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**Stephanie Zehnle**

**A Geography of Jihad  
Sokoto Jihadism and the Islamic  
Frontier in West Africa**

**Studien 37**

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For a family of magicians



## Content

Acknowledgements, Note on Translation and Transcription, List of Figures	9
I Introduction	13
II The Course of the Jihad: Historiography, Literature, Sources	21
1 Literature and Historiography	29
1.1 Minding the Gaps – Pre-Colonial History and its Historiography in Nigeria and »the Rest«	29
1.2 Towards a Pre-Colonial History of West African Jihadist Spaces	45
2 Primary Sources: Cautions and Contexts	67
2.1 European Explorers in the Central Sahel	68
2.2 African Voices in European Sources	73
2.3 Oral Traditions Recorded by Colonial Officials	78
2.4 Jihadist Literature (Arabic, Fulfulde, Hausa)	80
2.5 Post-Jihad Manuscripts (Ajami and Arabic)	89
III Sokoto Scholars Measuring This World	97
1 Geographical Knowledge: The »Fruits of the Heart«	100
1.1 The Sources of World Knowledge	106
1.2 Jihadist Geography	122
2 Cardinal Directions and Cardinal Questions	197
IV Mobile Actors and the Transfer of Jihadist Knowledge on Space	209
1 Ancestral Travelers: »Reformers in Corrupt Times«	212
1.1 Fulbe Migration from East to West: »The Masters of Migration«	213
1.2 Fulbe Migration from West to East: »Our Jihad Led us from Futa«	224
1.3 No Migration, no History: Where the Others Came from	240
1.4 Origins of the Hausa: From Baghdad Royals to Bornu Slaves	248
1.5 Origins of the Maguzawa: Persians and Zoroastrians in West Africa	266
1.6 Conclusion: Migration, Ethnicity and Jihadist Space	281

2	Pilgrims: »Camel Driver, Urge Them towards the East!«	285
2.1	What Pilgrims Knew	288
2.2	Jihadist Encounters with Pilgrims	294
2.3	Jihadist Imaginings of the Hajj	302
2.4	Moving to the East: Migration and Eschatology	316
2.5	Conclusion: Rumor and Migration	331
3	Travelers by Profession: »Water and Its Threats«	333
3.1	Traders: »At the Edge of the Forest«	335
3.2	Sufi Travelers: »That Journey to Allah«	343
3.3	Itinerant Preachers: Rivers like Fire, Rivers like Milk	366
3.4	Rulers, Diplomats and Messengers: The Silent Travelers	397
3.5	Conclusion: Magical Equipment for Dangerous Passages	403
4	Pastoralists of the Sahel and Sahara: »Colonizing Dead Land«	409
4.1	Fulbe Pastoralists: »Colonize the Land of the Unbelievers!«	410
4.2	Saharan Bedouins: »From Cattle to Horses«	424
4.3	Urban Places, Dead Land, and the Harim in-between	432
4.4	Conclusion: Jihad and Sedentarization	435
5	Migrants of War: Precarious and Sacred Routes	436
5.1	Slaves: Being Black or Being Animals	437
5.2	Refugees: »No Horseman Can Pass the Mountain Peak«	474
5.3	Mercenaries, Soldiers, Warriors: War-Lions against Scavengers	502
5.4	Jihadist Exploration of »Cannibal Land«	561
5.5	Urbanization: »In Fortification Lies the Peace of the Kingdom«	599
5.6	Conclusion: The Thin Line between Mobilization and (Re)Settlement	615
V	Conclusions: Jihadist Geography and Geographical Jihad	617
	Archives and Collections	651
	Dictionaries	652
	Online Repositories	652
	Manuscripts	653
	Edited Sources and Translations	657
	Secondary Literature	671
	Index	697



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## Note on Translation and Transcription

All translations in the text are mine, unless noted otherwise. I have often modified existing translations in accordance with contemporary language style and with reference to the original text and by naming available translations in European languages. In untranslated quotations I have kept original spellings and orthography. All references to Koranic passages were made from the Arabic text (Daher, M.K. (ed.): *The Holy Qur'an. Arabic Text. Pronunciation in Latin Characters. Meanings in English*, Beirut 1998). Most translations are mine but I often compared different variants of interpretation. For Arabic names, locations and terms I have used a simplified transcription system for a smooth reading for non-Arabists. When quoting from unpublished manuscript texts using Arabic scripture, I have given the original Arabic phrases in the footnotes. In general, I have used the most common spelling of names and terms, so that my writing often differs from that used in other sources and languages.

## List of Figures

Figure 1: A map of the Caliphate drawn by Mallam Musa for Hugh Clapperton (Sokoto, April 1824). Held at Royal Geographical Society Archives, Mr Nigeria S/S 39, A collection of Route Maps of the Niger River, together with original letters from Clapperton and others. Published in Lockhart / Lovejoy (eds.): *Hugh Clapperton into the interior of Africa*, p. 490.

Figure 2: Contemporary map of the Sokoto Caliphate. Open Source file of Wikimedia Commons, 10.06.2011, [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalifat\\_von\\_Sokoto#/media/File:Sokoto\\_caliphate.png](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalifat_von_Sokoto#/media/File:Sokoto_caliphate.png) (29.07.2014).

Figure 3: Detail of a map of the African continent (German atlas, 1827). Published in Stein: *Neuer Atlas der ganzen Welt*.

Figure 4: Sultan Bello's Map of Sokoto and Central Africa, in: Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, facing p. 109.

Figure 5: Copy of Al-Idrisi's World Map of 1154, 15th century manuscript held at Bodleian Library (Oxford), Ms Pococke 375, ff. 3v.–4r. This is the most popular copy, drawn by Ali Ibn Hasan Al-Hufi Al-Qasimi (Cairo 1456). It was most likely drawn after the model of the Paris/Cairo copy of ca. 1300.

Figure 6: Gog and Magog on Idrisi's map, adapted by the author from Figure 5.

Figure 7: »Lands of the Lamlam« on Idrisi's map, adapted by the author from Figure 5.

Figure 8: Clapperton's map of the »Qwarra« (1827), Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 60b.

Figure 9: »Zanj« (الزنج on the right) and »Sufala« (سفاله on the left) on Idrisi's map, adapted by the author from Figure 5.

Figure 10: »Sind« (Indus river region on the right) and »Hind« (Ganges river region on the left) on Al-Idrisi's map, adapted by the author from Figure 5.

Figure 11: »Saradib« (Arab. سرنديب) Island (Sri Lanka) on Al-Idrisi's map, adapted by the author from Figure 5.

Figure 12: »The Mountain of the Moon and the Sources of the Nile« (جبل القمر وهو منبع النيل) on Al-Idrisi's map, adapted by the author from Figure 5.

Figure 13: Map of an anonymous Hausa scholar reported by Hornemann (1798/9), in: Hornemann: The Journal of Frederick Horneman's Travels, p. 110b.

Figure 14: Barth's servants Abbega (l.) and Dorugu (r.). Barth: Travels and Discoveries, vol. 2 (New York), p. 105.

Figure 15: Clapperton participated in a Bornu attack on Musfeia in 1823. Clapperton/Denham/Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 1, pp. 314–315.

Figure 16: Map of the Benue attached to Baikie's travel account. Baikie: Narrative of an Exploring Voyage.

Figure 17: Map of Bornu by Seetzen (1810). Seetzen: Nachrichten von dem Negerland Móbba, p. 152.

Figure 18: Abdassalam's map as copied by Muhammad Bello (drawn before 1818, copied before 1837). Muhammad Bello: Sard al-kalam, Zaria 23/1.

Figure 19: Translation of the Abdussalam/Bello map (Figure 18) by the author.

Figure 20: The first issue of the IS magazine Dabiq in 2014.

# I Introduction

Reviewing recent political commentaries on global and glocal jihadist activities, it seems that jihadist ideology has lost any territorial binding. Geographers acknowledge that »virtual space has been coupled with terrorist activities so much in recent years that some even question the significance of physical havens.«<sup>1</sup> Media Experts thus call the war on terrorism of the United States of America »antiquated«, because the virtual jihadist community could never be defeated by wars against particular nation states. But every jihad movement started with ideas and utopias about spaces which were then turned into organized warfare and state-building processes. This is exemplified by the current invasions of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (IS), a brutal and revolutionary military that has established control over large parts of the territory of Iraq and Syria. This movement may on the one hand recruit its young male followers from Muslim citizens all over the world via *facebook* and *youtube*, but its symbols are old and bequeath Islamic heritage from the very beginning of the religion. They use a black-and-white flag quoting the Islamic profession of faith: »There is no God but Allah« (cf. chapter IV.5.3). The title of this movement directly leads to territorial utopias and strategies: The initial plan was to found a new Caliphate including – for the time being – Iraq and the Levant. And on 29 June 2014 the IS leadership declared the foundation of their state.

What started as a civil war within a stateless community, has ended up as a (proto-)state. A similar development was displayed by the first major West African jihad, called the *Sokoto Jihad*. In 1802 a group of pious Muslims led by the preacher Uthman dan Fodio (1754–1817)<sup>2</sup> left their political home settlement (called Degel) in the Gobir State of the

1 Medina / Hepner: *The Geography of International Terrorism*, p. 29.

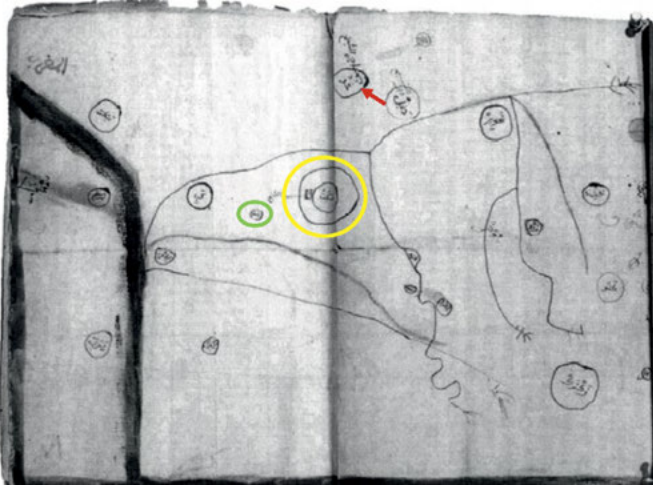
2 The term »dan« means »son of« in Hausa, the Arabic equivalent is *ibn* or *bin*.

West African Sahel. They settled at Dugu, assembled reformist Muslims, and launched a jihad, making reference to the first jihad of the Prophet Muhammad that started with his emigration from Mecca to Medina in 622. The Sokoto Jihadist migrants had traveled a distance of about a hundred kilometers to arrive at Gudu. After the Sokoto emigration, the city states of the Hausa region were conquered and turned into tributary emirates governed by the Sokoto Caliphate<sup>3</sup> capital. When the Jihadist state had been consolidated, the Sokoto Court drew a map of their dominions and commemorated their emigration (Arabic *hijra*) with the places, names and descriptions of both, Degel and Gudu (cf. red arrow in *Figure 1*). Spoken Arabic commentary of the time depicted Degel as »House of the Shaykh« and Gudu as »Refuge of the Shaykh«. <sup>4</sup> This »Shaykh« is not just any learned Muslim as implied by the common honorary Arabic title. This »Shaykh« is Uthman dan Fodio who had started the Sokoto Jihad movement and formally ruled the Caliphate until his death in 1817. Afterwards, the Caliphate was divided into two parts; Uthman's brother Abdullah dan Fodio (1766–1828) ruled the western Gwandu Emirate (see green ellipse in *Figure 1*). Muhammad Bello (1781–1837), Uthman's son and Abdullah's nephew, became the Sultan of all the other emirates and resided in Sokoto (cf. yellow circle in *Figure 1*).

But why do we begin this introduction with an illustrated map drawn by scholars of the Jihadist Sokoto Palace in 1824? We do, of course, have several maps of the Sokoto Caliphate, produced, co-edited or published by historians. But these only reflect political frontiers between the Caliphate and supposedly state-less areas, or respectively frontiers between the two empires of Sokoto and Bornu (cf. *Figure 2*). To begin with, this perspective is eurocentric, because only state borders of large territorial empires are deemed sufficiently important to be drawn. And it is not more »true« or reliable than the above-mentioned 1824 map of a Sokoto scholar. The modern approach focuses on the Sokoto capital

<sup>3</sup> The term »Caliphate« was not used by the Jihadists themselves in this case. They used other words to describe their state and they called the heads of the state »Imam«, »Leader of the Believers« or sometimes »Sultan«. The word »Caliphate« for Jihadist Sokoto was a creation of post-Jihadist generations. Hence, the claim for the uniqueness of the Islamic Caliphate on earth was not discussed by Jihadist writers.

<sup>4</sup> See Lockhart / Lovejoy (eds.): Hugh Clapperton into the Interior of Africa, pp. 490–491.



*Figure 1:* A map of the Caliphate drawn by Mallam Musa for Hugh Clapperton (Sokoto, April 1824). Colored signs added by the author

town, while the Arabic map mentions places of religious importance (the tomb of Uthman dan Fodio at Sokoto, Timbuktu in the distant Mali) or crucial trading partners in Northern Ghana (Gonja). In fact, this map is not political in a sense that all places written down are under the political and military control of Sokoto. The map of the twenty-first century on the other hand reflects the historical research about the Sokoto Caliphate and general methodological curricula of the twentieth century (cf. chapter II.1.1): The writing of Sokoto history was undertaken by historians working on political processes, ranging from inter-emirate relations to interior tributary and economic relations, to the micro-history and biographies of the Sokoto Palace and its officials.

Like any other map, the contemporary Sokoto map provides only a momentary historical glimpse, since the Sokoto frontier was always far from permanent as it emerged from a jihad that started at the Gobir borders, then moved to the east and south at fast speed. Some regions were conquered, others destroyed, some could regain their dominions, but in general the Sokoto Caliphate expanded throughout the nineteenth century. The political landscape constantly changed, allies became enemies, and enemies subordinates.

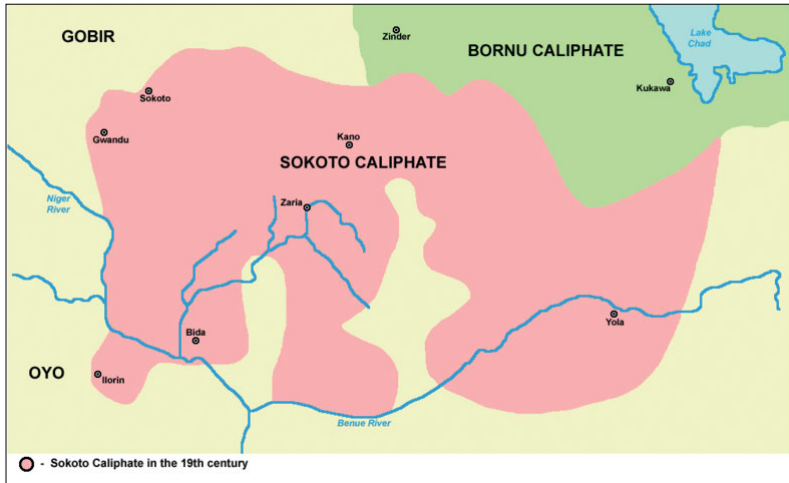


Figure 2: Contemporary map of the Sokoto Caliphate

But this expansion was not as sure and definite as the colorful political map would indicate. The Caliphate contained centers of political power that were closely connected by trade and messengers, while peripheral regions between these settlements were often hard to really control. Nonetheless, the Sokoto Caliphate can still be called a proper state for other reasons: There was a centralized political order and a federal emirate system; there were the duties to deliver tribute and taxes; there was a bureaucratic system of political communication; and there was a judicial system. So much for a conservative historical interpretation of statehood. But beyond this approach, sociologists have shifted the definition of a state towards that of a more semantic institution. In this perspective, the state is only an organization which describes itself as a political system.<sup>5</sup> This process of territorial self-description is usually considered as a historical practice that could best be studied by examining maps that were made during the period by the involved parties. This paradigm of course excludes most European maps of the time under consideration.

5 Luhmann: Die Politik der Gesellschaft.





Figure 3: Detail of a map of the African continent (German atlas, 1827)

At first sight, the European maps of the first decades of the nineteenth century can only be read as European attempts to describe »the other«. Indeed, finally they are self-descriptions *par excellence*. Their approach in the nineteenth century was cartographic in a mathematical sense with regard to settlements, rivers and lakes, deserts and mountain ranges (cf. Figure 3). But the two nineteenth century maps are not that different: the territory is organized in a rectangular mathematical style. On the German map, this is expressed with longitudes and latitudes, whereas the Sokoto scholar organised the edges of his space as bodies of water. The thick dark column to the west is the Niger River and the stretch of water in the south can either be identified as the Benue River or the Atlantic Ocean. Both waters were regularly mixed up by scholars from the Sahel region.

The fact that there are similarities in the two maps is not very astonishing if we recall the history of spatial knowledge and world knowledge in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Documented scientific geography was first practiced in the Ancient Mediterranean World from where it entered Europe, Arabia, North Africa and – by means of the trans-Saharan trade system – also the Central Sahel of West Africa. Therefore, both maps bear the geographical heritage of the Mediterranean scholars, they share the same historical and literary background. And furthermore, both maps are products of European-African communication and knowledge trans-

fer.<sup>6</sup> The Sokoto map was drawn at the urging of the British explorer Hugh Clapperton who was staying in Sokoto and who wanted the oral geographical knowledge of the Sokoto scholars to be put on paper in order to transport it to Britain. The German map of Africa was also drawn based on information published by European explorers who had interviewed African fellow travelers, traders, or scholars. Therefore, both maps assume that the Niger River, the Benue and Lake Chad were one and the same water body. Other geographical sources also add the Nile River and the Atlantic Ocean as sections of this major stream.

But there still are striking differences which cannot be dispelled, nor explained in examining the maps. The German map gives explicit names for every section of this super-river: »Joliba«, »Nile Abiad« (»White Nile«<sup>7</sup>), »Tchad« and so on. The Sokoto map, on the other hand, reveals how the water bodies are connected, but it does neither give names to the rivers – other than the cities – nor does it differentiate between rivers, lakes and oceans. On the German map, which represents the European-North American knowledge sphere of that time, the rivers were seen as connecting places and were explored as future waterways of use to traders and colonizers. The waterways of the Sokoto map, on the other hand, appear as borders separating the Caliphate territory from something else – but from what exactly? This drawing does not reveal why water differentiated the Caliphate from other spaces and no explanation is given to the question, what the Sokoto Jihadists understood to exist beyond the river borders. Here we encounter the limits of cartographic sources: Firstly, because the Sokoto Palace never produced written maps for their own use (a paucity of such sources); secondly, because maps cannot answer the above-raised questions of spatial concepts and spatial politics (style of the sources); and thirdly, because geographical knowledge was discussed and communicated orally and in texts instead of in drawn

6 Cf. for example the geographical accounts of the French explorer Pierre Henri Stanislas d'Escayrac de Lauture (1826–1868), who collected information from West African residents in Cairo about the connection of Lake Chad, the Cari River and the Egyptian Nile. Id.: *Mémoires sur le Soudan*.

7 The name »White Nile« derived from the Egyptian name for the western feeding rivers of the Nile with reference to their bright color. Since Maghrebian travelers were telling about a large »Sudanese« River flowing into a large lake (Lake Chad), all these rivers were called »White Nile«. Cf. Burckhardt: *Travels in Nubia*, p. 498.

cartographies. The above-described Bello/Clapperton map rather raises questions about Sokoto Jihadist geographies instead of offering answers. Drawn maps only make sense if related to the social and discursive context. To settle the question about where the Jihadists located their frontiers and what qualitative territories those frontiers actually separated, it is therefore necessary to undertake a broad analysis of Jihadist sources, their historical model texts, and European accounts.

Although contemporary scholars claim that the jihadist movements of today are deterritorialized, the foundation of any jihadist theory is the categorization of space. It is thus not the personal practices and thoughts, that make a person an unbeliever in a jihadist ideology, but rather the place of residence that decides on whether a given individual is deemed a Muslim in the ›Land of Islam‹ or an inhabitant of the ›Land of War‹ that can be conquered or killed. This study will explain which spaces were considered Islamic by the Jihadists and why. Furthermore, this text will analyze the nature of the frontiers and how spatial concepts were manifested in certain practices of religion and warfare. Wherever it can be captured, the process of knowledge generation, transfer and adaptation is analyzed. Several mobile actors will serve as case studies in this transfer. As a result, the term ›Jihadists‹ will not only comprise the Sokoto elite in this study, but also include any group of actors engaging in the Jihadist discourse on territory and warfare.

And the Sokoto Jihadist theory of space is not that different from that underlying recent jihadist attacks: In jihad wars, it is not persons, but places that are attacked – the ›Land of Unbelievers‹ and not exclusively the alleged ›Unbelievers‹ themselves. A spatial identity is created by active description and configuration of spaces. In the Sokoto Jihadist identity, different knowledge resources merge: Migrants, traders, pilgrims and soldiers transported and modified spatial knowledge from and across the Caliphate frontiers in such forms as embodied in early Islamic literature, gossip or ancestral myths. This analysis can be addressed in six major questions: Which places did the Jihadist identity refer to as home and how was this ›home‹ described? Who were the non-Jihadist others and to which places did the Jihadists link them? By which process of knowledge transfer did the Jihadists learn about space and how was the mode of knowledge transmission reflected in the Jihadist mental maps?



## II The Course of the Jihad: Historiography, Literature, Sources

»At the beginning of [the nineteenth] century, the Fulbe started their series of conquests. At the same time that Napoleon was mixing up the European world, destroying and creating states, the Central Sudan was being no less deeply and lastingly reshaped by the Fulbe.«<sup>1</sup>

This quotation of the German Africanist scholar Gottlob Adolf Krause (1850–1938) displays some major biases of European historiography about the Sokoto Jihad. In the first instance we have to acknowledge that the nineteenth century historians and scholars seldom used the terms »Sokoto« and »Jihad«. When the Jihad started in the northern Hausa savanna, Sokoto did indeed not exist as a fortified settlement. Sokoto only became the capital of the Caliphate in 1808 and then maintained its role as the site of the Sultan's palace until the Caliphate was conquered by British forces in 1903. And since colonial and post-colonial Nigerian governments tended to sustain the Caliphate bureaucracy to some degree, Sokoto still is considered the Islamic center of Northern Nigeria. According to oral Hausa traditions, the name of the capital derived from the name of a famous hunter who had settled in this area a long time before the Jihad.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of whether or not this legend captures the past of that place, the name Sokoto was inherited by the new Jihadist settlers and was not chosen with any Islamic reference. The term »Sokoto Jihad« was deve-

<sup>1</sup> German »Zu Anfang dieses Jahrhunderts eröffneten die Fulbe die Epoche ihrer grossen [sic!] Eroberungen. Zur Zeit, da Napoleon die europäische Welt verwirrte, alte Reiche zerstörend und neue schaffend, wurde der Sudan nicht weniger tief, aber in dauerhafter Weise umgeändert.« Cf. Lenz: *Timbuktu*, vol. 2, p. 264. Lenz is quoting the German Africanist Krause, see id. (ed.): *Der Ursprung von Sokoto*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. for example the short comment on this legend in id. (ed.): *Der Ursprung von Sokoto III*, p. 2.

loped later, when scholars with a background in either Islamic theology or Orientalist studies paid attention to this »series of conquests« in the Central Sahel. They started to highlight the reformist religious quality of these developments and thus joined together the names of the intellectual Caliphate capital and the internal Islamic word for legitimate warfare.

A second remark from the above-quoted extract compares European and West African history by mentioning the French Emperor Napoleon. This comparison was a common stylistic device of many nineteenth century European »explorers«<sup>3</sup> in Africa. And the name »Napoleon« was usually chosen to depict powerful African individual warlords that started state-building processes with a well-structured and centralized military force. Besides the first Sokoto ruler Uthman dan Fodio, other »African Napoleons« were announced. One of the most popular examples of this type of account is probably Henry Morton Stanley's (1841–1904) travel report *How I Found Livingstone*, in which he repeatedly called the East African ruler Mirambo an »African Bonaparte« or »black Bonaparte«.<sup>4</sup> However, unlike Stanley, Krause does not make a comparison to any individual Jihadist ruler, but rather to the »Fulbe« as a collective.

This ethnonym »Fulbe«<sup>5</sup> refers to the ethnic background of the majority of the Sokoto Jihadist elite – at least of the first generation. Fulfulde speakers were then and are still known to live in vast regions of West Africa, from Senegal in the west, across Mali, Niger, and Northern Nigeria, to Cameroon and Sudan in the east. Their home regions are part of the Sahel belt south of the Sahara desert, a semiarid belt of dry savannas and hills. Since many Fulbe communities have specialized in livestock farming, they were often perceived as pastoralists, or even nomads. Different legends attempt to explain how Fulfulde-speaking people and their cattle migrated from the Senegal region across the Sahel to Cameroon. These migrations are dated prior to the Sokoto Jihad, but the

3 This term will be used without quotation mark from now on, but with critical reflection of their colonial, missionary and other motives.

4 Cf. Stanley: *How I found Livingstone*.

5 Their self-designation is either Halpulaar (»Pular speakers«), Pullo (singular) or Fulbe (plural). The western dialects of Senegal and Guinea are called Pulaar, but the eastern dialects of the Central Sahel are called Ful or Fulfulde. In Arabic and European sources the synonymous words Fulani, Fula, Fullah, Fulata, Fellah, Felatah, or Filani are frequently encountered. Implosive consonants like ɓ in Fulbe will be used with linguistic accuracy in this book, wherever applicable.

Jihadist writers commemorated and glorified them in their texts. These »ancestral migrations« and their role in the Jihadist conception of historical space will constitute the first group of mobile actors to be analyzed (see chapter IV.1). The ethnic aspect of the Sokoto Jihad has clung to any historiographical study of that topic. And in general, non-African historians have continued to codify the Jihad as a Fulbe conquest of Hausa populations, while Nigerian and other West African scholars stressed that the Jihadists were a religious and thus multi-ethnic community. Unlike Fulfulde, Hausa is a Chadic language (like Kanuri) and was the major *lingua franca* of the Central Sahel at that time. And except for some frontier regions, the Sokoto Caliphate integrated a large region of Hausa speakers in one empire for the first time.

European explorers always expressed a keen interest in the origin and the course of migration of the Fulbe. They were collecting migration myths with huge effort, but at the same time called them mere »fairy tales«. Ironically, they were creating their own »fairy tales« and theories about the territorial origin of the Fulbe: Some suggested they may have emigrated from South-East Asia, others referred to tribal theories of the Bible and called them the »proto-Hamites«. <sup>6</sup> European explorers and early colonial officials were full of admiration for the Fulbe because of their literacy, military success and bright skin color. <sup>7</sup> It would be far too easy to explain this racist prejudice solely in terms of the emerging biological racism in Europe in the late nineteenth century. These European travelers may also have learned how to distinguish between different ethnic groups from their African informants, and recent studies have already reconstructed the deeply-rooted racist theories in North African history. <sup>8</sup> The Sokoto Jihadists used various oral and literary resources and created their own myth of Fulbe-Islamic origin. Nevertheless, many Jihadists from other ethnic groups were engaged in Sokoto warfare and

<sup>6</sup> This means that they were called the descendants of Ham, the youngest son of Noah. For a coeval discussion of these theories, cf. Lenz: *Timbuktu*, vol. 2, pp. 261–264.

<sup>7</sup> In former West African, Saharan, and European discourses they were attributed as »white«, »pale«, or »bright« in Arabic and European texts as well as in oral communication.

<sup>8</sup> See for the Moroccan example Hamel: *Black Morocco*. An elaborate discussion on the Hamitic myth in West African Islam is given on pp. 80–81.

achieved official positions during the state-building process.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, I will use the term »Jihadists« instead of »Fulbe« in this study with attention and increased awareness of its implications. Sokoto Jihadists were active members of an Islamic movement in the Central Sahel including elites and soldiers, as well as people participating in a jihadist discourse that was started in the Central Sahel around the year 1800. This book analyzes the formation of spatial identities during the Jihad wars from an internal perspective of elites, soldiers, and other mobile actors. Therefore, the political, military and cultural movement can only be captured and correctly understood as a Jihad. It was not an essentially ethnic conflict, but a conglomeration of different conflicts under the general Islamic frame. Sokoto Jihadists were people engaged with practices and ideas of the Jihad, accepting, modifying, creating and transferring Jihadist spaces.

### **Learning from History?**

Despite the European admiration for the military success of the Jihadists, this historical episode is usually completely unknown outside of West Africa. Handbooks on the history of Islam and Jihad only mention the Sokoto Jihad as one movement in a row of Islamic reformist wars in nineteenth century West Africa.<sup>10</sup> Before Northern Nigeria was colonized, any information about the nature of the Jihadist state was precious for colonial merchants and strategists. But after the military conquest of the Caliphate in 1903, popular interest in its history declined among global audiences, and Jihad historiography became a leisure activity of curious British colonial officers. This curiosity was reinforced by the everyday interaction of the colonial staff with officials of the Caliphate administration, who were generally allowed to stay in office in a subordinate capacity to the British authority. In Africanist academic

<sup>9</sup> See for instance the ethnic division of the military in the Kano Jihad, where the Hausa units were all lead by Hausa leaders. Those were known due to the last names (or nicknames) »Bahaushe« or »Al-Hausawi«. Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text »Taqqid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanui« by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. among others Bonner: Jihad in Islamic History, pp. 151–152.



environments, the Jihad was ›rediscovered‹ when the newly independent African states studied their own pre-colonial heritage in the 1960s and 70s (see chapter II.1.1).

In contrast to this, in Islamic scholarship of Nigeria, West Africa, and to some degree North Africa, commemoration and investigation of the Sokoto Jihad has never been interrupted. Genealogical lines of office holders across the colonial conquest in 1903 and the foundation of the Nigerian State in 1960 have been documented until today, so that individual kinship with a first-generation Jihadist still counts as religious and political ennoblement. In Northern Nigeria, the *Bicentenary Anniversary of the Sokoto Caliphate* was celebrated in the Nigerian capital Abuja and the historical capital Sokoto on 19–20 June 2004 with thousands visiting Sokoto and commemorating the Jihad. Most politicians took the chance to »celebrate a truly epochal event as we use the ideal of the caliphate ourselves in Nigeria, in particular, and West Africa in general.«<sup>11</sup> This official tribute to the Jihad was in general very uncritical and aimed at the stylization of the leading Jihadists as hero role models in order to solve Nigeria's problems in the twenty-first century. The extreme violence, enslavement, mass expulsion and other suffering were – apart from critical journalists mostly located in Southern Nigeria – ignored. Academic conferences were held with outstanding contributions from Nigeria's Islamic Studies departments. In Sokoto, the *Ulama*<sup>12</sup> *Conference on the Bicentenary Commemoration of the Sokoto Caliphate* was organized in July 2004. At this conference, it was claimed again, that the Jihad had united different ethnic groups and could thus count as a role model to solve ethnic tensions of the modern Nigerian society:

»This holy coalition and union of god-fearing mujahiduns from different ethnic and tribal groups were able to establish an edifice, which has achieved wonderful results in all slants of human endeavor.«<sup>13</sup>

11 The former Nigerian president Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari (reigned 1979–1983) in a speech in Sokoto, quoted by the political scientist Adebaniwi: *The Caliphate and Nigeria's Future*.

12 The ulama is the community of all Islamic scholars, literally the »knowing« people (Arab. علماء).

13 Bunza: *The Sokoto Caliphate after 200 Years*, p. 8.

The »triumvirate scholars«<sup>14</sup> Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullah dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello were presented as the leaders of an overall progressive development movement. Owing to this vivid Islamic scholarly tradition in West Africa, many Jihadist texts survived the political turbulences of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in different private or court libraries (cf. chapter II.2.4). Many of these texts are now being preserved in national or university archives. The lack of global interest in Sokoto is all the more astonishing since recent terrorist attacks and kidnappings of an illegal Islamic organization operating in Nigeria and Northern Cameroon have entered the newspapers since 2010. The name of this organization is *Community of the Sunite Teaching and Jihad*,<sup>15</sup> but the Hausa term *Boko Haram* (»Texts in Latin Script are Sins«) is the common name used in the global media. But recent studies on jihad in West and East Africa are not historical and therefore only look at the formation of jihadist movements since independence.<sup>16</sup> Unlike many reports about jihadism in Africa, this study is not composed as a compendium for politicians of NGOs in Northern Nigeria. But it may serve to differentiate more exactly between Jihadist ideologies and practices of the pre-colonial nineteenth century, the colonial era, and in the Republic of Nigeria. Such a mental history of the Sokoto Jihad is important because it can show which Jihadist spatial concepts remain part of the cultural and social heritage of this region that has now split up into several nation states.

### **The Jihad – When and Where?**

The Islamization of West Africa was a slow and gradual process, although it was punctuated by some dramatic events or individual historical actors. In general, however, there was basically a social and intellectual contact zone shaped by the activities of merchants through which Islamic rituals, objects, beliefs, and stories entered West African societies on different levels. One early modern center of African Is-

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Arab. جماعة أهل السنة للدعوة والجهاد.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. for example Venter: Jihad in Africa. Even historical studies only trace Northern Nigerian jihadism back to the 1980s; see Adesoji: The Boko Haram Uprising.

lam was Timbuktu and the whole Songhay Empire. This Empire was the successor of the ancient West African states of Ghana and Mali. Bordering the Saharan desert, those empires were constantly engaged in trans-Saharan trade of gold and other products. For the historian, the comparison of the history of political Islam in Songhay and the Hausa region<sup>17</sup> may be misleading, but the curriculum of Arabic literature encountered in early modern Songhay was often copied and traded further east to the Sokoto Jihadists. The latter regularly read the same classical texts as their (historical) Songhay colleagues and there are also several Jihadist texts, in which Songhay scholars are referred to.<sup>18</sup> Yet another powerful neighbor of the Hausa region was the Bornu-Kanem Empire to the east at Lake Chad. It came up in the ninth century and established intense contacts with the Arab and Muslim world. By the fifteenth century it had expanded across vast areas and also subordinated some Hausa cities as tributary states. Both empires, Songhay and Bornu, were connected to Islamic pilgrimage routes and centers of education at a time when the Hausa region was not directly integrated into long-distance trade. But starting with ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhay, the trans-Saharan tracks shifted eastwards for vague reasons. It was probably due to new gold mines and an increasing demand for horses and military equipment that led to the creation of new contacts with Hausa throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Kano and Katsina became important Islamic centers of scholarship in a quite missionary style: North African or Tuareg scholars traveled to the Hausa cities in order to preach – one of the North African preachers being the famous Al-Maghili – and some others even settled there. But it is plausible to assume that Bornu Muslims influenced the Hausa region more regularly than any other visitors because the Hausa borrowed many terms of Islamic education (e.g. »to read« and »to write«) from the Bornu Kanuri language.<sup>19</sup>

Although jihad was an ongoing process of Sokoto Caliphate policy, this study draws attention to the era of rapid change of spatial concepts

17 Although Osswald and others have suggested to do so. Cf. Osswald: *Das Sokoto-Kalifat*, p. 5.

18 In some texts, Uthman dan Fodio quoted Muhammad Al-Maghili's (ca. 1440–1504) chapters in full length. See for example his text *Sirag al-ikhwan*. Cf. the Arabic edition and commentary in Rebstock (ed.): *Die Lampe der Brüder*.

19 This has been proved by Osswald: *Das Sokoto-Kalifat*, p. 10.

due to the military expansion of the Caliphate until the late 1840s. The formation of a state ideology is investigated instead of the Caliphate consolidation and the establishment of continuous power structures in elites that occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century. This Jihadist period ended when the Sokoto State met its largest spatial dimension in the mid-nineteenth century; after a period of waging wars against political entities outside the ›Caliphate‹, whole emirates rebelled against this central authority and declared themselves autonomous in the mid-nineteenth century. Among them was the Hadejia Emirate that renounced its connection with Sokoto in 1848, and at the Kebbi and Gobir frontier in the west other states constantly rebelled against the Sokoto rule (intense uprisings 1849–54). As the nature of these conflicts was different, i.e. less expansionist, and because a state ideology had already been established by the second Jihadist generation during the regency of Muhammad Bello (reigned 1817–1837), the time frame ends with the third generation in the time of Sultan Abubakar Atiku (reigned 1837–1842). The Nupe wars in the south<sup>20</sup> and the above-listed separatist movements forced the Caliphate to *react*, whereas before the Jihad military had often *acted*. The question »when« the Jihad took place can therefore be answered with a time frame from ca. 1800 until ca. 1850. The question »where« cannot be answered in one sentence, but is rather the task of this whole study. The Caliphate frontiers constantly shifted as did allegiances between emirates and enemy military forces. And at the same time, concepts shifted about where the Muslim ›self‹ and the unbelieving ›others‹ were located.

**20** In 1824 the Gwandu Caliphate sent Mallam Dendo to the southern border where he settled in Nupe. After his death in 1833 his son Usman Zaki succeeded him and resided in Raba until 1845. At this time, other Nupe rulers overcame Zaki's authority and he was exiled at Gwandu until his reinstallation in 1857. The Jihadists often tried to interfere with Nupe succession conflicts: Sokoto sent its soldiers to support one of the aspirants and then stayed in that country. See for example Nupe in the 1820s as reported by Richard L. Lander: Lander / Lander: Journal of an Expedition, vol. 1, p. 278.

## 1. Literature and Historiography

### *1.1 Minding the Gaps – Pre-Colonial History and its Historiography in Nigeria and »the Rest«*

Instead of outlining or listing the most important articles and monographs analyzing the Sokoto Jihad, this chapter is better described as a discussion and categorization of different schools of thought and their relevance within the historical debates concerning the Jihad. As the sub-chapter title anticipates, there are crucial gaps within the historical discourse on the Sokoto Jihad that need to be addressed: between the mentioned schools of thought, between academic personnel and suspicious state security institutions, between religious groups, between colonists and colonized, and between West African and so-called ›Western‹ academia. But as Nigeria has hosted a vivid scene of historical research for decades, its research landscape will be granted priority, whereas »the Rest« – in upending the concept of »the West and the Rest« – is only included selectively as required.

The Sokoto Jihad itself has long been an ambivalent topic of historical research in both the so-called »Western« and African academic and scholarly discourses. Several orders of interpretation have emerged as being of particularly normative nature (e.g. religious-Islamic or colonial). The basic difference between the traditions clearly is the aspect of political or religious goals which the authors might have had at the back of their minds – some would hide them whereas others would openly propagate their views and policies. Because the Sokoto Jihad discourse touches religious feelings, the discussions often include emotional levels. Another emotional trigger is of course the classification of pre-colonial history as a separate epoch determined by European colonialism. According to Lawson, who has analyzed the historiographical literature of Nigeria up to 1990, the colonial experience of Nigeria as a British colony moulded the historians' view during the first decade of independence:

»In the 1960's this group to be given a history was very general: ›Africans‹, personified in the jihadists of the Sokoto Caliphate who created through a non-tribal, intellectual revolution inspired by the ideal of the perfect Islamic

society. This was understood to destroy the colonial myth that Africans were non-progressive primitives without any written or spoken history.«<sup>1</sup>

In fact, African anti-colonial movements were often imbued with Islamic ideas or slogans. It is thus not surprising that the first Nigerian academic generation referred to the power of Islamic social ideas in opposition to colonial views about an alleged intellectual backwardness concerning pre-colonial African transformations. Academic writing of this decade reminds the scholar to critically question the goals and mentality of European colonial officers and linguists who contributed a lot to the editing and translation of sources about Northern Nigerian history. State officials such as Nigeria's governor Frederick Lugard formed the religious landscape of the north by excluding Christian missionaries and protecting Islam. Fears of losing this protection and having to compete with the south dominated debates in the era of independence. Therefore anti-colonialist historians of the first generations were rather southern Nigerians, who chose to write about

»the recent pre-colonial past [and] found evidence of proto-nationalism which was used both to support claims that nationalism was African and not an imposed colonial condition, and to legitimate the new leadership.«<sup>2</sup>

Indigenous roots of statehood and political leadership were traced and the Muslim Umma (community) defined as state-builders. For this project of nation-building it was inevitable to create a new national identity. And Wolfgang Kaese has explained that with a shift from anti-colonialism towards nation-building the educated elite of Nigeria heavily relied on the Islamic historical heritage in forming an identity.<sup>3</sup> Nigerian scholars like Ade Ajayi wanted to stress Africa's achievements of the past in

1 Lawson: Nigerian Historiography and the Sokoto Jihads, p. 2.

2 Ibid., p. 8.

3 Kaese deconstructs the discourses of the 1960s on the late pre-colonial era by carving out one basic debate of Ajayi against Dike within the ›Ibadan School‹, of which the first one is supposed to have become the leader of the mainstream opinion during the following years. Kaese's opinion says that it was the research on the Yoruba States that dominated the early historical research in the first place (Kaese: Akademische Geschichtsschreibung in Nigeria).

order to provide the new political leaders an »answer to imperialism.«<sup>4</sup> The study of history was valued as a way to produce self-knowledge – knowing the self through knowing its past. Historiography was not the goal itself, but the production of knowledge in order to carry the nation. But with regard to scientific methods, these Nigerian historians widely accepted and used the Anglo-American academic norms and were basically looking for their own social history as an educated elite. Even though the different schools of thought consisted of a mixture of Nigerians and foreigners, they did not represent the contemporary Nigerian society as a whole.

In the north, the Muslim leaders did indeed try to link their power to pre-colonial times and to re-establish the Sokoto Caliphate politically and genealogically under the *Sardauna* (title for the principal bodyguard), a descendant of Usman dan Fodio: Ahmadu Bello.<sup>5</sup> This politician was also the eponym for Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in Zaria and Northern Nigeria's first History Department within this university. This department was set up in 1962 by the British historian H.F.C. Smith, a professor of history at Ibadan University. Smith opened another department of history in Kano soon after. With a special ›Northern History Research Scheme‹ Smith called on linguists, archaeologists as well as historians to pursue a joint study of the past – at first cooperating with British academic staff only. He stressed the importance of written sources which resulted in an intense study of Arabic manuscripts in the following decades. The basic work consisted of establishing precise chronologies and writing a history of Islamic politics. With his pioneering article ›A Neglected Theme of West African History: The Islamic Revolutions of the Nineteenth Century‹<sup>6</sup> Smith set up the framework for analyzing the Jihad as a *revolution* in the following years. But since the Jihads were examined in connection with ›Western‹ readings, the approach closely adapted terms such as ›revolution‹ from former colonial powers. The backwardness attributed to Nigeria and Africa by the colonists was thus emphatically rejected: ›The obsession with the concept of a revolution

4 Ajayi: *The Place of African History and Culture*, p. 211.

5 Politician and founder of the conservative party Northern People's Congress (NPC), Primary Minister of Northern Nigeria 1954–1966, killed in a Putsch attack in 1966.

6 Smith: *A Neglected Theme of West African History*.

was because this was such an obvious symbol of progress.«<sup>7</sup> This concept of revolution also required a comparison of African historical processes with, for example, those of the French Revolution. This way, the 1960s molded ›African History‹ as a discipline within the field of historical research. Its special focuses were »events rather than structures, and the elite rather than the people.«<sup>8</sup> Smith and his followers were eager to marginalize European influence within Africa's history and to present a version of the past independent from European trade and policies. Even though not actively writing about the Sahel history, Smith nevertheless strongly supported dissertation projects in that field. A milestone was Murray Last's »The Sokoto Caliphate« which is based almost entirely on African sources and interviews, and which was supervised by Smith. In his pioneering work, Last rejects the colonial idea of the noble Fulbe nomads that conquered the ethnically inferior Hausa societies in order to establish a model rule of law. Another important dissertation under Smith's mentoring of that decade was Roland Adeleye's »Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804–1906«<sup>9</sup> which contributed more to the history of Northern Nigeria's conquest by British forces than the period of the Jihad years (1800s–1840s). It is thus a temporal continuation of Last's work. On reviewing the book, Mervyn Hiskett summarized: »In fine, Roland Adeleye makes plain that the Sokoto Caliphate did not decline: it was overtaken.«<sup>10</sup> It was Adeleye who introduced the phases of resistance against colonization to the historiography of the Sokoto Jihad, and he denied colonial images of an aged, decadent state, supposedly far too weak to defend itself against the British attack.

In the 1970s, scholars in general referred to Adeleye's assumptions when explaining the decline of the Caliphate. This decade led to the emergence of two schools of thinking: One that was interpreting the Jihad from an Islamic worldview, and an alternative school interpreting the events as terror and thus attacking the ideal of ›West Africa's Golden Age of Islam‹. As Lawson argues, both schools were evoked by the same transformations of Nigerian society: the collapse of democracy, the Civil

7 Lawson: Nigerian Historiography and the Sokoto Jihads, p. 14.

8 Ibid., p. 13.

9 Adeleye: Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria.

10 Hiskett: Review. Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804–1906, p. 675.



War and economic problems. »An unstated search for the cause of these failures now led to a radical revision of the historical story.«<sup>11</sup> Hausa-Fulani society was no longer praised as a homogenous nation with one common identity. Ethnicity in the present and in historical conflicts was reevaluated by academic researchers. On the other hand, radical intellectual groups reinforcing Islamic values at universities in Kano and Zaria overtook scholars and started to write their own history. Marxist historians such as Y. B. Usman<sup>12</sup> also gained some influence and challenged Islamic views. Usman integrated more heterogeneous source material (e.g. oral history) in order to give a voice to the less privileged social classes of the past. He shifted away from the former history of Islamic revolution and focused on what people actually did, which included production, occupation and settlement. While explaining the rural-urban dichotomy of the region of Katsina, Usman attempted to deconstruct identities. In this study – a study of social and cultural history – neither practices nor Islamic theories will be discussed separately. Mobile actors will be examined on the basis of both their thoughts and their actions as deeply as possible given the available sources.

The 1970s also witnessed a boom in historical theses about the pre-colonial Hausa region – especially from West African students studying and writing abroad (USA, Canada, UK).<sup>13</sup> As Lawson discovered, they used the free environment for positioning subtle criticism of the Sokoto Caliphs.<sup>14</sup> But in a conservative way, they also continued to focus on the biographies of a few Jihad leaders as scholars of the 1960s had done. Others, such as Sa'id and Adamu, analyzed the Jihad within a wider frame of ethnic history, and the titles make this evident: »Revolution and Reaction. The Fulani Jihad in Kano and its Aftermath 1807–1919«<sup>15</sup> and »The Hausa Factor in West African History«. Sa'id and also Alkali<sup>16</sup> analyzed the Jihad within a regional context – a change of concept that

11 Lawson: *Nigerian Historiography and the Sokoto Jihads*, p. 16.

12 See for example Usman (ed.): *Sokoto Seminar*; see also the published version of his PhD thesis: *The Transformation of Katsina*.

13 For instance Zahradeen: *Abd Allah ibn Fodio's Contributions to the Fulani Jihad*; and Gwandu: *Abdullahi b. Fodio as a Muslim Jurist*.

14 Lawson: *Nigerian Historiography and the Sokoto Jihads*, pp. 21–22.

15 Sa'id: *Revolution and Reaction*.

16 Alkali: *A Hausa Community in Crisis*.

Last and Adeleye had demanded to come after their master narratives. There was a major trend to study the different Sokoto Emirates in Nigeria and beyond. They documented many new details of the Sokoto Jihad in different local spaces, making a contribution that constitutes the groundwork of this analysis.

Adamu uses a time span of one thousand years to examine the history of the ordinary people of Kebbi; the *talakawa*.<sup>17</sup> Lawson concludes that historians like Usman started to realize, that »the selection of a time-frame was in many ways a definition of the decisive events in history.«<sup>18</sup> By using basically oral tradition and European travelers' accounts, his study marks a shift from the perspective of the conquerors (Jihadists) towards that of the conquered. In this present study, the time-frame will be chosen according to the transformation of the Jihad years. This work will endeavor to explain the chaotic years of confusion and not the emergence of solid statehood or stabilization of political, religious or economic systems. Conquerors and conquered alike will be of interest, because transfer of spatial knowledge was not limited to one social class. But one must also admit that unfortunately the sources restrict the numbers of actors whom it is possible to study during these years of multiple Jihad movements.

Another aspect of interpretation has very recently been reinforced by Islamic radicalism in the Sahel region: the religious tension between Muslims and Christians (or »Unbelievers«) in Nigeria itself. Although being formally organized in a Western academic manner, Northern Nigerian universities have always been close to the traditional ulama who analyze Sokoto history from a religious frame of education and science. As a result, not only anti-colonial, but also anti-southern powers have strongly influenced Nigerian historiography from its institutionalized beginnings. These scholars have tried to locate the Jihad within a holistic Islamic eschatology. This special Northern Nigerian school of history was labeled the »Islamic Legitimists« by Paul Lovejoy.<sup>19</sup> Abdullahi Smith,<sup>20</sup>

17 »Poor people« (Hausa translation according to Robinson: Dictionary, vol. 1, p. 397).

18 Lawson: Nigerian Historiography and the Sokoto Jihads, p. 24.

19 Lovejoy: The Ibadan School of Historiography, p. 198.

20 Smith was himself an ambiguous figure in the Nigerian scholarly elite: He married a Nigerian, accepted Nigerian citizenship and converted to Islam. From then on he was called Abdullahi Smith. He was intellectually torn between the Islamic radical milieu's

for example, wanted Northern Nigeria's universities to be structured and adjusted to the Islamic traditional system of lecturing. After having ruled several other history departments in Northern Nigeria, Smith also opened the *Arewa House*<sup>21</sup> in Kaduna in 1972, which was installed in exactly the same building where the assassinated Prime Minister Sir Ahmadu Bello had lived before. The new institutions of the ›Smith Era‹ brought forth the indexation and collection of masses of Arabic manuscripts from private and mosque libraries.

And together with the establishment of public manuscript archives, the 1970s introduced new methods and new sources for investigation of the Sokoto Jihad. In the Northern Nigerian regions and elsewhere in Nigeria this decade was considered the start of intensified self-criticism regarding methods and matters. Ayandele, a member of the ›Ibadan School‹ was provoking his colleagues when claiming that historical research was only focused on elites.<sup>22</sup> Others thereupon criticized the hegemony of statehood as a subtle but positive ideal and achievement in and of history. The decade of the 1970s was thus also a period of increasing frustration and disillusion amongst historians in Nigeria.

This disharmonious atmosphere produced a gap between the ›Ibadan School‹ and the northern colleagues, when a group of scholars started to identify themselves as the ›Zaria School‹. While historians of the north at first agreed to adapt to the dominant ›Ibadan School‹, the evolution of an Islamic reading of Sokoto history broke the bonds with the south. Ironically it was Smith, the nation's leading historian, who established religious interpretation. After his military service in British India (Pakistan), he was inspired to fight colonialism and to study other cultures' heritage in an academic context. In the mid-1970s he explained the current crisis in Nigeria as a result of a cultural crisis and neocolonial influence. To him, the ›Western‹ education meant the abandoning of African wisdom and religions.<sup>23</sup> Therefore he suggested adapting the precolo-

influence and Western secular traditions of research (see Lawson: *Nigerian Historiography and the Sokoto Jihads*, p. 26). A similar biography can be attributed to John Lavers, a British researcher and lecturer of history at the University of Kano, who married a Nigerian and converted to Islam.

21 Arewa is a Hausa term for the direction »north«.

22 Kaese: *Akademische Geschichtsschreibung in Nigeria*, p. 311.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 389–390.

nial Jihadists' mode of teaching at universities in a universal »Islamic Restoration.«<sup>24</sup> Smith pushed himself into opposition to the ›Western‹ idealistic concept of a value-free historiography. As Kaese states, Smith and his students transformed methods of cultural history into an Islamic research agenda.<sup>25</sup> Al-Hajj was one of the students to apply these instruments of religious research and at the same time address Islamic research topics.<sup>26</sup> But he did not at all define the Sokoto Jihad as a confrontation of believers and unbelievers, because in his view Islam was the omnipresent religious belief system in the Hausa region long before 1800. He described the Jihad as a »revolutionary movement within a Muslim community«<sup>27</sup> and stressed the role of Islam in the Jihadists' political thought. When re-examining the writings of the Jihad triumvirate (Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullah dan Fodio, Muhammad Bello), Abdul Hamid claimed that only Abdullah dan Fodio can be called a true theologian who contributed to *tafsir*<sup>28</sup> science.<sup>29</sup> Instead of competing with European standards of statehood and civilization as was the case in the historiography of the 1960s up to 1975, the new wave of Islamic research led to an alignment with regard to the global ulama. This emancipatory effort is, for example, explicitly formulated by Osman Ismail: »The literature they left us, with its diversity, originality and sheer quantity stands high in the order of the Arabic Islamic literature of its time.«<sup>30</sup> Ismail goes on, comparing Abdullah dan Fodio to Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab,<sup>31</sup> the Sudanese Mahdi, and even to the liberal reformist Muhammad Abduh.<sup>32</sup> Now the European revolutions no longer served as a frame of reference and platform for comparison, but rather the Islamic intellectual history

24 Ibid., p. 393.

25 Ibid., p. 397.

26 See Al-Hajj: The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria; and more precisely id.: The Fulani Concept of Jihad, pp. 45–48.

27 Al-Hajj: The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad, p. 6.

28 Arab. تفسير (science of Koran exegesis).

29 Hamid: Contributions of the Sokoto Jihad Leaders to Quranic Studies, p. 193; id.: Abdullahi b. Fudi as an Exegetist.

30 This article is part of a whole section of the anthology called »Intellectual Activity« (Ismail: Some Reflections on the Literature, p. 176).

31 One of the authorities who established the Wahhabiyya Islamic dogma on the Arab Peninsula during the eighteenth century.

32 A nineteenth century Egyptian jurist, Islamic scholar, and liberal reformer in Egypt. He is a representative of Islamic Modernism.

of Africa and the Middle East. This trend (with repeated backslides to the study of the elite triumvirate) has continued until the present day. Some of these studies even went as far as to advise contemporary politicians how to learn from the Jihadists.<sup>33</sup> This attitude towards historical research distinctly accounts for a certain *zeitgeist* of the late 1970s and 1980s in Nigeria: The desperate wish to find religious ways to support the establishment of a long-lasting and prosperous state that was not reliable anymore.

Only one open attempt was made to explain the Jihad by applying a Marxist theory of revolutions and class conflicts<sup>34</sup> by the Russian Africanist and Hausa linguist Dmitri Alexeyevich Olderogge.<sup>35</sup> But it was apparently not picked up in Nigeria at the time of its publication. However, other attempts to introduce a materialistic historiography were practiced soon after. One of these schools' representatives was Thomas Hodgkin. Having studied philosophy and archaeology at Oxford, he became a politicized detractor of the British policy in Palestine when staying there for excavations. Back in Britain, he was an active communist in higher education policy before leaving for Africa on the eve of its independence in the late 1950s. He worked as head of the African Studies Department in Legon (University of Ghana Campus at Accra) and spread Soviet interpretations of history – such as the Sokoto Jihad theory of Olderogge.<sup>36</sup> Hodgkin himself was quite unsuccessful in intensifying socialist historiographical theory in Northern Nigeria, it being a rather traditionalist setting governed by ulama and military rulers in his time. But as Kaese outlines, Hodgkin's colleague and friend Smith partly adopted his theories in his own research. Other socialists such as Segun Osoba remained outsiders at the ›Ibadan School‹, and only Y. B. Usman used socialist theories for his research, calling for a historiography making use of the

33 Tukur: Values and Public Affairs.

34 For an English summary of this argumentation see Olderogge: Feudalism in the Western Sudan, pp. 11–12.

35 Kaese claims (id.: Akademische Geschichtsschreibung in Nigeria, p. 397) that Olderogge had not made use of any primary sources which is clearly a wrong assumption. In fact the famous Russian linguist and historian has translated many of Krause's Ajami manuscripts (see chapter I.2.5) that are also consulted within this study (published in: Olderogge: Zapadnyj Sudan).

36 See for example Hodgkin: Mahdism, Messianism and Marxism.

category ›class‹.<sup>37</sup> His term ›sarauta system‹ for explaining the political situation of the pre-colonial Hausa region gained further prominence in the dissertation of Abdullahi Mahadi.<sup>38</sup> Mahadi's research on Kano fits with the growing interest in economic history in the 1980s within Nigeria and Africa. Mahadi claims that there never really was a replacement of the Sarauta System by the new Jamaa System based on the Islamic community, but that there was an immediate restoration of the old system in Kano. He states that on the eve of British occupation the old system with its social problems, poor masses and slaves had universally reappeared.<sup>39</sup> Revealing the *perpetuum mobile* of Islamic reform movements and eras of restoration, Usman abandoned the idea of a religious solution to contemporary problems and instead trusted in socialist ideas.

Another major field for scholars working on the history of Sokoto, was the editing and collection of Jihadist sources. The often authentic respect of colonial officials such as Governor Lugard towards the region's Islamic heritage had led to the publishing and translation of historical sources in Arabic and Ajami<sup>40</sup> as early as late pre-colonial and colonial times.<sup>41</sup> The officials did not only collect oral information on pre-colonial experiences but also examined, copied and conserved Arabic manuscripts. This happened well in line with the argumentation of the Hamitic theory, which historically and ethno-linguistically claimed the superiority of so-called ›Hamitic Tribes‹<sup>42</sup> compared to the ›Negroids‹ of Sub-Saharan Africa. Due to this Orientalistic view, British colonial staff of the North privileged Hausa history and culture.<sup>43</sup> In order to reconstruct the tensions between the ›Western‹ research tradition on the Hausa region and the Nigerian one in depth, one has to recall that it was exactly the ruling colonial class – respectively the European explorers

37 Kaese: *Akademische Geschichtsschreibung in Nigeria*, pp. 418–419.

38 Mahadi: *The State and the Economy*.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 337–339.

40 Ajami: Texts in Arabic letters, but in any language other than Arabic.

41 For more information on European interest in Arabic manuscripts, see chapter II.2.

42 These usually included Berbers, Cushitic, Semitic, and also the Hausa people because of their classification as Chadic ethnic groups.

43 See for example Palmer: *Sudanese Memoirs*, 3 vols.; *id.*: *The Bornu, Sahara and Sudan*; Hogben: *The Muhammadan Emirates of Nigeria*; Nadel: *A Black Byzantium*. This also includes the different ›Gazetteers of the Northern provinces of Nigeria‹, published in the 1920s and 1930s.

prior to colonialism – that founded academic research on the northern region, proceeding from the work and views of oriental linguists coming from their own countries throughout Europe. Thus, the ›Western‹ chain of historical research has to be critically scrutinized because of the Orientalist<sup>44</sup> heritage it has in its background.

Well after Nigeria's independence, these colonial staff members went on publishing historical analyses based on their memories and colonial records.<sup>45</sup> Hugh A. S. Johnston, a former colonial District Officer of the Sokoto Province, published his book<sup>46</sup> on the Sokoto Caliphate and had to face some criticism: Smith lamented about his concentration on European sources<sup>47</sup> and Daniel F. McCall was convinced that Johnston

»empathizes completely with the Fulani (when they are hard pressed, they are ›determined‹ and ›courageous‹; when their opponents act in that fashion, they are ›diehards‹) and he considers this people superior in intelligence to other Africans, which leads to such naïve assessments as that the weak character of Bello's son resulted from his Hausa mother. Johnston's concept of the formation of the Hausa language is untenable, and other references to linguistics are awkward.«<sup>48</sup>

Even before Nigeria's independence in 1960, Bill Kensdale had started to collect original manuscripts, photocopies and microfilm reproductions at Ibadan University. In 1964 it was transformed into the newly launched *Centre for Arabic Documentation*. Other collections (Kaduna, Jos) were established with the help of the British Arabists David Bivar and Mervyn Hiskett, who acted as historians but had been educated as linguists. The

44 Edward Said, who has forged the term ›orientalism‹ (1978), was especially referring to ›Western‹ academic and intellectual constructions of the ›Orient‹ as the exotic, autocratic and religiously radical counterpart to the enlightened and rational ›West‹. Today the concept of ›Orientalism‹ is regarded as a general method of humans in the process of ›othering‹, also being adapted by gender studies.

45 Of them Tony Kirkgreene, David Muffet, and Hugh A.S. Johnston are best-known.  
46 Johnston: *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*.

47 Smith: *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto* by H.A.S. Johnston, in: *Africa*. In another review on the mentioned book his critical points are expressed even harsher (*Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*), as he blamed Johnston to underestimate the special African moment in the Caliphate history.

48 McCall: *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto* by H.A.S. Johnston, p. 244.

latter worked at the *School of Arabic Studies* in Kano. These research centers were thus organized and staffed on an interdisciplinary basis: Islamic Studies, linguistics, history.

Whereas the 1970s opened new ways of interpretation and were dominated by hybrid researchers that crossed the lines of various historical schools, the 1980s witnessed a stop of this constant fluctuation. This decade saw the hardening of the discourse in the field, when two much more polemic groups established themselves: Islamists and Counter-Islamists. After Uthman dan Fodio had at first been studied as a nation-builder (in the 1960s), and his brother Abdullah dan Fodio had been of key interest as an authentic social reformer (in the 1970s), the new Islamist group started to emphasize Muhammed Bello's role as a statesman, scholar and military leader. New theses focused on Muhammad Bello as the real and practical establisher of the Caliphate.<sup>49</sup> And the ›Islamist‹ interpretation of the Jihad became even more important to the majority of northern Nigerians when the Sharia law was introduced in twelve Nigerian federal states starting in 1999.<sup>50</sup> In the meantime, corruption, military putsches and the failure of democratic experiments in Nigeria drastically reduced trust in the state system. Radical millenarian sects – both Muslim and Christian – aroused the masses and led people to riot against the establishment and/or other religious groups. On an intellectual level, historians also started to doubt the contemporary political system and to look for solutions in pre-colonial history. Along these lines, Shehu Umar Abdullahi<sup>51</sup> has published several books on the Sokoto Jihad in order to describe a role model for students, teachers, politicians and others.<sup>52</sup> Structure, methods of analysis and interpretations in these books are dominated by Islamic views to such an extent, that they can no longer be referred to as reliable secondary literature.<sup>53</sup> These studies also do

49 See Bello: *The Political Thought of Muhammad*; or Minna: Sultan Muhammad Bello and his intellectual Contribution.

50 Islamic law was fully introduced in the federal states Zamfara, Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Bauchi, Bornu, Jigawa, Kebbi and Yobe. Sharia law was regionally introduced in Kaduna, Niger and Gombe.

51 Abdullahi: *On the Search for a Viable Political Culture*.

52 Sulaiman: *A Revolution in History*; id.: *The Islamic State and the Challenge of History*; id.: *The African Caliphate*.

53 They lack the scientifically accepted approach that research has to start without a predetermined conclusion.



not differentiate between spatial areas nor between different periods of time. They are looking for ever-lasting and global religious solutions to contemporary Nigerian problems.

When a military coup ended the short phase of the Second Nigerian Republic,<sup>54</sup> different military juntas replaced one another. The two Northern schools of thought – the Islamists and the Materialists – further challenged the stagnating ›Ibadan School‹ which led to a crisis of historiography in Nigeria. Especially in Zaria and Kano, the Materialists (Usman, Tukur, Mahadi) gained influence by supervising several theses, some of which explicitly applied Marxist ideas. When Abdullahi Smith retired and soon after died in 1984, Nigeria's historians lost their very anchor and theoretically integrative factor because Smith had managed to represent all schools of thought: Islamists, Materialists and Conservatives. In Zaria, the Materialists worked on their own, cooperating only with sociologists. In Kano, the ›Ibadan School‹ was adapted and after Smith's death the Islamists gathered in the departments for Islamic studies (rather than for history) or religious institutions within the country and abroad. Some of their works can barely be called scholarly in an academic sense.<sup>55</sup> In the 1980s, both Islamists (e.g. Ahmad Kani) and Materialists (e.g. Sule Bello) were monitored by the state, persecuted and finally removed from their university offices.<sup>56</sup> Events such as these led to a brain-drain of Nigerian historians to North America and eventually to an almost complete standstill of genuine historical research in Nigeria, or what Kaese calls an »arteriotomy of personnel.«<sup>57</sup>

But another trend has also had its effect on Sokoto Caliphate historiography from the 1980s onwards: the global interest in the previously ›silent‹ (or better ›silenced‹) historical actors, such as slaves and women. Jean Boyd and Isaac A. Ogunbiyi dedicated much of their time to the tracing and study of Jihadist prose and poetry by female authors.<sup>58</sup> The most famous and influential of these figures is Nana Asmau, a daughter of Uthman dan Fodio. And thanks to the effort of Nigerian scholars,

54 1979–1983.

55 Kaese: *Akademische Geschichtsschreibung in Nigeria*, pp. 498–500.

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 507–508.

57 »[P]ersoneller Aderlaß« (*ibid.*, p. 530).

58 Cf. among other publications on gender in the Sokoto Caliphate Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*; Boyd / Mack (eds.): *One Woman's Jihad*.

biographies were put together over decades using oral interviews with local female scholars.<sup>59</sup> Together with these gender studies activities, the studies in slaves were also introduced. Both trends appeared at almost the same time and were in some instances united.<sup>60</sup> The socially marginalized Sokoto slaves had previously often been reduced to their economic relevance as a work force, trade good and tribute ›currency‹. But Paul Lovejoy and other colleagues coming from the global slavery, slave trade, and African diaspora studies, highlighted the role of slaves in Sokoto history.<sup>61</sup> But in general, Sokoto historiography in Europe and North America remained focused along the lines of classical historical approaches and political historiography.<sup>62</sup>

From a current academic point of view, the most discussed and challenging problem of the Jihad historiography has always been its normative or even political intentions. Even if a researcher has tried to exclude his own political convictions from his academic work, he usually nevertheless judged the Jihad according to the Jihadists' aims. Research questions thus were: Did the Jihadists fail or succeed? Was the war an ethnic or a religious violent conflict? Did the Jihad create a peaceful Caliphate with a merging of ethnic groups? Did it restrict or rather boost the slave economy? Did the inhabitants really become more religious or at least more aware of religious laws and contents?

In this analysis, the attempt is made to enrich these debates as there will never be broad agreement on the answers to the above questions. This study will adopt tools from discourse analysis methods in order to

**59** Though they were not the first scholars to interview female scholars. The anthropologist Mary Smith (married to the aforementioned historian M.G. Smith) had interviewed the old teacher Baba (1877–1951) in Hausa, translated the account, and published her oral autobiography; cf. Smith: *Baba of Karo*.

**60** Nast focused for instance on female palace slaves abused as concubines; cf. Nast: *Concubines and Power*.

**61** See for example the studies on elite slaves in Stilwell: *Power, Honour and Shame*; id.: *Paradoxes of Power*. Lovejoy's approach is more strongly related to the economic history of West Africa, since he had started his career with research on the Kola trade and the salt trade in West Africa. See for a more recent publication on slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate Lovejoy: *Slavery, Commerce and Production in West Africa*.

**62** The very first of the general Sokoto historiographies was Last: *The Sokoto Caliphate*. This work is a published version of his PhD dissertation at Ibadan University. It openly focuses on a chronological account of the Jihad and the implementation of different government offices.

overcome positivist approaches.<sup>63</sup> Since historical truth and reality are only represented as past realities communicated by codes of language, medium, and other meaningful signs, we can analyze the modes and norms of constructed reality. What was possible to think, say and write about spaces in the Jihad? In a Foucauldian sense, historians can only ever question historical statements and not historical subjects. Historical facts can only be facts about what the past actors knew, could linguistically express, were willing to communicate and managed to express. We can ask how this knowledge was generated and distributed, and how it in turn altered societies. This has to do with the linguistic and literary codes of Hausa, Fulfulde and Arabic. And it includes social norms which administer the power of a community.

When focusing on mobility and mobile actors during this work, more conservative and contested estimations might well be discussed in an oblique way. But this dissertation is devoted to knowledge discourses about territory. This knowledge can be true in the sense that the historical actors considered it (religiously, metaphorically, or scientifically) correct, and these actors can at the same time be wrong in the modern geographical sense. There is no overall »success« or »failure« of the Jihadists to be claimed, because the Jihadist discourses themselves constantly changed and generated other goals and historical consciousness. Not even with argumentations of Islam was there any undisputed process or ultimate goal for this world. The final state for humans could only be attained in paradise and with the Prophet Mohammed. From the very beginning of any religiously inspired movement, its goals are always utopian. And before this point of time, there is no goal, because the concept of jihad<sup>64</sup> includes the struggle for Islamization as an ongoing process until the day of resurrection.<sup>65</sup>

Criticizing a common phenomenon in the African academic landscape, Richard Reid is right when he laments about a certain dominance of »presentism« in historical African studies: »presentist and solution-oriented research agendas are hegemonic, and Africa's troubled present is severed

63 For introductions into discourse analysis see Gee: *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*; Sarasin: *Diskursanalyse*, pp. 53–57.

64 The etymological root of Jihad is جَاهِد (to endeavour).

65 Called »Qiyamah« in Islamic eschatology.

from its violent deeper past.«<sup>66</sup> Pre-colonial research is seen as an unaffordable luxury in times when solutions for current issues are required. In his polemical essay Reid argues that while African states lost interest in pre-colonial research for political and economic reasons, so did non-Africans as it became rather difficult for them to find African partners for cooperation projects and archive trips or fieldwork. »The disastrous outcome of all this was the emergence of the current vast gulf between most scholarship produced in the West and Africa.«<sup>67</sup> Reid concludes. Parallel to the decline of pre-colonial research, he observes the rise of colonial history. One of his main points is the urgent need for the study of history with a notion of *longue durée*. This means the search for continuities and writing a history on the long-term scale. Lack of relevant language skills can of course be a major reason for many young scholars to turn to colonial sources. Furthermore, efficient cooperation between Africanist linguists and historians is scarce, and linguistic studies are usually even more »presentist« and juxtaposed to institutes of anthropology. However, pre-colonial African history deserves a thorough treatment by scholars who take its intellectual history and its actors seriously.

Picking up Richard Reid's suggestions for an intensified research on pre-colonial Africa, I nonetheless have to neglect his demand for the study of long-term processes. Concerning West African history, we can take into account numerous attempts for an overall anthology, starting in the 1960s until very recently.<sup>68</sup> Although there is certainly much to contribute to these master narratives, this study is rather offering a thick description<sup>69</sup> and analysis of knowledge transfer. This monograph traces the interrelation between the Jihad movement, territorial knowledge and physical mobility of mobile actors as transmitters of information. Until now, no study of the Sokoto Jihad has included spatial mobility and

66 Reid: Past and Presentism, p. 152.

67 Ibid., p. 137.

68 Fage: An Introduction to the History of West Africa; Davies: West Africa before the Europeans; Trimingham: A History of Islam in West Africa; Hopkins: Economic History of West Africa; Ade Ajayi / Crowder: History of West Africa, 2 vols.; Davidson: West Africa before the Colonial Era; Lovejoy: Ecology and Ethnography of Muslim Trade in West Africa; Hall: A History of Race in Muslim West Africa.

69 This anthropological method was introduced by Geertz: Thick Description. Geertz had transferred the philosophical ideas of Gilbert Ryle and Ludwig Wittgenstein to the anthropological field.

concepts. Mobility was only considered a fact, a means to an end. But rarely if ever was it related to groups of mobile actors that were engaged in the creation of a discourse on geography. The Jihad was analyzed on the basis of its proclamation and its result. This research study in contrast is intended to scrutinize the practices of movement and the attributed meanings. This includes both the actual physical use and the imagination of space.

What are now considered the gaps we have to mind throughout this study? The general gap between Euro-American scholarship and West-African-Nigerian academia has never been absolute, but in many Northern Nigerian institutes Caliphate historiography has become the domain of Islamic theology which alienates profane ›Western‹ libraries and students who object to buying their books. This gap can be bridged only to some extent. Highly specialized essays and critical editions of Jihadist primary sources by Islamic scholars will be taken into account in this analysis, especially since their knowledge on the background of Islamic allusions is essential to this work, despite their doubtful religious and political propagandistic character. Yet another gap exists between linguists and historians working with source material in different languages. By making use of Arabic, Hausa, and Fulfulde sources at the same time, the works of different disciplines researching on the Central Sahel (linguistics, anthropology, history) will be given their place in this book. And finally, a third gap can be identified between scholars of colonial or post-colonial history on the one hand and of pre-colonial history on the other hand. This analysis is supplied with many substantial results from the twentieth century historiography on the Sokoto Caliphate, but it clearly seeks to bring into debate more recent discussions, often originating from the (post)colonial studies scheme.

### ***1.2 Towards a Pre-Colonial History of West African Jihadist Spaces***

Whenever historical discussions address issues containing the keywords »cartography« or »geography«, and »Africa«, the discussants usually refer to the colonial scramble for Africa or other projects of mapping Africa from a ›Western‹ point of view. In global networks of geographers, Africa had for long remained the continent whose inner regions were among the last to contain a *terra incognita* – or in German »white

spots« (»weiße Flecken«),<sup>70</sup> a metaphor referring to the uncolored spaces of interior Africa on maps of the mid-nineteenth century. The *horror vacui* of many geographers in the Colonial Age has been used by several national ideologies for legitimizing colonial ventures and expeditions. Practices of ›mapping‹ have often been presented as a typically ›Western‹ approach of humans to landscape and space.

This critical deconstruction of colonial concepts of African spaces correlates with the refusal by many Africanist scholars to include pre-colonial history of space (perception).<sup>71</sup> A pioneer in this field has been Igor Kopytoff: In the voluminous introductory chapter to his miscellany volume of 1987, he redefined African notions of frontier and space, stressing that most of today's ethnic or political borders have developed rather recently and that migration – both long and short distance – was common throughout pre-colonial African history. Former rulers who had lost power, criminals and social outcasts often left their homes and went »into the bush«<sup>72</sup> in order to set up a new life. This way an ethnic group may extend its area of settlement, found trade, hunting or military diasporas. On the one hand, his emphasis on rapid change of social frontier brings historical disciplines back into the arena. But on the other hand, Kopytoff quite naively translates the emigration and founding father myths into historical reality. Kopytoff defined Africa as a frontier continent, fully aware that he was adapting a term created for the conquest of North America. With this argumentation he did not restrict the frontier concept to European immigration to other continents, but applied it for inner-African examples; an undertaking for which he coined the term of the »internal«<sup>73</sup> African frontier. According to Kopytoff, new political formations arise in these frontier regions. Different ideal types of frontiers are defined: *Firstly*, the resettlement in densely populated land. This kind of boundary is at least defined by the migrants themselves, though the implicate assumption that these spaces were empty and lacked any

70 See for example Schneider: *Wartezeit beendet*, p. 249.

71 Most exceptions have to rely solely on European sources and thus investigate Euro-African contact zones of missionary enclaves of the African coasts. Some studies have integrated the pre-colonial time in their analysis; cf. Dulucq / Soubias (eds.): *L'espace et ses représentations en Afrique subsaharienne*.

72 Quotation marks by Kopytoff. See id.: *The Internal African Frontier*, p. 6.

73 See for example *ibid.*, p. 9.

political authority might have misled African migrants, as well as colonial conquerors. *Secondly*, the belief in the power of frontier zones that are characterized as institutional vacuums and therefore as boosters for social processes. *Thirdly*, conservative frontier zones that revive metropolitan rules and lifestyle; or as Kopytoff puts it, »the frontier process then becomes one of cultural self-reproduction on a regional scale.«<sup>74</sup>

In the frontier theory developed by Kopytoff, first-comers are the legitimated authorities of the land and therefore newcomers tried to adapt to their myths and historical consciousness. Within this study, this hypothesis is tested, since the Fulbe were relative »newcomers« to the Hausa Sahel with their own consciousness of migratory history, and they faced »first-comers« and their legends (cf. chapter IV.1). The Fulbe clans among the Jihadists broke with this discourse on being first, by partly replacing it with different legitimizing myths. Maybe this missing link between the first-comer myth<sup>75</sup> and the revolutionary Islamic myths is one element forming the caesura which the Jihad obviously was. A very disputable point of Kopytoff's essay is his assumption that African societies prefer social mapping to geographical mapping unlike other societies. One may at once ask: Isn't geographical space a major aspect of social mapping and thus a social practice as well? Aren't deities often bound to special places, such as rivers, dwellings, caves or mountains? Haven't Islamic African burial places been conserved and visited for healing purposes for centuries? And one may also doubt whether there has ever been something called a »general pan-African political culture«<sup>76</sup> in pre-colonial time, when information networks were only seldom trans-regional and even more rarely genuinely African (but rather Islamic, Indian Ocean etc.).

On the other hand, local myths actually take it for granted that, at first, a few adventurous individuals migrated to the frontier and then all of a sudden these few individuals turned into a whole community. Therefore one can assume that frontier zones were often densely populated, and not empty at all: Some inhabitants were needed as new fol-

74 Ibid., p. 35.

75 See *ibid.*, p. 22.

76 Ibid., p. 27.

lowers and group members.<sup>77</sup> Kopytoff goes one step further from this conclusion when arguing that in African history – and especially so in frontier zones – there was a shortage of people, so that leaders were keen to attract and keep them in their dominion: »There is undoubtedly a relationship between this emphasis on social rather than geographical control and the lack of a rigid ›rootedness‹ in physical space [...]«. <sup>78</sup> This implies that Africans have had a very social perception of space. But one may oppose this assumption and differentiation between the ›social‹ and the ›geographical‹ approach to power by asking why it was that African migrants usually changed their religious shrine affiliation. Were they socially or geographically forced to do so? Many religious sites of local or regional significance were fixed locations which could not be easily transferred – even if certain talismans connected to such places may have been mobile.<sup>79</sup>

But Kopytoff's most quoted argument was developed along the critical commentary on Jackson Turner's »frontier thesis« (1893) referring to the North American frontier: While Turner had highlighted the role of the frontier as a »quasi natural engine of change that shaped the American character,« Kopytoff concluded that the »frontier process in traditional Africa encouraged cultural continuity rather than innovation.«<sup>80</sup> But his works never elaborate on the question according to which standard a process is judged to be innovative or conservative. He restricts ›innovation‹ to a structural character only: New political entities emerge at the frontier but largely consolidate an existing culture. Kopytoff refers to ›traditional‹ and ›indigenous‹ African societies and – whatever these terms may bear of definitions and meanings – he is not studying Islamic or other African states. But his distinction between external and internal frontiers is very illuminating: Between metropolitan African areas are belts of »no-man's lands« where social outcasts from all metropolises may escape and form new communities at this internal frontier. Migration at an external frontier is directed in only one way, by an advancing

77 Ibid., p. 32.

78 Ibid., p. 41.

79 See for an example of shrines in African space and landscape Colson: *Places of Power and Shrines of the Land*.

80 Kopytoff: *The Internal African Frontier*, p. 31.



population moving forward with the frontier.<sup>81</sup> While the internal border can be a place of refuge, the external border is characterized by violence and forced migration. Although some frontier zones between some Sokoto Emirates can be called »internal«, the expanding southern Caliphate frontier was clearly external (like the North American and South African frontier), although some traders may have immigrated voluntarily from the north to the south.<sup>82</sup> But what Kopytoff named an »internal« frontier is maybe better described as a periphery in opposition to metropolises.

African frontiers are often explained in terms of lifestyle and profession of a society. Fulbe pastoralists are widely considered to have been more indifferent to space and boundaries than farmers who marked the »nature-culture« border by dumpings of litter, religious shrines and devices, or menstruation huts.<sup>83</sup> And when Ulf Engel and Paul Nugent reviewed and estimated the contribution of African Studies to the *spatial turn* in 2010, they assumed that major insights were achieved in the study of migration and the politics of belonging.<sup>84</sup> Other intriguing fields of interest are urban spaces, trans-local networks, and gendered spaces. For Allen M. Howard and his socio-historical research, it is the household which has formed the most important entity of human spatial order, although he also discerned religious spatial orders:

»Those who shared beliefs and ritual practices often focused on particular places – shrines, mosques, tombs, or other sacred sites – that had meaning for them, influenced their identities, and were part of their mental landscapes.«<sup>85</sup>

And one major element of sacred Muslim or Christian landscapes is to represent and overcome spatial distance:

**81** Ibid., p. 33.

**82** At the Sokoto frontier there was no »relative equality of power between the aboriginal settlers and the immigrant frontiersmen«, as it was described for internal frontiers in *ibid.*, p. 41.

**83** Rösler / Wendl: Introduction. *Frontiers and Borderlands*, p. 7. See for a literary study on East African oral literature and its use of animals as markers between nature and culture, human and animal Kirberg: *Repräsentationen von Tier-Mensch-Raum in ostafrikanischen Oraturen*.

**84** Engel / Nugent: Introduction. *The Spatial Turn in African Studies*, p. 3.

**85** Howard: *Nodes, Networks, Landscapes, and Regions*, p. 69.

»Local places often possessed sacred power because people associated those places, and the objects and ceremonies located there, with distant sacred places, real and imagined.«<sup>86</sup>

Howard's co-editor Richard M. Shain even mentioned the Sokoto Jihad as a »new spatial regime« built in accordance with Uthman dan Fodio's »vision of an Islamic landscape«. <sup>87</sup> And by that he alluded to the promoting of urbanization and long-distance trade with the ›Islamic World‹. But what could this Islamic landscape be like? What were the indicators of different spatial categories and what was opposed to Islamic landscapes? These questions will be answered throughout this study more thoroughly.

We can conclude that in Historical African Studies the research topic ›African Spaces‹ faced a modest boom during the past ten years. That means that two disciplines – history and geography – are converging in some fields of research that had once originated from one and the same discipline or scholarly activity in European antiquity. In this age, geographers were also historians, and the sciences of space and time were united as one. Even throughout the nineteenth century, geography and history were studied by the same European scholars – some of them featuring a special interest in Africa. The famous German explorer Heinrich Barth<sup>88</sup> (1821–1865) is one example of several pre-colonial travelers in Africa displaying serious interest in African history and geography. In the 1850s Barth also entered the Sokoto Caliphate and during his vast journeys across North and West African territory, he was forced to acquaint himself with at least some basic geographical knowledge in order to proceed with his trips. Furthermore, the description of topographical and climatic characteristics of landscape had become a common structural element of the genre of ›exploration literature‹. Every travel report about Africa usually contained descriptions about the travel infrastructure (roads, rivers, obstacles) and landscape. This mode of writing was necessary for the individual documentation of a trip, but it was also a literary device designed to immerse the reader in the story by re-experiencing

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>87</sup> Shain: *The Salt that Binds*, p. 254.

<sup>88</sup> Also called Henry Barth in some English publications.

the trip in a chronological manner. As for Heinrich Barth, he was not one of the lay explorers, but rather an academic trained in the classical subjects: geography, history, law and linguistics.<sup>89</sup> As a student in Berlin, Heinrich Barth was an avid student of Carl Ritter's (1779-1859) geography lessons and aimed at succeeding him as a professor of geography in Berlin after his retirement. Carl Ritter is generally considered as one of the founders of geography as a separate discipline, while his research was still combined with historical studies.<sup>90</sup> Ritter was especially interested in the geography of the African continent and a passionate opponent of slavery and the slave trade. It was Ritter who brought Barth in touch with the Foreign Office in London and by that initiated Barth's African journey. Like Ritter, Barth combined geographical and historical studies as one broad cultural discipline and in the end failed with this approach. This was because in the mid-nineteenth century geographical academia gradually shifted from a historical framework to a more natural scientific approach. Heinrich Barth was thus doomed to failure when insisting on historical and linguistic methods in order to acquire geographical knowledge. Caught in this controversy about universalism and sectionalism, he represented an old-fashioned (universalist) school of geography. Trained by Ritter, Heinrich Barth produced many drawings documenting his African journey – many of which were integrated into his voluminous published travel accounts.<sup>91</sup> His draft drawings archived with his diaries in Hamburg reveal that he focused on natural landscape and architecture. Humans and animals are rarely integrated into his scientific pictures. He often only documented his personal experience and how his camp was set up on the outskirts of a settlement. Many drawings depicted the history of minerals while others portrayed historical sights of Roman antiquity or early Islamic history in Saharan Africa.

After roughly a century of academic separation, the *spatial turn* in humanities launched a new wave of studies on space as a cultural unit. In the field of African Studies this topic is still passionately debated because it offers links between different sub-disciplines. The biennial

**89** Cf. Schiffers (ed.): Heinrich Barth. Ein Forscher in Afrika; Diawara / Farias / Spittler (eds.): Heinrich Barth et l'Afrique.

**90** Lenz (ed.): Carl Ritter. Geltung und Deutung.

**91** Barth: Travels and Discoveries, 5 vols., London 1857–1858.

*European Conference on African Studies* of 2009 in Leipzig was entitled »Respacing Africa«, while the conference of the Association for African Studies in Germany in Cologne (2012) was called »Embattled Spaces – Contested Orders«. It is obvious that the term »space« guarantees somehow that divergent panels and topics in African Studies can be listed and collected in one conference. At the Cologne conference, the organization committee interpreted spatial conflicts in two ways that can approximately summarize two major fields of the »spatial turn« in African Studies. Firstly, they featured panels on »Commoditising Space – Indigenising Land«. These embraced anthropological studies on land grab and land conflicts in general. Secondly, the Cologne conference also focused on »Contested Environments – Negotiating Spatiality and Resources«. Environmental studies have especially been dealt with by historians among the field of African Studies. And very recently, the global emergence of Human-Animal Studies has contributed to this trend of environmental research from a cultural point of view.<sup>92</sup>

The above-described topic of the (social) frontier separating and connecting spaces has recently achieved some attention among exponents of spatial studies in African history. James L. A. Webb has for example investigated the shift of the Saharan desert frontier as a »natural« frontier into the West-African Sahel from 1600 to 1850 and highlighted ecological and environmental implications. Webb claims that this 150 miles shift to the south of the desert frontier increased political violence in the Sahel because of a widespread »cavalry revolution«. <sup>93</sup> According to Webb, pastoralist societies were forced to leave the desert southwards with their pasture and at the same time the Tsetse frontier shifted and allowed the use of Saharan horse breeds in the Sahel.<sup>94</sup> Both factors, the migration of pastoral societies into the Sahel and the militarization of the region by use of horses, are given as evidence for the increase of violence in the pre-colonial centuries. However, while his hypothesis may be valid for the Western Sahel region, this present empirical study

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Beinart / McGregor (eds.): *Social History and African Environments*; Speitkamp / Zehnle (eds.): *Afrikanische Tierräume*.

<sup>93</sup> Webb: *Desert Frontier*, p. xv.

<sup>94</sup> The tsetse fly lives on blood of humans and animals and infects several species – including horses and cattle – by spreading parasitic diseases like Trypanosomiasis (sleeping-sickness in human, Nagano in cattle).

on the Central Sahel in some way contradicts his theory of militarization and desertification, because the elite of the Sokoto Jihad were not pastoralists, but professionalist Islamic scholars who could readily fit into urban Hausa society. They spread to the south by warfare, but they were not motivated by climatic changes in the first place. And secondly, Fulbe pastoralists generally migrated from the extreme west in the Senegal to Northern Cameroon in the east, and not from the north to the south. Only in the course of the Sokoto Jihad, considerable groups moved from the savanna plains into the forest hills. As this study will show, this process was not as gradual as the climatic change, but dynamic and enabled by violent military expeditions of the Jihadist armies.

Many studies on pre-colonial African spaces have referred to climatic changes and thus run the risk of essentializing landscape and looking at African societies as passive collectives that are to a large degree determined by their environment. But after the *spatial turn* which aimed at understanding space as constructions, perspectives have slightly shifted away from the naturalization of environments. Dichotomous nature-culture spatial orders were replaced by in-between spaces<sup>95</sup> and frontiers are now considered as contact zones where identities were constantly at stake. Camille Lefèbvre has demonstrated that West African frontiers – like like European borders – have never been natural, but were intellectual constructions. Creating and perceiving space always entails processes of knowledge transfer over time, and then local adoption of fluctuating knowledge on spaces. Lefèbvre defined the frontier as a social production inscribed into space at a certain time which was thus defined by those two factors: space and time. The border is considered a temporary matter created by human action.<sup>96</sup> But recent studies on human-animal relations challenge this anthropocentric claim by regarding animal actors that create spaces by their own actions. Beyond this, actor-network theory has tried to give up any dichotomous concept, be it the nature-culture, human-animal, or active-passive divide.<sup>97</sup>

95 Cf. Philo / Wilbert: *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places. An Introduction*, p. 21.

96 Lefèbvre: *Territoires et frontières du Soudan central*, p. 11. Her dissertation was condensed and published with a new title more recently; see id.: *Frontières de sable, frontières de papier*. In this book I have used the unpublished work of Lefèbvre.

97 Cf. for example Taylor / Signal (eds.): *Theorizing Animals*.

In Africa, the critique of »unnatural« and »artificial« borders dictated by colonial geographers, politicians and militaries has received great attention in the media, politics and in general public discussion. The roots of this neglect of »artificial« borders can be traced back to the nineteenth and twentieth century when the idea of the nation led intellectuals and civil persons to the assumption that any nation needed a delimited territory marked by exact frontiers. The *African Borderlands Research Network* (ABORNE) based in Edinburgh and founded in 2007, also went beyond this theory by doubting

»that the boundaries of African states were drawn arbitrarily by Europeans and that their basic artificiality renders the very foundations of African states inherently unstable. This argument is not without some merit, but scholars are increasingly questioning whether it can be taken as the last word on the subject.«<sup>98</sup>

But ABORNE members have seldom referred to pre-colonial African spaces and in fact focus on contemporary frontiers, migration policy and practices, as well as trafficking. They study human practices in border areas of territories defined as states, but not their creation as such.<sup>99</sup> The French network *FrontAfrique* also decided to primarily focus on colonial and post-colonial African examples, although and fortunately Camille Lefèbvre is an important exception since she chose to investigate the borders of today's Niger with a *longue durée* view from 1800 up to 1964. Studies about colonial border politics of the Hausa region have given some evidence that Africans are not and have never been passive victims of colonial activities.<sup>100</sup> But nevertheless and generally speaking, pre-colonial frontier making has – apart from Lefèbvre – not been considered a topic of research. This study assumes that there were border regimes and that knowledge circulated about what was different on each side of the frontier. The Sokoto Jihadists were of course referring to Islamic ideas of borders and space, as well as to local and regional concepts of space.

**98** Brochure of ABORNE; cf. <http://www.aborne.org/fileadmin/PDFs/ESF-ABORNE-Brochure-Final.pdf> (30.06.2014).

**99** An exception to this is the Colonial impact on borders; cf. Asiwaju / Nugent (eds.): *African Boundaries*, part 1 (pp. 19–84).

**100** Cf. for example Mahamane: *The Place of Islam*.

In the field of Islamic Studies, spatial orders and concepts were seldom taken as an approach to study either the past or the present.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, Islamic literature contains marvelous essays on world geography and the geography of the hereafter, or more precisely the connecting links (bridges, mountains) between the two worlds. Furthermore, Islamic frontier societies created an all-embracing frontier culture (see subchapter IV.5.5). Jean Schmitz proposed that the Islamic frontier towns in West African history also politically produced new African societies. And yet another aspect of Muslim frontier culture was the hijra concept, meaning to escape from a non-Islamic state into the periphery in order to create a new political entity. By the way, Schmitz expressed severe doubts on the specific Africanness of Kopytoff's internal frontier theory, because all Islamic concepts of the frontier would perfectly fit his analysis.<sup>102</sup> But this present study disregards the question ›what‹ a frontier is or could be for the historian, and instead investigates the Jihadist definitions of borders and the political power drawn from mental bordering processes.

Another task of this study is to consider migration – both migratory concepts and practices – in the Sokoto Jihad. Mass movements – whether as a consequence of the slave trade, voluntary migration or pastoral lifestyles – are still debated in African history at various conferences. Toyin Falola's yearly conferences on African history at Austin, Texas (USA) have recently highlighted topics such as urban spaces, diaspora spaces, movements, migration and displacement.<sup>103</sup> And in 2014, the Italian African Studies Association ASAI (*Associazione Italiana per gli Studi Africani*) held its meeting at Macerata under the title »Africa in Motion« (Ital. »Africa in Movimento«). One of its panels explicitly discussed the topic »Exodus: Migration of Humans, Ideas, and Texts in Sub-Saharan Africa«.<sup>104</sup> It was especially anthropologists highlighting aspects of migration in Africa. And from anthropology the idea is adap-

**101** I want to express sincere thanks to Prof. Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf for her advice on this question in Arabic and Islamic Studies. Cf. her milestone article on spaces of memory and commemoration id.: Palästinensische Repräsentationen des Raums.

**102** Schmitz: *L'Internal African Frontier* (1987) d'Igor Kopytoff.

**103** The author participated at the 2013 conference on »Social Movements, Religion and Political Expression in Africa«. The paper is published in an edited volume; cf. Zehnle: *From Mount Sinai to the Hausa Savanna*.

**104** See <http://cirafrica.unimc.it/it/eventi/conferenza-biennale-asai.-africa-in-movimento> (07.08.2014).

ted that the migratory practices during the Jihad *and* the commemoration of migrants before the Jihad are of entangled significance, in particular with their impact on the formation of Jihadist identities.

The making of Jihadist spaces includes various areas of life – from architecture and building construction to forced migration. But all these aspects share the factor by which they were generated or shaped: (anti-)Jihadist warfare. From its very beginning, the Jihad was set up as a military movement that involved several practices of warfare. It started with a »guerilla«<sup>105</sup> warfare style using small troops; when establishing a territorial state, warfare shifted towards organized battles between two armies; and beyond the frontier, small-scale military looting expeditions were very common. Several historical studies have already dealt with spaces from a military point of view. While rather conservative books just summarize and compare findings of specialized empirical studies on African warfare,<sup>106</sup> a new approach to military history was undertaken by the British historian Richard J. Reid. Like his predecessors, Reid analyzes warfare within a broader spatial framework of climatic and topographic factors. The Tsetse fly affected the location of cavalry warfare, and forested areas were accordingly characterized by another culture of warfare than desert or savanna areas. On the other hand, he emphasizes that wars have also shaped African landscapes, when for example warfare led to fortification and militarization (cf. chapter IV.5.5).<sup>107</sup> But different landscapes do not just modify warfare culture due to their physical characteristics. Landscapes had to be imagined, ordered, and judged by Jihadists before adjusting their mode of violence. It will be argued in this study that forests, rivers (Niger, Benue, Chari etc.), and mountains (Mandara) of the southern Caliphate frontier were at first imagined spaces of Jihadist geographies and only afterwards became venues of warfare (see chapter IV.5.4). According to Reid, much military violence in pre-colonial Africa was especially aimed at the control of cultivated land and water resources.<sup>108</sup> And although water was a major factor in Jihadist warfare strategy and routes, the decision was never taken to start a

**105** Smaldone: Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate, p. 34. Smaldone also called the early Jihadist military a »raiding citizen army«; cf. *ibid.*, p. 128.

**106** Cf. Thornton: Warfare in Atlantic Africa.

**107** Reid: Warfare in African History, p. 3.

**108** *Ibid.*, p. 5.



war as a result of a dangerous lack of water. On the contrary, warfare often restricted the access to water for both the migrating military soldiers in an unknown area and the attacked and expelled refugees. The Sokoto Jihad featured some battles of a larger extent that included at least several hundred soldiers on both sides. But the common feature of Jihadist violence on the *longue durée* can rather be seen in »raiding wars«, as Reid calls most of traditional African warfare. Small and mobile groups of soldiers attacked small villages and captured goods, killed the men and took women and children as slaves. This ›traditional‹ mode of warfare faced dramatic change throughout the »long nineteenth« century.<sup>109</sup> The Sokoto military was professionalized and, for example, equipped with firearms and horses. And when their military faced ›traditional‹ warfare in its southern regions, the outcome of this asymmetric warfare was extreme and cruel violence.

Yet a broad field of research has for long been dedicated to the many interrelations of travel, mobility and the history of Islam. »The subject of Muslim travel is unexpectedly complex.« This is how the Islamic studies scholars Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori started their preface.<sup>110</sup> And with reference to the different articles following in the book, they soon summarize this topic with the term »ambiguous«. Upon exactly this term, the German researcher on the history of Islam, Thomas Bauer, has ordered his theory of the ambiguity of Islam in its cultural meanings.<sup>111</sup> Islamic influence on traveling is of multilayer character. First of all the belief in certain religious duties motivates Muslims to head for certain locations – Mecca and Medina of course being the most important ones. But bearing in mind the results of the *spatial turn* and the perception of space, traveling is also a journey of the mind and the imaginary sphere. The various modes of Muslim traveling, such as pilgrimages or hijras and the like, »obviously constitute physical movement from one place to another, but, owing to the power of religious imagination, they involve spiritual or temporal movement at the same time.«<sup>112</sup> And there is also an imaginary

109 Ibid., pp. 16, 107.

110 Eickelman / Piscatori (eds.): *Muslim Travellers*, p. xii.

111 Thomas Bauer is interpreting the history of conflicts in which Islam has been involved as a struggle about the dimension of tolerance applied to the ambiguity of Islam. Cf. Bauer: *Die Kultur der Ambiguität*.

112 Eickelman / Piscatori: *Muslim Travellers*, p. xii.

component when it comes to the more or less fixed concepts of home, transit spaces and destination. For home is a precarious entity, a fact of the transient moment, and a different place when returning.<sup>113</sup> Therefore genealogical myths of Arab origin (or ›home‹) in West African societies are also part of this traveling of the mind. It is a way of expressing views of the global or at least trans-continental space. It is a method of self-positioning in the imagined world space (see chapter IV.1).

Islamic spatial concepts and practices were, of course, not limited to defining the ›self‹. Yet, communication networks established by Islam fostered the transfer of ideas from the outland about strange ›other‹ spaces; »those specific social and religious meanings created through travel [...] inspire changes in how Muslims conceive of and experience ›Islam‹ and the communities in which they live.«<sup>114</sup> And this transfer and new ideas may indeed lead to politically subversive acts and movements. Islamic travel was not necessarily restricted to religious motivations and rituals, because trading ventures or the visit of friends or relatives go along well with pilgrimage networks. Taking a closer look at the research, the field of travel in Muslim societies is tremendously under-represented considering the importance of travel concepts that are inseparable from Islam. Spatial concepts in Islam obviously are centered on Mecca, which Muslims face when praying and head for as pilgrims. The Holy Cities Mecca and Medina are probably the only constant territorial spots, while political or academic Islamic centers may come and go. However, it is worth noting that Islamic spaces are arranged with multiple centers and peripheries. Actually the term »periphery« may at once come up when discussing Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa. While the view of Arab Muslims on West African fellow believers will not be part of this study, it will of course investigate how and where the Sokoto Jihadists located themselves in terms of geographies of centers and peripheries.

The territories influenced by Islam have been multi-ethnic, even before the era of Islamic expansion in the seventh century. What is striking about this diverse area is its relative limitation to common climatic zones called the *great (semi-)arid zone* of Africa and Asia. Contemporary

113 Cf. for example Baumann / Rossdal / Weise / Zehnle (eds.): »Habt euch müde schon geflogen?«

114 Eickelman / Piscatori: *Social Theory in the Study of Muslim Societies*, p. 3.

monographies about the History of Islam have stressed that all Islamized lands faced water shortage as a problematic factor that led to certain cultural habits in order to survive as a human society. The Sahel region, where the Sokoto Jihad was mainly fought, must also be considered as belonging to this semi-arid savanna zone. And as we will see, many Sokoto Jihadists picked out the lack or abundance of water as a topic in metaphorical poems or prose texts. This lack of water resources in the Islamic world was also handled by the use of camels for traveling and transportation of goods. It is however a truism to mention that camels can travel far distances in deserts when only drinking every couple of days. But it is much less a platitude to recall the sensitivity of camel feet when walking on cold or rough and uneven ground. During the process of Islamization, Muslim military units usually used camels and therefore focused on the expansion along arid and plain lands of Syria, Persia and North Africa. The British Orientalist Adam J. Silverstein has derived from this mode of expansion that hills and mountains have always remained places of withdrawal and retreat for those fleeing from Islamic expansion.<sup>115</sup> But bearing in mind that the sources about this time of Islamic expansion were mainly authored by Muslims, we may well turn this argument around: Because Muslim forces with their camels and a very fast and mobile way of warfare avoided mountains and instead focused on the surrounding plains, mountain inhabitants usually did not intensify contacts with Muslim societies. Criticizing Silverstein and inverting his argument can be appropriate when re-reading Edward Said. Said had explained that societies have notoriously imagined boundaries and called people beyond this line »barbarians« and »unbelievers« without ever including their point of view.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, mountains were much less ›colonized‹ by escaping anti-Islamic parties and it is much more plausible that they were seldom directly Islamized by traders and preachers due to their exclusion from Islamic networks. To some extent, this process of Islamization was repeated in the Sokoto wars when mobile soldiers on horseback perceived remote areas with hilly topography and forest vegetation as strange, dangerous and wild.

**115** Silverstein: *Islamische Geschichte*, p. 14. The original English text has been published in 2010 under the title *Islamic History. A very Short Introduction*.

**116** Said: *Orientalisierung des Orients*, p. 263.

Spatial concepts also have been at the very center of the theory of Jihad. Deriving from the Arabic verb *jahhada*,<sup>117</sup> »jihad« originally means »endeavor« or »effort« and has usually been applied in religious contexts. The term is, however, ambiguous: On the one hand, it may describe the so-called »greater« jihad which refers to an inner, spiritual and personal effort for the attainment of moral perfection. On the other hand, the »lesser« jihad characterizes the physical and military effort in support of any expansion or defense of Islam. In the history of Islam the second notion has in general been the dominant one,<sup>118</sup> whereas Sufi brotherhoods stress the mental jihad. Although the Sokoto Jihadists were strongly influenced by Sufi teachers of their time, in their texts they used the term »jihad« in a strictly military sense just like classical treatises of Islamic jurisprudence (Arab. *fiqh*) do. And in this context of the »lesser« jihad, the meaning is territorial. The »lesser« jihad is aimed at the territorial persistence and expansion of Islam. Usually this religious and military division of the land was only addressed in texts or oral literature, and not on maps drawn by Islamic scholars. In the past, the written word, rather than drawings, was the medium used to express Islamic concepts of space. And only very recently, international (or even »Western«) fighters of the IS Jihadist rebels have started to apply maps as a propaganda medium, by which they express the wish and will to (re)conquer all countries that had been Islamized at any historical time: On one of their maps, all West Africa is considered as »Maghreb« destined to form one large emirate in their Caliphate.<sup>119</sup>

Islamic intellectual history has molded various sacred cartographical concepts in different literary fields. This partition and classification of space have led to certain rules of behavior for those people living in them. Ordered around the Kaaba in Saudi Arabian Mecca as its very center, the world is in principle divided into two spheres. This classification along religious attributes includes people (believers, unbelievers, sinners, blessed, tolerated etc.) and zones of territory alike. In this system that had evolved in the era of medieval Islam, God is bound to

117 Arab. جهاد.

118 Tyan: *Djihad*, pp. 538–540.

119 Cf. an ISIS utopian world map of 2014, <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2014/07/03/why-is-the-media-taking-these-isis-world-domina/199984> (09.08.2014).

a territory. This view is expressed in the concept of the *Dar al-Islam* (›Land of Islam‹) which characterizes a country or area ruled by any Muslim political-religious elite. Its antonym is the *Dar al-Harb* (›Land of War‹) describing a land governed by non-Muslims. Due to this metaphor of warfare, every land outside Islamic countries has been called a ›war zone‹. On the other hand, the ›Land of Islam‹ is often called the ›Land of Peace‹ (*Dar as-Salam*), so that Islamic scholars played with the common linguistic origin of both terms »peace« (*salam*) and »Islam«. From the religious status and the place of abode certain rights and duties are derived. Believers in Islam are asked to leave the ›Land of War‹ whenever possible and escape to Islamic countries for permanent settlement. Non-Muslims on the other hand shall be either forced to convert, be expelled or be tolerated in exchange for a special tax – depending on the school of religious exegesis and their religious affiliation category (Jewish, Christian or other).<sup>120</sup> The territorial concept outlined here does not rely on Koran extracts, although the majority of Muslim jurists have supported this idea with reference to collections of sayings and acts ascribed to Prophet Muhammad – the so called Hadiths. Beyond the use of the terms »jihad« and »harb« for certain kinds of warfare, the word »futih« can also mean conquest by warfare. The original meaning of »futih« is »opening« and in a metaphorical sense it describes the »occasions when God helped the believers to ›open‹ or conquer a given territory for the imposition of divine law and Islamic rule.«<sup>121</sup>

Islamic laws or conventions of war are exactly based upon this partition of territory. While every military act against the ›Land of Islam‹ is considered a common war, violent acts against the ›Land of War‹ are considered a religious jihad. Jihad wars are therefore the only military ventures that are legitimized by Islamic laws: Muslims are not permitted to attack each other at all, and each war led by ›unbelievers‹ against Muslims is illegal anyway. But this definition of a Muslim is in practical constitutional law dependent on the individual's place of residence in either the ›Land of Islam‹ or beyond its borders. Spatial concepts are thus crucial for all military theory of Jihad.

120 Abel: *Dar al-Islam*, pp. 127–128.

121 Donner: *The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War*, p. 50.

The Sokoto Jihadists at first defined their home region in West Africa as ›Land of War‹ by declaring the rulers of the various city states ›unbelievers‹. According to the Jihadists, these rulers were tyrants as they allegedly mixed Islam and local beliefs, especially when it came to representations of power in rituals and festivals. These regional elites, however, perceived themselves as Muslims whose subjects were much less and very slowly educated in Islam. Via the trans-Saharan long-distance trade routes West Africans had been in contact with Islamic knowledge and rituals from at least the ninth century onwards. Thus North African traders stayed at royal courts of the Empires of the Sahel and became influential figures and secretaries or counselors among the local elites because of their skill in reading and writing Arabic. Throughout these so called West African Middle Ages, it was most notably traders and the political elites which were perceived as Muslims. Notwithstanding this, their religious duties could also include rituals beyond Islam.<sup>122</sup> Islamic reform movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were therefore geared to fight this inconsistent behavior of their rulers who combined different religious roles. These reform movements usually were not executed as external conquests but rather as revolting attacks from within a region. As a result, concepts of the enemy and the enemy territory had to be developed and propagated during the Jihad of Sokoto. The question of either belonging to the ›Dar al-Islam‹ or the ›Dar al-Harb‹ was not obvious outside the Jihadist elite.

But prior to any legitimate Islamic jihad stands the hijra movement. The verb *hajara*,<sup>123</sup> from which hijra is derived, literally means to emigrate, separate or keep away from somewhere or someone.<sup>124</sup> But hijra usually is used in the context of Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina in 622, respectively the first year of the Muslim calendar. There have indeed been some Muslims more or less voluntarily migrating from Mecca to other places in Arabia and Abyssinia before Muhammad led his followers to Medina. Especially the group of about eighty Muslims taking shelter in Abyssinia was commemorated by the

122 See for example Levtzion: Ancient Ghana and Mali; Lange: Ancient Kingdoms of West Africa.

123 Arab. هجر.

124 Cf. Cowan: Arab-English Dictionary, p. 1194.

Sokoto Jihadists as a proto-hijra migrant community.<sup>125</sup> But while the first migrants had no official representatives for diplomatic negotiations, the Prophet Muhammad was accompanied by his counselors who signed treaties with the inhabitants of Medina to welcome, protect and defend Muslims against Mecca military aggression in advance. Some men were migrating together with their families, and women reportedly were among the first to swear allegiance to the Medina treaties. This claim of women being capable of holding rights is also expressed in the Koran.<sup>126</sup> As stressed by Masud, this migration broke all ›blood‹ ties and formed new communities – including new lines of inheritance custom and law: »Hijra thus meant to abandon one’s property and relations in order to support the nascent community of Muslims in Medina.«<sup>127</sup> Any refusal to follow the call for emigration at the same time meant to indirectly support the Muslims’ enemies. This is addressed explicitly in the Koran: »And those who believed afterwards [after the initial emigration] and emigrated and fought with you, they are of you.«<sup>128</sup> But »hijra« expresses both meanings in the Koran, that of physical or political distancing from whatever is to be defined as evil. The word appears in different Koranic contexts but often is found together with jihad. However, the Koran clearly asks all believers to leave the enemy country and gather in diaspora for a jihad:

»Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and lives in the cause of Allah and those who gave shelter and aided, they are allies of one another. But those who believed and did not emigrate, for you there is no guardianship of them [...].«<sup>129</sup>

**125** This sequence is for example part of a poem composed by Muhammad Tukur in the early Jihad years; later to be translated from Fulfulde to Hausa by Nana Asmau. Cf. id.: Begore, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 104.

**126** »O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not associate anything with Allah, nor will they steal, nor will they commit unlawful sexual intercourse, nor will they kill their children, nor will they bring forth a slander they have invented between their arms and legs, nor will they disobey you in what is right, then accept their pledge and ask forgiveness for them from Allah« (Koran 60,12).

**127** Masud, Muhammad Khalid: The Obligation to emigrate. The Doctrine of hijra in Islamic Law, in: Eickelman / Piscatori (eds.): Muslim Travellers, p. 31.

**128** Koran 8,75.

**129** Koran 8,72.

While this Koran quotation is basically reflecting the Hijra of Mohammed and the Muslim community to Medina, another extract generalizes the aspect of emigration as an effect of political persecution:

»Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves; [the angels] will say, ›In what [condition] were you?‹ They [the dead] will say, ›We were oppressed in the land.‹ The angels will say, ›Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?‹ For those, their refuge is hell and evil it is the destination.«<sup>130</sup>

Migration was thus always dictated as an option for Muslim communities which could become obligatory. Those who refused to emigrate were excluded from the Muslim status in both earthly and heavenly life. And from its origin in Islamic contexts, hijra has been connected to warfare as a means of defense and mobilization. But scholars of Islam at different times have not agreed on whether the hijra remained a religious duty even after the establishment of one ›Land of Islam‹. Since Mecca became part of Muslim territory in 630 a discussion arose whether hijra was only the unique migration from Mecca to Medina. It was answered pointing to the process of decline of the ›Land of Islam‹ and how exactly authorities should treat those who had stayed behind and refused migration.<sup>131</sup> Some Hadiths indicate that Prophet Muhammad had claimed the hijra to be a singular historical event of migration from Mecca to Medina that could not be repeated. According to the Persian scholar Al-Bukhari (810–870) it was narrated that Muhammad said »there is no Hijra after the Conquest (of Mecca), but Jihad and good intention remain; and if you are called (by the Muslim ruler) for fighting, go forth immediately.«<sup>132</sup> In another Hadith of this collection, close relatives of Muhammad told some scholars that

**130** Koran 4,97.

**131** In the twelfth century Muslim frontier zones were captured by Christian armies so that the question came up whether the Muslim inhabitants of those areas were supposed to immediately migrate to Islamic state territory. Many jurists asked those Muslims to practice a hijra while others claimed that in those cases staying might serve the universal Islamic goals better.

**132** Khan (ed.): *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 4, p. 35.



»today there is no (hijrah) emigration. A believer used to run away with his religion to Allah and His Apostle lest he should be put to trial because of his religion. Today Allah has made Islam triumphant, and today a believer can worship his Lord wherever he likes. But the deeds that are still rewardable (in place of emigration) are Jihad and good intentions.«<sup>133</sup>

Obviously the hijra duty of migration was interpreted differently, depending on the contemporary situation of Muslims and Islamic statehood at a certain time. Yet, at a very early stage of the history of Islam, revolts and sectarian movements occurred throughout the seventh and eighth centuries. In this period the complex territorial terms *Dar al-Kufr* (›Land of Unbelief‹) and *Dar al-Sulh* (›Land of Truce‹) were brought into discussion and the hijra concept was applied to it as well. Many Muslim jurists argued that any inner alienation from unbelieving rulers was obligatory for all Muslim individuals, whereas the duty to migrate was a collective one only. Mystic Sufi scholars have obviously embraced the individual duty of hijra. Successful court jurists in general supported the hijra concept as a mental construction in order not to oppose their rulers. Along with the experience of consolidating frontiers, the ›Land of Unbelief‹ was rather a buffer area for regular raiding expeditions rather than an enemy state of comparable status: »Usually the territories bordering *Dar al-Islam* were *Dar al-Kufr*, against which the rulers were urged to wage Jihad at least once a year.«<sup>134</sup> The ›Land of War‹ lacked Islam, but not statehood, while in the ›Land of Unbelief‹ both characteristics were allegedly absent. And this study will show that the territory of the »Kufr« was also adapted as a scheme by the Sokoto Jihadists.

Interestingly enough, the term hijra was soon applied for Arab Bedouin nomads in order to motivate them to settle in permanent towns. Mobile lifestyle in the Umayyid period (661–750) was stigmatized as backward and pre-Islamic behavior, and sedentarization was appreciated as progressive. Nomads were considered as potential rebels not to be controlled as sedentary citizens by any government. In the centuries of Islamic expansion, the original Hijra lost its topicality and the duty

133 Ibid., vol. 5, p. 155. See also in *ibid.*: »There is no more Hijrah (migration) after the Conquest of Mecca.«

134 Masud: *The Obligation to Emigrate*, p. 36.

to migrate was considered a matter of sedentarization when nomadic groups settled in emerging towns.<sup>135</sup> Some Muslim scholars would also add that any persecution, disease, famine and the like were legitimate reasons for emigration in the sense of a hijra. To summarize Masud's explanations on hijra, its meaning has shifted »from movement to settlement, from physical movement to spiritual and mental withdrawal, and from movement to Muslim territory to residence in Western countries«<sup>136</sup> for the purpose of missionary work. There was a remarkable shift of the »hijra« meaning by the Sokoto Jihadists from the duty to migrate towards a territory mentally conceptualized as the ›Land of Islam‹ from the ›Land of Unbelief‹ without ever referring to the ›Land of War‹.<sup>137</sup> The tremendous relevance of the Hijra was inscribed into Islamic history when the calculation of times until today was fixed on the basis of the Hijra migration. And although the Sokoto Jihadists in general dated their texts by applying the standard Muslim calendar, they did at times and preferably in poems use their own Hijra of 1804 as a starting point of time in order to give a chronology of their wars and rule.

The process of making Jihadist spaces requires studying spatial contexts on various levels. Those include ideological ideas of territory, perceptions of topography, climate, flora and fauna, as well as social and religious concepts and practices. The general spatial Jihadist discourses are examined with particular attention paid to the transfer of spatial knowledge from classical Islamic literature to the Sokoto Jihadist philosophy of space. The primary focus is then directed to the mobile actors in the Jihad and the early Sokoto Caliphate, who created, linked and experienced spaces actively: Ancestral travelers and migrants in the Jihadist historical consciousness, pilgrims, professional travelers, Fulbe and Tuareg ›nomads‹, and mobile actors involved in Jihadist warfare.

**135** See also on the role of sedentism in the Sokoto Jihad chapter IV.4.2.

**136** Masud: *The Obligation to Emigrate*, p. 45.

**137** Id.: *Shehu Usuman dan Fodio's Restatement of the Doctrine of Hijrah*, p. 60.

## 2. Primary Sources: Cautions and Contexts

The primary sources that bear information about the Sokoto Jihad are stunningly voluminous compared to other pre-colonial African regions, although the Central Sahel was not a permanent residence for European Christian missionaries or traders as, for example, the Atlantic coast of West Africa was. But some ›explorers‹<sup>1</sup> did visit the Caliphate from different directions and with diffuse intentions. Their background and the general contexts of nineteenth century travel writing will be discussed briefly in the first sub-chapters, though only the most important explorers can be portrayed here.<sup>2</sup> Very fortunately, the Jihadists were themselves dedicated writers and even used written essays and letters as propaganda media. But their individual biographies, as well as the language and literary form they chose, substantially dictated to a large extent what and how the Jihadists composed. The most influential Jihadist figures and their intellectual heirs will be presented in the latter sections of this chapter. But the structure of this section is not meant to imply that the different writers of the sources and their various methods of knowledge procurement were not interrelated. European explorers were, for example, given copies of Jihadist literature as presents, which they took home and had translated and published by Arabist linguists. Nevertheless, the diverse backgrounds of the authors make it advisable to treat them in separate chapters.

1 The term ›explorer‹ is defined as a pre-colonial traveler in Africa, who was – to some extent – motivated by ›scientific‹ goals, and not only colonial or trade interests. I acknowledge that they usually discovered only what was already known to local population. But their impetus and habitus in the first half of the nineteenth century clearly distinguished them from traders or missionaries of their time. Therefore, the expression ›explorer‹ will henceforth be used without quotation marks.

2 Other European writers will be introduced when their sources are discussed or quoted.

## 2.1 *European Explorers in the Central Sahel*

Throughout the nineteenth century, several European explorers traveled to the Sokoto Caliphate and produced large amounts of journals and travel accounts, both published and unpublished. These self-appointed pioneers either entered the Caliphate from the Sahara in the north or from the Niger and Benue rivers by boat from the Atlantic coast in the south. The Saharan routes were the first to be explored, and the Scotsman Mungo Park (1771–1806) was the first European to enter the Caliphate territory right after the start of the Jihad wars. His first journey (1795–1797) was financed by the African Association<sup>3</sup> and his second journey (1805–1806) was subsidized directly by the British government. On his first journey, Park managed to reach the Niger River in Mali and then returned to Britain.<sup>4</sup> Assuming that the Niger and the Congo were one and the same river,<sup>5</sup> Mungo Park set out on his second journey in order to investigate the course of the Niger from Mali downwards. But his official task was to explore uncolonized African territory for further British colonial ventures. Under unsettled circumstances – there are legends about local warrior attacks or dangerous natural cataracts on the Niger River – Park’s vessel sank close to the village Bussa and his diary was lost. Mungo Park’s death and the destiny of his lost papers occupied his European successors for decades.<sup>6</sup>

The next British explorer in this area was another Scotsman: Hugh Clapperton (1788–1827).<sup>7</sup> His first journey to West Africa (1821–1825) was organized by the British Royal Marine and Clapperton only accompanied Walter Oudney and Lieutenant Dixon Denham. After Oud-

3 The British predecessor of the famous Royal Geographical Society (founded 1831).

4 Park: *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*. Cf. Lupton: *Mungo Park the African Traveler*.

5 The tribulations to locate the Niger geographically are further analyzed in this study with regard to Arabic medieval geographies which were quoted by the Sokoto Jihadists. But they usually confused the Niger and the Nile.

6 Mungo Park was also portrayed in fictional works, cf. Boyle: *Water Music*.

7 The accounts of the first journey were published together with Oudney’s and Denham’s papers as *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa* (London 1826); the diaries of the second journey were published post-mortem in the *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo* (London 1829).

ney's death, Denham entered Baguirmi and Mandara while Clapperton managed to enter Sokoto alone. Clapperton started his second journey (1825–1827) as the leader of the expedition from the Atlantic coast. He visited Sokoto and tried to proceed to Bornu, but was prevented doing so by the Sokoto Sultan Muhammad Bello. Clapperton died near the Caliphate capital, probably due to malaria. His young companion Richard Lemon Lander (1804–1834) survived and returned to the Atlantic coast. Lander proceeded with the Niger expeditions, and in 1830 he traveled up that river and its feeder river Benue together with his brother John.<sup>8</sup> Funded by Liverpool merchants, Richard Lander led a second expedition up the Niger in 1832. But since many personnel died and Lander was attacked with a musket, the group failed to reach Bussa and returned to the Atlantic, where Lander died from his severe musket wounds.

Several British Niger expeditions were then organized with political, missionary, and abolitionist goals, but most of them gave up due to deaths caused by diseases. The Niger expedition of 1841, for example, was equipped with three steamers and more than 150 European travelers on board. Among the travelers was the Sierra Leone Creole Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (ca. 1809–1891).<sup>9</sup> He had himself been a victim of a Sokoto Jihadist war expedition in Yoruba in 1821, when he was enslaved as a young boy by mounted Jihadist soldiers. He ended up as a freed slave in Sierra Leone and started an impressive career at the *Church Missionary Society* before becoming the first Anglican Bishop of Nigeria. In his autobiographical accounts, Crowther addresses his enslavement at approximately twelve years of age with plaintive literary language. To him, this day was »unhappy« because he was separated from his family, while on the other hand it was »blessed«, because on that very day he escaped »heathenism«.<sup>10</sup> He described his Jihadist enslavers as aggressive and notorious human traffickers who had themselves once been enslaved in the north, traded southwards and finally escaped their southern owners. When his Yoruba home town Osogun was attacked by the Oyo Jihadists, the mounted soldiers allegedly captured the running refugees with lassos.

8 Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, 2 vols.

9 Crowther / Schön: *Journals of James Frederick Schön and Samuel Crowther*.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 372.

Another contemporary witness of the Sokoto Caliphate was Heinrich (or: Henry) Barth (1821–1865). Coming from Hamburg, Barth studied ancient philology, history and geography in Berlin where he submitted his dissertation on the ancient Mediterranean region. After traveling across the aforementioned region, he qualified as a professor but was not offered employment. Like ancient and medieval scholars, Barth was both a geographer and a historian. Barth grew up in the Prussian academic culture but being frustrated by his hopeless situation at university, he accepted the offer to participate in a scientific expedition organized by the British *Royal Geographical Society*. From 1849 to 1855 he traveled from Tripolis to Lake Chad, along the Benue and the Niger to Timbuktu, and then back to Tripolis. Since the expedition leader James Richardson and the geologist Adolf Overweg had died in the Lake Chad area, Heinrich Barth proceeded alone<sup>11</sup> and became the only European expedition member who was able to report about the results. Barth's travel accounts were published in five extensive volumes of about 3,500 pages and were written in an academic style, rather than in the style of the more popular adventure stories of Africa exploration.<sup>12</sup> At the same time that Barth entered the Sokoto Caliphate from the Sahara, the explorer and medical doctor William Balfour Baikie (1825–1864) set out for his first Niger expedition with the British Royal Navy from the delta 250 miles upstream. He explored the Benue as well. The attempt to undertake a second voyage on the Niger failed in 1857, but at the Benue-Niger confluence Baikie built up a trading settlement for the British. He published his narrative of this expedition in 1856.<sup>13</sup>

All of these travelers had a keen interest in African geography, trade and culture for various reasons, ranging from abolitionist to scientific to colonial concerns. Therefore, each one of them had his own spatial concept in mind, adapted it to his experience while traveling, and finally merged it into European cartography and media on Africa.<sup>14</sup> But

**11** He proceeded without any European companions, but of course with African translators, servants and porters.

**12** Barth: *Reisen und Entdeckungen*, 5 vols.; id.: *Travels and Discoveries*, 5 vols., London 1857/8.

**13** Baikie: *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage*.

**14** While Schön and Crowther used local names for most places, Baikie studied the maps drawn by his predecessors and recognized important landscape features

their retrospective roles in the construction of geographic knowledge of Africa have been discussed elsewhere and will thus not be the primary topic of this study.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, these travel accounts contain many African voices that could otherwise never be consulted. The Sokoto Jihadist elite,<sup>16</sup> for example, in their writings would only refer to members of the elite and famous contemporary figures – such as hajj travelers and Islamic teachers. They silenced the voices of the common slaves, of petty traders, of ordinary farmers, of most of their enemies. The sources of European travelers can thus serve as a corrective to some Jihadist propagandistic literature. These explorers were, of course, living in their own *travelerscape* and were often not able to fully understand the complex social structures of the societies they had entered. Their view usually ended where the trade and pilgrimage networks ended, and what they experienced was to a large degree ›gossip‹ and information from the world of long-distance trade. Yet, although being limited by their own notions of landscape and African societies, they transferred local knowledge into written accounts. In many regards, these writings are testaments to the misunderstandings arising in a precarious knowledge transfer process. But comparing these accounts with Jihadist sources can contribute to a multilayer portrait of Jihadist spatial politics and the impact of Jihadist wars on local societies in terms of migration and kidnapping.

The Jihadists observed and remembered any European caravan entering their territory, but they did not consider them dangerous immediately, but rather as chances to communicate with other states. They perceived these travelers as Christians and did not pay extraordinary attention to nationalities and names. The Sokoto Court of Sultan Bello was, for example, aware of the journey undertaken by Mungo Park and his group down the Niger, where the remaining travelers were finally killed or drowned close to the settlement Bussa.<sup>17</sup> More than Muhammad

by English names given to them. He also proceeded with this naming process; cf. *ibid.*, p. 81.

**15** For a current dissertation on this subject see Lefèbvre: *Territoires et frontières du Soudan central*, pp. 30–64.

**16** Burnham and Last have also attempted to call the Jihadist elite an ›aristocracy‹; cf. Burnham / Last: *From Pastoralist to Politician*. They mainly referred to the study on ›Fulbe Aristocrats‹ published by Azarya: *Aristocrats Facing Change*.

**17** This story was written down in Arabic by a secretary of Sultan Bello in 1827 when Hugh Clapperton resided at the Sokoto Court. Cf. Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, pp. 333–334.

Bello, the Bornu king praised the historical friendship between »Christians« and »Muslims« and was especially pleased that the British assisted Muslim countries in the effort to defeat the French rule in Egypt. In his famous letter of 1824 addressed to the Kano Emir Ibrahim Dabo as part of the Sokoto Caliphate, the Bornu ruler informed his colleagues about the geographical research which was being attempted by the English expedition group. They allegedly

»came to the land of the Soodan for the purpose of seeing and delighting themselves with the wonders it contains, and to examine and see the lakes and rivers, and forests and deserts therein. They have been sent by their king for this purpose.«<sup>18</sup>

The style of this passage resembles the arrangement of classical Arabic geographical accounts which usually speak about »wonders« that should »please and delight« the readers (cf. chapter III.1). At the Bornu Court, the travelers were initially perceived as curious scholars exploring and documenting unknown territory on behalf of their ruler. In the letter, the English men were also called the descendants of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (ca. 575–641). Islamic legends have it that Heraclius received a letter from the Prophet Muhammad and – although being a Christian – started to support and believe in the new religion of Islam. The Bornu king chose a historical model in order to categorize the British visitors and apparently chose one that tended to protect them and consider them as Christians supporting Islam. He even repeated most of the above-mentioned arguments in another letter to Muhammad Bello, referring to the »wonders«<sup>19</sup> of Bornu, Hausa, and the whole Sudan several times. But when information about growing numbers of European explorers and merchants in West Africa reached the Bornu and Sokoto Courts, the Bornu rulers became alarmed. By the 1820s, trans-Saharan traders staying in the Hausa region for business had already spread some knowledge about Nupe (Central Nigeria) traders going to the »Great Sea« in order to exchange goods with the »Whites«.

18 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 1, p. 377.

19 Arabic عجائب.



A researcher may find even more information in unpublished diaries, letters or draft versions of texts to be published later. These sources contain written documents or drawings of the travelers.<sup>20</sup> Although some case studies were undertaken in archives which preserve unpublished pre-colonial and early colonial explorers' accounts, this study concentrates on the Jihadists and their literature. And very often the Jihadist spatial knowledge was expressed as rumor by European explorers. And rumors were in turn preferably published and not retained as secret or boring information by the explorers. They were usually eager to share it. Therefore, in most cases the published European accounts conduce to complement the Jihadist sources.

## *2.2 African Voices in European Sources*

Many European sources were not composed as travel accounts, but contained interviews with Central Sahelian travelers or slaves that were held in West Africa, North Africa, Europe or South America. They quoted West African voices quite directly and often did not translate geographical or ethnological keywords. A somewhat special and very early case is the estate of Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815), who was merely traveling in Arabia and Persia, but who was able to meet the Tripolitanian ambassador Abderrahman Aga who was visiting certain European states together with his delegation. One of the »servants« accompanying the diplomat to Europe in the 1770s was a Hausa-speaking slave. From this slave or servant as well as from the North African minister Niebuhr received some information by discussing with them in Arabic about the »interior Africa«, i.e. the Sahel and Sahara regions. Niebuhr only published the

**20** The papers of many of these travelers are located in German archives. Some, however, do not contain any more information than is to be found in the published sources – for example, in Hamburg (Staatsarchiv) Heinrich Barth's hand-written diaries are preserved which were published with much more precise descriptions. The Ethnological Museum Dahlem (Berlin) keeps the papers of Kurt Strümpell (1872–1923) who explored Northern Cameroon as a German colonial officer. These files contain the documentation of his exploration journeys (diaries and reports) and genealogical diagrams. This material thus complements his published accounts. Most importantly Strümpell: Bericht über eine Bereisung des Ostgrenzgebietes; id.: Forschungen am Nordrande des Kamerunplateaus; id.: Die Geschichte Adamaus nach mündlichen Überlieferungen.

results of this conversation some 20–30 years later on two occasions.<sup>21</sup> In a precise list of the delegation, the person of Hausa origin who was the informant of Niebuhr is mentioned among the »Drei Mohren« (»three Moors«).<sup>22</sup> Niebuhr himself stated that he had never paid any attention to black Africans in his travels across the Middle East. Due to severe prejudices, Europeans residing in Egypt would never talk to them and therefore miss their knowledge about the »interior« of Africa, Niebuhr admitted. He apologized for having thought of them as »mean and stupid people«.<sup>23</sup> But meeting Aberrahman Aga in 1772, he started to become more interested in the »Land of the Blacks« and thus had »often talked to him about the interior of Africa«.<sup>24</sup> According to Niebuhr, his informant had gained his information during his pilgrimage to Mecca and from traders of the interior since he was also a merchant.

Another European located at the interface between the common European missionary travelers belonging to an expedition group on the one hand, and European Orientalists translating texts as »armchair« linguists on the other hand, was Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle. Born in 1823 in Cleeborn (Württemberg, Germany), he was trained as a missionary in Basel and afterwards at the *Church Missionary Society* in Islington. He was ordained as a priest in 1847 and then took some lessons in Arabic at Tübingen University. Later that year Koelle arrived in Sierra Leone in order to work as a missionary.<sup>25</sup> He especially focused on the analysis and documentation of African languages in order to facilitate local missionaries' efforts. Apart from other publications on certain linguistic studies, two compilations – both being published in 1854 – are most important for this research. The first one is his so-called *Polyglotta Africana*<sup>26</sup> in which Koelle compares different African languages so as to find similarities and improve the categorization of families of language.

21 Those are Niebuhr: *Das Innere von Afrika*; id.: *Bemerkungen über Fr. Hornemann's Reisen*. I want to thank my colleague Dr. Camille Lefèbvre for her advice to explore his texts.

22 »Drei Mohren, jeder 25 Dukaten 75.« Cf. August Ludwig Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*, p. 236.

23 Niebuhr: *Das Innere von Afrika*, p. 977.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 978.

25 A biography of Koelle is provided in a reprint of the *Polyglotta* (Hair: Koelle at Freetown).

26 Koelle: *Polyglotta Africana*.

Koelle is therefore considered a pioneer of Africanist comparative linguistics. Even if the main chapters of the *Polyglotta* are of no special interest to this study, Koelle preceded his vocabulary lists with an introduction on his informants who were mostly freed slaves from all around the Atlantic and inner Africa – from Angola to Senegal – who resettled in Sierra Leone or Liberia. The German missionary interviewed them about their mother tongues, but also shortly summarized their biographies, including place of origin and individual history of enslavement. Many of these slaves originally came from the Hausa region, Bornu, Nupe, Yoruba and Cameroon, so that their accounts allow for the historical study of Jihadist enslavement from the standpoint of the victims belonging to this social group. These short accounts fortunately contain at least forty persons from the Sokoto Caliphate and its frontiers who were enslaved during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Because Koelle's antecessor had intensely studied the Hausa language,<sup>27</sup> he decided to add Kanuri linguistic studies to his work.<sup>28</sup> He edited Kanuri tales and historical accounts he was told by the Kanuri ex-slave Ali Eisami Gazir in both Kanuri and in English translation.<sup>29</sup> His informant had spent half of his life in the Central Sahel and half of it in Sierra Leone where he was interviewed by Koelle in his sixties. Koelle's informants allowedly must have been influenced by the multicultural Sierra Leonian society,<sup>30</sup> but these accounts nevertheless offer the chance to encounter a description of the Jihad years from a (temporary) slave's perspective. And Koelle was indeed very critical with his informants and rechecked places and distances while interviewing their compatriots.<sup>31</sup> The slaves weren't the ones to actually plan the routes of trafficking

27 The German missionary James Frederick Schön had for example compiled a Hausa-English dictionary this study at times refers to; Schön: Dictionary of the Hausa Language.

28 For example Koelle: Grammar of the Bornu or Kanuri Language.

29 Id.: African Native Literature. Another text dictated by Gazir was published in the Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft and seems to be quite unknown among Africanist historians; cf. Pott: Sprachen aus Afrika's Innerem und Westen.

30 Barth criticized the missionary linguists of Sierra Leone harshly for their superficial approach to languages and called their residence pejoratively the »linguistic Babel of Sierra Leone«. Cf. Barth: Sammlung und Bearbeitung Central-Afrikanischer Vokabularien, vol. 1, p. V.

31 Koelle: Polyglotta, p. V.

and the interruptions of their walks; furthermore their owners wouldn't necessarily choose the shortest route but zigzagged from market place to market place. From his experience with informants, Koelle concludes that Muslim slaves from the Sahel were in general better-informed about routes than persons from coastal areas:

»In Northern Africa, especially in Mohammedan countries, and where people are much used to travelling, the natives seem to have much correcter notions about distances than in the south, where travelling does not appear to be so common.«<sup>32</sup>

What Koelle calls »Northern Africa« in this case is not to be confused with today's North African countries because Koelle informants came from the hinterland of the Atlantic coast as well as from the Sahel regions (the various »Sudans«). He therefore called the freed slaves of Sahelian origin »North Africans«. Islam is described as a religion directly attached to mobile networks of traders and priests.<sup>33</sup>

Another interviewer and publisher of (semi-)autobiographical slave accounts in the nineteenth century was Francis De Castelnau (1810–1880).<sup>34</sup> Sent on an expedition by the French king Louis Philippe, the French zoologist traveled the Atlantic coasts of North and South America and in 1848 spent some months in Bahia, Brazil, where he interviewed slaves and freed slaves. He especially asked for itineraries, vocabularies and political processes in their regions of origin. In Bahia he was installed as French consul after the February Revolution of 1848, and then he acted as consul in Siam and Melbourne. He supervised several expeditions and sent fish collections to France. After visiting South Africa and several Asian destinations for further research, he spent the last two decades of his life in Australia where he died in 1880.<sup>35</sup> His published material on slaves contains some twenty short accounts and one more

32 Ibid., pp. V–VI.

33 Although these brief biographies contain precious information about slave experience, Koelle's collected manuscript data of about 800 pages has unfortunately not been rediscovered in the Church Missionary Society Archive (Birmingham) up to now.

34 Born in London in 1810, his proper birth name was François Louis Nompar de Caumont LaPorte, Comte de Castelnau.

35 Whitley: Francois Laporte.

detailed one.<sup>36</sup> Almost every person of this group came from either the Hausa region, Bornu or their outskirts.<sup>37</sup> They talked about the Jihad wars, how they themselves fought as soldiers against or among Jihadist armies and horror stories about non-Muslim regions from ca. 1800 up to the 1840s. From the way in which the narrations were arranged, one can easily reconstruct the list of questions with which De Castelnau addressed his informants: Where are you from (place, ethnic group, language)? Which routes did you travel in freedom or throughout enslavement? Which places have you heard of? Do you know Timbuktu? Which wars did you fight in? And finally: Have you heard about cannibals? This last query probably had only been included in his list of questions since his interview partners had often mentioned them. De Castelnau has obviously never heard of this cannibal stereotype prior to his Bahia investigations because he stated that he asked some French Arabists about this topic after returning to Paris.<sup>38</sup> Many of the individuals providing these slave narratives were enslaved right in the midst of the Jihad or in the criminal and uprooted environment of the wars. It can be assumed that many slaves were former soldiers, although the variety of informants is limited because of the slave routes in the Central Sahel: Transatlantic slavescapes only stretched to the Southern Caliphate such as the Yoruba region. Many other enslaved Hausa or Bornuese probably stayed in the Sahel or were traded to the North. African voices in European reports thus refer to traders, pilgrims, slaves, and soldiers. The European interviewers were usually not trained for this research (except for missionaries) so that the individual circumstances of their encounters will be discussed separately whenever they are quoted.

**36** Castelnau: Renseignements.

**37** For a general reflection on De Castelnau's informants in the West African slave trade of the nineteenth century; cf. O'Hear: Ilorin as a Slaving and Slave-Trading Emirate, pp. 61–62.

**38** Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 6.

### 2.3 *Oral Traditions Recorded by Colonial Officials*

Several studies on the historiography of the Sokoto Jihad and the history of its Emirates have relied on British colonial records of the Northern Nigerian Protectorate, held today in England or at various Nigerian Archives. The well-known *Gazetteers of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria* were for instance already published in the 1970s.<sup>39</sup> Such accounts by British colonial officials were composed in the early twentieth century, some one hundred years after the Jihad. Therefore, they only contain the oral heritage of the Jihad years, and not the Jihadist concepts. But for some case studies of this book it is necessary to consult local historical knowledge that was often recorded by the British colonial administration. Post-colonial transcriptions of oral traditions were all the more distant from the Jihadist mentality of the early nineteenth century. They are thus only referred to in certain cases, because they contain only scarce and reminiscent information about the Jihadist spatial concepts and territorial conquest.

Due to the late colonization of the Sokoto Caliphate by the British, Nigerian colonial records only started to be collected after 1900. Earlier edited material is often to be found in publications by German colonial officers between the 1880s and 1940s. One example is Kurt Strümpell who worked in German Cameroon between 1892 and 1917. In this period, he mostly lived in Garoua (Northern Cameroon), which formerly was part of the Adamawa Emirate under Sokoto rule.<sup>40</sup> He collected oral accounts of old Fulbe residents and also collected ethnological objects which today are held by the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin (Dahlem) and by the Städtisches Museum Braunschweig.<sup>41</sup> His translators assisted him with reading the local Arabic sources and he also quoted information given by other nineteenth century travelers such as Barth, Flegel, Passarge and Marquardsen.<sup>42</sup> But very unfortunately he never sent copies of

39 Kirk-Greene (ed.): *Gazetteers of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*, 3 vols.

40 Meyer / Schnee (eds.): *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, vol. 3, p. 430.

41 [www.smb.museum/em](http://www.smb.museum/em) (17 July 2012). Strümpell was, however, forced to transfer many of his Braunschweig objects to Berlin; cf. the list of objects in Ethnologisches Museum Dahlem (Berlin), Strümpell Papers, I/MV 0778, pp. 121–128. Among them were several Mandara weapons and musical instruments used for warfare.

42 Strümpell: *Die Geschichte Adamauas*, pp. 49–107.

text (other than Koran copies) to Europe.<sup>43</sup> Analyzing his edited material that is available in German, it is seldom obvious where to draw the line between quotations of local informants and his own – often emotional – interpretation of Fulbe history. This description of the Sokoto Jihad, for example, is typical: »In order to ignite the glimmering light and turn it into a blazing fire, only a soft breeze was needed. In the west a storm aroused. Shehu Uthmanu dan Fodio...«<sup>44</sup>

Apart from the many European officials entering West Africa in an obvious context of colonization, there were more or less »scientific« expeditions during which oral source material was collected through interviews with local informants. One of those expeditions was led by the French explorer and member of the French Academy of Sciences: Jean Auguste Marie Tilho (1875–1956). From 1899 to 1902 he led his first expedition on the Middle Niger. Then continuing from 1902 to 1905, he served in measuring and fixing borders between the British Protectorate and French West African colonies. Afterwards he revisited his explorations in the Lake Chad region and some West African plateaus. His results were published in a voluminous collection of essays by different members of this »Tilho Mission(s)«.<sup>45</sup> Summing up the oral traditions recorded by colonial officials, the collected information was often re-narrated in a manner that served to legitimize colonialism. Local Muslim elites that were considered allies were portrayed very benevolently in the historical accounts of the colonial officers while other social groups were presented as being racially inferior. Because of this bias and the regular modifications which occur in handling such oral material, these oral traditions will appear as sources only in exceptional cases in order to make arcane written narratives plausible.

43 Ethnologisches Museum Dahlem (Berlin), Strümpell Papers, I/MV 0778, p. 122+9.

44 Strümpell: *Geschichte Adamauas*, p. 56.

45 Tilho (ed.): *Documents scientifiques*, 3 vols.

### ***2.4 Jihadist Literature (Arabic, Fulfulde, Hausa)***

The core of the primary sources referred to in this study clearly is original Jihadist literature. Most of the Sokoto Jihadists were devoted authors and readers and because of the continuous power of the Sokoto scholarly politicians, many Jihadist texts were retained in West African archives. The Jihadist source material is divided into three language groups: Arabic, Fulfulde and Hausa. The Sokoto Caliphate was a multilingual state and many of its texts have been translated several times from the Jihad epoch up to now. Argungu called the Sokoto language policy pyramidal: On top of it there was Arabic, the language of Islam as the language chosen for classical Arabic genres of literature. On the bottom were Fulfulde and Hausa texts which were intended to educate the masses in a more popular manner.<sup>46</sup>

With regard to the Jihadist literary activity – some Sokoto authors composed hundreds of essays and poems – there is no lack of Jihadist sources from a quantitative standpoint. On a qualitative level, however, there is to some extent a lack of different text genres. Especially the Arabic Jihadist texts tend to follow the stylistic rules of their role models brought to the Sahel from North Africa. The classical Arabic genres were imitated, such as poems for the Prophet Muhammad, judicial and instructive treatises, geographical accounts, or summaries of famous commentaries, Koran extracts or Hadith sayings. Islamic texts among the Arabic literature served as models to be studied before junior scholars went on to compile and create their own texts. These practices represented the Jihadist ideal that any Islamic act was no more than an act of imitation of what Islam asked its believers to do and what other Muslim individuals had already done before them. Fortunately, the Fulfulde and Hausa texts genres differed substantially from the Arabic books.

The texts were usually written on imported paper material that was often washed and reused as pages for new texts. Larger sheets were efficiently used for four smaller pages each (back and front of the sheet). The sheets were folded in the middle and thus were stored and used as a book. At times a leather envelope protected the books, for example for Koran copies taken on a trip. For practicing Arabic and learning the

46 Cf. Argungu: *The Linguistic Activities*, p. 4.



Koran by heart, students used rewritable wooden or copper boards. In the pre-colonial Sahel, scholars usually relied on imported paper from Italy or the Ottoman Empire which was traded via North Africa. The Italian »Tre lune« watermark was the most accepted proof of high quality, so that Ottoman manufacturers also applied it on their paper.<sup>47</sup> Hausa scholars usually bought paper in Bornu where it was sold at the markets. In Jihadist sources the origin or shops where the paper came from is not mentioned, although the Sokoto scholars were aware of the Ottoman African dominions in the Sudan.<sup>48</sup> Murray Last has analyzed the average speed of writing of the Sokoto authors; they themselves seldom mention the exact period of writing. According to Last it took Uthman dan Fodio some seventeen days for the composition of twenty-one folios of a text referring to a prior composition.<sup>49</sup>

Unfortunately, there are no written Jihadist sources covering legal accounts on land transaction or other treaties. Furthermore, there are – with only few exceptions – no private letters or notes on commercial matters or caravan trade. In Sudan, for example, many private merchants' libraries have been discovered, which contain notes, letters and treaties.<sup>50</sup> In archives of the former Sokoto Caliphate there are no texts as evidence for either ownership of land, houses, slaves or other ›goods‹. The reason for this lack of secular sources might be that the texts that have survived were considered more precious. The writers were Islamic scholars and politicians who appreciated Islamic prose and poetry authored by their own elite and endeavored to ensure that such material was preserved.

Most of the Jihadist texts exist in several copies spread across West African, North American, and European archives. Many manuscript texts have already been edited (in Arabic) and sometimes have been translated and commented by researchers. And of course all editors, translators and commentators of the sources from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries followed different scholarly principles and policies. Many

47 Last: *The Book*, p. 185.

48 This for example mentioned by Clapperton's informant Ahmad at the Sokoto Court in 1827. Cf. Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 336: »[...] the country of the Kordofal, which extends seven days in length, and is inhabited by Arabs and Kahlans; it is however possessed now by the Turks.«

49 Last: *The Book*, p. 186.

50 Cf. for example Bjørkelo / Ali: *A Sudanese Merchant's Career*.

Arabists and Islamic scholars were driven by a rather teleological view regarding the history of Islamic Africa. In introductory and interpretative chapters the Jihad wars are, for example, explained as a dichotomous war between the real believers on the one hand and the fake Islamic rulers on the other hand. In the ›Smith era‹<sup>51</sup> of Nigerian historical research, there was not only support for historical analysis but also for critical translations of Arabic source material. The first dissertation was accepted in Ibadan for the work on Uthman dan Fodio's text *Bayan wujub al-hijra ala al-ibad*,<sup>52</sup> by the Sudanese researcher Fathi El-Masri. In London, the Nigerian Ismail Balogun had already been awarded with a doctorate degree in philosophy for his translation of the text *Ihya al-sunna wa-l-ikhmad al-bida*.<sup>53</sup> These Arabist and Islamic studies usually consist of a biographical introduction and a critical edition (and translation) of a certain text – based on either one or several accessible manuscript copies. As early as the 1960s, Mervyn Hiskett added an edition and translation of Hausa texts and Hausa oral accounts to the Arabic editions of his colleagues.<sup>54</sup>

In the 1980s, the objectives of many West African scholars shifted to Islamic ideals. Fazlur Rahman Siddiqi was, for instance, educated at the famous Al-Azhar University (Cairo). In his introduction to another text edition he not only stressed the religious progress from pre- to post-Jihad times in Northern Nigeria, but also compared the alleged ›loss of faith‹ in the pre-Jihadist time to his Nigerian context. A situation was restored: People that had once been faithful in Islam lost their religion due to the corrupt elite:

»Some of the rulers were pretending to be Muslims and at the same time, were practicing all customs of paganism [...] and consequently, the whole society changed into an un-Islamic society.«<sup>55</sup>

This opinion absolutely corresponds with the Islamic world view that judges the people depending on their rulers. People are considered re-

51 For more information on the person and his effects on the academic landscape see chapter II.1.2.

52 El-Masri (ed.): *Bayan wujub al-hijra ala al-ibad*.

53 Balogun: *Critical Edition of the Ihya al-Sunna*.

54 Hiskett: *Hausa Islamic Verse*.

55 Siddiqi (ed.): *Shaykh 'Uthmān Ibn-Fūdī*, p. 3.

sponsible for their governors' lifestyle. It is therefore very likely that those pious assumptions strongly influenced the selection, edition and translation of certain Arabic manuscripts. But since the Jihadist authors and their religious interpreters of the new »Islamist school« probably agree about the content of the texts – they were educated according to the same scholarly traditions – they have not corrupted the texts and these editions can thus be considered very reliable. Especially when it comes to the conducive and voluminous commentaries on the origins of hidden allusions and metaphors in the footnotes, these modern Islamic editions are very helpful if treated with the appropriate caution.

Beyond several edited Arabic or Ajami sources in BA, MA or PhD theses or in special journals, I have consulted several archives bearing Jihadist primary sources. I have visited the Arabic manuscript collection in Ghana (*Arabic Collection of Balme Library*, University of Ghana) in 2011, and then the voluminous *West African Arabic Manuscript Collection* at Northwestern University (Evanston, USA) in 2012. The Ghanaian University archive collected the books from several Northern Ghanaian Islamic libraries and stored them in one central archive in the capital town Accra. The archive in Evanston on the other hand was set up with many photocopied texts made by Arabist scholars in Northern Nigeria. In 2013 I studied several manuscripts at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris) and *Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France* (Paris), as well as in the *Département Manuscrits Arabes et Ajami* (Institut de Recherche en Sciences Humaines) in Niamey (Niger). The *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris keeps some four thousand manuscripts that had formerly been compiled at the Library of Segu by the state founder Al-Hajj Umar (1797–1864). His son Ahmad Al-Kabir Al-Madani continued running this royal library. When the French colonial army under Louis Archinard conquered Segu in 1890 they confiscated all the books and transferred them to Paris in 1892. These materials are now part of the main catalogue but were formerly known as »Fonds Archinard«. As a result of the colonial conquest of Segu, this rich compilation of Arabic books from different centuries and places of origin are now stored in Paris. As Al-Hajj Umar was a contemporary of the Sokoto Jihadists,<sup>56</sup> he stored many of their texts in copy.

56 Their relation to each other will be dealt with in more depth in the main chapters of IV.

Although the instable situation, bombings and kidnappings prevented me from traveling to Northern Nigerian archives, I was able to order digital copies of certain manuscripts from Zaria (*Department of History*, Ahmadu Bello University). Digitalization projects of many European libraries have of course eased the access to many outlying manuscript archives.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, many editions could be consulted via certain websites. The most important of these was the website of the *Sankore Institute of Islamic-African Studies International (SIIASI)*,<sup>58</sup> which was run by the Islamic scholar Imam Muhammad Shareef.<sup>59</sup>

### *The Jihadist Authors*

In retrospect, the role of the leading figures during the Sokoto Jihad might well have been overestimated by scholars. History is not written by winners, but by writers. But in the case of Sokoto, the winners also were writers in most of its emirates and the Caliphate capital. Because historical sciences have always largely focused on written sources, they have silenced the many soldiers, traders, farmers and even commanders of the wars that did not appear as authors of the manuscripts. And this concentration on one major historical actor was especially the case with the scholar Uthman dan Fodio, who was recognized as the leader of the movement. His role as a religious saviour has been metaphorically and romantically renarrated by many scholars:

»In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century of the Christian era [...] a bright star appeared on the sky of Hausaland. The waves of its dazzling light wiped off the darkness and gloom which enveloped the area. [...] That bright star was

**57** For instance the British Library Endangered Archives Project on Northern Nigerian manuscripts, <http://eap.bl.uk/database/results.a4d?projID=EAP535> (12.08.2014).

**58** [www.siiasi.org](http://www.siiasi.org).

**59** Even if the policy of Shareef is irreconcilable with free scholarly research under democratic conditions, his digitalized manuscripts, transcriptions and commentaries of the Sokoto Jihadist texts are very precise and – after comparing some samples to other copies – turned out to be reliable.

Shaykh ‘Uthmān Ibn Fūdī and the people enlightened themselves through that light.«<sup>60</sup>

At least since Uthman dan Fodio’s death in 1817, his family and the Sokoto elite made an effort to establish a positive and devout commemoration of Uthman as a mythic religious founding father of Islamic reformism. Uthman dan Fodio and other writers reflected on their political role as writers:

»Because every scholar takes into consideration in their writing the problems of the people of his time. And they attain this goal because of the scholar’s role. And therefore writing exists. Every scholar of a time is more useful for people of that time than other writings.«<sup>61</sup>

Uthman was born in 1754 in Maratta and was educated by related Islamic teachers of the region. He was also initiated to the Islamic *tariqa* (brotherhood) of the Qadiriyya. His mother tongue was Fulfulde, but he also learned Arabic at a very young age. After spending some decades as a reformist scholar on preaching tours in Gobir and Zamfara, Uthman’s previously close and warm relationship with regional rulers and the court of Gobir became hostile after 1800. In 1804 he started his Hijra movement from Degel to Gudu and propagated a jihad. His war against Gobir spread to other Hausa states. He was the first Sultan, but in Sokoto sources he was strictly called »Sheikh« or »Amir al-Muimin« (»Leader of all Believers«). By the end of his life, his brother (Abdullah) and son (Muhammad Bello) were running all matters of the state on a *de facto* basis, while Uthman withdrew from public presentations; rumor said he had become mentally ill. However, when he died in 1817, he was already a legend and his state was then officially split into two. Many theses and booklets have attempted to portray Uthman dan Fodio’s life and his family, so that here only a brief genealogical list is given according to Abdullah dan Fodio’s text:<sup>62</sup>

60 Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afhām*, p. 3–4.

61 *Ibid.*, p. ۱۲۲.

62 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, manuscript photocopy and translation, in: Shareef: *The Lost and Found Children*, pp. 97–101.

*Brothers and sisters of Uthman dan Fodio:*

Ali, Uthman, Abubakar, Muhammad Abdullah, Waadde, Abdullah, Muhammad Aal, Alfa Umar, Muhammad Yero; and his three sisters were called Munim, Yaghugu, Sawda and Findu.

*Uthman's wives and their children:*

Maymuna: Ali, Muhammad Al-Sana, Muhammad Hajju, Umar, Aischa, Hafsa, Muhammad al-Hassan, Nana Asmau.

Ghabindu: Muhammad Saad, Muhammad Sanbu, Khadija, Muhammad Al-Bukhari, Muhammad Al-Farabri, Aischa, Juwayra,

Hawwa: Muhammad Bello, Abubakar, Fatima, Sawda, Hanna

Huje: Aisha

Hajju: Abd Al-Qadir, Fatima

Shuturu: Abu Al-Hassan, Ahmad Al-Rufai, Ahmad Al-Badawi

Mariyam: Ibrahim Al-Dassuki, Amina, Hajjiru, Mariyam, Ibrahim, Khadija, Isa<sup>63</sup>

The second Jihadist generation was primarily constituted from among these names. Not all Jihadist writers after Uthman and Abdullah were directly related with the Fodio clan, so that some complementary members of the Sokoto elite were integrated by friendship and certain offices in the administration of the Caliphate. Because this study focuses on the developments in the Central Sahel between ca. 1800 and 1850, it will also include the second-generation Jihadist texts. In addition to the male descendants of the dan Fodios, some educated female scholars among their offspring also became celebrated poets. The best-known among them is Nana Asmau,<sup>64</sup> the daughter of Uthman. She was born in ca. 1794 and reached a substantial age, dying in ca. 1864. Within this time span she experienced the emergence of the Jihad wars, the expansion of the Caliphate Empire and the reign of five different sultans. Being married to Gidado Ibn Laima in 1807, she moved to live in the political capi-

**63** Several children are not listed, because they had died at young age. Other wives whose children are not mentioned: Aisha, Jinne, Jumbajju, Tabaraaye, Hafsa, Asmau, Furaa.

**64** The first name »Nana« is probably a variation of the female title »Inna« by which women in (semi-)political offices were called. Cf. for example Sarkin Gobir Muhammad: *Account of the Chiefs of Gobir*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, G 24, »Innaa«, p. 1B.

tal Sokoto where she gave birth to five sons. She was a productive writer and translator as well. She produced considerably more texts than her sisters, some of whom also composed several texts on religion, grammar or private matters. According to family chronicles of her descendants, Nana Asmau was taught by her father, uncles, sisters and her husband. She at least spoke and wrote in two languages (Arabic and Fulfulde).

The high level of her education led many historians to the conclusion that women's education in general was supported by the Jihadist elite – just as Uthman dan Fodio had wished for when preaching in public. Nana Asmau is portrayed as a woman fighting for women's rights in general.<sup>65</sup> This research was mainly undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s and can be considered a response to the rising importance of gender studies in historiography. According to the family tradition of the Wazir dynasty, Nana Asmau preached in different rural settlements in the tradition of Fulbe preaching tours.<sup>66</sup> Since many of her relatives were almost as occupied with translating existing Jihadist texts as she was, some texts of the first Jihadist generation are today kept in the archives in various languages. It is therefore not always possible to trace the original text back to the author in a literary environment that featured copying and translating within the extended family. On the other hand, this ongoing translation and republication of their ancestors' texts can be taken into account as evidence for the urgent need to remember the Jihad and its first leaders during the era of consolidation.

Owing to the quantitative and qualitative effort in collecting (through fieldwork), editing and translating Nana Asmau's texts, Jean Boyd has created an easy access to Asmau's sources. Boyd published much of her material with the support of Northern Nigerian descendants of Nana and other Islamic scholars archiving her texts.<sup>67</sup> But Jean Boyd has also done research on other Jihadist female writers, and this material remains unpublished and is held in her estate at the *School of Oriental and African Studies Archive* (London).<sup>68</sup> This source corpus consists of hundreds of

65 See for example Boyd / Mack (eds.): *One Woman's Jihad*. Another example, written by an anthropologist is Werthmann: The example of Nana Asma'u; she stresses her role for Islamic women education in Northern Nigeria today.

66 Manuscript edition in Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*, p. 7.

67 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Asma'u, Nana*.

68 SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36 (19 boxes).

unexplored poems and prose texts from the male and female Jihadist elite of the first and second generation. Boyd transcribed some of these Arabic, Hausa Ajami, and Fulfulde Ajami texts in Roman script. For a few of the sources a draft translation is also given.

Since women did not regularly fight in the Jihad, their role was restricted to education of their children and writing. Those occupations were, of course, important elements of political consolidation in the Caliphate and were accorded high importance by the male Jihadists. Furthermore, the different and often remote emirate governments were tied to the Sokoto Sultan family by dynastic means of marriage.<sup>69</sup> These female authors knew about their influence and powerful positions in the Sokoto elite. When Uthman dan Fodio's daughter Nana Asmau lamented on her deceased husband Gidado in a poem, she also praised her husband's intentions to preserve the Jihadist texts:

»The preservation of the Sheikh's books, which he collected and had copied, preoccupied him [Gidado]. Because he feared they would not survive. And if they were not rewritten they would be lost.«<sup>70</sup>

The offspring of the Dan Fodio clan was eager to preserve the written cultural and political heritage. They were well aware of the value of their writings as a tool of political remembrance in order to glorify the first-generation Jihadists and thus help to create a common point of reference in the elite and the state.

<sup>69</sup> Lawal: Women and the 1804 Jihad, held at SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW/14, p. 8.

<sup>70</sup> Translation published in Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 201. For the Fulfulde Ajami original text cf. Nana Asmau: *Sonnore Gidado*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 59.



### 2.5 *Post-Jihad Manuscripts (Ajami and Arabic)*

*Shi ke nan, shi ke nan* (»It was like that, it was like that«). Hausa Ajami historiographic stories of the nineteenth century were traditionally finished with this set phrase. While Jihadist sources usually started and ended with religious invocations referring to God and Prophet Muhammad, Hausa and Fulfulde prose texts followed the norms of oral literature, even when transcribed in Arabic. Only from the second Jihadist generation onwards, did Hausa and Fulfulde become major literary languages. This is evident in the boom of Ajami texts from the 1840s until the colonial conquest. Although the Hausa and Fulfulde literary products were written in Arabic script, they did not adapt Arabic literary genres. The language dictated the genre and not the script. Therefore post-Jihad manuscripts (principally in Ajami) represent and imitate Islamic principles to a lesser extent than the Arabic texts of the Jihadists. Arabic script was traditionally applied in West Africa in order to express Arabic language and Islamic content. But it was only in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century that scholars in the Hausa region started to transfer Arabic letters for the composition of poetry and sometimes prose texts in Hausa or Fulfulde.<sup>71</sup> According to local Nigerian traditions, it was Uthman dan Fodio's son Isa who was the first Ajami composer of that region.<sup>72</sup> And even if this can easily be detected as myth, it points to the intensive effort of the second-generation Jihadists made to translate the Arabic texts of the first Jihadist generation.

In the same way that oral traditions were written down one or several times in various scripts or languages after they were imagined and (re-) narrated, manuscripts about the Sokoto Jihad were similarly not always recorded directly during the war years, but sometimes decades afterwards. All sources of this historical analysis are more or less of a written nature from their outward appearance. And each source at the same time is characterized and individualized by its own unique history of emergence, authorship(s), oral transmission, translation(s), transcription, storage, trade, inheritance, and comments. And still, orality was usually present before writing. In the various cases of post-Jihad manuscripts,

71 See for example Hiskett: *Arabic Loanwords in Hausa*, p. 24.

72 Hunwick: *Note on the Transliteration of Hausa*, p. 13.

the oral history of the texts is of course more dominant and formative than with the Arabic literature of the early Jihadists.

Post-Jihad manuscripts are texts that were generated after the period of this investigation, from ca. 1850 up to the 1880s, so that they cannot be considered authentic relicts of the Jihad era. The writers or narrators were annalists at courts of *sarakuna*<sup>73</sup> rulers or secretaries at colonial offices, some were members of the ulama or traveling merchants, and others were enslaved persons or freed slaves. A wide-ranging anthology of historical stories of the Central Sahel was produced by Alhaji Umaru<sup>74</sup> when he was staying in latter-day Togo and northern Ghana. He was born in Kano in 1858, when Abdullahi dan Dabo was ruling the Kano Emirate (1855–1882). Umaru's father was a religious teacher and trader from Kebbi who regularly traveled between Kano and Salaga in the Gonja region of present-day northern Ghana. Umaru studied at a Kano Koran school and occasionally accompanied his father on merchant trips to Salaga. In 1882 Umaru migrated to Sokoto when the installation of the new Kano Emir Muhammad Bello occurred. In the following years, he studied and traveled extensively in the Sokoto area. After nine years he moved to settle in Salaga at a time when the Salaga Civil War (1892) broke out. He became Imam of Salaga's Friday Mosque and officiated as Imam and teacher in that region until his death in 1934.<sup>75</sup>

Umaru expressed his opinion on different ongoing problems, such as social needs, trade, healthcare, colonial conquest and so on.<sup>76</sup> He also was teaching the German trader and linguist Gottlob Adolf Krause the Hausa language.<sup>77</sup> When in 1896 Graf von Zech burned Salaga which was then located in the neutral zone between the British Gold Coast and German Togo, Umaru left for Kete-Krachi where he settled. After his pilgrimage to Mecca during the years 1913 to 1918 Umaru discovered that Kete-Krachi

73 »Kings« (Hausa Sing. *sarki*).

74 Or Al-Hajj Umar in Arabic. I will use his Hausa name in this study as he was writing down his historical accounts in Hausa Ajami.

75 A detailed biography of Alhaji Umaru can be found in Ferguson (ed.): *Nineteenth-Century Hausaland* (see chapter 2 in particular), or in Umaru's own autobiographical text: »Life of the Imam Umaru of Kano«, in: Piłaszewicz (ed.): *Hausa Prose Writings*, pp. 53–74.

76 Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *The Arrival of the Christians*, Legon 4.

77 Krause will be discussed later in this chapter.

had become British and he met the British anthropologist Robert Sutherland Rattray (1881–1938).<sup>78</sup> He supplied many researchers and colonial officials with historical information throughout his life. Being a scholar and later an Imam, Umaru wrote a multitude of Arabic letters and prose texts in Arabic script – many of which can still be found in the Archive of the *Department of Arabic Language* at the University of Ghana (Legon Campus). But his works held in Ghana are only informative for the dramatic events during his stay in Northern Ghana (e.g. the Salaga Civil War, or British and German colonial rule).

In this study I will concentrate on Umaru's Hausa Ajami texts which were requested and compiled by the German Adam Mischlich from ca. 1900 to 1910. Mischlich was appointed the German administrator of Kete-Krachi in 1900 and supported Umaru in becoming the local Imam. After their political cooperation, ten years of intense scholarly cooperation followed. Umaru accompanied Mischlich to Togo when the latter was offered the post of District Head there, and Umaru then left for his pilgrimage. This short period of time Mischlich spent in Kete-Krachi facilitated the composition of many Ajami texts that Mischlich explicitly requested. Mischlich analyzed them and published several articles on Hausa history based on Umaru's accounts.<sup>79</sup> Many of them in fact are mere German paraphrases of Umaru's texts. Those editions were translated into English and examined by Ferguson;<sup>80</sup> one of them was translated and published by J.A. Burdon.<sup>81</sup> When comparing Mischlich's texts to Umaru's Hausa original composition, Reichmuth discovered »that Umaru had quite divergent strands of historical tradition at his disposal.«<sup>82</sup> Mischlich for example explicitly favored the Fulbe as a superior »race«

**78** Apart from research on the Ashanti People and Northern Ghanaian societies, Rattray also published compilations of Hausa stories collected in Hausa diaspora communities across the Gold Coast colony; cf. id. (ed.): *Hausa Folklore*, 2 vols.

**79** See for example Mischlich: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Haussastaaten*; id.: *Wörterbuch der Hausasprache*; id.: *Über Sitten und Gebräuche in Hausa*; id.: *Lehrbuch der Hausasprache*; id.: *Haussa. Sprachführer*; id.: *Neue Märchen aus Afrika*; id.: *Über die Herkunft der Fulbe*; id.: *Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der Hausa*; id.: *Über die Kulturen in Mittelsudan*.

**80** Cf. Ferguson: *Hausaland*.

**81** Burdon: *Northern Nigeria*, pp. 81–98.

**82** Reichmuth (ed.): *Imam Umoru's Account*, p. 157.

compared to the Hausa and other imagined racial groups, as many of his colonialist coevals also did.

A large proportion of the Mischlich Ajami manuscript collection was handed over to the Africanist and linguist Heinz Sölken<sup>83</sup> (1912–1980) by the *Berliner Institut für Lautforschung* in the 1930s. Sölken planned to translate and publish all of the manuscripts, but apparently only managed to work on a few.<sup>84</sup> After Heinz Sölken's death, his wife submitted the manuscripts to Herrmann Jungraithmayr from the *Department of African Languages* at Frankfurt University for revision and publication, who in turn asked Stanisław Piłaszewicz, researcher on Hausa literature and language in Warsaw, to edit the texts. Fortunately, in 2000, eleven texts of the Mischlich Collection were published in English, Latin Hausa and Ajami Hausa.<sup>85</sup> Due to the experience accumulated when writing a dissertation on Alhaji Umaru,<sup>86</sup> Piłaszewicz's edition will be of great use for this study.

Two of these texts were copies of original works by a certain Mallam Alhasan who was probably of Northern Ghanaian origin.<sup>87</sup> Most of the other texts, however, deal with the history of the Jihad in various parts of the Hausa region and they report legends of the origin of ethnic groups and town populations. Surprisingly and fortunately, Umaru's interpretation of history does not follow the narratives and ideals of the Jihad leaders and the political and religious elite that came after them. As Reichmuth accentuates in his preface to the edition of Umaru's manuscript on the history Ilorin, the capital of a southern Jihadist Emirate from the 1820s until British occupation in 1897:

**83** He was later blamed for having researched with French war prisoners of African origin in 1941 near Bordeaux when he recorded native speakers on tape.

**84** Sölken: *Die Geschichte von Ada*; id.: *Afrikanische Dokumente*; id.: *Die Geschichte von Kabi*. Sölken also published Umaru's biography in a short article: id.: *Zur Biographie des Imam Umaru*.

**85** Piłaszewicz (ed.): *Hausa Prose Writings*.

**86** Id.: *Alhadzi Umaru*.

**87** These are the »History of the Dagomba People« and the »History of Gurunsi«. Piłaszewicz identifies Mallam Alhasan as being a Hausa-Fulani scholar from Yendi region and later served as Imam of the Salaga Friday Mosque before his death in 1933. See id. (ed.): *Hausa Prose Writings*, pp. 31–32.

»Umaru's rather laconic narrative, typical also for other parts of his account, would generally seem to reflect the unenthusiastic attitude of a learned Hausa Malam towards the Fulbe as a ruling group, despite his identification with the religious aims of the jihad movement.«<sup>88</sup>

Alhaji Umaru was very independent from ruling elites of the Hausa region because he was part of the exile community and rather involved in Gold Coast and Togo politics. Therefore his intentions were indeed pious and religious, but not necessarily legitimizing in its tone. But when analyzing these sources, the circumstances of text production have to be considered. These include the diaspora, local intellectual influences in Northern Ghana and last but not least, the effects and expectations of close cooperation and coexistence with European scholars and colonial officials. However, having a critical perspective on these sources does not diminish their historical significance for this study as they do not reproduce official Sokoto Court annals. Or as expressed in Piłaszewicz's words:

»It seems that in many cases they may contain more reliable information than some of the official Hausa chronicles which must have undergone at least some censorship at the emirs' courts and, therefore, might be less truthful in some significant matters.«<sup>89</sup>

Another important collection of post-Jihad manuscripts was gathered by another German scholar, Gottlob Adolf Krause (1850–1938). Much of Krause's materials was deposited in the east of Germany, so that when the German Democratic Republic came into being, the manuscript collection was only accessible for a few Africanists. One of those using the Krause material for biographical research was Peter Sebald, who published the autobiography of Krause in a somewhat rehabilitating tone in 1972.<sup>90</sup> By highlighting the anti-slavery articles of Krause, he portrayed him as an anti-colonial Africanist researcher. According to this study, Krause was born into a farmer's family near Leipzig. After leaving school for Tripolis, he started learning Arabic and Hausa by the age of 18. In 1869 he took

**88** Reichmuth (ed.): *Origins of the Ilorin Emirate*, p. 159.

**89** Piłaszewicz (ed.): *Hausa Prose Writings*, p. 42.

**90** Sebald: *Malam Musa*.

part in the Tinné expedition to Murzuk.<sup>91</sup> Back in Germany he fought in the French-German war and then studied in Leipzig. He was engaged in several Niger expeditions and finally led the colonial station in Salaga from 1889 to 1895, where he witnessed the Yendi-Salaga War. He spent the last decades of his life in Europe where he published articles against any colonial occupation of African territories.

Krause had obviously viewed many Ajami and Arabic manuscripts, sent some of them to Germany and also copied several texts for himself. Some of these are still held by the *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz*.<sup>92</sup> Yet another scholar of the ›Eastern Bloc‹ that worked on Krause's materials was the renowned Russian Africanist Dmitri Alexeyevich Olderogge (1903–1987). Since there was no interest among Africanists of the German Democratic Republic in Krause's collection of Hausa Ajami texts, the Hausaist Olderogge must have borrowed them at some point from his German colleagues in the 1950s. Nonetheless, in this decade he was translating some of the manuscripts into Russian with his student seminar throughout several semesters.<sup>93</sup> In the style of Soviet historiography, Olderogge considered the whole Jihad a class conflict and not a religious war. With this use of Marxist methods, his approach was quite different from the interpretations of the Sokoto Jihad published by Western colleagues at that time.<sup>94</sup> Opposing ›Western‹ perspectives, the Russian Africanist considered the Sokoto Jihad a fight of the lower social classes against the aristocracy residing in the Hausa city states. In his opinion the Jihad was only another necessary social revolution starting from the bottom up.<sup>95</sup> This interpretation is provided with some convincing evidence in the sources, for instance when a new generation of Muslim

**91** Alexandrine Tinné (1835–1869) was the daughter of a merchant from The Hague and became popular for being the only female explorer of North Africa and the Sahara. She was killed on an expedition – probably by Tuareg groups for political reasons.

**92** The most important text collection is included in Ms 844. The German exlibris is published by Heepe: Gottlob Adolf Krauses Haussa-Handschriften. Krause published two articles on this material: id. (ed.): Aufzeichnungen über die Stadt Ghat; id. (ed.): Proben der Sprache von Ghat.

**93** Olderogge (ed.): Zapadnyj Sudan.

**94** Ibid., p. 80.

**95** Ibid., pp. 82–83.

preachers in the Hausa region gained particular support from the poor »talakawa caste.«<sup>96</sup>

There were, of course, other European scholars and colonial staff that collected post-Jihad literature. Some of them published vast editions of so-called »stories«, »tales«, or »fables«. One of these researchers without direct colonial affiliation was Charles Henry Robinson (1861–1925). He was a member of the short-lived *Hausa Association*, founded in 1891 »for the purpose of promoting the study of the Hausa language and people.«<sup>97</sup> The Association supported Robinson's stay in northern Nigeria from 1894 to 1895. After »field« experience he published the collected material in an anthology (1896), in a Hausa grammar (1897), as well as in a two-volume dictionary (1899) which was also consulted in this research project. The manuscripts collected within this anthology were only partly acquired by him during his stay in Northern Nigeria; the first three of them were obtained by his missionary brother. Robinson said about the paper used for the manuscripts: »The original MSS. are on paper of Egyptian manufacture, which had been brought by native caravans across the Sahara.«<sup>98</sup>

Most of these post-Jihad manuscript texts were copied several times by non-native Arabic speakers so that the editors and translators have often reviewed several versions of the texts in order to note discrepancies. And in most cases we don't know where and when and by whom these texts had been copied. Sometimes the manuscripts are incomplete, damaged or only summaries of the lost sheets that were originally consulted. Furthermore, all these texts expect their readers to have a basic knowledge of important and classical Islamic treatises. Another complicating factor is that the authors did not always note the titles of the quoted original texts, so that hidden intertextuality is another challenge in dealing with these sources. As a result, the manuscripts demand a background in Islamic literary traditions in order to translate and interpret them properly. But beyond all caution expressed here, the Arabic and Ajami texts offer insights about Jihadist mental maps that could otherwise never be researched. These Jihadist mental maps of the world and of their home are the topic of the next chapter.

96 Ibid., p. 84.

97 Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, Preface n.p.

98 Ibid.





### III Sokoto Scholars Measuring This World

Like the Mediterranean scholars of the pre-modern world, the Jihadist scholars of Sokoto considered historiography (*tarikh*) and geography (paraphrased as »Description of the World«) to be two variants of the same science. Space and time were dependent on each other, so that historical accounts were enriched by geographical information, and likewise the major events of the past were added to geographical descriptions. The Jihadist concept of time was of course centered on the beginning of Islam as the year zero in the Muslim calendar, and on the Sokoto year zero (1804) when their own Hijra and Jihad were launched. In almost every chronical Jihadist text, the authors emphasized how their Jihad had fundamentally changed the course of history. And historians usually adapted this time model in which the Sokoto Jihad marked an immediate change of epoch. On a pragmatic level, the Sokoto Jihad has traditionally been interpreted as a starting point for the new era of Caliphate Statehood ending with the British invasion of Northern Nigeria in 1903. The persistent glorification of the Sokoto Caliphate had also impressed researchers after the colonial conquest. When the British army defeated the Caliphate, it had existed for approximately one hundred years, so that millenarian movements claimed that this duration had been foretold by Uthman dan Fodio and that the End of Time was therefore close at hand.<sup>1</sup>

But in the 1980s, scholars such as Yusufu Bala Usman modified the traditional narratives when investigating on local and Emirate history as they found sufficient evidence for their claim that the Jihad was only one historical phase like others on a regional level.<sup>2</sup> This study follows this perspective, seeing the Jihad as an ongoing process instead of a caesura,

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Islamic Millenarianism and Mahdism in the Sokoto Caliphate cf. chapter IV.2.4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Usman: The Transformation of Katsina.

or a *zero hour* in the history of the Central Sahel, as the Jihadist had so often declared it to be. The Sokoto Jihad is one process of a crucial transition period starting in the late eighteenth century and continuing until European colonization. Historians have been struggling to find an appropriate timescale for the nineteenth century in Africa. John Iliffe called it the century of »regional diversity«, Parker and Rathbone labeled it the »turbulent 19<sup>th</sup> century«, and Winfried Speitkamp used the term »asynchrony« and highlighted the increasing transfer processes between Africa and other continents.<sup>3</sup> We may even call the Sokoto Jihad a phenomenon of the West African *Sattelzeit* (»transition period«)<sup>4</sup> in which the transfer of knowledge, migrants and products faced an enlargement of scale and acceleration with regard to trade, politics and culture. The Central Sahel rapidly became part of the globalization process of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> And the Sokoto Jihadists were at no point in time passive victims of this process. They were actively looking for integration into trade and pilgrimage networks, and they desired to become a well-networked element in the global trade and the global Islamic principles that were dominant in most of the territories of which they were aware.

