

FROM REBELS TO RULERS: POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEGITIMACY IN THE
WRITINGS OF THE SOKOTO FODIAWA 1803–1837

by

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Abstract

The nineteenth century was the century of revolutions not just in Europe and the Americas, but West Africa as well. Here, Muslim reformers overturned whole political systems by jihad. The largest and most enduring of these states was Sokoto, centred in present-day Northern Nigeria. It was founded by Usman dan Fodio with his younger brother, Abdullahi, and his son, Muhammad Bello, also playing major roles. These three individuals – the Fodiawa – articulated and debated a new vision of Islamic statecraft in hundreds of Arabic treatises. Sokoto's early history – from its founding in 1804 to the death of Muhammad Bello, its second ruler, in 1837 – is perhaps the best documented event in pre-colonial Africa. Yet, while historians have used the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa to reconstruct the early history of Sokoto, the role of these texts as vehicles of authority and legitimacy has not been fully explored. This thesis interrogates concepts of "legitimacy" in the nineteenth century Sahel. It examines how the Fodiawa utilised, adapted and disputed such concepts over the roughly thirty year period in which they turned from rebels to rulers, suggesting a common process of (de)legitimation in Muslim West Africa, and the wider world of Islam.

For Anna, David and Lesley

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Note on Language

All direct quotations from languages other than English are my own translations, unless otherwise indicated. For quoted translations that are not my own, I have kept to the spelling and orthography as rendered by the translator. When I deem it necessary to include Arabic text, this appears in the original and transliterated using Library of Congress standards. In the rare instances where I cite words in Hausa, Fulfulde, or other non-European languages, I follow the standard spelling used in the specialist literature and render the words in *italics*. Arabic words that commonly occur in English (imam, jihad, hadith, et cetera) remain in their English approximations. All other Arabic terms not in common use, including the titles of Arabic manuscripts, are transliterated following the Library of Congress transliteration system for the Arabic language.

I will refer to the three protagonists of this study by the Hausa renderings of their names: Usman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio, and Muhammad Bello. This rendering has become standard in the literature, and due to how frequently these names occur in the text, I consider this approximation easier on the reader than their Arabic transliterations. When referring to the three men collectively, I will use the term *Fodiawa*. This term comes from a combination of Usman's appellation *dan Fodio* (son of the teacher), and the Hausa *-wa* reserved for the plural form of ethnonyms and social groups. Usman, Abdullahi and Bello have been referred to collectively in this manner in some works of secondary literature, but the term is a

relatively recent innovation. I prefer *Fodiawa* to the alternative term, *triumvirate*. This is because the term *Fodiawa* does not presuppose any notions of shared government, but only – to my mind – emphasises their family ties.

I do not use the term “Sokoto Caliphate” except in reference to the book of this title by Murray Last, or when discussing the concept in other works of secondary literature. I will however use “Sokoto”, “Sokoto project”, “Sokoto elite” or similar, despite the fact that Sokoto was not a seat of government in the modern sense. I will refer to the ruler of Sokoto (Usman from c. 1804–1817 and Muhammad Bello, from 1817–1837) by the term “*amīr al-mu’minīn*” (Arabic: Commander of the Faithful) because this is the term most frequently encountered in the manuscripts. I will refer to the rulers of Gwandu, as well as the heads of the various emirates, sub-emirates and polities under the control of Sokoto and Gwandu as “Emir”. This thesis deals with the different terms to denote a Muslim ruler and their significance in the context of Sokoto at various points.

Because this thesis is concerned with the way in which ideas change over time, it is important for the creation date of both primary and secondary sources to be very clear. Therefore, the referencing style for this thesis is a modified Author, Date style. For example, a footnote for a secondary source would read: de Moraes Farias (2004) *Arabic medieval inscriptions from the Republic of Mali: Epigraphy, chronicles and Songhay-Tuareg history*. In footnote citations, primary sources will be treated no differently than secondary sources, appearing in the form: Usman (1812) *ta’līm al-ikhwān*; Abdullahi (1812) *tazyīn al-waraqāt*; Bello (after 1821) *qadh al-zinād*. However, the bibliography divides primary from secondary sources. I

opted for a short reference format for all primary and secondary sources in the footnotes.

Complete references for primary sources (full title, translated title, form, archive collection and reference number) and secondary sources (author, titles, place of publication and publisher) can be found found in the bibliography. When citing the folio number for Arabic manuscripts, I stick to the pagination provided in the MS wherever possible. Otherwise, I I start my numbers from the *basmala*.

Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| ALA II | Hunwick and O’Fahey (1995) <i>Arabic literature of Africa Volume 2: The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa</i> |
| BL (EAP) | British Library, Endangered Archives Programme |
| c. | <i>circa</i> |
| fl. | <i>floruit</i> |
| Dakar (IFAN) | Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire Dakar |
| Ibadan (UC) | University College, Ibadan |
| Kaduna (NA) | National Archives, Kaduna |
| Kano (SHCB) | State History and Culture Bureau, Kano |
| ME | Market Edition |
| MS | Manuscript |
| MX | Xerox, Photostat or other copy of an original primary source |
| n.d. | no date [of publication] |
| Niamey (MARA) | Département des Manuscrits Arabes et Ajami, Niamey |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| NU/Falke | Northwestern University, Illinois, 'Umar Falke Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies |
| NU/Hiskett | Northwestern University, Illinois, Mervyn Hiskett Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies |
| NU/Hunwick | Northwestern University, Illinois, John O. Hunwick Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies |
| NU/Paden | Northwestern University, Illinois, John Naber Paden Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies |
| NU/Wilks | Northwestern University, Illinois, The University of Ghana (Ivor Wilks) Collection of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies |
| Paris (BN) | Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris |
| Paris (BI) | Bibliothèque de l'institut de France, Paris |
| Sokoto (SHB) | Sokoto History Bureau |
| TaS | <i>tārīkh al-sūdān</i> |

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ahl al-ḥal wa al-'aqd (Arabic) electoral council, charged with selecting a new leader

‘alīm – ‘ulamā (Arabic) scholar, knowledgeable person

amajegh – imajeghen (Tamasheq) in Tuareg societies, the aristocratic or warrior class

amāna (Arabic) a grant of safe conduct through enemy territory; a truce

amīr al-jaysh (Arabic) commander of the army

amīr al-mu‘minīn (Arabic) commander of the faithful

aneslem – ineslemen (Tamasheq) in Tuareg societies, the Muslim scholarly class

ash‘arī (Arabic) referring to the school of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, who enforced a literalist, anti-rationalist interpretation of the Qur’an

askiya (Soninke) ruler, the title bestowed on al-Ḥājj Muḥammad after his defeat of Sonni Ali

balāgha (Arabic) literary eloquence, or study of this

bāṭin (Arabic) the hidden aspects of religion, as opposed to *zāhir*

baraka (Arabic) blessing

bay‘a (Arabic) pledge of allegiance

bayt al-māl (Arabic) in Islamic statecraft, the public treasury

bid'a (Arabic) heretical innovation in religious practice

bilād al-sūdān (Arabic) Land of the Blacks, a geographical term first used by Arab writers to refer to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Fodiawa often used *bilād al-sūdān* or simply *al-sūdān* to refer to the region in which they lived, and *ahl al-sūdān* or *sūdānī* to refer to certain parts of its population. For clarity, I use these terms, above, whenever possible. On the rare occasions when “Sudan” appears in the main text, it will be in reference to the area of the modern state of Sudan

bori (Hausa) possession cult

dār al-ḥarb (Arabic) the land of war, where the practice of Islam is disputed; lands where jihad is being fought against the non-believers

dār al-islām (Arabic) the lands of Islam, as opposed to *dār al-ḥarb*, or *dār al-kufr*

dār al-kufr (Arabic) lands where Islam is not practised

emir (Arabic: amīr) regional ruler. In Sokoto, a regional ruler appointed by the *amīr al-mu'minīn*

fā'ida – fawā'id (Arabic) a document explaining how to achieve supernatural benefit through invocation of God and Islamic esoteric practice

fāsiq (Arabic) an immoral person whose actions, however, are not sufficient to declare them an apostate from Islam

fatwa (Arabic: fatwá – fatāwá) a legal opinion

fitna (Arabic) confusion, discord, internecine strife in the Muslim community

fiqh (Arabic) jurisprudence, the practice of Islamic law, divided into *uṣūl al-fiqh* (sources of law) and *furū' al-fiqh* (branches of law)

fisq (Arabic) immorality, which nevertheless does not constitute *kufṛ*

fodiawa (Fulfulde-Hausa) Usman, Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello, referred to collectively

fulBe (Fulfulde) belonging to the pastoralist people known as Fulani or Peule, as the Fodiawa did

ḥadīth (Arabic: ḥadīth) an action or saying of the Prophet Muhammad, constituting a source of Islamic law

ḥarbī – ḥarbiyīn (Arabic) see *muḥārib*

hijra (Arabic) emigration, specifically emigration from persecution. Originally referring to the emigration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca, the term was also used by the Fodiawa to refer to their emigration from Gobir

ijāza – ijāzāt (Arabic) teaching licence, a list of teachers through whom a work was transmitted from its author to the student

ijtihād (Arabic) arriving at legal judgement through freely interpreting the sources of law without following the judgements of previous scholars, the opposite of *taqlīd*

ikhtilāf (Arabic) absence of consensus among legal scholars over a particular legal question

‘ilm (Arabic) knowledge

‘ilm al-ghayb (Arabic) the science of the hidden, the study of secret knowledge

imam (Arabic: imām) religious leader of a community

imāma (Arabic) Imamate

imajeghen (Tamasheq) see amajegh

ineslemen (Tamasheq) see *aneslem*

inkār al-ḥarām (Arabic) the legal standpoint that one cannot forbid any action over which there is *ikhtilāf*

inna (Hausa) mother, specifically the cult of Gobir revolving around an appointed mother figure

jamā’a (Arabic) community, in this context the reformist community that gathered around Usman dan Fodio

jihad (Arabic: jihād) more precisely, jihad of the sword: struggle, Holy War

jinn (Arabic) powerful beings inhabiting the human world that certain people can see and interact with, but are otherwise unperceived

kāfir – kuffār (Arabic) one who does not believe in the Islamic faith, an infidel

kalām, ‘ilm al-kalām (Arabic) theology, the study of theology

karāma – karāmāt (Arabic) spiritual gift, the working of miracles

kashf (Arabic) inspiration and understanding gained through divine revelation in visions and dreams, as opposed to learnt knowledge

khabar (Arabic) an historical anecdote not involving the Prophet, but compiled and transmitted in the same manner as hadith

khalīfa – khulafā (Arabic) successor of Prophet Muhammad in the sense of representing the Umma on earth, a Caliph

khalwa (Arabic) spiritual retreat, seclusion

khilāfa (Arabic) the authority to be caliph, caliphal rule, caliph-hood

kufr (Arabic) non-belief, infidelity, or an action denoted as such

maʿṣiya – maʿāṣī (Arabic) major sin

madhhab – madhāhib (Arabic) accepted legal school

mai (Kanuri) term applied to the rulers of the Kanem-Bornu Empire

maguzawa (Hausa) a non-Muslim Hausa people, from Ar. mājūs “Magian”, “Zoroastrian”

mahdi, al-imam al-mahdi (Arabic: mahdī; al-imām al-mahdī) the messiah figure of Islamic eschatology, who will emerge on judgement day

mahdīya (Arabic) as in, “claiming the mahdīya”, claiming that one is the Mahdi. Not to be confused with *The Mahdiya*, the regime of the Sudanese Mahdi, Muhammad Ahmad.

makrūh (Arabic) hateful, said of an action judged to be morally wrong but not constituting kufr

maliki (Arabic: mālikī) the madhhab of Anas b. Malik, predominant in the Sahel region

mallam – mallamai (Hausa) a local practitioner of Islamic knowledge

muḥārib – muḥāribīn (Arabic) one who refuses to recognise central authority, a rebel, a brigand

mujāhid – mujāhidīn (Arabic) one who wages jihad, a jihadist

mujtahid (Arabic) a scholar who engages in ijtihād, the opposite of a muqallid

mulk (Arabic) kingship

muqaddam (Arabic) in Sufism, the regional representative of a Sufi order

muqallid (Arabic) a scholar who engages in taqlīd, the opposite of a mujtahid

mustaghraq al-dhimma (Arabic) a legal term for those who do not have a legal right to the property they own since they acquired it by theft; a reference to the muḥāribūn

mu'tazalite (Arabic: al-mu'tazila) a theological school employing Hellenistic logic which enjoyed ascendancy in the early Abbasid period but whose adherents were later branded apostates from Islam

mutakallim – mutakallimūn (Arabic) theologian, used pejoratively to refer to the speculative theology of the Mu'tazilites and any scholar whose study of theology has led them to question the beliefs of other Muslims or question the validity of Islamic beliefs in general

muwālāh – muwālāt (Arabic) friendship, good relations, alliance

nasab (Arabic) genealogy, noble heritage

qadiri (Arabic: qādirī) a member of the Qādirīya Sufi order

qadiriyya (Arabic: qādirīya) a Sufi order founded in Baghdad by ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, widespread in the Sahel region

quraysh (Arabic) the Arab tribe to which Prophet Muhammad belonged

quṭb (Arabic) pole, in Sufism said of one with a direct connection to the founder of a Sufi order

rabaṭ – ribāṭ (Arabic) fort, garrison

al-rashidun, the Rashidun Caliphs (Arabic: al-rāshidūn, al-khulafā’ al-rāshidūn), the “Rightly Guided” Caliphs, a term commonly applied to the four caliphs after Prophet Muhammad, or the historical period of their rule

sahel (Arabic: sāḥil) the southern edge of the Sahara desert

ṣalāt (Arabic) the action of performative prayer

ṣanad – isnād (Arabic) in hadith studies, a chain of transmission, that is, a list of names connecting the hadith compiler to the one who originally reported it

sarauta (Hausa) the aristocracy of the Hausa Kings, members of the royal court, as opposed to the *talakawa*

sarki – sarakai (Hausa) ruler, chief, as in Sarkin Gobir, “Ruler of Gobir”

sharia (Arabic: sharī’a) Islamic law, derived from the Qur’an, the Sunna and one of the accepted madhhabs

sharīf (Arabic) a descendant of the Prophet. In West Africa, the term was also frequently applied to North Africans of Arab heritage

siḥr (Arabic) magic, sorcery, specifically of the un-Islamic kind

silsila – salāsīl (Arabic) chain of transmission, notably for a Sufi *wird*

sunna (Arabic) the practice of Prophet Muhammad, used as one of the bases for Islamic law

syncretist (Arabic: mukhalliṭ) in this context, one who mixed Islam with the pagan beliefs of West African traditional religion

tafsīr (Arabic) Qur’anic exegesis

tajdīd (Arabic) renewal, in the sense of the moral or religious reform of society

takfīr (Arabic) declaring Muslims to have left Islam, anathematisation

takfīrī (Arabic) one who bases their ideology around anathematising others

talakawa (Hausa) common people

ṭālib – ṭullāb; ṭalaba (Arabic) student, a term used by Usman and Muhammad Bello to refer to overzealous students of theology who were questioning the beliefs of other Muslims

taqlīd (Arabic) following only the legal rulings of past scholars, as opposed to *ijtihād*

tārīkh (Arabic) historical work, chronicle. Most often applied to the Timbuktu Chronicles *tārīkh al-sūdān* and the so-called *tārīkh al-fattāsh*, as well as the histories of the *rāshidūn* period

tariqa (Arabic: ṭarīqa) a Sufi order

taṣawwuf (Arabic) the study of Sufism

tawaye (Hausa) rebel, the term used for those (mostly) Hausa communities who rebelled against Muhammad Bello's rule in the period 1817–1821, known as the Tawaye Rebellions

tawhīd (Arabic) the study of monotheism and its proof

tijani (Arabic: tījānī) a member of the Tījānīya Sufi order

tijaniyya (Arabic: tījānīya) a Sufi order founded in the late 18th century by Aḥmad al-Tījānī in present-day Algeria, which quickly spread throughout West Africa

torodBe (Fulfulde) a scholarly sub-group of the Fulani, to which the Fodiawa claimed membership

umma (Arabic) the global Muslim community

wafq – awfāq (Arabic) number square, *carré magique*

waqf (Arabic) endowment

walī – awliyā' (Arabic) one who is close to God, a saint

wazīr (Arabic: wazīr) chief minister

wird – awrād (Arabic) a supplication recited daily by the members of a Sufi tariqa passed down from its founder and said to bring spiritual benefit. The passing of a *wird* to an initiate marked his or her entry into the order.

ẓāhir (Arabic) the external, or manifest aspects of religion, as opposed *bāṭin*

INTRODUCTION: QUESTIONS AND DISAGREEMENTS

Some time after the year 1854, Al-Hāj Saʿīd completed a history of Sokoto. Sokoto was the largest state to emerge from the series of jihads in the Sahel region that took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, led predominantly by TorodBe clerics.¹ The success of these jihads marked an abrupt severance of a politico-religious framework that had persisted for many centuries and the emergence of new state formations. The jihad in Hausaland was started fifty years previously by Usman dan Fodio, a TorodBe scholar and teacher. It was directed against the erstwhile rulers of the Hausa states and led to the dissolution of these states, the fall of the Sayfawa dynasty of Bornu and the collapse of the empire of Oyo. The state structure that evolved to replace these institutions was the largest and longest lasting. It became known as the “Sokoto Caliphate”. In 1854, when Al-Hāj Saʿīd completed his work, its territory was still expanding. Although the political state created by the jihad no longer exists, there is still a Sultan of Sokoto and a wealth of titled officials who remain important players in local and nation-wide politics. In 2004, Sokoto marked its bicentenary with a fanfare of celebration. Looking through this commemorative material,² one can easily forget that the

¹ A scholarly caste – or client group – attached to the Fulani who according to tradition, started migrating westwards across the Sahel from the region of Futa Toro in the seventeenth century. See Willis (1978) *The Torodbe Clerisy: a social view*.

² See for example Gwandu, Mikailu and Junaidu (2005) *The Sokoto Caliphate : a legacy of scholarship and good governance : proceedings of the conference of ‘Ulamā’ organised to commemorate the 200 years of the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate*.

Muslim polity which the Fodiawa founded in 1804 officially ceased to exist in 1903 and is now part of the modern nation state of Nigeria.

Al-Hāj Saʿīd drew his history from some twenty years he had spent at the court of Sokoto's second ruler and Usman's son, Muhammad Bello (ruled 1817–1837) and his successors. He noted that Bello – like other reformist leaders of the period – wrote prolifically in Arabic. In Sokoto, Al-Hāj Saʿīd had served as Bello's Qur'an reader, a tutor to his sons, and perhaps offered his ear as a confidante. As such, he was probably one of the best-placed people to understand the reason and the intended audience for Muhammad Bello's various works. Of this he says:

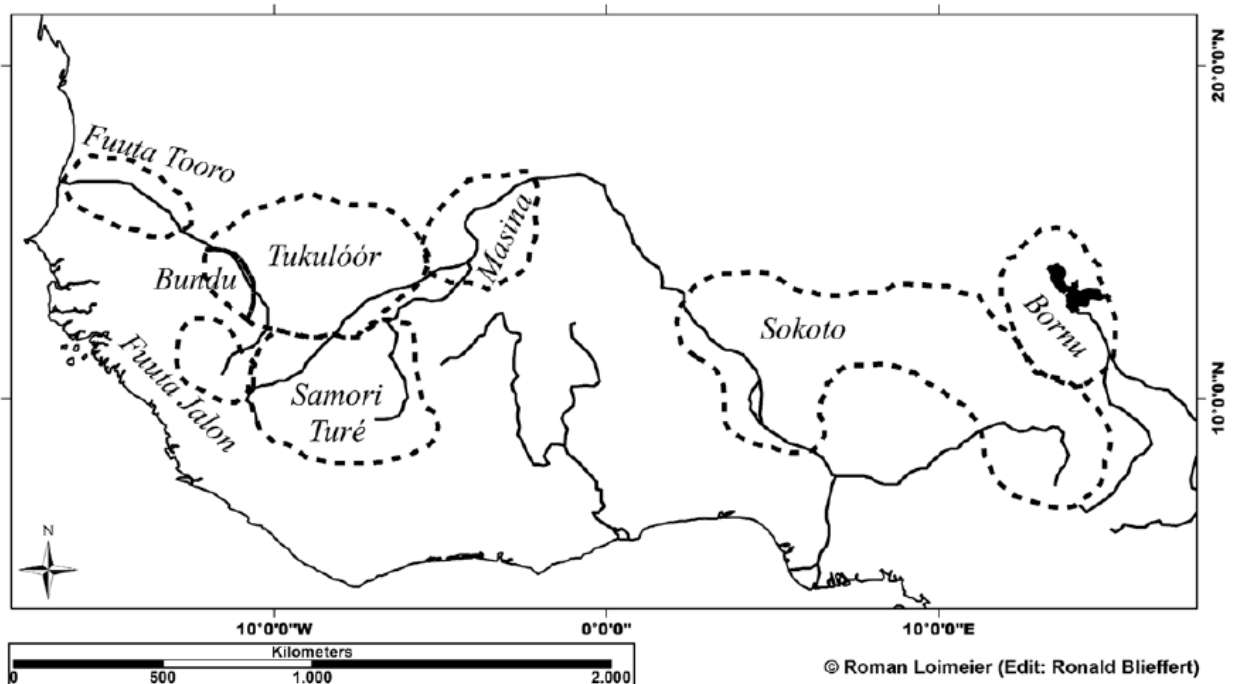
Questions and disagreements were the reason for the large amount of his compositions. If he was asked something concerning an issue, he would compose a treatise upon it; if it reached him that so-and-so and so-and-so were in disagreement about some issue, then he would compose a treatise upon it.³

This thesis explains how legitimacy was constructed and deconstructed in the nineteenth century Sahel through identifying and analysing such “questions and disagreements” in the Arabic writings of Usman dan Fodio, Abdullahi dan Fodio, and Muhammad Bello. It considers the Arabic writings of these three individuals – collectively termed the Fodiawa – as vehicles for their legitimacy as Muslim scholars and rulers, and charts how their arguments evolved and changed over a thirty-year period in which they rose from rebels fighting a central government to a central government suppressing rebellion.

³ Al-Hāj Saʿīd, *taqāyīd mim mā waṣala ilaynā* MS Paris (BN) 5422: 4. My translation.

The series of Muslim reformist movements that arose in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Sahel had two common features. First, despite the fact that the leaders of these movements spoke –and wrote – in numerous other tongues, they communicated the aims and agendas of their movements principally through the medium of the Arabic language. Al-Ḥājj Saʿīd’s mention of “questions and disagreements” as Bello’s main motivation for his compositions brings us to our second point. Once they had taken power through inciting a jihad of the sword, these movements never ruled entirely unopposed, nor were they ever internally unified.

Figure 1 *Muslim States in the Nineteenth Century Sahel*



Map taken from Loimeier (2013) *Muslim societies in Africa: a historical anthropology: Chapter 5.*

The frequency of Muhammad Bello's compositions did not suggest he was a leisurely philosopher-king. On the contrary, it suggested that the authority he held was directly connected to his ability to express in writing why one course of action was more correct than another, and why ultimately he had the legitimacy to make such a distinction. Arabic was the language in which this kind of authority was negotiated and enforced among a Sahelian knowledge elite who shared a body of common knowledge and information –an Islamic discursive tradition –⁴ giving them the right to “separate truth from falsehood” and claim to speak for their communities as Muslim spiritual and political leaders.⁵ The Fodiawa had to constantly reframe their claims in line with their increasing political power. What is more, those inside and outside of the jihadist circle continued to suggest different visions of how a Muslim state should be ruled, by whom and on what basis. Al-Hāj Sa'īd knew this full well. The father of his patron, Aḥmad al-Kabīr of Masina, was the leader of a jihad that had overturned one of the Muslim states contemporary to Sokoto, the Caliphate of Hamdallahi, because he claimed that it had diverged too much from its reformist beginnings. Predictably, once Sokoto's leaders definitively achieved the legitimacy to define the right from the wrong, we see a sharp decline in literary production.⁶

I suggest that the legitimacy the Fodiawa claimed in their Arabic writings involved three distinct components (1) *'ilm*: an appeal to reason and logic based on knowledge of Islamic history and law; (2) *kashf*: a claim to represent a direct manifestation of divine power through

⁴ See Asad *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*: 20.

⁵ Abdullahi (1820) *ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt in Kani* (1988) *ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt wa-fatāwā al-nawāzil mim mā huwa min furū' al-dīn min masā'il*: 73–4.

⁶ See the Conclusion of this thesis, *infra*.

miracles and supernatural occurrences; (3) *nasab*: ethnic background, identity and connections justifying an accession to power. Further, these arguments for legitimacy evolved as the Fodiawa turned from rebels to rulers. While rebels, I suggest that the Fodiawa engaged a "process of dissent" to argue for a radical overturning of the political order. When they became rulers, they engaged a "process of accommodation" to justify the maintenance of the status quo. Their ability to shift from one process to another can be explained by (1) a pre-existing framework of Islamic legal arguments making sense of political and historical change, and (2) their skill in applying these Islamic legal arguments to the local context.

This introductory chapter comprises several sections. (1) "Introducing the Arabic Writings of the Fodiawa" familiarises the reader with the major primary source materials used for this thesis. It situates these sources within the context of their historical period, imposes some thematic and chronological order, and makes observations on their various purposes and intended audience. (2) "Reading against the Grain" weighs up other, so-called "alternative" written sources that exist for this historical period and explains the basis for the selection and treatment of the source material for this thesis. Following this, (3) "A history of engagement with the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa", details how these texts have been used in the past to produce a historiography of the Sokoto jihad and the state founded by the Fodiawa. It suggests some problematic aspects of this endeavour, proposing a source-critical and context-sensitive methodology and engaging with literature taking this approach. (4) "Making and Maintaining Legitimacy in the nineteenth century Sahel" sets out a framework for conceptualising the Fodiawa's various strategies to achieve political legitimacy for their jihad and their rule in the

period c.1790–1834, drawing on the relevant literature. Lastly, a summary is given of the thesis chapters and the arguments linking them together.

Introducing the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa

From the 1790s, when Usman dan Fodio first began his preaching tours of the Hausa countryside, to the death of Muhammad Bello in 1834, the Fodiawa produced an extraordinary amount of writing. The number of known surviving works attributed to the Fodiawa seems to be growing all the time. As a culmination of many decades of research by scholars and the documentation and cataloguing efforts by institutions worldwide, in 1995 John Hunwick gave the number of firmly established Arabic writings as 100 prose works and 3 poems for Uthman, 87 prose works and 26 poems for Abdullahi, and 108 prose works and 67 poems for Bello.⁷ While Usman, Abdullahi and Bello were the most prolific writers of the Sokoto elite, they were only three individuals out of hundreds of writers from this period.⁸ In addition, the numerous works they left behind in the West African languages of Hausa and Fulfulde have not been catalogued comprehensively.⁹ As such, this is arguably the largest documented record of literary production in the history of West Africa before the twentieth century. Copies of the Fodiawa's works circulated widely, being found as far away as Ghana¹⁰, Mauritania¹¹ and Morocco.¹² The Fodiawa wrote on a wide range of subjects: didactic works on all aspects of the Islamic faith,

⁷ See Hunwick and O'Fahey (1995) *Arabic literature of Africa Volume 2: The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa*. During my own relatively short period of research, I have come across additional material not included in this list, discussed in the appendices.

⁸ For a full list of Sokoto scholars and their works, see *ALA II*.

⁹ Hunwick & O'Fahey (*ALA II*) give some titles, as well as some PhD theses on this theme. See also the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme 387, *Safeguarding Fulfulde ajami manuscripts of Nigerian Jihad poetry by Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817) and contemporaries* <http://eap.bl.uk/database/results.a4d?projID=EAP387> (accessed 18/05/2017).

¹⁰ See Fodiawa MSS in the Ivor Wilks Collection, Northwestern, Herskovits Library of African Studies.

¹¹ Hall and Stewart (2011) *The Historic 'Core Curriculum' and the Book Market in Islamic West Africa*

¹² See Hunwick and O'Fahey (1995) *ALA II*.

political treatises calling for social and religious reform, apologies defending their actions in Islamic legal terms, spiritual reflections on the world and the hereafter, and works on all aspects of state policy from the economy, land use and employment, to health and social care.

The majority of the Fodiawa's writings available to researchers today come in the form of hand-written copies made in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. These copies are held in public and private archive collections around the world, whether in its original form (MS) or, most commonly, a microfilm, Photostat or Xerox copy (MX).¹³ Some manuscript material relating to the Fodiawa has been digitised and is available online. The *Bibliothèque nationale de France* has digitised its collections of Fodiawa manuscripts, accessible through its online platform, www.gallica.bnf.fr. Fodiawa manuscripts held at branches of the Nigerian national archive collections in Kano (State History and Culture Bureau), Kaduna (National Archives, Arewa House) and several private collections have now been digitised and are available through the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme at www.eap.bl.uk.¹⁴ In the mid-twentieth century, "market editions" (ME) of many of the Fodiawa's works began to be printed on Northern Nigerian presses.¹⁵ MEs are mass-produced prints of a recently scribed MS, often including a parallel Hausa translation either in the same Arabic calligraphic script used for the text ('ajamī), or in printed *boko*.¹⁶ They are sold widely in bookstores and markets and available in many specialist university libraries. While much has been written about the content of the

¹³ For comprehensive list, see *ibid*.

¹⁴ EAP projects 488, 690 and 879 collected, catalogued and digitised the holdings of *La bibliothèque des manuscrits de Djenné*. The digitised images were made publicly available in early 2018 and contain many examples of Fodiawa MSS not available at the time of Hunwick and O'Fahey's survey.

¹⁵ For more on market editions, see Dobronravine (2017) *Design Elements and Illuminations in Nigerian "Market Literature" in Arabic and 'Ajamī*.

¹⁶ Hausa language rendered in Latin script.

Fodiawa's writings, there has been very little comment on the physical form in which we encounter them today. To this end, I will highlight some basic features shared by the manuscripts consulted for this study.

While the main body of each work is a distinct and independent composition, the way in which this text is presented is extremely formulaic. This formality is the result of a rich tradition of copying and recopying Arabic texts in the West African region. First comes the introduction of the copyist, consisting of the *basmala*¹⁷, the name of the author and some information about him or her. Here are two examples:

In the name of God, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful. May God bless our Lord Muhammad, his family and Companions. The humble servant in need of his Lord's mercy, 'Uthmān b. Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān b. Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad, known as Ibn Fūdī – may God protect him with His grace, Amen – says:¹⁸

In the name of God, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful. May God bless our Lord Muhammad, his family and Companions. The one humble to his Lord, doomed from the wickedness of his making, 'Uthmān b. Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān – Fulani in origin, Maliki in legal school, Ash'arī in belief – says:¹⁹

Next comes the doxology by the author. In many examples, this is very short. In others, it is a general statement reflecting the content of the work. Here is an example from Abdullahi's *ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt*, a work on Islamic law:

In the name of God, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful. May God bless our Lord Muhammad, his family and Companions. Praise be to God, sole possessor of judgement, whose decree is absolute. He enacts the laws for His servants and through their implementation averts them from iniquity and corruption. He gives them sufficient and correct policies to prevent them from ignorance and heretical innovation. Blessings and

¹⁷ i.e. bi-ism Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm "In the name of God, the Most Righteous, the Most Merciful".

¹⁸ Usman (c.1774–1804) *ajwiba muḥarrira* MX Kaduna (NA): 1.

