

The Complexity and Ironic Nature of *Sòókò* in Ife Praise Poetry

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Abstract

The institution of *Sòókò* is important to the social and political arrangement in Ife land in the western part of Nigeria. This paper investigates the complexity and the ironic nature of the institution and title of *Sòókò* in the praise poetry in Ife land. The data for the paper were gathered through various modes of interviews with the major traditional chiefs, princes, princesses as well as traditional poets in Ile-Ife and other parts of Ife land. Data collected were analyzed using sociological theory. The paper found out that the complexity of *Sòókò* can be located in its multi-meanings in which it can refer to a group, individual, mere appellation, chieftaincy title or royal panegyric. It also found out that the ironic nature of *Sòókò* is conveyed by the fact that while it is compulsory for an elected Ooni (the paramount traditional ruler of Ife land) to be installed as *Sòókò* before ascending the throne, a full-fledged *Sòókò* chief is not likely to become an Ooni.

Key Words: *Sòókò*, prince, princesses, complexity, irony.

Introduction

Chieftaincy is an important and integral part of kingship institution in Yoruba communities. The positions of the chiefs precede the foundation of their kingdom and they are also the symbol of the integrity of their territories, the harmony, the mouth piece and social cohesion of their group. There is no Yoruba community without one chief or the other. Their inclusion in Yoruba social political set up cannot be glossed over. They serve as checks and balances in their communities. Even though the king has the control and the final say in everything, he can still be dethroned by chiefs or made to commit suicide, if there is evil in his actions or he fails to operate within his traditional responsibility. Therefore each sector is checked by the other (Salami Yunusa Kehinde 2004:315-328).

Sòókò in Ife land falls under the three divisions of chieftaincy titles in Yorubaland which are lineage chief, town chief and honorary chief. *Sòókò* as a honorary chief is a development in the trend of *Sòókò* in Ile-Ife. This was opposed to its olden day categories of town and lineage chiefs. Tradition has it that *Sòókò* chieftaincy is as old as the stool of *Oòni-Àdimúlà, Olófin, Àjàláyé* of Ile-Ife.

The fact that *Sòókò* is commonly mentioned in Ile-Ife in form of greeting, praising, jesting or as appellation will entice a visitor or an observer to wish to investigate the popularity and uniqueness of *Sòókò*. (Anthony et al 2012:20-23). This paper seeks to discuss the complexity and ironic nature of the title and its praise poetry in the political and governance of Ife land.

The Origin and Meaning of *Sòókò*

There is hardly anything without an origin. There are two versions of accounts as to the origin of *Sòókò* title. The first one postulated that the origin of *Sòókò* as a traditional title was dated back to the origin of the town. It was claimed to have started from *Oduduwa* the progenitor of the Yorubas and subsequent ruling *Oònis* (Abiodun 2014:204-244, Tejumola 2015:215-223). Sons and daughters of these *Oònis* are regarded as princes and princesses. The princes and princesses remain the *Sòókò*. The second one stated that *Sòókò* chieftaincy title originated from a woman called *Núyìn*.

Adémilúyì 2003:5 asserts that *Núyìn* was the daughter of *Oòni Láròóká*, the then Ife monarch. In those days people were not lettered as to record the date during which *Oòni Láròóká* reigned. *Núyìn* was barren and had to consult *Ifá* oracle to know the solution to her infertility. She was told by the oracle that it was through her living in another town that she would have the fruits of womb. This made her lived in Ilesa a town near Ile-Ife where she got married to *King Owa Aponlese*, the then Owa of Ijesa land. She had four children out of which '*Owáníkin*' her first son, later became the Owa of Ijesa. When *Owáníkin*'s son was denied access to the throne of *Owa* of Ijesa, he came to Ile-Ife, her grandmother's town, to receive the chieftaincy title of *Sòókò*. This is reflected in the praise poetry below:

Sòókò Wáníkin
Owáníkin, Ìjèní nì' Jèsà
Owá bímò pupo
Ìjèní káre ò

Sòókò Wáníkin
Owáníkin, Ìjèní is from Ijesa
Owa had many children
Kudos to Ìjèní

Presently in the hierarchy of *Sòókò* chieftaincy title in Ile-Ife, *Sòókò Wáníkin* is the head and he gives the staff of office to any *Sòókò* elect. *Sòókò* can be seen as a group, as an individual or an appellation. It can be seen as a chieftaincy title and we can also refer to it as a panegyric. *Sòókò* can be a male or female. The male ones are called *Jálá* while the female ones are called *Moso*. They are therefore called together as *Jálá-Mòsò*.

