

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

AFRICA'S ISLAMIC HERITAGE:

***Muslim Regimes in East, North East
and West Africa***

***By
Professor Suleman Dangor***

ISLAMIC DAWAH MOVEMENT
of Southern Africa
Durban, South Africa

FOREWORD

Published by	IDM Publications
Postal Address	P.O. Box 48009, Qualbert, 4078 Durban, South Africa
Physical Address	495 Dr. Pixley KaSeme Street Durban, 4001, South Africa
Telephone	(++27-31) 304 6883
Facsimile	(++27-31) 305 1292
Email	ids@ion.co.za
Website	www.idmdawah.co.za
Title	Africa's Islamic Heritage:
Subtitle	Muslim Regimes in East, North East and West Africa
Language	English
Author	Professor Suleman Dangor
ISBN	978-0-620-61931-8
First Print	September 2006 Ramadaan 1427
Second Print	March 2014 Jamaad-ul-Ula 1435

IDM Publications is a division of the:
ISLAMIC DAWAH MOVEMENT of Southern Africa (IDM)

Islam has been linked intimately with the continent of Africa from its very inception, and even well before the advent of the formal religion of Islam in the 7th century CE. The patriarch of the 3 major Semitic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Prophet Ebrahim^p married a lady from Africa, by the name of Hagar, who bore him his first born, Ishmael. It was Ishmael's progeny down the line which eventually culminated with Prophet Muhammad^s the last Prophet from God to mankind, and the founder from God Almighty, of the religion of Islam.

Prophet Muhammad^s himself also married a lady from Africa, Maria Al Qibtiyya, (the Copt), who bore him a son, Ibrahim, who passed away in his infancy. These are all extremely close and binding links of Islam with the continent of Africa. Furthermore, Africa was the first continent into which Islam expanded; and Islam has become an integral part of many African cultures and histories. No wonder then that according to both Encyclopedia Britannica (2003) and World Book Encyclopedia, Islam is the largest religion in Africa, followed by Christianity. This makes it the continent with the largest percentage of Muslims. Hence the reference to Africa as a Muslim continent. Yet, not much is known about the history of Islam on the African continent.

When persecutions of Muslims by the Pagan Arabs became unbearable in the seventh century, Prophet Muhammad^s advised his followers to seek refuge and asylum in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in Africa, under the rule of Al-Najashi. Africa thus became the first refuge for the nascent Muslim Community from Arabia. These first Muslim migrants provided Islam with its first major triumph. The coastline of Somalia became the first safe haven for Muslims and the first place Islam would be practiced outside of the Arabian Peninsula.

Seven years after the death of Muhammad^s (639 CE), the Arabs advanced toward Africa; and within two generations, Islam had expanded across the Horn of Africa, North Africa and all of the Central Maghreb. When the Prophet^s established the first Islamic City State in Madinah in the 7th century CE, he appointed the African ex-slave Bilal Ibn Rabah as his first Treasurer General of the New State. As Islam grew and the reputation of its just and morally civilising World view spread, the Christian Egyptians in North Africa welcomed with open arms, the Muslim general Amr Ibn Al'As in 640 CE against their own oppressive Christian Byzantine rulers. It is recorded that the Prophet^s had told Amr that "when you conquer Egypt, be kind to its people because they are your protégée kith and kin".

In the following centuries, the consolidation of Muslim trading networks, connected by lineage, trade, and Sufi brotherhoods, had reached a crescendo in West Africa, enabling Muslims to wield tremendous political influence and power. During the reign of Umar II, the then governor of Africa, Ismail ibn Abdullah, was said to have won the Berbers to Islam by his just administration. Other early notable duaat (callers to Allah) include Abdallah ibn Yasin, who started a movement which caused thousands of Berbers to accept Islam.

Similarly, in the Swahili coast, Islam made its way inland, spreading at a phenomenal pace. This expansion of Islam in Africa not only led to the formation of new communities in Africa, but it also reconfigured existing African communities and empires to be based on Islamic models. Indeed, in the middle of the eleventh century, the Kanem Empire, whose influence extended into Sudan, converted to Islam. At the same time but more toward West Africa, the reigning ruler of the Bornu Empire embraced Islam. As these kingdoms adopted Islam, its populace thereafter devotedly followed suit.

In praising the Africans' zealousness to Islam, the fourteenth century explorer Ibn Battuta stated that mosques were so crowded on Fridays, that unless one went very early, it was impossible to find a place to sit. In the sixteenth century, the Ouaddai Empire and the Kingdom of Kano embraced Islam, and later toward the eighteenth century, the Nigeria based Sokoto Caliphate led by Usman dan Fodio exerted considerable effort in spreading Islam. Today, Islam is the predominant religion of Northern Africa, mainly concentrated in North, Northeast Africa and the Sahel, as well as West Africa.

As Islam spread across the Sahara to West Africa, it formed the great Malian Empire and its then internationally acclaimed University of Timbuktu, long before the advent of Oxford, Harvard and other universities in the West. Islam in Africa often adapted to African cultural contexts and belief systems forming Africa's own orthodoxies. Africans have generally appropriated Islam in more inclusive way, or in the more radical way, as with the Almoravid Movement. On the global level, however, African Muslims belong to the Ummah, the worldwide Islamic community, and follow global issues and current events that affect the Muslim world with keen interest. With globalization and new initiatives in information technology, African Muslims have developed and maintained close connections with the wider Muslim world. South Africa has taken the initiative to support the Malian project which involves the preservation of the ancient Islamic/African manuscripts of Timbuktu as a means to bolster African pride in its history and advance the African Renaissance.

This book was inspired by a series of articles on "Islamic Africa" which the author had written for "*Africa Perspectives*" several years ago. Many readers expressed an interest in the articles which they found to be revealing and inspirational. It was thought useful to collect these articles into a book which would be accessible to the lay public as well as a text for learning in public and independent schools.

This book, which is a brief introduction to Africa's Islamic Heritage, deals with only three regions, East, North-East and West Africa. Hopefully, it will encourage more writers to research this important area of Africa's history. Professor Suleiman Dangor should be commended for this initiative which, in the context of the debates on the place of Muslims in the African Renaissance, is both timely and relevant.

Dr Ebrahim Dada

National Executive Director
Islamic Dawah Movement of Southern Africa
Durban, South Africa
March 2014

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor SULEMAN DANGOR, Professor of Islamic Studies in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, was born in South Africa. He obtained his B.A., B.A. Hons., M.A. and D.Phil from the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa, and a higher diploma in Arabic from the University of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Though he has retired, he continues to supervise post graduate students and publish articles on Islam and Muslims.

He has contributed a host of research papers to journals and newspapers of international repute, and published five books, including the biography of *Shayk Yusuf of Macassar*, and English translations of two of his Arabic manuscripts on Tasawwuf, *Zubdat al-Asrar* (Essence of Secrets) and *Sirr al-Asrar* (Secret of Secrets).

He is actively involved in the media as a columnist for national newspapers and as a radio presenter at a local Muslim radio station.



CONTENTS

	<i>Foreword.....</i>	<i>iii</i>
	<i>About the Author.....</i>	<i>vii</i>
1	Introduction	1
2	Section One: Muslim Regimes in West & East Africa	
	A Muslim Regimes in West Africa	5
	B Muslim Regimes in East and North-East Africa	33
3	Section Two: Islam & Colonisation in Africa	47
4	Section Three: Trade, Administration & Scholarship	
	A The Muslim Trader in the Sudanic States	53
	B The Administration of the Hausa State	57
	C The Timbuktu Manuscripts	63
5	Bibliography	68

INTRODUCTION

Islam was introduced to Africa as early as 615 AC. Most Muslims, including those living in Africa, are ignorant of the great Islamic heritage in Africa. They are not aware that there were vast Muslim dynasties, advanced institutes of learning and outstanding personalities in Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries. They assume that Africa was always under-developed and cannot imagine the continent boasting thriving kingdoms with sophisticated administration systems.

The fact that the Prophet of Islam chose *Habashah* (Abyssinia) as a place of refuge for his followers who were being persecuted by the Quraysh elite in Makkah is significant. The Christian ruler of Abyssinia, who was referred to by the title *al-Najashi* (Negus), was well-known for his justice and the Prophet was convinced that his followers would be well received and granted refuge by *al-Najashi*. And so it proved to be.

He refused to accept the arguments by the Quraysh envoys who had pursued the Muslims to Abyssinia that Islam was an enemy of Christianity and rejected their request to send the Muslim immigrants back to Makkah. The Najashi later accepted Islam.

Kingdoms and Sultanates

The following is a list of the major Muslim dynasties, kingdoms and sultanates in Africa. The list includes only regimes that were based on African soil. It excludes the *al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun*, and *Umayyad*, *Abbasid* and *Uthmani* caliphates. Their capitals were based in Arabia, Syria, Spain, Iraq and present day Turkey. In this period, North Africa constituted the western fringe of the caliphate. This allowed for the establishment of several independent or semi-independent dynasties. Only two of the regions below - North and North-East Africa and East Africa - had Arab and Turkish dynasties.

[1] North and North East Africa

- 1 Egypt : *Tulunid, Ikshidid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk* dynasties,
- 2 Ifriqiyyah/Maghrib - consisting of present-day Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco:
Idrisid, Muwahhidun and Murabitun, Aghlabid, Fatimid, Zirid, Hafsid, Rustamid, Hammadid, Hussainid, Marinid, Wattasid dynasties
- 3 Sudan : *Fatimid, Mamluk and Sennar* dynasties
- 4 Ethiopia : *Adal, Ifat and Makdishu* dynasties

[2] Equatorial Africa:

Darfur (Chad), *Wadai* (Chad), *Baguirmi* (Chad), *Mandara* (Cameroun) and *Yolo* (Cameroun) dynasties.

[3] East Africa:

Shiraz (Tanzania), *Omani* (Zanzibar) and *Buganda* (Uganda) dynasties

[4] West Africa:

Takrur (Senegal), *Ghana, Mali, Kanem-Bornu* (Chad, Niger), *Songhai* (Niger-Dahomey), *Futa Jalon, Futa Toro, Sokoto* (Nigeria), *Macina* (Mali) and *Tukolor* (Mali) dynasties.

