

A Historical Appraisal of an Articulated Kingship Institution in Isinland, Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This work explores the historical evolution of a modular kingship system among three communities of Isin in Kwara State of Nigeria from the earliest times up to 2010. The paper examines the Olusin kingship and its influence on inter-communal relations. It also examines how the institution has been shaped by socio-political and cultural interactions over the centuries, particularly under the pressures of colonialism and modernity. By analysing the historical trajectory of the kingship institution, the study provides insights into its role as a unifying force within Isinland. The study highlights significant milestones in the development of the kingship, detailing major events and transitions that have shaped its trajectory. It underscores the role of the kingship in fostering cooperation and mutual understanding among the three communities of Isanlu-Isin, Ijara-Isin, and Iji-Isin; all in Isin Local Government Area of Kwara State. The study adopts a multidisciplinary approach, utilising materials from both primary and secondary sources. Oral information from community elders offer first-hand accounts of customs, conflicts, and resolutions, providing valuable perspectives on the kingship's significance. Archival materials such as annual reports provide a comprehensive reconstruction of the institution's evolution. The study discovers that despite the challenges faced by the political institution such as succession disputes and external political influences, the kingship has played a pivotal role in maintaining the cultural identity and historical continuity of the three communities.

Keywords: Kingship institution, colonialism, modernity, cultural identity, historical continuity, oral traditions.

Introduction

This paper is a rich and intricately interwoven political history of Isinland in Kwara State of Nigeria from the earliest times of the community up to 2010 when the modularised kingship institution ceased to exist. The piece specifically focused on the transformation of the traditional political system in the three communities. Isinland, with its rich cultural heritage and deeply ingrained customs, witnessed a significant shift in its governance structure following the demise of *Olusin* Ajai Amuyunbola. While his period in power is unknown as there are diverse narrations to the monarch's reign, his pivotal period in office heralded the dawn of a new era characterised by the introduction of a rotational system within the *Olusin* kingship institution. This essay unravels the complexities surrounding the establishment and evolution of the rotational system in Isinland.

Historiographically, apart from a number of general works on African and Nigerian kingship institution; Boston (1962), Adegbulu (1993), and Nevadomsky (1993), and Yoruba kinship institution; Lloyd (1960), Ogunode (2021), Miles (1987), Biobaku (1987), and Pemberton and Afolayan (1996), academic literature specifically devoted to the *Olusin* and by extension, the Igbomina kinship institution is relatively sparse. Boston's work, *Origin of Igala Kingship* connected the kingship of the Igala with a group across the Niger from Idah linked with a Yoruba king. Boston's work is useful for this research effort as it laid a foundation for exploring cultural connections relevant to understanding the evolution of the *Olusin* kingship institution (1962: 373-383). Nevadomisky's work, *The Benin Kingdom: Rituals of Kingship and Their Social Meaning* is based on the axiom that African kings are sacred (1993: 65-77). Nevadomisky's work provided a theoretical foundation for understanding the sacred nature of kingship, which is a key consideration in the *Olusin* kingship institution.

On the historiography of the Yoruba kingship institution, Lloyd (1960: 221–237) opined that the Yoruba are best-known in West Africa with sacred kingship. The work also considered the issue of conflict occurrence over the installation of a new king which issue this research effort has addressed. Ogunode's thesis titled, "Kingship Institution in Post-Colonial Akokoland, 1960-1999," argued that kingship and power dynamics remain important in the African traditional governance. The work became important to this research effort as it examined the survival of a kingship institution in the postcolonial era in Yorubaland (2021: 48-72). Biobaku's work, *Sources of Yoruba History*, studied the political entities of the Yoruba, especially the Egba and Ekiti. He held forth that these entities employed sacred kingship that was hereditary only within the royal blood (1987: 206-210). This work has contributed to the research's effort at examining how the principles of sacred kingship and hereditary succession manifested in the Isin kingship institution.

The scrubby nature of cerebral literature on the *Olusin* kingship institution has made this research to thoroughly peruse the little available ones from some notable scholars. In addition, the research also relied heavily on archival materials obtained from provincial files, court injunction documents, some unpublished seminar papers, as well as newspaper reports, news magazine and articles in notable journals. Some of these materials made occasional references to Isinland in studies related to Igbomina or Kwara State in general. In making allusions to Isinland, these works majorly studied wars of the 19th century and the Ilorin domination of Igbominaland. The body of literature in this category include Aaron (2022), Aboyeji (2015), Afolabi (2006), Ibiloye (2012; 2011), and Ugwu (2016). Aaron's work is a historical analysis of how Isinland became part of the Ilorin emirate after a successful Ilorin military expedition of Isinland and other Igbomina towns. Aboyeji's thesis focused on the cultural and colonial history of Isinland with a rich insight into its kingship institution (2015: 64-80). Afolabi detailed the migration history of the Igbomina of which the subject of this study is a part to present day Kwara and Osun States as well as delving into the evolution of the *Olusin* kingship institution and the origin of its rotational system (Afolabi, 2006: 26-30). Also, the work of Ibiloye gave more insight into the evolution of the *Olusin* kingship institution and inter-community relations in Isinland before the rotational system of the stool (2011: 33-36). Another of Ibiloye's work discussed the dispersal of population within Igbomina land as a result of the 1804 Fulani Jihad. The population shifts affected parts of Isinland and the kingship institution (Ibiloye, 2012: 105-113). The relevance of the aforementioned works to the research efforts could not be overemphasised.

