

The Minor Works of T. O. Avoseh

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Source: *History in Africa*, 1992, Vol. 19 (1992), pp. 237-262

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3172000>

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THE MINOR WORKS OF T. O. AVOSEH*

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I do not profess to have produced the best or [an] exhaustive history . . . but I hope that these feeble efforts of mine shall be a stepping stone for others to follow.¹

I

This is the first part of a study of the works of Chief Theophilus Olabode Avoseh, the *Gbesiewu* of Badagry, a man of culture and self-education who represents two related but distinct peoples, the Egun and the Yoruba-Awori, and who, above all, is a prolific researcher and distinguished local historian. In this first part, I will provide the biodata on Avoseh, and then introduce his minor works with translations and comments designed to bring out their significance. My primary aims are to draw attention to these obscure works and make them accessible to other researchers.

In the second part, I will examine Avoseh's major works, that is, his two studies of Badagry and Epe: *A Short History of Badagry* published in 1938, recently revised and awaiting publication,² and *A Short History of Epe* published in 1960. This second part will emphasize the special aspects of Avoseh's works and their contribution to Yoruba and Aja historiography. These two major works have been of considerable value to other historians in their reconstruction of the history of the coastal cities whereas the minor works presented here are comparatively little known.³

All these minor works are concerned with Badagry, a port and a former small city-state located to the west of Lagos. Badagry, together with a number of other Yoruba- and Aja-speaking areas, lies in the southwest of the Yoruba country.⁴ Works on the Yoruba in the nineteenth century treat Badagry as part of Egbado, although it became part of the Lagos Colony in 1863.⁵ The kingdom of Badagry profited from local and international trade because of its location on the coast and other political circumstances in the Yoruba and Aja country.⁶ By the 1720s it had risen to become a major slave port, a valuable one for the Oyo empire. To reap the maximum benefits from this trade, Oyo used the *Olu (oba)* of Ilaro as its local political agent to control the Egbado region. In the much-discussed Oyo-Dahomey and Egba-Dahomey conflicts, the control of Badagry occupied a prominent role, because of the importance of its port.⁷ Early in the 1780s Dahomey attacked Badagry with resounding success. In the subsequent years, Badagry (and indeed the entire southwest), was drawn into the crises and wars (motivated by commercial and political considerations) generated between the ambitious states of Dahomey, Lagos, and Abeokuta.

History in Africa 19 (1992): 237-62.

For most of the first half of the nineteenth century, Badagry remained an important terminus of trade, a position which it later lost to Porto Novo.⁸

In the following discussion I will introduce the books and their author, reproduce five short texts of historical significance, and conclude with comments on them.

II

The Works

When his history of Badagry was published in 1938, Avoseh may have expected a commendation for popularizing his town. In the event he received utter condemnation and instant hostility from many Badagry chiefs.⁹ He narrates his experience in the following frustrating words:

I was the first person to publish a short History of Badagry in 1938. My honest intention in writing the history was misconstrued in several quarters. I had invited enemies over my head. I was scorned and persecuted. Some called me un-patriotic because I mentioned in my history book some past mis-deeds and atrocious acts of our progenators(*sic*). Some accused me for giving more pages to a particular ward in the Book than any other wards. Some were bitter with me because my history book referred to Ajamperi of Gbrefu. The publication is a matter for mention in the Badagry Town meeting, hurriedly summoned by the late respected enlightened father on the 4th September, 1938 when my uncle, late Mr. Ajagbaide Avoseh was shown what I, his nephew had written and which they did not want such history to be published. Consequent upon all these distracting influences, my parent warned me seriously to desist from collecting historical materials and to refrain from publishing any book.

I had no alternative than to acquiesce(*sic*) and to pray that my antagonists may desist from ill-talks against me as false impression that people might have about me could hardly be eradicated from their mind for years.¹⁰

Frustrated and frightened, he threw away his pen and abstained from further writing until 1959. He explains:

Twenty years being passed after the publication of the first edition of my history book my impostors did not print a better written history of Badagry promised by them. I felt the pangs of getting all my labour lost. With due humble apology, I set aside my parents' warnings not to connect myself with Badagry affairs. I produced the manuscript of the 2nd edition of the history of Badagry which collapsed in my efforts of getting in print since 1959.¹¹ I diverted my attention to other works which can help the community.¹²

He returned to writing with a vengeance, which led to the printing of the works that I have described here as minor, in comparison to the more substantial ones on Epe and Badagry. These minor works are: *Iwe li ede Egun pelu itumo ni ede Yoruba ati Gesi*, 1959, reprinted in 1962, revised and printed again in 1982 (this can be translated as, "The Egun Language, with its Yoruba and English equivalent"); *Iwe Ikomo Jade, Oruko Awon Ojo, Adura Ojojumo, Ojo ati Osu Ibimo, Ojo Lati Dawole Nkan ati Iwe Eri Ijo Ibi Omo* [1960] ("Naming Ceremony, Daily Prayer Book, Child Birth, When to start an Enterprise, and Birth Certificates"); *Isin Imale ni Ilu Agbadarigi* [1964] (Islam in Badagry); *A Short History of St. Thomas's Church, Badagry, 1842–1970* [1970]; *Iwe Itan Kukuru Egbe Ajumogbadura* [1973] (A History of the Prayer Group Society); *The Historical Tree of Badagry* [1984]; *First Storey Building in Nigeria* [1984]; and *The First Christmas Day in Badagry* [1984].

III

The Man

The concern here is not to attempt a full-scale biography,¹³ but to present the essential aspects of the author's life that will make it easier to understand, interpret, and use his works.

Avoseh was born in March 1908 in Badagry, to parents of Egun¹⁴ and Yoruba, in his case specifically Awori,¹⁵ origins. He spent his early years in Ajara Vedo, a village of Badagry. In 1912 he started school at the St. Thomas's School in Badagry, which turned out to be the only one he would attend in life, though he stayed there from 1912 to 1925 because of demotion and ill-health. In his spare time he learned carpentry from his father.¹⁶ In 1926 he abandoned carpentry to take a teaching position in his old school. In the 1920s and early 1930s he tried to improve his education. He met with no success other than the Standard VI examinations, which he passed as an external candidate in 1929. He failed to secure admission to the prestigious St. Andrew's College because of his poor health and he failed the Teachers' Higher Elementary Certificate examinations in 1932 and 1934. He lost his teaching job in March 1941, after fourteen years.

In May 1941, he secured a new appointment with the Egun Awori Native Authority where he worked as a Clerk, Treasury Clerk, and Ag. Secretary/Treasurer until he retired in October 1955. During these years he visited all the nooks and corners of the Badagry district.

In 1957 Avoseh applied to the Ministry of Education in Ikeja, Lagos, for permission to open a private primary school and to the Ministry of Information and Home Affairs at Ibadan for the post of a Cinema Commentator.¹⁷ He succeeded in both: He established his school at Ajegunle, Apapa, in January 1958, and he began his new job at Ibadan in the middle of the same year. He ran the school until the 1970s, when the government took over all private schools. He also worked at the Ministry until he retired at the mandatory age of sixty in 1968. While at the Ministry he worked at Ibadan,

Badagry, Epe, and Ijebu–Ode. In the 1960s and 1970s the government made use of him in the management of schools and council in Badagry.¹⁸

Avoseh's other interests in religion, writing, and politics were developed during these years. He was baptized in the Anglican faith in 1916, and confirmed and appointed a Lay Reader in St. Thomas's Church, Badagry in October 1932. In later years, he was to hold many Church offices, including Secretary to the Parochial Committee in Badagry (1933–41); Secretary, Lay Readers' Association (1965–75); Conductor of St. Thomas's Church Morning Prayer Band from 1966; General Secretary of the Egbe Ogo Olorun Tan (a Church society) (1966–77); and Chairman, Lay Readers Association (1975 to 1980s).

