

**SACRED ADE-ILEKE ISENBAYE-NLA ONIRORO: ANALYSIS OF ONA CREATIVITY TO EMBELLISH YORUBA HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND SYMBOLS**

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**Abstract**

*Ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* (big ancient conical beaded crown with veil) is a product of *Ona* creativity. It remains an important and valued artistic object designed for the Yoruba *Oba* (king), the royal palace and the community. It is a sacred object of kingship from the ancient time till date. Unfortunately, the value accorded *ade-ileke* (beaded crown) among contemporary Yoruba people and artists is gradually declining as a result of assimilated foreign artistic concepts and influences. However, the contemporary *Ona* artists who formed *Onaism* as a movement give high recognition to *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro*, not only as a product of informal training but as an important object that bears meaningful images, signs and symbols embodying Yoruba history, philosophy, culture and world view. This paper in analysis engages the Theory of Iconology, popularised by Panofsky in 1932 which provides meaning to icons at three levels of meaning. It identifies *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* as a product of *Ona*. It further projects the importance of *ileke* (beads) within the Yoruba world view as well as identifies and discusses some of the iconic representations on *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin and Arandun; the three historically connected towns located in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State to project *ade-ileke* as an art object that records Yoruba history, philosophy and world view. It recommends that beadmaking be included in the curriculum of visual arts, youths be encouraged to participate in cultural activities as well as recognise and respect *ade-ileke* a living heritage of the Yoruba royal institution,

**Keywords:** *Ade-ileke isenbaye nla oniroro, Onaism, Icons*

**Introduction**

*Ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* (huge conical beaded crown with veil) which Drewal (1998, p. 201) tagged *adenla* is a sacred Yoruba royal artistic headwear purposely designed to adorn the head of the king. It serves as an object of identity and a representation of the attribute of the sacred Kingship (Adediran 1998, p. 9; Poynor, 2008, p. 239) *Ade-ileke* (beaded crown), which represents a symbol of unity, leadership and political authority is made up of *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* and *ade-ileke kekere* (small beaded crown) also named *orikogbofo* (coronet) (Drewal 1998, p. 201). These two types of *ade-ileke* are symbolic of the hierarchies of the Yoruba *Oba* (Kings) and are regarded as the most prominent and valued of the different Yoruba *ade* (crown) (Abiodun, 1994, p. 77; Afolayan, 1998, p. 20).

*Ade-ileke* is a product of *Ona* creativity. *Ona*, according to Babayemi (1992: p.1) is a Yoruba word meaning art. *Ise-ona* (work of art) is significant as a means of representing and preserving aspects of Yoruba culture, especially from Yoruba worldview, history, philosophy, religion, economy and social activities. *Ade-ileke* remains an ever-living art object, which from the ancient Yoruba society up to the modern and contemporary times, expresses the history, philosophies and cultural life of Yoruba kingdoms and communities.

The invention of *ade-ileke* according to Yoruba mythology dates back to the time of Oduduwa the acclaimed progenitor of the Yoruba race. The commissioning and use of *ade-ileke* by the *Oba* (king) continue to the contemporary time. Beier (1981, p. 35) captures the art of crown making among Yoruba *asindemade* (beaded crown makers), arguing out that commissioning and production of *ade-ileke* would not undergo the danger of extinction, in as much as the tradition of Yoruba kingship exists. Beier (1981, p. 35) posited that the *Oba* would always add to his *ade-ileke* and other beaded royal treasures as desired.

Meanwhile, *Ona* is expressed in different forms; visual and non-visual, images, signs and symbols. *Ona* is visually rendered in different artistic expressions. Also, *Ona* is not restricted to visual arts imagery such as in wood carving, pottery, metal works (blacksmithing, goldsmithing, brass and copper casting), body marking, cloth weaving and cloth dyeing, sewing/tailoring and embroidery alone. It is also found in bead and beaded crown making as well as in dance, songs and singing, making of drums and drumming as well as poetry that characterizes the Yoruba cultural cycle. Interestingly, the visual and non-visual artists are known by names associated with *Ona*. Such names include *Gbenagbena* (wood carver), *Onisona* (craft worker), *Olonade* (maker of art), *Onawumi* (One who likes art) among others. Other practitioners in the field of traditional arts and crafts such as weavers, calabash decorators, potters, blacksmithing, and basket weavers among others, are said to have *ojuona* (artistic eyes) (Babayemi, 1992: p. 1). The implication, therefore, is that Yoruba artists are well known in *Ona*, which is not just “art for art’s sake” but expressions of Yoruba philosophies, concept and ideas filled with meanings rooted in social, political, religious and other aspects of Yoruba cultural beliefs.

