

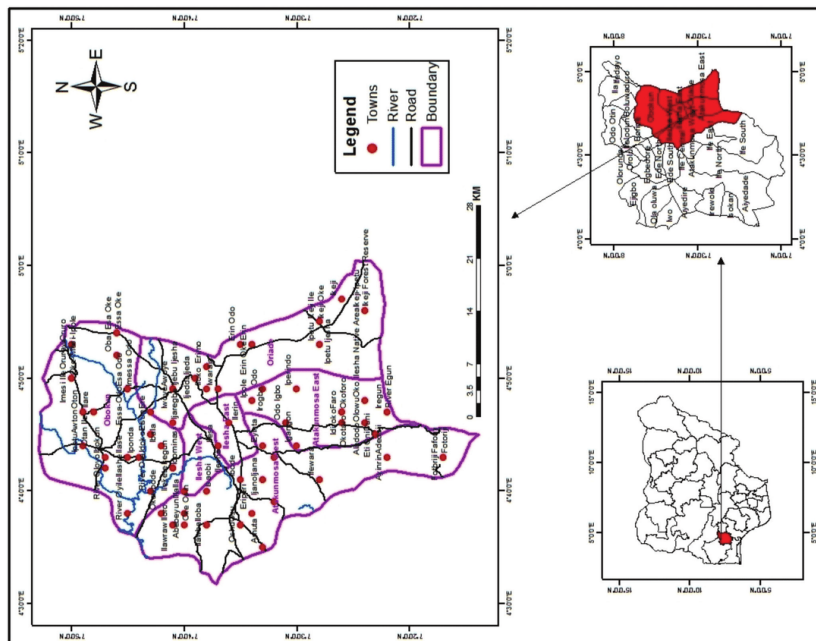
BRIEF HISTORY OF UJĘSALAND

In'pẹlẹ o, gbogbo Ujesa ! Se k'ømøde ba ba'tan, He a b'arøba a.

Arøba sö'øun ni baba'tan.

(i.e. exactly in ancestral Ujęsa dialect; whereby 'l' is replaced with 'u'; except where 'n' immediately follows it in exceptional cases. Or else, e.g. 'Upẹlẹ' may replace 'In'pẹlẹ'. NB.

Ujesaland can be found on the longitude 4°75' of the Greenwich and 7°30' latitude North of the Equator. Ujęsaland dwells in the splendour of a very beautiful weather bestowed on her by mother Nature. It lies on the rainforest of the North East of Yorubaland, a very beautiful landscape with hills ranging from 900 feet above sea level in the forest of Øni Valley to around 3000 feet above sea level in Imo Hills and 1800 feet in the hills around Oke-męsi towards the North and about 1,900 feet in Olumirin Waterfalls and others around Ęrin-Ujęsa; forming a boundary with Ęføn-Alaaye and other allies in Ekiti axis and the ancestral Ila/ Igbomina kingdom. Within the beautiful landscape, nature has given Ujęsaland steep inselbergs, which is fertile for timber, and grey igneous rocks, which falls below the red laterite soil and as much annual rainfall, which is always heavy from March to early November; or sometimes into December. It's always at its peak between June and August as characterically found to be the case in the forest zone, and the forest-bordering Savannah zone of West Africa.



Originally, Ujėsaland extends and covers the landmass between Ènuwa in Ile-Ife to the borders of Øwø, and the immediate boundary of Øsę river to the East; and had borders with Ila/Igbomina kingdom to the North. As well it has borders with the South-West of present-day Kogi state. As a result of schism occasioned and sponsored by the British colonial powers on the one hand, and the federation and pluralist sphere of interest of Ujęsa people for autonomy, on the other, internal political ambition rivals the extent and span of Ujęsaland; thus reducing it to the present-day size. Ujęsaland came to be reduced to what it is now surrounded by Rivers like Øwęna, and Eti-Øni to the East bordering Ondo State; and rivers Osun and Oora to the West.

Ujesaland culture



The major traditional deities unique to the Ujęsa people are Ogun, Orisa Onifon, which is prevalent in the North West of Ujęsaland. Ogun is very significant and celebrated with grandeur annually by all Ujęsas, culminating into the Iwude Festival. Ifa-Orunmila is the knowledge corpus of the Ujęsa people. Ujęsa people used to have very many deeply profound Ifa priests in Yorubaland; far more than often found in other parts of Yorubaland in times past. "Ifa ta l'Øfa, o bere l'Øwø ori", is what used to be made used to tease, appellate, and challenge the many itinerant Ujęsa Ifa priests in the few centuries past. One of them, Agbigbagba was prominent Ifa priest in Lagos Island(then called Eko) in the present-day Lagos state. He became an Ifa priest to the then Oba of Lagos, centuries past. He predicted the coming of the Portuguese and other Europeans. He later got married to Ologun Kutere, and to date has been of the major Eko kingship line. Of course, Arampe and Osun are also very important deities in Ujęsaland.