The history of Islam in North Africa and North-East Africa is generally well-known since these regions formed part of the caliphates mentioned above. Works of history which include these caliphates discuss their rule over North and North-East Africa. The regimes in *Bilad al-Sudan* that were established and administered by the indigenous people of Africa are hardly ever mentioned. However, several North African scholars have travelled to the regions discussed here. For instance, the famous Moroccan scholar, Ibn Battuta [1304-1369], has provided us with valuable information on the various regimes in Africa. It is for this reason that this book will focus only on two regions: East and West Africa.■

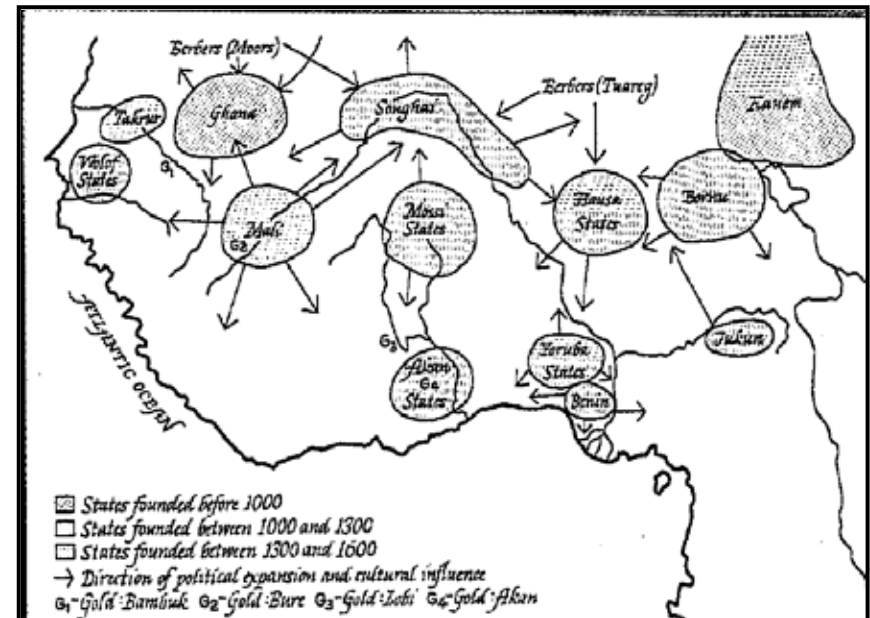


SECTION ONE

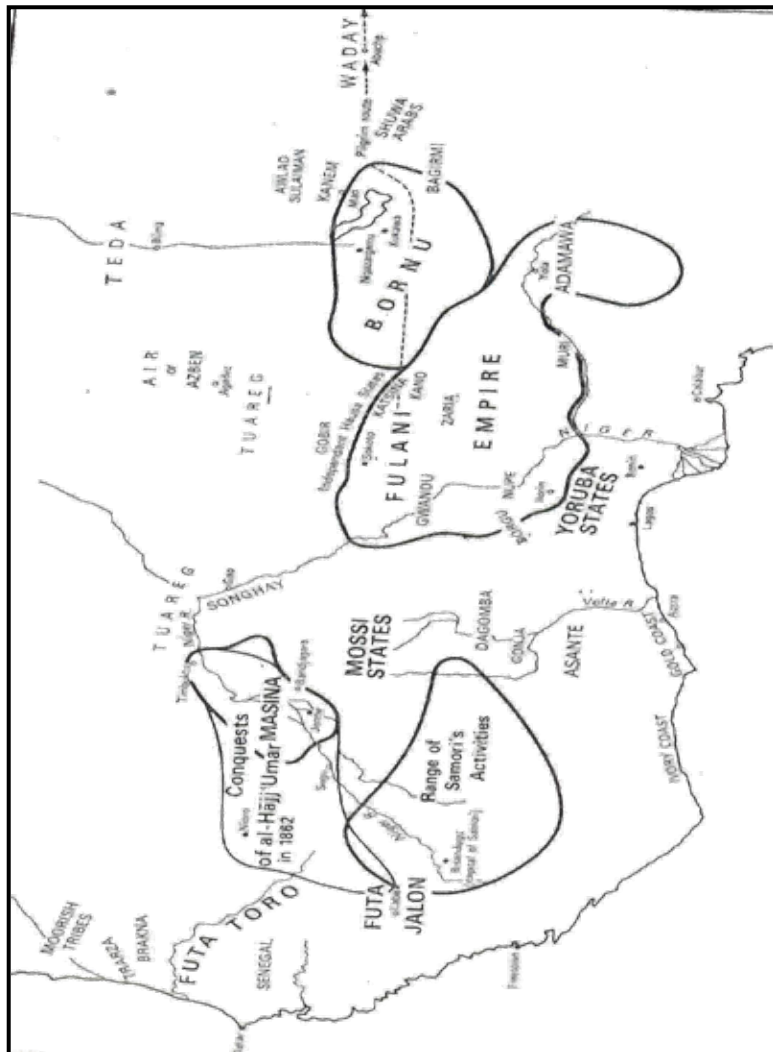
MUSLIM REGIMES IN WEST & EAST AFRICA

[A] MUSLIM REGIMES IN WEST AFRICA

In this section we will discuss the kingdom of Ghana, empires of Mali, Songhai and Kanem-Bornu, states of Hausa and Senegambia, the Sokoto caliphate, Macina and Tukolor.



The Principal States of East and West Africa 1000 - 1600



West Africa in the 18th and 19th Centuries

[1] The Kingdom of Ghana [800-1230]

The following historians have all described the Ghana kingdom in their writings:

Al-Yaqubi (872 A.D.),
 Al-Masudi (c. 944 A.D.),
 Ibn Hawqal, (c. 977 A.D.),
 Al-Biruni (c. 1036 A.D.),
 and Al-Bakri (1014-1094)

The Kingdom of Ghana was one of the first kingdoms in West Africa. In the eleventh century it spread from the Senegal to the Niger, exercising control over several smaller kingdoms and covering over 100 000 miles in extent.

Ghana was run by a very efficient administration. The main trading activity of Ghana was purchasing gold from the south and exchanging it for salt and manufactured goods from the north. The export-import trade was well organised. The king had at his command a powerful army.

At its peak from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries the capital, Kumbi Saleh, occupied about 200 acres. Kumbi Saleh consisted of two distinct districts; the indigenous Africans and the king residing in one sector and Muslim immigrants from North Africa in the other. There were twelve mosques in this section of the town. These Muslims served the royal court as administrators and ministers.

The king's palace had a number of domed dwellings all surrounded with an enclosure like city wall. In this section of the town, and not far from his courts of justice, was a mosque where Muslims who visited his court prayed.

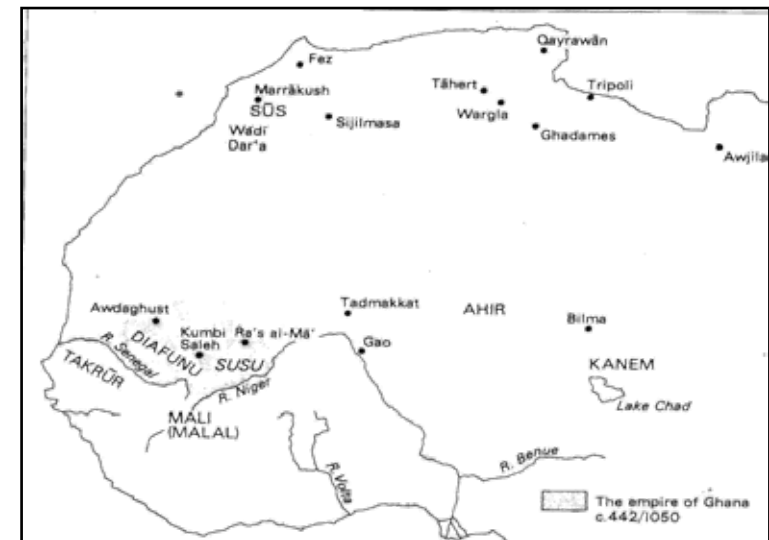
Around the king's town were domed buildings and groves and thickets where the leaders of the religious cults lived. By the twelfth century, the kingdom of Ghana was in a state of decline. Subject provinces were in rebellion, vassal rulers began to assert their independence and Berber nomads from the north were continually harassing the indigenous Soninke cultivators.



Ruins of Kumbi Saleh [capital of Ghana Empire]

[2] The Empire of Mali [1230-1464]

The foundation of the Mali Empire was laid by Sundiata who ruled from 1230 to 1255. Though he himself was not a Muslim, his successors accepted Islam with great enthusiasm. They encouraged the building of mosques and the establishment of Qur'anic schools.



The Empire of Mali c.750/1350

Many Muslims of Mali undertook the difficult journey to Makkah for *hajj* across the Sahara desert. The most popular was the pilgrimage of Mansa Musa who ruled from 1312 - 1337. On his journey in 1324, he was accompanied by between 8 000 and 15 000 men.



Sankara Mosque & University, Timbuktu

The Mali caravan carried so much gold and the pilgrims spent it so lavishly during their stop-over in Cairo that the value of gold in Egypt was depreciated by 12 per cent.

From Cairo Mansa Musa took home with him the famous Andalusian poet and architect, al-Sahili, to build mosques and a palace in Timbuktu. The Adobe Mosque is the largest mud brick building in the world.

By the 14th century, the Mali Empire stretched from the Atlantic coast in the west to Nigeria in the east and Guinea in the south-west.

At its peak in the mid-fourteenth century, the rulers of Mali (better known as Mansas) were recognised by the rulers of Morocco, Egypt, Senegal and the Songhai Empire.



The Adobe Mosque in Mali

The Moroccan traveller, Ibn Battuta (1304-1368), visited the empire of Mali in 1352. He described Mali in his writings as a land of justice, safety and prosperity, and described its people as committed Muslims.

By the 15th century, the Mansas also gained control over the Songhai Empire. This enabled Mali traders to bring international trade and Islam to the small Hausa kingdoms.

They opened a major trade route to tap the gold in Ghana, and by the early sixteenth century, were doing business with the Portuguese on the seacoast.



Details of the Catalan Atlas of 1375, Showing Musa, the Mansa of Mali, awaiting a Musim merchant. Pictures of Mansa Musa appeared on maps from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century.

