Aláhoro Factor in the New Ọyọ History

Jamiu Ajiboye Owolabi
Department of History
University of Ibadan, Nigeria
Owoboye85@gmail.com

Abstract
Scholarly analyses of the collapse of the Òyó Empire and the foundation of New Òyó have largely overlooked the Aláhoro factor, making its role in New Òyó's emergence an understudied area of history. This article examines the status of Aláhoro within the context of New Òyó history and explores the rationale for the integration of the Aláhoro towns. It interrogates the methods of this integration, highlighting the socio-economic contributions of the Aláhoro towns to the development of New Òyó. Adopting a historical methodology, the study relies on both primary and secondary data. Primary sources include oral accounts collected from representatives of the Aláhoro quarters, while secondary data are sourced from court proceedings, government documents, books, and journals on Òyó history. Findings reveal that, contrary to claims of forced annexation or conquest (e.g., by Johnson), the Aláhoro towns were integrated into New Òyó primarily through persuasion.

Keywords*: Aláhoro, Ọyọ Empire, New Ọ̀yọ́, Àtìbà, Migration and settlement*

Introduction

Aláhoro is the collective name for neighboring towns and settlements integrated into New Òyó in 1839 (Johnson, 1921; Ogunmola, 1997). Following the collapse of the Òyó Empire and the relocation of the capital to New Òyó, the Aláhoro communities were resettled from their original towns, located a few kilometers away (Ojo, 1968; Badejo, 1964). Àtìbà, the founder of New Òyó, allocated quarters to these resettled communities—including Àpáàrà, Ajagba Akeètàn Àguo, Gúdùgbú, Ìsèkè Ìdóde, and Òjòngbòdú—under the leadership of their respective *Báálẹ̀* (town heads) (Ojo, 1968;

Badejo, 1964). Despite their integration, the descendants of these settlements retain ancestral claims to their land[1]. Contrary to the claims of conquest and forced annexation made by Johnson and some oral accounts, this study's findings reveal that the integration of Aláhoro was achieved through persuasion, not violence. The migration and settlement followed a gradual, staged pattern. The first batch to move to New Òyó comprised the political elites, such as the *Báálẹ̀* and their chiefs, who maintained their titles and oversaw their affairs within their allocated quarters[2]. The rest of the inhabitants followed gradually. However, they continuously shuttled between New Òyó and their original homesteads weekly to work on their farms, as their income was tied to these ancestral lands[3].

The integration of Aláhoro occurred after the final collapse of the Òyó Empire in 1835, which followed protracted civil wars across Yorubaland in the nineteenth century (Law, 1977; Akinjogbin, 1998). In an effort to re-establish the Òyó Empire, Àtìbà spearheaded the relocation of the capital to Àgó-Òjá. Originally founded by Òjá, a migrant from the town of Obatè in 1792 (Ojo, 1968), Àtìbà used manipulation and diplomacy to take control from Òjá's family (Ogunmola, 1997; Ayankojo, 2009). Following the takeover, Àtìbà was crowned *Aláàfin* and renamed Àgó-Òjá to Àgó-dòyó (later shortened to Òyó), meaning 'Àgó has become Òyó' (Smith, 1965; Ojo, 1968). Àtìbà focused on transforming New Òyó into a densely populated city. While his imperial ambitions to incorporate major emerging towns like Ìbàdàn and Ìjàyè were resisted, he successfully shifted his focus and integrated the Aláhoro[4]. Although some Aláhoro settlements initially resisted assimilation, they eventually moved to New Òyó after a series of persuasions. While Àtìbà did invade other, non-Aláhoro towns like Ìgagà and Akínmòríìn (Bajomo, 1964), the Aláhoro integration itself remained non-violent, refuting Johnson's claims (Johnson, 1921).