¹⁹ Usman *mi'rāj al-'awām* ME Shifa Commercial Press, Zaria: 2.

praise upon our Messenger Muhammad – May God bless him – who made clear what is permissible and what is forbidden, and upon his family, Companions and followers.²⁰

Below is an example of another work by Abdullahi. This one concerns the rules of buying and selling:

In the name of God, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful. May God bless our Lord Muhammad, his family and Companions. Praise be to God, who allowed us to sell and thereby receive money that was not our own so that we might be content and so that living on the earth might be made easier. He sent to us the Messenger of Islam – Muhammad, may God bless him, his Companions and those who follow him – to distinguish the permissible from the forbidden.²¹

The end of the doxology is announced by the Arabic words *amma ba'd*, meaning something akin to “and now...” or, “to move on”. Copyists often bolden or highlight this phrase in red ink to help the reader locate the start of the text proper. The author then introduces the work. The author’s introduction may include the title of their work, the number of chapters it has, the principal sources from which they drew, and the reason they composed it. Alternatively, the introduction may simply consist of the words, “I say, trusting in God...” followed by the main body of text. Here are two examples from works by Muhammad Bello:

When I came across the preface of our Sheikh and teacher, blessed in vowelled and vowelless consonants, named *The Repository of Texts Concerning Those Sheikhs from Whom I Took Knowledge*, as well as the versified treatise of my brother al-Muṣṭafá b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad mentioning what he took [of texts], my soul yearned to add to them. Even though I had already made note of them in my *infāq al-maysūr*, nevertheless my soul set out to allude to them and the individuals mentioned by making a commentary to the preface of our Sheikh, as well as noting some of the things he mentioned that are untrue. By my objection, I do not wish to attack him nor overlook him, but only to bring benefit to the quest for knowledge.²²

²⁰ Abdullahi (1820) *ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt* MS Ibadan (UC): 1.

²¹ Abdullahi (1800) *kifāyat al-'awām fī al-buyū'* MS NU/Falke: 117: 1.

²² Bello (after 1812) *hāshiya 'alā muqaddimat idā'al-nusūkh* MS Paris (BN) Arabe 543: 298–9.

This book is named *Revealing the Cover and the Veil Concerning Friendship with the Infidels, That Is to Say, Aiding Them*, according to what is said on this topic by the specialists in Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic jurisprudence.²³

After this introduction, the main body of the work begins. Works of the Fodiawa range between unstructured works of a few folios in length, to more than a hundred folios divided into chapters (abwāb) and chapter sections (fuṣūl). After the conclusion, the author sometimes revealed the date on which he had finished the work. Of the one hundred or so works analysed in preparation for this thesis, less than a dozen were precisely dated by their authors. However, the date of most works can be assumed by contextual references and content, as will be discussed below.

Following the conclusion of the text, there is sometimes a note by the copyist, announcing that the copy is complete and asking for blessing from God for their labour. For the majority of Fodiawa works I have consulted, these statements have been anonymous and the copyist impossible to identify.²⁴ The identity of the person who copied the work is sometimes included on the coversheets of manuscripts held at national archive collections in Nigeria and Niger, although these tend to be more recent and prolific copyists such as Junayd, until his recent passing the Wazir of Sokoto.

Aside from the many epistolary correspondences authored by the Fodiawa, in which the intended recipient is always stated, we can tell what specific audience the Fodiawa had in mind for their non-epistolary works on many occasions. Muhammad Bello wrote his treatise on

²³ Bello (1819) *kashf al-ghīṭā'* MS Kaduna (NA): 1.

²⁴ See Last (2008) *The book in the Sokoto Caliphate*: 154.

government, *al-ghayth al-shu'būb*, to guide the Emir of Bauchi, Ya'qūb. Usman wrote *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* in response to a Tuareg group asking his advice in the case of a Mahdi claimant.

Abdullahi wrote *ḍiyā' al-ḥukkām* at the insistence of the people of Kano, who sought his legal guidance. In other cases, these texts are clearly part of a dialogue between the Fodiawa themselves. Abdullahi's *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān* is a reaction to Usman's works, *miṣbāḥ ahl al-zamān* and *sirāj al-ikhwān*, to which Usman wrote *najm al-ikhwān* as a counter-response. Bello's works, *inṣāf fī dhikr mā fī masā'il al-khilāfa min wifāq wa-khilāf* and *ḥāshiya 'alā muqaddimat īdā' al-nusūkh* are direct responses to Abdullahi's *sabīl al-salāma* and *īdā' al-nusūkh* respectively.

Meanwhile, texts without an explicitly stated audience or purpose can often be traced to an event or circumstance during these years. Abdullahi's *ḍiyā'* (guiding light) series can be understood as an expression of his fears that the community was moving in the wrong direction and were aimed at his elder brother and those who supported him, such as Muhammad Bello. Meanwhile, Bello wrote a flurry of works on obedience to the ruler after the mass rebellions following his appointment as *amīr al-mu'minīn* in 1817, targeted at regional emirs and community leaders who were wavering in their support. Naturally, towards the end of their respective lives, the Fodiawa wrote more frequently on the transience of existence and the necessity of seeking repentance due to their fear for their souls, and for the fate of the community that they would leave behind.

Building on the work of M. A. al-Hajj and other scholars who attempted to provide a precise chronology for the writings of the Fodiawa,²⁵ I have split this considerable oeuvre into five relatively distinct chronological periods that will form the basis for my thesis chapters. The pre-Jihad period (1774–1804) mostly consists of works by Usman since, due to their difference in age, Abdullahi and Bello had not yet begun to write serious compositions of their own. It is in this period that he wrote the majority of his works on social reform, critiques of the Hausa kings, and outlined the basic template for the society he wished to create. The Jihad period (1804–1810) is the period in which Usman wrote his well-known *bayān wujūb al-hijra* – explaining the need for emigrating from the lands of the Hausa kings – as well as the majority of his works on the coming of the Mahdi and the end of the world. Abdullahi and Bello also wrote some of their early manuals on kingship, while Bello exchanged a war of words with al-Kanāmī of Bornu. The period of consolidation (1810–17) that follows was perhaps the Fodiawa’s greatest period of literary activity. This was the period in which the Fodiawa both documented and provided justification for their jihad against the Hausa kings. It was the period in which Abdullahi and Bello wrote their respective *opera magna*, the *tazyīn al-waraqāt* (1813) and the *infāq al-maysūr* (1812). Abdullahi and Bello also wrote further manuals on kingship in which they discussed the issue of hereditary succession. Abdullahi and Bello both composed dictates to regional emirs on Sokoto policy and corresponded with neighbouring powers to formalise relations with them. In this period we also see Abdullahi and Usman engaging in debate over various legal matters, while composing works to calm the community amid these intellectual

²⁵ Al-Hajj (1977) *A Tentative Chronology for the writings of Shehu ‘Uthmān dan Fodio*; Kani (1980) *Some Reflections on the Writings of Shaykh ‘Uthman b. Fudī*.

conflicts. This was also the period in which Abdullahi and Bello wrote bibliographical works, detailing their education and the texts that they had studied. Next comes the period of succession crisis (1817–1821). In this period, following the death of Usman in 1817, Abdullahi and Bello debated the correct rules of succession and the characteristics of an ideal Muslim leader. Bello wrote many works attempting to unite the community around his leadership, put down rebellions and maintain allegiances. He also wrote the majority of his works on Islamic government and guides for regional rulers during this period. Meanwhile, Abdullahi outlined the illustrious heritage of the TorodBe-Fulani and Bello (possibly) wrote his critical response to these theories. Throughout this period, Abdullahi and Bello continued to correspond with regional powers and subordinate emirs. The last period we will examine in this thesis is Abdullahi's rule of Gwandu (1821–1828) and Bello's rule of Sokoto (1821–37). It is in this period that Bello wrote policy directives on garrison forts (*ribāṭ*), trade, nomadic and enslavable groups, and called for the continued expansion of Sokoto territory by jihad, as well as producing works on medicine and other scientific matters. Meanwhile, both Bello and Abdullahi produced most of their works on Islamic mysticism (*taṣawwūf*) during this period.

Throughout this thesis, my analysis of these MSS is largely chronological. Therefore, whenever I refer to a given work either in footnotes or in the main text, it will be followed by a date or range of dates between brackets. The appendices include an updated chronology of the Fodiawa's writings, which explains how I date the works that do not have an in-text chronological reference, as well as several editions and translations of works or part of works

that were especially important to this study but which had not been previously translated or made widely available.

Reading against the Grain: Attempts at an alternative history of Sokoto

Despite my focus on the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa, they are by no means the only primary sources I use. Questions such as: *“How did the Fodiawa claim legitimacy in wider, non-Arabophone Sahelian society? How were their written arguments for legitimacy transmitted and understood among non-literate audiences? What were the alternative legitimacies sustaining the rule of the Hausa kings? How did communities that were labelled syncretist or non-Muslim react to legitimacy claimed on Muslim terms?”* cannot be answered by these manuscripts. Various sources have emerged that directly or indirectly shed light on some of these questions. Whether explicitly or through inference, they represent “alternative” sources for history and society in the nineteenth century Sahel to the account given in the writings of the Fodiawa. Here I discuss what these sources are and how they have been interpreted, pointing out ways in which they have both helped and hindered placing the writings of the Fodiawa in their historical context.

Camille Lefebvre argues that the bias implicit in jihadist sources such as the writings of the Fodiawa has obscured and distorted our understanding of this formative historical period.²⁶ As Bivins puts it, “by the 1980s, historians had built a narrative of nineteenth century Hausa history around that of a Sokoto Caliphate and imagined a Hausa world remarkable for the

²⁶ See Lefebvre (2015) *Frontières de sable, frontières de papier: histoire de territoires et de frontières, du jihad de Sokoto à la colonisation française du Niger, XIXe-XXe siècles*.

absence of women, children and the elderly in their scholarly works.”²⁷ Meanwhile as Stillwell, Hamza & Lovejoy point out, this literature is largely silent on the role of enslaved persons in the economy and political administration of Sokoto.²⁸

Various sources exist for this historical period other than the writings of the Sokoto ruling elite. Of these, the earliest to be recognised by scholars were the Hausa Chronicles.²⁹ The most complete of these – the Kano Chronicle – gives the biographies of the rulers of Kano from the tenth century to the late nineteenth century. The chronicles seem to show key moments in the Islamisation of Hausaland, although the jihad of the Fodiawa and the overthrow of *Sarkin* Kano by the jihadist forces has only a brief mention. There are also accounts of the jihad seen from regional perspectives. Al-Ḥājj Saʿīd’s history has already been mentioned.³⁰ The *kanz al-awlād*, if genuine, was completed in 1818. Its author, Sambo Kulwa, reportedly joined the community of Usman in 1810 or 1811. He was among the list of scholars who chose to go with Abdullahi to Gwandu, rather than stay with Bello in Sokoto. It also gives a history of the jihad years, but from a markedly “Fulani” perspective.³¹ Al-Haj Umaru – originally from Kano, he studied in Sokoto and Gwandu before settling in Kebbi state – gave his version of the jihad to

²⁷ Bivins (2007) *Telling stories, making histories: women, words, and Islam in nineteenth-century Hausaland and the Sokoto Caliphate*: 3.

²⁸ Stilwell, Hamza and Lovejoy (2001) *The Oral History of Royal Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate: An Interview with Sallama Dako*. See also Lovejoy (1978) *Plantations in the economy of the Sokoto Caliphate*; Lovejoy (2005) *Slavery, commerce and production in the Sokoto caliphate of West Africa*; Stilwell (2004) *Paradoxes of power: the Kano “mamluks” and male royal slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1804-1903*.

²⁹ Palmer (1908) *The Kano Chronicle*; Hiskett (1964) *The ‘Song of Bagauda’: a Hausa king list and homily in verse*—I (see also parts II & III); Al-Hajj (1968) *A seventeenth century chronicle of the origins and missionary activities of the Wangarawa*.

³⁰ See Houdas (1901) *Histoire du Sokoto* and Whitting (n.d.) *History of Sokoto*, both based on Paris (BN) Arabe 5422. There is also an unstudied document attributed to Saʿīd, Paris (BN) Arabe 5484 110–112, that discusses the jihad years.

³¹ See *supra* for a discussion of the authenticity of this document.

German colonists in Togo.³² His narrative too offers a different perspective. There are also two oral histories collected from Maradi in the early twentieth century that tell the jihad from the perspective of the Gobirawa.³³

Also of note are the accounts of the small number of European explorers who travelled through Hausaland in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁴ Some of them met Muhammad Bello and other members of the Sokoto elite and provided extremely valuable information about them. Often cutting through class and racial divides, their observations shed light on aspects of daily life that cannot be found in African written sources from the period. Their understanding of the Fodiawa's movement was formed by the tales and stories they heard from a wide range of informants, and shows considerable divergence from the version given by the Fodiawa themselves. Of late there has been a certain "resuscitation" of these colonial sources for Sokoto which were deemed irredeemably tainted by colonial bias by writers in the early nationalist period.³⁵

Biographical accounts collected in Hausaland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are also useful in constructing an idea of daily life.³⁶ Slave biography forms another key resource for this period. Some individuals from Hausaland who were taken captive during the jihad wars

³² Piłaszewicz (2000) *Hausa prose writings in ajami by Alhaji Umaru from A. Mischlich/H. Sölken's collection*.

³³ See "History of Gobir" in Landeroin (1909) *Notice historique*; "History of Gobir" recorded by *Le Centre Régional de Recherche et de Documentation*, Niamey in SOAS Special Collections, Jean Boyd Papers.

³⁴ For a full list, see Lefebvre (2015) *Frontières de sable*.

³⁵ Ibid. See for example Adelberger (2000) *Eduard Vogel and Eduard Robert Flegel: The Experiences of Two Nineteenth-Century German Explorers in Africa*; Lockhart and Lovejoy (2005) *Hugh Clapperton into the interior of Africa: records of the Second Expedition, 1825-1827*.

³⁶ Flegel *The Biography of Madugu Mohamman Mai Gashin Baki*; Kirk-Greene and Newman (1971) *West African travels and adventures: two autobiographical narratives from Northern Nigeria*; Prietze (1924) *Wüstenreise des Hausa-Händlers Mohammed Agigi* and translated into English in Ahmed & Seidensticker-Brikay (forthcoming) *The Trans-Saharan Sagas of Ahmadu Kano: Turbar Tarabulus and Rabeh*.

were interviewed about their experiences by agents of European colonial powers, abolitionists and scholars in places as diverse as Sierra Leone³⁷, Bahia³⁸ and Mecca.³⁹ As non-elite and often non-Muslim actors, their perspectives are also very valuable. Of late, there has been a conscious effort to locate and compile biographical narratives of enslaved persons from this period.⁴⁰

As well as collecting and translating the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa, the British were also interested in oral histories,⁴¹ stories and proverbs,⁴² and ethnographies of non-Muslim or syncretic practices.⁴³ Later in the twentieth century, a large amount of ethnographic material was collected on non-Muslim communities that had been under the rule of Sokoto or on its borders.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the modern Hausa language and in particular Hausa proverbs have also

³⁷ Koelle (1854) *African Native Literature, or Proverbs, Tales, Fables and Historical Fragments in the Kanuri or Bornu Language. To which are added a translation of the above and a Kanuri-English vocabulary.*

³⁸ Castelnau (1851) *Renseignements sur l'Afrique Centrale et sur une nation d'hommes à queue qui s'y trouverait: d'après le rapport des nègres du Soudan, esclaves à Bahia.*

³⁹ Seetzen (1808) *Nachrichten von arabischen Reisebeschreibungen und andern geographischen Werken.*

⁴⁰ Lovejoy (2006) *Biographies of Enslaved Muslims from the Central Sudan in the Nineteenth Century*; Lovejoy (2007) *Alhaji Ahmad el-Fellati ibn Dauda ibn Muhammad Manga: Personal Malam to Emir Muhammad Bello of Kano*; Stilwell, Hamza and Lovejoy (2001) *The Oral History of Royal Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate: An Interview with Sallama Dako*; Lovejoy (1997) *Biography as Source Material: Towards a Biographical Archive of Enslaved Africans*. See also <http://slavebiographies.org/>; <http://www.liberatedafricans.org> to which Paul Lovejoy and Henry Lovejoy contribute, respectively.

⁴¹ Edgar (1911) *Litafi na Tatsuniyoyi na Hausa.*

⁴² Merrick (1905) *Hausa Proverbs*; Rattray (1913) *Hausa folk-lore, customs, proverbs, etc. (2 vols.).*

⁴³ Tremearne (1914) *The ban of the Bori: Demons and dancing in West and North Africa*; Greenberg (1941) *Some aspects of Negro-Mohammedan culture-contact among the Hausa*; Greenberg (1946) *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese religion.*

⁴⁴ Krieger (1967) *Notizen zur Religion der Hausa*; Nicholas (1969) *Fondements magico-religieux du pouvoir politique au sein de la principauté hausa du Gobir*; Reuke (1969) *Die Maguzawa in Nordnigeria : Ethnographische Darstellung und Analyse des beginnenden Religionswandels zum Katholizismus*; Piault (1970) *Histoire Mawri : introduction à l'étude des processus constitutifs d'un État*; Échard (1975) *L'expérience du passé : histoire de la société paysanne, Hausa de l'Ader*; Nicholas (1975) *Dynamique sociale et appréhension du monde au sein d'une société Hausa*; Hamani (1975) *Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire des états hausa : l'Adar précolonial (République du Niger)*; Fuglestad (1978) *A Reconsideration of Hausa History before the Jihad.*

been scoured for an understanding of what concepts of state, religion and authority may have been before the victory of the jihadists.⁴⁵

In short, much of this material complicates the history of the jihad provided by the Fodiawa. Meanwhile, the colourful and complicated picture of daily life in nineteenth century Hausaland – and the strong culture of orality it hints at – makes it difficult for the historian to marry the writings of the Fodiawa to their historical context. However, if we have a feeling of disassociation when comparing the writings of the Fodiawa with other accounts of this period, it is not the sources that are “at fault” but rather the way we have treated them in the past. We can remedy this by translating more of them. Preference for analysing the Fodiawa’s historical writings about the jihad, as well as the polemics of their reformist movement, naturally seemed the most important for historians writing about the jihad years. The result is that many of these works are readily available in translation. This has perhaps artificially narrowed our perspective of what the Fodiawa wrote about, as well as obscuring the many unstudied and untranslated works written by the Fodiawa on matters closer to the daily experience of the local population. For example, while polemical works often criticise the practices of the *mallamai* – a class of itinerant religious savants who made their livelihoods fabricating amulets and other works of thaumaturgy⁴⁶ – in reality, the Fodiawa’s views on these topics were far more nuanced.⁴⁷ If we look at the oeuvre of the Fodiawa as a whole, we see many examples of more popular religious

⁴⁵ See Brady (1978) *Hierarchy and authority among the Hausa with special reference to the period of the Sokoto Caliphate in the nineteenth century*; McIntyre (2010) *More Rural Than Urban? The Religious Content And Functions Of Hausa Proverbs And Hausa Verbal Compounds*.

⁴⁶ See Brenner (1985) *Réflexions sur le savoir islamique en Afrique de l'Ouest*.

⁴⁷ See for example Abdullahi’s discussion on the use of charms and amulets in Kani (1988) *ḍiyā’ al-siyāsāt wa-fatāwā al-nawāzil mimmā huwa min furū’ al-dīn min masā’il*: Introduction.

expression. For example, Usman's daughter, Nana Asmau, wrote a book on Qur'anic medicine, the *tabshīr al-ikhwān*, in which she prescribed very similar practices to those of the *mallamai* that are regularly held up in the literature in oppositional terms to the reformist views of the Fodiawa.⁴⁸ Conversely, the Fodiawa's writings are sometimes labelled "religious".⁴⁹ But when analysed in detail, many texts that upon first glance deal exclusively with "religious subjects" are found to concern profane topics framed within a legitimising religious language

In some of their lesser-known writings, for example those denoting geographical regions of unbelief or detailing policy towards nomadic groups, the Fodiawa show a great awareness of the ethnicities and beliefs found in Hausaland.⁵⁰ However, it is the polemics that the Fodiawa wrote against the religious practices of Hausa society in the run up to the jihad that have been seized upon in secondary literature as promising an accurate record of religious life in the nineteenth century Sahel. This stance has not only exaggerated our concept of the divide between "Muslim" and "pagan in this historical period, it may also have given us a misrepresentative view of what constituted "un-Islamic" practice. For reasons we shall explore fully later on, much of what the Fodiawa had to say about the pagan and syncretic practices of the Hausa is lifted verbatim from al-Maghīlī's reply to Askia Muḥammad, which concerns fifteenth century Gao.⁵¹ Therefore, using this material to paint an accurate picture of Hausa

⁴⁸ See Binsbergen (1999) *Islam as a constitutive factor in so-called African traditional religion and culture: The evidence from geomantic divination, mankala boardgames, ecstatic religion, and musical instruments*: 1-4, who argues the same.

⁴⁹ Bivins (2007) *Telling stories*: 12.

⁵⁰ See Bello *miftāh al-safḍāḍ; al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq; qadh al-zinād*, discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

⁵¹ See Hunwick (1985) *Sharī'a in Songhay the replies of al-Maghīlī to the questions of Askia al-Ḥājj Muḥammad* and compare with passages of Usman (n.d.) *ajwiba muḥarrira*; (n.d.) *kitāb al-farq*; (1803) *masā'il muhimma*, among others.

religion and practice before the jihad would be a flawed one. At the same time, attempts by anthropologists to reimagine a pre-Islamic Hausa religion based on modern day ethnographies have arguably gone too far.⁵²

On a related subject, could taking for granted the “scholarly” and “written” nature of the texts of the Fodiawa have resulted in creating an exaggerated divide between the “written” and “oral”?⁵³ As several scholars have noted, many “oral” sources were in fact basing their accounts on Arabic documents, or otherwise giving an oral rendering of written Hausa texts that they had compiled.⁵⁴ The question may also be asked to what extent these sources constitute an “alternative” viewpoint. Recent work by Paul Lovejoy has shown that the Kano Chronicle was likely compiled in the 1880s by Dan Rimi Barka, a high official of the Kano Emirs.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, the Song of Bagauda shows an unmistakably Islamic reformist perspective.⁵⁶ Therefore, we should not automatically start out with the assumption that these sources are in oppositional relationship to the writings of the Fodiawa.

To conclude, while this thesis concerns first and foremost the writings of the Fodiawa, the sources outlined above can be used in a complementary way to answer some of the questions upon which the Fodiawa are silent, offer new perspectives, and inject a sense of everyday lived reality the places and people they are describing. Like the writings of the

⁵² See Last (1980) *Historical metaphors in the Kano Chronicle*; Last (1993) *History as religion: de-constructing the Magians 'Maguzawa' of Nigerian Hausaland*.

⁵³ Last (2008) *The book in the Sokoto Caliphate* : 157–8.

⁵⁴ Last (1967) *The Sokoto Caliphate*: xlix-l; Bivins (2007) *Telling stories*: 9. For extended discussion on this topic, see Dobronravine and Philips (2004) *Hausa ajami literature and script: Colonial innovations and post-colonial myths in northern Nigeria*.

⁵⁵ Lovejoy (2015) *The Kano Chronicle Revisited*.

⁵⁶ Hiskett (1964) *Song of Bagauda*.

Fodiawa, I will be using these sources with a close eye on the context of their production and the work they have been asked to do in secondary literature.

Moving on to the writings of the Fodiawa, during the preparation of this thesis I conducted two significant research trips to consult these primary sources necessary for my project. The first took me to the Niger Republic, where I was able to spend a ten-week period in the Arabic and Ajami archives of the Institut de Recherche en Sciences Humaines, a research facility attached to the Université Abdou Moumouni holding some 8,000 manuscripts from the region. I also spent a three-month fellowship at the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa at Northwestern University, Illinois. There, I consulted the holdings of the university's Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies. This library contains an impressive amount of printed and manuscript material relevant to my project. I also made short trips to SOAS special collections and Cambridge African Studies Centre. Together with the digitised archival material available through the British Library and the BnF, as well as the numerous published editions of the Fodiawa's works in Arabic and in translation, I was able to consult multiple copies of almost every Fodiawa text I required, going off the list compiled by John Hunwick and Sean O'Fahey in ALA II. However, the time and resources at my disposal did not allow me to travel to Nigeria to see first-hand the collections available in Ibadan, Jos, Kano and of course Sokoto. Such a visit would no doubt have led to beneficial exchanges with custodians, academics and local experts, perhaps leading to new insights and discoveries on my part, aside from the privilege of viewing with my own eyes many of the locations that I mention, and the resting places of this thesis's protagonists. At the same time, we must keep in mind that while such experiences would have

enlightened my understanding of how the authority and legitimacy of Sokoto is constructed in the present day, they may not have helped me to understand processes of how these concepts were understood and constructed some two hundred years ago.

My theory as to the key role of Arabic texts in the construction of authority and legitimacy in Sokoto was shaped primarily by prolonged study of the sources themselves. However, it was also affected by my own choices as a researcher. I made a conscious decision to concentrate on those writings of the Fodiawa that had a direct relevance to the theme of authority and legitimacy and thus made scant reference to the large body of the writings that the Fodiawa composed on such subjects that did not have an immediate bearing on my theme. These include tafsīr, tawḥīd, taṣawwuf, other Islamic sciences, pharmacology and prophetic medicine, and numerous poems in praise of the Prophet. Further, the choice to focus on the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa was in part academic and in part a practical one. While Arabic was the Fodiawa's preferred medium for discourses around legitimacy such as I have described, the Fodiawa also left behind them numerous compositions in the languages of Hausa and Fulfulde. I do not profess to have knowledge of either of these languages, and there are no doubt important documents that would have informed my understanding of legitimacy in Sokoto that will have escaped my attention.

For a thesis so highly reliant on primary source material, from the outset we have to make several assumptions and ignore certain unknowns. We have to assume that these writings were indeed written by the stated author. We have to assume that the form that they are in now was roughly the same as the form in which they were first composed by the author. For a

thesis so dependent on accurate chronology, we have to assume that those manuscripts that are dated bear the correct date. We do not know whether the writings that survive today are an accurate representation of the range of works originally composed by the Fodiawa. Whether accidental or deliberate, there will have been a certain degree of selectivity in the way they were copied and preserved through the years. It is highly probable that during the jihad years, the Fodiawa destroyed a certain amount of material that ran contrary to the narrative that they wished to portray. The almost total lack of documents from Gwandu emirate – originally governed independently by Abdullahi after his schism with the wider *jamā'a* and thereafter entertaining an uneasy and fractious relationship with Sokoto – suggests a will to conceal. But it could equally be a case of neglect. Whereas I have attempted to the best of my abilities to ascertain questions of motivation and audience when not clearly stated, these can be at best well-reasoned hypotheses. Constant figures in the daily lives of the Fodiawa who may have influenced their thinking and motivations (brothers, sisters, wives, servants, concubines) are never mentioned, while we can assume numerous events of vital importance to our understanding of this period will never have been written down. But this is not a problem exclusively associated with the writings of group of religious leaders from the nineteenth century Sahel. The question of how much we can really understand of a person's life, hopes and dreams through the written record they leave behind is a constant and largely unknowable one for the historian.

A history of engagement with the writings of the Sokoto Fodiawa⁵⁷

In 1824, British explorer Hugh Clapperton passed through Sokoto, meeting Sultan Muhammad Bello at his court. This was the first interaction between a ruler of Sokoto and the representative of a European power. Clapperton came back to Britain bearing two Arabic texts. One of these texts was the *infāq al-maysūr*, a history of the jihad from 1804 to 1812 written by Bello. In the published account of Clapperton's travels, only the first five chapters of this voluminous work – those detailing the geography, topography and natural resources of various West African regions – were translated into English.⁵⁸ In this era of European exploration, Bello's account informed Europeans about regions of the world they barely understood. As Clapperton's translator noted, the rest of the work concerned, "only the details of the actions and battles that took place when Bello's father conquered these countries."⁵⁹ At the time, such a level of detail must have seemed irrelevant to current European preoccupations such as the search for the source of the Nile. It wasn't until more than a century had passed since Clapperton's visit that the *infāq al-maysūr* was published in full, albeit under quite different political circumstances.

On 15 March 1903, following Britain's growing colonial ambitions in Sokoto territories, British troops defeated the armies of Sokoto, killing Sultan Muhammadu Attahiru I and declaring

⁵⁷ For this analysis of Sokoto historiography, I am indebted to Professor Charles C. Stewart who allowed me to consult a draft of his unpublished study, provisionally entitled *A Condensed Summary of Historians and History Writing in Nigeria: Sokoto's Past through 180 Years*, which he completed in 1979.

⁵⁸ Denham and Clapperton (1826) *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa : In the Years 1822, 1823, and 1824* : 158–167 (in appendices).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: 167.

the British Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Headed by a new Sultan more amenable to British demands, the ancestral FulBe elite who descended from the Fodiawa now became the representatives of British indirect rule. The texts that their grandfathers and great grandfathers had written – the major sources for this thesis – remained in the private collections they maintained. One of Britain's first actions upon taking administrative control of Sokoto's territories was to request the Wazirs (chief ministers) of Sokoto and Gwandu to write histories of their emirates from the jihad of 1804 to the present.⁶⁰ In emphasising the importance of the jihad and its legacy, the custodians of these manuscripts ensured for themselves a prominent role in assisting the British colonial project in Northern Nigeria. Meanwhile, the British used these texts to write for themselves the history of the territory that they had acquired.⁶¹ This task now took on a new significance as they sought to construct a durable and legitimate Native Administration through which to rule.⁶² In 1922, A. J. Arnett, British Resident of Kano, published *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani*, a translation and paraphrase of Bello's *infāq al-maysūr*.⁶³ In his

⁶⁰ Muḥammad al-Bukhārī (c. 1903) *ta'nīs al-ikhwān*. For a list of his works, see Hunwick and O'Fahey (1995) *ALA II*: 191–193; Aḥmad b. Sa'd (1908) *lubāb mā fī tazyīn al-waraqāt*.

⁶¹ Burdon (1904) *The Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria*; Burdon (1907) *Sokoto History: Tables of Dates and Genealogy*; Palmer (1914) *An early Fulani conception of Islam*; Palmer (1915) *Western Sudan History: The Raudhāt' ul Afkārī*; Temple and Temple (1922) *Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, States and Emirates of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*. See also the collected edition of the 1920–1934 *Gazetteer* series in Kirk-Greene (1972) *Gazetteers of the northern provinces of Nigeria*, as well as unpublished notes and translations by residents Gower, McAllister and Harris held at Kaduna (NA) and available at the British Library through the 535 project.

⁶² Frederick Lugard, Governor of Nigeria from 1914–1919, modelled the system of native courts in Northern Nigeria on Abdullahi dan Fodio's compendiums of law, the *ḍiyā' al-ḥukkām* and *ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt*. See Smith (1965) *Hausa Inheritance and Succession*: 264–5. Palmer, an assistant Resident of Northern Nigeria, used Muhammad Bello's account of the origin of the Fulani in the *infāq al-maysūr* to strengthen the concept that the Sokoto elite were descended from a non-African and thus superior people (Palmer (1931) *The Carthaginian voyage to West Africa in 500 B.C. together with Sultan Mohammed Bello's account of the origin of the Fulbe*).

⁶³ Arnett (1922) *The rise of the Sokoto Fulani: being a paraphrase and in some parts a translation of the Infaku'l Maisuri of Sultan Mohammed Bello*. Arnett had in fact requested Mallam Haruna, brother of the Wazir of Sokoto, to give an oral rendering of Bello's Arabic manuscript in Hausa, which Arnett then translated into English. Such collaboration typifies the relations between the Sokoto elite and colonial administrators.

preface, Arnett noted the disparity between the disinterest that Clapperton's translator had shown in this work a century previously, to the importance it now assumed in advancing British indirect rule in Northern Nigeria. As he put it, "it may assist those who are directing the destinies of the Hausa States to have access to a record of that movement written by one of the principal actors in it".⁶⁴

In the years surrounding Nigerian independence in 1960, there was an explosion of scholarship on Sokoto history and the texts of the Fodiawa. This activity was taking place in a politically charged environment. The way in which Northern Nigeria's history was approached – notably, the legacy of the state of Sokoto – had a tangible political relevance among Nigeria's newly founded political parties, divided along geographical, ethnic and religious lines. Of the two major political parties of Northern Nigeria, both the Sokoto elite and the British gave their support to the Northern People's Congress (NPC), rather than the more egalitarian Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). This was in order to preserve the role of the northern elites they had supported, and whom they presumed would constitute a stable platform for a smooth transfer to independence.⁶⁵ The leadership of the NPC was inextricably tied to the colonial historians of Sokoto.⁶⁶ After independence, an NPC-dominated government put its resources into a number of regional *Northern History Research Schemes* to accelerate the process of documenting and translating Arabic manuscript material concerning the history of

⁶⁴ Ibid.: II.