All Muslim societies entered the thirteenth century in 1786 according to the Muslim calendar. This new symbolic time frame generated millenarianist ideas about a coming savior starting the apocalypse within that Islamic century. The End of Time was also identified with the end of the material world space. But space and time were not considered a continuum in every geographical ›world‹. On a more elaborate level and facilitated by a satisfactory state of source material from Jihadist authors, we may explore the Jihadist concept of time for the hereafter. The afterworld was for example depicted as a material world, but a time-less place by Uthman dan Fodio: »And the eternity of paradise [Arab. *janna*] and its inhabitants is true.«<sup>6</sup> Only this world, however, is situated in a framework of space and time:

3 Iliffe: *Geschichte Afrikas*, p. 214; Parker / Rathbone: *African History*, p. 86; Speitkamp: *Kleine Geschichte Afrikas*, p. 125.

4 A term created by the German historian Reinhart Koselleck (1923–2006).

5 Cf. Osterhammel: *Die Verwandlung der Welt*.

6 Arab. ودوام الجنة مع أهلها حق. Uthman dan Fodio: *Usul al-din*, NU, Falke 1, f. 3.

»And I say – and success is with God – all the world from its throne to its carpet is passing in time and God the Exalted is its creator. He is necessary from the early existence. There is no one like him and nothing else following him. There is no creator but him [?] and he is not stones, not body, and no ignorance is with him. He has no place, he is like the force of the earth.«<sup>7</sup>

God is place-less although he created all the territory of the world, and he is time-less although he created the beginning and end of time. His existence is not limited by any event in time because he is old and persisting at the same time.<sup>8</sup> These religious axioms were part of Uthman dan Fodio's studies on *tawhid*, the study of monotheistic concepts of God as one and unique. This theological branch of knowledge was especially important to followers of Sufi schools that aimed at understanding, knowing and feeling the oneness of Allah with their bodies and souls. While the Jihadists were also occupied with the description of the geography of the hereafter in poetical texts (see chapter IV.3.3), their prose genre of historical geographies – or geographical histories – was strictly dedicated to this world.

7 Arab. فاقول وبالله توفيق العالم كله من عرشه الى فرشه حادث وصانعه الله تعالى و تعالى و اوجب الوجود قديم لا اول له ولا اخر له مخالف للحوادث ما هو [يجرم؟] ولاصفة للجرم ولاجهة له ولا مكان له بل هو كما كان [الازر؟]. Ibid., f.1.

8 This explanation about the characteristics of Allah were summarized by Uthman dan Fodio in his work *Ulum al-muamala* (Niamey 410(14)); here it is referred to the English translation published in Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, p. 50.

## 1. Geographical Knowledge: The »Fruits of the Heart«

Due to the *spatial turn* in humanities, spatial concepts expressed by writing and drawing became the focal point of interest in the late twentieth century. With reference to Michel Foucault (1926–1984), the nexus of spatial knowledge and a ›will to power‹ were analytical constructs. The French historian reconstructed the mental maps and arrangements of historical spaces as a part of mental and discourse history. Referring to medieval history he summarized:

»One could say, by way of retracing this history of space very roughly, that in the Middle Ages there was a hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred places and profane places: protected places and open, exposed places: urban places and rural places (all these concern the real life of men). In cosmological theory, there were the supercelestial places as opposed to the celestial, and the celestial place was in its turn opposed to the terrestrial place. There were places where things had been put because they had been violently displaced, and then on the contrary places where things found their natural ground and stability. It was this complete hierarchy, this opposition, this intersection of places that constituted what could very roughly be called medieval space: the space of emplacement.«<sup>1</sup>

Sacred spaces, according to Foucault, do not by any means necessarily entail any religious meaning. His examples of sacred spaces also included public and private space, working space and leisure space. The constitutive element of all these heterotopical places is their universal categorization into two or more classes: a spatial hierarchy. No matter whether concerning profane or religious powers: Space is always political and this politics is multilayered. It may for instance refer to the acquisition, transfer and fixation of spatial knowledge. But it may also apply to informants, texts or maps for trade, warfare and the like. Brian Harley in turn approached the power scheme of mapping by differentiating between the ›external power‹ of a ruler instructing scholars to

<sup>1</sup> Foucault: Des Espace Autres. English translation adopted from <http://foucault.info/documents/heterotopia/foucault.heterotopia.en.html> (11.04.2015).

generate maps, and the ›internal‹ – often unconscious – power of the illustrator. Harley has been criticized for this concept, when for instance Barbara Belyea doubted that Harley was in accordance with postmodern discourse theories.<sup>2</sup> According to her exegesis of Foucault, Derrida and Harley, the latter misinterpreted the French theorists as he relied on paraphrases and not the original French texts. Belyea concluded that »neither Derrida nor Foucault provides the ›social theory‹ Harley would like to rely on«.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, Harley has done pioneer work by demanding a reconstruction of the geographical discourse in which map-making has always been embedded.<sup>4</sup> He dealt with maps as value-loaded images powerful enough to manipulate societies. He deconstructed map-making and maps as instruments of power in the hands of scholars, political elites or conquerors. Cartography to him was a language defining a certain version of truth: »Maps as knowledge as power« applied as a »specialized intellectual weapon«.<sup>5</sup> In pre-modern societies, map-making has always been located somewhere in the sphere of influence of the political elite or an emperor or empress personally. Harley has based most of his theoretical framework upon his empirical research into colonial mapping discourses. Different histories of military and cultural expansion have revealed that maps were designed to improve military strategy while at the same time expressing fantasies about the exotic periphery.<sup>6</sup> This study will hold to the view that this latent power of mapping in its defining of ›civilized‹ and of ›uncivilized‹ territories has often been more important than any direct application of maps or geographical descriptions in warfare and expansionist politics. And although the medieval Arab geographical literature of the Sokoto Jihadists‹ libraries was not aimed at an expansionist policy,<sup>7</sup> the West African Jihadists were eager to integrate their policy into the existing spatial arrangements of mono-

2 Belyea: *Images of Power*, p. 3.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

4 Harley: *Maps, Knowledge, and Power*, p. 52.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 55–56.

6 Cf. the academic discussion summarized by Schröder: *Wissenstransfer und Kartieren von Herrschaft?*, p. 317.

7 See for example the production and use of Al-Idrisi's map at the medieval palace of Roger II in Sicily.

theistic civilizations. Belonging to the ›civilized‹ space and living on the frontier to the ›wilderness‹ was an integral element of Jihadist identity and politics. Even though Jihadist geographical literature was probably not used in actual warfare, it was composed in order to ›legitimize the reality of conquest and empire‹.<sup>8</sup> This helped to create narratives that supported the claimed (cultural, political, religious, military, scientific) superiority of an imperial power. Harley would also give the scramble for Africa as a model process of a mapping imperialism by which European powers ›fragmented the identity of indigenous territorial organization‹.<sup>9</sup> The Sokoto Jihadists tried to empower a new spiritual, imaginary and political landscape to the Hausa region *before* European colonialism in that region. But when Harley concludes that Imperial maps tend to ›desocialize‹ or depopulate territory,<sup>10</sup> this may only be supposed if one ignores the voluminous texts that were only illustrated and not dominated by cartographic images. In cartography of Euro-Asian descent – be it Christian or Muslim – geographical literature was destined to fill in these gaps and depict peoples and cultures that were not shown on the maps.<sup>11</sup> Geographical literature and images create ›normalized‹ stereotypes. Geographies can never be neutral and the Jihadists acknowledged this fact as Arabic geographical literature has always discussed conflicting views about certain world regions, distances and cultures. The Jihadists were quite critical with their geographic sources to the extent that they demanded that a geographic description may not be suitable in another century.

Edward Said (1935-2003) deliberately unmasked the territorial ›Orient‹ in 1978 to be a merely imaginary, yet at the same time a very powerful space created by the ›West‹. He demonstrated how influential imaginary spaces have been in historical and colonial processes. Geography is imaginary from its very beginning; it is full of ›perceptive itineraries‹ and ›intellectual journeys‹.<sup>12</sup> In the same way that the imaginary spaces

8 Harley: Maps, Knowledge, and Power, p. 57.

9 Ibid., p. 59.

10 Ibid., p. 81.

11 In his introduction, Al-Idrisi was for example giving a detailed argumentation why a written account was needed beyond maps.

12 See for instance Jacob: The Sovereign Map, p. 270.

are merged into written geographies, this literature in turn influences the imaginary spaces. The invisible territory is imagined with support of the written or graphic representation. Or as put in Jacob's words: »The map structures a horizon that is first mental and only afterward geographical.«<sup>13</sup> It creates common spatial references of a territory that cannot be perceived as a whole without imagination.

The production and perception of geographical descriptions in general can work in two basic manners: by mapping from a bird's eye view or by narrating itineraries in which the perceiver himself moves through space with his imagination.<sup>14</sup> These two modes of perception are also common in the classical Arabic literature that served as a model for the Sokoto Jihadists. Accordingly, two major ways of geographical reading have emerged: »a static, synoptic gaze« and »a mobile gaze that travels around the map.«<sup>15</sup> Geographical texts however, tend to lead the reader's inner gaze along the lines of itineraries. The space of itineraries is an experienced space, being either imagined by memory or evoked through narratives. Itineraries can be unilinear or polylinear when different routes are depicted, starting from the same starting point or at junctions of the initial route. Most itineraries in everyday life of the Central Sahel were only negotiated orally and were never written down. At times a route was sketched into the sand, but such an action was simply an attempt to »stimulate the memory.«<sup>16</sup> Itinerary accounts were neither a distinct European nor an exclusively African form of spatial perception, but a genuine practice of all mobile actors in the Sahel and most other regions. These migrants regularly exchanged information by means of this narrative form with strangers they met during the journey – be it slaves (if linguistically able and free to do so), traders, pilgrims, or diplomats. Itineraries were the most common narrative genre and topic of conversation in the travelscapes of North and West Africa. Space appears as an assemblage of itineraries, as lists of names. These names may at times refer to villages, towns, states, or whole regions. Distances were always

13 Ibid., p. 275.

14 Ibid., p. 307.

15 Ibid., p. 309.

16 French »la mémoire [est] stimulée.« Lefèbvre: Territoires et frontières du Soudan central, p. 113.

given in hours, days, or months of walk, or the time required for horse or camel travel. Geographical texts, conversations or images are focal points of individual and collective identity, because

»the first question asked of a map is ›Where am I?‹ It is essential to define this fundamental landmark, this anchor and origin, this guarantee of the individual's identity, a central reference in respect to which all surrounding space is organized.«<sup>17</sup>

By means of geographical accounts, all fundamental spaces such as ›home‹ and ›abroad‹ are defined. Research on the history of cartography and mental mapping has demonstrated that spatial concepts of the past almost everywhere combined spaces of one or many earths with territories of the hereafter.<sup>18</sup> Yet very paradoxically, most studies of medieval geography have only examined drawn source material, although those maps had only been added to the more detailed geographical texts by external graphic artists and painters. If, for example, we turn to processes of knowledge transfer between the Muslim and Christian communities occurring in the Mediterranean region in medieval times, it is obvious that Christian scholars not only referred to Muslim maps ordered in climate zones,<sup>19</sup> but also quoted the voluminous written accounts about the world. And those texts – especially in pre-modern Arabic geographies – explore space by the narrative use of route descriptions and not necessarily from a bird's eye view. In other words, maps have been overestimated by many researchers in the spatial history field. This is true for both ›secular‹ and ›sacred‹ geographies that in fact only take account of cartography.<sup>20</sup>

If we consider psychological studies, this ubiquitous kind of ›route map‹ is the more immediate and direct human perception of space. Psychologists have developed three steps of spatial knowledge in human

17 Jacob: *The Sovereign Map*, p. 338.

18 Cf. for examples of early modern maps of heaven Howitz: *Entgrenzung, Entordnung, Entortung*.

19 The transfer of the climate concept from Muslim geographers to Christian scholars has been explained by Brinken: *Die Rahmung der ›Welt‹ auf mittelalterlichen Karten*, p. 110.

20 See for instance Shalev: *Sacred Words and Worlds*.



childhood: landmarks, routes, and surveys.<sup>21</sup> Like many other historical and contemporary societies, the Sokoto Jihadists often described space along the narrative structure of itineraries. Especially middle-sized spaces usually were described in the mode of routes by which they were traversed, whereas huge regions and continents were rather defined as accumulations of neighboring regions. From the historian's perspective, it may thus be concluded that the value and influence of drawn maps has been overemphasized to a large extent, while at the same time written or orally transmitted sources have been underestimated in the humanities. Correlative to this is the mistaken assumption that producing and reading maps was a very common aspect of cultural history. But it was the opposite; it was in fact a historical exception until very ›recently‹. In ancient and medieval times, however, maps were iconographies and illustrations rather than instruments and mediums of travelers, traders, or mathematicians.<sup>22</sup>

Roughly summarizing, there are two basic spaces in Sokoto Jihadist literature: On the one hand, the world in which people happen to exist. Secondly, there is the place of the hereafter. Both co-exist like parallel worlds, although human beings lack any empirical knowledge about paradise and hell. As the Jihadist writer Nana Asmau put it in a religious warning poem: »[The dead] are taken from the place they know to a place they don't know, very distant, if they like it or not. [...] But there is no protector on this journey.«<sup>23</sup> This journey remained a mystery to humans until it was suddenly right in front of them. The »place of the dead« ›unbelievers‹ was featured as a horrifying dark and hot place where people are squeezed together. Hell was a place where vermin animals lived; parasites such as bugs, ticks, blackflies, tsetse, mosquitoes, ants, scorpions, and termites the size of horses.<sup>24</sup> All these animals prevented the inhabitants of hell from getting any sleep or rest. Geographical knowledge of the hereafter was collected from scholars and religious texts, whereas

21 As discussed and summarized in Broderse: *Litora legere/Küsten lesen*, p. 83.

22 Discussed by id.: *Das Medium Karte zwischen Bild und Diagramm*, p. 9.

23 Translation by Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 347. The Fulfulde Ajami original text is compiled in the text of Nana Asmau: *Hulni-nde*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, pp. 137–173.

24 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 357.

this world was experienced to some extent. Pictures and drawing of these spaces were irrelevant for the Sokoto Jihadists – like they were for most societies in history.

### *1.1 The Sources of World Knowledge*

Geographical world knowledge was only accessed by the Jihadists from migrants, travelers, explorers and the Arabic literature from North Africa, Arabia, and Persia. But curiously, the Sokoto Jihadists did not combine information from European travelers or military leaders active at the Caliphate frontier about the Atlantic coast or the Americas with their Arabic geographical documents. In spite of the widespread trade relations in West Africa, the Jihadists preferred medieval or early modern geographical accounts from Maghrebian writers, such as Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) or Al-Idrisi (1099–1165/66) for their literary works. The central and major source of reference in terms of world knowledge was thus the world view from a Muslim Mediterranean perspective. The Jihadists therefore basically copied or paraphrased chapters and sentences from those reference works. But they did also add some information gained from fellow Malian scholars like for example from Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu (1556–1627) or from the more recent Sufi revolutionary Mukhtar Al-Kunti (1729–1811). The course of Islamic expansion and book trade from the Arab Peninsula via Egypt, Morocco and Mali to the Hausa region therefore became the focal point of Jihadist geography and historical consciousness.

As may be deduced from the discussion of geographical literature as historical sources, the Sokoto Jihad cannot be studied in depth with regard to cartographical sources because the Jihadists did not regularly draw maps on paper – or, there is at least no evidence in the archives that they produced or even read maps apart from their occasional interaction with the British explorer Clapperton (cf. *Figure 4*). They did create draft maps in the sand expressing military strategies or advising passing travelers, but were in general rather giving lists of places in a conversation and thus creating routes without any optical supplement. On the one hand, Islamic scholars and Islam itself officially rejected any use of pictures because living beings – human or animal alike – were not permitted to be drawn or painted. Using the script has therefore

been the most accepted way to decorate paper, clothes, or buildings. On the other hand, cartography was well-known and applied in North Africa, the Middle East and especially the Mediterranean since medieval times. There are currently no discovered Jihadist works that show any kind of drawing or map apart from that of Abdassalam (chapter V). The more common geometrical forms applied in Jihadist publications are magical squares in Sufi texts or instructions for Sufi magical practices. Those squares were not really representing spatial concepts as such, but were confined to organize two-dimensional space of the paper sheets. Those squares were either labeled with Arabic letters or simple dots expressing numbers, so that way each sum of the horizontal or vertical rows always stay the same. Uthman dan Fodio allegedly used them, although in other texts he prohibited the use of magical squares for predictions.<sup>25</sup> Early Islamic mathematicians linked scientific ›rational‹ approaches to mystical Islam and wanted to achieve a certain form of divine power in such squares. Because of the influence of the North African scholar Al-Buni (d. 1225), these mystical practices also became popular in West African Islam: »Ibn Khaldun condemned al-Buni for witchcraft, while Sufi biographers praised the same man as a great saint and mystic.«<sup>26</sup> Although these squares were washed in water and then used as the basis for a magical drink, they alone did not contain much power in West African Sufi contexts: It was always necessary to add religious spells either by writing or by speaking during the procedure. To be more concrete, the magical ninety-nine names of God often were used in these rituals. The aesthetical geometrical form or the astonishing effects purportedly generated by this mathematical content were not broached by the Jihadists. But Prussin argued that the Sufi magic squares had some ongoing effects on the Hausa decoration style found on buildings and walls, because the traditional totemic figures and round, soft forms were (partly) replaced with these squares.<sup>27</sup> The magical squares were called *hatimi* in

25 Uthman dan Fodio prohibited sand divinations and magical squares in his text *Nur al-ulbab*; see Hamet (ed.): *Nour-el-Eulbab*, pp. 301–302. See also a manuscript copy in Ghana: Uthman dan Fodio: *Nur al-ulbab*, Legon 114.

26 Francis: *Magic and Divination*, p. 625.

27 Prussin: *Hatumere*, p. 209.

Hausa and in West Africa they were already common and criticized in Al-Maghili's time, when they were drawn into the sand.<sup>28</sup>

Muhammad Bello himself is reported to have drawn maps in the sand during Hugh Clapperton's stay in Sokoto in 1924. Bello allegedly »drew on the sand the course of the river Quarra [Niger], which he also informed me entered the sea at Fundah [250 miles north of the Niger-Benue confluence and also referred to as ›Panda‹].«<sup>29</sup> Another day Bello drew a second map of the Niger in the sand, explaining that Fundah was situated at the Niger-ocean confluence, which was only connected in the raining season. Clapperton also quoted the Sultan talking about the coastal town Tagra governed by a Fula person from Katsina on Bello's behalf.<sup>30</sup> The way that Clapperton interpreted these maps, the lower Niger ran parallel to the coast and although not actually possessing any tributary states at the Atlantic coast, Bello claimed that God had given him all the lands of the ›unbelievers‹. The transfer of this geographical knowledge was embedded in an ongoing intellectual discussion between Clapperton and Bello. The latter was interested in British newspapers he called the »Huber el dineah«, a corrupt transliteration of the Arabic term for »news of the world«. Bello also asked whether the Greek were joined by other Christian countries and why the British had attacked Algeria.<sup>31</sup> Algier had indeed been attacked by the allied marine forces of Britain and the Netherlands in August 1816. And considering how impressive all that news on British naval power was for Bello, he was challenged and therefore claimed that his state was strong and extended to all West African territory ›on land‹. Bello's remarks on the Niger River, explaining that it was not navigable further south, may have been political statements in order to protect his frontier regions from British colonialism. Bello was aware of the British power referring to water transport systems, like rivers and oceans.<sup>32</sup> But in all written accounts, the Jihadists talked of Christian countries without further differentiation.

28 Rebstock (ed.): *Die Lampe der Brüder*, p. 100.

29 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, p. 304.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 314.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 313.

32 Nigerian journalists and historians have pointed at this behavior, assuming that »[Clapperton] asked Sultan Bello to have the map drawn on paper but the map he got simply confirmed the erroneous ideas of England's leading geographers. A very smart

From the renarration of Bello's conversations with Clapperton, we can also assume that Bello knew that all India had been conquered and was governed by the British at that time. »[Bello said:] You are a strange people, the strongest of all Christian nations; you have subjugated all India! I said, we merely afforded it our protection, and gave it good laws.«<sup>33</sup> Bello talked to his guest about the time of Islamic rule in Iberia and asked for Arabic books from Europe and a world map. He repeatedly asked for European consuls, physicians and scholars to visit him again, and he attracted the British by mentioning that in the Southern Emirates of Jacoba and Adamawa they would find gold and silver. Clapperton in turn had asked several times for a regional map drawn by Bello's secretaries on paper to take back to England. Only during this last conversation he was finally provided with a map and a corresponding explanation by Bello (cf. *Figure 4*).<sup>34</sup> Clapperton had been in conversation with Sultan Bello on fifteen different occasions and had often posed questions of a geographical character. But only when asked to draw the Niger did the Sultan change the mode of communication from verbal to visual, and drew the river into the sand. Since the map for Clapperton had to be produced on his request during his stay in Sokoto, Bello and the scholars at his Sokoto Court probably never possessed collections of maps in their libraries. Clapperton's second stay in Sokoto however was less neutral and he was more perceived as an official representative of the British State by the Sokoto Sultan. During this stay of about five months, Clapperton faced severe distrust and suspicion from his host.<sup>35</sup>

Bello's original manuscript map has not been found among Clapperton's papers so far, and so can only be studied as a European reproduction. The hybrid nature of this map does not allow all its models and local background to be revealed, as the meetings between Clapper-

move by the Sultan as he didn't want further reconnaissance to provide the English with more accurate geographical information something they eventually got from another misguided pre-colonial ruler.« Adewale: The genius of Sultan Bello revealed. For a historical discussion of this anti-colonial behavior of Bello, cf. Lefèbvre / Surun: *Exploration et transferts de savoir*, p. 11.

33 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 304, 313–314.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 331.

35 For more information about Clapperton's stay in Bornu and the creation of Bello's map, see Lefèbvre / Surun: *Exploration et transferts de savoir*, p. 10.

ton and Bello were of a rather extraordinary character. And yet, several fundamental elements of the medieval Arabic geographical accounts are repeated on the map. The Niger is for example called Nile in the Arabic commentary on the paper and was considered to proceed to the east until Egypt.<sup>36</sup> But we neither know whether the map had been oriented to the north in its original composition, nor do we exactly know whether Bello had written down the Arabic description himself. But what the map does represent, is that the Sokoto scholars considered their Caliphate to be surrounded by one long river, called Nile (Niger and Benue), and that the frontier of the Caliphate was by this time situated at the water frontier (cf. *Preface*). Other minor rivers do not bear any names and the Atlantic

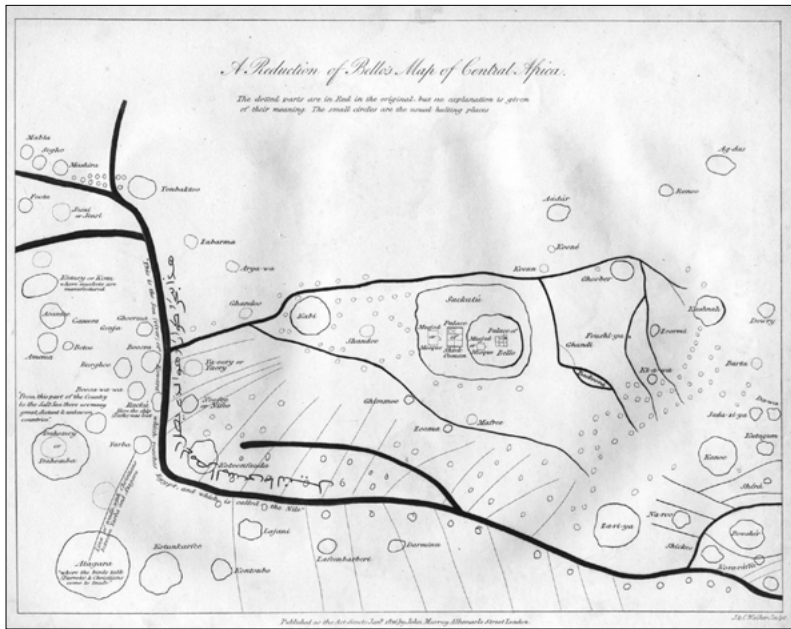


Figure 4: Sultan Bello's map of Sokoto and West Africa for Hugh Clapperton

**36** Lefèbvre and Surun suppose that this map was not influenced by Arabic cartography (*ibid.*, p. 11). And bearing in mind that Arabic geography was in general documented as text, and not as drawing, I assume that the genre of this map was a European one and thus represents Sokoto mental maps to a much lesser degree than claimed by Lefèbvre and Surun.

Ocean neither appears in the south nor in the west. The »Christians«, the »unknown countries« in the west, and the »birds that talk« were all located outside the big water stream of that map. Bello's understanding of power was unmistakably territorial and corresponded with »different levels of knowledge«, from a local context of the Sokoto Court and major buildings, to mere »book knowledge«.<sup>37</sup>

The talking blue parrots, to which Bello's map refers (under the name »Atagara« in the southwest), were traded from Nupe to the north and taught to speak by some women taking care of them.<sup>38</sup> Bello located them in Atagara, in the south of Kebbi. This knowledge was derived from the regional trade networks of the Caliphate. But with reference to the »Nile«, Bello reproduced the classical Arabic hypothesis about the course of the Nile from the very West of Africa and Mali, via Hausa and Sudan, to Egypt. Lefèbvre and Surun supposed that Bello had the map drawn without reference to Arabic geography and just »didn't know the precise course of the Niger until the coast.«<sup>39</sup> I suggest, on the other hand, that Bello's knowledge of the Sokoto water frontier was quite precise, because he referred to the Niger and the Benue, and it was Arabic book knowledge at the same time. The Arabic term *bahar* (ocean) can refer to the sea, a lake or large river and therefore confused Clapper-ton's notion of European geography.<sup>40</sup> Bello just ignored that the Benue flows to the west, and not to the east, because it was neither important to him, nor written down in Arabic geographical accounts. Most traders and trans-Saharan travelers of that time claimed that the Niger or Nile River started in Mali, then went through the southern Hausa region, and then turned northwards into Lake Chad.<sup>41</sup> Bello's and the general Arabic knowledge on rivers was not focused on the direction of flow, because the centrally organized warfare conducted by the Sokoto Caliphate did not include naval forces, and because the major long-distance trade net-

37 Ibid., p. 12.

38 Lyon: A Narrative of Travels, p. 157.

39 Lefèbvre / Surun: Exploration et transferts de savoir, p. 15.

40 Cf. the information of a Ghadames merchant given to Denham in 1822: »Sheikh Mohammed describes the Tzad as an immense Lake or Sea, Bahr, and makes all the streams run into it except the Shary.« Cf. Rodd / Bovill (eds.): Fezzani Military Expedition, p. 153.

41 For an example of this theory see Lyon: A Narrative of Travels, p. 148.

works were organized in caravans on land, relying on camels, mules, and horses. Rivers were only considered topographical obstacles for the military and trade caravans and – more positively – as sources of water.

But over and over again, Clapperton asked for the Atlantic Ocean and Bello explained the (correct) connection of the two rivers (the Niger and the Benue) at the southern Sokoto frontier. Lefèbvre and Surun are right to assume that many inhabitants of the river banks tried to protect their knowledge about the rivers. But this lack of geographical knowledge can also be attributed to the Sultan, not only to European travelers, because there were local strategies to protect the local naval trade system based on the availability of river ferry services or fords.<sup>42</sup> This defensive attitude of many societies living on the Niger and Benue River banks often was effective, because the Jihadist military was typically alarmed and frightened whenever naval communities of fishermen and river traders were addressed (cf. chapter IV.5.4). Bello, however, was not that secretive in sharing his knowledge on the »Nile«, because when asked about the death of Mungo Park on his second Niger journey, he emphasized that Park and his remaining boat team would have survived the narrow and stony passage at Raka in another season. Thus, Bello did not always deny that the rivers of his state were navigable.<sup>43</sup>

In a trans-Saharan context, each of the Sahel rivers was perceived as a border between Muslim-scapes and wilderness. The British traveler Lyon summarized the rumor he had gathered on his journeys across the desert: »All nations south of the Waters are said to be unbelievers, and to live in a state of nature, resembling in their appearance, manners, and

<sup>42</sup> Clapperton had for example heard a conversation about the »Quarra River« entering the ocean in Raka, where the water was salty. But on questioning the two discussants, one stated that »it is commonly believed among them that strangers would come and take their country from them, if they knew the course of the Quarra.« Cf. Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, p. 270. In the Hausa region it seemed to be common sense that the neighboring southern states refused to share their knowledge about the rivers in order to protect themselves against military invasions.

<sup>43</sup> All European travelers usually asked local informants whether the rivers were navigable; cf. Denham's letter about a Saharan trader commenting on the »Nile«: »The Nile was navigable for small vessels from Timbuctoo to Grand Cairo, but it was an uncertain and unsafe mode of performing the journey.« Cf. SOAS, Bovill, MS 282539, W1 (File 6A), f. 91/2.



habitations, wild beasts rather than men.«<sup>44</sup> Therefore, many European explorers of the nineteenth century could not convince their local guides and canoe assistants to travel further down the Niger beyond the Benue confluence. Instead, they were willing to proceed up the Benue towards Bauchi.<sup>45</sup> The Benue and the Nile were also considered a frontier for animals from the Sahel and Sahara region. Horses, mules and camels would soon suffer from diseases when reaching the streams or proceeding beyond them.<sup>46</sup> These diseases were often attributed to the landscape, humidity and abundance of water, not yet to the Tsetse fly.

Not only Bello used the sandy ground in order to draw »maps«. Many Sahelian or Saharan traders used this practice because paper was always scarce and expensive. Denham reported for instance:

»Explanatory of the movements of the Sultan's army my informant [the trader Muhammad from Ghadames] constantly drew the route on the sand as we sometimes sat at the door of his house and marked the towns and places as he went on [...].«<sup>47</sup>

Those »drawings« were therefore produced out of the personal memory and were arranged as itineraries in a one-dimensional manner. In contrast, reflections on two-dimensional spaces are rather presented in texts, and not in itineraries or ›sand maps‹. Two-dimensional maps have been vastly overestimated in research on (cultural) spaces because of the unique ›Western‹ approach to cartography since early modern time, and more specifically throughout the nineteenth century. Because of this Western and often colonial fetish for maps, this medium was correspondingly judged an important source for African perception of space. Based on the fact that Muhammad Bello asked Clapperton for a world map, we may assume that Bello understood how important drawn geographical information was to the British. But there is no proof – neither in Clapperton's Journals, nor in archives of West African Arabic and Ajami manuscripts – that Bello's scholars attempted to copy any of Clapper-

44 Lyon: A Narrative of Travels, p. 139.

45 Cf. Flegel: Die Flegel'sche Expedition, p. 34.

46 This information was collected by Flegel; cf. id.: Lose Blätter, p. 142.

47 Rodd / Bovill: Fezzani Military Expedition, p. 163.

ton's maps. When Lefèbvre and Surun deal with »representations in the maps and accompanying texts«,<sup>48</sup> I suggest speaking of »representations in the texts and accompanying maps« for studying any West African or Arabic geography.



Figure 5: Copy of Al-Idrisi's World Map of 1154

If any maps were drawn, West African informants were usually asked for it by European travelers and the drawings were usually given on the sand on explicit request of an explorer.<sup>49</sup> Concerning the situation of knowledge transfer, these sources deliver insights about the individual European perception of West African spatial concepts, enriched by European geographical methods of that time. The only evidence for

48 Lefèbvre / Surun: *Exploration et transferts de savoir*, p. 1 (English abstract).

49 Cf. for example the title of the published dissertation by Lefèbvre: *Frontières de sable, frontières de papier. Du Soudan central à la république du Niger 1800–1964*. See also Lefèbvre: *Territoires et frontières du Soudan central*, p. 101.

any drawing that Sultan Muhammad Bello was shown by Hugh Clapperton was his »planisphere of the heavenly bodies«, and Bello apparently knew »some constellations, and many of the stars by their Arabic name.«<sup>50</sup> Bello then examined Clapperton's scientific equipment and telescope. While the Sokoto libraries were never reported to possess any maps, the Bornu ruler El Kanemi presented a typical Arabic world map to Clapperton as part of one of his books. Clapperton reported in his diary entry on 15 July 1823:

»Clear[.] in the After noon the Sheikh [El Kanemi] sent for us – I had made him a present of a compass & put a card on it for him and after explaining the points to him he wrote them in Arabic on the card – he also showed us in one of his books a map of the World – according to Arab Nations it was in a circle which he said was flat surround[e]d by a sea and round that the Mountains of I[incomplete] surrounding the whole and beyond which the sun set[.] We said we considered it round: -& we explained to him our theory[.]«<sup>51</sup>

According to Clapperton's report, the Bornu world map displayed the world in the classical Mediterranean style of the Middle Ages and early modern times. The world is perceived as a round disc which is surrounded by a circular ocean and a mountain range. Lockhart, the editor of Clapperton's Bornu diaries, misleadingly deemed this mountain range the legendary *Mountains of the Moon* where the Nile sources were supposed in Mediterranean geographies.<sup>52</sup> But this mountain range was a common element to describe the ends of the world, being located next to the so called *Foggy Ocean* (cf. the yellowish mountain circle and the blue water circle in *Figure 5*). But because there is no evidence for a world map in the possession of the Sokoto Jihadists, they have probably never had one. And furthermore, the three major Jihadist

50 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 304, 336.

51 Lockhart (ed.): Clapperton in Bornu, pp. 159–160.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 160 (footnote 1). All medieval European and Middle Eastern maps located those mountains at the southern end of the known world on the African continent. Often, the sources of the Nile were considered to be in a lake next to those snowy mountains. Throughout the trade in the sea-scape of the Indian Ocean, the more or less imaginary mountain range was likewise identified as the Ruwenzori Mountains or Kilimanjaro. Cf. Hamann: »An Apparition from another World.«

leaders Uthman dan Fodio, Abdullah dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello, seldom left their local regions – not even as far as to the southern and eastern frontiers of their Caliphate. And for these circumstances it seems justifiable to suppose that they did not study the Bornu world map or any other Arabic map.

More often in the history of the Arabic speaking cultures, geographical knowledge was communicated by texts, in which places were described and states were identified by giving the directions of their borders. Islamic geography was established upon ancient Greek and Roman scholarship enriched by Iranian, Iraqi and Indian knowledge. Accordingly, they either chose Baghdad or Mecca as the world's center. Geography was not considered a scientific approach itself, but historical, anthropological, economic, and topographic information and data were all mixed in what was essentially a literary genre. Accordingly, the Arab geographer Al-Masudi (d. 956) used the expression »Dimensions of the Earth«<sup>53</sup> for his geographical work. Some medieval Arab geographers, however, referred to Greek literature and thus translated the term »geography« as »Picture of the Earth«.<sup>54</sup> But most writers created their own expressions of mapping and describing the world anyway.<sup>55</sup>

Arabic geography has always been a product of various cultural and religious contact zones. Pre-Islamic Arabic knowledge of geography was based upon Jewish, Christian, Babylonian and indigenous Arab sources. And due to the rapid expansion of Islam into Africa, Asia and Europe, Arab scholars recorded new geographical information which was also desired by military units. The Islamized Arabs accessed foreign centers of learning in Iran, India, Egypt and Greece, from which new scientific disciplines – among them geography – were adopted. And thus descriptions about these foreign lands entered Arab common knowledge annexed to certain skills of space representation. Al-Masudi consulted both Ptolemy's written *Geography* and his world map. This map depicts Europe,

53 Arab. قطع الارض.

54 Arab. صورة الارض.

55 Taeschner: »Djughrafiya«, p. 575.

Arabia, vast parts of Asia and Africa as far as the Niger and Nile Rivers. Places beyond these rivers were labeled »terra incognita«.<sup>56</sup>

The axiom that the world is round instead of flat was introduced into Arabic geography by foreign geographical sciences. Geographical knowledge was more and more Islamized by linking and legitimating it with Koranic verses.<sup>57</sup> By the ninth century the »Science of the Roads«<sup>58</sup> had also contributed to geographical accounts, with a focus on their use in the residences of states – for example when arranging diplomatic journeys or military expeditions. Therefore, many works still managed space by listing narrations of different itineraries including distances and topographical features. Furthermore, astronomical sciences helped to develop the spatial determination of longitudes and latitudes: »The Arabs were better astronomers and geographers than cartographers.«<sup>59</sup> The focus of interest was on the description of the Abbasid Islamic Empire and its bordering empires, most notably the Byzantine Empire (Arab. »Rūm«).<sup>60</sup> This thematic and »Islamic approach«<sup>61</sup> to geography was complemented by a rather mathematical orientation aimed at the description and representation of what was considered the »whole« world. Al-Masudi, however, combined his own travel experience, historical knowledge, and geography to the extent that he even »regarded geography as a part of history«.<sup>62</sup> This combination of contemporary travel knowledge expressed by itineraries and historical accounts became the main focus of many Arabic geographic surveys and was also studied by the Sokoto Jihadists. After Al-Masudi, Mecca replaced Baghdad as the center of world maps or geographical descriptions, the Islamized world

56 Cf. the Latin copy of Ptolemy's World Map (15th century), held at The British Library (London), Harley MS 7182, ff. 58v–59.

57 Mathematical and Astronomic insights and contribution to Arab geography are skipped here. Cf. Taeschner: »Djughrafiya«, p. 578.

58 Arab. علم الطروق. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 579.

59 Throver: *Maps and Civilization*, p. 47.

60 The Byzantine Empire became the crucial reference for successful conquest of early Muslim armies in the glorifying and romantic war literature written in the time of the Crusades. Cf. Donner: *The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War*, p. 54.

61 Taeschner: »Djughrafiya«, p. 580.

62 *Ibid.*

became the nexus of geography, and the texts were structured by regional chapters<sup>63</sup> – yet another method applied by the Jihadists.

The more intensive long-distance trade became in the Islamic ›world‹, the more information about trade routes, trading habits, resources, and currencies was included into geographical texts in order to ›use it as a traveler’s guide‹.<sup>64</sup> When routes of traveling merchants, maritime networks and pilgrims became longer, world maps became more exact about coastal areas – for example regarding India and East Africa. Some geographers also consulted expert merchant sailors and their sea-charts in order to gather information. The so-called ›silent trade‹, by which merchants who cannot speak each other’s language can trade without talking, was often described in those accounts with reference to Asian regions, West Africa, and East Africa. These descriptions often shifted into the mythical sphere and quoted ›wonder tales‹<sup>65</sup> of the trading empires. Arab travelers of that time were usually traders or at least made some use of the economic infrastructure when on a journey. Since they did not display any keen interest in exploration for its own sake, they usually did not cross Islamic frontiers. Nevertheless, fantastic stories of single travelers and their experiences in the land of South Asian cannibals beyond Islamic frontiers were common. Al-Idrisi occasionally linked three attributes to the periphery, also adopted by the Sokoto Jihadists: ›Its inhabitants are black and naked and cannibal.‹<sup>66</sup> They were especially thought to kill and eat up strangers, which was a general horror story narrative in many merchant accounts.

Although some Arabic geographers mentioned that the Indian and the Atlantic Ocean met south of the African *Mountains of the Moon*, Arab traders were not reported to have taken this route and it was rather the Portuguese oceanic experience that informed the Muslim world about the shape of the African continent surrounded by sea water. From the tenth up to the sixteenth century geographical literature was rather in

63 Arab. اقليم. Ibid., p. 582.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., p. 583.

66 Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, p. 33.

decline,<sup>67</sup> so that the famous works of Al-Idrisi can be judged as a rare exception:

»The scientific and critical attitude towards the subject and emphasis on authenticity of information that was the mark of the earlier writers gave place to mere recapitulations and *résumés* of the traditional and theoretical knowledge found in the works of earlier writers.«<sup>68</sup>

Al-Idrisi (ca. 1100–1166), however, worked in Palermo for the Norman king Roger II. His famous world map connected the Niger and Nile with each other and also mentioned the early modern Sahel Empire »Kanem«<sup>69</sup> (cf. *Figure 5*). His major work *The Book of Pleasant Journeys into Far-away Lands*<sup>70</sup> was accompanied by the aforementioned world map and seventy regional maps. The geographer Al-Idrisi was born in Ceuta and he combined historical Greek and Arabic sources with contemporary information from travelers. The Sokoto Jihadists basically used Al-Idrisi as a source for geographical knowledge about the world. Al-Idrisi had consulted the ancient works of both Ptolemaios and Orosius as well as interviews of scouts. Several world maps and regional maps have survived attached to the written geography; admittedly there are doubts about their authenticity and the process of copying.<sup>71</sup> At the court of the Sicilian king Roger II, Al-Idrisi produced only one world map engraved on silver which no longer exists.<sup>72</sup>

Although Christian medieval geography as well as Muslim medieval geography was derived from ancient Greek scholarship, they developed quite separately from each other except in the Spanish and Sicilian contact zones. Early Muslim rulers had ordered that geographies be compiled and gathered in order to record and gain an overview of their empires. Arabic maps and geographical accounts were more applicable, whereas medieval Latin maps presented condensed and metaphorical fairy tales

67 Taeschner: »Djughrafiya«, p. 584.

68 Ibid.

69 Arab. كَانَم. Also called Kanem-Bornu.

70 For a full Arabic edition see Bombaci et al. (eds.): Al-Idrisi, 9 vols.

71 Cf. Drecoll: Idrisi aus Sizilien, p. 11.

72 Ahmad: Cartography of al-Sharif al-Idrisi, p. 156.

and myths (*mirabilia*). But in the twelfth century the demand for accurate maps increased in Europe due to pilgrimage and Crusade ventures.<sup>73</sup> From a contemporary perspective maps offer an easy approach to the historical study of spatial concepts, so that the value of those European and Arabic maps has been dramatically overemphasized as well. At the same time, the more widespread textual works of geography have been neglected,<sup>74</sup> even though »independent map artefacts [...] are the exceptions in the cartographic record of pre-modern Islamic civilization«<sup>75</sup> and medieval Europe. Maps were embedded in a predominantly textual environment. Al-Idrisi's written work, for example, was absorbed in different cultural and temporal contexts – from the Ottoman Empire, to early modern Portuguese traders along African coasts, to German Orientalists of the nineteenth century. It has been demonstrated that medieval geography was first and primarily executed through literary means. Maps by contrast were considered as additional and aesthetical material illustrating the information given by the text.

In Al-Idrisi's written geography his introduction opens with an explicit reference to Ptolemy's *Geographia*. The form of the world is defined as a globe that remains firm in the universe.<sup>76</sup> According to Al-Idrisi, the southern territory (including the regions south of the Sahel) is unpopulated because of its intense heat and aridity.<sup>77</sup> The south-orientation and the round form of the world were adapted from the tenth century Muslim geographer Ibn Hawqal and his famous work *Surat al-ard* (*Image of the World*). From the east to the west the world falls into climate categories separated by lines. The Arabic term denoting »climate« (*iqlim*) had been adapted from Ptolemy's Greek work. But in the course of the Middle Ages, *iqlim* had become a word for a territorial »region« in general.<sup>78</sup> Al-Idrisi also applied this »climate« arrangement for his text structure. His geography is introduced by a preface followed by chapters on seven climatic zones between east and west. Furthermore, each climate region

73 Drecoll: Idrisi aus Sizilien, p. 14.

74 Ibid., p. 15.

75 Karamustafa: Introduction to Islamic Maps, p. 4.

76 Drecoll: Idrisi aus Sizilien, p. 71.

77 Ibid., p. 76.

78 Karamustafa: Introduction to Islamic Maps, pp. 7–8.



is divided into ten sections. This makes seventy sections altogether, each one being illustrated by a sectional map.<sup>79</sup> The world map however, was explicitly prepared and demanded by Roger II according to Al-Idrisi's introduction. Much-traveled persons and scholars were thus invited to the Sicilian court in order to discuss and produce an up-to-date world map. It is speculated that Al-Idrisi might have copied his maps from the cartographic boards which the group of scholars had created.<sup>80</sup> It was only after the completion of the map boards that Roger II asked Al-Idrisi to add a written account to it, including peoples, habits, languages, trade, handicrafts, food, architecture and topography.

Very surprisingly, Al-Idrisi does not refer to the famous world map in his text at all, which remains a somewhat isolated illustration attached to his literary work. On the other hand, he alludes to cartography which must be further explained by textual description.<sup>81</sup> Unlike his Muslim predecessor Ibn Hawqal, Al-Idrisi did not focus on Islamized regions, but claims that his work represents the whole world. Although he was able to interview merchants about the Mediterranean world, Al-Idrisi had to rely on older Arabic sources for his sections on Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, Africa is illustrated as the biggest continent by far on his world map and the East African Coast directly faces India. India is divided into »Sind« and »Hind«, ancient Ghana and the imagined wild people named »Lamlam« are located in Africa alongside the Nile and its sources in the *Mountains of the Moon*. This mountain range has been copied and translated into Arabic from Ptolemy. North of the mountains ten mountain streams accumulate into two lakes which finally unite into one lake forming the source of the Nile. In both, Al-Idrisi's map and his geographical description,<sup>82</sup> the *Mountains of the Moon* generate the Nile and Niger (and Senegal River) without any connections with the (Atlantic) Ocean. It was only discovered by Portuguese naval networks that the Niger was separate from other West African rivers flowing into the Atlantic.<sup>83</sup> Although mathematical skills rapidly improved in the Is-

79 Ahmad: Cartography of al-Sharif al-Idrisi, p. 158.

80 Ibid., p. 159.

81 Ibid., p. 163.

82 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 17.

83 Drecoll: Idrisi aus Sizilien, p. 126.

lamic world, this knowledge was only rarely translated into cartography so that there remained a »gap between theory and practice in the history of pre-modern Islamic cartography.«<sup>84</sup> Pre-modern Islamic scholarship clearly lacked a unified cartographic discourse integrating various disciplines, such as mathematics, astronomy and graphic arts. This is also illustrated by the fact that no single term had been developed to denote a »map« in Arabic language.

### **1.2 Jihadist Geography**

The Jihadist knowledge about this world as one holistic entity was dominated by an oceanic perspective, because it was assumed that God was the »controller of the ships« and the one who »spread out the world on the surface of the water, holding it in position by His wisdom.«<sup>85</sup> Descriptions of the divine power over the movement of clouds and the seven heavens above the horizon support this embedment of territory between other levels of divine power. This concept is later transmitted in Abdulkadiri Dan Tafa's (1804–1864) text called »Fruits of the Heart from Reflection about the Sudanese Earth [World]«.<sup>86</sup> Dan Tafa, also called by his complete name Abd Al-Qadir bin Al-Mustafa Al-Turudi, was a maternal nephew of Muhammad Bello and also later married Bello's daughter Khadija, his cousin. He was a representative of the second Jihadist generation and had a strict scholarly career. Dan Tafa never held any political office, but he was a famous thinker and writer. Barth noted for example:

**84** Karamustafa: Introduction to Islamic Maps, p. 7.

**85** Abdulkadiri dan Tafa: *قطائف الجنان في ذكر احوال ارض السودان*, edited and translated in Kani: Life and Works, p. 292. Since this manuscript was accessed as a scanned file graciously sent by Okechukwu Eke, the scan of several edited Arabic pages lacked the quality which would be necessary for quotations. Therefore I will mostly have to rely on Kani's Arabic edition.

**86** Catalogued in Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 227. There is also supposed a poem by Uthman dan Fodio about the process of how God created earth and sky. I have not located it and Boyd only mentioned its title *Miyetti baado kammuji* within some lists of her archival papers.

»He [the Katsina scholar Abd Al-Rahman Al-Tuwati] called my attention particularly to a man whom he presented as the most learned of the present generation of the inhabitants of Sokoto, and from whom, he assured me, I should not fail to obtain what information I wanted. This man was Abd el Kader dan Taffa (meaning the son of Mustapha), on whose stores of knowledge I drew largely.«<sup>87</sup>

Dan Tafa was an Islamic scholar educated in spiritual Sufi Islam. In the preface of his geography he therefore praised God's sovereignty with reference to several Koranic lines and Hadith traditions. He quoted for example one Hadith demonstrating God's power over the »hidden and un-hidden things«.<sup>88</sup> From this religious point of view, he made clear that this world is divided into the visual world experienced by humans and the invisible world of the jinns (spirits in Islam). Dan Tafa defended his attempt to describe the world by a line of argumentation. He claimed that geographies (and histories) were necessary in light of the immense public interest in the characteristics and events of strange countries:

»It is a fact that people are eager to hear accounts of both the wonders and the ordinary conditions of countries and the reports of their affairs and the news about what happens there.«<sup>89</sup>

According to the Jihadist author there was a dominant public curiosity and wish to be educated about foreign lands. Dan Tafa himself was not active in Jihad wars, but rather devoted his life to teaching, studying theology and related scholarly topics, and publishing his own treatises. As a well-educated Muslim, Dan Tafa criticized harshly the lack of geographical knowledge in his home region:

»It is also a fact that the recordings of this has been totally neglected in these Sudanese Hausa countries as a result of their disregard for those who are

**87** Barth: *Travels and Discoveries*, vol. 3, New York 1859, p. 86.

**88** Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 294.

**89** *Ibid.*, p. 295. I slightly changed this due to the Arabic version; cf. *ibid.*, p. 357.

wise and pious, and rejection of them due to the predominance of ignorance and evil desires and the lack of intelligence on their part.«<sup>90</sup>

In this subtle argumentation the Sufi author opposes geographical wisdom with a general state of ignorance leading to evil desires. He complains that he could hardly find a single person among their ulama class that knows about foreign countries. And this is exactly the point when Dan Tafa abruptly turns to the lack of knowledge about history. Knowing foreign countries meant to know their location, culture, and history alike. Quoting the Moroccan scholar Al-Hassan Ibn Masud Al-Yusi (1631–1691),<sup>91</sup> the Fula scholar Dan Tafa adapts the idea that in the Maghreb – obviously also including the historical *Sudan* in it – people do study the various Islamic sciences but tend to forget about critical reflection and the transmission of this knowledge: »The attention to histories and accounts of events and the chain of authority [*al-sanad*] is very minimal among the Maghrebians.«<sup>92</sup> The study of past events and the historicity of scholarly insights are directly linked to geography and »world knowledge«. Just as early Arab geographers did, Dan Tafa constructs his whole text on the basis of a combination of history and geography, linking time and space. The scholar quotes another Maghrebian writer to underline this regional lack of interest in history. It is outlined as a general Maghrebian habit not to document the transmission of information (*wird*). And Dan Tafa contrasts this shortfall with the Egyptian curiosity in historical transmission, on the »time and place at which the incident occurred.«<sup>93</sup> So once again, Dan Tafa adapts the classical medieval notion of combined history and geography which were taken to be necessary when transmitting the route of religious knowledge through space and time.

Dan Tafa pointed out the substantial effort he had to take in collecting news and histories of foreign countries, writing that this work required »great thoroughness and confident reporting.«<sup>94</sup> According to him, every-

90 Ibid.

91 For reference to Tafa's source, see Hajji (ed.): Al-Hassan Al-Yusi.

92 Kani: Life and Works, p. 296.

93 Ibid., p. 297.

94 Ibid., p. 301.

one's soul desired to hear about curious and rare events from other places. Collections of stories and information may even »enrich the intellect and sharpen the mind«<sup>95</sup> when being recalled by thought. With this chapter of legitimation Dan Tafa vindicated his own text and the social class of scholars in general, because it was they who »are always concerned with the recording of histories and the transmission of information to the next generation.«<sup>96</sup> The scholars are presented as protectors of geographical and historical knowledge.

Having outlined the general composition of this world by God and having argued why a treatise on geography is essential and required, Dan Tafa then situates the place of his home region within the world space: He locates himself and his Caliphate contemporaries at the »edge of civilization [or ›cultivation‹, ›architecture‹], particularly in the ›Lands of Sudan‹ where crudity, the darkness of ignorance and unbelief«<sup>97</sup> were still found. In this mental map he describes the frontier of Islam as a borderline of man-made achievements, consisting of such elements as state structure, fine architecture and cultivation of land. As we can conclude from this essay, the Jihadists perceived their Caliphate and the whole historical Sudan as a fortress against uncivilized regions further south and southeast. Quoting the treatise *On the Obligations of Princes*, which the Algerian scholar Al-Maghili (d. 1505) had written for the Kano Emir Rumfa, the Jihadist scholar Dan Tafa underlines that unbelief has long been present in the Sudan. He also quotes the West African scholar Al-Kunti (1729–1811) and his statement about the infidel Sudanese rulers that prevented their subjects from becoming Muslims. This is because in the Islamic theory of space, a territory becomes contaminated with unbelief according to its ruler, and not the average inhabitant. Al-Kunti had banned Muslims from traveling to the land of the enemies and unbelief, thereby including all Sudanese countries. And Dan Tafa repeated this ban.

The Jihadist scholar further explains the characteristics of the *Sudanese* unbelief. The Spanish Sufi scholar Shihab Al-Din (1219–1286) is cited, and the claim is made that the ›unbelievers‹ in the Sudan wor-

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid., p. 359. Translation by the author.

97 Arab. [...] نحن في طرف العمارة في بلاد السودان التي [...] Ibid., p. 358.

shipped trees and water.<sup>98</sup> This stereotypical perception of West African religions developed and determined in the Ancient Mediterranean (*vide supra*) also entered Sokoto Jihadist scholarship through several literary sources from Islamic North Africa and Iberia. Medieval authors are quoted by Dan Tafa as a method of criticizing contemporary Hausa religion during the early Caliphate. Another historical source of information about Sudanese unbelief for the Sokoto scholars was the text *Answers of Al-Maghili* (ca. 1500), which featured responses to the questions of the Songhay ruler. Sultan Askiya of Songhay had explained in his questions that many black slaves in his Empire considered themselves Muslims and believed in Allah, but also acknowledged the existence of other harmful or helpful gods and spirits. They would, for instance, listen to the previsions of foxes, or worship and sacrifice in front of trees and shrines. According to Al-Maghili's answers, it was Askiya's duty to burn the shrines and the priests taking care of them.<sup>99</sup> Uthman dan Fodio adapted this principle when he declared the pre-Jihad Hausa rulers unbelievers, because they allegedly worshipped places, trees and stones with sacrificial (animal) offerings.<sup>100</sup>

The Jihadist scholars annexed North African stories that exoticized West Africa when searching for their own place in history, in space and time. In North Africa, the story of the arrival of a Bornu diplomatic caravan bringing a giraffe to Tunis in the thirteenth century was for example one 'exotic' event that was commemorated about Sahelian Africa. This story was also renarrated by Uthman dan Fodio with reference to Ibn Khaldun (North Africa, 1332–1406),<sup>101</sup> who was in turn quoted by Dan Tafa in his geography:

98 Ibid., p. 299.

99 Cf. Rebstock (ed.): *Die Lampe der Brüder*, pp. 9–11.

100 Ibid., p. 11.

101 Cf. *Tanbih al-ikhwan* (Hunwick (ed.): *Writings*, p. 74). Cf. the Arabic manuscript copy in Paris: Uthman dan Fodio: *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, BIF, 2415/208. See also the translation and edition by Palmer: *An early Fulani Conception of Islam II*, p. 54.

»And in the year 655 [1257] the present king of Kanem, ruler of Bornu came via Tripolis to Tunis with a giraffe, an animal of strange character. In Tunis it was studied as a great sensation.«<sup>102</sup>

The source text for both Jihadist quotations was Ibn Khaldun's *Tarikh al-kabir* (also *Kitab al-ibar*), a chronicle that described the Bornuese giraffe in more detail than the Jihadists did:

»In the year 655 [1257] Sultan Al-Mustansar received a rich present from the king of the Blacks, ruler of Kanem and king of Bornu, located at the longitude of Tripolis. Among the donations to him was also a giraffe, whose outward appearance was very strange. The inhabitants of Tunis ran in masses in order to see it. The place was crowded with people, who felt a deep astonishment when looking at the quadruped whose shape appeared so strange and yet its appearance reminded at the same time of the distinctive marks of several animals of various species.«<sup>103</sup>

According to Ibn Khaldun's chronicle, the Bornu ruler was neither personally visiting Tripolis nor Tunis. He had allegedly sent several gifts to Tunis, of which only the giraffe was remembered as an extraordinary one. Smith called this transaction of goods the earliest diplomatic »embassy« known between distant Muslim states in Africa.<sup>104</sup> No matter whether the gift was of a political and diplomatic character or rather from a merchant's caravan, the Jihadists used this historical account in order to ennoble their home region to a level of supraregional historical significance. The giraffe itself served as proof of authenticity, a symbol for Sub-Saharan origin and historical relevance of the historical Sudan in Africa and Muslim territory. In Kanem-Bornu, Al-Idrisi located the frontier between the »civilized« Muslim world and the »other« space of

102 Arab. سنة خمس وخمسين وستماية وصلت [...] ملك كانم و [...] صاحب برنوقبله طرابلس إلى تونس. وفيها الزرافة الحيوان الغريب الخلق فان لها تونس مشهد عظيم انتهى. The Arabic edition unfortunately is partly indecipherable. Cf. Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 363.

103 Translated from the French version by the author; Slane (trans.): Ibn Khaldoun, vol. 2, pp. 346–347.

104 Smith: *Warfare and Diplomacy*, p. 33.

nakedness and wilderness.<sup>105</sup> In this respect, the giraffe represented the ›Land of Unbelief‹, a souvenir of the other world.

With these several aspects, the introduction of Dan Tafa's geography created a mental map, on which the Hausa region and the Sokoto Caliphate were located at the frontier between Islamic ›civilization‹ and the pagan ›wilderness‹. This positioning was based firstly on a supposed lack of knowledge in general, and a specific lack of geographical education in particular across the ›Sudan‹. Secondly, it was argued that the *Sudan* has historically been a region where unbelief prevailed, or at least persisted. It was considered neither truly Muslim, nor wholly pagan. It was the frontier zone where ›civilization‹ had to sustain, defend and expand itself.

### *Defining Africa*

The early etymology of the name »Africa« is still disputed among scholars. Derivations from the terms »dust« or »hot« in different languages have been suggested, for example. Historically, the name »Africa« was first used in its territorial sense by Latin speaking ancient Romans in order to refer to modern Tunisia. When North Africa was conquered by Muslim armies in the seventh century, they adopted the existing Latin term and called the province »Ifriqiyya«, comprising Algeria, Libya and Tunisia. Like most medieval Arabic authors, the Sokoto Jihadist scholars did not use the term »Ifriqiyya« in general. One exception, however, is found in Muhammad Bello's historiographical work *Infaq al-maysur*, in which he mentioned the spread of Berber tribes all over *Ifriqiyya*.<sup>106</sup> But by this name, Bello meant to describe the North African coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and not the continent. When referring to North Africa, they more often applied the term »Maghreb« (›West‹). And when writing about the territory south of the Maghreb, it was called the ›Lands of the Sudan‹. Africa was only the Mediterranean northern coast, and in this sense Al-Idrisi had used the name.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, the title of this section

105 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 15.

106 Arab. افریقیة. Cf. *Infaq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 19.

107 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 121.



premises the actual geographical meaning of »Africa« as denoting the whole continent. It does not rely on any historical semantics of the name »Africa«, which was not generally used in Jihadist texts.

It is important to note that Al-Idrisi had dedicated the most space on his map and his written geographical account to the African continent. According to his textual arrangement in climate zones, West Africa, Nubia, Abessinia and Yemen are juxtaposed in only one chapter. This spatial order was adopted by the Sokoto Jihadists and integrated into their perception of home as part of the Sahel »Lands of Sudan«, ranging from east to west. In chapter 1.1, Al-Idrisi described the Atlantic Ocean as »The Ocean of Darkness« and located two Atlantic Islands reported by Ptolemy. The water mouth of the »Western Nile« is mentioned and furthermore, the country of the »Lamlam« with its towns »Melel« and »Dawu« are depicted. »Ghana« is presented as a populous town where everyone went naked and frequently had sexual intercourse with any stranger without any sort of marriage.<sup>108</sup>

The famous world map of Ibn Hawqal (tenth century) had already identified an imagined frontier of Islam in Africa. He labeled his African map with the words »Awdaghust is part of the Muslim territory, Ghana [ancient Rana] belongs to the unbelievers.«<sup>109</sup> As Eisenstein emphasizes, this frontier label is only applied in West Africa and as an exception on these maps. The idea of a wild, cannibalistic people living in the far north and south of the inhabited world is an integral part of Islamic eschatology. Both the northern and southern edges of the world were considered uninhabited deserts due to the extreme cold in the north and hostile heat in the south. The most northern people were called »Yajuj wa-Majuj« (in Christian mythology: Gog and Magog). Alexander the Great (lit. *dhu'l qarnain*: »the possessor of two horns«) was believed to have locked them up behind a big wall:

»Until, when he reached the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had made no shelter against it. [...] Until, when he reached the place between the two mountains, he found beneath them a people who would scarcely understand a word. They said, ›O Dhu'l Qarnain, verily, Gog

108 Drecoll: Idrisi aus Sizilien, p. 127.

109 Eisenstein: »Mappae Arabicae«, p. 101.

and Magog are creating disorder in the earth; shall we then pay thee tribute on condition that thou set up a barrier between us and them?« He replied, »The power with which my Lord has endowed me about this is better, but you may help me with physical strength; I will set up between you and them a rampart. [...] So they [Gog and Magog] were not able to scale it, nor were they able to dig through it.« (Koran 18,91–98)

Accordingly, these pagan humans were only to be freed on Judgment Day when they would spread through the world, drinking and eating up all the resources. On the Al-Idrisi map and in his geographical account, Gog and Magog were located in the very north-east of Asia (see *Figure 6*). Those people had long been considered to be anthropophagous; they only appeared in anonymous masses and would finally be eliminated by God. Many geographical Arabic texts and also some Sufi traditions referred to these mythical peoples at the northern frontier of the world. Knowledge about the Gog, Magog, and their places in the north had of course also entered Jihadist scholarship first and foremost because the Sahelian scholars were well-educated in the Koran exegesis.<sup>110</sup> Also in the Sufi biographies of Persian spiritual scholars, it was explicitly mentioned that these role models had lived close to the northern frontier of the world neighboring the Gog and Magog. Uthman dan Fodio quoted for example a biography about the Persian Sufi saint Al-Jaylani in his work *Tabshir al-umma* of 1794, in which this Gog-Magog-frontier is located next to his home region.<sup>111</sup>

The people of the southern edge of the world and Africa are less prominent in the Koran and other religious texts. But they were likewise considered wild cannibal masses, called »Lamlam«, »Nyamnyam« and the like. Al-Idrisi condensed in his introduction to this climate zone at the southern edge of the »Bilad as-Sudan« all information in one statement: »There, water is scarce and there is no culture.«<sup>112</sup> Accordingly,

**110** Arab merchant travelers in Asia also spread news about the Gog and Magog in early nineteenth-century Cairo; cf. Seetzen: *Nachrichten von arabischen Reisebeschreibungen*, p. 301.

**111** Cf. the edition published online at <http://siiiiasi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/tabshir-al-umma-arabic.pdf> (16.04.2014), p. 19.

**112** Dozy / Goeje (eds.): *Edrisi. Description de l’Afrique*, p. 35.



Figure 6: «Gog and Magog» (ماجوج وياجوج) on Idrisi's map

the extreme desert was populated by huge snakes that were hunted and eaten by some Africans.<sup>113</sup> The inhabitants of the desert were thought to steal each other's children, purportedly in order to sell them. Al-Idrisi said they had many children in polygamous families that »live like animals«<sup>114</sup> and only care for their physical needs without ever thinking about the composition of the world. Since these deserts border the edge of the world, their land and living beings already mix with legendary figures, such as dragons on desert mountains.<sup>115</sup> And in the areas of the imaginary tribe of the »Damdam« (or »Lamlam«), wild animals were even more bizarre: mountains with two-headed snakes and snakes with two tails (cf. *Figure 7*).<sup>116</sup> Those populations living on the

113 Ibid., p. 37.

114 Ibid., p. 39.

115 Ibid., p. 41.

116 Ibid., p. 44.

remotest islands of the *Foggy Ocean*<sup>117</sup> were even forced to fight magic ocean creatures in order to survive.<sup>118</sup> Accordingly, its human inhabitants were located at the gate between this world and the hereafter; so that they were all considered to be professional magicians by Al-Idrisi.<sup>119</sup> Reportedly, Islamized societies would regularly raid their pagan neighbours and enslave them.<sup>120</sup> It was especially inhabitants of remote islands that were imagined as half-animals with animal heads. With this Islamic background, it may be a little ironic that Jihadist emirs believed that the British lived on the water. Hugh Clapperton reported about a chat with a local ruler during his second journey:

»At eight in the evening the sultan came, accompanied by the midaki [*maidaki*, cavalry leader], and one male slave. [...] He then asked me if the king of England was a great man. ›Yes,‹ I said, ›the greatest of all the white kings.‹ ›But,‹ says he, ›you live on the water?‹ ›Oh no,‹ I said, ›we have more land than there is between Boussa and Badag (as they call Badagry), and more than five thousand towns.‹ ›Well,‹ says he, ›I thought, and always have heard, that you lived on the water.‹«<sup>121</sup>

European travelers were considered a naval people because all the news they received was that they owned huge ships and governed the coasts of the world. Al-Idrisi located the »Lamlam« at the West African Atlantic coast, south of the large rivers. But from his text it is clear that he judged all peoples south of the Sahel rivers to be pagan cannibals.

Having analyzed the Islamic territorial concept of the »evil« and *kafir* space at the end of the world, we can now turn to the positioning of paradise on maps and in geographical literature. Religious towns, like for instance Mecca or Medina, were usually not even labeled on these maps, so that they do not represent a purely religious visualization. Descriptions of the Holy Cities and their environment were rather found in special pilgrimage literature, to which maps were usually not attached. Furthermore, certain

117 The eternal ocean limiting the world to the west (Atlantic).

118 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l’Afrique, p. 61.

119 Ibid., p. 43.

120 Ibid., p. 47.

121 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 102.



Figure 7: »Lands of the Lamlam« (بلاد لعلم) on Idrisi's map

Qibla maps were created in order to illustrate the direction of prayer to the Kaaba. Explicit religious explanations were not part of the classical Arabic map of the Middle Ages. Therefore, it must be assumed that the importance of the Islamic frontier in Africa was expressed owing to a concept of the »civilized« human that may coincidentally happen to be also a Muslim.

On the one hand, the Nile River was considered one of the rivers coming from paradise. But from Jewish-Christian traditions on the other hand, Muslim geographers extracted the idea of paradise being situated in the Far East. The medieval Muslim maps and geographies can be seen as a synthesis of both theories: The mythic *Mountains of the Moon* in East Africa (alternating from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, to Mozambique) were considered a gate to paradise, while the African continent was stretched far to the east, facing India. Later in the geographic tradition, paradise was rather supposed in the very south of Africa. The Nile however, maintained its crucial role for the hereafter and remained the paradisiac »River of Honey« in all Islamic world geography. Other rivers linking earth and paradise – such as the Euphrat and the Tigris – never

were as dominant on Muslim maps as the Nile. Several Islamic or pre-Islamic stories focus on journeys to the Gate of Paradise via the source of the Nile, and still others describe the regular floods of the Nile as divine.<sup>122</sup> Other accounts located the lands of angels, jinns, and paradise itself behind the round oceanic belt and the mountain range *Qaf* beyond it. The alleged ›cannibals‹, as well as the devil in Islamic cosmology, were located on the lower layers of the universe. Muslim scholars agreed that there were six earths under the flat earth layer inhabited by the humans of this world. Altogether this makes seven stacked earths being topped by seven heavens. But in geographical accounts and maps they were neither presented nor mentioned, so that it was only the northern ›Gog and Magog‹, as well as the southern African ›Lamlam‹ that served as representatives of the evil other world. Sub-Saharan Africa was created as a region of human-animal, heaven-earth and hell-earth frontiers. This overlap of antipodal spheres was perceived as a threat for well-organized Muslim societies.

Cannibals were the major evidence for this frontier theory. The Jihadist geographers located the ›Lamlam‹ cannibals in relation to a large river, separating them from the Muslim trading sphere. Rivers therefore were important environmental features that acted as borders between the human world and the ›other‹ or ›nether‹ worlds. Although living close to the Niger and Benue, the Jihadists were more willing to explain the rivers of other Islamic regions or the famous paradise waters. When Hugh Clapperton resided at Bello's Court in 1827, his informant Ahmad described the Sennar region between the White and the Blue Nile, also mentioning the yearly floodings.<sup>123</sup> The Niger and the Benue were the most important rivers of the Hausa region, but were only seldom taken account of in Jihadist Arabic literature. In Hausa language, they were commonly referred to as *farin ruwa* (›white water‹) and *bakin ruwa* (›black water‹).<sup>124</sup> In the view of the Jihadists, there was no concept of the African continent. But what can today be considered ›Africa‹ was structured along climatic zones: the North African Coast, the Sahara deserts, and the Sahel called ›Sudan‹ which was separated from the

122 Eisenstein: ›Mappae Arabicae‹, p. 105.

123 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 336.

124 Baikie: Narrative of an Exploring Voyage, p. 73.

southern forests by rivers and lakes. The very north of the world was imagined as the coldest end of the world so that African regions were defined as the hottest climatic zones at the southern end of the world.

### *Defining the Sudanese Lands*

The term »Sudan« indisputably derives from the Arabic name of the color ›black‹ or ›dark‹ (*sawda* or *aswad*),<sup>125</sup> and in pre-colonial times it was used in connection with the word ›lands‹: ›Bilad as-Sudan‹, or ›Land of the Blacks‹. Implicitly it assumed racial-geographical segregation and strengthened ethnological stereotypes. What was meant by Sudan is the Sahel belt at the desert edge of the Sahara. »Sahel« is itself an Arabic term, meaning »shore«, which can be used for the ocean or desert shores. This term was adopted from North Africans by European Colonial geographers and is now used in order to denote the environmental zone at the desert edge.<sup>126</sup> In this work, I use the word »Sahel« because it is an academic convention today, because it is the least pejorative term available, and because the Sokoto Jihadists also organized the world with reference to climatic zones in the tradition of Al-Idrisi and other Arabic geographers. The former expressions »Western« and »Central Sudan« are neglected by most Africanist scholars today, because they are racial labels of historical geographies in Arabic. Whenever the word »Sudan« is used here, it is applied with reference to the Jihadist idea of this space or when referring to the modern Sudanese states.

The Sokoto Jihadists were aware of the etymological development of the word »Sudan« in Arabic and yet continued to use it. The Fulbe Jihadist scholar Dan Tafa explained in his geographical work: »Know that the Sudan means the southern regions of the earth and the word is the plural for ›black‹ stemming from the ›blackness‹ of their majority.«<sup>127</sup> The Jihadists agreed that most of the Sudanese inhabitants were black and

125 Arab. أسود (m.), سوداء (f.).

126 See also on terminological questions of »Sudan« and »Sahel« Hall: *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa*, p. 27.

127 Arab. أعلم ان السودان عبارة عن الاقليم الجنوبية في الارض وهو اسود من السواد لغلبته عليهم. Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 363.

thus integrated this category of skin color deliberately and consciously, which had also been turned into a spatial category long before the Sokoto Jihad. Moreover, the Jihadists defined the ›Lands of Sudan‹ with regard to a cardinal direction. In their spatial concept, the Sudan was located in the global south, almost constituting the edge of the map. It was not considered an African feature, but a latitude zone that was present all over the earth. The Caliphate was thus located in a geographical frontier position, facing the world unknown and unfamiliar to Muslim scholars. Dan Tafa formulated clear explanations why the Sudanese Lands lacked Islamic scholarship:

»They consist of different peoples, various tribes and regions far from each other. The knowledge of the people did not arrive among them because of the distances and gaps [between] the settlements.«<sup>128</sup>

According to Dan Tafa's analysis, the sparse population and scattered regionalism prevented Islamic knowledge from expanding into the Sudan. We may therefore conclude from this account that the Jihadists imagined the central Islamic regions of North Africa and Arabia as densely inhabited spaces, which thus lacked integration within Islamic long-distance networks. Space was considered an obstacle for the distribution of knowledge.

The Sudan of the Jihadist geography was limited in the very west by Mafara (Central Guinea) and Awlayla (unknown) on a river shore, where salt was produced and traded to the whole Sudan. This detailed information about trade relations was most probably quoted from Al-Idrisi's *Kitab nuzhat al-mushtaq* and did not refer to information circulating among traders in Dan Tafa's time. In a further step, the town ›Sula‹ is mentioned with a description copied from Al-Idrisi. Dan Tafa also located it on the shore of ›the River Nile‹,<sup>129</sup> and hence he adopted the theory that the Niger and Nile Rivers were in fact one and the same water course. Historically there existed different hypotheses about the course of the Nile in Africa. Many contemporary traders seemed

128 Arab. وهم أمم مختلفة وقبائل متبانية وأقطار متباعدة أكثرها لم يصل اليهم علم الناس لطول المسافة. Ibid. انقطاع عمران

129 Arab. على نهر النيل. Ibid.



to know that the Nile passed Timbuktu, but the further course was a topic of diverse debate. When the British traveler Lander interviewed Yawuri<sup>130</sup> residents in 1830 about this matter, a Fulbe informant guessed that it passed the Hausa region and flowed into Lake Chad.<sup>131</sup> But if we analyze on the other hand the map of Hugh Clapperton he drew based on information provided by a scholar of Bello's Sokoto Court, the »Qwarra« is portrayed flowing from Massina (Mali) to Sokoto south of the land trading route.<sup>132</sup>

The original map was called an »Arabic chart« by Clapperton and is lost. The map of *Figure 8* was published in 1829 and had been »translated« into English and European cartographic language. Clapperton's version was, for example, drawn northbound for publication in Europe. The Arabic text was written by a certain »Mohammed, son of Ahmad Masané« on 31 January 1827 at the Sokoto Court on request and payment of Hugh Clapperton.<sup>133</sup> According to the name of this Sokoto scholar, he had either traveled to the Caliphate from the Massina Sultanate (central Mali), or his father had immigrated to Sokoto and told his son about the journey. The inscription A on the right (or east) illustrates the Sokoto Court, B represents a »Quarra« island, and C–K are towns and settlements on the road to Timbuktu. The latter city is also portrayed in a rectangular shape as »L«. Since the author of the chart was of Massina origin, the map is more detailed about the rivers of Mali and Futa Toro, than it is about the Caliphate region. X (north of Sokoto) is an »undescribed branch of the river« and P is only depicting the Sokoto-Massina route. On crossing the river at B (»Biténkoobi«), the route leads through land inhabited by »the tribe of Felan.« It is described more elaborately as a country that

**130** A tributary Emirate of Gwandu (Eastern Sokoto Caliphate).

**131** Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, p. 305.

**132** One must pay attention that this map is southbound and not northbound.

**133** Clapperton wrote in his journal: »Paid Malem Mohamed 20,000 cowries for his writing me an account of the country between Soccatoo and Masina, and Kano and Senar, and making a chart of the river Quorra, between Cubbie and Masina.« Cf. the edition of Lockhart / Lovejoy (eds.): *Hugh Clapperton into the Interior of Africa*, p. 515.

»abounds with mountains, rocks, plains, elephants, and buffaloes; and has along the bank of the river many white hills. Some of the people drink their water from the river, and others have shallow wells.«<sup>134</sup>

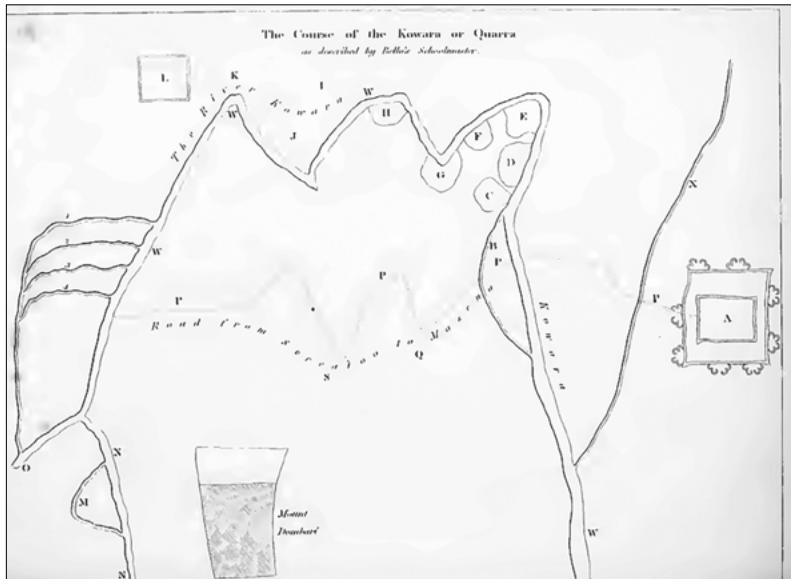


Figure 8: Clapperton's map of the »Qwarra« (the original was drawn in 1827)

The Torodi country to its west is also characterized as mountainous ruled by »a tall and extremely strong man, and renowned for his courage and wars.«<sup>135</sup> »O« in the far west is the »White River or Sea« from Massina and Futa Toro until the area of the »French Christians«. »N« on the other hand represents the »Black Sea or River« flowing from/to Futa Jallon.<sup>136</sup> Muhammad mentions several Massina Rivers and wells in his written account, always giving distances by days of traveling between the points. Beyond waters, his geographical account is also focused on Fulbe towns and emirates to the west of the Sokoto Caliphate (e.g. Liptako). Many of

134 Ibid., pp. 511–512.

135 Ibid., p. 512.

136 Ibid., pp. 510–511.

them are cited for their great warriors and mounted soldiers.<sup>137</sup> He also identified the land »Hajri« as ›T‹ which was not marked on the map, but which was inhabited by Fulbe as well. Muhammad then legitimized that the Fulbe were first in this region, and that the ›black‹ people were only living in the mountains: »The inhabitants of the vales are the Felans, who originally conquered these countries; but the mountains are inhabited by a people called Benoo-Hami (the children of Ham).«<sup>138</sup> By the term »children of Ham« all black Africans are meant who were considered to be descendants of the biblical Ham in Islam (cf. chapter IV.1.2). He located the ›black‹ Africans on the mountains and clearly distinguished the Fulbe from them. The »Benoo-Hami« were reportedly living close to the mountain in the south of the map and they belonged to the Songhay warriors. And Muhammad claimed, that except for the Songhay town Hombori all these countries were »subject to our Lord the Prince of the Believers, Mohammed Bello.«<sup>139</sup>

Massina itself was praised for its prosperity, the Fulbe pastoral grounds for the grazing of cattle, and the land generally for its food (rice, meat, fish), its fertility and its warriors. And Muhammad again stressed that they had settled there »since ancient times.«<sup>140</sup> Its ruler »Ahmad Hamad Labo« (Seku Amadu, 1776–1845) is called the ruler of the »Gharb (West) in Soodan« – the »Western Sudan«.<sup>141</sup> And we can conclude from this, that the Fulbe scholar Muhammad divided the Sudan into two: Massina in the west, and the Sokoto Caliphate in the east. The voluminous description of Massina is not represented on the map of Clapperton at all. Muhammad mentioned many places, plants, and topographical features of Massina only during his talk(s) with the British explorer. In his account of Mauri (western Kebbi), he focused once again on the ›pagans‹ of that region:

»Mouri contains small mountains, woods, and has two roads on the left; on one of which there is a deep stream, and on the other are two lakes, sur-

137 Ibid., p. 512.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid., p. 513.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

rounded with flowering and fruitful trees. This country originally belonged to the Sultan of Kabi, and its inhabitants are infidels. Its present sultan is named Ghagara, and has a city for his residence named Lukoo-you [Lokoye], which has a great lake near it. The chief towns of this country are Dogordoo-si [Dogon Dutse], Myzani, Toonsubi, and Tabada. There are many smaller ones, which need not be mentioned for brevity's sake. The lands are mostly stony, sandy, and hilly. There are a great many deep wells, well supplied with water; but the country altogether has but few trees, though it abounds with reptiles.«<sup>142</sup>

North of Mauri, several Tuareg towns are described by Muhammad. After these sections, he turns to another pagan state:

»On the right of the country the territory of Jerma [Zarma, Songhay speakers] lies; it is a narrow vale, between hills and hillocks of sand; and on the east it has a lofty mountain; it contains natron and other deep lakes. It is inhabited by the tribe of Benoo-Hami, who are great warriors, possessing swift and well-trained horses, and their spears are extremely long and well-ironed with sharp blades. They are ill-disposed people, and have no lawful sultan, but their chief is one chosen out of the tribe. They subsist mostly upon dokhun, and their country abuts on the great sea or river C wara.«<sup>143</sup>

The ›unbelieving‹ Songhay in his account are frightening and awe-inspiring warriors, but they are counted as ›black‹ descendants of Ham without legitimate statehood on the other hand. Some other pagans supposedly lived in the Touareg land Azaouak. He explains that between Azaouak and the Niger there was only desert, inhabited solely by wild beasts, and that the people of Azaouak ›go to the chase of the giraffe in the winter season.«<sup>144</sup> The abode of the various ›unbelievers‹ and ›Benoo-Ham‹ are not linked to special environments (rivers, deserts) by Muhammad. Only in one section did he locate them explicitly on the mountain. The ›Quorra River‹ itself appears as a quite frightening natu-

142 Ibid., pp. 513–514.

143 Ibid., p. 514.

144 Ibid., p. 515.

ral water course, even more so because its sources were unknown and its power referred to God's will:

»This great river is the largest in all the territories of Houssa; we know not of its source, or of any one who has seen it. It rushes and precipitates itself through the country from left to right, and contains many islands inhabited by fishermen herdsmen, husbandmen, and settlers. As to the variety of its animals, birds, and fish, it is only known to the Lord Creator; it has rocks and mountains, which break and shatter to pieces all vessels that are driven against them; and its great roaring and noise, with the agitation of its waves, astonish the hearer and terrify the beholder; and, at the same time, exhibit the wonderful power of the Omnipotent Creator.«<sup>145</sup>

The direction of the river from west to east is only given in the text description. The inhabitants of its islands are mainly described as fishermen and its animals are referred to as strange, numerous, and unexplored. The sound of the water is horrifying in this account, and the waves were accordingly destructive to any boats.

Dan Tafa's account is quite different in tone and content from Muhammad's itinerary geography. The Sokoto Jihadist author of the second generation based his geography on medieval literature instead of personal travel experience. Except for some towns, the whole ›Mafara‹ region in the very west of the Sudan is described as waste and desert land due to the lack of »water and soil irrigation«. <sup>146</sup> Wangara, in contrast, was allegedly an island rich in gold dust and probably refers to one of the islands on the Gambia River that are usually flooded during the raining season. Or it refers to the medieval Songhay merchant caste ›Wangara‹ located between Jenne and Timbuktu, which were way stations in the ancient Malian gold trade. In the chapter on the Western Sudan, the Jihadist writer Dan Tafa summarized Al-Idrisi who had explicitly explained the methods of gathering gold dust whenever the water in Wangara retreats. <sup>147</sup> ›Senegal‹<sup>148</sup> is considered a town north of another river which

145 Ibid.

146 Arab. لُقلة الماء والمرعى ارض. Kani: Life and Works, p. 364.

147 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 9.

148 Written سمغال in Dan Tafa's text although usually spelled سنغال in Arabic.

was used for trade by nomadic camel herders, and which flows in the reverse direction of the Senegal River: from the ocean to the Nile (Niger).

Another kingdom called »Karkar«<sup>149</sup> was assumed to be on the shore of a river »Bahar« (Arab. »ocean«). The ancient Empire Ghana was also thought to be on the golden shore of that »Bahar«, on which the local inhabitants would navigate with huge ships.<sup>150</sup> With the term »Karkar«, Al-Idrisi had described the population south of the Muslim towns with whom the so-called »silent trade« was practiced. This type of barter was used in many regions – usually if the trading parties did not have a common *lingua franca*. This trade was organized without direct contact between the traders. Usually one individual or group went to a customary place, left some goods, and retreated. The other trader then approached the site to examine the goods, either leaving them behind or adding an amount of other trade goods or currency if willing to buy them. At the time when the first trader accepted the sum he would take it, and the other trading partner finally would take the goods in order to finish the transaction. At least since Herodotus' description of the Carthaginian trade with West African societies,<sup>151</sup> this phenomenon was well-known and considered typical for West Africa, too. But this institutionalized trade mode has also been reported for Southeast Asian regions.

In post-colonial critical studies on silent trade in ancient Ghana, it is doubted that it ever existed as such. Moraes Farias for example claims it would be highly unlikely that Carthagian traders would have disclosed details about their business methods and the secret about the origin of

149 Arab. كركر. Kani: Life and Works, p. 364. This place cannot be located on modern maps. There is only one city called Karkar in Somalia.

150 Ibid., p. 365.

151 Herodotus: »Another story is told by the Carthaginians. There is a place in Libya, they say, where men live beyond the Pillars of Heracles; they come here and unload their cargo; then, having laid it in order along the beach, they go aboard their ships and light a smoking fire. The people of the country see the smoke, and, coming to the sea, they lay down gold to pay for the cargo, and withdraw from the wares. Then the Carthaginians disembark and examine the gold; if it seems to them a fair price for their cargo, they take it and go away; but if not, they go back aboard and wait, and the people come back and add more gold until the sailors are satisfied. In this transaction, it is said, neither party defrauds the other: the Carthaginians do not touch the gold until it equals the value of their cargo, nor do the people touch the cargo until the sailors have taken the gold.« Cf. Godley (ed.): Herodotus, IV.196. See also Encyclopaedia Britannica, »Silent Trade«.

their goods.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, Arabic sources have revealed that trade middlemen were in fact engaged in the trans-Saharan gold trade, which was not ›silent‹ at all. The myth of the ›silent trade‹ may thus be judged a creation of the West African middlemen who tried to prevent any direct contact between North African trade caravans and West African local rulers. They probably told the curious visitors that one cannot meet the gold-mining peoples personally – a story transmitted to the whole Mediterranean and then back to the Sahel and to the nineteenth century Jihadists who studied Medieval Arabic geography. Moraes Farias deconstructed several Arabic accounts and has shown compellingly that the more direct the sources are, the less did they even take note of something identified as ›silent trade‹. Nevertheless, it had become a fixed narrative included in Mediterranean world knowledge. It was basically renarrated by scholars that never investigated the phenomenon and relied on the literal truth of historical travel literature which summarized a sort of ›merchant gossip‹ about trans-Saharan trade. Middlemen of the gold trade were on the one hand open in talking about this gossip, while they weren't so willing to inform visitors about the location of these barter places or the actual mining spots: »Often the accounts of silent exchanges seem almost independent from any precise context of space and time.«<sup>153</sup> From Al-Idrisi the Sokoto Jihadists adapted this ›geographical‹ and ›historical gossip‹, and the imaginary landscapes that for the most part lacked any reference either to places the Jihadists were aware of or to a concrete time. To add another argument to the interpretation of silent trade as myth, one must take notice of the cannibal myths that were so often incorporated into the ›silent trade‹ stories.

Dan Tafa, however, retold Al-Idrisi's myth about Karkar including the reported ›silent trade‹ in gold, the execution of gold thieves, and plants with which one may turn a dangerous snake into a harmless animal. The exact places where these sensational events may have occurred remained unknown. In contrast to the Clapperton/Muhammad map, Dan Tafa located all places on anonymous river islands or river shores without ever distinguishing the Gambia, Senegal, Niger River, the Atlantic Ocean or minor streams. »Dahdam« is for example considered »west of the sea [or

152 Moraes Farias: *Silent Trade*, p. 10.

153 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

lake]»<sup>154</sup> without further reference being given. The Sokoto Jihadist writers only collected the written geographical knowledge, but they neglected any direct comparison with the contemporary knowledge about Mali and the Senegambia regions. They only endeavored to provide a thick history when the Hausa region and its direct neighbors are judged for their lack of Islamic belief. The place »Dahdam« on the other hand was only defined according to Al-Idrisi's work: They had built a fortress with a picture of a woman, whom they serve as goddess and organize pilgrimages to this picture.<sup>155</sup> Al-Idrisi also assumed that they went naked and that »they are a people like animals«.<sup>156</sup> It is, however, interesting that the Jihadists did not really make an effort to verify or falsify accounts regarding certain places, but rather were eager to adopt transcontinental narratives about non-Muslims, which often characterized them by noting their nakedness and animal-like behavior and outward appearance.<sup>157</sup>

Myths about the incredible wealth in resources, such as gold, salt and cowries, were joined by narratives about the uncivilized inhabitants. Those stories about the »rich and wild« were copied time and again by Mediterranean writers from the eleventh century (Al-Idrisi) onwards and thus became standardized knowledge about West Africa. The composition of Al-Idrisi follows the genre of merchant itineraries by mentioning distances (in day units) and topographical features (deserts) throughout the journey. When for instance referring to ancient Ghana,<sup>158</sup> the size of the country is measured by the time it takes to cross it.<sup>159</sup> Obviously appreciating these written accounts in some way, the Jihadist writers also adopted the idea that former West African kings (like the rulers of Ghana and Mali) were Muslims at a time when their subjects weren't. This information is also integrated into Al-Idrisi's geography. Al-Idrisi wrote, for example, about Ancient Ghana: »It is said that its king is a

154 Arab. بحر مغربا. Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 365.

155 Ibid.

156 Arab. وهم امة كالبهائم. Ibid.

157 For a more detailed discussion of stereotypes in myths of anthropophagy, see chapter IV.5.4.

158 Arab. غانة. Kani: *Life and Works*, pp. 365–366.

159 See for instance the chapter on Nubia, which demanded three weeks to pass it, according to 'Dan Tafa's source. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 366.



Muslim.«<sup>160</sup> This conclusion was in turn put to use for Jihadist propaganda against the Hausa rulers that had allegedly once been Muslims in the past, but then lost their faith and became apostates in the eighteenth century.

Dan Tafa also quoted Al-Idrisi's brief remark about Kanem (Bornu) that was located at the Nile shore: »All of them are Muslims except for a few« and they follow the school of Islamic law established by »Imam Malik«. <sup>161</sup> And this short explanation on Kanem Islam corresponds with the Bornu environment described by Al-Idrisi and Dan Tafa: »Flat and vast land.«<sup>162</sup> This link between flat topography and Islam on the one hand, and correspondingly the connection between hilly forests and unbelief is very prevalent in medieval Arabic literature on Africa and was later copied and regionally modified by the Sokoto Jihadists. In Al-Idrisi's text of the twelfth century, Kanem (Bornu) appears as a fortified market town dependent on the Wangara rulers of Songhay and inhabited by female professional magicians.<sup>163</sup> All sorts of Al-Idrisi's curios and wonders about West Africa were quoted by Dan Tafa, ranging from snake-eating peoples of the desert to huge glimmering mountains with water springs tasting like honey.<sup>164</sup>

Although being uncritical with Al-Idrisi's text corpus, Dan Tafa mentioned the lack of written sources for composing a compendium about the geographical accounts and the intensity of Islam in the Sudan. He called this unfortunate initial position of a scholar an »abyss«<sup>165</sup> he needed to overcome. Quoting classical North African scholars such as Abu Al-Hasan Ash-Shadhili (593–656) and the Malian reformist Al-Kunti (1729–1811), Dan Tafa emphasized that for the majority of its regions the Sudan was considered a »Land of Unbelief« with which trade was prohibited for Muslims. Furthermore, the Sokoto Jihadist author recalled the writings of the Malian scholar Ahmad Baba who had claimed that Bornu, Kano, Katsina, Songhay and Zakzak (Zaria) were Islamized re-

160 Arab. وقال ان ملكها [of Ghana] مسلم. Ibid.

161 Arab. وكلها مسلمون الا القليل منهم [...] امام مالك. Ibid.

162 Arab. ارض منبسطة واسعة. Ibid.

163 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 15.

164 Al-Idrisi described a place called »Karaundiye« (probably in Mauretania) in the above-mentioned chapter. Ibid., p. 315.

165 Kani: Life and Works, p. 300.

gions. But all bordering regions of the Sudan were definitely declared ›Lands of Unbelief‹. The ›Land of Islam‹ tends to be made up of all territories accessed by Sudanese trade and pilgrimage routes. The ›familiar‹ trading territory is opposed to the ›unknown‹ pagan country.

Dan Tafa also refers to Uthman dan Fodio and his commentary on Ahmad Baba: Uthman dan Fodio relativized Baba's view because he had composed his text according to the accessible knowledge of his time. In order to justify his Jihadist policy, dan Fodio claimed that times had changed and Baba's opinion was not universally and literally relevant anymore. In the time of the Songhay Empire, Hausa rulers were Muslims and their subjects still unbelievers; but in Uthman's time the rulers were blamed for their apostate unbelief while the poor subjects were still pious Muslims.<sup>166</sup> Dan Tafa seems to tacitly agree with the historicity of the Sudan as a united territory as described by Baba or Al-Idrisi: Uthman dan Fodio's quotation argues that the unbelieving Hausa rulers of 1804 were killed and replaced by the Jihadists who had turned the Hausa region into a ›Land of Islam‹ by means of these executions. Neighboring countries of the Hausa, such as Yoruba, are designated as ›Lands of Unbelief‹ in accordance with Ahmad Baba and Uthman dan Fodio's commentary on Baba. Unlike the Hausa territory, the Jihadists considered most Yoruba kings as well as their subjects to be unbelievers. The Jihadists applied the powerful politics of memory for their own purposes. They chose and interpreted historical texts about the geography and levels of Islamization of the Sudan. Certain traditional comments on the Sudanese ›Lands of Unbelief‹ were questioned and new, adapted scholarly judgments were composed.

The Jihadist scholar Dan Tafa composed another geographical text in 1824 – probably at a time when Clapperton was staying in Sokoto. This text has been called *Rawdhat al-afkar* by western scholars, although it is a draft book and lacks a proper title.<sup>167</sup> In the manuscript collection at Niamey (Niger) the text is catalogued under the headline *Majmua' ba'd akhbar*, as »some important news«; other archives called it *Akhbar*

166 Ibid., p. 304. Dan Tafa is quoting Uthman dan Fodio's text *Tanbih al-ikhwan*; cf. Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 159. See also Uthman dan Fodio: *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, BIF, 2415/208.

167 Cf. Hunwick (ed.): Writings, pp. 227–228.

*hadhihi al-bilad al-hawsiyya*, or »News of these Hausa countries«. Dan Tafa was a celebrated scholar according to Barth who had met him during his stay. And he especially instructed Barth about Songhay history:

»I here first made the acquaintance of the learned 'Abd el Kader dan Taffa (Mustapha), whom I was most anxious to see, in order to obtain from him some historical information. As soon as the people had dispersed quietly, returning to their various quarters, I sent him a present, when he paid me a visit in the evening, and furnished me immediately with some positive data with regard to the history of the dynasty of the Asaki or A'skia, the rulers of Songhay [ca. 1443–1538], which he had perfectly in his head, and which were of the greatest importance in giving me an insight into the historical relation of the western countries of these regions with that of Central Negroland.«<sup>168</sup>

What Heinrich Barth labeled »western« and »Central Negroland« in his English travel journals, was doubtless called »Sudanese lands« by Dan Tafa in their Arabic conversation, considering his Sudanese geography. In this draft geography the Jihadist author classified three Sudanese sections.

»Know that our country is the Sudan, which is divided into three regions, the Upper, the Middle, and the Lower. The Upper Sudan comprises the land of Bornu, the land of Aïr, the land of Zabarma, and the land of Songhay. The Middle Sudan is Hausa, with its seven states, and seven bastard [*banza*] states.<sup>169</sup> The Lower Sudan is the land of the Bayabaya.<sup>170</sup> No King of the Sudan has ever ruled the whole of these three regions: did he conquer a part, the other parts – which were the greater part – escaped him.«<sup>171</sup>

168 Barth: *Travels and Discoveries*, vol. 3, p. 136.

169 A discussion of these fourteen Hausa states and their legends is outlined in chapter IV.1.4.

170 Shareef's manuscript copy calls this land »Baiyyai«, Arab. بايياي . See Shareef: *The Origin and Meaning*, n.p.

171 Arab. فاعلم ان بلادنا هذه السودانية على ثلاثة اقسام عوالي وسائط وسوافل فعوالي وبلاد برنو وبلاد ادر وبلاد زيرم و بلاد سنغي ووسانظها حوس وهو سبع اقاليم وينذكي وهو سبعة واقلايم وسوافلها هي بلاد بياييا (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, ff. 2–3). Cf. also the English translation by Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, p. 262. Palmer was confused about the authorship of this text,

First of all, Dan Tafa structured the Sudanese space into three belts between east and west. Although Heinrich Barth and other European explorers divided the Sudan along the lines of longitudes into a western (Mali), a central (Hausa), and an eastern region (Bornu, Dar Fur), the Jihadist author chose the ›climatological‹ approach of Al-Idrisi and other Arabic geographers. But while Al-Idrisi did not further differentiate the Sudanese Lands, Dan Tafa mentioned three categories. The ›upper‹ or northern Sudan stretched out from Bornu in the east to Songhay in the west. In the ›lower‹ or southern Sudan all regions were labeled as *Bebayo* (or rather ›Bayyai‹ in other manuscripts). By the name *Bebayo*, the Jihadist geographer probably alluded to the *Gbaya* (or *Baya*) people living today in various regions within the Central African Republic, the Congos, and Cameroon. But prior to the Sokoto Jihad, the majority of the *Gbaya* had lived in the Adamawa Emirate region of the eastern Sokoto Caliphate. Many of them escaped the Jihadist expansion to the east or resisted the conquest; others cooperated with the new rulers or came to another arrangement.<sup>172</sup> But revisiting Dan Tafa's Sudanese geography, he called all the southern, and not only his Adamawa neighbors by the ethnic term *Gbaya*. And this shows the importance of Adamawa as a frontier region in the time of Muhammad Bello and the era of expansion. Adamawa ›unbelievers‹ were thus perceived as the epitome of the southern ›Lands of Unbelief‹.

Up to this point, the Jihadist geography seems to be fairly up to date from a Sokoto perspective of 1824. Yet, when Dan Tafa turns to the ›middle Sudan‹, it is defined to include the fourteen legendary pre-Jihad Hausa states, instead of the Sokoto Caliphate that had conquered and united most of them. The geographer mixed historical and current spatial knowledge. The only continuity is the landscape: The regions were ordered with reference to climatic and topographic factors, although there

assuming it was Muhammad Bello, as he also discovered some of its content in the text *Infaq al-maysur*. In fact, Abd Al-Qadir bin Al-Mustafa (1804–1864) was part of the same clan and for some time also studied under Muhammad Bello. An analysis of his life and another critical edition of this text are provided by Ahmad Muhammad Kani's dissertation (Kani: Life and Works). Manuscripts of this text are found in many Nigerian and other West African Archives.

**172** For the history of the *Gbaya* ethnic groups of the Adamawa Plateau cf. Burnham: *The Politics of Cultural Difference*, pp. 19–23.

were no synchronistic political entities separated by these mental borders. Dan Tafa's spatial order of the Sudan includes three belts next to each other; a view which was shared by many mobile actors. They considered the Saharan edge, the dry savanna of the Sahel, and the hilly forest areas as distinct zones, of which each demanded different preparation and knowledge. The region moreover is presented as politically scattered and impossible to be united into one state. The author himself minimized the importance of historical accounts, noting that any historical knowledge about the Sudan was in a strict Islamic sense of no value. In a pious tone Dan Tafa added that the only goal of his text was to »sharpen our intelligence«. <sup>173</sup> On the one hand, this acceptance of Islamic argumentation was meant to demonstrate the author's wisdom and prevent any attacks calling his work unnecessary or even worse unreligious. On the other hand, this account serves as an example of a Jihadist writer who dealt in a creative way with Islamic geographies that traditionally ignored Africa south of the Sahel.

### *Defining the Muslim Sudan*

The territorial status of a region in Islamic law was the major factor for a Jihad army in deciding whether or not a land could be attacked in accordance with religious precepts. The ›Dar al-Islam‹ was not to be harmed, whereas it was a ruler's duty to fight the ›Dar al-Harb‹ or ›Land of Unbelief‹. The religious or legal category of a territory also determined whether or not a person was legally ›enslavable‹ by Jihadist military. In an early description of the ›Bilad as-Sudan‹ (Sudanese countries) by Uthman dan Fodio in 1809, he outlined the Islamic rules of enslavement, paying attention to the zones of the Sudan. For his argumentation dan Fodio referred to the text *Miraj al-suud ila nayl majlub al-sudan*<sup>174</sup> by Ahmad Baba. The Malian scholar composed this work after he had been deported from Timbuktu to Morocco during the Moroccan invasion of 1594. Baba condemned any enslavement of Muslims during the invasion and denied that there was any Islamic legitimation for a general enslave-

173 Palmer: *Raudhât ul Afkâri*, p. 261.

174 Dan Fodio calls this work »Kashf«.

ment of ›black‹ persons in order to serve the ›white‹ Arabs or Berbers. Reverting to Baba's interpretation, dan Fodio argued that »one is obliged to emigrate from the lands of the unbelievers, among which are most of ›Bilad as-Sudan‹ [...]».<sup>175</sup> Dan Fodio copied Ahmad Baba's concept of three religious categories of land and adapts it to his contemporary environment. Examples were given for countries where ›unbelief‹ was dominant and Islam rarely found: Mossi, Gurma, Busa, Borgu, Yoruba, Dagomba, Kutukuli, and Bubul.<sup>176</sup> Dan Fodio was thus depicting all the regions south and south-west of his place of residence as ›Lands of Unbelief‹. These countries were well-connected to the Sahel trade system so that dan Fodio may have gained his information by means of personal communication or rumors coming from travelers and traders. In Yoruba areas Hausa Muslims founded trading posts, and pilgrims and Kola traders arrived in the Sokoto area from the Western Sahel (today Mali, Burkina Faso, northern Ghana and Togo). Especially the pilgrim informants were sensitized for religious matters because their whole journey through the Sokoto Caliphate was considered an element of the pious Islamic pillar of the hajj.

Uthman dan Fodio explained that a land might be considered a ›Land of Unbelief‹ according to the status of its majority population. Another aspect, however, is the status of its ruler or the whole political elite. Likewise, an unbelieving ruler may also bring the country into a status of ›unbelief‹. Dan Fodio copied his list of the »Lands of Unbelief« almost literally from Ahmad Baba, who stated that:

»We will add another rule for you, that is that whoever now comes to you from the group called Mossi, or Gurma, or Busa, or Borgu, or Dagomba, or Kotokoli, or Yoruba, or Tombo, or Bobo, or K.rmu [?] – all of these are unbelievers, remaining in their unbelief until now.«<sup>177</sup>

Ahmad Baba had accordingly permitted the enslavement of the inhabitants of these ›Lands of Unbelief‹. From a Songhay point of view, the

175 Arab. الهجرة من بلاد الكفار واجبة [...] و منها معظم بلاد السودان. El-Masri (ed.): *Bayan wujub*, pp. 49, ١٣.

176 Ibid.

177 Harrak / Hunwick (eds.): *Ahmad Bābā's Replies*, p. 39.

above-named regions were located at the eastern frontier of the empire, which was an area that was hardly ever controlled. Baba legitimized the enslavement of the inhabitants of the imperial periphery. Uthman dan Fodio, however, did not critically analyze Baba's work in terms of the Islamic laws of enslavement. He was rather looking for some arguments from other Islamic authorities to support his own Jihadist theory of territorial categories.

Dan Fodio's second category of land was a country where Islam was dominant but unbelief still present. Dan Fodio declared them all »Lands of Unbelief« because »the spread of Islam there is among the masses but as for their sultans, they are unbelievers just like the first category, even though they may profess Islam, because they are polytheists.«<sup>178</sup> To give some examples, Uthman dan Fodio listed Bornu, Kano, Katsina, Songhay and Mali. Baba's list, however, is slightly different:

»You asked: ›What have you to say concerning slaves imported from lands whose people have been established to be Muslims, such as Bornu, Afnu [=Hausa], Kano, Gao and Katsina, and others among whose adherence to Islam is widely acknowledged?‹ [...] ›The people of these lands are, as you have said, Muslims except for Afnu whose location I do not know nor have I heard of it.«<sup>179</sup>

Quoting Ahmad Baba in full length here, dan Fodio stated that Muslims living under a non-Muslim ruler may either flee from this place or revolt against the corrupt kings. And even if some of these people might be considered Muslims, they could in general be enslaved. Dan Fodio deleted Afnu from the list, but he cited the two Hausa city states Kano and Katsina, as well as Bornu from Baba's text. The third category comprised all totally Islamized countries, from the masses up to the elite. But according to dan Fodio such territory existed nowhere across the Sudan.

Uthman dan Fodio also relied on the books of the Massina scholar Al-Kunti, who had argued that the majority of Sudanese inhabitants were unbelievers and that Muslim minorities of these regions suffered from

178 Arab. الإسلام المستقيض فيها في غير سلاطينها و أما سلاطينها فكفار كالقسم الأول و ان كانوا يدينون  
بدين الاسلام لأنهم أهل شرك وصد. El-Masri (ed.): Bayan wujub, pp. 50, ١٤.

179 Harrak / Hunwick (eds.): Ahmad Bābā's Replies, p. 22.

the unjust rule of unbelieving elites. The subjects of such powers would regularly imitate their pagan elites and thus fall back into ›unbelief‹ once again. Another aspect briefly referred to by Al-Kunti and dan Fodio, is the question whether Muslims were allowed to travel to Sudanese regions although some scholars had declared this a sin. Al-Kunti relativized this strict dogma and modified it towards a prohibition concerning unbelievers among the Sudanese only. Uthman dan Fodio repeated this moderate religious attitude and briefly concluded: »[...] that trading with the land of enemies is reprehensible, be they Sudanese or other.«<sup>180</sup> Dan Fodio chose not to go into detail about this question and instead summarized Al-Kunti's and Ahmad Baba's opinions. Accordingly, the Sudan consists of both ›Lands of Islam‹ and ›Lands of Unbelief‹, although some scholars had disagreed with this position and claimed that there were no Islamic areas in the Sudan at all. With reference to Ahmad Baba's analysis, Uthman portrayed the historical process of Islamization of the Sudan as a voluntary development with no Muslim rulers forcing their subjects to accept Islam.

Uthman dan Fodio not only copied the content of Ahmad Baba's text on enslavement, he also imitated his style of addressing the audience with sentences like »If you were to ask me..., I would say that....« Uthman dan Fodio thus concluded his treatise with the words: »If you were to ask me what the limits of the Sudan are, I would say that I have not found any one who has attempted to define its beginning and end.«<sup>181</sup> This question was not borrowed from Ahmad Baba and therefore displays dan Fodio's own keen interest in the geographical measurement of the Sudan. Dan Fodio may have asked travelers and scholars how to define the Sudan territorially, but without receiving satisfactory answers. Quoting the famous Tunisian historian Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) as portrayed by Ahmad Baba,<sup>182</sup> the Jihadist leader only listed the countries

180 Arab. تكره التجارة الى أرض العدو كانوا سودانا أو غيرهم. El-Masri (ed.): Bayan wujub, pp. 51, ١٥.

181 Arab. فان قلت ما حد بلاد السودان؟ قلت: لم أقف على من تعرض لذكر مبدئها و آخرها. Ibid., pp. 51, ١٦.

182 The original text of Ibn Khaldun was probably not accessible for Uthman dan Fodio and is only quoted from other summaries and commentaries.



Tajira (perhaps the Daju in today's Darfur), Kanem (Bornu), Kawkaw (Gao in Mali)<sup>183</sup> and Takrur (Western Sahel).

Beyond the effort of compiling classical Arabic accounts on Sudanese geography, the Jihadists also combined these text sources with information coming from traders and pilgrims, and with stories present in the collective memory. With this intellectual assemblage in the background, the Sokoto Jihadists created their own individual spatial concept of the historical and contemporary Sudan. When writing down a description of the Sudanese territories to the west of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1827, the Sokoto Court official »Ahmad Messine« (cf. the map on *Figure 5*) informed his British visitor Hugh Clapperton that all Sudanese populations were in some way or another linked to Persian, Christian, or Jewish ancestors. He explained that the natives of Mali derived from the Copts, but with regard to other groups, he was not quite sure whether they were »originally Jews [because] others say Christian.«<sup>184</sup> However, the Sudan is not considered a periphery of monotheistic history, but a frontier zone of Islam where religious relics of Middle Eastern history were still in conflict with each other. Clapperton's informant was himself of Massina origin and claimed that the Sudanese ancestors had migrated from the Euphrat and Tigris regions to Mali and the rest of the Sudan. This line of argument was the official Jihadist view on the history of the Sudan, because Clapperton's translator in this conversation also remarked that Sultan Muhammad Bello himself had given a similar account on the origin of the Sudanese.<sup>185</sup>

The Sokoto Jihadists described and measured the Sudan on different levels. First of all, the etymological Arabic meaning of »Sudan« referred to a racial category, including all ›black‹ people, and the Jihadists were absolutely aware of this connotation. Secondly, the geographical Sudan was a climatic belt with a common landscape and temperature located right on the southern edge of the world. On a third level, the Sudan

**183** For Al-Idrisi's account of the merchant town »Caucau« cf. Dozy / Goeje (eds.): *Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique*, pp. 13–14. Al-Idrisi collected conflicting information about the beginning and end of its river (Niger) in his chapters on Gao; some sources suspected them to be in the mountains, others connected the Niger with the Nile, and finally some suggested that the river vanished in the western Sahara. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

**184** Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 337.

**185** *Ibid.*

was religiously unsettled between Islam and ›unbelief‹, due to its aforementioned frontier position. And finally, the Sudanese peoples were all united by common Middle Eastern ancestors that had once immigrated to the region via Mali.

### *Defining the Christian Sudan*

Due to this interest in the development of the book religions and their persistence in the region called »Sudan«, the Sokoto Jihadist paid attention to the Christian enclaves on the African continent. One of the Christian countries described by the Jihadists in Arabic texts is Nubia.<sup>186</sup> During the life span of Al-Idrisi in the eleventh century, Nubia was still Christian having been Christianized and then affiliated to the Coptic Christian Church of Egypt since the sixth century. These Christian roots can thus be traced in the Sudan long before the advent of Islam in North Africa. Several Christian kingdoms, cathedrals and monasteries were founded subsequently. Nubian language was written, but Greek remained the liturgical language of communication. As a consequence of Arab immigration from Egypt, Nubia was finally Islamized in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The Sokoto Jihadist scholar Dan Tafa copied his chapter about Nubia from Ibn Al-Wardi's (ca. 1291–1348) geographical composition. Al-Wardi's geography had been published with an attached map entitled *Kharidat al-ajaib wa faridat al-gharaib*<sup>187</sup> (The Pearl of Wonders and the Uniqueness of Strange Things). The Egyptian historian and geographer must have witnessed the Islamization of Nubia, but despite this he only relied on older literary sources, such as from Al-Masudi (895–957) of Baghdad, for example. Al-Wardi and in turn also Dan Tafa therefore treated Nubia as an exclusively Christian territory. The Sokoto scholar nevertheless listed several individual personalities in the history of Islam who had allegedly been of Nubian origin. Among these important figures are, for example, Luqman Al-Hakim, a contemporary of Moses, and the Sufi scholar and saint Dhu Al-Nun Al-Misri (796–859). And once more,

186 Arab. النوبة. Kani: Life and Works, p. 366.

187 Arab. خريدة العجائب وفريدة الغرائب.

non-Islamic states are linked with gold deposits: »They have gold mines and their religion is Christianity.«<sup>188</sup> In another chapter Ibn Al-Wardi and Dan Tafa had also connected the Nubian territory with exotic animals: »And in their countries are elephants, giraffes, monkeys and gazelles.«<sup>189</sup>

From Ibn Al-Wardi's geography the Sokoto scholar adopted the description of two (out of three) Christian Nubian kingdoms and their capital towns on the western Nile bank: the Nubian state Alwa (or Alodia) in the south with the capital Wailula (Soba?); and Nuba (or Makuria) with its major town Dongola. Although identified as Christians, the Nubians were presented as the most elegant and handsome people of the Sudan. Especially the women were praised for their beauty, soft voices and long hair. Dan Tafa even mentioned the prices to buy a concubine from among them. Al-Idrisi had already spread the news about Nubia's beautiful women in his time. The Sicilian scholar heard of stories about Muslim Spanish rulers who bought and fell desparately in love with Nubian female slaves.<sup>190</sup> And Dan Tafa explicitly presented a certain concubine of the Persian scholar Al-Sahib Ibn Abbad<sup>191</sup> in the tenth century. She was believed to have revived her owner's sexual activity and supplied him with new energy to an extent that she even entered his poems.<sup>192</sup> Al-Idrisi had also attributed the city state Dongola with some common stereotypes of Christian Nubia: beautiful women, very dark skin complexion, and wild animal species, such as giraffes, elephants and gazelles.<sup>193</sup>

From Al-Idrisi and Ibn Al-Wardi the Sokoto author Dan Tafa collected information about Nubian mountains, Nubian cities and distances between the Nile and the Red Sea. Furthermore, Dan Tafa described a huge stone idol in Nubia, probably identified as the Abu Simbel rock temples

188 Arab. وعندهم معادن الذهب ودينهم النصرانية. Ibid.

189 Arab. و في بلادهم الفيلة والزرافات والقردة والغزلان. Ibid., p. 367. Al-Idrisi also claimed that Coptic Christianity could be traced back to the Byzantine church »Al-Rum« that had arrived in this area long before Islam. Cf. Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 26.

190 Ibid., p. 16.

191 For biographical data on Ibn Abbad cf. Ashtiany et al. (eds.): 'Abbasid Belles-Lettres, pp. 96–111.

192 Kani: Life and Works, p. 319.

193 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 24.

with statues of Ramses II, his wife, and some Egyptian deities:<sup>194</sup> »It is believed that he was a tyrannical man turned into stone by Allah.«<sup>195</sup> The past of Nubia was perceived in the form and content of myths and experiences of the pilgrimage travel reports. This way God was also integrated into pre-Islamic historical narratives. In Al-Idrisi's model text he described that a huge stone statue of a human figure was placed at the confluence of the two Nile Rivers – an anonymous person had turned into stone:<sup>196</sup> »At the shore of this lake there is a statue holding its hands to its breast; it is said that this was a crazy man that was transformed.«<sup>197</sup> Dan Tafa didn't further explain ancient Egyptian buildings although he might have read about them in Al-Idrisi's text: The pyramids were allegedly huge garners at first, and only afterwards were they used as burial places of the kings of the ancient Egyptians which were synonymous with the Copts.<sup>198</sup> Al-Idrisi had also reported about two Gizeh Pyramids instead of three.<sup>199</sup>

Abyssinia is also presented as predominantly a Christian space. The data compiled and edited by Al-Idrisi focused on naval trade routes, market places, and the Red Sea coast. As in Nubia, the women of Abyssinia were praised for being eloquent and elegant; its eunuchs were the best of all. Turning to pre-Islamic history, the »Habesha« people were remembered as the ancient rulers of Yemen. The Christian dominions of the Sudan were unmistakably declared »civilized« areas and in turn part of the Sudanese frontier facing the wilderness. Their pagan neighbors were called the Bejas, and they were characterized as wild before being Islamized in the tenth century.<sup>200</sup> Dan Tafa reported about the Beja: »They

**194** For a historical drawing see Lane: *Description of Egypt*, Figure 154. The whole site was relocated when the Aswan dam was built in the 1960s.

**195** Arab. قال انه كان رجلا ظلما فمسخه الله حجرا. Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 367.

**196** Drecoll: *Idrisi aus Sizilien*, p. 88.

**197** Dozy / Goeje (eds.): *Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique*, p. 18.

**198** Drecoll: *Idrisi aus Sizilien*, p. 87.

**199** Dozy / Goeje (eds.): *Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique*, p. 175.

**200** The Arab geographer Al-Masudi reported about the Bejas in the tenth century: »They live between the Red Sea and the Nile, consist of several tribes and have different kings. In their country there are gold and emerald mines. On their noble camels they raid the Nubian country and take prisoners. The Nubians used to dominate the Bejas until the latter accepted Islam [...].« Translation of Rotter (ed.): *Al-Mas'udi*, p. 192.

are very black, they are naked, and they are slaves to an idol.«<sup>201</sup> And above all, Arab scholars reported that they owned plenty of gold mines. Al-Idrisi argued, for example, that in the Beja region the »Mountain of the Moon« was enclosed by the »Mountain of Temples« and the »Mountain of Gold« bearing incredible amounts of gold and other metals.<sup>202</sup> Incredible wealth, dark complexion, nakedness and non-Islamic Gods once again form a civilization-wilderness frontier in the Jihadist concept of the Sudan. But this time, the »civilized« people are Christians and not Muslims. Archeologists and historians agreed, on the other hand, that the Beja cattle-breeders never existed as a homogenous ethnic group and were isolated from the Christians, as 'Dan Tafa's account implies. During the first millennium, they communicated with Christian kingdoms in Greek and in the second millennium they were Islamized.<sup>203</sup> But 'Dan Tafa collected his information about the Bejas from the fourteenth century Arab historiographer Ibn Al-Wardi who had considered the Bejas to belong to the »uncivilized«. This narrative was probably widespread in North Africa because some robbers raided pilgrimage and trade caravans in the Beja area.

In Al-Idrisi's geography the Jihadist Sokoto scholars also studied certain Christian sects living in Northeast Africa. The »Al-Balyun« were considered neighbors of the Bejas belonging to the »Jacobite sect.«<sup>204</sup> Its members followed the sixth century scholar Jacob Baradaeus, the Bishop of Edessa. He was one of the most important figures in the history of the Syriac Orthodox Church. Al-Idrisi, however, had characterized the sect as a nomadic people.<sup>205</sup> While Dan Tafa portrayed the Jacobites as brave warriors, their »Barbar« (or Berber) neighbors were denigrated as eaters of frogs, insects and filth. It is indicated that their profession was fishery and they allegedly lived high up in the mountains.<sup>206</sup>

This study can clarify that the Sokoto Jihadists collected several characteristics of the stereotypical wild fishermen and mountaineer societies

201 Arab. وهم شديدو السواد وعرة الاجسام يعبدون الاوثان. Kani: Life and Works, p. 368.

202 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 19.

203 Herzog: Kulturelle Kontinuität der Bedja, p. 167.

204 Arab. على مذهب يعقوبية. Kani, Life and Works, p. 369.

205 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 32.

206 Kani: Life and Works, p. 370.

from medieval Arabic texts before adapting them to the socio-political environment of the Caliphate territory. The frontier to those strangers was located between either Muslims or Christians and people without adherence to any monotheistic religion. The Christian Sudan was praised for the beauty of its people and the servile behavior of its slaves. But like the more western sections of the Sudan, they were located very close to barbaric pagan tribes and the wilderness represented by exotic wildlife.

### *Defining the Indian Ocean Seascape*

Another Islamic frontier that was referred to in Jihadist geographies was the seascape of the Indian Ocean, including the Indian sub-continent, and the Swahili coast of East Africa. In accordance with the Arabic medieval perception of East Africa and India as one united merchant space of the Indian Ocean, the Sokoto Jihadist scholars located the two continents (Africa and India) as close to one another and hence »facing«<sup>207</sup> each other (cf. also the map of Al-Idrisi on *Figure 5*, Asia and Africa face each other on the left). They called East Africa »Zanj«, and Western India »Sind.«<sup>208</sup> The Zanj is also listed among the Sudanese regions because of the inhabitants' reported skin color and the location of the Zanj coastal region between the same lines of latitude: »They are the darkest people of the Sudan and all of them worship idols.«<sup>209</sup> In this chapter of the Jihadist writer Dan Tafa, the Zanj people lack horses, mules and camels, so that they had to ride cows. Their pagan status is linked to their skin color and the absence of beasts of burden which were common in Muslim societies. The writings on East Africa of Al-Masudi, a Persian geographer of the tenth century, served as a prototype geography for Dan Tafa. According to Al-Masudi and Dan Tafa, all inhabitants of the Swahili coast and the Sofala hinterland (Mozambique) utilized cows as beasts of burden (cf. *Figure 9*). Furthermore, there were masses of people, fertile farms and abundant amounts of gold. But like the Sudan, these lands allegedly lacked cold weather and rain. Furthermore, the Zanj and the residents of

207 Ibid., p. 324.

208 Arab. زنج / سند. Ibid., p. 370.

209 Arab. الزنج اشد السودان سوادا وكلهم يعبدون الاوثان. Ibid.

that area were abused as a slave reservoir: »Traders steal their children and exchange them for dates in other countries.«<sup>210</sup>



Figure 9: »Zanj« (الزنج) on the right) and »Sufala« (سفالة) on the left) on Idrisi's map

And from an unknown source<sup>211</sup> the Sokoto scholar Dan Tafa quoted another chapter about the Zanj: Their kings supposedly commanded thousands of cow riders as soldiers at the place where the Nile splitted in two in the mountains. These mountains were probably the same which were usually named the mythic *Mountains of the Moon*. Already in the first century texts of Claudius Ptolemy from Alexandria, the *lunae montes* entered the geographies about Africa, mostly identified as the supposed source of the Nile within a lake in the *Mountains of the Moon*. Some of the rumors about these mountains probably reckoned them to be the Ruwenzori Mountains and its glacier (Kongo/Uganda); others interpreted them as the snow-topped Kilimanjaro (Tanzania). And in one Sokoto account about

210 Arab. والتجار يسرقون اولادهم ويبيعونهم بالتمر في بلاد. Ibid.

211 Al-Idrisi did for example not mention this section. Cf. Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, pp. 23–25.

the pilgrimage route from Sokoto to the Red Sea, Clapperton was instructed about the mythic ninety-nine mountains of Sennar where a gold mine was located. What was special about this mountain range was that each name of the various mountain peaks started with an ›F‹: »But three only of these mountains are known, whose names are as follow: Fazooglu, Fafaklu, and Foondooflu.«<sup>212</sup> Yet another of Clapperton's informants was more detailed in his Arabic text, reproducing the theory about the Niger and Nile source:

»The river of Kowara runs through mountains, and a great many woods and forests; and has mountains on the north and the east. This great river issues from the Mountains of the Moon; and what we know of it is, that it comes from Sookan to Kiya, to Kabi, to Yaouri, to Boossa, to Wiiwa, and to Noofee; but in that place there is another river which springs from Zirma, to Ghoober, to Zeffra, to Kory or Koora, and then enters Noofee; its name is Kaduna. On the north of it Kanbari lies; on the east is Kory; on the south are Cankan and Kafath; and on the west is Bassoa, or Bashwa. About the centre of it is the kingdom of Noofee, with that of Abyou.«<sup>213</sup>

This informant linked geographical information about the Niger, some other Hausa rivers, and the bordering societies to the *Mountains of the Moon*. He thus established a connection between the mythic natural space characterized by distant mountains and the experienced human spaces of the Kaduna River. The repeated talk of these *Mountains of the Moon* made Hugh Clapperton assume that the Mandara Mountains were part of the »Mountains of the Moon«, or »El Gibel Gumhr«.<sup>214</sup>

In Dan Tafa's geography, the inhabitants of these mountains were believed to look like beasts of prey. They allegedly hunted other wild beasts and traded their skins and tusks: »And the majority of them sharpen their teeth and file them. They sell elephant tusks, tiger spine and silk.«<sup>215</sup> They were supposed to export luxurious animal products, al-

212 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 339.

213 Ibid., p. 340.

214 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 1, p. 313.

215 Arab. واكثرهم يحددون اسنانهم ويبردونها حتى ترقق ويبيعون اتياب الغيلة وجلود النمر والحريير. Kani: Life and Works, p. 370.



though tiger spine and silk were produced in Indian territories rather than in East Africa. On certain islands they would dig out cowries and use it for jewelry. In the Jihadist account, there is no reference that the inhabitants of the *Mountains of the Moon* used cowries as currency which was common in pre-colonial East Africa.



Figure 10: »Sind« (Indus river region on the right) and »Hind« (Ganges river region on the left) on Al-Idrisi's map

The neighbors of these mountaineers were characterized by Dan Tafa as being equally negligent in their Islamic duties. He called them »Damadim« (or »Damdam«), another variation of »Lamlam«, which was a stereotypical name for any non-Muslim bordering the historical Sudan. Dan Tafa reported that they produced and exported iron to Indian traders at the coast for the building of weapons. Al-Idrisi was exceedingly concerned with iron resources in East Africa. He also paid attention to the iron trade across the Indian Ocean and the manufacture of exquisite iron swords in India.<sup>216</sup> The Sokoto Jihadist was also interested in the giraffes living among the »Damadim«. Unsurprisingly, the most marvelous as-

216 Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, pp. 23–24.

pect of the southern Zanj for Dan Tafa was the existence of pure gold nuggets that could be found easily on the surface of their land.<sup>217</sup>

East Africa, or the »Zanj« coast, was situated very close to the small Indian Ocean and the Indian sub-continent in Arabic geographies. Therefore, Dan Tafa placed his account of India right next to his remarks on the »Zanj«. In this manner, the readers continued the imaginary journey along the southern climatic zone from west to east. Although Muhammad Bello had known that India was subdued by the British Empire, this Jihadist geography only compiled historical Arabic information about India. Very broadly, India was structured in two regions in classical Arabic geography: »Sind« and »Hind«. The »Sind« region was defined as a vast area west of »Hind« (cf. map in *Figure 10*). Both regions were situated at the outskirts of major rivers. Al-Idrisi's written description of India served as a model for Dan Tafa, who also adopted the division of »Sind« into two spaces: the Islamized coastal area and the pagan hinterland. From the view of a Muslim trader who had traveled the Indian Ocean, this perspective was the most plausible territorial order. The historical capital Mansura (also: Brahmanabad) of the Muslim Empire in »Sind« is attributed with Islamic eschatological value by the Jihadist writer. This city is today located in Western Pakistan and it was constructed in the 840s as a planned city according to the principles of Islamic town-planning. Some years later, this city was also studied as a prototype for the construction of Baghdad. Dan Tafa renarrated the widespread myth that Mansura was amongst the four Muslim towns in the world that would not be destroyed until Judgement Day. Like Dan Tafa, Al-Idrisi had also referred to Mansura's eternal existence and its flourishing markets.<sup>218</sup> The Jihadist writer quoted Al-Idrisi's paragraph about the currency of Mansura and the origin of its name: Since Al-Masudi's time, legends were told that the second Abbasid Caliph Al-Mansur (reigned 754–775) founded Mansura and that the planned town was hence named after him. Dan Tafa wrote in his comment on Al-Idrisi that Caliph Al-Mansur had chosen the location of all four ever-lasting towns according to his astrological interpretation of four stars.<sup>219</sup> The Jihadist author contributed to

217 Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 371.

218 Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, pp. 42–43.

219 Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 328.

the Sokoto ideology and emphasized that the imperial expansion of the Islamic state in »Sind« was accompanied by organized urban development. Urbanization of space is then likewise linked to the eschatological value of towns in Islam. Quite on the contrary, Mansura's non-Muslim neighbors of Multan, in the interior of Pakistan, were thought to worship huge idols, which they would visit on pilgrimages and supply with offerings. Dan Tafa reported that the eyes of the idols were decorated with gems and that they could be visited through a golden gate.<sup>220</sup> Much more detailed information about those religious statues delivered by Al-Idrisi was not quoted by the Jihadist author. Dan Tafa preferred to categorize them as mere »idols«. To him they were only Indian variations of a general idolatry, and he preferred to concentrate on the successful Islamic conquest and idol destruction.

The »Hind« Empire was ruled by a Mahraj, according to Al-Masudi. It was supposed a powerful state, with large rivers and many minor kingdoms. Needless to say, they worshipped idols that were bequeathed from one generation to the next. Al-Idrisi reported the name of the idol *al-bud* (Buddha), the taboo regarding the killing of cows, and the practice of cremating the dead.<sup>221</sup> But all these cultural peculiarities were not taken into account by Dan Tafa. He once again omitted the religious practices. But he was all the more excited to read about huge elephant cavalier armies commanded by the »Hind« king. He supposed that one thousand elephants alone were part of the personal royal stable. Those impressive animals were characterized in full length by Dan Tafa: Some were of pure white color and they measured up to five hands.<sup>222</sup> Detailed methods of Indian elephant hunting were not quoted from Al-Idrisi's geography.<sup>223</sup> The Sicilian scholar praised the elephants for their magnificent tusks, their intelligence, teachability and piety. Allegedly, they would not

**220** Al-Idrisi had further described its shape, form and rituals referring to this idol. It was obviously a cross-legged stone Buddha in a meditation position, with his fingers »as if it were figuring [the number] four«. Cf. Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, p. 49. This description may thus refer to the Hindu temple Sun Mandir (Multan, Pakistan) that was ruined during the Islamic conquest in 1026.

**221** *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 61.

**222** Al-Idrisi repeatedly referred to exotic animals used in warfare or as beasts of prey. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 33, 35.

**223** Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, pp. 69–71.

even dare to look at the genitals of human beings.<sup>224</sup> Like other countries beyond the frontier of Islam, the Indian kingdoms of the »Hind« were portrayed by Dan Tafa as reservoirs of luxurious products and resources, like for instance expensive wood (e.g. camphor), pearls, sapphires, ivory and perfumes. From an unknown edition, Dan Tafa also managed to quote from a letter of an Indian king to the Persian ruler Kiswa Anu Shirvan (590–628). Reportedly, the letter was accompanied by rich diplomatic presents composed of woods, perfumes, jewelry, spices (curry tree wood) and a beautiful concubine that was praised extensively.<sup>225</sup>

While this excursus on »Sind« and »Hind« refers to pre-Islamic Asia, the Islamic conquest of both Asian regions was finally explained by Dan Tafa. Mahmud of Ghazni (971–1030) was an emperor of Turkish origin who created an Islamic state with an Afghan political center. Mahmud undertook extensive military expeditions into northern India and his letter to another ruler is mentioned by the Sokoto geographer. He was especially commemorated for the destruction of a Hindu temple that was visited by many pilgrims who had their heads shaved by religious servants. Women were regularly dancing to worship the temple. But then Mahmud reportedly gathered his followers in order to destroy and burn the temple completely. Furthermore, he killed 50,000 of its inhabitants, so that this account may refer to the conquest of Multan (Pakistan) by Mahmud in 1005 when many Ismaili followers of Shia Islam were massacred.<sup>226</sup> Since Ismaili religious practices often combined Islamic Sufism and Hinduism, they were criticized and opposed by the Sunni conquerors. Their idol was allegedly sitting on a luxurious throne, ornamented with gemstones. India's Hindu temples were believed to be 300,000 years old and Mahmud was reputed to have destroyed several thousand »idols«.<sup>227</sup> While Al-Idrisi had reported quite neutrally about various Indian traditional religions, Dan Tafa focused on India's military Islamization at the beginning of the second millennium. He revisited the course of conquest and the destruction and demonization of Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions. Unlike Dan Tafa, Al-Idrisi assumed that all Indians believed in a Creator or

224 Ibid., p. 71.

225 Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 372.

226 Virani: *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages*, p. 100.

227 Kani: *Life and Works*, p. 334.

highest God and would not »depart from justice«,<sup>228</sup> although there was no Islamic law. The Sicilian writer estimated about forty-two different sects to have existed worshipping stones, fire, sun, trees or serpents.<sup>229</sup>

Various details from Al-Idrisi were not reflected by Dan Tafa, such as the caste system, Buddhism and methods of elephant hunting.<sup>230</sup> Al-Idrisi had reported explicitly about different professions, religious duties and marriage rules of seven social castes. The incredible wealth in terms of woods, perfumes, and jewelry on the other hand, is ubiquitous in both Al-Idrisi's and Dan Tafa's chapters on India.<sup>231</sup> Drecoll's estimation that Asia was of no particular interest to Arab cartography must be rejected. In fact, there was a substantial level of interest deriving from the Indian Ocean trade system (Arabia/Persia – East Africa – India); this was well-known and intensive during the annual monsoon periods.<sup>232</sup> Pakistan, India and East Africa were all perceived as frontiers of Islam connected by a common system of naval trade in luxury goods. Although India was entitled to have a cultural history of its own and historical systems of belief in Arabic geography, East Africa remained ahistorical and a more ulterior space. And at the same time there was an absence of any missionary impetus among the Muslim Indian Ocean traders as presented in the Jihadist text compilation. Their »idols« or cultures were not characterized beyond any information on trade and business.

The diplomatic communication within the Sokoto Caliphate, however, implies that Muhammad Bello was informed about the British conquest of India »from the hands of the Mahometans«. <sup>233</sup> Furthermore, some Sahel rulers were aware of the British global power and feared that the Sudan could be seized by them as well. But astonishingly, Muhammad Bello didn't seem to pay much attention to this rumor and protected the British explorer Clapperton at his court. Bello did not agree with some advisors who warned that he was an English military spy.<sup>234</sup> But

228 Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, p. 39.

229 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

230 Drecoll: *Idrisi aus Sizilien*, p. 118. Cf. also Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, pp. 36–38.

231 Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, p. 31.

232 Drecoll: *Idrisi aus Sizilien*, p. 121.

233 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 197.

234 *Ibid.*, p. 199.

Bello's messenger instructed Clapperton during his second stay not to proceed to Bornu, since the Bornu ruler had suggested in a letter to Bello to execute Clapperton as a British representative. Clapperton did not believe in the existence of this letter and requested that the messengers supply him with a copy of it. Instead of the Bornu route, the messenger suggested traveling with some Muslim scholars along the desert edge to Futa Toro, where other British dominions were reputed to exist.<sup>235</sup> Bello's envoy told Clapperton that south of Futa Toro there were some Fula regions belonging to Bello's Caliphate. By that, he probably was referring to the Jihadist state Massina in Mali, which had been expanding since 1810.<sup>236</sup> Some days after, Bello talked to Clapperton personally about this letter, explaining that it was not the Bornu Sultan himself, but a religious advisor of him who had informed Bello. This advisor said that »as the English had taken possession of all India by first going there by ones and twos, until they got strong enough to seize upon the whole country«,<sup>237</sup> so would the English repeat the colonization process in Sokoto and Bornu.

This idea about a gradual conquest and colonization by the British Empire was reckoned more dangerous at the Bornu court than in Sokoto. On 7 April 1824 Denham went to see the Bornu king with his fellow British explorers. A Moroccan scholar also partook in the following conversation:

»Almost the first question of the sheikh's [king] was, as to the distance of our country from India: and when told it was four months by sea, he said, ›What could induce you to go so far from home – to find it out, and fight with the people?‹ We replied, ›that we had plenty of ships, and were great lovers of discovery; that the French and the Dutch had been there before us; and we were always jealous of our neighbours doing more than ourselves.‹ ›And now it is all yours,‹ said he, ›and governed by your laws!‹ Our reply was, ›that we only kept possession of the part near the sea – that their own laws were in full force – but that even Mussulmans often preferred the English

235 Ibid., p. 198.

236 The fact that the Massina town Jenne was expected by the Sokoto Court to be located south-east of Futa Toro, supports this conclusion (cf. also Clapperton's maps).

237 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 199.

laws to their own.< >Wonderful!< said he, >and you went at first with only a few ships, as friends?< >We are friends now,< said I, >and by trade have not only made ourselves rich, but the natives also.< >By God!< said the Marroquin [Moroccan scholar], >they eat the whole country – they are no friends: these are the words of truth.<<<sup>238</sup>

The Bornu Sultan Al-Kanemi was obviously very ironic about the British perspective on colonization. He did not believe that the British were only interested in trade and discovery and was alarmed by the British presence in India, North Africa, and the Sudan. And especially the naval power and the far reaching imperial territory frightened the Bornu court. In a war praise poem of 1821, Al-Kanemi had referred to the famous Indian silks. Glorifying one of his wives (or an imaginary one), he stated that »silks from India are less soft than her skin«.<sup>239</sup> Muhammad Bello, on the other hand, only remarked with surprise that the British conquered distant lands in India; Clapperton tried to appease Bello and prevent any tension:

»I mentioned, particularly, that many Mahometan states had put themselves under our protection, knowing we were a people that never interfered with the rights of others, whether civil or religious, but caused the laws to be impartially administered among all sects and persuasions. The King of England, I often told him, had, in fact, as many Mahometan subjects as the Grand Signor; and I took care to enlarge upon the favourite topic of several ships conveying the inhabitants of India annually to Mecca.«<sup>240</sup>

But this up-to-date news about British expansion in India never entered Dan Tafa's classical world geography. Instead, he incorporated the mythic role of the Indian Ocean world for the beginning of human life in this world. As in Christianity, Islamic spatial concepts about the shape and dimensions of the world have always been influenced by religious ideas about the transcendent hereafter and myths about the origin of mankind, its future, and its ultimate destiny. According to Islamic knowledge,

**238** Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 81–82.

**239** *Ibid.*, p. 410. Cf. also on the genre of erotic love poetry Hunwick (ed.): *Writings*, pp. 154–155.

**240** Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 1, p. 314.

Adam, the first human in Abrahamic creation myths, was located in paradise and on earth: It was assumed that he had taken his first step on the earth on the island of Sri Lanka after having been banned from paradise. Sri Lanka therefore often appears in the shape of a foot print on Islamic maps and was usually named »Sarandib« (cf. *Figure 11*).<sup>241</sup> Al-Idrisi listed Sarandib as one of the many islands in the Indian Ocean world, on which he supposed a huge mountain »upon which Adam descended.«<sup>242</sup> In his account, the mountain and all its jewels and perfumes were praised. The royal court of the island was imagined to consist of ministers representing Jews, Christians (Roman and Byzantine), Muslims and Indian religions. This tolerant religious perspective was not shared by Dan Tafa who omitted this information.



*Figure 11:* »Sarandib« (Arab. سرنديب) Island (Sri Lanka) on Al-Idrisi's map

Although the second Sokoto Sultan Muhammad Bello knew that India was ruled by the British, the Jihadist geographical account of the Indian

<sup>241</sup> Eisenstein: »Mappae Arabicae«, p. 100.

<sup>242</sup> Ahmad (ed.): *India and the Neighbouring Territories*, p. 27.



Ocean world was only compiled from classical Arabic texts. Dan Tafa primarily relied on Al-Idrisi, but he did not include most of the cultural or ethnographical information given on the non-Muslim population of India and East Africa. The Swahili Coast in East Africa (called »Zanj«) was considered rich in resources, but was not Islamized at all. The hinterland people were located on the legendary *Mountains of the Moon* (cf. *Figure 12*). The »Zanj« was not considered appropriate for Islamization at all because it was counted as wilderness. »Sind« and »Hind« on the other hand, had been non-Muslim adherents of idols, but once their temples and sacred statues were destroyed during the Islamic expansion after the year 1.000, Islamic empires could be introduced to the region. In Dan Tafa's geography, the pre-Islamic religions Hinduism and Buddhism were of no interest. What counted was the Islamization of the land by means of military conquest. The Jihadist writer only paid attention to the »Hind« in connection with exotic elephant armies and luxurious trade products. It was considered a dangerous and wild reservoir of wealth for traders of the Islamic frontier region.



*Figure 12:* »The Mountain of the Moon and the Sources of the Nile« (جبل القمر وهو منبع النيل) on Al-Idrisi's map

In Idrisi's geography, the Sudanic belt also included the Indian Ocean and coasts. In the Jihadist geography this was interpreted as universal resemblance of climates, religions and cultures. Moreover, India and the Sudan were both spaces in which Islamic countries bordered ›pagan‹ territory. The cannibal regions south of the Sudan and right behind the East African coast were also arranged in one climatic zone south of the Sudan proper. They were therefore likewise judged to be in a position not to be Islamized at all. Those regions were the absolute ›other‹ compared to Muslim or other ›civilized‹ states. Statehood was even denied to exist there. While the Indian ›unbelievers‹ were depicted as literate people with diplomatic relations (diplomatic letters and presents), the zone south of the Sudan was illiterate, animal-like, and uncontrollable. The whole southern belt was mountainous and rich in natural resources, but hybrid human-animal beings populated this zone of the world.

### *Defining Takrur*

The territorial denomination »Takrur« was originally the name of a state capital in the lower Senegal region in ca. 1.000. It was well known in Arabic historiographical and geographical writings and later the French word »Toucouleur« derived from it. In the Middle East the term »came to have a generic sense inclusive of all peoples of West African origin«. <sup>243</sup> During the Middle Ages it became at some point synonymous with the region called »Sudan«. The Arabic historian Al-Bakri described Takrur in the eleventh century as the first Muslim state in West Africa raiding and enslaving ›unbelievers‹ close to the Niger. <sup>244</sup> In the eleventh century the Arabo-Hispanic geographer Al-Bakri described Takrur as an Islamized town:

»Directly after Sanghana and to the south-western direction, the town Takrur is situated at the Nile and it is inhabited by blacks, who used to be pagans like the other black peoples and who worshipped *dekakir* [Wolof word for ebony wood used for sculptures]. <sup>245</sup> This word, and its singular is *dekkour*, is used to

**243** Al-Naqar: Takrur, p. 365.

**244** Then confused and called Nile.

**245** Cf. Kane: La première hégémonie peule, p. 75.

designate idols by them. Warjabi, son of Rabis, became their ruler, accepted Islam, introduced Islamic law among them, and they adapted to it after their eyes had been opened for the truth. He died in the year 432 [1040/1 A.D.]. Today the inhabitants of Takrur practice Islam.«<sup>246</sup>

In the historical memory of the Arab region, Takrur was thus imagined as a place recently Islamized by a new ruler. This ruler allegedly turned his subjects away from their idols and towards the law of Islam. Contradictory reasons have been given why »Takrur« was later turned into the whole of the Sudan. The most probable explanation is that the first waves of West African pilgrims started their journey in Takrur and that therefore African »Takrur« pilgrims became a stereotyped Muslim people in the pilgrimage rumors on the Arab peninsula. By the nineteenth century, Takruri and other West African pilgrims had already established settlements by that name on their way back home from the Holy Cities. One century after Al-Bakri, the geographer Al-Idrisi compiled some more information about Takrur, which he had never visited but had heard and read of:

»In this section that we entered, are the towns Awlil, Silla, Takrur, Dau, Barisa, and Mura. They belong to the land Magzara of the Sudan. [The town Silla] is one of the states of the Sultan of Takrur, a powerful prince who owns slaves and soldiers, and who is known for his strength, his severity, and the justice of his character. His land is safe and quiet; the place of his residence and his capital is the town Takrur, located in the middle of the Nile, two days from Silla [...]. This town Takrur is larger and more mercantile than the town Silla.«<sup>247</sup>

**246** French »Immédiatement après Sanghana et dans la direction du sud-ouest se trouve la ville de Tekrou, située sur le Nil et habitée par des nègres qui, naguère, étaient païens comme les autres peuples noirs, et adoraient des dekakir. Ce mot, dont le singulier est dekkour, est employé par eux pour désigner des idoles. Oardjabi, fils de Rabis, étant devenu leur souverain, embrassa l'islamisme, introduisit chez eux la loi musulmane et les décida à s'y conformer, après leur avoir fait ouvrir les yeux à la vérité. Il mourut en l'an 432. Aujourd'hui les habitants de Tekrou professent l'islamisme.« See Slane (ed.): El-Bekri, p. 324.

**247** French »Dans cette section que nous avons tracée sont les villes d'Oulil, de Sillâ, de Tacrou, de Daw, de Barîsa et de Moura. Elles appartiennent au pays de Magzâra du Soudan. [La ville de Sillâ] fait partie des états du sultan de Tacrou, prince puissant qui

In Al-Idrisi's version, Takrur is both, a residence town and the name of a state under whose authority other towns paid tribute. Al-Idrisi probably heard about merchants traveling from Morocco southwards to West Africa and hence gives information on distances and trade goods. His account only bears some imprecise information about the historical Takrour; however, it reveals what was thought about West Africa from a pre-modern North African view: a region rich with gold and slaves. In Al-Idrisi's geography, Takrur directly bordered the land of the cannibals:

»South of Barisa is the land of Lamlam, ten days away. The inhabitants of Barisa, Silla, Takrur and Ghana organize expeditions into Lamlam, capture the inhabitants, transport them to their countries, and sell them to traders who go there and bring them away. In all the land of Lamlam there are only two towns, which are not larger than a small town. One of them is called Mallal, the other one is called Dau.«<sup>248</sup>

Al-Idrisi's explanations about the Lamlam are striking extracts of gossip and hearsay. Allegedly, most of them were pagan with a Jewish minority. They had their own language and in their puberty they decorated their bodies and faces with brandings. Al-Idrisi reported that they needed this scarification in order to recognize each other. And with Lamlam the inhabited world ended, because there was only desert: »To the south, no inhabited country is known.«<sup>249</sup>

Long before Al-Idrisi's geography, the Persian historian Ibn Saad (784–845) had developed a concept of Takrur, based on a dichotomous

possède esclaves et des troupes, et qui est connu par la fermeté, la sévérité et la justice de son caractère. Son pays est sûr et tranquille; le lieu de sa résidence et sa capital est la ville de Tacrou, située au midi du Nil, à 2 journées de marche de Sillâ [...]. Cette ville de Tacrou est plus grande et plus commerçante que la ville de Sillâ.« Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, pp. 1–3.

**248** French »Au sud de Barisâ, est le pays de Lamlam, éloigné d'environ 10 journées. Les habitants de Barisâ, de Silla, de Tacrou et de Ghâna font des incursions dans le Lamlam, réduisent en captivité les habitants, les transportent dans leur proper pays, et le vendent aux marchands, qui y viennent et qui les font passer ailleurs. Il n'y a dans tout ce pays de Lamlam que deux villes, qui ne sont pas plus grandes que des bourgs. L'une d'elles s'appelle Mallel, et l'autre Dau.« Ibid., p. 4.

**249** French »Vers le sud, on ne connaît pas de pays habité.« Ibid.

confrontation of the Islamized Takrur raiding its »Lemlem« neighbors. But as Naqar demonstrated, Takrur became the dominant mode of identification among West African individuals or communities traveling or settling in Arabia, either in North Africa or the Middle East. The name was borrowed by West Africans but originally only described one town or a small region. When Mansa Musa, the Malian king, passed Egypt on his celebrated pilgrimage in the fourteenth century, for example, he did not accept the announced title »king of Takrur«, because it was only one of his provinces. West African pilgrims became a distinct group defined by their region of origin, mobile lifestyle and Islam. Naqar summarizes: »The cities of Mecca and Madina [sic], where many Muslims take up permanent residence in *mujawara*, have become a microcosm of the wider world of Islam.«<sup>250</sup> For some time, Takrur probably used to be a starting point for pilgrims who thus introduced themselves as coming from Takrur. But in fact they had come from all around West Africa and the Sudan. »Takrur« was more or less the name of a pilgrimage caravan of the route along the Sahel, because it was common practice to name a heterogeneous pilgrim caravan after its starting place where they were summoned and structured. By the late medieval epoch, the term »Takrur« had already lost its original meaning and was used synonymously with other territorial names like »Mali«, »Hausa« or »Bornu«. Previous writers were often merely quoted without taking account of the political changes in West Africa. This was the practice at a time when the name »Takrur« no longer had a corresponding African place to refer to anymore, but had become a label for West Africans when staying abroad – a mobile identity. African historians quickly adopted this habitual usage of the term, as explained by Shareef: »Abd ar-Rahman as-Saadi utilized the term many times in his *Tarikh*'s-Sudan; and he was followed in this by Mahmud Ka'ti in his *Tarikh*'l-Fattash.«<sup>251</sup>

When West African scholars of the Sokoto Jihad era described their countries of origin, they arranged them in mental maps with reference to the same Middle Eastern names with which they had learned Arabic language and Islamic sciences. There was a transfer of knowledge going in different directions: In the early Middle Ages, Moroccan traders learned

250 Naqar: Takrur, p. 371.

251 Shareef: The Origin and Meaning, n.p.

about Takrur from their West African trading partners, then Arabian Muslims read about Takrur in geographical accounts and met Takrur pilgrims. Finally, West African pilgrims kept the name and identifier »Takrur« alive. The Sokoto Jihadists drew from both sources of spatial knowledge about Takrur. They were familiar with this name from pilgrims and traders crossing the Caliphate and in addition to that, they studied the standardized geographical information of classical Arabic treatises. Muhammad Bello entitled his major work on the history of the Sudan and the Jihad *Easy Expenditure on the History of the Lands of Takrur* (finished 1812).<sup>252</sup> This title was certainly chosen to demonstrate Bello's knowledge of the Middle Eastern style of writing and his Islamic education. But Muhammad Bello did by no means entitle his history/geography text by the name »Takrur« unreflectively. The very first chapter of his text, for example, is dedicated to a definition and discussion of this territory called »Takrur«. Bello was aware of the fact that this debated term had emerged as a xenonym of Arabs for West African pilgrims:

»This name is known in the Two Holy Places [Mecca and Medina], Egypt and Abyssinia. And from studies in these places they don't know the origin of the inhabitants of these land(s). They encountered it [the name] from pilgrims that were called this in the Two Holy Places and Egypt.«<sup>253</sup>

By choosing the name »Takrur« for a description of his home region, Bello emphasized the long history of pilgrimage from West Africa and he ennobled the name because it originated in the region of the Holy Cities. In the style of the Jihadist geographer 'Dan Tafa, Muhammad Bello complained about his countrymen who preferred invented tales to true historical accounts which were very rare in his time.<sup>254</sup> According to his own research, the following countries were part of Takrur: »Dar Fur, Wodai [Wadai], Birghima [Baguirmi], Kano, Katsina, Songhay, Mali and Takrur proper.«<sup>255</sup> Bello listed Dar Fur among the eastern parts of Takrur, whereas Wadai and Baguirmi bordered it to the west. He depicted the

252 Arab. انفاق الميسور في تاريخ بلاد التكرور.

253 Whitting (ed.): *Infaku l-maisuri*, p. 3. Translation by the author.

254 *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

255 Shareef: *The Origin and Meaning*, n.p.

most eastern Tavrur region Dar Fur as Islamic and hospitable towards pilgrims:

»Concerning the country of Fur, it is an extensive land full of forests, rivers and farmland. The main foods of its people are millet, sorghum, black-eyed peas and many cattle. And there live Arabized non-Arabs and [linguistically] assimilated Arabs. Islam has spread there a lot. More of its inhabitants are pilgrims than of any other society of this region. They claim that they honor pilgrims and do not oppose their routes.«<sup>256</sup>

In his explanation, Muhammad Bello pays attention to the needs of pilgrims who require protection during their journey through Dar Fur. And yet again, Bello linked the Tavrur region with the homelands of the pilgrims of the Sahel. From the experience of pilgrims he may have talked to, the Sokoto Sultan knew that the Dar Fur society was multicultural and polyglot due to the long-distance pilgrimage routes leading through it. Bello then turned westwards, describing the Sahel regions Wadai and Baguirmi. He reported that Baguirmi became dependent on Wadai when its king became corrupt and married his own daughter. Wadai forces allegedly killed the Baguirmi king and destroyed his palace.<sup>257</sup> Bello's notion of the Sahara desert north of Wadai is that of an almost empty place: »Concerning the country north of it, it is uncontrolled sand desert where no one lives except for Berber herders in springtime and the before-mentioned Arabs.«<sup>258</sup> The desert appears to be a place without any fixed political order that forms a natural frontier to the imaginary region of Tavrur. While the Sahara was portrayed as dangerous and unpopulated, Bello expected nothing but backwardness from the regions south of Dar Fur, Wadai and Baguirmi:

**256** Whitting (ed.): *Infaku l-maisuri*, p. 4. Author's own translation of Whitting's edition.

**257** See on Baguirmi history Zehnle: *The Kingdom of Baguirmi*.

**258** Whitting (ed.): *Infaku l-maisuri*, p. 5.

»And to the southern direction are many countries where the most backward of the Sudan live. As to news about these lands, we receive them rarely on organization, news on their kings, their ulama and their righteous men.«<sup>259</sup>

In this description Bello makes clear that the mere exclusion from the dominant trade and religious networks of information is enough reason for considering a region backward and uncivilized. Any lack of knowledge about a region was immediately filled with stories about its alleged backwardness and the absence of statehood. While the ›empty‹ desert limited Takrur to the north, the ›backward‹ regions bordered it to the south. Since we will turn to the definition of the Hausa region and other territories of the »Western Takrur« in another chapter, we will leave Bello's treatise at this point. But in conclusion, Bello's definition of Takrur cannot be distinguished from the common meaning of the African »Sudan« – a »Sudan« without the Indian Ocean world. The only major difference seems to be that Takrur regions were always linked to the main pilgrimage routes in the Sahel. During the decades of Jihad, the term »Takrur« was applied almost synonymously with »Sudan« on a territorial level. Bello's brother-in-law and closest consultant and Gidado Ibn Laima (1776–1851) referred to Takrur in a praise poem to his Sultan Bello, claiming that »we have not seen in all the towns of the Tukrur [someone] as eloquent to surpass [Bello] or reach his level.«<sup>260</sup> Bin Laima's territory of Takrur included at least the Sokoto Caliphate and all its neighboring Islamic states and emirates. To him, Takrur is the space that – in one way or another – is dominated by Sokoto and the Sokoto Sultan.

Dan Tafa, on the other hand, described Takrur as being only one part of the wider Sudanic region in his global geographical account. That is because he had studied Al-Idrisi and other classical geographers that include all the Swahili coast in the Sudanese climatic zone. From this perspective, Takrur only denominated the section of the Sudan situated between Hausa and the Red Sea – the regions of the pilgrimage route from a Sokoto perspective. Dan Tafa attempted to compile descriptions of the whole Sudan »from the far west to the far east«, in which Eastern Takrur incorporated the southern Funj Sultanate of Sannar (modern

259 Ibid.

260 English translation by Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 178.



Sudan) and the land »beyond the river [from the Nile to the Red Sea] as far as possible, owing to the lack [?] of records as we have mentioned earlier«. <sup>261</sup> This Jihadist notion of Takrur was obviously influenced by Arabic traditions which called all homes of the Sahelian Muslim pilgrims »Takrur«. Since Dan Tafa mentioned the Hausa states among the Takrur section as well, he apparently supposed that the Hausa region belonged to the supra-region of Takrur. <sup>262</sup> His account may be estimated as a critical discussion of the imprecise geographical names of regions like »Hausa«, »Sudan« or »Takrur«.

Dan Tafa revealed in his text that he had consulted the same Arabic sources as his Sultan Muhammad Bello had used for his famous text *Easy Expenditure on the History of the Lands of Takrur* (usually called by its Arabic name *Infaq al-Maysur*). <sup>263</sup> But he also stressed that Bello had only described »Takrur«, whereas Dan Tafa himself had also taken into account the »Sudanese Lands« (»Bilad as-Sudan«). <sup>264</sup> Apparently, the »Sudanese Lands« included more than the Sahel between Hausa and the Red Sea. »Takrur« on the other hand comprised essentially the southern Sennar and the Abessinian region between the Nile River(s) and the Red Sea. <sup>265</sup> Yet, when quoting Al-Idrisi's definition of Takrur »to the south and west of the Nile [Niger],« <sup>266</sup> Takrur is only restricted to the western Sahel. Dan Tafa did however not resolve this conflict in geographical definitions. Al-Idrisi had defined Takrur as a place on the shores of the Niger, next to the Niger towns Ghana and Mali in the western Sahel. <sup>267</sup> Bello on the other hand, called the Eastern Sahel by the name »Takrur«. In Dan Tafa's Takrur section adopted from Al-Idrisi, it is perceived as

261 Kani: Life and Works, p. 299.

262 »Then I will devote a copious section to mention the seven Hausa regions giving details of what we have summarised in the section of Takrur regarding them.« Ibid.

263 An abbreviated English translation of Clapperton's copy of *Infaq al-maysur* has been published in the appendix of the Journal; cf. Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 2, pp. 394–404.

264 Kani: Life and Works, p. 300.

265 Dan Tafa used the Arabic term وراء البحر (»behind the ocean«) which Kani translated as »beyond the river«. It may thus refer either to the Red Sea or the Nile. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 301, 359.

266 Arab. في جنوب النيل وغريبه. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

267 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 3.

a town and not as a proper region. From the Niger shore it managed to rule neighboring countries. Dan Tafa also copied Al-Idrisi's account of the southern neighbors of Takrur: They reportedly mined gold and were called »Lamlam«. <sup>268</sup> They were considered a slave reservoir for the Muslim towns on the Niger shore by Al-Idrisi and North African traders. According to Al-Idrisi's compilation, Takrur regularly invaded its southern neighbors and sold them to other states. <sup>269</sup> Dan Tafa exactly followed Al-Idrisi in this chapter and located the Lamlam at the southern Takrur frontier, bordering the unpopulated deserts further south.

Originating from an early medieval name for a West African town engaged in trade with Moroccan merchants, the land »Takrur« was soon identified with the homes of all Muslim pilgrims coming to Mecca via the Sahel route. The Sokoto Jihadists struggled to harmonize contradictory definitions about the exact location of Takrur expressed in classical Arabic literature. Sultan Muhammad Bello used the term »Takrur« almost synonymously with »Sudan«, but the scholar Dan Tafa considered Takrur to form only an eastern part of the Sudan. However, both scholars critically examined the semantic history of the term »Takrur« giving special attention to the pilgrimage route of the Sahel. They told that the name had originated from an Arab perspective on the Sahel pilgrims in Arabia, and that it would therefore still apply to designate the pilgrimage region between Hausa and the Red Sea. The Jihadist meaning of »Takrur« specified it as a space defined by the journeys of the pilgrims of the past and present.

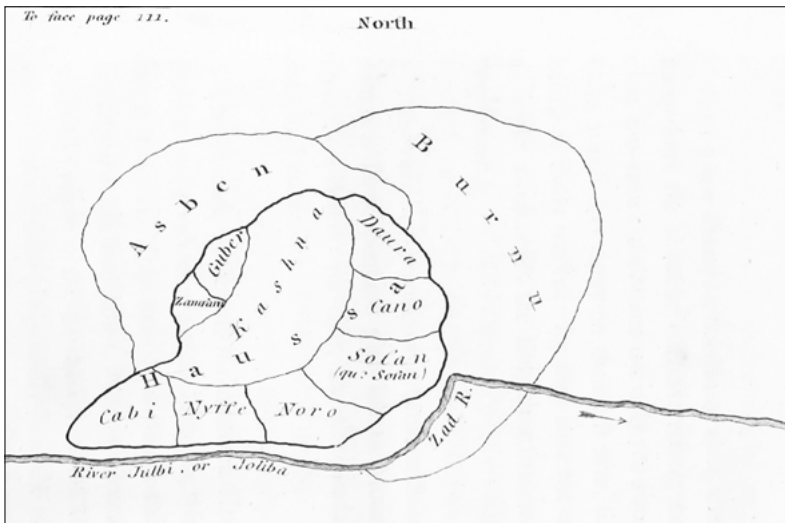
### *Defining Hausa*

Today, the Hausa region is mainly defined by the presence of Hausa speakers. There is no political unit of Hausa, because in all their localities they live together with other ethnic and linguistic groups. The term Hausa was unknown to European travelers and North African traders for a long time. The word for Hausa in the Kanuri language (Bornu) was for a long time the common name for the Hausa region. In the late eight-

<sup>268</sup> Arab. لملم. Kani: Life and Works, p. 364.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

eenth century, Carsten Niebuhr's informant from Tripoli told him about two states in the interior of Africa called »Afnu and Bernu«. <sup>270</sup> Both of them reportedly were of the size of Morocco and both were located at the Niger River. Neither European geography nor Arabic geography mentioned »Hausa« in their texts and maps. One of the earliest accounts from a person identifying himself as Hausa was reported by the German traveler Friedrich Hornemann (1772–1801). He was told by Saharan traders that »Haussa« was synonymous with »Soudan« and »Asna« (or »Afnu«). <sup>271</sup> He also met a Hausa »Marabut« (scholar) on his journey from Cairo to Murzuk in the 1790s and from him he had received a map depicting Hausa, Bornu and Asben (see *Figure 13*). <sup>272</sup> The German traveler claimed that he was publishing this drawing just as the Hausa man had given him the map. The map is a very rare source representing how



*Figure 13:* Map of an anonymous Hausa scholar reported by Hornemann (1798/9)

**270** Niebuhr: *Das Innere von Afrika*, p. 979.

**271** Hornemann: *The Journal of Frederick Horneman's Travels*, p. 111.

**272** »As to what the inhabitants themselves call Haussa, I had, as I think, very certain information. One of them, a Marabut, gave me a drawing of the situation of the different regions bordering on each other, which I here give as I received it (see the Sketch opposite). The land within the strong line is Haussa; my black friend had added Asben.« *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Hausa travelers in the pre-Jihad decade mapped their home countries. Asben, Bornu and Katsina are depicted as the largest empires. Around Katsina, minor Hausa states are arranged: Gobir (»Guber«), Zamfara, Daura, Kano (»Cano«), Sofan, Noro, Nupe (»Nyffe«), Kebbi (»Cabi«). The map gives the impression that the smaller Hausa states are somewhat dependent on Katsina. But reading Hornemann's journal, his Hausa informant – whom he called »friend« – considered Katsina and Kano the most powerful of them. Furthermore, they were considered tributaries of Bornu, Zamfara/Gobir and also of Asben. Nupe and Kebbi were the only Hausa states independent from Bornu due to their remote location. The Hausa traveler called all Hausa states sultanates, but otherwise religious topics were not documented by Hornemann. The German explorer preferred to inform his readership about Hausa music.<sup>273</sup> To the north, the east and the west Hausa is bordered by other states; to the south the »Joliba« (Niger and maybe Benue) make up the natural boundary. Beyond this water frontier, no states are mentioned or drawn. All Hausa states together form a circular area.

Hornmann stressed some fundamental differences between people of Hausa and Bornu origin: Saharan traders had told him that the Bornuese were reportedly less educated, darker in skin, and more hard-working than the Hausa.<sup>274</sup> But nevertheless, all Hausa states were supposed to be tributaries; Katsina paid for example a hundred slaves annually to Bornu as tribute.<sup>275</sup> Baguirmi was also considered a tributary state of Bornu, and a slave reservoir where »the greatest numbers of boys are mutilated«<sup>276</sup> or in other words, made eunuchs. Hornemann's explanations about the location of Hausa with regard to the river(s) harmonize with the Hausa map if it is considered north-oriented: The river »Julbi« (also called »the river that was seen by Mr. Park«) or Gwara (»Gaora«) flowed south of Hausa close to Nupe and Kebbi to the east, and in Bornu the name was supposed to change to Chad (»Zad«).<sup>277</sup> And in one of his letters, Hornemann added that this geography of the Niger/Julbi/Chad/

273 Ibid., pp. 111–112.

274 Ibid., p. 113.

275 Ibid., p. 118.

276 Ibid., p. 114.

277 Ibid., p. 115.

Nile was obtainable everywhere, »at least I could not find a single man who said to the contrary«. <sup>278</sup> As on the maps of the Sokoto Jihadists, this Hausa map depicted a large river as a border to the south, where no states were drawn in this case.

Historical Arabic literature did not apply the name »Hausa«, but references were made to the region. In Al-Maghili's answers to the question of the Songhay ruler, the latter renarrated the legend about the home of his antecessor Sonni Ali (reigned 1464–1492). He had reportedly been an unbeliever and Askiya also mentioned that Sonni Ali had grown up with his mother in the heathen land »Far«. Some scholars have identified »Far« with Fara in the Sokoto area, which was then located at the eastern periphery of the Songhay Empire. Sonni Ali and the inhabitants of »Far« were described as worshipping trees and stones. Askiya assumed that the Far population especially consulted their idol shrines before war expeditions and after a long journey. From his early childhood, Sonni Ali allegedly trusted in these shrines and in the priests. This story was quoted by Uthman dan Fodio, but he did not attempt to locate it in the Hausa region. <sup>279</sup>

Whenever the Sokoto Jihadists referred to the Hausa region some years after Hornemann's journey, it was not possible for them to trace the name »Hausa« in most of the classical Arabic literature in their libraries. Therefore, they often referred to the Hausa myth of origin in order to define the borders of the Hausa region (see chapter IV.1.4). This myth of origin reports that there existed seven ›original‹ (*hausa bakwai*; »Hausa Seven«) and seven ›bastard‹ (*banza bakwai*; »Worthless Seven«) states in the Hausa region. Among the ›worthless‹ Hausa states the second Sokoto Sultan Muhammad Bello listed »Zamfara, Kebbi, Yawuri [or Yauri], Nupe, Yoruba, Borgu and Gurma.« <sup>280</sup> The ›original‹ Hausa states usually included Daura, Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Gobir, Rano and Biram. Muhammad Bello emphasized the role of Katsina, the extensive land of Zaria, the barren Gobir and the blessed Kano. In his mental map, Hausa was a historical region united by a common legend of origin. To

**278** Ibid., p. 117.

**279** Cf. Rebstock (ed.): *Die Lampe der Brüder*, p. ۱۱–۱۲.

**280** Arab. وهي بلد زنفر وكب وياور ونفى ويرب وبرج وغرم. Muhammad Bello: *Infraq al-may-sur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 27.

the north it was limited by Ahir (or Aïr), and to the northeast it bordered Bornu.<sup>281</sup>

In the first years of the Sokoto Jihad, the Caliphate mainly comprised Hausa city states, so that Hausa was the most common *lingua franca* in the Caliphate. As a method of spreading Jihadist propaganda, the Jihadists translated many poems and treatises into the Hausa language. The second-generation Jihadist elite then accepted the Hausa language as an element of their Caliphate identity. They started to compose religious and political poems directly in Hausa, and not only translate older literature in Arabic and Fulfulde as it was done before. The Hausa region was the central area of the Caliphate when Nana Asmau, daughter of Uthman dan Fodio, composed an elegy after her uncle Abdullah's death in 1829. In that poem Nana Asmau applied the popular metaphor of the life-giving river of knowledge when describing Abdullah's role for his country. She wrote that he was giving water to all Hausa just like the Niger.<sup>282</sup>

The Jihadists defined the Hausa region according to the pre-existing Hausa myths of origin and the fourteen historical Hausa states. Hausa was bordered by Bornu to the east, the Tuareg regions (Aïr) to the north, and a river water frontier to the south. Another approach to define the Hausa space was the Hausa language. But only in the second Jihadist generation did the Sokoto elite refer to Hausa territory and Hausa language as a sort of »home«. Prior to this, it was identified as an assemblage of political units that were judged to be apostate in their state organization. Only after the successful Jihad did »Hausa« become a term to describe a cultural and linguistic space. Uthman dan Fodio and other representatives of the first Jihadist generation often called the Hausa kings unbelievers, but they avoided giving geographical information about the location of their »Lands of Unbelief«. Uthman perceived the world in accordance with classical Arabic geographers. He quoted, for example, the Egyptian scholar Al-Kastallani (1448–1517)<sup>283</sup> on the dispersion of human populations in this world and the size of the earth. He

281 Cf. *ibid.*

282 Cf. Nana Asmau: *Sonnoire Abdullahi*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, pp. 30–31.

283 Uthman dan Fodio referred to Al-Kastallani's famous commentary on the *Sahih al-Bukhari* (entitled: *Irshad al-sari fi sharh al-Bukhari*).

explained that the »land of the Sudan [measures] twelve years marching«<sup>284</sup> and that

»[t]he inhabited land extends over a distance of one hundred and twenty years' journey. Ninety of these for the Yajuj and Majuj, twelve for the Sudan, eight by the Romans [Byzantium], three by the Arabs, and seven by the rest of the peoples.«<sup>285</sup>

The wild Yajuj and Majuj inhabited by far the most territories, followed by the Sudan. In his *Tanbih al-ikhwan* Uthman dan Fodio was intensely looking for remarks on Sudanese history in North African and Middle Eastern literature. With reference to Ibn Khaldun, the Jihadist author explained that the Sudan kingdoms comprised Tajara, Kanem and to its west Kaukau, and further west Taktur. And again quoting Khaldun, Uthman dan Fodio wrote that the Abessinians were the best people of the Sudan, that they were Christians, and resided close to Yemen at the »Western Sea«.<sup>286</sup> One example of a pious Abessinian king was mentioned: Ashama Ibn Abjar (also called Al-Najashi) of Aksum, who gave refuge to several Muslims in his Kingdom according to Islamic legends. Moreover, Uthman dan Fodio supposed that three »Sudanese« historical figures would enter paradise directly: The above-mentioned Ethiopian king Najashi, the pre-Islamic Abessinian »prophet« Luqman, and the first muezzin of East African slave origin Bilal. Uthman dan Fodio obviously identified himself with these historical Muslims from the »Sudan«.

He argued against North African scholars who had declared the whole Sudan a pagan land, to which dan Fodio responded that »this passage shows that ›Sudan‹ comprises both lands of Islam and infidel countries«<sup>287</sup> adding that originally there was no ›Land of Islam‹ in the Sudanese countries.<sup>288</sup> Based on several written accounts – one for exam-

284 Arab. ارض السودان مسيره اثني عشرة سنة. Cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, BIF, 2415/208, f. 2.

285 Arab. المعمور من الارض مائة وعشرون سنة تسعون لياجوج وماجوج واثنا عشر للسودان وثمانية الروم الأمم وثلاثة العرب وسبعة السائر الأمم. Cf. *ibid.* See also the rough English translation of Palmer (ed.): *An early Fulani Conception of Islam I*, p. 412.

286 Arab. البحر الغربي. Uthman dan Fodio: *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, BIF, 2415/208, f. 3.

287 Arab. وهذا اللقول يشعر ان بلاد السودان بلاد الكفر وبلاد السلام. *Ibid.*, f. 4.

288 *Ibid.*

ple by Ahmad Baba<sup>289</sup> – dan Fodio concluded that most of the Sudan had to be considered infidel. When former authors declared the whole Sudan pagan, dan Fodio argued that it was primarily the Hausa pagans that were worshipping idols, trees, and rocks.<sup>290</sup> He defined Bornu, Kano, Katsina, Songhay, and part of Zaria Muslim countries. On the other hand, all the space to the west was declared pagan. Hausa was considered a religious frontier territory where everyone was considered Muslim except the »Afnu« (ethnic Hausa): »I don't know where they come from and I have never heard, but everyone in the lands to their west is unbeliever.«<sup>291</sup> And in Hausa itself, there were only Muslim subjects suffering from pagan rulers. Dan Fodio explicitly recounted the Islamic doctrine that pagan rulers turned their whole country into a »Land of Unbelief« according to the law. However, the Hausa region was allegedly turned into »Land of Islam« again by the Sokoto Jihad. Uthman dan Fodio discussed and quoted from Ahmad Baba's work »Exposition and Explanation of the Kinds of Sudanese Captives«, in which Baba explained which Sudanese tribes were pagan and could therefore legally be enslaved. Dan Fodio cited: »Mossi, Gurma, Bussa, Bargu, Yoruba, [Da]Gumba, Kutukuli, Tabangu, Bubula, and Amir are »Lands of Unbelievers«. [...] They remain so to this day.«<sup>292</sup> Uthman dan Fodio rejected Baba's idea that the Hausa region was an Islamic country. Ahmad Baba only called the northern Hausa states »Hausa peoples«:

»Gashgashi, this is a name I have never heard of except in this land of yours. What I understood from it is that it is a name applied to the people of Hausa (ahl Hawsa). If this is so, then they are the aforementioned groups, the people of Katsina, Kabi, Zakzak, Bornu, Kano and Gobir. As has previously been said, they are Muslims, and near them are groups of unbelievers, such as the people of Zamfara and others.«<sup>293</sup>

**289** Ahmad Baba (1556–1627), a Songhay jurist and writer, living in Moroccan exile most of his life.

**290** Cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, BIF, 2415/208, f. 6.

**291** Arab. فلا اعرف ابن هي ولا سمعت بها ولكن بغرب كل منها بلاد فيها كفر. Ibid., f. 5.

**292** Arab. بلد موس وبلد غرم وبلد بس وبلد برغ وبلد يرب وبلد غمب وبلد كتكال وبلد تينغ وبلد بويل وبلد عمير. Ibid. f. 7.

**293** Quoted in Hunwick: Ahmad Baba on Slavery, p. 136.



Dan Fodio therefore assumed that Hausa had once been partially Islamized but that the Hausa rulers shifted away from the Islamic path. Hausa was considered a region right on the frontier between belief and unbelief, where apostates were common and a threat to Islam. The Jihadists composed numerous texts on the discussion about who is an »unbeliever«, or *kufṛ* in Arabic, in order to legitimize religiously the Jihadist attack of the former »apostate« elites. The Sokoto Jihadists were themselves afraid of being called *kufṛ* by the established ulama and therefore tried to unmask the act of blaming others as unbelievers without arguments as *kufṛ*. Uthman dan Fodio wrote for example:

»Among these illusions is the belief of some people who condemn some others as Kāfir, who consider all other Muslims as Kāfir without giving an explanation about it. This attitude is based on prejudice and animosity. This is also false and an illusion according to consensus. It is an act of Kufṛ to declare someone Kāfir without any reasonable interpretation.«<sup>294</sup>

This religious blame worked like a boomerang: If the blamed person was a true Muslim, then the blamer had falsely called an Islamic person non-Islamic and acted himself like a *kufṛ*. In the same book Uthman dan Fodio also condemned Muslims that blamed the African Muslims from the Sudan as unbelievers:

»And a community had appeared calling the Muslims in our *bilād as-sūdāniyya* unbelievers. It is like the group that has passed my thoughts (already). And they say that calling them unbelievers is the path of the *sunnā* because of prejudices appearing with them in the books of the science of the speech.«<sup>295</sup>

Uthman dan Fodio defended *his* Sudanese home country against general assaults by Muslims from other areas. He rejected the idea that the Sudan was comprehensively excluded from the *bilād al-islām*. But on the other hand and in the same literary style, Uthman dan Fodio also denied that all inhabitants of the Sudanese area were Muslims:

294 Siddiqi (ed.): Shaykh ʿUthmān Ibn-Fūdī, pp. 81, ٦٤–٦٥.

295 Ibid., p. ٦٩. In this chapter Siddiqi's translation is rather rough and misleading. See *ibid.*, pp. 82–83.

»Among these illusions is the belief of some people that non-believers do not exist in our Sudanese countries. This is basically also untrue and an illusion on consensus. Because who has not entered these countries mainly in (the name of) Islam is *kāfir* on consensus of the Umma. And also in these countries, who worships trees and stones with slaughtering for them or pours a paste on them is *kāfir* according to consensus of the Umma. And also in these countries, who ridicules the religion of Allāh, this is *kāfir* on consensus of the Umma. And also in these countries, some insult mighty Allāh, this is *kāfir* according to consensus of the Umma. These people and their tools are *kāfir* when in their thoughts they follow mighty Allāh, but do not become aware that it is unbelief that appears in the speech or acts. They apparently worship the dream of Islam.«<sup>296</sup>

Uthman dan Fodio compared the ambiguous religious situation in the Sudan with that of other societies in the history of Islam, for example with that of the Jews in Baghdad whom he accused of having used the Islamic creed »There is no God but Allāh, Mohammed is his prophet« without truly believing the words. Uthman especially criticized the syncretism of religions in the Hausa region: Even if these people would believe that God created everything, the rituals, worshipping for other spirits and deities make them unbelievers. In the Hausa region, the Jihadists argued, there was a wide-spread gap between inner beliefs and religious acts. The Islamic frontier of the Sudan was considered both, a territorial border zone between landscapes, climatic belts and a frontier between the pious souls and misbehaving bodies. And the Hausa region was situated right on this border zone according to Jihadist geographies.