A Brief on the Collapse of Ọ̀yọ́ Empire

Scholarly debate on the decline of the Òyó Empire generally rejects Johnson's (1921) missionary-centered argument of divine retribution, focusing instead on verifiable historical factors. The collapse is linked to economic decline caused by the Atlantic slave trade hindering other activities (Akinjogbin, 1965; Law, 1977), as well as major political and structural flaws. The latter included the corrupt practices of provincial lieutenants (Awe, 1964) and

critical disunity stemming from personal conflict between the *Aláàfin* and the *Àre-Ònà Kaakàànfò*, especially under Àfònjá (Awe, 1964; Akinjogbin, 1998). Further constitutional crises, particularly disputes between the *Aláàfin* and the *Òyó-Mèsì* (Basòrun), rendered the empire vulnerable to external forces (Law, 1977; Ogundiran, 2020). This vulnerability was compounded by *Aláàfin* Áólè's serious political error of attacking Apòmù, a town under the *Oóni*'s authority (Akinjogbin, 1965). The ultimate cause of collapse was the external military pressure exerted by the rising Fulani oligarchy in Ìlorin and Dahomey. Their campaigns led to the empire's total collapse following the final Fulani invasion (Danmole, 1998; Ogundiran, 2020). Evidence suggests this invasion could have been repelled had unity been maintained, as demonstrated by Ìbàdàn's victory over the Fulani at Òsogbo in 1840 (Atanda, 1973; Akintoye, 2014). Furthermore, the remnants of the empire under Olúéwu were doomed by internal betrayal: Àtìbà and other warriors deliberately assisted the Fulani in defeating Olúéwu (Ojo, 1968). The primary conclusion, therefore, is that internal conflict fatally weakened the empire, making it an easy target for the external attack that constituted the immediate cause of its collapse.

The New Ọ̀yọ́: A Brief Background

Concurrent with the protracted Yoruba civil wars following the Òyó Empire's collapse, initiatives were undertaken to strategically reestablish the Òyó capital. This cause was championed by Àtìbà, who became the *Aláàfin* after Olúéwu's death. Àtìbà, the son of *Aláàfin* Abíódún Adégolú, spent time in the Èpò region of the empire, particularly Akeètàn, which gave him deep knowledge of surrounding towns like Gúdùgbú, Àpáàrà, and Àgó-Òjá (Goddard, 1971; Johnson, 1921). As a restless young prince, Àtìbà relocated to Àgó-Òjá, a town whose *Báálẹ̀*, Òjá, was a powerful warrior. Ignoring the warnings of his brother, Òjá accommodated Àtìbà, a miscalculation that led to intense conflict and Àtìbà eventually hijacking the town (Ojo, 1968). After the deaths of Òjá and his successor, Elébú, Àtìbà consolidated his influence by threatening and eliminating potential rivals (Ojo, 1968).

Around 1838, Àtìbà, having lobbied powerful leaders like Kúrunmí of Ìjàyè and Olúyòlé of Ìbàdàn, was installed as the new *Aláàfin* in Àgó-Òjá (Ojo 1968; Akintoye, 2014). Upon his coronation, Àtìbà immediately began the reintegration process, transforming Àgó-Òjá into Àgó-dòyó (later

shortened to Òyó or New Òyó). He summoned the former members of the *Òyó-Mèsì* and other chiefs and villages from the defunct empire to relocate (Johnson, 1921). Àtìbà structured New Òyó on the old imperial template, placing his palace and the Akèèsán market at the center. Though Àtìbà took firm control, he could not completely remove Òjá's family. He abolished the *Baaleship* title in Àgó-Òjá, but appeased the family by appointing Elébú's successor, Aílumo, as the new Asípa—one of the seven *Òyó-Mèsì* kingmakers (Johnson, 1921). He also appointed Gbènlaá as Basòrun, compensating him for his crucial intelligence against the Òjá family (Ojo 1968).

Àtìbà's plan to reintegrate all the vast territories of the Old Òyó Empire was unsuccessful. While powerful leaders like Kúrunmí and the chiefs of Ìbàdàn acknowledged his traditional authority, they refused to be politically reintegrated into New Òyó (Ojo, 1968). This limited territory reduced the economic prosperity of the new capital (Awe, 1964).Consequently, Àtìbà redirected his efforts, successfully integrating the surrounding **Aláhoro towns**, which included Àpáàrà, Ajagba Akeètàn Àgùo, Gúdùgbú, Ìsèkè Ìdóde, and Òjòngbòdú (Johnson, 1921). This paper specifically addresses the misconception (e.g., in Johnson, 1921) that the Aláhoro inhabitants were forcibly relocated.

