

# **AFRICA** and other **CONTINENTS** since the 19th century

A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Rashid Oladoja Lasisi



**Ibrahim A. Jawondo  
&  
Victor Ojakorotu**

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Editors

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## Acknowledgments

The Lord Almighty is the giver, sustainer and taker of life. Students, colleagues and admirers of Professor Rashid Oladoja Lasisi had planned to publish the festschrifts in his honour while he was alive, but destiny has made it a posthumous one.

The idea of writing this book remained very passive in me for a long period of time for several reasons. First, the personality in question had produced quite a number of people who are my seniors. They are found in all walks of life including, my Department, I was therefore being very careful not to be accused of 'stealing the show' or seeking cheap popularity or favour by initiating a festschrifts, particularly when he was still serving in the Department. On the other hand, quite a number of others were also qualified for such honour. Further to the above, the personality involved did not like to be publicized. Thus, to approach him with the idea was another major problem. I discussed with Dr. Sa'ad Yusuf Omoiya who was then the National Secretary of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), if such a project could be handled by the Society. He answered affirmatively but nothing came up. The idea gestated in me until I was invited by Dr R. K. Omoloso, the then Ag. Director of Academic Planning, now Ag. Director of General Studies, Al-Hikmah University who said to me: 'Jawondo!' I answered, Yes Sir. He asked; 'What are you people doing to honour this reverend gentleman?' And I asked Who Sir? Then he said, 'I mean Professor Lasisi'. He added 'the man has contributed in no small measure in his area of academic discipline and in mentoring the younger academics'. At this point, I breathed heavily and purred out my thoughts to him. He advised that we should start somewhere even if those to be honoured were a hundred. With regards to the rigidity of Professor Lasisi, he advised that I should inform him, but he insisted that the work must be done whatever his response might be.

From this point, I resolved that the idea must come to reality. I was:

assisted in taking this bold step because at this time, he had retired from the service of the University of Ilorin, so we used to see on appointments and not on daily basis; thus, it was going to be easy for me to avoid him at will.

The issue was tendered at a Departmental meeting of History, University of Ilorin. It was applauded, but again, the question of other retired academics resurfaced. It was therefore concluded that the festschrifts be done while a special edition of the Departmental Journal be produced in honour of our retired teachers and senior colleagues. At this juncture, the idea became externalized. I consulted with Dr. (Mrs) C.O.O. Agboola (now a professor), a former Head in the Department, who had just moved to the Department of History, Ajayi Crowder University, Oyo. She lauded the idea but, she strongly advised me to seek Professor Lasisi's blessing before anything. She was optimistic that I would get a positive response. She, however, advised me strongly to be vigilant for plagiarism and to do standard editorial work on the festschrifts. In her subsequent text, she was interested in knowing those to serve on the editorial board. This was very important, she added, 'so that the ultimate production would make both academic and grammatical sense'.

Also, I informed Dr. Isiaka Zubair Aliagan, former Deputy Director of Information, University of Ilorin, one of the PhD graduates of the Department, now a lecturer at the Department of Mass Communication, Kwara State University, Malete but then on a national assignment in the office of the First Lady Madam Dame Patience Jonathan. This was his response: 'A worthy project on a great scholar and benefactor... am sponsoring the posters and flyers'. This he did and delivered to me.

At this point, I felt that since the issue had been externalized, it would be morally wrong for Professor Lasisi to stop the project and if he attempted doing that I would resist by reporting him to people. I also felt he might have been getting the hint from people I had discussed with. Thus, at about 10:00am on a fateful day, I met him

at Al-Hikmah University where he had been given contract job and after our usual chats, I broke the news to him, telling him the journey so far. He had no other option than to bless it. He was quiet for a while, but when he spoke, he eventually blessed the project.

Given the wide range of the influence of the Professor, I had to make a lot of contact and to enlist the support of people at different corners of Nigeria and beyond as persons from whom information regarding the festschrifts could be sought (see the appendix for their names and locations)

When the 'Call for Paper' was published, there was an impressive response, undoubtedly because of the personality involved. For this reason, we had to shift submission deadlines several times to accommodate critical interests whose representatives complained to the Professor directly. For Knowing him as a thorough academic, we took our time to do things correctly at each stage. He was also monitoring the processes by asking me questions. To allow for independence of opinion of the editors and to forestall embarrassment from anyone, no money was charged to process any paper.

On the death of Professor Lasisi, I met with his brothers and the children to inform them of the project. They all co-operated by giving me information and scouting for the needed pictures.

When the papers were ready for the press, I had no money to pay. But I felt very strongly that I did not want to be telling stories of what we wanted to do to people, but to have concrete evidence of what we were doing. On this note, I called on Dr. Z. I. Aliagan, with whom we planned for the typesetting and production of a dummy. This I presented to Dr. Y. K. Jimoh who was aware of the project and for whom I know Professor Lasisi had a great respect. He appreciated it a lot. Thereafter, I declared to him that there was no money to continue the project. Upon his advice, a committee was created to look for funds. The members were Alhaji Dr. Y. K. Jimoh, Dr. A. O. Raji, Dr. L. F. Oladimeji, Professor R. A. Olaoye, the current Director

of Unilorin Archives and Documentation Centre, and I. We resolved to meet lovers, students and well-wishers of the deceased for help. For several reasons, our first point of call was Alhaji (Chief) (Dr.) Oladimeji's (OFR) house, the Proprietor of Al-Hikmah University and the Jagunmolu of Igbomina land and Arogundade of Lagos. When the committee presented the Book before him, he was happy and displayed the love he had for the Professor and for knowledge. He prayed for all the committee members and authors of the papers therein and the deceased. When he was told of our financial need, without hesitation, he agreed to put down N1 Million for the printing of hard cover copies of the book.

At this juncture, I specifically appreciate the huge financial contribution of Baba Oladimeji, which saved us from having to go cap-in-hand to other places. There and then, I told people that the plan on the ground was to do a public presentation of the book and the money realized would be divided into two for annual convocation gifts to the best student in History at both Al-Hikmah University and University of Ilorin where the deceased served.

While I thank Ibrahim AbdulGaniyu Jawondo Jnr for his efforts in typing and effecting corrections on several pages, I appreciate all the contributors for their efforts including those who submitted abstracts who were unable to submit full papers.

On this note, I thank Allah for making this project a reality. I also thank the authorities of the Department of History and International Studies of the University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, as well as the Department of Politics and International Relations, North-West University, South Africa that collaborated in publishing this work in honour of the erudite scholar. I say thank you to all the individuals that I have mentioned and those that, for space, I have not been able to mention who have contributed to the success of this project. You are all well appreciated. May the Lord grant us long and prosperous life and a glorious exit.

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## Preface/Introduction

The book is written in honour of our teacher and mentor, Professor Rashid Oladoja Lasisi, officially called R. O. Lasisi and fondly called R.O by his colleagues, Oga by his students and admirers. Because his area of academic expertise was International Relations with particular focus on British and French administration on Africa, the papers here dealt with issues and theories of Intra and Inter, groups, States and national relations.

The first chapter presented the biography of the personality, Professor R.O Lasisi as an indigene of Oyo town in Oyo state and a worthy citizen of Nigeria. The chapter covered his history from childhood to death noting necessary credence of his career as a scholar and community leader.

Chapter two discussed intellectual imperialism in Africa as it impacted international studies. The author is of the opinion that the conventional traditional, International Relation paradigms are devoid of the dynamics of the contemporary African societies. The author departed from the traditional perspective of imperialism which lays emphasis on the political and economic dimension by examining the dynamics of intellectual imperialism in Africa with a special concern about its impact in international studies. Thus, a holistic approach which will enhance a comprehensive understanding is suggested.

The third chapter traced the historicity of theories of International Relations from the start to the present. The author identified classical, neo-realism, liberal, constructivism and feminism theories as often used in the discipline. He however detested the use of theories as a negative tool for an unending disputation. Moving away from this act, he highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the above mentioned theories pointing out their utilitarian values.

The fourth chapter considered the impact of globalization on Nigeria democracy. The author believed that there has been increased interdependence among nations as a result of globalization driven by technology, policy and competition which subordinated domestic economies to global economies. In governance, liberal democracy, adopted by Nigeria, is criticized owing to the fact that the disadvantages of liberal democracy outweigh the gains.

Chapter five which is on gender and language practice, is a discussion along global discourses on gender usage of language. The paper argued that language is an important social instrument evident in social construct. The paper submitted that in spite numerous empirical researches, common ground has not been established. Through the exploration of the existing literature, the paper concluded that new gendered identities should be expected through the online interactions and in different forms.

The sixth chapter is a reconstruction of the history of Nigeria during the colonial era, 1900-1960. The Author used the text of Akachi Ezeigbo; *The Last of the Strong* ones which is a story of the colonial history of Nigeria as a basis for analysis. The author believed that the work represented a new interpretation because of the use of gender discourse on imperialism. The author's analysis showed how women became heroines by resisting colonial social, economic domination and political subjugation. This type of new interpretation, according to the author, risks losing historical facts.

The seventh chapter centred on the management of the chief resource of Nigeria, Oil. The author believed that the Nigerian state acquires enormous funds from the petroleum resources but this has not translated to improved life among the commoners. Management issues were identified as the challenges militating against improved living in Nigeria. The paper therefore suggested a redirection of policies, to accelerate social and economic development in Nigeria.

The eighth chapter titled 'Post War Peace Restoration: Nigeria Press

against Foreign do-gooders' casted our minds back to the period 1967-1970 when Nigerians were divided into two camps against one another; the Nigerian government versus the Biafra. The author enlightened us on how the Nigerian press solidly stood behind the Nigerian government against the foreign press that was pro-Biafra even after the end of the civil war. The paper saw the foreign press as a promoter of imperialist interest in Nigeria.

The ninth paper discussed the impact of Islamic thoughts and culture on Africa using Nigeria as a case study. A detailed explanation of how Islam has touched every parts of Nigerians lives irrespective of their religion was presented. Of particular importance to the author are dresses, exchange of greetings respect for one another, marital relationship and scholarship etc.

The tenth chapter focused on the functions of writers and historians and the relationship between the two who are regarded as the watch dogs of the people's present, custodians of the past and seers of their future. Using the works of some African writers, the author historicized the independence struggle in East and South Africa, Civil war and military rule in Nigeria. The paper clearly analyzed the synergy between literary analysts and the historians.

Chapter eleven is majorly concerned about how government and corporate bodies battled with poverty in Africa. It singled out two major schemes; The Technical Aids Corps (TAC) put in place by the Nigerian government and the Voluntary Service Organization (VSO) of China. The paper examined in detail, the structure of the organizations, their benefits to the parties as well as the challenges and prospects of the organizations.

Chapter twelve traced the history of the linkage between Nigeria and Iran as engendered by the Islamic Movement in Nigeria and the Shiia of Iran. The paper claimed that the impact of the support IMN received from the Shiia of Iran was unprecedented as it strengthened the base of the IMN in Nigeria. Members enjoyed scholarship to

further their education in Iran and other sister countries. This and other assistances increased Shii'a following in Nigeria.

The thirteenth chapter considered the importance of spirit possession activities and its general applicability in Africa and Pacific Asia. The paper on the one hand examined the similarities and dissimilarities in the features of spirit possessions between 'Aruta' among the Owe people of Kabba in the Northeastern Yorubaland and Bori among the Hausa/Fulani of northern Nigeria while on the other hand, it compared and contrasted spirit possession in Nigeria with Haitian Vodou, Iwa or Alca and Papua of New Guinea Jari or Magis. The paper observed that in spite western education and culture, spirit possession practices existed though with moderation.

Chapter fourteen argued that the forces of culture and technology have promoted cultural globalization which is gradually breaking down all initial barriers. Thus, the impact is felt in all spheres of life. The paper further explored the impacts of cultural globalization on Nigerian women. It concluded that cultural globalization is a revolutionary trend which is impacting on Nigerian women.

The fifteenth chapter explored the links between industrialization and economic stability of a state on the one hand and social transformation of people on the other hand. As a case study, the author used the example of Kwara paper converter limited by documenting its origin, activities and closure.

Chapter sixteen 'holdings and challenges of Archives in Africa: the case of the National Archives of Ibadan' presented the historical origin of the Ibadan National Archive, the unlimited resources in the archive, their uses and challenges posed to the materials and users. The author is of the opinion that should the National Archive operate independent of the Federal Ministry of Information, it would be more efficient.

Chapter seventeen examined the hallmarks of the September 2001 Jos crisis. The author believed that the trouble often referred to as

Jos crisis was an accumulation of several skirmishes which leaders and government either ignored or mishandled. Thus, local problems transformed into a state problem and consequently a national problem.

The eighteenth chapter discussed intergroup relations among the different Yoruba communities in the nineteenth century, using the 1877-1893 war between the Ekiti parapo and the allied forces of Ibadan and Igbajo as a focus. The paper examined the blood, social, economic and cultural relationship among the parties as well as the causes and consequences of the war on the parties and the Yoruba nation.

The next chapter, which is the nineteenth, focused on the transformation of Ilorin from being Aare Afonja's enclave to an Emirate with significant structural difference from its likes in northern Nigeria. The roles played by the 'Jama'a' in the establishment of Ilorin Emirate and the administrative roles of the Baloguns were examined.

Chapter twenty examined the role of civil societies as a potent instrument for establishing, nurturing and promoting democracy in Nigeria. It therefore traced the history of civil societies' involvement in Nigeria's democracy, giving details of transition from military to civil rule, as well as challenges involved.

The twenty-first paper which is a case of intra-national relations focused on the significance and otherwise of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme which was established in 1973 by the Nigerian government to promote unity among Nigerian Youths most especially to eliminate the discord brought by the Nigerian Civil war which took place between 1967 and 1970. The author probed into the history of the scheme because of the new forces against the scheme.