⁶⁵ The founding member of the NPC was Sir Ahmadu Bello, also *Sardauna* of Sokoto, who would go on to become Northern Nigeria's first Premier.

⁶⁶ Sir Ahmadu Bello had been taught at Katsina College by Sidney Hogben, author of *The Muhammadan Emirates of Nigeria*, while another founding member of the NPC and future Prime Minister of Nigeria, Abubakar T. Balewa, wrote the foreword to the second edition of Hogben's work in 1966, months before his assassination.

Northern Nigeria. During this period, a large amount of the Fodiawa's writings were transferred from private hands to the archives of Northern Nigeria's many new universities and colleges.⁶⁷ Those who engaged with this material were no longer British colonial administrators with a leisurely interest in history, but professional (mostly British) academics based at university history departments.

The "Ibadan School", by which some of these scholars are now collectively referred,⁶⁸ based their histories on the large amount of manuscript material made accessible through the *Northern History Research Schemes*. They were also in close conversation and collaboration with members of the Sokoto elite such as Wazir Junayd. Junayd was the grandson of Wazir Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, who had first acted as official historian to British colonists some sixty years previously.⁶⁹ This similarity is telling, and a typical feature of early post-colonial scholarship which – as Hanretta aptly puts it – tended to "downplay the imprint of colonial transformation of the political economy and ignored the way nationalist projects and their elite leaders had come to be saturated in colonial ideologies."⁷⁰ In the context of Northern Nigerian nationalism, emphasising the order and authority of a "Sokoto Calphate" – this term largely

⁶⁷ Some regional facilities, key figures and date of foundation: Centre of Arabic Documentation, Ibadan (John Hunwick, 1965); Arewa House, Kaduna (Abdullahi Smith, 1970); Northern History Research Scheme, Zaria (Murray Last, 1966). W.E.N. Kensdale worked to catalogue the Arabic manuscript collection of University College, Ibadan (1958), while A.D.H. Bivar helped to collect much of the Arabic material now at the Department of Antiquities, Jos.

⁶⁸ A reference to the History Department of the University of Ibadan, under the direction of Abdullahi Smith. Smith supervised the dissertations of both Murray Last (*The Sokoto Caliphate*) and Roland Adeleye (*Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria*), the most commonly referenced and best-known general histories of Sokoto. See Lovejoy (1993) *The Ibadan School of Historiography and its Critics*; Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad. Jihadist Concepts of Space and Sokoto Warfare (West Africa ca. 1800-1850)*: 15–19 discusses this period in detail.

⁶⁹ For example, whereas Johnston was firmly in the colonial historian camp and Murray Last of the Ibadan School, they both relied on Wazir Junaidu as a final authority. See Johnston (1967) *The Fulani empire of Sokoto*: xi; Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: lii.

⁷⁰ Hanretta (2009) *Islam and social change in French West Africa : history of an emancipatory community*: 4–5.

absent from the writings of the Fodiawa in the period covered in this thesis – would act as a unifying factor for the country, while at the same time preserving the prominent role of the Northern elites in a united Nigeria. Such an approach was in line with Ahmadu Bello’s political aims for the various historical research programs he had set up, to “promote the unity of Muslims in Northern Nigeria on the basis of their common heritage of the jihad of the nineteenth century”.⁷¹

In 1966, at around the time Murray Last was completing his dissertation that would become *The Sokoto Caliphate*, Premier Bello and Prime Minister Balewa were both assassinated in a bloody coup and the country drifted into civil war. In these tumultuous years, Nigerian scholarship on the writings of the Fodiawa became thoroughly entrenched in present political concerns.⁷² Given the formal introduction of Sharia Law to Northern Nigeria from 1999 and the rise of the jihadi-salafi group, *Boko Haram*, from 2002, this trend has not abated. In fact, because of the frequent references to the “Sokoto Caliphate” in *Boko Haram* propaganda, scholars in the fields of global Islamic fundamentalism and security studies are becoming interested in the history of Sokoto.⁷³ Following Boko Haram’s 2015 declaration of allegiance to the *Islamic State* group, it is inevitable that studies in this field will continue to be framed in relation to ever-wider global events.

⁷¹ Kane (2016) *Beyond Timbuktu: An Intellectual History of Muslim West Africa* : 34–35. For more on Sir Ahmadu Bello, see Bello (1962) *My Life: Autobiography*.

⁷² For an excellent analysis of post-independence Nigerian scholarship on the Sokoto Caliphate, see Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*: 14–26.

⁷³ See Kassim (2015) *Defining and Understanding the Religious Philosophy of jihādī-Salafism and the Ideology of Boko Haram*.

Over two hundred years of engagement with the Fodiawa's literary production during Sokoto's formative years allowed scholars to recreate this period of West African history in a level of detail unusual for pre-modern historical events in Africa. Yet, a critical interrogation of the sources used to construct it has been largely absent. Sokoto historiography has relied principally on a selective reading of the Fodiawa's Arabic writings – as interpreted by the present-day Sokoto elite – as an authoritative and accurate account of the period. However, the purpose of many of the Fodiawa's writings on the jihad – most written around a decade after the event – was to offer a justification for their actions.⁷⁴ The legality of their jihad – for the most part against fellow Muslims – and their claim to represent the single legitimate source of regional Muslim governance was widely disputed. While there is a written record of these counter-claims, for the most part they are preserved only in the writings of the Fodiawa, who present them within their own legitimising narrative.⁷⁵ In short, the Fodiawa's account of the jihad years is far from being unbiased. It is the apologia of the victor.

What is more, the Arabic texts of the Fodiawa prioritised for study were chosen not based on an assessment of their importance within their historical context, but to fulfil the objective of producing an events-based history of Sokoto. Only around half of the Fodiawa's writings that survive to the present day have been the subject of a critical edition or

⁷⁴ See for example, Usman (1812) *ta'lim al-ikhwān*; Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt*; Bello (1812) *infāq al-maysūr*, which will be discussed, *infra*.

⁷⁵ For Bello's correspondence with Bā Arewa leader 'Abd al-Salām, see Bello (c. 1817) *sard al-kalām*. For correspondence of Bello with al-Kānamī of Bornu, see Bello (1812) in Shādhilī (1996) *infāq al-maysūr fī tārikh bilād al-Takrūr*: 229–286. For Bello's disputes with Ahmad Lobbo and Muhammad al-Jaylānī, and for more details of the above, See Chapter Four of this thesis.

translation.⁷⁶ Thus, when scholars talk about “well-known” works of the Fodiawa, they seem to conflate those works translated into European languages and thus familiar among scholars with works that were popular or important at the time of their creation. While often these categories are aligned, we can assume that sometimes they are not. Likewise, the vision of a “Sokoto Caliphate” led historians to consider the Fodiawa a collective “triumvirate” and reconceptualise their differences as unique contributions to a shared idea. In fact, the volume of writings produced by Usman, Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello reflected their numerous disagreements regarding the correct form of Muslim government, negotiated in Arabic texts.

This non-critical approach to the Arabic writings of the Sokoto Fodiawa thus far is typical of the treatment of other bodies of Arabic primary source material for the West African past. Such approaches favoured synthesis over analysis, flattened the contours of the contextual landscape within which these diverse writings were being produced and left questions about genre, audience and motivation largely unanswered. What is more, the idea that these sources represented nothing less than the “raw evidence”⁷⁷ with which to craft authoritative histories of the African past meant that by the 1980s, this mission seemed complete and there was a decline of scholarly interest in this topic.⁷⁸

Of late, scholars are beginning to interrogate some of these sources more critically and ask if there is something more that can be done with them. In his work on the Timbuktu

⁷⁶ Based on Hunwick and O'Fahey (1995) *ALA II*.

⁷⁷ See Moraes Farias (2008) *Intellectual innovation and reinvention of the Sahel: the seventeenth-century Timbuktu chronicles*: 96.

⁷⁸ Collet (2017) *Le sultanat du Mali (XIVe-XVe siècle): Historiographies d'un État soudanien, de l'islam médiéval à aujourd'hui*.

Chronicles, Moraes Farias argued that rather than passively recording historical events, the Chronicles were crafted by “politico-ideological doers” who consciously reinterpreted Sahelian history for tangible regional goals.⁷⁹ Moraes Farias has argued convincingly that the “vulgate” of West African historiography developed from the Chronicles contradicts the archeological evidence.⁸⁰ But his suggestion that such sources may shed light on “social relations and political-ideological issues at the time of their writing”⁸¹ has produced a new generation of scholars who take into account the dynamic qualities of primary sources and while analysing them critically, use them to ask new questions. Paul Lovejoy has re-examined the Kano Chronicle, convincingly arguing that it was composed as recently as the nineteenth century by a royal slave of the Emir of Kano for political reasons.⁸² Benedetta Rossi has looked again into the Chronicles of Agadez, suggesting that the version presented to the French colonial authorities had been altered to further the legitimacy claims of certain Tuareg groups.⁸³ Mauro Nobili and Mohamad Shahid Mathee have demonstrated that the so-called *tārikh al-fattāsh* is in fact an apocryphal nineteenth century adaptation to further the legitimacy claims of Ahmad Lobbo, written by one of his followers.⁸⁴ Nobili has also highlighted the political usefulness of the ‘Uqba myths of the Kunta and Kel es Suq.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, Ariela Marcus-Sells argues that the autobiographical writings of the Kunta of Azawad are legitimating devices for the spiritual and

⁷⁹ Moraes Farias (2008) *Intellectual Innovation*: 105.

⁸⁰ Moraes Farias (2004) *Arabic medieval inscriptions from the Republic of Mali: Epigraphy, chronicles and Songhay-Tuareg history*

⁸¹ Moraes Farias (2008) *Intellectual Innovation*: 99.

⁸² Lovejoy (2015) *The Kano Chronicle Revisited*.

⁸³ Rossi (2016) *The Agadez Chronicles and Y Tarichi: A Reinterpretation*.

⁸⁴ Nobili and Mathee (2015) *Towards a new study of the so-called Tārikh al-fattāsh*.

⁸⁵ Nobili (2012) *Back to Saharan Myths: Preliminary Notes on ‘Uqba al-Mustajab*.

commercial hegemony of this group.⁸⁶ Several other recent PhD theses also rely predominantly on Arabic texts to elucidate our understanding of concepts such as justice, diplomacy, history and authority in pre-colonial West Africa.⁸⁷

My approach builds on these studies, considering the political uses for the writings of the Fodiawa within the historical context of the nineteenth-century Sahel. This thesis does not seek to add to the standard narrative of events in the early history of Sokoto, nor to question it fundamentally. Rather, it is an exploration of the various discursive strategies through which the Fodiawa legitimised their actions, and how these strategies changed over time. As such, these Arabic writings can be considered manifestations of the evolving politico-intellectual projects of their authors. These three individuals – Usman, Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello – are treated as distinct voices whose varying dispositions, ambitions and opinions were a major factor in the discursive strategies they used. This approach complements such studies as Minna’s work on Muhammad Bello,⁸⁸ Mahibou’s study of Abdullahi,⁸⁹ Moumouni’s work on Usman,⁹⁰ as well as Mack and Boyd’s biography of Usman’s daughter, Nana Asmau.⁹¹ The focus of this thesis – discursive strategies of authority and legitimacy – owes much to Murray Last’s exploration of

⁸⁶ Marcus-Sells (2015) *Realm of the Unseen: Devotional Practice and Sufi Authority in the Kunta Community*.

⁸⁷ Among them Warscheid (2014) *Traduire le social en normatif : la justice islamique dans le grand Touat (Sahara algérien) au XVIIIe siècle*; Dewièrè (2015) *L’esclave, le savant et le sultan: Représentations du monde et diplomatie au sultanat du Borno (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)*; Collet (2017) *Le sultanat du Mali (XIVe-XVe siècle): Historiographies d’un État soudanien, de l’Islam médiéval à aujourd’hui*; Syed (2017) *Al-Ḥājj ‘Umar Tāl and the Realm of the Written: Mastery, Mobility and Islamic Authority in 19th Century West Africa*.

⁸⁸ Minna (1982) *Sultan Muhammad Bello and his intellectual contribution to the Sokoto Caliphate*.

⁸⁹ Mahibou (2010) *Abdullahi Dan Fodio et la théorie du gouvernement islamique*.

⁹⁰ Moumouni (2008) *Vie et oeuvre du Cheikh Uthmân Dan Fodio (1754-1817): de l’islam au soufisme*.

⁹¹ Mack and Boyd (2000) *One Woman’s Jihad : Nana Asma’u, scholar and scribe*.

the topic in a number of articles.⁹² It also draws inspiration from some recent studies which use these sources to explore other themes such as music,⁹³ ransoming,⁹⁴ geography,⁹⁵ and urban planning.⁹⁶ In seeking to document and translate under-used sources, this thesis also continues the renewed trend of critical editions and translations of historical sources from West Africa.⁹⁷

⁹² Last (1992) *'Injustice' and Legitimacy in the Early Sokoto Caliphate*; Last (2014) *From dissent to dissidence: the genesis & development of reformist Islamic groups in northern Nigeria*.

⁹³ Erlmann (1986) *Music and the Islamic reform in the early Sokoto empire. Sources, ideology, effects*.

⁹⁴ Lofkrantz (2011) *Protecting Freeborn Muslims: The Sokoto Caliphate's Attempts to Prevent Illegal Enslavement and its Acceptance of the Strategy of Ransoming*; Lofkrantz (2012) *Intellectual discourse in the Sokoto Caliphate: the triumvirate's opinions on the issue of ransoming, ca. 1810*

⁹⁵ Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*.

⁹⁶ DeLancey (2005) *Moving East, Facing West: Islam as an Intercultural Mediator in Urban Planning in the Sokoto Empire*; Hakim and Ahmed (2006) *Rules for the built environment in 19th century Northern Nigeria*.

⁹⁷ For example, *Fontes Historiae Africana* (British Academy); *African Sources for African History* (Brill). See also Ware and Wright (forthcoming) *Jihad of the Pen, Journal of the Soul: An Anthology of West African Sufi Writing* as well as the various translations by Muhammad Shareef accessible via <https://siiasi.org/> (accessed 16/05/2017).

Making and maintaining Political legitimacy in the nineteenth century Sahel

In the world of the nineteenth century Sahel, Arabic manuscripts were the sites for “discourses of legitimation and delegitimation”.⁹⁸ While the use of these primary sources to create an authoritative account of a particular historical period is limited by their inherent biases, they can tell us very clearly the process by which legitimacy was created, maintained and destroyed in the Muslim societies of this region. Many scholars, whether working on the reformist Muslim movements of this period or African Muslim societies in general, have tried to pinpoint the factors that create “authority” and “legitimacy” in this context.⁹⁹

The most helpful theorist in this regard is the German sociologist Max Weber. Weber devised a typology of “authority” dividing this vague concept into three areas: charismatic, bureaucratic and traditional. He argued that movements – social, religious or political – did not rely on one type or the other, but rather progressed through them in stages. Weber pointed to “charisma” as one force of authority that was both revolutionary but unstable. While charismatic leaders might quickly encourage followers to suspend their individual interests in the name of a greater cause, they eventually expected that this greater cause would bring some form of personal benefit. When such private issues reasserted themselves, this led to a “suffocation” of the leader’s charisma. The result was either a rapid dissolution of the

⁹⁸ Loimeier (2013) *Muslim societies in Africa : a historical anthropology*: 114.

⁹⁹ I follow the definitions of “authority” and “legitimacy” proposed in Smith (1964) *Government in Zazzau, 1800-1950*. He defines “authority” as the right to make decisions and demand obedience based on a commonly agreed system of rules. Meanwhile, “legitimacy” is the harmony of this system of rules with the moral principles that govern each human society.

movement or else the necessary transfer of authority from the charisma of the leader into another source of authority, an impersonal institution that would satisfy these material concerns. As opposed to “charismatic” authority, this institution held what Weber called “bureaucratic” authority. The state, according to Weber, was the supreme holder of bureaucratic authority. Competition to control this state resulted in a new form of authority that was no longer the “charismatic” authority of the figurehead but a “traditional” authority invoked by its subsequent rulers to justify their rule.

The usefulness of Weber’s typology is that it can be readily translated into equivalent terms relevant to West Africa. The “charismatic authority” he speaks of can be equated with “baraka”, “karāma” and “walāya” that was applied to Usman dan Fodio and other reformist figures. Hanson uses Weber’s model of the “suffocation” of charisma to interpret the various internal conflicts, contradictions and – in the case of the Futunke in Karta – failures of West African jihad movements. As Weber’s model suggests, Muslims did not have one agenda for the movements they joined and led, but rather their motivations changed over time leading to their eventual dissolution or evolution into a different kind of authority.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, despite the equivalence of terms, scholars have pointed out certain key differences between how Weber envisioned charisma within his model for the evolution of charismatic movements and how “charisma” acted as a vehicle of authority in Muslim societies in Africa. In his study of authority among Sufi communities in the Atlas Mountains, Ernest Gellner adapts Weber’s three types of authority to explain how local Sufi leaders in the Atlas –

¹⁰⁰ Hanson (1996) *Migration, Jihad, and Muslim authority in West Africa : the Futanke colonies in Karta*: 1–4.

despite being the archetype of Weber's "charismatic leader" – made the transfer to "traditional" leaders while maintaining all the qualities of charisma. Gellner suggests that the concept of *baraka*, more tangible and transferable than Weber's "charisma", allowed charismatic authority to be maintained and "routinised by kinship" to form a kind of traditional-charismatic authority outside of Weber's model.¹⁰¹ This concept is the same as Batran's description of the "wilāya by right of birth" that characterised the authority held by the Kunta.¹⁰² In both cases, contrary to what Weber had described, this kind of charismatic authority was a stabilising rather than destabilising force, in that it could actually be maintained and passed on by the charismatic leader. In the Atlas Mountains, it provided a framework into which various tribal groupings could become a unified force. In the Sahel, it was the means by which the Kunta cultivated a multi-ethnic base of loyal followers who while on the face of it were politically independent, in fact owed considerable allegiance to the charismatic authority they wielded.

Rather than the transfer from one sort of legitimacy to the other, many scholars have agreed that in Muslim societies in West Africa, notions of "legitimacy" were a composite of three distinct areas more or less equivalent to the three categories stated by Weber. In his study of Muslim holymen in the Nilotic Sudan, McHugh states that the first of these is "personal election", that is, the personal belief that one is a holyman and has been granted special powers by God. The second is a systematic and rigorous study, that is, the holyman must be "learned" in more practical matters, not simply a spiritual ascetic. The third factor is "inheritance", that is,

¹⁰¹ Gellner (1969) *Saints of the Atlas*: 12.

¹⁰² Batran (1979) *The Kunta, Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī, and the Office of Shaykh al-Ṭarīq al-Qādiriyya*: 132.

the holyman must come from a line of holymen, or be able to trace his ancestry to a holyman of the past.¹⁰³ Robinson, an authoritative source on the jihad movement of Umar Tal, concluded that his authority was also derived from three distinct sources: “religious affiliation, ethnic identity and class position”. In other words, the combination of knowledge of Islamic texts and membership of Islamic scholarly networks, a “chosen people” narrative as well as certain miraculous qualities.¹⁰⁴ Bruce Hall has analysed extensively the connection between race and legitimacy, but he makes clear that race is only one of several “constructors of authority” in the Sahel region.¹⁰⁵

When we review scholarly work on the movement of the Sokoto Fodiawa, we see no similar attempts to explain the production, maintenance and destruction of “authority” and “legitimacy”. Despite identifying religious, charismatic and ethnic dimensions, scholars of Sokoto have tended to favour one factor over the other, rather than seeing all factors as belonging to a multi-faceted whole. Early work on Sokoto focused on “racial authority”. Early colonial administrators of Sokoto tended to take a cynical view of the jihad of 1804, framing it as an ethnic takeover disguised as a religious movement.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, they also recognised to some degree the charismatic authority held by Usman dan Fodio as a source of *baraka* as well as the link between authority and the knowledge of Islamic texts. For example, Hogben states that Usman had to “establish the legitimacy under sharia law for a jihad”, while Muhammad

¹⁰³ McHugh (1994) *Holymen of the Blue Nile : the making of an Arab-Islamic community in the Nilotic Sudan, 1500 - 1800*: 18.

¹⁰⁴ Robinson (1985) *The Holy War of Umar Tal*: 3.

¹⁰⁵ Hall (2011) *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960*: 67.

¹⁰⁶ Burdon (1904) *The Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria*: 640-641; Arnett (1922) *Infaku'l Maisuri* : 12.

Bello maintained his rule by “constantly quoting classical Arabic authorities in support of his philosophy of kingship”.¹⁰⁷

In contrast, later scholars tended to emphasise the Fodiawa’s religious authority as orthodox reformers speaking to a receptive audience of pious Muslims.¹⁰⁸ The focus on “religious authority” continued with the rise of the “Islamic Legitimist” school in Nigeria¹⁰⁹ which placed the movement of the Fodiawa within a global Islamic context.¹¹⁰ Scholars such as Mervyn Hiskett did emphasise the charismatic authority of Usman, presenting his adherence to the Qadiriyya and alledged link to the Mahdi as decisive factors in the legitimacy of the Fodiawa’s movement.¹¹¹ While Adeleye also speaks of Usman’s “mysticism, in itself an aspect of his charisma”, both scholars present this “charismatic authority” as being of secondary importance to an Islamic “revolution” borne of popular discontent and “the integrating force of the Islamic ideology”.¹¹² Others saw that the Fodiawa’s authority came through articulating socio-economic issues “in religious terms”¹¹³ and, after the jihad was won, by their monopoly over the means of production and patronage networks.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Hogben and Kirk-Greene (1966) *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria : a preliminary survey of their historical traditions*: 119; 397.

¹⁰⁸ Smith (1961) *A neglected theme of West African history: the Islamic revolutions of the 19th century*; Willis (1967) *Jihād fī Sabīl Allāh—its Doctrinal Basis in Islam and some Aspects of its Evolution in Nineteenth-Century West Africa*.

¹⁰⁹ See Lovejoy (1993) *The Ibadan School of Historiography and its Critics*.

¹¹⁰ See Sulaiman (1987) *The Islamic state and the challenge of history: Ideals, policies, and operation of the Sokoto Caliphate*: 1–2; Sulaiman (1986) *A revolution in history: the jihad of Usman dan Fodio*.

¹¹¹ Hiskett (1973) *The Sword of Truth: the life and times of the Shehu Usuman dan Fodio*; Hiskett (1977) *The Nineteenth-Century Jihads in West Africa*; Hiskett (1984) *The Development of Islam in West Africa*.

¹¹² Adeleye (1971) *Hausaland and Borno, 1600-1800*: 622; Adeleye (1971) *Power and diplomacy in northern Nigeria 1804-1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and its enemies*: 5–12 ; 21–22 ; 38–44.

¹¹³ Smaldone (1977) *Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: historical and sociological perspectives*: 20.

¹¹⁴ See Lovejoy (2005) *Slavery*; Lovejoy (1978) *Plantations*.

This thesis identifies the “religious”, “charismatic” and “ethnic” dimensions of authority in the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa. Rather than arguing that one surpassed the other, it demonstrates how these strands all fitted together to form a single discourse presented as “Islamic”. Further, it also seeks to explain how and why this Islamic discourse changed over a thirty year period. In the 1800s, the Fodiawa had used “Islamic discourse” to incite a violent overturning of the political order. They labelled the Hausa kings infidels for their mixing of Islam with paganism, and stated that their corruption, lavish lifestyle and hereditary transfer of power was the action of pagan kings, not Muslim emirs. They made clear that cleansing Hausa society of its many heretical innovations against the law of Islam was essential for salvation in a world that was soon to end with the arrival of the Mahdi. By the 1810s, they were encouraging restraint and tolerance. Many of the “heretical innovations” returned, while a new elite grew wealthy and acquired land. In 1817, Muhammad Bello took on his father’s role as Amir al-Mu’minīn, and preached that rebellion against him was forbidden. The Mahdi never arrived.

To answer the question of how these *volte-faces* were both justified in Islamic terms, we first have to reflect on the flexibility of “Islam” and “Islamic”. Trimingham – who wrote one of the first surveys of Islam in West Africa – identified this flexible quality of “Islam”. In Islam, it is the law of God that is absolute and not the law of any one man. Therefore, while a Muslim ruler can claim that his rule is “the rule of God”, others can claim that the “rule of God” demands his removal from power. This “anarchic element”, as Trimingham describes it, explained why Islamic arguments could be used to both prop up and undermine state formations.

Challenged by the work of Talal Asad, historians of late have been forced to think again about what they mean by “Islam”.¹¹⁵ Stilwell introduces his study of the institution of royal slavery in Kano by resolutely stating that there is not a “singular, ahistorical, and abstract ‘Islam’” by which to claim legitimacy. Rather, it was actors speaking in the name of Islam who caused perceptions about what was legitimate to shift. Thus, state entities across the Sahel region used Islam to address various problems related to authority and legitimacy specific to their own situations, finding different solutions. What bound them together was not a common view about what was politically, socially and morally acceptable, but the belief that these debates had to be carried out with reference to, and within the scope of Islam and Islamic discourse.¹¹⁶ Further, recent scholars have narrowed down the parameters of this Islamic discourse in West Africa to a well-defined Maliki-Ash‘arī knowledge tradition.¹¹⁷

Even if we know the stable compounds that made up “authority” in the nineteenth century Sahel, we still need to understand the different processes through which actors negotiated authority within a West African Islamic knowledge tradition, dependent on their changing political needs. Triaud suggested that analysing moments of conflict between Muslim leaders in West Africa – in his case, that between Amadu Amadu of Masina and al-Haj Umar Tal – would expose the different “juridical tools” at play in such processes. His conclusion was that two distinctive modes of Islam could be employed at different moments for different aims. The

¹¹⁵ See Asad (1986) *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*.

¹¹⁶ Stilwell (2004) *Paradoxes of power* : 33–50.

¹¹⁷ Loimeier (2013) *Muslim societies in Africa*; Ware (2014) *The walking Qur’an : Islamic education, embodied knowledge, and history in West Africa*; Seesemann (2015) *Embodied Knowledge and The Walking Qur’an: Lessons for the Study of Islam and Africa*.

first mode was a dogmatic “Maghīlite Madhhab”, the “idealistic” yet “anarchic” Islam of Trimingham. I call this a discursive “process of dissent”. This process of dissent held the ruling class up to the purist model of government imagined from the time of the Rāshidūn Caliphs, finding them in all cases wanting. Stripping them of their legitimacy to rule by removing their Islamic credentials, the natural result was an overturning of this political order. Gellner points out that in the hands of local religious figures (“saints”), such a process has the potential to unseat existing and largely urban religious elites (“doctors”) by appealing to the ultimate sources of Muslim authority: the Qur’an, hadith and the books of law.¹¹⁸ As Trimingham states, this process of dissent is not sustainable in the long term as, faced with the practicalities of government and the weight of history, the new leaders quickly revert to local modes of authority and alienate their followers. Therefore, Muslim actors must shift to a different discursive process if they are to maintain their authority.

Triaud’s second mode is one of accommodation and caution, giving the “benefit of the doubt” to Muslims whose practices seem unorthodox, stressing the importance of unity, and citing apologist hadith about accepting imperfect but nevertheless Muslim leaders. Whereas the first process looks for direct inspiration to the Rāshidūn Caliphs, this second process of accommodation, as I call it, took its discursive power from the works of Abbasid jurists who sought compromise between the ruler and religious scholars.¹¹⁹ Like Weber’s concept of a transformation between different types of authority, these two “modes” of Islam came one

¹¹⁸ Gellner (1969) *Saints of the Atlas*: 10.

¹¹⁹ See Triaud (1985) *Le renversement du souverain injuste: Un débat sur les fondements de la légitimité islamique en Afrique noire au XIXe siècle*.

after the other. Indeed, Loimeier conceives of these discursive processes as the driving force behind the “dialectic of events which led from rebellion against unjust rule to jihad, to the establishment of the rule of the faithful, and to the resistance against the new Muslim rulers.” In each process, Loimeier explains, Islam was translated into ideologies of liberation, governance or protest, each requiring its own “models of legitimization and delegitimization”.¹²⁰

The jihadist movement of the Fodiawa and their subsequent monopoly over political power is thus a classic example of the discursive cycle between “processes of dissent” and “processes of accommodation”. This thesis adopts these terms, and demonstrates the shift between them through sustained primary source analysis. At the same time, it highlights that what Loimeier presents as a smooth process was at the time mired in controversy and disagreement. It was not only historians who picked up on the inconsistencies between these two “Islamic” positions of dissent and accommodation. Abdullahi dan Fodio, Usman’s younger brother, picked up on it too. *À la* Triaud, we will pick out how Usman’s counter-arguments bring into focus the judicial tools to justify the shift from “dissent” to “accommodation”.

But before we can begin to discuss the use of a multi-faceted authority derived from “religious”, “charismatic” and “ethnic” factors to initiate processes of dissent and accommodation, we have to think about what these terms would have meant in the context of the nineteenth century Sahel. The Fodiawa were addressing their Arabic writings to a regional elite knowledge network consisting of the Kunta and fellow FulBe scholars. We need to understand what legitimacy meant in this elite network and the structures for receiving,

¹²⁰ Loimeier (2013) *Muslim societies in Africa*: 114.

managing and transferring it. Giving a typology of legitimising markers of this network will make the various legitimising arguments used by the Fodiawa discussed in the subsequent chapter recognisable in their intellectual context.

First, a certain type of authority was tied up with knowledge and education, that is, 'ilm. The Fodiawa demonstrated their authority as 'ulamā' – knowers – by citing from a plethora of Islamic texts and collecting and distributing *ijāzāt*, or teaching licences. In so doing, they connected themselves to both regional knowledge networks and scholarly chains of transmission reaching back to the founders of Islamic thought and ultimately to the Prophet. They argued for their jihad and their rule of Hausaland by citing legal precedents from the Sahel region and works of Islamic history. A second type was related to charisma, expressed in a number of terms such as *baraka* (blessing, divine favour), *walāya* (closeness to God) and *karāma* (the power to work miracles). Whether directly or indirectly, the Fodiawa demonstrated that they had received innate understanding (*kashf*) of hidden and powerful forces. This authority came principally from existing spiritual hierarchies such as the *silsila* of the Qadiriya Sufi order but also directly from God in visions, dreams and miracles. A third aspect of authority had to do with identity, race and origin, equated with the concept of *nasab* (noble heritage). The Fodiawa wrote that their distant ancestors had had a prominent place in the Islamization of the Sahel region and that their socio-ethnic group, the TorodBe-Fulani, was a stronghold of orthodox Islam. Because of their ethnic background and their genealogy, the Fodiawa were thus uniquely placed to lead a reformist movement.