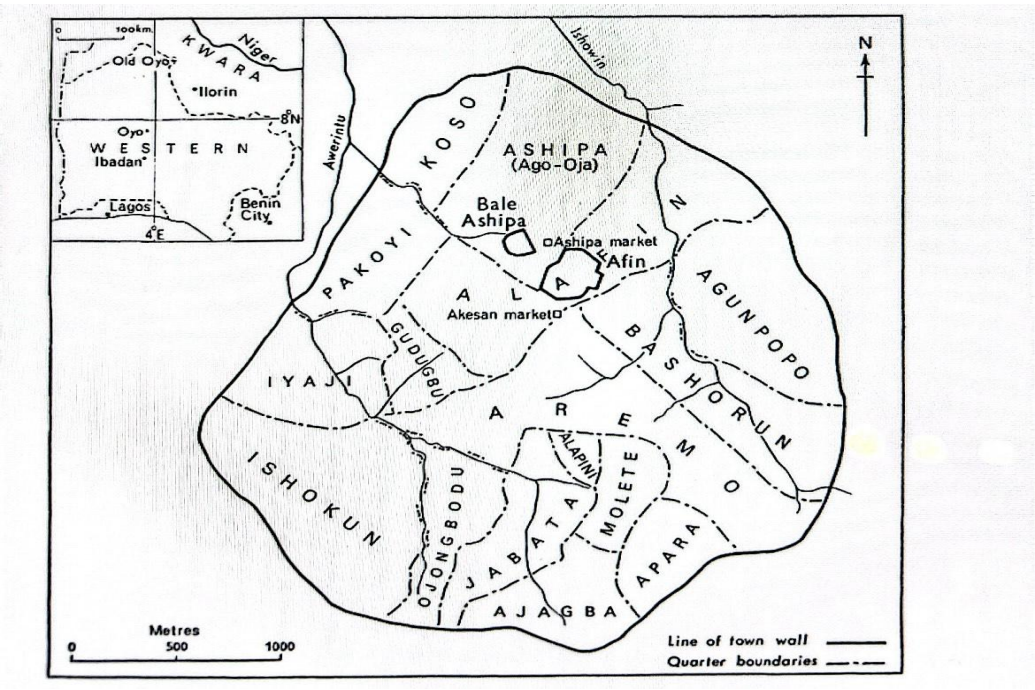

Fig. 1 Fig. 1 Map of New Oyo (Goddard 1971)

Aláhoro Factor in New Ọ̀yọ́ History

Before Àtìbà's arrival, several nearby towns in the Èpò region, collectively known as the Aláhoro—including Àpáàrà, Ajagba Akeètàn Àguo, Gúdùgbú, Ìsèkè Ìdóde, and Òjòngbòdú—were already established. These socio-politically organized settlements, which would rank historically alongside towns like Ìbàdàn, contradict claims of their recent founding. Contrary to popular accounts, especially Johnson's, that *Aláàfin* Àtìbà forcibly annexed the Aláhoro, recent findings show their integration into New Òyó occurred without conquest. They moved voluntarily following Àtìbà's invitation, with some initial resistance overcome through persuasion. This incorporation was essentially a **social contract** to recreate the collapsed Òyó Empire's glory[5]. The case of Àpáàrà exemplifies this voluntary process: Àtìbà's initial emissaries were rejected, but his subsequent persistence convinced the

community to relocate a few kilometers away to New Òyó. A critical piece of evidence against conquest is the fact that the integrated Aláhoro retained ownership of their original homesteads (*ahoro*)[6]. Had they been conquered, these lands would have been seized by the *Aláàfin*[7].

Furthermore, Áwé town, which was closer to New Òyó than some Aláhoro settlements, successfully refused Àtìbà's invitation and was not conquered, supporting the idea that Àtìbà preferred peaceful integration. This preference was likely driven by the lack of resources and formidable military capacity in New Òyó at the time, which was struggling economically (Awe, 1964), mirroring Àtìbà's strategic, non-confrontational takeover of Àgó-Òjá from Òjá.