Chapter twenty-two challenged the view that says religious intolerance is the bane of African Development. It argued that multiplicity of religion is not the problem but ethnic considerations brought about

by the failure of the leaders to foster unity, integration and common goal. It called for people oriented policies to curb incessant ethnic crises veiled with religions.

Chapter twenty-three is on Ikaland. It is a good example of intra-national relations where the various clans in Ikaland relate under the guise of religion to celebrate Igwe, a socio-cultural and religious festival. According to the author, the festival rekindled the clans, enlightened their youths, and visitors about the dos and don'ts in the society as well as the origin and culture of the Ika people. The paper concluded by stating that modernity is one of the challenges of Igwe festival practice in Ikaland.

Chapter twenty-four is on leadership in Nigeria. It is concerned about the failure of the Nigerian State, which it hinged on leadership problem. The paper using Platonic option argued that Nigeria will witness progressive transformation if 'philosophical acumen' is made a requirement for appointing and electing leaders in Nigeria.

Chapter twenty fifth which is on the complexity of urban conflict in Nigeria argued that the Nigerian elite is responsible for the urban conflict in Nigeria just to cover up the inabilities to chart a progressive course for the masses and to perpetuate themselves in offices. Thus, using historical analysis, the paper historicized a catalogue of urban conflicts in northern part of Nigeria.

The twenty -sixth paper is on selective conflict Resolution Initiatives in West Africa. It is dedicated to the study of conflict resolution role of ECOWAS within West Africa with particular focus on the cash and troop contributions of Nigeria. The paper acknowledged the role of Nigeria and argued that the absence of Nigeria's troops in Guinea-Bissau was partly responsible for the failure of the peace keeping force.

The twenty-seventh chapter on 'White Collar Jobs and the Deconstruction of the Peasant Farmer in Southwestern Nigeria' painted a glowing picture of farming as a profession which improved

Nigerian economy between 1900 and 1960. However, farming became moribund and overtaken by white collar jobs, which were more appealing through attractive salaries and fraud. The paper x-rayed the negative consequences of white collar jobs on agricultural development in Nigeria.

The twenty eighth paper, which is on Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution in Africa Traditional System, refreshed our memories on the existence of dispute resolution mechanisms in Africa before the era of colonialism. However, with colonization came litigation, a new method of dispute resolution that Africa had to key into. The author observed recourse to the ADR in Africa particularly in Nigeria because of the associated inefficacies of litigation. He therefore probed into the nitty-gritty of ADR as a conflict settlement mechanism.

Chapter twenty ninth examined the current position of the developing nations at the face of the growing influence of Technology and what their future is likely going to be. The author using dependency syndrome believes that the developing nations would always be at the mercy of the developed as they continued to give them fishes rather than teaching them the act of fishing for self sustenance.

The thirtieth paper discussed in details, how the Jamatul Tablighi influenced the African Youth with particular reference to Nigeria and the Gambia. The author traced the establishment and the historical development of the religious group which sort off transformed some youths both religiously and socially. The author made it clear that the group found alliance with some youth in both countries with full involvement of the women folks. Today the author agreed that the group has grown big that their effect is felt in all the nooks and crannies of the Gambia and Nigeria.

The thirty first paper, discussed the personality of Professor R. O. Lasisi using the lens of the deceased place of Origin, Oyo and career, teaching. He uniquely discussed this, by stressing the role Islam had

played in revolutionizing the early new Oyo leaders and the town. He submitted that Professor Lasisi's progenitor; Al-Bornawi of the Ajokidero family was the Reformer Allah used to revolutionize Oyo land and people. He concluded the piece by drawing lessons from the life of the Professor.

With the above analytical presentation, it is crystal clear that this book will serve as a useful material in the areas of intra group, inter group and international discourses for students and teachers alike. I therefore wish you a comprehensive reading. I do hope you find the chapters herein rewarding.

**L. A. Jawondo (Ph.D)**

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APPENDIX: A GOODWILL LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE OF MUSLIM FRIENDS, OYO

## CHAPTER 1

### R.O. LASISI: A SCHOLAR, TEACHER AND AN ADMINISTRATOR

By I. A. Jawondo

Rashid Oladoja Lasisi was born on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1944, to the family of Late Rufai Akanbi Lasisi of Ile- Imam Ajokidero, in Oyo town and Princess Asimau Sie Ejide Oyedunmade Atunyaya, daughter of Alaaft Bello Gbadegesin, Ladigbolu II. His father was Baba Lasisi, whose own father was Rufai. They were all descendants of Ajokidero family and of Olundu's lineage, who migrated from the Old Oyo Kingdom to the present Oyo. The name Olundu (perseverant) was given to the lineage because of the endurance shown by members of that family in spite of having suffered successive misfortune of infant mortality. The Ajokidero family belongs to the Imamate lineage since the time immemorial of the Old Oyo Kingdom and it produced the first Imam of the new Oyo. The Imamship of Oyo land is rotated between the Ajokidero and Akewugberu family that produced the second Imam of the new Oyo. The current Imam, al-Shaikh Mashood Abdulganiy Adebayo, who was turbaned in 2007, is from the Ajokidero family. He is the direct son of Baba AbdulGaniyu who was from the line of Baba Atanda, a younger brother to Baba Rufai, the grandfather of Rashid Lasisi. Baba Lasisi's other brothers included AbdulRaheem, Salahudeen and Yunus.

