

Emergence and Abolition of Adoro the Mysterious Goddess of Alor-Uno (Nsukka) Enugu State of Nigeria, 1957 - 1995

By

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Abstract

Humans alleged that real life is in close contact with sacred powers, and these sacred powers are often encountered in the form of divine beings. The ways in which the divine beings are imagined and experienced depend on the cultural context of a particular community. Such divine beings is goddesses. A goddess is a female deity worshipped by people who believe it controls or exerts force over some aspect of the world. A goddess can be generous and supportive, and also devastating and destructive. A goddess rules over destiny, nature, justice, and need to be recognized and worshipped as a powerful being. A goddess can also be perceived as a feminine expression of the divine, which is Mother Nature and the elements of creation. Thus, human beings must respect the powers above them that cannot be controlled. This paper therefore explores the emergence, deeds and abolition of Adoro, the mysterious goddess of Alor-Uno Nsukka. It takes through the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era in Nigeria. The paper uses historical, qualitative and quantitative approaches to achieve its aim.

Keywords: Emergence, abolition, Adoro, mystery, goddess, pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial

Introduction

Goddess is any feminine or female deity with supernatural powers. In some cultures such as Canaan, Anatolia, Arabia and Australia among others, Goddesses are associated with Earth, motherhood, love, and the household. In other cultures such as the Eskimos, the Japanese, the Khasis of India among others, Goddesses also rule over war, death, and destruction as well as healing. They can be figureheads of religions and can be accessed in modern times by religious statues. In some religions, a sacred feminine archetype can occupy a very central place in prayer and worship. The historical context of goddess veneration is traced from prehistory through archaeological and iconographic evidence entailing grave contents: female figurines, pottery; artifacts like palettes, maceheads and stelae; from early Nile valley cultures. Female figures in possible ritual contexts feature prominently and some may be precursors of later goddesses due to their similar symbolism. Others indicate possible female leaders or queens [1]. However; every goddess has her own unique qualities, talents and associated rituals. Over the centuries, and to this day, people have conducted rituals to specific goddesses when they want to generate certain results in their lives.

People have benefitted from variety of religious ideas in their long history. Worship of the goddess is one of these types. The abundant statues found through excavations carried out in different regions confirm the existence of the tradition of worship of the goddesses, one of the oldest religious traditions, in the old world. Based on historical and archaeological evidence, some scholars believe that speaking and inventing vocabulary for the transmission of abstract concepts was founded by women, as women needed to talk with children and to communicate with other tribal members. That is why, in all cultures and languages, the language of the conversation is called mother tongue [2]. Because women in the ancient age had the main task of

life, they were worshipped as a goddess for their dignity and respect. Perhaps the most important cause was the fertility and reproduction that caused the woman to be sacred in this age, and even to be worshiped as a goddess. The goddesses of fertility, water, justice, love, beauty, etc. are only examples of women goddesses, each existed in Mesopotamian civilizations, Elam, Iran, Greece, India and Egypt, with different names and with almost identical functions that guaranteed the life of human societies in conditions which the early humans were constantly faced with natural devastating threats [3].

Although, the goddesses of a particular society reflect the values and traditions of that society, one cannot assume direct correspondences between the mythological divine world and humans. It seems that myths about the goddesses cannot be taken as direct reflections of human historical experiences. At the same time, the changing visions of the divine beings may suggest some facets of the dynamics of social change within a particular community of people. For instance, a change in dominance from one goddess to another may reflect the rising power of a particular group within the society with its mythological concerns. A change in a particular goddess's function could conceivably reflect new needs and concerns on the part of the people [4]. One may ask whether it is possible to identify the "original" function of certain goddesses, in contrast to added or accumulated functions, or to distinguish between "primordial" goddesses, on the one hand, and lesser spirits or deified humans, on the other. While these distinctions can provide valuable insights, they can also be misleading. A particular goddess displays a number of functions, and it cannot be determined with certainty which should be considered the original or primordial. In fact, most divine beings are highly complex and are perceived to meet the needs of the people in a variety of ways.

