



Èró ò kan t'èsin: Religious Syncretism in the Performance of Èró Festival in Ọ̀wọ̀ Kingdom, Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Religious syncretism is adherence to Christianity or Islam, while also practicing other forms of African traditional religion. This was prevalent in Èró, a septennial, age-grade retirement festival performed by men above 65 years in Ọ̀wọ̀ Kingdom, Ondo State, Nigeria. Scant academic resources revealed that Èró Festival is yet to receive adequate research attention, thereby creating knowledge gap. The aim therefore, was to fill the gap by embarking on a study of Èró Festival. The objectives were to identify the performers and investigate religious syncretism in the festival. Qualitative Research Design was adopted. A combination of ethnography, interview (Key Informant and In-depth), and non-participant observation methods were espoused. Festivalisation was adopted as theoretical framework. Performers were identified as Eléro (candidate), Bàbá Eléro, (an elderly male who has performed Èró), the age-grade cadres (Ayóyos/Ugbàmas), first daughter/female relative, female cloth-weavers and participant-audiences. The study found that diverse aspects of Èró Festival aligned with syncretism, and performers oscillated between Christianity/Islam and traditional religion. Additionally, the study found that many ritualistic proscriptions were imposed on performers. The study concluded that Ọ̀wọ̀' s strict adherence to indigenous festivals promotes religious syncretism and religious harmony in the community.

Keywords: Èró Festival, Ondo State, Nigeria, Ọ̀wọ̀ Kingdom, Religious Syncretism

Introduction

Religious syncretism is the blending of diverse forms of belief systems or practices. (Adega, 2022: 120). It is as old as religion and exists all over the world. In Nigeria, it is mainly the fusion of Christianity, Islam, and some forms of African traditional religion. This is predominant among the Yoruba ethnic that comprises one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa. They inhabit the western and coastal regions of Nigeria and parts of neighboring countries like Benin and Togo and some countries in the Atlantic World (Klem, 1975). Mbiti (1985: 1) cited in Ndubisi (2022) observes that "Africans are notoriously

religious". Ndubuisi (2022: 70) further substantiates that "Religion can be said to be part and parcel of the African person".

The Yoruba religious tradition is renowned for its vibrant and diverse expressions, which have been shaped by indigenous beliefs and the influence of external faith traditions over centuries (Klem, 1975). The Yoruba, a significant ethnic group in Nigeria, has a rich religious tradition that, through the transatlantic slave trade, has influenced and merged with various belief systems across the Americas. A significant aspect of Yoruba spirituality is the Ifá divination system, which uses sacred texts and rituals to communicate with the Òrìṣàs and ancestors.

The traditional religion of the Yoruba, often referred to as Ifá, is a complex and sophisticated system of beliefs centered on a pantheon of deities known as Òrìṣàs. They represent natural forces and human endeavors, each possessing distinct personalities, domains, and attributes. Notable Òrìṣàs include Òḡún, the god of iron and warfare; Šàngó, the god of thunder and lightning; Yemoja, the goddess of rivers and motherhood; and Òṣun, the goddess of love, fertility, and fresh waters. This system guides adherents in making decisions and understanding the divine will. Ancestral worship is another crucial component, with ancestors believed to influence the living, ensuring continuity and respect for lineage and heritage. These deities are central to Yoruba religious practices and are revered through various rituals and ceremonies.

The Yoruba also engage in numerous rituals and festivals, which often include music, dance, and sacrifices to honor the Òrìṣàs and ancestors, reflecting a vibrant and dynamic religious culture. However, there has been a long-standing religious syncretism among the Yoruba groups. This unique religious synthesis has been extensively studied by scholars, who have sought to understand how the Yoruba have integrated various faith traditions into their own spiritual and cultural expressions (Ray, 1993). Although extensive studies have been done on indigenous Yoruba festivals (Parrinder 1951; Adedeji, 1968; Olupona, 2012; Opare, 2014; Kukoyi, 2020; Adesiji, 2022; Diyaolu, 2023), these studies have been selective, while scant attention is paid to Èró Festival in Qwò Kingdom. Most of these studies were delimited to some ethnic groups with no attention given to the religious syncretism in septennial festivals like the Èró Festival in Qwò Kingdom

Understanding Èró Festival through Festivalisation

Festival is generally used to denote commemorations that are marked by unique observances that are usually done at intervals and are branded by unusual performances. Festival is from the Latin word *festum*, which means public joy, merriment, revelry. Another Latin term for festive events is *feria*, which means abstinence from work so as to honour the gods (Falassi, 1987). While describing festival, Falassi (1987: 1) argues that:

Festival is an event, a social phenomenon, encountered in virtually all human cultures. The colorful variety and

dramatic intensity of its dynamic choreographic and aesthetic aspects, the signs of deep meaning underlying them, its historical roots and the involvement of the natives have always attracted the attention of casual visitors, have consumed travelers and men of letters alike.