Avoseh played an active role in local politics as well. He was interested in organizations and committees that “catered for the general development of Badagry.”¹⁹ Among other offices he was General Secretary, Badagry Binukonu Friendly Society (1927–32), General Secretary, Irawo Owuro Juvenile Templars (1930–34); General Secretary, Badagry Citizen Hope Association (1938); General Secretary, Nigerian Youth Movement, Badagry branch (1939–41); and founder and General Secretary, Egun Awori Improvement Union, 1968.

In 1938, he wrote the book on Badagry while a school teacher. The book on Epe was written when he was working for the Ministry of Information at Epe, a position which enabled him to develop contacts with the chiefs and other informants. In recognition of his contribution to the town, C.D. Akran, the *Oba* of Badagry, conferred on him the chieftaincy title of *Gbesiewu* in January 1974.²⁰ Avoseh regards this title as the highest honor and achievement for himself and his family.

IV

The Texts

In this section I present five of Avoseh's short works of historical significance; two are written in Yoruba and the rest in English.

[A] *Islam in Badagry*²¹ (my translation)

Preface

I began the writing of this book in 1964, basing everything in it on the information supplied thirty years ago by the late Aminu Arigbawonwo, Preacher Gbadamosi Kaka and other elders, now deceased, and to fresh sources that I have just collected.

Islam is witnessing good changes and progress in Badagry, such that we now have new mosques and indigens who are becoming Alfa, Imams, Alhaji and Alhaja, and who are very knowledgeable in

matters of religion. In 1964, six people from the town went on the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, including the first set of two.

I appeal to all Muslim sons and daughters to read this book carefully, because they will find in it the good works of their parents that will inspire them.

I thank the Chief Imam, Gafari Tijani, for reading the draft and all those who assisted me with information. I also thank Chief J.O.O. Samuel, M.B.E., J.P. for his corrections to my draft.

I am prepared to do a bigger edition, if people are willing to supply me with stories.

Islam in Badagry

In the past, *orisa* worship was the only and established religion in the town, since its foundation. It was a prominent trader from Oyo, by name Ramalana Saibu Ogboalejo, who brought Islam to the town in 1821.

It was at a time of crisis in Oyo that Ogboalejo left this place, together with other traders and brave men. Among his sons who followed him were Atari the father of Aminu Arigbawonwo, Magaji Akinola, the father of Ajape. The other traders and brave men in his company were Buraimo, the father of Abudu Kadiri, Sule Kayode Eleshin Sulu, the father of Imam Tijani, Alfa Ashiru, the father of Imam Sunmonu, and some others.

As soon as Ogboalejo and his company arrived he introduced Islam and established a mosque at the Iganho quarter where he lived.

In the Ramadan prayers of 1830, the Muslims invited a British traveller, Richard Lander, to worship with them.²² Lander put their number at seventy.

During the foundation years of Islam, the Mewu²³ civil war erupted in the town in 1851, forcing the *Oba* chiefs, and other brave men to flee.²⁴ Ogboalejo and others, too, escaped to Lagos, and Atari went to Ajase. Three years after when there was peace, many of these people began to return to Badagry.

When it was clear that there was peace, Islam began anew.

It was an elder, Salu Balogun, the father of Adisa Ahoviko, who gathered people together to educate them on Islamic practices. He was assisted by other elders like Wari Awhanjigo Abudulai and Aruna Medeoro. Other prominent Muslims were Sule, Kayode, Eleshin, Atari, Abibu, Sabo, Momo, Aboyiji, and Sukarani Aganna who all worked very hard to ensure that Islam had a strong root.

Abudulai was Hausa, with a deep knowledge of the Quran. The others that I have mentioned went to him for knowledge. Momo Lawal, the

father of Abudu Giwa, and Sunmonu Kanike were the Quranic teachers during this time. The Muslims worshipped in Abudulai's house, located in the compound of Posu Agongoro. When they grew in number, they established the Awusako mosque in Verokete. The congregation decided to have an Imam,²⁵ and Abudulai was elected. The Muslims discussed with Posu Agongoro who released Abudulai, who thus became the first Imam of Badagry.

It was the conflict among the congregation that brought a split which led to the setting up of another mosque²⁶ by Salu Balogun Atari, Imam Abudulai and others at the compound of Eleshin Sulu, father of Alhaji Imam Tijani. Buraimo, father of Lawani Omolara, Aruna, Okoya and other prominent men continued to worship at Verokete, and they re-built the mosque.

We regret that another conflict ensued between Abudu Salami Alakurani and Sule-Kayode-Eleshin which made Abudu-Salami and their supporters to refuse to worship at Agbole Eleshin.

Salu Balogun, Atari and Imam Abudulai approached Thomas Tickel,²⁷ the judge, to request land to build another mosque. Tickel referred them to Chief Jengen and his council, who allocated a piece to them at Awhanjigo where they built a new mosque.

When the Great Prophet Mohammed was ready, all the conflicts were brought to an end, and the Muslims were united. It was this same Mosque which is now used as the Friday Mosque. Those who led the scheme to renovate the Mosque in 1877 were Bello Danmola, Momo Lawal, Raji, Iyanda Abudu Likadiri, Seriki Abasi, Badaru Babadudu, Seidu Iganmu, Seidu, Adelakun, Gborigi, Aminu Arigbawonwo, and some others.

In 1833, the annual revival began, and a special Quran was ordered from Arabia for the purpose.

A third Mosque was built by Seriki Abasi for the Muslims in Sango in ca. 1896. It was during the same time that Abudu Mumuni Adogba graduated and became a preacher. Abudu became the most influential, for he was the first Egun 'pagan' to attain this status.

Pilgrimage to Mecca began in 1910, with five people: Tijani Sulu, Sanni Okoro, Raji Okoro, Raji Abudu Ramonu, Momodu Agbaje and Liadi Ajape. It was sad indeed that only two of these were able to return: Alhaji Tijani Sulu and Alhaji Liadi Ajape.

This discouraged many Muslims from embarking on the pilgrimage. After many years, when the faith deepened in the minds of the people, and they overcame their fear, about twenty people went on the pilgrimage.

The second Egun who graduated from the Quranic school was Yekini Yinvo Hundeyin, in 1915. He was a devout Muslim who struggled to build a Mosque in his Sowhe quarter, opened on May 11, 1945.

Islam spread in Badagry, displacing *orisa* worship.

