

Chief Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà (c. 1820s – June 30, 1874) was the second Iyalode of Ibadan and one of the preeminent slave traders in 19th century Ibadan.[1][2] Revered as a successful merchant and trader, her impact encompassed the political, military, economic and religious spheres of Ibadan. She is famous for being arguably the most powerful - and certainly one of the wealthiest - Yoruba women that ever lived. She has been described by historians as an authoritarian leader who often utilized capital punishment on erring slaves. This has been attributed to the psychological breakdown due to the death of her only daughter, and her inability to procreate afterwards.

Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà

Ìyálóde of Ìbàdàn.

Reign

1867 – May 1, 1874

Coronation

1867

Born

c. 1820s

Abeokuta

Died

June 30, 1874

Ibadan

Issue

1 (daughter, died 1860)

Father

Ogunrin

### Personal life

Born in Ikija-Egba in the 1820s,[3] Aniwura's family moved to Ibadan after the fall of Ikija in the 1820s. Her father, Chief Ogunrin, was a warlord from Ikija while her mother was from Ife. Her entrepreneurial drive is reported to have originated when her mother, who was a petty trader, took her to the market with her.[4] She

was married multiple times, and had a child, whom she lost at birth. This event has been the subject of numerous historical writings, and has been attributed to influencing the latter parts of her life, both positively (in terms of focus) and negatively (in terms of ruthlessness).

According to Olawale Idowu, Aniwura's decision to migrate to Ibadan was mainly for two reasons: Firstly, at the time, her cousin was a prominent leader in the city. Secondly, due to the enterprising nature of the town at the time in comparison to other locations, she could start a successful business there. She is reputed to have had about two thousand slaves and multiple farms, exporting agricultural produce to Porto-Novo, Badagry and Ikorodu.[4][6] Her major line were in tobacco and slave trading. She also manufactured a local cosmetic product, Kijipa, that was transported to America for use.[4] Her difficulty in child-bearing led her not only to be diligent in her business, but also become emotionally unstable as having a successor was seen as a major determinant of affluence at that

time. Due to this, she was often depressed and it became evident in her style of leadership.[7] She created rules that ensured no slave in her household could get pregnant, or get anyone pregnant, and instituted death as the penalty for defaulters. Isola (2010) revealed that during her lifetime, she had ordered the decapitation of 41 of her slaves.[5][8][6]

By the 1860s, she was made the second Iyalode of Ibadan.[5] She was also made a patron of the Anglican Church in Ibadan for her involvement in strengthening Christianity in the community.[4]

She was deposed as Iyalode by Aare Latoosa on May 1, 1874 for politically motivated allegations, despite paying all the fines levied against her.

Her authority within the community and opposition to the political views of the Ibadan de facto ruler, the Aare Ona Kakanfo Latoosa, led

him to plot to execute her. This proved to be difficult due to her political position among the high chiefs. He paid-off Kumuyilo, her adopted son, to betray her and lead her to the place of execution.[3] There are many theories on why Latoosa wanted Aniwura out of Ibadan. While some felt it was motivated by sexism and jealousy, other historians believe it was simply because the city became too dependent on her - especially for military equipment, which was gotten on credit. Some writers argue that her failure to abide by the regulations of the Aare was what led him to get angry with her.[9][6]

Aniwura was killed in her sleep by two of her slaves in 1874. They had been instructed to do so by her adopted son, Kumuyilo. Kumuyilo was in turn bribed by Aare Latoosa, the ruler of Ibadan at the time. The motivation was posited to be that Latoosa felt threatened by her wealth and disobedience towards him.

Chief Aniwura got mainstream attention after being the subject of a play by Professor

Akinwunmi Isola.

Aniwura's statue is placed at the center of Challenge roundabout, a major point within the modern city of Ibadan.[5]

She has also been the subject of some Nigerian film production.

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