

# African history



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Taking a look at the outline of African history, it can be gleaned that African states were mostly dominated by kings and chieftains. Unfortunately though, chronicles of their exploits by post-era white historians have given them the reputation of being bloodthirsty despots. For example, Shaka Zulu, the 19th century warrior king was dubbed by these historians as the Napoleon of Africa, and yet, there have been scant evidences to prove that Shaka Zulu was indeed a despotic monster.

The accounts of Zulu's bloodthirsty exploits were attributed to authors who wanted their books to sell and encourage the annexation of Zulu lands by the British. While African kings and chiefs may have endured the upheavals of society, they are sometimes blamed for the tribal conservatism which eventually blocked the African societies from becoming modern states. However, the kings and chiefs of Africa in the 19th century did not wield absolute power as compared to the chiefs and kings in the pre-colonial era.

European colonizers placed African “ kings and chiefs” which would serve their own interests. In 1927, British colonizers abolished the hereditary rights of succession and assumed the power to appoint kings thereby insuring that independent-minded kings and chiefs were replaced or subdued. Thus, the king's powers unlike before who were deemed as gods and wielded absolute governance over their states, were relegated to wielding cultural and spirituals powers only.

Their decisions and control of their respective states were either controlled by the European colonizers or by a council composed of royal family members, village headmen and commoners. Whatever decision the king came up with, only the British administration may approve of such decisions.

Furthermore, in many states, African chiefs were tasked to allocate land, adjudicate and settle land disputes, wherein these responsibilities belonged to village heads and chiefs previously. Together with these powers, the African chiefs and kings were supported and backed up by military force provided by colonial armies.