
IRCICA

ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE

Proceedings of the International Conference on

Islamic History and Civilization in West Africa

October 2018, Abuja, Nigeria

İstanbul 2020

OIC Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
IRCICA Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ISLAMIC HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION IN WEST AFRICA

SOURCES AND STUDIES ON THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC CIVILISATION SERIES; NO. 45

ISBN 978-92-9063-107-1

İSTANBUL 2020

CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

International Conference on Islamic History and Civilization in West Africa (2018: Abuja, Nigeria)
Proceedings of the International Conference on Islamic History and Civilization in West Africa: October 2018, Abuja, Nigeria / edited by Halit Eren; prepared for publication by Aboubacar Abdullah Senghore, Sadık Ünay, Shuaibu Shehu Aliyu and Samet Yalçın.- İstanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 2020.
218 p.: maps; 25 cm.- (Sources and studies on the history of Islamic civilisation series; no. 45)
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-92-9063-107-1
1. Islamic civilization--Africa, West--Congresses. I. Eren, Halit. II. Senghore, Aboubacar Abdullah. III. Ünay, Sadık. IV. Aliyu, Shuaibu Shehu. V. Yalçın, Samet. VI. Title. VII. Series. 966--dc22

EDITED BY Prof. Halit Eren

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY Prof. Aboubacar Abdullah Senghore, Prof. Sadık Ünay, Dr. Shuaibu Shehu Aliyu, Samet Yalçın

BOOK DESIGN Muhammed Nur Anbarlı

PRINTING AND BINDING Optimum Basım

Contents

Foreword

Prof. Halit Eren
Director General, IRCICA

As a subsidiary organ of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) is devoted to the study and promotion of Islamic culture, art and history in all of its forms. In this regard IRCICA is one of the largest research institutions that plays the role of connecting different historical, cultural and intellectual traditions and trajectories in the Islamic world. By organizing symposia and conferences, holding workshops, publishing books and promoting researches on various aspects of Islamic civilization IRCICA dynamically generates and disseminates a vast body of knowledge on the Islamic history, arts and culture throughout the whole Islamic world.

IRCICA is one of the rare research centres in the world that realizes and values the importance of scholarly studies on Africa and therefore it started directing its energy and effort in that direction almost for three decades now. In order to better understand and introduce the legacy of Islamic civilization in Africa, IRCICA started organizing a series of international symposia on "Islamic Civilization in Africa", in collaboration with eminent academic institutions from various member states of the Africa region. In this regard, IRCICA has so far organized nine international conferences on Islamic history and civilization in various parts of Africa such as Dakar conferences on Islamic history and civilization in Western Africa in 1996 and 1999, Kampala (2003) and Zanzibar (2013) conferences in Eastern Africa and Johannesburg (2006) and Durban (2016) conferences in Southern Africa. Adding to this consistent interest in Africa's Islamic legacy, IRCICA recently held three symposia and conferences on Islamic history and civilization in West and Central Africa: Abuja (2018), Niamey (2019) and N'Djamena (2019). These symposia and conferences also bore fruitful results in publication and until date IRCICA published four books on Islamic history and civilization in Africa. IRCICA's Africa library shelves will continue grow richer with the most recent conference proceedings.

The history of Islam in Africa dates back to the first century of Islam and over the course of time it spread into the heart of Africa and to the most remote areas of the continent, as various tribes, ethnic groups and communities continued to embrace Islam. We believe that well-directed researches and studies with a clear geographical focus provide us with detailed and informative data on the history and culture of local

Muslim communities stretching from the time of their first contact with Islam up until the present day. IRCICA upholds the objective of building cultural bridges between Muslim communities by promoting scholarly research that reflects the knowledge of scholars across Africa and elsewhere. In this regard collaboration with local academic and research institutions in the implementation of IRCICA's program is invaluable. While organizing Abuja Conference on Islamic History and Civilization in West Africa, we had the opportunity to collaborate with two prestigious institutions, namely Arewa House (Center for Historical Documentation and Research of Ahmadu Bello University) and the university proper.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to Arewa House and Ahmadu Bello University. I would also like to thank our coordinators for the program in the persons of Prof. Shaaba Idris Jimada, former director, and Dr. Shuaibu Shehu Aliyu, the current director of Arewa House, for their generous effort in realizing this conference.

Diplomatic Relations and Other Forms of Engagement between the Ottoman Caliphate, Egypt and Bilad al-Sudan

Hamid Bobboyi*

Introduction

The history of the *Bilad al-Sudan*, comprising principally of former Ghana, Mali Songhai and Kanem-Borno Empires, as well as Futa Toro, Futa Jallo, Bundu and the Sokoto Caliphate, may help to illustrate the dominant position of Islam and the role of Islamic institutions in shaping the relationships between the *Bilad al-Sudan* and the *Maghrib*, Egypt and the Hijaz during pre-colonial times. The *Bilad al-Sudan* is a region that had, for many centuries, witnessed the fruition of many Islamic states, amongst which was the famous Kanem-Borno Empire, which began its expansive phase towards the end of the eleventh century and the Sokoto Caliphate which established its political presence and dominance from the beginning of the nineteenth century.[1] The leaders of these states bore the title of *amir al-muminin* (commander of the faithful). The interaction with the local environment and the relationships with the wider world were, to a significant extent, mediated by the plethora of Islamic institutions, which defined the conduct of the state and determined the worldview of its leaders. However, the institution of the *hajj* (pilgrimage) and the pursuit of Islamic scholarships were to a large extent instrumental in determining the degree and nature of relationships between *Bilad al-Sudan* and *Maghrib*, Egypt as well as Hijaz for over millennia.

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1 See Yusuf Bala Usman (ed.), *Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate: The Sokoto Seminar Papers*, Lagos 1979. For the Empire of Kanem-Borno see Hamid Bobboyi, *The Ulama of Borno, A Study of the Relations between Scholars and State under the Sayfawa*, Evanston, Northwestern University, 1992. See also, John R. Wills (eds.), *Studies in West African History: The Cultivators of Islam*, Frank CASS, 1979, pp. 1-30.

The historical record has it that the first Muslim ruler of Kanem, Mai Umme b. Abdul-Jalil (c. 1086–1097) died in the land of Misra (Egypt) presumably on his way to perform *hajj*. His son and successor, Mai Dunama b. Umme (c. 1097–1150) made the pilgrimage twice but died in his third attempt.[2] This was followed by the pilgrimages of many subsequent Kanem–Borno rulers who strived with one another to discharge this religious obligation. These early Kanem-Borno pilgrimages served as precursors to the more famous and widely documented pilgrimages of the western *Bilad al-Sudan*, including the pilgrimage of Mansa Musa (1307–1332) which he accomplished in 1324/5 and that of Askia Muhammad b. Abi Bakr Ture (1493–1527) which he undertook in two years, beginning from 902/1496.[3] Both Mansa Musa and Askiya Muhammad Ture used the journey of *hajj* for diplomatic as well as for political purposes and on their return, they brought back scholars and technocrats, including the Andalusian poet, Abu Ishaq al-Sahili. Even the leaders of the Sokoto Caliphate who viewed the responsibilities of state as superior to discharging the obligation of *hajj* used the occasion to invite Islamic scholars to the *Bilad al-Sudan*.[4]

Bilad al-Sudan and the Maghrib (North Africa)

The relationship that ensued between *Bilad al-Sudan* and North Africa preceded the Ottoman times and had been predicated on several factors. There was the imperative of discharging the religious obligation of *hajj*, which the West African political and religious leaders considered as a religious duty. For instance, most of the *mais* (kings) of Kanem-Borno undertook the pilgrimage more than once in their life-

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[2] Umar al-Nagar, *The Pilgrimage Tradition in West Africa*, Khartoum, 1972, pp. 26-33.

[3] Ibid, pp. 6-25.

[4] Muhammad Bello b. Sheikh Uthman b. Fodio authored *The Tanbih al-Raqid lima Yactawir al-Haj min al-Mafasid*; see *Arabic Literature in Africa*, Leiden 1995, p. 141. In his message to the people of Hijaz which was delivered through Haj Ali b. Nuh, the Caliphate's *amir al-hajj* of 1228/1813, Muhammad Bello wrote: "We also ask of the *fuqaha* and the nobles there, those who can reach us to come to us so that we can benefit from what God had taught them. We also inform you that all those captured by the enemy from among the communities that followed us and who were sold to merchants who sold them to you are free Muslims whose enslavement is forbidden, *haram*. You are to do your utmost to rescue their necks from bondage."

time. The security of the pilgrimage routes assumed vital importance and so also was the relationship between Kanem-Borno and the states through which its kings had to pass to get to Makkah. Suspicion and mistrust resulted from the large retinue, which usually accompanied the *mais*, as the *Diwan Salatin Borno* profoundly pointed out concerning Mai Dunama b. Hume (c. 1098-1150):

> Among his noble acts were pilgrimages to the sacred house of God on two occasions. On his first pilgrimage, he left in Masr (Egypt) 300 slaves and on his second a like number. When he was on his way to a third pilgrimage and took ship, the people of Egypt said to themselves; "if this king returns from Mecca to this country, he will take from us our land and our country no doubt." So they took counsel to destroy him: they opened a sea-cock in his ship so that the sea drowned him by the command of God. His followers saw him in his white garments floating on the sea, till he vanished from their eyes, lost by the command of God, most high, in the sea of Prophet Musa.[5]

Another important aspect of the relationships that bestrode West and North Africa was the significance attached to the pursuit of Islamic scholarship. The pursuit of *hajj* and the quest for knowledge are usually conterminous and any scholarly inclined pilgrim would not fail to take advantage of the long journey to further his Islamic education. The Kanem-Bornoans made a conscious effort, as early as the mid-thirteenth century, to establish a Maliki Madrasa in Cairo, the Madrasat Ibn al-Rashiq,[6] to cater to the educational needs of the pilgrims. According to al-Maqrizi in his *Khitat*, "people from Kanem who came to Cairo in the years of 640/1249s, on their way to the pilgrimage, offered money to Qadi Alamaddin ibn Rashiq who established the school and taught in it."[7] There was also the Borno *ruwak* or *ruwak barnawiya* a section established in al-Azhar University into which all West Africans students were enrolled.[8] The *ruwak* was established by

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[5] See *Diwan Salatin Borno* in Herbert R. Palmer, *The Borno Sahara and Sudan*, London, 1936. See also Umar al-Nagar, *The Pilgrimage Tradition in West Africa*, op. cit., p. 28.

[6] Ibid, p. 29. See Ahmad b. Ali al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, Cairo, Bullog, 1853. Quoted in Umar al-Nagar, op. cit., p. 27.

[7] Ibid.

[8] For details see, Gordon J. Lethem, *History of Islamic Political Propaganda in Nigeria*, Waterlow, 1927, Apendix C, p. 26.

mai of Borno. According to contemporary sources, the *madrasa* and the *ruwak* also served as hostels to Kanem-Borno pilgrims. Apart from the *ruwak*, there was also Zawiyat Surur Agha, established by a prominent transiting pilgrim as a *waqf* for the use of westerners.[9]

Available records indicate that West African students, through the institution of the *hajj* found time to travel to the *Maghrib*, Egypt and the Hijaz to study with the famous scholars of their time; and to bring to their homeland both the Islamic knowledge and the intellectual legacies of their teachers. It was through these efforts that the works of prominent scholars such as the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil b. Ishaq al-Jundi (d. 776/1374), the *Aqaid* of Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Sanusi (d. 892/1486) and the *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* of the fifteenth-century Egyptian polymath Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti were brought to the *Bilad al-Sudan*. The *Bilad al-Sudan* also witnessed the arrival of a large number of Arab scholars many of whom settled in the region. The activities of Sheikh Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Maghili (d. 910/1504–5) in Katsina, Kano, Takedda and Gao have been well documented. And so were the activities of both Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Tazakhti (d. 936/1529-30), who served as *qadi* of Katsina, and Makhluf b. Ali al-Balbali (d. after 940/1533-4).[10]

The missing link in this dynamic academic environment was provided by West African scholars who migrated to the Arab World and attained recognition in the various Islamic disciplines they taught. Their reputation in these distant lands served to attract more Sudanic scholars and may have facilitated the emergence of distinct Sudanic scholarly communities. During the twelfth century, there was the case of Ibrahim b. Yaqub al-Kanemi (d. 608/1211 or 609/1212-13),[11] who travelled to Marrakesh during the reign of the Almohad Sultan Yaqub al-Mansur (reg. 1184–99), and attained recognition as a grammarian and poet. He later travelled to Andalusia where he died. He was a good friend to Abd al-Rahman al-Fazazi (d. 627/1230). There was also Mu-

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[9] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[10] See Hamid Bobboyi, *Scholars and Scholarship in the Relationship between the Maghrib and the Central Bilad al-Sudan,* Rabat, Institute of African Studies, 2006.

[11] See *Arabic Literature in Africa II*, pp. 17-19. See also Mohammed Bencherifa Ibrahim al-Kanimi (d. 609/1212-13), *Figure illustre dans les relations culturelles entre le Maroc et Bilad al-Sudan*, Rabat, Institute of African Studies, 1991.

hammad b. Muhammad al-Kashnawi (d. 1165/1741-2)[12] who settled in Egypt and attained fame as a mathematician and numerologist as well as Salih al-Fullani (1752/3–1804),[13] the *hadith* scholar who settled in Madina and was reputed to be one of the progenitors of the *ahl–Hadith* and the *Wahhabiyya* movements. In the 20th century, a notable migration of distinct scholarly communities to Hijaz occurred under the leadership of Sheikh Alfa Hashim who eventually settled in Madina together with other prominent Islamic scholars from West Africa.

There were also active scholarly relationships between Kanem-Borno and the *Maghrib*, which further strengthened the commonality of the Maliki *madhhab*. The scholarly activities of Sheikh Ibrahim b. Yaqub al-Kanemi (d. 608/1211), a Kanem-Borno poet and grammarian, who took up residence in Morocco and Andalusia during the reign of the Almohad Sultan, Yaqub al-Mansur (1184-1199) was a case in point.[14] Scholarly relations between the Kanem-Bornoans and the Hafsids of Tunis could also have been enhanced by the extant diplomatic contacts amongst the two states. For instance, in 655/1257, a delegation was sent by Mai Dunama Dibalemi to Tunis, with a gift of a giraffe which, according to Ibn Khaldun, was presented to the Hafsid ruler al-Mustansir (reg. 1249-1277).[15]

In addition to this, trade and commerce played crucial roles in shaping the pattern of relationships between *Bilad al-Sudan* and the *Maghrib*, Egypt and the Hijaz. These included the provision of adequate security along the trade routes, which had assumed primary importance and the regulation of commerce and fair taxation by the various rulers that straddled the trade routes. It is therefore not surprising that major entrepot of the trans-Saharan trade ~~th~~e Fezzan, now in southern Libya—~~w~~as reported to be under the control of the Kanem-Borneans' as early as the mid-thirteenth century. Taraghan, west of Zawila, was the seat of Sayfawa administration in the Fezzan

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[12] *Arabic Literature in Africa II,* pp. 37-39.

[13] See John O. Hunwick, "Salih al-Fullani [1752/3–1803]: The Career and Teachings of a West African *Alim* in Medina", in *In Quest of an Islamic Humanism*, ed. Arnold H. Green, Cairo, AUC Press, pp. 139-153.

[14] See John O. Hunwick, H. Bobboyi (et al), *Arabic Literature in Africa, Vol. II: Central Bilad al-Sudan,* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995, pp. 17-19.

[15] See Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 99.

and oral traditions indicate a list of governors of Tubu origin, like the Banu Nasur who ruled on behalf of the Kanem-Borno Sultans.[16] The Tripolitania merchants played prominent roles in Kanem-Borno and later rose to become an important component of the state elite. In the Hausa states, a record of Arab merchants began to appear as early as the fifteen century and by the eighteenth century, they had become an important component of the politics and society of Kano as well as Katsina.[17] The Sokoto Jihad of 1804 substantially changed the patterns of trade in the region but did not diminish the importance of the Arab merchants. The old centres of Birni Gazargamo and Alkalawa lost their prominence as new centres like Sokoto and Kukawa emerged to take their place. Kano also re-emerged as the principal beneficiary of the new order drawing most of the Arab merchants from Katsina and outlying areas and becoming the principal commercial emporium of the *Bilad al-Sudan*.[18] Although these merchants could not successfully fend off European competition and the negative impact of the Atlantic economy, they had, by the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries effectively integrated into Sudanic society. It was left to later Arab migrants, principally Lebanese merchants, to serve as mediators of the new commercial regime.

The withdrawal of the Sayfawa ruling house from Kanem made it difficult to control the major gateway of trans-Saharan trade, which linked the Kingdom of Kanem with Egypt through Awjila as well as gave it access to Tripoli, Tunis and the *Maghrib*. By the early part of the fifteenth-century, the Banu Khorman became one of the major political factions vying for the control of the Fezzan. They were subsequently supplanted by the Awland Muhammad. Kanem–Borno could only exercise its influence through these political groupings and indeed through the fading power of the Hafsids, both in Tunis and Tripoli.[19]

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[16] John Lavers, "Fezzan, Sudanic or Saharan State", in Lavers Collections, Arewa House, Kaduna, 1/8/79, p. 18.

[17] See the *Katsina Kinglist* and *Tarikh Arbab Hadh al-Balad Alladhi Musamma Kano,* otherwise known as the *Kano Chronicle* in Herbert R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, Reprinted Frank Cass, 1970.

[18] See Mahdi Adamu, "Distribution of Trading Centres in the Central Sudan in the 18th and 19th Centuries", in Yusuf Bala Usman, op. cit., pp. 59-104.

[19] John Lavers, "Fezzan, Sudanic or Saharan State", in Lavers Collections, Arewa House, Kaduna, 1/8/79, pp. 19-28.

The development of sufism and its spread into West Africa, which further fostered the activities of the sufi orders in *Bilad al-Sudan* enhanced the relationship amongst *Maghrib*, Egypt and Hijaz. The earliest sufi order recorded in the *Bilad al-Sudan* was the Qadiriyyah, whose introduction was attributed, at least in the Kunta and Sokoto *salasil* (chains of transmission) to Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, the pioneering scholar of *Maghrib*i origin.[20] There was also the Suhrawardiyya order mediated by Sheikh Ahmad al-Sadiq b. Uways al-Tariqi (d. after 1670). The latter was a mentor to Sheikh Abdallah al-Barnawi, who featured prominently as a spiritual guide to the eighteenth-century *Maghrib*ian sufi Sidi Abd al-Aziz al-Dabbagh.[21] The prominence of the Tijaniyyah order in West Africa in the nineteenth century, especially through the activities of al-Hajj Umar al-Futi (1794-1864) added another important dimension to the role of sufism in inter-regional relations.[22] The Tijaniyya *tariqa*, along with the other orders, placed the *Bilad al-Sudan* within the spiritual hierarchies of the sufi world which came to engender easy discourse, communication and fraternal relations between members. It took the Moroccan authorities over two centuries to realize the tremendous spiritual power they wielded over the West African sub-region and its vast Tijaniyyah disciples, owing to the status of Morocco as the birthplace of the Tijaniyyah *tariqa*.

Another important factor that played a key role in evoking inter-regional relations and massive population movements from the *Bilad al-Sudan* into the *Maghrib*, Egypt, Eastern *Bilad al-Sudan* and the Hijaz was the European incursion into *Bilad al-Sudan* in the last decade of the 19th century. For instance, following the French military campaigns in Western Sudan and the dismantling of the Islamic State of Segu, the Sokoto Caliphate and the Kanem-Borno Empire, there were mass movements of people to the east. Moreover, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the doctrinal bases for the *hijra* (emigration), especially in the Sokoto Caliphate, were fairly well-established. Qadi

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[20] See Shaykh Uthman b. Fodio, "Al-Salasil al-Qadiriyya" and "al-Salasil al-Dhahabiyya li al-Sadat al-Sufiyya" in *Arabic Literature in Africa II*, p. 70.

[21] See Hamid Bobboyi, *Scholars and Scholarship*, pp. 23–26.

[22] See Omar Jah, "The Relationship between the Sokoto Jihad and the Jihad of Al-Hajj Umar: A New Assessment" in Yusuf Bala Usman, op. cit, pp. 430-449.

Abdallah's epistle, *Risala ila al-Muasirin*, had made a forceful argument for all Muslims to evacuate the Sokoto Caliphate and emigrate to avoid falling under the sovereignty of the *kuffar* (unbelievers). Despite the counter-arguments of Wazir Muhammad Bukhari (d. 1910) on the permissibility of concluding a truce with the British, in his *Risalat ahl al-Ilm wa'l-Tadabbur*, the *hijra* movement had already gained momentum.[23] The result of this movement was the substantial increase in the population of West Africans in the present territories Republic of Sudan, Eretria and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the beginning of an arduous process of integrating universal Islamic citizens into the difficult terrain of emergent nation-states.

Sokoto Caliphate and the Maghrib

During his reign, Caliph Muhammad Bello forged and strengthened international alliances with the State of Morocco and Tripoli, consequent upon the conflict between the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno. The craving of Caliph Muhammad Bello to foster diplomatic relations with Morocco and Tripoli was predicated on his resoluteness to isolate and severe diplomatic ties between Borno and international communities. Undisputedly, there was a long-standing diplomatic relationship between Borno and her northern neighbours, which presumably threatened Muhammad Bello. On this note, Muhammad Bello sent emissaries to Morocco, and the leaders of Morocco replied Sokoto by praying for the success of the *jihad*. The reply of the letter read thus:

> May Allah the Almighty reward you on behalf of Islam with every good, and May He protect you from harmful things. May He prolong the lifespan of your state and keep it intact. We pray it continues under the protection of Allah for a long time.[24]

Similarly, Caliph Muhammad Bello sent another delegation to Tripoli. The letter dispatched to Tripoli by Muhammad Bello was not

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[23] See R. A. Adeleye, "The Dilemma of the Wazir: The Place of *Risalat ahl al-Ilm wa'l-Tadabbur* in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, IV/2, pp. 285-312.

[24] For details see, Y. T. Gella, "The Foreign Policy of the Caliphate of Muhammad Bello (1817-1837) towards the State of Borno, Adar, and the West", Unpublished PhD thesis, ABU, Zaria, 1986, p. 241, he quoted Muhammad Bello, *Infaqul al-Maysur*.

readily available. However, what is available was the reply of the Pasha of Tripoli to Muhammad Bello. The Tripolitania leader was quoted paying a glowing tribute to Caliph Muhammad Bello:

> The elevated presence and inviolable sanctuary, the abode of the most orthodox Caliph and most fortunate hero: he is of dazzling achievements and manifest virtues; the fountain of grace whose conduits never fail, *khawthar* of justice whose frequenter never thirsts. Imam whose grace and righteousness are diffused in every quarter until they are displayed like the splendor of the moon day sun master of the two degrees of the sword and of the pen.[25]

Ottoman Caliphate and the Bilad al-Sudan

The take-over of Egypt in 1517 and the subsequent consolidation of the Ottoman power in Algeria, Tunis and Tripoli, especially during the second half of the sixteenth century except for Morocco, under the Sa'adids, which remained one of the major polities outside Ottoman's sphere of influence, the Ottoman Caliphate extended its political domination completely to North Africa. Consequently, Kanem-Borno needed Ottoman Turks and its North African provinces to safeguard its religious as well as economic interests.

But the Ottoman involvement in Tunis, Fezzan and Tripoli was largely positive for the Kanem-Bornoan's. The imposition of Ottoman control over the Fezzan reduced the region's political fragmentation and led to greater security for Kanem–Borno's vital commercial corridor. "A *sanjak* was placed in Murzuk to supervise the area, supported by a garrison to ensure security."[26] Ottoman control of both Tunis and Tripoli and the defeat of the Spaniards and the knights of Malta had also substantially reduced the uncertainties in the trade relations between Kanem-Borno and its northern counterparts. The Sayfawa sultans were quick at realizing the opportunities offered by the Ottoman presence and in 1552, one year after the defeat of the knights of St.

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[25] Ibid., p. 24, he quoted Yusuf Karamanli, *Letter to Muhammad Bello*, as produced by A. D. Biver, "Arabic Manuscripts of Northern Nigeria", *BSOAS*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1959, p. 347.

[26] John Lavers, "Fezzan, Sudanic or Saharan State", in Lavers Collections, Arewa House, Kaduna, 1/8/79, p. 27.

John, "dispatched a mission to Tripoli to conclude a treaty of friendship and commerce."[27]

The relationship between Kanem-Borno and Pashas of Tripoli was cordial for over two decades, until 1573 when an officer of the Sanjak of Fezzan, Qa'id Abdu began to present some difficulties for Kanem-Borno subjects as well as its merchants and traders. It also coincided with the accession of Mai Idris Alauma/Alooma (1571-1604) two years earlier to the Kanem-Borno throne. These difficulties, coming from the Ottoman side, must have been serious enough to cause Mai Idris Alauma/Alooma to decide to bypass the Pashas of Tripoli and Tunis and establish direct contact with the Sublime Porte in Istanbul. This contact served as an opportunity for the Kanem-Borno Sultan to explore a new kind of relationship with the Ottoman Empire. Thus, in 1574, Idris Alauma/Alooma dispatched a six-man delegation to Istanbul, led by his ambassador, al-Hajj Yusuf, to meet the new Ottoman Sultan, Murad III (1574- 1595).[28]

Although Mai Idris Alauma's letter is yet to come to light, Sultan Murad's reply has been preserved in the Turkish archives. The *Mühimme Defterleri* (Registers of the State Council) contain two copies of Sultan Murad's reply, a short version which appears like the first draft and a second longer letter, containing the same details, but embellished by official scribes as would be customary in such diplomatic correspondences.[29] Mai Idris Alauma/Alooma requested three things from the Ottoman Sultan: freedom of movement for Kanem-Borno pilgrims, scholars and merchants in the territories of the Ottoman Caliphate; Military Aid and the ceding of the Fortress of Qiran, probably in Fezzan, to which the Kanem-Bornoans had laid claim. The last request was made verbally by the Mai's ambassador, al-Hajj Yusuf. Sultan Murad III readily acceded to the first request by writing official decrees to all governors concerned, including the *Beylerbeyi* of Tunis

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[27] Ibid.

[28] See Muhammad Nura Alkali, "Kanem-Borno Under the Sayfawa", PhD. Thesis, ABU, 1978, pp. 228-254.

[29] See Muhammad A. al-Hajj, "Some Diplomatic Correspondence of the Seifawa Mais of Borno with Egypt, Turkey and Morocco" in Yusuf Bala Usman and Muhammad Nura Alkali (eds.), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno*, Gaskiya Corporation, 1983, pp. 156-177.

as well as the viceroy of Egypt, to ensure that the "people of this territory have the freedom to travel along the roads and trails and to rest at the hostels and stations in security and contentment whether as merchants or as pilgrims…"[30] A similar letter was also dispatched to the Sanjak of Fezzan. Although the response to the request for Military aid was also positive, what Sultan Murad did on the matter is not clear. The third request on the ceding of the fortress of Qiran was flatly rejected, as "it has never been the custom of our noble forefathers nor the habit of our ancestors", to cede what they held of such fortresses nor to give even a foot length of their lands and domains.[31] Another significant aspect of Sultan Murad's reply was the enunciation of what could be considered as the civic values of the Ottoman Caliphate as far as its relations with other regions and climes were concerned. In the words of Sultan Murad III:

> When this letter of ours reaches you, therefore, your duty would be to give it the best reception and to stand up on the feet and legs of resolution to control the regions under your government and defend them with high aspiring zeal. You must treat your subjects with the utmost diplomacy to win their hearts and attract their love. You should be on intimate terms with the *amirs* holding the highest power, and the remainder of the representatives (*nuwwab*) of the all-conquering Sultanate….who are established in the proximity to your regions, for the re-enforcement of the decrees of religion, to bring solace to the hearts of believers, to relax the breast of those in pain, to make hearts agree in brotherhood and to put an end to the grief of war through strength, as exemplified by his exalted utterances, "for truly, the believers are brothers.[32]

The last point we should observe, as far as Sultan Murad's reply was concerned, is that the letter was ambiguous enough to allow diverse interpretations by different actors on the actual status of Kanem-Borno vis-à-vis the Sublime Porte. Professor Nur Alkali pointed out that, Mai Idris Alauma/Alooma had been variously referred in Ottoman documents as 'His Highness', 'Prince Idris', 'Ruler of Borno', 'His Majesty

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[30] Alkali, "Kanem–Borno Under the Sayfawa", op. cit, pp. 232-4

[31] Ibid., pp. 233-4

[32] See Muhammad A. al-Hajj, op. cit., pp.164-7. We have used a draft translation by Prof. Bradford G. Martin, which has greater clarity.

the Ruler of Borno' as well as the 'Malik' of Borno. And while the letter itself made reference to swearing fealty to the Sublime Porte, it was only an indirect one and was not made as a requirement for associating with the Ottoman fraternity or receiving help from it. From all the available evidence, the Kanem-Bornoans never considered themselves as vassals of the Ottoman Caliphate, but rather as willing partners in a complex enterprise of state-building. Moreover, the strategic interests of the Ottoman Caliphate in North Africa and the *Bilad al-Sudan* had shared interests. Kanem-Borno needed the peace and security provided by the Sublime Porte not only to discharge its primary Islamic obligations but to sustain its socio-economic growth and development. Mai Idris Alauma's biographer, Imam Ahmad ibn Fartuwa, could perhaps be forgiven for blowing his trumpet and extolling the virtues of his Sultan in the following words:

> O, my wise friends and companions! Have you ever seen a king equal to our Sultan or like him at the time when the lord of Istanbul, Sultan of Turkey sent messengers to him from his country, with a favourable proposal, indicating his desire to gain his affection and his eagerness for his association and friendship? Alas, every ruler is inferior to these kings, since they are of the tribe of the Quraysh, descended from Himyar.[33]

It is worth noting that Mai Idris Alauma, the Sultan of Kanem-Borno, probably under pressure from internal revolts or acting out of the disappointment of unmet expectations or yet still building on extant relations, had to turn to the Moroccan Sa'adids in 1582, for assistance in acquiring military weaponry. The reaction of the Moroccans was in sharp contrast to the smooth diplomacy of Ottoman officialdom. The account given by Abd al-Aziz b. Muhammad al-Fishtali (d.1032/1622-3),[34] the Sa'adian Wazir, was as condescending as it was disrespectful. The Sa'adids first accused al-Hajj Yusuf of contradicting the content of his Sultan's letter and forced him to return to Borno for clarification. On return, he was upbraided for misrepresenting the Qurayshite genealogy of his Sultan and that he was not entitled to conduct any *jihad* until he took the *bay'a* (pledge of allegiance) from Ahmad al-Mansur,

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[33] See Ahmad ibn Fartuwa, "The Kanem Wars", in Herbert R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, I, p. 123 as quoted in Nura Alkali, op. cit., p. 238.

[34] See Hogkin, *Nigerian Perspective: An Historical Anthology*, pp. 147-149.

the Sa'adian Sultan. Hajj Yusuf has marched back to Borno again with *bay'a* form to be signed by his master before the Moroccans could entertain any discussion on military assistance. Whether the Bornoan's signed the form is not clear but Hajj Yusuf lost his life on his third trip and nothing much was heard about Moroccan military assistance to Kanem-Borno.[35]

Despite the misadventure of Mai Idris Alauma/Alooma with the Moroccans, the relations between the Kanem-Borno and the Ottoman Caliphate seemed to have proceeded according to the broad outline of Sultan Murad's correspondence. Interestingly, there is no record which has come to light, indicating any discomfiture on the part of the Ottoman governors over the failed relations with the Sa'dids. Possibly no one took notice.

From all indications, the relationship between the Pashas of Tripoli and the rulers of Kanem-Borno became stronger. Embassies were frequently exchanged, trade relations formalized and exchange of gifts institutionalized. The French surgeon, Girard, who was resident at Tripoli, recorded these exchanges from 1578, through 1612 to 1634 and 1647.[36] Kanem-Borno's pilgrimage tradition also continued unhindered. Mai Ali ibn Umar (1645-1685) is said to have undertaken the *hajj* three times, while other sources say five times.[37] It is also probable that it was the same Mai Ali who gave audience to the Turkish traveller (*seyyah-i alam*), Evliya Chelebi (c. 1611-1680) who in his *Seyahatname*, had this to say of him:

> The king is a most orthodox Sunni… his subjects likewise are both faithful and monotheistic… in fact when their ruler, Mai Sanjal al-Din, came to Egypt to perform the pilgrimage, accompanied by 1,000 camels, I, as unworthy as I am was privileged to meet him. The ruler covered his face and eyes like a woman in front of strangers; bowing his face he lay on the ground and thus conducted the conversation. He died at al-Aqaba while returning from the pilgrimage.[38]

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[35] See Alkali, "Kanem–Borno Under the Sayfawa", op. cit., pp. 240-245.

[36] See Lavers Collection, 1/5/41 and Hogkin, *Nigerian Perspective*: *An Historical Anthology*, pp. 180-2.

[37] See al-Nagar, *Pilgrimage Tradition*, pp. 32-33.

[38] See Hogkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, pp. 184-5.

Diplomatic Challenges and Problems

But encouraging as these relations were, they were also not without serious challenges. The first major challenge was the development of monopolies, which tended to concentrate economic and political power in a few hands and distorted the pattern of trade. A case in point is Muhammad Saqizli, the Pasha of Tripoli (1633-1649), in 1636:

> … realizing the great profits made by those engaged in business with Borno resolved to draw all the trade to himself alone. For this reason, he wrote to Prince of Fezzan and Mai Umar b. Idris (c.1619-39)… offering to supply them with large quantities of copper, paper, Venetian beads and cloth, but declared that none of his Tripolitania subjects should have any part of their trade without his consent… All the goods which arrived in Tripoli suitable for this commerce were brought by his officers… so that in a little time while he saw himself sole master of this trade.[39]

When Mai Ali b. Umar ascended the throne of Borno in 1645, he refused to consent to the trade arrangement. This greatly infuriated the Tripoli Pasha who planned to kidnap Mai Ali during his return journey from Mecca after his second pilgrimage. Kanem–Borno was only able to restore full diplomatic and trade relations after the demise of Muhammad Saqizli Pasha.[40]

The second challenge was the emergence of rebellious officials as well as local autonomies, which promoted arbitrariness and made normal economic and diplomatic relations a bit less predictable. This challenge posed serious problems to both Ottoman and Bornoan authorities, especially during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Karamanli dynasty in Tripoli, itself came into being as a result of a successful *coup d'etat* by Ahmad I against Ottoman authority in 1714; the rise of the Awlad Sulayman in the Fezzan, which virtually cut-off Tripoli from the Trans-Saharan trade, allowing only linkages with Tunis and Egypt in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also had its adverse consequences.[41] Normalcy was not restored until

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[39] See John lavers, "Trans-Saharan Trade Before 1800: Towards Quantification" in Lavers Collection, 1/8/79, p. 11.

[40] See Girard, loc. cit.

[41] See Kola Folayan, "Some Economic Aspects of the History of Tripoli in the Reign of Yusuf Pasha Karamanli 1795 – 1832" in Lavers Collection 1/18/200.

the Ottoman authorities imposed direct control over Tripoli and the Fezzan in about 1832.[42]

Finally, mention must be made of the changing political landscape in Kanem-Borno as well as North Africa. The rise of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1804 led to the sack of Borno's capital city, Birni Gazargamo about three years later. The consequence of this development had been the systematic eclipse of the Sayfawa ruling house by the rising power and prestige of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi popularly known as Shehu Laminu al-Kanemi, though tolerant of the Awled Sulayman, readily acknowledged the suzerainty of the Ottoman Sultan and in 1835 sent an embassy to the Sublime Porte.[43]Shehu Laminu's successor, Shehu Umar also had cordial relations with the Ottoman authorities at Tripoli and there was no reason to expect anything different for his successors. In fact in 1892 when Charles Mackintosh visited Kukawa on behalf of the Royal Niger Company (RNC), his gifts were returned by the Bornoans and on his departure, the Turkish flag was seen flying over the town.[44] It was unfortunate that when the Bornoans were over-run by the forces of the Sudanese General, Rabih b. Fadlallah, a few years later, the Ottomans in Tripoli were also engrossed in a protracted conflict with the European powers had come to the aid of their allies. Tripoli ultimately succumbed to the Italians on 18 October 1912.

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[42] See John Lavers, "The Diplomatic Relations of the Sokoto Caliphate", Lavers Collection, 1/4/33, pp. 6-9.

[43] Ibid., p. 7.

[44] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

The Institution of *Awqaf* al-Islamiyya as Understood and Applied in West Africa

Shuaibu Shehu Aliyu & Muhammad Suleiman Adam

Introduction

The institution of *awqaf* plays a formidable role in the emergence of Islamic civilization and the development of Muslim societies for many centuries. It has been a charity activity promoted by Islam to address the wide inequality and redistribute wealth to the poor, but scholars differed on its origin and development. Some argued that it was a pre-Islamic practice, while others attributed its historicity to the Islamic era. Undoubtedly, it has been the cornerstone for many public services delivered to Muslim communities in the early period of Islam. Though *awqaf* have been misconceived and relegated to mere charity activities, it has recorded tremendous success in generating viable income and plummeting poverty in the Muslim countries. Traditionally, the creation of *awqaf* has succeeded in reviving the consciousness of the Islamic brotherhood enshrined in the teaching and practices of the Prophet[saw], which patently encourage Muslims to be brother's keepers. It has also contributed to the socio-economic development of Muslim societies. *Awqaf* also played a significant part in the evolution and improvement of Islamic institutions, these included mosques, schools, hospitals, residential houses and educational institutions. The most prominent educational institution that survived till date is al-Azhar University in Cairo which is a product of *awqaf* foundation. Similarly, many private and public libraries, scientific and promising research centres were developed by *awqaf* foundations throughout the Muslim world.

In the Ottoman Empire, the institution of *awqaf* reached its zenith of development and growth to the extent that people were born in *awqaf* houses, fed in the system, attended *awqaf* schools, worked in

awqaf endowments and finally died and buried in *awqaf* cemeteries. Thus, Ottoman Turkey was considered as the model that has really perfected the development of *awqaf* institutions in the Islamic world.

Indeed, there is intense controversy amongst the famous schools of law relating to the importance, juridical basis, significance and imperative of *awqaf* in Islamic history, especially within the domain of orthodox Islamic school of thoughts. These include the Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali and Hanafi schools of jurisprudence. These schools differ on what constitutes *awqaf* and its institutionalization in the Islamic world from the first century of Islam to the present time. There were differences in the opinions of the early great jurists concerning the structure and judicial framework of the *awqaf*. While Imam Shafi'i had objections to certain aspects of the institution of *awqaf,* among the Hanafis, Imam Abu Yusuf differed from his mentors.

The controversies and debates in most instances hinged on the application of the concept and manifestations of *awqaf* in the Islamic world. The application of *awqaf* was largely being influenced by the dominance of the school of thought where it became more pervasive. In other words, school of law conclusions and inferences on *awqaf* vary from one region to another depending on the political and economic conditions affecting human societies. For instance, Imam Shafi'i's conclusion and perception of *awqaf* significantly changed when he moved from Kufah (present-day Baghdad) to Cairo, Egypt. Because the economic conditions in Cairo favour entirely the evolution and establishment of *awqaf*. This influenced and emboldened Imam Shafi'i to support the establishment of *awqaf* in ancient Egypt. The Maliki school of law, which is the dominant *mazhab* in West Africa, discourages the establishment of *awqaf*. The Maliki's worldview on *awqaf* coincided with economic conditions in the West African sub-region, which further strengthened the Maliki perspectives on *awqaf*. However, despite the Maliki prohibition and discouragement, there are pockets of *awqaf* in West Africa from the earliest period of the spread and development of Islam to the contemporary period. This article, therefore, analyzes and examines the concept of *awqaf* as applied and understood in West Africa from the earliest period to the present times.

Historical Background of Awqaf in Islam

The historical evolution of *awqaf* dates back to the first century of Islam, though scholars advanced the arguments that *awqaf* existed in the ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, Roman Empire, and Arab socities before the advent of Islam.[1] And it was from these societies that Muslims adopted and borrowed this system, while others advanced contrary views that it originated from Islam.[2] However, the institution of *awqaf* became an important vehicle for charity and other related socio-economic activities in the subsequent centuries of Islam. This became more manifest during the Ottoman era. Certainly, there is an absence of Qur'an injunctions relating to the permissibility of *awqaf*, but the prophetic commands that promoted the institutions of *awqaf* are largely derived from the *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad[saw]/traditions of Muhammad[saw]. Consequently, it was reported by, Ibn Umar that Umar Ibn al-Khattab acquired a portion of land in Khaybar, and reported the matter to the Prophet Muhammad[saw] and sought the advice of the prophet on what to do with it. The Prophet said: "If you like, make the property inalienable and donate the profit to charity." It goes on to say that Umar endowed it as alms, this signifies that the land itself would not be sold, inherited or re-donated again to any person. He gave it away for the poor, the relatives, the slaves, the *jihad*, the travelers and the guests. And it will not be held against him who administers it if he appropriately consumes some of its yields or feeds a friend who does not enrich himself through it.Suffice to note that, the role of the *awqaf* largely disappeared from Muslim societies, and today we are in dire need of this practice. In the opening decades of Islam, during the lifetime of the Prophet[saw], there are recorded traditions which indicate that the companions excelled in charitable activities to the extent that some donated their complete properties to the benefit of the Muslim communities and the cause of Allah[swt]. Some of the *sahabah* that participated actively in creating endowments are: Abubakar, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Othman ibn Affan, Talha, Zubayr,

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[1] For details see, Murat Çizakça, "*Awqaf* in History and its Implications for Modern Islamic Economies", in *Journal of Islamic Economic Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, November, 1998, p. 48.

[2] Ibid., p. 48.

Ali, Ibn Umar, Abdullah bin Amr bin al-As, and Khalid bin al-Waleed. This is what made Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, when the companions (*sahabah)* gave a different opinion in dividing conquered lands, decided that the land should remain in the hand of its owners so that they can benefit from its wealth; but the control of the land and the land itself ought to be endowed as a *waqf* for generations of Muslims perpetually. The process of *awqaf* continued until the Ottoman era when the sultans and governors of the Ottoman state expanded the scope of *awqaf* by introducing administrative reforms for its supervision and thereafter developed a robust management structure that helped the system to grow and flourish.

The *awqaf* were encouraged by Islam to cater for the needy and poverty-stricken people of the society. Although *awqaf* is a concept of wealth re-distribution strongly emphasized in the Qur'an (2:215, 264, 270, and 280), there are also substantial records in Islamic history, which clearly illustrate the fact that prominent personalities of Islam had dedicated their properties for charitable purposes. The hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah is normally cited as laying the foundation for the establishment of *awqaf* in the Islamic world.

The Concept of *Awqaf* in Islam

There are numerous interpretations relating to the meaning of the concept of *awqaf* among scholars. The literal meaning of the word *waqf* and the plural *awqaf* is endowment or trust. Thus, the word *waqf* and its plural form *awqaf* are derived from the Arabic word *waqafa*, which means to cause a thing to a standstill. The second meaning of *waqf* refers to philanthropic activities. The concept and principles of *awqaf* could apply to individuals, societies and governments.[3] In other words, *waqf* is an inalienable charitable endowment by a Muslim, which connotes donating a building, plot of land or other asset for religious or charitable purposes without the intention of reclaiming the

[3] Ahmed al-Risouni, *Islamic Awqaf, Its Fields and Dimensions*, Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), 2001; Mohammed bin Ahmed bin Saleh al-Saleh, *Awqaf in Islamic Law and its Impact on the Development of Society*, First Edition, 2001, p. 19.

assert.[4] *Awqaf* can also be considered as an Islamic trust of property to be held for charitable or religious purposes. Similarly, it can be regarded as a system of a modern-day charitable foundation that permeated the whole fabric of present-day endowment and trust funds.The word *waqf* is also regarded to acquire the same meaning and purposes of *habs* (pl. *hubs or hubus*). It should be noted that the leading scholars of the Maliki School of law held the views that the institutionalization of *hubs* shared similar goals and objectives of *awqaf*.[5] However, from the western perspectives, *awqaf* refers to endowment established and preserved for charity purposes primarily to serve as social services to the community and society at large. It suffices to note that philanthropic foundations in most Muslim countries and indeed in the Islamic world are considered as *awqaf* or *habs*. But the concept of *awqaf* is more commonly used and applied in North Africa, than other parts of the Islamic world. Another type of *awqaf* is cash *awqaf* which is a special endowment that significantly differed from the estate and asset-based *awqaf* and purely consisted of cash.[6] This perspective was enunciated and promoted by Imam Maliki and Imam Shafi'i schools of thought.In a nutshell, the institution of *awqaf* could be understood as a privately owned property, transferred for religious or charity purposes without any intention to take it back. The revenue accrued from it should be utilized for religious purposes. In the Islamic world, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and down to the Saharan region and Arabian peninsula, there existed superlative achievements of *awqaf* that permeated the whole globe. These huge recorded successes were the outcome of *awqaf* institutions in every part of the Muslim world. The West African sub-region was not an exception, because the region has also enjoyed some levels of the social and economic benefits of *awqaf* principles and ideologies. This laudable charity program promoted by Islam has continued to linger up today. This had fostered scholars to

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[4] H. S. Nahar and H. Yaacob, "Accountability in the Sacred Context: The Case of Management, Accounting and Reporting of A Malaysian Cash *Awqaf* Institution", *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2011, pp. 87–113.

[5] Hisham Yaacob, "*Awqaf* Accounting in Malaysian State Islamic Religious Institutions: The Case of Federal Territory SIRC", Unpublished Master Dissertation, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2006.

[6] Murat Çizakça, "*Awqaf* in History and its Implications for Modern Islamic Economies", p. 53.

allude to the fact that *awqaf* had survived for considerably longer than half a millennium and in some parts of the Muslim world even longer.

Despite these crucial attainments of *awqaf*, the history of development and growth of *awqaf* faces some problems in most of the Muslim nations. For centuries the operational conditions of *awqaf* at most times conformed and confronted the political institutions prevailing at the time, and under the political system which they functioned. Consequently, the institutions confront problems and difficulty, which made it possible to experience dramatic overturned. The period of establishment and growth of *awqaf* was a critical one that occasioned decline and sheer neglect, which led to failures in some Muslims countries.

Islamic Rulings on Awqaf

There is ample evidence from the Qur'an and *sunnah* of the Prophet justifying the *awqaf*,[7] which also further supported the establishment of *awqaf* in Islam. The following verse is one of the Qur'anic verses that encouraged the establishment of *awqaf* :

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ...[8]

You will not receive righteousness
until you spend from what you love...

On the other hand, the *hadith* (*sunnah*) is replete with authentic sayings of the Prophet[saw] that strongly encouraged and supported the establishment of *awqaf*. It is narrated by al-Bukhari from Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), that:

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال: أصاب عمر بخيبر أرضًا فأتى النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال: يا رسول الله: أصبت أرضًا لم أصب مالًا قط أنفس منه فكيف تأمرني به؟ قال: «إن شئت حبست أصلها وتصدقت به» قال: فتصدق بها عمر، أنّه لا يباع

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[7] See, Muslim b. al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, *Book of Awqaf*, chapter on what causes a person to be rewarded after his death; Abu Dawood Suleyman b. al-Ash'ath, *Sunan*, The *kitab* of what is mentioned in the charity on the deceased, No. 2880; and al-Tirmidhi Muhammad b. Isa, *Sunan*, *the Book of Judgments* No. 1227; al-Nasa'i Ahmed b. Shu'ayb, *Sunan, the Book of Commandments*, No. 3591.

[8] Al-i Imran, 3:92.

أصلها ولا يوهب ولا يورث، و تصدق بها في الفقراء والقربى والرقاب وفي سبيل الله والضيف وابن السبيل، لا جناح على من وليها أن يأكل منها بالمعروف، أو يطعم صديقًا غير متمول فيه.

Ibn 'Umar reported: 'Umar acquired a land at Khaibar. He came to Allah's Messenger and sought his advice in regard to it. He said: "Allah's Messenger, I have acquired land in Khaibar. I have never acquired property more valuable for me than this, so what do you command me to do with it?" Thereupon he said: "If you like, you may keep the corpus intact and give its produce as *sadaqa*." So 'Umar gave it as *sadaqa* declaring that property must not be sold or inherited or given away as gift. And 'Umar devoted it to the poor, to the nearest kin, and to the emancipation of slaves, and in the way of Allah and guests. There is no sin for one who administers it if he eats something from it in a reasonable manner, or if he feeds his friends and does not hoard up goods (for himself)."[9]

The Institution of *Awqaf* in Pre-Colonial West Africa

Awqaf has also become a source of funding for Muslims over the centuries, from large endowments (*awqaf*) made by the Prophet[saw] and his companions almost all the needs of life were covered during the early period of Islam. These encompass issues relating to health challenges, provision of quality education, and supply of basic social amenities. It also involves the development of business and other commercial activities. In the early period of Islam, especially, during the Ottoman Empire, *awqaf* activities were focused on job creation, and food security. Consequently, they addressed the issues relating to hunger and shelter provision for the poor and needy, and supporting the development of agricultural and industrial activities in Muslim dominated societies. In this context, Imam Shafi' was quoted pointing out that: "more than eighty men among the companions participated in *awqaf*." Ibn Battuta stated that: "the *awqaf*/endowments in Damas-

[9] Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith no. 1727; Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Saleh al-Saleh, Ibid., p. 44.

cus were plentiful, uncounted, and unlimited."The *awqaf* institutions were not popular in most parts of the Muslim world. However, despite the predominance of the Maliki school of law in the West African sub-region *awqaf* as charity foundations thrived for many centuries. The *awqaf* were largely under the full control of imams and emirs of Islamic states. In other words, *awqaf* were normally entrenched by the ruling class and wealthy individuals. The most classical few examples of the *awqaf* institutions, which could be found, especially in the pre-colonial and early colonial period are usually limited to the area around Timbuktu, Djenne, and Massina in the ancient Mali and Songhai. There were also some practices of *awqaf*, in pre-colonial ancient cities of Hausaland, Borno Emirate and the Sokoto Caliphate. In Hausaland and Borno, it was reported that the rulers and wealthy individuals built houses and farms and dug wells and endowed them for religious purposes. Historical records are replete with the activities of Mai Dunama the Mai of Borno who established a ruwak (a student hostel) built to cater for passing pilgrims and the West African students who studied at al-Azhar University, Cairo. The ruwak continued to exist till date at al-Azhar. It is considered to be the first recorded *awqaf* established by the West African rulers outside Africa. There was also the madrasa of Ibn Ishaq in Cairo, which was instituted for the teaching of Maliki School of Islamic jurisprudence.

In Hausaland, there were also the cases of emirs of Zazzau, Kano and other polities of Hausaland respectively. Instead, Islamic West African societies placed a much greater emphasis on non-permanent acts of charity. The institution of *awqaf* can be explained by West Africa's tradition as "personal largesse". In most circumstances the imams and indeed emirs of Islamic states would make themselves the collectors and distributors of charity, thus building and enhancing his reputation and grandeur. *Awqaf* in this period have become a regional phenomenon, though, at a lower level, there was serious awareness on providing charity, especially to cater the needs of Islamic education, which was presumed to be a communal and state responsibility. Therefore, *awqaf* institution is an adequate provision that can take care of the needs of Qur'anic school pupils and their teachers, because it was a taboo to find the Qur'anic school pupils begging for alms. However, the greatest tragedy that afflicted the Qur'anic schools was during the colonial period when they were left to fend for themselves.

Subsequently, it marked the onset of the social and economic crises that jeopardized the intellectual heritage and system that produced the bulk of bureaucratic personnel of the polities of the pre-colonial societies.