### *Defining Songhay*

The Sokoto scholar Al-Mustafa listed several empires that had previously ruled parts of the Sudan in his historical treatise: At first Bornu ruled a vast empire, afterwards Kororafa raided Bornu towns from the south, then Zakzak (Zaria) conquered parts of Hausa, and right afterwards Songhay took over political control. This West African empire

was considered the most important one by the Sokoto historiographer Al-Mustafa. According to him, the Songhay ruler Askia controlled most of the Sudan. His attack on the previous dynasty purportedly led the region to a just government and empire:

»Askia it was who seized the state from the Songhay dynasty, and waged war on their ignorance and wicked customs: [he] established right and justice in these territories. He ruled over them, the willing and unwilling alike, and was known as the Good King of Tekrur.«<sup>297</sup>

But with even more emphasis Askia was depicted as a pilgrim who had established contacts within a vast scholarly network:

»He made the pilgrimage from his land and visited the Prophet's tomb. There he met distinguished doctors like Jelal-es-Suyuti, who composed treatises for him. Maghili came to his country and wrote him books and exhortations. No king in the Sudan who has ever ruled was equal to Askia.«<sup>298</sup>

His prestige and good character were both linked to his pilgrimage and to his contact with the scholars he invited during his journey and at home. These contacts with famous Islamic authorities were honored. Two regions of the wider Hausa area were reportedly invaded by Askia: Al-Mustafa commemorated Askia's attacks on Borgu (Western Nigeria, North Benin) where he failed. Aïr, on the contrary, was subject to Songhay, and the population and rulers of Aïr were even presumed by Al-Mustafa to have »descended from his slaves who were settled there.«<sup>299</sup> The legendary rule of Kanta, a Hausa implemented as ruler of Kebbi by Askia right after Kebbi's defeat against Songhay, was praised

297 Arab. اسكيا هو الذى اخذ الدولة من اهل سنغي وخرب مآثره الجاهلية وعوانده الباسطة فيسط العذل و. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 4). Cf. also Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, p. 263.

298 Arab. وقد حج من بلاده وزاروا لقي خلقا من العلماء منهم الجلال السيوطي غيره والفواله كتبنا ووصل المغيلي. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 4). Cf. Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, p. 263.

299 Arab. في بلاد اهير الان من ذرية عبيده الذين وضعهم هناك. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 4). Cf. Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, p. 162.

by Al-Mustafa as the last of the big seven empires in the Hausa region. Its history and legends are outlined in detail; starting with Kanta's rise:

»In Kebbi the rulers are slaves, for it is said that Kanta was a slave of the Fulani: He went forth and grew powerful, and waged war in this land, until he became master of the whole land of Kebbi and Zabarma. The latter is a country of scrub and thicket where are the heathen called Maguzawa.«<sup>300</sup>

By calling Kanta a slave of the Fulbe, the Jihadist author claimed dominance over Kebbi and its political origins. The Zabarma were also humiliated by Al-Mustafa.<sup>301</sup> Zabarma and Aïr were both conquered by Kebbi, whereas Bornu remained an equally powerful rival to the east. In Al-Mustafa's narrative, Kanta is the prototype of an arrogant and decadent tyrant of slave origin, torturing his subjects:

»It is said that Kanta forced the Asbenawa to carry to Surami the water of a certain lake in the territory called Tinshamau; and to bring sand from this same lake for his horse to stand upon. They were obliged to do this by force, and executed his commands right swiftly. It is said that he was inspired to do this by a dream and made the Tuareg bring his dream to pass: and so they did.«<sup>302</sup>

In these legends Kanta is a ruler living in luxury while his subjects suffer from forced labour. The practice of interpreting dreams also marks him as a devotee of non-Islamic religious rituals. Al-Mustafa also reported a war attack of the Aïr and Bornu forces on Kanta's capital town Surami at »day-break on the 'Aid«.<sup>303</sup> Dating decisive battles on Islamic festival

300 Arab. أمير انها هو مخاليع فيها عبيد ويقال انه عبد الفلانيين فخرج واستوثامرته وغزافي هذه البلاد حتى. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 5). Cf. Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, p. 263.

301 For a discussion of the ethnological value and etymological evolution of the term »Maguzawa«, see chapter IV.1.5.

302 Arab. ويقال انه كلع التوارق ان يحملوا الى بلده صورام ماء حوض كان في بلادهم يقال له تنشام وان يحملوا المر. ابط فرسه رملا من ذلك الحوض فاذعنوا بذلك فهرا وبادروا الى ما امر ويقال انه رنى ذلك في منا مه والزمهم تصديق مارءاه فعلوا او بقى. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 6). Cf. Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, pp. 263–264.

303 Arab. صباح العيد. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 6). Cf. Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, p. 264.

days, Fridays and at times of Muslim prayers (e.g. sunrise) was a typical stylistic approach in order to demonstrate their meaning from a religious perspective. The Bornu ruler gave up and withdrew to his country with Kanta following him. Kanta in turn faced resistance from Berber groups, defeated them and took the booty home. When attacking inhabitants of the Katsina area, he was wounded and finally died on his march back: »His people carried the body back, and buried him at his capital, Surami.«<sup>304</sup> In the Jihadist definition of Songhay, it was a just and Islamic empire, and furthermore the biggest one in the history of the Sudan. But its dynastical remains, e.g. the Kanta ruler, were considered arrogant apostates and illegitimate successors. Songhay was not a territory, but a political dynasty of the past without relevance for the present jihad.

### *Defining Urban Spaces*

The Hausa space had already been divided into urban centers and rural areas before the Sokoto Jihad. The Hausa cities were economic centers with professionalized markets, town walls and royal palaces. These towns were planned and constructed, houses were renovated, and town walls extended. Ross has argued that urban design in Muslim West Africa was »total«.<sup>305</sup> He explains that designed objects were destined to become part of a divine reality instead of being merely a utilitarian object there to serve immediate material needs. This is also true for Hausa cities, which were planned geometrically and often spiritually inspired. The Friday Mosque,<sup>306</sup> the Court Building, and the Palace of the Emir were built in the very center of the walled towns. Around the urban political and religious center, the cities were divided into wards, each with its own neighborhood mosque and the residence of the ward head.<sup>307</sup> Urbanity in the eighteenth century Hausa region was influenced by Islamic principles, but as a result of the Sokoto Jihad and a general reformation of Islam in the area a more spiritual Sufi

**304** Arab. فتوفى بها وحمله قومه ودفنوه بداره صورام. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 7). Cf. Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, p. 264.

**305** Ross: *Sufi City*, p. 23.

**306** The capital and largest mosque of a town which was visited by the Emir or Sultan.

**307** Moughtin: *Hausa Architecture*, p. 4.

Islam was reintroduced. For Sufi Muslims, urban spaces were only mirrors of this world reflecting the real and divine space:

»Material reality is coded; it contains signs of higher truth. Sufi phenomenology views the landscape as a matrix of such signs, to be analyzed or interpreted for what it can reveal of the higher truth of things.«<sup>308</sup>

Urban spaces always contain a semiotic basis which can be religious or carry another form of cultural meaning. Futa Jallon Sufi settlements were traditionally excluded from paying taxes to the ›profane‹ rulers of the area. They often chose peripheral locations to settle for exactly this reason. As early as in the fourteenth century these settlements were places of retreat for fugitives coming from other states. The French colonizers of the Senegambia region called these cities »marabout republics« and by that defined them as theocratic enclaves.<sup>309</sup> They were the centers of the Sahel religious geography. However, the Senegambian Jihads of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not lead to revolutionary urban processes, as they did in the Sokoto Caliphate: »There was no Senegambian equivalent to the great Muslim capitals further east, cities like Sokoto and Hamdallay.«<sup>310</sup>

The urban spaces in the Sokoto Caliphate were usually limited by city walls, which turned a settlement linguistically into a town: *gari* in Hausa and *birni* in Fulfulde. Therefore travelers in giving accounts of towns usually reported about the constitution of the wall, as well as the number, location and the names of the city gates. During the Sokoto Jihad, fortification increased leading to a rapid growth of towns (cf. chapter IV.5.5). In Jihadist fortified towns, the most important and sacred places were the mosques and burial sites. The only non-religious buildings of equal relevance were probably markets and city gates. Urban planners structured the towns deliberately, and every official in charge of architectural administration was highly respected. During Muhammad Bello's leadership, it was his personal secretary Gidado Ibn Laima who took

**308** Ross: Sufi City, p. 26.

**309** Cf. *ibid.*, p. 129.

**310** *Ibid.*, p. 130.

care of urban planning on behalf of the Sokoto sultan. Gidado's widowed wife Nana Asmau lamented on his death in 1850 in her obituary poem:

»He was in charge of repairing the Sheikh [Uthman] and Bello Mosques and other city buildings; tasks he never tired of. He was also in charge of repairing the city gates and tombs. He was the guardian and acted responsibly.«<sup>311</sup>

The Jihadists of the first generation grew up in small Fulbe settlements in the northern Hausa savanna. Many of their families owned cattle, but after defeating the Hausa kings many Jihadists moved into the Hausa towns and started to found new ones. The Sokoto Jihadists started to link pre-existing Hausa traditions of urban architecture with Islamic principles and legends. Taking care of the city and building mosques was by far the highest assignment for an architect. Urbanity was defined by a town wall offering security and a mosque providing religious services. These buildings surpassed the spatial relevance of a palace in the Jihadist urban concept.

### *Defining Nature*

Due to the general trend to present Africa as a continent subject to an extraordinary amount of natural disasters and climatic hardship, many studies on Sahel history have looked at topographic and climatic determinants. This interest was brought forward by colonial agents, explaining that Africa was a dangerous, hostile place for human beings. According to the analysis of the long history of the Saharan desert expansion and the shift of the Sahel zone southwards, studies on the pre-colonial Hausa region have overemphasized the role of ecology.<sup>312</sup> In these books, the nineteenth century accordingly appears as a century of climatic change, famines, and scarcity of resources: »A century of insecurity«,<sup>313</sup> as Weiss

311 Fulfulde درنید فی جولر د شیخ حبر فو فح محک برن حفسر ایه حابتا. کوریج برن حایک فی حبار فو Nana Asmau: *Sonnore Gidado*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 57.

312 Cf. for example Raynaut (ed.): *Sahels*; Weiss: *Alltag, Streß und Krisen*.

313 *Ibid.*, p. 155.

put it in a chapter headline of his dissertation. In more recent studies this phenomenon was likewise called »ecological stress« or »environmental stress«. <sup>314</sup> And very often historians put migrations and climatic changes into direct causal relation to each other. But at the same time, it could be argued that the Sokoto Jihad brought political stability with it and turned the nineteenth century into »a century of security«. But this study does not come forward with another view on ecological factors in Sahel history. I will, however, analyze how the Jihadist society perceived its environment and nature, and how they reacted to these factors. Environmental change and human adaptation to natural processes were not special in the nineteenth century compared to previous centuries. Societies have always observed and interpreted nature. But in the nineteenth century large-scale state-building processes were encouraged by the Jihadist movement. And the Jihadist ideology attempted to implement unambiguous frontiers between the Sokoto Caliphate and the outside world. The Jihadists revisited and redefined natural spaces.

In their geographical literature, the Sokoto Jihadists described the location, landscape, humans and animals of the region. They glorified towns and praised populated areas, and at the same time they expressed fear regarding any sort of wilderness. Later in this work I will analyze the Jihadist perception and interpretation of wilderness, »wild pagans« and the politics and warfare of Jihadist expansion. For the moment, I will briefly specify the different cultural concepts of wild spaces in the Central Sahel around 1800. In the Hausa language the common term for uncultivated bush or wilderness is *daji*. This Hausa understanding of wilderness was not necessarily alienated from God and sacred spaces. Nana Asmau commemorated in a poem the universal creation of God, and in doing so she also mentioned the earth, stars, sun, moon, seven heavens, rain and the *daji*: »Look, he made the wilderness and hills likewise; trees and the grass, he also created them.« <sup>315</sup> The Jihadist concept of wilderness included a hilly topography and a dense vegetation of grass and trees. In contrast to this, Nana Asmau assembled human beings, angels,

314 Cf. *ibid.*; see also Oppong: *Moving through and Passing on*, p. 24.

315 Hausa »Duba da yin daji duwatsu hakaza, da itatuwa da hakukuwa kuwa yai su ya.« Cf. Nana Asmau: *Dalilin sanuwar Allah*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 203.



spirits and four-legged animals in another category of God's creation. One must, of course, add here that Nana Asmau referred to cattle when writing »animals«, because all other living beings were gathered in the category of wild animals. This spatial concept is very exacting and absolute in marking the partition between wilderness and the human space.<sup>316</sup>

### *Defining a Frontier*

Nature offered itself many features which were interpreted as borders in the Central Sahel. From their study of classical Arabic geography dealing with Africa, the Sokoto Jihadists were familiar with water frontiers and mountain ranges as borders. A frontier separating different spaces is ambiguous, depending on the character of space it divides. In the early Sokoto Caliphate there was no common definition what a frontier actually was, so that each language used in the polyglot Sahel made use of different semantic methods. In the Hausa language for example, frontier was called *baki* (pl. *bakuna*), and its primary meaning is »mouth«. But *baki* may refer to anything being able to open and close a demarcation line between spaces. Corresponding with this metaphorical use of the word *baki*, *bakin dutsi* means »foot of a hill« (lit. »mouth of the hill«), and *bakin ruwa* (lit. »mouth of the water«) refers to a river bank or any water shore.<sup>317</sup> In the Hausa language the frontier is not imagined to block connections, but it is rather a connecting point or line. The frontier is an opening and entrance »mouth« into another territory.<sup>318</sup> A more explicit and modern political expression for a territorial boundary or any metaphorical limit is the Hausa word *iyaka* (pl. *iyakoki*). This term does not refer to a transit line, but a mere barrier. Etymologically the word has derived from the verb *iyaa* – »being able to« or »being in a position to

**316** The corresponding Fulfulde term for the Hausa *daji* would be *ladde*. Unfortunately, we cannot find any Jihadist description of *ladde* other than in Sokoto propaganda texts which will be analyzed later in this study. See for example a Fulfulde poem by Nana Asmau, called *Tilfin Bawa*. *Ladde* appears in the Ajami manuscript written ١٧٧١ (SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 213).

**317** These examples were taken from Robinson: Dictionary, vol. 1, p. 29.

**318** Cf. Bargery's Hausa Dictionary, online since 2002: <http://maguzawa.dyndns.ws/frame.html> (21.07.2014).

do something«. The word *iyaka* is thus referring to political and military frontiers and limitations of spatial powers.<sup>319</sup> It is applied in contexts of the state or the limitations of the world. To conclude these elaborations on the frontier in the Hausa language, there are human-made political frontiers between states or the state and »stateless« areas; and there are secondly boundaries within the states which connect different ecological and natural spaces. *Iyaka* is the term used for external frontiers blocking connections between states or larger cultural units. *Baki*, on the other hand, is a non-political or »natural« boundary or barrier which opens other spaces.

In the Sokoto dialect of the Fulfulde language, the word *keerol* (pl. *keeri*) is applied for political or agricultural borders alike.<sup>320</sup> The state border is thus called *keerol leydi* (»border of the country«).<sup>321</sup> In Arabic, which was the religious and diplomatic language of the Sokoto Jihadists, state borders, frontiers, limits and – in a more metaphorical use – also penalties on crime were all together called *ḥadda* (pl. *ḥudūd*)<sup>322</sup> The use of this term reveals a very authoritarian approach to borders as institutions of social control. The Arabic border does not describe frontiers as transit zones, but clear lines because *ḥadda* can also mean a razor or knife »blade« and an exact »definition« of something.<sup>323</sup> But when referring to state borders in Arabic language, the Jihadists would usually write about the »end/edge of the land« (*tharf al-balaḍ*).<sup>324</sup>

All these borders may at times overlap or represent themselves by reference to trees, rivers or other natural landmarks. But more often,

**319** Cf. Robinson: Dictionary, vol. 1, p. 166; see also Abraham: Dictionary, p. 408, and Schön: Dictionary, p. 91.

**320** See Klingenheben: Die Sprache der Ful, p. 307. In the French colonial dominions of West African Fulfulde-speaking societies the loanword *forontiere* (pl. *forontierji*) has also been used synonymously to *keerol*. I thank Abdourahmane Diallo for this information.

**321** Cf. Westermann: Handbuch der Ful-Sprache, p. 65. Westermann compiled his vocabulary lists from a Fulfulde native speaker, called Audu Hamadu, who came from Sokoto and who was interviewed by Westermann in the German Colony of Togo in 1907; cf. *ibid.*, p. III.

**322** Arab. حد (pl. حدود). Other words for »border« in Arabic are *تجم* or *حافة*, both of which are used only seldom in the context of territorial borders.

**323** See Wehr: Arabisches Wörterbuch, pp. 232–233.

**324** Cf. Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, p. 55. See also Abdullah dan Fodio: *Tazyin al-waraqat*, Legon 2.

the Jihadist debate was on certain settlements and whether they were part of their emirate or caliphate. The fiscal borders of the Sokoto Caliphate were not lines drawn onto the territory. With each town and village and with each tax collection it was negotiated again whether or not a settlement was tributary to a certain emirate. The Islamic discourse on frontiers is therefore specific in dealing with the exact classification of villages and towns. This approach imagines the Islamic border as a line connecting different frontier towns, called *ribat* (cf. chapter IV.5.5). The Jihadists reflected on political, religious and cultural frontiers. Some of them were considered natural, some spiritual and others again political or military.

### *Defining the Caliphate Frontiers*

After the first four years of Jihadist fighting, the movement began to spread rapidly. The borders of the Caliphate constantly shifted forward – and then sometimes back again. Emirs were chosen over certain territories and asked to conquer cities and states. In a historiographical poem Nana Asmau recalled the fast expansion of the Caliphate: At first Mallam Musa Ibn Muhammad (reigned 1808–1821) was sent to capture Zaria, Zaki was sent to Bornu, Muhamman Manga dan Gwami Mukhtar (reigned 1808–1833) took Misau,<sup>325</sup> Mallam Ishaqu (reigned 1806–1830) ruled Daura, and Sulaymanu dan Abahama (reigned 1807–1819) received Kano. The eastern emirates were founded by Yakubu dan Dadi (reigned 1805–1845) in Bauchi and Modibo Adama (reigned 1809–1847) in Adamawa.<sup>326</sup> Fighting at the eastern frontier was considered an extra religious deed by Nana Asmau. It was probably for this reason that the Western Caliphate was passed to Abdullah dan Fodio whereas the unstable East was given to the experienced warrior Muhammad Bello after Uthman's death in 1817. The southern frontier on the other hand was propagated as being stable in Jihadist literature. Reportedly, inhabitants of the southern frontier zone were afraid and threatened. Nana Asmau's

**325** The Arabic translation of this text also added the granting of the Kanuri territories to Mallam Nakiji. Cf. Shareef: *The Description of the Land of the Blacks*, p. 15.

**326** Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 148–149.

geography of the southern frontier included Nupe, Songhay, Yoruba and Borgu.

References to cardinal directions were popular in Jihadist poetry. In order to express that people from everywhere supported the Jihad, they alluded to »north, west, east and south«<sup>327</sup> in all their literature. And the frontier at each cardinal direction was perceived differently by the Jihadists. Some frontiers were considered more rebellious than others. In prayer poems of the early 1840s they begged God to destroy »unbelief everywhere east and west.«<sup>328</sup> And by that expression they referred explicitly to their enemies in Maradi, Tsibiri,<sup>329</sup> as well as in Anka.<sup>330</sup> The signification of the cardinal directions became political in the Sokoto Caliphate. The meanings of the four directions were recombined from Hausa, Fulbe, and Islamic traditions.

327 Hausa »arewa, yamma, gabas, da humbina«; *ibid.*, p. 451.

328 Hausa ا شافى و كافرئى غيس دد يم دك. Nana Asmau: *Gadaben gaskiya*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 17.

329 Located at the Eastern Rima River.

330 Town at the Zamfara River.

## 2. Cardinal Directions and Cardinal Questions

Cardinal directions cannot be understood as mere physical facts. They always depend on where an individual is located, where he or she is looking at, which fixed point the eye or compass refers to. The definition of four cardinal directions is the most common way of organizing a space perceived as two-dimensional. In Europe, in Arabia, and in West Africa these directions are similar with reference to the course of the sun. But the cultural meaning of these directions was different for Hausa farmers, traders, pilgrims, scholars, and soldiers of the Sokoto Caliphate.

### *Locating the Qibla Wall*

In Islam the dominant direction has always been the direction of Mecca, because the Kaaba stone has to be faced in Muslim prayer. This Muslim duty generated a »multiplicity of ways that Muslims have used over the centuries to ensure they were facing the Ka'ba.«<sup>1</sup> The Kaaba is a cube-shaped stone monument from pre-Islamic times that was also included into Islamic cosmology. It is said to be arranged in a position so that its main axis pointed at the very bright star Canopus.<sup>2</sup> And as a result to this astronomical orientation of the sacred Islamic Monument, Muslims all over the world could know which wall of the Kaaba they faced for their prayer: »This is the basic notion of ›direction‹ underlying Islamic sacred geography.«<sup>3</sup> The Kaaba corners were called after the regions they were directed at: Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and »the West« (*maghrib*). This monument was considered the very center of the inhabited world, and Islamic compasses were constructed to find the exact direction to it from every spot. But more often instructions to find the direction of the Kaaba were written down in texts.<sup>4</sup> This individual direction of Muslim prayer is called *qibla*,<sup>5</sup> and referring to this name, the wall of a

1 King / Lorch: Qibla Charts, p. 190.

2 Hawkins / King: On the Orientation of the Ka'ba, pp. 102–109.

3 King / Lorch: Qibla Charts, p. 190.

4 Ibid., p. 195.

5 Arab. قِبْلَة.

mosque facing the Kaaba is called the *qibla* wall all over the world. From the perspective of the Sahel region, the two Holy Cities in Arabia were located almost exactly to the east. This *qibla* direction was identified by Jihadist scholars without mathematical or astronomical calculations, on the basis of simple sun observations. East and west were thus the most important cardinal directions on the religious mental maps of the Sokoto Jihadist. In the west the mythic migration of the Fulbe ancestors had once started (cf. chapter IV.1.1), and to the east the Kaaba represented the geographical center of Islam.

The Jihadists therefore highlighted east and west in numerous prose or poetry. Whenever topics of missionary preaching, (fictional) pilgrimage or warfare were concerned, one or both of these major directions were mentioned. For example, when comparing the Jihad of the Prophet with the Sokoto Jihad, Uthman dan Fodio explained that both jihadist communities had been closed in by their enemies in their towns from »east and west«. <sup>6</sup> In a similar way Uthman dan Fodio later expressed that both jihadist groups defeated the unbelievers from »east and west«. <sup>7</sup> The two mentioned cardinal directions obviously symbolized »everywhere«. But it also refers to the directions into which the Jihadists wanted to spread Islam and engage in religious, military or trade networks. The most common long-distance routes were arranged along the east-west axis from either Morocco via Egypt to Arabia, or along the Sahel route from Mali via Sokoto to the Red Sea. Likewise, the Sahel region was considered part of this spatial arrangement ordered along this east-west line. This focus on the east-west axis was also displayed when the Caliphate was partitioned into two parts by Uthman dan Fodio in 1815. The Eastern Empire was to be governed by Muhammad Bello, while Uthman's brother Abdullah ruled the Western Emirates at Gwandu. The political names for Caliphate territories were preferably chosen with regard to east and west. From the Arabic directions *shamal* (north), *janub* (south), *sharq* (east) and *gharb* (west), <sup>8</sup> the Sokoto Jihadists only used the names »east« and »west« in their Arabic literature, giving credit to

6 Hausa »gabas da yamma«. Cf. Adeleye / El-Masri: Ajami Transliterated Text of Sifofin Shehu, p. 23.

7 Ibid., p. 25.

8 Arab. شمال، جنوب، شرق، غرب.

Islamic sacred geographies (*qibla*) and to the religious relevance of the »Sudanese frontier belt« facing the pagan south in Jihadist geography. In the Hausa and in Fulfulde languages there also existed the similar four direction system: In Hausa they are called *arewa* (north), *gabas* (east), *kudu* (south) and *yamma* (west); in Fulfulde the major directions are *kudi*, *funaange*, *naamu* and *hirnaange*. Arabic literature and Arabic knowledge on geography entering the Sahel did thus not confuse this pre-existing system of four basic directions from which all others are derived.

For Uthman dan Fodio the construction of new mosques was the highest duty of any just Islamic ruler.<sup>9</sup> And the definition of the *qibla* direction was a crucial act before the construction of a mosque could be started. From the Sokoto Jihadist sources we have only scarce information about architecture and architects of mosques or other public buildings. At least one designer of mosques, Mallam Mikhaila, was an active supporter of Jihadist urban planning. Hugh Clapperton reported that this professional also supervised the construction of a mosque in Sokoto. Under the rule of the Zaria Emir Abd Al-Karim Ibn Abbas (1835–1846) Mallam Mikhaila later constructed the main Friday Mosque of the Zaria capital city.<sup>10</sup> When Clapperton visited the construction site of the new mosque in the Sokoto capital during his first journey, he was very impressed:

»After taking leave of the prince, we rode by appointment to view a new mosque, which was a building at the expense of the *gadado* [*wazir*], not far distant from Ateeko's house. Like all mosques, it was of a quadrangular form, the sides facing the four cardinal points, and about 800 feet in length. On the eastern side [*qibla wall*] there were two doors. The western entrance had a small square apartment on the right hand in entering, where the people perform their ablutions before prayers. The roof of the mosque was perfectly flat, and formed of joists laid from wall to wall, the interstices being filled up with slender spars placed obliquely from joist to joist, and the whole covered outside with a thick stratum of indurated clay. The roof rested on arches, which were supported by seven rows of pillars, seven in each row. The pillars

9 Rebstock (ed.): *Die Lampe der Brüder*, p. 99.

10 Moughtin: *The Traditional Settlements*, p. 29.

were of wood, plastered over with clay, and highly ornamented. On the south side of the body of the building there, was a small recess appropriated solely to the sultan's use.«<sup>11</sup>

The whole construction was made with wood and clay. The building was arranged according to the cardinal directions: The public entrance and lavatory were in the west, and the *qibla wall* was east-oriented. And despite pious Jihadist trends to keep decoration simple and puritanical, Clapperton considered its style »highly ornamented.« The British traveler Clapperton witnessed and reported part of this process of decoration:

»Some workmen were employed in ornamenting the pillars, others in completing the roof; and all appeared particularly busy, from the circumstance of the *gadado* himself being here to receive me. The *gadado* was very inquisitive to know my opinion, every two or three minutes asking me what I thought of the building. The master builder, a shrewd looking little man, continually laughing, was seated in a position from whence he could conveniently overlook all the workmen. He informed me he was a native of Zeg Zeg [Zaria], and that his father having been in Egypt, had there acquired a smattering of Moorish architecture, and had left him after his death all his papers, from which he derived his only architectural knowledge. He was particularly solicitous to possess a Gunter's scale, which I afterwards sent to the sultan.«<sup>12</sup>

This »master builder« reportedly was Mallam Mikhaila who surprised Clapperton by telling him that he had studied architecture with Arabic manuscripts from Egypt. The mosque was built in order to resemble the Egyptian style. Unfortunately, there is no source describing or picturing the interior of this mosque. Its construction was, however, given top priority by the Sultan and his Wazir. Sultan Muhammad Bello had started his extensive urban planning projects in Sokoto right after Uthman dan Fodio's death in 1817. All new buildings, streets and the new Sokoto town wall were built in a rectangular arrangement according to the four

11 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 2, pp. 322–323.

12 Ibid., pp. 323–324.



cardinal directions.<sup>13</sup> This construction process requested male builders and workers. Urban Hausa women mostly lost their traditional duty to decorate houses and public buildings and their activity was hence limited to the interior ornamentation of their private rooms. And yet, female Sokoto scholars also referred to the cardinal directions. In one of her historiographical poems, Nana Asmau declared that inhabitants of the west, south, north and east had all obeyed the call for Islam pronounced by her father – even those living at the »end of the world«. <sup>14</sup> Although the composer of these lines did not explain to which direction this ›end of the world‹ was located, the above-elaborated Jihadist world geography would indicate that Nana Asmau was speaking of the southern Sokoto frontier.

From a geographical point of view, the *qibla* direction of Muslim prayer was oriented to the east-northeast in the Hausa Sahel region, but the Sokoto writers usually generalized it to the term »east«. The *qibla* direction was an important direction of identification for the Jihadists, so that Uthman dan Fodio addressed all Muslims at times as *ahl al-qibla* (›people of the qibla«). <sup>15</sup> All Muslims were obliged to look into this direction before starting the daily prayers. But under several conditions Uthman dan Fodio gave permission to skip the correct direction and pray while facing any cardinal point: This applied to persons mounted on camel, horse or donkey during a journey. Or when immediately in a battle or prior to a war, prayers could be shortened to only certain movements and positions of the arms without use of the legs and regardless of any directions. <sup>16</sup> The determination of the *qibla* was usually the responsibility of political persons of the highest ranks. Some decades after Abdullah dan Fodio's visit to the emirate capital Kano, the Kano state official Muham-

13 Prussin: Hatumere, p. 215. Cf. also general remarks on Sokoto as a planned city and the twelve city gates in Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 2, p. 335.

14 Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 163. The Fulfulde Ajami manuscript copy is held at SOAS; cf. Nana Asmau: *Ko 'iwi 'i Shehu*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, p. 214. Unfortunately, the author was not able to confirm Jean Boyd's translation.

15 Arab. اهل القبلة. Cf. Rebstock (ed.): Die Lampe der Brüder, p. 4.

16 Uthman dan Fodio framed these prayer instructions in his text *Ulum al-muamala* (Niamey 410(14)), published in English translation by Abdarraḥman Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, p. 31.

mad Zangi still commemorated how the Jihadist leader Abdullah had decided on the direction of prayer in 1807, before the new Kano mosque was constructed. He reported in his Kano chronicle of 1868:

»Skaykh Abdullah Ibn Fodio visited Kano during the period of Amir Sulaiman in the year of the sun eclipse [a total sun eclipse in Kebbi was on 29 November 1807], he led the eclipse prayer on Friday in the middle of Ramadan. Shaykh Abdullahi Ibn Fodio established the position of the *qiblah* for the Kano Mosque.«<sup>17</sup>

On the occasion of Abdullah's visit in Kano, he also instructed the new Kano scholarly elite and rulers about the Islamic principles of government with his written documentation, entitled *Diya al-hukam*. The Kano chronicler Muhammad Zangi even compared Abdullah's *qibla* definition with the famous Al-Azhar Mosque of Cairo that was visited by the Muslim jurist Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Idris Al-Shafi (767–820) for the purpose of ascertaining the correct direction for the *qibla* wall.

### *The Orientation of Hausa Farms*

Even before the Sokoto Jihad and the Jihadist Islamization movement, many Hausa associated the eastern direction with God(s) and spirits. Among Hausa farmers, facing the east was necessary whenever sacrificing or praying to the Muslim God or any other spiritual being. In their religious landscape, east and south were considered the ›male‹ directions because they were supposed the most powerful of all four cardinal directions: The east was the location of Gods and spirits, whereas the south was the space of the right hand when facing the ›spiritual‹ east. And the right hand was also the ›pure‹ hand destined for eating and greeting. The western and northern directions were known as the weaker directions and perceived as ›female‹. This Hausa cosmology of space was considered delicate and precarious. For this reason, spiritual rituals and the arrangement of houses and fields aimed at balancing the female-male

17 Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 46.

complex of directions and influences. The rural Hausa field system was arranged rectangularly, with a one major axis from the north-western angle to the south-eastern angle. Hausa farmers also organized the sowing of their crops according to this gendered scheme of space:

»Millet, because of the phallic shape of the seed, is thought to be a masculine crop, and is sown in an east-west direction; sorghum, a feminine plant, is sown in a north-south direction.«<sup>18</sup>

Millet and sorghum are traditionally mixed on one field in a kind of heterosexual relationship in order to make them both fertile in combination with the right directions. The farming compound was arranged in the same manner. The male head of the family worshipped and appeased all directions by laying down four charms at each side of the quadrilateral space. The family houses were also located according to the proper direction. The public gate to the compound was open to the west (like in mosques), and the private house entrances were hidden towards the east, or in other words: the direction of the Prophet. With reference to this social order of space, the first wife and her children used to live in the most northern hut and she was therefore called *uwar gida* or *matar arwa* in Hausa (»mistress of the house« or »woman of the north«).<sup>19</sup> In the life of Hausa farmers the whole compound, including field and houses, were arranged in accordance with the four directions. North, east, west, and south had a sexual meaning with effects on the fertility of humans and plants. The cardinal directions were also addressed in religious rituals and for Islamic or other prayer. Like Islamic architects, Hausa farmers preferred the rectangular organization of space.

18 Moughtin: Hausa Architecture, p. 35.

19 Ibid., p. 36.

*Cardinal Directions in Fulbe Pastoral Tradition*

The Fulbe pastoralist communities of the Central Sahel also arranged their camps according to the cardinal directions: The cattle were usually kept in the western part, considered the male direction. Therefore the male tombs were built behind the cattle.<sup>20</sup> The houses of the wives were located in the east facing the cattle, and behind this female space they set up the burial ground of the women to the east. Hopen even took one step further, suggesting that the Sokoto dialect of Fulfulde linguistically identified men with the west: Accordingly, *gorko* (»man«) and *gorgal* (»west«) both derived from the root *gor*.<sup>21</sup> In the same system of cardinal directions the senior wife in the northern estate was called *wailaajo* (»the northerner«) while the junior wife (or wives) was named *fombinaajo* (»the southerner«). As in the culture of Hausa farmers, the north was the direction of the female head of the family, be it the Fulbe *fombinaajo* or the Hausa *matar arwa*.

The term »Fombina« originally depicted the southern direction, but was also regionally adapted as the Fulfulde name for the Adamawa (or »Fombina«) Emirate in the south-east of the Sokoto Caliphate.<sup>22</sup> The Jihadists perceived Adamawa as the far south of the Caliphate, although it was located more to the east than to the south from a Sokoto point of view. In Fulbe oral tradition the east and the west were in general portrayed as two safe and prosperous regions. That is because the Sahel belt is spread from the east to the west and is in general beneficial for their cattle. In contrast to that, the north is too dry and the Tsetse fly of the southern forests too dangerous to keep large cattle herds.<sup>23</sup>

When some pastoral Fulbe of Adamawa were sedentarized during the Jihad, the *wuro* (»camp«) was suddenly associated with »town«. The western direction maintained its representation of (preferably male) power, but the female east was replaced by the direction of Islam and

20 Cf. Fulbe Tomb of Adamawa (drawn by Strümpell in 1904), Ethnologisches Museum Dahlem (Berlin), Strümpell Papers, I/MV 0838, Routenaufnahmebuch 10, p. 34.

21 Hopen: The Pastoral Fulbe Family, p. 111.

22 Cf. Mukoshy: A Fulfulde-English Dictionary, p. 57.

23 DeLancey: Moving East, Facing West, p. 7.

knowledge.<sup>24</sup> Islamic factors became more relevant than gender spaces in the era of Sokoto Jihadist urbanization. Acknowledging the Islamic sacred geography and Fulbe traditions, the Sokoto Jihadists also positioned the palaces of their newly established towns in the east, facing the *qibla* wall of the mosque (cf. the palace in the yellow circle on Sultan Bello's map in *Figure 1*). Many scholars have argued that during the Jihad the mosques were erected in the city centers for the first time in this region and were to replace the central position of the palaces.<sup>25</sup>

The Hausa palaces usually opened to the east, so that the new Jihadist cities of Sokoto, Wurno, Bauchi, and Yola contrasted this Hausa spatial concept of royal housing. Corresponding with traditions of the pastoral Fulbe, the royal compounds faced west and the private rooms were located behind them, in the eastern part.<sup>26</sup> With the Jihadist propaganda and wars, privacy and seclusion of women from the elite became more important. Furthermore, the decoration of buildings generally became less colorful with only abstract, geometrical finger patterning on the mud walls. Today, there are no remains showing the Jihadist decoration style, because the annual raining season usually destroyed the mud ornaments which were therefore renewed after every rainy season.<sup>27</sup>

Directions were not only crucial to religious contexts during the Sokoto Jihad, they were also important for military activities in the Jihad. The standing armies in the Caliphate were in general overseen by the emir or another head of the town they belonged to. But no ruler would let them reside within the city walls and as a result their camps were located in the environs of the city. The military camps were organized with regard to the four directions. The military leader camped towards the west, while his mounted soldiers had their tents eastward behind him. The closer the relationship between soldiers and the military leader was, the closer their tents were located to his.<sup>28</sup> Clapperton also asserted this structure

24 Ibid., p. 9.

25 Ibid., p. 18.

26 Moughtin: Hausa Architecture, p. 50.

27 Ibid., pp. 115, 125. For a study on Ibadan and Zaria architecture in the late twentieth century with special regard to land tenure and kinship, see the comparative analysis by Schwerdtfeger: Traditional Housing in African Cities.

28 This encampment practice was described by the Tilho expedition (1906–1909) with reference to the Zinder Emirate; cf. Tilho (ed.): Documents scientifiques, p. 527.

with regard to Sultan Muhammad Bello's armies: »The man next in rank to the governor of each province has his tent placed nearest to him, and so on.«<sup>29</sup> The military camps outside of the capital towns were organized according to the regions they were supposed to attack or visit, into the four directions.<sup>30</sup> The camp which Clapperton called »without the least regularity« was in fact organized quite exactly, according to tactical spaces, the four directions, and the social position of the soldiers. The eastern direction was also praised in military songs. The Kano Court reported several praise songs in which the Kano Emir is addressed as »mighty king of the east«, »conqueror of the pagans«, and »father of the easterners«.<sup>31</sup>

In the Sokoto Jihad different spatial concepts were negotiated. The Jihadists encountered a climatic approach to geography from their study of classical Arabic literature. The flat and round earth was structured into zones along the lines of latitude from east to west. From their study of the world in medieval Arabic geography, the Sokoto scholars noticed that their home region in the Sahelian (or »Sudanese«) climate zone was at the same time the global frontier of Islam. As in India, Islamic military movements conquered »civilized«, but polytheist societies in this environmental belt – in a pre-modern Muslim view. As the Asian jihadist armies had defeated the Buddhist and Hindu societies of northern India, so did the Sokoto Jihadists see their fate in fighting and integrating the Hausa apostate city states. Further south, however, the climatic belt of the cannibal peoples was located. They were judged pagan *and* uncivilized half-animals, which could or should not be Islamized at all. Beyond them, there were allegedly only hot deserts in the global south, which were therefore not inhabited by humans. In their regional geographies the Jihadists modified the understanding of the south slightly. It was not hot deserts, but the hilly and tropical forest regions which were considered uncivilized. Due to the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca and

29 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 181.

30 »The only regulation that appears in these rude feudal armies is, that they take up their ground according to the situation of the provinces, east, west, north, or south; but all are otherwise huddled together, without the least regularity.« Ibid.

31 Hausa »mashashan gabas«, »sha da arna«, »uban gabasawa«. Cf. Besmer: Hausa Court Music, pp. 175, 166, 110.

the major Sahel pilgrimage route, the east and the west were seen as the directions and regions of Islam. When the Sokoto Jihadists measured this world, they integrated mythological, sacred, historical and the actual political landscapes. Their home region was mythic because of their frontier location which led to a direct spatial encounter with ›unbelief‹. It was also sacred because of the location of the Central Sahel on the pilgrimage route. Furthermore it was historical, because it had been an area of Islamic expansion for centuries. And lastly, it was an area of current encounters between different mobile actors circulating news about Arabia, Futa Toro (Senegal), European colonization, and the Caliphate frontiers.





## **IV Mobile Actors and the Transfer of Jihadist Knowledge on Space**

Much of the Jihadist spatial knowledge was quoted from medieval or contemporary Arabic literature; other information about territory was gained by travel experience. And yet, the Arabic books were also one important merchant trade item and talisman among travelers and other mobile actors of the Central Sahel in the nineteenth century. The books and extracts conserved in the Jihadist libraries had been brought from Mali, Bornu, or directly from and through the Sahara. This way, the book traders transferred written knowledge along with rumors from merchant networks. These informants were also able to transfer spatial knowledge orally, when they talked to hosts, trading partners, or Islamic scholars in the Sokoto Caliphate. We can conclude, that spatial knowledge was ›traded‹ on the level of written book content and secondly, on the level of oral conversation between mobile actors. And very often both levels of knowledge transmission were addressed during one and the same encounter of migrants. The recipients of this spatial knowledge in turn debated different aspects of these encounters: They deliberated on the content of territorial information; they discussed the origin and transmission of information; and finally they reflected on the role and status of the mobile actor(s). These mobile individuals and groups often had different ethnic, linguistic, territorial, social, and cultural backgrounds.

The first group of actors, ancestral travelers and migrants, can be labeled historical or even legendary. Myths of origin obviously contained information about the ancestors, but they also offered theories about spatial orders: Which route did they (or did he) take and why? Which home region did they leave and why did they resettle in another area? Other studies are dedicated to the clarification of fact and fiction in these narratives. The present chapter will elaborate on the strategies used by the Sokoto Jihadists when they reinterpreted different myths of origin. The second chapter concentrates on the pilgrims, traveling between West Afri-

ca and Arabia. What kind of a discourse on space did they engage in on their journey and what did the Sokoto Jihadists learn from them? While pilgrims were usually temporary travelers in the Sahel, professional travelers drew their identity from constant migration. This third group of mobile actors comprises basically traders, mobile Islamic teachers and mendicant preachers. A fourth group portrays the spatial knowledge and attitudes towards territory of pastoralist and other mobile clans or families. In contrast to the aforementioned mobile groups, pastoralists migrated with all their family and belongings. The Sokoto Jihadists dealt in particular with Fulbe and Tuareg clans living within the Caliphate frontiers. And in a final step, the Jihadists were themselves for a large part of their lives mobile actors engaged in military expeditions. But what spatial knowledge did they seek and how did warfare and migration through war zones influence each other? Was the culture of violence adapted to the different categories of space defined by Islamic law (›Bilad al-Harb‹, ›Bilad al-Islam‹) and by Jihadist geography (Sudanese climate zone, the hot ›wilderness‹ south of the Sudan)? It will be explored how mental maps influenced the treatment of different enemy groups in jihadist warfare of the Caliphate expansion. The above-mentioned categories of mobile actors of course overlapped at times, and it will be clarified where exactly networks and discourses on spatial knowledge overlapped and which common narratives were generated by this interaction.

But what united all these actors was mobility, travel, and migration. Many experienced travelers and residents of the routes and networks knew exactly how organized migration was scheduled according to pastoral, agricultural or political determinants. Rainy seasons at times blocked routes for beasts of burden due to the seasonal flooding of river channels. And on the other hand, living on cattle or agricultural products determined when a person could leave the household for a journey. The Jihadist wars often forced traders to reconsider their routes, and local taxes or market prices framed decisions of caravan leaders. Certain festivals or the Ramadan fasting month also changed the rhythm of many Muslims' lives in the Central Sahel.

Local, regional or imperial rulers usually had to give their permission for a caravan to arrive or to proceed elsewhere. The local palace had to organize places for encampments next to the settlements or some rooms inside of the town. Guides and bodyguards had to be recruited, horses and porters to be assembled. Routes were chosen so as to avoid

robbery or lack of water and nourishment. Equipped with charms and after a Muslim prayer had been spoken, caravans started for the next passage. Whenever arriving at some settlement, messengers were sent to the court to announce the coming and the purpose of the visitors. Certain ceremonies and the exchange of greetings and goods were arranged and as a result of these negotiations encampment was usually accepted. The caravans paid their taxes at this occasion and not in the countryside when entering another political territory. From the point of view of the caravans, the frontiers of trade existed basically between settlements and the passages through uninhabited land beyond villages and towns.

The travelers communicated about foreign territories at all stages of their journey: When a caravan was configured the route and destinations were announced. The migrants also shared their experiences about strange places and spaces while traveling. And at every stopping place, new information about the upcoming passages was obtained. The travelers informed strangers about their home regions, and when they returned to their homes, families and neighbors listened to the stories of the returnees. The communication of and between these mobile actors was often far from being purely factualist or neutral in tone and style. Individual informants may not have wanted to tell about the economic hardships of traveling or incomprehensible occurrences at great length. Travel stories were often told with standard phrases that condensed, emphasized, or even omitted certain experiences. These discourses on space created a determined pool of labels for depicting certain landscapes, passages, animals and human inhabitants. This pool of space descriptions was then also accessed by the Sokoto Jihadists for developing their policies and warfare tactics. This analysis can be addressed in the following major research questions: Which places did the Jihadist identity refer to as home and how was this ›home‹ described? Who were the non-Jihadist others and to which places did the Jihadists link them? By which process of knowledge transfer did the Jihadists learn about space and how was the mode of knowledge transmission reflected in the Jihadist mental maps? And how did imagined geographies finally shape Jihadist warfare and expansion?

## 1. Ancestral Travelers: »Reformers in Corrupt Times«

The status of travelers in Islam was traditionally highly ranked across different ethnic and cultural groups. The treatment of migrant strangers was considered important from the very beginnings of Islam. They had to be hosted and supplied with food for customarily three days. Despite some deviation from this rule, travelers were persons of honor whose experience of foreign lands was often perceived as a kind of wisdom. Furthermore, Islamization was commemorated as the summation of the continuous effort of mobile soldiers and scholars. In classical Islamic literature, strangers and travelers were the chosen persons that reformed Islamic belief and led the people to God. According to Islamic eschatology, another renovator of Islam would appear as a stranger to the land of reform at the beginning of each new Islamic century. Uthman dan Fodio also quoted the following famous Hadith of the Prophet:

»Islam began as a strange thing and it will return as strange. God bless the strangers! And they said: Who are these strangers, oh Messenger of God? He said: Those who reform in corrupt times.«<sup>1</sup>

This Arabian and Islamic approach to the historical role of immigrants for political renewal fit well into the West African landscape of commemoration of ancestral migrants. Non-Islamic societies had also traced their descent back to the coming of a certain immigrant who renovated the political and social order. The figure of the ›immigrant reformer‹ was common among many ethnic groups, so that Islam could easily integrate this narrative. In the Jihadist discourse on ›immigrant reformers‹ and ›immigrant ancestors‹ the scholars referred essentially to two narratives: The Fulbe myths of origin and the Hausa descent. The Fulbe reportedly immigrated from the west and the ancestors of the Hausa dynasties allegedly came from Bornu in the east. However, all of these stories had already paid tribute to Islam by the late eighteenth century and thus

<sup>1</sup> Arab. بدأ الإسلام غريباً وسيعود غريباً فتوبى للغريباء. ققيل: من الغرباء يا رسول الله! قال: الذين يصلحون. عند فساد الزمان. Cf. Rebstock (ed.): *Die Lampe der Brüder*, p. ٨. This Hadith was, for example, included into the so-called *Sahih Muslim* Collection. It was documented by the Iranian scholar Muslim Ibn Al-Hajjaj (817/8–874/5).

presupposed that the first ancestors had come to Africa from the Middle East in some way or another.

### ***1.1 Fulbe Migration from East to West: »The Masters of Migration«***

Being a traditionally pastoral group, the scattered Fulbe communities of the Sahel recalled different variations of ancestral migration. Therefore the interpretation of the Fulbe from the Central Sahel will be studied in this section first and foremost. In popular myths, songs and historical poetry, the origins of the Fulbe were often linked to the origin of Islamization. The nineteenth century scholar Alhaji Umaru (1858–1934) from Kano pointed out that the Fulbe ancestral migration occurred parallel to the advent of Muslim missionaries in North and West Africa. He started his historical essay with the expansion of the first Islamic caliphate under the second caliph Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (592–644).<sup>2</sup> His military leaders were successful in Palestine, Egypt and in Syria. Alhaji Umaru commented on Al-Khattab in his Hausa Ajami account:

»It was said that Umaru ḡan Chattabi [Hausa name of Al-Khattab], Head of the Muslims, may God be pleased with him, he was the one who started to spread Islam in every direction.«<sup>3</sup>

Al-Khattab reportedly sent his military official Abu Darda<sup>4</sup> (d. 652) from Arabia to the west in order to conquer new regions on behalf of the Islamic caliphate. In fact, Abu Darda was a companion of the Prophet Muhammad and had served as a governor in Syria under Caliph Uthman, who reigned after Umar Ibn Al-Khattab.<sup>5</sup> There is no historical proof that he has ever traveled to North Africa, but the Hausa scholar Alhaji Umaru claimed that Abu Darda migrated to the Byzantine dominion in North Africa, accompanied by a group of Muslim soldiers:

»They set out in this direction in order to introduce Islam and spread it. Thus they arrived there, and they reached that place. There were many pagans.

2 Arab. عمر بن الخطاب.

3 Cf. Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, pp. 80, 491.

4 Arab. أبو الدرداء الأثري.

5 See Jeffery: Abu al-Darda, pp. 113–114.

There were also people who professed Christianity, but they vanished, as they [the Muslims] were doing well. [...] Abu Darda settled there and was introducing Islam into those countries. Some of them were accepting it with goodwill; some others were forced to accept it by use of weapons.«<sup>6</sup>

This group of Muslims was believed to have Islamized North and West Africa by command of the caliph himself. Their migration was interpreted as a missionary trip for the purpose of converting people on their journey by use of words and weapons (Hausa *makaamai*). One man of this missionary warrior group was called Uqba Ibn Nafi<sup>7</sup> (622–683), and he allegedly proceeded further to the west. This military leader had in fact conquered North African regions such as Tunisia. But according to the Fulbe myth of Alhaji Umaru, he did also settled amongst West African pagans:

»Ukbatu Ibn Amiri married a daughter of a man from that country. She bore six children for him: four males and two females. Well, as for those children, their language was not Arabic like that of their father. It was not a language of the pagans, either like that of their mother. Well, it was the Fulfulde language.«<sup>8</sup>

For Alhaji Umaru, language was the major identifier in order to distinguish the Fulbe. These children were the connecting link between the »pagans« and the Muslim-Arabic conquerors. It must also be stressed that the »unbelieving« mother and her language remained without names or other specification in this narration. Literally, this story described the genealogical connection of the Fulbe with the companions of Prophet Muhammad. But on a metaphorical level, the ulama of the Sokoto Caliphate also defined itself as an outcome of a Muslim-pagan frontier and contact zone. This hybridity is stressed when explaining that their new language was neither Arabic nor any indigenous African language. This distinct language must have been a basic element of Fulbe identity in the

6 Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, pp. 80, 491.

7 Arabic name of the military officer is عقبة بن نافع. Other Fulbe legends tell how a man with the name Yakoub came from his home in India via Egypt into the – then uninhabited – Sahel, married a female Chamaeleon, and founded a new ethnic group with her. Yakoub returned alone to Cairo where his grave reportedly was still identified in the nineteenth century. Cf. Escayrac de Lauture: Mémoires sur le Soudan, p. 145.

8 Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, pp. 80, 490.

Central Sahel. Living in a polyglot area, their way of communication marked borders between societies, and these borders were at the same time frontiers of knowledge about Islam.

Following the commands of Alhaji Umaru these Fulbe propagated rapidly and split up into different groups, with one settling in Futa Toro (Senegal). Muhammadu – one of their offspring – allegedly left Futa Toro because of tensions within the Fulbe clans there and resettled in Gobir, where six generations later Uthman dan Fodio was born. The migration of the Fulbe ancestor Uqba Ibn Nafi from the Arabian Peninsula to West Africa is presented as a missionary and military tour. In contrast to this official mission, the migration from Futa Toro to Gobir in the Central Sahel under Muhammadu is characterized as an escape and search for a new place to settle. In Adamawa (Northern Cameroon), the myth of Fulbe origin was passed on in a quite similar way: The Prophet Muhammad himself is believed to have sent Al-Khattab and Uqba Ibn Nafi westwards to the ancient empire of Melle (Mali) in order to preach Islam. Uqba married a local Malian woman, remembered as Badjumanga, and together they had four sons and six daughters.

»Homesickness later chased Uqba back to Mecca, leaving behind his wife and children in Malle guarded by a trustworthy slave he had freed. [...] Badjumanga, the female ancestor of the Fulbe had five more sons with her second husband, the former slave of Uqba, and they are the forefathers of the false Fulbe clans.«<sup>9</sup>

And, as expected, the »real« Fulbe of this account were those clans descending from Uqba himself (and not his slave), who traveled eastwards until Adamawa. Thus the genetic and spatial lineage was deemed highly valuable, because the most famous family of the region was considered to be direct descendants of Uqba. The reason given for the Fulbe migration to the east is overpopulation according to this source, while most

9 German »Sehnsucht trieb spatter Ukba nach Mekka zurück, sein Weib und seine Kinder ließ er jedoch unter Obhut eines vertrauten Sklaven, dem er die Freiheit geschenkt hatte, in Malle. [...] Badjumanga, die Stammutter der Fulbe, hatte ihrem zweiten Manne, dem einstigen Sklaven des Ukba, noch fünf Söhne geboren; sie sind die Väter unechter Fulsippen.« This account was narrated to Kurt Strümpell by Alkali Muktaru of Ngaundere, who had been educated by Malum Abdulahi, Wazir of Jola. See Strümpell: Die Geschichte Adamauas, p. 51.

other narratives explain this movement as a reaction to internal tensions. Two clans under the leaders Wajo and Rendi are reported to have migrated together. The editor of the source, Kurt Strümpell, later added that it was grazing land that the emigrants were basically looking for.<sup>10</sup> But this was probably his personal interpretation of the Fulbe history in Adamawa. This version of the Uqba myth reveals prejudices between the different Fulbe clans who blamed each other for being less Islamized and more influenced by pagan population. And these assumptions of different ranks of Islam were directly linked to the clans' places and times of migration. Some were honored for being ›real‹ Fulbe, others ridiculed as offspring of a slave of Uqba. Several ancestral Fulbe myths were generated within the Sokoto Caliphate in order to represent or implement social stratification.

The above-explained ancestral narratives not only symbolized a strong consciousness of a homogenous Fulbe community against all others. In some myths there were also strong notions of internal classification of hierarchical Fulbe sub-groups. This applied especially to the cattle-keeping Fulbe of rural areas, who were often called backward and uneducated.<sup>11</sup> They were even ridiculed by the town Fulbe for having descended out of several incestuous relationships. And in the Adamawa Uqba myth the father was only a slave and not a free Arab. This legend of slave descent censured the lack of Islam, the missing Middle Eastern relative and the social position of slaves as indicators for being ›false‹ Fulbe. The incest legend on the other hand expressed disgust for the social isolation and marriages within Fulbe clans.<sup>12</sup> In another account told according to a written document in the 1930s in Northern Cameroon, these pastoralist Fulbe were identified as the descendants of an unfaithful wife of a Muslim scholar and jinns (Muslim spirits), with whom she had sexual relations. The Cameroonian informant also told the German anthropologist that he had copied this story from a scholar working for Uthman dan Fodio – information which cannot be counted as trustworthy.<sup>13</sup> But

10 Ibid., p. 53.

11 For a more detailed description of these groups, see chapter IV.4.1.

12 See for example Brackenbury: Notes on the »Bororo Fulbe«, p. 211.

13 German »Diese Geschichte stammt aus dem Besitze des Malum Adamu-Jola. Er erbt sie von seinem Urgroßvater, der ein bekannter Dichter und Schriftgelehrter am



this myth probably dated back to the mid-nineteenth century, when some Jihadist Fulbe came to political power and moved into urban centers, while other Fulfulde speakers remained pastoralists.

Local commemoration in colonial Adamawa also claimed that Uqba had transported his war drum *tumbal sardi* from Mecca to Mali, and subsequently with the Jillaga clan migration to Adamawa. It was reported that this drum caused a severe fight between Fulbe aspirants for leadership and was therefore hidden in a cave by the leader Ardo Jajo and the place was marked by a stone. But a gazelle pushed the stone into the cave and the drum was never found again. A duplicate war drum had to be built and was used for battles by *ardo* leaders until colonial times.<sup>14</sup> If we assume that court regalia can constitute legitimacy of leadership,<sup>15</sup> the legitimizing power in the case of the *tumbal sardi* drum derived from the voyage of the object from Mecca to Mali and Adamawa. Coeval to the migration of people, the drum traveled across North Africa and the Sahel. It was considered an object that memorialized this journey.

In an earlier account by a Guinean scholar written down in the 1850s,<sup>16</sup> the author described the origin of the Fulbe in a quite different way. In his Fulfulde version, it was two leaders from Morocco (Fes) with Arabic ancestors, called Saydi and Siri, who had left their region of origin due to internal quarrels. They supposedly asked the Mandingo leader Alhaji Salih Suware for asylum, who in turn told them to proceed until Futa Jallon and settle there: »[The Mandingo leader] prayed over them. They passed till they came to Futa.«<sup>17</sup> The leader did not permit the migrants to settle in his sphere, but he allocated them a place to stay

Hofe Osman ‘dan Fodis war. Adamu schrieb die Geschichte für mich von dem Original ab, das in der Fulsprache mit arabischen Schriftzeichen geschrieben ist.« Cf. Pfeffer: Die Djafun-Bororo, p. 168.

14 Strümpell: Geschichte Adamaus, p. 52.

15 See for example Mayer-Himmelheber: Die Regalia des Kabaka von Buganda.

16 The translator was the Church Missionary Society member Charles Reichardt. He described his informant: »[It is] an oral tradition of Ibrahim, a man of property and much influence in Timbo, who visited the Colony of S[ierra] Leone late in the year 1857; it was penned on a slate by the above mentioned Muh[ammed] Sali.« Cf. Reichardt (ed.): Fulah Pieces, n.p. Reichardt also published a Fulfulde textbook in id.: Primer in the Fulah Language.

17 Reichardt (ed.): Fulah Pieces, pp. 39, 45.

and prayed for their journey. Not only was this leader considered to be a Muslim already, he was also powerful enough to direct the migrants. The author remarked that the descendants of the two leaders settled in Futa Jallon and started to organize a jihad: »The sons of Saydi and Seri had a time ago met each other and talked about a Crusade [Fula text *jihad*] into the Futa country.«<sup>18</sup> The jihadists »Saydi and Seri« can be identified as the early jihadist state builders of Futa Jallon, Karamokho Alfa (also called Ibrahim Musa, d. 1751) and the Imam Ibrahim Sori (reigned 1751–1784). This jihadist state was founded in 1727 and persisted until French colonization. The reason for leaving their homeland was the *fitina* (Engl. trouble, crisis or famine). The sons of the two Fulbe leaders then planned a jihad<sup>19</sup> and one of them deliberately provoked the »unbelievers«<sup>20</sup> by destroying their drums at a dance festival. When their enemies once again tried to trade in the area, they made the priest Alfa their king and launched the jihad. The idea of a religiously inspired war and the notion of a violent »introduction of religion to the land«<sup>21</sup> were chronologically fixed at a certain point in time after the migrants had resettled. But the focus of this account is set on the jihad and only to a lesser extent on migration and places of origin. This migration myth of the Fulbe of Futa Jallon is a story of struggle, escape and colonization of a foreign area. Their resettlement was then soon followed by Islamic jihad wars. The migrants were perceived as a revolutionary potential for the established political and military elites of a region – just like Islamic theology framed Muslim migrants. The Guinean author of this source also recounted that one of these Fulbe immigrants went to a public festival and banned all dancing and drumming because of Islamic principles. But as a result of his pious Islamic lifestyle he was himself banned by the celebrating community. This was called the start for the jihad series in the Futa Jallon region in the early eighteenth century.

Despite all differences, the Fulbe myths of origin from the Futa Jallon to Adamawa share some basic narrative elements: The earliest ancestors

18 Ibid.

19 Fulfulde »Bibe Sediben e bibe Seriben yididi be haldi fi gihadi en ledi Futa.« Cf. *ibid.*, p. 39.

20 Fulfulde »keferebeben.« *Ibid.*

21 Fulfulde »Koedi'i dubi woni ko'o habbi Futa odarni dina e mairi o mai.« *Ibid.*, p. 40.

always originate from the Arabian Peninsula, the migrating communities were usually organized around charismatic Islamic and military leaders, and the arrival of the groups sooner or later caused jihadist wars with the anterior society. The Sokoto scholars were also told these Fulbe legends in text and speech. From the Hausa point of view, it is reported that the first Fulbe (called *wangarawa*) came from Mali to the Hausa region during the rule of king Yaji (1349–1385) and Islamized it. During the reign of Muhammad Rumfa (1463–1499) the Kano Chronicle already listed twelve Fulbe clans settled in the Kano region.<sup>22</sup>

The Jihadist Court of Sokoto was aware of these legends of origin. One of Muhammad Bello's court officials wrote down his own account about the origins of the Fulbe with reference to Umar Ibn Al-Khattab and his conquest of Egypt. This Arabic essay was among Hugh Clapperton's papers and dated March 1827. According to this narrative, Al-Khattab's army invaded North Africa and subdued the Persian and Jewish residents there. The Christians allegedly welcomed the Muslim invaders and asked them to leave a Muslim scholar among them. This scholar was Uqba Ibn Nafi who married the daughter of the Christian king who had converted to Islam – a princess called Gajma. Their children spoke a new language and were half-Arabs and half-Christians: the Fulbe. They were four sons who were left behind in the »west« while their father Uqba returned to Egypt.<sup>23</sup> According to the Sokoto author of this text, he had read about this in the Sokoto library: »This we found recorded in our books.«<sup>24</sup> Abdullah dan Fodio also traced the Fulbe origin back to the Byzantinian Christians in North Africa who had been Islamized voluntarily:

»Their ancestors are, as we heard, Christians from Rome [Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantium]. The army of the companions arrived there and then their king accepted Islam. So Uqba bin Amir, who was the commander of the Muslim army and a companion of the Prophet and was the Emir of the West [Maghreb], married the king's daughter and generated the famous Fulani tribe. Their ancestor was Roman [v.s.] and his father was Isu bin Ishaq bin

22 Cf. Gowers: *Gazetteer of Kano Province*, p. 10.

23 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, pp. 337–338.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 338.

Ibrahim Khalil Allah. And his mother Nasma bint Ismail bin Ibrahim (peace be upon them).<sup>25</sup>

Abdullah dan Fodio also emphasized the Christian background of the Fulbe. He omits the idea of any »pagan« influence on his ancestors. His version of the Uqba myth integrated the history of Islamization in a more general setting of coexisting Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Byzantine Christians allegedly welcomed the Islamic invaders and their king immediately embraced Islam without any battle. Furthermore, Abdullah wanted to make sure that Uqba Ibn Nafi was a companion of the Prophet himself who had been instructed to conquer the »west«. These imaginary ancestral journeys and links represent Jihadist ideals as well as spheres of available knowledge. From North African and especially Egyptian books, the Jihadist scholars studied the Eastern Roman Empire which had fought against the Islamic expansion all throughout the seventh century. This account portrays the historical consciousness of the Jihadists, linking their existence as a linguistic group to the Byzantine Empire and the early history of Islamic conquest in North Africa.

Abdullah dan Fodio probably also composed a single brief text on the Fulbe myth titled »The origin of the Fulbe«,<sup>26</sup> in which he reflects on the mythic rise of his ethnic group and their mobile lifestyle in general. For this chapter and this whole analysis it is a source of extraordinary value and therefore it is important to discuss its problematic authenticity. There exist different copies of this text and the manuscripts are stored in several West African archives (Sokoto, Niamey, Kano). For this study I refer to the Niamey copy and Shareef's version for verification.<sup>27</sup> The manuscript Shareef used for his reprint and translation was one of the Sokoto copies.<sup>28</sup> For him, there existed no doubt that this text was originally written by Abdullah dan Fodio because other authors of the nineteenth century had often copied from it or referred to it:

25 إبداع النسوخ, Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida' al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, f. 2. For an Arabic edition see Hiskett: *Material Relating to the State of Learning*, pp. 550–578.

26 Arab. أصل الغلاتيين.

27 *Asl al-fulatiyin*, Niamey 11.

28 Center of Islamic Studies Sokoto Archive, 2/8/104, 2/10/139.

»This omission by Shaykh Abdullahi was carried over into other composers of works of the history and lineage of this particular line of the Turudbe such as the work of Shaykh Uthman ibn Ahmad called *Kitab'n-Nasab Li's-Shaykh Uthman* (the Book of the Lineage of Shehu Uthman), and the work of Shaykh Bashir ibn Modibo Abdullahi ibn Bellel called *an-Nasab wa's-Sihr* (Lineage and Racial Origin). However, in the work of Sultan Muhammad Bello called *Majmu n-Nasab*<sup>29</sup> (A Collection of the Lineages) which he composed a few years before his death in 1837, in which he gathered the entire lineages of each man and woman of the existing Turudbe ethnicity going back to the generation Ayyub ibn Maasiran ibn Buba Baba ibn Abu Bakr ibn Musa Jokolli.«<sup>30</sup>

However, there is at least some evidence that this text was actually read and studied within the Jihad elite, even if the author may have been another Jihadist author and not Abdullah dan Fodio. But Gwando expresses strong doubts about its authenticity.<sup>31</sup> Even if the real author must remain unknown, the document was widespread among scholars before 1850 and is thus relevant to this study as a relic that concerns Fulbe elite identity with regard to ancestral migration. The text demonstrates with detailed argumentation that there was a historical consciousness among the elite acknowledging the story of Uqba Ibn Nafi and his descendants. Abdullah dan Fodio (or some other unknown Jihadist author) started his description of the Fulbe migration with their mythic place of origin at Mount Sinai and then goes on with an explanation of their diffusion into a broader territory:

»The ancestors of all Fulbe [Arab. »Fullatiyin«] come from Mount Sinai. Then they persisted in migrating to the very West [Maghreb] and to the lands that almighty Allah had willed for them to reach. And there is no ethnic group more numerous than the Fulbe because they are found in many regions of the Islamic dominions. The reason that there are so few other ethnicities and that they have attained their great number is that they are the masters of

29 Misspelling: The text is called *Majmu al-ansab* and is basically a list of some 10,000 relatives of Uthman dan Fodio.

30 Shareef: *The Depository of Texts*, footnote 11.

31 Gwando mentions the different style, language, prejudices against Fulbe using Hausa and the given dates for historical incidents as arguments for his thesis. See Gwando: Abdullahi b. Fodio as a Muslim Jurist, pp. 205–206.

migration<sup>32</sup> [relocation]. Even the etymological root of ›al-Fulata‹ derives from the word [verb] ›falata‹<sup>33</sup> which means ›to escape, flee or be released‹, that is ›to be redeemed or saved‹. Like when you say [in Arabic] ›someone escaped‹ you would mean ›he redeemed or saved himself‹. This name was applied to this ethnic group because they all redeem themselves and flee from the experience of the state of conflict [*fitna*].<sup>34</sup> It is almighty Allah that redeems them. When they see anything that causes them grief they migrate from that place immediately. Because they are migrant people they are called ›al-Fulatiyin‹.<sup>35</sup>

The term ›Ful‹ or ›Peul‹ for the Fulbe had probably emerged long before the spread of Arabic language in North Africa, so that its etymological root most likely doesn't derive from any Arabic word. But with this linguistic explanation Abdullah specifies the mobile lifestyle as the major reason for calling the Fulbe a distinct ethnic group. Their place of origin is precisely given as Mount Sinai which was well-known in Islam as an area of tremendous relevance for the Jewish and Christian religions. This mountain was the spot where the Ten Commandments were reportedly revealed to Moses and his Jewish followers, and this place later became known for some old Christian monasteries. In Islam, the exodus from Egypt was often described as a hijra and compared to the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca. Although the Koran only refers to Mount Sinai as an anonymous mountain,<sup>36</sup> Moses and his migration have been important references in Islamic theology.

By calling the original home of the Fulbe ›Mount Sinai‹, Abdullah reminds his readership of the sacred migration of Moses, and how God leads the journey for his chosen people. The Fulbe thereby become part

32 Arab. أصحاب الانتقال.

33 Arab. فلت.

34 Or a state of civil war; mostly in a theological sense against established Islamic rule.

35 Arab. اعلم ان اصل الفلاتيين كلهم من طور سيناء فما زالوا ينتقلون من مكان الى مكان الى اقصر المغرب والى ما شاء الله ولا جنس اكثر من الفلاتيين لانهم يوجدون في كثير من اقطار الارض الاسلامية ما لا يوجد لغيرهم من الكثيرة لانهم اصحاب الانتقال لان الفلاتي مشتو من فلت يفلت ان جا ينجاو و يقال فلت فلان اذا نجا لانهم ينجون ويفلتون كلما نرك الفنة سح ينجيهم الله ولانهم ينتقلون من مكان بمجود مار او اما يحزنهم جبه بسرعة وكانوا اصحاب التجاول ايضا و لهذه الام سباب يسمونهم فلاتيين. Cf. *Asl al-fulatiyin*, Niamey 11, ff. 1–2. See also Shareef (ed.): *The Lost and Found Children*, pp. 102–104.

36 Koran 19,52.

of the »Chosen People« and share the destiny of divine migration into a land that God has destined for them to inhabit. Their migration westwards into the Maghreb is consequently interpreted as God's decision. The author analyzes why the Fulbe – unlike other ethnic groups – are so widespread and mobile. To him, the reason is their inclination to migrate, and the Fulbe are even described as »masters of migration«. The author delves more deeply into this question in an etymological analysis referring to the existing Arabic term »falata« (to escape, to flee). In this Jihadist interpretation, escaping is not an act of weakness or cowardice, but evidence of a strong faith in Islam. Fulbe have allegedly always escaped wars and rebellions directed against Islamic rule, law and state. Even if the term is not explicitly used here, the text implicitly praises hijra movements, the fleeing from the ›Lands of Unbelievers‹ in a situation of *fitna* into the ›Land of Islam‹. The Fulbe mobile lifestyle and their history of migration are presented as an ongoing chain of Islamic hijras ordered by God.

In this chapter we have investigated the Jihadist discourse of Fulbe ancestors emigrating from Arabia to the Maghreb and to Futa Toro. If we compare Jihadist accounts from the Sokoto Caliphate with pre-existing myths of Fulbe origin from Futa Jallon or Futa Toro, many narrative elements were obviously adopted by the Jihadist scholars. And yet, they received information about the migration of Islamic conquerors like Al-Khattab and Uqba into the Maghreb by literary treatises *and* also from Guinean scholars and traders traveling to the Hausa region. In the different versions, the motivations for migration were always linked to the Islamic expansion into the Maghreb. The route was always the same, and in the end the forefather Uqba married a Byzantine or West African princess whose father had accepted Islam. What appears as a political marriage at first sight was the start of a new ethnic group and language in the Fulbe self-concept. Abdullah dan Fodio's accounts also reveal a distinct Jihadist interpretation of this legend: The Fulbe have always tended to escape hostile and un-Islamic territories by migration and thus have become experts or »masters of migration«. And before the genesis of the Fulbe, God had ordained for their (paternal) ancestors to migrate from the center of the Islamic world to the remote west (Maghreb) and settle there. But Mount Sinai, or Egypt, was their territory of origin. This narrative of a common place of origin located in Egypt was not only debated among the Fulbe Jihadist elite of the Central Sahel. Hausa scholars

such as Alhaji Umaru also acknowledged this myth, which was at the core of Jihadist historiography in general. And some sources indicate that the social class of Fulbe slaves reported this story, too. Some Fulfulde-speaking slaves from the Sokoto Caliphate interviewed by the French diplomat Francis De Castelnau in Bahia (Brazil) were eager to explain that Egypt was their land of origin.<sup>37</sup> Futa Toro was only the transitory home of the Jihadist Fulbe that was situated close to the end of the earth and the circular ocean. It was said that the people living next to the sea were unbelievers who could even »hear the movement of the sun« at sunset due to their closeness to the skyline.<sup>38</sup>

### ***1.2 Fulbe Migration from West to East: »Our Jihad Led us from Futa«***

In all purely religious treatises, Uthman dan Fodio and his Jihadist family and colleagues denied that descent and lineage were important in this world or the hereafter. According to Uthman, being proud of a powerful lineage was an act of conceit since lineage was not linked to the individual will to believe or to pious deeds. Thus he asked his readers: »How can someone be conceited about something that is not really his?«<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, or more precisely in other genres of Jihadist texts, the authors expended many sentences in regard to ancestors of different epochs, ranging from pre-Islamic times to more recent migrations. Uthman dan Fodio himself is supposed to have descended from a Fulbe clan called Toroḅbe that reportedly migrated from Futa Toro to the Hausa region some eleven generations before Uthman dan Fodio was born. A traditional lineage gives the names of the male ancestors.<sup>40</sup> This list, however, does not correspond with the names described by Abdullah

37 These informants were in general illiterate and learned about this migration history from oral narration. Cf. Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 9.

38 Palmer (ed.): *The Carthaginian Voyage*, p. 22.

39 This quotation is extracted from Uthman dan Fodio's text on Sufism *Ulum al-muamala* (Niamey 410(14)); the above-written sentence was quoted from the English translation published in Abdarraḥman Bewley (ed.): *Handbook on Islam*, p. 58.

40 Siddiqi is for example referring to this list: Uthman dan Fodio, Muhammad, Uthman, Sālih, Hārūn, Muhammad Ghorto, Jubbū, Muhammad Thanbu, Ayyūb, Māsīrān, Ayyūb, Bāba, Mūsā Jakollo. Cf. Siddiqi (ed.): *Shaykh 'Uthmān Ibn-Fūdī*, pp. 22–23.



dan Fodio in his text *Ida' al-nusukh*.<sup>41</sup> In this text Abdullah dan Fodio elaborated on the arrival of the Musa Jokollo, the alleged leader of the Fulbe migration group. He stressed that this forefather himself settled in Birnin Konni in the Sokoto region:

»Musa came with our tribe from the Western territory called Futa Toro. And he was their leader until he arrived with them in Konni. They were the first who lived there before the Hausa and the Tuareg, until subsequently they spread through the country of the Hausas. They were the origin of the tribe of the Fulani and their language was the language of the Fulani. The Fulani came to the Hausa region seven years before others.«<sup>42</sup>

First of all, this quotation is an example of the Jihadist concept of colonizing an uninhabited territory. Before Musa's arrival in Konni it was imagined as an empty space with neither Hausa nor Tuareg settlers. This quotation also demonstrates that the Fulfulde language was one basic marker of identification for the Jihadist Fulbe. Fulfulde belongs to the Senegambian branch of the Niger-Congo language family and is very different from Hausa language in regard to grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. It was especially after the Jihad years and during the establishment of the Caliphate, that the ruling elites were keen to propagate the use of the Fulfulde language, because it was increasingly marginalized by Hausa. Uthman dan Fodio therefore published his text *Willayat*, in which he commented on language politics:

»Those who are from among us, should never neglect their Fulfulde language, because it is our language and the language of our fathers and grandfathers. Whoever abandons the Fulfulde language, then he is not from among us. Therefore, I implore you by Allah, do not forsake speaking with the language of Fulfulde and do not discard it. And the least you should know from

41 This text explains that Māsīrān was the son of a certain Bubbāb who himself was Mūsā Jakollos son.

42 Arab. موسى هذا هو الذي جاء مع قبيلتنا من ارض الغرب التي هي فوت توز فيها نسمع و هو من رؤسائهم وصل بهم الى ارض كن و هم اول من عمرها قبل اهل حوس والتوارك حتى انتشروا في ارض حوس بعد. وهم اصل قبيلة الفلان ولغهم هي لغة الفلان سبقوا الفلانيين الى حوس بسبع سنين. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida' al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, f. 1. For an Arabic edition see Hiskett: Material Relating to the State of Learning, pp. 550–578.

it is the greetings of the morning and evening and what is required in taking care of the needs of the house.«<sup>43</sup>

Uthman dan Fodio attempted to preserve the Fulfulde language as an everyday form of speech, at least for folkloristic reasons. The linguistic and cultural hybridization of the heterogeneous Sokoto Caliphate society scared Uthman dan Fodio. He wanted his own ethnic group to preserve its own cultural background – a wish that became increasingly urgent when the propagated Islam offered new forms of social mobility and integration. In this situation of cultural threat and fear of being marginalized as an individual dynasty and clan network, language became more important as a distinguishing feature. Dan Fodio was not calling for Fulfulde to be used in intellectual conversation, but rather in fixed salutations. Arabic already was the language of scholarship and the sacred sphere because God had revealed the Koran in Arabic. Fulfulde on the other hand, was propagated as a socio-cultural code in order to express and prove (ethnic) affiliation. Even for Uthman dan Fodio, aspects of lineage and descent were not rendered obsolete by Jihadist Islamization. Language was the symbol for Fulbe, and this lineage was the narrative of sacred migration from Arabia.

But proving and maintaining an identity by means of a common and distinct language is only one aspect touched by Abdullah in the above-quoted text on the migration of Musa Jokollo. Common migration under one charismatic leader also brought about the formation of a new society. Abdullah mentioned twice that the Fulbe were the first settlers in the Konni area. This line of argumentation is often part of a typical frontier discourse: The Fulbe Jihadists were convinced that they had settled in an area without any inhabitants, a *terra nullius*. On their arrival the group did not have to fight autochthonous people or integrate, cooperate, and compete with host societies. In this narrative the Fulbe acted as conquerors of a foreign and essentially empty country. This interpretation of course contradicts historical research on co-existing Fulbe and Hausa populations in the pre-colonial Central Sahel. Zahradeen has, for instance, demonstrated that both ethnic groups lived side by side with

<sup>43</sup> Jokolo: Wasiyyar, pp. ۳۲–۳۳. This text is not listed by Hunwick and might refer to a manuscript ascribed to Uthman's son Abubakar (called Atiku), located in Zaria (32/2).

each other and intermarried quite regularly.<sup>44</sup> But the Jihadists referred to this migration myth and stressed that their migration history was in fact a special religious quality. Islam was considered progress and only migration of some chosen reformers and self-appointed renewers of Islam spread religion.

From the first settlement Birnin Konni, the family of the »Fodiawa« is said to have moved first to Maratta and afterwards to Degel under the leadership of Abdullah's and Uthman's father Muhammad Fodio. Abdullah dan Fodio mentioned his father Muhammad in his educational autobiography. He began his list of teachers with his father, whose surname or »nickname«<sup>45</sup> was »Fodio« [or Fudi],<sup>46</sup> which »means jurist and Koran reciter in our language«.<sup>47</sup> And his father, grandfather and great-grandfather in turn »were amongst them who had ruled our [Fulbe] clan, we heard«,<sup>48</sup> Abdullah explains. They were Uthman, Jabbu and Thanbu. But in the same chapter Abdullah expressed some doubts about the validity of this oral heritage because »the genealogies lied«<sup>49</sup> and truth was only with God and the Prophet. Thus Abdullah trivialized the credibility of oral heritage and favored written information. Furthermore, his rank as a Muslim scholar demanded self-effacement and abstinence from the praise of lineage. Shareef described Abdullah's grandfather Uthman (nicknamed Ghurtu)<sup>50</sup> »the primary source of education in Songhay during the upheavals of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.«<sup>51</sup> Ghurtu's father was reportedly the chief judge of the Songhay district of Massina.

Although Abdullah dan Fodio admitted that genealogists may lie and that biological lineage was by far less important than the Islamic spiritual chain of learning (*silsila*), the Jihadists were indeed concerned with their own descent and even dedicated whole treatises to this topic. Abdullah

44 Zahradeen: Abd Allah ibn Fodio's Contributions to the Fulani Jihad, p. 95.

45 Arab. لقبه. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida' al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, f. 1.

46 Arab. فدي. Ibid. Westermann translated the Fulfulde word *fodya* (pl. *fodyabe*) with »marabout« or the Fulfulde synonym *modi66o*. Cf. Westermann: *Handbuch der Ful-Sprache*, pp. 40, 83.

47 Arab. في لغتنا فقيه. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida' al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, f. 1.

48 Arab. و هو بمن تأمر على قبيلتنا فيما نسمع. Ibid.

49 Arab. وكذب النسابون. Ibid.

50 Arab. غورط. Ibid.

51 Shareef: *The Depository of Texts*, footnote 9.

composed for example his book *Kitab al-nasab* (Book of Lineage),<sup>52</sup> in which he repeated that his ancestors had come from an Islamized family of Byzantium:

«I say and success is with Allah, realize that our tribe<sup>53</sup> which is called Toruḅbe<sup>54</sup> came originally from Futa [Toro]. And we have heard that they are the maternal uncles of the Fulani [Fulbe]. And the language of Fulbe is their language. The Mujahid Uqba bin Amir conquered the western lands at a time when Amr Ibn al-As<sup>55</sup> ruled Egypt. When he encountered our Fulani ancestors they were separate from the nations of Rum [Byzantium] in North Africa. Their king accepted Islam without a fight and married his daughter Baju Mana<sup>56</sup> to Uqba. Thus, all the Fulani were born from this union. This is what was transmitted to us in an unbroken manner, which we received from reliable scholars who came from the land of Futa. They have been speaking the language of their mother at that time and did not learn the language of their father. The Toruḅbe have no other original language than this.»<sup>57</sup>

Abdullah embedded this story of Toruḅbe origin within the Fulbe meta-narrative of Islamic conquest and Islamization. He also refers to the Fulfulde language, explaining with a metaphor of raising children in a nuclear family, that the mother taught them the first language and there-

52 This text was probably written between Uthman dan Fodio's death in 1817 and the author's death in 1828. Yusuf Wali transcribed a copy of his father's private library and reported there were other copies in Sokoto and Kaduna (cf. id. (ed.): *Kitab al-Nasab*). Hunwick mentioned several copies with slightly different titles all over West African archives; one of them for example in Niamey (see Hunwick (ed.): *Writings*, p. 97). Murray Last listed the text among Abdullah's works (id.: *The Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 242). Shareef published an Arabic edition (in extracts) and a full English translation (cf. Abdullah Dan Fodio: *Kitab al-Nasab*, manuscript photocopy and translation, in: Shareef: *The Lost and Found Children*). See also the Ghanaian copy: Abdullah dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, Legon 115.

53 قنبيلة Arab.

54 تورب Arab.

55 A companion of the Prophet who conquered Egypt together with Uqba and settled there.

56 In the Ghanaian version the queen is called بج منغ. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, Legon 115, f. 1.

57 Translation based on Abdullah dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, manuscript photocopy and translation, in: Shareef: *The Lost and Found Children*, pp. 97–101. Cf. another edition of this source in Wali: *Kitab al-nasab*.

fore the descendants and the Toruḅbe clan were originally not speaking Arabic. Abdullah then elaborated on the distinct outward appearance of the Fulbe ancestors from North Africa (»the West«) and the mother of all Fulbe: skin and hair color. Thereby he quoted several comments on Hadith texts, claiming that the North Africans of Byzantium were called *bani al-asfar*<sup>58</sup> (»Descendants of the Yellow«) because of their color. And according to Abdullah and his informants both the *bani al-asfar* and the Arabs, had the same ancestors. Fortunately, Abdullah this time also mentioned contemporary informants for this knowledge, namely traveling scholars from the Senegambia region. Therefore we can conclude that common descent was an issue which was regularly addressed in conversation with Muslim guests at the Sokoto Court.

Another short treatise on the origin of the Fulbe was obtained by the German explorer Heinrich Barth from an anonymous scholar in the 1850s. This text literally explained that Al-Rum was a grandchild of the biblical Ismail, son of Nasma, and »was yellow, and therefore his offspring were called Bani al-Asfar! (Children of the Yellow)«<sup>59</sup> The rest of Barth's account is similar to other Jihadist versions: The »Turudi« (Toruḅbe) were classified as »Fellani« who originated from a Byzantine king's daughter, called »Yagu Maga«, and Uqba.<sup>60</sup> Barth's informant also mentioned how he was educated about this history and reassured that this story was true: »This is what the tradition tells us. And we encountered some people coming from Futa, they were scholars and due to their authority there is no doubt.«<sup>61</sup> These scholars from »Futa« were probably pilgrim travelers along the Sahel, who reaffirmed the suggestions of other Fulbe about their migration history and resettlement in the Central Sahel. Like Abdullah dan Fodio, this unknown scholar also supposed that the first Fulbe children were speaking the language of their Byzantine mother and not any new tongue. Furthermore, both legends explain that the Fulbe of the Sokoto Caliphate had a brighter skin than

58 Arab. بني الاصفر .

59 This Arabic treatise was translated to French by F. Klein-Franke: »Ar-Rum était jaune (asfar), et ainsi ses fils furent nommés Banu-l-Asfar (=les fils du jaune)!« Cf. Despois (ed.): Souvenirs de H. Barth, p. 18.

60 Ibid.

61 French »Nous en avons eu connaissance par des hommes venus du pays Fut dont l'autorité ne fais pas doute, je veux dire des savants.« Ibid.

Hausa and other ethnic groups, and the reason for this was their North African origin. With regard to concepts of race or skin color, both narratives insist that the Fulbe ancestors were not black, but yellow Arabs and North Africans. And because the Fulfulde language allegedly was a language spoken by a princess of Byzantium, it was an important indicator for the »yellow« race, too.

This color-related interpretation of the Fulbe origin was also narrated in local Hausa historiography. One Hausa Ajami manuscript of the *Krause Collection* (Berlin) reveals that the Jihadists were locally also called the »whites«. In this mid-nineteenth century chronicle about the Sokoto Jihad from a Hausa perspective, the Jihadist aggressors are described as »some white men« that would conquer the land of the »Blacks«. <sup>62</sup> And the same manuscript also disclosed that the Jihadists were perceived as a coalition of »whites«, integrating Fulbe and Tuareg soldiers alike. <sup>63</sup> This Hausa chronicle also explained that in the mid-eighteenth century, some wise Muslim scholars had predicted this Jihadist conquest. Between 1740 and 1750, <sup>64</sup> all the kings and scholars of the Hausa regions assembled and foretold that some white men would defeat all of them. According to this legend, the kings were alarmed and paid attention to the arrival of a »white« person, but they failed to recognize Uthman dan Fodio as such. This text discusses color and race, thereby indicating that the »color« of the Fulbe was not that definite. They were seen as intermediates between »white« Tuareg and »black« Hausa.

Analyzing the history of Fulfulde language, Abdullah claimed that all languages go back to Adam and the Fall of Man. Therefore the Fulbe were not exactly the first speakers of this language. He suggested that they neglected their »father's« (Uqba's) language because it was not widespread at that time and instead learned their mother's tongue. Abdullah recounted the Islamic myth of Arab and Byzantine descent from

<sup>62</sup> Hausa »wasu farfarun mutane [...] bak'i.« Cf. Olderogge (ed): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 141. For the Arabic transliteration see the manuscript on the origins of the Sokoto state in Alhaji Umaru: *Origins of the Sokoto State*, StB, Ms. 844, text 23, f. 31.

<sup>63</sup> Hausa »Sarakin duka ba wanda ya zachi filani ne kowa cha ya ke azbinawa ni.« Ibid. Krause himself translated this part of the manuscript for one of his newspaper publications; cf. Krause (ed.): *Der Ursprung von Sokoto*, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> When Wari Mai Kere ruled Katsina.

the biblical (and Koranic) Ismael and his brother Isaac.<sup>65</sup> Once again, Abdullah referred to the ancestral migration from Futa Toro, claiming that »Musa is the one who came from the lands of Futa Toro and from that time, they have continued to migrate to these lands of ours.«<sup>66</sup> The name of the migration leader Musa is the Arabic variant of the name Moses. And the two mythic forefathers not only shared the same name, but they had both led their followers from a place of religious and social oppression eastwards and westwards into freedom. In order to prevent any objection by pious Muslim readers, Abdullah wrote in a poem: »O critics, abstain from blaming me for I am eager to clarify my lineage and preserve my honorable rank.«<sup>67</sup> The author demonstrated that this attempt was legitimate because his lineage bore some ›evidence‹ in support of the blood relationship with the Prophet:

»We have the relationship to Uqba that connects us to Ismael. And we have an ongoing ethnic root that connects us to Israel. Our paternal uncle is Arab just as our maternal uncle is a child of Israel. Thus, our root is from Mount Sinai and our Jihad led us from Futa with its abandoned houses. These events brought our ancestors to the lands of Hausa, my place of birth and abode. And eventually we reverted to the Jihad, our heritage; accompanying our Sheikh Uthman [dan Fodio], my dear brother.«<sup>68</sup>

In this poem Abdullah included all monotheistic narratives of ethnic origin, referring to persons and places alike. Thereby he pictured a continuing line of migration and jihad from Futa Toro to the Sokoto Jihad. The migrants in Abdullah's poem left Futa Toro with a jihadist mission, and religious warfare is framed as the historical heritage of the Toroɓɓe. The reason for their journey from the Western to the Eastern Sahel is in this perspective the duty to wage jihads and spread Islam. But in his text *As/ al-fulatiyin*, the same Jihadist author mentioned another motive of Musa and his followers who emigrated from Futa Toro:

»Our grandfather Musa Jokolli came from Futa Toro with four hundred Fulbe for pilgrimage during the fifth century [Islamic calendar]. Thus all

65 Cf. Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, pp. 97–98.

66 Shareef (ed.): *Kitab al-Nasab*, p. 99.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

68 *Ibid.*

Fulani in this region, more precisely Hausa and Adamawa, are descendants. Musa Jokolli was the head of all these communities and he had three children. The oldest was Adam, then Jughuu and Ayyub. When Musa Jokolli and his community reached this region, they established their sojourn there due to the fact that Allah did not permit them to travel on for pilgrimage. Therefore they resided in the region for a long time. When they despaired of migrating from the region the three sons of Musa separated and settled in different regions.<sup>69</sup>

Most Muslims from Futa Toro traveling through the Sokoto Caliphate were on their way to the Holy Cities in Arabia. Abdullah therefore assumed that his forefather Musa Jokolli had also intended to complete his Islamic Pillar of the hajj. The Hausa region was regularly visited by pilgrims from the west, so that the idea of a Muslim ancestor coming from Futa Toro, traversing the Sahel, and then stopping in the Hausa region is not absurd at all. And indeed many of the pilgrims did stop their journeys due to illness, education, trade, poverty, political crises or marriages. God had instructed them to leave Futa Toro, and on their arrival in the Hausa region he destined them to stop and resettle. They were allegedly tired of constant migration and coming to rest in different places. Abdullah dan Fodio compared this relocation in a new territory to the final settlement of »Ibrahim Al-Khalil« (the Jewish Abraham) in Palestine. The Jihadist author summarized that there were 48 generations between Musa and Uqba, and another 39 generations between Uqba and the forefather Abraham.<sup>70</sup> Because of Abraham's Islamic title »Al Khalil« (»beloved«) the Palestinian town Hebron, Abraham's presumed burial place, is still called Al-Khalil in Arabic. This comparison underlined the Jihadist claim that all their migrations of the past, as well as the resettlement in the Hausa region were ordained by God.

69 Arab. ان جنا موس جكل جاء من فوت توز مع اربعمئة انسان من الغلاتيين يريدون الحج في قرن الخامس. من هجرة سيدنا محمد رسول الله صل الله عليه وسلم و كل فلاتي في هذا القطرا عني قطر حوس الى عادماوا من دليلة هؤلاء الجماعة الا نابراوموسى جكل هو رئيس تلك الجماعة كلهم وله ثلاثة اولاد من صلبيه كبيرهم ءادم ثم جغو و ايوب. Cf. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Asl al-fulatiyin*, Niamey 11, ff. 5–6. See also Shareef (ed.): *Aslu l-Falaatiyeen*, pp. 102–104.

70 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Asl al-fulatiyin*, Niamey 11, f. 6.



*Being and Becoming »Torobbe«*

The Jihadist triumvirate and other Fulfulde speakers of the Sokoto elite called their clan or tribe »Torobbe« according to the place of origin in (Futa) Toro. They were defined as a migrant sub-group belonging to the Fulbe clans. It is, however, an challenging task to characterize who the Torobbe actually were. Willis doubts the theory saying that they were first of all an ethnic group. He prefers to call them a kind of intellectual caste, namely a »clerisy«:

»The Torodbe clerisy evolved out of that mass of rootless peoples who perceived in Islam a source of cultural identity. Bound in a new persuasion – linked by a common oppression – they shook the sense of ethnic difference and sought to stimulate a countertrend of a levelling nature. [...] There would seem little doubt that Torodbe Muslims were of an eclectic social and ethnic origin. Islam served as a springboard and refuge for these persons who appear to have had no other means of expressing their qualities.«<sup>71</sup>

Willis highlights the ethnic diversity of the clerisy before the era of jihad movements, at a time when they emerged as a group with their own Islamic identity in the Futa Toro region. Willis characterizes them as heterogeneous social outcasts, emphasizing the religious ties of this mobile and »rootless« group. In different Fulfulde proverbs, Willis discovers that the mobile scholars were often ridiculed as beggars who lived in poverty and who were completely dependent on alms and donations. And indeed do many oral traditions of the mid-nineteenth century Sahel do laugh at clumsy and vain Mallams.<sup>72</sup> In contrast to that, hunters usually are successful warriors and brave protagonists in these narratives.<sup>73</sup> Willis doubts that the name »Torobbe« derived from the place of origin in »Tooro«. He suggests a social explanation, proposing that the name was a variation of the Fulfulde verb *torade* (»to beg«). This theory

71 Willis: The Torodbe Clerisy, p. 196.

72 See for example the Hausa sayings comparing *mallamai* (»Islamic scholars«) with noisy and annoying wild birds. A certain bird with a loud voice was even called *mallamin daji* (»teacher of the forest«); collected by Prietze: Pflanze und Tier, p. 886. The jackal is also often called *mallam da karagabe* (»teacher of the wild animals«) due to his role as the official adviser of the king of the animals: the lion. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 897.

73 Cf. for example Krause: Erzähltes und Geschriebenes.

stresses that the Torobbe were begging Islamic scholars who traced their name back to their place of origin, due to a coincidental consonance of different words. And in fact, begging was an important element of the ascetic Sufi lifestyle. Usually the students had to beg for alms in order to supply themselves and their teacher. »This practice has been a custom designed to install humility in students and disciples of the Spiritual Way«,<sup>74</sup> as Shareef pointed out. And yet, the Sokoto Jihadists had their own geographical approach to their tribal history, and emphasized that it was the common place of origin (in Futa Toro), and not the begging practice which united them as a clan.

The Torobbe had given up the Fulbe life as pastoralists but maintained their mother tongue Fulfulde. They were educated Muslims and some may have been forced to beg or offer religious services for money. But others were still rich and delegated the management of their cattle to slaves. The Torobbe weren't the first educated class in the Central Sahel, but they were much more related to rural areas than the urban scholarly elites. Rural Fulbe settlements were their background, and they had started preaching from the countryside. Their society was permeable and easy to enter for any foreigner: as a student, a slave, or by marriage. There were no strict marriage rules as in other ethnic groups and the social status was not only dependent on origin, family or handicraft profession. In theory, anyone could become a convert and be integrated to this group. The first proto-Torobbe were outcasts from the Fulbe clan Ba. They soon integrated other uprooted individuals or members of their host communities. They maintained the Fulfulde language and integrated new members by clientage within master-slave or teacher-student relations. Slowly they emerged as a new elite ruling others who had to work in agriculture and pasturing. They practiced Islam strictly and propagated a new dichotomous world view according to which there were only regions of belief and those of disbelief. In Futa Jallon, this class soon controlled land tenure, with others doing the farming on these properties. Prior to this change, land usage had been free; now Islamic taxes had to be paid. And where they established themselves, the previous social mobility was abandoned for an elite hereditary system of power

74 Shareef: *The Lost and Found Children*, p. 7.

transfer.<sup>75</sup> Willis summed up: »Turudiyya suggests a métier and not an ethnic category.«<sup>76</sup> This statement may well apply to the pre-history of the Toroḅbe in Senegal. But during the Sokoto Jihad years they made a tremendous effort to define themselves as an ethnic or »tribal« group. They invoked genealogies, skin color, language, and the heritage of ancestral migration. They produced an identity based on their diaspora status, a remote enclave of emigrants from the Holy Land, Byzantium and Futa Toro, reestablishing themselves at the »global« Islamic frontier.<sup>77</sup>

According to Shareef's argumentation, the Toroḅbe came from Futa Toro before the thirteenth century and spread within the Sahel region, living in enclaves separate from other Fulfulde-speaking communities. Furthermore, some of them had served rulers as scribes and advisers. Revisiting the revolt of Askia Muhammad in the Mali Empire, this could be judged as just another Toroḅbe upheaval against the predominance of the Soninke, an ethnic group ruling Mali. At least did these scholars gain high ranks within the reformed Malian State. One of them, for example, was Muhammad Gidado Al-Fulani (d. 1581), who was appointed the imam of Timbuktu's Central Mosque.<sup>78</sup> In contrast to that, the Fulbe clans under Sonni Ali had encountered severe oppression, as the *Tarikh as-sudan*<sup>79</sup> tells:

»When he [Sonni Ali] had completed his expedition against the Fulani of Sonfutir, he then dispatched many of their women as gifts for the notables of Timbuktu, some of the scholars and the righteous men. He ordered them to take these women as concubines.«<sup>80</sup>

People identified as Fulbe (*al-fulan*, *al-fullani*) appear several times in the *Tarikh as-sudan* during Askia Muhammad's era – as victims, com-

75 Willis: *Torodbe Clerisy*, pp. 200–210.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 211.

77 Berber and Tuareg clans of the Sahel and Sahara also called Uqba their ancestor.

78 Cf. Houdas (ed.): *Tarikh es-Soudan*, p. 177.

79 This »History of the Sudan« was a Songhay chronicle composed in around 1655 by the Malian scholar Es-Sadi.

80 French »Ainsi, lorsqu'il fit une expédition contre les Foulan et qu'il razzia la tribu de Sonfotir, il envoya un grand nombre de femmes captives aux notables de Tombouctou, quelques-unes aux savants et aux saints en guise de cadeau, et il enjoignit à tous d'en faire leurs concubines.« Houdas (ed.): *Tarikh es-Soudan*, p. 109.

manders and political refugees. When Moroccan armies, the Almoravids, marched into the Songhay Empire, the scholars – including some Fulbe among them – developed and spread apocalyptic ideas under the influence of the experienced foreign rule.<sup>81</sup> Before this invasion, Toroḅbe scholars had adjusted to the different governments. Due to the Moroccan conquest of Songhay, they started to deny any profane rule and governance and were looking for more ›Islamic‹ statehood and a direct rule of Muslim scholars. They abandoned their status as consultants of the rulers and demanded political power. This process of radicalization was indeed repeated by the Sokoto Toroḅbe in their jihad.

After arriving in the Konni region of the Central Sahel, the Toroḅbe were said to have split up into five parties: Aal, Kaghi, Belari, Renaru and Birnighu. The first of these clans was best known for its Islamic scholars, who were devoted Sufi Muslims affiliated with the Qadiriyya brotherhood. Their affinity to esoteric knowledge was often compared to the role of the Kunta scholars in Berber society. And in fact, the Aal clan members did study Kunta texts.<sup>82</sup> Most of the commemorated ancestors were – with the exception of the Byzantine princess – male forebears. But in one lineage description, Muhammad Bello narrated the story of his female ancestor Taati, who met some benevolent jinn who paid allegiance to Taati. This female spirit trained her in magical practices and established an intimate and long-lasting relationship with Taati.<sup>83</sup> Another female figure that was counted as one mother of all Fulbe was Fatima. Fatima was the only child of the Prophet who survived and established his dynasty. In a famous poem, Uthman dan Fodio compared and differentiated between his characteristics and those of the expected Mahdi. When comparing his life to the expected Mahdi, he also mentioned that both were from the offspring of the Prophet: »See the grandchildren of

**81** Hodgkin: The Ulama under ›Colonialism‹, pp. 2–3.

**82** Batran: The Kunta, pp. 137–138.

**83** Shareef mentions this manuscript under the title *Majmu al-nasab* which is registered by Hunwick. Shareef probably did some mistake when transcribing the title, because the name and content of the text resemble the work called *Majmu al-ansab* (or *Ishara wa-ilam*). According to Shareef, Bello composed it during the years before his death in 1837 as a compilation of his ancestors. Cf. Shareef: The Lost and Found Children, p. 32.

Fatima he descends from; truly, so am I, thus let me speak to you.«<sup>84</sup> Uthman dan Fodio also illustrated this genealogical concept in a political treatise. He claimed that it was obligatory for the Mahdi to have »descent from Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet [...] and the majority agrees on this.«<sup>85</sup> El-Masri and Adeleye suggested that this section of the first source (*Sifofin Shehu*) was not originally part of the text and only entered it due to a »copyist error or a deliberate forgery«.<sup>86</sup> However, other texts composed by Uthman dan Fodio also refer to Fatima, daughter of Prophet Muhammad. But otherwise, the ›Arabic‹ ancestors listed are exclusively male, and only the West African ancestry of the Torobbe bears influential women.

### *Jihadist Descent and War Propaganda*

But the Jihadists also fostered the integration of other ›tribes‹; and especially in the literature of their war propaganda they referred to the integrating power of Islam in order to trivialize ethnic affiliations. This was principally addressed to the Hausa population. Abdullah dan Fodio harmonized his Torobbe origin with the multi-ethnic forces in the Jihadist battles against Gobir:

»And we are unified and besteding by Islam, and we are nothing but superior. Tribes of Islam, and Turubbi is our clan. Our Fulani and our Hausa are all united, and among us others from the joined tribes. For the support of Allah's religion there is the union. And the Turubbi are the maternal uncles of the Fulani, brothers to the Arabs, and from Rum Ibn Is they descend. And Uqba is the forebear for the Arab Fulani [side]. And for the Turubbi [side] their mother was Bajumangu.«<sup>87</sup>

84 Hausa »Ga jikōkī na Fatima anka fissa; haḳīḳan dudda nī don in faḍāmā.« Cf. Adeleye / El-Masri: Ajami Transliterated Text of *Sifofin Shehu*, p. 24.

85 From *Tahdhir al-ikhwan* (Niamey 2837, f. 1); English translation from Al-Hajj: *The Mahdist Tradition*, p. 225. Uthman mentions several authorities in favor of this concept, such as Al-Qurtubi (1214–1273, Andalusia, Egypt) and Al-Samhudi (sixteenth century, Egypt, Medina).

86 Adeleye / El-Masri: *Sifofin Shehu. Introduction and Commentary*, p. 10.

87 Arab. ونحن على الإسلام جمع تناصروا وليسنا بشئ غير نترفع قبائل إسلام فتورب حيناً فلانينا حوسينا الكل. مجمع وفينا سواهم من قبائل جمعت على نصر دين الله كان التجمع فتورب احوال [الحوال] rather:

For Abdullah Islam was the most important unifying force, stronger than lineage and tribe. But it was obviously a tightrope walk to bring Islamic cosmopolitanism and pride in the origin of the Torobbe together in one straightforward ideology of jihad. The discussions about rank of nobility and genealogical descent entered war poems composed for propagandistic reasons. The Jihadist military leader and son of Uthman dan Fodio, Muhammad Al-Bukhari, composed a poem in honor of a battle that was won by the Jihadists in 1820:

»The [news] that we have advanced to the people of Gobir, with a gathering which included lions that swallow up [defeat]. [We are] nobles from the descendants of Rum Ibn Is and Uqba, who are free from blame. [...] And who will protect [the enemy] from among the Ham[i] family?«<sup>88</sup>

Al-Bukhari argued that the lineage of his army included Uqba and Byzantines alike. Further down, he calls his enemies descendants of Ham. This requires a short recourse to biblical and Koranic exegesis. In the history and myths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Prophet Noah had three sons: Ham, Shem and Japheth. Those three were considered the forefathers of the three constructed ethnic groups called Hamitic, Semitic and Japhetic. They were defined according to their skin color and abodes. One may roughly summarize that Hamitic people were defined as black Africans, Semitic as »brown« Middle Easterners, and Japhetic as Caucasians. Based on these religious and racist assumptions, European travelers, missionaries and researchers on African languages in the nineteenth century formulated that two of these »races« deriving from the sons of Noah were still be found in Africa and that their languages may be separated in two groups: Hamitic or Semitic.<sup>89</sup> Since Ham was allegedly cursed by his father Noah for either seeing him naked or raping him, all his African descendants were considered cursed as well.<sup>90</sup> This theory was often applied and interpreted by Europeans in order to legitimize the slave trade and colonialism. But this Hamitic Hypothesis was

الفلانين إخوة لعرب فمن روم بن عيص تفرع وعقبه جد للفلانين من عرب ومن تورب كانت أمهم مجتمع Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, p. 58.

<sup>88</sup> English translation by Junaidu; cf. Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, pp. 167–168.

<sup>89</sup> Sometimes supplemented by Nilotes of African origin.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. for example Sanders: *Hamitic Hypothesis*, pp. 521–532.

also received and discussed in Islamic discourses. The famous Timbuktu scholar Ahmad Baba, for example, had rejected the enslavement of humans on the basis of the theory of descent as early as in the seventeenth century.<sup>91</sup> According to Arnett's translation of Muhammad Bello's text *Infag al-maysur*, Bello identified the people of Yoruba at the southern Caliphate frontier when talking about the descendants of Ham and Canaan, the son of Ham.<sup>92</sup> The Hamitic Hypothesis was by no means a Central European invention separate from African discourses on myths of origin. As Law pointed out:

»It seems clear, at least, that one of the major reasons why Europeans attributed Middle Eastern origins to West African peoples/cultures was, straightforwardly, because this is what they were told by their African informants.«<sup>93</sup>

Whenever Fulbe were asked about their origin, they told European interviewers that their genealogy was totally separate from the line of Ham. But coming back to Muhammad Al-Bukhari's poem, he did not explicitly explain whom he identified as the »Ham family«. And yet the Torobbe were of course not part of his offspring. Al-Bukhari contrasted the Hamitic enemies to the »children of Musa«, the brave Jihadist warriors:

»Did you not know that, I – on the day of the noise of battle – quench the thirst of my spears from the blood of my equals? And I will thrust at the gallant whose encounter is abhorred, when the brave nobles avoided him. And I defend my people and their personal merits against the enemy with my weapon and my tongue. Surrounding me are hungry lions from the descendants of Musa [Walidu and Ja'i],<sup>94</sup> the brave heroes.«<sup>95</sup>

In this propaganda poetry, the Jihadists blended racial concepts, religious genealogy, and ethnic migration with animal metaphors as a stylistic device. The Jihadists are the lions, the offspring of Uqba, Byzantium, and Musa Jokollo. The enemies are the black people, the descendants of Ham

91 Law: Hamitic Hypothesis, p. 296.

92 Arnett (ed.): *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, p. 16.

93 Law: Hamitic Hypothesis, p. 305.

94 Junaidu's translation is misleading here: The Arabic words *walid* (born, family members of) and *ja'a* (to come) will rather be translated as »born to the world«. They are no additional names of ancestors.

95 English translation by Sambo Wali Junaidu; cf. Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 174.

who failed and were cursed. The Jihadists made clear that they were different in terms of color, religious education, and their sacred destiny. The reason for all of these characteristics was that their ancestors had come from the west with the religious mission to lead jihads in every »Sudane« place where some of them resettled. The geographical logic of this mental map of ancestral migration was similar to that of the Jihadist treatises on geography. As ordered by the Arab geographer Al-Idrisi, the space was arranged around Arabia. In this center of the world, the Jihadist forefathers had lived and then migrated from there to the *maghribian* (»western«) end of the world. Space was organized in stripes from east to west, and along these stripes the ancestors of the Jihadists migrated. The first migration occurred from Arabia to North-West Africa, and the second migration episode was from the west to the east – although, of course, in another climatic zone along the Sahel. The spread of Islam was similarly imagined as a movement between east and west. The east was the authentic home territory of the Jihadists, so that the migration from Futa Toro to the east was considered a homecoming journey.

### ***1.3 No Migration, no History: Where the Others Came from***

In the Fulbe, or more explicitly in the Sokoto-Torobbe myths of migrations, other ethnic groups are very passive figures. They neither migrated, nor resettled in these Fulbe-centric narratives. But the Sokoto Jihadists did reflect on ancestral migrations of other groups, too. However, these stories were not part of treatises on ancestry, but rather were historiographical and geographical texts. These migrations were depicted in chapters on the pre-history of ethnic or linguistic groups. In his text *Infaq al-maysur*, Muhammad Bello mapped out some states and ethnic groups in a very systematic manner, from the northern regions to the southern frontier states. He called them the seven Hausa Kingdoms. When Muhammad Bello recounted the history of these West African states he started with some incoherent information about the very origin and foundation of this state. And of course he did so with his own Jihadist bias.

The very first country was Zamfara, to the south-east of Sokoto. Their mother had allegedly come from Gobir and their father from Kat-



sina.<sup>96</sup> Both lands of origin were in the north. At first they had been ruled by their Kebbi neighbors, but under the Zamfara ruler Yaqub Ibn Babba they infamously raided parts of Kebbi and Katsina until being conquered by the Gobir king »Babari«.<sup>97</sup> Yaqub Ibn Babba was actually ruling Zamfara in the early eighteenth century and was identified by Bello as the founder of the independent Zamfara state. »Babari« probably is the Gobir leader Babba dan Jirau who conquered Zamfara in 1734. The mythic ancestors as well as the more recent aggressors had come from other states of the northern Sahel. Statehood itself was a new organizing principle coming with migrants and military from the north.

The Kebbi state, on the other hand, was presented more elaborately by Bello. This began with its mythic origin; the first mother was from Songhay and the male ancestor from Katsina. The first Kanta – a Muslim scholarly clan from Mali – then conquered Kebbi. But Muhammad Bello also added that this emperor was of slave descent who had served Fulbe masters.<sup>98</sup> This fact was intended to impair the military success of Kebbi in the era of a declining Songhay Empire. Subsequently Bello described the Bornu-Kebbi wars in detail, mentioning the routes they took for several military expeditions and the names of important battles. The archetypal Kebbi ruler »Kanta« was finally shot and killed by brigands when ruling the biggest empire »with the most power«<sup>99</sup> in their time. But then Gobir, Air and Zamfara divided Kebbi into three vassal regions. Muhammad Bello emphasized the Songhay origin of Kebbi and how a military leader with a slave background from Mali overcame the powerful Songhay Empire. The third ›Hausa‹ state in Bello's chronicle is Yawuri (also Yauri), west of Kebbi. While the landscapes of Kebbi and Zamfara were not addressed at all by the Jihadist author, he started his topographical descriptions with Yawuri. Its natural setting was allegedly full of »mountains and valleys«<sup>100</sup> and dominated by »a watercourse they call ›Nile««.<sup>101</sup> This description of a hilly topography once again

96 Arab. اباهم كثنواى وامهم غوبرية. *Infaq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 27.

97 Ibid., f. 28.

98 Arab. ويقال انه عبد الغلانيين. Ibid.

99 Arab. دولة اعظم. Ibid., f. 29.

100 Arab. جبال واودية. Ibid., f. 30.

101 Arab. البحر الذى يقال له النيل. Ibid.

corresponds with the character of its inhabitants, who were called the least civilized Sudanese people before being Islamized by a man named Suta. Islam had to be introduced by a stranger migrating there from the ›Land of Islam‹.

With Yawuri Muhammad Bello finished his explanation regarding the northern states and turned to Nupe (or Nufe), which was also situated along the Niger shores at the southern Caliphate frontier. This region was reportedly even wilder in regard of its nature and people: A land bearing »rivers, trees [forest], barren land and mountains to the southern direction.«<sup>102</sup> The inhabitants were considered a confused mixture of Katsina, Zaria, Kano people, and other origins. Despite their Hausa descent, they did not speak Hausa. According to Bello's historical knowledge about Nupe, they had once been Islamized marginally by a ruler named Jibril. But they refused his religious influence after some period, deposed him and instead imposed someone as ruler who »corresponded with their character and madness.«<sup>103</sup> And with this résumé Bello closed this chapter abruptly. According to him, they once had the chance to become Muslims owing to the arrival of a religious scholar, but they deliberately neglected Islam. The nature of the Nupe people was portrayed as being just as chaotic as their heterogeneous origins. As in the case of Nupe, Muhammad Bello started the chapter on Yoruba with a characterization of the natural setting which featured rivers, forest, savannas and mountains. In Bello's words the stories from this land were just as strange as the aforementioned environment and their myth of origin is presented as one example of those weird Yoruban stories:

»It is said about this land that they have come from the descendants of Bani Kanaan, to which also belonged the tribe of Nimrod. And the reason for their dwelling in the West according to what is known is that Yarub Ibn Qahtan drove them out from Irak towards the west. Then they journeyed between Egypt and Abessinia until they arrived in Yoruba. And in every land they passed, they left behind some of them. It is said that the Blacks of the moun-

102 Arab. انهار واشجار ومار جبال من جانبه اليمن. Ibid.

103 Arab. يناسيهم في جنوبيهم ومجنونهم. Ibid., f. 31.

tains are all from them. Like for example the Yawuri people and the land close to [...] Nupe.»<sup>104</sup>

In Islamic mythology Nimrud Ibn Kanaan is considered the first tyrant of this world who demanded to be praised like God. He even dared to build a tower in order to depose Allah and therefore was punished with a fly locked up in his ear until he died. Yarub Ibn Qahtan is another mythic and historical figure that allegedly ruled southern Arabia before the Empire of Seba. He was praised for expelling the blasphemous Adite people from Yemen. Muhammad Bello probably combined two or more different Islamic legends in order to give proof that the Yoruban ancestors belonged to a blasphemous family that eventually was driven out of Arabia. Muhammad Bello pushed this defamation even further when explaining that all Blacks living in mountainous territories were descended from this Proto-Yoruban migrant people. They had left behind all the stereotypical ›unbelievers‹, persevering in impenetrable spaces and thereby refusing Islamization.

Accordingly, only strange news was heard from this country, like for instance reports about a »green bird with a speaking mouth.«<sup>105</sup> If we trust Muhammad Bello's statement that he had used a seventeenth century text as his major source of information, it is more obvious that Bello had not interviewed contemporary traders or military officials about Yoruba. Instead, he renarrated stories bequeathed by the Bornu scholar Muhammad Masanih (ca. 1594–1667). Masanih had studied in Katsina, exchanged letters with Yoruban scholars and left behind several texts in the Hausa region to which the Sokoto Jihadists had access.<sup>106</sup> But Bello's source text from Masanih about Yoruba has remained undiscovered.<sup>107</sup> However, his account about the Yoruban origin refers to several discriminatory Islamic legends. The Yorubans were also immigrants to

104 Arab. هذا البلاد على ما يقال انهم من بقايا بنى كنعان الذين هم عشيرة نمرود وسبب مقامهم بالمغرب. على ما قيل ان يعرب بن قحطان هو الذي طردهم من العراق الى المغرب فسلكوا بين مصر والحيشة حتى وصلوا الى يرب و كانوا خلفون في كل بلد طائفة منهم ويقال ان جالو السودان الذين يعمرن فوق الجبال كلهم منهم كذا اهل يور كذا البلد يغرب [...] نف Ibid., ff. 31–32.

105 Arab. هذا الطائر الاخض الذي هو ببقا ناطو. Ibid., f. 32.

106 Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 30.

107 Bello mentioned the text *Tuhfah al-anbariyya* in his book *Azhar al-riba fi akhbar yoruba*. Cf. *Infraq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 32.

their current territory, but they were descended from the worst figures of the religious founding myths. And quoting from Muhammad Masanih, Bello also reported that the Yoruban trader would sell slaves »from our country« (likewise Bornu or Sokoto) to Christians, so that Muslim slave traders should pay attention and avoid this forbidden transaction of Muslim slaves to Christians.<sup>108</sup> Masanih may have heard of the Portuguese slave trade around 1600. And Muhammad Bello did not add any new material in order to update this historical report about Yoruba. He only listed different stories contributing to his theory of maleficent Yorubans and Yoruban ancestors.

The region situated north of Yoruba was identified as Borgu by Bello. It was portrayed as a country full of forests and grasslands and populated with people of the lowest standard of civilization in all the Sudan. Muhammad Bello traced their origin back to some slaves of the Fulbe that failed to cross the Niger: »And it is said that they are slaves of the Fulani that stayed behind the river when the river was crossed and they spread in these countries.«<sup>109</sup> Borgu borders Kebbi and Yawuri at the Niger shore. Muhammad Bello ridiculed their choice of a home region and the low social status of their ancestors among the Fulbe. The legend about a group crossing the Niger and some of them staying behind explained the reason for their home being where it was and characterized them as backward, unsuccessful or even too lazy to migrate. Furthermore, among those »wild Blacks« Bello suspected »many magicians.«<sup>110</sup> Only Askia Muhammad had once tried to conquer this region, and although being a powerful king failed and turned homewards. Referring to their imperishable nature, Bello tried to defend the Caliphate's failure to completely subordinate Borgu. They were only offspring of Fulbe slaves incapable of keeping pace with the Fulbe »masters of migration«.

Beyond the Caliphate frontiers, Bello also took into account the western neighbors Gurma and Mossi (Burkina Faso, Ghana). The land

108 Cf. *ibid.*

109 Arab. ويقال انهم عبيد الفلاتيين الذين خلفوا ورا البحر حين جاوزوا البحر وانتشروا في هذه البلاد. *Ibid.* This story was also written down by Bello's secretary Ahmad Messine in 1827, when Hugh Clapperton was staying at the Sokoto Royal Court during his second journey. Cf. Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 338.

110 Arab. فيهم السحر الكثير. Cf. *Infaq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 32.

of Gurma was also characterized by rivers, forests and mountains. It was accordingly a wild and huge land, even bigger than Borgu. In Muhammad Bello's mental map Gurma bordered Mossi, another huge country full of rivers and forests. The mere size of those imagined countries might have scared Bello, who expressed a kind of *horror vacui*, or fear of emptiness, which was an element of Arabic geographies. Inhabitants of these lands were only referred to as thieves and corrupt people. Their low level of culture was in accordance with the gold mines that Bello suspected in their country.<sup>111</sup> Bello's secretary also added short chapters about Mossi and Asante in his geographical account of 1827. Mossi was considered to be rich in gold again, and Mossi would sell their donkeys to the Gonga military. This secretary only provided the name »Asante« (Northern Ghana) without any description of the land.<sup>112</sup> Muhammad Bello and his secretary both refused to attribute historicity to the countries of Ghana and Burkina Faso. Their pagan state was considered a timeless artefact, and their appearance in their home regions remained unexplained. In other words, they were just there like the forests, rivers and mountains. They did not come from any other place, and they did not migrate anywhere else. Bello naturalized these peoples, so that they became a part of nature description – wild, threatening, and rich in resources.

The second Sokoto sultan defined the above-discussed regions as one category of space and people, labeled as pagan, semi-pagan, or recently Islamized by immigrant scholars. Those Islamized peoples were not considered indigenous to their region, but the offspring of ancestral travelers from the northern Sahel or Sahara. The Saharan tribes, on the other hand, were discussed in an individual chapter of the *Infaq al-maysur*. Bello located the land of Aïr (also Ahir, Asben)<sup>113</sup> to the north of Bornu. Its inhabitants, the Tuareg, were descendants of Sanhaja (Berbers) and the Sudanese (Blacks). Their land had once been in the hands of the Gobir Sudanese and was then conquered by the Tuareg: »They spread in the lands and settled there.«<sup>114</sup> They chose emirs among them and established a Muslim society. Bello then mentioned the pre-history of

111 Cf. *ibid.*, ff. 32–33.

112 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 338.

113 Arab. اهير. Cf. *Infaq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 18.

114 Arab. فتغلبوا على البلاد ومكثوا فيها. *Ibid.*

their Berber ancestors who were in turn descendants of Japheth. Bello revisited the classical Islamic myths about Japheth, who was believed to be the forefather of the Gog and Magog tribes and the Turks at the northern end of the world:

»It is said that they [Berbers] were from the Gog and Magog who were barricaded by Alexander the Great. They descended from them and introduced corruption that their forefathers had not done and committed outrages. They eventually intermarried with the Turks and Tartars.«<sup>115</sup>

Although an independent history was attributed to the Berbers among the genealogical myths of Islam, they partly descended from the wild Gog and Magog – a clear sign for being less civilized than the other offspring of Noah. Some wild women of these half-Turks reportedly migrated to Jerusalem and settled there. Since they lacked male companions, they were impregnated by the male jinn of that region, and their descendants were called the first Tuareg. Due to the wild nature of Gog, Magog and ghosts, they had always tended to warfare and bloodshed. They allegedly killed several prophets and were also held responsible for oppressing the Israelites and driving them out of their sacred homeland. Under the leadership of Goliath, the Proto-Tuareg were then defeated by Saul and David and escaped first to Egypt and from there to the Maghreb, where they »settled in the mountains«.<sup>116</sup> The Koran explicitly calls Goliath (»Jalut«) and his followers a people of unbelievers.<sup>117</sup> These Tuareg allegedly spread across Libya and drove the »Romans« away. Muhammad Bello listed for example Cyrenaica and Nafusa (both Libya) among their regions. While the Berber (or Tuareg) invaders were descendants of Japheth, Bello called the indigenous »Africans« of that time children of Ham. And only when »Ifriqiyya« was conquered by Islamic armies, did the Tuareg disperse into the Maghreb and »the south-western regions of the ›Bilad as-Sudan‹.«<sup>118</sup> Some Tuareg settled in Aïr, thereby expelling

115 Arab. وقيل من ياجوج و ماجوج الذين سدهم ذوالقرنين وقد خرج منهم طائفة بقي ورقسد من دونهم. Ibid., f. 19.

116 Arab. سكنوا الجبال. Cf. *ibid.*, f. 20.

117 Koran 2,250.

118 Arab. إلى الغرب الجنوبي الضاربع [sic!] بلاد السودان. Cf. *Infaq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 20.

the indigenous »Blacks«. These Aïr Tuareg (*kel ahir*) improved in faith, according to Bello. But although he admitted that the Aïr had some important scholars among their tribe, Bello also noted some »evil« practices of their culture. They would, for example, establish genealogical dynasties of scholars, kill each other because of blood vengeance, or practice illegitimate inheritance norms.<sup>119</sup>

In his account on the origins and culture of Aïr, Muhammad Bello probably drew from both Arabic literature and oral traditions. The Aïr myth of origin was, for instance, recounted in Hausa society, too. Edgar's Hausa informant confirmed that the Asbenawa (or Aïr people) were descendants from an evil »alĵani«<sup>120</sup> (*jinn*) who had stolen Prophet Solomon's ring and impregnated one hundred women of Solomon's harem. As a result, Solomon punished these pregnant women by exiling them into the bush. Their offspring became the Asben and were thus called »ĵiyan zina«<sup>121</sup> (children of adultery). The Hausa informant linked the origin of the Asbenawa to a religious legend on Salomon existing in Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions. God was believed to have given Solomon a special ring with which he could command the jinns. To that point the different legendary accounts agree. In the Middle Ages the story of a spirit called *Sakhr*, who reportedly stole the ring and ruled Solomon's kingdom for some time, was attached to this account.<sup>122</sup> From this argumentation we can learn that Aïr people were discredited by a mélange of different Islamic myths. They were called the children of the wild Gog and Magog, of evil jinns and of unfaithful women. They were allegedly forced to live in a barren area in a state of exile as a punishment of God and his prophets. Islamic legends of North Africa and the Middle East served as a means of unmasking others as unbelievers because of their evil Palestinian ancestors. But Muhammad Bello credited at least some of them with Islamic education and belief.

Muhammad Bello identified two major categories of peoples in his remarks on the origin and history of migration. There were those peoples

119 Ibid., ff. 23–24.

120 Edgar (ed.): *Litafo na Tatsuniyoyi na Hausa* 1, p. 277.

121 Ibid.

122 *Sakhr* was also included into the collection of *One Thousand and One Nights* alias *Arabian Nights*, where he appears with Solomon in the episode »The City of Brass«.

that partially participated in the Islamic myths of origin. They came from Palestine or at least from the Middle East. Some of them hid themselves in the mountains and refused Islamization for some time. Their routes of migration (from the Middle East to the Maghreb) were in general the same, although they had traveled at different times. The pre-Islamic emigrants escaped Islam or its prophets, whereas the Islamic migrants aimed at spreading Islam and establishing a caliphate. Muslims and anti-Muslims were antagonists; both groups inhabited and traveled the same regions. The latter withdrew into the mountains and deserts, while the Muslims waged their jihad wars against them. In the »Sudan« however, these »Abrahamic« peoples confronted peoples outside of this ancestral entanglement: Muhammad Bello characterized them as people without history and without another place of origin. History was basically the history of migration, but Muhammad Bello perceived these inhabitants of the southern regions as part of the ever-lasting landscape, without change of culture or change of territory. The history of migration was a noble background which they completely lacked. And in a Jihadist view, migration was always caused by religious contexts, like for instance religious wars, state-building processes, or pilgrimage. Some escaped religion, some spread it, and a third group was simply standing still. There was always an (anti-)Islamic meaning in migration. Migration referred to historicity, and motionlessness to historylessness.

#### ***1.4 Origins of the Hausa: From Baghdad Royals to Bornu Slaves***

The Sokoto Jihadists moved into the Hausa capital town and annexed their Arabic libraries. Many Hausa Muslim scholars changed their patrons and supported the Jihadists. Under these circumstances the Jihadists consequently learned about Hausa myths of origin. The most popular Hausa meta-legend was and still is the *Bayajidda Legend*. In Hausa oral history and culture, the legend of Bayajidda is the most famous narrative because it is superordinate to every other myth of origin.<sup>123</sup> Although it was modified, censured and embroidered over and over again, some

**123** My special thanks to my teacher Ulrike Zoch (Institute of African Languages, Frankfurt a.M.) for translating and discussing Bayajidda legends in our seminars.



episodes have always been conserved.<sup>124</sup> In brief, the story tells how a foreigner arrived in the Hausa region and married a woman from the ruling dynasty. Together the couple had seven sons who became the seven founders of the seven Hausa City States – the *hausa bakwai* (»Hausa Seven«): Daura, Kano, Katsina, Zaria, Gobir, Rano, Biram. There are various versions of this story, but in my analysis I will limit myself to one very detailed transcription of the legend.<sup>125</sup> Like most published editions of this myth, this version is a post-Jihad one. Thus, the Hausa ancestors were called »Haɓe«. <sup>126</sup> This Fulfulde word *haɓe* means »un-believers«, <sup>127</sup> but was also applied to label other indigenous inhabitants of the Central Sahel. The Sokoto Jihadists usually used this term for the traditional Hausa ruling dynasties before the Jihad. And the Hausa adapted this word in the long run together with the Jihadist interpretation of Hausa history.

In Jihadist texts as well as in post-Jihad literature and oral tradition, this term »Haɓe« defined all Hausa rulers until the Sokoto Jihad. Present-day Hausa dictionaries don't even include this word anymore, whereas the former lexicons translate it as »indigenous tribes«<sup>128</sup> or »ab-originals, autochthon«<sup>129</sup> people. Robinson dedicated some more words to that topic and explained that »kado, pl. haɓe (Fulani words)« could be translated as »indigenous tribes, used generally by the Fulanis for Hausas«. <sup>130</sup> It was thus applied by the Fulbe for *all* Hausa people. The Sokoto Jihadists strictly used it to speak about allegedly corrupt Hausa elites, but in everyday live it was obviously also used for any Hausa person. In another old dictionary of the Eastern Fulfulde dialect, Westermann translated the singular *kado* with »pagan, non-Muslim, barbar,

**124** Several ethnological studies refer to the relevance of the legend during the twentieth century; see for example Nicolas: *Dynamique sociale*, p. 63.

**125** The Hausa version was published by Hassan / Na'ibi (eds.): *Makau*; the English translation was published by id. (eds.): *A Chronicle of Abuja*. Another Hausa version was published by Tsiga (ed.): *Tarihin Sarauniya Daurama*.

**126** Hassan / Na'ibi (eds.): *Makau*, p. 1.

**127** Sing. »kado«. Cf. Westermann: *Handbuch der Ful-Sprache*, p. 62.

**128** See for example Abraham: *Dictionary*, p. 358. Schön for example leaves it out; Schön: *Dictionary*.

**129** Bargery / Westermann / Skinner: *A Hausa-English Dictionary*, p. 522.

**130** Robinson: *Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 182.

slave«,<sup>131</sup> so that the word was framed in an even more humiliating and religiously oriented way. Contemporary Fulfulde dictionaries translate it similarly with »a non-Fullo; slave; member of a subject race«. <sup>132</sup> Before applying this word for the Hausa, the term was used in Futa Jallon and Futa Toro for describing other societies as pagans. But it is important to mention that usually the Fulbe applied the Arabic loanword *kafir* to depict ›unbelievers‹. The words *kado* and *habe* were only used for ›pagan‹ war captives and slaves.<sup>133</sup> In some regions these outcasts became a distinct social class, called *Tukkude*, with their own Fulfulde dialect. Slaves had quite different Fulfulde names depending on their particular status:

»The first one concerns the non-Fulbe, pagans, slaves (kaado/haabe) of both sexes; the second category refers to the ›slave servants‹ (maccudo/maccube) and ›slave butlers‹ (korfo/horbe).«<sup>134</sup>

Of the three words, *kado* was considered the most hostile. Unlike the other slaves, they were ethnic strangers *and* enslaved.<sup>135</sup> In an urban Fulbe context, *kado* has become a common cuss word of Muslims directed at non-Muslim neighbors.<sup>136</sup> Fulbe jihadists all over West Africa had used this word for enslaved enemies long before the Sokoto Jihad was launched. But during the Sokoto Jihad the term was no longer restricted to slaves, but was also applied to any non-Jihadist Hausa politician. The Jihadists linguistically turned the social hierarchy around: Instead of referring to low-class slaves and war captives, they addressed the Hausa elite with these terms.

**131** German »Heide, Nicht-Islamit, Barbar, Sklave.« Westermann: Handbuch der Ful-Sprache, p. 62. See also on *kado/habe* translations Barth: Sammlung und Bearbeitung Central-Afrikanischer Vokabularien, vol. 2, p. CXIV.

**132** Mukoshy: A Fulfulde-English Dictionary, p. 102.

**133** French »[...] un homme de caste, un captivé de guerre ou un serviteur.« Diallo: Le Kakkabe entre Pidgin et Langue Minoritaire. I appreciate having discussed this topic with Abdourahmane Diallo in order to clarify the terms.

**134** French »La premiere concerne les ›non-Peuls, païens, esclaves‹ (kaado/haabe) sans distinction de sexe, la deuxieme les ›esclave(s)-serviteur(s)‹ (maccudo/maccube) et les ›esclave(s)-servante(s)‹ (korfo/horbe).« Baumgardt: La représentation de l'Autre, p. 300.

**135** Barry: Le lien de sève et la maison paternelle, p. 152.

**136** Blanckmeister / Heine: Ethnizität und Islam in Nordkamerun, p. 173.

This Sokoto Jihadization of the words *kado/habe* also framed the Hausa Bayajidda legend. While pre-Jihad narrations called it the *Origins of the Hausa*, post-Jihad versions were suddenly called *Origins of the Habe*. In the different versions of the legend, Bayajidda is either considered the ruler or a prince of Baghdad. Sometimes his name is given as »Bayajid dān Abdullahi«, implying that he was the son of Abdullah. In some oral or written accounts there is no comment on the reasons why Bayajidda initially left his home in Iraq. The detailed account of Hassan and Na'ibi says that he had planned a jihad against the pagan Ziduwa in Bornu.<sup>137</sup> A Zaria oral tradition only refers to the Bornu pagans as »wani Kafiri«<sup>138</sup> (»some unbelievers«). The Ajami manuscript used by E.J. Arnett explains that a »heathen named Zitawid«<sup>139</sup> made war upon them until they separated into forty parties. Bayajidda went with twenty parts to Bornu [...].«<sup>140</sup> »Ziduwa« may have derived from »Sh'uwak«,<sup>141</sup> the Arabic word for Shiites, and hence represent anti-Shiite propaganda of Sunni Muslims. For Hallam it is sufficient evidence that one of Palmer's Bornu sources described the first Bornu rulers as »light [skinned] like the Arabs«<sup>142</sup> to claim that the first Bornu dynasty was of Berber origin. The Hassan/Na'ibi version, on the other hand, gives another interpretation: Bayajidda overcame the Ziduwa, divided their land into forty parts, and took the land west of Bornu. Most versions do somehow include a Muslim-pagan conflict during or prior to the migration. When Bayajidda was about to attack the Bornu king, he was given the princess Magira for marriage. In regard of this first part of the legend, all versions agree that a certain noble from the Middle East had come to Bornu and married the

137 Hausa »Wani kafiri sunansa Ziduwa ya yake su [...].« Cf. Hassan / Na'ibi (eds.): Makau, p. 1.

138 N.N. (ed.): Hausawa da Makwabtansu. Na daya, p. 1. This publication corresponds with East (ed.): Labarun Hausawa da makwabtansu. Littafi na biyu. It probably is a reprint of East's first (»Na daya« = vol. 1) collection of oral history on Hausa origin and history.

139 Palmer traces the term »Zi Tuwan« back to the place »Tuzun« in Anatolia. See Palmer (ed.): The Bornu Sahara and Sudan, p. 274.

140 Arnett (ed.): A Hausa Chronicle, p. 162.

141 Arab. سبيعة.

142 Palmer (ed.): Bornu Sahara and Sudan, p. 179; see also Hallam: The Bayajida Legend, p. 55.

king's daughter. Just as in Fulbe myths of origin, the ancestor emigrated from Arabia and after the Sokoto Jihad, the Hausa storytellers integrated the Jihadist intention into the legend. The route, however, was different from all the other Fulbe narratives: Bayajidda crossed Egypt and the Sudan for Bornu, instead of traveling along the Mediterranean Coast into the Maghreb.

The next narrative section tells how Bayajidda's father-in-law asked him for soldiers to support the Bornu forces in warfare, and Bayajidda honored this request several times. Bayajidda's soldiers were rewarded with land and town houses in the former war zones to settle down. In the legend this loss of soldiers is over-emphasized:

»Thus he continued until there were none left to Bayajidda except his brother who went to the country of the Bagharmi [Baghirimi] where he became king; so Bayajidda was left alone save for his wife and his horse.«<sup>143</sup>

Arnett transmitted another version, in which a brother of Bayajidda became the king of Kanem. This part of the legend reflects the practices of warfare when diplomatic relations basically included rental of troops. But this renting of soldiers could at times be risky and expensive for an allied ruler because the warriors were rewarded and settled abroad. This section also demonstrates the precarious situation of an individual immigrant who was dependent on the Bornu ruler, because the transmission of soldiers was a typical service offered by tributary states. Due to these tensions, Bayajidda finally left Bornu together with his pregnant wife. She stayed behind in the town Biram (or »Birnin Gabas«)<sup>144</sup> where she gave birth to her first child Burkimu, who became Biram's ruler and thus founded the first Hausa state. The legend connects the arrival of Islamic strangers with the implementation of new dynasties. Immigrants are styled as potential revolutionaries and successful social climbers. As Bayajidda moved on, he arrived in Daura where the homonymous

**143** Hassan / Na'ibi (eds.): Chronicle, p. 1. Arnett's manuscript gives the following information: »And when he [the Bornu king] returned from war he did not bring them [the soldiers] back with him, but gave them one of his cities, and there they sat down and lived until they were ended, all that remained being Baijidda and his two brothers.« Cf. Arnett (ed.): Hausa Chronicle, p. 162.

**144** N.N. (ed.): Hausawa da Makwabtansu, p. 1. Today called Hadejia in North-Eastern Nigeria.

queen Daura (or Daurama) ruled. According to this legend, Daura was governed with a matriarchal political hereditary system. But even more important than this queen, was Bayajidda's meeting with the old woman Ayana of Daura. When Bayajidda stopped at her house and asked for water to refresh himself and his horse, Ayana told him the local customs: Only on Friday was there water, after the local priests had performed their rituals and appeased the dangerous snake in the well. This sequence of the story line is similar in every version and is therefore the very crux of the legend. Bayajidda insisted, secretly took a bucket from the old woman and pulled up the snake *Sarki*<sup>145</sup> in order to kill it by cutting off its head with his sword. He took some water for him, his horse and the old woman. The next day every inhabitant was looking for the tough killer of the snake. Queen Daura even announced that half of her country would be given to him. Ayana told the queen about Bayajidda, who proved his act by showing the queen the snake head. But Bayajidda refused to take half of the kingdom and instead married Daura and became king of the whole state.

Once again, the foreign immigrant is the one who became the new ruler. He killed the former authority (styled as snake) and introduced Islam. The water snake of the story can at first be identified as the local king. But it also referred to North African stories about the West African belief in water ghosts. In this view, the immigrant destroyed the source of local religion and also deprived the priest of his power to control water access. Colonial informants and anthropological studies revealed that lakes and rivers in the savanna area were both feared and treated with special care.<sup>146</sup> The office of the Daura ruler was from that time on called *Makas Sarki* («Killer of Sarki» [the snake or king]) and became patriarchally organized. Thus, the immigrant reformed the whole political system of Daura. In some versions the old woman Ayana told Queen Daura that the stranger rode a cow-like animal, so that Bayajidda's ar-

**145** It is, however, ironic that the snake's name can be translated as »king« or »ruler«. The name is a metaphor for any local ruler who was killed or otherwise replaced by a stranger.

**146** Some Mbum informants had warned the German Colonial Officer Kurt Strümpell not to sail across the Dembalang lake because in the past a Fulbe settler had been killed by some god living in the lake. See Strümpell: *Aus dem Schutzgebiete Kamerun*, p. 15.

rival is also a metaphor for the introduction of horses from Islamic territories. On the other hand, the snake rituals were performed every Friday (»Aljimma'a«),<sup>147</sup> which is of course the Islamic sacred day of the week.

### *The Water Snake and Snake Killer as a Standard Narrative*

In many West African legends of the origin of new kings, snakes play a significant role. Al-Bakri already described the snake gods of West Africa in his eleventh-century geography. He explained that in the Sahel people adored a huge snake with a camel head located in a desert cave. Furthermore, humans were regularly sacrificed to this deity.<sup>148</sup> In another legend, Za Alayman, founder of the first Songhay dynasty killed a river snake before becoming the new ruler. Myths reported that he had come from Yemen and then killed the snake in the Middle Niger.<sup>149</sup> This snake or deity was highly respected among the local population when Za Alayman killed it in order to prove the belief in water spirits wrong and convince the devotees to convert to Islam. Sequences of snake killing are so common in Sahel legends because they symbolize the Islamic influence of mobile actors such as immigrants or traders. But in fact, the former political or religious authorities were not actually killed by Muslim migrants; instead, the latter gradually replaced them. In some Hausa versions of this legend, the water snake was replaced by a Dodo – a mythological Hausa figure often described as having an animal body that kidnaps, or mocks and sometimes kills people.<sup>150</sup>

Local water spirits might *firstly* have been a metaphor for the lack of wells or restricted access to water in the Sahel; and *secondly* this may have represented the increasing need of water when many caravans with their mules, donkeys, horses and camels arrived from their exhausting trans-Saharan journey. This thirst was probably not always sufficiently allayed by the small Sahel village wells. The water snake also referred to the royal control of the wells as public property. In this view, the snake

147 N.N. (ed.): Hausawa da Makwabtansu, p. 1.

148 Slane (ed.): El-Bekri, p. 326.

149 Hunwick (ed.): Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire, pp. xxxv, 5.

150 Cf. a version translated by Krause: Neue afrikanische Märchen II, p. 2.

was a symbol for the power of the state that regulated water access due to rainfall and other influences. In Krause's text on the deposition of the ruler in the Saharan trading town Ghat it is thus said about the procedure of deposition: »He [the king] is reported to have withdrawn his slaves from the state well called Idasheran and which he is supposed to use.«<sup>151</sup> The control of water was the major means of exerting power for a Saharan and Sahelian ruler. Even in the Jihadist towns, e.g. in the Wurno Sultanate residence, stories about magical creatures living in the local river Gagere were still current. In the 1850s, there were certain days on which the horses had to drink from the river before the inhabitants of Wurno could fetch water. According to local rumor, there were water people with long hair and short figures that would attack humans in the morning.<sup>152</sup> However, looking for the pre-history behind the story – as Hallam, for example, has done<sup>153</sup> – is not the goal of this chapter. The attempt is instead made to demonstrate that immigrant snake killers from the east have long been a basic element and narrative *wandermotiv* in Sahelian myths of origin. The Hausa Bayajidda myth is thus embedded into a general Sahelian narrative genre with a characteristic symbolical language.

### *Immigrants Fathering Bastards and Legitimate Children*

Bayajidda also had a concubine.<sup>154</sup> Their first son was humorously called »mun karfi gari«<sup>155</sup> (»we conquered the town«) and his second son with his official wife was named »Bawo« (»give back«) soon after. In some versions of the legend, the queen forced her husband to take a concubine because she had to remain a virgin as a queen and needed to undergo

151 German »Wenn er das getan hat, fordert man ihn [den König] auf, seine Sklaven von dem Regierungsbrunnen namens Idascheran, dessen Nutznießung ihm zusteht, zurückzuziehen.« Hausa text: »Su ce da si: »Fitasda bayinka cikin rizia na sarauta, ana ce da ita Itazeran [...]« Krause (ed.): Proben der Sprache von Ghat, p. 82.

152 This rumour about the water people (Hausa *yayan ruwa*) was told by the Hausa freed slave Dorugu and published by Schön (ed.): *Magana Hausa*, p. 76.

153 Hallam: *Bayajida Legend*, p. 59.

154 »Kwarkwara« (slave wife, concubine). *Ibid.*, p. 5. Her name was Bagwariya.

155 There are variants such as »karap da gari« or »Karbagari«.

certain rituals in order to have sexual intercourse with him later: »At that time queens did not get married. Whoever was a queen, she should not get married.«<sup>156</sup> Being jealous of the concubine's first-born son, Queen Daura consulted traditional healers and masters of the *bori* obsession cults in order to give birth to a son.<sup>157</sup> The Queen represents the pre-Islamic, and pre-Jihadist Hausa belief system related to traditional experts on spirits, norms and medicine. The legitimate second-born son Bawo was then father to six sons who became rulers of the other six Hausa city states:

»Bagaudu became King of Kano, Kazuru of Daura, Gunguma of Zazzau [Zaria], Duma of Gobir, Kumaiyau of Katsina, and Zamagari of Rano; and these with Biram made up the Seven Hausa States.«<sup>158</sup>

The legend also included the seven illegitimate Hausa States founded by the sons of the slave concubine: Zamfara, Kebbi, Yauri (or Yawuri), Gwari, Kororafa, Nupe, Yoruba. They were called the *banza bakwai* (»evil seven«). One may roughly locate the legitimate *hausa bakwai* in the northern Sahel belt from Gobir in the west to Lake Chad in the east. The *banza bakwai* bordered this region to the south in the Niger and Benue River regions. This Hausa geography differentiated between the Northern Sahel which was Islamized, and the Southern »illegitimate« Hausa States. Just as in Fulbe myths of origin, the forefather came from the Middle East, brought Islam and left some honorable legitimate children, as well as some slave progeny behind. His migration route was from east to west and the spatial order also divided political and genealogical regions between these two cardinal directions.

Frank Edgar collected most of his oral traditions in Northern Nigeria and especially in Sokoto around 1900. In this region the myths were of

**156** Lange: Ancient Kingdoms of West Africa, p. 293. This oral account was told Lange by Alasan Abdurrahman (1932–1996), son of the Emir of Daura, who had collected the legend and its details by interviewing older family members. Lange is convinced that Phoenician settlements in ancient North Africa have had strong influence on the Hausa region up to today.

**157** Hausa »Wannan ya sa ta shiga bokaye [healers] da ‘yan bori [bori practitioners] har da masu tsafi don ita ma ta samu haihuwar [sic!] da namiji.« Cf. Garba: Tarihin Bawo, p. 13.

**158** Hassan / Na’ibi (eds.): Chronicle, p. 3.



course influenced by Jihadist ideology throughout the nineteenth century. They also call Bayajidda the former ruler of Baghdad who was defeated in a war attack of pagan Ziduwa. Of the 40 shattered military units of Bayajidda, 20 fled to Bornu. This tradition assumed that the Bornu king was a descendant of Syria.<sup>159</sup> Later in that text, different regions of the Middle East were obviously confused and Bayajidda was also called *ba-larabe na sham* (an Arab from Syria).<sup>160</sup> Edgar's transcriptions also offer another view of the topic of Bayajidda's mount: An old Bornu woman had inseminated her donkey with horse semen from a very famous royal stallion. The resultant animal (a mule) attracted so many curious visitors, that the breeder's son had to run away with it to Daura.<sup>161</sup> But this extract of the legend only referring to the migration from Bornu to Daura demonstrated the role of the Bornu animal trade from a nineteenth-century Sokoto view.

Hallam and others have tried to read the Hausa myths of origin like a chronology of events, dating Bayajidda's arrival in Daura sometime during the tenth century.<sup>162</sup> Palmer likewise suggested that Bayajidda may have been the Ibadite sectarian called Abu Yazid Makhlad Ibn Kaidad Al-Zanati. This would explain why some traditions call Bayajidda »Abuyazid«. <sup>163</sup> Abu Yazid was born in Gao (Mali) in the ninth century and his biography was sketched by the Arab chronicler Ibn Khaldun. He was a mobile priest and became a leader of the Berber Kharijites. They were more radical compared to the Sunni and Shia Muslims and declared other Muslims unbelievers. Many Berbers declared themselves Kharijite between the years 900 and 1000 and opposed the Fatimid and »Arabized« North African regimes. Abu Yazid and his followers started a revolt in the 940s but were finally defeated. According to Palmer, his name and legends (for example moving around on a donkey for preaching tours) had been popular in Asben and Bornu into the nineteenth century:

**159** Hausa »Sarikin Barno, asalinsa Sham [The ruler of Bornu, his ancestors are Syrian].« Cf. Edgar (ed.): Litafo, p. 222.

**160** Ibid., p. 224.

**161** In this text Bayajidda is called Abba Kyari. Ibid., pp. 274–277.

**162** Hallam: Bayajida Legend, p. 49.

**163** Other versions use both names synonymously; cf. Garba: Tarihin Bawo, p. 7. He is identified as an Arab (»Larabawa«) from Baghdad (»Bagadaza«).

»We may, in fact, assume that the Abu Yazid of the Daura legend, the Abu Yazid of Asben and Abu Yazid of Bornu represent the same personage and are connected with the same events.«<sup>164</sup>

Hallam on the other hand suggested that Abu Yazid was related to the Persian founder of the Rustamid Imamate in North Africa in the eighth century.<sup>165</sup> He was of Persian origin but grew up in Tunisia, ruled the Imamate and finally fled into the Sahara due to political tensions, perhaps reaching the Bornu Empire with his defeated army. Even though his name doesn't correlate with the name Abu Yazid or the legends about the Baghdadi immigrant Bayajidda, he may have been integrated into Hausa traditions. But this study cannot finally clarify whether or not Bayajidda in fact existed or was formed on the basis of several historical role models. It endeavors rather to historicize myths of origin with regard to the Jihad years and to trace modifications in the way the story was told at different times and by different narrators.

Some nineteenth-century Bayajidda legends also included the descent of the Queen Daura. According to Palmer's manuscript from ca. 1850,<sup>166</sup> a Palestinian man called Najib traveled to Libya, but his son Abdul Dar was too greedy for power and was therefore chased away to the oasis village Kusugu where he raised five daughters – the youngest of them being called Daura. This legend was written by a Daura scholar who refused to accept that the famous queen was indigenous to that region.<sup>167</sup> In Edgar's version of the individual Daura myth, she came from Bornu and settled in the bush with her slaves. She started cultivating and built a town. This Daura myth resembles a typical pre-Islamic frontier myth of West Africa, in which bushland is cleared and turned into

164 Palmer (ed.): Bornu Sahara and Sudan, p. 273.

165 Hallam: Bayajida Legend, p. 49.

166 This manuscript was reportedly stolen from the Daura ruler Nuhu (reigned 1855–1861) and was later confiscated by the British in a Damagaram library. Cf. Palmer: Sudanese Memoirs, vol. 3, pp. 132–136.

167 In this version Bayajidda is called Abuyazidu. The town name Daura and the Queen's name were pronounced differently, Palmer noticed. This is possible because Hausa language is a tonal language. The town is pronounced »Daurá« and the queen's name »Dáura«. Palmer thought that the office title and name of the snake *sarki* derived from *sare ki* (»killer of her«). Cf. *ibid.*

an urban and agricultural space by immigrant settlers. An unmistakable connection is drawn between her religious duties as priestess and her sexual abstinence. According to this account, she wore men's clothes and charms on her body. She also refused to sleep with Bayajidda, but when the concubine bore a son she changed her mind:

»Then she took all the amulettes [Hausa *lawaye*] from her head and put them aside. Then she did her hair and rubbed it with indigo and said to her husband: »I'm sleeping with you today.«<sup>168</sup>

The immigrant Bayajidda conquered Daura by marriage and sexual intercourse. The change of rule also implied a fundamental change of gender roles and the loss of local religious patterns. The Daura legend and the Bayajidda myth cross; both were believed to have emigrated from the Middle East via Bornu or the Saharan desert. Some versions also link Bayajidda's arrival to the introduction of new weaponry. When Bayajidda left Bornu, he met some blacksmiths and asked them to produce swords using his own weapon as a model.<sup>169</sup> Bayajidda is a figure of narrative culmination, representing various events and processes of historical change. But the general statement of all legends is that crucial changes were brought about by migrants from the Sahara and Bornu.

Comparing these variations of the Hausa legend with Fulbe myths of origin, the Hausa stories describe the emergence, installation and modification of political systems alongside other innovations such as new religions or new animal races. The Hausa immigrant(s) mixed with the local dynasties by marriage and thus implemented new dynasties. The Fulbe myths never concentrated on factors of genealogical integration – with the exception of Uqba's marriage with the Byzantine princess. The Hausa legend can be called a political myth of origin (with the emergence of a new dynasty and the royal title *sarki*). The Fulbe of the early nineteenth-century Hausa region cultivated an ethnic myth of origin, paying attention to accurate genealogies, language and Islam in regard to socio-ethnic cohesion and consciousness.

The local Hausa scholars continued to commemorate these meta-stories of origin and hence the ways in which different states and towns had

168 Edgar: Litafo, p. 229.

169 Lange: Ancient Kingdoms of West Africa, p. 291.

been founded. The Hausa scholar Alhaji Umaru (1858–1934) reported about the foundation of the town Zamfara in his Ajami manuscript. In this narration a »new man« (Hausa *mazan fara*) came from the »bush« (*daji*) as a hunter selling his game meat. His settlement became larger and »was called ›Land of the New Man‹ [*kasar mazan fara*] and later also Zanfara.«<sup>170</sup> A comparable story was also narrated about Yawuri in the Kebbi area: »There were bowmen that settled in the forest«,<sup>171</sup> conquered the area, and provoked a military reaction by the King of Kebbi. The leader of the hunters was then reportedly called »king of many dancers« (*sarki yawa rawa*). The *Yawa Rawa* (or Yawuri) broke off from the Kebbi state and lived on selling game meat. These chronicles always consider the hunters as pioneers in conquering new land and establishing towns. Among the Hausa Ajami materials of the German colonial official Krause, there is also a copy of the Daura legend written by Alhaji Umaru. The author put emphasis on the gender of the legendary Daura queen, stating that she was a powerful woman that behaved »like a man«. <sup>172</sup> One day an unnamed man arrived at her settlement and they had a child named Bawa whose offspring were the Katsina and Kano people. From the Katsina ethnic group the Baybay (?) emerged, while some of the Kano offspring founded Zaria. Bawa also founded Gobir and Kebbi. Gobir children in turn settled in Zamfara, and the Kebbi offspring became known as Yawuri and Arewa.<sup>173</sup> In this case, the founder of Daura was the famous homonymous queen who settled in the forest and not a (male) hunter.<sup>174</sup> The land of origin of the male immigrants was not even discussed in these narrations. They only spoke of anonymous »hunters« and »new men« in contrast to the local queen.

170 Hausa قسر مزنفجر كم ائث زنفر. Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Origins of Zamfara*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 21, f. 30.

171 Hausa مهلبان سك زما نا ئكن داج. Id.: *Origins of Yawuri*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 22, f. 30.

172 Hausa كمر نئمج. Cf. id.: *Origins of the Hausa*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 28, f. 43.

173 Cf. *ibid.*

174 Hausa ئكن داج [...] ئزما نا. Cf. *ibid.*

*Jihadist Interpretations of Hausa Myths*

The Bayajidda legend was the most well-known story across the Hausa-speaking regions in the nineteenth century. Heinrich Barth was told the story throughout the Central Sahel and remarked that all Hausa people were convinced that they were descendants of a certain Bawo, son of Karbigari. He also obtained information about Queen Daura who had hosted a holy immigrant from Baghdad.<sup>175</sup> He also listed the »Hausa bokoy« and »Banza bokoy« and referred to the traditional tasks of the city states, according to which Gobir was the »serki-n-yaki« (war leader) and Zaria the »serki-n-bay« (slave trade leader).<sup>176</sup> Barth also said that Muhammad Bello supposed that the Hausa people originated from a Bornu slave.<sup>177</sup> Barth probably read about this in Sultan Bello's work *Infaq al-maysur*, in which he published this insulting theory. He started his chapter about the Hausa with a geographical location of Hausa south-west of Bornu, and a brief account of its vegetation: forests, rivers, deserts, mountains, valleys, and thickets. Then he immediately turned to the origins of the Hausa: »They claim that a slave of the Sultan of Bornu named Bawa is the one who fathered the Sudanese of this land.«<sup>178</sup> He is not called an ally or consultant of the Bornu king, as was implied in most Hausa versions of this legend. Furthermore, Bello confused Bayajidda and Bawo, because originally it was Bayajidda who had migrated from Bornu to Hausa where Bawo was born and raised. I suggest that this ›confusion‹ was also a tactical method in order to linguistically formulate and underpin the theory of slave descent. This interpretation is based on a misunderstanding of the personal name Bawo, because the term resembles the Hausa word *bawa* which means »slave« in Hausa language. Either Muhammad Bello's knowledge on Hausa myths of origin

175 Barth obviously confused the genealogical line and assumed that Daura was the eldest son of Bawo. See Barth: *Travels and Discoveries*, vol. 1, New York 1859, pp. 470–472.

176 Ibid.

177 Ibid., p. 471. In post-Jihadist oral tradition this is a common idea; see for example Garba (ed.): *Tarihin Bawo*, p. 15: Hausa »Sarkin Musulmi Bello ya ce, Bayajidda *bawan* Mai na Barno ne wanda aka turo kasar Hausa don ya sarauce ta.«

178 Arab. وزعموا ان عبد السلطان برنو يقال له باو هو الذي ولد السودانيين من اهل هذا البلد. Cf. Muhammad Bello: *Infaq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 25.

was very rudimentary, or he deliberately modified them in accordance with his political agenda. In his view, all Hausa were descendants of slaves owned by Berber tribes of Bornu. By calling the Hausa ancestors Bornu slaves, Bello also demonstrated their state of ›unbelief‹ because Islamic law condemned the enslavement of Muslims. Only the Gobir people were of noble origin because they descended from ›Copts who left Egypt and headed to the west.‹<sup>179</sup> The Hausa on the other hand, are portrayed as servile people and ›Blacks‹ without any link to the Islamic migrations and genealogies.

Muhammad Bello also commented on another Hausa myth of origin. In the fourteenth century the queen Bakwa – a descendant of Bayajidda – was believed to have built Zaria, and her daughter Aminatu ruled the royal army and fortified the conquered towns. Bello comments on that:

»These seven regions [Hausa States] witnessed many unusual and strange events. The first who established a government among them, it has been claimed, was Aminatu, daughter of the Emir of Zaria. She waged war in these [Hausa] lands.«<sup>180</sup>

Bello considered the idea of a powerful female ruler and military officer an exotic and strange concept. She allegedly made Kano and Katsina tributary to her Zaria state and also made war expeditions into Bauchi, until ›she reached the circular ocean to the south and west.‹<sup>181</sup> Muhammad Bello obviously believed the medieval geographies locating the flat world in the middle of a circular ocean. Therefore, he may also have accepted the idea that the region south of the Sokoto Caliphate bordered the edge of the earth. South of these regions he only supposed Christian ships from two kingdoms coming to trade with the ›Sudan.‹<sup>182</sup> Zaria had allegedly ruled the entire Hausa region until the coast. This southern region was said to have lacked Islam until the Sokoto Jihad. Bello listed some of their regions and claimed that in all twenty districts they

179 Arab. خرجوا من مصر وهم من بقايا القبط وتوجهوا الى المغرب. Ibid.

180 Arab. وهذه الاقاليم السبعة قدكان فيها من العجائب والغرائب امور كثيرة واول من وهبت له Ibid., ff. 25–26.

181 Arab. حتى وصلت البحر المحيط من جانب اليمين. Ibid.

182 Ibid., f. 27. Bello mentioned the Ocean and the ships of the Christians two times in this section.

spoke the same language and had one Sultan »Kurunruwa«. <sup>183</sup> Bello maybe referred to Kwararafa, a state south of the Benue River. They were rich in salt mines and gold, but they also were the most »blind« (ignorant) of all the Sudan. <sup>184</sup> Yet again, no migration history was attributed to these southern edges of the world apart from the war expedition that took the southerners into Kano and Bornu.

In the Hausa account of the Aminatu legend, she reportedly controlled Nupe (alias Nufe) and hence received »forty eunuchs and ten thousand kola nuts, none of which had been seen in the Hausa lands before, and in her time came the first trade from the south, and she was in power for thirty years.« <sup>185</sup> The Sokoto historiographer and geographer Dan Tafa <sup>186</sup> mentioned Aminatu as one of the seven greatest regents in the history of the Sudan who had conquered all the Lower Sudan »until the circular [Foggy] Ocean from the south to the west«. <sup>187</sup> From the official historiography of the Sokoto Jihadists, it seems as if Jihadist women did not participate in Jihadist warfare and had to stay away from the battlefields. But in fact royal concubines and slaves on horses were engaged to supply the exhausted and wounded soldiers with water on the battleground. Clapperton reported that an old female slave of Muhammad Bello from Zamfara offered such services:

»At her saddle-bow hung about half a dozen gourds, filled with water, and a brass basin to drink out of; and with this she supplied the wounded and the thirsty. I certainly was much obliged to her, for she twice gave me a basin of water.« <sup>188</sup>

Her status probably differed from that of other women, because she was considered »old« and »unattractive« and was dressed up like her male military companions. Dan Tafa also judged Aminatu as exotic as his Sultan had done; moreover, he interpreted the Bawa/Bayajidda legend in accordance with Bello's view:

183 Arab. كرنرو. Ibid.

184 Ibid., f. 26.

185 Hassan / Na'ibi (eds.): Chronicle, p. 3.

186 Cf. for an elaborate discussion of his geographical work in chapter III.1.

187 Arab. الى بحر المحيط من جانب اليمن (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 3). Cf. also the translation of Palmer (ed.): Western Sudan History, p. 262.

188 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 188.

»In past times all these states were in the hands of the Sultan of Bornu, who had a royal slave named Bawu. His origin is unknown to me. I have never heard from anyone to what tribe he belonged. The Sultan of Bornu appointed him governor of these regions. He ruled, and had seven sons: and when he came to die, he placed them in charge of these countries, each over a separate state.«<sup>189</sup>

There is no mention of Bawu's Persian ancestors or his migration before his appearance in Bornu. He is only a royal slave and an installed ruler dependent on Bornu's will. His slave status was given the term *mamluk*, which originally designated the royal slaves of the North African Empires in contrast to common house slaves, and this status often referred to eunuch slaves. But since Bawu was the father of seven sons, Dan Tafa probably didn't mean to call him a eunuch. The nature of this enslavement was a political and economic one because Dan Tafa said that Hausa has always been paying tribute to the Bornu ruler:

»Hence it is said that all the kings of these [Hausa] countries were slaves of the Sultan of Bornu because the peoples of these [Hausa] countries were under its [Bornu] government. These [Hausa] Sultans paid tribute and ransom to the Emir of Daura, and he conveyed it to the Emir of Bornu. Such was their binding custom: no one refused to pay until the beginning of our Jihad, except the Sultan of Gobir Bawa [1777–1795].«<sup>190</sup>

The Jihadists are portrayed as the liberators of the oppressed Hausa masses under Bornu rule. »Gobir indeed had kings before the sons of Bawu«,<sup>191</sup> Dan Tafa underlined in order to diminish the extraordinary

189 Arab. وكانت هذه الاقاليم فيما مضى في يد سلطان برنو وكان له مملوكا يقال له باو لا ادرما اصله و. Arab. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 8). Cf. also Palmer (ed.): *Western Sudan History*, p. 265.

190 Arab. فكان ملك هذه البلاد كلهم عبيد سلطان برنو اعني بذلك سلاطينها لان اهل هذه البلاد تحت حكمهم وكان هو لا السلاطين دوره الخراج و القلات الى سلطن برنو يوصلون ذلك لامير دوره فيوصله الى اميربرنو وكان ذلك (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 9). Bawa was also called Baba Jan Gwarzo dan Babari (reigned as Sarkin Gobir 1777–1795), for whom Uthman dan Fodio had worked as a teacher before the Jihad. Cf. the translation of Palmer (ed.): *Western Sudan History*, p. 265.

191 Arab. وقد كانت لهذه البلاد ملوك قبل اقلاد باو. Arab. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 10). Cf. Palmer (ed.): *Western Sudan History*, p. 266.



status of immigrants in the myths of Hausa dynasties. The Gobirawa invaded Gobir and expelled the Hausa dynasty. The above-mentioned Gobir Sultan Bawa then ceased paying tribute to Bornu. Dan Tafa defended Gobir's cultural and genealogical distance to the enslaved Hausa ancestors by illustrating the Gobir descent:

»And from their [Gobir] accounts, there is no doubt that they are free from their descent, because they are a remnant of the Copts, who left Egypt and migrated to Aïr. Thence they came to the land of Gobir expelling from it those of the sons of Bawu who were ruling. They settled in it, and paid tribute just as their predecessors had done until Bawa refused.«<sup>192</sup>

The Jihadist historian presented the Gobir legend of origin from Egypt as historical fact, while at the same time similar myths of origin from the Hausa are denied and considered legends. The Gobirawa are declared free men due to their Christian origin and history of migration. They expelled the indigenous Hausa descendants and ruled over Gobir. According to Dan Tafa, the Seven Hausa States lost their clan affiliation and started to fight each other, so that the Jihadists played the role of a liberator from both Bornu oppression and incompetent and quarreling Hausa rulers. Historians looking for facts about early West African history hidden in these myths have often failed to recognize the Jihadist bias that had modified the Bayajidda legend before their colonial or post-colonial fieldwork. Hallam, for example, adopted Muhammad Bello's opinion on the claimed slave status of Bayajidda and transformed this humiliating and politically motivated version of the story into historical fact. He said the Hausa ancestors were not »slaves as such, but [...] of a servile race«.<sup>193</sup> The non-Jihadist Hausa readings of this legend had only called the seven illegitimate *banza bakwai* States offspring of slaves, or in this case of a slave concubine. The Sokoto Jihadists confused Hausa names and genealogies, misinterpreted Hausa oral traditions and claimed that the Hausa considered themselves the descendants of a slave.

192 Arab. فما يذكرون ثابت اذانهم احرار من اصلهم وهم من بقايا القبط خرجوا من مصروفوا بلاد. (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 10). Cf. Palmer (ed.): *Western Sudan History*, p. 265.

193 Palmer (ed.): *Western Sudan History*, p. 53.

### *1.5 Origins of the Maguzawa: Persians and Zoroastrians in West Africa*

In the region of Kano, another legend was common: the Bagauda legend. This myth was part of the Bayajidda meta-story because Bagauda was considered one of Bawo's sons and in turn a descendant of Bayajidda. The Kano myth of origin started with a sequence on bush clearing and civilization:

»Bagauda was the first to cut Kano [land consolidation]. It was bush [*daji*] at that time without people. It was thick jungle [*kirmiji*] with nothing save idols, waterbuck, buffalo, and elephant. Bagauda had his home at Gaya; he was a mighty hunter, a killer. He came foraging in the dry season, and made a hut at Madatai.«<sup>194</sup>

The arrival of this immigrant marked the start of urbanization in Kano. This legend commemorated the ›civilization‹ of Kano by land clearance and farming. What used to be a thick bush populated by wild animals was turned into a human space. In Palmer's version of the origin of Kano, eleven pagan chiefs were described, whom Bagauda then attacked. The different rulers were each the master of a certain profession: blacksmith, brewer, doctor, watchman, miner, smelter, salt maker, head of the dwellings and so on. According to this »Kano Chronicle«, their fear of Bagauda forced the pagan people to sacrifice animals to their gods: »Then they would bring a black dog and sacrifice it at the foot of Tchunburburai. They sacrificed a black he-goat in the grove.«<sup>195</sup> More and more people settled with the male hunting community and shared their game. They were in particular joined by women from the »Maguzawa«. From today's perspective, the Maguzawa are just one of many Nigerian ethnic groups and Wikipedia calls them a »subgroup of the Hausa people«. <sup>196</sup> In 1915 they were already recognized as an ethnic group in

**194** Hiskett (ed.): The ›Song of Bagauda‹, p. 544. Another Hausa version was published in Zaria 1969 under the title »Wakar Bagauda ta Kano« by an anonymous editor. Mervyn Hiskett transcribed and translated oral accounts and Hausa Ajami manuscripts.

**195** Palmer: Sudanese Memoirs, vol. 3, p. 99.

**196** Wikipedia Online Dictionary: Maguzawa Hausa people, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maguzawa\\_Hausa\\_people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maguzawa_Hausa_people) (29.08.2014).

colonial records.<sup>197</sup> Ethnographic studies of the previous century defined them as »non-Muslim Hausa [who] do not pray, are totally rural, and rank very low in the prestige system«. <sup>198</sup> This term was meant to describe non-Islamic farming inhabitants of the Kano and Katsina area. In the twentieth century the term had been integrated into Hausa language and culture. But in fact this ethnonym was neither an »indigenous« appellation nor a Hausa word. The roots of the Hausaized words *bamaguje* (sing.) and *maguzawa* (pl.) were Arabic and Persian. In both Middle Eastern languages *majus*<sup>199</sup> labeled people of Zoroastrian religion. The term was then integrated into Fulfulde as *magujo* (pl. *magube*), and later on borrowed by the Hausa language as a collective name for non-Muslims with local beliefs. Last suggested that North African scholar-merchants directly introduced their own categorical labels for local groups into Hausa; for example »Maguzawa« (Persians), »Jalutawa« (Palestinians) or »Rumawa« (Byzantines).<sup>200</sup> But it is more plausible that Songhay and Fulbe Muslim scholars introduced this name to Hausa from the west. They were intermediaries in this transfer of knowledge. Many medieval and early modern Moroccan and Songhay manuscripts applied the label *majus* when discussing a special category of unbelievers by birth and origin. The Sokoto Jihadists studied these treatises. Uthman dan Fodio, for example, quoted from a fourteenth-century text by Al-Maghili: »The first category comprises those [unbelievers] that are clearly unbelievers by origin like the Christians and Zoroastrians.«<sup>201</sup> This group of non-Muslim non-polytheists is also described in the Koran:

»Indeed, those who have believed and those who were Jews and the Sabians and the Christians and the *majus* and those who associated with Allah – Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection.«<sup>202</sup>

The term »Maguzawa« was also well-known in eighteenth-century Bornu, when Hornemann claimed with reference to his informants that the

197 Reuke: Die Maguzawa in Nordnigeria, p. 11.

198 Barkow: Muslims and Maguzawa, p. 59.

199 Arab. مجوس.

200 Last: The Book and the Nature of Knowledge, p. 183.

201 Arab. اول هو كافر حرتم بالاصالة كالنصارى والمجوس. Quoted from the *Siraj al-ikhwan* held at BN, Manuscripts Arabes 5528, f. 231a (ff. 255–238).

202 Koran 22,17.

Niger »ran through the land of ›Majies‹ (i.e. Heathens)«<sup>203</sup> and further through Dafur and Egypt. Hornemann was obviously told that this term meant ›unbelievers‹. The rivers of the Sahel were linked to unbelief by Saharan traders. And in mid-nineteenth century Cairo, West African pilgrims reportedly differentiated between the Islamic Sudan, called ›Bilad al-Takrur‹, and the regions of the unbelievers, called ›Bilad al-Majus‹.<sup>204</sup> *Takrur* typified West African territory connected to Muslim trade and pilgrimage networks, whereas the *majus* land was cut off from long-distance migration systems. They were less influenced by Islamic culture, so that they maintained different local spirits and religious practices. The so-called Maguzawa of the Hausa region integrated Islam as new gods like *iskokin musulmai* (Muslim gods) into their *iskoki* religion, instead of replacing it with Islam.<sup>205</sup> But they also spoke Hausa language and practiced Hausa face scarification.<sup>206</sup>

Their religious practices had in fact long been influenced by Islam. They called, for example, a higher god who was only contacted when rain was absent for too long by the name »Allah«.<sup>207</sup> Minor gods or spirits were in many regions called *bori* (pl. *boruruka*). Greenberg distinguished three categories of these spirits: well-known ghosts inhabiting a certain territory, kin group ghosts and house spirits.<sup>208</sup> Different rites were performed on the occasion of weather disturbance, sickness or violation of social norms. Persons responsible for these religious services were called *yan bori* and *masu bori*. A special category of evil ghost was called *dodo*. These *dodos* were also known by Muslim Hausa of the nineteenth century and appeared in many Hausa fairytales.<sup>209</sup> Around

203 Hornemann: The Journal of Frederick Horneman's Travels, p. 115.

204 Reported by a French diplomat who interviewed West African pilgrims about the geography of their home regions; cf. Escayrac de Lature: Mémoires sur le Soudan, p. 144.

205 Reuke: Maguzawa in Nordnigeria, p. 16.

206 Ibid., p. 20. Greenberg summarized: »These Maguzawa are practically identical in language and material culture with the Moslem population that surrounded them. It is only in certain aspects of their social organization and religion that they reveal significant differences when compared to the Moslem Hausa.« See Greenberg: Influence of Islam, p. 15.

207 Reuke: Maguzawa in Nordnigeria, pp. 57–59.

208 Greenberg: Influence of Islam, pp. 43–44.

209 Ibid., pp. 70–71, 77.

1900 these spirits were often called *aljani*, a modification of the Arabic word for Islamic spirits created by God.<sup>210</sup>

*Hausa Perspectives on the »Maguzawa«*

Prior to the Sokoto Jihad, Hausa annalists had already called others *majus*. In the famous Kano Chronicle, the Maguzawa immigrated to Kano as a group under the leadership of a blacksmith.<sup>211</sup> They inhabited one of the Kano Hills but they were expelled from there by the Kano king Bugaya (1385–1390).<sup>212</sup> They used to be blacksmiths but had to become farmers when chased away from Kano into the rural landscape. They were isolated from urban life, except on the occasion of Kano town festivals when they were hosted by the Kano ruler Mohammed Kukuna (1652–1660):

»On the same Monday he called all the Marguzawa [sic!] to the city to salute him. They remained twenty-one days, and played a game in which they beat each other's heads with iron. The Sarki gave them many gifts, and asked them who was their chief. On their saying it was Zanku, the Sarki said to him, »Next year come again [...]«.«<sup>213</sup>

The Maguzawa were downgraded to the status of backward and exotic farmers. And although their name was of Arabic origin, Hausa Muslims developed more local etymological theories about it. The German-American pastor Paul Krusius, for example, was told that the *Fulbe* and *Habe* accepted *salla* [Muslim prayer], whereas the Hausa *Bama* group avoided prayer. Therefore, they told Krusius, *Bamaguje* is derived from the Hausa sentence »Bama guje salla« (Bama ran away from prayer).<sup>214</sup>

210 Tremearne: *The Ban of the Bori*, p. 243.

211 Palmer: *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. 3, p. 65. Palmer's manuscript copy of the Kano Chronicle was written (or copied) in the late nineteenth century and may therefore be adapted to a post-Jihad Hausa view on Kano pre-history.

212 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

213 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

214 Krusius: *Die Maguzawa*, p. 288. Krusius said he would recognize them due to their scarification markings. The German visitor spent some weeks in a village and thus gave a description of »Maguzawa« religion: They were animists who belief in the *karua* (soul)

The Hausa Muslims ridiculed them as »hyena worshippers«, calling the obnoxious animal the »borin arna« (ghosts of the pagans).<sup>215</sup> Some of their recently introduced spirits were Muslims (wearing a robe, turban, sandals and perfume), some had snake bodies and dried up water basins,<sup>216</sup> and others were called Fulbe. In another Hausa oral tradition from the 1890s, the original Arabic spelling *majus* was used: »The son of the wicked man is the friend of the majus, the brother of the Jew; leave them alone, the day is coming when they will meet with God.«<sup>217</sup> As in the Koran, this Hausa scholar compared the *majus* with the Jews, and predicted their punishment by God in the hereafter. This was obviously a very theological remark on the Maguzawa and almost a literal Hausa translation of the Arabic sura on the *majus*. But the so-called »Maguzawa« were also ridiculed by other urban Hausa Muslims. In Hausa literature and oral traditions the migration of Zoroastrians from Persia was never acknowledged.

#### *Jihadist Perspectives on the »Maguzawa«*

The Sokoto Jihadists, on the other hand, studied the history of Islamization in Persia and the extinction of Zoroastrian belief. Uthman dan Fodio's daughter Nana Asmau referred, for example, to the story of the Persian king Khosrow I (501–579) in her praise poem for Muhammad. Khosrow's priests were hunted by the Prophet in their dreams, Nana reported, and the city walls crumbled when the Prophet was born.<sup>218</sup> And

of all plants and living beings. The locally brewed beer was considered to be healthy for body and soul. Every part of the body including hair and sweat were powerful and therefore hidden from strangers. Krusius referred to witches called *maye*, who were excluded from the community or even killed against the will of the Fulbe. Socially accepted doctors were called *boka*. There were common ghosts (*iskoki*), evil ones (*dodani*) and ghosts to contact with the help of a human medium (*bori*).

**215** Ibid., p. 293.

**216** These ghosts can be identified with the snake of the Bayajidda legend, where these gods were appeased in order to fetch water. This spirit snake would drink up the water of any well in the dry period. Ibid., pp. 294–295.

**217** Hausa »Da mazugu aboki majusi kani yahudi abersu kuru akoi rangamasu da su da allah.« Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, pp. 48–49. This Hausa poem was composed (or renarrated) by the Hausa scholar Mohammed from Birnin Gwari.