Location and the Strategic Importance Isin in Yorubaland

The land of Isin lies within the northern part of Yorubaland in the middle belt of Nigeria (Aleru 2006: 10). It is approximately between latitude 8°N and 8°25'N and between longitude 4°40'E and 5°30'E, within Isin Local Government of Kwara State of Nigeria. It shares boundaries with Agunji and Igbaja districts to the north, Oro-Ago and Ilere to the east, Omu-Aran and Arandun to the south, and Oro to the west. All these neighbouring communities fall within Ifelodun and Irepodun Local Government Areas of Kwara State. Isinland occupies an approximate area of 995 square kilometres. It is endowed with savannah and forest vegetation on a plain terrain with patches of rivers and streams that serve as verdant areas for easy crop cultivation and animal grazing. Isinland has an alternating climate of wet and dry seasons. The wet season lasts from April to November with about 1100mm-1500mm of rain. The rainy season starts in April and ends in November. The season is characterised by prevailing winds. The wet season is accompanied by south-westerly winds originating from the Atlantic Ocean, while the dry season is characterised by harmattan winds due to the tropical region (Aleru 2006: 10-20).

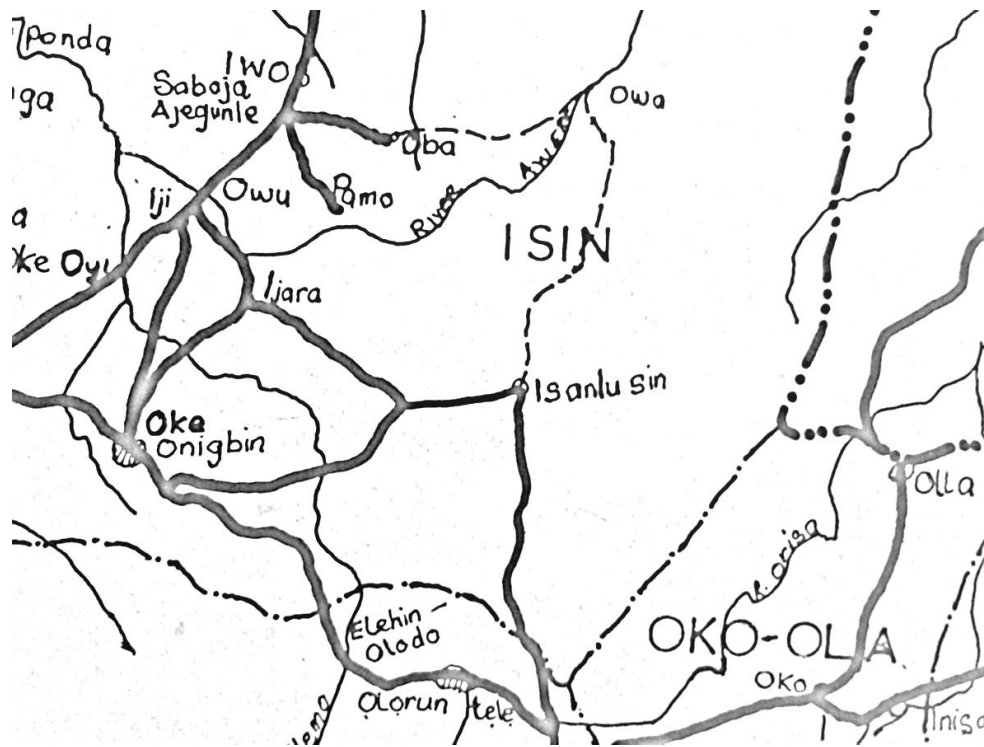


Figure1: Map showing the three Isin communities of Ijara-Isin, Iji-Isin and Isanlu-Isin, in Isin Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Source: Ilorin: Kwara State of Nigeria: Launching of the Local Government Reform, Pamphlet, 1976.