Legal validation of Aláhoro land ownership

The historical claim of voluntary integration was validated in contemporary land disputes. In 1985 and 1988, the Oláróyan family of Mòlété quarters claimed ownership of the Àpáàrà homestead, arguing that *Aláàfin* Àtìbà had redistributed the land following a supposed annexation (Minutes of court proceedings, 1985). The defendants from the Àpáàrà quarters successfully countered this by tracing their land rights to their ancestor, Adédèjì Láníba, who founded Àpáàrà in the late seventeenth century after migrating from Old Òyó, well before New Òyó's founding. The town's long history—including its naming from the undecomposed body (*Enití Apa Tí Kó Rà*) of its founder after his death in war—and the fact that over ten *Báálẹ̀* had reigned before Àtìbà's arrival, confirmed their long-standing sovereignty. The court ruled in favor of the Àpáàrà quarters, affirming that they were neither conquered nor surrendered their land to the *Aláàfin* (Minutes of court proceedings, 1985). This ruling was reinforced when the Àpáàrà people successfully defended their land against encroachment claims by the Agúnpopo and Basòrun families.

Following the integration of *Àpàárà* into the newly established *Òyó*, *Àtìbà* expressed reservations toward the Báàlè, given their shared backgrounds as hunters and warriors. To eliminate *Báálè Àpáàrà*, *Àtìbà* ordered him to bring a live leopard to his palace (Oral Interview, Chief M.O. Ogunmola, 1/4/2021). *Báálè Àpáàrà* embarked on hunting expedition and he was able to bring a live leopard even though he sustained an injury on his way back to the Aláàfin's palace. The injury was so severe that he could not make

it to the palace in person, but he handed the leopard to *Báálè Akeètàn*, who was the head of *Akeètàn* town, to deliver it to the Aláàfin (Oral Interview, Chief M.O. Ogunmola, 1/4/2021).

Akeètàn's history is also traced to Offa, formerly part of the old Òyó empire. The town derives its name from its founder, *Akeètàn*. Tradition holds that the origin of his name is linked to the events associated with his birth (Ogunmola, 1998). He was born to *Olófà* of *Òffà*, but he was an Àbíkú (stillbirth), and he was also a sickle who remained sick despite the efforts of his father. He was subsequently abandoned at a disposal site by his father and left without supervision. However, he survived alone but cried all the time. His parents retrieved him from the disposal site and named him *Akin-átán*, which translates to "the brave of the disposal site. Over time, the name was formally abbreviated to *Akeètàn* (Ogunmola, 1998). *Akeètàn* grew up to become a hunter before he finally left *Òffà* to establish a town of his own in the river *Obà* area in the *Èpò* region of the old *Òyó* empire (Ogunmola, 1998). *Mèekùèbè*, the *Báálè* of *Akeètàn*, relocated the *Akeètàn* to New *Òyó* after *Àtìbà*'s coronation in 1938 (Ogunmola, 1997).

The history of *Ìsèkè* is attributed to *Ládòkun*, who served as a chief under the *Aláàfin* in Old *Òyó*. Chief *Àkàndé, Elépè Ìsèkè* in the early 1960s, stated that his ancestors paid homage to *Aláàfin* through *Oníkòyí* in Old *Òyó* (Bajomo, 1964). When *Àtìbà* relocated the capital of Old Òyó to New Òyó, he integrated the *Ìsèkè* into New Òyó, which was without force. *Àtìbà* was an in-law to *Elépè Ìsèkè*. He married his daughter *Ikúolá*, who produced *Adélù*, *Àtìbà*'s eldest son and the second *Aláàfin* in New Òyó (Bajomo, 1964). The relationship between *Àtìbà* and *Elépè* and the loyalty of the *Ìsèkè* to Old *Òyó* could not have propelled them to resist their integration into New *Òyó*.

Ajagba was part of Old Òyó before they migrated southward and settled to farm in their homestead along *Òyó-Ìwó* expressway. Chief *Yesufu Àdìgún*, the *Báálè* of *Ajagba*, acknowledged that *Ajagba* collected tributes from villages under her control and, in turn, paid tributes to *Aláàfin* in Old Òyó (Bajomo, 1964). *Ajagba*'s origins trace back to *Òffà*, formerly part of Old *Òyó*, from where its people migrated to their current location (Oral Interview, Chief Odùníje, 14/6/2025). *Ajagba* and the other *Aláhoro* towns joined New *Òyó* without conflict. Notably, *Àtìbà* invaded only *Ìgagà*, a town not belonging to the *Aláhoro* group. (Oral Interview, Chief Odunije, 14/6/2025).