**218** Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 127, 441.

yet, more often Sokoto authors made reference to the Jewish ›unbelievers‹. Muhammad Bello called an enemy war leader a Jew,<sup>219</sup> and his sister Nana Asmau warned the Jews in an apocalyptic poem: »He [Jesus] overcomes many Jews and Unbelievers, except for those entering religion [Islam].«<sup>220</sup> Muhammad Tukur, a Fulbe scholar who joined Uthman dan Fodio in 1804 at the place of refuge after the Hijra, commented more elaborately on the Jews in his biography of the Prophet. In this work he supposed that the Jews understood the foretelling of the Prophet, but denied him because of their *hassada* (›envy‹).<sup>221</sup> They were characterized as intelligent enough to understand Islam, but too arrogant to accept it. Another sequence of this same poem recounts how Muhammad and his soldiers defeated the Jewish Nalir tribe and took large amounts of their weaponry as booty.<sup>222</sup> The Nalir were former allies of Muhammad who broke the pact. The Jewish were thus portrayed as opportunistic traitors.

Both religions, the Jewish and the Zoroastrian, were offered the option of paying *jizya* taxes in order to be left alone and protected within an Islamic state. The Sokoto State also allowed some ›Maguzawa‹ groups to pay this tax and maintain their local religion.<sup>223</sup> This means that the label ›Maguzawa‹ was first of all a category of taxpayers, and not an ethnic concept in the consolidated caliphate state. And when Uthman dan Fodio offered his perception of Hausa local religious practices, he avoided the term *majus*.<sup>224</sup> The Kano myths of origin, on the other hand, mentioned that the Maguzawa lived south of Kano and at times escaped to the city when suffering from a famine. Some reportedly returned to their places of origin when the famine abated, but many of their slaves

219 Cf. English translation by Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 156.

220 Hausa »A kas yahuda da kafira kashi da yawa, san wanda ya shiga aldini a bar shishiya.« The Hausa Ajami manuscript is held at Nana Asmau: *Sharuddan kujama*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 86.

221 Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 312. This voluminous poem was originally composed in Fulfulde, Nana Asmau translated it to Hausa. For the Hausa Ajami text and English summaries, cf. Nana Asmau: *Begore*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, pp. 93–135.

222 Ibid., p. 114.

223 Krusius: *Die Maguzawa*, pp. 298–299.

224 According to him, the rituals requested sticks, cotton, and stones in order to bewitch (*jarrada*) others. Jean Boyd only collected the Hausa copy of this Fulfulde poem; cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Mudinori*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, S16.

stayed in Kano.<sup>225</sup> And as a result, Hausa Jihadist scholars tended more often to discuss the Maguzawa than the Fulbe Jihadists did. And since the Maguzawa stereotype was most common in the region of Kano, the new Jihadist leaders of that town integrated them into their collection of migration myths. Some generations after founding of the city by Bagauda, Muhammad Rumfa is mentioned as the first Muslim ruler in whose time the famous scholar Al-Maghili visited Kano, preaching there and introducing date palm plantations.<sup>226</sup> Bagauda's grandson Rumfa built a large wall around Kano. But some generations later, the Kano kings were not Muslims any longer, but »Maguzawa« rulers who were finally expelled by an Islamic ruler: »Now Umaru was one learned in Islam; he it was who escaped [hellfire]; he lit a fire which defied extinction. He drove out the Maguzawa and they fled to the bush.«<sup>227</sup> In this case, the ethnonym Maguzawa is used in contrast to the Hausa Muslim kings. The »unbelievers« had to escape into the wilderness outside of urban civilization. In the Sokoto Jihadist ideology, the Maguzawa were a category of unbelievers that lived very close to the Muslim urban centers and interacted with Muslims by trade. They were the inhabitants of the forest outskirts of the Jihadist towns, defined as »Maguzawa« due to their home territory.

### *Kisra Legends as Counter-Islamic Myths*

It is in the nature of conquest that the victors usually dictate their own ideology on space and time, landscapes and history. The Sokoto Jihadists integrated the Maguzawa stereotypes of Hausa origin into their ideology and forced these »Maguzawa« misfits to deal with this foreign category. Most conquered societies tried to escape this Zoroastrian *majus* label and present themselves as devoted Muslims tracing their own roots back to

225 Hiskett: Song of Bagauda, p. 545.

226 Even Muslim Kano kinglists start with Bagauda; cf. the mid-nineteenth century chronicle by the Jihadist Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869). The list is part of his text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu*. See the English translation in Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, pp. 35–37.

227 Hiskett: Song of Bagauda, p. 549.



Arabic immigrants preaching and spreading Islam. Others were, however, confident or desperate enough to accept this appellation and be proud of their alleged Zoroastrian and Persian background. The inhabitants of Borgu west of the Niger, traced their origin for instance back to the Persian king Kisra. Various forms of this legend have been documented and continue to be modified.<sup>228</sup> The different versions of the legend can be summarized with their basic argumentation: Kisra (or Kisira) and his supporters from Arabia were ejected from the east because of their refusal to accept Islam. As a result, they migrated to Africa and established many states along their routes. Afterwards they settled for a while in the Kanuri kingdom of Kanem. This is given as the reason for the special relationship between the Kanuri and the Borgu people. The community left Kanem to the south, and at the bank of the river Niger, Kisra and his followers settled and established the town Illo. According to this tradition, the Niger was only a small river but was miraculously enlarged by Kisra to the present size in order to prevent Prophet Muhammad and his supporters from pursuing them.<sup>229</sup> The Bussa (East Borgu), for example, preserved the myth of origin in the following way:

»They say that Kishira was driven out of the »Haibirra« by Muhammad as the result of a religious dispute. He fled with his people, and was pursued until he crossed the Niger near Illo (then a much smaller stream), putting it as a barrier between him and his enemies.«<sup>230</sup>

Their migration was an escape from the east and the river area became their refuge. They controlled the water by magical powers and perceived the Niger as a natural frontier they had transformed and now relied on. The three Borgu capital towns Illo, Bussa and Nikki all traced their ancestors back to Kisra. He is believed to have lived in the seventh century at Badr near Mecca. He started his migration because the Prophet tried to convert him to Islam by force. In fact, the name »Kisra« rather refers to the Persian emperors named Khosrow I–IV (reigned 531–632). In the

**228** For a study on colonial and post-colonial modifications based on oral accounts see Akinwumi: *Oral Tradition in Changing Political Contexts*, pp. 1–7.

**229** Summary according to Akinwumi: *Oral Traditions and the Political History of Borgu*, p. 216. See also Hogben / Kirk-Greene: *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria*, p. 577.

**230** Temple / Temple: *Notes on the Tribes*, p. 495.

early twentieth century, Temple and Temple recorded several versions of how the Kisra immigrants might have arrived in the Hausa region and set up several independent states:

»According to notes collected from the Sarkin Illo and his Council, the Bus-sawa formed part of a big migration from the Kingdom of Badar, near Mecca, their King Kishera having opposed Muhammad the Prophet. It appears that they journeyed across the Sudan to Asben, where they broke off into many sections the Bedde (Badr) settling down in Bornu, while others under the leadership of Kishera's descendants, came further west, and a large body settled under the chieftainship of three brothers at Bussa, Illo and Nikki. Another section, the Yoruba, continued southwards. Bussa was the eldest of the brothers, and received presents from the other two (Nikki was a brother-in-law to the others), and on the accession of each new Chief they performed the offices of coronation one for the other.«<sup>231</sup>

The Kisra legend(s) has only been written down in modern times and still tends to be more evident in oral accounts. It is not only relevant for the Borgu but also for certain towns and areas that are convinced that Kisra had once passed through or even stayed there for a while. Whatever he is supposed to have used or touched is still considered sacred.<sup>232</sup> Stevens argued that the Kisra legend mainly functioned as a basis for establishing a common Borgu policy against the Jihadist threat. Criticizing Stevens' interpretation of the Kisra legend, Stewart commented: »The legend cannot simply be dismissed as an ideological distortion of history geared to the integration of the Borgu state.«<sup>233</sup> However, this myth of origin was created under severe military threat by the Jihadist military and their scholarly interpretation of their enemies' migration history. Temple and Temple remarked that Muhammad Bello also commented on this leg-

**231** Ibid.

**232** »Kisra relics have been recorded in certain villages where they are acknowledged as the original, hence sacred, articles of kingship. In all areas where the legend of Kisra exists, it and the associated relics are held as evidence of the people's claimed Eastern ancestry, or at least, Eastern connections.« Cf. Phillips: *Kisra Legend*, p. 185.

**233** Stewart: *The Kisra Legend as Oral History*, p. 70.

end,<sup>234</sup> but in fact he did not mention the Persian King Khosrow.<sup>235</sup> Bello claimed that the Borgu were the remnants of Fulbe slaves who could not manage to cross the Niger on their common migration from the west to the east. He denied that they could powerfully handle rivers,<sup>236</sup> whereas the Borgu legend stressed their capability to control water. In the Borgu legend, their ancestors migrated quite independently from the east to the west and not the other way round, as Muhammad Bello claimed. In the Jihadist ideology, their own Muslim ancestors were propagators of Islam who voluntarily left Arabia, whereas the Borgu ancestors were slaves by origin.

The Jihadist interpretation of every conflict as a war between believers and unbelievers entered Borgu myths of origin. This dichotomous arrangement was thus accepted by those denominated as believers and by those called unbelievers alike. Furthermore, the Niger appears as the natural migration barrier in both the Jihadist and the Borgu reading of the legend. The Niger was a historical natural frontier on the one hand, and a blockade against the Sokoto Jihad troops on the other. In the Bussa version of the Kiswa legend, the leader himself settled in Bussa where

»he received a deputation from the Prophet asking him to return, which he would not agree to do, but he consented to receive a Mallam to instruct him in the Muhammadan religion. After a brief interval, however, he reverted to his pagan ways.«<sup>237</sup>

This counter-Islamic legend dealt with foreign Islamic influence before and during the Jihad, moreover the anti-Islamic element in the Borgu myths of origin is always the dominant one. But in an Illo version of the legend Kiswa was less successful in getting rid of the Prophet's forces:

»Kishera opposed the advance of the Prophet Muhammad and sought assistance from his kinsman, the Sarkin Bornu, but in vain. He was defeated and killed, and his son led his people in flight to the town of Bussa.«<sup>238</sup>

234 Temple / Temple: Notes on the Tribes, p. 376.

235 Temple and Temple had probably received this information from a local *mallam*. The Borgu myth of origin is discussed by Muhammad Bello in his work *Infaq al-maysur*.

236 Cf. *Infaq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641, f. 32.

237 Temple / Temple: Notes on the Tribes, p. 496.

238 Ibid., p. 557.

In this narrative, Bussa is not the powerful fortress against Muslim invaders, but the refuge after Kisra had been killed by Muslim forces. In a more scholarly account of this legend written in the second half of the nineteenth century, Kisra was correctly depicted as the opponent of Byzantium:

»It said that the tribe of Kisara [Kisra] appeared in the Sudan when it fled from Egypt after it had fought the Byzantines (Rum [in Hausa]). So Mallam Kura said, and so the book said.«<sup>239</sup>

In fact, the Sasanian Persian rulers of the Khosrow dynasty did fight Byzantium in the late classical age. In this story, Egypt is Kisra's land of origin, and not Persia. The legend furthermore claimed that »the King of Rum [Byzantine] was named Harkilla (Arkel) [Heraclius]; and these Kisara [Kisra] when defeated spread abroad in Egypt, and went east and west.«<sup>240</sup> Under Heraclius (reigned 610–641) the Byzantine Empire lost many provinces, was constantly at war with the Persian Sassanids and eventually killed Khosrow II. But in the West African Kisra legend, Khosrow survived and fled from Arabia. One sub-group under the leadership of Tatari allegedly came to the Sahel. The legend then indicates that Tatari founded many towns on his route through the »Sudan«. Mallam Sherif listed all their names and recounted that the migrants finally settled on a »great mountain«.<sup>241</sup> From there some migrated southwards to Yola and spread in different directions. In this version of the Kisra legend they were not considered common pagans:

»As for the pagans of the region, they were like the Kuraish<sup>242</sup> (the people of Al-latand Al Ozza);<sup>243</sup> they were the Kengawa.<sup>244</sup> The Kisara settled at Karshi

**239** Palmer published an English translation of the Arabic manuscript written in 1922 by Mallam Sherif in Argungu. This scholar told the legend according to a version he had heard from another Wukari scholar. Mallam Sherif consulted the Wukari version in a book in ca. 1880. Cf. Palmer: *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 61.

**240** Ibid.

**241** Ibid., p. 62.

**242** The term »Quraish« – the name of the Prophet's tribe – is quite contradictory to the rest of the story. Maybe the informant wanted to express, that the pagans than were like the Quraish tribe *before* Islam.

**243** Pre-Islamic Arabic goddesses in Mecca.

**244** Language and region in Southern Chad.

[Sokoto region] but did not remain long. These pagan ›Kuraish‹ drove them out, and hence the country was called Karshi.«<sup>245</sup>

In the course of this expulsion, the Kisra crossed the Niger and established towns, so that according to this account, pagans and not Muslim armies had pushed the Kisra people across the Niger. But the »pagan followers [...] spread among them, and their chief built the city of Fissa (near Busa).«<sup>246</sup> And yet in all the different stories the Niger is an important natural frontier between ›believers‹ and ›unbelievers‹ of different sorts. The main difference is that in the Jihadist versions, the Kisra descendants failed to cross the Niger, when it was in fact a matter of self-reproach for the Sokoto Jihadists that they could not efficiently control the regions beyond the Niger and Benue. One Jihadist oral account of the Kisra legend was reported by the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius in the early twentieth century:

»Once when Kisra and his nation were waging war in Gabas (the East), they were one day pursuing the enemy. Then they suddenly came to a great water which parted asunder and allowed the foe in his flight to get across it. But when Kisra and his army attempted to follow, the waves closed in over them and many were drowned.«<sup>247</sup>

Both the Muslims and their enemies tried to assert magic control of a river during the migration. In the Borgu version, the Niger is magically enlarged as a frontier against the Muslims, and in this Jihadist interpretation it is the Kisra ›unbelievers‹ drowning in the water. This section of the story refers to experiences of Sokoto Jihadist warfare, when rivers could become unconquerable boundaries for armies due to rainfall and the difficulties of crossing such barriers with beasts of burden and heavy equipment. Frobenius explained that in remembrance of the victims who had died in the river, Kisra's sons built the shrine Tobé in Ina (west of Nikki). To this shrine the king and his followers used to make a pilgrimage every year and sacrificed a bull on this occasion.<sup>248</sup> Apart from that,

245 Palmer: *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 62.

246 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

247 Frobenius: *Voice of Africa*, vol. 2, p. 438.

248 *Ibid.*, pp. 436–440.

Frobenius gave rather weird interpretations of fragments he collected on the Kisra stories.<sup>249</sup> On a broader scale, McCall disproved Frobenius' theory about a connection between Kisra people and Nubian Christians. Frobenius had tried to prove this, arguing that Sahelian artwork contained Christian elements.<sup>250</sup>

Palmer suggested that the name »Kisra« was a Hausa term and was to be translated as »owner of the settlement«,<sup>251</sup> so that the Hausa then turned the syllables around and started to call their leaders »sarki«. <sup>252</sup>Frobenius and others neglected this bold theory and instead correctly identified Kisra with the Persian rulers called Khosrow.<sup>253</sup> But for this study, the factual relevance of the Kisra legends is not an issue for further investigation, particularly as Stevens has concluded: »I think that the route of any particular »Kisra migration« cannot be delineated, nor do I think it would be fruitful to try.«<sup>254</sup> Instead Stevens suggested taking a closer look at »the distortion of historical tradition in response to an external threat, whether real or imagined.«<sup>255</sup> But by the end of the nineteenth century, some authors explicitly identified Kisra as a Persian ruler. In the Arabic text of the Bussa king Kitoro Mahamman Gaani (reigned 1903–1915), the Kisra people were of Arabic origin but had migrated to Persia, too:

»Concerning sultan Kisra, and the treasure houses of the land of Kisra in Faris [Persia] and Rum [Byzantine]. They are people of the Yemen. The name of their ancestor was Humayr b. Wurdaca. His title was Tubba' al-awwal. He ruled the lands from Yemen to »Iraq, until he came with his troops and encamped at the gate of Mecca. [...] Tubbac al-awwal declared that he had formed the intention of, in the following morning, eating up [conquering] that city [...] called Mecca. The 'ulama dissuaded him. They told him »No,

**249** Ibid., pp. 613–615. He for example connected them with non-Islamic cults of traditional religions, like the Bori rituals.

**250** McCall: Kisra, Chosroes, Christ, etc., pp. 255–277. Frobenius also described the never-ending fight between Kisra and »Anabu nuhu« (the Prophet Noah). Cf. Frobenius: Voice of Africa, vol. 2, pp. 542–545.

**251** Ki = owner of (genitive); sara = encampment.

**252** Palmer: Sudanese Memoirs, vol. 2, p. 63.

**253** Cf. Frobenius: Voice of Africa, vol. 2; Phillips: Kisra Legend, p. 190.

**254** Phillips: Kisra Legend, p. 192.

**255** Ibid., p. 194.

No, No, No! He should leave Mecca alone [...]. Tubbac al-awwal stayed on for forty years waiting for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (upon him be God's blessing and peace), so as to see him. [...] Tubbac al-awwal proceeded from the land of Mecca to the land of India. He stopped at 'Ulsan and died there (God's mercy [be upon him]), in submission to God and His messenger. He left behind children and [other] descendants. [...] Afterwards, some of his descendants traveled to their land, Haybar [oasis town north of Medina]. It was a land of *fursan* [knights]. It was there that Kisra of the Sudan people was born. The name of his town was Haybar. And he was Kisra the great, the origin of this land.«<sup>256</sup>

In pre- and early Islamic times, the oasis Khaybar was inhabited by Jewish merchants, who were displaced to Syria in the seventh century in order to keep ›unbelievers‹ away from the Holy Cities. In this version of the legend, Kisra's ancestors were (Jewish) opponents of Islam that finally accepted the new religion and migrated to Persia and India. This explanation is a creative compromise between Islamic influence and the rejection of Islam. The Bussa king and composer of this text only converted to Islam some years after this manuscript was written. Nevertheless, Islamic myths and historiography had already entered the Bussa court. The story of the expedition against Mecca and of the miracle preventing the success of the attackers is clearly derived from classical Arabic books. The Muslim scholars at the royal court of Bussa spread the legends about Yemeni origins and the war expeditions to India by Alexander the Great. Different stories were combined in order to demonstrate a high level of education and historical knowledge.

Although the Sokoto Jihadists denied the Persian descent of the Borgu, they often referred to the historical figure Khosrow of Persia. Jihadist writers, for example, linked the birth of the Prophet with the collapse of the Persian Palace of Kisra.<sup>257</sup> Leo Frobenius called the Kisra legends a self-made ideology of resistance against Islam on the long term. Other historians stressed the Borgu-Sokoto opposition throughout the nineteenth century which may have caused this anti-Islamic myth.

**256** The manuscript was collected by a German Colonial official in 1912. Cf. the translation of Moraes Farias: Letter from Ki-Toro, pp. 125–127.

**257** Nana Asmau: *Begore*, p. 100.

But Moraes Farias judged them all reductionist in one way or another. According to him, Kisra has symbolized a quite ambiguous relationship between Borgu rulers and Islam:

»Such stories, and rites, fitted well with a situation in which kings were required to retain roles that were incompatible with Islam, yet were also required to maintain good relations with traders, and other Muslims, in their territory.«<sup>258</sup>

Thus, the Kisra legend was an instrument to integrate social groups of different – and often hybrid – religious categories. Nevertheless, it was the reformist Islamic movement in the nineteenth century that dictated the mode, language and arguments of these debates.<sup>259</sup> These myths of Abrahamic religious tradition were obviously not generated in order to fight Islam, but voluntarily integrated into Borgu regional identity. But what Moraes Farias omitted is the battles between competing myths of origin that were fought on an Islamic ground from the Sokoto Jihad onwards. Of course, most of these myths had existed in the Sahel before the Jihad. However, they increased in relevance when traditional West African Islam was challenged by the Jihadists. During the Jihad, the land of origin was much less important for the narrators of the Kisra stories than the reasons for resettlement in a certain region of the Sahel. Were the Kisra people slaves of the Fulbe, did they escape Muslim armies or pagans? Did they control rivers as barriers or were they just incapable of crossing them? Belief was linked to landscape characteristics. The Niger separated these landscapes, ›believers‹ and ›unbelievers‹, aggressors and victims.

**258** Moraes Farias: Letter from Ki-Toro, p. 114.

**259** Moraes Farias demonstrated that the scholarly elite advising the kings was trying to legitimate its own influence on Borgu politics after 1900. Cf. the quotation of the manuscript »The ‘ulama dissuaded him [from attacking Mecca].«



### *1.6 Conclusion: Migration, Ethnicity and Jihadist Space*

Many historians have explained the Sokoto Jihad as an ethno-religious conflict. It has hence been described as a war between Hausa and Fulbe as a result of increasing ethnic tensions. West African scholars, on the other hand, have sharply rejected this explanation. Zahradeen argued for example:

»Most important of all, the Hausawa themselves never regarded the Fulani as foreigners. Any evidence of hostilities between them should be regarded as the age old hostility between nomadic and sedentary populations and not in terms of racial conflict.«<sup>260</sup>

Although ›ethnicity‹ is a very general term today referring to common language, religion and culture, it was originally considered a term depicting common ancestors. The Sokoto Jihadists and many other authorities of the Central Sahel at that time contradicted the postmodern definition of ethnicity. They discussed genealogies of tribes and the migration routes of ancestors as primary markers of social identification and solidarity. In the sense of Max Weber,<sup>261</sup> myths of origin were created and modified during the Jihad. This understanding of ethnicity is by no means a traditional ›African‹ approach to community. On the contrary, the Hausa myths of origin mostly focused on individual immigrants from the Middle East introducing new dynasties. The myths commented neither on the outward appearance of these figures nor on any other ›racial‹ marker. But the Jihadists introduced more ›racist‹ theories of origin, explaining that whole tribes or the biological offspring of certain foreigners had migrated to West Africa.

Uthman dan Fodio was born into a Fulbe family and often preached in this language. Nevertheless, he usually avoided ethnic argumentation and blaming the Hausa for being unbelievers. He seldom employed myths of origin in his argumentation and aimed at integrating multiple ethnic groups into his movement:

**260** Zahradeen: Abd Allah ibn Fodio's Contributions to the Fulani Jihad, p. 95.

**261** He explained that clans actually were relatives, while ›ethnicity‹ should be counted as a belief in a joint community. Cf. Weber: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 237.

»Among these illusions is the belief that all Fulani are Muslims. This is also false and an illusion according to consensus. Because there are persons among them [the Fulbe] who deny the Resurrection. They are non-believers according to consensus. And among them there are also persons who ridicule the religion of Allah, and they are unbelievers according to consensus. And among them are some that insult mighty Allah and they are unbelievers according to consensus. And if the situation is like that, how can we say, that all Fulani are Muslims? And what leads them to this [illusion] is the dominance of Islam in the Fulani tribe. And the universal level of Islam in this whole tribe cannot be achieved by another tribal community. And if this level links with the concept of tribe, the Arabs would be the first of them, because they are the tribe of God's prophet Mohammed – peace be upon him.«<sup>262</sup>

In Uthman dan Fodio's view, Islam cannot be reduced to ethnicity. Despite this position, he remarked that the Fulbe were more pious Muslims than others, and that the Arabs were the best believers of all because of their biological relationship with the Prophet. But, as he points out, there still were many unbelievers among his »tribe«. He rejected ethnic rankings but nevertheless wrote about them. The second Jihadist generation was more aggressive in their efforts to establish new interpretations of tribal memory and migrations of ancestors. The Sokoto Jihad was not only a military war, but also organized as a war to destroy other sources of religious or political knowledge and identity. When Heinrich Barth renarrated and discussed the various Hausa chronicles and legends he admitted that

»it is to be lamented that the books containing a comprehensive history of this [Hausa] nation have been intentionally destroyed by the Fülbe, or Fél-lani, since the conquest of the country, in order to annihilate, as far as possible, the national records.«<sup>263</sup>

Barth's impression is very plausible because from the time of his travels in the 1850s there were only few texts on Hausa history and government except for the Jihadist pamphlets discrediting Hausa myths of origin. The Jihad was also a culture war destroying or banning other historical treatises, chronicles and legends. Not only did the Jihadists materially

**262** Translated by the author. See Siddiqi (ed.): *Hiṣn al-afhām*, p. ^^.

**263** Barth: *Travels and Discoveries*, vol. 1 (New York), p. 474.

destroy Hausa cultural memory, they also put great effort into introducing and interpreting new readings of myths of origin. With the Fulbe and classical Islamic concepts of tribal origin and genealogy, a more ethnic or racial idea of descent was brought up. Prior to the Jihad, immigrants or invaders were described as individual persons or elite groups.<sup>264</sup> They were hunters or refugees inhabiting the bush lands. Later, mass migration was the common theme in myths of origin. The Jihadists refused to engage in the »who-was-first« debate of immigration. Instead, hunter-pioneer ancestors were replaced by Middle Eastern immigrants. As soon as Islamic preachers established themselves, communities replaced the local heroes of their stories and songs with classical Islamic prototypes, like the four orthodox caliphs and minor Muslim military leaders. The narratives of the myths of origin were often resistant to changes, but the protagonists – or to be more accurate: their names – and their lands of origin were often changed immediately.

On a local scale, new myths of origin often entered a community by story-telling traders or mobile priests. They were renarrated within the family so that Uthman dan Fodio asked the youth to turn away from »their fathers and leaders and elders with blameworthy customs.«<sup>265</sup> Uthman advised young Muslims not to honor traditional religious priests with certain rituals: »They practice this courtesy of adoration; those are the greeting with obeisance and kneeling.«<sup>266</sup> These traditional authorities allegedly restrained the young people from attending Islamic lessons and sermons. He had to dissociate himself from non-Islamic priests:

»Among the illusions is the belief of some people that both the singing storyteller and the reminding preacher are the same. This is also wrong and an illusion according to consensus. Because the reminding preachers do not invent things but improve and long for the good and do not frighten people or scare them. They do not invent, but excite the people for the Book of God and the Sunna and his Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him. They teach

**264** Lange argued for example: »Particular ethnic groups should be conceived through their own traditions of origin, although in actual fact these belong in each case solely to the ruling elite.« Lange: *Ethnogenesis from within the Chadic State*, p. 261.

**265** Siddiqi (ed.): *Hiṣn al-afhām*, p. ^^.

**266** *Ibid.*, p. ^9.

people sciences and the [Sufi] path. The singing storytellers are the opposite of what the reminding preachers are.«<sup>267</sup>

»And the singing storytellers are creators of praise (songs) for remembrance and admonition, as an argument for the purity of their souls and they transferred the word ›reminding‹ (religious warning) to their fables. End.<sup>268</sup> If you understand all this, you know that storytelling is heresy.«<sup>269</sup>

Uthman stressed that Muslim (Jihadist) preachers only spread the truth while others only made up stories. The Jihad was a struggle for religious interpretive predominance. The praise singers (*griots*) and local priests are described as heretic storytellers. The Jihadists attempted to Islamize all oral and written literature about myths of origin. The Fulbe migrational background from the west was interpreted as only one section of the tribal history, because the original ancestors were purportedly relatives and military commanders of the Prophet from the east. Local traditions of the Central Sahel claiming that ancestors of the inhabitants had come from the east (Bornu, Arabia, Persia) were modified slightly. Pioneer immigrants, conqueror heroes, and brave hunters were called slave refugees and apostates fleeing the Islamic expansion and hiding in bushes and mountains. All these myths contain episodes of landscape production: Pioneers clearing the forests and legendary founding fathers urbanizing farmland. But the Jihadist myths implied that their ancestors migrated with a religious mission and were pious pilgrims and preachers. These »reformers in corrupt times« only crossed Islamic landscapes, such as deserts and dry savannas. In this sense, Islamic migration was only possible in flat land, whereas the immobile ›unbelievers‹ barricaded their villages in the mountains and forests. When before powerful immigrants had come as hunters from the forests, the ›new leaders‹ of Islam only traveled on ›Sudanic‹ and Arabic paths. Landscape was redefined by Jihadist approaches to myths of origin.

267 Ibid., p. 99.

268 This sentence is a quotation of the Sufi writer Al-Ghazali (Persia, 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century).

269 Siddiqi (ed.): *Hiṣn al-afhām*, p. 107.

## 2. Pilgrims: »Camel Driver, Urge Them towards the East!«

Like all Muslims, the Sokoto Jihadists accepted the Five Islamic Pillars: *shahadah* (creed), *salat* (five prayers each day), *sawm* (fasting during the month of Ramadan), *zakat* (alms-giving) and *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). The last-mentioned religious obligation only became compulsory if a person was able to finance the trip and leave his (or her) family behind. No member of the Sokoto Jihadist elite had ever visited Mecca, but nevertheless they repeated this pillar over and over again in their texts. Their concept of the hajj was ambivalent, because they acknowledged its relevance but stayed in the Sahel all their lives. Therefore, and as an excuse, they did not forget to demonstrate that the hajj only had to be performed by those Muslims that were rich enough to fund their journey, that were in good health and were not needed by those under their responsibility. Furthermore, the roads of the journey necessarily had to be open and safe.<sup>1</sup> The Jihadists claimed that they could not perform the hajj due to their political positions in the Caliphate. But they were often visited by pilgrims who shared some knowledge on the countries they had traveled between West Africa and Mecca. These widely traveled pilgrims were important actors in various processes of transferring spatial knowledge. They had discussed routes and regions with fellow travelers and knew the rumors and gossip of the pilgrimage networks.

The Sahelian pilgrimage networks can be characterized as »a string of pilgrim settlements along the changing routes.«<sup>2</sup> The original purpose of migration for many pilgrims had once been to perform the pilgrimage, but many settled on their way to or from Mecca. The reason for their continuing residence along the pilgrimage roads was often a lack of money, the establishment of trading businesses or marriage. Although it was sometimes claimed that the nineteenth century was a difficult period for the pilgrimage of Africans due to political crisis in the region, the Sahelian route prospered in that century. In the early nineteenth century

<sup>1</sup> This explanation about the hajj was for example written by Uthman dan Fodio in his work *Ulum al-muamala* (Niamey 410(14)); here I refer to the English translation published in Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): *Handbook on Islam*, pp. 44–45.

<sup>2</sup> Works: *Pilgrims in a Strange Land*, p. 5.

two routes were utilized for this journey. The first was the North African trade route via the Sahara Desert and Egypt. This route was also used by people traveling to the student quarters in Al-Azhar University in Cairo to study Islamic Sciences. The second route passed along the savanna belt that stretched from Futa Toro through the Sokoto Caliphate to the Red Sea. The Egyptian route was taken only by those pilgrims who had enough money to buy or hire a camel for the journey across the Sahara. The Sahelian route was initially used by pilgrims who could not afford the journey via North Africa. By the early nineteenth century, however, the savanna belt route became the most popular path for pilgrims. Although the Sokoto relations with Bornu and Baguirmi to the east were often precarious, it was during the early period of Jihadist rule that Hausa and Fulbe settlements were founded along the Sahelian pilgrimage route.<sup>3</sup> The so-called »Sudan« was considered relatively safe and stable during this era. A certain informant called »Lucas« had traveled through Fezzan in the late eighteenth century and recounted that Sahel pilgrims from different regions of origin assembled in Murzuk and formed a single large caravan once every year. They waited there in order to buy dates, grain and other food for their journey to Egypt and Mecca.<sup>4</sup> But when Hugh Clapperton visited the Sokoto Caliphate in the 1820s most pilgrims chose the Sahel route. During Clapperton's second stay in Sokoto, he was visited by three foreign scholars: two scholars from the Timbuktu area and the pilgrim Hadji Omer from Futa Toro. Omer had stopped in Sokoto on his return from Mecca, where he wished to travel again. He complained that the road passing Baguirmi was not safe anymore since Al-Kanemi (1776–1837) and his Bornu military forces had expelled the Baguirmi inhabitants southwards into the mountains. It was reported that the vast and abandoned country was regularly distressed by robbers.<sup>5</sup> This episode of Clapperton demonstrates that pilgrims had to stay well-informed about any political tensions and wars. And they dis-

3 Ibid., pp. 17–18.

4 N.N.: *Geschichten der Unternehmungen der Britischen Gesellschaft*, p. 202.

5 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, pp. 202–203.

tributed this information in their networks. Like Omer, the pilgrims were very often Fulfulde speakers from the Guinea region.<sup>6</sup>

With the growth in the numbers of West African pilgrims, the hajj caravans became specialized and institutionalized. The caravans were well organized with chiefs, supervisors, and heads of caravan sub-groups. Checkpoints and resting stations were established along the way and called *zango* in Hausa language. Many *zango* quarters in larger towns across the Sahel eventually became permanent settlements. Pilgrims depended on large caravans offering military protection against robbery and slave raids. Therefore, pilgrimage caravans often used already existing economic networks for their religious voyage. Pilgrims often visited Sufi teachers and schools that were located in the Sahel and Sahara. Sufi spiritual priests focused on an inner, mystical experience of Islam. They interpreted their journeys through space at the same time as an inner, spiritual voyage. The pilgrims were confronted with different governmental systems, different cultures and different religious interpretations.

Supporting and hosting the Sahelian pilgrims was one main political goal of the Jihadist elite. In a praise poem for Muhammad Bello, people were even advised to consult »*amin* [guarantors] of righteousness and a purified pilgrim«<sup>7</sup> if they could not learn from a Sultan directly. The Sokoto Jihadists considered pilgrims to be honorable Muslims with extraordinary knowledge resources. After the pilgrimage the title »Al-Hajj« or »Hajji« was usually used as a signal for religious devotion, cosmopolitan experience and familiarity with traveling in general. The Jihadists also received stories about the pilgrimage journeys of the Prophet. In 629 he allegedly performed the small pilgrimage (*umra*) accompanied by some two thousand Muslims. In a Jihadist poem by Muhammad Tukur, this was commemorated: »When they reached Mecca all unbelievers were afraid. Muhammad went to the Kaaba and preceded the circuit.«<sup>8</sup> One year later, Muhammad performed his last pilgrimage.

6 Cf. two West Africans joining Clapperton's journey eastwards for some days: Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 2, p. 341.

7 English translation by Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 178.

8 Hausa »Da ya sabka Makka ta fa kafirai sunka tsorata duk. Fay a zo ga Kaaba fay a yi dawafi Muhammada.« Cf. Nana Asmau: *Begore*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 122.

He announced in front of the masses of pilgrims that the Muslim revelation was completed. This journey was accompanied by several wonders evoked by Muhammad – such as a newborn baby pronouncing the name of the Prophet and the like.<sup>9</sup> The Sokoto Jihadists were determined to perform the pilgrimage mentally and via literature. They were able to interview their pilgrim guests and study the pilgrimage routes from their Arabic literature.

This chapter is an attempt to trace the geographical knowledge of pilgrims utilizing the Sahel route before and during the Sokoto Jihad. Moreover, it will be allowed for the transfer of this knowledge through-out encounters of pilgrims and Jihadist writers. To what extent did pilgrimage narratives enter Jihadist thinking expressed in their fictional literature? And at last, the expectation of one last pilgrimage at the End of Time will be analyzed with reference to Jihadist politics of religious migration.

### *2.1 What Pilgrims Knew*

Between Bornu and Mecca, as well as in Cairo and along other pilgrimage routes, the black pilgrims were known as »Takruris«, which »many assured me [Burckhardt] they had never heard till they reached the limits of Darfour.«<sup>10</sup> Obviously, the name Takrur was not a common identifying term among most of the pilgrims. Burckhardt also mentioned that most West African pilgrims were literate in the Arabic language, but only some of them stayed in Cairo (ca. twelve) or Mecca (about twenty) for further studies. The majority came from Dar Fur, others from Timbuktu or Bornu. Most of them lived on begging and casual labor, and their equipment was reportedly the same: Some rags around their waist, a woolen cap, a leather bag with some prayer books and Koran chapters, a wooden tablet for writing and charm water. They traveled in groups of about six pilgrims and gathered in Dar Fur in a larger caravan to proceed. From that time on they were perceived as a homogenous group under the term »Takruris«. They allegedly experienced some discrimination from

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Burckhardt: *Travels in Nubia*, p. 406.



the Coptic Christians when working at the coast in order to be able to pay for the boat to Yemen or Jidda. Burckhardt estimated the number of black African pilgrims at ca. 200 per year.<sup>11</sup> Many rich people dressed like the poor in order to discourage robbery and to live in an ascetic manner. The pilgrims who died during the journeys were considered martyrs. The image of the »Takrur« pilgrims was ambiguous for, on the one hand, they were considered rich princes with lots of gold hidden under their poor dress, and on the other hand, their Arabic charms were believed to be most effective of all across Arabia and Egypt.<sup>12</sup>

Pilgrims in the early nineteenth century Sahel often possessed knowledge about geography and Islam. But nevertheless, they were often very indigent travelers. The begging pilgrim thus became a popular figure in Hausa tales and fables. According to these narratives, such pilgrims visited people unexpectedly and asked for water, food and other donations. In return they would use their spiritual powers obtained on their pilgrimage in order to pray for the donors. In a Hausa Ajami tale which Krause had collected from a pilgrim from Zinder around 1880 this is portrayed:

»[...] until the pilgrims came one day. One poor among them came to Sha-ha's wife [...] and asked her for an old hose in which he could save water during his pilgrimage.«<sup>13</sup>

Although begging was an accepted part of the Muslim scholarly lifestyle, the Jihadist elite tried to reduce the number of beggars in their state. According to a poem composed by Uthman dan Fodio's daughter Hafsatu, any »unnecessary« begging and especially beggars hanging around the rulers' houses to »harass honest Muslims« should burn in hell.<sup>14</sup> Only for young Muslim students and pilgrims was poverty acceptable. Pilgrims often lived solely on religious services that they could sell. In popular Hausa stories, the pilgrims were often contrasted to the pagan hunter figure: »Everyday when [the ›unbeliever‹] came from his forest where

11 Ibid., p. 408.

12 Ibid., p. 413.

13 Hausa »[...] har wata rana sun zo mutane masu zuwa hajji. Da ya zo wani talaka ya iske mata ta Zaha tana zamne da ita da mata. Ya ce da ita: ›Bani tsofo salka da na sa ruwa cikin tafia zuwaa hajji.« Cf. Krause (ed.): *Proben der Sprache von Ghat*, p. 64.

14 Cf. Hausa and English translations in Hafsatu: *Untitled*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, Notebook 5, p. 90, l. 16–17.

he had been hunting, he went to the priest, and saluted him.<sup>15</sup> Trespassing a landscape frontier and entering forests are portrayed as pagan acts so that the forests themselves become the places of the »other« and of »wild« people. The friendship between the priest and the »unbeliever« only appears to be possible because the pagan hunter visits the priest in his own environment. When the priest sets out for the hajj towards Mecca, he tells his friend to stay behind. But the »unbeliever« refuses and instead travels to Mecca where he is rewarded for his effort to become a Muslim, whereas his former friend is punished for his lack of support for a fledgling Muslim. Within this tale the typical preparations for the hajj were explained: A week before the priest departs he kills a cow and dries the meat. When leaving he puts the meat and flour into a bag, takes one calabash for drinking water and another one for prayer washing rites, a bag with books and the journey begins. In the story the priest walks and therefore – lacking a beast of burden – only carries with him what he needs to survive materially and religiously. At the priest's arrival in Mecca on a Friday, the inhabitants of Mecca enter the compound around the Kaaba through a gate for the weekly prayer in the mosque. When both, the priest and his former friend are about to leave, two modes or standards of traveling are given: The »unbeliever« is given luxurious presents by the Meccans and the priest is only given a little food and iron plates. The converted »unbeliever« receives silver and golden dishes, beautiful new clothes and a lot of food. This description perhaps represents what Bornuese people experienced when pilgrims returned either poor or equipped with new goods, clothes and food products.<sup>16</sup> Pilgrims had experienced strange goods which they introduced to the Sahel regions.

Biographical accounts of pilgrims often included a tremendous amount of material regarding robbers and kidnappers. In Brazil, the French traveler De Castelnau interviewed the freed Fulbe slave Mohammad-Abdullah. He had come to Bahia in ca. 1818 and had allegedly been on a pilgrimage when still living as a free person in Katsina. He was literate, but according to De Castelnau, confused Timbuktu and Mecca, so that there is no clear evidence that he really completed the hajj. However, he told De Castelnau that he was traveling with a caravan on cam-

15 Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, pp. 20, 138.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21, 138–139.

els, avoiding Dar Fur which was considered hostile to visitors. Another region he had supposedly passed was the »*arna*« region (Hausa for »pagans«). The report also stated that he was later enslaved by some Hausa in a Jihad war.<sup>17</sup> Even if we suppose that Mohammad-Abdullah was not an actual pilgrim, he may at least have forwarded the information he was given by pilgrims. He transmitted the pilgrimage rumor about dangerous unbelievers (*arna*) and the hostile Dar Fur. Space was either considered hostile or merciful to strangers on the hajj.

Another documented pilgrimage biography is the one published by the German traveler Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811), who met the Fulbe scholar Muhammad in 1808 at the Al-Azhar University of Cairo. Muhammad came from Adar and Seetzen estimated his age to be about 25 years. At the age of ten (in ca. 1797) he had left pre-Jihad Adar for a pilgrimage to Mecca, where he arrived some two months later via Cairo – the pilgrimage route of the eighteenth century. Muhammad remembered the desert and its strange fruits such as date palms and pomegranates. He reportedly stayed in Mecca for twelve years because of the French-Napoleonic expedition to Egypt (1798–1801). When Seetzen met Muhammad he had only been back from Mecca for one year.<sup>18</sup> Muhammad contrasted the food culture of his home region and all Muslim Fulbe to the habits of the »unbelievers« of West Africa, who would eat anything: »dogs, wolves, foxes, snakes.«<sup>19</sup> Wild donkeys were allegedly captured and immediately used for transportation. In his country there were also many giraffes (»sirâfe«) which were killed by hunters who were painted in white and equipped with spears. The meat was eaten and the leather used for sandals. The desert was also populated with many ostriches. Only the southern neighbors of Adar would believe in idols. Seetzen mentioned that Muhammad was very suspicious about the colonial goals of the European countries and was scared that Seetzen's

17 Castelnu: Renseignements, pp. 46–47.

18 Seetzen: Phellata-Araber, pp. 225–227. Seetzen's African vocabulary lists were published after his death in Severin Vater (ed.): Proben deutscher Volks-Mundarten, pp. 245–350. Only Seetzen's Fulfulde lists were published elsewhere; cf. Delbrück et al. (eds.): Königsberger Archiv für Philosophie.

19 German »Hunde, Wölfe, Füchse, Schlangen u.s.w.« Cf. Seetzen: Phellata-Araber, p. 230.

nation would conquer Adar.<sup>20</sup> Muhammad seemed to be interested in world politics and paid particular attention to European colonialism. He characterized the southern edge of the »Sudan« as a home to unbelievers eating forbidden food and worshipping idols.

Seetzen also questioned Muhammad about the location of large rivers in West Africa and his informant talked about the Nile River (or »Gülby«) in the »Land of the Blacks«. He estimated its direction westwards until the ocean. This super-river reportedly passed Borgu, Baguirmi, Bornu, Gobir, Kano, Mali, Jenne, and Timbuktu. He described Mali (»Melle«) as an island on that river. The Niger would contain lots of fish and many hippopotami. As in many geographical accounts provided by West Africans, the Niger, Benue, Lake Chad, the Logone and other water basins were once again combined and identified as one large river stretching from east to west.<sup>21</sup> Muhammad was also informed about the political situation in the Central Sahel while being abroad and he told Seetzen that Zamfara was at that time (1808) ruled by Uthman dan Fodio from a Fulbe clan. He allegedly ruled all black people of that region and many of his subjects would even pilgrimage to his residence (Sokoto). He fought the heathen practice of praising wooden statues and aimed to destroy them. Only Katsina and Bauchi youth would practice facial scarification. Muhammad located his home Adar directly on the pilgrimage road from Mali to Arabia.<sup>22</sup> Pilgrims were often alarmed about wars and political changes. They experienced strange food, cultures, and animals and transmitted ideas and comparisons between regions. They located their home region at the frontier between belief and unbelief separated by a large river.

The depiction of ›unbelievers‹ in pilgrimage accounts was often extreme and bizarre, but it also adapted old stereotypes narrated in the environment of North African long-distance trade. The French diplomat Pierre Henri Stanislas d'Escayrac de Lauture (1822–1868) interviewed »Sudanese« pilgrims in Cairo in the mid-nineteenth century and reported that not all pilgrims exactly remembered their itinerary. In retrospect, they would only describe their home village and some places in its vi-

20 Ibid., p. 232.

21 Ibid., pp. 232–235.

22 Ibid., pp. 236–237.

cinity. One must, of course, remark that the purpose of their journeys was not the acquisition of geographical knowledge, but rather to obtain religious information and spiritual experiences. However, many of the pilgrims imagined that only »anthropophagous Christians and men with tails«<sup>23</sup> were to be found between their home and the Islamic metropolitan sights in Arabia. They essentialized the space between home and the explored religious centers (Cairo, Mecca) as dangerous territories inhabited by human-animal creatures. Escayrac de Lauture called the »men with tails«-stories mere fairy tales, but ironically he tried to localize them geographically at the same time. The pilgrims allegedly told him that those creatures were very small, lived in the area of the Chari River, south of Baguirmi, and were called *mala gilage* (»tail bearers«) in Kanuri.<sup>24</sup> They had very long hair all over their bodies and their skin color ranged between black, red and white. The pilgrims and merchant informants further told the French diplomat that a military expedition once captured one of these humans, sold it to the Baguirmi Sultan, and he was brought to the Baguirmi capital Massenya where »the entire world could visit him«<sup>25</sup> for some years. True or not, the stereotypical »other« was localized in the forests and the river areas. They were easily imagined as tourist attractions in the Islamic states of the Central Sahel. And, of course, we do not know what being was in fact presented to the visitors in Massenya. If it was not only imagined, it was probably just some foreign person, or a Central African of diminutive stature (often referred to as »pygmy«), or even another primate species. Furthermore, since antiquity Mediterranean knowledge about Africa had included accounts of short and naked peoples living at the legendary Nile sources. Another theory identifies certain apes with the protagonists of pygmy narratives. By the mid-nineteenth century, the stories about them were so common in the Sahel and the Sahara that any pilgrim from the Sahel reaching Cairo could give some details of hearsay about them. When the multi-cultural pilgrims established a common Muslim identity, the

23 French »[...] chrétiens anthropophagus et les homes à queue.« Escayrac de Lauture: Mémoires sur le Soudan, p. 95.

24 Ibid., p. 135.

25 French »tout le monde put le visiter.« Ibid., p. 136.

pagan and beastly ›other‹ in the far south and beyond the rivers served as a countervailing concept to the pilgrimage community.

## 2.2 Jihadist Encounters with Pilgrims

Although the Sokoto Jihadists did not perform the hajj, they wrote about the pilgrimages of others. In ca. 1785/6, when Uthman dan Fodio and his brother Abdullah were still young Islamic students, their teacher Jibril Ibn Umar instructed them right after his return from his second pilgrimage to Mecca. According to oral tradition, Jibril had asked his young student Uthman to accompany him to Mecca but Uthman's father refused to give his permission. Uthman demonstrated his life-long devotion to Jibril in one of his poems: »If there be said of me that which is said of good report, then I am but a wave of the waves of Jibril.«<sup>26</sup> In his praise poem for Jibril, Abdullah dan Fodio referred to religious traveling and the pilgrimage experience of Jibril. He imagined traveling day and night on a female camel in order to visit Jibril »who has visited Tayba [Thebes] after he had visited Makka at the head of the bands of pilgrims.«<sup>27</sup> Jibril was imagined the powerful head of the pilgrimage caravan and Abdullah longed to visit him in Arabia. Abdullah described how the sun rose in the west (Sahel) and proceeded to Jibril in the east (Arabia), while Abdullah had to stay in the west. Just after their studies with Jibril, Uthman and Abdullah dan Fodio attended the lectures on Al-Bukhari given by another pilgrim teacher, Al-Hajj Muhammad bin Raj. He had also just returned from his journey to Mecca in 1786. Abdullah called him a genius scholar in another personal praise poem of 1794/5 who had gained authority because he »has remained long in Al-Madina«.<sup>28</sup> Abdullah quoted the line of transmission of Al-Bukhari's Hadith collection from Al-Bukhari

26 Quoted according to an anthology authored by Uthman's son Muhammad Bello: *Infaq al-maysur*, NU, Falke 2641. See also Hiskett: Material, p. 566. Another reference for his admiration for Jibril is mentioned in Uthman's *Tahdhir al-ikhwan*: »We have lost the revelations which were brought down to us by Jibril, going to and fro.« Translated by Al-Hajj: Mahdist Tradition, p. 267.

27 Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, p. 91.

28 Ibid., p. 95.

himself via Raj, »our paternal uncle, the pure one of the pilgrims.«<sup>29</sup> The knowledge of their pilgrim teachers was considered authentic and the transmission of knowledge accurate and reliable. But this transfer of knowledge was only presented as an exchange of religious and scientific knowledge, and not as a source of geographical information.

A third »Hajji« teacher of the two first Sokoto Jihadist leaders was Muhammad Thanbu.<sup>30</sup> He was reportedly a maternal uncle of Uthman and Abdullah dan Fodio. His last name »Thanbu«<sup>31</sup> probably derives from the Fulfulde expression for »second son« which usually accompanied the name Muhammad.<sup>32</sup> His descendants praised him for his knowledge and especially for memorizing whole law commentaries and theological interpretations. Before leaving for Mecca he had instructed his nephew Uthman dan Fodio during the 1770s. He taught Uthman several Sufi lessons based upon the commentary of Al-Kharashi (d. 1690)<sup>33</sup> and conferred a teaching license on his student in 1777. This formal granting of permission to act as a distributor of knowledge was copied by Uthman later in his life.<sup>34</sup> Uthman's brother Abdullah also remembered and recalled Thanbu's pilgrimage:

»Then he went to the land of the two sanctuaries [Mecca and Medina] for the hajj. And he stayed there some ten years. Then he returned and reached the town Agades and died there.«<sup>35</sup>

Thanbu obviously stayed abroad for further studies for quite some time. He intended to return home but died in 1792/3 on his way back in Agades. At the time of his death, his family and clan were already anticipat-

29 Ibid.

30 His full name was Muhammad Thanbu bin Sheikh Abdullahi bin Sheikh Al-Alim.

31 Common variations are »Sanbu« or »Samba«.

32 Cf. Shareef: *The Depository of Texts by Abdullahi Dan Fuduye*, footnote 10.

33 His full name is Muhammad bin Abdallah Al-Kharashi Al-Maliki Al-Misri. Today manuscript copies of his famous commentary on the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil (d. 1365) are found in many North African archives as well as in Timbuktu. Cf Hall / Stewart: *The Historic »Core Curriculum«*, p. 167.

34 This treatise on the names of God (*Ism al-Adhim*) has been translated and published online by Muhammad Shareef; cf. <http://siiasi.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Isml-Aadhem.pdf> (03.02.2014).

35 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida' al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, f. 4. For an Arabic edition see Hiskett: *Material*, pp. 550–578.

ing his arrival because of a rumor they had heard.<sup>36</sup> The Sokoto Jihadists had experienced the long period of waiting for some news about hajj pilgrims from their clan. It was feared that they would never return, and there was great respect for their pilgrimage deeds and curiosity about what information and books they would bring home. When mourning for his uncle Thanbu, Abdullah expressed some thoughts about him in a poem:

»For a long time his character has been praised because of his knowledge and piety before his departure to the two sanctuaries. He stayed there ten years and a few more and built supremacies. And his sustainer destined that his tomb will be appearing in the afternoon in Agades.«<sup>37</sup>

Abdullah stressed that even before his departure his uncle was a popular and successful scholar. He assumed that he had become even more famous and wise when staying abroad. His death while on pilgrimage was called a divine decision. Several important teachers of the Sokoto Jihadists had performed the hajj in the pre-Jihad time, but the Jihadist scholars also encountered pilgrims after the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, when the Agadez route and other Saharan routes were neglected in favor of the Sahel path.

The most famous and influential post-Jihad pilgrim figure was probably Al-Hajj Umar Tall (1797–1864). Umar Tall was a scholar from Futa Toro, a devotee of the Tijaniyya Sufi brotherhood, and the founder of a short-lived jihadist state in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup> When he visited Sultan Muhammad Bello in Sokoto, he was on his journey back from the pilgrimage. He reportedly also married a daughter of Bello during his stay. However, the only known source making reference to their meeting in the 1830s is a letter which was given to Al-Hajj by Bello when the pilgrim left for his journey westwards. Through different copyists, it is today available only in a French translation.<sup>39</sup> In this letter, the emperor Bello in particular referred to the common Fulbe origin that he and Umar

36 Cf. Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, p. 96.

37 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida' al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, f. 5.

38 For his biography, see for example Robinson: *The Holy War of Umar Tal*.

39 Samb (ed.): *La vie d'El Hadj Omar*, pp. 796–799. According to Hunwick, no original manuscript has been located; cf. Hunwick (ed.): *Writings*, p. 149.



Tall shared. Bello claimed that »my people and I imitate their ancestor Toro, the son of Ismail.«<sup>40</sup> He addressed his letter to all »brothers and friends among the inhabitants of Futa, especially to the ulama, Emirs, and all pious tribes.«<sup>41</sup> Their mother tongue and migration background were instrumentalized as a reference for a common identity between the Sokoto Muslims and the Fulbe pilgrims from Futa Toro. Bello praised his guest for his beauty and popularity and for his honest and loyal character. The Jihadist author also reflected emphatically on his guest's long journey, his pilgrimage and his home region:

»He came to us from his country like a bright moon appearing on the horizon, like a guide for us. What is most marvelous is that he was dawning from the occidental horizon [...]. He was returning to us after he had accomplished the pilgrimage rites [...].«<sup>42</sup>

Bello repeatedly honored Al-Hajj by calling him a »friend« and his departure »a death«. In his letter Bello explicitly asked for answers in order to strengthen the cooperation between them and to know about all news and »whatever happens over there where you are.«<sup>43</sup> The visit of the pilgrim and fellow scholar Umar Tall was obviously also considered a chance to establish far-reaching networks of information, and Bello even talked of a »pact« between them. Unlike the first Sokoto Jihadist generation, Muhammad Bello was less interested in pilgrims as resources who could provide theological knowledge, but rather wanted to interview them about strange countries. Bello greeted the inhabitants of Futa Toro with a list of wishes and advice; milk should rain on the ground of Futa for his »brothers and friends«. He addressed them as wise and generous scholars and encouraged them to wage jihads against their enemies – a task Umar Tall in fact accomplished: »Those who blight the satanic plans

40 French »Voilà mon peuple, nous faisons remonter l'origine de ce peuple à Toro fils d'Ismaïl que nous imitons.« Samb (ed.): *La vie d'El Hadj Omar*, p. 796.

41 French »[...] aux frères et amis parmi les habitants du Fouta, en particulier aux ulémas, aux émirs et aux pieux de toutes les tribus.« Ibid.

42 French »De son pays il est venu vers nous telle une pleine lune apparaissant à l'horizon comme un guide pour nous! Ce qu'il y a de plus merveilleux, c'est qu'il soit monté au-dessus de l'horizon occidental [...]. Lorsqu'il fut de retour vers nous après avoir accompli les rites du pèlerinage [...].« Ibid., p. 797.

43 French »[...] ce qui se passe chez vous là-bas.« Ibid.

of the enemies and wage Jihad equip themselves with cannonballs and lances.«<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately we do not know whether Bello was appealing to the seventeenth and eighteenth century wars labeled jihad in Futa Jallon and Futa Toro, or to early jihadist plans of Al-Hajj that they may have discussed in Sokoto.

The jihads of Futa Jallon and Futa Toro had commenced with a Wolof Jihad in 1673, and Bundu Jihads in the 1790s and once again in the 1820s. Those were most likely inspired by Mauritanian scholars and leaders and were succeeded by a broad Islamization of the masses.<sup>45</sup> Not incidentally, Al-Hajj Umar began preparations for his own jihad movement right after returning from his six-year pilgrimage journey from Mecca via Sokoto to Futa Jallon in 1836. His army fought its first attack in 1848 with European weaponry and – after failing to defeat the French colonial military – his army withdrew and installed itself in different Malian regions until his death in a gun powder accident in 1864.<sup>46</sup> Bello had probably discussed jihadist concepts with his guest, and maybe Bello was also given some information about the West African jihads of the past. This instruction might have caused his tremendous interest in receiving news from Futa Toro and Futa Jallon. On the other hand, when referring to his descent in Futa Toro, Bello failed to comment on any jihads in this area. He rather stressed his close genealogical ties with Futa Toro:

»These are my people; we attribute my family's descent to Toro, offspring of Ismael. We admit that. Let them know that I have a burning desire to see them again, that I languish and I wander here and there like a man madly in love; because they are in a distant country.«<sup>47</sup>

44 French »Ceux qui déjouent les plans diaboliques des ennemis et qui mènent la guerre sainte, s'équipent en boulets de canon et en [lances] brunes.« Ibid., p. 798.

45 For a brief analysis of these Jihad movements see Curtin: Jihad in West Africa, pp. 11–24.

46 Robinson: The Holy War.

47 French »Ceux-là sont mes gens, nous attribuons l'origine de ma famille à Toro fils d'Ismael. Nous l'avouons. Faites-leur comprendre que j'éprouve un ardent désir de les revoir, que je languis et que j'erre çà et là comme un homme fou d'amour, puisqu'ils se trouvent dans un pays lointain.« Samb (ed.): La vie d'El Hadj Omar, p. 798.

Muhammad Bello expressed a special feeling of ›homesickness‹ and longing because he was not able to visit his original place of origin. Neither did he travel to Arabia, the origin of ›Ismael‹, nor did he visit Futa Toro, the supposed origin of the Fulbe. Bello's definition of the inhabitants of Futa Toro – and thus his ancestors – is ›offspring of Ismael‹. Ismael, the son of Abraham according to Jewish, Christian, and Islamic tradition, is considered the ancestor of all Arabs. While the Bible asserts that he was an expelled son of a slave and that his brother Isaac was chosen by God for Abraham's ordeal, Muslims supposed that Ismael was a conjugal child.<sup>48</sup> By mentioning Ismael to his visitor, Bello confirmed their common descent. He added a genealogical line starting with himself, via his father Uthman and other ancestors, arriving at Mus-sa Jokolo ›who originated from Futa Toro‹.<sup>49</sup> But unlike contemporary scholars, Bello did not claim that Jokolo had intended to leave in order to pilgrimage or spread Islam in the ›Sudan‹. Instead he admitted that ›he left Futa because of a conflict with his brother about succession to the throne in that country‹.<sup>50</sup> With the foundation of the Jihadist state of Sokoto and the shift of the main West African pilgrimage routes from the Sahara to the Sahel, the Sokoto Jihadists established contacts with pilgrims beyond their clan relatives and teachers. With these new contacts they discussed the history of Fulbe migration and the political situation in the Western Sahel, while previously the pilgrims had been asked for theological knowledge and descriptions of the Holy Cities. The historical and geographical interest of the Jihadists shifted from Arabia to the Senegambian region: from east to west.

### *Regional Jihadist Pilgrimages*

The only kind of pilgrimage performed by the Jihadist elite was the regular visit of tombs and graves of fellow scholars and Sufi teachers. The

48 Paret: *Ismā'īl*, pp. 184–185.

49 French »[...] qui est originaire du Fouta Toro.« Cf. Samb (ed.): *La vie d'El Hadj Omar*, p. 798.

50 French »[...] qui avait quitté le Fouta à cause d'un démêlé qui l'avait opposé à son frère au sujet du trône du pays.« *Ibid.*, p. 799.

burial places of famous scholars had already been popular sites to visit for other aspiring Muslims of the Hausa region. But the Sokoto Jihadists claimed that it was an Islamic duty to pilgrimage to the tombs. In his text *Lubub al-madkhal*,<sup>51</sup> Abdullah dan Fodio stressed that every scholar had to visit the tombs of saints regularly.<sup>52</sup> The Jihadist scholar Al-Mustafa even visited a Sufi tomb in Katsina on the occasion of his involvement in a war against Gobir:

»They have a long list of their kings, and there were at Katsina learned men and good men, God's creatures in plenty – such as Ibn Sabagi. His tomb is in Katsina, and was visited by me, when war broke out between the Sultan of Katsina and the Sultan of Gobir I assisted the former.«<sup>53</sup>

This scholar referred to as »Ibn Sabagi« was Muhammad Ibn Al-Sabbagh, a seventeenth century scholar of Katsina (d. 1655). He was the head of the local scholarly elite of his time and also nicknamed Dan Marina.<sup>54</sup> In his text *Infraq al-maysur*, Muhammad Bello praised Ibn Sabagi's books and his achievements as a scholar. He was an advisor of the Katsina king and energetically fought separatist religious movements, as he narrated in one of his poems.<sup>55</sup>

51 A summary of the *Madkhal* of Ibn Al-Hajj.

52 Manuscript held at Niamey (412). Cf. also the discussion of this text in Dalhat: *Etiquette of a Muslim Scholar*, pp. 266–279.

53 Arab. فيها ملوك متعددة وكان فيها من العلماء والصلحين خلوكثير كابن الصباح وغيره وفي مدينة كاشنه قبره وقد زرته حين وصلتها ولعت بين سلطانها بيو سلطان غوبرمزاحفات انتصر فيها على سلطان غوبر (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 11). Cf. Palmer: *Western Sudan History*, p. 266. Shareef's edition of another manuscript copy leads, however, to a slightly different translation: »Among the ones who ruled there were many kings. Among them were scholars and many pious persons like Ibn Sabagi and others. And in the town Katsina is his grave which I visited when I reached there. And between its Sultan and Gobir's Sultan happened attacks, and then I supported the Sultan of Gobir.« Cf. Shareef: *Rawdat al-Afkaar*. The intention for the journey was hence not connected with a war – which occurred at a different point of time – but another unknown motive.

54 Cf. Hiskett: *The Development of Islam*, p. 56.

55 »So they were slaughtered in front of him, through the grace of the Messenger of God, pride of the matatikh. We were greatly pleased at that. No happiness is there like it except in the abode of eternity on the day of taking the yawabikh. After this there remained no claimant to prophecy in our land for fear of the sword's exemplary punishment.« Cf. the translation published by Bobboyi / Hunwick (trans.): *Falkeiana 1*, p. 134.

Visiting tombs was an activity that female Jihadists were also permitted to perform. Since educated women of the Sokoto elite were not enabled to travel to Mecca, nor to replace this Muslim pillar by actively participating in a jihad war, they started to organize journeys to nearby tombs and sacred places.<sup>56</sup> Like most educative initiatives of the Sokoto women, these pilgrimages were targeted at rural women who had to travel long distances in order to attend Islamic lectures.<sup>57</sup> They preferably traveled to the burial places of their own family members. Thus Uthman dan Fodio's grave became a very popular pilgrimage site in the 1840s. Brenner promoted the idea that Uthman's daughter Nana Asmau and her husband Gidado dan Laima furthered this sacralization of the first Sultan as a holy person.<sup>58</sup> But I must agree with Jean Boyd that there is no evidence in Nana Asmau's voluminous literature of any endorsement to turn Uthman's tomb into a pilgrimage place.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, Asmau was aware of burial places of female scholars that attracted many visitors who wanted to gain blessing.<sup>60</sup>

In the Jihadist texts, the authors only revealed that pilgrims introduced new Islamic books and theological knowledge into the Central Sahel. They mostly remained quiet about any geographical information accessed from pilgrims. Muhammad Bello, on the other hand, attempted to establish contacts with pilgrims from other Fulbe regions in West Africa and admitted his curiosity to know about unfamiliar countries. But much of the geographical information about Arabia that the Jihadists learned from the pilgrims was not published in pilgrim biographies, but in poems about fictional hajj journeys.

**56** Draft article »Women as Agents religieux in Sokoto« by Jean Boyd and Murray Last, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW 12, p. 289.

**57** Seminar Paper »The Role of Women in the Sokoto Caliphate«, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW 12, p. 14.

**58** Brenner: Concepts of Tariqa, pp. 33–52.

**59** Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 65.

**60** Ibid., p. 78.

### 2.3 Jihadist Imaginings of the Hajj

Although the Jihadists had spent their whole lives in West Africa, they described the stages of the hajj in every possible detail: It started with the sacred state of *ihram* which was initiated with extensive ritual washing and special pilgrimage clothes. This dress code dictated three clothes for men to be fixed on the body without any knots or stitched items. Male pilgrims were advised to wear two of them around their waist and one on their neck. Women, on the other hand, were supposed to wear a simple full-length dress without covering face and hands. The preferred color of these textiles was white for the Jihadists – a color still used today by most Muslim pilgrims. Uthman dan Fodio gave a list of forbidden acts during this *ihram* period: no shaving, no cutting of hair or nails, no perfumes and jewelry, no marriage contract, no sexual contacts, no quarreling and no hunting or killing of animals – not even lice or the like.<sup>61</sup> Certain sentences of extra prayer were demanded whenever groups of pilgrims met on their route and performed their prayer at sunrise together. Uthman dan Fodio recommended the pilgrims to enter Mecca from the north and leave it to the south. Dan Fodio even mentioned the city gates through which one should walk into the town. Then the sacred black stone had to be kissed or touched before and after the circumambulation of the Kaaba. The stone was part of the eastern wall of the Kaaba building. Yet another part of the wall to be praised was the southern, the so-called Yemeni corner. After circling the Kaaba every pilgrim was requested to visit the station of Abraham where the forefather allegedly had left his footprint in a stone when (re-)constructing the Kaaba. The last station to visit in the center of Mecca was the mythic well of Zamzam within the mosque building of the Masjid Al-Haram. The water was recommended for drinking.<sup>62</sup>

Afterwards, dan Fodio told the future pilgrims, they should climb the two hills of Mecca – Safa and Marwa – and go back and forth between them seven times. This practice originated from the Islamic myth of Abraham's wife Hagar and their son Ismael, who were exposed to

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Uthman dan Fodio's work *Ulum al-muamala* (Niamey 410(14)); see the English translation published in Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): *Handbook on Islam*, pp. 44–46.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

the desert alone in order to test their faith in God. While Hagar climbed the two mountains seven times her little infant revealed the miraculous Zamzam well and both were saved from death by dehydration. On the eighth day of the hajj rituals, the journey continued to the Mina valley and the Arafat plain. After spending several nights there, pilgrims on an extended hajj proceeded further to the Muzdalifa plain to the east of Jidda. According to Islamic mythology, Abraham and his son Ismael encountered the devil in Mina and chased him away by throwing stones at him. Thus, Muslim pilgrims were asked by Uthman dan Fodio to collect 49 or 70 small stones, in order to symbolically chase the devil away when returning to Mina. Dan Fodio described the stoning ritual in great detail, also adding that a pilgrim should take care to throw seven stones at one time. Between the stoning sessions the pilgrim was obliged to sacrifice an animal, shave his head and return to Mecca for a short prayer session. He could then return to Mina, complete the stoning, go to Mecca for his last prayer and in so doing finish the hajj.<sup>63</sup> Although Uthman never traveled to the Holy Cities, he claimed authority and knowledge to instruct other Muslims how exactly the rituals had to be performed. He was obliged to demonstrate accurate awareness of the topographical situation in Arabia. But he left out the whole journey between the Sahel and Arabia, starting with the preliminary duties before setting out and then switching right to the region of Mecca.

However, the above-quoted text was a religious instruction, and in his poems Uthman dan Fodio demonstrated his knowledge about the African pilgrimage routes more elaborately. One example for this is given in his Fulfulde poem *Ma'am'are* (»Rhyming with »m««), which was later translated by his son into Hausa.<sup>64</sup> In this poem he lamented about his unfulfilled desire to visit Mecca and other religious sights in Arabia.<sup>65</sup> Uthman dan Fodio had started to compose poems in Arabic on imaginary pilgrimages at an early age prior to the Jihad.<sup>66</sup> In a later poem out of this genre Uthman gave a detailed itinerary of the fictional hajj:

63 Ibid., pp. 48–49.

64 Cf. Hiskett (ed.): *The Ma'am'are*.

65 Ibid., p. 2 (of the Latin transcription).

66 In 1772 he composed his poem *Dalail*, NU, Hunwick 147.

»With our wives, our children, all our slaves and our goods, we Muslims will go together. And our blind and halt and aged, and whoever is afraid, we will all go together. We will travel too without thirst or hunger; we will rejoice in that which is sweet, one with another. By the power of God and the blessing of our friend. He will bring us to the place where a share shall be granted to all. When we have prepared our goods and have started, from Tumba we follow the road to Bakura. When we start from the town of Bakura, we come to the town of Talata, we sleep there. When we start from the town of Talata, we follow the road to Jata, we sleep there. When we start from there we give diligence to reach Danisa and sleep at Bungudu. When we start from here we travel diligently, we come to Kutarkushi, we put down our baggage. When we come to Kutarkushi, we start and turn aside from the road to Zaria, we leave it on the right. We turn aside from Kano and Bauchi, we leave them on the left; we come to Kurarafa, we put down our goods. When we start from here we travel diligently, we come to Madangana, the river of Wakari. When we start from here we travel diligently, we follow it, we travel east as far as Adamawa. When we start from Adamawa we come to the country of Bagu, we put down our goods. May (God) bring us to the city without lack of anything; with joy we shall meet with the Arabs. When we come to Mina we rest there; we go to Mecca and pass it to go to Medina.«<sup>67</sup>

Uthman dan Fodio recalled all halting spots on this imaginary journey until Adamawa. There, however, his knowledge about small villages came to an end, so that the only information he could offer was the meeting places with Arabic pilgrims and traders. He left out the routes through Bornu, Wadai, Dar Fur, Sennar and the Red Sea. The more elaborate part of this itinerary leads only through parts of the Sokoto Caliphate (Zaria, Kano, Bauchi, Adamawa), which hence almost seems to border Arabia in this mental pilgrimage map. Many other fictional hajj accounts of Jihadist scholars only started with the description of the Ara-

67 Hausa »Da matanmu da yayanmu da bai du da dukoki musulmi zamu tari. Makafinmu guragunmu da tsofi wani kaki zulumi duka zamu tari. Mu kua taffi babu kishirua babu yunwa shikin dadi muna murna da jima. Da yi allah da albarkar waliya. Izan mu shiria kaia munka tashi. Izan mu tashi da birnin bakura. Izan mu tashi da birnin talata ya kaimu gari da ankaraba da kowa, ta tunba mu ki biawa har bakura mu zo birnin talata nan mu kwana ta jata mu ki biawa nan mu kwana. Izan mu tashi da nan mun yi hinma ta dani-sa da bungudu zamu kwana.« Robinson (ed.): Specimens of Hausa Literature, pp. 64–67.



bian landscape. A Hausa teacher from Birnin Gwari displayed this style in a poem edited by Robinson:

»I have a strong desire to go on the pilgrimage, to go to Medina, to visit the Prophet. We have great joy and gladness secretly; may God bring us to Mecca that we may show it openly. We make the circuit, we kiss with one hand the stone, we drink water from the well Zemzem, our desire is accomplished. O my lord, thee I supplicate; may God bring us to Mecca, this is our strong desire. The pilgrims that are with you, I pray, wait a little while for me, let us go together. The town of Medina is ever full of light; it is the city of the son of Amina, with beautiful porches. We will perform our religious duties, we will make ready; we will go to Medina to salute. It is a prosperous place, it has clouds of incense, it has the tomb of the prophet, a thing to be loved. Behold his tomb, behold the tomb of the father of Endo and Asman, and behold the tomb of the father of Hafsi. Let me crawl, let me place my face on the ground; within and behind, I will not decrease even the edge.«<sup>68</sup>

In the nineteenth century Mecca became a popular topic of wanderlust poems. In these works the imaginary space of Mecca was represented with its smells, its architecture, and the sensual experience of its religious buildings. The authors described the rituals of encircling the Kaaba, kissing the stone, drinking water from the well and visiting several tombs of important figures in the history of Islam. Although there existed legends that Uthman dan Fodio accomplished the hajj,<sup>69</sup> we can assume that he collected all his knowledge about the pilgrimage from books and from informants. This way he created and spread imaginary religious spaces of Arabia. In a Fulfulde poem, only existing now in a

**68** Hausa »Guri gareni en taffi haji ni en je madina en yi ziarata; Muna da kalkali murna boiyi allah shi kaimu mekka mu budeta; Mu yi kewoiyi muna sunban dutsi mu sha rua a zamzamu guri ya yi; Ya rubbana gareka na ki roko allah shi kaimu mokka muna kamna; Muhajata garinku na ki roko ku yi mani jinkiri amuje tari; Birni madina maihaski tutut ta dan araina maikiyo sorayi; Mu bada farilinmu mu zazagi zua madina zamu ziara nai; Tana ni'am tana habakal kamshi na kabari annabiu abin kamna; Ga kabarinna ga na iiban endo da asman ga na uba hafsi; En rarafi ina aza huskata chiki da bai ba ni ragi kauyi ba.« Ibid., pp. 32–35.

**69** In North Africa the fictive story was told, that Uthman dan Fodio had studied in Cairo and completed the pilgrimage to Mecca. Cf. for instance a report in Escayrac de Lauture: *Mémoires sur le Soudan*, p. 146.

Hausa translation, Uthman laid bare his wishes: »I beg you to be taken to Mecca; and to Al-Medina, oh God with whom is peace.«<sup>70</sup>

Abdullah dan Fodio composed a more personal and realistic description of his wish to perform the hajj. In 1807 he was frustrated by the Jihad, criticized the persistent unbelief among the Jihad soldiers and thus started for the hajj.<sup>71</sup> His journey was, however, a short one, because on his arrival in Kano other Jihadists convinced Abdullah to return to the Jihad which he did. But from a stylistic point of view he presented his failed hajj to Kano like a completed pilgrimage with fictional elements:

»My heart flew to al-Madina, dwelling there for years out of desire, and it will not return, but my sin kept my body away from it, confused. With an empty breast, lacking a heart, emancipated. I turned my reins away from them, making towards the best of God's creation, the giver of longed-for things [...]. O driver of the riding beasts, urge them towards the east! Do not turn back in our journey towards the west! If they succeed in arriving, then God is the giver. And if they fail, then the fault is with him who travels.«<sup>72</sup>

Then Abdullah turned to the description of his concrete and accomplished journey from Sokoto to Kano in the style of an adventure story:

»And I made my soul patient in crossing deserts among elephants like rocks, seeking water by night. And there were no tracks on the ground other than theirs. In the wet season and the dry season they were like wells near at hand. I travelled without knowledge, and without guidance of a guide and without having a path through the verdant wilderness. With five free men and a similar number of slaves, together with three horses and the same number of camels. We forecast thirst when the time of our arrival came. From drooping branches of the trees which drink water. [...] There was no fire but ours in the wide forest. Our companions in conversation, our neighbours, our relations were mosquitoes, snakes, and the company of scorpions. Its thickets, its dells, its fruits, its pools were walls and house, and the food of the guest,

70 Hausa »Inā rōfōnka donnai kaini Makkā; da Taiba ubangijī bias kō salāmā.« Adeleye / El-Masri (eds.): *Ajami Transliterated Text of Sifofin Shehu*, p. 25.

71 Abdullah left the battlegrounds due to the lack of religious motivation of the soldiers who struggled for booty and abandoned the building of mosques and schools. In Kano people wanted him to stay and teach, according to Abdullah's own account.

72 Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, pp. 122–123.

the drinking cup. And our friends were our bows and our quivers, our spears and our fine-edged swords. And the footprints of people, after we had come near to inhabited places became a wonderful thing. Particularly the speech of people, especially their houses and they themselves were strange.«<sup>73</sup>

The journey is presented as an experience of abstinence and contact with nature and animals. Abdullah allegedly encountered deserts and forest wilderness. He is the victorious fighter against the dangers of this uncivilized nature in its various manifestations, such as mosquitoes, snakes, and scorpions. He experienced this journey like a dangerous trip in extreme loneliness. In fact, he only spent three days without reaching any village, if we may trust his own words:

»I left the army and occupied myself with my own affairs and faced towards the east, towards the chosen One – may God bless him and give him peace – if God would make that easy. I entered the wilderness [or: desert] with five of my companions, and we passed three nights without seeing anyone, nor the traces of anything other than the tracks of the elephants in that wilderness, until God made easy for us our arrival at the inhabited places.«<sup>74</sup>

In any situation of personal and religious discontent, »facing the east« is presented as the solution. The required risks had to be faced when entering the wild nature. Non-urban places were dangerous spaces in Abdullah's view where humans could only trust in God. Another failed attempt at a pilgrimage was launched by the first-generation Jihadist Muhammad Raji bin Ali bin Abi Bakr (ca. 1790–1865). Although different Sufi brotherhoods had previously not caused tensions among the Jihadists, this changed rapidly after Muhammad Bello's death in 1837. Scholars discussed whether or not Bello had been initiated to the Tijaniyya. Muhammad Raji was initiated to this brotherhood in the 1830s and defended this organization against scholarly attacks during the 1840s. When the conflict escalated he withdrew from his office as a Gwandu counsel, migrated to the eastern Adamawa emirate and stayed in the capital Yola.<sup>75</sup>

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., p. 121.

75 Note that Hunwick considers this an attempt to make the pilgrimage without any notion of protest; Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 435.

In one of his poems he explained that this trip was initially planned as a pilgrimage to Mecca:

»Had it been that I had known where to run to, I would have escaped. I would then retrace the Prophet's footsteps in Medina. In reality, the body has remained motionless, unable to commence the journey; but the mind has eagerly left while the limbs have been stationary.«<sup>76</sup>

The Jihadists seemed to test different methods to replace the pilgrimage as one of the five obligatory Pillars. They mentioned as an excuse that their minds would manage to travel to Arabia although their bodies stayed behind. Nana Asmau, Uthman's daughter, for example, quoted a commentary in ca. 1839,<sup>77</sup> saying that: »Whoever reads the sura Al-Buruj [Koran 85] is rewarded just like [someone visiting] Mount Arafat.«<sup>78</sup> This hill is located east of Mecca and is believed to be the place where Muhammed talked to his followers for the last time before his death. It is therefore a popular sight to be visited and prayed at by Muslim pilgrims. An alternative chapter of Nana Asmau's text compared the reward for the recitation of a particular sura to that of a visitor of Mount Arafat and Muna. Muna is located halfway between Mecca and Arafat, where pilgrims after two hours of traveling usually perform their noon prayer. And in one of Nana Asmau's prayer advice texts, she claimed that reading a certain sura after waking up every day would bring about the reward of thirty pilgrimages.<sup>79</sup> This literary effort aimed to demonstrate the possibility of replacing the pilgrimage with other pious deeds.

So despite the fact that the Jihadists did not pilgrimage bodily, the simple desire to go there was a good deed on its own according to the Jihadist philosophy of Islam. Nana Asmau explained for example: »[Among the proof of love for the Prophet is] holding in high esteem [...] locations associated with him in Mecca and Medina, and longing to

76 Cf. his poem *Alamaaji ngirbuki* (»The Signs of Collapse«) edited by Abubakar / Tahir / Hamid / Dewa (eds.): *Fulfulde Poems*, vol. 1, pp. 90–103.

77 Nana Asmau dated only one poem within this whole work in the year 1255/1839.

78 Arab. من قرأ سورة البروج أعطى أجر عرفات. Nana Asmau: *Tabshir al-ikhwan*, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*, p. 55.

79 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

go there.«<sup>80</sup> In a Jihadist understanding the pilgrimage was also a matter of intention and attitude as well as an inner sentiment. When recounting the Five Muslim Pillars in a poem of 1842, Hadija (another daughter of Uthman dan Fodio) modified the duty to pilgrimage with the words »if possible.«<sup>81</sup> Her sister Safiya<sup>82</sup> also composed a poem in 1833, expressing her desire to perform the pilgrimage in exactly the same manner as her male relatives did:

»Allah, take me to Mecca, Muhammad's country and let me wander in it and go to Arafa. Then I go to Medina, the land of Yathrib [pre-Islamic name of Medina],<sup>83</sup> and the mosque and mausoleum. [...] Then to the tombs of Abubakar, Umar Uthman and Ali – the Caliphs who succeeded the Prophet. [...] and the Zamzam Well.«<sup>84</sup>

Though the Sokoto women were usually not among the pilgrimage caravans, they obviously accessed the same knowledge on the Arabian pilgrimage sites and rituals as educated men. Only before marriage and after menopause were women permitted to head out for short pilgrimages to Muslim shrines and burial places in the region. Nana Asmau regularly organized these trips for her pupils according to oral tradition.<sup>85</sup> The reason for this age group restriction was that married women often visited non-Muslim shrines for fertility rituals which the Jihadists intended to ban. In her writings, Nana Asmau focused on the hajj journeys by composing prayers and fictive travel literature. In one poem she styled the hajj as a preparation for the Mahdi – the last Prophet to come: »Let us go to Mecca to prepare for the coming of the Mahdi. Let me make the

80 Arab. اعظام [...] اماكنه من مكة والمدينة و اشتياق الوصول اليها. Nana Asmau: *Tanbih al-ghafilin*, in: *ibid.*, p. 111.

81 Hadija: *Alkiyama*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW 19, Notebook 7, p. 3, l. 19.

82 Safiya was born ca. 1803. Her parents were Uthman dan Fodio and his wife Jinni. Safiya married Muhammadu Autan Jido bin Umar Alkamu. She probably died at young age and only one Fulfulde poem of her (27 lines) survived. Cf. Boyd / Last: *Role of Women*, p. 294.

83 At this point, Boyd's translation is very misleading because she translates this passage »the land of Tyre« which is a Phoenicia city in today's Lebanon. Therefore I relied on the Hausa Ajami script quotation يثرب: cf. SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW4/1, l. 8.

84 Safiya: *Untitled*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW4/1, pp. 70–75.

85 Boyd / Last: *Role of Women*, pp. 289–290.

pilgrimage which is right for those who have the means.<sup>86</sup> Nana Asmau expressed the desire of her contemporaries and herself for a comfortable mode of traveling. In the above-quoted poem she projected these wishes onto the Prophet Muhammad: »Let us go to Medina, the land of the Chosen One [...], he who is unique, has a beautiful place to lodge in, and a superior road on which to travel.«<sup>87</sup> But again, the route between the Central Sahel and Arabia was left out. Instead, the Jihadists referred only to topographical features of the Middle East and Saudi Arabia.

Sometimes the arrival of a pilgrim in Sokoto inspired Jihadist poets to compose some lines about the journey to Mecca. When an anonymous scholar and friend of the Sokoto elite visited the ruling family, Nana Asmau dedicated an Arabic poem to him to say farewell. She started to explain what caused her to write the poem: »The most honored of our experts who set out from his earth [home] for a visit towards Medina.«<sup>88</sup> In the lines following this introduction Nana created the imaginary scenery of what the pilgrim could experience after leaving Sokoto for Arabia:

»To get acquainted with that house and tomb, whose radiance illuminates all allies. By it a star is raised attesting the passion. It eases the effort of the smart and exhausted. [...] May He crown your effort at the final destination of Mina and your effort at Arafat, the house of the only One. And then grant your arrival at Medina and afterwards the visit of the sanctuaries and shrines.«<sup>89</sup>

In this poem Nana Asmau demonstrated her knowledge about these Middle Eastern places she had never been to before. She proves that she is well-informed about the course of the journey, the rituals and peculiarities of the pilgrimage. Her description skipped the route between Hausa and Arabia and only continued with the Holy Places. Thus she did not link Arabian spaces with her knowledge of West Africa. The author also

86 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 222. For the Fulfulde Ajami text cf. Nana Asmau: *Mantore di dabre*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 102.

87 Ibid.

88 Arab. أكرم بجيبتنا الوافد من أرضه نحو المدينة قاصد. Nana Asmau: *Untitled*, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*, p. 124.

89 Arab. يعتاد ذلك البيت والقبر الذي ضاءت به أبواب كل معاهد يسمو به نجم يدلله الهوى ويهين سعى المستحث والراشد [...] وأتم سعيك بالمناسك في منى ولسعي في عرفات بيت الواحد. واتاح وصلك للمدينة بعدها وزيارة بمزائر ومشاهد. Ibid., pp. 124–126.

added some stanzas about a passing pilgrimage caravan and the sorrow to be left behind in Sokoto:

»Know that we were delighted about the passing cavalcade [caravan] for our dear travelers. Especially for the tall, noble brother who is surpassing and progressive in wisdom. He has come to us with evidence of his knowledge and the language of his prose and poetry. May the lord of the throne grant you good reward for the effort and may your arriving reports be excellent.«<sup>90</sup>

Pilgrimage caravans were crossing the Caliphate territory and important scholars were hosted at the Sokoto Court. These events must have been extraordinary for the hosts because Nana Asmau dedicated a whole poem to only one of the pilgrims. The author also expressed her strong desire to receive news and reports from the Holy Cities. Nana Asmau also praised the pilgrim Al-Hajj Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Shinqiti with another poem of ten lines.<sup>91</sup> In the first half of the text Asmau expressed delight about the arrival of a pilgrimage caravan and the new (religious) knowledge brought by it to Sokoto:

»Entertain the arriving noble and learned man of ours, from his country, going straight to Madinah; frequenting that house and the tomb which the lights of every ally shined around it. The noble camels go up there, the descent humiliating them; [yet] they scorn the pace of the excited [camel]. You should know that we were extremely pleased with the passing-by of the caravan of the intending [pilgrim]; especially the [coming of] the highborn, comely brother, who has an ascendant and exalted precedence in learning. He certainly brings us the wealth of his learning and eloquence of his prose and poems. May the Lord of the throne requite you with the best of His requittal, on our behalf for his [al-Shingit] good talk reaching us.«<sup>92</sup>

90 Arab. واعلم بانا قد فرحنا غايه بصرور ركب للأحبة قاصد. لاسيما لأخ نسيب فارخ في العلم ذى قدم رفيع صاعد قد. Ibid., p. 124. جاءنا بأمانة من علمه بلاغة من نثره وقصائد. فجزاك رب العرش خيره عنا لحسن كلامك المتوارد.

91 The name of the pilgrim was not given in the text, but added by Sambo Junaidu, who translated this poem. Cf. Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 180.

92 Ibid., pp. 180–181. The Arabic version of this text, supplemented with an English translation is held at Nana Asmau: *Qasida min Asmau da mualim al-murtanya*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, pp. 52–53. The camel metaphor was obviously not acknowledged by Junaidu. Boyd and her Sokoto scholarly informants translated: »The scholar's great knowledge sweetens the air and facilitates his journey.« The metaphor is in fact comparing the pilgrim's amount of knowledge to the camel loads of the caravans.

Asmau reflected on the mode of traveling with camels and the route of the caravan. But she only referred to his place of origin as »his country.« She either didn't know where the pilgrim came from, or she didn't pay attention to this detail. On the other hand, his last name »Shinqiti« bears his attributed home »Chinguetti« in northern Mauretania. The guest was probably asked to recite his poems and prose texts to the Sokoto elite. In the second part of her poem, Nana Asmau devoted herself to an imaginary description of the part of the journey still to come:

»And may He [God] complete your endeavour at the places of pilgrimage at Mina, and the Say running at Arafat and the circumambulation of the house of the [only] one. And may He facilitate your reaching Madinah and after that to places of visit and of [religious] assemblies. By the rank of al-Mukhtar, the leader who, with [your] dauntless resolution, you may feel proud of visiting.«<sup>93</sup>

Nana Asmau again demonstrated her idea of the Arabian landscape by mentioning Mount Arafat and the Mina valley located close to Mecca. In this translation it appears as if Nana Asmau wished that Al-Shinqiti might visit religious centers of learning on his pilgrimage, such as the Sufi communities established by Sidi Al-Mukhtar Ibn Ahmad Al-Kunti (1729–1811) in the Western Sudan. But unfortunately, Junaidu's translation is misleading here. The original Arabic line is referring to the »chosen place« (Arab. *al-mukhtar*) of Mecca that the pilgrim intended to visit and not to Sidi »the Chosen« Al-Kunti.<sup>94</sup> Another group of pilgrims, whose identity is not disclosed by the poem, was welcomed by Nana Asmau on their return from the hajj. She expressed a warm greeting and happiness about this incident: »The heart is flying in love to meet you.«<sup>95</sup> The poet then anticipated what the travelers might have experienced:

»You, witnesses of these sacred places for meetings with them and arriving visitors; and you visited the Chosen and the open country [desert] and his

93 Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 181.

94 Nana Asmau: *Qasida min Asmau da mualim al-murtanya*, p. 52.

95 Arab. طار الفوءاد الى لغانك عاشقا. Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 130.



most noble Companions. By his grace he pushes your [pl.] arrival in an excellent condition of all travelers.«<sup>96</sup>

Pilgrims could be stuck during their journeys as a result of financial or political problems as well as because of a change in marital or economic position. Some suffered from diseases or died on their trip, so that Nana Asmau celebrated the safe and healthy condition of the returning pilgrims. She only summarized the journey through the deserts and »open land« in one expression. The desert route was considered necessary in order to reach the Holy Cities, but the exact routes (Sahara or Sahel) were not described. According to Jean Boyd's investigation, this poem was addressing Shaikh Saad from Gwandu, who had been on his pilgrimage tour for many years. Boyd also collected an Arabic letter by Shaikh Saad to Asmau, in which he wrote down his name and a reference, saying that the Shaikh [Uthman dan Fodio] had promised to support the pilgrimage and return.<sup>97</sup> Saad gave assurances that he had still kept Uthman's wisdom and grace in his heart. Therefore, it can be assumed that Saad had left for Mecca before Uthman dan Fodio's death in 1817 and that he returned home after that year. Neither Junaidu, nor Ogunbiyi had paid attention to Shaikh Saad's letter. These verses are overflowing with gratitude for Nana Asmau as an educated and exceptional woman and for her whole family. Saad expressed his need to be assisted on his return. The political situation after years of absence had changed, so that the returning traveler was eager to reactivate personal bonds with powerful allies. He was probably alluding to his close relationship with the dan Fodio family, as he had known Uthman personally but he was not genealogically related with them.

Surprisingly, he did not narrate the details of his pilgrimage journey. He scarcely interposed: »Restless from traveling through the desert, I long to meet you [pl.], shedding [tears] piously.«<sup>98</sup> The long journey across desert areas immediately led him to express his homesickness. In

96 Arab. شهودكم تلك الأماكن قدست للقائمين بها و أنت زائر. و زيارة المختار و الما الرض و أصحابه. Ibid., pp. 130–132.

97 The Arabic text is compiled in Nana Asmau: *Mursalat al-sha'ar*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 56.

98 Arab. متشجع جوب الموم باغيا للقائكم و محامر ومبائر. Ibid.

this answer to Asmau's letter, Saad repeatedly tells about his pleasure at receiving her letter even when he could not meet her. He added, »I thank God from whom I was given your care even when we were far [from each other].«<sup>99</sup> There existed an appropriate fear of being forgotten while traveling to Mecca. Muslim pilgrims expected the scholarly elite to pray for and commemorate them until their return. It is also interesting to explore the Hadith quotation that was attached to this letter; in extracts it says: »What is stronger than going, meeting your enemies in order to kill them and be killed by them; it is thinking of God.«<sup>100</sup> Even though, this quotation does not explicitly refer to jihad and martyrdom, Saad certainly talked about the Sokoto Jihad wars, which were being fought when he had left Gwandu. Defending himself for leaving the country for the hajj, he chose a Hadith that demonstrated the superiority of Islamic education and meditation over jihad warfare. While he had to defend his absence in times of jihad, the Sokoto Jihadists had to legitimate their stay in the Sahel. Nana Asmau limited the hajj duty to those who could afford and physically travel.<sup>101</sup> The pilgrimage was only a task for the »powerful« or »rich« in her view.<sup>102</sup> But there were no physical limits to imagined pilgrimage journeys. Even during the lifetime of Uthman dan Fodio, legends were told claiming he had managed to fly to Mecca. Although imaginary pilgrimages were common among Jihadist sources, Uthman dan Fodio rejected the possession of spiritual powers for transferring his *body* to Mecca and Medina:

»They say that I have been to Mecca and Medina, and they have no doubt about it. They say that I can fold up the earth, walk on water and fly. They say that I meet with the »Men of the Unseen« [*ahl al-ghayb*]. These qualities are attributed to me by many people, and I must say they are wrong.«<sup>103</sup>

99 Arab. انى حمدت الله مما انعمنا مراعتنا بي بغيب غائر. Ibid.

100 Arab. وخير لكم ممن ان تلقوا عدوكم فتضربوا اعناقهم ويضربوا اعناقكم ذكر الله. Ibid., p. 58.

101 Nana Asmau: *Waazu i Fulfulde*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol.1, pp. 62–65.

102 Hausa غمى ايكو. Nana Asmau: *Gadaben gaskiya*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 5.

103 From the Arabic edition of *Tahdhir al-ikhwan*, as translated by Al-Hajj: Mahdist Tradition, pp. 262–263. For an Arabic manuscript copy see Niamey 382 and 2837.

Uthman commented on Sufi knowledge which was in particular propagated by the Qadiriyya brotherhood of which he was a member. Emerging in the eleventh century, the Sufi term »Men of the Unseen« (*ahl al-ghayb*) labeled the Sufi founders or brotherhood leaders. They allegedly were saints with supernatural powers and the power to communicate with jinns. Uthman dan Fodio denied being able to meet the dead Sufi saints or to travel to Mecca by flying. The second and third Jihadist generations still felt the pressure to explain and justify why they failed to undertake the hajj as one of the Five Islamic Pillars. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Kano Kadi Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih (1806–1869) recounted the legend that Uthman dan Fodio was instructed by the saints and prophets to wage a jihad in his region instead of executing the hajj to Arabia.<sup>104</sup> Performing the hijra flight and jihad were thus declared a legitimate substitution for the hajj journey. In this chronicle text, the hajj was the initial plan of Uthman dan Fodio, but because another task was assigned to him, he had to abstain from it.

The Jihadists noticed that educated Muslims expected them to perform the hajj, but their political offices did not allow them to leave the Caliphate for a period of several years. Intense contact and conversations with pilgrims came to replace this missed experience of travel. The Jihadists expressed their knowledge of the »desert routes« with camels and the geography of Central Arabia in imaginary pilgrimage poetry and praise literature for individual pilgrims. The pilgrimage to the Holy Cities was perceived as a journey through space *and* time. In one of his poems Sultan Muhammad Bello expressed his wish to travel to Mecca: »Oh Lord, facilitate our journey to his place, so as to see his grave [of the Prophet] and the bequest.«<sup>105</sup> The pilgrims crossing the Central Sahel on their journey with horses and camels were considered to come closer to the Prophet spiritually by visiting his places of birth and death. Bello even asked a (fictional) pilgrim to forward a letter from Sokoto to the Prophet:

**104** Cf. a translation of the text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 25.

**105** English translation by Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 167.

»O rider of a bulky, beautiful camel, greet the beloved one [Prophet] and take a letter from me to him. Tell him that I am among the captives of his love. And my heart loves no one other than him. Cheer the retinues going to his door. And all came to your land to attain [their] desires.«<sup>106</sup>

By establishing contacts with pilgrims from the Sahel, the Jihadists wanted to shift their home region closer to the Holy Land in Arabia. In their poetry they perceived the journey as a dangerous path through only desert land that they largely omitted in their imaginings of the hajj.

### ***2.4 Moving to the East: Migration and Eschatology***

In the Jihadist concepts of space, the east had an extraordinary connotation as a direction and as a territory of religion from a Sahelian perspective. The Fulbe ancestors had once started their migration along the Sahel to the east, the pilgrims headed towards the ›far‹ east, and the Jihadist poets longed to travel with them to Arabia. There was also an eschatological factor that made eastward travel attractive to Muslims. In the nineteenth century – especially from the 1840s onwards – the Millenarian Mahdi belief became widespread in the African Sahel. In brief, a legendary final Messenger of God (the Mahdi) would appear and gather all Muslims for the last fight between the devil and Jesus. In the nineteenth century many Muslims supposed that he would soon appear on earth in »the east«. In the Sudan, Muhammad Ahmad claimed Mahdship for himself and started a revolt against Egyptian rule in 1881. In the early nineteenth century, the Sokoto Jihadists could not ignore these trans-West-African fears and hopes. It was part of their Islamic background, and many promoted Uthman dan Fodio as the legendary last leader of all believers. The Sokoto Jihadists refused Mahdship because this would have caused mass emigration from their newly founded state. They did not want religious people to flee from the Caliphate, so the Jihadists presented Uthman dan Fodio as a figure within the sacred eschatology, but not the Mahdi. Uthman dan Fodio composed a Fulfulde poem in which he presented his view on the coming of the Mahdi. He as-

served that he was not the expected last Prophet, but that he shared some characteristics with him.

»Furthermore, I am not the appointed Mahdi; I was given this mantle as for the pattern. Truly, I do not refuse [there is] a Mahdi; at these times I have obtained my spiritual powers. So then every time has a Mahdi; it is indeed a thousand years so that I speak [now]. I am like the wind to the raincloud; [this is] the system of the Mahdi in spite of any zeal.«<sup>107</sup>

Dan Fodio established himself as the announcer of the Mahdi in Islamic eschatology. He only prepared the coming of the last Mahdi, since he called his time »the time of the Mahdi«.<sup>108</sup> This time is further described by dan Fodio as an era of tyranny and injustice, for the time of the Mahdi was always predicted as an era of catastrophic incidents in Islamic tradition. He depicted his period as a time dominated by evils and religious reformation, so that this had to be the time of the Mahdi. Both appearances, that of the Mahdi and of Uthman, were prophesied before birth – as expressed in this poem: »Truly, it was said when he had not come yet; the rumour about me was similar, I am lucky.«<sup>109</sup> Since in another line Uthman dan Fodio also compared the prophecy regarding him to the prophecy regarding Prophet Mohammed, these literary analogies do not imply any claim to be either a prophet or the Mahdi. According to accounts of the second Jihadist generation, a woman called Umm Hani Al-Fulani foretold the coming of Uthman with the following attributes:

»From what was reliably recounted, there is something [told] by the righteous and saintly Umm Hani from the Fulbe, and she said: ›There appears in this Sudanic land, a friend from among the friends of Allah. He will reform belief, revive the Sunna and establish religion. The fortunate [people] follow him and his name is popular distally. The public and the elite emulate his commands. Those belonging to him are known as the Community. Among

**107** Hausa »Dadī banzama Mahdī ‘ayyanannē; tufānai anka sāmini don nizāmā. Ḥakīkan bani inkārī na Mahdī; ga zāmāninga nā sam tau karāmā. Zamā zamanī dukā fa shināda Mahdi; dubū ya yi da fī dalīlī in faḍāmā. Misālīnā awā iskā nahadrī; dadā nizzam na Mahdī dudda himmā.« Adeleye / El-Masri (eds.): *Sifofin Shehu*, p. 25.

**108** Hausa »Zamā zamanimmu yā zam shī na Mahdī.« *Ibid.*, p. 24.

**109** Hausa »Ḥakīkan an faḍai tun bai [ba ya] tafō ba; faḍinnan anka yō min nāyī zāmā.« *Ibid.*

their signs is that they do not look after cattle by pasturing like it is the custom of the Fulbe. And it is recognized from this time that the winner [rich] follows him. And there are identified many friends of Allah. And they had informed about his status and order before his appearance.»<sup>110</sup>

This prophecy by a Fulbe woman was narrated by Muhammad Bello with attention to the attributes of the Jihadist lifestyle, who were Fulfulde speakers, but not professional pastoralists. Uthman dan Fodio was a scholar by profession and not engaged in keeping cattle. This distinctive attribute was stressed in this account as a fundamental component of Jihadist identity. Another parallel attribute of him and the Mahdi was depicted by dan Fodio himself, namely the circumstances of accessing leadership: »During upheaval [*fitna*] he was made leader; truly, during it I became Imam.«<sup>111</sup> The term *Fitna* expresses chaos, civil war and secession throughout which Islam is challenged. Uthman stated in his poem that he and the Mahdi both fought bad customs, oppression, taught Koran and were wise and generous. He was convinced that the period of the aforesaid arrival of the Mahdi had already started – a time of rebellion and decline of Islam. Dan Fodio added that they were both of Fatimid (*fadiminke*)<sup>112</sup> descent. Since the Fatimid dynasty had maintained its political center in North Africa in the Middle Ages, Uthman dan Fodio in turn claimed North African descent and blood relationship with the Prophet. Without explicitly mentioning the Fulbe myth of origin, he implicitly referred to an ethno-centered interpretation of history and migration.

But Uthman dan Fodio paid attention not to activate inhabitants of the young Caliphate to leave for other places in the east where the Mahdi

110 Arab من ذلك ما روى الثقة عن ام هانى الصالائية الفلاتية انهم قالت يظهر في هذا القطر السودانى و لى ولياء الله يجدد الدين ويحيى السنة ويقيم الملة ويتبعه الموفقون ويشتهر فى الافاق ذكره يقندى العام والخاص بامرته ويشتهر المنتسبون اليه بالجماعة ومن علامتهم انهم لا يعتنون برعى البقر كعاراة الفلاتيين و من ادرك ذلك الزمان فديتبعه الحاضر انه قد تفرس فيه اوليك اله كثيرا واخبر وابشانه وامره قبل ظهوره وحين ظهوره Whitting (ed.): Infaku'l maisuri, pp. 29–30.

111 Hausa »Cikin fitinā a kann yō mai sarautā; ḥakīka cikinta nissāmō imāmā.« Adel-eye / El-Masri: Sifofin Shehu, p. 24.

112 Cf. the Fulfulde version of this Mahdi poem edited by Al-Hajji Garba (unpublished): Uthman dan Fodio: *Ba ngare Mahdi*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, attached to S19, pp. 175–177.

was expected to appear. In his poems he advised his readers and listeners not to spread news such as »this year or month is the time of the Mahdi.«<sup>113</sup> The Jihadists tried to prevent any public panic leading to mass emigration. Indeed, in another line of the same poem this aim becomes even more explicit: Everyone shall continue to obey the leaders (*laamibe*) until the very moment of the Mahdi Coming and Judgement Day.<sup>114</sup> Uthman dan Fodio even warned people not to claim to be the Mahdi falsely. In 1814 he dedicated a whole treatise to this topic<sup>115</sup> because many people continued to call Uthman dan Fodio the Mahdi, although he had »striven beyond measure in warning them to desist and explicitly rejected their claim in [his] Arabic and Ajami writings.«<sup>116</sup> He quoted from different texts – both prose and poetry – he had already written on the Mahdi claims. Uthman argued that he could not be the Mahdi because he was »born in the Sudanese region at a place called Maradi whereas it was common knowledge from Prophetic traditions that the Mahdi would be born at Medina.«<sup>117</sup> In this context Uthman's place of origin was depicted as inferior to the Holy City of Medina. Another hint to identify the true Mahdi was to point to a popular prophesy saying that the first name of the real Mahdi would be Muhammad, just like that of the Prophet. Hence Uthman concluded:

»How can I claim the Mahdiyya while I know that many of my characteristics are contrary to what have been mentioned about the Mahdi in the Prophetic traditions and the reports of the Companions?«<sup>118</sup>

This warning against false Mahdi claims and Uthman's self-criticism in this respect were inter alia caused by early anti-Jihadist revolts at a time when the Caliphate had just been founded. One of these rebellions was led by Hamma. In a draft chronicle of the 1820s it is stated that: »In the tenth year after the [Sokoto] Hijra [1813/4] the army of Maganga came out, claiming he was the Mahdi. The plot was active until he was

113 Cf. for example *ibid.*

114 *Ibid.*

115 *Tahdhir al-ikhwan*, Niamey (382, 2837); translated as an appendix to *Al-Hajj: Mahdist Tradition*, pp. 224–271.

116 *Ibid.*, p. 228.

117 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

118 *Ibid.*, pp. 233–234.

captured and crucified.«<sup>119</sup> In his translation, Palmer confused different terms: Maganga was the revolting leader's place of origin, northeast of Sokoto, and the leader of the revolt was called Hamma. Uthman dan Fodio narrated this story in more detail in another text:

»One of the strange incidents is the story of a certain man from among the commons who claimed sainthood. This man came to visit us but we did not bother about his claim because we were not disturbed by it. Then he came for a second visit and claimed the Mahdiyya. We therefore admonished him and he returned to his home. But instead of abandoning his claim he persisted in it, so that his affair became widely known among the Tuareg and the matter became difficult for them.«<sup>120</sup>

Confused by this self-appointed Mahdi, some Tuareg scholars wrote a letter to their official leader Uthman dan Fodio whom they asked whether this man was the Mahdi:

»The reason for this letter also is to let you know about a terrible incident which had been brought up to our notice. A young man from our clan came to us and told us that he had seen a Muslim man called Muhammada, or Hamma, at Maganga, who claimed to be the Mahdi. We were perplexed and then, therefore, we sent another young man, whose religion, intellect, intelligence and knowledge we did not suspect, to find out the truth of the matter. When he returned he confirmed to us that the aforementioned man really believed himself to be the Mahdi as evident from his behavior and utterances. Thus, we were bewildered and perplexed.«<sup>121</sup>

Replying to this Tuareg request, Uthman dan Fodio explained that this man was only a common person and not even a member of the scholarly class. Therefore only ignorant commoners would follow him. Likewise, Uthman declared that the scholars should »cut the throat«<sup>122</sup> of every pretender until the real Mahdi was identified by the aforementioned

**119** Arab. و في السنة العاشرة خرج حمى بماغغ فادعى المهديّة فقال امره الى ان اخذو صلب (Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 22). Cf. also the translation of Palmer (ed.): *Western Sudan History*, p. 271.

**120** *Tahdhir al-ikhwan*, translated by Al-Hajj: *Mahdist Tradition*, p. 234. See also the manuscripts in Niamey (382, 1830).

**121** Al-Hajj: *Mahdist Tradition*, p. 235.

**122** *Ibid.*, p. 238.



scholarly class. This incident, which finally led to the killing of the self-made Prophet Hamma, proves that the Jihadist elite was threatened by Mahdi movements to a degree which Uthman did not admit in his argumentation. Apparently, Hamma had not tried to flee from the Jihadists but instead visited them at least two times. He might have considered himself able to convince the Sokoto rulers of his Mahdi identity and garner the Caliphate subjects as followers.

Uthman dan Fodio studied other historical cases of false Mahdis. He discussed, for example, the Shiite belief that other persons had been the Mahdi, e.g. Muhammad Ibn Hasan from Persia (ninth century), the Prophet's son-in-law Ali Ibn Abi Talib (d. 661), or the latter's son. Another historical claim to be the Mahdi was that of Zayd Ibn Ali (695–740), the great grandson of the Prophet. He had revolted against the Umayyad Caliph, was killed during a battle and according to some of Uthman's sources then crucified. In the sixteenth century, the Moroccan scholar Ahmed Ibn Abi Mahalli (1559–1613) announced himself as the awaited Mahdi. He eventually competed with the Moroccan monarchy and its Saadi dynasty in a war from 1610 to 1613. In Uthman dan Fodio's source of the seventeenth century<sup>123</sup> the Mahalli revolt was called a jihad:

»He claimed that he was the expected Mahdi and called for the Jihad. He captivated the hearts of the common people who flocked round him. He then entered the town of Sijilmasa and defeated the governor, the agent of the Saadi kings, and took him as captive. Then he drove them [the Saadis] out of Dira and followed them up to the capital Marrakesh where he defeated Zaydan ibn Ahmad Al-Mansur who fled to the people of Al-Sus Al-Aqsa and sought their assistance. They came down, killed Ibn Abi Mahalli and dispersed his armies. The movement came to an end and Zaydan was reinstated in his kingdom.«<sup>124</sup>

This text provided Uthman dan Fodio with many historical examples of illegitimate and self-appointed Mahdis. Another Mahdi case from Moroccan history was that of Tumart Al-Susi (1081–1130), who rebelled against Almoravid rule in Spain and Morocco. After his journey to Ara-

**123** It was composed by the Moroccan Sufi writer Al-Hassan Ibn Masud Al-Yusi (1631–1691). Cf. his original text edited in Al-Jusi: *Al-Muhadarat*.

**124** Al-Hajj: *Mahdist Tradition*, pp. 246–247.

bia and allegedly also to Persia, he wanted to implement his missionary duty because he felt himself to be chosen by God. He found followers among the political opposition with whom he reenacted the Hijra. He claimed to be a descendant of Fatima and fought the Almoravids until his death.<sup>125</sup> Uthman dan Fodio quoted Al-Yusi's account of this Mahdi movement:

»He [Tumart] went to the mountains and began to call the people to the faith. And when the people gathered round him he assumed the role of the Mahdi and incited them to rise to establish the religion and declare a jihad against the corrupt rulers. Then he led them against Marrakesh and devastating wars with the Almoravids ensued. But he died in the course of these wars.«<sup>126</sup>

From another author, Uthman also studied accounts on Muhammad Jaunpuri (1443–1505), who was born in northeastern India and who spread his Mahdi claims in public several times in Mecca and India. According to a sixteenth century Indian scholar quoted by Uthman,<sup>127</sup> »a group of people who appeared in India believed that a certain sharif [...] is the promised Mahdi.«<sup>128</sup> In this narration the Mahdi claim is judged to be false because of this group's ignorance in religious matters and their aggression against opposing scholars. The Indian scholar Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi (d. 1567) said,<sup>129</sup> he had »traveled widely in the Indian region and discussed the matter with the ulama of the land but enquiries came to nothing.«<sup>130</sup> The Indian scholar Al-Hindi, who was also studied by Uthman dan Fodio, claimed that the false Mahdi was an Indian who had died in the Persian town Farah (Afghanistan). After debating the issue with scholars in Mecca and Medina he finally rejected this Mahdi. Uthman dan Fodio considered it necessary to quote some legal judgments (*fatawa*) which Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi had collected from Meccan jurists on the Indian Mahdi claim. The idea of an Indian Mahdi was categorically denied

125 Cf. Furnish: *Holiest Wars*, pp. 31–37.

126 Al-Hajj: *Mahdist Tradition*, p. 247.

127 Ala Al-Din Ali Ibn Abd Al-Malik Husam Al-Din Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi (d. 1567).

128 Al-Hajj: *Mahdist Tradition*, p. 249.

129 The text is called *Kitāb al-Burhān fī 'alāmāt Mahdī ākhir al-zamān*; cf. the edition of Jasim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhallil Yasin (Kuwait 1988).

130 Al-Hajj: *Mahdist Tradition*, p. 250.

by the Meccan scholars,<sup>131</sup> who stressed that the real Mahdi must necessarily be from among the offspring of the Prophet, that he would rule the world and kill the Antichrist. Other Muslim authorities consulted by the Indian scholar had added as obvious signs for the time of the Mahdi two lunar eclipses and a solar eclipse during Ramadan, as well as upheavals or chaos (*fitna*). One *fatwa* responded to these arguments in an explicit and unambiguous manner:

»Verily, none of these events occurred at the time of the aforementioned dead man. The belief of his followers that he is the Mahdi is, therefore, false and without basis. As for their belief that whoever denies his Mahdship is an unbeliever, it is tantamount to unbelief if publicly declared by them. They must be asked to repent and if they persist they should be killed.«<sup>132</sup>

And yet another one adjoined: »They should be given three days within which to repent, and if they persist, then their throats should be cut with the sword as an example to other heretics.«<sup>133</sup> Because of many urgent Mahdi claims in the Caliphate periphery, Uthman dan Fodio acknowledged the Islamic debate on that topic and tried to disseminate historical examples as warnings not to believe in false Mahdis before the real coming. The Jihadists noticed that the Mahdi belief was often rooted in the periphery, in rural areas, and among the poor and uneducated. At first, they did not intend to fight Hamma when he visited the Jihadist Court, but relied on their interpretative authority over religious matters. Only when the phenomenon of Hamma and his followers became too dangerous and far-reaching, as it was communicated over a vast area, did they instruct the Tuareg allies to kill all false Mahdis.

Uthman dan Fodio argued he was not the Mahdi but that this person would come soon. His son and successor Muhammad Bello on the other hand dared to publish more exact forecasts about the time of the expected Mahdi arrival. He said, for example, that he might appear in the Islamic year 1280 (1863/4) because he had interpreted the appearance of

**131** For example by the Sunni Muslim Shafi'i scholar Ibn Hajar Al-Haytami Al-Makki (1503–1566).

**132** Al-Hajj: Mahdist Tradition, p. 258.

**133** Ibid., p. 260.

a comet in 1825 as one of the signs having been foretold by his father.<sup>134</sup> In one of Bello's letters to Modibbo Adama, the Emir of Adamawa in the eastern part of the Caliphate, he asked his ally to make use of the constant state of war at the northeastern borders of Adamawa and send some spies there who could gather some information on the Mahdi:

»The matter which we discussed and agreed upon before your departure from our place and that is: dispatching of troops to the south of Baghirmi, Wadai, Dar Fur and towards the Nile. You should try to do that and send spies to the region. This is because our Shaykh, may God be pleased with him, has indicated to us that his followers will emigrate to those regions when the time of the advent of the Mahdi is near. There, they will meet him and pay him homage, by God's will, because among the signs related to the appearance of the Mahdi is the destruction of most of the land until it becomes as if it had not [been fertile before].«<sup>135</sup>

This letter is an indication for the serious expectation that people might migrate to the east very soon. This is, at least, what Bello judged to be worthy for inclusion in a letter to another emir. Bello did not want to risk missing the End of Time and therefore wished to stay well-informed. The Sokoto Sultan suggested that the military networks to the east could also be used as an intelligence system on news of the Mahdi's arrival. Bello increased religious pressure on Adama who was asked to keep long-distance routes secure for pilgrims. According to Al-Hajj, the route mentioned in Bello's letter became the most important pilgrimage route for Hausa and other West African travelers in the late nineteenth century. The Mahdi belief was not only a political instrument for the Jihadists but also an ungovernable danger and hope. The only method for dealing with the situation was to maintain control over Mahdi claims and the rumors connected with them. While Uthman dan Fodio was busy fighting various illegitimate Mahdis, his son Muhammad Bello was eager to be informed about the Mahdi rumor to the east of the Caliphate. He expected the Mahdi in another region and not within the borders of his Caliphate.

**134** *Qawl al-mukhtasar*, summarized in *ibid.*, p. 90. Unfortunately and due to the lack of security in Northern Nigerian towns, the original manuscript could not be acquired.

**135** Cf. the translation of an extract from the text *Risala ila al-alim Adam wa jamatihu* in Minna: Sultan Muhammad Bello, p. 340. The Arabic original is held at Kano.

The Mahdi topic was present in all genres of Jihadist literature, ranging from classical Arabic treatises to poetry. Hadija (ca. 1772–1856), a daughter of Uthman dan Fodio, composed for example a poem as a collection of several precise predictions of the coming of a »Mahad-ik.«<sup>136</sup> In this poem she recounted different myths and rumors about the Mahdi's identity and characteristics. She rejected, for example, the theory suggesting that the Mahdi is the son of an Askiya (Songhay) ruler: »Although if some say he will be born as the son of the Askiya, it is not like that.«<sup>137</sup> Hadija called this assumption false because this had not been foretold by any Hadith text. The Askia dynasty ruled the Songhay Empire (Mali) from 1493 until its defeat by an invading Moroccan army in 1591. As a matter of fact, in the nineteenth century there was historical evidence for the consistency of the world after the Askiya dynasty: Time had already proved this prediction wrong. Hadija listed some years in which – according to false prediction in songs – the Mahdi was expected, ranging from 1304 (1882) to 1321 (1903). She also said that many people believed he was coming thirty or sixty years after the time when she composed the poem. According to this source, Caliphate subjects tried to predict the Mahdi's birth or appearance in public in the 1840s. By listing the different predicted dates of his arrival, Hadija tried to give some evidence that most of those priestly storytellers were liars. Other forecasts said he would come in the month of Ramadan, at daybreak or together with a solar (or lunar) eclipse or a comet: »There is one manifest declaration that there is a big [comet] tail full of light. It is that the sky would be full of light.«<sup>138</sup> Other predictions mentioned in the poem said that the Mahdi arrival would be at a time when there was war in Egypt or a »long dry season«.<sup>139</sup> Just as the natural order would be disturbed, the social order would be inverted, so that as a result slaves and children would no longer obey their masters and parents.

The destruction of whole cities (for example in Syria) or an Iraqi mosque was foretold by some from the Sokoto Caliphate. Thunder and

136 Hadija: *Untitled*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, Notebook 5, p. 46.

137 Hausa »Ba ðan askiya ba. [...] Ba haka ne ba.« Ibid., l. 4–6.

138 Hausa »Da bayanar da tamkaro da babban wutsuya wutsuyar nan mai haske ta. Kuma da fitar wuta cikin sammai mai yawan haske.« Ibid., p. 50, l. 25–26.

139 Hausa »dogon rani.« Ibid., l. 29.

loud voices would be heard and blood would flow on the streets. Many rumors listed by Hadija cited the duty to migrate to the site of the Mahdi in advance of his coming. One theory predicted that the real Mahdi and his followers would travel from Iraq with an army to Mecca and be defeated at first; another stated that all Egyptians would flee to the Sudan and then witness his coming. Another stanza talked about Moroccans traveling to Egypt and Arabians to Jordan for the awaited appearance. One third of all people would be killed in the destruction and then be saved after the Mahdi's arrival.<sup>140</sup> Mass migration was thus considered a clear sign for the end time. Unlike her brother Bello, Hadija clearly rejected any precise date or year of the Mahdi arrival. She focused on classical Islamic predictions that could only give some rough signs which people must interpret and recognize.

Some decades later, the Mahdist mass movements had become more urgent at the eastern Sokoto frontier. In the 1880s the Emir of Kano consulted the Sokoto Court with a report about some alarming processes, including migration movements from the Kano region eastwards in expectation of the Mahdi. Although this letter is missing, its Sokoto answer written by Mariyam, one of the youngest daughters of Uthman dan Fodio, still exists. In her letter she stressed that her father Uthman had agreed that there was a Mahdi to come, but that he had not foretold any exact date of his arrival:

»As for the question about which you have sought our opinion, namely that the people of Hausaland pass by your place from all directions and claim, among other things, that the time for the evacuation of Hausaland has come, the answer is as follows: Such people are utterly misguided [...] Indeed the Skaykh, my father, did mention that we shall emigrate from Hausaland but he did not specify the time. He, may God bless him, described for us the route of the *hijra* as follows: The beginning of the route is Bughu, then to Mushkam Fush, then to Sarathen to Sarwa, then to Andam, then to Warithu, then to Busu, then to the hill called Kughum, then to the hill called Kigha, [ca. ten more stopps]. Then after a journey of two days we shall reach the Nile. He did not specify the time of the *hijra* but when it comes it will be like fire on top of a mountain and it will not be hidden from anyone. One of the signs of the advent is the lack of rain which shall cause a serious drought, so that you

may dig a well in the river-bed and will not get any water. Another sign is the eruption of upheavals among the communities of the west [Morocco] who will leave their homes and move towards the east, but when they arrive here they will find that we have left before them. Those two signs are the principal signs, in our opinion, which have come down to us from the two Shaikhs, my father and his son Muhammad Bello [...]. As what you see at present, namely drought, famine, wars between us and the unbelievers, lack of prosperity and closed routes, these things are nothing and they are not among the things that will frighten us. The real signs, however, are the absence of rain and the upheavals among the communities of the west and their migration from the west to the east.«<sup>141</sup>

Mariyam therefore declared that all these migrants were wrong in choosing this time to migrate. She quotes what Uthman dan Fodio allegedly had taught others about the coming of the Mahdi in detail: The route would lead from Hausa eastwards to the Nile and even Moroccans would travel through Hausa. In the late nineteenth century, many scholars predicted that in the Islamic year 1300 (1882) the Mahdi would come. Thus many migrating groups set out eastwards. Mariyam's father probably did not fear that people would leave the Caliphate when the expected End of Time was in the year 1300, which was still quite distant from his own period. The route he had announced was the same that pilgrims in his time regularly used on their way to Mecca, and their number in his time was probably not alarming. The leaders of these migrations were often local scholars from rural areas whose followers were illiterate farmers.<sup>142</sup> The prelude to the »Mahdi year« had started from ca. 1855 onwards, when a group of hijra migrants was heading for Mecca expecting the advent of the Mahdi. They were led by a Massina scholar, Ibrahim Sharif Al-Din, of Fulbe origin.<sup>143</sup> In 1857/8 he passed the Hausa region. Almost twenty

**141** Cf. English translation by Al-Hajj: *Mahdist Tradition*, pp. 96–98. An unpublished Hausa translation was composed by Jean Boyd; cf. Mariyam: *Wasika*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, Notebook 6, pp. 9–18. The Arabic poem at Northwestern University (NU, Hunwick 15, pp. 60–63) is reportedly missing.

**142** Al-Hajj: *Mahdist Tradition*, pp. 93–94.

**143** See for example the treatise by the Qadiri Sufi Sulayman bin Ahmad Al-Fallati *Tasdid al-khawatir fi mawazin al-basa'ir* (NU, Hunwick 289).

years later the German traveler Gustav Nachtigal was told about this Mahdi migration during his African travels:

»His reputation was that of a holy person, and even in his home country many people followed him. He was strict in his religious duties and convention, simple in his diet and poor in his way of dressing. He never rode a beast of burden except when he was ill, but instead walked and used – disdaining shoes – only sandals. He ordered strict discipline in his community and the people believed he had supernatural and secret prophetic powers. This fanatic called the people for the meritorious pilgrimage wherever he was.«<sup>144</sup>

Since Nachtigal only visited Bornu and not Sokoto, he only retold stories from his Bornu informants. He passed by some abandoned villages where Al-Din had allegedly camped and gathered the inhabitants. According to the traveler, some pious authorities wanted to let the group pass, while other leaders intended to fight them with their armies. The rulers of Baguirmi were horrified to lose as many inhabitants as their Bornu neighbor had and therefore asked the migrating community to take another route. When they refused to change the route, Baguirmi attacked the pilgrims, defeated them and even killed their leader. Consequently, the community suffered from internal conflicts and hunger so that they finally dispersed.<sup>145</sup>

After the death of Muhammad Bello in 1837, the social unrest expressed by mass migration movements became manifest in the Caliphate policy. The succeeding Caliphate leader Abubakar, called Atiku, reigned as sultan until 1842 when he died in one of the regular war expeditions against Gobir. He composed most of his poems on the topic of the Mahdist hijra to Arabia and in these texts he claimed that his father had foretold this emigration as a duty for everyone. He adopted this intellectual

**144** German »Der Ruf eines heiligen Mannes ging ihm voraus, und schon aus seiner Heimath war ihm eine grosse Menge Volkes gefolgt. Er war streng in der Erfüllung seiner religiösen Pflichten und in seinen Sitten, einfach in seiner Nahrung und fast ärmlich in der Kleidung. Er bestieg nie ein Reitthier, ausser wenn er etwa krank war, sondern ging stets zu Fuss und bediente sich, Schuhe verschmähend, ausschliesslich der Sandalen. Er hielt strenge Manneszucht in seinem Gefolge, und das Volk schrieb ihm übernatürliche und geheimnisvolle, fast prophetische Kräfte zu. Ueberall rief der Fanatiker das Volk zur verdienstlichen Pilgerfahrt auf.« Nachtigal: Sahara und Sudan, vol. 2, p. 120.

**145** Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 120–123.



heritage founded by Uthman dan Fodio and used it for his military goals. As a result, he argued that only those people living in the frontier towns would eventually be led to the east and meet the Mahdi, whereas those escaping to the protected towns in the inner Caliphate would be led to the west in order to meet the Antichrist.<sup>146</sup> Sultan Abubakar used the Mahdi traditions and beliefs in order to attract people to move to the frontier towns in the east where new territories were conquered and the present inhabitants expelled (cf. chapter IV.5.5). Since he was not able to prevent the migrants from traveling to the east, he at least wanted them to resettle within the Caliphate frontier zone and not at the Nile.

The dominant direction of Mahdist pilgrimage movements was to the east. The east was usually referred to as Mecca, Medina or the Holy Cities. References to other places on the Arab Peninsula (Arab. *hijaz*) are scarce in the Jihadists' text corpus.<sup>147</sup> The Holy Cities were believed to ascend to heaven together with Jesus and all Koranic copies at the End of Time and after the Rise of the Mahdi.<sup>148</sup> Those cities and the Koran were considered gateways to another world. And from the hereafter a chimaera beast would appear and mark all Muslims and unbelievers. This gigantic animal combined the eyes of the wild pig, the ostrich neck, elephant ears, lion chest and tail, a ram nose, camel legs, antelope horns and leopard skin.<sup>149</sup> Leopard skins were probably well-known in the Hausa parts of the Caliphate, because the southern emirates often delivered leopard skins along with a number of slaves as annual tributes.<sup>150</sup>

**146** Unfortunately the original manuscript could not be acquired in Northern Nigeria due to lack of security. See instead a summary of its content in Al-Hajj: Mahdist Tradition, pp. 92–93.

**147** The only reference that was found is a warning poem about Judgement Day by Nana Asmau, in which she mentioned that – being one of the predicted Plagues – a fire had started in the *hijaz* already: »Fitar wuta ga hijaz.« The Hausa Ajami manuscript is held at SOAS: Nana Asmau: *Sharuddan kujama*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 84.

**148** Ibid., p. 88.

**149** Ibid.

**150** There is for example some evidence that Nupe rulers during the 1820s used leopard skins as presents and tribute. Cf. Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 2, p. 109. See also on leopard skins as diplomatic presents Lander's account about his stay at the Niger shores in Nupe in 1830; cf. Transcription of John Lander's Journal Book No. 2, 1830, Ms. 42326, John Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, edited

Likewise, ostriches were kept at many royal courts and used as animate presents.<sup>151</sup> Clapperton also reported that in a mass battle of united Caliphate military against Gobir, many mounted soldiers had ostrich feathers attached to their helmets.<sup>152</sup> In general, the ostrich was perceived as a royal animal in Hausa poetry.<sup>153</sup> But in Sokoto, the center of pious political representation, luxurious animal skins were not regularly used.<sup>154</sup> All outstanding physical animal characteristics were put together in Nana Asmau's descriptive poem lines. These beastly figures served as an ideal type of the wild and ›unnatural‹ animal appearing in an époque gone wild. Thus the poet Nana Asmau explained: »[The beast] combines the physical attributes of the offspring of the bush [*yan daji*].«<sup>155</sup> But this animal was also destined to communicate to all people left on earth whether they would enter paradise or not, because it marked the Muslims with different brandings than non-Muslims. This marking of people's bodies was probably referring to the branding of slaves in North Africa; in this practice, usually the forehead was chosen for these painful brandings. Mahdism was a factor that unsettled the Jihadist rule. Jihadist politicians could not block the pilgrimage routes to the east, but at the same time they tried to prevent panic and mass migration to a Mahdi figure. They denied the coming of the last Prophet in their time and wanted the people to stay calm and be patient. Nevertheless, they wanted to be in the right territory (the east) when he arrived, and not in the west where the ›unbelievers‹ would be branded by horrible beasts.

version online at <http://www.tubmaninstitute.ca/sites/default/files/file/Appendix I, JL Text John Murray Archive D2 Nov 2010.pdf> (16.07.2014), p. 6.

**151** Lander was for example offered an ostriche by the Yawuri king in 1830; cf. Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 2, p. 275.

**152** Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 187.

**153** For example in the term *kazan sarki* (chicken of the king) as a synonym for ostriche. Cf. Prietze: *Pflanze und Tier*, p. 891.

**154** See Zehnle: *War and Wilderness*. Burnham and Last agree with my results; cf. Burnham / Last: *From Pastoralist to Politician*, p. 334.

**155** Hausa كمر بيسا دك د يان داج. Nana Asmau: *Sharuddan kujama*, p. 88.

### 2.5 Conclusion: Rumor and Migration

The pilgrims crossing the Central Sahel were by no means a homogenous group. But they became a distinct and coherent community during their journey. Common prayers, a shared goal and the dangers of traveling generated a distinct pilgrim discourse. One major feature of this discourse was the constant differentiation between safe spaces and dangerous spaces which coincided with the Islamic territories and the countries of ›unbelief‹. Along the Sahel hajj route to the Red Sea, legends of southern cannibal neighbors were a ubiquitous narrative. Their home regions were never exactly determined but always ›south‹ from the pilgrimage route. This spatial discourse was already developed before the Sokoto Jihad. When the British traveler Browne visited the Sudan and Dar Fur in the late 1790s, he reported legendary stories about the ›Gnum Gnum‹ pagan land, where allegedly all slaves came from. They would eat their war prisoners and use the skin of their hands and faces as war trophies. They would use poisoned weapons which were prepared by the women. Browne added: ›I have conversed with slaves who came thence, and they admit the fact.‹<sup>156</sup> The pilgrimage informants of Browne were the most horrified by the ›Gnum Gnum‹ manner of warfare; they would fight to death and never retreat. Many Muslim priests from the pilgrimage caravans produced certain spells and talismans against poisoned arrows while on their journey.<sup>157</sup> Muslim authorities were hired as guards, even though they were completely unarmed.<sup>158</sup> Burckhardt's pilgrimage informants called the pagans south of Dar Fur ›Yemyem‹ and their lands were considered very mountainous as in medieval Arabic geographies.<sup>159</sup> The stereotype of the dangerous cannibals south of the pilgrimage route was transferred through space – from the Eastern Sahel to the Central Sahel – and through time – from medieval Arabic legends to pilgrimage rumor of the nineteenth century.

In the Jihadist accounts on pilgrimage routes, the sections between the Central Sahel and Arabia were often not even mentioned. If refer-

156 Browne: *Travels in Africa*, p. 310.

157 Boyd: *From the Niger to the Nile*, vol. 2, p. 15.

158 Cf. Burckhardt: *Travels in Nubia*, p. 271.

159 *Ibid.*, pp. 486–487.

ring to them, they were summarized briefly as dangerous paths through deserts and animal spaces. The pilgrims usually did not pay attention to the topographical features of this part of the route. When Burckhardt interviewed some Bornu pilgrims and traders about the itinerary of the Bornu-Mecca route, they mentioned many contradictory features from their mental maps. Very surprisingly for the Swiss explorer, the Chari River was sometimes said to flow from south to north, and at other occasions from north to south.<sup>160</sup> It was in any case full of fish, hippos, crocodiles, and the shores were populated by lions, giraffes, and elephants.<sup>161</sup> Another Bornu informant told Burckhardt that he had never heard of a large lake (Lake Chad) in his country. He called the »Tsad« a river instead, which allegedly was flooded yearly and a female slave had to be thrown into the water at that time of the year in order to appease the water spirit. He called the Chari »Baguirmi River.«<sup>162</sup> The knowledge was usually restricted to the home regions, southern »pagan« neighbors, and the Holy Cities.

In the Sokoto Caliphate the pilgrims were distributors of new religious knowledge and of rumor about the glory of Arabia and the dangerous inhabitants of the elusive »south«. In the Jihadist texts the pilgrimage discourse was a discourse over imaginary spaces and fictional journeys. For the Jihadists it remained a blemish that they did not pilgrimage to Mecca. Therefore they styled short journeys through forests as pilgrimage experiences (Abdullah dan Fodio) and argued that jihad warfare, certain prayers, and mental journeys could replace the bodily movement to Arabia. When the pilgrimage routes became paths for Mahdist mass migration the Sokoto elite became threatened. Pilgrimage caravans were typically organized with a hierarchical structure, they had some sort of wealth, their members were often emotionalized by the Islamic mission they were undertaking, and the caravans owned professional guards with some military equipment. Such mass migration could readily turn into a political or military movement. Thus mass pilgrimages were considered dangerous, and the Jihadists tried to control the pilgrim groups and Mahdist rumors.

**160** Ibid., pp. 477–478.

**161** Ibid.

**162** Ibid., p. 489.

### 3. Travelers by Profession: »Water and Its Threats«

By the nineteenth century, long-distance routes had been established in the Sahel which were used by diverse types of travelers. Some of these were pilgrims who might accomplish a pilgrim odyssey only once or maybe twice in a lifetime. Others were professional travelers who were in the first instance identified as such, before further characterization as members of a certain clan or ethnic group. Professional travelers emerged in this time as new social entities. The influence of these new »travel occupations« and the social role such migrants had as transmitters of concepts about other spaces became prominent in popular stories of the Central Sahel around the year 1800. These stories began to differentiate between different itinerary professions.

In one such tale six juvenile brothers had to choose their occupation. The first son became a soldier: »I will get up and go to the king's residence, that the king [*mei* (mai) in Kanuri] may provide me with a horse, for I like war.«<sup>1</sup> This son obviously linked royal warfare inseparably with horseback riding. The second son decided to become his antagonist: a highway robber. Highway robbers were considered dangerous in every West African road network and therefore political leaders were always intent on protecting the travelers in their spheres of influence. The less safe the routes in a leader's domain, the less powerful he was considered to be. The preferred targets of highway robbers were travelers who transported trade goods in addition to their personal trade equipment. So unsurprisingly, the third son of the Kanuri story intended to be a trader in his adult life: »The employment which I like, is, I will go with my asses, my bullocks of burden, and my camels, and I will trade.«<sup>2</sup> And again certain animal species serve as identifying features of an itinerant profession. The fourth and fifth brothers became a farmer and a blacksmith, and the last one decided to be a market thief. In the end of the tragic fable, the soldier died in a war, the highway robber and the thief were executed, and the merchant was killed when he was robbed. Only the blacksmith and the farmer – both staying in their homes – survived

1 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, pp. 26, 145.

2 Ibid., pp. 27, 146.

the challenges of their professions. In this story, the travelerscapes of trade and war were presented as being full of violence and as decidedly dangerous for those who occupied them.

In the Central Sahel travelers such as these and horror stories explaining their frequent disappearance were common phenomena. The following sub-chapters will explain how travelers contributed to the distribution of knowledge about unfamiliar spaces and their inhabitants. The professions were organized in the manner that the Jihadists had for classifying different occupations. For example in addition to traders,<sup>3</sup> Nana Asmau listed Sufi scholars and teachers and also messengers.<sup>4</sup> These professional travelers contributed to the Jihad by communicating and forming geographical and social stereotypes. Although the Jihadists usually did not mention where they acquired this rumor knowledge, the transfer of ideas can be analyzed from more subtle Jihadist accounts. From a security-political perspective, the Sokoto Jihadists promoted the image of the Caliphate as a safe place to travel. The Jihadists were intellectually dependent on traveling scholars and book traders. And besides they promised to turn the »Sudan« into a peaceful place to live and to pass through. It was a sign of social prestige for the Jihadist rulers to host these travelers. In her elegy for Muhammed Bello, his sister Nana Asmau devoted a whole stanza to his support for strangers and visitors: »[He was] great to strangers by donating to prevent dangers; and he protected the rights of the inferior strangers by lodging them and providing them benefits.«<sup>5</sup> Explaining that especially »defeated« strangers were welcomed by the Jihadists, the author was probably speaking of people living in conquered areas. Nana Asmau portrayed the Jihadists as tolerant and willing to integrate traveling strangers. Professional travelers were perceived as weak and dependent on the mercy of regional political leaders.

3 Although traders were not integrated into Nana Asmau's list, they are regularly mentioned by the Jihadists in treatises about market regulations and the general risks of travel in general.

4 Nana Asmau listed all close followers of Uthman dan Fodio in this text; cf. Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 170–172.

5 Arab. و تحظیم غربا ببندل خطیر. و حفظ حقوق الغریب الکسیر. بابوائه و بنفع کثیر. Cf. Nana Asmau: *Elegy on Muhammad Bello*, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*, p. 159.

But travelers also possessed a distinctive power with regard to the power-knowledge complex. They were well informed about news and gossip through far-reaching and influential networks. Some traveled long trade routes, while others linked the communicative spheres of urban centers and rural areas. Travelers transported and modified geographical concepts about the »Sudan«, this world, and the hereafter.

### 3.1 Traders: »At the Edge of the Forest«

The first professional travelers that are mentioned in this chapter are at the same time the most numerous. By the time of the Jihad, traders already formed a prominent group of mobile actors and were identified with special names. In Hausa, itinerant traders were called *fatake*,<sup>6</sup> in Fulfulde, their name was *geybe*,<sup>7</sup> and in Arabic *tujjār*. Their lifestyle was structured by the needs of road-life. A merchant journey usually started with the preparation of the luggage, the beasts of burden, and the organization of the caravan. But preparations also included a series of religious practices and the attachment of talismans. Natural signs, such as weather or animal life, had to be read carefully as omens for the trip. When a Kanuri village boy accompanied his father to the town for trade, the appearance of a certain snake on the road immediately caused his father to cancel the trip and postpone their departure to the next day.<sup>8</sup> Since journeys were considered perilous ventures, different supernatural rituals were practiced for protection. The human settlements were usually portrayed as places of shelter located in the dangerous in-between spaces.

Whenever the traders arrived in a town, they entered a space that was under a certain jurisdiction. This typically included institutions that penalized criminal acts with corporal punishment. Certain places of the Kano market, for example, were used for certain public physical penalties: »On the cleared wheat ground people were executed. Their execu-

6 See »färke/fälke« in Bargery's Hausa Dictionary, online since 2002: <http://maguzawa.dyndns.ws/frame.html> (29.09.2014).

7 Westermann: Handbuch der Ful-Sprache, p. 164.

8 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 195.

tioner was called *Hauni*. [...] To the west of the market hands were cut off, it was the *Birgiji* who cut [them] off.«<sup>9</sup> As a child Alhaji Umaru witnessed two executions of former judges (*alkali*) by decision of the *sarkin Kano*. At the second one, Umaru stated, the accused Ahmadu Rufa'i was brought out of the prayer in the Friday mosque and killed at the prison compound. It is significant that the head of the prison of Kano was at the same time the head of the market (*San Kurmii*).<sup>10</sup> From that we draw two conclusions: It shows that trade and crime occurred in the same urban spheres and were thus allocated to one office holder. It also shows that the power of the king was demonstrated in the most shocking way where it must have been the most fragile, namely within the networks of traders and scholars. The mosque and the marketplace were the places where mobile people gathered and formed the situative public sphere.<sup>11</sup>

The Jihadists clearly aimed to convince traveling merchants to support their Jihad. When propagating the Jihad to merchants, Uthman dan Fodio attacked the Hausa rulers for seizing the property of any traveler dying within their sphere of influence. According to dan Fodio this rule was unjust in Islamic law. But this custom had not completely vanished during the Sokoto Jihad, as Barth reported on a merchant accompanying his caravan from Zinder to Katsina, who died in Katsina. His property was seized even though officials had promised to send it back to his relatives.<sup>12</sup> Obviously this matter was important for any traveler – whether European or African – so that dan Fodio chose to broach the issue of inheritance in the event of the death of a merchant. Uthman dan Fodio even took this argumentation one step further with his condemnation of any state taxation of itinerant merchants.<sup>13</sup> The collection of tolls was, of course, a major source of income for the pre-Jihad city states of Hausa. Sokoto Jihadist politics thus supported trade without the interference of

9 Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, p. 66.

10 Ibid., p. 67.

11 The accused was found guilty of either the attempt to poison the king or to cast a spell on the king and have another court official succeeding him as ruler. The expression »yi sammu« (Hausa) is equivocal here. Piłaszewicz translated »bewitched« (ibid.), but the Arabic root سَم indicates »to poison«. It either means a physical or sorcerous attack on the king's health.

12 Cf. Barth: Travels and Discoveries, vol. 4 (London), p. 104.

13 Cf. Hiskett: Kitāb Al-Farq, p. 568.



toll borders, and they introduced other taxes that were considered to be in accordance with Islam. According to Jihadist plans, each emir was obliged to impose taxes of one fifth on the traders when selling on a market instead of demanding taxes on the roads.<sup>14</sup>

The Jihadist ideology was dependent on large trading networks in order to import Islamic literature and other luxurious products from the north. From the south, the Central Sahel received slaves and different fruits and vegetables. The Jihadist politicians supported trade and sought to foster it, and yet the rulers were scared of the power of large caravans. The Bornu Sultan wrote, for example, in his letter to the British king that the British should only send four to five traders to Bornu, not more.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the Jihadists wanted to turn the markets into spheres that only men were allowed to enter. Uthman dan Fodio asked the market women to stay at home in one of his treatises:

»And among the bad practices is the entering of houses without permission [by men]. Furthermore the veil is missing, when women enter [the house of] the husband's brothers, their [male] cousins, their sisters' husbands or the husbands of their aunts or friends of their husband. And the loneliness of a strange man with a woman and traveling together, when there is no representative of the husband with them, is not allowed. And the women go out to the markets crowded together with men. And they go out on these tours around the town to buy anklets, bracelets, decorated dresses, and cotton. And this does not occur without desires. And there is a lack of reference to the book of Allāh. [...] And the husband is misled by the faithfulness of his wife; he is undutiful with her, so that he leaves her with strange men.«<sup>16</sup>

The spheres of trade and markets are presented here as being morally dangerous for women, who could meet strange men without being controlled by male family members. In a Hausa manuscript collected in the late nineteenth century, married women are obliged to »give up

14 Sheikh Usman B. Foduye: *Usulul-adliluwullatil Umuri*. Translated by Mafara (ed.): *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, p. 15.

15 An English translation of this letter was published in Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, p. 372.

16 Translated by the author from Siddiqi's Arabic edition. Cf. Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-af-hām*, p. ٨٩.

going to three places: the market, a public feast and the place of drawing water.<sup>17</sup> A woman was supposed to always be accompanied outside the house and cover her body except her feet and eyes. Her voice was supposed to be quiet and her mouth shut when speaking. Uthman's daughter Nana Asmau adopted this concept of female behavior and female spaces. Preaching to women not to enter public spaces without good reason was a common element of every Hausa *Wa'azi* (religious warning) poem. Nana Asmau explained that women should only leave their houses in order to get food or religious education. She made use of both the Arabic term *ilmi* and the Hausa word *sanin* when describing knowledge.<sup>18</sup> Female scholars, such as Nana herself, were dependent on this right for education in order to travel. Female followers were gathered in the countryside and called to the towns for their studies. When Nana Asmau dedicated an elegy to her deceased companion teacher Hawa, she mentioned that Hawa was traveling all through the year in order to summon female scholars and lead them to Nana Asmau's school.<sup>19</sup> But the ideal woman from a male Jihadist perspective would only rarely leave her house and would devote herself exclusively to her husband's and her children's needs. Women, for example, were expected to prepare water bowls for their husbands' ritual washing and to have meals ready on time.<sup>20</sup> And more precisely, a good wife was to stay in her room most of her time.<sup>21</sup> Uthman dan Fodio prohibited specifically going out on the night of the Ramadan feast for women.<sup>22</sup>

17 Hausa »Mata da ki suna ta ber taffia uku daga kasua khar gunbuki doka rua.« Cf. Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, pp. 6–7.

18 Hausa ماما كبر فتا سي للرورا [الرورا] طي بطئي دنتيبو غعلم. نن غالدين بتر سنن فرض [فرل] عين. شي كسا مئي كو فتا باب كوم حي. See Nana Asmau: *Wa'azu*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 155.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 172–173. The Hausa Ajami version is obscure here, so that I was not able to review the original text and instead had to rely on Jean Boyd's draft translation.

20 See, for example, a poem on misbehaving women composed by Uthman dan Fodio in Fulfulde, photocopy at SOAS; Uthman dan Fodio: *Wakar Shehu*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, S2/1.

21 *Ibid.*, S4.

22 This 27<sup>th</sup> night of the Islamic fasting month is traditionally (and not in accordance with the Koran) celebrated as the one night of the year when the revelation of the Koran happened.

»Among these illusions is the belief that it is allowed for the people to assemble for Koran recitation in the 27<sup>th</sup> night of Ramadan. Then they have become accustomed at this time in this night to a mixing up of men and women; and enraptured by obscenities in the recitation; and among them are rivals bragging about their opinions.«<sup>23</sup>

From repeatedly published warning against women traveling and trading on the markets, we can, of course, conclude that women were traditionally participating in merchant traveling and as market store keepers. However, in the narratives of male traders, women are only seldom mentioned as active traders. And yet, we only have historical sources coming from male merchants. These accounts may not be read as reliable sources on the gendered spaces of trade, because in theory they followed the ideal of the »good wife« at home.

Communication in the trade sphere was often characterized by bargaining with different articles of exchange or currencies. Popular currencies, for example, were gold, kola nuts, or salt. All of these items were traded from the Hausa region along the Sahel to Northern Ghana: »As for us, we sold salt at a very high price,«<sup>24</sup> Umaru explained. Kauri was another currency that was common across vast regions of Africa and especially in the coastal areas. The intensification of trade was followed by the establishment of two major merchant languages in the Sahel: Hausa and Arabic. However, in eighteenth century Hausa and Bornu, Arabic was not widespread. When August von Einsiedel visited Tunis and interviewed North African informants about the states south of the Sahara, they explained to him that in Bornu and Hausa Arabic was not common as a *lingua franca* because Arabic-speaking traders from North Africa only traveled as far as Murzuk in the Sahara. There, they met Sahelian traders and exchanged their goods.<sup>25</sup> The major language of the merchantscape of the Central Sahel clearly was Hausa by the turn of the century in 1800. Throughout the nineteenth century Hausa constantly expanded as the dominant commercial language of West Africa. In the 1870s, Krause noted that every North African traveler regularly visit-

23 Translation by the author. Cf. Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afhām*, p. ۱۱۷.

24 Piłaszewicz (ed.): *Hausa Prose Writings*, p. 70.

25 Einsiedel: *Nachricht von den innern Ländern*, p. 447.

ing the Sahara merchant towns had to learn the Hausa language because Hausa traders could typically not speak Arabic:

»The commercial languages in Ghat are Arabic and Hausa, and all merchants of the north coming to Ghat speak both languages; because merchants from Hausa or Bornu often only speak their mother tongue which forces Arabs to learn their language.«<sup>26</sup>

Not only languages and currencies were adjusted as a mode of communication in the trade networks. A powerful ›sign language‹ was Islam, expressed by the movements of prayer, Islamic utensils (talismans etc.), or typical Islamic phrases, like »thank God« or »by the will of God«. And while traders of the Central Sahel developed their own Muslim identity based on certain identifiers, they also often claimed to be more pious and educated in Islam than pre-Jihad rulers of West Africa. Niebuhr's North African informant Abderrahman Aga told him, for example, that »the kings of Afnu and Bernu [Bornu] are Mohammedans of the Maliki sect, just like the Maghreb Sunnites.«<sup>27</sup> But they and their mediating court traders only pretended to be Muslims and would instead worship »the sun or the first animal they may see in the morning«.<sup>28</sup> This eighteenth-century source already makes clear that Hausa traders well before the Jihad claimed to be Muslims but were not respected as such by their North African colleagues. They were constantly treated as cheating unbelievers and challenged to prove their faith and knowledge of Islam.

### *Transferring Merchant Concepts of Space*

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Sokoto trade system was part of a large network reaching from the North African Mediterranean to the southeastern Sokoto Emirate Adamawa. Krause's collected itin-

26 German »Die Handelssprachen in Chat sind arabisch und haussanisch und alle Kaufleute des Nordens, die nach Chat gehen, sprechen diese beiden Sprachen; denn die aus Haussa oder Bornu kommenden Kaufleute sprechen oft nur ihre Muttersprache, was die Araber zwingt, deren Sprache zu erlernen.« Cf. Krause: Ghat in der Sahara, p. 304.

27 German »Die Könige von Afnu und Bernu sind Mohammedaner, und zwar wie die Maggrebi Sunniten der Sekte Maleki«; Niebuhr: Das Innere von Afrika, p. 980.

28 Ibid.

erary demonstrates that some North African traders regularly traveled to Kano and afterwards along the Benue River via Zaria to Adamawa and back to the Saharan Ghat.<sup>29</sup> And along with the expanding trade networks spatial knowledge was transferred, modified and gossiped about. De Castelnau's slave informant Mahammah described his service in a trade caravan from Kano to Kukuwa, the Bornu capital, carrying goods on his head. Unfortunately, we are not informed whether he had been trading goods independently or on behalf of a principal at that time. Anyway, this informant distinguished two sorts of rivers of the Hausa region: Those that finally flowed into the Niger («Quarah») and those leading to Lake Chad.<sup>30</sup> He narrated the route with many references to rivers and landscape when passing sand deserts and swamp areas. When Mahammah was interviewed, he also remembered a trade caravan from Kano to Agadez which had to transport drinking water on camels for one week. They were walking distances of about 25 miles each day until arriving in Agadez where he stayed for a month. As a trader he was obviously and very understandably worried about the sources of water in strange regions. To him this place was remarkable because the local people had to fetch water from wells as there were no streams or pools in town.<sup>31</sup> He was also concerned about wild animals considered a threat to humans. The slave of Kano origin reported the presence of wildcats and also a huge and dangerous bird that was suspected of attacking travelers on the route some days' journey east of Kano.<sup>32</sup>

Both humans and animals of the forests were judged to be dangerous by the long-distance traders of the Central Sahel. They feared brigand groups in the thickets waiting to rob trade caravans passing through the woods. And on the other hand, many were afraid of hyenas that were said to approach the fire places at night in order to eat leftovers of the grilled meat. Among the gossip of trade caravans was a story about a hyena that stole a sleeping mat because it thought this was a human

29 This source is giving an itinerary description: »Saria, Keffi, Abd es Senga, Lafia Baribari und Wukari.« Cf. Krause: Ghat in der Sahara, p. 315.

30 For evidence on his – at least temporary – merchant activities see for example the Kano-Wadai itinerary in Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 25.

31 Ibid., pp. 16–20.

32 Ibid., pp. 20–21.

being. Other stories had it that hyenas captured little children from the caravans, bringing them into the forest and eating them if the young boys and girls were not carefully hidden. Yet a third kind of horror story told of magical powers of the hyena that allowed for it to escape without ever being harmed by humans.<sup>33</sup> Dorugu (see *Figure 14*), the servant of Barth's little »explorer« caravan assumed that inhabitants of the forest hills themselves were afraid of their own home region: »Gondo [Gwandu?] is located in the mountains, it is small but populated. I think they are scared in this place because they live at the edge of the forest.«<sup>34</sup>



*Figure 14:* Barth's servants Abbega (l.) and Dorugu (r.)

The travelers that established their businesses in the Sokoto Caliphate traditionally considered the routes as dangerous. Thus, these spaces of trade were considered inappropriate for women and children, who could

<sup>33</sup> See for example Dorugu's description of the merchants' fear of hyenas (called by their Hausa name *kura*) at night in his autobiography; cf. Schön (ed.): *Magana Hausa*, pp. 53–54. For a discussion of this source see Zehnle / Benneh-Oberschewen: *Eine afrikanische Entdeckung Hamburgs*.

<sup>34</sup> Hausa »Gari nan shi daga cikin dutsi shi ke; gari karami ne, amma acike da mutane. Amma ina tamaha suna cin tsoro daga nan, don suna kusa ga bakin dazi.« Cf. Schön (ed.): *Magana Hausa*, p. 59.

either be kidnapped by highway robbers or attacked by wild beasts in the forests. The traders interacted with each other using Islamic greetings and rituals and construed the forests as a non-Islamic and dangerous space.

### 3.2 *Sufi Travelers: »That Journey to Allah«*

Islamic Sufism appeared as early as Islam itself. Moreover, certain practices and lifestyles connected with religious asceticism and mysticism are even older than that. In the Sahel region, Sufism was rising in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – the pre-Jihad era. During this time religion became a more private, almost intimate matter and less state- and court-based. Mediators of Sufi knowledge were primarily members of brotherhoods<sup>35</sup> who were organized on a transregional scale, and were thus not limited by political boundaries. To receive spiritual instruction from fellow Sufis they had to cross long distances. And according to Uthman dan Fodio, Sufi asceticism involved constant praying for hours, extra fasting and traveling.<sup>36</sup>

#### *The Qadiriyya Tariqa: Brotherhoods as Paths*

Sufi knowledge was preserved and taught from generation to generation in different *turuq* (literally »paths«),<sup>37</sup> the Islamic »brotherhoods« or »orders«. These were intellectual networks, and the term is best translated as »brotherhoods« because the devotees often referred to themselves as *ikhwan*<sup>38</sup> (»brothers«) in Arabic. From a theological perspective, the different brotherhoods resembled each other closely and their collections of prayers only differed from each other in detail. Doctrinal disputes were

35 Al-Hajj: The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad, p. 6.

36 One detailed essay on the advantages of strict fasting by Uthman dan Fodio is among the collected manuscripts of Gottlob Adolf Krause; cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Sauq al-sadiqim*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms 984, 13 f.

37 Arab. طريق / طرق. Brenner is confusing the literal and connotational meanings. See Brenner: *Tariqa in West Africa*, p. 34.

38 Arab. إخوان.

mostly fought and solved by writing letters and commentaries. »The *turuq* institutionalized *tasawwuf* [sufism] and provided a structure and method for the pursuit of one's inner religious development,«<sup>39</sup> Brenner explained with regard to these West African brotherhoods. By initiation into a *tariqa*, former students gained the right to teach the knowledge independently. There was a mystic aura of secrecy surrounding this knowledge including certain prayers. These written and spoken words were considered to possess spiritual power which could potentially be misused. Secrecy also surrounded the visions and miracles (*karamat*) a pious Sufi could receive as a present by the mercy of God. Individuals who were provided with these characteristics of sainthood were regarded as innovators of Islam. »Perhaps most importantly, from the perspective of social and political transformation, the *awliya* [Sufi saints] were often seen, and portrayed themselves, as opposed to established political authority,«<sup>40</sup> says Brenner.

Even more precious than the actual Islamic knowledge that was taught, probably was the genealogy of knowledge transmission. Knowledge was considered the more powerful, the more authentic or original it was judged to be. *Tariqa* prayers were often traced back to a famous deceased Sufi whom the Prophet had instructed in a vision or dream. The *silsila*, or line of knowledge transmission, therefore included all persons who had once received and transmitted the secret knowledge. And just like the ancestral migrations commemorated by the Fulbe Jihadists, this Sufi *silsila* also linked the Sahel with the Sahara, North Africa and indirectly with the Middle East. In West Africa, the aspect of secrecy and spiritual linkage was probably dominant up to the nineteenth century when some brotherhoods increasingly began to forge a common identity and became »public institutions«<sup>41</sup> and political movements.

These processes were initiated by scholars such as Sidi Al-Mukhtar Al-Kunti and Al-Hajj Umar Al-Futi. Certain leaders were no longer willing to restrict their power to religious matters. They aimed to implement pious Islamic orders through a change in society. Al-Kunti (1729–1811) founded the *Qadiriyya-Mukhtariyya* branch of the Qadiriyya brother-

39 Brenner: *Tariqa in West Africa*, p. 34.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., p. 35.



hoods in Mali.<sup>42</sup> Sufi scholars before him had often lived an ascetic and almost impoverished life, depending on donations for their material subsistence. This view of poor scholars of Islam is still evident in oral literature which featured the poor traveling *mallam* who asked people for money or food and in return offered to settle disputes according to Islamic law or assisted by praying for pregnancy, rain or against diseases. Al-Kunti however, desisted from this mendicant lifestyle and his followers started to earn their own living. They gradually secluded themselves from society and lived in economically self-sufficient communities. Having been one social group among others before, they turned into their own autarkic society. They were actively involved in Saharan trade, accumulated wealth, and »insisted that there was a clear link between economic success and religious piety.«<sup>43</sup> Traveling in poverty was no longer accepted as a lifelong lifestyle, but was seen rather as a certain stage of young adulthood. This was expressed by Al-Kunti's son:

»When the Kunta youth reached maturity their ultimate desire would be to travel in search of knowledge. After acquiring a substantial grounding in the religious and mystical sciences they would concentrate on accumulating wealth. Then they would seek to marry into most noble families. Each of them would become distinguished for his knowledge, piety and wealth.«<sup>44</sup>

Traveling around in poverty was considered a ›rite of passage‹ on a larger lifelong path to material and spiritual wealth. The brotherhood branch was developed with these premises based on Kunta ethnic identity. In 1747, the 18-year-old Al-Kunti traveled to a famous Sufi tomb and on this pilgrimage tour he established a network with other pilgrims. He used pilgrimage and Sufi networks for establishing his own community. Membership in Al-Kunti's branch of the *Qadiriyya* brotherhood was either attained by blood descent or initiation. However, family ties were probably the more important aspect, and one may assume that the *tariqa* »was employed as a means to cement blood ties, and to complement and extend them.«<sup>45</sup> In the marketplace of prayer selling and receiving, the

42 See for example Batran: Qadiriyya Brotherhood.

43 Brenner: Tariqa in West Africa, p. 39.

44 Quoted by Batran: Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, p. 235.

45 Brenner: Tariqa in West Africa, p. 42.

compilation of prayers by Al-Kunti was in highest demand. In contrast to Uthman dan Fodio, Al-Kunti did not levy formal taxes on his community but instead received all state income in the form of presents from his followers. And whereas Al-Kunti built his community according to brotherhood structures, the Sokoto Jihadists model of organization was never set up with reference to any *tariqa*, even if scholars used to assume this nexus.<sup>46</sup> In the early Sokoto Caliphate, Sufi brotherhoods were an intimate element of personal belief and their networks were spiritual rather than political. To the ulama itself and to leading Jihadists, brotherhood membership may have been an important matter, but it was certainly not used for Jihadist mass mobilization.

Al-Kunti's direct followers counted Massina, Bornu (during the rule of Muhammad Al-Baqiri),<sup>47</sup> and Sokoto among their allies. Al-Baqiri and »the turbaned and *ulama* of the Fulbe«<sup>48</sup> had allegedly sent presents and sworn loyalty. In this text, the Al-Kuntis claimed they had influenced the whole »Sudan«, West Africa and Saharan populations with their movement. And they also mentioned the three leaders of the early Sokoto triumvirate: »In particular one should mention Uthman bin Fudi, who was summoning the people to Allah, his brother, the *faqih* and *wazir*, Abdullah, and his son and *wazir*, the learned Muhammad Bello.«<sup>49</sup> It is claimed that there was intensive correspondence with all these leaders. Some of Al-Kunti's members were either originally from the Hausa region or were trading and traveling in the area. Three of them were traced in Batran's study: Alfa Nuhu bin Al-Tahir Al-Fulani Al-Masini, Al-Imam Al-Sufi Al-Qadi Al-Hajj Muhammad Al-Afiyya, and Saiyidna Wahib Al-Amawi.<sup>50</sup> And according to Uthman dan Fodio, he and his brother were initiated into the Qadiriyya brotherhood by the above-mentioned Alfa Nuhu:

»We should like, however, to terminate this book by mentioning our uninterrupted chain of connection [*silsila*] to him – may God be pleased with him

46 See for example Martin: Muslim Brotherhoods, p. 15.

47 But Muhammad Al-Baqiri can rather be identified as the Air sultan reigning 1815–1816.

48 Quoted in Batran: Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, p. 344.

49 Ibid.

50 Batran: Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, p. 346.

– which comes to us from Sidi Muhammad al-Mukhtar bin Ahmad bin Abi Bakr al-Kunti al-Ummawi, the link of the Qadiri *wird*.<sup>51</sup> The learned Shaykh Nuh authorized our entry into it. He received it from his Shaykh Sidi Ahmad al-Mukhtar, [...] who had it from his shaykh [...] who had it from his Skaykh Sidi Muhammad bin Abd al-Karim al-Maghili.«<sup>52</sup>

Dan Fodio was well aware of the network of Sufi scholars he was part of after attending Alfa Nuhu's lectures. As this text was written right after the foundation of the Caliphate in December 1813, Alfa Nuhu's visit must be dated during the last Jihad years. The second person, Al-Afiyya, was mentioned by Muhammad Bello in his text *Infraq al-maysur*. Bello explained that he had gained his *ijaza*, the permission to transmit and teach the doctrines of the Qadiriyya-Mukhtariyya brotherhood, from Al-Hajj Muhammad Al-Afiyya who had in turn received his legitimation from »Al-Sheikh Al-Mukhtar«.<sup>53</sup> Bello even quoted the whole special brotherhood prayer instructions – the so-called *wird* in which the members are told exactly what and when and how many times to pray. Muhammad Bello argued that an inhabitant of the Al-Kunti dominion had once come to Uthman dan Fodio:

»I was once sitting with the *sheikh* when a man [Al-Afiyya?] arrived and asked for permission to be heard. So he went to the *sheikh* and said: »I witness the appearance, I have seen you three times.« The *sheikh* said: »I witness.« Then the *sheikh* said: »What is the reason for this conversation?« He said: »[...] I was a servant of Al-Mukhtar [Al-Kunti] and I reached this land like I wished thanks to God, then I returned to our lands and came to the *sheikh* our Lord Al-Mukhtar and he asked me about my journey and the lands I passed. [...] And I said to him: »I was in the lands of the *sheikh* our Lord Uthman bin Fudi.« And he said: »And did you arrive at the *sheikh* and did you see him personally?« I said: »Yes indeed. I witnessed him showing up and I saw Uthman bin Fudi three times.« He said: »No, he didn't meet you until the day of departure and he had chased you away.« And I said: »Just like I saw you, I saw *sheikh* Uthman bin Fudi.« And I said to him: »Oh *sheikh*,

51 Sufi special prayer often practiced with prayer beads.

52 Uthman dan Fodio: *Talim al-ikhwan*, in: Martin: Unbelief in the Western Sudan, pp. 78, 93.

53 Whitting (ed.): *Infaku l-maisuri*, p. 203.

how could I lie to you, when I am pious and in this is the joyful reason for you. < He didn't witness you like I have seen you. Then I returned to our Lord Al-Mukhtar so that he sees. And he [Al-Afiyya] had spent a night with the *sheikh* [Uthman dan Fodio] and then he traveled to his land and that of *sheikh* our Lord Al-Mukhtar. I took the knowledge and permission from the Sufi *imam* and *qadi* Asuda Al-Hajj Muhammad Al-Afiyya and he had taken it from the *sheikh* Al-Mukhtar.«<sup>54</sup>

This short account is an introduction to the full quotation of the brotherhood prayers Bello had reportedly received from Al-Afiyya. In the depiction of this meeting a portrait of how Sufi knowledge and migrating devotees were reaching the Hausa region is given. It was through informants who traveled the Sahel regularly, as this quotation implies. It was all about trusting these Sufi informants because the leading political figures of Sokoto and the Sahel usually didn't meet personally. Instead they questioned traders and traveling Sufi scholars who had to ask for an audience. Al-Afiyya<sup>55</sup> identified himself as a servant of Al-Mukhtar Al-Kunti, but the initial reasons for his travels were not alluded to by Bello. However, Al-Mukhtar not only asked him about his meetings with the Sokoto Jihadists, but also »about my journey and the lands I passed.« The Sufi traveler was obviously welcome at the courts although the leaders were suspicious about the truth of Al-Afiyya's journeys and audiences. The role and transmission of Sufi spiritual knowledge is crucial here, because it guaranteed the authenticity of the Sufi journeys and conversations. And together with the *ijaza* prayers it was commemorated who transmitted this sacred information and from where. While the spaces of these routes were considered important, the timeframe was not an issue. Bello only classified the time with the words »I was once sitting with the *sheikh*.«

Through these Sufi encounters new brotherhood prayers and new books were introduced at the Sokoto Court. This influence of Sufi travelers can only be discovered by quotation of their texts found in the

54 Ibid., pp. 202–203. Translation by the author.

55 In the source text it is not clear whether this Sufi traveler actually was Al-Afiyya or another devotee, but with regard to the *silsila* (Al-Mukhtar Al-Kunti – Al-Afiyya – Muhammad Bello / Uthman dan Fodio) we may assume it was him.

books of the Sokoto Jihadists. Muhammad Bello for example quoted Al-Mukhtar's book *Nasihah al-kafiyah*, referring to unbelief in the Sudan and the prohibition to travel through the ›Lands of the Unbelievers‹:

»The Sudan is a country whose people for the most part are disbelievers. There are some among them who are Muslims under the dominations of the disbelievers. Their people have appointed rulers and they behave in the fashion of their rulers in most cases. [...] For this reason it is prohibited to travel to the lands of the enemies in the Sudan.«<sup>56</sup>

This political Sufi text defined most of the ›Sudanic‹ regions as predominantly non-Muslim. It also forbade traveling to the parts of the ›unbelievers‹. At the same time it encouraged Sufi scholars to travel to other Jihadist states and hence strengthen bonds with them. Although Uthman dan Fodio only became a member of the Qadiriyya-Mukhtariyya *tariqa* late in his life, he composed a *ghazal* (love) poem in which he expressed his wish to visit the Muslim ›Kunta‹ scholars in the west. When the adored woman called Salma left her home unexpectedly, Uthman dan Fodio wrote he would instead like to travel to the ›Kunta‹ equipped with sword and camel: »[I ] leave Salma and emigrate to the Kunta.«<sup>57</sup> Praising Al-Mukhtar's knowledge and understanding the Prophetic traditions, Uthman applied the metaphor of a bright light shining from the west, where the ›Kunta‹ established their Sufi community.<sup>58</sup> East and west were again the dominant directions in which travel and knowledge were achieved by Sufi scholars. Both directions were often related to the circle of the sun as the symbol of intellectual and religious enlightenment.

Many Islamic and scholarly debates were dedicated to the question whether or not Uthman dan Fodio was also affiliated to other Sufi brotherhoods, such as the Khalwatiyya, Mahmudiyya and the Shadhili, for example.<sup>59</sup> The Qadiriyya brotherhood clearly was the most popular in the Caliphate, because Uthman dan Fodio always stressed his close

56 Shareef (ed.): *Infaq'l-Maysuur*, chapter 4.

57 English translation by Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 151.

58 Arabic original and English translation in *ibid.*, pp. 151–152.

59 Cf. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Bayan al-arkan wa-l-shurut li-l-tariqat al-sufiyya*, and *Al-salasil al-dhahabiyya li-l-sadat al-sufiyya*. Cf. also on this matter Last: *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 6.

spiritual ties with this *tariqa*. And in a Hausa Ajami poem<sup>60</sup> attributed to him he even addressed the readers/listeners as »Al-Qadirawa« (»the Qadiriyya people/followers«). Robinson misleadingly translated them as the followers of the Muslim scholar Abd Al-Qadir from Kano: »Listen, O companions of Abd-el-Kadr.«<sup>61</sup> But the Hausa text says »Ku sorara jama'a alkadirawa« which is correctly translated as »Listen, [religious] community of Qadiriyya«.<sup>62</sup>

We can conclude that in the early Caliphate no brotherhood was promoted as being superior to the others by any of the Jihadists. The brotherhood initiations were rather used as social capital that a Sufi scholar could collect and accumulate without breaking bonds with former brotherhood sections. One *tariqa* did not exclude another one, rather it was seen as an additional source of knowledge and prestige. The brotherhoods of the Jihadists were by no means a field of competition but rather complementary stages of personal and spiritual development. The initiations were collected like the secret prayers belonging to the brotherhoods. Until old age Uthman dan Fodio continued to collect poems from brotherhoods. He did not present himself as a Sufi leader in public nor did he announce the uniqueness of one individual brotherhood to his students and the educated elite. Uthman dan Fodio did not represent his memberships in brotherhoods in public and kept it more or less secret, so that today Islamic scholars are still fighting about which orders he actually was a member of. Belonging to a *tariqa* was considered a private and intimate matter. It was considered as evidence for a personal connection with other Islamic spaces.

The Sufis of the Qadiriyya and Qadiriyya-Mukhtariyya brotherhoods traveled for spiritual learning across the Sahel between east and west. This migration was considered part of the Sufi initiation. And along with specific prayers they also transported the itineraries that they had actually

**60** He may also have written it in Arabic first and it was then only translated into Hausa by his descendants.

**61** Hausa original »jama'a alkadirawa.« Cf. Robinson (ed.): Specimens of Hausa Literature, p. 69.

**62** Incidentally, Brass has already mentioned this mistake: »Die Erklärung Robinsons zu diesem Ausdruck: 'Abd-el-Kadr was Othman's principal Mallam and a native of Kano; Alkadirawa is therefore probably equivalent to »people of Kano« ist als gänzlich unwahrscheinlich zurückzuweisen.« Brass (ed.): Eine neue Quelle, p. 69.

experienced. Their mental geographies contained more or less »pagan« lands with intermittent Islamic courts and schools. They connected Islamic »islands«.

### *Sufi Paths and Radical Islamization*

The Qadiriyya Sufi brotherhood is probably the oldest Sufi organization and was founded by the Iranian scholar Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani (d. 1166). Even before the rise of the »Kunta« Sufism in the Sahel in the early nineteenth century, the scholars of the Hausa region were instructed about the Qadiriyya. Some believe that Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Karim Al-Maghili, commonly known as Muhammad Al-Maghili (d. ca. 1505), was the first to introduce Sufi brotherhoods into the Central Sahel. He was an Algerian reformist who had traveled to Kano in order to lecture and write on religious subjects. In North Africa he exchanged ideas with Egyptian scholars but his teachings became disputed because of his anti-Jewish propaganda. The anti-Semitism of his time was attacking the relationship of the Moroccan and Saharan ruling elite and Jewish people:

»By He on Whom my life depends, the killing of a single Jew is more meritorious than a razzia upon the lands of the polytheists. Take them [the Jews], kill them, wherever they are, expropriate their property, enslave their women and children until they completely submit to the rule of law, for the payment of the jizya [poll-tax or tribute] and their status of humiliation will arrest their evil-doing.«<sup>63</sup>

Al-Maghili insisted that no Jewish or Christian building of religious service should be built in Muslim lands. He published prose and poems on the duty to destroy all synagogues due to this pollution of Muslim land. At the court of Fez, the case of Al-Maghili was heard and finally the accused had to leave Morocco. In the desert town Tuat his preaching led to the arson attacks against its synagogues and the killing of many Jewish inhabitants. These Jews were engaged in trans-Saharan trade and were probably refugees who had been expelled from Spain. The Qadi of

63 See Al-Maghili's *Ahkam ahl al-dhimma*, quoted by Batran: Biography of Al-Maghili, p. 385.

Tuat protected the Jews of his town and claimed that they were living in separate quarters, and that their religious buildings were located far from any Muslims. As a result of his opposition to this Qadi, Al-Maghili left Tuat for a prolonged preaching tour in Aïr, Kano, Katsina and Gao.<sup>64</sup> The historian Batran, however, criticizes this unidimensional reading of the character Al-Maghili as a religiously radical preacher:

»He has generally been presented as an intolerant fanatic who relentlessly persecuted the Jews of Touat in southern Algeria, but no serious attention has been devoted to the theological debate which preceded his military campaign. Al-Maghili's eminence in the field of Islamic sciences and his far-reaching missionary achievements did not, however, escape the notice of these writers.«<sup>65</sup>

Other historians saw him as the introducer of the Qadiriyya brotherhood or the starting point of messianic belief in West Africa.<sup>66</sup> However, the short stay of the Sufi refugee in Kano influenced Hausa Islamic scholars for centuries and was still being commemorated in oral legends of the 1990s.<sup>67</sup> When Al-Maghili's anti-Semitic movement and attacks failed he fled to Aïr, then proceeding to Takidda, Kano, Katsina and Gao. In many Saharan and Sahelian places he was remembered as a holy person bearing the name Sidi Al-Baghdadi.<sup>68</sup> This honorary title meant he was an educated scholar and »Al-Baghdadi« was a name »which the people of Aïr are reputed to have given to the ulama who either originally came from the Orient or had lived there for a long time.«<sup>69</sup> It is therefore also plausible that the Baghdad origin of the immigrant in the Bayajidda legends goes back to Al-Maghili whose nickname was »Al-Baghdadi«. The Bayajidda legend may have included characteristics of Al-Maghili and his work.<sup>70</sup>

64 Baldwin (ed.): *Obligations of the Princes*, pp. 3–4.

65 Batran: *Biography of Al-Maghili*, p. 381.

66 See for example Hiskett: *Islamic Tradition of Reform*, p. 584.

67 Starrat: *Oral History in Muslim Africa*.

68 Bovill: *Mohammed el Maghili*, p. 28.

69 Batran: *Contribution to the Biography*, p. 390.

70 The Bayajidda legend is discussed in chapter IV.1.4, p. 172. Heinrich Barth had also documented oral traditions concerning Al-Maghili's grandson coming from Baghdad and killing the local fetish or *dodo*. Cf. Barth: *Travels and Discoveries*, vol. 1 (New York), p. 610.



It is worth mentioning that on Al-Maghili's arrival in Kano, he was a radical supporter of Islamic reform and criticized the tolerant co-existence of Muslims and non-Muslims. Moreover, this scholar often opposed existing Muslim elites and criticized their arrangements with Jewish subjects; for example the Banu-Wattas clans of Morocco. During his stay in Kano at Muhammad Rumfa's court, Al-Maghili wrote the political treatises *The Obligations of Princes* and *Jumla mukhtasara*.<sup>71</sup> The first book was addressed to an anonymous ruler who can be identified as the Kano Sultan Muhammad Rumfa (1462–1498).<sup>72</sup> Even the famous scholar Ahmad Baba from Timbuktu (1556–1627) knew this text and wrote a treatise »as response to a request from the ruler of Kano«. <sup>73</sup> Baba's accounts on Maghili were translated into French in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> In this text Al-Maghili advised the rulers to appear clean and perfumed in public and to stand and sit still. Rulers should not speak loudly or yawn in presence of others. Court members had to be chosen wisely: »trusty men who collect and donate, scribes and accountants who keep record, messengers, informants, watchers and patrols.«<sup>75</sup> They were also told to appoint religious scholars as advisers and judges. But Al-Maghili went into more depth when it came to warfare:

»And there are also fortified strongholds protected by the invincible and armed horses; and on their backs smart [horsemen]. And brave men are ready at every time. There are strong and large numbers of educated and trustworthy physicians. And in the wars there are also wazirs that summon the men, reduce the burdens and call for caution and weapons. And they order the army combat with a constant leader from among the heroes [of war]. And for the disheartened among the horsemen there are those who activate their hearts by speech and they scorn deserters. There are military experts with

71 Cf. the edition of Al-Maghili: *Fima yajibu ala al-amir*.

72 Hiskett (ed.): »Song of Bagauda«, pp. 363, 385.

73 Baldwin: *Obligations of the Princes*, p. 4.

74 Cherbonneau: *Histoire de la littérature*, pp. 392–397. A biographical account of Al-Maghili appears in Baba's text *Nayl al-ibtihaj bi-tatriz al-dibaj*.