Having provided this typology of legitimising forces in the nineteenth century Sahel (Chapter 1), I turn to the changing discursive strategies of the Fodiawa between 1803 and 1837. I show that at first, the Fodiawa engaged these legitimising forces to start a “process of dissent” (Chapter 2). They invoked well-established Islamic legal arguments for waging jihad – holy war – against the Hausa kings and highlighted their ethnic group’s historical role in societal reform, while visions, prophecies and millenarian discourse drove a popular fervour for radical change. After the jihad was won, Usman dan Fodio and his son, Muhammad Bello, went back on some of their previous writings to promote a “process of accommodation” (Chapter 3). This was characterised by a more pragmatic application of Islamic law, the establishment of an emerging ruling class along the lines of the Hausa model, a violent repression of dissent and a disavowal of the supernatural claims of previous years. During this period, Abdullahi expressed his grievances that elements of both of these discourses contravened the correct procedure to create and run a truly Muslim state. This led to an extended period of friction in which the Fodiawa argued among themselves over the legality of the jihad, the source of state power and who was fit to wield it. When Usman died in 1817, this prompted a succession crisis pitting Abdullahi against his nephew, Muhammad Bello. I chart the arguments between the Fodiawa during this period, demonstrating that while the debate between pragmatism and idealism is inherent in Islam, their arguments also drew strongly on events on the ground and the localised criteria for legitimacy mentioned in previous chapters. I go on (Chapter 4) to analyse how Muhammad Bello pushed the process of accommodation further to justify his hereditary succession and assert his authority in the years of crisis (1817–1821), as he began to see Sokoto

as a territorial Muslim power on a par with established African Muslim states. The final chapter (Chapter 5) shows how once Muhammad Bello had assured his rule, he relied less on Islamic knowledge and more on his own authority as ruler. While maintaining a TorodBe-Fulani ruling elite, he also integrated Hausa culture and language to create a multi-ethnic Muslim empire and reserved “othering” racial discourse for enemies of the Caliphate. On the other hand, what evidence there is of Abdullahi’s rule of Gwandu suggests that he stuck to the vision of Muslim statecraft first laid out in the jihad years. I suggest Bello’s mastery of these three strands of legitimacy laid the solid foundations that allowed Sokoto to outlast other pre-colonial West African Muslim states and maintain a lasting identity in the region.

My conclusion reflects on the major arguments of my thesis and how they contribute more broadly to our understanding of state formation in Muslim West Africa. I also make some observations about the development of a “legacy” of the Fodiawa outside the timeframe of this thesis, and propose reasons for the sharp decline of literary production after 1837. Finally, I suggest that my study contributes to a broader discussion of authority in Islam and demonstrates how Islamic arguments can be used to both legitimise and discredit state power in a variety of historical contexts.

CHAPTER ONE: AUTHORITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SAHEL

The Sahel region has, since at least the 16th century, supported an intellectual elite of Muslim scholars. These scholars were not “elite” in the sense that their position brought them significant wealth, political influence or universal esteem. On the contrary, many subsisted on very few resources, had little interaction with West African political systems and were often relegated to a low status within them. Rather, I call them an “elite” in the sense that a long-established tradition of peripatetic scholarship and migration, as well as family, clan and tariqa affiliation, had allowed these scholars to maintain communication over long distances and create a shared body of values, pursuits and conceptions of the world that amounted to a holistic knowledge system. The Fodiawa counted themselves among this elite. In their Arabic writings, it is clear that they considered themselves to be the principal holders of authority in the Hausa region, arrogating the right to distinguish truth from falsehood and dictate what constituted correct Muslim conduct. However, to do so they had to reference the same common concepts of authority shared by the Muslim elite to whom they appealed.

In the previous chapter, we introduced three components of authority in Muslim West African society ultimately derived from Weber’s tripartite division, but informed by more recent and localised studies. This chapter does the work of (1) expanding on the concepts of “religious”, “charismatic” and “ethnic” authority introduced in the previous chapter (2) explaining why such concepts mattered in the historical and cultural context of the nineteenth

century Sahel, and (3) demonstrating how the Fodiawa appealed to these concepts of authority in their Arabic writings.

Islamic legal authority (‘ilm)

Usman, Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello were operating in a scholarly milieu where knowledge was directly connected to the Divine, and thus to authority. God was al-‘alīm, the supreme knower, and “knowledge” pertained to knowledge of God’s law and His wishes for how humankind behaved and ordered itself. One element of “authority” in the nineteenth century Sahel was connected to claiming knowledge –‘ilm – of Islamic law and its correct interpretation. Correct interpretation of Qur’anic law would result in a harmonious society, living in accordance with God’s plan for humanity. Improper understanding would bring catastrophic consequences to Muslim societies and the fate of souls. For every place where the Qur’an is interpreted without mastery, Usman promises:

Plague, hunger, lack of rain, poverty, maladies, house fires, an outbreak of discord and bloodshed, enmity and hatred between the Muslims for no reason¹²¹

To avoid such *fitna*, Usman advocated seeking one with greater ‘ilm. In the nineteenth century Sahel, concepts of what constituted ‘ilm and the how one acquired it were remarkably standardised. We have already discussed what Seesemann termed a “Maliki-Ash‘ari” knowledge tradition,¹²² while Hall and Stewart’s analysis of Sahelian manuscript collections even suggests a “core curriculum” of certain commentaries and abridgements of Maliki-Ash‘ari fiqh that were

¹²¹ Usman (n.d.) *wathīqa ilā al-rajul* ME Sokoto: 3.

¹²² Seesemann (2015) *Embodied Knowledge and The Walking Qur’an: Lessons for the Study of Islam and Africa*: 201.

given preference over others.¹²³ Quoting from these key texts conveyed authority, invoking as it did the prestige of recognised legal minds to reinforce one's own actions in what was almost a secular form of intercession. Such a practice is known as *taqlīd*. One who performs it, the *muqallid*, dedicated his or her life¹²⁴ to compiling the best views of the scholars who preceded them. Usman defined himself as just such a *muqallid*, but this was a point of debate among the Fodiawa.¹²⁵ Whatever the case, the Fodiawa's writings mainly consist of quoted text from the authors of this "core curriculum" of the Sahel, some one hundred scholars.¹²⁶

But to have "authority" was not simply a case of quoting from established authors. In the nineteenth century Sahel – as elsewhere – the authority connected to book knowledge lay less in the works one had studied, but *who* one had studied them with. Teachers did not only pass on their understanding of the work, but also a licence to teach it – the *ijāza* – tracing their connection to the author of the original text through a list of former teachers. Typically, teachers would specialise in teaching a single work. For example, Abdullahi remarks that one of his teachers, a Muhammad al-Maghara, was, "famous as the sun in our country for learning in al-Mukhtasar".¹²⁷ Bello remarks that he was able to learn all the obscurities of Arabic grammar

¹²³ See Hall and Stewart (2011) 'Core Curriculum' : 132–4.

¹²⁴ In the case of the nineteenth century Sahel, such legal scholars were predominantly male.

¹²⁵ See Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹²⁶ Hall and Stewart used the *īdā' al-nusūkh*, Abdullahi's record of his education, as one of the sources for their study. Predictably, 68% (26 out of 38) of the works Abdullahi mentioned feature in their proposed "core curriculum". However, a minimum of 63% (15 out of 24) of the authors that Muhammad Bello cited in *ḥāshiya 'alā muqaddimat īdā' al-nusūkh*, a document not used by Hall and Stewart, also feature on their list. This seems to validate the authors' claims of a "core curriculum".

¹²⁷ Abdullahi (1812) *īdā' al-nusūkh* in Hiskett (1957) *Material relating to the state of learning among the Fulani before their jihād*: 567. The mukhtaṣar of al-Khalīl was a standard textbook of Maliki fiqh in West Africa.

because of the prestigious *ijāza* of one of his teachers, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.¹²⁸

Education was a family business, especially for TorodBe clerics such as Usman and Abdullahi’s father, Muhammad. In their bibliographical works, around half of the texts cited by Abdullahi and Bello were learnt at the feet of direct family members.¹²⁹ But the Fodiawa also travelled great distances to seek out knowledge: Usman and Abdullahi travelled from Gobir to Agadez to study under Jibril b. ‘Umar.

In contrast to the practice of *taqlīd* was that of *ijtihād*, or the interpretation of Qur’anic law independent of an established legal authority. While the conventional wisdom was that after the formation of the four Sunni legal schools, the “gate of *ijtihād*” was closed, *ijtihād* remained a powerful concept. Usman even set down what we can assume was a commonly accepted hierarchy of independent legal interpreters (*mujtahidūn*) moving from those scholars who freely abrogated Qur’anic verses (*mujtahidūn al-tarjīḥ*) to those who used the legal reasoning of existing judgements to make new ones (*mujtahidūn al-tafrī’*)– to those who made new legal judgements without reference to any preceding ones (*mujtahidūn al-ta’sīl*).¹³⁰ Because all legal interpreters ultimately derive their judgements from the sources of Islamic law – the Qur’an and the hadith – as the maxim goes, “every *mujtahid* is correct”. Therefore, *ijtihād* was also a powerful tool of authority. Although the Fodiawa never explicitly referred to themselves as *mujtahidūn*, there were instances in which they had arguably applied the

¹²⁸ Bello (after 1812) *ḥāshiya ‘alā muqaddimat idā’ al-nusūkh*.

¹²⁹ See Abdullahi (1812) *idā’ al-nusūkh*; Bello (after 1812) *ḥāshiya*.

¹³⁰ Usman (1814) *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* in Al-Hajj (1973) *The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria* : 224–272.

principles of *ijtihād* and had in fact been accused of such.¹³¹ It was the slippery employment of the concepts of *taqlīd* and *ijtihād* that allowed Usman and later Bello to radically change their judgement on a number of issues while maintaining authority.¹³²

Aside from a “core curriculum” of Maliki legal texts, the Fodiawa also demonstrated their knowledge of a series of historical events that had cemented the link between knowledge of Islamic law and authority to rule in the Sahel region. These events took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, commonly acknowledged as a watershed moment of Islamic influence on government in Hausaland.¹³³ The earliest record of such interactions concerns the Egyptian polymath, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī (1445 – 1505). He taught many scholars from the West African region who passed through Cairo on their pilgrimage to Mecca, giving them copies of his works to take back with them across the Sahara. He was also in correspondence with West African rulers such as Ibrahim of Katsina, for whom he wrote a treatise on governance.¹³⁴ The Fodiawa’s biographical works record that they learnt *uṣūl al-fiqh*, Arabic grammar and Islamic history through his primers, and he is the most frequently cited author in the Fodiawa’s biographical works. Usman even quotes al-Suyūṭī’s letter to Ibrahim of Katsina in the *tanbīh al-ikhwān*.¹³⁵

¹³¹ See Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹³² See Chapter Two.

¹³³ See Sanneh (1976) *The Origins of Clericalism in West African Islam*; Fuglestad (1978) *A Reconsideration of Hausa History before the Jihad*; Lovejoy *ibid.* *The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*; Last (1985) *The early kingdoms of the Nigerian savanna*.

¹³⁴ See Sartain (1971) *Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti’s Relations with the People of Takrur*.

¹³⁵ Usman (1811) *tanbīh al-ikhwān* in Palmer (1914) *An early Fulani conception of Islam (continued)*: 55–59. Abdullahi also makes reference to this letter in his *ḍiyā’ al-muqtadīn*.

The Fodiawa identified a precedent for their movement in the history of another West African polity, Songhai, where – again in the fifteenth century – the connection between Islamic knowledge and the right to rule was first established clearly. In 1492, after the death of Sonni Ali, ruler of Songhai, one of his senior army commanders, Muhammad b. Abi Bakr al-Ṭūrī, wished to take his place.¹³⁶ After acceding to power, and now styling himself *Askiya* al-Ḥājj Muhammad, the *Askiya* presented himself the exemplary Muslim ruler. In Cairo, during his pilgrimage, the *Askiya* claimed to have received instruction from Al-Suyūṭī himself. Back in Songhai, he “decided to consult the religious scholars concerning the traditions of the Messenger of God...and to follow their recommendations.”¹³⁷ However, the *Askiya*’s main legitimacy claim came in the form of a text prepared for him by ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī (1425 – 1505), a Muslim cleric from North Africa. Al-Maghīlī was born in Tlemcen, north western Algeria, and gained a reputation for his fatwas (legal opinions) encouraging pogroms against the Jewish population of Touat, a Saharan oasis town. He stated that by growing rich off the Trans-Saharan trade at the expense of Muslims, the Jews had broken the terms of their dhimmitude.¹³⁸ Further, he declared the Waṭṭasid dynasty of Morocco illegitimate for favouring these Jewish traders over the Muslim population. His views were not widely adopted and his rebellion against the Waṭṭasids ending in failure, al-Maghīlī fled to the Sahel. He started on a tour of Hausaland, where he wrote a kingship manual, *tāj al-dīn fī-mā yajib ‘alā al-mulūk*, for

¹³⁶ See Hunwick (1999) *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire : Al-Sa’dī’s Ta’rīkh al-Sūdān down to 1613, and other contemporary documents*: 102.

¹³⁷ Houdas and Delafosse (1913) *Tarikh el-fettach, ou Chronique du chercheur, pour servir à l’histoire des villes, des armées et des principaux personnages du Tekroun*: 15.

¹³⁸ i.e. the agreement that Dhimmis (non-Muslims permitted to live in a Muslim state) must live in subjugation to the Muslims.

Muhammad b. Ya'qūb (Muhammadu Rumfa) of Kano, who reigned 1463–1499,¹³⁹ as well as a second short treatise around 1491–92, an event possibly recorded in the Kano Chronicles.¹⁴⁰ Around 1498, he travelled to Gao where he produced his famous text, *ajwiba li-as'ilat al-amīr Askia al-Ḥājj Muḥammad*.

In the *ajwiba*, al-Maghīlī ruled that due to the erroneous religious practices of Sonni Ali, his belief in idols, his persecution and enslavement of free Muslims and numerous other malpractices, he was not a Muslim at all, but rather a syncretist who should be anathematised from the Islamic faith (takfīr). Accordingly, the *Askia* had performed correctly in seizing power from his descendants and seeking to enforce Muslim governance in Songhai. What was more, a jihad against the syncretist allies of Sonni Ali was more fitting than against declared non-Muslims due to the risk of confusing the faithful by mixing Islam with paganism.¹⁴¹

While the Fodiawa were aware of al-Maghīlī's earlier treatises,¹⁴² Usman, Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello all presented the *ajwiba* as a major precedent for their jihad against the Hausa Kings, relying as it did on takfīr. The actions of the Hausa kings are so frequently conflated with the actions of Sonni Ali that the two become a byword for the same thing.¹⁴³ This point is not well understood in the secondary literature. To cite one example, Usman's *kitāb al-farq* was considered by Hiskett to be of:

¹³⁹ See Batran (1973) *A Contribution to the Biography of Shaikh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd-al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Maghīlī al-Tilimsānī*; Fisher (1977) *The eastern Maghrib and the central Sudan*.

¹⁴⁰ Fisher (1977) *The eastern Maghrib and the central Sudan*: 296.

¹⁴¹ See Hunwick (1985) *Sharī'a in Songhay the replies of al-Maghīlī to the questions of Askia al-Ḥājj Muḥammad*.

¹⁴² Both Usman (*tanbīh al-ikhwān*) and Abdullahi (*ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt*) quote al-Maghīlī's *tāj al-dīn* in full.

¹⁴³ See Usman *ajwiba muḥarrira*; *sirāj al-ikhwān*; *ta'līm al-ikhwān*; Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt*; Bello *miftāḥ al-saddād*.

great importance, for unlike other MSS of the period so far studied it is not limited to general accusations of corruption and impiety but specifies in some detail the shortcomings which prompted these accusations [against the Hausa kings]¹⁴⁴

It is because of Hiskett's translation and his assertions that the *kitāb al-farq* has become one of the better-known works of social critique produced by the Fodiawa. However, when we examine closely the precise criticisms made by Usman in this work, we see that a great part of them are lifted verbatim from al-Maghīlī's *answers* to the Askiya, who was of course writing not about nineteenth century Hausaland but fifteenth century Gao.

In the years following their conquest of Songhai in 1591, the Sa'dian dynasty of Morocco forcibly took one of its most notable scholars, Ahmad Bāba (1556–1627), back with them to Marrakesh. From Bāba's works, we understand that al-Maghīlī had left a sizeable impression on Sahelian scholarship. Al-Maghīlī features prominently in Bāba's *nayl al-ibtihāj*, a bibliographical work on scholarly learning in the western *bilād al-sūdān* also cited by the Fodiawa,¹⁴⁵ while Bāba's father and son also wrote commentaries on al-Maghīlī's works. Like al-Maghīlī, Bāba was known predominantly for his fatwas, which he composed in response to questions from regional scholars mostly during his period of exile between 1594 and 1608.¹⁴⁶ The most famous of these replies was written around 1614 for one Sa'īd b. Ibrāhīm al-Jirārī, who lived in Touat, then – as in al-Maghīlī's time – a staging post on the trade route from Bornu to Morocco. The questioner wanted to know if the large number of enslaved persons travelling through Touat from lands to

¹⁴⁴ Hiskett (1960) *Kitāb Al-Farq: A Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to 'Uthmān Dan Fodio*: 559.

¹⁴⁵ See Abdullahī *ḍiyā' ūlī [walī?]* 'l-amr wa'l-mujāhidīn fī sirāt al-nabī wa'l-khulafā' al-rāshidīn.

¹⁴⁶ Hunwick (1964) *A New Source For the Biography of Ahmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī (1556–1627)*: 570.

the south were Muslims or not. In answer, Aḥmad Bāba neatly divides these lands – encompassing Bornu, Hausaland as well as regions further to the west – into Muslim and non-Muslim areas.¹⁴⁷ This work, known as the *mi'rāj al-su'ūd* or the *kashf wa-al-bayān*, was utilised by the Fodiawa in their discussion of the religious practices of the Hausa region, and their own discourses on enslavability.

By consciously engaging with the works of such prestigious figures from the Sahelian past in reference to their own time, the Fodiawa were infusing their actions with a more immediate authority than simply referencing the Qur'an, Hadith and major Maliki legal works. By citing these historical precedents, the Fodiawa meant to discredit the leadership of the Hausa kings. But they also engaged longstanding concepts of Islamic leadership in the Sahel region to set out the terms of an authority which – though never stated directly – they hoped to gain for themselves. Following precedents set in the early history of Islam, the Fodiawa ruled that the Muslim community should appoint a single figure to lead the Muslim community, to whom obedience was mandatory.¹⁴⁸ They assigned “obligations” to the ruler that had become standard thanks to the kingship guides written by Al-Maghīlī and al-Suyūṭī, themselves based on Abbasid standards such as al-Māwardī's *al-aḥkām al-sultaniya*. For example, the leader should rule justly and according to Islamic law. He should appoint judges and other state officials as well as representatives to govern the provinces. He should maintain and promote the Islamic

¹⁴⁷ Aḥmad Bāba had written an earlier set of replies to one Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar al-Īsī, whom Hunwick (1964, *supra*) reckoned to be a student of Aḥmad Bāba in Marrakesh. In this document, he delivered a similar set of geographical divisions. However, it seems that the Fodiawa were not aware of this work and thus it will not be discussed here.

¹⁴⁸ See Usman (1803) *masā'il muhimma*; (1811) *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*.

faith by the construction of mosques and other public works. He should ensure that taxes are collected and wealth distributed fairly among his subjects. He should lead a yearly expedition against the unbelievers to defend his territories and extend the frontiers of Islam.¹⁴⁹

However, the terms by which the Fodiawa referred to this ideal Muslim leader demonstrate that they were working within the limits of Islamic authority defined by the Sahelian political context. In their Arabic writings, the Fodiawa use “*imam*” almost exclusively. Usman and Bello were referred to as *amīr al-mu’minīn* by copyists of their works, and by regional powers,¹⁵⁰ while Bello’s official seal also bears this appellation.¹⁵¹ The title of Murray Last’s 1968 work, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, was inspirational. Thanks in part to this bold appellation, its publication led to a marked increase in interest in the history of Sokoto both in Nigeria and the West. However, the term “Sokoto Caliphate” was never used by the Fodiawa. Contrary to Last’s assertions,¹⁵² neither was the term *khalīfa* – Caliph – the standard term by which Usman or Bello were referred to or referred to themselves. It was only in the 1820s that Bello, for precise geo-political reasons, asserted that Usman had been a Caliph.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ See Usman *bayān wujūb al-hijra* (1806) in *El-Masri (1978) Bayān wujūb al-hijra ‘alā al-‘ibād*; Abdullahi (1813) *ḍiyā’ al-umarā’* in Alkali (2004) *Diya al - ‘umara : a guide for rulers concerning their demands obligations*: Chapter I; Muhammad Bello (1820-21) *al-ghayth al-wabl* in Bello (1983) *The political thought of Muhammad Bello (1781-1837) as revealed in his Arabic writings, more especially al-Ghayth al-Wabl fi Sirat al-Imām al-‘Adl* ; Shareef (2002) *The Abundant Downpour (Chapter 1)*.

¹⁵⁰ Usman *bayān*, quoting a letter from the Tuareg; Al-Ḥājj Sa’īd *taqāyīd*, in reference to Bello and Usman. This term is used by both parties in the Fodiawa – al-Kānamī exchange. See Brenner (1979).

¹⁵¹ This seal forms the cover of the 1967 Longmans Green and Co. edition of Last’s *The Sokoto Caliphate*. In the *rawḍāt al-afkār* (1823) Abdulkadir dan Tafa uses the term *al-dawla al-‘Uthmāniya* “The Uthmanic State”, although this seems to be its only appearance.

¹⁵² Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 46 n.

¹⁵³ See Chapter Four. Before he came to power, Bello refers to Usman as *khalīfa* on a single occasion, in *infāq al-maysūr*, Chapter 5. There are only two other instances of the term *khalīfa* appearing in a work of the Fodiawa other than in reference to *al-khulafā’ al-rāshidūn* before the 1820s. The first is by Abdullahi in *ḍiyā’ ūlī al-amr* (1810),

Indeed, many established Muslim powers in West Africa such as Kanem-Bornu, the Hausa Kingdoms and the Sultanate of Agadez had often taken the titles of *amīr al-mu‘minīn* or *Imām*, but never *khalīfa*.¹⁵⁴ While the Sa’dian dynasty of Morocco claimed the title through their relation to Prophet Muhammad, the big exception in West Africa was *Askiya* Muhammad of Songhai, whom we are told in the Timbuktu Chronicles received the title from the Abbasid Caliph in Cairo. Ahmad Lobbo of Masina claimed the *khilāfa* through citing a prophecy in one of these chronicles, the apocryphal *tārīkh al-fattāsh*, that declared him the successor of the *Askiya* dynasty.¹⁵⁵ *Khalīfa* was thus a title that had to be conferred and not simply claimed. Nobody, it would seem, conferred this title on the Fodiawa.

where he says (Paris BN Arabe 5354: 2) “The Imām should... be a *khilāfa* of the Messenger of God for the Muslims, and their Amīr.” Here he is clearly using the term in its original meaning of “deputy”. The second is in the title of Bello’s work of 1817, *al-inṣāf fī dhikr mā fī masā’il al-khilāfa min wifāq wa-khilāf*, or “Fair Judgement of conflicting views on questions concerning the Caliphate”. Here, the term *khilāfa* is arguably used only as a play on words with *khilāf* (difference) and the term does not occur again at any point in the text.

¹⁵⁴ See table, below.

¹⁵⁵ See Nobili and Mathee (2015) *So-called Tārīkh al-fattāsh*.

Figure 2: Table of West African Muslim States and Titles of their Rulers ¹⁵⁶

| State/Personage | Period | Appellation of Ruler |
|--|---|---|
| Kanem-Bornu Empire | c. 9 th - nineteenth century | <i>Mai; amīr al-mu'minīn;</i> ¹⁵⁷ <i>amīr</i> ¹⁵⁸ |
| Hausa Kingdoms | fl. 15 th c.-1808 | <i>sarki; sarkin musulmai</i> ¹⁵⁹ |
| Askiya dynasty of Songhai | 1443–1591 | <i>Askiya; khalīfa;</i> ¹⁶⁰ <i>amīr;</i> ¹⁶¹ <i>amīr al-mu'minīn</i> ¹⁶² |
| Sa'dian Dynasty of Morocco | 1549–1659 | <i>Imām;</i> ¹⁶³ <i>amīr al-mu'minīn;</i> ¹⁶⁴ <i>khalīfa</i> ¹⁶⁵ |
| al-Kānamī of Bornu | fl. 1809-1837 | <i>Shaykh al-Amīn</i> ¹⁶⁶ |
| Aḥmad Lobbo of Māsīna | fl. 1818-1845 | <i>Imām; khalīfa; Seku</i> |
| FulBe states of Futa Toro, Futa Jallon and Bundu | 17 th - 18 th c. | <i>Imam; Almami; Eliman</i> |

¹⁵⁶ Adapted from Lovejoy (2016) *Jihād in West Africa During the Age of Revolutions*: 37–8.

¹⁵⁷ Brenner (1979) *Religion and Politics in Bornu: the Case of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi*.

¹⁵⁸ See Usman, *ta'lim al-ikhwān*.

¹⁵⁹ Palmer (1908) *Kano Chronicle*.

¹⁶⁰ Hunwick (1999) *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire : Al-Sa'di's Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān down to 1613, and other contemporary documents* (TaS): lv n. He takes this to mean “Khalīfa (deputy) to the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph of Cairo”.

¹⁶¹ Hunwick TaS: 294. “Letter from Mūlāy Aḥmad al-Mansūr to Askiya Iṣḥāq II dated 1589”, addressed to “the amīr Sakya [Askiya].” *Amīr* used throughout the text of TaS to refer to Askiya Muḥammad and his descendants.

¹⁶² Hunwick TaS: 26 “It was because of this that Amīr al-mu'minīn Askiya al-ḥājj Muḥammad, on his return from pilgrimage, appointed him qādī of the city of Jenne.”

¹⁶³ Hunwick TaS: 295 (in *Letter from Mūlāy Aḥmad al-Mansūr to Askiya Iṣḥāq II dated 1589*) “the salt mine at Taghaza, which is within our domain and under the rule of our imamate”; Hunwick, TaS: 298 (in *Two extracts of a letter from Mūlāy Aḥmad al-Mansūr, allegedly to Askiya Iṣḥāq II, but probably to Mai Idrīs Aloma of Bornu. Undated*) “and that you should follow this holy imamate, whose lights have spread across the eastern and western lands”. Hunwick states (295, n.9) that “[t]he term imāma is used in Arabic writing as the equivalent of khilāfa (caliphate), and similarly al-imām and al-khalīfa. The use of the terms imām and imāma is intended to underline the religious legitimacy of the office.”

¹⁶⁴ Hunwick TaS: xlii.

¹⁶⁵ Hunwick TaS: 297 (in *Two extracts of a letter from Mūlāy Aḥmad al-Mansūr...*), al-Manṣūr talks of the “complete obedience that God has imposed towards this Prophetic caliphate”.

¹⁶⁶ See Brenner (1979) *Religion and Politics in Bornu: the Case of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi*.

The Fodiawa understood their place in the Muslim world and their authority within it from their readings of such geographical works as *al-kharīdat al-‘ajā’ib*. They were aware that in the eyes of Arab geographers, the region in which they lived, “south-western Sūdān”, was “one of the parts of Miṣr”, that is, Egypt. They also knew that in their time, the governor of Egypt was a representative of the Ottoman Caliphate in Istanbul.¹⁶⁷ On several occasions, the Fodiawa made it clear that they recognised the Ottoman ruler in Istanbul as *khalīfa* – using this term – but were unable to communicate their allegiance to him.¹⁶⁸ In correspondence with Bello, Yusuf Karamanli, the Ottoman governor of Tripoli, addressed him as *ṣāḥib wilāyat [vilayet] al-sūdān*, “ruler of the province of the Sūdān”, suggesting a command structure could have been nominally in place.¹⁶⁹ Likewise, the Fodiawa recognised that Sa’dian Morocco, through the link to the Quraysh, could also be legitimate Caliphate.¹⁷⁰ The Sultan of Morocco, *Mūlāy ‘Abd al-Raḥmān*, may have accepted Usman as his representative (*nā’ib*) in the *bilād al-sūdān*, a part of territory they considered to be under their jurisdiction.¹⁷¹

That the Fodiawa abstained from using the terms Caliph or Caliphate to designate themselves or their enterprise is an important point. It suggested that the authority the Fodiawa claimed as Muslim leaders was regional, not universal. Nevertheless, it did extend beyond the frontiers granted them by their victory over the Hausa States. The History of Gobir recorded by the Tilho Mission suggested that in the aftermath of the jihad, the Fodiawa rejected the title of

¹⁶⁷ Bello (c.1821) *jawāb shāfin li-l-murīd* MS Kaduna (NA), digitised as BL (EAP) 535 1/2/1/10: 22.

¹⁶⁸ See Bello *jawāb shāfin*: 36–40; Bello (c.1817–21) *jawāb li’l-sayyid Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Lobbo* in Minna (1982): 108.

¹⁶⁹ See Minna (1982): 129, citing Bivar (1959) *Arabic Documents of Northern Nigeria*: 345.

¹⁷⁰ See Bello *jawāb shāfin* and Chapter Four of this thesis.

¹⁷¹ See Stewart (1976) *Frontier Disputes and Problems of Legitimation: Sokoto–Masina Relations 1817–1837* and critical analysis in Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 124–8.

Sarkin Gobir bestowed upon Usman by the *mallamai*, claiming the “more significant” title of *Sarkin Musulmi*.¹⁷² Such disputes threatened the established political order as the Fodiawa argued with regional leaders about the extent of their powers and the geographical limits of their authority.¹⁷³

While the Fodiawa made it clear how a Muslim leader should be addressed and what his qualities should be, there was no so much clarity as to how such a leader should be appointed. Usman was completely silent on this topic and what is more, failed to name a successor. Meanwhile, as we shall see, Abdullahi and Bello differed widely in their understandings of the correct procedure for succession. As such, while tapping into narratives of correct Islamic government had lent the jihadist movement considerable legitimacy among the Muslim population, arguments over the succession created a significant legitimacy problem for Usman’s successors.

This was not just a problem for the Fodiawa, but an eternal question in Islamic governance. Upon his death in 632, Prophet Muhammad had not named a successor nor clarified the authority such person might wield.¹⁷⁴ The absence of an “Islamic” succession tradition means that accession of any one person to a Muslim office brings with it a potential legitimacy crisis.¹⁷⁵ Muhammad’s direct successors are known as the four *rashidun*, or “rightly guided” caliphs, since they are considered by Muslims to represent a perfect Islamic

¹⁷² See English translation of the History of Gobir recorded by the Tilho mission in Jean Boyd Papers, SOAS special collections.

¹⁷³ See Bello (1812) *infāq al-maysūr* for communication with al-Amīn al-Kanāmī; see Stewart (1976) *Frontier Disputes* for Bello’s exchanges with Aḥmad Lobbo of Masina.

¹⁷⁴ See Williams (2016) *Muhammad and the Foundation of Islam*.

¹⁷⁵ The succession of Muhammad Bello was no different. See Chapter Three of this thesis.

government. Nevertheless, all acceded to power by different means: Abū Bakr through his worthiness as Muhammad's foremost companion, 'Umar and 'Uthmān through tribal affiliation to the Quraysh, and 'Alī through his connection to Muhammad's family. Every transfer of power prompted a legitimacy crisis for the incumbent and all – apart from Abū Bakr – were assassinated by their rivals.

Soon after the founding of the Umayyad Caliphate, legal scholars sought to distance themselves from the machinations of the political centre and their increasingly tyrannical rulers. In contrast to the rashidun period, they came to associate political office of their own age with corruption and caliphal rule to mere "kingship". At the same time, rulers desperately needed scholars of the law to legitimize their rule, often coopting scholars of renown into the services of the state by force.¹⁷⁶ In this thesis we shall return to debates around the figure of an Islamic ruler, his appellation, the type of authority he should yield and how far it should extend. I will demonstrate that while such debates were couched in the language of Islamic manuals of statecraft from which they borrow heavily, the actors involved had concrete personal and geo-political aims. Nevertheless, such debates also reflected inherent problems in the negotiation of leadership in Islam.