History of Alor-uno

Alor-uno is one of the towns that make up Nsukka local government Area in Enugu state of Nigeria. It is situated at four kilometres distance towards the west of Kogi state. A major road from Nsukka to Idah in Kogi State passes through Alor- uno. The town, Alor-uno is bounded on the east by Nsukka town, on the west by Ibagwa-ani, on the north by Obukpa and on the south by Edem- ani. There is a natural boundary between Alor-uno and the above named communities, these boundaries are always made of living shrubs of plants which can resist any drought or any form of erosion. Alor –uno is also surrounded by hills which have made some people to regard Alor-uno as a town in a valley. This geographical location has contributed a lot to the land fertility of the town and most especially it has also shielded them from wars and enemies [5]. Alor-uno is made up of four quarters: Uwani quarter, Ejuona quarter, Amikpo quarter and Ugbene-ero quarter. Each quarter consist of several villages. The town originated from Igala in Kogi State of the middle belt, and the great fore-father or ancestors of Alor-uno was Ozuzuikoko. Ozuzuikoko was the son of the king of Igala known as “Attaa of Igala” and he was a famous hunter and farmer.

As a hunter and farmer, he came down to this eastern part of the country for hunting and to do other agricultural works. This man later decided to settle permanently at Alor-uno when he discovered that there were many wild animals and abundant land to cultivate on. He got married to Afor, a woman from his place and they gave birth to three sons, she was named after the main and the only market in Alor-Uno [6]. These three sons were Ibagwa aka, Oji and Ibagwa-Ani, these sons are the great-grand fathers of the present Ibagwa-aka in Igboeze South Local Government Area, Alor-Uno and Ibagwani both in Nsukka Local Government of Enugu State. Ranked in order of seniority, the three towns are brothers, and have many things in common,

especially in customs and traditions, because of this relationship, they share in common, traditional celebrations like the Omabe festival, the new yam festival, king coronation e.t.c

Alor-uno is known for agriculture which was their occupation then and even now. The land is very fertile for many tropical crops. Due to their interest in agriculture, some have left to other places like Kogi and Benue state to mention but a few, due to insufficiency of land for agriculture [7]. The people of Alor-uno do not depend on farming only, some of them are government workers, Some engage themselves in trading. Both Alor men and women are known for their industrious life, their women never depend on their husbands, they help in one way or the other in the caretaking of their families. As traders, one can find Alor-uno people all over Nigeria. The people of Alor-uno believed in African traditional religion which is the bond between three brothers as mentioned above. But when modern civilization came, it influenced their belief system which made some to stop worshipping other gods. The white men came into the town with different churches like Protestants, Roman Catholic and Anglican church of God.

Leadership in Alor-uno

The Alor-uno indigenes are noted for their uprightness. They believe in the efficacy of traditional justice. They have opposed all attempts to have a police station near them. The people believe that police or the white men justice is one that can be bought by the highest bidder, and that justice is for those who have more connections with people in power [8]. In Alor-uno, they have traditional rulers and elders. These are the peace makers in the town, the traditional rulers always rule their respective villages, and they hold such titles as Ozioko, Ede, Otamashi, Aruma, Asogwa and Mkpozo. They settle cases in the town and see to the welfare of the people. They are the highest central ruling body in the town, their decision is binding and final on all citizens. They can pronounce punishments such as fines, execution, or ostracism to anybody who

goes contrary to the rules and norms of Alor-uno people. The people call the police only if a person is guilty and refuses to accept his guilt, if the police could not settle the case, they will then charge the person to court, but this rarely occurs.