Awqaf in Post-Colonial West Africa

The institution of *awqaf* has assumed a different paradigm with the colonial conquest of West African states. The relegation and suppression of the development of Islam, particularly the social services provided by the *awqaf* institution, was fostered by the colonial regimes throughout West Africa. The *awqaf* institution was instrumental in the development and sustenance of the Islamic scholars, especially via the Qur'anic schools or tsangaya school teachers. The products of these systems were catered for and fend by the states in the pre-colonial period. Consequent to the negligence of the colonial regimes to take good care of Qur'anic schools, the Qur'anic school teachers and pupils were exposed to street begging, which has now become an anathema and social malaise to Muslim societies of the West African sub-region. This has engendered a new vigor to revive the spirit of social services rendered by the *awqaf* to address the problems and challenges created to Muslim communities by the colonial administration throughout Africa. In this context, foundations and endowments were established, especially in the post-colonial era. This has precipitated the establishment of Jama'atul Nasril Islam (JNI) in Nigeria, primarily to champion the course of Islam and galvanize the Nigerian Muslims in tackling the social and economic problems affecting the Muslim ummah at regional and continental levels. The organization set up structures across the country and established schools, hospitals and skills acquisition centres in the federation.

In this regard, similar foundations and endowments were established to complement the efforts of the JNI. These included the Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN). The association was established to tackle Muslim women related problems and challenges in the post-colonial period. And one of the greatest problems that confronted Muslim women was the issue of the permissibility of co-education, which was introduced primarily to discourage Muslim women from participation in the acquisition of Western or

conventional education. The colonial administrators knowing fully the provision of Islam on mixing women with men, strongly promoted co-education instead of establishing schools only for girls and boys. Thus, it was a deliberate colonial policy that denied Muslim women education, until the evil machination of the policy was realized. This has contributed significantly to the backwardness of Muslim women in education in most West African states, especially at the closing decades of colonial rule.It also provoked the setting up of many endowments and trust funds at the community, local, states and regional levels to find answers to the daunting challenges confronting Muslim communities in West Africa. Consequently, endowments were dotted in almost all the Muslims states of West Africa. They rendered the social services and economic development agendas and geared towards creating the economic empowerment and job opportunities for the Muslim communities. The sectarian and splinter Islamic groups at different levels have instituted endowments and foundations to address the social problems bedeviling their followers. For instance, the *tariqa* or sufi orders (Tijjaniya and Qadiriyya) and the Izala have foundations and charity activities that focused on addressing the problems and challenges confronting the members of their groups.

At the same time, International endowments and charity organizations came on board, who also engaged deeply in complementing the activities of the local foundations and endowments in West Africa. The most prominent ones are the International Relief Organization (IRO), with headquarters in Jidda, Saudi Arabia. The organization has been carrying out many philanthropic activities in West Africa. It has been providing scour to victims of crises, poverty, building mosques, educational institutions and health-related matters on a monumental scale. There was also Al-Muntada Islamy, based in the United Kingdom as well as the Libya based the World Islamic Call Society, the Sudan based Munazamat al-Dawa al-Islamiyah and Africa Muslims Agency of Kuwait and many others. They also engaged in similar activities like the IRO. These organizations have been contributing to education, health, development of entrepreneur skills, and empowering the vulnerable and orphans in Muslim dominated communities.

Conclusion

The tradition of *awqaf* is presumed to have predated the advent of Islam, though there are many pre-Islamic practices and value systems, which were sanctioned by Islam. Among such values is the institution of *awqaf*. It was in this context that this article examined the historicity of *awqaf* in the Islamic world, its meaning, origin and development, especially under the Ottoman Caliphate. The divergent perspectives expressed by the orthodox schools of thought were also discussed. The effect of the divergent opinions of the early scholars on the functions and operation of *awqaf*, especially in West Africa was highlighted. The importance of *awqaf* in West Africa and the contribution the institution has been making on the development of the social institutions was highlighted. The institution of *awqaf* has fervently entrenched the concept of welfare, which enhances mutual assistance among Muslim communities. Although *awqaf* do not receive any support or protection from the state in West Africa, unlike North Africa and Asia, the institution survived the test of time in the sub-region. As a result, we have witnessed the emergence of the ministries of endowments only in Asia and North Africa. These ministries played an important role in the socio-economic development of their respective societies, which further lessen the burden of the state on social services. However, in West Africa, as already alluded to, the *awqaf* were more of individual and communal efforts rather than states efforts. However, we hope that soon, particularly given the daunting challenges confronting Muslim societies economically and socially, the state institutions in West Africa will set up *awqaf* that will enunciate programs, which will tackle the ever increasing problem of poverty afflicting the Muslim communities across the sub-region.

Engendering Islamic Civilization in West Africa

Aisha Balarabe Bawa*

Introduction

The rich history of Muslim women in West Africa has too often been overlooked or overshadowed by male/men contributions. Many studies have either ignored women's religious activities and experiences or have presented women's activities as primarily a form of resistance against patriarchy. In literature where Muslim women are considered as Muslims (as distinct from the literature on women as wives, mothers, farmworkers, slaves, etc.), the emphasis has been almost exclusively on their roles as preservers of pre-Islamic religion or at best as marginal or 'second-rate'.[1] For instance, Abdalla Ibn Battuta, often regarded as the foremost traveller of medieval times, detailed information on the cultural diversity of peoples living within the expanse of *dar al-Islam*, the lands of Islam in the narratives, treated women superficially even with much criticism on the role they played in their society.[2] It seems that, in Islamic history, the constructs, institutions and modes of thought devised by early Muslim societies that form the core discourses of Islam have played a central role in the omission of women in most of the account of Islam in Africa. The marginalization of women needs to be understood within this broader context.

For thousands of years, women left their mark on their societies, changing the course of history at times and influencing significant

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1 Jean Boyd and Murray Last, "The Role of Women as 'Agents Religieux' in Sokoto", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 19, no.2., 1985, pp. 283-300.

2 See Nina Berman, "Questions of Context: Ibn Battuta and E. W. Bovill on Africa", *Research African Literature*, vol. 34, no.2, Summer 2003, pp. 199-205.

spheres of life at others. In the early stages of Islam, women worked alongside men to advance their communities. Nadwi detailed the central role women had played in preserving the Prophet's teaching.[3] Within the bounds of their religion, women routinely attended and gave classes in the major mosques and *madrasas*, travelled intensively for knowledge, transmitted and critiqued *hadith*, issued *fatwas* (rulings) and many other activities.[4]

In addition to their contributions to *hadith*, women also pioneered the first educational institutions. The Grand College Mosque Complex of al-Qarawiyin in Fez, which is perhaps the oldest university in the world, was originally established in 841 by Fatima al-Fihri.[5] Muslim women have also played a major role in promoting civilization and science in the Islamic world. For instance, Hazrat Amna Ramliyya was a distinguished scholar who participated in the lectures of Masjid al-Haram in Mecca and gained intimate knowledge of Qur'an and *hadith*. These few examples perfectly demonstrate how women actively contributed to social and religious spheres during the early Islamic period.

In contrast, we find little information on Muslim women's contributions to Islamic civilization in West Africa. This article expands the debate to investigate the contributions of women to Islamic civilization in West Africa.

A Brief Account on the Spread of Islam in West Africa

The rise of Islam was the most amazing event in human history. Islam sprang from a barren desert yet within a century built the then most advanced and vast human civilization. West Africa's first contacts with Islam were formed in the seventh and eighth centuries, initially through slave raids and gold trade. The spread of Islam was often structured in distinct stages. The religion was brought either through coastal, or trans-Saharan trade, and merchants and their families would settle in minority quarters while slowly forging relationships

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[3] Mohammad Akram Nadwi, *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*, Oxford Interface Publications, 2007, pp. 179–200.

[4] Ibid., p. 56.

[5] Salim T. S. al-Hassani (ed.), *1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World*, The Foundation for Science Technology and Civilization, 2nd ed., 2007, p. 55.

with local populations. It was the heads of state and the elite class that initially adopted the religion.[6] By the 12th century AD, many Berber traders had been converted to Islam. Although these Muslim traders did not actively try to convert West Africans to Islam, they did practice their religion during the time that they spent travelling in West Africa.

Moreover, as time passed, Muslim traders were accompanied on their journeys by Muslim clerics and scholars. These men of religion interacted primarily with local rulers. As men of learning, they provided advice to local rulers on matters related to trade, security and governing. Gradually, Muslim advisors became important to West African rulers. It is important to note that, before the European conquest, most of the Savannah region of West Africa from Senegal and Guinea through Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Northern Nigeria was under the control of Muslim rulers.[7] Before 1500, Islam had spread widely into Sub-Saharan Africa. The first town south of the Sahara that became majority Muslim was Gao on the Niger River in Mali when a ruler accepted Islam in the 10th century. By 1040, groups in Senegal became Muslims. From then on, Islam spread to the region of today's Senegal, Ghana, West Mali and Guinea.[8] Before the end of the fifteenth century, however, Islam had already started becoming a state religion in places like Kano during the reign of Muhammad Rumfa.

African Muslim scholars became established in major towns like Timbuktu and they taught, wrote and practiced Islamic law as judges. Cultural developments in literature, arts and sciences, manufacturing and trade accompanied the spread of Islam and its influence on religious, intellectual, economic and political life in those regions. It was, however, famous trade routes, which invariably became centres of Islamic learning and civilization. The Sudanese Empire, as explained by sources, seemed to represent a classical civilization analogous to a 'golden age' in Islam.[9]

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[6] David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 28.

[7] S. M. Leghae, "The Spread of Islam from its Beginning to the 14th Century", http://www.al-islam.org/articles/spread-islam-its-beginning-14th-century/ retrieved 9/11/2018.

[8] Benjamin Soares, "The Historiography of Islam in West Africa: An Anthropological View", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 55, 2014, pp. 27-36.

[9] Ibid. p. 28.

Timbuktu and Other Centers of Learning

Timbuktu gained an international reputation for Islamic knowledge in the fourteenth century when the great medieval empire of Mali was at its height. Its fame as a city of learning attracted students and scholars from all over West Africa as well as the Maghreb, Egypt, Baghdad and Damascus. Manuscripts of Timbuktu serve as a living testimony of the highly advanced and refined civilization in Africa during the middle ages. By 1501, both Jenne and Walata became the centres of Islamic knowledge and the symbol of Islamic intellectual tradition in West Africa. Though Islamic scholarly tradition in Timbuktu was a male-dominated enterprise, there was no lack of women presence. The seventeenth-century chronicle *Tarikh al-Sudan* of Abdurrahman al-Saidi (and other written and oral sources of the region) revealed that Timbuktu was founded by a Muslim woman called Buktu.[10] The influence of Timbuktu civilization in shaping West African Islamic history has rooted from the major caravan route that continues to Morocco in the North and swings towards the modern-day state of Sudan across the Sahara desert, as well as one of the major routes to pilgrimage to Mecca which was all attributed to its founder.

Timbuktu distinguished itself from the sixteenth century onwards as a centre of study. It was a city famous for the education of important scholars whose reputation was pan-Islamic. Hunwick explained that much of the teaching was done in the scholars' homes. Therefore, one can rightly claim that women as mothers, and wives might have played an active role since they have been known as teachers of adults and significant scholars in their own right.[11] It was in the record that at the *majlis* well-versed female and male teachers helped advanced students in reading complex manuscripts of law, grammar, poetry, history, theology, astronomy, mathematics, mysticism and medicine.[12]

Furthermore, at the height of Malian power, Mansa Musa, the tenth Mansa (meaning the king of kings) of the great Malian Empire was a devoted Muslim, committed to the propagation of Islam. The king de-

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[10] John Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empires: Al-Saidi's Tarikh al-Sudan Down to 1613 and Other Contemporary Documents*, Brill, 1999, pp. 2-4.

[11] Ibid. p. 4.

[12] W. S. Elias, *Social History of Timbuktu, The Role of Muslim Scholars and Notables, 1400–1900*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 5-6.

served the credit of developing the city of Timbuktu, and making it a renowned scholarly and commercial centre in the world. During the time of his journey through Cairo for pilgrimage, women formed part of the large entourage accompanying the king. A brief mention was made by Ibn Battuta:

> Mansa Musa had passed through the city two years earlier (1324) making his pilgrimage to Mecca with thousands of slaves and soldiers, wives and officials. One hundred camels each carried one hundred pounds of gold.[13]

It is interesting to note that, the Muslim merchants (Berbers), discussed earlier, from North Africa settled among the kingdoms of West Africa, and married African women who became Muslims including their children. Islam as a religion is not only open to members of both sexes, but it also gives specific rules to men as well as women in order to give them their place in the Islamic community. The Qur'an and *sunnah* of the Prophet[saw] establish equity and parity between men and women, although maintaining a differing function for the genders in marriage, family and society.

Sufi Women and Literary Works

Sufism was an Islamic mystical philosophy that stressed the importance of community while emphasizing the need for self-education and wisdom, denial of worldliness and materialism, and submission to the will of God. Sufism involves various physical and spiritual disciplines. Not surprisingly, therefore, women have been relatively more involved in the sufi movement than other areas of Islam.

Women are seen in different roles in the Sufi establishment; as spiritual guides and enlightened beings; as mothers, daughters, wives of *sheikhs*, providing them support and guidance when required; as preservers of Sufi knowledge and as composers of biographies; as composers and preservers of songs and narrations; and as caretakers of tombs of famous *sheikhs*. The principles given by sufis have been preserved largely by women through an indigenous way, i.e. through folksongs.

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[13] See Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventure of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century*, University of California Press, 1989.

While men dominated the traditional spheres of religious authority (*ulama*), women too played influential roles in the sufi movement.[14] For instance, women contributed greatly to the genre of the sufi literature.

I. Eminent Sufi Women Personalities

a. Nana Asma'u bint Uthman b. Fudi

Nana Asma'u (1793–1864) was a respected public figure of significant authority. As she was growing up the *jihad* concept was instilled in her. She was an accomplished author and an activist spirit that gave no quarter to elitist approaches to literary works. She was well-educated, fluent in Arabic, Fulfulde, Hausa and Tamachek. She pursued all these endeavours as a Sufi of the Qadiriyya order.[15] Literacy made it possible for scholars to preserve the history and the oral traditions of some of the states. Scholars have credited Nana Asma'u as being the foremost leader who kept alive the ideological flame of the Islamic Revolution.

In 1830, Nana Asma'u was instrumental in the formation of *Yan Taru* Organization. The *Yan Taru* consists of a network of Muslim women who had been trained as teachers under Nana Asma'u and had worked with her to educate women and children in Islamic religious and literary education. Before the formation of the *Yan Taru*, Asma'u began by teaching children and women of her household, then extended to the neighbourhood and then to the community as a whole. After the death of her father, Nana Asma'u composed her first poems, which reflected his political and religious ideas entitled *The Way of the Pious*, written in 1820. This poem reflected her father's sermon on undesirable character traits, but it followed the patterns of her father and brother's writings and teachings. Having mastered Arabic, the language in which the Qur'an was revealed, Nana Asma'u wrote poems in Arabic intended for the Muslim elite. *The Path of Truth* written in Hausa in 1842, treated obligatory religious duties, resurrection, sin-

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[14] Britta Frede and Joseph Hill, "Engendering Islamic Authority in West Africa", *Islamic Africa*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2014, pp. 131–165.

[15] Beverly. B. Mack and Jean Boyd, *One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u, Scholar and Scribe*, Indiana University Press, 2000, pp. 76-91.

ners, salvation and paradise. Asma'u also composed poetry in Fulfulde on the history of the *jihad* which dated 1840. She also wrote another one on the history of the family of the Sheikh. *Fillintago*, *Ka'iwi'i Shehu* and *Jande Wurno* discussed historical events of the *jihad* movement and informed about the Shehu's family.[16] Her work entitled

The Sufi Women which she composed for women to understand the active role women had played in the Muslim community, indicates that she was familiar with works such as that of the thirteenth century Ibn al-Jawzi's *Sifat al-Safuwa*, which lists Sufi women saints of exemplary character.[17] She emphasized in the said book that Sufi women have connected the community of caliphate women to Muslim women, scholars and Sufis throughout history and confirmed a tradition of women as active members of the devout Muslim community over twelve centuries.

b. Khadijah bint Uthman b. Fudi

Khadijah was the eldest daughter of Shehu. She was born in Degel probably in 1782, and her mother was the Sufi scholar Aisha. Khadijah is reported to have written work on grammar entitled *Katadurun* and also to have translated the *Mukhtasar of Khalil* into Fulfulde. She also wrote on the subject of the Mahdi, which she rejected with the reason that the Mahdi issue was not in the *hadith*. she stated, "although some say he will be born the son of Askiya'u, this is not so." Her fourth work, dated 1842, was on good fortune, written in Fulfulde. According to Khadijah, the foundations of religion are five; keep them and be noted for your piety. They are: acknowledging the oneness of Allah, prayer, fasting, alms, and the pilgrimage (when possible).[18]

Tradition has it that some women scholars, particularly within the Shehu Usman Danfodiyo's family became versed in Islamic sciences and produced many works. Over fifty books that were written by the

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[16] Beverly B. Mack, *Muslim Women Scholars in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Morocco to Nigeria*, in *The Meaning of Timbuktu*, Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne (eds.), Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2008, p. 172.

[17] Beverly B. Mack and Jean Boyd, *One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u, Scholar and Scribe*, p. 84.

[18] Jean Boyd and Murray Last, "The Role of Women as 'Agents Religieux' in Sokoto", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2., 1985, p. 291.

Sufi women scholars are enough to demonstrate the contribution of women to Islamic literature. Other women scholars that authored books include Maimunatu Binta Qadhi Bazari a jurist, grammarian and Sufi in Katsina. She authored some books both in prose and poetry. Hamid Bobboyi mentioned Amina the daughter of Muhammad Nakashiri b. Ibrahim (c. 1877–1947) as a scholar and teacher to the ruling house of Adamawa.[19]

c. Hafsatu Bint Uthman b. Fudi

Hafsatu was born about 1789 to the Shehu Danfodiyo family. She played a great role in the dissemination of knowledge to her sister Asma'u. Hafsatu composed poetry in Hausa on admonition (*waazi*).

d. Maryam bint Uthman b. Fudi

Maryam (*uwar daje*) was a younger sister to Nana Asma'u inspired by her exemplary in seeking knowledge as a necessary pursuit in her life. She received her early education from her family members, Asmau'u inclusive. Maryam wrote many works on poetry which include; undated work in Fulfulde about the office of Imam, possibly to settle a dispute over a new appointment. She contributed greatly on the issue of Mahdi, in her *Al-Wathiqa ila Amir Kano*. She was asked by the Emir of Kano Uthman bin Dabo,[20] on the situation of people who migrated from Hausaland to the east assuming that Mahdi was about to appear. After the death of Asma'u, Maryam took over her school and she moved to her father's house teaching women until her death.

The result of the massive women's education was the production of scholarly women called *modibbo*.

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[19] See Hamid Bobboyi, "Bornu, Wadai and Adamawa" in *Arabic Literature of Africa: The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa*, John O. Hunwick, and E. J. Bril, (eds.), vol . 2, Leiden, 1995.

[20] Sokoto State Committee on National Centenary, "Contributions of Sokoto State to the Making of Modern Nigeria", *Sokoto State Government's Centenary Book Project*, 2013, p. 21.

e. Modibbo Saudatu (Known as Kilo)

Modibbo Kilo was one of the most eminent female Islamic scholars of the twentieth century Sokoto Sultanate. She was a renowned scholar second to Nana Asma'u. Kilo was a teacher of both men and women. Among her students were the famous Sokoto Islamic Scholar Sheikh Sidi Attahir Ibrahim and the Grand Qadi Usman Gusau. She was known to have immigrated from Sokoto to Makkah, a journey that took her two years to arrive in Saudi Arabia.[21] The driving factor of her flight was her concern for the *sunnah*, the exemplary way of life set forth by the Prophet Muhammad[saw]. While in Makkah, Modibbo Kilo established a school where she taught Qur'an, *hadith* and *fiqh* to women at Jarwal. Throughout her stay in the holy city, she focused on the spiritual life, while rejecting materialism.

f. Aishatu Hamani Zarmakoy Dencandu

Aishatu is a Sufi Muslim woman in the Niger Republic and became a religious commentator on Niger's national television, preaching Islamic values to the public. She demonstrates her role as a religious educator, advocating for both religious and secular education for girls and women as a right within Islam.[22] It has been observed by Boyd and Last, that specific groups particularly the scholarly 'caste' of Futa Toro, has produced notably learned women.[23] Literacy made it possible for scholars to preserve the history and the oral traditions of some of the states.

II. Contributions of Sufi Women to Literature and Sciences

a. Poetry

Poetry has been a common mode of expression throughout the history of Islam. Many scholarly women in Shehu's clan focused their studies on the Arabic poetry composition. Asma'u employed various forms of poetry so that her corpus of works displays her extensive

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[21] O. Sadiya, *Modibbo Kilo (1901-1976) Rayuwarta da Ayyukanta (Ta biyu ga Nana Asma'u Bin Fodiyo a karni na 20)*, Ahmadu Bello University, 2013, p. 17.

[22] O. Alidou, "A Reformist Sufi Woman in the Niger Republic", *Middle East Program Occasional Paper Series*, Spring 2009, p. 21.

[23] Jean and Murray, ibid, p. 283.

education. One form she used is acrostic poetry in which the first letter of each line forms its message which relates to the message of the work. Maryam bint Uthman b. Fudi also used poetry in Fulfulde on the office of the Imam. Khadijah dealt with the science of Muslim jurisprudence and grammar in her two distinct poems. In the field of preaching, Fatima composed poems on people not to seek admonishment from preachers.[24]

In addition to providing fundamental education to children they raise, women have long been known as teachers of adults and significant scholars in their own right. For instance, one of Shehu Usman Danfodio's teachers, Sheikh Abdulqadir, the Mujahid of Futa Taro, had been taught by Khadija, a sister of Ahmad al-Aqil.[25] Among the *zawaya* as pointed out by Stewart, there were several women *sheikhs* noted for their learning and their *baraka*.[26]

Seyda Rakhya Ibrahim Niass is a scholar, a religious leader in the Tijaniyya Sufi order in Senegal. She is an educator who has written books in Arabic. She was born in 1930 to the family of the renowned Islamic Sheikh Ibrahim Niass. She first memorized the Qur'an at an early age, learned Arabic and then proceeded to absorb Sufi learning. Her family belongs to the Tijaniyya *Fayda* branch which encourages women education by giving the right (certificate) to convey the teaching and thought of the order. Other teachers and educators include the wives of Shehu Usman who together with their husband educated their children in classical Islamic as well as domestic education.

b. Medicine

In one capacity or another, women have been regularly involved in medical practice in the caliphate. For example, a lady midwife, Zaharatu, was attending women during post-childbirth. In the *Yan Taru* Organization also many women served as traditional midwives and

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[24] M. J. Kaura, "Emancipation of Women in the Sokoto Caliphate" in *State and Society in the Sokoto Caliphate*, A. M. Kani and A. Gandi (eds.), Gaskiya Corporation Limited, 1990, p. 94.

[25] See John Ralph Willis, *Studies in West African Islamic History: The Cultivators of Islam*, Routledge, 2006.

[26] C. C. Stewart, *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania*, Clarendon Press, 1979, pp. 192-212.

nurses. They took care of the sick and bathing death corpse of women and children. In her *Tabshir al-Ikhwan* written in 1836, the author outlined the practical benefits of the *suras* of the Qur'an, which included safe child-birth and protection against some illnesses. The Arabic poem meant to be appreciated by scholars, especially those who specialized in *Tibb al-Nabi* which is understood to be the religiously oriented, highly spiritual healing system of Madina. All the *hadiths* dealing with medicine and related subjects are presented as an inseparable part of the Prophet, hence, considered genuine and infallible.[27]

On the contributions Muslim women have made to military and public welfare, Fadima, wife of the army commander-in-chief (*amir al-jaish*), was actively involved in organizing the production of "hard tack" (food for the army). According to Mack and Boyd, the two principal items were *muye* and *kilishi*, the former a kind of muesli, the latter dried meat. Both were high protein foods. To prepare the food for the armies, Fadima has to be involved in negotiations with all manner of suppliers, as well as the workforce.[28]

c. Reform (Da'wah)

Women play a prominent role in symbolic forms of Islamic renewal. They also play a key role in effecting societal moral reform thereby echoing central tenets of Muslim activism throughout West Africa. There is no doubt that the Qur'an encourages Muslims to stand up for their faith against enemies and make Islam triumphant. Islam, as explained by Bunza, is a religion of letters, which emphasizes teaching and practice of its tenets through learning and knowledge.[29]

Muslim women across West Africa contributed to the promotion of understanding and practice of the teachings of Islam through the formation of women associations. The Federation of Muslim Women's

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[27] Beverly B. Mack, "Muslim Women Scholars in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Morocco to Nigeria", *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, 2008, p. 7.

[28] Mack & Boyd, *One Woman's Jihad: Nana Asma'u, Scholar and Scribe*, p. 89.

[29] M. U. Bunza, "Muslims' Contributions to the Development of Medical Sciences in the 19th Century Nigeria: A Preliminary Account", Paper Presented at the 7th International Congress of the International Society of Islamic Medicine, 24th – 28th October, 2016, United Kingdom.

Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) is an example of such associations.[30] FOMWAN since 1985 has worked to spread Islam through *da'wah* and advocate for Muslim girls' education. The low level of education among Muslim women in Nigeria is what FOMWAN sought to tackle from its inception. It has organized seminars and conferences challenging patriarchal ideology and promoting women's literacy and access to education. Madore and Gomez-Perez have mentioned Koulsoum, a well-known female preacher. She was considered to be the first female preacher in Burkina Faso.[31] In Mali, since the 1970s, Muslim women organized themselves into neighbourhood-based learning groups *Kalaniten.* Schulz has documented the prominent role women played in symbolic forms of Islamic renewal (*da'wah*) regulating everyday conduct. The stated goal of the group is learning to read and understand the Qur'an and to engage in joint religious practice.[32]

Conclusion

This article has examined the contributions of Muslim women to Islamic civilization in West Africa. As it has been argued in the study, the contribution of women to their society is undeniable. Muslim women had and still making important contributions to the vitality of Islam in West Africa. Some women have played important roles within Sufi communities and established themselves as influential religious leaders and spiritual guides. Others served as full, vibrant members of their societies, whether as skillful educators, leading scholars or medical personnel. Others have gained autonomy and expanded their sphere of influence through the activities of *da'wah*. Islam has historically empowered women along with men, they contributed substantially to the prominence of Islamic civilization in the Sokoto Caliphate and the *dar al-Islam.*

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[30] A. B. Bawa, "Muslim Women and Shariah Implementation in Northern Nigeria: An Overview of FOMWAN", *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities, UJAH*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2017, pp. 149-167.

[31] F. Madore and M. Gomez-Perez, "Muslim Women in Burkina Faso Since the 1970s: Towards Recognition as Figures of Religious Authority," *Islamic Africa*, 7, 2016, p. 194.

[32] Dorothea Schulz, "Renewal and Enlightenment: Muslim Women's Biographic Narratives of Personal Reform in Mali", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 41, 2011, p. 94.

The Tradition of *Tajdid* in West Africa

Usman Muhammad Bugaje*

Introduction

The tradition of *tajdid* has been a missing theme in the general discourse and historiography of Islam in West Africa. This is largely so, because the regional historiography was dominated by the literature of colonial writers. They distorted the picture of the *jihad* and gave it an ethnic and economic coloration in their attempts at usurping power from the ruling class of the time.

Undoubtedly, Islam in sub-Saharan Africa stretched from the Senegambia region to the Red Sea.[1] Islam had passed through many phases of development and decline from the 8th century when the religion was first introduced, to the 18th and 19th centuries, which witnessed the reform movements at both micro and macro levels. Indeed, the tradition of *tajdid* in the *Bilad al-Sudan* dates back to the closing decades of the 15th and the opening decades of the 16th centuries. This trend continued until the 17th and 18th centuries.[2] The tradition of Islamic revivalism, especially in West Africa had far-reaching social, economic and political consequences not only for the region but for the entire African continent.

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1 See J. S. Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, Oxford University Press, 1962; K. W. Horrow, *Faces of Islam in African Literature*, ed., Heinemann, 1993; B. Lewis, "The Return of Islam", *Middle East Review*, 12, 1 (Fall, 1979); and T. Hodgkin, "Scholars and the Revolutionary Tradition: Vietnam and West Africa", *Oxford Review of Education*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1976 and more importantly, Usman M. Bugaje, *The Past as Future: Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Sokoto Caliphate*, Abuja Books and Libraries, 2015 and also Usman M. Bugaje, *The Traditions of Tajdid in West Africa*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Khartoum, 1992.

2 For details see *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, ed. by J. F. P. Hopkins, N. Levtzion, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 261-353.

The period of stagnation of the development crept in as a result of the Moroccan invasion of the Songhai Empire in the 16th century. Subsequently, the spread and development of Islamic learning and scholarship declined tremendously. The development of Islamic scholarship in the region had played a key role in the realization of revolutionary ideas that sparked off monumental political, economic and socio-cultural changes in West Africa. The pivotal objective of *tajdid* is primarily to return the Muslim community to the pristine nature of Islamic culture, which was hitherto corrupted and pervaded by non-Islamic practices and beliefs. However, by the opening decades of the 17th century, West African witnessed pockets of Islamic revivalism, which snowballed into full-fledged revolutionary movements in the 18th century. In the 16th and 17th centuries, there were pockets of revivalist movements in the Futa Toro, Futa Jallo, Bundu and in the minor river region of West Africa. In the 18th century Uthman b. Fudi Jihad, Ahmad Labbo Jihad and Umar al-Futy Jihad established the Sokoto, Massina and Segu Caliphates respectively. Therefore, this article discusses the intellectual history, which provides a veritable ground for the fruition of *tajdid* movements, with special emphasis on the 18th and 19th centuries *jihad*s in West Africa, which led to the Sokoto, Massina and Segu *jihad* movements in a monumental scale.

Doctrinal Basis of the *Tradition* of Tajdid in West Africa

The historical background of the thoughts and ideas, which germinated to provide the fertile ground for the emergence of the *jihad* movements, are to be found in the Qur'an, *sunnah*, and reinforced by the *sira* of the *khulafa al-rashidun* and the works of the earlier *mujaddidun*. The Islamic educational institutions provided the impetus that ensured the preservation of the latent ideas, which stimulated and evoked the ferment for *tajdid*. This fostered the religious rituals of the community to invoke them with unfailing regularity. Similarly, *tasawwuf* in its general form, perhaps more than anything else provides the hibernaculum for the kernels of *tajdid*. *Tasawwuf*, however, with its esoteric bent, tends to touch the heart and approach the Qur'an and *sunnah* not so much as a source of law but as a source of light, which draws and cultivates closeness to Allah and His Prophet, thereby giving power and depth to Islamic teachings. Out of this power and depth

of its feeling towards the heart, emanates such potent drive for change that the mind finds difficult to comprehend much less to generate the potent weapons, which the *jihadist* draw inspirations.

The tradition of *tajdid* in West Africa was spurred with the fervent desire to revive the pristine teaching of Islam. Certainly, the tradition of learning and scholarship in *Bilad al-Sudan* was the stimulus that nurtured the thoughts and ideas of *tajdid.* Scholars are considered as the beacons of any society. They are the rallying point and provided hope to the oppressed and the common man. As Thomas Hodgkin[3] rightly pointed out, "When and why do scholars become revolutionary?" This pertinent question needs to be addressed. It is from the class of the *ulama* (intelligentsia) that *mujaddid* (revivalist), who were imbued with the zeal and determination to change the society emerged. The scholars were also influenced by the burning desire to become representatives of the prophet[saw], to emulate the moral and spiritual agitation of transforming societies.[4] This accorded the scholars the spiritual capacities to become guides, leaders, jurists, politicians, military commanders and *imams* of their communities. Like the prophet, the *mujaddid* also attempted to live as a 'total' person, serving as an example in a wide variety of human endeavour.[5] In other words, he possessed the capacity to articulate the challenges and problems affecting his society. Thus, he was inclined to leave behind a profound and enduring influence in society. The name of Sheikh Uthman b. Fudi, for example, still evokes deep-seated respect and veneration in today's Nigeria, and the rest of West Africa, as if he is still alive. Consequently, the worldly considerations appeared to be surpassing the moral ones among the class of the *mujahidun.* In his words:

> And when God had driven the enemy from us, we began to raid and to attack those who had rebelled against us, until we prepared, in the fourth year of our hijra to raid al-Kalawa. We set out at the end of Rajab, and the moon of Sha'ban rose while we were on the road. Then there came

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[3] T. Hodgkin, "Scholars and the Revolutionary Tradition: Vietnam and West Africa", *Oxford Review of Education*, vol. 2, no.2, 1976. pp. 111-28.

[4] H. A. R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, S. J. Shaw and W. R. Polk (eds.), Beacon Press, 1962. p. 194.

[5] Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, (2nd. ed.), 1985. p. 93.

> to me from God the sudden thought to shun the homelands, and my brothers, and turn towards the best of God's creation, to seek approval, because of what I had seen of the changing times, and my brothers, and their inclination towards the world and their squabbling over its possession, and its wealth, and its regard... I considered flight incumbent upon me, and I left the army and occupied my affairs and faced towards the East, towards the Chosen One - may God bless him and give him peace, until we arrived the city of Kano. The people of Kano prevented me from continuing and sought from me that I should teach them how they should act to establish religion...[6]

Understanding the Ingenuity of *Tadjid* in West Africa

The tradition of *tajdid* in West Africa owes its originality and historicity to the internal dynamics of the region. The reign of Askia Muhammad the Great had marked an important milestone in Islamic reforms in the West Africa sub-region. By the 16th century, the tradition of learning had matured and was at par with many others in the Muslim world. From then on the region interacted with the wider world of scholarship more than ever before, giving and receiving scholars and enriching its learning and the horizon of scholarship. The onset of the decline of learning and scholarship, which began in the 16th century provided a veritable ground for the development and fruition of Islamic revivalism in the 17th and 18th centuries. From the 16th to the 18th century, there developed in the region a variety of approaches to *tajdid*. In this context, five approaches have been identified as the dominant schools of *tajdid*, which differ in interpretations and perceptions of the *jihad* movements. There was the '*fiqh* school' which saw the decadence and deviation in the Muslim society mainly as a result of ignorance, especially of the *shari'a*, and hence *tajdid* could only come about through intensive education.

The 'militant school', however, believed that the Muslim society is kept on the course only through the practice of *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy an al-munkar*. Hence society could only be restored on course through the application of this principle using force and specifically

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[6] Abdallah b. Fudi, *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, ed. and trans. by M. Hiskett, Ibadan University Press, 1963, pp. 120-2.

fighting *jihad*, so long as there were the means to do so. As for the 'sufi school', the issue of societal degeneration and deviation was neither the dearth of knowledge as such nor could it be entirely remedied through the use of force. Rather it is a question of character building (*tarbiyya*). There was the 'semi-militant school' which shared with the militant school a perspective on *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy an al-munkar*, in considering *jihad* a viable alternative in *tajdid* and in their criticism of the injustices of rulers. This school of thought used subtle means and veiled references and implored such caution in implementing these ideas which took away a substantial amount of militancy. The 'pacifist school', very much like the *fiqh* school, saw education as the main instrument of *tajdid*, and many of its advocates made a career out of teaching, which they often combined with trade. It distinguished itself from the *fiqh* school, however, by taking its quietism further in taking a firm position against *jihad* and giving pacifism a kind of doctrinal status.

The *jihad* movements in the 19th century represented the fruition of these ideas of *tajdid* on a scale unprecedented in the region. This article identifies and discusses three major *jihad* movements in West Africa. These include Sheikh Uthman b. Fudi, Sheikh Ahmad Labbo and al-Hajj Umar al-Futi *jihads*.[7] Sheikh Uthman began prophetic teachings and continued for nearly a quarter of a century along the lines of the Maliki *fiqh* and school of law. However, he found himself in circumstances which, by the arguments of the militant school, warranted the use of force. Though the Sheikh was cautious in resorting to force, the way he marshalled his arguments for the militant school once he decided on it, and the resoluteness with which he executed the militant option suggests that the Sheikh had all along with a soft spot for the militant school. The dramatic success of the militant school in Hausaland seemed to have given it an edge over others. Thus, Sheikh Ahmad Labbo, essentially part of Sheikh Uthman's *jama'a*, had no hesitation

[7] For details on the three famous *jihad* movements in West Africa see the following literature, *Tazyin al-Waraqat* of Abdullahi Fodio, *Infaq al-Maysur fi Tarikh Bilad al-Takrur* of Muhammad Bello; Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*; Ibrahim Sulaiman, *A Revolution in History and Islamic State and the Challenge of History*; W. A. Brown, *The Caliphate of Hamdullahi*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1969; and also, B. O. Oloruntimehin, *The Segu Tukulor Empire*, 1972.

in going the militant way. Similarly, al-Hajj Umar had no difficulty in subscribing to the militant school. But he did so without having to abandon his strong sufi orientation. In fact, he integrated the militancy into the sufi frame producing a rather unique blend which added to the variety of species of *tajdid* in the region.

The Sokoto *jihad* leaders attempt to extend the *jihad* in Borno provoked the polemical debates with the Borno scholars. In this regard, a careful examination of the arguments around the Sokoto-Borno and Segu-Masina conflicts reveals that it was essentially a result of differences between schools of *tajdid,* rather than territorial ambition or competition between Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya. Though the tradition of *tajdid* benefited from other traditions in other parts of the Muslim world and this remained unique in several ways. The opportune blend of *fiqh* and *tasawwuf* gave the ideas *of tajdid* an optimum habitat that retained their potency through the rhythm of time. The rigid tendencies of *fiqh* were tempered by the softness and warmth of *tasawwuf,* while the latter's excessive tendencies were checked by *fiqh.* The blending of intellectuality and morality in the scholars of the region and the burden of the ordinary men which the scholars carried on their shoulders, endeared the scholars to the ordinary people and attracted and retained for them a large and loyal following making them potentially (and in times of crisis effectively) more powerful than temporal rulers. The supremacy of the moral over the political considerations in *tajdid* and the keenness to keep within the bounds of the *shari'a* in a way which echoed the Murabitun movement was yet another feature of this tradition. All these combined gave the tradition of *tajdid* in West Africa a momentum of its own.

Tajdid in Western *Bilad al-Sudan* is not merely an historical event, but rather a tradition that lives on, for as long as degeneration and deviation remain part of the nature of human society because the key ideas are preserved in the Qur'an and *sunnah* and the seeds, as Muhammad Bello believed, are to be found in the indestructible 'righteous portion'.

The Inevitabilities for *Jihads* in West Africa

The challenges of *tajdid*, the return to God and the restoration of His *shari'a*, after decades of decay and deviation, necessarily involved a fresh look at the Qur'an and *hadith* and the arrival at a new consensus or *ijma*. In other words, the gates of *ijtihad* must necessarily be opened for scholars to address themselves to new issues critical to the times and conditions of their societies. Sheikh Uthman b. Fudi took this quest for *ijtihad* further when he asserted that the best writings for a community were those of their contemporary scholars because they were more informed on the socio-economic and moral decadence affecting their societies. The dominant principle of *tajdid* in Islamic theology indicates that once a *mujtahid* dies, his legal opinions will no longer be binding because he is no more in touch with the conditions and social ills, which the community survives.

Interestingly, colonial historiography is replete with Euro-centric perspectives, especially on the history of Islam relating to the development of *tajdid* movements. These scholars had a casual familiarity with the history of the region, and hence distorted the picture of the *jihad* movements, thereafter linking it to the Wahhabi movement of the Arabian Peninsula. The internal dynamics of the West African societies, especially the social, political decadence and coupled with economic repressions and oppressions of the pre-*jihads* rulers, were the major impetus that sparked off the *jihad* movements and they were devoid of external influences. These conditions were supported fervently with the state of learning in contemporary West Africa. However, this notion has been debunked by F. H. el-Masri[8] who posited that it was not tenable for the reform movement in West Africa to be engendered by the ideologies of Muhammad ibn Abdulwahhab in content and organization. Sheikh Umar al-Futi was the only Islamic scholar who established contact with the Middle East before the outbreak of his *jihad* in West Africa. Sufism played a critical role in the West African *jihads*.[9] This clearly illustrates the dearth of appreciation of the originality of the educational tradition

[8] See Uthman Ibn Fudi's *Bayan Wujub al-Hijra*, edited and translated by Fathi Hassan el-Masri, Khartoum University Press, 1978. p. 18.

[9] Both Qadiriyya and Tijjaniyya orders played a formidable part in the organization and mobilization of the *jihads*, especially the *jihad* of Sheikh Umar al-Futi.

of West Africa, which led to the externalization of the ferment of *jihad* to the Middle East. However, the writings of Wilks, Hunwick[10] and more significantly Sa'ad's *Social History of Timbuktu*,[11] debunked the distorted pictures embedded in the colonial historiography and orientalist views that underscored the contributions of West Africa to Islamic scholarship. Ahmad Baba's biographical dictionary of Maliki scholars, *Nayl al-Ibtihaj*,[12] which was meant to be complementary to the *Dibaj* of Ibn Farhun, was a very modest attempt at educating and enlightening the Islamic World about Western Sudan's tremendous contributions to the development of scholars and a tradition of scholarship equivalent to North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. In his response to al-Mansur, the Moroccan Sultan whose army invaded Timbuktu, Ahmad Baba categorically states that the Islamic credentials of Morocco were not in any way better than those of Western Sudan, a point vindicated by Ahmad Baba's fame in the scholarly circles of Morocco. This was contained in his famous works *al-Kashf wa'l-Bayan li Asnaf Majlub al-Sudan,* in which he defended the region from the blanket judgment of some scholars outside the region.

In a related development, Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti responded forcefully on the state of learning and scholarship in West Africa. He contended that Islamic practices in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula were not more advanced than other regions, especially West Africa. Similarly, Sheikh Uthman b. Fudi contended that the intellectual autonomy they enjoyed, especially when dealing with his contemporary scholars from other parts of the world on important issues of the religion was profound. This influenced Sheikh Uthman b. Fudi to assert that:

> What comes to us from the prophet we take directly without any reservation; what comes from the *sahaba* we take some we leave some; but as for what comes from others (apart from the *sahaba)*, they are men and we are men.[13]

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[10] For details see, J. O. Hunwick (editor and translator), *Sharia in Songhai: Replies of al-Maghili to the Questions of Askia al-Hajj Muhammad*, Oxford University Press, 1983.

[11] See Elias Sa'ad, *Social History of Timbuktu, The Role of Muslim Scholars and Notables, 1400-1900*, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

[12] Ahmad Baba, *Nayl al-Ibtihaj*, translated by J. O. Hunwick, in his "A Contribution to the Study of Islamic Teaching Traditions in West Africa: The Career of Muhammad Baghayogho 930/1523-4-1002/1594.", *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara*, 1990, 4, pp. 149–63.

[13] Uthman b. Fudi, *Hisn al-Afham min Juyush al-Awham*, (ms) f 19. 243.

This frame of mind and mood of the scholars of the region reveal not only the originality and creativity of the educational tradition in Western Sudan but also the extent to which its scholars enjoyed independent thoughts that nourished their ideas of reforms. The tradition of *tajdid* in Western *Bilad al-Sudan* being a product of this educational tradition retains its stamp of originality and creativity. This is not to deny the interactions with the traditions of other regions of the Muslim world as evident in the works of the scholars and *mujaddidun.* Rather, this is to emphasize the fact that the tradition of *tajdid* in Western *Bilad al-Sudan* has a momentum of its own.

The Development of *Tajdid* in the 19th Century History of West Africa

The tradition has passed through many phases and processes, which made it possible for it to acquire a distinctive flavour, uniqueness and features to the region. The most important feature of this tradition is the appropriate blend of *fiqh* and *tasawwuf*, which echoed the asceticism and militancy of the Murabitun scholars and their mentors in Qayrawan. In the Islamic orient where the *sufi-faqih* dichotomy became pronounced, *fiqh* tended to be dry and rigid while Sufism drifted away from the *shari'a* and acquired a strong propensity to live in a world of its own, where some pantheistic ideas find accommodation a problem which al-Ghazali sought to rectify in his epistle *Ihya Ulum al-Din*. This mix of *fiqh* and *tasawwuf* is best symbolized by the scholars of Timbuktu, who were to set both the tone as well as the pace of scholarship in the region. Until the emergence of the Qadiriyya in the region, no scholar is known to belong to a Sufi order as such. But, as almost every page of Ahmad Baba's *Nayl al-lbtyah* and al-Bartall's *Fath al-Shukur* bear evidence, the scholars of the region were all ascetics who combined their asceticism with an impressive knowledge of *fiqh* and other disciplines. This mix became the hallmark of scholarship in the region. The city of Timbuktu itself, despite the presence of large commercial transactions, was known and respected largely for its learning and scholarship and owed much of its reverence and political autonomy to its piety.

Another feature, which is common to all Islamic traditions of learning, but which seemed to have gained a special place in the region, was yet another composite, this time of intellectuality and morality.

This amalgam in the scholars of the region gave learning a sense of purpose and endowed them with a great sense of responsibility. From this emanated a special relationship between the teacher on the one hand and his students and the wider community on the other. The scholar carried on his shoulders the heavy burden of his students and the wider society, always concerned about their individual and collective welfare, ready and willing to give a helping hand. Ahmad Baba's description of his teacher, Muhammad Baghayogho (1523-94), clearly pointed a vivid picture of the situation. He stressed that:

> Our Sheikh and our [source of] blessing, the jurist the accomplished scholar, the pious and ascetic man of God (*al-abid*), the *mufti*, a man among the finest of God's upright servants and practising scholars... he was constantly busying himself in seeing to people's needs, even at the cost to himself, becoming distressed if they fell into adversity, settling disputes among them and giving them good advice. Add to this his love of learning and his devotion to teaching and study, his love for men of learning and his total humility. the aid he gave to scholars and the trouble he took for them, giving out the rarest and most precious of his books... He had enormous patience for teaching throughout the whole day and was able to get his point across even to the dull-witted never feeling bored or tired... When I first came in contact with him he was teaching various lessons from the after the early morning prayer until mid-morning; then he would go to his house and offer the mid-morning prayer (*salat al-duha*) for a while and afterwards go to the *qadi* to look into certain people's problems and to effect a reconciliation between others. Then he would study in his house over the noon period and lead people in the midday prayer. He would then teach until it was time for the mid-afternoon prayer and having performed it, would go and teach in another place until dusk or close to it. After praying the sunset prayer he would teach in the mosque until the evening prayer after which he will return to his house. I heard that he always used to spend the last part of the night in devotions.[14]

Indeed, we find a similar pattern of life in most of the scholars

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[14] Ahmad Baba, *Nayl al-Ibtihaj*, p. 341-2. The translation is John Hunwick's in his "A Contribution to the Study of Islamic Teaching Traditions in West Africa: The Career of Muhammad Baghayogho 930/1523-4-1002/1594", in *Islam et Societies au Sud du Sahara*, no.4, 1990, p. 155-7.

of the region, particularly the prominent ones, like Sheikh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, Sheikh Umar Jibrila, Sheikh Uthman b. Fudi, Abdallah b. Fudi, al-Hajj Umar al-Fudi, whose students have written extensively about the details of their illustrious careers. It was their simplicity and accessibility that brought these scholars close to their students and the wider society, allowing them to share with their community its worries as well as its aspirations. Their identification with the problems of the ordinary people, with whom they lived and interacted daily, naturally endeared them to their community and earned them deep-seated respect. Above all, it cultivated confidence, trust and loyalty among their usually large following.

Sheikh Uthman's criticism of his contemporary scholars who stayed in their ivory towers and taught their few students while indifferent about the ignorance of their wives and children much less, the wider society.[15] The seemingly, corny remark with which al-Maghili opened all the chapters of his book, *Taj al-Din fima Yajib ala al-Muluk*, which was written as a political guide to Muhammad Rumfa opined that 'the greatest calamity that can befall a ruler, is his seclusion from his subjects'. What al-Maghili seemed to be stressing was that the absence of accessibility erodes confidence, breeds suspicion and for the ruler, it makes it difficult to determine the stage of injustices pervading the society at that time. Abdallah b. Fudi's book, *Diya al-Hukkam* contained a portion on that deal with the issues of *siyasat al-shar'iyya* (Islamic political theory). He admonishes temporal rulers to make themselves accessible to their subjects so that they do not become completely dependent on his advisers, who might wish to hide something significant for him. These practices constituted the bedrock of the confidence, trust and loyalty the *mujaddidun* in West Africa enjoyed from their large following.

Conversely, the power base of the scholar tended to be much wider than that of temporal rulers. For, while the following of a scholar cuts across and extends very far beyond political, ethnic and even linguistic boundaries, the subjects of a ruler are limited to his state and within this state, his power base may be limited to members of his ethnic or

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[15] Uthman b. Fudi, *Ifham al-Munkirin*, the relevant passage had been translated and published in M.A. al-Hajj, "The Writing of Shehu 'Uthman Dan Fodio: A Plea for Dating and Chronology", in *Kano Studies*, vol. 1, 2(1974/77), p. 8.

language group. A more significant difference may be in the depth of these two. A temporal ruler may be feared by his subjects, but very rarely is revered and it is even more unlikely that his subjects would stake much for his cause, especially when he is unjust. As for the scholar the extent of the love and depth of the loyalty of his following, whereever they may be, can only be surpassed by that of the *sahaba* towards the Prophet. The closer the scholar relates with his society, the better he provides pathological solutions to the problems and challenges bedevilling the society of his time.

On the other hand, Abdallah must have considered this a serious matter, for in the 'great debate' after the jihad in Hausaland, he ferociously fought against allowing the new leadership the age of the ostentatious dress of the Habe rulers they had just overthrown. He seemed to have nursed the fear that it would alienate the subjects from their rulers. These combined was likely to make the scholar potentially many times more powerful than a temporal ruler.