The vegetation of Isinland is nourished by the high rainfall, high temperature, and high relative humidity. The land is drained by short, swift-flowing streams that are mostly seasonal. Important among them are the Awere, Agbaa, Osin, and Oyi rivers. Awere is the most important to this research because it cuts across most of the towns in Isinland. The edaphic nature of the soil contains mineral resources such as granite, gravel, laterite, feldspar, tantalite, mica, kaolin, talc, quartzite, tourmaline and marble. Topographically, Isinland is craggy in nature and it is surrounded by some rugged hills and knolls, including: Jewo-Ese, Odo Ibu, Sangolopo, Okore, Alaguso, and Alawoji hills. The gradients of the hills are very steep, and their harsh topography served some historical purpose as they functioned as a defensive barrier against successive raids carried out in the country by the Nupe, Ilorin, and Ibadan invaders in the past (Aleru 2006: 11). Also present in Isinland are notable undeveloped waterfalls including; Atti, Ijoko, and Aise Falls at Isanlu-Isin. Other historical features present include Tiloye stone and image, and Alaguso hill at Ijara-Isin; Agbasin shrine at Isanlu-Isin;

Kooyi shrine at Olla; Alawoji hill and forest at Iwo; the Iron crown rod at Oba-Isin; Esii shrine at Oke-Oyi, and Akoyi at Edidi, among others. The presence of dolerite had played a significant role in the earlier centuries as materials for stone tools while the availability of soapstone was very important for the ancient stone carving in the area, especially at Esie and some other towns (Aleru 2006: 10-11). It is without doubt that Isinland has occupied a strategic position in Yorubaland; advantageously located in its northern tip and extremely rich in historical artefacts.

Theoretical and Conceptual Assumptions

Some traditionalist theories and concepts are germane to this study. When behavioural theorists test for statistical correlation between two factors, they embark on a voyage of discovery of coincidental survey between the two factors. If they engage in a multivariate analysis they are determined in finding out which of the several factors is the most reliable forecaster of a particular aftermath (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001: 38). To the scientific analysts, this position is irresponsibly arrogant (Knorr and Sidney, 1961: 16). However, this research borrows a leave from the traditionalist theorists of multidisciplinary approach by performing a careful content analysis of the primary and secondary sources that are offered as evidence. These will not only include archival materials, but also speeches, press statements, government reports, personal memoirs, newspaper accounts and commentaries, interviews, oral histories, and scholarly studies.

The study of the *Olusin* rotational institution also fits into the concept of intuitive selection of what is deemed important and relevant, meticulously gathering, sifting, weighing, and interpreting evidence (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001: 37). Since the use of judgement, intuition, and insight are essential in arriving at conclusions in this type of research, utilising oral traditions, archival records, and secondary sources are apropos. Oral histories from community elders offered first-hand accounts of customs, conflicts, and resolutions, providing valuable perspectives on the kingship's significance. Archival account, not excluding historical documents, colonial records, and previous scholarly works, enabled a comprehensive reconstruction of the evolution of the *Olusin* kinship institution situating it within broader socio-political and historical contexts. The essay also explored the impact of external pressures, such as invasions and colonialism, on the kingship's authority and adaptability. It has demonstrated how the institution was able to navigate these challenges, preserving its traditional authority while embracing changes that ensure its relevance in contemporary society.

Migration and peopling Isinland

The Isin people are a stock of Igbomina, a sub-group of the Yoruba distinguished by a particular dialect of their own. The name 'Isin' connotes both the people and the land they occupy as most of the towns in Isinland bear the suffix, 'Isin.'The

dialect of the people concurs with the major Igbomina dialects. Isin settlements are comprised of thirty-six towns referred to as *Ekunmerindinlogoji* Isin, (the thirty-six communities of Isin) (Tinuoye, 2002). Some of the towns in Isinland include Isanlu-Isin, Ijara-Isin, Iji-Isin, Oke-Aba, Iwo, Odu-Ore, Owu, Oke-Onigbin, Pamo, Oba-Isin, Kudu-Owode, Alla, Igbesi, Oponda, Edidi, Sabaja, Opega, Odo-Eku, Olla, Oke-Oyi, etc. The people are divided into two groups: the Odo/Isale-Isin and Oke-Isin, (the upper and lower Isin). Tinuoye (2002) suggested that the people might have settled together at the same time since they had both filial and conjugal relationships at the time of their settlement. Moreover, the word 'Isin' points to people who are related linguistically, culturally, and geographically (Aleru, 2006: 53).