75 Baldwin: *Obligations of the Princes*, p. 9. In 1932, when this text was translated and published, a manuscript copy of Morocco (Rabat) was used although local copies were at hand in Nigerian libraries (Katsina).

whose opinion worries are detected. War is indeed treacherous; it is not about quantity and not about speed.»<sup>76</sup>

Al-Maghili especially focused on the mobilization of war: assembling, encouraging and honoring brave fighters, appeasing and deriding deserters. To him, the persons supplying these services were the most important for the military sector. Furthermore, Al-Maghili was also involved with welfare. He advised the rulers to personally practice welfare by raising orphans at his court. Rulers should fight corruption and prevent any intrigue. A prince should never drink alcohol and also prohibit his consultants to do so. In the fifth chapter Al-Maghili warned against integrating Jews and Christians into the government: »How many of your people have given the plan of campaign into the hands of Jews and Christians!«<sup>77</sup> A ruler should dedicate most of the state budget to support the military:

»The Imam starts with strengthening those fortresses that are indispensable to protect, and weapon and the like. Then he provides the ulama and the Kadis and the muezzins, and all supporting the peace of Muslims like the warriors [not ›Jihadists‹].«<sup>78</sup>

76 Arab. و من ذلك ايضا حصن حصين مكفي بالحريز و خيل حديده (و ظهور رشيدة). و رجال شجاعان حاضرة. 76 Arab. في كل اوان. و عدد كثيرة متينة و اطباء عارفة امينة. و من ذلك ايضا في الحروب و زرار يجمعون الرجال و يخفون الانتقال و يحملون على الحذر و السلاح. و يرتبون الجيش للكفاح بصدور ثابت من الابطال. و جناحين من سائر الخيل و بلغاء ينشطون القلوب و يقبحون الهروب و عرفاء بالحروب برأيهم تتكشف الكروب. فان الحرب خدعة ليس بالسرعة بالكثيرة و لا بالسرعة. Translation from Arabic by the author. Cf. the edition of Gwarzo, H.I.: The Life and Teachings of Al-Maghili with particular Reference to the Saharan Jewish Community, PhD dissertation, University of London 1972, p. 277. See also Baldwin's translation (id.: Obligations of the Princes, p. 9): »Again, there are strongholds well fortified and provisioned, spirited horsemen and bold footmen ready for all emergency, munitions plentiful and strong, and accomplished and trusty physicians. Then in the wars there are vizirs who assemble the men, who ease the burdens, encourage warlike ardour and bearing of arms, and marshal the army for the combat. There are also the eloquent to kindle the hearts of the brave and to pour scorn on those who flee. There are those with knowledge of the art of war by whose counsel anxieties are cleared. War, indeed is treacherous; guile counts for more therein than strength or speed.«

77 Baldwin: Obligations of the Princes, p. 13.

78 Arab. ان يبدأ الامام بسد ما لا غنى عن سده من هژن و سلاح و غيره ثم بارزاق العلماء و القضاة [القضاة] و المؤذنين و كل من بيده شئ من مزالح المسلمين كالمقاتلين. Translation by the author. Cf. Gwarzo: Al-Maghili, p. 281. See also Baldwin's translation (id.: Obligations of the Princes, p. 21): »He will first strengthen fortresses, weapons and the like where these are weak. Next he

Military figures were given the top priority rank, whereas only next came the Islamic scholarly elite such as Al-Maghili and his colleagues. Only if there was any surplus of wealth, it should be used for the building of mosques, aiding pilgrims and the like. Although Al-Maghili was an educated Sufi, his preaching tours were more radical and aimed at indoctrinating the military elite. The second text called *Jumla mukhtasara* was written as a recommendation for the same Kano ruler (Muhammad Rumfa) and was quoted in full length by Uthman dan Fodio in his book *Tanbih al-ikhwan*.<sup>79</sup> Gwarzo suggests that the original text was written by Al-Maghili in Katsina after his return from Kano in 1492.<sup>80</sup> The author advised Muhammad Rumfa to prevent people from drinking wine and eating meat that had not been ritually slaughtered. He stressed that the king must prohibit all non-Muslims from performing any forbidden acts in public during Ramadan. Criminals should be punished according to Islamic law; recidivists should be enslaved. Al-Maghili added that slaves should be clothed by their owners.<sup>81</sup> This text of Al-Maghili is a general comment on correct kingship and state organization. Al-Maghili was also openly critical of how Kano Muslims and non-Muslims interacted regularly in public: »[...] Because the unbelievers in your [pl.] country are among the Muslims on the markets.«<sup>82</sup> And he gave an interpretation of the situation in Kano, where many people were still in their supposedly »natural« and »animal-like« state: »The tribe of this ignorant [in a pre-Islamic way] country is passionate and just like it [the coun-

will provide for the learned doctors, the judges, the summoners to prayer and all those who uphold the welfare of the Faithful, such as warriors.«

**79** Cf. the manuscript copy at Institut de France, Ms 2415.208.

**80** Gwarzo: Al-Maghili, p. 291. Gwarzo calls this work the *Wasiyat*. Hunwick also suggests that the short treatise *Jumla mukhtasara* was written for the Kano king in 1492 when Al-Maghili was still in Katsina or Takedda, whereas the longer text *The Obligations of Princes* was written later when he actually resided in Kano for some time. Cf. Hunwick: Al-Maghili's Replies, p. 160.

**81** Palmer: An early Fulani Conception of Islam II, p. 54. An Arabic edition is given by Gwarzo (id.: Al-Maghili, pp. 295–299) with particular reference to the Saharan Jewish community.

**82** Arab. لأن كفار بلادكم بين المسلمين في الاسواق. Translation by the author. Cf. Gwarzo: Al-Maghili, p. 296. See also Palmer's translation »for the Infidels in your country mingle with the Faithful in the markets and other places.« See Palmer: An early Fulani Conception of Islam III, p. 186.

try].<sup>83</sup> The use of the term *jahiliyya* refers to the pre-Islamic societies of the Arabic peninsula. It is the name of an age and status lacking religion. Al-Maghili called the Sudan pagan and insisted on the inseparable nexus of a pagan space and pagan tribes. To solve this problem he suggested separating Muslims and ›unbelievers‹ from each other.

During his stay in Katsina Al-Maghili allegedly advised the ruler Ibrahim Maji. According to what Heinrich Barth was told in the 1850s, the Moroccan Sufi preacher even converted the Katsina king to Islam.<sup>84</sup> Others claim it was the sultan Muhammad Korau who hosted Al-Maghili in Katsina.<sup>85</sup> Afterwards the itinerant scholar was asked to visit Gao by the Songhay ruler Al-Hajj Muhammad, which he did in ca. 1498. And in Gao, Al-Maghili composed the famous answers to the political and religious questions raised by his host Al-Hajj Muhammad. Al-Maghili heard that the Jews of Tuat had killed his son and therefore forced the Songhay king to imprison the Jews of Gao. Due to the dispute between Al-Maghili and the Askia over the treatment of the Jews, the radical scholar left for Katsina and continued his journey to Tuat. He launched another persecution of the Jewish population and finally stayed there until his death.<sup>86</sup>

Hunwick explained that Al-Maghili had left North Africa and headed south in order to »have an opportunity to influence Muslim rulers in a way evidently denied him in North Africa.«<sup>87</sup> The Sokoto Jihadists never discussed Al-Maghili's emigration or escape from Morocco with regard to politics. They related his teaching to the Qadiriyya *tariqa* and a general Sufi lifestyle. Uthman dan Fodio explained that Al-Maghili prohibited any friendship with ›unbelievers‹. Dan Fodio also included Al-Maghili's opinion on the Hausa kings and Sudanic unbelief in general in his treatises. In his *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, dan Fodio composed a biographical account about Al-Maghili which had been transmitted by Sidi Ahmad Baba. This consisted of a short description of his character and virtues

83 Arab. الغالب على اهل تلك البلاد الجهل و الهوى و اصلهم كان كذلك. Translation by the author. Cf. Gwarzo: Al-Maghili, p. 296. See also Palmer (id.: An Early Fulani Conception of Islam III, p. 186): »The people of your country are chiefly ignorant and still ruled by their lusts as they were originally.«

84 Barth: Travels and Discoveries 1 (New York), p. 474.

85 Hogben / Kirk-Greene: The Emirates of Northern Nigeria, pp. 161, 181.

86 Batran: Biography of Al-Maghili, p. 393.

87 Hunwick: Al-Maghili's Replies, p. 153.

and a list of his most important writings. Uthman dan Fodio studied »the *Book of Questions* he wrote for the Askiya, likewise the *Misbah as-sarwah fi ulul al-falah*, and the *Risala* which he wrote for Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yaqub, Sultan of Kano, and other things.«<sup>88</sup> Al-Maghili was actively commemorated and discussed as a migrant Sufi scholar by Jihadist authors.

Oral legends offer even more insights regarding the image of Al-Maghili in the Central Sahel. He was characterized as a scholar with magical powers who not only defined the direction of Mecca in order to reconstruct the Kano mosque, but who could also transfer people to the Holy Cities immediately. In Fulfulde language he was nicknamed »Jodama«, which means »wanderer« or »the one who could not sit still«.<sup>89</sup> Al-Maghili was the prototype of the learned traveler advising and reforming the courts in accordance with Islam. He instructed other high-ranked court officials who in turn became leading politicians, such as his student Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Tazakhti who became the Katsina *qadi*.<sup>90</sup> Oral history claimed he had left Kano for Egypt and not Gao in Songhay.<sup>91</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century Al-Maghili was still famous under his nickname »Baghdadi« who had once defined the direction of prayer in Aïr and other towns:

»The ›msid‹ [mosque] or ›mesalla‹ [place of prayer] at present is only marked by stones laid out in a regular way, and inclosing a space from sixty to seventy feet long and fifteen broad, with a small mehrab, which is adorned (accidentally or intentionally, I cannot say) by a young talha-tree. This is the venerated and far-famed ›Makam e'Sheikh ben Abd el Kerim‹, where the traveller coming from the north never omits to say his prayers; others call it Msid Sidi Baghdadi, the name Baghdadi being often given by the blacks to the sheikh, who had long resided in the East.«<sup>92</sup>

88 Uthman dan Fodio: *Talim al-ikhwan*, in Martin: Unbelief in the Western Sudan, pp. 78, 92.

89 While »joda« is verified as the Fulfulde word for »to rest, to sit down«, »ma« only means »not« in Arabic. See Gwarzo: Al-Maghili, p. 65.

90 Ibid., p. 67.

91 Ibid., p. 73.

92 Barth: *Travels and Discoveries 1* (New York), p. 311.

Al-Maghili's influence on the Sokoto Jihadists was strong, although they did not spread his anti-Jewish propaganda and persecution notably. They only focused on his writing about Islamic statehood and religious duties. Or as Batran put it: »In West Africa, al-Maghili's influence assumed a more peaceful and scholastic emphasis.«<sup>93</sup> The Jihadists studied his texts with huge effort so that Uthman dan Fodio quoted the full text of his *Jumla mukhtasara* and Abdullah used citations from another one for his text in the *Diya al-siyasa*.<sup>94</sup> Al-Maghili was less remembered for his journeys by the Sokoto Jihadists than by the religious masses. They commemorated him as the Baghdad immigrant revolutionizing the Central Sahel with brute scholarly activity and propaganda. The Jihadists usually didn't mention their affiliation with the Qadiriyya brotherhood. But when Al-Mukhtar Al-Kunti popularized this *tariqa* for their Islamic reform movement in the Western Sahel, the Malian Sufi devotees at times visited the Sokoto Court. Moreover, Al-Kunti communicated with scholars from the Sahel as far as from Bornu.<sup>95</sup>

The Jihadist Sufi concepts were more spiritual than the intellectual heritage of Al-Maghili. Uthman dan Fodio's theological universe was structured in three basic elements: *Islam*, *iman* and *ihsan*. *Islam* contained the personal devotion to God's law including individual prayer rituals. These could be learnt by mere imitation. *Iman* referred to the study of the attributes of God and the Prophets. And *ihsan*, dan Fodio explained, is based on the science of *tasawwuf* (Sufism) and referred to religion as inward experiences. *Ihsan* means the »better« or »best« that should be studied and adapted to.

»The theological concepts of *tawhid* [lit. »one-ness«; attributes of the One God] require considerably more intellectual application, even if they are simply committed to memory without any very deep understanding. And *tasawwuf*, which must be understood as a science of inner transformation requires even more sophisticated level of personal application.«<sup>96</sup>

93 Batran: Biography of Al-Maghili, p. 393.

94 Gwarzo: Al-Maghili, p. 293.

95 See Batran: Qadiriyya Brotherhood.

96 Brenner: Tariqa in West Africa, pp. 33–34.

Uthman dan Fodio also initiated his younger brother Abdullah into *tasawwuf* sciences. The Sufi education of Abdullah dan Fodio began in his youth when he was taught by his brother: »He taught me Sufism<sup>97</sup> for the development of character and affirmation [moral and spiritual].«<sup>98</sup>

In addition to the works of Al-Maghili, the Sokoto Jihadists also studied the writings of the Sufi Jalal Al-Din Al-Suyuti (ca. 1445–1505). He was a contemporary of Al-Maghili from Egypt. Before resettling in his home country he reportedly traveled North Africa, India and Arabia. Gwandu suggested that Al-Suyuti also visited the Hausa region and met Al-Maghili there.<sup>99</sup> This theory must be rejected for in fact he never visited West Africa, but only exchanged letters with Aïr, Agades and Katsina rulers.<sup>100</sup> Abdullah dan Fodio quoted largely from his voluminous and chronological work on the history of Islamic caliphs (*Tarikh al-khulafa*).<sup>101</sup>

Among the Sufi brotherhoods opposing the Qadiriyya around the year 1800 was the Tijaniyya *tariqa*. It was a very recent movement at that time, initiated in 1781 by Sidi Ahmad Al-Tijani (1737–1815) in North Africa. He had spent his life in Algeria and Morocco and explicitly led his reform movement against the then dominant Qadiriyya. Al-Hajj Umar Tall (ca. 1797–1864) was one of the important West African initiates. In the mid-nineteenth century he founded an empire in today's Mali and fought the French army with his Toucouleur soldiers for about ten years until he was finally defeated. He was instructed in the Tijaniyya on his way back from Mecca when crossing the Sudan in about 1826. Directly following this, he spent some eight years in Sokoto and even married one of Muhammad Bello's daughters. Whether or not Bello himself was initiated to this Sufi brotherhood was intensely debated after his death in 1837. However, Umar Tall traveled back to Guinea and established a short-lived Islamic state extending to Mali. The Tijaniyya was an expanding Islamic movement under Al-Hajj Umar Tall, but during the

97 Arab. علم تصوف.

98 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida' al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, f. 2. For an Arabic edition see Hiskett: Material Relating to the State of Learning, p. 552.

99 Gwandu: Abdullahi b. Fodio, p. 84.

100 These letters are only found in Egyptian archives. See for example Saad: Social History of Timbuktu, p. 47.

101 Abdullah called this text *Diya al-muqtadin li-l-khulafa al-rashidin*; cf. Gwandu: Abdullahi b. Fodio, p. 84.

Sokoto Jihad years its role was not politically significant for the leaders. Muhammad Bello only happened to learn about it late in his life. As the elite generations after Uthman's death (1817) were eager to establish his remembrance in a conservative way that did not allow for new reform movements and separatist ideas, they neglected the Tijaniyya and emphasized the role of the Qadiriyya for Uthman dan Fodio.<sup>102</sup>

But obviously, Al-Hajj Umar Tall had some influence on the Sokoto leader Muhammad Bello as an individual person (and vice versa). Among archival sources only one *silsila* by him has been discovered that was written for the Bornu leader. It was composed in December 1815 (1231)<sup>103</sup> and refers to the founder of the brotherhood Al-Tijani, claiming that his forefathers were descended from the Prophet himself: »His forefather is our Lord Muhammad, messenger of God.«<sup>104</sup> An ancestral line was drawn from contemporary devotees to the brotherhood founder and then to the Prophet. Another written source about Al-Hajj Umar Tall's influence on the Central Sahel is a letter written by Muhammad Bello which he probably gave to his guest Tall as a present when he was leaving Sokoto.<sup>105</sup> In this letter he addressed the people of Futa Toro and praised the visitor and his countrymen.

The third Sufi brotherhood that experienced rapid expansion in North Africa during the first decades of the nineteenth century, along with the Qadiriyya-Mukhtariyya and the Tijaniyya, was the Sanusiyya Order. The order was founded in 1837 by Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ali Al-Sanussi (1787–1859). But only after his death did Hausa scholars refer to him. One of them was the scholar Lima Chidi a (nicknamed »Halilu«), who mentioned Al-Sanussi in one of his texts:

»This song is the work of Halilu, a disciple of the Shaikh of Sanusiyya. The relations of his mother all belong to his own town, the relations of his father are men of Rima, do you hear? He was the son of a concubine, his mother's name was Zainab; the name of his father was Sidi Mukhtar, do you

**102** Brenner: *Tariqa in West Africa*, p. 50.

**103** Al-Hajj Umar Tall: *Silsila* [Arabic], in: El-Nager: *West Africa and the Muslim Pilgrimage*, p. 407.

**104** Arab. جده سيدنا محمد رسول الله. Ibid.

**105** This letter is analyzed elsewhere in IV.2.2. For a full edition of the source see Samb (ed.): *La vie d'El Hadj Omar*, pp. 796–799.



hear? God is the King of all. He follows them with kindness, and for that the Shaikh of Sanusi may obtain favour from Him. Lord, tell Sanusi that I who am here on earth, who am a child of the future world, that he may know that I ask a favour on behalf of his city. I make ready my gift for the Shaikh of Sanusi while I am on earth, Shaikh would receive anyone, much more would he receive me.«<sup>106</sup>

In the early phase of the Jihad these brotherhoods were never put to use as organizations for Jihad. However, the Sokoto Court was included in Sufi networks which traded books, spiritual prayers and geographical knowledge about their journeys.

### *Wanderers and Thinkers: Sufi Practices*

Traveling by foot was a very common meditative practice for many Sufi scholars. Mystical religious truth was reportedly revealed to the founder of the Qadiriyya brotherhood, Al-Jaylani from Persia (1077–1166), by this practice. The Sokoto Jihadists were well aware of these Sufi rituals. In the pre-Jihad time around 1794, Uthman dan Fodio collected abridged medieval biographical and hagiographical texts about Al-Jaylani. And he also renarrated how God chose the young Persian Muslim when he was walking on his exhausting journey to Baghdad. The religious truth itself appeared embodied as an old sick man sitting next to the street.<sup>107</sup> Other passages of this compiled text suggested re-enacting the journey of Al-Jaylani in the region of Baghdad and called on readers to pause wher-

**106** Hausa original: »Waka ga dan bawa halilu fa ya yita, almajirin kua shaikhu ni fa sanusia; Dengin uwa tasa du suna alahua, dengin uba nasa ritnatawa kun jia; Shi dan wahaia ni uwa tasa zainabu, sunan uba nasa sidi almukhtari kun jia; Allahu sarki dud ya bisu da gafara, domin fa shifu sanusi shina waiwaia; Ya rabbi sanda sanusi ni nan dunia, dan lakhirra fa shi san gari ni dogara; Na shiria kaiana ga shifu sanusi na dunia; tuna ya doki kowa shaikhu balante nia.« Cf. Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, pp. 42–43.

**107** Cf. the treatise *Tabshir al-umma*, edited and published online at <http://siiasi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/tabshir-al-umma-arabic.pdf> (16.04.2014), p. 7. Original manuscripts are held at many West African archives; see Hunwick (ed.): *Writings*, pp. 71–72.

ever the Sufi saint had stopped for obligatory prayer or additional meditation. Other stories, however, tell about magical journeys of other Sufi scholars flying from the Lebanese mountains to visit Al-Jaylani in Iraq. Some Sufis were even believed to have visited the mystical mountain range *Qaf* surrounding the end of the world behind the *Foggy Ocean*. Right beyond these mountains the temporal hereafter begins, as narrated by many Arabic geographers. Moreover, many miracles accomplished by Al-Jaylani himself dealt with matters of travel. Al-Jaylani, for example, prayed for a very weak camel carrying its rider on his pilgrimage to Mecca, so that it suddenly became the fastest of the whole caravan.<sup>108</sup> Because journeys were considered exhausting and dangerous, they were seen as a challenging stage of every Sufi life and as effective method to feel a temporary unity with God. The first-born son of Al-Jaylani was therefore believed to have started traveling at an early age and »was overcome by spiritual conditions.«<sup>109</sup>

Sufi scholars not only used to travel long distances for meditation and meetings with foreign scholars, but they also spent days and weeks in meditation in the desert. But Uthman dan Fodio disputed the idea that the desert was the most appropriate environment for prayer and meditation. He explained that the desert or wilderness was for the beasts and not for humans:

»And among these illusions is the belief, that instigating Koran exegesis should happen in the desert and not in the settlement. This is also wrong and an illusion according to consensus. Because it was not revealed for the beast [to study], so that you would interpret in the desert. But it was revealed for human beings.«<sup>110</sup>

The argumentation here differs from major Sufi ideas. The desert (or savannah) is understood as a place of wild beasts and the villages (or towns) as places where human species live. Topoi of wilderness and civilization are thus expressed and Islam is thereby bound to civilization

**108** *Tabshir al-umma*, <http://siiasi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/tabshir-al-umma-arabic.pdf> (16.04.2014), p. 7.

**109** Arab. و كان تغلب عليه الاحوال. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

**110** Translated by the author from Siddiqi's Arabic edition. Cf. Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afhām*, p. ١٣٤.

and not to nature. But with this chapter Uthman dan Fodio also revealed that many Sufi scholars of his time preferred to study Islam in the loneliness of nature. In Muhammad Bello's *Infaq al-maysur* he renarrated the account about a Sufi scholar retreating into an isolated mountain area of Morocco in ca. 1650. He lived with his young male student as an eremite, but eventually people found out that Sufi practices were only an excuse for him to engage in a sexual relationship with his student.<sup>111</sup> Ascetic loneliness was considered something suspicious because people could hide secret and evil practices from the public.

Many Muslim followers of the Jihadists did not believe Uthman's disavowal of his own spiritual powers. It was part of Uthman dan Fodio's public image that he possessed certain Sufi magical skills. It was for example claimed that at the age of 31 he was pulled up by the light of the Prophet to meet him after emotional prayers and meditation. He recited a poem to Muhammad and had a conversation with him. When he was 13 he allegedly met some jinns, and again at the age of 25. He rejected the idea that he was able to command spiritual beings for »they appear or disappear at their own freewill.«<sup>112</sup> Nana Asmau also reflected on the Sufi practices of the Prophet Muhammad, who »performed his religious observances in the *kogo* [cave].«<sup>113</sup> Itinerant Sufi teachers were often expected to be capable of magical powers such as prophecy. They were asked to heal people and paid for certain services. Uthman dan Fodio was remembered as such by his descendants and followers although he actively denied magical powers in his own writing:

»Know O' my brethren that I have never claimed the *qutbaniyya* [sainthood] or the *wilaya* [guardianship of the faith] though that is heard from the tongues of other men. It is heard from their tongues that I can fly in the air and walk on water, that the Earth is folded up for me in such a way as to enable me to walk to Mecca and Medina, that the *jins* serve me as they serve the most perfect saints (*al-awliya' al-kummal*) and that I can guide the people not only on the path of piety and righteousness but also on the path of *kashf*

111 Shareef (ed.): *Infaq'1-Maysuur*, n.p.

112 Cf. *Tahdhir al-ikhwan*, translated by Al-Hajj: Mahdist Tradition, p. 269. Cf. also the manuscript in Niamey (2837).

113 Nana Asmau: *Mimsitare*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, pp. 76–77.

[knowledge of the heart]. When all this had come to my notice I composed numerous poems in *Ajami* to refute the aforementioned claims.«<sup>114</sup>

Sufi communities were appreciated by the Sokoto Jihadists as a means to link up with other Muslim scholars at distant places of the Sahel of their time, or with Sufi Saints and travelers of the past. With the help of detailed genealogies (*silsila*) the Jihadists situated themselves in a network extending from Futa Toro in the very west via Mali to Bornu in the Central Sahel. In Sufi belief systems, traveling was inseparable from mystical states of consciousness and magical powers. Despite these traditions, the Sokoto scholars for the most part distanced themselves from spiritual skills and mystic meditation in the desert. The wilderness was meant to be crossed as a migrant space, and not to be inhabited by Sufi travelers.

#### *Sufi Journeys to Courts and Paradise*

On analyzing the scarce sources we have about Jihadist scholars apart from the dan Fodio clan, their Sufi networks appear to be loose and trans-regional. There was, for example, Muhammadu Kwairanga, a scholar originating from Jenne (Mali). He was an expert on mystic Sufi practices and lived in Sokoto.<sup>115</sup> Tuareg Sufis were also among the early Jihad supporters. According to local tradition, the Tuareg scholar Agali transported the books of Uthman dan Fodio with his camels during the Hijra journey, and he later married his daughter Fatima to Muhammad Bello.<sup>116</sup> Taking care of someone's books can be counted as proof of an intimate and trusting relationship. Uthman dan Fodio's personal assistant Mustafa was, for example, writing on behalf of Uthman, taking care of his library and in addition to that he used to shave his head.<sup>117</sup> During

**114** Cf. *Tahdhir al-ikhwan* in Al-Hajj: Mahdist Tradition, pp. 262–263.

**115** Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 171–172. The Hausa *Ajami* version of this poem is held at SOAS: Nana Asmau: *Labaran Shehu*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 2.

**116** Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 172.

**117** Hausa »Don Musdafa aiki shi kai mai anka cee. Shi rubuta littaffai a kebai shi dāya.« Cf. Nana Asmau: *Labaran Shehu*, p. 9.

Muhammad Bello's reign, the Sokoto Court engaged the Malian scribe Musa from Wangara, as well as scholars from Bornu and Jenne.<sup>118</sup>

The Sokoto Jihadists promoted Sufi knowledge and principles as a personal form of spiritual endeavor and as a way to improve one's pious character. But their ideas about statehood were only linked with classical and historical Islamic models of caliphates. One may call this a »relative absence of politicization in the Sufism«<sup>119</sup> of the Jihadists. In addition to that, historians face severe methodological problems in studying Jihadist Sufism: Sufi knowledge was considered private in Sokoto and as a result the principal actors did not reveal, for example, which geographical information was transmitted by Sufi itinerant scholars visiting Sokoto. Sufi networks were not activated for mass mobilization in the Jihad and public speeches were based on Islamic and Koranic principles rather than spiritual knowledge. The latter was more or less reserved for elite individuals in private lessons. Therefore Sufism and the transmission of *tariqa* knowledge helped cementing and separating the educated Jihadist elite according to their clan ties and Fulbe ethnic identity. The character of meetings with Sufi guests was official and diplomatic. It was only decades after the Jihad that the elites tried to politicize the brotherhoods. There are very few indications that the Jihadists activated brotherhood networks when mobilizing for war campaigns. These relations were picked out in Nana Asmau's poem on the battle of Gawakuke in 1836. But she composed her praise poem 20 years after the battle's occurrence. In her Fulfulde text she described how Muhammad Bello called different allies for a common expedition against Gobir and their confederates. In addition to the Kano Emir she listed the Qadiriyya Sufi scholars among the Jihadist allied groups: »The community of Abd al-Qadir [Al-Jaylani] promised in front of Bello, that they would not flee from the field.«<sup>120</sup> However, traveling Sufi scholars evidently exchanged jihadist and reformist ideas with Sokoto scholars. Moreover they spread a mental map that regarded most regions of the Sahel or »Sudan« as a pagan ›Land of Unbelief‹.

118 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 174–175.

119 Brenner: *Tariqa in West Africa*, p. 51.

120 Fulfulde Ajami text and rough English translation: Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, pp. 134–135.

Sufi travel experience was usually not published as prose or as geographical accounts. Their knowledge on space and its interpretation is only contained in metaphorical poems on spiritual journeys to God. Not only were the brotherhoods called »paths« in Arabic (*turuq*), but the whole life was interpreted as a journey. A mid-nineteenth century Sufi scholar from Sokoto expressed this in a Hausa poem:

»Leave off hastening after the things of this world and to prepare for it; rise up, O my relations, for we have a journey before us. That journey which you take is to the city of the servants (of God); keep knowledge, you know the precepts of God. I do not fear death or burial; you are journeying to a strange city to which you have never come before. [...] Let us take care, let us follow the path of those who are guided; let us not desert it, Satan leads us by a dark way.«<sup>121</sup>

This metaphor of the spiritual journey is probably common in different cultural contexts, but it is certainly suitable for Sufi travelers of the Jihadist era. Dedicating life to travel to distant scholars meant leaving behind the »things of the world«. It demanded courage against the fear of »death and burial«, caution against dangerous and »dark ways«, and intrepidity to enter »a strange city«. Strong belief in the divine reward of such traveling may have eased such fears for the Sufi scholars.

### ***3.3 Itinerant Preachers: Rivers like Fire, Rivers like Milk***

The Jihadists considered themselves to be members of the scholarly elite class of Muslims, called *ulama* in Arabic. In many texts they tried to defend the political position of their professional class. Uthman dan Fodio claimed in his short treatise on Islam (*Usul al-din*) that common people may accept the basic Islamic principles only if there was an *ulama* class installed to generate and teach religious knowledge. Dan Fo-

**121** Hausa »Ku ber garaji zama dunia da shiriwa ku yi tashi dengi akoi taffia gabb-anmu; Taffia chan da kuna zo gari gabawa ku rika shinni kuna sani sunna ga allah; Ba mutua ni ki razana ba zaman kushiwa ku yi taffian bako gari ba ka tso dadai ba. [...] Mu do (a)nia nuina bi tafar ka masushirya, kadda mu saki shaitsa(n) shi kaimu bakin tafarki.« Cf. Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, pp. 48–51.

dio explained that the inability of the masses to understand theological proof caused this division between the ulama and the rest of society.<sup>122</sup> But prior to the commencement of the Jihad in 1804, the leading Jihadists were also active in itinerant preaching across the Central Sahel. They were situated in the field of tension between independent itinerant preaching and positions as teachers and advisers of the rulers' courts. From the time when they established themselves as political rulers, the Jihadists lacked direct contact with such networks of preachers. Uthman dan Fodio therefore downplayed the role of those scholarly networks. He criticized that many of these teachers repeatedly talked about powerful scholar friends they had already met on their tours, which he called a blameworthy act of

»showing-off by claiming connection to people. For instance the man will mention the *shaykhs* often in order to show that he has met many *shaykhs* and profited from them. He says ›I have met all the *skaykhs*‹ and ›I went about in the land and served the *skaykhs*‹.<sup>123</sup>

In fact, the listing of educational journeys and different teachers was a powerful method to gain reputation among the class of scholars and their audiences or clients. For the Sokoto Court, the knowledge of these preachers was often not accessible. We will therefore analyze the respective roles of itinerant preaching and preachers hired at the courts in separate sub-chapters, and then analyze the transfer of spatial knowledge by means of itinerant preaching.

### *Journey and Education*

When a family of the Hausa region decided that one of its male members should be educated in Islamic sciences, the chosen boy usually left his parents at a very early age. He was either sent to relatives or to some famous teacher for Koran lessons. Growing up with distantly related family mem-

**122** Cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Usul al-din*, NU, Falke 1, f. 4.

**123** This Jihadist concept of bragging was summarized by Uthman dan Fodio in his work *Ulum al-muamala* (Niamey 410(14)). Here it is referred to the English translation published in Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): *Handbook on Islam*, p. 76.

bers seemed to be quite common for Hausa families in general, and not only for scholarly families. When Alhaji Umaru wrote about his childhood in the 1850s in his autobiography, he said that a Hausa child was typically carried on the mother's back for about two years and right afterwards he was sent to his grandmother. In his own case Umaru was taken from Kano to Jega, covering a distance of about 300 miles. He spent five years there and then started his elementary Koran School back in Kano.<sup>124</sup> The first Islamic education consisted of reading through the whole Koran, which could take about five years, but depended on both the teacher and the performance of his pupil. Often, the reading of the Holy Book was also started for a second time. The Islamic calendar strictly determined the schedule of the children attending the schools. Apart from the prayer times, they had to visit the main mosque on Friday, the last day of the Islamic week. Alhaji Umaru colorfully described how the city hills of Kano became a playground for the pupils on weekends when there were no lessons to attend.<sup>125</sup> The reading of the Koranic suras usually included copying the whole text so that by graduation the pupil finished his own copy and hence owned a personal copy for further studies.<sup>126</sup>

Abdullah dan Fodio was at first taught by his father to recite the Koran which he finished when he was 13 years old. Then he stayed with his older brother Uthman to learn Koranic interpretations. This was considered the second stage of Islamic education and usually was started with the journey to another teacher. Abdullah knew that there was more commentary text on the Koran in Arabic beyond his home region: »And I recited all the books about the science of *tawhid*<sup>127</sup> that had arrived in our country and I learnt them, and I didn't transcribe them all.«<sup>128</sup> The scholars were well aware of the constraint that all Islamic knowledge was dependent on trade routes and networks. Abdullah and his fellow students usually accompanied their teacher on preaching tours »at home and abroad«.<sup>129</sup>

124 Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, p. 65.

125 Cf. *ibid.*

126 Last: *The Book and the Nature of Knowledge*, p. 187.

127 »Oneness [of God]«; the ultimate principle of Islam which is explained in different science disciplines such as theology, jurisprudence, philosophy, Sufism or natural sciences.

128 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida' al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, f. 2. For an Arabic edition see Hiskett: *Material*, pp. 550–578.

129 *Ibid.*, p. 562.



The secondary education could then be continued with different teachers and experts on certain Islamic authors and their works. Afterwards the young scholar was free to organize his own preaching tours. Uthman dan Fodio was one of these Muslim itinerant preachers, or *mal-lamai* in Hausa language, who considered this occupation important for a revival of Islam. His son Muhammad Bello later recounted the preaching style of his father from the private preparation to the performance in public:

»Realize, that I often saw that whenever he desired to come out to teach the people, he would stop in a corner of his home for a short time, say some words and then come out to the people. I once asked about that and he said: ›I take this time to renew my intention and make a pledge to Allah that I would be sincere in the reason that I have come out to them. I then ask Allah to make those present understand whatever I speak about.‹ It is for this reason that I, too, make sure to renew my intention in my lectures and always call to mind this pledge he took with Allah. Whenever the Shehu would arrive at his assemblies, he would greet the people with a comprehensive greeting that would be heard by everyone present. Then when he sat upon his stool, he would salute them three times with a smile, happy demeanor and excellent character. Then the people would become silent. He would never become annoyed, show revulsion or disdain towards those in his lectures, even though he was harried by many of the common people who possessed the most evil traits. They were the kind of people who, when asked to be silent, would continue speaking and if they were prevented from asking questions would not cease asking. Then the Shehu [Uthman dan Fodio] would raise his voice not directing his words to any particular person. He was not hesitant to speak to any of the people present in his lectures; although many of the prominent shaykhs and envious scholars were present. Rather, the Shehu would speak to the entire assembly with words, which were of benefit to everyone, without exception. Sometimes people would ask questions while he was in the middle of speaking. He would then stop teaching in order to answer their questions.«<sup>130</sup>

This account of Muhammad Bello of course tries to sanctify his family's political legitimacy during his rule of the Caliphate. This text character-

ized an ideal preacher rather than telling authentic details about Uthman dan Fodio. And it allows some insights into the public sphere of the Hausa region before the Jihad. One major problem Uthman faced as a preacher was to build up his audience. We don't know if he really was such a patient and motivated speaker as described in Bello's text, but he apparently faced some problems with listeners disturbing his speeches. Uthman had to greet them several times and in a loud voice in order to make the people listen, and during his speech he had to ask for silence. Another obstacle was the presence of the so called »envious scholars« present during the sermons. While the common visitors of the market places had to be attracted for Islamic topics, the local class of scholars sought to disprove the foreign speaker. They were competitors by profession, and established scholars started to feel offended when Uthman dan Fodio gathered large groups of followers around him. Muhammad Bello dedicated a whole chapter of his *Infraq al-maysur* to portray and give examples of the sermons of his father. However, those examples only contain very basic Islamic principles about monotheism, the Prophet Muhammad, and the universal power of God in this world and the hereafter.<sup>131</sup> From these documented sermons it does not appear as if there was a large gap between different preachers regarding the content of the speeches. They competed for personal followers and alms.

But once the Caliphate was built up as a state, itinerant preachers threatened the Caliphate rulers. They could suddenly appear and disappear in the rural areas, far from emirate control, and summon masses of followers. For this reason Muhammad Bello recounted a story accredited to Abu Ali Al-Hassan Ibn Masud Al-Yusi (Morocco, 1631–1691): In Sijilmasa there was some rumor about a saint having appeared in the outskirts of the city. Masses of people went to that person who had to escape into an old tomb. He would only expose his hand through the small gap of the door, so that his followers could kiss it. The alleged saint moved into another quarter of Sijilmasa where he accidentally fell into a well and died. Then the Islamic scholars of the town discovered that the man had interfered with the jinns and his body was therefore destroyed.<sup>132</sup> Bello warned the people not to follow strange itinerant preachers.

131 Cf. *Infraq al-Maysur*, *ibid.*, chapter 13.

132 *Ibid.*, n.p.

In his sermons Uthman dan Fodio emphasized that not only educated persons can become true believers in Islam: »And from these illusions the next one says that no one is considered a Muslim or believer unless he knows the Islamic rights and sciences.«<sup>133</sup> Nigerian scholars supposed that this text was originally oral poetry written down in Fulfulde language and translated by the author himself some years later.<sup>134</sup> We can therefore assume that he had used these arguments in his speeches which he usually performed in Hausa and Fulfulde. He was probably presenting these thoughts in public before translating them into Arabic. The second-generation Jihadists were eager to translate the sermons and texts of the first-generation authors into written Hausa in order to spread them across the Caliphate. But even during Uthman dan Fodio's lifetime, there were allied scholars of Hausa origin translating Jihadist books. Nana Asmau listed one of those translators in her voluminous collection of important Jihadists: »Oh hear, the muezzin Muhammadu Cibi Ahmadu was truly a Hausa. So was Bola Mamman Mode, he translated the sermons of the Sheikh, this is what you hear.«<sup>135</sup> According to Uthman's speech collection, some scholars wrongly told the people that Islam could only be practiced theologically, by memorizing all literature and possessing the ability to express these arguments. But in Uthman's view faith was not necessarily linked with intelligence and education.<sup>136</sup> And when the Prophet Muhammad met ignorant people, the Jihadists claimed, he didn't immediately define them as unbelievers:

»The majority of the people who embraced Islam during the time of Prophet Muhammad had no knowledge of the principles on which Islam is based, and the Prophet had called them Muslims.«<sup>137</sup>

**133** Translated from Arabic by the author. See the edition of the manuscript: Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afhām*, p. ١٩. This book is a compilation of false assumptions about Islam, consisting of argumentations against 101 of such illusions.

**134** In the 1980s the Wazir of Sokoto Al-Hajj Junaidu was interviewed by Fazhur Rahman Siddiqi and allegedly had a Fulfulde copy in his private library. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 10.

**135** Hausa »Kuma kun ji ladannai Muhammadu Cibi Ahmadu shi Bahaushe na hakikan tambaya. Dada Bula Mamman Mode sho ko hakaza, maimai da wa'azu na shaihu shi ko ku jiya.« Nana Asmau: *Labaran Shehu*, p. 11. This poem was originally composed in Fulfulde by Nana Asmau and in 1866 it was translated into Hausa.

**136** Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afhām*, p. ١٩–٢٢.

**137** *Ibid.*, p. 56, ٢٠.

Uthman dan Fodio's early followers were often people from the poor social classes: farmers, slaves, and urban masses. This circumstance may have underlain the ninth illusion published in Uthman's sermon book:

»Among these illusions is the belief of some people that all the Companions of the Prophet were knowledgeable persons and talked about the fundamentals of faith in a fluent manner elaborated by the various methods of reasoning. [...] The kind of insight that has been attributed to them is because of their ability to contemplate which enabled them to understand the truth until they had full perception of religion. [...] I do not mean here the deep thinking of the theologians, but at the level of the majority of the people.«<sup>138</sup>

Uthman compared his audience of the late eighteenth century with the first Muslim community of the Prophet in Arabia. He asked his followers to become Muslims even without higher education, because only a person that acted or spoke against Islam could be regarded as *kufir* (unbeliever).<sup>139</sup> Uthman dan Fodio was preaching in multiple languages. He therefore argued that Islamic faith could also be expressed and understood in languages other than Arabic.<sup>140</sup> In his nineteenth ›illusion‹ he claimed:

»Among these illusions is the belief of some people that studying the faith in Arabic language is not sufficient for non-Arabs, and this is also false and an illusion according to consensus. The real purpose in the study of faith is to have a true understanding of faith itself, and that can be gained through all languages. If they had a little sense, they would have known that a non-Arab who writes something about the faith in a language other than Arabic does not write without having understood it first through Arabic language.«<sup>141</sup>

Uthman encouraged the common people that lacked Arabic education to learn about Islam in their mother tongue. Moreover, he legitimated his multilingual preaching tours in Hausa and Fulfulde. Spatial knowledge did not seem an important issue of the pious sermons of Uthman, and

138 Ibid., pp. 56–57, ٢٦–٢٧.

139 Ibid., p. ٣٠.

140 The Arabic language has a special meaning for Islam. Unlike the Bible, the Koran can only be interpreted but not translated. All Muslim prayers must be said in Arabic because it is considered to be the language of Allah.

141 Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afhām*, pp. 69–70, ٥٧.

he did not discuss the role of his migration as itinerant preacher prior to his Hijra. However, his family composed texts about the tours, and his brother Abdullah wrote, for example, that by traveling and preaching Uthman had become popular:

»And the brother and beloved Emir and Leader of Believers, news about him traveled with the horse riders to the East and West; therefore there is no need to mention him.«<sup>142</sup>

Abdullah claimed that news about Uthman also reached distant regions in the east and west by other mounted travelers. Abdullah always stressed that he had traveled together with his brother all his life:

»I was often the first person to transcribe any book he wrote since the beginning of his writings until now. I accompanied him both at home and on his journey and I never parted from him since my youth until now when I am almost 50 years old.«<sup>143</sup>

Religious mentor and mentees usually traveled together.<sup>144</sup> Uthman dan Fodio himself had studied with a »Bedouin from Kebbi«<sup>145</sup> and other foreign scholars. According to his biography composed by Abdullah, Uthman also voyaged with his paternal uncle for education:

142 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, p. 2. For an Arabic edition see Hiskett: Material, pp. 550–578.

143 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, p. 3.

144 Uthman Dan Fodio himself submitted his *ijazas* to many students and followers. He instructed his brother Abdullah, his sons Muhammad Saad, Muhammad Bello, Muhammad Sanbu and his nephew Ibrahim Khalil. Other students were described as friends, companions, ascets and scholars: Umar Al-Kammi, Muhammad Kiriangha, Muhammad Zanghi, Ismail, Habiballah Al-Sudani, Ishaq bin Umar, Fudayri, Muhammad Yero, Kabeeju, Shaykh Al-Nur, Abaan, Modibbo Sufi, Umar Gorba, Shinbu Hamal, Malam al-Badawi Wuudi bin Mahmud, Sadaan, Nadumaam, Modibbo Jelli al-Mukaashif and Siddiq Ghuneeje. Very few are remembered as martyrs that had died in the Jihad, proving that only some scholars had actually fought in the wars: Umar Ghanburi Nakeeju and Ghaabdu. Abdullah listed these 24 students, but of course many more people listened to Uthman's speeches during his preaching tours. Cf. Abdullah Dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, manuscript photocopy and translation, in: Shareef (ed.): *Lost and Found Children*, pp. 97–101.

145 Arab. *بدو الكوي*. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241, p. 4.

»This teacher [*sheikh*] was learned and pious and well-known for his righteousness, doing what is right, forbidding what is wrong and interested only in his own concerns. And he was the one, whom Uthman [our *sheikh*] imitated in both character and behavior. He was his companion for two years and assumed his pious character. And he did what is right and forbade what is wrong.«<sup>146</sup>

The travels of Islamic students were to a large extent centered on the figure of the teacher as a role model and leader. The teacher's duty was not simply the transmission of information; he was also expected to teach a certain life attitude and moral values. And this education took place through traveling with teachers and imitating them. After the time spent with his uncle, »sheikh Uthman traveled to our scholar and sheikh Jibril and was his companion for a year and learnt from him«.<sup>147</sup> Uthman then attended lessons by family members (cousins, uncles) after Jibril had left for his second pilgrimage. Another teacher with the nickname »al-Zanfara«<sup>148</sup> was probably from Zamfara.

When Uthman was educated by his uncle Al-Hajj Muhammad<sup>149</sup> his younger brother Abdullah was already allowed to listen to the texts they read. They were given his *ijaza*,<sup>150</sup> the oral certification by a higher authority to teach about a certain Islamic subject or text. Abdullah also mentioned from whom this uncle had obtained his *ijaza* according to the *silsila* chain of transmission: »He had received it from his teacher [*sheikh*] Abu Hassan Ali, originally from the town Zinder«<sup>151</sup> in today's southern Niger.<sup>152</sup> The majority of Abdullah's teachers were male family members. Only the non-relatives among the listed preachers were further described by telling their places of origin. There was, for example,

146 Ibid., p. 4.

147 Ibid., p. 5.

148 Arab. الزنفرى. Ibid., p. 5.

149 His proper name was Al-Hajj Muhammad bin Raji bin Modiffo bin Hamma bin Ali.

150 Arab. إجازة.

151 Arab. سندی. NU, Paden 241, p. 6.

152 Zinder expanded from a small Hausa village to an important center of the trans-Saharan trade. Since the 1830s Zinder was the capital of the Sultanate Damagaram, which was a kind of vassal state of the Bornu Empire. Its population included Fulbe, Tuareg quarters or encampments, Hausa traders' quarters (*zongo*) and others.

Ibrahim Al-Barnawi;<sup>153</sup> his name is an indication of his Bornu origin and he had allegedly settled in Sokoto after studying there. Another teacher was nicknamed Al-Mandari<sup>154</sup> which might refer to his origins in the Mandara Mountain area at the eastern Caliphate frontier. It is remarkable that the Jihadists never mentioned the location where their lessons took place. Only the home regions of the teachers and their journeys were commemorated by way of nicknames. The social environment of itinerant preachers and students was very cosmopolitan; however the sources don't tell about the geographical knowledge they transmitted.

Uthman dan Fodio's daughter Nana Asmau, on the other hand, described the preaching tours of her father geographically and not as a list of the teachers he consulted. She even entitled her biographical poem about Uthman dan Fodio *Filitago* (»round trip«) in Fulfulde.<sup>155</sup> In this poem she described the preaching tours of Uthman dan Fodio, starting with his birth in 1754, when »God gave him to us in Hausa because of his mercy.«<sup>156</sup> In this line Nana Asmau literally called Hausa her homeland. And in this region his preaching tours started at his residence in Degel, and then he continued traveling to Zamfara (Dauran, Faru) to the south. According to the route described by Nana Asmau, he turned northwards from there and then returned to Degel. Asmau called his home settlement a *rugga*, which is the Hausa term for Fulbe cattle encampments. His next tours took him further south to the Niger (lit. *kuwara*) shore. In order to express that Muslims in all places accepted his sermons, Nana Asmau used the popular phrase »east and west« (Hausa *gabas da yamma*).<sup>157</sup> In Jihadist poetry of the second Sokoto generation this preaching

153 Arab. البرنوى. NU, Paden 241, p. 6.

154 Arab. المندرى. Ibid.

155 After Asmau's death, her widower Isa translated this work into Hausa, giving a literal translation of the title »[*Wakar*] *Gewaye*.« In ca. 1865 the Sokoto scholar and former Wazir (1842–1859) Isa composed an Arabic translation. Cf. for a Hausa version: Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 444–454; for the Fulfulde original see Nana Asmau: *Filitago*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, pp. 201–208; and for the Arabic text (with English translation) see Shareef (ed.): *Description of the Land of the Blacks*. The Arabic version is also held in Ghana, falsely ascribed to Uthman dan Fodio: *Masufat al-sudan*, Legon 73.

156 Hausa »Jalla Ubangiji ya ba mu shi na na Hausa don jinƙai nasa.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 444.

157 Ibid., p. 445.

journey was repeated over and over again, so that there emerged a master narrative which was reproduced as a fixed element. One of the legends often picked out, was the moment when Uthman reached the Niger, which was styled as the initialed moment when he called for his Jihad: »He was on the Path, but the lost souls rejected it. He went to the banks of the Niger, calling on responsive people. [...] He returned and called on people to get ready.«<sup>158</sup> The Niger was called the natural and religious boundary of his preaching journey. Uthman reportedly wanted to reach a new audience but they ignored his sermons. In another version of this poem, Nana Asmau stressed that her father had called the rural people to come to the towns.<sup>159</sup> The Jihadist poet had witnessed the Jihad wars and the urbanization of many regions.

The intense activity of itinerant preachers in the Jihad years was also remembered by the second-generation Jihadist Kadi Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih (1806–1869). He composed an Arabic history of the Jihad in Sokoto and Kano and mentioned the ways by which the Jihadist reformist ideas were spread among the people:

»The first was through his [Uthman dan Fodio's] writings in Arabic, and his poems in our languages Hausa and Fulfulde. The second was through itinerant preachers who preached to members of the public or any individual they met.«<sup>160</sup>

And Zangi complemented this list with a third way of mobilization: through miracles (*karamat*). But the role of the mobile priests is outstanding here, because the writers of the Jihadist elites usually did not refer to their contribution to the Jihad. They were often ignored in official texts. Most of the average itinerant teachers at the frontier emirates were Fulbe and still ran their cattle farms when returning »home«. Their rural clan residencies usually were called by the names of that clan, but when moving into the growing urban centers of the Caliphate, the clan

**158** Ibid., p. 164. For the Fulfulde Ajami text cf. Nana Asmau: *Ko'iwī 'i Shehu*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, p. 215.

**159** Nana Asmau: *Labaran Shehu*, p. 3.

**160** Cf. an English translation of the text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 21. Original manuscripts are only reported in Northern Nigerian Collections; cf. Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 324.



names were used to refer to the urban quarters where the Fulbe families settled.<sup>161</sup>

Whilst the Sokoto Jihadists feared the power of itinerant preachers in the central Caliphate areas, they tolerated their activity in the frontier zones. Wherever the Caliphate expanded militarily, Islamic traveling teachers usually moved ahead of the war frontier. When the Jihadist soldiers entered the Nupe region at the Niger-Benue confluence in the late 1830s, the Nupe rejected being called ›unbelievers‹ and often enthusiastically welcomed migrant teachers who instructed them how to perform the Islamic prayers and circumcise their male children. Mallamai (Hausa preachers) were usually paid for this medical service which was performed at the age of three or four months. The Christian missionary Schön was told in Kakanda<sup>162</sup> that Muslim priests from the north would regularly visit the region for missionary purposes. Circumcision festivals were then celebrated with many guests and the slaughter of goats.<sup>163</sup> But even those priests traveling to or residing in Nupe were often not trained to read and understand the Arabic language.<sup>164</sup>

The Christianized Samuel Ajayi Crowther must also have landed on the shore of some displaced Kakanda villages during his Niger mission. He reported that some Kakanda had escaped from the ›Fulatahs‹ (Jihadists) to the western shore and to the mountain tops in 1838. And while the European missionary Schön had emphasized the Islamic elements of local religion in this area, Crowther drew attention to certain rituals performed by an old man with some religious authority who sacrificed a fowl to his ›idol‹, consisting of animal blood, feathers, clay and grasses.<sup>165</sup> In Crowther's report many of these religious rites were invoked ›to prevent war.‹<sup>166</sup> On the one hand, the Kakanda adopted certain Islamic practices introduced by pioneer itinerant preachers, and on the other hand they had to escape the Jihadist military expeditions that followed

**161** Ado-Kurawa (ed.): *Jihad in Kano*, pp. 23–24.

**162** A Nupe settlement on the Niger shore, north of the Benue confluence.

**163** Crowther / Schön: *Journals*, pp. 138–139.

**164** *Ibid.*, p. 184.

**165** *Ibid.*, p. 294.

**166** *Ibid.*, p. 309.

during the early 1830s. Different religious objects were used as a method of ensuring the peace and well-being of the community in a time of crisis caused by the Jihadist invasions. Ironically, the Jihadist soldiers ridiculed and prohibited such religious practices and yet their presence when attacking the frontier population was often what led to a rise in such practices. The Jihadists often caused what they condemned.

When the Jihad spread into the southern and eastern neighboring countries of Hausa, some priests followed the wars as official legates to teach the villages. Intense missionary work was especially carried out by the Jihadists of the southern emirates where people were considered pagans. The British traveler Richard Lemon Lander encountered some Jihadist preachers in the Nupe Emirate in 1830 during a boat trip on the Niger:

»We found several Felatah Mallams on the island, who had been sent by the chief of Rabba for the purpose of instructing the natives in the Mahomedan faith. The island is inhabited by Nouffie fishermen, a harmless, inoffensive race of men, who only a few weeks ago were obliged to abjure their pagan deities for the Koran, whether against their inclination or otherwise.«<sup>167</sup>

In another village this observation was repeated by Lander when he was invited to stay in a large room run by a Fula priest as a public village school.<sup>168</sup> There were already Islamized Nupe priests that usually worked for local rulers and produced different charms by writing down Koranic suras on cotton textile strips.<sup>169</sup> Hence, it does not seem as if the influence of Islamic practices was in general established by force. Some Nupe rulers actively asked to have a Muslim priest sent to their settlements who would produce charms and pray for the well-being of the state and the ruler.<sup>170</sup> However, the fishermen and their communities at the Niger shore or on Niger islands were perceived as the least Islamized people by the new Jihadist rulers. In the conquered Caliphate frontier region the priests had to implement Islamic elements in a local context, but their activities were by no means restricted to the religious sphere. Many

**167** Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 2, p. 15.

**168** Cf. *ibid.*, p. 51.

**169** *Ibid.*, p. 108.

**170** *Ibid.*, p. 114.

of them were also trading in horses from Hausa to the south; others colonized the south with larger Fulbe groups keeping cattle in their separate settlements at the outskirts of towns.<sup>171</sup> Lander explained that only the Fulbe bred bullocks in Nupe and Yoruba,<sup>172</sup> and that even towns not yet conquered by the Jihadists preferred to instruct their Fulbe slaves to take care of the state-owned cattle.<sup>173</sup> Even if the Jihadists could not annex a town to the Caliphate, pastoral knowledge and Jihadist scholarship often transcended political borders.

### *At the Royal Courts*

Some Muslim preachers had permanent positions at royal courts, and sometimes itinerant scholars would also accept a temporary position at a court. Uthman dan Fodio himself had worked as a court preacher. The Sokoto Jihad was initiated by a local conflict between Uthman dan Fodio and the state of Gobir. In fact, Uthman dan Fodio had previously worked at the Gobir royal court as priest, teacher and advisor before he became the public enemy of Gobir. Not surprisingly, Uthman dan Fodio and his fellow Jihadists did not mention this relation because they systematically attacked other Muslim teachers for remaining with powerful pre-Jihad Hausa leaders. This was part of their propaganda against non-Jihadist preachers.

But Hausa chronicles of the nineteenth century were not so sensitive about this issue and narrated the story of this relationship and the dispute that ended it. One text from Krause's Hausa Ajami Collection explained that Uthman dan Fodio was engaged by the Gobir ruler Yaquba (reigned 1795–1801) to lead prayers for successful military expeditions against the neighboring state Maradi. This narrative also claimed that Gobir military forces brought 250 slave girls and an equal amount of slave boys from a war on Maradi back home for Uthman dan Fodio. But instead of accepting this wealth, Uthman asked Gobir to build mosques for his community. While the Jihadist narratives argued that the Gobir ruler

171 Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, pp. 108, 134, 140.

172 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

173 Cf. for the case of Bussa (Borgu) in 1830: *ibid.*, p. 250.

Yaquba opposed Islam in general, this Hausa legend offers a more differentiated account. Yaquba lost a battle against Zamfara and announced that Uthman dan Fodio had prayed against him in secret: »He was angry; he said it was the priest Uthman that prayed so that we might not conquer the [beleaguered] town.«<sup>174</sup> According to this perspective, Uthman dan Fodio unintentionally or deliberately failed with his task to support the armies. As a result of this failure, Yaqubu wanted to kill Uthman who then allied himself with Yunfa who became the ruler of Gobir after Yaqubu. The old sultan died while on a war expedition with his »slaves« (soldiers). By the time his army had returned home to Gobir, Yunfa had already been installed as the new ruler: »Step by step the priest Uthman intervened in all the matters of the city because his student [Yunfa, reigned 1803–1808] had become king.«<sup>175</sup> In Hausa historiography Uthman dan Fodio participated in a coup d'état at the Gobir Court.

Somehow this division of labor between the kings, the military leaders, and Muslim court preachers came out of balance in the late eighteenth century. The most famous example is, of course, Uthman dan Fodio and his renunciation of the Gobir Sultanate Court. Another narrative was told about the scholar Abdassalam who preached in Gimbana for some time. When a Gobir military expedition sent out by Yunfa passed Abdassalam's camp, he was asked to pray for the warriors. In the Hausa Ajami manuscript from the Krause Collection, Abdassalam is described as a recent convert to Islam who had built his own big mosque. However, the Gobir army leader Waru said to him: »Come out and say some prayers for us as the king of Gobir has sent us.«<sup>176</sup> But according to the unknown author of the manuscript, Abdassalam refused to come out and pray in public. After having burnt down Dosso, Waru and his Gobir military unit returned with masses of booty: slaves, cattle and horses. The

174 Hausa »Ya yi fushi, ya chi, malam Usman ne, ya yi addu'a, kad in che garen nan.« Cf. Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 142. For the Arabic transliteration see Alhaji Umaru: *Origins of the Sokoto State*, StB, Ms. 844, text 23, f. 31.

175 Hausa »Ana nan zama zama malam Usman dada shi ad da shawarat gari duka, domin dan mak'aranta tasa ya zama sarki.« Cf. Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 143; see also Alhaji Umaru: *Origins of the Sokoto State*, f. 32.

176 Hausa »Ka yu mini magana, da malam ya fito ya yi mini addu'a, sarkin Gobir ya a aike ni.« Cf. Olderogge: *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 144; cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Origins of the Sokoto State*, f. 32.

conflict between Abdassalam and Gobir was also portrayed as a debate about the duties and constraints of Muslim priests under Hausa political rule. These conflicts finally escalated in this narrative when Waru and his soldiers captured the people of Abdassalam and passed by Uthman dan Fodio's camp together with this ›booty‹. Uthman demanded that all of their Muslim slaves be freed, which they refused. Then Uthman told his followers to go to the streets and undue all the leather belts of the enslaved women and men, of the young and old. Several attempts were subsequently undertaken in vain to get the freed slaves back from Uthman dan Fodio who instead chased the delegations away.<sup>177</sup> When this crisis turned into a war, the Jihad started.

In the pre-Jihad decades, Fulbe priests increased their influence on local and regional rulers. This process also occurred in areas beyond the Hausa region, e.g. in Bornu. These more active priests did not compose a new social group, but instead replaced the existing class of religious advisers. A contemporary from the Sokoto-Bornu frontier region of Deia described the rise of itinerant priests at the courts during the reign of Lafia (ca. 1800):

»Afterwards, however, when he [Lafia] had taken his own, he did not give anything to others, except to the priests of the Phula; he did not like the priests of Bornu, but the priests of the Phula always asked God for him. The Phula are not good, they and the king of Bornu never agree.«<sup>178</sup>

When Lafia eventually attacked the Bornu King Amadu, he was caught, taken to Katsega and disposed of. The new ruler Salgami implemented a royal order to ban the Fulbe living in the towns in order to marginalize their influence on the courts. Some Fulbe escaped from Deia and resettled in Gutshiba, where they mobilized for a war and attacked Deia. They crossed the forest to the east and raided and burned down the town Kalalawa. Afterwards the Bornu king sent a military unit with the explicit order to kill, and not to enslave the Fulbe.<sup>179</sup>

177 See the German paraphrase of this chapter in Krause (ed.): *Der Ursprung von Sokoto II*, p. 2.

178 Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 217.

179 *Ibid.*, p. 219.

This example, narrated by a freed slave originating from the Sokoto-Bornu frontier, demonstrates how the priesthood at the courts had become an embattled office for Hausa, Bornu, and traditionally rural Fulbe *mallamai*. Traditional scholarly elites and rulers perceived them as a homogeneous ethnic group of Fulbe who challenged their role in society and state. Therefore, violent opposition was organized explicitly against »Fulbe« priests. When the expelled king of Bornu stayed in his exile residence in Kurnawa, he specially asked for a Kanem priest. A soldier escorted this priest to Kurnawa where he was engaged to provide religious advice and to conduct war preparations against the Fulbe. But when the priest decided to march for the old capital, the old king died on the way to the battlefield. The king »Dunduma« (Dunama, reigned 1813–1820?) and the priest then faced the Fulbe in front of the capital and drove them out of the town. In this account of a Bornu informant interviewed by Koelle, the Bornu success was caused by the magic of the priest:

»So they met with the Phula, the priest being in front, and the king behind him. Then the priest made a charm-water, put it in a little calabash, and having flung it at the Phula, the Phula did not stop, but began to flee.«<sup>180</sup>

According to this story, the priest did not only prepare for the war in the background, but in front of the battle formation when they marched against their enemies. This religious adviser was judged as the decisive factor in this battle. It was commemorated that he received a share of the booty and returned to Kanem, the north-eastern frontier of Bornu. This *mallam*<sup>181</sup> was engaged especially for warfare and not as a permanent adviser. On both sides of the border, in Bornu and in Sokoto, the Islamic court priests were seen as the most important figures – but other than in Bornu, the Sokoto Jihadists acted simultaneously as »priests« and as political rulers. This marked a shift of the political culture in the Central Sahel, so that itinerant preachers were only accepted in the periphery and not in the political centers of the Sokoto Caliphate. This is also evident in the political office titles. The title of the king was formerly *mai* (»owner«, »leader«) in Chadic languages. With the Jihad it was soon

180 Ibid., p. 224.

181 E.g. *ibid.*, p. 93.

replaced by the term *shehu* (*sheikh*), and also adopted by the Bornu ruler Umar Ibn Muhammad Al-Amin in 1846. And as early as in the 1810s the political and military struggles of the Central Sahel were formulated with religious labels. When the juvenile king Dunama was expelled from the Bornu capital by Mallam Tsagi of Katagum (near Kano), his uncle Muhammad Nghileruma attacked the allies of Mallam Tsagi. The battle between Nghileruma (Bornu) and Tsagi (Sokoto) was then described as a fight of two priests who competed religiously and intellectually. At least Bornu inhabitants narrated the conflict as a duel of priests: »After this prince Ngaleiruma raised an army, and went against the Capital, and said to the Pulo [Fulbe], »If thou art a priest, I am a greater priest« [...].«<sup>182</sup>

In times of military and religious crisis new priests were needed with new skills and methods that were commensurate with new problems. In another source of Koelle, the name of the new Bornu priest was given as *mallam* Laminu. In this story the priest was also escorted to the Bornu exile ruler in Kurnawa on a horse. This informant described the preparation for this journey vividly:

»Priest Laminu [...] arose, went to his house, got ready, took his book, returned to the man [messenger] received the horse at his hand. Mounted it, and then he and the man came to the king's place.«<sup>183</sup>

The equipment of the priestly war adviser consisted only of a book [*kitabun*]. Books were considered an effective source of knowledge, especially for war. In the Sokoto-Bornu conflict the Jihadists already mixed Islamic preaching with their warfare, so that the king of Bornu adapted to this new ideology of warfare, according to the stories spread by inhabitants of Bornu. Laminu was responsible for deciding on the appropriate moment to start a military attack by prayer:

»Priest Laminu [...] said to him [the king]: »Go and sit down! God knows what he will do, but no man: I will pray to God for thee, and as soon as I know that God has accepted my prayer, I will tell thee to get ready.«<sup>184</sup>

182 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, pp. 224–225.

183 Ibid., p. 228.

184 Ibid., p. 229.

The Bornu informant told Koelle that the priest prayed for seven days and nights without any sleep and then told the king to start for the war. When they marched for the occupied capital the priest was in front and the king right behind him, followed by his soldiers. This leading role of priests in war was certainly new; the priest Laminu not only prayed and prepared for the war, but actively participated in the military campaign. When the soldiers assembled in front of the city walls of the capital, the priest prayed for the soldiers and then instructed them to use his sacred water against the enemies:

»Priest Laminu who had some small calabash with charm-water about him, in his bosom-pocket, called a soldier who had a swift horse, saying to him, ›when we all arise, and go to where the Phula are, and the Phula also arise to meet us, so that we and they approach each other, then hold the calabash in thy hand, and gallop thy horse, and as soon as thou comest to the Phula, throw this calabash at them, and come back to us, and when we advance to towards the Phula, they shall not stay and wait for us.«<sup>185</sup>

The mounted soldier performed the ritual as instructed by the priest. Because of the sacred water, the informant explained, the Bornu forces recaptured their capital in this battle. The water was believed to have pushed the Fulbe to flee from the town without even fighting back. In the Sahel region water was a symbol of power because it was in fact a decisive factor of warfare and other activities that involved traveling. Caravans organized their trips, stages and overnight camps according to the location of wells, lakes, rivers and other water deposits. Handling space on a theoretical and practical level was especially dependent on this resource. Knowledge of water was something precious and magical; for example, when in Islamic rituals the priests washed the Arabic script from a paper and then gave the sacred water as a drink to their clients.

After the military success of Bornu, the priest Laminu returned to his home country. Koelle's account claims that he was asked what reward he wished and reportedly he only wanted a horse for his journey and a prayer shirt. He was said to have been rewarded with the shirt, a Muslim cap, a tent, a cloak and a horse.<sup>186</sup> All these objects are part of the ma-

**185** Ibid., p. 230.

**186** Ibid., pp. 231–232.



terial equipment of itinerant preaching. The priests engaged for warfare offered their services for different rulers and traveled far distances in order to take these offices. They cultivated an ascetic lifestyle but in the meantime they expressed their social rank by wearing certain clothes and carrying along books during their journeys.

The tremendous influence of priest Laminu was not without any aftermath for Bornu history: Many people were afraid that this priest might attack Bornu with his own followers. Therefore the Bornu ruler Ibrahim (reigned 1820–1846) sent the Wadai ruler and soldiers to fight Laminu in advance, which they did. Laminu escaped and his town was looted and set on fire. Then he organized the murder of the Bornu king and declared himself the ruler, adopting the title *sheikh* instead of the former title *mai*. The historical Laminu<sup>187</sup> indeed ruled Bornu from 1846–1853, and then again from 1854–1881. The introduction of the new title *sheikh*, which had been used by the Sokoto Jihadists before, is indicative of the fact that the new and permanent political title was no mere bureaucratic formality but the beginning of a new style of governance. Contemporary Bornu residents considered Laminu's reign as a major caesura, because the itinerant priest (*mallam*) had turned from an Islamic adviser to a sultan:

»When they called him Sheik Laminu, all the people of the land knew that this priest had left priesthood, and that the government of Bornu had come into his hand. After this there was none who any longer called him priest [*mallam*] Laminu, but they only called him Sheik Laminu.«<sup>188</sup>

This development was implemented across the region by the Sokoto Jihad. In this regard, Koelle's Bornu informant also remembered several Fulbe priests of that period, for example Tsagi and Bokore, who preached in Jihadist Katagum (northeast Nigeria) during the Bornu rule of Ibrahim Ibn Ahmad (1820–1846).<sup>189</sup> In contemporary public opinion, military leaders could only win a war with the help of professional Islamic priests. Koelle's informant explained that Laminu was only successful because of his books:

**187** Also called Umar Ibn Muhammad Al-Amin.

**188** Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 237.

**189** Ibid., p. 232. The Jihadist Mallam Zaki had founded the Katagum Emirate of Sokoto in 1807, and ruled it up to 1814.

»But as to me [the fictional narrator Laminu], a prince and a priest, our Lord has instructed me in the Koran, so that I know it, and our Lord has also instructed me in (other) books, so that I know them.«<sup>190</sup>

Books came to be regarded as a source of legitimacy. And the Sokoto Jihadists styled themselves as the ›legitimate‹ priests of Islam. In their writings, the Jihadists discriminated between two groups of priests: pious priests and errant priests. Uthman dan Fodio claimed that any educated person could easily detect the false priests because they could not really understand, read, and write in the Arabic language, and thus failed to teach authentic Islam.<sup>191</sup> As dan Fodio put it, every time had its errant priests and prophets, proving his theory with a quotation from the Koran:

»And thus We have made for every Prophet an enemy – devils from mankind and jinn, inspiring to one another decorative speech in delusion. But if your Lord had willed, they would not have done it, so leave them and that which they invent.«<sup>192</sup>

These dangerous and errant priests would in fact practice polytheism together with the rulers of the Hausa city states, as Uthman dan Fodio put it. They praised ›trees and stones‹ and gained their power by praying and foretelling prior to war expeditions.<sup>193</sup> From different medieval Arabic texts the Jihadists gathered their arguments in order to condemn communication with the aforementioned jinns. They would engage in ›practicing the ›Science of the Unseen‹ by reading signs in the sand and in the stars or communicating with jinns from the voices and movements of the birds and the like.«<sup>194</sup> Officially, every type of ›unislamic‹ talisman – whatever this might actually be – was prohibited and the false priests should be killed in a Jihadist act.<sup>195</sup> The Sokoto Jihadists harshly opposed the existing scholarly elite of court priests, but as soon as they had replaced them, they turned against independent itinerant preachers.

190 Ibid., p. 225.

191 Cf. the text *Siraj al-ikhwan* at BN, Manuscripts Arabes 5528, f. 227a (ff. 255–238).

192 Koran 6,112, quoted by Uthman dan Fodio in *ibid.*, f. 228a.

193 Ibid., f. 230a.

194 Arab. اناس انه يعمل شيا من علم الغيب بالخطف الرمل ونحوه او باحوال النجوم او باخبار من الجب او ذلك بشئ اصوات الطيور او حركاتها ونحو ذلك. Ibid., f. 234b.

195 Ibid., f. 235a.

They aimed at marginalizing their role in the Caliphate center and pushing them to the frontiers. The contemporaries experienced and narrated the wars of that time as a general rise in power for the court priests who opposed each other in magical wars. In a more Jihadist elite understanding, the conflict arose between true priests and false preachers. The Jihadist authors emphasized that the ideal ruler had to rely on the true Islamic scholars for political advice. Such was described by dan Fodio in his text *The Foundation of Justice for the People of Honor and Those Taking Charge of the Affairs*: »Of those to be with him are the pious learned scholars who will show the right path to the people.«<sup>196</sup> Dan Fodio also warned political leaders against choosing the wrong Islamic counselors:

»O Sultan, you must show your love to the religious scholars and be anxious in listening to their advice. You should be cautious about the bad scholars, those who struggle for the worldly gain.«<sup>197</sup>

This quotation demonstrates that the political influence of the ulama increased with the Jihad. At the same time court scholars suffered from competition of winning the leader's favor. When Uthman dan Fodio himself was still an itinerant preacher, he would rather stress the role of rural scholars far from the courts. As a mobile preacher in the pre-Jihad years, he explicitly called for military preparation in public. In Nana Asmau's account of the beginning of the Sokoto Jihad, it was he who told his followers to take up bows, quivers and swords, and to gather and train the horses.<sup>198</sup> »He sent letters [on this subject] and distributed them to the towns.«<sup>199</sup> The Jihadists commemorated how the preacher Uthman dan Fodio had established a network of scholars he successfully called for the Jihad by written messages. As military uniform, Uthman called for a distinguished manner of Muslim dress: »Dress in the way as the inside is arranged.«<sup>200</sup> This refers to the restrained dress code of the Ji-

196 Mafara (ed.): *Usulul-adliluwullatil Umuri*, p. 12.

197 Ibid., p. 3.

198 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 445.

199 Ibid.

200 Hausa »A yi ko rawunna har kaza da damra ciki.« Ibid.

hadists which included a turban for male Muslims and likewise dictated that women should cover their hair.

Prior to the Jihad, itinerant preachers were already hired at the courts, but with the Jihad the migrant preachers themselves became rulers according to contemporary explanations of the public. But they were only few compared to the growing segment of itinerant preachers sent as missionaries into the Sokoto frontier regions of the south. From the scarce information we have about the content of the speeches of preachers, I will portray two concepts of pagan territories, starting with these missionary preachers' interpretation of Hausa traditional religion.

### *Banning the Bori*

Itinerant preachers visiting the urban centers were often opposed by the established ulama of the local court. But itinerant missionaries in rural spaces and at the Caliphate frontiers were challenged by other religious actors: the *dan bori* or *masu bori* (»people of the *bori* rituals«). When the British Major Arthur John Newman Tremearne (1877–1915) published his book on Hausa spiritual practices, *Ban of the Bori* in 1914, he analyzed Hausa communities living in North Africa.<sup>201</sup> Obviously, the *bori* possession rituals survived in many West African and Hausa communities although they had been banned by the Jihadists. In the official texts of the Jihadist elite those practices were usually not called by any name, but summarized as »forbidden rituals with the jinns«. They usually characterized them as anti-Islamic and as generally evil.

The Jihadist women, on the other hand, described the rituals in more details, probably because Hausa women maintained important roles in *bori* rituals. The female preachers were present in rural areas where they probably learned about *bori*. Nana Asmau directly mentioned these rituals in one of her early works.<sup>202</sup> In a list of negative characteristics and deeds she included: »To follow the Satan called *huri*.«<sup>203</sup> Women have

201 See Tremearne: *The Ban of the Bori*.

202 Ogunbiyi supposed it was written in ca. 1820 when she was 27 years old; cf. Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*, p. 95.

203 Arab. اتباع الشيطان التي تسمى بوري. Ibid., p. 105.

been important agents in *bori* meetings as professional dancers who contacted spirits. They were believed to make them useful or harmless by communication and possession.<sup>204</sup> In her religious advice, Nana Asmau quoted from the Koran in order to ban the contact between jinns and human beings:

»The day when He will gather them together [and say]: ›O company of jinn, you have [mised] many of mankind.‹ And their allies among mankind will say: ›Our Lord, some of us made use of others, and we have [now] reached our term, which you appointed for us.‹ He will say: ›The fire is your residence.‹<sup>205</sup>

When looking for an adequate Koranic term for regional *bori* rituals, Nana Asmau chose a sura on the human-jinn-relationship that was eventually punished with hellfire. Nana Asmau only »translated« *bori* into Islamic cosmology of the jinns but with no single word did she dispute the effectiveness of spirit possession. To the contrary: She argued that even if contact with spirits may have a short-term positive effect for the client, they would pay for it on Judgment Day. This attitude corresponds with the general Islamic concept of jinns as spiritual entities: There are humans, jinns and God. In this universe God is superior to both jinns and humans, whereas Prophet Muhammed is considered a leading figure for both ›species‹. Jinns are characterized as invisible to humans, and equipped with a free will to choose the right religion independently. The existence of multiple worlds is an overall principle of Islam. Jinns thus live in the unseen parallel world, so that some Muslim scholars even spoke of seven worlds and seven heavens. Allah created humans out of clay, while angels and jinns consist of mere light. Their world is real, but non-material and in this regard »imaginative«:

»Imagination is like alchemy, a force of change; it is not fantasy. It is mistakenly confused with illusion, defined as a misleading image presented to the mind. Attributing the definition of fantasy or the illusion to imagination or the imaginal is therefore manifestly spurious.«<sup>206</sup>

204 Smith: Baba of Karo, p. 222.

205 Koran 6,128. See also Ogunbiyi (ed.): Arabic Writings, p. 95.

206 El-Zein: Islam, Arabs, and the Intelligent World of the Jinn, p. 9.

The belief in jinns is evidentially pre-Islamic in Arabia and was later included into the general monotheistic concepts of Islam. In Sufi orders, contact with the jinns was often sought for secret information or arrangement of a quarrel between a jinn and a human. All the classical scholars in the history of Islam have referred to the world of jinns in one way or another. Against the dangerous attacks of a jinn Muslims applied Islamic magical rituals. Amulets with Koranic verses, recitation ceremonies or geometrical figures containing divine words and letters served, for example, as methods of religious healing and protection: »Illness was perceived as a discordance, a disharmony between man, nature, and the intermediary realm.«<sup>207</sup>

On returning to Nana Asmau's interpretation, she registered »magic«<sup>208</sup> as a sin different from *bori*. The author quoted several Koran clauses that reveal the major difference between *bori* and common magic: »[...] the magician will not succeed wherever he goes.«<sup>209</sup> Magic was considered to be fraud and therefore ineffective. The outcome of this is that there were two groups of sorcerers that were banned by Jihadist authors and itinerant preachers: people practicing effective and evil *bori* rituals, and magicians only performing useless rituals. Nana Asmau declared that »those who pretend to be saints in order to get presents«<sup>210</sup> also burned in hell. However, all sorcerers were destined to enter hell. Another Koran quotation of Nana Asmau refers to the two angels Harut and Marut, who bet with Allah and taught the people of Babel in witchcraft.<sup>211</sup> Nana Asmau's senior half-sister and teacher Hafsatu also warned all devotees of magic of their fate in the hereafter: »Begging sorcerers and soothsayers will be in destruction.«<sup>212</sup> It is worth noting that Hafsatu replaced the common stereotype of the begging Muslim scholar with the begging agent of traditional religions.

207 Ibid., p. 88.

208 Arab. سحر. Nana Asmau: *Tanbih al-ghafilin*, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): Arabic Writings, p. 105. One manuscript copy is held in Niamey (1405).

209 Koran 20,69.

210 Hausa »Masu karya da alwalici a bas u dukiya.« Nana Asmau: *Tabbat hakika*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, pp. 56–57.

211 Koran 2,102.

212 Cf. Hausa and English translation: Hafsatu: *Untitled*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, Notebook 5, p. 91, l. 20.

When translating a Fulfulde poem authored by Uthman dan Fodio, Nana Asmau claimed that all »magicians« will enter hell.<sup>213</sup> She chose a very general term for spiritual service: *masu tsafe* (»fetish people«). And this poem passes evidence about the tensions between wives and their husbands, co-wives, and concubines:

»Women who imprison their husbands with sorcery. [...] There are women accumulating eagerness. She was reproved that her behavior is not good. Any wife using sorcery against her rival woman.«<sup>214</sup>

Magic was the power of women who were considered weak in Islam and other patriarchal contexts. The Jihadist women did not ban ecstatic religious experiences in general, but they wanted this to happen within a purely Islamic framework. They tried to convince more women to support the Jihad and its ideas. In a versified essay, composed by Bello and his sister Asmau in the 1830s, Sufi women of the Islamic past were thus recalled in order to demonstrate their role in Islam. Nana Asmau called these spiritual women *ubbadu mata*<sup>215</sup> (»women of worship«). Characteristic Sufi practices, such as »she was zealously praying all night«<sup>216</sup> and »she saw female and male jinns because of her sainthood«,<sup>217</sup> were attributed to historical female saints of Islam. Nana Asmau believed that some even »experienced ecstasy by intelligent worship«.<sup>218</sup> She praised them as perfect role models that retreated from preaching in public and entered into an ascetic lifestyle. In Nana Asmau's account it becomes clear that Jihadist ideology asked female religious agents of the public to withdraw from public places and learn Islamic suras by heart and in

213 Hausa ماسن ظافى (*masu tsafe*). Nana Asmau: *Tabbat hakika*, pp. 48–49. Jean Boyd translated the Hausa term as »witches«; cf. Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 51.

214 Hausa »Masu damre miji su kara da kwarce. Hakanan mace wadda ta tara kishi. An yi horonta babu kyau ta barshi. Hakanan mace mai fa kwarcan kiyushi.« Cf. *ibid.*, p. 431; and for the Ajami version see Nana Asmau: *Tabbat hakika*, p. 55.

215 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 434.

216 Hausa »Mai kofarin salla ga kullu lailu.« Jean Boyd translated the Arabic words »kullu lailu« as a mutation of »Illahu« (»Allah«), which is clearly a misinterpretation. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 435.

217 Hausa »Tana ganin fa aljani da aljana domin walicci.« *Ibid.*, p. 436.

218 Hausa »Mahaukata don hankalin ibada.« *Ibid.* Jean Boyd's translation deviates from my interpretation.

private.<sup>219</sup> From this follows that banning the *bori* also meant to disempower female religious experts.

It was mainly independent itinerant preachers and among them especially female scholars who learned about *bori* and tried to abolish such practices. When traveling through the Yoruba region, Clapperton's caravan porters were, however, willing to tell him about »Bori«, which the British explorer interpreted as an individual name of a village:

»After crossing, I travelled through thick woods for an hour, when I halted at a few huts on the north side of the river, called Bori, until the baggage should arrive. A hut stood apart from the rest, near the banks of the river; the grass and weeds carefully cleared away from around it. The messenger and people who were with me went one after another to say their prayers; which they did, by lying down, with their foreheads towards the door, which was secured by a mat: they appeared to be very devout, and having finished their prayers, slipped a few cowries inside the mat. I asked if I might go and look in, but they would not allow me. I asked them who they prayed to: they said, to the God that gave them plenty of water, corn, and yams.«<sup>220</sup>

*Bori* was a very general term used by Jihadist preachers to denounce all non-Islamic religious practices of the Central Sahel. Itinerant teachers, on the one hand, spread the stories about *bori* practices of the villages into the capitals. On the other hand, mobile priests also carried the news about the sinfulness of *bori* from the towns into the villages by way of their preaching. It was perceived as a phenomenon of rural Hausa society, far from any centers of learning. Furthermore, under the explicit name *bori* the rituals were only discussed in a female literary sphere. Although the Sokoto Jihadists were eager to instruct women about their Islamic duties in separate lessons, the more common opinion on women's education was that their husbands were their closest teachers – just as fathers served as the first religious authority for the minor children. In a mid-nineteenth century Hausa text of religious advice a comparison is thus drawn between these types of family relationships:

219 Ibid., p. 438.

220 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 63.



»Ye too, O women my disciples, do you show diligence and take pains, do you serve God; Say your full prayers, fulfil the fast; be not stubborn nor walk proudly, your husband is to you as a Mallam. [...] You my children, my disciples, do you show diligence, do you seek after the knowledge of God; be strenuous, ye are the heirs of the Mallams. Seek after true and correct knowledge, leave off changing; be not stubborn nor walk proudly, your father is to you as a Mallam.«<sup>221</sup>

The Jihadists did not like the idea that women could attend public lectures by itinerant priests on the markets or in front of the mosques. Moreover, women staying at home alone could engage in ›forbidden‹ magic practices as the *bori*. Therefore the Jihadists asked the fathers and husbands to keep an eye on women and teach them Islamic rituals of prayer only. The educational biography of Nana Asmau is probably one of the best-documented accounts of the life of a female preacher. In the Arabic text *Rawd al-jinan fi dhikr manaqib al-sheikh uthman*,<sup>222</sup> her husband Gidado Ibn Laima listed numerous places where she preached to mainly Fulbe women who were described as her »(female) students«.<sup>223</sup> The settlements, of which many names are not known anymore, were defined as »village«<sup>224</sup> or »settlement«.<sup>225</sup> And from that we can assume that her work as a teacher was concentrated on rural Fulbe settlements and not the urban masses. Anthropological research also supports this theory because Nana Asmau is well-remembered particularly by women in the villages. During these local-scale lectures Nana Asmau probably also learned about *bori* rituals and understood them as primarily a female domain of rural society. Therefore both groups of mobile actors, female Sokoto Jihadists in the rural environment of Sokoto and itinerant preachers at the Caliphate frontiers, communicated knowledge about *bori* –

221 Hausa »To matamu almajirai akumaida himma ku do ania kuna kokari kuna ibada; Kuna salla chikaka kuna azumi chikaka, kadda ku chaia kuna takama almanjinka mallama. [...]Ku yayamu almajirai akumaida himma ku nema shinni kuna kokari da ku gaji mallama. Ku nema shinni hakika da gaskia ku ber sakiwa kadda ku chaia kuna takamal ubaka mallama.« Robinson (ed.): Specimens of Hausa Literature, pp. 50–53.

222 Manuscript edition in Ogunbiyi (ed.): Arabic Writings, p. 7.

223 Arab. طلبات. Cf. ibid.

224 Arab. قرية. Ibid.

225 Arab. محلة. Ibid.

and explicitly tried to ban such knowledge from the Islamic territory. Uthman dan Fodio and the first Jihadist generation had described magic as a problem of the Hausa royals, but the second generation of leaders focused more on the ›sorcerers‹ of the villages, trying to only resettle them in the frontier zones.

### *Preaching the Geography of the Hereafter*

The public image of itinerant preachers traveling the Central Sahel was often far from respectful. They were ridiculed for their material poverty and often treated as failing lazy service providers in oral literature. Therefore some Jihadist texts defended the scholarly lifestyle, dedicating hours every day to the study of books. In 1924, one member of the Sokoto elite wrote: »The learned have compiled books and treatises concerning obscurities, for such work is not devoid of profit, and there is not lacking reward to him who spends his days in study.«<sup>226</sup> Many itinerant preachers did not only quote passages from Islamic books, and instead they presented vivid descriptions of the hereafter. They often generated fear of hell in their speeches in order to present themselves as the solution to ease this fear and lead the audience to heaven. In their oral preaching they colorfully described the horrors and geography of hell. Although Last has argued that itinerant »teachers would carry interpretations and arguments in their head ready for the morning's oral instruction,«<sup>227</sup> and not on paper, the Jihadist poetry offers some hints about what they preached of when considering the hereafter, namely paradise and hell. Itinerant preachers called on people to escape this world with their professional help. In the mid-nineteenth century the Hausa Mallam Lima Chidia from the Sokoto area also asked his audience to leave the material world and hence defended the influence of the *mallamai*:

»The world undertakes wars with the Mallams; she is an ignorant [*jahili*] slave [*bawa*]. She mutters and speaks evil of a Mallam; she shows her strength to the ignorant. The female slave [this world] fights with the Mallam; but she

226 Cf. English translation in Palmer (ed.): *Western Sudan History*, p. 261. See also Dan Tafa: *Rawdhat al-afkar*, Niamey 77, f. 2.

227 Last: *The Book and the Nature of Knowledge*, p. 185.

seizes the child of ignorance by the neck. Whoever desires to escape, being at war with her, must abandon everything in this world [*dakin duniya*]. [...] Cleave to prayer, visit and salute the Mallams.«<sup>228</sup>

This world, labeled with the Arabic word *duniya*, was defined *jahili*, an Arabic term referring to the Islamic concept of the pre-Islamic and ›ignorant‹ societies. The world was also compared to male and female slaves seducing *mallams*.<sup>229</sup> The preachers explicitly threatened people and warned them to listen to and follow Muslim scholars in almost every text and speech about hell: One such description of the hereafter concluded that ›everyone shall seek knowledge with the scholars‹.<sup>230</sup> And hell was described in much more detail than paradise by nineteenth century itinerant preachers, when apocalyptic ideas and Mahdist expectations became popular (cf. chapter IV.2.4). Usually, and comparable to Christian imaginations of hell,<sup>231</sup> the deepest fears and aspirations were projected onto the territory of the hereafter. Hell was often portrayed like a desert, where people suffered from extreme heat and thirst, as a Hausa scholar imagined vividly in this speech:

»The (heat of the) sun shall descend (increased) seventy-thousand-fold; its heat shall wither up our arms and the heat of its orb shall (burn) our heads. It will continually blister our heads, it will soften them; the skull will boil over as a cooking vessel does. On that day a little drinking-water shall be sought

**228** Hausa »Ita doki yakoki ta kai gun mallamai don jahili bawa ta ni ita dunia; Dunu ta kai zami takan che na mallami karfi ta kan goda jahili ita dunia; Da baia baia ta ki fada da mallami dan jahili saiko tari da sa gun wuya; Kowa ki so shi fichi maiyako ki nata ashiyerda komi nan ga dakin dunia. [...] Ku riki sallati ka zan ziara mallamai.« See Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, pp. 40–41.

**229** In another text by a Muslim scholar of the mid-nineteenth century people are asked to send their children to Islamic teachers: »If you have children seek instruction for them, take them to the Mallams that they may learn by heart.« Hausa original: »En kun samu yaya ku nema laddabi garesu ku kaisu ga mallamasu shinni su samu harda.« Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

**230** Hausa »Kai dai anim shinni gun mallamai.« Cf. *ibid.*, p. 33.

**231** See for example the groundbreaking works by Jacques Le Goff and Peter Dinzelbacher; such as: Dinzelbacher: *Von der Welt durch die Hölle*; Le Goff: *La Naissance du Purgatoire* (Engl. transl. by Arthur Goldhammer: *The Birth of Purgatory*); *ibid.*: *The Medieval Imagination*.

for, there shall be no limit to the great heat, there shall be thirst and pain. Thirst shall burn the tongue down to the throat; it shall burn the spleen, the liver, the heart and the parts below.«<sup>232</sup>

Hell was described as a waterless desert where Prophet Muhammad is the only shelter giving shadow. In paradise on the other hand, there were cool places, and plenty of water for drinking and washing. Everyone could run his own house and farm. Paradise accounts of itinerant preachers demonstrate how the perfect place was imagined: cool, with plenty of water and fertile land to farm on. In contrast to that, hell was considered a dry desert, where there was nothing to offer shadow against the aggressive sun.

The journey to either paradise or hell was another popular feature of religious warning sermons. At first the dead person had to cross a narrow bridge over hellfire with seven peaks: At the first peak the ›unbelievers‹ were left behind, the second stop was only passed by those who had prayed. Thirdly, everyone was questioned about almsgiving, fourthly about fasting, fifthly about pilgrimage, then about ablution and finally about obedience towards parents. Deceivers would directly fall into the flames. The route to hell and paradise was imagined as crossing dangerous rivers of fire and thus reflected the real risk for a caravan crossing rivers in the Central Sahel. The mode of travel of the deceased was compared by Nana Asmau to the rigor of their faith. Therefore some would ride on stallions or walk uprightly to Muhammad, whereas others had to crawl on their belly or drag their buttocks. With this poem Nana Asmau probably referred to her own experience of traveling within migrating families and communities, where some owned beasts of burden, and the poor had to walk or trudge. Those who successfully passed the seven-peak bridge proceeded to Lake Al-Kawthar.

In Islam, ›Kawthar‹ could mean both the lake outside paradise and the river in paradise. Nana Asmau described the lake as a resting point

**232** Hausa ›Akan safko da rana ribbi sabain, chakani asanya chikai chakani gudanta du kawanamu. Ta kan rika farcha kai garemu ta zabki, kolua tana tafassa tana habuma Kaman tukunia. Rana na akannemi guwa baiyaka, zafi yayiawa ga kishirua ga chananta. Kishirua che akansurya halshi hal, makurua ta so(i)ya sefa da anta da zuchia da saifa.« Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, pp. 52–53.

for travelers, where they could drink clean and pure water that was sweet and even more delicious than milk and honey: »Who drinks from it will never feel thirsty again.«<sup>233</sup> People would meet at the shore and celebrate their fate in paradise. Together they would enter their paradise homes made of gold, silver and pearls; all the ground in paradise consists of gold dust. They could dress in silk and jewelry and never suffer again from sickness, ageing and poverty. For those who refused to listen to music in their life on earth, birds would sing beautiful songs.<sup>234</sup> Al-Kawthar is the conceptual counterpart of the fire river, because it was not dangerous and full of sweet and clean water. It represents how itinerant preachers perceived lakes and rivers as providing drinking water for the caravans. The lake of paradise connected the people and satisfied their needs, whereas the river of hell was a borderline between the good and the evil humans, the good and the bad territory.

### **3.4 Rulers, Diplomats and Messengers: The Silent Travelers**

The Sokoto Caliphate was a vast territorial state stretched out over the Central Sahel. Communication within the state, with its emirates, and with neighboring courts was therefore only possible through a network of traveling diplomats, messengers, and official visitations by the rulers. In the first phase of the Jihad, letters and flags were distributed in order to officially recognize an army leader as part of the movement (cf. paragraph »Under White Flags« in IV.5.3). But in times of peace, messengers and spies were also needed to investigate and negotiate political issues. Federal statehood in Sokoto was mostly organized through systems of tribute exchange, as was the case in the Bornu Empire as well. Rulers from tributary states had to pay visits to the emirate or state capital when delivering slaves and other presents or taxes. But more often the rulers sent deputies, princes or delegations. Right before the Sokoto Jihad was launched, the Bornu frontier ruler Lafia from Deia was sent for by the

233 Hausa فکشاس با ش فقار قشروا دطا. Nana Asmau: *Gadaben gaskiya*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 15.

234 Ibid., pp. 1–19.

Bornu king Amadu,<sup>235</sup> but ignored the messengers three times. Therefore the Bornu king (*mai*) sent his *keigamma* (commander) to Deia for an attack.<sup>236</sup> Regular visits were a basic element of political communication in the Central Sahel and demonstrated loyalty over territorial distances. From time to time, sovereigns seemingly asked for the rulers themselves to appear for the purpose of reassurance and to reinforce allegiances. Not answering a request communicated by the messengers could indicate a revolt against the predominance of the sovereign. Quite regularly, little frontier towns at the northern Caliphate border paid tribute to two states. In Gobir, the Jihadist invaders and the Gobir »shadow government« were both supplied with goods and slaves. According to oral accounts, the Konni ruler who was suffering from such double taxation finally broke bonds with Gobir years after the Jihad.<sup>237</sup>

Undertaking diplomatic journeys was also proof of a ruler's strength because he could only leave his home if his reign was firm and not likely to be subverted during his absence. For this reason Uthman dan Fodio asked leaders to choose deputies when they left their domains in order to prevent revolts during an emir's travel: »He [the emir] is to appoint servants to do services while he is on journey.«<sup>238</sup> The Sokoto Jihadists also dictated that every ruler should represent his office in an appropriate way that also included his outward appearance:

»It is incumbent upon the emir to portray a good manner whether he is present in his domain or out of it for a journey. [...] You are to adorn your body, perfume it and dress in attire that is allowed to men. You must not adorn with gold, silver and silk. You are to sit cross-legged and be as calm [...] as you can.«<sup>239</sup>

Good manners thus included well-tempered emotions, a religiously accepted dress code as well as a certain posture. A leader's personal odor was also important and was considered an essential element of the con-

**235** Name given by the informant. This ruler was correctly called Ahmad Alimi, ruling from 1793 to 1808. In this period of time the informant was a youth (born 1787).

**236** Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, pp. 83–84, 212–213.

**237** SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, G25, »Mission Tilho«, pp. 3–4. Boyd is referring here to extracts from Tilho (ed.): Documents scientifiques.

**238** Mafara (ed.): Usulul-adlilullatil Umuri, p. 12.

**239** Ibid., p. 11.

cept of male beauty. The Prophet Muhammad was usually ranked as the best-looking man, and was regularly and in an erotic way praised for his natural smell which was allegedly more fragrant than any perfume could be. His fragrance was divine in a sense that he never used artificial perfumes to generate it. Uthman dan Fodio also mentioned the duty of the emirs to travel as part of their office. Muhammad Bello agreed with his father that elegant dressing with luxurious materials was in general prohibited by Islam. On the other hand, he advised traveling delegates to dress nicely and to be clean for official meetings.<sup>240</sup> Minna's interpretation points at the competition between Bello and his uncle Abdullah within the ruling family of the Caliphate:

»Bello was here making excuses for the kingly and courtly atmosphere that was surrounding him at Sokoto as against the austere and religious life expected of him by fellow Jihadists of Abdullahi's mould.«<sup>241</sup>

This theory, however, is not entirely convincing; Sokoto Jihadists did not oppose »neat« dressing, but only *luxurious* textiles and decoration, such as silk or jewelry. Welcoming guests at home in a hospitable manner was often praised in elegies for deceased Jihadists. In one elegy poem on Abdullah dan Fodio in 1828, the author explained: »His academy of books was the lodging of the guests, for he flows in the studies of [Islamic] sciences.«<sup>242</sup> This library must have been an impressive room for official purposes where the Sultan hosted delegates. There is also one report of the involvement of female messengers in diplomatic relations. Hugh Clapperton met a female messenger, conciliating between the local ruler and his wazir.<sup>243</sup> She even replaced the ruler during his absence, Clapperton explained.<sup>244</sup> But the crucial information about this female messenger called Yargoorma is her age and slave status: Clapperton indeed described her as a »shrewed [sic!] old slave«.<sup>245</sup> Concubines or other female slaves who were childless until their menopause could often take

240 Minna: Sultan Muhammad Bello, pp. 187–188.

241 Ibid., p. 188.

242 English translation by Junaidu; cf. Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 194.

243 Lawal: »Women and the 1804 Jihad. A Preliminary Study«, University of Sokoto, unpublished Seminar Paper 1981, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW/14, p. 8.

244 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 249.

245 Ibid.

offices normally destined for male court officials. We can therefore conclude that diplomatic travelers could also be female if their fertility was not an issue of royal protection (anymore).

The Jihadist propaganda of Uthman dan Fodio had always demanded that no political leader accept luxurious presents from other representatives. Although the Jihadists probably never met this target to their perfect satisfaction, they renarrated the refusal of bribery as a main characteristic of Jihadist rule. In 1838 Nana Asmau gave an example of how pious her brother Muhammad Bello had been during his rule:

»One day Garange [Mafara ruler] sent him a splendid gift, but Bello told the messenger Zitaro to take it back. He said to the envoy who had brought the bribe: »I have nothing to do with forbidden things.« And then he said »Tell him that the gift was sent for unlawful purposes; it is wrong to respond to an evil intent.«<sup>246</sup>

Many sources demonstrate by passing mention that the Jihadists commemorated messengers by their name. Their office was considered memorable and the arrival of a messenger was seen as a diplomatic event by the Caliphate rulers. Nana Asmau, for example, called the Mafara delegate by the name Zitaro. Messengers sometimes accompanied their rulers. When Uthman dan Fodio traveled, he was always accompanied and guarded by his diplomat and counselor Sambo, a man who did not belong to the dan Fodio family: »He was protecting the horse ride when he [Uthman] was traveling by horse, always with effort.«<sup>247</sup> During the Jihad wars messengers were either sent out by a war leader or they were based at outposts and traveled to the capital as soon as enemies arrived on the scene. When the Jihadists arrived in Bornu, a messenger announced their march at the Bornu capital, a contemporary informant explained: »On their approach to the Capital, the Phula were seen by all the soldiers of the Capital [*kogana bernibe*] who, on seeing them, went to the king.«<sup>248</sup> Sometimes invading armies even warned their adversaries in

**246** Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 92. For a Fulfulde Ajami manuscript copy, cf. Nana Asmau: *Gikku Bello*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, p. 125.

**247** Hausa »Tsaron hawa nai lokacin tafiya da ya hau duk tutut bias aniya.« Nana Asmau: *Labaran Shehu*, p. 9.

**248** Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, pp. 96, 227.



advance. When the Wadai marched against priest Laminu of Bornu, they announced their coming the evening before the battle.<sup>249</sup> If there was no such warning and only rumor, the besieged king would usually send messengers or spies to find out if war was in fact imminent. When the Bornu military failed to conquer Kano, they marched to Yacoba instead. The Jihadist Isa then moved close to the Bornu war camp and the Bornu ruler sent his messengers:

»After Captain Isa had slept, he took three hundred horse [sic!] in the morning, and went before them to where the Sheik was, who, on seeing them, called his slave, the little Barga, and his son Lagerau, and sent them, saying, ›Go and see after the men who are come to me, what they want of us; let them tell you what they want of us, and then come and tell me again!‹ When they went to the Phula, and met with them, [the battle began].«<sup>250</sup>

The names of the two messengers were bequeathed by oral traditions, which sometimes mention or imagine what written sources omit. Messengers and spies gained secret knowledge because of their journeys. When military units camped somewhere in the forests to hide themselves they were sometimes discovered coincidentally by hunters. When the returning Bornu soldiers camped in a forest in Tshagua, the hunter in charge saw them and reported this fact to the Fula ruler Dankaua,<sup>251</sup> an opponent of Bornu who had been expelled from his town before. The hunter told them that he had »seen them in the middle of the forest, and therefore came to inform [him] of it.«<sup>252</sup> By 1830 there must have been a general fear of spies at the Caliphate frontier. The British traveler Lander, for example, was told during his stay in Yawuri that merchants often faced suspicious town inhabitants when leaving the Caliphate. One such trader, who complained about suspicious messengers, came from Sokoto to sell his horses in Ilorin and other Yoruba towns. His customers reportedly were afraid that he may have been sent by Muhammad Bello

249 Ibid., p. 235.

250 Ibid., pp. 106–107, 238–239.

251 He may probably be identified as Muhammadu Dan Kauwa dan Muhammadu Bunni, ruler of Katagum 1816–1846.

252 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 241.

in order to observe the characteristics of fortifications.<sup>253</sup> In such an atmosphere of distrust, traders were suspect spies and in turn messengers had to prove their identity and affiliation. They were usually equipped with a letter of consignment, called *dereol* in Fulfulde. This letter was then checked by soldiers when the messenger entered a town.<sup>254</sup> When Nana Asmau composed a poem in honor of her deceased brother Muhammad Bello, she expressed pride in the well-functioning intelligence service established by her brother, which brought them all »news«.<sup>255</sup>

Messengers clearly had a significant and central role in the political business of the Sokoto Caliphate. How is then that we do not have more complete accounts of these actors' mental geographies and spatial knowledge? This can be explained by their professional discretion and the lack of autobiographical sources. Messengers were often in charge of intelligence services. Hugh Clapperton took notice of two or more mounted »Fellatas« that observed him wherever he went within the Caliphate.<sup>256</sup> They usually made no effort to talk to him, so we may assume that their responsibility was to inform emirs or the Sokoto Court about travel undertaken by strangers. Messengers were typically not eager to tell foreign visitors – especially European travelers – the messages they were delivering or the routes they took. Usually they only transmitted short messages or escorted visitors for short distances. And when Clapperton explicitly asked two messengers for geographical information about the Niger River, »they either could not, or were afraid to give any the least account of the river Quorra [Niger], and I therefore sent them off, after asking a few questions.«<sup>257</sup> Messengers had to be loyal and discreet persons. And they usually investigated whether or not a route was safe for travel – either for their own sake or in order to inform their employer. They were the most up-to-date source of geographical information for the rulers, and also the most silent group of professional mobile actors. Their loyalty was often cemented by marriage with a princess from the royal court for which they worked.

253 Cf. Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, p. 265.

254 Westermann (ed.): *Erzählungen in Fulfulde*, p. 51.

255 Arab./Fulfulde خبرو. Nana Asmau: *Gikku Bello*, pp. 124–125.

256 Cf. for example Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 296.

257 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

### 3.5 Conclusion: *Magical Equipment for Dangerous Passages*

Most of the professional travelers of the Central Sahel were familiar with basic Islamic rituals and sayings. For greeting or farewell they said »*salama*«, a modification of the Arabic phrases »*as-salamu alaykum*« and »*ma'a salama*« (both: »peace be with you«). Islam was especially useful as a religion and code of communication for frequent travelers because its ideas and accessories could easily be transferred and used at every place. Islam is a deterritorialized religion if compared to local West African religions that rely on specific places of religious significance and the reputation of individual locally based priests. In theory, a Muslim traveler could join prayers at any mosque or prayer ground that he passed. This body language was universally understood and helped to overcome obstacles of integration for a stranger.

Islamic charms were another mobile guarantor of religious protection. They were often carried on the bodies of the travelers. The material incorporation of Koranic Arabic phrases was also practiced by washing the scripture off the paper or wooden plate and drinking this water. This practice was so common that Nana Asmau differentiated between the use of washed paper or wood. In Arabic prose texts she repeatedly explained this ritual, for example when quoting the Algerian Sufi author Al-Buni<sup>258</sup> (d. 1225) of Cairo: »If someone drinks its water [of a certain sura], it is effective against dysentery and relaxes the anus.«<sup>259</sup> Most of these practices were intended to protect body and health as in the example quoted here. With reference to the same North African author, Nana Asmau also advised Muslims to wear Koranic charms on their body in order to be victorious in war:

**258** In Nana Asmau's text his name is spelled »Abu Al-Abbas Al-Buni«, other sources call him Ahmad Ibn Ali Al-Buni. His magic squares attracted orientalist scholars in the early twentieth century; cf. Ahrens: *Die magischen Quadrate*, pp. 157–177, pp. 104–110. See also Gawhary: *Die Gottesnamen*; Pielow: *Die Quellen der Weisheit*.

**259** Arab. و ان شرب ماها نفع من الزحير و سهل مخرج. Nana Asmau: *Tabshir al-ikhwan*, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*, p. 27.

»Whoever writes it on a clean gazelle paper [leather] and hangs it on himself, the power of his Sultan is with him and he is defeated by no one and conquest is with him. And he maintains strength and victory.«<sup>260</sup>

Some of the suras were believed to prevent a person from being scared or from meeting an enemy when traveling.<sup>261</sup> Other quotations from the Koran were written for the support of women giving birth, against toothache or to facilitate death as a martyr just by saying a special sura out loud. Many suggestions also dealt with traveling itself. A sentence borrowed from Al-Buni in Nana Asmau's study on the Koran suras promised general support for every journey: »Whoever reads it on a journey, ease is with him and protection from the bad people.«<sup>262</sup> Another sura was used to guard persons traveling at night: »If it is read to someone traveling at night, it will protect him from any nocturnal visitors [...].«<sup>263</sup> In one way or another many of these invocations attempted to bring the traveler safely to his destination. Some suras could even be stored and read aloud by the traveler's family waiting at home, others by the traveler himself:

»Whoever reads it [Koran 93,1–11] when setting out for a journey is protected against all evil until he returns to his family by the will of Allah and he will be protected from water and its threats.«<sup>264</sup>

Once again, water is mentioned as a major natural risk for travelers and probably summarizes the various risks of flooded rivers and swamps or heavy rains. Nana Asmau listed complicated methods of absorbing the Koran scriptures into the human body. A sura may, for example, be written on new clay, pulverized and drunk with rain water to recover from disease.<sup>265</sup> These Islamic practices may also be used against local witchcraft:

260 Arab. و من كتبها في ورق غزال طاهر و علقها عليه قوي سلطانه و لم يخاصم اهدا الا قهره و كان النصر له قوي عليه و النصر Ibid., p. 31.

261 Ibid., p. 51.

262 Arab. و من قرأها في سفر هون عليه و يمن من المفسدين Ibid., p. 43.

263 Arab. [...] و من قرأها لمن يسفر بالليل يحفظ من كل طاريق Ibid., p. 51.

264 Arab. ان قرأها متوجه في سفر وقى من كل شر حتى يعود الى أهله بانذن الله تعالى و سلم من الماء و خوفه. Ibid., p. 69.

265 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 49.

»Whoever reads it in a house with a buried charm whose location is unknown, exalted Allah is coming to him and nothing harms him. And deceit is hindered from the one it was wished for.«<sup>266</sup>

The time of these practices was another crucial factor, and certain suras were considered appropriate in special situations: after sleep, before sexual intercourse or weaning a child, or when rain was falling. Uthman dan Fodio also believed in the effectiveness of talismans. He even considered them a religious tool that was easy to handle, for according to him »the act of seeing jinn equipped with talismans,<sup>267</sup> is not the criterion of a great saint. It is a sign of greatness if obtained without talismans.«<sup>268</sup> Travelers also applied spells in order to protect their health and economic success during a trip. This meant that a person spoke out a certain religious or Koranic spell for a certain number of times – ranging between one and 5.000 according to magical numbers. Furthermore, Uthman dan Fodio gave instructions on how to write and draw inscribed magical squares which could offer further divine assistance.<sup>269</sup> This knowledge was based on Uthman dan Fodio's education in mystical Sufi studies. The intended effects of these talismans and special rituals were manifold: wealth, successful childbirth, sexual strength, being loved or married, divine revenge against opponents, and finally the protection of the travelers.<sup>270</sup> But at the same time, the Jihadists warned soldiers of the Jihad not to use talismans against their companions:

266 Arab. *في بيت فيه سحر مدفون لا يعلم له موضع ألهمه الله تعالى اليه و لا يضره شيء و بطل عقده*. عن من عمل له. Ibid., p. 53.

267 Arab. *توائم*.

268 Cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Tahdhir al-ikhwan*; translated by Al-Hajj: Mahdist Tradition, p. 264.

269 Those magic squares are for example applied in Uthman's treatise on the names of God (*Ism al-adhim*) which has been translated and published online by Muhammad Shareef; cf. <http://siiasi.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Isml-Aadhem.pdf> (03.02.2014), p. 5.

270 Ibid., pp. 3–6.

»If you go where the Jihad occurs, listen to speeches. The Jihad is for God, so do not forget. Those who make their brothers sick with magic. And those who beat in order to plunder [they enter hell].«<sup>271</sup>

Most Sokoto Jihadists seemingly believed in jinns and their involvement in warfare. Narrating the battle of Gawakuke in 1836, Nana Asmau explained how Ibra, the enemy leader, »positioned himself where he thought the Men of the Unseen [*jinns*] would help him, not knowing they assisted Bello.«<sup>272</sup> The female Jihadist writers were just as acquainted with talismans as were their brothers, husbands and fathers. Nana Asmau in ca. 1839 collected numerous instructions reported by Arab intellectuals and Hadiths. These chapters explain how different Koranic verses shall be copied and worn as a talisman protecting against all kinds of evil. Little pieces of gazelle-leather with quotations could save the owner from loss of power, from poverty and disease. Some proverbs were supposed to protect trade items throughout a journey. And many charms focused on the dangers of traveling: »When this sura [71,1–28] is read out, one will be freed from prison. [...] When it is read out on a journey, danger against him and all evils will be dominated.«<sup>273</sup> Whenever journeys are mentioned in the list of talisman practices, they are treated as a threatening passage. While the majority of the above-mentioned talisman quotations addressed the well-being of the traveler and his goods, some charms could also be applied for the buildings, people and goods left at home:

271 Hausa »In fa ka zo wurin jihadi, ji zance. Yo jihadi ga Jalla don kada ka mance. Mai fa cuta ga y'an'uwa du da kwarce. Dud da ko masu yin bugu don su kwace.« Nana Asmau: *Tabbat hakika*, pp. 48–49. Cf. for the transliterated text Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 428.

272 Fulfulde Ajami text and English translation: Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, pp. 136–137.

273 Arab. هذا السورة من قراها تخلص من سجنه واذا دام على قراءتها هو في غم وهم زال عنه. Nana Asmau: *Tabshir al-ikhwan*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, p. 161. Translated by the author.

»Read this at the door of your house three times when starting a journey, it will be guarded from harm and it will keep the family, household effects and wealth [money] well.«<sup>274</sup>

Other talismans were entangled with enslavement. One sura reminded slave owners of the reward for freeing their slaves, and another one directly addressed captives:

»When it is read, a door will open for the captive. And he will be saved from weakness until he returns to his family (community). [...] If it is read by a captive his return will be easy.«<sup>275</sup>

The fear of being seized far away from home is vividly expressed in many talisman instructions. Some charms very generally promised protection from any enemy.<sup>276</sup> Many professional and literate travelers produced talismans for themselves or for sale. In the trans-Saharan trade networks it was common knowledge that in the »Sudan« any Muslim who was able to write and copy Koranic suras on little sheets could make a fortune out of this skill.<sup>277</sup> Traveling made the migrants suspicious and obviously motivated them to seek religious protection. The content of such talisman sayings uncover individual fears that frequent travelers shared and discussed. This ubiquitous anxiety, of course, influenced the ways in which professional travelers perceived and communicated about spaces.

Every group of professional travelers spread different geographies: Traders were especially afraid of robbery and embattled territories. The stereotypical danger was usually located in the forests where robbers or wild beasts lived. Sufi travelers had to leave every fortune behind and projected their fear on the dangerous path of the hereafter. Itinerant preachers also spread news about the journey to the hereafter where the believers and unbelievers were separated by

274 Arab. تقرأها على باب منزلك اذا اردت السفر ثلاث مرات فانه يحرس عن الافات هو و عافيه من اهل المال و المتاع و المال. Ibid., p. 169.

275 Arab. و اذا قراها الاسير فتح له باب فرج و حفظ الى ان يرجع الى اهله [...] و من قراها و هو مغتلو سهل. خروجه. Ibid., p. 161.

276 Arab. عدو. Ibid., p. 169.

277 Lyon: Narrative of Travels, p. 139.

a river frontier – a metaphor which was probably inspired by their experience of working as Muslim missionaries at the Caliphate frontier of the Niger and Benue. All of them differentiated between safe spaces and dangerous zones. Usually the latter were marked by certain natural features, such as rivers, forests or deserts. Their evaluation of geographical features was obviously centered on the Sahel, whose landscape was seen as normal and appropriate (and thus less threatening) for professional travelers.



#### 4. Pastoralists of the Sahel and Sahara: »Colonizing Dead Land«

The Sokoto Caliphate population included pastoralist societies with different ethnic backgrounds and mobile lifestyles. On the one hand, there were Fulbe clans who raised and lived with cattle in settled villages, and on the other hand the rural Saharan clans north of Sokoto who raised camels and horses without establishing permanent villages. When the European traveler Hugh Clapperton visited Muhammad Bello's court, he tried to analyze the pastoralist history of the Fulbe Jihadists for the readers of his journal:

»Before he [Uthman dan Fodio] gathered the Foulahs, or Fellatas, under his government, they did not live in towns, but were scattered over the greater part of Soudan, attending to their herds and flocks, living in temporary huts, generally in the midst of unfrequented woods, seldom visiting the towns.«<sup>1</sup>

With regard to historical information, Clapperton trusted his Jihadist informants and passed on their ideology, explaining that their Jihad united and urbanized the »Sudanese« Fulbe. Most of the mobile actors in the Sokoto Caliphate located unbelief and backwardness outside of the towns, and the Jihadist elite often made use of this concept of space. Pastoralists were the only mobile group that did not consider traveling a challenging passage, but the »normal« order of their family life and profession. They thought of migration as a traditional right and did not necessarily adapt to the travel regulations and symbols of the pilgrimage and trade routes. For urban officials governing a territorial state, pastoralists could not easily be located, contacted, asked for military assistance, robbed, or taxed. But since the Fulbe of the Jihadist elite praised the migration of their ancestors between east and west (cf. chapter I.1), the Jihadist attitude towards mobile pastoralism was ambivalent. This chapter is therefore dedicated to the Jihadist discourse on pastoralism and the politics they drew from it. This space discourse is structured in two sections with regard to general Islamic principles of sedentarization: the Fulbe pastoralists and the Saharan pastoralists subsumed as »Bedouins« in Sokoto Jihadist literature.

1 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 205.

#### 4.1 Fulbe Pastoralists: »Colonize the Land of the Unbelievers!«

In official proclamations and Islamic essays, the Jihadist authors usually omitted topics or tensions concerning pastoralist communities. And the above quotation of Hugh Clapperton insinuates that the Jihadists officially defined the Fulbe as a homogenous tribe with a common background and a common language. Abdullah dan Fodio explicitly called on the Fulbe Jihadists not to replace Fulfulde by Hausa language:

»It is inappropriate for the Fulata to be negligent with the Fulani language and no reasonable Fulani person should show disdain for it. Because this language is their foundation and whoever shows disdain for his language and is predisposed to another until he becomes preoccupied with it is like a person who shows disdain for his own parents and ends to the parents of another. Because it is his foundation. This is true of every language except Arabic.«<sup>2</sup>

The author then explained that Arabic is superior to all languages because the Koran was written in »pure« Arabic. Abdullah gave some examples of Arabic loanwords in Fulfulde and praised this influence on the language. Being Fulbe for the Jihadists meant to speak the Fulfulde language and was not determined by other factors such as profession or mobility. This concept of ethnic identity included Fulfulde speaking pastoralists as well as other social groups that spoke the language.

According to the idealistic Jihadist interpretation, the Jihad had turned all pastoralist Fulbe into urban subjects during a time frame of only two decades. It is only from oral history that the historians can learn about conflicts concerning natural resources such as grazing land and water that were, in fact, caused by the persistence of Fulbe pastoralists. Present day anthropological studies neglect any clear differentiation between »nomads« and »settled« people.<sup>3</sup> But the discourse on pastoralism in the Central Sahel of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

2 قلت و لهذا لا ينبغي لنا معشر الغلاتيين التفريط بلغة الغلاتية ولا له يتهاون بها كل فلاتى عاقل لانها هي اصله. Arab. وكل من تهاون لغته واعتنق بلغة غيره واشتغل بها سور العربية كما تهاون والى يه واعتنى بوالدى غيره لا بلد نسما. اصله و قيل افضل اللغة العربية. Cf. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Asl al-fulatiyin*, Niamey 11, f. 2. See also Abdullah dan Fodio: *Aslu l-Falaatiyeen*, manuscript photocopy and translation, in: Shareef: *The Lost and Found Children*, pp. 102–104.

3 My thanks to Dr. Christine Hardung for her input on Fulbe pastoralism.

accounted for two distinct categories of Fulbe communities: One group was labeled *fulanin gida* which is a Hausa term for settled Fulbe living in houses (or a *gida*). The Nigerian historian Al-Hajj supposed that the settled Fulbe were discriminated by the Hausa majority and hence supported the Jihad:

»Although these »settled« Fulani had lived among the Hausa populations for generations, and were in large measure socially integrated, they did not enjoy the same privileges as the Hausa. [This] created unstable conditions of society which contributed in a large measure to the growth of the Shehu's movement.«<sup>4</sup>

While these »housed« Fulbe lived among Hausa people, learned the Hausa language and even intermarried, the so called »Bororo Fulbe« maintained their mobile lifestyle as cattleherders. Anthropologists have suggested that the name »Bororo« derived from *wuro*, which means »cattle camp« in Fulfulde. It could therefore be a Fula name, but was by no means an endonym; rather it was the exonym which settled *fulanin gida* used.<sup>5</sup> Another etymological option is the meaning of *boro* as a leather bag used by Fulbe for traveling.<sup>6</sup> Either way, the term expressed mobility as the element of distinction from other Fulbe. Communication or economic transactions with the Hausa population were kept to a minimum. The Hausa called the Fulbe's temporary rural settlements *ruga* – a noun derived from the homonymous verb »to flee« or »to run away«.<sup>7</sup> Both sedentarized groups, the Hausa farmers and the *fulanin gida*, made explicit reference to the style of temporary housing and settlement.

Conflicts sometimes arose with Hausa peasants when grazing grounds were being sought. But in general, the herders kept some distance from farming land. Interaction with Hausa authorities was only necessary when Hausa messengers collected the cattle-tax *jangali*. According to Al-Hajj, the Bororo Fulbe were not involved in the Islamic reform movement at first and only participated due to »racial and linguis-

4 Al-Hajj: The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad, pp. 10–11.

5 Brackenbury: Notes on the »Bororo Fulbe«, p. 208.

6 Ibid., p. 209.

7 Robinson: Dictionary, vol. 1.

tic affinity«. <sup>8</sup> But the »Bororo« themselves also perceived their groups as different from the *fulanin gida*. They considered the name »Bororo« an insult and likewise ridiculed the town-dwelling Fulbe by the name »Hujajo«. »Hujajo« could either mean »those not knowing the bush«<sup>9</sup> or »those who work«. <sup>10</sup> Influenced by the Jihadist wars, the town Fulbe started to call the pastoral camps *cangeje*, the Fulfulde term for »military camps«. <sup>11</sup> Typically during the Jihad, temporary bush encampments were established for migrating troops of soldiers.

The pastoralist perception of space was always focused on the needs of the cattle. <sup>12</sup> New migration routes were chosen in accordance with the quality of pasture and access to water. Another important factor for the cattle was the danger of snakes. Koelle's informant described, for example, that he »saw a Pulo tending his cows«, and that a poisonous snake »saw the cows, dispersed all the cows of the Pulo, and bit and killed one of them.« <sup>13</sup> From a Hausa or Kanuri point of view, the pastoral Fulbe lived in a dangerous hybrid zone between the human world of the villages and the animal wilderness.

**8** Al-Hajj: Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad, p. 11.

**9** Brackenbury: »Bororo Fulbe«, pp. 209–210.

**10** The name may have derived from »hawa« (»to work«); see for example Pfeffer: Djafun-Bororo, p. 151.

**11** Cf. Klingenheben: Die Sprache der Ful, p. 430. See also Brackenbury: »Bororo Fulbe«, p. 214.

**12** Taking care of the cattle was considered an honorable task which was practiced by the Fulbe themselves. Pastoral Fulbe maintained an individual system of agricultural slavery. For domestic services or agricultural cultivation they kept slaves on their compounds. These were usually neither freed nor married to a Fula, so that they remained a distinct social class. *Ibid.*, pp. 215–216.

**13** Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 195.

### *Territorial Conflicts*

In only a few Hausa sources are conflicts over territory between pastoral Fulbe and Hausa farmers addressed. There is even less, but nonetheless compelling evidence that this balanced relationship over the use of land was shattered by the Jihad wars. Usually the pastoral Fulbe clans only migrated over Hausa farm land during the harvesting season, in order not to damage the growing crops and then subsequently to manure the field before the next sowing. The plundering Jihadist military communities were less sensitive about the affairs of the Hausa farmers – they trampled over the agricultural fields with their war horses and cattle. One of the very rare texts about the Jihadist destruction of farmland was authored by the Hausa Kano scholar Alhaji Umaru. It was brought to Germany by the Africanist Krause in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> In some chapters the text confuses the historical chronology, but in general it gives the correct opponents in the Kebbi-Sokoto wars. This Hausa Ajami source recounts concerted military actions of allied groups, different wars and diplomatic processes. But the most valuable and significant passages for our purposes are those dedicated to the angry Hausa farmers as they reacted to the Jihadist conquest. Kebbi had resisted Jihadist overrule for 27 years, but from 1831 to 1849 it was incorporated by force into the Gwandu Empire in the western part of the Sokoto Caliphate. And the Hausa Ajami text complained about the suffering of the farmers during this long period: »It was like that [misery] for 18 years.«<sup>15</sup> In Hausa accounts, the coming of the Fulbe was a disaster and initiated a period of oppression. Umaru's text described this vividly:

»The Fulbe came into Kebbi and they were office-holders. The [former] non-powerful now conquered much but they were not careful with their conquest. When they wanted to lodge at a house, they would tie the harnesses [of the horses] in the courtyard [it was not supposed for animals to enter it].

14 Krause himself only published a rough translation of excerpts in paraphrase; cf. Krause (ed.): *Der Krieg Gandu-Sokotos I&II*, p. 1.

15 Hausa نى هكنن هكنن حر شكر اشيرن بى باب (»Nai hakanan hakanan har shikara ashirin biyu babu.«). Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Sokoto-Kebbi Wars*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 29, ff. 44–45. See also the Latin transcription in Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 152.

If there was a bride, the soldier of the king slept in her room and the husband was chased away. If they were cultivating rice their [the Fulbe's] cattle would scatter and eat it up. There was no speaker [for the Kebbi people]. The Kebbi people became goats.«<sup>16</sup>

This Hausa source explicitly mentions the coming of the Fulbe soldiers and kin together with their horses and cattle. They insulted the *mai gida* (Hausa »male head of the house«) by bringing their war horses into the courtyard and they raped the women of the household. But the farmers also lamented that the cattle of the troops ate up the crops, which was a characteristic of Sokoto Jihad warfare. This Hausa account implies that there was no one to curb the acquisition of the pastoral land. Although the Jihadist leadership did not allow for the soldiers to have sexual intercourse without marriage or to permanently enslave women as concubines, or to destroy the crops without urgent need, they could in fact not control the behavior of distant or even irregular military units. From the perspective of the defeated Kebbi, it was the invasion of cattle that finally provoked them to resist Jihadist colonization of their farmland. One scene from Umaru's narration of the Sokoto-Kebbi wars tells how the pastoralist invaders and their cattle provoked an attack by some Kebbi farmers who beat the Fulbe soldiers:

»So one day the cattle migrated from Arewa [the very north] to Gwandu [the Western Caliphate]. They spread on the plains of the Kebbi people. They destroyed the rice until they arrived at the farm of Jatau close to Mera. They descended on the rice with effort and ate it. Jatau said to his children they should not kill the cattle. They got up and assembled. He said they should attack and beat the Fulbe, so they rebuked them until they were beaten up.

16 Hausa فلاتى سنا شىغ كىب سنا الفرما با مى اىكو شت بىن يونى سى سوا با مېئن كلوا سى سوا سن سفك  
 غدا سىغن ترك بس دب ان كوامريا دن سركى شكونا داكنت اكور مى غدن ان سن ايكن شنكافا شانوا سو اكل سنئيبى  
 »Fillani suna shiga Kabi, suna alfarma ba mai-iko shi chi babban  
 yau ne, sai su ba maichin da kulawa. Sai su son safka gida, su gina turki bisa dabi. In  
 akoi amarya, dan sarki shi kwana dakinta a kori maigidan. In sun aikin shinkafa shanu su  
 ratsa [manuscript gives »watsa«/»wakala«] su chinye. Ba maimagana Kabawa sun zama  
 awakan.«. Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Sokoto-Kebbi Wars*, f. 44. See also the Latin edition in  
 Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 152.



»When all Fulbe leave Kebbi, we will rise. The Fulbe and the people of their camps drove their cattle and left. The cattle were more than 50,000 in Kebbi. The Kebbi people did not hurt them. [...] It was peace. But the [Kebbi] villages were assaulted. The men of the [Fulbe] camps had come back [...].«<sup>18</sup>

Reportedly the Fulbe returned together with armed forces in order to attack the revolting Kebbi villages. Although it cannot be clarified with certainty whether or not the Hausa farmers of Kebbi in fact allowed the Fulbe pastoralists to leave their farmland without any violence, this precious manuscript demonstrates that increasing numbers of pastoralists and cattle immigrated to Kebbi after the Jihadist conquest. In the source text the number of cattle was given as 50,000 in the whole Kebbi region – quite a lot to bear for a region of the size of the Netherlands (ca. 16,000 m<sup>2</sup>). The manuscript then explained the Kebbi revolt of 1848, which was fought under the leadership of Nabame.<sup>19</sup> Some Zarma men of Kebbi were fighting on behalf of the »Fulbe«<sup>20</sup> (Jihadist army), while others belonged to Nabame. Hence this revolt became a civil war. Nabame summoned all his warriors into the forest (*daji*)<sup>21</sup> in order to plan the battle. According to this Hausa source, they were 5,000 soldiers including 400 mounted warriors. Although the city gates of the capital were closed, Nabame managed to conquer it and then destroyed all the buildings and burnt all the trees. He conquered all the Kebbi towns until the harvest season (in November/December). Nabame ruled Kebbi for the next five years until he died from a war injury. However, the argument of this Hausa source is that all anti-Jihadist revolts in Kebbi had their roots in the damage done to the crops by Fulbe cattle.

18 Hausa بفلانئى دك شفت دكب زام كوو دد فلانى دمتانن رغا سنكيى انيا تفتا شانوا سنف ب خمسين Bafilache duka shi fita da Kabi za mu kuwa. Dada Filani da mutanin rugasunka yi aniya ta fita shanu sun fi dubu hamsin shikin Kabi. Kabawa ko dai bas u taba ba. [...] Saan lafiya ne. Dada k'auyukka sunka tafashewa. Dada mutanin rugga sunka [verb not written in the manuscript] komo.». Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Sokoto-Kebbi Wars*, f. 45. See also the Latin edition in Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 154.

19 Yaqubu Nabame dan Ismaila (reigned 1849–1854).

20 Alhaji Umaru: *Sokoto-Kebbi Wars*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 29, f. 46.

21 Cf. *ibid.*



During the Sokoto Jihad, pastoral Fulbe spread into the western frontier region of Kebbi, but they also were present in the eastern border zone (today's Nigerian-Cameroonian border). The Fulbe herders of the Adamawa region profited from the destruction of the traditional dynasties and the redistribution of power and offices. When a Jihad military expedition arrived in Mubi (Adamawa), the resident pastoral Fulbe under Malum Haman quickly escaped to the mountains and waited for the end of the battle. Afterwards they returned to the valley and were granted one of the destroyed villages for colonization.<sup>22</sup> These pastoral groups neither helped their non-Fula neighbors nor actively assisted the conquerors. Unintendedly they became wartime profiteers. They were fast in escaping from attacks and later the Jihadists sought their good will by offering them the tenure of land and villages.

Some non-pastoral Fulbe of Adamawa even returned to pastoral business because of the expansion of the Sokoto Caliphate: These Fulbe groups of the Banyo area had lost all their cattle in the wake of a cattle pleuropneumonia called *sorfolong* in Fulfulde. Due to this loss, many started working as regional salt traders between Banyo and Bamenda. The pastoralist Fulbe were experts on local salt resources because they used to water their cattle at natural brines.<sup>23</sup> They usually preferred grazing land close to salt deposits and could thus easily become engaged in the local salt trade. But instead of becoming permanent professional traders, they spent the income acquired through the salt trade on buying new cattle. According to Brackenbury, this return to herding started when the Adamawa Jihad under Modibbo Adama was launched in ca. 1809.<sup>24</sup> When the Jihadist military arrived in Adamawa, they encountered pastoral Fulbe communities with growing cattle herds seeking to find new grazing grounds. It was therefore easy to convince them to colonize farm land to the east on behalf of the Jihad leaders. Oral history also implies that the Jihadists implemented a program of organized resettlement of pastoral clans in the newly founded Adamawa Emirate. The leader Baba Manga and his pastoral groups were, for example, invited to

22 Strümpell: Die Geschichte Adamauas, p. 57.

23 Strümpell: Aus dem Schutzgebiete Kamerun, p. 15.

24 Brackenbury: »Bororo Fulbe«, p. 209.

graze their cattle in Adamawa by the Jihadists. The cattle breeders sent their messengers there and eventually decided to migrate to the east:

»The victorious military leaders of the Hujajo [the Jihadists], who had already settled in the new land, said to the Bororo: »Come, pasture your cattle, the land is good!« Then the clan chiefs of the Bororo sent scouts to ascertain if the land really was that good. The scouts delivered good news and now began the migration of the Jafu'en [Fulbe clan] to Adamawa and the Ngaundere Highlands over a period of many years.«<sup>25</sup>

According to local memories collected by the anthropologist Gulla Pfeffer in the German Colony of Cameroon, this Fulbe move into Adamawa created multiple conflicts about access to water resources. Before the Jihad, pastoralists had watered their cattle at local springs and paid the local non-Fulbe villagers for this service. After the Jihad, they paid cattle taxes to Jihadist officials of the Adamawa Emirate, and later to German colonial officers.<sup>26</sup> The pastoral communities were organized in camps and on the next level in different clans sharing access to a certain grazing land.<sup>27</sup> Their mobility in general prevented the spread of cattle diseases and the gathering of harmful insects. Many groups therefore practiced slash and burn agriculture on their grazing lands at the end of the dry season and headed for new territories. They often returned to this former place after a period of some years.<sup>28</sup> In order to prevent their cattle from destroying farming ground the herders usually stayed at some distance from villages. Their profession forced them to live separate from neighboring societies. But when the Jihad wars depopulated many villages in Adamawa, the pastoral Fulbe often occupied the houses and land.

25 German »Die siegreichen, schon im neuen Lande seßhaft gewordenen Heerführer der Huja'en ließen den Bororo sagen: »Kommt, weidet euere Kühe, das Land ist gut!« Darauf schickten die Sippenführer der Bororo Späher aus, um sich zu vergewissern, ob das Land auch wirklich gut sei. Die Späher brachten günstigen Bescheid und nun begann die Zuwanderung der Djafun'en nach Adamaua und dem Ngaundere-Hochland, die sich über viele Jahre erstreckte.« Pfeffer: Djafun-Bororo, p. 154.

26 Ibid., pp. 154–155.

27 Ibid., p. 166.

28 Ibid., p. 167.

*Jihadist Political Responses*

In Adamawa, regional Jihadist rulers induced pastoral Fulbe to migrate further to the east. The Jihadist elite of Sokoto also canvassed »Bororo« Fulbe to some degree in their propaganda. In an effort to shape public opinion, Uthman dan Fodio blamed the former Hausa rulers for stealing Fulbe cattle:

»It is common among them [Hausa elite] that, when the animals of the people mix with their [royal] animals, they wouldn't come back unless some of them are given as payment. And if they [the royal cattle] get lost and are found destroying farmland and the like, they are not driven off.«<sup>29</sup>

Dan Fodio's first point was to warn pastoralists that Hausa rulers may take possession of their cattle by illegal means contrary to customary practices. And secondly he addressed Hausa peasants with his claim that whenever their farmland was destroyed, the Hausa royal courts and not the pastoral Fulbe were responsible. Only Hausa elites and not the farmers or pastoralists were identified as those responsible for any loss of cattle or crops. Uthman dan Fodio also complained about *jangali* cattle taxes imposed on pastoralists by Hausa rulers.<sup>30</sup> He explained that this tax was never legitimated by any Sharia law. With the feigned promise to reduce cattle taxation, the Jihadist propaganda probably won some support from pastoral Fulbe.

The study of much Jihadist literature shows, however, that the Jihadist elite was more often concerned with the interests of farmers than with any Fulbe pastoralist group. In a Fulfulde Ajami poem dominated by religious warnings of infernal punishments, Uthman dan Fodio's daughter Hafsatu<sup>31</sup> explicitly protected the rights of the farmers against unjust rulers: »Rulers who embezzle the inheritance of orphans and who cheat

29 Arab. أن دواب الناس إذا دخلت في دوابهم لا تخرج إلا إذا أعطوا شيئاً منها وإذا ضلت ووجدت تقسد. الحراث أو غيره لا تطرد. Hiskett (ed.): Kitāb Al-Farq, p. 562.

30 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 567.

31 Hafsatu is said to be born in 1789 as daughter to Uthman's cousin and first wife Maimuna. She was married twice to the scholars Ibrahim Demba Hamma from Birnin Gada and Mudegel bin Liman Alkamu. Hafsatu was probably one of the teachers of Nana Asmau. The only work that survived is the mentioned Fulfulde poem. Cf. Boyd / Last: *The Role of Women*, p. 294.

the peasants will be severely punished.«<sup>32</sup> Hafsatu even blamed pastoralists who grazed their cattle illegally on farms and ate up the crops: »Pastoralists who deliberately allow their animals to feed on growing crops will only get deserts in the next world.«<sup>33</sup> The Jihadist author threatened the pastoral Fulbe with the deserts of hell where no crops or grass was left for their cattle. Fatima, a daughter of Muhammad Bello, also included this line of her aunt's poem in her own text.<sup>34</sup> The Jihadist leadership in Sokoto had to care for the interests of the farming majority. The farmers' concept of land use was of great significance, because they were absolutely dependent on the crops that were grown. Uthman dan Fodio informed the Hausa farmers in his Hausa poem *Wallahi* that unfair pre-Jihad rulers exploited the farmers by land grab:

»The ruler sells the fields of the poor. He seizes these lands. The land is collected by imposing fines, by magic, or other mean acts. Taken by force because they want to farm the land. Furthermore, he receives the parts [rulership of these districts] so that he farms the land. Because of the world, he eats and drinks from the cesspit, I swear by God [*wallahi*].«<sup>35</sup>

These quoted lines are remarkable because Uthman explained that the land grab of the Hausa kings and the contamination by magic occurred at the same time. He addressed farmers suffering from taxation, land seizure, or simply inexplicable failure of crops. And for every problem of the farmers dan Fodio pointed to the vicious Hausa royals as the cause. The initiator of the Sokoto Jihad asked the farmers to oppose land grab

**32** From her female perspective she also claimed that married men were religiously obliged to treat their wives properly and supply them with any goods they might need. Cf. Fulfulde Ajami copy and English translation at Hafsatu: *Untitled*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW3/2, l. 10.

**33** *Ibid.*, l. 13.

**34** Fatima: *Untitled*, WW19, Notebook 7, pp. 27–28. The original Fulfulde Ajami text is cataloged under SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW8/1.

**35** Hausa »Mai saida gona talaka shi amshe wan su [wafannan] kasa. Tara da gumki [gunki] da fiski dai sukai ga kasa. Kwace da zulmi [zalunci] sukai domin su nema kasa. Kuwa fa ya karbi yanki don shi nema kasa. Ta duniya ya ci masai a sha wallahi.« Uthman dan Fodio: *Wallahi*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, S14. Implosive letters were added to Boyd's draft Latin transliteration by the author in accordance with the Hausa Ajami manuscript.

by Hausa rulers. The pre-Jihad kings illegally overtaxed the Hausa farmers and also seized their rams for illegal pagan rituals:

»They must farm for the land tax [money], this is the situation. They take the ram for the charms [rituals], this is the situation. They build walls and houses, this is the situation. Furthermore, he only takes the parts away, this is the situation. The knife of the devil cuts him, I swear by God.«<sup>36</sup>

The farmers allegedly faced economic exploitation, land seizure, and seizure of cattle. When Uthman dan Fodio talked about pagan religious charms and ritual animal slaughtering, he applied the Hausa term *laya* (a written charm). He alluded to the illegal amalgamation of pagan rituals and written Islamic talismans. The composer of the poem warned rulers not to abuse their power over farming land. »I do not (even) possess a ridge in a field,«<sup>37</sup> Uthman wrote in a modest and ascetic tone. In contrast to the Hausa rulers, dan Fodio claimed that he would guarantee his subjects not to have any interest in their farmland. In order to appease the Hausa farmers he brought his own cultural background into play: He was not a traditional farmer and did not intend to engage himself in royal farming. Therefore he warned all emirs: »Be careful with their land, [...] offspring, [...] field ridge [and] farms.«<sup>38</sup> The mere quantity of poem lines Uthman dedicated to the protection of farming land is amazing. He also composed (or had translated) this poem in Hausa in order to reach Hausa farmers, and not Arabic-speaking scholars or »Bororo« Fulfulde native speakers. Uthman dan Fodio disclaimed personal profit from land seizures of the Jihadist military and explained that any land grab during the wars happened in order to provide the poor with food and not for the Sokoto elite, a leadership without any farmland.

In order to keep their promise to protect the Hausa farmers, the Jihadists motivated the Fulbe pastoralists and the soldiers to seize and loot the farms beyond the Caliphate frontier instead: »One may colonize [lodge]

36 Hausa »A sa su noma su ya kuɗin kasa ga hali. Rage na sabka da laya sukai ga wanga hali. Gina katanga sukai, yin dakuna ga hali. Kuwa fa ya karɓi yanki dai ga wanga hali. Yuka ta iblisa ta yanke shi wallahi.« Ibid. Implosive letters were added by the author; vide supra.

37 Hausa »Ni ban da kwuya [kwiya].« Ibid.

38 Hausa »Ku yi hatara da batun fa kasa[r]su [...] 'ya'yansu [...] kwuyasu [kwiyasu] fa gonakinsu.« Ibid.

and chop the ›Land of the Unbelievers‹ by fighting them. [...] There is wealth in their farms.«<sup>39</sup> The Jihadist policy favored the colonization and clearing of bushland in the territories defined as »pagan«, instead of redistributing existing farmland in the heartland of the Caliphate. The Caliphate elite constructed an enemy beyond the state frontiers that inhabited forests or farms without any religious right to possess land. With this strategy, Uthman hoped to prevent Jihadist soldiers and officials from provoking social unrest among the farmers whose agricultural products were needed in order to nourish and appease the urban areas. With mass propaganda as in this Hausa poem, the Jihadists stereotyped an enemy they would not use for their state-building project. New land could be ›Islamized‹ by colonization, but the ›unbelievers‹ were to be driven from that land.

When the Caliphate expanded, pastoralist Fulbe had often preceded on the paths subsequently taken by the Jihadist military. In Borgu, at the western Caliphate frontier, local rulers owned (or engaged) Fulbe slaves (or free herders) who were in charge of the royal cattle. They watched and milked the cows, and they forwarded half of their income to the palace of Bussa (Borgu capital), if we trust Lander's report.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes the Jihad motivated the Hausa and Fulbe slaves at non-Jihadist courts to ally against their common rulers. This was, for example, reported by Clapperton for the case of Nupe, where dependent Fulbe pastoralists and Hausa royal slaves allied with the Jihadist military against this southern region.<sup>41</sup> Allegedly, they burnt many villages during their war expeditions into Nupe.<sup>42</sup> The Nupe rebel ruler of the 1820s, Idirisu dan Jimada, complained that »his slaves from Housa had joined the Fellatahs, put to death the old, and sold the young«.<sup>43</sup> These »Housa« slaves had probably more than accepted the Fulbe invasion into the southern frontier zone. Many Fulbe pastoralists living in Nupe or Yoruba were engaged as spies and police officers after the Jihadist expansion because they were famil-

39 Hausa »Anka yi kamunta [...], yi saran nan [...] kasa da anka ci kafirai. [...] Akwai fa hujja ga gonakinsu.« Ibid.

40 Cf. Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, p. 376.

41 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 28.

42 Cf. for example *ibid.*, pp. 33, 35.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

iar with local politics. Clapperton renarrated a conversation between his servant and a group of Fulbe at the market of Katunga in Yoruba:

»My servant Pascoe met in the market today some Fellatahs, who told him there was no war in Nyffe; that the king was only afraid of the Fellatahs; that the Fellatahs of Raka had taken nine Yourribanis, who had been found in a suspicious place, but were going to return them here on the morrow.«<sup>44</sup>

Nupe was hit by slave expeditions from two directions: Fulbe soldiers invaded Nupe from the North, and slave trade expeditions from the Atlantic coastal region approached from the south. This situation may explain why many slave concubines entered the royal courts in this period of Jihad. Kidnappings and slave trade by mounted gangs were so ubiquitous that people had wooden statues in front of their houses depicting »men taking slaves, and sometimes a man on horseback leading slaves.«<sup>45</sup> Fulbe and Hausa were among the victims and the perpetrators of enslavement and colonization of conquered land.

The Sokoto Jihadists tried to solve ethnic or traditional tensions and territorial conflicts between farmers (Hausa) and pastoralists (Fulbe) by two measures: Firstly, farmers and pastoralists were appeased by being granted tenure to »pagan« farmland and pasture land that could be colonized and Islamized. And secondly, Uthman dan Fodio called on the Hausa farmers to build fences around their farms in order to protect the crops from Fulbe cattle: »Walls and fences were built as shelter from being eaten up. Some farmland was still eaten up by cattle. Some are without control.«<sup>46</sup> At the Caliphate frontier the Jihadists exploited the pastoralist interest in fertile land and the tensions between farmers and herdsman within the Caliphate. Colonization and controlled migration to the frontiers was considered the solution for internal rural conflicts and the desired promotion of Jihadist territorial expansion. The Jihadists hoped to kill two birds with one stone.

44 Ibid., p. 45.

45 Ibid., p. 48.

46 Hausa »Runfa da shimgi [shinge] shikai shi fake a canye mai. Wani ke shi noma a sa shanu su cinye mai. Wani babu iko [...].« Uthman dan Fodio: *Wallahi*, S14. Implosive letters were added by the author in accordance with the Hausa Ajami manuscript.

#### 4.2 Saharan Bedouins: »From Cattle to Horses«

When the Sokoto Jihadists talked or wrote about their Saharan neighbors to the north, they either called them Tuareg or Bedouins. The Berber label »Tuareg« was also used in the Arabic language and defined the Saharan populations ethnically. But when the Jihadists used the Arabic term »Bedouin«, they only referred to that part of Tuareg society living nomadically as cattle herders at least to a certain degree. Saharan Tuareg scholars participated in Jihadist networks or even settled in the Sokoto Caliphate. Some Tuareg leaders were military allies of Sokoto, and others joined the army of the northern enemies Kebbi and Gobir. The rural Bedouin Tuareg only interacted with Sokoto when selling camels and horses to the armies or to traders from the Caliphate. But at the time of the Jihad, Tuareg societies were facing the same social gap between pastoralists and urbanized classes as the Fulbe. Jihadist scholars from both ethnic groups discussed whether Islam respected nomadism or not.

The Jihadists' estimation of pastoral nomadism was equivocal and irresolute at the beginning of the Jihad wars – and especially negative when studying the perception of Saharan nomads throughout the history of Islamic literature. During the Islamic and Arabic conquest of North Africa, mobile bands of robbers often contested the authority and territorial power of the Islamic State. The Islamic leadership could not accept that small-scale groups of thieves were powerful enough to threaten a whole state. They often declared all Tuaregs to be a people of brigands – a stereotype that has been maintained until today. The Sokoto Jihadists, of course, picked up on this prejudice against Saharan nomads and sometimes quoted these passages in their own publications. Uthman dan Fodio, for example, quoted a paragraph from Al-Maghili who in turn was referring to another text by the Tunisian scholar Al-Burzuli (d. 1438). This account explains that the goods of the »African Bedouins« should legally be captured as booty by Muslim emperors, because it had before been stolen from non-Bedouins anyway.<sup>47</sup> The Arabic name »Bedouin« was not used to refer to Saharan or African nomads. It was used for any desert population considered as nomadic or at least semi-nomadic. And during the Islamic expansion their image was

47 Cf. the text Uthman dan Fodio: *Siraj al-ikhwan* at BN, Manuscripts Arabes 5528, f. 233b (ff. 255–238).



often rendered as backward and polytheist. The Sokoto Jihadists adopted general Bedouin stereotypes in order to describe their northern neighbors.

The relationship between Bedouin societies and the Sokoto Jihadists was complex and changeable. The Jihadists considered Tuareg military units as flexible mercenaries fighting for every warring party in principle. According to the second-generation Jihadist writer Abd Al-Qadir bin Al-Mustafa (1804–1864) the »rebellious among the Berbers«<sup>48</sup> were also fighting for the enemies on the Gobir side. On the other hand, Tuaregs were often listed among the supporters of Jihadist forces. The non-famous son of Muhammad Bello, Abd Al-Rauf, analyzed the Jihadist forces in terms of ethnic affiliation: »From amongst the Tuaregs and the Sudanic [lit. »Blacks«] certainly assisted, and the majority of them the Fulanis.«<sup>49</sup> The most dominant Bedouin tribes in the northern frontier zone of the Caliphate were the Kel Geres (also Gress) north of the Sokoto capital, the Kel Aïr (also Ayr) between Agadez and Arlit, and the Kel Iwellemmedan in the border regions of Mali and Niger. The latter were already separated into the Kel Ataram in the west and the Kel Denneg in the east by the eighteenth century.<sup>50</sup> But their internal and trans-tribal social structure cannot sufficiently be described by these names of the clans. The social hierarchy of these Bedouins included professional military leaders and soldiers, noblemen, slaves and former slaves, artisans and religious Islamic experts. The Sokoto Jihadists gained most of their Bedouin support from among the class of Islamic professionals called *ineslemen* (lit. »Muslims«). There are at least some hints in the sources that the *ineslemen* leader Muhammad Al-Jaylani (ca. 1777–ca. 1840) exchanged letters with Sultan Muhammad Bello. Al-Jaylani belonged to the small Ait-Awari clan that basically resided north of Birnin Konni. Oral historiography of the Ait-Awari and neighboring clans has revealed that Al-Jaylani started his own political movement against the noble clan elites. He criticized them for being careless Muslims, for not praying regularly, for supporting music and practicing magic beyond Islamic options. Later Al-Jaylani also became a military leader, called *amenokal*.

48 Cf. his poem on »The Battle of Daura«, English translation in Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 188.

49 English translation in *ibid.*, p. 206.

50 Grémont: Les Touaregs Iwellemmedan, p. 16.

Local history also has it, that he announced himself to have appeared in the Sudan as the awaited Mahdi.<sup>51</sup> Another Tuareg, known as Hamma, had already claimed to be the Mahdi before and was put to death with acquiescence of the Sokoto Jihadists. Most *ineslemen* scholars on the other hand supported their southern Jihadist neighbors and clearly aimed at the creation of a strict Muslim and, at the same time, settled society.<sup>52</sup>

Al-Jaylani ruled his group of radical Kel Denneg from 1807 to 1816, and together they raided other Tuareg clans as well as the »Maguzawa«<sup>53</sup> of the Adar region. They finally defeated the Adar king Ibra, a long-time opponent of the Sokoto Jihadists, and their Tuareg allies from the Kel Geres clans.<sup>54</sup> Al-Jaylani promoted a classless and urbanized society among the Muslim Tuaregs. His permanent warfare caused the construction of many town walls in southern Niger. In 1813 he turned northwards and attacked Aïr where the defeated Muslim leaders soon combined their forces in order to take revenge. Although being opponents of Al-Jaylani, these Tuaregs considered themselves pious Muslims and even created the new endonym Kel Tamezgidda (lit. »People from the Mosque«).<sup>55</sup> In 1816 after many battles, they chased Al-Jaylani away who in turn took refuge in Sokoto with his ally Muhammad Bello. Some twenty years later, allied forces including Sokoto armies and Al-Jaylani finally defeated Ibra, the Tuareg ally of Gobir, at the battle of Gawakuke. Ibra allegedly survived the battle, withdrew from politics and died in ca. 1850 in the Sokoto area.<sup>56</sup> It has been argued that Al-Jaylani ignored the major principles of Tuareg society and therefore failed with his revolutionary attempt: He and his followers interpreted Jihad as a class struggle, but class was a deep fundament of the Tuareg clan system.<sup>57</sup>

In one of Al-Jaylani's letters to Muhammad Bello he must have posed the question how a ruler was to lead a nomadic society in accordance with Islam and the jihadist reformation of the Central Sahel. According to Last, this text is dated 1815 – a time when Al-Jaylani was still leading his

51 Norris: Tuaregs, p. 158.

52 Ibid., p. 145.

53 On the ethnonym »Maguzawa« cf. chapter IV.1.5.

54 Cf. Bernus: Histoires parallèles et croisées, pp. 41–42. See also Norris: Tuaregs, p. 148.

55 Norris: Tuaregs, p. 154.

56 Ibid., p. 158.

57 Bello: Introduction, in: id. (ed.): Ballo's Fatwa on Urbanization of Nomads, p. 3.

revolutionary radical group.<sup>58</sup> Muhammad Bello's answers are – unlike the questions of Al-Jaylani – available in three copies in different West African archives.<sup>59</sup> The content of this whole treatise is dedicated to the discussion of Bedouin nomadism. Muhammad Bello discussed whether or not they must become sedentary when accepting Islam. Al-Jaylani had asked whether the Bedouin lifestyle really was »the ruin of religion, the weakness of Islam and its negation«.<sup>60</sup> According to Bello's answer, Al-Jaylani's letter was sent to the Sokoto Court along with a »shield«<sup>61</sup> as a present and symbol of military allegiance. Muhammad Bello quoted some sentences of Al-Jaylani's questions before answering them. This extract reveals that the Tuareg revolutionary tried to make his followers sedentary by »a fortress of trees [wood]«.<sup>62</sup> He complained that too much traveling kept his followers distant from each other due to the custom that »any Bedouin community follows its herds in search of pasture and this prevents [us] from meeting them.«<sup>63</sup> The above-quoted statement on the abandonment of a nomadic lifestyle for religious reasons referred to a scholar called »Yahya« (or »Ahya«)<sup>64</sup> and his followers. This person has not been identified so far, but it may refer to either another regional scholar of the Central Sudan or some historical Arabic author.

In Muhammad Bello's answer to the question whether this »Yahya« was right with his negative appraisal of nomadism, the Sokoto Sultan classified all Muslim communities according to two major groups: The

58 Last: The Sokoto Caliphate, p. 231.

59 The author has consulted the copies held at Niamey (manuscript) and Sokoto (edited text); the Kano copy was not viewed. For details on the catalogue reference codes see Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 121 (item 30). Norris included an English translation in paraphrase; cf. id.: Tuaregs, pp. 149–153.

60 Arab. حراب الدين وضعف الاسلام حرمه. Muhammad Bello: *Risalat ila Muhammad Al-Jaylani*, Niamey 3046 (before reindexing of the archive: 1744), p. 1.

61 Arab. الاتراس. Ibid.

62 Arab. حصنا من الشجر. Ibid.

63 Arab. و كل قرية بدوية اتبعت مواثيها في طلب المرعى وذلك لا يمكن الاجتماع معه. Ibid.

64 In the Nigerien manuscript copy from Niamey it says »Yahya« (cf. *ibid.*, p. 1) and may thus refer to Yahya Ibn Umar, a Persian military leader of the ninth century. Allegedly, Yahya Ibn Umar bequeathed a Hadith claiming that God cursed the Bedouins three times. This is also mentioned by Muhammad Bello (p. 4.). However, the notation of this Arabic name is usually different from this manuscript, which strengthens doubts about the identity of this »Yahya« or »Ahya«.

urban people on the one hand, and others »living in the village and the desert«.<sup>65</sup> Bello did not emphasize differences between mobile societies and sedentary groups. Nomads belonged to the »non-urban« category of Muslims, together with villagers and all inhabitants of rural environments. Muhammad Bello rejected the idea of forced sedentism among Bedouins, but he openly preferred an urbanization process for them: »Settling in villages and towns is preferable to residing in the desert except during wartime.«<sup>66</sup> Only the Jihad was a legitimate excuse to settle in desert territory. Moreover, Bello reminded Al-Jaylani of the Prophet's prediction that most people would settle in towns. And the Sokoto ruler considered this prophecy already fulfilled since the time of Islamic expansion under Umar Al-Khattab, when the fortified towns Basra, Kufa, Fustat and Damascus were founded in Iraq, Egypt, and Syria. Besides, Bello noted, even the Prophet himself and his followers migrating to Medina were urban people.

But Bello also recalled some harsh Prophetic traditions that condemned the nomads' role in Islamic eschatology. The people living in the desert, consuming milk and misinterpreting the Koran would bring destruction over Muslim societies.<sup>67</sup> And another Hadith quoted by Bello linked pastoral economy and the desert to religious ignorance and sexual desires. The *conditio animale* of the Sokoto Jihadists differentiated predatory and livestock animals, both of which represented certain emotions. Predatory animals were linked to unjust anger and hate, livestock animals were characterized by sexual lust. But all animal actions were eventually dominated by passion and desire. Civilized humans, in contrast, were constituted by the two animal types (cattle and predator), a devilish element combining anger and passion, and a sacred part generating love and legitimate leadership.<sup>68</sup> Pastoralist characters were obviously supposed to be influenced by their intense relation with cattle. Their el-

65 Arab. سكنى والبادية. Ibid., p. 2.

66 Arab. فسكنى القرى والمدن خير من المقام بالبادية الا في الفتنة. Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Uthman dan Fodio: *Tahdhib al-insan min khisal al-shaytan*; Arabic edition by Shareef, Muhammad: www.siiasi.org (13.02.2013), p. 6. Catalogued in Hunwick (ed.): *Writings*, p. 108. This attitude of »lustful« cattle was also expressed by Uthman dan Fodio when comparing cattle to »unbelieving« rulers. Sexual lust was compared to lust for political power. See Hiskett (ed.): *Kitāb Al-Farq*, p. 567.

ement of sexual desires was considered more powerful than with urban people or farmers. With the metaphor of a wolf that notoriously caught the sheep staying remote from their group, Muhammad Bello drew his conclusion: »To settle in towns is better than settling in a village which is in turn better than living in the desert.«<sup>69</sup> People not integrated into the urban masses were suspicious to Bello, because they lived with the danger of being misled by evil forces (the wolf as devil). In his graduated categorization of townspeople, villagers and Bedouins, Bello requested all rural people to leave the desert or village and settle in a town if they had the alternative. He believed in the successive process of urbanization along with a general Islamization of the Sahel and Saharan societies. Although being a Bedouin did not exclude being a Muslim as well, people of the desert reportedly maintained a rough and rude character.

Bello referred to the Andalusian scholar Amr Al-Karmani (eleventh century) to demonstrate the religious superiority of the inhabitants of towns: Village people were required to be summoned for daily prayers, town people had their meetings for Friday prayer. But the »secluded people«<sup>70</sup> only met fellow Muslims at the Feast of Breaking the Fast after the month of Ramadan once in a year, or when undertaking the pilgrimage once or twice in a lifetime. And for this reason, Bello argued, people may legally move from the desert to the village or from the village to a town – but the reverse migration was prohibited by Sharia Law. He summarized his theory, saying that »humans are urban by nature«<sup>71</sup> and there was only human progress in urbanization. Only during wartime was a Muslim allowed to take some sheep and escape into the remote mountains where he could stay for two months, because staying longer than that period in the desert or in other isolation would turn this migrant into a Bedouin. This Jihadist definition of Bedouins neither refers to tribal identity nor to language, but to their continuous isolation in the desert. According to Muhammad Bello, anybody could turn into a Bedouin if he only lived in the desert for too long, and he had in mind a definition of

69 Arab. سكنى المدائن خير من السكنى فى القرى و سكنى القرية يار من السكنى بالبادية. Cf. Shareef's edition of *Tahdhib al-insan min khisal al-shaytan*, p. 3.

70 Arab. اهل الافاؤلوقو. Muhammad Bello: *Risalat ila Muhammad Al-Jaylani*, Niamey 3046, p. 4.

71 Arab. بالطنع [sic!] الانسن مدنئ. Ibid.

the desert as a sparsely populated place. The desert was neither specified as a climatic zone nor on the basis of topographical features.

After this general discussion of the Bedouin in Islam, Muhammad Bello concentrated on more current issues of Bedouins in Jihad warfare. He demanded that the Bedouins must »at certain times come together in order to blockade the passages [border] and for repelling and fighting against the enemy.«<sup>72</sup> However, this could only be managed if they settled somewhere together. It was therefore the duty of any Bedouin military leader to build fortresses where the people could take refuge. Bello further explained this process of Jihadist frontier urbanization with examples from the history of Islam: Basra was founded on the frontier to India, Pakistan and China; Al-Kufa blocked the Persian, Kurdish, Daylamite (Caspian Sea) and Turkish borders; Al-Fustat (Egypt) was erected against the Byzantine Empire, the Copts and Nubia; Damascus protected the Muslims against Byzantine Syria. Muhammad Bello imposed an urbanization policy causing the erection of many fortified villages and towns. He recalled the successful fortification of the above-described four Islamic frontier cities, and he also claimed that the Prophet himself built town walls because God had revealed to him that a fortified Medina would never be conquered by the enemies of Islam. The Jihadist urbanization project was directly connected with Jihad warfare. According to Bello, every emirate leader was supposed to fortify at least the capital town and to store sufficient amounts of food and »war equipment«<sup>73</sup> inside of it. Muhammad Bello quoted several Islamic authorities – among them Al-Maghili – to prove the Islamic duty to build fortresses for the Muslim population. This fortress population should even be asked to pay additional taxes during warfare if the state funds were exhausted and military goods were required.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the surrounding population was obliged to support the construction of the Islamic fortress with money, goods or labor. Muhammad Bello did not forget to highlight his personal achievements as the leader of the Muslims with respect to the frontier fortresses. He directly linked fortresses with the building of mosques for mass education in an exclusively urban environment.

72 Arab. يحتاجون في بعد الاحيان الى الاجتماع لسد الثغور والدفاع وجهاد العدو. Ibid., p. 5.

73 Arab. بآلات الحرب. Ibid., p. 6.

74 Cf. ibid., p. 7.

Bello's more practical advice for Al-Jaylani contained, for example, the implementation of a hierarchical Islamic social structure in every Bedouin clan: A sheikh should be installed for political leadership, a teacher for schooling, and an Imam for higher studies and the leading of the regular prayers. In his written answer, the Sokoto author also revealed his ›selfish‹ plans with the Bedouin clans. He wanted all Bedouin leaders, including Al-Jaylani, to prevent the Bedouin people from keeping huge herds of cattle. Instead they should dedicate their knowledge and experience to the breeding of camels, horses and sheep for the military strength of the Jihadists.<sup>75</sup> Muhammad Bello mentioned several arguments in favor of this religious duty: First of all, the Prophet neither owned cattle, nor did he slaughter them for any feast. Secondly, a Hadith said that God punished all Muslims turning from horse breeding to the rearing of cattle because of the status of the horse in Jihad warfare. And thirdly, many Hadiths explicitly expressed adoration for the beauty and martial prowess of horses. The Sokoto warfare of the second generation and the expansion wars especially deployed mounted soldiers on horses and camels. And besides, the long-distance trade in the whole region constantly needed a supply of beasts of burden. Muhammad Bello's Bedouin policy wanted to turn this group into producers of animals of warfare for the Jihad. And accordingly he considered pastoralists as suppliers for the urban population which was still the most important reference group for Bello's war purposes.<sup>76</sup> Bello claimed that he had once traveled around as a migrant preacher and taught the Bedouin people for two months. He said they all needed religious instruction. And in a somewhat apodictic manner Bello renarrated that Prophet Muhammad had led the Bedouin tribes (of the Arabic Peninsula) northwards and used their cattle for jihadist military conquests.<sup>77</sup>

In the Jihadist concept of space, the desert was an unpopulated territory where humans soon turned into nomads, where they were dominated by sexual passion and devilish seductions. The landscape was again believed to be the major determining factor for the human character. And the more practical argument of Muhammad Bello implied that effective

75 Ibid., p. 8.

76 Ibid., p. 9.

77 Ibid., p. 8.

Jihadist warfare was only guaranteed by Bedouin horse breeders selling their animals to the military. A self-sufficient economy of cattle breeding was, on the other hand, not allowed. And in the long run only sedentarization and urbanization would lead to the Islamization of the Bedouin society.

### ***4.3 Urban Places, Dead Land, and the Harim in-between***

In his manuscript »On teaching about the revivification of dead land« (Arab. *Ta'lim al-radi fi asbab al-ikhtisas bi-mawat al-aradi*), Abdullah dan Fodio outlined some basic principles for the distribution and cultivation of land.<sup>78</sup> The author distinguished several ways of acquiring possession over land. The first way was seizing land by cultivation. It was reportedly obligatory that only »dead land«<sup>79</sup> could be annexed by cultivation. Abdullah specified »dead land« as land where »no buildings are erected«,<sup>80</sup> that was neither owned nor leased by anyone. Possession of land was also legitimated by three other methods: By cultivating it continuously, by living on it in a building, or by owning it with official agreement and knowledge. Land seizure was also legal in Abdullah's view when someone installed irrigation, dewatered flooded land, or »by erecting a building which is important as accommodation«,<sup>81</sup> by considerable planting, ploughing of an acre (seeding alone is not considered cultivation), by clearing the land with cutting or burning of its trees, and finally by breaking the stones or leveling the ground by removing slopes. In this approach, land ownership was achieved by physical work with and on the land. However, the mere fencing of land was not sufficient and was hence not considered an act of cultivation. And Abdullah added to this: »Similarly, cultivation is not grazing [livestock] on

78 Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 108. Based on two Northern Nigerian manuscript copies (Bayero College Kano, 78 / National Archives Kaduna, N/AR2/129) Zahradeen provided an Arabic edition and English translation of this text in his unpublished thesis; cf. Zahradeen: Abd Allah ibn Fodio's Contributions to the Fulani Jihad, pp. 299–325.

79 Arab. الارض الموات. Ibid., p. 316.

80 Arab. لا عمارة فيها. Zahradeen's translation is somewhat misleading here – translating it as »uncultivated«. Ibid., pp. 300, 316.

81 Arab. [والتالث] بالبناء عليها بناء له بال اى عظيم المؤنة. Ibid., p. 318.



the land's pastures or digging a well for the cattle on the land.«<sup>82</sup> Thus Abdullah clearly accepted the paradigm that mobile pastoralist communities could never own land by using it for their cattle. Land was only possessed by continuous cultivation of farmers.

The Jihadist author also presented his view on general land classification. These categories included urban metropolitan towns, the suburban hinterland, and rural spaces distant from towns. When the ›dead land‹ was very remote, Abdullah explained, it might be seized without any official permission: »In terms of the far [land], land reclamation is allowed without the permission of the Imam [ruler] and even to dhimmis [tolerated non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim state] except for the Arab peninsula, Mecca, Medina, and Yemen.«<sup>83</sup> This quotation is indicative of the fact that Jihadist policy focused on power over urban spaces and allowed the distant countryside to practice self-organized forms of land tenure. The hinterland of the towns may on the other hand be reclaimed by Muslims »on permission of the Imam [ruler], as against the dhimmis who are not allowed land reclamation in areas close [to settlements] at all.«<sup>84</sup> In the urban areas, non-Muslims should not own land at all. As cultivators of land they were only tolerated far from larger settlements. At the same time the hinterland of the towns displayed a special status: These »forbidden [and holy] lands or spaces close to these or bordering them«<sup>85</sup> which were cultivated by Muslims only, might always be recalled by a ruler if he had not been asked for permission. The ruler could command the illegal inhabitants to leave if he paid them the price of the estate. Then the ruler must forward the land to Muslim owners or a Muslim tenant. However, a ruler was not allowed to disperse cultivators of the urban hinterland arbitrarily and without compensation. Abdullah further described this »forbidden« (Arab. *harim*) land as »the space from which wood is taken for the benefit of the inhabitants and where they graze their cattle and which could be reached back and forth [on only

82 Arab. وكذلك لا يكون الاحياء برعى كلاء الارض و حفر بئر الماشية فيها. Ibid., p. 319.

83 Arab. واما البعيد فيجوز احياءه بغير اذن الامام ولو ذمى و غير جزيرتةمالعرب مكة والمدينة واليمن. Ibid., p. 316.

84 Arab. [...] بانذ الامام بخلاف الذمى فلا يجوز له الاحياء في القرين مطلقا. Ibid.

85 Arab. حريم البلد او مازاد عليه مما يقربه. Ibid., p. 317.

one day]». <sup>86</sup> He explained that the *harim* was the maximum radius within which the urban inhabitants fetched firewood and grazed their livestock on a daily journey back and forth. His method of land measurement was based on walked distances. <sup>87</sup>

In Abdullah's opinion, the first cultivator of a piece of land possessed it until he neglected it and another person recultivated the abandoned land. <sup>88</sup> He also refers to the early Islamic jurist Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Qasim Al-Utaqi (d. 806) who claimed that the land may be owned by the second cultivator when the first had disregarded it, so that it was free to be recultivated by others. Abdullah also quoted Ibn Al-Ashhab (d. ca. 823) and his position on land ownership. <sup>89</sup> Both authors were students of the early Maliki school of Islamic thought, <sup>90</sup> but Al-Ashhab distinguished between land in the town environs or the periphery. While land near settlements should always belong to the first owner, remote land should be handed over to the second cultivator if abandoned. With reference to the mentioned Maliki jurists of the eighth and ninth centuries, Abdullah recapitulated that »the second owner requires [for his legal acquisition of abandoned land] a long period after which it gains its primary condition«. <sup>91</sup> Moreover and in ad-

**86** Arab. ماكن التي يؤخذ منها الحطب لنفع اهلها والتي ترعى فيها مواشيهما مما يدرك غدوا ورواحا. Ibid., p. 319.

**87** Hakim and Ahmed paraphrased the Jihadist interpretation of *harim* in their recent article on Jihadist town planning: »The third mechanism is *harim* (the zone surrounding a property or structure), which is necessary for its function, such as pathways and roads, so that other people are prohibited from obstructing or building upon it. The *harim* also refers to a space surrounding a well that protects it from damage, maintains the well's integrity, and prevents the pollution of its water. *Harim* is effective at various levels of the built and natural environments, such as the village or city as a whole, alignment on both sides of rivers, and forests. At the neighborhood level, the term *harim* signifies the area surrounding clusters of compounds, roads and pathways between them, and access to neighborhood farms.« See Hakim / Ahmed: Rules for the Built Environment, p. 4.

**88** Cf. Zahradeen: Abd Allah ibn Fodio's Contributions to the Fulani Jihad, p. 317.

**89** Zahradeen correctly ascribes Abdullah dan Fodio's medieval source text of this section to Asad Al-Furat (759–828). Uthman dan Fodio also referred to a source text called *Bayan* in which Al-Furat commented on Sahnun's Maliki legal compendium called *Al-mudawwana*. Al-Furat allegedly met Al-Qasim when studying in Egypt. Cf. Sezgin: Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, vol. 1, pp. 465–466.

**90** On their appearance in Sahnun's *Al-mudawwana* see Talbi: Sahnun, pp. 843–845.

**91** Arab. فشرط كونها للثاني ان تطول المدة بعد عودها الى الحالة الاولى. Zahradeen: Abd Allah ibn Fodio's Contributions to the Fulani Jihad, p. 317.

dition to that, the cultivation of town hinterland by a second owner needed the official permission of the town ruler. If a cultivator did not know there was a former owner, he had to be paid for the effort of recultivation when returning the land to the first owner. With reference to Muhammad Al-Kharashi (d. 1689),<sup>92</sup> Abdullah further restricted the transfer of land ownership: Donated land may never become ›dead land‹ again, regardless of how long it may be uncultivated. And building a house on a piece of land banned any legal transfer to a second owner without the first cultivator's consent. Abdullah made indirect reference to the nebulous situation of ownership in times of war: "For example if one buys land for erecting a building on it which is then destroyed and the land reverts to what it was [before], he would not stop owning it if it is like this."<sup>93</sup> A house thus represented permanent ownership.

#### 4.4 Conclusion: Jihad and Sedentarization

The Sokoto Jihadists attracted farmers and pastoralists to colonize new and ›dead‹ land. However, they disapproved of pastoral nomadism in ›deserted‹ land. They intended to create a caliphate that eventually only consisted of urban centers and *harim* environs used as pasture, firewood resources, and for cultivation. The ›dead‹ land and its inhabitants could not be controlled by the sultan, the emirs, or an imam. Therefore this land was free for individual colonization by cultivation, buildings, and pasture. Everyone should be sedentarized gradually. And the ›Land of the Unbelievers‹ was considered ›dead‹ land anyway: Both the farmers and the pastoral societies were asked to migrate to the Caliphate frontier and ›revive‹ this land.

92 He had commented on the *Mukhtasar* of the Maliki scholar Khalil Ibn Ishaq Al-Jundi (d. 1365).

93 Arab. مثل ان يشتري عرضه فيبينها ثم ينهدم البنين وتعود عرضه كما كانت فلا يزال ملكه عنها لذلك. Zahraadeen: Abd Allah ibn Fodio's Contributions to the Fulani Jihad, p. 318.

## 5. Migrants of War: Precarious and Sacred Routes

The Sokoto Jihad wars generated individual and mass migration for several decades. Some of these mobile actors migrated or traveled voluntarily, while others were forced to move. But it is not desirable or really possible to differentiate accurately between these categories, because many of the concerned parties never articulated their will. Did captives for example *want* to be captured and trafficked? Probably not. But did they as slaves *want* to accompany their masters on war expeditions? We cannot answer this question so clearly. The boundaries between slaves and soldiers often vanished. Many slaves were forced to come with their masters on war expeditions while others voluntarily joined the military groups as soldiers in expectation of booty or liberation. And on the other hand, there were siblings of soldiers and commanders who were urged or even threatened to move into the war camps against their own will.

It is also not advisable to distinguish political Jihadists from non-Jihadists. During the Jihad wars the frontiers expanded, former enemies were integrated into the Jihadist military, and certain emirates suddenly rebelled against Sokoto rule. I argue that the Sokoto Jihad set up a new mode and culture of warfare which shaped both the Sokoto Jihadists and the enemy military forces. With the introduction of the war horse into many West African regions, the Jihadists accelerated warfare. When attacks by soldiers became quicker, the messengers and the refugees also had to move faster. This general increase in speed of warfare generated large-scale migration. Not only did more people migrate, but also they had to move over larger distances than in the past. They produced and transmitted ideas about foreign spaces and landscape formations, about their home and their new homes, about journeys and identities based on this experience of translocation.<sup>1</sup>

1 Zehnle: *Unter weißer Flagge*, pp. 91–110.

### 5.1 Slaves: Being Black or Being Animals

Although slaves in the Central Sahel were usually kept at some distance from higher education, they were often sources of immense spatial knowledge due to their migration background. After being captured and enslaved, they were usually sold in order to prevent them from returning home. Slaves were traded over hundreds of kilometers across West Africa and were often traded beyond the territories of their own language and culture to prevent a loss of slaves and to complete the *social death*<sup>2</sup> of the enslaved.<sup>3</sup> Many were sold and transported in multiple stages throughout their lives. Some managed to run away and live as free persons or with another master; others escaped by participating in a Jihad war. In the disorder of wartime free people often became slaves while others gained freedom by the same causes. These contradictory circumstances explain why each slave experienced and evaluated the Jihad from an individual and personal point of view. Although much has been written about slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate,<sup>4</sup> there is little exact knowledge about the numbers of slaves during the Jihad decades. Estimations of European travelers or early colonial officials were destined to be vague.<sup>5</sup> Many of the articles about organized slave plantations, for example, are only valid with reference to the situation in the Caliphate right before the British war on Sokoto towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> But some indications in European, missionary and other documentation allow for an investigation of the spatial knowledge of this diverse social group. These examples are often coincidental and can neither represent the full variety

2 This term expresses the loss of identity, home, and the social environment in the process of individual enslavement. With their enslavement these persons were forced suddenly to accept another social role and also to change their view of themselves. The first to promote this idea of slavery was the Jamaican-American historian Orlando Patterson; cf. id.: *Slavery and Social Death*.

3 Cf. Nupe informants explaining to the missionary Schön, that they would prefer foreign slaves for this reason; see Crowther / Schön: *Journals*, p. 187.

4 To mention some important researchers: Stilwell: *Power, Honour and Shame*; Tambo: *The Sokoto Caliphate Slave Trade*; Salau: *The West African Slave Plantation*.

5 Osswald has elaborately argued that historians would never analyze the extent of slaves among the Caliphate population. Cf. Osswald: *Das Sokoto-Kalifat*, p. 17.

6 Cf. Hogendorn: *The Economics of Slave Use*.

of slave biographies nor some »typical« slave. But they can show what some slaves narrated when being asked about their land of origin, their routes, and their experience as forced migrants.

Enslavement was an official element of Jihad warfare. Uthman dan Fodio himself defined the Jihad mode of warfare as the killing of male »unbelievers« and their male offspring, the enslavement of all women and children, and the annexation of all their goods.<sup>7</sup> Slaves were a common currency of annual taxation in the Sokoto State and emirates, and sometimes people were enslaved at the frontier when their communities could not gather the sum demanded by Jihadist tax collectors.<sup>8</sup> However, the difference between slaves of the first and the second generation was crucial in this region even before the Jihad: The captured slaves (*bayi*) usually were much less integrated into the Hausa society than those slaves born into slavery (*cucanawa*).<sup>9</sup> But despite certain Islamic principles recommending manumission, neither of these slave groups was automatically set free or protected from further selling. Many slaves therefore experienced several households, cultures and languages.

The *social death theory* is not the only explanation for the process of becoming and being a slave. Paul Lovejoy has long studied biographies of slaves as a whole life narrative starting long before enslavement. Although he does not dismiss the *social death theory*, he wants to focus on continuities of the individual subject in terms of language, religion, culture and identity.<sup>10</sup> But social death is probably what the Jihadists wished for their slaves and especially so for the concubines. It is the theory of the masters who express a feeling of total power when assuming they could completely own and change their slaves intellectually. This metaphor of death for enslavement is also encountered in some langua-

7 See Uthman dan Fodio: *Siraj al-ikhwan*, published in: Rebstock: Die Lampe der Brüder, p. 9.

8 Cf. Crowther / Schön: Journals, p. 153.

9 See Stilwell: Power, Honour and Shame, p. 398. He emphasized that Kano slaves never were able to gain honor throughout their official career and thus remained outside the honor-shame nexus of Hausa society. Iliffe also mentioned that the alleged kinlessness and the absence of acknowledged ancestry may have complicated the acquisition of honor for slaves in Muslim societies; cf. Iliffe: Honour in African History, p. 119.