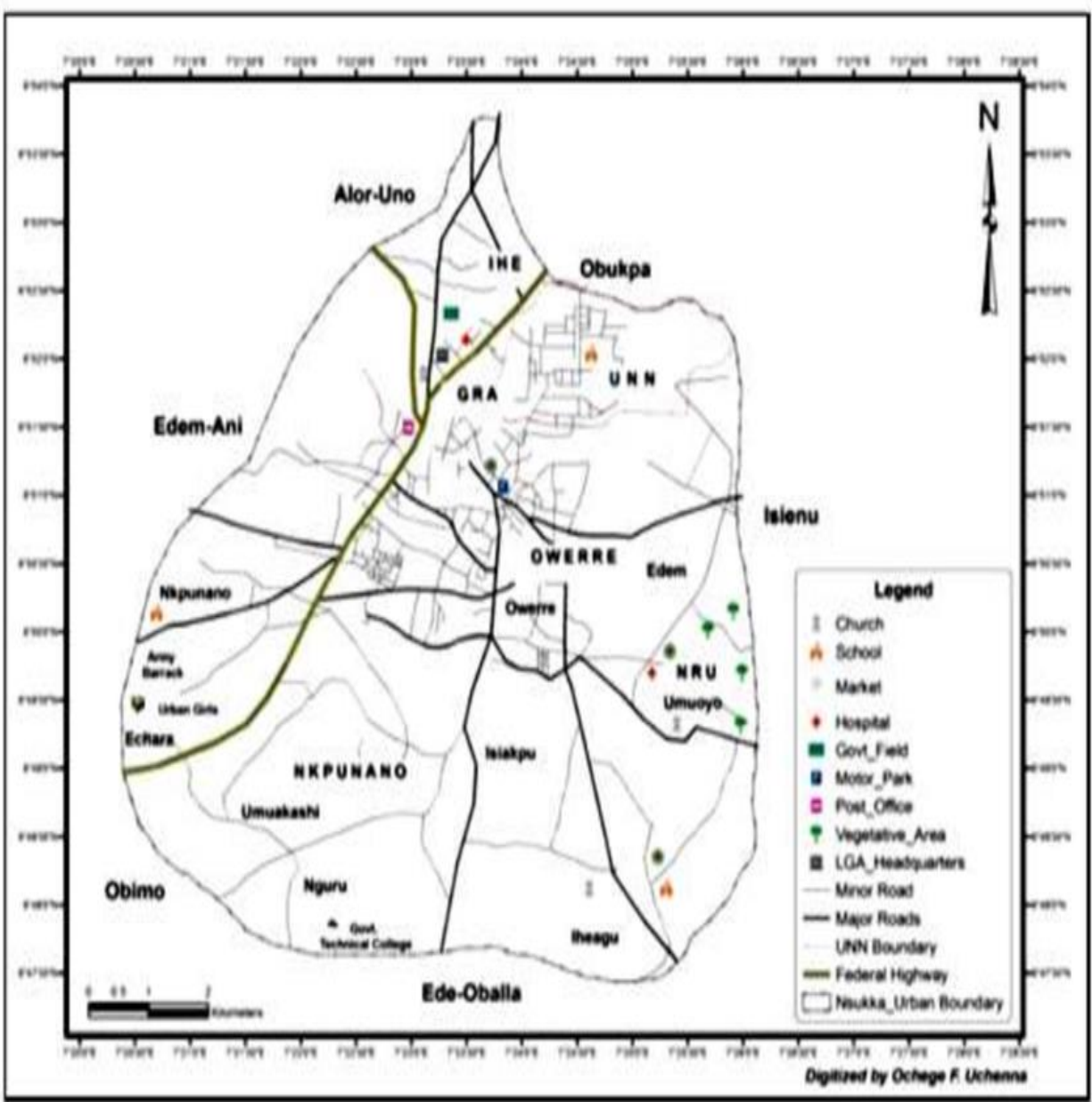


Figure one: Map of Nsukka L.G.A depicting Alor-Uno on top
Source: [15]

Slave Trade in Alor-Uno

The commercial lives of Aro-Uno in the pre-colonial era, centered on slave trade. This was at about early 18th Century ago. In fact, their present *Aho* Market has been as old as Alor-Uno itself. Though now, *Aho* Market is nothing to write home about but then, it was a very large Market both in space and population, and the centre for slave trade. Their forefathers were very wicked, especially those in Okoyi village. It was at Okoyi that they had more of the giants compared to other villages in Aro-Uno of that Century [9]. Indiscriminately, Okoyi Giants were busy kidnapping human beings and commercializing them at their will. The entire land of Nsukka, including the land of Aro-Uno and their suburbs were in confusion and in jeopardy; people were missing here and there. At Aho Market, those Giants will dig a very deep pit over night, which is the night before Aho Market day, removing the fresh sands the same night. They will also cover the pits with dry palm leaves; the covered pits were traps for whosoever that may urinate within that area. In fact, there had never been any Market day their traps wouldn't catch at least one or two innocent persons.