The word 'Isin' happened to have been coined from the ackee tree (*Blighia sapida*), a tree native to tropical West Africa and cultivated for its fruits. Under such trees meetings by the earlier progenitors might have held. The people might also have used the bark, the leaves and fruits of the tree to cure some certain diseases. Perhaps, the ackee apple tree might have provided some shade for the people under which they took their rest when on migration. The name could also have been derived from the name of an important cult god, *Agbasin*, prominent among the people. The various versions of derivation of the name, 'Isin' indicate that the people might have migrated together to their present place in large groups from their ancestral homes of Ile-Ife and Oyo-Ile. Perhaps the most probable of all the sources of the root of the name 'Isin' may be that version that linked the name to *Ile Isinmi*, meaning "the place of rest." Thus, the name may be the summary of the agony of war and attacks the people experienced on their way to their new abode from their ancestral homes in the hands of invading Nupe, Fulani, and most likely also, the Ibadan warriors (Dada, 1985: 9).

The migration of Isin people to their present place of abode is not unlike the ones that took place before or after their own in history. Migration is an aspect of human activities, and human beings changing locations has been a normal part of culture and civilisation. People moved from one place to another to settle permanently or for adventure; such movement always involved individuals or group of individuals depending on the motive behind the movement. Human migration, in a broad sense, refers to the relatively permanent movement of an individual or a group over a distance. Migration often resulted from the search for another permanent settlement for peaceful living and expansion. The reasons for migration differ from person to person or group to group (Ibiloye, 2011: 33-36). According to Ibiloye (2011), people voluntarily abandon their homeland under pressure from enemies and disputes over land and chieftaincy titles, as in the cases of many people in Isinland. According to the historical background of some of the towns, exploration and entertainment activities such as game (hunting), drumming, and masquerades like *Oje*, *Igunnu*, and *Egungun* also led to migration.

Some migrations occurred due to divine instruction from deities to change environment, or the outbreak of epidemics and diseases (Ibiloye, 2011: 33-36).

The Isin people have a diverse history of origin and migration. Some members of the group migrated from different places at different times and settled at different times and in different sites. However, majority of the people that arrived at their present place of abode came from two main sources at different times. The two principal sources of migration of the people were the old Oyo and Ile-Ife (Ibiloye, 2011: 33-36). Nevertheless, a fraction of the people claimed some irreconcilable source of origin and migration. For instance, the Oba-Isin people claimed that their progenitors emerged from the earth at a place called *Ojubo-Ere* shrine where rites were performed to the earth deity. Thus, the Oba-Isin people's cognomen today is, 'Oba, *omo ere*,' meaning 'Oba, children of the mud.' (Ibiloye, 2011: 33-36). It has been argued that the claim of descent from Oyo and Ile-Ife notably by the ruling classes among the people might be a ploy to legitimise the usurpation of power from the indigenous people. This also suggests that those immigrants would have met some people in the area they were supposed to have founded. According to Ibiloye, this argument has been supported by archaeological and historical records containing aspects of the people's culture. There is evidence of some ancient and abandoned settlement sites in Isinland, located in the forest enclosure very close to the hill tops (Ibiloye, 2011: 33-36).

In order to support this argument further, Ibiloye (2011) opined that the presence of stone walls at Isanlu-Isin, reported to have been there when the first immigrants arrived, as well as some stone figures in Ijara-Isin, are testimonies to the claim that indigenous people were already present in the area. Also, the overall redistribution of population in Isinland formed part of its migration history (Aleru, 2006: 53). Furthermore, it is noted that sections of the Esie refugees can be found in Ijara-Isin and Iji-Isin as parts of a paramount evidence of such movement and final relation with their former home. In addition, some Esie stone images can be found in Ijara-Isin today. Thus, there seemed to have been a continued formation of settlements in Isinland with the most recent recorded being after the 1804 Jihad. These events had actually affected Isinland's migration history, with new villages founded and old ones augmented by waves of refugees from neighbouring settlements (Ibiloye, 2011: 33-36).

The Isinland settlements of today appear to be a product of a complex intermingling of people through migration due to military conquest, political pressure, and personal decisions of some of the early settlers. Although, the Isin people have different stories of migration, the people are related linguistically, culturally, and geographically as oral evidence shows that some of their predecessors must have come together at the same time (S. Alade, personal communication, March 22, 2024). However, the conquest and integration of the

northern Igbomina by the Fulani under the Ilorin emirate system in the pre-colonial period separated them from the southern Igbomina, bringing Isinland (which was part of the northern Igbomina) and its people under Kwara State while their kith and kin, the southern Igbomina belong to Osun State today. The unholy separation of the people determined the type of colonial experience they had. Isinland under the Ilorin Emirate came under the Northern regional administration, while other parts of Igbomina were included in the boundary delimitation of 1894 between Captain Bower and Lord Lugard, based on the principle of local jurisdictions. This was a product of the 1830 event by which the Igbomina, including Isinland, was integrated under the Ilorin Emirate (ILOPROF/NAK 3663C).