10 Cf. the interview with Paul Lovejoy in *Africa Past and Present* Podcast, Episode 79: Biographies and Databases of Atlantic Slaves (I), <http://afripod.aodl.org/> (25.01.2014).

ges. In mid-nineteenth century Kanuri the term »to be lost« (*padgeskin*) was used for both, »dying« and »becoming a slave«. <sup>11</sup> Both processes are characterized by social disintegration and therefore equated linguistically. Becoming a slave also meant to remember the spaces of the past and acquire knowledge of new territories. Unfortunately European travelers and Jihadist authors mostly neglected to query slave informants regarding their geographical experiences. And if they did, informants often explained that they had been forced to leave their place of origin as little children and could not remember the journey. <sup>12</sup> But there are some exceptions – one of them being the Hausa servant of a Tripoli minister who visited Europe in 1782.

*Pre-Jihad Slave Geographies, or A Hausa-German Encounter in Copenhagen*

Two slave servants of Abderrahman Aga, a Tripolitan diplomat, met the German scholar Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815) in Copenhagen in 1782. Niebuhr was told that one slave was born in the Hausa region and was recognized by others due to his specific facial scarification. <sup>13</sup> Aga told a story about an African slave woman who had allegedly recognized her kidnapped daughter because of her marks under her breast and between her shoulders. <sup>14</sup> From his Bornu nanny Abderrahman had learnt Kanuri numbers as a child: »Telu, Jadi, Jasku, Daku, Uku, Arasku, Tullu, Usku, Lakar, Maku«, he explained to Niebuhr. The scholar also documented the Hausa numbers: »Deia, Biu, Ukku, Huddu, Bial, Schidde, Bokoi, Tokus,

<sup>11</sup> Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 233.

<sup>12</sup> Seetzen explained that many black slaves in Cairo in ca. 1808 told him there were no memories regarding their Sahelian homes. See id.: *Nachrichten von dem Negerland Móbba*, p. 140. Furthermore, recently captured slaves could often not speak Arabic yet and could therefore not easily be interviewed. Moreover, slave owners in Cairo only allowed old slaves to leave the house for hours and be interviewed by strangers; cf. id.: *Vorbericht zu den Beyträgen*, pp. 321–322. Unfortunately, Seetzen's published travel diaries do not contain any information about his conversations with Africans from the Sahel; cf. Seetzen: *Ulrich Jasper Seetzen's Reisen*.

<sup>13</sup> Lefèbvre: *Lire l'identité sur la peau*.

<sup>14</sup> Niebuhr: *Das Innere von Afrika*, p. 982.

Tara, Ghomo«.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, he called fortified towns »Berni« (Hausa *birni*) and sultans »Sirki« (Hausa *sarki*). Niebuhr wrote down that this slave was »born in Afnu«<sup>16</sup> and the residence of his ruler was called Zamfara. According to this servant, African kings often fought short wars in which only a few died. For weaponry they used lances, bucklers, bows and arrows which they regularly poisoned.<sup>17</sup> As the main reason for enslavement, Niebuhr recounted the making of war captives which could not be used as servants of West African soldiers and were therefore sold to Arab traders. These traders, according to this account, also incited African kings to start wars in order to get even more slaves. The slave traders preferred children as slaves who were often kidnapped.<sup>18</sup> Once every year, slave caravans from Bornu and Hausa (*Afnu*) left for North Africa with many people dying due to hunger and thirst.<sup>19</sup> The anonymous Hausa slave told Niebuhr about the long-distance salt trade in the Central Sahel and the regional currencies gold dust or Kauri.

Niebuhr was willing to report the geographical knowledge of this Hausa slave. The Tripolitan servant located his home village right next to the river »Gúlbi«.<sup>20</sup> According to Abraham's standard Hausa dictionary, *gulbi* means »river« in Sokoto and Katsina Hausa dialects, so that the slave was probably honest about his Zamfara origin. He could have

15 Ibid., pp. 982–983.

16 Id.: Noch etwas über das Innere von Afrika, p. 421.

17 German »Die afrikanischen Könige führen oft Krieg gegen einander, aber ihre Kriege dauern nur einige Tage, höchstens nur wenige Wochen, und selten werden bei dieser Gelegenheit viele Leute erschlagen. Das Feuegewehr ist bei ihnen noch nicht eingeführt. Ihre Waffen bestehen in großen und kleinen Lanzen, in Schilden, Bogen und Pfeilen, und letztere pflegen sie auch wohl zu vergiften.« Id.: Das Innere von Afrika, p. 983.

18 German »Die Kriegsgefangenen werden Sklaven des Siegers, und als eine Waare an die Weissen verkauft. [...] Allein die afrikanischen Fürsten konten ihren Kriegsgefangenen keine Festungs- oder andere öffentliche Arbeiten anweisen, auch sie nicht als Soldaten brauchen, es war ihnen also nur übrig, daß sie solche todtschlügen, oder auswärts verkauften, und davon wählten sie um so mehr das letztere [...]. Unglücklicherweise aber verlangten die Weissen immer mehrere schwarze Sklaven, besonders Kinder; sie kamen an ihre Grenze, ja reiseten [sic!] zu den Fürsten mitten in Afrika, um sie zu Kriegen gegen ihre Mitbrüder aufzumuntern.« Ibid., p. 984.

19 Ibid., p. 985.

20 Ibid., pp. 987, 1003. See also id.: Bemerkungen über Fr. Hornemann's Reisen, p. 433.



referred to the Niger (west of Zamfara) or the Kaduna River (south of Zamfara), because he also told Niebuhr Arab people would call this river Nile (*nil*). All rivers of the Sahel were usually perceived as one stream locally called »Gulbi«, »Julbi« or »Joliba« in Hausa. The map published in Hornemann's journal around the year 1800 alludes to this concept of rivers: The regions next to this river are Nupe (Nufe, Nyfe) and southern Bornu (see *Figure 13*).<sup>21</sup> Horneman explained that this river was only called »Julbi« in Nupe and Kebbi.<sup>22</sup> Another time Hornemann referred to the Sokoto River when explaining: »Besides these two great rivers here described [Niger and Nile], there are seven small streams in Hausa, which fall into the Julbi near Berva.«<sup>23</sup>

The Zamfara capital was described to Niebuhr as a residence of the ruler with giant fortification.<sup>24</sup> Abderrahman Aga, the North African diplomat, also listed some Hausa towns. One of them he called »Flata«, which was probably derived from the Arabic ethnonym »Fulata« for Fulbe people.<sup>25</sup> All the Muslim kings of this area reportedly were obedient to either the Zamfara or the Bornu king. According to these informants, the Gwari region situated south of Hausa around the Niger-Benue-confluence was rich in gold and had only recently been conquered by the Hausa states. The slave servant expressed that he considered the people living at the »Gúlbi« river or any dominant stream, very rich in resources. He reproduced the traditional North African view on the »Sudanese Lands« and linked it up with his home region and the river he encountered.

When he was asked about »Tukurur«, he located it north of Jos in the Mara region. He defined it as a separate little kingdom belonging to Hausa. Another place he knew was »Kissa«, maybe the Kissa situated north of the Benue River. Furthermore, he explained that »Kischna« (Katsina) was an important trading town. Niebuhr misinterpreted the descriptions of the Tuareg, assuming they were a merchant town between Zamfara

21 Hornemann: *The Journal of Frederick Horneman's Travels*, p. 110b.

22 *Ibid.*, 115.

23 By »Berva« he probably meant the village Dutsin Barwa between Katsina and Gusu. Cf. *ibid.*

24 German »Sanfara [...] die Residenz des Landesherrn, ist eine große, mit einer Mauer umgebene Stadt, und etwa drei Monate von Tripolis entfernt.« Niebuhr: *Das Innere von Afrika*, p. 988.

25 Short vocals are often not pronounced in Maghrebian Arabic dialects.

and North Africa inhabited by professional slave traders.<sup>26</sup> The second West African servant of Abderrahman Aga was born in Timbuktu and said he was playing with other children on the riverside when they were all kidnapped. He also remembered that there were »white« people in a certain quarter of the town called »Flata« (Fulbe).<sup>27</sup> They were living in their own separate districts and considered »white«. From his slave informants Niebuhr also learned about the route of the Hausa and Bornu pilgrims and long-distance traders:

»Bornu merchants and pilgrims heading for Barbary, Egypt and Mecca, assemble together with those from Afnu in Zamfara and travel via Katsina and Tuareg to Fezzan. Those who want to go to Barbary, travel from Fezan via Sufne and Shati to Tripoli. Those going to Egypt via Dedsjele [?] to Cairo.«<sup>28</sup>

Niebuhr was given the northern pilgrimage routes between the Sahel and Mecca. Niebuhr also wrote about African eunuchs as harem overseers who were mutilated in Fezzan (probably Murzuk) »factories«<sup>29</sup> where only a quarter of them survived the operations.<sup>30</sup> The Hausa geographies documented by Niebuhr focused on the routes of the slave trade and big slave markets. The Sahel slaves described the horrors of the huge slave caravans between Bornu and North Africa and the general preference for children. The Tuareg traders were depicted as evil merchants demanding African kings to make more slaves than they could use. Different names

**26** German »Tuarik ist gleichfalls eine berühmte und reiche Handelsstadt zwischen Sanfara und Fasan. Hier wohnen viele Sklavenhändler, welche jährlich eine Menge Neger zum Verkauf nach Aegypten und der Barberei bringen, und durch diesen Verkehr mit den weissen Mohammedanern Arabisch gelernt haben.« Niebuhr: *Das Innere von Afrika*, p. 989.

**27** *Ibid.*, p. 990.

**28** German »Die Kaufleute und Pilgrime aus Bernu, welche nach der Barberei, Aegypten und Mekke reisen wollen, versammeln sich mit denen aus dem Königreiche Afnu in Sanfara, und reisen von hier über Kaschne und Tuarik nach Fasan. Diejenigen von ihnen, welche nach der Barberei wollen, reisen von Fasan über Sukne und Schati nach Tripolis, und die nach Aegypten gehenden über Dedsjele nach Kahira.« *Ibid.*, p. 991.

**29** *Ibid.*, pp. 996–997.

**30** Evidence for the early use of eunuchs in the Sokoto State is given in Gidado Ibn Laima's account on his personal and military supporters and family. In this list he also named several eunuch slaves. Cf. Gidado Ibn Laima: *Majmu'ah al-sayyid Muhammad Bello*, Niamey 383. See also Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 90–91.

for Sahelian regions formed one region between the Sahara and the super-river in the south. No reference was made to the regions beyond this river. The mental map linked the Sahel with the Sahara and North Africa. All other places were accordingly only reached by the northern routes, be it by pilgrims, traders, or slaves.

*Ali Eisami Gazir: Rumor and Migration in a Slave Autobiography*

A collection of very interesting and significant slave autobiographies was edited and translated by the German-British missionary Koelle in mid-nineteenth century Sierra Leone. By this time the slaves were already freed and resettled in Sierra Leone. But most of them had lived in the Central Sahel as youths. The most detailed among these accounts is the transcribed »autobiography« of the former slave from Bornu Ali Eisami Gazir alias William Harding.<sup>31</sup> Born in 1787 in Magiari Tapsua, he grew up with his family and started schooling at the age of seven. Two years later he was sent to the »house of circumcision«.<sup>32</sup> In this house the boys of the same age usually stayed and recovered from the circumcision operation for about three weeks.<sup>33</sup> During the next two years Gazir read the Koran again at school. Thus the bodily transformation and initiation enabled and prepared the boys for further religious studies as then young adults. After certain environmental and social caesuras – sun eclipse, locust menace, the famine *ngeseneski* and pestilence – Gazir described the Fulbe attack on the neighboring towns when he was 19 years old (approximately 1806). The Jihadist attacks were described as one basic historical demarcation, a caesura, and an event that started a new era. But at first he explained that the locusts had come to his village from the west. Gazir added:

»They do not always come to Bornu [...]. In the year they come, there also comes a famine: when a famine comes, it is because, when they come, they

**31** For enslaved persons it was common to rename when integrating into a new social environment. In Sierra Leone – where English was the *lingua franca* – ex-slaves often chose English (respectively Christian) names.

**32** Kanuri *nem katsabe*. Cf. Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 115.

**33** *Ibid.*, p. 318.

neither leave guinea-corn, nor kuskus, nor beans. As they get up in the West and march toward the East, they never spend two nights in any town they may reach, but only one, and then they march on: such is their march. We have never heard of the place where the Kaman-locusts are said to go and remain in the East.«<sup>34</sup>

And right after this disaster his region witnessed a pest epidemic. Town after town was infected and many inhabitants died:

»All the towns began to be broken up. [...] It put an end to all the great men in Bornu, the priests and the soldiers, the old men and old women, the strong men, both small and great: this disease is not good.«<sup>35</sup>

This contemporary (witness) remembered the Fulbe attacks right after the epidemics but listed it in a row of different catastrophes occurring in one period. The informant explained that his father in the face of advancing Fulbe soldiers gave the interpretation of events that all miserable times had started with the solar eclipse and that the arrival of the foreign armies might well be the climax of this. Hearing rumor about these attacks, the father advised his 19-year-old son to marry soon and start a new life in a new epoch after the war. This way the Jihadist attack was not only considered a turning point in the history of societies and states but also a watershed in an individual life.<sup>36</sup> But soon after, some refugees arrived in Magriari Tapsoua:

»At that time we were weeding our farm, close by our house, in the evening about four o'clock, and on looking to the South, the people of the town Deia were coming to our town, because the Phula had driven them away. When they were come, we remained in our town till the rainy season was passed, and then both we and they were lost, and I came to this place.«<sup>37</sup>

The inhabitants of the attacked town Deia<sup>38</sup> were expelled and sought refuge at their neighbors' town where they evidently settled for some

34 Ibid., p. 200.

35 Ibid., p. 209.

36 Ibid., p. 209.

37 Ibid., pp. 80, 210.

38 Also Daia or Deya. Cf. Brenner: *The Shehus of Kukawa*, pp. 20–30, 58.

months. In this way the forced migration formed new communities, in which displaced persons were for example integrated into existing societies for shelter. Being a frontier region of the Bornu state, the Deia region came up with an organized system of defense during the 1830s in order to prevent repeated attacks after the Fulbe invasion.

Connecting the disasters of the Jihad wars with astronomical anomalies was very common and an immediate process of categorizing irregularities and inexplicable events. In Bussa, the capital of Borgu on the Niger River to the southwest of the Jihadist state, there was a rumor that a lunar eclipse had even warned the inhabitants of the coming of the Jihadist soldiers.<sup>39</sup> Gazir's father, who had intended to let his son marry a year later, suddenly had to change his plans in response to the wars. Gazir remembers him interpreting the war as an »unsettlement of the land«<sup>40</sup> caused by the Fulbe. The family also was unsettled and escaped with other inhabitants of their town and a neighboring town to the capital where they were attacked »on a Sunday, about two o' clock in the afternoon.«<sup>41</sup> The worst place to stay in the event of a Jihadist attack was probably the village. Therefore, farmers usually left their homes behind and escaped to the fortified towns. The town ruler then left the town through the east gate, his commander following soon after. In the evening the news of the capture reached Gazir and his family. Based on the rumor that circulated about the coming of the Jihadists, many villagers left their homes for the next town even before they saw the attackers.

And only in the next morning a Fulbe leader, called by the title *mallam* in Gazir's account,<sup>42</sup> tried to reestablish order and security, commanding: »Let every one [sic!] go and remain in his house, the war is over: let all the poor go, and each cultivate land!«<sup>43</sup> It is astonishing that Gazir did not call the speaker of the Fulbe a king or commander, but rather a priest or *mallam*. Maybe he would not have used this name in 1806, but during the establishment of Jihadist rule in the following years, Islamic titles replaced royal military titles that had been used earlier. This *imam* and

39 Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, p. 365.

40 Kanuri »Fulata larde tsesangi«. Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 115.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

42 *Ibid.*

43 *Ibid.*, p. 250.

his Jihadist conquerors obviously feared this »unsettlement of the land« they had caused. In order to prevent further famines they at once asked the farmers to continue with their work and return home. Gazir and his family obeyed and went back home where they found their village destroyed and plundered and when they came »there was nothing at all to eat.«<sup>44</sup> Gazir described that the settlement was no longer a town and that the family therefore left. In his memory it was his father who decided to leave the place. The family headed for Magerari, a Shuwa town nearby.

These Shuwa or Shua Arabs were descendants from Arabic immigrants into the Bornu area of the East and Central Sahel. As early as the seventh century some pastoral Egyptian Arabs migrated to Bornu as a reaction to the wars of Islamic expansion. Henceforth Arabs, locally termed Shuwa or Shua, settled in Bornu as a distinct group with their own Arabic dialect. Their pastoral lifestyle on the frontier zones of Egypt scared Egyptian rulers and led to further disintegration from the state. After this first Arabic immigration wave, the second one into Bornu only started in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries via Darfur, Wadai and Kanem. When Al-Kanemi, a Libyan sheikh and military leader, fought the Fulbe he relied heavily on the Shuwa groups' support.<sup>45</sup> Arabic immigrants in some areas were specialized in camel breeding, but the Shuwa in Bornu focused mostly on cattle. But they were also traders and famous warriors. Ali Eisami Gazir told Koelle that the Fulbe would »never meddle with any place that is subject to the Shoas.«<sup>46</sup> Their territories were considered protected zones, which turned out to be true for Gazir and his family. They found refuge for a year when »the [Shuwa] king went, turned the Phula out of the capital, and went in himself and abode there.«<sup>47</sup> Gazir was then fighting the enemy together with Bode troops<sup>48</sup> under the same »king« who is to be identified with Al-Kanemi. While Gazir called the Jihadist leader *mallam*, he still used the Hausa/Bornu title *mei* for the Shuwa leader.<sup>49</sup> Gazir's parents then both died and the orphan secretly set

44 Ibid.

45 Tijani: The Shuwa Arabs, p. 65.

46 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 250.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., p. 212.

49 Ibid., p. 116.

out for a journey at night: »I took my father's spear, his charms, and one book which he had.«<sup>50</sup> He took the spear against the dangers of robbery on a journey and the charms and the religious book against spiritual risks. Journeys were considered to be risky affairs, especially when traveling alone. In the morning Gazir arrived at a Shuwa friend's house when they were just about to pray. This friend agreed to accommodate the orphaned young man. The turbulences of Jihadist wars often destroyed traditional farms that otherwise would have been bequeathed to the new generation. When Gazir had neither land to cultivate nor parents, he was forced to look for work in more distant places at the age of ca. 20.

Because of Gazir's account we also learn about the process of enslavement during the Jihad era through the eyes of the victim: Gazir and a friend wanted to visit somebody in the evening but on the road »seven Phula waylaid us, seized us, tied our hands upon our backs, fettered us, put us in the way, and then we went till it became day.«<sup>51</sup> They spent the night in a remote place where they could only eat some tree fruits. The next day Gazir and his friend were sold on a slave market by a Hausa trader. Thus, the attack was immediately followed by a forced migration to the next market place. The Hausa master put the slaves into a house and »put iron fetters on our feet.«<sup>52</sup> There they were imprisoned for five days after which the second forced journey started, which lasted 21 days. In Songaya they stayed for three more months and then marched for a week until they reached Katsina. There, they stayed another five days and then proceeded further west to Yawuri. The Hausas sold the two friends to Barga clients: »The man who had bought me, did not leave me alone at all: I had iron fetters round my feet, both by night and by day,«<sup>53</sup> Gazir explained. The process of enslavement appears as a never-ending narration of forced migration and trafficking. The slaves could never feel secure or come to terms with their environment which was constantly changing.

After only a week Gazir was sold to the south, to a son of the Yoruba ruler of Katunga. This Yoruba man noticed the traditional scarification marks on the body of Gazir and asked if his father also was a king. Gazir

50 Ibid., p. 251.

51 Ibid., pp. 251–252.

52 Ibid., p. 252.

53 Ibid.

answered that he was the son of a scholar: »Abani fugura« [»My father is a scholar«].<sup>54</sup> Gazir then stayed in Yoruba for three years and also learned their language. After three years the Jihad war reached Yoruba and all slave participants were promised that they would be freed afterwards. »So when the slaves heard this good news, they all ran there, and the Yorubans saw it,«<sup>55</sup> Gazir reported. His owner was afraid his slave might also run away with the others and therefore gave him to a friend who took him to the Atlantic coast where Gazir was boarded and then freed by an antislavery patrol vessel.<sup>56</sup> The promise of manumission was the ideal method of fast mass mobilization in a war. This promise was usually spread as a rumor among the slaves. In his autobiographical report, Ali Eisami Gazir did not tell about his slave work, or his friends, or strange things he experienced in foreign regions. He shared the stages of migration with the missionary interviewer, giving distances and stays in certain places by times: 21-day march, three-month stay etc. The measuring of time and space went together and Gazir never mentioned details of the journeys, but only told of the towns and markets. He never explained that there was another frontier beside those between towns or villages, and the deserted space between them. He differentiated between Shuwa, Hausa, Fulbe and Yoruba by their different languages, omitting information about their territories and residences.

### *Koelle's Informants in Numbers*

Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle published accounts from 210 informants, of whom 179 were former slaves and the others were professional migrants such as sailors or traders.<sup>57</sup> From the group of freed slaves only two were women. These informants cannot, of course, represent the approximate number of 40,000 ex-slaves that were being resettled in Sierra Leone

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 252–253.

<sup>56</sup> Due to the Abolitionist movement in the United States and in Britain, ships were installed to catch slave boats and bring the freed slaves to Liberia and Sierra Leone between 1819 and 1861.

<sup>57</sup> Hair provided a quantitative analysis on Koelle's informants: Hair: Enslavement.



in 1850. Half of the freed slave informants were enslaved during their twenties, between the years 1795 and 1847. At the time of Koelle's interviews in the 1840s they were aged 30 to 60 years:

»The picture sometimes given of Koelle interviewing newly arrived slaves in the streets of Freetown, as they came off the ships, is false. His typical informant was a middle-aged or elderly man who had been settled in Freetown or its vicinity for well over ten years.«<sup>58</sup>

Most of them had only lived as slaves to African owners for a very short period and were shipped elsewhere soon after their capture. 48 of the informants were enslaved in war, 27 were taken by Fulbe (or some Jihadists) according to Koelle. 43 were kidnapped far from a war – many of them while traveling and/or trading like Ali Eisami Gazir. Ten other informants told Koelle that they had been sold by relatives or community leaders. Yet another ten of the interviewed were enslaved as payback for their relatives' debts; 17 were condemned in a judicial process by their community and therefore enslaved for murder, theft or witchcraft. Comparing these total numbers, it is convincing that a large percentage of these slaves were among the direct victims of Jihad wars or war refugees being captured during their flight. Owing to favorable circumstances, Koelle's material captures the experiences of slaves being traded from the regions of Jihad to the south. In the following sections I will discuss the accounts of Koelle's informants with regard to their regions of origin, starting with Yoruba at the southern Sokoto frontier.

### *Yoruba and the »Phula« Attacks*

As we have learnt from Gazir's biography, slaves being kept in Yoruba were easily traded to the coast. But Yorubans themselves were also among the war captives and enslaved of the Jihadist wars. One informant of Yoruba origin was captured during a trading journey in the 1820s. He was not immediately shipped away but was brought eastwards to Igala where he stayed for 12 years. And there are many more examples, e.g.

58 Ibid., p. 195.

from the Sahel,<sup>59</sup> of merchants who were enslaved during a business trip. There are many Yorubans listed by Koelle, who are only described as being kidnapped in war, without any information given about the background of these conflicts. There is for example Odso (alias Henry Maccauley), who was about 25 when he was captured in 1830. In the case of Degbite (alias Sam Cole) from Abeokuta the kidnappers were Yorubans, too. Aeta from a village between Ilorin and Oyo was also captured by Yorubans during a war in the 1830s and afterwards sold. In general, soldiers or other perpetrators tried to get rid of their human booty. They did not keep them as slaves and instead sold them as soon as possible.

But many of the interviewed Yorubans had indeed been enslaved during the Jihad. In 1818 Ogbaleye (alias Thomas Johnson) was captured »by the Phula«<sup>60</sup> at the age of about 25. He had been living close to the capital New Oyo. Another Yoruban was enslaved by a military leader because »he refused to give him his wife.«<sup>61</sup> Unfortunately his anonymous attacker was not further described, but it is at least possible that he was a member of the Jihad military or anti-Jihadist armies. Enslavement was an effective method to seize and rape women and girls. The husband was sold elsewhere or killed and the wife, who was considered unprotected without a husband, was probably forced to become a concubine (or »sexual slave«) despite her husband's resistance. The Yoruban Arogu (alias James Jones) was captured in the 1830s in the area of Raba. At the age of about 30 the father of one child was kidnapped »in war by the Phula«,<sup>62</sup> detained in Raba for one year and then shipped away. And in a Yoruban village a man called Odiemi (alias James Wilhelm) was kidnapped as a 28-year-old by »Nupes and Agoi, i.e. Phula, [who] invaded and conquered Dsumu, destroying all its towns.«<sup>63</sup> When the Jihad soldiers destroyed the settlements they captured Odiemi and sold him to Yoruban traders. The Yoruban victims characterized the Jihadist invaders as »Phula« and thus used an ethnic or linguistic name for them.

59 Koelle: *Polyglotta Africana*, p. 7.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

61 *Ibid.*

62 *Ibid.*

63 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

*Nupe and the Frontier Position*

North of Yoruba the Nupe region was situated on the Niger shores. In the 1830s, the old Nupe dynasty organized wars against Fulbe rulers and priests and their followers. Many of the latter had formerly been working at Nupe royal courts, but then dedicated their positions to the Jihad. The Yoruban Robo (alias George Macauley) may have been a victim of these struggles for power. He was allegedly kidnapped by Nupe soldiers in a Nupe war. The Nupe region was undermined by Fulbe preachers who had influenced regional politics for a long time, but gradually started to found their own emirate. Many people were enslaved during these conflicts at the southern Sokoto frontier. One of them was Mama, who was enslaved in a war in the capital Raba in ca. 1815 »by the Phula«.<sup>64</sup> Another victim was Sobori (alias John Pratt) who »was taken in war by the Phula in about his twenty-second year.«<sup>65</sup> According to Koelle's informants, Fulbe gangs also captured people separate from Jihad wars. Lamadsi (alias John Smith) was kidnapped by so-called »Filani« (Fulbe) as a 45-year-old man in the 1840s. In comparison to the other persons interviewed, he was kidnapped at a relatively high age which was very uncommon. Other Yoruban informants were only described as being enslaved »in a civil war.«<sup>66</sup> Musa Masause was for example a victim of such a »civil war« in ca. 1815 in Gbali (south of Abuja). But this war may also refer to the early Jihad in Nupe, because often the victims may not have exactly known about the ideological goals and identities of the different armies participating in the chaotic attacks. Or put differently, they had more elaborate terms and descriptions for regional conflicts which Koelle was not told of or did not understand.

In some cases, Nupe people were kidnapped as a whole group in the Jihad wars. Kolo (alias John Gerber) had lived in a village close to Raba where he was enslaved in a »Phula« attack at the age of 26, in ca. 1820. With him on the ship were eleven others from his village and the informant stated that before and after this attack, no other people from this village had ever come to Sierra Leone. Another time the kidnappers

64 Ibid., p. 8.

65 Ibid.

66 See for example *ibid.*, p. 9.

were just identified as Nupe, but the enslavement of Atumei nevertheless occurred in the Jihad era during the 1820s. He stayed in his kidnappers' hands for a year until being sent abroad. Another of these examples is Adsoro, who was kidnapped in 1830 »by Basas«<sup>67</sup> from the region east of Raba. Still another person from Basa was enslaved instead by Hausas in a war during the 1840s.<sup>68</sup> Due to the frontier position of Nupe, people were regularly enslaved by different war parties or gangs. From there, it seems, many slaves were directly sent to the Atlantic coast. True or not, many Hausa slaves in Brazil also claimed they had been enslaved as war captives.<sup>69</sup> It was probably a more accepted story to tell about enslavement than being sold by one's relatives, although many of them really were indeed kidnapped in a war or may at least have heard about this phenomenon in the Sokoto Jihad in the early nineteenth century. In Bahia, a slave called Adam told the French diplomat De Castelnau that he was enslaved in a war against the Gwari (Gbayi) region from where he was trafficked to Ilorin and then to the coast. He also explained that he could not defend himself against the attacking warriors because he and his fellow soldiers had been kidnapped while asleep.<sup>70</sup>

### *Kanuri at the Bornu-Frontier*

The Kanuri slave Ali Eisami Gazir has already been portrayed in the first section of this chapter. Another Kanuri interviewed by Koelle was called Munio and »was kidnapped by some Ngurus«<sup>71</sup> between Katsina and Lake Chad. He was probably called Munio with reference to the Nguru neighbor state Mounio at the Sokoto-Bornu frontier. Both states, Nguru and Mounio, for some time tried to ally with Sokoto and liberate themselves from Bornu rule. Koelle's informant Munio had been liv-

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., p. 11.

69 When the French traveler Francis de Laporte de Castelnau (1810–1880) interviewed Hausa slaves in Brazil in 1848, he stated that only Hausa men were present as slaves in Bahia. They had reportedly been kidnapped and trafficked in wars. Cf. Castelnau: *Renseignements*, p. 9.

70 Ibid., p. 26.

71 Koelle: *Polyglotta Africana*, p. 10.

ing with his two wives when he was enslaved in the 1840s. From the Kukawa region, east of Zinder, a soldier had been enslaved during a war expedition – but he was the only soldier to become a slave among Koelle’s informants. Many soldiers were probably rather killed or integrated into the enemy military. This soldier Abali was 22 when he joined a war expedition against some Hausa in the mid-1840s. He was eventually captured and at once carried to Lagos and then boarded and rescued by antislavery boats.<sup>72</sup> By the 1840s the Atlantic slave trade networks penetrated deeply into the hinterland, so that several episodes of forced migration were then replaced by fast and more direct transport to the coast. In 1815 Kanuri slaves were also wanted in Yoruba. One Kanuri who became a victim of a Fulbe war attack in this time was Dala (alias William). He was captured at the age of 27 and forced to travel to Yoruba where he lived as a slave for 17 years before leaving for Sierra Leone. As there were even more Kanuri living in Sierra Leone in 1850, we may assume that there had been more people enslaved by the Jihadists during this period.

#### *Adamawa: The Gate to Wilderness*

The Adamawa Emirate was a very recently created Jihadist state to the south-east of the Sokoto Empire. From two Sierra Leone residents who had been enslaved in »Bate« between 1810 and 1830 Koelle learned that the »Phula« often made war expeditions into Bayon (Gbaya?), their region of origin. But Koelle’s informants called the attackers »Tebale« and »Gayi« who cannot be identified as Fulbe groups, but indeed as people being displaced by the Jihad wars, as Chilver and Kaberry explain:

»Oral traditions [...] suggest that the Fulani were preceded in the Cameroons Highlands by the Bali or Ba’ni; that is, polyglot raiding confederacies under Chamba leaders, such as Gawolbe. The foundation of the lamidates of Banyo, Tibati, and Ngaundere is usually placed in the 1830s and may have been preceded by raiding far to the south of their headquarters. The Bali are,

72 Ibid.

however, agreed that they were pressed from behind by the Fulani on their southward wanderings.«<sup>73</sup>

Therefore, some Adamawa war expeditions by the course of which people were enslaved, were only indirect effects of the Jihad movements. Another informant, called Yon (alias William Macfoi), actually was enslaved because of such a »Tebale« attack:

»Born in Pati, where he lived till about his eighteenth year, when the Tebale came and set fire to it, in the morning before the day, so that the people ran away in all directions. He, with many others ran into the Paza country, where they were caught and made slaves.«<sup>74</sup>

Unfortunately the town Pati could not be finally located.<sup>75</sup> It must be somewhere in Eastern Cameroon, where the warrior groups attacked right before dawn and enslaved many of the fleeing people in ca. 1820. On his way to the sea, Yon lived in Konwan and then on the coast for about three years at each place. Being himself a victim of the wars, Yon told Koelle that »all the Bayon [his community of origin] and Rufum eat their enemies' flesh in times of war.«<sup>76</sup> Cannibalism as the most extreme form of (imagined) cruelty was linked to times of war. The informant told Koelle about his home town Pati, where a powerful king of the neighboring Lufum (Rufum) once received an embassy with presents of salt. But Yon described these neighbors also as »tall, strong and warlike, dressing in black monkey-skins, and fighting with swords, spears, and arrows.«<sup>77</sup> In the discourse on his home region, Adamawa was presented as the gate to wilderness, inhabited by powerful cannibal warriors in animal skins. Another informant captured by Tibale was Ndanga (alias John Harding), who had lived in a town nearby Fumban (Northwestern Cameroon), when he was seized in war by »Muhammadan Tibale« and displaced in ca. 1825. It is remarkable that this informant identified the attackers as Muslims and therefore demonstrated that the slaves often

73 Chilver / Kaberry: Cameroons Highlands, p. 119.

74 Koelle: Polyglotta Africana, p. 11.

75 See Chilver / Kaberry: Cameroons Highlands, p. 118.

76 Koelle: Polyglotta Africana, p. 11.

77 Ibid., p. 12.

classified the Jihadists the way they wanted to be perceived: as fighters with religious motivation. Ndanga then managed to escape, but was soon recaptured by others and sold towards the coast.

Another former slave from the same area offered some more lines about his story of enslavement. He was enslaved by »Tebale« between 1830 and 1835:

»[They] had come from afar on horses, and had conquered many countries, spreading terror before them on account of their poisoned weapons by the mere touch of which they killed their enemies.«<sup>78</sup>

Sise (alias John Cole) perceived them as strangers from a far country that used alien war horses and weaponry. As mounted soldiers with superior weaponry, the Tibale were considered predominant and very successful. When mentioning the poisoning of weapons, Sise could have been describing herbal poison, magical ingredients or both. Kamsi (alias John Thomas) said that he was also captured by the Tibale<sup>79</sup> in ca. 1830, and then brought to the sea. He described the Tibale as being »the same as the Phula of other countries.«<sup>80</sup>

Being expelled by the Fulbe invaders, the Bamum in a preceding wave of wars also attacked areas further south. One of their victims was Nyamse (alias Thomas John) who had lived in the town Momanka until ca. 1830, when the Bamum destroyed the settlement. He fled to another town whose language he didn't understand. There, the vulnerable refugee was enslaved and sold again after a year. A similar experience was narrated by Mbepe (alias James John) who escaped a Tibale<sup>81</sup> attack in ca. 1830, when several towns were burnt down »so that the people had to flee for safety in every direction.«<sup>82</sup> Mbepe fled to Mbara where he was enslaved, but as those towns were soon burnt down as well, he escaped with his master to Param, where he was captured again and traded to the coast. The Bamum state was a kingdom around Fumban, in Western Ca-

78 Ibid.

79 Koelle wrote »Tibar«, but due to the l/r consonant shift in many African language systems the informant probably meant the Tibale. Cf. *ibid.*

80 Ibid.

81 »Tipala« in the original text.

82 Koelle: *Polyglotta Africana*, p. 12.

meroon, that had long-established trade relations with the Hausa region before the Jihadist attacks in the nineteenth century. But only under the German colonial regime did the Fumban Court convert to Islam. Sangara (alias William Parker) had lived at the Bamum frontier zone, which was destroyed by the »Pamum« (Bamum) in a war when Sangara was 16: »People then scattered themselves in the forests, and when they had nothing more to eat, he and others were sold to the Ntontu country.«<sup>83</sup> He was not enslaved during the war attack, but rather by fellow refugees due to imminent starvation. Another informant of Koelle also stated that he had been expelled by the »Pamom« from his home town and then walked for a day to Nso, and then for five days to Mbogue where he was enslaved. The slave frontier of Sokoto obviously preceded the state frontier.

In the late 1820s Nyamsi (alias Andrew Wilhelm) was enslaved in the same area in Western Cameroon as an 18-year-old by a neighboring group called »Papiak«.<sup>84</sup> Nyamsi was sold two times and then shipped to Sierra Leone. He told Koelle about a »Tebale« attack two years prior to his capture:

»The Tebale had invaded his country and committed the most fearful atrocities; e.g. they took children by their legs and dashed their brains out against trees; ripped up the pregnant women; caught four hundred children of the king's family and the families of other great men, made a large fire, and burnt them alive; pulled out the eyes of people, and then let them go, &c.«<sup>85</sup>

Hair argued that Nyamsi exaggerated this war account in order to please the missionary interviewer Koelle, who was of course an abolitionist influenced by corresponding propaganda against enslavers.<sup>86</sup> This claim might be true with reference to Nyamsi's last quote »black man bad for true.« But on the other hand, there was no need for the freed slave to make up lies about these wars that happened before his personal en-

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>84</sup> Another inhabitant of the Fombina region was also called Nyamse (alias James Harding). He was allegedly enslaved during a trading tour in order to pay back the debts on the perpetrator in ca. 1820. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>86</sup> Hair: *Enslavement*, p. 201.



slavement. The rumor or experience of extremely cruel acts of attacking soldiers must have traumatized the youth. The narrated wartime atrocities in their logic are reminiscent of practices during various genocides when specifically the younger generations were killed and prevented from continuing their ethnic line. Having encountered or heard about this violence and comparing this to the behavior of Europeans in Sierra Leone, Nyamsi may have meant what he said. He never experienced forced work on an American slave plantation, European or colonial wars. Whether true or not, the Jihadist or preceding proto-Jihad wars in the east were without doubt experienced by many as very brutal – apparently even more so than the informant's own enslavement by kidnapping.

*Borgu: The Western Frontier*

Only very few of Koelle's informants came from the Borgu region. Borgu was an area inhabited by different political and cultural entities in today's northern Benin: »The country stretched from the Atakora chain of mountains in the west to river Niger in the east. It shared its border in the north with the Hausaland, and in the south with Yorubaland.«<sup>87</sup> It was also shaped by Jihad events in the north, but up to now there is a lack of information on this influence:

»To the best of our knowledge, there is yet no comprehensive scholarly account of this historical event in Borgu. Yet the tradition of the people is very rich concerning the imperial ambition of the Fulani jihadists in Borgu.«<sup>88</sup>

Being afraid of independently organized Jihad movements of Fulbe immigrants within Borgu, the local rulers started to restrict their power and place limits on what weaponry they were legally allowed to have. And Borgu did indeed not lose its independence to Fulbe invaders. Quite the contrary: In 1835/6 the Borgu capital Nikki assisted the Yoruban army against the Jihadists at Ilorin, where the Borgu ruler Seru Kpera lost his life. After his death Borgu faced destabilization so that various provinces started to found their own forms of statehood.

87 Akinwumi: Oral Traditions, p. 215.

88 Ibid., p. 219.

One of Koelle's Borgu informants was born in Koraku (Parakou?) in ca. 1790 and at the age of twelve he moved to Nikki. He married two women and had one son when he was enslaved »in a civil war«<sup>89</sup> around the year 1820. After enslavement he stayed in Popo (?) for nine years and then left for Sierra Leone. But Wuene (alias William Cole), born in Kaiama, south-east of Nikki, in ca. 1815, was fighting as a soldier on behalf of the Borgu army. He fought against Illo, a Hausa frontier town on the Niger shore. In this war he was between 20 and 25 years old, so that the fighting may have occurred between 1835 and 1840. In this war »he was taken by the Phula, who at once sold him to Yoruba, whence he was delivered to the Portuguese [coastal slave traders].«<sup>90</sup>

From Koelle's material we, of course, do not learn about those enslaved people who were reintegrated into their masters' communities or worked as soldiers for the new Jihadist states. This is because Koelle only encountered slaves who were at some point traded to the Atlantic coast. But some general conclusions can be drawn from these precious sources: When the ex-slaves described their process of enslavement and the journeys of forced migration they usually referred to language groups when describing places and inhabitants. They did not describe the horrible marches, but only the periods of permanent stay in a place. The Jihad wars were always present in the rumors and news that were spread. Jihadist attackers were frequently called »Phulas«, and more rarely »Muslims«. Before their enslavement, many of these persons had already become refugees when escaping from attacks of mounted troops or in anticipation of some news about their coming. On the northern Sokoto frontier people fled into fortified towns, while on the southern frontiers only the forests were considered safe to hide in by the villagers. Some slaves from the southern Sokoto borders also mentioned cruel war practices of the enemies, such as cannibalism and the killing of pregnant women and children. From the northern slaves no such statements were transmitted and published. In the northern Sahel the killing of children was very uncommon, because they were the most wanted booty. There is an early and popular account of an enslaved child from Kanuri who later became a servant of European aristocrats in Vienna. Angelo Soliman

89 Koelle: *Polyglotta Africana*, p. 17.

90 Ibid.

described his enslavement as a child in about 1720 somewhere in the Kanuri (Magomi) region: He was seven years old and in the house with his mother Fatima and his little baby sister when the anonymous enemy arrived. His parents were reportedly killed and there was a fight about whose booty the child would be. He was kidnapped and later was bartered for a horse. On his kidnapping journey by boat he later met other enslaved people of his community.<sup>91</sup> He probably left southwards to the Atlantic coast and was then shipped to Europe.<sup>92</sup>

Practices of warfare, execution and enslavement also differed in the various Jihadist frontier zones. And the most crucial question for Jihadist soldiers was how to treat female victims and war captives: Which women were integrated into Jihadist society as slaves and wives? Under which conditions could they become accepted members of the family?

### *Concubines: Sex and Jihad*

The official Jihadist policy of enslavement in wars was based upon Al-Maghili's (ca. 1440–1504) treatise. He distinguished between three types of ›unbelievers‹: unbelievers by birth, apostates and pretenders. The women and children of born unbelievers should be enslaved by Muslim soldiers and distributed among the army like any other sort of booty. Wives and offspring of apostates on the other hand could not legally be enslaved because they had been born and had grown up as ›free Muslims‹. But all male apostates could be killed if they did not reconvert to Islam and their property should be captured.<sup>93</sup> The Jihadist definition of the ›enslavable‹ other depended largely on the definition of the ›unbeliever‹ who was in turn defined according to the territory he inhabited. The *mapping* of ›unbelief‹ also generated maps of the ›enslavable‹ people. Uthman dan Fodio often directly quoted Al-Maghili's

91 [N.N.:] Der Neger Angelo Soliman.

92 See for example Firla: »Segen, Segen, Segen auf dich guter Mann!«; id.: Angelo Soliman; Bauer: Angelo Soliman.

93 Cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Masa'il muhimma*; published by Abdarraḥman Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, pp. 101–102. The author explicitly referred to Al-Maghili's answers to Askīya Muhammad's questions in his text *Siraj al-ikhwan* at BN, Manuscripts Arabes 5528, f. 229a.

text in extenso in order to describe the character of the ›unbelievers‹: ›They have idols and say: ›The fox has said this and thus it will be, if it is like that it will be like that.‹ They praise trees and sacrifice animals at sacred places.‹<sup>94</sup> For every decision in life such persons would ask these magicians that take care of their sacred shrines. Because they were considered ›polytheists‹, Muslim Jihadists could fight them in a jihad, kill the men, enslave all the women and confiscate their goods as booty. The justification for this was their alleged status as ›unbelievers by birth‹. Dan Fodio's quotation from Al-Maghili even advised Muslims to burn these magicians and all of their idols.<sup>95</sup>

Enslaving the women often meant that they would become wives or concubines for the Jihadist soldiers or officials. From a male Jihadist point of view, concubinage was legal if the owners refrained from having sex until after the first menstruation of the enslaved woman following ›acquisition‹ by the new owner. This was important in order to identify the father if the woman became pregnant in this first period. This waiting period was called *istibra'* in Arabic. Uthman dan Fodio looked at different Songhay rulers of the past and their errors: Reportedly, many of them had taken women as slave concubines without respecting the proper *istibra'* procedure demanded by Islam.<sup>96</sup> The Jihadists only acknowledged that Muslim jurists differed in their opinion on how to treat ›apostates‹ in warfare. The question was whether the Jihadists could enslave their families or had to restrict themselves to the capture of booty. Uthman dan Fodio quoted scholars of the early Islamic period that claimed that anyone from the ›Dar al-Harb‹ should be captured.<sup>97</sup> But in this literary product of the year 1811, Uthman dan Fodio did not comment on the location of the borders between the ›Land of Islam‹ and the ›Land of War‹ in the Central Sahel. However, the question of enslavement was nonetheless a territorial question for the Jihadists. Following classical Arabic texts, the Sokoto Jihadists related the legal aspects concerning slave trading to the Islamic spatial order. According to Uthman dan

94 Arab. يقولون الثعلب قال كنا وسيكون كنا وان كان كنا فيكون كنا و يعطمون بعض الشجار و يذهبون لها و لهم بيوت معظمة عنر Ibid., f. 229a.

95 Cf. *ibid.*, f. 229b.

96 *Ibid.*, f. 230b.

97 *Ibid.*, f. 231a.

Fodio's principles, any Muslim intending to buy a slave should not ask for the individual belief of the slaves, but instead inquire which country they were from. Many questions had to be answered due to this rule: How could the country of origin be clarified and which authority was obliged to do this? Could the slave in this case testify regarding his or her origin? Finally and all the more absurd, it was the Jihadists themselves who should interpret and determine the religious status of any West African territory. Moreover, many warriors must have violated the rules of the waiting period for sex slaves because even Uthman dan Fodio warned the soldiers in a propaganda text of 1812:

»When a town is captured do not tyrannize. This is not appropriate [nice] for us. There are some among us that act like this. [...] When in war there is time, slaves are obtained and even some female slaves. There are some not following the path of the Sharia. Some impassionate encroach upon [female] slaves, not accepting the *bara'a* [three menstrual cycles].«<sup>98</sup>

The female Jihadist writers never discussed or even mentioned concubinage, although they must have lived together with the sexual slaves of their husbands, fathers, and brothers – or at least with their common offspring. Although concubines were usually not freed, their offspring with their masters were born as free persons. As a mother of free children the status of the concubine usually improved and she was called the *umm walad* – »mother of the child.«<sup>99</sup> Even from the female Jihadist perspective, slaves were usually considered as war booty among other goods. But when Abd Al-Qadir bin Al-Mustafa (Wazir of Sokoto, 1842–1859) composed an Arabic translation of a poem by Nana Asmau, he added some examples of the variety of booty gathered in the Alkalawa battle against Gobir in 1808 while Nana Asmau had merely noted the war: Gold, jewelry, horses, as well as women and children as captives.<sup>100</sup> Abd Al-Qadir remarked the successful integration of Nupe, Borgu and Yoruba to the Caliphate, but emphasized that the capture of Illo, which he described as

98 Cf. Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 52, 429.

99 Cf. on concubinage in West African and Saharan Islam: Hamel: *Black Morocco*, pp. 22–36. See also for the Sokoto example Zehnle: *Sex und Dschihad*.

100 Shareef: *Description of the Land of the Blacks*, p. 15.

a place »beyond the river [Niger]«, led to the greatest amount of booty.<sup>101</sup> The southern frontier was considered rich in »enslavable« people. Since Illo was one main market for north-south slave trade, which many Jihad slaves passed during their forced migration southwards, they may also have enslaved or *re*-enslaved numerous people there. Unlike her male relatives and fellow scholars, Nana Asmau usually did not narrate or list the seizure of women for the purpose of sexual slaves.

Former concubines from the Sokoto State region were not present in the Atlantic slave trade and were never interviewed by European travelers of that time. Only one female slave from the northern frontier happened to meet the British explorer George Francis Lyon in ca. 1820 in the Saharan merchant town Murzuk. The young woman identified herself as a Fulfulde speaker of Sokoto origin. This fact can be validated by the Fulfulde vocabulary list attached by Lyon. She had allegedly lived with her husband Muhammad in a monogamous relationship and was the mother of a little suckling babe at the time of her kidnapping. She cried when telling the interviewer that she had led her cattle to pasture and was captured by some Gobir Fulbe who sold her to Tuareg slave traders. She was desperate when thinking of who would now take care of the baby and nurse it.<sup>102</sup> Lyon was informed that only female Fulbe slaves would be traded from Sokoto to Murzuk because all men were immediately killed after seizure. In the constant wars between Gobir and Sokoto at the northern frontier, women were captured in frontier military expeditions or by marauding gangs. This emotional report of a single kidnapped young mother is perhaps only slight evidence to demonstrate that enslavement was not linked to ethnicity at the northern frontier, where Fulbe gangs would also seize Fulbe women. However, women were usually preferred as slaves because they were forced to work in the household *and* offer sexual services.

Slaves could free themselves by running away, partaking in a Jihad or they were freed by manumission. Freeing slaves was considered a pious Muslim deed. Uthman dan Fodio's daughter Nana Asmau explained for example that reciting a certain sura of the Koran and then freeing a slave

**101** Ibid., p. 17.

**102** Lyon: A Narrative of Travels, p. 135.

would be rewarded with a whole fortune in paradise.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, reciting an alternative sura could free people according to her explanation of Sufi practice.<sup>104</sup> Many Muslim slave holders probably tried to Islamize their slaves without setting them free – this infringed upon Islamic law prohibiting having Muslims as slaves. In one warning chapter Uthman dan Fodio therefore addressed these slave holders in order to prevent them from teaching uneducated slaves to pray:

»Among these illusions is one saying that some people instruct their infidel slave to pray, before instructing him in Islam, believing they have done something good. This is also false and an illusion according to consensus.«<sup>105</sup>

Although many slaves in the Sokoto State were instructed to practice the Islamic prayer and could become respected individuals in private households or political offices, they were never completely integrated religiously so as to become imams. A slave (*bawa*) or eunuch could not hold the highest Islamic offices. This was expressed in a Hausa poem by Mariyam, in which she listed all people who are prohibited from becoming imams.<sup>106</sup> Ironically, this Mariyam was herself the daughter of Uthman dan Fodio and his slave concubine. Her homonymous mother gave birth to Mariyam in ca. 1810. The older Mariyam was the only concubine of Uthman dan Fodio. It is very likely that mother and daughter were named »Mariyam« because of traditions saying that the Prophet Muhammad also restricted himself to only one official concubine: Mariyam Al-Qibtiyya. She was an Egyptian-Christian slave in Muhammad's household in Medina. According to Islamic tradition, Muhammad's wife Hafsa caught them in flagrante delicto in her own house and forced him to quit this sexual relationship. This struggle even led to the revelation of a Koranic sura on this topic (66,1–5): »O Prophet! Why do you for-

103 Nana Asmau: *Tabshir al-ikhwan*, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): Arabic Writings, p. 43.

104 Arab. و إذا قرأها الأسير فتح الله له باب الفرج و حفظ الى أن يرجع الى أهله. Ibid.

105 Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afhām*, p. 106.

106 The Hausa text in Latin script is found in: Mariyam: *Limanci* [The Imam], SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, Notebook 5, p. 54. For the Hausa Ajami text, see *ibid.*, WW5/1. Mariyam Bint Shehu married Mallam Ade with whom she had two children. When her husband died she was remarried in ca. 1830 to the Kano Emir Ibrahim Dabo (1819–1846). Widowed for the second time, she studied with her sister Nana Asmau and after Asmau's death she became a lecturer for women.

bid yourself what Allah has made lawful for you; you seek to please your wives.«<sup>107</sup> And just as the son of the Prophet and his concubine was called Ibrahim, so did Uthman dan Fodio call Mariyam's son Ibrahim. She had four children: The above-mentioned Mariyam, her son Ibrahim, and two daughters called Amina and Hajara.

When the concubine Mariyam became a mother she was called »Mariyam, the mother of his child«.<sup>108</sup> She had become a concubine during the early Jihad years, but finally had free children with equal rights compared to the children of the free wives. The term »mother of his child« (*umm waladhu*)<sup>109</sup> express her lifetime slave status and the liberty of her children in Islamic societies. Yet, in a Fulfulde poem by Nana Asmau there is a concrete hint about Mariyam's origin: »In accordance with the Sunna the Sheikh acquired Mariyam from the partition of booty.«<sup>110</sup> She was a war captive who became a concubine and Nana Asmau stressed the legitimacy of this relationship. If Jean Boyd correctly dated the birth of Mariyam's homonymous daughter in 1808<sup>111</sup> and her first-born child Amina in 1806,<sup>112</sup> their concubine mother was likely to have been captured in the very early Jihad battles of 1804/5.

The ownership of concubines was on the one hand considered legal in accordance with Islam, but it nevertheless was a delicate topic. And Jihadists never addressed the eventuality that their own women or daughters might be captured by the enemy soldiers. Only in one of Al-Bukhari's (fictional?) love poems did he refer to an anonymous beautiful woman who fell into the hands of an also unknown enemy:

»And among them was another, our enemy had captured, and rescue was hoped for her afterwards. On her were pearls of beauty and purity, elegance. Daylight emerges from the sun as if on her hair and her eyes were flowers of verdant garden showered by drops of rain.«<sup>113</sup>

107 Koran 66,1.

108 Abdullah dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, manuscript photocopy and translation, in: Shareef: The Lost and Found Children, pp. 97–101.

109 Arab. أم ولد. Cf. Wali: *Kitab al-Nasab*, p. 7.

110 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 167. For the original Fulfulde Ajami text, cf. Nana Asmau: *Ko'iwī 'i Shehu*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, p. 217.

111 Jean Boyd: *Birth Lists*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, Notebook 6.

112 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 169.

113 English translation by Junaidu; cf. Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 198.



Although the social status of a concubine slave may have differed from case to case and although many female slaves may have improved their living conditions during slavery, the Jihadists officially adopted the ›genealogical‹ Islamic approach when dealing with slave concubines: The most important topic was to clarify fatherhood whenever a child was born by a slave concubine. Uthman asked owners to buy female slaves during their menstruation so that unsettled paternity would not occur. If there was no menstruation when she was bought, a trustworthy state official was in charge of keeping her at his house until he eliminated any possibility of pregnancy. She was then forwarded to her final owner.<sup>114</sup> In the event of pregnancy already in existence, her child was considered a slave and was denied as heir among the slave owner's family.

The Jihadists wanted to break with the Hausa royal concubines. They criticized the decadent amounts of slave concubines in royal Hausa palaces during the first years of war. They believed that these harems consisted of more than a thousand women. The oldest woman usually acted as harem guard and ›every single one of them is like a female slave under her‹.<sup>115</sup> These royal slave girls and other free female servants were active participants in urban drama festivals with masked dancers called *jandudu*<sup>116</sup> – a *dodo* festival. Dodos were spiritual entities in Hausa fairytales. They tricked people and animals alike. Hiskett recounted that these annual royal festivals were held by the household in order to elect court officials.<sup>117</sup> The slave women were obviously involved in political issues combined with cultural entertainment. In some respects, the Jihadists also broke with Fulbe traditions of slavery when automatically liberating the children of their concubines. In rural Fulbe communities female slave concubines (*culaa'do*, pl. *sulaabe*) and their young children were raised and taught to look after the cattle. These children never reached the social status of their brothers and sisters born by free wives because

114 This chapter refers to Al-Maghili's *Answers*; cf. Uthman dan Fodio's text *Siraj al-ikhwan* at BN, Manuscripts Arabes 5528, f. 237a.

115 Arab. وكل واحدة منهن كالأمّة تحتها. Hiskett (ed.): *Kitāb Al-Farq*, p. 561.

116 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 568. Hiskett misleadingly translated ›jan‹ as ›red‹ instead of ›people, followers‹. Cf. Bivins: *Telling Stories, Making Histories*, p. 79; see also Tremearne: *Hausa Superstitions and Customs*, pp. 530–534.

117 *Ibid.*, p. 573.

such children could never inherit their father's cattle.<sup>118</sup> Uthman dan Fodio prohibited the establishment of large harems and he condemned the sacrifice of slaves by the rich. For instance, he blamed the Gobir neighbors for sacrificing slaves in his book *Tanbih al-ikhwan*:

»I have heard that the people of Gobir or some of them – when a man is sick – sacrifice a male or female slave and believe that thus they will be saved from death. What more clearly show their unbelief than these practices and beliefs?«<sup>119</sup>

Uthman dan Fodio argued that the sacrifice of slaves was never effective. Instead, he suggested, a sick owner must manumit his slaves. Only this act of mercy would be rewarded by God. Due to the facts that many concubines stayed in the Central Sahel and that European travelers would not talk to them as male guests in a Muslim household, their knowledge on different regions is not accessible for historians. However, at the southern Jihad frontier the soldiers were asked to change their practices of warfare and kill the women, too. This was because the southerners were declared a different sort of living beings (cf. chapter IV.5.4).

### *The Sokoto Jihad and the Discovery of the Atlantic Slave Trade*

From Mediterranean Arabic geographies and histories the Sokoto Jihadists found out about the long-established trans-Saharan slave trade. They knew that »Sudanese« slaves were transported across the desert to a sea coast. The flourishing trans-Atlantic slave trade on the other hand was not commonly known in the Sokoto State. It seems that only in the time of Muhammad Bello's rule did they hear rumor about a southern slave trade network run by European merchants. With the Sokoto expansion to the south, returning soldiers brought slaves from Yoruba, Gwari and other regions south of the Niger-Benue water border into the northern emirates. The Jihadist soldiers and their slaves probably reported about

**118** Pfeffer: Djafun-Bororo, p. 173. Pfeffer even explains that these concubine children were killed and their mother often became prostitutes (ibid., p. 174).

**119** Cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Tanbih al-ikhwan*, BIF, 2415/208. For an English translation see Palmer: An early Fulani Conception of Islam II, p. 59.

their experiences with the coastal slave trade. As a result of this new transfer of knowledge, the second-generation Jihadists at times reflected about the Atlantic slave trade, although this topic was not touched on very often. Information about it was transmitted only orally and could not be confirmed by the Jihadist libraries in Arabic language. This may be one explanation why Muhammad Bello for instance only mentioned European participation in transatlantic slave trade in one of his texts. In a geographical section of his famous text collection *Infraq al-maysur* Bello explained that to the south of Yoruba there were »travel vehicles of the aforementioned Christians«<sup>120</sup> and later in that text he adds that Yorubans notoriously sold enslaved Muslims from the Sokoto Caliphate to those Christians.<sup>121</sup> Bello condemned this situation in which Christian »unbelievers« enslaved and traded Muslim slaves. He blamed Yoruban traders for these transactions with »the Christians«.

This knowledge entered the Jihadist agenda when the war was driven further south into Yoruba countries which were more directly involved in the slave trade with the coast. With the increasing slave trade from the Caliphate frontiers to the Atlantic coast, knowledge about the Hausa region entered the Atlantic sphere and its knowledge discourse. But this transfer of knowledge was not experienced to the same degree in the other direction. The most plausible and simple reason for this is that there were not large numbers of slaves who traveled from the coast into the Sokoto emirates. Long-distance slave trade over the Sahara and the Atlantic Ocean were one-way roads and the same was true for the direction of the knowledge transfer. Only the traders returned to the Sokoto frontier, but they often refused to give details about personal trade networks and the fate of the slaves. Hence Muhammad Bello was not well-informed about the topography and location of the Bight of Benin and its seaports. Clapperton was told, for example, by Bello that the seacoast was located at a settlement that was actually located some 150 miles north from the Atlantic on the Niger shore.<sup>122</sup> The Saharan slave trade was, on the other hand, so well-known across the Central Sahel that even

120 Arab. السفر النصارى المذكورين مهس [...] Muhammad Bello: *Infraq al-maysur*, NU, Falke, 2641, f. 31.

121 Ibid., f. 32.

122 Cf. *ibid.*, p. xii. See also Clapperton: Second Expedition.

Yorubans living in the south had heard about it. A Yoruban translator working for two North African traders told the missionary Crowther on his first Niger expedition in 1841 that »the Arabs very often carry away many slaves from hence [Nupe] and Rabba, across the Desert; some owning forty, fifty, and some a hundred.«<sup>123</sup>

*Forced Migration, Resettlement, Escape*

It was an element of the logic of slave trade to keep slaves uninformed about the routes, halting spots, and destinations of the marches. Slaves were produced as migrating strangers in an unknown territory. Many slaves became permanent residents in a new land or town with their owner and his family. In the Sokoto State separate slave villages were set up where the enslaved persons had to work as farmers. These slaves were often allowed to marry, have children and realize certain life plans as long as they obeyed their owners. The account written by the Hausa caravan trader Musa in 1875 for the German Africanist Krause<sup>124</sup> is one of the sources highlighting the difference between farm slavery and trans-Saharan slave trade. Musa told a story he heard from a slave girl in his caravan: She had lived with her parents and their slave families on a farm in northern Gobir. When her father was asked to join the Gobir army for a battle against the Tuareg, there were no weapons left at the farm. A group of Tuareg came, burnt the estate, killed some older persons and kidnapped the young boys and girls. Among them was the 12-year old daughter who was traded in Musa's caravan to Tripolis. Musa contrasted Hausa farm slavery with the Saharan slave trade: While he portrayed slave life on this Gobir farm as an idyllic life, many slaves among the caravan were demeaned by the traders, beaten and left to die of thirst.<sup>125</sup> Although being born into slavery, this girl must have experienced life as protected until being trafficked across the desert.

123 Crowther / Schön: Journals, p. 320.

124 The Hausa Ajami original is held at Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: Mallam Musa: *Journey from Zinder to Mecca / Hausa Tales*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 755, text 2.

125 Cf. the German translation published in Krause: *Sklaven-Karawane in der Sahara*.

Slaves were regularly traded from the small towns to the emirate capitals and from there many were sent to Sokoto as tribute payment. While some were later on freed and returned home as »Muslims«, the majority never came back to their place of birth due to their choice, external force, or death. In his journal the British explorer Lander included a rumor about a Sokoto military delegation of 20 soldiers to Ilorin (Yoruba) that collected slaves as taxes. According to Lander and his local informants, the Yoruban rulers had prohibited any of their subjects from providing the Jihadists and their slaves with food so that the soldiers finally executed the slaves when facing starvation.<sup>126</sup> It is exceedingly difficult to estimate the actual numbers of slaves that were usually traded as annual or irregular tribute, but it seems legitimate to assume that the numbers ranged between 50 and a few hundred.<sup>127</sup> Clapperton reported that he met slave groups of 30 people being forced to walk to Sokoto as a tribute of an emirate: »The men were tied to each other by the neck with twisted bullocks' hide.«<sup>128</sup> Many slaves stayed in the emirate capitals for forced labor. When Hugh Clapperton entered Kano on his second West African journey, he was told by some informants that there were 30 slaves in proportion to only one free man in Kano.<sup>129</sup> Slaves in the towns usually lived close to their master's compound, but spatially severed in a separate house or room. Alhaji Umaru remembered that the slaves owned by his family lived together with the cattle.<sup>130</sup> Domestic slavery at the royal courts allowed for a different lifestyle. The court slaves were rather servants than workers. The »Royal Moor« (*Hofmohr*) Angelo Soliman compared the royal domestic slaves of his home region with royal servants in Europe (*Diener*).<sup>131</sup>

When slaves escaped, their new freedom was usually short-lived. Being strangers in a foreign land, they were often re-enslaved or offered themselves to a new owner on a market. De Castelnau wrote for example about a young boy who was kidnapped in Adamawa in ca. 1840

126 Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, pp. 227–228.

127 Lander witnessed that Yawuri soldiers returned from Nupe with »only« 40–50 slaves or war captives. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 272.

128 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 292.

129 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

130 Piłaszewicz (ed.): *Hausa Prose Writings*, p. 65.

131 [N.N.] *Der Neger Angelo Soliman*, p. 837.

by a Hausa gang. They brought him to Bauchi and sold him to a Pullo man in order to herd the man's camels in the forest. When the young slave lost one of the animals he escaped for fear of being punished. He went back to the slave market and was resold by a slave dealer from Zaria.<sup>132</sup> Although the Jihadists accepted the kidnapping of children as slaves, they also warned enslavers that Islam forbade to sell them knowingly into calamity. Uthman dan Fodio argued this way in one of his religious warning poems. He had composed it in 1812 in Fulfulde and his daughter Nana Asmau translated it into Hausa some 20 years later. In one line Uthman claimed that the »enslaver of a son, who sells him into misery«<sup>133</sup> will in turn be enslaved in hell.

### *Slave Reports: Of Races and Species*

European interviewers that lived or traveled in West Africa did usually not ask the slaves of their hosts for general geographical and ethnographical information. They inquired about certain lakes and rivers, market towns and peoples. But when the French diplomat Francis De Castelnau interviewed Hausa slaves in Brazil, he documented general explanations about the Central Sahel and the neighboring regions. In a conversation with Mahammah from Kano, he was told there were three different types of skin color in Hausaland: »Bature« or »Tourawa« (whites) from North Africa, »reddish brown Filanis« (Fulbe) and »the mass of black people«.<sup>134</sup> De Castelnau's informant Adam also called the Asben Tuaregs »Boturas« (whites).<sup>135</sup> According to Mahammah's account, all farmers in Hausa regions belonged to the »blacks«. But Mahammah did not directly construe a social hierarchy from complexion. He explained that the lowest social class of slave workers came from the eastern emirate Adamawa because »all Hausa people are free«.<sup>136</sup> They were characterized by Ma-

132 Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 35.

133 Hausa »Mai fa bautad da da, shi sawo azaba.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 427. Jean Boyd's translation is rather paraphrasing this line.

134 Castelnau: Renseignements, pp. 11, 21.

135 Ibid., p. 27.

136 French »tous les gens de Haoussa sont libres.« Ibid., p. 11.

hammad as stereotypically uncivilized persons that »go around naked and are regarded as savages«. <sup>137</sup> Moreover, topographical features, wildlife and the »Niam-Niam« cannibal stereotype were associated with each other. As Mahammad put it, the rivers southeast of Lake Chad were full of crocodiles and hippopotami and its sources in the mountains were in the land of the »Niam-Niam«. <sup>138</sup> This rumor about lakes and rivers in the Sudan-Chad area that were populated by rare animals and mythic animal beings was also common in medieval Arabic literature of the Mediterranean. Al-Idrisi reported on crocodiles, »water horses« (hippopotami), »water dogs«, crampfish and other huge fish species. <sup>139</sup> Dangerous animals, impenetrable mountains and »uncivilized humans« were the topoi of strange wilderness for Mahammad, too. He explained that Adamawa's capital (Yola) was located at a river (Benue) and that many salt lakes were present there. Another Hausa slave in Brazil explained that people of this human-animal species from Adamawa would never »mix« with Fulbe and »black« Africans. <sup>140</sup>

But Mahammad also employed religious criteria for differentiation. He said there were unbelievers in the Hausa region called the »Malek«. This term may be derived from the Hausa word »malalata« (wicked, idle). But in his hometown Kano he also encountered North African traders that wore nice oriental clothes and were all Muslims. <sup>141</sup> On being asked about their country of origin, Mahammad just said they came from a place in the east. Mahammad met some Europeans who were staying and collecting insects and birds at the Niger bank. The group was probably the Niger Mission of 1841. Several naturalists such as Theodor Vogel were part of the steamer expedition. Another Brazilian slave from Zaria had even heard about the French conquest of Algeria when working for Tuareg traders. According to him, the French were brave, well-dressed but also cruel infidels. <sup>142</sup>

137 French »[ils] vont nus et sont regardés comme des sauvages.« Ibid.

138 Ibid., p. 12.

139 Dozy / Goeje (eds.): Edrisi. Description de l'Afrique, p. 21.

140 Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 36.

141 Ibid., p. 21.

142 Ibid., p. 38.

Fortunately, we can compare these accounts of Hausa slaves that were trafficked to the Atlantic coast with other accounts from slaves that were forced to march across the Sahara. The Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784–1817)<sup>143</sup> interviewed a slave just before his death, probably in or near Cairo. This slave was called Abdullah and he was captured and kidnapped in Gobir. Abdullah said that Katsina and Gobir were part of Hausa, but that the Hausa capital was further west in Kebbi. Abdullah called the Hausa capital »A'riva«, which could either be a variation of the Arabic *ar-ribat* (»the frontier town«) or of the Hausa cardinal direction *arewa* (north). However, the center of Sokoto power was both a frontier town and situated in the north of the Hausa region. Abdullah also added to this that the harbor town of that capital was Kebbi (or Birnin Kebbi), which is located at the Sokoto River – a feeder of the Niger. Kano was another large country south of Katsina on his mental map. Other countries he had only heard of were Shuwa and Wadai in the east of Bornu. All the countries on this mental map were located in the Sahel belt and Abdullah did not mention any other regions to the south.

According to Abdullah's report, the Gobir king at the time of his enslavement was »Selki Yakuba«. He can either be identified as *Sarkin* Yaquba (reigned 1795–1801), or as Salihu dan Yaquba (reigned 1810–1814), so that Abdullah left Gobir probably right before the Jihad or after 1810, and not in the year 1805, as it was estimated by Burckhardt. Since Abdullah did not mention the Jihad at all, he may have left before 1801.<sup>144</sup> Abdullah described the Saharan salt trade with camel caravans and gold manufacturing. He stated that in Gobir elephants and buffaloes lived in the woods, and hippopotami in the rivers. Burckhardt was surprised that Abdullah could not describe the courses of the rivers in his home country. Abdullah heard of the »bahr Fitri« (Lake Fitri) in the Bornu region east of Lake Chad. And somewhere in his region he supposed a forest country at a lake where people sacrificed a black dog, an ox and a chicken annually. Abdullah contrasted these societies with his own community he identified as Muslims. Yet another river from the west to the east was the »Gulbin Mareadi« (Maradi River). This river reportedly made its way eastwards until Dar Fur. This description may also apply to

143 Also known as John Lewis Burckhardt.

144 Burckhardt / Mollien: Review of Travels in Africa, pp. 534–535.



the Hadejia or any other river in that area flowing to the east into Lake Chad. Yet in another statement, Abdullah talked about a feeder river of the Kebbi River, finally flowing into the »Kworra« (Niger) in the west. Like many West African pilgrims, Abdullah explained that this largest river was situated some 20 days from Gobir, that it continued to the east as the »Nil as-Sudan« and then flowed into the Great Sea.

This concept of the Niger and the whole river system of the Sahel was very common. But fortunately Abdullah also told his interviewer the source of his information about the Niger. He was neither told about it at home, nor from Islamic teachers: »[He] had only heard of that river from the Bedwins [Bedouins].«<sup>145</sup> In the northern Sahel, trans-Saharan knowledge about the »Sudan« dominated the geographical discourses. Abdullah received only little information about the southern neighbors of Hausa: There was the »Luffe River« (Nupe section of the Niger) from west to east, and in the south there was also sea water – an area occupied by the Christians. Yet all the rivers addressed by Abdullah flew from west to east or *vice versa*, and there was no reference on any river flowing southwards into the Atlantic Ocean. This Niger section allegedly also crossed the Gonja country (Northern Ghana) and fruits were traded on it by boat. Abdullah and other slaves told Burckhardt that these Christians were cannibals with tails called »Beibei«, that they were enslaved as eunuchs in Tunis, and that many African slaves had seen them in North Africa as slaves.<sup>146</sup>

Although slaves were often the most powerless and traumatized persons, their foreignness generated distrust and fear among slave traders and buyers. Not only did Islamic legal principles of enslavement ask the traders to inquire about their regions of origin; the slave holders were also suspicious about general rumor about slaves from cannibal regions in the mountains. And the slave accounts discussed in this chapter have demonstrated that the slaves themselves reproduced these narratives about the extreme wilderness whose people were savage and wild, too. With this method they denied that they were themselves another species. Those slaves that were able and willing to articulate their geographical knowledge minimized the degree of otherness attributed to them by the

145 Ibid., p. 536.

146 Ibid., p. 537.

free society by referring to the extreme otherness of the cannibals. They participated in this discourse with a certain strategy that related them closer to the free people and mankind in general. They were approached as dangerous, wicked and uncivilized, so that many slaves in turn blamed the other societies with this accusation. They spread the image of West African forests inhabited by cannibals in order to protect their lives and their dignity.

### ***5.2 Refugees: »No Horseman Can Pass the Mountain Peak«***

The Jihadist wars generated large waves of refugees; as the most vulnerable group of migrants, they were often enslaved by official troops, traders, or gangs. Ironically, the Sokoto Jihadists around Uthman dan Fodio had also initiated and provoked the first Jihad wars through their own mass migration as refugees. In the official Jihadist chronology of these events, the role of this escape movement from the camp in Degel to Gudu received special emphasis. The escape was not portrayed as a sign of inferiority or shame, but rather as a sacred act of migration in order to mobilize and prepare a jihad war in the (local) diaspora. In the Jihadist propaganda this migration of 1804 was compared to another migration – the Hijra from Mecca to Medina made by the Prophet Muhammad in 622. Through the link with this Hijra, the Sokoto Jihadists promoted a general duty of every Muslim to flee from ›pagan territory‹ into Jihadist land. With this method of mobilization the Jihadists managed to attract scholars from remote areas to come to Gudu, their place of refuge, and prepare the Jihad. This first Jihadist community translated »ideological difference into a spatial distance, which in turn became implicated in contest for control of territories.«<sup>147</sup> Hijra refugees were not directly forced to migrate as a result of violence that was being done to them. They argued that the violation of religious principles in their country of residence forced them to leave this land and seek refuge at the periphery. In addition to the unrivaled Hijra of the Prophet, the Sokoto Jihadists also drew inspiration from regional role models of their time.

*The Hijra Emigrations: »God gave lodging«*

One radical scholar who influenced the Sokoto Jihadists was the Hausa preacher Abdussalam.<sup>148</sup> He lived in the Gobir region before the Jihad and had several pupils and followers living with him. Muhammad Bello claimed that he was directly educated by Uthman dan Fodio. He was known under the name Mikhail, but when he settled close to dan Fodio's community in the 1790s, he called his camp *Dar as-Salam* (»Land of Peace«) and himself Abdussalam (»Slave of Peace«).<sup>149</sup> This demonstrates that jihadist geographies molded identities in the Sahel years before the start of the Sokoto Jihad. When Gobir attempted to control this settlement Abdussalam proclaimed a Hijra in ca. 1797. He and his community migrated from Gobir to Gimbana, a place within Kebbi, where some of the followers had their origin. Yunfa, the leader of Gobir, ordered them to return into his state. When they refused and enclosed their settlement with barricades, Gobir attacked them with an army in 1803/4. They enslaved the women and children and, according to Muhammad Bello's pathetic account, the soldiers also burnt copies of the Koran. In consequence of the defeat that then transpired, Abdussalam escaped to a fortified town nearby in Kebbi and lived with a group of Fulbe. In fact, most groups of Jihadist migrants perceived themselves as multi-ethnic, but in Hausa commemoration the Hausa origin of Abdussalam was considered outstanding. In the late nineteenth century, Alhaji Umaru explained this »first« Hijra of the Hausa region:

»Uthman [dan Fodio] had been preaching for twenty years, and all the Fulani followed. As for the Hausa people, they did not follow. At that time the Fulani were commoners. It was the Hausa people who owned the towns. From among the Hausa people only Abdussalam followed. Well, in such situation one day the king of Gobir sent Waru Kukunbere with the army. He defeated Abdussalami and killed some of his people. He captured some, together with the women and children.«<sup>150</sup>

**148** He protested against the Sokoto rule after Bello's death in 1820/1 and allegedly declared himself the leader of the Caliphate. See Muhammad Bello on this topic in the treatise *Sard al-kalam*; edited and translated in Osswald: *Das Sokoto-Kalifat*.

**149** *Ibid.*, p. 53.

**150** Piłaszewicz (ed.): *Hausa Prose Writings*, p. 81.

The idea to perform a hijra did not suddenly come up in 1804. Escaping from the towns, the centers of state power, and gathering in the periphery was a tactically effective means of challenging royal power. And with the common experience of migration and resettlement a distinct group identity as *muhajirun* was created. In this quotation of the Hausa scholar Alhaji Umaru, he confronted the ›Hausa‹ towns with the ›Fulbe‹ periphery, and this interpretation probably features the Gobir ruler's fear of a peripheral movement.

This emigration is considered to be the first Hijra in Gobir, after which Usman dan Fodio started his own Hijra from Degel to Gudu. And this migration was finally used as the event to designate the first year of the Sokoto Jihadist calendar in the style of the Prophet, whose Hijra became year zero for the general Islamic calendar. As a rule, the Jihadist writers referred to the common Islamic calendar (Hijri Time) when dating their texts. But in chronicle prose literature they also referred to their own Hijri time.<sup>151</sup> This demonstrates the importance of the Degel-Gudu Hijra in Jihadist commemorative culture. The Hijra of Abdussalam did not go unnoticed by Uthman dan Fodio and his followers staying in another Gobir camp. Both Muslim leaders had exchanged letters about the Hijra to Gimbana and the Gobir attacks. In both Muhammad Bello's text and in Alhaji Umaru's account, it is the Gobir attack on Abdussalam that provoked Uthman dan Fodio to help and disobey Gobir orders:

»He [the Gobir army leader Waru Kunkubere] took the route very close to the cattle encampment of Uthman. When dan Fodio saw this, he told the Fulbe to untie [the enslaved followers of Abdussalam]. The Gobir people forbade this, so it ended with fighting. The King of Gobir sent the *uban dawaki* [head of cavalry] there, but Uthman did not agree [to his proposal]. This was the principal reason. Well, such was the beginning of the war of Dan Fodio with the Hausa people.«<sup>152</sup>

Uthman dan Fodio and his community gave their support to Abdussalam's group of refugee migrants when the latter were enslaved. This capture of Muslims was considered unlawful. The source at hand unfor-

**151** For example in a chronicle written in the 1820s; cf. Palmer (ed.): *Western Sudan History*, pp. 261–273.

**152** Pilaszewicz (ed.): *Hausa Prose Writings*, pp. 81–82.

unately does not comment on Waru Kunkubere's reasons for passing by close to Uthman's camp. It was either by coincidence or – and this is Muhammad Bello's interpretation of these events – a planned act of provocation or demonstration of military superiority.<sup>153</sup> However, the community of dan Fodio felt humiliated watching Muslims being transported as slaves, although Bello emphasized that there was no order by Uthman dan Fodio to free them. Both groups of migrants shared a common lifestyle based on a religious missionary belief in a hijra migration lead by a priest. The Sokoto Jihadists admitted that Abdussalam's Hijra and persecution by Gobir military were crucial for their own Hijra. Abdullaha dan Fodio remembered, for example, that Abdussalam migrated to Gimhana in Kebbi, situated south-west of Degel:<sup>154</sup>

»Some of the community feared their threats [of Gobir], namely the people of our brother Abdussalam, and they emigrated before us to a place in Kebbi called Gimhana. Then the Sultan of Gobir sent the message to them, that they should return, and they refused.«<sup>155</sup>

Abdullah described this migration with the Arabic verb *hajara* (»to leave behind«), which semiotically belongs to the term »hijra«. Even before their own emigration, the Sokoto Jihadists experienced that Gobir did not accept such a mass escape from its territory:

»He [the Sultan of Gobir] dispatched an army after that against the community of Abdussalam Al-Salam, and it attacked them, and some of the Muslims were killed, and some were taken prisoner, and the rest of them scattered in the land of Kebbi.«<sup>156</sup>

Those two Hijra examples, that of the Prophet and that of Abdussalam, influenced Sokoto Jihadist tactics and narratives with regard to emigration. The Jihadists repeatedly compared their own Hijra to the emigration of Prophet Muhammad. According to their propaganda poetry, the

153 See the translation of Osswald: Das Sokoto-Kalifat, p. 54.

154 Hiskett's map is misleading here, as he located Gimhana by mistake to the west of Degel; cf. Hiskett (ed.): Tazyin al-Waraqat, p. 145.

155 Arab. فخاف بعض الجماعة من وعيدهم وهم قوم أختينا عبد السلام فهاجروا قبلنا إلى مكان في كب يسمى. Ibid., p. 55.

156 Arab. فاخرج جيشا بعد ذلك إلى جماعة عبد السلام فغزاهم وقتل من قتل واسر من اسر من المسلمين و. تفرق باقيهم في ارض كب. Ibid.

Prophet and Uthman dan Fodio had both started their Hijra at the age of 50, both headed towards the north where the enemy finally confronted them. Both Hijra journeys were followed by jihad wars which were explained to have started as an act of self defense against the military persecutors in Gudu, respectively Medina.<sup>157</sup> The second Jihadist generation adopted Uthman's interpretation of the Hijra as being part of a sacred tradition of Prophetic emigration. The Kano Kadi Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih (1806–1869) deliberately wrote an account of the Jihad in Kano in order to commemorate the Hijra suffering from the first Jihadist generation:

»I have adopted this style in order to indicate the similarities between the history of the Companions [...] of the Apostle of Allah [...] and that of our parents the *muhajirun* [emigrants], who followed the footsteps of the Companions by leaving their homes, lovers, relatives, wealth, farmlands to a place where they could be firmly established in their life transaction.«<sup>158</sup>

The Hijra was considered a bitter sacrifice to achieve a jihad. It was praised as a pious act of neglecting worldly wealth in order to travel. In the medieval history of Islam the concept of hijra was only seldom referred to, as it was synonymous with rebellion and upheaval against the political order of an existing state. Hijra ideology was dangerous to any permanent statehood. Therefore, leaders of the Islamic empires rather stressed the uniqueness of the Prophet's emigration which should afterwards never be repeated. And Uthman dan Fodio could, of course, not ignore those discussions in his political treatises. On the contrary, he quoted the different Hadiths in which Muhammad and his family refused the duty to migrate after the emigration of the first Muslim community from Mecca. With reference to different Hadith interpretations, Uthman dan Fodio discussed what the Prophet meant by saying »no emigration after the conquest of Mecca« and when exactly Mecca officially became part of the »Land of Islam«. Moreover, he also discussed the so-called »Second Hijra« of the year 628, when Muhammad led his army from

**157** Cf. for example the Hausa Roman copy of the poem: Uthman dan Fodio: *Wakar karama*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, S18.

**158** Cf. a translation of the text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: *Jihad in Kano*, p. 18.

Medina back towards Mecca and (while traveling) signed contracts with other tribes. Some scholars quoted by the Jihadist leader explained that a Muslim should emigrate whenever he was scared to practice his religion in the country of residence. Others admitted that emigration was obligatory as long as there was evil remaining in the world or until the End of Time. After discussing several opinions, Uthman dan Fodio argued straightforwardly that any Muslim convert must not stay in his present ›Land of Unbelief‹, but should rather migrate to Islamic dominions – otherwise his belief would not be regarded as honest by God: »Similarly no one disputes that whoever remains by choice in the ›Land of War‹ is disobedient to God and his Messenger, or that such a man’s testimony is invalid.«<sup>159</sup> Dan Fodio composed this voluminous work *Bayan wujub al-hijra ala al-ibad* in 1806, so that during the early Jihad period distant Muslims were still mobilized to leave their countries of origin and join this revolution.

But Uthman dan Fodio then also quoted a less radical opinion, which dealt with Muslims after the Norman conquest of Sicily (eleventh century) in its original context. According to this quotation, it could be necessary to stay in the ›Land of War‹ as a Muslim when someone intended to lead Muslims there as an underground community. But assimilating to the ›unbeliever’s‹ lifestyle was not permitted under any circumstances. At the end of the chapter, Uthman asked all Muslims to stay in a region that was already captured by Muslim armies and governed by a Muslim elite, because »the place is thus becoming an abode of Islam.«<sup>160</sup> It was better to remain there even when the majority was still non-Muslim because they could be expected to convert soon. In another chapter of this text, Uthman dan Fodio tried to mobilize all Muslims to leave the ›Land of Unbelief‹ even if there was suffering to be expected during the migration. Listing several Koranic verses, dan Fodio turned to the rewards given by God in the hereafter:

»And (as for) the foremost, the first of the *muhajirin* [emigrants] and the *ansar* [supporters], and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him, and He has prepared

159 Arab. و كما لا يختلف اثنان أن المقيم ببلد الحرب اختيارا عاص لله و رسوله لا يختلفان أيضا أن شهادته لا يجوز. El-Masri (ed.): *Bayan wujub*, pp. 54, ١٩.

160 Arab. البلد به دار الاسلام. *Ibid.*, pp. 55, ٢٠.

for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them forever; that is the mighty achievement.«<sup>161</sup>

Almost the same content is recounted in another sura:

»And (as for) those who believed and fled and struggled hard in Allah's way, and those who gave shelter and helped, these are the believers truly; they shall have forgiveness and honorable provision.«<sup>162</sup>

By employing these suras Uthman dan Fodio showed appreciation for the suffering of those who had already joined his Hijra and those he would still mobilize to follow after publication of his text. The next suras obviously alluded to the situation of escape or forced migration in a war-like situation:

»And whoever flies in Allah's way will find on the earth many places of refuge and abundant resources, and whoever leaves his house flying to Allah and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his reward is indeed with Allah and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.«<sup>163</sup>

»[Those] who fled and were turned out of their homes and persecuted in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds.«<sup>164</sup>

According to dan Fodio's Koranic compilation, both the voluntary religious migration and the forced expulsion were reason enough to be rewarded with resources in this life and in paradise. Furthermore, another sura dealt with the reward for a settled community which welcomed and supported the refugees – just like the inhabitants of Medina had welcomed the Muslim migrants:

»For the poor who fled their homes and their possessions, seeking grace of Allah and [His] pleasure, and assisting Allah and His Messenger: Those are the truthful. But those who before them, had homes [in Medina] and had adopted the Faith – showing their affection to those coming to them for refuge,

161 Koran 9,100.

162 Koran 8,74.

163 Koran 4,100.

164 Koran 3,195.



and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to them, but give them [the migrants] preference over themselves, even though poverty was with them. And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls – they are the ones that achieve prosperity.«<sup>165</sup>

With his words, Uthman dan Fodio described the risks of »harm and damage« that migrants had to face.<sup>166</sup> For a historical reference to the Prophet, he also quoted a tenth century narration by Al-Khazin (Persia, 900–971):

»When the Messenger and his Companions entered Medina at the outset of the Hijra, they were stricken with great suffering since they had emigrated without any possessions, leaving their belongings and homes in the hands of the polytheists [...].«<sup>167</sup>

Another episode of the early Muslim wars was narrated right afterwards: Some Muslims had stayed behind in Mecca and refused to migrate to Medina. When their identity was discovered by the Meccan ruler they were attacked and when trying to escape to Medina they were pushed back again. In this story, those Muslims who refused emigration acknowledged their mistake and tried to escape again later. Since Uthman devoted the three opening chapters of his text to issues of Hijra, there is enough evidence that he felt the urgent need for new Jihadists in support of the Jihad wars. He claimed that the emigration from the ›Lands of Unbelief‹ was a general Islamic obligation. He narrated the Koranic story of some sinners in the hereafter who had failed to emigrate from the ›Land of Unbelief‹. When trying to excuse their actions, they were told by a group of angels that the world was big enough to flee from the territory of ›unbelievers‹.<sup>168</sup> For support of this theory Uthman referred to comments and Hadiths of past authorities, such as Al-Suyuti (Egypt, d. 1505), and contemporary West African scholars like Mukhtar Al-Kunti (1729–1811) who was still alive at that time.

165 Koran 59,8–9.

166 Arab. البائعا والضرراء. El-Masri (ed.): Bayan wujub, p. ٢١.

167 Arab. لما دخل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأصحابه المدينة في أول الهجرة إبتد عليهم الضر لأنهم خرجوا. Ibid., pp. 56, ٢٢.

168 Koran 4,97.

As a variation of this compilation of quotations, Uthman dan Fodio also added his own thoughts on illegitimate excuses for failing to participate in a hijra: »Considerations of blood relationship and marriage should not be an excuse for anyone failing to emigrate; how much less (should) possessions and dwellings!«<sup>169</sup> This statement is followed by a praise of immaterial properties such as honor, intellect and soul. Uthman dan Fodio attempted to establish a Jihadist migratory identity based on Islamic principles instead of family and wealth. In a footnote El-Masri, the editor of the *Bayan wujub al-hijra ala al-ibad*, argued that Uthman especially addressed the Hausa population with this chapter, because as farmers they depended on their fields and were less willing to emigrate and leave their means of subsistence behind. The Fulbe population of northern Hausaland was probably more easily convinced to migrate with their cattle and kin: »Unlike [Fulbe] nomads, the sedentary culture of the peasants meant that materially they had everything to lose by emigration.«<sup>170</sup> Uthman listed different sorts of material and social capital that obviously prevented some people from joining the hijra: land, goods, family. Most of these considerations referred to a trans-ethnic and trans-professional audience, but Hausa farmers were of course included by Uthman dan Fodio. The idea of the hijra was to demonstrate a political decision by translocation and practice a vote with one's feet. Refugee migration could be both, a sign of Jihadist allegiance and cooperation or a signal for revolting against the political order. Escape was hence a diplomatic and political tool and a communicative act from a perpetrator's perspective.

Masud for instance overemphasized the trans-continental, if not global impact of the Hijra of Uthman dan Fodio: »Shehu and his follower's Hijrah from Degel to Gudu in 1804 was a turning point in the history of Islam not only in Nigeria but in other areas of the west Africa [sic!].«<sup>171</sup> If we include the Hijra of Abdussalam into this analysis, it becomes clear that the Degel Hijra alone was not the turning point of history in the Central Sahel. The Jihad wars that followed this Hijra migration, of

169 Arab. El-Masri و لا تكون مراعاة حقوق القرابة و الزوجية عذر الأحد في ترك الهجرة فالأموال و المساكن. (ed.): *Bayan wujub*, pp. 48, ١٢.

170 Ibid., p. 49.

171 Masud: Shehu Usuman dan Fodio's Restatement, p. 62.

course shook the whole region, but ideas and practices of migration in a religious sense existed before the journey from Degel to Gudu, and were an object of the Jihadist commemoration strategy in the first place. Concepts of religious emigration existed, for example, in discourses on pilgrimage and in Mahdist expectations. Nevertheless, the Sokoto Jihadists were the only group that propagated the hijra notably with explicit reference to the Islamic Hijra of the Prophet. They introduced the hijra to the Central Sahel as a Prophetic tradition. But El-Masri doubted the resemblance between Uthman's emigration and Muhammad's Hijra,

»not only because the Fulani in Hausa land were accustomed to frequent migrations from one place to another, but mainly because the Prophet had fled secretly the night it was planned to kill him and he was pursued by his enemies till they lost any trace of him. In the case of the Shehu, it was no secret that he would leave Degel for Gudu [...].«<sup>172</sup>

But the Sokoto Jihadists clearly interpreted their Hijra like this retrospectively. The planned murder of Uthman dan Fodio became a common narrative element of the story in the decades after the 1804 Hijra. I will not argue whether or not the two Hijra emigrations are comparable. Instead, I will focus on the Jihadist effort to prove the authenticity and legitimacy of their Hijra by making reference to the Prophet. Uthman dan Fodio compared his whole life to that of the Prophet in order to demonstrate plausible similarities. In the famous Hausa Ajami poem *Sifofin Shehu*, he also dedicated a large part of the double biography to the two Hijras:

»When he [Prophet Muhammad] summoned religion he made the Hijra; when I made mine it troubled me. At the place where the enemies came out; like they didn't catch him, they didn't catch me. When he made the Hijra he was indeed saved; when they did it again, I did the same and it was repeated. He made it at the beginning of the sixth decade; truly, I did the same at this age. When he made the Hijra he waged the Jihad; so did I, keeping the order.«<sup>173</sup>

The »coming out« of the enemies alludes to the murder conspiracies which supposedly failed against the Prophet and Uthman dan Fodio.

172 El Masri: Introduction, in: id. (ed.): *Bayan wujub*, p. 11.

173 Adeleye / El-Masri: *Sifofin Shehu*, p. 25.

According to Abdullah dan Fodio's account of the Hijra, the Sultan of Gobir had become worried when noticing that the Jihadists were increasing in number and were starting preparations for war. Thus, the Sultan threatened the community with attack and prohibited »the clothes of the community as it was custom, turbans and the obligatory veiling for the women.«<sup>174</sup> This Jihadist dress code was perceived as a sort of uniform. The people engaged in the Jihad wars were not part of a homogenous society. As the Jihad leaders did not strengthen traditional ties of society – family, clan, and class – they needed to redefine the Jihadists. On the one hand they defined themselves intellectually, on the other hand they established a definition of of themselves through their unique outward appearance. This way, every Muslim should look like a scholar:

»And among these illusions is one, that the Sunna of wearing a turban is destined for the 'Ulama. And this is also wrong and an illusion according to consensus, because the turban is the barrier between the Muslims and the polytheists and not the barrier between the 'Ulama and the people that can't reach their level.«<sup>175</sup>

Thus Uthman dan Fodio wanted every Muslim to wear the turban and as a result disempowered the traditional Muslim scholars. The author then quoted Ibn Al-Hajj, an Algerian author of ca. 1300, saying that God himself had put the turban on Ali's<sup>176</sup> head commenting that it distinguishes »believers« from »unbelievers«. The turban became a special element of Jihadist identity, so that when an enemy ruler was asked to join them and surrender, they told him to wear the turban. This reportedly happened before the conquest of the Bornu capital, when the *mai* of Bornu was told to wear a *kalekele* (white turban).<sup>177</sup> Therefore the Jihadists stressed that non-Muslims rulers oppressed Muslims by banning the turban and the veil.<sup>178</sup> These particular forms of discrimination by the Gobir ruler Yunfa were even purported to have led to the outbreak of the Jihad and the emergence of an organized Muslim opposition.

174 Arab. من زى الجماعة كالعمائم أمر النساء بالتستر. Hiskett (ed.): Tazyin al-Waraqat, p. 54.

175 Siddiqi (ed.): Ḥiṣn al-afhām, p. ٩٠.

176 One of the four Caliphs of Islam.

177 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, pp. 91/221.

178 Hiskett (ed.): Kitāb Al-Farq, p. 569.

The leaders of the community – Uthman, Abdullah and a certain Umar Al-Kammawi – were invited to the Gobir royal court. Although this meeting at the Gobir court was probably of a diplomatic character, it was very soon interpreted as a »murder attack« in the style of Prophetic biographies. In 619 the Prophet allegedly faced mortal danger when his uncle and clan leader Abu Talib died and an enemy of Muhammad replaced him. This new leader withdrew the clan's protection from the Prophet and outlawed him in the process. As a result, Muhammad eagerly looked for other possible places to stay with his community – an effort which finally resulted in the Hijra when Muhammad gained knowledge about a murder plot against him. He managed to escape from Mecca into a cave for three days and then proceeded to Medina.<sup>179</sup> Abdullah renarrated the meeting at the Gobir palace like a spiritual battle between the Gobir king and Uthman dan Fodio: »He fired at us with oil in order to burn us with his fire but the fire returned to him and almost burnt him. And we watched him and did not move while he retreated in a hurry.«<sup>180</sup> This attack is described as a so-called »Greek Fire« which was used in naval wars or by beleaguered towns in the Byzantine Empire from the early Middle Ages. For this weapon a mixture of oil and other ingredients was prepared and burned.<sup>181</sup> The whole fight was reduced to two leading figures because no military or bodyguards were mentioned. It is very unlikely that the Jihadists or their enemies used »Greek Fire« in their battles, though the Jihadists might have studied these warfare practices in their Arabic texts on the Islamic conquest of North Africa and the Byzantine Empire.

The Hijra migration was a political act that commenced the political agenda of jihad and Islamic state building processes. Right before the Sokoto Hijra and the subsequent start of the Jihad wars, Uthman dan Fodio had summarized the main points of his policy in one short treatise called *Masa'il al-muhimma*.<sup>182</sup> This text clearly deserves to be called

179 Watt: *Hidjra*, pp. 366–367.

180 Arab. فضرب علينا نفضله ليحرقنا بنااره فرجعت النار اليه فكادت تحرقه قنح ننظر اليه ولم يتحرك واحد منا وفر متقهفرا Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, p. 55.

181 Cf. Christides: *Naft*, pp. 884–886.

182 An English translation of this text has been published by Abdarrahan Bewley (ed.): *Handbook on Islam*, pp. 88–112. See also the original manuscript held at BN, *Manuscripts Arabes* 5678.

a political agenda, because it requested all Muslims to elect a leader (emir) and then leave the countries of ›unbelief‹.<sup>183</sup> Dan Fodio quoted Al-Maghili's answers to Askia in order to underline his order to find new leaders. He put severe pressure on his scholarly colleagues to appoint a leader among them through references to Koran chapters and Hadiths. One of these Hadiths passed down by Ibn Umar states that anyone failing to elect a leader would die like in pre-Islamic time – without the chance to enter heaven.<sup>184</sup> Like in other, more voluminous texts, Uthman dan Fodio openly argued in favor of a hijra before initiating it. Once more, he quoted the sura about the angels damning people failing to emigrate:

»The angels will say, ›Was the earth of God not spacious for you to emigrate on it?‹ For those, their refuge is hell and it is an evil destination. Except for the oppressed among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan nor can they be directed to a way.«<sup>185</sup>

Subsequently, different classical Arabic scholars are cited. One of them suggested two kinds of appropriate behavior for Muslims in the ›Land of Unbelief‹: They may either attack the political elite and replace it by a new Islamic government, or, if less powerful or numerous, they were obliged to emigrate. The only legitimate acts were hijra and/or jihad. In this short treatise Uthman dan Fodio only listed scholars that argued in favor of a legitimate hijra after the Prophet's death. He ignored the contra voices in this simple text for the ›masses‹: The hijra was declared to be an Islamic duty until »the sun rises in the West« (Judgment Day) from any place of ›idol worshippers« to the »wide spaces of Allah's earth.«<sup>186</sup> This perspective does not limit the new land to Islamic states but offers the chance to establish new states in an area considered ›unpopulated‹. The colonization ideology of empty territory was already becoming evident in this text. Abdullah dan Fodio later explained that Gudu was situated in the ›deserts.«<sup>187</sup> He called all people to perform the Hijra

183 Cf. Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, pp. 88–89.

184 Ibid., p. 91.

185 Cf. ibid., p. 93 and Koran 4,97–98.

186 Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, p. 93.

187 Arab. البوادی. Hiskett (ed.): Tazyin al-Waraqat, p. 55.

»from the Kwara [Niger] to Watadi [a lake]«<sup>188</sup> and he warned some friends with letters who had decided to stay behind when their neighbors left for the Hijra.<sup>189</sup> Even recent converts to Islam were obliged to emigrate according to dan Fodio's argumentation. He closed his list of quotations in that chapter with a clear missionary request by the Persian jurist Al-Mawardi (972–1058): Whenever there was the chance to challenge a non-Muslim regime militarily, this method was preferred to emigration by the ulama because this way the mass of ›unbelievers‹ may be converted in only a short time.<sup>190</sup> Yet in another chapter on the legal status of property belonging to Muslims that had chosen to stay in the ›Land of Unbelief‹ instead of making the hijra, dan Fodio had no mercy: If their pagan state was finally defeated by Muslim armies these goods would be distributed among the Muslim successors like any other booty of ›pagans‹.<sup>191</sup>

In Jihadist commemoration, the prehistory of Uthman dan Fodio's Degel-Gudu Hijra was presented as a clear story of provocation on the part of the Gobir ruler. These accounts stress that Uthman usually did not visit royal courts, but that in 1788 he was invited by the king to celebrate the Islamic Feast of the Sacrifice with the king. According to this tradition he was also offered luxurious gifts, which he refused to accept: »He [Uthman] and his people were not in need of his [the king's] wealth.«<sup>192</sup> When tensions became more serious between Gobir and Uthman's community, the Muslim leader was asked to leave Gobir without his followers. But Uthman dan Fodio insisted on taking his students and followers with him.<sup>193</sup> The will of these people to emigrate with Uthman was later honored by Abdullah:

»The fire of injustice and oppression diffused and despoiled the majority of the villages by means of the governments of the disbelievers. And he [Uth-

188 Arab. من كوار الى وطاد. Ibid., p. 61.

189 Ibid., p. 111.

190 Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, p. 95.

191 Ibid., pp. 98–99.

192 Bugaje: The Sokoto Model (unpublished).

193 Zahradeen: Abd Allah ibn Fodio's Contributions to the Fulani Jihad.

man] has named us the party of Allah and we have shattered all the disbelievers with the help of those who emigrated.«<sup>194</sup>

The first-generation Jihadists glorified the Hijra religiously but seldom wrote about the practical course of actions and details that it entailed. The second-generation Jihadists, on the other hand, had experienced the Hijra as children or youths and dealt with this crucial period in their lives in their prose and poetry. In Nana Asmau's account of the Hijra written in ca. 1839, she told about the emigration from oral information passed down in her family and from her personal experience as an eleven-year-old child. Two friends of Uthman dan Fodio, Aliyu Jedo and Mahmud Gurdam, had prepared the camp before the arrival of the refugees. Nana Asmau stressed that all of Uthman's books were transported to Gudu prior to his arrival by Agali, a companion from Asben. Although Nana Asmau was part of the Hijra, she narrated it as her father's route, giving the names of villages he passed through and slept in.<sup>195</sup> In the nineteenth-century Arabic translation of Nana Asmau's text, the interpreter Abd Al-Qadir Ibn Mustafa also added some notes on his birth which occurred during the Hijra migration: Uthman dan Fodio's daughter and Ibn Mustafa's mother, called Khadija, camped in the village Farkaji where she reportedly gave birth to a son. Being this son of Khadija, the translator added this sequence about his own life that started with the dawning of a new religious and political age.<sup>196</sup>

Nana Asmau explained in her Hausa original poem that Gudu was the place God had destined for the migrants: »God gave him [Uthman dan Fodio] lodging and his community.«<sup>197</sup> She gave a romantic scenery for the oath given to Uthman by the community under a *faru* tree – a detail not alluded to by other Jihadist writers. There, Uthman dan Fodio was reportedly appointed the Jihad leader and in turn nominated Aliyu dan Jedo as army commander and Muhammad Sambo as the supreme jurist.

**194** Abdullah dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, manuscript photocopy and translation, in: Shareef: *The Lost and Found Children*, pp. 97–101.

**195** Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 445.

**196** Shareef (ed.): *The Description of the Land of the Blacks*, p. 5, footnote 23.

**197** Hausa »Gudu Jalla ya jisai [jisshe] kau, jama'a tasa.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 445.



This ›selection‹ was necessary in order to implement Islamic political structures in the periphery which was seen as deserted wilderness. Uthman dan Fodio always stressed the duty of every Muslim ›to travel to the Land of a [legitimate] Muslim ruler‹,<sup>198</sup> and hence a ruler had to be appointed. Then, they legitimately killed the ›unbelievers‹, enslaved their daughters, and divided the booty. According to this account, the ›unbelievers‹ were dirty in both a religious and hygienic sense: ›They don't wash until purity, they don't have water, they don't pay attention.‹<sup>199</sup>

While the Hijra of Uthman dan Fodio was retold with only little information about the details of the journey, the Kano Hijra movements were remembered in a different manner. Different scholars and their families in the Kano region visited Uthman dan Fodio regularly before the Jihad and when he announced the Hijra in his letters to Kano, they migrated from the town to different villages. Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih (1806–1869) wrote a history of the Kano Emirate and declared that these villages had already been abandoned and empty on their arrival: The original inhabitants were reported to be pagans that had escaped in fear of the Jihadists. The migrants then took the food and goods of the villagers and killed everyone who had been left behind to defend their property. This was legitimized by Jihad principles because their villages were considered ›Land of Unbelief‹. Many of the Kano Jihadists came from as far as Yola. The author of this chronicle remembered that the first killing of a ›pagan‹ man in the Kano Jihad happened in one of these villages.<sup>200</sup> In the first generation of Jihad, the Sokoto scholars stressed that the Hijra movements led them into deserted land to be settled and colonized. Only the second and third generations openly declared that civilians were killed and villages conquered by the emigrants.

But the Jihadists were not the only political movement that used the periphery for mobilization. Often, their enemy rulers managed to escape Jihadist attacks on their towns and – together with their family, slaves

**198** Hausa ›Sarki na musulunci [...] sai a tashi daga kasarsu.‹ Jean Boyd only collected the Hausa Latin copy of this poem, to which I refer here. Cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Mudinori*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, S16.

**199** Hausa ›Basu wankan tsarki. Ba ruwansu, basu kulawa.‹ Ibid.

**200** Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih: *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 25.

and closest followers – tried to establish themselves in exile and prepare a counterattack. When the *mai* of Bornu was attacked by the Sokoto Jihadists, he escaped through the eastern city gate with his mother, sons, war commander and other followers and settled in Kurnawa, north of Maiduguri. It was said that the *mai* of Bornu escaped by horse and his mother by camel.<sup>201</sup> Only after the Jihad era did exiled kings and officials gain asylum in another city state. After the execution of the Kano judge Zangi, his sons Mallam Shaihu and Mallam Gero fled, for example, to Bauchi and only returned when the king of Kano had died.<sup>202</sup> But for Jihad mobilization, the Hijra refugees usually withdrew into the rural areas and conquered little villages to settle there.

*Expulsed Villagers: »We hid in the bush«*

The fate of these expulsed villagers that fled from the Hijra communities and Jihad military is much less documented in the sources. Jihadist accounts pay no attention to where they migrated or what happened to them. Only accounts of ex-slaves describe the escape from the villages. One detailed account is that of Dorugu who was born in a village near Damagaram. He was captured in his homeland in the 1840s and moved to Zinder, where a Kanuri merchant bought him. He was subsequently passed among several owners before the German diplomat Adolf Overweg set him free in 1851 and named him Adam. Dorugu worked as the personal assistant of Heinrich Barth in the 1850s and even returned with Barth to Germany and Britain. During his stay in Europe Dorugu dictated his memoirs as well as several stories and historical fragments in Hausa to the German missionary Schön (*Church Missionary Society*). This was published in the Hausa original and in an English translation as *Magana Hausa* in 1885. Dorugu returned to the Sokoto State in 1864 and died at Kano in 1912. »Dorugu's autobiography and the other materials that he dictated in Hausa provide unique material for the study of the

201 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, pp. 221–222.

202 Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, p. 67.

Central Sudan in the nineteenth century,« says for example Mohammed Bashir Salau.<sup>203</sup>

In this autobiographical account, Dorugu started with the comfortable childhood he spent with his parents, one brother and one sister in the 1840s. His father was a professional drummer and farmer, cultivating corn and cotton. The first catastrophe of his life – the death of his little sister – was soon to be followed by rumor of a coming war. All inhabitants of Damagaram left their homes at night and marched for about two days. Dorugu gave a detailed account of this escape:

»After the death of my little sister we heard news about a war reaching our town. We thus left at night and escaped for two or three days. Then we were told that it was wrong rumor and not the truth. In the morning the people noticed that all children were tired of walking and I was crying due to exhaustion. Whenever they heard a baby crying they asked its mother to feed it with milk to make him/her quiet.«<sup>204</sup>

Whenever rumor about approaching soldiers reached a village the inhabitants would at once escape, leaving behind their farms and goods. Dorugu and his community stayed hidden in the forest (»daji«) and sent a few informants back to the settlement. Children suffered and cried. When the messengers returned and gave the all-clear, the refugees returned to their houses only to find out that a thief had stolen many goods and burnt most of the houses. Leaving the farms was a huge risk for the families. Dorugu's community returned to their houses and revived their farms but after one year there was again rumor about a war. This time the inhabitants escaped into a little forest very close to the village and observed how two Jihadist »Fulani« mounted on horses entered the town. One refugee acted as scout and climbed up a tree in order to alert his fellows about the two soldiers. According to Dorugu's story the Jihadists attacked another village, killed or wounded some of the inhabitants, captured many of them,

**203** Salau: Dorugu.

**204** Hausa »Baya ga mutuan kanuata na zi labarin yaki shina zakua ga garimu. Muka tashi da dere, muka gudu tafian kwana biu ko uku. Aze, karia ce ba gaskia ba. Da gari ya waye mutane suna gani dansu sungazi da tafia; ni da kaina ina yin kuka saboda gazia. Kadan sun zi shariri shina kuka suna ce ga uwasa, ki bashi nono ya sha, don ya yi kawoi!« Cf. Schön (ed.): *Magana Hausa*, p. 21. Dorugu's story was also translated into German in Krause: *Eines Afrikaners Leben und Reisen*.

burnt the houses and then left. Dorugu and his family then witnessed that the Bornu Sultan Umar Ibn Muhammad Al-Amin (1846–1853) sent an army to attack a city close to the village and Dorugu remembered the sound of the firearms used in this attack. The Bornu army retreated after some battles but a few soldiers stayed behind when a serious famine hit the region after all this fighting. These soldiers ambushed Dorugu's mother and kidnapped her. Facing extreme poverty, Dorugu's brother was given to another family. Dorugu suffered from the loss of his brother and as a child promised himself that he would find him as an adult by recognizing his individual facial markings (»shashawa«).<sup>205</sup>

Soon after, another war attack from the Bornu military was expected so that the city gate was barricaded with tree trunks and pieces of wood. These precautionary measures were successful and the Bornu military unit passed the town without any attack. Another time Bornu soldiers approached the town and Dorugu's father told his son to hide in the grass. He later called his son back to the house since no soldiers actually entered the town. This life in a state of constant alarm is typical in Dorugu's memory of his childhood. Without giving any political interpretation of these wars, his focus was generally on hiding and avoiding any interaction with soldiers regardless of their origin. For the villagers it did not matter whether the enemies were Jihadists or Bornu soldiers. For the short term, the villagers usually escaped into the forests where mounted soldiers could not readily advance, but in the long term they preferred to resettle behind town walls. It is not surprising that wars, rumor of attacks and mass escapes into towns coincided with famines because farmers were not able to continue with their seasonal farm work. At times the Jihadist invaders caused severe famines because long-lasting warfare prevented farmers from planting their crops and traders from coming to a town. A contemporary Bornu citizen described the Jihadist rule of Bornu the following way:

»In all Bornu there was then nothing to eat, and all the people died of famine: the Phula did not suffer the people of the towns to do farm-work, and every one had eaten up the food which had remained from former years; there was no place where you might [sic!] go to seek food, so as to have something to

eat: all the people perished from famine, and the Phula took away all the strength of Bornu.«<sup>206</sup>

Food supply during the war years was often based on rapine economy and insecurity. Furthermore, forced migration dramatically lowered the agricultural output, often resulting in famine. And while the displaced persons suffered hunger, their enemy celebrated luxurious feasts eating up all food left behind. Such feasting cannot only be attributed to the Jihadists. The Bornu forces that expelled the Fulbe from Katagum also ate up their cattle within three days.<sup>207</sup>

Although Dorugu and his father had escaped into a walled town (probably Damagaram), the Bornu military finally conquered it. The mounted soldiers forced the inhabitants to provide their horses with corn and finally enslaved Dorugu and his father. All captured inhabitants of the town were transported to the war camp outside of the walls and the houses were burnt.<sup>208</sup> In Dorugu's case, the occupation of the town by Bornu soldiers led ultimately to its total destruction. According to Dorugu, they were enslaved unexpectedly so that there was no fight. Dorugu and his fellow slaves had to accompany the soldiers and witnessed how they captured more slaves and burned other towns on their journey. Dorugu said they were about 300 soldiers and even more slaves in this trek. Of course the Bornuese dominated in these encounters because they were equipped with horses and firearms. Dorugu was kept south of Damagaram, in Zinder, for some time. He was renamed and then traded to Bornu where he felt like a stranger because he could not understand the Kanuri language. He tried to meet regularly with another Hausa slave girl but their owners prohibited their meetings and expected they would plan an escape together. This method was often applied by slave owners: They did not buy more than one slave from a given region so that the individual was forced to stay with his master and integrate into the household. In Dorugu's account, slaves were desperate for any news from their home region. Dorugu was resold to an »Arab« that had examined the body of the young boy by looking at his eyes,

206 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 233.

207 Ibid., p. 237.

208 Schön (ed.): Magana Hausa, p. 28.

tongue, hands and feet. At this stage of his life in the year 1851, German explorers decided about Dorugu's fate. From the hands of the »Arab« trader he was taken into the caravan of Adolf Overweg and Heinrich Barth. When average villagers were threatened by Jihadist or anti-Jihadist soldiers they had two basic options: They could either flee into the forest or escape into a fortified town. Refugee groups established provisional systems of spies and messengers to inform each other about the location of the soldiers and other refugee communities.

*The Southern Frontier: »Insular Abodes«*

The refugee villagers regularly used rivers and mountains as natural barriers against Jihadist mounted soldiers. In 1841, Jihadist troops raided Nupe villages north of the »Tshadda« (Benue River) and enslaved many of them.<sup>209</sup> The remaining Nupe people then escaped to the other shore, which the Jihadist soldiers could not reach so quickly with their horses. By that time, Jihadist military commanders had already noticed the growing interest of European agents in the southern Nigerian territory. Some may have used it as a threat and told Nupe rulers that the Sokoto State would attack from the north, while the »White People« would invade their home regions from the south.<sup>210</sup> Usually, remote villages had to deliver tributes for the Jihadists annually, but in the Nupe region in 1841 Jihadist camps (»Fulatahs«) demanded taxes on a monthly basis. The missionary Crowther quoted, for instance, a Nupe informant saying that »when they cannot afford to pay it, they must run away into the bush, to prevent their being taken away and sold.«<sup>211</sup> Anticipating this fate, whole villages fled from the raiding Jihadist soldiers and resettled on little islands. The mounted soldiers rarely made use of boats and the river water made sudden attacks impossible.<sup>212</sup> The British traveler Baikie explained that »not having canoes [the Jihadists] could not attack the refugees on

**209** Crowther / Schön: Journals, p. 111.

**210** Ibid., p. 125.

**211** Ibid., p. 309.

**212** Baikie: Narrative of an Exploring Voyage, pp. 81–82.

their insular abode.«<sup>213</sup> Due to the constant warfare at the southern Sokoto frontier, the Jihadist expansion also forced many villagers to leave their homes and build new settlement beyond the frontier. In ca. 1851 some Yoruban refugees built the town Kende at the western Niger shore, north of the Niger-Benue confluence. Baikie renarrated their experience:

»The enemy, they said, did not come on openly; but for several days many of them had been arriving at Panda in small bands, apparently for trade, when suddenly one morning they arose and assaulted the place, so unexpectedly that but little resistance was made. Few were killed, but numbers were made captives, the King being among the former. The city was then burnt, after which most of the Fulatas retired [...].«<sup>214</sup>

In the mid-1850s, the Jihadist invaders had already withdrawn their military from the most southern provinces. Baikie even had the chance to talk to Bassa villagers who managed to return to their former settlements after some years of exile in the south.<sup>215</sup> The Bassa told Baikie some legends saying that they originated from Zaria and that the Jihadists invaded their villages because the Bassa king was not able to control the northern frontier.<sup>216</sup> Their neighbors from the Niger-Benue-confluence region also knew that water was a natural obstacle for Jihadist warfare:

»As long as the rainy season lasted, and there was plenty of water, bush, and long grass in the way, they were safe; but as soon as the dry season set in, they would be liable to fresh violence.«<sup>217</sup>

At the Caliphate frontiers refugees very regularly resettled in the hills and beyond rivers. But Hausa villagers from the central emirates also migrated further into the Caliphate peripheries and established their farms in those areas. European sources remain very silent about these refugees, because they usually approached the Sokoto emirates from the south as missionaries or merchants and only talked to the most southern migrant groups. And it is not at all surprising that the Jihadists

213 Ibid., p. 83.

214 Ibid.

215 Ibid., p. 251.

216 Ibid., p. 252.

217 Ibid., p. 258.

preferably highlighted migration from the ›Land of Unbelief‹ into their state, and not the reverse. Thus only Hausa local tradition remembered those Hausa migrants who went into the periphery in oral history and in Hausa Ajami historiography. One such story about some Hausa farmers escaping into the hills of Bauchi was bequeathed by the scholar and trader Umaru from Kano, whose Hausa Ajami texts were brought to Germany by Gottlob Adolf Krause in the 1890s. This manuscript tells the story of three scholars from Tsakuwa, located in the south of the Kano Emirate capital. Mallam Maji, Mallam Hamza and Mallam Maimazari were all running their farms during the reign of the Kano Emir Ibrahim Dabo (1819–1846). One of his royal deputies then entered the compound of Maimazari who was working on the field. The narrative says that his disabled son Husaini was studying the Koran at that time and taking care of the house. The state official was talking to this pious boy with harsh words demanding certain tributes: »He said: I want a ram, a jar of honey, corn for the horses and [goods for the] royal eunuch<sup>218</sup> slaves.«<sup>219</sup> The young Hausa boy gathered all the ordered articles but the official and his followers also confiscated a wether tied to a tree.

The boy, his family and the neighbors refused to hand over the wether because the local Muslim priest had destined it for ritual slaughter and talisman production: »That is not possible [...] because there is a Mallam that will use it for the *layya* festival.«<sup>220</sup> This religious holiday was celebrated by Sunni Muslims of the Hausa area on the tenth day of the month Muharram in remembrance of the rescue of the people of Israel by Moses from the Egyptian Pharaoh. This Feast of the Sacrifice was usually practiced with animal slaughter and the production of different

**218** This expression is nebulous in the Hausa text: It may mean a person or some objects dedicated to the royal slaves. The latter explanation is more likely according to the further narration.

**219** Hausa يٲ راغوا نكس د تولن زم د دمنندوكي د تير نيابي سرڪي («Ya chi: Rago na ke so da tulun zuma da dammunan dawakai da tabre na bayin sarki»). Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Kano Wars and Emigration*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 31, f. 57. See also the Latin edition in Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 163.

**220** Hausa دن مالام ني زي لي دشى («Ba ta yiwu. [...] Don malam ne, zai yi layya da shi»). Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Kano Wars and Emigration*, f. 57 and Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 164.



talisman objects from different parts of the sacrificed animal. The Kano official then ridiculed the *layya* of this village and called the Muslim priest an idiot. The local Mallam warned the Kano deputy and said this religious ram was so powerful that slaughtering it before tenth of Muharram would cause the capture of many Kano towns by the enemy. Despite his warnings, his son was forced to slaughter the wether for the royal ›guests‹ who ate it and spent the night at this farm. This incident – according to this Hausa interpretation – was the initial cause for this little village community to leave the Kano Emirate:

»The next day, on Wednesday, they assembled. All three [Mallams] discussed and said: These Fulbe here, if we will stay together with them they will some day sell our children. You saw it happen, in front of our eyes they demeaned us. Therefore, by settling at a new place in some country we will find honor again in order that our children some day will humiliate their mothers just like their children are maltreating us right now.«<sup>221</sup>

Because of these abasements the Hausa farmer-scholars decided to leave their village Tsakuwa and the Kano Emirate. They headed towards Bauchi, southeast of Kano, and arrived in the Ningi hills midway between the Kano and Bauchi capitals. The group of refugees chose this place because it was protected against military invasions by large mountains and forests:

»Well, they reached a decision in their discussion. On Saturday they left the Kano Emirate and entered Lingi [Ningi], the name of a big town in the land Unbutu surrounded by a big mountain. Only one path leads to this town and no horseman can pass its peak by horse, he has to dismount and direct the

221 Hausa كاش غر كو لاربا سكتار سوكنن سڤ شاورتا سكت فلانن ان منتار د سو وترانا سسپد پايئم زما غس  
 كن ادم سنا [سنا] ولاكنتام سبدهك مقورتاوتا قس مسام غرما دومن پايئم وترانا سوكم سيو او اين ودينس ولا  
 كئش كمن يد پايئن ودينس سڤ من ولا كئش يو (»Kashi gari, kuwa larba, suka taru, su uku nan, suka  
 shawarta, suka che: Filanin nan, in muna tari da su, wata rana su sai da yayanmu: zama  
 ga su, kan idonmu suna wulakanta mu. Saboda haka mak' aure ta wata k'asa, mu samu  
 girma domin yayanmu wata rana, su kuma, su yi wa uwayin wadansu wulakanchi, kaman  
 yadda yayan wadansu suka yi muna wulakanchi yau.«). Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Kano Wars  
 and Emigration*, ff. 57–59 and Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, pp. 164–165.

horse. Water and all fields of this place are on the mountain. The mountain is so large that someone would travel three days to pass it.»<sup>222</sup>

This Hausa retrospective argues that the Ningi Mountains provided the Hausa settlers with everything they required: Water and soil to cultivate, and mountains to hinder mounted Kano military expeditions. Oral history has it that Ningi was founded by this group of Islamic scholars in the 1840s<sup>223</sup> under the leadership of Hamza. They migrated from Tsakuwa to Mara, east of the Bauchi capital, after they had refused to pay additional taxes to Kano. Bauchi and Kano finally combined their military and killed some Ningi leaders in the 1850s. However, the Jihadist emirates never managed to really control the Ningi Mountains. The correspondent text from Krause's collection also contains a passage about the delicate relation of Hausa migrants and hosting societies in Ningi. They were scared that the Fulbe would soon follow the Hausa migrants and enslave the local women and children. And indeed did the Jihadist army soon follow the Hausa fugitives into Ningi. Umaru's account of that war explained that the Hausa warriors led the Jihadists through a defile where the Ningi warriors were waiting behind a mountain armed with bows and arrows. They defeated the Jihadist invading troops and Mallam Hamza remained the Ningi ruler until combined forces of Bauchi, Kano and Zaria killed him years after his migration. Hamza and his Ningi followers refused to pay tribute to the Sokoto Caliphate and thus provoked the loyal emirates surrounding them. Krause's manuscript explains that the Hausa immigrants convinced the Ningi warriors by sharing the booty:

222 Hausa Ƴo shi ke nan, zanchensu ya shiryoy. Ran assabat suka bar k'asar Kano, suka shiga Lingi, sunan babban gari ne na k'asat Unbutu, dutsi mai tsawo ya kewaye shi. Hanyassa daya chi, ita ma mai doki ba ya wuchewa a kan doki, sai ya wuchi daban. Ruwa du [da] wurin noma duka na chikin dutsin ne. Dutsin kuwa faffada ne, shi fadinsa, ya yi taffiyat yini uku.» Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Kano Wars and Emigration*, f. 57 and Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 164.

223 Patton dated this emigration in the year 1846. Cf. Patton: *The Ningi Chiefdom*, p. 1.

»Cattle, goats, sheep, chicken, iron arm rings and foot rings will be yours and we will get the horses and slaves. We will ride on the horses because you don't ride them [in general]. We will sell the biggest horses and take the female slaves into our houses because you don't let Hausa women enter your houses [in general].«<sup>224</sup>

Under Mallam Hamza they started the war against the »countries at the edge of the forest«<sup>225</sup> with some 500 soldiers of Hausa origin and others from the local groups of Butawa (Batta) and Warjawa. Although these Hausa farmers and scholars opposed the Jihadist conquest of Kano and their villages at the outskirts of Kano, they had adapted their political and military policy. They presented themselves as scholars and were thus called with the title »Mallam«. In public memory their emigration was provoked by the Jihadists who had disturbed their Islamic rituals. They considered Islamic ideals as the highest goal of politics, which caused them – according to Umaru's source – to migrate into the Ningi region and set up a new state. They imitated the Jihadist mentality and used religious arguments for migrating and usurping a foreign land. They colonized Ningi in order to run their farms without Caliphate taxation imposed on each farm. They considered their colonization of Ningi legitimate and exploited the advantages of the Ningi topography when fighting the Jihadist emirates. The Jihadist warfare on horses faced substantial obstacles when battles took place in the mountains and forests of the Caliphate periphery.

The text also offers details about the Ningi warfare under Mallam Hamza. They started with attacking villages and then also turned to more important towns, always capturing many slaves. They fought against Rano, located between Ningi and Kano. In the late 1840s, Kano and the Sokoto Caliphate intensified their war expeditions against Ningi when the latter seriously threatened the Bauchi Emirate. The Ningi under Hamza

224 Hausa شنو اداواکی د تماکی د کاج د قرفنسنو د نحنوا دک ناک نی موکو دوکی د بایی نام نی دواکی محو دن کو  
 دنك شانو دا awakai da tumakai (»Shanu da awakai da tumakai da kaji da k'arfunan sau da na hannu duk naku ne, mu kuwa, dawakai da bayi namu ne. Dawakai mu hau, don ku ba ku hawan doki. K'atta kuwa mu sai dawakai, kuyangi mu sa daki, don ku ba ku sa Kanawa daki.«). Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Kano Wars and Emigration*, f. 58 and Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 166.

225 Hausa قسشن باکن داج (»k'asashin bakin daji«). Ibid.

tired out their Jihadist opposition by moving back and forth between the mountains and the battlefields:

»Everyday in the late afternoon they withdraw into the mountains and spent the night there. It was like that for about two years. The Kano people became exhausted and their army returned home.«<sup>226</sup>

This partisan warfare in the mountains was not the kind of warfare the Jihadists in general preferred. They were often defeated in this topographical area but not in the savanna plains. The Ningi warfare directed by Hausa refugee immigrants often led the Jihadist armies into narrow mountain passes; there they could defeat the Jihadist Kano or Bauchi military although these forces and weaponry might have outnumbered the Ningi. They applied kettling tactics whenever they could and only lost the battles on broad battlefields in the plains against the mounted Jihadist armies.

#### *Refugee Territory: Jihadist Perception and Reaction*

In general, Jihadist ethics demanded that refugees be hosted and provided with food. Hosting strangers and offering a home to refugees was praised in various Jihadist poems. Muhammad Al-Bukhari, Uthman dan Fodio's son, composed such a poem in remembrance of his companion Al-Jilani. He glorified his friend's strength in warfare and his behavior towards strangers: »If you come as his guest, as a needy stranger, the next morning you will awaken wealthy and well protected.«<sup>227</sup> In the same manner, Nana Asmau praised her brother Muhammad Bello for his mercy towards ›strangers‹ some months after his death in 1837:

**226** Hausa ان مرثى يابى سكوم ثكن دوط سكونا هكنن حر اكسام شكر بيو كناوا سكفج يا قنس يكوموا غدا (»In mareche ya yi, su koma chikin dutsi, su kona. Haka nan, har a ka samu shekara biyu. Kanawa suka gaji, yak'insu ya komo gida«). Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Kano Wars and Emigration*, f. 59 and Olderoerge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 167.

**227** Arab. وإذا نزلت به غريباً عافياً أصبحت رب حرافد وحصان. Arabic original text and Arabic translation in Abdullah: *Arabic Poetry in West Africa*, p. 379.

»When strangers came he met them, and taught about religious matters, explaining things: he tried to enlighten them. [...] He was gracious to important people and was hospitable to all visitors, including non-Muslims [kāfirī].«<sup>228</sup>

In this quotation, Nana Asmau stressed the type of visitor seeking knowledge in foreign places. But although this attention included ›unbelievers‹, it only referred to »important people« from strange lands. In another poem Nana Asmau put some emphasis on Bello's hospitality towards visitors and travelers of diverse ethnic origin: »Fulbe, Habe, Wodaabe and also Arabs – every single person who arrived was unfailingly welcomed. He presented a smiling face to everyone.«<sup>229</sup> Two mentioned names are remarkable in these quoted lines: At first, Nana Asmau referred to the Hausa visitors only as »unbelievers«, or »habe«.<sup>230</sup> And secondly, she listed the Wodaabe, respectively Bororo,<sup>231</sup> separate from other Fulbe. Thus, she clearly drew a line between Fulbe, Hausa and (semi-) nomadic Wodaabe Fulbe groups and her own scholarly social environment. But this hospitality was nevertheless individual and there were no organized refugee camps or any support of this sort.

Refugee migration during the Jihad was either from villages into the forests or fortified towns, or from the frontiers into the political peripheries in the hills and beyond the rivers. Refugees usually emigrated from the Sokoto State and could thus not deliver information about their new home territories into the Caliphate metropolises, unless they were enslaved. The Jihadists on the other hand condemned migration from the ›Land of Islam‹ into territory of ›Unbelief‹ and requested Muslims to migrate in the reverse direction. Even before the Jihad wars, Uthman dan Fodio asked them to migrate to Islamic countries:

»Migration from the country of unbelief to an Islamic country is obligatory for those who could do so. The supporters of disbelievers will be considered

**228** Fulfulde Ajami and English translation in Nana Asmau: *Gikku Bello*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, pp. 126–127.

**229** Fulfulde Ajami text in Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, pp. 130, 132. Jean Boyd gave a rather rough translation of the ethnic terms: »Fulanis, Tuaregs and Hausas – every one including Arabs [...].«

**230** For the Jihadist use of this term see IV.1.4.

**231** For the Jihadist concept of Bororo cf. IV.4.1.

as disbelievers. Waging a Jihad against unbelievers as well as those who have adopted the pagan practices is obligatory.«<sup>232</sup>

Emigration was a powerful method in war and therefore the Jihadists only permitted refugees coming into the emirates and not leaving the state. Emigration and resettlement were the first steps for state building and mobilization for war. For the Jihadists, migration had a religious meaning and the hijra was in particular understood as a religious obligation: »Migration itself acquire[d] a transcendent religious meaning when adherents interpret the process of relocation as a religious act.«<sup>233</sup> This was achieved by interpreting the Hijra journeys as key group experiences bringing together a heterogenous group of refugees on an Islamic basis. But only deserts were considered appropriate for a Muslim emigrant community. This landscape was described as empty and free for colonization. The rivers and mountains, on the other hand, were considered secular places of refuge.

### ***5.3 Mercenaries, Soldiers, Warriors: War-Lions against Scavengers***

Mass migration not only occurred among civilians. It also was common for military personnel, namely for soldiers and their servants. Military units had to join other distant armies or organized small expeditions. The Jihadists compared their first emigration to the Hijra of Prophet Muhammad, and they compared Sokoto warfare to the Jihad undertaken by their role model. The Sokoto Jihad was often narrated in a parallel manner to the stories of Prophet Muhammad's battles and the primary expansion of Islam on the Arabic Peninsula. There were also some more specific characteristics of Jihadist war narration. For example, one voluminous Prophet biography was employed.<sup>234</sup> This source text is only available

**232** Cf. the English translation of Uthman dan Fodio's *Masa'il muhimma* published by Abdarrahan Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, pp. 88–89. See also the original manuscript held at BN, Manuscripts Arabes 5678/149b.

**233** Stump: *The Geography of Religion*, p. 69.

**234** For the Hausa Ajami version, see Nana Asmau: *Begore*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 93. For Jean Boyds English translation cf. Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 304.

in Hausa Ajami today, although it was originally composed in Fulfulde by Muhammad Tukur. He was a Fulbe scholar who joined the Jihadists after their Hijra arrival in Gudu in 1804. The Hausa copy was composed by Nana Asmau and is undated. When talking about the battles of the Prophet, Tukur mentioned the war camps, or *sansani* in Asmau's Hausa verse.<sup>235</sup> This *sansani* was thought to be a provisional military camp, consisting of huts. Around this encampment guards were posted. The battles themselves were often dated as occurring on Fridays after the prayer. At least in retrospect, the Jihadists always referred to this temporal order of Islamic warfare. The »Muslims« always formed ordered ranks when advancing on the battlefield. The »unbelievers« in contrast arrived in chaotic crowds (Hausa *taro*). The Prophet was wearing a suit of chain armor (Hausa *sulke*) and the standards (*tuta*) rose. The standard bearers, riding left and right of the Prophet, were even described by name in this poem.<sup>236</sup> The use of war flags was confined to the Muslim military and their allies.<sup>237</sup> Tukur repeatedly described the battlefield and camp as hidden under dust. These optical impressions of the spaces of war were rather derived from Sokoto Jihad wars and not from the experiences of the Prophet. According to this Sokoto interpretation, Muhammad's warriors cried »There is no God but Allah« when advancing on the enemy.<sup>238</sup>

Emotions are seldom included into these accounts; if so, fear is not mentioned at all. Rather, the well-organized Muslim troops fight the enemy »with anger.«<sup>239</sup> The military equipment included bows and arrows (*kwaruruwa*) and swords (*takubba*). The enemies escaped the place of battle and the Muslim military followed up with burials and recovering: »After burying the martyrs, he [Muhammad] went home and Fatima washed the spear of Muhammad. They spent the night healing the wounds that had been done.«<sup>240</sup> After the fight, the soldiers immediately buried their dead compatriots as martyrs. At home the wounded reco-

235 Nana Asmau: *Begore*, p. 112.

236 Ibid. For a more elaborate discussion of the use and symbolism of flags in the Sokoto Jihad, cf. section *Under White Flags* (IV.5.3).

237 Nana Asmau: *Begore*, p. 122.

238 Ibid., p. 130.

239 Hausa »da fushi.« Ibid.

240 Hausa »Da ya bisne shahiddai fa ya zo gida. Fa Fadima ta wanke takobin Muhammad. Dada sunka kwana gashin makammai da anka yi.« Ibid.

vered and a woman was obviously responsible for the act of cleaning the weapons. The poem then lists one war expedition after another. The legitimate treatment of the defeated enemy was at times merciless: All young men and their leaders were »beheaded in front of Ahmad [Muhammad]. The corpses were put into one hole.«<sup>241</sup> This mass grave is in clear contradiction to the individual martyr burials. Women and children were sold as slaves in order to finance horses and weapons for the Jihad. Muhammad and his followers were not only destroying towns, but also »repairing« (*gyara*) them after conquest.

The Prophet allegedly evoked several wonders throughout his life and some more after death. This usually served as proof for his role in Islam and eschatological history. Between the wars, Muhammad called for rain and was answered with seven days and nights of rain. Wonders with regard to water were very popular in Jihadist texts in general, but even more so when referring to war expeditions. Another wonder of Muhammad concerned the healing of a fractured leg after a war.<sup>242</sup> Nana Asmau's poem on the life of the Prophet also offers sequences of the journey home after a war expedition: When camping at night the soldiers were exhausted and even slept late. But on their return Muhammad's horsemen would only leave behind clouds of dust.<sup>243</sup> At times, Bedouin tribes became Muhammad's allies in war – just as some Tuareg tribes of the northern Central Sahel sometimes joined the Sokoto Jihadists. Tukur, the poet of this biography in verse, stressed the strange outward appearance of these Bedouins, since one could only see their eyes because of their way of dressing.<sup>244</sup> Another people referred to in this poem were the »Romans« (*rumu*), or the Byzantine Empire, against whom Muhammad fought in Syria (*sham*).<sup>245</sup> When mentioning the Eastern Roman Empire in this poem, the author was talking of the Syrian Province governed by Farwa (*Farwatau*).<sup>246</sup> The composer of this war poem expressed sadness

241 Hausa »Fa nan anka yayankesu duk gaba ga Ahmada. Ga rame guda ɗaya anka sa su ɗaruruwa [dahuhuwa].« Ibid., p. 116.

242 Ibid., p. 118. It is not definitely clear to which wonder the poem is referring here, but all known healing wonders of broken legs by Muhammad were war wounds.

243 Ibid., p. 122.

244 Ibid.

245 Ibid., p. 124.

246 Ibid., p. 130.



since he would never feel the »(religious) ecstasy« (*halara*) of being a soldier of the Prophet; instead they are left behind with only »ruin sites« of Muhammad.<sup>247</sup>

With regard to warfare, Prophet Muhammad was deemed the superior prototype of an Islamic warrior. In 1839/40 Nana Asmau praised his bravery in verses in order to goad the Sokoto soldiers: »Look at the bravest among all warriors, look at the superior courage of Ahmad [=Prophet Muhammad].«<sup>248</sup> His magical powers were often apparent in desperate situations in battle. Often, animals were part of these stories and Muhammad was the one to command them and talk with them. When, for example, his enemy Suraka Ibn Malik Ibn Jushun chased the Prophet on his horse, it fell down four times. Suraka interpreted this incident as a religious sign and chose not to kill Muhammad. Another narrative explains how Muhammad was saved on his escape from Mecca to Medina while hiding in a cave: Spiders at once built their webs at the cave entrance and a dove laid eggs into her nest, so that Muhammad's persecutors assumed the cave was deserted. When Ukasha Ibn Al-Mihsan, a companion of the Prophet, lacked a sword in battle, Muhammad wondrously turned a stick into a dagger with which Ukasha fought successfully all his life.<sup>249</sup> Other magical stories about Muhammad focus on the hunger and thirst experienced on war expeditions. When passing through a desert and water in the containers was scarce, Muhammad was able to provide water for all animals and soldiers. Muhammad gave his army food in times of hunger in a battle against Mecca and he revived a dried up well in Hudaibiya with his arrow.<sup>250</sup> And indeed, thirst and hunger were among the most common factors causing ordinary soldiers to desert and escape from the war camps.<sup>251</sup> In the Jihadist war poetry, the spaces of Prophet Muhammad's wars were often reproduced and narrated in a form that was intermingled with experiences from the Sokoto Jihad. If we analyze the Jihadist discourse of spaces of war, we have to acknowledge that the

247 Ibid., p. 126.

248 Hausa »Hakana ga zarumci zama duka zarumi, bai kai ga zaruncin fiyayye Ahmada.« Nana Asmau: *Kiran Ahmada*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 193.

249 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 128.

250 Ibid., p. 442.

251 Cf. for example Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 190.

Jihadists often used historical and metaphorical phrases about the Jihad of the seventh century in order to interpret the wars they were fighting in the nineteenth century.

### *Mobilization*

The first Jihad battles were fought between two armies in short and irregular periods. When emirates were established, war expeditions were usually organized annually in order to collect taxes and tribute or to raid villages. The Jihadists dedicated much time and communication efforts to attract people to fight as Jihad soldiers. They used scholarly networks and preaching tours, they integrated defeated armies and runaway slaves. For their free subjects, military service was voluntary, and many only joined for the sake of shared booty. There were standing armies but no mass compulsory military service. The Jihadists sometimes mentioned the material rewards of the war, but more often they used religious and social pressure in convincing people to join the expeditions. Uthman dan Fodio criticized the pre-Jihad Hausa governments for forcing people to fight or demanding compensations:

»[They] compel people to serve in the armies, even though they are Muslims, and they call it *gharghardi*, and everyone who does not go, they impose upon him a fee, not imposed by the Sharia.«<sup>252</sup>

According to Uthman dan Fodio, emirs had to support wars, but mainly remain scholars and instead were to engage successful commanders for war expeditions. Dan Fodio also advised the heads of the emirates to choose someone who had great experience in warfare: »Of that [the obligatory duties for an emir] also is selecting commanders who are familiar with wars and from whose views he can get relieve of his sadness.«<sup>253</sup> On March 27 in 1824, Hugh Clapperton was informed about plans for a short military expedition of Sokoto by Muhammad Bello himself. Clapperton documented the period of mobilization for this war. A »city crier«

252 Arab. إخبار الناس إلى جيوش ولو كانوا مسلمين و بسمونه غرغد وكل من لم يذهب وضعوا عليه من الأموال. Hiskett (ed.): *Kitāb Al-Farq*, p. 562.

253 Mafara (ed.): *Usulul-adliluwullatil Umuri*, p. 12.

was then sent to the palace gate and to the market place in order to announce the venture and gather recruits:

»It was proclaimed on this occasion, that all those who were to accompany the expedition must provide themselves with eight days' provisions. At eight in the evening, the sultan left the capital with his army.«<sup>254</sup>

On April 4, after exactly eight days, the military expedition returned to Sokoto. On another occasion, when Clapperton stayed in Kano at the public feast at the end of the Ramadan month, the Emir Ibrahim Dabo announced a war expedition and called all male residents to bring their young sons with them and educate them how to fight.<sup>255</sup> In the towns war expeditions were usually announced at the markets, at the palace gates, or at the entrance of the mosques. When Bornu was threatened by Jihadist forces during Ibrahim's reign (1820–1846), the Bornu military commander called twelve regiments together while standing on the open prayer field.<sup>256</sup> Wars were often announced where the people assembled for prayer. The Jihadists and their Bornu opponents interpreted war expeditions as religious missions and used Islamic rituals and spaces for mobilization. According to reports and poems authored by military leaders of the Jihad wars, the preparation for war also included religious sermons and prayers. Spiritual speeches were used to goad the recruits for the expedition. Uthman's son Muhammad Al-Bukhari wrote for instance: »We lead them [soldiers] with craft and by homilies, and getting them excited for the abode of peace.«<sup>257</sup> Public prayers and tactical instructions by the leaders were often entangled during military expeditions. During the battle of Gawakuke in 1836 – according to Nana Asmau's report – the army happened to stay in a war camp on the Feast of the Sacrifice (*Eid al-adha*). Muhammad Bello led the public prayer and added a military speech to it, ordering that no one should »alert the enemy by lighting fires« and all should remain »silent and still«.<sup>258</sup>

254 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, p. 315.

255 *Ibid.*, p. 356.

256 Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 232.

257 English translation in Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 167.

258 Fulfulde Ajami text and English translation: Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, pp. 134–135.

During the early Jihad years, the Jihadists used different scholarly networks to mobilize soldiers. The first allies who supported the Jihadists were listed by name in Nana Asmau's poem on her father's life. Among them was the Pullo Muhammad Moyijo »and his people«<sup>259</sup> from Kebbi. Two other supporters who were named were »Mamman Yidi« and »Ladan na Kalyero«.<sup>260</sup> While Jean Boyd explained she could not identify those names among the Jihadist followers, Shareef commented that they could be identified with the Fula relative of Uthman, called Muhammad Ghabdu ›Yitti‹ Ibn Adam, who later died in a Jihad battle; and the other one as Ladan Kalyiru Ibn Muhammad Ibn Al-Sina.<sup>261</sup> The latter is probably of Tuareg origin, because his name was preceded by »Kel«, a Tuareg name for »people«. Only in the Arabic translation of this poem it is said their enemy Yunfa of Gobir also sent messages and called Katsina and Tuareg armies for assistance. Both armies lined up on the battlefield and the Jihadist soldiers said »Allahu akbar« (»God is great«) before fighting, while the enemies were only perceived as a yelling and crying bunch of people.<sup>262</sup> Their style of warfare was illustrated as barbaric and completely unorganized. During his second visit to Sokoto, Clapperton witnessed a battle of the Caliphate against Gobir and explained that the early morning hours were dedicated to prayer. During the battle the »Allahu akbar« was allegedly exclaimed every 15 minutes as a ›war cry‹ motivating the soldiers.<sup>263</sup>

Recruits were also gathered from among slaves willing to be freed throughout the war or by slaves coming with their masters. The latter happened to Osman, a Zaria slave, who was forced to leave for a war expedition with his owner to Jawa (Nigerian-Niger border, north of Gashua) in the late 1830s. When the master was killed in the war, Osman was sold and traveled along the desert frontier via Sokoto and Konni to Asben. He was assisting salt traders in Agades and Bilma. After manumission he intended to buy his own slaves in Zamfara, when he was judged to be a helpless

259 Hausa »shi da dangogi nasa.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 446.

260 Ibid.

261 Shareef (ed.): *The Description of the Land of the Blacks*, p. 6.

262 Ibid., p. 7.

263 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 187.

stranger and enslaved again.<sup>264</sup> Another method to mobilize and recruit soldiers was by huge fires as visual signs in rural areas. Large amounts of wood and grass were gathered so that the fire sites attracted soldiers to come together at the camp.<sup>265</sup>

Quite often the Jihadists used musical instruments to mobilize soldiers. The playing of music in general was considered a habit of ›unbelievers‹ by the Jihadists. Therefore they fought against it and condemned its use before, during and after the Jihad. There is evidence for professional female praise-singers from the fifteenth century in the Sahel: Praising those who pay them and satirizing those who do not.<sup>266</sup> The Jihadists mentioned the different kinds of music they considered inappropriate from their religious point of view:

»Singer, stop, do not waste your time in singing the praise of men. Sing the praise of the Prophet and be content. It is to praising him that you should hold fast to obtain your desires. [...] Truly, whenever I see *kirari* [praise] shouters, it is the panegric of Muhammad I desire, in truth.«<sup>267</sup>

The Jihadists obviously aimed at replacing praise singing, dancing and every musical aspect by religious topics and events. And they especially argued against the use of drums:

»Some of them, their intention is to go where the Hausa fiddle [*goge*] is played. They fail to return from the place where drums are played. In the next world they will pay, for they will be uprooted.«<sup>268</sup>

Drumming was featured as a public event that people attended. It was considered extremely evil to go to these festivals, so that the Jihadists

**264** Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 38.

**265** Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 52.

**266** Cf. Hunwick: Notes on a Late-Fifteenth Century Document, p. 15.

**267** Hausa »Da mai wāke- wāke, tsayā kar ka bātā. Ga wāken mutānen, yi bēgē ka hūtā, Madīha riƙa shi ka sāmō bukātā. [...] Akul nā ga māsu kirāri hakīkā, mabēgen Muhammad na sō shi hakīkā.« Cf. for this quotation Erlmann: Music. See also Hiskett: Hausa Islamic Verse, vol. 1, p. 141.

**268** Hausa »Wansu himmassu ko zuwa inda goge. Sun gaza ko su dawayo inda buge. Lokacin nan su ke biya don su tuge.« Ibid., p. 107; see also Erlmann: Music, p. 38 and Nana Asmau: *Tabbat hakika*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, pp. 52–53.

listed it as a major sin comparable to having sexual intercourse with prostitutes at the town gates and gambling: »Leave off playing *darra* and deceit, you Muslims; leave off drumming and going about with bad women.«<sup>269</sup> In another text Uthman dan Fodio in particular banned the drum from any religious recitation:

»Some believe they are Muslims and all acts they do are Islamic. Although when they recite the Koran they drum the *dufuf* [tambourines] and this is (also) unbelief and Islamic rule is not with them.«<sup>270</sup>

The Jihadists tried to ban music from religious and profane rituals and events. The use of drums was only »permitted in a legitimate Jihad if one wants to frighten the unbelievers and strengthen the Muslims by that.«<sup>271</sup> To account for this, dan Fodio quoted several scholars, such as the Sufi master Ibn Arabi (1165–1240): He allowed war drums for Muslims and a silent tambourine for wedding feasts if this did not lead to obscene dancing of unveiled women. Uthman dan Fodio allowed the beating of drums only when the music served as a means to gather for a meeting of Muslims, for a military march, the arrival of an army in the camp and other military events. Muhammad Bello also quoted the Egyptian Sunni scholar Ibn Hajar Al-Haytami (1503–1566), highlighting the permission to use drums for warfare: »And there are those [instruments] which are not for pleasure but for warning like the trombone and the war drum.«<sup>272</sup>

Non-Muslims were those people who played music just for pleasure and not for a military purpose: »Of what kind is then with what the ignorant [=pagans] do when drumming for amusement and singing?«<sup>273</sup> Of

269 Hausa »Ku ber na darra da tsalumshi musulmi kidda molo ku ber yawo da karma.« Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, p. 63.

270 Arab. و منهم من يزعم ان مسلم يعمل اعمال الاسلام و هو مع ذلك يزن القرآن بضرب الدفوف فهذا ايضا. كافر لا تجري علي احكام الاسلام. Hamet (ed.): *Nour-el-Eulbab*, p. 60. Draft French translation »Ceux qui psalmodient le Koran en marquant le rythme des syllabes au moyen de tambour.« Hamet (ed.): *Nour-el-Eulbab*, p. 302.

271 Arab. إن ضرب الطبول في الجهاد جائز إن أريد به إرهاب الكفار وتقوية المسلمين. El-Masri (ed.): *Bayan wujub*, p. ٢٦.

272 Arab. [?] الطرب الى انذار كالبوق و طبل الحرب [...] و هو ما خرج عن الت. Muhammad Bello: *Shifa al-asqam fi madarik al-ahkam*, BN, Manuscripts Arabes, 5669, f. 30b, l. 8–9. For a summary of this text's content, see Minna: Sultan Muhammad Bello, pp. 185–187.

273 Arab. وكيف لما يفعله الجهال من ضرب آلات اللهو والغناء. Ibid.

course, this was judged a sin by Uthman dan Fodio. The music of ›unbelievers‹ was regarded as pure music accompanied by extreme emotions lacking rational political or religious goals. The Jihadists ignored the fact that the non-Muslim populations had established their own system of music. The Jihadists lacked any comprehension of other cultures. Non-Muslims would beat the drums and blow on shawms without any legal reason while

»Muslims only beat the kettle-drum, and similar instruments for a legal purpose, such as wishing to gather the army together, or to signify its departure, or setting up of camp, and its arrival, and as a sign of the advent of the festival, as the kettle drum is beaten for the advent of the Feast of the Sacrifice [...].«<sup>274</sup>

Muslim music was supposed to organize traveling and warfare. On the other hand, non-Muslims were ridiculed for »maintaining their lusts in their dominions because they are like animals«.<sup>275</sup> Uthman dan Fodio classified different categories of music: forbidden instruments (lute, mandolin, reed-pipe) that were played solo, blameworthy instruments that were accompanied by singing (castanets, flute) but were not allowed to play solo, and information instruments (trombone, drum, tambourine) which were permitted in wars or at weddings. War instruments were even allowed to motivate Jihadist soldiers and scare enemies by their sound.<sup>276</sup> Only Sufi practices should include instruments in order to reach a state of religious trance and gain spiritual knowledge the devotee would otherwise not have access to.<sup>277</sup> The Jihadist argumentation consisted of a collection of quotations by several Islamic scholars who commented on the use of music in Muslim society. Abdullah dan Fodio even claimed he had destroyed the drums of the ›unbelievers‹ and »made the wooden parts of their drums into containers for their horses' fodder.«<sup>278</sup>

Nana Asmau also commented on the restricted use of drumming. Muslims should avoid these occasions since men and women would mix

274 Arab. والمسلمون إنما يضربون الطبل ونحوه لغرض شرعي كإرادة اجتماع الجيش وإعلام خروجه ونزوله و. Hiskett (ed.): *Kitāb Al-Farq*, p. 563. [sic!] قدمه وإعلام قدوم العيد كما ضرب الطبل لقدم عيد لدحية

275 Arab. ولاياتهم فضاء شهواتهم فقط إذ هم كالبهائم. *Ibid.*, p. 560.

276 *Misbah li-ahl hadha al-zaman min ahl bilad al-sudan*, translated by Erlmann: Music, p. 43. Original Arabic copies are located in Sokoto (1/9/36) and Paris (BI 2410(177)).

277 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

278 Arab. وكسروا آلات اللهو التي وجدت عندهم وجعلوا عيدان طويلهم معلقا لخيلهم. Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, p. 70.

with music. She stressed the well-known exception to this rule: »Drumming for the sake of Jihad is no crime against Him. [...] The same applied to war drumming when moving to the battlefield.«<sup>279</sup> Al-Bukhari however, a son of Uthman dan Fodio and military leader, estimated the use of drums and singing as less significant in warfare. He warned his brother Atiku not to use music for his military: »Indeed power is by the swords and not by tambourines and the twittering of the fool.«<sup>280</sup> Surprisingly, Nana Asmau also turned to the civil use of drums. It was allowed »when at work one finds that people have left work and slowed down.«<sup>281</sup> Unfortunately, Nana Asmau did not go into details here, so that we can only guess which kind of work she had in mind. But the idea of extra drummers at a working place evokes the image of a large group of workers, who were perhaps enslaved. Giving another example or proper utilization of drumming in civil life, Nana Asmau mentioned caravan trading. Whenever travelers »come home and want to approach«<sup>282</sup> drums may be played. She explained that drumming may also be used when »on the route, because some may turn aside from the road, go away and become worried.«<sup>283</sup> Drumming was only allowed for professional mass traveling, and Jihad warfare was given the highest priority: Soldiers were gathered, motivated, and warned by musical instruments.

### *Leaving the Battlefield*

Usually there is only scarce information found in the sources about the arrival of the soldiers at home. One of Koelle's informants remarked laconically that when the Bornu soldiers returned from a military campaign in the Hausa region in 1846, they »unbuckled their war-things

**279** Hausa »Kidi don jihadi babu laifi gare shi shi. [...] Fa hakana kidin yaki ga tashi wurin fada.« Nana Asmau: *Rokon ruwa*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 161.

**280** Cf. Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 170.

**281** Hausa »Na aiki don a samu a bar nawa.« Nana Asmau: *Rokon ruwa*, p. 161.

**282** Hausa »Kazake na komuwa gida don fa son zuwa.« Ibid.

**283** Hausa »Kaza kau kidin tafiya ga hanya hakika don wadansu su rates wansu kau su yi damuwa.« Ibid.



from their bodies, laid them away, and sat down.«<sup>284</sup> This was how the expedition came to an end, and no more equipment had to be carried around. Some soldiers never returned home, but settled elsewhere or migrated from battle to battle. But if they returned, their families usually expected some booty. When a Bornu army marched against Zinder, the soldiers captured the town and took all people, animals and other goods home to Bornu as war booty:

»When King Ibram was gone, King Omar's men gathered together the people, and everything that was property in the Capital: the women, the children, the men, both small and great, the cows, the horses, the camels, the asses, the bullocks of burden, the sheep, the goats, the fowls, the cloth, the copper-money; then they chained the people together, and started for their own country, where they arrived after five days' journey. Then the whole town rejoiced, saying ›King Omar has prospered.«<sup>285</sup>

This account is the ideal return of a successful army. But of course, the Jihadists also had experience with deserters. In several Jihadist warning texts, deserting was identified as a major sin. It was a problem for the organization of the military, and a factor for the general mood of the soldiers. Nana Asmau explained, for example, in one of her religious treatises (ca. 1820) that »fleeing from [military] marches« was counted as an evil deed punished with hellfire.<sup>286</sup> Conventions had it, of course, that the Sokoto Jihadists would try to avoid talking about the failures of warfare. On the other hand, the Jihadists included reports and rumors in their propaganda poetry about desertions that occurred among their enemies. With reference to the military leader Al-Bukhari, it was only due to God's help that Zamfara opponents encountered desertion in the midst of fighting: »And He [God] abased the unbelievers by deserting.«<sup>287</sup>

But often withdrawal from a battle was ordered by the military leaders. And it was traditionally the task of the female Jihadist authors to ridicule the retreating enemy. Satirical poems of defeat were composed

284 Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 242.

285 Ibid., pp. 246–247.

286 Arab. *و الفرار من الزحف*. Nana Asmau: *Tanbih al-ghafilin*, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*, p. 117.

287 English translation by Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 175.

for this reason. When in 1877 Caliph Muath tried to recapture Sabon Birni from the Gobir ruler Bawa,<sup>288</sup> Uthman dan Fodio's daughter Mariyam composed one of these texts when already at an advanced age:

»Bawa the intriguer ran; turned and fled with his slaves. He was dismayed when he saw the spears. He turned and did not return; he spent the day running until he was exhausted. The men of the Sheikh [Uthman dan Fodio] were there like hungry lions after the game. He released the horse and rode without a saddle. [...] He left his camels bearing his loads. He was like an owl, afraid to come out during the day because of his bedraggled appearance.«<sup>289</sup>

The Gobir ruler was hunted like prey by lions, although he was in fact successful in maintaining power over Sabon Birni. The withdrawal without saddle represents the mode of traveling in haste and without the luxurious and appropriate equipment of a king. According to Mariyam's interpretation, he left all his equipment behind which became booty for the Jihadists. This itemization allows us a very vivid impression of the war equipment in the nineteenth century: For his dressing Bawa had used his turban, sandals, belt, robe and cloak. Moreover, he used religious equipment such as charms and prayer beads. He may also have used an animal skin used as rug and a water bottle. The army was equipped with weapons, flags, horns, drums and other instruments.<sup>290</sup> When mocking the stampeded enemy, the place of withdrawal was usually located in the bushes. Mariyam described this as a shameful place for a human and a king:

»His hiding place was the thorn bushes; what a humiliation. [...] When Bawa went into the thorn bushes of the marsh without anything, he hid without time [rest]. Bawa stumbled incessantly in struggle without anything because of the fear of the brave men.«<sup>291</sup>

**288** Cf. Last: *The Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 123.

**289** Hausa »Bawa wanda ya yi shishigi ya gudu. Ya ba da baya tare da bayinai. Ya yi demuwa sa'ada ya ga masu. Ya ba da bai bai saki jugowa ba. Ya yiri yana gudu bisa ga gajiya sa'ada ya gamu da zakokin Shehu bisa dawaki. Ya ciri kafun doki y, ya hawa ba sirdi. Ya bar rakunama wanda ke dauka. Ya koma kamar mujiya bay a fita da rana don kakasu da aggarai.« Mariyam: *Bawa*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, Notebook 6, pp. 19–20. For a paraphrase translation, cf. Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, pp. 185–186.

**290** Mariyam: *Bawa*, pp. 19–23.

**291** Hausa »Wurin tsiransa a cikin kunci. Wannan shi na kaskasci. [...] Sa'ad da Bawa ya zan cikin kunci cikin fadamu masu duku, da tufani masu tsawo. Bawa ya

Mariyam's sister Nana Asmau had also mocked her enemies by referring to their shameful escape from the battlefield. In 1843/4 she recounted how the Sokoto Sultan Aliyu and his soldiers forced the Kebbi »unbelievers«<sup>292</sup> to withdraw:

»Dan Mari [Katsina leader] the obdurate and Mayaki [Gobir leader] stand rebuked and have retreated in disgrace. Their forces including cavalry were put to flight and no one knows where they are. They did not halt at Maradi; they have gone into hiding [...].«<sup>293</sup>

Although Nana Asmau did not forget to mention the killing of many Kebbi and Gobir army leaders and the capture of armor and horses as booty, she put the most emphasis on the dispersed enemy soldiers. She located them outside urban spaces like Maradi, hiding in the bush. Nana Asmau's poem was also translated into Hausa. In this version Dan Mari fled bewildered and completely disoriented. His ally Mayaki likewise did not even wait for a horse and was embarrassed when escaping on foot. The Caliphate army allegedly killed 600 persons and captured 150 horses.<sup>294</sup>

### *Mobile Soldiers*

The Jihadist military migrated without interruption during the first Jihad years.<sup>295</sup> After the initial Jihad battle in Kwatto, the Jihadists migrated southwards until reaching Magabci between the Rima and Zamfara rivers. They conquered and – in their own Jihadist terminology

yi tuntube bayan wani tuntubi. Cikin kumace masu duku. Domin tsoron Jaramawa.«  
Ibid., p. 21.

**292** Fulfulde كفر. Nana Asmau: *Temedde jewego funbara*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 39.

**293** Fulfulde طان مار وحادام د جنغتي جهياكع كوت حجو نيا. غياج ماير ديحف شرجم غفي تيكشيا. بدر  
[...]. Ibid.

**294** Hausa »Har ya yi batan kai ya bace, bai san hanya ba da ya biya. Da Mai yaki da ya gudu bai jirai, ko doki balle ya tsaya.« Nana Asmau: *Murna kan nasarar yaki*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 44. The Hausa version was translated by Jean Boyd; cf. Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 193.

**295** See a map of the major early military expeditions of the Jihadists from 1806 to 1812: Hiskett: *The Sword of Truth*, p. 94.

– »converted« the Sullabawa Fulbe. The small Fulbe settlements they passed on their expedition route (Hausa *turba*) were all listed by Nana Asmau.<sup>296</sup> They migrated again and settled in Sokoto from where they sent military expeditions to other towns like Rabah, Gudawa and Rima. Next, the Jihadists migrated up the Rima River to Kirare. In the wars following this resettlement, many leading Jihadists died. The Jihadist warrior Moi (or Moyi) died while returning from an expedition,<sup>297</sup> whereas Mammadi died in battle and was thus called a »shahada«<sup>298</sup> (martyr) by Nana Asmau. The Jihadists increased in number when the Azben leader Agali and Mamman Tukur undertook their own Hijra and joined the Jihadists.<sup>299</sup> Together they moved further to the east until Alkalawa where they met the Gobir and Adar forces in the famous and traumatic battle of Tsuntsuwa.<sup>300</sup> The defeated forces starved and therefore migrated to Zamfara where they met some allies before heading for Sabon Gari. Only the Arabic version of one Jihad chronicle commented on this »time of difficulty and constricted food supplies«.<sup>301</sup> In the Jihadist literature the military expeditions are usually documented as lists of passed places, settlements and rivers. When Nana Asmau renarrated the journey of her father from Sabon Gari to Gwandu, she enumerated all the camps: »He traveled and slept at Bukkuyum, Bunkasau, Sadawa and Falam on his way. He also slept in Gazura Margai and Bagida. His route was then to Gwandu and the River Samu.«<sup>302</sup> When the Bornu military marched home after an expedition to Kano and Yacoba they started at sunrise and stopped in different towns every evening: Tsebag, Katsaule, Kaduwa, Gafaye, Tshatsharam, Adufia, Murmur, Tshagua.<sup>303</sup> Contemporary or historical wars were commemorated as journeys by listing the places the army passed by, camped at or raided. When the British explorer Denham

296 Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 446.

297 Shareef (ed.): The Description of the Land of the Blacks, p. 8.

298 Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 447.

299 Ibid.

300 Ibid.

301 Shareef (ed.): Description of the Land of the Blacks, p. 10.

302 Hausa »Ya tashi nan ya kwana can kan Bukkuyum, Bunkasa, Sadawa, Falam, hanya tasa. Daga Zura, Margai, Bagida ya kwana can, har Gazura Rafin Samu.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 449.

303 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, pp. 240–241.

interviewed Saharan traders about the history of Bornu, he was given a list of places which a Fezzan military expedition of the year 1021 had once passed by. The caption text explained: »Route of the army under the Command of the sultan of Fezzan which left Murzuk in the spring of 1021 for the Negro country.«<sup>304</sup> The map is south-oriented in the classical Mediterranean style and depicts Lake Chad and – mostly untitled – rivers. The military route is indicated by the many halting places. The river passing Kano (»Kanno«) is on the other hand not labeled as Niger, Nile, or by any other name.

This is similar to the slave narratives that are thus closely connected to the general mode of travel narration in the time of the Jihad. It seems that the European interviewers have had less influence on the style of slave accounts than usually claimed.<sup>305</sup> Although we have only a few documented biographies of soldiers, this is enough evidence to conclude that Jihadist soldiers often traveled long distances because of their engagement in warfare. One slave narrative collected by De Castelnau gives different military migrations of a soldier from Zaria. He served in a Zaria army expedition against Maradi (South Niger) in ca. 1840, when Umaru Dan Mari was ruling the town (1835–1842). They traveled all the 190 miles from Zaria to Maradi in only six days – more than 30 miles a day. The informant Adam emphasized Dan Mari's (»Dammara«) Fulbe identity, adding that he was nevertheless revolting against Sokoto rule. After some days of beleaguering Maradi, the army returned home without success: »The expedition failed and after a long siege the Hausa were forced to retreat without being able to take the city.«<sup>306</sup> He was also part of an expedition against the Gwarri, to the West of Zaria. Yet in another expedition Adam himself was mounted on a horse.<sup>307</sup>

**304** Map attached to Denham's letters held at SOAS, Bovill Papers, MS 282539, W1 (File 6A), f. 91/5.

**305** At the ECAS 2013 the panel »Slave Narratives« convened by Camille Lefebvre, Emmanuelle Kadya Tall and M'hamed Oualdi (29 June), different discussants also brought up this critical argument and considered the value of such sources only to be plausible for the study of slavery in the diaspora.

**306** French »L'expédition ne réussit pas, et après un assez long siège, les Haoussas furent obligés de se retirer sans avoir pu prendre la ville.« Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 28.

**307** Ibid., p. 26.

The life of a Jihadist soldier included living in war camps. When traveling this was obligatory, but many soldiers were also lodged in camps at their home barracks outside of the town walls. When a Jihadist ruler called for a war expedition the military caravan would at first leave the town and march for some hours. Close to a village they would rest for some time, assemble and prepare all equipment before leaving for the expedition.<sup>308</sup> Some war camps were even used continuously. One of De Castelnau's slave informants from Kano explained where exactly the Kano Emir would usually set up his tent prior to a battle.<sup>309</sup> The Jihadists also erected camps in front of walled towns of the enemy for a period of siege. When Abdullah dan Fodio beleaguered Kebbi's capital in 1805, the ruler Muhammadu Hodi dan Sulemana (reigned 1803–1826) reportedly »ran away in fear.«<sup>310</sup> Silver and jewelry were among the captured booty, while the Arabic translation also documented military shields. However, both translations of Nana Asmau's text emphasize the role of the two Jihadist brothers Abdullah and Uthman for the successful siege. Asmau even compares them to the brothers Aaron and Moses, both of which are believed to be prophets in Islam.<sup>311</sup> In the Jihad wars, a military unit could also take advantage of the enemies being occupied with the setup of the camp. At the Dakurawa battle of 1835, Gobir, Katsina and Tuareg forces together attacked the Sokoto military which had just started to unpack their loads. Abd Al-Qadir bin Al-Mustafa (1804–1864) versified this event: »At Dakurawa, when they advanced to us rather early, when our loads were unloaded in the lodgings.«<sup>312</sup> Muhammad Bello defeated the allied enemy whose survivors then founded a new war camp in Tsibiri, north of Maradi.

Different emirates preferably sent slave troops to raid the distant Caliphate frontiers. At the southern border these ex-slave soldiers built irregular camps and resettled as free men. When the traveler Baikie met some »Pulo« people at Gandiko on the middle Benue, they told him that

**308** Cf. Dorugu's comment on warfare in the Central Sahel published by Schön (ed.): *Magana Hausa*, p. 55.

**309** Castelnau: *Renseignements*, p. 20.

**310** Hausa »Ya gudu, dole, don tsoro nasa.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 448.

**311** *Ibid.*

**312** English translation by Junaidu; cf. *id.*: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 189.

some years ago they were sent as a slave troop to conquer Wukari, south of the Benue. But after a failed attack on Wukari, the returning soldiers decided to stay at the Benue shore, found their own settlement and marry local Jukun women.<sup>313</sup> Some Jukun were socio-economically connected to the rivers and hence called »Kwararrafa«, which can be translated as »People from the River«. <sup>314</sup> The former enslaved soldiers were still using Fulfulde as a first language and otherwise switched to Hausa when trading. These Fulbe colonies owned Saharan horses for warfare and equipped their mounted soldiers with shields. According to Baikie's report, they regularly raided the »Mitshi tribes« south of the Benue River and also lived by the trading of ivory, which was usually fetched by Hausa merchants. This colony had its own *mallam* who kept little sheets with Arabic writing.<sup>315</sup> Baikie also noted that the »Pulo« settlements along the Middle Benue did not run any canoes.<sup>316</sup> This means that these semi-independent military settlers created a frontier according to the »river frontier« adapted from written myths and old oral traditions. Although they married local women, they raided the southern neighbors only. In the Middle Benue region, it seemed quite common for Fulbe men to marry Jukun women. The German explorer and colonial official Eduard Robert Flegel (1852–1886) wrote down the biography of his West African travel assistant Mohamman, whose Fula father had married a Jukun woman in the 1820s.<sup>317</sup> As a youth (ca. 1845), Mohamman started his career as a trader along the Benue between west (Benue-Niger confluence) and east (Adamawa). The Adamawa journeys became common for the Hausa-Fulbe merchant network and Mohamman's trade focused on horses and ponies. In Adamawa he exchanged the animals for elephant tusks. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, Adamawa was penetrated by growing numbers of trading expeditions. It became known as a place to become rich in a short time, if one were adventurous and reckless enough. These journeys were usually undertaken by very young traders

313 Baikie: Narrative, p. 125.

314 Shain: The Salt that Binds, p. 246.

315 Baikie: Narrative, pp. 126–128.

316 Ibid., p. 131.

317 Flegel: Lose Blätter, p. 8.

since women and families were not part of the small caravans.<sup>318</sup> At the Benue frontier, soldiers could become traders very readily and make money with raids or legitimate trade.

For Fulbe communities at the Sokoto-Bornu frontier mobility was a major method of warfare. When the Jihad in Bornu started, the Fulbe of the various towns were persecuted and resettled in rural and peripheral areas where they prepared themselves for the wars. In these camps the inhabitants usually only stayed for a short time. The first settlement in Gutsheba was soon abandoned for tactical reasons and its inhabitants moved to Damaturu. Locating the Jihadist Fulbe was a major problem for the Bornu sovereign, who unsuccessfully sent several military units to force the rebels to retreat.<sup>319</sup> While the Sokoto Jihadists disparaged their non-Islamic enemies for living a barbaric life in the forests, this was exactly what Hausa and Bornu residents thought about the Fulbe at the borders. Their claim was that the Fulbe inhabited the bush. This was described in a slave account that narrated how the Bornu king Dunduma and his priests fought the Jihadists: »I helped thee to drive all the Phula into their forests [*kagawa*],<sup>320</sup> that thou mightiest remain in thine house, and I and thou were of one mind [...].«<sup>321</sup> Locating the enemy in the bush or forest was a common device in much of the mental mapping done by the Jihadists, too. Along with this enemy image many opponents of the Jihadists also adopted the Jihadist mode of warfare and war priests. When the Jihadists occupied the Bornu capital, the Bornu military headed for Kurnawa, camped there and engaged some Fulbe priests to mobilize local residents.<sup>322</sup>

Large-scale expeditions were often prepared some months in advance. Letters had to be sent to allied emirates and the military leaders waited for the arrival of soldiers. If we dare to trust Nana Asmau's explanations she wrote down some twenty years after Muhammad Bello's war campaigns, the army normally set out for an expedition after the Friday prayers. She wrote about the run-up to the Gawakuke battle of 1836:

318 Ibid., p. 15.

319 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, pp. 119–120.

320 Ibid., p. 104.

321 Ibid., p. 236.

322 Ibid., pp. 232–233.



»When the host [Bello] had gathered at Sokoto, he mounted and rode out to Wurno after the Friday prayer.«<sup>323</sup> Several camps were established on their way to the north and the whole expedition lasted at least several weeks. Traveling together for days and weeks led to war narratives in which journeys are depicted as settings for miraculous religious incidents and adventurous ordeals. When Muhammad Bello traveled to Gobir with Gidado Ibn Laima, God revealed his presence to him, so that afterwards they were able to cross an area inhabited by a dangerous lion.<sup>324</sup> The wild forests were considered dangerous and a gateway for religious experiences at the same time. Within the military expeditions of the Sokoto military in Gobir, the landscape of the deserted forests was contrasted with the cultivated land in the outskirts of towns. These expedition routes were perceived as lines of encampments and raids which were situated along such lines. The ideal military expedition moved forward in one direction and at some point turned round and went home.<sup>325</sup> Smart armies cut off the roads for the enemy. The Hausa kings blocked roads by digging sand and earth onto the path. When Kano was attacked by the Jihadists, the Kano military equipped itself with farming instruments for this purpose.<sup>326</sup>

### *Mobility and Equipment*

The Sokoto Jihadists used weapons that were transportable. Each type of weapon was usually used at a certain distance to the military line. On the battlefield, the flanks with bows and arrows started attacking while »the two lines feigned patience.«<sup>327</sup> Afterwards the successful war party penetrated the line of their enemy and assaulted the center, or so-called ›heart‹ of the battle formation, with swords. Guns were only present in

323 Fulfulde Ajami text and English translation: Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, pp. 134–135.

324 Gidado Ibn Laima: *Al-kashf wa-l-bayan*, Niamey 1038, f. 7. See also Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 90.

325 Krieger: *Geschichte von Zamfara*, pp. 82–83.

326 Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: *Jihad in Kano*, p. 27.

327 Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 157.

rare numbers in the Hausa region before 1850, whereas Bornu used them well before this time. One soldier serving in the Zaria army reported there were some traded to Toto, a village north of the Niger-Benue confluence.<sup>328</sup> But he was obviously not using them, nor did his companions. In one of his warning war poems, Uthman's son and military officer Muhammad Al-Bukhari described how his Zamfara enemies combined different forces and then attacked with an organized battle lineup:

»Ask the people of Zamfara what befell them when they met at Ibetu [Niger state] after the re-grouping of the negroes [lit. »Sudanese«]. From the people of Yawri [Yauri] and Kotonkoro and others among the helpers of Satan. The day when fear weak-minded every hero, gallant, and the heart of the coward flew out. They advanced to us confident of their strength with a strong force [like a night] composed of Arkan.«<sup>329</sup>

The above-mentioned »Arkan« is the Arabic term expressing the organization of military by different branches. According to Smaldone, the Sokoto forces themselves were organized in four flanks and one »heart« (center).<sup>330</sup> For most of their weaponry metalwork was necessary; especially when it came to swords, spears and armament for both people and horses. In the Hausa region, blacksmiths were perceived as powerful and at the same time suspicious figures because their profession secluded them from the other inhabitants of the towns. They kept special knowledge on the professional practices of smithing, which was preserved and bequeathed secretly within their lineages. Their work was accompanied by transcendent rituals that clearly stood in opposition to Islam. They usually lived in separate quarters of towns. In Kano for instance, this quarter was called *Tudun*<sup>331</sup> *Makera*,<sup>332</sup> »hill of the blacksmiths.«<sup>333</sup> According to Alhaji Umaru's account, this hill west of the market was inhabited by blacksmiths who had their own rulers (*manya*) that were

328 Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 26.

329 Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 174.

330 Smaldone: Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate, pp. 80–82.

331 Arab طَوْدَ (»hill«).

332 Arab. تَدُنْ مَكْرَأَ (Hausa »blacksmiths«).

333 Cf. Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, p. 504.

supervised by an official (*mai anguwa*) – the head of the suburb – who was appointed by the king (*sarki*).<sup>334</sup>

Usually every soldier carried his own arms or had slaves with him for the transport of the equipment. Provisions for expeditions were not only provided by the military leaders. Contributing food or horses was seen an act of Islamic welfare. Reading elegies on female Jihadist scholars, we find evidence that women were often supporting military expeditions by donating provisions. Nana Asmau praised her deceased half-sister Fatima in 1838 for this effort: »She organized the production of provisions when an expedition was mounted. She had a lot of responsibilities.«<sup>335</sup>

### *Beloved and Dreaded: Animals of Jihad*

Military logistics were a major problem the Jihadists faced due to distant battlefields and long-distance expeditions. If an attack was launched against another town, the place of battle could be weeks away and thus food and equipment had to be transported for the soldiers. In pre-Jihad Bornu, the loading of the beasts of burden was a crucial act of war preparation. One of Koelle's informants, a youth at that time, explained:

»All the twelve regiments listened to what the Commander [*keigamma*] said, and returned home to prepare themselves: one who had a camel loaded his provisions upon the camel, one who had an ass loaded his provisions upon his ass, one who had an ox of burden loaded his provisions upon his ox, one who had a mule loaded his provisions upon his mule: all of them took their things, got ready, and went to the Commander. [...] The Commander arose before the King [*mai Amadu*], went to the front, all the twelve Regiments following him, and thus they started to war with the Deia King [*Lafia*].«<sup>336</sup>

These animals were not used for actual fighting, but for transportation of goods and humans. The more the Sokoto Emirates expanded, the more the military utilized animals for transportation of soldiers and equip-

334 Ibid., p. 54.

335 Nana Asmau: *Sonnoire Mo'inna*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, pp. 130–131.

336 Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 213.

ment. Local markets offered »cattle, camels, horses, sheep«<sup>337</sup> for sale in every town, Alhaji Umaru wrote in his autobiography. Camels were very expensive and thus only seldom used for warfare. Both species, horses and camels, had been integral parts of Hausa royal festivals, representing the power to control animals and space. These animals typified trade networks and scholarly influence. When lamenting the departure of an adored woman, Uthman dan Fodio in his entire lover's grief praised his camel, with which he headed for the Sufis when the woman disappeared:

»Could the tall and lean she-camel convey you to him [al-Kunti]? That which is lean, nipples-cut and swift? She is delicate, with long neck, tall, strong, crazy about her running, light and fast.«<sup>338</sup>

In another love poem with analog structure and topics, Muhammad Bello »consoled«<sup>339</sup> himself with a fast male camel, a tall stallion and lanky asses. In Arabic praise poems this structure was very common and West African authors adapted it regularly: These poems begin with the profession of love for someone, go on with a sorrowful lamentation about her departure and then the sad one seeks relief with his camel or with a Muslim authority then to be praised.<sup>340</sup> The adored person who has left her home is regularly called »Salma« in Arabic poetry; Uthman dan Fodio used the same name in his work. This motif of Salma who had left her home and her sad lover behind, is most obvious in Imru Al-Qais' love versifications from sixth-century Arabia.<sup>341</sup> Therefore, the Jihadist composers of erotic poems referred to a fictional archetype and probably not to a real lost love. But they expressed intimate and sexual feelings for these animals in their fiction. Composing erotic imaginations with animal metaphors had also been a very popular stylistic device in classical Arabic poetry. In the Sokoto State this poetry style was not observed uncritically. There was, for example, rumor that Uthman dan

337 Hausa *سَيِّدُ بَابَا دَ شَانُو ذِرَاكُمُ دَدَوَاكِي*. Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, p. 501.

338 English translation by Junaidu; cf. Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 151.

339 Ibid.

340 Abdullah: Arabic Poetry in West Africa, pp. 377–378.

341 Cf. Rückert (ed.): Amrilkais der Dichter und König (she is transcribed »Selma« in the German edition and many poems are explicitly dedicated to her). For an English edition see Ahlwardt (ed.): The Divans.