¹⁷⁶ Hallaq (2009) *An introduction to Islamic Law*: 45.

Charismatic Authority (*kashf*)

While the Fodiawa derived the legal and rational authority for their jihad and future governance of Hausaland through their knowledge (‘ilm) of Islamic texts, the Islamic worldview also allowed for an alternative way of “knowing”. In nineteenth century West Africa, as in other parts of the Islamic world, it was believed that God had hidden a secret within each of His creations.¹⁷⁷ What is more, parallel to the visible world, or more accurately, lying on top of it, God had also created a hidden world. This world was populated by a different sort of being made from fire as humans are made from earth (Arabic: *jinn* Hausa: *iskoki*). This division is represented in Islamic thought by the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin*. The secrets of the *bāṭin* world could, like the *ẓāhir*, also be studied. *‘Ilm al-bāṭin* or “the science of the hidden” was a genre of works that promised an awareness of these secrets through exercises of the mind and heart. However, Ibn Khaldūn had famously stated that unlike the other sciences, logic and reason alone would not suffice to gain knowledge. The student also had to have faith.¹⁷⁸

Such ideas derived ultimately from the debate between the Asharites and the Mutazalites as to the nature of God in the mid-Abbasid period. The Mutazalites argued that God was a supremely logical being, and thus it was possible for humans to use logic and reason to identify the rules God had put in place to manage His world. The Asharites argued that this reasoning effectively placed limits on God’s actions and was thus heretical. In the end, in a

¹⁷⁷ See Brenner (1985) *Réflexions*.

¹⁷⁸ Rosenthal (1958) *The Muqaddimah: an introduction to history*: 184–246.

period of renewed Islamic orthodoxy, the Ashari school of thought came to dominate.¹⁷⁹

Henceforth, Muslim scholars largely accepted that to “know” God required more than simply learning religious texts. God, as a wilful being, could decide when to give knowledge to humankind and when to withhold. This kind of knowledge transfer was both mysterious and spontaneous, and is known by the term *kashf*, or “revelation”.¹⁸⁰ *Kashf* provided insight (and therefore authority) that *‘ilm* alone could not. As explained previously, given the intangible and anti-rational nature of this kind of authority, scholars of West Africa have found Weber’s “charismatic authority” a helpful theoretical concept.

In the nineteenth century Sahel, such charismatic authority lay in several distinct spheres, all of which the Fodiawa ultimately touched upon. Firstly, while as demonstrated above, the authority of scholars was grounded on receiving, safeguarding and passing on knowledge to others, the retrogressive influence of time – at least in Ashari thought¹⁸¹ – compromised the durability of book knowledge. In fact, the Prophet Himself predicted that the Muslim community would ultimately fall into *fitna* to be rescued, before judgement day, by a divinely inspired figure.¹⁸² After the end of the rashidun period, the caliphal title of *al-mahdī* – the *guider*, or the *redeemer* – was slowly reinterpreted to refer instead to this expected figure,

¹⁷⁹ This classical repudiation of the Mu’tazalites can be found in the theological works of all three Fodiawa.

¹⁸⁰ See discussion on this topic in Seesemann (2011) *The Divine Flood: Ibrahim Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival*: 19.

¹⁸¹ For more on Ash’arī kalām in relation to West African statecraft, see Mathee (2016) *A seventeenth-century Songhay chronicler learning (and teaching) to be Muslim through historiography: the case of the Tarikh al-Sudan*.

¹⁸² See hadith in the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, “Prophethood will remain among you as long as Allah wills. Then Caliphate (khilafa) on the lines of Prophethood shall commence, and remain as long as Allah wills. Then rapacious kingship will emerge, and it will remain as long as Allah wills. After that, despotic kingship will emerge, and it will remain as long as Allah wills. **Then, the Caliphate (khilāfa) shall come once again based on the precept of Prophethood**”, my emphasis. The Fodiawa reproduced this hadith in their works.

whose appearance would preordain the end of the world and usher in a final period of perfect Muslim statecraft.¹⁸³

Aside from assuming *khilāfa* over the Muslim Umma, the Mahdi was also a supreme scholar. Referring to Usman's hierarchy of legal knowledge, above, the Mahdi represented another kind of *mujtahid* figure altogether. As *mujtahid muṭlaq*, the Mahdi could interpret Islamic law directly from the Qur'an with no reference to any previous scholar. Thus, the whole history of human attempts to make sense of the Word of God and transform it into *law* – upon which the authority of knowledge elites and governments rested – would fall away before the supreme *ʿilm* of the Mahdi. As such, from its inception the Mahdi figure had overtly anti-state connotations. In the Islamic world, such movements had for many centuries been a means to gather popular feelings of discontent and direct them at the professed holders of Islamic authority in order to bring about radical social change. But tapping into such Mahdist sentiments was of course a double-edged sword. For while temporarily effective in garnering massive popular support, Mahdist movements had no long-term adhesive qualities, barring the actual appearance of the Mahdi. Instead they were highly destructive, leading only to further and more radical Mahdist splinter groups breaking from the original movement. An alternative belief emphasised that while the Mahdi would eventually emerge at the end of time, the start of every Islamic century would produce a *mujaddid* or “renewer”, a precursor to the Mahdi who would reform society and remove the corruption built up over the previous years.¹⁸⁴ In this

¹⁸³ See Madelung (2012) *al-Mahdī*.

¹⁸⁴ See Al-Hajj (1973) *The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria*.

way, movements built around a *mujaddid* still managed to tap into Mahdist sentiments, while less likely to become self-destructive.

Among his writings on Islamic government, al-Maghīlī emphasised the idea of the *mujaddid* in the context of the Askiya's rise to power.¹⁸⁵ Several prophecies widely circulating in the Islamic world – including in Hausaland – stated that the number of *mujaddid* before the Mahdi would be twelve.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, the beginning of the twelfth Islamic century (1785–6 AD) was widely believed to signal the imminent end of the world, preceded by radical religious and social reform. In part, such ideas were responsible for the global appearance of Islamic reform movements, from the *Hui* revolution in China to the slave revolts in Bahia, Brazil. This was also the period when Usman began his preaching tours of the Hausa countryside. Referencing al-Maghīlī's words on the *mujaddid* and aided by localised prophecies declaring that Usman specifically was this expected figure,¹⁸⁷ the Fodiawa presented themselves as the rightful heirs to al-Maghīlī's mission of social reform.

During the Fodiawa's rise to power, Usman was also identified with the Mahdi figure and did not deny such claims until well after the victory of the jihadists.¹⁸⁸ After the jihad, the Fodiawa's relationship with Mahdism was complex. While violently repressing Mahdist

¹⁸⁵ Hunwick (1974) *Al-Maghīlī's Replies to the Questions of Askia al-Hajj Muhammad, edited and translated with an introduction on the history of Islam in the Niger Bend to 1500*: 200, which he correctly identifies as a hadith, rather than – as Batran (1973) *A Contribution* has it – being of al-Maghīlī's own invention.

¹⁸⁶ See al-Mutqā *al-burhān*, quoted in Usman (1809) *amr al-sā'a wa-ashrāṭihā*; al-Sufyān al-Thūraī, quoted in Usman (c.1804–1810) *kitāb al-maḥdhūrāt min 'alāmāt khurūj al-mahdī*.

¹⁸⁷ See Bello (1812) in Shādhilī (1996) *infāq al-maysūr*: 61–62, quoting the prophecy of a scholar named al-Ṭahir b. Ibrāhīm al-Fulānī from Bornu, who identifies Usman as the *mujaddid*.

¹⁸⁸ See Chapter Two of this thesis, *infra*.

movements within their territories,¹⁸⁹ Usman and Bello still invoked Mahdist prophecies to justify their maintenance of power.¹⁹⁰ Usman later denied that he was the *Mahdi*, but nevertheless seemed to suggest that he was the final *mujaddid* who would precede him.¹⁹¹ However, several regional figures also claimed this position. Sīdi Muḥammad al-Kuntī describes his father, Sīdi al-Mukhtār, as the twelfth *mujaddid*,¹⁹² while a prophecy inserted into the *tārīkh al-fattāsh* by one of Ahmad Lobbo's disciples awarded Lobbo this honour.¹⁹³ Usman and Bello's dabbling in Mahdism formed another point of contention with Abdullahi, who for his part consistently held that the Mahdi's appearance could not be predicted.¹⁹⁴ As a result, he never linked his own claims of leadership to millenarian ideas.

Throughout this thesis, I will examine how the Fodiawa managed millenarian expectations and put them to use in their legitimacy discourse. Unlike discourses based around works on Islamic law and statecraft, Mahdism appealed directly to the popular imagination. As such, the millenarian component of the Fodiawa's movement may well have been vastly underrated in their Arabic writings. However, while Mahdism had the ability to overturn the system with divinely-granted understanding, the Fodiawa consistently stated that the Mahdi figure must also have conventional *'ilm* as well. Hamma's claims were rejected by the Fodiawa

¹⁸⁹ In 1815, Hamma, a Tuareg Mahdi claimant, was put to death at the Fodiawa's instance. Bello repelled various Mahdist claimants during his rule, while Atiku condemned the wave of eastward migration that occurred during his reign in expectation of the Mahdi.

¹⁹⁰ See Bello (1820) *al-qawl al-mukhtaṣar*, who predicted that the Mahdi would appear in the year 1863.

¹⁹¹ Usman (1814) *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān*, quoting an Arabic translation of a Fulfulde poem he had composed at an earlier date.

¹⁹² Marcus-Sells (2015) *Realm of the Unseen*: 146.

¹⁹³ See Nobili (2016) *A propaganda document in support of the nineteenth century Caliphate of Ḥamdallāhi: Nūḥ b. al-Ṭāhir al-Fulānī's "Letter on the appearance of the twelfth caliph"*.

¹⁹⁴ Abdullahi (1815–16) *ajwibat 'an as'ilat Aḥmad Lobbo*; (1817) *sabīl al-salāma*.

principally because he was of the “common people”, with little knowledge of Qur’anic exegesis or Islamic law. The Fodiawa, like other members of the Sahelian knowledge elites, had to strike a balance between demonstrating their connection to the Mahdi figure, while avoiding a descent into millenarianism. In part because of the Fodiawa’s Mahdist claims, later rulers of Sokoto found it difficult to stem a rising tide of Mahdist revolution that threatened their legitimacy.¹⁹⁵

Aside from Mahdism, Islamic mysticism (*taṣawwuf*) is another source from which Muslim leaders derive charismatic authority. Sufi orders (*tariqas*) offer the possibility of *kashf* through a set of ritualised spiritual exercises: the recitation of litanies (*awrad*), communal and solitary retreats, as well as *salasil*, chains of transmission to the founder of the order passed down to novices. Like the *ijāza* that bestows the student with the authority of their teacher, the *silsila* passes on the charismatic authority of the order’s founder. *Salāsil* were arguably even more powerful, since the *silsila* went on to link the founder of the *tariqa* to Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Muhammad to God Himself.¹⁹⁶ As such, the *silsila* constituted a spiritual genealogy. The founders of Sufi orders as well as prominent members are considered to be saints (*walī* – *awliyā’*). The *walī*, meaning one close to God, has not only mastered the manifest aspects of religion through the thinking mind, but gained hidden and intuitive understanding through *kashf*.¹⁹⁷ While he was living, the *walī* could pass on elements of this divine blessing (*baraka*) to

¹⁹⁵ Lovejoy and Hogendorn (1990) *Revolutionary Mahdism and Resistance to Colonial Rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905–6*: 217–244.

¹⁹⁶ Jenkins (1979) *The Evolution of Religious Brotherhoods in North and Northwest Africa* : 58.

¹⁹⁷ In the first centuries of Islam, certain orders of mystics dispensed with the outward meaning of the Qur’an all-together which – not unlike the Gnostics of early Christianity – led them to disregard some of the key teachings of

those who gathered around him. After his death, *baraka* could be obtained by visitations to his tomb, or through special prayers of intercession obtained through membership of his *tariqa*. Adherents of Sufi orders anticipate and expect to receive the *baraka* of the *awliyā'* through visions and dreams, which in turn give them *baraka* to pass on to others. As such, in the early history of Islam, *baraka* became thoroughly institutionalised and, as a concept, connected to authority both within and outside the Sufi *tariqa*.¹⁹⁸

In the early nineteenth century Sahel, the control and supply of *baraka* was connected exclusively with the Qadiriyya Sufi order. This order was founded in Baghdad but later spread to North and West Africa. Initiates received the *baraka* of the founder, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, through a *wird* or litany to be recited by members of the *tariqa* both in private and at communal gatherings (*dhikr*). Alongside the *wird*, initiates to the Sufi order received a *silsila*, relating the chain of *muqaddams* – local leaders of the Sufi order – from al-Jīlānī himself to the *muqaddam* who initiated them. In this region, a prominent link in the Qadiri *silsila* was the same 'Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī. Aside from introducing the doctrine of *takfir* and the concept of a *mujaddid* at the start of every century, numerous traditions also credited the introduction of the Qadiriyya in the Sahel region to al-Maghīlī. Therefore, there was an explicit link between Qadiri Sufism and movements of religious reform.¹⁹⁹ The Kunta, a family of Sanhaja scholars from the Azouad region, recorded that al-Maghīlī passed the *wird* of the Qadiriyya to their ancestor, Sīdī 'Umar

their faith. In order to prevent a schism with the orthodox school, the eleventh century Sufi theologian al-Ghazālī taught that the *zāhir* and the *bāṭin* were equally important and necessary parts of one's faith.

¹⁹⁸ See Gellner *Saints of the Atlas*, as discussed in the Introduction.

¹⁹⁹ Brenner (1985) *Réflexions*: 12. Note the irony that in present-day Northern Nigeria, reformist movements tend to be based on Salafism, which rejects Sufi practices as *bid'a*.

al-Shaykh, in the sixteenth century, when both men were living in Touat.²⁰⁰ The Kunta could therefore claim to be *muqaddams* of the Qadiriyya in the Sahel region.²⁰¹ The Fodiawa upheld the Kunta *silsila*, adding that Usman was given the *wird* from one of the Kunta's agents in Hausaland in the years preceding the jihad:

Figure 3: *Silsila of the Qadiriyya in Usman (1813) ta'lim al-ikhwān*²⁰²



Respect and maintenance of this spiritual hierarchy – the *Qadiriyya Mukhtariyya* – translated directly to regional political and commercial orderings.²⁰⁴ The Kunta's authority was automatically superior to that of the Fodiawa, because they had received the *wird* first. Indeed,

²⁰⁰ Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī *al-Ṭarāʾif waʾl-talāʾid*. See Marcus-Sells (2015) *Realm of the Unseen*: 62; Batran (1979) *The Kunta, Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī, and the Office of Shaykh al-Ṭarīq al-Qādiriyya*: 120.

²⁰¹ A separate tradition from Kano reported in Starratt (1993: 91–2) states that al-Maghīlī passed the *wird* to one Malam Bawa, while the former was staying with the Kano Emir Muhuhammadu Rumfa.

²⁰² Usman (1813) *ta'lim al-ikhwān* in Martin (1967) *Unbelief in the Western Sudan: ʿUthman dan Fodio's "Ta'lim al-ikhwān"*: 93.

²⁰³ "Poles", mystical figures who had gained *kashf* directly from God and thus formed a conduit through which divine knowledge passed.

²⁰⁴ See Vikør (2000) *Sufi Brotherhoods in Africa*.

the Fodiawa's deference to the Kunta is unwavering throughout their writings.²⁰⁵ A family could maintain their place indefinitely in this "charismatic hierarchy" through remembering and passing down the *silsila* to their descendants, while continuing to seek spiritual knowledge from the descendants of the immediate *muqaddam*. In most cases, this arrangement ensured that the *muqaddams* remained the supreme holders of charismatic authority, hence Batran's "walāya of descent".²⁰⁶ However, *kashf* allowed for the possibilities of "jumps" in this spiritual chain. Through *kashf*, or revelation, individuals could receive knowledge from those higher up the chain such as the founder of the order or even Prophet Muhammad himself in visions, dreams and miraculous happenings. Such individuals usually went on to found their own orders.²⁰⁷ That said, political factors dictated whether such visions were accepted as *kashf*, or rejected as spurious and heretical charlatanism.

While membership of the Qadiriyya through the Kunta reinforced the Fodiawa's place in the Sahelian knowledge elite, Usman's mysterious visions of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī – discussed *infra* – seem to constitute just such a "jump in the chain". While there was to be no "Uthmaniyya" tariqa in Hausaland, like Sīdī al-Mukhtār and his son, Sīdī Muḥammad al-Kuntī, Usman also claimed to have knowledge of *'ilm al-bāṭin*. As was the case when explaining his exact relationship with the Mahdi, Usman was vague as to whether he had reached the level of

²⁰⁵ See for example Bello (after 1811) *Letter to Sheikh al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī II*.

²⁰⁶ See Introduction, *supra*.

²⁰⁷ Perhaps the most famous modern example being Tijani Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse (1900–1975), who claimed that Aḥmad al-Tijānī had appointed him *muqaddam* in place of the existing head of the Tijani order in his region. See Seesemann (2011) *The Divine Flood: Ibrahim Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival*.

a *walī*, or “friend of God”, as the Kunta claimed they had done.²⁰⁸ Mystic knowledge invested the Fodiawa with both a strong purpose and personal ambition, as well as garnering them massive popular support. After the jihad, when Usman was based in Sifawa, he was said to have attracted an immense following among Sufis, to whom he passed on the Qadiri *wird* he had received directly from al-Jīlānī.²⁰⁹ Bello used Usman’s reputation as saint in later years to unite the *jamā’a*, while accounts of the *karāmāt*, or miraculous qualities of Usman – and Bello – were spread posthumously by members of the Sokoto elite. Their tombs – in Sokoto and Wurno respectively – became places of pilgrimage. Meanwhile, the controversy over Bello’s association with the rival Tijani order clearly showed the extent to which allegiance to the Qadiriyya and the authority of the Sokoto elite were intertwined.²¹⁰ Abdullahi on the other hand did not cultivate such an image and it seems he was sceptical of the growing spiritual movement around his elder brother.²¹¹

In the nineteenth century Sahel, supernatural events – or as Sīdī Muḥammad al-Kuntī described them, “breakings-of-the norm” – were evidence of God’s unknowable nature.²¹² There was an almost universal acceptance of the supernatural as a force that could be invoked and controlled by various esoteric practices. Indeed West Africa was considered an important

²⁰⁸ Usman (1794?) *Iamma balaghtu*; Usman (1814) *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān*. For the Kunta, Marcus-Sells (2015) *Realm of the Unseen*: 55.

²⁰⁹ Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 58; Last (1967) *A note on attitudes to the supernatural in the Sokoto Jihad*: 9.

²¹⁰ For Bello and the Tijaniyya, see the Conclusion of this thesis.

²¹¹ See Abdulkadir dan Tafa (n.d.) *‘ashara masā’il al-khilāf* in Mahibou (2010) *Théorie du gouvernement*.

²¹² Marcus-Sells (2015) *Realm of the Unseen* : 9–10.

centre of *‘ilm al-bāṭin* in the wider Muslim world.²¹³ A significant proportion of the Arabic manuscript material surviving from the nineteenth century Sahel is classified as “*fawā'id wa asrār*”, that is, details on how to use hidden knowledge to control the natural world.²¹⁴ As such, production and control of esoteric knowledge can be considered another important component of authority in the nineteenth century Sahel.²¹⁵

Like the *zāhir*, the source of *bāṭin* knowledge also lies in the text of the Qur'an. However, this “*talismanic*” Qur'an must first be decontextualised from its place in Islamic liturgy and made ready for thaumatic purposes through “*linguistic, graphic and numerical processes*”.²¹⁶ Such processes are represented in the West African genre of *fawā'id*,²¹⁷ “*recipes*” to create amulets (ar. *khawātim*) or talismans using Qur'anic text.²¹⁸ Some recipes call for the Qur'anic text to be copied on a writing slate, washed off with liquid and drunk or applied to parts of the body.²¹⁹

²¹³ See Muḥammad al-Kaṣīnāwī al-Fulānī's 1728 work, analysed in Hamès (2008) *Problématiques de la magie-sorcellerie en islam et perspectives africaines* *Problématiques de la magie-sorcellerie en islam et perspectives africaines*.

²¹⁴ See for example <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP488>, a project to catalogue manuscripts from Djenné. The project found that “more than 50% [...] dealt with ‘esoteric’ subjects.” Meanwhile, Levtzion (1965) *Early Nineteenth Century Arabic Manuscripts from Kumasi*: 100, remarks that of what is now the *Royal Danish Library's* collection of Arabic manuscripts from Kumasi, Ghana, “Over ninety per cent of these manuscripts may be described as magical formulas, or prescriptions for preparing amulets”.

²¹⁵ See Last (1967) *Attitudes to the supernatural*.

²¹⁶ Hamès (2008) *Problématiques* : 89.

²¹⁷ So-called since each preparation starts with the Arabic word فائدة *fā'ida* “benefit”.

²¹⁸ Instructions usually call for the patient to write out a Qur'anic text a certain number of times or at a specific hour, day or month of the Islamic calendar. These actions are often accompanied with certain physical actions such as the movements of prayer, the oral repetition of prayer formulas, the preparation of tree barks and other pharmacological substances, or the slaughtering of animals of a certain colour. Other recipes call for the verse to be written out on paper and buried in certain locations or worn on the body. For more on *fawā'id*, see Canaan (1937) *The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans*. For examples from West Africa see Anawati (1972) *Trois Talismans Musulmans en Arabe Provenant du Mali (Marché de Mopti)*; Mommersteeg (1988) “*He Has Smitten Her to the Heart with Love*” *The Fabrication of an Islamic Love-Amulet in West Africa*; Naylor (2016) *An in-depth look at the British Library's collection of Arabic manuscripts from West Africa*.

²¹⁹ Last (2008) *The book in the Sokoto Caliphate*: 151, refers to this substance as *rubutu*.

Many fawā'id include number squares (*awfāq*),²²⁰ in which Qur'anic text has been rendered as a series of Arabic numerals through complex mathematical calculations. These devices claim to be able to cure the sick, to remove pain, to unite or separate lovers, to ward off misfortune and disease, to render oneself immune from attack, to make people and settlements become invisible, to communicate with unseen entities and cause them to enter or leave living bodies, to bring rain and a good harvest, to gain wealth, to conclude a business deal successfully, to rise through the ranks of society, to bring harm or death to one's enemies and a host of other manipulations of the natural order.

However, there was a deep disagreement as to whether these practices were "Islamic" or not. Presented as remedies for the evil influences of sorcery (*siḥr*), Islamic magical practice nevertheless worked on the same assumptions and was therefore could be prone to the same accusations. Like many of the legitimising forces we will discuss in this chapter, such magical practices were a subject to *ikhtilāf*, that is, a matter upon which there was no scholarly consensus.²²¹ As in the case of those Sufis who claimed to have experienced *kashf*, with little clarity or consistency offered by the law, it was often the political power of the actor that determined whether his acts were regarded as "Islamic", or whether he was an imposter engaging in pseudo-science to trick and mislead the faithful.

²²⁰ For more on number squares, see Cammann (1969) *Islamic and Indian Magic Squares Part I*.

²²¹ This uncertainty can be seen in the works of the Fodiawa. In Usman's earlier works, he stridently argues against the sale of fawaid, while Abdullahi (*ḍiyā' al-siyāsāt*) suggests that such devices were acceptable as long as they were written in Arabic, and that the buyer understood the content. For a wider discussion of Islamic magical practice in Africa, see Hamès (2008) *Problématiques*.

On a popular level, belief in the supernatural and supernatural entities such as spirits and demons did not necessarily have an Islamic basis. Many non-Muslim groups in West Africa used their connection with non-Islamic spirits as a means to maintain their independence in an era of Islamic encroachment. Some oral histories of the *Maguzawa*, a self-professed non-Muslim group in Hausaland, state that they were originally among the pagan chiefs of Kano who fled the town rather than abandon their animist practices.²²² While in the legends of the non-Muslim inhabitants of Borgu, Kisra (Khosroes, the Persian king) used his powers to protect them from Muslim invasion.²²³ In griot versions of the epic of *Askiya* Muḥammad, the *Askiya's* power comes not from his authority as a Muslim ruler, but rather the combined supernatural power of the *Askiya's* mother, said to be a great sorceress, and his father, a *jinn* who defeated the giant fish of Kukawa and assumed its powers over the spirit world.²²⁴ Meanwhile the Bori possession dance offered agency to its mostly female participants, making their activities doubly subversive and powerful in a patriarchal system.²²⁵ While the Fodiawa criticise Bori explicitly in their writings, they were unable to suppress it.²²⁶ The *inna* cult of Gobir also remained a powerful source of authority counter to the Fodiawa, in part enabling the irredentist Hausa kingdom to maintain its resistance to Sokoto's rule from their new capital of Tsibiri. In an attempt to

²²² Starratt (1993) *Oral history in Muslim Africa: Al-Maghili legends in Kano*: 243.

²²³ See Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*: 188–9, citing Temple and Temple (1922) *Tribes, Provinces, States and Emirates*.

²²⁴ See Hale and Malio (1990) *Scribe, Griot, and Novelist: Narrative Interpreters of the Songhay Empire followed by the Epic of Askia Mohammed, recounted by Nouhou Malio*; Wise and Taleb (2011) *The Timbuktu Chronicles, 1493–1599: Al Hajj Mahmud Kati's Tarikh al-fattash*.

²²⁵ See Tremearne (1914) *The ban of the Bori*.

²²⁶ See Usman *ajwiba muḥarrira*, who mentions the practice.

subvert the authority of the *inna*, Nana Asmau, a daughter of Usman dan Fodio, went on to incorporate some *inna* rituals into the *Yan Tawa* organisation she founded.²²⁷

While the fabrication of amulets, astrology, fortune telling and other hidden sciences were generally condemned by the Fodiawa as evidence for the kind of heretical innovation and ignorant superstition that their movement sought to stamp out, it is also clear that they both believed in and believed that they possessed *'ilm al-ghayb*, or knowledge of the hidden. Many in the *jamā'a* fervently believed that Usman was connected to the Mahdi and addressed him by term *walī* long after he flatly denied such associations. Numerous supernatural acts were also attributed to him and to Muhammad Bello at the time of the 1804 jihad and in subsequent years.²²⁸ Judging by the rare accounts of the jihad years by actors from outside the Sahelian knowledge elite, the Fodiawa's connection to supernatural forces was a powerful element of their authority, at least among non-elite, nominally Muslim actors.²²⁹ While such connections are not always obvious from the Arabic sources alone, we should consider charismatic authority a constant source of dynamism within the jihadist movement.

²²⁷ See Boyd (1990) *Asma'u Fodio's use of Power*.

²²⁸ See *karāmāt* literature, discussed in the conclusion of this thesis.

²²⁹ See Chapter One of this thesis.

Ethnic or “Traditional” authority (*nasab*)

The Arabic concept of *nasab*, or “noble origin”, was linked to legitimacy to rule from the earliest days of Islam. Tribal affiliation through the Quraysh, the tribe of Muhammad, became one of the bases for Caliphal office.²³⁰ Descendants of the Prophet – known as *sayyids* or *sharifs* – traced their genealogies from Fatima, the Prophet Muhammad’s only surviving progeny. The names of the Prophet’s companions, the Sahaba, were scrupulously recorded. Studies of the life of Prophet Muhammad (*sīra*) contain bewildering numbers of names. The social prestige and – under the policy of the Rashidun Caliphs – financial rewards that came from tracing family involvement in the story of the early Muslim community spread the Arab world’s strong tradition of keeping genealogical records to the lands they conquered.²³¹ It follows that in Islamic contexts, (creative) genealogy assumed an important role. Like other parts of the Muslim world, in Muslim West Africa finding a way to link oneself to the Islamic past through a *nasab* was an essential component of authority. In a sense, *nasab* went hand in hand with *‘ilm*. To create a logical and meaningful genealogical link to prestigious ancestors required deep knowledge of Islamic history. And, as opposed to oral epic histories or folk origin stories, a *nasab* had to be written down, in Arabic.²³²

In West Africa, the link between an Arab origin and the right to rule is linked to the political developments of the fifteenth century, as outlined above. In this period, Islamisation of

²³⁰ See Hugh Kennedy (1986) *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphate*: 50.

²³¹ Noth (1994) *The early Arabic historical tradition : a source-critical study*: 109–172.

²³² See Abdullahi, quoted in *kanz al-awlad* MS Cambridge (African Studies Centre): Chapter One.

the West African ruling class by North African scholars such as al-Maghīlī also increased the cultural and social dominance of Arab and Berber groups. Bruce Hall demonstrates how Arab heritage became over time a benchmark for social stratification.²³³ To justify their prominent position, Sahelian Arabo-Berber elites reimagined their pasts to connect themselves to those who first brought Islam across the Sahara, such as ‘Uqba ibn Nāfi’, an army general under Caliph Umar who led the Muslim conquest of the Maghreb.²³⁴ At the same time, elites were constantly reshaping their past to suit their changing needs in the present. In this context, the constructs of race and ethnicity were considered especially fluid. Starratt suggested that in Kano, elites assumed traditional authority roles by discovering “Islamic” origins for the African social practices and institutions over which they presided. But in times of reform, scholars uncovered the “pagan” origins of such practices, thus delegitimising this same elite.²³⁵ Established traditional authority figures saw continuation and harmony with the Islamic world, aided by links to the Arab, Muslim past. Meanwhile, new claimants to this role demonstrated the “African-ness” of elite groups through origin stories and equated it to the corruption and heretical innovations they saw all around them. Superior authority required a superior link to the Arab, Muslim past.

²³³ Hall (2011) *History of Race*: 33; 40–1. See also Norris (1986) *The Arab conquest of the Western Sahara: Studies of the historical events, religious beliefs and social customs which made the remotest Sahara a part of the Arab world*; Ould Cheikh (1985) *Nomadisme, Islam et pouvoir politique dans la société maure précoloniale (XI^{ème} siècle-XIX^{ème} siècle): essai sur quelques aspects du tribalisme*.

²³⁴ For more on the Uqba myth, see Nobili (2012) *Back to Saharan Myths: Preliminary Notes on ‘Uqba al-Mustajab*; Naylor (2018) *Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello’s Debate over the Torobbe-Fulani: Case Study for a New Methodology for Arabic Primary Source Material from West Africa*.

²³⁵ Starratt (1993) *Oral history in Muslim Africa: Al-Maghili legends in Kano*: 58. For an equivalent phenomenon in East Africa, see discussion of concepts of *dini* and *mila* in Loimeier and Seesemann (2006) *The global worlds of the Swahili : interfaces of Islam, identity and space in 19th and 20th-century East Africa* : 7–13.

In this social and political context, what the Fodiawa say about their race and origin makes perfect sense. Like many leaders of the West African Muslim reform movements of the nineteenth century, the Fulani identified themselves as *TorodBe*.²³⁶ In their native Futa Toro, tradition suggested that the *TorodBe* were originally an African people who became clients or even slaves of the Fulani, before slowly adapting their language and customs.²³⁷ However, when we read what the Fodiawa have to say about the *TorodBe*, we find a completely different story. Borrowing the “rhetorical strategy” of the Arabo-Berber elites that came before them, the Fodiawa reimagined their *nasab* to reflect their objectives for religious reform and Islamic government in the Hausa region.²³⁸ They did not present the *TorodBe* as an African people, but rather as outsiders with a heritage in the Arab world. Their migration from Futa Toro was reimagined as a *hijra* to escape religious persecution,²³⁹ while Abdullahi suggested that the *TorodBe* also descended from the historical Uqba figure.²⁴⁰

In contrast, the Fodiawa described their region and its inhabitants as the *bilād al-sūdān*, or “land of the blacks”.²⁴¹ Following Hall’s argument, we should recognise that this term was not a neutral one. Rather, it was part of a strategy of asserting authority in an African context using

²³⁶ See Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt*; (after 1817) *kitāb al-nasab*; (n.d.) *aṣl al-Fulātīyīn*. Bello (1812) *infāq al-maysūr* in Shādhilī (1996) *infāq al-maysūr*: 329–336; (after 1812) *ḥāshiya*.

