" replied that she had. She asked, "How many children have you?" and "Elemele of the house" said she had two children. "Elemele of the farm"

6. Qrunmila is, of course, supposed to know more than anyone else about Ifa divination, and certainly more than a woman.

7. This shelter is the silk cotton tree, araba or egungun (Ceiba pentandra), in which she builds her nest. It is implied here that Qrunmila warned her that this was dangerous, and that she should sacrifice so that evil would not befall her.

8. Cf. n. 4, verse 19-3. It is understood that, as in verse 19-3, she should touch her children's heads to the pot while saying this.

ni o ti ko ru-(ξ)b ξ meji ni on na bi. O ni ξ e on ti
 say she have not offer-sacrifice two be she also bear. She say make she have
 s ξ pe ki o ma ru-(ξ)b ξ n(i)-igba-na? O ni b ξ -ni bi aw ξ n ko
 speak that should she not offer-sacrifice at-time-the? She say so-be if they not
 ba ru-(ξ)b ξ , bi aw ξ n ti bi yi na ni aw ξ n iba bi. E ξ su
 should offer-sacrifice, as they have bear this also be they should bear. Eshu
 wa da-(o)hun o ni n(i)-igba-ti Elemele oko ko ru-(ξ)b ξ tan
 come break-voice he say at-time-that Elemele (of) farm not offer-sacrifice finish
 o tun nfi on ξ e fa-(o)ri? O wa ran-(i) $\xi\xi$, si ojo pe ki
 she then taking him make shave-head? He come send-message to rain that should
 iji ki o l ξ ba Elemele oko ja.
 thunderstorm should it go join Elemele (of) farm fight.

N(i)-igba-ti Elemele oko ri pe ojo ξ u, o ni on nl ξ si
 At-time-that Elemele (of) farm see that rain darken, she say she going to
 ile on; n(i)-igba-ti o nl ξ ξ fufu gbe l ξ jina si ξ na ile
 house (of) her; at-time-that she going wind carry (her) go far to road (of) house
 r ξ , ko si m ξ ξ na m ξ ; ni o ξ keji ni o to de ile ni-
 hers, (she) not and know road again; at day second be she equal arrive house at-
 (i)bi-ti o bi ξ m ξ si. Ki o to de ib ξ , ξ fufu ti wo igi
 place-that she bear child to. Before she equal arrive there, wind have break tree
 lu ξ m ξ r ξ m ξ ibi-ti o gbe bi ξ m ξ si l(i)-ori igi; aw ξ n
 strike child hers against place-that she take bear child to at-head (of) tree; those
 ξ m ξ na si ti ku. O ri kukute ti o ma nba le ki
 child the and have die. She see stump that she (continuative) alighting upon before
 o to fo gun ori egungun; aw ξ n ξ m ξ de meji si ko
 she equal fly climb head (of) silk:cotton:tree those young:child two and gather
 aw ξ n ξ m ξ r ξ mej(i)-(m)eji nw ξ n nfi w ξ n ξ -(i)re. Elemele oko
 those child hers two-two they taking them make-play. Elemele (of) farm
 tun pada wa s(i)- ξ d ξ Elemele ile o ni iji ti
 then return come to-presence (of) Elemele (of) house she say thunderstorm that
 o ja ti ξ e on ni ibi; o ni kukute ti on fi ξ (e)-ami ib ξ
 it fight (her) have do her at evil; she say stump that she take (it) make-sign there
 on ko ri, ati aw ξ n ξ m ξ on p ξ lu. N(i)-igba-na ni Elemele
 she not see, and those child (of) her together:with (it). At-time-the be Elemele
 ile dide o b ξ si idi ikoko, o gbe ξ m ξ r ξ o ni ξ m ξ
 (of) house arise she drop to bottom (of) pot, she take child hers she say "child
 on f(i)-ori kan ikoko ko ku.
 (of) her take-head touch pot not die."

Elemele ile ni oruk ξ ti a pe ξ iy ξ -(i)le; Elemele oko
 Elemele (of) house be name that we call bird-(of)-house; Elemele (of) farm
 ni oruk ξ ti a pe adaba.
 be name that we call dove.

said that she had not offered a sacrifice, but that she had two children also. She said, "Didn't I tell you at the time that I needn't sacrifice?" She said it would have been the same if they hadn't sacrificed, as their children would have been born anyway. Eshu protested, saying, "First 'Elemele of the farm' refused to sacrifice, and now is she going to brag about it?" He sent word to the rain to send a thunderstorm to fight "Elemele of the farm."

When "Elemele of the farm" saw the clouds growing dark, she said she had to be going home. While she was going, the wind carried her far out of her way, so that she no longer knew her way home, and it was not until the next day that she reached her nest. Before she arrived, the storm had broken down the tree and thrown her children to the ground, and her children were dead. She saw the stump upon which she used to alight before flying to the top of the silk cotton tree, and that two human children had picked up her own two children and were playing with them. "Elemele of the farm" returned to "Elemele of the house" and told how the thunderstorm had fought with her and brought evil upon her. She said that she had not seen either the stump that marked her way home or her children.⁹ Then "Elemele of the house" flew into her pot and, taking her children, said, "My child touches the pot with its head; it will not die." "Elemele of the house" is what we call Pigeon; "Elemele of the farm" is what we call Dove.¹⁰

9. There is an inconsistency here which is left unexplained. First it is said that she saw the stump, and found that her children had been killed; while here it says that she had not seen either. The stump was used as a landmark, by which she recognized the tree in which her nest was.

10. Without stating it explicitly, this verse explains why the dove continues to live in the treetops in the forest, while the pigeon lives in the house in pots set out for her by men. An alternate explanation of this is offered in verse 33-3. Cf. the version of this verse recorded by Epega (n.d.: II, 93-94) and quoted in Chapter XII.

Ifa ni ki ɛni-ti a da Ifa yi fun, ki o ru-(ɛ)bɔ
 Ifa say should person-that we cast Ifa this for (him), should she offer-sacri-
 nitori i-b(i)-eji kan ki nwɔn ma ba ku, ati ki iji
 fice because one:who-born-two one that they not should die; and that thunder-
 ki o ma ba gbe o-ni-(i)ji kan lɔ; ati-pe ki
 storm should it not should carry one:who-be-shelter one go; and-that should
 ɛni-ti a da Ifa yi fun, ki o ma-ɛ rin ni-(i)nu ɛfufu
 person-that we cast Ifa this for (him), should he not-do walk at-belly (of) wind
 ni ɔdun yi ki igi ki o ma ba da pa.
 at year this that tree should it not should break kill (him).

 IWORI OGBE - 2

Alukerese fi irakoro d(i)-agba a da k(o)-Ojigibogi ti
 "Alukerese take crawling become-elder" (be) who cast for-Ojigibogi that
 iɛ Oluwo ode ɔrun. Nwɔn ni ki o lɔ j(ɛ)-iɛɛ
 make Oluwo (of) outside (of) sky. They say should he go eat-message (of)
 ɛbɔ fun awɔn ara rɛ ni ile; nwɔn ni gba-(e)ruku-gba-(i)lɛ kan
 sacrifice for those people his at house; they say sweep-dust-sweep-ground one
 nbɔ ki o ma ba le pa gbogbo ɛrunlɔjɔ igi oko; nwɔn ni
 coming that it not should be:able kill all 165 tree (of) farm; they say
 ki nwɔn ma ɛ ɛgb(ɛwa)-ɛgbɛwa o-l(i)-ori-
 should they (continuative) make 2000-2000 (cowries) one:who-has-head-
 du-(o)ri, akikɔ (ɔ)k(an)-ɔkan.
 strive:for-head, cock one-one.

Gbogbo nwɔn ni awɔn ko ni ɛgb(ɛwa)-ɛgbɛwa ti awɔn yio
 All (of) them say they not have 2000-2000 (cowries) that they will
 fi ru-(ɛ)bɔ. N(i)-igba-ti o de ɔdɔ atori o ɛ
 take (them) offer-sacrifice. At-time-that he reach presence (of) Atori, he make
 ɛgbɛwa ati akikɔ kan; ariran ɛ irinwo, esun ɛ irinwo
 2000 (cowries) and cock one; Ariran make 400 (cowries), Esun make 400
 ti-rɛ. N(i)-igba-ti nwɔn ru ɛbɔ yi tan, Eɛu gbe
 (cowries) that-(of)-his. At-time-that they offer sacrifice this finish, Eshu carry
 ɛbɔ na o di ode ɔrun; nwɔn bere pe awɔn melo ni o
 sacrifice the it become outside (of) sky; they ask that they how:many be who
 ru-(ɛ)bɔ? O ni awɔn mɛta ni o ru-(ɛ)bɔ, o ni ariran, atori
 offer-sacrifice? He say those three be who offer-sacrifice, he say Ariran, Atori
 ati esun; nwɔn ni ki iji lɔ ba awɔn ɛrunlɔjɔ igi oko
 and Esun; they say should thunderstorm go join those 165 tree (of) farm
 ja, n(i)-igba-ti o de ɔdɔ wɔn o bɛrɛ silɔ ori wɔn pɔ
 fight; at-time-that it reach presence their, it begin to twist head their together

Ifa says that the person for whom we have cast this figure should sacrifice that her twins may not die, and that a thunderstorm may not carry away her shelter,¹¹ and that the person for whom this figure was cast should not walk outside in the wind this year lest he be killed by a falling tree.

11. This can be either a thing, as in the case of "Elemele of the farm," or a person, or a guardian spirit. Note the play on the words "shelter" (iji) and "thunderstorm" (iji).

33 - 2

"The Alukerese vine¹ creeps to old age" was the one who cast Ifa for Ojigibogi who was the Oluwo² in heaven. They said he should take word to the people of his house that they should sacrifice, lest a heavy storm should sweep the ground clean³ and kill all the 165 kinds of trees of the farm. They said they should offer six pence each, and one cock apiece.

The trees all said they did not have the six pence with which to sacrifice. However, the Atori bush⁴ sacrificed the six pence and the cock; and the Ariran grass⁵ and the Esun grass⁶ each gave one penny two oninis. When they had finished, Eshu carried their sacrifices to heaven, where they asked him how many had sacrificed. He said that three had sacrificed, and they were Ariran, Atori, and Esun. They said that a thunderstorm should go to fight with the 165 trees of the farm. When the storm came, it began to twist their heads together

1. A creeping plant (Ipomoea involucrata), which grows very slowly. Cf. verse 181-1.

2. Oluwo is one of the titles among babalawo; see Chapter IX.

3. "Sweep-dust-sweep-ground" may refer to a storm or to a supernatural force that comes to earth from heaven and kills people.

4. A bush (Glyphaea lateriflora) with flexible twigs that are used in making switches.

5. An unidentified grass standing a foot or two high.

6. Elephant grass (Pennisetum purpureum) or perhaps Saccharum spontaneum. Described as wild grass resembling sugar cane, used for feeding horses, it stands six feet high and has a blade an inch or two wide.

o si nfa wọn tu; n(i)-igba-ti o de ọdọ esun, esun ni on
 it and pulling them loosen. At-time-that it reach presence (of) Esun, Esun say he
 ru irinwo, o ọbalẹ; n(i)-igba-ti o de ọdọ ariran
 offer 400, he prostrate (himself); at-time-that it reach presence (of) Ariran,
 o bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
 he begin to sing-song that:

Tẹ-(o)ri wọn o tẹ-(o)ri wọn
 "Press-head their, oh, press-head their

Igba ariran ẹfufu lẹ-lẹ
 "200 Ariran wind sway-sway

Tẹ-(o)ri wọn ba-(i)lẹ igba ariran
 "Press-head their touch-ground, 200 Ariran"

O tẹ-(o)ri ariran ba-(i)lẹ. N(i)-igba-ti o de ọdọ atori,
 It press-head (of) Ariran touch-ground. At-time-that it reach presence (of) Atori,
 atori ni:
 Atori say:

O-şoko bani
 "O-shoko." "Bani."

O ni:
 He say:

Alukereşe o l(i)-o fi irakoro rakoro d(i)-agba a da fun iwọ
 "Alukereşe, oh, be-who take crawling crawl become-elder' they cast for you
 Ojigibogi ti işe Oluwo ode ọrun, nwọn ni ki o lọ j(ẹ)-
 Ojigibogi that make Oluwo (of) outside (of) sky; they say should he go eat-
 işe ẹbọ fun awọn ara rẹ ni-(i)le.
 message (of) sacrifice for those people his at-house."

O ni:
 He say:

Ẹfufu-lẹgẹ-lẹgẹ o,
 "Wind-sway-sway, Oh,

O ma ranti ẹ-l(i)-ẹgbẹwa,
 "You (imperative) remember one:who-has-2000 (cowries),

O ma ş(e)-si ranti ẹ-l(i)-ẹgbẹwa
 "You not do-not remember one:who-has-2000 (cowries)."

O ni:
 He say:

Atori ni-(i)gi orişa o,
 "Atori be-tree (of) orisha, oh;

Iji p(a)-ori p(a)-okun mọ mọ pa-(a)tori o,
 "Thunderstorm kill-head kill-rope (imperative) not kill-Atori, oh;

Atori ni-(i)gi orişa
 Atori be-tree (of) orisha"

and to pull them up by the roots. But when it reached Esun, he said that he had offered one penny two oninis, and he prostrated himself and the storm passed over him. When it came to Ariran, he began to sing:

"Bend down their heads, oh, bend down their heads.
 "The 200 Ariran are swaying in the wind,
 "Bend down their heads to the ground, 200 Ariran."

The storm bent the heads of the Ariran to the ground, and passed over them. When it reached Atori, Atori said:

"O shoko." "Bani."

He said:

"'The Alukerese vine creeps to old age' was the one who cast Ifa for Ojigig-bogi who was the Oluwo in heaven. They said he should take word to the people of his house that they should sacrifice."

He said:

"Swaying in the wind, oh.
 "Remember the one who sacrificed sixpence;
 "Do not forget to remember the one who sacrificed sixpence."

He said:

"Atori is the tree of the gods⁷ oh;
 "Let the thunderstorm break down trees and pull down vines, but do not kill
 Atori, oh.
 "Atori is the tree of the gods."

7. Switches made from the atori bush are used in the festivals of certain deities.

O ni:
He say:

Ma şe bẹ̀lẹ̀jẹ̀, atori
“(Imperative) make slender, Atori

Ma şe bẹ̀lẹ̀jẹ̀, o, atori
(Imperative) make slender, oh, Atori”

Ifa ni ki şni-ti a da Ifa yi fun ki o bẹ̀rẹ̀
Ifa say should person-that we cast Ifa this for (him) should he bend:down
fun iji ki iji ki o le foda.
for thunderstorm that thunderstorm should it be:able jump:over (him).

IWORI OGBE - 3

Ọkanjuwa agbẹ ni gbẹ owu akurọ ki o ba le
“Greedy farmer be (he) plant cotton waterside:garden that it should be:able
şe omọ kurubu-kurubu a da fun Adaba ti o nlo nfe Otegbe.
make child huge-huge” (be) who cast for Dove that he going loving Otegbe.

Ifa ni şni-kan nfe fe obinrin kan pepepe bayi bi ko ba ru-
Ifa say person-one wanting love woman one slender, thus if not should offer-
(ş)bọ, gbese re ni yio le wo inu igbo lo.
sacrifice, debt (of) her be (it) will chase (him) enter belly (of) forest go.

Adaba fe Otegbe ko ru-(ş)bọ, gbese re si le wo
Dove love Otegbe not offer-sacrifice, debt (of) her and chase (him) enter
inu igbo lo, n(i)-igba-ti o de igbo o bẹ̀rẹ̀ si ke pe Gbese
belly (of) forest go; at-time-that he arrive forest he begin to cry that “Debt (of)
Otegbe sun mi; igbe na ni i ma ke titi di oni yi.
Otegbe tire me”; cry the be he (continuative) cry until (it) become today this.

Akiko-(a)diş marun ati egbarun ni şbo.
Cock-chicken five and 10,000 (cowries) be sacrifice.

IWORI OGBE - 4

Agbo-ti-(i)ku-toş a da f(un)-A-1(i)-ara ti aya re
“Ram-from-belly-urinate” (be) who cast for-One:who-has-Ara that wife his
tori omọ da Ifa; nwon ni ki o ru-(ş)bọ igiripa
because (of) child cast Ifa; they say should she offer-sacrifice (of) full:grown
obuko kan, akiko-(a)diş kan, ati egbetalelgbon. Nwon ni aya re
he:goat one, cock-chicken one, and 6600 (cowries). They say wife his

He said:

"Be slender, Atori;
"Be slender, oh, Atori."⁸

Ifa says that the person for whom this figure was cast should bend down during thunderstorms so that they may pass over without harming him.

8. This verse explains why the Esun, Ariran, and Atori plants are flexible and can survive the heavy thunderstorms, while the larger trees of the forest are broken down or torn up by the roots.

33 - 3

"The greedy farmer plants cotton in the waterside garden so it may have very large bolls" was the one who cast Ifa for Dove when he wanted to marry Otegbe.

Ifa says someone wants to marry a slender woman; if he does not sacrifice, he will have to hide in the forest because of the debt he owes on her bridewealth.

Dove married Otegbe, but did not sacrifice, and his debt on her bridewealth drove him into the forest. There he began to cry, "Otegbe's debt has tired me out"; this is the cry of the Dove until this very day.¹ Five cocks and two shillings six pence² is the sacrifice.

1. This verse explains why the dove lives in the forest, and also the origin of his cry. For another explanation of why the dove lives in the forest, see verse 33-1.

2. There are five cocks and five units of 2000 cowries.

33 - 4

"Ram urinates from the belly" was the one who cast Ifa for the King of Ara, whose wife cast Ifa because she wanted a child. They said she should sacrifice one full-grown he-goat, one cock, and one shilling seven pence eight oninis. They said his wife

yio ɕe ki o to ri ɔmɔ bi. Bi o ba ru-(ɛ)bɔ yi
will do (this) before she equal see child bear. If she should offer-sacrifice this
tan, yio gbe obukɔ na pɔn lɔ si idi Eɕu.
finish, (she) will carry he:goat the carry:on:back go to base (of) Eshu.

Nwɔn ni nitori-ti Eɕu ni yio fun ni ɔmɔ. O ni on ko
They say because-that Eshu be (who) will give (her) at child. She say she not
le tori ɔmɔ gbe obukɔ pɔn lɔ si-(i)di Eɕu; o
be:able because (of) child carry he:goat carry:on:back go to-base (of) Eshu; she
ni ki Gbɔndin ɛru on ki o gbe obukɔ na pɔn lɔ si
say that Gbɔndin slave (of) her should she carry he:goat the carry:on:back go to
idi Eɕu. N(i)-igba-ti Gbɔndin gbe obukɔ pɔn de idi
base (of) Eshu. At-time-that Gbɔndin carry he:goat carry:on:back arrive base

Eɕu ti o nbɔ ni ile l(i)-ɛhin igba-ti nwɔn ti fi obukɔ
(of) Eshu that she coming at house, at-back (of) time-that they have take he:goat
bɔ Eɕu tan, Eɕu gbe ɔmɔ pɔn Gbɔndin wa si ile;
sacrifice (to) Eshu finish, Eshu carry child carry:on:back Gbɔndin come to house
n(i)-igba-ti o di o-ri-ka-ɕ(e)-k(un)-ɛwa Gbɔndin bi ɔmɔ, nwɔn si
at-time-that it become it-not-count-make-add-ten Gbɔndin bear child; they and
mu ilɛkɛ pupa nwɔn se mɔ ɔmɔ Gbɔndin l(i)-ɔrun, nwɔn ni
take bead red they string (them) against child (of) Gbɔndin at-neck; they say
ki aya Alara wa wo ɔmɔ Gbɔndin, o ni oju
should wife (of) One:who-has-Ara come look:at child (of) Gbɔndin; she say eye (of)
on ti nri pipɔn ina, oju on ti nri rɛbɛrɛbɛ orun, ki on
her have seeing redness (of) fire, eye (of) her have seeing redness (of) sun, that she
ɕɛɕɛ wa ma wo akun pupa ɔrun ɔmɔ Gbɔndin? O
just come (continuative) look:at bead red (of) neck (of) child (of) Gbɔndin? She
ni iku ya ju ɛsin.
say death be:quick surpass shame.

Ifa ni ki ɛni-ti a da on fun yi ma ɕe da ɛja,
Ifa say should person-that we cast him for (him) this not make suspect lie;
o ni bi o ba fɛ bi-(ɔ)mɔ ki o ma d(a)-ɛja; igiripa
he say if she should want bear-child should she not suspect-lie. Full:grown
obukɔ kan ni ki obinrin kan gbe pɔn lɔ si idi Eɕu ki
he:goat one be should woman one carry carry:on:back go to base (of) Eshu, should
o lɔ fi ru-(ɛ)bɔ.
she go take (it) offer-sacrifice.

should do this before she could bear a child. If she completed this sacrifice, then she must carry the he-goat on her back¹ to the shrine of Eshu.

They said this was because Eshu was the one who would give her the child. She said she could not carry a he-goat on her back to Eshu for the sake of a child. She said that her slave, Gbɔndin, would carry the goat for her. When Gbɔndin had carried the he-goat on her back to Eshu and was returning home after they had finished sacrificing it to Eshu, Eshu carried a child on his back to the house of Gbɔndin. After less than ten months' time Gbɔndin bore a child, and they tied red beads about its neck. They said the King of Ara's wife should come to look at Gbɔndin's child. She replied that her eyes had seen the redness of fire, and her eyes had seen the redness of the sun, so why should she come just to look at red beads on the neck of the child of her slave? She said, "Death is better than shame."

Ifa says that the person for whom this figure was cast should not doubt the truth of Ifa; he says that if she wants to bear a child, she must have no doubts. A woman should carry a full-grown he-goat on her back to the shrine of Eshu and offer it as a sacrifice.

1. As Yoruba women carry their children.

IWORI OGBE - 5

Iwori-a-bq-gbe jiję Iwori-a-bq-gbe mimu Iwori b(o)-
 "Iwori-to-sacrifice-aid to:eat," "Iwori-to-sacrifice-aid to:drink," "Iwori cover-
 qmọ Ogbe mọ-(i)lę ki qmọ Ogbe ma ba ku a da
 child (of) Ogbe against-ground that child (of) Ogbe not should die" (be) who cast
 fun Baba-(i)ka(ra) ti o nlọ ko awọn qmọ rę mu ilę
 for Father-(of)-household that he going gather those child his take ground (of)
 (i)bu-(i)do ni oko, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ę)bọ igiripa
 place-(to)-settle at farm. They say should he offer-sacrifice (of) full-grown
 obukọ kan, ęgbafa pipe, ati aşọ a-bi-rọrọ.
 he:goat one, 12,000 (cowries) complete, and cloth that:which-bear-fringe.

Baba-(i)ka(ra) ni orukọ ti a pe ọgan. Nwọn ni ibi-
 Father-(of)-household be name that we call termite:hill. They say place-
 ti o gbe nlọ mu ilę yio gba; n(i)-igba-ti o ru-(ę)bọ
 that he carry going take ground will accept (him); at-time-that he offer-sacrifice
 tan nwọn bo ębọ na mọ-(i)lę; nwọn ni ki o joko le.
 finish they cover sacrifice the against-ground; they say should he sit:down upon
 O bęrę si bi-(ọ)mọ; gbogbo awọn qmọ rę nyọ. Nwọn ni ọgan
 (it). He begin to bear-child; all those child his rejoicing. They say termite:
 bi-(i)wo ni o di t(i)-eku t(i)-ęiyę ni yio ma
 hill bear-hole be it become that-(of)-rat that-(of)-bird be (they) will (continuative)
 sa wọ.
 run enter.

Ifa ni ęni-kan nlọ mu-(i)lę, ki o ru-(ę)bọ ki ibę
 Ifa say person-one going take-ground, should he offer-sacrifice that there
 le gba.
 can accept (him).

IWORI OGBE - 6

Iwori-a-bq-gbe jiję Iwori-a-bq-gbe mimu Iwori b(o)-
 "Iwori-to-sacrifice-aid to:eat," "Iwori-to-sacrifice-aid to:drink," "Iwori cover-
 qmọ Ogbe mọ-(i)lę ki qmọ Ogbe ma ba ku a da
 child (of) Ogbe against-ground that child (of) Ogbe not should die" (be) who cast
 fun Baba-(i)ka(ra) ti a ni ki o ru-(ę)bọ nitori
 for Father-(of)-household that they say should he offer-sacrifice because (of)
 arun ori. Igiripa ewurę kan ati ęgbawa pipe ni
 disease (of) head. Full-grown she:goat one and 20,000 (cowries) complete be
 ębọ. Baba-(i)ka(ra) ni orukọ ti a pe ọgan; o kọ ko
 sacrifice. Father-(of)-household be name that we call termite:hill; he refuse not

33 - 5

"Iwori which brings help through a sacrifice,¹ is to be eaten," "Iwori which brings help through a sacrifice, is to be drunk"² and "Iwori shields Ogbe's child so that it will not die" were the ones who cast Ifa for "Father of Household" when he was gathering his children together to take land to settle in the farm. They said he should sacrifice one full-grown he-goat and three shillings, complete, and a fringed cloth.

"Father of Household" is what we call Termite Hill. They said that the place to which he was going to take land would be large enough to accommodate him. When he had completed the sacrifice, they buried it in the ground and told him to settle there. He began to have many children and all his children were rejoicing. They said that a termite hill which has a hole will have rats and birds entering it.

Ifa says that someone who is going to take new land should sacrifice so that he may find a place to accommodate him.

1. An alternative name for the figure Iwori Ogbe. See n. 1, verse 33-1.

2. This probably refers to the medicine prepared with this verse, which then is eaten or drunk.

33 - 6

"Iwori which brings help through a sacrifice, is to be eaten," "Iwori which brings help through a sacrifice, is to be drunk" and "Iwori shields Ogbe's child so that it will not die" were the ones who cast Ifa for "Father of Household."¹ They said he should sacrifice against a disease of the head. One full-grown she-goat and five shillings, complete, was the sacrifice. "Father of Household" is what we call Termite Hill. He refused

1. The names of the diviners and of the main character here are identical to those in verse 33-5, but the circumstances are different.

si ru-(ε)bq; arun ori bεrε si mu oγan o si bεrε si
and offer-sacrifice; disease (of) head begin to take termite:hill he and begin to
ti ori jin.
from head fall:down.

Ifa ni εni-kan jε o-l(i)-roi ni-(i)nu ile kan, ki
Ifa say person-one eat one:who-be-head at-belly (of) house one, should
εni na ru-(ε)bq ki arun ori ki o ma ba ma
person the offer-sacrifice that disease (of) head should it not should (continuative)
ba ja ki o si ti ibε ma ku nitori-ti bi εni na ba
join (him) fight should he and from there not die; because-that if person the should
ku, iya nla ni yio ma jε awq̄n ara ile rε ti o
die, punishment big be will (continuative) eat those people (of) house his, that they
wa ni ile na; arun ori ni yio si pa εni na.
exist at house the; disease (of) head be will and kill person the.

IWORI - (Q)YEKU - 1

Ijatijati awo q̄run q̄pε a da fun
"Dead:fruit:of:palm:tree secret (of) neck (of) palm:tree" (be) who cast for
Olukoun l(i)-q̄gbq̄n Ijiwo ti a ni ki o ru-(ε)bq̄ nitori
Olukoun at-precinct (of) Ijiwo that they say should he offer-sacrifice because (of)
oko idi rε: q̄okoto idi rε, obukq̄ kan, aike kan, ati
penis (of) waist his: trousers (of) waist his, he:goat one, axe one, and
εgbεtalelq̄gbq̄n. Olukoun ko ru-(ε)bq̄; n(i)-igba-ti nwq̄n ngbe iyawo
6600 (cowries). Olukoun no offer-sacrifice; at-time-that they taking junior:
bq̄ Olukoun sa wq̄ inu igbo lq̄; Olukoun ni a-i-pe do-
wife come, Olukoun run enter belly (of) bush go; Olukoun be we-to-call copulate:
(i)gi-do-(i)gi.
with-tree-copulate:with-tree.

Ifa ni ki e-l(i)-yi ru-(ε)bq̄ nitori oko idi
Ifa say should one:who-be-this offer-sacrifice because (of) penis (of) waist
rε ki ara-(a)iyε ma ba fi oko idi rε da ni
his, that people-(of)-world not should take penis (of) waist his cause (him) at
idagiri nitori-ti nwq̄n ngbe iyawo kan bq̄ wa ba.
catastrophy because-that they carrying junior:wife one come come meet (him).

to sacrifice, and a head disease began to afflict him, so that he began to crumble at the top.²

Ifa says someone who is head of a house should sacrifice, lest a disease of the head afflict him and lest he should die from it; because if he should die, a dire affliction will fall upon his relatives who live in his house. A disease of the head will kill him.

2. The comparison of the crumbling of the top of the termite hill and the head disease is clearer in Yoruba, since the word "ori" indicates both "head" and "top."

34 - 1

"Dead fruit and dead leaves of the palm tree,"¹ diviner of the palm tree's neck, was the one who cast Ifa for Olukoun of Ijiwo precinct.² They said Olukoun should sacrifice the trousers he was wearing, one goat, one axe, and one shilling seven pence eight oninis on account of his penis.³ Olukoun did not sacrifice. When they were bringing his bride to him he ran into the forest.⁴ Olukoun is what we call the bird "Copulate with tree."⁵

Ifa says that this person should sacrifice because of his penis, lest witches injure it, because a wife will soon be brought to him.

1. The dead fruit and dead leaves at the head of the palm tree, near the region from which the palm wine is tapped.

2. Ijiwo is a precinct in the ward or "quarter" (adugbo) of Mọrę in Ifę.

3. Note that the "trousers of his waist" are sacrificed for "the penis of his waist." In verse 4-2 Lukoun is identified as Penis.

4. Because he could not have intercourse, having failed to make the sacrifice.

5. This unidentified bird gets its name from the motions it makes when alighting on a tree. This verse explains why it lives in the forest, and why it goes through its characteristic motions.

IWORI - (Q)YẸKU - 2

Egungun eluju duro l(i)-oko nwo ise ilu roro
 "Silk:cotton:tree (of) field stand at-farm looking:at doings (of) town intensely"
 a da fun Ẹ-(i)wọ-mọ ti o nlo ẹ ọkọ Biri-biri; nwọn
 (be) who cast for Make-you-know that he going make husband (of) Turn-turn; they
 ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ma ba ẹ agbako iku ni ọdun
 say should he offer-sacrifice that he not should make misfortune (of) death at year
 yi. Ẹ-(i)wọ-mọ ko ru-(ẹ)bọ agutan kan, aṣọ ibo-(a)ra kan, ati
 this. Make-you-know not offer-sacrifice (of) ewe one, cloth cover-body one, and
 ẹtala.
 26,000 (cowries).

N(i)-igba-ti Ẹ-(i)wọ-mọ ti ise ọkọ Biri-biri kọ ko
 At-time-that Make-you-know that make husband (of) Turn-turn refuse not
 ru-(ẹ)bọ, ni-(ọ)jọ-kan ti awọn Irun-(I)mọlẹ nfo aṣọ ni Eṣu ta
 offer-sacrifice, at-day-one that those 400-Deity washing cloth be Eshu kick
 Biri-biri ni idi, o si lo ba wọn n(i)-ibi-ti nwọn ti gbe nfo
 Turn-turn at waist; she and go meet them at-place-that they have take washing
 aṣọ. N(i)-igba-ti nwọn ri nwọn ko ọfa bo o, nwọn si bẹrẹ
 cloth. At-time-that they see (her) they gather arrow cover her, they and begin
 si kọ-(o)rin nwọn nle lo pe:
 to sing-song they chasing (her) go that:

Biri-biri bẹ a wo n(i)-ibi a gbe nfo-(a)ṣọ
 "Turn-turn peep:at us look at-place we take washing-cloth;

Biri-biri bẹ a wo n(i)-ibi a gbe nfo-(a)ṣọ
 "Turn-turn peep:at us look at-place we take washing-cloth."

Nwọn nwa nwọn si le de ẹhin-(ẹ)kun-(i)le Ẹ-
 They seeking (her) they and chase (her) arrive back-door-(of)-house (of) Make-
 (i)wọ-mọ; n(i)-igba-ti Ẹ-(i)wọ-mọ ngbọ igbe iyawo rẹ o bọ
 you-know; at-time-that Make-you-know hearing cry (of) junior:wife his, he come
 s(i)-ode, n(i)-igba-ti nwọn ri-i nwọn bẹ l(i)-ori, nwọn si pa
 to-outside; at-time-that they see-him, they cut (him) at-head, they and kill
 Biri-biri aya rẹ pẹlu n(i)-igba-na ni nwọn nkọ-(o)rin pe:
 Turn-turn wife his together:with (him); at-time-the be they singing-song that:

Ẹ iwọ mọ o ẹ ẹ
 "Make you know you do do?"

Ẹ iwọ mọ o ẹ ẹ
 "Make you know you do do?"

Ifa ni ki obinrin kan ma fi ẹṣẹ ko gran wọ-(i)le lai!
 Ifa say should woman one not take foot gather affair enter-house, alas!

Ki gran na ma ba pa ọkọ pa aya pẹlu.
 That affair the not should kill husband kill wife together:with (him).

34 - 2

"The silk cotton tree in the field stands in the farm watching closely what is happening in town"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for "Didn't you know?" when he was going to become the husband of Whirler.² They said he should sacrifice lest he should meet his death during that year. "Didn't you know?" did not make the sacrifice of one ewe, one cloth to cover the body, and six shillings six pence.

"Didn't you know?" the husband of Whirler refused to sacrifice. One day when the Four Hundred Deities were washing their clothes, Eshu forced Whirler to go where they were washing. When they saw her they shot arrows at her, and they began to sing as they chased her:

"Whirler has spied on us where we were washing our clothes;

"Whirler has spied on us where we were washing our clothes."

They followed her chasing her until she came to the back door of her husband's house; and when "Didn't you know?" heard the cries of his wife, he came out. When they saw him, the deities cut off his head and killed his wife Whirler with him. Then they began to sing:

"Didn't you know, you shouldn't have done it?"

"Didn't you know, you shouldn't have done it?"

Ifa says that a woman should sacrifice lest trouble follow her footsteps home; and lest it kill both her husband and herself.

1. Cf. the proverb "The bat suspends itself upside down but watches the doings of all the birds": "Adan dorikodo o nwo ise ẹiyẹ gbogbo."

2. One who whirls, spins, or turns about.

IWORI MEJI¹ - 1

Eru-(o)kọ l(i)-ori ko ni mundunmundun a da k(o)-Eji-koko
 "Handle-(of)-hoe have-head not have brain" who cast for-Two-Knot

Eji-(I)wori ti o nlọ s(i)-ode Qyọ; nwọn ni ki o ru ẹiyẹ-
 Eji-Iwori that he going to-outside (of) Qyọ; they say should he offer bird-(of)-
 (i)le meji, ẹyin adię meji, ati ẹgbẹdọgbọn. Nwọn ni ko ni
 house two, egg (of) chicken two, and 5000 (cowries). They say not be (he)
 ri ibi n(i)-ibẹ, nwọn ni ire ni yio ri. Ifa ni on ko ni jẹ-
 see evil at-there, they say goodness be (he) will see. Ifa say he not be consent-
 ki a ri ibi ni ohun ti a da Ifa si yi.
 that we see evil at thing that we cast Ifa to this.

Oju awo ki ri-(i)bi, Eji-(I)wori
 "Eye (of) secret not see-evil, Eji-Iwori;

Oju awo ki ri-(i)bi, Eji-(I)wori
 "Eye (of) secret not see-evil, Eji-Iwori."

IWORI MEJI - 2

Qrunmila ni o di si mo ni k(i)-o-ro yẹ-(ẹ)ba o ni
 Qrunmila say it become 'sssi'; I say that-who-stands avoid-side; he say
 k(i)-a ọọ omi da, k(i)-a ma ba da omi si alejo l(i)-ara,
 should-we watch water cast, that-we not should cast water to visitor at-body,
 mo ni alejo wo ni? O ni alejo aje ni.
 I say visitor which be (it)? He say visitor (of) money be (it).

Qrunmila ni o di si; mo ni k(i)-o-ro yẹ-(ẹ)ba o ni
 Qrunmila say it become 'sssi'; I say that-who-stands avoid-side; he say
 ki a ọọ omi da, ki a ma ba da omi si alejo l(i)-ara, mo
 should we watch water cast, that we not should cast water to visitor at-body, I
 ni alejo wo ni? O ni alejo aya ni.
 say visitor which be (it)? He say visitor (of) wife be (it).

Qrunmila ni o di si; mo ni ki o-ro yẹ-(ẹ)ba o ni
 Qrunmila say it become 'sssi'; I say that who-stands avoid-side; he say
 ki a ọọ omi da, ki a ma ba da omi si alejo l(i)-ara, mo
 should we watch water cast, that we not should cast water to visitor at-body, I
 ni alejo wo ni? O ni alejo ọmọ ni.
 say visitor which be (it)? He say visitor (of) child be (it).

1. Also known as Eji-(I)wori and as Eji Koko (two knots). See n. 2, verse 35-1.

35 - 1

"A hoe handle has a head, but it does not have brains"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for "Two-Knots,² Eji Iwori," when he was going to Qyo. They said he should sacrifice two pigeons, two chicken eggs, and one shilling three pence. They said he would not see evil where he was going; they said that a blessing was what he would see. Ifa says he will not allow us to see evil in the matter for which we have divined.

"The diviner's eye will not see evil, Eji Iwori;
"The diviner's eye will not see evil, Eji Iwori."³

1. The "head" of the hoe handle is the knot in the piece of wood into which the blade is fastened. Though it looks like a head, it has no brains inside it. The reference here is to the marrow or meat inside the head, and not to intelligence or sense.

2. "Two-Knots" is an alternative name of the figure, Iwori Meji or Eji Iwori. It appears here as a character for whom a divination was performed. Koko is a knot in a piece of wood and the allusion here is to the "head" of the hoe-handle. The word "koko" is onomatopoeic, and really refers to anything which makes the sound "koko" when tapped.

3. This is used as a song, repeated by children when going home to expected punishment. It is believed that if it is repeated, their parents will not punish them.

35 - 2

Qrunmila says we should cry "Sssi."¹ I say that whoever is in the way should duck. He says that we should look before we throw water into the street, lest we throw water upon a visitor. I say, "What visitor?" He says, "A visitor who will bring money."

Qrunmila says we should cry "Sssi." I say that whoever is in the way should duck. He says that we should look before we throw water into the street, lest we throw water upon a visitor. I say, "What visitor?" He says, "A visitor who will bring wives."

Qrunmila says we should cry "Sssi." I say that whoever is in the way should duck. He says that we should look before we throw water into the street, lest we throw water upon a visitor. I say, "What visitor?" He says, "A visitor who will bring children."

1. Sssi is a warning cried at night before throwing water or refuse into the street.

Qrunmila ni o di si; mo ni ki o-ro yẹ-(ẹ)ba o ni
 Qrunmila say it become 'sssi'; I say that who-stands avoid-side; he say
 ki a ẹọ omi da ki a maba da omi si alejo l(i)-ara, mo
 should we watch water cast, that we not should cast water to visitor at-body, I
 ni alejo wo ni? O ni alejo oye ni.
 say visitor which be (it)? He say visitor (of) title be (it).

Ifa ni on ri ire alejo, ire aje, ire aya,
 Ifa say he see goodness (of) visitor, goodness (of) money, goodness (of) wife,
 ire ọmọ, ati ire oye. O ni ki a ni ẹiyẹ-
 goodness (of) child, and goodness (of) title. He say should we have bird-(of)-
 (i)le kan ati agbebọ adię kan.
 house one and hen chicken one.

IWORI MEJI - 3

Qkan yọ ẹinşin, ọkan wọ inu igbo Qgan yọ lọlọ,
 "Qkan sprout firm, ọkan enter belly (of) forest; Qgan sprout long:and:slender
 ja-(ọ)na Ati g(un)-oke nş(e)-ọmọ n(i)-idi biripe yunyun a da
 reach-road" "To climb-hill making-child at-waist biripe yunyun" (be) who cast
 k(o)-Ahere ẹọ-(o)ko ma m(u)-ole ti iş(e)-ọmọ O-ni-
 for-"Farm:hut watch-farm not take-thief" that make-child (of) "One:who-have-
 suru awo Akin-(ẹ)ja. Nwọn ni ọdun yi ni ori rẹ yio ti
 patience," secret (of) "Hero-(of)-fish." They say year this be head his will push
 de ibi-ti yio gbe ma şe iwa. Nwọn ni ki
 (him) arrive place-that will carry (continuative) make destiny. They say should
 o ru-(ẹ)bọ: eku meji, ẹja meji, ati adię meji. O gbọ ẹbọ o
 he offer-sacrifice: rat two, fish two, and chicken two. He hear sacrifice, he
 ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 offer-sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti o şe, ọba awọn ara Igbodo ku, nwọn mu ẹja
 At-time-that it make, king (of) those people (of) Igbodo die, they take fish
 nwọn de s(i)-inu igba. Nwọn ni ẹni-k(u)-ẹni ti o
 they cover (it) to-belly (of) calabash. They say person-any-person that he
 ba le ki Ifa kan ohun ti awọn de si-(i)nu igba na
 should be:able recite Ifa touch thing that they cover to-belly (of) calabash the
 ti o ba si le da-(o)rukọ ẹja ni awọn yio fi j(ẹ)-
 that he should and be:able break-name (of) fish be (who) they will take (him) eat-
 ọba ilu awọn.
 king (of) town their.

Qrunmila says we should cry "Sssi." I say that whoever is in the way should duck. He says that we should look before we throw water into the street, lest we throw water upon a visitor. I say, "What visitor?" He says, "A visitor who will bring a title."

Ifa says that he sees the blessing of visitors, the blessing of money, the blessing of wives, the blessing of children, and the blessing of a title. He says we should sacrifice one pigeon and one hen.

35 - 3

"Qkan sprouts firm; it enters the forest; Qgan¹ sprouts long and slender; it reaches the road," and "In climbing a hill, one's hips move biripe-yunyun"² were the ones who cast Ifa for "Farm hut stands watch in the farm but does not catch thieves," who was a child of "Patient One," the diviner of "Hero of fish." They said that that year his head would bring him to a place where he would achieve his destiny. They said he should sacrifice two rats, two fish, and two chickens. He heard and offered the sacrifice.

After a while, the King of the people of Igbodo die³. They took a fish and put it in a covered calabash. They said that anyone who could recite Ifa verses which touched upon the thing they had put inside the calabash, that is, who mentioned the word "fish," would be made king of their town.

1. Cf. nn. 5 and 6, verse 1-1.

2. A phrase describing the motion of a person's hips when taking high steps in climbing.

Gbogbo awọn babalawo ilu ki Ifa titi nwọn ko da-(o)rukọ
 All those diviner (of) town recite Ifa until they not break-name (of)
 ẹja nitori-na nwọn ko fun-(i)bo. L(i)-ẹhin-na ni Ahere ẹṣo-(o)ko ma
 fish, because-the they not know-ibo. At-after-the be "Farm:hut watch-farm not
 m(u)-ole nkọja lẹ, nwọn si pe pe ki on na wa ki Ifa,
 taking-thief" passing go, they and call (him) that should he also come recite Ifa,
 nitori-ti nwọn ri ide Ifa ni ọrun ọwọ rẹ. Ẹgbọn o da wọn
 because-that they see bead (of) Ifa at neck (of) hand his. But he break them
 l(i)-ohun pe on ko mọ Ifa, o si wi-pe:
 at-voice that he not know Ifa, he and say-that:

Awọn Ọkan yọ ẹsin, ọkan wọ inu igbo Ọgan yọ lẹlẹ
 "Those Ọkan sprout firm, ọkan enter belly (of) forest; Ọgan sprout long:and:
 ja-(o)na Ati-g(un)-oke nṣ(e)-omọ n(i)-idi biripe yunyun a
 slender reach-road; To-climb-hill making-child at-waist biripe yunyun (be) who
 da fun on Ahere ẹṣo-(o)ko ma m(u)-ole ti iṣ(e)-omọ O-
 cast for him Farm:hut watch-farm not take-thief that make-child (of) One:who-
 ni-suru, awo Alapa Akin-(ẹ)ja.
 have-patience, secret (of) Alapa Hero-(of)-fish."

N(i)-igba-ti awọn ara ode Igbodo gbọ bayi, nwọn ni o fun-
 At-time-that those people (of) outside (of) Igbodo hear thus, they say he know-
 (i)bo nitori-ti o ki Ifa o da-(o)rukọ ẹja; nwọn si mu nwọn
 (i)bo because-that he recite Ifa he break-name (of) fish; they and take (him) they
 fi jẹ ọba ilu wọn. Ahere ẹṣo-(o)ko ma m(u)-ole ni orukọ
 take (him) eat king (of) town their. "Farm:hut watch-farm not take-thief" be name
 ti a-i-pe ikoriko.
 that we-to-call Hyena.

N(i)-igba-ti o to iwọn ọdun meṣa ni ikoriko di ọ-l(i)-
 At-time-that it equal period (of) year three be Hyena become one:who-have-
 gla gbogbo ewurẹ ati aguntan ilu bẹrẹ si inu; Eṣu l(i)-o si ngbe
 honor all she:goat and ewe (of) town begin to be:lost; Eshu be-he and taking
 wọn pa-mọ nitori-ti ẹbọ oye nikan ni Ahere ẹṣo-(o)ko
 them kill-against because-that sacrifice (of) title alone be "Farm-hut watch-farm
 ma m(u)-ole ru, ko ru ẹbọ pe ki on ki o ma ri e-
 not take-thief" offer, not offer sacrifice that should he should he not see one:who
 l(i)-enini; nitori-na ni Eṣu ẹ ngbe awọn ewurẹ ati aguntan
 be-slanderer; because-the be Eshu make taking those she:goat and ewe (of)
 ilu pa-mọ. Eṣu si tun tọ awọn ara ilu lẹ, o sọ fun
 town kill-against. Eshu and then approach those people (of) town go, he speak for
 wọn pe, Enyin ko mọ pe ẹniti ẹ fi ẹ ọba ni o npa
 them that, "You not know that person-that you take (him) make king be he killing

All the diviners of the town recited Ifa without mentioning the word "fish," because they did not know enough about specific alternatives.³ Afterward as "Farm hut stands watch in the farm but does not catch thieves" was passing by, they called him to come and recite Ifa, because they saw the beads of Ifa on his wrist. But he replied that he did not know Ifa, and he said:

"'Okan sprout firm, they enter the forest; Ogan sprouts long and slender, it reaches the road' and 'When one climbs a hill, his hips move biripe-yunyun' were the ones who cast Ifa for me, 'Farmhut stands watch in the farm but does not catch thieves' who am the child of 'Patient One,' diviner of Alapa, 'Hero of Fish.'"

When the people of Igbodo heard this, they said he did know about specific alternatives because when he recited Ifa, he mentioned "fish"; so they took him and made him king of their town. "Farm hut stands watch in the farm but does not catch thieves" is what we call Spotted Hyena.

After two years had passed, when Hyena had become a highly honored person, all the ewes and she-goats began to disappear from town. It was Eshu who was taking and hiding them because "Farm hut stands watch in the farm but does not catch thieves" had made only the sacrifice for a title, but had not sacrificed against a slanderer. Therefore Eshu was taking the ewes and she-goats in town and hiding them. Then Eshu went to the townspeople and said to them, "Don't you know that the person you have made king is the one who is killing

3. See Chapter V.

nyin ni ewurẹ ati aguntan jẹ? Awọn ara ilu wa pa ero
you at she:goat and ewe eat?" Those people (of) town come kill thought

pọ nwọn yọ ikoriko ni oye.
together, they pull:out Hyena at title.

N(i)-igba-ti ikoriko ri pe nwọn yọ on kuro l(i)-ori oye, o tun
At-time-that Hyena see that they pull him depart at-head (of) title, he then

tọ awọn babalawo ijọsi lọ o si bi wọn lere pe kin ni
approach those diviner (of) the:other:day go, he and ask them (1) that what be

on le ẹ se ti on fi tun le pada s(i)-ori oye on? Nwọn ni
he be:able do that he take then be:able return to-head (of) title his? They say

ki o ru ekiri ẹran mẹfa, ẹgbafa, ati amu epo kan.
should he offer piece (of) meat six, 12,000 (cowries), and jar (of) palm:oil one.

Nwọn ni ki o gbe lọ si eti odo ni akikọ ki ilẹ
They say should he carry (it) go to ear (of) river at cock (crow) before earth

ki o to mọ, ki o si joko ti ki o ma
should it equal clear, should he and sit:down against (it) should he (continuative)

şş. N(i)-igba-ti ilẹ mọ, ti awọn obinrin ara ode
watch (it). At-time-that earth clear, that those woman (of) people (of) outside

Igbodo si wa pọn omi ni ibi odo ti ikoriko gbe ẹbọ
(of) Igbodo and come draw water at place (of) river that Hyena carry sacrifice

si, Eşu nmu ekiri ẹran (ọ)k(an)-ọkan o si nfi s(i)-inu
to, Eshu taking piece (of) meat one-one he and putting (them) to-belly (of)

amu wọn. Bi o ti nsọ ẹran na si inu amu wọn, ni ẹran na si
jar their. As he have throwing meat the to belly (to) jar their, be meat the and

ndi itan tabi apa ewurẹ, omi ti nwọn pọn s(i)-inu amu
becoming thigh or arm (of) she:goat, water that they draw to-belly (of) jars

di ẹjẹ. Eşu si sọ fun ikoriko pe ki o tẹle wọn ki o
become blood. Eshu and speak for Hyena that should he follow them should he

lọ ko wọn. N(i)-igba-ti ọran na si di ẹjọ, Eşu wa sọ fun
go gather them. At-time-that affair the and become case, Eshu come speak for

awọn ara ode Igbodo pe ẹni-ti ẹ yọ l(i)-oye ti ẹ
those people (of) outside (of) Igbodo that person-that you pull:out at-title that you

ni o npa nyin ni ẹran jẹ, ni ẹnyin na papa si tun ran awọn obinrin
say he killing you at meat eat, be you also yourself and then send those woman

nyin pe ki o lọ ma ko awọn ẹran na wa? O ni
yours that should they go (continuative) gather those meat the come? He say (it)

ko ni şişe, ko ni aişe afi-bi ẹ ba tun le gba
not be to:be:done, not be not-do unless-if you should then be:able accept (him)

pada, ki ẹ si tun fi j(ẹ)-oye.
return, that you and then take (him) eat-title.

1. Bi . . . lere means "to ask."

your ewes and she-goats and eating them?" The people of the town conferred together, and they took Hyena from the throne.

When Hyena saw they had removed him from his position, he went to the diviners he had visited before, and he asked them what he could do to be able to return to his post. They said he should sacrifice six pieces of meat,⁴ three shillings, and one pot of palm oil. They said he should take his sacrifice to the bank of the river at cock's crow, before dawn, and sit down beside it and watch it. When day broke, and the women of Igbodo came to draw water at the place at the river where Hyena had brought his sacrifice, Eshu took the pieces of meat and put one in each of their jars. As he put the meat into their jars, it turned into front or hind legs of a she-goat, and the water that the women dipped into their pots became blood. Eshu told Hyena to follow them and arrest them. When this affair came to court, Eshu said to the people of Igbodo, "Have you taken your king from the throne because he was killing your animals and eating them, while you yourselves have been sending your wives to bring the same meat home?" He said, "Whether you like it or not, you must find a way to take him back and make him king again."

4. Lumps of meat of the size that are served in Yoruba stews, each of which is about a mouthful. This part of the sacrifice is instrumental in restoring Hyena to the throne.

Ifa ni ohun kan ti sọ-(i)nu ni ọwọ ẹni (ohu)n-kan na tun
 Ifa say thing one have throw-be:lost at hand (of) person, thing-one the then
 npada bọ ati pe bi ẹni-kan tabi ẹni-ti o da Ifa yi ba
 returning come; and that if person-one or person-that he cast Ifa this should
 de ipo oye kan, ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ma ba ri
 arrive position (of) title one, should he offer-sacrifice that he not should see
 e-l(i)-enini ti yio mu ki nwọn yọ l(i)-ori oye na.
 one:who-be-slanderer that will take that they pull:out (him) at-head (of) title the.

 IWORI MEJI - 4

Ipenpe-(o)ju nwọn ko ni enini, agba-l(i)-agba irun-(a)gbọn nwọn ko
 "Lashes-(of)-eye they not have dew, elder-be-elder hair-(of)-chin they not
 ẹ a da fun oju ni-(i)gba-ti o nlọ s(i)-ode Apere;
 make fine:color" (be) who cast for Eye at-time-that he going to-outside (of) Apere;
 Apere ni orukọ ti aiye jẹ. Nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ: ẹiyẹ-
 Apere be name that earth eat. They say should he offer-sacrifice: bird-(of)-
 (i)le meji ati ọgbọkanla. Nwọn ni ki o ma ri ibi.
 house two and 2200 (cowries). They say should he not see evil.

N(i)-igba-ti oju nbọ ni ode Apere, o tọ awọn babalawo
 At-time-that Eye coming at outside (of) Apere, he approach those diviner
 lọ, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki oju rẹ ma ba ri bu(ru)-buru
 go, they say should he offer-sacrifice that eye his not should see be:bad-be:bad
 ni ode aiye, ki o mu ẹiyẹ-(i)le kan ki o fi kan
 at outside (of) earth; should he take bird-(of)-house one should he take (it) touch
 oju osi ki o mu ekeji ki o fi kan oju ọtun. A-(yi)o wa
 eye left, should he take second should he take (it) touch eye right. We-will come
 mu ọkan ni-(i)nu awọn ẹiyẹ-(i)le nwọn-yi a-(yi)o fi ru-
 take one at-belly (of) those bird-(of)-house those-this, we-will take (it) offer-
 (ẹ)bọ pẹlu ẹwa ni-(i)nu owo na; a-(yi)o mu ẹiyẹ-
 sacrifice with ten (cowries) at-belly (of) cowries the; we-will take bird-(of)-
 (i)le keji lọ si ile, tabi babalawo yio mu lọ si ile.
 house second go to house, or diviner will take (it) go to house.

Ifa ni ẹni-ti a da Ifa yi fun nfẹ lọ si ẹhin-
 Ifa say person-that we cast Ifa this for (him) wanting go to back-(of)-
 (o)di tabi ajo kan ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki oju rẹ ma ba ri
 town:wall or journey one; should he offer-sacrifice that eye his not should see
 ibi l(i)-ghun.
 evil at-there.

Ifa says that someone has lost something, but it will come back again; and that if someone, or if the person for whom this figure was cast, should achieve a position or a title, he should sacrifice that he will not encounter a slanderer who will cause him to be removed from it.

35 - 4

"Eyelashes¹ do not gather dew; old beards do not have good color" was the one who cast Ifa for Eye when he was going to Apere. Apere is what we call the earth. They said he should sacrifice two pigeons and six pence six oninis. They said he would not see evil.

When Eye was coming to Apere, he went to the diviners. They said he should sacrifice so that his eyes should not see anything bad on earth; he should take one pigeon and touch it to his left eye, and take the other and touch it to his right eye. We will take one of these two pigeons and sacrifice it with ten of the cowries. We will take the second pigeon home, or the diviner will take it home with him.

Ifa says that the person for whom this figure was cast wants to go out of town or on a journey. He should sacrifice that his eyes should not see evil where he is going.

1. Ipenpe includes the eyelashes, the eyelid, the eyebrow.

IWORI MEJI - 5

Palakungo palakungo, ipako igun jo eru ake, be-ni
 "Not:round, not:round; occiput (of) Vulture resemble handle (of) axe, so-be

ko se la-(i)gi a da fun Eji-koko Eji-(I)wori ti o ma
 not make split-wood" (be) who cast for Two-Knot Eji-Iwori that he (continuative)

ketata odu w(a)-aiye.
 third figure come-earth.

Ifa ni eni-kan ni-yi ti awon ara ile re nda l(i)-
 Ifa say person-one be-this that those people (of) house his causing (him) at-
 amu ti nwon ko je-ki o ri ile ati oko gbe yi, sugbon ti
 trouble, that they not consent-that he see house and farm dwell this, but that
 o ba ni gbogbo, yio ri iba-(i)le okan, yio ati bo-(o)ri
 he should have sacrifice, will see touch-ground (of) heart, will and cover-head
 gbogbo awon qta re.
 (of) all those enemy his.

N(i)-igba-ti awon odu merindilogun nbog-wa si aiye Eji-koko
 At-time-that those Figure sixteen coming-come to earth, Two-Knot
 Eji-(I)wori si fe se eketa won wa si ode aiye sugbon awon
 Eji-Iwori and want make third their come to outside (of) earth, but those
 odu merindilogun di qte mo, nwon ni ko ni ri aye gbe
 Figure sixteen tie conspiracy against (him), they say not be see room dwell
 ni-(i)nu aiye. N(i)-igba-na ni Eji-koko Eji-(I)wori mu-(a)ra o lo si
 at-belly (of) earth. At-time-that be Two-Knot Eji-Iwori take-body he go to
 odo awon babalawo pe ki nwon ki o ye on wo pe
 presence (of) those diviner that should they should they examine him look that
 bawo ni on yio ti se le ri aye gbe ni-(i)nu aiye. Nwon ni
 how be he will have make be:able see room dwell at-belly (of) earth. They say
 ewure kan, odo, tetete, gbegbe, ati ejilogun ni gbogbo.
 she:goat one, mortar, tetete, gbegbe, and 44,000 (cowries) be sacrifice.

Eji-koko Eji-(I)wori gbogbo o ru-(e)bo. Nwon ni ki
 Two-Knot Eji-Iwori hear sacrifice he offer-sacrifice. They say should
 o tun ma pada lo si ode aiye; n(i)-igba-ti o tun pada
 he then (continuative) return go to outside (of) earth; at-time-that he then return
 de ode aiye o so fun awon odu medogun na pe on de;
 arrive outside (of) earth he speak for those Figure fifteen the that he arrive;
 nwon ni se awon ti so fun pe ko si aye fun lati
 they say make they have speak for (him) that not be room for (him) in:order:to
 gbe joko ni aiye? N(i)-igba-na ni Eji-koko Eji-(I)wori wa da-(o)hun
 dwell sit:down at earth? At-time-the be Two-Knot Eji-Iwori come break-voice
 o so fun won bi awon babalawo re ti ko pe:
 he speak for them as those diviner his have teach that:

35 - 5

"Not round, not round;¹ the back of Vulture's head resembles an axe handle, but it cannot split wood" was the one who cast Ifa for "Two-Knots, Eji Iwori"² when he was coming to earth as the third³ figure of Ifa.

Ifa says this is someone whose relatives are causing him trouble; they do not allow him to find a house or a farm. But if he sacrifices, he will find peace of heart and will overcome all his enemies.

When the sixteen Figures of Ifa were coming to the earth, "Two-Knots, Eji Iwori" wanted to be third among them on earth; but the other Figures conspired against him. They told him that there was no room for him to live on earth. Then "Two-Knots, Eji Iwori" got ready and went to the diviners, that they might examine his case and tell him how he might be able to find a place to live on earth. They said that one she-goat, a mortar, the ṭṭ leaf, the gbege leaf,⁴ and eleven shillings were required as sacrifice.

"Two-Knots, Eji Iwori" heard and he offered the sacrifice. They said he should return to earth again. When he reached the earth he told the other fifteen Figures that he had come. They said, hadn't they told him that there wasn't room on earth for him to live? Then "Two-Knots, Eji Iwori" replied as his diviners had taught him:

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1. Something flattened, or oval-shaped like a vulture's head.
 2. See n. 2, verse 35-1. Here the allusion is to the knot into which the axe blade is inserted.
 3. In rank order. See Chapters IV and V.
 4. Ṭṭ is Amaranthus caudatus; gbege is Isacina trichantha.

Odo yio ni ki n-ri ibi do
 "Mortar will say that I-see place (to) settle;

Tẹtẹ yio ni ki n-ri ibi tẹ
 "Tẹtẹ will say that I-see place (to) stretch;

Gbegbe yio ni ki n-ri ibi gbe.
 "Gbegbe will say that I-see place (to) dwell."

N(i)-igba-ti awọn odu (i)y(i)-o-ku gbọ iru i-da-(o)hun bayi,
 At-time-that those Figure this-which-remain hear kind (of) to-break-voice thus,
 nwọn ni (O)hūn-kan a a eyi-yi ma kuku le o. Nwọn ni
 they say "Thing-one Ah ah this-this (continuative) indeed strong, oh." They say
 ki o ma joko rẹ; n(i)-igba-na ni Eji-koko Eji-(I)wori t(i)-o
 should he (continuative) sit his; at-time-the be Two-Knot Eji-Iwori have-he
 ri aye joko ni ipo ẹkẹta awọn odu iy(i)-o-ku.
 see room sit:down at position third (of) those Figure this-which-remain.

IWORI MEJI - 6

Ẹṣin ji ni owurọ o ko gbinringbinrin s(i)-ẹnu Orun ko-
 "Horse awake at morning, he gather bit to-mouth" "Sun enter-

(i)bi ẹrẹrẹrẹ wọ-(i)le Q-l(i)-grun yi oṣu l(i)-atete
 place (of) chinks enter-house" "One:who-has-sky turn month at-high:place"

Oṣumare ẹgọ gb(e)-oju Q-l(i)-grun tan yanran-yanran a
 "Rainbow fool dwell-face (of) One:who-has-sky shine bright-bright" (be) who
 da fun idẹ a lu-(i)kin fun oje a bu fun irin ti iṣe omọ ik(an)-
 cast for Brass, who beat-ikin for Lead, who share for Iron that make child stand-
 ẹhin wọn.
 back (of) them.

Ifa ni awọn omọ iya męta ni-yi, ki wọn ru-(ẹ)bọ ki
 Ifa say those child (of) mother three be-this. Should they offer-sacrifice that
 eyi a-bi-k(an)-ẹhin wọn ki o ma ba ku; ki awọn mejì
 this one:who-born-stand-back (of) them should he not should die; that those two
 (i)y(i)-o-ku ma ba fi oju wọn sun-(ẹ)kun eyi omọ kekere
 this-who-remain not should take eye their shed-tears this (of) child small (of)
 inu wọn; bẹ-ni eyi a-bi-k(an)-ẹhin yi ẹnu rẹ mu ju
 belly their; so-be this one:who-born-stand-back this mouth his sharp surpass
 ẹnu abẹ lọ o si le j(ẹ)-iyan pupọ. Nitori-na ki nwọn
 mouth (of) razor go, he and be:able eat-dispute much. Because-the should they
 ni ọbọtọ ori, obukọ kan, ẹiyẹ-(i)le kan, ati ẹgbafa.
 have lump (of) shea:butter, he:goat one, bird-(of)-house one, and 12,000 (cowries).

"The mortar will testify that I see room in which to settle,
 "The t̩t̩t̩ leaf will testify that I see room in which to stretch out,
 "The gbeḡbe leaf will testify that I see room in which to dwell."⁵

When the other Figures heard this kind of a reply, they said, "Ah! ah! this is a very powerful thing indeed, oh!" They said he should take his seat; then "Two-Knots, Eji Iwori" found his place to sit down in the third position among the other Figures.

5. There is a play on words here, and the efficacy of the sacrifice depends in part on the sound of the names of the ingredients. The mortar (odo) insures room in which to settle (do), the t̩t̩t̩ leaf insures room in which to stretch out (t̩), and the gbeḡbe leaf insures room in which to dwell (gbe).

35 - 6

"Horse awakes in the morning; it takes the bit¹ in its mouth," "Sun enters the house through chinks in the wall," "Sky God turns the moon high up above," and "Rainbow, the foolish one, stays in the heavens, shining very brightly"² were the ones who cast Ifa for Brass, beat palm nuts for Lead, and shared³ it with Iron, the last-born of these three children.

Ifa says that these are three children of the same mother. They should sacrifice so that the last-born among them will not die, and so that the two others will not have to weep for this small child in their midst. The tongue of the last-born is sharper than the edge of a razor,⁴ and he argues a great deal. Therefore they should sacrifice a lump of shea butter, one he-goat, one pigeon, and three shillings.

1. This is an onomatopoeic word which refers to anything that makes the sound "gbinringbinrin."

2. Cf. verse 24-1.

3. See n. 4, verse 18-4.

4. The reference here is to Iron.

N(i)-igba-ti nwon ni ki awon omọ iya męta nwon-yi ru-
 At-time-that they say should those child (of) mother three those-this offer-
 (ę)bo ai-ku idę ru-(ę)bo, oje tu, şugbon irin ni irọ ni
 sacrifice (of) not-die, Brass offer-sacrifice, Lead atone, but Iron say lie be
 awon npa, o ni ohun ti Q-l(i)-orun ba ti şe o ti şe
 they killing, he say thing that One:who-has-sky should have make he have make
 tan. Ebo ti irin ko ru ni o şe ma nje. L(i)-
 finish. Sacrifice that Iron not offer be it make (continuative) eating (him). At-
 ghin n(i)-igba-ti o ba to iwon odun marun ti ile ba ti
 back at-time-that it should equal period (of) year five that ground should have
 bo a berę si imu ipata a si fe baję; şugbon ebo ti idę
 cover (him) he begin to take rusty he and want spoil; but sacrifice that Brass
 ati oje ru ni ki je-ki won baję bi won tile wa ni-(i)nu
 and Lead offer be (it) not consent-that they spoil if they even exist at-belly (of)
 ile fun iwon odun pupo.
 ground for period (of) year many.

IWORI MEJI - 7

Qşan awo Itori Polo awo Ilugun
 Horse:whip secret (of) Itori, A:thing:with:a:big:base secret (of) Ilugun (be)
 a da f(un)-olofin l(i)-ode awofin. Nwon ni ohun kan ribiti yio ti
 who cast for-king at-outside (of) palace. They say thing one round will from
 oju orun ba-(i)le da kelekele meje; nwon ni ki apa ki o
 eye (of) sky strike-ground break into:bits seven; they say that arm should it
 ba le ka. Nwon ko ru-(ę)bo be-ni nwon ko si pa
 should be:able go:ground (it). They not offer-sacrifice so-be they not and appease
 Eşu.
 Eshu.

He! agbajo ile kan ni ekun wo yi. Ifa ni awon męfa kan ni-
 He! crowd (of) house one be tears enter this. Ifa say those six one be-
 yi ki a ru-(ę)bo ki nwon ma ba ku tele-(a)ra-tele-(a)ra,
 this, should they offer-sacrifice that they not should die follow-body-follow-body,
 ki o si ku eyi a-bi-k(an)-ghin won; bi awon ara
 should it and remain this one:who-born-stand-back (of) them; as those people (of)
 ile oku nwon-yi ba si nsq-(ę)kun ti nwon ko si tete
 house (of) corpse those-this should and shedding-tears, that they not and quickly
 gbọ ebę ki nwon si dake Eşu ati awon Irun-(i)mole yio ba
 hear request should they and be:silent, Eshu and those 400-Deity will meet

When these three children of the same mother were told to sacrifice against death, Brass sacrificed and Lead made an atonement, but Iron said that the diviners were telling lies. He said that as the Sky God has ordained things, so they are destined to be forever. The sacrifice that Iron refused to make is what is eating him away. Since that time if Iron has been buried in the ground for as long as four years,⁵ he begins to rust and to spoil. But the sacrifice that Brass and Lead made is what prevents them from spoiling even if they stay in the ground for many years.

5. In the fifth year according to the Yoruba system of counting.
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35 - 7

"Horse-whip," the diviner of the town of Itori,¹ and "Something with a big base,"² the diviner of the town of Ilugun, were the ones who cast Ifa for the king at his palace. They said something round would fall from heaven and break into seven pieces on the ground. They said he should sacrifice so that he might keep it under control. They did not sacrifice, and they did not appease Eshu.³

Hey! This is a compound which tears will enter. Ifa says there is a group of six people who should sacrifice so that they may not die one after another until only the last-born among them remains; and so that when their family is mourning and does not heed promptly the pleas to stop weeping, Eshu and the Four Hundred Deities may not

1. A pun on atori, a bush from which switches [opa-(a)tori] are made.
2. Something "like a palm tree."
3. To give a part of a sacrifice when one cannot afford to give it all, as Ariran and Esun did in verse 33-2.

won tẹ-(o)wọ-gba ẹkun na, eyi-ti o ku ni-(i)nu awon omọ na
 them stretch-hand-accept tears the, this-that he remain at-belly their, child the
 yio si tun ku pẹlu.
 will and then die together:with (them).

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila lo si ẹhin-odi o fi awon omọ re
 At-time-that Qrunmila go to back-(of)-townwall, he put those child his
 okunrin si-(i)le lo. N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila wa l(i)-ohun a-ja-
 man to-ground go. At-time-that Qrunmila come at-there that:which-fight-
 ka-(i)le arun wo ilu. Nitori-ti ko si Qrunmila ni ile lati
 about-earth (of) disease enter town. Because-that not be Qrunmila at house to
 da Ifa, awon omọ re okunrin nwon-yi to awon babalawo lo pe
 cast Ifa, those child his man those-this approach those diviner go that
 ki nwon ki o ye awon wo pe ohun ti a-ja-ka-
 should they should they examine them look that thing that that:which-fight-about-
 (i)le arun yi ko fi ni le mu awon lo titi baba awon yio fi
 earth (of) disease this not take be be:able take them go until father their will take
 de. Awon babalawo si so fun awon [Apo-oro, Apo-le-ja,
 arrive. Those diviner and speak for those [Pouch-(of)-poison, Pouch-can-fight,
 Ejemopoluwonran, F(i)-eyi-ṣ(e)-e-l(i)-gbe, Atẹginnidekun, Wo-
 Ejemopoluwonran, Take-this-make-one:who-be-assist, Atẹginnidekun, and Look-
 (e)mi-l(i)-oju] omọ Qrunmila pe ki nwon ki o ru ewure
 me-at-eye] child (of) Qrunmila that should they should they offer she:goat
 (o)k(an)-okan, itan ekiri (o)k(an)-okan, eku meji-meji, ẹgb(afa)-ẹgbafa.
 one-one, thigh (of) bush:goat one-one, rat two-two 12,000-12,000
 (cowries).

N(i)-igba-ti nwon ko gbogbo (ohu)n-kan nwon-yi si-(i)le tan, nwon
 At-time-that they gather all thing-one those-this to-ground finish, they
 ni a fi awon babalawo nwon-yi ba pa awon ewure nwon-yi be-
 say unless-if those diviner those-this should kill those she:goat those-this, so-
 ni a ko gbodo pa won. Ifa ni ẹni-kan ni-yi ti o ti nse ohun nla
 be we not must kill them. Ifa say person-one be-this that he have doing thing big
 kan, ti o si ti se tan; sugbon ki o so-(a)ra gidigidi ki
 one, that he and have do (it) finish; but should he watch-body completely that
 o ma ba fi ohun ke(re)-kere kan bajẹ. Awon babalawo nwon-
 he not should take thing be:small-be:small one spoil (it). Those diviner those-
 yi pa awon ewure nwon-yi nwon mu awon orun awon ewure na
 this kill those she:goat those-this, they take those neck (of) those she:goat the,
 nwon fi won le ori ẹbọ, sugbon eyi a-bi-k(an)-ẹhin
 they put them upon head (of) sacrifice, but this one:who-born-stand-back (of)
 won, Wo-(e)mi-l(i)-oju, so fun awon babalawo pe bi nwon ba ti ise
 them, Look-me-at-eye, speak for those diviner that as they should have make

add to their tears by causing the one remaining child to die like the others.

When Qrunmila went on a journey, he left his six sons behind. When he had gone, an epidemic entered the town. Since Qrunmila was not at home to cast Ifa for them, his sons went to the diviners that they might examine their case and tell them what to do so that this epidemic could not kill them before their father returned. The diviners told Qrunmila's children—"Pouch of Poison," "Pouch can fight,"⁴ "Ejemqoluwoṅran," "This one can be of assistance," "Atẹginnidẹkun,"⁵ and "Look me in the eye"—that they should sacrifice one she-goat each, one thigh of bush goat each, two rats each, and three shillings apiece.

When they had finished gathering all these things together, they insisted that the diviners should kill the she-goats,⁶ although they ought not to have killed them. Ifa says this is someone who has been doing something important and who has already accomplished it, but that he should watch himself carefully, lest it be spoiled through a small detail.⁷ The diviners killed the she-goats as they were told and put their heads on top of the sacrifice; but the last-born, "Look me in the eye," told the diviners that they should make

4. A pouch or sheath made from telescoping tubes of bamboo or leather in which poison is kept.

5. The informant could not translate two of these names.

6. It is implied here, that they did not trust the diviners, suspecting that they would simply add them to their possessions.

7. As Qrunmila's children brought an expensive sacrifice to naught, by quibbling about a small point.

ru-(ẹ)ḃọ, ni ki nwọn ki o ẹ ba on ẹ ti on.
offer-sacrifice, be should they should they make take him make that (of) him.

Nwọn ko si pa ewurẹ ti-rẹ ẹgbọn ti awọn iy(i)-o-ku ti
They not and kill she:goat that-(of)-his, but that those this-which-remain that

nwọn pa ni nwọn ko si-(i)nu apadi ti nwọn si gbe lẹ si
they kill be they gather to-belly (of) potsherd that they and take (them) go to

idi Eṣu. Bi nwọn ti gbe de idi Eṣu, eṣinṣin ẹ
base (of) Eshu. As they have carry (them) arrive base (of) Eshu, fly gather

bo. Awọn ẹburu (iwin)¹ ri, nwọn si rọ wọ inu
cover (sacrifice). Those evil:spirit (iwin) see, they and gush enter belly (of)

ile; awọn eburu nwọn-yi si pa awọn marun ti awọn babalawo pa
house; those evil:spirit those-this and kill those five that those diviners kill

ewurẹ wọn, nwọn si fi eyi a-bi-k(an)-ẹhin si-(i)lẹ.
she:goat their, they and put this one:who-born-stand-back to-ground.

Ni oru ọjọ na gan ni Qrunmila sun ti o si la ala,
At night (of) day the identical be Qrunmila sleep that he and dream dream,

ala na ko si dara. O wa da Ifa, o da Iwori Meji, nwọn ni
dream the not and be:good. He come cast Ifa, he cast Iwori Meji, they say

ki o ma pada lẹ si ẹhin ile rẹ. O si mu-(a)ra o wa
should he (continuative) return go to back house his. He and take-body he come

si ile, ẹgbọn n(i)-igba-ti o fi ma de ile ko ba awọn
to house, but at-time-that he take (continuative) arrive house not meet those

ọmọ marun (i)y(i)-o-ku ni ile; o ba a-bi-k(an)-ẹhin
child five this-which-remain at house; he meet one:who-born-stand-back (of)

wọn. N(i)-igba-ti o si bere awọn marun (i)y(i)-o-ku, nwọn pu-
their. At-time-that he and ask (of) those five this-which-remain, they tell-

(i)rọ fun pe nwọn lẹ si oko. N(i)-igba-ti o to iwọn ọjọ marun
lie for (him) that they go to farm. At-time-that it equal period (of) day five

ni eyi a-bi-k(an)-ẹhin tọ awọn ọrẹ baba rẹ lẹ, o ni
be this one:who-born-stand-back approach those friend (of) father his go, he say

ki nwọn wa tu Qrunmila ni-(i)nu ki nwọn si tu l(i)-
should they come ease Qrunmila at-belly should they and loosen (him) at-

ọfọ awọn ẹgbọn on. N(i)-igba-ti nwọn si de ọdọ
mourning (of) those elder:sibling (of) him. At-time-that they and arrive presence

Qrunmila ti nwọn tu l(i)-ọfọ tan, o bẹrẹ si sọ-(ẹ)kun;
(of) Qrunmila that they loosen (him) at-mourning finish, he begin to shed-tears;

nwọn si bẹ titi ko fẹ gbọ. Qrunmila wa ka ọwọ le-
they and request until not want hear (them). Qrunmila come encircle hand upon-

(o)ri o bẹrẹ si sọ-(ẹ)kun wi-pe:
head he begin to shed-tears speak-that:

1. Iwin is another name for eburu.

his sacrifice as it ought to be made. They did not kill his she-goat, but the others they killed and put in broken pots and placed at the bottom of Eshu's shrine. When they had taken them to the base of Eshu, flies gathered, covering the sacrifice. The evil spirits saw this and rushed⁸ into the house and killed the five children whose goats had been killed by the diviners, but they left the last-born alone.

On the night of that very day Qrunmila dreamed a dream, and his dream was not good. He cast Ifa, and he cast Iwori Meji. They said he should return to his home. He got ready and came home, but when he arrived at his house he did not find the five other children; he met only the last-born. When he asked about the other five, they lied to him saying they had gone to farm. When four days had passed, the last-born child went to his father's friends and asked them to come and comfort Qrunmila and let him begin to mourn for the elder brothers. When they had told Qrunmila, he began to weep; they pleaded and pleaded with him, but he would not listen. Qrunmila put his hands over his ears and began to cry:

8. Literally "gushed," like water.

Apo-oro ọmọ mi o
 "Pouch-(of)-poison, child my, oh,

Ọmọ ẹni wo-(ẹ)ni l(i)-oju
 "Child (of) person look-person at-eye,

K(i)-ẹni rina ọmọ ẹni
 "Should-person see child (of) person.

Apo-le-ja ọmọ mi o
 "Pouch-can-fight, child my, oh,

Ọmọ ẹni wo-(ẹ)ni l(i)-oju
 "Child (of) person look-person at-eye,

K(i)-ẹni rina ọmọ ẹni
 "Should-person see child (of) person.

Ejemọluwọran, ọmọ mi o
 "Ejemọluwọran, child my, oh,

Ọmọ ẹni wo-(ẹ)ni l(i)-oju
 "Child (of) person look-person at-eye,

K(i)-ẹni rina ọmọ ẹni
 "Should-person see child (of) person.

F(i)-eyi-ṣ(e)-e-l(i)-gbe, ọmọ mi o
 "With-this-make-one:who-be-assist, child my, oh,

Ọmọ ẹni wo-(ẹ)ni l(i)-oju
 "Child (☛) person look-person at-eye,

K(i)-ẹni rina ọmọ ẹni
 "Should-person see child (of) person.

Aṭẹginnidẹkun, ọmọ mi o
 "Aṭẹginnidẹkun, child my, oh,

Ọmọ ẹni wo-(ẹ)ni l(i)-oju
 "Child (of) person look-person at-eye,

K(i)-ẹni rina ọmọ ẹni
 "Should-person see child (of) person."

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila sọ-(ẹ)kun titi ti ko gbọ ẹbẹ ni Eṣu wa ba
 At-time-that Qrunmila shed-tears until that not hear request be Eshu come meet
 ti o si sọ fun pe bi ko ba dakẹ awọn ẹgbẹ rẹ
 (him) that he and speak for (him) that if not should be:silent those companion his
 gbogbo yio ba tẹ-(ọ)wọ-gba ẹkun na, ọmọ rẹ a-bi-
 all will join (him) stretch-hand-accept tears the, child his one:who-born-
 k(an)-ẹhin kan-na ti o ku si-(i)lẹ yio si tun ku pẹlu.
 stand-back one-the that he remain to-ground will and then die together:with (them).

"Pouch of Poison, my child, oh,
"When one's child looks him in the eye,
"One should see his child.
"Pouch can fight, my child, oh,
"When one's child looks him in the eye,
"One should see his child.
"Ejemqoluwqran, my child, oh,
"When one's child looks him in the eye,
"One should see his child.
"This one can be of assistance, my child, oh,
"When one's child looks him in the eye,
"One should see his child.
"Atqinnidqkun, my child, oh,
"When one's child looks him in the eye,
"One should see his child."

While Qrunmila was weeping, refusing to listen to the pleading of his friends, Eshu came to him and told him that if he did not keep quiet, he and all his comrades would add to Qrunmila's tears, by causing his last-born child who was still left to die also.

IWORI OFUN - 1

Qwɔn sɔ ibi di ire agba l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa fun ogejan,
 "Thorn change evil become goodness, rope" be-who cast-ifa for Ogejan,

ɛ-l(i)-ɛgbɛ Ifa. Qwɔn sɔ ibi di ire on li o
 one:who-be-companion (of) Ifa. "Thorn change evil become blessing," he be who

da inu aiye on li o ko gbogbo ire wa inu aiye,
 create belly (of) earth, he be who gather all goodness come belly (of) earth.

gran ti ko ba dara ɛhin ni da si.
 Affair that not should be:good back be (he) cast (Ifa) to.

N(i)-igba-ti Eṣu gbɔ pe awɔn ɔrɛ meji sɔ pe awɔn ko ni
 At-time-that Eshu hear that those friend two speak that they no be (they)

ja lai-lai n(i)-igba-na ni Eṣu lɔ da fila a-l(i)-awɔ meji;
 fight ever-ever, at-time-the be Eshu go create cap that:which-has-color two;

apa kan fun-fun, apa kan si dudu; o si lɔ kɔja l(i)-arin
 arm one be:white-be:white, arm one and black; he and go pass at-middle (of)

awɔn mej(i)-(m)ej(i), o si da ija s(i)-ilɛ l(i)-arin awɔn.
 those two-two, he and cast fight to-ground at-middle (of) them.