It is interesting to note that the power a scholar wields, tends to increase rather than decrease if he maintains his distance from temporal authorities. Scholars in the region had always maintained contact, sometimes quite close, with rulers. But those that kept a good watch on their credibility tended to maintain some distance even as they discharged their obligation to advise and oblige them some of their requests for prayers. The case of al-Maghili and Sheikh Uthman are classical examples of these. The scholars tended to be guided by the often quoted tradition of the prophet, to the effect that, the best among the rulers are those who consult the *ulama*, and the worst among the *ulama* are those who serve the interest of the rulers. Sheikh Uthman, for example, writing his *Masail Muhimma* on the eve of the *jihad* at a time when the relationship with Hausa rulers had reached breaking point was not prepared to excuse any scholar making any contact with the rulers, under any pretext. Quoting the relevant authorities, the Sheikh wrote:

> Ibn al-Hajj has stated in his book *Al-Madkhal:* 'Let (the scholar) guard strictly against frequenting anyone belonging to the group of worldly men (*abna al-dunya*)... since the earned man should be the person to whom people come, not the other way round. it is no excuse for a learned man to frequent other people's houses on the pretext of securing advan-

> tages for the masses of the people and warding off harm... securing the need of the Muslims lies in total abstention from visiting worldly men, and in reliance upon Allah and recourse to him.
>
> The devout servant of Allah, Abdalwahab al-Sha'rani has stated in his book, *Lawaqih al-Anwar:* Sufyan al-Thawri has said, Beware of princes O my brother! You must not go close to them and mix with them in any way. It is said to you: 'Intercede and save someone oppressed and restore his rights to him'. This is nothing other than satanic deception. The deluded merely takes that as a ladder to acquire some worldly gain. Abdalaziz al-Andalusi has said: 'If you should claim that there are some people, the weak and oppressed in the hands of oppressors, and that frequenting kings and getting acquainted with rulers, with a view to intercede on behalf of those seeking such intercession, is a means of rendering great service to Allah... we should reply by pointing out that, that is the essence of satanic deception. Besides such an action is the real perdition... due to what it entails of degradation for the guardians of the *shari'a* (i.e. scholars) who represent the honour and sanctity of Islam, in every country.' That is so because fraternising with oppressors is a great sin, hypocrisy and is tantamount to waging war against Allah and his Apostle.[16]

Let us not be perturbed by the raging question of why Islamic scholars are revolutionary. They are the heirs of the prophets, the guardians, conscience of their societies, and above all they have a mission to establish justice in society, as symbolized by the *shari'a.* The question of the means they employed to achieve their objectives seem to revolve around the famous hadith on *al-amr bi alma'ruf wa nahy an al-munkar.* The hadith stipulates that the wrongs in the society should be corrected by the hand when and wherever possible, failing that, it should be corrected by talking, writing, education, etc., and failing that, the wrong should be loathed pending the ability to correct it. Scholars have elaborated extensively on this hadith, but at the core of its application lies the question of ability *(istita'a).* The differences among the diverse schools of *tajdid* essentially revolve around the question

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[16] Uthman b. Fudi, *Masail Muhimma,* f 7-9. The translation of this passage had been done by A. Bello Daura and used by I. Sulaiman in "Worlds Apart" an unpublished paper for an international seminar on the role of *ulama* in the Sokoto Caliphate, University of Sokoto, 1986.

of *istita'a*. Even the militant al-Maghili, when advising al-Hajj Askia Muhammad on the militant course in removing the wrong and establishing justice, did add the proviso of *istita'a*.

There are guidelines developed by scholars,[17] the discussion of which is however beyond our scope here. However, it should suffice our purpose to appreciate that the decision to remain silent, speak or fight against tyranny and oppression in the society is informed and determined by several factors, which include moral, social, political and economic considerations. But given the moral nature of *tajdid* and the radical nature it represents, at the most time, it aims at bringing about societal transformation on a monumental scale. However, the moral factor seems to be by far the most important.

Scholars generally and *mujaddidun* in particular, seem to have a deep appreciation, more than their following, of the fact that *tajdid is* not only a moral movement, but it is also an evolutionary process nourished by ideas. They try to maintain a balance between the speed at which ideas spread and the rather slow pace of societal evolution. Thus, Sheikh Uthman resisted confrontation with the Hausa establishment for several years despite the urging of the *jama'a*, the members of which thought they were ready. The Sheikh may have perceived that the society was not morally ripe for revolution despite the large number and apparent zeal of the *jama'a* —a point vindicated by Abdallah's desertion from the army in the middle of the *jihad*. Similarly, Umar al-Fudi insisted that the *talaba* must master the Qur'an and imbibe the deep aspect of sufi *tarbiyya* before venturing into armed struggle. These *mujaddidun* feared that pure political action which is not motivated by the desire to please God is misguided and unworthy in the final analysis, even if it leads to spectacular material success. In fact, as one can glean from their writings, they may have felt that material success not backed with adequate moral development, could lead to a disaster much worse than the one they wanted to flee from.

It was also part of the moral consideration that scholars ensured that whatever choice they made was supported by the *shari'a*. Thus, whenever they chose to make the *hijra*, and also when the momen-

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[17] See for example, H. A. Satti "A Translation of and Introduction to Al-Amr bi'l-Ma'ruf wa'l Nahy 'an al-Munkar by Ibn Taymiyya", Unpublished M.A. Litt. Thesis, Edinburgh University, 1981.

tous decision for *jihad* came they all had to evoke the authority of the *Shari'a.* Indeed every step they took on the path of *tajdid,* sometimes including silence, had to be justified by the *shari'a.* Such were the constraints of the *mujaddidun.*

Admittedly there was a considerable measure of subjectivity in some of the decisions taken especially in the interpretation of *istita'a.* Thus two scholars given the same situation could arrive at two different, even opposing views. The practices in Borno for example, while admittedly wrong, did not, as far as al-Kanemi's *ijtihad* goes, warrant a *jihad.* But the *jama'a* in their *jihad* felt it did, hence the conflict. Propitiously some consensus was reached and hostilities ceased. In the case of Masina, however, where consensus could not be reached, one took over the other. Such were the hazards of *tajdid.*

It might be appropriate to close our discussion on the tradition of *tajdid* with the reflections of a *mujaddid* who had the rare opportunity of living through all the stages of *tajdid.* He was born into a society in decline, he was brought up in the core of the *tajdid* movement, taking part in the long and arduous process which culminated into *jihad,* having survived the *jihad* he shouldered the full weight of *islah,* for nearly three decades and became the main architect of the new Islamic order. This was Muhammad Bello, one of the triumvirate that led the *tajdid* in Hausaland, and his reflections on *tajdid* are contained in a work he wrote at the tail end of his life, titled: *Al-Dhikra.* Ibrahim Sulaiman, who was perhaps the first to draw attention to this surprisingly obscure work, described it as "a philosophy of history, written by a maker of history."[18] In *Al-Dhikra,* Muhammad Bello was lamenting that barely three decades after the *jihad,* the tempo of the revolution and the spirit of the *jihad* was already waning. He was deeply worried that the Sokoto Caliphate was resting on its oars rather too early and that the future of the Caliphate may not, therefore, be bright. Bello was, in other words, worried about what Toynbee[19] called the 'intoxication of victory' and the 'victor's pride, which always spells the victor's ruin. Bello was particularly disturbed by the rate at which the society was reverting to the very practices which elicited the *jihad* in the first

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[18] See *lnquiry Magazine,* London, April, 1987.

[19] See Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History,* or A. Toynbee & G. R. Urban, *Toynbee on Toynbee,* Oxford University Press, 1974. p. 28.

place. Referring to these practices, Bello wrote:

> It is utterly amazing that (some of) the people have (soon afterwards) reverted to the ways of the unbelievers who had ruled these countries before them, and are now taking what those unbelievers used to take themselves: bribery, illegal taxes and seized goods. They appropriated women's dowry, collect levies from traders, and falsely and unjustly enrich themselves. They have also reverted to much injustice, arrogance, lying and treachery... and they revel day and night in vanities. They turn away from the study of the Qur'an and learning and remembrance of Allah *(dhikr)... As* for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong – they do not take recourse to it but follow reprehensible customs.[20]

Though disturbed, Bello was not altogether surprised for he identified the root cause of all these excesses and deviations as the human craves for comfort and luxury, which is inherent in man, la budda li al-nas min tanfis. He thus dwelt at length on the issue of materialism and the threat it posed to the umma. Quoting the relevant ayat of the Qur'an and ahadith, Muhammad Bello argued cogently that the first casualty of this human crave for comfort is the jihad. This crave erodes the resolve to fight munkar and the determination to establish al-ma'ruf and rationalize the position. Once this resolve to strive and fight is lost, the very perception of munkar and ma'ruf becomes blurred and the conscience of society becomes blunt until it gradually sinks into the quicksand of pervasion and corruption. The worst stage, however, Bello seemed to imply, is when this crave catches up with the ulama and they "fall into dispute, mutual rivalry, and enmity, resulting from their competition for worldly things, power and authority." Then the society would have lost its fight against evil and oppression, tyranny, perversion and corruption will engulf the whole society.

However, despite this dismal picture, Bello ended his reflections on a note of hope. Quoting the ayat of the Qur'an, "Not all of them are alike: of the people of the book are a portion that stands (for the right); ... They believe in God and the Last Day; they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; and they hasten (in emulation) in (all) good works: They are in the rank of the righteous... for God knoweth well those that do right." Bello recalled the history of Banu Israel and how, despite their

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[20] See ibid.

perversion and corruption, there endured among them a community, which remained steadfast on truth and continued to guide others. This 'righteous portion', Bello strongly believed, is the indestructible seeds of regeneration of the umma, provided they eschew materialism and take to asceticism (zuhd) for it is in zuhd their indestructibility lies. Bello's fears about the Caliphate, if we may add, came to pass, as it gradually lost its grip and fell prey to colonialism and consequently degenerated to levels that Bello might have found inconceivable.

Conclusion

This article attempted the arduous and rather cumbersome task of tracing the genesis, development and fruition of the thoughts and ideas of tajdid in Western Bilad al-Sudan over ten centuries. Though Islam started spreading into the region as early as the 8th century, it was only in the 11th century with the Murabitun movement that tajdid could be said to have begun. The Murabitun movement itself was an extension of the activities of the Maliki fuqaha of Qayrawan, with their sufi orientation, militant posture and wariness of establishment. Having been built on the educational foundations of the Murabitun movement, the tradition of learning in the region came to imbibe these features of the Qayrawan Maliki scholarship. The tradition of tajdid in the region which was nurtured in and nourished by this tradition of learning came, rather naturally, to acquire these features too. Thus, while the idea of tajdid forms an integral part of the Islamic world-view, in the Western Bilad al-Sudan the tradition of tajdid acquired a local pigmentation in which we find the touch bequeathed by the Murabitun and their mentors in Qayrawan. And in time tajdid in the region, as the study reveals, came to stand for a genus of which a variety of species developed. The socio-political conditions prevalent in the region; the network of scholars; the pilgrimage provided the fertile ground for the germination of revolutionary appeal. The movements began in central Sudan but triggered off a wave of reactions that permeated the whole fabric of West Africa.

The Foundations of Bundu and Kombo Sultanates in the 17th and 19th Centuries Gambia

Ensa Touray*

Introduction

The penetration of the famous Arab tribes such as Banu Ma'qil, Banu Hassan, Kunta and Zawiya as scholars from North Africa, marked an important stage in the spread and development of Islam into West Africa, particularly in the 15th century Senegambia region. This development was a milestone on the socio-political transformation that affected West Africa and Senegambia in particular. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, the founder of Zawiya movement was a cleric of the *zwaya* who took the name Nasir al-Din, (the helper of the religion) who was a member of the Banu Dayman, which in turn belong to the five major *zwaya* tribes known collectively as the Tashumsha. These scholarly communities made significant contributions to the development of Islam in the Senegambia region, which culminated in the foundation of the Bundu Sultanate, under the leadership of a prominent Islamic scholar, popularly known as the Malick Dauda Sy. The Sultanate was a by-product of the Kajoor learning centers, which permeated the region of Pir and Kokki in the lower Senegal. This created the conditions for Islamic revivalist movements in the Senegambia. The reform movement is similar to the Sokoto Caliphate established by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio; Ahmad Labbo who established the Masina; and the Umar al-Futi who created the Segu Imamate from the ruins of the Masina.

Therefore, this article is an attempt to examine the historical processes that led to the emergence of the Sultanate of Bundu in the 17th

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century and Kombo Sultanate in the 19th century Senegambia region. The foundation of these caliphates and the contributions they made towards the development of Islam in Senegambia has been grossly ignored in the Islamic literature and historical records. Thus, this article will bridge this important and huge gap, in the process attempts will be made to make a comparative analysis of the West African Sultanates and Islamic States that developed in the 17th and 19th centuries, with a view to appreciate their major differences in terms of organization, structure and methodological approach to *da'wah*.

The Foundation of Bundu Sultanate

The demise of Nasir al-Din in a battle in the 1670s reinforced the re-establishment of the stratification of southern Mauritanian society. The Brakna and Trarza Moors who were Arab in origin, were able to regain their influence and assumed the position of political and military elite, while a religious and commercial elite constituted by the *zwaya* Berbers. David Robinson examines that "The reform continued to exercise influence through the Muslim communities that it had formed or fostered."[1]

The defeat of Zwaya movement led to the formation of military alliance between Trarza Moors and non-Muslim Fulani groups known as Denyanke who were initially defeated by Nasir al-Din in Futa Toro, situated on the Senegalese middle valley. The two groups embarked on reprisals against the Muslims in Futa Toro and Mauritania. This macabre condition forced the Torodbe Muslims to evacuate from Futa Toro into Bundu.[2]

Geographically, Bundu is strategically located at the terminus of Gambian trade route. It was a cosmopolitan area inhabited by Bajaranke, Konyagi, Basari, Jahanke and Serahuleh non-Muslim populations. Andrew F. Clerk stated that the "early Bundu political and religious history revolves around the establishment of a Muslim state in

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[1] David Robinson, "Islamic Revolution of Futa Toro", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1973), p. 190.

[2] Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 94.

the area with dominant indigenous non-Muslim populations."[3]

Malick Sy was born at Souyouma in 1864 near Podor in the region of Futa Toro. His father was a Muslim scholar, and he received Islamic education first in his home town and then proceeded to Kajoor institutes of Pir and Kocki founded by members of Zwaya movement. He served as an itinerant scholar before settling down around Gajaaga. After a career as a travelling scholar, he returned to Gajaaga, the Soninke Kingdom up-river from Futa. There, he obtained a title to rule over part of southern Gajaaga by an act of cession by the nominal suzerain and ruler of Gajaaga, the Tunka of Tuabo, Ali Windji Wandja. His aim was to invoke the militant tradition of Nasir al-Din.[4] His movement served as a link between Zwaya movement and Islamic militant movement of Futa Jallon.[5] Gajaaga was a kingdom administered by Tunka, based in Tuabo, the administrative capital. Initially, the Muslim non-Muslim co-existence in the Senegambia region was based on mutual interest. Therefore, the initial Muslim pacifist stance in the political patronage of secular kings was meant to facilitate political and economic security for the Muslim minorities within the jurisdiction under the non-Muslim political hegemony. The tradition confirms that Malick Sy was well known for his piety and Islamic mysticism. The reigning king, the Tunka of Taubo benefitted from Malick Sy's prayer services and the provision of protective amulets worn by the king against the penetration of alleged human and spiritual forces. Consequently, the alliance was sealed between the king and Malick`s movement. According to the tradition, Malick successfully embarked on miracle performance through the use of some verses of the holy Quran to evacuate the violent spirits from Bundu Forest. The successful miracle mobilisation earned him to acquire vast land which facilitated his territorial claim over Bundu. So, when Malick Dauda got here and saw this, he conversed with them and said, "You there, what prevents you from finishing off your well?" They told him what was

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[3] Andrew F. Clark, "The Fulbe of Bundu (Senegambia): From Theocracy to Secularization", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1996), p. 5.

[4] Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 94.

[5] Michael A. Gomez, "The Problem with Malick Sy and the Foundation of Bundu", *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol. 25, Cahiers 100 (1985), p. 548.

stopping them finishing it. He said, "Well, now, I'll write an ayah for you, to be strinkled on the trees, and the jinn will run away. Then we will cut the trees down, but when the bush has been cleared and the well has been owned, and received, and contrived, then I, Malick, will own it. I shall own the well."[6]

The general belief of Islamic clerical leaders in the Senegambia region was that their moral superiority over non-Muslim political leaders required them to claim power to dictate the policies.[7] Secondly, tradition of Islamic revival became fundamental part of Islam. In the south of Sahara, the concept of Imamate that was central to Islamic revolution continued to preoccupy the minds of religious leaders. In Bundu, the Jahanke Muslim Marabout traders were subjected to constant molestation and pillaging of military aristocracies of Gajaaga. Malick Sy, studying the precarious situation of Muslim communities, realised that the intervention of his movement in the control of the Faleme whose strategic commercial and viable agricultural wealth could constitute the basis of his political consolidation, took control of the area and then established a theocracy under Sisibe Dynasty.

The combination of Malick Sy`s religious charisma and military prowess served as a significant political capital for his success in Bundu. He created a strong military organisation comprised of various Muslim immigrants from within and outside Bundu. He and his Fulani followers from Futa strengthened solidarity with several other lineages or other groupings of people who initially settled in Bundu to escape the persecution of non-Muslim Denyanke Fulanis. Most of them belonged to Pulaar-speaking grouping. They also formed an alliance under Malick Sy's leadership which secured their political independence from the Serahulleh-speaking kingdom of Gajaaga to the north, whose kings had a previous claim to the part of the territory. They extended their territories to the south against the non-Muslim Mandinka speaking people in what was to be southern Bundu.[8] Ulti-

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[6] Saki Olal N'Diaye, A. Neil Skinner and Philip D. Curtin, "The Story of Malick Sy", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol. 11, Cahier 43 (1971), p. 477.

[7] Philip D. Curtin, "Jihad in West Africa: Early Phases and Inter-Relationship with Mauritania and Senegal", *Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 1. (1971), p. 14.

[8] Philip D. Curtin, "Jihad in West Africa: Early Phases and Inter-Relationship with Mauritania and Senegal", p. 18.

mately, their descendants had to fight to make good of their claim to the independence from their homeland in Futa Toro as well. It should be noted that Bundu was founded, in short, as an offshoot of Futa Toro resulting from Fuutanke population movement to the southeast.

Like other successful Muslim leaders, Malick Sy took the title *almamy*, the head of Muslim theocracy.[9] Philip Curtin examines the extent of the success of the Islamic revolution of Bundu and notes that, "Malick Sy may not have taken a direct part in the war of marabouts. But from every point of view he was a fervent disciple who achieved some of the political and religious objective of the Marabout movement."[10] Malick Sy and his descendants established an elaborate ruling bureaucracy, with a court, advisers, numerous political and religious offices, and local princes.

The Foundations of Kombo Sultanate, South Bank of the Gambia

The introduction of peanut cultivation in 1840 in the Southern Senegambia led to the processes of social, political and economic change. It weakened the structures of the Atlantic slave trade and enhanced the growth of legitimate trade that transformed Muslims and subsistence farmers into peasants.[11] Since this was linked to a new global economic and commercial phenomenon, it brought transformation in wider context and generated new commitment for political consolidation among the traditional ruling aristocracies. In the process of consolidation, new mode of resource mobilization was instituted through the aristocratic dependence on the produce of slaves, Muslim clerics, peasants, and the revenue gained from the trade that passed through their kingdoms. In addition, the ruling authorities constrained the participation of peasants and Muslim communities in subjecting the traditional state authorities to peer and popular check on their administration.[12]

In response to the newly emerging production system, the remaining

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[9] Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 95.

[10] Philip D. Curtin, Ibid.

[11] Donald R. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: A History of Globalization in Nuimi, The Gambia*, (2nd ed.) Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2004, pp. 131-135.

[12] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 45.

lower Gambia ruling dynasties of the vassal states of Kabu Empire were quick to assert their independence and consolidated their position in the region of Kiang, Jarra, and Kombo.[13] When Kiang and Jarra became the main peanut producing centers, the south bank area witnessed the intense capital flow through massive participation in peanut production and trade. In 1839 the acting governor reported that, "the demand for groundnut in England and America has been the means of opening a new branch of commerce in the river."[14] This led to the creation of new form of political consolidation and power relations. The non-Muslim ruling dynasties who dominated the economic and political sphere of Kiang Jarra and Kombo were known as Soninke. The Soninke regimes were dominated by Mandinka speaking people who began to consider themselves exclusively privileged. It should be understood that Britain was the leading industrial nation committed to the implementation of the doctrine of free trade and the abolition of slave trade to enhance unrestricted participation in the cash crop cultivation that was very strategic for industrial capitalism. Since the policy of free trade was instituted by Great Britain, as an industrial core-nation, it guaranteed the participation of Muslim clerics, and even the people of slave origin in the peanut cultivation and trade to acquire financial independence.[15] The new condition enabled the Muslims to become hard-working to accumulate wealth.[16]

In the Kingdoms of Jarra and Kiang and Kombo the dominant ethnic groups were the centralized Mandinkas. They established political control over Kiang, Jarra, Niamina and Kombo. However, the groups of Mandinkas who ruled these places were not Muslims. Despite their ethnic belonging, Mandinka clerics, who were educated literally and professionally in Islam, considered the traditional Mandinka kings as Soninke. In their areas of influence, the clerical families began to migrate and established isolated settlements known as Moribund.[17] In

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[13] John M. Gray, *A History of the Gambia*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 153.

[14] Cso1/4, T. L. Ingram to Marquis Normanby, 31 October 1839. (Archives of the Gambia)

[15] John M. Gray, ibid., p. 381.

[16] John H. Hanson, "Islam and Imperialism: Martin Klein's Contributions to an Understanding of the History of Senegambian Muslim Communities", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3, (2000), p. 537.

[17] Charlotte A. Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia: Traditionalism, Islam, and European Expansion*, Northwestern University Press, 1972, pp. 53-70.

contrast to the conditions in southern Senegambia region, David Robinson's survey indicates that the practice of Islam in the north created a new socio-political and commercial elite in Islam within territorial and cultural context of *dar al-Islam*.[18] They also established learning centers where people came from different areas to take Quranic education from those educational centers. As Soninke continued to constitute a dominant force in the south bank area of the Gambia, the Muslim minorities began to establish alliances and collaborate with each other. The 1860s marked another political turning point on both banks of the Gambia. Wright rationalizes the period as the beginning of practical manifestation of dissatisfaction among Muslims, and therefore argues that the reformist urge among Muslims was very strong.[19]

Soninke-Marabout War in Kombo

Geographically, the region of Kombo is located on the Atlantic coast of Gambia River. Prior to the expansion of the Mali Empire, the entire Kombo was inhabited by Bainunkas and Karoni speaking people. Kombo came under the hegemony of Manding speaking people through the intervention of Kabu Empire, the regional power. However, David E. Skinner's survey establishes the pivotal roles of the Gambia River as an ancient trade route and magnet for populations owing to its connection to the coast with interior states. With the introduction of European trade after the fifteenth century, Kombo became an important region for traders, Manding conquerors and wandering Muslim scholars and propagators.[20]

The Soninke kings earlier on controlled the economic and political spheres of the region. The kings of Kombo and the ruling families, from which the kings were elected, were all Soninkes of Bojang and Jatta ruling dynasties.[21]

In the middle of the nineteenth century the entire Kombo witnessed

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[18] David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania: 1880-1920*, Ohio University Press, 2000, p. 16.

[19] Donald R. Wright. *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: A History of Globalization in Nuimi, The Gambia*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2004, *p. 131.*

[20] David E. Skinner, "Islam in Kombo: The Spiritual and Militant Jihad of Fodé Ibrahim Silla Turé," *Islamic Africa*, vol. 3, no. 1, Brill, Northwestern University Press, pp. 87.

[21] J. M. Gray, A *History of The Gambia*, Frank CASS & Co. Ltd, 1966, p. 327.

the immigration of Muslims from the east. The migrant Muslim scholars and propagators found the entire Kombo under the hegemony of Soninke aristocracy. The Muslim clerics established their own separate settlements in Gunjur, Sukuta and Brufut.

With the final abolition of Atlantic slave trade and the introduction of legitimate trade underpinned by the British policy of the doctrine of free trade, the Muslims and peasants living on both banks of the Gambia River had access to cash and material mobilization to acquire means of force to defend and fight against oppressive non-Muslim kings.[22] The economic change however, forced the reigning kings of Kombo based in Brikama, Busumbala and Yundum to modify their mode of exaction through heavy taxation and forced labour.[23] With the introduction of peanut cultivation in Kombo, the ruling aristocrats instituted stringent customary land laws to prevent Muslims from owning land and prohibited those royal Muslim members who were legitimate heirs to the throne to assume power.[24]

In 1849, the reigning king of Brikama, Mansa Portukais Mamudu died. He was succeeded by Mansa Koli Bojang. The new ruler demonstrated his despotism against Muslims through the introduction of annual forced labor. According to oral tradition, when Mansa Koli complained of the disturbance of the noise of the weaver birds in the administrative capital of Brikama, he forcefully assigned the Muslims of Gunjur to climb and trim the branches of silk cotton trees inside Brikama. The oral sources confirmed that Muslims were maltreated and killed during the process.

However, the minority *marabout* elements in Kombo had gradually gained ground in their various settlements. Significantly, the *marabout*s were in their greatest strength in Gunjur, Sukuta and Brufut. The gradual infiltration of Muslim forces in Kombo can be explained in the context of institutional transformation that gave rise to effective conscientization and material mobilization in course of Islamic

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[22] Martin A. Martin, *Islam and Imperialism in Senegal: Sine-Saloum, 1847-1914*, Stanford University Press, 1968, pp. 219-224.

[23] Interview with Kebba Jammeh, 81, Farmer, Gunjur Village, Kombo South District, West Coast Region, 28 August, 2018.

[24] Interview with Nyawu Touray 79, Muslim Cleric, Brikama Town, Kombo Central District, West Coast Region, 28 February, 2018.

awakening. Quinn traces the consequent manifestation of this situation through Islamic practice and the establishment of religious infrastructures.[25] The Muslims in all these settlements considered the Soninke ruling regimes in the entire Kombo as common threat to their security. They formed an alliance against the Soninke political hegemony in 1855. This however, posed a threat to the regime of Suling Jatta, a Soninke king at Busumbala. Mansa Suling therefore, sought the protection of the British administration. Despite the presence of the Europeans, the *marabouts* of Gunjur attacked Busumbala in 1855 and killed Suling Jatta. This marked the beginning of the end for Soninke political hegemony.[26]

The British Situation Report in 1850 indicates that the rise of Muslim militancy was driven by the Muslim intense desire to end their political isolation. The Muslim settlements in Kombo established a loose confederation to contest the authority of the ruling families.[27] The report sent by Colonel O'Connor to the British governor in Sierra Leone states that "the rights and wrongs of the dispute between the two factions are hard to discover, but it is clear that the Marabouts wanted a share in the government, which had hitherto been denied to them by the hereditary rulers of the district."[28]

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Maba Jahou, a strong *jihadist* in the north bank of the Gambia successfully strengthened the Muslim solidarity beyond ethnic and regional line. He unified and mobilized the support of established Muslim communities from the north and south of Senegal and the Gambia.[29] By the end of 1862, Fakaba Touray and the Muslims of Gunjur invaded Nuimi through Jinak to assist Maba.[30] This alliance also posed a threat to the Soninke ruling dynasty of Kombo based in Brikama. Consequently, this created division in which one of the leading members of Bojang royal dynasty converted to Islam as explained by David Skinner:

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[25] Charlotte A. Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia: Traditionalism, Islam, and European Expansion,* Northwestern University Press, 1972, *p. 68.*

[26] CSO1 The Draft Dispatches to Colonial Office, Piece 118, Gambia National Archive, Banjul. (NRS).

[27] CSO 1/4 the letter from colonel O`Connor to H. Labouchere, 4 June 1856.

[28] J. M. Gray, ibid., p. 388.

[29] Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade,* p. 196.

[30] J. M. Gray, ibid. p. 422.

> The *suma* (senior elder) of Brikama was Madi Nyenkeleng, brother of the late Mansa Jomba Bojang. Madi Nyenkeleng was the tax collector for Mansa Koli, but he and other notables had a disagreement with the Mansa. Because of the dispute Madi Nyenkeleng fled to Gunjur with several kegs of powder entrusted to him by the Soninke ruler when Ma Ba Jahou had threatened Kombo in May 1863.[31]

To demonstrate sincerity of his conversion, Madi Nyenkeling Bojang mobilized and led a Muslim force against the Bojangs of Manduari which he took and subsequently stockade. He waged a war against all other Soninke establishment in Kombo.

With the intensification of violence in Kombo, the King of Yundum appealed to the British governor for military assistance. His alignment to the British was to get military support against the rebellious *marabout*s of Kombo. However, the British were tactical in their response and involvement in the local conflict. Colonel D'Arcy, the British administrator in the Gambia had adopted the manipulative mediation technique in his effort to terminate the violence in Kombo. In this mediation model, Britain as third party, contributed substantively to the negotiations. Colonel Darcy sent an officer to Gunjur to persuade the *marabout* of Gunjur to hold on their hand, while he proceeded to see the King of Yundum. Despite the British Pacific intervention, the two parties continued to fight. Commander Fradley Wilmot was officially tasked to negotiate a settlement. On 9th February 1864 a peace treaty was signed between the King of Kombo and Fakaba Touray of Gunjur.[32]

The Rise of Foday Ebrima Kombo Sillah and the Foundation of Kombo Sultanate

In 1873, the *marabout*s elected Foday Sillah as their war general. Foday Sillah was born in 1831. He received his early Islamic education from his family. When he grew up, his uncle, Fakaba Touray sent him to Pakau to study under his namesake, Sillaba of Pakau Dasilame. Upon completion of his studies he returned to Gunjur and established his

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[31] David E. Skinner, "Islam in Kombo: The Spiritual and Militant Jihad of Fodé Ibrahim Silla Ture", *Islamic Africa*, vol. 3, no. 1, Brill, Northwestern University Press, p. 87.

[32] This report is mentioned in both select committees on Africa (West Coast), 1865 and ordinance of the Gambia, 1875.

own separate learning centre at Gunjur Kanuma. Tradition from Gunjur confirms that several Muslim saints who visited Gunjur prior to his return from Pakau prophesized Foday Ebrima Kombo Sillah Touray as the chosen candidate who was destined to successfully lead the Muslims of Kombo against the Soninke hegemony.[33] While in Pakau as a student under Sillahba, Foday Sillah seized the opportunity to study the method employed by Sillaba in his uprising against Bainunkas in Pakau. According to tradition, his teacher spiritually utilised some verses of the holy Quran to embark on miracle mobilisation to enervate and facilitate his conversion of non-Muslim Bainunka population of Pakau.

Significantly, the narratives of the *jalis* (traditional bards) of Kombo indicates the application of both military and spiritual miracle mobilization by Foday Sillah in his effort to weaken the Soninke authorities.[34] In his exploration of spiritual and militant *jihad*, Skinner identifies two version of miracle mobilization utilized by Foday Sillah. Accordingly, he put *nasos* (liquid charm) powder and water and threw *koriteh* (dangerous aggressive charm) into the well of Soninkes.[35] Charismatic leadership served as social and political capital for the nineteenth century holy warriors. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a thorough examination of Sillah`s personality to understand deeply what constituted his charisma in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is significant to note that Sillah was an erudite scholar whose ideological principles were centered on the creation of civilizational egalitarian model that gave the assurance and hope to both oppressed non-Muslims and Muslims in Kombo. Secondly, he demonstrated his total concern for human salvation through his preachings in Kombo. Thirdly, his manipulation of tactical alliances to secure the allegiance of prominent clan heads in Kombo and non-Muslim province of Foni Jabang-Kunda, earned him great respect among the existing ruling dynasties.[36] Sillah′s constant adherence to the practice of

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[33] Interview with Jali Alagie Mbaye, 55 Griot, Traditional Bard, 9th September, 2018 Nema Kunku Kombo St. Mary Division.

[34] Interview with Jali Nyaling Mbaye, 71, Griot, Traditional Bard, 16th September, 2018 Brikama Jiddah, Kombo Central District, West Coast Region.

[35] David E. Skinner, "Islam in Kombo: The Spiritual and Militant Jihad of Fodé Ibrahim Silla Ture", pp. 91-94.

[36] Interview with Bafoday Jabang, 65, 19th March, 2011, Kombo Sanyang, Kombo South District.

Islam and mastery of Islamic jurisprudence shaped his imagination for the foundation of Islamic state.

Foday Sillah embarked on intense human and material mobilisation required for his uprising. He eventually secured the backing of all the villages situated along the coast of Kombo. It is understood that Sillah's election to lead the Muslims coincided with the final downfall of Kabu Empire.[37] Therefore, in the wake of his military restructuring, Foday Sillah deemed it prudent to hire and enlist the warriors of Kabu in his initial revolt against the Soninke ruling dynasties of Bojangs and Jattas. He also received the military support from disaffected volunteers of the non-Muslim region of Karoni situated on the south of Kombo.[38]

By the middle of 1873 Kombo witnessed the massive shift of allegiance of most the Soninke towns in Kombo to Foday Sillah except Brikama, Yundum and Busumbala.[39] Some of the natives of Soninke towns visited Gunjur to express their allegiance to Foday Sillah. This provoked the anger and the hostility of Mansa Koli Bojang. When one of the prominent members of the Jabang Dynasty, Tomani Jabang of Pirang openly declared his allegiance to the Muslims of Gunjur, the King of Brikama, Mansa Koli Bojang ordered his arrest. Unfortunately, the angry Soninke soldiers killed Tomani during the cause of his arrest. In response to this incident, Foday Sillah and the Muslims had to convene a consultative meeting to examine the doctrinal justification of their planned reprisal expedition against the King of Brikama, Yundum and Busumbala. With reference to Quran and *sunnah*, Foday and the scholars concluded that there existed the doctrinal basis of the planned reprisal attack against the Soninke town of Brikama. Prior to the declaration of holy war against the Soninke towns, Sillah revealed his commitment to rule the Sultanate of Kombo within the framework of *sharia*.[40]

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[37] Interview with Alieu Ceesay, 43, 17th August, 2018, Kombo Gunjur, Kombo South District.

[38] Interview with Omar Jabang, 63, 14th August, 2014, Kafoutine Town, Southern Senegal.

[39] J. M. Gray, ibid., p. 455.

[40] Interview with Bafoday Jabang, 65, 19th March, 2011, Kombo Sanyang, Kombo South District.

In 1874 Foday Sillah attacked and destroyed Brikama. Mansa Koli Bojang and some of the members of Bojang ruling dynasty escaped to seek refuge under the British in Bathurst. He captured Brikama and renamed it with Islamic nomenclature, *darussalam*, the abode of peace.[41] To avert the disruption, the British administrator was prompted to conclude a non-aggression pact at Sukuta with Foday Sillah. By June 1875, the last Soninke Kingdom of Kombo Affet area under Busumbala and Yundum were conquered by the forces loyal to Foday Sillah. This forced the last reigning king, Tomani Bojang to flee to British Kombo. The British report states that, "Tomani Bojang assented to peace on most humiliating term." He finally agreed to convert to Islam and adopted a Muslim name. His head was shaved by a well-known Bojang *marabout*, Kankoli Kemo Bojang. His conversion to Islam marked the end of Bojang-Jatta Soninke aristocratic rule that had dominated Kombo for more than three centuries.[42]

Foday Kombo Sillah successfully subdued all the Soninke villages of Kombo. He also extended his influence beyond the territory of Kombo through alliance and political alignment with other areas in the south of Allahin River up to Hatani in Karoni. He established Islamic monarchy based administration that unified the entire Kombo until 1894.

Conclusion

Bundu`s strategic geographical link to Futa Toro, the middle valley of Senegal and Upper Gambia valley was strategic for the creation of Islamic Sultanate. The influence of Islamic revival movement played an instrumental role in the establishment of institutes of learning in the lower Senegalese Basin. The institutes built capacities for scholars in Islamic jurisprudence. This enabled Malick Sy to embark on intense human, material and spiritual mobilisation required for the successful establishment of the Sultanate of Bundu. However, in the region of Kombo, economic change, with the policy of free trade in the middle of the nineteenth century, served as catalyst for the participation of deprived Muslim minority in cultivation of cash crop agriculture and trade. However, the economic change enticed the Soninke

[41] Interview with Jali Nyaling Mbaye, 71, Griot, Traditional Bard.

[42] J. M. Gray, ibid., p. 455.

ruling dynasties to impose stringent laws and heavy taxation to target the wealth of the Muslims and peasants. Therefore, the Muslims were committed to intense capital accumulation to demonstrate their readiness to alter the balance of power in Kombo. The emergence of Foday Ebrima Kombo Sillah Touray, as a *marabout* scholar in the latter part of the nineteenth century galvanized the support in Kombo. His success in the establishment of Kombo Sultanate depended largely on his charisma and pragmatic leadership.

Islam in the Hausa States of Kano, Katsina, Gobir and Zazzau, Before the 1804

Muhammadu Mustapha Gwadabe*

Introduction

Hausaland (Kasar Hausa) is geographically located between the western and central Sudanic states. It forms part of the great Savannah region which cuts across the continent of Africa from east to west. It therefore occupies the area between the Lake Chad in the east and the middle Niger in the west. It was by location bounded to the north by the great Sahara Desert and by the thick equatorial forest to the south. Hausaland, therefore, falls within latitude 7˚N to 17˚N and longitude 4˚E to 11˚E.[1] Known to have housed mighty kingdoms in addition to economic fortunes, Hausaland has been greatly influenced by developments arising from historic links established between the Sudanic states and the Muslim world across the Sahara. One of the most noted influence that resulted was Islam, which seriously transformed the Hausa society on matters of religion as well as on their language, norms and values.[2] Recording an ancient past, Hausaland experienced a gradual but organic process of political and cultural evolution. Among the features that characterized these developments were the existence of walled cities, an economy based on agriculture and a political institution symbolised by the presence of powerful kings, palaces and palace etiquette, and servants. This evolutionary attainment did not end with the establishment of kingdoms, rather, the Hausa states continued in their socio-political and economic evolution through a

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1 Halil Ibrahim Said, *Revolution and Reaction: The Fulani Jihad in Kano and its Aftermath, 1807-1919,* Ahmadu Bello University Press, Zaria, 2012, p. 2.

2 Ademola Adeleke, "Islam and Hausa Culture", *Lagos Historical Review,* vol. 5 (2005), pp. 99-110.

process of internal transformation during which they strengthened their political and military capability and successfully executed policies of territorial expansion.[3] By the end of the fourteenth century some of these states, especially Kano, Katsina, and Gobir had emerged among the strong contenders for power and influence (trade) in the land. Though all the kingdoms were independent entities, but a system naturally developed that linked all of them together, sometimes in conflict and in another time in peaceful rendering of economic activities. It was in this process that Islam and Islamic civilization permeated and reached out to most parts of the region, especially from the fourteenth century. But fourteenth century is contested by a number of historians as the date for the introduction of Islam into Hausaland on the ground that Islam has been with the people long before then. At best the factor of the Wangarawa, as shared by Bugaje,[4] only informed the Islamization of the government circles. Arguing further John Edward Philips made the point that Islamization of the people has preceded that of the rulers.[5] Notwithstanding, it was at this point in the history of the Hausa people and Hausaland that Islam featured more prominently, especially in administration, though at different times to the different kingdoms that made up the totality of Hausaland.

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[3] Yusuf Bala Usman, *The Transformation of Katsina, 1400-1883,* Ahmadu Bello University Press, Ahmadu Bello University History Series, Zaria, Nigeria, 1981. See also M. G. Smith, *Government in Kano, 1350-1950,* Westview Press, USA,1997. M. G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau, 1800-1950,* Oxford University Press, London and also Abdullahi Smith, "Some Considerations Relating to the Formation of States in Hausaland", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria,* 3, (Dec. 1970), p. 331; H. A. S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto,* Oxford University Press, 1967; M. G. Smith, "The Beginning of Hausa Society", in Jan Vansina et al, (eds.), *The Historian in Tropical Africa,* Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1964, pp. 338-45; Smith, "Some Considerations Relating to the Formation of States in Hausaland", in *A Little New Light: Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith,* Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, Zaria, 1987, p. 50-79.

[4] Usman Muhammad Bugaje, "Some Reflections on the Development of Islamic Learning in Katsina (1300-1800AD), in I. A. Tsiga, (ed.) (et. al.) *Islam and the History of Learning in Katsina,* Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2007, p. 78.

[5] J. E. Philips, J. E. "The Islamization of Kano before Jihad", *Kano Studies* (New Series), vol. 2, no. 3, 1982/85, p. 32.

Islam in Kano

Kano is one of the kingdoms that made up Hausaland. Available record on the history of Kano pointed that Islam was introduced during the reign of Sarkin Kano Yaji Dan Tsamiya, 1349-1385.[6] Prior to that the people of Kano and indeed the political leadership were worshiping the cult of Tsumburbura (shrine) located on the Dala Hill.[7] Thus officially Islam came to Kano through the activities of the Wangarawa scholars and traders who introduced Kano into social transformation leading to political and economic developments that produced a state like institutions. The Wangarawa brought along with them Islam and knowledge, which reformed the way life was organized and administered. On their instructions and advice, Sarki Yaji Dan Tsamiya was converted into Islam and was made to observe the times of prayer.[8] This marked an important turning point in the history of Kano leading to a contest for influence on the ruling class between the Wangarawa visitors and the indigenous priestly class of the Tsunburbura.[9] The

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[6] Though emphasized by Kano Chronicle, this view is contested by notable scholars as Al-Hajj, and Hunwick. For details refer to H. I. Sa'id, *Revolution and Reaction: The Fulani Jihad in Kano and its Aftermath, 1807-1919,* Ahmadu Bello University Press, Zaria, 2012, p. 38. A. M. Kani, is of the view that the date of the 14th century was more authentic since it tallies with the time the Wangarawa left Mali. See for details Ahmad M. Kani, "The Place of Katsina in the Intellectual History of Bilad al-Sudan up to 1800", in I. A. Tsiga, (ed.) (et. al.) *Islam and the History of Learning in Katsina,* Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2007, p. 24.

[7] The commonly accepted view on the history of Kano argued that the earliest inhabitants settled around the Dala Hill. The significance of Dala Hill was both economic and social. Economically the area produced iron ore of quantity, good enough for industrial development. Given cognizance to its hilly nature, on the other hand, the Dala environment provided security to the inhabitants. These factors made Kano environment attractive, and experienced the presence of countable migrants which boosted the population and made settlement more established and prosperous. For detail on this refer to Herbert Richmond Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs,* Frank Cass, London, 1968, p. 98.

[8] Balogun is of the opinion that the influence of the Wangarawa clerics over, especially the king, is because of the assumed mystical powers they possessed to solve some problems, to cause rain to fall during draught, make the king win war and thereby enhance his prestige. See for details, S. A. Balogun, "History of Islam up to 1800", in Obaro Ikime, *Groundwork of Nigerian History,* Heinmann Educational Books, Nigeria, p. 221.

[9] Earlier on there where disputes over control of political hold of Kano between the masters of the Tsunburbura cult on the one hand and the new set of migrants represented by the Bagauda clan, though latter arrivals, but more civilized and populous.

universality of Islam and the trade relations it extended for Kano with some important centers of commerce gave the Wangarawa upper hand over the other competing groups. This became evident when Sarki Yaji Dantsamiya directed his palace officials and some influential persons in the kingdom to also convert and observe the times of prayer. It was at this point that a mosque was built around the premises where the sacred tree that was formally worshipped by the people was located. Like all mosques in the Muslim world, it was built facing east, and prayers were offered five times daily.[10]

Islam continued to gain prominence and acceptance when the Kingdom of Kano continued to prosper in its economy as well as in the expansion of its territory, which led to the institutionalization of the religion. Congregational prayers were encouraged which produced a community of worshippers and created a form of solidarity that enhanced the understanding of the religion. Within a short period of time, a bond of Islamic brotherhood and collective responsibility was established.[11] This led to the expansion of Kano territory when it extended its influence by conquest to as far as the border with Zazzau Kingdom.[12] Much of these conquests were achieved during the reign of Abdullahi Burja (1438-1452), a period that opened Kano to new comers, mostly scholars, traders and slaves. More specifically was noted the presence of Fulani itinerant scholars from Mali carrying along with them books on divinity and etymology. Foreign merchants from as far as Gonja and Borno were noted among the visiting population, making Kano not only prosperous but also exposed to international

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[10] The chief priest was opposed to the prayer, "and when the Muslims after praying had gone home, he would come with his men and defile the whole mosque and cover it with filth. The Muslim prayed and the Chief of the Pagans was struck blind together with all the pagans who were present at the defilement." The custodians of the traditional religion were defeated on their own ground by a superior magical power.

[11] While Islam attracted important personages, it also encountered serious opposition from the defenders of the traditional religion. The Chronicle celebrates the superiority of Islam and its victory over tradition: the chief exponent of tradition, Sarkin Garazawa, was struck blind by the power of Muslim prayers. Yet, traditional religion remained strong even in the royal court. Nevertheless, Islam had already embarked on its match to glory.

[12] Political and religious offices were soon established to support the management of the Kingdom on the path of Islam. For details refer to M. Wada, *History of the Imamship of Kano, c. 1373-1998*, Tunland Print and Publishers, Beruit Road Kano, Nigeria, 2011.

relations.[13] The necessity for security led the Kano ruling elite into constructing a wall round the city, a development that also enhanced commercial activities and ensured safety of trading routes that traversed Kano. Though challenged by internecine wars, Kano continued to attract Muslim scholars and traders from across the Sahara, which further enhanced the consolidation of Islam as well as the place of Kano as a center of commerce.[14]

At this point Islam in Kano Kingdom became more practical; this coincided with the shift of the Saifawa Dynasty from Kanem to Bornu, which brought Borno closer to the Hausa states and increased the Bornuan influence on the communities of Hausaland. It is relevant to note here that Islam reached the Empire of Bornu since about the 11th century. Indeed, the Bornuan society did not only accept the religion but also engaged in the practice with all commitment and conviction. Thus, while the first Muslim scholars that visited Kano came from Mali in the west, much of the Islamic influence to Kano came from Bornu. By the middle of the 15th century Kano was in a position to lead as an Islamic state. This was at the time of Muhammad Rumfa (1464-99), whose claim to Islam was without any doubt. Rumfa is described in Kano Chronicles as the most determined ruler since its establishment. His administration did not only consolidate Islam, but also the administration of Kano as a political entity. His close association with scholars of refute made him the champion of Islamic revivalism. This was evident from the way he was encouraged by especially the itinerant scholar Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili. Kano's contact with Islamic culture was strengthened with the arrival of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-karim al-Maghili in Kano in c. 1493. Al-Maghili, a foremost Islamic theologian and political theorist from Tlemcen, Algeria, established a close friendship with Muhammad Rumfa and eventually produced for him a treatise on statecraft called The Obligation of Princes. Al-Maghili is credited with the introduction of the Sufi order of the Qadiriyya brotherhood into West Africa, which explains its presence in Kano to date. He extended his activities to Katsina where he was received by Sarki Ibrahim Sura. It was also at this time another

[13] H. I. Said, ibid.

[14] Ibid.

batch of the Wangarawa visited Kano, a development which further upgraded the teaching and practice of Islam in Kano. The impacts of this batch of visitors were so enormous that some historians traced the Islamisation of Kano to it. Though not truly so, it was evident that the Wangarawa came to Kano in great numbers during this time, which coincided with the destruction and collapse the Mali Empire of the late 15th century.

Among some of the clear changes noted includes the destruction of the sacred tree that was worshipped prior to the introduction of Islam in Kano. A mosque was built in its place that served the entire community in congregational prayer. This development led to the total conversion of the Kano people into Islam and the establishment of institutions of governance in accordance to the teachings of Islam. It therefore marked a conspicuous transformation that addressed issues of governance and socio-economic life of the people. It was on this recognition and massive transformation that the reign of Muhammadu Rumfa is considered the pinnacle in the Islamisation of Kano. The reform did not end with the building of the mosque alone, it extended to around the orbit of detesting of all pagan practices including moving away from the location that settled the first community. It was at this point that a new palace was built which physically moved the Kano settlement some kilometers south-east of the old settlement of Madabo. Among some other Islamic scholars that visited Kano and left a legacy included the Moroccan scholar, Abd al-Rahman Suqqayn, and Makhluf al-Balbali from Tabalbala near Tuwat who visited Kano in c.1519.[15]

Ramfa's son Abu Bakr Kado (1565-73) was more a religious leader than an aristocrat, he disdained the duties of the king. He and all his chiefs spent their time in prayer. He was the king who made the princes learn the Quran. Yet the traditional religious practices continued to remain especially during the reign of Mohammad Zaki (1582-1618), with the appearance of syncretistic practices, such as the veneration of the Dirki, a Quran covered with layers of goat skin. Facing the recurring attacks by the Kworarafa and Katsina in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the kings of Kano also sought for relief in rituals and magic. Kano chiefs vacillated between traditional and Islamic ritu-

[15] H. I. Said, ibid.

als, depending on which promised to produce the best results.[16] These practices were no doubt some of the developments that justified the jihad in Kano in 1807.

Islam in Katsina

Katsina is one of the oldest seats of Islamic learning in Hausaland. During our period of study the Kingdom extended to as far as Maradi and Zinder in the present day Niger Republic and to Yandoto in today's Zamfara state. Primarily in the case of Katsina the spread of Islam followed the establishment of learning centers that attracted scholars from far and near.[17] The spread of Islam in Katsina that engaged the community and authority was noted from the coming into power of Muhammad Korau (1445-1495), who hailed from the learned city of Yandoto and made up the first Muslim King of Katsina.[18] As popularized by Bugaje, it became so easy for Korau because of the fact that Islam has since been accepted by the general populace long before the Kings. It was also because of the contradiction in the manner in which traditional pagan practices were organized and the increasing level of awareness which advanced Islamic civilization represented. His tenure has been regarded as the most significant era, as far as Islamic reforms were concerned. His association with Muslim scholars is said to have consolidated his political base and allowed him to exercise a considerable control over his domain. His reign marked a clear break from the smaller ancestor worship-based communities into a more cohesive cosmopolitan political community made up of several garuruwa (towns) and birane (cities).[19]

The Kingdom benefitted immensely in the cross fertilization of

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[16] H. I. Said, ibid.

[17] Among the learning centres include the Yandoto and Ranko centres, Gobarau mosque which served also as an institution of advance studies in Islamic science; Gobarau was considered as one of the oldest universities in pre-colonial Africa. These learning centres produced a number of ulama who distinguished themselves in various fields. I. A. Tsiga, (ed.) (et.al), ibid., p. XIV

[18] The successors of Korau represented by Ibrahim Sura (1493-1498) and Sakin Katsina Ali (1498-1524) left a lot to be said considering the efforts they expended on Islam. The two equally devoted their energy just like what did Korau. S. E. Balogun, ibid., p. 225.

[19] U. M. Bugaje, "Some Reflections on the Development of Islamic Learning in Katsina (1300-1800)", in I. A. Tsiga, (ed.) (et. al.) *Islam and the History of Learning in Katsina*, Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2007, p. 78-80.

ideas with other centers of learning in especially western Sudan. Ulama of great significance migrated and settled in Katsina and other centers of learning like Kurmin Dan Ranko and Yandoto, giving chance to continued institutionalization of the culture of Islamic learning and scholarship.[20] Beyond just knowledge about Islam, it was noted that the scholars of Katsina were by this period vast in the field of mathematics, occult sciences, ulum al-awfaq (magic square), ulum al-huruf (letter magic's) for the purpose of controlling societal affairs.[21] According to Kani, the most famous scholar produced by the schools of Katsina and who made great impact inside and outside of Hausaland and Bilad al-Sudan was Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Katsinawi. More than anything else the activities of these scholars and the scholarship they engaged in open the gates of Katsina to Islamic cultural and intellectual influences. These efforts continued with the immediate successor of Koraau Ibrahim Sura (1493-98), which brought him intimately closer to Islamic scholars as Jalal al-din al-Suyuti in faraway Cairo, and benefitted greatly in knowledge of the religion and governance.[22] Others that played the same role include Muhammad al-Maghili whose visit and sojourn in Katsina supported the Kings and the larger community, especially on matters of understanding the religion. It was Maghili that encouraged the building of the Gobarau Mosque copying from the Timbuktu-type architecture which was used also as center of learning, like the Sankore Mosque in Timbuktu.[23] This major stride transformed Katsina into a center of learning receiving visitors from all walks of life. Many prominent scholars continued to patronize Katsina mostly on their way to perform the annual pilgrimage of Islam. Among the noted scholars who visited and even taught in Katsina was Makhluf b. Salil b. Balbali, who studied both in Timbuktu and Marrakesh.[24] This new status of Katsina as an important learned center witnessed the continued visit of students and scholars and the continued growth in scholarship. Thus by the end of the 16th century

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[20] A. M. Kani, ibid., p. 30.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Nehemia Levtzion, (et.al) (ed.) *History of Islam in Africa*, Ohio University Press, United State of America, 2000.

[23] U. M. Bugaje, op. cit.

