Emmanuel A. Ayandele and His Contributions to the Development of African Historical Scholarship

By

Ebikibina Ugo
Department of History and Diplomacy,
Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island,
Amassoma, Bayelsa State
234 (0)8036715551

&

Bina Odogu PhD
Department of History and Diplomacy,
Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island,
Amassoma, Bayelsa State
+234 (0)8033426315

Abstract

Emmanuel Ayandele, as one of the pioneer members of the Ibadan School of History, made significant contributions to the development of African history. The aim of this work, "Emmanuel A. Ayandele and His Contributions to the Development of African Historical Scholarship" is to point out the role Ayandele played in recreating a new African image through his major works. Before the 1950s, the mention and study of African history mostly reflected western perspectives. Archaeological evidences and oral sources were not accepted as valid sources of history and so most scholars (mostly historians) at this time depended heavily, if not exclusively on the archives of their former colonial powers. To some of these Eurocentric scholars, Africa was not part of the historical globe, and others consigned the study of African history to historical damnation. This study, using secondary and oral sources of data collection interrogate this biased perception of looking at African history using some of Ayandele's publications. It notes that the survival of African history in the 21st century and beyond depends greatly on the receptiveness of African historians to show interest and commitment to research into our past. The paper concludes that but for the intervention of some academic missionaries like E.J.Alagoa, J.F. Ade Ajayi, Kenneth O. Dike and

others,who went into writing a "defensive history" ostensibly to give African history its rightful place, perhaps the recognition accorded African history as an academic discipline could not have been possible at the time it did.

Keyword: Historical scholarship,

Introduction

Africa was believed, portrayed and seen by Europeans as a continent inhabited by "barbarous" and "uncivilized" peoples. The continent was perceived as one outside the historical globe and occupied the bottom rung of humanity and was merely a pathological adjunct of white European societies.

Many philosophers and Eurocentric scholarsmade sweeping statements about Africa in the most derogatory and sometimes provocative manner. David Hume, the renowned Scottish philosopher, for instance, characterized Africa as being changeless and one continuum of barbarism (Uya, 1984:1). George Hegel, the German philosopher wrote-off Africa as part of the historical world as "it has no movement or development to show" (Uya, 1984:2). C. G. Seligman audaciously wrote that the "civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites, its history is the record of these peoples and of their interaction with the two other African stocks, the Negro and Bushmen" (Uya, 1984:6).

To these and other scholars of their time, Africa could only be salvaged by Europeans who were the "agents of civilization". The activities of these so-called agents of change-the travellers, explorers, missionaries, traders and administrators dominated African history and became the subject of historical discourse. No wonder, therefore, that the Oxford University Professor of History, Trevor Roper, in an apparent display of ignorance, stated that Africa has no history besides the history of the Europeans in Africa, and to insist on the study of African history before the coming of the Europeans, one was merely trying to "pry into the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe" (Uya, 1984:2). In other words, there was nothing to study about Africa before the coming of the Europeans.

These assertions and prevarications about the African continent were essentially accentuated by Europe's cultural arrogance of Africa, absence of conventional written records as well as the non-recognition and acceptance at this time of oral tradition and the use of ethnographic data as veritable methods of history. Although it is now common knowledge that the absence of conventional written documents does not connote absence of history, the prevailing climate of opinion about Africa-its people, culture and institutions at that time had a profoundly destructive effect on the study of true African history with Africa as its focal point.

From the early 1960s during the struggle for independence and later the attainment of it, there was a shift in perspective. During this time, Africanist historians notably the likes of Samuel Johnson, James Africanus Horton, Otonba Payne, Carl C. Reindurf, E.J.Alagoa, Kenneth Dike, A.E. Afigbo, Emmanuel Ayandele, Obaro Ikime, Bala Usman, T. Tamuno, Uzoigwe, J.C. Anene, J. F. Ade Ajayi, Omer-Copper, Akinjogbin and Olaruntimehin, some of whom went beyond Nigeria to work in Southern Africa and other empires of Western Sudan of the 17th to the 19th centuries in what Uya calls "defensive history" (Uya, 1984: 2). These scholars, through their works began to challenge and debunk the view that Africa as a continent had no history. For example, Kenneth O. Dike, used his book *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* to critique the role of European traders in Africa, pointing out that these traders came to upset the political economy of African sovereignty. J. F. Ade Ajayi was very critical about the negative effects of Christian Missionary activities on African societies. Ayandele through his work *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis* perceived missionary activities in Africa as representing the "spiritual wing of secular imperialism" (Ayandele, 1966: 43). Their methodologies and perspectives focused on countering these earlier notions about Africa which appeared to have been institutionalized. Put differently, these historians began to adopt the more meaningful "inside-out" approach rather than the less myopic "outside-in" approach to historical reconstruction. Their efforts served as a spring-board for historians and scholars after them to reappraise African history as was seen from the 'spectacle' of European scholars.