Ẹbɔ: abo adiɛ fun-fun kan, ɛiyɛ-(i)le fun-
 Sacrifice: female chicken be:white-be:white one, bird-(of)-house be:white-

fun kan, adiɛ dudu kan, ɛiyɛ-(i)le dudu kan.
 be:white one, chicken black one, bird-(of)-house black one.

Ewe Ifa: Ewe a-lu-pa-yi-da, ewe ɔwɔn sɔ idi
 Leaves (of) Ifa: Leaf that:which-beat-change-this, leaf "thorn change evil

di ire ati ɛgbafa.
 become blessing," and 12,000 (cowries).

EDI MEJI - 1

Ẹṣɛ-(i)dɛ ni f(i)-oju tan-(i)na Ɔ-l(i)-ɔbɔnɔn ni
 "Breaking-(of)-brass be take-eye shine-fire" "One:who-has-buzzing be (who)

f(i)-apa mej(i)-(m)ej(i) lu gbɛdu Ajija gogoro awo A-
 take-arm two-two beat gbɛdu" "Whirlwind very:tall" secret (of) One:who-

ji-gunwa a da k(o)-A-ji-gunwa ti o
 awake-sit:in:splendor (be) who cast for-One:who-awake-sit:in:splendor that he

nti ode ɔrun bɔ wa si i-kɔ-(i)le aiye.
 leaving outside (of) sky come come to to-build-house (of) earth.

Ifa ni ɔmɔ-(ɔ)kunrin kan ni a-(yi)o bi yi ode ɔrun ni o
 Ifa say child-man one be we-will bear (be) this, outside (of) sky be he

ti gbe igba iwa rɛ wa ko ni si ɛni-ti yio le
 have carry calabash (of) destiny his come, not be and person-that will be:able

"Thorns turn evil into good, rope"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Ogejan, companion of Ifa. "Thorns turn evil into good" was the one who created the earth and brought everything good to the earth. Afterward when his affairs did not go well, he divined.

When Eshu heard these two friends (Ifa and Ogejan) say that they never quarreled, he made a two-colored cap, one side of which was white and the other black. He passed between these two friends and caused them to fight.²

Sacrifice: one white hen, one white pigeon, one black chicken, and one black pigeon.³

Leaves of Ifa: the leaf "which transforms things when beaten"⁴ and the leaf of "Thorns turn evil into good," and three shillings.

1. Informants explained that "thorns" (ṣwṣṣ) refers to a thorny plant more commonly known as ṣwṣṣ. Ṣwṣṣ is a name for several kinds of prickly bushes, but probably refers here to Acacia ataxacantha or A. pennata, from both of which rope is made. "Thorns turn evil into good, rope" refers to the use of this plant in making rope, despite its thorns, and to the fact that it is planted by diviners in their back yards, where it is readily available for making medicines.

2. It is understood that they began to fight about the color of Eshu's cap. This verse was recorded from the Araba of Modakṣṣṣ, a suburb of Ifṣ settled during the wars of the last century; Araba afterward explained that the left side of the cap was black and the right was white. This verse was not known to four good Ifṣ diviners, but one informant had heard similar tales in which black, white, red, and green were used interchangeably. An Eshu worshiper at Qyṣ described Eshu as making best friends (korikosun) fight by wearing a cap which is black on one side and white on the other; and a more complete version of this tale, with a red and black cap, was recorded from an Eshu worshiper at Mṣṣṣ who concluded with the comment, "This is the real story. The babalawo tell it in Ifa so that people will make sacrifices." Compare also the tale as recorded by Frobenius (1913: I, 240-243), in which the cap has four colors: green, black, red, and white; and as recorded by Herskovits and Herskovits (1931: 455) from an Itṣṣṣṣ Yoruba informant in which the cap is red and white.

3. Note the parallels in the colors of the birds to be sacrificed and the colors of Eshu's cap.

4. Uraria picta.

"The fractured surface of brass shines like fire," "Buzzing One"¹ beats the gbṣṣṣṣ drum with both hands," and "Very tall whirlwind," the diviner of "One who awakes and sits in royal splendor"² were the ones who cast Ifa for "One who awakes and sits in royal splendor" when he was coming from heaven to the dwelling places on earth.³

Ifa says that we will bear a son who comes from heaven carrying his "calabash of destiny."⁴ There is no one who will be able

1. A large beetle with a black shell and red under-wings, whose name refers to the buzzing (bṣṣṣṣṣ) he makes when flying.

2. Notes 2-4 appear on page 313.

ko l(i)-uju tabi ki o da-duro n(i)-inu ohun-k(u)-ohun;
 meet (him) at-eye or should he cause-(him)-stand at-belly (of) thing-any-thing.

iyi rẹ yio pọ pupọ l(i)-aiye, gbogbo enia ni yio mọ ka-
 Glory his will be:much much at-earth, all persons be will know (him) go:around

kiri agb(o)-aiye; yio si ba ẹsẹ ja-(o)ri; kijikiji ọmọ na yio
 about crowd-(of)-earth; will and with row reach-head; shaking (of) child the will

si mu-(i)lẹ ka-(a)iyẹ; a-ji-gunwa ni orukọ ti a
 and take-ground go:around-earth; one:who-awake-sit:in:splendor be name that we

pe ọjọ. Igba abẹrẹ, aguntan kan, aṣọ fun-fun kan, epo ati
 call day. 200 needle, ewe one, cloth be:white-be:white one, palm:oil and

egbejilelogun ni ẹbọ. A-ji-gunwa gbọ ẹbọ o
 4400 (cowries) be sacrifice. One:who-awake-sit:in:splendor hear sacrifice he

ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 offer-sacrifice.

 EDI MEJI - 2

Koto-koto ni a-ipilẹ aran bi o ba d(e)-oke a di gburudu
 "Hollow-hollow be we-found aran, if it should arrive-hill it become huge

bi o ba d(e)-oke a di gbarada a da fun Ipẹsan ti iṣe
 if it should arrive-hill it become immense" (be) who cast for Ipẹsan that make

(ba)ba-(i)lẹ ọja. Ipẹsan ma de o (ba)ba-
 father-(of)-ground (of) market. Ipẹsan (continuative) arrive, oh, Father-(of)-

(i)lẹ ọja, ti o nlọ mu ilẹ ibu-(i)joko. Ipẹsan ni orukọ
 ground (of) market, that he going take ground (of) place-sit:down. Ipẹsan be name

ti a pe ọdan. O-l(i)-ori rere ma d(e)-ọja o.
 that we call ọdan. One:who-has-head good (continuative) arrive-market, oh.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan ni-yi ti yio ni ibu-(i)joko ati ipo pupọ
 Ifa say person-one be-this that will have place-sit:down and room much,

ṣugbọn ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ma ba ri e-l(i)-enini ati
 but should he offer-sacrifice that he not should see one:who-has-enmity and

ohun ti yio din ibu-(i)joko rẹ ku.
 thing that will lessen place-sit:down his (1).

Nwọn ni ki ọdan ru-(ẹ)bọ k(i)-o ma ba ri e-l(i)-
 They say should ọdan offer-sacrifice that-he not should see one:who-be-

enini ni ibu-(i)joko rẹ obukọ kan, akikọ kan, ada kan, ati
 slanderer at place-sit:down his he:goat one, cock one, cutlass one, and

to oppose him or to stop him in anything he undertakes. His glory will be great on earth; everyone will know him all around the world; and he will complete whatever he undertakes. The mention of the name of this child will cause the ground to tremble⁵ around the world. "One who awakes and sits in royal splendor" is what we call Sun.⁶ Two hundred needles, one ewe, one white cloth, palm oil, and one shilling two pence is the sacrifice. "One who awakes and sits in royal splendor" heard and made the sacrifice.

2. A king is said to gunwa when his chairs, carpets, and cushions are set out for him and he comes out in all his royal finery and sits with arms and legs spread out pompously. Possibly it is derived from gun-(i)wa, meaning to mount-destiny.

3. Not only in Nigeria, but all over the world, wherever houses are built.

4. Cf. n. 2, verse 4-1 A.

5. "Kijikiji" describes the way it vibrates at the mention of his name.

6. As in verses 1-6 and 103-1, Day (ojo) was interpreted as meaning Sun (orun). This verse explains why the sun is known and respected the world over, and predicts great fame for the child that is to be born. The rising of the sun in all its glory is compared here with a king sitting in royal splendor. In both this case and in verse 103-1 the rather unusual sacrifice of 200 needles is required; perhaps these symbolize the rays of the sun.

52 - 2

"Hollowing is the foundation of the aran drum;¹ if it goes up, it becomes huge; if it goes up, it becomes immense" was the one who cast Ifa for Ip̄san, Chief of the Market. Ip̄san arrives, oh, Chief of the Market; he is going to take new land on which to settle. Ip̄san is what we call the Qdan tree.² A lucky person arrives at the market,³ oh!

Ifa says this is someone who will have a settlement⁴ of his own and lots of room, but he should sacrifice lest he encounter an enemy and a thing which will decrease the size of his settlement.

They said that Qdan tree should sacrifice one he-goat, one cock, one cutlass, and one shilling seven pence eight oninis, so that he would not encounter a slanderer at his settlement.

1. Kotokoto is said also to represent the scraping sound in hollowing out a log to make a drum. Aran is one of the types of drums used in the worship of Ifa.

2. The qdan tree (*Ficus spp.*) is called Chief of the Market here because it is commonly planted in Yoruba market places as a shade tree.

3. This phrase implies that he finds good fortune, that he "arrives at the market of destiny" (cf. verse 256-1), and, more specifically, that he will have a large family (cf. verse 225-3).

4. That is, a place to live. It is implied that he will also have a large number of people living with him.

egb̄etalel̄ogb̄on. Nw̄on ni bi yio ti ni ibu-(i)joko to yio
6600 (cowries). They say if (he) will have that place-sit:down equal will

na apa yio na ̄s̄s̄, ̄dan gb̄o ̄b̄o o ru obuk̄o kan,
stretch arm will stretch foot. ̄Dan hear sacrifice, he offer he:goat one,

egb̄etalel̄ogb̄on ti īs̄e ti ibu-(i)joko, ̄s̄ugb̄on ko ru akik̄o ati
6600 (cowries) that make that (of) place-sit:down, but not offer cock and

ada kan eyi-ti o j̄e pe ki o le p̄e ni ibu-(i)joko na.
cutlass one this-that it eat that should he be:able be:long at place-sit:down the.

N(i)-igba-ti ̄dan de ibu-(i)joko, o na apa o na ̄s̄s̄ ̄s̄ugb̄on
At-time-that ̄dan arrive place-sit:down, he stretch arm he stretch foot, but

n(i)-igba-ti o na apa na ̄s̄s̄ tan, aw̄on ̄om̄o ara-(a)iyē
at-time-that he stretch arm stretch foot finish, those child (of) people-(of)-earth

de, nw̄on mu ada nw̄on si b̄er̄e si fi ada w̄on l(i)-apa ati
arrive, they take cutlass they and begin to take cutlass trim (him) at-arm and

l(i)-̄s̄s̄.

at-foot.

Nitori-na ki e-l(i)-eyi ru-(̄)̄b̄o ki o ma ba fi
Because-the should one:who-be-this offer-sacrifice that he not should take

̄gw̄o r̄e ̄s̄(e)-īs̄e ni ar̄o ki ara-(a)iyē ma ba yi da-nu
hand his do-work at morning that people-(of)-earth not should turn throw-be:lost

ni oju al̄e r̄e.

at face (of) evening his. •

EDI MEJI - 3

O de rere, o rin rere, o m̄o irin aseko¹ rin l(i)-̄s̄s̄e
"You arrive good, you walk good, you know walking (of) time walk at-foot

mej(i)-(m)ejī, a ̄s̄s̄s̄ ko ohun ̄r̄o s(i)-il̄e o de ̄ḡḡḡ bi
two-two, we just gather thing (of) riches to-ground, you arrive just like

̄om̄o o-ni-(ohu)n-kan a da f(un)-ajeji godogbo ti o
child (of) one:who-has-thing-one" (be) who cast for-Foreigner stout that he

nl̄o si ode Ibini. Nw̄on ni ori ̄eni-kan yio mu de
going to outside (of) Benin. They say head (of) person-one will take (him) arrive

ibi-ti yio gbe ̄s̄e iwa kan, nw̄on ni ̄ogangan ire ni yio
place-that (he) will take make destiny one; they say inevitable goodness be will

ma ̄s̄e. Nw̄on ni ki ajeji-godogbo ti o nl̄o si ode
(he) (continuative) make. They say should Foreigner-stout that he going to outside

1. Often written "asiko."

They said he would find a large enough place in which to settle, and that he would stretch out his arms and stretch out his legs.⁵ Qdan tree heard the sacrifice, and he offered one he-goat and one shilling seven pence eight oninis for a place in which to settle, but he did not offer the cock and the cutlass that he might be able to stay there for a long time. When Qdan tree reached his settlement, he stretched out his arms and he stretched out his legs; but when he had finished stretching them out, people came and took a cutlass⁶ and began to cut off his arms and legs.

Therefore this person should sacrifice in order that what he has achieved in the morning of his life shall not be destroyed by others in the evening of his life.

5. The branches and roots of the tree.

6. This verse explains why the qdan tree grows in the market, and why people pass time by hacking at its roots and branches. It is understood that it met this fate through the cutlass which it refused to sacrifice.

"You arrive here excellently, you walk excellently; you know how to walk on time¹ with both feet; no sooner are riches spread on the ground than you arrive just like the child of their owner," was the one who cast Ifa for Stout Foreigner when he was going to Benin City. They said that someone's head will bring him to a place where he will achieve his destiny; they said a blessing is certain to reach him. They said that Stout Foreigner, who was going to

1. That is, arriving punctually.

Ibini ru eku meji, eja meji, igbin meji, adie meji, ati ejilelogun.
(of) Benin offer rat two, fish two, snail two, chicken two, and 44,000 (cowries).

O gbọ ẹbọ o si ru-(ẹ)bọ.
He hear sacrifice he and offer-sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti o de ode Ibini ohun-k(u)-ohun ti o ba fi
At-time-that he arrive outside (of) Benin, thing-any-thing that he should take
gwọ rẹ kan ni o ndi rere; bi obinrin ko ba ni oyun ti o
hand his touch be it becoming good; if woman not should have pregnancy that she
ba de ọdọ rẹ yio si l(i)-oyun, bi nwọn ba gbe ọmọ
should arrive presence his will and have-pregnancy; if they should carry child
ke(re)-kere ti ai-san nge de ọdọ rẹ yio san
be:small-be:small that not-be:better making arrive presence his will (it) be:better
fun u Bayi ni ajeji-godogbo di ọ-l(i)-ọrọ ati o-n(i)-
for him. Thus be Foreigner-stout become one:who-has-riches and one:who-has-
ile ni ode Ibini.
house at outside (of) Benin.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan ni-yi ti o nfe lọ si idalẹ, ki o mu-(a)ra
Ifa say person-one be-this that he wanting go to distance, should he take-body
ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ba le ri owo, iyi ati ọla ni
should he offer-sacrifice that he should be:able see cowries, glory, and honor at
ibi-ti o nlo na, ati pe ki ibe ki o le san dara-
place-that he going the, and that should there should it be:able benefit (him) be:good-
dara.
be:good.

EDI MEJI - 4

Wa nihin, ara ọrun ki idu ara wọn ni-(i)le l(i)-o da
"Come here, people (of) sky not refuse people their at-house" be-who cast
Ifa k(o)-Eji-ọ-kọ-mi ti a bi ni on ni-(ọ)kan ti o ma
Ifa for-Second-no-refuse-me that they bear at him at-one, that he (continuative)
fi gbogbo inu aiye se ogun je. Eji-ọ-kọ-mi ni
take all (of) belly (of) earth make inheritance eat. Second-no-refuse-me be
orukọ ti a-ipe Egun.
name that we-to:call Egun.

Ifa ni ki a bọ Egun kan, o ni Egun na yio s(i)-
Ifa say should we sacrifice:to Egunun one; he say Egunun the will open-
il(e)-ẹkun ọmọ fun-(ẹ)ni obinrin kan yio bi ọmọ pupọ.
house-door (of) child for-person; woman one will bear child many.

Benin, should sacrifice two rats, two fish, two snails, two chickens, and eleven shillings. He heard and he made the sacrifice.

When he reached Benin, everything he turned his hand to became good. If a woman who could not conceive came to him, she became pregnant; if they brought an ill child to him, it became well. Thus Stout Foreigner became a rich person and the owner of a house in Benin.

Ifa says this is someone who wants to go on a journey. He should sacrifice that he may be able to gain money, glory, and honor where he is going, and that his journey may be of great benefit² to him.

-
2. Note the pun on san (cure or heal) and san (benefit).
-

"Come here, people in heaven do not refuse their relatives a home"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for "My partner² does not refuse my requests," an only child who was about to inherit everything on earth. "My partner doesn't refuse my requests" is what we call the Egungun.³

Ifa says we should sacrifice to an Egungun. He says the Egungun will open the door of children for someone; a woman will bear many children.

1. This translation is open to question. One informant interpreted it as "people in heaven do not refuse themselves a house," but the diviner himself justified the interpretation given by stating, "No one has ever heard of anyone being refused admission to heaven."

2. Literally, "My Second," with reference to the guardian spirit in heaven.

3. See n. 6, verse 7-5. The dead "inherit everything on earth" in the sense that all living things must die.

Ki a fi ọlẹ, agbọn ẹkọ, paşan, ati
 Should we take steamed:beans, basket (of) cornstarch:porridge, whip, and
 obukọ kan bọ Egun na. Ifa ni orukọ ẹni ko ni parẹ
 he:goat one sacrifice:to Egungun the. Ifa say name (of) person not be obliterated
 ko si ni run ni ohun ti a d(a)-Ifa si. Şugbọn ki a wa ọran
 not and be perish at thing that we cast-Ifa to. But should we seek affair (of)
 ẹni si ọdọ Egun.
 person to presence (of) Egungun.

EDI MEJI - 5

L(i)-oni nkọ? apa aja jagada ni-(i)mu-(i)na ọla
 "At-today what:about? arm (of) dog broad at-place-(of)-fire; tomorrow
 nkọ? apa aja jagada ni-(i)mu-(i)na Olokoş fun-fun,
 what:about? arm (of) dog broad at-place-(of)-fire; Whydah be:white-be:white,
 irere idi rẹ fun-fun a d(a)-Ifa k(o)-Ogbegbe ranyin-
 tail:feather (of) waist his be:white-be:white" (be) who cast-Ifa for-Ogbegbe ranyin-
 ranyin ti o nlọ fi ẹsẹ ọrọ ba ile.
 ranyin that he going take foot (of) riches touch house.

Idu wa f(i)-ẹsẹ ọrọ ba ile mi;
 "Idu come take-foot (of) riches touch house my;

Ogbegbe ranyinranyin wa f(i)-ẹsẹ ọrọ ba ile mi.
 "Ogbegbe ranyinranyin come take-foot (of) riches touch house my."

Ifa ni o ri ire aya kan, a-(yi)o fẹ, n(i)-ibi-ti o
 Ifa say he see goodness (of) wife one, we-will love (her), at-place-that she
 kun-(i)lẹ ti ẹ-l(i)-ẹda ẹni si ni o wa nisisiyi.
 kneel-ground take one:who-be-creature (of) person to be she exist right:now.

Akikọ kan, agbebo adię kan, ati ẹgbẹrindinlogun ni ẹbọ ti Idu ru
 Cock one, hen chicken one, and 3200 (cowries) be sacrifice that Idu offered
 n(i)-igba-na pẹlu ẹiyẹ-(i)le mẹrin.
 at-time-the together:with bird-(of)-house four.

EDI - (Q)KANRAN - 1

O şa wọn pa bi ẹya kutukutu ko mu-(i)lẹ
 "He pick:up:one:by:one them kill like yam:stick; early-early not take-ground
 şe biş-a-biş a da fun A-ri-(i)le-w(a)-ọla ọmọ
 make stagger-stagger" (be) who cast for One:who-see-house-see-honor, child

We should sacrifice red steamed beans,⁴ a basket of cornstarch porridge, a whip, and a he-goat to the Egungun. Ifa says that the name of this person will not die out, and he will not fail in the thing concerning which we have cast Ifa, but that he should go to Egungun about the matter.

4. Word magic is implied here, as red steamed beans (ọlẹ) are sacrificed to produce pregnancy, and ọlẹ is the word for embryo.

52 - 5

"How about today? broad foreleg of a dog beside the fire; how about tomorrow? broad foreleg of a dog beside the fire; White Pin Tailed Whydah, its tail feather¹ is white" was the one who cast Ifa for Ogbegbe Ranyinranyin,² when he was bringing riches to whatever house he visited.

"Idu,³ bring riches and visit my house;

"Ogbegbe ranyinranyin, bring riches and visit my house"

Ifa says he sees the blessing of a wife⁴ whom someone will marry. At this very moment she is kneeling beside his ancestral guardian soul in heaven. One cock, one hen, and nine pence six oninis is the sacrifice that Idu offered at that time, along with four pigeons.

1. The Olokoşę (or Ologoşę) bird is the Pin Tailed Whydah (*Vidua macroura*). Males of this species have tail feathers (irere) which are two to three times the length of their bodies. See Fairburn (1933: 98), Abraham (1958: 706).

2. The meaning of this name could not be explained, except for saying that Ranyinranyin is the noise that Ogbegbe makes. In verse 54-7 ranyin means spinning or oscillating.

3. Idu, also unexplained, appears to be another name for Ogbegbe Ranyinranyin, for whom this figure was cast, as Idu is later named as the one who made the sacrifice.

4. There is no relation here between the prediction of taking a wife and the precedent case which refers to wealth.

54 - 1

"He picks them up one by one and cuts them like yam sticks;¹ early in the morning one does not dance bisha-bisha"² was the one who cast Ifa for "He has a house, but goes on to seek honor," the child

1. The sticks to which the yam vines are trained.

2. Bisha-bisha describes the motion of a person in dancing.

Ɖ-l(i)-egbẹrin a-mọ-ka-(a)ra, Nwọn ni ni oşu męta l(i)-oni
 (of) One:who-has-800 to-build-go:around-self. They say at month three at-today
 ni Q-l(i)-qrun yio la ọna iwa fun, şugbọn ki o ru-
 be One:who-has-sky will open road (of) destiny for (him), but should he offer-
 (ę)bọ ọdun męrin nitori iku, n(i)-igba-ti aye ba ma
 sacrifice (of) year four because (of) death, at-time-that room should (continu-
 gba tan ki o ma ba ku ni akoko ti ori rę yio dara.
 ative) accept (him) finish, that he not should die at time that head his will be:good
 Nwọn ni ki o ru obukọ kan, ęgbafa, ọkọ kan, agaro tabi ogigi
 They say should he offer he-goat one, 12,000 (cowries), hoe one, agaro or ogigi
 meji, ęiyę-(i)le meji, ati akikọ meji. A-ri-(i)le-w(a)-ọla ru-
 two, bird-(of)-house two, and cock two. One:who-see-house-seek-honor offer-
 (ę)bọ şugbọn ko ru akikọ mọ.
 sacrifice but not offer cock against (it).

N(i)-igba-ti o di oşu kęta, ni nwọn fi A-ri-(i)le-w(a)-
 At-time-that it become month third, be they take One:who-see-house-seek-
 ọla j(ę)-ọba n(i)-igba-ti o de ori oye, awọn ọmọ rę pe;
 honor eat-king, at-time-that he arrive head (of) title, those child his call (him);
 nwọn ni baba, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ę)bọ nitori iku ti awọn
 they say father, they say should you offer-sacrifice because (of) death that those
 babalawo wi, o ni kaka ki iku pa on, on (yi) o fi igba ẹru
 diviner speak; he say instead:of should death kill him, he will take 200 slave
 wẹrę-wẹrę de-(i)le, o ni on yio fi ęgbẹrin enia korokoro di-
 tiny-tiny watch-house, he say he will take 800 persons sound-sound tie-
 (ọ)na, o ni on yio lọ si aja ilę on yio ęe mini-mini si.
 road, he say he will go to ceiling (of) ground he will make quiet-quiet to.

N(i)-igba-ti o di ọdun kẹrin ti Eşu si ri pe A-ri-(i)le-
 At-time-that it become year fourth that Eshu and see that One:who-see-house-
 w(a)-ọla ko ru-(ę)bọ, o ko awọn iganniganni janmọ l(i)-ęhin, o
 seek-honor not offer-sacrifice, he gather those rascal band at-back, he
 ko ọkọ ati agaro tabi ogigi le wọn l(i)-ọwọ, o ni ki nwọn ma
 gather hoe and agaro or ogigi upon them at-hand; he say should they (continua-
 nişo ni ile A-ri-(i)le-w(a)-ọla, o ni ki nwọn
 tive) proceed at house (of) One:who-see-house-seek-honor, he say should they
 ma wo ile rę. Bayi ni nwọn bẹrę si wo ile A-
 (continuative) break house his. Thus be they begin to break-house (of) One:who-
 ri-(i)le-w(a)-ọla, nwọn si wa ba ni aja ilę, nwọn
 see-house-seek-honor, they and come meet (him) at ceiling (of) ground, they
 si mu, nwọn si wa sun ję. A-ri-(i)le-w(a)-ọla
 and take (him) they and come roast (him) eat. One:who-see-house-seek-honor
 ni orukọ ti a npe olu ọgan tabi ọba ikan lati
 be name that we calling Chief (of) Termite:hill or King (of) Termites; from

of "He has 800 people with whom to surround himself." They said that within the third month from that day the Sky God would "open the road of destiny" for him, but that before the fourth year he should sacrifice against death lest, when he had found his destiny, he should die at the very time that his luck was good. They said he should offer one he-goat, three shillings, one hoe, two digging sticks (either agaro or ogigi),³ two pigeons, and two cocks. "He has a house but goes on to seek honor" made a sacrifice, but he did not include the cocks.

In the third month, "He has a house but goes on to seek honor" was made king, and when he had been crowned his children called on him. They said, "Father, you should make the sacrifice against death that the diviners spoke of." He said that rather than being killed by death, he would set 200 tiny slaves to watch his house, and he would set 800 sturdy men to guard the road;⁴ he said he would go to his underground chamber and keep absolutely quiet.

When the fourth year came and Eshu saw that "He has a house but goes on to seek honor" had not sacrificed, he called his band of rascals together behind him, and gave them hoes and digging sticks. He said that they should go to the house of "He has a house but goes on to seek honor"; he said that they should break down his house. And so they began to wreck the house of "He has a house but goes on to seek honor," and when they came upon him in his underground chamber, they seized him, roasted him in the fire, and ate him. "He has a house but goes on to seek honor" is what we call the "Chief of the Termite Hill," or the "King of Termites." And from

3. The agaro, also known as ganmiro, is a digging stick with an iron head; while the ogigi is made entirely of hard wood. These are used on hard soil, and in breaking down termite hills.

4. The reference is to the different kinds of termites which inhabit the termite hill. Note that "He has a house but goes on to seek honor" is called the child of "He has 800 people with whom to surround himself."

igba-na ni ɔmɔ ara-(a)iyē ti ma ko ɔkɔ, ogigi tabi
 time-the be child (of) people-(of)-earth have (continuative) gather hoe, ogigi or
 agaro ti ɔgan ti nwo ma nwo ti nwo si
 agaro against termite:hill, that they (continuative) breaking (it), that they and
 ma nmu olu ɔgan inu rɛ sun jɛ.
 (continuative) taking Chief (of) Termite:hill (of) belly its roast (him) eat.

Ifa ni ki a ru-(ɛ)bɔ nitori e-l(i)-enini ki o
 Ifa say should we offer-sacrifice because (of) one:who-has-enmity that he
 ma ba le ba iʃɛ ɔwɔ ɛni jɛ n(i)-igba-ti o ba
 not should be:able spoil work (of) hand (of) person (1) at-time-that it should
 ndara fun-(ɛ)ni.
 being:fine for-person.

 EDI - (Q)KANRAN - 2

Ahere oko sisun ni mu ɔpɔlɔ tɔ lu-(ɛ)ni ni oru
 "Farm:hut (of) farm sleeping be take frog jump strike-person at night" (be)
 a da fun ere ti o nfi ɛkun ʃe irahun ɔmɔ. Nwo ni
 who cast for Python that she taking tears make moaning (of) child. They say
 ki o ru-(ɛ)bɔ ki o le bi ɔmɔ ewurɛ kan, aʃɔ
 should she offer-sacrifice that she be:able bear child she:goat one, cloth
 kijipa ara rɛ ejielogun. O gbɔ o ru.
 homespun (of) body hers, 44,000 (cowries). She hear she offer.

Ere si l(i)-oyun o si bi ɔmɔ; awɔn enia si bɛrɛ si
 Python and have-pregnancy she and bear child; those people and begin to
 wi-pe O-l(i)-odu ni ɔmɔ ti Ere bi yi. N(i)-igba-ti ɔmɔ
 speak-that One:who-has-odu be child that Python bear this. At-time-that child
 na si d(i)-agba, o si j(ɛ)-ɔba ni oju iya rɛ, on ni gbogbo enia
 the and become-elder, he and eat-king at eye (of) mother his, he be all people
 si npe ni O-l(i)-odu-(ɔ)ma-(e)rɛ² titi di oni.
 and calling at One:who-has-odu-child-(of)-Python until (it) become today.

Ifa ni ogbo-l(i)-ogbo obinrin kan ni-(e)yi-ti awɔn enia ti nro
 Ifa say old-be-old woman one be-this-that those people have thinking
 pe ko le bi ɔmɔ mɔ, ʃugbɔn ɔ-l(i)-ɔrun yio fun
 that (she) not be:able bear child again, but One:who-has-sky will give (her)
 ni ɔmɔ kan, ɔmɔ na yio si j(ɛ)-ɔba ni oju iya rɛ, gbogbo enia ni
 at child one, child the will and eat-king at eye (of) mother his; all people be
 yio si ma pe sin ni oju iya rɛ.
 will and (continuative) assemble serve (him) at eye (of) mother his.

 1. Ba . . . jɛ means "to spoil."

2. The usual form for "child" is ɔmɔ rather than ɔma.

that time on, humans have taken their hoes and their digging sticks to break down termite hills, and, taking the "Chief of the Termite Hill" from the inside, have roasted and eaten him.⁵

Ifa says we should sacrifice lest an enemy should be able to spoil a person's work at the time when things are going well for him.

5. This verse explains why people roast and eat the "King of Termites," using hoes and digging sticks to break down the termite hills. In this case hoes and digging sticks are used in bringing about the character's downfall, even though he included them in the sacrifice which he made.

54 - 2

"When we sleep in the farm hut, frogs jump on us in the night" was the one who cast Ifa for Python when she was weeping and moaning for a child. They said she should sacrifice one she-goat, the homespun cloth she was wearing, and eleven shillings so that she might be able to have a child. She heard and she made the sacrifice.

And Python became pregnant, and she gave birth to a child; and people began to say that "One who has odu"¹ was this child that Python bore. And when the child grew up, she lived to see him become king. He is the one whom all people are calling "One who has odu, child of Python" (Olodumare)² until this very day.

Ifa says this is a very old woman whom everyone thinks is too old to bear children any more, but the Sky God will give her a child, and she will live to see him become king and to see everyone gather to serve him.

1. Odu in this context was variously interpreted as meaning "something big," "a large pot," and the ritual object diviners of high rank acquire, but not the figure of Ifa.

2. Olodumare is an alternative name for Ọlọrun, the Sky God. This verse explains its meaning according to a commonly accepted folk etymology, and how the name came to be used.

EDI - (Q)KANRAN - 3

Oko Edi ko ni ina, ẹpon Qkanran ko ni ilẹwu
 "Penis (of) Edi not have lice; testicle (of) Qkanran not have downy:hair" (be)
 a da fun Amure a-mi-titi ti ja-(o)gun l(i)-ẹgbẹ ọrun, ti
 who cast for "Sash that:which-shake-titi that fight-war at-side (of) sky," that
 o lọ fẹ Qmọ-l(i)-okun ati Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ. Nwọni ki o ru-
 he go love "Child-be-bead" and "Child-be-brass." They say should he offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ayebọ adię męrin, ẹgbẹtalelọgbọ. Amure a-mi-titi
 sacrifice (of) hen chicken four, 6600 (cowries). "Sash that:which-shake-titi
 ti ja-(o)gun l(i)-ẹgbẹ ọrun gbọ o ru, o si gbe Qmọ-l(i)-okun ati
 that fight-war at-side (of) sky" hear, he offer, he and take "Child-be-bead" and
 Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ ni iyawo lọ si ile rẹ, nwọni si bi ọmọ fun
 "Child-be-brass" at junior:wife go to house his; they and bear child for (him)
 pupọ-pupọ.
 many-many.

Ifa ni ọkunrin kan ni-(e)yi ti Q-l(i)-ọrun yio fun ni aya
 Ifa say man one be-this that One-who-has-sky will give (him) at wife
 meji ni-(i)nu ọdun yi, awọn aya na yio si bi ọmọ fun pupọ.
 two at-belly (of) year this, those wife the will and bear child for (him) many.
 N(i)-igba-ti nwọni bi ọmọ awọn enia si bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin wi-pe
 At-time-that they bear child those people and begin to sing-song speak-that:

Ta-ni l(i)-ọmọ yi o,
 "Who-be has-child this, oh;

Qmọ-l(i)-okun
 "Child-be-bead,

Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ
 "Child-be-brass."

EDI - (Q)KANRAN - 4

Ọpẹ atana l(i)-o jẹ ebi ada Awọ ẹtu ki
 "Palm:tree (of) crossroad be-who eat guilt (of) cutlass" "Hide (of) Duiker not
 gba enia-meji sun a da fun O-l(i)-okun, nwọni ki ofun
 accept persons-two sleep" (be) who cast for One:who-has-sea; they say that loss
 kan ma ẹ-(ẹ)ni ọdun yi. Ẹbọ: ẹiyẹ-(i)le meji, ẹgba
 one (continuative) make-person year this. Sacrifice: bird-(of)-house two, 2,000
 marun. O-l(i)-okun ko ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 (cowries) five. One:who-has-sea not offer-sacrifice.

"Edi's penis does not have lice; Qkanran's¹ testicles do not have down" was the one who cast Ifa for "Sash² which sounds 'titi'³ when it fights on the side of the sky," when he was going to marry "A child is better than beads" and "A child is better than brass."⁴ They said he should sacrifice four hens and one shilling seven pence eight oninis. "Sash which sounds 'titi' when it fights on the side of the sky" heard and made the sacrifice. He married "A child is better than beads" and "A child is better than brass" and brought them home to his house; and they bore many children for him.

Ifa says this is a man to whom the Sky God will give two wives during this year, and that these wives will bear many children for him. When "A child is better than beads" and "A child is better than brass" gave birth to their children, people began to sing:

"Whose child is this, oh?
 "A child is better than beads
 "A child is better than brass."⁵

-
1. Note the appearance of Edi and Qkanran, derived from the name of the figure, in the name of the diviner.
 2. Amure is a sash or a girdle formerly worn by men.
 3. "Titi" is the sound caused by shaking: in illustration the informant jiggled a table, causing the bottle on it to rock back and forth.
 4. See verse 54-5, where these two names are applied to a single character.
 5. The answer is that these two are the mothers.

"The palm tree at the crossroads is the one which feels the cutlass"¹ and "Two people cannot sleep on a duiker hide"² were the ones who cast Ifa for the Sea Goddess. They said someone would suffer a loss during that year.³ The sacrifice is two pigeons and two shillings six pence. The Sea Goddess did not sacrifice.

-
1. People hack at any tree at the crossroad when passing by or when waiting for someone, as they do at trees in the market. Cf. verse 52-2.
 2. The skin of the duiker is only about one and a half by two feet in size, not large enough for even one adult to sleep on.
 3. It is understood that the same prediction applies to the client for whom this verse is recited.

N(i)-igba-ti o ɕe malu O-l(i)-okun si ku, o si
 At-time-that it make (later), cow (of) One:who-has-sea and die, she and
 mu malu na o si tan si-(i)lɛ ɡɛɡɛ bi oku, o ni ki awɔn
 take cow the, she and spread (it) to-ground just like corpse, she say that those
 enia on sɔ pe on ku, o si sɔ fun awɔn enia rɛ ki
 people (of) her speak that she die, she and speak for those people hers should
 nwɔn lɔ pe awɔn babalawo wa, pe ki nwɔn wa sɔ ɡɛɡɛ bi ɕhin
 they go call those diviner come, that should they come speak just like back
 oku on yio ti ri. N(i)-igba-ti awɔn babalawo de ti nwɔn si da
 corpse her will have see. At-time-that those diviner arrive that they and cast
 Ifa titi, ko si ɕni-ti o mu ibo na rara, gbogbo awɔn babalawo si
 Ifa until, not be person-that he take ibo the at:all, all those diviner and
 bɛrɛ si wi-pe ɕhin oku na yio dara. L(i)-ɕhin eyi ni awɔn
 begin to speak-that back (of) corpse the will be:good. At-back this be those
 enia O-l(i)-okun bi awɔn babalawo lere pe, ta-ni babalawo
 people (of) One:who-has-sea ask those diviner (1) that, which-be diviner
 ti o ku s(i)-ɕhin? Nwɔn ni o ku Iru s(i)-ɕhin, nwɔn si lɔ ran-
 that he remain to-back? They say it remain Tail to-back they and go send-
 (i)ɕɛ pe Iru n(i)-igba-ti Iru si de, o da Ifa ti-rɛ o si
 message call Tail; at-time-that Tail and arrive, he cast Ifa that-(of)-his he and
 sɔ pe O-l(i)-okun ko ku ɕugbɔn ofun li o ɕe.
 speak that One:who-has-sea not die, but loss be it make (her).

N(i)-igba-na ni O-l(i)-okun ja-(o)de n(i)-ibi-ti o ti sa-
 At-time-the be One:who-has-sea reach-outside at-place-that she have run-
 pa-mɔ si, o si wi-pe on gba fun Iru nitori-pe o mu ibo
 kill-against to, she and speak-that she accept for Tail because-that he take ibo
 na. Iru si yan ɛbɔ ti-rɛ ni ɕsɛ-k(u)-ɕsɛ fun O-l(i)-okun
 the. Tail and choose sacrifice that-(of)-his at foot-any-foot for One:who-has-sea,
 ewurɛ meji, aɕo kan, erundinlɔgbɔn ki ofun ma ba ɕe O-
 she-goat two, cloth one, 50,000 (cowries) that loss not should make One:who-
 l(i)-okun mɔ. O-l(i)-okun gbɔ o si ru, l(i)-ɕhin eyi o sɔ
 has-sea again. One:who-has-sea hear she and offer; at-back this she speak
 fun awɔn babalawo pe n(i)-igba-k(u)-igba ti nwɔn ba ti nlɔ si ode
 for those diviner that at-time-any-time that they should have going to outside
 awo nwɔn nilati ma mu Iru dani pɛlu wɔn lɔ si
 (of) secret they must (continuative) take Tail hold together:with them go to
 ode awo. Lati igba-na ni awɔn babalawo ti ma mu
 outside (of) secret. From time-the be those diviner have (continuative) take
 Iru dani. Gbogbo awɔn si bɛrɛ si kɔ-(o)rin wi-pe:
 Tail hold. All (of) them and begin to sing-song speak-that:

1. Bi . . . lere means "to ask."

After a while the Sea Goddess' cow died, and she took the cow and laid it out just like a human corpse. She told her family to say that she had died, and she told them to call the diviners to come and divine, just as if she had really died. When the diviners came, they all cast Ifa, but not one of them chose the correct specific alternative;⁴ all the diviners said that following her death things would go well. Then the family of the Sea Goddess asked them if there was another diviner. They said that there was Tail. And they sent word to Tail that he should come. When Tail arrived, he cast his Ifa and declared that the Sea Goddess had not died, but that she had suffered a loss.

Then the Sea Goddess came out from where she had hidden herself; and she said that she would take Tail as her diviner because he had chosen the correct specific alternative. Tail named his sacrifice at once for the Sea Goddess: two she-goats, one cloth, and twelve shillings six pence, so that she would not suffer another loss. The Sea Goddess heard and made the sacrifice. Then she told the diviners that whenever they were going out to divine, they must bring Tail along with them. Since that time diviners always carry Tail with them. And they all began to sing:

4. See Chapter V.

Mo mire-(i)le a-mu-(I)ru
 "I going-house to-take-Tail,
 Iru l(i)-O-ni-(I)fẹ lo
 "Tail be-One:who-has-Ifẹ use."

EDI - (Q)KANRAN - 5

Iṣanṣan awo Idi ọpẹ a da fun alangba ni-(ọ)jọ
 Root secret (of) "Base (of) palm:tree" (be) who cast for Lizard at-day
 ti o ma ni obinrin kan; nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 that he (continuative) have woman one; they say should he offer-sacrifice (of)
 akikọ meji, ẹiyẹ-(i)le meji. Nwọn ni yio fẹ obinrin kan, nwọn ni bi o
 cock two, bird-(of)-house two. They say will love woman one, they say if he
 ba fẹ obinrin na tan ki o ma ba ri ẹni-ti yio ba
 should love woman the finish that he not should see person-that will meet (him)
 ti obinrin na si igbo, nitori-na ki o ru ẹbọ e-l(i)-
 push woman the to forest, because-the should he offer sacrifice (of) one:who-be-
 enini ile. Alangba ru ẹiyẹ-(i)le meji ki on ba le
 slanderer (of) house. Lizard offer bird-(of)-house two that he should be:able
 ri obinrin fẹ, ẹgbọko ru akikọ meji ki obinrin na ba le pẹ
 see woman love, but not offer cock two that woman the should be:able be:long
 l(i)-ọdọ rẹ.
 at-presence his.

Obinrin kan si wa orukọ rẹ a ma jẹ Qmọ-l(i)-okun Qmọ-
 Woman one and exist name her she (continuative) eat Child-be-bead Child-
 n(i)-idẹ, gbogbo awọn ẹranko igbo ni o si nfẹ obinrin yi; ẹgbọko
 be-brass, all those animal (of) forest be they and wanting woman this; but
 ko gba fun ẹni-kan ni-(i)nu wọn nitori-ti o wi-pe ẹni-ti
 not accept for person-one at-belly theirs because-that she speak-that person-that
 yio ba fẹ on ni lati le ka ọsan agba-lu-(i)mọ fun on
 will should love her be to be:able pluck ọsan elder-gather-knowledge for her
 mu, ẹni-ti o ba si le ka ọsan yi fun on ni on yio fẹ;
 drink, person-that he should and be:able pluck ọsan this for her be she will love.
 gbogbo awọn ẹranko igbo ẹ ti nwọn ko le ka ọsan fun Qmọ-
 All those animal (of) forest make that they not be:able pluck ọsan for Child-
 l(i)-okun Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ, ẹgbọko alangba ni-(ọ)kan ni o gb(e)-iyanju ti o
 be-bead Child-be-brass, but Lizard be-one be he take-persevere that he
 si ka ọsan fun Qmọ-l(i)-okun Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ o si di aya rẹ.
 and pluck ọsan for Child-be-bead Child-be-brass she and become wife his.

"I am going home to get my Tail,
"Tail is what the King of Ifẹ uses." 5

5. This verse explains why diviners carry a cow-tail switch (irukẹrẹ), resembling that used by the King of Ifẹ.

54 - 5

Roots,¹ the diviner of "The base of the palm tree" was the one who cast Ifa for Lizard when he was going to take a wife; they said he should sacrifice two cocks and two pigeons. They said he would love a woman and that he would marry her, but that lest someone should drive her away into the forest, he should sacrifice because of a slanderer in his house. Lizard offered two pigeons that he might take a wife, but did not sacrifice two cocks that she would be able to stay with him.

And there was a woman whose name was "A child is better than beads, a child is better than brass,"² who was desired by all the animals of the forest. But she would not accept any of them because she said that the person who would marry her must be able to pick star apples, "The elder who gathers knowledge,"³ for her to suck, and that anyone who picked these star apples for her she would marry. All the animals of the forest tried but were unable to pick star apples for "A child is better than beads, a child is better than brass." Lizard alone persevered, and he picked star apples for "A child is better than beads, a child is better than brass," and she became his wife.

1. Ishanshan is said to describe anything which resembles the way in which the roots of a tree protrude from the trunk into the ground.

2. These names, which refer here to a single individual, are used to refer to two individuals in verse 54-3.

3. Qsan agbalumọ refers both to the African star apple (Chrysophyllum africanum) and the White star apple (Chrysophyllum albidum). The qualifying phrase was said, without further explanation, to refer to the man who stole the true qsan.

N(i)-igba-ti o fẹ tan ni gbogbo awọn ẹranko igbo wa di
 At-time-that he love (her) finish be all those animal (of) forest come tie
 rikiṣi mọ alangba, nwọn si p(a)-ero pọ, nwọn si sọ fun Qmọ-
 plot against Lizard, they and kill-thought together, they and speak for Child-
 l(i)-okun Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ pe alangba ti o lọ fẹ ko ni-(i)le, bẹ-ni
 be-bead Child-be-brass that Lizard that she go love not have-house; so-be (it)
 nitotọ alangba ko ni-(i)le ti gbe, gbọnran ogiri ni i ma
 truly Lizard not have-house that (he) dwell, crack (of) wall be he (continua-
 sun kiri, n(i)-igba-ti Qmọ-l(i)-okun Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ gbọ bayi ti o
 tive) sleep about. At-time-that Child-be-bead Child-be-brass hear thus that she
 si ri pe alangba ko ni-(i)le nitotọ, o si lọ kuro ni ọdọ rẹ n(i)-
 and see that Lizard not have-house truly, she and go depart at presence his at-
 igba-ti alangba wa ile ti yio gbe lọ. N(i)-igba-ti alangba de
 time-that Lizard seek house that (they) will dwell go. At-time-that Lizard arrive
 o bẹrẹ si wa Qmọ-l(i)-okun Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ ṣugbọn ko ri ko si mọ
 he begin to seek Child-be-bead Child-be-brass but not see (her) not and know
 ibi-ti o wa; n(i)-igba-na ni alangba bẹrẹ si wa kiri ti o si
 place-that she exist; at-time-the be Lizard begin to seek (her) about that he and
 nkọ-(o)rin bayi pe:
 singing-song thus that:

Talo r(i)-qmọ yi o
 "Who see-child this, oh?"

Qmọ-l(i)-okun
 "Child-be-bead,

Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ
 "Child-be-brass."

Bayi ni alangba bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin kiri ti o si nwa obinrin rẹ yi kiri
 Thus be Lizard begin to sing-song about that he and seeking woman his this about
 ti o si nwo gbogbo ori igi igbo kiri ko si ri Qmọ-l(i)-
 that he and looking:at all head (of) tree (of) forest about not and see Child-be-
 okun Qmọ-n(i)-idẹ aya rẹ. Bayi ni alangba nwa a kiri ti o si
 bead Child-be-brass, wife his. Thus be Lizard seeking her about that he and
 nwo ori igi titi di oni yi; on na ni o nwa kiri ti
 looking:at head (of) tree until become today this; she also be he seeking about that
 o si ma nwo ori igi.
 he and (continuative) looking:at head (of) tree.

Ifa ni ẹni-ti o wa da Ifa yi yio ri obinrin kan fẹ ṣugbọn
 Ifa say person-that he come cast Ifa this will see woman one love, but

ki o ru ẹbọ e-l(i)-enini ti yio ba ọran
 should he offer sacrifice (of) one:who-has-enmity that will spoil affair (of)

After he had married her, all the animals of the forest plotted against Lizard. They consulted together, and they told "A child is better than beads, a child is better than brass" that Lizard whom she had married did not own a house. Thus it was in truth, Lizard had no house in which to live; he slept about town in cracks in the wall. When "A child is better than beads, a child is better than brass" heard this, and when she saw that Lizard really had no house, she ran away from him while he was out looking for a house in which they could live. When Lizard returned, he looked for "A child is better than beads, a child is better than brass," but he did not see her, and he did not know where she was. Then Lizard began to go about looking for her, singing this song:

"Who has seen this child, oh?
 "A child is better than beads,
 "A child is better than brass?"⁴

Thus Lizard began to sing as he went around looking for his wife and peering into the tops of all the trees of the forest, but he did not find "A child is better than beads, a child is better than brass." Thus Lizard has continued to go about searching for her and to look at the treetops until this very day; it is his wife that he is seeking for everywhere and for whom he is looking in the treetops.⁵

Ifa says that the person for whom this figure was cast will find a woman to marry, but that he should offer a sacrifice lest an enemy spoil his

4. Cf. the song in verse 54-3.

5. It is understood that this verse explains how the lizard came to have the characteristic motion of raising himself on his front legs and peering about. Cf. the version of this tale as recorded by Frobenius (1926: 244-246).

obinrin na jẹ mọ ni l(i)-ḡwḡ to-bẹ ti obinrin na yio fi nu
 woman the (1) against (him) be at-hand equal-so that woman the will make be:lost

mọ ni l(i)-ḡwḡ ti a-(yi)o si fi ma wa ka.
 against (him) be at-hand, that we-will and take (continuative) seeking go:around.

Gbogbo enia ni yio ti fẹ obinrin na ti şugbḡn e-l(i)-eyi ni
 All people be will have want woman the that, but one:who-be-this be (he)

yio fẹ, şugbḡn ki a ru ẹbḡ e-l(i)-enini.
 will love (her), but should he offer sacrifice (of) one:who-be-slanderer.

Ẹni-kan si nfẹ şe ohun kan ti gbogbo enia ti sẹ ti ohun na
 Person-one and wanting do thing one that all people have do that thing the

yio bḡ si-(ẹ)ni l(i)-ḡwḡ şugbḡn ki a ru ẹbḡ e-l(i)-
 will come to-person at-hand but should he offer sacrifice (of) one:who-be-

enini bi ohun na ba tẹ-(ẹ)ni l(i)-ḡwḡ tan ki o ma ba tun
 slanderer if thing the should reach-person at-hand finish, that it not should then

bḡ l(i)-ḡwḡ ẹni.
 slip at-hand (of) person.

 EDI - (Q)KANRAN - 6

Jingbun jingbun finfi a da fun ḡtin a bu fun
 "Jingbun jingbun finfin" (be) who cast for Maize:Beer, they share for

ẹmu a lu-(i)kin fun ogurḡ ḡmḡ iya rẹ nwḡn ni
 Palm:Wine, they beat-ikin for Bamboo:Wine, child (of) mother his; they say

ki awḡn mḡt(a)-(m)ḡta ru-(ẹ)bḡ akikḡ mḡta-mḡta, ki nwḡn ma
 should they three-three offer-sacrifice (of) cock three-three, that they not

ba mu a-mu-bḡ mḡ; ḡtin ko ru-(ẹ)bḡ, ḡḡḡḡ ko
 should take to-take-slip again; Maize:Beer not offer-sacrifice; Bamboo:Wine not

ru bẹ-ni Ẹmu ḡmḡ iya wḡn na ko pa-(E)şu. Lati
 offer, so-be (it) Palm:Wine child (of) mother their also not appease-Eshu. From

igba-na bi ḡtin, ẹmu tabi ḡḡḡḡ ba npa enia ti
 time-the if Maize:Beer, Palm:Wine, or Bamboo:Wine should killing person, that

o si mu u ti o yo, ti o ba si ti le sun, ḡtin,
 he and drink it that he satisfied, that he should and have be:able sleep, Maize:Beer.

ẹmu tabi ḡḡḡḡ ti o mu na yio fo l(i)-oju rẹ. Ni ḡḡ
 Palm:Wine, or Bamboo:Wine that he drink the will clear at-eye his. At day

ti ḡtin, ẹmu ḡḡḡḡ ti nmu a-mu-bḡ ni-yi.
 that Maize:Beer, Palm:Wine, Bamboo:Wine have taking to-take-slip be-this.

 1. Ba . . . jẹ means "to spoil."

marriage so that he will lose his wife, and he will have to go around looking for her. Everyone will desire this woman, but this person is the one who will marry her; still he should offer a sacrifice against a slanderer. And someone wants to do something that everyone is attempting; it will come within his grasp, but he should sacrifice against a slanderer lest, when it is within his grasp, it should not slip away from him.

54 - 6

"Jingbun jingbun finfin"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Maize Beer, shared² it with Palm Wine, and beat palm nuts for Bamboo Wine, three children of the same mother. They said that these three should sacrifice three cocks each, so that things would not slip from their grasp. Maize Beer did not sacrifice; Bamboo Wine did not sacrifice; nor did Palm Wine, child of the same mother, appease³ Eshu. Since that time if Maize Beer, Palm Wine, or Bamboo Wine intoxicate⁴ someone and he has drunk his fill, when he has had a chance to sleep, his head will clear again. This was the day that Maize Beer, Palm Wine, and Bamboo Wine let things slip from their grasp.

1. Jingbun jingbun finfin is an onomatopoeic name for one of the drum rhythms, but here it refers to the sound of drinking; jingbun jingbun represents the sound made in swallowing or gulping, and finfin the sucking sound made when drinking.

2. See n. 4, verse 18-4.

3. See n. 3, verse 35-7.

4. Literally, "to kill." It is implied that if these three alcoholic drinks had sacrificed, the people whom they appear to kill would not recover in the morning. Bamboo wine or raphia wine is made by tapping the Bamboo or Wine Palm (Raphia spp.). Palm wine is made by tapping the Oil Palm (Elaeis guineensis).

Ifa ni ki e-l(i)-eyi ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ohun rere ti o ti
 Ifa say should one:who-be-this offer-sacrifice that thing good that he have
 nmu ma ba le ma bọ l(i)-owo ẹ mọ.
 taking not should be:able (continuative) slip at-hand his again.

EDI - (Q)KANRAN - 7

Edi ranyin ni o da fun okoto nwọn ni awọn enia yio gbe
 "Edi spinning" be who cast for Periwinkle; they say those people will carry
 de ipo rere ni-(i)nu ọdun yi şugbọn ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 (him) arrive position good at-belly (of) year this, but should he offer-sacrifice
 akikọ adiẹ męta ati ẹgbędogun. Ikoto ko ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 (of) cock chicken three and 3000 (cowries). Periwinkle not offer-sacrifice.
 N(i)-igba-ti o şe awọn enia bęre si gbe ikoto ga,
 At-time-that it make (later), those people begin to carry Periwinkle be:high,
 nwọn si nta a n(i)-igba-ti ijo ba si wo ikoto l(i)-ara,
 they and spinning him, at-time-that dance should and enter Periwinkle at-body,
 a si ku l(i)-esẹ-k(u)-esẹ nitori-ti ko ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 he and die at-foot-any-foot because-that (he) not offer-sacrifice.

Ifa ni awọn enia yio gbe e-l(i)-eyi si ipo ọla kan
 Ifa say those people will carry one:who-be-this to position (of) honor one,
 şugbọn ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ai-ku ki o ba le jẹ igba-dun
 but should he offer-sacrifice (of) not-die that he should be:able eat time-sweet
 ipo na.
 (of) position the.

EDI - (Q)KANRAN - 8

Ogiri gba aşọ ilẹ-du bo-(a)ra a la-(ẹ)nu fọ ni
 "Wall accept cloth (of) earth-black cover-body; to open-mouth (not) speak be
 ti amọ a da fun afe ti işe ọmọ Olodumare
 that (of) Lizard" (be) who cast for Grass:Mouse that make child (of) Olodumare;
 nwọn ni ki o ru agbo kan, aja kan, ati akikọ adiẹ kan nitori-pe
 they say should he offer ram one, dog one, and cock chicken one because-that
 ori ẹ yio dara ni ai-ro-tẹlẹ ni-(i)nu ọdun yi.
 head his will be:good at no-think-beforehand at-belly (of) year this.

N(i)-igba-ti o şe Olodumare ran-(i)şẹ si arẹmọ ọmọ
 At-time-that it make (later), Olodumare send-message to first:born child

Ifa says that this person should sacrifice so that a good thing which he has within his grasp should not be able to slip out of his hands again.

54 - 7

"Edi spinning"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Periwinkle.² They said he would be placed in a good position during that year, but that he should sacrifice three cocks and nine pence. Periwinkle did not sacrifice.

After a while people raised Periwinkle high, and they were spinning him like a top; but as soon as dancing had entered his body,³ he suddenly fell dead⁴ because he had not sacrificed.

Ifa says that people will place this person in a position of honor, but he should sacrifice against death, so that he will be able to enjoy the position.

1. The word "ranyin" does not describe spinning itself, but the secondary weaving or oscillating motion of the axis of a top.

2. Perhaps not correctly a periwinkle, but a spiral univalve shell about three quarters of an inch in diameter at the large end, and about an inch long, which is spun as a top by children.

3. That is, when the shell began to spin.

4. This verse thus explains why the okoto or ikoto shell is used as a top, and why it stops suddenly after spinning for only a short time.

54 - 8

"Wall uses a cloth of manure to cover itself;¹ Lizard² opens his mouth but does not speak" was the one who cast Ifa for Grass Mouse,³ who was a child of the Sky God. They said he should sacrifice one ram, one dog, and one cock so that his luck would unexpectedly be good during that year.

After a while the Sky God send word to his own first-born⁴ child

1. The layer of manure ("black dirt") rubbed on the walls of a house is compared here with the clothes worn by humans.

2. Amɔ (or alamu) lizard is a synonym for alangba. Cf. verse 54-5.

3. Spotted Grass Mouse (Lemniscomys striatus).

4. Presumably Grass Mouse.

Olodumare papa pe ki o fi agbo, aja, ati akikọ adię ran-
 (of) Olodumare himself that should he take ram, dog, and cock chicken send-
 (i)şę si on şugbọn arẹmọ Olodumare ran-(i)şę pada pe on
 message to him, but first:born (of) Olodumare send-message return that he
 ko ni owo ti on yio fi ra awọn (ohu)n-kan męta nwọn-yi awọn
 not have cowries that he will take (it) buy those thing-one three those-this; those
 o-n(i)-işę na si npada lọ l(i)-ọwọ ofo n(i)-igba-na
 one:who-have-message the and returning go at-hand (of) emptiness, at-time-the
 ni afe si pe wọn pada o si fi agbo, aja, ati akikọ adię ti
 be Grass:Mouse and call them return he and take ram, dog, and cock fowl that
 on papa ti fę fi ęe ẹbọ fun ara rę ran-(i)şę si
 he himself have want take (them) make sacrifice for body his send-message to
 Olodumare; n(i)-igba-ti Olodumare ri inu rę si dun o si gbe
 Olodumare; at-time-that Olodumare see (this) belly his and sweet he and carry
 apo iwa ran-(i)şę si afe.
 pouch (of) destiny send-message to Grass:Mouse.

Afe si bęrę si di o-l(i)-okiki enia ni-(i)nu
 Grass:Mouse and begin to become one:who-have-praise (of) people at-belly
 aiye; Olodumare si wi-pe ko si ęni-ti yio ni ori rere gęge
 (of) earth. Olodumare and speak-that not be person-that will have head good just
 bi ti afe l(i)-aiye, o ni afe ni yio ju gbogbo
 like that (of) Grass:Mouse at-earth, he say Grass:Mouse be will surpass all
 awọn ọmọ on lọ ni aiye, awọn enia si bęrę si wi-pe o yę afe,
 those child (of) him go at earth, those people and begin to say-that "It suit Grass:
 nwọn ni o ra aja ita o fi agbo bọ baba rę,
 Mouse," they say he buy dog (of) third:day, he take ram sacrifice:to father his,
 nwọn si nkọ-(o)rin wi-pe:
 they and singing-song speak-that:

Ęni ęe oju ko ęe o
 "Person do eye not do, oh,

Ęni ęe-(ę)hin l(i)-o ęe o
 "Person do-back be-he do, oh,

Afe ra-(a)ja ita o
 "Grass:Mouse buy-dog (of) third:day, oh,

Afe f(i)-agbo bọ baba rę.
 "Grass:Mouse take-ram sacrifice:to father his."

Ifa ni ęni-kan wa ti baba rę ọrun yio p(a)-ese fun
 Ifa say person-one exist that father his (in) sky will kill-provision for (him)
 ni-(i)nu ọdun yi şugbọn ki o fi agbo, aja, ati akikọ bọ
 at-belly (of) year this, but should he take ram, dog, and cock sacrifice:to
 baba na.
 father the.

to send him a ram, a dog, and a cock; but his first-born sent back word that he did not have money with which to buy these three things. The messengers were returning empty-handed, and then Grass Mouse called them back and gave them the ram, dog, and cock which he had wanted to sacrifice for himself for them to take to the Sky God.⁵ When the Sky God saw what Grass Mouse had done, he was pleased, and he sent a "pouch of destiny" to Grass Mouse.

And Grass Mouse began to gain fame⁶ on earth. The Sky God said that no one on earth would have good luck like that of Grass Mouse; he said that Grass Mouse would be more important than any of his other children on earth. And people began to say, "Grass Mouse deserves it";⁷ they said "He bought a dog of the third day,⁸ and he sacrificed a ram to his father"; and they sang:

"Those who do things for you before your eyes don't count, oh;
 "Those who do things for you behind your back are the ones that
 count, oh.
 "Grass Mouse bought a dog of the third day, oh;
 "Grass Mouse sacrificed a ram to his father, oh."

Ifa says there is someone whose father in heaven⁹ will provide for him during this year, but he should sacrifice a ram, a dog, and a cock to his father.

5. After at first refusing, Grass Mouse changed his mind and gave these three things, which he had purchased to make the sacrifice prescribed by the diviners, to the Sky God. When a character fails to make a prescribed sacrifice, he usually meets with misfortune, but Grass Mouse gave the sacrifice directly to the Sky God, and as a result he was rewarded.

6. He became a person who has praise names (okiki or oriki).

7. The fame and good fortune of Grass Mouse (Afe) may refer to the use of the tail of a rat known as Afe-imojo instead of a cow-tail switch by the King of Qyo, according to Crowther, who cites a proverb, "Whoever kills afe-imojo must take it to Qyo; ęda only is due to the people of the province to eat" (ęda is a kind of rat remarkable for its fast breeding).

8. This may refer to Grass Mouse's hesitation in giving it to the Sky God.

9. That is, his own father who has died, not the Sky God.

EDI - (I)ROSUN - 1

Edi rusurusu, Edi o sun, Edi o wo ɛni-ti ko sun ni
 "Edi very:red, Edi who sleep, Edi who relax, person-that not sleep be (he)
 mọ ibi ilẹ gbe mọ" a da fun iwowo ti nlo si-(i)nu
 know place ground take clear" (be) who cast for Porcupine that going to-belly (of)
 ogan nwọn ni ki o fi ɛiyɛ-(i)le meji, akikọ adię meji,
 termite:hill; they say should he take bird-(of)-house two, cock chicken two,
 ati egbejilelogun ru-(ɛ)bọ. Şugbọn babalawo na yio mu akikọ
 and 4400 (cowries) offer-sacrifice. But diviner the will take cock
 adię kan fun ɛni-ti o ru-(ɛ)bọ na ni-(i)nu awọn ohun ti
 chicken one for person-that he offer-sacrifice the at-belly (of) those thing that
 a yan nwọn-yi pe ki o lo fi bọ ori rẹ. Iwowo
 he choose those-this that should he go take (it) sacrifice:to head his. Porcupine
 ru-(ɛ)bọ, awọn enia si bẹrẹ si wi-pe ori iwowo la-
 offer-sacrifice, those people and begin to speak-that "Head (of) Porcupine open-
 (o)na fun u nitori-ti o ru-(ɛ)bọ.
 road for him because-that he offer-sacrifice."

Ifa ni ori ɛni-ti o da-(I)fa yi yio la-(o)na fun bi o
 Ifa say head (of) person-that he cast-Ifa this will open-road for (him) if he
 ba ru-(ɛ)bọ.
 should offer-sacrifice.

EDI - (I)ROSUN - 2

A ki i-di a-l(i)-agẹmọ mọ ori owu a
 "We not to-catch:unaware one:who-be-chameleon (1) (at) head (of) cotton; we
 ki i-di odẹ fẹrẹfẹ mọ epo ẹpa a da fun
 not to-catch:unaware bat quick-quick (1) (at) shell (of) peanut" (be) who cast for
 Qlọramuole ọmọ A-yi-bo-l(i)-ori-ohun-gbogbo, Ojo ko
 Qlọramuole child (of) "One:who-turn-cover-at-head-(of)-things-all," "Rain not
 mu-(ɛ)kọ-l(i)-ọra ni ọjọ ti mu-(ɛ)ni-mu-(ɛ)ni ọrun
 drink-cornstarch:gruel-at-morning" at day that take-person-take-person (of) sky
 de n(i)-igba-ti ɛnimọ ọrun nhan nwọn ni ki o ru igba
 arrive at-time-that evil:thing (of) sky appearing; they say should he offer calabash
 ogi meji, ɛiyɛ-(i)le meji, ati egbejila nwọn ni e-
 (of) cornstarch two, bird-(of)-house two, and 2400 (cowries); they say one:who-
 l(i)-e-mu ọrun ko ni le mu lo. Qlọramuole ni orukọ ti
 be-who-take (of) sky not be (he) be:able take (him) go. Qlọramuole be name that

1. Di . . . mọ means "to catch unawares."

55 - 1

"Very red¹ Edi, Edi who sleeps,² Edi who relaxes; the one who doesn't go to sleep knows where the sun rises" was the one who cast Ifa for Porcupine³ when he was going to break into a termite hill. They said he should sacrifice two pigeons, two cocks, and one shilling one pence two oninis. But the diviner will set aside one of the two cocks for the person to take and sacrifice to his head.⁴ Porcupine sacrificed, and the people began to say, "Porcupine's head opened the way for him because he sacrificed."⁵

Ifa says that the head of the person for whom this figure is cast will "open the way" for him if he sacrifices.

1. "Rusurusu" is usually an adverb that qualifies verbs meaning only "to be red" (pipa, pipon). The color indicated is a yellowish, red such as is seen only in the sky at sunset.

2. Note the pun here on Edi-(i)rosun and Edi o sun.

3. Iwowo (or egudu) was said to be the porcupine, more commonly known as orę.

4. To the soul which controls his luck.

5. The verse thus explains why the iwowo is successful in breaking into termite hills and eating the termites.

55 - 2

"One does not catch chameleons unaware on cotton plants; one does not catch nimble bats unaware on peanut shells"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Qlqramuole,² child of "One who turns and covers over everything," "Rain prevents us from buying cornstarch gruel to drink in the morning"³ on the day that something which takes people away arrived from heaven, when an evil thing from heaven was appearing. They said he should sacrifice two calabashes of cornstarch, two pigeons, and seven pence two oninis. They said that the thing from heaven which takes people away will not be able to take him. Qlqramuole is the name

1. These truisms are typical of the overstatements of proverbs, since chameleons are never found on cotton plants, nor bats on peanut shells.

2. This title could not be analyzed or its meaning explained.

3. These are two praise names for the parent of Qlqramuole. The latter, it was explained, implies that because it was raining, he was inside the house when the evil thing came, and thus escaped. Ekpọ is a drink made of cornstarch (ogi) in warm water, which can be bought in the market and which commonly serves as the first meal of the day.

ọpọlọ jẹ, n(i)-igba-ti a ba ba ọpọlọ bi ko jọ eku iṣe ni
 frog eat, at-time-that we should meet frog, if (it) not resemble rat; make be
 ai-fi si-(i)lẹ.
 not-put to-ground.

Ifa ni ohun ti a da on si yi on ko ni jẹ-ki apa ara-
 Ifa say thing that we cast him to this he not be consent-that arm (of) people-
 (a)iyе ka-(ẹ)ni tabi on ko ni fi aye fun ibi lati ni
 (of)-earth go:around-person or he not be take chance give place to have
 agbara l(i)-ori ẹni.
 strength at-head (of) person.

OKANRAN MEJI - 1

Qyẹ ko san ara imọnamọna ko jirẹrẹ bu akọ aparo
 "Harmattan not crash thunder; lightning not secretly flash; male partridge
 ati abo aparo ko la ogbe l(i)-ori ṣanṣan a da fun Ereje dudu
 and female partridge not open comb at-head upright" (be) who cast for Ereje black,
 yeye agbo, on ni o bi erin ati ẹfọn o si bi agbo ṣe
 mother (of) Ram, she be who bore Elephant and Buffalo, she and bore Ram make
 ẹkẹta; awọn mẹt(a)-(m)ẹta gbẹ ila, Ẹngọ si nwa ti ọrun ji ila
 third; those three-three plant ochra, Shango and coming from sky steal ochra
 nwọn ka, n(i)-igba-ti iya wọn ri pe a nji ila na ka, o
 their pluck, at-time-that mother their see that they stealing ochra the pluck, she
 ni on ko ma mọ ohun ti o nka ila. Erin wa bẹrẹ
 say she not (continuative) know thing that it plucking ochra. Elephant come begin
 si ṣọ, ni-(ọ)jọ-kan Ẹngọ wa ka ila yi, n(i)-igba-ti o ri
 to watch (it), at-day-one Shango come pluck ochra this, at-time-that he see
 erin, o bu mọ, erin bẹ lu igbo, ẹfọn na lọ
 Elephant, he roar against (him), Elephant jump against forest; Buffalo also go
 ṣọ-(o)ko na, n(i)-igba-ti Ẹngọ ri ẹfọn, o bu mọ, on na
 watch-farm the, at-time-that Shango see Buffalo, he roar against (him) he also
 si bẹ lu igbo pẹlu; n(i)-igba-ti o kan agbo, n(i)-
 and jump against forest together:with (Elephant). At-time-that it touch Ram, at-
 igba-ti o nlọ o mu ewurẹ dani nitori-ti ọmọ-ọdọ agbo
 time-that he going he take She:goat hold because-that child-young:animal (of) Ram
 ni ewurẹ ṣe, n(i)-igba-ti Ẹngọ na nbọ on na mu aja dani, n(i)-igba-
 be She:goat make, at-time-that Shango also coming he also take Dog hold, at-time-
 ti Ẹngọ yọ si oko ti o ri agbo, o bu mọ ọ, agbo na si
 that Shango appear to farm that he see Ram, he roar against him, Ram also and

of Frog. When we see Frog, if it does not resemble a rat, we do not leave him alone.⁴

Ifa says he will not allow other people to hinder this person in the matter for which he has cast Ifa, nor will he give them a chance to have power over him.

4. The meaning of this is obscure, and could not be clarified by the informant.

86 - 1

"Thunder does not crash during the harmattan;¹ lightning does not flash secretly; male and female partridges do not have upright combs on their heads" was the one who cast Ifa for black Ereje, mother of Ram, she who gave birth to Elephant and Buffalo, and whose third child was Ram. These three children planted ochra, and the God of Thunder came from the sky to steal it; when their mother saw that ochra was being stolen, she said she did not know what was picking it. Elephant began to watch the field, and one day the God of Thunder came back to pick ochra; when he saw Elephant, he roared at him, and Elephant fled into the forest. Buffalo also went to watch the farm; when the God of Thunder saw Buffalo, he roared at him, and he, too, fled into the forest. When it came Ram's turn, he took She-goat along with him because she was his servant; and when the God of Thunder was coming, he brought Dog along. When the God of Thunder reached the Farm and saw Ram, he roared at him, but Ram

1. During the dry season, from about December through February, the dry, dust-laden harmattan wind blows down from the Sahara. Thunderstorms are associated with the rainy season, particularly during June and July.

bu mọ bi o ti ngun agbo ni ọbẹ, bẹ-ni agbo na nkan,
 roar against (him), as he have stabbing Ram at knife, so-be Ram also butting

N(i)-igba-ti o pẹ ti nwọn ti nja, ọbẹ Şongo da owo
 (him). At-time-that it stay that they have fighting, knife (of) Shango break, horn
 agbo na si da pẹlu; Şongo ran aja pe ki o lọ mu
 (of) Ram also and break together:with (it); Shango send Dog that should he go take
 ọbẹ miran wa fun on, n(i)-igba-ti aja de ọna o ba egungun, o
 knife another come for him, at-time-that Dog arrive road he meet bone, he
 dubu-(i)lẹ ti i o nje, agbo si ran ewurẹ lọ mu owo
 lie:across-ground against it he eating (it), Ram and send She:goat go take horn
 miran, n(i)-igba-ti ara-(a)ye na ọwọ epo işu si ewurẹ,
 another, at-time-that people-(of)-world stretch hand husk (of) yam to She:goat,
 o ni Oni ki işe ọjọ epo bẹkẹkẹ bẹkẹkẹrikẹ, bayi ni ewurẹ
 she say "Today not make day (of) husk, bẹkẹkẹ, bẹkẹkẹrikẹ," thus be She:goat
 ko owo miran wa fun agbo, n(i)-igba-ti agbo ran owo mọ-(o)ri
 gather horn another come give Ram, at-time-that Ram fasten horn against-head
 tan o le Şongo lu igbẹ, lati igba-na ni Şongo ti wa l(i)-
 finish he chase Shango against forest, from time-the be Shango have exist at-
 ọrun; ti apara ba san, ti imọnamọna ba kọ, agbo a fi eşẹ
 sky; that thunder should crash, that lightning should flash, Ram he with feet
 wa ilẹ a ni ija on pẹlu rẹ tun ku ekan.
 scratch ground, he say fight (of) him together:with yours then remain once.

Ifa ni ki (ohu)n-kan bi ibi ma ti oko şe, ki awọn ọmọ
 Ifa say should thing-one like evil not from farm make, should those child
 iya męta ma ba fi ori ki, ki iya wọn na ma ba
 (of) mother three not should take head perish, should mother their also not should
 fi ori gba ni-(i)nu ibi na. Ebo: obukọ kan, egbẹdọgbon,
 take head strike at-belly (of) evil the. Sacrifice: he:goat one, 5000 (cowries),
 ati işu męfa ni ebo ki a si ma gbe ebo na lọ si
 and yam six be sacrifice, should we and (continuative) carry sacrifice the go to
 ọna oko.
 road (of) farm.

QKANRAN MEJI - 2

Ogbo ẹrinla ki isọ-(ọ)rọ ẹ w(o)-eyẹ jingbinni l(i)-ọrun
 "Old cow not speak-word, you look:at-decoration gorgeous at-neck (of)
 eşin l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa fun Bilọpẹ ti iş(e)-ọmọ bibi Ọrunmila. Nwọn ni
 horse" be-who cast-Ifa for Bilọpẹ that make-child born (of) Ọrunmila. They say

roared back; and when he began stabbing Ram with his knife, Ram began butting him. When they had been fighting a while, the God of Thunder's knife broke, and Ram's horn broke also. The God of Thunder sent Dog to bring him another knife, but when Dog reached the road, he found a bone and lay down to eat it. Ram likewise sent She-goat to bring him another horn; and when humans held out yam rinds to her, She-goat replied, "Today is no day for rinds, 'bẹkẹkẹ bẹkẹkẹrikẹ.'"² So She-goat brought another horn to Ram; and when Ram had fastened the horn to his head, he chased the God of Thunder away. Since that time the God of Thunder has remained in the sky, and when thunder crashes and lightning flashes,³ Ram paws the ground with his feet, saying, "Our fight is not yet finished."⁴

Ifa says we should sacrifice, lest something evil come from the farm and lest three children of the same mother should perish, and their mother should also become affected by the evil. One he-goat, one shilling three pence, and six yams is the sacrifice; we should take it to the farm road.

2. The sound that a goat makes when it bleats.

3. Note the relationship here between the tale and the names of the diviners.

4. This verse explains why the God of Thunder lives in the sky, and explains the behavior of rams during thunderstorms. It differs somewhat from the explanation sometimes offered that the sound of thunder is caused by the God of Thunder's ram pawing the ground in the heavens. Rams are the main sacrificial animals for the God of Thunder, ochra is another of his favorite foods, and dogs, though not used as sacrifices, are sacred to him. Compare the versions of this tale recorded by Parkinson (1909: 166-169) and Itayemi and Gurry (1953: 53-55) and the variant recorded by Frobenius (1926: 247-248).

"An old cow does not speak; look at the gorgeous decoration on the neck of the horse" was the one who cast Ifa for Bilọpẹ, the child of Orunmila. They said

ki o wa ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori ki lọ si oko: eku meji, ẹja meji, ati
 should he come offer-sacrifice because not go to farm, rat two, fish two, and
 ayebo adig meji, oko ti on ti ẹgbaji.
 hen chicken two, twenty:cowries against it against 4,000 (cowries).

A-ru-lọ-(I)fa: ki a pa ọkan ki a la l(i)-aiya ki a
 To-carry-go-Ifa: should we kill one should we split (it) at-chest, should we
 bu epo si yio gbe tọ Eṣu lọ, a-(yi)o wa mu ọkan
 dip palm:oil to (it); (we) will carry (it) approach Eshu go; we-will come take one
 (i)y(i)-o-ku fun ẹni-ti a d(a)-Ifa na fun pe ki o lọ
 this-which-remain for person-that we cast-Ifa the for (him), that should he go
 fi bọ Ifa.
 take (it) sacrifice:to Ifa.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan ni-yi ki lọ si oko, ko si gbọdọ fi ẹṣẹ rẹ kan
 Ifa say person-one be-this not go to farm, not and must take foot his touch
 enini, ki a ni Ifa nro ẹni-kan; ki o lọ ma bọ
 dew, that we say Ifa thinking (of) person-one; should he go (continuative) sacrifice:
 Ifa.
 to Ifa.

QKANRAN MEJI - 3

Ikan winrin ikan winrin l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa ko Yanmọti ti o nlọ si oko
 "One winrin one winrin" be-who cast-Ifa for Sesame that she going to farm
 a-l(i)-oro ọdun ti o nlọ mu-(i)lẹ (i)bu-do nitori
 that:which-has-ritual (of) year that she going take-ground place-settle because
 ti ọmọ, nwọn ni yio bi-(ọ)mọ; eku meji, ẹja meji, oko
 that (of) child, they say will bear-child. Rat two, fish two, twenty:cowries
 ti on ti ẹgbaji. Ifa ni ẹni-kan nṣe (ohu)n-kan
 against it against 4000 (cowries). Ifa say person-one making thing-one (of)
 oṣu rẹ l(i)-ọwọ, bi o ba le ru-(ẹ)bọ ọmọ ni yio fi
 month hers at-hand; if she should be:able offer-sacrifice child be (she) will take
 bi. Yanmọti ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 (it) bear. Sesame offer-sacrifice.

he should sacrifice two rats, two fish, two hens, and twenty cowries¹ in addition to one shilling, because he should not go to farm.

Instructions for making the sacrifice: One chicken will be killed and split open at the breast, and palm oil will be dipped inside it; we will take it to Eshu. We will give the other chicken to the person for whom this figure was cast, so he may take it to sacrifice to Ifa.

Ifa says that this is someone who should not go to farm, and who must not touch the dew with his feet.² And we say Ifa is thinking of someone; he should be sacrificing to Ifa.

1. This is another example of punning and word magic. Twenty cowries (oko) are added to the sacrifice of someone who must not go to farm (oko).

2. As one does when he goes to the farm early in the morning. The client here is instructed to give up farm work and to devote himself to the worship of Ifa. Cf. verse 6-3.

"One 'winrin,' one 'winrin'"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Benniseed when she was going to the farm of ritual² to take land to settle so that she might bear children. They said that she would bear children if she sacrificed two rats, two fish, and twenty cowries³ in addition to one shilling. Ifa says someone is menstruating at this moment; if she is able to make the sacrifice, she will bear a child. Benniseed sacrificed.⁴

1. Winrin winrin was explained as a tinkling sound such as is made by rattling a small chain.

2. Because benniseed is the principal tabu of the God of Smallpox, it is prohibited to plant benniseed near Yoruba towns. It is also used in "medicine" to cause an enemy to have smallpox.

3. Cf. n. 2, verse 86-2.

4. The implication of this verse is that it is because Benniseed or Sesame (Sesamum indicum) made the sacrifice that she bears so many "children," or seeds.

IROSUN QBARA - 1

Qpẹ ku f(i)-q̄riwo l(u)-adq̄ l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa k(o)-a-
 "Palm:tree die take-young:palm:frond beat-body" be-who cast-Ifa for-One:who-
 l(i)-ara Iṣa. Nw̄n ni aya kan ni o ma fẹ ni q̄dun-ni yi, ki
 has-Ara Isha. They say wife one be he (continuative) love at year-be this, should
 aya na ma ba ṣ(e)-iku pa nw̄n ni ki o ru ewurẹ kan,
 wife the not should make-death kill (him); they say should he offer she:goat one,
 ejielogun. A-l(i)-ara ko ru-(ẹ)bq̄.
 44,000 (cowries). One:who-has-Ara not offer-sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti nw̄n bi A-l(i)-ara, i-b(i)-eji ni nw̄n bi, ṣugb̄n
 At-time-that they bear One:who-has-Ara, to-bear-two be they bear, but
 nw̄n fi q̄kan pa-mq̄ nw̄n pa q̄kan ni-(i)nu w̄n nw̄n si lq̄ sin
 they take one kill:against they kill one at-belly (of) them they and go bury (it)
 si-(i)nu igbo kan, n(i)-igba-ti A-l(i)-ara wa ni q̄mq̄de, bi o
 to-belly (of) forest one, at-time-that One:who-has-Ara come at young:child, if he
 ba nṣ(e)-ai-san, ti nw̄n ba lq̄ wo iṣṣ, aw̄n babalawo a
 should making-not-be:better that they should go look:at work, those diviner will
 sq̄ fun iya rẹ pe nibo ni a-ku-i-sin kan wa? Ki
 speak for mother his that "Where be one:who-die-not-bury one exist?" Should
 nw̄n lq̄ bq̄ a-ku-i-sin na, bi iya rẹ ba si bq̄
 they go sacrifice:to one:who-die-not-bury the; if mother his should and sacrifice:
 ara rẹ a si le.
 to (it), body his will and be:strong.

N(i)-igba-ti A-l(i)-ara d(i)-agba ti o to iṣṣ i-ṣe, bi o
 At-time-that One:who-has-Ara become-elder that he equal work to-do, if he
 ba ṣe iṣṣ ko ni ri ori rẹ, n(i)-igba-ti o ri ti on ko nri ori
 should do work not be see head its, at-time-that he see that he not seeing head (of)
 iṣṣ ti on nṣe, o lq̄ da Ifa, nw̄n sq̄ fun pe ki o t̄o-
 work that he doing, he go cast Ifa, they speak for (him) that should he care:for-
 (o)ju a-ku-i-sin kan, ṣugb̄n bi o ti jẹ-pe ko mq̄
 eye (of) one:who-die-not-bury one, but as he have consent-that not know
 ohun-k(u)-ohun nipa a-ku-i-sin na, n(i)-igba-ti o de
 thing-any-thing concerning one:who-die-not-bury the, at-time-that he arrive
 ile o bi iya rẹ lere, o si sq̄ bi o ti ri fun, A-
 house he ask mother his (1), she and speak as she have see for (him). One:who-
 l(i)-ara si lq̄ bq̄ ekeji rẹ ti o wa ni-(i)nu igbo ni-(i)bi-ti
 has-Ara and go sacrifice:to second his that he be at-belly (of) forest at-place-that

1. Bi . . . lere means "to ask."

101 - 1

"The palm tree dies, the young fronds fall to its side" was the one who cast Ifa for the King of Ara Isha.¹ They said he would take a wife that year; but lest his wife cause his death, they said he should sacrifice one she-goat and eleven shillings. The King of Ara did not sacrifice.

When the King of Ara² was born, his mother gave birth to twins, but they hid one—they killed it and buried it in the forest.³ When the King of Ara was a young child and he was ill and they examined him, the diviners asked his mother "Where is the one who died but was not given a funeral?" They said they should go to him and sacrifice to him; if his mother would do this, his body would become strong.

When the King of Ara grew old enough to work for himself,⁴ he was unable to complete anything he tried to do. When he saw that he could not complete the work he was doing, he went and cast Ifa, and the diviners told him that he should care for one who had died but had not been given a funeral. But since he knew nothing about such a person, he asked his mother when he reached home, and she told him what she knew. The King of Ara went into the forest and sacrificed to his twin, where

1. This town, referred to afterward in the verse simply as Ara, is probably the Ara located about ten miles northeast of Efon-Alaye in Ekiti.

2. The character is referred to as the King of Ara even before he is crowned.

3. It was formerly customary to allow one twin to die. No funeral ceremonies were held for it, or for anyone dying in childhood. It was buried in the forest, but the parents and the surviving twin were obligated to sacrifice to it throughout their lifetimes, as this verse indicates.

4. That is, when he became independent of his father.

nwọn sin si. Bayi ni A-l(i)-ara bẹrẹ si iṣẹ i-ṣe ti o
they bury (him) to (it). Thus be One:who-has-Ara begin to work to-do that he
si bẹrẹ si ni l(i)-ḡwḡ.
and begin to have at-hand.

N(i)-igba-ti o tun ṣe, o fẹ fẹ obinrin, bi o ba fẹ eyi,
At-time-that it then make (later), he want love woman, if he should love this
ko ni ni ori, bi o ba fẹ t(i)-ḡhun ko ni ni idi, o si lḡ
(one), not be have head, if he should love that-there not be have base, he and go
da Ifa, nwọn ni afi-bi o ba le bḡ a-ku-i-sin
cast Ifa, they say unless-if he should be:able sacrifice:to one:who-die-not-bury
kan, o si lḡ bḡ, o bẹrẹ si ni aya o si bi ḡmḡ.
one, he and go sacrifice:to (it), he begin to have wife he and bear child.

N(i)-igba-ti o ṣe nwọn fẹ jẹ oye A-l(i)-ara, o si
At-time-that it make (later) they want eat title (of) One:who-has-Ara, he and
du oye na, nwọn ko si fẹ fi jẹ, o si tun tḡ
compete:for title the, they not and want take (him) eat (it), he and then approach
awọn babalawo lḡ, nwọn si sḡ fun pe afi-bi o ba lḡ bḡ
those diviner go, they and speak for (him) that unless-if he should go sacrifice:
a-ku-i-sin kan, o si lḡ bḡ ekeji rẹ, l(i)-ḡhin na
to one:who-die-not-bury one, he and go sacrifice:to second his; at-back (of) the
ni nwọn ba fi jẹ A-l(i)-ara.
be they did take (him) eat One:who-has-Ara.

N(i)-igba-ti o de ori oye, o wa fẹ obinrin kan, obinrin na
At-time-that he arrive head (of) title, he come love woman one, woman the
si dara pupḡ, o si fẹran rẹ n(i)-igba-na ni o bẹrẹ si gbagbe ekeji
and be:good much, she and love his, at-time-the be he begin to forget second
rẹ, bi o ba la ḡla ri, ko tun bikita fun mḡ
his, if he should dream dream see (him), not then show:respect for (him) again
nitori-ti obinrin yi ti gba ḡkan rẹ ko si jẹ-ki o ranti
because-that woman this have take heart his not and consent-that he remember
ohun-k(u)-ohun mḡ. N(i)-igba-ti ekeji rẹ ri pe ko ranti on mḡ,
thing-any-thing again. At-time-that second his see that not remember him again,
o di okete o si gbẹ iho lati inu igbo o si gbẹ wḡ ibi-
he become Giant:Rat he and dig hole from belly (of) forest he and dig enter place-
ti nwọn nko ohun ti nwọn yio fi se ḡbẹ si, o si fi
that they gathering thing that they will take (them) cook stew to, he and take
gbogbo rẹ jẹ. N(i)-igba-ti ilẹ mḡ ti obinrin yi ri eyi, o bẹrẹ si
all its eat. At-time-that ground clear that woman this see this, she begin to
sḡ-(ḡ)kun. A-l(i)-ara wa sḡ fun pe ki o ma sḡ-(ḡ)kun
shed-tears. One:who-has-Ara come speak for (her) that should she not shed-tears
mḡ, o ni on yio fun ni owo lati lḡ fi ra omiran
again, he say he will give (her) at cowries in:order:to go take (them) buy another,

he had been buried. Thus the King of Ara began to accomplish things, and he began to accumulate property.

After a while he wanted to take a wife, but one woman after another that he loved refused him.⁵ So he went and cast Ifa again, and they told him that he must sacrifice to one who had died but had not been given a funeral. And he went and sacrificed again, and he began to have wives and to beget children.

After a while the people of Ara were choosing a new king, and he competed for the title, but they did not want him. Again he visited the diviners and they told him that he must go and sacrifice to one who had died but had not been given a funeral. He sacrificed again to his twin, and afterward they crowned him King of Ara.

When he had become king, he fell in love with a woman who was very beautiful and who returned his love. Then he began to neglect his twin. If he saw his twin in a dream, he paid no attention to him because this woman had stolen his heart and did not let him remember anything any more. When his twin saw that the King of Ara no longer remembered him, he turned into a Pouched Rat⁶ and dug a hole from the forest to the place where they stored the things with which to cook stew, and he ate all the food. When day broke, and this woman saw what had happened, she began to cry. The King of Ara came to her and told her that she should not weep; he said he would give her money so that she could buy more,

5. Idiomatically, "if he wanted to love this one, it didn't have a top; if he wanted to love that one, it didn't have a bottom."

6. Giant Rat or Pouched Rat (Cricetomys gambianus), a large rat that lives in the forest.

şugbõn obinrin yi kọ. N(i)-igba-na ni A-l(i)-ara wa pa-(i)şę
 but woman this refuse. At-time-the be One:who-has-Ara come kill-word
 pe ki nwõn gbę ilę ki nwõn si lọ pa eku ti fi (ohu)n-kan ti
 that should they dig ground should they and go kill rat that take thing-one that
 aya on ra ję.
 wife (of) him buy eat.

N(i)-igba-ti nwõn si bęre si gbę ilę, nwõn gbę ilę na kọja si ęhin
 At-time-that they and begin to dig ground, they dig ground the pass to back
 odi, nwõn si gbę de ibi igbo ti nwõn sin ekeji rę si,
 (of) town:wall, they and dig arrive place (of) forest that they bury second his to,
 o si pa-(i)şę pe ki nwõn şan igbo na ki nwõn ma gbę
 he and kill-word that should they clear forest the should they (continuative) dig
 ilę na lọ, n(i)-igba-ti nwõn ti şan igbo yi, gbogbo awõn ęranko
 ground the go, at-time-that they have clear forest this, all those animal (of)
 igbo na fi oju le ode, ibi-ti ko yę ki orun pa ni-(i)nu
 forest the take eye appear outside, place-that (it) not suit that sun kill at-belly
 igbo na, orun npa; ibi-ti ko yę ki ojo rọ si, ojo nrọ si
 (of) forest the, sun killing; place-that (it) not suit that rain fall to, rain falling to
 ibę bayi ni A-l(i)-ara bęre si şe ai-san, o wa mu-(a)ra
 there; thus be One:who-has-Ara begin to make not-be:better, he come take-body
 o mu igba eku, igba ęja, ọmọ-(o)binrin ai-gun-(ọ)mu ọmọ-(ọ)kunrin ai-
 he take 200 rat, 200 fish, child-woman not-come:out-breast, child-man not-
 rọ-(ę)põn, o ni ki nwõn lọ fi bọ ekeji on,
 sprout-testicle; he say should they go take (them) sacrifice:to second (of) him,
 ekeji rę ni o ko fę mọ, o ni afi A-l(i)-ara gan ni on
 second his say he not want again, he say unless One:who-has-Ara identical be he
 fę, bayi ni A-l(i)-ara ba-(i)ku.
 want; thus be One:who-has-Ara meet-death.

Ifa ni ęni-kan yio ri aya kan fę, şugbõn ki tọ-(o)ju
 Ifa say person-one will see wife one love, but should care:for-eye (of)
 a-ku-i-sin kan, ki obinrin na ma ba şe iku pa-(ę)ni
 one:who-die-not-bury one, that woman the not should make death kill-person
 nipa pe yio mu-(ę)ni gbagbe a-ku-i-sin na.
 concerning that (she) will take-person forget one:who-die-not-bury the.

 IROSUN MEJI - 1

Ebiti ja-(ọ)wọ f(i)-aiya lu-(i)lę l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa k(o)-Oye-ni
 "Deadfall cut-hand take-chest strike-ground" be-who cast-Ifa for-Title-has-
 (i)ran ti o nsọ-(ę)kun a-l(i)-ai-l(i)-oyun, ti o
 descendants that she shedding-tears (of) one:who-be-not-have-pregnancy that she

but she would not stop crying. Then the King of Ara commanded that the ground should be dug up, and the rat which had eaten his wife's food should be killed.

When they began to dig, they dug past the town wall, and they dug until they reached the spot in the forest where the King's twin had been buried. The King of Ara commanded that they should clear away the forest, and keep on digging. As they cleared the forest, all the wild animals ran out. Where it was not right for the sun to shine in the forest, the sun was now shining; where it was not right for rain to fall, rain was now falling. Thus the King of Ara became ill.⁷ He got ready and took two hundred rats, two hundred fish, a girl whose breasts had not yet appeared, and a boy whose testicles had not yet developed; he said they should take these and sacrifice them to his twin. But his twin said he did not want them; he said he wanted only the King of Ara himself. And thus the King of Ara died.

Ifa says that someone will find a wife to marry, but that he should care for one who has died but has not been given a funeral, lest the woman cause his death by making him forget the one who has died but has not been given a funeral.

7. Note the pun here on san (to cure) and san (to clear).

"The deadfall is sprung, it strikes the ground with its chest" was the one who cast Ifa for "Title has descendants" when she was weeping because she had not become pregnant and when she

si ngba-(a)wẹ a-l(i)-ai-ri-pọn. Nwọn ni ki o
 and taking-fast (of) one:who-be-not-see-carry:on:back. They say should she
 ru-(ẹ)bo, nwọn ni ọmọ kan ni yio bi yi, nwọn ni gbogbo aiye
 offer-sacrifice, they say child one be (she) will bear this, they say all earth
 ni yio mọ, kijikiji rẹ yio si gba aiye ka. O ru igba abẹrẹ.
 be will know (him), shaking his will and take earth go:around. She offer 200 needle
 agutan kan, ọkanla, amu epo kan. N(i)-igba-ti Oye-ni-
 ewe one, 22,000 (cowries), pot (of) palm:oil one. At-time-that Title-has-
 (i)ran ma bi o bi ọjọ.
 descendants (continuative) bear she bear day.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan nsọ-(ẹ)kun ọmọ, yio si bi ọmọ kan, ọmọ-
 Ifa say person-one shedding-tears (of) child, will and bear child one, child-
 (ọ)kunrin ni ọmọ na yio jẹ.
 man be child the will eat.

IROSUN MEJI - 2

Igunnukun f(i)-oju s(i)-eyi, Igunnukun f(i)-oju s(i)-ọhun l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa fun
 "Igunnukun put-eye to-this, Igunnukun put-eye to-there" be-who cast-Ifa for
 Orişa ti o nlọ gba Ida♣ Apará. Ifa ni ẹni-kan nfẹ gba
 Orisha that he going take Sword (of) Thunder. Ifa say person-one wanting take
 obinrin kan, okiki yio pọ nipa obinrin na, yio si n(i)-ipa
 woman one; praise will be: much concerning woman the, will and have: strength
 diẹ, şugbọn ki a mu-(a)ra o ni yio şe işe. Orişa ru
 small, but should we take-body; he say (we) will do work. Orisha offer
 obukọ kan, ẹgbẹtalelọgbọn, ati aşọ dudu ara rẹ l(i)-ẹbọ. N(i)-
 he:goat one, 6600 (cowries), and cloth black (of) body his be-sacrifice. At-
 igba-ti Orişa gba obinrin yi tan ẹru nba a nitori-ti o
 time-that Orisha take woman this finish, fear meeting him because-that they
 wi-pe ẹlomiran yio gba ni ọwọ on, nitori-na o lọ
 speak-that another:person will take (her) at hand (of) him, because-the he go
 kọ ile rẹ si ọna agbala ni-(i)gba-ku-(i)gba ti enia ba ti
 build house his to road (of) back:yard at-time-any-time that people should have
 nfẹ kọja ni-(i)bẹ ara a bẹrẹ si fun Orişa pe boya ẹni-
 wanting pass at-there, body will begin to squeeze¹ Orisha that perhaps person-
 kan yio tun gba ni ọwọ on N(i)-igba-na ni nwọn wa fi
 one will then take (her) at hand (of) him be (it). At-time-the be they come take
 da-(o)rin pe:
 break-song that:

1. "Fun" means to wring out, or to squeeze dry.

was fasting because she had no child to carry on her back. They said she should sacrifice; they said she would give birth to a child who would be known to all the world and that the mention of his name would cause the whole world to tremble. She offered 200 needles, one ewe, five shilling six pence, and a pot of palm oil. When "Title who has descendants" gave birth, she gave birth to Sun.¹

Ifa says that someone is weeping for a child, and that she will bear a child, and this child will be a boy.

1. Again this verse explains why the sun is known all over the world. Cf. verses 1-6 and 52-1, and n. 6, verse 52-1.

103 - 2

"Igunnukun¹ looks here, Igunnukun looks there" was the one who cast Ifa for Orisha when he was going to marry Sword of Thunder. Ifa says that someone is wanting to take a wife. There will be much gossip about the woman and it will be somewhat difficult, but we should go ahead; he says we shall succeed.² Orisha sacrificed one he-goat, one shilling seven pence eight oninis, and the black cloth he was wearing. When Orisha had married this woman, he was afraid because they said that someone else would take her away from him; so he built his house in the back yard, and whenever people passed by, he shrank with fear, lest someone should take her from him. Then they began to sing:

1. A Nupe deity (ẹbura Tapa) which, like the Egungun, is masked. It is described as a tall cylinder that can grow tall and grow short. See Nadel (1954: 189-190). Its worship was introduced to Ifẹ by a Nupe woman.

2. This interpretation, given by informants, is somewhat different from the literal translation, which is also uncertain. The whole verse, in fact, is obscure and apparently not understood by the diviner himself. Sword seems to have been the former wife, or perhaps the daughter, of Thunder, but the relationship is not specified in the text. Orisha here probably refers to Orisha of the Back Yard (Orisa Agbala), one of the "white deities" (orisa funfun), but it is not clear how he happened to be wearing a black cloth. See n. 4, verse 249-1.

Qsan pgn werewere
 "Midday be:ripe shimmering

Eni o fin-(i)dan a ri-(i)dan
 "Person who want-consequences will see-consequences."

IROSUN QŞE¹ - 1

Akoto itq a b(i)-ęnu boro a fa m(ę)-qđq
 "Calabash (of) spit it bear-mouth narrow we pull against-presence (of)

tęmutęmu a da fun enia ti ięę ęru ipin; nwq̄n ni ki
 hassock" (be) who cast for Person that make slave(of) Guardian; they say should
 o ru-(ę)bq̄ ki o-l(i)-owo rę q̄run ma ba wa mu
 he offer-sacrifice that one:who-has-cowries his (of) sky not should come take

lq̄ ni q̄dun yi: eku, ęja, igbin, ęiyę-(i)le, ayebq̄ adię, ati obukq̄
 (him) go at year this: rat, fish, snail, bird-(of)-house, hen chicken, and he:goat
 pęlu ęgbasan. Enia ko ru-(ę)bq̄.
 together:with 18,000 (cowries). Person not offer-sacrifice.

Awq̄n irun-(i)mqlę ran ipin pe ki o lq̄ mu enia wa si
 Those 400-Deity send Guardian that should he go take Person come to
 q̄run nitori-ti enia ko sin wq̄n; n(i)-igba-ti ipin de aiye
 sky because-that Person not serve them; at-time-that Guardian arrive earth
 ti o mu enia ti o si nfa lq̄ ni ęhin-(ę)ku(n)-(i)le Ogun,
 that he take Person that he and pulling (him) go at back-door-(of)-house (of) Ogun,
 enia ke wi-pe Ogun gba mi o, ipin nwq̄ mi l(i)-ęęę lq̄; n(i)-
 Person cry speak-that "Ogun take me, oh, Guardian dragging me at-foot go." At-
 igba-ti Ogun ja-(o)de o ri ipin, o si bere pe ki(n)-ni o de?
 time-that Ogun reach-outside he see Guardian, he and ask that what-be it arrive?

Ipin si ro ęjq̄ fun, n(i)-igba-na ni Ogun ra-(q)wq̄ si wq̄n, ipin
 Guardian and state case for (him), at-time-the be Ogun rub-hand to them, Guardian
 si nmu enia lq̄; bę-ni o nmu de gbogbo ojude awq̄n Orięa
 and taking Person go; so-be he taking (him) arrive all outside (of) those Orisha
 ti o wa l(i)-aiye ti nwq̄n si nja-(o)de si wq̄n, ti ipin
 that they exist at-earth that they and reaching-outside to them, that Guardian
 nro-(ę)jđq̄ fun wq̄n, ti awq̄n na si ęęęę-bi Ogun ti ęę, nikęhin ni
 stating-case for them, that they also and do just-like Ogun have do, finally be
 nwq̄n nkq̄ja ni ojude Q̄runmila, enia si kigbe pe: Q̄runmila o
 they passing at outside (of) Q̄runmila, Person and cry:out that "Q̄runmila you
 ma gba mi ipin nwq̄ mi l(i)-ęęę lq̄.
 (continuative) take me, Guardian dragging me at-foot go."

1. This figure is also known as Irosun ęęęę. Cf. n. 1, verse 111-2.

"Shimmering³ high noon,
 "One who asks for trouble⁴ will find trouble."

3. "Werewere" was described as referring to the shimmering of heat waves on a road during the heat of the day.

4. That is, one who wants to do something that is forbidden.

111 - 1

"The spittoon with a small mouth is drawn close to the cushion"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Person² who was the slave of his Ancestral Guardian Soul.³ They said he should sacrifice a rat, a fish, a snail, a pigeon, a hen, and a he-goat, together with four shillings six pence, lest his master in heaven carry him away during that year. Person did not sacrifice.

The Four Hundred Deities sent Guardian Soul to go and bring Person to heaven, because Person did not serve them.⁴ When Guardian Soul arrived on earth, he seized Person and was dragging him past the back door of the God of Iron's house when Person cried out, "God of Iron! Help me, oh! Guardian Soul is dragging me away by my feet!" When the God of Iron came out, he saw Guardian Soul and he asked, "What is happening?" and Guardian Soul explained the case to him. Then the God of Iron rubbed his hands to them,⁵ and Guardian Soul went on with Person. Thus they passed the houses of all the deities that are on earth, with the deities coming out to them, with Guardian Soul explaining the situation to them, and with all of them doing just what God of Iron had done. Finally, as they were passing Qrunmila's house, Person cried out, "Qrunmila! Help me! Guardian Soul is dragging me away by my feet."

1. This is another case of overstatement typical of proverbial expression, as the akoto is one of the largest calabashes, with a very broad mouth.

2. This is an unusual personification of a generalized individual.

3. The ancestral guardian soul is known also as iponri, olori, eḷḷda. It is the individual's counterpart in heaven, and controls his luck. See Chapter X.

4. That is, he failed to sacrifice to them.

5. This is a common gesture, meaning here that one wishes to be excused from passing judgment or intervening in a dispute. It is also a gesture of supplication, and it is made when paying homage to a person of high rank. Cf. n. 2, verse 2-2.

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila ja-(o)de si wõn, ipin ro-(ę)jõ fun u,
 At-time-that Qrunmila reach-outside to them, Guardian state-case for him,
 Qrunmila si da-(o)hun pe ki ipin fi enia si-(i)lę, on yio
 Qrunmila and break-voice that should Guardian put Person to-ground, he will
 ma wa gba ohun ti nwõn iba ma fi sin
 (continuative) come take thing that they should (continuative) take (them) serve
 ipin fun ni õd(un)-õdun; ipin si fi enia si-(i)lę, lati õjõ
 Guardian give (him) at year-year. Guardian and put Person to-ground, from day
 na ni Qrunmila ti ma ngba ohun-k(u)-ohun ti ori ęni-(õ)k(an)-
 the be Qrunmila have (continuative) taking thing-any-thing that head person-one-
 õkan ba gba, ti o ba si fi bõ ni õd(un)-õdun, ti
 one should take, that he should and take (it) sacrifice:to (it) at year-year, that
 o si lõ ma nko fun ipin, bi Qrunmila ba
 he and go (continuative) gathering (them) give Guardian. If Qrunmila should
 ko de õdõ ipin, ipin yio fun ni ębun
 gather (them) arrive presence (of) Guardian, Guardian will give (him) at gift
 ti-rę, ki Qrunmila to lõ pęlu awõn enia yio fun
 that-(of)-his, before Qrunmila equal go together:with (Ipin) those people will give
 ni ębun ki o ba le sõ ti-wõn ni rere ni õdo
 (him) at gift should he should be:able speak that-(of)-them at good at presence
 awõn irun-(i)mõlę ati ipin.
 (of) those 400-Deity and Guardian.

Lati igba-na ni a ti ma nsõ pe Qrunmila
 From time-the be we have (continuative) speaking that "Qrunmila (be)
 ęlęri ipin." Ifa ni ki ęni-kan ru-(ę)bõ ki
 intermediary (of) Guardian." Ifa say should person-one offer-sacrifice should
 awõn o-l(i)-owo rę grun ma ba mu lõ. Ki o si
 those one:who-have-cowries his (of) sky not should take (him) go. Should he and
 tõ-(o)ju orişa rę kan bi ko ba tõ-(o)ju rę, orişa na yio mu
 care:for-eye orisha his one; if not should care:for-eye its, orisha the will take
 lõ.
 (him) go.

 IROSUN QŞĘ - 2

Qrunmila ni o ş(e)-ępęrę; mo ni o ş(e)-ępęrę; o ni şe ni o
 Qrunmila say it make-better; I say it make-better; he say make (it) be it
 ş(e)-ępęrę fun işu ti o fi ta.
 make-better for yam that it take grow.

When Ọrunmila came out to them, Guardian Soul explained the case to him, and Ọrunmila replied that Guardian Soul should release Person. Ọrunmila said that he would come and collect the things that people sacrificed to Guardian Soul each year. Guardian Soul released Person, and since that day Ọrunmila has been collecting whatever the head of each person should require as its annual sacrifice and taking them to Guardian Soul.⁶ When Ọrunmila brings them to Guardian Soul, Guardian Soul gives Ọrunmila some as his share; and before he goes, people also give Ọrunmila something so that he will speak well of them in the presence of the Four Hundred Deities and of their Ancestral Guardian Souls.

Since that time we say, "Ọrunmila is the intermediary of Guardian Soul."⁷ Ifa says that someone should sacrifice, lest his masters in heaven should carry him away. And he should care for a deity of his; if he does not do so, the deity will carry him away.

6. The annual sacrifices that each individual makes to his own head or "luck" go to the ancestral guardian soul, who shares them among the deities. In Ifẹ these sacrifices are made at the individual's own festival (ọdun mi). If an individual is a worshiper of Ifa, he puts some food on his set of palm nuts; if not, he puts some food in the corner of the room for Ọrunmila. This verse explains the ritual, and how Ọrunmila came to have the role of collecting the sacrifices which the ancestral guardian soul requires.

7. Cf. Epega (1931: 14): "Ọrunmila, Eḷeri ipin, Ibikeji Olodumare (Witness of Fate, Second Being to the Olodumare)."

Ọrunmila says, "It is getting better";¹ I say, "It is getting better"; he says, "It is getting better for the yam that is growing."

1. This phrase has many applications, meaning always, "things are getting better." It can be used in reply to an inquiry about the health of a person who is ill, or about the progress of a person's studies, or in answer to a creditor's inquiry of a debtor about the chances of receiving further payments on the debt. Irosun ẹperẹ is an alternative name for Irosun Ọṣẹ.

O ni ş(e)-şpşş; mo ni o ş(e)-şpşş; o ni şe ni o ş(e)-
 He say (it) make-better; I say it make-better; he say make (it) be it make-
 şpşş fun igbado ti o fi y(ş)-şmq.
 better for corn that it take sprout-child.

Qrunmila ni o ş(e)-şpşş; mo ni o ş(e)-şpşş; o ni şe ni o
 Qrunmila say it make-better; I say it make-better; he say make (it) be it
 ş(e)-şpşş fun ilş ti o fi fi şgan ş(e)-owo.
 make-better for ground that it take take termite-hill make-horn.

Qrunmila ni o ş(e)-şpşş; mo ni o ş(e)-şpşş; o ni o ş(e)-şpşş
 Qrunmila say it make-better; I say it make-better; he say it make-better
 fun agan ai-bi Ile-Ifş ti o fi di ş-l(i)-şmq.
 for barren:woman not-bear (of) Ile-Ifş that she take become one:who-have-children.

Şiyş-(i)le meji, akikş meji, igbin meji, eku meji, ati şja meji şlu
 Bird-(of)-house two, cock two, snail two, rat two, and fish two together:
 egbejila ni şbş. Ifa ni a nş şe ohun kan, a-(yi)o ni
 with 2400 (cowries) be sacrifice. Ifa say we going do thing one, we-will have
 iyi ni ibş, a-(yi)o si di şni iyi ni ibş, bi o ba şe
 glory at there, we-will and become person (of) glory at there; if it should make
 owo ni, a-(yi)o di şni iyi ni idi owo na,
 transaction be (it), we-will become person (of) glory at bottom (of) transaction the,
 yio si ş(e)-şpşş fun-(ş)ni.
 (it) will and make-better for person.

Ewe Ifa rş: Ewe şş-fun-şş-fun —şfunş—ewe irş,
 Leaf (of) Ifa its: Leaf make-be:white-make-be:white—şfunş—leaf (of) irş,
 şş, A-(yi)o gun ori eku ati ori şja meji-meji yi mş,
 soap. We-will pound head (of) rat and head (of) fish two-two this against (these);
 a-(yi)o pa şkan ni-(i)nu awş şiyş-(i)le meji yi, a-(yi)o tş ori
 we-will kill one at-belly (of) those bird-(of)-house two this, we-will press head
 rş mş şş na l(i)-ori ni-(i)nu igba, a-(yi)o fi iyş-
 its against soap the at-head at-belly (of) calabash; we-will with wood:dust-(of)-
 (i)rosun tş Irosun Qşş; a-(yi)o da si a-(yi)o ma
 irosun mark Irosun Qşş; we-will throw (it) to (the rest); we-will (continuative)
 fi wş.
 take (it) wash.

He says, "It is getting better"; I say, "It is getting better"; he says, "It is getting better for the corn that is sprouting ears."²

Qrunmila says, "It is getting better"; I say, "It is getting better"; he says, "It is getting better for the ground on which a termite hill is growing like a horn."

Qrunmila says, "It is getting better"; I say, "It is getting better"; he says, "It is getting better for the barren woman of Ife, who is becoming the mother of children."

Two pigeons, two cocks, two snails, two rats, and two fish, with seven pence two oninis, is the sacrifice. Ifa says we are going to do something through which we will gain glory; we will become a person with glory through it. If it is a business deal that we are about to engage in, we will become a person with glory through it, and things will be getting better for us.

Leaves of Ifa for this verse: The leaf of "Make-white-make-white" —that is, *efunle*³—the leaves of the *ire*⁴ tree, and soap. With these we will grind up the heads of both rats and both fish; we will kill one of the two pigeons and press its head into the soap on top of all this in the calabash. We will mark the figure Irosun *Qşş*⁵ in the divining powder and pour the powder into the calabash. We will use this mixture to wash ourselves.

2. Spoken of here as the children of corn.

3. This plant, described as a vine, is identified by Dalziel as *Evolvus alsinoides*.

4. The West African rubber tree or Lagos silk-rubber tree (*Funtumia elastica*).

5. Note the two cases of word magic here. For the figure Irosun *Qşş*, divining powder from the irosun tree and soap (*qşş*) are used as ingredients in the medicine.

QWQNRIN MEJI - 1

Qla-na-(o)wq ni s(e)-awo wq̄n l(i)-ode Ido Qla-
 "Wealth-stretch-hand" be (who) make-secret their at-outside (of) Ido, "Wealth-
 na-(e)sq̄ ni s(e)-awo wq̄n l(i)-ode Qtun, Oto, Qya ni
 stretch-foot" be (who) make-secret their at-outside (of) Qtun, Oto, Qya be (who)
 s(e)-awo wq̄n l(i)-ode Koro Ewe q̄la-jengetiele Ibi ti o
 make-secret their at-outside (of) Koro, "Leaf (of) honor-swaying," "Evil that it
 ba wa l(i)-ori awo l(i)-oni ki o ma di ki
 should exist at-head (of) secret at-today, should it (continuative) clear:out should
 o ma re ilq̄ omi a da fun Qrunmila n(i)-igba-ti o
 it (continuative) go ground (of) water". (be) who cast for Qrunmila at-time-that he
 nq̄(e)-awo re ode Qyq̄, nwq̄n ni ki o ru-(e)bq̄ akikq̄
 making-secret go outside (of) Qyq̄ they say should he offer-sacrifice (of) cock
 adiḡ meji, ḡiyḡ-(i)le kan, obi mḡta, epo pupa, nitori-pe ki
 chicken two, bird-(of)-house one, kola three, palm:oil red, because-that should
 q̄na ajo rḡ ba dara, Qrunmila ru-(e)bq̄, o si gbe
 road (of) journey his should be:good, Qrunmila offer-sacrifice, he and carry
 eḡbq̄ na si eti odo.
 sacrifice the to ear (of) river.

Ifa ni ki a ru-(e)bq̄ nitori q̄na ajo, ti a nlq̄
 Ifa say should we offer-sacrifice because (of) road (of) journey that we going
 ki a ba le ko iḡḡ ḡni de-(i)le.
 should we should be:able gather deed (of) person arrive-house.

QWQNRIN MEJI - 2

A-de-olu-kḡ nḡḡe awo re ode A-ji-
 "To-arrive-(for)-family-indulge" making secret go outside (of) "To-wake-
 kḡ-olu A-de-tutu nq̄(e)-awo re ode A-ji-f(o)-
 indulge-family," "To-arrive-cool" making-secret go outside (of) "To-wake-jump-
 q̄ran-rere-lq̄ a da fun Qrunmila ni q̄jḡ ti o nḡḡe awo rḡ
 affair-good-show" (be) who cast for Qrunmila at day that he making secret go
 ode A-ji-kḡ-olu ti nwq̄n sq̄ fun pe ki o
 outside (of) "To-wake-indulge-family" that they speak for (him) that should he
 fi ewurḡ bq̄ oke ipq̄nri rḡ pe ki q̄na ajo rḡ
 take she:goat sacrifice:to hill (of) guardian his that should road (of) journey his
 ba le dara fun, Qrunmila ko bq̄ oke ipq̄nri rḡ
 should be:able be:good for (him); Qrunmila not sacrifice:to hill (of) guardian his
 titi o fi lq̄ si q̄na ajo na, n(i)-igba-ti o de ibi-ti o nlq̄
 until he take go to road (of) journey the; at-time-that he arrive place-that he going

120 - 1

"Wealth stretches out its hand," the diviner at Ido;¹ "Wealth stretches out its foot," the diviner at Qtun;² "Oto" and "Qya," the diviners at Koro;³ "The leaf called 'Honor swaying'";⁴ "The evil that exists on the diviner's head today will go away to the bottom of the water" were the ones who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he was going to divine at Qyo. They said he should sacrifice two cocks, one pigeon, three kola nuts, and red palm oil so that his journey would be good. Qrunmila sacrificed,⁵ and he carried the sacrifice to the bank of a river.⁶

Ifa says that we should sacrifice because of a journey we are going to take, so that we may bring home the fruits of our labor.

1. A town about twenty-five miles southeast of Ila.
2. A town about fifteen miles east of Ila.
3. There are several towns by the name of Koro, but this was identified by informants as one about four miles from Imęsi, which is twenty miles northeast of Ilesha.
4. Swaying like a supple plant upon which a bird has alighted.
5. Since Qrunmila is noted for his success in divining, it is not necessary to state that the sacrifice accomplished its purpose.
6. There seems to be some correlation between the names of the diviners and the instructions to the client. The last name describes evil leaving the head of the diviner and going to the bottom of the water, and Qrunmila carries his sacrifice to the edge of the river.

120 - 2

"He arrives for his family to indulge," the diviner of "He awakes to indulge his family," "He is cool when he arrives," the diviner of "He awakes to give good advice" were the ones who cast Ifa for Qrunmila on the day he was going to "He awakes to indulge his family" to divine. They told Qrunmila to sacrifice a she-goat to his ancestral guardian soul so that his journey would be good. Qrunmila did not sacrifice to his guardian soul until he had made the journey. When he arrived at the place where he was going

ş(e)-awo, ko si ɛni-ti o wa si ɔɔ rɛ lati şe awo,
 make-secret, not be person-that he come to presence his in:order:to make secret;
 n(i)-igba-ti o ri pe ebi npa on, n(i)-igba-na ni o pada wa si-
 at-time-that he see that hunger killing him, at-time-the be he return come to-
 (i)le lati wa bɔ oke iponri rɛ, n(i)-igba-ti o pa
 house in:order:to come sacrifice:to hill (of) guardian his. At-time-that he kill
 ewurɛ na, o pin fun awon agb(a)-agba ilu, nwon si bɛrɛ si
 she:goat the, he divide (it) give those old-old (of) town, they and begin to
 fun ni ɛgbɛ(wa)-(ɛ)gbɛwa, Qrunmila di o-l(i)-owo ni ɔɔ
 give (him) at 2000-2000-(cowries), Qrunmila become one:who-has-cowries at day
 na, o si bɛrɛ si kɔ-(o)rin wi-pe:
 the, he and begin to sing-song say-that:

Kabi owo mɔ wa o?
 "Where cowries (continuative) exist, oh?"

Ara enia ni owo ma wa o
 "People (of) person be cowries (continuative) exist, oh;"

Ara enia l(i)-owo ma wa o
 "People (of) person be-cowries (continuative) exist, oh."

Ifa ni ɛni-ti a da Ifa yi fun yio ri olu-ran-l(i)-ɔwɔ
 Ifa say person-that we cast Ifa this for (him) will see one:who-send-at-hand
 ni-(i)nu ohun-k(u)-ohun ti o ba da ɔwɔ le lati şe bi ko
 at-belly (of) thing-any-thing that he should throw hand upon in:order:to do, if not
 tilɛ si owo l(i)-ɔwɔ rɛ.
 even be cowries at-hand his.

QWQNRIN - (I)RETE - 1

Adan a b(i)-ara dudu ɛkun fi-(i)bi kurumu-kurumu tɛ-
 "Bat it bear-body black; leopard take-place spherical-spherical press-
 (i)lɛ i-jo şewɛ, i-rin şewɛ a da fun akukɔ mɔgalaja ni-(ɔ)jɔ
 ground; to-dance soft, to-walk soft" (be) who cast for Cock tall at-day
 ti o nlɔ fɛ Are-ɛɛɛ, ɔmɔ O-l(i)-okun. Nwon ni ki o ru
 that he going love Are-ɛɛɛ, child (of) One:who-has-sea. They say should he offer
 ikoko mɛta, ɔkɔ mɛta, ɛiyɛ-(i)le mɛfa; akikɔ ru-(ɛ)bɔ.
 pot three, hoe three, bird-(of)-house six; Cock offer-sacrifice.

Gbogbo awon ɛranko ati ɛiyɛ igbo ni nwon nfɛ Are-ɛɛɛ, ɔmɔ
 All those animal and bird (of) forest be they loving Are-ɛɛɛ, child (of)
 O-l(i)-okun, şugbon O-l(i)-okun wi-pe ɛni-k(u)-ɛni ti
 One:who-has-sea, but One:who-has-sea speak-that person-any-person that

to divine, no one came to him to divine; and when he saw that he would die of hunger, he returned to his house to make the sacrifice to his ancestral guardian soul. When he killed the she-goat, he divided it with the elders of the town, and in return they each gave him six pence. Qrunmila became a rich man that day and he began to sing:

"Where is money to be found, oh?

"Money is to be found among one's own followers,¹ oh;

"Money is to be found among one's own followers, oh."

Ifa says that the person for whom this figure was cast will see someone who will aid him in anything he turns his hand to, even if he has no money at hand.

1. "Ara" refers to both a person's friends and relatives; the latter are generally distinguished as ara ile.

"Bat has a black body; the pads of leopard's paws are rounded; dance softly, walk softly" was the one who cast Ifa for Tall Cock when he was going to marry Are-egg, child of the Sea Goddess. They said he should offer three pots, three hoes, and six pigeons. Cock sacrificed.

All the animals and birds of the forest were in love with Are-egg, child of the Sea Goddess, but the Sea Goddess said that whoever

o ba ba on k̄o ɛran ni-(i)nu oko on, ti o ba si k̄ok̄o ja-
 he should for her hoe heap at-belly (of) farm hers, that he should and first reach-
 (ɛ) s̄ɛ ni on yio fi ɔm̄o on fun ni iyawo. N(i)-igba-ti akik̄o
 row be she will take child her give (him) at junior:wife. At-time-that Cock
 ru-(ɛ)b̄o, ti Eṣu si gba ɛb̄o j̄ɛ tan Eṣu l̄o bo awon
 offer-sacrifice, that Eshu and accept sacrifice eat finish Eshu go cover those
 ikoko m̄ɛta na ti akik̄o fi ru-(ɛ)b̄o ni-(i)nu oko ti n̄won
 pot three the that Cock take (them) offer-sacrifice at-belly (of) farm that they
 yio gbe k̄o-(ɛ)ran ni origun m̄ɛt(a)-(m)ɛta ti oko na ni.
 will take hoe-heap at corner three-three that farm the have.

Ki il̄ɛ to m̄o gbogbo awon ɛranko ati awon ɛiȳɛ ti l̄o b̄ɛr̄ɛ
 Before ground equal clear, all those animal and those bird have go begin
 si k̄o-(ɛ)ran ni-(i)nu oko yi ki akik̄o to ji, n̄won si ti
 to hoe-heap at-belly (of) farm this before Cock equal awake, they and have
 f̄ɛr̄ɛ k̄o-(ɛ)ran tan ki o to de; n(i)-igba-ti akik̄o de ti
 almost hoe-heap finish before he equal arrive. At-time-that Cock arrive that
 o ri pe awon ɛgb̄ɛ on ti f̄ɛr̄ɛ k̄o-(ɛ)ran tan o b̄ɛr̄ɛ si
 he see that those companion (of) him have almost hoe-heap finish, he begin to
 nwi-pe: Ṣ(e)-ɔk̄o s̄ɛ, ṣ(e)-ɛran gan.
 speaking-that: "Make-hoe 's̄ɛ,' make-heap stand-up."

Bayi ni akik̄o nk̄o-(ɛ)ran ti o si ya ju ti awon ti o
 Thus be Cock hoeing-heap that he and be:quick surpass that those that he
 ti ba ni-(i)nu oko l̄o; n(i)-igba-ti odid̄ɛ ri pe akik̄o f̄ɛr̄ɛ ba
 have meet at-belly (of) farm go; at-time-that Parrot see that Cock almost meet
 awon o ni Ho! aluko ni Ē ya, ɔk̄o akik̄o si ya; akik̄o si
 them he say, "Ho!"; Woodcock say "You split," hoe (of) Cock and split; Cock and
 tun mu ɔk̄o miran, o si tun b̄ɛr̄ɛ si fi k̄o-(ɛ)ran o nk̄o-(o)rin pe:
 then take hoe another, he and then begin to take (it) hoe-heap he singing-song that:

Akik̄o, akik̄o, ḡɛr̄ɛ gba-(i)l̄ɛ ḡɛr̄ɛ
 "Cock, Cock, trail sweep-ground trail,

Akik̄o, ḡɛr̄ɛ gba-(i)l̄ɛ ḡɛr̄ɛ
 "Cock, trail sweep-ground trail."

N(i)-igba-ti n̄won si tun ri pe akik̄o tun n̄s̄(e)-(iw)aju w̄on odid̄ɛ
 At-time-that they and then see that Cock then making-front (of) them Parrot
 ni Ho! aluko ni Ē ya ɔk̄o akik̄o si tun ya o si mu ɔk̄o
 say, "Ho!" Woodcock say, "You split," hoe (of) Cock and then split he and take hoe
 k̄ɛta, Eṣu ti o si f̄ɛ ran akik̄o l(i)-ɔw̄o l̄o si ibi ikoko kan o si
 third, Eshu that he and want send Cock at-hand go to place (of) pot one he and
 lu, ikoko yi si f̄o ɛsisun si b̄ɛr̄ɛ si fo ja-(o)de ni-(i)nu
 strike (it), pot this and break, queen:ant and begin to fly reach-out at-belly (of)
 ikoko yi; awon (i)y(i)-o-ku si b̄ɛr̄ɛ si pa ɛsisun titi akik̄o fi
 pot this; those this-who-remain and begin to kill queen:ant until Cock take

would be the first to finish his row of yam heaps in hoeing her farm would be the one to whom she would give her child as wife. When Cock had made his sacrifice and Eshu had taken it and finished eating, Eshu took the three pots Cock had sacrificed¹ and buried one in each of the three corners of the farm where they were going to hoe yam heaps.

Before dawn, all the animals and birds had begun to hoe yam heaps in this farm before Cock awoke, and they had almost finished hoeing before he arrived. When Cock arrived and saw that his companions had almost finished hoeing, he began to repeat: "Make the hoe go 'shę,'² make the heaps rise up."

Thus Cock began to hoe quicker than anyone else at the farm. When Parrot saw that Cock had almost caught up to them, he said "Ho!"³ and Woodcock said "You break"; and Cock's hoe broke. Then Cock took another hoe and again began to hoe, singing:

"Cock, Cock spread your feathers so they sweep the ground;⁴
"Cock, spread your feathers so they sweep the ground"

When they saw that Cock was again passing them, Parrot said "Ho!" and Woodcock said, "You break"; and Cock's hoe again broke; he took the third hoe⁵ and Eshu, wanting to help Cock, went to one of the pots and struck it. It broke and queen-ants began to fly out of the pot; and the others began to kill the queen-ants and eat them, while Cock

1. Part of the sacrifice is instrumental to Cock's success.
2. The sound that a hoe makes when cutting the ground; note the word magic.
3. The sound that iron makes in breaking; note the word magic.
4. Gęřę describes the way in which a cock spreads its wings when fighting, or how a gown that is too big drags along the ground.
5. The three hoes included in the sacrifice are also instrumental to Cock's success. Cf. n. 1.

kq-(ẹ)ran kqja wq̄n, n(i)-igba-ti nwq̄n tun ri pe akikq̄ tun fẹ kqja wq̄n
 hoe-heap pass them; at-time-that they then see that Cock then want pass them
 ti odidẹ ni Ho! ti aluko ni Ẹ ya, akikq̄ na ni Tipẹ-tipẹ
 that Parrot say "Ho!" that Woodcock say, "You split," Cock also say, "Tight-tight
 ni ikun imu arugbo rọ, bayi ni akikq̄ gbq̄n gbogbo wq̄n lq̄
 be mucus (of) nose (of) old-person be:tough," thus be Cock pass all them go
 ti inu obinrin si dun ti o nkq̄-(o)rin pe:
 that belly (of) woman and sweet that she singing-song that:

Are-ẹgẹ m(o)-(n)i Are-ẹgẹ o, Are-ẹgẹ
 "Are-ẹgẹ I-say Are-ẹgẹ, oh, Are-ẹgẹ;

Erin ma ja-(ẹ)sẹ, Are-ẹgẹ
 "Elephant (continuative) reach-row, Are-ẹgẹ;

Ẹfọn ma ja-(o)ke, Are-ẹgẹ
 "Buffalo (continuative) reach-hill, Are-ẹgẹ;

Akikq̄ q̄kq̄ mi ma ma de o, Are-ẹgẹ.
 "Cock husband my indeed (continuative) arrive, oh, Are-ẹgẹ."

N(i)-igba-ti Are-ẹgẹ ri pe akikq̄ ja ẹsẹ s(ẹ)-(iw)aju gbogbo awq̄n
 At-time-that Are-ẹgẹ see that Cock reach row make-front all those
 (i)y(i)-o-ku, o fo mọ l(i)-q̄run, O-l(i)-okun si fi
 this-who-remain, she jump against (him) at-neck, One:who-has-sea and take
 Are-ẹgẹ fun akikq̄, gbogbo awq̄n ẹranko ti o ku si bi-(i)nu fi wq̄n
 Are-ẹgẹ give Cock, all those animal that who remain and vex-belly put them
 si-(i)bẹ lq̄.
 to-there go.

N(i)-igba-ti nwq̄n nlq̄ l(i)-q̄na nwq̄n bẹrẹ si di rikiṣi q̄na ti nwq̄n
 At-time-that they going at-road they begin to tie plot (of) road that they
 yio fi pa akikq̄ ki nwq̄n si gba Are-ẹgẹ l(i)-q̄wq̄ rẹ. N(i)-igba-ti
 will take (it) kill Cock that they and take Are-ẹgẹ at-hand his. At-time-that
 nwq̄n si de ibi odo kan, bi nwq̄n ti nwẹ l(i)-q̄wq̄ ni akikq̄ ti
 they and reach place (of) river one, as they have washing at-hand be Cock that
 on ti Are-ẹgẹ de, nwq̄n si ni ki o wa wẹ s̄ugbq̄n o ni on
 he against Are-ẹgẹ arrive, they and say should he come wash but he say he
 ko wẹ, n(i)-igba-ti nwq̄n si bẹrẹ si yq̄ l(i)-q̄nu o gbe Are-ẹgẹ
 not wash, at-time-that they and begin to pull (him) at-mouth he take Are-ẹgẹ
 ha q̄nu, n(i)-igba-ti nwq̄n si ri pe o fẹ ma lq̄, nwq̄n
 stick:in mouth, at-time-that they and see that he want (continuative) go, they
 ti lu omi bi o ti bq̄ lu omi o gbe Are-ẹgẹ mi.
 push (him) strike water, as he have come strike water he take Are-ẹgẹ swallow.
 N(i)-igba-ti akikq̄ de ile o fẹ pe ki Are-ẹgẹ ja-(o)de o
 At-time-that Cock arrive house he want that should Are-ẹgẹ reach-outside, he
 si f(i)-apa-l(u)-apa o ni "Are-ẹgẹ ja-(o)de" s̄ugbq̄n Are-ẹgẹ ko
 and take-arm-beat-arm, he say "Are-ẹgẹ reach-outside" but Are-ẹgẹ not

went on hoeing and almost passed them. When they saw that Cock again was about to pass them, Parrot said, "Ho!" and Woodcock said, "You break"; Cock said "Very tight, the mucus of an old person's nose is tough."⁶ Thus Cock passed them all, and the girl was happy and she was singing:

"Are-egg; I say Are-egg, oh, Are-egg;
 "Elephant is finishing his row, Are-egg;
 "Buffalo is reaching the end, Are-egg;
 "Cock, my husband, is really getting there,
 oh, Are-egg."

When Are-egg saw that Cock finished his row ahead of all the others, she threw herself about his neck; and the Sea Goddess gave Are-egg to Cock in marriage. All the other animals were angry and left them there.

As they were walking along the road, they began to plot to kill Cock and to take Are-egg from him. They came to a river, and as they were washing their hands, Cock and Are-egg arrived. They told Cock to come and wash, but he said he did not wash. When they began to tease him, he put Are-egg into his mouth. When the others saw that he wanted to go on, they pushed him into the water, and as he struck the water he swallowed Are-egg. When Cock reached home, and wanted Are-egg to come out, he flapped his wings and said, "Are-egg, come out,"⁷ but Are-egg did not

6. A counter incantation to prevent the hoe from breaking.

7. This verse thus explains the meaning of Cock's crow and the origin of the longest of its tail feathers. Cf. this tale with the versions given by Bouche (1884-1885: 122-123), Lomax (1913: 3-4), Frobenius (1926: 241-244), and Herskovits and Herskovits (1931: 459-460).

ja-(o)de, n(i)-igba-ti o ko ja-(o)de o lq yq ni idi rẹ o
 reach-outside; at-time-that she not reach-outside she go appear at waist his she
 si di irere idi akikq, on na ni o di irere
 and become tail:feather (of) waist (of) Cock; she also be she become tail:feather
 idi rẹ titi di oni o-l(i)-oni yi.
 (of) waist his until (it) become today that:which-be-today this.

Ifa ni a-(yi)o fẹ obinrin kan, ki a ru-(ẹ)bq ki ẹni-kan
 Ifa say we-will love woman one, should we offer-sacrifice that person-one
 ma ba pa obinrin na ni i-pa fa-(o)ri mq-(ẹ)ni l(i)-qwo. Gbogbo
 not should kill woman the, be to-kill shave-head against-person at-hand. All
 enia ni yio ma du obinrin yi ki o to ja mq-
 people be will (continuative) compete:for woman this before it equal cut against-
 (ẹ)ni l(i)-qwo. Bi a ba fẹ obinrin na a-(yi)o fi ewurẹ kan, aşq
 person at-hand. If we should love woman the we-will take she:goat one, cloth (of)
 ara obinrin na ati ejielogun ru-(ẹ)bq ki obinrin na ma
 body (of) woman the, and 44,000 (cowries) offer-sacrifice, that woman the not
 ba ku ki awq enia si ma sq pe owo run le obinrin yi
 should die that those people and not speak that cowries perish upon woman this
 l(i)-ori, ki a ma ba ma pe obinrin na mq Egun
 at-head, that we not should (continuative) call woman the together:with Egungun
 ni ojq miran.
 at day another.

 OGUNDA - (I)WORI - 1

Ko kq-(i)le ko sun ori-(i)gi; ko kq-(i)şu ko jẹ erupẹ
 "Not build-house not sleep head-(of)-tree; not hoe-yam not eat dirt (of)
 ilẹ; agba kan kq-(I)fa ko ri obi ti o gbo jẹ a da-(I)fa fun
 ground; elder one learn-Ifa not see kola that it grow:old eat" who cast-Ifa for
 Ajaolele ti o nlq si ode Oro. Nwq ni ki Ajaolele ru-
 Ajaolele that he going to outside (of) Oro. They say should Ajaolele offer-
 (ẹ)bq ki o to lq si ode Oro. Nwq ni ki o fi ewurẹ
 sacrifice before he equal go to outside (of) Oro. They say should he take she:goat
 ru-(ẹ)bq akikq męta, ayebq adię, abę kan. Ajaolele ru-(ẹ)bq.
 offer-sacrifice, cock three, hen chicken, razor one. Ajaolele offer-sacrifice.
 N(i)-igba-ti o de ode Oro, Eşu yq abę ti o fi
 At-time-that he arrive outside (of) Oro, Eshu pull:out razor that he take (it)
 ru-(ẹ)bq le l(i)-qwo. Ija wa da on pęlu Qran
 offer-sacrifice give (him) at-hand. Fight come cause him together:with Affair,

come out. Instead she turned into the longest feather in his tail, and there she remains until this very day.

Ifa says that we will marry a wife, but that we should sacrifice lest someone kill her and brag about it to our face. Everyone will be competing for this woman before we win out.⁸ If we marry her, we should sacrifice one she-goat, a cloth from her body, and eleven shillings, that she may not die and that people will not say that our money⁹ was lost on her, and lest someday we should have to call her to come with the Egungun.¹⁰

8. "It cut against person at hand" is said of a rope that breaks when people are pulling it in opposite directions, as in a tug of war. The figure of speech here compares the attempts to win the woman with a tug of war.

9. The money given as bridewealth.

10. Meaning that she will die. Cf. n. 3, verse 52-4.

131 - 1

"One who does not build a house does not have to sleep in the tree top; one who does not hoe yams does not have to eat dirt; an elder who learns¹ Ifa does not have to eat stale kola nuts" was the one who cast Ifa for Ajaolele when he was going to the town of Oro.² They said Ajaolele should make a sacrifice before he went to Oro. They said he should sacrifice a she-goat, three cocks, a hen, and one razor. Ajaolele made the sacrifice.

When he reached the town of Oro, Eshu pulled out the razor which Ajaolele had sacrificed and put it in Ajaolele's hand.³ A fight started between Ajaolele and Affair,

1. Note the pun on the words: build (kọ), hoe (kọ), and learn (kọ).

2. There are several towns named Oro, including one near Ido and Ijero in Ekiti.

3. The razor offered as part of the sacrifice is instrumental in getting him into the trouble which brings him wives.

qmq-(o)binrin O-l(i)-oro ti o jẹ pe Ajaolele ima
child-woman (of) One:who-has-Oro that she consent that Ajaolele (continuative)

ba ra ẹkọ. Eṣu wa ti Qran lu ọbẹ
join (her) buy cornstarch:porridge. Eshu come push Affair against knife (of)

qwg Ajaolele, o gun Qran. Nwọn ni Ajaolele da-(q)ran. Eṣu ni
hand (of) Ajaolele, it stab Affair. They say Ajaolele cause-affair. Eshu say (he)

ko da-(q)ran o ni ẹ ni ki nwọn fa Qran le Ajaolele l(i)-qwg
not cause-affair; he say make be should they pull Affair give Ajaolele at-hand

ki o lq ma tq-(o)ju rẹ. Nwọn si fa Qran le l(i)-
should he go (continuative) care:for-eye hers. They and pull Affair give (him) at-

qwg pe ki o lq ma tq-(o)ju rẹ. Bẹ-ni Qran ti wq-
hand that should he go (continuative) care:for-eye hers. So-be Affair have enter-

(i)le-(q)kq ko l(i)-oyun bẹ-ni ko si bi-(q)mq. N(i)-igba-ti
house-(of)-husband not have-pregnancy; so-be not and bear-child. At-time-that

Qran de ile Ajaolele, bi Ajaolele ti ntq-(o)ju rẹ, bẹ-na
Affair arrive house (of) Ajaolele, as Ajaolele have caring:for-eye hers, so-also

ni o si nba sun pẹlu. N(i)-igba-ti o ma
be he and joining (her) sleep together:with (her). At-time-that it (continuative)

to oṣu męta oyun han ni ara Qran.
reach month three pregnancy appear at body (of) Affair.

N(i)-igba-ti O-l(i)-Oro gbq o ni on fi Qran fun Ajaolele
At-time-that One:who-has-Oro hear (this) he say he take Affair give Ajaolele

ki o ma ẹ aya rẹ. Bẹ-na ni igba-(e)keji O-
should she (continuative) make wife his. So-also be calabash-second (of) One:who-

l(i)-Oro na si fun ni qmq pẹlu ati igba-(ẹ)kęta O-
has-Oro the and give at child together:with (him) and calabash-third (of) One:who-

l(i)-Oro na si ẹ bẹ gęgę. N(i)-igba-ti o pada de ilu rẹ, ti o
has-Oro the and do so just. At-time-that he return arrive town his, that he

di ẹ-l(i)-ęni o bẹrẹ si jo, o bẹrẹ si iyọ. O wa
become one:who-has-person he begin to dance, he begin to rejoice. He come

di enia nla o wa bẹrẹ si kq-(o)rin pe:
become person big he come begin to sing-song that:

Ifa mo da r(e)-Oro ẹẹ Ajaolele,
"Ifa I cast go-Oro happen, Ajaolele,

Ifa mo da r(e)-Oro ẹẹ
"Ifa I cast go-Oro happen."

Ifa ni inu yio dun ni ohun ti a da on si yi, o ni a-(yi)o
Ifa say belly will be:sweet at ohun that we cast him to this; he say we-will

ni iyi a-(yi)o si di ẹ-l(i)-ęni ati pe nwọn yio fi
have glory; we-will and become one:who-has-person and that they will take

obinrin kan ta-(ę)ni l(i)-qrę.
woman one sell-person at-gift.

the daughter of the chief of Oro, who had agreed to let Ajaolele buy cornstarch porridge from her. Eshu pushed Affair against the knife in the hand of Ajaolele, and it stabbed Affair. They said Ajaolele had started the trouble.⁴ Eshu said that he had not started it; he said that they must put Affair in the charge of Ajaolele, so that he should take care of her until her wound healed. And they put Affair in the charge of Ajaolele so that he could take care of her. It so happened that Affair was already married and living with her husband, but she had not become pregnant and had not born a child. When Affair came to Ajaolele's house, while he was taking care of her, he was also sleeping with her. When the third month arrived, her pregnancy became noticeable.

When the chief of Oro heard this, he said he would give Affair to Ajaolele and that she should be his wife. Likewise the chief second⁵ to the chief of Oro gave him one of his daughters, and the chief third to the chief of Oro did the same. When he returned to his own town, Ajaolele had become a person with followers, and he began to dance, he began to rejoice. He had become an important person, and he began to sing:

"The Ifa that I cast to go to Oro has come to pass, Ajaolele;

"The Ifa that I cast to go to Oro has come to pass."

Ifa says that we will be happy about the thing for which this figure was cast. He says we will gain glory; and we will become someone with a following, and that we will be given a wife without having to give bridewealth.

4. There is a pun here on the trouble or affair of the fight and the name of the daughter of the king.

5. An individual's followers are spoken of as his second, third, and fourth "calabashes" after the order in which, according to their rank, they drink when a calabash of palm wine is passed.

OGUNDA MEJI - 1

O ni o wọ wọrọ, mo ni o tutu dun-dun o ni bi kin-ni?

He say, it drag gently; I say, it cool cold-cold; he say, like what-be (it)?

Mo ni bi owo tun-tun ti a ma ni ni, mo ni kin-
I say, like cowries new-new that we (continuative) have be (it); I say, what-
ni ẹbọ? Ẹiyẹ-(i)le meji ati egbejila.
be sacrifice? Bird-(of)-house two and 2400 (cowries).

O ni o wọ wọrọ, mo ni o tutu dun-dun o ni bi kin-ni?

He say, it drag gently; I say, it cool cold-cold; he say, like what-be (it)?

Mo ni bi aya titun ti a ma ni ni, mo ni kin-ni
I say, like wife new that we (continuative) have be (it), I say, what-be
ẹbọ? O ni agbebo adię meji ati egbejila.
sacrifice? He say, hen chicken two and 2400 (cowries).

O ni o wọ wọrọ, mo ni o tutu dun-dun, o ni bi kin-ni?

He say, it drag gently; I say, it cool cold-cold; he say, like what-be (it)?

Mo ni bi ọmọ titun ti a ma bi ni, o ni akikọ męta
I say, like child new that we (continuative) bear be (it); he say, ọok three
ati ẹgbẹtaalegbọn. O ni a-bi-(ọ)mọ-le-(ọ)mọ ni ti ẹşşęki,
and 6600 (cowries). He say, to-bear-child-upon-child be that (of) şęşęki,
o ni ọmọ ni din l(i)-ẹhin obinrin rẹ.
he say, child not lessen at-back woman his.

O ni o wọ wọrọ, mo ni o tutu dun-dun, o ni bi kin-ni?

He say, it drag gently; I say, it cool cold-cold; he say, like what-be (it)?

Mo ni bi ile tun-tun ti a ma kọ, o ni a-da-mọ
I say, like house new-new that we (continuative) build, he say, to-create-against
a-da-mọ ni peregun da-(a)şọ, o ni peregun ki lo aşọ esi.
to-create-against be peregun create-cloth, he say, peregun not use cloth (of) last:

O ni ewurę kan ati ejielogun l(i)-ẹbọ; nwọn ni gbogbo
year. He say, she:goat one and 44,000 (cowries) be-sacrifice; they say, all
aiye yi ni yio ba joko n(i)-ibẹ.
earth this be (it) will join (him) sit:down at-there.

O ni o wọ wọrọ, mo ni o tutu dun-dun, o ni bi kin-ni?

He say, it drag gently; I say, it cool cold-cold; he say, like what-be (it)?

Mo ni bi oye titun ti a ma jẹ ni, o ni ki a yan
I say, like title new that we (continuative) eat be (it); he say, should we choose
on l(i)-ẹbọ ki on ki on le jẹ ti on pẹ: agutan kan,
him at-sacrifice that he should he be:able eat that (of) his be:long: ewe one,
iti aşọ fun-fun, igba ẹfun kan, ati ọkanla.
bunch (of) cloth be:white-be:white calabash (of) chalk one, and 22,000 (cowries).

137 - 1

He says, "It is pulling gently." I say, "It is very cool." He says, "Like what?" I say, "Like new money that we are going to have." I say, "What is the sacrifice?" Two pigeons and seven pence two oninis.

He says, "It is pulling gently." I say, "It is very cool." He says, "Like what?" I say, "Like a new wife that we are going to have." I say, "What is the sacrifice?" He says, "Two hens and seven pence two oninis."

He says, "It is pulling gently." I say, "It is very cool." He says, "Like what?" I say, "Like a new child that we are going to bear." He says, "Three cocks and one shilling seven pence eight oninis." He says, "To bear child after child is what the shēshēki plant does."¹ He says children will not decrease in number behind his wife.

He says, "It is pulling gently." I say, "It is very cool." He says, "Like what?" I say, "Like a new house that we are going to build." He says, "To grow against himself, to grow against himself is how Peregun tree grows his cloth";² he says, "Peregun tree never uses last year's clothes." He says, "One she-goat and eleven shillings is the sacrifice." They say, "The whole world will be sitting down there with him."

He says, "It is pulling gently." I say, "It is very cool." He says, "Like what?" I say, "Like a new title that we are going to take." He says we should name the sacrifice that will enable him to take the title and remain long in office. One ewe, a bunch of white cloths, a calabash of chalk, and five shillings six pence.

1. This refers to the abundance of seeds or fruit of this unidentified plant. Cf. verse 249-3.

2. This refers to the fact that the peregun tree (Dracaena spp.), which is used to mark boundaries, gets a new layer of bark each year.

Ori mi di ori ẹfun Ado;
 "Head my become head (of) chalk (of) Benin;

Qtẹkulu gbogbo ẹ wa yọ fun ori mi poro.
 "Everybody all you come rejoice for head my together."

Ifa ni a-(yi)o ba ẹsẹ ja.
 Ifa say we-will join row reach.

OGUNDA MEJI - 2

Pẹtẹ-pẹtẹ ni a-irọ-(ọ)kọ gbọnrangandan-gbọnrangandan ni a-irọ
 "Flat-flat be we-strike-hoe, 'gbọnrangandan-gbọnrangandan' be we-strike
 ada, l(i)-eji-da l(i)-eji-da ni a-irọ agogo idẹ, bi a ki pa
 cutlass, at-two-turn at-two-turn be we-strike gong (of) brass; if we should kill
 pọ o di ọkan-şoşo giro-giro a da fun Qrunmila ti o wa
 together it become one-only alone-alone" who cast for Qrunmila that he exist
 ni ir(ọ)-ogun ọta, nwọn ni yio şş-(o)gun wọn, nwọn ni ki o
 at gather-war (of) enemy, they say will make-war (of) them, they say should he
 ru akikọ meṭa, ẹgbẹtalelọgbọn, ati asunrun etu kan.
 offer cock three, 6600 (cowries), and bag (of) etu one.

Ati o-n(i)-iru ati o-n(i)-iyọ, ẹnu wọn sunin-sunin
 And one:who-has-locust:bean and one:who-has-salt, mouth their 'sunin-sunin'
 ẹnu wọn, nwọn ni yio şş wọn. Ifa ni on yio ba-(ẹ)ni şş-(o)gun
 mouth their; they say (he) will make them. Ifa say he will join-person make-war
 ar(a)-aiye ni ohun ti a da Ifa si yi, o ni a fẹ şş ohun kan,
 (of) people-(of)-earth at thing that we cast Ifa to this, he say we want do thing one;
 o ni on ko ni jẹ-ki a ri ibi ọta n(i)-inu rẹ,
 he say he not be (he) consent-that we see evil (of) enemy at-belly its.

QSA - (O)GUNDA - 1

A-ja-tu-(e)ruku ẹfọn a da fun ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ, nwọn ni
 "To-fight-loosen-dust (of) buffalo" who cast for one:who-be-hunter; they say
 ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori-pe yio ri aya kan fẹ ni ọdun yi.
 should he offer-sacrifice because-that (he) will see wife one love at year this.
 Q-l(i)-ọdẹ ru-(ẹ)bọ akikọ meji, ayebo adię meji, ọtin
 One:who-be-hunter offer-sacrifice (of) cock two, hen chicken two, liquor (of)
 şşkẹtẹ, ati ẹgbaji.
 maize:beer, and 4000 (cowries).

"My head becomes as white as chalk from Benin,"³

"Everybody, come and rejoice with me because of my head."

Ifa says we will reach the end of our row.⁴

3. I will become so old my hair will be white as chalk.

4. That is, find a solution to our problem. The prediction is that the client will get money, a wife, a child, a new house, or a title, depending on which he came to inquire about, if he makes the specified sacrifice.

137 - 2

"When we forge a hoe, we beat it out flat; when we forge a cutlass, we beat 'gbonrandan-gbonrandan';¹ when we forge a brass gong, we turn it over and over and over; if we bring them together, they become only one alone" was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he was going to attack his enemies. They said he would defeat them. They said he should sacrifice three cocks, one shilling seven pence and eight oninis, and one bag made of etu cloth.²

Both those who use locust beans and those who use salt, their mouths will be closed 'sunin-sunin,'³ they say he will defeat them. Ifa says he will help someone defeat the people of the world in this thing for which this figure was cast. He says we want to do something; he says he will not allow us to find the evil of enemies in it.

1. The sound made when beating iron on an anvil.

2. Etu is a popular pattern of cotton cloth woven in blue and white on the men's loom.

3. The sound of a person closing his mouth, meaning that no one will be able to say anything against him. It was explained that since everyone uses locust beans or salt in seasoning food, Qrunmila will defeat everyone.

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"To fight and stir up dust like Buffalo" was the one who cast Ifa for Hunter. They said he should make a sacrifice so that he would find a wife to marry during that year. Hunter sacrificed two cocks, two hens, maize beer, and one shilling.

A-(yi)o wa egun-iṣu a-(yi)o fi gun iyan bọ
 We-will seek egun-yam we-will take (it) pound pounded:yam sacrifice:to

ori. Q-l(i)-ṣḍe ru-(ḍ)bọ.
 head. One:who-be-hunter offer-sacrifice.

Ni ọjọ kan ọ-l(i)-ṣḍe yi lọ s(i)-oko, n(i)-igba-ti o gun egun
 At day one one:who-be-hunter this go to-farm, at-time-that he mount lookout,
 o ri gidigidi kan ṣugbọn n(i)-igba-ti o fẹ na ibọn si, gidigidi yi
 he see Gidigidi one but at-time-that he want stretch gun to (it), Gidigidi this
 ara pada o si di wundia pupa wẹ; n(i)-igba-ti o bọ awọ s(i)-
 body change it and become maiden red fine; at-time-that she take:off hide to-
 ilẹ tan, ọ-l(i)-ṣḍe si nwo bi gidigidi na ti nfi
 ground finish, one-who-be-hunter and looking:at (her) as Gidigidi the have taking
 awọ rẹ pa-mọ o si mọ ibi-ti o fi pa-mọ si ni ẹhin
 hide hers kill-against he and know place-that she take (it) kill-against to at back
 igi kan; ṣugbọn o papa ko mọ pe ọ-l(i)-ṣḍe yi nwo
 (of) tree one; but she herself not know that one:who-be-hunter this looking:at
 on.
 her.

N(i)-igba-ti gidigidi na lọ tan, ọ-l(i)-ṣḍe yi sọ ka-
 At-time-that Gidigidi the go finish, one:who-be-hunter this strike against-
 (i)lẹ l(i)-ori egun rẹ o si gbe awọ ti o bọ si-(i)lẹ o
 ground at-head (of) lookout he and take hide that she take:off to-ground he
 gbe s(i)-inu apo rẹ o si ntẹle titi o fi ri pe ọja ni
 carry (it) to-belly bag his he and following (her) until he take see that market be
 o nlọ; n(i)-igba-ti nwọn de inu ọja, ọ-l(i)-ṣḍe yi
 she going; at-time-that they arrive belly (of) market, one:who-be-hunter this
 sun-mọ, o ki, o si sọ fun pe on ni on wa
 move-against (her), he greet (her), he and speak for (her) that she be he seek
 wa si ọja; gidigidi yi ti o di obinrin si da-(o)hun o bi
 come to market; Gidigidi this that she become woman and break-voice she ask
 lere pe Ẹ ko si (ohu)n-kan? Ọ-l(i)-ṣḍe yi da-(o)hun o
 (him) (1) that "Make not be thing-one?" One:who-be-hunter this break-voice he
 ni o nfẹ lati fẹ ni; gidigidi da-(o)hun o ni on ko
 say he wanting in:order:to love (her) be (it); Gidigidi break-voice she say she not
 nfẹ enia, n(i)-igba-ti o di igba-(ḍ)kẹta ti ṣḍe yi ma
 loving person; at-time-that it become time-third that hunter this (continuative)
 tọ wa ni o wa bi ṣḍe na lere pe o ri (ohu)n-kan l(i)-
 approach (her) seek be she come ask hunter the (1) that he see thing-one at-
 ẹhin on dan?
 back hers (interrogative)?

1. Bi . . . lere means "to ask."

We will find some yam cuttings;¹ we will pound yam loaf with them and sacrifice them to our head. Hunter made the sacrifice.

One day this hunter went to the farm. When he climbed to his lookout platform,² he saw a Gidigidi,³ but when he tried to aim his gun at it, this Gidigidi turned into a beautiful reddish maiden. When she had finished taking off her hide, the hunter watched as the Gidigidi hid her hide, and he knew the place where she hid it behind a tree. But she herself did not know that this hunter was watching her.

When the Gidigidi had left, this hunter came down from his lookout and put the hide that she had taken off into his bag; and he followed her until he saw that she was going to market. When they reached the market, this hunter approached her; he greeted her, and told her that he had come to market seeking her. This Gidigidi who had turned into a woman replied, "Is something wrong?" The hunter answered that he wanted to marry her. Gidigidi answered that she was not going to marry anyone. The third time that the hunter approached her in this way, she asked if he had seen anything behind her.⁴

1. There are two yam harvests. At the early harvest, the lower part of some yams is cut off and the rest is replanted. When these mature, they are called egun yams and are used primarily as seed-yams (ebu) for planting in the following year. They are never pounded into yam loaf for eating, but they are commonly used in this form in medicines and for other ritual purposes. Here they are used as a sacrifice to the head, which is for the soul which controls the individual's luck.

2. A platform in a tree reached by a ladder where a hunter watches for game. Note the pun here on "mount the lookout" (gun egun) and "pound yam cuttings" (gun egun).

3. A Gidigidi is a wild animal described by the informant as large and powerful, and similar to a buffalo; it runs from the rain, which it dislikes, and is sometimes seen with its head under a shelter but its body out in the rain. Other informants described it as like a wild goat or like a horse, but stronger. It is identified in the CMS Dictionary as "a large and strong animal," and by Abraham as the Yellowbacked Duiker (Cephalophus Sylvicultrix Sylvicultrix Afzelius). Later in the verse the children of the Gidigidi woman are spoken of as "children of Buffalo," and Buffalo is mentioned in the introductory phrase. Cf. n. 7.

4. That is, whether he had found out anything about her past.

Q-l(i)-oḍe na da-(o)hun o ni o ri (ohu)n-kan l(i)-ḡhin rẹ.
 One:who-be-hunter the break-voice he say he see thing-one at-back hers.

Obinrin gidigidi wa da-(o)hun o ni Kin-ni o ri l(i)-ḡhin mi? N(i)-
 Woman Gidigidi come break-voice she say "What-be he see at-back my?" At-
 igba-na ni q-l(i)-oḍe sọ fun pe ki o wa ki on sọ
 time-the be one:who-be-hunter speak for (her) that should she come that he speak
 ohun ti on ri l(i)-ḡhin rẹ fun; n(i)-igba-ti awon mej(i)-(m)aji si
 thing that he see at-back hers for (her); at-time-that those two-two and
 de ḡhin oja q-l(i)-oḍe yi ki qwq bq apo o si yọ
 arrive back (of) market, one:who-be-hunter this push hand enter bag he and pull:
 awq rẹ ja-(o)de o si fi han n(i)-igba-ti o ri awq ti
 out hide hers reach-outside he and take (it) appear, at-time-that she see hide that
 o bq s(i)-inu igbo l(i)-qwq q-l(i)-oḍe yi, o ni
 she take:off to-belly (of) forest at-hand (of) one:who-be-hunter this, she say
 ki q-l(i)-oḍe jowq, o ni on yio fẹ; obinrin yi
 should one:who-be-hunter grant:favor, she say she will love (him); woman this
 si pada lo si oja o lo pa-(i)lẹ rẹ mo o si tẹle q-
 and return go to market, she go kill-ground hers against, she and follow one:who-
 l(i)-oḍe yi; ṣugbon n(i)-igba-ti nwon nlo ni ona o sọ fun q-l(i)-
 be-hunter this; but at-time-that they going at road she speak for one:who-be-
 oḍe yi pe ko gbodo sọ orọ na fun ẹni-k(u)-ẹni, q-l(i)-
 hunter this that not must speak word the for person-any-person, one:who-be-
 oḍe na si sọ fun pe on ko ni sọ fun ẹni-k(u)-ẹni; bayi
 hunter the and speak for (her) that he not be speak for person-any-person; thus
 ni o di aya rẹ ti nwon jo ngbe ile.
 be she become wife his that they be:together dwelling:at house.

Obinrin yi bẹrẹ si bi-(o)mo fun oḍe yi; ṣugbon aya q-l(i)-
 Woman this begin to bear-child for hunter this; but wife (of) one:who-be-
 oḍe akokọ fẹ bẹrẹ si yọ q-l(i)-oḍe yi l(i)-ḡnu pe nibo ni
 hunter first love begin to pull one:who-be-hunter this at-mouth that where be
 okọ on ti ri aya-(e)keji fẹ ti ko sọ fun on, q-l(i)-oḍe
 husband her have see wife-second love that not speak for her, one:who-be-hunter
 yi si sọ fun pe qmọ awon ti ima wa ba on ra
 this and speak for (her) that child (of) those that (continuative) come join him buy
 ẹran l(i)-oko ni, ṣugbon iru ida-(o)hun yi ko tẹ aya rẹ yi
 meat at-farm be (she), but kind (of) break-voice this not reach wife his this
 l(i)-ḡrun o si tun bẹrẹ si wadi pe boya ni ilu yi ni tabi
 at-neck she and then begin to investigate that perhaps at town this be (she) or
 ni ilu miran. Q-l(i)-oḍe yi si sọ fun pe ni ilu miran
 at town another. One:who-be-hunter this and speak for (her) that at town another
 ni, ṣugbon sibẹ-sibẹ ko tẹ obinrin yi l(i)-ḡrun o si bẹrẹ si
 be (she), but still-still not reach woman this at-neck she and begin to

The hunter replied that he had seen something behind her. The Gidigidi woman answered, "What did you see behind me?" Then the hunter told her that she should come with him, so that he could tell her what he had seen behind her. When they got outside the market, the hunter put his hand into his bag and brought out her hide and showed it to her. When she saw the hide that she had taken off in the forest in the hand of the hunter, she said the hunter should take pity on her, that she would marry him. The woman went back to the market and gathered up her goods and set out with the hunter. But while they were on the way, she told the hunter that he must not speak a word about this to anyone; and the hunter told her that he would not tell anyone. Thus she became his wife, and they lived together in his house.

This woman began to bear children for the hunter, but the wife whom the hunter had first married began to tease the hunter by asking him where he had met his second wife, that he had not told her about it. The hunter told her that she was the child of the women who came to the farm to buy meat from him, but this kind of answer did not satisfy his first wife, and she began to inquire whether she had perhaps come from this town or from that town. The hunter told her that she was from a different town, but still this did not satisfy the woman, and she began to

ma wadi kiri; n(i)-inu ṣ(e)-iṣe bayi ni obinrin gidigidi
 (continuative) investigate around; at-belly (of) do-deed thus be woman Gidigidi
 yi bi ọmọ kinni ti o si bi ekeji.
 this bear child first that she and bear second.

Obinrin yi wa lọ ba ẹgbọn ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ yi di ọran
 Woman this come go join elder:sibling (of) one:who-be-hunter this tie affair
 na pọ, ẹgbọn rẹ si mu lọ si ode, o fun ni ẹmu
 the together, elder:sibling his and take (him) go to outside, he give (him) at palm:
 mu lọpọ-lọpọ, n(i)-igba-ti o yo tan ni ẹgbọn rẹ
 wine drink much-much, at-time-that he be:satisfied finish be elder:sibling his
 bere l(i)-ọwọ rẹ pe nibo ni iwọ ti ri aya rẹ-(e)keji fẹ? Ọ-
 ask at-hand his that "Where be you have see wife his-second love?" One:who-
 l(i)-ọdẹ yi da-(o)hun o ni gidigidi ni n(i)-ibi-ti o gbe nṣọ
 be-hunter this break-voice he say Gidigidi be (she), at-place-that he take watching
 igi l(i)-oko ni on ti ri ti o nbọ awọ ti on si ti ko awọ
 tree at-farm be he have see that she taking:off hide that he and have gather hide
 rẹ ti o si ba de ọja ti on si fi awọ rẹ han ati
 hers that he and join (her) arrive market that he and take hide hers appear and
 pe lati igba-na ni o ti di aya on. N(i)-igba-ti ẹgbọn
 that from time-the be she have become wife his. At-time-that elder:sibling (of)
 ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ yi de ile o ko o ro fun aya ọ-l(i)-
 one:who-be-hunter this arrive house he relate he report for wife (of) one:who-be
 ọdẹ-(e)keji.
 hunter-second.

N(i)-igba-ti o ṣe ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ yi mu-(a)ra o lọ si oko, ṣugbọn
 At-time-that it make one:who-be-hunter this take-body he go to farm, but
 n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(ẹ)kẹta ti o ti lọ ni eyi iyale mu igi
 at-time-that it become day-third that he have go be this senior:wife take wood
 ti o si gbe lu-(i)lẹ o nfẹ ṣẹ igi yi. [Ewọ si ni enia
 that she and take strike-ground she wanting break wood this. [Tabu and be people
 ko gbọdọ gbe igi lu-(i)lẹ bẹ ni ile ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ.] Eyi
 not must take wood strike-ground so at house (of) one:who-be-hunter.] This
 obinrin gidigidi yi si da-(o)hun o ni ṣe ọkọ awọn ti kilọ
 woman Gidigidi this and break-voice she say make husband (of) them have warn
 fun awọn pe ki awọn ma-ṣe ṣẹ igi bẹ mọ n(i)-inu ile? N(i)-
 for them that should they not-do break wood so again at-belly (of) house? At-
 igba-na ni eyi iyale da-(o)hun o ni Ba ara rẹ lọ wayi, iwọ
 time-the be this senior:wife break-voice she say, "With body yours go, wayi, you
 iṣe enia ṣe ẹranko yi ma jẹ ma mu awọ rẹ
 make person make animal this, (imperative) eat (imperative) drink hide yours
 nbẹ n(i)-inu aka.
 existing at-belly (of) storehouse."

inquire about. While she was doing this, the Gidigidi woman bore her first child, and her second child.

The first wife went to the hunter's elder brother and discussed the matter with him. The elder brother took the hunter out and gave him lots of palm wine to drink. When the hunter had drunk his fill, his brother asked him, "Where did you meet your second wife?" The hunter replied that she was a Gidigidi, that he had seen her taking off her hide where he was watching from a tree in the farm, and that he had taken her hide and gone to the market with her, that he had shown her the hide, and that from that time on she had been his wife. When the hunter's elder brother came home, he reported this to the hunter's first wife.⁵

After a while, the hunter got ready and went to the farm; but on the second day after he had left, his senior wife took wood and struck it against the ground in order to break it. (It is a tabu that wood must not be struck against the ground in this way in the house of a hunter.) This Gidigidi woman asked whether their husband had not warned them that they must not break wood in this way in his house? Then the senior wife replied with contempt "Take yourself and go away, Wayi!⁶ You are both a human being and an animal. Eat and drink; your hide is inside the storehouse."

5. The Yoruba text says he told the hunter's second wife, but from the context this is clearly an error.

6. An exclamation expressing great contempt.

N(i)-igba-ti obinrin gidigidi yi gbọ bayi o ni Ha! o si dakę,
 At-time-that woman Gidigidi this hear thus she say, "Ha!" she and be:silent,
 o si mu-(a)ra, o si lọ si ori aka, n(i)-igba-ti o de
 she and take-body, she and go to head (of) storehouse; at-time-that she arrive
 ibę, o ba awọ rę n(i)-ibi-ti ọ-l(i)-ọdę gbe fi pa-
 there, she meet hide hers at-place-that one:who-be-hunter take take (it) kill-
 mọ si, o si gbe awọ rę, n(i)-igba-ti o wo o, o ti gbę,
 against to, she and take hide hers; at-time-that she look:at it, it have dry:out,
 o si lọ pọn omi, o ri i s(i)-inu rę, n(i)-igba-ti o de, o
 she and go draw water, she immerse it to-belly its; at-time-that it be:ready, she
 gbe wọ, o si ni iwo l(i)-ori, n(i)-igba-na ni o sa-re ti
 take (it) enter (it), she and have horn at-head; at-time-the be she run-go against
 iyale rę, o si kan a pa, n(i)-igba-ti o kan iyale rę
 senior:wife her, she and butt her kill (her), at-time-that she butt senior:wife hers
 pa tan, o yọ ọkan s(i)-ilę n(i)-inu awọn iwo rę mej(i)-
 kill (her) finish, she pull:out one to-ground at-belly (of) those horn hers two-
 (m)ejio si mu-(a)ra o d(a)-ori kọ oko, n(i)-igba-ti ọ-
 two she and take-body she turn-head turn:toward farm; at-time-that one:who-
 l(i)-ọdę yi ri ti o nbọ, o mọ ti igi ti bę ni ile; n(i)-igba-
 be-hunter this see that she coming, he know that wood have cut at house; at-time-
 ti o fę kan ọkọ rę, ọkọ rę ni ki o ma kan on, o ni:
 that she want butt husband hers, husband hers say should she not butt him, he say:

Iyan egun ati ọtin apę
 "Pounded:yam (of) egun and liquor (of) pot,

Ę p(a)-oko bo mi
 "You clean-farm cover me,

Ę b(a)-qwo le mi.
 "You put-honor upon me."

N(i)-igba-na ni o wa bere l(i)-qwo ọ-l(i)-ọdę yi pe bawo
 At-time-the be she come ask at-hand (of) one:who-be-hunter this that how
 ni iyale on ti ęe mọ on, n(i)-igba-na ni ọ-l(i)-ọdę yi
 be senior:wife his have make know her, at-time-the be one:who-be-hunter this
 wa ko bi ęgbọn on ti ęe mu on lọ si ode ti o si
 come relate as elder:sibling his have make take him go to outside that he and
 fun on ni ęmu mu yo ti on ko si mọ igba-ti on sọ
 give him at palm:wine drink be:satisfied that he not and know time-that he speak
 fun. N(i)-igba-na ni o ni o dara, o ni on ko ni pa,
 for (him). At-time-the be she say "it be:good," she say she not be kill (him),
 ęgbọn ki o ma lọ si ile, ati pe n(i)-igba-ku-(i)gba ti
 but should he (continuative) go to house, and that at-time-any-time that
 awọn ọmọ on ba nę ęe ọdun, ki o ma ba awọn
 those child hers should wanting make year, should he (continuative) join those

When the Gidigidi woman heard this, she said, "Ha!" and she kept quiet. She got ready and went to the storehouse. When she got there, she found her hide where the hunter had hidden it, and she brought it out. When she looked at it, it had dried out. She drew some water and put the hide into it. When it was ready, she got into it, and she had horns on her head. Then she ran at the senior wife, butted her, and killed her. When she had butted and killed the senior wife, she pulled off one of her two horns, and then started toward the farm. When the hunter saw her coming, he knew that wood had been broken in his house. When she wanted to butt her husband, her husband said that she must not butt him. He said:

"Loaf of yam cuttings and pot of maize beer,⁷

"You cut weeds and cover me,

"You heap honor upon me."

Then she asked the hunter, how it was that his senior wife had known about her. The hunter told her how his elder brother had taken him out and had given him so much palm wine to drink that he no longer knew what he was saying. Then she said, "It is all right." She said that she would not kill him, but that he should go home and that whenever her children should want to perform their annual festival, he should

7. Both the maize beer and the loaf of yam cuttings mentioned here, in an incantation recited by the hunter to prevent the Gidigidi from killing him, were included in the sacrifice he had offered.

omọ on bọ iwo ti on yọ s(i)-ilẹ ni ile fun iranti
 child hers sacrifice:to horn that she pull:out to-ground at house for remembrance
 oṣ n(i)-igba-ti awọn ba fẹ bọ ori wọn. Lati igba-na ni
 hers at-time-that they should want sacrifice:to head theirs. From time-the be
 awọn omọ rẹ ti ma nbọ iwo ti nwọn ba nṣe
 those child hers have (continuative) sacrificing:to horn that they should making
 qdun wọn; awọn ti ima bọ iwo bayi ni a ma
 year their; those that (continuative) sacrifice:to horn thus be we (continuative)
 npe ti a si nki ni omọ Ẹfọn titi di oni yi.
 calling that we and greeting at "child (of) Buffalo" until become today this.

Ifa ni o ri ire obinrin kan fun e-l(i)-eyi, ṣugbọn ki
 Ifa say he see goodness (of) woman one for one:who-be-this, but should
 a ru-(ẹ)bọ ki obinrin na ma ba ku n(i)-igba-ti omọ rẹ ba
 we offer-sacrifice that woman the not should die at-time-that child her should
 di meji; ki o ma ba ku tan ki iyale rẹ na ma ba
 become two; that she not should die finish that senior:wife her also not should
 ku pẹlu; ki ọkọ na ma ba gbe ai-san ti
 die together:with (her); that husband also not should carry not-be:better from
 oko wa s(i)-ile ki o ma ba ku tan ki a ma wi-pe aya rẹ
 farm come to-house that he not should die finish that we not speak-that wife his
 grun ni o mu lọ. Ki a ṣọ-(a)ra ki a ma f(i)-inu han
 sky be she take (him) go. Should we watch-body that we not take-belly appear
 obinrin ni ohun kan ti a nfẹ ṣe, ki aṣiri ẹni ti itori bẹ
 woman at thing one that we wanting do, that secret (of) person from because so
 tu.
 loosen.

 QSA MEJI - 1

Koko de oju orokun o pin, ọna de ori apata po-ruru
 "Knot arrive face (of) knee he end; road arrive head (of) rock turn-confused"
 a da fun Yẹwẹrẹ ni-(ọ)jọ ti o ma na Ijẹgbẹ ati Ejẹgbo, nwọn
 who cast for Worthless at-day that he (continuative) whip Ijẹgbẹ and Ejẹgbo, they
 ni ki o ma na nwọn o ni on yio na wọn o si na wọn, n(i)-igba-
 say should he not whip them, he say he will whip them he and whip them; at-time-
 ti o pada de ile o ba gbogbo awọn ara ile rẹ ni ibu-
 that he return arrive house he meet all those people (of) house his at lying-
 (i)lẹ ai-san o si tọ awọn babalawo lọ, nwọn ni tani
 ground (of) not-be:better he and approach those diviner go, they say who
 Yẹwẹrẹ ba ja? Nwọn ni a fi bi o ba ru-(ẹ)bọ ni o
 Worthless join (them) fight? They say unless if he should offer-sacrifice be he

sacrifice with them to the horn that she had pulled off and left at home as a remembrance of her when they might want to sacrifice to their heads. From that time on, her children have continued to sacrifice to the horn when they perform their annual festival. Those who sacrifice to horns in this way are the ones that we call and greet as "Children of Buffalo"⁸ until this very day.

Ifa says he sees the blessing of a woman for this person, but that we should sacrifice, lest the woman die when her children reach two in number; lest she die and lest her senior wife die with her; lest her husband bring illness home from the farm; and lest he die and it be said that his wife has taken him away to heaven. We should be careful not to reveal secrets to a woman⁹ regarding something we want to do, lest, through this our secrets be made public.

8. According to the informants, this is a sib or lineage name (orilẹ) in Ifẹ whose origin is thus explained. However, a variant of this myth recorded at Mẹkọ, in which a Buffalo (ẹfọn) appears in place of the Gidigidi, identifies the "Child of Buffalo" as Qya, the Goddess of the Niger River and the principal wife of the God of Thunder. This variant explains why the worshipers or "children" of Qya sacrifice to buffalo horns, and why Qya has the praise name Iyansan or Yansan. Probably this verse also refers to the worshipers of Qya, and Gidigidi is a praise name for Buffalo. Cf. n. 1. Cf. also the versions recorded by Idewu (1956: 22-25); Danford and Fuja (1960: 7-10); the Walkers (1961: 11-16); and Fuja (1962: 77-82) in which the animal is identified as a hind or a deer.

9. Cf. verse 18-7.

"Knot reaches the knee and ends;¹ road reaches the top of a rock and is lost"² was the one who cast Ifa for Worthless when he was whipping Ijẹgbẹ and Ejẹgbo.³ They said he should not whip them, but he said he would whip them, and he did whip them. When he returned to his home, he found all his family lying ill upon the ground. He went to the diviners and they asked with whom Worthless was fighting. They said that unless he made a sacrifice he

1. The knee cap is the only "knot" to be found on the human body.

2. A path may be difficult to follow where it crosses a rock.

3. The meaning of these two names is obscure. Informants suggested that the latter may mean "face of sore" (oju egbo), and the former may refer to a group which formerly collected tribute from the people of Ifẹ for the king.

fi le şe-(o)gun. O ru şiyş-(i)le meji, obi meşan, abo-
take (them) be:able make-war. He offer bird-(of)-house two, kola nine, female-
(a)diş kan, ati akikş-(a)diş kan. Nwşn wa ki Ifa fun pe:
chicken one, and cock-chicken one. They come recite Ifa for (him) that:

A le iku lş l(i)-ode ilş yi
"We chase death go at-outside (of) ground this,

Yşwşrş iwş l(i)-o na-(I)şşgbş na Ejegbo rş pşlu
"Worthless you be-who whip-Işşgbş whip Ejegbo his together:with (him).

A le arun lş l(i)-ode ilş yi l(i)-oni
"We chase disease go at-outside (of) ground this at-today,

Yşwşrş iwş l(i)-o na-(I)şşgbş n(a)-Ejegbo rş mş
"Worthless you be-who whip-Işşgbş whip-Ejegbo his together:with (him),

Yşwşrş.
Worthless."

Ifa ni ki şni-kan şş-(a)ra ki o ma ja nitori-ti bi o
Ifa say should person-one watch-body that he not fight because-that if he
ba ja arun ati ai-san yio ba awşn ara ile rş,
should fight disease and not-be:better will meet those people (of) house his,
ki şni-kan si ru-(ş)bş pşlu ki awşn a-l(i)-
should person-one and offer-sacrifice together:with (it) that those one:who-be-
ai-san ile rş ba le dide ni ibu-(i)lş nitori-ti
not-be:better (of) house his should be:able arise at lying-ground because-that
şbura ni nwşn şe.
deity be they offend.

IREŞE ŞKANRAN - 1

Oşrş awo ori igba a da fun şrunlşşş şranko ni şşş
New:leaf secret (of) head (of) eggplant who cast for 165 animal at day
ti a-b(i)-awun nşş ji ilu şkun gbe. A ni ki
that One:who-like-Miser going steal drum (of) Leopard take (it). They say should
şrunlşşş şranko ru-(ş)bş nitori a-l(i)-a-ko-wa-ba,
165 animal offer-sacrifice because (of) one:who-be-who-gather-come-meet,
ki nwşn ma ba ri a-l(i)-a-ko-wa-ba ni şşun yi, şşan
that they not should see one:who-be-who-gather-come-meet at year this, (of) rod
eku (ş)k(an)-şkan ati şşşlugba, gbogbo şranko ru-(ş)bş.
(of) rat one-one and 260 (cowries); all animal offer-sacrifice.
Ko l(i)-şşş ko l(i)-oşş şba şrun ran-(i)şş si awşn şrunlşşş
Not at-day not at-month, king (of) sky send-message to those 165

would not be able to conquer them. He offered two pigeons, nine kola nuts, one hen, and one cock. They came and recited Ifa for him as follows:

"We chase Death out of town;

"Worthless, you are the one who is whipping Ijẹgbẹ and also his Ejegbo.

"We chase Disease out of town today;

"Worthless, you are the one who is whipping Ijẹgbẹ and also his Ejegbo, Worthless."

Ifa says someone should be careful not to fight, because if he should get into a fight, disease and illness will afflict his family; and someone should sacrifice so that those who are ill in his house may be able to get up from where they are lying down because they have offended a deity.

"Leaf sprouts,"¹ the diviner of the top of Eggplant was the one who cast Ifa for the 165 kinds of animals² on the day that Tortoise³ was going to steal Leopard's drum. They said that the 165 animals should sacrifice one stick of rats⁴ each and 0.78 pence because of a troublemaker,⁵ so that they might not see a troublemaker during that year. All the animals sacrificed.

Soon afterward the King of the Sky sent word to the 165 kinds of

1. The new leaves or leaf-shoots of any plant.

2. Cf. n. 3, verse 18-4.

3. The real word for Tortoise is *ajapa*, but he is usually referred to by the name "Miser" (*awun*, *ahun*) or one of its derivatives: *a-b(i)-awun*, *a-b(i)-ahun*. From Tortoise's stinginess, the women who do petty trading for a very small margin of profit are known as *a-l(i)-ajapa*, "those who are tortoise."

4. Dried rats and fish are sold impaled on small sticks.

5. A person who brings trouble to someone who doesn't deserve it. The reference is to Tortoise, the trickster of Yoruba folk tales, and the animal counterpart of Eshu, the divine trickster and troublemaker.

ẹranko pe ki nwọn wa ba on ẹ-(i)re ki nwọn si gbe ilu
 animal that should they come join him make-play should they and carry drum
 wọn dani; gbogbo ẹranko si se ilu, n(i)-igba-ti nwọn nlo, a-b(i)-
 their hold; all animal and cover drum at-time-that they going, One:who-like-
 awun ko ri awọ se ilu, o ba ilu ẹkun n(i)-ibi-ti o gbe
 Miser not see hide cover drum, he meet drum (of) Leopard at-place-that he carry
 e si ni oju ọna ti ẹkun si lo wẹ; a-b(i)-awun ji ilu
 it to at eye (of) road, that Leopard and go wash; One:who-like-Miser steal drum
 yi o si gbe lo si ọdọ ọba ọrun; ilu yi dara pupọ
 this he and carry (it) go to presence (of) king (of) sky; drum this be:good much
 o si dun ju awọn ilu miran lo; n(i)-igba-ti awun nlu ilu
 it and be:sweet surpass those drum other go; at-time-that Miser beating drum
 yi ni ọdọ ọba ọrun ọnu ya awọn ẹranko iy(i)-o-ku
 this at presence (of) king (of) sky mouth open those animal this-which-remain
 pupọ pe nibo ni awun ti ri iru ilu bayi? N(i)-igba-ti ẹkun
 much that where be Miser have see kind (of) drum thus? At-time-that Leopard
 wa ilu rẹ titi ti ko ri, o duro de awọn ẹranko-(i)y(i)-o-
 seek drum his until that not see (it), he stand wait:for those animal-this-which-
 ku ni oju ọna pe nwọn fẹrẹ de na, on yio si ri ọni-ti
 remain at face (of) road that they almost arrive the, he will and see person-that
 o ji on ni ilu gbe.
 he steal him at drum carry (it).

N(i)-igba-ti gbogbo awọn ẹranko da-(o)ri ti nwọn mbọ, erin ni
 At-time-that all those animal turn-head that they coming, Elephant be
 o tete de, ẹkun si bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
 he quickly arrive, Leopard and begin to sing-song that:

Qba d(a)-ijọ are Arekenjan
 "King cause-day (of) play, Arekenjan;

Qba d(a)-ijọ are Arekenjan
 "King cause-day (of) play, Arekenjan;

K(i)-a ma lu k(i)-a ma fọn Arekenjan
 "Should-we (continuative) beat, should-we (continuative) blow, Arekenjan.

Mo r(e)-odo la-wẹ Arekenjan
 "I go-river go-wash, Arekenjan;

E! tete ki n-de Arekenjan
 "E! quickly that I-arrive, Arekenjan;

E! tete ki (e)m(i)-bọ Arekenjan
 "E! quickly that I-come, Arekenjan.

Nwọn ma gbe-(i)lu lo Arekenjan
 "They (continuative) carry-drum go, Arekenjan;

Lu ti-rẹ ki (e)m(i)-gbọ Arekenjan
 "Beat that-(of)-yours that I-hear, Arekenjan;

animals that they should come for a dance, and that they should bring their drums with them. All the animals put new heads on their drums; and when they were going, Tortoise, who did not find leather with which to cover his drum, found Leopard's drum on the road where he had left it when he went to wash. Tortoise stole this drum and took it to the home of the King of the Sky. This drum was very fine and it sounded better than all the other drums. When Tortoise was beating this drum for the King of the Sky, the other animals gaped in amazement, wondering where Tortoise had found such a drum. When Leopard had looked for his drum for a long time without finding it, he waited for the other animals on the road on which they would soon return, to see who it was that had stolen his drum.

When all the animals started back, Elephant came first, and Leopard began to sing:

"The king set the day for a dance, Arekenjan;⁶

"The king set the day for a dance, Arekenjan;

"We should beat our drums, we should blow our trumpets, Arekenjan.

"I went to the river to wash, Arekenjan;

"E! Quickly did I return, Arekenjan;

"E! Quickly did I come back, Arekenjan.

"They took my drum away, Arekenjan;

"Beat yours that I may hear it, Arekenjan;

6. Arekenjan has no meaning but is added as the refrain.

Lu ti-rẹ ki (e)m(i)-mọ Arekenjan
 "Beat that-(of)-yours that I-know, Arekenjan.

O di bombokunbo Arekenjan
 "It becomes bombokunbo, Arekenjan;

O ma di bombokunbo Arekenjan
 "It (continuative) becomes bombokunbo, Arekenjan;

Ilu mi kọ yi ni Arekenjan
 "Drum my not this be, Arekenjan;

Kọja k(i)-o ma lọ Arekenjan
 "Pass should-you (continuative) go, Arekenjan."

Bayi ni erin kọja ti o si duro ni apa-kan, ti efon de ti
 Thus be Elephant pass that he and stand at arm-one, that Buffalo arrive that
 ẹkun si tun kọ-(o)rin b(i)-akan-na, ti on na si tun lu ilu ti-rẹ,
 Leopard and then sing-song like-one-the, that he also and then beat drum that-
 rẹ, ti ẹkun si tun sọ fun pe ki o kọja ki o
 (of)-his, that Leopard and then speak for (him) that should he pass should he
 ma lọ ti on na si tun duro ni ẹgbẹ kan; bayi ni gbogbo awọn
 (continuative) go that he also and then stand at side one; thus be all those
 ẹranko nde ti nwọn si nlu ilu wọn ti nwọn nkọja ti nwọn si
 animal arriving that they and beating drum their that they passing that, they and
 nduro ni ẹgbẹ kan titi o fi kan awun; n(i)-igba-ti awun yọ ni awun
 standing at side one until it take touch Miser; at-time-that Miser appear be Miser
 ti mọ pe on ni ẹkun nduro de, bi ẹkun si ti ri
 have know that he be (whom) Leopard standing wait:for; as Leopard and have see
 ilu rẹ ni o si ti mọ pe ti on ni ilu ti awun gbe kọ si
 drum his be he and have know that that (of) his be drum that Miser take hang to
 ọrun rẹ bi ẹkun si ti mu awun ti o bẹrẹ si lu ti o si
 neck his; as Leopard and have take Miser that he begin to beat (him) that he and
 nha ni ekanna, ni gbogbo awọn ẹranko pẹlu nfe
 scratching (him) at claw, be all those animal together:with (him) wanting
 lu awun, sugbọn bi o ti ni ki on jan mọ-(i)lẹ ni awun
 beat Miser, but as he have say that he dash (him) against-ground be Miser
 yọ ni ọwọ rẹ o si bọ s(i)-inu igbo o si sa lọ. Oju ekanna
 slip at hand his he and enter to-belly (of) forest he and run go. Face (of) claw
 ẹkun igba-na ni o wa l(i)-ara awun titi di oni yi.
 (of) Leopard (of) time-the be it exist at-body (of) Miser until become today this.

Ifa ni ọmọ-(ọ)kunrin kukuru pupa kan yio ẹe ohun kan, ki o ma ba
 Ifa say child-man short red one will do thing one, should he not should
 ti ibẹ fi ẹsẹ ko ohun bu(ru)-buru wa ile ki o ma ba
 from there take foot gather thing be:bad-be:bad come house that it not should
 ti mbura si ọrọ na. Ki agbajọ awọn enia si ru-(ẹ)bọ
 become swearing to word the. Should crowd (of) those people and offer-sacrifice

"Beat yours that I may recognize it, Arekenjan.

"It becomes "bombokunbo,"⁷ Arekenjan;

"It is becoming "bombokunbo," Arekenjan;

"This is not my drum, Arekenjan;

"Pass by, you may go on, Arekenjan."

Thus Elephant passed by and waited on one side. Buffalo arrived and Leopard sang the same song, and Buffalo also beat his drum. Leopard told him that he should pass by, and he also stood aside. In this way all the animals arrived, beat their drums, passed by, and stood aside until it became the turn of Tortoise. When Tortoise appeared, he knew that he was the one for whom Leopard was waiting; and when Leopard saw his drum, he knew that it was his own drum that Tortoise had hanging from his neck. And as Leopard seized Tortoise and began to beat him and to scratch him with his claws, all the animals wanted to help him beat Tortoise; but when Leopard said that he was going to dash him to the ground, Tortoise slipped from his hand, escaped into the forest, and ran away. The marks made by Leopard's claws at that time are to be seen on Tortoise's body until this very day."⁸

Ifa says that a short, reddish boy will do something; but he should be careful not to bring home something evil that will make it necessary to take an oath about it. And a crowd of people should sacrifice

7. The sound of the drum rhythm.

8. This verse thus explains the marks on Tortoise's shell. For a different explanation see verse 168-1.

pẹlu ki nwọn tun sọ-(a)ra ki nwọn ma ba ri a-
together:with (him) should they then watch-body that they not should see one:who-
l(i)-a-ko-wa-ba ti yio mu wọn se bi ẹni-pe nwọn yio
be-who-gather-come-meet that will take them make like person-that they will
mu aje si ohun kan ti ibi yio ti ibe wọ-(i)le.
drink ordeal to thing one that evil will from there enter-house.

IREṬE - (I)ROSUN - 1

Oropa niga, a ja tu-(e)ruku ẹfọn, eruku gba-gba ori
"Oropa Niga; to fight loosen-dust (of) Buffalo; dust dry-dry (of) head (of)
ota a da fun ẹkun ti nlọ mu ilẹ ile ti nwọn ni
quartz" who cast for Leopard that (he) going take ground (of) house that they say
ki o ru-(ẹ)bo ki o ma ba s(e)-owo fun olobo
should he offer-sacrifice that he not should make-transaction for another:person
[ori-o-l(i)-ori] j(ẹ)-ere ki a ma ba be ọwẹ
[head-(of)-one:who-has-head] eat-gain, that they not should request cooperative:
ẹni-ti yio ju ti. Nwọn ni ki o ru ọkẹ
work (of) person-that will surpass that (of his). They say should he offer bag (of)
esẹ, ẹiyẹ-(i)le mọrin, ki o gbe lọ si koto akurọ.
corn:skin, bird-(of)-house four, should he carry go to bank (of) waterside:garden.
ẹkun ko ru nitori-ti o gbẹkẹle egun apa rẹ.
Leopard not offer because-that he rely: on bone (of) arm his.

Ni ọjọ kan ẹkun, obukọ, ati ewurẹ nlọ mu ilẹ ile, n(i)-
At day one Leopard, He:goat, and She:goat going take ground (of) house; at-
igba-ti obukọ de ibi ilẹ, o şan ilẹ na o si pada wa
time-that He:goat arrive place (of) ground, he clear ground the he and return come
si ile rẹ; n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji ẹkun wa si ibi ilẹ
to house his; at-time-that it become day-second Leopard come to place (of) ground
na n(i)-igba-ti o de ibe ti o ri pe ẹni-kan ti şan ilẹ na
the at-time-that he arrive there that he see that person-one have clear ground the
o ni Ta-ni ba mi şan ilẹ mi o si tu yepẹ s(i)-ilẹ o si
he say "Who-be (it) for me clear ground my?" he and loosen dirt to-ground he and
pada lọ si ile rẹ; n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji obukọ tun pada
return go to house his; at-time-that it become day-second He:goat then return
wa si ibi ilẹ yi o si ri pe nwọn ti tu yepẹ s(i)-ilẹ
come to place (of) ground this he and see that they have loosen dirt to-ground
o si da-(o)hun pe Ta-ni ba mi tu yepẹ ile mi o na
he and break-voice that "Who-be (it) for me loosen dirt (of) house my?" he also

along with this boy, and they should also be careful, lest they meet a trouble-maker who will cause them to take a trial by ordeal concerning something by means of which evil will enter their house.

167 - 1

"Oropa Niga;¹ to fight and stir up dust like Buffalo;² parched dust on top of rock" was the one who cast Ifa for Leopard when he was going to take land for a new house. They said that he should make a sacrifice so that someone else should not enjoy the fruits of his labor,³ and so that someone should not call upon the help of another person in order to get the best of him.⁴ They said he should offer a bag of corn-skins⁵ and four pigeons, and that he should take the sacrifice to a garden by the waterside. Leopard did not sacrifice, because he depended on the strength of his own arms.

One day Leopard, Goat, and She-goat were going to take land on which to build a new house. When Goat arrived at the piece of land, he cleared the ground and he returned home. On the following day Leopard came to the same piece of land. When he arrived, he found that someone had cleared the ground, and he said, "Who has cleared my land for me?" He dug the ground to make mud for the walls, and then went home. The next day Goat came to this piece of land. He saw that someone had broken the ground, and he asked, "Who has dug the ground for my house for me?" He

1. This was interpreted as a name that might be analyzed as "Poison kills Niga" (Oro-pa Niga), with Niga as an unidentified name.

2. Cf. verse 153-1.

3. This refers to the fact that in the tale Goat is the one who lives in the house that Leopard has helped to build.

4. This refers to the fact that in the tale Goat calls upon a hunter's aid to drive Leopard away.

5. The skins of the kernels of corn, taken from the mortar after soaked corn has been pounded.

si bẹrẹ si mọ ogiri o si mọ ile ogiri kan o si pada lọ s(i)-ile
 and begin to build wall he and build layer (of) wall one he and return go to-house
 rẹ; n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji ẹkun lọ si ibi ilẹ yi n(i)-
 his; at-time-that it become day-second Leopard go to place (of) ground this at-
 igba-ti o de ibẹ o ba ti ẹni-kan ti mọ ile ogiri kan
 time-that he arrive there he meet that person-one have build layer (of) wall one
 o si da-(o)hun pe Ta-ni mọ ile kan n(i)-inu ile ogiri
 he and break-voice that "Who-be (it) build layer one at-belly (of) layer (of) wall
 ile mi? O na si mọ ile ogiri-(e)keji o si pada lọ si
 (of) house my?" He also and build layer (of) wall-second he and return go to
 ile; n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji ti obukọ de ibẹ o ri ti
 house; at-time-that it become day-second that He:goat arrive there he see that
 nwọn ti mọ ile-(e)keji le ile na l(i)-ori o si bere pe Ta-ni
 they have build layer-second upon layer the at-head he and ask that "Who-be (it)
 mọ ile-(e)keji le ile mi?
 build layer-second upon layer my?"

Bayi ni nwọn sẹ mọ ogiri titi o fi pa-(o)ri ti o to ati kọ ile
 Thus be they do build wall until it take kill-head that it equal to build house
 le ogiri na l(i)-ori. Obukọ si mu-(a)ra o lọ pa ẹkẹ o gbe ka-
 upon wall the at-head. He:goat and take-body he go kill rafter he carry against-
 (i)lẹ si ibi ile na n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji ẹkun na
 ground to place (of) house the, at-time-that it become day-second Leopard also
 lọ pa okun o si gbe wa si ibi ile na n(i)-igba-ti o de
 go kill rope he and carry (it) come to place (of) house the, at-time-that he arrive
 ibẹ o ba ti ẹni-kan ti pa ẹkẹ si ibi ile na o si da-
 there he meet that person-one have kill rafter to place (of) house the he and break-
 (o)hun pe Ta-ni ba mi pa ẹkẹ wa si ibi ile mi? o si
 voice that "Who-be (it) for me kill rafter come to place (of) house my?" he and
 gbe okun na s(i)-ilẹ o si lọ si ile rẹ; n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji
 take rope the to-ground he and go to house his; at-time-that it become day-second
 obukọ mu-(a)ra o wa si ibi ile na lati wa ro o si
 He:goat take-body he come to place (of) house the in:order:to come roof (it) he and
 ba okun ni ibẹ, o si bere pe Ta-ni ba on wa gbe okun si
 meet rope at there, he and ask that "Who-be (it) for him come carry rope to
 ibi ile on o si bẹrẹ si ro ile o ro ile yi tan o si
 place (of) house his" he and begin to roof house he roof house this finish he and
 lọ si ile; n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji ẹkun si wa si ibẹ lati
 go to house; at-time-that it become day-second Leopard and come to there in:
 wa ro ile ẹgbọn o ba ti ẹlomiran ti ro ile,
 order:to come roof house but he meet that another:person have roof house,
 o si wi-pe Ta-ni o wa ba on ro ile on? o si bẹrẹ
 he and speak-that "Who-be (it) who come for him roof house his?" he and begin

began to build the walls; he built one layer and then went home. Next day Leopard went to this piece of land. When he arrived, he found that someone had built one layer of the walls, and he asked, "Who has built one of the layers of the walls of my house for me?" Then he built the second layer of the walls and went home. The next day, when Goat came, he found that a second layer had been built upon that which he had made, and he asked, "Who built another layer for me upon the one that I built?"

In this way they built the walls until they were completed, and ready to be roofed. Goat got ready, and he went and cut rafters; and he carried them back to the place where the house was. On the following day Leopard went to cut ropes, and he brought them to the site of the house. When he arrived, he found that someone had brought rafters to the site, and he asked, "Who has brought rafters to the site of my house for me?" He put the ropes down and went home. The next day Goat got ready and went to the house to erect the rafters. He found the ropes there, and asked, "Who has brought ropes to the site of my house for me?" He began to erect the rafters, and when he had finished doing this he went home. Next day Leopard came there to erect the rafters, but he found that someone else had done it. He asked, "Who has erected the rafters of my house for me?" He began to

si rọ ni ewe o si rọ tan. N(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji l(i)-
to thatch (it) at leaf he and thatch finish. At-time-that it become day-second at-
ẹhin eyi ti obukọ fẹ wa rọ ile ni gbodogi o ba ti ẹni-
back (of) this that He:goat want come thatch house at gbodogi he meet that person-
kan ti rọ ni gbodogi o si bere pe Ta-ni wa ba on rọ ile
one have thatch at gbodogi he and ask that "Who-be (it) come for him thatch house
on ni gbodogi? O ni l(i)-ọla ni on yio ko wa si ile on.
his at gbodogi?" He say at-tomorrow be he will gather come to house his.

N(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji bi o ti mbọ ni o pade ẹkun
At-time-that it become day-second as he have coming be he meet Leopard
ni ọna ti on na nfẹ ko s(i)-ile rẹ pẹlu. Ẹkun
at road that he also wanting gather to-house his together:with (him). Leopard
bere l(i)-ọwọ obukọ pe Kin-ni o nwa ni ile on? Obukọ na
ask at-hand (of) He:goat that "What-be he seeking at house his?" He:goat also
bere l(i)-ọwọ ẹkun pe Kin-ni o nwa ni ile on? Nwọn si fẹ
ask at-hand (of) Leopard that "What-be he seeking at house his?" They and want
bẹrẹ si lati ja şugbọn ewurẹ ni ki nwọn ma ja şugbọn ki
begin to in:order:to fight but She:goat say should they not fight but should
nwọn jọ jumọ ma gbe ile na.
they be:together together (continuative) dwell:at house the.

Bayi ni nwọn jọ bẹrẹ si jọ gbe ile titi o fi di
Thus be they together begin to together dwell:at house until it take become
ọjọ kan ti obukọ ri ti ẹkun gbe oku ẹranko kan wọ-(i)le
day one that He:goat see that Leopard carry corpse (of) animal one enter-house,
şugbọn n(i)-igba-ti o wo o ri pe oku baba on ni ẹkun
but at-time-that he look:at (it) he see that corpse (of) father his be Leopard
pa ti o si gbe wa si ile. N(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ-(e)keji o tun
kill that he and carry come to house. At-time-that it become day-second he then
ri pe ẹkun tun gbe oku iya on wa si ile, o wa mu-
see that Leopard then carry corpse (of) mother his come to house; he come take-
(a)ra o tọ ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ lọ o bẹ pe ki o ba on
body he approach one:who-be-hunter go he request (him) that should he for him
pa ẹkun kan pe bi o ba le ba on pa ẹkun kan on yio fun
kill leopard one that if he should be:able for him kill leopard one he will give (him)
ni ohun kan, ọdẹ yi si mu-(a)ra o si ba obukọ pa ẹkun kan şugbọn
at thing one; hunter this and take-body he and join He:goat kill leopard one but
n(i)-igba-ti ẹkun pade obukọ l(i)-ọna ti o ru oku ẹkun
at-time-that Leopard meet He:goat at-road that he carry corpse (of) leopard,
ẹru ba ẹkun o si bere l(i)-ọwọ obukọ pe bawo ni o ti şe
fear meet Leopard he and ask at-hand (of) He:goat that how be he have make
le pa ẹkun? Obukọ sọ fun ẹkun pe on ni akaraba a-wo-pa
be:able kill leopard? He:goat speak for Leopard that he have akaraba to-look:at-kill

thatch the roof with leaves, and he finished thatching it. On the day after this, when Goat came to thatch the house with gbodogi leaves,⁶ he found that someone had thatched it with gbodogi and he asked, "Who came and thatched my house with gbodogi leaves for me?" He said, "Tomorrow I will move to my new house."

On the following day, as he was coming, Goat met Leopard on the road, also moving to the new house. Leopard asked Goat, "What are you doing at my house?" And Goat asked Leopard, "What are you doing at my house?" They were about to start fighting, but She-goat said that they should not fight, but that they should live in the house together.

So they began to live together in the house, until one day Goat saw that Leopard had brought home the body of a dead animal. But when he looked at it more closely, he saw that it was the body of his own father that Leopard had killed and brought home to eat. The next day he saw Leopard bring home the body of his mother. Goat got ready and went to see a hunter. He asked him to kill a leopard for him, promising that if he did so, he would give him something. The hunter got ready and killed a leopard for Goat, but when Leopard met Goat on the road carrying the body of the dead leopard, Leopard was frightened, and he asked Goat how he had been able to kill a leopard. Goat told Leopard that he had the evil eye⁷

6. A broad leaf (Sarcophrynium spp.) which is used in Ife for thatching.

7. Akaraba is any kind of medicine which, when pointed at the victim, roots him to one spot so that he cannot move. A-wo-pa is a particular type of this category in which the owner has only to look at his victim in order to kill him.

pe gbogbo ohun ti on ba wo (ohu)n-kan na ni lati ku. N(i)-
that all things that he should look:at, thing-one the be in:order:to die. At-
igba-ti ẹkun gbọ eyi o bẹ si igbo o si sa lọ pata-pata
time-that Leopard hear this he leap to forest he and run go completely-completely
ko si tun pada wa si ile na mọ. Bayi ni obukọ di o-
not and then return come to house the again. Thus be He:goat become one:who-
n(i)-ile on ati ewurẹ iyawo rẹ.
has-house his and She:goat junior:wife his.

Ifa ni ki ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ kan ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ma
Ifa say that one:who-be-hunter one should he offer-sacrifice that he not
ba pa enia ni ọdun yi; ati pe ẹni-kan nlọ mu ilẹ ile
should kill person at year this; and that person-one going take ground (of) house
tabi oko ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ẹni-kan ma ba bẹ o-
or farm should he offer-sacrifice that person-one not should request one:who-
l(i)-ogun ti ara wọn ki nwọn ma ba ri ija ogun
has-medicine against body their, that they not should see (a) fight (of) medicine
l(i)-ori ile. Qmọde kan wa n(i)-ibẹ ti a nfi oju qmọde
at-head (of) house. Young:child one exist at-there that we taking eye (of) young:
wo, ki a ma-şe fi oju qmọde wo qmọ na
child look:at (him); should we not-do take eye (of) young:child look:at child the
nitori-ti o ni baba n(i)-isalẹ; bi a ba fi oju qmọde
because-that he have father at-bottom; if we should take eye (of) young:child
wo, baba-(i)salẹ rẹ yio fi ori mu-(i)lẹ yio si
look:at (him), father-(of)-bottom his will take head sink:into-ground will and
fẹrẹ run gbogbo enia tan nitori ọrọ ilẹ ile tabi
almost destroy all people finish because (of) word (of) ground (of) house or
oko yi.
farm this.

IRETẸ - (Q)WQNRIN - 1

A-l(i)-adin ko si n(i)-ile kannakanna a gb(e)-ebu
"One:who-have-palm:kernel:oil not be at-house crow it dwell:at-palm:
a da fun A-b(i)-ahun Ajapa ti o ma
kernel:oil:factory" who cast for One:who-like-Miser Tortoise that he (continua-
ba wọn na-(ọ)ja-toku, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki
tive) join them spend-goods-(of)-Toku; they say should he offer-sacrifice that
awo rẹ ma ba bajẹ le e l(i)-ori; ẹiyẹ-(i)le meji, egbejila
secret his not should spoil upon him at-head; bird-(of)-house two, 2400 (cowries)

so that everything that he looked at had to die. When Leopard heard this he jumped into the forest and ran away forever; he did not return to the house any more. Thus Goat and his wife, She-goat, came to own their own house.⁸

Ifa says that a hunter should make a sacrifice so that he will not kill a human being during this year; and that someone who is going to take land for a new house or a new farm should make a sacrifice lest someone ask a medicine man to make medicine against him;⁹ and so that he will not get into a fight with medicine over the house. And there is a child whom we are looking upon as only a child;¹⁰ we should not treat him as a child because he has a father who stands behind him. If we should treat him as a child, his father behind him will undermine us and almost completely destroy all our family because of the land for this house or this farm.

8. This verse explains why leopards live in the forest, and goats live near houses. Compare the version of this tale recorded by Frobenius (1926: 248-250).

9. This refers to Goat's boasting of having the evil eye after having been helped by the hunter. The first prediction refers to the killing of the leopard.

10. This refers to Goat, who, although weaker than Leopard, overcame him through the help of the hunter.

"When the palm kernel oil maker is not at home, crows live in his workshop"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Tortoise, the Miser,² when he was trading at Toku.³ They said he should make a sacrifice so that his secret would not be revealed. Two pigeons, seven pence two oninis,

1. Ebu is the place where palm kernel oil is made; it must be located outside of town, and when no one is there, crows come to eat what is left.

2. See n. 3, verse 166-1.

3. Informants were unable to clarify the meaning of Toku.

ati akikọ ti o jẹ pe ko ni jẹ-ki awo rẹ ya. A-b(i)-awun
 and cock that it eat that not be consent-that secret his split. One:who-like-Miser
 ru ẹiyẹ-(i)le meji ati egbejila sugbɔn ko ru akikọ-(a)diẹ
 offer bird-(of)-house two and 2400 (cowries) but not offer cock-chicken
 pẹlu ẹbọ ti o ru.
 together:with sacrifice that he offer.

Ni igba lai-lai iyan mu l(i)-aiye o mu l(i)-orun, A-b(i)-awun
 At time ever-ever famine take at-earth it take at-sky, One:who-like-Miser
 wa ọna ti on yio fi ma jẹ-(oh)un, o wa da ọgbɔn kan
 seek road that he will take (it) (continuative) eat-thing, he seek create wisdom one
 o mu-(a)ra o lọ si eti ọja n(i)-ibi-ti ọpẹ kan wa ti o ni
 he take-body he go to ear (of) market at-place-that palm:tree one exist that it have
 iho, o sa pa-mọ s(i)-inu rẹ, n(i)-igba-ti o di ọrun ọja,
 hole, he run kill-against to-belly its, at-time-that it become fifth:day (of) market,
 ti awon enia pe si ọja, ni A-b(i)-ahun bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin
 that those people assemble to market, be One:who-like-Miser begin to sing-song
 pe:
 that:

Ọpẹ jo o-n(i)-imọ Jo n-jo
 "Palm:tree dance one:who-have-palm:leaf, Dance I-dance;

Ọpẹ tarege tage o Jo n-jo
 "Palm:tree stagger stagger, oh, Dance I-dance;

Ọpẹ tarege tage Jo n-jo
 "Palm:tree stagger stagger, Dance I-dance.

Ọpẹ taṣaṣa ka-(o)ja Jo n-jo
 "Palm:tree flit go:about-market, Dance I-dance;

Ọpẹ tọ biri ka-(o)ja Jo n-jo
 "Palm:tree twist turn go:about-market, Dance I-dance."

N(i)-igba-ti A-b(i)-awun ba kọ orin bayi, ti nwon ara
 At-time-that One:who-like-Miser should sing song thus, that those people
 ọja ba si gbọ, ti nwon ba si ri ọpẹ ti o nrin
 (of) market should and hear, that they should and see palm:tree that it walking
 ka ọja, gbogbo ọja a bẹ, Ahun a si ja-(o)de kuro
 go:around market, all market they leap, Miser he and reach-outside depart
 n(i)-inu iho ọpẹ, o bẹrẹ si ko ẹru ati ohun jijẹ, bayi ni
 at-belly (of) hole (of) palm:tree, he begin to gather load and thing to:eat, thus be
 Ahun ma nṣe ni ọj(ọ)-ọjọ ọja ti o si ma
 Miser (continuative) doing at day-day (of) market that he and (continuative)
 nko ohun gbogbo bi onjẹ ti ọwọ rẹ ba te ni ọja ni ọr(un)-
 gathering thing all like food that hand his should alight:on at market at fifth:day-
 ọrun ọja.
 fifth-day (of) market.

and a cock was the sacrifice so that his secret would not be disclosed. Tortoise offered the two pigeons and the seven pence two oninis, but he did not offer the cock with the rest of the sacrifice.

Long, long ago there was a famine on earth and in heaven. Tortoise sought a way to get something to eat, and he tried to find a clever trick. He got ready and went to the edge of the market where there was a hollow palm tree, and he hid inside it. When market day⁴ arrived and people came to market, Tortoise began to sing:

"The palm tree dances, the one that has palm leaves; Dance, I dance;

"The palm tree staggers about,⁵ oh; Dance, I dance;

"The palm tree staggers about; Dance, I dance.

"The palm tree flits about the market; Dance, I dance;

"The palm tree twists and turns through the market; Dance, I dance."

When Tortoise began to sing in this way, and the people in the market heard him and saw the palm tree walking about the market, the whole market broke up. Then Tortoise came out from the hollow of the palm tree and began to gather the traders' goods and things to eat. Tortoise was doing this every market day and gathering all the food that came to his hand each market day.

4. Market days are usually every fourth day or, according to the Yoruba system of counting, every fifth day.

5. The words "tarege tage" describe the motion of something that is staggering.

N(i)-igba-ti awɔn enia ri eyi, nwɔn lɔ sɔ fun ɔba, ɔba si ran
At-time-that those people see this, they go speak for king, king and send

Ogun lo si ɔja lati lɔ mu ohun ti o nse iru (ohu)n-kan yi
Ogun go to market in:order:to go take thing that it doing kind (of) thing-one this

wa; ŋugbɔn n(i)-igba-ti Ogun na gbɔ orin yi ti o si ri ti ɔpɛ
come; but at-time-that Ogun the hear song this that he and see that palm:tree

nrin o bɛ lu igbo; bayi ni ɔba ran gbogbo awɔn irun-(i)mɔlɛ ti
walking he leap against forest; thus be king send all those 400-Deity that

nwɔn de ibɛ ti nwɔn ko si le mu ohun ti o ntu wɔn l(i)-
they arrive there that they not and be:able take thing that it scattering them at-

ɔja yi. L(i)-ɛhin na ni Eṣu da-(o)hun ti o ni on yio mu n(i)-
market this. At-back the be Eshu break-voice that he say he will take (it); at-

igba-ti o nlɔ o so igba ireṛɛ mɔ-(a)ra, ŋugbɔn n(i)-igba-ti o
time-that he going he tie 200 calabash against-body, but at-time-that he

de ɔja ti awɔn ara ɔja pe ti o si gbɔ orin yi
arrive market that those people (of) market assemble that he and hear song this

ti o si ri ɔpɛ ti o nrin, on na pɛlu bɛ lu-
that he and see palm:tree that it walking, he also together:with (them) leap against-

(i)gbo, awɔn ireṛɛ ti o so mɔ-(a)ra si bɛ ku meji, awɔn meji na
forest, those calabash that he tie against-body and cut remain two, those two the

si bɛrɛ si wi-pe:

and begin to speak-that: ♣

Pɛkɛlɛpɛ, gbagidari

"Pɛkɛlɛpɛ, gbagidari,

Ko jɛ bayi pɛ gbagidari

"What eat thus be:long? gbagidari."

N(i)-igba-ti ko le mu ohun na ni ɔba wa ran Qṣanyin pe
At-time-that (he) not be:able take thing the be king come send Qṣanyin that

ki o lɔ mu (ohu)n-kan na wa, n(i)-igba-ti Qṣanyin nlɔ o mu ɔgbagbara
should he go take thing-one the come, at-time-that Qṣanyin going he take burning:

kan dani o si joko ti ina a-l(i)-akara, o fi
iron one hold he and sit:down against fire (of) one:who-have-bean:fritter, he take
ɔgbagbara na bɔ ina, n(i)-igba-ti o pɛ diɛ, ni o bɛrɛ si gbɔ orin
burning:iron the enter fire, at-time-that it be:long small, be he begin to hear song

ti o si ri ti ɔpɛ na si nrin, n(i)-igba-ti gbogbo ɔja tu
that he and see that palm:tree the and walking, at-time-that all market scatter,

Qṣanyin joko ko kuro ni ɔja, ko si sa pɛlu awɔn ara
Qṣanyin sit:down not depart at market, not and run together:with those people (of)

ɔja; n(i)-igba-ti Ahun ri pe ɔja tu, o sɔ-ka-(i)lɛ o
market; at-time-that Miser see that market scatter, he strike-against-ground he

si bɛrɛ si ko ɛru, ŋugbɔn n(i)-igba-ti o de ibi a-l(i)-
and begin to gather load, but at-time-that he arrive place (of) one:who-have-

When the people saw what was happening, they told the king, and the king sent the God of Iron to the market to bring him whatever was doing this kind of a thing. But when the God of Iron heard the song and saw the palm tree walking, he ran into the forest. Thus the king sent all the Four Hundred Deities, and they went there but were not able to capture the thing that was breaking up the market. Then Eshu said that he would capture it. When he went he tied 200 small medicine calabashes⁶ on his body, but when he reached the market and the market people assembled, and he heard the song and saw the palm tree walking, he ran into the forest with the others. The calabashes of medicine that he had tied on his body fell off, except for two, and these two began to say:

“Pẹkẹlẹpẹ, gbagidari⁷
 “What is this? gbagidari”

When Eshu could not capture the thing, the king sent the God of Medicine to go and bring it to him. When the God of Medicine went, he took a burning iron⁸ with him, and he sat down next to the fire of those who sold bean fritters, and he put the burning iron into the fire. After a little while he began to hear the song and to see the palm tree walking. When the market people scattered, the God of Medicine remained seated and did not leave the market; he did not run away with the market people. When Tortoise saw that the market had scattered, he came out and began to gather up the goods, but when he came to the place where

6. Charms and medicine are kept in small calabashes known as irẹrẹ or ado.
7. These words represent the sound of the other calabashes falling to the ground.
8. An iron rod which is heated in order to burn holes through wood.

akara, o kan re fe je akara, bi o si ti na owo ti o
 bean:fritter, heart his want eat bean:fritter, as he and have stretch hand that he
 mu akara kan, Qşanyin yo oğbagbara n(i)-inu ina o si fi
 take bean:fritter one, Qşanyin pull:out burning:iron at-belly (of) fire he and take
 te Ahun ni idi, Ahun wa da-(o)hun o ni ati Ahun ati igbin di
 press Miser at waist, Miser come break-voice he say and Miser and snail become
 eru Qşanyin. Qşanyin ni Ahun ni-(o)kan ni o mu on ko mu igbin pelu
 slave (of) Qşanyin. Qşanyin say Miser at-one be he take he not take snail together
 ati ojo na ni a ti ma nfi Ahun bo Qşanyin
 with (him); from day the be we have (continuative) taking Miser sacrifice:to Qşanyin
 titi di oni yi.
 until become today this.

Ifa ni ki eni-kan ru-(e)bo ki ohun ti o nfe se ggege-bi
 Ifa say should person-one offer-sacrifice that thing that he wanting do just-as
 awo ma ba baję mo l(i)-ori ti o si ko itiju bo o.
 secret not should spoil against (him) at-head that it and gather shame cover him.
 Ifa ni eni-kan nfe se ohun kan, şugbon itiju ni yio kan bi
 Ifa say person-one wanting do thing one, but shame be (it) will touch (him) if
 ko ba ni ebo dara-dara.
 not should have sacrifice be:good-be:good.

 IRETE QSA¹ - 1

A r(i)-otę tan a nsa, Kolombo bi olu odide,
 "We see-conspiracy finish we running," "Without:covering like chief (of) parrot,"
 Abon se rigidi di eyin, bi abon ko
 "Unripe:palm:fruit make bulky become (ripe) palm:fruit, if unripe:palm:fruit not
 ba ku a se bi e-l(i)-eyin bi o d(i)-ola a
 should die (it) will make like one:who-be-palm-fruit if it become-tomorrow" who
 da fun akere-kokęyo ti ise omọ Onişinko, nwon ni ire meji
 cast for Frog-kokęyo that make child (of) Onishinko; they say goodness two
 mbọ wa ba ki o ru-(e)bo ki mej(i)-(m)ejile
 coming come meet (him), should he offer-sacrifice that two-two be:able
 te l(i)-owo. Akere ko ru-(e)bo, o ni igba-ti on ba
 reach (him) at-hand. Frog refuse not offer-sacrifice, he say time-that he should
 ri ire na on yio wa ru-(e)bo; ko si pa Eşu rara. Nwon
 see goodness the he will come offer-sacrifice; not and appease Eshu at:all. They

1. Also known as A r(i)-otę sa, meaning "We see a conspiracy and run." See n. 1, verse 170-1.

bean fritters were sold, he wanted to eat bean fritters. And as he reached out his hand to take a bean fritter, the God of Medicine pulled the burning iron out of the fire and pressed it against Tortoise's body. Tortoise cried out, promising that both Tortoise and Snail would become slaves of the God of Medicine. The God of Medicine said he would take only Tortoise as his slave and that he would not take Snail. From that day on, we have been using Tortoise to sacrifice to the God of Medicine until this very day.⁹

Ifa says someone should make a sacrifice lest the thing he wants to do in secret be revealed and cover him with shame. Ifa says someone wants to do something, but shame will come to him if he does not make a very fine sacrifice.

9. This verse thus explains the markings on Tortoise's shell, and why Tortoise is the favorite sacrificial animal of Qsanyin (or Qşanyin). For a different version of the former, see verse 166-1. Cf. the versions of this tale recorded by Frobenius (1926: 288-289), Jacobs (1933: 41-45), Itayemi and Gurrey (1953: 79-81), and Fuja (1962: 40-43). A quite different tale (Frobenius, 1926: 40-43) ends in much the same way.

170 - 1

"When we have seen a conspiracy we run,"¹ "Naked, like the chief of parrots," and "Young palm fruit grows large and becomes ripe palm fruit; if young palm fruit does not die it will be ripe palm fruit tomorrow"² were the ones who cast Ifa for Frog Kokęyo,³ who was the child of Onishinko.⁴ They said two blessings were coming to him, and that he should sacrifice so that both would be able to reach him. Frog refused to sacrifice; he said that when he saw the blessings, he would make the sacrifice. He did not appease Eshu at all. They

1. This is derived from an alternative name for this figure, A r(i)-otę sa, meaning "We see a conspiracy and run."

2. The individual fruits of the oil palm are known as ęyin or ęleyin when ripe, and as abon or abon ęyin when they are small.

3. Akere or ake is a type of frog noted for its ability to jump long distances. Informants were not sure of the meaning of kokęyo, but suggested that it might mean "not refuse Qyo," ko-k(ę)-Ęyo.

4. Onishinko was interpreted as the title of a chief at Qyo, but from the context it would seem to be a personal or praise name of the Alafin or King of Qyo. Frog is identified in the second paragraph as the child of the King of Qyo. See also verse 170-3.

ni ki o ru obukọ kan, aṣọ pupa fẹrẹ-fẹrẹ o-n(i)-ila, ati
 say should he offer he:goat one, cloth red lightly-lightly which-has-lines, and
 ẹgbẹtalelọgbọn.
 6600 (cowries).

Akere jẹ ọmọ ọba ni ode Qyọ, o si ni obinrin kan ti o
 Frog eat child (of) king at outside (of) Qyọ, he and have woman one that she
 ti wa ni ọdọ rẹ fun ọjọ gigun ṣugbọn ko l(i)-oyun bẹ-ni ko
 have exist at presence his for day length but not have-pregnancy so-be not
 si bi-(ọ)mọ ri, ni akoko ti nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ yi gan
 and bear-child see, at time that they say should he offer-sacrifice this identical
 ni aya akere yi wa l(i)-oyun, inu akere si dun pupọ.
 be wife (of) Frog this come have-pregnancy, belly (of) Frog and be:sweet much.
 N(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ ti obirin yi ma bi, oko ni akere
 At-time-that it become day that woman this (continuative) bear, farm be Frog
 wa ibẹ ni nwọn si gbe wa sọ fun pe aya rẹ bi ọmọ; n(i)-
 exist, there be they and take come speak for (him) that wife his bear child; at-
 igba-ti akere gbọ eyi inu rẹ dun pupọ, o ni ki on to lọ si
 time-that Frog hear this belly his be:sweet much, he say before he equal go to
 ile on yio lọ da ẹmu on na. Bi akere ti kuro ni aba ni o-
 house he will go cast palm:wine his also. As Frog have depart at barn be one:who-
 n(i)-iṣẹ ti ile de pe nwọn npe akere ni ile nitori-ti
 have-message from house arrive that they calling Frog at house because-that
 ọba ku nwọn si fẹ fi akere j(ẹ)-oye, nitori-ti akere ko si ni aba
 king die they and want take Frog eat-title, because-that Frog not be at barn
 nwọn lọ ba akere ni inu oko n(i)-ibi-ti o gbe nda ẹmu ni
 they go meet Frog at belly (of) farm at-place-that he take casting palm:wine at
 ori ọpẹ, n(i)-igba-ti nwọn sọ fun akere inu rẹ dun to-
 head (of) palm:tree, at-time-that they speak for Frog, belly his be:sweet equal-
 bẹ gẹ ti o fi jẹ-pe o gbagbe pe ori ọpẹ ni o wa o
 so just that he take consent-that he forget that head (of) palm:tree be he exist he
 si ja lu-(i)lẹ o si fi ẹsẹ ẹsẹ; n(i)-igba-ti nwọn ri pe o fi
 and break strike-ground he and take foot break; at-time-that they see that he take
 ẹsẹ ẹsẹ nwọn gbe wa s(i)-ile ṣugbọn t(i)-apa t(i)-itan
 foot break they carry (him) come to-house but that-(of)-arm that-(of)-thigh
 rẹ ti ẹsẹ, n(i)-igba-ti nwọn wo ti ko ẹ wo, nwọn fi
 his have break; at-time-that they heal (him) that not make heal, they take
 ẹlomiran j(ẹ)-oye na, nwọn si fi akere s(i)-ilẹ. Lati ọjọ na ni nwọn
 another:person eat-title the, they and put Frog to-ground. From day the be they
 ti ma nwi-pe Ayọ ayọ-ju akere f(i)-itan ẹsẹ."
 have (continuative) speaking-that "Joy joy-surpass Frog take-thigh break."

said he should sacrifice one he-goat, one red cloth with light stripes, and one shilling seven pence eight oninis.

Frog was the child of the King of Qyq. He had one wife who had lived with him for some time but who was not pregnant and who had not yet borne a child. At the very time that they said he should make this sacrifice, the wife of Frog became pregnant, and Frog was very happy. When the day came that this woman gave birth, Frog was at his farm, and there they came to tell him that his wife had borne a child. When Frog heard this, he was very happy; he said that before he went home he would tap some palm wine. As Frog left the farm storehouse, a messenger came from home to tell him that they were calling Frog at home, because the king had died and they wanted to make Frog king. Because he was not at the store house, they went and found Frog in the middle of the farm, where he was tapping palm wine at the top of a palm tree. When they told Frog, he was so happy that he forgot that he was up in a palm tree and he fell down and broke his legs. When they saw he had broken his legs, they carried him home, but both his arms and legs were broken. When they tried to cure him and failed, they gave the title to another person, and left Frog alone. From that day on, people have been saying, "Too much happiness broke Frog's legs."⁵

5. This is a proverb, which is explained by this verse, as proverbs are often explained by folk tales in Africa. The verse also appears to explain the shape of the legs of this kind of frog.

Ifa ni ire meji mbọ wa ba ẹni-kan ẹgbọn ki o ru-
 Ifa say goodness two coming come meet person:one but should he offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ki ire na ma ba kọja rẹ nitori ayọ ayọ-ju; ki
 sacrifice that goodness the not should pass his because (of) joy joy-surpass; that
 o ma ba jẹ-pe inu ibu-(i)lẹ ni yio ti ma
 he not should consent-that belly (of) lying:across-ground be will that (continuative)
 gbọ nipa ti ire na.
 hear concerning that (of) goodness the.

IREṬE QSA - 2

Ori l(i)-o kun ni a-np(e)-a-l(i)-abẹ; odo l(i)-okun
 "Head be-it be:full (of hair) be we-calling-one:who-has-razor; river have-sea
 l(i)-a np(e)-o-tu-(ọ)kọ, bi o-tu-(ọ)kọ ko ba tu
 be-we calling-one:who-paddles-boat; If one:who-paddles-boat not should paddle
 mi ma tu-(o)do lororo, ma tu oju omi
 I (continuative) paddle-river straight, (I) (continuative) paddle eye (of) water
 ẹankala a da fun akere nwon ni ki iya rẹ ma ku ni ọdun ni
 anyhow," who cast for Frog they say should mother his not die at year be (it)
 ki o ma ba da gbese ni ọdun yi na, nwon ni ki o ru ẹiyẹ-
 should he not should cause debt at year this also, they say should he offer bird-
 (i)le męrin, ẹgbarin, obi męrin, ko ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 (of)-house four, 8000 (cowries), kola four, not offer-sacrifice.

Ko l(i)-ọjọ ko l(i)-oṣu iya akere ku n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ
 Not at-day not at-month mother (of) Frog die; at-time-that it become day
 ti o nwu ode o ba awọn Ifẹ męr(indilogun)-(m)ęrindilogun ni ẹnu
 that he visiting outside he meet those Ifẹ sixteen-sixteen at mouth

Geru ni ode Ẹnuwa, o ni "Kin-ni ẹe ẹyin Ifẹ?" O ni ni ọjọ ti
 (of) Geru at outside (of) Ẹnuwa, he say "What-be do you Ifẹ?" He say at day that
 gbogbo nyin ti nwa ojo on le ẹe ti ojo ki o rọ t(i)-
 all you have seeking rain he be:able make that rain should it fall that-(of)-
 oni t(i)-ọla; n(i)-igba-ti akere lọ tan ọ-l(i)-ọfin mu
 today that-(of)-tomorrow; at-time-that Frog go finish, one:who-has-palace take
 ẹru-(o)binrin męrin ati ẹru-(ọ)kunrin męrin, amu ilẹkẹ meji, igba ọkẹ,
 slave-woman four and slave-man four, pot (of) bead two, 200 bag (of

ati aṣọ męrindilogun, o fi ran awọn o-n(i)-iṣẹ
 cowries), and cloth sixteen, he take (them) send those one:who-have-message
 rẹ si akere ki o jowọ ki o ba awọn fi wa ojo, n(i)-igba-ti
 his to Frog should he grant:favor should he join them take seek rain, at-time-that

Ifa says two blessings are coming to someone, but he should sacrifice lest the blessings pass him by because of too much happiness, and so that he will not be lying ill when he hears about the blessings.⁶

6. And be unable to take advantage of them.

170 - 2

"When the head is full of hair, we call the barber; when the river is in flood,¹ we call the ferryman; if the ferryman does not paddle, I paddle straight across the river, I paddle across the water anyway" was the one who cast Ifa for Frog.² They said he should sacrifice four pigeons, two shillings,³ and four kola nuts so that his mother would not die during that year, and so that he would not go into debt that year also. He did not sacrifice.

Not long afterward Frog's mother died. On the day when he went out to visit his relatives as part of the funeral ceremonies, he met the sixteen chiefs of Ife at Geru gate in front of the palace of the Oni,⁴ and he asked them, "What are you Ife chiefs doing?" He said that when they wanted rain, he would be able to make rain fall either today or tomorrow. When Frog had gone, the king took four female slaves and four male slaves, two pots of beads, two hundred bags of cowries,⁵ and sixteen cloths and sent them with his messengers to Frog to ask if he would please make rain for him. When

1. Note the pun on "be it be full" l(i)-o kun and "have sea" l(i)-okun, which means to be flooded or full of water.

2. See n. 3, verse 170-1.

3. Since money is counted by 2000 cowries, there are four units of money as there are four pigeons and four kola nuts.

4. The sixteen major chiefs of Ife—eight inner or palace chiefs and eight outer or town chiefs—met every four days to hear cases in front of the king's palace. Enu Geru is the name of the entrance to the palace, and Enuwa is the name of the square in front of the palace.

5. 200 × 20,000 cowries, or £50.

awọn o-ni(i)-iṣẹ de ile akere, akere sun, nwọn si
 those one:who-have-message arrive house (of) Frog, Frog sleep, they and
 ko gbogbo awọn (ohu)n-kan nwọn-yi s(i)-ilẹ de pe bi o
 gather all those thing-one those-this to-ground wait:for (him) that if he
 ba ji ki nwọn ba awọn ko fun pe ọba ni ki o
 should awake should they join them relate for (him) that king say should he
 le fi ba wọn wa ojo t(i)-oni t(i)-ọla: n(i)-igba-ti
 be:able take join them seek rain that-(of)-today that-(of)-tomorrow; at-time-that
 akere ji ti o ba awọn (ohu)n-kan nwọn-yi o ni on ko sọ bẹ; ẹru
 Frog awake that he meet those thing-one those-this he say he not speak so; fear
 ba o sa tọ awọn babalawo lọ, nwọn ni ẹbọ ti awọn
 meet (him) he run approach those diviner go, they say sacrifice that they
 yan fun ri ko pada, nwọn ni ki o wa ru ẹbọ, n(i)-
 choose for (him) before not change, they say should he come offer sacrifice, at-
 igba-na ni o to wa ru ẹbọ ti nwọn ti sọ fun ri,
 time-that be he equal come offer sacrifice that they have speak for (him) before,
 awọn babalawo si ko meji fun n(i)-inu obi męrin na, nwọn ni
 those diviner and gather two for (him) at-belly (of) kola four the, they say
 ki o lọ fi bọ iya rẹ; n(i)-igba-ti o de oriri
 should he go take (them) sacrifice:to mother his; at-time-that he arrive grave (of)
 iya rẹ, n(i)-ibi-ti o gbe mbọ ni ojo gbe ku giri, o
 mother his, at-place-that he take sacrificing:to (her) be rain take sound 'giri,' he
 ni "Iya mi gba mi, yọ mi n(i)-inu ọran yi, iya ẹni
 say "Mother my help me, pull:out me at-belly (of) affair this, mother (of) person
 ni ku f(un)-ẹni sin" bi o ti wi bẹ tan ti ojo si ku-o
 be die for-person bury"; as he have speak so finish that rain and sound-oh
 "Aṣoro-o bu şuru oju mpon mi kẹrẹ-kẹrẹ" Ojo bu lu-(i)lẹ.
 "Ashoro-oh, pour plentifully eye being:red me red-red." Rain pour strike-ground.
 Nwọn ni "A ko mọ ohun ti akere fi np(e)-ojo" Aṣoro ni orukọ
 They say "We not know thing that Frog take (it) calling-rain" Ashoro be name
 ti iya akere jẹ.
 that mother (of) Frog eat.
 Ifa ni ohun kan npon ni oju, iya ẹni ọrun ni ki
 Ifa say thing one being:red at eye, mother (of) person (of) sky be (she) should
 a bọ yio si ran-(ẹ)ni l(i)-ọwọ lati ọrun wa lati
 we sacrifice:to (her), will and send-person at-hand from sky come in:order:to
 ri ohun na, bi iya na ki si wa l(i)-aiye ki a bọ ori
 see thing the; if mother the should and exist at-earth should we sacrifice:to head
 rẹ ki iya na ma ba ku ni ọdun yi gan.
 her that mother the not should die at year this identical.

the messengers came to Frog's house, Frog was asleep. They laid out all the things for him and left word that when he awoke, they should tell him for them that the king said he should make it rain either today or tomorrow. When Frog awoke and found all these things, he said that he hadn't said that he could make rain. He was afraid, and he ran to the diviners. They said that the sacrifice which they had named for him before had not changed. They said he should come and make the sacrifice. After he had made the sacrifice that they had told him to make before, the diviners took two of the four kola nuts and gave them to him; they said that he should go and sacrifice them to his mother. When he arrived at the grave of his mother, where he was sacrificing to her, the rain began to beat down "giri."⁶ He said, "My mother, help me. Get me out of this trouble. When one's mother dies, one buries her." As he finished saying this, the rain was beating down, oh! He said, "Ashoro, oh, let the rain pour heavily. I am greatly troubled." The rain poured down. They said, "We don't know what Frog uses to call the rain." Ashoro is the name of Frog's mother.

Ifa says something is troubling someone. His mother in heaven is the one to whom he should sacrifice; she will send help to him in this matter. And if his mother should still be on earth, he should sacrifice to her head so that she may not die this very year.

6. The sound of rain falling heavily. Cf. n. 2, verse 17 - 2.

IREṬE QSA - 3

Obibẹ rọra fo ki o ma ba fi aṣọ kọ-(i)gi a da fun
 "House:bat gently fly that you not should take cloth hang-tree" who cast for
 akere ti yio jẹ Oniṣinkọ l(i)-ẹhin ọla, nwọn ni ki o ru-
 Frog that will eat Onishinkọ at-back (of) tomorrow, they say should he offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ki ayọ ayọ-ju ma ba pa: ẹiyẹ-(i)le mẹrin,
 sacrifice that joy joy-surpass not should kill (him): bird-(of)-house four,
 ẹgbarin, ati aṣọ pupa fẹrẹ-fẹrẹ o-n(i)-ila. Akere kọ
 8000 (cowries), and cloth red lightly-lightly one:who-has-lines. Frog refuse
 ko ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 not offer-sacrifice.

Ko l(i)-ọjọ ko l(i)-oṣu akere ti iṣe ọmọ ọba ni ode Qyọ,
 Not at-day not at-month Frog that make child (of) king at outside (of) Qyọ,
 baba rẹ ku, nwọn si lọ mu akere lati wa jẹ Oniṣinkọ, ṣugbọn
 father his die, they and go take Frog in:order:to come eat Onishinkọ, but
 akere ko si n(i)-ile n(i)-igba-ti awọn o-n(i)-iṣẹ wa pe,
 Frog not be at-house at-time-that those one:who-have-message come call (him),
 o wa ni oko, nwọn si ni ki iyawo rẹ ki o lọ sọ fun
 he exist at farm, they and say that junior:wife his should she go speak for (him)
 ni oko, n(i)-igba-ti aya rẹ de oko ti o sọ fun akere, akere ni
 at farm; at-time-that wife his arrive farm that she speak for Frog, Frog say
 ki o ma pada lọ s(i)-ile ki o lọ ma ra gbogbo ẹmu
 should she not return go to-house should she go (continuative) buy all palm:
 ti o ba ba ni ẹnụ ibode ni ki o ra de
 wine that she should meet at mouth (of) town:gate be (it) should she buy (it) wait:
 ki o si lọ pe o-n(i)-ilu on de on pẹlu.
 for (him) should she and go call one:who-have-drum his wait:for him together:with
 (her).

N(i)-igba-ti o fi ma pada de ile, aya rẹ ti ẹ gẹgẹ-
 At-time-that he take (continuative) return arrive house, wife his have do just-
 bi o ti wi de, n(i)-igba-ti o si de ti o ba o-
 as he have speak wait:for (him); at-time-that he and arrive that he meet one:who-
 n(i)-ilu rẹ o wi fun pe "o ya, mo fẹ ki o ba mi
 have-drum his he speak for (him) that "it be:ready, I want should you join me
 fi ẹsẹ kan ya ọdọ gbogbo ọba kiri ki n-to jẹ ọba
 take foot one turn:to presence (of) all king about before I-equal eat king
 nitori-ti bi mo ba j(ẹ)-oye tan, n-ko ni ri aye de ọdọ
 because-that if I should eat-title finish I-not be see chance arrive presence
 wọn mọ lai-lai." Bayi ni o bẹrẹ si so ogun egbe mọ ara
 their again ever-ever." Thus be he begin to tie medicine carrier against body

170 - 3

"Fly carefully, house bat, lest you catch your clothes¹ in a tree" was the one who cast Ifa for Frog who was going to be made Onishinko² after tomorrow. They said he should sacrifice four pigeons, two shillings, and a red cloth with light stripes, lest too much happiness should kill him. Frog refused to make the sacrifice.

Frog was the child of the King of Qyo. Not long afterward his father died, and they went to get Frog to make him Onishinko. But Frog was not at home when the messengers came to summon him. He was at the farm, and they told his wife to go to the farm to tell him. When his wife reached the farm and told Frog, Frog said that she should not go straight home, but that she should go and buy all the palm wine that she could find at the town gate, and she should call his drummer to wait for him with her at home.

When he came home, his wife had done just as he had told her and was waiting for him. When he arrived and found his drummer, he told him, "Everything is ready. I want you to go about with me at once to visit all the kings before I become king, because after I have taken the title, I will never have a chance to visit them again." He began to tie "carrier medicine"³ on his body,

1. I.e. wings.

2. Cf. nn. 3 and 4, verse 170-1.

3. A type of medicine which will carry the one who wears it immediately to any place.

rẹ ti o si nso ọkan mọ o-n(i)-ilu rẹ ni ọrun pẹlu
his that he and tying one against one:who-have-drum his at neck together:with

ti o si sọ pe o ya, ki o fi ilu si pe:
(him) that he and speak that it be:ready, should he take drum beat that:

L(i)-ọla, l(i)-ọla, l(i)-ọla akere a j(ẹ)-Oniṣinkọ
"At-tomorrow, at-tomorrow, at-tomorrow, Frog will eat-Onishinkọ,

B(i)-o ba di l(i)-ọla akere a j(ẹ)-Oniṣinkọ.
"If-it should become at-tomorrow, Frog will eat-Onishinkọ."

Bi o ba si lu o-n(i)-ilu rẹ gba, o di Ibadan, n(i)-igba-
As he should and beat one:who-have-drum his strike, it become Ibadan, at-time-

ti o ba de ibẹ bi nwọn ni ki o duro gba obi a ni ki
that he should arrive there as they say should he stand accept kola he say should

nwọn mu ba on ni ile oye, o tun ni ki o-n(i)-ilu
they take (it) meet him at house (of) title, he then say should one:who-have-drum

on fi ilu gba, o tun lu gba o di ode Qyọ, bayi
his take drum strike, he again beat strike (him) it become outside (of) Qyọ, thus

ni o nṣe titi o fi de Ilesha; sugbọn n(i)-igba-ti o npada bọ,
be he doing until he take arrive Ilesha; but at-time-that he returning come,

arẹ ti mu ogun egbe ti o nlo; n(i)-igba-ti o ku diẹ
fatigue have take medicine carrier that he using; at-time-that it remain small

ki o de ile, egbe gbe kọ ori igi n(i)-ibi-ti o
before he arrive house, carrier take hang (him) head (of) tree at-place-that it

rẹ egbe si, o si gb(e)-iyan-(o)ju titi pe ki on le wa s(i)-ilẹ
tire carrier to, he and take-bold-eye until that should he be:able come to-ground

sugbọn ko le wa s(i)-ilẹ. N(i)-igba-ti o pẹ ni iro-(i)hin
but not be:able come to-ground. At-time-that it be:long be report-(of)-news

kan ba awọn ara ile, nwọn si wa wa s(i)-ibẹ, n(i)-igba-
touch meet those people (of) house, they and come seek (him) to-there, at-time-

ti nwọn de ibẹ ti nwọn ri, nwọn ko ake ti igi egungun
that they arrive there that they see (him), they gather axe against tree silk:

ti o wa l(i)-ori rẹ nwọn si ge lu-(i)lẹ, n(i)-igba-ti
cotton:tree that he exist at-head its they and cut (it) strike-ground, at-time-that

igi wo, o wo lu akere mọ-(i)lẹ o si sẹ ni sẹ mej(i)-(m)ejì
tree break, it break strike Frog against-ground he and break at foot two-two

ati apa mej(i)-(m)ejì n(i)-igba-ti nwọn gbe akere de ile, awọn ara-
and arm two-two at-time-that they carry Frog arrive house, those people-

ile rẹ bẹrẹ si wo, nwọn da ina ti titi ilẹ
(of)-house his begin to heal (him), they create fire against (him) until ground

mọ, n(i)-igba-ti ilẹ mọ awọn ilu nreti pe o fẹrẹ de ki nwọn
clear at-time-that earth clear those town expecting that he almost arrive that they

and he tied one about the neck of his drummer also, and he told the drummer that everything was ready and that he should beat on his drum:⁴

"Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow, Frog will be the Onishinko,

"When tomorrow comes, Frog will be the Onishinko."

As he struck his drummer, they were suddenly transferred to Ibadan. When he arrived there, they told him to wait while they got him some kola nuts,⁵ but he said that they should bring them to his house when he had received his title. Again he told his drummer to beat the drum, and again he struck him, and this time they were in Qyo. He kept doing this, until finally they reached Ilesha. But when they were returning from Ilesha, the medicine that he was using wore out. When they were just a little way from home, the medicine dropped him in a tree top, where it wore out. He tried and tried, but could not get down. After a while news of this reached his family, and they came there looking for him; when they got there and saw him, they took axes and chopped down the silk cotton tree in the top of which he had landed. When the tree fell, it threw Frog to the ground, so that he broke both legs and both arms. When they had carried Frog home, his family began to cure him; they built a fire and warmed him by it all night long. When day broke, the townspeople were expecting him to arrive soon, so that they could

4. That is, on the "talking drums."

5. It is the custom to give kola nuts to visitors, but Frog could not wait to receive them.

ja ewe oye le l(i)-ori na, ṣugbṛn n(i)-igba-ti nwṛn reti rẹ
 break leaf (of) title upon (him) at-head the, but at-time-that they expect his
 titi ti nwṛn ko ri, nwṛn ran-(i)ṣe wa si ile rẹ lati
 until that they not see (him), they send-message come to house his in:order:to
 wa pe pe ki o ma bṛ, ṣugbṛn n(i)-igba-ti o-
 come call (him) that should he (continuative) come, but at-time-that one:who-
 n(i)-iṣe ri ti o si lṛ ro-(i)hin fun awṛn ilu, nwṛn mu
 have-message see (him) that he and go report-news for those town, they take
 ẹlomiran nwṛn fi j(ẹ)-oye. Bayi ni akere ko j(ẹ)-oye mṛ ti
 another:person they take (him) eat-title. Thus be Frog not eat-title again that
 ayṛ ayṛ-ju si pa, ati igba-na ni nwṛn ti ma nwi-
 joy joy-surpass and kill (him), from time-the be they have (continuative) speaking-
 pe "Ayṛ ayṛ-ju akere f(i)-itan se."
 that "Joy joy-surpass Frog take-thigh break."

Ifa ni ire kan mbṛ wa ba ẹni-kan ṣugbṛn ki o ru-
 Ifa say goodness one coming come meet person-one but should he offer-
 (ẹ)bṛ ki ayṛ ayṛ-ju ma ba gba ipo na ni ọwṛ rẹ.
 sacrifice that joy joy-surpass not should take position the at hand his.

◆ IRETE - (Q)ṢE¹ - 1

Okunkun gbe adie mi t(i)-ori-t(i)-ori a da fun
 "Darkness take chicken swallow that-(of)-head-that-(of)-head" who cast for
 ṛ-l(i)-ṛde, nwṛn ni oko ni o nlṛ yi; nwṛn ni yio ri aya kan
 one:who-be-hunter, they say farm be he going this; they say will see wife one
 fe n(i)-ibe; nwṛn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bṛ ki o ma ba ti ara
 love at-there; they say should he offer-sacrifice that he not should from body
 obinrin na ri ibi. O ru-(ẹ)bṛ aja meṭa ati ẹgbṛtalelṛgbṛn;
 (of) woman the see evil. He offer-sacrifice (of) dog three and 6600 (cowries).
 ki o fi ẹgbṛta rẹ yan ẹkṛ.
 Should he take 600 (cowries) his buy cornstarch:porridge.

Q-1(i)-ṛde yi ni aja meṭa ti i ma mu lṛ s(i)-oko
 One:who-be-hunter this have dog three that he (continuative) take go to-farm
 ṛde rẹ; orukṛ ekini a ma je Okemṛkerewu, ekeji a
 (of) hunter his; name (of) first it (continuative) eat Okemṛkerewu; second it
 ma je Osṛpakagbṛmṛmi, ati ẹkṛta a ma je Q-gba-
 (continuative) eat Osṛpakagbṛmṛmi, and third it (continuative) eat One:who-sweep-

1. This figure is also known as Iru Ẹkun (Leopard's tail) and as Ẹkun f(i)-iru na-(i)ṣe (Leopard beats the ground with its tail).

break the leaves of his title over his head. But when they waited and he did not come, they sent to his house to tell him to come. But when the messenger saw him and reported his condition to the townspeople, they took another person and crowned him as king. So it was that Frog never attained the title, because of too much happiness; and from that time on, people have been saying "Too much happiness broke Frog's legs."⁶

Ifa says that a blessing is coming to someone, but he should make a sacrifice lest too much happiness should take the position meant for him from his hand.

6. A proverb. Cf. verse 170-1, and the tale recorded by Fuja (1962: 17-19).

175 - 1

"Darkness swallows up chickens completely" was the one who cast Ifa for hunter. They said that he was going to the farm; they said he would find a wife there. They said he should sacrifice that the woman should not bring him evil. He sacrificed three dogs and one shilling seven pence eight oninis. He should buy cornstarch porridge with one penny eight oninis of the sacrifice.

This hunter had three dogs,¹ which he used to take hunting with him in the farm. The first was called Okemkerewu, the second, Ospamkagbomomi, and the third Qgba-

1. The fact that this hunter, after having sacrificed three dogs, is helped out of his difficulty by three dogs should be compared with other instances in which a part of the sacrifice is instrumental in achieving the character's aims.

(i)lẹ-gba-(i)rawe. N(i)-igba-ti ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ yi ba de
ground-sweep-dry:leaves. At-time-that one:who-be-hunter this should arrive
oko, obinrin kan wa ba da oniramọ, ti si ma
farm, woman one come join (him) create customer, that (she) and (continuative)
ba ra gbogbo ẹran ti o ba pa; ṣugbọn ko mọ pe ọrọ-
join (him) buy all meat that he should kill; but not know that evil:spirit-
(i)gi ni obinrin na.
(of)-tree be woman the.

N(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ kan, obinrin yi da-(o)hun pe ki ọ-
At-time-that it become day one, woman this break-voice that should one:who-
l(i)-ọdẹ yi wa lọ mọ ile on, nitori-ti ọ-l(i)-ode ọ
be-hunter this come go know house hers, because-that one-who-be-hunter speak
pe o nfẹ lati fẹ ẹ aya; n(i)-igba-ti ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ
that he wanting in:order:to love (her) make wife; at-time-that one:who-be-hunter
yi mu-(a)ra tan lati ma ba obinrin yi lọ, o pe aja
this take-body finish in:order:to (continuative) join woman this go, he call dog
rẹ mẹt(a)-(m)ẹta pe ki nwọn kalọ, ṣugbọn obinrin ni da-(o)hun pe
his three-three that should they go:along, but woman this break-voice that
"O nlọ si ile aya rẹ o si npe awọn aja rẹ pe ki nwọn
"He going to house (of) wife his he and calling those dog his that should they
kalọ?" O ni ki ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ ti il(e)-ẹkun mọ awọn aja
go:along?" She say should one:who-be-hunter push house-door against those dog
rẹ; nitori-pe obinrin yi mọ pe awọn aja yi gbọna pupọ ati-pe awọn
his; because-that woman this know that those dog this fierce much and-that those
aja yi ko si ẹranko ti nwọn ko le fa-ya.
dog this not be animal that they not be:able pull-split.

L(i)-ẹhin na ni ọkunrin yi wọ-(i)le o si gbe ibọn rẹ, ṣugbọn n(i)-
At-back the be man this enter-house he and carry gun his, but at-
igba-ti obinrin yi tun ri o ni "Ile aya rẹ na ni o nlọ ti
time-that woman this again see she say "House (of) wife his the be he going that
o lọ gbe ibọn rẹ o fẹ lọ j(a)-ogun ni ohun ni?" Ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ
he go carry gun his, he want go fight-war at there be (it)?" One:who-be-hunter
yi si tun gbe ibọn rẹ s(i)-ilẹ o si na-(ọ)wọ mu ada rẹ ti
this and again take gun his to-ground he and stretch-hand take cutlass his that
o ma nmu lọ si igbo ọdẹ n(i)-igba-ti obinrin yi tun ri
he (continuative) taking go to forest (of) hunter; at-time-that woman this then see
eyi o da-(o)hun o ni "Ile aya rẹ ni o nlọ ti o lọ nmu
this she break-voice she say "House (of) wife his be he going that he go taking
ada, o fẹ lọ bẹ wọn l(i)-ori l(i)-ọhun ni?" Ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ yi
cutlass, he want go cut them at-head at-there be (it)?" One:who-be-hunter this

lēgbarawe.² When this hunter arrived at the farm, a woman trader came to him to be his customer, and to buy all the meat that he killed. But he did not know that this woman was an evil tree-spirit.

One day this woman asked the hunter to come with her to see her home, because the hunter had told her that he wanted her to be his wife. When the hunter was ready to go with this woman, he called to his three dogs to come along; but this woman said, "Are you going to your wife's house that you call your dogs to come along?" She said that the hunter should lock the door on his dogs, because this woman knew that these dogs were very fierce, and that there was no animal that they could not tear to pieces. Then this man went into the house and took his gun, but when the woman saw it, she said, "Are you going to your wife's house that you take your gun along? Do you want to go to make war there?" And the hunter put back his gun and took down his cutlass that he used to take hunting in the forest. When this woman saw it, she said to him, "Are you going to your wife's house that you take your cutlass along? Do you want to go to cut off someone's head there?" So the hunter

2. These names could be only partially translated. The first was said to mean "One who cuts child of kerewu," o-ke-(o)mq-kerewu; kerewu means cotton seed, but informants did not know its meaning in this context. The second name could be translated only as "Osopaka takes child and swallows it," osopaka-gb(a)-qm̄-mi. The third name means "One who sweeps the ground and sweeps dry leaves."

tun fi ada s(i)-ilẹ, o si wọ ẹwu dara-dara o si ẹtle obinrin
 then put cutlass to-ground, he and enter gown fine-fine he and follow woman
 yi; ẹgbọn bi o ti fẹ bọ s(i)-ode, aya rẹ ti o ti fẹ s(i)-
 this; but as he have want come to-outside, wife his that he have love move-
 (w)aju ri pe o ni "Şe ọdẹ ni ọ, bawo ni o ti ẹe yẹ
 front before call (him) she say "Make hunter be you, how be he have make suit
 pe ki o ma ba ẹni-ti o ko mọ ri lọ si ibi kan
 that should he (continuative) meet person-that he not know before go to place one
 ki o ma mu ọbẹ dani?" Nitori-na o ni ki o pada lọ si ile,
 that he not take knife hold?" Because-the she say should he return go to house,
 ki o si mu ọbẹ rẹ dani. Q-l(i)-ọdẹ yi si mu ọbẹ i-la-
 should he and take knife his hold. One:who-be-hunter this and take knife to-open-
 (i)gbẹ yi s(i)-inu ẹwu rẹ, o si fi ẹwu bo mọ-(i)lẹ.
 forest his to-belly (of) gown his, he and take gown cover (it) against-ground.
 Nwọn si jumọ nlọ.
 They and together going.

Bayi ni awọn mej(i)-(m)ẹji jumọ si lọ titi nwọn fi de inu
 Thus be those two-two together and go until they take arrive belly (of)
 igbo, n(i)-igba-ti nwọn de inu igbo bẹ ni gbogbo awọn igi bẹrẹ
 forest, at-time-that they arrive belly (of) forest so be all those tree begin
 si ki obinrin yi pe "E-k(u)-abọ" ti nwọn si nyọ
 to greet woman this that "You-be:greeted-(of)-arrival" that they and appearing
 si wọn. N(i)-igba-ti ọ-l(i)-ọdẹ yi ri eyi, ẹru ba o si
 to them. At-time-that one:who-be-hunter this see this, fear meet (him) he and
 fẹ sa pada ẹgbọn nwọn di l(i)-ona nwọn ko si fẹ jẹ-ki o
 want run return but they tie (him) at-road they not and want consent-that he
 lọ nwọn si mu-(a)ra lati pa; n(i)-igba-ti o ri pe nwọn fẹ
 go, they and take-body in:order:to kill (him); at-time-that he see that they want
 pa on o sa gun ori igi o si bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
 kill him he run climb head (of) tree he and begin to sing-song that:

Aja mi da? Aja ọdẹ
 "Dog my where:be (they)? Dog (of) hunter,

Okemọkerewu, Aja ọdẹ
 "Okemọkerewu, Dog (of) hunter,

Osọpakagbomọmi Aja ọdẹ
 "Osọpakagbomọmi, Dog (of) hunter,

Q-gba-(i)lẹ-gba-(i)rawe Aja ọdẹ
 "One:who-sweep-ground-sweep-dry:leaves, Dog (of) hunter,

Aja mi da? Aja ọdẹ
 "Dog my where:be (they)? Dog (of) hunter."

put the cutlass down, and he put on a very fine gown to go with this woman. But when he came out, his senior wife, whom he had married earlier, called to him and said, "Are you not a hunter? How can you go somewhere to meet people you have never known before without carrying a knife?" Therefore, she said, he should go back to the house and get his knife. The hunter took his bush knife and put it inside his gown so that the gown hid it. And they went off together.

And so they both went along together until they entered the forest. When they came into the forest, all the trees began to greet this woman, saying, "Welcome," and came up to them. When the hunter saw this, he was afraid, and he wanted to run back home. But the trees closed the road and would not let him go; and they got ready to kill him. When he saw that they were going to kill him, he ran and climbed to the top of a tree and began to sing:

"Where are my dogs? The hunter's dogs,

"Okemqkerewu, The hunter's dogs,

"Osqpakagbomomi, The hunter's dogs,

"Qgbalegbarawe, The hunter's dogs,

"Where are my dogs? The hunter's dogs."³

3. This song is sung in the typical West African pattern, with the chorus singing the refrain, "The hunter's dogs."

N(i)-igba-ti ɔ-l(i)-oḍe yi nko-(o)rin bayi, l(i)-eṣe kan na ni
 At-time-that one:who-be-hunter this singing-song thus, at-foot one the be
 awon aja met(a)-(m)eta sa-re ti ile de, ti nwon si ba oga
 those dog three-three run-go from house arrive that they and meet master
 won n(i)-ibi-ti o gbe wa n(i)-inu idamu, ti nwon si kolu
 their at-place-that he take exist at-belly (of) confusion, that they and attack
 awon ota oga won ti nwon si ba oga won se-(o)gun awon
 those enemy (of) master their, that they and join master their make-war those
 oro-(i)gi nwon-yi. Q-l(i)-oḍe yi si wa s(i)-ile
 evil:spirit-(of)-tree those-this. One:who-be-hunter this and come to-house
 pelu awon aja re.
 together:with those dog his.

Ifa ni a-(yi)o ri aya kan fe ti yio wa l(i)-ori emi eni,
 Ifa say we-will see wife one love that will exist at-head (of) breath (of) person
 sugbon ki a ru-(e)bo ki a ma ba ri ibi lati odo
 but should we offer-sacrifice that we not should see evil from presence (of)
 obinrin na ti yio fe fe le gba emi eni.
 woman the that will almost be:able take breath (of) person.

◆ IREṬE - (Q)ṢE - 2

Efufu lege-lege awo aiye Efufu lege-lege awo orun a
 "Wind sway-sway" secret (of) earth, "Wind sway-sway" secret (of) sky who
 da fun Qrunmila ni-(o)jo ti o nlo si apa okun ilaji oga.
 cast for Qrunmila at-day that he going to arm (of) sea middle (of) lagoon.

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila nlo o so fun awon omọ-awo re pe
 At-time-that Qrunmila going he speak for those child-(of)-secret his that
 l(i)-ilo ni on nlo yi, nwon ko gbodo se opon Ifa on titi on yio
 at-departure he he going this, they not must tap tray (of) Ifa his until he will
 fi de, o ni ki nwon ma da ikin si i-da-si ogere on; n(i)-
 take arrive, he say should they not cast ikin to to-cast-to divining:cup his; at-
 igba-ti o di oṣu-(e)keta ti o lo ni awon omọ-awo re se
 time-that it become month-third that he go be those child-(of)-secret his tap
 opon ide re gberere; nwon dun yere ohun aro, nwon da ikin si
 tray (of) brass his softly; they sound yere voice (of) sadness, they cast ikin to
 i-da-si ogere re, ape so-(i)le ni m(o)-orun ai-ku
 to-cast-to divining:cup his, sign strike-ground at against-altar (of) not-die (of)
 o-l(i)-ofin;
 one:who-has-palace;

When the hunter sang this song, at once his three dogs came running to him from home, and they found their master in the midst of his difficulties. They attacked the enemies of their master and conquered the evil tree-spirits for him. The hunter went back home with his dogs.⁴

Ifa says we will find a wife who will be with our soul,⁵ but we should make a sacrifice so that she will not bring us evil which will almost be able to carry our soul away.

4. Cf. the versions of this tale recorded by Frobenius (1926: 233-236), Walker and Walker (1961: 17-19), and Fuja (1962: 155-160).

5. The breath (ẹmi) constitutes one of the multiple souls. See Chapter XI.

175 - 2

"Gentle breeze"¹ the diviner of earth, "Gentle breeze" the diviner of heaven was the one who cast Ifa for Orunmila when he was going to the shore of the ocean, to the middle of the lagoon.²

When Orunmila was going, he told his apprentices that after he had gone, they must not tap his divining tray until he returned; he said they should not cast the palm nuts in his divining cup.³ During the third month of his absence his apprentices tapped his brass divining tray softly; they sang his yẹrẹ song sadly; and they cast the palm nuts in his divining cup. A sign appeared at the shrine kept to prevent the king's death.

1. A breeze that makes things sway gently. Cf. verse 255-2.

2. Cf. verse 5-4.

3. That is, they should not attempt to divine until he returned.

Q-l(i)-ṣfin ni "Ha" o ni ki nwọn lọ pe Qrunmila wa,
 One:who-has-palace say "Ha" he say should they go call Qrunmila come,
 n(i)-igba-ti awọn o-n(i)-iṣẹ Q-l(i)-ṣfin de-(i)le
 at-time-that those one:who-have-message (of) One:who-has-palace arrive-house
 Qrunmila ti nwọn ko ba, nwọn pada de ọdọ Q-
 (of) Qrunmila that they not meet (him), they return arrive presence (of) One:who-
 l(i)-ṣfin nwọn ni awọn ko ba, nwọn ni ki nwọn ọmọ-awo
 has-palace they say they not meet (him), they say that those child-(of)-secret
 rẹ mẹt(a)-(m)ẹta ni awọn ba; Q-l(i)-ṣfin ni ki nwọn lọ pe
 his three-three be they meet; One:who-has-palace say should they go call
 awọn ọmọ-awo rẹ mẹt(a)-(m)ẹta na wa ki nwọn wa yẹ
 those child-(of)-secret his three-three the come should they come examine
 on wo; n(i)-igba-ti nwọn pe wọn de, nwọn da Ifa, nwọn da Irẹtẹ-
 him look:at; at-time-that they call them arrive, they cast Ifa, they cast Irẹtẹ-
 Qṣẹ, nwọn ni ki Q-l(i)-ṣfin fi ọkẹ mẹta, aguntan
 Qṣẹ, they say should One:who-has-palace take bag (of cowries) three, ewe
 mẹta, ati ẹkun kan ru-(ẹ)bọ pẹlu aṣọ kan; Q-l(i)-
 three, and leopard one offer-sacrifice together:with cloth one; One:who-has-
 ṣfin ni "o dara," o ni ṣugbọn nibo ni o ti ri ẹkun?
 palace say "it be:good," he say but where be he have see leopard?

Gbogbo Ifẹ mu-(a)ra, nwọn lọ wo itẹ nwọn si ka ẹkun kan
 All Ifẹ take-body, they go clear bush they and go:around leopard one
 mọ itẹ nwọn wa da-(o)hun pe ki nwọn lọ pe babalawo ti o
 against bush they come break-voice that should they go call diviner that they
 yan ẹkun ni ẹbọ wa ki nwọn wa ba wọn mu ẹkun n(i)-
 choose leopard at sacrifice come should they come join them take leopard at-
 inu itẹ; n(i)-igba-ti nwọn pe awọn ọmọ-awo mẹt(a)-(m)ẹta
 belly (of) bush; at-time-that they call those child-(of)-secret three-three
 de nwọn ko le mu ẹkun.
 arrive they not be:able take leopard.

Ni ọjọ na gan ni Qrunmila sun ni ilu ti o wa ti orun na
 At day the identical be Qrunmila sleep at town that he exist that sleep the
 ko dara, ti o si mu-(a)ra o tọ awọn babalawo lọ; nwọn sọ
 not be:good, that he and take-body he approach those diviner go; they speak
 fun pe ki o tete mu-(a)ra ki o ma lọ si ilu rẹ
 for (him) that should he quickly take-body should he (continuative) go to town his
 kia-kia, Qrunmila si ka ọna ko n(i)-igba-ti o de ile o bere
 quick-quick, Qrunmila and shorten road (1) at-time-that he arrive house he ask
 awọn ọmọ-awo rẹ, nwọn ni o di ij(ọ)-ẹta ti Q-l(i)-ṣfin
 those child-(of)-secret his, they say it become day-three that One:who-has-palace

1. Ka . . . ko means "to shorten."

The king said, "Ha!" He said that they should go and tell Qrunmila to come. When the king's messengers came to Qrunmila's house and did not find him, they went back to the king; they said that they could not find him, and that they had found only his three apprentices. The king said they should go and tell the three apprentices to come and examine him. When they had been called and had come, they cast Ifa, and they cast the figure Irẹtẹ Qşşẹ. They said that the king should sacrifice fifteen shillings, three ewes, and one leopard, and also one cloth. The king said, "All right, but where can I find the leopard?"

All the people of Ifẹ got ready; they went and cleared the bush and they surrounded a leopard in the bush. They said that they should call the diviners who had named a leopard as part of the sacrifice to come and capture the leopard in the bush. When they called the three apprentices to come, they could not capture the leopard.

On that very day Qrunmila was sleeping in the town where he was, and he had a bad dream. He got ready and consulted the diviners. They told him that he must get ready quickly and return to his town immediately, and Qrunmila used magic to make the journey shorter. When he got home, he asked his apprentices what was wrong. They said that two days ago⁴ the king

4. Three days before, according to Yoruba reckoning.

ti pe wọn lọ pẹ ki nwọn wa ba on mu ẹkun n(i)-inu itẹ,
 have call them go that should they come join him take leopard at-belly (of) bush,
 nwọn ko si ti de; şugbọn bi awọn ọmọ-awo ti de inu
 they not and have arrive; but as those child-(of)-secret have arrive belly (of)
 itẹ ni ẹkun ti pa ọkan n(i)-inu wọn; n(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila gbọ bayi o
 bush be leopard have kill one at-belly their; at-time-that Qrunmila hear thus he
 lọ ra awọn kan o gbe ọmọ ewurẹ sọ si inu rẹ, n(i)-igba-ti Qrun-
 go buy net one he carry child (of) she:goat throw to belly its, at-time-that Qrun-
 mila de ibẹ o ju awọn na pẹlu ewurẹ yi s(i)-inu itẹ;
 mila arrive there he throw net the together:with she:goat this to-belly (of) bush;
 n(i)-igba-ti ewurẹ ba-(i)lẹ o ke, n(i)-igba-ti ẹkun gbọ igbe
 at-time-that she:goat strike-ground it cry; at-time-that leopard hear cry (of)
 ewurẹ o sa-re si, bi o ti ni ki on gbe ni awọn yi, n(i)-igba-na
 she:goat he run-go to (it), as he have be that he take at net this, at-time-the
 ni Qrunmila bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
 be Qrunmila begin to sing-song that:

Ẹran ti o roro
 "Meat that it be:fierce,

Awọn ma yi
 "Net (continuative) turn (it),

Ẹran o roro.
 "Meat it be:fierce."

N(i)-igba-ti awọn yi tan ni Qrunmila gbe ru ti o si
 At-time-that net turn (it) finish be Qrunmila carry carry (it) that he and
 mbọ n(i)-ile, şugbọn bi o ti ngbe bọ ni ẹkun bẹrẹ si ha
 coming at-house, but as he have carrying (it) come be leopard begin to scratch
 ni ekanna; ibi-ti ẹkun gbe ha Qrunmila ni ekanna ni oju mẹrin
 (him) at claw; place-that leopard take scratch Qrunmila at claw be eye four
 ti wa l(i)-ara ifa (ekurọ) titi di oni yi, n(i)-igba-ti
 that they exist at-body (of) Ifa (palm:nut) until become today this, at-time-that
 ẹkun nha ni ekanna ni Qrunmila bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
 leopard scratching (him) at claw be Qrunmila begin to sing-song that:

O roro
 "It be:fierce,

Agẹmọ ko şe jẹ
 "Chameleon not make eat,

O roro.
 "It be:fierce."

N(i)-igba-ti o gbe de ile ni nwọn ba lọ ş(e)-ẹbọ fun
 At-time-that he carry (it) arrive house be they join (him) go make-sacrifice for
 Q-l(i)-ọfin.
 One:who-has-palace.

had called them to come and capture a leopard in the bush, and they had not gone; but when they did go to the bush, the leopard had killed one of them. When Qrunmila heard this, he went and bought a net, and in it he put a young she-goat. When Qrunmila got there, he threw the net, with the she-goat inside it, into the bush. When the she-goat hit the ground, it bleated, and when the leopard heard its cry it ran to it. As it was caught in the net, Qrunmila began to sing:

"Animal that is very fierce,
"The net is ensnaring it,
"Animal is very fierce."

When the net had ensnared the leopard, Qrunmila picked it up and started to carry it home; but as he was carrying it, the leopard began to scratch him with its claws. The places where the leopard scratched Qrunmila with its claws are the four eyes that are to be seen on Ifa (on his palm nuts) until this very day.⁵ When leopard was scratching him with his claws, Qrunmila began to sing:

"It is very bitter,⁶
"Chameleon is not able to eat it,
"It is very bitter."

When he had carried the leopard home, they went with him to make the sacrifice for the king.

5. This verse thus explains how it came about that the palm nuts used by the diviners have four "eyes" at one end. (See Chapter III).

6. Given as to be fierce (roro) in the text, but interpreted as meaning to be bitter (koro).

Ifa ni ẹni-kan nlọ si idalẹ kan yio si fi ẹni-kan de-(i)le
 Ifa say person-one going to distance one will and put person-one watch-house
 rẹ gẹgẹ-bi a-l(i)-akoso ti yio duro bi oluwarẹ na
 his just-as one:who-have-control that will stand as person:in:question the
 pataki, ki a ru-(ẹ)bọ ki Ṣọpọnna ma ba pa ẹni-
 important:person, should we offer-sacrifice that Ṣọpọnna not should kill person-
 ti a fi s(i)-ile na, ki ẹni-ti o lọ si ẹhin odi na to
 that we put to-house the, before person-that he go to back (of) town:wall the equal
 de. Ki o ma de ile jampo ki nwọn ma ba sọ
 arrive. Should he not arrive house empty that they (continuative) should speak
 pe igbẹ ma wa fọ-(ọ)na o.
 that forest (continuative) come break-road his.

Ifa kan wa ki a fi ori le l(i)-ori ki a pa igbin
 Ifa one exist, should we put shea:butter upon (it) at-head should we kill snail
 si ki a to fi ewurẹ bọ nitori-ti awọn kan gba-
 to (it) before we equal take she:goat sacrifice:to (it) because-that those one take-
 (o)ri jọ ti Ifa yi ma ba yẹ-(o)ri ni ọrọ wọn nitori-ti o
 head be:together that Ifa this not should avoid-head at word their because-that it
 fi ori ti ọran wọn.
 put head against affair their.

OTURA - (Q)BARA¹ - 1

Idi ẹ b(i)-ire-b(i)-ire o gun ori ẹni, awọn ẹ jẹgẹ-jẹgẹ
 "Waist do like-play-like-play it climb head (of) mat; net do softly-softly
 m(u)-ẹru le, Alukerese rakoro-rakoro o d(i)-agba, n(i)-igba-ti o
 take-load strong," "Alukerese crawl-crawl it become-elder, at-time-that it
 d(i)-agba tan o nṣe oju mi eyi, oju mi ọhun" a da fun Aiye ti
 become-elder finish he doing eye my this, eye my there" who cast for Earth that
 o nf(i)-ẹkun oju ẹ irahun ọmọ nwọn ni yio b(i)-ọmọ nwọn
 she taking-tears (of) eye make moaning (of) child; they say will bear-child they
 ni gbogbo aiye ni yio ma pe sin ọmọ na yio si
 say all earth be (they) will (continuative) assemble serve child the, will and
 de ade sugbọn ki iṣe rẹ le ẹ oju rẹ ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 cover crown but that work his be:able do eye her be should she offer-sacrifice
 fun. Ewurẹ kan ati aṣọ ara rẹ ni ẹbọ.
 for. She:goat one and cloth (of) body her be sacrifice.

1. An alternative name is Etura Oniwara.

Ifa says someone is going to a distant place, and he will leave **someone** in charge of his house like a director who will stand in his place as an **important** person. We should sacrifice, lest the God of Smallpox kill this person **that** we leave at home before the one who goes out of town returns, and so **that** he does not return to an empty house and be told that the forest has destroyed it.

There is an Ifa;⁷ we should put shea butter on top of it and kill a **snail** on it before we sacrifice a she-goat to it, because some people have been counting on this Ifa not to fail them, because it will help them in this affair.⁸

7. A set of palm nuts (ikin).

8. This translation is uncertain.

181 - 1

"Hips act indifferently,¹ but they get to sit on the mat; nets act gently, but they hold their loads firmly;" and "The alukeresse vine² creeps to maturity; when it is old, it turns its face here and there" were the ones who cast Ifa for Earth when she was weeping and moaning for a child. They said she would bear a child and that the whole world would be gathering to serve it. They said the child would wear a crown but that she should sacrifice so that he would be able to do so while she was still alive to see it. One she-goat and the cloth from her body is the sacrifice.

1. To act as if something does not matter, to do something by indirection, or to feign indifference. To tell important news incidentally in the midst of joking and talking about the point; to gain admission into a crowded room or to reach a desired position in a crowd by moving gradually and joking with those whom one passes; or, as in this case, to move gradually and almost unnoticeably onto a mat.

2. See n. 1, verse 33-2.

Ifa ni obinrin kan ni-(e)yi, ko si ɛni-ti o tun le gbagbọ pe
 Ifa say woman one be-this, not be person-that he then be:able believe that
 o le bi-(g)mọ mọ; yio bi ọmọ-(g)kunrin kan ọgbọn ki o ru-
 she be:able bear-child again; will bear child-man one but should she offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ki igba ọmọ na le ọe oju rẹ; ọmọ na yio jẹ ọba.
 sacrifice that time (of) child the be:able do eye her; child the will eat king.

Aiye kọ ko ru-(ẹ)bọ titi o fi ku si oko, ibẹ ni nwọn
 Earth refuse not offer-sacrifice until she take die to farm, there be they
 sin Aiye si n(i)-igba-ti ọmọ rẹ si wa ni ọmọde. N(i)-igba-ti o
 bury Earth to, at-time-that child her and exist at young:child. At-time-that it
 pẹ titi, igbo kun bo iboji ibi-ti nwọn sin Aiye si, ko si
 be:long until, forest fill cover grave (of) place-that they bury Earth to, not and
 si ɛni-ti o mọ ibẹ mọ, ọgbọn n(i)-igba-ti o pẹ ọmọ yi
 be person-that he know there again, but at-time-that it be:long child this
 di agba, nwọn si fi j(ẹ)-ọba; n(i)-igba-yi ni agbẹ kan lọ
 become elder, they and take (him) eat-king; at-time-this be farmer one go
 da oko si ibi-ti nwọn sin Aiye si, bi o si ti nfi kọ ẹran,
 create farm to place-that they bury Earth to, as he and have taking hoe heap,
 ọkọ ọba Aiye l(i)-ori, o si k(e)-igbe pe "Ha o fi ọkọ ọba mi l(i)-
 hoe chop Earth at-head, she and cry-cry that "Ha! you take hoe chop me at-
 ori?"
 head?"

N(i)-igba-ti agbẹ yi gbọ bayi, o fi ọkọ s(i)-ilẹ, o si sa-re
 At-time-that farmer this hear thus, he put hoe to-ground, he and run-go
 wa sọ fun ọba n(i)-ile ti o ri ori gbigbẹ ti o ns(ọ)-ọrọ n(i)-
 come speak for king at-house that he see head dry that it speaking-word at-
 ibi-ti o gbe nkọ ẹran. Ọba ni ọe ki o ran-(i)şẹ wa kalọ
 place-that he take hoeing heap. King say make that he send-message come go:
 s(i)-ibẹ? O ni ki o ran-(i)şẹ tẹle on ati bi awọn ba
 along to-there? He say should he send-message follow him and if they should
 de ibẹ ti ko ba s(ọ)-ọrọ ki ọba ki o bẹ on ni ori;
 arrive there that (it) not should speak-word that king should he cut him at head;
 ọba si ran awọn-(I)mọlẹ tẹle lọ si ibẹ ọgbọn n(i)-igba-ti nwọn
 king and send those-Ogboni follow (him) go to there, but at-time-that they
 de ibẹ, ori gbigbẹ ko s(ọ)-ọrọ mọ, nwọn si mu agbẹ nwọn si
 arrive there, head dry not speak-word again, they and take farmer they and
 bẹ l(i)-ori gẹgẹ-bi ileri rẹ; ọgbọn bi awọn-(I)mọlẹ ti bẹ agbẹ
 cut (him) at-head just-as promise his; but as those-Ogboni have cut farmer
 l(i)-ori tan ti nwọn yi ẹhin pada ni ori-gbẹ da-(o)hun o ni "Ha
 at-head finish that they turn back return be head-dry break-voice it say "Ha!
 ẹ pa enia?"
 you kill person?"

Ifa says this is a woman. There is no one who can believe that she is still able to bear children. She will bear a son, but she should make a sacrifice so that his time will come while she is still alive. The child will become king.

Earth refused to sacrifice, and finally she died in the farm, where she was buried when her son was still a young boy. After a while the forest grew up and covered the grave where Earth was buried, and there was no one who knew where it was any more. But after a while her child grew up, and they made him king. At this time a farmer went to make a farm at the place where they had buried Earth, and as he was hoeing yam heaps, his hoe chopped Earth's head, and she cried out, "Ha! Did you chop my head with your hoe?"

When the farmer heard this, he put down his hoe and he ran home to tell the king that he had seen a skull that talked where he was hoeing yam heaps. The king asked whether he should send someone to accompany him there. He said the king should send someone to follow him, and that if they got there and the skull did not talk, the king should cut off his head. The king sent the Ogboni³ to accompany him to the place, but when they got there, the skull would not talk any more. So they seized the farmer and cut off his head, according to his agreement. But when the Ogboni had cut off the farmer's head and turned to go back, the skull spoke, saying "Ha! Did you kill someone?"

3. A group of officials, whose primary functions are to serve as one of the higher courts of justice, and to perform rituals in honor of the earth.

N(i)-igba-ti awọn-(I)mọlẹ si de ile nwọn ro-(i)hin ohun ti
 At-time-that those-Ogboni and arrive house they report-news (of) thing that
 awọn ri fun ọba nwọn si sọ fun bi ohun ti awọn wi yi ko
 they see for king they and speak for (him) if thing that they speak this not
 ba ri bẹ ki ọba ki o pa awọn; o si tun ran awọn Ogungbẹ le
 should see so that king should he kill them; he and then send those Ogungbẹ upon
 nwọn l(i)-ẹhin sùgbọn n(i)-igba-ti nwọn de ibẹ ori gbigbẹ tun pa-(ẹ)nu
 them at-back but at-time-that they arrive there head dry then kill-mouth
 mọ ko s(ọ)-ọrọ mọ, awọn Ogungbẹ si pa awọn-(I)mọlẹ si ọhun
 against not speak-word again, those Ogungbẹ and kill those-Ogboni to there
 sùgbọn bi wọn ti pa wọn tan ti nwọn si yi ẹhin pada ni ori-gbigbẹ
 but as they have kill them finish that they and turn back return be head-dry
 tun da-(o)hun ti o si wi-pe "Ha ẹ pa enia?"
 then break-voice that he and speak-that "Ha! you kill person?"

N(i)-igba-ti awọn Ogungbẹ de ile nwọn ko ohun ti nwọn ri nwọn
 At-time-that those Ogungbẹ arrive house they relate thing that they see they
 si sọ fun ọba, ọba si pe awọn Otu pe ki nwọn wa ba awọn
 and speak for king, king and call those Otu that should they come join those
 Ẹmẹsẹ lọ si ibi-ti ori-gbigbẹ gbe ns(ọ)-ọrọ. Sùgbọn ki awọn Otu
 Ẹmẹsẹ go to place-that head-dry take speaking-word. But before those Otu
 to lọ nwọn mu eji kan ẹta nwọn tọ awọn babalawo lọ
 equal go they take two touch three (cowries) they approach those diviner go
 awọn babalawo si sọ fun wọn pe ki nwọn ru-(ẹ)bọ agutan
 those diviner and speak for them that should they offer-sacrifice (of) ewe
 kan, aṣọ funfun, awin, ẹmu, ati akara.
 one, cloth white, tamarind, palm:wine, and bean:fritter.

N(i)-igba-ti awọn Otu de ibẹ, nwọn bẹ agutan si, nwọn da ẹmu
 At-time-that those Otu arrive there, they cut ewe to (it), they cast palm:
 lu nwọn si run akara si, n(i)-igba-ti ori gbigbẹ
 wine against (it), they and crumble bean:fritter to (it); at-time-that head dry
 jẹ tan o ni o Aiye ni, o ni ki nwọn gbe on, nwọn si gbe
 eat finish, it say it Earth be, it say should they carry it, they and carry (it)
 s(i)-inu aṣọ funfun; nwọn si gbe wa s(i)-ile nwọn wa mọ
 to-belly (of) cloth white; they and carry (it) come to-house, they come know
 pe iya ọ-l(i)-ọfin ni.
 that mother (of) one:who-has-palace be (it).

Ifa ni a-ku-(i)-sin oku kan wa, Ifa ni ki a y(a)-
 Ifa say one:who-die-(not)-bury corpse one exist, Ifa say should we be:quick-
 ara lọ sin oku na dara-dara ki oku na ba ma ẹ a-ku-
 body go bury corpse the fine-fine that corpse the should not make one:who-die-
 fa enia pupọ.
 pull people many.

When the Ogboni came home, they reported to the king what they had seen, and they told him that if what they had said was not true, the king should kill them. Then the king sent the Ogungbẹ⁴ after the Ogboni; but when they got there, the skull again kept silent and would not speak. The Ogungbẹ killed the Ogboni on the spot; but when they had killed them and they turned to come back, the skull again spoke, saying, "Ha! Did you kill someone?"

When the Ogungbẹ came home, they reported what they had seen, telling it to the king. The king called the Otu priests⁵ to go with the Ẹmṣẹṣ⁶ to the place where the skull was talking. But before the Otu priests left, they took five cowries and consulted the diviners; and the diviners told them to sacrifice one ewe, a white cloth, Black Tamarind,⁷ palm wine, and bean fritters.

When the Otu arrived there, they cut off the head of the ewe and poured its blood on the skull; they poured palm wine on it; and they crumbled the bean fritters on it. When the skull had finished eating, it said that it was Earth, and it said they should carry it home. They put it in the white cloth and carried it home. Thus they learned that it was the mother of the king.

Ifa says that there is a dead person who has not been buried. Ifa says we should hurry and bury the dead person in fine style, so that it will not draw many people to their death after it.

4. A group of officials, whose primary function is to serve as bodyguards of the king and arrest and detain criminals. Cf. n. 4, verse 249-6. Their name means "War society" [Ogun-(ẹ)gbẹ].

5. A group of priests in Ifẹ whose duty it is to dispose of sacrifices for the king. Cf. verse 181-4 for a similar tale in which the meaning of their title is explained.

6. A group of palace officials whose primary functions are to act as messengers of the king and his representatives at the various religious festivals performed by the people of Ifẹ. They are the equivalent of the Iari of the Oyo kingdom. The Ẹmṣẹṣ, the Ogungbẹ, and the Ogboni are three sets of officials who assist the king and the chiefs of Ifẹ in governing the capital and the kingdom.

7. A sour fruit, the Black or Velvet Tamarind (Dialium guineense).

OTURA - (Q)BARA - 2

Etura bayi, Qbara bayi a da fun omu-(i)ye meji; nwọn ni
 "Etura thus, Qbara thus" who cast for child-(of)-mother two; they say
 ki awọn mej(i)-(m)ej(i) ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ọran wọn le ni ori; apa-
 should those two-two offer-sacrifice that affair their be:able have head; arm
 kan ru-(ẹ)bọ, apa-kan ko ru. Awọn ti o ru-(ẹ)bọ n(i)-igba-
 one offer-sacrifice, arm-one not offer. Those that they offer-sacrifice at-time-
 na ni awọn ọmọ iya meji ti a ma nsọ pe Ẹ ko
 the be those child (of) mother two that we (continuative) speaking that "You not
 ri bi (ohu)n-kan wọn ti gun? Awọn ti ko ru-(ẹ)bọ n(i)-igba
 see if thing-one their have be:orderly?" Those that not offer-sacrifice at-time-
 na ni awọn ti a ma nsọ pe Nwọn ba. Etura ba
 the be those that we (continuative) speaking that "They be:worthless. Etura be:
 Qbara ba. Ẹiyẹ-(i)le męrin ati ẹgbarin ni
 worthless, Qbara be:worthless." Bird-(of)-house four and 8000 (cowries) be
 ẹbọ.
 sacrifice.

Ifa ni ki awọn ọmọ iya meji ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ọran wọn
 Ifa say should those child (of) mother two offer-sacrifice that affair their
 le pa-pọ; ki awọn ar(a)-aiye ma ba ma sọ
 be:able kill-together; that those people-(of)-earth not should (continuative) speak
 pe Nwọn ba.
 that "They be:worthless."

OTURA - (Q)BARA - 3

A ki ini ititọ n(i)-inu ki a gb(e)-awọn ika si iku a da
 "We not have truth at-belly that we take-unpaid wickedness to belly" who cast
 fun Qsanyin; nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ohun kan ki o ma ba
 for Qsanyin; they say should he offer-sacrifice that thing one that it not should
 pa ohun mọ l(i)-ẹnu. Akikọ-(a)diẹ męta ati ẹgbẹtalegbọn ni
 kill voice against (him) at-mouth. Cock-chicken three and 6600 (cowries) be
 ẹbọ.
 sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti Qsanyin ma ru-(ẹ)bọ o ru akikọ-(a)diẹ kan.
 At-time-that Qsanyin (continuative) offer-sacrifice he offer cock-chicken one
 lati igba-na ni ohun Qsanyin ko ti de oke mọ ti o si ma
 from time-the be voice (of) Qsanyin not have arrive hill again that he and (contin
 nfo-(o)hun fintin-fintin. Ifa ni ki e-l(i)-eyi ki o
 ative) speaking-voice tiny-tiny. Ifa say should one:who-be-this should he

181 - 2

"Etura like this, Qbara like this"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for two children of the same mother. They said that both should make a sacrifice, so that their affairs might be successfully concluded. One side sacrificed; the other side did not. Those that sacrificed at that time are the two children of the same mother,² of whom we say, "Don't you see how their things are in order?" Those that did not sacrifice at that time are the ones of whom we say, "They are worthless. Etura is worthless; Qbara is worthless."³ Four pigeons and two shillings is the sacrifice.

Ifa says that two children of the same mother should make a sacrifice so that they will be able to join forces, and so that people will not be saying, "They are worthless."

1. The diviner's name is derived from the name of the figure. Etura is an alternate form of Otura.

2. Although in the first instance it is implied that there are only two individuals concerned, here it becomes clear that there are at least four.

3. The meaning of this was not clear to informants. The word "ba" was said to be a verb meaning the opposite of "gun" (to be orderly), and hence "worthless." I have followed the informants' interpretation, but I have a suspicion that the name of the diviner should have been given as "Etura ba-yi, Qbara ba-yi" (Etura worthless-this, Qbara worthless-this).

181 - 3

"One does not have the truth in his belly and put wickedness in his stomach for nothing"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for the God of Medicine. They said he should make a sacrifice, lest something should stop the voice in his throat. Three cocks and one shilling seven pence eight oninis is the sacrifice.

When the God of Medicine made the sacrifice, he offered only one cock. From that time on, his voice does not carry far, and he talks with a very tiny voice.² Ifa says that this person should

1. A person's character is thought to reside in his stomach, in much the same way that his luck resides in his head. Here it is seen that truth and wickedness are there also. (Cf. Chapter XI.)

2. This verse thus explains why the God of Medicine talks in falsetto, which is one of his widely known characteristics, associated with ventriloquism.

ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ohun kan ki o ma ba gba ni ohun ki a ma
 offer-sacrifice that thing one should it not should take (him) at voice that they not
 ba ma sọ pe "Bawo ni o ẹ nfọ-(o)hun fintin bi ohun
 should (continuative) speak that "How be he make speaking-voice tiny like voice
 Qsanyin bayi?"
 (of) Qsanyin thus?"

OTURA - (Q)BARA - 4

Opipi ye mọniwọn ki o ba ri iyẹ bo
 "Featherless (chicken) lay:egg few that it should see feathers cover
 a da fun Aiye. Nwọn ni ki Aiye ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori-ti
 (them)" who cast for Earth. They say should Earth offer-sacrifice because-that
 yio de ipo kan şugbọn ki o le ẹ oju iya rẹ Alaba;
 will arrive position one but that he be:able do eye (of) mother his Alaba;
 şugbọn Aiye kọ ko ru-(ẹ)bọ; ko pẹ Alaba, yeye Aiye, ku
 but Earth refuse not offer-sacrifice; not be:long Alaba, mother (of) Earth, die;
 n(i)-igba-ti Aiye d(i)-agba, nwọn fi j(ẹ)-ọba.
 at-time-that Earth become-elder, they take (him) eat-king.
 Ki Alaba iya Aiye to ku o ni iwọfa kan oju rẹ ni Alaba
 Before Alaba mother (of) Earth equal die she have pawn one, eye his be Alaba
 ẹ ku o si mọ ibi-ti nwọn sin si ni idi iroko; n(i)-igba-
 make die he and know place-that they bury (her) to at base (of) iroko; at-time-
 ti iwọfa yi san-(o)wo tan, bi o ba ti de idi iroko yi
 that pawn this repay-cowries finish, as he should have arrive base (of) iroko this
 o ma fi Alaba ẹ-(i)re pe Ori gbibẹ o nwo iroko
 he (continuative) take Alaba make-play that "Head dry you looking:at iroko (of)
 oko Alaba ni Alaba? Oj(umọ)-ojumọ ni iwọfa yi ma nwi
 farm (of) Alaba at Alaba?" Dawn-dawn be pawn this (continuative) speaking
 bayi şugbọn n(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ kan bi o ti wi bayi tan, ori
 thus but at-time-that it become day one as he have speak thus finish, head
 gbibẹ da-(o)hun o ni Iwọfa Alaba bi o ba ma lọ si oko,
 dry break-voice it say "Pawn (of) Alaba if you should (continuative) go to farm,
 işẹ ni ki o ma ẹ ẹnu jẹ, n(i)-igba-ti iwọfa gbọ eyi
 make be should you (continuative) make mouth quiet"; at-time-that pawn hear this
 o mu-(a)ra o wa s(i)-ile o ni on ri ohun ti oju on ko ri ri
 he take-body he come to-house he say he see thing that eye his not see before
 ati-pe ohun ti on ri ju on lọ o mu-(a)ra o tọ ọba lọ, o
 and-that thing that he see surpass him go; he take-body he approach king go, he

sacrifice, so that something will not take away his voice and so that people will not say, "Why is he talking this way with a tiny voice like that of the God of Medicine?"

181 - 4

"A chicken with few feathers lays few eggs, so that its feathers can cover them" was the one who cast Ifa for Earth.¹ They said that Earth would attain an important position but that he should make a sacrifice so that he would be able to do so while his mother was alive to see it; but Earth refused to sacrifice. Not long afterward Alaba, Earth's mother, died; and when Earth grew up, they made him king.

Before she died, Alaba, the mother of Earth, had a pawn.² It was in his presence that Alaba died, and he knew the place where they buried her, at the base of an iroko tree.³ When this pawn had repaid his debt, he used to make fun of Alaba as he passed the iroko tree where she was buried, saying, "Skull, are you looking at the iroko tree in Alaba's farm at Alaba?"⁴ Each morning the pawn said this; but one day when he had finished saying it, the skull answered, saying "Pawn of Alaba, when you go to farm, you should keep your mouth shut." When the pawn heard this, he got ready and came home. He said that he had seen something that his eyes had never seen before, and that the thing he had seen passed his understanding. He got ready and went to the king. He

1. Cf. the tale of the talking skull in verse 181-1, where Earth appears as the mother of the man who became king. A similar verse with Earth's skull was recorded from an Ife diviner in 1965, and Epega (n.d.: VIII, 14-16) gives a similar tale in a somewhat different verse for the same figure, Otura Qbara. Cf. also the tale of the talking sheep in verse 249-5.

2. An indentured laborer, who works for the creditor in lieu of interest until his loan has been repaid.

3. See n. 4, verse 1-1.

4. An unidentified place-name, distinguished by tone from the name of Earth's mother.

ni o ri ibi-ti ori gbigbẹ gbe s(ọ)-ọrọ, o ni bi o ba de
say he see place-that head dry take speak-word, he say if he should arrive
ibẹ t(i)-o ko ba s(ọ)-ọrọ ki ọba ki o bẹ on l(i)-ori.
there that-it not should speak-word should king should he cut him at-head.

Ọba yan awọn Ogungbẹ ati awọn Ẹmẹsẹ le l(i)-ẹhin; n(i)-igba-
King choose those Ogungbẹ and those Ẹmẹsẹ upon (him) at-back; at-time-
ti nwọn de ibẹ nwọn ni ki o pe bi o ti ma
that they arrive there, they say should he call (it) as he have (continuative)
npe, o ni Ori gbigbẹ o nwo iroko oko Alaba ni Alaba
calling (it), he say "Head dry you looking:at iroko (of) farm (of) Alaba at Alaba,
o? Ori gbigbẹ ko da-(o)hun, nwọn si mu, nwọn pa, bi nwọn
oh?" Head dry not break-voice, they and take (him), they kill (him); as they
ti pa tan ni ori-gbigbẹ da-(o)hun o ni kin-ni ẹ ti ẹ
have kill (him) finish be head-dry break-voice it say "What-be make that you
fi pa? Nwọn ni Iwọ ta-ni? O ni on ori-gbigbẹ ni; nwọn ni
take kill (him)?" They say "You who-be?" It say it head-dry be; they say
Kin-ni ẹ ti o ko ti da-(o)hun ri? Ori-gbigbẹ ni agbere
"What-be make that you not have break-voice before?" Head-dry say excess (of)
ẹnu rẹ ni o pa.
mouth his be it kill (him).

N(i)-igba-ti nwọn de ile nwọn ro-(i)hin fun ọba, ọba da-(o)hun
At-time-that they arrive house they report-news for king, king break-voice
pe Ta-ni yio ba on tu ori yi? O ni ki nwọn lọ pe awọn
that "Who-be will for him appease head this?" He say should they go call those
Otu wa. Awọn Otu si tọ awọn babalawo lọ nwọn si sọ ohun ti
Otu come. Those Otu and approach those diviner go they and speak thing that
nwọn yio ẹ fun wọn; nwọn si mu iti aṣọ funfun ati agutan; n(i)-igba-
they will do for them; they and take bunch (of) cloth white and ewe; at-time-
ti nwọn si de ọhun ti nwọn si tu ori-gbigbẹ tan, nwọn nkọ-
that they and arrive there that they and appease head-dry finish, they singing-
(o)rin pe:
song that:

Yeye Aiye o ma ka re-(i)le o
"Mother (of) Earth you (continuative) should go-house, oh;

K(i)-o wa lọ ẹ iwa
"Should-you seek go make destiny;

Ẹ ẹ hun
"You make 'hun,'

Yeye Aiye nre-(i)le o
"Mother (of) Earth going-home, oh."

said he had seen a place where a skull was talking; he said if he should go there and the skull did not talk, the king should cut off his head.

The king chose the Ogungbẹ and the Ẹmṣẹṣẹ⁵ to follow him, and when they got there they told him to call to the skull as he had called it before. He said, "Skull, are you looking at the iroko tree in Alaba's farm at Alaba, oh?" The skull did not answer, and they seized him and killed him. When they had killed him, the skull said, "Why did you kill him?" They asked, "Who are you?" It said it was a skull. They asked, "Why did you not answer before?" The skull replied, "His big mouth killed him."

When they returned home, they reported to the king. The king said, "Who will go and appease this head for me?" He said that they should call the Otu priests. The Otu priests consulted the diviners, who told them what they should do. They took a bunch of white cloth and one ewe. When they got there and had appeased the skull, they sang:

"Mother of Earth, you should go home, oh;

"Go seek your destiny;

"You should hum;

"Mother of Earth is going home, oh."

5. See nn. 4-6, verse 181-1, for identification of Ogungbẹ, Ẹmṣẹṣẹ, and Otu.

Eyi ni awọn Otu ma nṣe ni g̃j̃j̃ Ferekete titi di oni yi.
This be those Otu (continuative) doing at day Ferekete until become today this.

Ifa ni a-ku-(i)-sin kan wa n(i)-ibẹ ki a mu-(a)ra ki
Ifa say one:who-die-(not)-bury one exist at-there should we take-body should
a tete sin oku rẹ ki o ma ba ma ẹ a-ku-
we quickly bury corpse his that it not should (continuative) make one:who-die-
fa.
pull.

OTURA IROSUN - 1

Etura ro-ro, Irosun ro-ro a da fun ẹrunlọjọ igi
"Etura bright-bright, Irosun bright-bright" who cast for 165 tree (of)
oko nwọn ni ki nwọn wa ru-(ẹ)bọ akikọ mẹfa-mẹfa, abẹrẹ
farm; they say should they come offer-sacrifice (of) cock six-six, needle
mẹfa-mẹfa, ati ẹgbafa. Egungun, iroko, apa ati gbogbo awọn igi
six-six, and 12,000 (cowries). Egungun, Iroko, Apa, and all those tree
nla-nla ni oko ni o ru-(ẹ)bọ; ẹgbọn awon igi bi ayinyin, adindin,
big-big at farm be who offer-sacrifice; but those tree like Ayinyin, Adindin,
ati gbogbo awon igi ti oko nla ni oko ko ru-(ẹ)bọ ati gbogbo awon
and all those tree that not big at farm not offer-sacrifice and all those
igi tẹrẹ-tẹrẹ inu oko ati igbo gbogbo ni ko ru ẹbọ
tree slender-slender (of) belly (of) farm and forest all be not offer sacrifice
yi.
this.

Ifa ni ki e-l(i)-eyi ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o le
Ifa say should one:who-be-this should he offer-sacrifice that he be:able
d(i)-agba ki arun inu ma pa si ke(re)-kere.
become-elder that disease (of) belly not kill (him) to small-small.

Ayani ni-(e)yi ti iroko, egungun, apa, ati awon igi nla igbo
Explanation be-this that Iroko, Egungun, Apa, and those tree big (of) forest
fi nd(i)-agba ẹgbọn ti awon kekeke bi ayinyin, adindin ati awon
take becoming-elder but that those small like Ayinyin, Adindin, and those
kekeke ko fi nd(i)-agba ki nwon to ku, bi nwon ba d(i)-
small not take becoming-elder before they equal die, if they should become-
agba to iwon odun męta, (ohu)n-kan-kan a wọ inu won a si
elder equal period (of) year three, thing-one-one will enter belly their will and
da iho s(i)-inu won a si ma gun won n(i)-inu, nwon a
create hole to-belly their will and (continuative) climb them at-belly, they will
si ku.
and die.

This is what the Otu priests do every Ferekete day until this very day.⁶

Ifa says that there is a dead person who has not been given a burial; he should bury his body quickly so that it will not draw others to their death after it.

6. This verse thus explains the song sung by the Otu priests on Ferekete day during the Edi festival, and the meaning of the name Otu, "those who appease" (tu).

183 - 1

"Bright red Etura, bright red Irosun"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for the 165 kinds of trees² in the farm. They said that they should sacrifice six cocks each, six needles each, and three shillings.³ The Egungun, Iroko, and Apa⁴ and all the very large trees of the forest sacrificed, but the trees like Ayinyin, Adindin,⁵ and all the trees that are not large did not, and all the very slender trees in the farm and in the forest likewise did not make this sacrifice.

Ifa says that this person should sacrifice so that he will be able to live to old age, and so that a disease of the stomach will not kill him while he is still very small.

This explains why the Iroko, Egungun, Apa, and the big trees of the forest grow old, but the small trees like Ayinyin, Adindin, and the other small trees die before they grow very old. If they live as long as two years, something bores inside them and makes a hole inside them, and they die.⁶

1. Roro is a word that intensifies such verbs as "to be red" (pqn, pa) and "to shine, or to be bright" (dan). It is used here to modify the names of the figures Otura and Irosun, both of which are conceived to be red, the latter because of its association with camwood (irosun), from which divining powder is made.

2. Cf. n. 3, verse 18-4.

3. Since cowries are counted by units of 2000, there are six units of money as there are six cocks and six needles.

4. Egungun is the Silk Cotton Tree, also known as Araba (Ceiba pentandra); Iroko, the "African Teak or African Oak" (Chlorophora excelsa); and Apa the Mahogany Bean or Rhodesian Mahogany (Afzelia spp.).

5. Ayinyin and Adindin are unidentified small trees.

6. The explanatory element is made more explicit here than in most verses.

Ifa ni ki a ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori arun inu kan, ki o
 Ifa say should we offer-sacrifice because (of) disease (of) belly one, that it
 ba le jẹ-ki e-l(i)-eyi d(i)-agba.
 should be:able consent-that one:who-be-this become-elder.

 OTURA IROSUN - 2

Otura ro-ro, Irosun ro-ro a da fun aro a lu-(i)-kin
 "Otura bright-bright, Irosun bright-bright" who cast for Dye who beat-ikin
 fun olokiti nwọn ni ki olokiti ru-(ẹ)bọ ki aro ki o ru-
 for Mordant they say should Mordant offer-sacrifice that Dye should he offer-
 (ẹ)bọ. Nwọn ni oyun kan ni olokiti yio ni yi, şugbọn ki
 sacrifice. They say pregnancy one be (it) Mordant will have this, but should
 o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki oyun na ma ba le jo; olokiti ko ru-
 she offer-sacrifice that pregnancy the not should be:able leak; Mordant not offer-
 (ẹ)bọ n(i)-igba-ti o şe oyun ohun kan si dalu ni idi,
 sacrifice, at-time-that it make pregnancy, thing one and puncture (her) at waist,
 o bẹrẹ si işe o si nro titi o fi ro tan, o nwi pe
 she begin to dribble she and dripping until she take drip finish; she speaking that
 on iba mọ, ki o şe ẹbọ Etura ro, Irosun ro bayi ni
 she should know, should she make sacrifice (of) "Etura drip, Irosun drip"; thus be
 o nwi titi di oni yi.
 she speaking until become today this.

Bẹ-na ni aro ko ru-(ẹ)bọ, nwọn ni işe ti yio şe yi ti
 So-also be Dye not offer-sacrifice, they say work that (he) will do this, that
 ẹlomiran ma ba ma fi şe ẹyẹ, nwọn ni ki o
 another:person not should (continuative) take (it) make benefit, they say that he
 ma ba si ri arun ti yio de mọ oju-kan ki a si şe
 not should and see disease that will bind (him) against eye-one that they and break
 ọpa le l(i)-qwo. Lati igba-na nitori-ti aro ko ru-(ẹ)bọ
 staff give (him) at-hand. From time-the because-that Dye not offer-sacrifice
 ti o ba rẹ aşo tan ẹlomiran ni ilo ti si mu
 that he should dye cloth finish, another:person be use (them) that (he) and take
 lọ s(i)-ode awọn enia a si ma wi-pe O-ko ri
 (them) go to-outside, those people will and (continuative) speak-that "You-not see
 işe aro? Aro ni ọkọ Aşo. Nwọn a si fi ọpa ro aro,
 work (of) Dye? Dye be husband (of) Cloth." They will and take staff stir Dye,
 nwọn a si fi ọpa rẹ ti l(i)-grun.
 they will and put staff his lean at-neck.

Ifa says we should make a sacrifice because of a stomach disease, so that this person will be able to live to an old age.

183 - 2

"Bright red Otura, bright red Irosun"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Dye and who beat palm nuts for Mordant.² They said that Mordant should make a sacrifice, and that Dye should make a sacrifice. They said that Mordant would become pregnant, but that she should sacrifice so that the pregnancy should not leak out. Mordant did not sacrifice. When she became pregnant, something pierced her groin and she began to drip, and she dripped until her pregnancy was all gone.³ She said that had she known, she would have made the sacrifice of "Etura drips, Irosun drips."⁴ And this is what she keeps saying until this very day.

Dye likewise did not sacrifice. They said that he should have sacrificed, so that the fruit of his labor should not be enjoyed by someone else. They said that he should sacrifice, so that he would not see a disease which would confine him to one spot, and so that a staff would not be cut and put into his hand for him to use as a cane. From that time on, because Dye did not sacrifice, when a cloth has been dyed, someone else wears it, and people say, "Don't you see the work of Dye? Dye is the husband of Cloth." And they take a staff to stir Dye, and then lean the staff against Dye's neck.⁵

1. Cf. n. 1, verse 183-1.

2. Caustic and fresh wood ashes are placed in a large jar in the bottom of which is a hole covered with a piece of matting. Water is poured over the mixture and allowed to drip slowly out of the bottom to make the mordant (olokiti) for indigo dye (aro). The used caustic and ashes are dried in small cakes and then fired in an oven to produce fresh caustic.

3. Miscarriage of a child is compared here with breaking a hole in the mat so that the water runs through the caustic and ashes too quickly, and the mordant is spoiled.

4. Note the pun here on "drip" (ro) and "bright" (ro-ro).

5. This verse has multiple aetiological elements explaining (1) why mordant drips from the jar; (2) the sound of its dripping; (3) why dye never wears the cloths it colors; (4) why dye is stirred with a stick, which is leaned against the pots when not in use; and (5) why dye pots are kept in one place.

Ifa ni ki obinrin kan ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki oyun kan ti
 Ifa say should woman one should she offer-sacrifice that pregnancy one that
 o ni bayi ma ba bajẹ ki o si jo da-nu; ki ẹni-kan
 she have thus not should spoil, that it and leak throw-be:lost; should person-one
 si tun ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ma ba ri ọran oju-kan ti a-(yi)o
 and then offer-sacrifice that he not should see affair (of) eye-one that we-will
 fi ẹẹ ọpa le oluwarẹ l(i)-ọwọ ki ẹlomiran si gba
 make break staff give person:in:question at-hand that another:person and take
 iṣẹ rẹ ẹ; ki ẹlomiran ma j(ẹ)-ihin iṣẹ rẹ.
 work his make; that another:person not eat-news (of) work his.

OTURA IROSUN - 3

Wuyẹ-wuyẹ a da fun wọn ni tibọ, nwọn ni ki nwọn ru-
 "Quietly-quietly" who cast for them at impasse, they say should they offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ki ohun gbogbo ti nwọn ma ma ẹ ki o ma
 sacrifice that thing all that they (continuative) (continuative) do that they not
 ba ma ẹ tibọ. Nwọn ko ru-(ẹ)bọ ni tibọ, nwọn
 should (continuative) make impasse. They not offer-sacrifice at impasse, they
 ẹ ọran owo o di tibọ nwọn ẹ ọran ọmọ o di
 do affair (of) cowries it become impasse, they do affair (of) child it become
 tibọ nwọn si ẹ ọran aya o di tibọ pẹlu;
 impasse; they and do affair (of) wife it become impasse together:with (the others);
 gbogbo ohun ti nwọn nṣe ni o nbọ si tibọ.
 all thing that they doing be they coming to impasse.

Ifa ni ki e-l(i)-eyi ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ma ba ma
 Ifa say should one:who-be-this offer-sacrifice that he not should (continuative)
 ri ọran tibọ ti yio fi ma mu a-mu-bọ ti ọwọ
 see affair (of) impasse that will take (continuative) take to-take-slip from hand
 rẹ ko si ni tẹ ohun-k(u)-ohun.
 his not and be press thing-any-thing.

OTURA IROSUN - 4

Abata ko gb(a)-ọkọ a da fun Yewa ti o nlo si igbo iko,
 "Mud not accept-boat" who cast for Yewa that she going to forest (of) raphia;
 nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o ma ba nu si ọhun ati-pe
 they say should she offer-sacrifice that she not should be:lost to there and-that

Ifa says some woman should make a sacrifice so that the pregnancy which she has will not spoil and leak away; and also that someone should make a sacrifice so that he will not find himself confined to one spot, and have a staff cut for him and placed in his hand; and so that someone else will not enjoy the fruits of his labor, and someone else will not get the credit for what he has accomplished.

183 - 3

"Very quietly" was the one who cast Ifa for those at an impasse. They said they should make a sacrifice so that everything that they were doing would not come to an impasse. Those at an impasse did not sacrifice. They tried to get money, it came to an impasse; they tried to get children, it came to an impasse; they tried to get wives, it came to an impasse; everything that they were doing came to an impasse.

Ifa says that this person should make a sacrifice so that he will not see his efforts come to an impasse, and so that things will not slip from his grasp and he will not be able to hold on to anything.

183 - 4

"Mud does not float a boat" was the one who cast Ifa for Yewa¹ when she was going to the forest of raphia. They said she should make a sacrifice so that she would not get lost there and so that

1. Yewa was interpreted by Ife informants as a contraction of yeye-wa, "our mother," which is consistent with the funeral song below. However, Yewa is also the goddess of the Yewa River near the Dahomean border, and she is associated with raphia (Raphia spp.), mentioned below.

ki o ba le pada wa s(i)-ile. Yewa gbọ ẹbọ ko ru
 that she should be:able return come to-house. Yewa hear sacrifice not offer (it)
 titi o fi lọ si igbo iko; n(i)-igba-ti o de ọhun, o ra
 until she take go to forest (of) raphia; at-time-that she arrive there, she disappear
 si ibẹ ko si tun pada de wa s(i)-ile mọ. Awọn ẹgbẹ rẹ
 to there, not and then return arrive come to-house again. Those companion hers
 ati awọn iyawo ẹhin rẹ ati awọn ọmọ rẹ wa bọ s(i)-ode nwọn
 and those junior:wife back hers and those child hers come come to-outside they
 bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin wi-pe:
 begin to sing-song speak-that:

Yewa l(i)-a nwa awa o ri
 "Yewa be-we seeking we not see;

Yewa l(i)-a nwa o ye e e e e
 "Yewa be-we seeking, oh, ye e e e e;

Bẹ l(i)-a o sun, bẹ l(i)-a o wo
 "So be-we not sleep, so be-we not fall-down;

Yewa l(i)-a nwa o ye e e e e.
 "Yewa be-we seeking, oh, ye e e e e."

Orin yi ni awọn ti o ba nwa oku ma nkọ titi
 Song this be those that they should seeking corpse (continuative) singing until
 di oni yi n(i)-igba-ti oku ba ku ni ilẹ Yoruba.
 become today this at-time-that corpse should die at ground (of) Yoruba.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan nlọ si ibi-kan, ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki o
 Ifa say person-one going to place-one, should he offer-sacrifice before he
 to lọ ki o ba le pada de ile rẹ n(i)-ibi-ti o ti
 equal go that he should be:able return arrive house his at-place-that he have
 kuro; bi ko ba ru-(ẹ)bọ ẹ ni nwọn yio fi ẹ a-wa-
 depart; if not should offer-sacrifice make be they will take make to-seek-(not)-
 ri titi lai-lai. Ẹiyẹ-(i)le mẹrin ati ẹgbajọ ai-din ni
 see until ever-ever. Bird-(of)-house four and 16,000 (cowries) not-lessen be
 ẹbọ.
 sacrifice.

OTURUPỌN - (O)TURA¹ - 1

Aja ni la-(o)mi l(i)-ẹba, eṣinṣin o patẹ ilẹkẹ, Bi iregun ba
 "Dog be (he) lick-water at-side, fly not display bead," "If reproach should
 kọ waju ẹhin l(i)-a-pọn si a d(a)-Ifa f(un)-Osu ti
 refuse go:front back be-we-carry:on:back (it) to" who cast-Ifa for-Osu that

1. Also known as Oturupọn-(o)tura o-tu ewurẹ (Orurupọn Otura which propitiates with a she:goat).

she would be able to return home. Yewa heard, but she did not make the sacrifice, waiting until she had gone to the raphia forest. When she got there, she vanished, and she did not come back home again. Her friends and her junior co-wives and her children came out and began to sing:

"We are looking for Yewa, we cannot find her;
 "We are looking for Yewa, oh, ye e e e e;
 "So we do not sleep, so we do not rest;
 "We are looking for Yewa, oh, ye e e e e."

This is the song that those who are "looking for the dead" sing until this very day when someone has died in Yoruba land.²

Ifa says that someone is going somewhere; he should make a sacrifice before he goes so that he may be able to return home to the place from which he starts; if he does not make the sacrifice, they will be looking for him in vain for ever. Four pigeons and four shillings, no less, is the sacrifice.³

2. This verse thus explains one of the songs sung during the part of the funeral ceremonies known as "looking for the dead person" (iwa oku).

3. For the manner in which this sacrifice is performed, see the end of Chapter VI.

"Dog laps up water on the side of his mouth; fly does not display beads for sale" and "If reproach refuses to go forward, then we carry it backward" were the ones who cast Ifa for Osu, who

ṣe ḡmḡ ḡba l(i)-Ẽyḡ, Aḡri, t(i)-o ni on rḡ-(ḡ)mḡ-bi t(i)-
make child (of) king at-Qyḡ, Aḡri, that-she be she (not) pain-child-bear that-
o nsḡ-(ḡ)kun a-l(i)-ai-bi-(ḡ)mḡ.
she shedding-tears (of) one:who-be-not-bear-child.

Aja ni la-(o)mi l(i)-ḡba, eṣinṣin ko patḡ ilḡḡ, Bi iregun ba
"Dog be (he) lick-water at-side, fly not display bead," "If reproach should
kḡ waju ḡhin l(i)-a-pḡḡ si a d(a)-Ifa f(un)-Arera ti
refuse go:front back be-we-carry:on:back (it) to" who cast-Ifa for-Arera that

ṣe ḡmḡ ḡba ni Ife ti nsḡ-(ḡ)kun a-l(i)-ai-bi-(ḡ)mḡ.
make child (of) king at Ife that shedding-tears (of) one:who-be-not-bear-child.

Ẽbḡ ti Arera ni agbo kan. Ẽbḡ ti Osu ni agutan kan.
Sacrifice that (of) Arera be ram one. Sacrifice that (of) Osu be ewe one.

Eyi-ti wḡḡ yio ma sin ni fun Arera, agbo ke(re)-kere; eyi-
This-that they will (continuative) raise be (it) for Arera, ram small-small; this-
ti wḡḡ yio ma sin ni fun Osu, agutan ke(re)-kere.
that they will (continuative) raise be (it) for Osu, ewe small-small.

Awḡḡ mej(i)-(m)ej(i) ni nwa ḡmḡ nwḡḡ si pade Arera do Osu
Those two-two be seeking child they and meet; Arera copulate:with Osu
l(i)-oyun. Arera sḡ fun Osu pe Ojodu l(i)-ḡmḡ on yio ma
have-pregnancy. Arera speak for Osu that Ojodu be-child his will (continuative)

jḡ. Ko pḡ l(i)-ḡhin eyi ḡtḡ tḡ Ojodu ni awḡḡ ara
eat. Not be:long at-back (of) this conspiracy conspire Ojodu be those people (of)

Ile-Ife ba fḡ ra a (fun Ḣni) pe ki on fi ṣe ḡbḡ.
Ile-Ife meet (him) want buy him (for Ḣni) that should he take (Ojudo) make sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti wḡḡ so Ojudo mḡ-(i)lḡ o bḡḡ si sḡ-(ḡ)kun pe ni ilu on
At-time-that they tie Ojudo against-ground, he begin to shed-tears that at town his

ni wḡḡ mu on wa ni Ḣni ba fun ni obi mḡḡḡ ni mḡḡḡ d(i)-
be they take him come, be Ḣni should give (him) at kola eight, be four become-

oju-de mḡḡḡ ṣi-(o)ju si oke, ni wḡḡ ba nkḡ-(o)rin bayi:
eye-cover four open-eye to hill, be they should singing-song thus:

Ojudo de, ḡmḡ Arera
"Ojudo arrive, child (of) Arera;

Ojudo de, ḡmḡ Arera
"Ojudo arrive, child (of) Arera;

Ẽ ba mi dupe l(i)-ḡwḡ obi ti o yan.
"You join me give:thanks at-hand kola that it be:good.

Ojudo de, ḡmḡ Arera
"Ojudo arrive, child (of) Arera;

Ẽran ni k(i)-o ḡba
"Meat be (it) should-you take;

Ma ma ḡba ori ḡmḡ.
"Not (continuative) take head (of) child.

was the child of the King of Qyq, Ajjri,¹ who had not experienced the pains of childbirth, and who was weeping because she had not borne a child.

"Dog laps up water on the side of his mouth; fly does not display beads for sale," and "If reproach refuses to go forward, then we carry it backward" were the ones who cast Ifa for Arera, who was the child of the King of Ife and who was weeping because he had not begotten a child.

The sacrifice of Arera was one ram. The sacrifice of Osu was one ewe. Arera should raise his little ram.² Osu should raise her little ewe.

Both were trying to get children; they met and Arera had intercourse with Osu, and Osu became pregnant. Arera told Osu that his child should be called Ojodu. Not long after this, there was a conspiracy against Ojodu. The people of Ife wanted to buy him so that the Qni could sacrifice him. When they tied Ojodu down, he began to weep that he had been taken to his own town as a captive. He said that the Qni should give him eight kola to cast, and if they should come out four face down and four face up, they should begin to sing:

"Ojudo comes, the child of Arera;

"Ojudo comes, the child of Arera;

"You should give thanks with me that the kola turned out good.³

"Ojudo comes, the child of Arera;

"You should take an animal as the sacrifice;

"You should not take the head of a kinsman.

1. This verse was recorded in Igana. Ajjri was said to be another name for Osu, the daughter of the king of Qyq.

2. That is, he should take a young ram and raise it until it was full grown, when he should sacrifice it.

3. That is, the divination turned out propitiously, with four kola face up and four face down.

Ẹran ni k(i)-o gba,
 "Meat be (it) should-you take;

Ma ma gba ori ḡmḡ
 "Not (continuative) take head (of) child;

Ojudo de ḡmḡ Arera.
 "Ojudo arrive, child (of) Arera."

Lati-(i)gba na ni a ba ti nfi ewurę bḡ Ifa.
 From-time the be we should have taking she:goat sacrifice:to Ifa.

IKA MEJI - 1

Opopo męta ile Ila, ḡna Ojomo odo; męta de-(i)le,
 "Street three (of) house (of) Ila, road (of) Ojomo odo; three arrive-house,
 męta ko de-(i)le, Qpę ke(re)-kere ile Irojo a b(i)-
 three not arrive-house" "Palm:tree small-small (of) house (of) Irojo it bear-
 ęmu rojo-rojo a da fun nwḡn ni Ilaḡsan ni ḡḡ ti ḡba wḡn wḡ-
 palm:wine good-good" who cast for those at Ilaḡsan at day that king their enter-
 (i)le-eji nwḡn ni ki nwḡn lḡ mu erin wa ki wa fi
 house-(of)-rain that say should they go take elephant come should come take (it)
 ḡ(e)-ębḡ; gbogbo awḡn ḡ-l(i)-ḡḡ ḡe ti, awun ni on yio ḡe, o
 make-sacrifice; all those one:who-be-hunter do not, Miser say he will do, he
 mu gbogbo ohun ti ęnu ję, o lḡ gbe ba erin, n(i)-igba-ti
 take all thing that mouth eat, he go carry (them) meet Elephant, at-time-that
 erin tḡ wo o ni Ohun ti iwḡ erin yio ma
 Elephant taste (them) look:at he say "Thing that you, Elephant, will (continuative)
 ję ni-(e)yi bi o ba de ile ti nwḡn ba fi ḡ j(ę)-ḡba nitori-
 eat be-this, if you should arrive house that they should take you eat-king because-
 ti ḡba ilu Ilaḡsan ku, iwḡ ni nwḡn si nę fi j(ę)-ḡba.
 that king (of) town (of) Ilaḡsan die, you be they and wanting take (you) eat-king."
 N(i)-igba-ti erin gbḡ bayi inu rę dun o si tęle a-b(i)-
 At-time-that Elephant hear thus, belly his be:sweet, he and follow One:who-like-
 awun, a-b(i)-awun si kḡ-(o)rin wi-pe:
 Miser, One:who-like-Miser, and sing-song say-that:

A-(yi)o m(u)-erin j(ę)-ḡba ḡękuręḡęḡę
 "We-will take-Elephant eat-king, ḡękuręḡęḡę;

A-(yi)o m(u)-erin j(ę)-ḡba ḡękuręḡęḡę.
 "We-will take-Elephant eat-king, ḡękuręḡęḡę.

Bayi ni a-b(i)-awun ḡrę si kḡ-(o)rin titi awḡn mej(i)-(m)ej
 Thus be One:who-like-Miser begin to sing-song until those two-two

"You should take an animal as the sacrifice;
 "You should not take the head of a kinsman;
 "Ojudo comes, the child of Arera."

From that time on, we have sacrificed she-goats to Ifa.⁴

4. This verse explains why human sacrifices are no longer made to Ifa, and why she-goats are sacrificed instead.

222 - 1

"Three streets of the house in Ila, roads of Ojomo odo;¹ three reach home, three don't reach home" and "Very small palm tree of the house of Irojo yields very good palm wine" were the ones who cast Ifa for the people of Ilaḅsan on the day their king died.² They said they should bring an elephant with which to make a sacrifice. All the hunters of the town tried to catch an elephant, but failed; Tortoise said that he would do it. He took all the things that the mouth eats and carried them out to Elephant. When Elephant had tasted them, Tortoise said, "These are the things that you, Elephant, will be eating if you come home so that they can make you king, because the king of the town of Ilaḅsan has died, and you are the one they want to make king." When Elephant heard this, he was happy, and he followed Tortoise, and Tortoise sang:

"We will take Elephant and make him king, Shẹkureḅḅẹḷẹ.³

"We will take Elephant and make him king, Shẹkureḅḅẹḷẹ."

Thus Tortoise sang until these two

1. Ojomo odo is an unidentified town; Ila is a town about forty-five miles northeast of Ifẹ.

2. The euphemism used here is "entered the house of rain." Ilaḅsan is an unidentified town.

3. Shẹkureḅḅẹḷẹ has no meaning but is added as the refrain "to make the song sound sweet."

fi de ile; n(i)-igba-ti nwọn wọ inu ilu ti awọn ara
 take arrive house; at-time-that they enter belly (of) town that those people (of)
 ilu ri erin nwọn pariwo ye, ẹru si ba erin şugbọn a-b(i)-
 town see Elephant they shout "Ye," fear and meet Elephant but One:who-like-
 awun da l(i)-ọkan-le pe o ko ri awọn ara ilu bi
 Miser cause (him) at-heart-strong that "You not see those people (of) town how
 inu wọn ti dun lati ri ọ? Şugbọn ki erin ati a-
 belly their have be:sweet to see you?" But before Elephant and One:who-
 b(i)-awun to wọ ilu ni awọn ara ilu ti gbẹ ọfin s(i)-ilẹ
 like-Miser equal enter town be those people (of) town have dig pitfall to-ground
 de wọn gẹgẹ-bi a-b(i)-awun ti kọ wọn ki o to lọ si
 wait:for them just-as One:who-like-Miser have teach them before he equal go to
 inu igbo pe on yio lọ mu erin wa. N(i)-igba-ti erin wọ
 belly (of) forest that he will go take Elephant come. At-time-that Elephant enter
 ilu, awọn ara ilu ti tẹ ẹni le ori ọfin na nwọn si
 town, those people (of) town have spread mat upon head (of) pitfall the, they and
 ni ki erin wa joko le l(i)-ori nitori-ti ori itẹ
 say should Elephant come sit:down upon (it) at-head because-that head (of) spread
 ni o ni lati joko si. Bi erin ti fẹ lati joko le ori
 be he be to sit:down to (it). As Elephant have want to sit:down upon head (of)
 ẹni yi, ni ẹni jin s(i)-inu ọfin ti erin na si şubu s(i)-inu
 mat this, be mat fall:down to-belly (of) pitfall that Elephant also and fall to-belly
 ọfin pẹlu; n(i)-igba-ti awọn ara ilu ri ti erin
 (of) pitfall together:with (it); at-time-that those people (of) town see that Elephant
 şubu s(i)-inu ọfin nwọn ko igi ti nwọn si pa. Bayi
 fall to-belly (of) pitfall they gather tree against (him) they and kill (him). Thus
 ni awọn ara ilu Ilabẹsan fi erin ru-(ẹ)bọ si ilu wọn
 be those people (of) town (of) Ilabẹsan take Elephant offer-sacrifice to town their
 nipa iran-l(i)-ọwọ a-b(i)-awun ti ilu wọn si bẹrẹ si
 concerning sending-at-hand (of) One:who-like-Miser that town there and begin to
 to-ro.
 be:in:order-stand.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti ori rẹ ngbe lọ de ipo kan,
 Ifa say person-one exist that head his carrying (him) go arrive position one,
 şugbọn ẹni-ti yio ran-l(i)-ọwọ ojiji ni yio wa, yio si jẹ
 but person-that will send-at-hand suddenly be (he) will come, will and eat
 ẹni-ti a ko gb(e)-ọju le on ni yio jẹ olu-ran-l(i)-ọwọ na.
 person-that we not take-face upon him be will eat one:who-send-at-hand the.

reached home. When they entered into town, the townspeople saw Elephant and began to cheer, "Ye!" Elephant was frightened, but Tortoise encouraged him, saying, "Don't you see how happy the townspeople are to see you?" But before Elephant and Tortoise entered the town, the townspeople had dug a pitfall for them, just as Tortoise had instructed before he went into the forest to get Elephant. When Elephant entered the town, the townspeople had spread a mat on top of the pitfall. And they said that Elephant should come and sit upon it, because the mat was to be the throne on which he was to sit. When Elephant tried to sit down on the mat, the mat fell into the pitfall, and Elephant fell into the pitfall with it. When the townspeople saw that Elephant had fallen into the pitfall, they took sticks and killed him. Thus the people of the town of Ilabṣan were able to sacrifice an elephant for the good of their town, with the help of Tortoise, and their town began to run smoothly again.⁴

Ifa says there is someone whose head⁵ will place him in an important position, but the person who will help him will come to his aid suddenly, and someone he does not expect will be his helper.

4. Cf. the versions of this folk tale recorded by Frobenius (1926: 289-292); Ogumefu (1929: 65-68; n.d. 7-9); Jacobs (1933: 9-11); and Walker and Walker (1961: 61-63).

5. That is, his luck or destiny; an important position or office is in store for this person.

IKA MEJI - 2

Jikelewi awo ologbo a da fun ologbo ni oṣṣo ti o nfi oj(umṣ)-
 "Pouncing," secret (of) Cat who cast for Cat at day that he taking dawn-
 oṣṣo ṣe owo a-mu-bṣ, nwṣn ni ki o ru abṣṣ mṣfa,
 dawn make transaction (of) to-take-slip, they say should he offer needle six,
 ṣiyṣ-(i)le mṣfa ati ṣgbafa. O ru-(ṣ)bṣ. Lati igba-na ni
 bird-(of)-house six, and 12,000 (cowries). He offer-sacrifice. From time-the be
 ologbo ko ti mu a-mu-bṣ mṣ.
 Cat not have take to-take-slip again.

Ifa ni ṣni-kan wa ti o ti nmu ohun gbogbo ni a-mu-bṣ,
 Ifa say person-one exist that he have taking thing all at to-take-slip,
 ki o ru-(ṣ)bṣ ki o ma ba ma mu a-mu-bṣ mṣ.
 should he offer-sacrifice that he not should (continuative) take to-take-slip again.

IKA MEJI - 3

I-ba-re-re awo ina a da fun ina; nwṣn ni ibi-
 "To-pay:homage-far-far" secret (of) Fire who cast for Fire; they say place-
 k(u)-ibi ti ina ba fi ori le, ni yio jṣ ṣna fun, nwṣn ni
 any-place that Fire should take head appear, be will eat road for (him), they say
 ori rṣ yio la ṣna fun. Nwṣn ni ki o ru akikṣ adṣ mṣta,
 head his will open road for (him). They say should he offer cock chicken three,
 ṣgbṣtalelṣṣṣn ati epo pupṣ. Ina ru-(ṣ)bṣ.
 6600 (cowries) and palm:oil much. Fire offer-sacrifice.