List of Imams

1. Imam Abudulai, he held office for long, and it was during his time that Islam began anew, after the Mewa [Mewu] crisis broke the . . . town. It was during his period that Warini Awhanjigo was made a Muslim Chief.
2. Imam Yesufu, another Hausa person. He used to visit *orisa* shrines to observe the activities of worshippers and to seek the means to convert them. It was during his time that Abasi Williams became the *Seriki* in October 1897.
3. Imam Sanni Sule Elesin. It was during his time that notable pagans like Adogba and Yinvo Hundeyin and their families were converted. The Killa Society was established, and pilgrimage to Mecca began.
4. Imam Alhaji Tijani Sulu. He established the Ahmadiyya Movement in Badagry.
5. Imam Sumonu Ashiru who did not lead for long.
6. Imam Awesu Akewusola. Because of the sickness which led to his death. Sunmonu Bakare was elected the Deputy Imam. It was during this time that the Ansarudeen movement was established.
7. Imam Alhaji Abudu Gafari Tijani, who became Imam in July 1944 and who remains the incumbent. You will read of him below.

The Tausiri²⁸

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sanusi Bayero | 2. Ashiru |
| 3. Abudu Likadri | 4. Awesu Akewusola |
| 5. Sunmonu | 6. Abudu Busari |
| 7. Nuru Likadri | 8. Alhaji Mustafa Ajape. |

The Ladani²⁹

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Buraimo | 2. Alli Alapa |
| 3. Lawani Kasaho | 4. Lawani Molara |
| 5. Muhammed Busari Ariyo | 6. Amusa Busari |
| 7. Yesufu Kasaho | 8. Abudu Salami Idileke |
| 9. Abudu Yekini. | |

The Seriki³⁰

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Wari | 2. Abasi Williams in October 1987. |
| 3. Buraimo Eniafe | 4. Abu Abasi Williams. |

Preachers³¹

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Belo Giwa | 2. Atarakudi Abudulai |
| 3. Gbadamosi Kaka (he held the office for long and was assisted by Abudul Busari and Salisu Bakare). | 4. Adeyola Raji |
| 5. Ashimi Majeed. | |

Alhaji and Alhaja

Tijani Sulu, Sanni Okoro, Raji Abudu Ramonu, Momodu Agbaje, Liadi Ajape, Arasi Asani Giwa, Teburaniyu Abudulai, Seidu Awesu, Alli S. Alafia, Karimu Alafia, Mustafa Sunmonu, Mustafa Ajape, Nuru Durowoju, Jimo Oseni, Mustafa Shittu, Jinadu Layode, Chief Lateef Odotade, Abudu Kadiri Tawakalitu, Chief Imam Gafari Tijani, Chief Rufai Tukur Balogun, Chief Mustafa Ajilero, Muji Awesu Akewusola, Ashiata Giwa and Muniratu Shittu.

In Ibereko: Mustafa Oshoja Gbadamosi.

In Iworo: Lawani and Disu Alli

In Ojo: Raimi Akorede Jinadu, Alimi Ariyo, Lamina Folami, A. Mumuni Tijani and Ahmed Rufai Buraimo Finni.

In Ajido: Raimi Zannu Gasiamele.

The Baba Adinni

The only person to hold this title is Mr. Aminu Arigbawonwo.

School for Muslims

The Quranic school has been in existence since ca. 1825. Children learn the Quran either in the compounds of Alfa and Imam or under the trees. The schools teach how to write and read in Arabic and how to learn by rote.³²

A public school was opened in Badagry in 1898,³³ with provision for Muslim education. The first set of teachers came from Lagos, and these were: Alfa Aruna, Alfa Saliu, and Alhaji Nuru Taba Thomas, Alfa Husane and Mr. Tahiru. Badagry indigens like Mohammed Abudi Busari, Y.Y. Balogun, R. Husman Nuru Durowoju, N.N. Giwa did a lot to assist Islamic education in the school.

Government closed down the school, and transferred all the staff to another town.³⁴ This was why the Muslims struggled hard to establish another school, and they had to speak with the authorities of the Ansaru-Deen.

In January 1938, an Ansaru-Deen school was opened in Badagry. Mr. M.B. Onipede, the son of Alfa Abudu Busari, was the first Headmaster. Alhaji Liadi and Mr. M.B. Hassan were the supervisors.

In 1953, Alfa Liadi Raji Aralmo [*sic*]³⁵ was hired as the Arabic teacher, and the Headmaster was Mr. G.B. Ogunlola while Alhaji Jinadu Layode was the supervisor.

Muslim Chiefs Appointed On 7th July 1946 During The Time Of Imam Gafari Tijani.

Abagbe Buraimo Eniafe	—Seriki
Rufai Tukur	—Balogun
Mustafa Ayinde	—Sarumi Adini
M.T. Robert	—Bashorun
Yakubu Iganmmu	—Otun Balogun
Asimi Osumare	—Onasokun Baba Oba
Adelakun Okoya	—Otun Onasokun
Lawani Oluseun Obabiyi	—kerin Adini
Ramonu Fagbenro	—Babasale Adini
E.B. Shoboh	—AsojuImale.

Chiefs Appointed in 1955 During The Time of Imam Gafari Tijani.

Abu Abasi Williams	—Seriki
Tijani Omolade	—Otun Balogun
Adelakun Okoya	—Onasokun Baba Oba
Halidu Olori	—Ekerin Adini

I will talk about female chiefs when I revise this book.

The Growth of Islam in Badagry.

In 1910, during the period of Imam Sanni Sule Eleshin, influential Muslims established a society to enhance the progress of Islam. This was the Killa Society, for members and their wives. The society engaged in social events and fund raising. It was the most prominent society in the town, with asset worth more than one hundred pounds; in short, it was the society of the prosperous. They exhibit wealth during Muslim festivals, either by riding horses or bicycles with drummers and singers. It was a significant day for Ajidoni in 1914 when the members of the society visited the place.

Among the members were: Suberu Fari, Abubu Giwa, E.B. Shoboh, Buraimo Oridami, Samiwilo, Bello Anjorin, Ligali Amadu Edidi,

Amadu Giwa, Wahabi, Ashimi Osumare, Amadi Dindi, Amadu Baba Sule Oshin, Abiola Liasu Demawu, Alli Adeyemi, and Abudu Fadairo.

For the growth of Islam, Gbadamosi Shomoye, Y.Y.Balogun, Nuru Durowaju, Muba Ligali, and Lasisi Jinato Hundeyin founded the Ahmadiyya in Badagry in August 1922.

In April 1929 T.A. Afinni, Raji Aralamo, A. Ade Giwa, L.S. Akonni, N.N.Giwa, N.S. Adelakun, M.B.Hassan, B.H.Ayinla, Y.L.Gongo, Tebun Abdulai Mustafa Abiola, D.D. Olawole, Mustafa Kadiri and Yesufu Oyedele established the Ansarudeen.

The establishment of the two movements contributed to the progress of Islam in Badagry.

Some volunteers went round the town during the ramadan, drumming and singing, to wake up the Muslims to prepare their meals and pray. These volunteers are: Sunmonu Akobale, Lasisi Ayigbede and Fasasi Anigege Araloto.

