

OSAGIE VICTORIA

DENTISTRY

19/mhs01/361

200 Level

GST 203 Government

Do a review of Chapter Two (2) (pages 15-32) on 'An historical analysis of the evolution of the Nigeria state', in Salient issues in Government and Nigeria's Politics.

This chapter of the book aims to enlighten readers on the historical background of Nigerian government and politics.

It is stated in the introduction of this chapter that the Nigerian state is a colonial creation. Prior to the emergence of the Nigerian state, pre-colonial Nigeria comprises of different independent chiefdoms, states, kingdoms and empires. There are archaeological evidences from different parts of Nigeria which pointed to the fact that man had settled in the region now known as Nigeria since the Palaeolithic period 500,000-9000BC. There is evidence of advanced technology in various parts of Nigeria during the bronze and metal age. Around 500BC-200AD, there were people who lived in Nigeria who made sculptures; many were of human heads and figures from small sized objects to huge objects. Findings of these sculptures were made in Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Ile-Ife, Jebba, Esie and Benin.

Under the Nok culture/civilisation, the discovery of a terracotta (burnt clay) head of a monkey by tin miners in Nok in 1936 prompted more discoveries in other places such as Wamba, Kastina-Ala and Jema. The area where these terracotta figurines were found is called the Nok culture or civilisation area.

The Benin civilisation was important for its art work. The craftsmen of Benin carved in wood and ivory and cast objects in bronze and brass. Art historians claim that bronze was introduced into Benin by an Ife artist. They cast wooden doors and ivory masks, one of which was the ivory mask used as a FESTAC symbol in 1977.

The Ife civilisation is important because of its terracotta and bronze heads. Objects such as stools and figures were carved on hard stone called quartz, while animal and human figures were carved from granite and decorated with iron nails. Art historians believe

that Ife art originated from the Nok culture because of the similarities in the two, especially beaded neck, wrist and ankles.

In the Igbo-Ukwu civilisation, some bronze objects and ornaments were accidentally discovered while digging a toilet pit at Igbo Ukwu in 1939. This eventually led to the excavation of three sites in the area by an archaeologist called Thurstan Shaw. Many objects made of bronze were discovered in the various sites including the remains of a decayed skeleton which have been suggested to be those of a king and five slaves who were buried with him.

The three major ethnic groups, i.e. Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo are then examined. The Yorubas are one of the largest ethnic group in Nigeria and are united by language. The Yoruba people trace their origin to Oduduwa who was the founder of the Yoruba Kingdom. Ile-Ife is regarded as the ancestral home of the Yoruba people. There are different versions of their origin. According to the Oke Oramfe version of the origin of the Yoruba, there was a period when the world was covered by water. The Almighty God then decided to send some of his messengers to the world and they included Obatala or Orisa Nla or Orisa Alase [as the leader and sixteen Oye [immortals]]. They were given five pieces of iron, a lump of earth tied to a white piece of cloth and a cockerel. Obatala got drunk on wine and Oduduwa seized the symbol of authority and eventually led the party to the world. The site on which they landed is traditionally known as Oke Oramfe in Ile Ife. On arrival at the site, Oduduwa set down the five pieces of iron and placed the lump of earth on them, the cockerel then spread the lump of earth with its feet throughout the earth. The political structures of the Yoruba kingdom were similar in nature. Each consisted of a capital town, subordinate towns, villages and farmlands. Each town has an Oba, who is the spiritual and political head of the kingdom. The pattern of administration was hierarchical.

The Igbo people are best known for their segmentary or acephalous way of life. This is because from the ancient times, they had no centralised states. Consequently, they operated a kind of government without kings. The Igbo are grouped into five sub-cultures; The Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, The Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria, The Igbo of North-Eastern Nigeria, The Western Igbo and The Northern Igbo. One of the most popular versions of the migratory stories of origin of the Igbo people is the one that points to Israel. This is based on the claimed similarities between the cultures of the Igbo and ancient Hebrew. In the Igbo traditional society, there was no highly centralised authority but instead they had what could be called a diffusion of authority into different groups. Some socio-political institutions existed in each village to perform legislative, judicial, executive and military functions, such institutions include family, council of elders, age grades and secret societies.

Hausa land is located in Northern Nigeria. Hausa land, before 1804 was made up of fourteen states and they were of two distinct groups. The first group consist of seven states called 'Hausa Bakwai', i.e. Hausa legitimate states. The second group consist of the remaining seven states 'Hausa Banza', i.e. Hausa illegitimate states. Oral tradition

attributed the origin of the Hausa states to a man named Bayajidda, An Arab prince who travelled to the Sahel from Baghdad. He killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura and he married the queen. The queen had six sons already and produced another son with Bayajidda, and each of these sons ruled one of the seven Hausa city-states, becoming the first kings. Islam was not introduced to the region until the eleventh century. The 'Sarki' was known as the head of any typical Hausa state. He worked with a retinue of officials in a well organised court. 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. Every state was headed by the Fulani Emir who was assisted by a council which consisted of officers appointed by Dan Fodio and each held a title with specific functions. The judicial administration of Hausa-Fulani was based on the Islamic legal system called sharia.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to land in Nigeria, through the Bini Kingdom in 1472 in Ewuare's reign and in 1484 in Ozolua's reign. The Atlantic slave trade was the trade carried on across the Atlantic ocean between the Europeans and Africans. Demand for slaves could be traced to the introduction of plantation system of agriculture in places like Brazil, Jamaica and Haiti among others. After three centuries of shameful slave trade, came the so-called period of legitimate commerce. As from 1898, the British government sought to establish and maintain a colonial state in Nigeria. To achieve this, measures were taken, for example, the expansion and consolidation of British authority over the territory later known as Nigeria. The May 1906 amalgamation is known as the first ever amalgamation of the British in Nigeria. British government amalgamated the Lagos colony and protectorate with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the new protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The second amalgamation was that of 1914. In January 1914, the British government amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria.