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**Nigeria Before 1800: Nature,
Dynamics & Development of
Socio-Political & Economic Culture**

J.G. Nkem Onyekpe, PhD, FHSN

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**Nigeria Before 1800: Nature,
Dynamics and Development
of
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Economic Culture**

by

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Editorial Policy

The Faculty of Arts Monograph is a series published under the aegis of the Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos, Nigeria. Its aim is to promote research and scholarship in the humanities worldwide. Each serial is topically focused on issues and problems confronting humans from the perspective of the humanities. Papers are expected to focus on issues in Philosophy, literary studies, politics, arts, culture, language, environment, history, law, international relations, crisis management and development.

Authors are fully responsible for the positions and views they express.

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Maximum number of pages expected is sixty (60).

The Editors may edit the papers for the purposes of clarity and appropriate title.

Papers received will be acknowledged online within seven days of receipt. Authors will also be duly informed about the progress of their papers.

Foreword

The current issue of the Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos, Monograph Series, No. 19, is on Nigeria Before 1800: Nature, Dynamics and Development of Socio-political and Economic Culture. Written in very lucid language and style, the author Dr. J.G. Nkem Onyekpe, presents an excellent discussion and analysis of the achievements of the peoples of Nigeria before the nineteenth century, in social and political organisation, economy, intergroup relations and their cognition of their world.

African historians are agreed that the nineteenth century was a revolutionary period in all of Africa. However, Dr. Onyekpe's discussion of the different types of socio-political administration evolved by 1800 and the effectiveness of traditional institutions evolved in meeting the needs of society, and his examination of the ability of the groups to develop solid economic substructure for the superstructure of political administration have demonstrated that the developments and drastic changes of the nineteenth century were built on the foundation of the past.

Concerning the peoples' achievements, the author has ably shown the contribution of the different groups to world political culture. The separation of powers and system of checks and balances practised by some states, especially Old Oyo, and the participatory democracy or republicanism of the so-called stateless societies, and the institutions of primogeniture and heir apparent which ensured peaceful political transitions were practices the people devised internally.

Intergroup relations examined by the author show clearly that the different peoples had fundamental affinities which served as centripetal forces of unity and integration.

Moreover, the historical materialist that he is, Dr. Onyekpe explains not only that the economic activities of the different groups were determined by their natural environment, but also that their spiritual and religious consciousness and lives were basically determined by the realities of their material world.

The analysis of the author and the conclusion reached are a reinforcement of the perception of the new African historiography pioneered by great scholars like Kenneth Dike, Jacob Ade Ajayi, Obaro Ikime, Adiele Afigbo, Bassey Andah, and so on, that contrary to the wild, Eurocentric notion that Africa was a continent without history and culture worthy of the attention of scholars, the Nigerian, nay African peoples have a rich past of great accomplishments worthy of scholarly inquiries.

In writing this monograph, Dr. Onyekpe has brought to bear his wealth of experience of over two decades of research and teaching. A major strength of the work is that it is presented in simple but by no means simplistic style. The present contribution to the Faculty Monograph Series is a significant work for the study and teaching of Nigerian History up to 1800 Century. Students and researchers in pre-colonial Nigerian history and Africana, diplomats and tourists, as well as general readers will find Dr. Onyekpe's work very valuable.

Professor Duro Oni
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Introduction

One of the major features of culture as the totality of a people's way of life is its dynamic nature. The culture of a people refers to the way the people relate to their physical environment and organise their productive activities (or economy), and their political administration (or government). It goes beyond economy and government. Because a society is an organised community of people, it (society) evolves definite forms of relationships among the people. These forms of relationships are an essential part of culture. They are themselves determined by the position and status of the different individuals and groups of individuals that make up the society. These three aspects of culture of a people, viz, economy, government and social relationships, are determined by the people's physical environment and material