Ujęsa Founding Fathers

Ajibogun Orunaja Agoniyeye Ekun Adimula was the progenitor of the Ujẹsa. His memorial statue can be found at the Ulesa city centre. He was also the founder of the Owa Obokun Adimula Monarchical dynasty and that of the ancient, ancestral and modern Ujẹsa Kingdom and its monarchy system proficiently inherent till date in the Ujẹsa traditional system of government where pluralism, autonomy, and responsible performance system are the rules. Before Hegel's 1830's theory of modern society, i.e., the philosophy of Pluralism came to appear in literal, written form, the Ujẹsa people had been using the principle of Pluralism in managing public affairs among themselves. Similarly for other Yoruba or, Karø'ojire people in West Africa especially as, and in matters of multiple religions; and beliefs; our cosmogony. Or, and in cases when having to do with multiple chieftaincy and Obas, without fear of breaking into wars, and social disorders as often found witnessed severally in Europe and the Middle East, many centuries past. And the Ujẹsa happened to be the earliest Federataists going by the way Ile-Ifẹ was managed by Øwa Ajibogun, and successive Øwa Obokun until ceded to be ruled by Ooni; independently, and autonomously. In the very ways the several tributaries of Ujẹsaland were allowed to operate as federating entities over the centuries, and in other times following to date, revealing the federal system in Ujẹsaland. Of course, it is of such Confederate status and system etched to the nature of administration of Øwa Ajibogun's reign over Ile-Ifẹ that has continued to prove as the most trenchant test perpetuating and sustaining Ifẹ-Ujẹsa cohesion. Modernity in positive or, negative term may be proving not to allow such cohesion to last these days, or, in the future.

Øwa Obokun Adimula Ajibogun, after having succeeded fetching the sea water (Omi Okun) to heal the old-age blindness of his father—as the earliest sea farer in Yorubaland came through the Ijẹbu axes with immense company, entourage and reference settlements to back up his homestead in Ile-Ifẹ, and successive settlements where he took abode. As Odua Olofin-Aye, and one who through conquest captured many other territories including the vast territory known at the earliest times as Ujẹsaland, stopped the wars he was so charged to go after his brothers who had taken all inheritance of Oduduwa, while he was at the sea to fetch sea water to heal his father's blindness. It is worthy of note to make mention that the capital of Ujẹsaland has always been dictated by which ever place the Owa Obokun Adimula happens to have chosen as his seat of government. Ajibogun ruled Ile-Ifẹ for a short while; leaving vestiges of rulership in monumental word places like “Enuwa”, Mode Owa,” and so on; as replete of such and similar namings can equally be found in all places making up the earliest Ujẹsaland.

Conquering many territories in the whole of North Eastern Yorubaland after having been so charged to pursue his brothers who had taken all the inheritance as commanded by his father, Oduduwa.

There and then, he established his monarchy, and government at Iddo Omupetu. After a while, he moved to Igbadae. His successor, Owa Obokun Adimula Owaka Okile moved to Ilowa—Owa's city. Okile's successor, Owa Obokun Adimula Obarabara Olokunesin(1360-1459), who was the father of Prince Larooye Gbadewolu, the first Ataoja of Osogbo, moved the seat of government to Ilemure, now known as Ibokun. His successor, Owa Obokun Adimula Owari moved it to Ilekete and later Ipole. Owa

Obokun Adimula Owoluse(1522 - 1526) established Ulesha, which is today the royal capital city of Ujeshaland; founded in the fifteenth century(15th c.). He brought the ingenuity of modern artistry in governance from Egypt and Mali empire inspired Oyo empire ~ where he had sojourned earlier with close trade dealings and governance with people of Mali following the fall of Mali as a result of Morocco's invasion. He established a metropolitan-styled government in Ujeshaland with an outlook of Oyo. Rev. Samuel Johnson had derogatory and ritual remarks to make about who Ujeshas were. That was in his book, Yoruba History. If he was the one who was of the opinion that the layout of Ulesha was modeled after Oyo, his could not be taken seriously. ~ Owa Obokun Adimula Owoluse transformed and reshaped the Ujeshas traditional system of government, which gave room to military supervision, and which took after the role of Ajaka, Ajibogun's commander-in-chief of the Ujeshas Armed forces. Owa Obokun Adimula Atakunmosa(1526 - 1546) succeeded Owoluse in 1526. He consolidated the administrative and management structure put in place by the Ujeshas chieftaincy and Ifa knowledge corpus. The regional, and provincial Lordships in the Ogbonis of Ibokun, Ipole, Ujebu-jehsa and Ulesha were strengthened and emboldened. He enriched the Ujeshas chieftaincy, tradition and structure with the experience he gathered from Benin Kingdom where he had lived during the reign of Oba Ehenguda. Atakunmosa later visited Ule-Ubinu (now called Benin-City), marked the boundaries of Ujeshaland; founded Akure, and other towns on his way, and gave king to Akure on his way back to Ulesha, the Deji. Others are not explicitly known in their Obaship which trace to Ujeshas. He brought public prominence and glamour to the Ogun Festival celebrated at Ibokun, Ipole and Ujebu-jehsa with its grand finale in Iwude at Ulesha.



The history of Ujesaland is such that one can properly put into three major perspectives: the monarchy/royalty, war-lordship and assertiveness, and the pluralist society it all encompassed in

effective leadership. One cannot but make mention of the bravery and gallantry of great Ujẹsa heroes like Seriki Ogedengbe-Agbogunbororo and his lieutenants like Fabunmi Oraralada of Okemesi, Fabørø of Ido, Aduloju of Aramøkø, Obe, Okunade Arimoro, Ogunmodede, Fapohunda, Jowo-jori Onigbogi, Ogunlae Dagunduro, Peter Aparo, his machine gun commandant, and a host of other Ujẹsa who fought the over-zealous Ibadan led by Aare Latosa to their knees—a standstill at Kiriji in Imesi-Ile during the Intra-Yoruba ethnic civil war - Bishop Ajayi Crowther saved them, and the Alafin of Oyo who happened to be the sponsor, and financier of the Ibadan Army from the Ogedengbe-led Kiriji Army made up of the Ujẹsa, Ekiti and Igbomina allied forces to save the whole of the Yorubaland, and sub-nations therein from the dominance and subjugation trends of the Ibadan, and the Alafin of Oyo who only cared to rule over Yoruba/ Karø'ojire people with reckless abandon. And without consulting Ifa like his progenitors did in Ifẹ to avoid wars; but for him to consult foreign religion.

Today, in the absence of wars, inter and intra ethnic rivalry Ujẹsa, through collective self realization, decisiveness, and pedigree discovered the ways to go in the then emerging Nigeria country state.

With the abolition of the Imo Hill-based Yoruba North Eastern District& the first Local Government/ LGA in Nigeria, following which the merging of Ijesaland with the Oyo Province took place; Ekiti axes, our allies as well as the Ondo province earlier were under Ujẹsaland before January, 1914 – the year of Nigeria's amalgamation - marking a turning point in Ujẹsaland's history.

The "Osoomalo" itinerant entrepreneurship and innovation spirit with high transactional fortune and acumen spread their activities and interests like wild fire into the nooks and crannies of Nigeria, the West Africa and beyond. Osoomalo trade is one of the greatest contributions of the Ujẹsa to the world of commerce, trade, industry, finance and banking. The Osoomalo itinerants became very influential in their abode of business and saw the prospects of, and in good education and thereby sent their children and wards to school, coming from the 1860s' background of CMS Grammar School, Lagos graduands of which many were Ujẹsa boys. It was the practice of the Osomaalo to visit home at least twice in a year, and to endeavour to contribute to the development of their homestead in terms of cash, donations, and housing.



Cocoa farming and plantation happened to have become popular, and viral in Ujėsaland since the 1880s'. Further to this, high grade cocoa plantation and farm proceeds of the Brazilian species had been thriving in Ujėsaland since the mid-1930s'. It was from Ujėsaland that cocoa planting got to Owo, Ekiti axes and the entire Ondo state. Eti-Øni axes of Ujėsaland has about the largest of such cocoa farms and plantations.

The emergence of the Cocoa trade in which a lot of Ujėsa took part cannot be wished away. Ujėsa took the lead and massively reaped the gains of Western education, and modernity with applause.

The Christain Missionary Society(CMS), and the colonial precursors in christain evangelists like Henry Townsend, Ajayi Crowther, et al and business men like Goldie Tubman and others together with the troops attached to them devised to rob us of our natural resources, and farm proceeds take to proselytising and crusade to give to us the opium of the people called Christianity in many ways - more particularly to hoodwink our people - and take their minds away from the natural resources abundant here in our lands. Of course, many Yoruba people got to know about the gimmick and church game plays and started founding African churches and Pentecostal movements to stop them from further breaking our pot, of the ØMØLUABI values and virtues. More so, when Bishop Ajayi Crowther who had helped the British to secure Lagos, Southern, and the Northern colonies in one fell swoop believing that the Christain faith is a bond beyond the blood lines and apathy was derived and disgraced out of office of a Bishop. But only for Bishop Ajayi Crowther so disgraced and de-robed as a Bishop by the British colonialists after having firmly got Nigeria colony in their grip. They declared him, Bishop Ajayi Crowther

unfit to be Bishop over the white priests of the Church of England in the new colony, Nigeria. His sin was because he was a brown, or black man; the colour of his skin. Thus started was the African Church Mission on 14th August, 1891 as well as others like it. CAC led by Apostle Ayodele Babalola of the 1930s' from where TAC broke away. C&S led by Prophet Moses Orimolade Tunwase of Akoko axis but spread like wildfire in Ulesa, and environs, and beyond to Lagos, and several many other places and towns in Yorubaland.