²³⁷ See Gomez (1992) *Pragmatism in the age of Jihad : the precolonial state of Bundu*: 36; Willis (1978) *Torodbe Clerisy*: 196; 200. See also *tanbīh al-jāhil fī uṣūl al-fulān* MS Dakar: 24–25, which repeats this theory.

²³⁸ Hall (2011) *History of Race*: 104.

²³⁹ Abdullahi & Bello, *supra*. See also Shareef (2004) *The Lost & Found Children of Abraham In Africa and the American Diaspora*.

²⁴⁰ For origin stories of the Kunta and Tuareg, see Nobili (2012) *Saharan Myths*; Norris (1975) *The Tuaregs : their Islamic legacy and its diffusion in the Sahel*. For origin stories of the Fulani, see Balogun (1987) *The Fulani in Arabic Sources*. For the *TorodBe*-Fulani, see Hiskett (1957) *Material relating to the state of learning among the Fulani before their jihād*; Willis (1978) *Torodbe Clerisy*.

²⁴¹ Titles of numerous works by Usman and Bello include this term. See appendices.

arguments of race. In the parts of *infāq al-maysūr* dealing with the history of the Hausa region, Bello used origin stories to associate pathological traits to the Fodiawa's enemies. He detailed how the Hausa were descended from the slaves of a ruler of Bornu, while the inhabitants of rebellious regions such as Borgu and Gurma were also descended from slaves. Throughout, Bello reinforces the mental association already made in the Sahel between blackness, paganism, and enslavability.²⁴² As a reminder of the fluctuating notion of race, as *amīr al-mu'minīn* Bello freely incorporated the Hausa into his growing Muslim empire, while suggested that due to their history of resistance to the Muslim conquests, Berber and Tuareg groups were atavistically rebellious.²⁴³ Further, while Bello did not initially question his uncle's theory that the *TorodBe* were descended from Uqba, in the context of a rising tension between the two men, and facing the question of how to involve the Hausa majority in the Sokoto project after the jihad was won, he became more critical and reverted to the theory that the *TorodBe* were originally an African people.²⁴⁴

Like spiritual descent from the *muqaddams* of the Qadiriyya, sharifian descent – from the family of Prophet Muhammad – also carried immense authority. Although the Fodiawa did not claim sharifian descent themselves, they were aided by several who did. The emissary of the Kunta, Nūr b. Ṭāha, who initiated Usman into the *Qadiriyya Mukhtariyya*, was described by

²⁴² See Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*, who writes at length on Bello's descriptions of the Hausa region and the migration theories of the *TorodBe*.

²⁴³ Bello (after 1821) *al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq*, discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis.

²⁴⁴ See Naylor (2018) *Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello's Debate over the Torobbe-Fulani*, and Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Abdullahi as a *sharif*.²⁴⁵ During the period covered by this thesis, the Fodiawa were visited by several *sharifs* who supported their efforts, no doubt increasing the authority they held.²⁴⁶ Meanwhile, European visitors to Sokoto in the 1830s remarked on the “swarm of sheriffs” asking funds from the Sokoto and Gwandu treasuries. The fact that all claimants got what they asked for confirmed that the authority conferred by sharifian descent also worked both ways.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 104.

²⁴⁶ For Sharif Hannun Gīwa, see Abdullahi (1806) *kashf al-lu'm*; Bello (c. 1805) *miṭāḥ al-baṣā'ir*. Wazir Junaidu dismisses these documents as forgeries. For Sharif Qamr al-Dīn, see Belloin in *majmū' ba'd al-rasā'il* MX NW (Hunwick): 37–9.

²⁴⁷ See Lander (1830) *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa : With the Subsequent Adventures of the Author* Volume I: 276. Clapperton (Denham and Clapperton (1826) *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*: 91) had earlier remarked that “Both Bello and his father have, it seems, been much cheated by the Arabs [in all] their dealings, twenty sometimes coming at a time on a begging excursion, with the story of being poor shreefs; and, if not presented with thirty or forty slaves, besides food and camels, they were sure to bully the Felatahs, telling them they were not Mussulmans, and would never see paradise, on account of the number of the faithful they had put to death in the conquest of Soudan.”

Conclusion

While the work of this chapter has been to isolate and expand upon the concepts of “religious-legal”, “charismatic” and ethnic or “traditional” authorities, it is important to reiterate that the remainder of this thesis does not treat these authorities as being at all separate, but rather as vital components of a single whole. Likewise, rather than stating that we can find “religious-legal”, “charismatic” and “traditional” authorities within the Fodiawa’s Arabic treatises, it would be more accurate to say that in the context of the nineteenth century Sahel, *writing Arabic treatises was how one expressed authority of all kinds*. The Fodiawa were buying into a common literary tradition of authority-making that had been present in the Sahel region for several centuries. Within this tradition, the various categories of authority worked together to affirm and reinforce one another.

Elite actors identified a prominent historical role for themselves in the Islamization of the bilād al-sūdān using a select group of stock characters, such as the Uqba figure. They demonstrated thorough knowledge of a select body of Maliki legal texts, learnt through a standardised pedagogical chain. They adhered to a specific branch of the Qadiriyya, a Qadiriyya Mukhtariyya, connected to the Kunta. Spiritual, pedagogical and ancestral genealogies worked together in tandem, and al-Maghīlī was the lynchpin of both pedagogical and Qadiri pedigree. While knowledge of Islamic history allowed for a more authentic *nasab*, knowledge of esoteric practice and Sufi ritual better enabled elite actors to experience *kashf*. *Kashf*, in turn, bolstered claims to paramount religious and legal knowledge.

But such a narrow definition of “authority” did not restrict those who wielded it to a similarly narrow set of actions. Rather, as the history of the Sahel region tells us, this discursive tradition of authority was a tool kit through which Muslim actors could claim legitimacy for a wide range of activities. The remainder of this thesis details how the Fodiawa used this tool kit over a period of roughly thirty years. During these thirty years, they rose from rebels to rulers. Islamic discursive tradition gave the Fodiawa the flexibility to maintain legitimacy in the face of radical policy changes, but also allowed for others to challenge and question it.

CHAPTER TWO: PROCESSES OF DISSENT AND ACCOMMODATION

There are some remarkable changes in the Arabic writings of Usman dan Fodio between the start and end of the jihad. In essence, in the pre-jihad period Usman boldly announced his manifesto for a radical overturning of the social order, using what some considered to be an independent interpretation of Islamic law (*ijtihād*). After the jihad, he went back on many of these rulings, urging an approach grounded on a comparison with a wide variety of scholarly positions (*taqlīd*).

Louis Brenner suggests it was the challenge of Muhammad al-Amīn al-Kānamī to the Fodiawa's rhetoric of jihad that forced them to find the legal means by which to justify it.²⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Last and Al-Hajj argue it is more a case of genre. While Usman's earlier writings were intended as educational works to "instruct people without perplexing them", the responsibilities attached to their victory led to the Fodiawa to explore the complexity of legal rulings when "more precise knowledge was necessary".²⁴⁹ This thesis takes the view that while the challenge of al-Kānamī goes some way to explaining these changes, something deeper is at work. Namely, a dip into Triaud's "juridical tool kit" to steer the process of dissent into a process of accommodation, as the Fodiawa transformed from dissenting Muslim rebels to Muslim rulers seeking to buttress their control.

²⁴⁸ Brenner (1979) *Religion and Politics in Bornu: the Case of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi*; Brenner (1992) *The jihad debate between Sokoto and Borno: An historical analysis of Islamic political discourse in Nigeria*.

²⁴⁹ Last and Al-Hajj (1965) *Attempts at defining a Muslim in 19th century Hausaland and Bornu*: 240.

This thesis refers to these traditions as “processes of dissent²⁵⁰ and accommodation”, while this chapter narrates how the Fodiawa moved between one and the other in the period c. 1790–1814. While others have described these changes in detail,²⁵¹ I demonstrate the processes by which Usman used legal, charismatic and ethnic discursive strategies to create the authority for dissent against the Hausa rulers, and then for accommodation to the new status quo. Such a study promises to enlighten our understanding of why the jihad was so meteorically successful, and how the Fodiawa were able to convert the inchoate fervour of jihadism into a durable regional legitimacy to rule. At the same time, it also precisely locates the seeds of future divisions that would soon arise within the *jamā'a*, to be discussed in subsequent chapters. This thesis demonstrates that the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa – often considered purely “religious” in character – had a vital role in the geo-politics of the Sahel region and as such, reflect more accurately what may have been occurring on the ground than previously thought.

This chapter is divided in the following subsections: (1) “Laying the foundations” explains how, from the 1790s, Usman dan Fodio began defining the religious landscape of Hausaland. His works critically appraising various Muslim authorities in the region normalised the Fodiawa’s claim to supersede them. While Usman’s initiation into the Qadiriyya in 1794 reinforced a link to existing Sahelian knowledge elites, his reference to millenarian expectations at the beginning of the twelfth Islamic century (1785–1786 AD) undoubtedly facilitated the spread and

²⁵⁰ After developing this terminology, I found that Murray Last has also developed the concept of “dissent” in several articles (Last (1992) *'Injustice' and Legitimacy in the Early Sokoto Caliphate*; Last (2009) *The Pattern of Dissent: Boko Haram in Nigeria 2009*; Last (2014) *From dissent to dissidence: the genesis & development of reformist Islamic groups in northern Nigeria*) from which I drew inspiration as I took my work further.

²⁵¹ Among them Moumouni (2008) *Vie et oeuvre du Cheikh Uthmân Dan Fodio (1754-1817): de l'islam au soufisme*; Mahibou (2010) *Théorie du gouvernement*.

militarisation of his movement. (2) “A process of dissent” introduces a number of Arabic writings Usman produced in the years directly preceding the jihad of 1804. Contrary to standard accounts of these years, from an analysis of these works it is clear that the Fodiawa had already formulated a strategy of delegitimising the Hausa Kings before the start of hostilities. This process of dissent consisted of (a) a set of legal arguments for *takfir* of the Hausa Kings and those who supported them (b) an alternative narrative of the Fodiawa’s initiation into the Qadiriyya that bypassed current Sahelian hierarchies (c) claims that Usman was directly connected to the Mahdi figure, and (d) an appeal to ethnic solidarity with the Fulani of Hausaland. (3) “A process of accommodation” highlights that after the jihad was largely won, the Fodiawa had to conclude the process of dissent and find a way to justify the status quo, converting their authority to lead a rebellion into a legitimacy to govern. This process of accommodation consisted of (a) a rationalisation and limitation of the doctrine of *takfir* (b) a justification of the jihad by citing historical precedents, (c) finding a legal excuse for the seeming excesses and confusion caused by the war, (d) a normalisation of the Fodiawa’s ties to the Qadiriyya and a disavowal of millenarian claims, and (e) an assertion of the right to govern the Hausa region through highlighting the role of the Fodiawa’s ancestors in the Islamisation of the Sahel. In the concluding part of this chapter, “From *ijtihād* to *taqlīd*”, I will reflect on the shift between these processes and the consequences for authority and legitimacy they entailed.

Laying the Foundations: Writings of Usman dan Fodio before 1804

Throughout the 1780s and 1790s, Usman was engaged in a series of teaching tours in the Hausa countryside, joined by his brother Abdullahi.²⁵² Usman's *iḥyā' al-sunna* has been described as a summary of what he preached on these tours, as well as a teaching guide for others.²⁵³ From Muhammad Bello's highly detailed account of one of Usman's lectures, it is clear that Usman's main focus was on teaching the basics of Islamic practice to rural Muslim communities.²⁵⁴ While he did point out the heretical innovations, or *bid'a*, that they had unknowingly incorporated into their religious practices, his views on the subject in this instance were remarkably tolerant.²⁵⁵ But Usman was also writing a set of works that would set the grounds for *takfir* – declaring other Muslims to be non-Muslims – and pre-empted, in various ways, the jihad against the Hausa kings in which *takfir* was a vital component.

Well before the outbreak of jihad in 1804, which rested on the assertion that the Hausa kings were apostates from Islam, it is clear that there were active debates in the Sahel region on what constituted a Muslim. Usman's works from the pre-jihad period serve to assert his own opinions on question of *takfir*. In these debates, Usman placed himself in the middle ground between several extremes of thought. With a mixture of logic and scriptural references, he argued that those on either side of him were either apostates from Islam, or otherwise *fāsiqīn*,

²⁵² See El-Masri (1963) *The Life of Shehu Usuman dan Fodio Before the jihād*.

²⁵³ See Balogun (1967) *A critical edition of the Iḥyā' al-Sunna wa-lkḥmād al-Bid'a of 'Uṭṭmān b. Fūdī, popularly known as Usumanu Ḍan Fodio*.

²⁵⁴ Bello (1812) *infāq al-maysūr* in Shādhilī (1996): Chapters 13–19.

²⁵⁵ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 85–86.

immoral people who had no place at the table. In an analysis of these early works, we will discuss how he negotiated such an authority to judge among others, and why having such authority mattered. By taking control of the parameters defining a Muslim, the Fodiawa cultivated the necessary authority to lead a rebel movement that rested on the anathematisation of others. At the same time, we also need to see these events in the context of Usman's initiation into the Qadiriyya Mukhtariyya in 1794, and his conscious references to the prophecy that the beginning of the twelfth Islamic century would herald major eschatological events. A link to the Qadiriyya connected the Fodiawa to Sahelian spiritual hierarchies, confirming that the authority they claimed was accepted at a higher level, while millenarian discourse injected an urgency that would otherwise have been absent. In sum, the various strands of authority discussed in the previous chapter coalesced to give the movement of the Fodiawa the legitimacy to overturn the current order and propose a new form of West Africa statecraft.

In Usman's works on *takfir*, he identified four distinct "satanic parties": religious scholars operating in the Sahel region whose parameters of unbelief were unacceptable to him. These works are *naṣā'ih al-umma* and *ifhām al-munkirūn*. Although neither is dated, Hiskett notes that much of the material from the former is derived from Usman's *magnum opus*, the *iḥyā' al-sunna*, composed in 1793. It can therefore be assumed that Usman had formulated his policies on *takfir* well before the jihad.²⁵⁶ What is more, from the *ifhām al-munkirūn* we understand that Usman's views on this matter were already a subject of debate. Usman

²⁵⁶ Hiskett (1962) *An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*: 578.

addressed a section of this work to people who rejected his teachings about on *takfir*.²⁵⁷ The first group that Usman singles out are “those who deny there are born unbelievers²⁵⁸ in our *bilād al-sūdān*”, or otherwise scholars who fail to anathematise those “who mix Islam with the words and actions of the pagans”.²⁵⁹ As he goes on to say, “Every one of the Sunni scholars, whose works are available in these lands of the *bilād al-sūdān*” pointed out the existence of such a non-believing people. Usman referred to the words of Qadi Ayyad, a twelfth century jurist who lived in North Africa and Andalucía who talked of:

“the polytheists from the Arabs or the Indians or the Chinese or the blacks and others who do not refer to a book”. See the words of Qadi Ayyad to know that the polytheists in the [*bilād*] *al-sūdān* [...] are also infidels by consensus of the nation²⁶⁰

But Usman went on to claim that the belief status of those who refused to follow this judgement should also be called into question:

the consensus of the Muslims holds that those who venerate rocks and trees with sacrifices, even if they claim to practice Islam, are infidels...and there is also a consensus that those who do not anathematize them are anathematised²⁶¹

Although in this example he did not quote him directly, as this early stage Usman was already relying on al-Maghīlī’s answers to Askiya Muhammad to formulate his policy on *takfir*.

²⁵⁷ Usman (c.1774–1804) *ifhām al-munkirūn* MX Niamey (MARA) 229: 6 –10 (as labelled: 3-14–3-10).

²⁵⁸ Ar. كافر أصلي *kāfir aṣlī* “original infidel”.

²⁵⁹ Usman (c.1774–1804) *naṣā’ih al-umma* MS Niamey (MARA) 264: Chapter 1.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.: Chapter 1.

²⁶¹ Usman *ifhām al-munkirūn*: 9 (labelled: 3-11).

The second group identified by Usman were those who, conversely, anathematised good Muslims on account of their beliefs. Usman describes these people as *mutakallimūn*

(theologians) or more commonly as simply *ṭullāb* (students). As Usman explains:

These are the ones who do not believe the faithful and do not judge that anyone has faith except after learning [all their] beliefs... [these are things] which they have found in their books on theology [*‘ilm al-kalām*], namely that whoever believes this thing and that is an unbeliever, whoever is ignorant of such and such a thing is an unbeliever.²⁶²

Usman reportedly wrote over fifty works discrediting the *mutakallimūn*, the great majority written before the commencement of the jihad.²⁶³ He explains that groups of overzealous students of theology operating in the local region were anathematising people for not having a complete knowledge of theology. These people Usman also anathematises, following the logic that calling good Muslims infidels was in effect calling Islam unbelief.²⁶⁴

The third group are those who anathematised based on major sins (*ma‘āṣī*).²⁶⁵ This school is the only one that Usman identifies with a specific and contemporary figure, that of his former teacher, Jibril b. ‘Umar. As well as mentioning him in the *naṣā’ih*, Usman also composed a

²⁶² Ibid.: Chapter 2.

²⁶³ See Bello (1812) *infāq al-maysūr* in Shādhilī (1996): Chapter 11. Usman’s works dealing specifically with the Mutakallimūn include *mi‘rāj al-‘awām sama’ ‘ilm al-kalām* (1784–5), *kifāyat al-muhtadīn*, *ḥiṣn al-afhām* and *mir’āt al-ṭullāb* (all presumed written 1774–1804). For more on *ḥiṣn al-afhām*, see Siddiqi (1989) *ḥiṣn al-afhām fī juyūsh al-awhām*.

²⁶⁴ Usman (c.1774–1804) *naṣā’ih al-umma*. Usman does not advocate the study of *‘ilm al-kalām* as it may all too easily mislead the faithful. As ruler, Bello would control the study of theology very tightly. See subsequent chapters of this thesis.

²⁶⁵ Usman identifies these groups with the *khawārij* (the kharijites). The original kharijites refused to acknowledge the authority of Muhammad’s successors in the first Islamic century and as a result were forced to emigrate from the Hijaz. There is evidence that the kharijites played an important role in the early history of West African Islam in the form of the Ibadis (see Savage, 1992). But as Hiskett (1962: 596) convincingly argues, by Usman’s time “*khārijī*” probably meant simply “schismatic” or “innovator”.

treatise explaining the difference between his position on *takfir* and that of Jibril.²⁶⁶ This work is also pre-jihad, and there is considerable overlap of content between the two works. The only writings attributed to Jibril that survive today are the two that Usman quotes in full in his aforementioned works: an unnamed composition in verse and another in rhyming prose. These two compositions are short and unsophisticated, showing no special talent for Arabic composition. In them, Jibril savagely attacks the people of the *bilād al-sūdān* as a whole, and anathematises them collectively on his own authority, without quoting any other scholar:

So know, whoever has insight of people in the [*bilād al*]-*sūdān*, or rather memory of them:

The only thing you see from them is he who claims his Islam with mouth open wide
While rejecting fasting and prayer out of pride, and with the ugliest of curses
For he is truly an infidel without a doubt because he has clearly done what is
forbidden²⁶⁷

Regarding this passage, Usman stated that:

His words were not correct, for the [real] unbelievers among them did not commit unbelief merely for committing those sins but committed unbelief in other things²⁶⁸

Meanwhile, he questioned how Jibril could claim consensus “on [a subject] which no scholars of the Sunna have accepted”. Usman maintained – as al-Maghīlī did also – the standard Sunni

²⁶⁶ Usman (before 1804) *shifā’ al-ghalīl fī-mā ashkala min kalām shaykh shuyūkhnā Jibrīl* “Quenching the thirst concerning what is dubious from the words of the Sheikh of our Sheikhs Jibrīl”.

²⁶⁷ Jibrīl, unnamed composition in verse, quoted in Usman (c.1774–1804) *shifā’ al-ghalīl*: 2.

²⁶⁸ Usman *naṣā’ih al-umma*: Chapter Three. He also quotes a verse from Abdullahi on the subject:

Oh Sheikh, perhaps anathematising the people of the Sudan [*ahl al-sūdān*] on account of these sins
is somewhat harsh and wrong and not the true anathematising

position that the only forbidden act for which one can be anathematised is *shirk* (polytheism), but only when it has been committed knowingly. He who commits forbidden acts, or commits polytheism unknowingly is a *fāsiq* (immoral), and one cannot be anathematised for *fisq* alone. Usman justified his position by citing Qur'an 4:48: "God does not forgive those who set up partners to him, but forgives anything else to whom he pleases"²⁶⁹ but significantly, steers clear of anathematising this group as he did the others.

The fourth and final "satanic party" Usman cited in his *naṣā'ih al-umma* are "the ones who follow the blameworthy practices of their fathers", that is to say, innovations in Islamic practices such as ritual washing, the performance of prayers, the recitation of the Qur'an,²⁷⁰ or laws relating to inheritance.²⁷¹ Usman ruled that these practices did not constitute unbelief but *fisq*, if done without the knowledge that they are wrong. In the *ifhām al-munkirūn*, he stated that though such innovations were by consensus *makrūh* (hateful), they did not constitute *kufr*. Bello later specified that this group consisted of ignorant would-be jurists who passed fatwas based on "bizarre and unusual" authorities and taken from books "of the most loathsome nature", as well as those who pretended to have hidden knowledge and claimed to be Sufis.²⁷²

In sum, Usman's description of the religious landscape of Hausaland involved four groups that he claimed had erroneous ways of defining belief. Aside from Jibril b. 'Umar, these groups were not identified by a specific group name or individual representative. However, we can surmise that the first group, those who either did not accept that unbelief exists in the

²⁶⁹ Usman *ifhām al-munkirūn*: 8 (3-12).

²⁷⁰ See *ifhām al-munkirūn*, where Usman refers to a particular school who teaches elisions to ease pronunciation.

²⁷¹ Usman makes extensive lists of such practices in works such as *kitāb al-farq* and *nūr al-albāb*.

²⁷² Bello *infāq al-maysūr* (1812) in Shareef (2008) *Easy Expenditure* Chapter 12: 2.

Hausa region or refused to condemn it, could be applied to scholars such as al-Kānamī who did not attribute unbelief to the traditional practices of the ruling class, but rather defined it as custom, or *ʿurf*. Equally, Usman may have had in mind scholars at the Hausa royal courts who did not recognise the rituals of the Hausa kings as unbelief. The second group – the elitist theologians – can be seen as a by-product of the rise in religious education in Hausaland. In this environment, groups of religious scholars vied to out-compete each other in theological knowledge and Usman recognises, in the *ifhām al-munkirūn*, that there were those who challenged his own authority in religious matters. Among his critics, he cites those who deny that “all I have said has been with a view to inviting the people to religion”, as well as those who questioned his knowledge of the Sunna. Usman may have been referring to the quarrel he had with another local scholar, Muṣṭafá Ghunī, who had criticised Usman for educating both men and women in the same space.²⁷³ But while the Fodiawa were arguably just one such group of scholars, Usman successfully delegitimised competing groups by labelling them *ṭullāb*, mere “students” of the Islamic sciences. The label stuck, and he would go on to use the same term to describe his later critics, including his own brother, Abdullahi. As for the fourth group, those who followed the blameworthy practices of their fathers, in many other works Usman attributes these very same practices to the “ignorant” among the Hausa.²⁷⁴ Presumably, Usman had in mind the Hausa *mallam* class not attached to the royal court. By assuming the right to judge others, and declare his theological opponents either apostates or immoral reprobates, Usman had set a precedent that allowed the Fodiawa to make the Hausa kings legitimate targets for

²⁷³ See Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 86–7.

²⁷⁴ See Usman (c.1774–1804) *ḥukm jahhāl bilād al-Ḥawsa*.

jihad. Meanwhile, by avoiding a definition of his own theological school, Usman allowed for the subsequent changes and flexibility that characterised the processes of dissent and accommodation.

But other events during this same period also established the Fodiawa as paramount authorities in the Hausa region. The Fodiawa first mention the Qadiriyya tariqa in the mid-1790s. In one of his earliest works, *tabshīr al-umma*, dated 4 August, 1794, Usman recounts the merits of the founder of the Qadiriyya, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, but does not include any *wird* or spiritual chain linking himself directly with the Qadiri order. Three years later, in 1797, the Fodiawa were “officially” initiated into the Qadiriyya Mukhtariyya by Shaykh Nūr b. Ṭāhir al-Fūlānī, an emissary of the Kunta sent to Hausaland after reports of the growing strength of the *jamā’a*.²⁷⁵ There is no record of what Shaykh Nūr and the Fodiawa discussed, but immediately after this visit, Usman commanded his followers to arm themselves for rebellion, and composed a poem²⁷⁶ announcing his initiation into the Qadiriyya, along with the *wird* of ‘Abd al-Qādir.²⁷⁷ The poem, composed some five years before the start of the jihad, clearly pre-empted the conflict:

Through the rank of one who is called ‘Abd al-Qādir

²⁷⁵ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 104. Note parallels with the story of Sharīf ‘Abd Allāh Ḥannuna Gīwa, who according to Abdullahi (*kashf al-lu’ma*) had come to Hausaland from a far off land around 1805 “in answer to Usman’s prayer” to encourage the *jamā’a* and render them spiritual assistance through passing on his *silṣila* to the Prophet.

²⁷⁶ Dated by Abdullahi to between 24 August and 22 September, 1797.

²⁷⁷ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 104 -107.

Show me as a conqueror by your religion in these countries²⁷⁸

The poem goes on to invoke the spiritual power of ‘Abd al-Qādir, as Usman invites the saint to work through him as his intermediary on earth and asks God to grant him divine insight – *kashf* – through Qadiri spiritual practice. In the nineteenth century Sahel, these were clear authority markers. What is more, by accepting the *wird* of the Qadiriyya from the Kunta, the Fodiawa were assuming a defined position in the politico-spiritual hierarchy of the wider Sahel region.

These events of the 1790s were also taking place in a context of a fervent Mahdist expectation which cannot be overlooked. While al-Maghīlī had introduced the concept of a centennial *mujaddid*, there was also a belief – reported by such luminaries as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī – that the *mujaddid* appearing at the beginning of the twelfth Islamic century would be the Mahdi. This corresponded to exactly to the period (1785–6 AD) that Usman began his preaching tours of the Hausa countryside. Several prophecies circulating the region during this period – reported by Muhammad Bello in the *infāq* – suggested that Usman was the promised *mujaddid*,²⁷⁹ while as we will see from the next section, Usman himself would go on to make the connection between himself, the twelfth *mujaddid* and the Mahdi.

²⁷⁸ *Abdullahi (1813) tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 105.

²⁷⁹ Bello (1813) *infāq al-maysūr*, *supra*.

A Process of Dissent: 1804 – 1810

By 1800, Usman's judgements on belief and *takfir* had not only circulated among his growing followers but also spread to the wider Sahel region. The *ajwiba muharrira*, composed several years before the jihad, is a response to questions put to Usman by one Shīsummaṣ bin Aḥmad, a Tuareg Sheikh. Prominent among his concerns are precise guidelines as to who was a Muslim – in the context of enslavement policy – and specific requests to arbitrate in cases from his community that may or may not necessitate *takfir*.²⁸⁰ The authority placed in Usman by Shīsummaṣ bin Aḥmad confirms that Usman's authority to define belief and non-belief was widely respected. According to Muhammad Bello, full-scale fighting between the jihadists and the Hausa kings first broke out on 21 June 1804, after the community had made *hijra* from Gobir territory in February of that year. By the time of this official commencement of hostilities, Usman had already produced a body of writings that legitimised such a conflict.²⁸¹

The focus of these texts was not to educate rural populations in Islamic practice, nor did they examine matters of theology. Instead, they focused narrowly on those legal judgements that would be relevant in the case of a jihad of the sword: the legal basis for jihad, the terms of engagement in jihad, laws on emigration from non-Muslim lands, laws on friendship with non-

²⁸⁰ The cases Bin Aḥmad cites concern a local man who complained that being obliged to pay zakat caused the death of his cattle, and practitioners of the bori possession dance. In both cases Usman recommends anathematisation.

²⁸¹ Usman's work, *masā'il muhimma yaḥtāju ilā ma'rifatihā ahl al-Sūdān* "Important matters that the ahl al-sūdān need to know about", is the earliest of these writings, is dated 4 August, 1794. The *wathīqa ilā jamī' ahl al-sūdān*, considered by Bivar (1961) to be the "manifesto" of the jihad, could also date to this period. Other works by Usman that fit into this genre are *ajwiba muḥarrira*, *ikhmād al-bid'a*, *ḥukm jahhāl bilād al-ḥawsa* and *tamyīz al-muslimīn min al-kāfirīn*. They were considered by al-Hajj (1977) to belong to the pre-jihad period (c.1774–1804).

Muslims, laws on the enslavement of non-believers during a jihad and the appropriation of property. In the *tazyīn al-waraqāt*, Abdullahi plainly stated that Usman did not call for an armed uprising for the purposes of defence, but rather because of “the greatness of the community, and their desire to break away from the unbelievers”.²⁸² Even though Usman did not mention the Hausa kings by name, Al-Hajj is right to point out that the purpose of these documents was clearly to provoke a popular, armed rebellion against the Hausa kings in the year leading up to the declaration of jihad in 1804.²⁸³ In short, it is a process towards dissent.

The process of dissent laid out the path towards the jihad step by step. Briefly summarised, Usman affirmed – as he had already outlined in his previous works – that anyone committing an act that was opposed to the basic tenets of Islam or that mixed Islam with pagan beliefs, must be anathematised.²⁸⁴ What is more, if a ruler engaged in non-Islamic practice, his territory became a land of unbelief, irrespective of the beliefs of his subjects.²⁸⁵ Muslims who found themselves living in a land of unbelief were, he said, obliged to emigrate to a Muslim polity under the allegiance of a single leader, the *amīr al-muʾminīn*.²⁸⁶ Obedience to the *amīr al-muʾminīn* is obligatory, and Muslims who did not emigrate to the *dar al-islam*, did not submit to the *amīr al-muʾminīn*, or maintained friendly relations (*muwālāt*) with the infidels would also be considered infidels and fought along with the unbelievers.²⁸⁷ Under the terms of engagement in such a jihad, taking the children and wives of the unbelievers captive and appropriating their

²⁸² Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 105.

²⁸³ Al-Hajj (1973) *The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria*: 71.

²⁸⁴ Usman (c. 1774–1804) *tamyīz al-muslimīn*.

²⁸⁵ Usman (c.1804–1810) *wathīqa ilā jamīʾ ahl al-sūdān* in Bivar (1961): 240. This was the view of al-Maghili, although he is not cited.

²⁸⁶ Usman *wathīqa ilā jamīʾ ahl al-sūdān*; (1806) *bayān wujūb al-hijra*.

²⁸⁷ Usman reiterated this judgement in his work *al-amr bi-muwālāt*, dated 7 April, 1805.

possessions was “legal by consensus”, as was appropriating the possessions of those Muslims who chose to remain in the lands of the unbelievers.²⁸⁸ None of these arguments were new to Islamic jurisprudence, nor were they explicitly linked to the political context of Hausaland in the nineteenth century. Rather, these arguments were imbued with authority precisely because they had been employed iteratively throughout Islamic history, and continue to be deployed today.²⁸⁹

Well before the jihad, the Fodiawa had also spread the word that they held charismatic authority through their connection to the Qadiriyya Mukhtariyya, an event dated to late 1797. However, in parallel to this narrative is another more curious one. A document purportedly written by Usman²⁹⁰ recounts a series of visions he had in 1790 and 1794:

When I reached 36 years of age [1790], God removed the cover from my sight,²⁹¹ the blockage from my ears and my nose, the film from my taste buds, the seal from my hand, the stiffness from my legs and the heaviness from my belly. I could see the close as if it were the far and hear what was far away as if it were close by. I could smell the sweetness of the slave of God and the foul scent of the sinner. I could tell by taste the halal from the haram before swallowing. I could pick up with my hand what was far away while sitting down. I could walk on foot what a stallion could not cover in years. All this was by the grace of God who gives to whom he wills. I knew my body part by part, bone by bone, sinew by sinew, hair by hair, each one in its proper place. And I found that on

²⁸⁸ Usman (1803) *masā'il muhimma* MS Paris (BN): 155a.