Ifa ni ṣni-kan nfṣ ṣe ohun kan, ki oluwarṣ ru-
 Ifa say person-one wanting do thing one, should person:in:question offer-
 (ṣ)bṣ ki ṣna ba le la fun nitori-ti bi oluwarṣ
 sacrifice that road should be:able open for (him) because-that if person:in:
 ba ru-(ṣ)bṣ ohun-k(u)-ohun ti o nfṣ, iba-ṣe
 question should offer-sacrifice thing-any-thing that he wanting, should-make
 iṣṣ ni tabi bi o ba fṣ ṣe ohun pataki kan ohun na yio ṣe iṣṣ.
 work be (it) or if he should want do thing important one, thing the will do to:be:
 done.

222 - 2

"Pouncing," the diviner of Cat, was the one who cast Ifa for Cat when he was trading every day, but having his profits slip from his grasp. They said he should sacrifice six needles, six pigeons, and three shillings.¹ He made the sacrifice. From that time on, Cat has never again had things slip from his grasp.²

Ifa says there is someone who is having everything slip from his grasp; he should sacrifice so that things will never slip from his grasp again.

1. Since cowries are counted by units of 2000, there are six units of cowries here, as there are six needles and six pigeons.

2. It is understood that the needles became Cat's claws, with which he keeps things from escaping from his grasp. This verse thus explains how cats came to have claws, and why they can hold things tightly.

222 - 3

"To pay homage from afar"¹ the diviner of Fire, was the one who cast Ifa for Fire. They said wherever Fire should turn, there would be a way for him; they said his head would open the way for him.² They said he should sacrifice three cocks, one shilling seven pence eight onis, and plenty of palm oil.³ Fire made the sacrifice.

Ifa says someone wants to do something; he should make a sacrifice, so that the way will be clear for him, because if he should sacrifice, he will be able to do whatever he wants—whether it is work or an important thing that he wants to do.

1. The imagery here compares the way one rubs his hands to warm them before the fire with the way in which one "rubs his hands" in paying homage to a ruler. Cf. n. 5, verse 111-1 and n. 2, verse 2-2.

2. The meaning is that Fire will burn its own path wherever it goes.

3. Cf. verse 245-1, where it is specifically stated that the palm oil is poured on Fire to keep him alive.

QṢṢ OGBE¹ - 1

Alamurin-rindin-rindin a da fun a-l(i)-agṣmṣ ye t(i)-
 "Lizard-silly-silly" who cast for One:who-be-chameleon that that-(of)-
 igbi gbṣ, ṣran a-l(i)-agṣmṣ, ṣran a-l(i)-agṣmṣ
 time olden; affair (of) One:who-be-chameleon, affair (of) One:who-be-chameleon
 bi eyi-ti a ṣ(e)-epe ṣṣ. Gbajumṣ enia kan wa ti gbogbo aiye
 like this-that we make-curse talk. Gentleman person one exist that all earth
 nro ibi si, o ru-(ṣ)ḃṣ ko fin, o ṣ(e)-ogun, ko
 thinking evil to (him), he offer-sacrifice, not come:to:pass, he make-medicine, not
 jṣ fun u. Ki o ru ṣiyṣ-(i)le meji ati ṣgba marun ki
 eat for him. Should he offer bird-(of)-house two and 2000 (cowries) five that
 ori rṣ ma ba buru pata-pata nitori ti ori bu(ru)-buru
 head his not should be:bad completely-completely, because that head be:bad-be:bad
 ni o gbe ti ṣrun wa.
 be (it) he carry from sky come.

Ewe Ifa rṣ: A (yi)o wa a-tṣ-yun a-tṣ-wa gbṣgidina ati
 Leaf (of) Ifa its: We will seek to-press-go to-press-come gbṣgidina and
 ṣṣṣ; a-(yi)o gun ṣiyṣ-(i)le kan mṣ; a-(yi)o si wa igba
 soap; we-will pound bird-(of)-house one against (it); we-will and seek calabash
 a-de-mu kan, a-(yi)o wṣ ori ṣni na s(i)-inu rṣ a-(yi)o lṣ
 to-cover-drink one; we-will wash head (of) person the to-belly its; we-will go
 da si odo ti o ba nṣan.
 pour (it) to river that it should flowing.

Ifa ni ṣni-kan wa ti o dabi ṣni-pe o ngbe ṣ(e)-epe,
 Ifa say person-one exist that he resemble person-that they taking make-curse,
 ki ṣni na lṣ wṣ ori rṣ si odo.
 should person the go wash head his to river.

QṢṢ OGBE - 2

Koriko nde, ṣruwa dide dide ki o ma jo niṣo
 "Grass standing, grass standing, standing that you (continuative) dance proceed
 ni-(i)le, ṣba nla alṣ ana p(a)-ṣran jṣ a da fun ṣ-
 at-house, king big (of) evening (of) yesterday kill-meat eat" who cast for one:who-
 l(i)-ṣfin a lu-(i)kin fun Ameri, aya rṣ.
 has-palace who beat-ikin for Ameri, wife his.

1. Also known as Qṣṣ-l(u)-Ogbe, meaning Qṣṣ-against-Ogbe.

225 - 1

"Foolish lizard" was the one who cast Ifa for Chameleon long, long ago. "Chameleon's trouble, Chameleon's trouble"—like this a curse is pronounced. There is a gentleman of whom all the world is thinking evil; he makes a sacrifice, but it has no effect; he makes medicine, but it does not work for him. He should sacrifice two pigeons and two shillings six pence, that his luck may not be completely bad, because he has come from heaven with a bad head.¹

Ifa's leaves: We will hunt for some gbëgidina² that have been trampled by much coming and going, and some soap; we will pound one pigeon with these; we will take a covered calabash; we will wash the person's head in this mixture in the calabash; we will pour the rest into a river that is flowing.

Ifa says there is someone who is behaving as if he had been cursed; the person should go and wash his head at the river.

1. In this case a person who has been given bad luck as part of his destiny is told to sacrifice so that his luck will not be as bad as it might be if he does not sacrifice. (Cf. Chapter XI.)

2. An unidentified kind of grass.

225 - 2

"Grass standing, eruwa grass¹ standing, stand up and dance home ahead of them; last night the great king killed meat to eat" was the one who cast Ifa for the king and who beat palm nuts for Ameri, his wife.

1. Probably Andropogon Gayanus (eruwa funfun) or A. tectorum (eruwa dudu). "Koriko" is a general term for grass.

Ẹni-kan wa ti o nfi ohun-gbogbo ṣ(e)-ikṣ ṣ(e)-igṣ
 Person-one exist that he taking thing-all make-indulgence make-petting
 o-l(i)-obinrin kan, ṣugbṣn ajṣ ni o-l(i)-obinrin na, ko njṣ
 (of) one:who-be-woman one, but witch be one:who-be-woman the, not consent-
 ki (ohu)n-kan ṣni ma gun; a ru-(ṣ)bṣ ko
 ing that thing-one (of) person (continuative) be:orderly; he offer-sacrifice not
 fin, o ṣ(e)-ogun ko jṣ, ki a ru-(ṣ)bṣ nitori
 come:to:pass, he make-medicine not eat; should he offer-sacrifice because (of)
 rṣ ṣṣmṣ-adiṣ mṣfa, ṣpa ate mṣfa, iṣu ṣbṣ; nwṣn ni ki
 her young-(of)-chicken six, staff (of) birdlime six, yam ṣbṣ; they say should
 o ma gbe lṣ s(i)-inu oko rṣ, o gbe ṣbṣ na lṣ s(i)-
 he (continuative) carry (them) go to-belly (of) farm his, he carry ṣbṣ the go to-
 inu oko rṣ, o si so ṣṣmṣ-adiṣ na mṣ atṣṣ o
 belly (of) farm his, he and tie young-(of)-chicken the against basketry:tray, he
 si so awṣn ate na mṣ eti atṣṣ na. Iyale
 and tie those birdlime the against ear (of) basketry:tray the. Senior:wife (of)
 aya ṣkunrin yi si wa di ṣiyṣ, o si fo lṣ si oko; n(i)-igba-ti
 wife (of) man this and come become bird, she and fly go to farm; at-time-that
 o de oko, o gbṣ igbe awṣn ṣṣmṣ-adiṣ, o si fo s(i)-ilṣ,
 she arrive farm, she hear cry (of) those young-(of)-chicken, she and fly to-ground
 o ri ṣbṣ, bi o ti bṣrṣ si jṣ, bṣ-ni ate si mu, o si ku.
 she see ṣbṣ, as she have begin to eat, so-be birdlime and take (her), she and die.
 Ifa ni ṣ-l(i)-ṣiyṣ obinrin kan wa ti o si duro ti-(ṣ)ni,
 Ifa say one:who-be-bird woman one exist that she and stand against-person;
 Ifa ni ṣbṣ ti o ma le pa-(ṣ)ni ni ki a ru, Ifa ni a
 Ifa say sacrifice that she not be:able kill-person be should we offer; Ifa say we
 ngb(e)-im(ṣ)-ṣran kan, ṣugbṣn ṣta ṣni ni a ngb(e)-
 taking-knowledge-(of)-affair one, but enemy (of) (of) person be we taking-
 im(ṣ)-ṣran na le l(i)-ṣwṣ; nitori-na ki a ṣṣ-(a)ra
 knowledge-(of)-affair the upon (him) at-hand; because-the should we watch-body
 ki a ma ba s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ ni oju ṣni-ti yio ṣe ofofo
 that we not should speak-word at face (of) person-that will make tale:bearer (of)
 ṣni.
 person.

 QṢṢ OGBE - 3

Qṣṣ tu-(e)rutu a da fun A-l(i)-ara n(i)-igba-ti o nsun-
 "Qṣṣ loosen-dust" who cast for One:who-has-Ara at-time-that he shedding-
 (ṣ)kun a-l(i)-ai-l(i)-owo l(i)-ṣwṣ, nwṣn ni ki o ru-
 tears (of) one:who-be-not-have-cowries at-hand, they say should he offer-

There is someone who is favoring and indulging a woman with everything; but the woman is a witch. She will not allow his affairs to straighten out. He makes a sacrifice, but it has no effect; he makes medicine, but it does not work. He should sacrifice six baby chickens, six sticks of birdlime,² and seasoned mashed yams because of this woman. They said he should carry them into his farm. He carried the seasoned mashed yams into his farm, and he tied the chicks to a basketry tray; he tied the sticks of birdlime to the edge of the tray. The senior wife of this man turned into a bird and she flew to the farm. When she reached the farm, she heard the cries of the baby chickens and flew down to the ground; she saw the seasoned mashed yams and, as she began to eat them, she stuck to the birdlime and she died.³

Ifa says there is a bird-woman⁴ who is standing beside this person. Ifa says that he should make a sacrifice, so that she will not be able to kill him. Ifa says that we are seeking advice about a matter, but that the person from whom we are seeking advice is an enemy; therefore we should be careful not to speak of it in front of this person, who will prove to be a tale-bearer.

2. A sticky substance made from the sap of a tree and used with a decoy to catch parrots in the cornfield. Cf. verse 245-2.

3. Note that all of the items sacrificed are instrumental in catching the witch.

4. A witch. Witches are believed to have birds and other animal familiars and, as stated in this verse, to be able to turn themselves into birds.

“Qṣṣ¹ stirs up dust” was the one who cast Ifa for the King of Ara when he was weeping because he had no money. They said he should sacri-

1. Qṣṣ is from the name of the figure.

(ṣ)ḃṣ, o ru ṣiyṣ-(i)le mṣrin ati ekuru funfun. Nwṣn ni ibi
sacrifice; he offer bird-(of)-house four and ekuru white. They say if (not)
ti-rṣ ni a-(yi)o f(i)-owo nini ti si.
that-(of)-his be (it) we-will take-cowries having lean to.

O l(i)-owo tan o ku ki o ni aya, o tun ru ayeḃṣ
He have-cowries finish it remain that he have wife, he then offer hen

adiṣ meji, ṣḃḃerindinlogun ati ṣḃḃerindilogḃṣn, ati keregbe kan, o
chicken two, 3200 (cowries) and 5200 (cowries), and calabash one, he
ni aya.
have wife.

Nwṣn ni ki o ru-(ṣ)ḃṣ ṣmṣ bibi ago akiko
They say should he offer-sacrifice (of) child to:be:born (of) coop (of) cock

adiṣ kan, ṣṣtala, o si bi-(ṣ)mṣ.
chicken one, 26,000 (cowries), he and bear-child.

O ni ki on jṣ oye, o tun ru ṣḃṣ agbo kan, igan
They say should he eat title, he then offer sacrifice (of) ram one, piece (of)

aṣṣ funfun kan, igba ṣfun kan.
cloth white one, calabash (of) chalk one.

O ni ki o pṣ l(i)-ori oye, o ru ṣiyṣ-(i)le funfun
They say should he be:long at-head (of) title, he offer bird-(of)-house white

mṣrin, aṣṣ funfun, ṣḃḃarin, o d(i)-agba a si nsa l(i)-
four, cloth white, 8000 (cowries); he become-elder we and drying (him) at-
orun.
sun.

Ifa ni ṣmṣ ke(re)-kere kan wa yio ba ṣṣṣ ja-(o)ri.
Ifa say child small-small one exist, will with row reach-head.

(E)m(i)-a y(an)-owo, y(an)-ṣmṣ
"I-will choose-cowries, choose-child,

E si ye mo le yinnu
"Not be that I be:able leave;

(E)m(i)-a y(an)-owo, y(an)-ṣmṣ
"I-will choose-cowries, choose-child,

E si ye mo le yinnu
"Not be that I be:able leave."

Ifa ni ṣba ṣrun da ṣja kan fun a-l(i)-agba kan, ki iwa
Ifa say King (of) Sky create market one for one:who-be-elder one, that destiny
rṣ ma bajṣ ni oju rṣ l(i)-aiye ni ki o ru-(ṣ)ḃṣ fun.
his not spoil at eye his at-earth be should he offer-sacrifice for (it).

fice; he sacrificed four pigeons and white steamed beans. They said no one would have as much money as he.

He got money, but he still needed wives. He sacrificed two hens, nine pence six oninis, and one shilling three pence six oninis, and one calabash. He got wives.

They said he should sacrifice a coop full of cocks and six shillings six pence, so that he might have children, and he got children.

They said he would take a title; then he sacrificed one ram, one length of white cloth, and one calabash of chalk.

They said he would remain in office for a long time; he sacrificed four white pigeons, a white cloth,² and two shillings. He grew so old that they had to warm him in the sun.³

Ifa says there is a very small child who will complete his task.

"I will choose money, I will choose children;

"I will not be able to depart."⁴

"I will choose money, I will choose children;

"I will not be able to depart."

Ifa says that the King of the Sky will "create a market"⁵ for an old person; so that his destiny⁶ may not spoil while he is still alive on earth, he should make a sacrifice.

2. Note the recurrence of the color white: white steamed beans, a piece of white cloth, a calabash of chalk, four white pigeons, and a white cloth. The figure Ọṣṣ is associated with the color white, because of the similarity of its name to the Yoruba for soap (Ọṣṣ) which, though black, yields white suds.

3. Literally, to dry him out in the sun.

4. Probably, to leave this earth; to die.

5. This is a figure of speech for giving him a large family and many followers, as numerous as the crowds in the market.

6. The implication is that this destiny includes money, children, a title, and long life.

Qṣṣ OGBE - 4

Kere-tṣ-ḡburu-wṣ-amu a da fun Q-1(i)-ṣfin-1(i)-
 "Dipper-jump-continuously-enter-jar" who cast for One:who-has-palace-has-
 aga-oyinbo ti a ni ki o wa ru-(ṣ)bo nitori
 chair-(of)-whiteman that they say should he come offer-sacrifice because (of)
 a-b(i)-oyun ile rṣ. Ifa ni a-b(i)-oyun kan ni-
 one:who-bear-pregnancy (of) house his. Ifa say one:who-bear-pregnancy one be-
 (e)yi ki o ma ṣe eṣe lai. Nwṣn ni ki o ru igiripa
 this should she not make calamity, alas! They say should he offer full:grown
 obukṣ kan, amu omi kan, egbejila ati aṣṣ idi obinrin
 he:goat one, jar (of) water one, 2400 (cowries) and cloth (of) waist (of) woman
 na, Q-1(i)-ṣfin ko ru-(ṣ)bṣ.
 the; One:who-has-palace not offer-sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti a-b(i)-oyun yi ma bi, o bi
 At-time-that one:who-bear-pregnancy this (continuative) bear, she bear
 ṣmṣ-(ṣ)kunrin kan, nwṣn si ṣṣ orukṣ rṣ ni Ade-rin-mṣ-(ṣ)la. N(i)-
 child-man one, they and speak name his be Crown-walk-against-honor. At-
 igba-ti ṣmṣ yi to s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ, ko s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ; n(i)-igba-ti o di
 time-that child this equal speak-word, not speak-word; at-time-that he become
 agba tan o ya(n)-(o)di; nwṣn ṣe titi ko le s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ; nwṣn mu
 elder finish he become-dumb; they do until not be:able speak-word; they take
 fun a pa ṣṣn pe ki nwṣn mu lṣ si oko ṣṣn
 (him) for those:who kill buffalo that should they take (him) go to farm (of) buffalo
 pe boya yio le s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ; ṣṣn ṣn mṣ titi ko
 that perhaps (he) will be:able speak-word; buffalo blow against (him) until not
 s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ, nwṣn mu fun awṣn a p(a)-erin pe boya bi erin
 speak-word. They take (him) for those who kill-elephant that perhaps if elephant
 ba ke mṣ boya o le s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ ṣṣḡṣn ko le s(ṣ)-
 should cry against (him) perhaps he be:able speak-word but not be:able speak-
 ṣrṣ; n(i)-igba-ti ḡbogbo wṣn ṣe ti ni ahun da-(o)hun ti o ni on yio
 word; at-time-that all them do not, be Miser break-voice that he say he will
 ṣe ṣmṣ na yio si s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ, Q-1(i)-ṣfin ni bi ahun ba
 do (it) child the will and speak-word. One:who-has-palace say if Miser should
 le ṣe ti o si s(ṣ)-ṣrṣ on yio da ile on si meji-meji on
 be:able do (it) that he and speak-word, he will break house his to two-two he
 yio si fi jin.
 will and take (it) give (him).

N(i)-igba-ti o mu ṣmṣ yi de ile o ni ki nwṣn ba on wa
 At-time-that he take child this arrive home he say should they join him seek
 ṣru ṣpa atori meji ati (1)ṣṣṣ-lṣṣṣ oyin igan, nwṣn si ko
 load (of) staff (of) atori two and much-much honey (of) bee; they and gather

225 - 4

"The dipper jumps in and out of the water jar"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for the King who has a Whiteman's chair.² They said he should make a sacrifice on behalf of a pregnant woman in his house. Ifa says this concerns a pregnant woman; do not let her meet with calamity,³ alas! They said he should sacrifice one full grown he-goat, one jar of water,⁴ seven pence two oninis, and the cloth from the woman's waist. The king did not sacrifice.

When this pregnant woman gave birth, she gave birth to a boy; they said his name was "Crown walks with honor." When he was old enough to talk, he did not talk; and when he grew up, he was a dumb mute. They tried and tried but could not get him to speak. They took him to the buffalo hunters to have them take him to the place where the buffalo live, hoping that perhaps he would be able to talk; the buffalo bellowed at him, but he did not speak. They took him to the elephant hunters, hoping that perhaps if the elephants should trumpet at him, he would be able to talk; but he could not talk. When all of them had tried and failed, Tortoise said that he would do it, and that the child would talk. The king promised that if Tortoise was able to do it, and the child did speak, he would divide his house in two, and give half to Tortoise.

When Tortoise brought this child home, he said that they should find him two loads of switches⁵ and lots of honey.⁶ They gathered

1. The amu is a large, narrow-necked pot in which water is stored; the kere is a dipper, which was formerly made of a snail shell.

2. Chairs of European manufacture were used as thrones by some Yoruba kings.

3. The phrase "şe eşe" is used to refer to the death of pregnant women, an especially evil event requiring removal of the foetus before burial, or for those killed accidentally by hunters and, today, for those killed in automobile accidents. Here it refers to the birth of a dumb mute.

4. Note the reference to the name of the diviner.

5. Switches made from the atori bush. See n. 4, verse 33-1.

6. Igan was explained as meaning the honey bee, also known as oyin. Cf. n. 3, verse 18-8.

gbogbo rẹ wa fun. N(i)-igba-ti ahun ri oyin yi gba o
 all his come for (him). At-time-that Miser see honey this (he) accept (it) he
 gbe lẹ si oju ọna gbogbo ẹni-ti o ba nkọja lẹ ntọ
 carry (it) go to eye (of) road all person-that he should passing go tasting (it)
 la ṣugbọn n(i)-igba-ti Ade-rin-mọ-(ọ)la de ibẹ ti o fi ọwọ
 lick but at-time-that Crown-walk-against-honor arrive there that he put hand
 bọ oyin yi ti o si tọ-la, ahun ti o ti sa pa-mọ
 enter honey this that he and taste-(it)-lick, Miser that he have run kill-against
 s(i)-inu igbo yọ si o si da ni ọwọ ni, o si sọ fun
 to-belly (of) forest appear to (him) he and hold (him) at hand (1), he and speak for
 pe o ji on ni oyin. Bayi ni ahun mu ni ole ti o si
 (him) that he steal him at honey. Thus be Miser take (him) at thief that he and
 ko ọpa bo ti o si bẹrẹ si lati na, n(i)-igba-ti o pẹ
 gather staff cover (him) that he and begin to to whip (him), at-time-that it be:
 ti o ti nna, o na ni ọrun, n(i)-igba-ti o na
 long that he have whipping (him), he whip (him) at neck, at-time-that he whip (him)
 ni ọrun, o dun ọmọ yi pupọ o si ke gbo, o ni:
 at neck, it pain child this much he and cry loudly, he say:

Ade-rin-mọ-(ọ)la ọmọ Qṣin
 "Crown-walk-against-honor, child (of) Qshin,

Qmọ Qṣin
 Child (of) Qshin;

Mo b(a)-erin de-(i)gbo erin
 "I join-elephant arrive-forest (of) elephant,

Qmọ Qṣin
 Child (of) Qshin;

Mo b(a)-efọn r(e)-oko i-p(a)-ẹfọn
 "I join-buffalo go-farm (of) to-kill-buffalo,

Qmọ Qṣin
 Child (of) Qshin;

Mo b(a)-ogodo r(e)-oko iyo
 "I join-young:animal go-farm (of) Iyo,

Qmọ Qṣin
 Child (of) Qshin.

Ogodo ni mo j(i)-oyin jẹ
 "Young:animal be I steal-honey eat,

Qmọ Qṣin
 Child (of) Qshin;

the things and brought them to him. Tortoise took the honey, and carried it to a path. Everyone passing by tasted it, but when "Crown walks with honor" came there and put his finger into the honey and licked it, Tortoise, who had hidden in the forest, came out and seized him, and accused him of stealing his honey. Thus did Tortoise catch him as a thief, and he picked up the switches and covered him with blows, beginning to whip him. When he had been whipping him for a long time, he whipped him on the neck. When he whipped him on the neck, it hurt this child very much, and he cried out loudly, saying:

"Crown walks with honor, child of Qshin,

Child of Qshin;

"I went with elephants to the forest of elephants,

Child of Qshin;

"I went with buffalo to the farm where they hunt buffalo,

Child of Qshin;

"I went with a young animal⁷ to the farm of Iyo,⁸

Child of Qshin.

"I stole the young animal's honey to eat,

Child of Qshin;

7. This refers to Tortoise, as is shown in the following line.

8. This was explained only as the name of the farm.

Ade-rin-mḡ-(ḡ)la ḡmḡ Qṣin
 "Crown-walk-against-honor, child (of) Qshin,

Qmḡ Qṣin
 Child (of) Qshin;

Yesi l(i)-o l(i)-ogodo? Yesi l(i)-o l(i)-oyin?
 "Who be-who have-young:animal? Who be-who have-honey?"

Qmḡ Qṣin
 Child (of) Qshin;

Baba mi l(i)-o l(i)-ogodo on l(i)-o l(i)-oyin,
 "Father my be-who have-young:animal, he be-who have-honey,

Qmḡ Qṣin.
 Child (of) Qshin."

Bayi ni Ade-rin-mḡ-(ḡ)la bḡḡ si kḡ-(o)rin ti o si bḡḡ si s(ḡ)-
 Thus be Crown-walk-against-honor begin to sing-song that he and begin to speak-
 ḡḡḡ titi o pḡlu ahun fi de ile. N(i)-igba-ti Qṣin ri
 word until he together:with Miser take arrive house. At-time-that Qshin see (him)
 inu ḡḡ dun pupḡ o si da ile ati ḡna ḡḡ si meji-meji o si
 belly his be:sweet much he and break house and road his to two-two he and
 ko fun ahun.
 gather (half) for Miser.

Ifa ni ki a ru-(ḡ)bḡ nitori obinrin a-b(i)-oyun kan,
 Ifa say should we offer-sacrifice because woman one:who-bear-pregnancy one,
 ki ḡmḡ inu ḡḡ ma ba ya(n)-(o)di, ki o si na ni owo
 that child (of) belly hers not should become-dumb, that she and spend at cowries
 pupḡ.
 much.

Qṣṣ - (O)TURA - 1

Kḡḡḡḡ ti ḡnu awo ḡba ire a da fun ḡbogbo
 "Throat:disease from mouth (of) plate take goodness" who cast for all
 aiye n(i)-igba-ti ai-san nja. Eṣu ni ḡbḡ yio ma
 earth at-time-that not-be:better fighting. Eshu say sacrifice will (continuative)
 fin bi awḡn enia aiye ba fi ti on ṣe. Awḡn enia
 come:to:pass if those people (of) earth should take that (of) his do. Those people
 aiye si wa fi ḡbḡn ḡbin kan, ḡbo kan, ḡḡba meje
 (of) earth and come take basket (of) snail one, ram one, 2000 (cowries) seven
 ru-(ḡ)bḡ na; lati ḡba-na ni aiye ti bḡḡḡ si dara.
 offer-sacrifice the; from time-the be world have begin to be:good.

"Crown walks with honor, child of Qshin,
 Child of Qshin;
 "Whose is the young animal? Whose is the honey?
 Child of Qshin;
 "My father owns the young animal, he owns the honey,
 Child of Qshin."⁹

In this way "Crown walks with honor" began to sing and he began to talk until he and Tortoise came back home. When Qshin, the king, saw that he was talking, he was very happy and divided his house and home¹⁰ in two and gave half to Tortoise.

Ifa says we should sacrifice because of a pregnant woman, lest the child within her be a dumb mute and lest she spend much money because of it.

9. This is a song sung in typical leader-chorus pattern, with "Child of Qshin" as the refrain sung by the chorus.

10. The Yoruba idiom is "his house and road," meaning all his possessions. Cf. the versions of this tale recorded by Bouche (1885: 225-226); Ellis (1894: 263-265); Frobenius (1926: 237-238); Jacobs (1933: 28-30); and Itayemi and Gurrey (1953: 51-53).

"Sore throat takes the good from the plate"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for all the people on earth when they were afflicted with illness. Eshu says that the sacrifice will be effective if they will do as he says. The people on earth came and sacrificed one basket of snails, one ram, and three shillings six pence. From that time on, the world began to be good.

1. Kọlq̄bq̄ was described by informants as a throat disease which turns the throat and tongue black and prevents one from eating. Abraham equates it with efu, which he defines as "thrush (a disease causing white patches on the tongue and mouth and preventing one eating pepper)." In either case, it spoils the joy of eating. This verse was recorded from Araba of Modak̄k̄k̄, a suburb of Ifẹ founded by refugees from the Qyq̄ area during the wars of the last century.

QṢṢ MEJI - 1

Akṓda awo ẹ-l(i)-ṣrupeṣ, Qdṓrṓgi awo o-d(a)-
 "Akṓda, secret (of) one:who-has-dirt," "Too:long, secret (of) one:who-cause-
 oro a da f(un)-Qrunmila n(i)-ṓjṓ ti ibi gbogbo inu aiye fẹ
 pain" who cast for-Qrunmila at-day that evil all (of) belly (of) earth want
 mu lṓ. O ni on na ni ṓga bi ti wṓn na, ti o si
 take (him) go. He say he also have master as that (of) them also, that he and
 ma gba l(i)-ṓwṓ wṓn ti ko ni jẹ-ki nwṓn mu on
 (continuative) take (him) at-hand their that (he) not be consent-that they take him
 lṓ.
 go.

O tṓ awṓn ẹiyẹ fin-fin inu ṓgan lṓ, ẹiyẹ
 He approach those bird be:white-be:white (of) belly (of) termite:hill go, bird
 ma-fin-ma-fin apa osi ẹiyẹ fin-fin ti o ti inu
 not-be:white-not-be:white (of) arm left, bird be:white-be:white that they from belly
 ṓgan fo wa s(i)-aiye. Ẹiyẹ fin-fin inu ṓgan
 (of) termite:hill fly come to-earth. Bird be:white-be:white (of) belly (of) termite:
 ni o ni ki Qrunmila mu obi ifin wa. Ẹiyẹ ma-fin-ma-
 hill be who say should Qrunmila take kola white come. Bird not-be:white-not-
 fin apa osi on ni o ni ki Qrunmila mu obi ipa wa. Ẹiyẹ
 white (of) arm left his be who say should Qrunmila take kola red come. Bird
 fin-fin ti o ti inu ṓgan fo w(a)-aiye ni ki
 be:white-be:white that they from belly (of) termite:hill fly come-earth say should
 Qrunmila mu atare wa, nwṓn fi g(un)-egiri fun Qrunmila. Nwṓn
 Qrunmila take Guinea:pepper come; they take (it) pound:egiri for Qrunmila. They
 ni ori ki ifṓ awun, ẹdṓ ki idun igbin, etu ki ipa ṓta ni ilẹ
 say, "Head not break Miser, liver not pain snail, cold not kill quartz at ground (of)
 odo. Nwṓn ni ibi ko ni le mu. Yio da iyẹ-
 river." They say evil not be (it) be:able take (him). Will cast wood:dust-(of)-
 (i)rosun na si ṓbẹ na yio jẹ.
 irosun the to stew the will eat (it).

QṢṢ MEJI - 2

A-(yi)o fi ẹfun ati osun tẹ Qṣṣ Meji s(i)-ara ogiri.
 We-will take chalk and camwood press Qṣṣ Meji to-body (of) wall.
 Ewu f(i)-ori arugbo ẹ-(i)le, imṓ gbigbẹ ko ni
 "Grey:hair take-head (of) old:person make-house, palm:leaf dry not have
 gran atiro l(i)-ṓrun, a da Ifa fun obi ti o nti ode
 affair (of) basket at-neck" who cast Ifa for Kola that they leaving outside (of)

239 - 1

Akqda,¹ the diviner of "One who owns soil," and "Too long,"² the diviner of "Causer of pain," were the ones who cast Ifa for Qrunmila on the day that all the evil spirits in the world wanted to carry him away. He said that he, too, had a master³ as they did, and that his master would deliver him from their hands and not let them carry him away.

He went to the white birds inside the termite hill, to the white-spotted birds on the left side, and to the white birds who flew to earth from inside the termite hill. The white birds inside the termite hill said that Qrunmila should bring white kola. The white-spotted birds on the left side said Qrunmila should bring red kola. The white birds who flew to earth from inside the termite hill said that Qrunmila should bring Guinea pepper.⁴ They pounded these things to make egiri medicine⁵ for Qrunmila. They said, "The head of tortoise does not ache; the liver of snail does not hurt him; the stone at the bottom of the river does not feel cold." They said that the evil spirits would not be able to carry him away. We will pour the divining powder into the stew and eat it.⁶

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1. The title of one of the diviners of the King of Ife. (See Chapter X.)
 2. Something that is too long.
 3. The ancestral guardian soul is sometimes referred to as one's "master" (ogga).
 4. Aframomum melegueta, also known as Maleguetta pepper or "Alligator pepper."
 5. Egiri is a kind of medicine to prevent death.
 6. After the figure Qşş Meji is marked in the divining powder and this verse has been recited, the powder is added to a stew made of a small tortoise and a small snail, which are removed from their shells, and white kola, red kola, Guinea pepper, salt, pepper, and palm oil. This is a charm or medicine to prevent death known as "not-die" (aiku) or "not-see-death" (ariku, a ri iku); egiri, mentioned in the verse was said to be another name for such a charm. Cf. the verse recorded by Lijadu (1923: 26).
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239 - 2

We will mark Qşş Meji on the side of a wall with chalk and camwood.¹
 "Grey hairs make their home on the heads of the aged; dry palm leaves cannot carry burdens² on their shoulders" was the one who cast Ifa for Kola, when they were coming from

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1. The figures Qşş meji and Ofun meji can be seen drawn for protection in chalk and camwood on the wall of houses. Cf. verse 256-6.
 2. Literally "do not see the affair of an atiro," which is a basketry framework used for carrying bundles.

grun bọ ni ode aiye, nwọn ni ki nwọn ru-(ẹ)bọ ki-(a)r(a)-
 sky come at outside (of) earth; they say should they offer-sacrifice that-people-
 aiye ma le pa wọn, aburo wọn ke(re)-kere ni o ru
 (of)-earth not be:able kill them, junior:sibling their small-small be who offer
 ẹbọ; awọn ẹgbọn ko ru Aburo wọn ni awẹ ke(re)-
 sacrifice; those elder:sibling not offer. Junior:sibling their be section small-
 kere ti a ma nyọ si ọtọ. Lati igba-na ni ar(a)-
 small that we (continuative) pulling:out to aside. From time-the be people-(of)-
 aiye ti ma npa obi.
 earth have (continuative) killing kola.

A-(yi)o jẹ obi fọn l(i)-ẹhin igba-ti a ba ti tẹ tan,
 We-will eat kola blow (it) at-back (of) time-that we should have press finish,
 pe ki apa ar(a)-aiye ma le ka-(ẹ)ni. Akikọ męta
 that should arm (of) people-(of)-earth not be:able go:around-person. Cock three
 ati ẹgbędogun ni ẹbọ.
 and 3000 (cowries) be sacrifice.

OFUN OGBE¹ - 1

Ẹ-ra-ni-dẹdẹ l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa ko-(I)gun ti o nlọ si ilu Igbo
 "You-fly-at-low" be-who cast-Ifa for-Vulture that he going to town (of) Igbo
 dẹdẹ, nwọn ni arẹ ko ni mu, nwọn ni ko ni ri idagiri
 (of) low; they say fatigue not be take (him), they say not be see catastrophe (of)
 ojojo, nwọn ni ni akoko ti ebi ba ma pa ni Olodu-
 sickness, they say at time that hunger should (continuative) kill (him) be Olodu-
 mare yio ma gba onjẹ ti yio jẹ ko. Igun ru i-
 mare will (continuative) carry food that (he) will eat meet (him). Vulture offer to-
 san-mọ-(i)di aşọ idi rẹ, oru epo kan, obukọ kan; Igun
 wrap-against-waist cloth (of) waist his, pot (of) palm:oil one, he:goat one; Vulture
 ru-(ẹ)bo. Bi o ba da ki ebi pa Igun, idagiri yio
 offer-sacrifice. If it should happen that hunger kill Vulture, catastrophe will
 da ni ilu.
 occur at town.

Ifa ni a nlọ şe ohun kan, o ni on ko ni jẹ-ki a ri ojojo
 Ifa say we going do thing one, he say he not be consent-that we see sickness
 ni ibi (ohu)n-kan na, o ni e-l(i)-ekeji ẹni grun yio
 at place (of) thing-one the, he say one:who-be-second (of) person (of) sky will
 ti-(ẹ)ni l(i)-ẹhin ni idi (ohu)n-kan na, oju ko ni ti-(ẹ)ni.
 push-person at-back at waist (of) thing-one the, eye not be push-person.

1. Also known as Ofun-na-(O)gbe, meaning Ofun-reaches-Ogbe.

heaven to earth. They said that they should sacrifice so that human beings would not be able to kill them. Their little junior siblings were the ones who made the sacrifice; the elder siblings did not sacrifice. The junior siblings are the small sections of kola nuts³ that we set aside. From that time on, people have been killing Kola.⁴

We will chew kola and blow it out after we have marked the figure on the wall, so that witches will not be able to take this person.⁵ Three cocks and nine pence is the sacrifice.

3. The tiny bits or natural segments (awę) of the kola nut (Cola acuminata) are not eaten but picked out and set aside. The verse explains why this is so, and why the larger segments are eaten.

4. To split kola is spoken of as to "kill it"; the meaning is that it is eaten.

5. Literally "to encircle," referring to the fact that a kola nut can be enclosed in the hand; but the meaning here is that they will not be able to kill him.

241 - 1

"Fly low" was the one who cast Ifa for Vulture when he was going to the town of low Igbo.¹ They said that he would not become tired. They said he would not meet with the misfortune of sickness. They said that when he became hungry, the Sky God would bring food for him to eat. Vulture sacrificed the sash from his waist, a small pot of palm oil, and one he-goat. Vulture made the sacrifice. If it happens that Vulture is hungry, a catastrophe will occur in the town.²

Ifa says we are going to do something. He says that he will not allow us to meet with sickness there. He says our spiritual double in heaven³ will assist us in this thing, and we will not be disgraced.

1. According to Ifę tradition the Igbo were a group of people located toward the south, who fought with Ifę until they were defeated by Mqřęmi. See n. 5, verse 24-1.

2. Cf. verses 5-2, 248-1. This explains why any disaster in town benefits Vulture, who feeds on the bodies of dead animals and on the sacrifices offered to bring the disaster to an end.

3. The ancestral guardian soul.

OFUN OGBE - 2

Qjere agbado f(i)-ori j(o)-Egun ko le se ise
 "Sprout (of) corn with-head resemble-Egungun, not be:able do deed (of)
 Egungun a da fun Itọ, a lu fun Itọ a da fun Atọ ti ise
 Egungun" who cast for Urine, who beat for Spit, who cast for Semen that make
 omọ ik(an)-ghin wọn; nwọn ni ki awọn mẹt(a)-(m)eta ru-(e)bọ
 child standing-back (of) them; they say should those three-three offer-sacrifice
 ki nwọn ba ma di odidi, adię mewa-mewa ati
 that they should (continuative) become entire, (of) chicken ten-ten and
 egb(awa)-egbawa. Nwọn ni ki ọran wọn ba le ma
 20,000-20,000 (cowries). They say that affair their should be:able (continuative)
 ni ori. Itọ ko ru-(e)bọ be-ni Itọ ko pa-(E)ṣu. Atọ
 have head. Urine not offer-sacrifice, so-be (it) spit not appease-Eshu. Semen
 ti ise omọ ik(an)-ghin wọn ru adię mewa ati egbawa
 that make child standing-back (of) them offer chicken ten and 20,000 (cowries)
 ti-rẹ.
 that-(of)-his.

N(i)-igba-ti o se bi Itọ ba ba-(i)lẹ o p(a)-ora,
 At-time-that it make (later) as Spit should strike-ground he kill-disappearance,
 bi Itọ ba ba-(i)lẹ a wọ-(i)lẹ lọ, Atọ ba-(i)lẹ o di
 as Urine should strike-ground he enter-ground go, Semen strike-ground he become
 omọ kandi-kandi,
 child healthy-healthy.

Ta l(i)-o bi nwọn-yi wẹre?
 "Who be-who bear those-this tiny?"

Atọ l(i)-o bi nwọn-yi wẹre, Atọ
 "Semen be-who bear those-this tiny, Semen."

Ifa ni awọn meta kan wa ti ise omọ iya kan na, ki nwọn
 Ifa say those three one exist that make child (of) mother one the, should they
 ru-(e)bọ ki nwọn ma ba ra mọ aiye l(i)-ara ki o si
 offer-sacrifice that they not should disappear against earth at-body that it and
 ku eyi a-bi-k(an)-ghin wọn.
 remain this one:who-born-stand-back (of) them.

OFUN OGBE - 3

Ijanwọn irin, Ijanwọn irin, ariwọ irin ko ni a-fa-ya
 "Scraps (of) iron, Scraps (of) iron, hook (of) iron not be (it) to-pull-split"
 a da fun Oriṣala Qṣereṣbo nwọn ni ki o wa ru-(e)bọ
 who cast for Oriṣala Qṣereṣbo, they say should he come offer-sacrifice (of)

241 - 2

"Corn tassels look like an Egungun¹ but cannot do what Egungun can" was the one who cast Ifa for Urine, beat palm nuts for Spit, and cast Ifa for Semen,² who was their younger sibling. They said that these three should sacrifice ten chickens each and five shillings each so that they might become whole persons,³ and so that their affairs might be able to come to a successful conclusion. Urine did not sacrifice, nor did Spit appease Eshu. Semen, the youngest born of these three, sacrificed his ten chickens and five shillings.

Afterward, whenever Spit touches the ground, he disappears; and when Urine touches the ground, he goes into it; but when Semen touches the ground,⁴ he turns into a healthy child.

"Who is it that begets these tiny children?"

"Semen is the one who begets these tiny children, Semen."

Ifa says there are three people who are children of the same mother; they should make a sacrifice so that they will not disappear from the face of the earth, leaving only the last born among them.

1. That is, the corn stalk has a decoration on top like the headpiece of an Egungun costume. *Ojẹrẹ*, though referring here to the tassel, was said to mean, more generally, new sprouts or leaves of any plant. Cf. verse 166-1.

2. Note the pun on Urine (*Itọ*), Spit (*Itọ*), and Semen (*Atọ*).

3. So that they might become children as Semen does.

4. It is understood that this means when it enters the womb. The verse thus explains why only semen can produce children.

241 - 3

"Scrap iron, scrap iron, iron hooks do not break"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for the God of Whiteness. They said that he should come and make a sacrifice

1. Like the usual ones, made of wood. Cf. n. 1, verse 4-4.

awon omọ rẹ meji wẹrẹ-wẹrẹ, o ni on ko le ru-(ẹ)bọ, o ni on
 those child his two tiny-tiny, he say he not be:able offer-sacrifice, he say he
 ni on da ẹru ti on si da omọ; ko pẹ o ran awon omọ nwon-
 be he create slave that he and create child; not be:long he send those child those-
 yi ni oko, n(i)-igba-ti nwon de ọna, odo gbe ọkan lọ n(i)-inu nwon,
 this at farm, at-time-that they arrive road, river carry one go at-belly their,
 n(i)-ibi-ti nwon wa nwọ ki, ina bọ s(i)-ile ọkan
 at-place-that they come flocking greet (him), fire come to-house (of) one
 ti o ku si jona s(i)-inu ile na.
 that he remain and burn (him) to-belly (of) house the.

Ifa ni awon omọ meji kan wa ki baba won ru akikọ meji, ẹgbafa,
 Ifa say those child two one exist should father their offer cock two, 12,000

ati agbon ẹkọ kan ki awon omọ na ma ba
 (cowries), and basket (of) cornstarch:porridge one that those child the not should
 ku; tabi ki a ẹṣ-(a)ra nitori awon omọ meji kan, ki ọkan ma
 die; or should we watch-body because (of) those child two one, that one not
 ba jona ki ekeji ma ku s(i)-odo.
 should burn that second not die to-river.

OFUN OGBE - 4

A-ta-(ẹ)kan-si-ọja a da fun-(i)gba-(o)ri ti
 "One:who-sell-once-to-market" who cast for-calabash-(of)-shea:butter that
 o nlọ si ọja Ejigbomẹkun, nwon ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori
 he going to market (of) Ejigbomẹkun, they say should he offer-sacrifice because
 awon ẹgbẹ rẹ ọrun mẹta. Ekini a ma jẹ I-mu-(i)na-
 (of) those companion his (of) sky three. First it (continuative) eat "It-take-fire-
 mu-(i)na-yanran-yanran. Ekeji a ma jẹ Imọrimọ-kọ-yẹri-
 take-fire-bright-bright." Second it (continuative) eat "Lightning-flash-sparkle-
 yẹri. Ẹkẹta a ma jẹ A-gbe-(i)nu-ile-p(a)-
 sparkle." Third it (continuative) eat "One:who-dwell:at-belly-(of)-house-kill-
 ẹya. Igba ori ko ru-(ẹ)bọ ẹiyẹ-(i)le mẹta
 yamstick." Calabash (of) shea:butter not offer-sacrifice (of) bird-(of)-house three,
 ẹgbẹrindilogun A-(yi)o lọ sọ igba-(o)wo ori rẹ si oju ọna.
 3200 (cowries). We-will go throw 200-cowries (of) head its to eye (of) road.
 A-l(i)-ai-ru-(ẹ)bọ igba ori ni o jẹ
 One:who-be-not-offer-sacrifice (of) calabash (of) shea:butter be who consent
 ki o jẹ ẹkan ni a fi fi igba ori ta ori ti
 that it eat once be we make take calabash (of) shea:butter sell shea:butter that

for his two very small children. He said he was not able to sacrifice; he said that he was the one who created both slaves and free born.² Not long afterward he sent his two children to the farm. When they reached the road, the river carried one of them away; and where people were coming to greet the other, a fire started in his house and burned him to death in the house.

Ifa says there are two children whose father should sacrifice two cocks, three shillings, and a basket of cornstarch porridge, so that these children will not die. Or we should be careful of two children, lest one be burned to death and the other be drowned in a river.

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2. See n. 3, verse 5-1, and n. 3, verse 9-1.
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241 - 4

"Sold once in the market" was the one who cast Ifa for Calabash of Shea Butter when he was going to the market of Ejigbomẹkun.¹ They said he should make a sacrifice because of his three comrades in heaven. The first is called "It seizes fire² very brightly"; the second is called "Lightning flashes and sparkles";³ the third is called "One who lives in the house and cuts yam sticks."⁴ Calabash of Shea Butter did not make the sacrifice of three pigeons and nine pence six oninis. We will throw the six oninis (200 cowries) into the road.

The failure of Calabash of Shea Butter to sacrifice is the reason why we use a calabash only once to sell shea butter, and why

1. Cf. n. 5, verse 24-1.

2. Imunamuna was freely translated as "very fierce," but in this context it should be compared with imọnamọna, meaning lightning.

3. Imọrimọ refers to a flash of lightning; kọ means to flash, as lightning; yẹri-yẹri means to sparkle, like the sparklers used in fireworks.

4. The sticks to which yam plants are trained.

ḡni-ti o ra igba ori si gbe igba na lḡ pḡlu
 person-that who buy calabash (of) shea:butter and take calabash the go together:
 ori.
 with shea:butter.

Ifa ni a nlḡ ṣe owo kan, ki a ṣḡ-(a)ra ki ḡni-
 Ifa say we going make transaction one, should we watch-body that person-
 (e)keji ḡni ḡrun ma ba ma ba owo na jḡ
 second (of) person (of) sky not should (continuative) spoil transaction the (1)
 mḡ-(ḡ)ni l(i)-ḡwḡ nitori-ti n(i)-igba-ti awḡn ḡgbḡ igba
 against-person at-hand because-that at-time-that those companion (of) calabash
 ori mḡt(a)-(m)ḡta ba ti fi oju kan igba ori,
 (of) shea:butter three-three should have take eye touch calabash (of) shea:butter,
 ori rḡ a bajḡ.
 head his will spoil.

OFUN - (I)WORI² - 1

Ofun pa Iwori wara Mḡ mu mi l(i)-ḡwḡ, emi ko wḡ kanki,
 "Ofun kill Iwori immediately" "Not take me at-hand, I not enter shorts;
 yin mi l(i)-ḡṣḡ nu, bḡ-ni emi ko bḡ ṣokoto a da fun Ewe-gbe-mi-
 leave me at-foot (3), so-be I not wear trousers" who cast for "Leaf-assist-me-
 awala-wulu ḡmḡ A-gb(ḡ)-Egun ko fḡ, Lubayḡmi, ḡmḡ
 mumble-mumble," child (of) "One:who-hear-Egun not speak," Lubayḡmi, child (of)
 A fi igba ata ṣḡ-(o)gun, A-fin-(o)ju ḡ-l(i)-ḡwa
 "One:who take 200 pepper make-war," "One:who-decorate eye one:who-has-beauty
 ru-(i)l(e)-ḡkun ḡrun gbḡngan-gbḡngan, nwḡn ni ti ar(a)-aiye
 open-house-door (of) sky 'gbḡngan-gbḡngan'; they say that (of) people-(of)-earth
 ti ara-(ḡ)run on l(i)-o ma j(ḡ)-ḡba fun wḡn.
 that (of) people-(of)-sky he be-who (continuative) eat-king for them.

Ifa ni ḡkunrin kan ni o nrin kiri ile bi were bi were
 Ifa say man one be who walking about house like insane:person like insane:
 yi, Ifa ni on ni yio ni ile na-(i)gb(a)-ḡhin, Ifa ni t(i)-
 person this; Ifa say he be (who) will have house the-time-back; Ifa say that-(of)-
 ḡkunrin t(i)-obinrin ile na ni o ma ma pe
 man that-(of)-woman (of) house the be who about:to (continuative) assemble

1. Ba . . . jḡ means "to spoil."
2. Also known as Ofun pa Iwori, meaning Ofun kills Iwori. Cf. n. 1, verse 243-1.
3. Yin . . . nu means "to leave."

the person who buys shea butter takes the calabash along with the shea butter.⁵

Ifa says we are going to do some business; we should be careful lest our spiritual double in heaven spoil the transaction for us because, when Calabash of Shea Butter's three comrades in heaven look upon Calabash of Shea Butter, his head spoils.⁶

5. When shea butter melts, it spoils the calabash. Therefore, when shea butter is sold in the market, the buyer takes the calabash home with him and discards it when the shea butter is finished. This passage explains both this and the name of the diviner, "Sold (only) once in the market."

6. As is indicated by their names, the first two of these comrades refer to lightning and heat, which can melt shea butter and spoil the calabash in which it is kept.

243 - 1

"Ofun kills Iwori¹ immediately," and "Don't hold my hand, I am not putting on shorts;² let go of my feet, I am not wearing trousers" were the ones who cast Ifa for "Leaves help me 'mumble, mumble'"³ the child of "One who understands the Egun language but does not speak it," Lubayemi, the child of "One who conquers with two hundred peppers," "Beautiful neat person opens the door of the sky so that it sounds 'gbongan-gbongan!'"⁴ They said that he would become king of the people of earth and the people of heaven.

Ifa says there is a man who is going about the house like a person who is insane. Ifa says he is the one who will own the house after a while. Ifa says that both the men and women of the house are going to assemble

1. This is an alternative name for the figure Ofun Iwori, appearing here in the name of one of the diviners.

2. Kanki are short trousers reaching about to the knee, while *şokoto* reach to the ankle. The whole name is said to mean "Leave me alone, I don't want to fight."

3. Awala-wulu represents the sounds made when someone tries to speak a language that he does not know, such as Egun, the language spoken by the people of Porto Novo, referred to later, or to the scribbling of a child who does not yet know how to write. In this context it refers to the sound of thunder.

4. Gbongan-gbongan represents the noise of a door vibrating after it has been slammed shut. Here it refers to the sound of thunder. These four names are associated with Shango, the God of Thunder, identified below.

sin k(an)-ẹhin on ni yio si j(ẹ)-ọba le wọn l(i)-ori. Ewe-serve (him) stand-back; he be (who) will and eat-king upon them at-head. "Leaf-gbe-mi ni orukọ ti a pe Ẹngọ. assist-me" be name that we call Shango.

Agbo kan, ẹtala igba akọ okuta ni ẹbọ. Ẹngọ si ru-Ram one, 26,000 (cowries), 200 male stone be sacrifice. Shango and offer-(ẹ)bọ lati igba-na ni ko si ẹni-ti o le duro de l(i)-sacrifice, from time-the be not be person-that he be:able stand wait:for (him) at-aiye l(i)-ọrun. earth at-sky.

OFUN - (I)WORI - 2

Ofun do-do-do, Iwori win a da fun Kannike ti o "Ofun empty-empty-empty, Iwori very:heavy" who cast for Kannike that he ma tori t(i)-(ow)o-kan kun-(i)gbẹ lọ nwọn ni ki (continuative) because (of) that-(of)-cowry-one enter-forest go, they say should o ru ẹiyẹ-(i)le męrin ati ẹgbarin ki o ma ba ẹ ẹ ẹ a he offer bird-(of)-house four and 8000 (cowries) that he not should do work to ẹ da-nu. Kannike ko ru-(ẹ)bọ. Kannike ni orukọ ada jẹ do throw-be:lost. Kannike not offer-sacrifice. Kannike be name Cutlass eat; lati igba-na bi ada ba kọ-(i)şu, şan agbado tan, nwọn from time-the if Cutlass should hoe-yam, clear (bush) (of) corn finish, they y(ọ)-ọwọ n(i)-inu rẹ, ẹlomiran a wa, a si ko ere rẹ jẹ. pull:out-hand at-belly his, another:person will come, will and gather gain his eat (it).

Ifa ni ọkunrin kan ni yi, ki o ma le ma ẹ ẹ ẹ a-Ifa say man one be this, should he not be:able (continuative) do work to-ẹ da-nu, lai. Gbogbo ẹ ẹ ti o nşe ko nri ori rẹ, ẹlomiran do-throw-be:lost, alas! All work that he doing not seeing head its, another:ni o nko ere rẹ jẹ. person be he gathering gain its eat (it).

OFUN - (I)WORI - 3

Ofun awo Igando, Iwori awo Igando, Mọşamọşa l(i)-aşọ Ofun, secret (of) Igando, Iwori secret (of) Igando, "Varicolored:cloth be-cloth ajẹ a da fun a-l(i)-akara Eriwọn, nwọn ni ọkan-şoşọ (of) witch" who cast for one:who-has-bean-fritter (of) Eriwọn; they say one-only

to serve him afterward, and he will be king over them. "Leaves help me" is the name we call the God of Thunder.

One ram, six shillings six pence, and 200 male stones⁵ is the sacrifice. The God of Thunder made the sacrifice, and from that time on, no one has been able to stand and face him⁶ either on earth or in heaven.

5. "Male stones" were identified as white pebbles of quartzite (ota).

6. That is, no one has dared to oppose him; no one can hear his thunder and not run from him. The verse thus explains how Shango came to have so much power and respect.

243 - 2

"Empty, empty Ofun; very heavy Iwori"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Kannike when he was going to run into the forest because of one cowry.² They said he should sacrifice four pigeons and two shillings so that he might not lose the benefits of his work. Kannike did not make the sacrifice. Kannike is the name of Cutlass, and from that time on, if Cutlass grows yams or clears the land for corn, he is put aside and someone else comes and takes the fruits of his labor.³

Ifa says this is a man. Let him not lose the benefits of his work, alas! Everything that he is doing is not coming to a successful conclusion, and someone else takes the fruits of his labor.

1. The diviner's name is derived from the name of the figure.

2. That is, to escape his creditors. Cf. verse 255-3, where a character in similar circumstances borrowed money to make the sacrifice and became wealthy.

3. This verse explains why a cutlass (machete) does not eat the yams and corn that it helps to grow.

243 - 3

Ofun, the diviner of Igando; Iwori¹ the diviner of Igando; and "A cloth of many colors"² is the cloth of a witch" were the ones who cast Ifa for the seller of bean fritters in the town of Eriwoṅ. They said that only

1. The name of the figure, Ofun Iwori, appears in the names of the diviners.

2. This was described as a cloth with small areas of different colors.

Qla qm̄q r̄ḡ yi ni ɛb̄q b̄q (ɛb̄q mu), nw̄n ni ki
 "Honor," child hers this, be sacrifice sacrifice:to (sacrifice take); they say should
 o ru ewur̄ḡ kan, ejilelogun ati aṣ̄q r̄ḡ ki qm̄q na ma ba
 she offer she:goat one, 44,000 (cowries) and cloth her that child the not should
 ku. O ru-(ɛ)b̄q.
 die. She offer-sacrifice.

Ifa ni ki e-l(i)-eyi ru-(ɛ)b̄q nitori qm̄q kan-na ti
 Ifa say should one:who-be-this offer-sacrifice because (of) child one-the that
 o bi, ki o ma ba ri iku ojiji, iku ti o ma pa qm̄q
 he bear, that he not should see death suddenly, death that it (continuative) kill child
 na a ko ni m̄q rara.
 the we not be know (it) at:all.

OFUN - (I)WORI - 4

Ofun awo Igando, Iwori awo Igando, Oyakatayaka aba
 Ofun, secret (of) Igando, Iwori secret (of) Igando, "Huge storehouse
 ni p(a)-o-l(i)-oko l(i)-ḡrin a da fun Ẹfunṣeku ti iṣ̄e
 be (it) kill-one:who-have-farm at-laughter" who cast for Ẹfunṣeku that make
 o-l(i)-ori agan Ile-If̄ḡ, nw̄n ni ire aiye
 one:who-be-head (of) barren:women (of) Ile-If̄ḡ; they say goodness (of) earth
 ire ḡrun ma to l(i)-ḡw̄ḡ l(i)-ḡdun-ni, nw̄n ni ki o
 goodness (of) sky (continuative) reach at-hand at-year-this, they say should she
 ru-(ɛ)b̄q at(i)-ḡnu-j̄ḡ ki nw̄n ma ba fun ni ogun
 offer-sacrifice (of) from-mouth-eat that they not should give (her) at medicine
 j̄ḡ. O-l(i)-ori agan Ife-If̄ḡ ni a-pe aba. N(i)-
 eat. One:who-be-head (of) barren:women (of) Ife-If̄ḡ be we-call Storehouse. At-
 igba-ti a ba ko iṣ̄u, agbado, awuj̄ḡ ati (l)ḡḡḡ-ḡḡḡ (ohu)n-kan s(i)-
 time-that we should gather yam, corn, awuj̄ḡ and much-much thing-one to-
 inu aba, inu r̄ḡ a ma dun, ṣ̄ugb̄n e-l(i)-
 belly (of) Storehouse, belly her will (continuative) be:sweet, but one:who-be-
 eyi a de, a mu iṣ̄u, ti e-l(i)-eyi ba de a mu igbado
 this will arrive, will take yam, that one:who-be-this should arrive will take corn,
 b̄ḡ-b̄ḡ nw̄n da oju aba de-(i)l̄ḡ janpo.
 so-so they break eye (of) Storehouse arrive-ground empty.

Ifa ni ɛni-kan wa ti o f̄ḡ ṣ̄e iṣ̄ḡ kan ti Q-l(i)-ḡrun yio
 Ifa say person-one exist that he want do work one that One:who-has-sky will
 da ori ḡla k̄ḡ ki o ru-(ɛ)b̄q ki o ma ba
 turn head (of) honor turn:toward (him), should he offer-sacrifice that he not should

"Honor," her child, was acceptable as a sacrifice.³ They said she should offer one she-goat, eleven shillings, and her cloth so that the child would not die. She made the sacrifice.

Ifa says that this person should make a sacrifice because of his only child, lest it meet with sudden death; the death that will kill the child is one of which we will know nothing whatsoever.⁴

3. This statement, contradicted in the following sentence, was explained as meaning that although the child is the only sacrifice the gods will accept, it may be possible to change their minds by making the other sacrifice suggested.

4. That is, we will never learn what has killed the child.

243 - 4

Ofun, the diviner of Igando; Iwori, the diviner of Igando,¹ and "A huge storehouse makes the farmer laugh"² were the ones who cast Ifa for Ẹfunsheku who was "The head of the barren women of Ifẹ." They said that blessings of heaven and blessings of earth would come to her during that year. They said she could sacrifice against "eat from mouth"³ so that she might not be given medicine to eat. "The head of the barren women of Ifẹ" is what we call Storehouse. When we gather yams, corn, awujẹ beans,⁴ and many other things and store them inside Storehouse, she is happy; but someone comes and takes the yams, someone comes and takes the corn; and so they disgrace Storehouse and let her fall down empty.⁵

Ifa says there is someone who wants to do some work; the Sky God will direct honor toward him. He should sacrifice lest he

1. See n. 1, verse 243-3.

2. A large, full storehouse makes a farmer happy.

3. A type of bad medicine which, as explained by informants and by the verse, is given to someone to eat. It would also seem to mean a medicine whose purpose is to be able to take food from someone.

4. Probably butter beans (*Phaseolus lunatus*), but the name awujẹ is also applied to other kinds of beans. (See Dalziel, 1937: 240, 254, 255.)

5. This verse explains why the possessions of Storehouse are taken away and it is deserted and left to fall apart. The implication is clear that Storehouse did not make the prescribed sacrifice.

ri ɛni-ti yio fun ni ogun jẹ. Gbogbo owo ile (ati)
 see person-that will give (him) at medicine eat. All cowries (of) house (and)
 ɔna yio si tan l(i)-ɛhin na ki o ma ba ku. Agutan kan, ɔkanla,
 road will and finish at-back the that he not should die. Ewe one, 22,000
 amu epo, ati aṣọ ara rẹ ni ɛbọ.
 (cowries), jar (of) palm:oil, and cloth (of) body his be sacrifice.

OFUN - (E)DI - 1

O-fun-(i)di o nso, o ɣai fun-(i)di o nso, o
 "You-squeeze-waist you flatulating, you not squeeze-waist you flatulating; you
 ɣe ɔran o ko bẹ-bẹ Iwo ko bẹ-bẹ ɔran iwɔnṣe
 make affair you not request-request, You not request-request affair you making
 o-ni-k(?) -oju yanran-yanran a d(a)-Ifa ko Ṣakeu ti iṣe ɔmɔ
 one:who-be-(?) -eye 'yanran-yanran'" who cast-Ifa for Shakeu that make child (of)
 Ibagboloro ni ɔjɔ ti o nlɔ mu ɔta oye l(i)-oke, nwɔn ni ki o
 Ibagboloro at day that he going take quartz (of) title at-hill; they say should he
 ru-(ɛ)bɔ ki-(a)r(a)-aiye ma ba da n(i)-iji, agutan
 offer-sacrifice that-people-(of)-earth not should cause (him) at-dread, ewe
 kan, ɛtalogun, aṣọ funfun kan, Ṣakeu ko ru.
 one, 46,000 (cowries), cloth white one; Shakeu not offer.
 Ṣakeu jẹ ɔmɔ ɔba o si la pupɔ, n(i)-igba-ti ɔba ku,
 Shakeu eat child (of) king he and be:wealthy much, at-time-that king die,
 Ṣakeu ni ta-ni on tun le du oye de ɔdɔ rẹ mɔ
 Shakeu say who-be he then be:able compete:for title arrive presence his again
 n(i)-inu aiye yi, o si ko gbogb(o)-ohun ti a fi
 at-belly (of) earth this, he and gather all-thing that we take (them)
 idu-(o)ye, ki a iko fun awɔn-(i)j(ɛ)-oye, lɔ si ɔrun, o ta
 competition:for-title, that we gather give those-eat-title, go to sky; he suspend
 okun o gun lɔ si ɔrun. N(i)-igba-ti o de ɔrun ɔ-l(i)-ɔrun ni iwɔ
 rope he climb go to sky. At-time-that he arrive sky One:who-has-sky say "You
 ko ri ɛni-ti iwɔ yio du-(o)ye l(i)-ɔdɔ ni gbogbo aiye mɔ?
 not see person-that you will compete:for-title at-presence at all earth again?"
 O ni ki o ma ɣe bayi mɔ. N(i)-igba-ti Ṣakeu npada bɔ wa si
 He say should he not do thus again. At-time-that Shakeu returning come come to
 aiye, okun ti o fi gun oke lɔ si ɔrun, Eṣu ja, n(i)-igba-ti o
 earth, rope that he take (it) climb hill go to sky, Eshu cut (it); at-time-that he
 ni ki o tun pada s(i)-oke, Eṣu tun ja eyi-ti iba fi gun
 say that he then return to-hill, Eshu then cut this-that (he) should take (it) climb

meet someone who will give him bad medicine to eat, and all the money of his house and home⁶ be spent to keep him from dying. One ewe, five shillings six pence, a jar of palm oil, and the cloth from his body is the sacrifice.

6. See n. 10, verse 225-4.

244 - 1

"You contract your anus, and you flatulate; you do not contract your anus, and you flatulate" and "You get into trouble and you don't beg forgiveness; you don't beg forgiveness, and you deny your guilt"¹ were the ones who cast Ifa for Shakeu, who was the child of Ibagboloro, on the day that he was going to the hill to take the stone of a title.² They said he should sacrifice one ewe, eleven shillings six pence, and one white cloth, so that people would not frighten him. Shakeu did not make the sacrifice.

Shakeu was the king's son, and he was very rich. When the king died, Shakeu asked, "Who else is there on earth for me to visit in competing for this title?"³ He gathered together everything with which we compete for a title, and which we take as gifts to the chiefs, and he went to heaven. He hung a rope from the sky and climbed up it. When he reached heaven, the Sky God said, "Isn't there anyone else for you to visit on the whole earth?" He said he must never do this again. When Shakeu was returning to the earth, Eshu cut off the bottom of the rope with which he had climbed up to heaven. When he started to go back up, Eshu cut off the top of the rope with which he was going to climb

1. "Yanran-yanran" was said to describe the facial expression of a person making an indignant denial.

2. Going to the top of a hill and taking a stone is a part of the installation ceremony; it should be compared with the Qni's visit to Oke Ora during his installation.

3. Candidates for a titled position visit the other chiefs, bringing them presents and food; the candidates also entertain the other chiefs in their own homes, hoping to make a better impression than their rival candidates. In campaigning to succeed his father, and having visited all the chiefs on earth that he considered worthy of his notice, Shakeu presumed to see the Sky God himself.

oke ɔrun, ʃakeu wa duro si agbedemeji ɔrun, orun npa. N(i)-
 hill (of) sky, Shakeu come stand to middle (of) sky, sun killing (him). At-
 igba-ti ebi ma pa ku ni o fi igbe bɔ-(ɛ)nu pe:
 time-that hunger (continuative) kill (him) die, be he take cry enter-mouth that:

Emi ʃakeu de o ɔmɔ Ibagboloro
 "I Shakeu arrive, oh, child (of) Ibagboloro;

Ebi ma npa emi ɔmɔ oye l(i)-oke o.
 "Hunger (continuative) killing me, child (of) title at-hill, oh."

Ifa ni Q-l(i)-ɔrun fɛ gbe atupa iwa fun ɛni-kan, ki
 Ifa say One:who-has-sky want take lamp (of) destiny give person-one, should
 o ʃɔ-(a)ra ki o ma ba fi a-ʃe-ju bajɛ, ki o ma ba
 he watch-body that he not should take to-do-surpass spoil (it), that he not should
 ja okun di-(o)ju.
 cut rope close-eye.

OFUN - (E)DI - 2

A-ta-koro awo wɔn l(i)-ode Igbade l(i)-o da fun
 "One:who-kick-at:once," secret (of) those at-outside Igbade be-who cast for
 wɔn l(i)-ode Igbade ni-(ɔ)jɔ ti mu-(ɛ)ni-mu-(ɛ)ni ɔrun de,
 them at-outside (of) Igbade at-day that take- person-take-person (of) sky arrive,
 ti ɛmimɔ ɔrun nhan; A-ta-koro ni ire de
 that evil:thing (of) sky appearing; "One:who-kick-at:once" say goodness arrive
 fun wɔn ni ɔdun yi ni ode Igbade, nwɔn ni alafia, inu wɔn
 for them at year this at outside (of) Igbade; they say contentment, belly their
 dun, nwɔn yɔ.
 be:sweet, they rejoice.

Alapa-ko-wo-n(i)-ile-ki-o-lɔ-si-oko-lɔ-pa-(ɛ)ni, on na jɛ
 "Wall-not-break-at-house-that-it-go-to-farm-go-kill-person," he also eat
 babalawo ni ode Igbade, o ni ha, o ni ɛbɔ e-l(i)-e-
 diviner at outside (of) Igbade, he say 'Ha!,' he say sacrifice (of) one:who-be-who-
 mu ɔrun ni nwɔn iba ru. Egbejila, akikɔ-(a)diɛ, ati ɛran-
 take (of) sky be they should offer. 2400 (cowries), cock-chicken, and twisted-
 (o)kun ni nwɔn iba ru.
 rope be they should offer.

O ni e-l(i)-e-mu ɔrun de ti yio ma mu
 He say one:who-be-who-take (of) sky arrive that will (continuative) take
 wɔn, nwɔn ki mɔ-(i)lɛ, nwɔn bɛrɛ si lu, nwɔn ni ɛni-
 them; they push (him) against-ground, they begin to beat (him), they say person-

up to heaven. Shakeu was left hanging in mid-air, and the sun was beating down on him. When he was dying of hunger, he cried out:

"I, Shakeu come, oh; child of Ibagboloro;

"I am dying of hunger; child of a chief above, oh."

Ifa says the Sky God wants to give the lamp of destiny to someone. He should be careful lest he spoil his opportunity by being overambitious, and lest he break the string and clog up the beads.⁴

4. A metaphor for spoiling everything. See n. 2, verse 14-2.

244 - 2

"Jump at once," diviner of the town of Igbade, was the one who cast Ifa for the people of Igbade on the day that evil spirits who seize people were coming from heaven, when evil beings from heaven were appearing. "Jump at once" said that blessings would come to the people of Igbade during that year.¹ They said, "All is well"; they were happy and they rejoiced.

"The wall which collapses at home does not kill someone in the farm" was also a diviner at Igbade. He said "Ha!" He said that they should offer a sacrifice against evil spirits from heaven that would seize them. Seven pence two oninis, a cock, and twisted ropes is what they should sacrifice.

He said that evil spirits were coming from heaven to seize them and carry them away. The people shoved him to the ground and they began to beat him.² They said, "The

1. That is, he divined falsely, and failed to warn them of the impending danger.

2. Because they did not want to hear the truth about their danger.

ti awon pe so pe ire aya, ire aje, sugbon iwon ni
 that they call speak that goodness (of) wife, goodness (of) money, but you say
 e-l(i)-e-mu orun de.
 one:who-be-who-take (of) sky arrive.

Nwon si de e, n(i)-ibi-ti nwon de e mo, ni Eshu da eruku
 They and bind him, at-place-that they bind him against, be Eshu cast dust
 s(i)-inu igbo, o pa-(a)te mo, t(i)-igbo t(i)-iju
 to-belly (of) forest, he clap-palm against (it), that-(of)-forest that-(of)-dense:

di ogun, ogun ba ko gbgobo won. Nwon wa so
 forest become warrior, warrior meet gather all (of) them. They come speak
 pe babalawo yi wi be, n(i)-igba-na ni Eshu da-(o)hun pe babalawo na
 that diviner this speak so, at-time-the be Eshu break-voice that diviner the
 da? Nwon ni o ni awon de mo-(i)le yi.
 where:be (he)? They say he be they bind against-ground this.

Awon ogun kan sa-re si babalawo na, nwon ni okunrin ni. Awon
 Those warrior one run-go to diviner the, they say man be (he). Those
 ogun so fun babalawo na pe ki o se Ifa fun awon ki awon le
 warrior speak for diviner the that should he make Ifa for them that they be:able
 ri ilu miran ko, o ni afi bi nwon ba ma da awon
 see town another gather, he say unless if they should (continuative) release those
 ara ode Igbade fun on, nwon wa da awon ara ode
 people (of) outside (of) Igbade for him, they come release those people (of) outside
 Igbade fun, o wa so fun awon ara ode Igbade pe
 (of) Igbade for (him), he come speak for those people (of) outside (of) Igbade that
 ki won lo mu egb(ejila)-egbejila ati eran-(o)kun-(o)k(an)-okan ati
 should they go take 2400-2400 (cowries) and twisted-rope-one-one and
 akiko fun on.
 cock for him.

Ifa ni awon agbo kan wa, ki nwon lo bo Ifa kan bayi nitori
 Ifa say those flock one exist, should they go sacrifice:to Ifa one thus because
 ki e-l(i)-e-mu orun ma ba mu won lo ni odun yi, ki
 that one:who-be-who-take (of) sky not should take them go at year this, should
 won fi eran-(o)kun-(o)k(an)-okan, egb(ejila)-egbejila, ati akiko-(o)k(an)-
 they take twisted-rope-one-one 2400-2400 (cowries), and cock-one-
 okan ru-(e)bo.
 one offer-sacrifice.

other diviner we called promised us blessings of wives and blessings of money, but now you tell us that something from heaven is coming to seize us."

They tied him up, and at the place where they left him tied up, Eshu threw dust into the forest and clapped his hands at it.³ The forest turned into warriors, and the warriors captured all the people. The people said that a diviner had warned them of just this thing.⁴ Then Eshu spoke, asking, "Where is this diviner?" They said that they had tied him up and left him.

The warriors ran to the diviner; they said, "He's a real man!" The warriors told the diviner to make Ifa for them, so that they would be able to capture another town. He said that they could not do so unless they released the people of Igbade for him. They released the people of Igbade for him, and he told the people of Igbade that they should each go and get seven pence two oninis, a twisted rope, and a cock for him.

Ifa says that there is a group of people who should sacrifice to an Ifa because evil spirits from heaven are coming to seize them during this year; they should each sacrifice a twisted rope, seven pence two oninis, and one cock.

3. A method used by Eshu to accomplish magical transformations. Cf. verse 1-10.

4. By creating the warriors, Eshu not only rescues the diviner but makes his prediction come true.

OFUN - (Q)BARA - 1

O-fun bala-bala a da fun ina ni-(o)jjo ti o nlọ jẹ oye
 "It-be:white spotted:spotted" who cast for Fire at-day that he going eat title
 omọ ni rọ-rọ ni-(o)jjo ti aiye ina ko dara. Nwọn ni ki o
 (of) child at up-up at-day that earth (of) Fire not be:good. They say should he
 ru akikọ męta, oru epo, ati ęgbędọgbọn ki aiye rẹ ba
 offer cock three, pot (of) palm:oil, and 5000 (cowries) that earth his should
 le dara; ina ru-(ę)bo. N(i)-igba-ti o ba ku dię ki
 be:able be:good; Fire offer-sacrifice. At-time-that it should remain small that
 ina ku, bi a ba bu epo si, a bęrę si jo rọ-rọ.
 Fire die, if we should dip palm:oil to (it), it begin to dance up-up.

Ifa ni ọkunrin kan wa ti Q-l(i)-orun gbe iwa fun, bę-ni
 Ifa say man one exist that One:who-has-sky take destiny give (him), so-be
 o fęrę di arugbo tan, ina oluwarę na yio ma
 he almost become old:person finish, fire (of) person:in:question the will (continua-
 tive) dance up-up. But should he offer-sacrifice.

OFUN - (Q)BARA - 2

Igbo didi ni a gbe j(a)-agba ibanbalę ni nwọn gbe fa-(o)kun a da
 "Forest tied be we take break-agba; low:down be they take pull-rope" who cast
 fun ešinşin ni ọjjo ti o ma gbe ate n(i)-iyawo, bę-ni
 for Fly at day that he (continuative) take Birdlime at-junior:wife so-be (she)
 ko ni kọ, ko si ni fun ni alafia. Ešinşin ni ko buru
 not be divorce (him), not and be give (him) at contentment. Fly say "not be:
 on yio fę bę, ni ọjjo ti o fę ate, n(i)-igba-ti o ni ki o
 bad" he will love (her) so, at day that he love Birdlime, at-time-that it be that he
 fi ọwọ kan, ate mu, bi o ba ni ki on fi ęsę kan,
 take hand touch (her), Birdlime take (him), if it should be that he take foot touch
 ate a mu. Ešinşin wa fi ori yi ate kitikiti,
 (her) Birdlime will take (him). Fly come take head turn Birdlime completely,
 n(i)-igba-na ni ešinşin bęrę si wi-pe:
 at-time-the be Fly begin to speak-that:

Emi ni mo fę ọ-ọ-ọ.
 "I be I love you-u-u."

Bayi ni ešinşin wi titi o fi ku si oju ate.
 Thus be Fly speak until he take die to eye (of) Birdlime.

245 - 1

"It is white, flickering"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Fire on the day when he was going to take the title of "Child up high,"² on the day that things were not going well for Fire. They said he should sacrifice three cocks, a pot of palm oil, and one shilling three pence, so that things might go well for him. Fire sacrificed. When Fire is about to die, if we pour palm oil on him he begins to dance up high.³

Ifa says there is a man to whom the Sky God will give his destiny; even though he is almost an old man, the "fire" of his destiny will continue to dance up high. But he should offer a sacrifice.

1. Bala-bala means "spotted with mud," when applied to a cloth, and "flickering," when applied to a fire. In this context both meanings are implied, since it modifies directly the verb "to be white," and since it is a part of the name of Fire's diviner.

2. "Child up high" or "Child at up-up" is a praise-name of Fire; as seen below, it means that the fire will burn high.

3. Meaning that the flames will burn high. Note that the palm oil included in the sacrifice is instrumental in making the prediction come to pass. Cf. verse 222-3.

245 - 2

"It is in the dense forest that we pluck twine; it is down that we pull rope"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Fly on the day that he was going to take Birdlime² as his wife. They warned him that she would neither divorce him nor give him peace. Fly said "All right," he would marry her anyway. On the day that he married Birdlime, when he touched her with his hand, Birdlime seized him; and when he touched her with his foot, Birdlime seized him. Fly rolled his head³ against her and was stuck completely. Then Fly began to say.

"I-I-I lov-v-ve you-u-u."⁴

Fly kept saying this until he died in the Birdlime.

1. Both agba and okun were given as words for rope and twine. The reference here is to the gathering of vines or lianas for use as rope, as these are pulled down from the large trees of the forest.

2. Cf. n. 2, verse 225-2. A sticky substance like that on flypaper.

3. As a fly twists or turns its head on its neck. Cf. the Tar Baby story.

4. This is said to be what fly says when it buzzes. When this line is repeated, all the final vowels are nasalized as follows: "emin nin mon fɛn ɔ-ɔ-ɔn," to imitate the buzzing sound. The verse explains why flies buzz as they do, and why they stick in birdlime.

Ifa ni a-(yi)o fẹ obinrin dara-dara kan, n(i)-igba-ti obinrin yi ko ni
 Ifa say we-will love woman fine-fine one, at-time-that woman this not be
 kọ-(ẹ)ni tan, ọkunrin na ko si ni ni alafia l(i)-ara obinrin
 divorce-person finish, man the not and be have contentment at-body (of) woman
 yi titi ọkunrin na yio fi ku. Akikọ męta ati ẹgbẹdọgbọn ni ẹbọ ti
 this until man the will take die. Cock three and 5000 (cowries) be sacrifice that
 a yan fun eşinşin şugbọn ko ru ẹbọ na, bi o ba şe pe o
 they choose for Fly but not offer sacrifice the, if it should make that he
 ru ẹbọ na, eşinşin ki ba ti ma ku si ori ate.
 offer sacrifice the, Fly not should have (continuative) die to head (of) Birdlime.

 OFUN -(Q)BARA - 3

Lile oşu ọmọ ni dederede, ai-le oşu ọmọ
 "Appearance (of) month (of) child at plainly; not-appear (of) month (of) child
 ni dedere a da fun Qrunmila ti o nni-(ọ)kan mu igba obi ti o
 at plainly" who cast for Qrunmila that he being-one take calabash (of) kola that he
 nni-(ọ)kan mu-(i)gba ata; nwọn ni ki Qrunmila ru-(ẹ)bọ
 being-one take-calabash (of) pepper; they say should Qrunmila offer-sacrifice
 pe ni oşu ti o ma le yi ni Q-l(i)-qrun gbe igba
 that at month that it (continuative) appear this be One:who-has-sky take calabash
 iwa le l(i)-ọwọ, ẹiyẹ-(i)le męrin ati ẹgbarun,
 (of) destiny upon (him) at-hand, bird-(of)-house four and 10,000 (cowries),
 igbin meji, ati ekuru fun-fun. O ru-(ẹ)bọ. N(i)-igba-
 snail two, and steamed:beans be:white-be:white. He offer-sacrifice. At-time-
 ti Qrunmila ru-(ẹ)bọ yi tan ni owo ba de si, n(i)-
 that Qrunmila offer-sacrifice this finish, be cowries should arrive to (him); at-
 igba-ti o wa di o-l(i)-owo tan ti o ni ẹru ti
 time-that he come become one:who-have-cowries finish that he have slaves that
 o ni iwọfa, ni o bęre si wi-pe:
 he have pawns, be he begin to speak-that:
 Iya o ba ti ya mi l(i)-oşu yi, o,
 "Pawning he should have pawned me at-month this, oh,
 Agba-(a)gba a ki f(i)-ara ş(e)-ọfa k(i)-a r(ł)-oju sin-(i)kin ęni.
 "Elder-elder we not take-body make-pawn that-we see-eye serve-ikin (of) person."
 Ifa ni ęni-kan nfẹ di o-l(i)-owo, ti yio fi a-
 Ifa say person-one wanting become one:who-have-cowries, that will take one:
 l(i)-ai-j(ẹ)-oye, yio si ju o-l(i)-oye lọ, gbogbo ohun ti o
 who-be-not-eat-title, will and surpass one:who-has-title go, all thing that he

Ifa says someone will marry a very beautiful woman; but when this woman refuses to divorce him, the man will not have peace with this woman until he dies. Three cocks and one shilling three pence is the sacrifice that they chose for Fly, but he did not make it. If Fly had made this sacrifice, he would not always get stuck in birdlime.

