

## All About the Book

This study attempts to reconstruct the role of the Nupe and Nupeland in the origins and evolution of the Yoruba, from earliest times to the British conquest of 1897. It brings out concrete historical evidence from primary sources to show as false, the conception that the Yoruba ethnic nationality of modern Nigeria constitutes a race, distinct and separate, in origin, culture and identity, from other neighbouring ethnic nationalities of Nigeria.

The study has brought out historical evidence from primary sources, largely Yoruba, to show that the Nupe and Nupeland played a major role in the origins of the Yoruba ethnic nationality of modern Nigeria, right from the level of Yoruba language, settlements, dynasties, cults, facial marks, technology, material art, clothing, and economy generally. The dialects, from which the Yoruba language of modern Nigeria emerged, separated from Nupoid, and other dialects, in the area of what has become Nupeland. Even today, the Nupe and Yoruba dialects intermesh and shade into one another.

The study has also brought out evidence to show that early Nupe settlers founded many of the settlements and dynasties in northern and central Yorubaland, where the major Yoruba centres were located before the economic, social and political transformation of the area in the 19th century. These early Nupe settlers introduced the cults of Ifa, Egungun, Ogboni and Igunnu to the Yoruba, and these have now become part and parcel of traditional Yoruba culture.

The study cites historical sources which contain, hitherto obscured, traditions which indicate that the great heroes of Yoruba legends of origin, in particular Obatala, Oduduwa, Oranmiyan, and Sango, were either of Nupe origin, or closely associated with the Nupe, by marriage, or by birth. The great similarity of the sculpture and other material art from Jebba, Tada, Giragi, Esie, Oyo, Owo, Ado, Ile-Ife, and beyond, corroborates these traditions.

The study shows that, from the late eighteenth into the early decades of the nineteenth centuries, civil wars caused by succession disputes and Jihad movements came up to change the course of the history of the Nupe and the Yoruba. In the Nupe Kingdom and in the Alafinate of Oyo, indigenous forces challenged the old order and the alliances between these forces enabled them to overthrow the old rulers, take over power, and establish new emirates belonging to the Sokoto Caliphate, in both areas. The close political, diplomatic, economic and military relations established by the Emirate of Bida, with the Emirate of Ilorin, with the City-State of Ibadan, and with the indigenous rulers and the British authorities in Lagos; and the significant role of Nupe groups and prominent individuals in Lagos, Ijebu and the Egba, and elsewhere in Yorubaland, came to be decisive in determining the tempo of British penetration, invasion, and conquest of the area.

The study reconstructs how this British colonial penetration and invasion came to face its most coherent and determined opposition from the Nupe Emirate of Bida. Right from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Etsu Masaba (1859 – 1873), had formulated a grand strategy, and was astutely and courageously, implementing it,

using Bida's strategic location, its growing technological capacity, and his extensive network of clients and allies, all over Yorubaland, in the Niger – Benue Confluence Area and in the Igbo kingdoms of the Lower Niger . As the study brings out, this grand strategy was purposely aimed at establishing the Emirate of Bida's technological, commercial , diplomatic and military, hegemony over most of the Nigerian area, including Yorubaland, and put a limit to British imperialist expansion.

The British realised that the grand strategy of the Etsu Masaba , pursued by his successors, constituted the most serious threat to their imperialist objectives in the Nigerian area. The invasion and conquest of the Emirate of Bida in 1897, using some of the northeast Yoruba to undermine the southern reach of the emirate authorities, enabled the British to extend and consolidate colonial rule over Yorubaland, Nupeland and over large parts of southern, central and northern Nigeria

## **The Author**

Idris Sha'aba Jimada was born in, the Chiroma's Compound, Patigi,Kwara State, Nigeria, in 1962. He went, in 1972 - 1977, to the Offa Grammar School; and in 1977 1979 to the School of Basic Studies of the Kwara State College of Science and Technology; and then to the University of Ilorin, in 1980 - 1984. He worked for the Ministry of Education, Kwara State, in 1986 - 1992, before becoming a lecturer in the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, where he completed his postgraduate studies, at the masters and doctoral levels. He has contributed papers, articles and chapters, to conferences, to books and to journals. He is the chairman of the Patigi History Project and member of the Nigerian National Committee of the UNESCO Slave Routes Project.