[24] A. M. Kani, op. cit.

the Kingdom of Katsina had become so rich in scholars considered to be of local breed, but of international status.[25] This transformed Katsina into a population of people of varying origin, traditions and skills that enriched the Kingdom socio-politically.

At the beginning the Muslim rulers of Katsina were not completely successful in their efforts to turn Katsina into an Islamic state. In the face of strong resistance, they were forced to reach an agreement with the *durbi*, (the priest-chief). The outcome was a sort of dual paramountcy, in which the durbi was responsible for choosing the king. During this period Kingship in Katsina took on the characteristics of a sacred traditional kingship. It was the assumption to the throne by Ibrahim Maje (1549-66), the reformer of Islam in Katsina, which saved the situation. It was during his time that he ordered the implementation of the shari'a laws of marriage and threatened to arrest those who transgressed the religious prescriptions. The number of scholars in his time increased considerably. Scholars from Timbuktu, who visited Kano and Katsina on their way to Mecca, were officially hosted and during their stay taught for some time and contributed to the growth of local Hausa scholarship.

During the seventeenth century, scholarship in Katsina was associated with Muhammad b. al-Sabbagh, known in Hausaland as Dan Marina. He gathered around him a scholarly community that was well versed in all the branches of Islamic learning. Some members of a self-conscious Muslim intelligentsia were employed at the court, but the leading roles in the administration were held by slaves and eunuchs. Yet during the course of the 18th century despite the number of mosques built and the support for shari'a, the rulers of the Kingdom were found involved in the worship of traditional deities. By implication the legitimacy of the dynasty continued to be embedded in the traditional belief system. As a result of such deviations scholars became alienated from the rulers, and therefore moved out of the main town

[25] Among the scholars were Muhammad b, Masani al-Barnawi al-Kashnawi (1595-1667); Muhammad al-Kashinawi ibn Sabbagh; Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Fulani al-Kashinawi. See for details on their works and travels, U. M. Bugaje, "Some Reflections on the Development of Islamic Learning in Katsina (1300-1800)", in I. A. Tsiga, (ed.) (et. al.) *Islam and the History of Learning in Katsina*, Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2007, p. 80.

on the periphery of Katsina where they enjoyed greater autonomy. This tactical move drew the attention of people to the new settlements away from the larger city. It was from these small towns that the supporters of the *jihad* of Dan Fodio came. The rulers ignored them because of their small numbers and their peripheral location, away from the major centers of the population and political power.[26]

Islam in Gobir

The Fulani no doubt constituted the second wave of migrants into Hausaland that facilitated the spread of Islam. Of significance in their teachings was the emphasis on Islamic sciences (*ilmu al-tawhid*) that touched on the science of the Unity of God, a field that teaches the understanding of the relationship between God, the creator and His creatures.[27] It was at this juncture that Islam was introduced into Gobir Kingdom, which comprised of parts of the present day Zamfara and Sokoto states.[28] The spread of Islam in Gobir followed the change of approach by Sheikh Usman Ibn Fodio to reach out to the ruling class, which hitherto he was against.[29] In his earlier efforts Sheikh Usman was more concerned with the common people than the ruling class, due to fear of getting consumed by worldly pleasures. It was in this context that Sheikh Usman reached out to the palace of the then King of Gobir (Bawa Jan Gwarzo). This was at the time when the king of Gobir was seriously bothered with the increasing number of his subjects that were leaving the traditional religion into Islam, especially in parts of Zamfara area. To this effect the king of Gobir issued an order inviting all the Islamic scholars in his Kingdom for a meeting at a town called Magami. Some historians are of the opinion that the meeting was aimed at taking serious measures on the Sheikh to stop converting people to Islam. Not-

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[26] Y. B. Usman, *The Transformation of Katsina, 1400-1883,* Ahmadu Bello University Press, Zaria, Nigeria, 1981.

[27] A. M. Kani, op. cit., p. 25.

[28] The very early political history of Gobir is not within reach, Smith, A. maintained that the people of Gobir lived in Azben down to the fifteenth century, but we lack detail information about their social organisational. Refer to A. Smith, op. cit., p. 105.

[29] A. S. Balogun, *The Life and Works of Uthman Dan Fodio,* Islamic Publications Bureau, Lagos, Nigeria, 1981, p. 34.

withstanding, from a nearby town of Faru, Sheikh Usman answered the call and attended the meeting with the king. Sheikh Usman was known for his firmness and speaking the truth, especially on matters of Islam and against injustices of the ruling class of Gobir.

It is relevant to understand that the more the subject population converts the more the king loses control, which seriously dawn on the king that he was losing the authority to govern. The loyalty of the people was changing hand and the popularity of Sheikh Usman was growing like wild fire. It was on this ground that historians made the point that the meeting was targeting Sheikh Usman and not any other scholar. At the meeting the king saw the writing on the wall himself when the subject population followed behind the entourage of Sheikh Usman and not that of the king. Quickly the king changed his tune and ordered Sheikh to be given some quantity of gold to support his activities. The objective was to draw Sheikh Closer to the palace and possibly check some of his activities, including the massive conversion into Islam. Sheikh Usman declined the gift, but used the opportunity and requests the king that:

- He should be allowed to preach in every part of Gobir without any form of harassment, intimidation or disturbance;
- All interested persons to join Islam should not be disallowed;
- All those willing to wear veils or turban should not be disallowed;
- All persons imprisoned unjustly should be released;
- All taxes that are unjustly collected should be stopped.[30]

The King accepted all the demand and in returns requested Sheikh Usman to pray for his Kingdom going to war against the people of Maradi. Sheikh Usman prayed and advised him to limit his attack on Maradi alone, not to extend to the next town. The king accepted and escorted Sheikh Usman out of the venue of the meeting. The war with Maradi ended in favour of Gobir but the king of Gobir lost his life for not keeping to his promise. Carried away by the joy of outright submission by the Maradi forces Bawa Jan Gwarzo went attacking neigh-

[30] Ibid., p. 35.

bouring towns and in the process got killed.[31] The death of Bawa gave chance to his brother to succeed him. Yakuba succeeded him at a time when the population of Muslims had increased significantly. Indeed, the agreement entered with the late king had also made Muslims so relaxed in conducting their activities, which further weaken the authority of the new king. Thus from the onset King Yakubu was not at ease with the activities of Sheikh Usman, but continued to manage the relation. Indeed, he approached Sheikh Usman to pray for him to avenge the killing of his brother. This was after he made all preparations in army and resources to go to war. Sheikh Usman advised him against fighting the war, which he accepted, but on a contrary advice by his palace officials Yakubu went ahead and launched the attack as a result of which he lost his life. Yakubu was succeeded by his brother, Nafata, who continued with the non-Islamic practices and with running the Kingdom following such practices.

On the other hand, Sheikh Usman continued his preaching and conversion beyond the Gobir Kingdom. The population of Muslims swelled to the point of reckon, while the ruling house continued to lose respect and support from the subject population. The expansion of Islam to the countryside widened the popular basis for religious teaching and preaching. The dissemination of the knowledge of Islam to the illiterate peasants and herdsmen could have been only in the vernacular languages. Parallel to the transformation of Islam as a popular religion and as a political force, this led Muslim societies into gradually developing a literature that further rooted Islam in the society. On the other hand, the ruling class took the option of harassment and intimidation of especially the subject population, a development that further drove the larger members of the community towards the camp of Sheikh Usman. It is relevant to make the point here that most of the subject population were not Fulani, but from among the Hausa speaking population. Their support for Sheikh Usman was because he stood for justice, which attracted most of them to Islam. Sheikh Usman increased his preaching and showed how Islam has solution to all challenges of the people; it was at this point Sheikh Usman extended

[31] M. I. Talata Mafara, *Daular Usmaniyya*, vol. 1-3, Nadabo Print Production, 1999, pp. 37-40.

his invitation to some Fulani communities.[32] He articulated the grievances of the peasants; criticized the rulers for killing people, violating their honor, and devouring their wealth. This was at a point when Sheikh Usman concluded that he needed to fight the ruling class, but most of his followers were too weak and poor to serve in the army. To fully prepare for the *jihad* Sheikh Usman migrated with his followers from his settlement at Degel to Gudu and led the community on an actionable agenda that resulted in the 1804.

Islam in Zazzau

Like the experience in Gobir, the spread of Islam in Zazzau Kingdom was influenced by the activities of the Fulani preachers from Borno, Kano and Katsina. Indeed, like other Kingdoms of Hausaland, Zazzau Kingdom has a long history of political evolution and establishment of a state system which saw the establishment of a number of settlements before the final abode that made up the capital city in Zaria. Prior to the arrival of Islam, the Habe (Hausa speaking people) were in both political and spiritual control with emphasis in the worship of traditions represented by sacrifices to gods and goddesses. As far as the territory was concerned it extended to as far as the southern vassal states of Kajuru and Kauru, whose rulers were also of Habe origin. Same was the case with the Gwari of Lapai and Kusheriki. It was while Zazzau Kingdom was at state of development that some Fulani clerics established their presence in parts of the Zazzau Kingdom. Mostly Islamic teachers and propagators the Fulani preoccupied themselves with the teaching of the Holy Qur'an using which they established communities all over the surrounding towns. Available record shows that there existed contacts and visits between the communities. One of the Fulani scholars Mallam Musa was well travelled visiting communities and spreading the knowledge of Islam to as far as the Zaria city. Musa was a Fulani from Malle, an ancient town in the region of Timbuktu who was well known to Sheikh Usman and other Toronkawa Fulani.[33] Much of

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[32] A. Smith, "A Neglected theme of West African History: The Islamic Revolution of the 19th Century", in A. Smith, op. cit.

[33] M. G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau, 1800-1950*, Oxford University Press, London, 1960, p. 138.

the influence which subdued Zazzau Kingdom came from the massive cultural transformations which the major centers of Islamic learning in Katsina, Kano and Borno. It was this middleman's position that enhanced the Islamisation process in Zazzau, which became established when the wind of the blew.

The spread of Islam has a number of consequences to the people and political entities that made up the Hausaland. One of such consequence was the introduction of new and important form of education against the indigenous model that was local and concerned with initiating the young into knowledge of local customs, their duties within local society and the skills they needed for their livelihood. The new knowledge represented by Islam however covered an international field of theology, politics, law, history, geography, and the natural sciences. More than that, Islam introduced a form of literacy when it developed a means of documentation using Arabic letters, as well as the art of academic criticisms. In addition, the spread and consolidation of Islam brought political and economic advantages to the Sudanic states in general. Relations with North African merchants and rulers were not only friendlier and on equal basis, but extending advance civilization based on an Islamic culture. This led the Sudanic states into a system of cultural communality, which in the case of Hausaland transformed the existing independent Kingdoms into a federated system under the Sokoto Caliphate. In more philosophical terms the spread of Islam has transformed the 19th century Kingdoms of Hausaland and created a condition that made easier the establishment of larger political entities that are multicultural, multi tribal in nature. This was achieved, in the case of Hausaland, when the British imperial conquest of the 20th century amalgamated the administration of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914, into a federated system under a central government.

The Development of Islamic States of Segu and Massina

Shuaibu Shehu Aliyu*

Introduction

The history of Islam in West Africa dates back to the first century of Islam. The Islamic religion spread and developed into an institutional religion for four centuries in the West African sub-region.[1] However, with the conquest of Songhai in the 15th century, the period of decay and stagnation creeped in and continued unabated until the 17th century. Thus, the 17th and 18th centuries represent very important epochs in the history of Islam in West Africa. Islam became a powerful factor in nation-building in the western Sudan during this period. This period witnessed a varying context of Islamic revivalism, which consequently, fostered series of *jihadist* movements in the region. These *jihad*s ostensibly began in the 17th and the 18th centuries; the most prominent being the one organized in Senegambia by Maliki Sufis such as Sidi Malik Sy, Sidi Alfa Karamako and Sidi Sulayman Bal at Bundu, Futa Jallo, and Toro. These constituted a fountain-head that triggered the upsurge of similar *jihad*s in the 19th century. Moreover, most of the precursors of the 19th century *jihad* in West Africa were disciples of Sheikh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (d. 1226/1811). Sheikh Mukhtar al-Kunti was a reputable and erudite scholar who greatly influenced the course of 19th century development of Islam throughout the region.[2] The pre-19th century *jihad*s were largely localized and stunted in scale and magnitude than those of the 19th century, which were to a large

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1 J. S. Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, Oxford, London, 1970, pp. 1-16.

2 See U. M. Bugaje, "The Tradition of Tajdid in Western Bilad al-Sudan: A Study of the Genesis, Development and Pattern of Islamic Revivalism in the Region 900-1900", Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Khartoum, 1991, p. 86.

extent the spillover of those of the 18th century. Similarly, it has been argued that no century or period in history that witnessed the upsurge of *jihad* movements in West Africa as the 19th century. A fact which all the historians of the region seem to agree upon. But the scholars argue that pilgrimage played a critical role in shaping the course of Islamic revivalism in West Africa.[3]

This influenced Professor Abdullahi Smith to conclude:

> The history of the West African Savannah in the nineteenth century has its own independent theme- and this consists in a series of revolutionary movements which radically changed the social and political complexion of the whole zone during the hundred years or so before the establishment of the European governments. These movements were *jihad*s resulting in the formation of Islamic States, the emergence of a new West African Muslim aristocracy and widespread conversions to Islam.[4]

The *jihad* in Hausaland was a watershed that succeeded in pulling out the hitherto dissolute Hausa states from the state of repressing rules, and restored Islam to its pristine nature of honour and dignity. The significant achievements of the *jihad* was not confined to the Hausaland, as it had also succeeded in triggering similar and related reform movements in other parts of West Africa and beyond, with clear zeal and objective of following the trodden path of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, who they regarded with the highest esteem as a teacher and mentor.[5]

The 19th century *jihad*s should be seen within the context of struggle for a constructive reform rather than the perceived notion of an attempt to dislodge pagan communities. Consequently, the *jihad*s, which restored the lost glory and supremacy of Islam led to the revival, and renaissance of Islamic culture and scholarship resulting in Islamic universalism throughout West Africa. It has been argued that at the time when Sheikh Usman settled firmly in Degel, scholars and students continued to flock to him in large numbers from all over West

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[3] Umar al-Naqar, *The Pilgrimage Tradition in West Africa*, Khartoum University Press, 1972, p. 102.

[4] Abdullahi Smith, "A Neglected Theme of West African History: The Islamic Revolutions of the Nineteenth Century", in *A Little New Light, Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith*, Gaskiya Corporation, 1987, p. 134.

[5] U. M. Bugaje, op. cit., p. 7.

Africa. Notable among these were the scholars of Segu and Massina[6] from the West, and Borno and Chad in the East. This was primarily to tap from the fountain of Danfodio, particularly, messianic ideas of reforms and radical change. These teachings helped them to begin to chart a new course towards transforming their respective societies.[7] In essence therefore, the Sheikh Usman led *jihad* significantly influenced the development of Seku Ahmad ibn Hammadi (Ahmad Labbo) at Massina (d 1843), and al-Hajj Umar al-Futi's (Umar Tal) concept of reform in Segu (d 1864). These intellectual linkages came to determine the nature and pattern of relationships that existed between Sokoto, Massina and Segu in the 19th and 20th centuries. This fraternity was nurtured and sustained up to the period of European penetration of West African states. On this premise, the leaders of these areas sought refuge in Sokoto following the French incursion and occupation of their territory during the last decade of the 19th century.

The Massina Jihad

The *jihad* in Massina was led by Sheikh Muhamad Ahmad ibn Hammadi (Ahmad Lobbo), popularly known as Ahmad Segu (d.1843-5).[8] Sheikh Ahmad Segu (Labbo) engineered the establishment of an Islamic state of Massina in 1818. The *jihad* in Massina was not targeted only against the pagan communities of Bambara, but also against the *ulama* in Jenne and Timbuktu of the former Songhai Empire.[9] The Ahmad ibn Hammadi led *jihad* was similar to the Sokoto *jihad* in structure, organization and intellectual development.[10] The *jihad* was pre-

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[6] Omar Jah, "The Effect of Pilgrimage on the Jihad of Al-Umar al-Futi 1794-1864", in Y.F. Hasan and P. Dornbors (eds.), *The Central Bilad al-Sudan: Tradition and Adaptation, Essays on the Geography, Economic and Political History of the Sudanic Belt,* Sudanese Library Series, no. 11, 1977, p. 233.

[7] Y. B. Usman, Transformation of Political of Political Communities", in *Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate – The Sokoto Seminar Papers,* Third Press International, 1978, p. 38.

[8] M. U. Bugaje, *Tradition of Tajdid*, p. 81.

[9] Ibid., p. 81.

[10] M. U. Bugaje, "The Tradition of *Tajdeed* in West Africa: An Overview", A paper presented at the International Seminar on the Intellectual Tradition in the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno, organized by the Centre for Islamic Studies University of Sokoto from 23rd –26th June, 1987, p. 10.

ceded by *hijra* to Bani (Hamdullahi), which subsequently led to the overthrow of the Massina ruling dynasty which was considered un-Islamic, and in its place an imamate, with an *amir al-mu'minin* as the head of the Islamic State, as enshrined in an ideal Islamic system, was established.[11] Though, in terms of intellectual solemnity, the Ahmad led *jihad* presumably had much less intellectual content and import than the Sokoto *jihad*ist leaders, the prophecies of awaited deliverer (Mahdi) played a critical role in the organization and success of the *jihad*. The State covered an area of 56,000 square kilometers, which was much smaller than the Sokoto Caliphate.[12]

The *jihad* in Massina was highly inspired by the intellectual writings of Sheikh Mukhtar ibn Ahmad al-Kunti, but its greatest debt was to the Sokoto Caliphate *ulama*. He regarded Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio as an epitome, whom he consulted all the time, particularly on matters that effected the timing, preparation, and organization of the *jihad*.[13] Ahmad's major works titled, *al-Idtirar ila Allah fi Ikhmad ba'ad ma Tuqad min al-Bida'a wa ihya' ba'ad ma andarasa min al-sunna*, resembled Shehu's books in content and logical sequence pertaining to aspects of innovations.[14] Immediately after the *jihad* he consulted with Sokoto on issues that affected the dispensation and administration of justice of his newly established Caliphate.[15] Therefore, connections and linkages of Hamdullahi and Sokoto was indeed very close. The leaders of the newly Islamic state at Massina consulted the Sokoto Caliphate leaders on all matters, particularly on issues that related to administration of justice, and periodic review of court rulings.[16] Some schol-

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[11] Ibid., p. 11.

[12] Abdullahi Smith, "A Neglected Theme of West African History: The Islamic Revolutions of the Nineteenth Century", in the Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, *A Little New Light. Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith*, Gaskiya Corporation, 1987, p. 138.

[13] Ibid., p. 139.

[14] U. M. Bugaje, *The Past as Future: Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Sokoto Caliphate*, Books and Libraries, 2015, p. 71. The relationship began at the time Sheikh Ahmad Labbo sought the legal and moral support for his criticism of Ardos' lax practices of Islam from Sheikh Abdullahi Fodio.

[15] It was observed that from 1818 up to the early 1850s the Islamic States of Sokoto and Massina actively dominated the politics and economics of Western Sudan.

[16] M. U. Bunza, *Gwandu Emirate: The Domain of Abdullahi Fodiyo, since 1805*, Gwandu Emirate Development Association, 2016, p. 215.

ars argued that Massina was under the political control of Gwandu. This was evidenced by the quantum of correspondences that ensued between the two Islamic States, particularly Gwandu.[17] The prominent manuscripts[18] that shed light, which espoused the stages of relationship that bestrides the two states. The manuscripts suggested that at certain period it was amicable (1815-17)[19], then broken, especially with the death of Danfodio (1817-21)[20] then finally stabilized again and formalized (1821-36).[21] The political crises that submerged the Sokoto Caliphate, especially with the death of Shehu Usman, which resulted in the emergence of two claimants as *amir al-muminin*,[22] severed relationships amongst Sokoto and Massina. Consequently, the leaders of Massina refused to pay the annual tributes to Sokoto by denouncing the *bay'a* (allegiance).[23] However, when authorities in Sokoto confronted the leaders of Massina on the illegality of their actions, Ahmadu Labbo quoted the book written by Sheikh Abdullahi Fodio to buttress his point. He stressed that, "having more than one ruler at a time in one country is not permissible according to consensus."[24] However, the Islamic State was short-lived and dislodged by Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi in 1862.[25] This witnessed the emergence of the Islamic State of Segu, which survived much longer than that in Massina.

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17 Ibid., p. 214.

18 Stewart cited the existence of two manuscripts from Mauritania, and another one found in the hands of Fonds Brevie, IFAN Dakar, and Piece 17. The Brevie manuscripts was very significant towards stressing exchanges of various correspondences between Sokoto and Massina.

19 Represented a crucial period when amicable relations ensued between Sokoto and Massina, see for details C. C. Stewart, "Sokoto-Massina Relations 1815-26: An Exploratory Note", paper presented at the Sokoto Seminar, 6th to 10th January, 1975 at Sokoto, p. 4.

20 Following the death of Sheikh Uthman it occasioned broken of *bay'a* by Sheikh Ahmad, which led exchanges of harsh words on the subject of allegiance from both Sokoto and Hamdullahi, see C. C. Stewart, op. cit., p. 4.

21 C. C. Stewart, "Sokoto-Massina Relations 1815-26: An Exploratory Note", paper presented at the Sokoto Seminar, 6th to 10th January, 1975 at Sokoto, p. 2.

22 This was amongst Sheikh Abdullahi Fodio and Muhammad Bello.

23 Ibid., p. 214.

24 *Diya al-Hukkam*, as cited by M. U. Bunza, op. cit., p. 214.

25 Ibid., p. 139.

The Segu *Jihad*

The Segu *jihad* was organized and launched by Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi. Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi was born in about 1794,[26] of a modest and scholarly family in Halwar,[27] a village in Futa-Toro (Senegal) about twenty-five miles from the town of Podor, Futa Toro (Senegal) barely two decades after the *jihad* of Sulayman Bal in Futa Toro in the late 18th century. His family belonged to the Torodbe aristocratic class. Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi grew up in a community where the pace of the *jihad* was declining and European presence in the coastal towns was increasing with the French making frequent incursions into the hinterland. The pagan Bambara State of Ka'arta and Segu were similarly encroaching into the Senegambia region. These unfolding events had significant effects towards engendering political and religious development in the area.[28]

Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi travelled widely in search of learned scholars under whose guidance he could further his academic pursuits. Interestingly, in one of such journeys he met a renowned scholar Sheikh Abdul-Karim al-Naqil, a Tijjani scholar from Futa-Jalon who initiated and introduced him to the doctrine of Tijjaniyya.[29] Similarly, al-Naqil was presumed to have been initiated into the order by Mawlud Fal. From Futa-Jalon, Sheikh Abdul-Karim and his disciple decided to undertake the arduous journey to discharge religious obligation of the *hajj*. However, Abdul-Karim died in Massina the capital of a newly formed Caliphate of Hamadallahi.[30] Then from Massina Sheikh al-Hajj

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[26] J. M. Abu-Nasr, *The Tijjaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World*, Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 106.

[27] For details see, J. R. Willis, "The Writings of al-Hajj Umar al-Futi and Sheikh Mukhtar b. Wadi'at Allah: Literary Themes, Sources, and Influences", in J. R. Willis, (ed.), *Studies in West African Islamic History: The Cultivators of Islam*, vol. I, Frank Cass, 1979, p. 177.

[28] Abu-Nasr, *The Tijjaniyya*, p. 106.

[29] Ibid., p. 106.

[30] It was noted that the founder of Hamadallahi (Massina) desired to assemble reputable scholars in his capital, with a view to make Hamadallahi a permanent centre for Islam and learning in the Western Sudan. It was argued in other sources that Sheikh Abdul-Karim and his disciple Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi decided to made it for the hajj, but they could not however leave together, so the teacher left first and Sheikh al-Hajj Umar followed him later, For details see Abu-Nasr, *The Tijjaniyya*, p. 107.

Umar al-Futi continued with the journey to the *hajj* from about 1827 and passed through Gwandu, Sokoto, Air and Egypt.

It was noted that in Sokoto Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi spent about seven months and then travelled through Air the Tuareg territory where he spent a much shorter period. While in Air Umar learnt about Muhammad al-Ghali the head of the Tijjaniyya *tariqa* in Hijaz.[31] And finally Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi reached Hijaz through Fezzan.[32] On arrival in Hijaz in 1828 Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi sought the permission of Sidi Muhammad al-Ghali to become his disciple and student. This enabled him to acquire *ijaza* (certificate) and thereafter earned the blessing of being appointed the *khalifa* of the Tijjaniyya in western Sudan. Having made the *hajj* and acquired some considerable level of learning, Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi visited Syria and Jerusalem. He also spent some time in Al-Azhar University in Cairo on his way back. Towards the end of 1830 Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi made his way home through Borno to Sokoto. Consequently, in view of the vast knowledge and rich experience he had garnered; he quickly assumed the honorific title of not only a *muqaddam*, but also a *khalifa* of the Tijjaniyya in Western Sudan.[33] It was noted that in Borno he issued *ijaza*s to some prominent and foremost Borno scholars. The one that came to light was the one he issued to the father of late Sheikh al-Miskin during his short sojourn.[34] This marked the beginning of his struggle to make Islamic reforms in the Senegambia region.

In 1831 he left for Sokoto, where he received a good reception in

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[31] Sheikh Abu Abdallah Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghali Abu Talib, was a known acclaimed *wali* and of the companion of Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani (precursor of Tijjaniya *tariqa*). Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani awarded him a high rank in the *tariqa* and ordered him to appoint four *muqaddams* and authorize each of them to appoint in turn four others. Consequently, Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghali left for Makka and while there, he met Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi presumably in 1820s few years with the passing away of the founder of the *tariqa* Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani. It should be noted largely the adherents of Tijjaniyya *tariqa* accorded or Muhammad al-Ghali occupied both a high position and rank beside Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani.

[32] Abu-Nasr, *The Tijjaniyya*, p. 107.

[33] Ibid, p. 110.

[34] Interview with Professor Tijjani al-Miskin, age 65, he collected this information from his father who died on 20th November, 2014 at the age of 115 years, at his House in Kaduna. Similarly, during his brief stay his relationship with al-Kanemi went sour soon after his arrival. Despite the fact that Al-Hajj Umar had taken a wife, a daughter of one of the Borno notables

the court of Caliph Muhammad Bello, and stayed in Sokoto up to the death of the latter about seven years later. The intellectual prowess of Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi drew him close to political leadership in Sokoto. This influenced Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi to become deeply involved with Sokoto scholarly activities as well as administration. This came to play a decisive role in shaping his attitude towards Islamic reforms in the Senegambia region.[35] He was appointed a judge in Caliph Muhammad Bello's court, and joined in major campaigns during the time of Caliph Bello. It is also on record that Clapperton visited Caliph Muhammad Bello and found Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi in Sokoto. In this context the intellectual conflict between Caliph Muhammad Bello and Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi was linked to Clapperton who was said to have masterminded the conflict in the first instance.[36] Furthermore, Sheikh Umar al-Futi married the daughter of Caliph Muhammad Bello. The treatise *Suyuf al-Said*, which contained the manifesto of his *jihad*, was authored in Sokoto. This informed the conclusion that Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi was inspired into *jihad* by writings and close association with the leaders of the Sokoto Caliphate. Following Bello's death Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi set out for Futa Toro in 1838 along with his family and disciples, among whom were Hausa and Kanuri. He went through Masina, the Bambara State of Segu and arrived in Dyegonko near Timbo in 1840, where he was allowed to settle and establish a *zawiya*.[37]

Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi arrived in Futa Toro, and quickly mobilized the communities of Dinguiray, Nioro, Segu, and Bandiagara to launch his *jihad* movement. Smith believed that Sheikh al-Hajj Umar was able to effectively mobilize the Soninke with the assistance of the Hausa communities.[38] This made him to form a formidable force for his *jihad* campaigns in the region. The *jihad* of Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi, was mostly targeting the pagan state of Bambara and the entrenched commercial interest of the French who were at the coast primarily for

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[35] Abu-Nasr, *The Tijjaniyya*, p. 109.

[36] Interview with Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Sanusi Gumbi, age 73 at his residence in Kaduna, on 17/09/2013, Sheikh Sanusi Gumbi is a renowned Islamic scholar very vast in the history of the Sokoto Caliphate

[37] Abu-Nasr, *The Tijjaniyya*, p. 126.

[38] See, A. Smith, "A Neglected Theme of West African History", p. 139.

trade and to make reconnaissance survey into the politics of the area.[39] The Islamic State he founded covered an area of about 150,000 square miles, which was sparsely populated. Abdullahi Smith was of the opinion that Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi benefited tremendously from his acquaintance with the Sokoto and the knowledge of the intricacies and complexities that affected the process of consolidating the gains of the Sokoto *jihad.* Bugaje argued that Sheikh al-Hajj Umar benefited from the Sokoto intellectual stream and shared the practical experience of establishing and running an Islamic state, which led to the success of his *jihad*, and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic State of Segu.[40] It was admitted that he was less versed than the triumvirate[41] of the Sokoto Caliphate, who steered the *jihad* on rigorous intellectual discourse and thought. His wealth of experience of the wider world, resulting from his extensive travels, and utilization of the Tijjaniya Sufi order towards his course also played a critical role in the success of the Segu *jihad.* His supporters were largely referred to as *talib* (*tullab*, pl.) and recruited mostly from the Hausa communities who were rewarded with appointments into key administrative positions in the newly established Islamic State.

Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi remained at Dyegonko until 1848. He effectively engaged himself in extensive teaching, and raising followers as his fame permeated Senegambia. Indisputably, as the *khalifa* of Tijjaniya *tariqa* in West Africa, the *jihad* was organized within Tijjaniyya doctrinal basis and principles. He was credited with organized trade network principally for the *jihad* campaigns. The proceeds of the trade were channeled to support the course and organization of the *jihad.* Similarly, it was utilized in the purchase of arms and other provisions that would be required in the eventual confrontation. Interestingly, his famous work *Rimah hizb al-Rahim 'ala nuhur hizb al-rajim*, completed in September 1845 became the manifesto that guided the

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[39] U. M. Bugaje, "The Tradition of *Tajdeed* in West Africa: An Overview", A paper presented at the International Seminar on the Intellectual Tradition in the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno, organized by the Centre for Islamic Studies, University of Sokoto from 26th-23rd June, 1987, p. 20.

[40] U. M. Bugaje, "The Tradition of *Tajdeed* in West Africa: An Overview", p. 87.

[41] Triumvirate in this context referred to the three leading intellectuals that spearheaded the Sokoto *jihad*, these include Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, his brother Sheikh Abdullahi Dan Fodio and his son Caliph Muhammad Bello.

principles of the jihad. These treatise clearly illustrated that, he had pre-conceived a confrontation and had taken ample time to make the spiritual and material provisions for it. He devoted a lengthy portion of the treatise expatiating that his claim to the position of *khalifa* was justifiable.[42] In this book Sheikh al-Hajj Umar claimed that one of his disciples has received inspiration from the prophet[saw] stating that: "I delegated you to your Sheikh al-Hajj Umar. Tell him that I salute..." As in Sokoto and Massina, it was the frantic response of the establishment that precipitated the *jihad*. The pagan chieftain of Tamba dispatched an army to destroy Sheikh al-Hajj Umar's new base. Sheikh al-Hajj Umar *talaba* (students) uprooted the pagan army. This played a decisive role in encouraging a large number of people to embrace Islam.[43] Alarmed by the growing power of the Islamic forces, the French organized a boycott against Sheikh al-Hajj Umar. The inability of Sheikh al-Hajj Umar to dislodge the French after they martyred a large part of his *talaba*, he made it crystal clear that both the pagan communities and the French were the major threats to the survival of the Muslim community in the Senegambia. Sheikh al-Hajj Umar launched and conquered the pagan Bambara State of Segu and made Segu the capital of the Islamic State.[44] At this critical moment Sheikh al-Hajj Umar died in a battle and was succeeded by his son Ahmad two years later.

The conflict that ensued between Segu, under Sheikh al-Hajj Umar and the Islamic State of Massina under Ahmad Labbo corresponded remarkably with the intellectual dispute between Sokoto and Borno on the legitimacy of the *jihad* in both areas. It represented the intellectual dispute between Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi and Muhammad Bello over the justification of the *jihad* on Borno. Interestingly, Sheikh al-Hajj Umar produced a number of works berating the stands of the two scholars on the matter. Furthermore, Sokoto and Borno were able to address the issue without dislodging one another. However, the Segu Caliphate dislodged Massina completely.[45] The reasons for these differences would appear to lie not only in the intellectual and volatile

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[42] U. M. Bugaje, "The Tradition of Tajdid in Western Bilad al-Sudan", p. 111.

[43] Ibid., p. 110.

[44] Ibid., p. 98 and also see Abu-Nasr's *The Tijjaniyya: A Sufi Order in the Modern World*.

[45] Ibid., p. 87.

make up of the leaderships but also in the social and political context of the conflict.

It is worthy to note that the French imperial forces devastated and invaded Segu almost two decades after the death of Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi. However, the intellectual heritage established impacted greatly on the series of *jihad*s and the organized anti-colonial insurrections that pervaded the entire region in the last decades of the 19th century and the opening decades of the 20th century. For instance, Muhammad Lamin, Maba Diakhou, Samori Toure, Ahmad Bamba,[46] were to a large extent influenced by Sheikh al-Hajj Umar's messianic ideas of reform, particularly against the French imperial forces.

Conclusion

The *jihad* in Massina by Seku Ahmadu (Ahmad Labbo) and later by Sheikh Umar al-Futi constituted a large part of the broad-spectrum of Islamic revivalist movements that flecked the annals of West African history in the earlier and later parts of the 19th century. Undoubtedly, the *jihad* in Hausaland by Sheikh Uthman Danfodio, was the precursor that subsequently, triggered these prominent revolutionary movements both in content and organization. Thus, the two *jihad*s owed their credence and intellectual stimuli to Sheikh Uthman, especially, Ahmad Labbo who had consulted with the leaders of the Sokoto *jihad* in every aspect of the establishment of the Islamic State of Massina. There were contentions over Ahmad Labbo's allegiance (*bay'a*) to Sokoto, and purported attempt at keeping his Islamic state under the sway of Sokoto religious and political leaders. However, it was certain that Ahmad Labbo closely related and consulted Sheikh Abdullahi Gwandu on every matter relating to Massina, which further emboldened the external relations between the two emerging Islamic states. This continued unabated until the time when the Caliphate was divided into two with the death of Sheikh Uthman, the founder of the Caliphate.

The pilgrimage of Sheikh Umar al-Futi was an important milestone that led to initiation of the West African communities into the Tijjaniya brotherhood. The significance and primacy of the pilgrimage

[46] Ibid., p. 88.

towards influencing *jihad* has been stressed in the literature. However, there is no historical proof to rationalize the effect of Hajj in provoking and engendering the Sokoto *jihad*. But, the distinctive features of Al-Hajj Umar *jihad* were the Tijjaniya thoughts and ferment, which he galvanized to motivate the *jihad* in the region. The Sheikh Umar chain of transmission of Tijjaniya brotherhood is sustained in West Africa and has become the most dominant in the region. Similarly, Sheikh Umar al-Futi maintained close fraternity with the Sokoto triumvirate, especially Caliph Muhammad Bello up to his death. The relationship between the two Islamic states was sustained up to the European incursions in the later part of the 19th century. This precipitated the political refugees from Segu to journey to Sokoto and subsequently followed the hijra of the last *amir al-muminin* Muhammad Attahiru ibn Ahmad of a sovereign Sokoto Caliphate. The last Caliph made a hijra, but was ambushed by the British and killed at Bormi. The remnants of the followers of the *amir al-muminin* continued with the movement to Sudan and established a famous settlement in the western side of Sinnar called Mai Wurno as well as other pockets of settlements at the bank of the Blue Nile, Dindir and Rahad rivers in the republic of Sudan.

The Development of Timbuktu Islamic Intellectual Tradition

Sheshi T. Sidi*

Introduction

The legendary city of Timbuktu is said to have been founded as a commercial centre in Mali, West Africa for about 900 years ago.[1] For several centuries, the city became a significant religious, cultural, intellectual and commercial centre, whose residents travelled north across the Sahara through Morocco and Algeria to other parts of not only Africa but also Europe and Asia. This made Timbuktu highly exposed to the comity of nations. The civilization enjoyed by Timbuktu is reported to have gone beyond the 12th century AD. This proposition is based on archaeological findings, which proved human urban existence in the region of Timbuktu for about 1500 years ago (500 BC - 1000 AD, longer than many of the better known older world civilizations).[2]

It is generally accepted that Timbuktu as a town or city was founded during the 12th century.[3] As according to Shuriye and Ibrahim, during the dry season, the desert Tuaregs used to come down towards the Niger River and make their camp near a well there. When they returned north during the wet season, the well used to be left in charge of one old woman called *Buktu*. *Tin Buktu* in the Temajegh language of the Tuareg simply means the place of *Buktu*. The advantages of this

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1 Abdi O. Shuriye and Dauda Sh. Ibrahim, "Timbuktu Civilization and its Significance in Islamic History", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 11, 2013, Mediterranean Center of Social and Educational Research, pp. 696-704.

2 Ibid., p. 69.

3 Sidney John Hogben and Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions*, Oxford University Press, 1966, pp. 59-60.

place was its position eight miles north of River Niger and southern edge of the Sahara.[4]

As stated before, Timbuktu developed to become an important centre for learning, scholarship, culture and development of Islamic manuscripts and their preservation. No wonder, therefore, the city has left an invaluable tradition or heritage of Islamic literacy in both Arabic and other forms of *Ajami* for the Muslim world. The recognition and preservation of such rich heritage have made the University of Cape Town in South Africa, to organize an International Conference with the theme "The Arts and Crafts of Literacy: Manuscripts Cultures in Muslim Sub-Saharan Africa" and the proceedings of the conference was published in a book/exhibition entitled *Timbuktu Script and Scholarship*.[5]

West Africa's First Contacts with Islam

Contrary to some accounts suggesting the 7th century as the period for West Africa's first contacts with Islam, the 8th century is historically more acceptable period than the former. It was during the first half of the 8th century that Islam is said to have begun working its way across the Trans-Saharan trade routes from the North to West Africa.[6] Following the Arab conquest and subjugation of North Africa, the Umayyad rulers in the region began organizing a series of military expeditions and slave raids into the southern Morocco and southern parts of ancient Ghana. One of such military expeditions between 734 and 740 was ordered by the then Governor of Ifriqiyya, Ubaydullah b. al-Habib, under the joint command of his son Ismail and another army general called Abi Ubayda.[7]

As would be expected, the expeditions did not only expose West

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[4] Abdi O. Shuriye and Dauda Sh. Ibrahim, "Timbuktu Civilization and its Significance in Islamic History", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 11, 2013, Mediterranean Center of Social and Educational Research, p. 696.

[5] M. Lalou, H. Lindsay and K. Geradd (eds.), *Timbuktu Script and Scholarship*, Iziko Museums, 2008, p. 5.

[6] Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*, Hodder Arnold, 1982, p. 8.

[7] Peter. B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*, Hodder Arnold, 1982, p. 10.

Africa's social and economic potentials but also provided the Berbers with political opportunities for exploitation. Anytime the expeditions returned home, they went along with large quantities of not only slaves but gold, foodstuffs, ivory and other precious materials found in West Africa which could be used in exchange for North African goods such as salt, horses, swords and cloth. These expeditions played an important role not only in the enhancement and creating a durable relationship between the two areas but also in spreading Islam in West Africa. Thus, the Trans-Saharan trade routes and commercial centres were established and strengthened and sources of water were created at strategic places along the routes. Examples of such centres are Timbuktu, Gao, Jenne, Walata, Tekru, Sijlmasa, Tehert, Tadmakka, Awdaghost, Raba, Mokwa, Bussar, Borno, Kano and Zinder among others.[8] These places and routes, some of which may have gone into extinction, could be found in the present-day countries of Mali, Ghana, Senegal, Morocco, Nigeria, Libya, and the Niger Republic.

Other sources for the introduction of Islam into West Africa were travellers, Muslim clerics and scholars. As stated earlier, the initial contacts between the Arabs through North Africa and West Africa and Sudan were facilitated more by trade and commerce as far back as the 8th century or earlier. This might have been followed by a curious desire by Arab geographers, historians, travellers and Islamic clerics and scholars to know about the Sudanese areas. Through the writings of such people, West Africa might have begun to know about Islam and its practices. For instance, from the works of some Arab Muslim chroniclers, such as Ibn Munnabel in 734 AD, al-Masudi in 947 AD[9] and al-Maghili, a lot of information on Islam in West Africa can be obtained.

Levtzion refers us to the works of al-Bakri, Ibn Batuta and Ibn Khaldun among others, on the Sudanese areas and North Africa. Al-Bakri's work on *Book of Roads and Kingdoms* written between 1067 and 1068, among his several other works, gives a detailed description of

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[8] T. S. Sidi, "A History of the Nupe People 1068-1810", Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, 2017, p. 242; S. J. Hogben and A. H. M. Kirk–Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions*, p. 56.

[9] T. S. Sidi, "A History of the Nupe People 1068-1810", pp. 239-40.

ancient Ghana and its neighbours.[10] Timbuktu, in Mali, might have been one of such neighbours.

It is important to note the crucial role played by the Arab Muslim traders, travellers, and scholars to the spread of Islam in West Africa in general and the metropolitan areas of the region in particular. Also, the tolerant, receptive and accommodating attitudes of the host communities, might have accounted for the involvement of Muslim scholars and clerics in the administration of the local kings. They are, for instance, reported to have served as advisers, interpreters, court officials, chaplains on spiritual and secular matters[11] among other responsibilities.

As Peter B. Clark states, by the late 9th and early 10th centuries, some Muslim merchants and (most probably scholars and *ulama*) had begun to establish Muslim headquarters in the capitals of Gao ancient Ghana and Takur.[12] It can be observed that the Muslim scholars and merchants played a dual role – Islamization and trading, as well as, to some degree, partaking in secular matters. Stressing the relationship of trade/commerce and clericalism, Paul Lovejoy observes that little or no marked distinction existed between traders and Islamic clerics in the early introduction of Islam in Central Sudan.[13]

According to him,

> Relations with the aristocracy were more intimate in most diaspora towns. Marine elegances were important. Such arrangement solidified common interests between the government and commercial sector, strengthened Islamic influence, and led to the assimilation of immigrants as a privileged class.[14]

We can, therefore, conclude this aspect, by stating that trade and

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[10] Nehemia Levtzion, "Early States of the Western Sudan", in J. F. A. Ajayi and M. Crowther (eds.), *History of West Africa Vol. 1*, 2nd edition, Longman, 1976, p. 120.

[11] Siegfried Frederick Nadel, *Nupe Religion, Traditional Beliefs and the Influence of Islam in a West Africa Chiefdom*, Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1954, p. 232.

[12] Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*, Hodder Arnold, 1982, p. 10.

[13] Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Role of Wangarawa in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the 15th and 16th Centuries", *Journal of African History*, vol. XIX (2), 1978, Cambridge University Press, pp. 173-79.

[14] Ibid.

commercial activities, Islamic preaching, desire for the geographical and historical knowledge of the West African and the Sudanese areas formed a strong basis for the early migrations and settlements as well as, for the eventual emergence of Islamic centres in various parts of West Africa that led to the promotion of Islamic culture, civilization and intellectualism and the prominent among such centres was Timbuktu.

Timbuktu: A Centre of Islamic Culture and Scholarship

The strategic location of the city of Timbuktu, as stated earlier, being situated close to Niger River and at the boundaries of the Sahara. This advantage favoured the city, in terms of accessibility both by water and land. Timbuktu, therefore, began as a seasonal settlement in the early 11th century, which eventually flourished to become one of the early African centres of Islamic culture and civilization for some centuries.[15] This feature, no doubt, had "fascinated Europeans for a long period and has informed Erupoean imaginations of Muslim in West Africa to a considerable extent."[16]

Several factors had accounted for the emergence of Timbuktu being one of the most important centuries of Islamic tradition in West Africa. In the first place, the city is reported to have witnessed urban civilization in the pre-Islamic period as back as 1500 years ago (500 BC to AD 1000, based on archaeological findings) in the region.[17] This source, for instance, further reports the first archaeological research work conducted in Azawd in northern Mali by a French colonialist in the 1950's. The results showed evidence of late Stone Age sites along the river banks of the now desiccated water bodies. Stone tools, human and animals remain, ceramics among other relics were found.

On the bases of the above evidence, it can be claimed that Timbuktu, before the influence of Islam from the Arabs and even that from the Mediterranean, must have witnessed heterogeneous urban settle-

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[15] Abdi O. Shuriye, and Dauda Sh. Ibrahim, "Timbuktu Civilization and its Singnificance in Islamic History", p. 696.

[16] Omar Ousmane Kane, *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of West Africa*, Harvard University Press, 2016, p. 243.

[17] Abdi O. Shuriye, and Dauda Sh. Ibrahim, "Timbuktu Civilization and its Singnificance in Islamic History", p. 697.

ment with a highly densely human population. Influence of Islam and the Arab world, however, contributed immensely to the growth of Timbuktu as an academic and commercial centre.

As is the case with other urban centres in Africa, such metropolitan areas witnessed the early influx of the Arab and Berber settlements, hence, increasing the population, and extensively changing their political socio-economic and cultural status quo. One of the most important Islamic movements that might have contributed in this regard was the Almoravids movement that launched among the Sanhaja in the Sahara by Abdullahi b. Yasin in the first half of the 11th century. The movement activities are said to have spread to West Africa with a view of Islamizing the area. Both Levtzion and Trimingham assess the role of the Almoravids in this regard. According to the latter, "the conquest of Ghana's capital by the Almorabids led to the political triumph of Islam throughout the Sahel region between the Senegal and Niger rivers."[18]

The Role of Leadership in the Development of Timbuktu

For Timbuktu to attain the intellectual and cultural tradition in West Africa, critical roles played by certain rulers and scholars in this regard cannot be underrated. Among the rulers that reigned between the 11th and 16th centuries in various ancient Sudanese empires included Summan Guru of Ghana, Sundiata and Mansa Kankan Musa of Mali, Sunni Ali and Muhammad Askia the Great of Songhai. Each of these and others contributed in one way or another either negatively or positively towards the Islamization in West Africa. While rulers such as Suman Guru, Sundiata and Sunni Ali were antagonists to Islam and Muslims, at least, initially. Others were to be the opposite. Sunni Ali, for instance, was described as a tyrant, and a persecutor of Muslim scholars. He is said to have driven many Muslim scholars from Timbuktu in 1469 and 1486 on suspicion that they were cooperating with his opponents, the Tuareg.[19] Other kings, among whom were Muhammad Askia the Great and Mansa Musa, supported Islam,

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[18] Nehemia Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (reprint), 1980, p. 45; J. S. Trimingham, *History of Islam in West Africa*, Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 29-30.

[19] J. S. Trimingham, *History of Islam in West Africa*, p. 30.

its culture and civilization as great Muslim rulers. Worthy of note was the role played by Mansa Musa of Mali in the upliftment of Timbuktu as a significant religious, cultural, commercial and intellectual centre, once noted for Islamic scholarly activities known throughout the Muslim world.[20]

King Mansa Musa (1307-1332) was described as the Emperor of the Mandingoes, pious and a devout Muslim,[21] whose powers extended beyond the borders of the Mandingo peoples and whose power and authority was recognized not only in Mali but also in Songhai. According to the *Tarikh al-Sudan*, "the Sultan Kankan Musa was the first of the Mali kings to take Sanghai. A pious and balanced prince, he was not equalled by any other king of Mali in virtue and uprightness."[22] Holding the same view, Hunwick describes Musa as the "most celebrated ruler of Mali who ruled from 1312-1337 and made a colourful and very costly pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324-25."[23]

In the same vein, a 16th century North African traveller, Leo Africanus, also describes Musa as:

> The rich king of Timbuktu as having many plates and sceptres of gold..., keeps a magnificent and well-furnished court... There are numerous doctors, judges, scholars, priests and here are brought manuscript books from Barbary which are sold at a greater profit than any other merchandise.[24]

The above descriptions among others, all suggest the zeal, commitment, sacrifice, dedication and interest of Mansa Kankan Musa towards the institutionalization of Islam as a culture and tradition in his empire in general, and Timbuktu as an Islamic intellectual centre worthy of note in all ramifications in particular. All efforts, therefore,

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[20] S. J. Hogben and Kirk Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of Their Historical Traditions;* Ousmane Oumare Kane, *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of West Africa*.

[21] Abdi O. Shuriye and Dauda Sh. Ibrahim, "Timbuktu Civilization and its Singnificance in Islamic History", p. 697.

[22] S. J. Hogben and Kirk Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of Their Historical Traditions,* p. 57.

[23] S. J. Hogben and Kirk Greene, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria: A Preliminary Survey of Their Historical Traditions,* p. 57.

[24] John O. Hunwick, "Islam in West Africa AD. 1000-1800," in J. F. A. Ajayi and I. Espie (eds.), *A Thousand Years of West African History,* 1965.

appear to have been put in place to ensure practical actualization of the above.

Musa's *hajj* to Mecca in 1324-25 and importation of scholars and personnel in various walks of life may be regarded as a practical demonstration in this respect. Apart from fulfilling one of the main religious obligations, by visiting sacred localities in Mecca and Madina, Musa seized the opportunity to establish diplomatic relations with other parts of the Muslim world, among which were Tunis and Egypt. Due to his popularity and display of wealth on his pilgrimage, the name of Mali, being his area of jurisdiction, is said to have begun appearing on the maps of the known world.[25]

On his return from the *hajj*, Musa, as stated earlier, brought with him many Islamic scholars, artists, architects among others, to help him design and build mosques and other worshipping centres and to equip Timbuktu library with religious books and manuscripts to acquire the world standard. This was aimed at promoting Islamic learning and teaching of Islamic sciences as well as acquiring knowledge in other aspects of human endeavours —medicine, astrology, astronomy, law, and theology among others.

Also, Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca, in particular, can be said to be a turning point in the cultural, Islamic and intellectual development of Timbuktu and other centres in West Africa. Among the scholars of repute, he brought on his return from the pilgrimage was a great poet and architect from Granada named Ishaq al-Saheli, who, among other infrastructural works, designed and built a magnificent mosque at Gao and Timbuktu.[26] Using available local materials, he is also said to have constructed a magnificent audience chamber, built of stone and plaster, embellished with gold and silver plated on wooden panels, adjoining Musa's palace.[27] So perfect was the mosque at Timbuktu that the British traveller, Henry Bath, could not help being deeply impressed by the skills adopted at the different dimensions of the edi-

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[25] M. Lalou, H. Lindsay and K. Gerrald (eds.), *Timbuktu Script and Scholarship,* Iziko Museums, 2008, p. 5.

[26] John O. Hunwick, "Islam in West Africa AD. 1000-1800," in J. F. A. Ajayi and I. Espie (eds.), *A Thousand Years of West African History*, 1965. p. 118.

[27] M. Lalou, H. Lindsay, and K. Gerrald (eds.), *Timbuktu Script and Scholarship,* Iziko Museums, 2008, pp. 22-23.

fice.[28] This impression counters the general European assumption that there was no history, science and civilization in Africa before the arrival of the Europeans.