The Spread Of Islam In Badagry

Islam has penetrated the following places:

Place	Founder of Islam	Origin
Badagry	S. Ramalena Ogboalejo	Oyo
Iworo	Raji Bale	Ilorin
Ajido	Abu Bakare	Kannike
Apa	Sunmonu Bakare Arole	Badagry
Ikoga	Lawani Ayibu & Ogidan	Abeokuta Ajase
Igborosun	Amadu	Abeokuta
Iragbo	Akadiri Towobola	Badagry
Ganyigbo Topa	Salami Baba Yaya	Ibadan
Kweme	Ramotu Gbongbonleke	Eko
Gberefu	Mama Sanni Bale	Gberefu
Akoko	Abu Bakare Olushi	Badagry
Ibereko	Abibu	Ilorin
Itahun	Aminu Sule	Eko
Ojo	Alufa Yesufu & Alfa Alli	Ishin & Ijebu
Wesere	Abudu Kelani Thomas	Badagry
Idale	Asani Giwa	Badagry
Itopo	Seriki Abasi Williams	Badagry
Okokomaiko	Momora Atari Obo	Ile Hausa
Ilogbo Erinmi	Tailor Bakare Kadiri Ogidan	Ijebu

Time is running fast!

I will pass this way but once; hence all the good things that I can do for my quarter and town or any kindness that I can show should be

done now. I should not ignore them or be irresponsible, because I won't have another opportunity.

[B] *First Storey Building In Nigeria*³⁶

(The book opens with a picture of the house)

The First Anglican Parsonage In Nigeria.

After the abolition of Slave Trade, the liberated Africans, especially the Yorubas who were landed in Siera (*sic*) Leone were anxious to return to their respective homes.³⁷ Christians gospel was preached to them and they were inclined to have Christ brought near them in their towns. A commercial intercourse had already been established between Siera [*sic*] Leone and Badagry by some of the freed people.

Preparatory measures were adlpted [*sic*] with a view to the establishment of a Mission in the Yoruba Country. Rev. Henry Townsend of the C.M.S. was sent out and his visit to Badagry and Abeokuta in 1842 was the first definite step by the C.M.S. to sent [*sic*] out their Missionary Party, consisting of Rev. & Mrs. Henry Townsend, Rev. & Mrs. G.A. Goomer [*sic*],³⁸ Rev. & Mrs. S.A. Crowther with their two children, Mr. March a Catechist with his wife and two children, Mr. Philip, a School Master, Mr. Willoughby, interpreter with his family, four carpenters, three labourers and two servants all of whom landed in Badagry on the 17th January, 1845. Rev. Samuel Anneah of the Methodist Mission was their Primary host, giving them lodging until Chief Wawu and his lieutenant, Chief Podowu Mobee were able to locate a piece of land for the exclusive use of the C.M.S. This is the Parsonage Today.

Owing to the death of King Shodeke of Abeokuta who had invited the Missionary, Townsend and Crowther had to wait at Badagry for eighteen months.

A native-built house was first erected and the frame-house brought from Siera [*sic*] Leone by Gollmer was put up. They were in the native-made-house for about four months before removing to their prefabricated house in June, 1854, reputed to be the first Storey house in Nigeria.

REVD. TOWNSEND "The house is strong and convenient and will prove very comfortable. During the erection many persons have come to see it, expressing their unqualified admiration of it, especially of the single roof, it being the first they have ever seen.

REVD. GOLLMER ADDS: "The house is built of sound African wood principally of what we call brimstone. It is ten feet raised from the ground on twenty-six stout and durable trees, called cabbage trees and a spicies [*sic*] of coconut trees and on nine other smaller trees.

The length is forty-four feet and breadth twenty six feet. The Society has now a good durable and comfortable house at Badagry for many a year. The cost is estimated as 325 pounds."

After living together in the historic building, Revd. Townsend and Crowther left Badagry in July, 1847 to start with the work of evangelization at Abeokuta, leaving Gollmer and the others in the Historic house to carry on the work at Badagry. When Gollmer went to England on furlough in 1848 Revd. J. Smith relieved him and on his returned [*sic*] he devoted his attention to the work he had started. At the Vicarage were the following. [*sic*] The Church, The Mission House, Kitchen, School master's dwelling, Boarding house, Labourer's house, Widow's Shelter, Stable, Street, Vegetable garden, Rice garden.

On the transfer of Mission Station from Badagry to July 1852, Badagry was retained as outstation of Lagos and Revd. Gollmer had to leave Badagry to Lagos. Among the visiting Ministers from Lagos for baptism, Loard [*sic*] Supper, etc and using the Gollmer's house were among others, L. Nichdeon, A. Marm, J.B.Wood, V. Faulkner, T. Harding, N. Temple Hamlyn, M.J.Luke, I. Oluwole, Melvill Jones, A.W. Hawells, I.N. Johnson, S.M. Abiodun, H.V.E. Johnson and others who had joined the Church Triumphant. The Bishops of Lagos, Rt. Revd. S.I. Kale and Rt. Revd. F.O. Segun and the Archdeacons of Lagos, Ven. T.L. Oredugba and Ven. B.A. Adelaja relaxed in the historic building on their official visits.

The resident Ministers who were here as Catechists or Deacons but eventually became priests and lived in Gollmer's house were Revds S.H. Pearce, D. Coker, M.T. Euler Ajayi, A. C. Williams, J.A. Seville [*sic*], T.T. Leigh, E.O. Sodeinde, J.A. Olanle, B.A. Falode, B.I. Manuwa, E.Z. Fearon, J.I. Akeredolu, S.A. Odeneye, E.A. Kayode, F.A. Adebuseye, J.A. Ojo, Z.A. Adenuga, A.O. Ayodele and J.J. Ogunmilade. Rev. G.E. Bello is now in charge of the building.

When the historic storey showed the signs of old age and some trees and planks suffered from parasites and termites its general renovations changed the original structural shape of the building.

The St. Thomas's Church decided to have a befitting modern Vicarage for their Ministers. All preparations for a new Vicarage were in full swing under the auspices [*sic*] of the Vicarage Committee, whose Chairman is Chief S.A. Ekundayo.

On the 19th August, 1978 at a colourful ceremony, the sod of the New Vicarage was turned; all being well the foundation stone was laid on Saturday the 11th November, 1978, by His Lordship the Rt. Revd. F.O. Segun, M.A.

[C] *The Historical Tree Of Badagry Under Which The Early Missionaries Preached The Gospel Of Christ*³⁹

(The book opens with the picture of the tree)

Badagry possessed a famous tree of historical interest. The tree was situated at the heart of the town. It was an Agia tree, about 160 ft high and about 30 ft in circumference. It was a natural umbrella tree covering a good area of shaded places. It yielded fruits usually in millions and the sweet fruits attracted people from Badagry town and abroad.

About three hundred years ago, when the site now known as Badagry Town was a deep forest Agbade, the founder, built a hut under the Agia tree for rest and relaxation after farming.

During the slave trade, when the first European Slave Dealer in Badagry, Mr. George Fremungo,⁴⁰ known and called by the natives as Huntokonu Gbarajeko⁴¹ came to Badagry⁴² he admired and honoured the site where the trader of Badagry had a hut under the Agia tree from there Badagry gradually developed into a flourishing town.

[when Oba Adele 1 of Lagos lived in Badagry as a refugee]⁴³ he presided over the town-meetings under this umbrella tree . . . Missionaries preached under this tree . . . In March 1845, Revds. C.A.Gollmer, Henry Townsend and Samuel Growther (*sic*) had repeated open Church Services under the famous tree. The first Christian gospel preached under this tree by the early Missionaries mentioned above, had spread Christianity from Badagry to Abeokuta, Lagos and other parts of Nigeria and made Badagry the canterbury [*sic*] of Nigeria.