In the light of this continuous academic exercise to accord African history its rightful place devoid of western malice, prejudice and contempt, this work looks

at some major works of Professor Emmanuel Ayandele, whom Adesina described as one of the great figures in African historiography (2021). His works particularly the one on Christian Missions and that of J. F. Ade Ajayi are more or less pioneer works on Christian Missions and have contributed greatly to African historical scholarship. Conscious effort is also made to look at the term historical scholarship, the image of Africa before the 19th century from the European viewpoint, the reaction of Ayandele and other Africanist scholars' to that image, Ayandele's biography and his source of inspiration as a historian and scholar, his philosophy and his charge to African historians.

What is Historical Scholarship?

Historical scholarship refers to the method and possibly the technique scholars make use of primary and secondary sources to try and recreate history and answer essentially probing and interesting questions about the past (Barak, 2022). In the opinion of Herman (2011), "historical scholarship is a practice of reading, thinking, discussing and writing, in which successful performance requires active cultivation of certain skills, attitudes, and virtues". It is no longer explanation and narrative discourse that focused almost exclusively on the historian's seperate output, his published work as it was few decades ago. The scholarly or academic articles we write are all types of historical scholarship. Scholars document their studies and share the conclusions arising from those works with others in repressed personal or subjective feelings.

The Image of Africa before the 19th Century

Before the late 18th century, historiography was not at the centre of any civilization since history was almost not an important part of regular education and as such was never claimed to provide an interpretation of human life as a whole. In most of African societies, the culture of putting down events in writing was practically non-existent. In the eyes of European scholars, documentary evidence was overwhelming and became the yardstick in determining whether a society has history or not. The absence of written documents meant the absence of events worthy of historical study. Many of the indigenous peoples of Africa and even the Americas were dismissed by Europeans as having no precolonial history due to the fact that they did not keep records of stories about the past. The deeds of ancestors, heroes, heroines, gods or animals sacred to them were merely chanted

and memorized since there was no writing with which to document them before the arrival of European explorers. No wonder that the Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at King's College, London, Arthur Percival Newton remarked that "History begins when men begin to write" (Uya, 1984). This position was widely held against Africa up to the late 18th century as its advocates kept pressing it and maintained that 'Africa had no history'. The likes of Trevor Roper and George Hegel at different times dismissed Africa as either part of the historical world or a continent enveloped in 'darkness' and darkness is not part of history" (Uya, 1984). These persuasions held sway at the time and the history about Africa revolved around European activities on the continent. In West Africa for instance, the exploits of Mungo Park, the Lander Brothers, Tubman Goldie, John Beecroft and some others were the histories. In East, Central and Southern Africa, C.M. Sorgwe observes that the adventures of the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, David Livingstone, the London Missionary Society, the British Settlement at the Cape and Boer migration (The Great Trek) and the 'Mfecane' were the histories for discourse. (Sorgwe, 2020:40).

However, from the early 19th century, this scenario gradually shifted due to a number of factors. First, scientific history began to evolve side by side with the rise of history as an academic discipline. Second, a number of modern Africanist historians/elites began to write histories that were designed to reconstruct a record of human activities with a view to correcting the erroneous assertions and to achieve a more profound understanding of events. Prominent amongst others were, James Africanus Horton, Carl Christian Reindorf who wrote about the history of the Gold Coast and Asante; Otonba Payne and Samuel Johnson, who wrote about the history of the Yoruba from earliest times to the beginning of the British Protectorate; J.F. Ade Ajayi and Emmanuel A. Ayandele who wrote about the missionary activities in Nigeria and their effects; Kenneth O. Dike who wrote about trade and politics in the Niger Delta etc. Interestingly, some of these early historians and scholars who were taught by Europeans and ultimately indoctrinated by European civilization and culture became academic missionaries in some parts of the whiteman's world, preaching the gospel of African History as a legitimate branch of History Universal (Ayandele, 1979: 1). Today, the aftermath of this academic crusade is that history in totality-oral traditions, ethnographic data and archaeological findings have made it possible to discover a great deal of

civilizations and empires that flourished in the days of old which were hitherto neglected. These scholars contributed to the development of African historical writing in diverse ways, but for the purpose of this work, Emmanuel Ayandele's efforts are put on the spotlight.