The non-royal lineages are referred to as *Lásòrè-Molòrè*. *Sòókò* is the mark of the families recognised as the royal lineage in Ile-Ife. This, according to (Adelegan 2009:226) “the process of succession to the throne in Ile-Ife and the Yoruba race is always by lineage”. Their political position is hereditary. It is the string that binds all the royal families together. Each *Sòókò* is the lineage head of his family and that is why they are accorded the panegyric below:

<i>Sòókò àgbà</i>	<i>Sòókò, the eldest</i>
<i>Sòókò ló ó yàn</i>	<i>Sòókò was chosen</i>
<i>Kómo mó rojú</i>	<i>Let no child envy</i>
<i>Sòókò àgbà ló se é yàn</i>	<i>Sòókò the eldest/leader was chosen</i>

The chieftaincy title is a prerogative power of *Oòni Adimula* who bestows such on any child from the royal family as a leader. There are four royal families in Ile-Ife namely *Ògboòrí, Láfogído, Gíèsí* and *Osìnkólá*. Each royal family has other compounds with their *Sòókòs*. There are as many *Sòókò* as royal compounds and each compound has *Sòókò* joined with its name such as *Sòókò Wáníkín, Sòókò Omonìgbèyìn, Sòókò Nínú, Sòókò Wánísànní*, among others. Some of the female *Sòókòs* are *Sòókò Wábòkín, Sòókò Wábáyo* and *Sòókò Moropo*. The second position, *Sòókò Wábodù* is given to female line and that person must be the daughter of a late *Oòni*. This idea of high positions being given to the female line can be justified if we go by the second myth about the origin of *Sòókò*. From the second account, *Wánikin* was a descendant of *Núyìn* the daughter of *Oòni Láròóká* and *Sòókò Wánikin* is the head of all *Sòókòs* in Ife land. *Sòókò Wábodù* who occupies the second position is also from a female line. It is based on the prominence of *Sòókò Wábodù* that there had been a female *Oòni* (*Lúwo Gbàgídá*) in the history of Ile-Ife. *Lúwo Gbàgídá* as a female *Oòni* was a very tough King who subjected Ife people to hard labour. This made Ife people vowed never to make a female as king (Ikime 1980:121-126).

People look at *Sòókò* with high esteem and because of this a *Sòókò* chief is not allowed to move about alone in the town, there must be somebody (*Lòdòkó*) who will serve him as errand person. *Lòdòkó* and his *Sòókò* must come from the same royal family, he too can become a *Sòókò*. Example of this is late Pa *Ògúnwùsì Sòókù Nínú* from *Giesi* ruling house, who became a *Lòdòkó* in 1928 and later rose to become a head of the traditional council of *Sòókò*. He served his own father and later became *Sòókò* in 1970. Incidentally, one of his grandsons *Oòni Adéyeyè Enitàn Ògúnwùsì*, the *Òjájá II* is now the reigning *Oòni of Ife*. Due to principality in those days, *Sòókò* was well recognized and given a better position.

Sòókò chiefs were treated with awe and respect in traditional political arrangement of Ile-Ife. Historical accounts show that in the past, there was the belief, among the members of the Yoruba nation, the princes, princesses and children of highly ranked chiefs could do and undo. They enjoyed the same status like the children of *Basòrun Gáà* in the old Oyo under the reign of *Aláàfin Abíódún*. As such, they could not be queried by an individual or group of individuals. Such privileges include acquiring property and citizen's wives with force, setting houses ablaze and such kinds of acts (Faleti 1972:90-91).

