African History and Historiography: Illuminating the Pathways and Understanding the Challenges. An International Conference in Memory of Emeritus Professor J. F. Ade-Ajayi

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African History and Historiography: Illuminating the Pathways and Understanding the Challenges
An International Conference in Memory of Emeritus Professor J. F. Ade-Ajayi
(May 26, 1929 - August 9, 2014)
Date: August 11 - 14, 2019

Conveners: Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
In Conjunction with
The J.F. Ade-Ajayi Foundation (Jadeas Trust), Ibadan, Nigeria

The Late Emeritus Professor Jacob Festus Ade-Ajayi was an exemplary intellectual, a highly respected teacher, institution builder, a man of letters, and icon of the famous Ibadan School of History. ‘As the flag-bearer of a generation that fostered a renewed understanding of African history, he succeeded in adding allies to the major currents of historical scholarship on/in Africa.’ According to J.D.Y Peel, ‘[Kenneth] Dike was surely the Abraham of Nigerian historiography, Ajayi here confirms his position as its Moses...’ Thus, in his long, interesting life and career, his contributions to the development of African history and historiography were nonpareil. As a world-renowned historian of Africa and eminent scholar, his contributions to African history and nationalist historiography helped frame contemporary narratives on African history, and colonial history and historiography. The decolonisation of...
knowledge through the perspectives he brought to the study of Africa have found resonance in different parts of the world. Ade-Ajayi’s commitment to promoting African history and identity, his use of a combination of oral, written and other sources enabled him to change the narrative on African history and peoples. What epistemologies have emerged since his pioneering role in the field? How has Africa fared in the different settings of knowledge-production relations in a global world?

Prof. Ajayi’s distinguished intellectual career at the University of Ibadan began, first as a foundation student of the then University College, Ibadan in 1948. After his doctoral studies in the United Kingdom, he joined the services of the University College, Ibadan (later, University of Ibadan) on September 12, 1958 and served meritoriously in the university until his retirement in 1988. Despite his contributions to scholarship on a grand scale, he downplayed the need to provide a portrait of his own personal achievements and engagement with the research field. This conference brings together local and international scholars and participants to celebrate the life, works, writings and career of one of Africa’s most influential historians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The conference seeks to broaden and deepen dialogues and knowledge production between participants and scholars interested in Africa and the African experience in this global era. We further seek to engage with the ideas, issues and contexts raised by Ajayi, many of which now frame epistemologies locally, regionally and globally. This is with the understanding that the perspectives he brought up or influenced in the study of African history, culture and society have also led into existence other ideas that have moved in different directions.

Prof J.F. Ade-Ajayi also made pioneering contributions to rewriting the history of Christianity in Africa, with an initial focus on Christian Missions in Nigeria. The nurturing of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), his works in historical pedagogy and the teaching and learning of African History, not only in Africa, but also in the wider world provided a window to his engagement with his field. In later years, his critical contributions to the writing of the UNESCO General History of Africa added greater flavour to his scholarship. He was also the Chairman of the UNESCO Slave Routes project. Apart from other book-length works, his public lectures, occasional publications and journal articles have helped to project and define African epistemology far into the future.

The organisers welcome individual presentations, panels, roundtable discussion sessions, exhibitions; and documentary screening involving topics from all humanistic disciplines in the broadest sense.
Scholars and participants interested in the conference are invited to send a 250-word abstract on any of the following sub-themes or related themes:

- J. F. Ade-Ajayi and the rise of African historiography
- The Archives of and on Africa
- A critique of pre-colonial history and historical sources
- Imperial and Nationalist histories
- The nature of post-colonial histories
- History and nation-building
- UNESCO General History of Africa in the understanding of historical scholarship
- Slavery, Slavery Projects and Reparations
- Religion, Politics and Nation-building
- History and Christian Missions in Nigeria
- Christianity, Colonialism and Nationalism
- Social histories and cultural Studies
- Knowledge production and cultural life
- Biography
- Understanding Digital Humanities and the future of Historical Scholarship
- Politics, Politicians and nation-building
- Marxist historiography and the critique of the Ibadan School of history
- Africa and the modern world
- Understanding African Epistemologies in the modern world
- The future of African history and African Studies
- African Universities of the future

The deadline for the submission of a 250-word Abstract: May 5, 2019

Notification of Acceptance of Abstracts: May 15, 2019

Submission of Draft Papers (Note that papers are to be pre-circulated): July 30, 2019

Conference Dates: August 11 -14, 2019

Location: University of Ibadan, Nigeria

**Confirmed Keynote Speakers:**

1. Prof. Jacob K. Olupona, FNAL, NNOM. Harvard University, U.S.A.
2. TBA
Lead Paper Presenters:
1. TBA
2. TBA

Travel and Conference Information:
Participants are expected to seek funds for travel, cost of registration and conference participation from their home institutions.

Inquiries as well as a 250-word abstract should be addressed to:
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University of Ibadan
Email: uiibadanhistory@gmail.com
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