

RITUAL OBJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH
THE WORSHIP OF SHANGO AMONG THE YORUBA

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It is my intention to present, in the course of this paper, an examination of selected ritual objects utilized by the Yoruba in the worship of the thunder deity Shango. These objects will be individually described with respect to their use and function in the ritual activities associated with Shango as well as in terms of their physical appearance. A discussion of the objects as artistic representations and/or reflections of the mythological, legendary, and historical data pertaining to Shango himself will also be included, with various examples from oral tradition relating to the symbolic nature and stylistic characteristics of Shango ritual objects.

Shango as an Historical Figure

According to Yoruba mythology, some orisha were spirits of divine origin. Others were deified men. Still others were spirits representing natural forces, such as animals and trees. Shango belongs to the group of orisha who were at one time living men. There are numerous legends about the earthly life of Shango. In order to better understand the powers and functions associated with the cult which worships him as a deity, one must also examine the nature of his life on earth.

Three sources give varying versions of the legend of the Alafin Shango. Each will be given in its entirety within the course of this section.

I. Oramiyan, founder of Oyo, son or grandson of Oduduwa, and direct ancestor of the present Alafin who is forty-third in line of succession, was succeeded by his son, Ajaka, who was so mild a ruler that the provincial kings encroached on his lands, and the people dethroned him. His successor, Shango, is one of the most glamorous figures in Yoruba tradition. He brought ruin on himself and his family by playing with magic. At the time of Shango's reign the supremacy of Oyo was by no means recognized by the other Yoruba kings, particularly the Olowu of Owu, and it was Shango who apparently subjugated this important monarch. Shango's downfall came through his fascination with magic. One day, so the story goes, he used a preparation to summon lightning, and thereby destroyed his own house and most of his wives and children. Either because of discontent among the people about his dangerous interferences with the forces of magic, or because of his desolation at the loss of his family, he hanged himself. He was then deified as the God of Thunder and Lightning, and today is recognized as one of the most important gods, with followers all over Yorubaland.¹

II. There are various mythical stories about Shango, all more or less unreliable; but that he was an historical personage is clearly established. The facts as generally accepted, and given as history in Iwe Kika Ekerin, the Yoruba Fourth Reader, used in the upper forms of all the elementary schools, are to the following effect:

About two centuries ago (?) there reigned as King in the old town of Oyo (known to early explorers as Eyeo, of Katunga), which was situated near

the south bank of the river Niger, to the north of the Yoruba country, one Shango, who was a powerful and wise monarch. He was a great medicine man, or witch-doctor, and claimed to be able to kill people by ejecting fire from his mouth. His reign was tyrannical and cruel. He had two chief ministers of whom he was jealous, and set these to fight against each other, hoping both might be slain; but he was himself deposed by the one who came off victor in the fight. Shango fled, accompanied by his three wives, Oya, Oshun, and Oba, and some of his most loyal followers. He wandered in the bush, being gradually deserted by all, until only his favourite wife, Oya, remained. Then in despair, Shango hung himself from an ayan tree. Oya fled north and became presiding goddess of the river Niger. Travellers who had seen the body of Shango hanging from a tree entered the town and reported "Oba so," i.e. "the King has hanged himself." This report spread throughout the town. The friends of Shango were so incensed that they determined to avenge their deceased monarch. They took a number of small calabashes, or hollow gourds, and filled them with gunpowder. They then covered them with cocoanut fibre and put slow matches to them, and waited for the next tornado. When this came, they ignited the bombs and threw them into the thatched roofs of many houses. The resultant explosions and fires caused the panic-stricken people to cry out, "Why are all our houses burning?" The friends of Shango then came forward, saying, "Oh, you said Oba so" ("the King has hanged himself") -- "Oba ko so!" ("the King has not hanged himself"). "He is angry with you for this. He has become a god and has gone up into heaven and sent down the lightning to punish you. You must bring out oxen, sheep, fowls, palm-oil, etc., and offer sacrifices to him, and henceforth worship him, and then he will forgive you." Thus they established the worship due him as an orisha.^c