R.O. Lasisi, who was the first child of the family had the following younger brothers and sisters; Imam AbdulRafiu Lasisi, Mr. Mashood Adebayo AbdulGaniy, Lawyer Tajudeen, Alhaji Shakirudeen, Alhaji Falilulahi and Alhaja Shakira.

Princess Asimau Sie Ejide, who was the only daughter of her mother, Mama Saudat Ode to Aaafin Bello Gbadegesin Oladigbolu II, had the following as half sisters and brothers; Alhaja Sikirat, Alhaja Mojisola, Alhaji AbdulGaniy, Alhaji Husseni and Alhaji Hassan. Due to having lived a long life, she rose to the position of head of Gbadegesin family. Princess Asimau Sie Ejide was, however, survived by eight children, namely R.O. Lasisi, Imam AbdulRafiu Lasisi, Mr Mashood Adebayo AbdulGaniy, Alhaja Shakira, Alhaji Muhammad Kabir, Alhaji Abdul Wasiu, Alhaja Fatima and Alhaji AbdulFatai.

#### Education

As it was the practice among Muslims to give their children and wards sound education from their childhood, particularly families with Imamate tradition, the young Lasisi, along with other children of Ajokidero family, were exposed to Islamic education. He attended the tablet Quranic School (Ile-kewu) of Alfa Aderibigbe of Kaa Alfa Akewugberu, who was the father of Alfa AbdulAzeez who succeeded his father in overseeing the Qur'anic school. Young Lasisi completed the Quranic learning in 1954, but the graduation ceremony came up 1958. Members of the 1958 graduating class included Mudasir, Muritala, Rafiu, Ladi, Siddikat, all of Okunola's family. Others were Razaq Busari, Ayetiti, Abdullahi ibn Kaka and others. The current teacher at the Quranic School is Alfa Ahmadu.

Young Lasisi began Western education at the Native Authority Primary School, Idi-Ope, Oyo, where he graduated in 1957 with a Primary School Leaving Certificate. He advanced his education by attending Local Authority Teachers' Training College, Oyo, between 1961 and 1962 for Grade III Certificate. He later proceeded to the Local Authority Teachers' Training College, Ibadan, between 1965 and 1966 for his Teachers' Grade II, where he bagged academic awards, being the best student in both Geography and Principles of Education.

In preparation for university education, he registered for and passed

Ordinary and Advance G.C.E. London. With these results, he gained admission into the University of Ibadan in 1968 and graduated with a B.A. (Hons.) History in 1971. Lasisi registered for and completed his Master's and Ph.D degrees in the same University in 1981 and 1985 respectively. During his studentship at the University of Ibadan, he was a University Scholar in the Department of History between 1981 and 1984. These awards clearly testify to his consistent outstanding brilliance, industry and handwork.

### Career

Determined to build a career in teaching, Rashid Lasisi traversed various strata of the profession, starting from Primary School to Secondary School, College of Education, Polytechnic and finally the University. Lasisi's experience in the Civil Service was very unique. Sometimes, some individuals move fast through the cadres, while others go slowly. That of Lasisi was a steady type of career progression because he served in different but related educational sectors and in each sector, he started almost from the scratch and made it to the top.

At the Primary School, he began as a class teacher and rose to the position of Headmaster. From being a graduate History teacher, he rose to become Principal. As a Lecturer II in 1976 at the then Kwara State College of Technology now Kwara Polytechnic, he rose to the position of a Principal Lecturer in 1983, before crossing to University of Ilorin in 1986 as Lecturer II. He rose to the position of Lecturer I in 1988, Senior Lecturer in 1990, Reader in 1993, and Professor in 1995. The secret of his uniqueness was in his academic advancement which gave him the chance of moving on at every given opportunity.

### Appointments

As a reward for his consistent dedication to work and exhibition of truthfulness and trustworthiness, Rashid Lasisi was appointed and won elections into several offices. As a Primary School teacher,

he rose through the ranks to become Assistant Headmaster and substantive Headmaster in 1965 at Eleyele Primary School in Okeho, Oyo North. As a graduate History teacher at Oro Grammar School, Oro, in the present Irepoḍun Local Government of Kwara State, he became the Head, Department of Arts, and subsequently, the Acting Vice-Principal between January 1974 and June 1976, after which he was appointed substantive Vice-Principal of Okeya High School, Okeya in July 1976.