*Onaism*, is a Yoruba modern art movement founded by five graduates of the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo) in 1989 at Ondo. The pioneering artists as noticed by Azeez (2007, p. 82) include Kunle Filani, Moyo Okediji, Tola Wewe, Bolaji Campbell, and Tunde Nasiru who were later joined by other artists such as Moyo Ogundipe, Tayo Ojomo, Don Akatakpo and Idowu Otun among others. *Onaism* agreed to deliberately project Yoruba traditional icons, signs and symbols in history, philosophy, and beliefs, this has now been synthesized in modern and contemporary artistic renditions. It is a movement that explores the decorative motifs, ornaments, patterns and designs peculiar to the rich Yoruba culture as posited by Azeez (2007). Adeyemi (2007, p 112) buttresses that *Onaism* engages Yoruba concepts of design and aesthetics in contemporary Nigerian art manipulation. *Onaism* can therefore be described as a projecting and synergizing movement infusing ancient traditional images, signs and symbols into modern artistic forms of expression such as Painting, sculptures, ceramics, textile and graphic designs.

Many Yoruba history and philosophies are connected through, songs, dance, drumming, and their poetry are expressed through *Ona* in the form of icons, images, signs and symbols. The representations of which cut across many traditional art and craft expressions. Emphasis on the representation and use of traditional icons, signs and symbols are evident in contemporary Nigerian artistic expressions. Unfortunately, Yoruba artists are gradually declining as a result of assimilated foreign artistic concepts and influences. It is worth noting today that many young Yoruba artists could not understand or articulate the complexity of the sophisticated concepts and philosophies underlying the Yoruba worldview of arts in terms of its creativity, aesthetics, and functions (Abiodun, Drewal, Pemberton 1991: 8) which are emphasized and symbolically represented through icons, images, signs and symbols expressed through different forms of Yoruba art.

Modern and contemporary artistic training especially at the four walls of formal education did not emphasized the study of bead-making that serves kingship, traditional cults, groups, individuals and societies as an area of specialization. Creation of synergy between educational institutions impacting art education and families of traditional crown makers which would enhance the documentation of processes and products of the art of bead making and its symbolism in the global world of art that has been neglected.

This paper therefore aims to identifying and analyzing selected images, signs and symbols of *Ona* expressed on *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* to project *ade-ileke* as an instrument of recording, emphasizing and projecting Yoruba history, philosophies, politics and worldview.

This paper is significant to the younger generation of Yoruba people who are not familiar with the history and relevance of *Ona* (artistic embellishments and processes) as a movement and its iconographic representations on traditional *ade-ileke isenbaye* (ancient beaded crown) within the purview of their significance to the cultural values of the Yoruba. It is also significant to the *Oba* and his subject, the historians and the academic community as it projects the Yoruba culture that is gradually and stylishly declining as a result of the acceptance and assimilation of foreign cultural values at the detriments of the Yoruba history, philosophy, religion, economic and cosmological world view.

### **Theoretical Frame Work**

This paper is based on the Theory of Iconology, popularised by Panofsky in 1932 which provides meaning to icons at three levels; primary or natural subject matter, secondary or conventional subject matter as well as intrinsic meaning or content (Panofsky 1972, pp.7, 8). At the primary level, the theory emphasizes formal analysis of images signs and symbols beyond their facial values. Elements of art such as line, shape, colour, texture and volume employed as tools

for representing objects are analyzed at the primary level. The secondary level of meaning refers to the motifs used at the primary level as images, stories and allegories associated with themes and concepts of icons with associated literary sources emphasized. The third level of meaning emphasizes intrinsic meaning of icons in the mind of people which are not documented. The second and the third levels of meaning of iconology are important to this study because they are precursor to the areas under investigation.

#### ***Ade-ileke Isenbaye-nla Oniroro: A Product of Ona***

The process of making *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* as a product of *Ona* is painstaking. Drewal (1998, p. 64) emphasizes that the making of *ade-ileke* is slow, tedious and figuratively requires heavy work that could last up to six months. The process of making *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* requires patience (*suru*), attentiveness (*ifetisile*) and finesse (*finfin*) in the setting of the beads. The rigour can be likened to the *Ona processes* in wood carving. Drewal (1998, p. 64) points out that beading is a medium of expression for cool and well-composed specialists like *Olokun* (goddess of the sea, source of wealth, and provider of the glass and coral beads); the patron of bead makers and artists. Other deities involved in making *ade* based on the material used include *ogun*, *obalufon* and *obaluaye* (Drewal, 1998: 54). Drewal reasoned further that, bead artists are masters of physical and metaphysical experiences by medium.