III. Šango was the name of an historical figure, one who was indisputably a man among men. Samuel Johnson in The History of the Yorubas tells us that he was the fourth Alāfin of Oyo. He was a man, quite distinct from the divinities who are "of the heavens." The interesting story of his apotheosis can only be reconstructed from various legendary versions. He was a strong man; a powerful hunter; both of which mean primarily that he was versed in various magical arts. But he was also self-willed, cruel and tyrannical, and passionately devoted to carnage. As king of Oyo, he ruled with a rod of iron and sought to keep everybody under his thumb. In the end, however, people became tired of his tyranny: his authority was challenged and his purpose thwarted by two of his courtiers. When these two courtiers were becoming too much for him, he craftily set them one against the other and one of them was killed as a result. But the surviving one set after him, and the only way left for him to "play the man" was to commit suicide. This he did by hanging himself on an àyan tree. His opponents then taunted his followers that their king had hanged himself. This led his followers to seek the means of saving their faces: they went to Ibàrība and procured some preparation by which lightning could be attracted. They set to work with this, with the result that lightning became frequent in and around Oyo: the compounds and houses were often in conflagrations, and there were losses of lives and property. People became panic-stricken and so were prepared for the next move by the followers of Šango who then came out with the story that Šango did not hang himself; he only ascended to heaven; the lightning and the resulting calamities were the vengeance which Šango sent upon those who slandered him by saying that he had hanged himself; let all from now confess that Šango did not hang himself and worship him; the article of faith to be repeated henceforth should be "Oba kb so -- The king did not hang himself." Thus began the worship of Šango and Oyo. It

began with this act of confession and submission, and the payment by the enemies of propitiatory fines in the form of oxen, rams, sheep, fowls, kola-nuts, and palm-oil. Then a shrine, and later on a temple, came into being for his worship on the traditional spot where he was said to have hanged himself, which was renamed Kòso ("He-did-not-hang"). From there his cult spread all over Yorubaland.

The story as reconstructed above will not be acceptable to the priestly house of Kòso in Ọyọ. There the orthodox story is mainly as follows: two of Šango's wives were very quarrelsome; and there were also a few complaints from the subjects of Šango concerning his tyranny. Šango became angry with everybody, mounted his horse, and went into the forest. For a long time he was expected back, but in vain. When he did not return, people feared that he had gone in a fit of temper to hang himself. So they went in search of him; he was not found, but his horse was. The searchers therefore called out, "Where are you, O king? Have you hanged yourself?" To which he replied from a long distance, "No, I have not hanged myself!" "Then come back to us, we want you," they called back. But he replied, "No, since there has been so much trouble in the compound and so many complaints against me from you all, I will not come back to you; I will now rule you unseen." So he ascended to heaven by a chain which sprang from an ayàn tree. From heaven he has since then manifested his kingship by lightning and thunder.

One can understand why the priestly house of Kòso sticks to this "orthodox" version of the account of the apotheosis of Šango! Whatever version of the story is told, the important thing is that people became convinced that Šango ascended to heaven; and that he became thereby the author of lightning and thunder.³

Shango as Deity

Shango, representing thunder and lightning, is one of the most feared orisha in Yorubaland. This geographic area of Africa appears to be extremely susceptible to violent thunder and lightning storms, as well as relatively frequent tornados; the death and destruction caused by these storms is all too grim a fact of daily life.

Since most of the orisa are anthropomorphic, Shango easily finds a place in the pre-existing pantheon as well as in the mind of the people. Underlying his worship is the notion that, having taken residence in heaven where, so to speak, the power-plant of lightning now lies within his arm's reach, the world below is at his mercy. He must always be appeased. In the early days, this was done through the intercession of his faithful friends and followers, who were to become the founding priests of the Shango cult.⁴

About the mythology:

The myths of Shango are many, their details varying from one locality to another. Two dominant themes prevail in all of them, however. The first is concerned with his life as a historical figure and the second with his posthumous activities as an orisa. In the second one, especially, there are some apparent attempts to obscure the historicity of his life, so as to