Ayandele's Biography

Emmanuel Ayankanmi Ayandele was a man who devoted more than a third of his life to sustained historical scholarship, successively as post-graduate researcher, lecturer, professor and Vice Chancellor of two Nigerian Universities, (Principal, Jos Campus of the University of Ibadan and pioneer Vice-Chancellor, University of Calabar). His rise up the academic ladder is, perhaps, the best testimony of the man as a scholar-ever unsparing himself in his unstained devotion to learning.

Born on October 12th 1936, at Ogbomosho in Oyo State, Ayandele began his formal education at the Baptist Boys' High School, Oyo, from 1948-53. Between 1954 and 1956, he attended the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Ibadan, which was a preparatory intermediate school for his admission into the only colonial University in Ibadan. His urge for further studies took him to the four walls of the then famous citadel of learning- the University College, Ibadan, (now University of Ibadan) where he studied from 1956-60. Rather than rest on his oars as a graduate in a society in which graduates were few and far between, Ayandele shook off the dust of Nigeria and went to Britain for post-graduate studies. The next three years, 1961-63, he was at Kings College, University of London, England, where he completed his MA/PhD dissertation in history in 1964.

On his return to Nigeria, he joined the staff of the University of Ibadan as a lecturer in 1964. In 1967 he became a senior lecturer in the Department of History. Through dint of hard work, he ascended to the top echelon of the academic ladder and bagged the title of a professor of history in 1969. He was appointed Acting Principal, Jos Campus, University of Ibadan, 1971-74 and confirmed Principal (Vice Chancellor) and served from 1974-75. Thereafter, he became the acting Vice-Chancellor, University of Calabar, 1975-1980; appointed Vice-Chancellor, University of Calabar, Calabar in 1980 and served in that capacity till 1982 and thereafter he returned to the University of Ibadan.

He was conferred with many national and international awards and membership of certain clubs and bodies: member, Academic Advisory Board of the Institute on Comparative Political and Economic System, George town University, Washington 1981; member, Board of Trustees of the African-American Institute 1975-79; member, Club of Rome, 1971; Commander of the Order of the Niger (OFN) 1979, Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Administrative Management, 1981. He was the Ososon of Ogbomosho, a traditional title he bagged in 1979. His major publications include: *Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis. (Longman, 1966)*; *Holy Johnson, Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836-1917: (Frankcass, 1970); The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society (Ibadan U.P. 1974); Nigerian Historical Studies (Routledge, 1979)*; *African Historical Studies, Routledge, 1979; The Ijebu of Yorubaland, 1850-1950, Heinenann, 1992.* His hobby was reading. He died in July, 2014 in Ibadan. He was married to Oyebimpe Adeshuna with children.

Commenting on his personality and scholarship, Victor S, Edo, a Professor of African History and Post-Graduate Coordinator, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, who was a close confidant of Ayandele stated in an interview that,

> Ayandele was a first class historian and scholar of history.
> I had a privilege of coming across Ayandele and there is no doubt that he was a great teacher, a great lover of history. I had the privilege also to listen to him talk, delivering papers and it is clear that Ayandele was a class of his own, He was no doubt an eminent historian of his time who took history to a very high level (Edo, 2021).

Olutayo Adesina, a professor of history and Head, Department of History, University of Ibadan in an interview remarked

> Ayandele was one of the early scholars, who in conjunction with other eminent historians rose to debunk the view that Africa had no history.
> He was a great intellectual mentor… his works has continued to speak to us even from the grave (Adesina, 2021).

