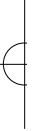
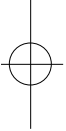
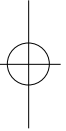
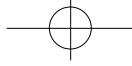
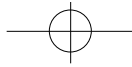


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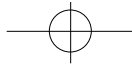
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Edited by

Toyin Falola

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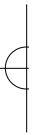
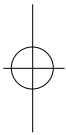
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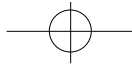
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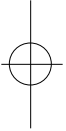


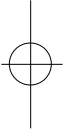
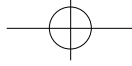
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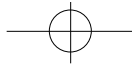
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For Olabisi, Dolapo, Bisola, and Oloruntoyin





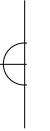
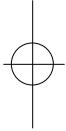


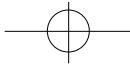
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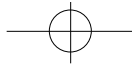


Preface and Acknowledgments

This book is intended as a text for college students and for all readers interested in the precolonial cultures of Africa. It covers many subjects, with each chapter written both to educate and to stimulate further research. Culture is important as a way of understanding a people and their history. With respect to Africa, culture defines its identity and offers answers to many of its contemporary problems. Through culture, a greater understanding of the past is made possible. In this book, “culture” refers to the totality of the African experience and all the ideas that Africans have evolved over time.

No one can claim to understand Africa and its place in the modern world without a clear awareness of its cultural past. Perhaps no other continent has placed more emphasis on the use of culture than Africa. Its long and brutal history of enslavement and imperial domination, and their consequences—racism, attacks on dignity and self-worth, loss of confidence—have all combined to drive Africans during the twentieth century to bold and systematic efforts to reclaim their history and culture. In the struggle for the continent to move forward and be on an equal footing with the rest of the world, many African thinkers see culture as a weapon of liberation. The strong belief is that African cultures have to be liberated from Western and imperial domination, by analyzing their specific aspects and reasserting their values in the modern world. Africans are advised to fall on culture to liberate themselves from political and economic domination, ensure empowerment, and attain the integration of diverse groups into more coherent and stable nation-states. Thus, culture has been of both practical and academic relevance in Africa. Its knowledge must ensure its understanding and its preservation. It must provide the great source to sustain morality and combat external domination. It must be the bedrock of contemporary nationalism, providing a positive inspiration to motivate Africans to strive for ideals to attain sustainable development. This book provides insights on cultures of the past, that great knowledge that Africans seek to capture and understand in all its ramifications. Volume 1, the companion to this, provides the historical basis.

I owe a great deal of debt to all my contributors. There is a commitment on their part to understand African cultures and present them in a readable form. Topics and issues are many, and no single volume can treat them comprehensively. What this volume accomplishes is an overview of the essence of African cultures, by focusing on many leading themes. At the planning stage, I received encouragement and support from many colleagues. At the preparation stage, Joel Tishken,

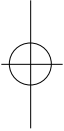


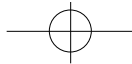
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Preface and Acknowledgments

Rebecca Gower, and Steven Salm assisted in managing correspondence. Steven Salm assisted in reading the entire volume for style and consistency. Saheed Adejumbi did a last-minute checking, Joel Tishken worked on the illustrations, while Dr. Ann O.Hear copy-edited the manuscript.

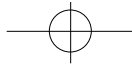
Toyin Falola
The University of Texas at Austin



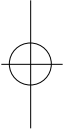


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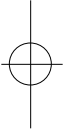


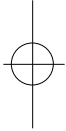
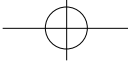


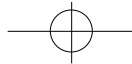
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Notes on the Authors

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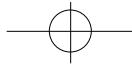
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Notes on the Authors

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