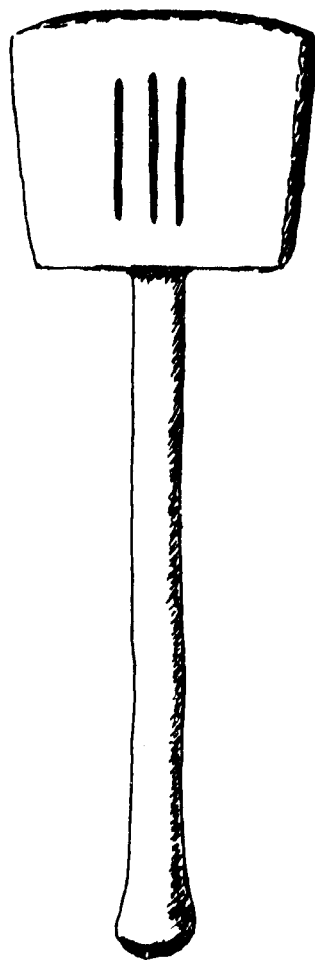


Fig. 1 Non-figurative Ose
(After Lawal, "Yoruba Sango Sculpture," p. 240)

incorporate him more fully (a sort of syncretism) into the pre-existing and expansive pantheon of orisa. To this effect, one of the orisa, Orungan, reportedly ravished his mother, Yemaja, the off-spring of Obatala and Oduduwa, and who had earlier married her brother, Aganju. The ultimate result of these series of incestuous marriages is the birth of a host of orisa, among whom Shango easily finds a place.⁵

Shango's heavenly troupe includes his three wives and various other attendants. "Shango's three wives are the three rivers, Oya (the Niger), Oshun, and Oba, these last being two of the smaller rivers of the Yoruba country. Shango has among his attendants Oshumare, the rainbow, who conveys water from the earth to his palace in the clouds, and Oru, the thunderclap, whom he sends out as his messenger with great noise."⁶ Meyerowitz gives the name of Shango's thunderclap messenger as Ara, and also adds his devoted slave Biri, who represents the darkness.⁷ It is often reported that Oya, who was Shango's favorite wife, is the wind which comes before the violent rain and thunderstorm; in some instances she is called the tornado.

Among the animals sacred to Shango are the dog and the ram. Both are included in the multitude of sculptural representations in the shrines of Shango. The snake is seen as his messenger. Certain birds, the papagori and irogun, are identified particularly with Shango. Farrow states that the papagori is sacred to Shango and that the Magbas pretend to understand its speech.⁸

Sacrifices are offered to Shango at his shrine every fourth day. Because each divinity has by tradition its own preferences, there are particular foods offered to every individual deity, according to its tastes. Iduwo says that Shango's staple food is ram, and that he is also fond of orógbó (bitter kola).⁹ Lawal adds that frequently the sacrifices are cooked foodstuffs placed in a bowl before or on the altar. Now and then, a ram or a cock may be sacrificed, and the blood is allowed to drip on the thunderbolts.¹⁰

Staffs/Bifacial Axes (Ose)

The ose is the carved double-axe symbol of Shango (see Fig. 1). In the course of my research I was able to discern four different types of ose as described in the literature. The first type is a carved dance wand; this particular type of ose is carved completely from wood and is often either in the form of a human figure wearing a headpiece resembling a bifacial (double-bladed) axe or that of a partial figure (usually just the head) with the same bifacial axe headpiece. The second type is a larger and considerably more elaborate piece. It is not used as a dance wand, but rather is a part of the permanent collection of sculpture kept at the altar of the shrine (as opposed to being carried around). These ose usually have several full figures carved in group, as well as occasional animal representations emerging from the front of the axe form. This second type is described by Bascom:

The central figure represents a "mount" of Shango, carrying an ose Shango in his right hand. His left hand rests on a female worshipper of Oya, Goddess of the River Niger and Shango's most loyal wife, who is giving the traditional greeting of Oya's worshippers to Shango's mount. The man at the

other side is beating Shango's drum (bata). The top, which represents two "thunderstones," has been elaborated into a frame for a ram at the left and a dog at the right. The ram is Shango's favorite sacrificial animal, and there is a dog which is sacred to him.¹¹

The third type of oŕe is a carved single or double axe which sometimes has a stone head atop the wooden staff, rather than being a piece carved in its entirety out of wood. A fourth type of oŕe differs from the other types not so much in form as in function. This type of oŕe is a carved wooden piece representing a single- or double-headed axe. These oŕe were not used by the priests, nor were they used by the Shango worshippers within the context of possession. The function of these oŕe was to insure fertility of the fields in which they were buried and to protect the homes and property (including the crops) of those individuals who performed the ritual from destruction and death caused by lightning and thunderbolts.