²⁸⁹ See the words of Muhammad Yusuf, leader of Boko Haram in Kassim (2015: 189): “Working with the government that does not rule by the Sharī'ah is a lie; it is Kufr. Working with the security agencies is a lie; it is Kufr. For those who are ignorant, let them be aware that it is important for a Muslim to make hijrah from the institutions established by the *ṭawāghīt*.” N.B. *ṭawāghīt*, translated as “tyrants” or “despots” is a term by which Jihadi-Salafist groups such as Boko Haram refer to Muslim leaders who do not impose their version of Islamic law in the countries they govern. It was not in use at the time of the Fodiawa.

²⁹⁰ This document is known as *lamma balaghtu*, so called because of its opening line, “when I reached [the age of thirty-six]”. This work has no formal title, nor a standard introduction, while the conclusion speaks of Usman in the third person, leading to questions over its authenticity (Last, 2008: 150). I have accessed ME Gaskiya Corp., Zaria (NU/Hunwick 122), MS NU/Hunwick 203 and two MS from Kaduna (NA) *digitised as* BL (EAP)535 1/2/4/20; 535 1/2/25/3, noting no major discrepancies between copies.

²⁹¹ Ar. كشف الله الغطاء عن بصري *kashafa Allāh al-ghīṭā' 'an baṣarī*

five of my ribs on my right side the words “Praise be to God Lord of the Worlds” ten times, “God pray for our master Muhammad and the family of our master Muhammad” ten times, and “I seek forgiveness from God Almighty” ten times, all written with the divine pen. I was much surprised at that.²⁹²

What Usman is describing is such detail is *kashf*, that is, the instantaneous and divinely-inspired revelation that Usman had requested in 1797 and, as we recall from the previous chapter, was a powerful authority marker. The text of *lamma balaghtu* goes on to recount another vision Usman received when he was forty years old. This would correspond to the year 1794. In this second vision, Usman is initiated into the Qadiriyya by ‘Abd al-Qādir himself. The saint presents Usman with a green robe and cap and presses them to his chest. Afterwards, the garments are passed between the Rashidun Caliphs Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, as well as the Prophet Yusuf, who returns them to ‘Abd al-Qādir. ‘Abd al-Qādir ceremoniously dresses Usman in the robe and cap. Then, as Usman states:

‘Abd al-Qādir declared me Imām of the Saints²⁹³ and ordered me to hold the good and forbade me from the despicable actions. He girded me with the sword of truth²⁹⁴ and bade me draw it against the enemies of God.²⁹⁵

‘Abd al-Qādir goes on to teach Usman the *wird* of the Qadiriyya himself, and gives him permission to spread this *wird* among his followers.

This is a significant development. Usman’s vision of ‘Abd al-Qādir made the claim that he had “jumped the chain”, bypassing the conventional hierarchy of the Qadiriyya Mukhtariyya and

²⁹² Usman (1794?) *lamma balaghtu* ME Zaria, Gaskiya Corp.: 1–2.

²⁹³ Ar. امام الأولياء *imām al-awliyā’*.

²⁹⁴ Ar. سيف الحق *sayf al-haqq*.

²⁹⁵ Usman *lamma balaghtu*: 4.

as such, reinforcing his legitimacy to break with the established religio-political order. The content of the vision has much in common with an established genre of *awliyā'* visions, and to the actual initiation ceremonies of Sufi orders such as the Khalwatiyya, which Usman had joined through his teacher, Jibril b. 'Umar.²⁹⁶ However, the authenticity of *lamma balaghtu* – in terms of the dates of the visions it reports – is certainly doubtful. The date of this second vision, 1794, would mean that Usman had received *kashf* and was initiated into the Qadiriyya by 'Abd al-Qādir *before* the arrival of Nūḥ b. al-Ṭāhir three years later, which seems highly unlikely. But we should by no means take these time references literally. According to *lamma balaghtu*, Usman was forty years old when he received this second vision. Prophet Muhammad gained an awareness of his prophethood in his fortieth year, and for this reason forty years is the traditional age at which Muslim authority figures receive their divine calling.

Indeed, while the precise dates do not match the chronology as we know it, it is likely that this text or a similar account was circulating in the Hausa region around the time of the jihad of 1804. Even in 1814, a Tuareg leader wrote to Usman referring to him as a “saint who has acquired the knowledge of God”. In his reply, Usman denied the common belief, as reported in *lamma balaghtu*, that he had acquired *kashf*.²⁹⁷ This vision would also make him a *quṭb* of the Qadiriyya, something he too denies in later works. We know after his move to Sifawa around 1809 that people travelled great distances to receive the *wird* from him; easily explained if from what we understand in *lamma balaghtu*, this *wird* had been revealed to

²⁹⁶ Moumouni (2008) *Vie et oeuvre du Cheikh Uthmān Dan Fodio (1754-1817): de l'islam au soufisme*: 106.

²⁹⁷ Ar. الولي العارف بالله *al-walī al-ʿārif bi-Allāh*. See Usman *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* in Al-Hajj (1973), *infra*.

Usman by ‘Abd al-Qādir himself.²⁹⁸ Meanwhile, the “sword of truth” motif can clearly be applied both to his judgements on *takfir* and his militating for holy war.

This text could have been written by the more fanatical elements of Usman’s supporters at anytime during the period covered by this thesis to reinforce their continued belief in Usman’s divine powers, long after he himself had denied it. Alternatively, it could have emerged during the *karāmāt* literature period of the 1820s and 1830s, in which hagiographies of Usman and Bello grew more extreme in their claims at a period in which Sokoto’s hegemony of spiritual power was declining. Whether authentic in its present form or not, the message behind *lamma balaghtu* certainly played a role in fanning the flames of dissent.

Another development of the jihad years was the emergence of an ethnic discourse that would in later years explicitly connect the Fodiawa’s authority to lead the jihad with their *nasab*, or prestigious Islamic heritage. During the jihad, Abdullahi – as Usman’s emissary – composed a qasīda appealing directly to the *TorodBe-Fulani* to join the *jamā’a*.²⁹⁹ Although the poem did not mention anything about the *TorodBe*’s *nasab*, it was an appeal for ethnic solidarity nonetheless. Similarly, when Usman discussed enslavement policy in his pre-jihad works *ajwiba muḥarrira* and *masā’il muhimma*, he specifically emphasised caution when receiving Fulani captives, making it clear that the majority of the Fulani tribes were good Muslims whom it was not legal to enslave. In the *kitāb al-farq*, many of Usman’s complaints against the Hausa kings seemed to be targeted at a Fulani audience, such as singling out the *jangali*, or cattle tax, which

²⁹⁸ Last (2006) *Innovation in the Sokoto Caliphate* : 328.

²⁹⁹ Abdullahi (n.d.) *risālat al-naṣā’ih* “Epistle of advice”, included in the *tazyīn* in Hiskett (1963): 98–101.

must have disproportionately affected pastoralist groups. By the outbreak of fighting in 1804, some Fulani clans were already militarised. Although according to Murray Last, only one third of Usman's community at Degel was Fulani, with the exception of the Hausa Bā Arewa leader, Abd al-Salam, and Aghali, a Tuareg, most of Usman's key supporters were Fulani.³⁰⁰ All those to whom Usman granted flags to extend the jihad were Fulani clan leaders.³⁰¹ Aside from Ya'qūb of Bauchi, all the Emirs appointed by the Fodiawa to rule the territories gained in the jihad were Fulani. Ahmad Lobbo, at that time a flag-bearer for the jihad in Masina, was Fulani. Muhammad Bello and probably the rest of the Fodiawa were in regular communication with Fulani clan leaders from Futa Toro such as al-Ḥasan al-Bilbālī.³⁰² Thus it can be said that the process of dissent also incorporated a certain degree of ethnic solidarity.

The fall of the Gobir capital of Alkalawa on 7 October, 1808, is traditionally seen as the defining moment of the jihad. It is interesting that the following day, Usman completed a work entitled *tanbīh al-fāhim 'alā ḥukm muddat al-dunyā wa khalq al-'ālam*.³⁰³ As its title suggests, this work does not discuss the jihad at all, but rather introduces various theories as to the age of the world, and when it may come to an end. In this same period – with the jihadists still in the heat of battle – he composed two more works: *tanbīh al-umma* and *muddat al-dunyā* and, on

³⁰⁰ See Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 16–22, who discusses the composition of the early jamā'a in some detail.

³⁰¹ For a list of FulBe clans who joined the jihad and their areas of operations, see Lovejoy (2016) *Jihād in West Africa*: 75–6. For a list of flag bearers, see Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 53–4.

³⁰² Bello mentions al-Bilbālī in several works. In the *ḥāshiya*, Bello quotes him as the source for his revised theory on TorodBe-Fulani origin. Bello makes a further reference to this person in *al-qawl al-mukhtaṣar*, stating that al-Bilbālī linked the Sokoto jihad to the imminent appearance of the Mahdi. See Minna (1982): 331; Albasu (1985): 15.

³⁰³ "Notice to one of understanding regarding judgement on the length of the world and the creation of the earth".

23 July, 1809, *amr al-sā'a*.³⁰⁴ The timing of these works, and Usman's evolving thoughts on the topic, stand to reason that millenarianism and the jihad of 1804 went hand in hand.

From *tanbīh al-fāhim*, we learn that before the jihad, Usman had clearly believed al-Suyūṭī's prophecy that the Mahdi would appear around the year 1200 or 1204 AH (1785–6 or 1789–90 AD) and spread this belief among his followers. Why else would he have “apologised” – to borrow al-Hajj's term – when the year 1204 AH had come and gone without this prediction coming true?

I have seen these times and I have not yet seen the appearance of the al-Mahdi. For this reason I have [now] judged these traditions to be false³⁰⁵

But his earlier assertions about the end of the world, coupled with his reformist preaching, led some in the *jamā'a* to believe that Usman *was* the Mahdi. Only in 1811, when the jihad had been won, did Usman attempt to clarify the situation. While denying that he was the Mahdi, Usman did not disavow that there was a connection:

Know oh my Brethren that my purpose in writing this book is not to affirm that I am the imam-mahdī; my purpose in writing it is to explain to you that God the Exalted has favoured me with conditions which agree with the conditions of the imam-mahdī which the 'ulamā' have mentioned in their books.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Usman refers to these first two works in *amr al-sā'a*, meaning that they could not have been composed after 1809.

³⁰⁵ Usman(1811) *tanbīh al-umma* in Shareef (1998) *The Signs of the End of Time*: 36.

³⁰⁶ Usman (1811) *al-khabar al-hādī* in Al-Hajj (1973): 223.

In this last statement, Usman was referring to *al-yawāqīt wa-al-jawāhir*, by the Egyptian Sufi mystic al-Shaʿrānī.³⁰⁷ Al-Shaʿrānī had mentioned the possibility that the Mahdi was already living on earth, citing some traditions of twelver Shiism.³⁰⁸ He then gave some characteristics of this “hidden” Mahdi that match remarkably Usman’s own career as a scholar-teacher: he will only appear at a time of tyranny and injustice and degeneration of the Islamic faith, he will consciously follow the example of the Prophet and be guided by an unseen angel (note Usman’s accounts of visions), his opinions will differ from the established class of scholars (the “four satanic parties” cited by Uman), he will be leader of the believers by consensus (the *jamāʿa* had appointed Usman *amīr al-muʿminīn* in 1804), and this community will share with him the burdens of running the kingdom (note his distribution of flags and granting of emirships) . Lastly, he will call the believers to jihad of the sword and wield the “sword of truth”, which as we recall was exactly what Usman received in his vision from Abd al-Qadir.³⁰⁹

Because of Usman’s study of the works of al-Shaʿrānī, and possibly because Usman had been initiated into a Sufi order connected with al-Shaʿrānī by his teacher, Jibril b. ʿUmar, Usman expected to meet this Hidden Mahdi:

Oh God, enable us to meet him and to join with him in a superior fashion through interchange³¹⁰ as you have enabled us to meet with him semantically³¹¹ through the chain of authority [from Jibril]³¹²

³⁰⁷ ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī (1492/3–1565) *al-yawāqīt wa-al-jawāhir*.

³⁰⁸ According to Twelver Shias, the Mahdi is the son of eleventh Shia Imam, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad (al-Ḥasan alʿAskarī). This “hidden” 12th Imam is waiting somewhere on earth to emerge on judgement day.

³⁰⁹ Usman *al-khabar al-ḥādī* in al-Hajj (1973).

³¹⁰ Ar. ابدال *ibdāl*. For me, the precise meaning is unclear.

³¹¹ Ar. معنویاً *maʿnawīyan*.

³¹² Usman (1811) *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān* ME NU/Hunwick 159: Chapter 7.

Further, because of his interpretation of another of al-Suyūṭī's predictions, Usman also hoped to be his precursor. Explaining the hadith of the twelve successors,³¹³ al-Suyūṭī had named ten historical caliphs, stating that the twelfth caliph would be the awaited Mahdi and the eleventh was yet to come. Usman commented, "I hope that I am the first of them and the awaited Mahdi the second".³¹⁴

The belief that Usman had received divine revelation and was connected to the Mahdi go a long way towards explaining the appeal and success of the jihad on a popular level. Bello himself urged a gathering of Hausa rulers to accept Usman as amīr al-mu'minīn *because his rule would be followed by the Mahdi*.³¹⁵ It also perhaps elucidates the reply that Richard Lander received around fifteen years after the jihad, when he asked his Hausa travelling companions to explain what had happened in those days:

The Houssans have often declared to me that [during the jihad] the strength and inclination to "shake the spear!" were denied them; they had no will of their own, - their hands fell powerless by their sides, and they felt as if they had been touched by the finger of a god, or were under the influence of an eastern talisman³¹⁶

But while the process of dissent had given the Fodiawa the authority to overturn the established order, it had also brought with it several negative consequences. Usman's rulings on *takfir* were harsh, but they were also entirely non-specific. Buoyed by Usman's declaration that

³¹³ Sahih Muslim: "This religion (Islam) will remain standing until twelve caliphs, all of them from the Quraysh, have ruled over you."

³¹⁴ Usman *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*: 37.

³¹⁵ Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 36. The text in Bello *infāq* (Shādhilī 1996: 205) reads: I informed them [the Hausa rulers] of the glad tidings he [Usman] had brought them; of the approach of the Mahdi's appearance and that the jamā'a of the Shaykh are his harbingers. Ar. أخبرتهم بما بشرهم به من <قرب> المهدي و أن جماعة الشيخ طلائعهم

³¹⁶ Lander (1830) *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa : With the Subsequent Adventures of the Author*: Volume II: 29.

the property of non-believers Muslims who remained without allegiance could be taken, the jihadist ranks swelled with opportunistic raiders. Meanwhile, the Fodiawa's call for ethnic solidarity was interpreted by Fulani clan leaders as an invitation to overthrow their Muslim overlords. The belief that Usman was gifted with supernatural powers led to fanaticism, and the millenarian rhetoric of the jihadists led to a host of Mahdist claimants and threatened to pull the region into anarchy. The result was mass looting, killing and the taking of captives without much thought as to what Usman had said on the subject. By 1810, the jihad had extended into the territories of the Kanem-Bornu Empire, an ancient Muslim power. Muhammad al-Amin al-Kānamī, a noted Muslim scholar allied with the *Mai* of Bornu, pointed out that the actions of the Fulani clan leaders there had no basis in Islam, calling the Fodiawa's authority as Muslim jurists into question.

From the exchange with al-Kānamī, we understand that the Fulani in Bornu were operating under the impression that contrary to the rulings Usman had made on *takfir*, they were permitted to attack *any* Muslims who committed mortal sins (*ma'āsī*). Bello expressed surprise that this was happening, suggesting that the Fodiawa had lost control of the many localised rebellions being fought in their name.³¹⁷ We could well apply the sentiments of Bello expressed some years later to the situation in western Bornu during this period:

some of the brothers who are far from home perhaps do not know the sources of the news that reaches them, and form judgements [for themselves] regarding the purposes [for which it was sent]. This is especially true for those who are of that age in which they

³¹⁷ Brenner (1979) *Religion and Politics in Bornu: the Case of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi*; Brenner (1992) *The jihad debate* .

do not sense when news has been distorted, or that they have been sent by fabrications by their enemies that can't be proven³¹⁸

But it was not just in Bornu that there had been a miscommunication as to whom it was acceptable to attack and take captive. Abdullahi described his own troops as “sellers of free men on the market”, and was almost killed when he tried to take back war spoils from his troops so as to divide them according to the *sharia*.³¹⁹ Bello faced the same situation on his campaigns. Having also confiscated incorrectly distributed booty, his troops refused to resume fighting until he had given it back. Resigned, Bello is reported to have said, “If I could find another people, I would wage jihad with them against you!”³²⁰ Meanwhile, in an undated letter written by Usman and Abdullahi, they apologise to a Hausa Muslim leader for their messenger, who instead of inviting them to join the jihad, branded them unbelievers and subjected them to attack.³²¹ In sum, the Fodiawa seemed to have lost their hold on the process of dissent that they had started. What was at first so vital in setting off the jihad was now proving a liability, and had to be reigned in.

³¹⁸ Bello (after 1817) *qadh al-zinad* MS Paris (BN): 2a –2b.

³¹⁹ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 122.

³²⁰ Al-Ḥājj Saʿīd *taqāyīd* MS Paris (BN) 5422: 2a.

³²¹ [A letter from Uthman and Abdullahi to a Hausa leader] (c. 1804) MS Niamey (MARA) 3996.

A Process of Accommodation

The process of dissent could be described as Trimmingham's "anarchic element". A powerful force for change, if allowed to run on unchallenged it could have split the *jamā'a* and compromised the authority of the Fodiawa in the longer term. After the jihad had been largely won, the Fodiawa swiftly changed their approach, turning the authority they had gained as rebels into a durable legitimacy for Islamic governance. The Fodiawa were forced by the challenge of al-Kānamī – among other factors – to (1) rationalise the anathematisation of the Hausa kings; (2) justify their jihad by citing historical precedents; (3) present the actions resulting from the chaos of their jihad as having a basis in Islamic law; (4) find a way to stem the Mahdist fervour spreading in Hausaland; and (5) assert the traditional authority wielded by the Fodiawa – as TorodBe Fulani – to rule the Hausa region. These actions I call collectively a process of accommodation.

Regarding the first element, in the years after 1811 the Fodiawa attempted to justify their assertion that the Hausa kings –and *Mai* Ahmad of Bornu – had been apostates from Islam, while also claiming their war against them was primarily in self-defence. Usman wrote two works for this purpose. The first of these was the *tanbīh al-ikhwān*, dated 11 November, 1811. In this document, Usman combined sections of what would become Bello's *infāq al-maysūr* and Abdullahi's *tazyīn al-waraqāt* to produce a single narrative explaining the reasons for the

jihad.³²² Bello and Abdullahi also included additional information about the start of the jihad in the final version of these works, completed in 1812 and 1813 respectively.³²³ Finally, Usman dedicated a second work to this subject, the *ta'lim al-ikhwān*, dated 7 December, 1813, that gave greater specificities.³²⁴

To give a convincing narrative for the jihad, Usman was forced to change some of the doctrinal positions he had adopted in the discourse of dissent. The first (a) concerned the question of whether Hausaland was Muslim or not before the start of the jihad. In pre-jihad works, *ajwibba muḥarrira* and *masā'il muhimma*, Usman asserted that it was. He quoted Ahmad Bāba's judgement, in which Bāba mentioned:

[...] countries whose inhabitants have established Islam such as Bornu, Kano, Katsina, some of Zakzak and Songhai³²⁵

Here, Usman even substantiated Bāba's judgement with his own observations of Hausaland's inhabitants:

We have followed the example of Ahmad Bāba [concerning regions of belief]...and it is all the more appropriate in our times for Islam has spread over the land. The best course of action is to enquire about the country, for in every country that has known the spread of Islam among its people, it is not permitted to take its inhabitants as slaves³²⁶

³²² Although Bello's *infāq al-maysūr* dates to 1812 and Abdullahi's *tazyin al-waraqāt* to the following year, sections of these documents evidently existed in their final form several years previously.

³²³ Muhammad Bello continued to write justifications of the jihad after the death of Usman in 1817, honing the specificities to circumstances of the time. See Muhammed Bello *qadh al-zinād* and Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

³²⁴ Last & Al-Hajj (1965) argue that Usman's undated work, *kitāb al-farq*, initially thought to belong to the pre-jihad works (Hiskett, 1960), also belongs to this group.

³²⁵ Usman *ajwiba muḥarrira*: Chapter 2, citing Ahmad Baba *al-kashf wa-l-bayān*.

³²⁶ Usman *ajwiba muḥarrira* (c.1774–1804) MS Niamey (MARA) 898: 4.

In the interim, the Fodiawa became aware of a more recent judgement concerning belief in Hausaland made by Sīdī Muḥammad al-Kuntī in his work, *al-jur'ā al-ṣāfiya*, written in 1792–3.³²⁷ In complete opposition to Ahmad Bāba, Sīdī Muḥammad had concluded that the *bilād al-sūdān* was predominantly a land of disbelief and prohibited travel there, saying:

The countries of the Sudan [i.e. the *bilād al-sūdān*] are heathen for the most part. The Moslems there are in subjugation to the heathen. The people too follow the actions of their chiefs³²⁸

In the *bayān wujūb al-hijra*, written after the start of the jihad, Usman also quoted the geographical areas of belief formulated by Ahmad Bāba, but this time he added a caveat to Bāba's judgement which was clearly inspired by al-Kuntī:

the spread of Islam there is only among the masses but as for their sultans they are unbelievers...even though they profess Islam³²⁹

This volte-face should be seen as a vital part of the process of dissent. For the Fodiawa to wage war on the Hausa Kings and the *Mai* of Bornu, they had to be non-Muslim. Al-Kuntī's fatwa served the purpose of allowing the Fodiawa to declare *takfīr* on their enemies. But under the scrutiny of al-Kānamī, and perhaps other scholars, Usman was forced to justify the reversal of his position on whether Hausaland was a land of Islam or not and in effect, attempted to merge the judgements of Bāba and al-Kuntī together. In the *tanbīh al-ikhwān* (1811), having

³²⁷ Hunwick, Kane and Salvaing (2003) *Arabic Literature of Africa Volume 4: the writings of Western Sudanic Africa*: 76–77.

³²⁸ Usman *bayān wujūb al-hijra* (1806) in El Masri (1978): Chapter 1, citing Sīdī Muḥammad al-Kuntī *al-jar'iya al-ṣāfiya*.

³²⁹ Usman (1806) *bayān wujūb al-hijra* in El Masri (1978): Chapter 1.

quoted once again Aḥmad Bāba's division of the Hausa region into Muslim and non-Muslim areas, Usman added that:

Every learned man judges according to the knowledge of his age. Conditions change with the times and the cure changes with the disease. It is well known that in our time Islam has become widespread in the land of Hausa **among other than kings. [But] the kings are unbelievers and nothing else**³³⁰

Two years later, in the *ta'lim al-ikhwān*, Usman also reiterated Ahmad Bāba's judgement that the people of Bornu were Muslim in his time, before adding his own opinion:

As far as our own times are concerned, the people in question are no longer what they used to be³³¹

Starting from *taqlīd* – uncritical replication – of Bāba's judgement, Usman had engaged in *ijtihād* at various points. First, he updated Bāba's ruling to reflect the increased Islamisation of Hausaland in his own time. Then, he adapted it to agree with al-Kuntī's judgement, making a distinction between the beliefs of Hausaland's rulers and its people. Now that the jihad was won, Usman made a completely *new* judgement on the status of Hausaland in which again, he incorporated his own observations:

The above description was applicable to the condition of the Hausa peoples as we found them, **before the Jihad** [...] We have [now] appointed Muslim Governors over this land and **it has become a land of Islam without doubt**³³²

³³⁰ Usman (1811) *tanbīh al-ikhwān* in Palmer (1914) *Early Fulani conception (continued)*: 53. My emphasis

³³¹ Usman (1813) *ta'lim al-ikhwān* in Martin (1967) *Ta'lim al-ikhwān*: 88.

³³² Palmer (1914) *Early Fulani conception (continued)*: 54. My emphasis.

To emphasise that Hausaland was now under Muslim rule was also to affirm that rebellion against its new Muslim rulers would be tantamount to unbelief, a notion in fact asserted by Bello in the early years of his rule.³³³ Usman's new judgement was meant to accommodate to a new *status quo* in which conformity, not dissent against the ruler was the correct legal action.

The second point was that the Fodiawa also required a historical precedent for their jihad. Usman had already praised his former teacher, Jibril b. 'Umar, stating that:

The beginning of the destruction of these blameworthy customs in our Sudanese [i.e. *sūdānī*] towns was by his hands, and the completion of that was by our hands³³⁴

But a more satisfying precedent was readily found in the example of Askiya Muhammad's usurpation of power from the descendants of Sonni Ali, and al-Maghīlī's justification of it. Al-Maghīlī, as will be discussed in later chapters, also took some liberties in *ijtihād* in light of his need to legitimize the Askiya's rule. Here, Hunwick succinctly summarises their relationship of mutual benefit:

It was important for Al-Maghīlī to establish that Sunni 'Alī and his aides were unbelievers, since it legitimised Askia Muḥammad's seizure of power from [Sonni 'Alī, as well as] his son and successor Sunni Abū Bakr Dā'ū. On this, in turn, hinged the propriety of Al-Maghīlī's association with the Askia.³³⁵

³³³ See Chapter Four of this thesis.

³³⁴ Usman (c.1774–1804) *naṣā'ih al-umma al-Muḥammadīya* in Hiskett (1962): 591.

³³⁵ Hunwick (1974) *Al-Maghīlī's replies*: 389n.

In Usman's earlier works, there are only occasional references to al-Maghīlī.³³⁶ In the *kitāb al-farq* and *nūr al-albāb*, passages from al-Maghīlī's *ajwiba* are copied verbatim, but not referenced to their source. It was only in the post-jihad period that al-Maghīlī's works became central to Usman's discourse and his judgements superseded all others. The *sirāj al-ikhwān* (1811) is essentially a paraphrase of the *ajwiba*, while the *tanbīh al-ikhwān* (1811) reproduces the whole text of his *tāj al-dīn*. In the *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*, Abdullahi gives a commentary on these two works of al-Maghīlī, explicitly linking the precedent set by al-Maghīlī to the Fodiawa's own actions:

If you believe what was said regarding Sonni Ali and his officials and the judgement made in their regard, then you know without a doubt that this is what we found with most of the Hausa kings and their officials and their allies from the south and west. The judgements on the former apply equally to the latter. If you know this, then you know that our jihad against them and our taking of their power was the correct path.³³⁷

In *ta'lim al-ikhwān* (1813), Usman demonstrated the key importance of al-Maghīlī to the jihadist project did not only pertain to his doctrine of *takfir*. In the final section of this work, which also includes extensive quotes from other Maghili texts such as *misbāḥ al-arwāḥ* and reproduces Ahmad Bāba's biography of him, Usman introduced a *sanad* linking Usman directly to al-Maghīlī, involving the Kunta:

We should like, however, to terminate this book by mentioning our uninterrupted chain of connection (al-sanad al-muttasil) to him [al-Maghīlī] – May God be pleased with him! – which comes to us from Sidi Muhammad al-Mukhtar b. Ahmad b. Abi Bakr al-Kunti al-Ummawi, [which is] the link of the Qadiri will [...] [God] has decreed that we might have

³³⁶ The *iḥyā' al-sunna* mentions al-Maghīlī only once, and the *ajwiba muḥarrira* and *masā'il muhimma* on only a couple of occasions.

³³⁷ Abdullahi (1812) *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān* MS Paris (BI) 205: 39.

sensible relations (al-ittisdl al-hissi) with him in the Intermediate State (barzakh), and in the Hereafter, as it has been decreed that we should have spiritual relations with him in this world, which are [symbolised] by this chain of transmission³³⁸

This passage perfectly encapsulates the multiple uses of the link to al-Maghīlī. Through the *sanad*, Usman presents himself al-Maghīlī's rightful heir as regards the promotion Islamic reform, while the inclusion of the Kunta and from them, to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, demonstrates that this legal authority worked in tandem with the charismatic authority granted through connection to the Qadiriyya.

While it was possible to shift the juridical underpinnings of the jihad, it was impossible to deny the excesses that had occurred on its account. A third aspect of the process of accommodation was that after the jihad, the Fodiawa developed a new legal framework that both relaxed the harsh legal rulings that had inspired the jihad, and found a legal basis for the many decisions – pragmatic, rash or heinous – that had been made on the ground. The aim was of course for Usman to maintain his legal authority at a time when it was being threatened both from the outside (al-Kānamī) and the inside (rebellious troops and lack of communication). Usman wrote a series of works for this purpose: the *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān* (1811), *sirāj al-ikhwān* (1811) and *najm al-ikhwān* (1812–13).

In Usman's earlier works on the legality of fighting jihad, taking war booty and captives, Usman's position was very clear. Muslims were obligated to leave areas of unbelief, pledge allegiance to an *amīr al-mu'minīn* and wage war on the infidels and apostates. Any Muslim who

³³⁸ Usman (1813) *ta'līm al-ikhwān* in Martin (1967): 93.

freely assisted the infidels was an infidel, and the possessions of any Muslim who stayed in the lands of the infidels could be counted as war booty. But the “process of accommodation” complicated and at times contradicted these judgements. In the preface to *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*, Usman explained that among the reasons he wrote this work was to “mention some matters that came up in this time whose judgement is in dispute among the scholars”, that is, matters of *ikhtilaf*.³³⁹ Several matters which Usman now described as matters of *ikhtilaf* he had earlier claimed – in the process of dissent – to be clear, “by consensus of the scholars”. For example, regarding the ruling on Muslims abiding in the land of the infidel by choice:

Usman (1803) *masā'il muhimma*: **Taking the possessions of such Muslims is legal by consensus** if they fall within the booty taken from the polytheists, even if they had been set apart.³⁴⁰

Usman (1811) *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*: We do not outlaw categorically confiscating and consuming their property, even if **it is in the way of caution not to do so since this is a subject that is in dispute** among the scholars.³⁴¹

Similarly, regarding whether it was permissible to enslave apostates from Islam:

Usman (1803) *masā'il muhimma*: **their men cannot be enslaved** and their women cannot be taken as concubines³⁴²

Usman (1811) *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*: **We do not outlaw categorically their enslavement** and that of their children and their families, even though the common opinion is that this is not permissible, since this is a subject that is in dispute among the scholars³⁴³

³³⁹ Usman (1811) *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*: 2.

³⁴⁰ Usman *masā'il muhimma*: 155a. My emphasis. This was one of the issues of contention between Usman and Abdullahi. See Chapter Three of this thesis.

³⁴¹ Usman *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*: 17–18. My emphasis.

³⁴² Usman *masā'il muhimma* MS Paris (BN) 5678: 158a. My emphasis.

³⁴³ Usman *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*: 17–18. My emphasis.

These later rulings justified the wholesale looting and enslavement that had occurred during the jihad, yet presented the Fodiawa as voices of reason. As we understand from these later works, it was not that the Fodiawa had ever wilfully encouraged such practices. Rather, they had allowed them *only on the technicality that a minority of scholars had likewise allowed them*. This was the very model of *taqlīd*. However, during the process of dissent the Fodiawa mentioned nothing about *ikthilāf*, presenting their judgements as if they were the consensus of all scholars. Arguably, such an action amounted to *ijtihād*.