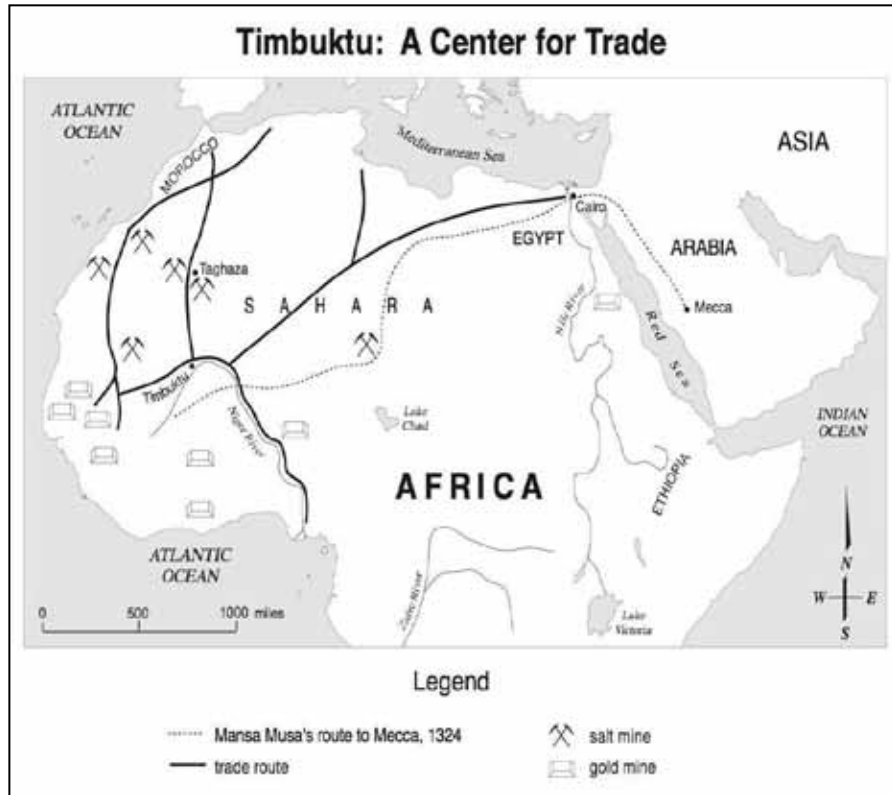
The empire of Mali achieved great prosperity and power. It had an orderly system of law and government, prosperous economic life, and urban civilization. Mali had built up a substantial force of cavalry with horses imported from across the desert. This gave it a distinct military advantage over its rivals.

It was during the reign of the Songhai ruler, Muhammad Ture, that Timbuktu developed into a considerable centre of learning. He greatly honored learning. Many handwritten books were imported from Barbary to be sold here. There was more profit made from this commerce than from all other merchandise. It was also the centre of a busy trade carried on by traders in African products, gold, printed cottons and slaves, and in Islamic books. Leo Africanus, the Moroccan traveller who visited the city in 1513, found there "great store of doctors, judges, priests and other learned men, that are bountifully maintained at the king's cost."

In the center of the city was a temple built of stone and mortar, built by an architect named Granata. In addition, there was a large palace, constructed by the same architect, where the king lived. There were numerous shops of artisans, merchants, and especially weavers of cotton cloth. Fabrics were also imported from Europe to Timbuktu, borne by Berber merchants.

The women of the city maintained the custom of veiling their faces. The inhabitants are said to have been very rich, especially the migrants who had settled in the country. There were many wells containing sweet water; in addition, when the Niger was in flood canals delivered the water to the city. Grain and animals were abundant, so that the consumption of milk and butter was considerable.

The king had a rich treasure of coins and gold ingots, each ingot weighing 970 pounds. Instead of coined money, pure gold nuggets were used, and for small purchases, cowrie shells which had been carried from Persia.



Map: Shows the various North and West African Trade routes through Timbuktu. (Courtesy: Florida Geographic Alliance).

Leo Africanus, the Moroccan adventurer, described the people of Timbuktu as having a peaceful nature. They had a custom of almost continuously walking about the city in the evening between 10.00 PM and 1.00 AM, playing musical instruments and dancing. The citizens had at their service many slaves, both men and women.

However, the great empire began to be weakened by internal rivalry for succession and external attacks by aggressive neighbours. By the seventeenth century, the empire of Mali had collapsed, and eventually dissolved into petty chieftainships.

[3] The Songhai Empire [1464-1591]

Following the collapse of the Mali Empire, the Za occupied Timbuktu and Jenne, the major commercial centres in West Africa.



Map: The Songhai Empire under the askiyas (10/16 century)

The Za ruler Sonni Ali (1464-1492), who is regarded as one of the leading African conquerors, transformed the

Songhai kingdom into a great empire. Sonni Ali had little respect for the traditional *'ulama'* and convinced his subjects that he was a magician who could turn himself into a vulture.

Barely a year after his death his empire was overthrown in a military coup led by one of his generals, Muhammad Ture (1493-1528) who assumed the title of Askia. Under him the Songhai Empire grew considerably, covering present-day Niger and Dahomey. In order to control such a large empire, Muhammad Ture developed a highly efficient system of administration.

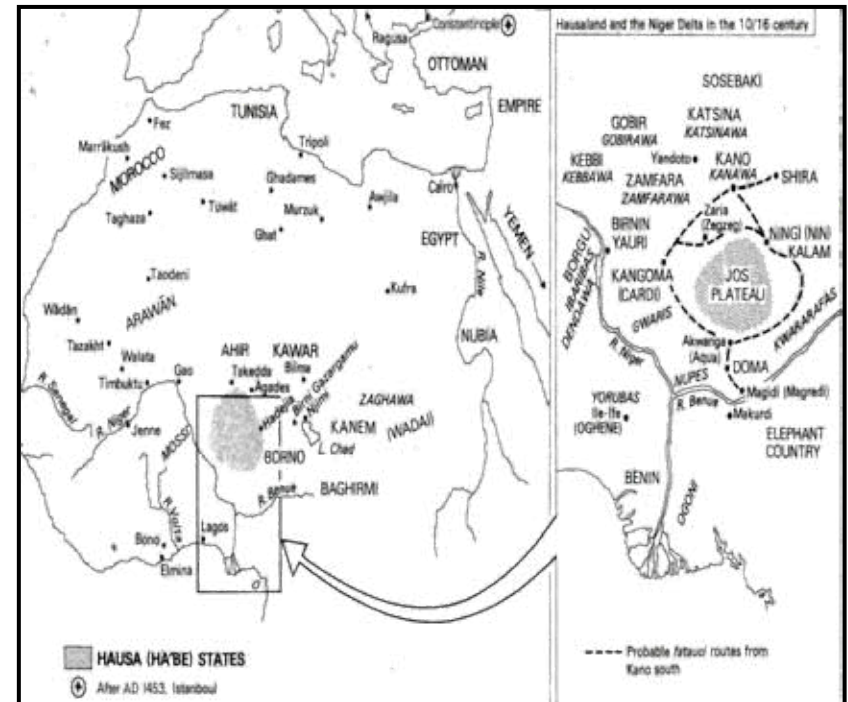
Unlike Sonni `Ali, he showed great respect for the *'ulama'*. He performed *hajj* and returned with the title of *khalifah*, indicating that he had joined a *sufi tariqah* in Arabia.

He later invited a *sufi* from Tlemcen, Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, who played an important role in eliminating superstition and introducing the Qadiriyyah *tariqah* in the region.

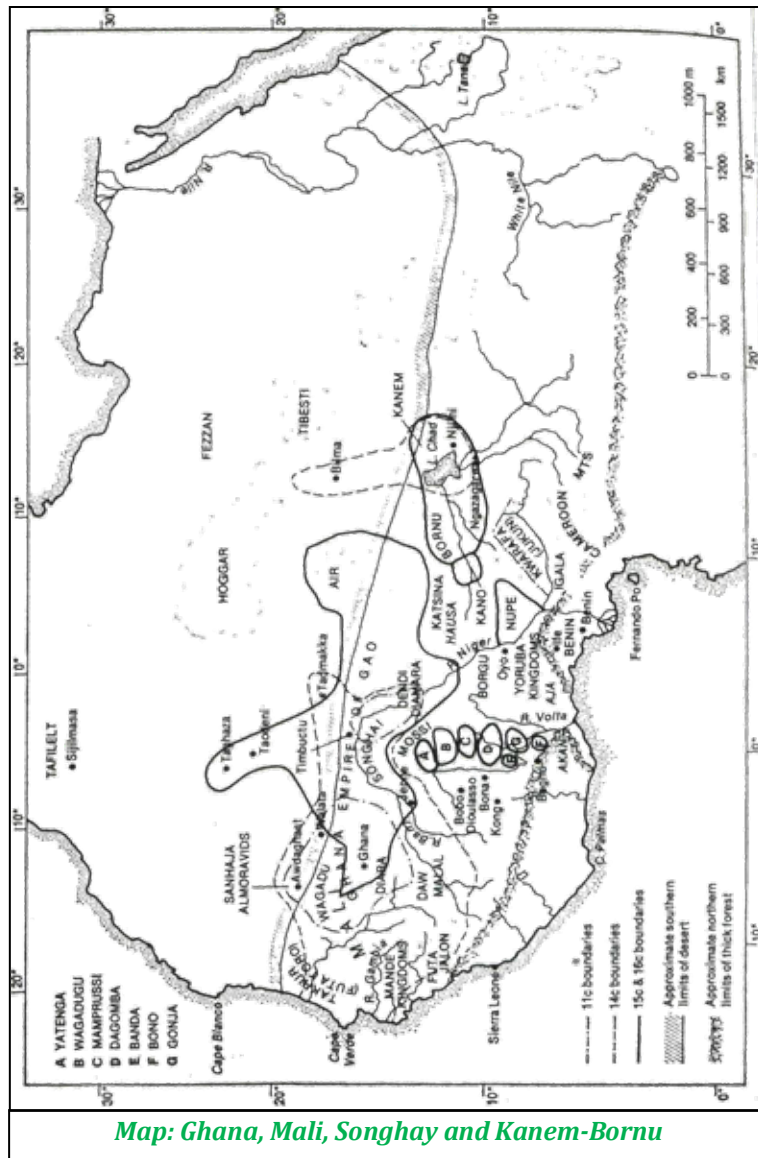
Muhammad Ture was deposed in 1528 by his ambitious sons. His successors had to deal with internal rivalry and deep divisions between followers of African tradition and of Islam. In 1591, the Songhai Empire was defeated by a Moroccan force. Subsequently, the Songhai kings ruled only a small kingdom. From 1630's the Songhai Empire broke up into petty chieftainships like the empire of Mali before it.