The making of *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* takes considerable time. It starts with the construction of a frame with silt palm reeds covered with layers of woven fabrics stiffened and secured with corn starch paste (*agidi* or *eko*). The inner part is laid with white cloth and sun dried while the eyes of the frontal face and other important features on *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* are built in relief using cloth, starch and beads (Beier 1981: 34). White cloth used denotes the colour of the beginning of life or existence, rebirth, purity, newness and renewal liken to shining stars and rebirth of the human soul to perform a different destiny as well as a representation of concealed powers of mothers (witches) (Drewal 1998, pp. 64, 201; Campbell 2008, pp. 46, 47). Rituals before sewing of beads include prayers offered to *ogun*, the god of iron and patron of users of needles, and offering of gifts such as snail fluid for composure and tortoise for wisdom in carrying out the job which Drewal (1998, p. 64) describes as made through “knowledge techniques and materials”.

#### ***Ileke (Beads) and their Importance***

The importance of *ileke* goes beyond its aesthetic significance in dressing and fashion, but its functional purposes are more visible in Yoruba political expressions, especially in the hierarchies of Yoruba *Oba* and other royal and palace significance. The privilege of using *ileke* and objects made of *ileke* is also significant among representatives of the gods such as kings, priests, diviners and native doctors (Lyndersay, 2011 p. 316). Others include chiefs, individuals (ordinary or wealthy) as well as social groups who embrace the products of *asinde* (bead makers). Decorative artistic expressions on the sculptures of Ile-Ife and Esie are reflections of the importance of *ileke* in ancient Yoruba culture (Fagg 1980, pp. 9, 10).

*Ileke*, either local or foreign, traditional or modern, small or big come in colours that are significant in Yoruba culture and worldview. *Ileke*, produced in different types, sizes, shapes, colours and purposes are classified by name in Yoruba land as captured in Drewal (1998, pp. 17, 39, 47, 48). Such names of beads include *iyun* (coral bead), *okun* (red stone bead) (p. 17), *akori* which Drewal (p. 39) described as elusive, expensive and rare *Segi* (blue/black glass bead) (p. 17), *sese funfun* (white variety), *bebe* and *lagidigba* (p. 17).

Drewal (1998) describes the colour of *ileke* to light as reflecting, transmitting and transforming (17). He emphasizes that the three chromatic groupings of the colour of *ileke* are (*funfun* (white), *pupa* (red) and *dudu* (black)). These colours in the Yoruba cosmos are significant in understanding Yoruba art as they define and reveal the nature, character, or personality of things, persons and divinities (pp.18 & 20). Lyndersay (2011, p. 313) in agreement posits that the three Chromatic groupings are associated with tradition, symbolism and temperament.

Okediji in Campbell (2008, p. 43) summarizes the hybridization of colour according to key English terms that exist today. For example, green is referred to as *girini*, blue is *buluu* and red is *redi*. However, Campbell explains that despite the new development, his research conducted in 1993 proves that, the tri-colour categorization of the Yoruba still holds. Campbell (2008, p. 43) points out that *pupa* (red) stands for *orisa gbigbona* (temperamental *orisa*) known as *awo pupa*, and is represented in bright colours. *Dudu* stands for *orisa liloworo* (“moderately warm and wild-mannered *orisa*”) and is referred to as *awo dudu*, which are represented in tones of dark colours. While *funfun* stands for *orisa tutu* (cool and contemplative *orisa*) called *awo funfun* and portrayed in tints of white (Campbell 2008, p. 43). For example, white stands for *Obatala* (deity of infinite patience and calm), red for *Sango* (deity of thunder), yellow

for *Osun* (deity of Osun River), blue for *Iyemoja* (mother of waters), white with red stripes for *Orisa-oko* (deity of farms) as identified by Oyelola (2010, p.106).