Education and Learning

Ousmane Oumare Kane's description of Timbuktu as an "intellectual center of Muslim West Africa"[29] supports the fact that the ancient city of Timbuktu was in the past a vibrant centre of scholarly activities recognized throughout the Islamic world. It served as a significant base for the widespread Islamic knowledge in various branches of the religion among West African regions. This was facilitated through well-established institutions believed to have existed there for centuries. For instance, by the mid 16th century, Timbuktu is said to have boosted well over 150 schools, having a well-organized curriculum, which covered a wide range of Islamic knowledge, including *tafsir*, *hadith*, jurisprudence, law, linguistic sciences such as Arabic literature, grammar and doctrinal theology.[30]

Schools, mosques and other worship centres served as centres for the acquisition of knowledge. The famous Timbuktu Sankore University was established around the 14th century, during the reign of Mansa Musa. It is reported to be one of the oldest high institutions of Islamic learning, which was superior to that of all other Islamic centres in the world.[31] According to Said Hamdun, and Noel King, the university had the capacity of housing 25,000 students, having one of the largest libraries in the world, containing between 400,000 and 700,000 manuscripts, and had successfully produced professionals in various fields, engineering, architecture, astronomy, law and medicine among others.[32]

The religious, intellectual, cultural and commercial position of Timbuktu was recognized beyond Africa. Scholars from various parts

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[28] Ibid, p. 23. For more details on the life and works of Ahmad Baba; see pages 23-31.

[29] M. Lalou (et.al.), *Timbuktu Script and Scholarship*, Iziko Museums, 2008, p. 7.

[30] Ibid, p. 6.

[31] Ibid, p. 10.

[32] Mauro Nobili, "Introduction: African History and Islamic Manuscript Cultures", in *The Arts and Crafts of Literacy Islamic Manuscript Cultures in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. by Andrea Brigaglia and Mauro Nobili, DeGruyter, 2017.

of the Islamic world fluxed to the city in pursuance of knowledge in one way or the other. On the other hand, hundreds of scholars from the citadel of learning travelled to other parts of Africa and beyond to impart Islamic knowledge and culture to the peoples and communities. While many books were authored and copied in Timbuktu, its indigenous scholars also imported books from other parts of the Islamic world. Therefore, manuscripts found in Timbuktu are often written in different forms of Arabic calligraphy such as *Kufic*, *Hijazi* (*Magbrib*), *Sudani* and *Sahara*.[33]

The flourishing markets in the city brought in merchants from different parts of African kingdoms. Trade and commercial relations were established between Timbuktu and the Mediterranean and Southern Europe. Merchants from cities such as Venice, Genoa, and Granada, among others, exchanged goods and products with Timbuktu and other parts of the Saharan desert.

Timbuktu Manuscripts and Preservation

That ancient Timbuktu became the warehouse of Islamic culture and intellectualism and its long-established heritage is beyond all dispute. According to the President of Mali Ahmadou Toumani Toure:

A remarkable intellectual heritage was constituted in Africa over the past millennium, as demonstrated by the wealth of manuscripts in Arabic and African languages written in Arabic script. One of the regions characterized by this flourishing intellectual activity is Timbuktu… (which) became a renowned centre of Islamic studies. Not only were books brought there, but local scholars also wrote their works to teach the sciences and literature… and various important works in mathematics esoteric, arts, and practices, medicine, poetry… as well as astronomy.[34]

Several factors which made this possible have already been highlighted. However, another fundamental factor yet to be mentioned was the zeal and desire of certain individuals and intellectuals, families

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[33] Okon Edet Uya, "Trends and Perspectives in African History", in O. E. Uya and J. Erim (eds.), *Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History*, Fourth Dimensions Publishing, 1984, pp. 1-9.

[34] Ibid, pp. 1-3.

and organizations to keep and maintain books and manuscripts. This was to ensure the preservation of the same cultural heritage for generations to remember and to benefit from.

Many researchers have recognized prominent scholars as having contributed tremendously to the development of Timbuktu as an enviable centre of scholarship. The high level of recognition enjoyed by Timbuktu followed the institutions of learning said to have been established by hundreds of scholars in the city leading to the formation of "vibrant centres of learning in Songhai Empire".[35] Unlike what happened at the eve of the Moroccan incursion of 1591 and its aftermaths, scholars had enjoyed government support, autonomy and encouragement to do that which is needed in terms of the institutionalization of learning centres and their preservation.

Ahmad Baba (reign 1556-1627) was significant among the scholars who contributed to the scholarly activities and their preservation in Timbuktu. He was described as a philosopher, martyr, jurist, intellectual and distinguished scholar.[36] The New York Times is reported to have described him as the most prominent Timbuktu scholar.[37] Baba stood out as one of the intellectuals who rose and fought against the Moroccan incursion and conquest of the Timbuktu region in 1591. His objection to the incursion may have been informed not only by the occupation of the invaders but probably and more importantly, by the fear of possible destruction and vandalization of the cherished and long well-established cultural and intellectual Islamic tradition in the city of Timbuktu and its environs.

After Baba's arrest in 1593 by the Moroccan Sultan and stay under house arrest in Morocco, little did deter him from his scholastic and intellectual activities. He is reported to have written 29 of his 56 recorded works in Morocco during that period.[38] Ahmad Baba's fear of possible pillage of his rich library and other invaluable books, manuscripts and possessions in Timbuktu by the Moroccan invad-

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[35] Abdi O. Shuriye and Dauda Sh. Ibraim, ibid., p. 702.

[36] John O. Hunwick, "Islam in West Africa AD. 1000-1800", in J. F. A. Ajayi and I. Espie (eds), *A Thousand Years of West African History*, Ibadan University Press, 1965, pp. 113-131.

[37] Abdi O. Shuriye and Dauda Sh. Ibraim, ibid., p. 702.

[38] Ibid.

ers appeared to have become a reality. Mahmud Zouber reports that Moroccan soldiers and a caravan of men, women, and children left Timbuktu with Baba's possessions. However, after his release on 27th March 1607, after spending 14 years in exile, Baba continued with his scholastic career of teaching, writing and propagation of Islam, until his death on April 22nd 1627.[39]

As a prolific writer, Ahmad Baba's works cover a wide range of fields including theology, grammar, *tafsir* of the Holy Qur'an, *hadith*, jurisprudence among others. An institute named after Ahmad Baba has been established in Timbuktu, where important collections of Mali's manuscripts are being kept. He left behind several prominent and distinguished disciples, among whom were Abu al-Abbas al-Maqqari, originally from Tlemcen, who wrote *Nafh al-tib min Ghusni il-Andalus ar-Ratib*, a compendium of the history of Andalus which provided a basis for the scholarly research on the subject until the twentieth century, and Abdulrahman al-Sa'di a Sudanese historian and author of the famous *Tarikh al-Sudan* and Ahmad Ibn al-Qadi a Moroccan historian and poet.[40]

Another prominent scholar, who will continue to be recognized and remembered in Timbuktu was Sheikh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti. He was born in 1729 into a family, noted for Islamic knowledge and poetry, from Arawan, a town not far from Timbuktu. He belonged to a famous tribe called Kunt. The sheikh is said to have settled in Timbuktu in his youth, where he studied the religion of Islam in various disciplines and branches, including law, grammar, morphology, prophetic traditions, Qur'anic exegesis, astronomy, philosophy, and sciences among others.[41] Al-Kunti became a pious and righteous teacher of high moral standing to whom scholars from all parts of the region flocked. He was an individual with many personalities; a religious scholar, politician, conflict resolver, teacher, judge, and protector of refugees.

One of al-Kunti's disciples, al-Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Sa'ad is reported to have alluded to the qualities of his teacher in a poem thus:

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[39] Ibid.

[40] M. Lalou, et al., op. cit., pp. 22-23.

[41] Mahamane Mahamoudou, *The Works of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti*, Free download from www.hsrcpress.ac.za, p. 213.

> Timbuktu was surrounded by safety and abundance when he came to it. He resided in it with security and he leads it to its guidance. It prospered and they too prospered and those who came to it prospered.[42]

Sheikh al-Mukhtar al-Kunti's Contributions to Scholarship

Like Baba Ahmad and Sheikh Zayni Baye of Boujbeha among other scholars, al-Kunti's role in the institutionalization of knowledge and scholarship in Timbuktu cannot be underrated. As a master of many fields in knowledge, Sheikh Mukhtar al-Kunti was famous for his abundant works in several areas of human endeavours. These include Islamic law, Qur'an, hadith, politics, medicine, geography, science, astronomy, poetry, history etc. In addition to his write-ups on religious matters, the Sheikh's concern about the conditions of the community is also reflected in his works. He is reported to have left behind more than 100 works dealing with diverse areas. The formation and institutionalization of brotherhoods in West Africa can essentially be attributed to the Sheikh's efforts. The Qadiriyya, Tijjaniyya and other brotherhoods have since continued to be widely practised in West Africa.[43] One of the writers describes the Sheikh and his work as:

> Sheikh Sidi al-Mukhtar was a veritable religious conqueror, whose miracles are so numerous that they can scarcely be counted. His disciples were missionaries spread through all the countries of West Africa. He made the Kunt into Islamisers and spiritual directors of the tribes of the Sahel and the Sahara. Thanks to the charisma and dynamism of its disciples, this tariqa took root in all the countries of West Africa and became the most important brotherhood from the end of the eighth century.[44]

Due to lack of space, details of works of al-Mukhtar cannot be listed and discussed here. However, for more detail on his works, reference can be made to Mahamane Mahamoudou.[45]

Another prominent scholar worthy of note in the development of Islamic intellectual tradition in the Timbuktu region was Sheikh Abu al-Khayr. Abu al-Khayr emerged much later then the previous scholars

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[42] Ibid, p. 214. retrieved 14/10/2018.

[43] Yahya Oudd al-Bara, *The Life of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti*, Free Download from www.hsrcpress.ac.za. pp. 195-198. Retrieved 16/10/2018.

[44] Ibid.

discussed earlier. Though we do not know the actual date of his birth, Abu Khayr is reported to have been born in Arawan at the turn of the 14th century of the Islamic calendar and died in 1397 A.H (1975 A.D).[45] Like the other scholars noted above, Sheikh Abu al-Khayr hailed from a scholarly family which instilled in him insatiable love for knowledge and learning. He started his early education, particularly Qur'anic recitation, under reputable and highly knowledgeable scholars. These included his brother, Ali Ibn Abdallah ibn Marzuk ibn al-Hill (d.1944), Sheikh al-Talib al-Habib (d.1972), a great scholar versed in the science of the correct rendition of the Qur'an, its calligraphy and other sciences of the Qur'an.

Abu al-Khayr is said to have memorized the Qur'an in his early childhood under Sheikh al-Talib al-Habib. He studied Qur'anic sciences, Islamic law, source methodology in jurisprudence, Prophetic traditions, grammar, linguistics, Arabic literature, logic, and rhetoric. He became a master of many disciplines.[46]

Scholarly Activities

Like Ahmad Baba and Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, Abu Khayr's contributions to the Islamic intellectual tradition in Timbuktu and its environs cannot be underestimated. He is said to had shuttled between Arawan and the city of Timbuktu, spending six months of the year in each. Having been gifted with a bright and luminous intellect and retentive memory, Abu al-Khayr is believed to have the ability to memorize the books of jurisprudence and law which offered him a deep understanding of them and their commentaries. Compared to his contemporaries in the field of scholarship, Abu al-Khayr was described as "a walking encyclopaedia; carrying his knowledge with him wherever he travelled."[47] A document describes him as unequalled in his time in the science of *tafsir* and *hadith*.[48] In the same manner, one of his

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[45] Muhammad Diagayete, "Al-Shaykh Abu al-Khayr: Illustrious Scholar and Pious Friend of God", in Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne (eds), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2008, pp. 49-264.

[46] Ibid., p. 250.

[47] Ibid., p. 252.

[48] See Ahmed Baba Institute, manuscript number 2752, titled *Al-Sa'ada al-Abadiyya fi'l Ta'rif bi'l Ulama Timbukt al-Bahiyya* (*The Perpetual Bliss in Introducing the Scholars of Glorious Timbuktu*), pp. 58-59.

famous disciples, Mahamane Mohamoudou, describes him thus:

> Abu al-Khayr was a scholar, a retainer (of texts), the proof of trustworthy reliability, the master who was depended on to respond with religious guidance to incidents and events in the issuing of fatwas. He was a luminary in the sciences of hadith and all its techniques; completely capable in discerning authentic traditions and spurious ones... He was an imam, an authority, a firm foundation of knowledge, a judge, pious, thorough and meticulous in his views and actions; what he said, ruled or commanded was not marked by hesitation or mixed feelings. He was a paragon of patience, tranquillity, clemency and endurance.[49]

Sheikh Abu al-Khayr left behind, several written works dealing with diverse issues of human endeavours. These include *Tarikh Arawan wa Tawdeni* (The History of Arawan and Tawdeni). The manuscript deals with the history of the establishment of the city of Arawan, its growth and development. Another written work was *Maktub fi al-Waqf* (Treatise on Endowments). The manuscript deals on religious endowments consisting of four folios written in a small but clear script.

Another important work was *Fath al-Karim ala Manzuma Muhammad Yahya ibn Salim al-Musammah Natiwi Shahrayn* (*The Noble Accomplishment on (Elucidating) the Didactic Poem 'Towards Two Months' of Muhammad Yahya Ibn Salim*). The manuscript written in *Sahrawi* font contains most of the rules on the precepts of the Arabic language in such areas as the particles (prepositions, particles of accusativeness, particles of abrogation, etc.) and nouns (definite and indefinite, masculine and feminine, etc.).[50] Also discussed in the work were verbs and their different cases. In summary, the manuscript became an invaluable commentary for a comprehensive knowledge of the precepts of the Arabic language.[51]

Sheikh Abu al-Khayr's works can be said to have covered almost all

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[49] Muhammad Diagayete, "Al-Shaykh Abu al-Khayr: Illustrious Scholar and Pious Friend of God", in Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne (eds), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2008, pp. 252-253.

[50] Muhammad Diagayete, "Al-Shaykh Abu al-Khayr: Illustrious Scholar and Pious Friend of God", in Shamil Jeppie and Souleymane Bachir Diagne (eds), *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2008, p. 257.

[51] For details of these and other written works of Abu al-Khayr, see the same source above, pp. 255-257.

subjects ranging from *tafsir*, *hadith*, law, jurisprudence, grammar, history, poetry among others. From all indications, Abu al-Khayr's works contributed immensely to the Islamic intellectual tradition, not only in Arawan and Timbuktu but also in West Africa and beyond. This great scholar was not only active but an exemplary personality in the peaceful resolution of disputes. His death is therefore said to have created "a vacuum in the region, specifically in Timbuktu and Arawan".[52]

Moroccan Incursion of 1591 and its Impact on Scholarship in Timbuktu

The Moroccan incursion of 1591 was occasioned by several factors. First, the Songhai Empire that controlled vast areas of the land in West Africa almost became disintegrated. Succession disputes among leaders became the order of the day, and as a result, led to the decline of the hitherto tempo of Islamic preaching and scholarship. For instance, after the fall of Mohammad Askia in 1528, most of his successors never showed interest and enthusiasm in the religion and its scholarship. From then on, Songhai went through a period of political instability which was counter productive to the socio-cultural and economic development of the empire.

The incursion of Morocco and its conquest of Songhai in 1591, could, to a large extent, be attributable to this fragile political situation in the region. During the reign of Askia Ishaq II, a Moroccan army under commander Juder Pasha invaded Songhai and brought out the collapse of the central authority of the empire.[53] The various provinces of the Songhai Empire seized this opportunity to assert their independence. Among them, were Timbuktu, Gao and Jenne which were indirectly ruled by Morocco. The failure of Songhai to integrate many of the provinces into a strong united political entity, coupled with its internal disunity, brought about a civil war in the 1580s and succession disputes prepared a fertile ground for the Moroccan incursion.

The impact of this incursion on Islamic scholarship and tradition in West Africa in general, and Timbuktu, in particular, cannot be under-

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[52] Ibid, p. 258.

[53] Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*, Hodder Arnold, 1982, p. 53.

estimated. As stated earlier, it led to greater political instability and a decline in trade and commerce in the region. Following the breakup of Songhai into smaller independent chiefdoms, Islam no longer was the official state religion. This situation is reported to have remained until the 18th century, when the Mande, the Bambara people, whose rulers were either non-Muslims or nominal Muslims like King Sundiata and Sunni Ali, came to dominate large areas of the region. Besides, the possibility of pillage, destruction and vandalization of archives, libraries and personal collections of books and manuscripts cannot be ruled out. For instance, as stated earlier, the Moroccan soldiers and caravans of men and women are reported to have left Timbuktu with large quantities of books and manuscripts.

In a related development, apart from the negative consequences of the Moroccan incursion on Islamic scholarship and its preservation in Timbuktu, there was yet another big challenge to the preservation of manuscripts in the region. This had to do with harsh weather conditions in terms of high temperature and lack of sufficient humidity to which Timbuktu manuscripts were subjected. This has resulted in what the conservators could 'chipping'.[54] It is described as a condition where the edges of a page gradually flake away until there is nothing left of the page, and eventually of the manuscripts.[55] Also, the manuscripts' leather covers are affected by arid weather conditions. Covers which are supposed to protect the body of the manuscripts begin to fail following the effect of weather. It has also been observed that both water and insects, such as termites, contribute to the destruction of, or wreaking considerable havoc on books and manuscripts.

Exhibition of Timbuktu Script and Scholarship

Efforts towards recognition and preservation of Timbuktu manuscripts and Islamic cultural tradition were made recently by South Africa in collaboration with the National Department of Arts and Culture and the Ahmad Baba Institute for Higher Learning and Islamic Research in Timbuktu, Mali. The exhibition title "Timbuktu Script and Scholarship" was hosted by Iziko Museums of Cape Town in South

[54] M. Lalou, et al, op. cit., p. 38.

[55] Ibid.

Africa in 2003.[56] During the exhibition, many topics concerning Timbuktu manuscripts were discussed, among which were "Travelling Timbuktu Books", "Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu" and "Preservation of the Timbuktu Manuscripts" among others.[57]

The exhibition was a joint project between Mali and South Africa, uner the auspicies of former president, Thabo Mbeki. The proceedings of the exhibition was published as a book in 2008 entitled, as earlier mentioned, "Timbuktu Script and Scholarship". The main objective of the project was to ensure the preservation of books and manuscripts of Timbuktu and this can be achieved through providing training, seminars and workshops aimed at producing professionals that can be engaged in conserving and handling of the manuscripts for generations yet unborn.

The selected documents of the exhibition revealed significant and relatively unknown aspects of the cultural heritage of Africa. Historical research on the manuscripts has also provided insights into the value placed by African peoples on scholarship and learning long before the European colonialism.[58]

This collaborative effort between South Africa and Mali, trying to unearth the lost cultural heritage should be emulated by other governments and organizations to explore and rediscover past glories in other towns and places in West Africa that may possess similar manuscripts and antiquities. So that not only the ancient city of Timbuktu, but also other centres and their tradition of learning will become a contemporary inspiration to explore the history and cultural heritage of not only West Africa alone, but African continent as a whole.

Conclusion

From our discussion thus far, it can generally be concluded that Timbuktu had, and to some extent, has continued to occupy an 'unparalleled' educational, intellectual and cultural position in terms of Islamic learning and teaching. It has had a long-established literary

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[56] Ibid., p. 7.

[57] Ibid., p. 6.

[58] Mauro Nobili, "Introduction: African History and Islamic Manuscript Cultures", in *The Arts and Crafts of Literacy Islamic Manuscript Cultures in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. by Andrea Brigaglia and Mauro Nobili, DeGruyter, 2017.

and written Islamic culture, scholarship, book production and preservation. These are of great significance to the study of African history. This counters the Eurocentric claims and assumptions that the history of Africa is only derived from oral history. Such claims seem to underestimate a century's old tradition of Islamic literacy found in many areas of Africa, written in both Arabic and other forms of *Ajami* (non-Arabic works written in the Arabic alphabet).[59]

The manuscripts and books kept in Timbuktu, which cover various areas of human endeavours, suggest the high level of civilization attained by West Africans during the Middle Ages and early modern period. With the new generation of scholars, both in and outside Africa, a revolution in the historiography of Africa has been initiated, aimed at restoring the past of Africa and its civilization.

Otherwise, we will continue to be misguided by the assumption that Africa had no history, science and civilization before its contact with the Europeans. For instance, a renowned professor of history from Oxford University, Hugh Trevor-Rope, while responding to students' demand in 1963, for courses in African history, was reported to have unfortunately replied:

> Perhaps in future, there will be some African history to teach. But at present, there is none. There is only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness and darkness is not a subject of history.[60]

Sharing the same view, a British philosopher, David Hume's comments on Africa in 1768 reads as following:

> I am apt to suspect the negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexity than the white nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No indigenous manufacture among them, no arts, no science.[61]

The Timbuktu Islamic culture and civilization, among other traditional cultural heritages in Africa, have debunked the above and other

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[59] Ibid.

[60] O. E. Uya, "Trends and Perspectives in African History", in O. E. Uya and E. O. Erin (eds.), *Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History*, Fourth Dimensions Publishing, 1984, pp. 1-9.

[61] Ibid.

racially biased and Eurocentric perspectives on the non-historicity of Africa and its peoples. The ability to write and preserve books and manuscripts in Timbuktu served as an indispensable centre of scholarship and Islamic culture. The construction of magnificent mosques, palaces, houses in Timbuktu and other places in West Africa; the emergence of great empires, kingdoms, chiefdoms, caliphates and ability of the African leaders to rule and manage suggests a high level of science and technology, as well as administrative and managerial skill and acumen of African leaders before the colonial intervention.

Libraries in Timbuktu continue the tradition of the families who established them by preserving the available valuable works, which until recently were unknown outside Mali. Scholars in the fields of Islamic studies and African studies are awed by the wealth of information that these manuscripts provide. Indeed, the uses of these works by scholars will likely result in rewriting of the Islamic, West African, and world history.

Islam in Kanem Borno: A Historical Review

Sulaiman Shehu*

Introduction

For many centuries before Islam, the central and western Sudan states have been in contact with other parts of the world by way of long-distance trading activities northwards across the Sahara and the Mediterranean. This long connection was particularly well established during the period of Roman, Carthaginian and Byzantine dominance over North Africa. The western and central Sudan states were mainly engaged in the exportation of gold, ivory, slaves and other local products in exchange for horses, salt, metalware and other numerous products. This was the same pattern which Islam greatly benefited in its penetration of these areas later referred to Bilad al-Sudan. Therefore, with the foundation of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in 610 CE series of changes began to shape the social and political landscape of Arabia and its neighbouring territories that were known to have commonly established links with each other in many aspects of human intercourse for several centuries. In Africa, apart from Egypt and the Maghrib (Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Tunisia) that were militarily conquered and immediately incorporated into the Muslim territories as from 665 CE, the penetration of Islam into the interior areas of western and central Sudan, the Ethiopian lands up to the coastal areas of eastern and southern Africa was gradual until it assumed a high level of relevance especially in areas where political leaders were converted. It was then that Islam was believed to be incorporated into the aspects of governance relative to the disposition of each of the political leaders that controlled affairs in these empires, kingdoms and

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polities in these centuries. This was the situation with the introduction and expansion of Islam in Kanem-Borno as the first state of the central Sudan region to have contact with the religion in the second half of the 7th century. Therefore, this article is an attempt to examine the introduction and expansion of Islam in Kanem Borno from the way it served as one of the frontline contributors to the developments witnessed in the area and indeed the rest of Bilad al-Sudan for many centuries. A study of this nature is significant in understanding how Islamic activities contributed to the transformation of the social, economic and political structure of Kanem-Borno and indeed other parts of central Sudan.

The Environment and Location of Kanem Borno

One of the most studied polities and state systems among the numerous that contributed to shaping the social, economic and political history of central Sudan was Kanem-Borno.[1] This was a central Sudanic state which today covered the entire Lake Chad basin from the northeast of Nigeria to parts of Niger republic, Cameroun, most of Chad and the southern fringes of Sudan. Most of this same area formed part of the regions open savanna with the rest covered under arid and desert vegetation of the larger Sahara Desert region that crossed to North Africa. An important point to stress here is that with all its movements the empire of Kanem-Borno was established within

[1] These research works and writings include among others Abdullah Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan", in J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds), *History of West Africa*, Vol. I, London, 1974, pp. 158-201; John Owen Hunwick, "Songhay, Bornu and Hausaland in the Sixteenth Century" in J. F. A. Ajayi, and Michael Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, pp. 202-239; Muhammad Nura Alkali, "Kanem Borno Under the Sayfawa Dynasty: A Study of Origin, Growth and Collapse of a Dynasty", PhD. Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1978; John Ellis Lavers, "Kanem and Borno to 1908" in Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, Ibadan, Nigerian Heinemann Educational Books, 1980, pp. 187-209; Yusufa Bala Usman and Nura Alkali, (eds.), *Studies in the History of Pre-colonial Borno*, Zaria, NNPC, 1983; Mustapha Abubakar, "The Contributions of Sayfawa *Ulama* to the Study of Islam 1087-1846 AD", PhD Thesis, Bayero University Kano, 1987; Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", Dissertation at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, 1992 and Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, *The Kanuri in Diaspora: The Contribution of Kanem Borno Ulama to Islamic Education in Nupe and Yorubalands*, Lagos, CSS, 2005.

the heart of the converging zone of the trade routes that linked Bilad al-Sudan to the Maghrib, Egypt and Ethiopia up to Hijaz. Thus, the area was quite known and also mentioned in the various historical accounts of travellers, geographers and writers since the pre-Islamic period.[2] Together with the rest of central Sudan states that shared borders with Kanem-Borno, the other areas of savanna zone south of the Sahara called western Sudan also established many years of trade relations with Berbers. This was the desert nomad group that seem to have dominated activities in the region across the Sahara to the Maghrib, the Mediterranean and Egypt at a time these areas the Roman (Byzantine) empire held sway over the entire area. Later, the penetration of Islam through this channel was easily facilitated by the desert Berbers immediately they were conquered and incorporated into the Islamic state with headquarters in Madinah by the Muslim armies of *amir al-muminin* Umar b. al-Khattab as from the year 665 CE

Before the Islamic era, there was in existence a powerful state in the region between Kawar and Fezzan that drew its political foundation to the Arab hero Sayf b. Dhi Yazan under the Sayfawa rule first as Kanem then later Kanem-Borno. Kanem was the first and most powerful of the early central Sudan states established by Zaghawa in an area northeast of Lake Chad bordering Fezzan and Darfur.[3] In the case of Borno, though less famous it mainly expanded its territories from the remnants of Kanem after it was plunged into a civil war by the Bulala and Magumi during the 14th and 15th centuries. Borno had most of its territories south of Kanem in present-day Lake Chad region and Northeast of Nigeria. The conflict which engulfed Kanem was responsible for its eventual consumption into Borno Empire that later became Kanem-Borno with

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[2] For some specific examples of these accounts related to Kanem Borno see Bradford G. Martin, "Kanem Borno and Fezzan Notes on the Political History of a Trade Route", *Journal of African History*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1969 and John Ellis Lavers, "Fezzan, Sudanic or Saharan State" in Lavers Collection, Arewa House Centre for Historical Documentation and Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, Nigeria, File No. 1/8/79. A brief but precise discourse on the Central Bilad al-Sudan where Kanem and Borno Empires before Islam featured can be followed in Muhammad A. Al-Hajj "The Character of the Central Bilad al-Sudan in Historical Perspective" in Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Paul Doornbos (eds.), *The Central Bilad as Sudan: Tradition and Adaptation*, Sudan Library Series (No. 11), Khartoum, al-Tamaddon Press, 1979, pp. 14-19.

[3] Bradford G. Martin, "Kanem Borno and Fezzan Notes on the Political History of a Trade Route", *Journal of African History*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1969.

a new seat of power in *Birnin* Gazargamo as from the second half of the 15th century. A detailed discussion on the tradition of origin in the case of Sayfawa dynasty in Kanem Borno has been done elsewhere, and thus need not to be over flogged.[4] Thus, the main issue of concern here would be that rather than adopt the Hamitic side of the argument on the formation of Kanem-Borno, hinging on a "solely foreign initiative" in the founding of the Chadic region state, the process was one that involved different social and political groups that lived in and around the region of the greater Lake Chad basin for centuries before the supposed coming of Sayf himself to "establish" an empire.[5] In this case, therefore, both Kanem and Borno areas played host to various sets of communities drawn by the environmental setting to meet up with their production needs such as cattle keeping, hunting and trade etc. It was these needs that opened ground for wider movements, mixtures, adaptation and integration among the early communities of Zaghawa, Bulala, Hawdin, Mallel, al-Qaqu and the team of the Sayfawa in the region to evolve new socio-economic and political structures under Kanem and Borno.[6] As in most conclusions of discussions about traditions of origin of states in the central Sudan region, the legend of Sayfawa concerning the foundation of Kanem Borno can most appropriately be regarded as an epoch in the events which produced the larger and complex entities called Kanem and Borno in the area including the introduction of Islam in state affairs.[7]

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[4] Abdullah Smith, "The Legend of the Seifawa: A Study in the Origins of a Legend of Origin" in Bala Usman and Nura Alkali (eds.), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno*, Zaria, NNPC, 1983,

[5] John Ellis Lavers, "Kanem and Borno to 1808", in Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, pp. 188-190.

[6] John Ellis Lavers, "Kanem and Borno to 1808", in Obaro Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, p. 189.

[7] I agree with this view as clearly expressed by scholars of central Sudan history such as Abdullahi Smith and John Ellis Lavers and re-echoed in Muhammad A. Al-Hajj, "The Character of the Central Bilad al-Sudan in Historical Perspective" in Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Paul Doornbos (eds.), *The Central Bilad as Sudan: Tradition and Adaptation*, Sudan Library Series (No 11), Khartoum, al-Tamaddon Press, 1979, p. 16.

The Beginning and Expansion of Islam in Kanem Borno

Generally, the earliest beginning for Islam in Africa was recorded from the time Muslims were hard-pressed in their land by the pagan leaders of Makkah forcing the Muslims to seek refuge (*hijrah*) in an African territory (Abyssinia) on the instruction of their leader and guide Prophet Muhammad[saw] in 615 CE This became the starter event that ushered in an era of spontaneous expansion of regional relations and pushes for the spread of Islam in Africa with its numerous Kingdoms and Empires. The penetration of Islam henceforth was obvious because of the existing numerous human intercourse along the international trade routes linking the various peoples and regions of Africa to Arabia and even Europe hundreds of years before Islam.

The early Arab writings regarding Kanem and the available oral and written sources obtained from Kanem Borno all agreed to Islam first setting in the empire from the conquest of North Africa up to Fezzan and Kawar by the great Muslim army commanded by Uqba b. Nafi' in the year 666 CE (46 AH).[8] Despite this terrain for Islam to register its formal presence in Kanem and other surrounding areas of central Sudan, reference to direct conversion activities regarding Islam remained obscured. However, what became clear was that with the conquest more frontiers became opened to the traversing Muslim travellers, scholars and traders that seem to have immediately swarmed Egypt and the *Maghrib* from the Arabian Peninsula. The area of Kanem and Borno was an important historical zone of convergence for the Trans-Saharan traders coming from Mediterranean coastal cities of Tunis, Qayrawan, Tripolitania, Algiers, Tangier and the eastern bound route linking to Darfur, Nubia, Abyssinia to Yemen, Egypt and to Hijaz.[9] The subsequent expansion of Islamic state activities under a new push into North Africa and Spain by the Umayyads and later

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[8] See Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", p. 2, with all acknowledgements on these three main sources. One of them was the path-breaking writing of Abdullahi Smith on the Legend of the Seifawa (Sayfawa) in Bala Usman and Nura Alkali (eds.), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno*, pp. 16-56.

[9] This eastern linkage served as the main route for those on pilgrimage to Makkah from as far as the coastal end of western Sudan. It was also this terrain which earned Borno the title of *Gabas* (East) for those travelling to the area for Qur'anic and Islamic education since it was on the route to the *Gabas* (Makkah) proper.

Abbasids further boosted conditions for Muslim penetration of the interior of Bilad al-Sudan including into Kanem, Ghana, Mali, Songhay and Hausaland among others. An indication of this was the reference to Islam in Kanem in the writings of b. Sa'id which seem to be the earliest and then Ibn Fadlullah al-Umari (d. 749/1349) who mentioned one Hadi al-Uthmani as the first Muslim in Kanem.[10] The case of Muhammad b. Mani, as the person who brought Islam to Kanem-Borno and indeed converted the *mais* of his time, also came to the fore. He was said to have been in the empire for many years as a scholar seeing trough the conversion of *Mai* Bulu, *Mai* Arku (Arki), then *Mai* Kadai Hawami (Hauwami) before *Mai* Umme (Hume) b. Abd al-Jalil who reigned from 1075-1086 CE as the twelfth *Mai* of Kanem.[11] From then developments on continuous basis brought Islam to the forefront and a major part of the governing principles of Kanem Borno. The rulers began to be identified as major agents in expanding the sphere of Islam not only within Kanem Borno but to other neighbouring territories of the central Sudan region.[12] It, therefore, became a major challenge to the *Mais* of Borno to make conscious efforts to create a cadre of Islamic intellectuals and lay the foundations of an Islamic learning tradition that would help shape the character and identity of Kanem-

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[10] Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", p. 3, quoted the work of al-Umari *Mamalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar* and also referred to another writer al-Bakri. These were significant indications on when Islam began to appear in the public domain of the state of Kanem.

[11] Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under Sayfawa 1470-1808", p. 3 with additional information from Muhammad Al-Hajj, "Some Diplomatic Correspondence of the Seifawa Mai of Borno with Egypt, Turkey and Morocco" in Bala Usman and Nura Alkali (eds), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno,* pp. 156-174.

[12] Muhammad al-Hajj, "Some Diplomatic Correspondence of the Seifawa Mai Borno with Egypt, Turkey and Morocco", p. 171 contained appendix III which was a letter of reply to the Kanem ruler *Mai* Idris Alauma from the Sultan of Morocco Ahmad al-Mansur. The said letter clearly indicated among reasons for Borno's overtures to Morocco was to "... request aid from the *amir al-mu'minin* in the form of troops, muskets and canon to declare a holy war against the unbelievers who were near them in the remote parts of the Sudan." See also detailed discussion in Mustapha Abubakar, "The Contributions of Sayfawa *Ulama* to the Study of Islam 1087-1846", pp. 43 with further analysis in Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, "The Role of Kanem Borno Ulama in the Propagation of Qur'anic Education" in *Al-Maher Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Maiden Edition, Centre for Qur'anic Studies, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, January, 2016, pp. 25-41.

Borno society.[13] This Islamic learning tradition also served as an important source of Borno's intellectual influence and hegemony over the later parts of the *dar al-salam* in Bilad al-Sudan. As would be demonstrated in this article, Kanem-Borno with its historical dominance in Islamic scholarly tradition for many centuries greatly inspired the evolution of the type of Islamic intellectual movements which nurtured the series of social and political transformation in the societies of Bilad al-Sudan. These included the pre-*jihad* reforms by leaders of the Hausa states and their neighbours in western Sudan as well as the 19th-century caliphate system which swept away the preponderance of many political communities of the central and western Sudan regions. Paradoxically, the same inspired movements contributed to the dismembering of Borno Caliphate, consumption of the centuries-old Sayfawa ruling dynasty and the emergence of the al-Kanemi ruling era with its full force in 1846.

Several factors can be considered in trying to understand the historical basis of Islam in Kanem Borno, and the evolution of Islamic intellectual culture and tradition which, from there spread to other areas of Bilad al-Sudan. In the first place, the political leadership in Kanem-Borno began by making it part of general state intent and focus to the design of policies towards the building of a sustainable Islamic intellectual tradition and culture that would shape the affairs of their domain; Kanem-Borno and the Bilad al-Sudan. Some of these policies included opening the area for students, scholars and scholarly activities from within and neighbouring territories of the Islamic world in addition to their long-existing economic and political relations. This idea was intending to attract those engaged in the propagation of Islam, teaching the Qur'an and its sciences as well as other branches of the Islamic knowledge to make Kanem (at the initial stage and later from the 15th century Kanem-Borno) as the leader of *dar al-salam* in Bilad al-Sudan. The example of a scholar and preacher Muhammad b. Mani has been cited where the foundation of the search for scholarship began in Kanem.

This was at the time of *Mai* Umme (Hume) who was considered as

[13] Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", p. 5.

the grand patriarch of the *ashab al-Islam* (the line of Islamic rulers) and the initiator of the expansion programme of Islam in the Chad region as was also continued by his successors.[14] *Mai* Umme was himself a learned leader having studied the whole chapters of the Qur'an and the famous *Risala* of Islamic law. This was an addition to his predecessors who were also said to have studied portions of the Qur'an and Islamic law. Therefore, the urgent need to establish Islamic state institutions for governance and the call to the new religion in non-Muslim areas penetrated by Borno meant that these constant challenges must be up to date with not only transiting scholars from across the Sahara but indigenes as well. Mention was made of local scholars like Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Ya'qub al-Kanemi (608/1211), then Ibrahim al-Kanemi educated in Kanem and travelled to Marrakesh where he taught literature around 595/1198-9 before moving to Andalusia till his death.[15] Similarly, among these great local scholars that travelled wide and acquired Islamic knowledge was Umar b. Uthman, the Imam Masbarma who was appointed to the position by *Mai* Ali b. al-Hajj Dunama (1465-1497). He learned the Qur'an, *tawhid*, Islamic rituals, mysticism, Arabic language, syntax, rhetoric, logic, secret arts, the science of *hadith* and law. All these he acquired in Borno where he later went to the school of Sheikh Ahmad Fatimi b. Muhammad Balyuma in the Machenna (Machina) area, where he studied the sciences of hadith (Prophetic traditions), particularly the *Sahih* of Imam Bukhari, *tafsir*, *fiqh* and *arud* (prosody).[16] He was also at al-Azhar Mosque in Egypt, Makkah and Madinah, then to Baghdad for six months before returning to Borno.[17] Umar b. Uthman was a teacher and scholar who

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[14] Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", p. 4.

[15] Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", pp. 5-6.

[16] See Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", pp. 11-13. According to Bobboyi, this centre of learning in Borno, Machenna pared with Bul which was also a citadel of Islamic scholarship that produced notable scholars of Borno for centuries. One of such was the lineage of al-Kanemi that took over Borno after the collapse of Sayfawa dynasty in 1846.

[17] See John Ellis Lavers, "An Account of Gazargamo" in Lavers Collection, Arewa House Centre for Historical Documentation and Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, File No / 1/5/41.

contributed immensely to the spread of Islamic learning and an intellectual tradition in Borno. Another important era was that of Idris Alauma (1564-1596) who, according to Bobboyi, in his time the *ulama* found themselves securely on the historical map of Borno, a map that they actively helped to shape… with such contributors like the famous Ahmad b. Fartuwa, the Imam al-Kabir (Chief Imam) and a distinguished state historian. Imam Ahmad's academic credentials included his *Kitab Ghazawat Barnu* and *Kitab Ghazawat Kanem*. Ahmad b. Fartuwa was said to be an *'alim* well versed in *adab* (Arabic literature) and the other fields of Islamic learning. Among his scholarly contemporaries were Muhammad b. Aisha and Hajj Umar, "the master of jurisprudence" and ruler of Faya.[18] This was the general pattern under which the *Mais* of Borno strived to produce the number of scholars who sustained the Islamic intellectual tradition and culture that continued to maintain the administrative structures of the caliphate.

Alongside this approach, the *Mais* of Kanem-Borno did not forget their obligation of seeking knowledge. Consequently, while they were seriously committed to the establishment of the Islamic intellectual culture with a focus on developing a class of *ulama*, they got engaged in seeking of knowledge and the implementation of provisions of Islam in state affairs as much as they could. As a result of this, at all times the seat of power was flooded with scholars that were initially sourced from the visiting and later from locals serving as advisers, guides, judges and key functionaries of the caliphate administration. These scholars were usually versed in Islamic law, governance, sciences and other aspects of Islamic knowledge which they also taught in the palaces, mosques and then move around the caliphate and neighbouring entities. One of the remarkable measures to attract a calibre of Islamic scholars for this task was in the establishment of *Birnin* Gazargamo by Sultan Ali b. Dunama (c.1465-1497 AD). *Birni* became a viable base to consolidate the power and authority of the *mais* of Borno as well as serve as a strategic location to extend the influence of the caliphate in the central Bilad al-Sudan on matters of Islamic scholarship and other intellectual activities. Thus, with the establishment of *Birni* there were

[18] Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", p. 16.

strenuous efforts at consolidating the indigenous stands of Islamic scholarship in the new homeland, and at the same time, a significant movement of scholars into the area from the other parts of the Muslim world.[19]

As an important gateway to the popular centres of learning in the Islamic world such as Egypt, Hijaz and the Maghrib, Borno became a famous centre of attraction and a transit point for the long-distance travellers who came around from all parts of the Bilad al-Sudan in search for and or exchange of knowledge. Also, the strategic positioning of Borno on the eastbound route to Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen and the Hijaz further opened the area with pilgrims travelling on *hajj* where it became an important stopover either on the way or on return for these pilgrims that mostly included scholars from various parts of Bilad al-Sudan.[20] The relevance of this has been aptly captured by Abdullahi Smith who surmised that:

> In Kanem the performance of the pilgrimage... appears, even in those early times, to have had greater importance than in other parts of Sudan. The route by which pilgrims then went to the holy cities lay through Egypt which, from the 13th century AD onwards, was emerging as the greatest international centre of learning in the whole of the Islamic world. And the *ulama* of Kanem had certainly established their reputation among the scholars who frequent Cairo in those days.[21]

One of the examples that can be cited was Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi; the *khalifa* of the Tijjaniyya movement in Western Sudan when he passed through Borno while returning from *hajj* in the early 1830s. He later led an Islamic movement to the *jihad* of Segu in the Senegambia region in the 1840s after staying in Sokoto for seven years until the death of *amir al-muminin* Muhammadu Bello. Sheikh Umar al-Futi's

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[19] Hamidu Bobboyi, "The *Ulama* of Borno: A Study of the Relations Between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470-1808", pp. 10-11.

[20] By the mid-19th century, the territory of Borno continued to receive these sets of pilgrims and scholars that impact on Islam and its activities in the area. A case in point was Sheikh al-Hajj Umar al-Futi (1830) and many others before him that visited Borno, learnt or taught Islam on their way to or back from Makkah and Madinah for the Annual *Hajj*.

[21] Abdullah Smith, "The Legend of the Seifawa: A Study in the Origins of a Legend of Origin", p. 21.

stopover in Borno was right at the critical period before the collapse of the Sayfawa rulers. His main pre-occupation then seems to be the promotion of Tijjaniyya sufi doctrine as a tool for mass mobilization of disciples for the ultimate social and political change in his main base at the Senegambia region of western Sudan. Therefore, in Borno, the Sheikh got married and began the recruit of adherents and students of Tijjaniyya before moving to Sokoto.[22] Eventually, Sheikh Umar mobilised a retinue of followers from these two central Sudan caliphates that later formed part of his movement for the *jihad* and establishment of Tukulor Caliphate in the 1840s.[23] More than five centuries before the appearance of Sheikh Umar al-Futi and those scholars of his era, successful political leaders of Kanem-Borno had benefitted immensely from the *hajj* travel in their effort at building a consistent strategy for Islamic intellectual activities and the establishment of Kanem-Borno Islamic learning tradition and culture. Thus, the advantage of following this *hajj* route was not new to Kanem-Borno. Few instances can be cited to understand what gave Kanem-Borno the upper hand against other popular entrepots from across the Sahara to Bilad al-Sudan.[24] By the 12th century, the leaders of Kanem had begun ripping from this route advantage when *Mai* Dunama b. Hume (c. 1086-1140 CE) went on pilgrimage twice and drew the attention of Egyptians and the rest of the Islamic world to the rising fame of Kanem as a reputable caliphate in Bilad al-Sudan. However, his third attempt to go on pilgrimage with all the wealth displays and glaring appearance of his ambition to raise Kanem higher in the map of the Islamic world was ended when he was suddenly drowned in the Red Sea while thousands of his subjects

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[22] Shuaibu Aliyu Shehu, "Islam, Colonialism and Migration: A Study of West African Communities in Sudan 1804-1950", PhD Thesis, University of Khartoum, 2015, pp. 68-75.

[23] Shuaibu Aliyu Shehu, "Islam, Colonialism and Migration A Study of West African Communities in Sudan 1804-1950", pp. 68-75.

[24] A close look at the map above shows many centres of convergence for the trans-Saharan trade route linking the central and western Sudan regions to trade points across the Sahara. Among them are Timbuktu, Gao, Awdaghust, Walata etc. in the west. While to the central region are Agades, Katsina and Kano. In the whole centuries since the beginning of Islam in the 7th century, none of these listed centres surpassed the widespread Islamic intellectual activities existing in the learning centres of Kanem Borno. In fact, some of them were known in the sense of being important trade centres only.

helplessly watched from the shores of the sea.[25] Despite this unfortunate incident, *Mai* Dunama Dibalemi who reigned from 1210-1248 CE saw the establishment of a *madrasa* (school) in al-Fustat. The historic institution was dedicated to studies of the Maliki law in addition to its building serving as accommodation for pilgrims and visitors to Cairo from Borno.[26] The accomplishment of this initiative meant opening a new chapter in the history of Islamic intellectual activities in Bilad al-Sudan. From then, Borno became the melting pot for building a strong and rich human resource bank to the benefit of the emergent Muslim polities of Bilad al-Sudan similar to their counterparts in the Maghrib, Hijaz and Ottoman regions. The *mais* of Borno maintained their commitment through visits and the annual *hajj* with Egypt as a key transit point for the pilgrims coming through central Sudan. This consistency by the *mais* of Kanem Borno to Makkah and Madinah brought about avenues for building an intellectually equipped Islamic state system through regular contacts with global scholars where learning and exchange of knowledge was the norm.

Another key aspect of Borno's early gain in the development of Islam and Islamic intellectual tradition ahead of other states in the Bilad al-Sudan related to the point above was in the area of establishing diplomatic relations with the major powers and caliphates of the Islamic world. From the 13th to 16th centuries, Kanem had established diplomatic relations with the Hafsids dynastic rulers of Tunis, the Tuat in Algiers. While in the later years, the *mais* of Kanem-Borno established linkages with the Ayyubid ruling families of Cairo, the Ottoman

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[25] According to a translation of the *Diwan Sultan Bornu* in Herbert Richmond Palmer, *The Bornu, Sahara and Sudan*, London: John Murray, 1936, p. 91, the death of *Mai* Dunama in the Red Sea was a conspiracy planted by apprehensive Egyptians who feared to lose their grip of their state to his display of wealth expressed in form of the increasing hundreds of slaves that have been accompanying him to Cairo since the last two pilgrimages. This, however, did not stop subsequent *mais* of Kanem from vigorously pushing their new caliphate to fame in the scene of world Islamic centres of social and political transformation.

[26] *Riwaq al-Barnu* has been referred here in Abdullah Smith, "The Legend of the Seifawa: A Study in the Origins of a Legend of Origin", pp. 52-53 under his footnote 15 where he was critical of al-Umari's grudging admission of the reputation of *ulama* of Borno in al-Azhar colleges. However, with a grudge or not the point most certainly to make here is there is no doubting the exceptionality of Borno scholars among those from Bilad al-Sudan in terms of the active role of the state in designing and pursuing the intellectual development of its people.

Turks then under Sultan Murad III (1574-1595), then the Sa'di Sharifian ruling dynasty based in Faz, the Maghrib.[27] Although most of the relations were intended for military assistance, the boosting of trade and other economic relations they nevertheless opened up more areas for mutual Islamic scholarly exchanges and benefits between Kanem-Borno, North Africa and the Middle East. The diplomatic exploits to the Ottomans, Tunis and Faz was heightened with the expectation of military assistance towards the expansion of Kanem-Borno influence in Hausaland, the Tuareg region, Wadai up to the border with Darfur down to the Adamawa hills. Islam made some passionate inroads through some of these exploits undertaken by Kanem-Borno from the 13th century up to the 19th century when the *jihad* of Uthman b. Fodio dismembered most of these territories from the control of Borno and incorporated them into the Sokoto caliphate.[28] During the years of Mai Idris b. Ali (Alauma) 1569-1600 CE, series of diplomatic twists between Kanem-Borno on the one side and the states of Tripoli, Faz (Morocco), Fezzan and Ottomans kept recurring with each working to outplay the other in a complexly created atmosphere of expansionist ambition, fear and mistrust among the more powerful Muslim states of Morocco and Ottoman.[29] Although all the diplomatic relations were established with leading Muslim states in North Africa and the Ottoman, the major points of the interplay were not limited to the military and promoting political ambitions of each side. For Borno at home in the Bilad al-Sudan, it was rather an unwavering act to assert itself as the power

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[27] Muhammad al-Hajj has discussed some aspects of the External relations of Borno in Muhammad al-Hajj, "Some Diplomatic Correspondence of the Seifawa (Sayfawa) Mais of Borno with Egypt, Turkey and Morocco" in Bala Usman and, Nura Alkali (eds.), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno*, pp. 156-173. The pages include translated copies of three letters sent in reply to messages from the *Mai* to Barquq of Egypt, Murad of Ottoman and Ahmad al-Mansur of Morocco. These were the most influential Sultanates of the Islamic world while Kanem Borno was the most powerful emergent Sultanate south of the Sahara with the widest diplomatic relations connecting it to the rest of the Muslim world.

[28] This has been briefly but aptly captured in A. Benisheikh, "The 19th Century Galadimas of Borno" in Bala Usman and Nura Alkali (eds), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno*, pp. 140-155.

[29] John Ellis Lavers, "Kanem and Borno to 1808" in Ikime Obaro (ed), *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, p. 195-199 and Hamidu Hamidu, "Ambiguity and Co-Existence: An Overview of the Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Central Bilad al-Sudan During the Pre-Colonial Period", *Arewa House Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 23-53.

that be in carrying Islam to non-Muslim areas as well as consolidating the series of gains it made in getting many of the other Muslim states in the region to declare their allegiance to its leadership.[30] In one of the correspondences from *Mai* Idris Alauma to the Ottoman Caliphate, Borno was very specific on asking for assurance of free movement for pilgrims, scholars and then merchants in Ottoman territories along the route to Makkah. Al-Hajj Yusuf was the ambassador of Borno who delivered the message to Sultan Murad III and the free movement aspect was immediately granted with orders to the provinces of Egypt, Tunis and Fezzan to comply. This was a major achievement for the socio-political and economic well-being of Borno, including areas of intellectual activities of Borno scholars traversing around North Africa and the Hijaz in search of knowledge.[31] Thus, in all its diplomatic adventures, there was little underplay of Borno's desire to boost the Islamic intellectual capacity as the supposed custodian of the religion in Bilad al-Sudan. Not only that, having an unchallenged leadership in Bilad al-Sudan for Borno in both political and intellectual senses would mean ending the ambitions of the Ottomans in extending direct hegemony deep into the central Bilad al-Sudan, an indication which became glaring with the Ottoman sacking of Fezzan in 1575 and the determination of its fighters to move further.[32] Be that as it may, the fact

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[30] This was largely the definition proposed on understanding the much argued "vassalage" of Hausa states in their relations with Kanem Borno between the 15th to the beginning of the 19th century when the Sokoto Caliphate destroyed most of these "hegemonic" connections Borno enjoyed. See Yusuf Bala Usman, "A Reconsideration of the History of Relations between Borno and Hausaland before 1804 AD" in Bala Usman and Nura Alkali (eds.), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno*, pp. 175-210, is perhaps the most cogent work undertaking on all the Hausa States concerning Borno. There are, however, other studies on Kano and Zazzau which further explained the origin and nature of Borno's relations with its southern neighbours. For these see Barkindo, Bawuro M. Barkindo, "Kano Relations with Borno: Early Times to c. 1800", Second International Conference on the History of Kano, Bayero University Kano, 1985 and Shuaibu Shehu, "Aspects of Borno-Zazzau Relations in the 19th Century", *Al-Sahwah Islamic Journal*, Second series, April, 2013, pp. 9-17.