Àgùo, located in present-day *Fìdìtì*, was incorporated into New *Òyó* by *Àtìbà*. (Bajomo, 1964) The *Alágùo* hosted *Módeni* in *Àgùo* and allocated a portion of land for him to farm. *Àsú*, who was a chief of *Kúrunmí*, fled *Ìjàyè* following the conflict between him and *Kúrunmí*. On his arrival in New *Òyó*, *Aláàfin Àtìbà* ordered the *Alágùo* to host him in the *Àgùo* homestead. *Alágùo* allocated a portion of land for him, sharing a boundary with the land allocated to *Módeni*. Both *Módeni* and *Àsú* founded *Fìdítì*. (Bajomo, 1964, Oral Interview, Barr. Esuola, 5/6/2025). Aside from paying homage to Old *Òyó*, there is no other proof that *Àgùo* was originally from *Òyó* like other *Aláhoro,* such as *Àpáàrà* and *Ajagba*. What is closer to conviction is the possibility of having an *Ègbá* root. *Ègbá* towns occupied the region including *Ìbàdàn* before *Sódeké* led them to *Abéòkúta* (Biobaku, 1991; Smith, 1962). *Áwé* town and *Akínmòríìn* towns are two notable examples of *Ègbá* towns that remained in the area. *Àtìbà* invaded *Akínmòríìn* town but recorded little success (Oral Interview with Mr. Ojewole, 31/12, 2022). Few inhabitants of *Akínmòríìn* were integrated into New *Òyó*, while others resisted.

Òjòngbòdú was situated along the now *Òyó-Ìséyìn* expressway before it was integrated into New *Òyó* by *Àtìbà*. *Adébóyè Àjàní Aláyàkí* was the last *Báálè* in *Òjòngbòdú* town and the first *Báálè* in the *Òjòngbòdú* quarters in New *Òyó*. *Àtìbà* met opposition while incorporating *Òjòngbòdú* into New *Òyó* but eventually annexed it. *Ìdóde* was situated in *Fátalà* along the current *Òǵbómòsó-Òyó* expressway, which was part of the *Èpo* region of the *Òyó* Empire. *Ìdóde* was founded by *Aládé Elèkèlèkemú*, an individual whose origins trace back to *Ifè*. (Interview with Baale Idode, 5/6/2025) *Àtìbà* integrated *Ìdóde* into New *Òyó* and reduced it to quarters like the rest of the *Aláhoro*

Determining the precise founding years of all the *Aláhoro* towns presents a challenge, as the available dates vary and lack consistency. *Gúdùgbú* and *Akeètàn* existed prior to *Aláàfin Abíódún Adégolú*'s reign, given the fact that he married *Àtìbà*'s mother from *Akeètàn*. It is plausible to conclude that the two towns preceded *Basòrun Gáhà*'s reign of terror. Oral tradition in *Àpáàrà* suggests the town was founded about a century before New *Òyó* emerged in the nineteenth century. In another account, *Àpáàrà, Ajagba* and *Ìsèkè* claim that *Ládòkun*, the founder of *Áwé* town, met them in their homesteads. Since the establishment of *Áwé* town is dated to the mid eighteenth century, it is reasonable to argue that *Àpáàrà, Ajagba* and *Ìsèkè*

were founded before the mid eighteenth century. All the *Aláhoro* which became part of New *Òyó*, including *Àgó-Òjá*, shared almost the same history. Most of them could trace their roots to Old *Òyó* through the *Óffá* kingdom. Quarters like *Àpáàrà* and *Akeètàn*, for example, identified themselves with the praise name *"Ìyèrú-òkín, Olófá mojó"*, which belongs to people of *Òffá* origin (Oral Interview, Chief M.O. Ogunmola, 1/4/2021). These groups moved from *Òffá*, passed through *Àrágberí*, and later settled around the River *Obà* area before they were finally absorbed into New *Òyó* (Ogunmola, 1998). The origin of *Òjá* can be traced to *Obátè*, a town that once belonged to Old *Òyó* (Ojo, 1968; Ayankojo, 2009). Towns such as *Àpáàrà, Akeètàn, Ajagba*, and the other *Aláhoro* continued to keep their social and leadership structures even after they became part of New *Òyó*. In *Àpáàrà*, there were about thirty founding compounds (Oral Interview with Chief Elegbede, 9/5/2021). In *Akeètàn*, there were thirteen founding compounds (Ogunmola, unpublished). In *Àgó-Òjá*, there were about forty-seven founding compounds that made up the *Ìsàlè-Òyó* and *Asípa* quarters (Ayankojo, 2009). The same pattern could be seen in *Ajagba, Àgùo, Ìsèkè Òjòngbòdú, Ìdóde,* and *Gúdùgbú*.