Fodio's son Muhammad Al-Bukhari (ca. 1785–1840) was not permitted to become sultan after Bello's death because of his love poetry, called *ghazal* in Arabic.<sup>342</sup> Al-Bukhari composed some works only dealing with the topic of lovesickness and »wide, wild lands«<sup>343</sup> between him and the woman he loved. This Jihadist poet did not just imitate the Arabic style of love poetry, but integrated descriptions of the ruined encampments of his lover. He related them to places well-known by his contemporaries; for example in Jenne (Mali) and the »hilly Tsamiya«<sup>344</sup> (west of Sokoto). However, traveling by camel was linked to femininity and individual as well as civilian migration. It also represented long-distance trade, because camel riders could forward news across huge distances. Muhammad Bello in one poem remarked: »Oh rider, whose camel still swoops down with him, forward my compliments at Sara when you pass it.«<sup>345</sup>

While camels were usually portrayed as she-camels, horses appear as stallions in the Sokoto love poems. They represented male power, because horses were considered as beasts to be dominated, while camels were sensitive creatures that had to be sweet-talked by the rider. Therefore, horses were the typical war animal for the Jihadists and their cavalry forces were well-known and dreaded among the neighboring states.<sup>346</sup> The Jihadists preferred short-hair tall horses from Saharan breeders. In a war poem Muhammad Bello gave a detailed description of cruel killing and slaughtering of the enemies and then turned to the characteristics of the horses the Jihadists were riding: »On hairless horses of good breed of Berbera.«<sup>347</sup> The Berber horse breeders were very famous for expensive and high quality horses they traded southwards to the Sahel.<sup>348</sup> In addition to the popular reputation Berber horses enjoyed, certain Touareg sub-groups achieved the standing as horsemen and troopers. Bello explained:

342 Hunwick (ed.): Writings, pp. 154–155.

343 English translation by Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 171.

344 Ibid., p. 173.

345 Ibid., p. 163. »Sara« is probably the name of a West African town but since today many »Sabon Sara« (»New Sara«) exist in Niger and Northern Nigeria, the location cannot be confirmed.

346 Cf. for example accounts by British traders in the early nineteenth century published online: Law (ed.): Documents.

347 English translation by Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 153.

348 Law: The Horse in West African History, p. 45

»And no enemy should remain in your country, and nothing should remain for you except sand. I knew and there is knowledge in every experience, that Itesan have the best riders. They are the most loyal Tuaregs in an alliance, and the noblest of them when they traced their lineage.«<sup>349</sup>

In Bello's words, the southern Niger Tuareg of the Kel Geres clan were not trustworthy, while he relied on mounted Kel Itesen living south and east of Air. He honored their highborn descent which served as a proof of being Muslim for the Sokoto Sultan. However, Bello wanted his soldiers to expulse all enemies into the desert. War horses were considered to accelerate warfare and successfully execute surprise attacks. With reference to these raids at the break of dawn, Bello proudly claimed he had »for any opposition, early morning horsemen.«<sup>350</sup> This view corresponds with significant accounts of civilians being attacked and enslaved by raiding horsemen during the Jihad wars. These narratives express fear of surprise attacks by fast mounted soldiers. When attacking a settlement, the women and girls were separated from their families, enslaved and observed by the mounted Jihadist soldiers:

»Cavalry surrounded the women grouped together, young maidens who were obtained for us as booty. On that day, they were unveiled, and they were not protected from the sun as a punishment.«<sup>351</sup>

The soldiers tortured the captured girls by exposing them to the sun. According to Muhammad Bello, the composer of this war praise poem, the punishment was self-imposed since these women were not pious Muslim women who veiled themselves in public. This torture method was also considered cruel by Bello's sister Nana Asmau who described the exposure to the sun as one punishment for unbelievers on the Day of Resurrection: »The sun will boil the heads and skulls of the evil ones who carry on the lie about Muhammad. They suffer from hunger and thirst.«<sup>352</sup> In general, the sources of victims depict mounted soldiers as more »cruel«.

349 English translation by Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 156.

350 Ibid., p. 155.

351 Ibid., p. 156.

352 Hausa. فرانا تنا نفسا غكانو د قلور. مياعو د سنكا فقريتا غمحمدا. سنا فتكن وحلا د ينوا د قشروا. Nana Asmau: *Gadaben gaskiya*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 7.

They were the superior units of the armed forces. The above-mentioned military leader and love poet Muhammad Al-Bukhari wrote in his poem on a war at Kadaye in 1820: »In their hands are fixed swords, which sever the skulls and the fingers. And under them are lanky horses, high, shying like the pigeon.«<sup>353</sup> And in another poem, Al-Bukhari begins with sexualized descriptions of an adored woman – specifying her neck, buttocks, breast and saliva. After this erotic section he warned an opponent not to collaborate with Gobir forces and used the Jihadist cavalry as a threat:

»Command them to embrace Islam, if you wish; with veracity and if not by offering poll-tax. And if not we shall indeed advance to you, driving squadrons of cavalry who are like mountains. They drive wild beasts from the desert and among them [the troop] are, war-lions on high hairless horses. Brave, at war they would never retreat, when the horses turn round in the state of fear. In their right hands are whetted, long swords and glittering, flattened swords and grey, ironheaded spears.«<sup>354</sup>

And again, the origin of the horses from the Sahara is stressed and even referred to as a symbol of military superiority. When comparing the horses to the soldiers, the latter were of course the bravest, although the horses were also called brave warriors: »On fine horses, though stern at wars, firm in battles, never cowardly.«<sup>355</sup> This poem of Abd Al-Qadir narrated the defeat of Gobir in 1835. He used the same characteristics and adjectives for horses and soldiers in his poems.<sup>356</sup> But the Jihadist soldiers themselves were identified as lions, so that the military journey into ›wilderness‹ was styled as a transformation from human to lion predators.

Military leaders were praised for equipping their armies, and in particular for »buying horses for Jihad.«<sup>357</sup> Although women were usually not fighting in the Jihad, they were asked to support the wars financi-

353 Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 167.

354 Ibid., p. 169.

355 Ibid., p. 190.

356 Later in the quoted poem, Abd Al-Qadir wrote: »They never experienced cowardice from us at battle.« Ibid.

357 Hausa »Ya sa dawaki son jihadi.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 453.

ally by donating horses. In a versified essay on female Sufi role models, Nana Asmau and her brother Muhammad Bello stressed the pious role of Prophet Muhammad's wives in the Jihad, because one of them even »bought horses for the Jihad of the Lord.«<sup>358</sup> In Abd Al-Qadir's poem there is also some evidence that Bello had established a whole system for war horse training; he appointed his brother Abubakar Atiku and his cousin Modibbo Aal as heads of these military training units.<sup>359</sup> Horses were an integral part of Jihadist warfare since they allowed fast attacks and withdrawals. But in the forests south of the savanna they were often not effective for escape. In the early 1840s, the soldier Muhamman took part in a Kano-led war expedition against Yoruba. The army crossed the Niger at Jebba and was soon attacked by their enemies from an ambush. When many soldiers were killed, Muhamman intended to escape on his horse from the dense forest. When the horse was hit by an arrow it fell, which led to the enslavement and trafficking of its rider to Ilorin and finally to Bahia in Brasil.<sup>360</sup> Jihadist cavalry warfare also failed in the Mandara Mountains of Adamawa. Mounted Fulbe groups made several attempts to invade the valleys. Some remembered that even before the Sokoto Jihad a certain Samba Sambabu attacked them at a time when only Bornu assaults with fire weapons were common. And right before the Jihad another Fula warrior, called Bautchi-Gordi, attacked parts of the country and seems to have only loosely cooperated with Uthman dan Fodio.<sup>361</sup> After this mounted warrior group destroyed some villages, their usage of horses in war determined the further invasions: They looted the villages Gullak, Duhu and others, and then tried to move towards a narrow valley leading into the Mandara Mountains but failed due to the difficult topography and the resistance of the inhabitants. Therefore the warriors continued southwards along the mountains and attacked villages of the Mubi Plain instead.<sup>362</sup> The horses directed the route of

**358** Hausa »Ta sai dawaki don jihadillahi.« Nana Asmau: *Tawassuli ga mata*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, p. 94.

**359** Shareef: *Description of the Land of the Blacks*, p. 19.

**360** Castelnaud: *Renseignements*, p. 23.

**361** Strümpell mentioned at least some informants speaking about their alliance, whereas Kirk-Greene dated his attacks prior to the Adamawa Jihad. Cf. Kirk-Greene: *The Kingdom of Sukur*.

**362** Strümpell: *Die Geschichte Adamauas*, pp. 56–57.



the military expedition and caused a mass exodus of inhabitants into the Mandara Mountains where horses could hardly ever reach them.

But on their military expeditions in the frontier regions, the Jihadist soldiers also met other mounted warriors riding ponies. The Jihadists defined these soldiers as exotic due to their style of riding and equipment. A witness from the Sokoto-Bornu frontier described how the non-Islamic Bode from Bornu fought the Jihadist Fulbe. Their lifestyle was described as being similar to the rest of the Bornu residents: They were fishermen and cultivators. But they practiced a different warfare on horses without saddle and harness. Before they stormed towns, the Bode (or Bata) warriors prepared themselves and their horses:

»They dismount from their horses, take a razor from their bosom, open the razor, slash their horses back, on the spot where they sit down, with the razor, and when the blood flows, they mount and sit down upon the blood.«<sup>363</sup>

The informant did not explain the goals behind these practices. Did the warriors try to speed the horses through the pain that they were suffering? Or did they rather try to frighten their enemies and the victims of their attacks? According to Fisher's research, this practice was intended to secure the riders to the horses' backs with the dried blood.<sup>364</sup> The Bornu informant also described that special charm water was given to the Bode horses, which allowed them to track all persons hidden in the bush: »The horse sees the spot where someone has hid himself, but the horse's master does not see it.«<sup>365</sup> In an itinerary delivered by a Ngaundere trader and documented by Heinrich Barth, the hinterland of Douala was perceived as mountains where pagan people and elephants lived.<sup>366</sup> Jihadist soldiers spoke about the lack of domesticated animals and about horse-riding without saddle with disgust, and in contrast to this, these people for their part also defined the Jihadists as exotic.

In the Adamawa Emirate of today's northern Cameroon, the coming of strange Jihadist soldiers was especially commemorated for two curiosities: The soldiers covered their bodies with loose cotton clothes and

363 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 211.

364 Fisher: »He Swalloweth the Ground with Fierceness and Rage«, p. 376.

365 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 212.

366 Ibid.

they introduced new animals to the area, such as Saharan horse breeds and donkeys.<sup>367</sup> When horses were used for Jihadist military expeditions the soldiers used a kind of armor to protect them from spears and arrows. This equipment was produced with the wool of the silk cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) which was used as stuffing.<sup>368</sup> This natural textile is very light and water-repellent so that it was practical for use on horseback. Sultan Muhammad Bello was very interested in studying the modes of horseback warfare practiced by early Islamic military forces. One day he asked his British visitor Hugh Clapperton to bring his English saddle to the palace, and he reportedly remarked that »it was exactly like the ancient Arab saddle, described in one of his books.«<sup>369</sup> The use of heavy suits of armor by mounted soldiers in official state battles only made possible to approach the enemy slowly. Moreover, the soldiers had to be assisted by several servants in order to mount the horses.<sup>370</sup> The Jihadist small-scale raids in the frontier zones used horses with a completely different set of war tactics: Their mode of warfare was surprise attacks with extremely fast approaches and withdrawals.

In many cavalry states of the Central Sahel white horses were the preferred ones. All horses with magical powers were usually white. For the Jihadists, the role model was the mythic white horse Al-Buraq. This heavenly creature supposedly transported the prophets. Prophet Muhammad reportedly traveled on its back to Jerusalem and back to Mecca in only one night. The anti-Jihadist military of the Nikki king Kpera (in Benin) was also commemorated for a white war horse. Kpera's horse »Ka« fought with him on the expedition to Ilorin (Yoruba), then ruled by the Emir Sita (1842–1860). Oral tradition has it that the name »Ka« refers to the common label of a white horse which were considered to possess extraordinary powers.<sup>371</sup> And white horses were in general considered to be seed capital that could lead to quick wealth. In a Sokoto oral narrative in Hausa language, documented in German in the 1870s, a young orphan

**367** Krause: Der erste Einfall der Muhammedaner.

**368** Dorugu called these trees in Katsina »itatuwan rimi« in his autobiographical account in Hausa. Cf. Schön (ed.): Magana Hausa, p. 51.

**369** Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 1, p. 311.

**370** Clapperton: Second Journey, p. 187.

**371** Dahomey oral literature collected by Mercier: Histoire et Légende, p. 94.

only inherited a white horse from his father. But the horse then let slaves, expensive clothes and a saddle appear by means of its magical powers. The possession of this horse turned its rider – a weak boy – into a renowned warrior who became the new king of a town in the end of the story.<sup>372</sup>

The use of horses in wars limited effective Jihadist warfare to the plains. In the hills, in the forests and on wet grounds their speed was of no use. Therefore the mounted Jihadist soldiers interpreted the ›horse frontier‹ as a border having simultaneous cultural, political, and religious significance. From these borders the soldiers transported ideas about the ›Lands of Unbelief‹ and their inhabitants who – in the eyes of the Jihadists – did not maintain an appropriate and civilized relationship with domesticated animals. Instead of riding horses as the Jihadists with saddles, they wounded their backs. And instead of respecting food taboos, they ate the flesh of the horses.

### *Valleys and Mountains*

After discussing the modes and routes of travel for Jihadist soldiers, we can now turn to their perception of experienced spaces. The Jihadist use of horses as a military means of conquest dictated where the Jihadist rulers settled and really *ruled*. Mounted Jihadist soldiers were confronted with spaces they could easily penetrate and territories that were unappropriate for fast sprints with horses. One such frontier for cavalry warfare was located in the Adamawa emirate due to the narrow valleys and many mountains.

The conquest of Adamawa started when the Jihadist military under Modibbo Adama conquered the town Duro in the Mandara Mountains in 1809. As a result to this event, the Mandara Sultan Bukar D’Gjiama (reigned 1773–1828) moved closer to the Eastern Mandara Mountain Range, established his capital in Mora and allied with Bornu against the Jihadist invasions. The hinterland of this Mora Sultanate was considered a stateless place of ›unbelievers‹ by both Bornu soldiers and Sokoto soldiers who could barely enter the mountains with their horses. The common Kanuri ethnonym for the people living in this area was *kirdi* or

372 Documented in Krause (ed.): Der jüngste Sohn.

*kerdi*.<sup>373</sup> Clapperton reported that 3,000 of the inhabitants were seized and transported to Bornu by a military expedition after 1810.<sup>374</sup> The British traveler was told that all Kerdis lived in the mountains, were naked and used bows and arrows, whereas all Muslims lived in the valleys and in towns.<sup>375</sup> Clapperton observed the settlements with his telescope and watched some Kerdis coming to Mora to sell or give cattle, slaves, and leopard skins. Their warriors were dressed up in animal skins, and Clapperton's Bornuese expedition group assured him that their ›barbaric‹ jewelry was made of bones and enemies' teeth. But despite all disgust for the mountaineers, the scantily dressed teenage girl slaves from the Mandara Mountains were appreciated as concubines and sold at high prizes.<sup>376</sup>

In a conversation about the alleged ›unbelievers‹, Clapperton was told they were Christians. He and his Muslim travel companions expressed disgust when some of them asked for the cadaver of a horse of the Bornuese. Clapperton tried to interview them at this occasion, but they refused to talk to anyone.<sup>377</sup> The Mori emir was also puzzled when he was informed about Clapperton's investigations in the mountains, during which Clapperton collected some stones for geological studies instead of catching slaves. From a Fulfulde-speaking trader Clapperton also gathered some information about the Adamawa Emirate: His informant said that all of the Mandara plain was inhabited by the Fulbe, while the mountains encircling Adamawa were populated by Kerdis. His dialog partner called himself Kaid Moussa-ben-Yusuf and was willing to share some rumor about the Kerdis with Clapperton: They ate the meat of horses, mules, donkeys and any other animal; they were almost naked or wearing animal skins.<sup>378</sup> Being questioned about the rivers of the region, Kaid mixed up several watercourses, such as the Nile, Niger, Benue and Chari as one major river. He added, that south of this super-river

373 For an elaborate discussion of this term see Vincent: *Sur les traces du major Denham*, p. 580. See also Barth: *Sammlung und Bearbeitung*, vol. 1, p. LXXXVIII. Barth translated the variants »kirdi« and »kerdi« with both »enemy« and »pagan«.

374 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 1, p. 290.

375 *Ibid.*, p. 291.

376 *Ibid.*, p. 338.

377 *Ibid.*, pp. 293–295.

378 *Ibid.*, pp. 333–334.

all inhabitants were Kerdi ›unbelievers‹ until the Great Desert which was unpopulated.<sup>379</sup> Right at the mountain frontier the medieval Islamic geography of the African continent was reproduced with clear reference to the climatological zones and the ›Land of Unbelievers‹ directly north of the southern desert at the assumed edge of the world.

### *Water and Land*

In the Sahel region rivers sometimes dried up completely and could then suddenly swell to large proportions very quickly. Rivers formed natural barriers because fishermen who could provide canoes to cross the waterways were rarely to be met. And on the other hand, the Jihadist army was well-known for being badly-equipped for river crossings. When the Fulbe leader Dankaua pursued the Bornu military with his soldiers and reached a large river, the Bornu soldiers managed to cross and Dankaua did not. Koelle's informant concluded: »So the river prevented him from following the Sheikh on his way.«<sup>380</sup> Narratives about such failure are evident in various sources. And especially when the Jihad wars continued and plundered Hausa horses were integrated into the Jihad armies, the crossing of rivers became a major issue and obstacle. The troops were therefore looking for narrow sections of rivers to facilitate possible crossings.<sup>381</sup> Moreover, their war cry »Allahu akbar« (»God is great«) was also voiced by the soldiers crossing a dangerous river with their beasts of burden in order to attack the enemy on the opposite shore, Abdullah dan Fodio reported.<sup>382</sup>

On the other hand, the location of springs, rivers and lakes was important for the organization of the Jihad expeditions and camps. In oral accounts Muslim armies were often depicted as being equipped with magical powers over water, which were of course provided by God. In one

**379** Ibid., p. 335.

**380** Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 241.

**381** Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* about crossing the Watari south-west of Kano by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 30: »The members of the Community retained their horses in order to cross the Watari River which had a narrow passage.«

**382** Cf. Hiskett (ed.): Tazyin al-Waraqat, p. 125.

of these stories it was explained that when a war was expected in the dry Gombora savanna, the Jihadists prayed to God who then set up a lake in front of them: »The believers and their horses were drinking, they filled their gourds and waterskins, and loaded six camels with them.«<sup>383</sup> Only when the »unbelievers« arrived at the lake did the water disappear. The believers then defeated their enemies and converted them to Islam when the latter saw the miracle and the power of God who had sent rain for the Muslims. Knowledge of water resources was crucial for war tactics during the Jihad. When the outnumbered Jihadists were fighting in the first military campaigns against Yunfa of Gobir they »drove away the forces of Unbelief from their [water] basin [by fire?].«<sup>384</sup> But in fact, the opponents of the Jihadists also succeeded in blocking access to local water reservoirs around the Jihadist war camps.<sup>385</sup> In oral traditions, the »unbelievers« controlled the rivers and watery areas while the Jihadists only dominated rain and springs in arid zones.

On war expeditions thirst was a well-known experience for many soldiers. In Jihadist war poems the sudden discovery of water basins or the advent of rain during a war was therefore celebrated as a miracle. Recounting the defeat of some enemies by Muhammad Bello in 1836 at Gawakuke, Nana Asmau wrote down one of these incidents: »Muslims were relieved from dreadful thirst, they were given to drink. Indeed a marvelous sign was given, I saw it myself.«<sup>386</sup> Almost twenty years after the battle of Gawakuke and this first, rather short draft poem, Nana Asmau composed a more detailed report of the aforementioned battle. In six Fulfulde verses Nana described how Muhammad Bello's men suffered from thirst when they camped at Bulaici at a hill completely dried up by the hot season with only some trees and thorn bushes growing. When the soldiers complained, Bello ordered them to dig holes into the hill and everyone found water to drink after following Bello's instructions: »Beyond doubt Muhammad Bello performed a miracle [*karama*]. Water

383 Westermann (ed.): *Erzählungen in Fulfulde*, p. 50.

384 Arab. فكننا جموع الكفر عن حوضه وقد. Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, p. 56.

385 When Clapperton attended a war expedition, the Jihadists even had to withdraw due to the Gobir war tactics. See Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 190.

386 Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke famarde*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, pp. 82–83.

bubbled forth. I saw it with my own eyes.«<sup>387</sup> Whether Nana Asmau had actually accompanied the army to the battlefield – as claimed in both poem versions – is dubious. It may well have been a stylistic device in order to give evidence of Bello's sainthood. According to Nana Asmau, her brother had also anticipated a severe drought, having warned and preached accordingly for one month. He told his people to trust in God and visit Mecca.<sup>388</sup> Allegedly, Bello also predicted a Gobir River calamity.<sup>389</sup> The connection between military and political power on the one hand and almost magical powers over water resources on the other hand, becomes apparent in Jihadist literature. Successful Saharan merchants were also believed to have such magical skills to detect and find water in the desert. The British traveler Denham was for instance told that »the Arabs know by smelling the Earth where the Water lays.«<sup>390</sup> The Jihadists renarrated many Islamic miracles about rain entering suddenly in times of drought. One of the most powerful examples in the Jihadist view was, for instance, the story of how the Prophet Muhammad prayed for rain in Mecca as a child and was immediately answered.<sup>391</sup> Likewise, when he traveled with his merchant relatives, rain clouds were supposed to have followed him and trees bowed down in front of him.<sup>392</sup>

The Jihadists applied Islamic prayers in order to call for rain, whereas traditional *bori* rituals were banned or at least condemned. In her »Prayer for Rain«, Nana Asmau called the existence of water in the world an act of God's mercy towards »Men, birds, quadruped animals, crops and all of [His] innumerable creatures.«<sup>393</sup> She begged God for some rain storms

**387** Fulfulde Ajami text and English translation: Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, pp. 134–135.

**388** In the same poem, only some lines after this section, Nana Asmau once again expressed her desire to perform the pilgrimage, go to Mecca, Medina and Muhammad's tomb. *Ibid.*, pp. 140–141.

**389** *Ibid.*, pp. 138–139.

**390** A photocopy of Denham's letter held at SOAS, Bovill Papers, MS 282539, W1 (File 6A), f. 94/2.

**391** Cf. for example in Nana Asmau's Hausa translation of a Fulfulde poem composed by Muhammad Tukur. Nana Asmau: *Begore*, p. 102.

**392** *Ibid.*, p. 104.

**393** Hausa »Mutane da tsuntsaye da dabba da yān dawa, da sauran fa tahlinka bas u Kidayuwa.« Nana Asmau: *Rokon ruwa*, p. 159.

in order to »strengthen our sowing.«<sup>394</sup> In this poem Nana Asmau also turned to non-Islamic rituals because she may have considered these sinful rituals the major causes of the drought. Or else, as Jean Boyd argued, Nana Asmau condemned the non-Islamic rituals which were specifically performed when there was a lack of rain.<sup>395</sup> I would rather support the first hypothesis, since Asmau also listed sins other than *bori*, namely gambling, which had nothing to do with rainmaking practices.

The lack and abundance of water was also picked as a topic in descriptions of the hereafter (cf. chapter IV.3.3). In her elegy about an unknown woman called Zaharatu, Nana Asmau expressed her wishes for the deceased. In the hereafter she may be protected from the sun and drink from the Kawthara River of Paradise, so that there would be no more thirst.<sup>396</sup> All sinners on the other hand, would suffer from heat on Judgment Day. Fire would encircle the people left on the earth, destroy all houses and force people to sweat to the extent that they will swim in their own liquid. Squeezed together, people would feel extremely hot and be unable to move. The only liquids that the lost souls would be allowed, or rather forced to drink, would be blood and pus. Blacksmiths would heat their irons in hellfire in order to brand market cheaters.<sup>397</sup> In all religious warning poems about the cruel penalties of hell, thirst and forced drinking of very hot water are prominent sequences of suffering.<sup>398</sup> The lack of cool and clean water was thus one of the most intimate fears of the Jihadists, which was even more threatening during military expeditions. Pure water was also requested for religious washing procedures. Water accepted as »pure« included rain, river, lake and well water that had not been modified in color, taste and smell.<sup>399</sup> At the same time, the Jihadists

**394** Hausa »Ka inganta shibkammu [...]« Ibid.

**395** Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 246.

**396** Nana Asmau: *Sonnore Zaharatu*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, pp. 166–167. Boyd's numeration of lines is misleading here. E.g. English line 21, to which I refer here, belongs to Arabic line 22.

**397** Ibid., pp. 178–185.

**398** See for instance a Jihadist poem by Muhammad Tukur translated by Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 356.

**399** Uthman dan Fodio explained the manners of ritual purification in his text *Kitab Ulum al-muamala* which is, for example, archived in Niamey 410(14). In this chapter I refer to the translation published in Abdarrahan Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, p. 15.



were also experts for arid land. They used prayers and experiences from the past for finding water.

### *Under White Flags*

The Jihadists had to control remote army units and dictate who was fighting on their behalf and who was not. On the one hand, clothes (turbans and veils) and letters of allegiance represented the Jihadist identity. But military occupation of spaces was also marked and put into effect by the use of flags. The Jihadists even created genealogies for their flags, and the ›original‹ flag was of course the standard of Prophet Muhammad during the first Jihad. According to this flag legend, the pilgrim Jibril Ibn Umar had transported one legitimate Islamic flag from Mecca to West Africa for Uthman dan Fodio. Jibril was Uthman's teacher and they had intended to travel to Mecca together. But Uthman's father prohibited his son from leaving, so that he only received presents from Mecca when his teacher returned from the second pilgrimage journey (cf. IV.2.2). Jibril Ibn Umar reportedly gave Uthman a flag from Mecca<sup>400</sup> that authorized him ideologically to launch a jihad in the name of the Prophet.

Uthman dan Fodio thus became the distributor for flags, and every new Jihadist leader had to travel to Uthman dan Fodio (or send a trustworthy messenger) and received a flag in order to be part of the movement.<sup>401</sup> Equipped with this flag the new military could spread the wars and colonize new ›Land of Unbelief‹. Although the first Arabian Jihadists had used black *or* white flags, all sources on the Sokoto Jihad mention white flags. White textiles in general represented religious and physical purity. Clapperton explained for example on his second stay in Sokoto:

»In addition to the white flag, the Fellatas were to wear a white tobe, as an emblem of their purity, and their war-cry was to be Allahu Akber! or, God is

**400** Information based on local traditions, which was, for example, collected by El-Masri: *The Life of Shehu*, p. 438.

**401** The flag was generally sent or handed over with a letter from Uthman dan Fodio. See Alhaji Umaru [?]: *Nubdha min dhikr bilad Adamawa*, Legon 128, f. 2.

Great! That every one who was wounded, or fell in battle, was sure to gain paradise.«<sup>402</sup>

Impressed by the religious symbolism of Jihadist warfare, and probably influenced by European Orientalist perceptions of Islam, Clapperton emphasized the use of white textiles for Jihadist flags and clothes. All the same, white was considered the color of the educated, so that Muhammad Bello explicitly advised teachers and pupils to dress in white.<sup>403</sup> The use of this color for Muslim war standards can be traced back to pre-Islamic Arabian practices. Accordingly the Prophet and his deputies used to carry a black or white standard.<sup>404</sup> Relying on stories about Prophet Muhammad, the Umayyad dynasty then used white flags for war expeditions across their caliphate – including North Africa. The handing over of the war flags by the Prophet has been narrated and transmitted by generations of scholars who interpreted it as a symbolic transmission of power and appreciation of status.<sup>405</sup> By 1830 the white robes were considered another definite symbol of belonging to a Jihadist military unit.<sup>406</sup>

The Jihadist flags were also inscribed according to one of Uthman dan Fodio's poems he had composed in Fulfulde, but which is today only found in a Hausa Ajami translation.<sup>407</sup> Uthman dan Fodio compared his way of warfare to that of the Prophet, and he also mentioned the similar design and inscription of the banners: »Truly, he came with flags; just like that I hoisted mine as a sign. Their writing was >Allah is Powerful< [*allahu akbar*]; truly mine was like that with wisdom.«<sup>408</sup> Throughout

**402** Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 203.

**403** For a draft translation of this manuscript called *Shifa al-asqam fi madarik al-ahkam*, see Minna: Sultan Muhammad Bello, p. 187.

**404** Cf. Weill: 'Alam, p. 349.

**405** Cf. Fishbein (ed.): The History of al-Tabari, vol. 8, pp. 119–121.

**406** Cf. Transcription of John Lander's Journal Book No. 2, 1830, Ms. 42326, John Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, <http://www.tubmaninstitute.ca/sites/default/files/file/Appendix I, JL Text John Murray Archive D2 Nov 2010.pdf> (16.07.2014), p. 7.

**407** The original manuscript is supposedly held at the Ibadan Centre of Arabic Documentation (MS 23). According to Hunwick, another one was detected at the Sokoto State History Bureau (4/16/107).

**408** Hausa »Shinā zakuwā da tūtōcī ḥaḳīḳan, kusan nā damra nau kō don 'alāmā. Rubūtū nāsu Allāh adda shaftā, ḥaḳīḳan nāwa kō hakanā da ḥikma.« Adeleye / El-Masri (eds.): Sifofin Shehu, p. 25.

the history of Islamic warfare, these standards were often girded with this phrase or with the Arabic profession of faith »There is no God but Allah.«<sup>409</sup> Today, these two expressions are still major elements of flags of nation states stressing their Islamic heritage and state ideology. But the Jihadist sources only tell about the flag distribution and transportation to the battlefields, while practices such as flag weaving were never mentioned. However, the transportation of flags to the edges of the Jihadist state was part of the symbolic and military occupation of the territory. In a war poem authored by Abdullah dan Fodio it is claimed that the white flags were used for Jihad warfare from the very first battles against the Gobir king from whom the Jihadists had escaped before: »We advanced towards them and the flag was flown.«<sup>410</sup> And in another poem on a Sokoto-Gobir war Abdullah recalled the powerful effect of the flag on the enemies: »Our banner was hoisted and reached them, and it seemed to them like a demon inside the object.«<sup>411</sup> The white military ›uniform‹ was also depicted in a military praise poem of Abdullah dan Fodio. After praising how the Jihadist forces defeated Malisa (Gwandu settlement) and Kadaye (Gobir town), he dedicated another chapter to the successful Jihadist cavalry:

»The annihilation of Kadaye in the little hands of our horsemen and experienced marksmen; in front of them was the son of the leader and his brothers the shooting stars which luminate the council. And their outfits were white, shining swords and red piercing arrows; and blue spearheads with haggard chargers. And they achieved their aspirations for killing two chieftains of their enemy, for he had been a betrayer of a dependable pact. And they returned with honor, unhurt and they divided their booty, discarding the expensive deceitful things.«<sup>412</sup>

The Sokoto soldiers captured Kadaye in ca. 1820 and killed its leader Gwomki.<sup>413</sup> In Abdullah's account of the Kadaye war, the Jihadists displayed very colorful equipment and white »shining« dress and sword.

409 Cf. Shanafelt: *The Nature of Flag Power*, p. 18.

410 Arab. *الحننا اليهم واللواء مرفع*, Hiskett (ed.): *Tazyin al-Waraqat*, p. 56.

411 Arab. *فصار لواؤنا يدنو إليهم و عاد لهم كغول في البجاد*. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

412 English translation by Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 152.

413 Cf. Last: *The Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 70.

Clapperton was astonished that the white flags were carried to the battlefields by slaves:

»The flags of the Fellatas are white, like the French, and their staff is a branch of a palm. They are not borne by men of honour, but by their slaves. The sultan had six borne before him; each of the governors had two. They also all dress in white tobies and trowsers [sic!], as an emblem of their purity in faith and intentions.«<sup>414</sup>

But as slaves could achieve high ranks in the Sokoto State, this does not necessarily mean that the flag bearers were from a low social rank. In fact, the office of the flag bearer was amongst the most honorable in the Caliphate. Uthman dan Fodio's standard bearer, for example, was mentioned by name (Ibrahim) in a list of servants authored by Nana Asmau.<sup>415</sup> And in another work, Nana Asmau noted three names of Muhammad Bello's standard bearers when commemorating the battle at Gawakuke (1836). By use of flowery metaphors, she described the impressive view of masses of glimmering spear heads. When praising the military equipment she also referred to their flags:

»Bello ordered the standards to be brought and unfurled. [...] Madi and Danyero raised the standards and with Abduwa, moved into the lead and towards the enemy. With standards flying, Bello mounted [...].«<sup>416</sup>

The standard bearers were obviously expected to lead the vanguard of the army into a battle. Their names were carefully remembered among the Jihadist elite – especially in times when there was a dearth of military success, as was the case during the 1850s when Nana Asmau composed her Fulfulde poem. She also mentioned the names of other flag bearers in an undated poem: »Thus Ibrahim was the flag bearer, likewise was Muhamman Jalo [...].«<sup>417</sup> From the context of this poem we know that the standard bearers were usually offices filled by non-clan individuals

**414** Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 189.

**415** Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 170.

**416** Ibid., p. 238. For the original Fulfulde text, see Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, p. 136.

**417** Hausa »Hakana fa Ibrahim mai tuta kuma, hakana Muhamman Jalo[...].« Nana Asmau: *Labaran Shehu*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 9.

or slaves. A flag bearer named Ibrahim also appeared in a list of servants of Uthman dan Fodio written by his son Abdullah.<sup>418</sup> Not all of these servants were slaves, because one can be identified as his nephew Kaa-wa Mangha. Others are just mentioned by their first names or nicknames (Sulle, Duudi, Sanbu, Dutte). In this list of very close followers of Abdullah, his secretary, who was called Mustafa, also appears as does his flag bearer Ibrahim.<sup>419</sup> This office was created in the first Jihad years, well before the consolidation of Jihadist statehood, and the carrying of flags therefore became a crucial element of territorial occupation.

During the spread of the Jihad wars, flag distribution became an act used for propaganda. In 1805, Uthman dan Fodio had started to award military leaders with flags and to give them a religious-military mission to conquer new territories on behalf of the Jihadists. Umar Dallaji and Muhammad Ibn Al-Hajj were of Katsina origin and had traveled to Uthman at the outbreak of the Jihad wars. Equipped with flags, they left Sabon Gari and returned to Katsina to start their own Jihad. This flag distribution, Nana Asmau remembered, mobilized the »community of the east« (Katsina and Kano) for Jihad: »Mallam Jamo, Dan Zabuwa, Dahiru and Mallam Jabir [...]; with Mallam Bakatsine [lit. »from Katsina«] they came in great numbers, they helped, and they accepted his [Uthman's] message.«<sup>420</sup> And in 1807, the Katsina ruler Muhammad Alwali was finally defeated by the Jihadists. The flags were material symbols of permission to conquer and to colonize. The Jihadists presented the flag as a tradition that had been practiced from the time of the Prophet onwards and would be continued until the coming of the Mahdi and the End of Time: »He [the Mahdi] is known for his lofty flags [just like me]«<sup>421</sup> Uthman dan Fodio explained in one of his Fulfulde poems dealing with the Mahdi. The flags linked spaces (Arabia and Sokoto) and times; the

418 Arab. ختم. Cf. Wali (ed.): *Kitab al-Nasab*, p. 8.

419 The judges were called Shuaib, Laadan Raame and Bial; the Imams of the mosque were Muhammad Sanbu, Muhammad Zanghi, and Abubakar nicknamed Mallam. Cf Abdullah Dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, manuscript photocopy and translation, in: Shareef: *The Lost and Found Children*, pp. 97–101.

420 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 449.

421 Fulfulde »Ko Mahdi anndira tutaaje juhde.« Edited by Al-Hajji Garba (unpublished) and located at SOAS: Uthman dan Fodio: *Ba ngare Mahdi*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, attached to S19, pp. 175–177.

past (Prophet Muhammad), their present (Sokoto Jihad) and the future (Mahdi).

*Booty, Taxes and Tribute*

The power of the Sokoto State and its emirates was achieved and maintained by raids, tribute and tax collection. The borderlines between the different categories of tributes and fees were not at all definite. But every form of tax or booty required soldiers who seized the goods and/or slaves through violence or under threat of such. The Sokoto leaders allowed the emirs to impose Islamic taxes on money, farm products, animals, mining products, and on war booty – each with a rate of one fifth.<sup>422</sup> But during Jihad wars, property was also subject to looting. Uthman dan Fodio declared that any property of non-Muslims and Muslims who had failed to emigrate in a hijra could legally be seized by Jihad soldiers.<sup>423</sup> And of course the military leaders wanted the state to profit from Jihad raids. They centralized the division of the booty and promised a just share for every soldier and the state treasury, as it was expressed in this Hausa poem accredited to Uthman dan Fodio:

»Leave off imitating the worship of the heathen, see what Yunfa [Gobir ruler, 1803–1808] did and he was driven away. When we come to the war and conquer the heathen, their goods shall be gathered together and the price fixed. When the reckoning is made a division will take place, the horses are divided and the owners driven away. And each soldier when he comes receives a share; let us repent of carrying off booty secretly, lest we burn in the fire [...].«<sup>424</sup>

422 Mafara (ed.): *Usulul-adlilullatil Umuri*, p. 15.

423 Cf. Uthman dan Fodio's *Masa'il muhimma* published by Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): *Handbook on Islam*, p. 100.

424 Hausa »Ku ber sun maida addini na asna, abin ga da yinfa ya yi ankaosai. Izan mun zo jahadi mu shi asna, agangama dukiansu akawamata. Izan ankawamata ararabata, rabon doki da maidoki afisai. Wa dakara randa ya zo du ya samu, mu tuba da shin gululu kadda mu kona [...].« Robinson (ed.): *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, pp. 60–61. Robinson's own translation is misleading here.

Soldiers and commanders often violated these principles, so that over and over again, the Jihadists emphatically reminded the community that »those who take booty and hide [it]«<sup>425</sup> would burn in hell. And in another stanza of the same poem, which was originally composed in 1812, Uthman dan Fodio banned different illegal practices of capturing booty in Jihad warfare:

»Those who steal something from someone who had at first captured it. [...] Goods must not be hidden undoubtedly. War booty must be taken to the leader. There are some amongst us who really own [these] goods. Those who prevent the division of the fifth of war.«<sup>426</sup>

Uthman dan Fodio hoped to centralize the numerous military units when introducing a system of taxation of booty. But warnings against defrauders did not stop with the second Jihadist generation, for Nana Asmau warned in an apocalyptic poem of 1842/3 that anyone stealing, defalcating or improperly distributing booty would never reach the Prophet.<sup>427</sup> In war poems internal conflicts over booty were never directly touched. Instead, Jihadist authors ridiculed the enemies that had to escape in a hurry and even left behind very personal belongings. The former Wazir Abd Al-Qadir explained for example how Yunfa's army in the first Jihad war ran away without shoes.<sup>428</sup> These verses can be traced back to a Fulfulde poem by Nana Asmau, later translated into Hausa by her husband. She also listed the items of booty collected in this battle, including horses, horse armor (barding), the royal drum, the tent (or umbrella), swords and kola nuts.<sup>429</sup> The second-generation Jihadist Abd Al-Qadir Ibn Al-Mustafa (1804–1864) explained that after the battle of Dakurawa

425 Hausa ماسن نڠن غول سبويي (»masu cin gulul subuya«). Nana Asmau: *Tabbat hakika*, pp. 48–49. Bargery explains that the Hausa term *gululu* derived from Arabic and means the »sly appropriation of booty; misappropriation of tax«; cf. Bargery's Hausa Dictionary, <http://maguzawa.dyndns.ws/frame.html> (12.11.2014).

426 Hausa »Masu kwace ma wanda ya fara kamu. [...] Baɗa boye fa dukiya babu shakki. Ai ta yaƙi a kai ta duk inda sarki. Wansu na nan hakikatan masu tarki. Masu hana yin rabo na humusi ga yaƙi.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, pp. 428–429.

427 Nana Asmau: *Gadaben gaskiya*, pp. 8–9.

428 Shareef (ed.): *The Description of the Land of the Blacks*, p. 7.

429 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 446.

(1835) the attackers »left their provisions and goods and benefit they had [brought] and booties.«<sup>430</sup>

But in this poem, the Jihadist author also referred to the fertile farmland the Gobir warriors left behind for the Jihadists: »They gave up their verdant and arable lands.«<sup>431</sup> In the Arabic text, the land was depicted as »green« and »dark«, which refers to the territory already used for cultivation. During the first years of warfare the Jihadist leaders highlighted portable booty that could be transported: slaves, horses, army equipment. But during state consolidation the territory itself became the ›product‹ to seize. The focus shifted from a policy of quick gains to a process of arranging sustainable sources of agricultural products to supply the Caliphate inhabitants. With this territorialization of warfare, the destruction of Sokoto cropland became an effective weapon for the enemies. In 1849, when the Sokoto Sultan Aliyu Baba dan Bello ruled the Caliphate (1842–1859), he fought a battle at the northern frontier in Dubdana (southern Niger). Some two years after the war he reported the initial reason for this military expedition:

»We met the troops of unbelief who had burnt almost all the crops out of enmity and aggression. They destroyed with utmost destruction and they gave no thanks to God, since they kindled fires in the crops. Until we saw with our own eyes that smoke surrounding us and we said, ›God would suffice for us‹; their resolution, may God back them not, was to drive off the Fulbe from the center of this valley. [They aimed at] destroying the Dulla country, far from it, what they presumed was a slander. At that stage we gathered [...] and marched towards Dubdana.«<sup>432</sup>

Land ordained for cultivation was precious and its willful destruction with fire condemned as a sinful act offending God. Destroyers of farmland and »those who annex land«<sup>433</sup> should be punished with hellfire.

430 English translation Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 191.

431 Ibid., p. 190.

432 Ibid., p. 200.

433 Hausa ماس قوئی قسا («masu kwacin kasa»). Nana Asmau: *Tabbat hakika*, pp. 48–49. A poem, originally composed by Uthman dan Fodio in 1812, and translated into Hausa by his daughter Nana Asmau some twenty years after.



For minorities of ›unbelievers‹ Islamic law imposed the so-called *jizya*<sup>434</sup> tax or reconciliation payment.<sup>435</sup> This allowed the ›unbelievers‹ to stay and live within Islamic territory in return for paying special taxes. These tolerated ›unbelievers‹ were sometimes integrated as additional armies for certain frontier expeditions. Many Jihadist soldiers remembered that they were looking for strange goods as booty. A Bornu warrior mentioned, for example, his non-Muslim comrades from the »Bede«. He stated that, when entering a town together in an attack, the Bede only caught dogs and then other »minor« goods as booty. They were supposed to do so in order to eat the animals. Reports of Jihadist soldiers claimed that the Bede regularly consumed both dogs and pigs. Both species are considered impure by Islam. They were neither allowed to enter a house, nor to be consumed as meat. This soldier was probably not informed about the Bede diet by his comrades, but from priests: »They eat dogs and hogs, and this renders them heathen, say the great men.«<sup>436</sup> Many Jihadist soldiers were influenced by the speeches of Islamic scholars. When encountering the ›unbelievers‹ of these sermons during military expeditions they sought to confirm stereotypes they already had in mind.

### *Dying in a Foreign Land: Sickness, War Wounds and Death*

In the Jihadist literature the war invalids only appear among the opponents' military, but of course many Jihadist soldiers also suffered from injuries during battle. There was no organized medical service, and instead ordinary soldiers had to take care of their own wounds. Clapperton observed one foot soldier whose face and arm were cut by the enemy's sword, so that his wounds were »tied up with a bandage or slip from the inner bark of a tree, which did not cover one half, or a third of the wound.«<sup>437</sup> If the soldiers died at home, they were buried in the compound or within the courtyard.<sup>438</sup> For them, the worst thing was not nec-

434 Arab. جزية.

435 Mafara (ed.): *Usulul-adlilwullatil Umuri*, p. 15.

436 Koelle (ed): *African Native Literature*, p. 210.

437 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 190.

438 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 325, 329.

essarily being buried in a strange country, but in the ›Land of Unbelief‹. This fear was expressed in an Arabic praise song on the event of the killing of the Fezzani trader ›Boo Khaloom‹ in the Mandara Mountains. This song was delivered by the first expedition of Denham and Clapperton: ›His body lies in the land of the heathen! The poisoned arrow of the unbeliever prevails!‹<sup>439</sup>

The Jihadist leaders always propagated Islamic burial practices. In a Fulfulde poem, Uthman dan Fodio instructed all Muslims to use a hollow in a grave oriented to the direction of Mecca – called *lahadi* – so that the corpse could be received by God.<sup>440</sup> But in the midst of a war, the ›martyrs‹ could often not be buried at once.<sup>441</sup> It was, on the other hand, strictly prohibited to practice the ritual washing of ›pagan corpses‹ and the burying of ›unbelievers‹ in a Muslim graveyard.<sup>442</sup> Among Hugh Clapperton's assemblage of various Arabic texts collected in the 1820s in Hausa, there was one short treatise on Nupe by an anonymous author. This text explained that the Nupe applied burial practices very different from mainstream Islamic rituals. Those ›drunkards and oppressors‹ neither prayed nor were they trustworthy as friends:

›When one of them dies, they fasten the arms across the chest, place the body in a sitting position in the grave, and one of them lies by it, while another sits at the entrance. They have a large and extensive cavern, in which they place their dead; but those who guard this cavern, though they are something like priests, are the most depraved persons. They sometimes send messengers to call the relatives of the dead, enjoining them to bring with them the best of every thing they have; and when these innocent people arrive at the cavern, they are immediately plundered of what they take there; and if they be females, their chastity is violated.‹<sup>443</sup>

439 Ibid., p. 413.

440 Uthman dan Fodio: *Mudinori*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, S16.

441 Cf. the Jihad battles in the Kano outskirts: ›None of the martyrs was buried that night, except those who were in the centre of the houses.‹ See the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 32.

442 See the Al-Maghili extract in Rebstock (ed.): Die Lampe der Brüder, p. 10–12.

443 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 340.

Clapperton's informant suspected the non-Muslim priests of abusing their clients financially and sexually throughout the burial ritual. Although this interpretation is a clear exaggeration in accordance with Jihadist ideology, Nupe officials agreed that the dead were buried in a sitting position and with weapons in caves.<sup>444</sup> The Jihadists condemned non-Islamic rituals for the sick and dead. The sick should be cured and dead be buried at home. In a Fulfulde poem Uthman dan Fodio banned the ritual of taking the sick into the bush and only letting them return when they were cured.<sup>445</sup> The battlefields were usually far from the city walls and tragedies of the wars were often communicated as hearsay. Bringing back corpses also was a means of creating clear evidence of the effects of a conflict. But despite this effort there was some rumor that articulated doubts about the killing in a war. In 1830, the British traveler Lander visited Yawuri at the Niger, which had resisted Jihadist attacks for decades. Lander observed mounted soldiers bringing the dead body of an army official back home to the capital after a war expedition. Local informants offered two possible causes: He was either killed by an arrow in the war or poisoned by his wife who had escaped with an Arab trader.<sup>446</sup>

Living together in military camps was itself a risk for the health of the soldiers because epidemics could soon make a whole army unit ill.<sup>447</sup> During longer campaigns, soldiers and war leaders frequently fell ill. Ibrahim Ibn Ahmad, the Bornu king from 1820 to 1846, fell sick on the return from a military expedition into the Kano Emirate:

»Illness overpowered the Sheikh: so they slept in that forest, and next morning they arose and went to Little Bode. Here the Sheikh's soldiers said, »Let us remain here, on account of the Sheikh's illness, and attend him for two days!« but, having been there two days, on the third God took the Sheikh away.«<sup>448</sup>

444 Ibid., p. 49.

445 Uthman dan Fodio: *Mudinori*.

446 Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, p. 273.

447 Ibid., p. 286.

448 Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 241.

He was immediately buried and his eldest son Umar<sup>449</sup> was given the royal insignia (sword and the *tsoga* cap)<sup>450</sup> and told to guide the soldiers home. But at first they had to mourn for seven days and only then did they proceed to the capital Kukawa. In Jihadist sources, the dead Jihadist soldiers only appear as buried bodies entering heaven, whereas the bodies of the enemies were left on the battleground and described with all their injuries. Although Muhammad Bello's poetic accounts of the Jihad battle often resemble a chronical summary, he reflects on these injured and abased corpses: »The horsemen of God left their skulls to the vultures at the battlefield with the palm and the leg amputated.«<sup>451</sup> He used expressions such as »slaughtered« or »butchered« when describing how opposing soldiers and leaders alike were treated. The account quoted below on how the corpses were exposed to different kinds of necrophagous animals is typical of the Jihadist war poetry. It obviously served as an insult of the most extreme sort and military leaders were not excluded from this triumphal narration:

»And they left Al-Siddiq [enemy leader] to the limping one in the dark [hyena]. And he spent the night on one side with a broken shank. And Sayda bin Barham whose fine horse perished there [...].«<sup>452</sup>

And Muhammad Al-Bukhari – son of Uthman and a high-ranking soldier in Jihad battles – also described how the Gobir military leaders were killed and left behind for the scavengers: »And we left their cavaliers and two of their leaders slaughtered for the limping one in the dark [hyena].«<sup>453</sup> In the Jihadist sources the wounded soldiers are always from among the enemy, whereas Jihadist death is placed in heavenly spheres of never-ending joy. Being consumed by carrion eaters or predators was likely a fate that the Jihadists feared. Therefore, they stressed that they had left »the majority of [enemies] at the battlefield, butchered by the wild beasts and hungry eagles.«<sup>454</sup> Predators were considered religiously

449 Umar Ibn Muhammad Al-Amin (reigned 1846–1853 and again 1854–1881).

450 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 109.

451 English translation by Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 154.

452 Ibid.

453 Ibid., p. 168.

454 Ibid., p. 175. This topos of scavengers eating the dead enemies' bodies is also documented in a war praise poem of the Bornu Sultan Al-Kanemi, composed in 1821 after

impure so that it was not permitted to either eat their meat or drink their milk.<sup>455</sup> Authors from the third generation of Jihadists revisited this topos of the wounded enemy when recounting the battles they had not witnessed in their life span. Abd Al-Qadir bin Al-Mustafa (son-in-law of Muhammad Bello) for example versified preordained Jihadist superiority on the battlefield:

»The Katsina people abandoned their leader to settlement for vultures and the howling limping one in the dark [hyena]. In it the Gobir [warriors] left Bawa behind knocked down, between the yells and arrows which fell like rain. Many an iron-clad warrior [...] ran away and another spent the night lying on the ground. [...] They were left like roots of a date tree; he remained soiled, uprooted by the wind, plucked by the thunder.«<sup>456</sup>

In another poem by the same author, dealing with the 1835 war of Sokoto against Gobir and its allies, he held forth about how enemy soldiers were injured by Jihadist swords. The detailed physical description marks a clear contrast to the idealized praise of Sokoto warfare:

»Broad-bladed swords, their fall cut apart the skulls; the bases of the neck fell apart from it [sword]. You would see their glitter in the air, their edges dyed [with blood]. When the cloudy dust of shells cleared off from it. And we made them drink death [...]; the chests of spears in every vein and bulky flesh.«<sup>457</sup>

In war poems composed during the mid-nineteenth century, the embellished renarration of the injured enemies and their fate was maintained. The fourth Caliphate ruler, called Aliyu Baba dan Bello (1842–1859), in ca. 1851 versified the battle against some rebel areas to the north. The battlefield chapter makes intensive use of the aesthetics of horror:

his return from a military expedition against Baguirmi; cf. Denhams English translation in Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 409–412.

**455** Uthman dan Fodio mentioned this impure animal category in his religious instruction book *Uhum al-muamala* (Niamey 410(14)); here it is referred to the English translation published in Abdarrahan Bewley (ed.): *Handbook on Islam*, p. 16.

**456** Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, pp. 188–189.

**457** *Ibid.*, p. 190.

»And you would see nothing on the hills except the corpses of casualties as carrion, massacred in the waters and among the trees. You could see and hear hyenas when they were eating them and the birds in the sky praising the cavalry. For they satisfied them with [types] of meat – near Karra as a reception to them and a feast; ask the vultures [who] would tell you.«<sup>458</sup>

On the one hand, the battlefield was a human space before fighting, but during the battle it was turned into the land of the animals, where humans are only found as corpses among different scavengers of the waters and the trees. Nana Asmau brought this stylistic device to perfection when dealing with the Gawakuke Battle of 1836. She described the conversations of hungry animals approaching the enemy corpses on the battle ground: »The vultures and hyenas said to each other, ›Who does this meat belong to?‹. And they were told, ›It's yours. There is no need to squabble today.«<sup>459</sup> This piece of poetry referred to observations of how scavengers quarreled about carrion. The corpses of the enemies were declared slaughter cattle because hyenas and vultures turned out »meat and brains.«<sup>460</sup>

At the early stage of the Jihad in 1820/1 Abdullah dan Fodio composed a Hausa poem about the battle of Kalambaina: *Waaƙar cikin Kalambaina*.<sup>461</sup> In this war poem Abdullah ridiculed the defeated allied enemies by asking where they were: »Where are the people from Gobir, Zamfara, [...] Marga, Gbari, Kambaza [Kebbi], Kuka, [...] Ginba, Kugira, [...] Zarma and Asbin?«<sup>462</sup> The poem answers all these questions by explaining how the enemies had been beaten, killed and plundered by the Sokoto military. Abdullah called his opponents arrogant liars and said they were now corpses left for hyenas and snakes on the Kalambaina battlefield.

458 Ibid., p. 202.

459 Ibid., p. 239. For the original Fulfulde Ajami version, see Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, p. 136.

460 Ibid., p. 138.

461 I have discovered the Ajami manuscript among the Krause Collection in Berlin; cf. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Waaƙar cikin Kalambaina*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 3, f. 14. Only one more copy is documented, held at Kaduna (O/AR1/24).

462 Hausa *إنا غوبراوا إنا زفراوا إنا مرغوا ناباغداوى إنا كنبزاوا إنا كوکیاوا إنا غنبناوى إنا کوغراوى إنا اسبناوا*. Cf. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Waaƙar cikin Kalambaina*, f. 14.

The impact of death was by no means restricted to the battlefield. Jihadists also died because of stressful war expeditions or epidemics. When Uthman dan Fodio traveled from Sabon Gari westwards to Gwandu, he gained news about the death of his son-in-law Umar Al-Kamuni who was married to Uthman's daughter Safiya. According to Nana Asmau's account, this was so important to him that he immediately preached about it to his followers.<sup>463</sup> And when the Jihadists gathered in Gwandu in 1805, a sudden »fever«<sup>464</sup> broke out and Uthman dan Fodio fell ill, too. In the Arabic translation of this poem, this epidemic is attributed to the spread of hedonistic enemies which provoked a religious plague sent and withdrawn by God.<sup>465</sup> But the question at stake was not whether a soldier was killed in action or during traveling between the battlefields in the camp. The crucial questions for the Jihadists in connection with soldierly death were: On which territory did the Jihadist die? And was his body buried and/or transported home? It was reported that after a defeat the Jihadists had spent the whole night to bury all the bodies of their fallen comrades. Muhammad Bello explained that they had no opportunity to complete the ritual corpse washing, so that they »had to ascend heaven with the dust of battle on them.«<sup>466</sup> Many people were scared to die on a war expedition and certainly most of them wanted to avoid dying in a foreign »Land of Unbelief«. For this reason the Sokoto Jihadist leaders employed martyrdom propaganda in order to ease this fear. It was towards the mid-nineteenth century that martyrdom finally became a favored topic in popular Sokoto literature. Authors commemorated the sacrifice of the first-generation Jihadists, who

»never feared death, they wanted it because they were looking forward to martyrdom and whenever a Mujahid was martyred he was succeeded by his son or brother hoping that Allah will bless him with martyrdom as he had blessed his predecessor.«<sup>467</sup>

463 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 449

464 Hausa »masasara« [»mashashshara«]. *Ibid.*, p. 450.

465 Shareef (ed.): *The Description of the Land of the Blacks*, p. 13.

466 Boyd / Mack: *Educating Muslim Women*, p. 43.

467 Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akh-bar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: *Jihad in Kano*, p. 71.

This intrepidity was also idealized by Muhammad Bello in his poem on the Fafara battle of 1806. Bello described the heavenly rewards for Jihadist martyrs in detail:

»And if what befell us of martyrdom pleased them, that [martyrdom] was our desire, we preferred the glorious deeds. Whoever they killed, they have conveyed him to his goal. He has blessedness, benevolence and pungent musk. And refreshment, sweet basil and paradise for his perpetual stay, and inherited dark-eyed maidens from chaste women. And from the dresses of paradise he will be dressed with all, silken wares, and silk brocade and gold woven clothes.«<sup>468</sup>

The promised reward in heaven included all luxurious things that puritan and ascetic-Sufist Islam banned for male Muslims: plenty of concubines, expensive food and elegant clothes. The description of the hereafter is employed as an alternative model to mundane poverty. Analogous to medieval Christian ideas of paradise,<sup>469</sup> Islamic concepts of paradise reflected contemporary rankings of luxury, wealth and desire even as these opposed religious ideas of abstinence. Although Uthman dan Fodio only seldom referred to martyrdom, he did not completely ignore the topic.<sup>470</sup> In 1811/2 he explained, for example, that the sin of idolatry could only be compensated by participating in a jihad. Otherwise such a sinner would be refused the Muslim burial rituals:

»Likewise one who bows to an idol for a hundred Dirham [currency] is to be asked for repentance with a sword and if he died or is killed before his repentance, he died as unbeliever. Therefore his body will not be washed ritually nor will prayer be offered on it. Furthermore, he will not be buried in the Muslims' Cemetery, even though he professes the Kalimatus-Shahadat<sup>471</sup>

468 Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 154.

469 See for example the pioneering study of Jacques Le Goff on medieval imagination of hell, paradise and purgatory; Le Goff: *La Naissance du Purgatoire*.

470 As for example claimed in Cook: *Martyrdom in Islam*, p. 89. Cook assumed that Uthman dan Fodio neglected this topic because he was never attending the battles and thus »ignored the practical exhortations that usually accompany warfare.« I would rather suppose that he addressed martyrdom in his speeches more often than in written works.

471 Muslim creed: »There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of God.«



and even if he prays, fasts and performs pilgrimage as well as all kinds of righteousness.«<sup>472</sup>

This description implicitly mentions the burial rituals of a martyr, which includes the washing of the corpse, a proper burial on a cemetery and the prayers of his companions. His brother Abdullah also made use of the martyrdom narrative of Islam. He described the death of two military soldiers of his clan who fell in a war and were thus given »beautiful women and fine silks«<sup>473</sup> in paradise. And it cannot be considered mere coincidence that Abdullah continued this line with a warning against deserters, or persons who hid when war expeditions were announced.<sup>474</sup> Uthman's son Muhammad Al-Bukhari outlined the options of Jihadist fighters more clearly – being alive with God's help or dying and thus being treated as a martyr in paradise: »Beseeching one of the two good things for our army, either paradise or the assistance of the All merciful.«<sup>475</sup>

Those who were considered to be in paradise were commemorated by the Jihadists on name lists. Those on the list were usually scholarly colleagues or important military commanders. When the Jihadists were defeated by the Gobir and Adar military in Tsuntsuwa in the early phase of the Jihad (September 1805), many relatives and scholars were killed and remembered as martyrs. Muhammad Sanbu, Saada, Riskuwa, Zaidu, Ladan and Nadumama<sup>476</sup> were characterized as »scholars« (*malimai*), »Koran students« (*Kuranu dalibai*), and those knowing the Koran »by heart« (*harda/hadda*).<sup>477</sup> Some two years later, in the battle of Alwasa, the leader Agunbulu and Gobir forces attacked and put many Jihadist soldiers to flight. Nana Asmau was convinced that the flight of these cowardly soldiers led to the death of the brave ones left behind. She also gave the names of those martyrs: Hammadi, Zago, Duwa, and Murje-

472 Mafara (ed.): Kitabul-Amri, p. 5.

473 Hiskett (ed.): Tazyin al-Waraqat, p. 119.

474 Ibid.

475 Junaidu: Sakkwato Legacy, p. 174.

476 Shareef has traced back their genealogies which all finally led him to the Fulbe ancestor Musa Jokollo and in turn to the clan of Uthman dan Fodio. Cf. Shareef: Description of the Land of the Blacks, p. 9.

477 Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 447.

do.<sup>478</sup> The names of these martyrs were remembered among the Jihadist family for decades. And Nana Asmau honored some more martyrs that had been killed during the wars following Uthman dan Fodio's death in 1817: »[Muhammad Bello] made war in which Shehu Nuri deceased. He obtained martyrdom in his [Bello's] war. [...] Truly, Dan Jada as well as Namoda obtained martyrdom in his war.«<sup>479</sup> The only closely related family member, who died as martyr in a Jihad war, was Abdulkadir, a son of Uthman and his wife Hajo. He was born in ca. 1806 and died before reaching 30 years of age on the battlefield at Anka where he was supposedly also buried.<sup>480</sup> It can be assumed that it was appropriate to bury martyrs in a foreign land. This was at least a better fate compared to being eaten by scavengers. But by contrast, the remains of the scholar Umaru Alkammu were transported from Zauma (ca. 100 miles south of Sokoto) to the capital on request of Muhammad Bello who buried him next to his father Uthman. Umaru was a close friend of Uthman dan Fodio.<sup>481</sup> By placing a martyr tomb somewhere, a Jihadist ruler was also able to influence the flow of pilgrimage visitors to gather at a certain place.

In the Hausa region, female relatives typically expressed grief after a family member's death by public screaming and weeping. But the Jihadist elite always prohibited these burial rituals, because to them it appeared as a non-Islamic form of ancestor worship. They wanted burials to be a quiet and inward demonstration of respect for the deceased. On the other hand, praising the first-generation martyrs in texts became fundamental in legitimizing the Caliphate state and the identity it was built upon. Thus Nana Asmau's most utilized literary genre was elegy poetry. With these texts she formulated her sad feelings about the death of her relatives and boasted about their pious character. But she also legitimized repeatedly that elegy praise poetry was allowed by Islam – unlike

**478** The names differ somewhat in the three language versions of Nana Asmau's poem *Filitago*. Cf. for example *ibid.*, p. 450.

**479** Hausa »Ya fidda yaƙi can a Shehu Nuri kau. Ya sam shahada can cikin yaƙi nasa. [...] Dan Jada kau haka ya Namoda hakikatan sun san shahada can cikin yaƙi nasa.« *Ibid.*, p. 452.

**480** *Ibid.*, p. 169.

**481** *Ibid.*, p. 171.

noisy lamentation at funerals. She argued this way in her elegy for Aisha, who was probably her niece and a daughter of Muhammad Bello:

»It really is no sin to compose an elegy, for Abu Sufyan<sup>482</sup> wrote an elegy for the Prophet after the battle. My weeping for her [Aisha] is with compassionate, longing and yearning tears with true love. The Prophet did not forbid this. He forbade only screaming, yelling and groaning.«<sup>483</sup>

Nana Asmau developed categories for delineating the intensity and religious devotion of feelings. Islamic mourning was a quiet and spiritual process, so that the hiring of professional screaming women by the mourning family was by no means allowed. Mourning should not be turned into a noisy representation of power and profane influence. In the 1850s her elegies worried about the death of the first-generation Jihadists. Nana Asmau talked about the previous deaths of her relatives. In a voluminous 1837 Arabic elegy for her brother and Caliphate ruler Muhammad Bello she had already mentioned her fear of the eschaton: »The state of the world is confusion and pain. And the loss of my Sheikh [Uthman] is a danger.«<sup>484</sup> With »world« she may well mean the Caliphate and the political consequences arising from its leaders' deaths. She expressed fear about an unsecure future for her family and the elite. Considering her old age, millenarian thoughts of this sort may also have derived from a general feeling of missing her former companions in life – she uses for example various metaphors for her loneliness: an abandoned bird, an stray in the desert, and an orphan. She also confessed to being scared of her own punishment in the hereafter and the weight of her sins. Nana Asmau listed all the moral values Bello possessed and expressed her hope that his tomb is a pleasant and bright place. Jihadist wives were typically also buried close to the grave of their deceased husband. Re-counting the Jihad as a means of maintaining a common identity through a commemorative culture was of crucial relevance since Uthman had

**482** Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb (d. 652) was a political leader in Mecca who converted to Islam after opposing it.

**483** Arab. ولا اثم حقا للرتاء فقد رثى النبي أبو سفيان بعد الواقعة. و أبكي عليها بالدموع ترحما و شوقا و تحنانا. Nana Asmau: Elegy for Aisha I, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): Arabic Writings, p. 143.

**484** Arab. بحال الدنيا ذات خلط و فجع و رزني بشيخي هذا خطير. Nana Asmau: Elegy for Muhammad Bello, in: *ibid.*, p. 153.

died in 1817. And exactly 20 years later Nana Asmau lamented in her elegy on Bello that an important and reliable contemporary witness had just died: «[He was an expert on] Every science and recounting past events [tradition].»<sup>485</sup>

Elegies and praise poems usually did not deal with the fate of war widows. Nana Asmau addressed this matter only once when describing the eschatological End of Time and Judgment Day. Among the plagues predicted by different prophets, Nana Asmau stressed that some of them had already appeared in her time – for instance that »many young were killed [in war] which caused many women to become single and poor; in order that they learn about the wealth of the world [instead of Islam]».<sup>486</sup> By this critical comment Nana Asmau was certainly condemning widowed women who ran the businesses or farms of their deceased husbands instead of living a pious and chaste Islamic lifestyle. Right after the above-quoted lines, Nana Asmau turned to men shunning their wives sexually and looking for prostitutes instead. Although there is no direct link between war widows and prostitution, widows may often have become prostitutes.

The Jihadists wanted to have the martyrs buried and mourned for quietly. Nevertheless they wanted the tombs to become frequented places within the territory declared as ›Land of Islam‹ or – even better – close to the capital Sokoto. Being left for the carrion eaters and being buried in a deserted »natural« space were dominant fears. This was also expressed in poems about the time of grieving for the deceased. The sorrow of mourning was often compared to the »wasteland and the waterless desert.«<sup>487</sup> In other poems, feelings of sadness for a dead relative were metaphorically compared to the despair of a »lost and dying person in an uninhabited region.«<sup>488</sup> In this elegy for Muhammad Bello, his sister Nana Asmau stressed the fear of being left behind in an unsettled area

485 Arab. و فيهم علوم و ارواء راوى. Ibid., p. 159.

486 Hausa يون كشن كن كذا ماتا سئمد يوا بطسني دراسم غرما تكن دنيا. Nana Asmau: *Sharuddan kujama*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, p. 84.

487 Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 172.

488 Ibid., p. 182.

– be it dead or alive. The urban burial places on the other hand became religious centers of visitation.<sup>489</sup>

### *Ethnic Spaces and Ethnic Markers*

Although the Jihadists tried to foster the image of a religious group despite all cultural and linguistic differences, their enemies often described them as Fulbe. The ethnic markers for them were the Fulfulde language, their complexion, or their culture of warfare on horses. When the Jihad arrived in the Bornu territory, the Bornu leaders declared that all urban Fulbe were Jihadist rebels. Bornu rulers not only tried to disperse their »Fulbe« enemy or enslave them, but also to kill them right away. Even Bornu Fulbe residents without links to the Sokoto Jihadists were therefore forced to seek protection. Bornu military chased these refugees and killed them even in remote places. They were afraid that the Fulbe would gather again and attack from the periphery. One contemporary witness stated that after the recapture of the capital town, Bornu soldiers haunted the Fulbe:

»On seeing that the Phula began to flee, the priest said to the king: »Follow after them, and kill them all: they will not stand still at all.« When the king saw that the Phula were running, all the soldiers pursued them on horseback, and killed them, and, after having pursued them to the distance of one day's walk, they returned to the capital, and, on entering it, there were so many corpses of the Phula, that there was no room for the King to sit down. [...] King Dunoma made war, and stormed every place where he heard that there were Phula: all the Phula feared him.«<sup>490</sup>

And when some Jihadists tried to conquer the Bornu capital once again, the account is very similar:

**489** Tombs of non-Muslims were at times attacked by religious enemies. When the British traveler Oudney died on his journey in Bornu, his burial ground was allegedly attacked and set on fire by North African traders who explained their action by declaring that the deceased had been a (Christian) unbeliever. This was reported by Clapperton in *id.* / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, p. 360.

**490** Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 224.

»All soldiers on horseback pursued, and overtook, and killed the Phula: the Phula were running before, and the soldiers followed them behind. Although they had begun after sunrise, they did not leave of killing them till the sun set. But when the sun had set, the King left them, went back, and alighted in the capital.«<sup>491</sup>

Quite a few scholars have explained the Sokoto Jihad as an ethnic conflict. Several Hausa interpretations of the initial Jihad war in Gobir indeed point out that the Gobir Court assumed that this new opposition was organized along ethnic ties. In Hausa historiography it was the Gobir king who asked all his allied kings to kill the Fulbe communities in their sphere of influence. But ironically, this ethnic understanding of the Jihadist enemies as Fulbe gave rise to a throng of immigrants who joined Uthman dan Fodio's settlement:

»He [the Gobir King] was angry; he sent letters to Bornu, Daura and Zaria and asked them to kill the Fulbe. Therefore all Fulbe gathered at the settlement of the priest Uthman. And in the places where the king of Gobir did not announce that, the Fulbe did not like the priest, but said: This priest has nothing and wants to start a war. He is poor and owns neither cattle nor horses. After seven nights there were 20,000 Fulbe warriors at Uthman's camp.«<sup>492</sup>

With the help of the royal courts and their ethnic interpretation of Jihadist opposition, the movement only became stronger and integrated Fulbe groups that had never aspired to start a revolution, but were in panic as a result of the anti-Fulbe propaganda. Urban Fulbe had to leave the towns and seek refuge in the settlement of Uthman dan Fodio. And nineteenth-century legends have it that when the Bornu forces recaptured their capital, the Islamic adviser told the Bornu soldiers to kill everyone. They pushed Fulbe villagers into the capital and killed them »so that

491 Ibid., p. 225.

492 Hausa »Ya yi fushi, ya watsa takardu ga garuruwa har birnin Daura har Zazau. Ya chi koana aka ga bafillachi a yi ta kasha, saboda haka duka fillani doli suka taru wurin malam Usman. Inda sarkin Gobir bai chi haka ba da fillanin ba duka ke son malam ba, sun chi: Wai malam don ya ga bay a da komi yak e son yak'i, suka chi: Shi matsiyachi ne ba shanu, ba dawaki. Ko an kwana bakoi bahillachi wuren malam Usman yak'I zanbar ashirin.« Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 146; cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Origins of the Sokoto State*, StB, Ms. 844, text 23, f. 33.

only here and there one was left to run and go to their country.«<sup>493</sup> These narratives sometimes depicted sequences of ethnic cleansing. For eight days, Koelle's informant stated, they buried the dead Fulbe bodies in the Bornu capital. The Bornu military reportedly used the walled town for this massacre, as a rapid mass escape through the gates was not possible. The urban space became a prison for the Fulbe. To the scholarly informant this ethnically oriented violence appeared as a new method of warfare: massacres. Not taking captives and instead killing all enemies was the exception in early nineteenth-century warfare of the Central Sahel. The Bornu leaders, however, aimed to prevent future Fulbe movements and therefore tried to wipe them out. One fact is especially astonishing in this regard: The idea to eliminate the »ethnic« enemy is ascribed to the foreign priest who was advising the Bornu king. The presence of the foreign Muslim priest and the application of the new radical form of warfare were connected by contemporary society. The Fulbe were seen as a threat so dangerous that it was necessary to fight them totally. And directly after the recapture of the capital it was principally Bornu soldiers who moved into the abandoned town houses of the Jihadists. From a Bornu point of view all Jihadist forces were Fulbe. A Bornu informant told Koelle about the Zinder Sultanate attack on Kugawa Buni:<sup>494</sup>

»One day the tidings came to him [Zinder ruler], that King Ibram had entreated the Phula, [...] and that the Phula had granted his request, prepared themselves, and come to him, and he had risen, taken the lead, and was marching against Kugawa Buni.«<sup>495</sup>

Among Bornu residents, the Jihad evoked a stereotypical image of the Fulbe as groups of soldiers and mercenaries. And even among the Sokoto neighbors to the south, kings ordered that the Fulbe Muslim missionaries be killed when the frontier states were threatened by Sokoto expansion and it was feared that local missionaries might be hidden spies of Sokoto. Lander delivered some news that the Gwari in the 1820s killed

493 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 231.

494 This place may be identified with Kukawa Birni.

495 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 247.

all Fulbe in their country and thus successfully scared off prospective attackers.<sup>496</sup>

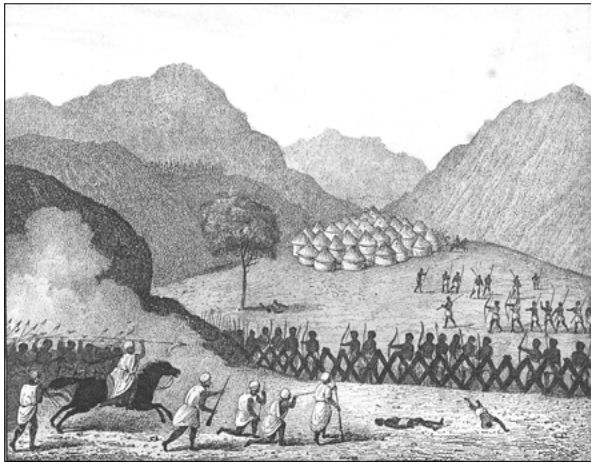


Figure 15: Clapperton participated in a Bornu attack on Musfeia in 1823

In the Mandara Mountains non-Jihadist Fulbe settlements were also attacked and the inhabitants were killed because of their ethnic affiliation. Most of these colonies in the Mandara Mountains were established after 1809, and were raided by both the Mandara Sultanate and the Bornu military. The British explorer Clapperton partook in a raid of Mandara and Bornuese military against the Fulbe settlement Dirkulla and some neighboring villages in 1823. He reported that only old people and young children were left behind in the villages, since everyone else had already escaped. According to his description, they were all killed and put into the flames of their burning homes.<sup>497</sup> When approaching the Fulbe town Musfeia<sup>498</sup> (cf. *Figure 15*), Clapperton noticed that the women supported their fighting husbands with a supply of arrows and by pushing down stones from the hills that rolled onto the mounted soldiers. The Bornu attackers were soon defeated and tried to escape while being pursued by

<sup>496</sup> Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, p. 276.

<sup>497</sup> Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 1, p. 313.

<sup>498</sup> This place may be identified with Maroua.



mounted warriors. Clapperton escaped without his horse, all his baggage was lost and many members of the expedition were killed. According to this report, most of the horses later died from poisoned arrows.<sup>499</sup> Moreover, this attack was not a single event, but »already ritual and an institution«<sup>500</sup> between the different groups of that area. With reference to the violent reaction to the Jihadist expansion we can conclude that the Jihad was interpreted as an ethnic conflict by anti-Jihadist military, while the Jihadist approach of socio-religious incorporation was territorially based on sacred geographies. The enemies of Sokoto did not accept the wars as religious conflict. They assumed that their enemies were Fulbe and therefore failed to see how attractive this movement might be for very different people and peoples. While they differentiated between different ethnic categories, the Jihadists most basically fostered a classification that distinguished between human believers and unbelievers, as well as between human and animal species populating different environments.

#### ***5.4 Jihadist Exploration of »Cannibal Land«***

Before the expansion of the Sokoto Caliphate into the southern and eastern frontier zones, those regions were typically discussed in geographical-historical texts. It has been demonstrated that this type of spatial knowledge either referred to persisting hearsay regarding the long-distance trade system or to geography from classical Arabic literature (cf. chapter III.1). But when military expedition groups and Jihadist colonizers entered the southern »Land of Unbelief« which heretofore they had only heard of, the existing theoretical knowledge and maps were challenged by real experienced encounters with the territory and its inhabitants. This section is therefore dedicated to the role of Jihad soldiers, slaves and refugees in exploring this strange space as mobile actors and transferring information, empirical knowledge and new stories within the Jihadist discourse.

**499** Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 1, pp. 320–326.

**500** French »La guerre était la fois rite et institution.« Cf. Vincent: Sur les traces du major Denham, p. 592.

At the turn of the century and during the early Jihad years, the southern ›Land of Unbelief‹ was especially described in terms of its vegetation, topography, economy, unbelief and the supposed tendency to anthropophagy. But when Sokoto expeditions entered these regions, the reports mostly focused on the inhabitants' exotic mode of warfare and cannibalism during or after battle. The Sokoto soldiers and slaves picked up the historical exonym ›Niam-Niam‹ when referring to the inhabitants of the alleged wilderness. The rumors about cannibals also became manifest in the exploration journals of European travelers, who relied on their local informants. The German explorer Georg Schweinfurth, for example, promoted his theory that the real ›Niam-Niams‹ cannibals were the Azande people of today's South Sudan and Central African Republic.<sup>501</sup> And his view was endorsed quite naively by the famous anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard in the twentieth century. Evans-Pritchard was convinced that the Azande were meant by the name ›Niam-Niam‹. And in an article he even investigated the question whether they were cannibals or not. Arguing on the basis of Schweinfurth's travel accounts, Evans-Pritchard at first very critically mentioned the lack of local language skills of the German traveler and the doubtful validity of his information about Niam-Niam cannibalism resulting from this lack. However, he reinforced the theory that ›Niam-Niam‹ itself and other names for the same people (e.g. Makaraka) meant man-eaters in their original African languages. Schweinfurth already reported that »niam« was a term for »flesh«. Nevertheless Evans-Pritchard called Schweinfurth's statements about the supposed cannibals mere reproductions of hearsay evidence and myth:

»The myth was by this time [1880s] so well established that any visitor to Zandeland who then wrote of his experiences felt obliged to make some reference to their cannibalism, even though he himself had seen no signs of the practice.«<sup>502</sup>

Despite all this elaborate discussion of the travel accounts and colonial papers, Evans-Pritchard in the end concluded, that »there is a strong prob-

**501** For an elaborate discussion of his interpretations see Marx: *Der Afrikareisende Georg Schweinfurth*, pp. 69–97.

**502** Evans-Pritchard: *Zande Cannibalism*, p. 245.

ability that cannibalism was practiced at any rate by some Azande.<sup>503</sup> According to his view, there was an Azande minority that sometimes also ate human flesh as part of special rituals. He supported this idea by mentioning the credibility of his Azande first-hand information. Evans-Pritchard was adamantly convinced that his ethnological methods of field research were the most reliable and effective academic instruments to answer the question of Azande cannibalism. In his argumentation it was the Azande who personally told him about cannibalism of killed enemies after wars or the execution of criminals. And in the same manner as nineteenth-century European explorers in Africa he answered the second question, for what reason they had practiced anthropophagy: »The motive was simply a taste for human meat, sometimes accentuated by extreme hunger,<sup>504</sup> he concluded.

From his field trips Evans-Pritchard learned that the cannibal *topos* was popular with various social groups in the Sahel: colonizers, colonized, travelers, merchants and so on. Even the Azande themselves feared cannibalism as they thought that the British doctors conducted medical operations because of their desire to eat human meat.<sup>505</sup> Therefore it appears that the belief in anthropophagy was widespread in pre-colonial Sudan and a general instrument of *othering* strangers and enemies. And from his own research, Evans-Pritchard quotes an Azande clerk who stated:

»In the past Azande were just like animals of the bush, because they killed people and ate their fellows just like lions, leopards, and wild dogs. In the past when a man died a Zande sharpened his knife, moved over the corpse, and cut off the flesh [a detailed description of cooking and eating the meat follows].<sup>506</sup>

The ›Niam-Niam‹ cannibal discourse has a long history and has never really stopped. Stories about this imaginary people existed in the early medieval Mediterranean, they developed further in the Sahel, and European travelers and anthropologists introduced them to modern European and North American academic writing. And the role of the Sokoto

503 Ibid., p. 251.

504 Ibid., p. 256.

505 Ibid., p. 257.

506 Evans-Pritchard: Cannibalism, p. 73–74.

Jihadists was crucial in determining *where* those cannibals allegedly lived. In a very ambitious attempt the ethnologist Paola Ivanov examined the complex evolution of the ›Niam-Niam‹ myth with reference to human-animal comparisons.<sup>507</sup> Her results demonstrate that the term ›Niam-Niam‹ was by no means confined to the Azande people, but was rather »a para-ethnographic cliché or *Wandermotiv*.«<sup>508</sup> Her research also confirmed that this narrative first appeared in the Arabic and Islamic cultural sphere of the Middle Ages with the terms »Namnam« or »Damdam.«<sup>509</sup> Those words were used to refer to African people living at the edge of the then known world on the periphery of the ›Bilad as-Sudan‹. The farther a given people were located from the perceived center of a mentally drawn map, the closer they were located to the animal world.

The oldest reference was from Al-Masudi, who explained that a »Damdam« area inhabited by cannibals was located to the west of the medieval Gao state (956/7). Imagining where all the black slaves in the trans-Saharan slave trade might come from, Al-Idrisi explained that they all originated from the »Lamlam« pagan regions and were captured by the slave expeditions of their northern neighbors. Unsurprisingly, these arguments all seem to legitimize the slave trade from a Muslim and Arabic point of view. Many slaves internalized this narrative and described their biography as a transition from an animal-like state to a Muslim and civilized one. During the thirteenth and fourteenth century the effort to precisely locate these Niam-Niam areas caused some scholars to distinguish between Lamlam, Namnam and Damdam. Myths about the sources of the Nile (or »Niles«: Nile, Niger, Senegal, Webi) were mixed up with imaginings of the deep interior of Africa beyond the routes of Arab exploration and trade. Such geographical accounts were based on concepts of the unknown and savage. This frontier of knowledge was – as the long-distance trade grew in the Sahel – expanding into the home regions of those societies that were considered to be cut off from this information network. Lack of knowledge was seen as one basic charac-

**507** Published in her voluminous article: Ivanov: Cannibals.

**508** Ibid., p. 92.

**509** Other variants are »Dahdam«, »Tamnam«, »Tamim« and »Yamyam«. The terms used in the Modern Age are »Yam-Yam«, »Niam-Niam« or »Lam-Lam«. The etymology is ambiguous because of the oral transmission between speakers of different languages.

teristic of the Niam-Niam people and referred to both an ignorance of Islam and a dearth of »civilization«:

»Because they lived in an area uninfluenced by Islamic civilization, they were endowed with animal characteristics such as cannibalism, even if there was yet no tails or dogs' heads. [...] The supposed existence of animal-like inhabitants at the edges of the earth served mainly to provide affirmation of one's own culture.«<sup>510</sup>

In the eighteenth century the first European entered the Dar Fur kingdom and explicitly quoted the inhabitants' remarks on the Niam-Niam when commenting on their production of poisoned spears for warfare:

»There is a remote part of the pagan country, from where slaves are brought, which the Arabs distinguish by the term *Gnum Gnum*, (a sobriquet,) whose inhabitants eat the flesh of the prisoners they take in war. I have conversed with slaves who came thence, and they admit the fact.«<sup>511</sup>

On being asked, the slaves always decided to repeat the prevailing narrative and called their ancestors cannibals. Browne further stated that these »Gnum Gnum« took off the skin of their victims and wore it as a trophy. By 1800, these terms were already collective names for inhabitants of the bordering regions of the Islamic world and had become paradigmatic for the frontiers of Islam. Only later and with the participation of European travelers were the names for the Niam-Niam traced back etymologically to certain African languages such as Dinka; the translation was always given as »man eaters« or the like. But as demonstrated above, the roots of these words are rather to be found in the African-Arabic tradescape. Coeval with Browne and just before the Sokoto Jihad, Friedrich Konrad Hornemann met some Hausa traders in the Fezzan, but he doubted the myths about »people with tails, without necks.«<sup>512</sup> In another letter he stressed again that the stories about human beings with tails were not credible, when hearing about tailed people living ten day marches south of Kano: »He [the informant] called them Yem Yem and said they were

510 Ivanov: *Cannibals*, pp. 94–95.

511 Browne: *Travels in Africa*, p. 310.

512 Hornemann: *Fr. Hornemanns Tagebuch seiner Reise*, p. 140.

maneaters.«<sup>513</sup> Hornemann was also confronted with tales about uncivilized Christians in the »Sudan«:

»Christians and tailed men, I suppose, never will be found in the interior of Africa. The Mahometans call Nazari (which is properly the name for Christians) not the Christians only, but also every other people who are not of their religion.«<sup>514</sup>

Another German scholar of the eighteenth century, Carsten Niebuhr, was told by Arab merchants that in Africa there were »persons that have sharp teeth just like man-eating animals.«<sup>515</sup> Tooth sharpening has indeed been common across many African and other societies. Niebuhr also mentioned that within »Afnu« (Hausa) there were regions like »Baghermi« (Bagirmi) and Andam (»Damdam«). But only the latter had sharpened teeth, although behaving in a proper manner in general. »Jemjem however, were not bought as slaves because of their dangerous cannibalism: A nation of heathens in this area, calling themselves Jemjem, with sharp teeth, are however evil and cannibals; no Muslim knowing them would buy them,»<sup>516</sup> Niebuhr reported. In another text Niebuhr compared his information to Hornemann's account on the Yemyem.<sup>517</sup>

And there is also some reference to the »Niam-Niam« topos in the account of the German traveler Johann August von Einsiedel (1754–1837). This intellectual visited North Africa in 1785 with his married lover after faking her death. But in Tunis they were soon forced to return to Europe due to the pest that stopped the Saharan trade system for some time. In his short travel journal he recounted what Arab merchants had told him about Africa south of the Sahara. Among other places, he also listed the »Jemjem« country.<sup>518</sup> His style of interviewing was similar to

**513** Ibid., p. 144.

**514** Id.: Journal, p. 119.

**515** German »Eine Nation Heiden in dieser Gegend, welche sich Jemjem nennt, und gleichfalls spitze Zähne hat, wird dagegen für böseartig, ja für Menschenfresser gehalten; kein Mohammedaner, der sie kennt, will sie kaufen.« Niebuhr: Das Innere von Afrika, p. 968.

**516** Ibid., p. 981.

**517** German »Er hat [Hornemann] gleichfalls von der kleinen Nation Yemyem gehört, die man für Menschenfresser hält.« Niebuhr: Bemerkungen über Fr. Hornemann's Reisen, p. 433.

**518** Einsiedel: Nachricht von den innern Ländern von Afrika, p. 436.

the one used in Niebuhr's conversations; Einsiedel asked about places, distances, food and animals. »Unbelievers« were not described as such, but those people who had been enslaved by the Bornu military were called »Christians«. For religious reasons they had to live separate from Muslim societies in the hilly areas.<sup>519</sup> According to Einsiedel and his informants, the »Jemjem« lived north of Bornu as a »half-wild nation« and African traders would never cross »Jemjem« borders.<sup>520</sup> Zamfara is presented as an unsafe area governed by various rulers constantly engaged in wars with each other. Therefore, traders avoided this area when traveling to Bornu. On the other hand, Hausa (»Hafnu«) is depicted as a safe area with a prospering slave trade, though less civilized than Bornu.<sup>521</sup> South of Hausa people produced large amounts of gold, but the Hausa wouldn't tell about it and foreigners were not allowed to enter this dominion.<sup>522</sup> The Sahel region was considered Islamized; each town had a mosque and educated pupils studying the Arabic language. The British traveler Lyon also collected Lamlam stories from trans-Saharan traders from 1818 to 1820. He interviewed a ten-year-old slave boy, who was identified as a native from Lamlam – somewhere between Kano and Zaria – by his owner. Lyon asked him which part of the human body tasted best, and the boy explained that the breasts were usually given to the men as the most delicious meat, whereas the rest was for women and children. The young child was obviously used to this random question as he was presented as an exotic cannibal child, but he was not able to answer further questions posed by Lyon in regard to the victims.<sup>523</sup>

After Lyon it was Clapperton's turn to travel through the Hausa region where he heard of the »Yemyem« of Yacoba in the Bauchi Emirate: »natives who were here in slavery, as well as from Hamada.«<sup>524</sup> His informants described the country as infidel, hilly and the earth full of silver. Exactly like the medieval Arabic geographers and the Sokoto Jihad-

**519** German »Die Neger von Bornou behaupten, dass sich dessen [Kouka] Bewohner zur christlichen Religion bekennen, und aus dieser Ursache vermieden sie alle Gemeinschaft mit den Mahometanern, mit denen sie grenzen.« Ibid., p. 438.

**520** Ibid., p. 439.

**521** Ibid., p. 440.

**522** Ibid., p. 441.

**523** Lyon: A Narrative of Travels, p. 143.

**524** Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 2, p. 221.

ists, Clapperton's informants addressed the lack of Islam, impenetrable landscape and hidden wealth of resources as characteristics inseparably linked with each other. On the one hand, there was a desire to trade with and explore the unknown frontier lands of the Caliphate. But on the other hand, there was a considerable fear of these strangers. From Denham's account we learn about contacts between Bauchi slaves and their northern neighbors. This contact within the hegemonic constraints of master-slave relationships may have increased prejudices against the so-called »Yemyem«, because foreign slaves unintendedly threatened their masters due to their distinct language and knowledge. In such contexts, slaves were very often stigmatized as cruel and barbaric beasts. Within the Arabic world there were always some rumors about female Niam-Niam slaves from Africa eating their masters' children which they were supposed to be taking care of. Furthermore, slave traders were blamed for cutting off the tails of the slaves secretly, so that no one on the slave markets would notice their cannibal descent.<sup>525</sup> In accounts about the Banda »Yamyam«, they were called uncivilized because they filed their front teeth like predators. Many reports about tooth sharpening probably referred to the Baka (so called »pygmies« or Bangwa) of Cameroon. Bornu slave holders were said to »civilize« and »humanize« their southern slaves by deadening their filed teeth. This was reported by a slave of Bornu origin interviewed by Seetzen.<sup>526</sup> In other accounts from Dar Fur, the »Niam-Niams« were even believed to have Jewish ancestors. But maybe the most astonishing narratives were those telling of the closeness to animal behavior, such as crawling on all fours.<sup>527</sup> It was said they had dog's heads or tails, and the question whether they had tails or not was scientifically debated in Europe during the nineteenth century when »these composite figures were seen as the missing link between the animal and human kingdoms.«<sup>528</sup> Although Europeans discussed these legends, they did not create them out of nothing. They encountered a Muslim, and then

525 Ivanov: *Cannibals*, p. 110.

526 Seetzen: *Über das grosse afrikanische Reich Burnu*, p. 338.

527 Quoted and discussed in Ivanov: *Cannibals*, pp. 98–102.

528 *Ibid.*, p. 105.



a Jihadist discourse of alterity that was rich in Niam-Niam stories and countries.<sup>529</sup>

*Strangers from the Water: Seacows and Ferrymen*

In the mid-nineteenth century, the German explorer Eduard Vogel was again told that »Njem« means »meat« in the local language of some cannibals south of Jakoba. Although Vogel considered these people passionate cannibals, he said that gossip saying they would eat the sick individuals from among their families was completely wrong. He visited them and witnessed two dying »Njem-Njem« being treated with the utmost care by their families. Allegedly, they only ate their enemies after battle and sold their own children into Jihadist slavery.<sup>530</sup> When Vogel asked local informants in Bauchi for the stories on human-animal beings, they presented him an African manatee or seacow from the Benue River. This animal was called »Ujuh« (*ayu* in Hausa) by Vogel's informants and had thick reddish hair on its back. From time to time it was hunted and eaten.<sup>531</sup> Vogel guessed that this animal was the so-called »holy fish« or »sacred water snake« of the Songhay and Hausa myths (cf. IV.1.4).<sup>532</sup> This account is the only evidence for a zoological explanation of myths about human-animal beings who lived in the water – and is indeed a very plausible one. Only fishermen, hunters, and some traders knew how this animal behaved in the water and what it looked like before it was slaughtered and turned into pieces of meat. Jules Verne presented these animals as mermaids and so did Asian, African and North American societies; it was considered a half-human with cannibalistic desires.<sup>533</sup> In another version of the cannibal stories, Eduard Vogel was told that the Adamawa

**529** Some Tuaregs told European travelers that Christians also had tails. For an elaborate analysis of Jihadist ideas about Christian otherness see Umar: Islamic Discourses, p. 151.

**530** Wagner (ed.): *Schilderungen der Reisen*, pp. 272–273.

**531** *Ibid.*, pp. 277–278. The report on »reddish hair« may either refer to the tactile hair (whiskers) of manatees or dark algae layers on their backs.

**532** *Ibid.*, p. 290.

**533** Heuvelmans: *Metamorphosis of Unknown Animals*, pp. 1–12.

Jihadists once had organized a huge military expedition to the south, but they had to withdraw when they captured two so-called »pygmies«:

»Here they captured two men from the southern countries. They were short and chunky men with long beards; and no one understood their language, so that they communicated rather provisionally with them by signs.«<sup>534</sup>

In the 1850s, stories about animal, human, and human-animal strangers proliferated in the whole Sokoto Caliphate and Bornu. And very often they formed one standard narrative. Ivanov and other researchers have highlighted the role of ›Western‹ travelers and writers for the development of these stories. But I argue that by comparing mostly anonymous accounts of »southern« cannibals in pre-colonial travel literature with accounts of Jihadist soldiers and leaders, we can reveal the active role of military personnel in this cannibal discourse on the southern countries.

Not only were the fishermen considered the hunters and traders of the human-animal water species, but they were often themselves declared half-human cannibals. In tradescape rumor they were stigmatized as uncivilized ›unbelievers‹. Before the Sokoto Jihad, Hornemann and his informants often mixed up inhabitants of the Benue River and Lake Chad in a very general approach: »The Budumas always keep themselves in the middle of this stream [Benue; here called ›Zad‹]; they are a very savage, heathenish nation.«<sup>535</sup> In fact, Buduma societies lived on Lake Chad Islands, but obviously the term had already become a topos for non-Muslim fishing societies. Hornemann indicated he had heard even more stories about the interior of Africa which he judged to be untrue: »I pass over men with tails, without necks, and without hair, without land, and living only on the great sea.«<sup>536</sup> Again, an uncivilized lifestyle and animal-like behavior were linked to areas full of water and without land.

During the Jihad years the portraits of the Budumas became more detailed and less mythic. One of the Brazilian slaves interviewed by De

534 German »Hier fingen sie zwei Männer, welche den südlichern Ländern angehörten. Es waren kurze, stämmige Männer mit langen Bärten, deren Sprache man nicht verstand und mit denen man sich nur nothdürftig durch die Dolmetscher und Zeichen unterhalten konnte.« Cf. Wagner (ed.): *Schilderungen der Reisen*, p. 282.

535 Hornemann: *The Journal of Frederick Horneman's Travels*, p. 116.

536 Ibid.

Castelnau, who originated from Baguirmi, recounted his journey with a pilgrimage caravan to Mecca. This Aboubakar had been living on the riverside of the Chari River, south of Lake Chad. Traveling towards the east, the caravan therefore passed Wadai, Dar Fur, and the Red Sea – depicted as a huge body of salt water with ships. Since Aboubakar was traveling for four months, he may well have arrived on the coast, where he left the caravan. On accompanying his brother on a merchant trip, the young trader Aboubakar took several camels with them for carrying goods. Aboubakar talked about cannibals in the Funj deserts (although places and names are mixed up a little), but when addressing the Budumas, he was convinced they were not anthropophagous. According to Aboubakar, the Budumas only practiced the ›strange‹ habit of dressing with short animal skins.<sup>537</sup> He described the otherness of the Budumas with very prosaic words. Other Muslim travelers also stressed their immobile lifestyle – never leaving the lake areas. When for example the travelers from the Tilho Mission asked people about the Budumas of Lake Chad, local informants explained that they had withdrawn to overgrown islands and were therefore called »Bu-duma« – »Men of the Grass« in Kanuri.<sup>538</sup> One myth of origin, told by a Buduma village community, narrated that once a Kanuri set out for Mecca and left his wife behind. When he was considered dead or lost after some years, his brother married her. The couple moved to an island where they founded the first Buduma village.<sup>539</sup> While the Bornu Muslims portrayed the Budumas as a people incapable of traveling far distances, the islanders also integrated the Muslim pilgrimage into their myth of descent.

The same phenomenon can be studied in Bussa, a walled town at the western shore of the Niger directly at the border of the Borgu state. When Bussa was attacked by Jihadist military forces in the 1820s, »its inhabitants fled, with their children and effects, to one of those little islands on the Niger.«<sup>540</sup> Since Jihadist warfare avoided battles on rivers and lakes, many of the attacked escaped on islands if there were any

537 His Wadai neighbors were also characterized as dangerous highway robbers wearing exotic and very short trousers. Castelnau: *Renseignements*, p. 32.

538 Tilho (ed.): *Documents scientifiques de la Mission*, Tilho, p. 310.

539 *Ibid.*, pp. 312–313.

540 Lander / Lander: *Journal of an Expedition*, vol. 1, London 1832, p. 243.



ond the Jihadist frontier, slave descent was often pointed to as the cause of strange or objectionable characteristics. Using local languages and hiding from long-distance networks made such groups suspect in the eyes of the Jihadist neighbors. Baikie added that these people were obviously »suspicious of any visitor« and would therefore »not comprehend anything beyond war.«<sup>545</sup>

Villages and towns located on the river shores or islands were considered fundamentally distinct from Jihadist political structure. However, many of these societies were not cut off from external communication and trade at all. They often provided ferry services and appointed their own »King of the Water« (Hausa *sarkin ruwa*) for this infrastructure.<sup>546</sup> Yet, this stereotype was also current in the Bornu Empire at that time, where the inhabitants of the feeder rivers of Lake Chad lived. These were people from the Chari, the Kotoko, Logone, and other Baguirmi regions. Answering to some questions from the British Consul of Tripolis in 1825, the Bornu Emperor Al-Kanemi explained that his land surrounded a huge lake that was supplied with water from mountain rivers, which were either located in »uninhabited« territory or in »the land of the Pagans, to whom no one goes.«<sup>547</sup> Al-Kanemi also admitted that this was all he knew about the regions south from the »pagan land: »And God only knows what is to be found on the other side of these places.«<sup>548</sup> The inhabitants of these countries were considered different and wild because of their language and the control of the lake and stream landscapes. Once again, water was considered a barrier to the spread of Islam in general, and to the advancement of the Jihad in particular.

Moreover, the Sokoto Jihadists assumed that water landscapes caused diseases. It is a well-known European idea that the African climate and humidity directly caused most tropical human diseases. Before scientists of the early twentieth century discovered that malaria, sleeping sickness

545 Ibid., p. 105.

546 Lander described this at the Niger shores in Nupe, when staying there in 1830; cf. the transcription of John Lander's Journal Book No. 2, 1830, Ms. 42326, John Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, edited version online at <http://www.tubmaninstitute.ca/sites/default/files/file/Appendix I, JL Text John Murray Archive D2 Nov 2010.pdf> (16.07.2014), p. 3.

547 Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 2, p. 386.

548 Ibid.

and other serious diseases were, in fact, transmitted to humans by mosquitoes or other insects, rivers and lakes were often believed to be harmful due to their toxic exhalation. But at least in the Central Sahel, this idea was already present before colonial conquest by European powers. The medical treatises of Abdullah dan Fodio discussed the factors that environment and climate allegedly had on bodily health. In Abdullah's view it was the imbalance of heat and cold in the human body that caused dysfunctions and sickness.<sup>549</sup> The common treatment for diseases such as smallpox was therefore alternately cold baths, embrocation with honey and spreading hot sand over the body.<sup>550</sup> Clapperton suffered from sickness almost constantly during his second stay in Sokoto until his death. As a kind of cure, Sultan Muhammad Bello and his brother-in-law Gidado recommended to Clapperton to ride out every morning. Clapperton had initially taken roads close to the swampy Sokoto River, but Gidado advised him to take the paths on the hills: »With the gadado's [sic!] advice I took my morning rides in future on the high grounds.«<sup>551</sup> The wet ground was believed to cause malaria fever attacks, and indeed mosquitoes do proliferate in water. Abdullah dan Fodio even asked healthy people to avoid going to towns hit by such epidemics.<sup>552</sup> The Jihadists

**549** Cf. the text *Masalih al-insan* (for example held at Zaria, 111/3), paraphrased by Bunza: An Overview of Arabic Medical Manuscripts, p. 27.

**550** »March 11. Small-pox is at present very prevalent. The patient is treated in the following manner: When the disease makes its appearance, they anoint the whole body with honey, and the patient lies down on the floor, previously strewn with warm sand, some of which is also sprinkled upon him. If the patient is very ill, he is bathed in cold water early every morning, and is afterwards anointed with honey, and replaced on the warm sand. This is their only mode of treatment; but numbers died every day of this loathsome disease, which had now been raging for the last six months.« Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: Narrative of Travels, vol. 2, p. 321.

**551** *Ibid.*, p. 358.

**552** In *Diya al-umma fi adillat al-a'imma* by Abdullah dan Fodio (NU, Hunwick 268). His nephew and Sultan Muhammad Bello were even more obsessed with health and medical science, since he composed many texts on that topic and repeatedly asked his British visitor Clapperton to send him a physician from Europe. Bello was convinced that the neglect of medical science by many Muslims would lead them to magical and non-Muslim practices; cf. *Ujalat al-rakib fi al-tibb al-saib*, Paris (BN), 5588, ff. 120–128. Bello also received letters of sick emirs and friends which were answered with diagnoses and medication methods. He also asked his scholars to compile the medical instructions of the Prophet.

also recommended herbs for curing of fever from water landscapes. The medical herb *senna*, for example, was promoted by Muhammad Bello in an extra scientific treatise.<sup>553</sup> In this text, Bello traced this plant back to Arabic origin, stressing that any cure – physical or mental – was introduced from Arabia.<sup>554</sup>

*Strangers from the Mountains: Refugee Children of Ham*

The Jihadists considered a hilly topography the most un-Islamic territorial feature and travelers agreed that Jihadist communities usually settled in the plains. One Arabic itinerary<sup>555</sup> collected by Hugh Clapperton in 1827 assumed that only real »Blacks« lived in the hills: »The inhabitants of the vales are the Felans, who originally conquered these countries but the mountains are inhabited by a people called Benoo-Hanii (the children of Ham).«<sup>556</sup> Yet in the same manuscript text another hilly area of the Jerma region allegedly was populated by unbelieving descendants of Ham (black people) who were aggressive and equipped with the most horrible weapons.<sup>557</sup> In Judaic and Islamic mythology the Biblical figure Ham became associated with blackness and enslavement. His descendants were considered legal slaves. This theory had also entered West African scholarly milieu, as evidenced in the famous comment of Ahmad Baba of Timbuktu on illegal enslavement and racist methods of the state in which he dismissed the Hamitic myth. He said that enslavement was not about color or race, but solely about the religious association of a person.<sup>558</sup> However, the Hamitic myth was obviously common among traders traveling to the Hausa region and among Sokoto Court officials. They located the »real« Black people in the mountains. The Adamawa Emirate was, for example, a well-known area of high mountains and many rivers that Clapperton's informants spoke about. Accordingly, its

553 Muhammad Bello: *Al-qawl al-sanna*, Niamey 467.

554 See Bunza: Medical Manuscripts, p. 30.

555 This text was written by the Sokoto Court official Ahmad, who came from Massina.

556 Cf. the appendix of Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 331.

557 Ibid., p. 332.

558 See the discussion on the Hamitic myth in West African Islam in Hamel: Black Morocco, pp. 80–81.

native inhabitants were described as »infidels« governed the Fulbe colonizers that were – of course – Muslim.<sup>559</sup> In conversation with Clapperton a Sokoto secretary located even more dangerous robbers beyond Adamawa, in the hilly countries of Logone and Baguirmi, south of Lake Chad.

*Into the Woods: Fighting the Foresters*

An Arabic manuscript collected by Hugh Clapperton in the 1820s reveals that traders between Mali and Lake Chad described any hilly forest as home to native »unbelievers«. The Muri Mountains within the Kebbi Emirate were accordingly described as hills full of thickets and pagans.<sup>560</sup> Travelers exchanged information on topography (town names), vegetation, and the level of »Islamization«. Traveling through foreign land, traders had to rely on cooperativeness of local communities. This estimated level of Islamization served as a unit of measurement for cooperation. For the Jihadist society the forest was a dangerous place for various reasons. In Jihadist mentality, the woods were linked to inhabitants and professions of low prestige. Lumberjacks, for instance, were considered a prime example of people especially far removed from education and wealth.<sup>561</sup> The forest was never regarded as an appropriate place for glorious Jihadist battle. The Sokoto military always preferred open battle on the plain savanna. Sometimes Jihadist armies even cleared areas of trees so that a battle could take place. This happened with the Kano military: »When the Unbelievers decided to fight we cut down all the surrounding trees, the place became an open space without any objects and hence it was called *Thabiru* [from Arabic »axe«<sup>562</sup>].«<sup>563</sup> The Jihadist military clearly faced disadvantages when entering the thick forests of their neighboring countries. But even in the early Jihad, Abdullah dan

**559** Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 335.

**560** *Ibid.*, p. 332.

**561** Uthman dan Fodio was referring to »wood choppers« in a Fulfulde poem; cf. Uthman dan Fodio: *Untitled*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, S13/1.

**562** Arab. طير.

**563** Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akh-bar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 31.



Fodio claimed that »pagan« Gobir forces were ambushing the Jihadists in the bushes and forested hills:

»They [Gobir forces] thought that the place of the thicket would overcome our group, and that the hills would be useful. They fled towards them, and then they lined up and banged their drums.«<sup>564</sup>

Abdullah ridiculed the use of densely vegetated landscape zones for warfare. He said these tactics were ineffective and barbaric. The author depicted the hills as places of refuge where new attacks were prepared by the enemy and drums were used to scare the Jihadists. The forests served as a standardized picture of the hostile hiding places where defeated enemies fled. In an early Jihad war<sup>565</sup> Abdullah dan Fodio wrote a poem to insult and laugh at his opponents. He calls them »offspring of insects«,<sup>566</sup> »unbelievers«, and cowards. The leading Jihadist noted that the enemies left all their women, camels, horses and tents behind. For their escape in panic Abdullah applied colorful metaphors: The Gobir forces had turned from lions into sheep and women that left their equipment and kin behind like a fleeing donkey leaves his master and loads. Furthermore, he announced that the Jihadist soldiers would follow the escaping soldiers into their home country of Gobir and »eat up all their millet«. <sup>567</sup> He said they had escaped into the thorn bushes: »They fled into the thickets and earth holes«<sup>568</sup> and King Yunfa »hastened into the cobwebbed [forest]«. <sup>569</sup> This escape into the forests and bushes was considered a humiliation for the enemy, but also a severe threat for the Jihadists.

On the other hand, when refugees left their villages for the forests and mountains this enabled the Jihadist government to colonize their former land. In his summary of the Jihad wars, Clapperton stated that Uthman

564 Arab. فظنونا محل الغيل ينصر جمعنا وان الربي من ناصرهم ستففع ففروا اليها ثم صفوا وانطقوا طبولهم. Hiskett (ed.): Tazyin al-Waraqat, p. 57.

565 Abdullah mentioned the term »Jihad« in the third line of this poem; cf. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Sokoto-Gobir Wars*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 2, f. 11.

566 Hausa دن غن. Ibid. Krause translated here »children of dogs« (German »Geschlecht der Hunde«); cf. Krause (ed.): *Der Ursprung von Sokoto IV*, p. 2.

567 Hausa انينس ن ن حطنك. Abdullah dan Fodio: *Sokoto-Gobir Wars*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 2, f. 13.

568 Hausa سن شفى قنث ر داموا. Ibid., f. 12.

569 Hausa يا غدانوا ماس ثنيا. Ibid., f. 14.

dan Fodio »gave lands and houses of the negroes who had fled to the mountains and inaccessible parts of that province lying to the south.«<sup>570</sup> Land grabbing was part of the Jihadist policy and turned villagers of the valleys into mountain dwellers. The Jihadist concept of the mountain forest connected refugee hiding with stories about mountain dwellers in classical Arabic literature: Living in the woods meant to refuse Islamization. Although the forest was considered part of the world created by God, it was destined to be the home of animals, not of humans. In Hausa Ajami texts, the forest animals were referred to as »offspring of the bush« (*yan daji*). Although being located in the forest and bush, they nonetheless had a role in the reception of the history of Islam and the coming of the Prophet Muhammad: When he was born, »the bush animals were happy,« Nana Asmau noted.<sup>571</sup>

Clapperton noticed that cannibal stories were soon spread about every strange and exotic group from forests. When he questioned some Saharan informants about cannibals he noted:

»On interrogating the Arabs more strictly, they allowed they had never witnessed the fact [cannibalism]; but affirmed they had seen human heads and limbs hung up in the dwellings of the inhabitants. At Mourzuk, when we first arrived, a similar report was circulated to our defamation; whether in jest or earnest, I could not ascertain; but the prejudice soon wore off when we were better known.«<sup>572</sup>

Traders and soldiers often explained that people from the forests exhibited human bones and scalps around their settlements. Some of this village decoration may in fact have been parts of the game animals which those people had hunted and killed. The alleged »Yemyem« themselves could also have exploited the cannibal myths in order to scare away potential enemies. Clapperton's companion James Richardson doubted the truth of these cannibal stories and referred to his critical Fula guide:

»In the territory of Boushi [Bauchi] will be found the celebrated name of Yamyam, where the Moorish and Arab merchants place the residence of the Ben-Adam eaters, or cannibals. I was greatly amused to hear my Fellatah

570 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 205.

571 Hausa »yan daji fa sun yi farin ciki«. Nana Asmau: *Begore*, p. 100.

572 Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 222.

informant most strenuously deny this calumny on the African race; he asserted that he had been in the country, and never had seen anything of this sort. The Moors are boldly affirmed that such cannibals exist, although they were obliged to confess they never saw the people of Adamaua or Yakoba (name of the sultan) eat human flesh. The whole story of the Yamyam is of the remotest antiquity, and has come down to us with many embellishments; but, if once true of the people hereabouts, it can no longer be authenticated by present facts, for as I have said, the Moors themselves represent Boushi to be like Tripoli.«<sup>573</sup>

Richardson explains how Jihadist travelers, who had lived with the alleged cannibals, modified the traditional narratives: Those people were not anthropophagous anymore, but they used to practice cannibalism before establishing contacts with Muslims. Wherever Jihadist travelers came, cannibalism was thought to have vanished only shortly before. Therefore, informants who had actually traveled to »Yamyam« contradicted the common perspective that there currently existed real cannibals. But nevertheless, this sort of gossip was still very popular with the Sokoto elite. During Clapperton's second stay in Sokoto, sultan Muhammad Bello himself told his visitor about the cannibals of Bauchi: This discussion with Clapperton started with food taboos in Islam, such as pork meat. And when addressing religious diet rules, Bello told his guest about the cannibals in Yacoba, where he had witnessed how the people there hung a Tuareg for theft and then ate part of his body:

»He said that whenever a person complained of sickness amongst these men, even though only a slight headache, they are killed instantly, for fear they should be lost by death, as they will not eat a person that has died by sickness [...] that universally when they went to war, the dead and wounded were always eaten; that the hearts were claimed by the head men; and that, on asking them why they eat human flesh, they said it was better than any other; that the heart and breasts of a woman were the best part of the body; and that they had no want of food, as an excuse for eating one another.«<sup>574</sup>

573 Richardson: *Narrative of a Mission*, vol. 2, pp. 323–324.

574 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 251.

Muhammad Bello especially focused on cannibalistic practices after a war. He expressed a major fear of all Jihadist soldiers penetrating foreign land: What are our enemies going to do with our bodies if they kill us? According to Muhammad Bello's explanation, these pagans would prefer certain parts of the body. This way they were supposed to express a social hierarchy, because the hearts were for the leaders. They would eat their enemies for their cruel nature, and not out of a need for nutrition. Bello presented the cannibals as an exotic present and asked Clapperton to bring them back to England, or at least to watch them personally in Yacoba:

»You will see them, he said, when you go to Jacoba: he would write to the governor to show them to me when I went. I then told him I wished as soon as possible to go to Jacoba, as I had been here now five months very idle. He said that the rebels of Zamfra had sent to beg for peace, and that, as soon as their sultan or chief arrived, he would send me through that part of Zamfra which I had not seen, and I should see the gold ores said to be there.«<sup>575</sup>

What Bello said next reminds readers of an advertisement for a tourist attraction. The Sultan described these people and their houses as very clean and nice except for their paganism and nakedness. Some of Bello's information was probably taken from old stories on cannibals living close to gold ore sites. But his description of their war practices was probably derived from reports of military commanders and soldiers who had served at the southern and eastern frontier. Common soldiers often told about encounters with ›Niam-Niam‹ cannibals. One of Koelle's informants claimed he had fought in a war against Bornu together with ›Niam-Niam‹ allies. When Bornu forces attacked Yacoba, the »king of the Nyamnyam« (*mei Nyamnyambero*)<sup>576</sup> was called for military support. His people then prepared the war for three days and afterwards men, women and girls appeared for fighting. Koelle's informant had to fight together with them, but he considered their way of warfare extraordinary and cruel. Their warfare included women on the battlefield:

<sup>575</sup> Ibid., pp. 251–252.

<sup>576</sup> Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, pp. 106, 239.

»When the attack commenced, the Nyamnyam began to kill the Sheik's soldiers [Jihadists], and then, when they killed one, they cut him up for meat, ere his life had quite left him: on catching a man, some cut off an arm, the man still standing, others cut off a leg, and put it into their bag, and others cut off the head, and put it into their bag: On catching a man, they at once cut him up completely for meat, and both the women and the girls with their baskets collected the intestines into their baskets. So likewise, on killing a horse, they cut it all up for meat, even before its life had quite departed.«<sup>577</sup>

First of all, the ›cannibal‹ warfare stories of the Jihadist soldiers usually included women's engagement in fighting. They found it very strange, although an account of the Kano Jihad also mentioned Jihadist women fighting the Kano military when on their hijra. These women were even honored for having killed some attackers.<sup>578</sup> On the other hand, female engagement in warfare was only tolerated by the Jihadist men in cases of self-defense. Secondly, the Jihad soldiers explained that the picking of bodily war trophies was a major marker for their opponents' cannibalism. And repeatedly, Jihadist soldiers expressed their disgust for ›cannibals‹ slaughtering war horses. However, no soldier claimed he actually saw these people eating human flesh. They only observed bones of humans or animals as village decoration and as trophies on the battlefield. Nevertheless, Koelle's ex-slave informant claimed that the taste or need for food served as motivation for cannibalism. Although the Jihadists cooperated with the ›Niam-Niam‹ on a military level, they still considered them wild and somewhat unpredictable. Koelle's informant reported that the ›Nyam-Nyam‹ succeeded in driving the Bornu soldiers back, they even went in pursuit and attacked them again. Therefore the Bornu army turned and fought the ›Niam-Niam‹ again. When reaching their former night camp they saw the leftovers that the ›Niam-Niam‹ had discarded and as a result they fled from the area:

»[...] they saw human bones, heads, legs and arms which they had thrown away, after having gnawed them enough, so that not one of the Sheikh's

**577** Ibid., pp. 239–240.

**578** Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 28.

men, on seeing this, could proceed any farther, [...] but returned to their own country.«<sup>579</sup>

Maybe these warriors really cut off parts of the dead bodies for certain rituals or as war trophies. Maybe they put the bones at some location in order to scare their enemies and prevent them from approaching the warriors' home. Or maybe these stories evolved out of the frustration of the Bornu soldiers who had lost the battle and made up mysterious experiences to explain why they did not pursue the enemy and confront them again. While the early European travelers and Ivanov argued that the ›Niam-Niam‹ *topos* arose in the world of Saharan long-distance trade, Jihad soldiers also spread and modified myths about the warfare of the ›cannibals‹. The origin of the ›Niam-Niam‹ stories reached back to late antiquity, but it was the Jihadist soldiers who – depending on the narrative background of their region of origin – located them in the hilly forests. Ivanov emphasized the contribution of Saharan and European travelers in the making of the ›Niam-Niam‹ myths; I supplement this account by describing the role of Jihadist networks and mobile soldiers.

In various contexts of slave narratives and (auto)biographic accounts, popular stereotypes of African non-Muslims were reproduced. Non-Muslims were very often ridiculed as animals in the Caliphate – in prose fiction or in Hausa religious and moral poems. One of these poems was allegedly authored by the Hausa Mallam Lima Chidia, who had lived near Kano and died in about 1860. According to Robinson, who translated the manuscript, it was derived from a ›funeral song frequently sung over graves by Mallams.«<sup>580</sup> The *alkafiri* (unbeliever) is ridiculed in the following way:

»I care not for the heathen. He would hear what I say and would pay no attention to it, he would merely lift up his chin and bray like an ass; He doubts the existence of pain in the next world.«<sup>581</sup>

579 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 240.

580 Robinson (ed.): Specimens of Hausa Literature, p. 2.

581 Hausa »[...] ba riia alkafiri; Shi ni shi kan ji fada ta baya kunuwa saidai shi tada haba yi jaki berbera; Shi ni shi ki shakka azaba lakhira.« Ibid., pp. 3–4.

The hereafter is then depicted with every cruel detail; Muslims are rewarded and unbelievers punished. For the soldiers, such stories about the animalized and pagan ›other‹ culminated when encountering the people living and fighting in the forests. When the French traveler, botanist and natural historian Francis de Laporte de Castelnau served as consul in Bahia for some months, he interviewed an unknown number of African slaves – including some from the Central Sahel and Yoruba. One of his informants, whom he consulted regularly, was Mahammah from Kano. This man told De Castelnau about the ›Niam-Niam‹, whom he called »men with tails«<sup>582</sup> or »wild and anthropophagous people with tails.«<sup>583</sup> De Castelnau admitted severe doubts to those detailed ›Niam-Niam‹ stories but also mentioned there were some twelve Sudanese informants who claimed to have met the ›Niam-Niam‹. The French interviewer remarked his astonishment about travelers to Arabia, who reported similar stories about central African ›tail men‹. Mahammah was probably enslaved in the mid-1840s because he reported about Aliyu's Sultan-ship (1842–1859) and Ibrahim Dabo's rule in Kano (1819–1846) when he was interviewed in 1848.<sup>584</sup> He also narrated the revolts of Maradi (southern Niger) against Jihadist rule.<sup>585</sup> Maradi had been conquered but it successfully rebelled in 1819. After that it remained independent but fought several wars against Jihadist armies until it was incorporated into the state of Katsina.

The Brazilian slave myths about African cannibalism may well have their roots in the Atlantic slave trade and slave plantation systems kept alive by collective fears. But the stories were initially generated in Muslim West Africa and then subsequently transformed in diaspora. When the Iraqi traveler Abderrahman Al-Bagdadi visited Brazil in the 1860s he had intensive contacts with enslaved Muslims of West African origin.<sup>586</sup> In his Arabic account on those Muslims and their situation in Brazil, he

582 French »hommes à queue«; cf. Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 6.

583 French »gens sauvages et anthropophages ayant une queue.« Ibid., p. 10.

584 Ibid., p. 11.

585 Ibid.

586 His translator of North African origin told him they had been transported from Sudanic Africa. Cf. Quiring-Zoche: Bei Den Male in Brasilien, p. 245.

also commented on the very first African slaves meeting Native South Americans:

»When the Blacks started coming to America, sometimes they [Native South Americans] captured one of them and tied him tightly and ate him. As they started to see lots of them, they came to know that they were human beings, as they are themselves.«<sup>587</sup>

This explanation of the wilderness beyond the places that a traveler had visited is typical for the classical Arabic genre of travel literature. And it seems as if Al-Bagdadi was following those textual examples in terms of style and content.<sup>588</sup> Even his title *Amusement for the Foreigner* implies that he intended to entertain readers with stories of wonder and magic. And his informants were eager to tell the Muslim scholar stories about exotic West African warfare with soldiers riding on ostriches, giraffes and elephants.<sup>589</sup> This kind of warfare was only attributed to non-Muslim states that allegedly prayed to idols. But the cannibal stereotype was easily transferred from West Africa to Brazil by Muslim slaves from the Sokoto Caliphate.

One of the precious accounts of a common soldier serving in a Jihad war comes from the above-mentioned Hausa soldier Mahammah. Probably in the 1830s or early 1840s he was fighting on behalf of the Kano ruler Ibrahim Dabo against the ›Niam-Niam‹. Mahammah himself was part of the war expedition eastwards together with two of his slaves. Many used horses on that journey passing several villages and camping for some months. The vast forests accordingly were inhabited by wild animals such as lions, rhinos, elephants and giraffes:

»It was often necessary to clear the path for the passing of the horses. During that time we saw many animals but no humans. When leaving the woods, we

**587** Cf. English translation offered by Daddi Addoun / Soulodre-La France: Abd al-Rahman al-Bagdadi, p. 25.

**588** This has been discovered by Quiring-Zoche: Bei Den Male in Brasilien, p. 199: »Mit dieser Komposition aus Tatsachenbericht, Belehrendem und Unterhaltendem steht 'Abdarrahmans Reisebuch in der jahrhundertealten Tradition der islamischen Reiseliteratur.«

**589** Ibid., p. 285.



further climbed the high mountains and some days later we saw a group of wild Niam-Niam.«<sup>590</sup>

The passage towards the Cameroun Plateau was described by Mahammah as going through almost impenetrable wilderness inhabited only by animals and ›Niam-Niam‹. The account then offers a description of how the Jihadist Hausa-Fulbe invaders killed this group of people they met – both male and female: ›These people were sleeping under the sun; the Hausa approached quietly and massacred them at once.«<sup>591</sup> Mahammah then went on to describe the corpses of the victims, asserting that they had 40cm-long smooth tails but otherwise looked like other black persons. Recounting this war expedition, he characterized the people he met in an alienating way. According to his interview, there were some ›Niam-Niam‹ eating human flesh and roasting three human heads over a fire. He was probably kidding the curious French interviewer, because Mahammah reported he had killed many ›Niam-Niams‹ and then examined their dead bodies by measuring all their tails. He also criticized the housing they chose, living in caves and straw huts. Moreover, their bodies were reportedly very different from those of the Kano soldiers: ›Those people are colored in an obscure black and their teeth are filed. [...] They are fine people, their hair is frizzy.«<sup>592</sup> Reporting on their way of warfare, Mahammah said they had used clubs, arrows, spears and acute screaming. And the Brazilian slave also commented on other ethnographic issues such as cultivation, cattle and diet.

Mahammah personally experienced the slave trade and slave markets, so that ›measuring‹ the bodies of people was probably how he perceived the physical examination of slaves exhibited for potential masters. On the other hand, killing female victims instead of seizing them as slaves was highly untypical of Jihadist warfare. In comparison to other accounts on Jihad war expeditions, only stories of ›Niam-Niam

**590** French ›Pendant ce temps on vit beaucoup d'animaux, mais pas un home. En sortant du bois, on commença à escalader des hautes montagnes, et peu de jours après on aperçut une bande des sauvages Niam-Niam.« Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 15.

**591** French ›Ces gens dormaient au soleil; les Haoussas s'en approchèrent sans bruit et les massacrèrent jusqu'au dernier.« Ibid.

**592** French ›Ces gens sont d'un noir obscure et leurs dents sont limées. [...] Ce sont des beaux homes, leur cheveux sont crépus.« Ibid., p. 16.

expeditions speak about killing the women and children. Other Jihadist sources only give examples of how cruelly their enemies killed the women and children. According to a local Hausa Ajami chronicle of Zamfara from 1899, the Gobir soldiers had allegedly entered the Zamfara capital in the mid-eighteenth century and massacred all the royal family: The children and the wives of the king – including the pregnant women – were all killed and their skins flayed.<sup>593</sup> Mahammah repeatedly told about the large numbers of ›Niam-Niam‹ people they killed and he even gave an explanation for this action:

»The leader of the Niam-Niams asked for mercy but the Kano king killed everyone we could get, because they had tails and he supposed that no one would like to buy slaves like that.«<sup>594</sup>

From his perspective as a soldier, he did not give any political, military (threat) or even economic (enslavement) reason for the whole expedition he was part of. According to what he told De Castelneau, the expedition was of ethnographic nature: »The Hausa people had heard of people with tails, but had doubts so that the aim of the expedition was to affirm that.«<sup>595</sup> However, other »naked cannibals« were enslaved on the way back to Kano, because they »had no tail«<sup>596</sup> but were nevertheless called »Niam-Niam« by the Jihadist soldiers. The »tailed men« were not perceived as ›unbelievers‹ or a different race, but another species. They were considered non-humans and therefore were defined as non-enslavable people.

Only once did Mahammah refer to an attack by the ›Niam-Niam‹ against a Jihadist soldier. The man had asked for water in a village and was reportedly beaten to death and cooked. In order to take revenge the Hausa attacked the village:

**593** Hausa »Wafanda ad da ciki suka fedewa.« Cf. the transliteration in Krieger: Geschichte von Zamfara, p. 66. Other traditions have it that the Zamfara king killed himself by hanging with his turban and then his family was slaughtered by the Gobir soldiers.

**594** French »Le chef de Niam-Niams demanda grâce, mais le roi de Kano fit tuer tous ceux que l'on prit, parce qu'ils avaient des queues, et qu'il supposait que personne ne voudrait acheter de semblables esclaves.« Castelneau: Renseignements, p. 16.

**595** French »Les gens de Haoussa avaient entendu parler d'hommes à queue, mais ils doutaient jusque là du fait et le but de l'expédition était de s'en assurer.« Ibid.

**596** French »Ils n'aient pas de queue.« Ibid.

»The expedition then came out of ambush and rushed to the village, whose inhabitants were taken into slavery; those of the said house were brought before the Sultan, who had them immediately beheaded.«<sup>597</sup>

Mahammah and his fellow soldiers distinguished enslavable ›Niam-Niam‹ from a non-enslavable species. Othering the enemy as cruel cannibals was probably an approach taken by the leaders to mobilize the soldiers and to ease their scruples in killing the enemy. Cannibalism was especially linked up with non-Muslim societies that did not obey invaders and were hiding in impenetrable hilly and densely wooded areas. Mahammah described three settlements on the Jos Plateau, which could only be reached by one rocky path: »The inhabitants destroyed it when the Hausa wanted to invade their country.«<sup>598</sup> The alleged ›Niam-Niam‹ people successfully resisted invasions. And Mahammah deservedly called them dangerous warriors who may kill strangers in their territory.

Mahammah preferably located the cannibals in Adamawa. Although Adamawa was a Sokoto Emirate from 1810 onwards, he noted from his stay there sometime in the 1830s or 40s that the inhabitants were either completely naked or only covered with sheepskin.<sup>599</sup> Mahammah had stayed in the temporary capital Gwanja (›Cuancha‹), some three day's journey from its later capital Yola,<sup>600</sup> where Modibbo Adama, the first emir, was still ruling during the time of his visit. The people inhabiting the region alongside the Kaduna River between the Jos Plateau and Kaduna/Zaria were also exoticized by another Hausa slave informant from Zaria, who was interviewed by De Castelnau. The Brazilian slave Adam had heard people from his home talking about ›Niam-Niams‹ who supposedly had tails, although he admitted he had never seen them himself.

**597** French »L'expédition sortit alors de sa retraite et s'élança sur le village, dont les habitants furent emmenés en esclavage; ceux de la maison précitée furent conduits devant le sultan, qui leur fit aussitôt couper la tête.« *Ibid.*, p. 17.

**598** French »[...] que les habitants détruisirent lorsque les Haoussas voulurent envahir leur pays.« *Ibid.*, p. 23.

**599** *Ibid.*, p. 24.

**600** Cf. Richardson: *Mission to Central Africa*, vol. 2, p. 356.

*Civilizing Wilderness*

The stereotype of non-Muslim neighbors as reported in soldiers' narratives co-occurred with the Jihadist attempt to dominate and civilize the frontier regions politically, economically and militarily. Civilizing the ›Niam-Niam‹ cannibals was a legitimizing strategy applied by the Sokoto Jihadists and the Bornu Empire. One Brazilian slave of Bornu origin told De Castelnau that he had encountered ›Niam-Niams‹ during his journey to Bauchi. He reported that they lived in a rocky and hilly landscape:

»The Niam-Niams are dilating the earlobes using a piece of wood they pass through an opening they do. [...] The women wear a piece of wood in the lip. They are cannibals. The King of Bornu seeks to prevent them from eating human flesh.«<sup>601</sup>

Cultural practices which included the modification of the body were clearly seen as proof of uncivilized behavior, a judgement that was also expressed by the term »cannibals«. Some female members of ethnic groups in Ethiopia and Chad in fact used lip plugs or lip discs. Although this practice seems to be older than slavery in this area, some researchers suppose that small ethnic groups maintained this ritual in order to make their women less attractive for slave traders of the Sahara and Sahel.<sup>602</sup> This interpretation in effect documents the view of slave traders and soldiers regarding these people: They were not considered to be enslavable. Islamic states like Bornu and Sokoto were therefore expected to civilize these people before ›integrating‹ them as slaves, human beings, and state subjects. It is therefore noteworthy to take a closer look at the final sentence of the citation. The informant Karo from Bornu stressed that the Bornu king was eager to prevent them from anthropophagy. This was how aggressive military expeditions and raids into this area were legit-

**601** »Les Niam-Niams se font dilater les lobes des oreilles au moyen d'un bois qu'ils passent dans une ouverture qu'ils y font. [...] Les femmes portent un morceau de bois dans la lèvre. Ils sont anthropophages. Le roi de Bernou cherche à les empêcher de manger de la chair humaine.« Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 29.

**602** Many anthropologists deny this slavery theory today, because the ethnic groups using lip plates never gave such an explanation. Cf. for example LaTosky: Reflections on the Lip-Plates, p. 386.

imized as a civilizing mission. In one of the many Sokoto-Bornu wars this Karo became a war captive when fighting on behalf of Bornu. He was brought to Kano and ended up as slave in Lagos from where he was to be shipped to South America. It seems that Bornu inhabitants were enslaved by Hausa armies all through the first half of the nineteenth century. De Castelnau's biographic slave accounts mention some having been enslaved shortly after Al-Kanemi's conquest of Jihadist Bornu and the installation of Kukawa as capital in ca. 1814, while others were enslaved during the 1840s.<sup>603</sup> Another Bornu slave, probably originating from the lower Mandara Mountains, also judged his neighbors to be infidels and reported that they wore animal skins. He had fought in different Hausa regions and said that people with tails were to be found everywhere in the mountains, although he had never met them.<sup>604</sup> Saharan traders of Murzuk in ca. 1820 also depicted the Mandara region next to Baguirmi as a place of beautiful heathen women living in grass huts instead of clay-walled houses.<sup>605</sup>

The Sokoto elites condemned the lifestyle of such people but still displayed some interest in their bodies and culture. According to one Adamawa slave, the supposed ›Niam-Niams‹ were persecuted by Bauchi soldiers on expeditions during which they even took some children with them to Zaria in order to exhibit them as exotic souvenirs in public:

»He has seen children who were brought as an object of curiosity from the expeditions to the cannibals. They had tails which he has seen and touched. These children must be still at Bauchi [Zaria]. Their tails had the size and length of the finger; they could be eight to ten years old. He heard that these people were very numerous.«<sup>606</sup>

This incident – if true – may be dated in the 1840s and also represents the environment and spheres of slave experience. The exposition of en-

**603** Cf. Castelnau: *Renseignements*, pp. 30–31.

**604** *Ibid.*, p. 34.

**605** Lyon: *A Narrative of Travels*, p. 126.

**606** French »Il a vu des enfants qui ont été amenés comme objet de curiosité par les expéditions qui ont été chez ces anthropophages. Ils avaient des queues; il les a vus et touchés. Ces enfants doivent être encore à Booché. Leurs queues avaient la grosseur et la longueur du doigt; ils pouvaient avoir de huit à dix ans. Il a entendu dire que ces gens étaient très nombreux.« Castelnau: *Renseignements*, p. 35.

slaved people in public was probably also part of this slave informant's life having been kidnapped as a child. He might therefore have been reflecting on his own history of being bought and sold. On the other hand, while the exposition of humans as goods for sale was probably a common sight on the Zaria market, some slaves were obviously considered more »exotic« and »strange« than others. They were observed and touched by spectators. They were not sold, but presented. Yet again, the signs for a cannibal diet were dressing with animal skins and habitation in remote forest areas. In Zaria it was the Tangale inhabitants of the Bauchi-Adamawa frontier region that were considered anthropophagous. But instead of enslaving these children, the Zaria Court apparently decided to exhibit them and even let people touch them.

Especially former soldiers tended to narrate ›Niam-Niam‹ stories. And from some expeditions individuals were even brought to the emirate capitals in order to present them as exotic war trophies. The Bauchi warrior Griss also told De Castelnau that his expeditions had led him into ›Niam-Niam‹ areas, where he saw the inhabitants roasting human heads and cooking flesh in a cauldron over a fire. They were goat and sheep herders and only wearing animal skins.<sup>607</sup> Another Kano soldier added to this narrative that he had killed many ›Niam-Niams‹ on his war expeditions and witnessed that their babies were born with »smooth and black«<sup>608</sup> tails that they cannot move separately and that they built benches with holes in order to accommodate their tails when sitting. Other people labeled as uncivilized humans were the »naked Gerey« that used small ponies instead of horses. From one expedition the soldiers allegedly returned with some »Gerey Niam-Niams« to the Kano Emirate capital. The expedition was commanded by the Kano Sultan Ibrahim Dabo and brought three ›Niam-Niams‹ as captives to Kano:

»They excited the greatest curiosity, but the Sultan had ordered to dress them. This is the first time that the lives of the poor were spared. It is now four or five years since this incident has happened.«<sup>609</sup>

607 Ibid., p. 41.

608 Ibid.

609 French »Ils y excitèrent la plus grande curiosité, mais le sultan avait ordonné de les vêtir. C'est la première fois que l'on épargnait la vie de ces malheureux. Il paraît y avoir quatre ou cinq ans que ce fait s'est passé.« Ibid., p. 42.

Firstly, this incident was considered a unique event so that many inhabitants of the town took notice of the exhibited strangers. Secondly, the Sultan or elite assumed the role of believing Muslims that supported pious behavior in contrast to sensationalism. They wanted to dress the captives, although the public wanted to see »naked« cannibals. Thirdly, this demonstrates that the people called »Niam-Niams« were usually killed by Jihadist soldiers and not enslaved. This Kano exhibition of alleged »Niam-Niams« happened in the 1840s.

The »Niam-Niam« narratives about people with tails were so widespread from 1800 up to 1840 that De Castelnau concluded: »everyone knows that fact.«<sup>610</sup> A Hausa scholar named Mahammad from Katsina was enslaved by Fulbe as they were on their way to sell slaves. He was educated, could read and write and had heard about Timbuktu and Katsina. In his view, all »wild cannibals«<sup>611</sup> were called »Niam-Niam« regardless of the specific place they resided. But only from new slaves arriving in Bahia did this scholar hear about a hilly region south of Hausa where people with tails lived. »Niam-Niam« was not common at that time as the designation of a place in Katsina, which was located on the northern Jihadist frontier. This demonstrates how the intensification of war and slave expeditions to the south and the east of the expanding Sokoto Caliphate shifted narratives of the wilderness frontier.

Another Muslim slave from Bornu claimed he had accompanied his father on a journey on the pilgrimage route to Mecca. He had heard about the »Niam-Niams« living south of Dar Fur up in the mountains. According to his knowledge, they welcomed visitors but at night killed them and speared their corpses on top of the houses.<sup>612</sup> The »Niam-Niam« stories seem to have been well-known among merchants and pilgrims alike. They cover the genre of horror stories for any traveler anxious about being dependent on the mercy of host communities. The stories were a way of dealing with the threat and fear of passing through unknown areas. And although some Hausa scholars may have been aware that »Niam-Niam« was a general term that discredited certain types of societies and cultures, there were nonetheless ongoing attempts to localize

610 Ibid., p. 39.

611 French »sauvages anthropophages.« Ibid., p. 39.

612 Ibid., p. 43.

the ›Niam-Niam‹ land geographically. Before publishing the different slave accounts, De Castelnau had aimed at summarizing his interview material in a letter published in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris).<sup>613</sup> He located the ›Niam-Niams‹ in the foreland of some mountains in thick forests where many wild animals reportedly lived with them. According to this letter, several informants talked about military expeditions against ›Niam-Niams‹. He surmised that the ›Niam-Niams‹ could reside in various places, such as Bauchi, Adamawa and south-east Bornu.

From his interviews the link between ›Niam-Niam‹ stories and Jihadist military expansion is impressive. The regions and people defined as ›wild‹ were not just a vaguely conceived ›unknown‹ as had been the case in previous centuries. In Jihad expeditions, people called ›Niam-Niams‹ were killed, used as allies, or even displaced and exhibited as souvenirs. The Sokoto Caliphate and its emirates wanted to control and civilize wilderness. Soldiers were moved into the alleged Niam-Niam regions over several hundreds of miles. The soldier Boué (Bawa) from Zaria, another slave informant of De Castelnau, traveled more than 600 miles with his army from Sokoto into the Mandara Mountains for a war expedition. This journey to Mandara took the army one month. Boué was enslaved on his way home crossing Bauchi.<sup>614</sup> This style of warfare generated experiences of alterity for the soldiers who adopted standardized phrases to explain what they observed and felt. Their reports were spread across the Caliphate and influenced general mental maps. The role and status of the so-called ›Niam-Niam‹ were troubling for the rulers, however. If people did not accept them as slaves, should they be treated like animals? Or should they be humanized, civilized and Islamized by dressing and educating them?

Comparing Koelle's material and De Castelnau's slave narratives, the stereotype of the barbaric societies on the frontiers of Islam is well illustrated in a short story on the Margi people dictated by Ali Eisami Gazir. This story was not included in the major publications of Koelle and would have remained among the lost compendium of his manuscripts if the German linguist August Friedrich Pott (1802–1887) had not asked for

**613** Castelnau: Niam-Niams, pp. 25–27.

**614** Castelnau: Renseignements, p. 40.



a Bornu prose example with interlinear translation which he published in 1854.<sup>615</sup> Describing the Margi, inhabitants of a province dependent on the Bornu Empire and located at its southern frontier, Gazir put emphasis on their outward appearance: He said they would go to the markets all naked and with colorfully painted bodies. Since Gazir claimed he had seen them with his own eyes, he probably encountered some people of different cultural belonging at markets of the Central Sahel. But he also mentioned stories about them he had heard from other Muslims. The anecdotal information he gave Koelle concerned Margi diet, which Gazir found disgusting. He condemned their practices of beer production, claiming that they would swiftly become drunk and then could no longer control their actions. Although Gazir did not mention the term ›Niam-Niam‹ or cannibalistic practices, the account of eating or drinking cooked cow blood served as an example of their alleged uncivilized lifestyle. In the very same manner that De Castelnau's Brazilian informants stressed the way of dressing in warfare, Gazir commented on the Margi: The horsemen ride their animals without any saddle or proper trousers. Instead they wear goat leather around their waists. According to Gazir, they were so obedient to Bornu that they never attacked them with their ponies.<sup>616</sup>

The Sokoto elites were aware of Niam-Niam stories as can be seen from the fact that Muhammad Bello reproduced them in conversation with his guest Hugh Clapperton. But the term Niam-Niam never entered Jihadist war poetry. Instead, they were generally called ›unbelievers‹ of the mountains and forest. Outside of the heartland of the Caliphate, people were expected to be ignorant. In his poem *Tabbat hakika* Uthman dan Fodio explained: »Do not live among people that do not know anything, for they plunder in Muslim lands.«<sup>617</sup> The frontier of Islam was also a frontier of knowledge according to Jihadist view. Uthman dan Fodio had called the inhabitants of the ›Land of Unbelief‹ ignorant and warlike. Later they came to be called »uncivilized«, »cannibals«, and »animals«. The topos of the ›unbelievers‹ living in and attacking from the hills was

615 Pott: *Sprachen aus Afrika's Innerem*, pp. 413–441.

616 *Ibid.*, pp. 419–421.

617 Hausa »Kada ka zauna cikin wadana ba su san ta komi. Masu fwace cikin kasashen Musulmi.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 429.

displayed in a war poem by Hussaina, daughter of the Kano Sultan Ibrahim Dabo. People from the Ningi Hills had been raiding Kano, so that Hussaina versified the call for war against Ningi and its rulers Haruna and Ibru: »Crowd Haruna out of the stones [hills], by God and then Ibru until you can also push their men [soldiers].«<sup>618</sup> Although revolts against the Sokoto central government were organized in centers and the periphery of the Caliphate at the same time, they were considered to happen more often at some distance to Sokoto, where no military expedition could easily move. In a prayer for divine assistance in warfare against several rebelling states, Nana Asmau in ca. 1826 asked God to gather all Muslims from every direction and bring about victory against rebellions in »Hausa and Bauchi.«<sup>619</sup> The term Bauchi – according to Jean Boyd and Waziri Junaidu<sup>620</sup> – can be translated as »wilderness beyond Hausa borders.« The original language of this poem was Fulfulde, but there is no clear meaning of »Bauchi«, respectively »Baushi«, in this language. But in Hausa, the term »Bauchi« designated strange languages and areas beyond Hausa in general and not only the »Bauchi Plateau« in today's Eastern Nigeria.<sup>621</sup> From the Sokoto point of view, »Bauchi« was a name for wilderness in general, but came also to be the name of the Bauchi Emirate in the east instead of naming it after the first Bauchi capital »Yacoba«. It was claimed that in the Bauchi emirate the civilized land had to be protected against the wilderness bordering it.

### *Mapping Back? How »Niam-Niams« Perceived Wilderness*

Due to the lack of contemporary written sources from the enemies of the Sokoto Caliphate, the attempt to investigate their concepts of the Jihadist enemy is rather provisional. Nevertheless, oral tradition offers certain hints about their methods of »othering« their Sokoto opponents. Different

**618** Hausa »Kafida Haruna cikin duwatsu Ubangizi; Kazaka da Ibru hal mutanensa ka iya.« Hussaina: *Untitled*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, WW 7/2, l. 15.

**619** Fulfulde حوسى/بوش. Cf. Nana Asmau: *Hi nasaraku moytago*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 3, pp. 24–25.

**620** Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 32. The published translation by Jean Boyd is very loose and therefore not followed here.

**621** Cf. for example historical dictionaries such as Robinson: *Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 38.

Nikki legends about wars against the Jihadist Yoruba town Ilorin, for instance, renarrate representations of war expeditions and – in the final stages – the experience of being defeated by »the Fulbe«. Located at the southern frontier of the expanding Caliphate, Ilorin was conquered in 1830/1. But the oral accounts edited by Mercier in *Colonial Dahomey*<sup>622</sup> seem to confuse several battles which culminate in one dominant story of the defeat of the Nikki. Moraes Farias has dated the Bussa-Ilorin wars around 1837.<sup>623</sup> The oral narratives report about changing alliances with Oyo and other Yoruba states, about the capture and the distribution of slaves. Each story tells about religion and politics merging into one single office of royal priestly counsellors. According to oral tradition, these court diviners were mostly of Hausa origin. And these individuals were even commemorated by name. The Nikki ruler Seru Kpera IV (reigned ca. 1840–1850) was for example advised by Alfa Salifu and Sibuko when preparing his magical war campaign against Ilorin. They allegedly turned plants into soldiers but still couldn't win the battle in the end. Another version of this story explains that Seru Kpera (also called »Illorink-puno«) voluntarily married an elfin women who lived in the woods and who secretly subsisted by consuming blood. At her place in the forest she lived in an underground city together with »bizarre persons: humans with dog heads, dogs with human heads.«<sup>624</sup>

Like all other cannibal figures, this queen was considered animal-like but also rich in gold resources. Correspondingly she was said to have turned sand into gold by touching it and as a result she was able to make her husband a rich ruler, buying hundreds of horses. This narrative does not only copy the dominant Jihadist stereotypes of their »wild« enemies, but also blames this queen for having incited her husband's attack on Ilorin in order to recapture her mystical home territory. This causal interpretation of the Nikki-Oyo-Ilorin wars clearly had been influenced by Jihadist spatial and moral ideas. The feral woman of the forest seducing a king and inciting him to attack the »Muslim« state of Ilorin – this story is marked by the search for a reason why the Nikki king attacked Jihadist

**622** Published in Mercier: *La Bataille d'Ilorin*, pp. 92–95.

**623** Moraes Farias: *Letter from Ki-Toro*, p. 110.

**624** French »peuplée de personnages bizarres: homes à tête de chien, chiens à tête d'homme.« Castelnau: *Niam-Niams*, p. 94.

Ilorin. This southern frontier south of the Niger was considered one of the last war zones of Jihadist expansion by the end of the nineteenth century. An anonymous scholarly Hausa in Krause's manuscripts noted that the Sokoto military had finished many wars of conquest »but not Toto [Yoruba] until today.«<sup>625</sup> But nevertheless, Jihadist discourses dominated interpretations of the forest and its human-animal inhabitants. It is an impossible task to carve out spatial concepts of anti-Jihadist communities or the non-Muslim victims at the southern frontier. This is, because the Jihadists at least ideologically won the wars and forced the oppressed frontier dominions to reproduce cannibal narratives.

### *Colonizing Wilderness*

Some soldiers returned from their expeditions into the forests, whereas others stayed and settled abroad. They stayed with Fulfulde-speaking groups who had settled in the mountains. These groups had moved into the hills that were in general considered the periphery of the Caliphate. Baikie passed many of these villages on his Niger expedition in 1854. On his voyage on the upper Benue River, south of the Muri Mountains, he encountered the colonial village Gurowa, built at the river shore. He noticed circular houses, each one with little gardens where ocher and pumpkins were cultivated.<sup>626</sup> In their conversation with the British visitor, the villagers in that area told Baikie that they were part of the »Hamaruwa« Emirate, being subordinate and a tributary to the Sokoto Caliphate.<sup>627</sup> They called the people of the Mandara Mountains independent, but at the same time »barbarous [...] heathens.«<sup>628</sup> But Baikie's information about the annual delivery of tribute by these Fulbe settlements contradicts the statements of former soldiers. According to them, slaves were usually

**625** Hausa »ba Toto wanda yau.« Cf. Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 148; see also Alhaji Umaru: *Origins of the Sokoto State*, StB, Ms. 844, text 23, f. 34.

**626** Baikie: Narrative, p. 147.

**627** This emirate is usually referred to as the Muri Emirate, which was indeed ruled by the Fulbe Hamma Ruwa dynasty until 1861. In 1817 Hamman Ruwa founded this state, his elder son Ibrahim and his younger offspring Hamman then ruled from 1836.

**628** Baikie: Narrative, p. 150.

captured from among the »Mitshis« and other »barbarian nations.«<sup>629</sup> They assumed that these people were enslavable »unbelievers«.

But although the local Muslim rulers may have accepted their neighbors as slaves, they certainly did not intend to put any effort in missionary work among them. When the Baikie expedition member Crowther asked a local ruler whether they could send some Christian priests to those »barbarian nations«, he did not oppose the idea of Christian activities in his area, but reportedly answered: »They were such Keferi [unbelievers], such savages, that he doubted much whether anything could be made of them.«<sup>630</sup> On the other hand, the Hausa were also integrated into these Jihadist Fulbe colonies. They were usually responsible for trade matters and appointed their own speaker, called *sarkin hausa* (Hausa ruler).<sup>631</sup> Baikie's expedition group left their steamer behind for some days and rode, or walked, to the Muri capital north of the Benue – called Hamaruwa after its founder. Baikie estimated that at least some 8,000 people inhabited this town. He observed many Muslim men wearing white turbans, large robes and talismans around their necks. Women only wore dresses and used jewelry, make-up, and home-grown henna colors.

This dress code was also used as a diplomatic instrument, so that the local ruler gave the expedition group three robes as presents.<sup>632</sup> Baikie contrasted them with native village people, whose men wore animal skins and the women leaves of plants. Some of these communities lived on hunting and fishing, and Baikie also observed the drying of a recently killed hippopotamus. In a certain part of their village they stored the skulls of the animals their hunters had killed: leopard, buffaloes and crocodiles.<sup>633</sup> Baikie never mentioned any human skulls or animal bones. But it is very likely that these places were turned into waste dump locations for animal skeletons that had been hunted by the reported »cannibals« in the stories of former soldiers.

629 Ibid.

630 Ibid., p. 152.

631 Ibid., p. 153.

632 Ibid., p. 165.

633 Ibid., p. 182.

The first language spoken in these colonies was still Fulfulde in the mid-nineteenth century, and the second *lingua franca* was Hausa.<sup>634</sup> When Baikie gave a demonstration of his compass the audience asked him to tell them about neighboring Jihadist settlements (e.g. Faro, Ziru). They also asked for the directions to important Caliphate urban centers (Sokoto, Katsina) and for other Islamic places in West Africa (Timbuktu, Bornu, Wadai). One scholarly inhabitant even asked for Istanbul and Mecca.<sup>635</sup> Baikie also gave the emir a map of the Benue as a present and showed other maps to various spectators. But unfortunately, he did not comment on any reactions to the maps – whether the local scholars were familiar with this medium of spatial documentation or not. A Hausa trader, who worked as translator for the expedition group, told them that the Fulbe originated from a place called Male near Timbuktu.<sup>636</sup> Even at the periphery of the Sokoto Caliphate, the migration legend of the Fulbe Jihadists was obviously well-known (see chapter IV.1.2). They considered their role important in strengthening the ›global‹ southern frontier of Islam against the surrounding »heathen« peoples. The traders around the Benue were mostly involved in ivory trade, but no information was gained about the hunting procedures.<sup>637</sup> In Bakundi, at the Taraba River (feeder of the Benue), rumor said donkeys were killed by hyenas, lions, cannibals and pygmies. Especially greenhorns were told these horror stories on their way to the Adamawa Emirate in the east.<sup>638</sup> Some colonists may have adopted this sort of gossip to prevent other aspiring traders from participating as new brokers between the Caliphate and the ›Land of Unbelief‹.

This colonization of the alleged wilderness on the southern frontier periphery also influenced the Sokoto capital. Soldiers and traders spread stories about the migration and resettlement of Fulbe groups. From a Jihadist perspective, colonizing uncultivated land was undertaken by opening roads to the north, east, south and west, so that ›communication

634 Ibid., pp. 154–161.

635 Ibid., p. 162.

636 Ibid., p. 174.

637 Ibid., pp. 172–173.

638 Cf. Flegel: Bericht des Reisenden, p. 260.

everywhere will be easier.«<sup>639</sup> In one of her prayers, Nana Asmau listed the goals of Jihadist policy. She begged God: »May the wilderness<sup>640</sup> have in it prosperous settlements, so people can travel without fear.«<sup>641</sup> Human penetration of this ›wilderness‹ by traveling, inhabiting and cultivating was a major goal of the Jihadists. They relied on an effective trade and communication system; firstly, in order to supply the Caliphate inhabitants with food and goods, and secondly, in order to receive taxes and welcome delegations and allied military troops. Therefore Nana Asmau asked God for prosperous towns, successful stock breeders, strong war horses and strong donkeys for carrying loads. In another poem she prayed for the defeat of Bawa, hoping the enemies would be driven into the wilderness (*laddi*).<sup>642</sup> The Jihadists wanted to colonize and civilize the land by building infrastructure and towns.

### 5.5 Urbanization: »In Fortification Lies the Peace of the Kingdom«<sup>643</sup>

The Sokoto Jihadists were engaged in projects to »civilize« and »Islamize« the so-called wilderness. One major field of political commitment was the urbanization of the frontier regions. Throughout the era of Islamic expansion in the Middle Ages, Muslim emperors built garrisons, or *ribat* in Arabic, whenever they conquered a new territory.<sup>644</sup> The border itself was created as a line of well-connected fortified towns. This architectural change came together with a certain militarization and urbanization of the frontier zones. In the first phase of Jihad the Sokoto Jihadists recognized towns as the very centers of power. Although their movement

639 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 209. Fulfulde Ajami text held at SOAS: Nana Asmau: *Moyta mayaki*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 77.

640 Fulfulde »ladde«/»laddi«. See *ibid.*

641 Cf. *ibid.* The lines of the poems are not numbered correctly; the quoted line 19 of the edited translation thus refers to line 18 in the archival Fulfulde Ajami text.

642 *Ladde* appears in the Ajami manuscript as لَدَدِي. Nana Asmau: *Tilfin Bawa*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, p. 213.

643 Arab. في ذلك [حصن] صلاح مملكته. Muhammad Bello: *Risalat ila Muhammad Al-Jaylani*, Niamey 3046, p. 6.

644 Silverstein: *Islamische Geschichte*, p. 23. The original English text has been published in 2010 under the title *Islamic History*.

came from the periphery, it was aimed at the control of urban spaces. A Fulbe Jihadist put it the following way in a biographical poem on the Prophet: »All his [the enemy's] fortified towns then were the towns of Muhammad.«<sup>645</sup> Urban spaces were places of clustered power. During the Jihad the towns were the focus of military competition, where frontiers and demarcation lines were fought over on a state level. There were peripheral and rural battlefields, but no constant rural frontiers. Lamenting about Kebbi rulers raiding and ruling former Jihadist towns, Muhammad Bello wrote: »You say that the towns belong to him [ally of the enemy], and they are not our towns when you were penetrating. You would know, the day we should meet at a valley, and the broad desert would become cramped to you.«<sup>646</sup> Bello contrasted desert and towns: He would find his enemy, fight him in a valley, reconquer the towns and push him into the desert defined as a stateless area.

In Jihad theories the building up of *ribat* on the frontiers of any Islamic state is portrayed as the most appreciated action of a community in a situation of war and threat.<sup>647</sup> The fortification of frontier settlements was also one major goal of the Jihadists. The duty to do so was mentioned in numerous Jihadist texts addressed to the emirs of the different provinces.<sup>648</sup> The frontier was a region of keen interest and continuous danger. In the early phase of Jihad, Gobir rulers and the Jihadists fortified the villages and war camps at once, which then quite often turned into proper towns. The military was forced to build up new fortified settlements at frequent intervals due to the mobility of their armies. When Gwamki dan Kura Gado was installed as Gobir ruler (1814–1816), he at once left the former capital Alkalawa and installed himself in Kadaye. Being driven out of his town by Muhammad Bello for the second time, the new Gobir ruler Ali dan Yaquba (1816–1835) fortified the small village Dakurawa, which was abandoned again in order to seek refuge in Birnin Kunia. He finally accepted Bello's domination. His successor Jibon Tauba dan Yaquba was installed in 1835 and ruled for a very short

645 Hausa »Biranensu sunka zamo biranen Muhammada.« Nana Asmau: *Begore*, p. 120.

646 Junaidu: *Sakkwato Legacy*, p. 164.

647 Tyan: *Djihad*, p. 539.

648 See for example Hiskett (ed.): *Kitāb Al-Farq*, p. 570.



period. He moved the capital to the Maradi region.<sup>649</sup> Although the soldiers would soon leave the war settlements and head for another battle, many villagers had left their homes and resettled permanently in these evolving urban places.

For the average Hausa urbanization was not a new process, and Hausa societies had distinguished urban dwellers from villagers for centuries. Even in pre-Jihad times, most Hausa capitals counted more than 20,000 inhabitants.<sup>650</sup> Town authorities organized trade, taxation, and warfare. But the towns also contained farms for domestic animals, like chicken and goats. Small towns had cyclical markets, usually on a weekly basis, so that each place had a fixed market day. Petty traders therefore traveled a lot. Only capital towns maintained daily markets. They were ethnic melting pots due to intensive »immigration, conquest, trade, assimilation, and Islamization.«<sup>651</sup> Hausa townspeople lost their lineage identity and practiced social mobility to a large degree. With the Jihad much smaller Hausa towns and war camps came to be fortified, so that the number of these *birane* (sing. *birni*) increased. Many of them contained the court of an emir or sultan behind the walls. The *gari* town on the other hand was not necessarily fortified. In its broader meaning, *gari* stands for »country«, »a people« or any »inhabited place.«<sup>652</sup> Within a *gari* there were supposed to be houses (or even suburbs), farmland, and water. The spatial arrangement of a *gari* refers to statements speaking of ›inside the *gari*‹ (*cikin gari*) and ›outside the *gari*‹ (*wajen gari*). The first term describes the houses while the second one denotes farmland and everything outside a wall, stockade, or village border: »Together they stand in contrast to *baayan garii*, denoting the land behind or beyond the settlement, e.g. the uncultivated land or bush,«<sup>653</sup> including the latrine-area and a dump place. The space of the *gari* is vertically limited in the

649 Jean Boyd: »Mission Tilho«, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, G25, pp. 13–17. Boyd refers to extracts from Tilho (ed.): Documents Scientifiques.

650 Yusuf: A Reconsideration of Urban Conceptions, p. 206.

651 Ibid., p. 209. Yusuf gives a detailed lexical list of Hausa terms ranging somewhere in the ruralurban continuum.

652 Dalby: The Noun *garii* in Hausa, pp. 280, 295.

653 Ibid., p. 296.

earth by the depth of a grave – the dead are buried outside the inhabited world – and in the sky by the clouds, since weather is part of the *gari*.<sup>654</sup>

The second-generation Jihadists intensified urbanization of the frontier more systematically than their predecessors. Muhammad Bello formulated his main ideas on the building of fortified towns in his text *Al-ribat wa al-hirasa*.<sup>655</sup> While Hunwick and others considered this text an authentic statement of Bello,<sup>656</sup> Dantiye argued strongly that it is a fake. He initially had intended to base his study mainly upon this manuscript text – on a copy located in Kaduna<sup>657</sup> – when he discovered it was not authored by Bello. According to this historian, the style doesn't resemble any of Muhammad Bello's other texts.<sup>658</sup> But I will interpret Bello's text as an authentic source produced by some Jihadist representative. Dantiye, on the other hand, relied on sources besides Arabic manuscripts for his four case studies on frontier towns, including colonial sources as well as some interviews of the early 1980s. His study is, however, centered on the period from the 1840s to the 1890s and analyzes the contribution of the forts to the defense of the Kano Emirate. The majority of the Kano forts mentioned by Dantiye (Rano, Karaye, Gwarzo and Babura) were only established in the mid-nineteenth century. However, Karaye (west of Kano) was built before the outbreak of Jihad war, but it was only fortified in 1855.<sup>659</sup> In Kano the scholar Mallam Danzabuwa (Danejawa Clan) was chosen to meet Uthman dan Fodio and receive a white flag. Karaye was then conquered first.<sup>660</sup> In a mid-nineteenth century Kano chronicle the author narrated the changes in the landscape that occurred through the intense fortification in the Kano Emirate under Ibrahim

654 Ibid., p. 298.

655 In this study all quotations of this text refer to the copy held in Zaria (12/2–3–4).

656 See for example Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 123. Hakim and Ahmed also followed Hunwick and believed in Bello's authorship; cf. Hakim / Ahmed: Rules for the Built Environment. Hakim and Ahmed offer a substantial list of all Jihadist manuscripts on urban management topics (ibid., pp. 6–7).

657 Kaduna AH, 1/15/74.

658 Dantiye: Frontier Strongholds, pp. x–xi. See also Philips: Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate.

659 Its rulers were Sulaimanu Nadoji (1808–1830), Muhammad Keciya (1830–6), Muhammad Sambo Tabari (1836–43), and Muhammad Sambo (1843–53). Cf. ibid., p. 148.

660 Hogben / Kirk-Greene: The Emirates of Northern Nigeria, p. 197.

Dabo (reigned 1819–1846): All villages around the fortified frontier town were expected to deliver firewood and agricultural products to supply the urban dwellers. They were obliged to use the outskirts of the towns as farmland.<sup>661</sup> In the second stage of the Kano Jihad, more frontier towns were erected in the direction of Bauchi, where all rebels were considered mountain-dwelling ›unbelievers‹ who would withdraw into the Bauchi hills. »The Unbelievers of the Mountains« became a common stereotype in war prose texts during the process of fortification.<sup>662</sup>

Most *ribat* were developed from already established temporary war camps. The establishment of the fortified frontier towns of Kano had already begun in Uthman dan Fodio's lifetime, while his successor Muhammad Bello intensified this effort and became a role model for other rulers. Muhammad Bello's empire was threatened by revolting states such as Ningi, Maradi and Damagaram – and it was Bello who fortified the frontier towns. According to local tradition, Uthman had only built two *ribat* – Yamulu and Salah – which were guarded by his son Bello anyway.<sup>663</sup> Nana Asmau praised her brother Bello for waging wars and erecting walled towns. He was also honored for the construction of mosques in Sokoto, but above all, he represented the empowerment of the frontiers:

»Then, he stationed all [soldiers] far away in the bushes. [...] He stationed men in all fortifications of towns. So understand this foresight. Some were stationed at Gandi and some were sent to Burmi. Fodiyo [Hoduwe], his son, went to Gobir.«<sup>664</sup>

With Muhammad Bello, politics in the Caliphate turned to the periphery or »bushes«. From the viewpoint of Sokoto, the immediate peripheral wilderness was located on the Sokoto-Zamfara border (Gandi

**661** Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 51.

**662** See for instance *ibid.*, pp. 62, 64.

**663** Dantiye: Frontier Strongholds, p. 31.

**664** Hausa »Dada ya yi tsaron janibai duka bai bari. [...] Matsara dada ya sa mazaizai ko'ina ya garuruwa dada kun jiya kwazo nana. Wasu Gandi anka aje su, wansu hakikatan can Burmi, Hoduwe cana Gobir da nasa.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): Collected Works, p. 453. Jean Boyd translated »janibai« with »ribadi«. I suggest that it is an Arabic loanword derived from حنبية (»bush«).

and Burmi). Nana Asmau also expressed appreciation for Bello offering his son to be sent to the dangerous military frontier. During Ahmad Atiku's sultanate (1859–1866) the *ribat* became less important to the Sokoto rulers and emirs. Their appearance and presence were therefore phenomena of the Jihad years and Caliphate expansion, which came to an end during the era of raids in the mid-nineteenth century (Ningi or other attackers).

The foundation of fortified settlements can also be described as a process of sedentarization and aging of the first Jihad generation. Many soldiers and commanders settled in new towns and had their families. During Ibrahim Dabo's Kano Emirship (1819–1846) the former Jihad leader Babi for example founded the Gwarzo *ribat* west of Kano. According to Dantiye's interviews of the 1980s, Babi was a pastoralist Yola Pullo, who fortified an area in which three separate villages had formerly been located (Dutsen Danbakoshy, Godiya, Getso). Legends have it that Babi let his cattle graze on Maguzawa land and destroyed the Hausa indigo fields. Babi then became a Jihadist commander in Sokoto and Kano. With the permission of Emir Dabo and after fighting a series of wars he built Gwarzo in the 1820s so that his soldiers could permanently be stationed and settled there.<sup>665</sup> In the next sub-chapters the relevance of fortification is examined from ca. 1804–1850 with regard to territorial power, military mobilization, and the creation of the Jihadist frontier spaces.

### *Murabitun: Blessed Guards of the Frontier Towns*

The Jihadists recognized Jihad warfare at the Caliphate frontier as a major Islamic duty. Even before initiating the Hijra in 1804, Uthman dan Fodio promoted his jihad obligations in a short guideline.<sup>666</sup> And his first argument stressed the distinctive role of the jihad at the frontier: These war expeditions should at least take place annually at the most insecure border in order to prevent rebellions. Every Muslim was obliged to take part in those wars and dan Fodio equated its importance to that of

<sup>665</sup> Ibid., pp. 95–96.

<sup>666</sup> Uthman dan Fodio: *Masa'il muhimma*, in: Abdarrahman Bewley (ed.): Handbook on Islam, pp. 88–112.

the pilgrimage.<sup>667</sup> The tradition of undertaking war expeditions annually was then in fact practiced by his son Muhammad Bello. A Kano trader remembered that Sokoto regularly undertook such expeditions against Kebbi. After defeating Kebbi, Bello returned home and announced: »I will prepare for next year. I tell you, I will return.«<sup>668</sup>

Every place inhabited by brigands was called an Islamic frontier and anyone being killed in such an area by an aggressor to the Caliphate was declared a martyr. Uthman dan Fodio defined such brigands<sup>669</sup> as highway robbers blocking roads or housebreakers. He even allowed killing the Muslim robbers among them if they stayed voluntarily with the criminals. But while proper rebels were also to be pursued if they retreated, less dangerous brigands should only be driven away. Furthermore frontier brigands needn't necessarily be killed nor their families enslaved.<sup>670</sup> Whenever a fortified Muslim city was attacked, everyone was obliged to defend it. Even women, children and slaves were allowed to fight in this situation without any official legitimation by their male legal guardians or owners. Moreover, even neighbors of an attacked city were expected to assist and fight the aggressor. But dan Fodio admitted that the urban inhabitants may flee if the quantity of »Muslims« was only half the amount of attackers or even less.<sup>671</sup> Although Uthman commented on the Jihad at the frontier, it was his son Muhammad Bello who enforced a strict urbanization process in these border regions.

Inhabitants of frontier towns had a special status with reference to traditional Koran exegesis. In Arabic they are called *murabitun*;<sup>672</sup> in Hausa the term *masu zaman ribatsi* (both: »people of the *ribat*«) is applied.<sup>673</sup> Every *murabit* died as a Muslim martyr because of his will to defend the

667 Ibid., pp. 100–101.

668 Hausa بد نك شر نڤيا ان كوم (Badi na ke shiri, na gaya in koma). Cf. Alhaji Umaru: *Sokoto-Kebbi Wars*, StB, Krause Collection, Ms. 844, text 29, f. 43. See also the Latin edition in Olderogge (ed.): *Zapadnyj Sudan*, p. 151; as well as the German translation in paraphrase by Krause: *Der Krieg Gandu-Sokotos I*, p. 1.

669 Arab. محاربون.

670 Abdarrahan Bewley (ed.): *Handbook on Islam*, pp. 103–106.

671 Ibid., pp. 106–107.

672 Arab. مرابطون. From this word the West African term »marabout« (scholar) is derived.

673 Dantiye: *Frontier Strongholds*, p. 3.

frontier of Islam. Muhammad Bello's comment on fortification of frontier towns was in large parts a summary of the text *Mashari al-ashwaq ila masari al-ushaaq* composed by the Egyptian Jihadist and scholar Ahmad Ibrahim Muhammad Al-Dimashqi Al-Dumyati (d. 1411) – nicknamed Ibn Nuhaas.<sup>674</sup> Ibn Nuhaas was born in Damascus, he moved to Egypt and settled in the fortress of Dimyat as a volunteer soldier where he was martyred when killed in a frontier area by Genuese military.<sup>675</sup> Bello revealed the title of Ibn Nuhaas' text, but we do not learn whether Bello was aware of the martyr story of its famous author.

The chapter about the *ribat* (No. 4) in the original text by Ibn Nuhaas is only one chapter among several sections dealing with the duty and legitimacy of jihad. But it is very significant to realize that Bello chose to summarize this topic in particular. Ibn Nuhaas started his treatise with a Koran sura using the term *ribat* as a verb: »You who have believed, persevere and endure and *remain stationed* [Arab. *rabitu*] and fear Allah that you may be successful.«<sup>676</sup> Other Hadith traditions mentioned by Ibn Nuhaas tell the audience that living in a *ribat* was even better than fasting for a whole month and praying through all its nights. All *mura-bitun* would be sent to heaven automatically without passing the Judgment Trial. Every inhabitant of a frontier town counted as a Jihad fighter and, even better, maybe without ever having been a soldier. One Hadith claims that »being an inhabitant of the *ribat* for a day is better than 1.000 days anywhere else.«<sup>677</sup>

Every Islamic territory had to be protected by Jihadist soldiers stationed at the frontier forts, a role which made such persons superior Muslims. Ibn Nuhaas stressed that staying as a frontier soldier in the »Land of War« for one day was better than staying in the Holy Cities

674 Cf. Hunwick (ed.): Writings, p. 123. About Ibn Nuhaas' biography and influence of Jihad discourse, see Lohlker: Dschihadismus, pp. 21–22.

675 See John E. Philips: Hausa Online Essay: »Muhammad Bello ya fi sanin tarihin Musulunci ya karanta littattafai da yawa har ya fahimci irin ribad'in gargajiya a k'asashen Larabawa. Littafin da ya fi so a kan batun ribad'i, shi ne Mashari al-Ashwaq na Ibrahim al-Dimashqi. Bello ya tsakuro littafin a littafinsa mai suna »Al-Ribat wa'l-Hirasa«. Za a ga littafin Bello a Jami'ar Ibadan da Jami'ar Ahmadu Bello, Zariya inda aka ajiye littattafan tarihi.« See also Hakim / Ahmed: Rules for the Built Environment, p. 21.

676 Koran 3,200. Quotation from Al-Fatah Al-Khalidi: Mashari al-Ashwaq, p. 118.

677 Ibid., p. 119.

of Mecca and Medina, but he also warned against the political danger of this *ribat* propaganda: Young men would often leave their families behind for the frontier glory and could not be replaced at home. Muhammad Bello only quoted the lines about the positive effects of the *ribat* lifestyle: Living in a *ribat* was even better than fighting in a jihad and whoever died in a fortress would not burn in hell.<sup>678</sup> Ibn Nuhaas offered the cases of several pious fighters that left Mecca or Medina for the Mediterranean Coast where they died as Muslim martyrs in wars or of a natural death. Some of them were accompanied by larger groups of followers, although their families begged them to stay.<sup>679</sup> Others chose to live and fight in Alexandria when it was still located at the Islamic frontier and close to a dangerous battlefield.<sup>680</sup>

The frontier was by definition a dangerous zone: Only a place where the enemies could attack at any time would be considered a *ribat*. Islamic principles actively induced young Muslim men to settle at the frontier and foster Islamic expansion. This frontier was also described in terms of topography in the quotations of Hadith sources: It was either the coast (with reference to the Byzantine borders) or the mountains and valleys, where anti-Muslim rebels were always expected to stay. Ibn Nuhaas recommended staying in a *ribat* for 40 days so that all the reward of heaven would be guaranteed.<sup>681</sup> But regarding the status of the families living there, some scholars did not consider them martyrs in the same manner as their male family guardians, because becoming a *ribat* inhabitant required the voluntary decision to leave home. And this decision was not considered possible for ›minor‹ subjects. Likewise, Ibn Nuhaas also drew a distinction between Muslims born in a frontier town and Muslims who moved there voluntarily to become Jihadists. Only the latter could expect an extraordinary reward. The *murabitun* had to seek danger and threat, and if either the *murabit* or the enemy left the frontier, every Muslim was turned into a normal civil person again. The most se-

678 Muhammad Bello: *Kitab al-ribat wa al-hirasa*, Zaria 12/2–3–4, pp. 30, 45–46.

679 Al-Fatah Al-Khalidi: *Mashari al-Ashwaq*, p. 124.

680 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

681 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

vere sin for a *murabit* was to leave the town when it was being attacked by the enemy. Deserters could not enter heaven, Ibn Nuhaas explained.<sup>682</sup>

Bello quoted him further that living in a frontier fortress for only one day was more rewarding and beneficial than fasting for a month or even a decade.<sup>683</sup> One person's protection of a *ribat* was equivalent to the religious worship of 1,000 Muslims over 1,000 years. And a person that was killed while living in a *ribat* could save the lives of 70 people on Judgement Day.<sup>684</sup> Bello asked the emirs to build frontier towns wherever Muslims lived in fear.<sup>685</sup> He applied this pressure to build up fortresses very successfully on his emirs. When the Kano ruler Ibrahim Dabo and other emirs visited Sokoto and other fortified towns under Bello's rule, they took them as role models to build their own forts.<sup>686</sup> Frontier soldiers were stationed there permanently in order to protect the emirate capitals and their civilians. The *ribat* rulers enjoyed special privileges because of the risk of living in a militarily vulnerable buffer zone of the emirates. The Jihad leaders ordered every ruler or emir to build fortified settlements within their space of influence and guarantee the supply and storage of enough water and food at the markets. These fortifications were supposed to be the ruler's residence as well as a secure place of retreat for inhabitants of the town itself and the surrounding settlements. When the calls for *ribat* building and immigration were formulated by the Jihadists, the era of hijra and jihad mobilization slowly came to an end. Muhammad Bello asked for controlled migration to the frontier and a permanent battle against 'unbelievers' beyond the frontier lines.

### *Living behind the Wall, Fighting outside the Wall*

Around the town walls there were shrubs that served as barrier against attackers. Alhaji Umaru described the Kano city wall and its surroundings

682 Ibid., pp. 127–128.

683 The first pages of the Zaria manuscript were not located by the librarian and I must therefore refer to the quotation in Dantiye: Frontier Strongholds, p. 16.

684 Muhammad Bello: *Kitab al-ribat wa al-hirasa*, Zaria 12/2–3–4, pp. 18, 31.

685 Ibid., p. 41.

686 Cf. Dantiye: Frontier Strongholds, p. 254.



when remembering his Kano childhood: »There was a thickly wooded area which surrounded the walled town of Kano with shrubs and dense thicket. We used to play in it and we were not afraid.«<sup>687</sup> Spaces outside the town wall were dangerous places. The names of the gates often referred to the trade products that entered the town through that gateway: In Kano the *kofar kansakali* (Gate of Sword) opened towards Sokoto and the *kofar gadan kaya* (Gate of Groundnut Loads) towards Nupe.<sup>688</sup> The Sokoto route was associated with the arrival of soldiers. The walls were not only used as a manifestation of power and as landscape demarcation referring to areas of influence. They also represented relative security for the inhabitants and a barrier for outsiders. During wars the urban dwellers for example nailed dead enemies of high military rank to the wall and thereby told invaders not to trespass this *ribat*.<sup>689</sup> If the towns were attacked, the battles were usually fought on an open field outside of the wall. Only if the urban warring party was close to losing the battle, did they withdraw into the town and close the gates. Around the year 1850 the Bornu king Ibrahim fought with the Kano Emir and soon proved to be much stronger. Therefore the Kano soldiers »entered into their Capital; and having entered they shut their gates.«<sup>690</sup> This contemporary account exemplifies how effective town walls could be in a desperate war situation.