[31] Muhammad Nura Alkali, "Kanem-Borno Under the Sayfawa: A Study of the Origin, Growth and Collapse of a Dynasty (891-1846)", p. 228-254 provides detail discussion on the origin, nature and implication of the forms of diplomatic relations engaged by the Sayfawa rulers of Kanem Borno where the issue of Islam and its development was not left out.

[32] John Ellis Lavers, "Kanem and Borno to 1808" in Ikime Obaro (ed), *Groundwork*

remains that Borno made gains on the side of Islam and its scholarly progress. The example of *Mai* Idris b. Ali, as cited by Lavers, is perhaps sufficient in this connection that: North African scholars were attracted to the palace court in *Birnin* Gazargamo which made them influential in the reforms carried out to bring Borno more on the path of Islamic law (*shari'a*), and reduce the strength of customary beliefs in state affairs. By this, *Mai* Idris earned a reputation as an astute diplomat, brave warrior, strong administrator and committed adherent to the teachings of Islam in governing his territory drawing the attention of scholars from neighbouring Islamic centres of learning from across the Sahara.[33] This also worked for Borno based scholars and students who gradually swarmed the entire Bilad al-Sudan and contributed to intellectual build up over centuries in the region.

Indeed, we have observed that this scholarly build-up approach pursued in Borno was extended also to other states of the Bilad al-Sudan where scholars from Borno served as the intellectual bank of the emergent Muslim political communities. To demonstrate some few examples, the crisscrossing of Borno scholars around the neighbouring Fombina and Hausaland has been going on since the early 14th century with a major impact on the social and political fortunes of the various states and kingdoms. In Fombina, an interesting stretch of Islamic learning and intellectual culture between Borno and Adamawa was said to have begun through the historical long-distance trade route of the two areas that have been existing since the pre-Islamic period. The *Tsangaya* Qur'anic education system was most common and it gained more prominence from the 17th and 18th century. This was as a result of the mass migration of people from Borno to Adamawa in search of a peaceful area to pursue their life activities which included scholarship. In Song Kanuri, Qur'anic centres and a mosque were es-

of Nigeria History, p. 195 and Hamidu Bobboyi, "Ambiguity and Co-Existence: An Overview of the Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Central Bilad al-Sudan During the Pre-Colonial Period" has indicated this dilemma for Borno's relations with the Ottomans until the Sayfawa Dynasty was replaced by the al-Kanemis when formally full allegiance was declared to the Ottomans by the new rulers of Borno.

[33] This has been inference to this in the writings of John Ellis Lavers. See John Ellis Lavers, "Kanem and Borno to 1808", in Ikime Obaro (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigeria History*, p. 197.

tablished. The centre became famous attracting scholars and students from Borno itself, Garwa and Ngaudere in the Cameroun of today.[34] The *jihad* leader of Fombina Modibbo Adama was himself a student and scholar in Borno for a decade before returning to lead other scholars on the historic Islamic intellectual activities that culminated into the *jihad* of Uthman b. Fodio and the establishment of Fombina Emirate.[35] Similarly, in 1846, the Lamido of Adamawa Modibbo Lawal was said to have sought and gotten over one hundred scholars from the Shehu of Borno to be part of Islamic propagation and teaching activities embarked upon as a means of consolidating the *jihad* in the emirate.[36] These scholars sent by the Shehu of Borno to Fombina were drawn from centres of learning spread across the caliphate such as Konduga, Goniri, Garuwa, Geidam, Ngurno among others. Goni Muktar al-Barnawi and his team also made way into Jalingo from Kukawa where he established a mosque and Islamic centre at Mutum Biyu teaching Islamic sciences to itinerant students drawn from parts of Adamawa region.[37] Generally, it seems that with the free flow of traffic along the ancient trade links between Borno and the upper Benue Valley, the area was eventually incorporated into the famous *gabas* (east) referring to Borno where all students and scholars look to travelling in search of Qur'anic and other Islamic knowledge. The influence of Borno scholars in the development of an Islamic education and governance tradition spread beyond Fombina, Jalingo and entire upper Benue Valley to Cameroon and the Central African Republic.

By the 15th century, there were movements of Borno scholars to Hausaland, especially to Kano, Katsina and Zazzau. This period co-

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[34] Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, "The Role of Kanem Borno Ulama in the Propagation of Qur'anic Education", p. 31.

[35] Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, "The Role of Kanem Borno Ulama in the Propagation of Qur'anic Education", pp. 31-32. As if Gazali's research on the Borno influence on Islam in Fombina was a direct response to Abubakar, S, "Relations Between Borno and Fombina Before 1901" in Bala Usman and Nura Alkali (eds), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno*, pp. 221: "...the Kanuri (Borno) probably prepared grounds for the spread of Islam among the peoples of Fombina which largely came through their commercial venture."

[36] Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, "The Role of Kanem Borno Ulama in the Propagation of Qur'anic Education", p. 32.

[37] Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, "The Role of Kanem Borno Ulama in the Propagation of Qur'anic Education", p. 32.

incided with the foundation of *Birnin* Gazargamo and subsequently other urban centres that linked up Borno with its western neighbours. In Kano, the beginning was the exiled Dagachi from Borno who came with his subjects, merchants and scholars and was settled by the King in Dorayi. Later in the centuries, other scholars such as Sheikh Karaski, Sheikh Magumi and Sheikh Kabi and Goron Duma also moved into Kano and became leading teachers and advisers on Islamic and administrative matters to the Kings. The legacies of these scholarly traditions still exist in Kano. Also among the Hausa states, Zazzau was one of the earliest places moved into by cattle rearing groups, traders and scholars from Borno where they established themselves in Zaria and other settlements throughout the kingdom. Soon they had centres of learning and the scholars occupied key positions as representatives of the caliphate of Borno and advisers to the administration of Zazzau.[38] The significance of Liman Kona and Limancin Kona quarters, as well as the palace position of *magajin malam* and *bakon Borno* in Zazzau, have been discussed elsewhere.[39] Indeed, scholars of Borno played important roles in the social and political construction of Zazzau which began since the first Muslim reformer in Zazzau Muhammad Rabo became king in the 16th century. A retinue of scholars from Borno that have been in Zazzau took an active position during the *jihad* and from them, a ruling family of *Barebari* (people of Borno origin) emerged as one of the ruling houses of the emirate up to today.[40] The character of this role was similar and has continued in most other areas of the Bilad al-Sudan.[41] In Katsina, for instance, Abu Abdullah b.

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[38] Abdullah Smith, "Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under the Hausa Kings" in M. J. Mortimore, (ed.), *Zaria and its Region*, ABU, Zaria, 1970 with additional analysis on the Borno-Zazzau connection. See Shuaibu Shehu, "Aspects of Borno-Zazzau Relations in the 19th Century", pp. 9-17.

[39] Abdullah Smith, "Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under the Hausa Kings", p. 93 and Shuaibu Shehu, "Aspects of Borno-Zazzau Relations in the 19th Century"; S. A. Sani, "The Foundation of Fulani Rule", B.A., *History Research Essay*, Department of History Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1972, pp. 8-10 and S. Ladan, "Ethnic Identity in Zaria City", B.A., *History Research Essay*, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1973, p. 34.

[40] The Barebari title as far those in Zazzau were concern could either be of Kanuri or Fulani extraction as in Borno there was a large concentration of Fulani popularly referred to Fullata Borno.

[41] More details on this can be found in Yusuf Bala Usman, "A Reconsideration of the History of Relations Between Borno and Hausaland Before 1804 A.D", in Bala

Masani b. Muhammad al-Barnawi a scholar of the 17th century whose parents came from Borno along with his student Danmarina revived an Islamic intellectual tradition that was respected and supported by the king of Katsina Muhammadu Jan Hazo of 1671-1685. On the survival and relevance of this intellectual tradition in the social and political structures of Katsina, "it has been aptly demonstrated that the scholar's position as a leading *malam* and adviser was institutionalized after his death and in the end, his name became the title held by his descendants..., living in the Masanawa quarter of the *Birnin Katsina*, around his house and mosque."[42] Studies also on the Rima basin section of central Sudan in the 18th century revealed the influence of Bornoan scholars in the pre-*jihad* and *jihad* periods. Mention was made of Islamic scholars and students in a team of about two hundred migrants from Borno that moved into Gummi and later Saifawa where they eventually established a Qur'anic learning centre that the *jihad* leaders, Uthman b. Fodio and his brother Abdullah b. Fodio attended during their intellectual sojourn.[43] This, therefore, goes to further demonstrate the continued influence and efficacy of Borno's scholarly tradition in the fruition of a largely consistent intellectual pedagogy which defines the pattern of the drive for social and political reinforcement and transformation in Northern Nigeria today.[44] In the deeper areas of present central Nigeria, there existed records

Usman and Nura Alkali (eds.), *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Borno* and Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, "The Role of Kanem Borno *Ulama* in the Propagation of Qur'anic Education", pp. 25-41.

42 Yusuf Bala Usman, "A Reconsideration of the History of Relations Between Borno and Hausaland Before 1804 A. D.", pp. 199-200.

43 A. A. Sifawa, "The Role of Kanem Borno *Ulama* in the Intellectual Development of the Bilad al-Sudan", Conference on Impact of Ulama in the Central Bilad al-Sudan, Centre for Trans-Saharan Studies, University of Maiduguri, 1991.

44 Interestingly, this type of argument was once brought to the fore by the Late Professor Abdullahi Smith in the 1970s in an interview he granted to Radio Television Kaduna (Federal Radio Nigeria, Kaduna or Radio Nigeria Kaduna as the case may be). He spoke on the significance of the then visit of the Shehu of Borno to the Sultan of Sokoto whereas the two seats of caliphates were considered strange bedfellows since the *jihad* of Uthman b. Fodio which led the sides to war on many occasions and the eventual territorial ripping of parts of Borno into the Sokoto caliphate. Audiotapes of the interview are deposited in the Music Archives of Radio Nigeria Kaduna (FRCN Kaduna). I am grateful to the former archivists, Late Ahmad Usman Girei and Malam Yahaya Ahmed Kajuru for drawing my attention and making the tapes available during my M.A History research from 2004-2010.

of the influential presence of Borno based scholars along with those who were attracted by the historical regional and international trade. By the 17th century, most of the communities like Lafiyan Barebari, Nasarawa, Egon, Makurdi, Akwanga, Kurgimi, Shendam, Keana, Obi, Doma, Kutigi, Bida, Lapai, Borgu had a good number of Borno scholars engaged in Qur'anic education and other Islamic intellectual activities. In Lapai, a certain Goni Mala and Goni Adam Rone al-Barnawi established Tsangaya School and mosques which attracted students from beyond the area of Nupeland. Also in the case of Borgu and Bida, the family of Sheikh Muhammad al-Turkummani (Turkumami) al-Barnawi (Waziri Bida) had established themselves in the second half of the 19th century having migrated into the area from Borno.[45] According to a recent study on this scholarly family, they are from children and grandchildren with the most famous of them that grew in intellectual activities around Borgu and Bida like Sheikh Abdullah b. Muhammad al-Turkummani (son) and Muhammad b. Abdullah b. Muhammad al-Turkummani (grandchild) who was well educated in his seven years travel to Makkah and Egypt between 1902-1909.[46] The Bornoan scholars had also recorded their presence in Ilorin, Ibadan, Lagos and many other parts of Nigeria since the centuries before the colonial period.[47] Similarly, *Birnin* Gazargamo, Nguru and later Kukawa along with many towns and settlements of Borno had played host to students and scholars from various parts of Bilad al-Sudan engaged in learning the sciences of the Qur'an, Hadith, Jurisprudence, Arabic and all its branches. This function which Borno played for centuries also went alongside other centres that grew as important citadels of Islamic scholarly activities in the *Birane* (pl. city) of Hausaland and their neighbours. The case of Kano, Katsina, 'Yan doto (before the *jihad* of Sheikh Uthman b. Fodio in 1804), Zaria, Sokoto, Gwandu of Kebbi, Bida, Ilorin among many emerging as centres of convergence

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[45] Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, "The Role of Kanem Borno *Ulama* in the Propagation of Qur'anic Education", p. 36.

[46] M. M. Jimba and I. S. Otukoko (eds.), *Ulama al-Imarah (Scholars of the Emirate)*, Vol. 1, Centre for Ilorin Manuscripts and Culture (CIMAC), Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria, 2015, pp. 56-57.

[47] Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, "The Role of Kanem Borno *Ulama* in the Propagation of Qur'anic Education", pp. 35-37. This was part of Gazali's doctoral research on the Kanuri in Diaspora which has already been published. See footnote no. 2 above.

by students and scholars moving around in search and exchange of knowledge has been well maintained particularly under the emirate system of the Sokoto Caliphate.

Conclusion

Finally, studies related to the significance of the Kanuri and Bornoan connection in the historical development of Islam in Nigeria seem to maintain the single dominance of Borno based scholars as the main source of Qur'anic studies and other fields of Islamic sciences for centuries both at home in the areas of Borno or in Diaspora. However, in as much as the Borno factor was key in the development of Islam in northern Nigeria, the issue was not Kanuri in the ethnic sense some of us would want to portray. Since the beginning of Islam's inroad into Kanem, the competitive struggle by students and scholars to learn and build their intellectual capacity was not exclusive to Kanuri. There were very many people from the ethnic groups that constituted the empire who distinguished themselves as scholars since those early years and the situation has not changed in its outlook. In the course of the discussion apart from Kanuri, there were Fullata scholars, Fezzan, Arab, Wadai, and Hausa etc. Indeed, quite a number of the scholars who joined the *jihad* of Uthman b. Fodio were of the Fullata extraction that originally had their base in Kanem-Borno for centuries. Many of the eastern emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate were established from the remnants of Kanem-Borno which was on the decline at the outbreak of the *jihad* in 1804.

The Foundation of the Sokoto Caliphate 1774-1817

Alkasum Abba*

Introduction

The Sokoto Caliphate became one of the largest and most important states in Africa, in the 19th century. This caliphate, which started in 1804 from Gobir Kingdom in Hausaland extended to cover a significant part of the present day Northern Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Northern Cameroon, Baghirmi and Bindir in Chad Republic and Southern Niger Republic. At its height, the caliphate included over thirty emirates covering an area of about 150,000 square miles.[1] The caliphate, therefore, became a political phenomenon in the history of *Bilad al-Sudan*.[2]

The history of the caliphate began when a simple and ordinary young Islamic teacher and preacher, called Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, became dissatisfied with the existing social, political and economic order in his society. He was also furious with the appalling level of ignorance, backwardness, the unbridled tyranny, corruption and the unrestrained impunity of the leaders of Hausaland. So, he decided to embark on public mobilization, to educate and draw the attention of the ordinary people (*talakawa*), to the awful conditions in their societies. This enabled the Shehu to initiate the process, which not only set into motion the overthrow of the old order in Hausaland and beyond but also paved the way

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1 See Muhammad Nura Alkali, "Colonialism and the Transformation of Value Systems" in A. M. Yakubu, et al, in *Northern Nigeria: Century of Transformation*, Baraka Press, 2004, p. 204.

2 It will be interesting to clarify that the concept *Bilad al-Sudan*, lands of blacks (sudan) replete in the writings of the Sokoto *mujahidun*. See Yusufu Bala Usman, "Transformation of Political Communities: Some Notes on A Significant Dimension of the Sokoto Jihad", in Y. B. Usman (ed.), *Studies in the History of Sokoto Caliphate*, Sabon-Gari Publishers, 1979, p. 22.

for the establishment of a new society, whose administrative system was built on justice, fairness and the rule of law, all anchored on the firm foundations of the Islamic *sharia* principles.

The Period of Peripatetic Teaching, 1774-1793

The establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate was started by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio in 1774. In that year, he was twenty years old and decided to embark on a vigorous campaign of teaching, preaching and enlightening the ordinary people (*talakawa*), about their plight and the plight of their society with the aim of finding a solution. In the course of his teaching and preaching, he focused on strengthening Islam by purging pagan practices and demanding upon leaders to govern based on the principles of justice and fairness as enshrined in the Islamic *sharia* system. From his home base at Degel, he travelled to Daura, Niger, Zamfara, Zaberma, Kebbi and a number of other places, along with his companion and junior brother, Abdullahi, who was equally a scholar of high regard. Because of the level of ignorance in some places, the Shehu had to spend years in these locations. Zamfara was one of such places where he had to spend as many as five years, teaching and preaching.[3]

The Shehu moved from one town to another, covering the length and breadth of Hausaland. This made it possible for him to become a public figure, not only in his home country Gobir but in the entire Hausaland. In the course of time, the young Shehu was able to establish a reputation and built a network of schools, a large following and became a formidable religious and political figure not only in his home country of Gobir but far into the larger Hausaland and beyond. This was facilitated by the fact that the Shehu in his preaching combined religious, social and sometimes political issues, all of which were the challenges facing the people. Significantly, he was able to locate them and proffered their solutions within the framework of Islamic religion, its rules and regulations.

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[3] See Usman M. Bugaje and Ibrahim M. Jumare, "Shehu Usman Dan Fodio 1804-1817, The Founder of the Sokoto Caliphate" in Alkasum Abba, Ibrahim Jumare and Shuaibu S. Aliyu (eds.), *Sultans of Sokoto: A Biographical History Since 1804*, Arewa House, 2017, p. 7.

After about a decade and a half of peripatetic teaching and the raising of public consciousness, Shehu Usman became a powerful and influential personality in Hausaland with a large following, called the *jamaa*. An illustration of the power and influence of Shehu and his community could be seen in his 1788 encounter with the King of Gobir, Bawa. In that year, the political pressure of the impact of the Shehu in his kingdom worried him to such an extent that he assembled scholars for *eid* prayers with the intention of assassinating the Shehu. However, the Shehu was accompanied by a large gathering of more than one thousand scholars and as the plot failed, the king resorted to buying the favours of the Shehu with money in the form of gold, which he instantly rejected. But this gave the Shehu an opportunity to make important demands for his community from the King of Gobir. Instead of the money, Shehu demanded:

> Neither I nor my *jamaa* are in need of your money. However, we want five 'cloaks' from you:
>
> 1) To allow me to invite the people to Allah in your land,
> 2) Not to stop anyone who intends to respond to my invitation,
> 3) To treat every person wearing turban or a veil with respect,
> 4) To free all political prisoners, and
> 5) Not to burden your subjects with unjust taxes.[4]

The fact that the King of Gobir was forced to accede to the five demands of Shehu and his *jamaa*, some of which are clearly political, is an illustration that the momentum for the build-up to the *jihad* was mounting. The Shehu was able to establish a following and create a movement principally because the ordinary people believed and trusted him; he lived an ordinary life just like them. This life style of the Shehu was captured by Usman Bugaje and Ibrahim Jumare, when they pointed out that:

> From his early manhood he lived a very simple life in that he had only one pair of trousers, one turban, and one gown. He ate abstemiously and was disinterested in wealth and possessions, which he regarded as corruption. He earned his living by twisting rope, an occupation he could

[4] Quoted from ibid., p. 9.

carry on while reading or teaching. His friends were men of his own kind: kinsmen, scholars, and visionaries who shared his interests and values.[5]

The Momentum for the *Jihad*, 1794-1804

Although the preparation for the *jihad* was apparent from 1788 it was not until the period 1794-1804 that it became unavoidable. In this period the Shehu was in the age bracket of between 40-50 years and had established a comfortable following that made it possible for him to basically confine his activities to his home country of Gobir. The concentration of the activities of Shehu on Gobir helped to create a centre of tension, which ignited the *jihad* and extended it from here to other parts of Hausaland and beyond. In this period, the Shehu concentrated his writings, campaigns and mobilization by exposing the bankruptcy of the governments in Hausaland. One of the most powerful books he wrote in this period was *Kitab al-Farq*, where he succinctly brought out the corrupt nature of governments in Hausaland and called for change. He said:

> … One of the ways of their government is the building of their sovereignty upon three things: the people's person, their honour, and their possessions; and whomsoever they wish to kill or exile or violate his honour or devour his wealth they do so in pursuit of their lusts, without any right in the sharia. One of the ways of their government is their imposing on the people monies not laid down by the sharia, being those which they call *janghali* and *kurdinghari* and *kurdin salla*… One of the ways of their government which is also well known is that whoever dies in their country, they take his property, and they call it 'inheritance,' and they know it is without doubt injustice. One of the ways of their governments is to impose tax on merchants, and other travelers… One of the ways of their government which is well known, is that if you have an adversary (in law) and he precedes you to them, and gives them some money, then your word will not be accepted by them, even though they know for a certainty of your truthfulness, unless you give them more than your adversary gave… One of the ways of their government is lying and treachery and pride, and you cannot see one of them who does not give himself airs, and anyone who shows the least lack of respect (for them), they punish him for that;

[5] Ibid., p. 4.

> and these characteristics which have been mentioned, all of them are according to the way of the unbelievers in their governments, and everyone who follows their way in his emirship then he has in truth followed the way of Hell fire.[6]

It was such powerful inspirational preaching and mobilization in which the Shehu touched the sensitive nerves of the ordinary people and their worries ranging from over taxation to blatant oppressive policies and the gross injustice pervading the entire judicial system, which over the period of thirty years changed his students and the larger society of Hausaland into people yearning for social transformation in their society and their lives.

The Birth of the Caliphate, 1804-1808

The year 1804 was marked by the declaration of the *jihad*, which triggered the beginning of the process of the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. Therefore, a major turning point in the history of the evolution of the caliphate was the focus of the struggle the Shehu was engaged against the rulers of Gobir. This development which involved the application of the popular doctrine of *hijrah* (of Shehu and his *jamaa*) from Degel to Gudu was a watershed on the path leading to the foundation of the caliphate.[7] However, Degel had attracted scholars, teachers and students from areas far beyond the boundaries of Hausaland. This made it possible for the *jihad* in Gobir to expand rapidly and spread to other parts of Hausaland and beyond, with relative ease. In this context, the tradition of *tajdeed*[8] played a crucial part in the *jihad*

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[6] Hamid Bobboyi and Alkasum Abba (eds.), *Adamawa Emirate, 1809-1901: A Documentary Source Book*, Centre for Regional Integration, 2009, pp. 11, 14-17.

[7] Gudu lays at the Southern border of the Gobir territory and it shares border with Kabi during the time. The choice of Gudu was strategic from a military point of view as it lays outside the river valley with water advantages and was far from Alkalawa, the capital of Gobir. At present, Gudu is a local government headquarters in Sokoto State. For details see, Usman M. Bugaje, "A Comparative Study of the Movements of Uthman Dan Fodio in Early Nineteenth Century Hausaland and Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi in Late Nineteenth Century Sudan", MSc Thesis, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, 1981, pp. 91-93.

[8] Usman M. Bugaje, "The Tradition of *Tajdid* in Western Bilad al-Sudan: A Study of the Genesis, Development and Patterns of Islamic Revivalism in the Region, 900-1900 A.D.", PhD Thesis, University of Khartoum, 1994.

movement, as people embraced Shehu Usman Dan Fodio as the messiah being awaited.

There had been several attempts at making Islamic reforms in the Western Sudan, which had failed. In fact, one of the Shehu's eminent teachers and a distinguished scholar, Sheikh Umar ibn Jibril, engineered one but it failed, partly because of his hard and harsh interpretation of Islam in contrast to the Shehu's moderate views and opinions. The political situation in Gobir reached a boiling point in February 1804 when Yunfa, the King of Gobir decided to expel Shehu from his kingdom. Following this expulsion order, Shehu was preparing to move out of his home town Degel and relocate to Gudu, a settlement outside the territory of Gobir.

However, this decision of Yunfa created a big problem for the king and his government because a significant number of the population of Gobir chose to emigrate with Shehu. Thus Shehu and his followers left Degel on Tuesday 21st February, 1804 to settle at Gudu. The fact that the King of Gobir was preparing to attack Shehu and his *jamaa* at Gudu made the declaration of the *jihad* urgent. As soon as the *jihad* was declared at Gudu, the *jamaa* unanimously appointed Shehu as the *amir al-muminin*. This singular act of election of the *amir al-muminin* and the paying of allegiance marked the birth of the Sokoto Caliphate in February 1804.[9]

Soon after the declaration of the *jihad* and his election as the *amir*, Shehu issued, in his publication, the *Wathiqa,* an instruction calling on the people to seize political power from the under listed rulers of Hausaland, namely:

> 1) To fight against an unbelieving king who has never in his life declared 'There is no deity but Allah', and to take the reins of government from him.
> 2) To fight against an unbelieving king who declares 'There is no deity but Allah' for the mere purpose of satisfying the established custom of

[9] It is reported that the Shehu was reluctant to accept the appointment until he was literarily compelled to do so. As soon as he was appointed he received an oath of allegiance first from his brother and companion, Abdullahi, then his son and associate, Bello and his close friend and confident Umar Al-Kammu. For details see, Usman Bugaje and Ibrahim Jumare, in Alkasum Abba et al (eds), *Sultans of Sokoto: A Biographical History Since 1804*, Arewa House, 2017, p. 12.

> the country but who in reality does not profess Islam, and to take the reins of government from him.
> 3) To fight against an apostate king who abandons Islam and reverts to unbelief, and to take the reins of government from him.
> 4) To fight against an apostate king who outwardly remains within the fold of Islam but who, nevertheless, syncretizes the practices of Islam with the practices of unbelief (like most of the Hausa kings), and to take the reins of government from him.[10]

The King of Gobir responded by launching attacks against the *jamaa* led by Shehu. The forces of the *jihad*ists organized their defenses as well as coordinated attacks against the forces of Gobir. Thus four months after the declaration of the *jihad*, the *jamaa* forces, for the first time, seized some Gobir settlements, including Konni and Matankari. This was followed by the defeat of the Gobir forces that launched attack on Gudu, the base of the newly declared caliphate. The Gobir army under the command of its King, Yunfa was defeated by the *jamaa* forces at the famous battle of Tafkin Kwatto. This was very important because it was the first major victory of the *jihad*ists and it provided inspiration to the people especially given the fact that the King of Gobir had to run away from the battle front, to save his life. From Gudu, the caliphate expanded by attacking and incorporating one settlement after another until 1808 when the capital of Gobir, Alkalawa was captured and Yunfa was killed. This marked the collapse of the Gobir Kingdom and the birth of the Sokoto Caliphate to replace it.

An important part of the process for the foundation of the Sokoto Caliphate was the ability of Shehu and his movement to inspire people far and wide, in and outside Hausaland, to seek to join the struggle for change in their own societies. Thus group after group flocked into Gudu to seek for the blessings of the *amir al-muminin*, to organize *jihad* in their localities. In fact, as far as July 1804, the Shehu had written letters to the rulers of Hausaland urging them to rule in accordance with the dictates of *sharia*. This call was accepted by only the King of Zazzau. In this regard, the Shehu gave out flags as symbol of authority to scholars and political leaders who came to seek for his

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[10] Quoted from Ibrahim Sulaiman, *A Revolutionary in History: The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio*, Mansell, 1986, pp. 115-116.

blessings. Among the first to do so were: 1. Umaru Dallaji, Katsina; 2. Mallam Sulaiman, Kano; 3. Mallam Musa, Zaria; 4. Mallam Yakubu, Bauchi; 5. Modibbo Adama, Fombina; 6. Mallam Buba Yero, Gombe; 7. Mallam Dendo, Nupe; 8. Mallam Alimi, Iilorin; 9. Mallam Dan Tunku, Kazaure; 10. Mallam Ishaku, Daura; 11. Mallam Sambo, Hedejia; 12. Mallam Hamman Manga, Misau; 13. Mallam Ibrahim Zaki, Katagum; 14. Mallam Gwani Muktar, Borno.[11]

All of them, except Gwani Muktar had successfully established their emirates under the authority of the *amir al-muminin*, Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, which formed an integral part of the federation of the Sokoto Caliphate. Others came in later to extend the territory of the caliphate to cover an area of about 150,000 square miles and raised the number of the constituent emirates to thirty.

The Establishment of the Caliphate System, 1808-1817

The year 1808 opened with the fall of Alkalawa, the capital of the Kingdom of Gobir to the military forces of the *jamaa* and closed in 1817, the year of the death of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, the *amir al-muminin* in Sokoto. This period constitutes an important phase in the history of the evolution of the Islamic administrative system of nascent caliphate. It was in this period that the leaders of the caliphate started evolving its political institutions and structures; the stage of the establishment of the foundations of the administrative system of the caliphate. This last phase of the foundation of the Sokoto Caliphate was a stage when its scholars participated in providing the intellectual guidance for the administrative architecture of this evolving polity.

This process of guidance started right from the time Shehu issued appointment letters to *amir*s, authorizing them to organize *jihad* in their localities, he did not leave them empty handed as to what to do in the event of success. He told them to establish a just, fair, accountable and responsive government. In fact, in the appointment letter he issued to Modibbo Adama of the Emirate of Fombina, dated 5th March

[11] See Usman Bugaje and Ibrahim Jumare, "Shehu Usman Dan Fodio 1804-1817, The Founder of the Sokoto Caliphate" in Alkasum Abba, Ibrahim Jumare and Shuaibu S. Aliyu (eds.), *Sultans of Sokoto: A Biographical History Since 1804*, Arewa House, 2017, pp. 14-15.

1809, he warned him thus:

> I warn you to avoid oppression, wanton damage, spilling of blood without the sanction of law, and, nepotism, because if you indulge in partiality and class distinction, your authority would be broken, and this would destroy satisfaction, understanding, and good relations, and if good relationship is lacking, the holy war would suffer and a destructive war would start, and this would bring harm even after it has been settled.[12]

In his publication, *Kitab al-Farq bayna Wilayat Ahl al-Islam wa bayna Wilayat Ahl al-Kufr*, the Shehu instructed his flag bearers on the foundation of government and its ministers. He said:

> … the first is that authority shall not be given to one who seeks it. The second is the necessity for consultation. The third is the abandoning of harshness. The fourth is justice. The fifth is good works. And as for its ministers, they are four. (The first) is a trust-worthy wazir to wake the ruler if he sleeps, to make him see if he is blind, and to remind him if he forgets and the greatest misfortune for the government and the subjects is that they should be denied honest wazirs. And among the conditions pertaining to the wazir is that he should be steadfast in compassion to the people, and merciful towards them. The second of the ministers of government is a judge whom the blame of the blamer cannot overtake concerning the affairs of God. The third is a chief of police who shall obtain justice for the weak from the strong. The fourth is the tax collector who shall discharge his duties and not oppress the subjects.[13]

The Shehu equally emphasized in his publication, the *Usul al Adl li Wullat al-Umur wa Ahl al-Fadl*, that the foundations of a good government lie in the "… stopping of oppressions, which is forbidden by *sharia*, and the promotion of uprightness, which roots out tyranny and protects the public against wrongdoers."[14]

Before his death in 1817, the Shehu divided the caliphate into two administrative units: western and eastern flanks. The eastern part was supervised by Caliph Muhammad Bello, while the western side was

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[12] Hamid Bobboyi and Alkasum Abba (eds.), *Adamawa Emirate, 1809-1901: A Documentary Source Book*, Centre for Regional Integration, 2009, pp. 4-5.

[13] Ibid, pp. 19-20.

[14] Usman Bugaje and Ibrahim Jumare, op. cit, 2017, p. 25.

supervised by Sheikh Abdullahi Fodio.[15] The emirates' administration was governed under a federal arrangement, with each emirate having autonomy;[16] and each *emir* enjoying certain degree of freedom, except in some instances where the caliph had to intervene. For instance, in the case of judicial issues, succession disputes and military mobilization during *jihad* campaigns against either a rebellion or an enemy territory. The caliph at Sokoto could exercise his *mazalim* functions over all emirates.[17]

Shehu provided spiritual guidance and direction to the administration of the caliphate. He equally advised the *jamaa* to learn from the leadership skills of Abdullah and Muhammad Bello. In *Najm al-Ikhwan*, Shehu categorically stressed that:

> Take to reading the works of my brother Abdullah for he is, on the whole, concerned with the letter of the sharia. Take to reading the works of my son Muhammad Bello for he is, on the whole, concerned with the preservation of the political science of the Muslim community with regards to persons, aims, time, place, and prevailing conditions. Take to reading of my works too for I am concerned with the preservation of both.[18]

In addition to the general guidance the Shehu provided, he also often times responded to specific requests by some of the *amir*s with regards to specific issues, particularly on the conduct of emirs.[19] The *jihad* leaders wrote extensively on different subjects of administration, as the problem or challenges crop up, to serve as guide to the *amir*s, in order not to deviate from the principles of an ideal Islamic state. The

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[15] Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, Longman, 1977.

[16] Saad Abubakar, "The Established Caliphate: Sokoto, Emirates and their Neighbours", In Obaro Ikime, (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, London, Heinemann, 1980.

[17] Chinedu N. Ubah, "The Sokoto Caliphate", p. 350; Tukur Muhammad Mukhtar, "A History of the *Mazalim* Court System in the Administration of Justice in Metropolitan Sokoto, 1808-1903", PhD Thesis, Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto, 2015.

[18] See Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, *Najm al-Ikhwan yahtadunabihi bi izn Allah fi Umur al-Zaaman;* Cf. O. S. A. Ismail, "Some Reflections on the Literature of the Jihad and the Caliphate", in Y.B. Usman, (ed.), *Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate: The Sokoto Seminar Papers*, Third Press International, 1979, p. 170.

[19] Thus, it is recorded that on the request of some *amir*s like that of Katsina Umaru Dallaji and Bauchi, Mallam Yakubu, Sultan Muhammad Bello have been reported to have written *Usul al-Siyasat* and *Algaith al-Shubub fi Ajwibati Amr* Bauchi Yakubu respectively. Further, Shehu Abdullahi wrote *Diya al-Hukkam* on the request of the *jamaa* in Kano.

leadership principles of the Shehu contributed tremendously in maintaining political ties between the metropolitan capital and other emirates of the caliphate.[20] In his publication, *Bayan Wujub al-Hijrah*, Shehu discussed extensively on the obligations involved in the appointment of an *imam* (leader) of the Muslim community. He spelt out, clearly, the qualifications expected of any person who is to be appointed a *walih* or *emir* (governor) of each of the emirates and *wilayat* (states or provinces). Among other things Shehu emphasized on the prevention of the acceptance of "gifts" by the leaders of the *umma* (community). On the other hand, Muhammad Bello wrote another important exposition that deals with the principles of politics called *Usul al–Siyasah*, on the request of the Emir of Katsina Ummaru Dallaji. These books served as guides to the full scale implementation of the administration of justice and also to ensure that the various emirates and principal officers conformed to the dictates and ideals of an Islamic state as envisaged by the triumvirate of Shehu, Abdullahi and Bello.[21]

Conclusion

This article has tried to trace the foundation of the Sokoto Caliphate, starting from 1774 when a young man aged about twenty years decided to embark on a journey to bring about change in his society and the lives of his people. This journey which commenced with teaching and preaching played an important role in waking up the people and mobilizing them for a dramatic change not only in their lives but also their entire society. After about twenty years, the young Shehu became a mature, outstanding scholar and political leader with capacity, integrity and the trust to lead the people of Hausaland out of the life of squalor, repression, decadence and hopelessness. The focus of

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[20] K. S. Chafe, "Challenges to the Hegemony of the Sokoto Caliphate: A Preliminary Examination", *Paideuma*, 40, 1994; Cf. C. N. Uban, "The Sokoto Caliphate", p. 355; Shehu Yamusa, "The Political Ideas of the Jihad Leaders, Being a Translation, Edition and Analysis of *Usul al-Siyasat* by Muhammad Bello and *Diya al-Hukkam* by Abdullahi Don Fodio", MA Thesis, Bayero University Kano, 1975.

[21] The three of them are reported to have written more than 500 books, poems and pamphlets. See *Principles of Leadership According to the Founding Fathers of the Sokoto Caliphate*, collated and edited by Hamid Bobboyi, CRID Leadership Series, Abuja, 2011, p. xi.

his activities on his home country of Gobir in the period, 1794-1804, generated conflict with the ruling elite. It was this conflict that helped to spark the *jihad*, making it possible for the caliphate to start taking shape territorially and politically. The success of the *jihad* in Gobir made it possible for the uprisings in other parts of Hausaland and beyond to take off and succeed. The successes of the *jihad*ists all over resulted in the establishment of the biggest federation in the 19th century Africa. So, by the time the Shehu died in 1817, at the age of 63, he along with his very close associates, particularly Abdullahi and Bello provided the administrative, political and intellectual foundations for the vast caliphate, deeply rooted in Islamic principles.

Islamic Revivalist Movements and the Transformation of Islamic Traditions in Northwest, Central and Southwest Nigeria

Idris Shaaba Jimada*

There is an immense corpus of literature on the *jihadist* movements in the areas of north-west and south-west Nigeria, but apparently none is specific on the role of the movements in the transformation of Islam and Islamic traditions in the region. The *jihad*ist movements led to migrations; which itself was a dynamic theme in Nigerian and West African History. Migrations transformed and reformed towns and cities in these areas, trade flourished and proper Islamic practices and traditions came to be established.

Early Revivalist Movements

In the Nupe Kingdom, the early reform movement was led by a man of widely acclaimed repute, regarded as a saint, and a patriot. Sheikh Abd al-Rahman, Muhammad b. Abd al-Rahman, better known as Shehu Abd al-Rahman Chacha (d.1830), was the leader of this earlier reform movement that took place in Nupeland before the *jihad* led by Uthman Dan Fodio, which broke out in Gobir in 1804. This *jihad* led by the Sheikh Abd al-Rahman started in c.1796-7 when the Etsu Mohammad (c.1795-1797) died in a civil war.[1] Captain Hugh Clapperton in 1826, also heard of Abd al-Rahman, "who overran the country and took possession of the capital for six months" and that Abd al-Rahman was much "feared by the Mohammedans (Muslims) and Kaffirs."[2]

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1 See Goldsmith's list in, E. G. M. Dupigny, *Gazetteer of Nupe Province, London, 1921, p. 8. See also L. Frobenius, The Voice of Africa: Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration Expedition in the Years 1910-1912*, vol. II, Hutchinson Co., 1913, p. 576.

2 H. Clapperton, *Journal of A Second Expedition*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 133.

Sheikh Abd al-Rahman undertook a mission of preaching to the Muslim communities in Nupe towns, visiting Mokwa, Kutigi, Kulfo and Jebba.[3] Abd al-Rahman seems to have begun preaching in the Nupe Kingdom from the time of Etsu Muazu Abdullahi (c.1785-c.1795) and in his preachings urged religious and political reforms. Sheikh Abd al-Rahman's preaching and proclamation of a *jihad*, attracted widespread support,[4] leading to his occupation of Mokwa, the capital. Indeed one account refer to the Sheikh Abd al-Rahman as the 20th Etsu Nupe.[5]

This pioneering revivalist movement had, well before 1804, sent important signals from Nupeland to the reformist communities in Hausa and Yoruba lands, and in Borno. It undoubtedly gave added impetus to the *jihad* movements led by the Shehu Usman Dan Fodio to the north, and to the *jihad* led by the Alimi Salih ibn Janta (d. 1823), in the Alafinate of Oyo, to the south.

It has been suggested by one writer that, Sheikh Abd al-Rahman's appeal for assistance to the Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio did not receive a favorable response, because Sheikh Abd al-Rahman was seen as a threat to Dan Fodio and the interests of the leaders of the Sokoto Caliphate.[6] But the indications are that, it was after 1804, that the Sheikh Abd al-Rahman seems to have visited Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio in order to get support for the *jihad* in Nupe,[7] though the evidence for this visit is still uncertain.[8] Support for this *jihad* movement, which he independently initiated and led, was actually sent from Sokoto in 1810.[9] According to the Caliph Muhammad Bello, "When the summer

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[3] M. Kologiwa, *Tarikh Nupe*, Kaduna (NA), 1/AR36/1; Zaria, 93/3. See also 'Yagichacha', anonymous (3p) p. 81/3 {NHRS}. NAK SNP 266/1918 Assessment Reports Eggan, Kakanda, and Kupa District. NAK SNP 1212 Re-assessment Report Egbako District.

[4] Kologiwa, *Tarikh Nupe*, p. 10.

[5] *Tsoedewa Dhayrrutiyi* written by one Dan Makaranta Salihu, a contemporary observer of events during this period, is in the writer's possession.

[6] Saidu Ibrahim, *The Nupe and Their Neighbours from the Fourteenth Century*, Lagos, 1992, pp. 25-6.

[7] ASI(B) Ibid., p. 35; Michael Mason, "The Nupe Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: A Political History", PhD. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1970, pp. 59-62.

[8] It is not clear if Abd al-Rahman actually visited Sokoto during this period. Richard Lander suggests that it was Majiya II who went to Sokoto to seek aid for his campaigns, Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, vol. I, p. 59. But this also seems improbable.

[9] E. J. Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani: Being a Paraphrase and in Some Parts a Translation of the Infaku'l Maisuri of Sultan Mohammed Bello*, Kano Emirate Printing Department, 1922, p. 16. For further details, see chapter 10, pp. 66-70.

of 1225 A.H [c.1810] came again our army returned that had gone to Nupe to give aid to Abd al-Rahman of Nupe against the army of the people of Nupe."[10]

In spite of this aid from Sokoto, Sheikh Abd al-Rahman did not succeed in taking over power from the Nupe kings. This was perhaps due to the overall political fragility of the Muslim group vis-à-vis the traditional religious practitioners. Saka Balogun suggests that this inability was "perhaps a reflection of the numerical inferiority of the Muslim community in Nupe vis-à-vis the non-Muslim groups ranged behind the traditional authorities."[11] While this assumption is reasonable, it is more plausible to assume that the objective political conditions in the Nupe Kingdom were not favorable, but arose later, and were astutely taken advantage of by the new *jihadist* leaders who came afterwards. They took advantage of the fact that the kingdom came to be torn apart by serious succession disputes.

Important Muslim scholars who took over the mantle of leadership of the *jihad* movement in Nupe included *Mallam* Muhammadu, (d.1833), better known in Nupe tradition as 'Dendo'[12] from Bangana near Birnin Kebbi[13] who had undertaken before c.1800 preaching missions to Nupe towns and cities like Kutigi, Dabban, Kima and Rabba.[14] The view that Dendo appeared in Nupeland only about c. 1810 is certainly erroneous.[15] Dendo could not have arrived in Nupe about c.1810 and acquired the status and fame attached to him in the period of the *jihad* campaigns.[16]

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[10] Ibid., p. 16.

[11] Saka A. Balogun, "The Gwandu Emirates in the Nineteenth Century with Special Reference to Political Relations 1817-1890", Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan 1970, p. 69.

[12] From the Nupe words, *Danny an Dondo*, meaning the man who hangs all sorts of things on his shoulders, a characteristic of diviners of the time. These words were later shortened to Dendo and became *Mallam* Muhammadu's name. See Idris Shaaba Jimada, "The Establishment of Patigi Emirate: The Historical Background 1810-1898", M.A. Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, 1991, pp. 218-226.

[13] H. A. S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 135-6; M Kologiwa, op. cit., p. 11, NAK SNP 4437 Extract from Reverend Banfield's *Nupe Grammar*.

[14] Kologiwa, op. cit., p. 11-12; Michael Mason, op. cit., pp. 69-72.

[15] Siegfried Frederick Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, Oxford University Press, 1942, p. 76.

[16] See below, chapter ten, pp. 66-8.

The Landers also claimed that Dendo was a cousin of Caliph Bello,[17] but this is probably incorrect; there is no evidence available that Dendo was related to Bello. It is also important to point out that Dendo cannot strictly be labeled an unassimilated alien,[18] as Robin Law does, for before 1810 Dendo had married a Nupe woman called Fatima, with whom he got Mustapha, Mamuda and the Etsu Masaba (c.1859-73), the second *Emir* of Bida Emirate.[19] Other notable Muslim preachers, and charm sellers, who came to Nupeland from Hausaland and from the Songhai area of Mali before 1810, were Mallams, Musa, whose forebears were also probably Arab, or Berber, settlers, and Baba, Maliki and Manzuma, who were also apparently inspired by the Sokoto *jihad*, though the exact nature of their connection with Sokoto is not clear.[20]

The Reformist *Ulama* in Oyo

Developments in the Oyo Kingdom followed similar, if not the same pattern, as in the Nupe Kingdom. There was a substantial Muslim population in Oyo cities and towns headed by Solagberu, the Chief of Kuwo.[21] Whereas Samuel Johnson claims that Solagberu was a Yoruba Muslim chief of Kuwo,[22] one account has it that he was actually a Kanuri from Borno.[23] It is suggested that his name 'Solagberu', which means, 'behave as a prince to acquire property' was accorded him by

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[17] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition,* vol. I, pp. 91-92.

[18] The word 'alien', 'unassimilated groups' is used by Law to describe immigrant preachers in the Oyo Kingdom; R. C. C. Law, "The Oyo Empire: The History of a Yoruba State, Principally in the Period c. 1600 to c. 1836", Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1971 , *p.* 256. But this claim should be rejected, since many of these groups such as Solagberu had been integrated into the society of Oyo before the *jihad* campaigns.

[19] M. Kologiwa, op. cit., Michael Mason, op. cit, pp. 69-72.

[20] Michael Mason, op. cit., pp. 66-69, records the role of *Mallam Musa especially in the early* jihad movement in Nupe land. Later events proved that he was perhaps, not as astute as *Mallam* Dendo, who became the leader of the jihad in the Nupe Kingdom.

[21] R. C. C. Law, op. cit., pp. 257-8, Samuel Johson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 193-198.

[22] Samuel Johson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 193.

[23] Saka A. Balogun, "The Gwandu Emirates in the Nineteenth Century with Special Reference to Political Relations 1817-1890", Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1970, pp. 153-4.

his numerous Yoruba followers and supporters, which was a practice among the Yoruba in depicting one's characteristics, status and achievements.

In Yorubaland, as in Nupeland, there were important *mallams* who preached and sold charms. The most important of these was Mualim Salih Ibn Janta, widely known in Yoruba traditions as Alimi, derived from the Arabic *mualim*.[24] Alimi undertook preaching missions in major Oyo towns and cities, such as Ikoyi, Kuwo, and Ogbomosho before c.1817.[25] Though one account states that the *jihad* in Hausaland inspired Alimi,[26] was actually with the jihad in the Nupe Kingdom, that Alimi had a direct connection.

For as we find in one source, Alimi came into the Middle Niger and the Upper Ogun regions, together with *mallam* Dendo, and that while Dendo stopped over in Nupe, Alimi journeyed further into the Oyo Kingdom.[27] It is even likely that Alimi was involved in the succession disputes in Nupe, and went on to Oyo specifically for the purpose of supporting the *jihad* movement there.[28] Other Muslim preachers in Oyo included One Bako, Abubkar Laduje of Birnin Ngaure,[29] and Muhammad Gumso.[30] Preachers from Nupe and Oyo together penetrated further south into Iseyin and Ijanna in Egbado, Badagry, Ketu and Idowa.[31]

The critical development, which transformed the fortunes of the *ji-*

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[24] For the derivation of 'Alimi' in reference to Salih see, Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 1969, *p.* 280; also B. G. Martin, "New Arabic History of Ilorin", *Research Bulletin of the Centre of Arabic Documentation*, Ibadan, 1/2, 1965, p. 24.

[25] Hodgkin, op. cit., p. 280. Salih's origin is not clear, but said to be Fulani from somewhere in Hausaland.

[26] R. C. C. Law, op. cit., p. 257.

[27] Saka A. Balogun, op. cit., pp. 153-4.

[28] Toyin Falola, Dare Oguntomisin and G. O. Oguntomisin, *Yoruba Warlords in the Nineteenth Century, World Press Inc.*, 2001, p. 164.

[29] For Abubakar Laduje's origins see Saka A. Balogun, op. cit., p. 49.

[30] Muhammad Gumso is said to be an Arab *Mallam* who came into Oyo Ile from the Mali area. For further detail see, Richard Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa: With the Subsequent Adventures of the Author*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 278.

[31] Ibid., pp. 279-82. For *mallams* in the coastal town of Badagry, Iseyin and Idowa. For Ketu, see Geoffrey Parrinder, *The Story of Ketu: An Ancient Yoruba Kingdom*, Ibadan University Press, 1956, p. 159.

had movement in the Alafinate of Oyo, was Afonja's contest for the Alafin's throne. This contest seriously started in c.1796, after the *coup d'etat* by the Oyo Mesi against the Alafin Awole (c.1789-1796), when Afonja, who was the Are Ona Kakanfo, the commander of the Oyo armed forces, and claiming to be of royal blood, expected that he would be made Alafin but when his ambition was thwarted, he started a rebellion.[32]

Afonja repudiated his allegiance to the Alafin of Oyo and set about carving an independent realm centered at Ilorin for himself. He succeeded in carrying along several other provincial chiefs such as Olupo of Ajaseipo, the Bale of Gbogun, Adegun, the Onikoyi of Ikoyi, Basho-run Asamu, Solagberu of Kuwo and Owotalafianu among others.[33] With the tensions of a disputed succession dividing the Oyo capital,[34] it was difficult for the Alafin Maku (1796-1797) to take effective measures against Afonja at Ilorin, who in view of the support derived from various groups of Nupe, Hausa, Bariba, Fulani and Yoruba Muslims was left at Ilorin to consolidate and expand his independent realm.[35]

Solagberu's support for Afonja's rebellion enabled Afonja to defy the Alafins Awole and Maku.[36] Samuel Johnson reports that, under Solagberu's leadership, Yoruba Muslims from Oyo-ile and from other towns such as Gbanda, Kobayi, Agoho, Kuwo and Kobe,[37] and other Muslims from Nupe flocked to Ilorin to his quarters of Okesuna, meaning 'the hill of the followers of the Sunna, in support of the reformist movement. Solagberu's leadership of Oyo Muslims in the proclamation of a *jihad* at the heart of the Oyo Kingdom discounts the view that the *jihad* in Oyo was a Fulani invasion. The roles of Chief Solagberu, and that of the Shehu Abd al-Rahman Chacha, in the Oyo and Nupe Kingdoms, respectively, further contradict the view that the *jihad* in Oyo and Nupe was a Fulani invasion.

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[32] For Afonja's revolts see especially Johnson, op. cit., pp. 193-4; Samuel Ojo, *Short History of Ilorin*, Shaki, 1957, p. 15; R. C. C. Law, op. cit., pp. 248-258.

[33] For details of Afonja's activities leading to the Muslim rebellion of c. 1817, see Law, op. cit., pp. 248-60; S. Johnson, ibid., pp. 193-200; Samuel Crowther, Samuel Crowther, *Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language*, London, 1843, p.vi.

[34] Samuel Johnson, op. cit., p. 194.

[35] R. C. C. Law, op. cit., p. 252.

[36] R. C. C. Law, op. cit., p. 251, R. A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria c. 1804-1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and It's Enemies*, Longman, 1971, p. 34 and p. 38.

[37] Samuel Johnson, op. cit., p. 194.

Indeed, oral traditions recollect the substantial settlement of Nupe supporters of Afonja in the Oyo Kingdom during this period. One such prominent settlers was one Olufadi, a Nupe who became an interpreter between Afonja and Alimi and became the first Sarki Gambari.[38] Before c.1825, there was concern at the influence of these *mallams* among the Oyo aristocracy, which led it, seems, to the expulsion of Alimi, from Oyo–ile, because the Alafin feared that the Muslim cleric might be tempted to seize his throne.[39] The same reason probably also accounted for the attempted assassination of Muhammad Gumso at Oyo–ile, the capital.[40]

It should be made clear that Robin Law's reference to some of these Muslims as 'alien and unassimilated',[41] is not tenable; for like Dendo in Nupeland, Alimi's second wife, from whom he got Abdulsalam and Shitta, the first and second *emirs* of Ilorin were probably the children of an Oyo Yoruba woman.[42] Moreover Samuel Johnson reports that it was the Yoruba elders who prevailed on Alimi to stay in Ilorin to act as a check against Afonja.[43]

It should be understood, however that not all Muslims supported the call for a *jihad*. The report of the Landers in 1830 is that there were still Muslims in areas of the Nupe and Oyo Kingdoms loyal to the kings of the pre-*jihad* dynasties.[44] The Landers specifically mentioned that many of the pastoral Fulani lived on peaceful terms with these kings, trading milk and cheese for food and clothes.[45]

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[38] MAA (I).