[4] The Empire of Kanem - Bornu or the Saifuwa Dynasty

Saif Dhi Yazan, a Yemeni descendent, founded a dynasty called the Saifuwa that ruled over Kanem for a thousand years.



Map: Kanem, Bornu, Hausaland and the Niger from c.802/1400 to 1008 / 1600.



Map: Ghana, Mali, Songhay and Kanem-Bornu

In the 11th century, the trans-Saharan traders influenced the "mais" (*sultans*) of Kanem (in the region of Lake Chad) to accept Islam. The Mais thus gained control of the main trans-Saharan trade routes. They also maintained good relations with North Africa. In 1257 they sent gifts to the Hafsids *sultan* of Tunis, including a camel.

Kanem became a powerful kingdom which extended from Kano as far as Wadai to the west of Darfur. It was a well-organised state consisting of an advisory council of nobility and members of the royal household, a network of provincial governors drawn from the king's relatives, chief ministers (*wazirs*) and judges (*qadis*).

The ruler Dunama Dibbalemi (1221-1259) surrounded himself with experts in Islamic law and opened a hostel for pilgrims and students in Cairo. During his rule, Kanem extended its frontiers into Bornu (south west of Lake Chad). It is here that Mai Umar ibn Idris established his new capital.

For about a century Kanem remained weak, mainly due to internal rivalry. However, toward the end of the 15th century it began to revive under Ali Ghajideni (1472-1504) and his son Idris Katakarmabi (1504-1526). The Mais established relations with the Ottomans. They taught the Hausa rulers methods of administration and court etiquette.

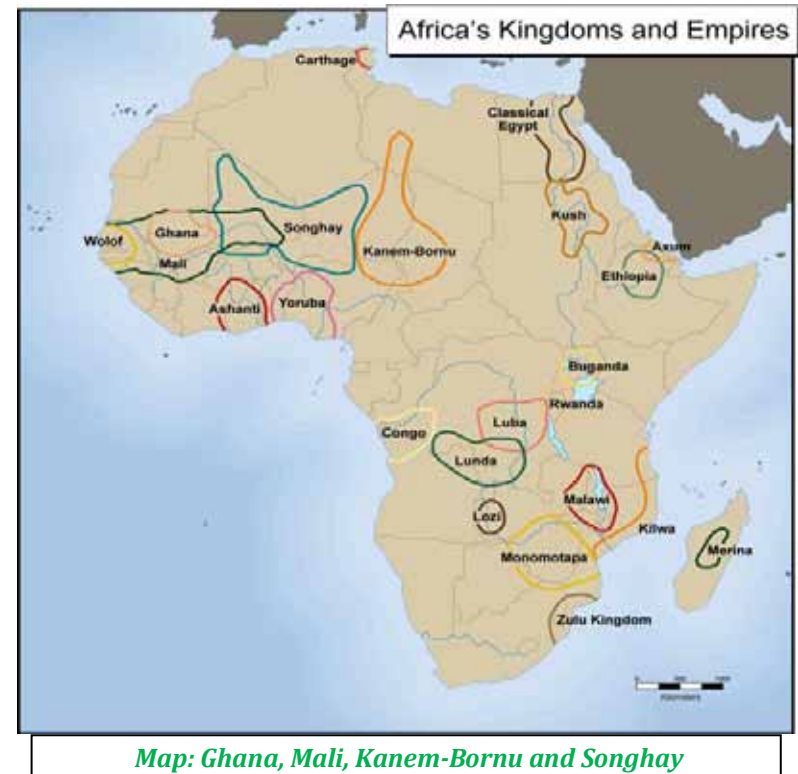
The 16th century was an age of glory for the Saifuwa who proved to be great warriors. One of their leaders, Idris Alawoma (1570-1602), recruited Turkish musketeers from Tripoli and established a state based on Islamic principles.

He replaced customary law and traditional tribunals with courts presided over by Muslim magistrates who based their decisions on *shari'ah*. Idris was recognised as a great leader by the Ottoman *sultan*.



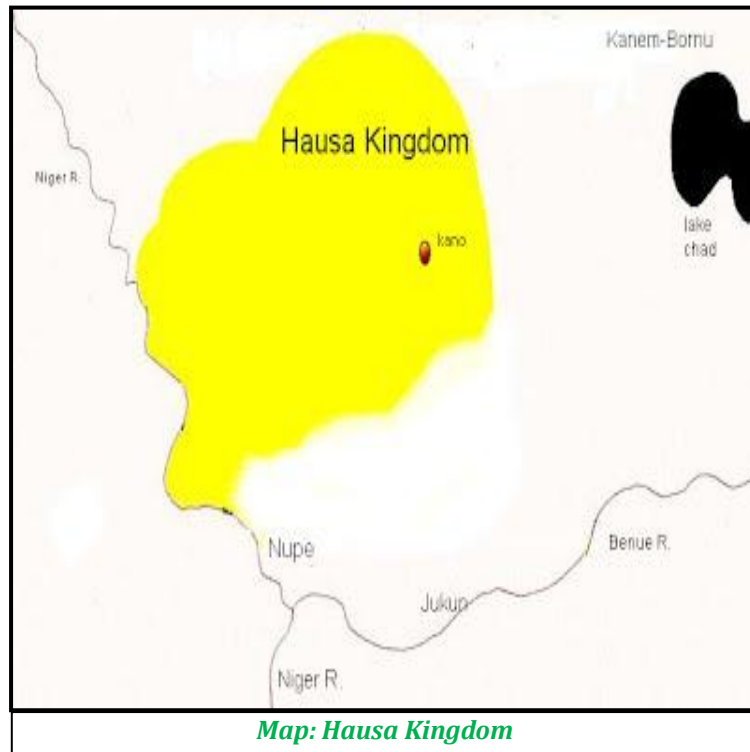
Royal women, in particular the king's mother, his first wife, and his elder sister enjoyed great power and influence in the administration of the kingdom.

Kanem-Bornu owed its prosperity to its agriculture, stock-raising and salt-mining. It exported embroidered garments, copper and tin, and imported horses, garments, fabrics and weapons. The Empire declined during the 18th century due to weak kings who indulged in luxury and cared little for affairs of state or the welfare of their subjects.



[5] The Hausa States

For many centuries the Hausa had occupied the area between Songhai and Kanem-Bornu. Islam was introduced to Hausaland in the 14th Century through contacts with Bornu and Mali traders and Islamic scholars. About this time Hausaland experienced large-scale immigration, in particular from Kanem-Bornu, Mali and Songhai. This included people of high rank such as the Fulani king Umaru (1410-1421).



When Timbuktu was at its peak in the 15th and 16th Centuries, a number of its scholars came to live and work in Hausaland. The Sufi shaykh, Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Karim al-Maghili, also visited Kano about this time. Al-Hajj Ahmad ibn `Umar Akit settled in Kano where he taught Islam and Muhammad ibn Ahmad became a magistrate in Katsina.

It is said that the Hausa king Bayajidda was the son of the king of Baghdad. He married the local queen and his grandsons became the kings of the major Hausa city-states of Kano, Rano, Daura, Katsina, Gobir and Zaria.

Kano and Rano were known as the "kings of indigo" since their main occupation was the production and dyeing of textiles. Daura and Katsina were "kings of the market" since trade was concentrated in these towns. Gobir was the "king of war" because its duty was to defend the others against external enemies. Zaria became known as the "king of slaves" for supplying slave labour to the Hausa states. Interestingly, Zaria also produced a capable queen, Amina.

The administrative system of Kanem-Bornu had a major influence on the institutions and functions of the Hausa states. At the head of the city-state was the *sarki* (ruler or king) who was chosen from among the members of the ruling lineage. He shared power with high officials. In Kano, Muhammad Rumfa (1463-1499) set up a council of nine leading office-holders as a kind of ministry.

Agriculture occupied an important place in the economic life of the Hausa. This was followed by handicrafts - textile production, leather goods, footwear, etc, which were exported to North African markets. Metal-working and pottery were also widely practised crafts. Intramural rivalry eventually led to the decline of Hausa influence and the rise of the Fulani under `Uthman dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto caliphate.

[6] The Sokoto Caliphate

'Uthman dan Fodio was born in the Hausa city-state of Gobir in 1754. He belonged to the *torodbe*, a clan of scholars and teachers who came to exercise a powerful influence as royal advisers and administrators. He also became a disciple of the Qadiriyyah *tariqah*.

The teacher who had the greatest influence on him was a Tuareg *Shaykh*, Jibril ibn `Umar, who taught him Arabic and the traditional Islamic sciences. He spent his youth in the study of diverse Islamic texts.

Disillusioned with the corruption of the Hausa rulers, their court practices and adherence to various pagan norms, he began to criticize them. At the age of twenty he commenced his teaching, *da`wah* and reform activities. He wrote poems and stories of mysticism that increased his popularity. In 1781, Bawa Jangworzo, the fifty-fifth *sarki* of Gobir, appointed him as tutor to the royal family.

Though Bawa Jangworzo agreed with `Uthman dan Fodio's reformist views, he had no intention of implementing them. Dan Fodio then began to focus his attention on the general population. His powerful personality and speaking ability soon attracted many followers. He became increasingly critical of the deviation of the Hausa rulers from established Islamic practices as well as their abuse of power and began to call for the overthrow of the Hausa system through *jihad*.

When Nafata succeeded Bawa Jangworzo as *sarki* of Gobir, dan Fodio acted as tutor to the princes Yakubu and Yunfa.

However, Nafata soon became increasingly concerned that dan Fodio's followers who had rapidly increased in size would pose a threat to his authority. He decided to check their growth by forbidding conversions to Islam and the wearing of the turban and veil.

When Yunfa became sarki of Gobir in 1802, he initially showed respect for dan Fodio. Soon he, too, realised the danger that dan Fodio and his followers posed to his rule and began to threaten them. In 1803, Yunfa summoned dan Fodio to his court where he attempted to have him killed. Subsequently, he led an expedition against the shaykh's followers, killing and capturing many of them. He was determined to break dan Fodio's power. The *shaykh* and his followers were forced to flee from Degel in February 1804.