These possibilities of abuses by the *Sòókò* chiefs called for the name ‘*Asòróókò*’ which is shortened to ‘*Sòókò*’ meaning ‘uneasy to meet’ that is a person that brings unpleasant contacts. This made people to believe that meeting *Sòókò* is a kind of challenge. The fear created in people’s mind was so high that people thought the only solution or the only way they could be relieved of this was through avoidance. Thus, the people of Ile-Ife would say:

*Kó bá sòro ó kò
É ra sòro ó yà á fún?*

*If he/she is uneasy to meet
Must giving him/her a way be difficult?*

This traditional privilege made the *Sòókòs* in the past to be perceived in different ways. While, to some, the *Sòókò* chiefs were popular and deserved greetings and praises, some treated them as objects of jest. In the contemporary Ife, the *Sòókòs* are civil members who go about their chieftaincies’ duties and roles with high respect for the laws of the land. As enviable members of their royal families and compounds, they demonstrate their senses of royalty and civil compartment.

The *Sòókò* institution is not restricted to Ile-Ife as a town. It is present in the entire Ife Land which covers towns as *Òkè-Igbó*, *Ìfétèdó*, *Ipetumodu*, *Edunabon* and *Ifèwàrà*. The institution even extends to Ikire, Ife-Odan and Republic of Benin. In spite of this extension to other lands, the *Sòókò* institution originated from Ile-Ife. This explains the reasons *Sòókò* chiefs from these lands come to Ile-Ife for coronation. Ademiluyi (2003:13) attested to this when he stated that:

In some Yoruba towns outside Ile-Ife domain where princes and princesses from Ile-Ife settled since about 300 years ago, *Sòókò* titles were being conferred on one of them selected as the leader. The *Sòókò* appointed was empowered to exercise authority over all his people till the present day.

It was gathered that *Sòókòs* in *Ifèwàrà* are from each of the four ruling houses in Ile-Ife. It was also gathered that *Sòókò* in *Edúnàbòn*, *Ipetumodù*, *Ìkirè*, *Ifè-Òdàn* and Republic of Benin are from *Ògboòrú* royal families. *Sòókò* in *Oke-Igbo* and *Ìfétèdó* are from *Gìèsí* ruling family. *Sòókò Ifèwàrà*’s progenitor was *Sòókò Adeniregun*, one of the sons of *Oòni Ògboòrú*. He was a hunter with spiritual prowess. He settled at *Ifèwàrà* with his associates from the four ruling houses in Ile-Ife following his defeat by his junior brother as to the stool of *Oòni*. He was named *Ò-segàn-derùkù* (turns thick bush to sand through the use of charm). This was due to his ability to turn *Ifèwàrà*, a thick forest to normal land. Each of the four ruling families in *Ifèwàrà* has a *Sòókò* chief. The ruling families are *Ò-segàn-derùkù*, *Ògógó*, *Òkúnnúwù* and *Àsá*.

Aade's compound (*Ilé Ààdè*) in *Edúnàbòn* became a *Sòókò*'s abode through *Sòókò Omóseébí Adésínà*. He refused to go further when he was tired and bored of the journey from Ile-Ife to Ife-Odan through *Sòókò Ògboòrú*. *Sòókò Ògboòrú* was tricked out of throne because he was considered to have stayed too long on the throne. He was to carry an offering for the peace of the town. It was when he realized that he was tricked out of the throne that he went to settle at Ife-Odan. After his departure from Ile-Ife none of the *Oònis* immediately after him reigned more than two months. He was begged and he mandated the king makers to crown his grandson, that is, the son of his daughter as *Oòni*. This led to the emergence of the Giesi ruling families.