At the university, the leadership qualities of Lasisi were brought to bear not only in departmental and faculty administration, but in the University at large and beyond. Though a father figure and adviser to all students, he was appointed adviser to 100 and 200 Level students between 1986 and 1991, the position he combined with manning the departmental Examination office within the same period. Appointed as Postgraduate Co-ordinator of the Department of History between 1998 and 1999, he rose to become the Head of the Department between 1999 and 2001. Lasisi was an 'ambassador' of the Faculty of Arts at the Faculty of Health Sciences Board from 1990 to 1994. He was a member of Senate Committee on Longe Commission in 1991 and on the committees on Examination, Scholarship and Prizes between 1993 and 1995. He was elected Sub-Dean of the Faculty of Arts in 1991, which lasted till 1994 and subsequently became the elected Dean nine years after. It is remarkable to mention that Professor Lasisi was not on ground when the decision to make him the Dean was taken by some Faculty members neither was he on ground to do the necessary campaign, but for his outstanding personality, he won the election with a land-slide. Late Professor Musa Ali Ajetunmobi was nominated by the supporting Professors and made the Chairman Campaign Committee, supported by Dr. Sa'ad Yusuf Omoiya, Dr. Ibrahim AbdulGaniyu Jawondo and other members. Professor M. A. Ajetunmobi succeeded him in office as the Dean of the Faculty.

Professor Lasisi's letter to the administration on returning from



Sabbatical cum accumulated leave speaks volumes about his election as Dean:

I was granted sabbatical from December 2001 to November 2002 and permitted after to utilize my accumulated leaves of eight months. I am therefore resuming work today, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2003 in the Department of History and also as Dean, Faculty of Arts...

The Kwara State Government also tapped from the fountain of knowledge, erudition and frankness of Lasisi when he was appointed the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Great Debate under the auspices of the Directorate of Mass Mobilization (MAMSER), Kwara State, for Gubernatorial Candidates in December 1991 and a member of the Kwara State Boundary Committee from 1992 to 1994.

At the university level, Lasisi served in various capacities. He was appointed Director of General Studies Unit twice, 1998-1999 and 2005-2007. He was the Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of the Unilorin Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies and elected into the Joint Council/Senate Committee for the selection of Vice Chancellor for the University in 2007. Lasisi's footprints as the Chairman of the University of Ilorin Muslim Community are still boldly written in the sand of time. The erudition of Lasisi knew no bounds; he read very widely as a scholar of International Studies, and he travelled the length and breadth of the country. He transcended the borders of the country to the international arena through attendance of conferences and publication of articles in reputable international journals. His academic focus was on British and French Administration in Africa, as reflected in his Master of Arts thesis and Doctor of Philosophy dissertation which he completed in 1981 and 1985, respectively.

For ease of reference, a list of some of his academic outputs is included in this chapter. Efforts are also on-going to collect, collate

and publish his public lectures.

Given his academic experience, he served as External Examiner to quite a number of Nigerian universities, including Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto; Bayero University, Kano; University of Ibadan; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Delta State University, Abraka among others, apart from observing his sabbatical leaves at Ondo, and Delta States universities and Ajayi Crowther/Al-Hikmah in 1993, 2001 and 2010 respectively. He was a member of National Universities Commission Accreditation Team to several Nigerian universities in Bayelsa, Rivers, Imo states and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin in Kwara state.

Upon his retirement from the services of the University of Ilorin on 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2011, he joined Al-Hikmah University as a Contract Officer in the Department of History and International Studies. It should be noted that he was not new in Al-Hikmah University. Apart from the fact that he had been on her staff list as an Associate Lecturer, he spent his last Sabbatical leave (2010-2011), in this University. Here, he also served in various capacities, ranging from the Deanship of the College of the Humanities now College of the Humanities and Social Sciences for two (2) years (2010-2012), the Chairman, Staff Disciplinary Committee and others till his transition to eternity.

#### **Association membership**

Professor R.O. Lasisi belonged to some professional, cultural and faith-based associations. Until his death, he was an active and, indeed, life member of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP), Current Affairs Association of Nigeria (CAAN), University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah Muslim Communities, and Oyo Muslim Committee of Friends. He chaired Unilorin Muslim Community for a period of four years, 2005-2009.

## Family

The young Lasisi got married in 1967 at the age of 23 years and as a primary school teacher. Since then and until his death, he was a committed family man. The eldest in both the paternal and the maternal families, he was indeed a rallying point. He was seen as a compassionate and no nonsense man. Based on principles, he was strict but benevolently generous. His marriages produced the following offsprings, arranged in order of age; Shakirat, Dauda, Sarafa, Sadiq, Aminat, Mohammed, Hafsat, Taofiqat, Mariam, and Rasheedat.