Similarly, E.J Alagoa, an emeritus Professor remarked thus

> I knew Prof. Ayandele very well. Ayandele and I and Professor Tekena Tamuno were all students of Prof. Dike… though I was senior to Ayandele.
>
> He was a very loud person. Whatever he believed, he promoted it loudly and very aggressively. He was that kind of person (Alagoa, 2021).

Sorgwe, (2021), a Professor of History, Niger Delta University saw in Ayandele an achiever, a very determined personality who strove to get whatever he wanted. He described him as "a historian and scholar of extra ordinary courage who liked using big English words in his writings". Perhaps his loud disposition and penchant for going after whatever he believed-in made him to undertake giant strides along-side other eminent historians to reappraise the activities of European actors on the continent, particularly the missionary activities in Nigeria and indeed Africa.

His Source of Inspiration as a Historian

Ayandele's career as a historian was to a great extent influenced by J.C. Anene, when the latter was his teacher at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, Ibadan in 1954. Commenting on the influence Anene's scholarship had on his choice of history as a career, Ayandele remarked. "None of his students escaped the truth that history has a rhetoric of its own" (Obiechere, 1982:10). This message profoundly inspired many to appreciate the value of the written word in the craft of historical interpretation and analysis.

Admissibly, Anene's scholarship inculcated in Ayandele the relevance to Nigerian society of historical studies of others such as European, American and Indian etc. As early as 1954 for instance, Anene was able to make Ayandele study 19th century Europeans as humans essentially like themselves, endowed with the good and the bad in their nature as contemporary Africans (Ayandele, 1979). There is no gain-saying the fact that such insights and inspirations gained from Anene's critical scholarship and others of his like tremendously influenced Ayandele not only in his choice of history as a career, but also his methodology and perspective in historical investigation.

His Philosophy of History

To Ayandele, history and man are two sides of the same coin. Put differently, history forms an integral part of man which cannot be removed from him. History, according to him ought to be the "mother of all disciplines" and that governments should re-orientate their minds towards exercising historical scholarship.

Ayandele noted that the problems posed by African studies are primarily African and therefore demand an African solution, stressing that "in historical appreciation and use of oral traditions, oracles, myths, legends and works of art African scholars have an advantage over others and are more likely to get at the truth than non-Africans" (Ayandele, 1984). This was perhaps why he strongly argued that historical writing about Africa by Africans will make the people appreciate the values of historical studies. To make history conscious, Ayandele said, that that duty is the responsibility of the historian. The best approach, according to him, is through dramatization.

The greatest virtue of any Nigerian and indeed African historian according to him, should be the glorious past, which has often always been misconstrued. He said that Nigerian historians should be patriotic enough to debunk the view that Nigeria is an artificial creation of the British. Put it differently, there were people and institutions that existed long in the area before the name Nigeria came into existence in 1914. Similarly there was Africa before European Africa. The historian should be able to tell the world that the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria and Africa co-existed, and exercised one kind of link or the other. They had practiced good neighbourliness', engaged in intra and inter-group trade and did cultural borrowing. This reality should be the watch-word of the historian.

Commenting on his philosophy, Jide Osutokunbo, observes that "Ayandele was a liberal or whig historian who feels that writing about the present will elucidate the past and illuminate the future". In other words, writing about the past will influence the present and make things better (Osuntokunbo, 2021).

His Historical Scholarship and the Development of African History

In Ayandele's view, what ought to be African and indeed Nigerian history is lacking in nationalist outlook. He cautioned that it was high time historians

stopped being academic slaves, paying irrelevant and unpatriotic attention to what he called "valued and imperialistic judgments of Eurocentric historians" Ayandele, 1979:1). He asked

> Why should we not be ourselves in relation to the national objectives and aspirations of Nigerians? Why should we not rewrite the so-called history of the Garveys, the Norton Cooks, the Michael Crowders, the Alan Burns, the Margery Perhams and so on have written over the last three decades…" Ayandele, 1979:2-3).

His views about what ought to be Nigerian and indeed African history largely influenced him in writing his path-breaking work on *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis*, his PhD dissertation which he published in 1966. Although his work came after that of J.F. Ade-Ajayi's *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite,* which was also his PhD dissertation that he published in 1965, the two works are seen as contemporaries, one not inferior to the other. Edo remarked "His, Ayandele's book when compared to that of J. F. Ade-Ajayi that came before him, "it is difficult to see that one surpasses the other. The two are written in the best traditions of history in Nigeria" (Edo, 2021). Affirming this view, Adesina (2021) observes;

> … his works, particularly the one on Christian Missions, he and Ade Ajayi actually more or less pioneered works on Christian missions so that it is a great contribution to African historiography. There is nobody who would work on Christian missions today without referring to Ade Ajayi and Ayandele.

However, E. J. Alagoa (2021) did not count Ayandele as a leading African historiographer, he however, admitted;

> in writing about the history of Christianity, I think we grant him the thing that own for. He wrote about the use of some guided European historians about African history and the subject he wrote about, Christianity goes virtually into that mode.

This divergent view of Alagoa notwithstanding, this paper sees a nexus between his mode and the perception that mode brought to bear on the new African image that was made bare through some of his works.

In exercising his historical scholarship, particularly in the writing of Nigerian history, Ayandele points out five basic kinds of imbalances (Ayandele, 1979:4). First, is the overstressing by some historians on the European contact with Nigerian peoples, especially those on the Atlantic seaboard. This gives one the impression that the history of these peoples constitutes more, if not exclusively of such relations. Second, is the serious mistake of interpreting this contact or relations against the background and interest of the European intruders. Third, is the emphasis placed on factors making for disunity, but often times neglecting those factors that united them which dominated most of the writings in the pre-colonial period. Fourth, is the too much attention placed on the large ethnic groups in relation to smaller ones. Fifth, rather than writing more on the history of the masses, the tendency has been to write the history of the elites.

Ayandele vehemently criticized these imbalances, stressing that internal political, social and economic events, (the pre-colonial political institutions in Africa, the different social organizations of the people as well as the numerous economic activities which sustained life) which were by no means determined by the Europeans have been relegated. He then suggested that a perspective on the Nigerian and indeed the African past should focus on internal developments, i.e within the Nigeria/Africa milieu in order to correct earlier misconceptions.

Drawing instances from Yoruba land and the Delta region to buttress his position, Ayandele noted that the Egba relations with the British in Lagos provided only one out of many events which they (Egba) regarded as crucial features of their experience in the 19th century and that these events were not determined by the British presence in Lagos, which constituted the real core of their history. Some of these events which were silent on the pages of most textbooks include: the constitutional experimentation between 1845 and 1891; chieftaincy wrangling which weakened their solidarity after the Dahomians unsuccessful reprisals of 1864; the economic ties they had with the Egbado and Ijebu which made Ketu, Iberekodo and Iperu important markets for the Egba; the frequent small pox

epidemics as well as the ardent adherence of the Egba to their traditional religion (Ayandele, 1979).

Arguing further, Ayandele cautioned that care should be taken when drawing the balance sheet of European political and economic interests' vis-à-vis the interest of the Nigerian peoples. He noted that in most historical writings, unbalanced and unfair interpretation in favour of the intruders' interest was mostly stressed. According to him, much as the European interests influenced their relations, the African attitude was also determined by their local economic and political interests. The Egba and Ijebu for instance, in closing routes to the British did not perceive routes in mainly economic terms but more in the interest of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Similarly, the Enyong, Akunakuna and the Umon people of the Cross River withheld their oil from the British as a means of restricting direct British movement along the river because they perceived that their sovereignty was threatened.

With regards to the emphasis placed by some writers on those things that divide rather than unit the people within the African milieu, Ayandele questioned the rationale behind those emphasis, stressing that it defies dispassionate assessment and represents an unfair perspective about the African past. A more balanced approach in assessing the peoples past in this direction he said, should take into consideration those factors of unity and co-operation which existed amongst them before contact with the Europeans, which most times are silent on the pages of books. Some of such factors that united the people include: The inter-state routes that linked the south and the north and through which religious, social and political ideas diffused. For example, the natrolite used by the Efik came from the Chad basin; the Ijebu exported their coarse type of cloth used by slaves to Northern Nigeria; the Nupe were weavers of textile cloths and they exchanged their camewood for manufactured articles of northern origin and the Yoruba obtained horses from Tripoli (Ayandele, 1979:87). These activities provided grounds for peaceful co-existence among the different ethnic nationalities which were not reported most of the times. This is an unbalanced historical writing which Ayandele pointed out and corrected.

Another serious imbalance in Nigeria and indeed African historical writing over the years has been a history that focused on the aristocracy (a privileged titled class) such as the kings, emirs, chiefs, the nobility and the educated elite rather than that of the people (masses). In the Western Sudan for example, we often read about the achievements of Mansa Musa, his flamboyant and extra ordinary display of affluence, the exploits of Songhai's Askia Muhammad Toure's opulence in Mecca and Cairo, the vast hoards of gold acquired by the ancient kings of Ghana etc. Most historians repeat these accounts in their books as if the people's existence depended exclusively on them. This, according to Ayandele, was an unbalanced historical writing which created the impression over the years that important and salient events in the experience of the people revolved around the aristocrats. In the opinion of Ayandele, this perception of the Nigerian past raises a crucial point in the philosophy of history. The crux of the matter is that, the interest of majority of the people or what they considered salient lies not in their rulers but in the socio-cultural institutions in the society. In the words of Ayandele;

> a true history of the Nigerian peoples in the pre-colonial period should emphasize the aversion of the indigenous people to the intruders, their passionate attachment to traditional religion, their amusement and fun, their non-literacy but nonetheless elaborate system of vocational and ethical education, their inter-family and inter-clan relations, their ways and means of curing diseases, their social welfare schemes and humanitarian concepts, their cosmological ideas and faith in the virtues of sacrifices and their belief in the indispensability of the slave economy (Ayandele, 1979:208).

This was perhaps why the Efik considered the Ekpe society and such things as the fattening of women, the administration of justice by the 'esere' bean and the observance of the traditional religious practices, inter-town relations, important practices than the concentration of attention on kings, chiefs and obas etc.

However, the negative aspect of these intruders notwithstanding, Ayandele posited that the Nigerian elites, through the instrumentality of the missionary endeavor, spear-headed nationalist and constitutional reforms in Nigeria and

indeed Africa. He said it was misleading not to accept or argue that there was no any form of nationalist and constitutional development in Nigeria in the period before 1914. The apologists of this school of thought about the Nigerian past were passing unfair judgment. He stated that there was forceful nationalist awakening in Nigeria before 1914. In his words, this nationalism was "constructive, purposeful, inspiring and fruitful and that it prepared the ground for the better known post-World War 1 nationalism" (Ayandele, 1970:28). He stated that nationalism expressed through the church (Ethiopianism) as well as parliamentary form of government were all spear-headed by the Nigerian elites (the 'saros'). Thanks to the missionaries; these saros (freed slave returnees) and elites expected a Pentecostal 'revolution' that would usher in the Nigeria of their dreams (Ayandele, 1970:28). Pressing the argument further on the role of the educated elites, Ayandele observed that Nigerian historiography is partial to their role, at the expense of the other classes. According to him, the claim by some authors that these deluded hybrids (educated elites) introduced new virtues or superior moral values into Nigeria is a flamboyant one blown out of all proportions. In his view, this was an incorrect, highly prejudiced and unbalanced historical perspective and he anatomized the educated elites in historical-socio-political terms. Ayandele noted that these deluded hybrids were indeed the vanguards of moral pollution in Nigeria; sexual immorality began among them on a scale quite alarming, leaving question marks on the quality of life and moral tone of many of the church leaders. (Ayandele: 367). To other rulers and communities in the Niger Delta, Ayandele stated that the saros were labeled European collaborators who were nothing but heralds of British imperialism. They were seen as conscious collaborators with the whiteman's spiritual, political, cultural and mental conquest of Nigeria. The neglect by some authors of the negative role of the saros (educated elites) was a serious prejudice and an error seemingly endorsed by Nigerian and African historiography (Ayandele, 1980:370).

There is also another aspect of Nigerian history which, over the years has not been given fair attention by some historians and other scholars. This has to do with the peoples contact with Europeans, which some have described as watershed. Correcting this imbalance and misconception, Ayandele maintained that the various societies, kingdoms and chiefdoms had had one form of contact or the other long before the coming of Europeans. Buttressing his position, Ayandele

noted that Ngazar'gamu, the second capital of Kanem-Borno, for instance, had maintained diplomatic ties with Tunis and Cairo and they had communicated with one another in most cordial terms in the 16th and 17th centuries (Ayandele, 1980:373). The Arabs, Fulani and Zaghawa moved about and settled in the Islamic zone of the northern fringes of Nigeria. Borno, therefore, became a leading supplier of eunuchs to Mediterranean Africa and Levant courts. The point being made is that, these relations did not threaten to overthrow traditional polities, but with the coming of the Europeans, the overthrow of the status quo was only but a matter of time. The intruders-explorers, missionaries, traders and later administrators were treated with suspicion and contempt and the peoples began to react in different forms in their communities. Such reactions depended on such variables as the prevailing local political situation and what each ruler considered to be his paramount interest.

Thus Ayandele pointed out that in areas where the intruders interest tallied with those of the traditional societies, they (intruders) were welcomed, and in areas where their interest was perceived to be inimical to the people's welfare, stiff resistance became the order of the day. For example, in the Niger Delta, the initial complaisance of the people in welcoming the missionaries was for socio-economic gains. Literary education with emphasis on Commerce and Accounting was perceived as vital tool in promoting their economic relations with the whiteman's world. No wonder that Eyamba V of Duke Town, Eyo Honesty II of Creek Town and George Pepple I of Bonny allowed missionaries to establish missions in their political domains with such perceived gains in mind. Hence Elkanemi of Borno invited the intruders to help him in warfare. Hence Alafin Majidun of Oyo in the 19th century sought the services of Clapperton and the Lander Brothers to help restore order in his domain (Ayandele, 1979:64).

However, while admitting the fact that these rulers and peoples had a warm embrace with the intruders, Ayandele noted that it was misleading to admit as well that they were welcomed in all societies and by all rulers with the same degree of hospitality. He corrected this imbalance pointing out that, the Oba of Benin, Nana Olomu of Itsekiri, Jaja of Opobo, the Ijebu in Yoruba land as well as the Igbos saw the missionaries presence as a threat to their sovereignty and accordingly restricted and regulated their movements and activities. Citing relevant instances,

Ayandele explained that in the Benin Kingdom, Oba Ovonramwen, not minding the so-called commercial advantages derivable from the white man, restricted and controlled his dealings with the whiteman when his sovereignty and territorial integrity became threatened. In Itsekiri land, Nana Olomu vowed to disallow missionary activities in his domain, as it would obliterate Itsekiri customs and traditions. Among the Ijebu in Yoruba land, the whiteman's presence was seen as a bad omen. This was why in 1859, when two white men appeared in Ijebu-Ode, the chiefs and people became horrified at their presence and consequently sacrifices of goats, dogs and fowls were offered to the gods at Ode and at the villages through which they passed in order to avert any potential danger their appearance might give rise to (Ayandele, 1980:255). In New Calabar, the chiefs became so horrified with the doctrine of Christian missionaries preached in their state that they prepared a lotion with which they wiped the faces of their school children believing that all what they had learnt might disappear from their minds (Ayandele, 1979:64). To all of these, Ayandele concluded "The ideal objective of missionaries was to wipe African Traditional Religion, in which Africans had been finding spiritual consolation for centuries, completely off the map of Africa, and to crush Islam, Christianity's main and seemingly more powerful rival, out of existence (Ayandele, 1979:255).

It is pertinent to mention that even in societies where the whiteman was initially seen as a 'friend', events that occurred later, which portrayed him as one that had an ulterior motive-the motive to dominate, govern, plunder or exploit their land under the cloak of humanitarianism, necessitated the re-defining of that relationship. The manifestations of such fears came to the fore with the events of 1851 and 1861 when Lagos was bombarded and ceded to the British crown. In fact later developments in Ijebu land compelled the Ijebu and Egba to expel the missionaries from Lagos and their libraries looted.

To rulers like Jaja of Opobo, the Oba of Benin, Nana Olomu of Itsekiri and others, Christian preaching was destructive to the foundation of traditional society. The orchestrated, coordinated but 'unwanted' campaigns the missionaries mounted against traditional institutions and socio-political practices such as twin-murder, slavery, polygamy, the Ogboni and Ekpe societies were deliberate efforts to upset traditional societies in favour of western ideals. Much as this paper agrees to an

extent with Ayandele's submission of the destruction of traditional socio-political and cultural institutions by the introduction of Christianity and preaching of the Christian missionaries, the aspect of twin-murder which the missionaries saw and campaigned against and to which some societies held the practice as sacred need to be interrogated. The termination of human life under the guise of tradition is repugnant to the law of nature and against morality. The societies that practiced the act of twin murder may have done so with some "socio-cultural gains"; certainly in the 19th century it was no longer fashionable to terminate lives of children the way it was done. To this extent the sweeping generalization made by Ayandele calls for caution. The campaign against twin murder by the missionaries may not be regarded as an unwanted campaign as Ayandele described it.