His other son, *Sòókò Olúfúnmi* could not also continue the journey and settled at òkè *Sòókò* in *Ìpetumodù*. His other sons also settled at *Ìkirè* and Republic of Benin. The one at *Ìkirè* invariably has four *Sòókò* compounds namely *Métikú*, *Awódèjì*, *Fáladé* and *Atééré*. *Sòókò Adérinsókun Ológbénlá* from *Gìesí* ruling family was seconded to Oke-Igbo by *Oòni Abeéwelá* to help in the ongoing internal war that rose against *Arílèkólàsí Òsemàwé* of *Ondo*. It was after the war that *Sòókò Adérinsókun* settled at *Òkè-Igbó* and was given appellation *Ológbénlá* meaning a person with a big cutlass that causes large cuts on the bodies of enemies at wars. *Sòókò* chief got to *Ìfétédó* by *Sòókò Òséwùmí* who was a child to *Sòókò Ológbénlá* of *Òkè-Igbó*. He pulled out together with his people and settled at *Ìfétédó* in the year 1931.

Research shows that while *Ìfétédó* people were at *Òkè-Igbó*, *Oòni Tadénikáwò Adésojí Adérémí* promised to reduce the tax on cocoa when vying for the stool of *Oòni* after the demise of *Oòni Adémilúyì* in 1930. Though he kept to his promise, the consuls did not stop the collection of tax neither did they return the percentage of the tax already collected. There was chaos due to arrest of people by the consuls. (Adesigbin 2001:12-23). *Ìfétédó* people had the intention to flee to Ile-Ife; they were tired and thought they were saved after crossing *Òwenà River*, the boundary of *Òkè-Igbó* and *Ìfétédó*. Their settlement area at the two towns, *Òkè-Igbó* and *Ìfétédó* are known as *Ológbénlá* house.

It should be noted that the *Sòókòs* are not regarded as members of royal families in most of the towns mentioned except in *Ifèwàrà* and Ile-Ife. Although they belong to royal families, in most cases, they cannot vie for the *Oòni*'s stool. They enjoy the status of princes and princesses with the dignity and respect attached to the status.

The dispersal of *Sòókòs* to other towns was usually based on being warriors, prowesses as hunters as well as consequences of misunderstandings and mistrusts concerning contests for the *Oòni* stool. (Johnson 1921:81) points out that:

Members of royal family occupy responsible positions. They may take no part in the administration of affairs in the town... certain privileges are granted them as befitting their rank. As a rule, distinguished members of the royal family except those holding responsible positions do not reside in the metropolis, a great number of them may be found scattered all over the provinces where each one resides as a lord of the town or village.

Coronation of *Sòókò* Chieftaincy Title

Coronation is an integral part of bestowing any title in Yoruba land. Without it a title is not complete. “*Akòko*” leave is put on the head of person to be bestowed with the title as an anointment. The selection of new *Sòókò* starts from compound head (*Baálé*). When there is a vacancy in a ruling house as to the stool of *Sòókò*, the compound head and the elders in the compound investigate who is to be elected. *Sòókò* elect will be brought to the council in the company of the compound head and four elders in the compound including *Lóógun* and *Akogun*. The council of *Sòókò* will also investigate whether the *Sòókò* elect is a prince and whether he hails from the compound in accordance with Yoruba custom. *Ifa* oracle is also usually consulted in order to make a right choice in as much as the king referred to as Olofin Ajalaye is at the centre of numerous oral narrations in *Ifa* corpus (Olupona 2011:93). The council of *Sòókò* will also want to know how responsible or reputable the person to be elected is.

After about three meetings by the council concerning this issue, the council then seeks the sanction of *Oòni* after which the *Sòókò* elect appears again before the council in the company of the compound head, *Akogun*, *Lóógun*, compound’s secretary and other four elders.

After fulfilling all necessary conditions of selection, the candidates will go through four stages of initiation before the coronation. After the stage of selection, there is the stage of showing appreciation which is the stage at which the elected *Sòókò* presents money and materials like kola nut and drink to the council and *Oòni*. This is known as “*Ìkàrò* and *òké dídì*”. Presentation of these things also solidifies the exercise. It gives the exercise its weight and makes the *Sòókò* elect to know that the title does not come easily and therefore it should be taken with seriousness. The third stage is the Turbanning or (*ìwéjàá*) stage. (Blier 2015:337-453). Turbanning (*ìwéjàá*) is done by *Sòókò Wáníkin* who is the head of *Sòókò* chiefs. Turbanning is the process of tying a piece of white clothes around the head of the *Sòókò* elect (Eluyemi 1983:18) said:

The purpose of *Iweja Sòókò* is to make a prince a *Sòókò* chief. The ceremony which, among other things is a process of tying around the prince’s head a piece of white cloth thus, *Iweja*, is usually performed by the head of the *Sòókò* chiefs who is usually the eldest.