## His pilgrimage to Makkah

Hajj is an important but the last of the pillars of Islam enjoined on all mentally, physically and financially able Muslims. Hajj, to some is not only meant for the able Muslims but that for an individual to perform Hajj, he must be spiritually mature in addition to age. Another school of thought believes that as soon as a Muslim is able, he or she can go on Hajj, believing that the spiritual maturity can come anytime. People in this group encourage minors to perform Hajj, since they can still go at will as time and resources permit. Professor Lasisi, as a senior civil servant, was eminently qualified to go on Hajj but he did not until 2010 believing that as the last pillar of Islam, it should also be the last of all worship to unite with one's Lord. At this point, permit my personal reminiscence with him, to succinctly capture his view on Hajj.

Sometimes in 2010, I was in my office, Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin, when it suddenly occurred to me that 'Oga' had not gone on Hajj. By any standard, I felt he had been qualified for long. I made up my mind to see him, but I also felt I needed someone to accompany me, in case I might need to argue with him. I therefore called on Dr. Abdullahi Abubakar Sadiq of the Department of English who also understood 'Oga' very well because he served as his secretary when he was the Chairman

University of Ilorin Muslim Community. I had briefed him of our mission to Oga's house. Now in his house, after chatting and putting him in a proper frame of mind, I opened a discussion on Hajj and eventually asked him if he had gone on Hajj. He replied no! Then both of us exclaimed WHY! He said: 'Going to Makkah is not a joke. Once you go, you must be ready to give up this world. So, I feared committing sins after Hajj.' We laughed it off and made him to see the blessing in going on Hajj. There and then he resolved to go that year (2010). He asked if I would be going with him and I replied 'No problem, but that depends on getting the money I had contributed to my cooperative'. The second day, he gave me a check to pay for his Hajj. I went straight to Kwara State Pilgrims Welfare Board where my teacher, an elder state man, Imam AbdullHameed Abdullahi (The Imam Imale of Ilorin) was the Chairman. I met with the Secretary, Mr. Imam, who is also a friend. I was given a teller of the Unity Bank. I paid for Oga's form and mine but I could not pay again for Hajj that year because Board claimed that they had exhausted the spaces available, in spite of the fact that I had obtained a form. However, I pleaded with the officials that my Oga be allowed a space in the first flight and they agreed. To the glory of Allah Oga went and returned from Hajj transformed. His faith increased tremendously as observed from his words and deeds. He said to me when I went to welcome him from Hajj: 'Jawondo', 'Sir', I answered. 'You see my grown grey beard?' 'Yes Sir,' I answered. 'So shall it be till I die'. From his return from Hajj till his death, white became the choice colour of Oga and so he went to meet his creator with it.

## His death

Death is an inevitable phenomenon in human life. However, long life has always been man's daily prayer to God. In Islam, Muslims are expected to live a life of preparedness for death at every time of the day, of the week and of the year. As a Muslim, Professor Lasisi seemed to have been influenced by this philosophy. While he prayed for longevity, he took caution in his sayings and deeds. At this point,

permit me again to narrate my experience with him on this subject matter. In my discussions with Oga, I discovered that he never had a protracted illness. He told me he never slept in a hospital since he was mature. Based on this, he never wanted in his life a prolonged illness but a tranquil transition. The very month of his preparation for transition to the great beyond, I met him in his office to say hello as I was on Sabbatical Leave at Al-Hikmah University at that time. While with him, he coughed and I asked, 'Sir, what is the problem? You are doing what you hate most!' He replied, 'In fact, I am to see my doctor today by 12 noon.' And I said: 'Sir, this is 11:30a.m.' Yes, he replied, 'but I have a class of 400 Level at that same time.' I persuaded him to let me take the class for him. He paused and said, 'Well, if you would not mind.' At this point I had a mixed feeling. First, I was happy that Oga was trusting me with his lecture for the first time in 2014 since 2001 that I had been in the same Department with him. Secondly, I was panicky as to the level of his illness for him to have allowed me to handle his class. As I was about to go, he called me again to give me a guide and even a note. I simply told him, 'Oga, a child is always a child before his father.' He got my message and he allowed me to go. After ten minutes in the class, I observed he was still in his office, so I left the class again to meet him, asking if he needed attention. When he saw me, he was alarmed. 'The students should be in class!' he exclaimed. 'Yes Sir, I came back because I still saw your car and that means you were still in the office,' I explained. Yes, I was about going when my junior brother called me and Yinka (his son) has also called now. They are both coming to my office,' he said. I wanted to take him to the hospital but he told me not to worry as his brother and son were coming to pick him. This turned out to be his last day and moment in Al-Hikmah University. He was driven to the hospital where Professor Ibrahim Katibi took care of him for 31 days. A few days after his discharge from the hospital, he breathed his last and answered the call of Allah after performing the Suhr prayer on Saturday, 1-March, 2014. May Allah forgive him and grant him aljannat Firdaus. (Amin).

