

INTRODUCTION

This issue has five articles that treat different but related subjects on Benin Kingdom and its diaspora. Despite their seeming differences, all the articles are interconnected in their discussion of issues of religion, festivals, dance, and music interwoven into them. The first article, titled “Beyond a dance: The Resonance of Ugie Ekaba as God’s conduit to “play” with humans” by Itohan Idumwonyi, examines the concept of *Ekaba*, its origin and dispersal beyond Urhonigbe, and also argues that the full range of the complex *Ekaba* is the conduit by which *Osanobua* (the creator God) initiates, establishes, and advances a relationship with humans. The next article, entitled “Ogbeson : An “Executive” Village” by Kathy Curnow, examines the development of Ogbeson from its origin as a village of the Ogiso era through its transformation into a dukedom in the 17th C and a suburb of Benin City in the late 20th C and touches on its *Okhulaihe* cult and *Ikpoleki* festival. This is followed by “A Study of Kpakpa-Jiala Music of the Edo ne Ekue Diaspora in Ita-Ogbolu, Ondo State” by Oluwatoyin Ayeyemi which analyzes the Kpakpa-Jiala Music performance at burials among the Edo ne Ekue of Ita-Ogbolu, and compares the organization of the music and repertoire of songs in the locale (Ita-Ogbolu Yoruba territory) with that of the source (Benin Edo), to ascertain the changes that have occurred in the language of presentation and meaning of texts during their centuries-long absence from their Benin homeland. Josephine E. Abbe’s article titled “Ugho dance performance of the Benin people: An endearing but endangered form” documents the age-long tradition of the evolution of Ugho dance in Benin and draws attention to the fact that the dance form is gradually being effaced due to lack of constant performance and adequate appreciation. The last piece by Leonard Oronsaye draws on his folkloric knowledge of “Esu in Benin Cosmology” and places Esu as a Youth leader in the Edo Pantheon and not the devil of Christian theology.

We are grateful to the Department of History, SUNY Oswego, for the continuous support and Ekaba Festival Urhonigbe Facebook Page owner for the photograph on the cover page. We thank our art and technology team, who helped put this issue together.