Festivals are celebrated in Africa for many reasons. On the African continent, Diakhate (2001) observes that Africa is a continent that is prodigiously rich in diverse form of rituals and observances. Most of them have origins in religious expressions and magic, though some engender comic expressions. The functionality of indigenous festivals in reassuring community of divine welfare often motivates community members work together in ensuring their periodic commemorations (Diakhate, 2001; Roy, 2005). Festivals are venerated to curry the favour of gods, ancestral spirits and other celestial elements, to ward off evil and attract good weather, bountiful harvest and sustenance of life through procreation. Additionally, they are celebrated to observe seasonal changes and the good they bring. For instance, in some African societies harvest seasons are conceptualised to thank the gods and request more bountiful harvest in the next season.

Diverse forms of festivals are venerated in Africa. A prominent one among Africans is Harvest and Agricultural festival which often celebrates the beginning of harvest. This category of festival is occasioned by the change of seasons, due to the effects of weather on crop planting and harvesting. These kinds of festivals are famous with many ethnic groups of Nigeria. It is a period when their staple crop, new yam is annually received with great festivity, signaling an end to hunger for that period, as well as being a period of plenty.

Another well-known festival among Africans is rite of passage. This is the process of moving from one point of maturity to another in a community. Such festival is common in Calabar and other parts of South-South Nigeria. Ovia-Ose Festival in Ògòrì, Kogi State and Arigiyan in Ìkàré-Àkókó Ondo State, as well as Ulwaluko Festival among the Xhosa people of South Africa are a few examples.

Furthermore, among Africans, the belief in the primacy of physical phenomena, like mountains, vegetation, the sun, the moon, hills, and bodies of water believed to have nourished the people, as well as being responsible for their survival, provides the root for some religious festivals. Another category of festivals is those that celebrate the progenitors of their communities. They are usually done by indigenes to show appreciation to their founders or the first settlers in their communities. Ancestor veneration/masquerade relates particularly to Africa where there are festivals relating to the return of the ancestors from the dead in the form of masquerade to commune with the living. This kind of festival abounds in different parts of Africa in different forms (Olupona, 2014).

Festivals serve important roles of re-enacting a society's past and its overall traditional thought system. Besides this, festivals, especially religious ones,

furnish communities with the belief and assurance of spiritual protection and symmetry. When festivals are not commemorated, communities often feel disconnected from the gods and may be enveloped in the fear of impending calamities and unpalatable consequences. Significant to festivals is their propensity in breaking the monotony of a community's life and ethics by enabling people to engage in some activities and behaviours that may otherwise be prohibited.

While festivals are important in re-enacting society's past and are didactic, there must be a link connecting the traditions of a festival with modernity. Festivalisation explores the links between various local and global cultures, communities, identities and lifestyle narratives as they are both constructed and experienced in the festival context (Jordan, 2016). Festivals progressively gather a broader spectrum of functions as they increase in significance by extending beyond the mechanism that protracts cultures and assure their acceptance as a means of engendering indigenous pride, distinctiveness and revenues. Jordan (2016: 10) avers that "Festive environments are created as sites that are clearly distinct from everyday life, places where social norms can be turned on their heads and identities played with". This is visible with Èró Festival. Participants and audiences are able to freely blend than in other platforms, thereby comparable to an experiment in which festivals turn into "cultural laboratories", enabling practitioners to experiment new ideas. It also enables "festival-goers" the opportunity to try out new art forms that they would otherwise restrain from, as well as see upcoming artists. The participatory, experiential and immersion nature of festivals distinguishes them from arts events held in theatre and concert halls (Robinson 2015; Jordan, 2016: 8). The saliency of participation, spectatorship, cultural message (of spectacle, mask and costumes) and the immersion of individuals in carnival spirit of celebration are amongst major factors of the carnival spirit (Yerima, 2009).