The Kano town wall predates the Jihad by far. But with Muhammad Bello's rule new *ribat* emerged. The Sokoto fortress was Bello's residence, but had already been enlarged in 1815 in order to host Uthman dan Fodio and his followers. He had spent some years in Gwandu after his active Jihad, in 1810 he retreated to Sifawa, and then he finally spent his last two years of life in Sokoto. Nana Asmau emphasized

**687** Hausa »Akoi dufuwa taa keewayee birnin Kano, geeza dasarkakkiyaa, mukan-yi waasa a cikinta, baa mu jin tsooroo.« Piłaszewicz: Alhadzi Umaru, pp. 55, 65.

**688** Kano region was used for groundnut cropping only after British occupation and thus relied on imports from the south before: »With the colonial occupation at the beginning of the twentieth century, many of the traditional crafts and commerce patterns declined especially after 1912 when the railways reached Kano. The economy was reoriented towards raw material production and the Kano region became the largest groundnut producing area in Northern Nigeria.« Dan-Asabe: The Traders of Kasar Kano.

**689** Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 213.

**690** Ibid., p. 238.

that this final migration was prepared properly. However, her father was more than 60 years old by that time: »He made preparation for his arrival in his town Sokoto. He set out, came, and his house was repaired.«<sup>691</sup> In another poem Nana Asmau called her Sokoto home the »fortress of my Sheikh called Bello«<sup>692</sup> two years after Bello's death. In public perception the Sokoto fortress was always remembered and known as Bello's work. Sokoto was the most important fortified town for the ruling elite. In 1827, just after Clapperton's stay in Sokoto, Muhammad Bello built and fortified another town: Wurno. In a Fulfulde poem Bello's sister Nana Asmau traced back the decision to build this *ribat* to a vision of Uthman dan Fodio. According to this conversation between Uthman and Bello, the father instructed his son that a new and huge fortified town would be built east of Sokoto:

»At Degel the Shehu said that Wurno would be inhabited. It was a mystery he revealed to Bello. [...] Then the Shehu pointed eastwards from where they were and said, »There is your town. Everything about it has been revealed.« [...] In due course we realized it was Wurno that he had meant.«<sup>693</sup>

In fact, Wurno was and is located northeast of Degel, but the gesture of pointing to the east is more symbolic: Recently conquered emirates and the Holy City of Mecca were situated there. Nana Asmau recalled her father Uthman dan Fodio as the original Jihadist authority in order to stress Wurno's role on the predicted road to salvation. She described Wurno as the ultimate religious center and a »lamp giving out light to Sokoto and the cities of the Sudan.«<sup>694</sup> We may only guess why Nana Asmau chose to promote the divine status of the *ribat* Wurno in the mid-nineteenth century. Probably Wurno faced dramatic depopulation since Nana Asmau mentioned the benefits for

691 Hausa »Dada ya yi shirin zakkuwa gari nai Sakkwato. Ya tashi ya zakka anka gyarta gida nasa.« Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 452.

692 Arab. [?] حصن شيخي يسمي بيل. Nana Asmau: *Tabshir al-ikhwan*, in: Ogunbiyi (ed.): *Arabic Writings*, p. 91.

693 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 205. The Fulfulde Ajami text can be consulted at SOAS: Nana Asmau: *Yonde Wurno*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, pp. 69, 71.

694 Ibid.

all Muslims immigrating to a »ribat.«<sup>695</sup> She asserted that her brother Bello himself gave proof of Wurno's status as a frontier fortress. Muhammad Bello had spent most of his time in Wurno and whenever the army was gathered for any expedition northwards, »the army of the Caliph assembled at Wurno.«<sup>696</sup>

In 1826, when Hugh Clapperton stayed in Sokoto for the second time, Muhammad Bello was already making plans for the construction of Wurno. He announced an expedition to the building ground two days before departure. Only a few servants traveled with Muhammad Bello, his secretary Gidado, and Clapperton. On December 1, the group camped south of the Sokoto city wall and had a feast together. The next morning Clapperton »rode out with the sultan and Gadado to mark out the site of the new town.«<sup>697</sup> Clapperton was told by the rulers that the small river and the bushes of that area were spaces of withdrawal for plundering rebel groups, who reportedly stole cattle and set settlements on fire at night. In the Caliphate, bush and river areas were considered potential hiding spots of anti-Jihadist soldiers or robbers. Urbanization therefore was the key method to fight cattle raids. The systematic location of loyal Jihadist families in fortified frontier towns was an important element of Bello's policy.

The Jihadist ideology aimed at abolishing these »neutral« buffer zones between emirate capitals by turning them into tributary fortifications or assemblages of dependent slave farms.<sup>698</sup> Most of the slaves living on these plantations were trafficked from other frontier regions, so that escape and autonomous social relations were rather improbable. The slave plantations also allowed the capital cities to become independent from traded provisions of other states and villages. A growing urban population needed grain and vegetables from the outskirts. It was common for the urban rich, and not only the urban political elite, to run farms outside the city walls where they stationed

695 Fulfulde ريباط. Ibid., p. 69.

696 Poem by Nana Asmau. Fulfulde Ajami text and English translation: Nana Asmau: *Gawakuke maunde*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 2, pp. 132–133.

697 Clapperton: *Second Expedition*, p. 225.

698 Cf. Salau: *Slave Plantation*. Salau insists on using the term »slave plantation« instead of »slave/serf village«.

their slaves. They would regularly visit their farms and travel back and forth between the city and the farm on a daily or weekly basis. Beyond foodstuffs, the plantations also grew indigo and cotton. The European accounts on pre-colonial plantation slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate are far from being reliable because the invisible power structures existing between slaves, overseers and plantation owners were not always clear for travelers just passing by the farms or staying in one place for only a few days. They could hardly differentiate between a slave plantation and an ›independent‹ farm. But in Hausa language both farm types were differentiated: Common farms were called *gandu* and slave plantations *rinji*. Clapperton visited several Sokoto slave plantations. One of them was Magaria north of Sokoto, which was fortified by Bello. It was a frontier town used as a permanent war camp (*sansani*) and a

»gathering place for their armies, and is mostly inhabited by the slaves of the great in Soccato, who have all houses here, and their slaves, who are employed in raising grain, and tending the cattle, mostly reside here, and in the villages around.«<sup>699</sup>

Slave farms and dangerous militarized *ribat* often coincided. During his stay in Magaria, Clapperton observed that a new fencing technique had been applied in Magaria,

»which is, to build a low wall, with a deep ditch outside, and to erect on the wall a stockade of rough stakes, firmly fixed in an upright posture, through the openings of which the people inside are enabled to shoot their arrows and fire muskets, when they have any.«<sup>700</sup>

This fencing work was still under construction when Clapperton resided in Magaria. It was explained to him that every rich owner of a house in that town had to send his slaves for this venture. Corresponding with the effort to promote urbanization in the 1820s, Clapperton was given an interpretation of the Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio with emphasis on his role as a founder of towns. Uthman dan Fodio allegedly »came out of the woods of Ader«, settled and founded a town in Gobir. War then

<sup>699</sup> Clapperton: Second Expedition, p. 192.

<sup>700</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

expulsed him and his followers, and together they settled in Ader again – though, »not in the woods, as formerly, but [they] built a town.«<sup>701</sup> These fortified frontier towns were often built in places already inhabited, but in a Jihadist perspective the process of fortification was considered a new beginning and caesura. Often the *sansanis* (war camps) received new names.<sup>702</sup> The Jihadists were intent on erasing the historicity of pre-Jihadist settlements and creating their own history. Many old settlements were destroyed and rebuilt, leading to the Hausa twin-town names »*Tsofon* [old] town name« and »*Sabon* [new] town name«. Another process was the enlargement of the town radius and the construction of larger town walls generating a new suburban neighborhood. Where there were no villages, bush clearance (*saran daji*) was performed by the slaves. Reclamation of farm land was also necessary around expanding slave plantations, because the slave families had to supply themselves with crops, too.<sup>703</sup> The Jihad generated a vast process of land clearance for cultivation, urbanization and fortification in the whole region.

The *ribat* settlements were also ideal places to sell horses and other warfare equipment, because the armies were regularly gathered there.<sup>704</sup> Furthermore, the plantations and *ribat* served as country residences for rulers. At least in the 1880s, the Kano Emir Bello (reigned 1882–1893) was ridiculed for his constant withdrawal from warfare and his holiday-like lifestyle at the frontier town Fanisau. The German linguist Prietze collected the following Hausa poem in Tunis: »The children sing songs about him: Rumor says he is a lazy person, he is the ruler of Fanisau. He can't engage in warfare, but goes to Fanisau.«<sup>705</sup> However, during the reign of Muhammad Bello there was permanent warfare at the northern Caliphate frontier. But due to the narrative of the barbarian south, the Bauchi and Adamawa frontier towns were considered the most dangerous strongholds. On the other hand, many ambitious leaders tried their

701 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 203.

702 See for example the case of the Kano frontier town Fanisau (ten miles northeast of Kano) in Salau: Slave Plantation, p. 41.

703 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

704 Clapperton / Dixon / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 272–273.

705 Hausa »Yara sun masa waƙa: Woi shi dan katambale, shi ne mai-Fanisau. Bello ba iya yaki, sai zuwa Fanisau.« Quoted from Prietze: *Haussa-Sänger II*, p. 592.

luck in the south and east. New *ribat* always promised fast economic boom for traders.

The Fula Jihadist Buba Njidda<sup>706</sup> from Adamawa initially cooperated with Adamu, the leader of Adamawa. Njidda conquered the land of the Dama (Ngaundere area) as well as Dui and Mbum societies in the name of Adamu. He settled some of his followers in Scholire. He needed to fortify the place including the farming land of the inhabitants in the 1820s because he had »failed to send tribute to Yola and answer Adama's call for military aid.«<sup>707</sup> This was an unmistakable declaration of independence from Adamu. Njidda had already been an important leader before the Jihad, but Sokoto refused to give him his individual flag and to have him become an emir.<sup>708</sup> The two Adamawa Jihadist leaders met but could not settle their dispute.<sup>709</sup> Therefore Buba Njidda tried to protect his new towns and villages with a system of clay walls. In 1912 German colonial officer Kurt Strümpell described the place:

»Like all fortified places of the Central Sudan, the clay walls are protecting an area as large that the inhabitants of the beleaguered town could still farm. As Scholire is built on a mountain, walls are built up the slope. [...] The inner town is protected by another wall that splits up into three going southwards. Cisterns make sure that the town is supplied by water if the above-ground streams ebb. Thus a system has been created that seemed impregnable. Indeed Modibo Adama tried to beleaguer his defiant vassal Buba Njidda in Scholire with Adamawa troops in vain.«<sup>710</sup>

**706** See East (ed.): *Stories of Old Adamawa*, pp. 35–37.

**707** Njeuma: *Fulani Hegemony*, p. 57.

**708** *Ibid.*, p. 56.

**709** Kirk-Greene: *Adamawa Past and Present*, p. 135.

**710** German »Nach der Art der Anlage aller befestigten Plätze des Zentral-Sudan sichern die Lehmmauern ein so großes Gelände, daß die Bewohner der belagerten Stadt dem Farmbau obliegen können. Da sich Scholire an das Gebirge anlehnt, laufen die Mauern hoch an die Hänge hinauf. [...] Die innere Stadt sichert eine weitere Mauer, die nach Süden sogar in drei Mauern ausläuft. Zisternen gewährleisten die Versorgung des Ortes mit Wasser, falls die oberirdischen Wasserläufe versiegen. So ist eine Anlage geschaffen, die in Adamawa als unneinnehmbar gelten mußte. In der Tat hatte der Modibo Adama vergebens mit dem Aufgebot von Adamawa seinen trotzigen Vasallen Buba Njidda in Scholire belagert.« Strümpell: *Aus dem Schutzgebiete Kamerun*, p. 9.

For merchants of the 1840s, recently fortified towns were so familiar in Adamawa that the Benue trader Mohamman remembered when Yola was still so new that it lacked a town wall: »Yola is a new town, there was no wall.«<sup>711</sup> Loyal Jihadists or separatists in turn expelled the local population higher into the mountains. In local collective memory the hills of Adamawa were remembered as places of protection for escaping people pursued by Jihadist Fulbe mounted warriors. The military success of the invaders and the destruction of the Mbum (or Wari) villages were interpreted as a loss of traditional magical powers: A meteor stone protected them once but a woman illegally looked at the stone which immediately returned to heaven.<sup>712</sup> During the German colonial rule in Cameroon the Mbum communities commemorated escaping from Fulbe warriors on top of the mountains where they were subsequently beleaguered and defeated. Their leader (*bellaka*) was killed and their village relocated to the submontane region.<sup>713</sup> The Fulbe soldiers could not easily control the mountain villages with horses and therefore avoided overseeing their tributaries up there.

### ***5.6 Conclusion: The Thin Line between Mobilization and (Re)Settlement***

The Sokoto Jihad fostered long-distance military expeditions and mobilized soldiers over a huge network. Prior to the Jihad only professionalized traders and slaves had used these routes. The road infrastructure was militarized and villages were fortified. Bushes and forests were cleared and the frontier was urbanized. This process can be explained with reference to the biography of Jihadist soldiers. Most of them were very young when they commenced as soldiers and only partook in the wars for some years. They expected a share of conquered farm land or a town house as reward in order to have a family. Managing soldiers therefore meant to negotiate between mobility and resettlement. Jihadist warfare often started with mobile tents and provisional camps. A Hausa nineteen-year-

711 Hausa »Yola kamar sabon gari, garu [b]abu.« Flegel: Lose Blätter, p. 9.

712 Strümpell: Aus dem Schutzgebiete Kamerun, p. 14.

713 Id.: Bericht über eine Bereisung, p. 20.

old informant described how the Jihadists gathered in the periphery and attacked the Bornu capital:

»When I was living in Bornu [...] the Phula arose in Bornu, and dispersed the whole Bornu-country by war, so that only the capital of Bornu remained; and then all the Phula gathered together, prepared themselves, and came to the Bornu Capital.«<sup>714</sup>

The Jihadists mobilized and encamped in the countryside. For some years it was a peripheral movement relying on widespread Fulbe clan networks and long-distance intelligence systems. They encountered the Sahel savannas as a familiar land they learned to control with their mounted military. They created artificial barriers around their *ribat* and aimed at turning every ›wilderness‹ into controllable plains with little vegetation and hiding spots. Jihadist soldiers believed in walled borders and feared the power of natural barriers, like rivers, forests and mountains. This discomfort was also expressed when encountering inhabitants beyond these ›natural borders‹: They were massacred and exhibited as exotic trophies. Migration was necessary for spatial integration of Jihadist warfare and the creation of a territorial state. But Jihadist expansion and mobilization ended when facing topographical obstacles. Therefore the frontier had to be protected and people settled. A Jihad chronicle put it this way: »This brought an end to all expeditions and migrations.«<sup>715</sup> Jihad wars should end and only be maintained at the external frontier of the Caliphate. Hence Muhammad Bello concluded that urbanization and fortification guaranteed »the peace of the Kingdom.«<sup>716</sup>

714 Koelle (ed.): African Native Literature, p. 227.

715 Cf. the translation of Muhammad Zangi Ibn Salih's (1806–1869) text *Taqyid akhbar jamat al-shaykh alladhina bi-Kanu* by Ado-Kurawa: Jihad in Kano, p. 34.

716 Muhammad Bello: *Risalat ila Muhammad Al-Jaylani*, Niamey 3046, p. 6.



## V Conclusions: Jihadist Geography and Geographical Jihad

This study on the Jihad of Sokoto started with the presupposition that all practical jihadist warfare requires geography and spatial knowledge because ›companions‹ (›believers‹) and ›enemies‹ (›unbelievers‹) are defined with reference to their respective lands of residence. The jihadist interpretation of Islam divides the world into the ›Land of Islam‹ (or ›Peace‹) and the ›Land of War‹ or the ›Land of Unbelief‹. Drawing from such a theory and concept of jihad, this warlike ideology of Islam is fundamentally focused on territorial orders. Although imagination is the core of its spatial knowledge, jihadist Islam is not a deterritorialized concept. In pre-colonial West Africa, the Jihadists of Sokoto discussed where the frontier between Muslim and ›pagan‹ land was located. At the same time, practical warfare and war infrastructure in fact generated a demand for geographical information on routes, villages of civilians and the residence of enemy soldiers. The Sokoto Jihad mobilized and moved soldiers, refugees and slaves. These mobile actors acquired, spread and discussed mental maps of the Central Sahel and beyond. In this regard, the Sokoto Jihad also created new and contradictory knowledge on space in multiple areas. Sacred, mythological, social, economic, experienced and utopian geographies were negotiated in the Jihadist discourse.

An essential question of the Jihad was to define and redefine who was a Muslim and who was an ›unbeliever‹. It was in regard to this act of definition that the Jihadists themselves wanted to be understood, and many historians have indeed followed their self-concept. However, this individual believer/unbeliever differentiation could never be managed in a war. On that level, dichotomous religious categories were generalized so that the Jihadists in fact discussed the status of collectives and not of persons. More often than using ethnic names, the Jihadists referred to a certain ›land‹ (Arab. *balad*) when addressing these questions of religious definition. They established a mental and literary map of

»lands« arranged on a round world slice, thus drawing from historical geographies found in Arabic literature as well as from spatial knowledge that was circulated orally by travelers, soldiers and other migrants. The Sokoto Jihad was a movement I have read in two ways: As a metaphor for social dynamics and as a description of people and ideas moving through space. The Jihadist elite may have adopted several spatial concepts and omitted others, but in many ways they had to rely on geographical information given by strangers and less powerful people. Several mobile groups contributed to and participated in the transfer of geographical knowledge.

During the mobilization of the Sokoto Jihad, Islam was propagated as a deterritorialized religion. Being close to any preacher (in a spatial sense), to an altar or special environment was not considered necessary for satisfactory religious practice. Islamic rituals could be carried out everywhere on earth and the efficiency of prayers was not linked to a certain place or building (e.g. mosques). Muslim prayers, on the one hand, required facing the Kaaba in Mecca, but on the other hand the spatial distance and the personal location with regard to the Holy Cities were – on a theological level – not relevant. The direction is noteworthy, not the place, so that they rely on a compass or the stars instead of buildings or trees. The Jihadists often criticized regional religious traditions that were centered on special trees or shrines. Uthman dan Fodio, for example, called them »blameworthy [...] customs of a certain country.«<sup>1</sup> Legitimate religious rituals had to be universal in this sense, so that even travelers and migrants were warned not to »imitate« local religious practices and not to become integrated into an alien religious context. Islamic rituals were therefore especially functional in the context of trans-regional networks, in which traders and slaves of different origin could find no common religious ground based on fixed religious places. Islamic practices offered trust-giving signals in an atmosphere of general suspicion that came along with frequent encounters with strangers. Traders thus judged spaces with reference to »dangerous« and »safe« lands (see chapter IV.3.1). Very regularly the dangerous spaces were identified as the ›Land of Unbelief‹, whereas safe spaces were considered Islamized. These traders also transported

1 Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afhām*, p. 97.

spatial information unknowingly that was contained in the books they sold. Copies of the Koran and other Arabic books could be transported on long journeys, and the Jihadist military also used the Koran for formal rituals in which their allies would swear their allegiance on the holy book.<sup>2</sup> New mental maps containing religious topographies were constructed among Muslim traders and communicated throughout the Caliphate of Sokoto. And these books contained myths and reports about foreign spaces and ancient migrations. It was therefore necessary for this study to create and apply certain methods in order to study mental maps that were usually never drawn on paper.

### **Methodological Achievements: Transcending the Limits of/on Maps**

When studying African geographies, scholars have usually sought map-like graphic sources to interpret. In 1998, the geographer Thomas J. Bassett claimed in his essay entitled *Indigenous Mapmaking in Intertropical Africa*<sup>3</sup> that any »deliberate emphasis placed on graphic representations is in itself a Western bias.«<sup>4</sup> However, his approach to stress the transfer of mapmaking skills between European (colonial) protagonists and Africans must also be considered unilateral. It acknowledges the contributions of African agents who informed and trained European geographers in the age of discovery and colonialism, and yet it largely omits internal African discussions of spatial information. External influences on African mapmaking are only referred to as »European« or »Western« impact. Although ignoring the multilateral knowledge transfer (Islamic ideas, internal African exchange), Bassett included a broad variety of African methods to represent space. He looked for general conclusions, for example focusing on cosmographic maps of West African societies that linked the four cardinal directions with divine spatial orders.<sup>5</sup> Even the layout of the farm land and the gender order of the house and compound

2 The Bornu military also practiced it with their allies. Cf. Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, p. 245.

3 Bassett: *Indigenous Mapmaking*.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

can be regarded as acts of mapping in this sense. Bassett also discovered linkages between the cardinal directions and creation myths. It has been demonstrated here in this study, that the Sokoto Jihadists considered the east-west and west-east axes as focal lines of genealogical and religious descent (cf. IV.1.1 and IV.1.2). In his creative approach, Bassett also analyzed patterns of body scarification as maps of historical migration routes and cosmological orders. He claimed that African maps were often mnemonic, as they were not necessarily ›stored‹ but only created and used during initiation rites, when the youths had to learn about the religious and political landscape they lived in. Many maps drawn for the European travelers, who requested that they be produced, can therefore be classified as »ephemeral« and »solicited.«<sup>6</sup> Bassett regrets that most of these maps were later altered or copied by Europeans so that variations are often not traceable. The Clapperton/Bello map was explored as one example of an originally pre-colonial African map (cf. *Figure 4*). But Bassett was misled by ethnic interpretations of maps in this case. What he called »ethnocentric« – because Sokoto is situated in the center of the drawing – should rather be called capital-centric. It was a map depicting Sokoto's claim of central significance as the capital of an Islamic territorial state. Furthermore, Bassett's essay explains that Bello knew the »true« location and mouth of the Niger River and that he consciously bluffed Clapperton for political reasons. This study has on the contrary discovered that the knowledge of various groups of Muslim travelers – assuming that a super-river (Niger, Benue, Chad, Nile) formed an east-west borderline and frontier of belief, vegetation, and civilization – was appreciated and followed by the Jihadist leaders and scholars. Scientific accuracy with regard to waterways was of no value to these creators of mental and written maps. They documented historical and contemporary narratives of travelers with regard to Islamic and experienced truth. More often than drawing maps into the sand, Sokoto travelers exchanged spatial information orally with lists giving the names of settlements on a certain route: »They [...] fulfilled a basic discourse function – to show relative position and direction to outsiders unfamiliar with the territory through which they were traveling.«<sup>7</sup>

6 Ibid., p. 33.

7 Ibid., p. 37.

During the 1810s, the British Vice-Consul Joseph Dupuis traveled to the Gold Coast (Ghana) and collected such Arabic itinerary manuscripts from Salaga traders. Some of them gave detailed descriptions of the Sahelian routes from Salaga to Katsina. They made mention of the crossing of a large water basin called »Kwara« (Niger) and the mighty Hausa markets. On describing the route further to Egypt, Mecca, and Mount Sinai, the information about places become scarce.<sup>8</sup> These lists of places easily blur the limits of experienced merchant spaces and religious geographies of Islam. One list gives the Sahel route to Mecca and Jerusalem, while another manuscript mentioned the northern route through the Sahara. The latter also mentions the end of the world in Syria: »This land is close to heaven and there is the end.«<sup>9</sup> A Sahel traveler explained that the Kaaba was situated in the middle of the whole world.<sup>10</sup> European travelers like Dupuis explicitly stated that they trusted their Muslim informants much more than any non-Muslim African. This was probably because travelers with Christian-European backgrounds could more easily adapt to a written and monotheistic culture of spatial knowledge.<sup>11</sup> They experienced African territory through Muslim eyes, speech and literature. For too long, researchers of African representations of space have looked for European methods of cartography and – very unsurprisingly – only discovered insufficient or incomplete maps. But at the same time West African societies had developed and used other sophisticated ways to perceive, remember and communicate spaces. This study has taken an approach different from that traditionally pursued in the history of geography, which is centered on maps in accordance with a European orientation. Instead, this analysis has explored different ways to investigate mental maps and spatial discourses from written and narrated literature.

The presented results do not deny the impact of European travelers visiting the palaces of the Central Sahel throughout the nineteenth century. The Jihadist rulers and scholars must have noticed that their favorite topic of debate was African geography. Nevertheless, the knowledge

8 Cf. Dupuis: *Journal of a Residence*, p. cxxvi.

9 Arab. والنهاري الشام كاربايا السماء في الشام انتهن. *Ibid.*, p. cxxix.

10 *Ibid.*, p. cxxxv.

11 It must be noted that Dupuis' maps of Africa refer to pre-Jihad information declaring Hausaland dependent on Bornu under Katsina rule.

transfer from European informants to Jihadist scholars was limited. Continents that had not already been identified in medieval Arabic geographies were not discussed in Jihadist texts. There is, for example, very scarce evidence to support the supposition that the Jihadists had a precise idea about the American continents. The only person talking of Americans was Mohammed Bousgayey, an Arab-Bornuese trader who had gone to the southern Caliphate frontier (Yawuri and Nupe) with a small merchant caravan. The British traveler Denham talked to him about this journey to the »Quolla« River (Niger). Bousgayey explained that the Nupe people living on the shores of that river were »kaffirs« (unbelievers), »but not bad people«.<sup>12</sup> He also noticed that Nupe obtained firearms and gun powder, as well as alcohol from the »bahr kebir« (big water). From there »white« and »Christian Americans« would come for trade and ask for male slaves.<sup>13</sup> This Arab trader was told about American slave traders during his stay in Nupe; similarly some European travelers may also have informed their West African hosts and employees about America. The notebooks of the German explorer Heinrich Barth – himself a trained geographer – contained a small draft world map destined to be presented to Africans he encountered.<sup>14</sup> On the African continent Barth wrote down »Egypt« (*Misr*) and »Sudan«. He also entitled Australia, North and South America. Although this map was oriented to the north, it may not have contradicted Muslim ideas about the world, because it was depicted as a flat disc surrounded by a circumfluent ocean, which Barth labeled »World Ocean« in the north and south. However, information about America did not enter any written Jihadist documents before 1850.

Having recognized that maps alone are not a sufficient type of source material for this analysis of Jihadist geography, it was decided that Sokoto scholarly literature should be complemented by rumor and gossip documented in European sources. Scholarship and gossip from the era

**12** See Denham's notes of 7 April 1824; Clapperton / Denham / Oudney: *Narrative of Travels*, vol. 2, London 1826, p. 80.

**13** *Ibid.*, p. 81. Only for the 1840s is there some evidence for rumor about white slave-trading cannibals from the Nigerian coast among the Hausa. Cf. Castelnau: *Renseignements*, p. 36.

**14** Bibliothèque de la Société de Géographie de Paris, carnet N° 4, p. 88, published in: Despois (ed.): *Souvenirs de H. Barth*, p. 12.

were interpreted and compared with regard to the spatial descriptions and evaluations they contained. The Sokoto Jihadists expressed their ideas and ideologies of spaces and traveling in texts instead of using graphical media. Political treatises, theological analysis, war poetry and elegies offered rich insights about the genesis of Jihadist mental maps and territorial politics. Although this study basically started with an intensive examination of authoritarian Jihadist ego-documents (cf. section III), the research questions soon demanded a critical review of European travel literature and the biographies of slaves and merchants written down mostly by missionaries and ›Western‹ scholars. It turned out that these sources revealed common legends, gossip, and rumor from the world of the mobile actors which included traders, pilgrims, teachers, slaves and soldiers. Therefore these non-scholarly sources were used as complementary material in order to write a history of Jihadist spatial ideas, mentalities, knowledge, and the cultural transfer of this information. Several colleagues dealing with colonial and postcolonial African societies have already defended the historical relevance of rumor and gossip for the study of colonization processes. Luise White, for example, scrutinized the informative value of vampire and cannibal stories in order to reduce the discomfort of historians doubting the validity of such stories as sources:

»What are historians to do with such evidence? To European officials, these stories were proof of the African superstition, and of the disorder that superstition so often caused. It was yet another groundless African belief, the details of which were not worth the recall of officials and observers.«<sup>15</sup>

Luise White on the contrary aimed at explaining these stories and telling how and why they made sense in the world of some African colonial societies, based upon the assumption that those narratives told of extraordinary occurrences through everyday descriptions. She wanted her book to be about »the world rumor and gossip reveals«, instead of focusing on the gossip itself.<sup>16</sup> White concluded that »vampire stories are like any other historical source; they change the way a historical reconstruction is

15 White: *Speaking with Vampires*, p. 4.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

done.«<sup>17</sup> And she accepts the existence of various attitudes towards truth in discussing these stories:

»This is not to say that people deliberately tell false stories. The distinction between true and false stories may be an important one for historians, but for people engaged in continuous arguments, explanations, and descriptions, sometimes presenting themselves as experts, or just in the best possible light, it may not matter: people want to tell stories that work, stories that convey ideas and points.«<sup>18</sup>

Rather than dealing with the categories of truth and falsehood, the historian should consider the language codes used to express or characterize fears, extreme outland areas, and mental categories. The Jihadist term »Niam-Niam« may, for example, at times stand for anthropophagous people, naked people, unbelieving people, non-human animals, slaves, warriors with different military equipment and fighting styles, people with strange architecture, and so on. But the Sokoto Jihadists tried to eliminate this ambiguity in human and spatial matters. Therefore, different meanings of »Niam-Niam« were melted into one territorial category: The Land of the »Niam-Niam«. In a multi-ethnic and pluri-religious region, the concept and identification of the enemy country had to be clear and unmistakable. Legends of the trading sphere were perfectly suited to become such a universal narrative, because the words and stories were spread over large areas by long-distance travel and trade networks. The »cannibal rumors« may have been created at different times and at different places, but the network of mobile actors in the Sahel generated a common knowledge repository of names, ethnonyms and places. Although the Jihadists made use of this repository for their propaganda literature and their geography, the stories had been spread and modified by mobile actors during and prior to the Jihad. These actors used well-known expressions to exchange ideas in a short time regarding the dangers and the pleasures of traveling. This mode of communication highlighted the extraordinary impressions of landscape and people. It was therefore not the legendary Hausa figure of the *dodo* kidnappers – or any other protagonist of traditional horror stories – who were located in

17 Ibid., p. 6.

18 Ibid., p. 30.



the territory beyond the Caliphate frontier, but the ›Niam-Niam‹ cannibals. The narratives that were used were, of course, ethnonyms that were compatible with Islamic knowledge. Cannibal stories were applied as references for projects of othering the enemy during the Jihad.

Mobile actors of the early nineteenth century diffused the stories about strange territories in the Central Sahel, just as their counterparts of the Arabic Middle Ages had spread information about their home region some centuries before. Ironically, the latter genre of historical rumor entered classical Arabic (and other) geography through anonymous sources, and finally returned to the Sahel by crossing the Sahara as literature documented in Arabic books. Although ultimately available as written sources, the actual content arose from oral rumor and gossip and oscillated between written and oral genres until and during the Sokoto Jihad. As historians, we have to accept that rumor and scholarly writings were intimately related with each other and should therefore not be treated as separate social worlds of knowledge or as sources of essentially different epistemic value.

The discourse contained in these sources does not tell directly about historical truth, but it reveals the social truth of societies of the past.<sup>19</sup> Rumor and gossip make it possible, »that diverse experiences, taken over and told as personal narratives, can reveal the power of difference and the speakers' knowledge thereof.«<sup>20</sup> This was the case with the multicultural military expeditions into the southern frontier zone of the Sokoto Caliphate. The soldiers were able to subsume individual and diverging perceptions of other cultures they encountered personally or by hearsay and the violence they experienced and engaged in themselves. And this was also the case with the imaginary pilgrimages to the Holy Cities, expressed in the Jihadist poetry. By quoting travel experiences of pilgrims and pilgrimage literature, the Jihadists overcame the knowledge discrepancy between them and important religious scholars – a process termed »domestication of circulating stories« by White.<sup>21</sup>

19 Cf. for instance East African examples described by Beidelmann: *Myth, Legend and Oral History*, pp. 74–97.

20 White: *Speaking with Vampires*, p. 36.

21 *Ibid.*

Gossip and rumor are powerful instruments of social control so that »if we can historicize gossip, we look at the boundaries and bonds of a community.«<sup>22</sup> And these boundaries and frontiers were at stake in the Sokoto Jihad. A new and utopian Islamic community had to be silhouetted against all other human populations. Jihadist gossip offers almost no »true« insights on their non-Jihadist neighbors, but »reveals motivations and interests of the gossiper at a specific moment.«<sup>23</sup> Gossip is a very intimate oral genre, revealing individual conflicts, »an intellectual world of fears and fantasies, ideas and claims that have not been studied before.«<sup>24</sup> The same is true for gossip as a source to analyze the Jihadist perception of and discourse on territories beyond the pious norms of their religious treatises. There are numerous publications about the so-called »intellectual history« of the Sokoto Caliphate, which usually refer to the – in a pure Islamic understanding – logical argumentation in the Jihadist texts on Islamic law and matters of theology.<sup>25</sup> This study, on the other hand, has also taken into consideration the intellectual debates going on in realms beyond those that we may today judge as scholarly. This is because the discourse occurring here is not less true or reliable than that of any other historical source if one can find the right research questions to approach it in a promising manner. This study has presented methods to use rumor as source material for the pre-colonial history of West Africa. This approach has included, for example, taking accounts of the marginalized seriously. Therefore slaves have not been treated as economic factors, but rather as subjects who often were geographic experts or at least presented themselves as such (cf. IV.5.1). Slaves were threatened by rumor and at the same time they used it as their own tool of defending their bodies and minds against the discrimination and abuse directed against them. In accordance with this methodology, narrated stories and legends were considered just as important as chronological and historiographical accounts (see IV.1). This study has transcended

22 Ibid., p. 65.

23 Ibid., p. 68.

24 Ibid., p. 86.

25 Cf. Centre for Islamic Studies (ed.): *Selected Papers. West African researchers on the intellectual history of the Caliphate often expressed their wish to help their »contemporary society out of the social and cultural crisis«*; see *ibid.*, p. 4 (preface). See also El-Miskin / Ibrahim / Hamman / Bala (eds.): *Nigeria's Intellectual Heritage*.

the limits *of* maps by consulting written accounts and oral narrations put into writing, so that we have been able to pass beyond the borders shown *on* maps that only depicted the ›home‹ territory and omitted the ›other‹ space beyond the Caliphate frontiers.

### **Moving Knowledge and Knowing Movement: Networks and Actors of Knowledge Transfer**

The spatial dimension of knowledge transfer was reflected by the Sokoto Jihadists in various ways. At first sight it may seem as if the Jihadists preferred to rely on geographical information drawn from books, and not from contemporary informants. But the written papers themselves were media with a history of transport and migration, expressed in the Sufi idea of the *silsila* chain of transfer of secret knowledge (chapter IV.3.2), or as depicted in legends about certain pioneer immigrants from North Africa, Arabia and Persia (IV.1). Knowledge was territorialized in this understanding: It had a place, a home, and a history of migration. Education, trade networks and warfare were connected with each other. The Jihadists picked these spheres up as an essential part of their civilizing mission – summarized in a nutshell by Nana Asmau in one of her poems lamenting Muhammad Bello’s death: »He facilitated learning, commerce and defense.«<sup>26</sup> With these three keywords Asmau identified the central and unchanging goals of Jihadist policy. The level of Islamic education should be improved, including formerly disadvantaged groups such as women. Commercial routes and urban markets were to be protected and the frontiers had to be guarded by military units.

As a matter of fact, these networks only linked some local places and communities to others – excluding the majority of the rural population. Furthermore, these information networks were not able to integrate areas with significantly different topographic and vegetative features. Thick forests and mountains were often not directly reached by Islamic education, long-distance trade and military presence. Communication and trade was only possible throughout middlemen as intermediary traders who crossed the frontiers on a regular scale. They reached the territories

which the Jihadist state would or could not control. For this and other reasons, these spaces came to embody the opposite concept of the Jihadist goals. They were considered non-civilized and therefore an obstacle to the Sokoto Jihadist manifest destiny to Islamize the »Sudan«.

Warfare was only one method of Jihadist state building and expansion. Another one was the controlled distribution of Jihadist ideas by preaching and writing about this ideology. Uthman dan Fodio liked to stylize himself as a communicator. He was convinced that it was the scholar's duty to tell the people what to change instead of bringing about the change on his own: »It is not up to someone to change, what he is religiously commanded to change; but it is up to him to tell about this in a speech.«<sup>27</sup> Communication with the inhabitants of the ›Land of Unbelief‹ was especially delicate for the Jihadists. They completely forbade contacts with the enemy land during a »time of fear«<sup>28</sup> or war. In dan Fodio's view, communicating with ›unbelievers‹ in order to gain »what is in their hands of the wealth«<sup>29</sup> was permitted whereas any other interaction was clearly judged an act of unbelief. Moving into the ›Land of Unbelief‹ was a necessity in times of Jihad but it was considered dangerous for the bodies and souls of the travelers.

### **Moving Bodies and Minds: Motion and Emotion**

In the Jihadist world, the movement of the body also involved the movement of the mind and a mental transformation.<sup>30</sup> This movement could at times be dangerous for body and soul. Sufi travelers, pilgrims on their hajj, and soldiers were challenged by the efforts and dangers of their various journeys. Movement was judged a challenge of character and belief for any Muslim traveler. Nevertheless, the Jihadist political and military movement required the mobilization of people who had to leave

27 Siddiqi (ed.): *Ḥiṣn al-afḥām*, p. 91. Uthman dan Fodio quoted Muhammad Ibn Hajj Al-Abdari Al-Tilmisani, an Algerian author of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The book quoted here is called *Al-madkhal*.

28 Mafara (ed.): *Kitabul-Amri*, p. 3.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

30 See for example Malti-Douglas: *Medicines of the Soul*.

their homes and engage in warfare. Mobilization included both the body and the mind. For their war efforts the Jihadists wanted to generate anger and feelings of revenge among the mobilized soldiers. Emotions were demanded before and during the Jihad, but afterwards the ulama wanted the people to calm down and support the state without being so agitated. Regarding the behavior of the future Caliphate leaders, dan Fodio ordered them to be strict but without feelings of revenge – just as the angels and saints were. Otherwise they would behave like animals: »And whenever you succumbed to your temper and that becomes your habit you are like animals and beasts.«<sup>31</sup> Therefore, beyond the Jihad battlefield emotions were stigmatized as animal-like characteristics and uncivilized behavior. In this concept the battlefield and places of Jihad fighting were separate from other spaces and another code of conduct was established (or rather propagated) among the followers. The Jihad religiously allowed expressing emotions like hate, anger and vengeance otherwise considered beastly, wild and inhuman. The wars therefore stimulated violent excesses, especially because they usually happened in places far away from the soldiers' usual social environment. But after the Jihad, people were expected to settle again since only settled inhabitants of the Caliphate allowed regular agriculture and taxation. Similarly, it was expected that emotions should become balanced again. In various elegies the Jihadists made clear the ideal and modest character they wished for:

»Never ill-tempered, pleasant to everyone, only if law was broken he became angry. In that case he was implacable and could not be appeased. When he regained equanimity he was calm.«<sup>32</sup>

Emotions should only be present and expressed when linked to Islam. Only when anyone sinned against God did Muhammad Bello become angry and »enraged«,<sup>33</sup> reported his sister Nana Asmau years after his death. In those elegies, the Jihadists reflected on the appropriate mode of mourning, which Uthman dan Fodio had limited to silent crying without screaming or movement. Nana Asmau repeated his will when praising her deceased sister Fatima with an elegy in ca. 1838:

31 Mafara (ed.): *Usulul-adliluwatil Umuri*, p. 5.

32 Boyd / Mack (eds.): *Collected Works*, p. 87.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 235.

»To stop grieving for the dead according to habits of the ignorant [Arab. *jahiliyya*].<sup>34</sup> The Sheikh told us not to err and prohibited extravagant wailing. Cry and shed tears of grief for the loved one and to relieve your pain.«<sup>35</sup>

According to the Jihadist view, emotions shall be controlled and regulated; calm inner feelings were permitted, but public expressions were judged to be remains from the pre-Islamic »Time of Ignorance«, or *jahiliyya*. Intensive expressions of emotions were considered to be backward. Prophet Muhammad served as a role model of a balanced character, who was never angry unless he witnessed a sin against Islam.

In general, feelings of anger were refused in Jihadist and Sufist ideas since they were considered a »blameworthy quality.«<sup>36</sup> Uthman dan Fodio explained that anger usually means the »boiling of the blood of the heart in search for revenge.«<sup>37</sup> If someone was angry at someone less powerful than him, the blood would go up to his face so that he would blush red in anger. In reverse, if he was angry at someone more powerful, all his blood would contract deep in his heart so that he would become pale. This concept of emotion links blood circulation directly to the social quality of anger. It refers to the limitation of emotional expression due to the social context: When confronting people of a higher status negative emotions had to be hidden inside the body or heart. This meant that the inferior may never show his anger with his body. This notion of feelings is bound to hierarchy – in a social situation or in a religious surrounding. Thus, the negative emotions most worthy of rejection in a Jihadist perspective were those of the pre-Islamic *jahiliyya*. Uthman dan Fodio explained that without Islam there was no justification of hate and anger at all.<sup>38</sup> Since the beginning of Islam, both excessive anger and insufficient anger were considered reprehensible. On the one hand, jealous anger was required in order to protest against evil – in the case of

34 Fulfulde جَاهِلِيْنَا. Nana Asmau: *Sonnore Mo'inna*, SOAS, Jean Boyd PP MS 36, A70–A72, vol. 1, p. 131.

35 Ibid., p. 130.

36 This Sufi explanation of the purification from anger was summarized by Uthman dan Fodio in his work *Ulum al-Muamala* (Niamey 410 (14)); here it is referred to the English translation published in Abdarrahman Bewley: *Handbook on Islam*, p. 67.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

adultery, for example. On the other hand, excessive anger might becloud the rational senses and intellect. In the view of Uthman, this exaggerated anger should be detected from the red skin color, the shaking of the body, foam in the mouth and the extreme ugliness of the face. Accordingly, the angry person would speak disgusting and insulting words.<sup>39</sup> The Jihadist writer went on to mention some interesting incidents that may occur when someone is ›too‹ angry:

»You may hit animals and smash a bowl to the ground and act like a madman. You verbally abuse the beast and speak to it ›how long can I endure this from you?‹ as if you were addressing a rational being.«<sup>40</sup>

This kind of anger allegedly befalls limbs, heart and tongue. The path of Sufi Islam, however, recommends moderate anger and feelings in general. More concretely this means that Muslims should only be ›rationally‹ angry when Islamic principles are being ignored. Everyone was called on to reflect on his mode of anger and either increase or decrease it when appropriate. In this Jihadist understanding of emotion, feelings had to be controlled by a religious ratio because they threatened rational control over human behavior. This control of emotions can be seen as the core of the Jihadist concept of the civilized and Islamized human being. This ability of self-control marked the borderline between the civilized and the ›cannibals‹. Eating human beings meant that those people lacked this control drawn from civilization and rationality. The forests and mountains were considered homes of the wild people who followed ›natural‹ desires in a ›natural‹ environment. They would perform the more extreme sins, the farther they were situated from the ›Land of Islam‹ (cf. IV.4.2 and IV.5.4). Thick forests or empty deserts were described as places where domesticated animals and disciplined humans could go crazy and lose their rationality and emotional control.

39 Ibid., p. 68.

40 Ibid., p. 69.

## Homeland: (Re-)Capturing the Sahel

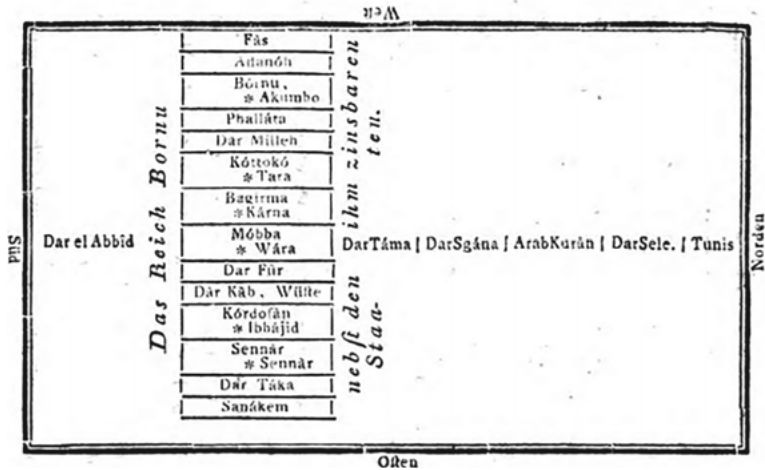


Figure 17: Map of Bornu by Seetzen (1810)

Mental maps were instruments for Jihadist war tactics, but they also generated legitimacy for cruel acts of violence and conquest. Those maps were communicated as subtle plans about which areas should be conquered and how. They negotiated which territory had formerly been ›Dar al-Islam‹ in the Central Sahel and therefore only had an interim status as ›Dar al-Harb‹. Jihadist geographies in this case debated which areas should be *reconquered* and which areas were ungovernable ›Lands of Cannibals‹. In the opinion of the Sokoto Jihadists, the best Jihad was the war on apostates, Muslims that had allegedly fallen back into heathen practices. The missionary Jihad on the other hand, aimed at the conversion of ›traditional‹ non-Muslims, was considered a less prestigious goal of their policy.<sup>41</sup> The Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio only concentrated on a civil war within the ›Muslim Sudan‹. When the Jihad battlefields and Sokoto frontiers shifted to the east and south, the Jihad turned from a civil war to colonial conquest. In the late nineteenth century, the Hausa scholar Umaru emphasized the change of Jihadist policy at this point in history:

41 Rebstock (ed.): *Die Lampe der Brüder*, p. 91.



»It was Yakuba who was given the task of making war on Bauchi. He was given the country and settled there. As for the Fulani they also made war on Adamawa, but the Fulani of Hausa did not go to make war on Adamawa. As for them, they only gave the flag to Modibbo of Adamawa and he was making war on the Adamawa people until he conquered them.«<sup>42</sup>

The western Caliphate of Gwandu had sent Mallam Dendo southwards to Nupe in order to colonize it and found a new emirate while the eastern Caliphate of Sokoto had sent flag bearers to the east and southeast. Most of the Jihadist propagandistic literature deals with the expansion of their state by means of warfare in legal Jihad. But in fact, the process of Caliphate expansion was more complex than that. Only rarely did the Jihadists ask someone to gather soldiers and subject new territory to the Caliphate system. Often, Hausa refugees or Fulbe settlers had already taken



Figure 18: Abdassalam's map as copied by Muhammad Bello (drawn before 1818, copied before 1837)

42 Quoted from the edition of Piłaszewicz (ed.): Hausa Prose Writings, p. 85.

up their residence in these areas – at a time when they legally belonged to the ›Land of War‹ which was to be attacked in a Jihad. But since Islam is ambiguous in most of its rules, the Jihadists found some arguments in the books of previous Muslim scholars that permitted Muslims to live in the ›Dar al-Harb‹, to interact with ›unbelieving‹ residents and to trade with them.<sup>43</sup> But in the same text composed by Uthman dan Fodio, Al-Maghili's *Answers* are quoted, in which he concludes that whoever is Muslim and settled among unbelievers can legally be killed by another Muslim army, for it was his fault to live on this territory contaminated with unbelief.<sup>44</sup> The creation of frontier towns offered salvation for these people because paradise was guaranteed for every inhabitant of a fortified town at the border (IV.5.5).

In principle, the Sokoto Jihadists accepted the legitimacy of other Muslim states in the Sahel – be that Massina in Mali or Bornu in the east. It was assumed that these regions were destined to be Muslim in accordance with the dominant topographical and environmental features. The Sahel zone was situated on the sacred axis linking several Islamic states and towns with the Holy Cities in Arabia. On this holy route pilgrims regularly traveled through the Sokoto emirates and supplied the Jihadists with descriptions of their journey and Mecca itself (IV.2.2). While the east and the west represented statehood and religion, the north and the south were perceived as lands of sin and danger. The Sahel was featured as the ›natural‹ home of Muslim statehood.

### **The Naturalization of the Southern and Northern Frontiers**

Territorial perception was managed with reference to Islamic concepts of space. Of course, everyday experiences in the Sokoto Caliphate sometimes contradicted this religious ideology of spaces. There were, for instance, mobile pastoralists living and migrating across the frontiers in rural landscapes and allies that co-existed and traded with the ›Lands of Unbelief‹, although this was officially prohibited. For this reason, the

43 Cf. for example Uthman dan Fodios text *Siraj al-ikhwan* at BN, Manuscrits Arabes 5528, f. 233b.

44 Rebstock (ed.): *Die Lampe der Brüder*, p. 94.

Caliphate intellectuals dedicated much of their literary effort to dealing with these gray areas, or in-between spaces and actors. This was especially done at times, when the Caliphate was expanding – often quite far and independent from the capital Sokoto – beyond the Hausa region. The Arabization project of the Caliphate gave way to the ›Hausaization‹ of the frontier elites and Fulfulde was often marginalized as an official language. Economic centers emerged beyond the Caliphate, and Islamic practices were introduced into existing religious and political systems.

There were centers and peripheries that were not necessarily arranged in a circular shape as suggested by Wilks in the case of Asante mental mapping.<sup>45</sup> Although the capital town Sokoto and other political or merchant centers were depicted with circles on the maps of explorers in the Central Sahel, the Caliphate itself was never considered to be round but rectangular: the northern frontier was a latitude, separating the desert from the savanna with a line; and to the south rivers separated the savanna from the hilly ›wilderness‹. In some more detailed drawings, the Sokoto emirates appeared as tetragons ordered geometrically next to each other. This was done in exactly the same way that the written Arabic geographies, which the Jihadist commented on, typically portrayed one ›land‹ after another in a row from the west to the east – as in the work of the medieval geographer Al-Idrisi, for example. Even the Niger or Nile River on Bello's map is stylized rather rectangularly (cf. *Figure 4*). And this was not caused or inspired by European ideas or ideals. The overwhelming significance of the four directions in the Sokoto Jihadist culture and Islam in general led to the mental and architectural organization of spaces in coordinate systems, rather than in circles (III.2). This was, for example, expressed in a west-oriented map of Bornu drawn by the German traveler Seetzen after having interviewed Sahelian pilgrims in Cairo and Mecca (*Figure 17*). This map is arranged as an assemblage of lines at right angles, oriented in accordance with the four directions. Names of places appear as lists and were probably discussed and communicated orally in the style of an experienced journey. But much relevant information of Seetzen's dialog partners is missing on this European visualization of West African mental maps: The »Land of Slaves« (»Dar el

45 Cf. his »mental map« published in Wilks: *On Mentally Mapping Greater Asante*, p. 182.

Abbid« on the left/south) was identified orally as Baguirmi by Seetzen's informants and the southern region was generally declared a land full of naked unbelievers living between rivers and mountains.<sup>46</sup> Mental maps of slaves from the Sahel did not distinguish geographical information from cultural evaluation.

So far, only one map has been found that was produced by Jihadists for a non-European recipient. The original map was part of a letter that was sent to Muhammad Bello by his former Hausa ally Abdassalam. Bello in turn presented his correspondence with Abdassalam about the latter's rebellion in his book *Sard al-kalam*. This compendium contains six letters of Bello and two letters of his rival. A map depicting the Caliphate was attached to the second letter from Abdassalam. Although Bello called the map a »circle«<sup>47</sup> in his commentary, the Arabic term used here is plurivalent, and the Sokoto sultan probably used this term in order to refer to his »region« or »area«. However, all copies of Abdassalam's map depict the region in a rectangular order and not as a round space. For this study, I basically rely on a copy of this map archived in Zaria (see *Figure 18*).<sup>48</sup>

This map was at least co-authored by Muhammad Bello, who manifested himself on the diagram by entitling it with the words »And the second letter [of Abdassalam] reads as follows« (see the two strips on the left in *Figure 19*). If we start with the introductory text of Abdassalam in the center of the rectangle, the map presents itself as south-oriented in the style of most Arabic cartography. This introduction describes the Caliphate as the land given to the Muslims by God himself. The space is clearly ordered rectangularly, although the texts around it must be read by turning the sheet. In the middle it is written that »this is the shape of the earth of God that He gave the Muslims by His mercy: the east, the west, the south and the north. [...]« All four directions are indicated by the edges of the description field and the piece of paper.

46 Seetzen: Nachrichten von dem Negerland Móbba, p. 155.

47 Arab. دائرة. Cf. the edition of the *Sard al-kalam* in Osswald: Das Sokoto-Kalifat, p. 41. Osswald was given a manuscript copy from Hiskett who obtained it from a private library in Bauchi. See *ibid.*, p. 34. Minna translated extracts of this text to English; cf. Minna: Sultan Muhammad Bello, p. 419. Minna had studied copies held in Kano, Sokoto and Kaduna.

48 Cf. an in-depth analysis of this map in Zehnle: »Where is my Region?«

Abdassalam declared that the Caliphate was divided into four territories congruent with the cardinal directions. The north was primarily given to Muhammad Bello, the western Caliphate was ruled by Abdullah dan Fodio, the south was governed by Al-Bukhari and Atiku and the east was completely ruled by Bello as well. These descriptions explain how the Jihadist territory was divided and ruled by the clan of Uthman dan Fodio. Territorial power was perceived and negotiated with reference to the four directions. This was especially so when Abdassalam turned to the major purpose of his letter and drawing: He was frustrated by this power-political and power-territorial outcome of the Jihad because he was not given a piece of land to govern on behalf of Sokoto. He called on Bello to give him his own emirate to rule over. The annoyed Jihadist thus asked on the map:

»Where is my region, [that] of Abdassalam? I still own, now in the days of Islam, what I have owned in the time of unbelief; and that is a house and some farmlands. What restriction is worse than this?« (cf. *Figure 18* and *19*)

The original author of this map obviously did not consider the Caliphate a centralized state governed by a powerful capital. He explained that there were several Jihadist states situated in different cardinal directions. And in the center, only God is mentioned as the all-embracing power and distributor of land. However, this is the only known example of a Jihadist using an Arabic map as a tool for negotiations about territory and emirate leadership. The diagram is restricted to the ›Land of Islam‹ in the Central Sahel and does not show any regions of ›Unbelief‹. This cartographic description is focused on the mapping of the territorial ›home‹ or ›self‹ and totally omits the outland. The strange lands beyond the Caliphate borders are those lands that could not be described by rectangular shape because they were considered spaces that could not be measured. There was only supposed to be wilderness between the ›Land of Islam‹ and the round edges of the world. This map tells the recipients what space the Jihadists called their own land conveyed into their authority by God. But the map remains silent about the spatial and living ›other‹. This knowledge was accessed by non-cartographic, written sources.

Although Jihadist geographies started with theological categories of space – the ›Land of Islam‹ and the ›Land of War‹ – the discourse was fundamentally influenced by traveling pilgrims, itinerant preachers,

messengers, traders, slaves, refugees and soldiers. During this process, the frontier was not defined so much as a provisional line dividing Muslim and pagan land. Borders were naturalized and considered permanent and independent from the religious status: Trade on Saharan horses and camels ended at the mountains and forests, and the process of civilization and enslavement should not be transferred to the imagined cannibals. The established *southern frontier* – that in fact also included the eastern border of Bauchi and Adamawa – was thought of as a demarcation line between the »Sudan« and the end of the world. Rivers, forests and mountains were noticed as such ›natural‹ borders located between Muslim civilization and southern wilderness. In this understanding of landscape, the tropical forests of Southern Nigeria were the frontier zone between the inland Caliphate regions and the coast or *Foggy Ocean* at the edge of the flat world plate.

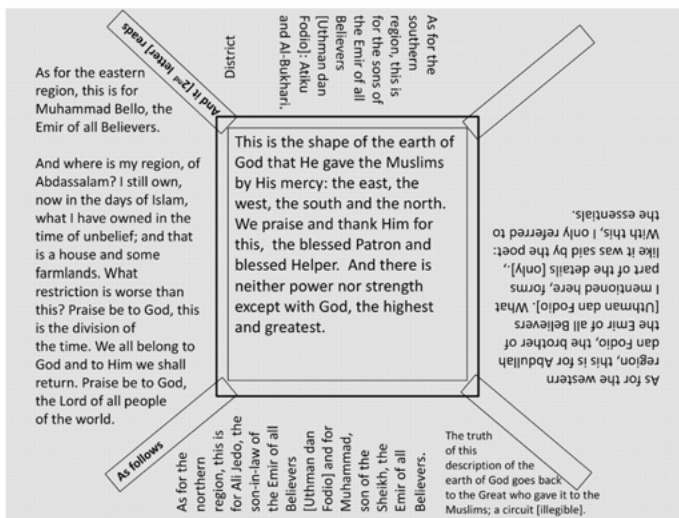


Figure 19: Translation of the Abdussalam/Bello map

There are many reasons why the Jihadist societies called the tropical forest zone a natural barrier. First of all, it blocked different trade systems. When analyzing how the Bornu or Hausa slaves of the Jihad era were trafficked to the Atlantic coast and shipped to the Americas, we can notice that there were usually stopovers of trade and transfers to

middlemen merchants in the tropical zone. Secondly, the Islamic influence never fully reached the coast from the Sahara. And thirdly, the Sokoto Jihadists did not appear well-informed about the political situation and the basic geographical characteristics of the tropical forests and the ocean, although the slaves, in reverse, brought some information about the savanna and the Caliphate heartlands to the coastal Atlantic regions and indirectly into the global knowledge discourses of the Atlantic world. The information flow between the Hausa region and the coast was – with some rare exceptions – unilateral from the north to the south. Moughtin concluded: »So it seems that the forest formerly provided a refuge for weaker peoples, giving some security against stronger, better organized groups from the grassland region.«<sup>49</sup> But by calling these refugees the »more primitive peoples« on the same page, Moughtin reveals that he had already adopted the Jihadist idea of superiority in contrast to the »wild« peoples of the south. It must be remarked that »primitive« is not the proper term here anyway, since their social structure was far from being primitive. Their society was just as complex as the Jihadist society, but they were organized on a more local and regional level. Until Christianization and Islamization these societies had not partaken in global discourses and had not had membership in transcendent global communities such as Islam.

Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias has led my interest to concepts of world space and knowledge transfer during the Sokoto Jihad with his published article on the perception and representation of the medieval Malian town Tadmakkat.<sup>50</sup> He noticed that the Islamic world geography was marked by decisive events of Islamic history, which generated »cognitive dissonances« among African scholars, »when people were simultaneously confronted with different and incompatible heuristic heritages.«<sup>51</sup> De Moraes Farias applied psychological theories, explaining that this dissonance usually makes affected individuals feel uncomfortable and eager to resolve contradictions. He explicitly posed two questions on cognitive dissonance with regard to Sokoto geography, which he did not answer: »Did this apply to the discrepant ideas about

49 Moughtin: Hausa Architecture, p. 13.

50 Cf. Moraes Farias: Local Landscapes, n.p.

51 Ibid.

the Niger held in the Sokoto Court? If it did, what avenues did Sokoto scholars follow in order to reconcile their cognitions?<sup>52</sup> Perhaps, this study can contribute major sources and arguments to respond to these questions. According to Jihadist geographical accounts, the genre and language of the sources determined the mode of geographical knowledge that was communicated by those documents. Historical and Islamic religious knowledge was never considered false in theory, but probably in practice. There are no signs of a cognitive dissonance among the Jihadist elite. Instead, there were separate knowledge spheres on spaces, which were organized in a parallel manner according to social class, gender, age, language and genre. Muslim scholarship allows the juxtaposition of different versions or interpretations of truth, so that the Jihadist libraries were full of books that collected contradictory statements on certain topics. Their understanding of the nature of knowledge was that it was a precious good that could be accumulated. Rivers, large lakes and oceans were not differentiated in most Jihadist sources. Therefore, the »Nile« was recognized as the Niger from Fula Jallon to the Niger-Benue confluence, secondly as the Benue in the Mandara Mountains, and then as the Nile in Egypt. Jihadist authors did not necessarily feel uncomfortable with different truths on geography, as long as they felt that their exploration of the southern border confirmed what they had already known from medieval texts about the ›cannibal lands‹. Rather than talking of »cognitive dissonances«, we can speak of different spheres of knowledge interacting at times.

The conglomeration of geographical information allowed for a selective handling for the Jihadists' own purposes. While Moraes Farias emphasized the role of historical written accounts, the mobile actors of the Sokoto Jihad era were another important medium that delivered geographical information about routes, dangers and events of the places they had passed. This knowledge transfer was practiced orally and more informally. And this information was already »historical« in a sense that those events had happened some days, weeks, or months ago. Yet another level of geographical information was the knowledge of the books which were also transported and traded by these mobile actors. The latter knowledge sphere was more religious, but both discourses on space –



the oral and the written – influenced each other. And on different levels of the space-time-intercourse the Caliphate was »inscribed into a more universal space.«<sup>53</sup>

This study did not seek to establish some essentialist definition of landscape zones because »natural« borders were created actively through-out discourses of space. This means that the Sokoto Jihadists were not confronted with an objective »wilderness«, but they had several Islamic, historical and legendary concepts in mind with which they localized social and topographical frontiers in the north and south. Their ideas about cannibal »Niam-Niams« or Persian »Maguzawa« inhabiting this wilderness were transferred by Arabic written accounts and rumor in the merchant world at the same time. Nature is not dichotomous in itself, but Jihadist mental maps often arranged spaces in dichotomous structures: towns versus villages, villages versus deserted land, settlement versus wilderness, Islamic territory versus »Land of Unbelief«, savanna versus forest, spaces of humans versus habitats of animals. This seeming diversity of space perception was unified in one dominant binary system by Jihadist actors; many villages were fortified and thus became part of the category of »fortified and populated places«. In addition to that, uninhabited land was soon identified with hills and forests. There were »civilized« places with Muslims and domesticated animals in contrast to the wilderness inhabited by wild humans and wild animals. The Sokoto Jihadists promoted and created a Caliphate frontier along environmental borders. Forests, hills, rivers and lakes formed the lines separating the believers from the lands of the so-called »unbelievers«. In a Hausa poem of the 1880s about the Kano reluctance to fight against »unbelievers«, the poet picked up such theories for his extreme explaining why the neighboring states could still not be conquered and controlled by the Jihadist Kano Emir: »Bauchi is the city of the Niam-Niams, Zazzau has many rocks [...], and Gombe has many water basins.«<sup>54</sup>

The northern frontier on the other hand was considered a transitory space connecting the Islamized Sahel with the North African coast and its important centers of Arabic scholarship. The Jihadists did not judge it

53 Lefèbvre: *Territoires et frontières du Soudan central*, p. 110.

54 Hausa »Bauci garin nyamnyam ne [...], Zazzau suna da duwatsu [...], Gombe na da babban kogi.« Prietze: *Haussa-Sänger II*, p. 590.

as a controllable area. Deserted places, the Jihadists argued, were dangerous for the bodies and souls of Muslims (IV.4.2). The Jihad leader Uthman dan Fodio imagined that the Jewish enclaves were located in »desert countries.«<sup>55</sup> Moreover, in elegies for deceased family members, deserts were applied as metaphors for grief and sorrow. In her famous elegy on the occasion of her brother Muhammad Bello's death in 1837, Asmau for example composed the lines: »[I am] Like an estray in the desert, and he is lost. And with him senses of smell and hearing vanish.«<sup>56</sup> The desert (or »north«) could liberate animal lusts in humans and bemuse human senses and rationality. In contrast to this, the south would generate a human-animal transformation in a more bodily fashion: tails grew on human bodies and these beings started to eat their own species. Both frontiers, the northern and the southern one, had profound effects on the Muslims through their topography and climate.

### Mental Maps and Jihadist Warfare

In this study, two major sources of warfare description have been contrasted, namely Jihadist war poetry and chronology of the elite, and accounts of former Jihad soldiers that were enslaved and interviewed later. The official war praise literature was determined to portray warfare on the open savanna, which was considered an appropriate war space. This ›battlefield space‹ was a place for well-organized wars between two major military groups, and the wilderness only overlapped with this Islamic battleground after the enemy was defeated and exposed to carrion eaters. In this case, the enemies were either dead, starving or suffering from extreme thirst. In opposition to the well-organized start of the battle, the defeated party left the ground in panic and chaos – leaving behind their belongings and dead companions. The animal world only entered the savanna when the Jihadists were already withdrawing their military. This war poetry neither described the horrific experiences of guerilla warfare and small military expeditions and raids, nor did it dedicate any chapters

<sup>55</sup> Mafara (ed.): Kitabul-Amri, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Arab. الضال في القفر و هو يطيح و يزول به سمعه و يريح. Ogunbiyi (ed.): Arabic Writings, p. 91.

to war spaces other than the savanna or beleaguered towns. Villages, farms, and forests were not part of ideal Jihad warfare. But the more Jihadist warfare was decentralized and organized by warlords at the expanding frontier zone, the more they drove their expansionist military units into the villages beyond the Niger and Benue rivers and right into the Mandara Mountains and the Adamawa Plateau. Most of the Jihadist soldiers being interviewed after enslavement had fought at the southern Caliphate frontier and were thus engaged in small expedition groups of approximately 30 soldiers raiding small villages. Those Jihadist soldiers picked up historical discourses in Muslim scholarship on the southern and northern edge of the world. Inhabitants and warfare practices of the ›southerners‹ were considered wild, passionate and animal-like.

The war propaganda of Sokoto legitimated state expansion as a civilizing mission which was only adopted for grassland regions. The savanna should be urbanized and controlled by military forces. The Sahel belt was a region judged as appropriate for missionary work. It featured a landscape and people that were destined to become Muslims. Development and progress were considered possible and desirable for them. The Jihadists were continuously mapping ›unbelief‹, and it was claimed that there existed only two categories of humankind: believers and unbelievers (with gray areas inhabited by Jewish or Christian minorities and apostates). But this study has demonstrated that the Jihadist soldiers and societies also mapped the absolute ›other‹ and antipole of even potential civilization. Those were the wild, animal-like cannibals who were declared incapable of ever becoming Muslims. This racist/speciesist view declared that in the »south« no civilizing progress was possible. Sometimes essential differences between humans and human-animal cannibals were even employed to bridge ›racial‹ gaps. In the Nupe region, John Lander wrote down in his notebook in 1830, that his Fulfulde translator had heard a local chief and a visiting merchant in Rabba saying that »they [British visitors] are like us, said the Chief, (who is almost black), their limbs are formed in the same manner as ours, and the color of the skin [is] the same.«<sup>57</sup> Creating the human-animal other could help to bring different human cultures together.

57 Cf. Transcription of John Lander's Journal Book No. 2, 1830, Ms. 42326, John Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, edited version online at <http://>

Those ›wild‹ others were thought to be characterized by their uncommon consumption of meat (including human flesh). In a mid-nineteenth century description of a hajj journey included in the moral tale *Story of a Priest who had a Heathen Friend*, the priest (*mallam* in Kanuri) was described as a person knowing all books, whereas his non-Muslim friend (*kerdi*) represented the uncivilized pagan: »I never fast, I never pray, I never kill the Easter lamb,<sup>58</sup> I eat hog's meat, I eat monkey-meat, I eat the carrion of cattle, I drink beer, and make water while standing.«<sup>59</sup> All Islamic principles of diet and urination were turned into the antithesis. The role of apes became especially important for this discussion about the human-animal frontier in the late nineteenth century. Many stories of the Jihadist Sahel express disgust for human societies eating ape meat. Therefore, this blame had become a common insult used by Jihadist Hausa against non-Muslims: »Only the Arna eat dried monkey meat.«<sup>60</sup>

In Hausa stories it was assumed that apes had once been humans who were expelled into the woods as a punishment of God where their tails grew. They became cannibals of a wild character, it was told, because they lived in the wilderness. Other accounts claimed that apes of the forests actually were strict herbivores. The male animal lived together with several females and his children. Nevertheless, the males would regularly kill male humans and take their wives as concubines. They locked the human women up in their forest cabins and raped them.<sup>61</sup> Such stories about sexual intercourse between humans and (formerly human) apes from the forests were narrated in the Sahel some three decades before Charles Darwin published his theories about the human-animal and human-ape relationships in Europe and North America. A Bornu informant of Seetzen explained in 1810 that women south of Bornu would be raped and killed by a certain ape species. Therefore women would only dare to enter the forests in groups.<sup>62</sup> At the southern frontier, the discussion about who was a real Muslim gave way for negotiating who was human and who was animal. Jihadist soldiers and traders were

[www.tubmaninstitute.ca/sites/default/files/file/Appendix I, JL Text John Murray Archive D2 Nov 2010.pdf](http://www.tubmaninstitute.ca/sites/default/files/file/Appendix_I_JL_Text_John_Murray_Archive_D2_Nov_2010.pdf) (16.07.2014), p. 7.

**58** What is meant here, is the application of the Muslim rite of slaughtering animals.

**59** Koelle (ed.): *African Native Literature*, pp. 20, 138.

**60** Hausa »Kilisin biri sai Arna.« Cf. Prietze: *Pflanze und Tier*, p. 903.

**61** *Ibid.*, p. 904.

**62** Seetzen: *Über das grosse afrikanische Reich Burnu*, p. 329.

fundamentally confused when experiencing cultures and natures different from their own. The inconsistent myths they brought home from their journeys were powerful narratives that influenced the Jihadist self-concept and their concept of the enemy and his homeland.

### Mapping the Self and Mapping the Other

With the attempt to define the »other« spaces, the Jihadists of Sokoto also defined the space they called their home. These home spaces were migratory spaces ordered along the east-west axis between Mount Sinai and Futa Toro at the North African coast (IV.1.1), and along the Sahel route from Futa Toro through Sokoto to Mecca (IV.1.2). Both routes together formed the historical, present and future homes of the Jihadists. They were defined as sacred routes of traveling in accordance with the Jihadist manifest destiny for the Islamic salvation history. Not only does Islam as a religion protect and guard sacred spaces like the Kaaba, but it also considers the major migration routes leading to them holy.<sup>63</sup> A fundamentalist religious state like Sokoto created powerful »homeland« concepts in order to promote the »holy state« idea.<sup>64</sup> In this case, Arabia remained the original and genealogical home for the Jihadist societies living in diaspora. Their home in the Central Sahel was only provisional because the Muslims awaited the announced Mahdi to start their last Islamic migration to the east before the End of Time (IV.2.4). The routes chosen to be called »home« were arranged with reference to the climatic zones stretching from the east to the west.<sup>65</sup>

Geographers of religion have contributed to the study of these relations of belief systems and landscapes, but they focus on the impact reli-

63 Stump: *Boundaries of Faith*, p. 177.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 194.

65 Most religions have maintained intense ties with ecological features and practices. Major feasts were for example linked to the harvest season. But the Islamic calendar broke with this tradition and »is thus liberated from ecological ties« (Sopher: *Geography of Religions*, p. 22). The Islamic months – and most notably the month of Ramadan – were arranged in accordance with the moon calendar and therefore did not correspond with the agricultural seasons. The hajj was, for example, not organized according to the rainy seasons in the Central Sahel.

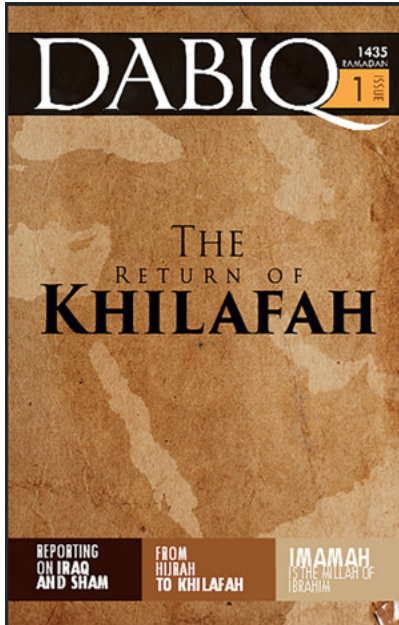


Figure 20: The first issue of the IS magazine Dabiq (2014)

gion has on the land and not on religious interpretations of geography.<sup>66</sup> Academic geographers examine »how religious worship is imprinted on landscape, in a variety of settings and cultures.«<sup>67</sup> But from a historical perspective, it is the societies that decide how they explain and narrate spaces. The Sokoto Jihadists could describe space as a list of places (Mecca, Medina, halting sites of a caravan), as regions (climate zones) and contact zones or arenas of interaction (networks of travelers or pilgrims). They could perceive space as landscape (urban space or deserted land) or as nature (dangerous forests or deserts).<sup>68</sup> The Sokoto Jihadists produced territoriality by organizing their home spaces and linking them to a greater concept of the world and the universe. This process made colonization and territorial statehood possible, although it was started with

<sup>66</sup> See for instance Park: *Sacred Worlds*, p. 197.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>68</sup> These categories of space were developed by Osterhammel: *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, pp. 154–157.

mental maps and thoughts.<sup>69</sup> The land itself was declared »Islamic« or »pagan«, so that the idea of places was substituted by the idea of spaces. The pre-Jihad concept of statehood being managed by a system of towns and environs was replaced by the introduction of emirates. The home territory was to be protected by linear frontiers, so that the theory claiming that Africa in general only learned about linear borders during European colonization has to be rejected.<sup>70</sup> The first generation of African academic scholars has, for example, highlighted that before colonialism Africa had been a continent without borders.<sup>71</sup> The study of Jihadist geographies disproved this indiscriminating theory. In fact, the Sokoto Jihadists territorialized the Caliphate in their discussion and some Jihadist mental maps were used to create the ›natural‹ linear borders of this territorial state. Moreover, knowledge about the hereafter was used to implement linear orders in this world by giving this knowledge a profane form in a religious geographical context.

This study was able to answer some major questions about the geographical implications of jihadist practices. It has also generated new topics for further research. Some years ago, it was suggested that the historical research in mental mapping should include the history of everyday life, and not restrict itself to the study of elites and elite communication.<sup>72</sup> This study has fulfilled this postulated aim to some degree. In addition to elite literature it has included and considered the statements of traders and slaves. Furthermore, non-cartographic sources have been interpreted in order to understand Sokoto Jihadist mental maps. Linking such different mobile actors was only possible by focusing on the Jihadist discourses and not on individual authors. Many studies of the past have dealt with certain outstanding Jihadist figures, but their texts were actually collective products: They referred to each other, quoted, translated and summarized each other's texts. This complex process of multiple translation and shared authorship often makes intertextuality impossible to trace. And in addition to that, it is not always known which linguistic

69 Osterhammel emphasized the connection between territoriality and (modern European) colonialism. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 173.

70 This general theory was, for example, explained in *ibid.*, p. 178.

71 See on this discussion Speitkamp: *Geschichte im Raum*, pp. 183–196.

72 See Langenohl: *Mental Maps, Raum und Erinnerung*, p. 60.

version was the original and which was the copy. Therefore, the Jihadists were mostly treated as members of a network here that generated certain discourses on space.

But even such a broad collection of sources was not sufficient to examine the contribution of non-Jihadist societies to Jihadist geographies. This question of research demands different methods and the documentation of oral knowledge in case studies at certain Jihadist frontier sections. Such a study may easily tie in with this research and directly compare the Jihadist mental maps with local ideas about spaces and borders. One may ask how frontier societies adopted, fought or ignored these Jihadist spatial concepts. So far, only a few studies have shed some light on counter-Islamic ideologies and how these groups picked up and modified Jihadist mental maps. Another field of future research of Jihadist spaces could include archeological excavations of frontier towns. Unfortunately, archeologists have rather studied the palaces of the emirate capitals. This dissertation has demonstrated that many ›Abrahamic‹ ideas about space were already implemented in the Central Sahel before European colonization and Christian missionary work. Historians could thus also concentrate on the process of early colonialism and analyze how European colonial officials borrowed Jihadist geographies about Africa and Africans and used them as tools for their own colonial rule.

The Jihadists participated in several global discussions on geography that were typical for the nineteenth century: They started an age of ›historicism‹ with reference to the glorious age of Islam and Islamic expansion. In Islamic political movements the utopian past has often been picked up as a role model for the utopian future.<sup>73</sup> Like European and American scholars two centuries ago, the Jihadists declared the home spaces of their opponents a historyless territory, while their own history of migration was glorified. The Jihadists also exoticized tropical environments and cultures by following their own civilization theory. And finally, the Sokoto Jihad promoted racist and speciesist ideologies with reference to their geographical concepts of nature. The Jihadists created a geography of home and foreign land, of the ›self‹ and the ›other‹, that was implemented as a new territorial order dividing the zones by linear and ›naturalized‹ frontiers.

73 Cf. Damir-Geilsdorf: *Politische Utopie und Erinnerung*, pp. 75–94.



For more than one century, the Central Sahel had not been perceived as an Islamic frontier line anymore. Many global jihad movements omitted West African attempts to (re-)establish Islamic statehood in these areas. Even the recently established Islamic State initially only depicted the Middle East as the Caliphate territory on their maps (see *Figure 20*), before turning to a re-Islamization project in North, West and East Africa as well as large parts of Asia. Afterwards the IS propaganda more and more included the Boko Haram Jihadist militants of Northern Nigeria into their list of allies. In the eighth volume of their propaganda magazine *Dabiq*, IS writers also called for a jihad across Africa on their cover page: »Sharia’ah alone will rule Africa.«<sup>74</sup> For Muslims in the ›West‹ who were willing to fight in the jihad in Syria but stopped by the police or border control, IS authors recommended traveling to Africa instead and launch jihad wars on that continent – especially in West Africa: »So come, O Muslims, to your State, for we call on you to mobilize for jihād and incite you and invite you to emigrate to your brothers in West Africa.«<sup>75</sup> And once more, »the southern portion of the country [Nigeria]«<sup>76</sup> is styled as the territory of unbelief from where non-Muslims tried »to stop the mujāhidīn’s liberation of West Africa.«<sup>77</sup>

While the IS maps only show the Caliphate ›self‹ with diagrams and pictures, their texts are full of references and descriptions of the »Lands of Kufr« (›Unbelief‹). The cartographic devices of the Jihadists of Sokoto and IS propaganda publications lead to assume that jihadist geographies are constructed independently from the territory of ›Unbelief‹, whereas in fact this ignorance is only simulated. The case of the Sokoto Jihad demonstrated the dominance of the ›other‹ space in the ideology of the Jihadist soldiers and societies. A ›Land of Islam‹ only existed if there was a ›Land of Unbelief‹ to be contrasted with.

74 *Dabiq* 8, front page.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

77 *Ibid.*



## Archives and Collections

<b>BIF</b>	Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris
<b>BN</b>	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
<b>Dahlem</b>	Ethnologisches Museum Dahlem, Berlin, Strümpell Papers
<b>Hamburg</b>	Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Heinrich Barth Collection
<b>Legon</b>	Arabic Collection of Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon (Accra)
<b>Niamey</b>	Institut de Recherche en Sciences Humaines, Niamey (Niger)
<b>NU, Falke</b>	Northwestern University, Evanston IL, Africana Library, , Falke Collection
<b>NU, Hunwick</b>	Northwestern University, Evanston IL, Africana Library, Hunwick Collection
<b>NU, Paden</b>	Northwestern University, Evanston IL, Africana Library, Paden Collection
<b>SOAS, Bovill</b>	School of Oriental and African Studies, London, Bovill Papers
<b>SOAS, Boyd</b>	School of Oriental and African Studies, London, Boyd Papers
<b>StB</b>	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Krause Collection
<b>Zaria</b>	Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (Nigeria)

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- Abdullah dan Fodio: *Ida al-nusukh*, NU, Paden 241.
- Abdullah dan Fodio: *Kitab al-nasab*, Legon 115.
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# Index

## PERSONS

### A

- Abd Al-Karim Ibn Abbas 199  
Abd Al-Qadir Al-Jilani 351  
Abd Al-Qadir bin Al-Mustafa Al-Turudi *see*  
    DanTafa  
Abd Al-Rahman Al-Tuwati 123  
Abd Al-Rahman Ibn Qasim Al-Utaqi 434  
Abd Al-Rauf 425  
Abd ar-Rahman as-Saadi 173  
Abdassalam 107, 380, 381, 633, 636, 637  
Abderrahman Aga 73, 340, 439, 441, 442  
Abdul Dar 258  
Abdullahi dan Dabo 90  
Aberrahman Aga 74  
Abraham 232, 299, 302, 303, 440  
Abrahamic 168, 220, 248, 280, 648  
Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Idris Al-Shafi  
    202  
Abu Al-Hasan Ash-Shadhili 145  
Abu Ali Al-Hassan Ibn Masud Al-Yusi 124,  
    321, 370  
Abubakar Atiku 28, 226, 328, 512, 528, 637  
Abu Darda 213, 214  
Abu Hassan Ali 374  
Abu Yazid Makhlad Ibn Kaidad Al-Zanati 257  
Adam 59, 91, 168, 230, 232, 452, 470, 490,  
    508, 517, 578, 587  
Agali 364, 488, 516  
Agunbulu 553  
Ahmad Al-Kabir Al-Madani 83  
Ahmad Atiku 604  
Ahmad Baba 106, 145, 146, 149, 150, 151,  
    152, 184, 239, 353, 356, 575  
Ahmadu Bello 31, 35, 84, 606  
Ahmed Ibn Abi Mahalli 321  
Al-Bakri 170, 171, 254  
Al-Bukhari 64, 86, 238, 239, 294, 464, 500,  
    507, 512, 513, 522, 525, 527, 548, 553, 637  
Al-Buni 107, 403, 404  
Al-Buraq 530  
Al-Burzuli 424  
Alexander the Great 129, 246, 279  
Alfa Nuhu 346, 347  
Alhaji Salih Suware 217  
Alhaji Umaru 90, 92, 93, 213, 214, 215, 224,  
    260, 336, 368, 413, 469, 475, 476, 522,  
    524, 608  
Al-Hajj Ahmad bin Muhammad Al-Shinqiti  
    311  
Al-Hajj Muhammad bin Raj 294  
Al-Hajj Umar 83, 90, 298  
Al-Hajj Umar Al-Futi 344  
Al-Hajj Umar Tall 296, 359, 360  
Ali dan Yaquba 600  
Al-Idrisi  
    adaptations in Sokoto 106, 118, 127-32,  
        135-6, 141-8, 635  
    biography 119-121  
    maps 101, 102, 114, 131, 133, 158-9, 161,  
        168-9, 240  
    on the Sahel 171-2, 176-8  
    on Nubia 154-7  
    on India 162-5, 169  
    African fauna and cannibalism 471, 564  
Ali Eisami Gazir 75, 443, 446, 448, 449, 452,  
    592  
Ali Ibn Abi Talib 321  
Al-Imam Al-Sufi Al-Qadi Al-Hajj Muhammad  
    Al-Afiyya 346  
Aliyu Baba dan Bello 544, 549  
Aliyu Jedo 488  
Al-Jaylani, Abd Al-Qadir 130, 361, 365  
Al-Jaylani, Muhammad 425-9, 431  
Al-Kastallani 182  
Al-Khazin 481  
Al-Kunti 106, 125, 145, 151-2, 312, 344-8,  
    358, 481, 524  
Al-Maghili 27, 108, 125-6, 181, 267, 272,  
    351-9, 424, 430, 459-60, 465, 486, 634  
Al-Mandari 375  
Al-Mansur (Caliph) 162, 321  
Al-Masudi 116, 117, 154, 156, 158, 162, 163,  
    564  
Al-Mawardi 487  
Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi 322

Al-Najashi 183  
 Al-Sahib Ibn Abbad 155  
 Aminatu 262, 263  
 Amr Al-Karmani 429  
 Amr Ibn al-As 228  
 Archinard, Louis 83  
 Ardo Jajo 217  
 Ashama Ibn Abjar *see* Al-Najashi  
 Askiya Muhammad 459  
 Atiku *see* Abubakar Atiku  
 Ayana 253

## B

Baba Manga 417  
 Babba dan Jirau 241  
 Bagauda 266, 272  
 Baikie, William Balfour 70, 494, 495, 518,  
 519, 572, 573, 596, 597, 598  
 Bakwa 262  
 Baradaeus, Jacob 157  
 Barth, Heinrich; also Henry 50, 51, 70, 73,  
 75, 78, 122, 147, 148, 229, 261, 282, 336,  
 342, 356, 490, 494, 529, 532, 622  
 Bawo 255, 256, 261, 266  
 Bayajidda 248, 251, 252, 253, 255, 257, 258,  
 259, 261, 262, 263, 265, 266, 270, 352, 533  
 Bokore 385  
 Bola Mamman Mode 371  
 Buba Njidda 614  
 Buddha 163  
 Bugaya 269  
 Bukar D`Gjiama 531  
 Burckhardt, Johann Ludwig; also John Lewis  
 288, 289, 331, 332, 472, 473  
 Burkimu 252

## C

Canaan 239  
 Castelnau, Francis De 76, 77, 224, 290, 341,  
 452, 470, 517, 518, 571, 583, 586, 587, 588,  
 589, 590, 591, 592, 593  
 Clapperton, Hugh 15, 18, 19, 68, 69, 71, 106,  
 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 132, 134,  
 137, 138, 139, 143, 146, 153, 160, 165, 166,

167, 199, 200, 205, 206, 219, 244, 263, 286,  
 287, 330, 392, 399, 402, 409, 410, 422, 423,  
 467, 469, 506, 507, 508, 530, 532, 534, 537,  
 538, 540, 545, 546, 547, 560, 561, 567, 568,  
 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 593, 610,  
 611, 612, 620  
 Crowther, Samuel Ajayi 69, 70, 377, 468,  
 494, 597

## D

Dan Marina *see* Muhammad Ibn Al-Sabbagh  
 Dan Tafa; also Abd Al-Qadir bin Al-Mustafa  
 Al-Turudi) 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128,  
 135, 136, 141, 143, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149,  
 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162,  
 163, 164, 165, 167, 168, 169, 174, 176, 177,  
 178, 186, 187, 188, 263, 264, 265, 300  
 Dankaua 401, 533  
 Danzabuwa 602  
 Denham, Dixon 68, 69, 113, 166, 516, 532,  
 535, 546, 568, 622  
 Derrida, Jacques 101  
 Dhu Al-Nun Al-Misri 154  
 Dunama 382  
 Dupuis, Joseph 621

## E

Einsiedel, Johann August von 339, 566, 567  
 El Kanemi 115  
 Escayrac de Lauture, Pierre Henri Stanislas de  
 18, 292, 293  
 Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 562, 563

## F

Fatima (bint Muhammad) 236, 237, 322, 503  
 Flegel, Eduard Robert 78, 519  
 Foucault, Michel 100, 101  
 Frobenius, Leo 277, 278, 279

## G

Gajma 219  
 Garange 400  
 Ghurtu 227

Gidado (Ibn Laima) 86, 88, 176, 190, 191,  
301, 393, 442, 521, 574, 611  
Goliath 246  
Gwamki dan Kura Gado 600

## H

Hadija 309, 325, 326  
Hadji Omer 286  
Hafsatu 289, 390, 419, 420  
Hagar 302, 303  
Ham 23, 139, 140, 238, 239, 240, 246, 575  
Hamma 319, 320, 321, 323, 419, 426, 596  
Harding, James 456  
Harding, John 454  
Harding, William *see* Ali Eisami Gazir  
Harley, Brian 100, 101, 102  
Heraclius 72, 276

## I

Ibn Al-Ashhab 434  
Ibn Al-Hajj 484  
Ibn Al-Wardi 154, 155, 157  
Ibn Hajar Al-Haytami 323, 510  
Ibn Hawqal 120, 121, 129  
Ibn Khaldun 106, 107, 126, 127, 152, 183,  
257  
Ibn Nuhaas 606, 607, 608  
Ibn Saad 172  
Ibn Sabagi *see* Muhammad Ibn Al-Sabbagh  
Ibra 406, 426  
Ibrahim Al-Barnawi 375  
Ibrahim Al-Khalil 232  
Ibrahima Musa 218  
Ibrahim Dabo 72, 463, 496, 507, 583, 584,  
590, 594, 602, 604, 608  
Ibrahim Ibn Ahmad 385, 547  
Ibrahim Maji 356  
Ibrahim Sharif Al-Din 327  
Ibrahim Sori 218  
Idirisu dan Jimada 422  
Ismael 231, 298, 299, 302, 303

## J

Jabbu 227

Jalal Al-Din Al-Suyuti 359  
Japheth 238, 246  
Jibon Tauba dan Yaquba 600  
Jibril Ibn Umar 294, 537  
Johnston, Hugh A.S. 39  
Jungrauthmayr, Herrmann 92

## K

Karamokho Alfa 218  
Karbighari 261  
Kirkgreene, Tony 39  
Kisra Anu Shirvan 164  
Kitoro Mahamman Gaani 278  
Koelle, Sigismund Wilhelm  
biography 74-6  
and Ali Eisami Gazir 443, 446, 592-3  
other informants 382-6, 412, 448-54, 456-8,  
512, 523, 533, 559, 580-1  
Krause, Gottlob Adolf  
on African history 21-2, 339  
and Alhaji Umaru 90, 260, 413, 496, 498  
manuscript collection 93-4, 230, 255, 289,  
340-1, 379-80, 468, 596  
Krusius, Paul 269, 270

## L

Lafia 381, 397, 523  
Laminu 383, 384, 385, 386, 401  
Lander, John 643  
Lander, Richard Lemon 69, 137, 329, 330,  
378-9, 401, 422, 469, 547, 559, 573  
Lima Chidia 394, 582  
Louis Philippe (Fench king) 76  
Lugard Frederick 30, 38  
Luqman (Al-Hakim) 154, 183  
Lyon, George Francis 112, 462, 567

## M

Maganga 319, 320  
Mahammah 341, 470, 471, 583, 584, 585,  
586, 587  
Mahmud Gurdam 488  
Mahmud Ka'ti 173  
Mahmud of Ghazni 164

- Mallam Dendo 28, 633  
 Mallam Gero 490  
 Mallam Hamza 496, 498, 499  
 Mallam Ishaqu 195  
 Mallam Mikhaila 199, 200  
 Mallam Musa Ibn Muhammad 195  
 Mallam Shaihu 490  
 Mallam Sherif 276  
 Mallam Tsagi 383  
 Malum Haman 417  
 Mariyam Al-Qibtiyya 463  
 Mariyam (concubine of Uthman dan Fodio)  
     86, 326-7, 463-4, 514-5  
 Mischlich, Adam 91, 92  
 Modibo Adama 195, 614  
 Mohammad-Abdullah 290, 291  
 Mohamma Kukuna 269  
 Mohammed Bousgayey 622  
 Mohamman 519, 625  
 Moses 154, 222, 231, 496, 518  
 Muath 514  
 Muffet, David 39  
 Muhammad Abduh 36  
 Muhammad Al-Kharashi 295, 435  
 Muhammad Bello, Emir of Kano 90  
     biography and dynasty 14, 28, 86, 122, 307,  
     369-70, 420, 425-6, 475  
     in historiography 40  
     on history and geography 113-6, 128, 174-  
     182, 200, 239-275, 300, 476-7, 600-16  
     his poetry 315, 524, 548, 552  
     praise poetry and elegies on him 287, 400,  
     402, 500, 555-6, 627, 642  
     as a military commander 206, 506-7, 510,  
     518, 520, 530, 534, 540, 551  
     on Mahdism 323-4, 328  
     on Sufism 347-9, 359-60, 363-5  
     on medicine 574-5  
     on nomadism 428-431  
     on slavery 467  
     on cannibalism 579-80, 593  
 Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Muhammad  
     Al-Tazakhti 357  
 Muhammad Gidado Al-Fulani 235  
 Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Karim Al-Maghilib  
     *see* Al-Maghili
- Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab 36  
 Muhammad Ibn Al-Hajj 541  
 Muhammad Ibn Al-Sabbagh 300  
 Muhammad Ibn Hasan 321  
 Muhammad Jaunpuri 322  
 Muhammad Korau 356  
 Muhammad Masanih 243, 244  
 Muhammad Moyijo 508  
 Muhammad Nghileruma 383  
 Muhammad (Prophet) 14, 61, 62, 63, 64, 72,  
     80, 89, 213, 214, 215, 222, 237, 273, 275,  
     279, 310, 363, 370, 371, 396, 399, 431, 463,  
     474, 477, 483, 502, 505, 528, 530, 535, 537,  
     538, 542, 578, 630  
 Muhammad Raji bin Ali bin Abi Bakr 307  
 Muhammad Rumfa 125, 219, 272, 353, 355  
 Muhammad Sambo 488  
 Muhammad Thanbu 295  
 Muhammad Tukur 63, 271, 287, 503  
 Muhammadu Cibi Ahmadu 371  
 Muhammadu Hodi dan Sulemana 518  
 Muhammadu Kwairanga 364  
 Muhammad Zangi (Ibn Salih) 24, 201, 202,  
     272, 315, 376, 478, 489, 509, 533, 576  
 Muhamman Manga dan Gwami Mukhtar 195  
 Mukhtar Al-Kunti *see* Al-Kunti  
 Musa Jokollo 225, 226, 240, 553
- ## N
- Nabame 416  
 Nachtigal, Gustav 328  
 Najib 258  
 Nana Asmau  
     biography 41, 86-8, 393  
     Sokoto historiography 195, 270, 301, 371,  
     375-6, 387, 488, 609-10  
     elegies on family members 182, 191, 334,  
     400, 402, 500-1, 554-5, 603-4, 627, 629, 642  
     on Sokoto warfare 365, 406, 461-2, 470,  
     503-28, 534-6, 540, 543, 550-3, 594, 599  
     on women 338, 388-91, 464, 556  
     description of this world and the hereafter  
     105, 192-3, 201, 271, 330, 578  
     on traveling and pilgrimage 308-14, 363,  
     396, 403-4

Napoleon Bonaparte 21, 22  
 Niebuhr, Carsten 73, 74, 179, 340, 439, 440,  
 441, 442, 566, 567  
 Nimrud Ibn Kanaan 243  
 Noah 23, 238, 246, 278

## O

Orosius 119  
 Oudney, Walter 68, 557  
 Overweg, Adolf 70, 490, 494

## P

Park, Mungo 68, 71, 112, 180  
 Pott, August Friedrich 592  
 Ptolemaios (Ptolemy) 116, 119, 120, 121,  
 129, 159

## R

Ramses II 156  
 Rattray, Robert Sutherland 91  
 Rendi 216  
 Richardson, James 70, 578, 579  
 Ritter, Carl 51  
 Robinson, Charles Henry 95, 249, 305, 350,  
 582  
 Roger II 101, 119, 121  
 Rumfa *see* Muhammad Rumfa

## S

Safiya 309, 551  
 Said, Edward 39, 59, 102  
 Saiydnah Wahib Al-Amawi 346  
 Salgami 381  
 Saydi 217, 218  
 Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Ali Al-Sanussi 360  
 Seetzen, Ulrich Jasper 291, 292, 439, 568,  
 632, 635, 636, 644  
 Seku Amadu 139  
 Seru Kpera 458, 595  
 Shaikh Saad 313  
 Shem 238  
 Shihab Al-Din 125  
 Sidi Ahmad Al-Tijani 359

Sidi Al-Mukhtar Al-Kunti *see* Al-Kunti  
 Siri 217  
 Smith, H.F.C. 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 41,  
 82, 127  
 Soliman, Angelo 459, 469  
 Sölken, Heinz 92  
 Solomon 247  
 Sonni Ali 181, 235  
 Stanley, Henry Morton 22  
 Strümpell, Kurt 73, 78, 216, 253, 528, 614  
 Sulaymanu dan Abahama 195  
 Suraka Ibn Malik Ibn Jushun 505

## T

Tilho, Jean Auguste Marie 79, 571  
 Tinné, Alexandrine 94  
 Tsagi 383, 385  
 Turner, Jackson 48

## U

Ukasha Ibn Al-Mihsan 505  
 Umar Al-Kammawi 485  
 Umar Dallaji 541  
 Umar (Ibn) Al-Khattab 213, 215, 219, 223,  
 428  
 Umar Ibn Muhammad Al-Amin 383, 385,  
 492, 548  
 Umm Hani Al-Fulani 317  
 Uqba Ibn Nafi 214, 215, 219, 220, 221  
 Usman Zaki 28  
 Uthman dan Fodio  
   biography 13-5, 81, 86, 116, 294-5, 537,  
   609, 628  
   historiography 22, 26, 36, 40-1, 50, 82, 84-  
   5, 87, 292, 301  
   on geography 97-9, 126, 130, 146, 149-152,  
   181-6, 198-9, 201, 593, 637, 642  
   sufism 107, 343, 346-50, 355-64  
   eschatology and Mahdism 212, 236, 316-  
   29, 610  
   on Fulbe 215, 224-6, 230, 237  
   on non-Islamic cultures 267, 271, 281-2,  
   510-2, 618  
   traveling and pilgrimage 302-5, 313-5,  
   398-9, 405, 551

Islamic law 336-8, 400  
 on the Ulama 366-73, 379-81, 386-94  
 on pastoralism and farming 419-24  
 on warfare and slavery 438, 460-1, 463-70,  
 506, 528, 538-43, 546-7, 552, 602-5, 612  
 hijra and jihad 474-89, 501, 558, 632, 634  
 feelings 524, 630

## V

Verne, Jules 569  
 Vogel, Eduard 569  
 Vogel, Theodor 471

## W

Wajo 216  
 Waru (Kunkubere) 380, 381, 475, 476, 477

## Y

Yaji 219  
 Yakubu dan Dadi 195  
 Yaqub Ibn Babba 241  
 Yargoorma 399  
 Yarub Ibn Qahtan 242, 243  
 Yunfa 380, 475, 484, 508, 534, 542, 543, 577

## Z

Za Alayman 254  
 Zaki 28, 195, 385  
 Zayd Ibn Ali 321  
 Zitaro 400

## PLACES

### A

Abbasid Empire 117  
 Abuja 25, 451  
 Abu Simbel 155  
 Abyssinia 62, 156, 174  
 Adamawa 78, 109, 148, 195, 204, 215, 216,  
 217, 218, 232, 304, 307, 324, 340, 341, 417,  
 418, 419, 453, 454, 470, 471, 519, 528, 529,  
 531, 532, 569, 575, 576, 587, 589, 590, 592,  
 598, 613, 614, 615, 633, 638, 643

Adar 291, 292, 426, 516, 553  
 Afghanistan, Afghan 322  
 Afnu 151, 179, 184, 340, 440, 442, 566  
 Africa  
   African continent 51, 118, 129, 133-4, 154,  
   533, 622  
   Central Africa 293, 583  
   Central African Republic 148, 562  
   East Africa 26, 118, 133, 158, 161, 162,  
   165, 169, 649  
   North Africa 17, 25, 59, 73, 80, 81, 94, 106,  
   107, 126, 128, 136, 154, 157, 167, 173,  
   213, 217, 219, 220, 222, 228, 229, 247,  
   256, 258, 286, 305, 318, 330, 339, 344,  
   351, 356, 359, 360, 388, 424, 440, 442,  
   443, 470, 473, 485, 538, 566, 627, 649  
   Agades 295, 296, 359, 508  
   Ahir *see* Aïr  
   Aïr 147, 179, 180, 182, 187, 188, 241, 245,  
   246, 247, 257, 258, 265, 274, 346, 352, 357,  
   359, 425, 426, 470, 488, 508, 526  
   Aksum 183  
   Algeria 108, 128, 352, 359, 471  
   Algier 108  
   Al-Kawthar 396, 397  
   Alodia 155  
   Al-Sus Al-Aqsa 321  
   Alwa 155  
   Alwasa 553  
   Andam 326, 566  
   Angola 75  
   Anka 196, 554  
   Arabia 17, 62, 73, 106, 117, 136, 165, 173,  
   178, 197, 198, 207, 210, 213, 223, 226, 232,  
   240, 243, 252, 273, 275, 276, 284, 289, 292,  
   293, 294, 299, 301, 303, 304, 305, 308, 310,  
   315, 316, 321, 328, 331, 332, 359, 372, 390,  
   524, 542, 575, 583, 627, 634, 645  
   Arafat 303, 308, 310, 312  
   Arewa 35, 260, 414, 415  
   Arlit 425  
   Asben *see* Aïr  
   Ashanti 91  
   Asia 17, 23, 58, 116, 117, 118, 121, 130, 142,  
   158, 164, 165, 649

Atagara 111  
 Atlantic 17, 18, 67, 68, 69, 75, 76, 106, 108,  
 110, 112, 118, 121, 129, 132, 143, 423, 448,  
 452, 453, 458, 459, 462, 466, 467, 468, 472,  
 473, 583, 638, 639  
 Australia 76, 622  
 Awdaghust 129  
 Awlayla 136  
 Azaouak 140

## B

Baghdad 116, 117, 154, 162, 186, 248, 251,  
 257, 261, 352, 358, 361  
 Bagu 304  
 Baguirmi 69, 174, 175, 180, 286, 292, 293,  
 328, 332, 549, 571, 573, 576, 589, 636  
 Bahia 76, 77, 224, 290, 452, 528, 583, 591  
 Bakundi 598  
 Bakura 304  
 Bargu 184  
 Basra 428, 430  
 Bauchi 40, 113, 195, 205, 262, 292, 304, 470,  
 490, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 567, 568, 569,  
 578, 579, 588, 589, 590, 592, 594, 603, 613,  
 633, 638, 641  
 Bayabaya *see* Gbaya  
 Benin 68, 187, 457, 467, 530  
 Benue 17, 18, 56, 68, 69, 70, 108, 110, 111,  
 112, 113, 134, 180, 256, 263, 277, 292, 341,  
 377, 408, 441, 467, 471, 494, 495, 518, 519,  
 520, 522, 532, 569, 570, 572, 596, 597, 598,  
 615, 620, 640, 643  
 Berlin 51, 70, 73, 78, 79, 94, 230  
 Bilad as-Sudan 130, 135, 149, 150, 177, 246, 564  
 Bilma 508  
 Biram 181, 249, 252, 256  
 Birnin Konni 225, 227, 425  
 Borgu 150, 181, 187, 196, 244, 245, 273, 274,  
 275, 277, 279, 280, 292, 379, 422, 445, 457,  
 458, 462, 571  
 Bornu *see also* Kanem  
 ~Empire 75, 81, 116, 126, 145, 258, 265,  
 374, 375, 382-4, 397, 446, 484, 513, 520,  
 557, 573, 588, 593  
 ~State 40, 445

Brahmanabad 162  
 Braunschweig 78  
 Brazil 76, 224, 290, 452, 470, 471, 583, 584  
 Britain 18, 37, 68, 108, 408, 490  
 British Empire 162, 166  
 Bubul; also Bubula 150, 184  
 Bughu 326  
 Bungudu 304  
 Burkina Faso 150, 244, 245  
 Bussa; also Busa 68, 69, 71, 150, 184, 273,  
 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 379, 422, 445,  
 571, 595  
 Busu 326  
 Byzantine, Byzantium 72, 117, 155, 168, 183,  
 213, 219, 220, 223, 228, 229, 230, 235, 236,  
 239, 259, 276, 278, 430, 485, 504, 607

## C

Cairo 18, 82, 112, 130, 179, 202, 214, 268,  
 286, 288, 291, 292, 293, 305, 403, 439, 442,  
 472, 635  
 Cameroon 22, 26, 53, 73, 75, 78, 148, 215,  
 216, 418, 454, 455, 456, 529, 568, 615  
 Carthago, Carthagian 142  
 Ceuta 119  
 Chad  
 State 18, 23, 27, 70, 79, 111, 180, 256, 276,  
 292, 332, 341, 382, 453, 471, 472, 473,  
 517, 570, 571, 573, 576, 588, 620  
 Lake 18, 27, 70, 79, 111, 137, 332, 256,  
 292, 341, 453, 471, 472, 473, 517, 570,  
 571, 573, 576  
 Chari 56, 293, 332, 532, 571, 573  
 Clebronn 74  
 Cologne 52  
 Congo 148  
 Cyrenaica 246

## D

Dagomba 150  
 Dahomey 595  
 Daju 153  
 Dakurawa 518, 543, 600  
 Damagaram 258, 374, 490, 491, 493, 603

Damascus 428, 430, 606  
 Danisa 304  
 Dar al-Harb *see* Land of War  
 Dar al-Islam *see* Land of Islam  
 Dar al-Kufr *see* Land of Unbelief  
 Dar al-Sulh *see* Land of Truce  
 Dar as-Salam *see* Land of Peace  
 Darfur 153, 446  
 Dar Fur 148, 174, 175, 288, 291, 304, 324, 331, 472, 565, 568, 571, 591  
 Daura 180, 181, 195, 249, 252, 253, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 264, 558  
 Dawu 129  
 Degel 13, 14, 85, 227, 375, 474, 476, 477, 482, 483, 487, 610  
 Deia 381, 397, 398, 439, 444, 445, 523  
 Dimyat 606  
 Dira 321  
 Dirkulla 560  
 Dongola 155  
 Dubdana 544  
 Duro 531

## E

Edessa 157  
 Egypt 36, 72, 74, 106, 110, 111, 116, 154, 156, 173, 174, 198, 200, 213, 214, 219, 222, 223, 224, 228, 242, 246, 252, 262, 265, 268, 276, 286, 289, 291, 325, 326, 357, 359, 428, 430, 442, 446, 481, 606, 621, 622, 640  
 Euphrat 133, 153

## F

Fanisau 613  
 Farah 322  
 Farkaji 488  
 Fez 351  
 Fezzan 286, 442, 517, 565  
 Foggy Ocean 115, 132, 362, 638  
 Fumban 454, 456  
 Fundah 108  
 Funj 176, 571  
 Fustat 428, 430

Futa Jallon 138, 190, 217, 218, 223, 234, 250, 298  
 Futa Toro 137, 138, 166, 207, 215, 223, 224, 225, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 240, 250, 286, 296, 297, 298, 299, 360, 364, 645

## G

Gagere (river) 255  
 Gambia 141, 143  
 Gao 151, 153, 257, 352, 356, 357, 564  
 Gashua 508  
 Gawakuke 365, 406, 426, 507, 520, 534, 540, 550  
 Gbali 451  
 Gbaya 147, 148, 453  
 German Democratic Republic 93, 94  
 Germany 74, 93, 94, 413, 490, 496  
 Ghana 15, 27, 37, 83, 90, 91, 93, 121, 129, 142, 144, 145, 150, 172, 177, 244, 245, 339, 375, 473, 621  
 Ghat 255, 340, 341  
 Gimbana 380, 475, 476, 477  
 Gizeh 156  
 Gobir 13, 85, 180-4, 215, 237-40, 265, 300, 379-81, 398, 424-6, 468, 472-8, 485, 521, 527, 539, 558, 612  
 Gold Coast 90, 93, 621  
 Gombe 40, 641  
 Gonja 15, 90, 245, 473  
 Greece 116  
 Gudawa 516  
 Gudu 14, 85, 474, 476, 478, 482, 483, 486, 487, 488, 503  
 Guinea 22, 136, 287, 359  
 Gumba 184  
 Gurma 150, 181, 184, 244, 245  
 Gurowa 596  
 Gutshiba 381  
 Gwandu 14, 28, 198, 221, 307, 313, 314, 342, 359, 413, 414, 415, 516, 539, 551, 609, 633  
 Gwari 256, 270, 305, 441, 452, 467, 559

## H

Hadejia 28, 252, 473



Hamaruwa 596, 597  
 Hamdallay 190  
 Hausa  
 ~capital(s) 248, 472, 601  
 ~City States 85, 148, 127, 180  
 ~kingdoms 240  
 ~state(s) 85, 148, 177, 180, 181, 182, 184,  
 241, 252, 256, 262, 265, 441  
 Hausaland 84, 326, 457, 470, 482, 621  
 Hebron 232  
 Holy Cities 58, 132, 171, 174, 198, 232, 279,  
 299, 303, 311, 313, 315, 329, 332, 357, 606,  
 618, 625, 634  
 Holy Land 235, 316  
 Hombori 139  
 Hudaibiya 505

## I

Ifriqiyya 128, 246  
 Illo 273, 274, 275, 458, 462  
 Ilorin 92, 401, 450, 452, 458, 469, 528, 530,  
 595, 596  
 Ina 277  
 India 35, 109, 116, 118, 121, 133, 158, 161,  
 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 206,  
 214, 279, 322, 359, 430  
 Indian Ocean 47, 115, 158, 161, 162, 165,  
 167, 168, 170, 176  
 Iran 116  
 Iraq 13, 197, 251, 278, 326, 362, 428  
 Islamic State (IS) 13, 649  
 Italy 81

## J

Jacoba 109, 580  
 Jata 304  
 Jawa 508  
 Jega 368  
 Jenne 141, 166, 292, 364, 365, 525  
 Jidda 289, 303  
 Jigawa 40  
 Joliba 18, 180, 441  
 Jordan 326  
 Jos 587

## K

Kaaba 60, 133, 197, 198, 206, 287, 290, 302,  
 305, 618, 621, 645  
 Kadaye 527, 539, 600  
 Kaduna 35, 39, 40, 160, 228, 441, 587, 602  
 Kakanda 377  
 Kalalawa 381  
 Kalambaina 550  
 Kanem *see also* Bornu 27, 119, 127, 145,  
 153, 183, 252, 273, 382, 446  
 Kano  
 region, emirate, state 38, 72, 90, 125, 137,  
 145, 151, 174, 180-1, 184, 195, 242, 249,  
 256, 262-3, 266-7, 271-2, 292, 326, 341,  
 376, 469, 472, 489, 497-500, 516-8, 528,  
 541, 546-7, 565, 567, 576, 581, 583-6,  
 590-1, 594, 602-5, 608-9, 613, 641  
 town, capital city 27, 31, 33, 40-1, 201-2,  
 206, 213, 219-20, 269, 304, 306, 315, 335-  
 6, 350-7, 368, 383, 401, 413, 438, 470-1,  
 478, 490, 496, 507, 521-2, 582-3, 586  
 Katagum 383, 385, 401, 493  
 Katsega 381  
 Katsina 27, 33, 40, 108, 123, 145, 151, 174,  
 180, 181, 184, 189, 230, 240, 241, 242, 243,  
 249, 256, 260, 262, 267, 290, 292, 300, 336,  
 352, 353, 355, 356, 357, 359, 440, 441, 442,  
 447, 452, 472, 508, 515, 518, 530, 541, 549,  
 583, 591, 598, 621  
 Katunga 423, 448  
 Kaukau 183  
 Kebbi 28, 34, 40, 90, 111, 139, 180, 181, 187,  
 188, 202, 241, 244, 256, 260, 373, 413, 414,  
 415, 416, 417, 424, 441, 472, 473, 475, 477,  
 508, 515, 518, 550, 576, 600, 605  
 Kende 495  
 Kenya 133  
 Kete-Krachi 90, 91  
 Khaybar 279  
 Kigha 326  
 Kilimanjaro 115, 159  
 Kirare 516  
 Kongo 159  
 Kororafa 186, 256

Kufa 428, 430  
 Kughum 326  
 Kunia 600  
 Kurarafa (also Kwararafa) 263, 304  
 Kusugu 258  
 Kutarkushi 304  
 Kutukuli 150, 184  
 Kwatto 515

## L

Land of Islam 19, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 146,  
 149, 183, 184, 223, 242, 460, 478, 501, 556,  
 617, 631, 632, 637, 649  
 Land of Peace 61, 475  
 Land of Truce 65  
 Land of War 19, 61, 62, 65, 66, 149, 460, 479,  
 606, 617, 632, 634, 637  
 Land of Unbelief/Unbelievers 19, 65, 66, 128,  
 145, 149, 150, 184, 223, 365, 479, 481, 486,  
 487, 489, 496, 533, 537, 546, 551, 561, 562,  
 593, 598, 617, 618, 628, 641, 649  
 Legon 37, 91  
 Leipzig 52, 93, 94  
 Liberia 75, 448  
 Libya 128, 142, 246, 258  
 Logone 292, 573, 576  
 London 51, 68, 76, 82, 87

## M

Macerata 55  
 Madangana 304  
 Madatai 266  
 Mafara 136, 141, 400  
 Magaria 612  
 Maghreb 60, 124, 128, 219, 221, 223, 246,  
 248, 252, 340  
 Magiari Tapsua 443  
 Maiduguri 490  
 Makuria 155  
 Mali 15, 22, 27, 68, 106, 111, 137, 144, 148,  
 150, 151, 153, 154, 166, 173, 174, 177, 198,  
 209, 215, 217, 219, 235, 241, 257, 292, 325,  
 345, 359, 364, 425, 525, 576, 634

Mandara 56, 69, 78, 160, 375, 528, 529, 531,  
 532, 546, 560, 589, 592, 596, 640, 643  
 Malisa 539  
 Mansura 162, 163  
 Mara 441, 498  
 Maradi 196, 319, 379, 472, 515, 517, 518,  
 583, 601, 603  
 Maratta 85, 227  
 Margi 592, 593  
 Marrakesh 321, 322  
 Marwa 302  
 Masjid Al-Haram 302  
 Massina 137, 138, 139, 151, 153, 166, 227,  
 327, 346, 575, 634  
 Mauretania 145, 312  
 Mauri 139, 140  
 Mecca 63, 65, 90, 116-7, 167, 178, 215, 217,  
 222, 273-6, 278-80, 285-95, 298, 301-5,  
 309-15, 326-7, 332, 357, 359, 362, 442,  
 478, 530, 535, 537, 546, 571, 591, 598, 610,  
 621, 634-5, 645; for Mecca and Medina, *see*  
 Medina; *see also* Kaaba  
 Medina 14, 57, 58, 62, 63, 64, 132, 174, 279,  
 295, 304, 305, 306, 308, 309, 310, 314, 319,  
 322, 329, 363, 428, 430, 433, 463, 474, 478,  
 479, 480, 481, 485, 505, 535, 607, 646  
 Mediterranean 17, 70, 97, 104, 106, 107, 115,  
 121, 126, 128, 143, 144, 252, 293, 340, 466,  
 471, 517, 563, 607  
 Melbourne 76  
 Melel 129  
 Middle East 37, 74, 107, 170, 173, 213, 247,  
 248, 251, 256, 257, 259, 281, 310, 344, 649  
 Mina 303, 304, 310, 312  
 Misau 195  
 Momanka 455  
 Mora 531, 532  
 Morocco 23, 106, 149, 172, 179, 198, 217,  
 321, 327, 351, 353, 356, 359, 363, 370  
 Mossi 150, 184, 244, 245  
 Mount Sinai 221, 222, 223, 231, 621, 645  
 Mountain(s) of the Moon 115, 118, 121, 133,  
 157, 159, 160, 161, 169  
 Mozambique 133, 158

Multan 163, 164  
 Murzuk 94, 179, 286, 339, 442, 462, 517, 589  
 Mushkam Fush 326  
 Muzdalifa 303

## N

Nafusa 246  
 Niger  
   state 22, 54, 83, 146, 225, 374, 425-6, 517,  
   522, 525, 526, 544, 583  
   river 17, 18, 68, 108, 143, 179, 273, 402,  
   437, 445, 620  
 Nigeria 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34,  
   35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 69, 72, 78, 82, 83,  
   87, 95, 97, 187, 252, 256, 329, 385, 482,  
   525, 594, 609, 638, 649  
 Nikki 273, 274, 277, 457, 458, 530, 595  
 Nile Abiad 18  
 Ningi 497, 498, 499, 500, 594, 603, 604  
 North America 41, 42, 46, 644  
 Nuba 155  
 Nubia 129, 144, 154, 155, 156, 430  
 Nupe 28, 72, 75, 111, 180, 181, 196, 242, 243,  
   256, 263, 329, 377, 378, 379, 422, 423, 437,  
   441, 451, 452, 462, 468, 469, 473, 494, 546,  
   547, 573, 609, 622, 633, 643

## O

Osogun 69  
 Ottoman Empire 81, 120  
 Oyo 69, 450, 595

## P

Pakistan 35, 162, 163, 164, 165, 430  
 Palermo 119  
 Palestine 37, 213, 232, 248  
 Paris 77, 83, 592  
 Persia 59, 73, 106, 165, 270, 276, 278, 279,  
   284, 321, 322, 361, 481, 627  
 Portugal, Portuguese 118, 120, 121, 244, 458

## Q

Qaf 134, 362

Quarra 108, 112, 137

## R

Raka 112, 423  
 Rano 181, 249, 256, 499, 602  
 Red Sea 155, 156, 160, 176, 177, 178, 198,  
   286, 304, 331, 571  
 Rima (River) 196, 515, 516  
 Roman Empire 219, 220, 504  
 Russia, Soviet State Russian, Soviet 37, 94  
 Ruwenzori Mountains 115, 159

## S

Safa 302  
 Sahara 22, 68, 70, 73, 94, 95, 113, 134, 135,  
   153, 175, 209, 235, 245, 258, 259, 286, 287,  
   293, 299, 313, 339, 340, 344, 409, 443, 467,  
   472, 527, 566, 588, 621, 625, 639  
 Sahel  
   geography 22  
   etymology 135  
   Central ~ (introduction) 17, 22-24  
   Eastern ~ 231, 331  
   Western ~ 52, 150, 153, 299, 358  
 Salaga 90, 91, 94, 621  
 Salah 603  
 Sannar 176  
 Sarandib 168  
 Sarathen 326  
 Sarwa 326  
 Segu 83  
 Senegal 22, 53, 75, 121, 141, 142, 143, 170,  
   207, 215, 235, 564  
 Senegambia 144, 190, 229  
 Siam 76  
 Sicilian 119, 121, 155, 163, 165  
 Sicily/Sicilian 101, 479  
 Sierra Leone 69, 74, 75, 443, 448, 449, 452,  
   453, 456, 457, 458  
 Sifawa 609  
 Sijilmasa 321, 370  
 Silla 171, 172  
 Sind 121, 158, 161, 162, 163, 164, 169

Sokoto

- capital city 14, 21-2, 25, 69, 84, 190, 425, 554, 556, 598, 620, 635, 637
- military 57, 469, 518, 521, 550, 576, 596
- war 23, 59, 413, 431, 502, 549
- history 15, 34-5, 42
- ~Court 14, 71-2, 81, 93, 109, 111, 137, 153, 229, 311, 326, 348, 358, 361, 363, 367, 402, 427, 575, 640
- ~Palace 14, 15, 18
- ~State 28, 438, 462-3, 466, 468, 490, 494, 501, 524, 540, 542

Songaya 447

- Songhay 27, 126, 139, 140, 141, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 174, 181, 184, 186, 187, 189, 196, 227, 235, 236, 241, 254, 267, 325, 356, 357, 460, 569

South Africa 49, 76

Spain, Spanish 119, 125, 155, 321, 351

Sri Lanka 168

Surami 188, 189

Swahili 158, 169, 176

Syria 13, 59, 197, 213, 257, 279, 325, 428, 430, 504, 621, 649

**T**

Tabangu 184

Tagra 108

Tajara 183

Takidda 352

Takrur 153, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 183, 268, 288, 289, 441

Talata 304

Tanzania 133, 159

The Hague 94

Thebes 294

Tigris 133, 153, 294

Timbuktu 15, 27, 70, 77, 106, 137, 141, 149, 235, 239, 286, 288, 290, 292, 295, 353, 442, 575, 591, 598

Togo 90, 91, 93, 150, 194

Toto 522, 596

Toucouleur 170, 359

Tripolis 70, 93, 127, 441, 442, 468, 573

Tsakuwa 496, 497, 498

Tshagua 401, 516

Tsibiri 196, 518

Tsuntsuwa 516, 553

Tuat 351, 352, 356

Tübingen 74

Tumba 304

Tunisia 128, 214, 258

Turkey, Turkish 164, 430

**U**

Uganda 133, 159

**W**

Wadai 174, 175, 304, 324, 341, 385, 401, 446, 472, 571, 598

Wailula 155

Wakari 155, 304

Wangara 141, 145, 365

Warithu 326

White Nile 18

Wurno 205, 255, 521, 610, 611

**Y**

Yamulu 603

Yathrib 309

Yawuri 137, 181, 241, 242, 243, 244, 256, 260, 330, 401, 447, 469, 547, 622

Yemen 129, 156, 183, 197, 243, 254, 278, 289, 433

Yobe 40

Yola 205, 276, 307, 471, 489, 587, 604, 614, 615

Yoruba 30, 69, 75, 77, 146, 150, 181, 184, 196, 239, 242, 243, 244, 256, 274, 379, 392, 401, 422, 423, 448, 449, 450, 451, 453, 458, 462, 467, 469, 528, 530, 583, 595, 596

**Z**

Zabarma 147, 188

Zakzak *see also* Zaria 145, 184, 186

Zamfara 40, 85, 180, 181, 184, 196, 240, 241, 256, 260, 263, 292, 374, 375, 380, 440, 441, 508, 513, 515, 516, 522, 550, 567, 586, 603

Zamzam 302, 303, 309  
 Zanj 158, 159, 162, 169  
 Zaria 31, 33, 35, 41, 84, 145, 181, 184, 186,  
 195, 199, 200, 205, 226, 242, 249, 251, 256,  
 260, 261, 262, 304, 341, 470, 471, 495, 498,  
 508, 517, 522, 558, 567, 574, 587, 589, 590,  
 592, 602, 608, 636  
 Zinder 205, 289, 336, 374, 453, 490, 493,  
 513, 559

## **TOPICS**

### **A**

Abolitionism, abolitionist 69, 70, 448, 456  
 ABORNE 54  
 adultery 247, 631  
 African Association 68  
 Ajami 37-8, 83, 88-95, 105, 113, 193, 201,  
 213, 230, 251, 260, 266, 271, 289, 309-10,  
 319, 329, 338, 350, 364-5, 376, 379-80, 391,  
 400, 406, 413, 415, 419-20, 463, 468, 483,  
 496, 501-3, 507, 521, 535, 538, 550, 578,  
 586, 599, 610-11  
 Al-Balyun 157  
 Almoravid 236, 321, 322  
 ambiguity, ambiguous 34, 57, 60, 186, 193,  
 280, 289, 564, 634 624  
 amulet 259  
 angels 64, 134, 192, 389, 390, 481, 486, 629  
 anthropophagy 144, 562, 563, 588  
 antiquity 50, 51, 293, 579, 582  
 ants 105  
 apostate 145, 146, 182, 185, 189, 206, 284,  
 459, 460, 632, 643  
 architecture 51, 56, 121, 125, 191, 199, 200,  
 205, 305, 624  
 archive 26, 35, 44, 73, 80, 81, 83, 84, 87, 106,  
 113, 146, 220, 228, 295, 359, 361, 427  
 aristocracy 71, 94  
 arrow 14, 331, 415, 440, 454, 498, 503, 505,  
 521, 528, 530, 532, 539, 546, 547 549, 560,  
 561, 572, 585, 612  
 ascetic 234, 289, 345, 385, 391, 421, 552  
 asylum 217, 490

autobiography 42, 93, 227, 342, 368, 443,  
 490, 524  
 Azande 562, 563, 564

### **B**

Baka 568  
 Bamum 455, 456  
 banza bakwai 181, 256, 265  
 battle 201, 220, 238-9, 263, 321, 330, 365,  
 380-4, 401, 406, 415-7, 426, 461, 468, 485,  
 503-8, 513-34, 538-53, 555, 562, 569, 576,  
 582, 595, 601, 608-9, 642  
 ~field,/~ground 263, 306, 382, 503, 508,  
 512, 515, 521, 535, 539, 548, 549, 550,  
 551, 554, 580, 581, 607, 629, 642  
 Bedouin 65, 373, 424, 425, 427, 429, 430  
 blackflies 105  
 blasphemy, blasphemous 243  
 Boko Haram 26, 649  
 booty 189, 271, 306, 380, 381, 382, 424, 436,  
 450, 459, 460, 461, 462, 464, 487, 489, 498,  
 506, 513, 514, 515, 518, 526, 539, 542, 543,  
 544, 545  
 border 28, 49, 53, 54, 112, 131, 181, 186, 194,  
 195, 304, 382, 398, 417, 425, 430, 457, 467,  
 508, 518, 531, 571, 599, 601, 603, 604, 605,  
 634, 638, 640, 649  
 Bori 278, 388, 392  
 Bororo 411, 412, 418, 419, 421, 501  
 branding 172, 330  
 brigand 241, 341, 424, 605  
 British Royal Marine 68  
 brotherhood 60, 85, 236, 296, 307, 315,343,  
 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352,  
 358, 359, 360, 361, 365, 366  
 Budumas 570, 571  
 bug 105  
 Bundu Jihads 298  
 bureaucracy 21  
 bush 46, 192, 247, 258, 260, 266, 272, 283,  
 284, 330, 412, 490, 494, 495, 514, 515, 520,  
 529, 534, 547, 563, 577, 578, 601, 603, 611,  
 613, 615

## C

## Caliphate

- ~ statehood *see* Islamic statehood
- ~ theory 14, 365
- camel 59, 104, 112, 113, 142, 156, 158, 201, 254, 285, 286, 290, 294, 306, 311, 312, 315, 316, 329, 333, 341, 349, 362, 364, 409, 424, 431, 446, 470, 472, 490, 513, 514, 523, 524, 525, 534, 571, 577, 638
- camphor 164
- cannibal, cannibalism *see also* anthropophagy 77, 118, 130, 132, 134, 143, 170, 172, 206, 331, 454, 458, 471, 473, 474, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 593, 595, 596, 597, 598, 622, 623, 624, 625, 631, 638, 640, 641, 643, 644
- canoe 113, 494, 519, 533
- captive 184, 235, 250, 316, 407, 436, 440, 449, 452, 459, 461, 469, 495, 559, 590, 591
- caravan 71, 81, 95, 112, 126, 127, 143, 157, 173, 210, 211, 254, 286, 287, 288, 290, 294, 309, 311, 312, 331, 332, 335, 336, 337, 341, 342, 362, 384, 392, 396, 397, 440, 442, 468, 472, 494, 512, 518, 520, 571, 622, 646
- cardinal direction 136, 196, 197, 198, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 256, 472, 619, 620, 637
- cartography 101
- caste 95, 141, 165, 233
- cattle 22, 52, 139, 157, 175, 191, 193, 204, 210, 216, 234, 318, 375, 376, 379, 380, 409, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 428, 431, 432, 433, 446, 462, 466, 469, 476, 482, 493, 499, 524, 532, 550, 558, 585, 604, 611, 612, 644
- cavalry 52, 56, 132, 476, 515, 525, 526, 527, 528, 530, 531, 539, 550
- center 16, 21, 26, 27, 40, 58, 60, 116, 117, 164, 189, 190, 197, 198, 205, 217, 223, 240, 272, 293, 302, 312, 318, 330, 335, 374, 376, 382, 387, 388, 392, 435, 472, 476, 521, 522, 544, 557, 564, 594, 598, 599, 610, 620, 635, 636, 637, 641
- charm 203, 211, 259, 288, 289, 378, 382, 384, 403, 405, 406, 407, 421, 447, 514, 529
- chosen people 222
- Christianity 155, 167, 214, 220, 238
- chronicle 87, 93, 127, 202, 219, 230, 235, 241, 260, 266, 269, 272, 282, 315, 319, 379, 476, 489, 516, 586, 602, 616
- Church Missionary Society 69, 74, 76, 217, 490
- circumcision 377, 443
- city state 14, 62, 94, 151, 155, 182, 206, 256, 261, 336, 386, 490
- civilizing mission 589, 627, 643
- civil war *see* war
- clay 199, 200, 377, 389, 404, 589, 614
- clerisy 233
- climate, climatic 50, 53, 56, 58, 66, 104, 120, 129, 130, 134, 135, 148, 153, 162, 170, 176, 186, 191, 192, 206, 210, 240, 430, 573, 574, 642, 645, 646
- collective memory 153, 615
- colonization, colony 29, 32, 78, 79, 91, 98, 166, 167, 194, 207, 217, 218, 414, 417, 418, 422, 423, 435, 486, 499, 502, 519, 560, 597, 598, 623, 646, 647, 648
- color (skin) 23, 135-6, 158, 163, 229-30, 235, 238, 240, 293, 470, 575, 631, 643
- concubinage, concubine 42, 155, 164, 235, 255, 256, 259, 263, 265, 360, 391, 414, 423, 438, 450, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 532, 552, 644
- conquest 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32, 46, 61, 62, 64, 78, 83, 89, 90, 97, 102, 117, 148, 163, 164, 165, 166, 169, 219, 220, 228, 230, 236, 272, 282, 404, 413, 416, 424, 431, 471, 478, 479, 484, 485, 499, 504, 531, 574, 589, 596, 601, 632
- Copt, Coptic 153, 154, 155, 156, 262, 265, 289, 430
- cosmology 134, 197, 202, 389
- cotton 271, 337, 378, 491, 529, 530, 612
- cowrie 137, 144, 161, 392
- creed 186, 285, 552
- crops 203, 413, 414, 416, 419, 420, 423, 492, 535, 544, 613
- crusade 120, 218

curiosity 24, 123, 124, 296, 301, 589, 590  
 currency 42, 142, 161, 162, 339, 438, 552  
 curry 164

## D

daji 192, 193, 233, 260, 266, 330, 416, 491,  
 499, 578, 613  
 Day of Resurrection 267, 526  
 deity 254  
 desert, desertification 22, 27, 52, 53, 56, 112,  
 131, 135, 140, 141, 145, 166, 172, 175, 176,  
 191, 254, 259, 286, 291, 303, 307, 312, 313,  
 315, 316, 351, 362, 364, 366, 395, 396, 424,  
 428, 429, 430, 431, 466, 469, 468, 505, 508,  
 526, 527, 533, 535, 555, 556, 600, 635, 642  
 deserter 353, 354, 513, 553, 608  
 devil 134, 303, 316, 386, 421  
 diplomat, diplomatic 63, 73, 103, 117, 126-7,  
 164-5, 170, 194, 224, 252, 292-3, 329, 365,  
 397-402, 413, 439, 441, 452, 470, 482, 485,  
 490, 597  
 discourse analysis 42  
 discourse history 100  
 drum 217, 218, 509, 510, 511, 512, 514, 543, 577  
 dysentery 403

## E

economy, economic 15, 33, 34, 38, 42, 44,  
 116, 118, 189, 211, 264, 287, 313, 345, 405,  
 411, 421, 428, 432, 493, 562, 586, 609, 614,  
 617, 626  
 education 27, 34, 35, 37, 87, 128, 174, 227,  
 232, 240, 247, 279, 314, 338, 359, 367, 368,  
 369, 371, 372, 373, 374, 392, 405, 430, 437,  
 576, 627  
 elegy 182, 334, 338, 399, 536, 554, 555, 556,  
 629, 642  
 elephant 138, 155, 163, 165, 169, 266, 306-7,  
 329, 332, 472, 529, 584  
 elephant tusk *see also* ivory 160, 519  
 elite  
 Sokoto ~ 19, 85, 86, 88, 182, 233, 301, 310,  
 312, 332, 394, 421, 579, 589, 593  
 political ~ 62, 101, 150, 486, 611

scholarly ~ 34, 202, 234, 280, 300, 314,  
 355, 366, 382, 386  
 military ~ 218, 355  
 emigration 14, 46, 63, 64, 65, 66, 222, 316,  
 319, 328, 356, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 481,  
 482, 483, 487, 488, 498, 499, 502  
 emir 72, 90, 93, 125, 132, 189, 199, 219, 205,  
 206, 245, 256, 262, 264, 324, 326, 337, 365,  
 373, 398, 399, 402, 421, 435, 463, 486, 496,  
 506, 507, 518, 530, 532, 542, 574, 587, 598,  
 600, 601, 604, 608, 609, 613, 614, 641  
 end of time 99  
 enslavement 25, 69, 75, 77, 149, 150, 151,  
 152, 239, 262, 264, 407, 423, 437, 438, 440,  
 447, 450, 452, 455, 457, 458, 459, 460, 462,  
 472, 473, 528, 575, 586, 638, 643  
 environment 25, 33, 52, 53, 77, 87, 120, 132,  
 134, 135, 140, 145, 150, 158, 192, 206, 242,  
 290, 292, 362, 375, 393, 428, 430, 434, 437,  
 443, 447, 501, 561, 574, 589, 618, 629, 631,  
 634, 641, 648  
 epidemic 444, 547, 551, 574  
 eschatology 34, 43, 129, 162, 163, 212, 316,  
 317, 428, 504, 556  
 ethnicity, ethnic concept 33, 221, 271, 281-4,  
 462  
 ethnic  
 cleansing 559  
 conflict 24, 558, 561  
 group 23, 25, 38, 42, 46, 77, 92, 148, 157,  
 212, 214, 220, 221, 222, 223, 226, 230,  
 233, 234, 235, 238, 240, 260, 266, 281,  
 283, 333, 382, 424, 588  
 identity 345, 365, 410  
 origin 231, 233, 259, 501  
 eunuch 156, 180, 263, 264, 442, 463, 473,  
 496  
 evil 63, 64, 124, 132, 134, 247, 256, 268, 270,  
 317, 351, 363, 369, 388, 390, 394, 397, 400,  
 404, 406, 429, 442, 479, 480, 486, 509, 513,  
 526, 566, 630  
 exodus 55, 222, 529  
 expansion 16, 28, 58, 59, 60, 65, 86, 101, 106,  
 116, 148, 163, 167, 169, 191, 192, 195, 207,  
 210, 211, 213, 220, 223, 284, 360, 417, 422,

423, 424, 428, 431, 446, 466, 495, 502, 559,  
561, 572, 592, 596, 599, 604, 607, 616, 628,  
633, 643, 648

## F

facebook 13

famine 66, 191, 218, 272, 327, 443, 444, 446,  
492, 493

farm, farming 22, 158, 202, 203, 234, 266,  
267, 376, 396, 411, 413, 414, 415, 417, 418,  
420, 421, 422, 423, 434, 444, 447, 468, 491,  
492, 495, 496, 497, 499, 521, 542, 556, 601,  
611, 612, 612, 613, 614, 615, 619, 643

farmer 49, 71, 84, 93, 197, 202, 203, 204,  
269, 327, 333, 372, 411, 413, 414, 415,  
416, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 429, 433,  
435, 445, 446, 468, 470, 482, 491, 492,  
496, 497, 499

farmland 175, 284, 413, 414, 416, 419, 421,  
422, 423, 544, 601, 603

fauna 66

February Revolution 76

fetish 113, 352, 391

fiction 68, 198, 209, 288, 301, 303, 304, 306,  
315, 332, 386, 464, 524, 582

fieldwork 44, 87, 265

fiqh 60

fire 79, 142, 165, 272, 306, 326, 329, 341,  
366, 385, 389, 396, 397, 454, 456, 485, 487,  
507, 509, 528, 534, 536, 542, 544, 557, 585,  
590, 611, 612

firearms 57, 492, 493, 622

fishermen 112, 141, 157, 378, 529, 533, 569, 570

fitna 222, 223, 318, 323

flag 13, 537, 397, 503, 514, 537, 538, 539,  
540, 541, 542, 602, 614, 633

Foreign Office 51

forest 53, 56, 59, 72, 135, 145, 149, 160, 175  
204, 206, 233, 242, 244-5, 260-1, 272, 284,  
289-90, 293, 306-7, 332, 341-3, 381, 401,  
407-8, 416, 422, 434, 456, 458, 470, 472, 474,  
491-9, 501, 520-1, 528, 531, 547, 576-87, 590,  
592-3, 595-6, 615-6, 627, 631, 638-9, 641-6  
forest area 149, 206, 590

dense 528 567, 592, 627, 63

tropical 206, 638-9

wilderness 307, 521"

fortification 56, 190, 402, 430, 441, 600, 602,  
603, 604, 606, 608, 611, 613, 616

fort, fortress 125, 144, 276, 354, 427, 430,  
602, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611

fox 126, 291, 460

freedom 77, 231, 437, 469

friendship 72, 86, 290, 356

FrontAfrique 54

Fulbe (also Fulani) 21, 22, 24, 33, 39, 71,  
92, 93, 126, 183, 188, 215, 219, 225, 228,  
232, 235, 237, 244, 249, 281, 282, 317, 346,  
410, 411, 453, 454, 457, 475, 483, 491, 560,  
576, 633

Fulfulde language 194, 199, 214, 225-34, 357,  
371, 410, 557

futuh 61

## G

gari 190, 255, 304, 342, 361, 366, 380, 491,  
497, 498, 601, 602, 610, 615

gate 132, 133, 134, 163, 190, 191, 201, 203,  
278, 290, 302, 416, 445, 453, 454, 490, 492,  
507, 510, 559, 609

gazelle 155, 217, 404, 406

gemstone 164

genealogy 227, 235, 239, 259, 262, 265, 281,  
283, 344, 364, 537, 553

generation 14, 19, 22, 25, 28, 30, 86, 87, 88,  
89, 94, 122, 123, 125, 141, 163, 182, 191,  
215, 221, 224, 232, 272, 282, 297, 307, 315,  
317, 343, 360, 371, 375, 376, 394, 411, 425,  
431, 438, 447, 457, 467, 478, 488, 489, 538,  
543, 549, 551, 554, 555, 602, 604, 647

ghazal 349, 525

giraffe 126, 127, 128, 140, 155, 161, 291,  
332, 584

glacier 159

Gog 129, 130, 131, 134, 246, 247

gossip 19, 71, 143, 172, 285, 335, 341, 569,  
579, 598, 622, 623, 625, 626

grammar 87, 95, 225



grass 192, 377, 392, 420, 492, 495, 509, 571,  
589, 639, 643  
grasslands 244, 639, 643  
Greek Fire 485  
griot 284  
guerilla 56, 642

## H

Habe 249, 251, 269, 501  
Hadith 61, 64, 80, 123, 212, 229, 294, 314,  
325, 406, 427, 428, 431, 478, 481, 486,  
606, 607  
hajj 71, 150, 232, 285, 287, 290, 291, 294,  
295, 296, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 309,  
312, 314, 315, 316, 331, 628, 644, 645  
Hamitic 23, 38, 238, 239, 575  
Hamite, Hamitic 23  
harem 247, 442, 465, 466  
hatimi 107  
Hausa Association 95  
hausa bakwai *see* Hausa Seven  
Hausa Seven 181, 249, 256  
heaven, heavenly 64, 115, 122, 134, 192, 329,  
389, 394, 486, 530, 548, 551, 552, 606, 607,  
608, 615, 621  
hell 64, 105, 134, 289, 390, 391, 394, 395,  
396, 397, 406, 420, 470, 486, 536, 543,  
552, 607  
hellfire 272, 389, 396, 513, 536, 544  
hereafter 55, 98, 99, 104, 105, 132, 133, 167,  
224, 270, 329, 335, 362, 370, 390, 394, 395,  
407, 408, 479, 481, 536, 552, 555, 583, 647  
hijra 14, 55, 57, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 82, 85, 97,  
222, 223, 271, 315, 319, 322, 326, 327, 328,  
364, 373, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480,  
481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489,  
490, 502, 503, 516, 542, 581, 604, 608  
Hijri Time 476  
hill 22, 53, 59, 138, 140, 192, 193, 269, 302,  
308, 326, 342, 368, 495, 496, 497, 501, 522,  
531, 534, 550, 560, 574, 575, 576, 577, 593,  
594, 596, 603, 615, 641  
Hindu, Hinduism 163, 164, 169, 206  
historical consciousness 43, 47, 66, 106, 220,

221  
historicity 124, 146, 245, 248, 613  
historiography 21, 24, 29, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37,  
41, 42, 45, 78, 87, 94, 97, 224, 230, 263,  
279, 380, 425, 496, 558  
homeland 175, 218, 246, 375, 490, 632-4, 646  
honey 145, 397, 496, 574  
horror vacui 46, 245  
horse  
~breeding and trading 52, 379, 401, 409,  
424-32, 459, 511, 513, 519, 522-7, 613,  
638  
~traveling 104, 112-3, 201, 210, 253-7, 315,  
373, 400  
Jihad war ~ 27, 57, 59, 263, 387, 413-4,  
436, 461, 474-505, 530-9, 542-4, 548,  
557-8, 561, 584, 599, 615  
non-Jihadist war ~ 140, 333, 353, 380, 383-  
4, 423, 455, 514-7, 528-9, 577, 581, 590-5  
Hujajo 412, 418  
hunter 21, 233, 260, 266, 283, 284, 289, 290,  
291, 401, 569, 570, 597

## I

Ibadan School 30, 34, 35, 37, 41  
Ibadite 257  
iconography 105  
ideology 13, 19, 26, 28, 46, 163, 192, 238,  
257, 272, 275, 279, 337, 383, 391, 409,  
478, 486, 539, 547, 611, 617, 623, 628, 634,  
648, 649  
idol 155, 157, 158, 163, 164, 165, 169, 171,  
181, 184, 266, 291, 292, 377, 460, 486,  
584, 552  
ihram 302  
ijaza 347, 348, 374  
illness 232, 390, 547  
immigration 46, 154, 283, 446, 601, 608  
indigenous 30, 48, 102, 116, 214, 245, 246,  
247, 249, 258, 265, 267  
indigo 259, 604, 612  
infrastructure 50, 118, 573, 599, 615, 617  
insecurity 191, 493  
Islam, Islamic

- ~ Africa 26, 82, 107, 280
- ~ eschatology 34, 43, 129, 212, 317, 428
- ~ expansion 58-60, 65, 106, 116, 169, 207, 220, 223, 284, 424, 428, 446, 502, 599, 607, 648
- ~ frontier 55, 118, 125, 129, 133, 158, 164, 169, 186, 195, 206, 235, 430, 593, 598, 605-7, 649
- ~ geography 116, 122, 168, 533
- history of ~ 24, 31, 33, 57-60, 65, 154, 186, 305, 390, 430, 478, 482, 578
- ~ law, jurisprudence 40, 60-1, 145, 149, 151, 165, 171, 210, 262, 336, 345, 355, 463, 545, 626
- ~ literature 9, 36, 55, 66, 212, 301, 337, 394, 424
- military ~ 206, 530
- ~ revolution, reform 24, 28, 31, 33, 62, 85, 353, 358, 411
- school of Islam 145, 434
- ~ statehood 65, 236, 358, 649
- ~ theology 22, 45, 218, 222
- ~ war(fare) 503, 505, 539
- ~ world 50, 59, 82, 133, 173, 223, 565, 639
- Islamization 26, 43, 59, 146, 152, 154, 164, 169, 202, 212-3, 220, 226, 228, 243, 248, 270, 298, 351, 429, 432, 576, 578, 601, 639, 649
- Ismaili 164
- istibra' 460
- itinerary 103, 141, 292, 303, 304, 332, 333, 336, 340, 341, 388, 529, 575, 621
- ivory 164, 519, 598

## J

- Jacobite sect 157
- jahiliyya 356, 630
- jangali 411, 419
- jewelry 161, 164, 165, 302, 397, 399, 461, 518, 532, 597
- Jew, Jewish *see also* Judaism 61, 116, 133, 153, 168, 172, 186, 219, 222, 232, 247, 267, 270, 271, 279, 299, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 358, 568, 642, 643

- Jihad, Jihadist
  - greater/lesser ~ 60
  - ~ of Prophet Muhammad 14, 198, 528, 537
  - Kano ~ 24, 489, 581, 603
  - Adamawa ~ 417, 528
  - Futa Jallon ~, Futa Toro ~ 218, 298
  - West African ~(s) 13, 298
  - ~ ideology 13, 19, 192, 257, 272, 275, 337, 391, 547, 611
  - ~ war, ~ warfare 56, 66, 210-1, 263, 277, 291, 301, 437, 432, 448, 495, 474, 499, 528, 531, 538, 543, 554, 558, 571-2, 584-5, 602, 615-7, 624-3
  - ~ exploration 561-99
  - jihadism 26
  - jinn 123, 134, 216, 236, 246, 247, 315, 363, 370, 386, 388, 389, 390, 391, 405, 406
  - Judaism *see also* Jew, Jewish 220, 238
  - Judgment Day 130, 389, 486, 536, 556
  - Jukun 519
  - jungle 266
  - justice 165, 171, 172, 187

## K

- kafir, kaffir, kefer 132, 185, 218, 250-1, 271, 472, 501, 582, 597, 622
- kufir *see also* dar al-kufir 185, 372, 649
- Kanta 187, 188, 189, 241
- Kanuri 23, 27, 75, 178, 195, 273, 293, 333, 335, 412, 439, 443, 445, 452, 453, 459, 490, 493, 531, 571, 644
- Kauri 339, 440
- Khalwatiyya 349
- kidnapping 26, 71, 84, 423, 457, 459, 462, 470
- kingdom 142, 154, 155, 157, 160, 163, 164, 183, 240, 247, 253, 256, 262, 268, 273, 274, 321, 441, 456, 565, 599, 616
- knowledge
  - Arabic ~ 111, 116, 199
  - geographical ~ 18, 50-1, 100-196, 288, 293, 361, 375, 440, 473, 618, 640
  - Islamic ~ 62, 136, 168, 344, 368, 625
  - local ~ 71
  - mediterranean ~ 143, 293

religious ~ 124, 311, 332, 366, 640  
 spatial ~ 17, 19, 34, 66, 73, 100, 104, 148,  
 174, 209-10, 285, 341, 367, 372, 402, 437,  
 561, 617-8, 621  
 world ~ 17, 106-22, 124, 143  
 kola nuts 42, 150, 263, 339, 543  
 Koran 36, 61, 63, 64, 79, 80, 90, 130, 222,  
 226, 227, 246, 267, 270, 288, 308, 318, 329,  
 338, 339, 362, 367, 368, 372, 378, 386, 389,  
 390, 404, 410, 428, 443, 463, 475, 486, 496,  
 510, 553, 605, 606, 619

## L

lake 17, 18, 72, 111, 115, 121, 135, 139, 140,  
 144, 156, 159, 188, 253, 332, 684, 396, 397,  
 470, 471, 472, 487, 533, 534, 536, 571, 571,  
 573, 574, 640, 641  
 Lamlam *see also* Niam-Niam 121, 129, 130,  
 131, 132, 133, 134, 161, 172, 178, 564, 567  
 landscape 15, 29, 30, 43, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51,  
 53, 56, 70, 71, 82, 102, 113, 143, 148, 153,  
 186, 190, 192, 202, 207, 211, 212, 241, 248,  
 269, 272, 280, 284, 290, 305, 312, 341, 408,  
 431, 436, 502, 521, 568, 573, 575, 577, 588,  
 602, 609, 620, 624, 634, 638, 641, 643,  
 645, 646  
 land seizure 420, 421, 432  
 legend 21, 22, 47, 68, 85, 92, 147, 162, 181,  
 188, 191, 214, 216, 219, 223, 229, 230, 244,  
 249, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 260, 266,  
 272, 273, 274, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 282,  
 305, 314, 315, 331, 357, 376, 495, 537, 558,  
 568, 572, 595, 598, 604, 623, 624, 626, 627  
 Bayajidda ~ 248, 251, 258, 261, 263, 265,  
 270, 352  
 Hausa ~ 259, 380  
 Islamic ~ 72, 183, 243, 247, 275  
 legitimacy, legitimate 22, 30, 62, 66, 140,  
 217, 231, 256, 280, 314, 315, 369, 386, 428,  
 464, 469, 483, 486, 489, 499, 504, 510, 520,  
 537, 606, 632, 634  
 library 26, 35, 45, 81, 83, 84, 101, 109, 115,  
 181, 209, 219, 228, 248, 329, 353, 258, 364,  
 371, 399, 467, 538, 573, 636, 640

lingua franca 23, 142, 182, 339, 443, 598  
 literacy, literate 23, 170, 288, 290, 407  
 longue durée 44, 54, 57

## M

Magog 129, 130, 131, 134, 246, 247  
 Maguzawa 188, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271,  
 272, 426, 604, 641  
 Mahdi, Mahdism 36, 236, 237, 309, 316, 317,  
 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326,  
 327, 328, 329, 330, 426, 541, 542, 645  
 Mahmudiyya 349  
 Mahraj 163  
 malaria 69, 573, 574  
 mamluk 264  
 manatee (seacow) 569  
 Mandingo 217  
 manifest destiny 628, 645  
 manumission 438, 448, 462, 508  
 map(s)  
 Abdussalam/Bello ~ 638  
 African ~ (making) 129, 619-20  
 Arabic ~ 15, 116, 119-20, 133, 637  
 Clapperton/Bello ~ 620  
 European ~ 16-7  
 German ~ 17-8  
 Islamic ~ 168  
 Sokoto ~ 15, 18  
 mapping 45-6, 100-1, 103, 116, 460, 594,  
 620, 637, 643, 645  
 ~ imperialism 102  
 colonial ~ 101  
 mental ~ 19, 95, 100, 104, 110, 125, 128,  
 173, 181, 198, 210-1, 240, 245, 332, 365,  
 443, 472, 520, 592, 617, 619, 621, 623,  
 632, 635-6, 641-2, 647-8  
 social ~ 47  
 marabout 190  
 marriage 88, 129, 165, 216, 223, 232, 34, 251,  
 259, 285, 302, 309, 402, 414, 482  
 martyr, martyrdom 314, 404, 504, 516, 551,  
 552, 553, 554, 605, 606  
 massacre 164, 550, 585, 586, 559, 616  
 mathematic 17, 105, 107, 117, 121, 122, 198

- medicine 256  
 menstruation 49, 460, 465  
 messenger 16, 166, 211, 212, 279, 300, 316,  
 334, 353, 360, 383, 392, 397, 398, 399, 400,  
 401, 402, 411, 418, 436, 479, 480, 481, 491,  
 494, 537, 546, 552, 638  
 metropolitan, metropole 47, 48, 293, 433, 501  
 Middle Ages, medieval 60, 62, 68, 70, 100,  
 101, 104, 105, 106, 107, 110, 115, 116, 119,  
 120, 124, 128, 133, 141, 145, 158, 170, 173,  
 178, 206, 209, 247, 262, 267, 318, 331, 361,  
 386, 434, 471, 478, 485, 533, 552, 563, 564,  
 567, 599, 622, 625, 635, 639, 640  
 migration  
   ~ history 227, 229, 263, 274  
   ~ myth 23, 218, 227, 272  
   ancestral ~ 23, 212, 213, 221, 231, 235,  
     240, 344  
   Islamic ~ 248, 262, 284, 645  
   religious ~ 288, 480  
 militarization 52-3, 56, 599  
 military  
   ~ equipment 27, 332, 503, 540, 624  
   ~ expedition 53, 117, 164, 210, 241, 293,  
     377, 379, 380, 417, 462, 498, 506-7,  
     516-7, 521, 523, 529-30, 532, 536, 544,  
     545, 547, 561, 570, 588, 592, 594, 615,  
     625, 642  
   ~ service 35, 506  
   ~ strategy 101, 106  
   Bornu ~ 286, 401, 492-3, 507, 516, 520,  
     533, 557, 559-60, 567  
   Sokoto ~ 57, 469, 518, 521, 550, 576, 596  
   Tuareg ~ 425  
 millenarianism, millenarian 40, 97, 98, 555  
 millet 175, 203, 577  
 miracle 279, 344, 362, 376, 534, 535  
 modern 14, 25, 27, 43, 83, 128, 135, 142, 193,  
 274, 563, 564  
   early modern 26, 104, 106, 113, 115, 119,  
     120, 267  
   post-modern 101, 281  
   pre-modern 97, 101, 104, 120, 122, 172,  
     206  
 monkey 155, 454, 644  
 monotheism, monotheistic 99, 101, 153, 158,  
 231, 370, 390, 621  
 monsoon 165  
 moon 192, 297, 645  
 mosque 35, 49, 189, 190, 191, 198, 199, 200,  
 202, 203, 205, 290, 302, 306, 309, 325, 336,  
 355, 357, 368, 379, 380, 393, 403, 430, 507,  
 541, 567, 603, 618  
 mosquitoes 105, 306, 307, 574  
 mountains 59, 139, 241-8, 500-2, 531-33,  
 603, 607, 615, 631-7; for Mandara Moun-  
 tains *see* Mandara; *see also* Mountains of  
 the Moon  
 mourning 296, 548, 555, 556, 629  
 movement 13, 14, 24, 26, 36, 43, 44, 45, 56,  
 57, 62, 66, 84, 85, 93, 122, 192, 195, 202,  
 216, 224, 240, 280, 281, 298, 321, 322, 332,  
 346, 352, 358, 359, 397, 411, 425, 448, 474,  
 476, 489, 537, 558, 561, 599, 616, 618,  
 628, 629  
   hijra ~ 223  
   Islamic ~ 24, 280, 359  
   jihad ~ 13, 93, 233, 298, 649  
   political ~ 344, 425, 489, 648  
   reform ~ 38, 62, 358, 359, 360, 411  
   religious ~ 300  
 muezzin 183, 371, 354  
 Mukhtariyya 344, 347, 349, 350, 360  
 mule 112, 113, 158, 254, 257, 523, 532  
 murder 385, 415, 449, 483, 485  
 music 78, 180, 397, 425, 509, 510, 511, 512  
 myth  
   ~ of origin 181, 242, 247, 248, 259, 262,  
     266, 273, 274, 275, 318, 571  
   ancestral ~ 19, 259  
   ethnic ~ 259  
   political ~ 259  
   Islamic ~ 47, 230, 243, 246, 247, 248, 272,  
     279, 302, 303, 575  
   Christian ~ 129  
   Hausa ~ 181, 182, 248, 257, 261, 262, 281,  
     282, 569  
   creation ~ 168, 620  
   Daura ~ 258  
   Bayajidda ~ 255, 259

genealogical ~ 58, 246  
 Fulbe ~ 212, 214, 216, 218, 220, 252, 256,  
 259, 318  
 migration ~ 23, 218, 227, 272

## N

nature 19, 24, 28, 29, 49, 53, 89, 109, 112,  
 191, 192, 193, 233, 242, 244, 245, 246, 264,  
 272, 307, 363, 390, 429, 580, 586, 640, 641,  
 646, 648  
 Niam-Niam *see also* Lamlam 471, 562, 563,  
 564, 565, 566, 568, 569, 580, 581, 582, 583,  
 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 590, 591, 592, 593,  
 624, 625  
 Niger expedition 69, 70, 94, 468, 596  
 nomadism, nomad 22, 32, 65, 66, 142, 157,  
 281, 410, 424, 426, 427, 428, 431, 435,  
 482, 501

## O

Orientalist, orientalism 22, 38, 39, 59, 471,  
 538  
 ornamentation 164, 199, 200, 201, 205  
 outcast 46, 48, 233, 234, 250  
 outland 58, 624, 637

## P

pagan  
 ~ ruler 184  
 ~ south 199  
 ~ land 183, 331, 351, 537, 617, 638  
 ~ tribe 158, 356  
 ~ hinterland 162  
 ~ state 140, 245, 487  
 ~ people 266, 529  
 ~ territory 170, 474  
 ~ neighbour 132  
 palace 14, 15, 18, 21, 42, 101, 175, 189, 191,  
 205, 210, 279, 422, 465, 485, 507, 530,  
 624, 648  
 paper(s) 18, 68, 73, 80, 81, 95, 106, 107, 108,  
 109, 110, 113, 122, 200, 219, 384, 394, 403,  
 404, 562, 619, 627, 636  
 paradise 43, 98, 105, 132, 133, 134, 168, 183,

330, 364, 394, 395, 396, 397, 463, 480, 536,  
 538, 552, 553, 634  
 pastoralism, pastoral 22, 49, 52, 53, 204, 210,  
 216, 217, 234, 318, 409, 410, 412, 414, 415,  
 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 520, 521, 412, 422,  
 423, 424, 428, 431, 433, 435, 604, 634  
 patrons 248  
 pearls 164, 397, 464  
 perfume 164, 165, 168, 270, 302, 398, 399  
 periphery 49, 55, 58, 101, 118, 151, 153, 181,  
 323, 382, 434, 474, 476, 489, 495, 496, 499,  
 501, 557, 564, 594, 596, 598, 600, 603,  
 616, 635  
 pestilence 443  
 philosophy 37, 66, 82, 308, 368  
 pilgrimage, pilgrim *see also* hajj, umra  
 ~ network 58, 71, 98, 268, 285  
 ~ route 27, 146, 159, 175-8, 207, 286, 288,  
 291, 299, 303, 324, 330-2, 442, 591  
 ~ site 301, 309  
 Sahelian ~ 285-7, 635  
 West African ~ 171, 173-4, 268, 287-8,  
 299, 473  
 plantation 272, 437, 457, 583, 611, 612, 613  
 poetry, poem  
 Arabic ~ 310, 327, 524  
 Fulfulde ~ 303, 305, 316, 391, 464, 540-1,  
 543, 546-7, 576, 610  
 Hausa ~ 330, 366, 420, 422, 463, 542, 550,  
 613 641  
 love ~ 167, 349, 464, 524-5, 527  
 praise ~ 167, 176, 270, 287, 294, 365, 524,  
 526, 539, 554, 556  
 war ~ 238, 504-5, 522, 525, 534, 539, 543,  
 548-50, 593-4, 623, 642  
 warning ~ 105, 329, 338, 470, 536  
 polyglot 175, 193, 215, 453  
 polytheist, polytheism 151, 206, 267, 351,  
 425, 460, 481, 484  
 postmodern 101, 281  
 poverty 232, 233, 289, 345, 394, 397, 406,  
 481, 492, 552  
 prayer 133, 196, 199, 202, 203, 258, 288, 290,  
 302, 303, 308, 309, 331, 332, 336, 340, 343,  
 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 350, 355, 357, 358,

361, 362, 363, 368, 379, 380, 383, 384, 392, 393, 395, 403, 429, 431, 503, 507, 508, 514, 520, 521, 537, 552, 553, 594, 599  
 Islamic ~ 377, 463, 535  
 Muslim ~ 189, 197, 201, 211, 269, 372, 618  
 preaching 85, 87, 198, 234, 257, 272, 273, 338, 351, 352, 355, 367, 368, 369, 372, 373, 375, 376, 383, 385, 391, 392, 394, 475, 506, 628  
 pregnancy 247, 252, 345, 456, 458, 460, 465, 586  
 propaganda 60, 67, 145, 182, 193, 205, 237, 239, 251, 351, 358, 379, 400, 419, 422, 456, 461, 474, 477, 513, 541, 551, 558, 607, 624, 643, 649  
 prophecy, prophet, prophetic 183, 186, 246, 247, 248, 282, 300, 305, 315, 317, 318, 328, 363, 386, 428, 518, 530, 556  
 Protectorate 78, 79  
 puberty 172  
 pyramid 156

## Q

Qadiriyya 85, 236, 315, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 349, 350, 351, 352, 356, 358, 359, 360, 361, 365  
 qibla 133, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 205

## R

race, racism 23, 91, 230, 238, 250, 259, 265, 378, 470, 575, 579, 586  
 rain 158, 192, 205, 210, 268, 297, 326, 327, 345, 404, 405, 444, 465, 495, 504, 534, 535, 536, 549, 645  
 Ramadan 202, 210, 285, 323, 325, 338, 339, 355, 429, 507, 645  
 rebellion, rebel 28, 60, 65, 223, 318, 319, 321, 422, 436, 478, 520, 557, 580, 583, 594, 603, 604, 605, 607, 611, 636  
 refugee 57, 69, 236, 283, 284, 351, 352, 436, 444, 449, 455, 456, 458, 474, 476, 480, 482, 488, 490, 491, 494, 495, 497, 500, 501, 502, 557, 561, 575, 577, 578, 617, 633, 638, 639

religion  
 traditional 164, 388, 390  
 local 253, 271, 377  
 African 126, 403  
 monotheistic 158  
 Abrahamic 220  
 pre-Islamic 169  
 deterritorialized 403, 618  
 revolution 29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 52, 76, 94, 479, 558  
 ribat 195, 472, 599, 600, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 616  
 ritual 26, 49, 58, 62, 107, 163, 186, 188, 202-3, 253-6, 271, 278, 283, 302-3, 305, 309-10, 335, 338, 343, 358, 361, 377, 384, 388-93, 403, 405, 421, 496, 499, 507, 510, 522, 535-6, 544-7, 551-4, 561, 563, 582, 588, 618-19  
 robbery, robber 157, 211, 286, 287, 289, 290, 333, 343, 407, 409, 424, 447, 571, 576, 605, 611  
 Royal Geographical Society 68, 70  
 rumor 73, 85, 112, 150, 159, 165, 171, 209, 255, 285, 291, 296, 324, 325, 326, 331, 332, 334, 370, 401, 443, 444, 445, 448, 457, 458, 466, 469, 471, 473, 491, 492, 513, 524, 532, 547, 562, 568, 570, 598, 613, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 641

## S

saddle 263, 514, 529, 530, 531, 593  
 salvation 610, 634, 645  
 Sanhaja 245  
 sapphires 164  
 Sardauna 31  
 Sattelzeit 98  
 savanna 21, 22, 53, 56, 59, 149, 191, 242, 253, 284, 286, 500, 528, 534, 576, 616, 635, 639, 641, 642, 643  
 scarification 172, 268, 269, 292, 439, 448, 620  
 scorpions 105, 306, 307  
 sculptures 170  
 seascape 158

- security 29, 191, 192, 324, 329, 334, 445,  
 609, 639  
 self-description 16, 17  
 semantic 16, 129, 178, 193  
 serpents 165  
 servant 70, 73, 164, 250, 342, 347, 348, 366,  
 398, 423, 439, 440, 441, 442, 459, 465, 469,  
 502, 530, 540, 541, 611  
 settlement 13, 16-7, 21, 33, 46, 51, 61, 66,  
 70-1, 87, 136-7, 171, 190-1, 195, 210-11, 227,  
 232, 234, 256, 260, 278, 285-7, 335, 362,  
 375, 377-79, 393, 411, 433, 434, 446, 450,  
 455, 467, 475, 491, 495, 516, 519-20, 526,  
 532, 539, 549, 558, 560, 578, 587, 596, 598-  
 9, 600-1, 604, 608, 611, 613, 620, 641  
 sexual slave *see also* concubines, concubinage  
 450, 461, 462  
 Sharia 40, 419, 429, 461, 506, 649  
 Shia, Shiite 164, 251, 257, 321  
 shore 135, 136, 142, 143, 145, 156, 177, 178,  
 193, 242, 244, 329, 332, 375, 377, 378, 397,  
 451, 458, 468, 494, 495, 519, 533, 571, 572,  
 573, 596, 622  
 shrine 48, 49, 126, 181, 277, 309, 310, 460,  
 618  
 Shuwa 446, 447, 448, 472  
 silent trade 118, 142, 143  
 silk 160, 161, 167, 397, 398, 399, 530, 552,  
 553  
 silsila 227, 344, 346, 348, 360, 364, 374, 627  
 slavery 42, 51, 93, 412, 437, 438, 465, 468,  
 469, 517, 567, 569, 587, 588, 612  
   sexual slavery *see* sexual slave  
 slave 437-74  
   ~ economy 42  
   ~ plantation 437, 457, 583, 611-3  
   ~ trade 42, 51, 55, 77, 238, 244, 261, 423,  
     442, 453, 462, 466, 467, 468, 564, 567,  
     583, 585  
   ~ traders 244, 440, 442, 458, 462, 473, 568,  
     588, 622  
 smallpox 574  
 snake 131, 143, 145, 253, 254, 255, 258, 270,  
 291, 306, 307, 335, 412, 550, 569  
 social death 437, 438  
 soldier  
   Bornu ~ 401, 492-3, 512, 531, 533, 558-9,  
     581-2  
   Gobir ~ 586  
   Hausa ~ 584  
   Jihad ~ 306, 450, 506, 542, 561, 581-2, 642  
   Kano ~ 585, 590, 609  
   mounted ~ 69, 139, 205, 330, 384, 431,  
     455, 492-4, 519, 526, 530, 547, 560  
   Nupe ~ 451  
   Sokoto ~ 505, 531, 539, 562  
   Tuareg ~ 230  
   wounded ~ 263, 548  
 sorcerer 390, 394  
 sorghum 175, 203  
 soul 99, 125, 186, 269, 270, 284, 306, 376,  
 481, 482, 536, 628, 642  
 spatial turn 49, 51, 52, 53, 57, 100  
 spear 140, 239, 291, 307, 447, 503, 540, 454,  
 514, 522, 527, 530, 549, 565, 585  
 spices 164  
 stability 100, 192  
 star 84, 115, 162, 192, 197, 310, 386, 539,  
 618  
 stone 99, 126, 155, 156, 163, 165, 181, 186,  
 197, 217, 271, 3102, 303, 305, 357, 386,  
 423, 432, 532, 560, 594, 615  
 Sufi  
   ~ brotherhood *see* brotherhood  
   ~ Islam 123, 189, 631  
   Sufism 164, 343, 344, 351, 358, 359, 365  
   ~ order 390  
   ~ practices 361-363, 364, 391, 511  
   ~ saint 130, 315, 344, 362, 364  
   ~ school 99  
   ~ teacher 60, 287, 299, 363  
   ~ traveler 343-366, 407, 628  
 Sultan 14, 21, 28, 69, 71, 85, 86, 88, 108,  
 109, 110, 112, 113, 115, 126, 127, 132,  
 140, 151, 153, 166, 167, 168, 171, 175,  
 177, 178, 181, 189, 191, 200, 205, 206,  
 221, 245 261, 263, 264, 265, 278, 287,  
 293, 296, 300, 301, 315, 324, 328, 329,  
 337, 346, 353, 356, 357, 385, 387, 399,  
 404, 425, 427, 435, 440, 477, 484, 492,

507, 515, 517, 525, 526, 530, 540, 544,  
548, 574, 579, 580, 587, 590, 591, 594,  
601, 611, 636

sultanate 137, 176, 180, , 255, 374, 380, 531,  
559, 560, 604

sun 115, 129, 165, 192, 197, 198, 202, 224,  
294, 340, 349, 395, 396, 443, 465, 486, 526,  
536, 558, 585

Sunni, Sunnite 164, 251, 257, 323, 340, 496, 510

**T**

tafsir 36

talisman 48, 209, 331, 335, 340, 386, 405,  
406, 407, 421, 496, 497, 597

tariqa *see also* brotherhood 85, 344, 345,  
346, 349, 350, 356, 358, 359, 365

Tartars 246

tawhid 99, 358, 368

tax, taxation 16, 61, 190, 195, 210, 211, 234,  
271, 336, 337, 346, 351, 397, 398, 411, 418,  
419, 420, 421, 430, 438, 469, 494, 498, 499,  
506, 527, 542, 543, 545, 599, 601, 629

telescope 115, 532

temple 155, 157, 163, 164, 169, 274, 275

Ten Commandments 222

termites 105

terra incognita 45, 117

terra nullius 226

textile 302, 378, 399, 530, 537, 538

theology 22, 45, 99, 123, 218, 222, 270, 295,  
297, 299, 301, 343, 352, 358, 367, 368, 618,  
623, 626, 637

this world 43, 98, 99, 122, 123, 125, 132, 134,  
167, 182, 190, 207, 224, 243, 335, 366, 370,  
394, 395, 647

throne 99, 164, 299, 311

Tibale (also Tebale) 453, 454, 455, 456

ticks 105

tiger spine 160, 161

Tijaniyya 296, 307, 359, 360

Tiv 572

tomb 15, 49, 187, 191, 204, 296, 299, 300,  
301, 305, 309, 310, 311, 345, 370, 535, 554,  
555, 556, 557

topography 59, 66, 121, 145, 192, 241, 467,  
499, 528, 562, 575, 576, 607, 619, 642

Torobbe 224, 229, 231, 233-40

trade, trader 335-43

Arab ~ 118, 440, 547, 622

book ~ 106, 209, 334

Fezzani ~ 546

Hausa ~ 340, 374, 447, 565, 598

Indian (Ocean) ~ 161, 165

Kano ~ 605

Kola ~ 42, 150

long-distance ~ 27, 50, 62, 71, 111, 118,  
292, 341, 431, 442, 525, 561, 564, 582,  
627

Muslim ~ 162, 268, 619, 557

network ~ 111, 198, 340-1, 407, 453, 466-7,  
524, 572, 624, 627

Ngaundere ~ 529

North African ~ 62, 143, 178, 286, 341,  
468, 471

professional(ized) ~ 417, 615

(trans-)Saharan ~ 17, 27, 72, 112-3, 143,  
179-80, 268, 345, 351, 374, 407, 517,  
566-7, 589

salt ~ 42, 417, 440, 472, 508

slave ~ 42, 51, 55, 77, 238, 244, 261, 423,  
440, 442, 453, 458, 462, 466-8, 473, 564,  
567-8, 583, 585, 588, 622

Sokoto ~ 340

Tuareg ~ 442, 471

Yoruba ~ 244, 451, 467

trafficking 54, 75, 447, 528

travelerscape 71, 334

travel, traveling, traveler

~ account 51, 68, 70-1, 73, 562

~ experience 117, 141, 209, 366, 625

~ journal 147, 566

~ literature 143, 309, 570, 584, 623

ancestral ~ 66, 209, 212-84

Islamic ~ 58, 377

long-distance ~ 624

Muslim ~ 57, 403, 532, 571, 620, 628

pre-colonial ~ 50, 67, 570

professional ~ 66, 210, 333-343, 403, 407-8

religious ~ 294



tree 126, 140, 164, 165, 181, 184, 186, 192,  
194, 242, 306, 357, 386, 416, 427, 432, 447,  
456, 460, 488, 491, 492, 496, 530, 534, 535,  
545, 549, 550, 576, 618  
tribute, tributary 14, 15, 16, 25, 27, 42, 108,  
130, 137, 172, 180, 195, 212, 252, 262, 264,  
265, 329, 351, 397, 398, 469, 494, 496, 498,  
506, 542, 596, 611, 614, 615  
triumvirate 26, 36, 37, 233, 346  
tsetse 52, 56, 105, 113, 204  
Tuareg 27, 66, 94, 140, 182, 188, 210, 225,  
230, 235, 245, 246, 247, 320, 323, 364, 374,  
424, 425, 426, 427, 442, 462, 468, 470, 471,  
501, 504, 508, 518, 526, 569, 579  
turban 270, 346, 388, 484, 514, 537, 586, 597

## U

ulama 25, 34, 36, 37, 90, 124, 176, 185, 214,  
278, 280, 297, 322, 346, 352, 354, 366, 367,  
387, 388, 487, 629  
umra 287  
Umayyid 65  
umm walad, umm waladhu 461, 464  
unbelief *see also* kufr, Land of Unbelief/  
Unbelievers 128, 145-6, 150-4, 185, 207,  
262, 268, 292, 306, 331, 349, 409, 460, 486,  
562, 628, 634, 643, 649  
Sudanese/Sudanic ~ 125-6, 356  
unbeliever *see also* kafir  
~ by birth 267, 459-60  
Christian ~ 467, 557  
Indian ~ 170  
Islamic definition 19  
Jewish ~ 271  
native ~ 576  
uniform 387, 484, 539  
uprising 28  
urban 33, 49, 50, 53, 55, 100, 163, 189, 190,  
191, 199, 200, 201, 205, 217, 234, 250, 259,  
266, 269, 270, 272, 307, 335, 336, 372, 376,  
377, 388, 393, 409, 410, 422, 428, 429, 430,  
431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 465, 515, 557, 558,  
559, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 605, 609,  
611, 612, 613, 616, 627, 646

~ dweller 601, 603, 609  
~ inhabitants 434, 605  
~ masses 372, 393, 429  
~ people 428, 429  
~ planning 190, 191, 199, 200  
~ population 431, 611  
~ center 189, 217, 272, 335, 376, 388, 435,  
598  
~ place 100, 307, 432, -435, 557, 601  
~ space 49, 55, 189-191, 259, 433, 515,  
559, 600, 646  
urbanization 50, 163, 205, 266, 284, 376,  
409, 424, 426, 428, 429, 430, 432, 599-  
615, 616, 643  
urbanity 189, 191

## V

vassal 241, 374, 614  
vegetation 59, 192, 261, 562, 576, 616, 620  
veil, veiling 337, 484, 510, 526,  
violence 25, 42, 44, 49, 52, 53, 56, 57, 61,  
210, 218, 334, 382, 416, 457, 474, 495, 542,  
559, 561, 625, 629, 632

## W

war, warfare 436-616  
~ booty 461, 513, 542-3  
~ camp 401, 493, 507, 518, 612  
~ captive 464, 589  
~ drum 217, 510  
~ equipment 430, 514  
~ expedition 69, 263, 380, 453, 504, 507-8,  
518, 528, 534, 547, 551, 584-5, 592  
~ flag 503, 538  
~ frontier 377  
~ horse *see* horse  
~ injury 416  
~ leader, ~lord 22, 261, 271, 400, 547, 643  
~like 354, 454, 593, 617  
~ poem *see* poetry, poem  
~ preparation 382, 523  
~ prisoner 92, 331  
~ propaganda 237, 643  
~ refugee *see* refugee

- ~ tactics 530, 534, 632
- ~ trophies 331, 581-2, 590
- ~ zone 61, 210, 252, 596
- civil ~ 13, 222, 318, 416, 451, 458, 632
- colonial ~ 457
- culture ~ 282
- Islamic ~fare 503, 539
- Jihad(ist) ~fare 56, 66, 210-1, 263, 277, 314, 332, 414, 430-2, 438, 495, 499, 512, 528, 531, 538-9, 543, 571-2, 585, 604, 615-7, 643
- Land of ~ *see* Land of War
- legitimate ~ 22
- religious ~ 94, 231, 248
- warrior 68, 139, 140, 157, 195, 214, 233, 239, 252, 354, 355, 380, 416, 446, 452, 454, 461, 498, 502, 503, 505, 516, 527, 528, 529, 531, 532, 544, 545, 549, 558, 561, 582, 587, 590, 615, 624
- water
  - ~way 18, 533, 620
  - ~ access 57, 253-5, 412, 418
  - ~ basin 270, 292, 534, 621, 641
  - ~ body, bodies of water 17, 18
  - ~ frontier 110-1, 180, 182, 193
  - ~ ghost, ~ spirit 253-4, 332
  - ~ resource 56, 418, 534-5
  - ~ snake 253-4, 569
  - abundance of ~ 59, 113, 536
  - charm ~ 288, 382, 384, 529
  - clean ~ 397, 536
  - drinking ~ 290, 305, 341, 395, 397
  - lack of ~ 57, 59, 211, 536
  - salt ~, sea ~ 118, 473, 571
- wazir 87, 199, 200, 215, 346, 375, 399, 461, 543
- widow, widower 191, 375, 556
- wilderness 102, 112, 128, 156, 157, 158, 169, 192, 193, 210, 272, 306, 307, 330, 362, 364, 412, 453, 454, 471, 473, 489, 527, 562, 584, 585, 588, 591, 592, 594, 596, 598, 599, 603, 616, 635, 637, 638, 641, 642, 644
- wird 124, 347, 566
- witchcraft 107, 390, 404, 449
- Wodaabe 501
- Wolof 170, 298
- Worthless Seven 181

## X

xenonym 174

## Y

youtube 13

## Z

Zaria School 35

zeitgeist 37

Ziduwa 251, 257

zango (also zongo) 287, 374

zoologist 76

Zoroastrian 266, 267, 270, 271, 273



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