About the year 1877 when the Mosque which this day becomes the Central Mosque in Badagry would be sited, the spot was chosen near the Agia tree.

In 1887 Mr. J.W. Rowland, the District Officer, who succeeded Mr. Thomas Tukul [*sic*], placed the project of a new central market before the traditional rulers of Badagry to replace the original Bereketé market where human beings were put up for sale. The community of Badagry and environs supported the District Officer's suggestions and the spot chosen was under and around the famous Agia tree.

During the official opening of the market in 1889, there was a big procession of the Chiefs and important personalities from the palace of the then reigning Akran Meke and just in front of the procession was Prince Gbenu Akran as the staff bearer of the King. The opening function of the Obada Market that was performed under the Agia tree in 1889 was the beginning of other performances such as staging of concerts, dancing and drumming under the famous tree.

The Agia tree became revered by the heathens and animal sacrifices and the likes were not unwanting under the tree in those days.

When the night guards operation started in Badagry in 1982, this was peacefully conducted daily under the Agia tree.

Near the historic tree is the Badagry Town Hall, the foundation stone of which was laid by Oba C. D. Akran in December, 1958 during the Oba's Coronation [*sic*].

As from 1930s the tree was showing signs of old age. Gradually as dead branches were falling, the tree suffered from parasites, termites and dreadful insects. Parts of its root was rotten and the un-rotten could no longer resist a heavy storm, the historic tree planted by nature about 300 years ago fell down on Saturday the 20th June, 1959, at 11.45 p.m.

On Sunday the 21st June, 1959, the High Chiefs, chiefs and important personalities in the town stood by the side of the fallen tree for a photograph before the Native Authority labourers set their cutlasses . . . and cleared it off.

A decent Monument with a historical inscription was installed on the area where the historic tree had stood many year [*sic*] ago.⁴⁴

[D] *Important Historical Places To Be Visited In Badagry By The Tourist*⁴⁵

SPOT WHERE THE MISSIONARIES FIRST PREACHED THE GOSPEL IN NIGERIA:

A famous tree of historical interest was an Agia Tree. A natural umbrella tree under which Revd. T.B. Freeman and William De Grafts of the Methodist Mission preached the Gospel in October, 1842. They were followed by Revds. Henry Townsend, C.A. Gollmer, Samuel Ajayi Crowther and other Missionaries preaching under the same tree. The historic tree planted by nature about 350 years fell down on Saturday the 20th June, 1959 at 11.45 p.m. A monument with historical inscription was installed on the very spot: where the historic tree had stood many years ago.

THE GRAVES OF THE EARLY MISSIONARIES, etc.:

At the extreme end of the town near the General Hospital are the graves of early Missionaries in 1840s. Mrs. Gollmer, Mrs. Muller, Mr. and Mrs. Cooten and Mr. Mark Willoughby and George Brand, a British Consul. Near the Roman Catholic Church is the grave of Revd. Father Joseph Carew S.M.A. who died on 25th May, 1973 and buried on 30th May, 1973.

RICHARD LANDER'S TRIAL AT VEREKETE:

In 1825 when Richard Lander, the famous British Explorer arrived in Badagry. [*sic*] The Portuguese cleverly insinuated that Lander was a spy of the British Government sent to Badagry to study the ways of the people so as to advise their Government how best to suppress the people and take their land. Lander was seized, charged and taken before the Fetish Priest at Vereketete, where he was forced to drink poison to prove his innocence. If he died he was guilty, if he lived he was innocent. This he did and survived. The critical ceremony happened to Richard Lander in Vereketete Fetish house.

THE GRAVE OF THE FIRST SLAVE DEALER:

Near the Methodist Church is the tomb of the first European Slave Dealer, called Huntokonu, George Freermingo [*sic*]. The relationship between Huntokonu and the town was more than that of an ordinary trading European and his customers. He showed them much sympathy, directed them how best to administer justice and supplied protection against invasion [*sic*]. He was really a good friend. He was assassinated and buried here about 250 years ago.

COCONUT PLANTATION:

In 1875 when the former Roman Catholic Mission was established at Topo, Coconut Plantation started at Topo Island in 1876. Along with this project were the establishments of the Convent Schools, Dispensary etc. and over sixty Revd. Fathers and eight brothers had worked there since 1876. Pere Baudin and Pere Poirier were the first Fathers to start work at Topo Island in 1876 and Rev. Father P.McKay was the last at Topo who left in 1962 when the then Western Regional Government acquired by purchase the coconut plantation and other properties of the Roman Catholic Mission. During the Military Government the area came under Lagos State and it is now the depot of the Soldiers.

THE BADAGRY MARKET:

The early slave market at Posuko was abolished in the 1880s and a new legitimate market was established between Asago and Awhanjigo wards and at Hunto. These markets are known as Obada Market. Being much congested the market was transplanted to Agbalata, where it is today. It cost over 50,000 pounds to build the market.

It is from the colony development fund for the modern market and it is the 2nd largest market in Nigeria. It was formally opened in July, 1954 by the late Akran of Badagry, Aholu Jiwa II, the Minister of Community Development, Western Region.⁴⁶

[E] *Ajara Becomes Another Lagos*⁴⁷**Awhanjigo's Store, Badagry.**

On the 24th of September 1942, Christians all over Nigeria, mainly the Methodists and Anglicans, celebrated the centenary of the introduction of Christianity to Badagry, from where it spread to Abeokuta, Lagos and other places. This was a great event, difficult to narrate fully. Three years after this centenary, Chief F.N.H. Ayeni opened a big store in Awhanjigo in 1945, called the Centenary Stores.

The staff

Although Chief F.N.H. Ayeni himself works in the store as the Director, he recruited staff to work with him and hawk goods like cigarette in the town and villages. One of his staff is a man from Ajara Vedo, known as Honfo "Mitohogbe Tonuewa." He was born in the compound of Gupoedu, and his father was Gozenga Tonuewa. Honfo Mitohogbe would leave Ajara Vedo every morning to work in Centenary Stores.

None can satisfy the world

Whenever he hawks his good on his excellent bicycle, buyers would call from left and right, and he could not attend to all at the same time. Those whom he did not attend to in time would heap insults on him: "Look at this bushman wasting my time;" "Baba Ayeni has done him a favour by removing him from the village to the town," etc.

Gentle Words Bring Peace

In spite of all the insults, Honfo maintained his calm. He had a thick skin. However, he was fed up with the jokes and negative comments on his trade that he vowed to turn Ajara to another Lagos.

Whenever Honfo hawks his goods, he would tell his customers that Ajara would one day be like Lagos. When he used his bicycle to move around, he would announce his presence with the shout of "Here is Ajara becomes another Lagos." This was how he acquired a nickname that spread throughout Badagry and its districts.

What did he see in Lagos that impressed him?:

1. Church and Mosque, with thousands of worshippers.
2. Lagos is full of educated, prosperous and rich people.
3. Aliens, whites, are many in Lagos.
4. Lagos has schools, from Primary to the University.
5. Lagos is full of government offices, commercial houses, good roads, hospitals, etc.