The oŕe is a ritual object used by both priests and worshippers; when not in use it is placed in the Shango shrine. The oŕe is both an active and passive ritual object. It can be an active element in ceremonies, i.e. its utilization as a dance wand (usually in possession-related activity), as a club to dispatch the unconscious victims of lightning, or as a protective object which diverts the violent destruction characteristic of Shango from one's family and property. The oŕe can also be a passive object, that is, it can serve as an object upon which worshipful attention is focused. The literature describes large elaborate oŕe (like the second type discussed) as being the object of sacrifice, much in the way the thunderstones are treated. The smaller, more portable oŕe are attended to in the same manner.

Adults also carry these staffs. For example, my dresser said that if he himself were ill he would go to a man in the town who would make juju and might advise him to "get Shongo." In this case he would procure a staff and carry it, never speaking all the time. At the end of a certain period, being better, he would then take some special stones and put them with the staff in a wooden vessel shaped like a mortar, and would kill a ram or a goat beside the vessel, and pour the blood over the stones in it, and for seven days there would be feasting.¹²

In terms of its relationship with Shango himself, the oŕe reflects several important elements of legend and history. First, the oŕe is usually carved from a very hard wood, that of the ayan tree; this is the type of tree on which Shango is supposed to have hanged himself. Second, the oŕe is the emblem by which devotees and priests of Shango are instantly recognizable. According to Lawal, devotees carry the oŕe as an emblem of their intimacy with Shango as well as to ward off evil and to win Shango's favor; the priests carry it as a staff of office, and to show the extent of their powers to invoke and direct the course of lightning.¹³ Third, it is the sculptural representation of the bifacial axe symbolism connected with Shango.

The oŕe is perhaps the most popular and peculiar of Shango's symbols. Though it is carried by worshippers as an emblem of their association with Sango, it is essentially the symbol of Sango's destructive power. It is basically a bifacial axe, embodying the notion that it is Sango who hurls the thunder-

bolt from the sky whenever lightning strikes. Thus the form of the ose would seem to have resulted from the splitting potency of lightning having been likened to that of the axe. Conversely, the ose is the sculptural equivalent of the thunderbolt.¹⁴

Fourth, legend has it that many centuries ago, Shango visited the earth in the guise of an old man. He carried with him a double-face carved staff, shoulder height, as a walking stick or supportive staff. Full size and reduced copies (and subsequent variations on both) have been in use ever since that time, according to the story. Lawal says that this legend is of comparatively recent origin; when and how the ose came into being is seemingly unknown to the modern generation of Shango devotees.¹⁵ One final word on the origin of the ose: many scholars attribute the origin of the ose to Cretan, Minoan, or Egyptian influences. After an extensive, fully-documented examination of these hypotheses, Lawal states definitively:

In the last analysis, from its quantity and "never-ending variety," the ose would seem to have had some four or five centuries of development. Its main stylistic idiom is unmistakably Yoruba, and a far cry from that of the Cretan double-axe.¹⁶

Celts (Thunderstones)

The prehistoric celts, or thunderstones, of Shango are found in two ritual contexts: (1) as ritual objects placed on the altar or in an urn in the Shango shrine, providing a means by which the deity is given nourishment, and (2) in the context of ritual plunder by the priests of Shango. The literature pictures the thunderstone thusly:



Fig. 2

In some instances it is described as a polished stone, or as a polished or ground axe-head.¹⁷ Many sources report it as showing traces of blood upon examination.

In the context of altar object the thunderstone has several important functions. It serves as a concrete and tangible representation of the power of Shango.

Most religions personalize the function of natural forces in anthropomorphic deities. This is the first step in the "humanizing" of natural and supernatural forces. The second step is to give the concept "real" or tangible form by inventing "objects" (statues, masks, or simple stones) as "containers" of the divine force. Such objects then became sacred and the worshipper thus enabled to see, touch, or approach the object, could focus his fervor upon it. This was an important invention of the human mind. It "concretized" a mysterious force, which then was no longer entirely

unknown and uncontrollable.