An Overview of Èró Festival in Ọwọ Kingdom

Ọwọ is located in the northern part of Ondo State. It is the Headquarters of Owo Local Government area. It is surrounded by satellite towns like Ìyèrè, Òkèlùsè, Emùré-Ilé, Ùsò and many others. Ọwọ's origin is attributed to Prince *Omalaiyé Ojùgbélú Arèrè* descendant of Odùduwà around 1019 AD (Oloidi, 2004; corroborated by informants). Ọwọ Kingdom is ruled by Ọlówọ, a supreme monarch and first-class king in Yorubaland. It consists of five major quarters: *Ìlórò*, *Ìgbóròkò*, *Èhin-Ogbè*, *Ìsáipèn* and *Ìjèbú-Ọwọ*, each having its own exclusivity in its history and socio-political organization. *Ìlórò* people are the aborigines that sojourned with the first Ọlówọ from Ile-Ife, over 10 centuries ago and occupy a significant place in Ọwọ Kingdom. Furthermore, they are the guardian of Ọwọ traditions and their chiefs are highly regarded (*Elénupònà*).

In Yorubaland, Ọwọ Kingdom is renowned for the commemoration of indigenous festivals. Most aspects of their sociology are attached to indigenous performances including Ùlabì Festival, Ògúnró and diverse kinds of Egúngún Festival, as well as their most prominent festival, Igogo. Others include *Àjọ*,

Ugbààte, Ùpèlì, Uyènnà, Èbò-àrúfín as well as the Festival under study, Èró Festival (Badeji, 2024).

Èró is a male rite of passage festival performed by men above 65 years. It is celebrated every seven years, but if a reigning Ọlówò participates in one, the subsequent one would be performed in nine years, as a symbol of respect. In the year it is commemorated, it usually runs concomitantly with Igogo Festival.

The key performers of this festival are members of the highest-ranking age-grade group (*Òkíné/Olórí-Ugbàma*). It is vital to mention that the cadres of the male age-grade in Ọwò Kingdom are three; generally referred to as *Ugbàma-Ùlórò* or *Ayóyos*; the latter, during Igogo Festival. The recruitment stage is *Kaya* (carriers), the middle cadre is *Òkejì/Èkejì-Ugbàma*, while the most senior that graduate in a spectacular Èró performance after seven years is *Òkíné/Olórí-Ugbàma*. The age-grades are headed by a chairman, *Olóótú* and a deputy. Succinctly put, it is a festival that is considered in Ọwò as the celebration of maturity into a gratifying old age by men of Ọwò origin. It symbolizes the attainment of eldership and sequestration from communal labour and physically demanding and exerting tasks.

Èró Festival candidacy and eligibility

Some Èró candidates (*Eléros*), who constituted the main population and informants in this study clarified that a criterion to becoming a chief in *Ìlórò* quarter, (except in exceptional cases with hereditary titles) young men must have served in the three age-grade for between 27-32 years with an average of seven years spent in each cadre. They are afterwards eligible for *Ùghàrẹ-Ùlórò*, (the most honoured chiefs) after Èró performance. Only men from *Ìlórò* quarter are eligible to become *Ùghàrẹ-Ùlórò*. Informants additionally disclosed that in the instance of performing Èró, the candidate (*Eléro*) must on no account bear load on his head or prostrate to anyone again till the day of his death.

As inferred most informants, Èró comes with a lot of demands and many phases of the festival comprise of rites and rituals for candidates. Informants however explained that a significant eligibility criterion for eligibility, to begin with, is to have exhibited lofty integrity and contributed to the progress Ọwò community in the course of the years. With these sterling qualities, a candidate is considered ripe for the status of a reputable elder.

Historicising Èró Festival from historical perspectives

Some informants explicated that Èró Festival began in 1539 during the reign of Ọlówò *Ọmàsàn* (1539-1578) with the appearance of *Ojùmú (Bàbá Àkéte)* in Ọwò from *Ìjùmú* in the present-day Kogi. He was a potent medicine-man who afterwards became Ọlówò *Ọmàsàn's* diviner, close friend and confidant. Soon after his arrival, he noticed that some customs that were inimical to the physical well-being of elderly men in the community were still in practice. So, he advised Ọlówò *Ọmàsàn* and his cabinet to institute three cadres, for all the men in the kingdom. He also prescribed the years that members should serve in each cadre

before move ahead to the subsequently one, while the final one should be celebrated with a festival. Beyond this, he implored the *Olówò* to promote qualified graduands to the respected positions of elders (*Ùghàrẹ*) to facilitate their taking chieftaincy titles.