The fourth stage is the stage of bestowing (*ìkòrí*). This is the stage at which the *Sòókò* cap and akoko leaf is put on the head of the *Sòókò* elect. This is the stage of annointment. This was referenced in the praise poetry thus:

Àbú iténí omo oòyè Ifè
Omo sòókò akèyò
Abìkòrí dan bí ide
Adé ì í sèkòrí ké e lá ràn mí

Abu iteni the son of Ooye
The son of Sòókò Akeyo
Whose cap shines like a brass
Cap is not compared to crown

The ceremony is usually followed by eating and drinking. The ceremony is usually peaceful since the *Sòókò* elect is unanimously nominated by all the members of his compound. Apart from this, as discussed earlier, there used to be many *Sòókòs* under each ruling house, therefore there cannot be any case of envy.

Functions of *Sòókò* Chiefs in Ife Land

There is variety of functions performed by the traditional council of *Sòókò* in Ife land and their positions remain invaluable. Even, the present political situation, the development and socio-economic situation of things cum educational development that has taken place has not eroded the functions of *Sòókò*.

The *Sòókò* chiefs are very vital in the political and social set up of Ile-Ife. They meet regularly at least once a month. This gives them opportunity to know the happenings in the town. They advise and inform the *Oòni* on what goes on in the town. They live in their various quarters in Ile-Ife and whatever report they have that may have negative impact on the town will be discussed in the meeting and later tabled before *Oòni* so as to quickly hit the nail on the head. They settle minor disputes among families such as land and marriage conflicts. It is the duty of *Sòókò* chiefs to make sure that there is peace and tranquility within their royal houses.

Furthermore, the *Sòókò* chiefs serve as confidants to *Oòni*. Example is during *Olójó festival* when *Oòni* uses his unique crown “*Arè*” to perform some functions at *Òkè-Imògún shrine*. While some chiefs goes to *Òkè-Imògún shrine* with *Oòni*, to salute and pray for him, the *Sòókò* chiefs stay in a specific area in the palace to salute and pray for him. During that period, *Oòni* will instruct them to look after the palace while he is a way out of the palace for the festival. This means they should not betray him.

The Term Complexity and Irony

Complexity originated from the Latin word “*complexus*” which means entwined or twisted together. This means that there must be two or more parts that are joined together in a way that it is difficult to separate them. *Chambers English Dictionary* defines complexity as being composed of more than one, or of many parts. Generally, complexity is used to describe something with many parts in which those parts affect one another in many ways. It is clear from this that anything that is complex needs extensive description and therefore needs more time to be examined or search.

This means that complex entities will be difficult to model or describe. Thus, tackling a complex issue requires more facts and knowledge. Fonseca (2002:70-72) sees complexity as implying interaction between diverse entities that amplifies difference to produce emergent novelty.

Irony, on the other hand, is defined by *Oxford English Dictionary* as the expression of meaning by use of words normally conveying the opposite: the apparent perversity of fate or circumstances. What is important about irony is that words are used in a way that the purpose of their meaning is different from the real meaning of the words. For Olatunji (1984:56), irony involves saying one thing while intending another which is incompatible with an overall meaning. In irony, the overall meaning of what is said or heard contradicts what one has in mind. In an ironic situation, what one expects is not what one expresses.

Complexity and Irony: The Institution of *Sòókò* and Poetry in Ife Land

One wonders why *Sòókò* was believed as having many and deep meanings in Ile-Ife. The institution is very important in the political administration in Ile-Ife. As a traditional town with a monarchical system of government, the complex situation of *Sòókò* as princes or princesses lies in the fact that there are many distinct and connected issues which makes it hard to understand the institution of *Sòókò* or deal with it. The complexity in *Sòókò* can be understood from the point of view that it can refer to an individual, group or institution (chieftaincy and kingship). It can be a mark of honour or jest. It is also an appellation that commands respect which is given to every prince or princess.