Lyndersay (2011, pp 213, 216) paints that beyond the aesthetic level, the underlying nature and character of the wearer of colours either in objects made of *Ileke* or dyed items are revealed. For example, Lyndersay (2011, p. 316) records that red and orange in the category of *pupa* are linked with aggressiveness, blood and war, while cool greens, blue colours and black are mediating, as highlights of white, silver or pale grey are associated with age and wisdom (p. 316). In all, many colours of *Ileke* as expressed on *ade-ileke* in Yoruba culture are indicative of the *oba* as the father of all in his community, and giving insight into the nature of individuals that uses them as well as linking them with the deities using them as a means of identity

**Symbolic Representations on *Ade-ileke Isenbaye-nla Oniroro* of Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin and Arandun**

Images, signs and symbols are significant *ona* (designs) represented on *ade-ileke isengaye-nla oniroro*. These *Ona* convey significant meaning in Yoruba royal and community cultural beliefs that are embedded in history, philosophy and worldview. Some of the *Ona* representations are noticed on the selected *ade-ileke* of Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin and Arandun. These towns are communities of the Igbomina group of Yoruba. They are located in Kwara State and Osun State of Nigeria that fall to north eastern part of Yoruba land. *Ona* in the form of images signs and symbols as represented on the selected *ade-ileke nla* could be classified under realistic and abstracted representations that take the form of zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, vegetal and basic design representations.



Plate 1. *Ade-ileke Isenbaye-nla Oniroro Olomu* of Omu-Aran  
Source: The researcher, August 2023



Plate 2. *Ade-ileke Isenbaye-nla Oniroro Olomu Alaran* of Aran-Orin  
Source: The Researcher, August 2023



Plate 3. *Ade-ildke Isenbaye-nla Oniroro*, Alaran of Arandun  
Source: The researcher, August 2023

Under the zoomorphic representations are depiction of buffalo and birds, human face as a feature of anthropomorphic representations, the floral design represents vegetal while the basic designs such as lines include vertical, horizontal

and zigzag lines. Identified shapes include oval shapes, circles, triangles, and diamonds, among other shapes. For this paper; only birds, animal figures, human faces, veils and colours will be analysed.

### **Zoomorphic Representation as Ona on *Ade-ileke Isenbaye-nla Oniroro* Representation of Bird and Animal Figures**

**Birds** (Plates 1, 2 &3): Some animals according to Olusola (2005, p. 157) are divine just like humans who are revered and honoured. They are regarded as sacred; neither can some of them be killed nor eaten. Bird expressed on *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* is significant in Yoruba worldview and philosophy. Bird is one of the major characteristic features of beaded crowns of Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin and Arandun and some notable towns in Igbominaland.

Thompson in Beier (1981, p. 26) espouses that more of the interpretation of bird symbolism on beaded crown rests on conjecture because the precise meaning of the bird has not been given by any Yoruba king consulted. Thompson according to Beier (1981, p 26) argues that beyond royalty, the bird could symbolize a witchcraft instrument of attack, pecking at the temple of their victim, but are dominated by the royal bird which looks down on them. Among the Yoruba, the bird is symbolic of the mystical power of the women's fold which could be positive or negative (Drewal 1998, p. 202). The mother bird at the apex of the crown is believed to guard the substances planted at the apex of the coned crown on which the mother bird is mounted. These three *Oba*, *Olomu* of Omu-Aran, *Alaran* of Aran Orin and *Alaran* of Arandun confirmed the presence of such substance in their crowns. They maintained that it is taboo for any *Oba* to look into the inner part of *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* pointing out that the consequence of such is death. Drewal (1998, p. 202) emphasizes that the substance can protect the rightful wearer or destroy the person who wears the crown unlawfully. Beier (1981, p. 26) believes that the *Oba* could be blinded if he looks inside the crown. Drewal (1998, p. 202) maintains that the *Oba* rules with the support of *awon iya* (the mothers/witches represented as birds) whose role include "controlling, placing, protecting and sacrificing" to the crown. According to Lawal (2012, p.14), the bird recalls the mystical creation of land on which Oduduwa established Ile-Ife to mediate between heaven and the earth, while the mystical power (*ase*) enclosed in a calabash given to the first female enabled procreation and capacity to turn to a bird at night and do good or evil, a power believed to be manipulatable by the king for the good of all as explained by Lawal (2012, p.14). The *Oba* as expressed by Beier (1981, p. 28), is a healer, who is familiar with the power of destruction and could control the power of the witches. The *Olomu* of Omu-aran also explained that the bird flies in the air and that the opportunity is limitless. He maintains that the *Oba* operates in a limitless space in which one *Oba* does not disturb the other.