## Testimonies

Prof. R.O. Lasisi was a friend, colleague and my predecessor in Office (the Dean of the Humanities, Al-Hikmah University). He was a humble and uncommonly rigidly principled person and a practising Muslim. May his soul rest in perfect peace. (Prof. I. B. Bello-Imam, 03/03/2014).

Daddy was a mentor when he was alive. I pray for Allah's forgiveness on him and may his gentle soul rest in perfect peace. (Mrs. Mustapha, Law, Unilorin, 03/03/2014)

He was a quiet, honest believer in God. May his soul rest in peace (Prof. G.A. Badmus, Al-Hikmah University).

My mentor has gone R. I. P. (Prof. Tijani AbdulWahab (LAUTECH, Ogbomoso)

Prof. R. O. Lasisi, you were a wonderful father whose passion for Islamic scholarship, justice and equity does not know any bound. I will greatly miss you and I pray fervently that Allah grant you His abode for the righteous in Jannatul-Firdaus, A-a-m-e-e-n (Alhaji Abdul-Hafeez Adedimeji, Fountain University Osogbo,)

His death was a great loss to the family, disciples, historians, Unilorin Muslim Community and humanity in general. May Allah bless and forgive Prof. R. O. Lasisi (Muhammed Bashir Gidado Jar, M.A. History, ex-student)

I don't know how to describe how much I will miss him. He's one in a million in all ramifications. May Allah grant him Al-Jannah Firdaus. (Lawal, S. Abayomi, COE, Ilorin)

You were an icon. You affected so many positively and they remain proofs of your dedication as a teacher and administrator. Continue to rest in Al-Jannah. (Mrs R. F. Ajiboye)

A great mentor, who shall never be forgotten May your soul rest in peace (Chib M. K. Ajayi, NPA Lagos)

The (Society for Peace Studies and Practice) sympathizes with the family for this great loss. May his gentle soul rest in peace. (Dr. Willie Eselebor, President SPSP).

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## Conclusion

This chapter has given a brief biography of Professor R. O. Lasisi as an indigene of Oyo in the present Oyo State in South-western Nigeria. For his educational adventure, he traversed the length and breadth of Oyo before he went out in search of further knowledge. The quest for knowledge made him transcend the borders of Nigeria to Togo and France. As a teacher, he affected the lives of many who will never forget him. To the nation, he was an unforgettable personality because of his contributions to knowledge and administration everywhere he had served. As a family man, he will be missed by his kin and children. As a Muslim, his contributions to the development

and peaceful co-existence of the Ummah are unquantifiable. Indeed Lasisi's death is a colossal loss to humanity. However, to the Muslims, death is a debt that every living being must pay. Prof., rest in peace.

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4. Interview with Dr. Ayo Alaka
5. interview with Imam AbdulRafiu Lasisi (SAW MILL, Ilorin)
6. Fridau prayer booklet used on the 8-day prayer for Professor Lasisi
7. Fridau prayer booklet used on the 8-day prayer for Asmau Sie Ejide, Professor Lasisi's mother.
8. Condolence Register signed by sympathizers at Professor Lasisi's house, Adewole, Ilorin.



Professor Lasisi as Dean of the College of the Humanities (now College of the Humanities and Social Sciences) on a matriculation day



Professor Lasisi standing while he was being introduced on his inaugural lecture



Professor Lasisi at the 2nd Convocation of Al-Hikmah University, 2012



Professor Lasisi celebrating first birthday of Sadiat Abiola Lasisi in 1978



The children who were in attendance at Prof. R.O. Lasisi's Inaugural lecture.

R.O. Lasisi & Chief Raimi Oladimeji, Proprietor, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin



Late Rufai Akanbi Lasisi of Be-Imam Ajekidero, Oyo (Father of Professor Lasisi)



Princess Asimata Sie Ejide Oyedunmade Atayaya (Mother of Professor Lasisi)



Professor Lasisi as a fresh graduate from the University of Ibadan in 1971



Rasheed Lasisi with a friend standing by his first car in 1974



Prof. Lasisi and wife celebrating Wolaat Al-Quran with their children



Prof. Lasisi and the Proprietor of Al-Hikmah University, Albaji Chief (Dr.) Abdur-Raheem Oladimeji, the Jagunmolu of Igbeeminalaad



Prof. Lasisi as the Dean presenting the students of the College of the Humanities to the Chancellor for the award of their degrees