245 - 3

"The new moon appears clearly; the new moon does not appear clearly"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he had to carry his calabash of kola nuts by himself and to carry his calabash of pepper by himself.² They said Qrunmila should sacrifice four pigeons, two shillings six pence, two snails, and white steamed beans so that the Sky God might put the calabash of destiny into his hands during the present month. He made the sacrifice. When Qrunmila had completed the sacrifice, money came to him; when he became rich and had slaves and "pawns,"³ he began to say:

"They were going to pawn me this month, oh;

"Elders, we do not pawn ourselves and have time to serve our palm nuts."⁴

Ifa says someone wants to be a man with money; he will not have a title, but he will be more important than a chief. He will have everything

1. Cf. Clarke, 1939: 247.

2. Because he was poor and had no relatives or followers to help him.

3. See n. 2, verse 181-4.

4. This again is obscure. One informant interpreted it as meaning that before Qrunmila sacrificed, his status was no better than that of a "pawn" or indentured servant. It also seems to imply that Qrunmila had been so poor that he was about to be pawned. In either case it is clear that he is concerned about sacrificing to his divining nuts, which would have been difficult if he were a pawn.

nfẹ ni ode aiye ni yio ri, şugbọn l(i)-oni yi oluwarẹ
wanting at outside (of) earth be (he) will see, but at-today this person:in:

ni-(o)kan mu-(i)gba o nni-(o)kan mu awo.
question be-one take-calabash he being-one take plate.

OFUN - (Q)BARA - 4

Akikara-(i)gba fọ o di o-n(i)-ipa mu-(i)pa,
"Broken:piece-(of)-calabash break, it become one:who-have-path take-path,
o-n(i)-iya mu-(i)ya a da fun Oluw(a)-ẹri ni-(o)jọ ti o
one:who-has-turning take-turning" who cast for Lord-(of)-river at-day that he
ma gba obinrin Keso, nwọn ni ki Oluw(a)-ẹri ru-
(continuative) take woman (of) Keso, they say should Lord-(of)-river offer-
(ẹ)bọ ki o ma jẹ-pe nitori-ti obinrin yi ni t(i)-ile
sacrifice that he not consent-that because-that (of) woman this be that-(of)-house
t(i)-ona rẹ ma pa-run si. Oluw(a)-ẹri ni on yio
that-(of)-road his (continuative) kill-perish to (her). Lord-(of)-river say he will
gba. Nwọn ni ki o ru ewurẹ, amu ori, igba igbin,
take (her). They say should he offer she:goat, jar (of) shea:butter, 200 snail,
ejielogun.
44,000 (cowries).

Oluw(a)-ẹri ko ru-(ẹ)bọ o si gba obinrin Keso, n(i)-igba-
Lord-(of)-river not offer-sacrifice, he and take woman (of) Keso, at-time-
ti o di oşu-(ẹ)kẹta ti Oluw(a)-ẹri ti gba aya Keso ni Igun
that it become month-third that Lord-(of)-river have take wife (of) Keso be Igun
wa ki Keso, Keso si se işu, n(i)-igba-ti işu jinna, ni Keso ni
come greet Keso, Keso and cook yam, at-time-that yam be:done, be Keso say
ki Igun wa ma wo işu si odo fun on, Igun ni bawo ni o
should Igun come (continuative) peel yam to mortar for him, Igun say how be he
ti ri? O ni aya rẹ nkọ? Keso ni Oluw(a)-ẹri ti gba
have see? He say, "Wife his what:about?" Keso say Lord-(of)-river have take
ni owo on, o ni ki-ni-şe ti ko ti wi fun on
(her) at hand his, he say "What-be-(it)-make that (he) not have speak for him
lati igba-ti on ti de?
from time-that he have arrive?"

N(i)-igba-ti Igun gbọ bayi, ko le duro mọ, o lọ pe Aidan ati
At-time-that Igun hear thus, not be:able stand again, he go call Aidan and
Ata-wẹrẹ, n(i)-igba-na ni awọn mẹr(in)-(m)ẹrin dide: Igun, Keso, Ata-
Pepper-wẹrẹ, at-time-the be those four-four arrived: Igun, Keso, Pepper-
wẹrẹ ati Aidan nwọn lọ kọlu ile Oluw(a)-ẹri n(i)-igba-ti nwọn
wẹrẹ and Aidan, they go attack house (of) Lord-(of)-river; at-time-that they

he wants on earth, but at present he has to carry his calabash by himself and carry his plate by himself.

245 - 4

"The broken piece of calabash breaks again; it is time for each to take his own path, for each to take his way" was the one who cast Ifa for Lord of the River¹ on the day he was about to seduce the wife of the Keso. They said that the Lord of the River should make a sacrifice lest his house and home² be destroyed because of her. The Lord of the River said he would seduce her. They said he should sacrifice a she-goat, a jar of shea butter, 200 snails, and eleven shillings.

The Lord of the River did not sacrifice, and he took Keso's wife. After two months had passed since the Lord of the River had taken Keso's wife, Igun came to greet Keso. Keso cooked yams, and when they were done, Keso told Igun to peel them into the mortar for him. Igun asked, "What is the meaning of this?" He said, "Where is your wife?" Keso said that the Lord of the River had taken her from him. Igun said, "Why didn't you tell me this when I first arrived?"

When Igun heard this, he could wait no longer; he went and called the Aidan and Ata-węřę. When these four came together—Igun, Keso, Ata-węřę and Aidan—they went to attack the house of the Lord of the River. They

-
1. The "Lord of the River" is the "father of the fishes," but he is not a deity.
 2. All his possessions. See n. 10, verse 225-4.

kọlu, ẹja nla, isin, ẹja wẹrẹ, ọmọ Oluw(a)-ẹri ni nwọn ẹe, n(i)-
 attack, fish big, minnow, fish tiny, child (of) Lord-(of)-river be they make; at-
 igba-ti nwọn kọlu wọn, nwọn run wọn ẹẹmu-ẹẹmu, gbogbo
 time-that they attack them, they destroy them completely-completely, all

awọn ọmọ Oluw(a)-ẹri ku tan. N(i)-igba-ti nwọn mbọ ni nwọn
 those child (of) Lord-(of)-river die finish. At-time-that they coming be they

bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin wi-pe:

begin to sing-song speak-that:

Keso o ma-ş(e)-ai ja
 "Keso, oh, (imperative)-do-not fight;

Aidan ma-ş(e)-ai ja.
 "Aidan, (imperative)-do-not fight."

Ifa ni ẹni-kan fẹ gba obinrin kan, ki o ọọ-(a)ra ki o ma
 Ifa say person-one want take woman one, should he watch-body that he not

jẹ-pe t(i)-ile ti-(ọ)na ọkunrin na ni yio run
 consent-that that-(of)-house that-(of)-road (of) man the be (it) will perish

nitori obinrin ti a fẹ gba yi, ki o ru-(ẹ)bo dara-dara.
 because (of) woman that he want take this, should he offer-sacrifice be:good-be:good.

Nwọn ti ro ọkọ pin pe ko le ẹe ohun-k(u)-ohun, ẹgbọn
 They have think husband end that (he) not be:able do thing-any-thing, but

enia ẹhin ọkọ ni yio gbe-ja ọkọ obinrin na ti
 people (of) back (of) husband be (he) will assist-fight husband (of) woman the that

ile wọn yio fi run tan pata-pata t(i)-ọmọ t(i)-
 (of) house their will take perish finish completely-completely that-(of)-child that-

aya. Lati igba-na li o ti jẹ-pe awọn ọmọ ar(a)-aiye
 (of)-wife. From time-the be it have consent-that those child (of) people-(of)-earth

ti ma gun odo, ti nwọn ma nfi Igun, Aidan, Keso
 have (continuative) poison river, that they (continuative) taking Igun, Aidan, Keso

ati Ata-wẹrẹ gun odo ti nwọn si ma npa ẹja inu
 and Pepper-wẹrẹ poison river that they and (continuative) killing fish (of) belly (of)

odo.

river.

attacked the big fish, the minnows, and the small fish, who were the Lord of the River's children. They attacked them and completely destroyed them, and all the children of Lord of the River were killed. When they were returning, they began to sing:

"Keso, oh, you must not fight;

"Aidan, you must not fight."

Ifa says someone wants to seduce a woman; he should be careful lest his house and home be destroyed because of this woman that he wants to seduce; he should make a very fine sacrifice. People have thought that the husband is finished, and that he can't do anything; but people in back of the husband will assist him in fighting the seducer of his wife, and will completely destroy the seducer's home, including his wives and his children. From that time on, human beings have been using fish poison in the river, and using Igun, Aidan, Keso, and Ata-węřę as poison to kill the fish in the river.³

3. This verse explains the origin of fish poison, and why the plants are used for this purpose. Dalziel records the use of all for fish poison except keso, an unidentified fruit that is also a quick-acting purgative. Igun is the Fish Poison Bean (Tephrosia Vogelii or T. densiflora) or another plant (Mundulea sericea) known by the same name; leaves of both are used as fish poison. Ata-węřę or "Węřę peppers" possibly refers to the pods of the Fish Poison Bean, for which Dalziel gives "węřę" as an alternative name. Aidan or aridan is a fruit (Tetrapleura tetraptera).

OFUN - (Q)KANRAN¹ - 1

O-finran Èkun ni t(ẹ)-ona ni ọsan ganranin-ganranin
 "One:who-provokes, Leopard, be (he) press-road at midday upright-upright"

a da fun Qrunmila ni-(ọ)jọ ti nwọn nran-(i)şę iku pe
 who cast for Qrunmila at-day that they sending-message (of) death call (him)

l(i)-qrun Eşinrinmqgbọ.
 at-sky Eshinrinmqgbọ.

Mi ko ni rin-(ọ)na k(o)-Q-l(i)-qrun
 "I not be (who) walk-road meet-One:who-has-sky;

Agogo idę n(i)-igba-ti o ba nro goro-goro-goro
 "Gong (of) brass at-time-that it should sounding 'goro-goro-goro,'

Ki f(i)-uju kan Orişa
 "Not take-eye touch Orisha;

Mi ko ni ję ipe Q-l(i)-qrun
 "I not be (who) eat call (of) One:who-has-sky;

Aja ti ko ba ni qmọ n(i)-inu
 "Bell that not should have child at-belly,

Ki ję ipe Orişa.
 "Not eat call (of) Orisha."

Ifa ni ęni-kan ni gbogbo ar(a)-aiye k(o)-ębọ k(o)-edi
 Ifa say person-one be all people-(of)-earth gather-sacrifice gather-to:tie
 ti yi, o ni yę-yę ni nwọn nşę, qwọ wọn ko ni le tę,
 against this; he say empty-empty be they making, hand their not be be:able press

qrun ni Q-l(i)-qrun ti ran wa, oju rę ni gbogbo awọn
 (him), sky be One:who-has-sky have send (him) come, eye his be all those

ti nko ębọ ko edi ti yio şe ku tan.
 that gathering sacrifice gather to:tie against (him) will make die finish.

OFUN - (Q)KANRAN - 2

O-fun tin a da fun Ade-g(un)-ori-oye qmọ
 "It-be:white very:white" who cast for Crown-mount-head-(of)- title, child (of)

Qrangunaga nwọn ni ko ni parun ni ode aiye rę, (A)de-g(un)-ori-
 Qrangunaga; they say not be perish at outside (of) earth his, Crown-mount-head-
 oye ni orukọ ti a pe ipe, nwọn ni ki o ru obukọ kan,
 (of)-title be name that we call trumpet; they say should he offer he:goat one,

1. Also known as Ofinran Èkun, meaning "One who provokes Leopard." Cf. n. 1, verse 246-1.

"The leopard looking for a fight¹ goes walking at high noon"² was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila on the day they were sending Death to call him to heaven, Eshinrinmoghbo.³

"I do not meet the Sky God when I go walking;
 "When a brass gong is sounding 'goro-goro-goro,'⁴
 "It does not look at the God of Whiteness;⁵
 "I do not answer the call of the Sky God;⁶
 "A bell that has no clapper
 "Does not answer the call of the God of Whiteness."⁷

Ifa says there is someone against whom everyone is making sacrifices and making charms.⁸ He says they are doing it in vain; they will not be able to hold him down. From heaven the Sky God has sent him, and he will live to see all those who are making sacrifices and charms against him die.

1. Ofinran Èkun is an alternative name for the figure Ofun Qkanran, meaning "one who provokes leopard." In this context, however, it is the leopard that is looking for a fight, by appearing in the daytime, when he is most apt to meet people on the road.

2. Qsan (mid-day) covers a period from about 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Ganranin-ganranin or gan-gan refers to the position of the sun overhead, or perhaps to the intensity of its heat. Together the two terms cover the period from about noon to 2:00 P.M.

3. Identified only as a title or praise-name (oriki) of heaven.

4. The sound made by the gong, which is a large, clapperless bell beaten with a stick.

5. As informants explained, "because it has no eye." The implication, however, is probably that another type of bell (aja), mentioned below, is used in the worship of Orishala.

6. I am not going to die yet; my time to die has not yet come.

7. A bell (aja) that has lost its clapper is not useful to Orishala.

8. A type of charm (edi) to tie a person to a spot, or to make him do evil against his will.

"It is very white"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for "Crown mounts title," the child of Qranganaga.² They said he would not perish within his world. "Crown mounts title" is the name that we call trumpet.³ They said he should sacrifice one he-goat,

1. This is derived from Ofun in the name of the figure.

2. The title of the king of Ila, forty-five miles northeast of Ife.

3. These are small ivory trumpets on which are blown the titles of a chief in saluting him.

egb̄t̄alelogb̄on aṣ̄o i-san-m̄o-(i)di r̄e, o ru-(e)ḅ̄o.
6600 (cowries), cloth to-wrap-against-waist his, he offer-sacrifice.

Ifa ni ḡkunrin a-l(i)-agba kan ni-yi ti o ma ri
Ifa say man one:who-be-elder one be-this, that he (continuative) see

obinrin arugbo kan f̄e ti gbogbo enia ro pe ko le bi-(ḡ)m̄o
woman old:person one love that all people think that not be:able bear-child

m̄o, ni oju obinrin yi ni ḡm̄o ti o ma bi yio ṣ̄e j(e)-
again, at eye (of) woman this be child that she (continuative) bear will make eat-

oye ti n̄w̄on yio si ma fun ipe fun ti n̄w̄on yio si
title that they will and (continuative) blow trumpet for (him) that they will and

fi oro de e l(i)-ori, ḅ̄e-ni gbogbo enia ni n̄w̄on nfi ḡkunrin
take miter cover him at-head, so-be (it) all people be they taking man

yi ṣ̄e-(i)re bayi, nitori-ti ko ni igba tabi awo.
this make-play thus, because-that not have calabash or plate.

OFUN - (Q)KANRAN - 3

P̄eṣ̄iṣ̄iṣ̄e, p̄eṣ̄iṣ̄iṣ̄e, Ifa l(i)-o-ṣ̄e ohun ti a ba gb̄o, igede
"To:open:flat, to:open:flat, Ifa be-who-make thing that we should hear, curse

ni-(ḡ)kan ni ko ju m̄o, Igede l(i)-ohun If̄e a da fun Wa-
be-one be (we) not surpass know, Curse be-voice (of) If̄e" who cast for Come-

(i)le-(e)lu A-ji-ṣ̄(e)-ḡm̄o, ḡm̄o A-l(i)-ab̄eḅ̄e
house-(of)-stranger One:who-awake-make-child, child (of) One:who-has-fan

oyoro. N̄w̄on ni ki Wa-(i)le-(e)lu ru ṣ̄iȳe-(i)le
glittering. They say should Come-house-(of)-stranger offer bird-(of)-house

m̄erin, eḡbarun. N̄w̄on ni nitori-ti eḡḡ kan li o ma
four, 10,000 (cowries). They say because-that case one be it (continuative)

digbolu yi, n(i)-inu eḡḡ na ni o gbe ma la.
come:against (him) this, at-belly (of) case the be he take (continuative) be:wealthy.

N(i)-igba-ti o ru eḅ̄o tan, ni n̄w̄on pe l(i)-eḡḡ, o-l(i)-
At-time-that he offer sacrifice finish, be they call (him) at-case, one:who-has-

ḡfin ni ki n̄w̄on l̄o mu wa, bi n̄w̄on ti mu de ti
palace say should they go take (him) come; as they have take (him) arrive that

n̄w̄on kun-(i)l̄e ti o nro-(e)j̄ḡ, ni o jin si il̄e akun,
they kneel-ground that he reporting-case, be he fall:down to earth (of) bead,

ḡ-l(i)-ḡfin ni ki o ma gb̄on akun na, nitori-pe
one:who-has-palace say should he (continuative) scoop:out bead the, because-that

ki ṣ̄e on ni-(ḡ)kan ni on ḡ-l(i)-ḡfin k̄ḡḡ pe pe ki o wa
not make he be-one be he one:who-has-palace first call that should he come

one shilling seven pence eight oninis, and the sash from his waist. He made the sacrifice.

Ifa says this is an old man who is going to marry an old woman who everyone thinks can no longer bear children. This woman will live to see the child that she is about to bear become a chief; they will blow trumpets for him and put a miter⁴ on his head. Everyone is making fun of this man because he does not have even a calabash or a plate.

4. A type of hat, made of finely plaited straw and decorated with leather appliquéd to velvet, which is worn by the principal diviners and town chiefs (Ifẹ). (See Chapter X.)

246 - 3

"Open for all to see, open for all to see; Ifa is the one who does things we can hear about; only curses we should not know about; curses are the voice of Ifẹ"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for "Come to the foreigner's house, who wakes and makes a child," the child of "One who has a glittering fan." They said that "Come to the foreigner's house" should sacrifice four pigeons and two shillings six pence. They said he should sacrifice because of a case that would be brought against him in court, through which he would become rich.

When he had completed the sacrifice, they called him to court. The king said that they should go to bring him, and when he was brought and knelt down to state his case, he broke through the ground into a pit of beads.² The king said he should take the beads, because he was not the first nor the only one whom the king had called to come

1. This means that the Ifa diviners do not work with bad medicine or do other evil things which have to be concealed, while those who use curses keep their work a secret. Ifẹ is reputed as a place where curses are strong and commonly used, as the Ijẹbu people are known for using bad medicine (ogun). Spells or incantations (ofọ) whose purpose is to kill someone are known as igede, ogede, or ẹgede.

2. See n. 5, verse 3-1.

ro-(ẹ)jọ. Bayi-ni Wa-(i)le-(e)lu bẹrẹ si gbọn akun na ti
report-case. Thus-be Come-house-(of)-stranger begin to scoop:out bead the that
o si ti ibẹ di ọ-l(i)-ọla. Wa-(i)le-(e)lu
he and from there become one:who-have-wealth. Come-house-(of)-stranger

wa bẹrẹ si wi-pe: N-ko mọ pe a-pe-jin ni erin pe on.
come begin to speak-that: "I-not know that to-call-give be Elephant call him."

Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti ọran kan ha mọ, tabi ti o
Ifa say person-one exist that affair one press against (him), or that he
ma ro-(ẹ)jọ kan yi, Ifa ni n(i)-inu ẹjọ na ni oluwarẹ
(continuative) report-case one this; Ifa say at-belly (of) case the be person:in:

yio ti di ọ-l(i)-ọla.
question will have become one:who-have-wealth.

OFUN - (Q)KANRAN - 4

Ejo tere nnako tere nna a da fun ẹrunlọjọ eku ni-(ọ)jọ ti Ọfọn
"Snake tere nnako tere nna" who cast for 165 rat at-day that Mouse
nlọ ji ogiri Oriṣa jẹ, nwọn ni ki nwọn ru akikọ
going steal boiled:locust:bean (of) Orisha eat, they say should they offer cock
(ọ)k(an)-ọkan ati ẹgb(ẹsan)-ẹgbẹsan. Gbogbo awọn eku ru-(ẹ)bọ
one-one and 1800-1800 (cowries). All those rat offer-sacrifice
ṣugbọn Ọfọn ni-(ọ)kan ni ko ru-(ẹ)bọ.
but Mouse be-one be (he) not offer-sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti o di ọjọ kan ogiri Oriṣa nu, Oriṣa
At-time-that it become day one boiled:locust:bean (of) Orisha be:lost, Orisha
wa sọ-pe awọn eku ni o ji on ni ogiri jẹ, o kẹ irin
come speak-that those rat be who steal him at boiled:locust:bean eat, he set trap
s(i)-ilẹ o ni ki gbogbo eku wa kọja ni oju irin na, o ni ẹni-
to-ground he say should all rat come pass at eye (of) trap the, he say person-
ti o ba ji on ni ogiri jẹ, irin yio mu. Ẹmọ ni
that he should steal him at boiled:locust:bean eat, trap will take (him). Ẹmọ be
o kọkọ kọja o si nk(ọ)-orin pe:
who first pass he and singing-song that:

Ejo tere nnako tere nna
"Snake tere nnako, tere nna;

Ẹmọ l(i)-ori eku Tere nna
"Ẹmọ be-head (of) rat Tere nna;

Akọsin l(i)-ako wọn jẹ Tere nna
"Akọsin be-leader their eat, Tere nna.

and state his case.³ So "Come to the foreigner's house" began to scoop up the beads, and in this way he became a wealthy man. "Come to the foreigner's house" began to say: "I didn't know that the Elephant called me to give me a present."⁴

Ifa says there is someone whose affairs are troubling him, or that someone has been called to state his case in court. Ifa says that through this case, he will become wealthy.

3. Because they had not been found by the many others who had knelt in the same spot, the beads must have been meant for him. Usually the king claims half of any beads found in this way.

4. He expected, rather, to be punished. Elephant is a praise-name of the king.

246 - 4

"Snake tere nnako, tere nna"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for the 165 kinds² of rats on the day that Mouse was going to steal and eat the boiled locust beans³ of the God of Whiteness. They said they should sacrifice one cock each and five pence four oninis apiece. All the rats made the sacrifice except Mouse who alone did not sacrifice.

One day the boiled locust beans of the God of Whiteness were missing. The God of Whiteness said that rats were the ones who had stolen and eaten his boiled locust beans; and he set a trap and told all the rats to come and pass over it. He said that the ones who had stolen his boiled locust beans would be caught in the trap. The *Ẹmọ* rat⁴ was the first to pass over, and as he went he sang:

"Snake, tere nnako, Tere nna;
 "Ẹmọ is head of the rats, Tere nna;
 "Akọsin⁵ is their leader, Tere nna.

1. These words have no meaning, but are added to the song which goes with this verse "to make it sweet." "Tere nna" is the refrain in which the chorus joins.

2. See n. 3, verse 18-4.

3. Ogiri are boiled and fermented oil seeds used in preparing stew sauce. Eginsi or melon seeds (*Citrullus vulgaris*) are commonly used but iru or African locust beans (*Parkia filicoidea*) are regarded as "sweeter" and are specified in the song below. Both eginsi stew and fried locust beans are favorite foods of the God of Whiteness, identified here only as Orisha. Cf. n. 3, verse 5-1.

4. A small brown rat; Tullberg's rat (*Praomys Tullbergi*).

5. An unidentified kind of rat who "goes in front when rats are looking for food.

Bi mo ba ji-(i)ru ana jẹ Tere nna
 "If I should steal-locust:bean (of) yesterday eat, Tere nna;

Ki-(i)rin kan mi l(i)-a-kan-pa Tere nna
 "Should-trap knock me at-to-knock-kill, Tere nna.

Bi mi ko ba ji-(i)ru ana jẹ Tere nna
 "If I not should steal-locust:bean (of) yesterday eat, Tere nna;

Ki-(i)rin kan mi l(i)-a-kan-yọ Tere nna
 "Should-trap knock me at-to-knock-slip, Tere nna;

Ejo tere nnako Tere nna.
 "Snake tere nnako, Tere nna."

Bayi ni Ẹmọ kọja ti irin ko si mu, gbogbo eku si nkọ-(o)rin bayi,
 Thus be Ẹmọ pass that trap not and take (him), all rat and singing-song thus,

nwọn si nkọja ni oju irin titi ti o fi kan Qfọn, şugbọn n(i)-igba-
 they and passing at eye (of) trap until that it take touch Mouse, but at-time-

ti o ni ki on kọja irin si mu n(i)-igba-ti nwọn tu Qfọn
 that he say should he pass, trap and take (him), at-time-that they loosen Mouse

tan, o ja lu igbo, lati igba-na ni Qfọn ko ti nba eku
 finish, he jump strike forest; from time-the be Mouse not have meeting rat

pe mọ.
 assemble again.

Ifa ni ki awọn kan ru-(ẹ)bọ nitori-ti bi ọran kan bi ẹni
 Ifa say should those one offer-sacrifice because-that as matter one if person

mu aje ole, ki ẹni-kan ma fi ẹsẹ ko (ohu)n-kan ba
 drink ordeal (of) thief, should person-one not take foot gather thing-one meet

wọn. Ifa ni ole kan yio ja, şugbọn ki e-l(i)-eyi ru-
 them. Ifa say thief one will reach (us), but should one:who-be-this offer-

(ẹ)bọ ki a ma ba mu ni ole. Ẹni-kan wa ni ipo
 sacrifice that we not should take (him) at thief. Person-one exist at position (of)

oye kan l(i)-oni, o nji iru, ni oşu meṭa l(i)-oni ni Olodumare yio fi
 title one at-today, he waving tail, at month three at-today be Olodumare will put

glomiran si ori ipo na.
 another:person to head (of) position the.

OFUN - (I)ROSUN - 1

Oşuşu ọwọ a b(i)-ẹnu l(i)-apa kan a da fun Ofun
 "Bunch (of) midrib:of:palm:leaf it bear-mouth at-arm one" who cast for Ofun

ti o ma mu ọbuntun adugbo wa s(i)-ile nwọn ni ki
 that he (continuative) take bride (of) quarter come to-house; they say should

"If I stole the locust beans yesterday to eat, Tere nna;
 "May the trap catch me, Tere nna.
 "If I did not steal the locust beans yesterday to eat, Tere nna;
 "May the trap let me escape, Tere nna;
 "Snake tere nnako, Tere nna."

In this way the Ẹmọ rat passed over and the trap did not catch him; and all the rats sang this song and passed over the trap until it was the turn of Mouse. But when the God of Whiteness said that Mouse should pass over, the trap caught him. When they released Mouse, he ran away. From that time on, Mouse has not associated with the rats any more.⁶

Ifa says a group of people should make a sacrifice so that if someone takes an ordeal to prove he is not a thief, he may not bring evil home to them. Ifa says that we will encounter a thief, but this person should make a sacrifice lest he himself be taken as the thief. There is someone who has a title today; he is waving a horse-tail switch;⁷ two months from today the Sky God will put another person in his place.

6. The verse thus explains why Mouse lives in the house and not with the other rats.

7. Chiefs use whisks similar to those of the *babalawo*, but made of horse tails rather than cow tails. This prediction involves a pun on "steal locust beans" (*ji iru*) and "wave tail" (*ji iru*); the latter would more commonly be given as *ju irukẹrẹ*. Cf. n. 5, verse 54-4.

"Broom's mouth is on one side"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Ofun when he was going to bring home a bride from his quarter. They said

1. Yoruba brooms or besoms are made of the midribs (*ọwọ*) of palm leaves, tied together with a string around the middle. The butt or base of the broom is usually not perpendicular to its axis, but slanted at an angle, to which this name refers.

o ru ayebọ meji, ẹgbẹdọgbọn, Ofun ru-(ẹ)bọ, bayi ni o do
 he offer hen two, 5000 (cowries); Ofun offer-sacrifice, thus be he copulate:

Irosun l(i)-oyun.
 with Irosun (she) have-pregnancy.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan ma fẹ obinrin kan, iṣe ni o ma
 Ifa say person-one (continuative) love woman one, make (it) be he (continuative)
 ji obinrin na do ti obinrin na yio si l(i)-oyun, n(i)-
 steal woman the copulate:with (her), that woman the will and have-pregnancy; at-
 igba-na ni yio si di aya rẹ.
 time-the be (she) will and become wife his.

OFUN - (I)ROSUN - 2

Ṣofe l(i)-awo Ewi, A-rin-(ọ)na-ko awo Qfa. Ṣofe nṣ(e)-
 Shofe be-secret (of) Ewi, To-walk-road-meet secret (of) Qfa. Shofe making-
 awo fun Ewi, o si ndo aya rẹ, gbogbo ohun ti o nṣe fun
 secret for Ewi, he and copulating:with wife his, all thing that he doing for
 Ewi ko gba bẹ-ni ko jẹ mọ. N(i)-igba-na ni Ewi ni ki a lọ pe A-
 Ewi not take so-be not eat again. At-time-the be Ewi say should they go call To-
 rin-(ọ)na-ko awo Qfa wa pe ki o wa ṣe (ohu)n-kan fun on,
 walk-road-meet, secret (of) Qfa, come that should he come do thing-one for him,
 boya ohun ti o wa ṣe fun on yio gba.
 perhaps thing that he come do for him will take.

N(i)-igba-ti Ṣofe gbọ pe Ewi lọ ran-(i)ṣẹ pe babalawo miran, o
 At-time-that Shofe hear that Ewi go send-message call diviner another, he
 si mọ pe bi o ba de yio bo-(o)ri rẹ Ṣofe ji wa si
 and know that if he should arrive will cover-head his, Shofe awake come to
 odo Ewi, o sọ fun pe babalawo kan nbọ ni ọdọ rẹ
 presence (of) Ewi, he speak for (him) that diviner one coming at presence his
 l(i)-oni, babalawo na ni ẹbọ, nitori-na Ewi ran-(i)ṣẹ lọ s(i)-ọju
 at-today, diviner the be sacrifice, because-the Ewi send-message go to-eye
 ọna, bi A-rin-(ọ)na-ko ti nbọ o bọ si ọwọ awọn o-
 (of) road, as To-walk-road-meet have coming he come to hand (of) those one:who-
 n(i)-iṣẹ Ewi, nwọn si mu N(i)-igba-na ni A-rin-(ọ)na-ko
 have-message (of) Ewi, they and take (him). At-time-the be To-walk-road-meet
 da-(o)hun, o ni, ile on ni on wa ti Ewi wa ran-(i)ṣẹ pe on,
 break-voice, he say house his be he exist that Ewi come send-message call him,
 abi enia a ma pe ni pa?
 or people they (continuative) call (one) be (they) kill (him)?

he should sacrifice two hens and one shilling three pence. Ofun made the sacrifice, and in this way he had intercourse with Irosun² and she became pregnant.

Ifa says someone loves a woman. He should "steal" the woman³ and have intercourse with her, so that she will become pregnant. Then she will become his wife.

2. The name of the figure is explained here in terms of the sexual union of Ofun and Irosun.

3. Have an illicit affair with her.

247 - 2

Shofe, the diviner of the Ewi; "Meet walking along the road," the diviner of Qfa.¹ Shofe was divining for the Ewi, and he was having intercourse with his wife; everything that he did for the Ewi did not take effect and did not work any more.² Then Ewi said they should go and call "Meet walking along the road," the diviner of Qfa, to come and do something for him, hoping that perhaps what he did would take effect.

When Shofe heard that the Ewi had sent to call another diviner, he knew that if he arrived, the other diviner would outdo him. Shofe awoke and went to see the Ewi; he told him that a diviner was coming to see him that day, and that the diviner was required as a sacrifice.³ Thereupon the Ewi sent his messengers to the road, and as "Meet walking along the road" was coming, he fell into the hands of Ewi's messengers. They seized him. Then "Meet walking along the road" spoke, saying, "The Ewi sent to my own house to call me. Do people invite someone to come, and then kill him?"

1. Ewi is the title of the King of Ado Ekiti, a town about fifty miles east of Ife, while Qfa is a town about the same distance to the north. This verse begins simply by naming the two central characters in the tale, both of whom are diviners, without the usual statement of problem and divination to serve as a precedent.

2. As stated more explicitly later in the verse, it is a tabu for a diviner or for a medicine man or doctor to commit adultery with the wife of a client, the consequence being that their predictions will not come true and their charms and medicines will not work.

3. He falsified Ifa's message to protect himself.

N(i)-igba-na ni A-rin-(o)na-ko wa sọ fun Ewi pe babalawo ti
 At-time-the be To-walk-road-meet come speak for Ewi that diviner that
 o nd(a)-Ifa fun ni ko jẹ ki aiye Ewi gun, nitori-
 he casting-Ifa for (him) be not consent that earth (of) Ewi be:orderly, because-
 ti o ndo ni obinrin, n(i)-igba-na ni Şofe, ti işe babalawo
 that he copulating:with (him) at woman, at-time-the be Shofe, that make diviner
 Ewi, da-(o)hun pe nibo ni on ti gbe ndo aya Ewi ti
 (of) Ewi, break-voice that where be he have take copulating:with wife (of) Ewi that
 A-rin-(o)na-ko ri on? A-rin-(o)na-ko da-(o)hun, o ni ki
 To-walk-road-meet see him? To-walk-road-meet break-voice, he say should
 gbogbo awọn aya Ewi lọ ma ko ọkẹ aşo wọn wa, n(i)-
 all those wife (of) Ewi go (continuative) gather bag (of) cloth their come; at-
 igba-ti nwọn ko wọn de, ni gbogbo wọn ntu ọkẹ wọn, nwọn
 time-that they gather them arrive, be all them loosening bag their, they
 nko aşo inu wọn s(i)-ilẹ, n(i)-ibi-ti nwọn gbe nko aşo
 gathering cloth (of) belly their to-ground; at-place-that they take gathering cloth
 s(i)-ilẹ ni nwọn ri i-san-mọ-(i)di aşo Ewi kan n(i)-inu ọkẹ
 to-ground be they see to-wrap-against-waist cloth (of) Ewi one at-belly (of) bag
 obinrin Ewi kan,
 (of) woman (of) Ewi one;

N(i)-igba-na ni Ewi da-(o)hun pe n(i)-igba-ti o sọ pe iwọ ko fẹ
 At-time-the be Ewi break-voice that "At-time-that you speak that you not love
 mi l(i)-aya, bawo ni aşo yi şe de inu ọkẹ aya on yi, nitori-
 me at-wife, how be cloth this make arrive belly (of) bag (of) wife his this, because-
 ti on ti fi aşo yi ru-(ẹ)bọ l(i)-ọwọ iwọ, Şofe, o si ti
 that he have take cloth this offer-sacrifice at-hand (of) you, Shofe, you and have
 jẹ l(i)-eru lọ, bayi ni nwọn ki Şofe mọ-(i)lẹ ti nwọn de e,
 eat (it) at-payment go"; thus be they push Shofe against-ground that they bind him,
 Ewi si ni ki nwọn lọ ma gbẹ ilẹ n(i)-inu gbagede on
 Ewi and say should they go (continuative) dig ground at-belly (of) backyard his
 ki on ba fi nu-(i)lẹ, ki on fi şe ebọ
 that they should take (him) put:in-ground, should they take (him) make sacrifice
 ti nwọn wi.
 that they speak.

Şofe bẹ A-rin-(o)na-ko pe ki o gba on, A-rin-(o)na-ko
 Shofe request To-walk-road-meet that should he help him, To-walk-road-meet
 wa sọ fun pe, şe o mọ n(i)-igba-ti o fi yan on ni
 come speak for (him) that, "Make you know at-time-that you take choose him at
 ẹbọ? O ni on ko mọ, n(i)-igba-ti o bẹ titi A-rin-(o)na-ko
 sacrifice?" He say he not know, at-time-that he request until, To-walk-road-meet

Then "Meet walking along the road" told the Ewi that the diviner who was casting Ifa for him was preventing his affairs from being in order because he was having intercourse with one of his wives. Then Shofe, who was the Ewi's diviner, replied, "Where have I been having intercourse with the Ewi's wife, that you saw me?" "Meet walking along the road" answered, saying that all the wives of the Ewi should bring out their bags of clothes. When they had brought them, they began to undo them and to empty the clothes inside them onto the ground. As they were doing this, they saw a sash of the Ewi in the bag of one of the Ewi's wives.

Then the Ewi spoke: "You said that you were not making love to my wife. How, then, did this cloth get inside my wife's bag? Because I used it to make a sacrifice which you prescribed for Shofe, and you took it away as payment." So they forced Shofe to the ground and tied him up. The Ewi said they should go and dig a hole in the back yard, and bury him in it, and that Shofe should be used to make the sacrifice which he himself had prescribed.

Shofe begged "Meet walking along the road" to help him. "Meet walking along the road" replied, "Don't you remember when you said I should be sacrificed?" Shofe said he didn't remember. When he had pleaded and pleaded, "Meet walking along the road"

gbe Şofe g(un)-odi Şofe si sa-lq. A-rin-(q)na-ko wa pa
 carry Shofe climb-townwall, Shofe and run-go. To-walk-road-meet come kill

ewurę nu-(i)lę o si sq fun Ewi pe on ti pa.
 she:goat put:in-ground he and speak for Ewi that he have kill (him).

N(i)-igba-ti o pę nwon wa ngburo Şofe ka-kiri,
 At-time-that it be:long they come hearing:news (of) Shofe go:around-about,

Ewi si bi A-rin-(q)na-ko lere pe še o ni o ti pa Şofe ru-
 Ewi and ask To-walk-road-meet (1) that "Make you say you have kill Shofe offer-

(ę)bq? O ni bę ni, boya ogun li o fi da
 sacrifice? He say so be (it), perhaps medicine be he take (it) transform (himself)

lq, Şofe wa bęre si wi-pe:
 go, Shofe come begin to speak-that:

A-rin-(q)na-ko o ma še-(oh)un, o še enia
 "To-walk-road-meet you indeed make-thing, you make person;

O ko ję-ki a mu Şofe Ewi s(e)-ębq.
 "You not consent-that they take Shofe (of) Ewi make-sacrifice."

Ifa ni ęni-kan wa ai-san nşe, ki o kiyesi ara, ęni-
 Ifa say person-one exist not-be:better making, should he heed body, person-
 ti nşe Ifa tabi ogun fun-(ę)ni ko ję-ki o san, o nfę
 that making Ifa or medicine for-person not consent-that he be:better, he loving

ni obinrin, obinrin a-l(i)-ai-san na si nd(o)-
 (him) at woman, woman (of) one:who-be-not-be:better the and copulating:with-

qkq mq l(i)-ara, nitori-na gbogbo ogun tabi Ifa ti o
 husband against (him) at-body, because-the all medicine or Ifa that he

nşe ko le ję. Ewurę kan, ejielogun aşq ara rę ni
 making not be:able eat. She:goat one, 44,000 (cowries), cloth (of) body his be

ębq.
 sacrifice.

Ifa ni a-(yi)o pe ęni-kan lq si şhin odi kan lq şe
 Ifa say they-will call person-one go to back (of) townwall one go make

ogun tabi Ifa kan, ki o şq-(a)ra ki o ma ba ko ekona
 medicine or Ifa one, should he watch-body that he not should meet evil:spirit

n(i)-ibi-ti o nlq, nitori-ti oluwarę yio ba enini
 at-place-that he going, because-that person:in:question will meet enemy (of)

ęni-ti o ti nşe Ifa tabi ogun fun a-l(i)-ai-san na
 person-that he have making Ifa or medicine for one:who-be-not-be:better the

pade, nitori-na ki o ru aguntan kan ati aşq kan pęlu ętala.
 meet, because-the should he offer ewe one and cloth one together:with 26,000

(cowries).

1. Bi . . . lere means "to ask."

took Shofe to the town wall, and let Shofe climb the town wall and run away. "Meet walking along the road" came back and killed a she-goat and buried it in the hole; and he told the Ewi that he had killed Shofe.

After a while they heard news that Shofe was still alive, and the Ewi asked "Meet walking along the road": "Didn't you say you had killed Shofe as a sacrifice? He said, "Yes, but perhaps he had medicine to bring himself back to life." Shofe then began to say:

"'Meet walking along the road,' you were kind indeed; you are truly human;
"You did not let them take Ewi's Shofe to make the sacrifice."

Ifa says there is someone who is not well; he should be careful. The person who is making Ifa or making medicine for him does not let him get well, because he is making love to his wife; and the wife of the sick person is committing adultery against him. Therefore all the medicine and the Ifa that he is making are not able to work. One she-goat, eleven shillings, and the cloth from his body is the sacrifice.

Ifa says someone will be called out of town to make medicine or Ifa. He should be careful lest he meet an evil spirit where he is going, because he will meet with the enemy of the sick person for whom he is making Ifa or medicine. Therefore he should sacrifice one ewe and one cloth, plus six shillings six pence.

OFUN - (I)ROSUN - 3

A-kọ-(e)be-le-(e)be awo inu oko a da fun
 "To-pile-yam:heap-upon-yam:heap," secret (of) belly (of) farm who cast for

Etitan ni-(ọ)jọ ti Etitan wa ni on ni-(ọ)kan ti ko n(i)-
 Refuse:Heap at-day that Refuse:Heap exist at he be-one that (he) not have-
 igba ti ko l(i)-awo nwọn ni aya kan ni o ma ri fẹ
 calabash that (he) not have-plate, they say wife one be he (continuative) see love
 yi, n(i)-igba-ti o ba fẹ aya na tan ni t(i)-ẹru t(i)-ọmọ
 this; at-time-that he should love wife the finish be that-(of)-slave that-(of)-child
 yio ma pe sin, nwọn ni ki o ru eku, ẹja, ori,
 will (continuative) assemble serve (him); they say should he offer rat, fish, shea:
 obukọ kan, ẹgbẹrindinlogun, Etitan ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 butter, he:goat one, 3200 (cowries); Refuse:Heap offer-sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti Etitan ru-(ẹ)bọ tan o ri obinrin kan ti orukọ
 At-time-that Refuse:Heap offer-sacrifice finish he see woman one that name
 rẹ njẹ Gborongaga fẹ, n(i)-igba-na ni o di pe gbogbo enia ngba
 her eating Gborongaga love, at-time-the be it become that all people sweeping
 ile gba ode wa da s(i)-inu Etitan ti ifa
 house sweep outside come cast (it) to-belly (of) Refuse:Heap that windfall (of)
 ile ati ti ode di ti Atitan. Olu a-wu-
 house and that (of) outside become that (of) Refuse:heap. Mushroom to-sprout-
 ka-(a)lẹ ori Atitan ni jẹ Gborongaga.
 around-evening (of) head (of) Refuse:heap be (who) eat Gborongaga.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti ko ni (ohu)n-kan-kan nisisiyi, yio ri
 Ifa say person-one exist that not have thing-one-one right:now, will see
 obinrin kan fẹ n(i)-igba-ti o ba fẹ tan ni ifa yio ma
 woman one love; at-time-that he should love (her) finish be windfall will (continu-
 ti gbogbo ilu wa ba.
 ative) from all town come meet (him)

Yesi gbe Gborongaga ni iyawo?
 "Who take Gborongaga at junior:wife?"

Atitan ga-ga-ga l(i)-o gbe Gborongaga ni iyawo.
 "Refuse:Heap be:high-be:high-be:high be-who take Gborongaga at junior:wife."

OFUN - (I)ROSUN - 4

Ẹrun ipọn-(ọ)na o f(i)-oju j(ọ)-ikin ko ri ẹjẹ jẹ
 "Palm:nut (of) mouth-(of)-road it take-eye resemble-ikin, not see blood eat
 bi ikin a da fun Ofun O-l(i)-osun a f(i)-ẹfun s(i)-oju sọ-(ẹ)kun
 like ikin" who cast for Ofun Who-has-camwood who take-chalk to-eye shed-tears

247 - 3

"Pile yam heap upon yam heap," the diviner inside the farm, was the one who cast Ifa for Refuse Heap in the days when Refuse Heap lived all alone, and had neither a calabash nor a plate.¹ They said he would find a woman to marry, and that when he had married her, both slaves and children would assemble to serve him.² They said he should sacrifice a rat, a fish, shea butter, one he-goat, and nine pence six oninis. Refuse Heap made the sacrifice.

When Refuse Heap had completed the sacrifice, he met a woman whose name was Gborongaga and married her. Then it happened that everyone sweeping their houses and sweeping the streets came and threw their sweepings on Refuse Heap, and that the windfalls³ from the house and the street belonged to Refuse Heap. The mushroom that springs up overnight on Refuse Heap is what is called Gborongaga.

Ifa says there is someone who does not own anything at present; he will find a woman to marry; when he has married her, he will receive windfalls from everyone in town.

"Who married Gborongaga?"

"Refuse Heap, very tall, was the one who married Gborongaga."

-
1. That is, he had no property and no family, friends, or followers.
 2. They will work for him, as a subject serves a king, or a child his father.
 3. Property that comes into one's possession unexpectedly, without payment, and even without his knowing how or from where it came.
-

247 - 4

"Palm nuts embedded in the path are like the palm nuts of Ifa, but they do not drink blood like Ifa's palm nuts"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Ofun with Camwood² who had put chalk on her face while weeping

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1. See n. 3, verse 6-3. Palm nuts are known both as *ęrun* and as *ekurę*.
 2. The character's name, Ofun Olosun, is a pun on the name of the figure, Ofun Irosun, as are the white chalk (*ęfun*) and the red "camwood" or barwood (*osun*) with which the client is instructed to mark her face. Cf. n. 5, verse 111-2.

omọ, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ pe ire omọ de si
 (of) child; they say should she offer-sacrifice that goodness (of) child arrive to
 ni ọdun-ni. O ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 (her) at year-this. She offer-sacrifice.

Ifa ni obinrin kan wa ti nwa omọ ori rẹ gba ayebọ adigẹ kan.
 Ifa say woman one exist that seeking child, head her take hen chicken one.

Ki o fi ẹfun sa oju ọtun, ki o fi osun sa oju osi n(i)-
 Should she take chalk mark eye right, should she take camwood mark eye left at-
 igba-ti o ba fẹ bọ ori na. Ifa ni ire omọ de
 time-that she should want sacrifice:to head the. Ifa say goodness (of) child arrive
 si ni ọdun-ni.
 to (her) at year-this.

OFUN - (I)ROSUN - 5

"Ofun Ojuro, yẹkẹ ọtita" a da fun Ojuro iya Efurẹ ti a nlọ
 "Ofun Ojuro, tipped stool" who cast for Ojuro mother (of) Efurẹ that she going

b(a)-O-l(i)-okun p(a)-ẹsan ọdun, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ
 join-One:who-has-sea kill-festival (of) year; they say should she offer-sacrifice
 ki ọna i-ši-(ọ)na ko ba ba, ko ru-(ẹ)bọ ẹiyẹ-
 that road to-miss-road not should join (her), (she) not offer-sacrifice (of) bird-
 (i)le meji, ati ẹgbẹdọgbọn.
 (of)-house two, and 5000 (cowries).

Ko ru-(ẹ)bọ, o ni ki ẹ oni ni on ti ma nlọ
 Not offer-sacrifice, she say not make today be she have (continuative) going
 ba O-l(i)-okun ẹ(e)-ọdun o ni nwọn sẹsẹ wa ni ki o ru-
 with One:who-has-sea make-year; she say they just come say should she offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ni ọdun-ni. N(i)-igba-ti o nlọ Eşu na ọpa si igbo, o
 sacrifice at year-this. At-time-that she going Eshu stretch staff to forest, she
 o ši-(ọ)na si igbo.
 and miss-road to forest.

Şugbọn n(i)-igba-ti o lọ tan, awọn ara ile rẹ wa ru-
 But at-time-that she go finish, those people (of) house hers come offer-
 (ẹ)bọ, n(i)-igba-ti Ojuro ši-(ọ)na ši-(ọ)na s(i)-inu igbo, ibi-
 sacrifice, at-time-that Ojuro miss-road miss-road to-belly (of) forest, place-
 ti o gbe nrin kiri n(i)-inu igbo o wa ba eko
 that she take walking around at-belly (of) forest she come meet tail:feather (of)
 odidẹ ni ilẹ, o ga gegerege, o wa tẹ aşşọ rẹ s(i)-ilẹ o
 parrot at ground, it be:high very:high, she come spread cloth hers to-ground she

because she had no child. They said she should sacrifice so that the blessing of a child might come to her during that year. She sacrificed.

Ifa says there is a woman who is seeking a child; her head needs a hen as sacrifice.³ She should mark her right eye with chalk and her left eye with camwood when she sacrifices to her head. Ifa says the blessing of a child will come to her during this year.

3. This sacrifice to the ancestral guardian soul is in addition to those made annually. See Chapter XI.

247 - 5

"Ofun of Ojuro, tipped stool"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Ojuro, the mother of Efur² on the day that she was going with the Sea Goddess to perform her annual festival. They said she should make a sacrifice, lest she miss her way; she did not make the sacrifice of two pigeons and one shilling three pence.

She did not sacrifice. She said that today was not the first time that she had gone with the Sea Goddess to perform her festival.³ She said the diviners were only saying that she should sacrifice this year.⁴ When she was going, Eshu pointed his staff toward the forest, and she lost her way in the forest.

But when she had gone, her relatives came to make the sacrifice. When Ojuro lost her way inside the forest, she came across parrot's red tail-feathers lying on the ground where she was wandering about, and there was a high pile of them. She spread her cloth on the ground

1. A stool (qtita, apoti) made from a section of the trunk of a tree or in the shape of a box, tipped on its side. The meaning of the full name is obscure, but Ofun refers to the name of the figure.

2. An unidentified vine used as a rope. Ojuro was said to mean face or eye spoils (oju-ro), and is identified below.

3. And she had never got lost before or had to make a sacrifice.

4. That is, she suspected the diviners of making up this prediction when there was no real basis for it, because they wanted the money.

bẹrẹ si ki-bọ, ko mọ pe ibẹ ni ọba odidẹ gbe sun, n(i)-igba-
begin to push-enter, not know that there be king (of) parrots take sleep, at-time-
ti awọn ara ile rẹ wa ti nwọn ko ri nwọn bẹrẹ si kọ-
that those people (of) house hers come that they not see (her) they begin to sing-

(o)rin pe:
song that:

A ma ri Ojuro
"We not see Ojuro,

Ojuro, Ojuro
"Ojuro, Ojuro."

N(i)-igba-ti Ojuro ki eko bọ aṣọ o wa ri oju ọna
At-time-that Ojuro push tail:feather enter cloth she come see eye (of) road
n(i)-igba-ti o ja-(o)de si oju ọna o fi aṣọ rẹ b(o)-ori
at-time that she reach-outside to eye (of) road she take cloth hers cover-head,
awọn enia rẹ wa ri nwọn bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin pe:
those people hers come see (her), they begin to sing-song that:

A ma ri Ojuro o
"We indeed see Ojuro, Oh,

Ojuro, Ojuro
"Ojuro, Ojuro."

Nwọn bẹrẹ si pa abẹbẹ nwọn si njo, n(i)-igba-na ni O-l(i)-okun fa
They begin to clap fan they and dancing, at-time-the be One:who-has-sea pull
ọmọ rẹ obinrin kan o fi fun Ojuro. Ojuro ni Oluyare jẹ.
child her woman one she take (it) give Ojuro. Ojuro be Oluyare eat.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan nṣe ohun kan bi ẹni ọni-(ọ)na, ki o lọ
Ifa say person-one doing thing one like person miss-road, should he go

bọ si ẹbura kan bi e-l(i)-eko-(o)didẹ bayi, on ni o
sacrifice to deity one like one:who-have-tail:feather-(of)-parrot thus; he be who
ma mu ori ẹni ja-(ọ)na, ki oluwarẹ wa
(continuative) take head (of) person reach-road; should person:in:question come

ile rẹ wo. Gbogbo ohun ti e-l(i)-eyi iba ni ni ẹbura
house his look:at (it). All thing that one:who-be-this should have be deity
na ngba l(i)-ọwọ rẹ ti ko jẹ-ki o ni.
the taking at-hand his that not consent-that he have (them).

and began to fill it with the feathers. She did not know that this was where the king of the parrots was wont to sleep. When her relatives came and did not find her, they began to sing:

"We cannot find Ojuro;
"Ojuro, Ojuro."

When Ojuro had put the feathers into her cloth, she found the way to the road, and when she reached the road, she covered her head with the cloth. Her people found her and began to sing:

"We did find Ojuro, oh;
"Ojuro, Ojuro."

They began to beat their fans,⁵ and they were dancing. Then the Sea Goddess took one of her daughters and gave it to Ojuro. Ojuro is what the Oluyare⁶ are called.

Ifa says someone is doing something like one who has lost his way; he should go and sacrifice to a deity that has parrots' red tail-feathers;⁷ for it is the one who will lead him to the right road. This person should examine his house carefully. All the things that this person has, this deity is taking away from him and it will not let him have them.

5. Fans are clapped or beaten against the palm of the hand to keep time with singing.

6. This verse explains the origin of the Oluyare costumes. The Oluyare are masked dancers who appear during the Edi festival in honor of Qsangangan Qbamakin; they represent the Igbo people who attacked Ife until they were defeated by Mọremi. See n. 5, verse 24-1. Here it is implied that Ojuro is masculine, like the Oluyare and Qsangangan Qbamakin, and has taken the Sea Goddess' daughter as his wife; but initially Ojuro is identified as the mother of Efurę.

7. The red tail-feathers of the African Grey Parrot are used on the costumes of the Oluyare, and they are associated with the worship of Ifa, Qshun, and other deities.

OFUN - (Q)WQNRIN¹ - 1

Ofun-(Q)wqnrin-(Q)wqnrin, awo Igun l(i)-o d(a)-Ifa fun Igun a
 "Ofun-Qwqnrin-Qwqnrin," secret (of) Vulture be-who cast-Ifa for Igun who
 bu fun Qşin ni-(q)jş ti mu-(ş)ni-mu-(ş)ni qrun de, ni-
 shared (it) for Eagle at-day that take-person-take-person (of) sky arrive, at-
 (q)jş ti şmimş qrun nhan, nwqni ni ki nwqni ru-(ş)bş
 day that evil:thing (of) sky appearing they say should they offer-sacrifice
 nitori iku a-şu-ku Qşin kş ko ru-(ş)bş Igun
 because (of) death (of) to-miss-die, Eagle refuse not offer-sacrifice, Vulture
 ru-(ş)bş obukş (ş)k(an)-şkan, şgbş(dşgbşn)-(ş)gbşdşgbşn, oru
 offer-sacrifice (of) he:goat one-one, 5000-5000 (cowries), pot
 epo (ş)k(an)-şkan, i-san-mş-(i)di aşş wşn, Qşin ni ohun ti
 (of) palm:oil one-one, to-wrap-against-waist cloth their; Eagle say thing that
 Q-l(i)-şrun ba ti şe, ki işe ku; Igun ni ori rş
 One:who-has-sky should have made, (he) not make remain; Vulture say head his
 ko dara, o ni on yio ru şbş, o ru şbş.
 not be:good, he say he will offer sacrifice, he offer sacrifice.

N(i)-igba-ti Igun ru-(ş)bş tan awşn babalawo ni ki o lş
 At-time-that Vulture offer-sacrifice finish those diviners say should he go
 ma rin ki o lş ma yan, nwqni ni ko ni ku iku
 (continuative) walk should he go (continuative) be:bold; they say not be die death
 a-şu-ku nwqni ni ebi ko ni pa, nwqni ni akoko ti ebi
 (of) to-miss-die, they say hunger not be (it) kill (him), they say time that hunger
 ni npa ni şni-(e)keji rş qrun yio ranti rş, nwqni ni
 should killing (him) be person-second his (of) sky will remember his, they say
 a ko ri ati ku Igun lai-lai. Lati igba-na bi Igun ba ba
 we not see to die (of) Vulture ever-ever. From time-the if Vulture should alight
 ti enia ko ba f(i)-şwş kan, bi Qşin ba ni ki on ba,
 that people not should take-hand touch (him); if Eagle should say that he alight,
 şmş ar(a)-aiye a ki mş-(i)leş nwqni a pa,
 child (of) people-(of)-earth will push (him) against-ground they will kill (him),
 nwqni a si se jş. Şiyş ti o ba fi ara we Igun,
 they will and cook (him) eat (him). Bird that he should take body imitate Vulture,
 şhin aro ni sun.
 back (of) hearth be (he) sleep.

Ifa ni awşn meji kan wa, ki nwqni ru-(ş)bş nitori iku
 Ifa say those two one exist, should they offer-sacrifice because (of) death
 a-şu-ku.
 to-miss-die.

1. Ofun Elerin is an alternative name for this figure.

248 - 1

"Ofun Qwqnrin-Qwqnrin,"¹ the diviner of Vulture, was the one who cast Ifa for Vulture and shared it with Fish Eagle² on the day that evil spirits who seize people were coming from heaven, when evil beings from heaven were appearing. They said they should sacrifice to avert accidental death. The Fish Eagles refused to sacrifice, but the Vultures sacrificed one he-goat each, one shilling three pence each, one pot of palm oil each, and the sashes from their waists. Fish Eagle said that whatever the Sky God has made, he has not left unfinished. Vulture said that his luck was not good; he said that he would make the sacrifice; and he made it.

When Vulture had completed the sacrifice, the diviners told him to walk about bravely.³ They said that he would not meet an accidental death. They said he would not be hungry; they said that whenever he was hungry, his spiritual double in heaven would remember him.⁴ They said we never see how Vulture dies.⁵ From that time on, when Vulture alights, one must not lay a hand upon him; but when a Fish Eagle alights, human beings catch him and kill him, and they cook him to eat. A bird who tries to imitate Vulture, will "sleep behind the hearth."⁶

Ifa says that there are two people; they should make a sacrifice to avert accidental death.

1. Derived directly from the name of the figure, Ofun-(Q)wqnrin; there is no meaning to the reduplication.

2. The Vulturine Fish-Eagle (Gypohierax angolensis).

3. He should walk boldly among human beings without fear of being killed. As this verse explains below, Vulture must not be killed. Igun is the Common or Hooded Vulture (Necrosyrtes monachus monachus) of whom Fairbairn (1933: 12) says, "Since it is unharmed by man, it is bold and can be seen thronging markets, refuse heaps and the neighbourhood of butchers' slabs, doing its useful work as a scavenger."

4. This refers, as in verses 5-2 and 241-1, to the fact that Vulture has much to eat when a town suffers from an epidemic or other catastrophe.

5. Informants say that the bodies of dead vultures are never seen. Cf. verse 5-2.

6. Meaning that it will be cooked and eaten if it tries to be as bold as Vulture. This verse explains why Fish Eagle is killed and why Vulture is not; why Vulture never goes hungry; why he walks boldly among human beings; and why dead Vultures are never seen.

OFUN - (Q)WQNRIN - 2

"Koto şale, gegele şale a da fun wq̄n ni ilu Gęsi
 "Hole be:suddenly, hillock be:suddenly" who cast for them at town (of) Gęsi
 kiki irukęę, nwq̄n ni ki nwq̄n ru-(ę)bq̄ nitori ire
 altogether tail; they say should they offer-sacrifice because goodness (of)
 qm̄q̄ de si wq̄n ni q̄dun-ni. Ara ilu Gęsi kiki
 child arrive to them at year-this. People (of) town (of) Gesi altogether
 irukęę ni orukq̄ ti a pe agbado.
 tail be name that we call corn.

Ifa ni awq̄n enia kan wa ni agbo, ki nwq̄n ru-(ę)bq̄, ire
 Ifa say those people one exist at flock, should they offer-sacrifice; goodness
 qm̄q̄ de si wq̄n ni q̄dun-ni, ki nwq̄n ru ęgb(ęfa)-ęgbęfa,
 (of) child arrive to them at year-this; should they offer 12,000-12,000 (cowries),
 ęiyę-(i)le (q)k(an)-q̄kan, nwq̄n ru-(ę)bq̄. Lati igba-na ni qm̄q̄
 bird-(of)-house one-one, they offer-sacrifice. From time-the be child (of)
 agbado ti ma npq̄.
 corn have (continuative) being:many.

OFUN - (Q)WQNRIN - 3

Ferefere ta-(i)di bq̄nun bq̄nun a da fun Q-1(i)-q̄run okolo ti o
 "Ferefere kick-waist stiff stiff" who cast for One:who-has-sky Okolo that he
 nq̄q̄ fę Şebeje, obinrin Oju. Nwq̄n ni ki o ru-(ę)bq̄ nitori
 going love Shebeje, woman (of) Eye. They say should he offer-sacrifice because
 obinrin kan.
 (of) woman one.
 Ifa ni ire aya kan de, ęni-kan yio ri aya kan bi wundia
 Ifa say goodness (of) wife one arrive, person-one will see wife one like maiden
 bayi he, ti oju ti foru, Ifa ni ki a şe sara nitori
 thus gather, that eye have overlook; Ifa say should we make feast because (of)
 obinrin na, ayeq̄ meji, ęgbęrindilogun.
 woman the: hen two, 3200 (cowries).

248 - 2

"Unexpected holes, unexpected bumps"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for the people of the town of "Gęsi entirely of cow-tail switches."² They said they should make a sacrifice so that the blessing of children might come to them during that year. The people of the town of "Gęsi entirely of cow-tail switches" is what we call corn.

Ifa says that there is a group of people who should make a sacrifice. The blessing of children is coming to them during this year. They should sacrifice three shillings each, and one pigeon each. They³ made the sacrifice, and from that time on, the children⁴ of corn have always been numerous.

1. As on a rough or uneven road, over which one stumbles in the dark.
2. Gęsi usually refers to the English, but its meaning in this context was not understood by informants. The cow tail switches, such as are carried by diviners, refer here to corn tassels, and the "town" is a corn field.
3. That is, the maize plants.
4. The verse thus explains why corn or maize bears many kernels.

248 - 3

"Ferefere¹ sticks out his buttocks² stiffly"³ was the one who cast Ifa for the Sky God Okolo⁴ when he was going to marry Shebeje, the wife of Eye. They said he should make a sacrifice because of a woman.

Ifa says the blessing of a wife is coming. Someone will find a virgin to take as a wife who has been overlooked by the eyes⁵ of others. Ifa says that we should make a feast⁶ because of the woman: two hens and nine pence six oninis.

1. This could not be translated or interpreted by informants.
2. As in the Yoruba manner of dancing.
3. Like a sail that stiffens in the breeze.
4. This could not be translated or interpreted by informants.
5. Note the reference here to Eye, the husband of Shebeje.
6. Sara is a Hausa word, indicating a feast that is given instead of making a sacrifice. In this case the hens are to be used in preparing it.

OFUN - (Q)WQNRIN - 4

Ohanhan nsun-(ẹ)kun ifun, nwq̄n ni aayan ni o n̄ṣe,
 "Ohanhan (bird) shedding-tears (of) intestines, they say anxiety be he making,"

Ogbigbo ru ẹru Oriṣa, b̄ṣ-ni ko s̄q̄, Odid̄ṣṣ ba-
 "Ogbigbo carry load (of) Orisha, so-be (he) not put:down (it)," "Parrot alight-

(i)l̄ṣ t̄ṣṣ-t̄ṣṣ-t̄ṣṣ a da fun Q̄runmila ni-(o)j̄ṣ ti o p̄ṣlu
 ground wobble-wobble-wobble" who cast for Q̄runmila at-day that he together:

Qna-(I)ledi n̄ṣ(e)-q̄ta, nwq̄n ni ki o ru-(ṣ)b̄ṣ ki o
 with Road-(of)-Iledi making-enemy, they say should he offer-sacrifice that he
 ba le ṣṣ-(o)gun r̄ṣ. Eku, ẹja, igbin, ayeb̄ṣ ad̄iṣ, ẹgbata ni
 should be:able make-war his. Rat, fish, snail, hen chicken, 6000 (cowries) be
 ẹb̄ṣ.
 sacrifice.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti o n̄ṣe a-bi-(i)nu-ku ẹni n(i)-inu
 Ifa say person-one exist that he doing to-vex-belly-die person at-belly (of)
 ile ẹni, Ifa ni ko j̄ṣ ki q̄w̄ṣ ẹni l̄ṣ si iwaju, ko si
 house (of) person, Ifa say not consent that hand (of) person go to front, not and
 j̄ṣ-ki q̄w̄ṣ ẹni l̄ṣ s(i)-ṣhin. Ifa ni ki a ru-(ṣ)b̄ṣ ki
 consent-that hand (of) person go to-back. Ifa say should we offer-sacrifice that
 Q-l(i)-q̄run ba le ba-(ṣ)ni ṣṣ-(o)gun r̄ṣ.
 One:who-has-sky should be:able join-person make-war his.

Epe kan wa l(i)-q̄w̄ṣ Qna-Iledi, o ni on fi nba Q̄runmila
 Curse one exist at-hand (of) Road-(of)-Iledi, he be who take joining Q̄runmila
 ja, ni-(o)j̄ṣ kan bi Qna-(I)ledi ti fi epe ba-(ṣ)nu ti o f̄ṣ
 fight, at-day one as Road-(of)-Iledi have take curse touch-mouth that he want
 ṣṣ le Q̄runmila l(i)-ori, ni Q̄runmila ko eku, ẹja, igbin s(i)-il̄ṣ ti
 curse upon Q̄runmila at-head, be Q̄runmila gather rat, fish, snail to-ground that
 o f̄ṣ fi b̄ṣ oke ip̄ṣnri r̄ṣ, Q̄runmila si pe
 he want take (them) sacrifice:to hill (of) guardian:soul his, Q̄runmila and call
 Qna-(I)ledi pe ki o sure fun on, ṣugb̄ṣn nitori-ti Qna-(I)ledi
 Road-(of)-Iledi that should he bless for him, but because-that Road-(of)-Iledi
 ko le duro li oju r̄ṣ ki o ma ṣ(e)-epe le l(i)-ori,
 not be:able stand at eye his that he (continuative) make-curse upon (him) at-head,
 Qna-(I)ledi b̄ṣṣ si sure fun Q̄runmila, o ni yio ṣṣ-(o)gun q̄ta
 Road-(of)-Iledi begin to bless for Q̄runmila, he say (he) will make-war (of) enemy
 r̄ṣ, n(i)-igba-ti o di q̄j̄ṣ-(ṣ)k̄ṣta ni Qna-(I)ledi ku.
 his, at-time-that it become day-third be Road-(of)-Iledi die.

Ifa ni q̄ta wa kan yio ku bi o ba le tun ma fi
 Ifa say enemy our one will die if he should be:able then (continuative) take
 ohun bu(ru)-buru ma pe-(o)ri ẹni Q̄runmila wa
 thing be:bad-be:bad (continuative) call-head (of) person. Q̄runmila come

248 - 4

"The Ohanhan bird weeping because of his intestines; they say he is worrying unnecessarily," "The Ogbigbo bird¹ carries a deity's load, and does not put it down," and "The Parrot alights on the ground wobbly, wobbly, wobbly"² were the ones who cast Ifa for Qrunmila on the day that he and Qna-Iledi³ were enemies. They said Qrunmila should make a sacrifice so that he would be able to defeat him. A rat, a fish, a snail, a hen, and one shilling six pence was the sacrifice.

Ifa says there is a person who is angry enough to kill someone in his own house; he does not let him go forward, and he does not let him go backward. Ifa says we should make a sacrifice so that the Sky God will help us defeat him.

Qna-Iledi knew a curse,⁴ and he was the one who was fighting with Qrunmila. One day as Qna-Iledi touched it to his mouth to pronounce the curse upon Qrunmila's head, Qrunmila gathered a rat, a fish, and a snail together in order to sacrifice to his ancestral guardian soul, and he called Qna-Iledi to come and bless him. But because Qna-Iledi could not stand before him and curse him to his face, Qna-Iledi began to bless Qrunmila, saying that he would defeat his enemies. Two days later Qna-Iledi died.⁵

Ifa says our enemy will die if he should invoke evil on our head.⁶ Qrunmila comes

1. Ohanhan and Ogbigbo are two unidentified birds with large hooked bills, the latter being larger.

2. Tẹjẹ-tẹjẹ-tẹjẹ describes the wobbling motion of a parrot walking.

3. This name was interpreted by informants as meaning the Road to the town of Iledi.

4. Epe is usually translated as a curse (like igede; cf. verse 246-3), but as explained here, it involves a charm or medicine that is touched to the lips while the curse is uttered.

5. Qna-Iledi, having made medicine to make his statements come true, causes his own death when he says that Qrunmila's enemies will die.

6. According to informants, this need not involve the use of any medicine. It may consist simply of saying that someone has a bad head (olori buruku, oloribuburu), which is regarded as an insult approaching a curse.

da-(o)hun o ni ki a ko obi fun a-ṣ(e)-ika ki o
 break-voice he say should we gather kola for one:who-do-wickedness that he
 fi ẹnu ara rẹ wure.
 take mouth (of) body his bless.

OFUN - (O)GUNDA¹ - 1

Qdẹ dudu ni ta-(q)fa oro, ile Imọlẹ ni a k(q)-
 "Hunter black be (who) shoot-arrow (of) poison"; "House (of) Ogboni be we hang-
 apo wọjọ-wọjọ wọ, bi ọmọde ba gb(o)-oju ki Ifa bi ko gb(o)-
 bag bulge-bulge enter"; "If young:child should harden-eye greet Ifa, if not harden-
 oju ki Ifa, ki a fi Ofun Eko lọ wo a da fun irun-(i)mọlẹ
 eye greet Ifa, should we take Ofun Eko go look:at (it)" who cast for 400-Deity (of)
 oju-k(an)-ọtun a bu fun igba-(i)mọlẹ oju-k(an)-osi, nwọn ni ki nwọn
 eye-touch-right who share for 200-Deity eye-touch-left, they say should they
 ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ọrọ wọn le ni ọjọ-wa, nwọn ru eku,
 should they offer-sacrifice that word their be:able have day-come, they offer rat,
 ẹja, igbin, obi, ati ẹgbẹdọgbọn.
 fish, snail, kola, and 5,000 (cowries).

Awọn oriṣa ti o ru-(ẹ)bọ n(i)-igba-na ni awọn oriṣa ti a
 Those orisha that they offer-sacrifice at-time-the be those orisha that we
 nlu igbin fun titi di isisiyi; awọn ti ko ru-(ẹ)bọ n(i)-
 beating igbin for (them) until become right:now; those that not offer-sacrifice at-
 igba-na ni awọn ti a npe ni Oriṣa Agbala titi di oni yi.
 time-the be those that we calling at Orisha (of) Backyard until become today this.

Ifa ni awọn kan nọ ẹ ohun kan bi iṣẹ aje bayi, ki a
 Ifa say those one going do thing one like work (of) money thus, should we
 ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ọran ẹni le ni ẹhin ni ohun na, ki ọmọ
 offer-sacrifice that affair (of) person be:able have back at thing the, that child (of)
 ẹhin ma ba gbọn-(ẹ)ni lọ. Ifa ni ki a ba le di
 back not should surpass-person go. Ifa say should we should be:able become
 ẹni a-pe-sin, bi ẹni-kan ko ba si ru-(ẹ)bọ yi,
 person to-assemble-serve, if person-one not should and offer-sacrifice this,
 yio di ẹni kọrọ ni oju awọn ẹgbẹ rẹ.
 will become person (of) corner at eye (of) those companion his.

1. Alternate names for this figure are Ofun Eko (see n. 2, verse 249-1), Ofuntọla "Loss then wealth" (see n. 3, verse 249-2), and Ofuntọpola "Ofun tastes palm oil" (see n. 1, verse 249-3).

to tell us to take kola and give it to the one who is doing evil to us, so he will bless us with his own mouth.

249 - 1

"Black hunter shoots poisoned arrows," "Entering the Ogboni house we hang up bulging bags"¹ and "To find out if a child is brave enough to recite Ifa, or if he is not brave enough to recite Ifa, we use Ofun Eko to test him"² was the one who cast Ifa for the Four Hundred Deities on the right and the Two Hundred Deities on the left.³ They said they should make a sacrifice so that their words might come true. They sacrificed a rat, a fish, a snail, kola, and one shilling three pence.

The orisha who sacrificed at that time are those for whom we have been beating igbin drums until this very day; those who did not make the sacrifice then are those whom we have been calling Deities of the Backyard⁴ until this very day.

Ifa says a group of people are going to do something like working for money; we should make a sacrifice so that it may reach a successful conclusion, and so that someone's inferiors may not surpass him. Ifa says we will be able to become a person whom others gather to serve; but if someone does not make this sacrifice, his companions will regard him as of no importance.

1. This refers to the large amounts of food eaten at the Ogboni house. (See n. 3, verse 181-1.)

2. Ofun Eko is one of the alternative names for Ofun Ogunda. Its verses are regarded as very dangerous, and even experienced diviners must make an atonement (etutu) before reciting them. They must not be recited "for nothing" or "empty mouthed." (See Chapter IX and verse 249-3.)

3. Usually these phrases refer to any of the deities, but here they appear to refer to the "white deities" (cf. n. 3, verse 5-1) because of the reference to Orisha Agbala and to igbin drums. Igbin is a type of drum which is used in the worship of the "white deities," but the verse implies that it is not used for Orisha Agbala.

4. Orisha Agbala, the Deity of the Backyard, is one of the lesser "white deities." He is considered to be a younger brother of Orisha Oko, the Deity of the Farm, and he is also known as Alataporipo, a praise-name whose meaning could not be interpreted. A simple shrine to him is said to be found in the backyard of every compound in Ife, marked by a peregun tree (*Dracaena* spp.), near which sacred materials are buried in the ground. He can be worshiped by anyone, and he often receives adimu at the instruction of the babalawo (see Chapter V). But there seem to be no myths about him, and he has no central shrine, no priests or priestesses, no cult group, and no annual festivals. According to some informants there are several minor deities known by this term, and the verse, which explains why they are less important than the other "white deities," supports this view. Cf. verse 103-2.

OFUN - (O)GUNDA - 2

Abata a-b(i)-aiya gbèdè-gbèdè a da fun Qrunmila ti o ti
 "Mud which-bear-chest mushy-mushy" who cast for Qrunmila that he have
 nṣe ofun ẹgbẹ-l(e)-ẹgbẹ lai-lai, nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ pe ni
 making loss side-upon-side ever-ever; they say should he offer-sacrifice that at
 ọdun-ni ni Q-l(i)-qrun san gbogbo (ohu)n-kan rẹ ti o ti nṣe
 year-this be One:who-has-sky repay all thing-one his that they have making
 ofun fun. O ru eku, ẹja, igbin, ayebo adig, ati egbejila.
 loss for (him). He offer rat, fish, snail, hen chicken, and 2400 (cowries).

N(i)-igba-ti Qrunmila ru-(ẹ)bọ yi tan, o ko ori eku,
 At-time-that Qrunmila offer-sacrifice this finish, he gather head (of) rat,
 ori ẹja, ori adig ati aṣẹ igbin na s(i)-inu ohun kan
 head (of) fish, head (of) chicken and antenna (of) snail the to-belly (of) thing one
 o gbe s(i)-ilẹ n(i)-igba-ti ilẹ fi ma mọ, awọn erun
 he take (it) to-ground; at-time-that ground take (continuative) clear, those ant
 (ija)ọ ti ọ su mọ, bi o ti ni ki o gba wọn kuro ni
 (driver:ant) have gather against (it) as he have say that he sweep them depart be
 o jin s(i)-ilẹ O-l(i)-okun, bayi ni Qrunmila bẹrẹ si gbọn
 he fall:down to-ground (of) One:who-has-sea; thus be Qrunmila begin to scoop:up
 akun. N(i)-igba-ti awọn ti o ba jẹ-(oh)un ni ana wa ki
 bead. At-time-that those that they join (him) eat-thing at yesterday come greet
 pe o ku ina-(o)wo ati pe Q-l(i)-qrun
 (him) that "You be:greeted (of) spending-(of)-cowries" and that "One:who-has-sky
 yio sọ ofun rẹ di ọrọ Qrunmila da-(o)hun o ni ofun ti o
 will change loss his become riches"; Qrunmila break-voice he say loss that he
 ọ l(i)-ana ko t(o)-ọla, lati igba-na ni a ti npe odu
 make at-yesterday not equal-wealth, from time-the be we have calling figure
 yi Ofun-t(i)-ọla.
 this Loss-that-(of)-wealth.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan ti nṣe ofun ri, ọgbọn ni ọdun yi ni Q-
 Ifa say person-one have making loss before, but at year this be One:who-
 l(i)-qrun yio sọ ofun na di, ti gbogbo ohun ti o ti sọ-nu ni
 has-sky will fill loss the close, that all thing that he have throw-be:lost at
 ọwọ rẹ yio bọ si-(a)po pata-pata.
 hand his will come to-pouch completely-completely.

249 - 2

"Mud has a mushy¹ chest" was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he had been suffering losses on all sides from the beginning of time. They said that he should sacrifice so that during that year the Sky God might repay him for all his losses. He sacrificed a rat, a fish, a snail, a hen, and seven pence two oninis.

When Qrunmila had completed this sacrifice, he put the head of the rat, the head of the fish, the head of the hen, and the feelers of the snail in something and left it on the ground. When dawn was breaking, ants (driver ants) gathered and covered the sacrifice; and when Qrunmila began to sweep them away, he broke through the ground into a pit of the Sea Goddess.² So Qrunmila began to scoop up beads from the pit. When those who had eaten with him the day before came to greet him, saying, "Greetings on spending money" and "The Sky God will change your losses into riches," Qrunmila answered that the losses he had suffered in the past did not equal the wealth he had gained. From that time on, we have called this figure of Ifa "Loss then Wealth."³

Ifa says that someone has been suffering losses in the past, but this year the Sky God will fill up his losses,⁴ and everything that has been lost from his hand will come into his pouch.

1. Soft and wet.

2. The Sea Goddess, renowned for her wealth, is here associated with the pits of *segi* beads through which one may attain wealth (cf. n. 2, verse 1-1; n. 5, verse 3-1). Archaeological excavations have shown that the sacred grove of the Sea Goddess at Ife was a site where glass making, in a variety of colors, flourished in ancient times (Frobenius, 1912: I, f. 337; Frobenius, 1913: I, 92-94; Fagg and Willett, 1960: 29). "Here evidently had been the centre of the great glass making industry which had spread *segi* beads across West Africa" (Willett, 1960: 237).

3. The verse thus explains one of the alternative names of the figure Ofun Ogunda, Ofun-t(i)-qla.

4. Note the pun here on "fill up" (*sq . . . di*) and "change into" (*sq . . . di*) above, and "lost" (*sq-nu*) below.

OFUN - (O)GUNDA - 3

Ofun-t̩-(e)po-la, awo A-l(i)-ara d(a)-Ifa fun A-
 "Ofun-touch-palm:oil-lick," secret (of) One:who-has-Ara, cast-Ifa for One:who-
 l(i)-ara nw̩n ni ire aje de si ni ɔdun yi, nw̩n ni
 has-Ara; they say goodness (of) money arrive to (him) at year this; they say
 ki o ru-(ɛ)b̩, A-l(i)-ara gb̩ o si ru ɛiy̩-(i)le
 should be offer-sacrifice; One:who-has-Ara hear he and offer bird-(of)-house
 meji egbejila. Nw̩n ni gbogbo ara ɕɕ-fun-ɕɕ-fun
 two, 2400 (cowries). They say all body (of) make-be:white-make-be:white
 fi ɕe aje.
 take (it) make money.

A-da-iɕ(e)-ai-t̩-(e)po-la, awo Ajero, da fun Ajero, nw̩n
 "To-cast-do-not-touch-palm:oil-lick," secret (of) Ajero, cast for Ajero; they
 ni ire aya de si ni ɔdun-ni, nw̩n ni ki o ru.
 say goodness (of) wife arrive to (him) at year-this; they say should he offer.
 Ajero ru-(ɛ)b̩ ayebo adie meji, ɛgb̩rindinlogun. Nw̩n ni
 Ajero offer-sacrifice (of) hen chicken two, 3200 (cowries). They say
 ewe ba-mi-m(u)-ɔbuntun ko mu ti, n(i)-igba-ti Ajero ru-(ɛ)b̩
 leaf join-me-take-bride not take (her) not; at-time-that Ajero offer-sacrifice
 tan o b̩ɛɛ si ni obinrin.
 finish he begin to have woman.

Ki a da Ifa ki a to f(i)-ɛnu b̩-(e)po a da fun
 "Should we cast Ifa before we equal take-mouth dip-palm:oil" who cast for
 Oloṣoṣa, ɔm̩ Ajiraw̩kin-beje-beje, nw̩n ni ire ɔm̩ de
 Oloshosha, child (of) Ajiraw̩kin-beje-beje; they say goodness (of) child arrive
 si ni ɔdun-ni, nw̩n ni ki o ru ago akik̩ adie, ati ɛgbafa.
 to (him) at year-this, they say should he offer coop (of) cock chicken, and 12,000
 Nw̩n ni a-bi-(ɔ)m̩-le-(ɔ)m̩ ni ti ɕɕɕ̩ki, nw̩n ni bi
 (cowries). They say to-bear-child-upon-child be that (of) sh̩sh̩ki, they say as
 aw̩n obinrin yio ti ma bi ɔm̩ rere, b̩ na ni nw̩n (yi)o
 those woman will have (continuative) bear child good, so also be they will
 ma ri ɔm̩ rere gbe p̩n.
 (continuative) see child good carry carry:on:back.

Ifa ni on ri ire aje ire aya ati ire ɔm̩.
 Ifa say he see goodnes (of) money, goodness (of) wife, and goodness (of) child.

