

Book Review

Islam in Nigeria

By Abdur Rahman Ibrahim Doi: Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Ltd., 1984 pp. 379

Islam in Nigeria is the product of A. R. I. Doi's twenty years of research on the spread and development of Islam in Nigeria. Professor Doi, currently the director of the Centre for Islamic Legal Studies at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, has also taught at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka and the University of Ife. His lengthy tenure in the different major geographical zones of Nigeria is reflected in the book. The twenty-one chapters begin with a general introductory overview of the spread of Islam in West Africa. Part I is devoted to the impact of Islam in the Northern States of Nigeria, Part II deals with the more recent spread of Islam into the Southern Nigerian States and Part III explicates a wide variety of issues germane to the understanding of Islam at the national level. The book is comprehensive, thoroughly researched, and is based on analyses of secondary sources as well as primary field research conducted in all parts of Nigeria. The book has nine maps, seventy-three photographs, detailed notes at the end of each chapter, a bibliography and an index.

Professor Doi traces the spread of Islam through North Africa into the Ancient Empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. As Islam moved into the Northern part of Nigeria, it had a dramatic impact on the seven Hausa states and on the Fulani peoples who carried out the *jihād* under *Shehu* Utham Dan Fodio and the Fulani Sultans of Sokoto. A link was established between the *Umayyad* Arabs and the Kanem-Bornu State. Islam also influenced the Nupe and Ebirra peoples. With the arrival of the Royal Niger Company, British Imperialism and Christian missions began to move into Northern Nigeria about 1302 AH/1885 AC. The impact of colonialism and Christianity upon Islam in Northern Nigeria is analyzed by Dr. Doi. Of particular interest is the analysis of syncretism between Islam and the indigenous cultures and religions of Northern Nigeria. The Boori Cult and the belief in *al-Jinni* are described. The life cycle of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims includes descriptions of the ceremonies conducted at childbirth, the naming of a new child, engagement, marriage, divorce, and death. Non-Islamic beliefs which continue to persist among Muslims in Northern Nigeria are identified.

In Part II, Professor Doi provides details of the influence of the Hausa

Muslims on the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, the syncretism which resulted from the interaction of the traditional Yoruba religion and Islam, and the changes in the life cycle of the Yoruba due to Islam. Islamic influences in Bendel State and among the Ibo-speaking peoples of Southeastern Nigeria are also described.

Part III touches upon a variety of fascinating topics. A survey of the architectural styles and decorative motifs of Nigerian mosques is of particular value. The influence of the *Sharī'ah*, *Sufism*, *Qādirīyah*, the *Tijānīyah*, and Islamic mystical practices upon Islam in Nigeria are considered. As Islam impacted upon the indigenous Nigerian religions, many syncretistic patterns were established, and elements of magic, witchcraft, sorcery, and divination can still be found in many of the Muslim communities in Nigeria. Conflict and misunderstanding between Muslims and Christians over issues such as polygamy are examined. Extremist movements such as that of the *Yoruba Mahdi* and that of Muhammadu Marwa Maitatsine, which led to the recent riots in Kano, are explicated. The types of Islamic education in Nigeria range from the traditional Qur'ānic school taught by the *Alfas* or *Mallams* (Teachers) to schools which integrate training in the Qur'ān with Western education. Changing patterns in Islam in Nigeria since independence also include such topics as the influence of the *Ahmadiyah* sect.

This book is rich in detail and will be of use to a wide variety of scholars, especially those with interest in the history and sociology of Muslims. Students of West African and Nigerian history, culture, society and religion will find it a very valuable text.

Reviewed by Dennis Michael Warren