6. Lagos is Nigeria's capital. To enumerate what Lagos has will occupy pages.

Honfo Loves his people and he is generous:

Honfo does not neglect his relations. Whenever he was in Badagry he would visit his brothers at Aladako, Omolade Johnson at the Dispensary, Chief T. Ola Avoseh and many others. Honfo was not a selfish person. The settlements in Ajara are not less than fourteen, and he was not interested only in the progress of Ajara Vedo but in all others as well. He wanted the whole of Ajara to be like Lagos.

As we all know, Ajara is divided into fourteen settlements, each founded by a different person.

Settlements and their Founders:

Settlement	Founder
Ajara Vedo	Hunye Ajavo
Ajara Agamaden	Apamu, Atikon Gbede
Ajara Topa	Whento Hungaso
Ajara Idoko	Odo
Ajara Isalu	Hunwi
Ajara Itohun (Tosuhon)	Hunjo
Ajara Age Laso	Ogonpo
Ajara Iyafin	Yewhenu
Ajara Agadamgba	Gbewhenu
Ajara Agboviye	Hunga Whadon, Donda
Ajara Panko	Whesuzo Kodo Avoyanya
Ajara Toriko	Senu
Ajara Tosadeko	Tosade
Ajara Zinvie	Hunmenu.

Progress Comes To Ajara As Predicted:

1. Churches and Mosques: When Hunfo was praying for Ajara, there were no more than two places of worship in the whole of Ajara. There was not even a mosque. Paganism was the order of the day; only those who could risk their lives became Christians or Muslims.

A great change came: people were converted; Ajara citizens introduced Islam and Christianity and they provide leadership; pagans are now Muslims and becoming Alhaji. The spread of these two religions brought a great change to the area.

2. Roads: There were no motorable roads before. Today, every place is connected with a good road, including Iyafin.

3. Schools: There are now many primary and Grammar schools, with many teachers.

4. New Buildings: Modern blocks are now used to build many houses.
5. Offices: Several have been established, together with new stores, and the secretariat of the Local Government. All these happened after the death of Hunfo who predicted these changes.
6. Important personalities: Ajara is now full of prominent people, the educated and the rich to the extent that visitors have increased ever than before.

Conclusion

May the souls of the deceased leaders rest in peace. May the soul of Honfo, alias "Ajara becomes another Lagos" rest in peace. May the present leaders live long to witness more changes.

Above all, we must never forget Chief F.N.H. Ayeni who established the store that employed Honfo Mitohogbe, the man who predicted the great changes for Ajara. We must never forget Honfo.

What I want.

1. The ports of Badagry and Gberefu should be linked. Gerefu should become a port for big European ships.
2. Work should begin on petroleum exploration which would bring more people and industries to the area.
3. The village near Badagry like Gbaji should have an Express road to link Gbaji– Apa–Gbogbele–Asheri–Jeregbe. A new market should be established here.
4. Roads and bridges should be constructed to link the area with the villages in Ogun state.
5. Tarred roads should be constructed for all Ajara villages.
6. Every place should have pipe–borne water and electricity.

Badagry Shall Rise!

In 1941 when the late Rev. A.T. Ola Olude was holding revivals shortly before he established the Methodist Primary School in Ijegba he used to sing: "If there is God, Badagry will rise."

He established this school on 30th August 1941. Since he used this song, it has been on the lips of everybody with the belief that this would come to pass.

If there is life and encouragement, I will write another edition of the history of Badagry to show why Rev. Olude composed the song.

The Late Elder E.O. Avoseh⁴⁸

Because I have written this book to mark the 40th anniversary of the death of Elder E.O. Avoseh, it is important that I say a word or two about this man.

He was born in 1880 in Badagry. His father's name was Avoseh Kenarowu Kujororande Ajidagba. His mother was Nupenhonde, the daughter of Kulotosi of Game, Ajara Vedo.

He attended the St. Thomas school, Badagry and St. Paul's Breadfruit, Lagos. He abandoned school in 1904 to learn carpentry under the late Aderomu, N.A. Coker and Taiwo. He was one of the carpenters that built the prison house, police office and other government houses.

As a leader he instructed the following: Chief T.B. Asuni, Mr. S.O. Avoseh, Chief T. Ola Avoseh, and the late Yesufu Yakubu Iganmu, Sunni Taiwo, and Elknanah Ajoseh.

He was a Christian, baptised by Bishop Oluwole at St Thomas Church in Badagry. He received the Lay Reader's certificate in 1925. He was a Church representative in the Lagos Synod.

He was also one of the elders of Boeko compound who deliberated on the affairs of the area.

He died on 5 July 1943. He had six children, four of whom died before him, and the two survivals were Chief T. Ola Avoseh, *Gbesiewu* of Badagry, and Olusola Avoseh, B.A. (Lond.), Dip.Ed. (McGill) M.Ed., M.A., Ph.D. (Toronto). May the soul of E.O.Avoseh continues to rest in peace. Great changes followed his death, and may there be more progress.

V**Comments**

All the minor works of Avoseh are short, usually under ten pages. He wrote the books at different periods and considered them as separate topics, although they all concern Badagry town and its villages. The advantage is that the works are more accessible to many people, specifically targeted by the author. For instance, *The History of Saint Thomas's Church* was distributed in the church and by church members to their friends. One major defect is that the author does not link one topic to the other. There are also some repetitions, especially where Christianity is an issue. Thus the beginning of Christianity is told and retold in the book on Badagry, in *The History of St. Thomas's Church*, *The Historical Tree*, *The First Storey Building*, and *The First Christmas*. There is yet another shortcoming: all the works read as if they are

tentative, and in a number of cases the author himself promises that he would add to his information.

Second, the author experienced publishing problems. He had to wait until he had money to pay the printer or until there was a sponsor. The result was that he kept his manuscripts for many years. This could have been an advantage if the author used the opportunity to update them; this was not, however, the case, with the result that much more current events are left out.

Third, the author's language is weak. All the works are marred not just by printing errors but poor use of language. This is the case even with those published in Yoruba. The author's diction in Yoruba is not rich, while his limited education must have affected the quality of his written English. It is, however, not difficult to understand what the author is trying to say.

Fourth, Avoseh's main concern is the progress of Badagry. He is proud of Badagry's heritage as the 'home' of Christianity and a former center of international trade. He wants this history to be put to good use in order to encourage tourism and to attract modern amenities. He believes that everybody should contribute to the development of the area which explains why he identifies Hunfo for special praise, why he distributes his books free of charge, and why he appeals to the people of Badagry to contribute to the development of their town.