[39] Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 171.

[40] R. Lander, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 277-8.

[41] R. C. C. Law, op. cit., p. 256.

[42] Johnson, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

[43] Ibid., p. 202. Johnson, wrote at length that "... when Afonja and his Jemas commenced their excesses, he (Alimi) was prepared to return to his own country from disgust, but the elders of the Yoruba prayed him to stay and act as a check on Afonja for there was no one else to whom he would defer and there was no telling how far he would go without someone to put the fear of God into him... the people of Ilorin prevailed upon him (Alimi) to send for his family and make Ilorin his home..."

[44] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. I, p. 182.

[45] Ibid., vol. I, p. 77, 126, 142, 208.

The *Jihad* Campaigns in Nupe and Oyo: 1810-1833

The Campaigns in Nupe

Even though the relationship between Sheikh Abd al-Rahman Chacha and the leaders of the Sokoto *Jihad* was such that an army in aid of the jihad led by Abd al-Rahman's in Nupe was sent from Sokoto in 1810, Abd al-Rahman's position as the *jihad* leader in Nupe waned, giving room to the emergence of *Mallam* Dendo. This probably explains Caliph Hello's account that: "Sarki Nupe Nikeka, (Yinkanko) was killed at Mekwa (Mokwa) and *Mallam* Danye [Dendo] made the first Fulani Sarki of Nupe.[46]

In fact, *Mallam* Dendo did not become the Etsu of Nupe in 1810. Bello's informants were mistaken in assuming that, at the end of the events of Mokwa, *Mallam* Dendo automatically became the Etsu of Nupe.

What we can now reconstruct happening was that, with the death of the Etsu Abdullah Yinkanko at Mokwa in 1810, Jimada, the son of Etsu Zubeiru Jiya (c.1760-1785),[47] was installed as Etsu Nupe at Gbara. At that time, one of the major contenders to the Nupe throne was Majiya, said to be related to Muazu and to belong to the ruling Nupe royal dynasty through the matrilineal line.[48] One account suggests that Jimada's father's brother's son; Majiya disputed the claim of Jimada, as the legitimate heir to the throne.[49] At any rate upon the ascension of Etsu Jimada, (c. 1810 - c. 1819) Majiya rebelled, and his rebellion led to his expulsion from Gbara. From Gbara the available traditions are agreed on the fact that, Majiya went to Jangi near Rabba, a port and a

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[46] E. J. Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani: Being a Paraphrase and in Some Parts a Translation of the Infaku'l Maisuri of Sultan Mohammed Bello*, Kano Emirate Printing Department, 1922, p. 16.

[47] William Balfour Baikie, "Notes on A Journey from Bida to Kano", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 37, 1867, p. 10.

[48] Michael Mason, "The Nupe Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: A Political History", University of Birmingham, PhD. Thesis, 1970, pp. 55-6; Baikie, ibid., p. 106; Siegfried Frederick Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, Oxford University Press, 1942, pp. 77-79; Idris Shaaba Jimada, "The Establishment of Patigi Emirate", p. 223.

[49] Nadel, op. cit., p. 77. Nadel's collection of traditions are not explicit on whether Jimada was Zubeiru Jiya's son or Muazu's.

center of trade routes and commerce.[50] It should be recalled that the area of Rabba through Mokwa to Zugurma, an area of trade routes and commerce, already had, residing there, members of the Tsoede Dynasty.[51]

This succession dispute was further complicated by the intervention of the Muslim clerics. At Rabba, Majiya learnt of Mallam Dendo's *ashiri*, or occult powers, the efficacy of which he hoped to harness to his own ends. Dendo's charms he believed could provide for success in war and assure his ascension to the throne.[52] Majiya invited Dendo from Jima to his court at Rabba, and induced him to bring his sons with him, and in fact took Masaba, Dendo's son by his Nupe wife under his guidance.[53] Richard Lander assumes that it was during this period that Majiya went to Sokoto to solicit for aid,[54] but this seems highly improbable.

Dendo was apparently more politically astute than other Muslim reformers in the Nupe Kingdom and learned lessons from the experience of the Sheikh Abd al-Rahman's reform movement and abandoned the idea of building up his own following and threw his weight behind the rebel prince, Majiya.[55] The view that Majiya invited Dendo and his followers is corroborated by the report of Captain Hugh Clapperton, who wrote that:

> Nyffe [Nupe] or Toppa [Tapa] was at civil war caused by the death of the king who had left two sons, both of whom claimed the kingdom, that one son had more of his countrymen on his side, but the other had called in the assistance of the Fellatahs or Fellans.[56]

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[50] Ibid., p. 77; Michael Mason, op. cit., p. 53; M. Kologiwa, *Tarikh Nupe*; Robert East, *Labarun Hausawa da Makwabtansu*, Gaskiya, Zaria, 1933, p. 42.

[51] Muazu was said to have lived in the Yauri-Zugurma area after his first reign c. 1746-56; Mamman Kolo his son, also stayed there after his deposition in c. 1798-1799. See Jimada, op. cit., p. 216-8.

[52] "The Nupe Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: A Political History", University of Birmingham, PhD. Thesis, 1970, pp. 53-9.

[53] M. Kologiwa, op. cit., Michael Mason, ibid., p. 56; Saidu Ibrahim, *The Nupe and Their Neighbours*, p. 24; R. A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804–1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and Its Enemies*, Longman, 1971, pp. 37-8.

[54] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. I, p. 59.

[55] Michael Mason, op. cit., p. 68.

[56] Hugh Clapperton, *Journal of A Second Expedition*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 40.

The proclamation of a new *jihad* by Majiya and his allies Dendo, Baba, Maliki, Musa and others sent from Sokoto in c. 1810, led to fresh offensives against Jimada's capital of Gbara.[57] The offensives continued over several seasons through 1811-12,[58] but it was probably not until c.1818-19 that Etsu Jimada suffered defeat at the Battle of Ragada.[59] Saidu Ibrahim's account that Jimada died at Jima through poisoning[60] has not been supported by other sources. The outcome of the Battle of Ragada greatly increased the intensity of the *jihad* campaigns, which enhanced the position of Majiya as the new Etsu Nupe and the position of his *jihadist* allies as well.

The Campaigns in Oyo

Afonja, like Majiya, trusted the efficacy of Muslim charms, and presumably knew of the military successes of the *jihad* especially in Nupe and Hausaland.[61] He must also have heard of *alimi'sashiri*, meaning occult powers, and how these could provide for success in his ambition to succeed as Alafm. Afonja invited Alimi to Ilorin from Kuwo just like Majiya did to Dendo in-Nupe, and induced him to bring his followers and sons. Alimi proceeded to proclaim a *jihad*, which attract-

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[57] E. J. Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani: Being a Paraphrase and in Some Parts a Translation of the Infaku'l Maisuri of Sultan Mohammed Bello*, Kano Emirate Printing Department, 1922, p. 16; Michael Mason, op. cit., pp. 62-66. Etsu Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Jimada, *Takhmis, Ahmidu Rabbi ul-Alam*, NHRS p. 85-7.

[58] Local traditions report that for a period of between seven to eight years campaigns were carried out against Jimada's capitals which were moved from Gbara to Jima and to Lade before Ragada, on the southern bank of the Niger; thus Mason's dates of 1811-12 for Jimada's defeat at Ragada appears unlikely. AMN (L).

[59] E. G. M. Dupigny, *The Gazetteer of Nupe Province*, pp. 8-12; E. Elphinstone, *The Gazetteer of llorin Province*, London, 1922, pp. 40-1; Hugh Clapperton, *Journal of A Second Expedition*, Cambridge University Press, 2015 pp. 40-42, in 1826 also heard of reports of a civil war that has ravaged the Nupe country in the last seven years, which probably alludes to the battles fought that led to Jimada's defeat at Ragada. Thus Jimada's defeat at Ragada may be tentatively put at c. 1818-19. Siegfried Frederick Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, Oxford University Press, 1942, pp. 77-78, against Mason's claim, see Michael Mason, "The Nupe Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: A Political History", University of Birmingham, PhD. Thesis, 1970, p. 56.

[60] Saidu Ibrahim, *The Nupe and Their Neighbours*, p. 26.

[61] Ibid., p. 257; and Hermon Hodge, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929, p. 65.

ed the widespread support of many Yoruba Muslims headed by Solagberu, and others such as Nupe, Hausa and Kanuri artisans, merchants and slaves.[62] Clapperton records his being told by the Alafinin that his:

> Hausa slaves had been in rebellion for two years [i.e. 1824] and possess a large town only two days journey from Katunga [i.e. Oyo-ile], and that the slaves had a great number of horses and have been joined by many Fellatahs.[63]

The rebellion of c. 1817 by Afonja and the proclamation of a *jihad* by *alimi* provided a broad territorial base for the *jihadist* movement in the Oyo Kingdom. Ali Eisami, a Kanuri enslaved at Oyo-ile in c. 1817, and an eyewitness to these events, reported that when this rebellion broke out in the Oyo Kingdom, slaves were encouraged to join with the promise of their freedom.[64] The Landers also collected similar traditions in 1830 that all:

> Run-away slaves are encouraged to join the ranks on condition of receiving their freedom and they were joined by vast numbers from the country, and that the discontented for miles around eagerly flocked to Atorie (Ilorin) in considerable numbers where they were well received.[65]

Getting themselves consolidated at Ilorin, Afonja's allies made up largely of Oyo, Hausa, Kanuri and Nupe Muslims and slaves now extended their activities across the River Ogun into Ibarapa province of the Oyo Kingdom and to towns such as Iseyin and Osogun, Samuel Ajayi Crowther's town, which was destroyed, and Crowther himself enslaved in c.1821-2. Crowther's recollections confirmed what has been recorded from Ali Eisami. He reported that:

> ... for some years (i.e. 1817-22) the Oyo Muhammadans, with the Fu-

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[62] Samuel Johnson, *History of the Yorubas*, pp. 193-201; Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 280-1; for Abu Ikokoro's narratives of the composition of the Muslims at Ilorin by c. 1817.

[63] Hugh Clapperton, op. cit., pp. 28-34.

[64] For details of Ali Eisami's accounts see Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 154, pp. 280-1. S. Koelle, *Native African Literature*, London, 1854, pp. 115-21, Philip D. Curtin (ed.), *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade*, Wisconsin 1967, pp. 119-126.

[65] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. I, pp. 91-2, pp. 296-7.

> lani's and such foreign slaves as had escaped from their owners joined together making a formidable force of about 20,000 who annoyed the whole country.[66]

The party apparently also attacked Oyo-ile itself, but was beaten off after light skirmishes.[67] Richard Lander in 1826 observed that: "… the houses had already began to act on the offensive and had made incursions even to the dwellings of their former masters."[68]

The *Ulama* Take Over

Both Majiya and Afonja were related to the royal dynasties of their kingdoms, through the female line. Their attempts at seizing the throne were the results of the progressive erosion of the traditional political norms of the Nupe and Oyo Kingdoms. The Landers provide evidence that several groups drawn from Hausa and Yoruba undertook the *jihad* in Nupe, and that many of those who supported Afonja's rebellion in Oyo came from Rabba.[69] Supporting evidence was also provided by MacGregor Laird and Oldfield in 1832-33, that, captains from ethnic groups, commanded their own men in the *jihad* in Nupe.[70] Numerous leaders of the *jihad* movement in Nupe were Hausa, Yoruba, Nupe and Fulani. The deputy commander of the Rabba *jihadist* army, Ubandawaki Mohammad Ada, was a Yoruba from Oyo.[71]

It became immediately obvious that, in seeking to make use of reformist Islam to fulfill their ambitions, both Majiya and Afonja had made grave miscalculations. Rather than acquiring the powers they desired, they realized when it was too late that it was the Muslim cler-

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[66] James Frederick Schön and Samuel Crowther, *Journals*, p. 229; Philip D. Curtin (ed.), *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade*, Wisconsin, 1967, pp. 299-301.

[67] Hugh Clapperton, op. cit., p. 204, Richard Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa: With the Subsequent Adventures of the Author*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 13.

[68] Richard Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa: With the Subsequent Adventures of the Author*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 97.

[69] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. I, p. 190.

[70] MacGregor Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa*, vol. I, Routledge, 1971, p. 84.

[71] Michael Mason, op. cit., p. 64.

ics that had grown in power and influence.[72] With a warning possibly from Shehu Abd al-Rahman, the pioneer Nupe Islamic reformer, of a probable *ulama* and Fulani *coup d'etat* against his authority, the Etsu Majiya was provoked to commence the suppression and destruction of several *ulama* and Fulani settlements in western Nupe and Kamberi.[73]

Majiya's hostility and attacks led to the flight of the Nupe *jihadists* to Ilorin where they joined forces with Abdulsalam, the son of Alimi, who had now emerged as the leader of the Yoruba Muslims.[74] This group was later to be joined by another refugee, Idrisu Gana I, the son of Jimada. Robert East erroneously refers to Idrisu, as Etsu Isa.[75] Isa was Idrisu's son. The tradition that claims that it was Majiya that drove Idrisu to Ilorin to seek refuge is probably, incorrect; the traditions are not explicit on Idrisu's presence at Ilorin in any case.

The episode of Majiya's successful expulsion of the jihad leaders from Nupe serves to illustrate the fragile basis of the *jihadist* power in Nupeland during this period. It was at this point that, Etsu Majiya and the Alafin Majotu reached an alliance to remove all Muslim group, especially their leaders, who had now concentrated at Ilorin, from the general area of the Nupe and the Oyo Kingdoms.[76] It is reported that the alliance between the Alafin and Majiya was sealed because the Nupe saw themselves as the protector of Ilorin, but the attempt to dislodge the *ulama* from Ilorin however failed,[77] and Majiya fled back to Nupeland pursued by the *ulama* who occupied his capital Rabba and drove him further to the obscure district of Zugurrna in northwestern Nupeland.

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[72] Clapperton records Majia's near irrelevant status in the affairs of Nupe during this period in *Journal of A Second Expedition*, Cambridge University Press, 2015 p. 128, Clapperton further predicted that it was a matter of time before Majia losses control of any amount of power, he might have had all together. For Afonja's helpless situation against the Ulama in Ilorin, see Johnson. p. 194-5; Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 280-1 for Abu Ikokoro's narratives of Afonja's situation.

[73] Yagi Chacha, Michael Mason, op. cit., p. 66.

[74] Hermon Hodge, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929, p. 69.

[75] Robert East, *Labarun Hausawa da Makwabtansu*, Gaskiya, Zaria, 1933, p. 58.

[76] Ibid., p. 59. Not only Majiya, but other Nupe rulers up till the end of the Sokoto Caliphate saw themselves as the protectors of Ilorin.

[77] Robert East, op. cit.. For further details on the failure of the Majiya and Alafin alliance, see Johnson, op. cit., pp. 200-16.

By c.1833, the *ulama* at Rabba led by *Mallam* Dendo had assumed powers as the rulers of the Nupe Kingdom,[78] a success ensured by the support of the Yoruba *ulama* led by Abdulsalam, through joint and cross border military co-operation between the two groups of the *ulama* in Nupe and in Oyo. In Oyo, Afonja was also alarmed at the growing power and influence of his Muslim allies. Afonja sought to remove all Muslims groups —Oyo, Nupe, Hausa and Fulani from Ilorin— which was precisely what Majiya did in Nupe.[79] But this attempt resulted in an insurrection by these groups, which led to the death of Afonja.[80]

There is evidence to suggest that Afonja was probably provoked to eliminate the Muslim group at Ilorin because of the recognition of Abdulsalam as the *emir* of Ilorin through a flag of authority received from Sokoto in c. 1823.[81] However the death of Afonja and the recognition of Abdulsalam as the Emir of Yoruba and the establishment of the Nupe *jihadists* at a new capital at Rabba, marked the definitive victory of the *jihadist* movements in the Nupe and the Oyo Kingdoms.

One source records that the Muslim leader of Oyo, Solagberu was not only Salih's right hand man, but also backed Salih's son Abdulsalam against *Mallam* Bako, a Hausa rival for the "Emirship of the Yoruba."[82] Later, however, Chief Solagberu and the Emir of Ilorin, Abdulsalam fell out. This leader of the Oyo Muslims at the Okesuna, or Hill of the Sunnists, ward of the City of Ilorin, was eliminated by the supporters of Abdulsalam, for what Johnson attributed to a power tussle between him and Abdulsalam.[83] One tradition however claims

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[78] M. Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield, op. cit., vol. III, p. 84; Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. I , pp. 190-8; R. Hallett, (ed.), *The Niger Journal of Richard and John Lander*, London, 1965, p. 198.

[79] Samuel Johnson, op. cit., pp. 193-5; Samuel Crowther, *Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language*, London, 1843, p. vii.

[80] Samuel Johnson, op. cit., p. 202; Hermon Hodge, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929, p .65; Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 281-2.

[81] Hermon Hodge, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929, p. 69.

[82] Saka A. Balogun, "The Gwandu Emirates in the Nineteenth Century with Special Reference to Political Relations 1817-1890", Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan 1970, p. 153.

[83] Samuel Johnson, op. cit., Similar traditions are also reported in T. Hodgkin, op. cit., p. 282, and B. G. Martin, "New Arabic History of Ilorin", *Research Bulletin of the Centre of Arabic Documentation*, Ibadan, 1/2, 1965, p. 25.

that the clash between Abdulsalam and Solagberu was a result of Solagberu practicing syncretism on the side;[84] but this appears unlikely.

The *Jihadist* Alliance

The success of the *jihad*ist movements in Nupe and Oyo was largely due to the alliances formed between the Nupe and Yoruba reformist Muslims. This is supported by the Landers report that many of the ulama that moved into Oyo, and places further south in the 1820s and 1830s, came from Nupe.[85] It was also the support of the Yoruba Muslims particularly Abdulsalam, the Emir of Ilorin that enabled *Mallam* Dendo and his group to return from exile at Ilorin to Nupe, to successfully take over power.[86] This demonstrates that the strength of the reformist *ulama* lay in their alliances.[87] It also indicates the importance of ideological linkages as the basis of the emergence of the new centers of authority in Nupe and Yoruba, up to the 1830s. The evidence of Lander and Clapperton, bring out, however, that the position of the reformist *ulama* in Nupe and as well in Oyo was, at the beginning, fragile.[88]

Significantly, the armies of the reformist *ulama* of Nupe and Oyo, were, composed of warriors of diverse ethnic origins, with a preponderance of Nupes and Yorubas, but noticeable among these warriors were, Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, as well as Kamuku elements.[89]

By c.1830, it was evident that the *jihad* had largely succeeded in the Nupe and the Oyo kingdoms. This was largely made possible, as Lander correctly observed, by the alliances between Nupe and Yoruba reformist leaders and by Dendo's policy of "advancing foreigners of all nations to certain lucrative and important posts either about his per-

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[84] AMO (I) Ilorin.

[85] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. I, p. 190.

[86] Michael Mason, op. cit., p. 64, also his *The Foundation of the Bida Kingdom*, Ahmadu Bello University Press, Zaria, 1976, pp. 14-18.

[87] Michael Mason, *The Foundation of the Bida Kingdom*, Ahmadu Bello University Press, Zaria, 1976, pp. 14-16.

[88] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. I, p. 182; Hugh Clapperton, op. cit., pp. 44-62.

[89] Robert East, *Labarun Hausawa da Makwabtansu*, Gaskiya, Zaria, 1933, p. 33; M. Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 38-45; Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. 296.

son, in the army or as governors of conquered towns, by this means he conciliates the original population."[90]

Similar policy 'advancements' were embarked upon in Ilorin, where most of the military leaders of the Ilorin emirate up till the end of the nineteenth century were made up of peoples of largely Nupe, Hausa and Fulani origin.[91]

The inability of the Alafin to dislodge the Muslims at Ilorin was due to the military superiority of the *jihadist* army at Ilorin, and the alliance with *jihadist* forces of the Nupe, reinforced by the fact that a considerable number of people loyal to the new emirate authorities, drawn from Nupe and elsewhere, continued to flock to Ilorin for protection under the new authorities.[92]

And in what will appear as a deliberate support for the ulama in Nupe and Yoruba, both Uthman Zaki, the son of *Mallam* Dendo and Abdulsalam the son of Alimi were confirmed in their positions as the leaders of their emirates by the visits of emissaries from Gwandu from whom they received their flags between 1831 and 1834.[93]

The Consolidation of Islamic Traditions c.1810

The aftermath of the *jihadist* and revivalist movements in Nupe and Yoruba region saw to the intensification of Islamic practices and traditions. Waves of migrants most of whom were Muslims moved into towns especially in the southwest augmenting the populations of these towns, transforming them and institutionalizing Islamic traditions. Trade flourished which encouraged further spread and consolidation of Islam.

The institutionalization of Islamic governments and introduction of the *sharia*, and Islamic traditions and culture led to the transforma-

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[90] Richard and John Lander, op. cit., vol. I, p. 296.

[91] Samuel Johnson, op. cit., pp. 200-11.

[92] Richard and John Lander, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 91-92, p. 296; and Abdullahi Smith, *A Little New Light on the Collapse of the Alafinate of Yoruba in A Little New Light Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith*, G. A. Kwanashie et.al. (eds.), 1987, pp. 158-168.

[93] Michael Mason, op. cit., pp. 62-79, for the Gwandu recognition of Usman Zaki as Ihe leader of the Nupe Emirate. For Abdulsalam's ascension as the Emir of Yoruba recognized by Gwandu, see Hermon Hodge, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929, p. 69; Thomas Hodgkin, *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 282.

tion of the peoples and states in the region. Pre-Islamic and pre-*jihad* practices and traditions gave way to the practice of Islam and the application of Islamic laws as related to politics, economy and society.

The Establishment of Masjids and Formation of Islamic Identity

Masjids were established early in the history of Islamization in this area, though the identity of many of the early ones are obscure. However, prominent *masjids* established from the late eighteenth century exists till date. One of the prominent *masjid* in the Nupe area that served as central *Jumaah* prayer congregation venue for Muslims was the Shaikh Ahmad Adam Masjid located in the Efukogi area of Bida and was of the earliest constructed at the establishment of Bida Emirate in the mid-19th century. The Bida Central Mosque is said to be constructed in 1870.[94]

Several *masjids* were also established in Yoruba area of the southwest prominent among these were the Ansar ad-deen and Ahmadiyga which prevails throughout Yorubaland. Other prominent central *masjids* existed from an early period in Ilorin, Oshogbo, Iwo, Ijebu, and other major cities in Yorubaland.

The establishment of *masjids* went side by side with the introduction of Quranic schools where pupils were taught the basic knowledge and rudiments of Islam.

Clothing Traditions and Muslim Identification

The clothing traditions and Muslim identifications is generally same in the area as well as in the general Nigerian and West African region. Here Muslims are identified and recognizable by their clothes. The Nupe and the Yoruba share traditions of clothing going back far into the distant past. There is evidence indicating that the technique of broad horizontal cloth weaving was common among the Nupe and the Yoruba. Nadel suggests that Yoruba slaves from northeast Yorubaland introduced the technique of horizontal cloth weaving into Nupe. Other sources provide evidence indicating that this technique was found in

[94] Abdulrahman Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, Gaskiya Corporation, Zaria, 1984.

these areas before the bringing in of these slaves.[95] The other distinct technique of weaving by which men weaved on upright looms and produced narrow strips of cloth about six inches wide was probably introduced from Hausaland. The Yoruba call this six-inch-wide strip, *apasa*, the Nupe call it *kpasa*, and the Hausa call it *kwasha*. The technique of using horizontal looms which produced broader strips of cloth about eighteen-inches-wide, was the tradition in the various Nupe and Yoruba communities, before immigration into these areas of the weavers of the upright loom from Hausaland.[96]

A prominent feature of the clothing traditions of the Nupe and the Yoruba was the multiple interconnections between them and with the clothing traditions of Hausaland and Borno and areas further north. For example, the now common Yoruba traditional cap, known in Yoruba as, *fila etu*, was most likely derived from the Nupe dark woven blue Phrygian cap, 'the cap of antiquity', called, by the Nupe, the *fulan zabo*. Nadel collected traditions that the 'blue Phrygian cap was the traditional headgear of the Nupe'[97] Samuel Johnson suggests that the Yoruba, *fila abeti*, the cap that covers the ears, known in Hausa, as *Laban kada*, was of Hausa, or Fulani origin.[98]

At Oyo-ile in 1826, Hugh Clapperton observed that Oyo chiefs widely and frequently wore Nupe cloths of various patterns and dimensions.[99] Thus, it is likely that the Yoruba *dashiki* the Yoruba *bante*, the Nupe *bente*, the Yoruba *tobi*, the Nupe *tobigi*, and Yoruba *iro and buba*, developed out of this process of cultural fusion.[100]

The Yoruba *ewu*, Nupe *ewo*, a loose shirt with sleeves, often white, worn under gowns; the Nupe *girike*, the large gown worn for special occasions; and the large *agandasi* trousers, loose at the waist and tight at

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[95] Siegfried Frederick Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, Oxford University Press, 1942, p. 22.

[96] Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, vol. I, pp. 90-91. Hugh Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa*, London, 1829, pp. 14-16.

[97] Jennifer M. Bray, "The Organization of Traditional Weaving in Iseyin", Nigeria, *Africa*, 38, 1968, pp. 270-80.

[98] R. C. C. Law, "The Oyo Empire: The History of a Yoruba State, Principally in the Period c. 1600 to c. 1836", Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1971, p. 204.

[99] S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, Oxford University Press, 1942, p. 132.

[100] Samuel Johnson, op. cit., p. 111.

the ankles and richly embroidered; and the *samayan,* are other obvious examples of the close interconnection between the Nupe and the Yoruba at the level of material culture for daily use.The *kaftan* in particular became the cloth of everyday use among the Muslims a cloth by which Muslims are easily recognized. However, it is important to note that, Islamic traditions broke down ethnic or religious loyalties while substituting a cosmopolitan loyalty which transcended kith and kin and ethnicity; bringing about the unification of disparate and diverse groups into a singular political and economic commonwealth.Much more important was the imposition of an Islamic superstructure in all ramifications. Islam became a way of life in terms of architecture, childbirth, weddings, and all aspects of social and economic life. According to the Africanist Edward Blyden:

> Islamic superstructure has been superimposed on a permanent indigenous substructure; so that what really took place when the Arab met the African in his home; it was a healthy amalgamation and not absorption or an undue repression.

Despite traditional practices that were largely common in rural areas, the fundamental principles of Islam were never violated. It was in this light that Spencer Trimingham observed that Islam has progressed in Africa and become an African religion whose agents are Africans which can be assimilated gradually without causing too great a disruption in communal life.Thus, strict Islamic traditions are followed for instance; naming a child on the eighth day after delivery. Marriages are also conducted in the communities according to Islamic law and in the past particular days such as during the periods of *maulud Nabiyyi* or the *eid al-fitr* or *eid al-kabir* festivities. In Yoruba in particular, the role of Islam is clearly depicted in songs. For instance; for weddings, naming ceremonies, burials and even pilgrimages to Makkah.[101] Undoubtedly, Islamic traditions and culture has been long established in this region and a large percentage of the population are Muslims.

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[101] Hugh Clapperton, op. cit., p. 36.

Conclusion

Revivalist and *jihadist* movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ensured a comparative reduction in syncretic practices of the peoples of this region. The creation of a wider political entity of the Sokoto Caliphate integrated diverse peoples into a common social, economic and political union over a considerable part of modern Nigeria. Islamic traditions and culture came to be firmly established in Muslim communities across the area.

The Spread and Establishment of Islam in the Nupe and Oyo Kingdoms

Idris Shaaba Jimada*

From empirical evidence available, Islam spread to the Western parts of the Nigerian area probably as early as the 8th century. Undoubtedly initial Islamic practices came from Mali, Songhay, Kanem Borno, and Ghana before its gradual spread to the Nigerian area. By the twelfth century, Islam had penetrated some major cities of the study area through trade and commerce, especially through commercially active markets and routes. Kings and chiefs were among the first groups to be converted, to be followed by other commercially active groups who introduced new elements of Islamic practice, material culture, intellectualism, literacy and civilization. It is important to note that the expansive Islamic Songhai Empire had influence over most of the Savanna cities of the Bilad-al-Sudan from the 15th century onwards. Merchants' transverse routes spread across the West African region and introduced the Islamic culture and traditions.

Location and Geography

The general area of the Nupe and Oyo Kingdoms largely occupied by the Nupe and Yoruba speaking peoples is located in the Western arc of the Nigerian Nation. From the area of the Middle Niger River southwestwards to the Atlantic Ocean and up north, the natural boundary of the Niger River to the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers at Lokoja serve as the northern boundaries of the region.

Two aspects of the physical geography of this area dominate all others: these are the lowness of the land and the abundance of rivers. The land generally was, with a few notable exceptions, consistently of

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low relief, most of it being no more than 60 metres above sea level.[1] The landscape however displays great internal variety. From the Savanna plains which the Nupe share with the Yoruba Oyo, Isbonuna, Ibolo, Yagba, Owe and Bunu and other Northern Yoruba groups to the adjoining rainforests, to the beaches, lagoons, sandbars, mangrove swamps and delta environment of the coastal areas, the region shares a general flatness of relief[2] which meant that there were no major physical barriers to the movement of peoples, cultures, ideas, practices, traditions, goods and services.

Islam spread rapidly among the peoples of this region and witnessed a spectacular influence of the environment as the environment made it imperative for the people to be mixed, it favoured the intermingling and the intermeshing of the communities in the general area who shared cultural and religious characteristics rooted in a similar geographical environment. The nature of the environment facilitated the rapid spread of Islam in the communities of the area and by the time of the *jihad* of the early nineteenth century a comparative percentage of the peoples of the region has been Islamized.

The Early Spread of Islam

States in this region had been recognized as centres of commercial importance as early as the 13th century and were well organized with relatively stable dynasties, and with distinctive traditions, splendid courts, hereditary nobility, administrative hierarchies and complicated systems of etiquette.[3] The 1722 map of D'Isle indicated Nupe as one of the states of great commercial importance in the Bilad al-Sudan.[4]

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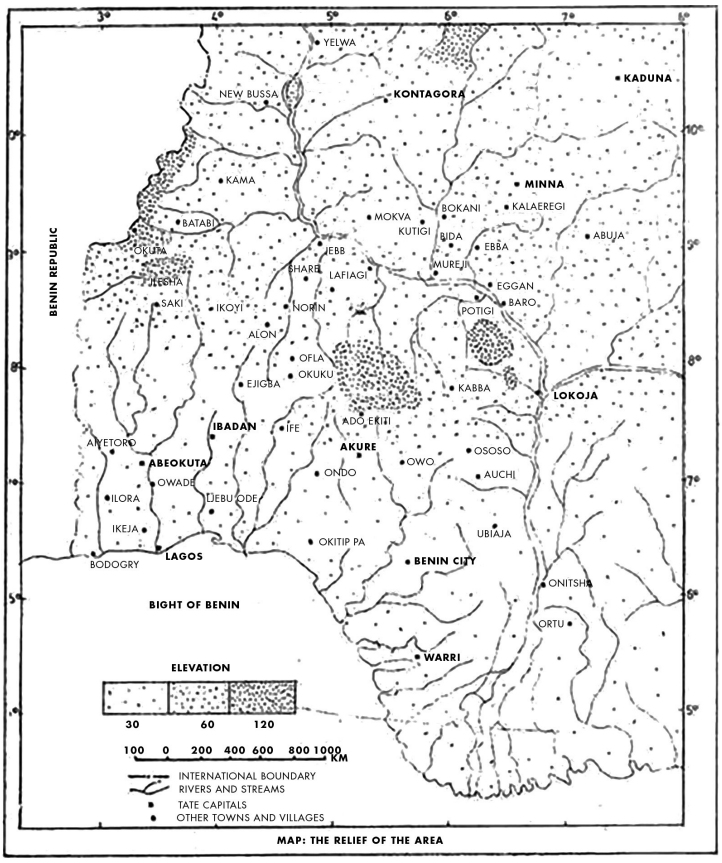
[1] See Siegfried F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, Oxford University Press, 1942, (Reprint 1973), pp. 1-11. S. W. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power Politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893: Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of Ekitiparapo*, Longman, Ibadan, 1971, pp. 2-6. Reuben K. Udo, "Environments and Peoples of Nigeria" in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Obaro Ikime (ed.), Heinemann Educational Books, 1980, pp. 10-12.

[2] J. C. Pugh and K. M. Buchanan, *Land and People in Nigeria: The Human Geography of Nigeria and Its Environmental Background*, University of London Press, 1960, pp. 15-17.

[3] J. S. Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 106.

[4] Michael Mason, *The Foundations of the Bida Kingdom*, Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1976.

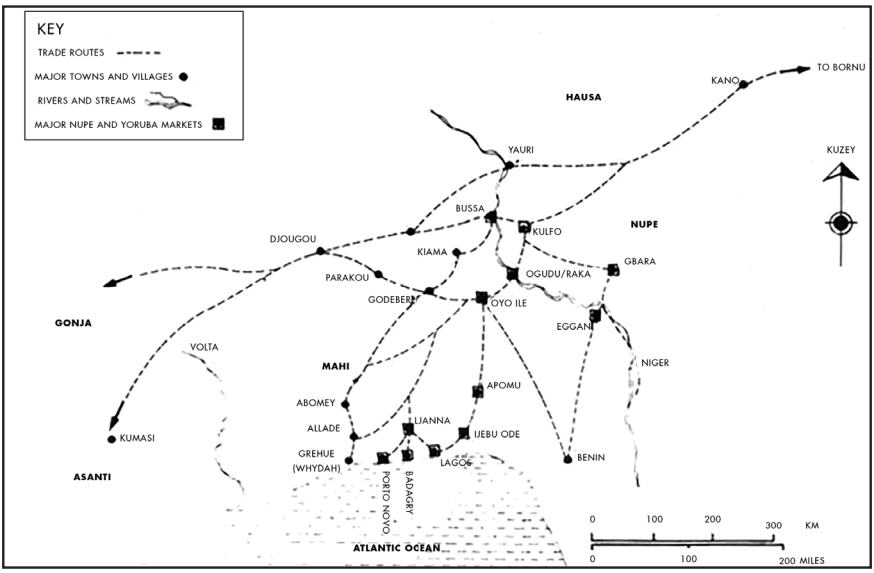


The Nupe and the Origins and Evolution of the Yoruba c.1275-1897

Ibn Battuta, the renowned explorer, refers to what appears to be the Nupe when he writes that the River Niger after leaving Muli which is the last province of Mali and belongs to the country of Limiyin descends to Yufi or Yuwi "one of the greatest countries of the blacks whose king is one of the most powerful."[5] This statement by Battuta is an affirmation that Nupe was already known in the Bilad al-Sudan and beyond, as a centre of commercial importance.

Islamic influence came into Nupe and Yoruba from many directions. Initially from west through Wangarawa and Dendi traders who

[5] J. S. Trimingham, op. cit., p. 130.



The Nupe and the Origins and Evolution of the Yoruba c.1275-1897

transverse the area eastwards as far as Katsina, Kano and Borno. Islam gained considerable hold in many important trade centres through trade routes conveying merchants and goods. Nadel reports an age old Trans-Saharan trade route traversing the Nigerian area from west to east down to the coast. These routes were not only important as trade routes, but equally significant for the spread of ideas and migrations. One route starts from Timbuktu and flows eastwards to Oyo Ile, Mokwa, Gbara and down to the Atlantic coast. Another route comes from Zander and in Niger goes through Kano to Kutigi Mokwa and crosses the Niger at Gudu and goes through Oyo-Ile to Badagry. One other route went through Mokwa to Oyo-Ile and west wards to Gwanja in Ghana. Yet another route went down the Niger River to Lokoja Idah, Onitsha and ultimately to the Niger Delta.[6] Bowdich mentioned trade routes to the north-east of Oyo Ile passing through Rabba to Hausaland.[7] Trade routes also led from Oyo through Nupe to Hausa and

[6] S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 319-320.

[7] T. E. Bowdich, *A Mission from Cape Coast to Ashantee*, John Murray, 1819, p. 202 and p. 483.

Borno, the route through which Clapperton travelled in 1824-1826. Trade routes facilitated the rapid spread of Islam in their region.

By the fifteenth century, Islam had spread among the Nupe and the Yoruba, particularly the commercially active Yoruba groups.[8] Certainly, by the end of the seventeenth century, there was a substantial population of Muslims in the Nupe and the Oyo Kingdoms. Islam spread here, largely, along the trade routes,[9] from two directions; from the Mande in the northwest, and from Hausaland and Borno, to the north and northeast. There is evidence that Mande merchants were trading from the Songhai metropolis and their trading centers, southeastwards to Nupe and to the Yoruba states by c. 1505.[10]

The evidence that the earliest Islamic links of the Nupe and the Yoruba were with the Mande from the west, probably represented by the Dendi of Borgu,[11] rather than with Hausaland and Borno, is to be found in the Nupe and Yoruba name for a Muslim cleric, which has always been alfa, a loan word from the Maude languages,[12] and not the mallam used in Hausa, or the variations on the Arabic mualim used in the Borno languages. It may be that the Nupe and Yoruba words derive not directly from the Arabic word laffa, meaning a turban, but indirectly through Mande.[13]

Peter Morton-William's observation that the usual Yoruba word

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[8] This may be inferred from Ihe trade relations between Nupe and the Hausa states of Kano, Zaria and Gobir contained in the Kano chronicle. Herbert Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, Frank Cass, 1967, p. l1; also *Western Sudanese History,* pp. 261-73. For the Oyo, it should be noted that the Katsina scholar, Muhammad Ibn Masanih, who died in 1667, is recorded to have written a work on the method of determining the time of sunset addressed to the learned men of Yoruba, which implies that Muslim clerics were by this date already active in the Oyo Kingdom; see A. D. Bivar and M. Hiskett, 'The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: A Provisional Account", *Bulletin of SOAS*, 25, 1962, pp. 104-48.

[9] Ade Ajayi, "The Aftermath of the Fall of Old Oyo", in *History of West Africa*, (ed.) Ade Ajayi, Longman, 1987, p. 142; Peter Morton-Williams, "The Influence of Habitat and Trade on the Policies of Oyo and Ashanti", *African Notes: Bulletin of the Institute of African Studies*, University of Ibadan, 1966, vol. 4, no.3, p. 92.

[10] A. D. Bivar, and M. Hiskett, "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: A Provisional Account", *Bulletin of SOAS*, 25, 1962, p. 10.

[11] R. C. C. Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600-c. 1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Clanderon Press, 1977, pp. 215-95.

[12] PAO (1)

[13] Michael Mason, "The Nupe Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: A Political History", University of Birmingham, PhD. Thesis, 1970, p. 46.

for a Muslim is imale, or a man from Mali,[14] strengthens the view that Islam came to the Yoruba and the Nupe through the Mande. It is noteworthy that the father of the Sheikh Abd al-Rahman Muhammad b. Abd al-Rahman, an Islamic reformer of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Nupeland, better known as Shehu Abd al-Rahman Chacha, was said to be an "Arab immigrant who came into Nupe from the Mande West."[15]

Political Influence

By the late sixteenth century Islam had been fairly established in Nupeland,[16] and Nupe Muslim inhabitants had either founded quarters in Oyo-Ile and other towns and cities of Yorubaland, or, were regular visitors. Samuel Johnson relates that when the Alafin Ajiboyede, who reigned during the sixteenth century, executed some Oyo chiefs, a Muslim cleric from Nupe who was resident at Igboho, then capital of the Oyo Kingdom, called 'Baba Kewu', sent his son 'Baba-yi-gi' to remonstrate with him, and induced him to make a public apology.[17]

These traditions do not only indicate the existence of an organized Muslim community in the Oyo Alafinate, in the sixteenth century, but also record that Nupe Muslim clerics were very influential and were already giving advice to the Alafins of Oyo. These Nupe Muslim clerics spread Islam to other parts of Yorubaland as well. Traditions of Iseyin, Ijannah, Idowa, Ijebu Ode, Epe, Lagos and Badagry report the introduction of Islam through Nupe and Hausa Muslim clerics and slaves.[18]

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[14] Peter Morton-Williams, "The Influence of Habitat and Trade", *African Notes: Bulletin of the Institute of African Studies*, University of Ibadan, 1966, vol. 4, no.3, p. 92.

[15] Muhammad Kologiwa, *Tarikh Nupe*, *NHRS*, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

[16] Nupe Kings such as Mamman Wan who reigned in the mid-sixteenth century bore Muslim names, though it was Jibrilu that was more associated with Islam.

[17] Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, C. M. S. Bookshops, 1956, p. 64.

[18] For these see especially, R. C. C. Law, "The Dynastic Chronology of Lagos", *Lagos Notes and Records, Bulletin of African Studies*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1960, pp. 46-54. T. Adewale, "The Ijannah Episode in Yoruba History", in *Proceedings of the Third International West African Conference*, 1949; K. Folayan, "Egbado to 1832: The Birth of a Dilemma", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1967, pp. 15-33; M. O. Apena, *Iwekukuni Iian Ijebu*, 2nd ed., 1937, p. 28.

That Islam had an important role in the affairs of Oyo, is confirmed by what happened over the theft of properties and a Qu'ran. said to belong to a Hausa trader called 'Alaja Eta', with the connivance of Bashorun Asamu, a principal state official, on the pretext that the trader was bringing evil charms into the City of Oyo.[19] Though Alafin Awole ordered the restitution of the stolen goods, the trader's Qu'ran, which had no doubt been the principal item leading to the accusation, was not returned.[20]

It seems that, even before the seventeenth century, both the Nupe and the Yoruba peoples had begun to use titles, associated with the spread of Islam from Hausaland, such as ladan, ladanu in Yoruba; liman, limanu in Yoruba; and magaji, mogaji, in Yoruba; and sarki, seriki in Yoruba.[21]

William Baikie reports that the Kutigi-Mokwa area, a hub of long-distance trade in the region, had long Islamic traditions.[22] In the Oyo Kingdom, though the Alafin was non-Muslim, a measure of official recognition was extended to Islamic practices, and the Alafin supposedly appointed, or rather confirmed, the selection of the imam who in turn offered prayers for the Alafin.[23] In Lagos, in c. 1784, for instance, the Oba Ologun Kutere had, as some of his principal officers of state, Muslims of Nupe and Hausa origin.[24] Richard Lander also reports that Islam was adopted as an official 'cult' in Ilaro and Egbado.[25]

The early eighteenth century saw acceleration in the spread of Islam through the policies of rulers like the Etsu Jibrilu. On Etsu Jibrilu (c. 1718-1746), the Caliph Muhammad Bello, recalls that:

> There was a certain just Sarki named Jibrilu, who ruled over them [i.e Nupes] in former times. Through him Islam spread abroad throughout

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19 Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, C. M. S. Bookshops, 1956, p. 190.

20 Ibid., pp. 190-1; R. C. C. Law, op. cit., p. 249.

21 Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, C. M. S. Bookshops, 1956, p. 107.

22 Fo2/.31 Baikie to Malmesbury, March 1859.

23 R. C. C. Law, op. cit., p. 76.

24 R. C. C. Law, "The Dynastic Chronology of Lagos", *Lagos Notes and Records, Bulletin of African Studies*, vol. II, no. 11, 1960, pp. 46-8.

25 Richard Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition*, Henry Colburn and Richard Bentler, 1830, vol. I, p. 79 and vol. 2, p. 127.

> the land, until they finally rebelled against him on account of his strict observance of religion...[26]

But, it appears that Jibrilu's 'strict observance of religion' led to his deposition and expulsion, which Bello condemned.[27] He was exiled, to Kutigi, the home of the immigrant Borno clerics and traders who settled there in c.1641.[28]

Though Islam was well established in Nupe and Yorubalands by the eighteenth century, it had not penetrated the basic fabric of the society to a consistent depth. It was more widely accepted in areas associated with long-distance trade, than in others. It gained foothold largely because it was not an ethnic religion, tied down to ancestor worship, but was a universal religion, facilitating exchange, intermixing and integration between diverse groups in increasingly heterogeneous societies.

Political Challenge

It thus seems that by the late eighteenth century, some Muslim clerics in Nupe and Yorubalands were, on their own, disaffected with the societies they lived in and the governments they lived under, and the solution they saw was the establishment of a government based on Islamic principles. These groups looked up to the ideals of political leadership they have read about in the Qu'ran and the hadith.[29]

Islam served as a basis upon which the Nupe and the Yoruba, as well as others, disaffected with the established order, could unite to change it.[30] For some, such as slaves, this change could mean emancipation; and for the criminal among them the opportunity to plunder. For others, such as merchants, such a change may mean a more secure legal framework for protecting life and property and for commercial

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[26] E. J. Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, Lagos, 1922, p. 16.

[27] Ibid., p. 16.

[28] Michael Mason, "The Nupe Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: A Political History", University of Birmingham, PhD. Thesis, 1970, p. 40.

[29] For inferences, see Idris Shaaba Jimada, *The Historical Background to the Establishment of Patigi Emirate: C. 1810-1898*, Ahmadu Bello University Press, pp. 216-8; Michael Mason, op. cit., pp. 52-8.

[30] S. F. Nadel, op. cit., pp. 142-3; R. C. C. Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600-c. 1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Clanderon Press, 1977, p. 258.

transactions and wider and more profitable markets and the prospects of more profits. These will definitely support a leadership with sympathies to the newly established governments set up by the jema'a of the Shehu Usman Dan Fodio in Hausaland and Borno, rather than those antagonistic to them.[31] However, Samuel Johnson reports that, "... Balogun Gimba, one of the head slaves of the Ilorin Emir took away all the Egungun dress and forced the Citizens of Oyo-Ile to accept the Koran which necessitated everyone to change his name for an Arabic one the only alternative being the sword..."[32] is questionable. Other traditions of the Oyo do not corraborate it, or make it plausible. Samuel Ajayi Crowther's reports, coming from someone much closer to the events brings out the role of Islam as a crucial, internal, factor in the crises of Oyo.[33] Both Captain Hugh Clapperton and the Landers had earlier observed the significant existence of Muslim communities in towns along the coast, practicing Islam without compulsion.[34] Islam forged sentiments of unity between the Nupe and Yoruba groups disaffected with the established order, which in the words of Nadel, "flourish without compulsion."[35] Some nineteenth century sources indicate that the Oyo Muslims may have received inspiration by visiting Nupe towns.[36]

However, there was concern among the Nupe ruling aristocracy, at the growing influence of the ulama in the Nupe Kingdom. This concern was probably one of the factors that led to the deposition and exile of

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[31] Michael Mason, "The Nupe Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: A Political History", University of Birmingham, PhD. Thesis, 1970, p. 68.

[32] Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, C. M. S. Bookshops, 1956, pp. 217-227.

[33] CMSCA 1/o/19/12(a) Rev. S. Crowther, *Extractor Journals*, 1859.

[34] Hugh Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*, J. Murray, 1829, pp. 204-6; Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, 3 vols., London, 1832, vol. 1 p. 182. Towns such as Lagos, Badagry and others were mentioned as towns of significant Muslim practices and population. For Ketu as an early Muslim center see, E. G. Parrinder, *The Story of Ketu: An Ancient Yoruba Kingdom*, Ibadan University Press, 1950, pp. 33-4.

[35] S. F. Nadel, op. cit., p. 144.

[36] See, Richard and John Lander, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger*, 3 vols., London, 1832, vol. 1, p. 190, and M. Laird and R. A. K. Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into Interior of Africa by the River Niger in 1832-4*, 2 vols., 1849, vol. 2. p. 28; they saw several Oyo and Yoruba Muslims in various Nupe towns.

Etsu Jibrilu (c.1718-1746).[37] In Oyo, this concern was expressed in the instigation of Alafin Majotu (c.1802-1830-1), by his traditional priests to arrange the assassination of Muslim preachers and clerics.[38] Clapperton thus reports that Alafin Majotu ordered: "... all Mohametans [i.e Muslims] put to death whether natives [i.e Oyo-Muslim] or in caravan trafficking [i.e. others, Nupe, Hausa, Kanuri, Fulani etc.]..."[39]

These political developments indicate that the political challenge posed by the activities of the reformist Muslim clergy was threatening the established order.

Aftermath of the Spread of Islam

The spread of Islam in the Nupe and Oyo areas resulted in new political and economic consequences. The establishment of Islamic practices demanded new loyalties that cut across the ethnic and traditional loyalties. The cosmopolitan nature of the towns and cities, which came to be inhabited by peoples of diverse origins who profess the Islamic religion were united in a common order against syncretic practices.[40] That a prominent Nupe cleric was by the 16th century giving Islamic religious advice to the Alafin is said to be informative.[41] It should also be noted that the Nupe invaded Oyo in the 16th century and considerable Nupe cultural and Islamic influences were instituted there.[42]

Mason wrote that Etsu Jibrilu, a foremost Nupe Islamic reformer whose tenure saw to the expansion of Islam to Oyo, might have in-

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[37] I. S. Jimada, *The Historical Background to the Establishment of Patigi Emirate: C. 1810-1898*, Ahmadu Bello University Press, p. 201.

[38] Richard Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition*, vol. 1. pp. 277-9. D. Denham and H. Clapperton, *Narratives of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the Years 1822, 1823 and 1824*, 2nd ed., London, 1828, reprint, London, 1966, p. 87. They heard of the travails of Muslim clerics such as Muhammad Gumso at the Oyo Capital.

[39] Hugh Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo*, p. 204.

[40] R. C. C. Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600-c. 1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Clanderon Press, 1977, pp.105-108. I. S. Jimada, *The Nupe and the Origins and Evolution of the Yoruba, c. 1275-1897*, Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, 2005.

[41] Samuel Johnson, op. cit., p. 104.

[42] J. F. Ade Ajayi and Robert Smith, *Yoruba Warfare in Ninetenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1964, p. 3. Samuel Johnson, op. cit., p.160.

creased the tempo of Islamic practices in the Alafinate.[43] Trade was an important factor in the spread and establishment of Islamic traditions in Nupe as well as in Oyo. The Nupe and the Oyo had maintained commercial relations for several centuries. The coming of Muslim slaves accelerated Islamic practices, in Oyo in particular.[44] Evidence from the 17th century suggests the prevalence of Islamic practices and presence of Muslims in Nupe and Oyo. Indeed, Muhammad al-Massanih (1667-8) was said to have written a treatise on the question of sunset in Islam, apparently in response to inquiries from Yorubaland.[45] By the late 18th century communities of Muslims were well established in Nupe and Oyo, with degrees of internal cohesion and external contact with traders coming from Hausaland and Bornu.

The Establishment of *Masjids* and the Formation of Islamic Identity

Masjids were established early in the history of Islamization in this area, though the identity of many of the early ones are obscure. However, prominent masjids established from the late eighteenth century exists till date. One of the prominent masjid in the Nupe area that served as central jumaah prayer congregation venue for Muslims was the Shaikh Ahmad Adam Masjid located in the Efukogi area of Bida and was of the earliest constructed at the establishment of Bida Emirate in the mid-19th century. The Bida Central Mosque is said to have been constructed in 1870.[46] Several masjids were also established in Yoruba area of the southwest. Prominent among these were the Ansar ud-deen and Ahmadiyga which prevails throughout Yorubaland. Other prominent central masjids existed from an early period in Ilorin, Oshogbo, Iwo, Ijebu, and other major cities in Yorubaland. The establishment of masjids went side by side with the introduction of Quranic schools where pupils were taught the basic knowledge and rudiments of Islam.