It is important to note that though the *Aláhoro* moved to New *Òyó* to form their own communities, their population did not remain the same over time. More people came from different places to settle among them, and this increased the number of families and compounds. For this reason, not all the compounds in *Ìsàlè-Òyó* and *Asípa* quarters can be said to have direct ties with the original *Òjá* family. Some joined only after *Àgó-Òjá* had become New *Òyó*. The number of compounds in *Ìsàlè-Òyó* and *Asípa* quarters increased from forty-seven to one hundred and seven (Lasisi, Ladigbolu et al., 2013). The same situation existed in other *Aláhoro* quarters. In *Àpáàrà*, compounds such as *Gbogbolomo, Pááfà, Gàá Fulani*, and some families in the *Baara* compound joined the *Àpáàrà* community later (Oral Interview with Pa Odekanyi, 7/5/2019). The disagreement between *Àtìbà* and the earlier settlers in *Àgó-Òjá* has remained a topic of argument for many years. The first settlers believed that *Àtìbà* took over their town unlawfully, while others, especially those from the royal family, defended him with the argument that *Àgó-Òjá* was already under the *Òyó* Empire and that the *Aláàfin* had the authority to move the capital to any part of the empire (Oral Interview, Pa Odekanyin, 7/5/2019; Archbishop Ayo Ladigbolu, 13/1/2021; Chief M.O. Ogunmola, 1/4/2021). In truth, *Òjá* himself had earlier migrated from *Obátè,* which also

belonged to the *Òyó* Empire, before founding *Àgó-Òjá*. When he arrived, he met some compounds already living in the area, including *Ìyálámù, Adáralóde,* and *Àmórù* compound (Oral Interview with Chief M.O. Ogunmola, 1/4/2021). The occupation of *Àgó-Òjá* by *Àtìbà* can be compared to the occupation of *Hausaland* by *Uthman Dan Fodio* in 1804 (Abubakar, 1974). Both occupations involve later settlers taking over the land from the earlier settlers. What is more important to mention is the fact that all the *Aláhoro* towns that became part of New *Òyó*, including *Àgó-Òjá* accepted *Aláàfin Àtìbà*'s leadership, whether willingly or unwillingly.

Àtìbà's decision to move what was left of the Old *Òyó* capital to *Àgó-Òjá* can be explained by several reasons. First, he wanted to keep *Òyó* safe from the *Fulani* warriors who had destroyed Old *Òyó*. Second, the movement of people from the north to the south in the *Èpò* region of the empire brought new growth, and towns such as *Àgó-Òjá, Akeètàn, Àpáàrà,* and *Ajagba* began to rise there. This development must have attracted *Àtìbà*. Third, the *Èpò* region was his base before the fall of Old *Òyó*. His mother came from *Akeètàn*, and he lived there before he later moved to *Àgó-Òjá*. Fourth, the region was close to *Ìbàdàn*. *Àtìbà* had friendly relationship with the war chiefs of *Ìbàdàn* before he became *Aláàfin*. Many of those chiefs were also from Old *Òyó*, and their relationship remained cordial. As *Aláàfin*, *Àtìbà* certainly wanted to reestablish his authority over them but *Ìbàdàn* kept its independence, even though its chiefs still recognised the *Aláàfin* as a traditional authority and fought for his interests, especially in the conflict with *Kurunmi* (Ajayi & Smith, 1971; Oguntomisin, 2015).