### **Animal Figure**

Animal plays a significant role in Yoruba proverbs, philosophies and worldviews. Some animals are associated with man while some are associated with spirits. Olushola (2005, p. 164) buttresses that, the relationship between Yoruba hunters and animals is "deep, complex and mysterious."

Some of the animals associated with royalty in Yoruba land include *ekun* (lion), *amotekun* (leopard), *okin* (peacock), *erin* (elephant), *esin* (horse) and *efon* (buffalo).

The main *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* commissioned by the present Olomu of Omu-Aran, His Royal Majesty, Oba AbdulRaheem Adeoti Akolade Agboluaaje exhibits the form of *efon* (buffalo) expressed in two dimensions (plate 1). The shape of the animal is formed with lines and represented at regular intervals round the crown as part of its embellishments. *Efon*, emphasized by Olushola (2005, p. 162) is powerful and heroic in character. The *oriki* (eulogy) of *efon* which Olushola recalls, praises the animal as one that bleats as if it wants to rain and one that pursues one until refuge is taken on the tree. The *efon* is relevant to the lineage of *Olomu Efon* and not to the entire Omu-Aran as pointed out by *Olomu*. The history of *efon* according to *Olomu* is traced to his father who ruled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Anthropomorphic Representation of Ona on *Ade-ileke Isenbaye-nla Oniroro* Humam Face**

*Ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of Aran-Orin and Arandun (plates 2&3) like any other Yoruba conical beaded crown is embellished with abstracted representations of human faces. Face representation according to Lawal (2012, p. 14) is a typical face, frequently associated with Oduduwa whom Drewal (1998, p. 202) pin-pointedly acclaimed as the first to wear *ade-ileke* in Yoruba land. The face expressed on *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* as explained by Lawal (2012, p. 14) indicates the continuity of office of the *oba* and as the all-seeing, an interpretation of pair of eyes on each of the faces. The faces on the *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of Aran-Orin and Arandun are expressed round the crowns in an orderly arrangement, in varied sizes with bigger ones down at the lower part and the smaller ones at the upper part of the conical crown. The three vertical lines below the eye on each human face takes the design of "pele,"

a type of tribal mark associated with the Igbomina people. Drewal recalls that the faces are reverend as *ejjogbe* in Okuku the divination sign of Okuku (Drewal, 1998 p. 202).

### Representational Veil

*Ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* is characterized by vertical chains of beads, known as veil that runs from the base or fringes of the crown down. It is designed to cover the face of the *Oba*. The *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of Omuraran, Aran-Orin and Arandun(plates 1, 2 & 3) bear this type of veil which is called “*roro*” in the three palaces. The term *roro* informs the name given to the crown of the three communities known as *ade-oniroro*. Drewal (1998, p. 202) explains that looking directly at the eyes of an *Oba* when he wears a crown is a taboo. This taboo is also confirmed by Omolewu (2017, p. 452). The veil conceals the face of the *Oba* thereby making him more spiritual, protected, shielded and transformed into the level of the gods.

### Basic Design of *Ona* on *Ade-ileke Isenbaye-nla Oniroro*

#### Lines

A line is an element of art used as embellishment. It is a tool for expressing designs on *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* (plates 2&3). Line according to Ocvirketal (2006, p. 74) performs expression of value and texture. The beads arranged in lines depict interesting textures that add value to the crowns. The feelings of the crown maker and the *Oba* who commissioned the work are often expressed through the expressive use of lines. The beads are usually arranged in lineal order that showcases different types of forms and designs as executed by the bead artist in line with the desire of the *Oba* who commissioned it.

Vertical lines: Different types of lines have been used as sign or symbols on the *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of the three communities. Three short vertical lines (plate 4) are skillfully arranged and expressed on the abstracted two-dimensional human faces designed on the surface of the crown. The lines are indicative of one of the tribal marks of Igbomina people named “*pele*” which some interviewees such as Elder Owolabi, a native of Aran-Orin suggest that, it could be marks on the face of Oduduwa or some other great ancestors.