Consequently, their acts of wickedness made other communities around to conspire to raid the entire land of Aro, irrespective of their population. They began to hold secret meetings without the knowledge of the women, believing that women do not keep secrets. It therefore, became a matter of oath that no man should ever under any circumstances make the secret known to his wife or daughter. In fact, the more people were missing, the more frequent the secret meetings were held. Unexpectedly, as the conspiratorial meetings were on; a man broke the oath by telling his wife, who happened to be a daughter of Aro-Uno. The truth was that, the man was not the only son in law to Aro-Uno, for Aro-Uno did not just have Giants; they had also many beautiful girls. This of course, made Aro-Uno had many sons in law all over Nsukka land.

Therefore, if that man hadn't been the first to break the oath, perhaps another would have, not dreading the repercussions.

However, as soon Aro-Uno heard about the war conspiracy, especially as it was confirmed from their several in-laws all around Nsukka; they began also to hold their own meetings. The purpose of their meetings was to form a formidable defense against the entire Nsukka men. Therefore, the Elders of Aro-Uno (called, "Oha-Aro") have already had series of meetings before inviting the young men in order to carry them along with their plans. In their meeting with the young men, the agenda was to device the best strategy for their defense, preparations and mystic fortifications of the young men. The repairing of all broken palm-rafters' leaves fences around their villages was opposed by the giants from Okoyi village. However, these giants later agreed that the work should be done. Their plan was to lay ambush by the sides of all the repairs fences in order to cut-in their enemies and then destroy them.

War Confederation against Aro-Uno

There were five main communities in Nsukka who were in alliance to fight Aro-Uno to finish as retaliation to their missing ones who had been kidnapped and sold to slavery. These communities are: *Obimo, Nsukka Asadu, Edem, Obukpa and Ehalumona*. The point here is that, as soon the allied group noticed that Aro-Uno themselves had known their secrets and were even making their own plans for the war; they wasted no more time for invasion and attack [10]. They surrendered the entire land the very night they came and actually penetrated through the unrepaired fences, the repaired ones were set ablaze. The casualties were better told than seen, the defenses they had prepared could not hold. The so called Giants were killed in their numbers, there were pandemonium everywhere; the center could no longer hold.

Emergence of Adoro The Mysterious Goddess of Alor-uno

After many Months the war ended, the same confederates' fighters and others who never participated declared and granted the remnants of Aro-Uno freedom to come back to their homes. Few strong-willed ones came back, while some others were hanging around; watched on what will be the fate of those who were bold enough to come back. But, majority of the remnant never thought of coming back, for they saw it as suicide mission. However, gorilla war, looting, scrambling for war benefits and scrambling for beautiful young girls were going on between the young men from among the confederates. This made those remnants that were watching to delay there coming back [11]. The gorilla war was very common especially, when the enemy saw an able young remnant from Aro-Uno come back; for they saw them as a threat and roadblocks against their selfish aggrandizement. They either killed or kidnapped the person for the same slave trade. This lasted for a long period of time, irrespective of the strong group of men called Igbo-kwube-Onu (i.e. Igbo-it is-Okay) that were stationed in the middle territory of Aro-Uno to Police them. The Igbo-kwube-Onu people are presently living with the New Aro-Uno today.

Consequently, having done everything to stop the gorilla war, the lootings and the scrambling continued. Then, the few remnants that had been managing to stay now had a secret meeting; to look for a witch doctor who will covenant them into a deity for protection against their common enemies. They finally located a woman at Edem who actually gave them what they wanted. They narrated their ordeal to her and then demanded a *Protecting Charm that will forever remain Sacred and Sacrosanct* [12]. The woman granted their request but insisted that somebody must be buried alive to seal the Charm. Nevertheless, they conspired to bury the woman alive, in a bid to guard against their enemies going behind to pay a higher sum that could make the woman prepare a counter-Charm.

The woman then prepared the charm; after praising, worshipping with series of incantations and dancing around the Charm; she shouted; “Now bring the person for the burial, and make sure the eyes are tied!” Instead of going away for a person, they now surrendered the woman; she cried out, is anything the matter? They all replied simultaneously, nothing is the matter. One of them said: “We are sorry for this, but is imperative we’ve got to do this; it is just to consolidate the Charm forever as we requested”. All further cries of the woman were inside the grave, she kept crying with curses until her voice disappeared, even as they were covering her with the earthly sands. They all took oath and agreed that that nobody will ever alter a word of what happened and dispersed to their respective houses, believing that all is well. They never knew this was the beginning of their troubles and also a beginning of a new Aro-Uno.