From his hideout in the countryside dan Fodio declared jihad against the Hausa rulers. Yunfa sent his army to challenge Uthman's followers which included Fulani pastoralists who had their own grievances against Hausa rulers. Assisted by his son Bello, and his brother Abdullahi, dan Fodio began a *jihad* against Gobir. He wrote letters to Fulani *mallams* (religious leaders) in other Hausa states, seeking their assistance against the sarki. He assumed the title *Sarkin Musulmi* (equivalent to *amir al-mu'minin*) and gave his blessings to various Fulani *mallams* who supported his campaign.

After some initial setbacks, his forces conquered the Hausa states. By 1808, he and his followers conquered Gobir, Kano, and other Hausa city-states. He retired from battle in 1811 and returned to teaching and writing but his armies continued their conquests until 1815. By that time dan

Fodio's religious empire included most of what is now northern Nigeria and northern Cameroon as well as parts of Niger. For the first time in history all of the Hausa city-states were now under one ruler. Dan Fodio established a new capital at Sokoto and soon this theocratic state was called the Sokoto Caliphate (Sokoto Empire).

The caliphate established by Uthman dan Fodio at Sokoto was called the Sokoto caliphate and was based on the `Abbasid model. The Caliph was assisted by a council of ministers. Provincial administration was in the hands of governors (*amirs*) who were appointed and could be deposed by the *sultan*. At its height, the caliphate included 15 major emirates, extending over 180 000 square miles and had ten million inhabitants.

Uthman dan Fodio's *jihad* inspired a series of holy wars throughout the Western Sudan and made Islam the dominant faith among the masses of people from Senegal to Chad. His movement also led to a poetic and literary explosion in Gobir, Kano, Katsina, and other Hausa city states. The surviving Arabic writings of the Sokoto Caliphate far outnumber the whole literary production of the central and western Sudan from 1000 AD, when Islam first appeared in West Africa, up to 1802. Arabic was now widely used for diplomacy and correspondence throughout the region.

When resistance in Hausaland was eliminated, it was divided into two regions: Gwandu under the administration of his brother Abdullahi and Sokoto under his son Muhammad Bello, both of whom were very capable administrators. By the end of Bello's rule in 1837, the Sokoto Caliphate, with an estimated 20 million people, had

become the most populous empire in West Africa. Dan Fodio, who had begun his life as an idealistic scholar and theologian who at first rejected the sword, eventually became the forceful and commanding leader of a formidable military empire.

The Sokoto caliphate brought about social reform, revived Islamic culture and restored Islamic values. In 1812 dan Fodio retired from all active participation in government. When he died in 1817, he was succeeded by Muhammad Bello.



Sketch of Uthman Dan Fodio

During his rule as sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Bello dispatched fifty expeditions to put down rebellions or to expand the territories of Islam. He was a good military commander and administrator, and also an outstanding scholar. He wrote many articles on doctrine, history, law, morals, science, etc. As an administrator, he tried to base his government on the *shari`ah*, took a personal interest in provincial affairs, prevented his troops from committing atrocities in conquered territory, rooted out corruption and intervened in the decisions of magistrates in the interests of justice. Sokoto became a centre where Islamic scholars flourished.

When Muhammad Bello died in 1837 he was the ruler of a vast territory, equivalent to what is now recognised as northern Nigeria. This period saw a revival of the traditional commerce of the Sudan. Sokoto trade included exports of brass, pewter, leather products (sandals and tanned hides), koala nuts and cloth. Various types of cloth were woven in the baked mud compounds and dyed in the municipal vats to be shipped off to consumers. The main imports were spices, perfume, beads, goora nuts, salt and raw silk. By 1850 the Sokoto caliphate covered an area of 150 000 square miles, consisting of twenty provinces.

[7] Macina (Modern Mali)

Before `Uthman dan Fodio had established the Sokoto caliphate, Macina was conquered by Shaykh Ahmadu ibn Hammadi (1775 – 1844), a Fulani *marabout* (member of the religious class). Ahmadu was a former disciple of `Uthman dan Fodio and kept in close contact with the Sokoto rulers throughout his rule.

He was an excellent administrator who transformed the kingdom of Macina into one of the best-governed states in Africa.

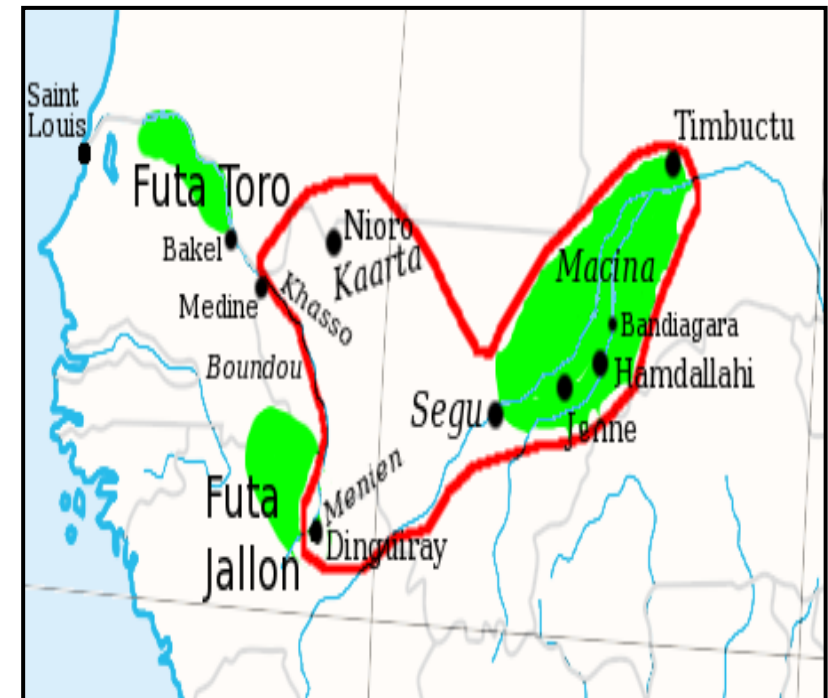
At its height, Macina extended over 50 000 square meters, including the two important trading centres, Timbuktu and Jenne. It was divided into five provinces, each governed by an *amir*, while Shaykh Ahmadu proclaimed himself as the *amir al-mu'minin* (commander of the faithful) and took up residence in a town he built especially for himself and named Hamdallahi (Praise be to God). He established councils of advisers who aided him in regulating the lives of the people of Macina.



Entrance of Ahmadu's Palace in Segu-Sikoro

[8] Tukolor (Modern Mali)

Within twenty years of Shaykh Ahmadu's death, al-Hajj `Umar Tal, a *torodbe* (Islamic scholar) from Futa Toro had conquered several kingdoms, including the state of Macina. `Umar Tal had spent over a decade in Muhammad Bello's court at Sokoto where he excelled as a teacher, scholar, adviser and military leader. He joined the *Tijaniyyah sufi* order which was founded in the *Maghrib* (Algeria and Morocco) in the 18th century.



Map: Futatoro and Futa Jallon

`Umar Tal proved to be an outstanding military leader and became a keen trader in European weapons. He was also an able scholar and many of his writings have survived to this day. He established the Tijaniyyah as the major *sufi* order in the western half of West Africa.



Map: Tukolor

[B] MUSLIM REGIMES IN EAST AND NORTH-EAST AFRICA

[1] Sultanates of Ifat & Adal

Ifat was the most successful of the Muslim sultanates in North East Africa. Its capital Zeila was actively involved in trade – in camel and sheep-breeding and in fishing. As the Christian Ethiopian state began to expand southward, it clashed with Ifat which became a tributary of Ethiopia for some time. Ifat was further weakened by internal political rivalries and eventually was overtaken by the sultanate of Adal which became the centre of Muslim economic activities.

In the 16th century the balance of power shifted once more to the Muslims.

Ahmad ibn Ibrahim, nicknamed Gran (1507-1542), re-established the empire of Adal with its capital at Harar. Uniting the nomads behind him, Ahmad Gran invaded Ethiopia to put an end to its continuous attacks on Adal.

Through commerce, Islam spread amongst the Somali population in the coastal cities of Somalia. Instability in the Arabian Peninsula resulted in the migration of Arab families to Somalia's coastal cities, who then contributed a significant element to the growing popularity of Islam in the Somali peninsula.

Adal was in its early stages a small trading community established by the newly-converted Horn of Africa Muslim merchants, who were predominantly Somali.

The Adal Sultanate became a center of a commercial empire. The Adalites then came under the influence of the expanding Kingdom of Ifat, and prospered under its patronage. The capital of the Ifat was Zeila, situated in Northern present-day Somalia.

[2] Sultanate of Mogadishu

By the 10th century there were substantial Muslim coastal towns in Somalia as well as on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. By the beginning of the 12th century substantial buildings, mosques and forts and palaces were built in coral stone in this region.

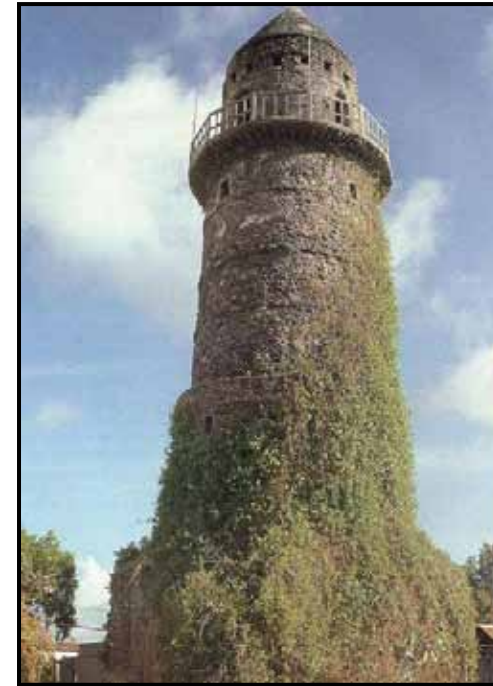
For many years, Mogadishu stood as the pre-eminent city in the Land of the Berbers, the medieval Arabic term for the Horn of Africa.