The main concerns and topics in the books do reflect the author's life, wish, and socio-political commitments. When he chose the theme of Christianity, it was not difficult for him to write because he was very much involved in the church. When he chose to write on trade or on tourism, these were in line with his thinking on economic development. At the same time he was suggesting in one of his books that Badagry needed hospitals, he was also building a patent medicine store because of the outbreak of cholera in the town. When he wrote a book on the first storied building in Nigeria, it was at the same time his prayer and wish to build a two-story building of his own in the same town. Just as the one for the nineteenth century was historic and had connections with religion (as described in the text above), so did the one he built in 1966:

... the foundation stones of my desire were laid at Avoseh-Ajidagba Compound ... by Rev. A.O. Ayodele, Dip.Th., late Chief J.O.O. Samuel, late Chief F.N.H. Ayeni, and late Daddy J.F. Wusu. It was the first two storey house ever built by a Christian indigene at Boeko Quarter and the eight ever built in the town by Christian Indigenes up to 1966.⁴⁹

Avoseh strongly supports the view in all these works that those who bring progress to the town should be rewarded and praised. Perhaps this recommendation and approach suggest that the author's life history should be a model for others to follow. Here was a man with limited education and opportunities who rose to become a prominent chief, a community leader, an *Oluwo*, and the champion of progress. So successful had he become by 1978 that he could write what almost amounted to an autobiography to tell the peo-

ple of the town about himself and “to serve as a monumental souvenir for generations yet unborn.”⁵⁰

Avoseh's prominence in the Anglican Church occupies most of the space. The bulk of his works focus on the Church. He wrote a commissioned book in 1970 on his Church, St. Thomas, which provides information of its origins and explains how the worshippers of indigenous gods were opposed to the early converts. Three years later he published a related book, *Iwe Itan Kukuru Egbe Ajumogbadura* which is a brief account of a society in the same Church. He celebrated the arrival of Christianity and the significance of Christmas in his *The First Christmas Day in Badagry*. The contributions of Christianity looms large in two other works, *The First Storey Building in Nigeria* and *The Historical Tree*.

However, Avoseh does not recommend Christianity as a religion for everybody; neither does he see it as the only religion associated with progress. He is not much associated with ancient Egun or Yoruba, but he does not condemn it. He is not a Muslim but he shows a great deal of goodwill to Muslims. More important he wrote a book on Islam which is very sensitive to the concerns of Muslims and which earned the approval of the Imam and the Muslim elite.

Why does Avoseh not impose Christian values on the interpretations of contemporary history, as many other chroniclers have done? First, he is not dogmatic about religion. Christianity does not mean a renunciation of African culture, certainly not in such things as dress, food, family affairs, and polygamy. On the latter, he said of himself:

On the 24th April, 1935 at the St. Thomas's Church, Badagry, the late Revd. B.I. Manuwa performed the marriage between me and my wife . . . with whom I had my first son . . . My late father had six children, four died before him and only two of us survived him after his death. On a desire to have a good number of children who would, God willing, survive me after death, I breached my solemn marriage vow, taking to wife [four] . . . mistresses.

In his short autobiography he shows that he is guided both by Christianity and respect for local custom and practice. In his *Iwe Ikomo Jade* as well he recommends that Christian and Yoruba practices be called on in the naming of children. When he was made a chief in 1974, he linked this achievement with a prophesy:

Ever before my birth, an Ifa Oracle had prophesised or predicted that the child to be born by my mother would be a note-worthy person, a Christian and a Chief.⁵¹

Not only does he believe in the oracle, he has been a strong member of the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (a secret society) since 1942, and he became the *Oluwo* (chief priest) of this society in 1975.⁵²

Second, his intellectual concern is not to push any religious ideology but to work toward the unity of the people of Badagry so that the town could de-

velop. Much more useful to him as an organizing framework than religion is the Egun identity. All Egun should fight the attempt to marginalize the use of their language in school and to impose English and Yoruba spellings. Thus his *Iwe Li Ede Egun* has an agenda far more important than the technical documentation of words, which are important anyway: his real motive is to reject the imperialism of the Yoruba language. When this book was reprinted in 1982, Avoseh had achieved much greater recognition as a leading personality and was President of the Egun Cultural Research Association, which sponsored its publication. He was able to put his aim in a much more direct manner: all Egun should reject Yoruba, English, Christian, and Muslim names.

There are other dimensions to Avoseh's articulation of the Egun identity and his concern for the progress of his town. First, he does not commercialize his works: most of them are distributed free. In so doing, his motives are to disseminate information and inspire the Egun. Second, he writes several of his works in Yoruba simply because he believes he could reach more people. Third, he avoids controversies and he seldom criticize individuals and groups, in order to maintain cohesion in society.

Thus his themes reflect all the aforementioned concerns and values, ranging from religion to the environment, the documentation of progress, and the need to attract tourists and investment to Badagry. In one case, self-glorification has become the open motive: his autobiography is intended to praise his own achievements and to motivate his children and relations to "make their own life history more sublime than mine."⁵³

Avoseh's methods of writing all these minor works are similar. He selects a number of important issues in Badagry history and life. He consults his small library, which includes among others, books by Lander (the European traveler), Ajisafe on Abeokuta, J.B. Losi on Lagos, newspapers, private letters, his father's records,⁵⁴ and his own works. Next he lists what he himself remembers as an observer who is interested in Badagry affairs and has lived there for most of his life. Finally, he talks to people who are associated with what he is writing about. He is always accurate in respect to names, and most of his dates are reliable. He is careful in recording facts, perhaps in order to avoid trouble with some influential groups or to repeat the experience of his first book. All these four methods show him to be methodical in seeking 'facts.'

Of what historical values are these minor works? First, they complement the *History of Badagry* by expanding and updating some of the stories in it. They also contain material that the author has not included in his major work on Badagry. His accounts of Islam are new and excellent; I would rate this work as the best of all the minor works. Second, all the minor works are useful to understand the concept of modernization, as articulated by a leading member of the elite and the community he represents. For instance, his *Ajara Da bi Eko* provides excellent data on modernization from several aspects, in understanding the paramount needs of the community, and the sources of its ideas and inspirations. Third, they provide important data on cultural history in

such aspects as language, orthography, names, festivals, religion, and photography.⁵⁵ The books should be consulted by students of contemporary southwestern Nigeria, if only for these reasons.

Notes

* I wish to thank Robert Smith, who provided useful comments on the draft of this paper.

1. T. O. Avoseh, *A Short History of Epe* (Badagry, 1960): 2.

2. The need to obtain and study the revised edition of the history of Badagry has delayed the completion of the second part. In the difficult but exciting task of locating all Avoseh's works I received the full cooperation of my student and friend, Siyan Oyeweso of the Department of History, Lagos State University, Nigeria, and the encouragement and warmth of another longstanding friend and collaborator, H.O. Danmole of the Department of History, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

3. For substantial references to these two books, see among others, R.S. Smith, *The Lagos Consulate, 1851–1861*, (London, 1978); Robin Law, "The career of Adele at Lagos and Badagry, c. 1807–c.1837," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, (June 1978): 35–59; and Toyin Falola and Dare Oguntomisin, *The Military In Nineteenth Century Yoruba Politics*, (Ile Ife, 1984). None of these or other authors have assessed the significance of these two major chronicles.

4. The second part reviews the early history of the town and the controversy about its origins, attributed to a Dutch trader in c. 1736 in some sources and to migrants from ancient Yoruba cities in some others.

5. See for instance, Kola Folayan, "Egbado and Yoruba–Aja Power Politics, 1832–1894," M.A. thesis, Ibadan, 1967.

6. See, for instance, John Adams, *Remarks on the Country extending from Cape Palmas to the River Congo*, (London, 1823): 95.

7. For a good map on the location of the Badagry port see the recent essay by Robin Law, "Between the Sea and the Lagoons: The Interaction of Maritime and Inland Navigation on the Precolonial Slave Coast," *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 39 (1989): 210. However, Badagry did not have a real port, other than a canoe port. Badagry is on the mainland shore of the lagoon. Seagoing vessels moved off the sea shore of the strip of land across the lagoon.