Migration and Settlement of the *Aláhoro* in New *Òyó*

The migration and settlement of the *Aláhoro* towns in New *Òyó* follow the same pattern. The migration was gradual and it was in batches. The first batch that moved to New *Òyó* were the political elites such as *Báálè* and their chiefs (Oral interview with the Baale of Àpáàrà, Baale Ajagba, Baale Ìdóde, Chief Ogunmola Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga, 21/5/2022). Each of the *Báálè* of the *Aláhoro* had his chiefs with whom they oversaw the reign of their towns before they were integrated into New *Òyó* (Oral interview with the Baale of Àpáàrà, Baale Ajagba, Baale Ìdóde, Chief Ogunmola Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga, 21/5/2022). They maintained their titles within their allocated quarters in New *Òyó* (Oral interview with the Baale of Àpáàrà, Baale Ajagba,

Baale Ìdóde, Chief Ogunmola Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga, 21/5/2022). The first batch was followed by the gradual migration of the rest of the inhabitants of the *Aláhoro* towns. (Oral interview with the Baale of Àpáàrà, Baale Ajagba, Baale Ìdóde, Chief Ogunmola Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga, 21/5/2022). However, they continued to shuttle between New *Òyó* and their original homesteads on weekly basis (Oral interview with the Baale of Àpáàrà, Baale Ajagba, Chief Ogunmola Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga, 21/5/2022). This is understandable given the fact that their source of income, which was farming and hurting, was tied to their homesteads. Consequently, they spent days in their homesteads purposely to work on their farms and spent the remaining days in the New *Òyó.* (Oral interview with the Baale of Àpáàrà, Baale Ajagba, Baale Ìdóde, Chief Ogunmola, Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga, 21/5/2022). Their mode of transportation was footpath and pack animals as it were commonly used in pre-colonial Africa (Ogunremi, 1996). The walking distance from the original *Aláhoro* towns to New *Òyó* were maximum of fifteen kilometers, consequently, the political elites travelled on horses while their subjects walked to New *Òyó* through the available footpaths (Oral interview with Chief Ogunmola 21/5/2022). They continued to shuttle between New *Òyó* and their homesteads through footpaths connecting their homesteads to New *Òyó*.

Socioeconomic Contributions of the Aláhoro to the Development of New Òyó

A dominant reason for the integration of the Aláhoro was Àtìbà's imperative to expand the population of New Òyó. Having been thwarted in his plan to restore the defunct Òyó Empire's glory by the resistance of Ìbàdàn and Ìjàyè to political integration, Àtìbà strategically turned to the neighboring Aláhoro towns. Scholars agree that in pre-colonial Africa, land was abundant and communally owned, facilitating Àtìbà's relocation of the capital (Austin, 2005; Ogunremi, 1996). However, the major constraint was labor scarcity. Àtìbà understood that a king is defined by his people, and without the human capital to utilize the abundant land for economic gain, New Òyó would lose significance, resulting in insufficient tributes and inability to sustain the Aláàfin's palace (Awe, 1964). Recognizing that successful leadership requires the mobilization of people and knowledge for prosperity (Guyer & Belinga, 1995), Àtìbà integrated the Aláhoro to ensure the town's growth and economic viability.

The integration of the Aláhoro communities directly addressed these economic concerns. Their predominant source of income was farming and hunting, involving crops like yam, maize, cassava, and palm products. They worked their homesteads and brought their produce and game to New Òyó for sale. Mini-markets, such as Ajagba market, Akeètàn market, Àpáàrà market, and Ìsèkè market, were established within their quarters. These quarter markets served as vital collection points, linking farmers and traders, predominantly women, who purchased produce for resale at the central and largest market, Àkèsan. This economic activity was crucial, as were the tributes paid to the Aláàfin in farm produce and hunting trophies, such as the live leopard demanded from the Báálẹ̀ of Àpáàrà (Bajomo, 1964). These consistent economic contributions enhanced the socio-economic development of New Òyó.

The Aláhoro also boosted the town's cultural life by introducing their masquerades, including Erinwonwon and Legbeoja. The annual masquerade festival became a social and economic event, attracting people from neighboring towns for entertainment, fostering family unity, and generating monetary gifts for the performers, all culminating in a final performance before the Aláàfin.