The Sultanate of Mogadishu became the center of Islam on the East African coast.

In the 16th century Mogadishu fell under the control of the Portuguese but in 1871 came under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Zanzibar. In 1891 the Sultan leased it to the Italians who then bought the city in 1905 and made it the capital of their colonial Somaliland until World War Two.

Mogadishu was a large commercial centre. Its inhabitants grew bananas, mangoes, vegetables and rice and exported cloth to Egypt. The town was dominated by an aristocracy of merchants, lawyers and officials of the *sultan*.

Mogadishu was reputed as a centre of learning and produced many *qadis* (judges) who presided over the many disputes in the region.



Minara (Tower) in Mogadishu

[3] **Sultanate of Kilwa Kisiwani or the Shirazi Kingdom**

At the end of the 12th century, the Shirazi from Yemen settled at Kilwa Kisiwani (an island off the Tanzanian coast) and it is these migrants who established a sultanate at Kilwa in the 14th century.



The Ruins at Kilwa

Subsequently, Kilwa Kisiwani became a very prosperous city with a royal palace and Grand Mosque.



An Artist impression of the Palace at Kilwa

The great geographer and traveller Ibn Battuta who visited Kilwa in 1331 was highly impressed with what he described as “one of the finest and most substantially built towns” he had seen.

The *sultan* of Kilwa Kisiwani was at the head of a well organised system of government. He appointed *wazirs*, *qadis* (judges) and *muhtasibs* (auditors). The *`ulama* (religious scholars) were patronised by the *sultan*. The court at Kilwa was visited by *sufis* and scholars from Iraq and the Hijaz.



Ruins of the Palace at Kilwa



The Fort at Kilwa

Other important coastal towns of this period were Kismani (on Mafia Island), Kizimkazi (in Zanzibar), Mombasa, Gedi, and Malindi. All these towns were highly prosperous.

The main commodities were spices, ivory, incense, gold as well as slaves. Ivory and slaves were in great demand in all the lands stretching from the Mediterranean to the Far East.



Map: Kilwa District

[4] Kingdom of Buganda

The Bugandan kings developed a centralised form of government and initiated canoe traffic on Lake Victoria. Thus in the 19th century, under Kabaka Suna (1830-1856) and his son Kabaka Mutesa (1856-1884) Buganda enjoyed political stability and great economic prosperity. By the mid 19th century Buganda had developed into the most homogenous and highly centralised state of its size in tropical Africa. This was achieved by replacing all traditional chiefs by officials appointed by the king personally. When the kabaka died his successor was chosen from among his sons by the chief minister.

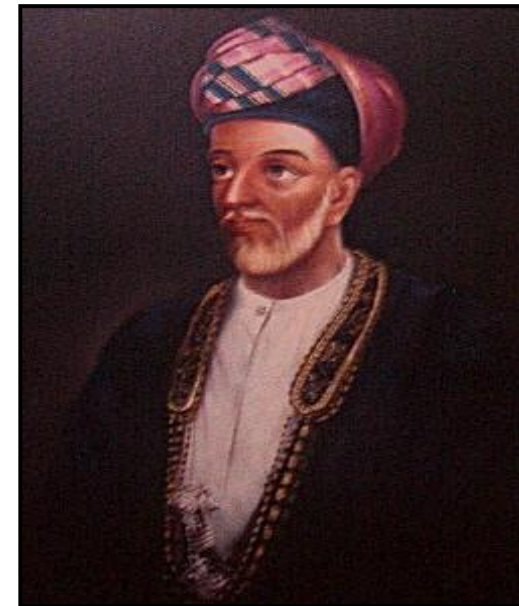


Map: Buganda

The introduction of firearms by Arab traders enabled Kabaka Mutesa to establish a corps of musketeers. Some of Buganda's wealth – cattle, ivory, slaves - came from raids against neighbouring peoples. Buganda specialised in the manufacture of bark-cloth which it exported to other kingdoms and produced a fine blend of coffee.

[5] The Omani Kingdom of Zanzibar

In 1650 Sultan ibn Saif of Oman captured Zanzibar from the Portuguese. In 1698 the Omani Arabs secured Mombasa and established a trading system linking the East African coastal towns with the lands of the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and north-western India.



Sayid Said ibn Sultan (1806 - 1856)

Following a bitter struggle for power among the Omani at Muscat in 1804 -1806, Sayyid Said ibn Sultan (1806-1856) decided to concentrate on the development of trade on the coast of East Africa. From 1822 onwards Said used his navy to assert his direct authority on the coastal towns. In 1840 the seat of the Omani government was transferred from Muscat to Zanzibar.

Said's power was based on his army consisting of about three thousand men called "Baluchis", recruited from the borderlands between India and Persia, and his navy of a dozen frigates, vessels and sloops. Said was reputed to be an astute politician, with a profound understanding of the relationship between government, commerce and security.



The East African Dhow

Said held daily durbars (sessions) which were attended by his principal followers. He appointed governors to a few of the coastal towns; in many others he retained the traditional leaders. The sultan was known to be very just; the poorest were guaranteed justice at his hands. He authorised an Indian merchant to collect taxes and import and export duties.

Said made Zanzibar the focal point of a prosperous coastal trading empire. With the financial backing of Indian merchants resident at Zanzibar, he sent Arab-Swahili caravans inland from the coast to the Great Lakes of East Africa. The main purpose of their expeditions was to acquire ivory to meet Asian and European demands.



The Zanzibar Railroad (1905 - 1928) connected Zanzibar town with Babubu

The Omani Arabs exploited the fertility of the East African coastal strip. They produced coconuts, copra, oil seeds and cowrie shells. Clove was also cultivated on a large scale on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba and became the dominant agricultural activity. By the early 20th century, Zanzibar and Pemba were producing 80% of the world's supply of cloves.

For centuries there had been a market for African slaves from Muslim Asia to north-west India. By the beginning of the 19th century the Omani empire had become an active participant in the slave trade in East Africa. Slaves were acquired for export as well as to provide labour for the clove plantations. It is estimated that one-third of the slaves were exported.



Ivory being weighed in Zanzibar before being exported to Boston, 1890

The Zanzibari Empire became enormously successful in economic terms. Though much of its foreign trade was with Asia, particularly with India, it was also an important market for British, French, German, Belgian, Italian, Austrian and American traders. These governments appointed consuls to Zanzibar, making it the paramount power in East Africa.

Sayyid Said encouraged Europeans to open businesses on the island. The Zanzibari traders bartered coconuts, tortoise shell, red peppers and bees wax with the Americans for cotton wool, fabric and hardware. Zanzibar's natural deep harbour made it ideal for anchoring large ships. The island also had an abundant supply of fresh spring water.



Old Fort in Zanzibar & Stone Town Carved Door

Sayyid Said converted Zanzibar, a fishing-town consisting of mud huts and thatched roofs, into a town with flat-roofed houses built from stone, lime and mortar. The construction was carried out by skilled masons from Arabia

Zanzibar was not only the commercial center of East African trade; it also became the center of Islamic cultural and religious life of the coast in the 19th century. Coastal Muslims came to regard the Arabs, the sultans and the new Zanzibari *'ulama'* as the pinnacle of Islamic prestige. Naturally, Islam became attractive to the indigenous peoples of East Africa.

The impact of Muslim immigrants from Arabia and Persia is manifest in several ways. There are ruins along the East African coast, including Zanzibar, of mosques and palaces built in the Muslim style of architecture. The Swahili language contains many Arabic words. And the influence of Muslim culture on East Africans is evident – even to this day.■



SECTION TWO

ISLAM AND COLONISATION IN AFRICA

Before colonization, Islam had spread fairly successfully in Africa. It is generally assumed that after colonization, European colonialists were intent on preventing the growth of Islam, primarily because Muslims challenged them politically as well as ideologically. This is only partly true. The fact is that the policies and attitudes of colonial powers towards Islam varied from region to region and even within a single region at different phases of colonization. They were shaped by two major factors:

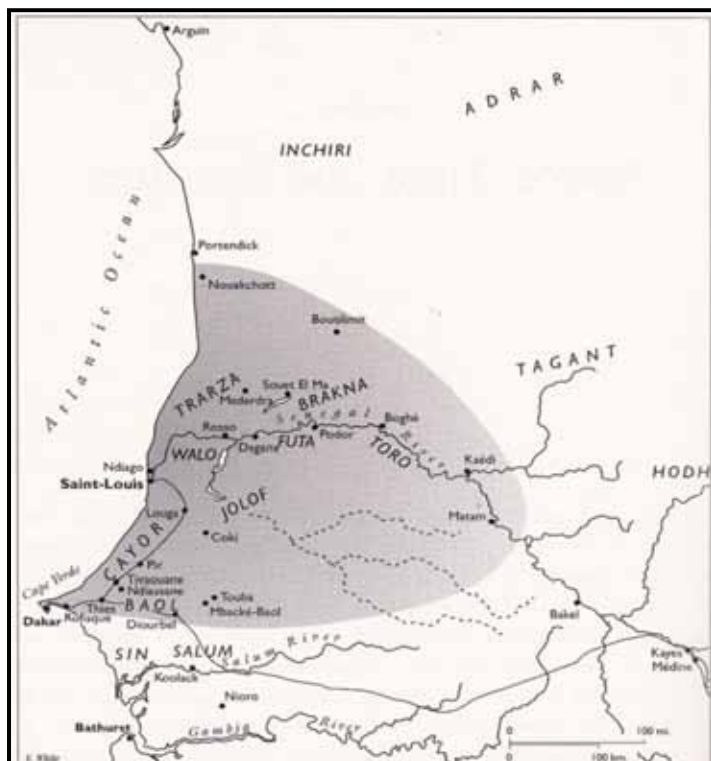
- (a) The degree of attachment of the colonizing power to Christianity and
- (b) local circumstances.



A Sufi saint in Senegal. The 1913 photograph of Amadu Bamba Mbacke, founder of the Murid brotherhood.

In this section, we will compare the conduct of diverse European colonialists to see how they differed in their treatment of native Muslims in Africa.

In the Belgian Congo, the Italians were extremely hostile towards Islam not only for evangelical but also for economic reasons; Arab traders proved to be strong competitors.