The Fulani invasion greatly unsettled the region and the Ibadan marauders' raid led to Burnet's report that '...the area has been somewhat unsettled since the Fulani invasion and Ibadan marauders' incursion. In fact, so great was the physical dislocation that by 1900 no Igbomina village was on its pre-18th century site.' This report revealed the havoc done to the Igbomina, including Isinland (Ibiloye, 2012: 105-113). During the British occupation, Isinland was under Omu. Isanlu District villages like Isanlu, Ijara, and Iji were under the rule of Ali Balogun Gambari and Ajia after the Olomu had been conquered (ILOPROF/NAC/398). However, Omu-Aran, Isanlu, Ijara, and other villages remained until Isin was put under Ilorin Division in 1946. Isanlu-Isin, Iji, and Oke were merged under Ilorin Emirate, and there was an Isin Village Council. However, the local government reform of the Igbomina area of 1954 created each village with its own area or ward. Village groups and district councils were responsible for electing members to the native authority council. Between 1956 and 1957, a standing order located an Area council in Isanlu-Isin (ILOPROF/AC/30/C5).

Following the Igbomina local government reforms of 1968 and 1976, and intense pressure for change, the Igbomina were granted autonomy, and the majority of the settlements are now in the Ifelodun and Irepodun local government areas of Kwara State (Kwara State of Nigeria Launching of the Local Government Reform, 1976: 15). Isin local government was carved out of Irepodun local government in 1986, with Owu as the capital. Nevertheless, the traditional council established in the LGA reform of 1976 for Ifelodun and Irepodun, with headquarters in Ajase-Ipo and headed by chairman Olupo of Ajase-Ipo, still remains and the three *Olusins* are today members of the traditional council of Kwara State (Local Government Reform Inauguration of Emirate/Traditional Councils, June, 1977: 41).

The Rotational Kingship Institution in Isinland

The transformation of Isinland's political system had many parts artfully combined. The land with its rich cultural heritage and deeply ingrained customs, witnessed a significant shift in its governance structure following the demise of *Olusin Ajai Amuyunbola*. The period of his reign is unknown as there are different narrations to the monarch's period in power. Notwithstanding, the reign of this particular monarch was very significant. It heralded the dawn of a new era that was characterised by the introduction of a rotational system within the *Olusin* kingship institution (S. Alade, personal communication, March 22, 2024). This part of the article will meticulously unravel and analyse the complexities surrounding the evolution and establishment of the rotational system in Isinland.

The *Olusin* kingship institution originated from the progenitor of Isanlu-Isin, *Olusin Aina*, who probably reigned between 1740 and 1766. Aina was one of the second-generation crowned princes from the *Agbedegbede* ruling family in Ile-Ife. Oral history testified to it that Aina was a king in a certain area of Ile-Ife before he left in frustration after being denied the opportunity to celebrate the *Egungun* festival, which he admired and wished to practice. (*Egungun* was neither practiced nor allowed in Ile-Ife, even to this day). Aina departed Ile-Ife with his crown and a deity known as Isin, symbolised by the *koro isin* (ackee fruit seed). Since this deity belonged to him, he kept it secret and made it a sacred god, worshipping and consulting it. It was from the use of this deity that he was referred to as the *Olu-Isin* 'owner of Isin,' which later evolved into the title *Olusin* (S. Alade, personal communication, March 22, 2024).

Olusin Aina most probably arrived in the present area around the 16th century and at a time, when there was no kingship institution in the entire region. He initially settled at Ajagbo and then moved to various locations before finally settling down at Oke-Agbon, near the present-day Isanlu-Isin. At Oke-Agbon, his first settlement, the *Olusin* kingship institution was established and ruled the land as the sole king. The Aina family was the only royal house entitled to the kingship from its inception. The Oke-Agbon settlement provided hiding places in times of emergency, hence settlements were located in close proximity to it. The *Olusin* soon became the political head of some thirty-six towns and villages, performing the role of a general overseer in the social, religious, and administrative affairs of Isinland. *Olusin Aina* established a centralised state over Isinland with a large political unit covering the thirty-six towns and villages, known as '*Ekunmerindinlogoji Isin*' (E. Aransiola, personal communication, March 20, 2024). The *Olusin* suzerainty was divided into the *Odo/Isale Isin* (lower Isin) and *Oke-Isin* (upper Isin), under his authority as the *Olusin of Isinland* with the headquarters at his palace in Oke-Agbon (Aleru, 2006: 53). The *Olusin* kingship was an absolute monarchy, with him as the supreme head wielding enormous power with *Baales* and chiefs under him (Afolabi, 2006: 188-189).

