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A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE NIGERIA STATE

The historical background of Nigerian government and politics involves the precolonial and the colonial period in Nigeria. Nigeria is a product of a historical arrangement that arose out of European adventure with its eventual culmination in the colonization of Africa. Nigeria is bordered to the south by the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. On west, by Beni, on the north by Niger and on the east by Cameroon. According to some archaeological evidence, man has settled in Nigeria since the Paleolithic period 500,000-9000BC. The man who lived in Nigeria during those years worked hard to cope with his environment. Hence, he invented tools consisting of pebbles. Early man in Nigeria advanced from the early stone age. He began to make hand axes, heavy chopper(sagoan). One of the most active periods of technological effort in Nigeria was around 500BC-200AD. Information on the major land mark in early Nigerian history was made possible through the excavation work done on places where man lived in Nigeria in the very remote past. The places were referred to as the centres of ancient civilization. The Nok culture is believed to be a transitional civilization between the stone age and the iron age in Nigeria. The area where terracotta figurines were found is called the Nok culture. Benin was important for its art work while Ife was important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. The bronze objects and ornaments discovered in Igbo Ukwu led to the excavation of the three sites (burial chamber, a pit and a compound wall). The Yorubas trace their origin to Oduduwa. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yorubas. In Johnson book, he traced back the origin of the Yoruba to the east. Oke Oramfe is another version of the origin of the Yoruba, it is located in Ile-Ife and it is believed to be the centre from which the world is created. The political structures of the Yoruba kingdoms were similar in nature. Each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town has a king known as Oba who resides in a place called Aafin. The king has lesser rulers and status. Another group of rulers were the Baale and the Oloja. The ilu was the basic political unit, while the subordinate town were the bedrock on which the administration of the whole kingdom was based. The government of the old Oyo empire is a typical example of the pre-colonial administration in Yorubaland. The first organ of government in the Oyo

empire was the king known as Alaaḥin Oyo. The Alaaḥin Administration; In the sixteenth century, Oyo had in-built checks and balances and this contributed to its stability for centuries. The Alaaḥin had a well-organised court. Theoretically, the Alaaḥin was the fountain of authority. Sometimes, he had an autocratic tendency, but in practice, his powers were often limited and regulated by the Oyomesi. The Ogboni cult administration; It played a mediatory role in any conflict between the Oyomesi and the Alaaḥin. The army; Its head was conferred with the coveted title of Are-Ona-Kankanfo. The army was credited with performing important functions such as stability of the empire, expansion, as well as keeping dissident territories in check. The Igbo people are best known for their acephalous way of life. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures; the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, South-Eastern Nigeria, North-Eastern Nigeria, Western Igbo and the Northern Igbo. One of the popular versions of migratory stories of Igbo origin is the one that points to Israel. Others believe that Igboland is the original homeland. Professor M.A. Onwuejeogwu regards Nri version as the only authentic version of origin in existence in the oral tradition of the Igbo. The Igbo practiced direct democracy and a decentralized system of government. Although, there was no highly centralized authority, some socio-political institutions existed in each village. Such institutions include; family; the smallest political unit in Igbo traditional society, Age grade which grew from childhood and took a common name to commemorate an event associated with the time of their birth, and the secret societies which consisted of the diviners' masquerades, "Ubinuknabi" at Arochukwu, the "Amadisha" of Ozuzzu, and so on. The origin of the Hausa states is associated with the man Bayajidda, an Arab prince who travelled to sahel from Baghdad. Bayajidda killed a snake that was oppressing the people of Daura. After killing the snake, he married the queen of Daura. The queen already had six sons and produced another one with Bayajidda and each son ruled one of the seven Hausa city states, becoming the first kings. The combination of the Hausa kingdoms were sometimes called Daura since Daura was the place Bayajidda founded the Hausa people. The "Sarki" was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well-organised court. Sarkin Kasar was the full title given to any effective and efficient head of Hausa State. The Sarkin Kasar combined both political and religious/spiritual functions. He was also the chief executive and judge of the State, but he was aided by a council of state. At the district level, the government was modelled after that at the national level. It is worthy of note that between 14th and 15th centuries, the socio-political organisation of Hausa States took another shape. Islam was introduced to Hausa land in the fourteenth century, and by the fifteenth century it was accepted as the religion of the ruling class. The Jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio of 1804 further strengthened and consolidated the religion in this area. The British who have often been credited with the creation of Nigeria were not the first Europeans to land in Nigeria. The Portuguese were the first

Europeans to arrive Nigeria through Bini Kingdom. Thus, The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the unfortunate channel that first put the British in contact with Nigeria. The transatlantic slave trade was abolished in the 19th century. Before the year 1900, all the different parts of Nigeria conquered by the British were still under their original administration. But by 1900, the whole Nigeria was under the responsibility of the British Colonial Office. The May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. British government amalgamated Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the new colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria.