AFRICA
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VOLUME 1
African History Before 1885

VOLUME 2
African Cultures and Societies
Before 1885

VOLUME 3
Colonial Africa, 1885–1939

VOLUME 4
The End of Colonial Rule:
Nationalism and Decolonization

VOLUME 5
Contemporary Africa
For Professors Adu Boahen, Bethwell Ogot and Ali Mazrui
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Preface and Acknowledgments

This text is intended to introduce Africa to college students and the general public. It presents in a simplified manner different aspects of African history. The book does not generalize about the continent; it reconstructs the history of many societies at different historical periods. This book meets the requirements of history and culture courses in most schools, and addresses those issues of interest to the general public. The choice of topics is dictated both by relevance and by the need to satisfy classroom requirements.

This volume is an interpretative and thematic history of the colonial period in Africa, from the beginning of the partition of the continent in the 1880s to the outbreak of World War II. This was an era of colonial conquest, consolidation, and the establishment of political systems. The book is divided into three parts. Part one discusses the imposition of colonial rule, covering the reasons for the conquest, the Berlin Conference, the stages in the Scramble, and the response of Africans to the conquest. In the first decade of colonial rule, Europeans established early forms of their political systems and took measures to consolidate their rule. By World War 1, colonial power had been firmly established in many parts of Africa. To demonstrate the success of European rule, Africans had to contribute to the success of Europe in World War 1.

The second part of the book deals with the major changes introduced during the colonial era. Various chapters cover different topics such as the colonial political systems (theory and practice, indirect rule, assimilation, association, paternalism); the political impact of European rule (e.g., the impact on indigenous politics the evolution of new boundaries, and ethnicity); the economic impact of European rule on land distribution, taxation, labor, cash crops, currency, and communication; ecological history; Western education; Christianity (issues of conversion, independence, and religious change), Islam; culture and society (issues of race, class, music, arts, law, dress, food, sports, leisure, and emerging social networks); gender; population, cities, and urbanization; intellectual history; and African nationalism. In the last part, a chapter is devoted to each region, to provide a chronological narrative of the major events of the period.

The choice of the contributors is primarily based on their competence as teachers in explaining history to college students and beginners, and their skills in synthesizing large bodies of data and ideas. The pedagogical features of the book include chapter abstracts that orient readers to the objectives and ideas of each chapter, review questions to help students test their knowledge of the main ideas.
of the chapter, and suggestions on additional reading materials to facilitate advanced research.

I am grateful to all the contributors, students, and readers who have helped in various ways to make the book readable for a diverse audience. Dr. Ann O’Hear offered a number of editorial suggestions. Sam Saverance produced the maps, and many of the illustrations are from my private collections.

Toyin Falola
The Frances Higginbothom Nalle Centennial Professor in History
The University of Texas at Austin
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