

SUBJECT: History
TOPIC: Oyo Empire II

OBJECTIVE:

- (a) Discuss the administration of Oyo
- (b) Highlight the factors responsible for the decline and fall of Oyo Empire.

ADMINISTRATION OF OYO

For administrative purposes, the empire was divided into three areas.

- a. The metropolitan Oyo – This was administered by the Alaafin and his palace officials. The palace officials included the Aremo members of the Oyomesi the surveyor, the sheriffs, the executioners and the eunuchs. (The eunuchs occupied an important and peculiar place in Oyo political history since they were incapable of raising children). One of these eunuchs called Ona-efa occupied prominent judicial position and decided appeals coming to the Alaafin. Another eunuch called Otun-efa was in charge of the shrine of Sango. Another eunuch known as Osi-efa represented the Alaafin in civil and military matters. The eunuchs were also responsible for looking after the wife and children of the Alaafin.
- b. Yoruba speaking areas – These formed a part of the empire. These were ruled in their internal affairs by their own Oba and by the council of elders and the Ogboni confraternity. But imperial matters were under the control and supervision of imperial agents and residents known as Ajale. To curtail the excesses of the Ajale, the Alaafin created special messengers known as the Ilari who supervised the Ajale.
- c. The third were the non – Yoruba provinces such as Nupe, Borgu and Dahomey. The government and administration of these areas rested on the local rulers but they paid their annual tribute to the empire.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF OYO EMPIRE

- i. Lapses in the check and balances in the Oyo constitution.
- ii. Clash between the Alaafin and his Bashorun between 1750 – 1774
- iii. The weakness of the army
- iv. Shift in the population in Yoruba land. From the 18th century the main population moved from the northern part to the forest region.
- v. Stopping of Slave trade
- vi. Largeness of the Empire
- vii. Fulani Jihad
- viii. Closure of trade routes by Nupe
- ix. Independence of vassal states

EVALUATION

- 1. Examine the administration of Oyo
- 2. Discuss the various factors responsible for the decline and fall of Oyo Empire.

ASSIGNMENT

Why was Oyo administration said to be organized?