Èró performances

Informants disclosed that a significant precondition for Èró performance is a road-trek of members of the three age-grades of *Ìlórò* ancestry to and from a village, *Àmùrẹn*, about five kilometres from *Qwò*. They additionally stated that along the way, various rites and rituals are performed. These are elemental to the prelude required for Èró. This road-trip is often performed between three weeks and seven days to the commencement of the festival. This is significant for the reason that the graduating group (*Òkíné-Ugbàma*) must guide all members of the three age-grades from *Ìlórò* quarter to pay respect to the *Alámùrẹn*. The road trip to *Àmùrẹn* is usually led by the *Olóòtú* and his deputy.

Plate 1: Some members of the *Èkeji/Òkejin-Ugbàma* arriving *Àmùrẹn* at the 2020 Èró Festival



Source: Tunde Onibode, 2021

Plate 2: The *Olóòtú* in indigo blue *agbada* arriving Amuren with the *Olórí-Ugbàma* (in purple attire) at 2020 Èró Festival



Source: Tundé Oníbodè, 2022

Informants disclosed further that Àmùrén trip is not for leisure because many shrines are located on their way, where they must stop to perform some rituals. The trip is also as an opportunity to orientate incoming *Òkíné-Ugbàmas* and their prospective *Olóòtú* with the shrines and rituals. This is also where outgoing leaders will pray for the prospective ones and the entire Ọwọ people community. They must perform rituals at every shrine until they get to their destination.

Ọko-Èró (Èró farm): A basic requirement for Èró performance is that cultivation of a farmland by candidate, who needs to plant food crops like yam, maize, plantains, vegetables and so on. These would be harvested after his Èró performance by relatives.

Selection/choice of *Bàbá Eléro*: *Baba Eléro*, as conceptualised in this study is a revered old or elderly man who has performed Ero earlier, and is responsible for the draping of Èró costume on the *Eléro*. However, the choice of this elder is not a frivolous one. The selection must be made by Ifá, so the eventual selection will bring the candidate good fortune.

Homage to the Ọlówọ at the Ọòsà *Aghòdáyé* Shrine: Before embarking on this trip, the age grades are required to pay homage to the Ọlówọ at the Ọòsà *Aghòdáyé* Shrine. This is located within the palace grounds. There he will bless them and offer prayers for their safe return.

Ūjà-Èró: The *Eléros* can also engage in mock wrestling matches with one another, to mark the end of any physical exertion (inclusive of physical combats) in their lifetimes.

Plate 3: Mock fight between two *Eléros* at the 2011 Èró Festival



Source: Tundé Onibodè, August 21, 2022

Ọpá-àjà: This is the draping of colourful women's headties on poles by participant-audiences that are often the relatives and friends of the candidate, who would carry it around some routes in the community amidst singing and dancing.

Iròghò Olísòghò (Shrine): Candidates can go to this shrine (*iròghò Olísòghò*) to receive blessings. In this place, they are required to place one foot on a stone known as (*ota-Olísòghò*). Before this, they must wear old clothes and paint their faces with blue powder, a substance known as *ẹfun dúdú*.

Plate 4: *Eléros* receiving blessing from the sacred stones of *Olísòghò* shrine at the 2020 Èró Festival



Source: *Ọ̀dòfẹ̀wò* of *Ọ̀wò* Kingdom, Nov. 24, 2021

Ìsánsò (Draping of Èró costume): This is when Èró costume (*girijó*) is draped on the candidate customarily done for *Ìlórò* candidates at *Arigidi*, even though it may be performed in the house of *Bàbá Eléro* or the candidate's family compound. The *Ugbàmas* from the other quarters are customarily not permitted to partake in the trip to *Àmùrén* and they can tie their *girijó* at any place of their choice, usually in the house of an elder who has performed Èró before.