The Deeds of Adoro the Mysterious Goddess of Alor-uno

After one Month, when everything was supposed to have been forgotten, and as they were playing their local draft in the village square of Ugbene-Ani; the apparition of the woman appeared. Almost, in all the village squares they, the apparition kept appearing for Months, sometimes it will appear in their respective houses and even in the farm lands. They started holding meetings again as to proffer a solution. When they finally decided to consult an Oracle-doctor, they now sent the wise among them to make inquiries. They then located one at Odoru in Igala land and went forth for consultation. Upon reaching there and before they could even knock on the door, the man shouted, “*I can see a woman following you, crying out for vengeance; what have you done to her?*” They were bamboozled, not knowing what will become of their search for solution and of their future [13].

Finally, they came in and the man became friendlier than he was when they were outside, for he offered them Kola and acted as one who knew they were coming and why they came.

After thanking him and before they could say another word, he was already telling them why they came and the solutions of their predicaments. He said, now here what *Ada-Aro* (*the woman they buried alive*), whom you buried alive said: “*You have only two options; it is either you offer me a person every year (male or female) for life sacrifice or I choose a person myself and whichever one you choose must become a covenant.*” Once again, they were bewildered in silence for more than 20 Minutes (meditating on the phrase-***Ada-Aro***) before one of them broke the silence and said we have heard you, we must get back to you.

When they left the Oracle, they came back and reported the message to all Oha-Aro (people of Aro). And, after days of contemplations as for which of the two options to choose, they finally broke the dilemma and made a choice. The choice is that, Ada-Aro should choose by herself every year. The same messengers were sent back to the Oracle to present their choice and when they arrived, the Oracle-Doctor then made an everlasting covenant between Aro-Uno and Ada-Aro (the woman they buried alive). Even though it is today called “Adoro,” it is just by usual corruption of languages. The real name is “Ada-Aro,” which later became a “mysterious goddess.” perpetrate

The people of Aro-Uro perpetrated a lot of atrocities using “Adoro” the mysterious goddess. They were misusing it by inciting it to cause societal distress and using it to maim individuals or even kill them in some cases. This shrine is demonic in nature because it has not helped in any way to improve the much needed developmental progress in the community. Rather what they witnessed was high rate of death, abject poverty in all its ramifications because no individual in the town had progressed according to his/her wish. The goddess was as a very powerful deity. People feared it. So many evil things happen in the town for which, Adoro was responsible. For example, the electricity in Nsukka is not up to two miles away from Alor-Uno,

but there was no electricity in the town, while other towns situated behind Alor-Uno have electricity through Nsukka.

There were frequent premature deaths of the young men and women of the town. They were being poisoned. Alor-uno town have been rejected because of this Adoro put in place by the old people. They were made to understand that the Adoro was made by a wizard for their people. It started killing them and even other people from other towns. Whenever it killed, it took the person's belongings, such as cars, motorcycles, televisions, radios, chairs, tables, stoves, gas cookers, plates among others. Dead bodies were even brought to it and also the living beings are used to sacrifice to it. A woman dare not touch items used to make sacrifices to Adoro. Women do not go near the domain of the deity known as 'Ngwu Adoro'. The road leading to the Ngwu Adoro is not for everybody [14]. A non-indigene who passes through the road would die. There were two roads there. At the end of every month, the chief priest closes one, and the other is opened. That is how he interchanges both roads. The indigenes of Alor-uno have been crying and longing to have tap water. They had it but Adoro suspended it because of noise. Adoro said that the place should be left for absolute quietness. There and then all the investment became a wasted effort and the pipelines became moribund.

There was no place the idol does not victimize people. Sometimes it used to kill the Yorubas, Igalas, etc. That was why people from those areas used to sacrifice to the idol. The idol was appeased with things like horses, cows, goats, hen e.t.c. The goddess claimed and made her choice; though mostly outside Aro-Uno. For instance, if one visits the Priest of Adoro, he will see many beautiful women (ironically, she doesn't choose ugly women) that have been claimed by Adoro from different parts of Nsukka land. These women or girls stay with the priest, until an interested man comes and pay a token of dowry to the priest for marriage. The deity safeguarded

Aro-Uno and prevented so many enemies from seeing them. In the long run, so many other smaller deities originated from the main deity, some of them are okareke, Ezeowo, Edi, Ngbedike, ego ego and many more.