What deserves further attention in this study is the over estimation of contributions made by certain European administrators in some African societies. In this regard, Ayandele's historical scholarship focused on the contributions of Mohammed Ali in Egypt, who has been described as the "founder of Modern Egypt". Assessing his contributions against such a claim, Ayandele admitted that although, Mohammed Ali was a man of extraordinary character with enormous ambition and succeeded to a great extent in reforming the Egyptian society, he observed that all his developmental programmes were not carried out in detail, and in fact many had to wait until the future before they could be fully implemented. He posited that Mohammed Ali was not the initiator of all the ideas and programmes which some unwary historians usually ascribed to him. In his view, many of his predecessors certainly wished to revolutionize the Egyptian society and liberate the country from Turkish rule; others had dreamt and wished since the ninth century of uniting Egypt and Syria. Still to others, they had appreciated the vital importance of irrigation to Egypt and attempted to take Egyptians into partnership in the administration of their country. Ayandele stated that, although it is important to put Mohammed Ali's vision and achievements in historical perspective, he cautioned that these should not be emphasized to the exclusion of the vision and achievements of other rulers of Egypt before and after him (Ayandele, 1966:30). He said that glorifying Mohammed Ali this way without acknowledging others before and after him is an incorrect and unbalanced historical writing. Ayandele's views no doubt, illuminated our grasp of the

Nigerian/ African past to a great extent. He was indeed an historian that stood out in his time.

Commenting on Ayandele's intellectual scholarship, Jide Osutokunbo, an Emeritus Professor at the University of Lagos again observes;

> In his generation, I don't think there is any person as prodigious as Ayandele was. In his generation, you find people like Emmanuel Afigbo, Ebiegberi Alagoa and few others. He was a very unique man, a true academic who had no hobby except study and go to the archives. He was versatile and functional in any area of history, from European to African, and the Arab world. He was very verbose and used English words literally (Osuotokunbo, 2021).

However, despite his outstanding contributions to historical scholarship, Ayandele was often criticized of his verbosity by his contemporaries, but Asiwaju, (2021) another Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Lagos in an oral interview stated that "everyone has different style of writing and as long as the grammar is correct, there is no problem about that".

Ayandele and the task before the Nigerian/African Historian

The greatest and most challenging tasks before the historian of today is first, their lack of patriotism and social responsibility. They have not been able to fully write to reveal and emphasize the elements of historical reality that is embedded in the geographical expression, Nigeria. Added to these is that most academics have unduly allowed themselves to be carried away by immodest adulteration after getting their doctoral thesis published. Many of them after publishing their PhD works never visited the archives. They have literally dried-up as far as research is concerned and finding solace in administrative positions in the University or in vying for one political appointment or the other in the wider world. In the opinion of Ayandele, these and others constitute the greatest challenge to the historian of today in giving the study of history its pride of place.

Conclusion

Ayandele has done his utmost best as an historian and scholar and has bowed to the call of nature, but his charge to both Nigerian and African historians' lives on. As already noted, the history about the various communities of Africa in the past has been largely influenced by biases and prejudices of western European authors. Historical perspective about the African past was gleaned from the Eurocentric view. This explained why anything African was treated with grave contempt: its art, culture, civilization, institutions and societies were portrayed as barbaric, savage, uncivilized and pathological adjuncts of white civilized societies. In areas where civilization was found to be indigenous as was in Egypt, Nok, Ife etc, the Hamitic hypothesis was advanced to rationalize European prejudice.

Ayandele's historical scholarship like others before and after him has enhanced our understanding and appreciation of the African values and cosmology. To Aiswaju (2021), Ayandele was undoubtedly the most prolific Nigerian historian of his generation. He was very energetic and penetrating in his works. His early intervention and others before him led to the reorganization of African history as an academic discipline, without which, perhaps the recognition of history as an academic discipline could not have been possible at the time it did.

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