An Illustrated Introductory Note

Regennia N. Williams
The RASHAD Center, Inc.
July 2016

Dear Readers,

Just before the sixth anniversary of the completion of my 2010 Fulbright Fellowship in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that Oba (King) Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi (Ojaja II), the Ooni of Ile-Ife, would be in Washington, D.C. Having recently relocated to the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area, I was able to visit the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African Art, where the Oba, Queen Olori Wuraola Ogunwusi, and their entourage participated in several activities.

The Oba came to share information about the abundant natural, cultural, and human resources of Yorubaland, and to make Americans aware of expanding business opportunities in Nigeria in general. Everything about the event at the museum reminded me of my time in Nigeria, so I requested copies of images documenting this historic visit. Not only did the museum provide copies of their professional photographs, they also gave me permission to publish them in this issue of *The Journal of Traditions & Beliefs*.

The timing of the Nigerians’ June visit could not have been better for the Initiative for the Study of Religion and Spirituality in the History of Africa and the Diaspora (RASHAD), which is now housed in the Maryland-based RASHAD Center, Inc., a non-profit educational organization. The photographs on the following pages illustrate key aspects of traditional Yoruba culture—including the respect shown to those in positions of authority, the clothing, the jewelry, and the importance of the visual and performing arts.

Several of the contributing scholars for this July 2016 issue of our journal live in, work in, and / or write and teach about Yorubaland. Needless to say, I am very grateful to my co-editor, Dr. Taiwo Soneye, and all of our contributors for allowing us to publish the results of their research.

In closing, I want to express my sincerest thanks to Dr. Amy Staples for providing the photographs and captions for this introductory message.

Sincerely,

Regennia N. Williams, PhD, Editor
The Journal of Traditions & Beliefs
His Imperial Majesty, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogumwusi, the Ooni of Ife, Nigeria, giving a speech at the National Museum of African Art (NMAfA), Smithsonian Institution (SI), June 21, 2016. Photograph by Franko Khoury, NMAfA/SI.
Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogumwusi, the Ooni of Ife, Queen Olori Wuraola, and delegation of prominent Yoruba kings who are part of the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria (NCTRN). Photograph by Franko Khoury, NMAfA/SI.
The Ooni of Ife examines colonial photographic albums on display in the exhibition Chief S.O. Alonge: Photographer to the Royal Court of Benin with Senior Archivist and Co-Curator Amy Staples, National Museum of African Art, June 21, 2016. Photograph by Franko Khoury, NMAfA/SI.
Curator Bryna Freyer gives a tour of *African Mosaic* to the Ooni of Ife and his delegation, National Museum of African Art, June 21, 2016. Photograph by Franko Khoury, NMAfA/SI.
The Ooni of Ife presents a decorative plaque depicting Shango, the god of thunder, to Christine Mullen Kreamer, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, National Museum of African Art, June 21, 2016. Photograph by Franko Khoury, NMAfA/Sl.