Being a prince or princess does not mean such a child can become the head of the ruling family as a *Sòókò* chief or as a king. One is chosen among others, male or female, as a *Sòókò* chief or a king. This praise poetry confirms it:

<i>Omo wéré ilé</i>	<i>All the children in the household</i>
<i>Sòókò ni àgbà</i>	<i>Sòókò is the eldest</i>
<i>Mérówó rupè</i>	<i>Though, I have no trumpet</i>
<i>Mo tì a ferun a fon</i>	<i>I'll improvise the claim through the use of mouth</i>
<i>Wí Sòókò làgbà</i>	<i>That Sòókò is the eldest</i>
<i>Àjàlayé, erin ló nipe</i>	<i>Ajalaye, elephant trumpets</i>

Sòókò chiefs in their various clans in all the ruling compounds constitute the traditional council of *Sòókò*. However nowadays, by way of expansion people are sometimes honoured with *Sòókò* title. Such people may not necessarily be Ife indigenes or come from ruling compounds. Nevertheless, such honorary title holders of *Sòókò* do not form part of the council of *Sòókò* and they do not have access to the stool of *Oòni* in Ile-Ife. This is according to the tradition of kingship in Yoruba land in which a non-indigene or somebody that is not from a royal lineage cannot become a king. Example of a non-royal compound in Ile-Ife having an honorary title of *Sòókò* is *Òpá house*, which is known as *Ilé-Òpá*. The president of Benin Republic, *Boni yayi* is also an honorary *Sòókò*.

Sòókòs of other towns apart from *Ifèwàrà* cannot vie to become king in their various towns. The thought is that they belong to Ile-Ife even though they were given free hand to operate as lords of their compounds. The excerpt below, praise poetry of Sòókò of *Ìfètédó* shows this:

*Sòókò, Omo wálé, wàlè, wálé
Wálé kó o wá joyè baba re n'Ífè Oòni*

Omo A-fifé-tèlú dó

*Nílé olúbósin Yekan Àbú Onífè
Akèjì òmò*

*Sòókò, please come
come to your father's house to
be crowned Oòni
The child of whose forefathers
settle down in their domain
with peace
At Olubosin household
the maternal relation of Abu
Onife that has eji omo marks*

Another complex nature of the institution of Sòókò and his praise poetry is that Sòókò *Ogbooru's* lineage formed the core ruling houses that vie for the stool of the king in Ile-Ife and *Ifèwàrà*. His children formed four houses in *Ìkirè*, a big and well organized compound in *Ìpetumodù* and *Edúnàbòn* but his lineage does not exist as a ruling house in *Ifè Òdàn* where the real Oòni *Ògboòrú* settled. However, the relationship between Sòókò *Ògboòrú* and Ile-Ife was shown in the similarity of *Ifè Òdàn* royal praise poetry and *Ògboòrú* royal praise poetry of Ile-Ife. The praise poetry is also regarded as the common panegyric for every Sòókò everywhere. It runs thus:

*Àbú itení olódò kan ò térééré
Àbú itení olódò kan ò tàràrà
Odò tó sà wéréke
Ó déyìnkùlé Olúfè a dòkun
Ó déyìnkùlé Olúfè a dàbàta*

*Abu iteni the owner of a river that is zealous
Abu iteni the owner of a river that is straight
The water that flows systematically
It turns to beach at the back of Olufe's house
It turns to marshy place at the back of
Olufe's house*

*Onípélé won kò gbodò bù mu
Alábàjà won kò gbodò bù sinsè*

*A person with facial marks should not drink
A person with facial marks shall use it to wash
his legs*

*Ògédé onísòbòró ni yòò pon
omi odò náà gbe
Mo débè mo bù bójú
Mo débè mo bù sinsè
Àbú ni mí Omo Sòókò
Tó b'Óni tan*

*Only those without facial marks shall use it

I got there I wash my face
I got there I wash my legs
I am Abu Sooko's child
That is related to Ooni*

The above praise poetry calls for the same appellation “*Sòókò*” that they all bear. Apart from this, each clan has its own panegyric which shows the unique qualities that differentiate it from the other.