The prosperous youths in Alor-uno were pre-maturely killed by Adoro. There were some good houses scattered all over the town but the owners have died at bachelorhood. The chief priest of the deity known as 'Obodo Uzu Ukweze' confessed that throughout the ten years of his tenure as the chief priest, he did not achieve any good thing, he lamented. That was why the entire community were tired and willing to reject the deity. It has been in prayer over many years for God to send the Messiah who would deliver them from the ugly situation.



Figure two: The image of Adoro The Mysterious Goddess of Alor-uno.
Source: Researcher's Field Work

Abolition of Adoro the Mysterious Goddess of Alor-uno

In 1994, there was a seminar held by the Charism prayer group. The Charism prayer group revealed that God has already sent someone to do the deliverance but nobody knew who it was. On 11th of February 1995, a lady, Sister Ngozi, came to Alor-uno. She was from the village Umu Egbede. The first day she arrived to the place, she stayed where her parents died, i.e. the worshipping ground. It is being said that the Adoro killed her parents. Prophetess Ngozi Ogbu was the head of a white garment church known as (Jehovah Messiah Alleluya Hosanna mission). She was formerly in Okuzu, Anambara state as a prophetess, before deciding to relocate to her home town to minister to her people. She and her followers destroyed Adoro the **Mysterious Goddess of Alor-Uno** and shattered the consecrated symbols of deity. Prophetess Ngozi Ogbu had so many followers and thugs, which she used to force the people to surrender their charms and personal gods (chi). The traditionalists and idol worshippers in the community then were her sworn enemies. Many threatened publicly never to rest until she was buried, she destroyed their idol shrines and shattered their consecrated symbols of deities, she and her followers even invaded houses to remove charms and beat up those who refused to surrender their charms. Sometimes she goes naked and rubs her faeces and urine on herself to get rid of some buried charms.

Not until she came, Alor-Uno indigenes never expected that any human being can do the mighty work that she has done. What she did for them, no one, even the government, cannot do it in ten years. She has done it free of charge. The youths are very happy for abolishing Adoro. The people who live abroad also sent their messages encouraging her to continue in her good work. Some people who are enemies of progress, opposed her mission. These people act in disguise of Adoro in carrying out their dubious acts. They are the people who call the Police for the

prophetess and her team. But youths were out for it. The worshipping ground was where her father died. She looked for a place where she could build a church, could not get, then she demolished her father's old buildings. The land belongs to her father. The name of her father was Obeta Nwa Ogbu. As Prophetess Ngozi Ogbu started cleansing this town, she has the support of the youths and the elderly men and women.



Figure Three: the picture of Prophetess Ngozi Ogbu sitting down at the premises of Adoro the Mysterious Goddess of Alor-Uno after she and her members have destroyed the deity.

Source: Researcher's Field Work

Conclusion

Goddess images are depicted in a wide range of forms, from aniconic representations, such as abstract organs of reproduction, to fully elaborated icons decorated with the finery of monarchy. They are linked to all major aspects of life, including birth, initiation, marriage, reproduction, and death. They display the elaborate variegation of religious experiences in different cultural contexts. Goddess worship is a continuous activity in many parts of the world, despite periodic ebbs and tides during certain critical epochs. The people of Alor-uno set up a goddess for protection and prosperity. However, the deity perpetrated a lot of atrocities against the town. Nevertheless, Prophetess Ngozi Ogbu the head of a white garment church known as (Jehovah Messiah Alleluya Hosanna mission) came and put to an end all the nefarious activities carried out by Adoro the mysterious goddess in the town. All things connected with witchcraft/native doctors or sorcerers that deter people's progress were demolished by the prophetess and her church members. Prophetess Ngozika Ogbu waged war against the supporters of bad omen and those that are enemies of progress in the town and emerged victorious. Having abolished the fetish worship and obnoxious activities of Adoro the mysterious goddess of Alor-uno, absolute peace and progress have returned to the land. The indigenes now involve in various economic activities, set up business empires, build companies, residential homes, attract and also sponsor different infrastructural development. So to say, the glory of the town has been restored.

Notes

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