The leadership of Isinland was hierarchized with the *Olusin* as the head of the entire chain of communities followed by the *Baales* in some towns and the high chiefs in others. The *Baales* were the heads of the chiefs in other. The chiefs under the *Olusin* were categorised into the *Ìhàfà* (high chiefs), *Ihare*, *Ihawa*, *Ologun* (senior chiefs), and *Omo Ologun* (lesser chiefs). Each group of chiefs was headed by one of them as the leader. The number of chiefs was as many as over two hundred, according to oral tradition. All the *Baales* and chiefs worked hand in hand in accordance to the directive from the *Olusin* of Isinland (Awodele and Alabi, (unpublished): 10-24). The *Olusin's* palace welcomed the *Baales* and chiefs every seventeenth day (referred to as *Ipade Itadinlogun*) for general meetings and assemblies. At these meetings, the interests of Isinland were discussed; important activities such as rituals and festivals were planned, and disputes were settled. When *Olusin* Aina died and was succeeded, the activities remained the same up to the time of the *Olusin* Amuyunbole Ajai (Oba S. B. Aboyeji, personal communication, March 8, 2024).

According to some available records, *Olusin* Ajai Amuyunbole was either the second or fourth *Olusin* that reigned after the progenitor. It is recorded to have reigned between 1766 and 1790 (Dada, 1985: 8). Ajai's reign, (1766-1790) fell within the Nupe periods of incessant raids on Isinland. The Nupe invaded Isinland repeatedly between 1744 and 1795; and during one of such incursions, the Oke-Agbon palace was sacked, and the entire town razed. Citizens scampered for safety to escape captivity and enslavement by the Nupe invaders. Ajai managed to escape and hid himself in a forest but got lost. The escapees returned to the settlement to pack their belongings and flee (NAK ILOR PROF/NAC 3663C). Ajai was still missing after five days. His daughters, married to men at Ijara-Isin and Iji-Isin, became agitated and together with other princes and princesses summoned courage to visit the settlement in search of their father. However, some of the children took their time to scavenge for treasures in the ruins of the burnt palace. It was the concerned daughters, sons-in-law, and their families who eventually organised a search party that found the *Olusin* in the forest (Suit No: KWS/399/2015).

The rescue team took *Olusin* Ajai from the forest back to his elder daughter's abode at Oke-Enifon compound, Ijara-Isin, for proper care. When the unconcerned princes got to know about their sisters' efforts and care for their father, they came to Ijara-Isin, with the motive of taking Ajai back home. However, the *Olusin* displeased by the uncaring attitudes of the princes refused to go with them. *Olusin* Aja informed his careless children that they and their generations after them would not partake in the *Olusin* kingship again after his death. After persistent entreaties from the the people of Isinland, Ajai agreed to return to Oke-Agbon but with the vow kept. Before his return to his former palace, *Olusin* Ajai pronounced the conferment of the right of ascension to the

throne of *Olusin* to the generations of his two daughters after his death on a rotational basis. This was to start with his elder daughter and followed by his younger daughter, in appreciation of their bravery and care for him during his travails. Ajai also invoked a curse on an attempt to revert his proclamation (Suit No: KWS/399/2015).

The rotation of the kingship institution in Isinland began with Ijara-Isin, and its candidature of the *Olusin*, Oba Pakuna Alejokele in an unknown date. However, his authority was said to have extended to the various settlements in the entire lower and upper Isinland. The community chiefs were under his control as it was before the establishment of the rotational order (Suit No: KWS/399/2015). Pakuna's reign was short but peaceful, and was succeeded by *Olusin* Adesunloye from Iji-Isin. Adesunloye's period in office was neither recorded. He became the second *Olusin* in the rotational order and ruled from his newly established palace in Iji-Isin. Adesunloye was known to be a poet and was very popular. Much of his praise names (*oriki*) are still remembered and recited by the elders in Isinland today. His poems are said to be part of the Isin oral history today. Poetic eulogies about this monarch depicted him as bold, steadfast, effective, and self-effacing (L. Oyelowo, personal communication, March 22, 2024). When Adesunloye died, the stool went back to Oke-Agbon, where *Olusin* Atidimogun was crowned. *Olusin* Atidimogun reigned from 1796 to 1816 and his reign was faced by threats from the Nupe invaders. The incessancy of these invasions led the people to move to another site, Isanlu-Isin, some few kilometres away. Atidimogun had a personal army and was said to have been a slave merchant. His reign also saw the establishment of the Ilorin emirate rule over Isinland (A. J. Afolayan, personal communication, April 1, 2024). However, Isinland was never conquered by the Fulani Jihadists from Ilorin but was affected by the conquest of its neighbour, Omu (NAK ILOR PROF/NAC 3663C).