8. For details, see among others, Kola Folayan, "Egbado to 1832: The Birth of a Dilemma," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4/1(1967): 15–32; A.B. Aderibigbe, "The Expansion of the Lagos Protectorate," Ph.D., University of London, 1959; O.O. Ayantuga, "Ijebu and its Neighbours, 1801–1941," Ph.D., University of London, 1965; S.O. Biobaku, *The Egba and Their Neighbours, 1842–1872* (Oxford, 1957); and Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600–c. 1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford, 1977).

9. The local reactions to this book, and the reasons for them, are discussed in the second part.

10. Chief T. Ola Avoseh, *Biographical Sketches*, (Agege, Lagos: self-printed, Ike–Olu Press, 1978): 25.

11. What Avoseh means here is that he is unable to publish this revised work.

12. Avoseh, *Biographical Sketches*: 26.

13. He himself has done this in *Biographical Sketches*, which has recently been paraphrased by Siyan Oyeweso, "T. Ola Avoseh: An Assessment of his

contribution to the Political Development and History of Badagry," paper presented at the National Seminar on Badagry History and Culture, Lagos State University, 5–8 February 1990.

14. The population of Badagry is dominated by Egun-speaking people.

15. The core settlement of Aworiland is Otta, but many of them also live in the Badagry area and in the southeastern parts of Egbado. On the Awori in Badagry see National Archives, Ibadan, C.S.O.26/29979, R. Wilkes and W.G. Wormal, "Report on the Central Awori Group in the Ikeja and Badagry Districts of the Colony," and R. J. M. Curwen, "A Report on the Reorganization of the Badagry District, 1937."

16. On his father see text F below.

17. This is a public relations job for the Ministry of Information.

18. In 1966 he was made a member of the Board of Governors, Badagry Grammar School (reappointed in 1971); member, Committee of Management, Egun Awori District Council in 1969; member of the Egun Awori District Council Caretaker Committee in 1972. Illness prevented him from serving as a member of the Badagry Grade 'C' Customary Court to which he was appointed in 1971.

19. *Biographical Sketches*: 28.

20. This is an Egun chieftaincy, signifying a senior position.

21. My translation. Some of the issues relating to early history and the features of Islam among the Yoruba can be found in T.G.O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam among the Yoruba 1841–1908* (Longman, 1978).

22. The Landers visited and stayed in Badagry during this period and provided valuable information on the town and its people. Richard Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa* vols (2 vols.: London, 1830); and Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger: With a Narrative of a Voyage Down That River*, (2 vols. London, 2d ed. 1838). The reference to Lander in this specific passage is the observation by Lander on 27 March 1830.

23. Mewu was a political refugee from Porto Novo. To settle his political score, he pursued anti-Porto Novo aims at Badagry, including an alliance with the Egba. See CMS CA2/05: E.G. Irving to Senior Naval Officer, 30 May 1854.

24. The event mentioned here was the 1854 civil war, caused by the struggle between Porto Novo and Abeokuta for the control of Badagry. The principal character in the story was Mewu, a strong Egba ally. See Biobaku, *Egba*, and C.M.S. CA2/ 043(a), Thomas Wright and John Coker to C.A. Gollmer, Badagry, 19 July 1854.

25. The overall religious leader of the Islamic community.

26. Conflicts and splinter groups building of new mosques were not uncommon features of Islam in Nigeria during this period. See Toyin Falola, "Islam and Protest in Colonial South-western Nigeria," paper for Conference on Religion and Protest in Africa, Cornell University, 1991.

27. Tickel worked in this region from 1854 to 1886. On him see Kola Folayan, "The Career of Thomas Tickel in the Western District of Lagos, 1854–1886," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 5/1, (1969): 27–46.

28. A Hausa loanword (*tassir*). The *tassir* translates the Quar'an to Yoruba.

29. Another Hausa loan word (*Ladan*) or the *muezzin* in Arabic. The *ladan* calls the congregation to prayer.

30. Since the nineteenth century, the Muslim communities had adopted some Yoruba titles (listed in this book) to reward its leading members. They are religious *cum* political, and should not be confused with the similar titles for the town.

31. These were known as the *mai-wa-azr*, that is, those who preached sermons.

32. On Islamic education and changes during the colonial period, see T.G.O. Gbadamosi, "The Establishment of Western Education among Muslims in Nigeria," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 4/1 (1967): 89-115.

33. Government sources date the establishment of this school to 1899. See National Archives, Ibadan, Chief Secretary's Office 1/1, MacGregor to Chamberlain, 10 September 1899.

34. This was in 1926.

35. He intended to write Aralamo.

36. Among others, the following works provide sufficient background information on issues discussed by Avoseh in this book and others touching on Christianity: J.F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1814-1891* (London, 1965); E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact On Modern Nigeria* (London, 1966); C. G. Baeta, ed. *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (Oxford, 1968).

37. On the details of this see J.H. Kopytoff, *A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The 'Sierra Leonians' in Yoruba, 1830-1890* (Madison, 1965), and C.W. Newbury, *The Western Slave Coast and Its Rulers* (Oxford, 1961).

38. The reference here is to C.H. Gollmer, for whom see C.H.V. Gollmer, *Charles Andrew Gollmer, His Life and Missionary Labours* (2d. ed.: London, 1889).

39. Avoseh is perhaps the only chronicler of his generation to pick on a theme of this nature, which is a celebration of a tree, described here as the spot where most of the major events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries took place.

40. Known in some sources as Fremingo George.

41. This means "the sailor or boatman is laughing." See E.H. Duckworth, "Badagry: Its Place in the Pages of history of Nigeria," *Nigeria Magazine*, no. 38 (1952): 171.

42. The arrival has been dated to the late 1720s. See Ajayi, *Christian Missions*: 22.

43. Adele lost the struggle for the throne in ca.1821 and went to stay in Badagry for fourteen years. See P.A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*: 86; J.F. Ade Ajayi, "The British Occupation of Lagos, 1851-61: A Critical Review," *Nigeria Magazine*, no. 69 (1961): 98; and Law, "Career of Adele."

44. The short inscription reads: "The seat of the fallen Agia tree. Christianity first preached here, 1842."

45. In recent times, Badagry has become one of Nigeria's leading tourist towns, with new hotels and an excellent road which connects it with Lagos. The places mentioned here attract visitors. This book serves as a summary of Avoseh's other works on Badagry.

46. *Akran Jiwa* was both an *Oba* and an Action Group politician and Minister in the 1950s.

47. My translations. The purpose of this book is to show how Ajara, one of the villages in Badagry, developed in recent times and to attribute the changes to a prophecy made by one of Avoseh's relations.

48. Additional information can be found in *Biographical Sketches*.

49. *Ibid.*: 34.

50. *Ibid.*: 10.

51. *Ibid.*: 34.

52. This influential cult was founded by the Rev. T.A.J. Ogunbiyi. See N.A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of the Yoruba* (Ibadan, 1970): 248 and *Reformed Ogboni Fraternity, Ceremony of Initiation* (Lagos: self-printed, Tika Tore press, 1934).

53. *Biographical Sketches*: 10.

54. This is mentioned in the acknowledgement to *Biographical Sketches*.

55. His books carry important photographs of people and places mentioned in the text.