Consecration of Èró costume: This is the sanctification of Èró costume, *girijó*, as well as other costumes that the *Eléro* would use for the duration of the festival and thereafter in the evening before the *Ìsánsò* performance. This is often performed according to the faith of the *Eléro*. These are customarily performed in Church by clergies that would pray for him before the altar. But if he is a Muslim, a prayer session would be organised by the Islamic clerics to sanctify the costume

Harvest of crops at *Okò-Èró*: This is often done the day after performing Èró. This is usually performed the day after the end of Igogo is usually set aside for this, amidst drumming, singing and dancing to harvest the crops. On the farm, each person can harvest as much crops as he/she carry, but it is forbidden for the *Eléro* to take any item from the farm.

Thanksgiving: Despite being an indigenous performance, a crucial aspect of the festival is that the *Elefo* must take his *Èró* clothes to his place of worship (Church, Mosque, traditional places of worship) to be blessed and sanctified by the religious head. There, he will be blessed as well as the clothes, the evening before the *Ùsánşo* performance.

Religious syncretism in *Èró* Performance

Ọwò is a community where religious plurality thrives and traditional and modern faiths enjoy a form of symbiosis and inter-religious harmony, considering the number of indigenous performances that are venerated in the community. In most of these, indigenes and members of the community, irrespective of age, status or religious faith were observed to participate. This was not only synonymous with indigenes that are resident in the community, but even those in Diaspora. This can be viewed as a contemporary way of being traditional. *Èró* is also observed to be very crucial to the sociology of most elderly men in the community, as noted in the number of participants that travel from abroad for its candidacy and performance, although this is not to say that this is applicable to all.

However, in the performance of this festival, a significant observation is religious syncretism. This was noted in the way performers oscillated between modern and traditional religions during some of the performances. Informants reinforced religious harmony in Ọwò Kingdom by emphasizing that belonging to a particular faith or religious belief, Christianity or Islam, has nothing to do with *Èró* performance (*Èró ò kan t'èsin* or *Èró o ba t'èsin wa*). These were reinforced in some aspects of the festival.

Elements of religious syncretism in *Èró* performance

Àmùrén trip: As pointed out earlier in the study, the road-trek to Àmùrén is an important aspect of *Èró* performance for candidates of *Ìlórò* descent, who are graduating (*Eléros*), or for those moving to other cadres in the *Ugbàma* age-grade system. This trip is not only significant for homage-paying to the *Alámùrén*, but some rituals are said to be performed at the numerous shrines situated between Àmùrén and Ọwò. Also, it will enable the *Olóótú* to reveal to the incoming group, the location of the shrines and the rituals performed there.

Ifá consultation: One of the requirements of the age-grade system (*Ugbàma*) is the replacement of an outgoing *Olóótú* with a new choice through the belief in divine choice and endorsement. This is not done through voting, popularity or wealth, but with due consultation of Ifá divinity, which according to informants, must not be queried.

Ìròghò *Olísòghò* performance: This is one of the performances required of an *Eléro*, though, it is optional. This shrine is presided over by its priest, High chief *Olísòghò*, where candidates visit to receive blessings as part of *Èró* performances, irrespective of their religious denomination.

Ifá consultation on the choice of *Bàbá Eléro*: This is a significant aspect of the festival in which a candidate must make a choice of an elder who has performed Èró before, to drape his *girijó* (Èró costume) on him. Irrespective of the candidate's faith, informants revealed that this choice must be made with due consultation to Ifá, which would pick an elder whose hand would be fortuitous in the life of the candidate, onward.

Church/Mosque sanctification of Èró costume: Another evidence of religious syncretism is that an Èró candidate must engage in a prayer or sanctification session, usually performed on the night after the performance at *Ìròghò Olísòghò*. This is usually done according to the faith of the candidate, whose Èró cloth, *girijó* (woven under ritualistic proscriptions) with other Qwò fabrics and other clothes gifted to him, must be neatly folded and displayed in a large tray. This tray is usually carried on the head by a female member of a candidate's family and taken to the Church, if he identifies with the Christian faith, where they would be sanctified. Also, the candidate, who may be joined by members of his family, would be prayed for, before the altar by clergy to enjoy the blessings of God, even as he performs Èró.

On the other hand, a candidate who is of the Muslim faith can organize a prayer session in his home by inviting Muslim clerics or by going to the home of an Islamic cleric in his vicinity for a prayer session, while a female member would bear the tray on which the clothes are placed on her head to the prayer session. The tray of clothes is usually placed in front of the clerics for sanctification.

Draping of Èró costume: The next stage of the performance is the draping of (*girijó*) on the candidate by *Baba Eléro*. This is often performed after the prayer and sanctification sessions in according to the faith of the candidate who is performing Èró.