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[43] Michael Mason, "The Nupe Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century: A Political History", University of Birmingham, PhD. Thesis, 1970, p. 43.

[44] G. O. Gbadamosi, *The Growth of Islam Among the Yoruba, 1841-1908*, Longman, 1978.

[45] R. Hiskett and A. Bivar, "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria in 1804: A Provisional Account", *Bulletin of SOAS*, vol. 25, no: 1/3, 1962, pp. 104-10.

[46] Jennifer M. Bray, "The Organization of Traditional Weaving in Iseyin, Nigeria", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1968, pp. 270-278.

Clothing Traditions and Muslim Identification

The clothing traditions and Muslim identifications is generally same in the area as well as in the general Nigerian and West African region. Here Muslims are identified and recognizable by their clothes. The Nupe and the Yoruba share traditions of clothing going back far into the distant past. There is evidence indicating that the technique of broad horizontal cloth weaving was common among the Nupe and the Yoruba. Nadel suggests that Yoruba slaves from northeast Yorubaland introduced the technique of horizontal cloth weaving into Nupe.[47] Other sources provide evidence indicating that this technique was found in these areas before the bringing in of these slaves.[48]

The other distinct technique of weaving by which men weaved on upright looms and produced narrow strips of cloth about six inches wide was probably introduced from Hausaland.[49] The Yoruba call this six inch wide strip, apasa, the Nupe call it *kpasa*, and the Hausa call it *kwasha*. The technique of using horizontal looms which produced broader strips of cloth about eighteen inches wide, was the tradition in the various Nupe and Yoruba communities, before immigration into these areas of the weavers of the upright loom from Hausaland.[50]

A prominent feature of the clothing traditions of the Nupe and the Yoruba was the multiple interconnections between them and with the clothing traditions of Hausaland and Borno and areas further North. For example, the now common Yoruba traditional cap, known in Yoruba as *fila etu*, was most likely derived from the Nupe dark woven blue Phrygian cap, 'the cap of antiquity', called, by the Nupe, the *fulan zabo*. Nadel collected traditions that the "blue Phrygian cap was the traditional headgear of the Nupe."[51] Samuel Johnson suggests that the Yoruba, *fila abeti*, the cap that covers the ears, known in Hausa, as *laban kada*, was of Hausa or Fulani origin.[52]

At Oyo-ile in 1826, Hugh Clapperton observed that Oyo chiefs widely and frequently wore Nupe cloths of various patterns and dimen-

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47 R. C. C. Law, *The Oyo Empire,* p. 204.

48 S. F. Nadel, op. cit., p. 132.

49 Samuel Johnson, op. cit, p. 111.

50 Hugh Clapperton, op. cit., p. 36.

51 Samuel Johnson, op. cit., p. 100.

52 Ibid, pp. 101-111.

sions. Thus, it is likely that the Yoruba *dashiki*, the Yoruba *bante*, the Nupe *bente*, the Yoruba *tobi*, the Nupe *tobigi*, and Yoruba *iro* and *buba*, developed out of this process of cultural fusion.[53]

The Yoruba *ewu*, Nupe *ewo*, a loose shirt with sleeves, often white, worn under gowns; the Nupe girike, the large gown worn for special occasions; and the large agandasi trousers, loose at the waist and tight at the ankles and richly embroidered; and the samayan, are other obvious examples of the close interconnection between the Nupe and the Yoruba at the level of material culture for daily use.

The *kaftan* in particular became the cloth of every day use among the Muslims a cloth by which Muslims are easily recognized. However, it is important to note that, Islamic traditions broke down ethnic or religious loyalties while substituting a cosmopolitan loyalty which transcended kith and kin and ethnicity; bringing about the unification of disparate and diverse groups into a singular political and economic commonwealth. Much more important was the imposition of an Islamic superstructure in all ramifications. Islam became a way of life in terms of architecture, childbirth, weddings, and all aspects of social and economic life. According to the Africanist Edward Blyden, "Islamic superstructure has been superimposed on a permanent indigenious substructure; so that what really took place when the Arab met the African in his home; it was a healthy amalgamation and not absorption or an undue repression."[54]

Despite traditional practices that were largely common in rural areas, the fundamental principles of Islam were never violated. It was in this light that Spencer Trimingham observed that Islam has progressed in Africa and become an African religion whose agents are Africans which can be assimilated gradually without causing too great a disruption in communal life.[55]

Thus, strict Islamic traditions are followed for instance; naming a child on the eighth day after delivery. Marriages are also conducted in the communities according to Islamic law and in the past particular days such as during the periods of *maulud nabiyyi* or the *eid-al-fitr* or

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[53] Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, Edinburgh University Press, 1971.

[54] Ibid., p. 14.

[55] J. S. Trimingham, *The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa*, SCM Press, 1955, p. 9.

eid-al-kabir festivities. In Yoruba in particular, the role of Islam is clearly depicted in songs. For instance; for weddings, naming ceremonies, burials and even pilgrimages to Makkah[56] undoubtedly Islamic traditions and culture has been long established in this region and a large percentage of the population are Muslims.

Conclusion

Revivalist and *jihadist* movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ensured a comparative reduction in syncretic practices of the peoples of this region. The creation of a wider political entity of the Sokoto Caliphate integrated diverse peoples into a common social, economic and political union over a considerable part of modern Nigeria. Islamic traditions and culture came to be firmly established in Muslim communities across the area.

[56] Abdulrahman Doi, *Islam in Nigeria*, Gaskiya Corporation, 1984, pp. 141-156.

The Spread of Islam in Bilad al-Sudan 900-1500: Ghana, Mali and Songhay

Ibrahim M. Jumare and Tukur M. Mukhtar*

Introduction

There is no doubt that trade and other commercial relations existed between the North African communities of the Sanhaja ethnic group and the general Berber societies with the Dyula and Mande speaking communities of the Western Sudan. But what is yet not certain is the period upon which these trading and commercial relations began. However, it is evident that the discovery of camel around the first century AD[1] facilitated a serious breakthrough in the traffic of the caravans and its criss-crossings along the Saharan marches southwards to the ancient states of the Western Sudan and vice versa. To that effect, trade has been seen as one of the dominant themes in the history of Western Sudanic region.[2] It resulted in the opening of persistent and dominant but dynamic relations that transformed the socio-political and economic features and structures of these states and their inhabitants.

Principal among the most important of these transformations in the Western Sudan has to do with the development of a complex system of trade with all its attendant consequences: the introduction and spread of Islam (which formed the subject matter of this study) as well as the rise and development of cities and states in the region. This buttresses the fact that African social formations have indeed been into relations with one another even before common era, hence influ-

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1 Nehemia Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali*, London: Matheun and Co., 1973, p. 6.

2 Nehemia Levtzion, "The Early States of the Western Sudan", in J. F. A Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, London: Longman, 1975.

encing each other's social and political systems and above all civilizations.[3] Thus, Fage has appropriately concluded in this context that "... one of the great lessons of history is that civilizations rarely develops in isolation."[4]

The present day West African sub-region has been generally referred to as *Bilad al–Sudan* or *Bilad al-Takrur* (Land of the Blacks) by the earliest Arab geographers and historians.[5] But, in some classical works of Hunwick,[6] Levtzion,[7] Smith,[8] and Palmer,[9] *Bilad al-Sudan* has been divided into the Western Sudan and the Central Sudan with some carved out states of the forest regions. Even though, there were some overlaps between some states of the Western and the Central Sudan at a point in time on the basis of some historical antecedents. A clear example of this was the ancient Songhay Empire in the early 16th century where its powers crossed to some Hausa states of Kabi, Zazzau and Katsina (that belongs to the Central Sudan region).[10] Within the context of this study, Western Sudan as the scope here shall be treated according to its boarders of the early sixteenth century.

Islam, its introduction and spread in the Western Sudan is one of those subjects that brought monumental developments in the historiography of Western Sudan, but undertaking the exercise of its docu-

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[3] Ancient African states/kingdoms have been not only relating within themselves but have been able to influence one another significantly in all aspects of human endeavor. In fact, they had contact with even across the shores of the Mediterranean Sea with Greeks and Romans, and to whose impact on one another was visible to the ancient states of Axum, Napata, Meroe and Egypt. Thus, civilizations in these ancient states have traversed to other states of sub-Saharan Africa. For more on this see, G. Mokhtar, (ed.), *General History of Africa: II Ancient Civilizations of Africa,* London: UNESCO, 1990.

[4] J. D. Fage, *A History of Africa,* London: Hutchinson University Library, 1978, p. 31.

[5] Such as Al-Fazari, Al-Yaqubi, Al-Umari, and Ibn Battuta.

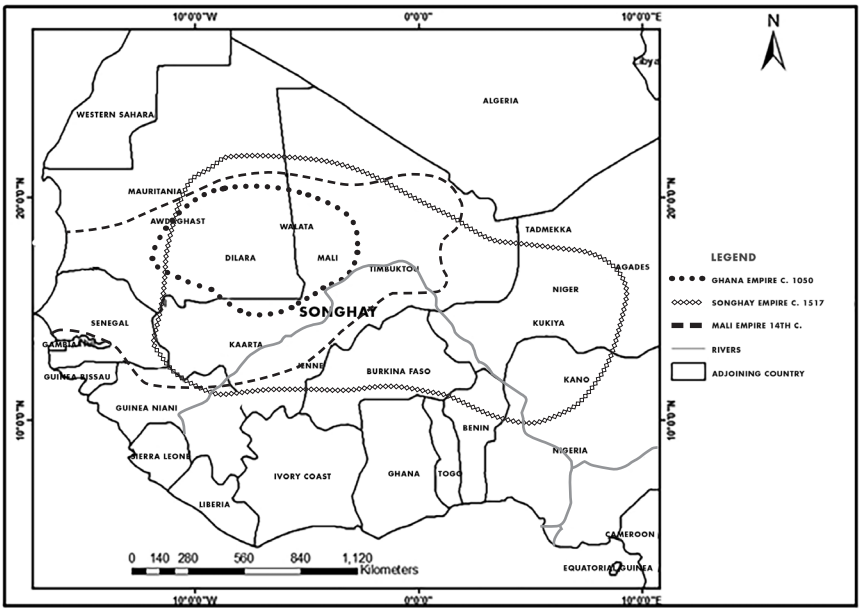
[6] J. O. Hunwick, "Songhay, Borno and Hausaland in the Sixteenth Century", in J. F. A Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa,* vol. I, London: Longman, 1975.

[7] N. Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali* and his "The Early States of the Western Sudan" in J. F. A Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa,* vol. I, London: Longman, 1975.

[8] A. Smith, "The Early States of the Central Sudan", in J. F. A Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa,* vol. I, London: Longman, 1975.

[9] H. R. Palmer, "The Kingdom of Gaogha of Leo Africanus Parts I & II", *Journal of the Royal African Society,* vol. 29, no. 115 (April, 1930) & 116 (July, 1930).

[10] Cf. Map I for the territorial extent of the Ghana, Mali and Songhay empire by the 1500 AD.



Map I: *Showing Study Area*

mentation has to rely heavily on the classical writings of some orientalists despite their limitations of Western perceptions on the religion. Yet this formed a major limitation to this exercise, for, most of the earlier works on the area are scanty and either extant in Arabic or in a French language.

The Introduction of Islam in Western Sudan

The exact dating as to the introduction of Islam in the Western Sudan appears very uneasy to make, this is not only for the extant records about the earliest historical records of the area, but further for the fact that, the primary records in the history of the *Bilad al-Sudan* generally was formulated by the Arab geographers and historians, whose accounts in some instances were based on reports of the north African Berber traders coming to the region.[11] What remains

[11] Michael Brett, "Islam and Trade in the *Bilad al-Sudan*, Tenth–Eleventh Century A.D", *Journal of African History*, vol. 24:4, 1983, p. 431.

important and most significant is the contact between the two regions which predates the Islamization of the North African region during the 7th century AD,[12] because, it was widely noticed in the 7th century when Muslim traders in Egypt and other parts of *Ifriqiyyat* were visible in some market centers not only as traders but as settled business agents.[13] This contact had no doubt enlarged the scope of the great achievements of the states of the Western Sudan: Ghana, Mali and Songhay empires.[14] For example, Brett argues that "

it was the consequence of the trade which the Arab conquests stimulated, that reached out across the Sahara to bring the Bilad al-Sudan for the first time within the sphere of the civilization of the Mediterranean and the Middle East."[15]

Indeed, the issue of economic linkages with the advent and spread of Islam in the Western Sudan is an inevitable one in the historiography of Islam in Africa. But, the question is how conscious was the introduction of Islam through the medium of trade became a debatable one. Classical scholars like Trimingham[16] did not emphasiz the desire of the Arabs and North Africans to extend the frontiers of Islam to the Western Sudan. Rather, they emphasized the pursuance of trade interest in their area, hence attributed the early spread of Islam to the extension of the Almoravid's activities into the Western Sudan during the mid-eleventh century (1050s) AD. As shall be expressed in the following paragraph, the extension of the Almoravid's activities to the Western Sudan is only seen here as a puritan or revivalist movement because Islam had been present in the region. But one fact worthy of note here rests on the *Almoraviduun*'s capacity in being militants, who introduced Islam among the non-Muslims through conversion as well as carrying out revival of Islamic practices and compliance with the

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[12] Cf. J. M. Abu al-Nasr, *History of the Maghrib*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

[13] J. S. Trimingham, *History of Islam in West Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 27-28; M. Brett, "Islam and Trade in the *Bilad al-Sudan*, Tenth–Eleventh Century A.D", *Journal of African History*, vol. 24:4, 1983.

[14] J. D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, London: Hutchinson University Library, 1978.

[15] Michael Brett, "Islam and Trade in the *Bilad al-Sudan*, Tenth–Eleventh Century A.D", *Journal of African History*, vol. 24:4, 1983, p. 431.

[16] J. S. Trimingham, *History of Islam in West Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 27.

sharia legal precepts in the region amongst the Muslim population. This however, does not confer on the *Almoraviduun* the legitimacy of introducing the religion in the area, rather, the claim over extension and revival of Islam into the region. On this note, *Almoraviduun* are seen as agents of revivalism and expansion of Islam in the Western Sudan.

However, some records suggest silent links and conversion of the indigenous Dyula merchants to Islam through their Berber counterparts. Two preserved narratives of about AD 1000, as reported by Brett[17] from al-Wansharisi,[18] expressed that 'while still dependent on hearsay, provide more direct evidence for the period when the *Bilad al-Sudan* was still largely un-Islamic (pagan)' but this further suggest only the existence of Islam in the region before the 11th century (AD 1000) which had been possible through the activities of the Berber merchants in the region.

Additional evidence indicates that, the two cases of *fatwas* handled by the Qayrawani jurist al-Qabisi (AD 935-1012), the cases of which were treated by Brett, have no doubt expressed a developed and complex trading system including commercial relations between the merchants of the North Africa and their agents in the Western Sudan. It equally expressed the development and application of the Islamic principles or laws which governed long distance and regional trade as at then between the merchants of the two regions. The two *fatwa*s related to *qirad* and *mirath*[19] involving Muslim merchants from the North African and *Bilad al-Sudan* is a further testimony of prevalence of Islam in the region. These two cases portrayed the complex trading relationship between the North Africa and the Sudanic traders, and on the other hand, showed that Islam had been established in the Western Sudan with some legal and administrative structures, but yet, limited to some intellectual standing where a legit had to be sought for in the North African region of Tunisia to determine a case. In view of

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[17] Cf. Michael Brett, "Islam and Trade in the *Bilad al-Sudan*, Tenth–Eleventh Century A.D", *Journal of African History*, vol. 24:4, 1983.

[18] Al-Wansharisi was a sixteenth century Moroccan jurist and the author of *Al-Mi'yar al-mu'rib wa'l-jami al-mughrib 'an fatawi ahl Ifriqya wa'l-Andalus wa'l-Maghrib*, 12 vols. lithographed (Fes, 1314-15 A.H).

[19] *Qirad* is money or goods given to someone to buy or sell on behalf of the owner, the profit to be divided between them in some previously agreed proportion upon completion of the business. While *mirath* means an inheritance.

these developments, it is posited here that Islam had no doubt been introduced in the *Bilad al-Sudan* in the 9th century AD.

In addition, similar to the *Almoraviduun*, the Mahdi ibn Tumart rose up in his own puritan movement after his return from the Middle Eastern states of Baghdad, Jerusalem, Mecca and Egypt, where he was credited to have met al-Ghazali and learned some exegesis of the Qur'an and other fields of Islamic science from him.[20] The new movement headed by Ibn Tumart is known as Almohad. Even though, Almohad and Almoravid share some differences in their theological conceptions, yet, they pursue the same aim as agents of puritanism and revivalism of Islamic religion within the Maghreb region, but their activities extended far into the southern fringes of the Sahara in Western Bilad al-Sudan peripherally. However, the major contributions of these movements in the Western Sudan lie in their capacity to push the extension and revivalism of the religion of Islam in the region.

Spread of Islam in Western Sudan

From the forgone discussions, it has become evident that Islam was introduced in the Western Sudan before the extension of the al-Moravid's activities in the area by the mid-eleventh century.[21] Thus, the introduction was then followed by its spread and expansion in to the southern limits of the Western Sudan and further to the Central Sudanic empires, though efforts are only concentrated on the Western Sudanic states of Ghana, Mali and Songhay as the focus of this chapter. As spread of Islam to the southern limits of the Western Sudan progressed steadily to its height in the 16th century through the expansion of the Trans-Saharan trade routes and centers,[22] the impact of this development extended to the 19th century. This segment of the spread of Islam shall be examined in three phases: the nominal phase; the phase of strength and desire; and the scholarship phase.

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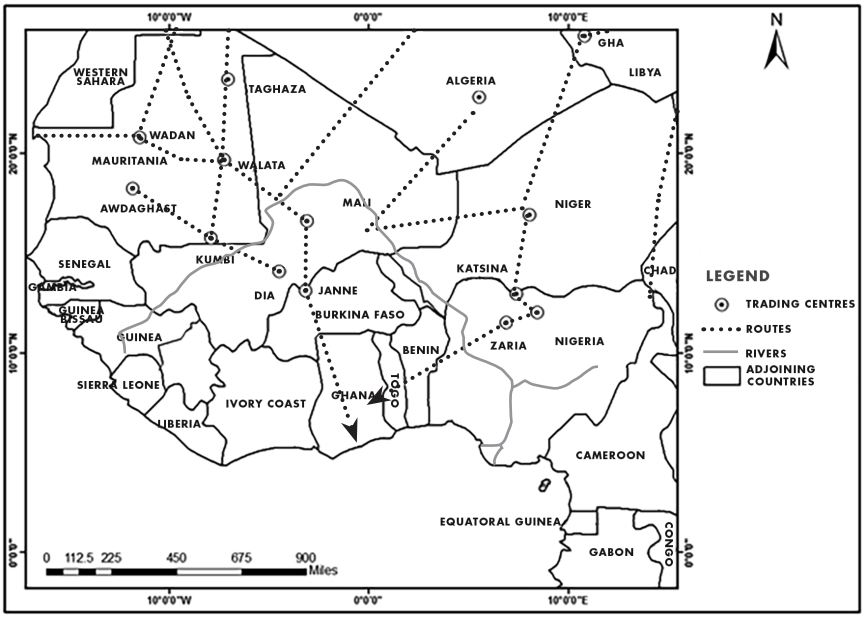
[20] Jamil M. Abu al-Nasr, *History of the Maghrib*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp. 103-118.

[21] Ibid., pp. 92-103.

[22] See Map II for the major trade routes and centers across the Western Sudan.



Map II: *Major Centers of Trade and Islamic Scholarship in Bilad al-Sudan*

Phase I: Nominal Phase

This was the first phase in the spread of Islam in the Western Sudanic states which can simply be described as a nominal phase in the spread of Islam in the region during the 19th century. It is referred to as nominal here for the fact that its advent became the contentious and unnoticed in the period as Islam was gradually and spatially introduced across the region. Thus it was only mildly noticed and unmitigated by the traditions and the rulers of states because of its value attachment to the trans-Saharan trade system.[23] This introductory phase ended with the beginning of the al-Moravid's activities in the Soninke region of Ghana and the subsequent conquest of its capital by 1076 AD. The Soninke traders in Ghana were the first group to accept

[23] Nehemia Levtzion, "The Early States of the Western Sudan", in J. F. A Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, London: Longman, 1975, p. 118.

Islam and were known to have dominated the trade routes and a few centers leading south to the gold sources.[24]

The development of commercial relations between the North African merchants and the Soninke traders and other states led to the emergence of more trading centers which later rose to prominence in both commercial activities and in the development of Islamic learning. Popular among these centers were; Kumbi, Awdaghast, Walata, Jenne, Gao, Timbuktu, Malel, etc.[25] Principally, these centers of commercial activities transformed into states only because of their locations along the trade routes,[26] as well as the hospitality their leadership accorded the Muslim merchants.[27] On this note, it was reported that, about three important cities: Gao, Ghana and Takrur had separate settlements between the Muslim merchants and the non-muslim host communities.[28] Levtzion, however, summarizes this relationship as he indicates that

> The position of Islam in Ghana exemplifies yet another pattern in the spread of Islam in West Africa, that of Muslims who lived under the auspices of [non-Muslim] pagan rulers. The king of Ghana was interested in attracting Muslim traders to the capital, because the prosperity of his kingdom depended on the trans-Saharan gold trade. He let the Muslims practiced their religion without interference… There were, however, points of contact, and the king employed the literate Muslims in his court as interpreters, in the treasury and whenever knowledge of writing could be of use.[29]

Gold formed an important staple of the Trans-Saharan trade, de-

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[24] Ibid., p. 146; N. Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali,* London: Matheun and Co., 1973, p. 187.

[25] Ibid., p. 125; Basil Davidson, *Old Africa Rediscovered,* London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1970.

[26] Michael Crowder, *West Africa: An Introduction to its History,* London: Longman, 1977, p. 28; C. Fyfe, "West African Trade", in J. F. A. Ajayi and I. Espie, (eds.), *A Thousand Years of West African History: A Handbook for Teachers and Students*, Ibadan University Press, 1965, pp. 238-252.

[27] N. Levtzion, "The Early States of the Western Sudan", p. 120; N. Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali;* J. S. Trimingham, *History of Islam in West Africa,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

[28] N. Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali,* London: Matheun and Co., 1973, p. 186.

[29] Ibid.

spite the fact that, its source and exploration had been shrouded by mysteries, superstitious and spiritual beliefs.[30] It equally formed an important tool through which conflicts over sources, control and extension could affect or even led to the downfall of a state. This is exemplified in the rise of Mali as a power over Ghana after the al-Moravid's conquest of its capital in 1076.[31] Though, this weakens the power of the Soninke and equally led to their dispersal, the development of Bure as a new source for gold as well as the extension of gold fields and trade routes to the Sudan have further facilitated its rise and the development to power.[32] Undoubtedly, the rise of Mali to power equally signified the advent and expansion of Islam in the region and shall form the next narrative in the phase of discussion in this paper.

Phase II: Phase of Strength and Desire

In the preceding phase, it was expressed that, the patterns of trade and political organizations in the empire of Ghana conditioned the spread of Islam in the area,[33] but equally, Islam became an important force to reckon with since the services of the Muslim elites were being employed by the non-Muslim leadership of Ghana Empire. This resulted to its shift from the nominal nature where peaceful coexistence through trade and diplomacy formed the fundamental basis for the spread of the religion, to a situation where zeal and desire to convert non-Muslims

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[30] The information about the source and techniques of its exploration has been a serious concern to the Berber merchants and other travelers like Ibn Batuta, who visited Ghana during the period of this trade system. The traditional Soninke communities maintained monopoly of both mining and disposal of the gold from the gold fields and through which they have intentionally blocked the foreigners from coming into contact with them. This is by introducing what they called 'silent trade', a situation where gold is being exchanged with other commodities between the merchants without seeing one another. Thus, a lot of superstitious belief was attached to the nature of the deposits of gold in a gold field. For instance, Al-Umari in his *Masalik* reported that Mansa Musa narrated in Egypt that whenever he had tried to introduce Islam on the people of the gold bearing country, the gold diminished. He therefore left them on their own, and as satisfied with the income he gained from controlling the gold trade through his dominions. Cf. George T. Stride and Caroline Ifeka, (eds.), *Peoples and Empires of West Africa*, Nigeria: Thomas Nelson, 1971.

[31] N. Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali*, pp. 29-52.

[32] M. Crowder, *West Africa: An Introduction to its History*, London: Longman, 1977, p. 28.

[33] N. Levtzion, "The Early States of the Western Sudan", p. 118.

into the religion had taken dominance. In this subsection, three important developments that were being driven by strength and desire to spread the religion in the Western Sudan are discussed and this is why it is being described as the phase of strength and desire.

One of these developments marked the beginning of Almoravid's activities in the Western Sudanic region as Levtzion, evidently concludes that,

> The ground for the Islamization of Ghana has already been prepared through the long, peaceful influence of the Muslim residents [in the Muslim communities]. But it needs the Almoravid's conquest to destroy the political and military power of Ghana, which have stiffened opposition to Islam.[34]

In this context, it should be noted that, the expansion of the Almoravid's religious and commercial activities to the Western Sudan was a result of the Dujjala revolts against Ibn Yasin after the death of the movement's leader Yahaya ibn Ibrahim in 1036.[35] According to Levtzion, it was:

> … when Abdullahi ibn Yasin saw that the Sanhaja turned away from him and followed their passions, he wanted to leave them for the land of those Sudanese [Takrur] who have already adopted Islam… the alliance between Takrur and the Almoravid was prompted by Islam, but it was also directed against common enemy, Ghana.[36]

It could be deduced from above that the zeal from Ibn Yasin (or *Almorabiduun*) and the strength of the Takrur, who have already professed Islam during the earlier phase, played a critical role that facilitated the Islamization of Ghana, which they achieved in the last quarter of the 11th century. According to ibn Khaldun, "the Almoravids conquered Ghana, imposed tribute on the Sudanese, and converted many of them to Islam [in 1076]."[37]

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[34] Ibid., p. 186.

[35] N. Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali*, pp. 33-34; B. Davidson and F. K. Buah (eds.), *The Growth of African Civilization: A History of West Africa 1000–1800*, London: Longman, 1977, p. 42.

[36] Ibid., p. 44.

[37] N. Levtzion, "The Early States of the Western Sudan", in J. F. A Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, London: Longman, 1975, p. 123.

The development that led to the conquest of Ghana did not last longer than a decade in terms of control even though its impact lasted longer than a century. This was so because by 1087, the Soninke rose against the Almoravid's rule and were able to expel them out of their domain, but this could not allow the Soninke to regain back the fallen state of Ghana as it remained yet a weak and failed state, and its tributaries had taken hold of their independence.[38] Despite this, an important development took place in the course of the spread of Islam during this period, and despite the prevailing weakness and stateless situation in the area, the Soninke dispersed in to the Western Sudan and took Islam along in their dispersion southwards to the forest zone.

The conversion of the leadership of the Western Sudan to Islam is also another significant factor in the spread and development of Islam in the region. Initially, during the first phase, the leaders of Takrur and Ghana states were not Muslims but Muslim merchants from the Maghrib and their Soninke counterparts enjoyed their tolerance, free will and cooperation to practice their religions in their respective domains.[39]

However, there are different versions as to which a ruler first accepts Islam in the historiography of the two states. Trimingham's study of the area shows that the first ruler of Gao to embrace Islam since AD 985 have later established in Gao a royal mosque and an open space for the congregational prayer.[40] Levtzion also relates an account of al-Bakri expressing that, Malel was at a point afflicted by draught and all sacrifices have failed to rescue the situation, but a Muslim trader offered to pray if the king could accept Islam which he did and after prayers abundant rains fell in Malel.[41] Though, it was reported that this Malel King accepted Islam with his court members, but his followers remained idolaters. This equally corresponds to Ibn Battuta's notes on the state of Islam when he visited Mali between 1352 and 1353 AD. According to Ibn Battuta's observations, there is an expression of a serious syncretic blending between traditional religious activities

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[38] J. D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, London: Hutchinson University Library, 1978.

[39] Cf. J. M. Abu al-Nasr, *History of the Maghrib*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

[40] J. S. Trimingham, *History of Islam in West Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 28.

[41] Al-Bakri, *Almasalik wa l'mamalik*

and that of Islamic practices and in some instances even among the intellectual Muslim class.[42] Despite all these negative observations, in respect of this stage, we share a conclusion of Levtzion, that "

Kings like Sundjata and Sunni Ali, founders of empires, remain the god-heroes of national traditions, and not their successors like Mansa Musa of Mali [his successor Mansa Sulaiman] and Askia Muhammad of Songhay, who were to become famous as great Muslim kings."[43]

The periods of Mansa Musa 1312-1337; Mansa Sulaiman 1340-1360 and Askia Muhammad of Songhay 1493-1528 have given a new leaf to the spread and development of Islam as well as Islamic institutions in Western Sudan both internally and externally to the Muslim world. Externally, their relations with the North African states of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and even far Andalusia in Spain, paved way for the development of Islamic scholarship in the Western Sudan through itinerant Muslim scholars' *fatwa*s and transmission of books and other materials for learning.[44] In addition, the pilgrimage undertaken by some of these Sudanese rulers have introduced the names of the Western Sudanic empires to the Arab world very prominently and have resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the regions.[45] It further led to the recognition of these empires by the Arab world as Islamic states, for instance, 'the investiture by the Sharif of Mecca as Caliph of the lands of the Takrur'[46] to the Askia Alhajj Muhammad Ture signified some level of legitimacy he enjoyed from the Arab world. It was however, noted that it was on his return from pilgrimage that Mansa Musa came along with some

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[42] Ibn Battuta, *The West African Journey: Ibn Battuta's Last Journey – Morocco Across the Sahara to the West Africa and Back,* (753 A.H./ 1352 AD to 754/1353), *Timbuktou, nd. Np.*; B. Awe, "Empires of Western Sudan: Ghana, Mali and Songhay", in J. F. A. Ajayi and I. Espie, (eds.), *Thousand Years of West African History,* Ibadan University Press, 1965, pp. 57-58.

[43] N. Levtzion, "The Early States of the Western Sudan", in J. F. A Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa,* vol. I, London: Longman, 1975, p. 191; cf. Al-Umari, *Masalik al-Absad;* B. Davidson and F. K. Buah (eds.), *The Growth of African Civilization: A History of West Africa 1000–1800,* London: Longman, 1977, p. 78.

[44] Cf. M. Brett, "Islam and Trade in the *Bilad al-Sudan*, Tenth–Eleventh Century A.D", *Journal of African History*, vol. 24:4, 1983.

[45] N. Levtzion, "The Early States of the Western Sudan", p. 147.

[46] Irene M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 493-4.

Muslim clerics who were vast in different fields of Islamic sciences.

Internally, it was during the reign of Mansa Musa of Mali that commercial centers of Jenne, Timbuktu and Gao began transforming to become renowned and eminent centers of Islamic learning because of his policies that encouraged scholarship, application of *shariah* laws and settlement of Muslim scholars from the Maghrib.[47] Consequently, this set the stage for the next section of the paper described as a revolutionary period or phase of the spread of Islam in the history of the empires because of the radical changes that were introduced.

Phase III: Revolutionary Phase

Two important forces which include the establishment of the Muslim traders' quarters in the major trading centers and the acceptance of Islam by the Muslim leadership have contributed to the rise of the Muslim intelligentsia that marked the revolutionary period in the development of Islam in the Western Sudan. From the beginning of the twelfth century when the Empire of Mali rose to power, the development of Islamic sciences began. Initially, it was the Sanhaja clerics who moved around the Western Sudan for preaching and teaching, but policies of Mansa Musa towards Islamic education became a window that attracted Muslim scholars to settle in these significant centers of trade in the region. The development of some Islamic institutions of *qadi, imam, nazir, muazzin,* etc. in the administration of Mali is a pointer to the growing level of intelligentsia class in the region. Though, corpus of Arabic literature has suggested some links with not only the Maghribi scholars but with the scholars of Andalusia in Spain before this time.[48] However, Ibn Battuta in his stay in Takadda in Western Sudan reported that

> … the Qadi Abu Ibrahim and the preacher Muhammad and the teacher Abu Hafs and the Shaikh Sa'id ibn Ali set out to call on the sultan of Takadda [over a dispute between him and the sultan of Takarkuri] … the gentlemen I mentioned had gone to arbitrate between the two.[49]

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[47] Ibid., p. 191.

[48] Cf. A. D. H. Bivar and M. Hiskett, "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: A Provincial Account", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* University of London, vol. 25:1/3, 1962.

[49] Ibn Battuta, *The West African Journey: Ibn Batuta's Last Journey – Morocco Across the Sahara to the West Africa and Back,* p. 70.

This development can be further established by the fact that, places like Fez (in Morocco), Qabis (in Tunisia) and Andalusia (in Spain) grew not only as trading centers but also centers of Islamic learning where Muslim students and scholars of Islamic learning travelled to further their education from the renowned scholars of Western Sudan during this phase of expansion of Islam in West Africa. On the other hand, these were the centers where *fatwas* were sought for from the Western Sudan. But al-Sadi reported that

> ... of all the Muslim centers, Timbuktu was the most famous. Though it reached its height under the Songhay it had already been important under Mali... the Friday Mosque and Sankore were built not only for prayers but for studies. Shaikh Abdulrahman al-Tamimi, who came from the Hijaz, find that scholars in Timbuktu were more learned than he was, and went to Fez to study before coming back to Timbuktu.[50]

At the dawn fall of the Empire of Mali in the 14th century under the Sunni dynasty of Songhay, Islamic practices declined down in these centers only because of the highly syncretic nature of the leadership at the time,[51] nonetheless, through the turn of the Askia's dynasty from 1492, especially with the accession to the power of Askia Muhammad Alhajj in 1493, Islamic scholarship got a giant leaf with his policies of consulting prominent Muslim jurists on matters of administration under the *sharia*. It is on this ground that Muhammad Abdulkarim al-Maghili visited Songhay in 1502.[52] This visit however, facilitated the transformation of the religion into a state religion by the leadership of Songhay Empire – Askia Muhammad Ture.[53] This was through a great deal of influence he (al-Maghili) exerted in the administration of Songhay both intellectually and politically. Thus, he advised Askia Muhammad on jurisprudence and political matters. Al-Maghili's popular text on the principles of Islamic government called *Ajwibat* attest to this fact.[54] This

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[50] Abdulrahman al-Sadi, *Tarikh al-Sudan*, Translated by O. Hudas, Paris, 1900.

[51] M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from 16th to 18th Centuries", *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London: vol. 25:1/3, 1962, p. 578.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Irene M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 494.

[54] See for instance John O. Hunwick, (ed.) *Shariah in Songhay, The Replies of al-Maghili*

was in addition to the development of the various fields of Islamic studies, in fact, al-Maghili has been a force to reckon with the implementation and enforcement of the *sharia* legal system and other successes recorded by the administration of Askia Muhammad Alhajj in Songhay.

Thus, the revitalization and development of the tradition of learning in Timbuktu and other centers of Islamic scholarship in the Western Sudan under the Askia's dynasty in Songhay (1493-1591)[55] have facilitated the emergence of the indigenous Muslim class such as Ahmad al-Baba, Sidi Mukhtar al-Kunti (d. 1811), Abdulrahman as-Sadi, Mahmud Kati and Qadi Muhammad Alhajj among others, in the later centuries which have influenced the triumph of Islamic revolutions in the Western and Central Sudanic states till the nineteenth century. In terms of connectivity, majority of these indigenous Muslim class of scholars derived their roots from the Sanhaja scholars who settled in the centers. For instance, in the fifteenth century, it was reported that scholarship in Timbuktu revolved around three Sanhaja families: *Shaikh* Muhammad Aqit's family, *Shaikh* Amd-Ag-Muhammad's family and the progenitors of al-Qadi Alhajj, to which the popular Timbuktu tradition is credited.[56] On the other side, some families of reputable standing in scholarship and learning from both Western and Central Sudan traces their progenies to Shaikh al-Maghili. For instance, the Kunta Qadiri *shaikhs* and *shariffai* family in Kano have at present claimed decency from al-Maghili.[57]

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to the Questions of Askia al-Hajj Muhammad, London: 1985; Similarly, while in Hausa states of Kano and Katsina, as well as in Air, al-Maghili had sawn same legacies and reminiscence of which still is visible in these cities. Cf. Abd al-Aziz 'Abd-Allah Batran, "A Contribution to the Biography of Shaikh Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karim Ibn Muhammad ('Umar-A'Mar) al-Maghili, al-Tilimsani", *Journal of African History*, vol. 14:3, 1973.

[55] John O. Hunwick, "Songhay, Borno and Hausaland in the Sixteenth Century", in J. F. A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, London: Longman, 1975; B. Davidson and F. K. Buah (eds.), *The Growth of African Civilization: A History of West Africa 1000–1800*, London: Longman, 1977, p. 78.

[56] Cf. M. A. Gomez, "Timbuktou Under the Imperial Songhay: A Reconsiderations of Autonomy", *JAH*, vol. 31:1, 1990; M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from 16th to 18th Centuries", *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London: vol. 25:1/3, 1962; cf. B. Davidson, *Old Africa Rediscovered*, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1970, p. 96.

[57] See P. E. Starrat, "Oral History in Muslim Africa: Al-Maghili's Legend in Kano", Ph. D. Thesis, University of Michigan, 1993.

Obviously, it was the rise of these indigenous Muslim scholars that sustained the tempo of the spread of Islam in Western Sudan after the fall of Songhay Empire and their literature have in no small measure contributed to the wave of Islamic revolutions in the Western Sudan in the 19th century,[58] which subsequently became a counter force to European imperialism in West Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[59]

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, it is evident that Islam came to the Western Sudan after the Arab conquests of North Africa in the 8th century, but popular versions of narratives on its advent to the Western Sudan in the eleventh century have been refuted in the arguments above. Rather than that, evidences presented above suggest that, it was introduced in the Western Sudan a century after the Islamization of North Africa that is in the 9th century. Though, its impacts were visible in the Western Sudanic systems between the 10th and 11th centuries.

However, the trend in its spread has been dealt with above in three important phases: (a) the nominal phase; (b) the phase of strength and desire and (c) the revolutionary phase. Thus, the general development of Islam in Western Sudan to this date has mostly been credited to the efforts of the Berber merchants and their Soninke counterparts, then to the *Almorabituun* and subsequently the Sanhaja clerics who settled in the Western Sudanic centers of learning and built upon it a tradition of scholarship and learning that these centers bear up to the present time.

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[58] J. O. Hunwick, "The Nineteenth Century Jihads", In J. C. Anene and G. N. Brown, (eds.), *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,* Ibadan University Press, 1966; See also A. M. Gada, *A Short History of Early Islamic Scholarship in Hausaland,* Sokoto–Nigeria, Department of Islamic Studies, Usman Danfodio University, Sokoto.

[59] See M. Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule,* London, Hutchinson, 1968.

The Role of the Wolof in the Preservation and Promotion of Islamic Civilization in West Africa

Ibrahim Khaleel Abdussalam*

Introduction

The Wolof, also called the Jolof, is a West African ethnic group that came into prominence in the early 14th century. The Wolof formed the majority and therefore the dominant ethnic group in the Senegambia region. It extended to the southwest of today's Mauritania on the west coast of the West African sub-region. By virtue of this, the Wolof exerted influence with its culture in that region. Soon after the founding of the Wolof states, its civilization came in contact with that of other neighboring groups and even civilizations as far afield as North Africa through trading activities. These contacts marked the beginning of the introduction of external influences, which included that of Islam. The Wolof therefore shared in the experience of other states of Central and Western Sudan who had their socio-political systems and indeed their civilizations influenced and enhanced by Islamic civilization. Such states imbibed many aspects of Islamic culture such that they grew to become imamates, sultanates or caliphates that further consolidated Islamic civilization in the West African sub-region. The history of the evolution and growth of the Wolof states and Wolof Empire will therefore not be complete without emphasis on its contact with Islam and the growth of Islamic civilization in the region. It is the dearth of data on this aspect of the history of the Wolof and its contribution to the spread of Islamic civilization in the region that makes it necessary to reconstruct that history with emphasis on this perspective and phenomenon. It is in view of this that this study gives a perspective of Wolof civilization and explores the process of its transformation into

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an Islamic state and as bearers and transmitters of the culture of Islam to many parts of the West African sub-region. The study examines the consolidation and expansion of Islamic culture among the Wolof such that it became identified with Islamic civilization, even with reference to it as sultanate, imamate or caliphate depending on the context of academic discourse.

Origin and Growth of the Wolof Empire

The Wolof founded small settlements in the Senegambia area covering most part of present Senegal. Tradition has it that they migrated to the area following the fall of the Ghana Empire as a result of the Arab incursions into West Africa by the end of the 11th century.[1] These conquests in West Africa by the Muslim armies forced the Wolof to move into the north and east of present Senegal where they established autonomous villages. These villages developed into five states namely: Walo, Kayor, Baol, Sine and Saloum, with Jolof as the sixth one, by the middle of the 14th century. The state of Jolof itself was formerly a vassal of the Mali Empire up to the 14th century. It gained its independence following a succession of dispute between two rival lineages of the Mali Empire's royal bloodline.[2] The states of Jolof, Kayor, Baol and Walo became united in a federation by the end of the 15th century under Jolof as the metropolitan power with its capital at Linguere, and under the Jolof king with the title of *Bour ba* Jolof. The rulers of the other component states therefore owed loyalty to the *Bour ba* and paid tribute to him.[3] These states eventually welded into the Wolof Empire, which held sway in the Senegambia between 1350 and 1549 A. D. The Empire was bounded in the north by River Senegal, in the east by states under the rule of Mali, in the south by River Gambia and in the west by the Atlantic Ocean (See Map of traditional Wolof states).

The Wolof Empire derived its strength from its control of trade

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[1] David P. Gamble, Linda K. Salmon and Alhaji Hassan Njie, *Peoples of the Gambia: The Wolof*, San Francisco State University Press, 1985, p. 3.

[2] Bethwell A. Ogot, *General History of Africa V: Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 1999, University of California Press, p. 136.

[3] Martin Klein, "Servitude Among the Wolof and Sereer of Senegambia", in S. Miers and I. Kopytoff (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1977, pp. 335-336.

and warfare.[4] The ability of Wolof blacksmiths to make weapons of war therefore explains the important position they held in the Wolof society. Other occupational castes included traders, jewelers, tanners, tailors, musicians and *griots*. The Wolof had long standing trade relations (in goods and slaves) as well as other aspects of relations with neighbours. These neighbours included Sudanese empires, Fulbe Muslim state of Futa Toro and other groups of north Africa.[5] To a large extent, these relations were to have impact on the Wolof in developing Islamic culture and civilization among them and in spreading same in the West African sub-region in later centuries.

In its political organization, each of the five kingdoms of the Wolof was governed by its own ruler appointed from the descendants of the founder of the state, chosen by their respective nobles. Each ruler had autonomy but their states were tributary to the ruler of the Empire, the *Bour ba*, who ruled from the capital of Linguere. They were also expected to cooperate with the *Bour ba* on matters of defense, trade and provision of imperial revenue. The *Bour ba* himself was selected by a college of electors, which included the rulers of the five kingdoms.[6] After they were appointed, the rulers would be taken through elaborate rituals to familiarize them with their new duties and through the rituals would be elevated to a divine status. They were thereafter expected to lead their states to greater heights, otherwise they would risk losing the favours of the gods and be deposed.[7]

Wolof Empire remained powerful politically and economically throughout the 15th century, reaching the height of its power and even controlling a force of about 100,000 infantries and 10,000 cavalries to hold the empire together. By the early 16th century however, the empire was confronted with challenges of internal feuds, trade rivalry and external forces. Although the coming of the Portuguese and the increase in coastal trade brought more wealth to the empire, it also gave econom-

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[4] Basil Davidson, *The Growth of African Civilization: A History of West Africa 1000-1800*, Longman Group Limited, 1975, p. 57.

[5] Martin Klein, ibid., pp. 339-343.

[6] J. D. Fage and R. Roland (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Africa, vol. 4, c. 1600–c. 1790*, Cambridge University Press, 1975; George T. Stride and Caroline Ifeka, *Peoples and Empires of West Africa: West Africa in History 1000-1800*, Walton-on-Thames: Nelson., 1971, pp. 21–26.

[7] George. T. Stride and Caroline Ifeka, ibid., p. 26.

ic advantages to the rulers of the vassal states on the coast. These coastal kingdoms therefore grew in prosperity to challenge the authority of the *Bour ba* and eventually gained their independence.[8] External forces emanating from the break-up of other neighbouring empires contributed in aiding the vassal kingdoms to assert their independence.

The advantage of the wealth created for the federating coastal kingdoms of Walo, Kayor, Baol Sine and Saloum set them all against the Wolof Empire and eventually gained their independence. The major incident that triggered the disintegration of the empire and the independence of the kingdoms was the Battle of Danki. Using the wealth and power it gained as a result of direct access to European trade, Kayor invaded its southern neighbor, Baol, and forced a union to become stronger. It used this union to engage the *Bour ba* forces and defeated it at the Battle of Danki in 1549 and by 1556 set up an independent state. The defeat did not only weaken the Wolof Empire but its effects facilitated the other kingdoms asserting their independence. Consequent on this development, by 1660 the Wolof had been reduced to its former kingdom.[9]

From the external angle, forces emanating from the break-up of empires such as Mali began to march into the Wolof Empire. These scores of forces coming from the conflicts in states like Mali and Futa Toro, spread into the Wolof Empire and seized its northern territories. For instance, in 1513, Dengella Koli, a son of an unsuccessful rebel in the Songhai Empire, instead of fighting the Songhai or Mandinka, led a strong force of Fulani and Mandinka into Futa Toro, seized it and set up his own dynasty over the Wolof.[10] The essence of relating the narrative of the growth of Wolof Empire is that it will serve to explain how the Wolof used that experience of building political empire to build an empire of Islamic culture and civilization in the West African sub-region.

From the perspective of the growth of Islamic civilization among the Wolof however, these conflicts and aggression were an advantage.

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[8] J. D. Fage and R. Roland (eds.), ibid., 1975; Basil Davidson, ibid., 1975, pp. 57-58; Michael Crowder, *West Africa: An Introduction to its History*, London: Longman Group Ltd., 1977, pp. 66-67.

[9] Basil Davidson, ibid., 1975, p. 58; Michael Crowder, *West Africa: An Introduction to its History*, Longman Group Ltd., 1977, pp. 67; J. D. Fage and R. Roland (eds.), ibid., 1975.

[10] George T. Stride and Caroline Ifeka, P*eoples and Empires of West Africa: West Africa in History 1000-1800*, Walton-on-Thames: Nelson., 1971, p. 26.

They forced the Wolof to retract and re-discover its tradition of the belief in the spiritual and magical character of their rulers as well as their exercising both religious and political powers. Indeed, the collapse of the Wolof Empire made the Wolof relive the historical experience of Islamic tradition it had earlier acquired. It also afforded the Wolof the opportunity to use that experience to redirect its energy to play a prominent role in the consolidation and spread of Islamic culture and civilization in the West African sub-region.

The Wolof and Islamic Culture and Civilization in West Africa

With regard to the claim that the Wolof had earlier on acquired Islamic culture, the tradition of origin of the earliest Wolof state agree that the founder of the state, which later developed into an empire, was Ndiadiane Ndiaye. The generally well accepted tradition of Ndiaye's ancestry is that he was the first and only son of a noble and saintly Berber Almoravid father, Abubakr Ibn Omar (also called Abu Dardai) and a Tukolor princess who was the daughter of the Lam Toro, Fatimata Sall.[11] From the perspective of Wolof history we are considering, it is important to note the significance of Ndiaye's Almoravid lineage (i.e. a Berber/Islamic background) on his father's side, and the blood of Takrur aristocracy on his mother's side. I am also tempted to state that there is the possibility that the Wolof are most probably the descendants/successors of the Jakhanke. The Jakhanke is a Mandinka speaking ethnic group in the Senegambia region. They are historically a specialized caste of professional Muslim scholars and educators. They were identified with the Jakhanke Islamic Movement, which arose in the 12th century and helped to spread Islam in the whole of what is today Mali, Guinea, Senegal and the Gambia.[12] This is explaining that the culture of Islam as part of historical experience had actually been with the Wolof from the onset of its existence.

Wolof oral traditions state that they have been adherents of Islam since the founding of the state. And although Wolof warriors and rul-

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[11] James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley 1700-1860*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 11–12.

[12] Lamin O. Sanneh, *The Jakhanke: The History of an Islamic Clerical People of the Senegambia*, London, 1979.

ers did not convert to Islam initially, they accepted the Muslims and relied especially on Muslim scholars as counselors and administrators.[13] Indeed, it has been established that Islam has had a complex relationship with the Wolof people since about the 10th century. And that the complicated relationship had led to the emergence of Sufi traditions from a historic and dominant Sunni Islam environment among the Wolof.[14]

This long complicated contact with Islam left the Wolof impacted by Islam through both peaceful and reformist means. What is important however is that notwithstanding the different means by which the Wolof experienced Islam and Islamic culture, they became rapidly and thoroughly Islamized. This was what placed the Wolof in a peculiar position and gave them the opportunity to serve as carriers of the civilization to other lands of the West African sub-region.

The 18th and 19th centuries were the periods when the Wolof were impacted more by Islam through reformist (*jihad*) movements. For instance, the Wolof Kingdom was largely conquered by the Imamate of Futa Jallon in 1875 while its territories were fully incorporated into the French West Africa by 1890. These 18th and 19th century *jihad*s resulted in massive conversions to Islam of the Wolof. And when the French forces launched the war of colonization against the Wolof kingdoms in the late 19th century, the Wolof resisted the French and this led instead to a near universal conversion of the Wolof in Senegambia to Islam. The Wolof then joined the various competing sufi Muslim movements in the 20th century, particularly those belonging to the Mouride and Tijjaniyya brotherhoods.[15] It was on this platform that the Wolof carried on the task of the preservation and spread of Islamic culture and civilization in West Africa. In essence therefore, rather than giving a narrative of the Wolof Empire as an imamate, a sultanate or a caliphate, the new construct here is that the Wolof played the role of the carriers of the civilization of Islam. The Wolof therefore

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[13] Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Pouwels, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 78–79.

[14] Mamadou Diouf and Mara Leichtman, *New Perspectives* on *Islam in Senegal*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 91–97.

[15] Nehemia Levtzion and Randall Pouwels, *The History of Islam in Africa*, Ohio University Press, 2000, pp. 78–79; D. Levinson, "Wolof", *Encyclopedia of World Culture*, Volume 9: Africa and the Middle East, G. K. Hall, 1996.

built what can safely be referred to as an empire of Islamic culture and civilization; the Wolof in other words served as bearers of Islamic civilization without borders in the West African sub-region.

Conclusion

The Wolof grew from autonomous small states to build an empire under the control of the most popular and powerful of the states ruled by the *Bour ba*. The empire could no longer hold together in the course of the history of the Wolof so that the main Wolof Empire was reduced to a kingdom. The Wolof had however imbibed the culture of Islam, albeit through peaceful and reformist means. The experiences of the Wolof in its contact with Islam turned the Wolof into a people that eventually played a very significant role in the preservation and transmission of Islamic culture and civilization in the West African sub-region. The Wolof did not establish an imamate, sultanate or caliphate in Wolof land as was the case with their other neighbours. The Wolof rather, as a people, played a novel role of what one can refer to as establishing an imamate without borders in the West African sub-region. In essence, the Wolof played a major role in the preservation, consolidation and promotion of Islamic civilization in West Africa.