The neolithic celts fulfilled this function. They became the "containers" of the force of Shango, who hurled them from the sky. The complex ideas about Shango were "objectivized" in the stone and became important symbols in his cult.¹⁸

Bascom notes that these stones, when kept by Shango priests at the shrines, provide a means by which the deity receives nourishment.¹⁹ Sacrificial blood, water, milk, oil, and other libations are poured over the stone as food for Shango. This activity could possibly account for the traces of blood described as appearing on the stones.

Another important ritual context in which the thunderstone is found is that of ritual plunder. When a house is struck by lightning, the Shango priests come and perform rituals in order to placate the wrath of Shango; at this time they remove the thunderstone/thunderstones hurled by Shango in his anger and displeasure against the people of the stricken home. The discovery of thunderstones in these homes reinforces the belief that the death and destruction caused by the lightning was actually the work of Shango himself. Some scholars believe that because a thunderstone is invariably discovered and removed by the priests, the priests have either planted the stones during the confusion accompanying the tragic event, or have simply brought along extra stones in their laba, which they wear on this particular ritual occasion.

The priests of Shango are called Oni-Shango, or Odushu-Shango. Their chief priests are called Magbas. Magba (emi a gba -- "I will take") signifies "a receiver." The priests wear a wallet to "receive" the plunder, or fines which they impose. In some parts, persons struck dead by lightning may not be buried until the body is ransomed from the Magbas, by whom persons struck insensible, if not killed, were formerly despatched. In their chants they speak of Shango as hurling stones (ja -- "to throw", okuta -- "a stone"). When a house is struck by lightning they rush in a body to the house, "to find the stone" -- no difficult matter since they take the said stone with them! They appropriate all the property which they can save from the flames as "their god has claimed it and given it to them." A chant of the Shango worshippers which is often heard may be translated thus:

O Shango, thou art the master!
 Thou takest in thy hand the fiery stones,
 To punish the guilty!
 To satisfy thy anger!
 Everything they strike is destroyed.
 The fire eats up the forest,
 The trees are broken down,
 And all things living are slain.²⁰

Another scholar describes this ritual as follows:

Whenever any house or property is damaged by lightning, the priests of Shango make for the place, saying that

they are going to find the thunderbolt: and they invariably bring out from the place a celt which they claim to have found. With the finding of the "bolt" goes much ritualistic plunder in the name of Shango. The body of a lightning victim is claimed by the priests, and, traditionally, it is only they who perform the burial offices at a tremendous cost to the relatives; and for a victim only yet unconscious, the priests have to make up their minds quickly between completing the work which Shango has so imperfectly done, or accepting a high ransom in the name of a propitiatory service.²¹

In sculptural representations of Shango and of figures described as representations of Shango priests, the sculptured figures are often shown holding a thunderstone in one hand and an ope or a bifacial axe in the other.

Embroidered Leather Pouches (Laba)

The laba is an ornamented leather pouch or bag used by Shango priests to contain ritual objects; it is carried by them on those ceremonial occasions when they are to be in full ritual dress, i.e. visitation of homes struck by lightning. It is worn slung over the right shoulder, so as to allow it to hang down on the left side of the wearer. Joan Wescott and Peter Morton-Williams feel that the left side is of ritual significance to the Yoruba and that the manner in which the laba is worn is related to an entire complex of ritual behavior linked to the left side.²² When the laba is not being worn, it is displayed by being hung in the shrine, usually on a wall above the altar.

The laba is worn when the priest travels in his vestments to officiate at some rite away from his shrine. It is never worn while the priest is in a state of possession, when he then is dressed as the god. When they are not carried, laba hang in the domestic shrines (gbongon) of the Shango priests and are used to contain only "thunderbolts" (edun ara), i.e. neolithic celts, and the sacred gourd rattles (shere), which are shaken while prayers are addressed to Shango. They are never used to carry the double-axe dance staffs (osho), which are used only in a state of possession.²³

By way of description, the laba is made of leather, is approximately twenty inches square, and has seven tassels hanging from the bottom edge.