Thanksgiving: From the end of the *Ùsanşò* performance, the candidates might decide to hold thanksgiving services in their places of worship. This, among other performances is usually held till the end of October of that year, as pointed out by informants.

Plate 5: One group of *Eléro* in Church for sanctification, while Muslim clerics in a prayer session for another *Eléro* before *Ùsánşò* at the 2020 Èró Festival



Source: *Ọ̀dòfẹ̀wò* of *Ọ̀wò* Kingdom and High chief *Adafen Àbáyòmí Ajọgbọ* Ode

Implications of Religious Syncretism in Èró Festival of Ọ̀wò Kingdom

Religious syncretism in Yorubaland, which involves the blending of traditional Yoruba religious practices with elements of Christianity and Islam, has significant cultural, social, and political implications. These implications manifest in various ways, shaping the identity, religious practices, and societal structures of the Yoruba people. I have identified four main implications as a way of conclude this paper.

Firstly, religious syncretism promotes cultural continuity and adaptation in Ọ̀wò Kingdom. The practice of religious syncretism in Èró festival has helped the kingdom to maintain and preserve their cultural identity amidst the spread of Christianity and Islam. By integrating elements of their traditional beliefs with those of the Abrahamic religions, the kingdom has been able to continue practicing aspects of their indigenous religion within the outlook of a new religious framework. This is in consonance with the submission of Olupona (2014) that the Yoruba people are enduring and adaptable to human spirituality in the quest to maintain their cultural practices. And as shown through my study, the syncretic nature of Yoruba religion demonstrates cultural flexibility and resilience. This adaptability has enabled the people of Ọ̀wò Kingdom to absorb and integrate new religious influences without completely abandoning their traditional beliefs and practices, thus ensuring the survival and relevance of Èró festival in a rapidly changing world.

Secondly, religious syncretism could be two strange bedfellows in the society. In some instances, it could easily promote social cohesion and at other times, religious syncretism could lead to conflict in the society. Religious syncretism

can enhance social cohesion by creating a shared cultural and religious space where different beliefs coexist (Olupona, 2014). This can lead to greater tolerance and understanding among adherents of different religions, fostering a sense of unity and community. This is the case with Èró festival in Ọwò Kingdom. On the other hand, the blending of religious practices can also lead to tensions and conflicts. Some purist factions within Christianity and Islam might view syncretism as a threat to the purity of their faith, leading to religious intolerance and conflict. Disputes can arise over the authenticity and legitimacy of syncretic practices, potentially destabilizing social harmony (Peel, 2000).

Thirdly, the religious syncretism in Èró festival could have political implications. Religious syncretism can influence political structures and leadership in Ọwò Kingdom. Traditional religious leaders, such as Ifá priests, may hold significant sway in communities especially during Èró Festival. Their authority can intersect with that of political leaders, creating a complex interplay between religious and political power (Bascom, 1991). Beyond this, the political leaders might need to navigate the sensitivities surrounding religious syncretism of Èró festival to maintain social stability and support.

Furthermore, Èró Festival is a high form of tourism and cultural heritage attracting tourists and contributing to the local economy. Cultural heritage sites associated with traditional Yoruba religion and syncretic practices, such as sacred groves and shrines, can become important tourist destinations, generating revenue and promoting cultural preservation. The blending of religious practices can influence economic activities, particularly those related to religious artifacts, attire, and ceremonies. Artisans and traders who produce and sell religious items may find new markets and opportunities arising from the syncretic nature of religious practices (Olupona, 2014).

Finally, the religious syncretism of Èró festival could encourage interfaith dialogue and education, fostering mutual respect and understanding among adherents of different religious backgrounds. This can contribute to peacebuilding and the development of a more inclusive society of Ọwò Kingdom.

Conclusion

The religious syncretism of Èró festival in Ọwò Kingdom are multifaceted, affecting cultural identity, social cohesion, political dynamics, religious practices, economic activities, and education. While syncretism can promote cultural continuity and social harmony, it also presents challenges, such as potential conflicts and tensions between purist and syncretic factions. Navigating these complexities requires a nuanced understanding of the interplay between traditional Yoruba religion, Christianity, and Islam, and a commitment to fostering mutual respect and coexistence. This interplay that has been the main reason for the existence of Èró Festival because *Èró ò kan t'èsin*.

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