The rotational system continued with *Olusin* Jawaraniju Apoinbeletierin (1811-1836) from Ijara-Isin. His reign was marked by internal conflicts. He was succeeded by *Olusin* Apopolonipaesin I from Iji-Isin, who reigned for forty years, (1836-1876). Apopolonipaesin I's reign experienced external military attacks and the establishment of the Ilorin emirate rule over Isinland. He became a puppet king under the emirate. He was succeeded by *Olusin* Okandunmoye Agboluaje Lakanpo (1876-1906) from Isanlu-Isin, who became the first *Olusin* after the settlement at Isanlu-Isin. His reign was marked by the continuation of the emirate administration (NAK ILOR PROF/NAC 3663C). The rotational system faced a setback when *Olusin* Aniyunlogba Bankole succeeded Okandunmoye from the same Isanlu-Isin. Bankole's reign, (1906-1911) was marked by disobedience to tradition and the failure to follow the rotational system. His reign ended in chaos and civil war within Isinland. This period marked a turning point in the history of Isinland, leading to conflicts and instability. Despite this, the rotational system

continued, with subsequent rulers from Ijara-Isin and Iji-Isin (Suit No: KWS/399/2015)

The demise of Bankole in 1911 triggered a significant conflict in Isinland, disrupting the longstanding rotational kingship system. This period saw the breakdown of unity among the triumvirates and the eventual collapse of the traditional political system. The influence of external forces, including the Fulani conquest and British colonial administration, played a significant role in destabilising the traditional order. The introduction of a foreign judicial system and the appointment of village heads by the Ilorin emirate undermined the authority of the *Olusin* and traditional chiefs (NAK ILOR PROF/NAC 767^A 3.8 1912-14). In 1912, a judiciary council was established in Isanlu-Isin, further eroding the traditional governance. This council, comprising local leaders and agents of the Ilorin emirate, managed legal and administrative affairs, collected tributes and settled disputes. The imposition of foreign administrative structures and the manipulation of traditional systems by external powers significantly altered the political landscape of Isinland, leading to a period of turmoil and instability (Dada, 1985: 11-12). Despite these challenges, the resilience of Isinland's traditional institutions and the commitment to maintain peace eventually led to the restoration of order. When Bankole died in 1911, the Ijara-Isin ruling house was expected to provide the next candidate for the position of the *Olusin*. The ruling house however presented a priest of the *Sango* deity, the *Baale Sango*, as its candidate. However, his candidature was opposed by the Ijara-Isin community and other settlements within the lower Isinland (Suit No: KWS/399/2015).

In a bid to break the stalemate, the Ijara-Isin ruling house was asked to produce another candidate or prevail on the *Sango* priest to relinquish his priesthood and ascend the stool or forgo the throne and hold onto his *Sango* priesthood. However, the ruling house in Ijara-Isin insisted on the *Sango* priest occupying both the *Olusin* stool and the *Sango* priesthood simultaneously. This position was against the point of view of the majority of Ijara-Isin and the entire lower Isinland citizens. In view of the fact that a *Sango* priest could not be crowned as an *Olusin* and since the ruling house in Ijara-Isin could not provide an alternative candidate, it suggested that the ruling house was not interested in the throne. Subsequently, the Ijara-Isin ruling house announced its apathy for the stool and expressed its readiness to return the stool to Isanlu-Isin for their exclusive occupation and control (Suit No: KWS/366/2015). The decision by the ruling house of Ijara-Isin infuriated other citizens of the town as well as those of Iji-Isin, and other members of communities within the lower Isinland. Consequently, the Isanlu-Isin community decided to break away from the age-old tradition and established a separate *Olusin* stool (Suit No: KWS/366/2015).

S/N	Name of Olusin	Compound	Town	Date
1	AjaiAmuyunbole (The founder of Rotational Order)	-	Isanlu-Isin (Oke-Agbon)	Unknown
2	PakunaAlejolokele	Oke-Enifon (now Ile-Olusin)	Ijara-Isin	Unknown
3	AdesunloyeAwonnibiagbon Gidigidiakoko	Ile-Loke (Now Ile-Olusin)	Iji-Isin	Unknown
4	Atidimogun	-	Isanlu-Isin (Oke-Agbon)	1790-1811
5	JawaranijuAponbeleterin	Oke-Enifon (now Ile-Olusin)	Ijara-Isin	1811-1836
6	Apopolonipaesin I	Isale-Ode (Now Ile-Oba)	Iji-Isin	1836-1906
7	OlakanpoAgboluaje	-	Isanlu-Isin (New Site)	1876-1906
8	AniyunlogbaBankole	-	Isanlu-Isin (New Site)	1906-1911

Table 1: Showing the list of *Olusin* of in the rotational order from inception to 1911.

Source: NAK ILOR PROF/NAC 3663C ‘Omu/Isanlu Succession District Head and Village, Area Heads.’