Conclusion

This article has established the distinct status of the Aláhoro towns within the history of New Òyó. It analyzed the popular claims, particularly Johnson's contention and some oral accounts, that the Aláhoro towns were conquered or forcibly annexed to New Òyó, finding these claims to be contradictory to the evidence. The integration of the Aláhoro towns into New Òyó was peaceful and persuasive, not achieved by force. This non-violent approach was facilitated by *Aláàfin* Àtìbà's personal ties to the region: he was raised in Akeètàn, one of the Aláhoro towns, and married the daughter of the *Báálè* of Ìsèkè, another Aláhoro town. Àtìbà's acquaintance with the Aláhoro, coupled with the southward movement of Òyó refugees, informed his choice of Àgó-Òjá as the new Òyó capital.

Furthermore, almost all the Aláhoro towns traced their history to the collapsed Òyó Empire and many acknowledged paying tributes to the *Aláàfin* in Old Òyó. While Àtìbà certainly attacked non-Aláhoro towns like Ìgagà and Akínmòríìn, often with limited success, there was no record that any of the

Aláhoro towns were conquered or forcibly annexed. After a series of persuasions, the Aláhoro towns were peacefully integrated. Crucially, among all the towns and settlements merged into New Òyó, only the Aláhoro continued to retain ownership of their homesteads.

The article demonstrated that the Aláhoro towns were integrated into New Òyó as a strategic alternative after Ìbàdàn and Ìjàyè refused to be politically reintegrated. The failure to consolidate these major emerging powers propelled Àtìbà to turn to the Aláhoro towns. They were integrated specifically to boost the population of the sparsely populated new capital, as New Òyó would otherwise have been reduced to a smaller, insignificant town. The Aláhoro towns were allocated quarters to settle in New Òyó under their own leaders, who, in turn, recognized the authority of the *Aláàfin*. The socio-economic contributions of the Aláhoro were undeniable, as their farming and hunting activities were essential to the economy of New Òyó, and their successful integration helped preserve what remained of the legitimate Òyó Empire.

Notes

[1] Oral interview with the Baalẹ of Àpáàrà, Baale Ajagba, Baale Ìdóde, Chief Ogunmola, Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga, 21/5/2022; Bajomo, 1964; Minutes of Court Proceedings.
[2] Oral interview with Chief Ogunmola 21/5/2022.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Oral interview with the Baale of Àpáàrà, Baale Ajagba, Baale Ìdóde, Chief Ogunmola Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga, 21/5/2022, Bajomo, 1964, Minutes of Court Proceedings
[6] Oral interviews with Basiru Agbesinga, Chief Elegbede on the 9th and 22nd May, 2022
[7] Oral Interview, Chief Samuel Elegbede, 9/5/2021

Bibliography

Oral Interview

S/N	**Names**	**Date of Interview**	**Location**	**Occupation**
1	Pa Odekanyi	7/5/2019	Oyo, Nigeria	Retired Civil Servant
2	Chief M.O. Ogunmola	1/4/2021	Oyo, Nigeria	Retired Diplomat
3	Chief Samuel Elegbede	9/5/2021	Oyo, Nigeria	Politician/Community Leader
4	Alhaji Basiru Agbesinga	21/5/2022	Oyo, Nigeria	Islamic Scholar
5	Chief Tijani Akinleye Baale Apaara	22/3/2022	Oyo, Nigeria	Traditional Chief
6	Chief Samuel Olosegun Odunije JP, the Baale Ajagba	27/52021 and 14/6/2025	Oyo. Nigeria	Traditional Chief
7	Chief Oyeleke Yussuf Abioye, the Baale of Idode	5/6/2025	Oyo, Nigeria	Traditional Chief
8	Archbishop Ayo Ladigbolu	13/1/2021	Oyo, Nigeria	Retired Archbishop
9	Salau Esuola	17/1/2017	Oyo, Nigeria	Farmer
10	Barrister Goke Esuola	5/6/2025	Oyo, Nigeria	Legal Practitioner
11	Mr. Falade	4/4/2022	Oyo, Nigeria	Retired Teacher
12	Dauda Ajeigbe	3/2/2022	Oyo, Nigeria	Trader
13	Mr. Tiamiyu Hammed	25/10/2022	Oyo, Nigeria	Trader
14	Mr. Ojewole	31/12/2022	Awe, Nigeria	Farmer

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