



Key Events in African History: A Reference Guide

By Toyin Falola Ph.D.

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This reference guide to African history provides substantive entries on 36 watershed events that shaped the history of the continent from the prehistoric past to the dawn of the 21st century. Noted African scholar Toyin Falola clearly and articulately chronicles the growth and change of the continent from the agricultural revolution through colonial rule to African independence and the end of apartheid, examining the powerful moments at which Africa became drawn into the global world. Each entry appears in chronological order and consists of a comprehensive essay on the event, its historical, social, and geographic context, and its long-term significance. Many illustrations and maps provide valuable visual tools for the reader. Each entry concludes with suggestions for further reading. A narrative introduction to the history of the continent and a timeline of events place the events in historical and global context.

Based on the latest scholarship, this reference work analyzes the major events in African history and their ramifications, and draws connections between the past and the present. Key themes recur throughout: the development of diverse African cultures, Arab and European incursions and influence, and the efforts of African peoples to gain independence in the 20th century. Among the events recounted are the Iron Age, the rise of the Kush, the spread of Islam, the 19th-century outbreak of Islamic Jihad, the Atlantic slave trade, European conquest and the African response, Pan-Africanism, the women's decade of 1965-1975, and environmental and political challenges of the last years of the 20th century. Well written and objective, this work is an essential reference tool for students and an excellent complement to the study of African history.

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Editorial Review

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Distinguished scholar and Africanist Falola surveys the complicated history of the African continent by focusing on 36 pivotal events that either caused or led to significant changes and developments in African social, political, and cultural life from around 40,000 B.C.E. to the collapse of apartheid in the 1990s. Included are such diverse topics as the growth of the ironworks, the spread of Islam and Christianity, the founding of Liberia, military coups, and refugee problems in the 1980s and 1990s. As the author indicates in his preface, this volume is meant to be used together with a text on African history and is intended for high-school and college students.

Following a detailed time line of historical events, each topic is highlighted in an individual chapter including cross-references, historical and political maps, illustrations, a notes section, and a suggested list for further reading that provides many recent references by international scholars. The chapters are in chronological sequence and divided into ancient and precolonial, nineteenth-century, and twentieth-century periods, and the index is well arranged. Only a cursory mention is made of the AIDS epidemic, which now accounts for more than 70 percent of the number of worldwide cases. Perhaps the impact of this disease can be the subject of a chapter in an updated edition.

In his overview, the author comments about the paucity of interest in African history that existed as recently as 100 years ago, with the resulting lack of historiography. Much research is now being published by both non-African and indigenous scholars; one advantage of this volume for the student is that it spans such a broad time frame, where other references, such as Vogel's *Encyclopedia of Precolonial Africa* (AltaMira, 1997) or Oliver and Atmore's *Medieval Africa, 1250-1800* (Cambridge, 2001), address a specific time period or a single subject area, although in greater detail. High-school and college libraries will find this book a valuable addition to their collections. *RBB*

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Review

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Booklist/Reference Books Bulletin

"Falola has made a valuable contribution to educate the lay reader by compiling a book that surveys the history of Africa from its prehistoric past to the end of the twentieth century....recommended."-MultiCultural Review

"Targeted at high school and college libraries for students taking survey courses in African history, this is an intriguing book....useful for its intended audience....Recommended. General and undergraduate libraries."-
Choice

"A compact overview and summary of events that shaped the history of the African continent....This survey will prove useful as a reference source for advanced students. It should also find a home in circulating collections.."-School Library Journal

.."contains information about 36 important events in African history....This book draws upon the many changes in the African continent from governments to the environment and describes the connections

between past and present African history. This is a valuable resource for updating the school library's Africa resources. Recommended."-Library Media Connection

About the Author

TOYIN FALOLA is the Frances Higginbothom Nalle Centennial Professor in History at the University of Texas, Austin. A distinguished Africanist, Falola serves on the editorial board of many journals, co-edits the *Journal of African Economic History*, and serves as the series editor of the University of Rochester's *Studies in African History and the Diaspora*. He is also series editor of the Greenwood Press series Culture and Customs of Africa. His publications include many essays and books on Nigeria, including *Decolonization and Development Planning* (1996), *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (1998), and *The History of Nigeria* (Greenwood, 1999).

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