The breaking of the established tradition by Isanlu-Isin resulted in Ijara-Isin and Iji-Isin continuing with the rotational order. Citizens of settlements within the lower Isin regarded the Ijara-Isin ruling house’s decision to return the stool of the *Olusin* to Isanlu-Isin as an act of betrayal. This led to the ruling house for being banned from ascending the throne of the *Olusin* by the entire Ijara-Isin and other communities in the lower Isin with a curse placed (Suit No: KWS/366/2015). Given that the Ile-Olusin ruling house shared full percentage with other existing sister compounds in Ijara-Isin, Odo-Ijara, and Okegunsin, they were recognised through Yoruba tradition and customary practices. The common paternal and fraternal rights among children of the same parentage were subsequently applied in treating both Odo-Ijara and Okegunsin compounds as equal with the Ile-Olusin ruling house. This allowed them to enjoy the right of ascension to the throne and the stool of the *Olusin*. Therefore, Odo-Ijara and Okegunsin were presented as a solution to the ban placed on the other ruling house, leading to the emergence of two new ruling houses in Ijara-Isin in 1911 (Suit No: KWS/366/2015).

The dispute over disruption in the age-long traditional rotational order of the *Olusin* stool devastated the whole of Isinland so much so that the colonial authority had to intervene. The Resident Officer, Dawyer, intervened and settled the dispute by separating the existing four sub-districts and appointing one Adebayo as the *Olusin* of Isanlu-Isin. The staff of office of the 5th grade, which had been given to *Olusin* Bankole (1906-1911), was recalled by the Ilorin emirate (Suit No: KWS/366/2015). Another rotational order between Ijara-Isin and its sister community, Iji-Isin subsequently began by 1911. Consequently, *Olusin* Awolowo Banigbe ascended the throne as the first *Olusin* for the rump of both Iji-Isin and Ijara-Isin by 1911 (Dada, 1985: 11-12). Upon the enthronement of Banigbe, Ile-Olusin, the royal house in Ijara-Isin continued agitating and causing violence throughout the land, leading to destruction of lives and properties in Isinland. The situation was so tense that the native authority reported the situation to the governing body, and the Emir of Ilorin intervened, the Emir directed that Isanlu-Isin should continue with its own stool while Ijara-Isin and Iji-Isin should continue with their newly jointly established stool (Suit No: KWS/366/2015).

Following the breakaway of Isanlu-Isin from the tripartite arrangement in 1911, the two other sister communities of Iji-Isin and Ijara-Isin solidified their mutual agreement to continue to rotate the *Olusin* stool between them. The first joint-*Olusin* for them emerged from Ijara-Isin, with *Olusin* Awolowo Banigbe as the king. The unbroken rotational agreement between the two communities continued until 2010 (Dada, 1985: 8-9). Despite occasional chieftaincy tussles, the rotational system of the *Olusin* kingship institution between them was very peaceful for ninety-nine until it ended amicably in 2010. The main reason for an agreement to establish separate stools for the two towns was to seek for better development for the two communities similar to their neighbouring communities (Oba S. B. Aboyeji, personal communication, March 8, 2024).

S/N	Name of <i>Olusin</i>	Town	Date
1	<i>Olusin</i> Awolowo Banigbe (Atobatele Oyebimpe I)	Ijara-Isin	1911 – 1918
2	<i>Olusin</i> Ayinla	Iji-Isin	1918 – 1921
3	<i>Olusin</i> Awoyinka	Ijara-Isin	1922 – 1940
4	<i>Olusin</i> Aworinde	Iji-Isin	1941 – 1946
5	<i>Olusin</i> Yusuf Madandola	Ijara-Isin	1947 – 1966
6	<i>Olusin</i> Olayioye Omiyale (Apopolo II)	Iji-Isin	1967 – 1992
7	<i>Olusin</i> Omoniyi Banigbe (Atobatele Oyebimpe II)	Ijara-Isin	1993 -2010

Table 2: Showing the list of *Olusin* of Ijara-Isin/Iji-Isin in the rotational order from 1911- 2010.

Source: Compiled by the researcher.

Conclusion

The foregoing has interrogated the evolution of kingship institution in Isinland in Kwara State of Nigeria. It detailed major events and transitions that shaped the traditional political history of Isinland. It is a study of the role of kingship as a unifying force, fostering cooperation and mutual understanding among three sister communities. Despite the challenges faced such as occasional succession disputes and external political and economic influences like Ilorin Emirate system, the British colonialism and modern economic systems, the kingship institution had played a pivotal role in maintaining the cultural identity and historical continuity of the communities studied. In spite external pressures, the institution navigated its way through the challenges and preserved its traditional authority while embracing changes that ensured its relevance in contemporary society.

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