Map: The implantation of the Murids in Senegal. Adapted from David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania 1880 to 1920* (Ohio University press 2000)

In North Africa, and particularly in Libya, Italian hostility was intensified by the *jihad* led by the Sanusi movement. Umar Mukhtar, better known as “Lion of the Desert,” was one of their most considerable foes and it was only after his capture that Berber resistance was broken.

Likewise, the British displayed intense enmity towards the Somalis for as long as they were opposed by the legendary Shaykh Muhammad Abdille Hassan (called the “mad mullah”) who led a *jihad* against the British and Ethiopian forces for twenty years (1900-1920) in the Somaliland Protectorate. Nonetheless, the British eventually relented and prohibited Christian proselytization and recognised and respected Islamic institutions.

In West Africa, French colonization was confronted by a *jihad* – led by the Tijaniyyah brotherhood and the Muridiyya in Senegal - resulting in widespread conflict with Islam. In subsequent years though, the French were compelled to tolerate Islam, leading to some degree of harmony between the colonizers and the Muslims.

In Eritrea and Somalia, once the populations were subdued, the Italians were prepared to use them to further their colonial ambitions in Ethiopia.

Thus the pre-colonial political institutions in these regions were largely left intact.

In Northern Nigeria, once the initial resistance to colonisation had been overcome, the British agreed to prevent Christian evangelisation in this predominantly Muslim region and included elements of the traditional Muslim political organisation in the new administration.

In Northern Sudan, the Mahdi had successfully challenged British occupation, but after his death, a similar agreement was reached.

Generally, British, French and Italian authorities allowed the *shari`ah* courts to continue their function and even appointed *qadis* in their respective colonies. This helped to consolidate Islam in these colonized territories. The demand for the implementation of *shari`ah* laws, including the penal laws of Islam in Nigeria, is not a new phenomenon.

The new opportunities for trade and commerce as well as the advanced means of communication provided by the European colonizers facilitated the expansion of Islam.

Muslim traders were able to travel over vast expanses of land easily and communicated the message of Islam to those they came into contact with. The spread of Islam was further boosted by the arrival of new Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent, some of whom – like the Ahmadiyya – became active missionaries.

An essential factor in the appeal of Islam for Africans was the fact that Christianity was the religion of the colonizers whereas Islam was viewed as the religion of resistance against the colonizers; Muslim individuals, sufi and national movements spearheaded independence movements throughout Africa.

From the above we can conclude that while colonization certainly set out to halt the expansion of Islam in Africa, it often did not succeed, and colonizers were compelled to make compromises with Muslims in the interests of the colonial enterprise.

These “concessions” worked to their advantage and served to indirectly promote or consolidate Islam in various regions of Africa.■



SECTION THREE

TRADE, ADMINISTRATION AND SCHOLARSHIP

[A] THE MUSLIM TRADER IN THE SUDANIC STATES

Introduction

Most Historians of Africa agree that an economy of buying and selling was the driving force in the development of Sudanic states from as early as A.D 500 onward. Trade - commodities included salt, iron, copper, gold, kola, nuts, animal skins, slaves, grains, meat, and dairy products - led to the rise of cities and consolidation of empires. Temporary market places in regional produce would attract trade caravans; several of these markets would eventually become major trading cities.

In short, merchants played a significant role in shaping political and social development through their influence and power in the Sudanic states. A close examination of society in these states shows that the lives and economic interests not only of rulers, but also of soldiers, religious scholars and agriculturists converged with that of the traders. Every sector of society depended on trade for its very existence. In this section, we will look at the intricate relationship between these sectors and the traders.

The rivalry between "western" and "eastern" networks not only led North African powers to compete with one another, but also profoundly influenced the development of states in west and central Africa south of the Sahara. This competition also altered the relationship between Sahelian and Savanna kingdoms in the Sudan itself.

Traders and Rulers

In the Sudanic states, the merchant was not seen as a threat to the traditional hierarchies of governmental authority; he was, in fact, the key to their growth and prosperity. Trade in Africa did not threaten power structures; it sustained them. The intimate relationship between traders and rulers is best illustrated by the establishment of merchant settlements very close to the royal capitals.

Before A.D. 1000, merchants from the north heading south across the Sahara in search of gold established contact chiefly with the kingdoms of the Sahel, such as Ghana and Kanem. These states procured gold from regions to the south. By 1100, merchants were travelling yet further south to the "savanna kingdoms" which were closer to the sources of the gold supply. These kingdoms struck agreements with the merchants, seizing the opportunity to increase their royal treasuries by taxing the growing trade in gold.

We are familiar with the image of camel caravans bearing salt from the Sahara to the Sudan and returning to North Africa laden with gold. Some historians have concluded that trading routes crisscrossed five "horizontal" zones stretching from west to east across Africa: north African coastal regions, oases north of the Sahara, the desert itself, the Sudanic Sahel, and the sub-Saharan savanna. However, in time, two "vertical" trading networks, running respectively from northwest Africa to the Niger and from Egypt to the central Sudan, came to vie for control over the lucrative trans-Saharan routes.

War was common in and around the Sahara, undertaken with regularity by various groups of Berber pastoralists. The trade caravans travelling across the sands of the Sahara gave rise to endless rivalry and hostilities between Berber factions who sought to control the flow of goods.

Traders & Religious Scholars

Among the major agents of Islam in Africa were traders and mystics. The relationship between traders and religious scholars in the Sudanic states was at three levels :

1. Traders carried Islam across the desert and within the Sudan.
2. Some of the most successful and active traders were produced by religious scholars.
3. While the religious scholars relied on traders among their kin for material benefits, the latter benefited from the prayers and spiritual protection of the former.

Traders & Soldiers

In the transitional zone from the Sahara to the Sudanic kingdoms traders were valued very highly by all sectors of society. Craftsmen producing arms and material enjoyed a growing demand for their wares. Soldiers had a strong interest in preserving the basic structure of an economy from which they drew their own wealth. An "ideology of protection" developed in which merchants regularly handed over wealth to the soldiers in return for their protection in the hostile world of the Sahara and Sahel.

Their motives could be attributed to a quest for glory, or a desire to spread the truth of Islam through *jihad* or both.

However, while these factors undoubtedly contributed to the emergence of organized battle groups, the primary motive was to control the increasingly "high-stakes" patterns of commerce operating within harsh natural environments. Intense rivalries for the control of limited resources - which could bring great wealth to those who had access to them - led war and trade to function as two sides of the same coin.

Traders & Agriculturists

For their own consumption, merchants had to purchase supplies from local peoples whose regions they traversed. These included the shepherds and farmers who produced the goods they required. Local nomads were also valuable as guides for the caravans. Cooperation and not competition underpinned the relationship between agriculturists and traders who relied on each other for their survival.

Conclusion

Traders constituted the major pillar of Sudanic society. The destiny of rulers, soldiers, agriculturists and religious scholars was tied up with that of the traders. For rulers, taxes levied on trade were an important source of income. Soldiers collected "protection money" from traders en route to their destinations. The major buyers of agricultural produce were traders. Many religious scholars received their keep from traders among their kith and kin. On the other hand, traders banked on the patronage of rulers, protection of soldiers, produce of agriculturists and "prayers" of scholars for their success.

[B] ADMINISTRATION OF THE HAUSA STATE

In this section, we will take a closer look at the organisation of the Hausa state. A brief sketch of its bureaucracy reflects a very sophisticated and advanced system of administration and management. Below we will examine

- (a) the functions of the chief office-bearers,
- (b) systems of consultation, justice and taxation and
- (c) the amir's sense of *amanah* (custodianship).

Functions of Chief Office-Bearers

Madawaki: He was Commander of the Army, summoned the Chief Councillors and Turbanned Councillors to meetings, and advised the *amir* on the appointment or dismissal of officials.

Galadima : A eunuch, he was left in charge of the town when the *amir* and other chiefs went out to war. The *Iyan Bakin Kasuwa* was responsible for the markets in the town and the villages. He arranged the marriages and naming of the children of royalty.

Wambai : A eunuch, he participated in naming the children. In addition, he had to ensure that the latrines of the *amir* and his wives were kept clean.

Jagaba : Chief of the foot soldiers, he always travelled a stage ahead of the *amir* to ensure that all was well.

Magayaki : He was assistant to the *Jagaba*.

Gwabare : He was responsible for thatching all the houses inside the *amir's* compound. During Ramadan, he attended to the lamps for the *maghrib* (evening) prayers, at the end of which the *amir* would give him a robe.

Jarmai : He was the chief warrior during fighting. It was his duty to come to the assistance of the *madawaki's* forces if required. In times of peace, he helped the *Sarkin Fada*.

The Imams

Liman Juma : The chief *imam*, he performed the *khutbah* (sermon) on Fridays. He also visited homes where death had occurred in order to offer supplications.

Salanke : He officiated at the *`id* congregational prayer and offered prayers at the death bed of chiefs and officials.

Magatakarda : He was the Chief Scribe and private *imam* of the *amir's* household.

Magajin Malam : He was the *imam* who installed the new *amir*.

Systems of Consultation, Justice and Taxation

1. Consultation

At dawn the *amir's* eunuchs would enter his private apartments to greet him. If he had any matter he wished to put to the council that day, he would inform them. After preliminary discussions they would go to the Council Chamber to debate the issue. If they were unable to reach agreement, they would summon the Chief Councillors.

After consulting with the *amir*, the councilors would engage in more discussions with the Turbanned Councillors, then convey their decision to the *amir*. He would, in turn, communicate this to the eunuchs and Body servants. If they were in agreement, he would publicly announce the decision. If not, he would personally make the final decision.

Every year, on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday and on the two days of *`Id*, the Chief Councillors and Turbanned Councillors would meet to discuss various matters before going to meet the *amir*.

2. Justice

Anyone who had a complaint or grievance to make came before the *amir* and informed him about it. If the matter was not very grave, he would deal with it himself. If it was serious, he consulted the Councillors, and the Chief *Malams* (Islamic scholars) on issues relating to Islamic law.

3. Taxation

The chiefs and headmen of the towns and villages used to pay annual tribute to the *amir*. Traders in cattle, horses, sheep, goats, potash, salt, onions, would give some to the *amir*. He also received money from the Councillors and Title-holders on their installation, as well as a share of the booty from war.