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Of course, the Ulesa riots of 1941 remained a watershed in Ujẹsa history when Fadugba was incarcerated, and later released from Ibadan prison marching to fame to Ulesa. His march to Ulesa led to a revolt culminating as women and youths led protests calling for the abdication of the King.

Meanwhile, due to the double mother nature privilege Ujẹsa people enjoyed having flourishing cocoa farms, trading businesses, gold deposits/ mines as well as the thriving entrepreneurial spirit of the Osomaalo, the flourishing businesses of the Syrians and Lebanese known as "Koraa" in Adeti Quarters of Ulesa up to the 1960s' remained fairly glamorous. Such was an era of immense prosperity in our history, though we weren't able to fully capture it and perpetuate it into a lasting, responsible business performance set of institutions. Nor trend through the making of high productivity usefulness to spawn new businesses and entirely new industries. Nor make knowledge productive and be paid for in wealth. Well that was until the "Koraa" were dispatched by Ujẹsa people for maltreating our people on the gold mines, and denying them due wages on the fields.

With the fortune of a greater tomorrow having been sealed at the dawn of independence of Nigeria in 1960, Ujẹsa's early strategies paid off as they occupied various positions in public, private, and international sectors of the Nigeria state when unfair trading practices, anti-trust practices, and competition stifling was not the order of the governments of the day. And gullible educated elitism as well as Church & Religious Authorities (CRAs') pandering to social evils were not taking centre stage. Nor, driving mass gullibility in the people using prosperity evangelism and prayers without due diligence and work were not in vogue and allowed going viral.

Going back in history, it will be recalled that among freed slaves from Brazil and Sierra Leone who settled in Lagos were a number of Ujesa who contributed immensely to the commercial, professional and academic growth of Nigeria. There are many others at home who came into prominence as first, and leading figures in the disciplines, professions, and trades having got educated both home and overseas.

Prominent among them was Candido Da Rocha - one of the members of the Eṣan dynasty in Ulesa. Candido Da Rocha was the first millionaire in Nigeria, and about the richest man of his time. In 1894, he co-founded the British Bank for West Africa (now First Bank of Nigeria). For the records, Ujẹsa people have over eighteen (18) other firsts to their credit in contemporary times; as at a time few of the other Yoruba sub-ethnic nationalities had one, or two; while others had none. For instance, an Ujẹsa man, Mr. Christopher Sapara Williams was Nigeria's first qualified lawyer; just one of the other eighteen (18).

Calisto, a great Roman Catholic who came back home to Ulesa in order to establish the first Roman Catholic Church at Oke Padi, Ulesa. Other professionals who contributed their quota immensely were Dr. T. M. Aluko (Herbert Macaulay) not Dr. T.M. Aluko was the first Nigeria chartered Engineer, Surveyor, and Town planner); though Aluko was former president of Nigerian Society of Engineer,

Others are Prof.(Mrs.) Olabisi Ugbebor (neé Falode) was the first female Doctorate Degree holder in Mathematics in Nigeria, Prof. H.O. Tejumòla was the first Doctorate in Mathematics produced by the University of Ibadan, Prof. Fagbulu was one of the first two graduates of University of Ibadan, Dr.(Mrs.) Grace Nzegwu, first female Medical Director in Nigeria. Dr. E.A. Faturoti, first Nigerian Geologist, and Mining Engineer. (Ifaturoti earlier made mentioned of was a UAC chief, Nb.....

On religious and moral development of Nigeria, the following Ujesa have contributed to evangelism in no small measures; Pastors Enoch Adeboye, W.F. Kumuyi, S.K. Abiara, Prophet T.O. Obadare and G.O. Fakeye, to mention a few.

On the legal front, Hon. Justice Kayode Eso, Hon. Justice Yinka Ayoola both former Judges of the Supreme court of Nigeria, Hon. Justice S. Olatunde Ilori, Olusola Thomas, Prof. Alfred B. Kasunmu, Mr. Babatunde ibironke and Prof. Michael Iyiola Jegede played key roles in Lagos State. On the account of infrastructure development of Lagos, it wouldn't be complete without mentioning the works of some Ujẹsa like Chief (Engr.) Samuel Olatunde Fadahunsi as Chairman of Lagos Executive Development Board. Similarly, Engr. Tunji Ogundiya was Lagos City engineer and Engr. S.B. Audifferen was director of Federal Works. Engr. Olateju Oyeleye the first General Manager of W.N.B.C. and Indigenous General Manager of Total Nigeria.