While we were in the Yoruba metropolis Oyo, we persuaded the High Priest of the Shango cult (the Magba) to allow us to have a laba made. It is now in the British Museum. The laba, made up of goatskin dyed in traditional red, consists of a pouch, a flap that hangs over the opening of the pouch covering its front, and a long strap which enables the laba to be worn down one side of the body while the strap passes over the opposite shoulder. Along the bottom edge of the flap are seven tassels, each a triangle with bundles of leather strips hanging from them. Except for the narrow vertical design often seen along each

side of the front face of the pouch, only the flap is decorated. The elements of the decoration are four intricate panels on a ground of red cloth. Each of the four panels carries the same design, and it is substantially the same on every laba made in Oyo. Not only the Magba and his two deputies, but other Shango priests and worshippers as well, have asserted that every laba must bear this design; and it is this design, traditionally repeated in each of the four panels, that contains the ritual meaning of the laba and has provoked the writing of this paper.²⁴

Joan Wescott and Peter Morton-Williams have postulated that the dancing figure motif which traditionally appears on each of the four panels represents Eshu, the trickster god. They document their theory by establishing a series of relationships between Eshu and Shango, among them the following:

- (1) Common elements and/or characteristics shared by Eshu and Shango, including these: powerful, overly-masculine, self-assertive, violent, and unpredictable.
- (2) Color symbolism; the colors which are used on the laba are red (for Shango) and yellow, black, and white (for Eshu). These are the colors traditionally associated with these two deities.
- (3) Physical characteristics of the dancing figure motif which specifically suggest Eshu; these include the characteristic headdress, dance position, open posture of the legs, impression of movement and speed, and a general feeling of restlessness and chaotic disorder.

Gourd Rattles

Gourd rattles are called "sere" and can be found either on the altar of a Shango shrine or lying on the ground in front of it; occasionally they have been photographed leaning against the altar platform. The principle function of the rattle as used in Shango worship is to attract the attention of Shango and sustain his interest while prayers and/or sacrifices are being offered to him. The rattles utilized in this cult can be fashioned from a variety of materials; among those reported in the literature, one finds sere made of bronze, leather, brass, gourds, and calabashes. These materials are also found in combination with one another; Lawal reports gourd rattles covered with leather.²⁵ Decorative carving on the surface areas of ritual rattles appears to be fairly common, and often symbolic or emblematic designs relating to the cult itself appear on these rattles. The following example is taken from Lawal and shows the design of the bifacial axe, symbolic of Shango worship.²⁶ (See Fig. 3.)

There are apparently two types of gourd rattles; the first is like the drawing done on the following page, that is, a long-necked gourd filled with seeds or other loose materials capable of producing the desired rattle effect. The second type of gourd rattle is reported by Bascom in a series of liner notes written for Ethnic Folkways record album # P 441 called "Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria." This rattle is described as "a large calabash, up to two feet in diameter, which is covered with a string net to which cowry shells are

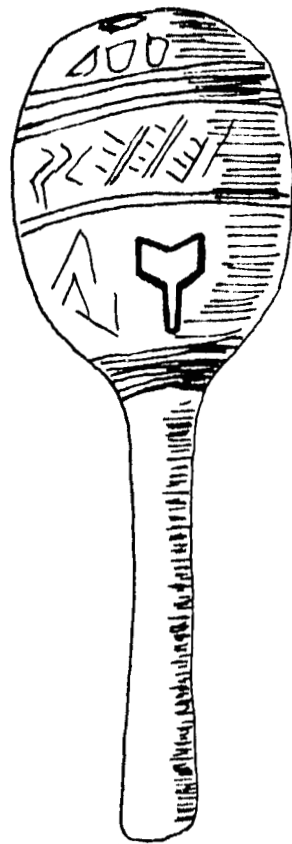


Fig. 3 Cult Rattle
(After Lawal, "Yoruba Sango Sculpture," p. 205)

fastened. It is a versatile instrument. When shaken, it serves as a rattle; it can also be beaten like a drum, and thrown into the air and caught in exact rhythm."

George Simpson, in his study of Shango cult activities in Trinidad, found a New World counterpart of the sere:

Gourd rattles and handclapping are used to accompany the drums both in southwest Nigeria and in Trinidad. In addition to drums and chac-chacs (ordinary gourd rattles) Trinidadian shangoists have two instruments which, when taken together, are the musical equivalent of the shekere rattle among the Yoruba. The shagby in Trinidad is a drum made from a large, round calabash whose top has been replaced with a piece of goatskin. The other object is a long, slender calabash filled with a string of buttons which produces a tremendous volume of sound when shaken.²⁷