249 - 3

"Ofun tastes palm oil,"¹ the diviner of the King of Ara, was the one who cast Ifa for the King of Ara. They said that the blessing of money would come to him during that year. They said he should make a sacrifice. The King of Ara heard, and he sacrificed two pigeons and seven pence two oninis. They said the whole body of the "Be white, be white" leaf was like money.²

"To cast but not taste palm oil," the diviner of Ajero, was the one who cast Ifa for Ajero, the King of Ijero. They said that the blessing of wives would come to him during that year. They said he should sacrifice. Ajero sacrificed two hens and nine pence six oninis. They said the leaf "With me take a wife"³ would not fail to take her. When Ajero had completed his sacrifice, he began to have wives.

"If we cast this Ifa, we should not recite it before we put palm oil in our mouth" was the one who cast Ifa for Oloshosa, child of Ajirawokin-beje-beje.⁴ They said that the blessing of children would come to him during that year. They said he should sacrifice a coop full of cocks and three shillings. They said that bearing child after child is what the shēshēki plant does.⁵ They said: as his wives will bear good children, so they will also have good children to carry on their backs.

Ifa says that he sees the blessing of money, the blessing of wives, and the blessing of children.

1. This is another alternative name for the figure Ofun Ogunda, referring to the fact that before reciting this verse the diviner puts his finger in palm oil and licks it as an atonement (cf. n. 2, verse 249-1). The names of the other two diviners also refer to tasting or not tasting palm oil when divining. Palm oil is tasted before reciting the first and third part, but not the second.

2. An alternative name for *ḡfunlẹ* (*Evolvus alsinoides*), whose white leaves resemble cowries. See n. 3, verse 111-2.

3. An unidentified plant with which informants were not familiar but which they believed to be a sticky plant used, as the name suggests, in making love charms.

4. This character could not be identified, nor his name translated. The two previous characters are Ekiti kings, whose towns lie about forty and forty-five miles northeast of Ifẹ.

5. An unidentified plant said to bear many fruit. Cf. n. 1, verse 137-1. Note the imitative magic in using a white leaf for money, a sticky leaf for wives, and a fruitful plant for children.

OFUN - (O)GUNDA - 4

A da f(i)-ẹnu bọ-(e)po Irosun a da fun Qrunmila ti o
 "To cast take-mouth dip-palm:oil (of) Irosun" who cast for Qrunmila that he
 ma mu ilẹ ni Mọpẹ ni ile baba rẹ. Jẹ-n-joko
 (continuative) take ground at Mọpẹ at house (of) father his. Consent-I-sit:down
 o ba jẹ-n-joko mi. Ẹni ẹni ki iyan-(ẹ)ni han
 you should consent-I-sit:down my. Person (of) person not betray-person appear
 ẹni ẹni.
 person (of) person.

Ifa ni on ko ni jẹ-ki a ri ohun ti yio gbo-(ẹ)ni ni ijoko
 Ifa say he not be consent-that we see thing that will disturb-person at sitting:
 ile ẹni. Enia ẹni kan wa ti o nfi ori
 down (of) house (of) person. Person (of) person one exist that he taking head
 mu-(i)lẹ ẹ-ẹni ni ibu-(i)joko ẹni na. Obukọ kan
 sink:into-ground make-person at place-(of)-sitting (of) person the. He:goat one
 ati ẹgbẹtalelọgbọni ni ẹbọ.
 and 6600 (cowries) be sacrifice.

A-(yi)o ja ewe Jẹ-n-joko, a-(yi)o gbẹ ilẹ a-(yi)o ri
 We-will break leaf Consent-I-sit:down, we-will dig ground; we-will put:in
 ori obukọ na mọ ibẹ, a-(yi)o ko ewe Jẹ-n-joko bo
 head (of) he:goat the against there; we-will gather leaf Consent-I-sit:down cover
 mọ-(i)lẹ ki a to ko ilẹ bo.
 (it) against-ground before we equal gather earth cover (it).

OFUN - (O)GUNDA - 5

"Ofun-t(i)-ọla" a da fun Logun-(I)rangan ti o ni aguntan
 "Loss-that-(of)-wealth" who cast for Logun-Irangan that he have ewe
 ti o ns(ọ)-ọrọ bi enia, nwọni ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ki oto
 that he speaking-word like person; they say should he offer-sacrifice that boast
 ma ba tẹ Logun-Irangan ru-(ẹ)bọ. Ifa ni ki ẹni-
 not should disgrace (him); Logun-Irangan offer-sacrifice. Ifa say should person-
 kan ru-(ẹ)bọ ki oto ma ba tẹ n(i)-iwaju enia ni
 one offer-sacrifice that boast not should disgrace (him) at-front (of) people at
 agbajọ ilu. Logun-Irangan ni orukọ ti a pe Lọwa Ijaruwa.
 crowd (of) town. Logun-Irangan be name that we call Lọwa Ijaruwa.

L(i)-ẹhin na ni nwọni lẹ sọ fun Qni pe Logun-Irangan ni aguntan kan
 At-back the be they go speak for Qni that Logun-Irangan have ewe one
 ti ns(ọ)-ọrọ bi enia, Qni si ran-(i)şẹ pe e, o si bi-lere
 that speaking-word like person; Qni and send-message call him, he and ask

249 - 4

"To cast and taste the palm oil¹ of Irosun" was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when he was going to move to Mope² near the house of his father. "Let me sit down," you should let me sit down as I am.³ One's relatives should not betray one.⁴

Ifa says he will not let us meet something that will not give someone a chance to sit down in peace at home. There is someone among his relatives who is undermining his seat. One he-goat and one shilling seven pence eight oninis is the sacrifice.

We will pluck "Let me sit down" leaves.⁵ We will dig a hole in the ground; we will put the goat's head into the hole. We will cover it with the "Let me sit down" leaves before we cover it again with dirt.

1. Cf. n. 1, verse 249-3. Before reciting this verse, the diviner must put palm oil into his mouth as atonement.

2. An unidentified place name.

3. This is a pun, referring both to the name of the leaf "Let me sit down" (*Cissampelos owariensis* and *C. mucronata*) and to the fact that someone's enemy will not let him sit down and rest.

4. This is an oversimplified translation of a complex play on the word "eni."

5. The use of "Let me sit down" leaves to enable a person to get a chance to sit down and rest is another example of word magic.

249 - 5

"Loss then wealth"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Logun-Irangan² who had a ewe who talked like a human being. They said he should sacrifice, lest empty boasting cause him disgrace; Logun-Irangan made the sacrifice. Ifa says that someone should make a sacrifice lest empty boasting bring him to disgrace before the whole town. Logun-Irangan is the name that we call Lqwa Ijaruwa.

Afterward they told the Qni that Logun-Irangan had a ewe that talked like a human being, and the Qni sent word for him to come. He asked

1. An alternative name for the figure Ofun Ogunda. See n. 3, verse 249-2.

2. As explained later, Logun-Irangan is an alternative name for Lqwa Ijaruwa, more commonly called Lqwa, who is the head of the inner or palace chiefs of Ife.

pe, l(i)-otq ni o ni aguntan kan ti ns(ɔ)-qrq bi enia bi? O
that "At-truth be you have ewe one that speaking-word like person if?" He

si da-(o)hun pe nitotq ni, Qni si sq fun pe bi o ba
and break-voice that truly be (it), Qni and speak for (him) that if it should

di qjɔ marun Qja-Ifɛ ki o mu aguntan na wa, o ni bi
become day five Market-(of)-Ifɛ should he take ewe the come, he say if

aguntan na ba s(ɔ)-qrq, o ni on yio da ohun ini
ewe the should speak-word, he say he will break thing (of) possession (of)

ile on si meji, on yio si ko fun Lqwa o ni şugbɔn bi aguntan
house his to two, he will and gather (them) give Lqwa, he say but if ewe

na ko ba s(ɔ)-qrq, o ni on yio so Lqwa rɔ on (yi)o si da
the not should speak-word, he say he will tie Lqwa hang (him) he will and create

ina sun Lqwa, Lqwa si şe ileri pe aguntan na yio s(ɔ)-qrq ni qjɔ
fire roast Lqwa, Lqwa and make promise that ewe the will speak-word at day

na. N(i)-igba-ti o di qrun qja, Lqwa mu aguntan na wa,
the. At-time-that it become fifth:day (of) market, Lqwa take ewe the come,

Lqwa ba aguntan na s(ɔ)-qrq titi, şugbɔn aguntan na ko da l(i)-
Lqwa join ewe the speak-word until, but ewe the not break (him) at-

ohun rara, n(i)-igba-ti Lqwa ba s(ɔ)-qrq titi ti ko da-(o)hun,
voice at:all; at-time-that Lqwa join (it) speak-word until that (it) not break-voice,

n(i)-igba-na ni nwɔn gbe Lqwa lu-(i)lɛ, nwɔn si de e, nwɔn si bɛrɛ
at-time-the be they take Lqwa strike-ground, they and bind him they and begin

si fi qhin rɛ ra ina, n(i)-igba-ti o di igba-mɛta ti nwɔn ma
to take back his rub fire, at-time-that it become time-three that they (continua-

fi qhin rɛ ra ina, n(i)-igba-na ni aguntan rɛ yi da-(o)hun o ni
tive) take back his rub fire, at-time-the be ewe his this break-voice, he say

A-a, ş ma pa (ɛ)ni?
"A-a!, you (continuative) kill person?"

N(i)-igba-ti aguntan sq bayi, awɔn enia si da-(o)hun pe aguntan
At-time-that ewe speak thus, those people and break-voice that "Ewe

s(ɔ)-qrq, aguntan s(ɔ)-qrq. Qni si da ohun ini ile
speak-word, ewe speak-word." Qni and break thing (of) possession (of) house

rɛ si ɔna meji, o si ko fun Lqwa; n(i)-igba-ti Lqwa nmu aguntan
his to road two, he and gather (one) give Lqwa; at-time-that Lqwa taking ewe

rɛ yi lɔ si ile, Lqwa bi i lere pe ki-ni şe ti iwɔ aguntan
his this go to house, Lqwa ask him (1) that "What-be (it) makè that you ewe

yi şe jɛ-ki nwɔn fi qhin on ra ina n(i)-igba-mɛta? Aguntan rɛ
this make consent-that they take back his rub fire at-time-three? Ewe his

1. Bi . . . lere means "to ask."

him "Is it true that you have a ewe that talks like a human being?" Lqwa answered that it was truly so. The Qni told him that in four days, on the day of the Ife Market,³ he should bring the ewe to him. He said that if the ewe talked, he would divide all his possessions in half and give one half to Lqwa. But he said that if the ewe did not talk, he would tie Lqwa and hang him up, and build a fire to roast him on. Lqwa promised that the ewe would speak on the appointed day. When the fourth day arrived, Lqwa brought the ewe to the king. Lqwa talked and talked with the ewe, but the ewe would not answer at all. When Lqwa had talked and talked without the ewe answering, they threw Lqwa to the ground, bound him, and began to pass him slowly back and forth across the fire. As they were passing him across the fire the third time, his ewe spoke, saying, "Ah! ah! Are you killing someone?"⁴

When the ewe said this, the people shouted, "The ewe is talking! The ewe is talking!" And the Qni divided all his possessions into two parts, and he gave half to Lqwa. When Lqwa was taking his ewe home, Lqwa asked him "Why did you let them pass me back and forth across the fire three times?" His ewe

3. The first day of the four-day week is called ojq Qjaife or "day of the Market of Ife," after the principal market.

4. Cf. the tale of the talking skull that refused to talk in verses 181-1 and 181-4.

si da-(o)hun pe: Ki o da ɔ l(i)-ohun l(i)-ɛkan-ɔso ɔ ki o si
 and break-voice that, "Should he break you at-voice at-once-only that he and
 ko gbogbo ɛru yɛn l(i)-ɛsɛ-k(u)-ɛsɛ lai ri iya? O ni "Owo
 gather all loads this at-foot-any-foot not see punishment?" He say, "Trans-
 ti a ba ma ɛe la, a ko ni ri apa rɛ l(i)-
 action that we should (continuative) make be:wealthy, we not be see scar its at-
 ara ni?
 body be (it)?

OFUN - (O)GUNDA - 6

Emini, awo aja-(i)lɛ a da fun ɛrunlɔjɔ ɛranko ni ɔjɔ
 Emini, secret (of) ceiling-(of)-ground, who cast for 165 animal at day
 ti nwɔn nlɔ fɛ Laduntan ɔmɔ O-l(i)-okun Nwɔn ni ki wɔn
 that they going love Laduntan child (of) One:who-has-sea. They say should they
 ru ewurɛ kan, ati ɛgbawa, aɔɔ dudu kan.
 offer she:goat one, and 20,000 (cowries), cloth black one.
 Ifa ni a nɛe ɔpalaye ɔran aya kan, o so ko ju
 Ifa say we making court:case (of) affair (of) wife one, "it bear:fruit not surpass
 ka, o wɔ ko ju he. Ifa ni ɔrɛ ni yio
 pluck (it), it shed (fruit) not surpass pick:up (it)." Ifa say friend be (who) will
 jɛ-ki ɔran aya na ɛe iɛe, ɛni-ti o nɛe gba aya yi ko
 consent-that affair (of) wife the do work; person-that he wanting take wife this not
 ni owo, bɛ-ni oju awɔn ara ile obinrin yi ko to
 have cowries, so-be eye (of) those people (of) house (of) woman this not equal
 ile ale ɔmɔ wɔn.
 house (of) concubine (of) child their.
 O-l(i)-okun ni ɛni-ti o ba le fun aka on dun
 One:who-has-sea say person-that he should be:able blow granary her sound
 ni on yio fi ɔmɔ on fun. A-b(i)-awun ni on a ri ɛe.
 be she will take child hers give (him). One:who-like-Miser say he will see do (it).
 ɛbɔ: akikɔ meji, pɛrɛ epo kan, egbejila, ati araba
 Sacrifice: cock two, pot (of) palm:oil one, 2400 (cowries), and loaf (of)
 iyan kan.
 pounded:yam one.

O-l(i)-okun ni bi o ba di ɔla, O-l(i)-okun ni
 One:who-has-sea say if it should become tomorrow; One:who-has-sea say
 ki nwɔn wa pe aka on. Ki ilɛ to mɔ, A-b(i)-
 should they come call granary her. Before ground equal clear, One:who-like-

replied, "Should I have answered you the very first time, and have you get all this property at once without any suffering?" He said, "If one becomes rich through trade, do we not see its scars on one's body?"

249 - 6

Dampness,¹ the diviner of Dungeon,² was the one who cast Ifa for the 165 kinds³ of animals on the day that they were going to love Laduntan, the child of the Sea Goddess. They said they should sacrifice one she-goat, five shillings, and one black cloth.

Ifa says we will be brought to court because of an affair with a woman. "It bears fruit, we cannot pick it; the fruit falls, we cannot gather it."⁴ Ifa says there is a friend who will allow the affair with this woman to reach a successful conclusion. The one who wants to marry this woman has no money, and the parents of this woman do not know where their child's lover lives.

The Sea Goddess said that the person who would be able to make her granary speak would be the one to whom she would give her child in marriage. Tortoise said he would try to do it. The sacrifice is two cocks, one pot of palm oil, seven pence two oninis, and one yam loaf.

The Sea Goddess said that they should come the next day to call to her granary to speak. Before day break,

1. Informants were unable to give the meaning of emini, but from the name and from the verse itself (see n. 4) it appears to mean dampness or dew, usually given as ɛnini, enini, eni, or iri.

2. A subterranean chamber, such as that used by the Ogungbẹ (see n. 4, verse 181-1), for detaining convicted criminals until their fines have been paid.

3. See n. 3, verse 18-4.

4. Used here like a proverb implying that it will be difficult for him to marry the woman, this is a Yoruba riddle, whose answer is "Dew." Bascom (1949: 12). Cf. n. 1, above.

awun ti ko s(i)-inu aka, o si fi ara pa-mo, bi o ti
 Miser have enter to-belly (of) granary, he and take body kill-against; as it have
 d(i)-ojo(e)keji, bi O-l(i)-okun ti so pe Aka, o, A-
 become-day-second, as One:who-has-sea have speak that "Granary, oh," One:who-
 b(i)-awun da-(o)hun n(i)-inu aka pe Aka, aka awa l(i)-a
 like-Miser break-voice at-belly (of) granary that "Granary, Granary we be-who
 f(a)-aka oba, aka awa l(i)-a f(a)-aka oba. N(i)-igba-na
 pull-granary (of) king; granary we be-who pull-granary (of) king." At-time-the
 ni nwon wa fi obinrin yi fun Orunmila.
 be they come take woman this give Orunmila.

Ifa ni aya kan ni a nfe fe yi, orefe eni ni yio ba-
 Ifa say wife one be we wanting love this, friend (of) person be (who) will join-
 (e)ni di awo idi re ti yio fi le fe-(e)ni.
 person tie secret (of) base its that (she) will take (him) be:able love-person.

OFUN - (Q)SA - 1

O-fun-sai o-mu-gba ko f(i)-owo
 "It-be:white-very:white, one:who-know-sweep not take-midrib:of:palm:leaf
 gba orun a da fun Aganna ti ise osa A-f(o)-ojo l(i)-
 sweep sky" who cast for Aganna that make assistant (of) One:who-clear-rain at-
 Qyo, nwon ni Q-l(i)-orun yio da ori ire kan si ni odun-
 Qyo; they say One:who-has-sky will turn head (of) goodness one to (him) at year-
 ni, sugbon ki o ru-(e)bo ki ar(a)-aiye ma ba da
 this, but should he offer-sacrifice that people-(of)-earth not should cause (him)
 l(i)-eja, nitori-ti ire na ko ni tan ni owo re ati omo
 at-frustration, because-that goodness the not be finish at hand his and child (of)
 omo re lai-lai. Aganna ni iron ni nwon npa, ko ru eye-(i)le
 child his ever-ever. Aganna say lie be they killing, not offer bird-(of)-house
 meji, adie meji, ati egberinlelogun.
 two, chicken two, and 4800 (cowries).

N(i)-igba lai-lai ni ode Qyo ni od(un)-odun ti oba Qyo ba
 At-time ever-ever at outside (of) Qyo at year-year that King (of) Qyo should
 nse odun ti o ba si di ojo ti o ma se eye
 making year that it should and become day that he (continuative) make decoration
 ja-(o)de, ojo ki ije-ki o r(i)-aye ja-(o)de be-ni
 reach-outside, rain not consent-that he see-chance reach-outside, so-be (it)
 Aganna ise ojo fifo ni ise, oba Qyo so fun pe bi
 Aganna work (of) rain clearing be (he) do, King (of) Qyo speak for (him) that if

Tortoise had entered the granary and hidden himself in it. When the next day came, and as the Sea Goddess called, "Granary, oh!", Tortoise answered from inside the granary "Granary, Granary; we pull the king's granary;⁵ Granary, we pull the king's granary." Then they gave this woman to Qrunmila.⁶

Ifa says there is a woman whom we want to marry. Someone's friend will keep the secret for him so that she will be able to marry him.⁷

5. The informant translated f'aka as "pull-granary" (fa-aka), but the context suggests that it should be translated as "blow-granary" (fun-aka), meaning to make the granary speak.

6. There is an inconsistency here. Qrunmila is not an animal, but the verse says that it was the 165 animals who were trying to win the hand of Laduntan. As it stands, however, Tortoise was not trying to marry Laduntan himself, but was simply aiding Qrunmila.

7. As Tortoise did for Qrunmila.

250 - 1

"It is very white,¹ one who knows how to sweep does not use a broom to sweep the sky," was the one who cast Ifa for Aganna, who was the assistant to the "One who prevents rain" at the town of Qyq.² They said the Sky God would direct a blessing to him during that year, but that he should make a sacrifice so that the people of the earth would not frustrate him, because this blessing would never end, but would benefit both himself and his children's children forever. Aganna said the diviners were telling lies. He did not make the sacrifice of two pigeons, two chickens, and one shilling two pence four oninis.

From the beginning of time in Qyq, each year when the King of Qyq was going to make his annual festival, when the day came and he put on his finery to go out, the rain did not let him have a chance to go outside. As Aganna's work was preventing rain, the King of Qyq told him that if

1. Note that this is derived from the name of the figure, Ofun-(Q)sa. The meaning of the phrase as it is used here is that it is something that is very clean like the ground which has just been swept, or like the sky from which clouds have cleared.

2. As important as the power of a rainmaker (cf. verse 170-2) is the power to prevent rain from interfering with an important ritual occasion. In both verses to which these powers are referred, they are ineffective.

o ba le ja-(o)de, ti ojo ko si rọ titi di akoko
 he should be:able reach-outside, that rain not and fall until (it) become time (of)
 oja alẹ, on yio fun Aganna ni ọmọ-(o)binrin kan, amu ilẹkẹ,
 market (of) evening, he will give Aganna at child-woman one, jar (of) bead,
 ogun aṣọ, ẹgbẹwa ọkẹ, ogun ẹwu, ati ga malu kan.
 twenty cloth, 2000 bag (of cowries), twenty gown, and cattle:pen cow one.

N(i)-igba-ti ọba tẹ itẹ lọ bi ilẹ bi ẹni, ti o si gunwa
 At-time-that king spread spread go like ground like mat, that he and sit:in:

tan ni ojo bẹrẹ si rọ nitori-ti Aganna ko ru-(ẹ)bọ
 splendor finish be rain begin to fall because-that Aganna not offer-sacrifice
 ki o to lọ, bẹ-ni Aganna ti ẹ ileri ki o to lọ pe
 before he equal go, so-be (it) Aganna have make promise before he equal go that
 ojo ko ni rọ, bayi ni Aganna bẹ lu-(i)gbo n(i)-igba-ti ojo bẹrẹ si rọ,
 rain not be fall, thus be Aganna jump strike-forest at-time-that rain begin to fall,
 ko si ri aye ko gbogbo (ohu)n-kan ti ọba Qyọ ko fun.
 not and see chance gather all thing-one that King (of) Qyọ gather give (him).

Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti Q-l(i)-ọrun fẹ ti l(i)-ẹhin
 Ifa say person-one exist that One:who-has-sky want push (him) at-back
 de ibi-ti yio ti ri ire kan, ẹgbọni ki o ru-
 arrive place-that (he) will from (it) see blessing one, but should he offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ki ar(a)-aiye ma dan, ki ileri rẹ ma ba
 sacrifice that people-(of)-earth not thwart (him), that promise his not should
 di ofo.
 become emptiness.

OFUN - (Q)SA - 2

A-ya-nu awo ọjọ a da fun ọjọ; A-ya-nu, awo
 To-split-be:lost, secret (of) Day, who cast for Day; To-split-be:lost, secret
 oṣu a da fun oṣu; Ijihẹri awo ọlọ a da f(un)-
 (of) month, who cast for Month; Ijihẹri, secret (of) Grindstone, who cast for-
 ọlọ; Eji rọ da-(a)kurọ si a da fun Yeye
 Grindstone; "Rain (not) fall miss-waterside:garden (1)" who cast for Mother
 Qni-rọ-l(i)-o-rọ-mọ, nwọni ni ti ojo
 Person-be:soft:for-(him)-be-it-be:soft:for-(him)-again; they say that (of) rain
 ti ẹrun ko ni ni l(i)-ara, nwọni ni n(i)-igba-ti o ba
 that (of) dry:season not be press (him) at-body; they say at-time-that it should

1. Da . . . si means "to miss."

he would be able to go out, and if the rain did not fall until the time of the evening market, he would give Aganna one girl, a jar full of beads, twenty cloths, two thousand bags of cowries,³ twenty gowns, and a pen full of cows.

When the king had spread out his cloths on the ground like a mat, reaching far and wide, and had seated himself on them in full royal splendor,⁴ rain began to fall because Aganna had not made the sacrifice before the king went out. But Aganna had made a promise before the king went out that it would not rain. So Aganna fled into the forest when rain began to fall, and he did not have a chance to take with him all those things that the King of Qyq had given him.

Ifa says there is someone whom the Sky God wants to help reach a place where he will find a blessing, but he should make a sacrifice so that the people on earth will not thwart him, and that his promises should not become empty.

3. £500. Each bag contains 20,000 cowries, worth five shillings.

4. See n. 2, verse 52-1.

250 - 2

Loss the diviner of Day, was the one who cast Ifa for Day; Loss the diviner of Month, was the one who cast Ifa for Month; Ijihęri¹ the diviner of Grindstone, was the one who cast Ifa for Grindstone; "When rain falls, it does not miss the waterside garden" was the one who cast Ifa for Mother "One who has it easy, always has it easy."² They said that neither the rains nor the dry season would be hard for him. They said that after it

1. This word represents the sound made when grinding on the metate-like grindstone.

2. The idea here is to be compared with "wealth begets wealth." Note the play on the words "fall" (like rain; rọ) and "be soft for" (rọ).

rọ l(i)-ọrun tan yio tun rọ a-l(i)-a-ro-
 be:soft:for (him) at-neck finish (it) will then be:soft:for one:who-be-who-stand-
 ti rẹ l(i)-ọrun pẹlu. Qni-rọ-l(i)-o-rọ-
 support his at-neck together:with (him). Person-be:soft:for-(him)-be-it-be:soft:
 mọ ni orukọ a pe Akurọ. Igbin męrin, ęiyę-(i)le
 for-(him)-again be name we call Waterside:garden. Snail four, bird-(of)-house
 męrin, oru epo kan, ati ęgbędọgbọn.
 four, pot (of) palm:oil one, and 5000 (cowries).

O ru-(ę)bọ lati igba-na ni Akurọ ko ti gbę ti
 He offer-sacrifice; from time-the be Waterside:garden not have dry:out that
 ojo ti ęrun. N(i)-igba-ti o rọ l(i)-ọrun tan, ni
 (of) rain that (of) dry:season. At-time-that it be:soft:for (him) at-neck finish, be
 o njo ti o nyọ ti o si nkọ-(o)rin bayi pe:
 he dancing that he rejoicing that he and singing-song thus that:

Airan l(i)-okun ade o
 "Airan be-rope (of) crown, oh,

Airan l(i)-okun aja
 "Airan be-rope (of) king.

Qni-rọ-l(i)-o-rọ-mọ o
 "Person-be:soft:for-(him)-be-it-be:soft:for-(him)-again, oh,

Airan l(i)-okun aja.
 "Airan be-rope (of) king."

Ifa ni ęni-kan wa ti o ję-pe lati ọrun ni Q-l(i)-ọrun ti
 Ifa say person-one exist that he eat-that from sky be One:who-has-sky have
 fi irọ-(ọ)run fun wa, n(i)-igba-ti o ba rọ
 take softness-(of)-neck give (him) come; at-time-that it should be:soft:for (him)
 l(i)-ọrun tan yio si tun rọ a-l(i)-a-ba-rin rẹ l(i)-
 at-neck finish will and then be:soft:for one:who-be-who-join-(him)-walk his at-
 ọrun pẹlu. Qla rẹ yio si ran gbogbo a-l(i)-a-ba-
 neck together:with (him). Honor his will and send all one:who-be-who-join-
 rin rẹ.
 (him)-walk his.

OFUN - (Q)SA - 3

Ofun sa wo bi a ję bi ko ni ję a da fun
 "Ofun apply:medicine look:at (it) if (it) will eat if not be eat" who cast for
 ęrunlọjọ ewe, nwọn ni ki nwọn ru akikọ (ọ)k(an)-ọkan, abę (ọ)k(an)-ọkan,
 165 leaf; they say should they offer cock one-one, razor one-one,
 ọgb(ọkanla)-ọgb(ọkanla) ki oto ma ba tẹ wọn. Eyi-ti o
 2200-2200 (cowries) that boast not should disgrace them. This-that they

was easy for him, it would be easy for his companions also. "One who has it easy, always has it easy" is the name of Waterside Garden. Four snails, four pigeons, one pot of palm oil, and one shilling three pence is the sacrifice.

He made the sacrifice, and from that time on, Waterside Garden has never dried up, either in the rains or in the dry season. When it was easy for him, he was dancing and rejoicing, and he was singing:

"Airan³ is the rope of crowns, oh,

"Airan is the rope of kings.

"One who has it easy, always has it easy, oh,

"Airan is the rope of kings."⁴

Ifa says there is someone who was given an easy lot by the Sky God when he came from heaven. When things have become easy for him, they will also be easy for his associates. And his honor will help all who associate with him.

3. An unidentified grass which is eaten by horses.

4. The meaning of this song was not at all clear to informants.

"Ofun applies medicine¹ and looks to see if it works or not" was the one who cast Ifa for the 165 kinds² of leaves. They said they should offer one cock each, one razor each, and six pence six oninis each, so that empty boasting would not disgrace them. Those

1. Note the pun here on the name of the figure, Ofun-(Q)sa; and the fact that the name of the diviner is in this case closely associated with the meaning of the rest of the verse.

2. See n. 3, verse 18-7.

ru n(i)-inu awon ewe ni eyi-ti a fi se ogun ti o
offer at-belly (of) those leaf be this-that we take (them) make medicine that it
je, ti a nwi-pe ewe yi ma je o.
eat, that we speaking-that "Leaf this indeed eat, oh."

Ifa ni ohun ti a da Ifa si yi, ki (ohu)n-kan na le dara
Ifa say thing that we cast Ifa to (it) this, that thing-one the be:able be:good
ni a da ebọ si. Ifa ni on ko ni je-ki oju ki o ti-
be we cast sacrifice to (it). Ifa say he not be consent-that eye should it push-
(e)ni nipa orọ na. O ni ki a ru-(e)bọ ki (ohu)n-kan
person concerning word the. He say should we offer-sacrifice that thing-one
na le dara ja-(i)le.
the be:able be:good reach-ground.

OFUN - (Q)ŞE - 1

"O-fun-şe ęla yun a da fun Olobutu ti işe
"It-be:white-abruptly, whiteness continuously" who cast for Olobutu that make
gba ęiyę l(i)-oko nwon ni ni odun yi ni ori re yio ti de
king (of) bird at-farm; they say at year this be head his will push (him) arrive
ibi-ti yio gbe se iwa şugbon ebọ ki o ma ri e-
place-that (he) will take make destiny but sacrifice that he not see one:who-
l(i)-enini ti yio ti kuro ni ipo na ni ki o se; ęwu
has-enmity that will push (him) depart at position the be should he make; gown
pupa orun re ti o fi se ęyę, aguntan kan, ęgbafa,
red (of) neck his that he take (it) making decoration, ewe one, 12,000 (cowries),
ati amu epo kan ni ebọ.
and jar (of) palm:oil one be sacrifice.

Olobutu ko ru ebọ, n(i)-igba-ti nwon fi j(e)-gba ti ko se
Olobutu not offer sacrifice; at-time-that they take (him) eat-king that not do
rere ni gbogbo ęiyę ba yọ ni oye. Ęwu igba-na ni o wa ni
good be all bird did pull:out (him) at title. Gown (of) time-the be it exist at
orun g(un)-osun-(g)un)-osun titi di oni yi, nwon si
neck (of) pound-camwood-pound-camwood until (it) become today this, they and
fi okin si ipo re.
put okin to position his.

Ifa ni Q-1(i)-orun ma gbe ęni-kan de ipo kan,
Ifa say One:who-has-sky (continuative) take person-one reach position one,
şugbon ki o ru-(e)bọ ki o ma ba ri e-l(i)-enini
but should he offer-sacrifice that he not should see one:who-has-enmity

among the leaves who sacrificed are the ones from whom we can make medicine that works, and of whom we say, "This leaf really works, oh."³

Ifa says that there is something for which we have cast Ifa, and that it will turn out well if we sacrifice because of it. Ifa says he will not allow us to be disgraced in this matter. He says we should make a sacrifice so that the thing can turn out well from top to bottom.

3. This verse thus explains why some leaves are useful in making medicine while others are not.

255 - 1

"It is suddenly white,¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Olobutu, the king of the birds in the farm. They said that during that year his head would bring him to a place where he would achieve his destiny, but that lest he meet an enemy who would push him out of the position, a sacrifice should be made. The red gown from his back with which he decorated himself, one ewe, three shillings, and one jar of palm oil was the sacrifice.

Olobutu did not make the sacrifice. When they made him king and he did not do good, all the birds took the title away from him. The gown which he did not sacrifice can still be seen on the neck of "Pound camwood pound camwood"² until this very day. And they put the *okin* bird in his position.

Ifa says that the Sky God is going to place someone in an important position, but that he should make a sacrifice, lest he meet an enemy

1. Note the pun here on the name of the figure Ofun-(Q)şş. White is associated with both Ofun and Qşş, and the *okin* is a white bird.

2. This is another name for olobutu, an unidentified bird, referring to the band of red feathers (its red "gown") on its neck. This verse thus explains how it came to have this marking and how the *okin* came to be regarded as "king of the birds." The *okin*, identified by Abraham as an egret, is described as a white bird whose highly prized feathers are fastened to king's crowns.

ti yio yọ ni ipo rẹ na. Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa l(i)-ori
 that will pull:out (him) at position his the, Ifa say person-one exist at-head (of)
 ipo kan n(i)-isisiyi, şugbọn bi ẹni ikọkọ ba ni ẹbọ yio
 position one at-right:now, but if person (of) corner should have sacrifice will
 gba ipo na l(i)-ọwọ rẹ ni oju ara rẹ.
 take position the at-hand his at eye (of) people his.

OFUN - (Q)ŞŞ - 2

Afẹrẹfẹ-lẹgẹ-lẹgẹ ti ori oko wa-(i)lẹ, ojo Apa ni
 "Breeze-sway-sway from head (of) farm come-ground; rain (of) Apa be (it)
 irọ ni ibubu a da fun Şereke ọmọ a-ş(e)-oro p(a)-
 fall at sideways" who cast for Shereke, child (of) one:who-make-ritual kill-
 ẹgbẹrin awun jẹ. Ojo dudu ni ti-(i)rọ l(i)-Apa ni ko jẹ-ki
 800 Miser eat. Rain black be (it) have-fall at-Apa be (it) not consent-that
 nwọn ri ọmọ tun-tun gbe ş(e)-ere, n(i)-igba-ti ojo funfun ba nrọ
 they see child new-new take make-play, at-time-that rain white should falling
 l(i)-Apa nwọn a ri ọwọ tun-tun gbe ş(e)-ere.
 at-Apa they will see child new-new take make-play.
 Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti o ni aya pupọ şugbọn ti awọn aya rẹ
 Ifa say person-one exist that he have wife many, but that those wife his
 wọn-yi ko bi ọmọ, Ifa ni on yio şi ọna ọmọ fun ni ọdun
 those-this not bear child; Ifa say he will open road (of) child for (him) at year
 yi, ki oluwarẹ na şe alafia ọmọ. Ẹbọ
 this, that person:in:question the make contentment (of) child. Sacrifice (be)
 ewurẹ kan, ejielogun, yio mu ewurẹ yi lọ si odo kan ti
 she:goat one, 44,000 (cowries); (we) will take she:goat this go to river one that
 ko nğan ti ko jina si, ki gbogbo enia si tẹle lọ si
 not flowing that not be:far to (him); should all people and follow (him) go to
 ibẹ ki o fi bọ, ki babalawo jẹ owo na ni eru.
 there should they take (it) sacrifice; should diviner eat cowries the at payment.

OFUN - (Q)ŞŞ - 3

"Otere omi Qşş, abuku odo ni d(i)-abata, ikasin
 "Trickle (of) water (of) Qshş, disgrace (of) river be (it) become-mud"; Left:
 omi gbe-(i)le Q-l(i)-orọ kan a da fun Abọnun
 over water dwell:at-house (of) One:who-has-riches sour" who cast for Abọnun

who will take him from the position. Ifa says there is someone in an important position at the present time, but if someone who now stays in the corner should make a sacrifice, he will take the post from him while his relatives are alive to see it.

255 - 2

"Gentle breeze¹ comes to earth from the top of the farm; rain at Apa² falls on a slant" was the one who cast Ifa for Shereke, the child of the "Priest who kills 800 tortoises to eat." The black rain that falls at Apa does not let the people of Apa have new-born children to celebrate; when white rain³ falls at Apa, they will have new-born children to celebrate.

Ifa says there is someone who has many wives, but that his wives have not born children. Ifa says he will open the road of children for him during this year, so that this person can find the contentment of children. The sacrifice is one she-goat and eleven shillings. We will take this she-goat to a nearby body of still water; all his people should follow him and they should sacrifice the she-goat there. The diviner should keep the money as his payment.

1. Cf. n. 1, verse 175-2.

2. "Apa," whose meaning was given as wastrel or prodigal, was interpreted here as the name of an unidentified town.

3. Informants did not know the significance of black and white rain, and the whole introduction is obscure.

255 - 3

"Trickle of water at Qshę,¹ river's disgrace is to become mud" and "Yesterday's water in the house of a rich man is stale"² were the ones who cast Ifa for Abqunun,

1. "Qshę," one of the elements in the name of this figure, was interpreted here as the name of an unidentified town. "Otere" was said to mean something that flows in a small stream, like a spring.

2. A rich man can afford to complain if his water is not fresh every day, and to regard water left over from the day before as "sour" or stale.

ti iṣe ọmọ Olodumare ni ọjọ ti ọmọ inu aiye nro
 that make child (of) Olodumare at day that child (of) belly (of) earth thinking (he)
 pin.
 end.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti o di arugbo ti gbogbo awọn ara
 Ifa say person-one exist that he become old:person that all those people
 ile rẹ ko ka si, ti nwọn nfi ẹ ẹ-l(i)-
 (of) house his not count to (him), that they taking (him) make one:who-have-
 ẹya, ni ọdun yi ni Q-l(i)-ọrun yio si ọna owo fun
 ridicule, at year this be One:who-has-sky will open road (of) cowries for (him)
 ti gbogbo enia yio si ma fi ori ba-(i)lẹ fun
 that all people will and (continuative) take head touch-ground for (him)
 pẹlu awọn ij(ẹ)-oye. Ifa kan ti ko gbogbo iwa ẹni pa-
 together:with those eat-title. Ifa one have gather all destiny (of) person kill-
 mọ, ki a tọ-(o)ju Ifa na ki o ba le si ọna fun-
 against, should we care:for-face (of) Ifa the that it should be:able open road for-
 (ẹ)ni. A-(yi)o fi ewurẹ kan bọ Ifa.
 person. We-will take she:goat one sacrifice:to Ifa.

Abọnun jẹ talaka o si jẹ arugbo, ẹ-l(i)-ẹya ni awọn
 Abọnun eat poor:man he and eat old:person, one:who-have-ridicule be those
 ara ile rẹ ma fi ẹ nṣe, n(i)-igba-ti Abọnun
 people (of) house his (continuative) take (him) make making; at-time-that Abọnun
 tọ babalawo lọ pe ki nwọn yẹ on wo, nwọn ni Ifa
 approach diviners go that should they examine him look:at (him), they say Ifa
 gba ewurẹ ni ọwọ rẹ, o wa lọ si ọja, o ra ewurẹ kan ni awin,
 take she:goat at hand his; he come go to market, he buy she:goat one at unpaid,
 o ni b(i)-o ba di ọtunla ki e-l(i)-ewurẹ
 he say if-it should become day:after:tomorrow should one:who-has-she:goat
 wa gb(e)-owo, n(i)-igba-ti o de ile, o pa ewurẹ, n(i)-igba-ti
 come take-cowries; at-time-that he arrive house, he kill she:goat, at-time-that
 o di ọjọ-(e)keji, o ha ewurẹ yi ka gbogbo ile, n(i)-igba-ti
 it become day-second, he share she:goat this around all house; at-time-that
 o di ọjọ-(ẹ)kẹta o sa pa-mọ s(i)-inu igbo nitori-ti o ri
 it become day-third he run kill-against to-belly (of) forest because-that he see
 pe on ko ni ri owo ewurẹ yi san fun e-l(i)-ewurẹ.
 that he not have see cowries (of) she:goat this repay for one:who-has-she:goat.

N(i)-ibi-ti o gbe nrin lọ, n(i)-inu igbo ni o jin s(i)-ilẹ
 At-place-that he take walking to, at-belly forest be he fall:down to-ground
 akun, n(i)-igba-ti e-l(i)-ewurẹ de ile Abọnun ti
 (of) bead; at-time-that one:who-has-she:goat arrive house (of) Abọnun that (she)
 ko ba, awọn ara ile Abọnun da-(o)hun, nwọn sọ fun
 not meet (him), those people (of) house (of) Abọnun break-voice, they speak for

who was the child of the Sky God, on the day that people on earth thought he was all through.³

Ifa says there is someone who has grown old; none of his relatives take any account of him, and they are making fun of him. During this year the Sky God will open the road of money for him, and everyone will prostrate themselves before him, including the chiefs. An Ifa has taken all his destiny and hidden it; we should take care of the Ifa so that it will be able to open the road for him. We will sacrifice one she-goat to Ifa.

Abɔnun was a poor man and he was very old. His relatives were making fun of him. When Abɔnun consulted the diviners, so that they might examine his case, they told him that Ifa wanted a she-goat from him. He went to the market, and bought a she-goat on credit. He told the goat-seller that she should come to collect the money on the day after tomorrow. When he reached home, he killed the goat. The next day he shared the goat among all the people of his house. And on the following day he ran into the forest to hide, because he saw that he had not found the money to pay the goat-seller for the goat.

In the forest he was walking about, he broke through the ground into a pit of beads. When the goat-seller came to Abɔnun's house and did not find him, the people of Abɔnun's house said to

3. Literally, "ended" or "finished," meaning that he did not count for anything any more.

e-l(i)-ewurẹ pe Ki-ni iwọ na ta ewurẹ fun si?
 one:who-has-she:goat that "What-be you the sell she:goat for (him) to (him)?"

Nibo ni yio ti ri owo san fun ọ?
 Where be (he) will have see cowries repay for you?"

N(i)-igba-na ni e-l(i)-ewurẹ dogo de Abọnun si ile, n(i)-igba-
 At-time-the be one:who-has-she:goat stay wait:for Abọnun to house; at-time-
 ti Abọnun de ile ti o ba e-l(i)-ewurẹ o gbe gbirin
 that Abọnun arrive house that he meet one:who-has-she:goat, he take package (of)
 akun fun E-l(i)-ewurẹ ba lọ pẹlu ija-(ai)ya, n(i)-
 bead give (her). One:who-has-she:goat join (it) go together:with break-chest; at-
 igba-ti o fi ma di ọdun-(e)keji Abọnun ti di ọ-
 time-that it take (continuative) become year-second Abọnun have become one:who-
 l(i)-ọrọ n(i)-igba-ti o ma bọ Ifa rẹ, malu ni o pa o
 have-riches; at-time-that he (continuative) sacrifice:to Ifa his, cow be he kill he
 si pa-(a)şş pe ki nwọn fi se ọbẹ, n(i)-igba-ti ọbẹ jina
 and kill-command that should they take (it) cook stew; at-time-that stew cooked
 ni Abọnun joko ti i ti o si bẹrẹ si kọ-(o)rin wi-pe:
 be Abọnun sit:down against it that he and begin to sing-song speak-that:

Ẹ m(u)-awo wa, ẹ la gba o
 "You take-plate come, you come accept, oh;

A-ro-(ẹ)ni-pin m(u)-awo wa
 "One:who-think-person-end take-plate come;

Ẹ la gba o A-ro-(ẹ)ni-pin
 "You come take, oh, One:who-think-person-end."

Ifa ni ẹni-kan wa ti awọn enia nsọ pe ko nilari,
 Ifa say person-one exist that those people speaking that not become:lucky,
 şugbọn Q-l(i)-ọrun ma şi-(ọ)na owo ati alafia
 but One:who-has-sky (continuative) open-road (of) cowries and contentment
 fun, gbogbo enia ni yio ma pada lati wa tun bu
 for (him), all people be (they) will (continuative) return to come then share
 ọla fun ti nwọn yio si ma tẹ-(o)ri-ba fun bi ko
 honor for (him) that they will and (continuative) press-head-touch for (him) if not
 j(ẹ)-oye yio ni ọla ju ẹni-ti o jẹ oye lọ.
 eat-title will have honor surpass person-that he eat title go.

her, "Why did you sell him a goat? Where will he find the money to pay you?"

Then the goat-seller sat down to wait for⁴ Abḡnun at his house. When Abḡnun came home and found the goat-seller, he gave her a package of beads wrapped in leaves. The goat-seller took it away with fear in her heart.⁵ By the next year Abḡnun had become a rich man, and when he sacrificed to his Ifa, he killed a cow.⁶ He ordered that it be made into a stew. When the stew was cooked, Abḡnun sat down beside it and began to sing:

"Bring your plates, come and eat, oh;

"You who thought that I was all through, bring your plates;

"Come and eat, oh, you who thought I was all through."

Ifa says there is someone who people say will never have any luck, but the Sky God is about to open the road of money and contentment for him. Everyone will come back to him in order to pay him honor, and they will bow down for him. Even if he is not made a chief, he will have more honor than those who are chiefs.

4. "Dogode" is used to describe the activities of a creditor in dunning a debtor. It is the equivalent of "camping on the doorstep," and may mean to sit (joko), stand (duro), or lie down [dubu-(i)lẹ].

5. That is, she was afraid that she was being paid with stolen goods, and might be involved in a legal case. The Yoruba idiom "break-chest" refers to the beating of her heart; the chest is the seat of courage in much the same way that the head is the seat of luck and the stomach the seat of one's disposition.

6. Only kings and very wealthy people could afford to use a cow as sacrifice.

OFUN - (Q)§ 4

O-fun-şunin awo aşo l(i)-o da fun aşo ni ojo ti o
 "To-squeeze-'shunin,'" secret (of) Cloth be-who cast for Cloth at day that she

nsq-(e)kun a-l(i)-ai-ri-omq-bi, nwon ni yio l(i)-
 shedding-tears (of) one:who-be-not-see-child-bear; they say (she) will have-

oyun kan, şugbon ebq ar(a)-aiye ni ki o ru aşo
 pregnancy one, but sacrifice (of) people-(of)-earth be should she offer cloth

i-ro kan, ewure kan, ati egbedogbon.
 to-wrap one, she:goat one, and 5000 (cowries).

Aşo gbq ko ru-(e)bq, n(i)-igba-ti aşo ba l(i)-oyun
 Cloth hear not offer-sacrifice, at-time-that Cloth should have-pregnancy,

oyun na a si ra mq l(i)-ara, n(i)-igba-na ni aşo
 pregnancy the will and disappear against (her) at-body; at-time-the be Cloth

berę si wi-pe on iba mq ki o se ebq O-fun-
 begin to speak-that "She should know should she make sacrifice (of) To-squeeze-

şunin n(i)-ijosı o si berę si k(i)-a-ba-mq pe ki-ni on
 'shunin' at-other:day," she and begin to that-we-should-know that "What-be she

şe yi?
 do this?"

Ifa ni obinrin kan ni-(e)yi ti yio l(i)-oyun, şugbon ki o ru-
 Ifa say woman one be-this that will have-pregnancy, but should she offer-

(e)bq ar(a)-aiye ki oyun na ma ba ra mq
 sacrifice (of) people-(of)-earth that pregnancy the not should disappear against

l(i)-ara. Obinrin kan si tun ni-(e)yi ki o ru-(e)bq ki
 (her) at-body. Woman one and then be-this should she offer-sacrifice that

oyun ti o ni yi ma jo mq l(i)-ara.
 pregnancy that she have this not leak against (her) at-body.

OFUN MEJI - 1

A sa-re a ka-(o)san a fi-(i)rin gbere-gbere ka-(o)san, a ki
 "We run-go we pluck-qsan, we take-walking slowly-slowly pluck-qsan, we not

ni eni ni (i)m(u)-qsan k(i)-a m(u)-ai-pon a da fun oju ti
 have person at place-(of)-qsan that-we drink-not-be:ripe" who cast for Eye that

o nlq j(e)-q-l(i)-oja l(i)-arin ara; nwon ni ki oju
 he going eat-one:who-has-market at-middle (of) people; they say should Eye

ki o ru-(e)bq giye-(i)le meji, şyin-(a)dię meji,
 should he offer-sacrifice (of) bird-(of)-house two, egg-(of)-chicken two,

egberindinlogun ati oboto ori a-(yi)o lo ori mq
 3200 (cowries), and lump (of) shea:butter, we-will grind shea:butter against

"To wring out 'shunin,'"¹ the diviner of Cloth, was the one who cast Ifa for Cloth when she was weeping because she was childless. They said she would become pregnant, but that as a sacrifice against witches² she should offer one cloth wrapper,³ one she-goat, and one shilling three pence.

Cloth heard but did not make the sacrifice. When Cloth became pregnant, the pregnancy disappeared from her body. Then Cloth began to say, "Had I but known, I would have made the sacrifice of To wring out 'shunin' the other day," and she began to regret, saying, "Why did I do this?"

Ifa says this is a woman who will become pregnant; but she should make a sacrifice against witches, so that the pregnancy will not disappear from her body. And then again there is a woman who is already pregnant who should make a sacrifice so that her pregnancy will not leak away.⁴

1. "Shunin" is the sound made when a cloth is squeezed or wrung dry. The name of the diviner is a play upon the name of the figure [Ofun-(*o*)*ṣṣ*]. The imagery involved in the diviner's name is carried consistently through the verse. The water dripping from the cloth refers to the tears of Cloth, weeping for children. The air bubbles that appear when a cloth is wrung out are referred to as Cloth becoming pregnant, a condition which never lasts because Cloth failed to sacrifice and the verse explains why this happens. And there is a danger that the client's pregnancy may also leak away.

2. Ar(a)-aiye is a euphemism for witches.

3. A large, rectangular piece of cloth that is wrapped around the waist as a skirt.

4. Cf. verse 183-2, where the pregnancy of the mordant used in dyeing also leaks away.

"We run to pick star apples,¹ we walk leisurely to pick star apples; but since we don't have anyone at the place where star apples grow, we always have to eat them unripened"² was the one who cast Ifa for Eye when he was going to be made king. They said Eye should sacrifice two pigeons, two chicken eggs, nine pence six oninis, and a lump of shea butter. We will grind the shea butter with

1. See n. 3, verse 54-5.

2. Because we have no one to watch them, the star apples are stolen as they ripen, leaving us only unripened ones.

ewe jε-n-joko a-(yi)o pa ɔkan si n(i)-inu awɔn ɛiyε-
 leaf consent-I-sit:down, we-will kill one to (it) at-belly (of) those bird-(of)-
 (i)le meji na a-(yi)o fɔ ɛyin-(a)diε kan si a-(yi)o ma
 house two the, we-will break egg-(of)-chicken one to (it), we-will (continuative)
 fi pa ara. Oju ru-(ε)bɔ.
 take (it) rub body. Eye offer-sacrifice.

Ifa ni ɛni-kan wa ti Q-l(i)-ɔrun yio da ɔja iwa
 Ifa say person-one exist that One:who-has-sky will create market (of) destiny
 nla kan fun ti yio kan gbogbo awɔn ara ile rε gεgε-bi oju
 big one for (him) that will touch all those people (of) house his just-as Eye
 ti ri fun gbogbo ara; ɔmɔde kan si wa ti Q-l(i)-ɔrun yio
 have see for all people; young:child one and exist that One:who-has-sky will
 mu de ipo nla kan, ɕugbɔn ki o ru-(ε)bɔ dara-dara
 take arrive position big one, but should he offer-sacrifice be:good-be:good
 nitori e-l(i)-enini.
 because (of) one:who-has-enmity.

OFUN MEJI - 2

"B(i)-a ɕe iwɔ bi yio ɕe emi ki jε-ki a ɕu si
 "If-(it)-will make you if (it) will make me, not consent-that we defecate to
 oko a-l(i)-ai-r(i)-uju, bi a ba ɕu si oko a-l(i)-
 farm (of) one:who-be-not-see-eye; if we should defecate to farm (of) one:who-be-
 ai-r(i)-uju, ebi-ala rε ni a ko gbɔdɔ rin, bi a ba rin ebi-
 not-see-eye edge-(of)-boundary his be we not must walk; if we should walk edge-
 ala rε iɕu rε ni a ko gbɔdɔ jε, a da fun Oniwɔnranole ti
 (of)-boundary his, yam his be we not must eat" who cast for Oniwɔnranole that
 ar(a)-aiye nfi ɕe ε-l(i)-ɛya ɛgbagun,
 people-(of)-earth taking (him) make one:who-have-ridicule (of) 40,000 (times),
 ti nwɔn nfi ɕe ε-l(i)-ɛya ɛgbagbɔn nwɔn
 that they taking (him) make one:who-have-ridicule (of) 60,000 (times); they
 ni gbogbo aiye ni yio pe sin n(i)-igb(a)-ɛhin oju-
 say all earth be (it) will assemble serve (him) at-time-back face-(of)-
 alε rε. Oniwɔnranole ni orukɔ ti a pe Ifa. Ewurε kan, eku, ɛja,
 evening his. Oniwɔnranole be name that we call Ifa. She:goat one, rat, fish,
 ayeɔ adie ati obi ni ɛbɔ.
 hen chicken, and kola be sacrifice.

Ifa ni ɛni-kan ni gbogbo awɔn ara ile rε nbu ti nwɔn
 Ifa say person-one be all those people (of) house his insulting that they

the leaf "let me sit down";³ we will kill one of the two pigeons and add its blood; we will break one egg onto the mixture; and with it we will rub our body. Eye made the sacrifice.

Ifa says that there is someone for whom the Sky God will create a large market of destiny, which will affect all his family, just as Eye sees for everyone.⁴ And there is a young child whom the Sky God will place in a very important position; but he should make a very good sacrifice to avoid an enemy.

3. See n. 3, verse 249-4.

4. This verse thus explains that, because he made the sacrifice, no one can see without eyes.

256 - 2

"Whether it is you or whether it is I, we are not permitted to defecate on the farm of one who is too busy to look after it;¹ if we do defecate on the farm of one who is too busy to look after it, we must not walk along the boundary of his farm; if we do walk along the boundary of his farm, we must not eat his yams"² was the one who cast Ifa for Oniwonranole when people were ridiculing him 40,000 times, when they were ridiculing him 60,000 times. They said all the world would gather to serve him in his old age. Oniwonranole is the name that we call Ifa.³ One she-goat, a rat, a fish, a hen, and kola is the sacrifice.

Ifa says there is someone whom all the people of his house are insulting

1. Alairoju was interpreted as meaning one who is so busy that he doesn't have time to look after his farm; but the reference may be to a blind man.

2. Prohibitions of this type are known as qhun. Informants compared them to tabus (ewq), but were unable to differentiate between them. If either is broken, one suffers the consequences (jε ewq, jε qhun). Abraham gives "I suffered the penalty" for qhun hun mi.

3. It is understood that Ifa became so important because he made the sacrifice.

si npe ni ọlẹ yi, oluwarẹ na ni yio ni
 and calling (him) at lazy:person this, person:in question the be (who) will have
 gbogbo ile na ni igb(a)-ẹhin ọla; a si nfẹ ẹe ohun kan, ohun
 all house the at time-back (of) tomorrow; we and wanting do thing one, thing
 na yio ni ere n(i)-ik(an)-ẹhin. Gbogbo ile ni yio ma
 the will have gain at-standing-back. All house be (it) will (continuative)
 pe sin ẹni-kan ni ẹhin-ọla.
 assemble serve person-one at back-(of)-tomorrow.

OFUN MEJI - 3

"Afinkin ni p(a)-ẹru, ilẹ dida ni p(a)-ọrẹ, epe ni p(a)-
 "Afinkin be (it) kill-slave, ground broken be (it) kill-friend, curse be (it) kill-
 ole, a-jọ-bi ni pa iye-kan, b(i)-
 thief, those:who-be:together-bear be (they) kill (those) (of) mother-one," "If-
 ọja ba tu pẹ a k(u)-ero kata-kata, a ku-
 market should loosen suddenly, it remain-stranger scattered-scattered, it remain-
 (a)-na-(ọ)ja, a ku-(a)-p(a)-atẹ a da fun Irun-(I)mọlẹ
 those:who-spend-goods, it remain-those:who-kill-tray" who cast for 400-Deity
 ti Olodumare nran-(i)şẹ iku pe wọn igb(a)-(og)oji ti o nran-
 that Olodumare sending-message (of) death call them time-forty that he sending-
 (i)şẹ iku pe wọn igb(a)-(og)ota.
 message (of) death call them time-sixty.

N(i)-igba-ti Olodumare nran-(i)şẹ iku pe gbogbo Irun-(I)mọlẹ,
 At-time-that Olodumare sending-message (of) death call all 400-Deity,

Qrunmila pe gbogbo wọn, o se ikoko igbin kan, ikoko ẹja kan, ikoko
 Qrunmila call all them, he cook pot (of) snail one, pot (of) fish one, pot

eku kan, o yan agbọn ori kan o si pọn amu
 (of) rat one, he choose basket (of) cornstarch:porridge one he and draw jar (of)

omi kan ti wọn; n(i)-igba-ti wọn jẹ ti wọn mu tan, Qrunmila
 water one against them; at-time-that they eat that they drink finish, Qrunmila

şọ fun wọn pe l(i)-ilọ ti nwọn nlọ si ọrun yi, ki awọn ma ẹ
 speak for them that at-departure that they going to sky this, should they not do

şẹ ara awọn ni ẹyọbẹyọ, ki a ẹ ara wọn ni şirimu, ki
 make body their at one:by:one, should they make body their at united, should

awọn si jọ ma rin lọ, ki awọn ma-şẹ rin l(i)-ọk(an)-
 they and be:together (continuative) walk go, should they not-do walk at-one-

ọkan, o ni nitori-ti bi awọn ba fi ara awọn ẹ ọkan, Olodumare
 one, he say because-that if they should take body their make one, Olodumare

and are calling lazy; this person will own the entire house in the near future. And we want to do something; this thing will yield a profit eventually. The whole house will gather to serve someone in the near future.

256 - 3

"Afinkin¹ is what kills slaves; broken oaths² are what kill friends; curses³ are what kill thieves; and ancestors are what kill relatives"⁴ and "If the market breaks up suddenly, foreigners are left scattered here and there, traders remain, and those who have spread their wares for sale remain"⁵ were the ones who cast Ifa for the Four Hundred Deities when the Sky God was sending Death to call them forty times, when he was sending Death to call them sixty times.

When the Sky God sent Death to call all the Four Hundred Deities, Qrunmila called them together. He cooked one pot of snails, one pot of fish, one pot of rats, and he bought one basket of cornstarch porridge and drew one jar full of water for them. When they had finished eating and drinking, Qrunmila told them that when they went to heaven this time, they should not go singly; they should go together and stand united; they should not walk alone. He said, because if they stayed together, the Sky God

1. This could not be explained by informants; but from the context it would seem to be something comparable to an oath or a curse. Idowu (1962: 52) gives it as Afinti, which he translates as tale-bearing, in a very similar introduction to a verse which he ascribes to Ogbe Meji.

2. To take an oath is called to "drink ground" (mulẹ, mu ilẹ), and to break an oath to "break ground" (da ilẹ).

3. See n. 4, verse 248-4.

4. According to informants "those born together" (ajọbi) refers to the ancestors, and "those of one mother" (iyekan) is used loosely here to mean those related by either the father or the mother. A person who is accused of making bad medicine against such a relative or of having sexual relations with a relative's wife is made to take an oath of his innocence. He must eat kola in the main chamber of the compound and repeat "May the ancestors kill me" (if I am guilty) [Ki ajọbi pa mi]. This type of an oath, taken only when there is a dispute within the family, is considered extremely dangerous, even more so than the public oaths by the Ogunladin in the Qni's palace. Idowu (1962: 52) gives Alajọbi, translated as consanguinity.

5. When something happens in the market, the customers leave, but those who sell in the market stay to protect their wares, and people who have come from other towns remain because they have nowhere else to go.

ko ni le da ọkan duro tabi ki o mu ọkan s(i)-ilẹ n(i)-inu awọn.
not be be:able cause one stand or that he take one to-ground at-belly their.

N(i)-igba-ti nwọn de ọdọ Olodumare, gbogbo awọn Irun-(I)mọlẹ
At-time-that they arrive presence (of) Olodumare, all those 400-Deity
sọ fun Olodumare pe ọkunrin dudu ti o gbe ide k(a)-ọrun yi ni o
speak for Olodumare that man black that he carry ide around-neck this be he
nru aiye nitori-na ki Olodumare ki o mu s(i)-ilẹ ni
disturbing earth because-the should Olodumare should he take (him) to-ground at
ọrun ki o ma-şe jẹ-ki o tun pada lọ si aiye mọ.
sky should he not-do consent-that he then return go to earth again.

N(i)-igba-ti Olodumare gbọ bayi o pe Eṣu o bere l(i)-ọwọ rẹ
At-time-that Olodumare hear thus he call Eshu, he ask (him) at-hand his
pe iwọ ni mo fi sọ wọn, bawo ni o ti ri ẹni-ti nwọn
that you be (who) I take watch them, how be you have see person-that they
wi yi si? Eṣu da-(o)hun o ni irọ ni nwọn npa mọ Qrunmila, o
speak this to? Eshu break-voice he say lie be they killing against Qrunmila, he
ni bi ẹni-kan ba nşe ai-san n(i)-inu nwọn ẹni-ti nwọn
say if person-one should doing not-be:better at-belly their, person-that they
wi yi ni ima tọ-(o)ju rẹ, bi o ba si gba eku
speak this be (who) (continuative) care:for-eye his, if he should and accept rat
tabi ẹja on na ni ma jẹ, Eṣu si tun sọ pe n(i)-
or fish, his the be (he) (continuative) eat (them), Eshu and then speak that at-
igba-ti awọn nbọ ni ọdọ Olodumare yi, o se ikoko eku,
time-that they coming at presence (of) Olodumare this, he cook pot (of) rat,
ikoko ẹja, ikoko igbin, amu omi o si yan agbọn ori
pot (of) fish, pot (of) snail, jar (of) water, he and choose basket (of) corn-
kan si, awọn jẹ awọn si mu ki awọn to bọ ni
starch:porridge one to (it), they eat they and drink before they equal come at
ọdọ iwọ, Olodumare.
presence (of) you, Olodumare.

N(i)-igba-ti gba ọrun gbọ bayi, o ko gbogbo awọn Irun-(I)mọlẹ
At-time-that King (of) sky hear thus, he gather all those 400-Deity
o de wọn mọ-(i)lẹ si ọrun, o ni ki Qrunmila ati Eṣu ma
he bind them against-ground to sky, he say should Qrunmila and Eshu (continua-
tive) go to earth. At-time-that those two-two arrive belly (of) earth, belly
Qrunmila dun, o si bẹrẹ si yin awọn babalawo rẹ o si nkọ-
(of) Qrunmila be:sweet, he and begin to praise those diviners his he and singing-
(o)rin pe:
song that:

would not be able to stop any one of them or be able to detain any one of them.

When they came to the Sky God, all the Four Hundred Deities told him that a black man who was wearing ide beads⁶ around his neck was the one who was upsetting the world, and that therefore the Sky God should keep him in heaven and not let him return to earth any more.

When the Sky God heard this, he called Eshu; he asked him "You are the one I have set to watch them. What do you know about this person of whom they speak?" Eshu answered, saying they were telling lies against Qrunmila. He said that whenever any one was ill, the one they said these things about was the one who cured them, and if he received rats or fish as a sacrifice, he only ate those that were meant for him. And then Eshu said that when they were coming to the Sky God this time, "Qrunmila cooked a pot of rats, a pot of fish, and a pot of snails, and he drew a jar of water and bought a basket of cornstarch porridge for them; and they ate and drank before they came before you, oh Olodumare."

When the King of the Sky heard this, he took all the Four Hundred Deities and tied them down in the sky; and he said that Qrunmila and Eshu should go back to earth. When these two arrived on earth, Qrunmila was happy and he began to praise his diviners and to sing:

6. Ide are the kind of beads worn by babalawo (see Chapter IX), identifying the "black man" as Qrunmila.

A gb(e)-ori-(i)lẹ a j(ẹ)-eku o
 "We dwell-at-head-(of)-ground we eat-rat, oh;

A gb(e)-ori-(i)lẹ a jẹ-(ẹ)ja
 "We dwell:at-head-(of)-ground we eat-fish;

A mu-(i)gba odu a jẹ-(i)gbin
 "We drink-calabash (of) odu we eat-snail.

A-şẹ d(i)-ọwọ ilẹ a jọ mu
 "That:which-happen become-hand (of) ground we be:together drink;

Ẹ gb(e)-ori-(i)lẹ ẹ da mi
 "You dwell:at-head-(of)-ground you break (ground) my;

A-şẹ d(i)-ọwọ ilẹ a jọ mu
 "That:which-happen become-hand (of) ground we be:together drink."

Ifa ni ki a ma da ilẹ ọrẹ ki a ma ba ku iku
 Ifa say should we not break ground (of) friend that we not should die death (of)

ai-ro-tẹlẹ, a ba ẹni-kan p(a)-ero ọrọ kan, oluwarẹ
 not-think-beforehand; we join person-one kill-thought (of) word one, person:in:

nfẹ da-(i)lẹ si-(ẹ)ni, ara ọrun ni yio şe i-
 question wanting break-ground to-person, people (of) sky be (who) will make to-

da-(ẹ)jọ ọrọ rẹ; ẹni-kan si tun wa ti o nşe ai-san
 cause-case (of) word his; person-one and then exist that he doing not-be:better,

ko ni ku, ẹni-ti a ko gb(e)-ọju le ni yio ku. Gbogbo ohun
 (he) not be die, person-that we not take-eye upon be (he) will die. All thing

ti Qrunmila fi ru-(ẹ)bọ n(i)-igba-na ni gbogbo enia fi
 that Qrunmila take (them) offer-sacrifice at-time-the be all people take (them)

nbọ nisisiyi.
 sacrificing right:now.

(Ẹkọ inu Ifa yi: Iwọ ko gbọdọ j(ẹ)-ẹri eke si
 (Lesson (of) belly (of) Ifa this: You not must eat-witness (of) falsehood to

ọmọnikeji rẹ.)
 companion yours.)

OFUN MEJI - 4

Iku nda-(i)na epin, arun nda-(i)na ita; ajẹ on Eşu
 "Death creating-fire (of) epin; disease creating-fire (of) ita; witch and Eshu

nda-(i)na munrun-munrun a da fun Qrunmila n(i)-igba-ti ara
 creating-fire (of) munrun-munrun" who cast for Qrunmila at-time-that body (of)

ọmọ rẹ ko da; nwọn ni ki o ru-(ẹ)bọ ẹiyẹ-(i)le kan,
 child his not be:good; they say should he offer-sacrifice (of) bird-(of)-house one,

"We live on earth, we eat rats, oh;

"We live on earth, we eat fish;

"We drink calabashes of odu,⁷ we eat snails.

"Whatever happens concerns the oath that we took together;

"You lived on earth, you broke your oath to me;

"Whatever happens concerns the oath that we took together."

Ifa says that we should not break an oath with a friend, lest we meet death unexpectedly. We have discussed something with someone who wants to break his oath to us, but the people in heaven will judge and punish him. And then there is someone who is ill, he will not die; but someone else whom we have not even noticed is the one who will die. All the things that Qrunmila sacrificed at that time are what everyone uses in sacrificing at the present time.⁸

(The lesson⁹ of this Ifa verse is that "You must not bear false witness against your companions.")

7. Informants could not explain the meaning of odu in this context.

8. The verse explains why snails, fish, rats, cornstarch porridge, and water are used in sacrifices to Qlqrun, and why Ifa and Eshu are so important on earth.

9. This moral, which is not recited by the diviners as part of the Ifa verse, was added by the interpreter.

"Death kindles a fire of epin wood; disease kindles a fire of ita wood; Witches and Eshu kindle a fire of munrun-munrun wood"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Qrunmila when his child's health was not good. They said he should sacrifice one pigeon,

1. Munrun-munrun is an unidentified tree. Firewood from the ita tree (Celtis Soyauxii, C. Zenkeri, C. Adolphi-Frederici)¹ is important among the gifts to the wife's relatives at marriage. Epin is the Sandpaper tree (Ficus asperifolia).

akikọ adiḡ kan, obi męfa, ęgba męfa, ki ọmọ rẹ ma ba ku.
 cock chicken one, kola six, 2000 (cowries) six, that child his not should die.

O ru ọmọ rẹ na si ye. Ifa ni ki a ru-(ẹ)bọ ki ai-san
 He offer, child his the and live. Ifa say should we offer-sacrifice that not-be:

ma le ẹ-(ẹ)ni.

better not be:able make-person.

OFUN MEJI - 5

Aṣinṣinrin ni ẹ(e)-awo ilu o-d(a)-oro ikandu
 Ashinshinrin be (who) make-secret (of) town (of) one:who-cause-spite, Ikandu

ni ẹ(e)-awo ilu o-ẹ(e)-ika ẹta fi iru
 be (who) make-secret (of) town (of) that:which-make-wickedness, "Ẹta take tail

gba-(i)lẹ ḡḡḡḡḡ, o nre mọgan a da fun Ọṣu-fun-mi-l(i)-ayo, a
 sweep-ground 'ḡḡḡḡḡ' he going Mọgan" who cast for "Ọṣu-give-me-at-joy, who

bi ija wara n(i)-igba-ti o nlọ si Agege, nwọn ni ki o ru
 as fight immediately" at-time-that he going to Agege; they say should he offer

eku meje, ẹja meje, ẹgbaje owo ẹyọ, o ru ẹbọ.
 rat seven, fish seven, 14,000 cowries ẹyọ, he offer sacrifice.

Ifa ni ki a ru-(ẹ)bọ irin ajo ti a np(a)-
 Ifa say should we offer-sacrifice (of) walking (of) journey that we killing-

ete lati lọ, ki a ba le pada wa si ile ni alafia.
 intention to go, that we should be:able return come to house at contentment.

OFUN MEJI - 6

A-(yi)o fi ẹfun ati osun tẹ Ofun Meji s(i)-ara ogiri.
 We-will take chalk and camwood press Ofun Meji to-body (of) wall.

Ayẹ, Odogbonikanran, A-dẹgbẹlu, A-lu-wi Apakenija
 "Ole, Odogbonikanran, One:who-collapses, One:who-beat-speak, Apakenija

A-ja-koro-(w)a-(i)le, A-tu-gbe ni tuku tu ẹbọ,
 One:who-reach-at:once-come-house, To-loosen-be:lost be boar loosen sacrifice,

ibi-ti ewu ba sọ-(i)lẹ si ni ku si.
 Place-that rodent should strike-ground to be (it) die to."

A-(yi)o jẹ obi a-(yi)o tu fọn a-(yi)o wi-pe ibi-k(u)-ibi ti
 We-will eat kola; we-will spit (it) blow; we-will speak-that evil-any-evil that

o ba fi ori ẹẹ mi ibẹ ni ki o ku si ki o ma le ran
 it should take head make me, there be should it die to, should it not be:able affect
 mi.
 me.

one cock, six kola nuts, and three shillings, so that his child might not die. He made the sacrifice and his child lived. Ifa says we should make a sacrifice so that someone will not become ill.

256 - 5

Ashinshinrin, who was the diviner of the town of Revenger; Ikandu, who was the diviner of the town of Evil Doer; and "Èta¹ sweeps the ground with its tail 'ḡr̄ḡḡ,'² he is going to Mogan"³ were the ones who cast Ifa for "'Qshu gives me happiness' who is like a sudden fight" when he was going to Agege.⁴ They said he should sacrifice seven rats, seven fish, and three shillings six pence. He made the sacrifice.

Ifa says we should make a sacrifice because of a journey on foot that we intend to make, so that we may be able to return home in contentment.

1. Èta is identified by Abraham as the civet-cat from which musk (iṣeta, eṣeta) is obtained. Ashinshinrin is a bad-smelling rat; and ikandu is a large, bad-smelling ant. The two towns mentioned could not be identified by informants.
 2. This word describes the motion of the tail in sweeping the earth.
 3. Interpreted as the name of an unidentified town.
 4. A town about fifteen miles inland from Lagos on the road to Abẹkuta and Ibadan.
-

256 - 6

We will mark Ofun Meji on the wall in chalk and camwood.¹

"Ole! Odogbonikanran! The one who slumps!² The one who beats and speaks! Apakenija! The one who comes home as soon as he gets there! The wild boar⁴ scatters sacrifices so that they stay scattered! Where the ewu⁵ touches the ground is where it dies!"

We will chew kola and blow it from our mouth; we will say, "Whatever evil may befall me should perish; it should not be able to affect me."

1. This is not a usual verse recited as a part of divination, but one of the medicines learned by the diviners; see n. 1, verse 239-2. In large part it consists of verbal incantations whose meaning is obscure even when they can be translated, which give efficacy to the marks made on the wall.

2. As when one pretends to collapse or fall against a wall when he is given a playful shove.

3. This probably refers to Orunmila beating palm nuts.

4. Identified in Abraham as the Red River-hog (ḡlḡḡ ḡdo).

5. Described by informants as a nocturnal rodent-like animal, which may be arboreal; Abraham gives ewu as a synonym for okete, the Giant Rat or Pouched Rat (*Cricetomys gambianus*).

PARODIES - 1

Qna tọ tara ma ya a da fun Reluwe ni-(ọ)jọ ti o
 "Road be:straight straight not turn" who cast for Railway at-day that he
 nṣ(e)-awo r(e)-odo ti o nlọ b(a)-Oyinbo ṣ(e)-owo. Nwọn
 making-secret go-river that he going join-Whiteman make-transaction. They
 ni gbogbo ẹru Oyinbo, Reluwe ni yio ni, nwọn ni ki
 say all load (of) Whiteman, Railway be (he) will have (them); they say should
 o ru-(ẹ)bọ, nwọn ni ati oyinbo ati a-kọ-(i)we, Reluwe ni
 be offer-sacrifice, they say and Whiteman and One:who-write-book, Railway be
 yio ni ẹru wọn.
 (who) will have load their.

Reluwe kọ ko ru-(ẹ)bọ. Lati igba-na bi gbogbo enia ba
 Railway refuse not offer-sacrifice. From time-the if all people should
 ko ẹru s(i)-inu Reluwe, n(i)-igba-ti nwọn ba sọ nwọn a si
 gather load to-belly (of) Railway, at-time-that they should alight, they will and
 ko ẹru wọn kuro n(i)-inu rẹ.
 gather load their depart at-belly his.

Ifa ni ẹni-kan nlọ si ẹhin odi kan, nwọn ni ki o ru-
 Ifa say person-one going to back (of) townwall one, they say should he offer-
 (ẹ)bọ ki ole ma ba gba ẹru rẹ ni ọwọ rẹ.
 sacrifice that thief not should take load his at hand his.

PARODIES - 2

Qna tọ tara ma ya l(i)-o da-(I)fa fun Reluwe ni ọjọ ti
 "Road be:straight straight not turn" be-who cast-Ifa for Railway at day that
 o nsọ-(ẹ)kun a-l(i)-ai-l(i)-ẹni nwọn ni ki o ru-
 he shedding-tears one:who-be-not-have-person, they say should he offer-
 (ẹ)bọ yio ni ẹni akikọ męta, ẹgbafa ati aṣọ ara rẹ.
 sacrifice will have person, cock three, 12,000 (cowries) and cloth (of) body his.

Reluwe ru ẹgbafa ati aṣọ ara rẹ, ṣugbọn ko ru
 Railroad offer 12,000 (cowries) and cloth (of) body his, but not offer
 akikọ męta ti o jẹ-pe ki awọn enia na ba ba k(a)-
 cock three that it consent-that should those people the should join (him) around-
 alẹ. Reluwe bẹrẹ si di ẹ-l(i)-ẹni; bi gbogbo enia ba
 evening. Railway begin to become one:who-have-person; if all people should
 wọ inu Reluwe, bi o ba di alẹ nwọn a kuro n(i)-inu
 enter belly (of) Railway, if it should become evening they will depart at-belly
 rẹ, onikaluku a si lọ si ile rẹ. Lati igba-na ni gbogbo ero
 his; everyone:else will and go to house his. From time-the be all traveller

257 - 1

"The road is very straight, it does not turn"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Railway on the day that he was divining and going down to trade with Whiteman. They said that all the loads of Whiteman would belong to Railway. They said he should make a sacrifice. They said that Railway would own the loads of both Whiteman and Clerk.²

Railway refused, he did not make the sacrifice. From that time on, if everyone puts his load inside Railway, when he gets off the train he takes his load off and carries it away from Railway.³

Ifa says that someone is going out of town. They say he should make a sacrifice lest a thief should steal his loads from him.

1. This introductory phrase is taken directly from verse 20-2. Here it is more meaningfully applied to Railway, whose tracks are straighter than the traditional paths and streets. Cf. also verses 17-3 and 257-2.

2. The clerks or "ones who write books" were mainly employed by European trading firms and in government service. Like the Europeans they traveled by railway rather than by foot, with their "loads" or baggage with them.

3. Although this parody specifies no sacrifice, it has the typical explanatory element, to show why baggage is taken away from the railway train on which it is carried. Cf. verse 243-4.

257 - 2

"The road is very straight, it does not turn"¹ was the one who cast Ifa for Railway on the day he was weeping because he did not have followers. They said he would have followers if he sacrificed three cocks, three shillings, and the cloth from his body.

Railway offered three shillings and the cloth from his body, but did not offer the three cocks to let people stay with him overnight. Railway began to become a person with followers, but after everyone went into Railway, when it became evening his followers went away again, everyone going to his own home. From that time on, all travelers

1. Cf. n. 1, verse 257-1.

ti ma nwọ inu Reluwe ti nwọn si ma nkuro
 that (continuative) entering belly (of) Railway that they and (continuative) departing
 n(i)-inu rẹ ni al(ẹ)-alẹ.
 at-belly his at evening-evening.

Ifa ni a-(yi)o di ẹ-l(i)-ẹni şugbọn ki a ru-(ẹ)bọ
 Ifa say we-will become one:who-have-person, but should we offer-sacrifice
 ki ẹni ti a ni ma ba fi-(ẹ)ni s(i)-ilẹ.
 that person that we have not should put-person to-ground.

PARODIES - 3

Okunkun jẹ-ki agba ri-(ọ)na a da-(I)fa fun Oyinbo ti a
 "Darkness consent-that elder see-road" who cast-Ifa for Whiteman that they
 ma gba atupa ọwọ rẹ nwọn ni atupa ọwọ rẹ ni ẹbọ.
 (continuative) take lamp (of) hand his; they say lamp (of) hand his be sacrifice.
 Oyinbo fi atupa ọwọ rẹ ru-(ẹ)bọ.
 Whiteman take lamp (of) hand his offer-sacrifice.

Ifa ni ki ẹni-kan fi atupa ọwọ rẹ ru-(ẹ)bọ. N(i)-igba-
 Ifa say should person-one take lamp (of) hand his offer-sacrifice. At-time-
 ti agba ko ri-(ọ)na, o da Ifa fun Oyinbo o si fẹ gba atupa ọwọ
 that elder not see-road, he cast Ifa for Whiteman he and want take lamp (of) hand
 rẹ.
 his.

PARODIES - 4

Bi o ba rin pẹ titi, ebi a pa ọ pẹ titi a
 "If you should laugh be:long until, hunger will kill you be:long until" (be) who
 da fun Ọ-l(i)-oggedẹ-agbagba ti o ş(e)-omọ kọrogun-kọrogun. Nwọn ni
 cast for One:who-has-plantain that he make-child thick-thick. They say
 oggedẹ ti o wa ni agbala ti o yọ omọ on ni ẹbọ.
 plantain that he exist at backyard that it sprout child hers be sacrifice.

Babalawo ti ebi npa ni o ki Ifa yi fun ọkunrin kan ti
 Diviner that hunger killing (him) be who greet Ifa this for man one that
 o ni oggedẹ ti o yọ omọ ni agbala rẹ.
 he have plantain that it sprout child at backyard his.

who enter Railway have been leaving again each evening.²

Ifa says we will become a person who has followers, but we should make a sacrifice so that the followers that we have should not leave us.

2. The explanatory element here tells why the passengers leave the train each night. This parody includes a characteristic implication, that when a sacrifice is only partially made, the desired effect is not permanently attained.

257 - 3

"Darkness lets the elder see the road" was the one who cast Ifa for Whiteman when they were going to take the lamp from his hand.¹ They said that the lamp in his hand was the sacrifice. Whiteman sacrificed the lamp in his hand.

Ifa says someone should make a sacrifice of the lamp in his hand. When the elder could not see the road, he cast Ifa for Whiteman, and he wanted to take the lamp in his hand.

1. The implication, stated more specifically later, is that the diviner wanted the lamp (or flashlight) which he knew the Whiteman had, and therefore falsely, and unethically, said that it was required as a sacrifice.

257 - 4

If you laugh long, you will hunger long" was the one who cast Ifa for one who had a plantain with very thick children.¹ They said that the plantain that was in his backyard which had children was the sacrifice.²

The diviner who was suffering from hunger was the one who recited this verse for a man who had a plantain with children in his backyard.³

1. I.e. the fruit.

2. Cf. verse 2-2.

3. Cf. n. 1, verse 257-3.