The irony in *Sòókò*s title and institution in *Ifeland* lies in the fact that a full-fledged *Sòókò* cannot become an *Oòni* whereas any king elect must first of all be installed as *Sòókò* before the final installation as *Oòni*. Eluyemi (1985:17-22) attested to this:

The irony of the history of Ife is that when a prince is given the chieftaincy of *Sòókò* during the lifetime of a living *Oòni*, the probability is, that such a *Sòókò* would never be appointed an *Oòni*. On the other hand the chieftaincy of *Sòókò* is not only mandatory but compulsory for any prince before he becomes the *Oòni*-elect.

It was never heard in the history of Ife that a king was ever installed without being made a *Sòókò*. For instance, the reigning *Oòni of Ife, Oba Adéyeyè Enitàn Ògúnwùsì, the Òjájá II* was first of all turbaned as *Sòókò Òjájá* on 25th of October 2015 before he commenced the rites for his ascendancy to the throne of *Oòni*. Going by this, one will wonder while a chieftaincy title is necessary before a kingship title and the same chieftaincy title robs those who are its holders the possibility of being elected as *Oòni*. However, it can be further stressed that every *Oòni* is accorded the appellation *Sòókò* by virtue of his birth. The installation of an *Oòni* elect as *Sòókò* prior to the full ascendancy to the throne may be a means for expressing a sense of belongingness among princess and princesses and for granting easy access to the throne without diminishing the sense of worth in the full fledged *Sòókò* chiefs. On the other hand, the fact that the one that is finally installed as the *Oba* was not one of the full-fledged *Sòókò* chiefs accords him respect as the first among equals. The difference between *Sòókò* as *Oòni* and other chiefs is shown in the praise poetry below:

<i>Wóórí òrè na ké han'mo Olòmínrìn</i>	<i>Others are praised and greeted Wóórí</i>
<i>òrè</i>	
<i>Ònà na ró mó kábíyèsí baba mi láàfìn</i>	<i>My father kabiyesi (Oòni) is honoured in the palace</i>
<i>Yèsí a bímo rè ká pè é l'Óòni o Àdìmúlà</i>	<i>Nobody calls his child Oòni Adimula</i>
<i>Adé ì í sèkòrí ke lá ràn mí</i>	<i>Crown is not compared with cap</i>
<i>Ìkòrí ó dán bí ide</i>	<i>Cap that shines like brass</i>
<i>Sòókò, baba mi</i>	<i>Sòókò, my father</i>

This excerpt also made a comparison between the *Oòni*'s crown and *Sòókò*'s cap. There are many caps but one crown in a town, therefore no body borrows a crown.

Conclusion

What the foregoing tells us about *Sòókò* in Ife land is its complex and ironic phenomenon that needs a deep study to understand. *Sòókò*'s genesis was traced originally to the descendant of the princess of *Oòni Láròóká* and this makes her son, *Sòókò Wábodù*, the second position from the female line. The genesis of *Sòókò* was also traced later to the days when princes and princesses were empowered to lord themselves over the people of their community. The *Sòókò* of other towns in Yoruba land take the same role as princes and princesses from Ile-Ife. As an honorary title, it is an upward trend which has no effect as to the stool of *Oòni*.

The complexity of *Sòókò*'s title in Ife land focuses on its multi-meanings as prince, princess, appellation, individual and family panegyrics, chief and king. Ironically, there is the uncertainty of a full fledged *Sòókò* chief becoming an *Oòni*. Secondly, there is the compulsion of an *Oòni* elect being first turbaned as *Sòókò*, the title which he holds for some days to later be proclaimed as *Oòni-Àdimúlà* after his various inductions and training at the sacred ground called *Ìlofi*.

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