Cowrie Inset Headgear/Symbolic Headdress

The official headgear of the Shango priest is a crown-like structure strung with cowries; Lawal calls this crown "bayani,"²⁸ while Segy refers to it as "Ibauri Shango."²⁹ The cowrie inset headdress is an essential part of the full ritual dress of the Shango priest, and it, like the laba, is worn on all occasions of a ceremonial nature. When not in use, the bayani (or Ibauri Shango) is displayed on a stand on the altar of a Shango shrine. Lawal gives this additional descriptive information: "A thunderbolt is invariably sewn into it. Some pieces of mirror may also be attached, these flashing like lightning in the sunlight...The average height is about twelve inches; however, some are considered oversize, being made specifically for permanent display on the altar. The one on the Shango altar at Ikire, for instance, is about six feet high."³⁰

Oral tradition has established several points of connection between Shango and the crown of cowries.

The symbolism of the bayani is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, it is identified with the orisa called Bayani (he is also known as Dada), who is associated with babies born with knotty hair and called (eponymously) Dada. (Dada and Ibeji -- twins -- and other children with phenomenal births are regarded by the Yoruba as spirit children.) Therefore, that the crown of Bayani should be found on Shango's altar, and also worn by his priests, is because "It was from birth that Shango had knotty hair curls. He-who-carries-coins-on-his-head." In other words, Shango himself was born a Dada.

On the other hand, Bayani, as an orisa, is also identified with Shango's senior brother, the third Alafin of Oyo-Ile, who was a lover of the arts and children, and was in turn much loved by women. But being too weak as an Alafin, he allegedly abdicated in favor of Shango and contented himself with a crown of cowries. This story immediately reminds us of Ajaka, who is said to have been deposed for Shango. If this second interpretation or identification of Bayani is the correct one, being more popular than the one which says that Shango was born a Dada, then its context in Shango ceremonials and on the altar remains to be adequately interpreted.³¹

The important point to note, for the purposes of this study, is that there are points of connection established in Yoruba oral tradition between the crown of cowries and Shango. The cowrie inset headgear is a clear representation of a physical characteristic (or an object, depending on which version of the legend one examines) described in these Shango legends.

NOTES

1. Michael Crowder, A Short History of Nigeria (New York, 1962), pp. 51-52.
2. Stephen S. Farrow, Faith, Fancies, and Fetich or Yoruba Paganism (London, 1926), pp. 48-50.
3. E. Bolaji Odowu, Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief (London, 1962), pp. 90-91.
4. Babatunde Lawal, "Yoruba Sango Sculpture in Historical Retrospect," Ph.D. diss. (Indiana University, 1970), p. 18.
5. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
6. Farrow, Yoruba Paganism, p. 51.
7. Eva L. R. Meyerowitz, "Notes on the King-God Shango and His Temple at Ibadan, Southern Nigeria," Man 46 (1946), 30.
8. Farrow, Yoruba Paganism, p. 51.
9. Idowu, Olódùmarè, p. 118.
10. Lawal, "Yoruba Sango Sculpture," p. 25.
11. William R. Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria (New York, 1969), p. 104.
12. Scott Macfie, "Shango Staffs," Man 13 (1913), 170.
13. Lawal, "Yoruba Sango Sculpture," pp. 95-96.
14. Ibid., p. 93.
15. Ibid., p. 94.
16. Ibid., p. 112.
17. Farrow, Yoruba Paganism, p. 93.
18. Ladislav Segy, "Shango Sculptures," Acta Tropica 12 (1955), 136-173.
19. Bascom, The Yoruba, p. 84.
20. Farrow, Yoruba Paganism, p. 50.
21. Idowu, Olódùmarè, pp. 91-92.

22. "The Symbolism and Ritual Context of the Yoruba Laba Shango," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 92, pt. 1 (1962), 27-28.
23. Ibid., p. 25.
24. Ibid., p. 24.
25. Lawal, "Yoruba Sango Sculpture," p. 33.
26. Ibid., p. 205.
27. "The Shango Cult in Nigeria and in Trinidad," American Anthropologist 64 (1962), 64.
28. Lawal, "Yoruba Sango Sculpture," p. 23.
29. Segy, "Shango Sculptures," p. 147.
30. Lawal, "Yoruba Sango Sculpture," p. 32.
31. Ibid., pp. 32-33.