Plate 4. Vertical lines

Zigzag lines (plate 5): This is another type of line that characterizes the face on the *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of Aran-Orin (plate 2) and Arandun (plate 3). It is a motif often used on Yoruba crowns. Beier (1981, p. 28) espouses that either in short zigzag or in full one, such as the one that appears like entwined snake which Beier (1981, p. 30) posits that some Yoruba people interpret as abstraction of intertwined snakes biting each other tails. The zigzag is referred as interlace pattern. It appears frequently on many *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* and other Yoruba art, and more importantly its appearance on most sacred objects such as on some items of *Sango* and *Oya* who belongs to the royal personages as well as on beaded bags of diviners among others (Beier, 1981, p. 28; Drewal 1998, p. 202). It is symbolic in interpretation as an entwined snake. According to Drewal, it suggests the competing powers of this world and other worlds and epitomises both tension and resolution of conflicts, the continuity and balance of existence in the realm of heaven and earth. He maintains that the acceptance of interlace whose origin is traced to the Hausa, finds solace and “encapsulation in the fundamental Yoruba philosophical concepts about the cosmos, forces within it and the mediating position of the sacred rulers”. Beier (1981, p. 28) posits that interlace is clearly associated with royalty, or leadership with emphasis that each king is a part of unending eternal royal beings.



Plate 5. Zigzag lines

### Colour

Another element of art on *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin and Arandun is the use of colourful beads (plates 1, 2 & 3). Colour as a symbol is loaded with meanings. Each colour of *ileke* on the crown relates to each other as they create a mood or elicit an emotional response which may change when it relates harmoniously with others (Ocvirk 2006, p. 152). Ocvirketal (2006, p. 168) argues further that an understanding of the use of Colour is critical to their meaning. Beads on their own carry colours that symbolize the characteristics of deities which the *Oba* is inseparable from. *Obatala* bears white colour, red for *Sango*, yellow for *Osun*, blue stands for *Iyemoja*, while, white with stripes of red stands for *Orisa-Oko*. The strands of beads normally distinguish worshippers of different *orisa* (Beier, 1981, p. 31).

*Ade-isenbaye-nla oniroro* and *ade-odunibile* of *Olomu* of Omu-Aran, *Alaran* of Aran-Orin and *Alaran* of Arandun bears varieties of coloured beads (plates 1, 2 & 3). The colours include white, brown, blue, red, yellow, black, and green among others. These colours are symbolic of Yoruba beliefs, and philosophical worldviews. Beier (1981, p. 31) buttresses that Yoruba crowns are brilliantly colourful, pointing out that the presence of all colours on Yoruba crowns indicates that the different cult groups are united in the person of the *Oba*. More still, all tendencies and group activities are interwoven and interlaced to express unity and oneness of all in the community, as exhibited on the crowns.

### Findings and Recommendation

*Ade-ileke* which Drewal (1998, p. 207) referred as *adenla* (conical beaded crown with veil) is known as *ade-ileke isenbaye nla oniroro* in Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin and Arandun. The *efon* (buffalo) symbol on the *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* did not only take after *Olomu* Agboluaje but recalls his history and contributions to Omu-Aran community. Owing to the efficacy of the *ade-ileke nle oniroro* of the three towns Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin and Arandun when in use, kolanuts must be broken in propitiation of that *ade-ileke* as the *Oba* walks. The three vertical lines on the abstracted facial representation is associated with the Pele tribal marks of the area. It corroborates the scholarly position holding to continuity in the culture of *ade-ileke* and *Oba* among the Yoruba, the use of beads and bead making artists cannot seize. All put together exposes the creativity embedded in *Ona* and the ingenuity of the *asindemade* (beaded crown maker) in representation and conveying of history, philosophy and world view in iconic representation on the sacred *ade-ileke*.

It is recommended that the royal use of *ade-ileke* must be recognized and respected as an important aspect of Yoruba culture that projects and advance the position of *Oba* and the community. Bead making should be introduced in to the visual arts curriculum of the three levels of learning in the country. The youth should recognize and participate in festivals to increase the almost fading knowledge of the cultural life and believes of the Yoruba community.

### Conclusion

*Ona*, a popular Yoruba word that refers to art and creativity played critical roles in the making of *ade-ikeke isenbaye-nla oniroro* which is an embodiment of images signs and symbols purposely designed and embellished on *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro*; a significant and more valued sacred object used in the *Oba*'s palace. The process of production commences with the commissioning of the *ade* to the *asindemade* who practice without learning the art from in the four walls of the formal academic community but from a master artist who produces creative works in *ileke*. Based on the theory of Iconology, the researcher points out the importance of *ileke* with an emphasis that colourful *ileke* bears significant meanings on the *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of Omu-Aran, Aran-Orin and Arandun, while the images, signs and symbols embellished on the *ade-ileke isenbaye-nla oniroro* of the three communities are carriers of

meanings that are peculiar to Yoruba, history, philosophy and worldview. It finally projects its findings and recommendations.

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