The *amir's* sense of *amanah*

The *amir* had many obligations to his officials and his people; to the *madawaki* and *galadima*, as well as to the Turbaned Councillors, he gave robes, horses, turbans, etc. He sent warriors to defend chiefs who were under attack, and rewarded the warriors for their bravery.

He built bridges over smaller streams, and purchased canoes for people to cross over big rivers.

He provided the destitute with food and clothing, and gave financial assistance to poor couples who wished to marry, as well as for the naming ceremony of infants. He also provided a robe and a *fez* to young men who completed the reading of the Qur`an.

The *amir's* personal involvement in the day-to-day affairs of his people made him highly popular. It is little wonder then that they were not in need of bodyguards. Their safety was "guaranteed" by satisfying the basic needs of their people.



Traditional Hausa robe

[C] THE TIMBUKTU MANUSCRIPTS

The great northward curve of the Niger River had allowed for the settlement of population along a vast stretch of well-watered land, provided a great highway of communication across the region and a link between the lands of the desert and North Africa and the land of the savannahs and forests in the South.

The intensive as well as extensive human activities that have taken place in this region for thousands of years have left behind their traces in a large number of archaeological sites.

Unfortunately, only a few of these sites have been scientifically explored, while many have been brutally exploited by local treasure hunters.

Fortunately, on the other hand, over the past 600-700 years another legacy has developed; that of the literate culture of Islam. Many extraordinary rich private collections of Arabic manuscripts have survived in the Niger valley and its desert hinterland.



Timbuktu Manuscripts

The city of Timbuktu – founded around the year 1100 CE – now an administrative centre in Mali, is located on the northern most bend of the Niger River where it meets the Sahara desert. This geographical setting made it a natural meeting point for settled Africa populations and nomadic Berbers and Arabs. It soon became a focal point for trade caravans originating in North Africa or the Sahara oases. Timbuktu's growing prosperity soon attracted scholars to it from Mediterranean Africa, the Sahara and West Africa.

By the mid-fifteenth century Timbuktu was as much a city of learning as it was a city of commerce. Many scholars had their own libraries consisting of collections they brought with them, imported manuscripts from North Africa and

Egypt that they purchased, and books that were copied in Timbuktu.

Eventually, they began to write their own books for teaching purposes as well as scholarly works in law, the Quran, traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, theology, the Arabic language, local chronicles and biographical dictionaries.



Imported Manuscripts

During the period of the Songhay empire (1493-1591), there was considerable support for the Muslim scholars of the city. Some received gifts from rulers in cash and kind, and the state undertook to renovate the city's mosques. One of the rulers, Askiya Dawud, who reigned from 1549 to 1583, is said to have established public libraries in his kingdom.

It appears that the private libraries of individual scholars were quite large. The celebrated scholar Ahmad Baba (d.1627), is said to have had a collection of 1,600 books, and his library was considered small when compared to others in the city. A public institution called the Ahmed Baba institute has been established in his name. The contents of several other private collections have been added to his collection and the institute now contains over 18,000 manuscripts.

To this day Timbuktu still boasts some 60-80 private collections, the largest of which, the Mamma Haidara Memorial Library, has been rehabilitated through a grant from the Mellon Foundation. Abdul Kader Haidara, the Timbuktu-based expert in the Arabic manuscripts, has been appointed guardian of the Library. A catalogue of its contents is being published by the Al-Furqan Islamic Foundation. The history of Timbuktu is known to us chiefly through the writings of two men: Abd Al-Rahman al-Sa'di who wrote his chronicle around 1656 and Mahmoud Kati who completed his *Ta'rikh al-Fattash* around 1650. Recently a historian from Mali, Ismail Diadie Haidara, a member of Kati clan, discovered the personal library of Mahmoud Kati, which was handed down through his descendants.

The library is in the possession of two branches of the Kati clan in the village of Kirshamba about 16 kilometers to the west of Timbuktu. It contains an estimated 2,000 manuscripts. Abdul Kader Haidara has examined and evaluated most of these manuscripts. The fact that a library from 16th century should have survived the ravages of time, especially the unstable political conditions in the Niger valley, is something of a miracle. It is a unique treasure of Islamic calligraphy and culture. A note on one of the manuscript records that it was purchased in the Sahara oasis of Tuwat in 1467 as the purchaser was on his way from Toledo in Spain to West Africa where he was hoping to find peace and security.

The margins of the manuscript contain valuable historical material. Apart from recording family events and mundane events, e.g. a marriage, death of a scholar, a season of abundant rain, good harvests, Mahmoud Kati included priceless data such as copies of letters from Songhay rulers to members of the Kati family. The information contained in the manuscripts is likely to revolutionize our understanding of the history of the Timbuktu region in the 16th century.

There is an urgent need to record the contents of the library, to preserve its volumes and to analyze their contents for the benefit of understanding the intellectual tradition of Muslim Africa as exemplified by Timbuktu's priceless heritage, and for the creation of a new documentary basis for the interpretation of the history of the Songhay empire.■



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ajayi, J. F. A. 2003. *General History of Africa: Africa from the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s*. Cape Town: New Africa Education.

Fage, A. 1995. *A History of Africa*. London & New York: Routledge.

Hallet, R. 1970. *Africa to 1875: A Modern History*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Hiskett, M. 1984. *The Development of Islam in West Africa*. London & New York: Longman.

Hrbeck, I. [ed]. 1992. *General History of Africa III: Africa from the seventh to the eleventh century*. London/California: Lanes Curry/University of California Press.

Kritzeck, J. & Lewis, W. H. [eds]. 1969. *Islam in Africa*. New York.

Levitzion, N. Z. & Powels, R. L. [eds] 2000. *The History of Islam in Africa*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

McEwan, P. J. M. 1968. *Africa from Early Times to 1800*, London : Oxford University Press.

Mahmud, F. 1960. *A Short History of Islam*. Oxford University Press.

Niane, D. T. [ed]. 1984. *General History of Africa IV: Africa from the twelfth to the sixteenth century*. London/California: Heinemann/University of California Press

Nothling, F. J. 1989. *Pre-colonial Africa- her civilizations and foreign contacts*. Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers.

Ogot, B. A. [ed]. 2003. *General History of Africa V. Africa from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century*. Cape Town: New Africa Edition.

Robinson, D. & Smith, D. 1979. *Sources of the African Past*, London : Heinemann.

Rotberg, R. J. 1965. *A Political History of Tropical Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sagay, J. O. & Wilson, D. A. 2003. *Africa – A Modern History [1800-1975]*. New York: African Publishing Company

Trimingham, J. S. 1962. *A History of Islam in West Africa*. London: Glasgow, New York: Oxford University Press.





**ISLAMIC DAWAH MOVEMENT
of Southern Africa (IDM)**

**THE ISLAMIC DAWAH MOVEMENT
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (IDM)**

Introduction: IDM is primarily involved in promoting the message of Islam to all the people of Southern Africa. With humble beginnings in 1977, it has now grown to be one of the largest dawah organizations in the country, and the Southern African region, with over 35 years of experience, expertise and professionalism backing it.

The Dawah Network Unit is the largest in the sub-continent, with scores of Islamic Centres under its portfolio and over 50 duaat employed. The IDM is continuously building Masaajid, classroom blocks, boreholes, Imaam's quarters and clinics in Southern Africa. This Unit conducts a host of dawah outreach programmes continuously throughout the year.

The Human Resource Development Unit has assumed sub-continental proportions, with the organization of major workshops, seminars and in-service training, incorporating the Southern Africa region; on fiqh, dawah, leadership and management, socio-political, and economic issues; often in conjunction with other international and regional organizations.

The Publications and Research Unit is playing a significant role in the making of a truly "Iqraa" Community in Southern Africa. This Unit researches and publishes, for free distribution, topics relevant to the Southern African scenario. It incorporates the bookshop and the translation of the Quran into 3 major languages of Southern Africa.

The Education and Training, Skills Development, and Capacity Building Unit: Running as a thread and interspersed with the other activities is the significant educational and education-related activities grouped together under the banner of the Education and Training, Skills Development and Capacity Building Unit. Under this unit, scores of scholarships are made available; and various different types of education-related grass-roots based activities are conducted on an on-going basis. These activities include ABET (Adult Basic Education Training) classes, pre-schools, sewing and embroidery classes, home based gardening skills programme, in-service training, Train the Trainers courses, adult Islamic classes, and youth training camps.

The Welfare Unit encompasses the feeding of hundreds of children daily at Madaaris, building of clinics and boreholes, and a host of other welfare-related activities.

Conclusion: IDM is currently in a favourable position to effectively enhance and accelerate the Islamisation process in the Southern African region. *Alhamdulillah.*

THE MISSION OF IDM

The mission of IDM is to promote the message of the unity of God to all the people of Southern Africa so that they may achieve their God given potential of excellence and purity; and in this way contribute to the moral, spiritual, social, intellectual and economic growth of the nations as a whole.

IDM PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH UNIT

IDM Publications and Research Unit a division of the Islamic Dawah Movement of Southern Africa. The primary thrust of the unit is to search, research and publish selective and relevant topics on Islam especially for the region of Southern Africa. It has published innumerable titles, (books and leaflets) as well as translations of the Quran, in 3 major local languages, *Alhamdulillah.* The unit concentrates on already published works, which are out of print, but are relevant to the region and in keeping with our aims and objectives. IDM has published titles primarily in English. However, its publications include titles in various local languages including Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo and Burundi languages.

A major objective of this Unit, through its publications, is to eliminate ambiguity and misconceptions of certain issues within the value system of Islam; hoping thereby to present the real and authentic Islam to both the Muslims and Non-Muslims alike.

The IDM Publications and Research Unit intends to continue to publish a variety of topics on Islam that would primarily aid in a better understanding of the true Islam amongst the people of Southern Africa, and thereby help to catalyse the process of Islamisation regionally and globally. The overall aim and objective of this Unit is to present Islamic principles and values to Muslims and Non-Muslims in order to help them understand this religion and way of life, which advocates unity, justice, brotherhood, tolerance and peace, which is Islam.



IDM Publications and Research Unit
A division of the Islamic Dawah Movement
of Southern Africa

P.O. BOX 48009, Qualbert, 4078, Durban, South Africa
Tel: (+27-31) 304 6883 Fax: (+27-31) 305 1292
Email: idsm@ion.co.za www.idmdawah.co.za

 Islamic dawah  idm_sa