For the remainder of *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*, Usman stuck by this legal maxim, namely, that one cannot outlaw categorically anything that is in dispute amongst the scholars.³⁴⁴ Usman used all the legal sources available to him to find vague and obscure examples that would permit practices that were otherwise unanimously judged to be forbidden, such as decorating oneself with gold and silver, the wearing of silk and fine clothes, and the playing of stringed musical instruments. This strategy at one and the same time allowed the Fodiawa to demonstrate their legal knowledge and thus maintain authority, but also to validate the behaviour of the jihadist armies. We will return to these judgements in more detail in the subsequent chapter.

Such turnarounds in legal rulings could not however settle the Mahdist agitation that continued in Hausaland after the jihad. The idea that Usman dan Fodio was – or was intimately connected to – the Mahdi and had been mystically initiated into the Qadiriyya had evidently travelled widely in the Sahel region. It was causing both confusion, and a plethora of Mahdist

³⁴⁴ The Arabic term is *inkār al-ḥarām*.

claimants. In 1814, a Tuareg leader wrote to Usman asking for his judgement concerning one Hamma, a member of his community who claimed to be the Mahdi.³⁴⁵ The following year, Aḥmad Lobbo wrote to Abdullahi dan Fodio wanting to know:

Firstly, is the correct name of the father of the expected Mahdi ‘Abd Allāh³⁴⁶ or Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, as al-Sha‘rānī took from Ibn ‘Arabī? [Secondly, I] request a work by *amīr al-mu‘minīn* Usman [dan Fodio] on the circumstances of the Mahdi from his physical characteristics and his character. [Lastly], is all that ‘Abd al-Wahhāb [al-Sha‘rānī] described in al-Yawāqīt [wa’l-Jawāhir] correct, or is there some that is faulty?³⁴⁷

Another element of the process of accommodation was that Usman sought to normalise his views on the Mahdi and return to his place in the Sahelian spiritual hierarchy, finding a way to maintain his charismatic authority yet curb the fanatical excesses of Mahdism. In his response addressing the Mahdist claims of Hamma, Usman changed his views on the Mahdi once again.³⁴⁸ Usman’s response makes clear that despite revising his ideas about the end of time, many still believed he was the Mahdi:

I am not the imam-mahdī, and... I have not claimed the mahdiyya, albeit that is heard from the tongues of other men. Verily, I have striven beyond measure in warning them to desist and explicitly rejected their claim in my Arabic and ‘ajamī writings.³⁴⁹

But also it reveals that his new theory about a hidden Mahdi on earth was being criticised. To deal with this criticism, as in his works on legal rulings, he retreated to the safety of *taqlīd*:

³⁴⁵ See Usman *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān*. This figure was briefly introduced in Chapter One, *supra*.

³⁴⁶ Prophet Muhammad stated that the Mahdī’s name would be Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh.

³⁴⁷ Abdullahi (1815–16) *ajwibat ‘Abd Allāh b. Fūdī* MS Niamey (MARA) 1716. Abdullahi replied that he had never heard of such a tradition in any of the reliable hadith compendia.

³⁴⁸ Usman (1814) *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* in Al-Hajj (1973): 224–272.

³⁴⁹ Usman *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* in Al-Hajj (1973): 229.

We are not quoting these works of al-Ḥasan al-ʿIrāqī [al-ʿAskarī] to support the statement of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb [al-Shaʿrānī, regarding the Mahdī] because we do not rely on anything other than the evidence of the Sharīʿa. On the other hand, we are not quoting them to refute them because we have not come across any evidence in the Sharīʿa which rules out the possibility of [the Mahdī] being of eternal existence³⁵⁰

Here too, Usman made his excuse on the basis of *inkār al-harām*. His point was that the reason for mentioning al-Shaʿrānī's words was not to point out the clear similarities between himself and the hidden Mahdī he alluded to. Rather, by quoting the works of previous scholars, he was only following scrupulously the principles of *taqlīd*. To support this conclusion, Usman went on to propose “a just scale for the verification of the Mahdiyya”, a classic work of *taqlīd* in which Usman methodically listed the qualities of the Mahdī as revealed in the Hadith such as his birthplace (Medina), his Sherifian descent and his name (Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh), demonstrating that his own circumstances did correspond, neither did those of the Tuareg Mahdist claimant, nor any of the Mahdī claimants throughout history. Just as in his judgements on *takfir*, Usman returned to being a *muqallid*, transmitting only those details of Judgement Day recorded in the Qurʿan and the Sunna. As such, Usman presented himself as the “just leader” in the hadith:

This knowledge will be maintained in every generation by the just leaders who shall preserve it from the distortion of the extremist, the forgery of the liar, and the interpretation of the ignorant.³⁵¹

He now upheld the standard interpretation – long espoused by Abdullahi – that God alone knows the last day of judgement, and that those who claim to know otherwise are challenging

³⁵⁰ Usman (1814) *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* in Al-Hajj (1973): 241.

³⁵¹ Usman *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* in Al-Hajj (1973): 262.

God and thus apostates from Islam. His judgement on Hama was *takfir*, and he was executed by crucifixion on this account.³⁵² Meanwhile Bello, after having stated that Usman's rule would precede that of the Mahdi, went on to suppress a number of Mahdist movements when it was in fact he himself who succeeded Usman as *amīr al-mu'minīn*.

In the second half of the *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān*, Usman turned to his relationship with the Qadiriyya. Just as many still believed Usman was the awaited Mahdi, from this text we understand that many still considered Usman a *walī* imbued with divine powers:

it is heard from the tongues of other men 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, and that I can guide the people not only on the path of piety and righteousness but also on the path of mystical knowledge [*kashf*]³⁵³

It is no coincidence that these qualities were the very same ones as reported in the text of *lamma balaghtu*, cited above. This is another piece of evidence suggesting that whether or not Usman spread such ideas himself, they were common at the time of the jihad and continued to circulate in 1814.

In 1811, Usman had already reaffirmed that his spiritual connection to 'Abd al-Qādir was via the standard Qadiriyya Mukhtariyya, contradicting the vision as presented in *lamma balaghtu*. In the *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān*, he clearly denied having supernatural powers, that he had

³⁵² Last (2014) *From dissent to dissidence: the genesis & development of reformist Islamic groups in northern Nigeria* : 37.

³⁵³ Usman (1814) *taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* in Al-Hajj (1973): 224 –272.

received *kashf* and that he was a quṭb of the Qadiriyya. As a rejoinder, he gave what appears to be a very different telling of that same vision:

God placed me in spiritual state (wāridāt al-aḥwāl) during my youth, until I reached the age of thirty one years [c.1785 CE]. Then I was pulled up by a transitory spiritual power (jadhba) emanating from the light of the Messenger of God and generated by prayer to him, till I found myself in front of the Messenger of God³⁵⁴

In the vision that followed, Prophet Muhammad simply told Usman: “I am your guide on the path of religion, you will not go astray.” While this vision confirmed Usman’s role as a reformer, it did not suggest a “breaking of the chain”. While Usman affirmed that these experiences placed him among the *arbāb al-maqāmāt*, or “persons of status”, they did not make him a walī. Thus, while he was able to guide people on the “path of religion”, he emphatically denied the ability to guide people on the path of *kashf*.³⁵⁵ This was the role of those higher up the chain, such as the Kunta. Muhammed Bello’s future communication with the Kunta makes the Fodiawa’s deferential relationship to them, and their dependence on them for bāṭin knowledge, crystal clear.³⁵⁶ As was the case for the evolution of Usman’s writings on the Mahdi, the Fodiawa now enforced the accepted position on spiritual hierarchy in the Sahel region: *kashf* passed through the Kunta, the local *muqaddams* of the Qadiriyya tariqa.

Lastly, another change that we witness between the processes of dissent and accommodation is the treatment of race. Before the jihad, the Fodiawa had appealed directly

³⁵⁴ Usman, taḥdhīr al-ikhwān in Al-Hajj (1973): 224–272.

³⁵⁵ Usman, taḥdhīr al-ikhwān in Al-Hajj (1973): 224–272.

³⁵⁶ See Bello [Letter to Sheikh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Kuntī].

to the Fulani clans. Later, Usman had explicitly referenced ethnic factors in his justification of the war with Bornu:

as to the cause of the fighting against the Muslim communities who were in their towns, and the battles which took place between us and our neighbours, its cause was that [Mai Ahmed's] Galadima [chief minister] went to his Dayāma (The ruler of Daya, South West Bornu) and told him falsely that **the Amir had ordered him to kill the Fallatiya (Fulani)**, so he had begun to slaughter them. That was why disorder had broken out in our towns³⁵⁷

However, while this account invokes ethnic solidarity, there was no mention of ethnic superiority.

After the jihad, the Fodiawa also sought to justify the new, dominant position of the Fulani over the Hausa ruling class on racial grounds. In their histories of the jihad, both Bello and Abdullahi touched on the more ancient history of the Sahel region. In these accounts, the ancestors of the Hausa are depicted as slaves and non-Muslims. According to Muhammad Bello, the inhabitants of the Hausa *bakwai* – with the exception of the Gobirawa – descended from the seven slaves of the *Mai* of Bornu.³⁵⁸ In ancient times, the *Kanta* (ruler) of Kebbi “was a slave of the Fulanis”, while the Gobirawa descended from the Nile-worshipping ancient Egyptians.³⁵⁹ As Last suggests, it was enough to confirm “that the Hausa were pagan or at least syncretist before the jihad, which can then be justified, once more, as a righteous revolution.”³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷ Usman (1813) *ta'lim al-ikhwān* in Martin (1967): 90.

³⁵⁸ Bello (1812) *infāq al-maysūr* Ch. 7; Abdulkadir dan Tafa (c.1825) *rawḍāt al-afkār*. See Zehnle (2015) 180–181, who suggests that Bello deliberately confused the Bayajidda legend of the Hausa, stating that it was Bayajidda's son, Bawo, rather than Bayajidda himself, who came from Bornu, and equating Bawo with the Hausa term *bawa*, meaning “slave”.

³⁵⁹ Abdulkadir dan Tafa *rawḍāt al-afkār*; Bello *infāq al-maysūr*.

³⁶⁰ Last (1993) *History as religion: de-constructing the Magians 'Maguzawa' of Nigerian Hausaland* : 268.

But the Fodiawa's comments also tapped into Sahelian stereotypes equating blackness with unbelief, and thus enslavability.³⁶¹

While Bello denigrated the origin of the conquered Hausa, in the years after the jihad Abdullahi worked to highlight the noble genealogy (*nasab*) of the ethnic group with which the Fodiawa identified: the TorodBe Fulani. The *īdā' al-nusūkh* (1812) contains a brief summary of the origin of the TorodBe, as does the *tazyīn al-waraqāt* (1813).³⁶² The theory of Fulani origin espoused by Abdullahi – and relayed non-critically by Muhammad Bello in the *infāq* – was that the Fulani were created from the union of the descendants of Ishmael (the Arabs) and Isaac (Byzantines and Jews), the two sides of the Abrahamic family.³⁶³ This union took place during the Arab conquests, in the region of Mount Sinai (Tūr Sīnā'), from whence the TorodBe gained their name:

The warrior 'Uqba ibn 'Āmir, who conquered the lands of the west in the time of 'Umar bin al-Āṣ in Egypt, reached them [the TorodBe] when they were one of the tribes of the Byzantines. Their king converted to Islam without a fight and 'Uqba married the daughter of their king called *Baju Maghu* and all the Fulanis came into being³⁶⁴

If we follow this story correctly, the TorodBe were not – as was believed in Futa Toro – originally clients or even slaves of the Fulani, but in fact the source of all the Fulani tribes and, Abdullahi

³⁶¹ See Hall (2011) *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600-1960*, discussed *supra*.

³⁶² Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 110–111.

³⁶³ See Naylor (2018) *Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello's Debate over the Torobbe-Fulani*.

³⁶⁴ Abdullahi (after 1817) *kitāb al-nasab* MX NU/Wilks 115: 1.

notes, first speakers of the Fulfulde language.³⁶⁵ What is more, the TorodBe also had a territorial claim on Hausaland:

Musa [Jokollo]³⁶⁶ he it was who came with our tribe from the country of the west, which is Futa Toro, according to what we have heard, and he was one of their chief men until he came with them to the country of Kunni [Konni]³⁶⁷, and they were the first who lived in it before the Hausas and the Touareg, 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. They preceded all the Fulani in Hausaland by seven years, according to what we have heard³⁶⁸

In sum, Abdullahi presented the TorodBe as an ancient people descended from the union of two sides of the Abrahamic family who migrated to the Sahel region during the time of the Islamic conquests. They in turn fathered the Fulani clans. By arriving in Hausaland before any other group and naming some localities there, the TorodBe are Hausaland's rightful rulers. We can perhaps understand this origin story as a mix of the Uqba myth common to Sahelian knowledge elites³⁶⁹ and the Hausa concept of *dan kasa* – sons of the land – that formed the basis for many Hausa origin myths.³⁷⁰ Whatever the case, in the context of the jihad of 1804, led overwhelmingly by the Fulani who were previously considered a “foreign” and minority

³⁶⁵ See Abdullahi (1812) *īdā' al-nusūkh*.

³⁶⁶ The genealogy of Abdullahi's father to Musa Jokollo in *kitāb al-nasab* runs: Muḥammad Fūdī b. 'Uthman b. Sālīḥ b. Hārūn b. Muḥammad Ghurṭu b. Muḥammad Jabbu b. Muḥammad Thanbū b. Būba Bāba b. Māsīrāna b. Ayyūb b. Mūsa. In the *aṣl al-fulātīyīn*, Abdullahi states that there are 39 generations between Abraham and 'Uqba and 48 generations between Abraham and Musa Jokollo.

³⁶⁷ In the *aṣl al-fulātīyīn*, Abdullahi specifies that this emigration occurred in the 5th century AH (11th or 12th century AD). He states that Musa Jokollo had three sons. One, Adam, he sent to the Benue river where he founded the Adamawa. A second, Jugu, he sent to Kulwa where he founded the Jegawa. A third, Ayyūb, stayed with him in Konni. The Fodiawa descend from Ayyūb. Bello outlines an alternative version of this account in his work ḥāshiya 'alā muqaddimat īdā' al-nusūkh. See Appendix I.

³⁶⁸ Abdullahi (1812) *īdā' al-nusūkh* in Hiskett (1957) *Material relating to the state of learning among the Fulani before their jihād*: 560.

³⁶⁹ See Nobili (2012) *Saharan Myths*.

³⁷⁰ For more on this topic, see the works of Guy Nicolas cited in the appendices.

group by the ruling Hausa, these theories of origin had an undeniably political dimension. Like the other elements in the process of accommodation, these works arguably had the same role: normalising the new situation and justifying it using a mix of historical precedents.

Conclusion: from *ijtihād* to *taqlīd*

The processes of dissent and accommodation required different forms of authority, but each comprised legal, charismatic and racial elements. While Usman later spoke of himself as a *muqallid*, we have seen that he was content to engage in *ijtihād* when it was necessary for the jihad campaign. Such changes were noted and in fact praised by his followers.³⁷¹ But while such *volte face* were arguably vital to assure a stable state, it left deep divisions in the *jamā'a* and started the embryonic conflict of legitimacy between Usman and Bello on the one hand and Abdullahi on the other which would lead to the estrangement of Abdullahi and his followers from the Sokoto project. Those followers, the *ṭullāb*, still held on to the “old” tools from the process of dissent spread by Usman in the 1800s and its stated purpose: to rule Hausaland by the example of the *rashidun* and the strict application of the Sharia. They would now use this same process of dissent to undermine the legitimacy of their erstwhile leader. Meanwhile, other discontents, such as Abd al-Salam, waged war on Sokoto following the same logic that Usman had used to wage war on the Hausa Kings. Many elements of the doctrine of dissent were also shared by the Mahdist uprisings and agitations that would continue to plague Sokoto well into the next century. The next chapter narrates Abdullahi's reaction to the change between the process of dissent and the process of accommodation, suggesting that it constituted an intellectual challenge to both Usman and the rising star of Muhammad Bello.

³⁷¹ See Abdulkadir dan Tafa (n.d.) *'ashara masā'il al-khilāf* in Mahibou (2010), discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE: THE INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE OF ABDULLAHI DAN FODIO 1804 – 1817

In his history of Sokoto, Al-Ḥājj Saʿīd related a story that Usman had at first refused to lead the *jamāʿa*, making the excuse that at fifty years old, he would be unable to play an active role in the jihad. The next choice was Abdullahi, Usman's younger brother by twelve years:³⁷²

So they deliberated, and some [in the *jamāʿa*] pointed to Abdullahi but others said, "No. He pits people against each other."³⁷³

In the end, no suitable candidates were found, and Usman was forced to become *amīr al-mu'minīn*. As Last suggests, no doubt the story was an apocryphal tale to emphasise Usman's "lack of political ambition".³⁷⁴ However, it is telling with regard to how Abdullahi was portrayed – and portrayed himself – within the jihadist movement. So far, this thesis has principally discussed the Arabic writings of Usman and Muhammad Bello. It has paid less attention to Abdullahi. The principal reason is that soon after the militarisation of the Fodiawa's movement, Abdullahi took rather a different path from his elder brother and his nephew. Abdullahi had supported the jihad wholeheartedly, playing a major role in the campaigns, and was the first to recognise Usman as *amīr al-mu'minīn*.³⁷⁵ However, on the march to what would be a major jihadist victory, the capture of Gobir's capital, Alkalawa, he had his first crisis of confidence in

³⁷² See Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 85; McAllister (1909) *History of Gando*.

³⁷³ Al-Ḥājj Saʿīd *taqāyīd* MS Paris (BN) 5484: 110b. Ar. يحملہ بعضاً عن بعض *yaḥmalahu baʿḍan ʿan baʿḍ*.

³⁷⁴ Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 24.

³⁷⁵ See Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt*; Bello *infāq al-maysūr*.

the jihadist movement. In the years that followed, Abdullahi would come to criticise many of the reasons Usman gave for the jihad and the general direction that the Fodiawa were taking now that they had assumed control of most of the Hausa territories, epitomised by the hereditary succession of Bello in 1817.

I suggest that Abdullahi had become disillusioned with the Sokoto project precisely because of the inconsistencies between the process of dissent and the process of accommodation described in the previous chapter. His points of contention (subjects as diverse as the proper title for an Islamic ruler, the rulings on *takfir* through helping the infidels, the status of Muslims who reside in the lands of the enemy and their possessions, minority interpretations of hadith and finally, the proper rules for succession) all clearly referenced and criticised Usman's shift between *ijtihād* and the blind *taqlīd* of *inkār al-ḥarām* I described in detail in the preceding chapter. This chapter considers Abdullahi's Arabic writings 1810 – 1817 to be an intellectual challenge to this strategy and to the authority that Usman, and later Bello claimed as Muslim leaders. In their responses, both Usman and Bello pushed the process of accommodation even further as they sought to consolidate their rule of Hausaland. I argue that in this period, Usman and Bello came to derive their authority not from a knowledge and replication of the Sharia, but from their own position as the Muslim leaders of a growing territorial entity. The authority they now claimed resembled Weber's concept of "bureaucratic authority", in that their authority rested not so much on a charismatic leader or a set of moral and legal principles, but on the idea of their leadership of an impersonal institution that existed by consensus of the people.

Following Abdullahi's challenge, Usman and Bello now applied some of the same labels used by the former to delegitimise his intellectual and political opponents before the jihad to Abdullahi and his followers, "the ṭullāb". This chapter covers (1) Abdullahi's role in the early *jamā'a* and his growing dissatisfaction with the jihad campaign (2) the intellectual challenge he posed to Usman from 1810 onwards and Usman's reply to these criticisms, and (3) Abdullahi's challenge to Bello's succession of 1817 and Bello's response.

Abdullahi dan Fodio

Abdullahi dan Fodio spent most of his early life in the company of his elder brother, Usman, and lists him as one of his first teachers.³⁷⁶ At a very early age, he accompanied Usman on his first preaching tours around the Hausa countryside.³⁷⁷ He soon became an accomplished Arabist, translating Usman's Fulfulde poetry into Arabic and recopying Usman's Arabic works. He also wrote on the Qur'anic sciences, hadith, fiqh and Arabic grammar, versifying established works in these fields.³⁷⁸ Rather than the Fulfulde verse favoured by Usman, Abdullahi became known for his mastery of Arabic *qaṣīda*, or epic poem. Even some fifteen years before the preparation of Usman's community for war, Abdullahi's poems already had a markedly militaristic bent. This one, below, is in praise of the Prophet:

He is the lion, and they are the lion cubs
 They cut off at a blow the heads of the unbelievers
 With swords the blades of which are bright.
 Whetted arrows, transfixing, assist them,
 While under them are fine horses³⁷⁹

³⁷⁶ See Abdullahi (1812) *īdā' al-nusūkh* in Hiskett (1957). Usman taught Abdullahi one quarter of the works he lists. Further, Usman and Abdullahi learnt many works together under direct family members, as well as from Jibrīl b. 'Umar.

³⁷⁷ Last (1967: 6) states that Usman was 20 years old when he began preaching, making Abdullahi no more than eight.

³⁷⁸ See Hunwick & O'Fahey *ALA II*.

³⁷⁹ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 89. Abdullahi composed this poem around 1789, shortly after he and Usman had celebrated Eid al-Adha with Bāwa, *Sarkin* Gobir.

In the build up to the jihad, Abdullahi assumed the role of Usman's spokesman. He entertained poetic dialogues with regional figures, composed elegies praising the Fodiawa's teachers, lamented their deceased family members, and engaged with Usman's critics with fine examples of *hijā'*, or Arabic satirical verse.³⁸⁰ Once the jihad was underway, Abdullahi put his pen to glorifying the conflict:

O community of Islam, strive and wage Holy War
 And do not be weak, for patience comes home to victory!
 Your slain are in Paradise for ever,
 And he who returns returns with glory and wealth.³⁸¹

In these poems, Abdullahi developed a shimmering vision of what the jihad would bring to Hausaland. He found numerous comparisons between the events of the 1804 jihad and the battles of the early Muslims under Muhammad.³⁸² He depicted the Hausa kings and their armies as corrupted, proud and tyrannical. They appear in his poems besotted with fine living, clothed in rich and luxurious gowns and riding decorated horses. The jihad was presented as a punishment from God for their sins.³⁸³ The jihad would replace the pagan regime of the Hausa kings with a perfect Islamic state in the model of the Rashidun Caliphs. With the strict application of the Sharia, confusion and oppression would cede to correct Muslim statecraft.

While his poems offered the jihadists moral support for their mission, Abdullahi also fought extensively in the campaigns. He led the first raids in the Konni region and the first siege

³⁸⁰ *Abdullahi (1813) tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 86–7.

³⁸¹ *Abdullahi (1813) tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 111.

³⁸² *Abdullahi (1813) tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 110.

³⁸³ See Abdullahi, *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 112.

of Alkalawa, oversaw the fall of Zamfara in 1805, and made more than twenty offensive raids while the jihadists were camped at Sabon Gari.³⁸⁴ Abdullahi's conduct in battle seems to have matched the heroism of his poems. Here, Al-Ḥājj Sa'īd describes a surprise attack against the jihadists at Argungu:³⁸⁵

The infidels descended on them while the [Muslim] armies had gone to search for provisions. They attacked [Usman's] brother, Abdullahi, during his study session [majlis al-iqrā'] and killed students and teachers from that group. Abdullahi fought them off alone, killing five of the armoured men.³⁸⁶

In October 1805, Usman tasked Abdullahi with leading the jihadist troops at the battle of Alwasa. The battle was a big defeat for the jihadists, resulting in major loss of life.³⁸⁷ There were many scholars among the dead, and Abdullahi must have lost many friends and teachers. This experience may have put some distance between Abdullahi and his beloved elder brother, who never actively participated in the jihad he sanctioned, and was probably not as aware of the situation on the ground.³⁸⁸ Surveying the scene after Alwasa, Abdullahi began to show the first signs of doubt about the motivations of the jihadists:

I have been left among a remnant who neglect their prayers
And obey, in procuring pleasures, their own souls.
And the majority of them have traded their faith for the world.
Preferring what they desire; and the heart wheedles,

³⁸⁴ See Abdullahi, *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 115–16.

³⁸⁵ Dated in Bello (*infāq*) to between 1807 and 1808.

³⁸⁶ Al-Ḥājj Sa'īd *taqāyīd* Paris (BN) 5484: 111b. Ar. أصحاب اللبود *aṣḥāb al-lubūd*, a reference *lifidi*, the padded cotton armour worn by the Hausa troops.

³⁸⁷ An account of Alwasa can be found in Bello *infāq al-maysūr*; Abdulkadir dan Tafa *rawḍāt al-afkār*.

³⁸⁸ See Mahibou (2010) *Théorie du gouvernement*: 197–8.

Bold for forbidden food, and the eating of it,
 As the beasts eat, they eat the tree of Hell.
 They do not listen to orders, they disobey their imam
 And whosoever stands and forbids them from evil, it is as if he spoke
 foul language!³⁸⁹

Nevertheless, in the following years the fortunes of the jihadists improved with the rising star of Muhammad Bello. Under his supervision, Gwandu became a permanent fortified base from which the jihadists launched successful attacks as far as Yauri, Borgu and Dendi. Through his diplomatic efforts at the meeting in Magami, the Hausa kingdoms of Zamfara, Katsina, Daura and Kano pledged allegiance to the growing jihadist state.³⁹⁰ In the *tazyīn al-waraqāt*, Abdullahi makes scant reference to these events. In October 1807, Usman chose Bello to lead a second attack on Gobir's capital, Alkalawa. On the night of 4 October 1807, as Abdullahi was marching towards Alkalawa along with the jihadist army, he had an abrupt change of heart. He decided that he no longer wanted to be part of the jihad. Instead, he and five companions resolved to journey far from Hausaland and undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Lands:

Then there came to me from God the sudden thought to shun the homelands... I left the army and occupied myself with my own (affairs) and faced towards the East, towards the Chosen One³⁹¹

Abdullahi first stopped at Kano. At this point, he was in his own words, "pre-occupied, and at a loss what to do."³⁹² Instead of continuing his journey eastwards to Mecca, the people

³⁸⁹ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 118.

³⁹⁰ Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 36; Bello *infāq* in Shādhilī (1996): 205. This is the same event described on p. 106 n. 315.

³⁹¹ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 120.

of Kano persuaded Abdullahi to stay and write for them something “by which they might be enlightened regarding the judgements of the Sharia and its application”.³⁹³ Abdullahi’s stay in Kano gave him the opportunity to put into writing an alternative vision to the kind of government he saw being implemented in Hausaland after the jihad. The result was the *ḍiyā’ al-ḥukkām*, one of Abdullahi’s first works on Muslim statecraft.³⁹⁴

As discussed in the previous chapter, Muhammad Bello was also outraged at the behaviour and motivations of many of the jihadist troops. However, Abdullahi’s concern seems to have been far greater, perhaps because the vision of a perfect Islamic state as expressed in his many poems had not been met. The victories of the jihad had not returned Hausaland to the straight path of the Sharia, but had resulted in confusion and wholesale violation of Islamic law. The lust for worldly possessions and ostentatious displays of war booty among the jihadist troops simply replicated the behaviour of the Hausa kings and their armies, while the fact that they did not hand over a portion of their winnings to the *bayt al-māl* compromised the establishment of an effective state apparatus. Further, much of the heretical innovations against which Usman had preached so forcefully – the playing of musical instruments, free mixing of the sexes, public dancing and so on – continued to be practised openly. In Kano, things

³⁹² Abdullahi (1807–8) *ḍiyā’ al-ḥukkām* MS Paris (BI) 175: 5.

³⁹³ Abdullahi *ḍiyā’ al-ḥukkām*: 4–5.

³⁹⁴ I hesitate to say “the first” – as Mahibou (2010) claims – because in a non-dated work entitled *ḍiyā’ al-muqtadīn li-al-khulafā’ al-rāshidīn* Abdullahi states (MS Paris (BI) 192: 2b) that there should be no obedience shown to one who rules contrary to the Sharia and consequently, “there is no remaining under the kings of al-sūdān.” This statement and the fact that the content is largely lifted from al-Suyūṭī’s *tārīkh al-khulafā’* without any input from Abdullahi, suggests that Abdullahi had written it prior to the *ḍiyā’ al-ḥukkām*.

were no better. Abdullahi stated that, “I saw among them that from which I had fled in my own country”.³⁹⁵

In the *ḍiyā’ al-ḥukkām*, Abdullahi explained how to found and govern a “proper” Islamic state, and looked in detail at the legal rulings around jihad and the taking of war booty.³⁹⁶

While these topics were clearly a response to the concerns Abdullahi had at that time, he was perhaps looking further ahead to the direction of the Sokoto project in the longer term. Among the conditions for the appointment of a ruler, he stated that it would be improper for a son to succeed his father.³⁹⁷ Did he have Muhammad Bello in mind?

Whatever Abdullahi’s sentiments at this stage, he soon decided to rejoin the jihad campaign. Under Muhammad Bello, the jihadists finally took Alkalawa and killed *Sarkin* Gobir Yunfa, defeating and dissolving the state against which they had initially gone to war.³⁹⁸

Abdullahi was given command of an army to make raids into Gurma, and continued to write triumphalist poetry about their victories. Around December 1809, Usman made the decision to move north-east to Sifawa along with Muhammad Bello and most of his followers, ordering

³⁹⁵ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 121.

³⁹⁶ See Gwandu (1977) *Abdullahi b. Fodio as a Muslim jurist*: 108.

³⁹⁷ Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*. Murray Last states that according to Wazir Junayd, this moment reflected the division between the older generation – as represented by Abdullahi – and the younger generation, who looked to Bello as their future leader. See Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 65.

³⁹⁸ Here there is some confusion in the dates. Bello (*infāq*) states that Alkalawa was taken in early October 1808. Abdullahi (*tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 124) seems to suggest that he witnessed this event. As we recall, Abdullahi had abandoned the jihadist armies heading out for that campaign a year earlier, on 4 October 1807. Thus either Abdullahi spent a full year in Kano and the campaign against Alkalawa was an extremely long one, or one of the dates is a year out and Abdullahi did not actually witness the fall of Alkalawa.

Abdullahi to remain in the west and continue the jihad there.³⁹⁹ Abdullahi was evidently upset at this arrangement:

I set out with a small army because most of the people had turned towards the place of emigration in order to acquire houses, and in order to make productive the unworked lands, and they were unwilling to fight Holy War at that time, in that area.⁴⁰⁰

By 1811, Abdullahi had returned to Bodinga, a few miles south-west of Sifawa, to be closer to Usman. Meanwhile, Bello led military campaigns in Gwari and began construction of a new city, Sokoto.⁴⁰¹ His star continued to rise. The following year, Usman divided the territory gained in the jihad among his most senior commanders.⁴⁰² He gave the western half to Abdullahi, the east to Bello, the north to 'Alī Jedo, while dividing the south between another of his sons, al-Bukhārī, and the Bā Arewa Hausa leader Abd al-Salam.⁴⁰³ Retrospectively, it seems that Bello had gained the greatest amount of territory from this division, although were Ahmad Lobbo to have remained Sokoto's regional Emir in Masina, the western half of the division may have been more prestigious.⁴⁰⁴ In any case, the division plainly showed that by 1812, Usman

³⁹⁹ Balogun (1973) *Succession tradition in Gwandu history*: 19.

⁴⁰⁰ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 127.

⁴⁰¹ Balogun (1973) *Succession tradition*: 19; Abdullahi, *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 129–30.

⁴⁰² See Sa'd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān *tarṭīb al-aṣḥāb*. Balogun (1973; 1974) convincingly argues that the date of 1812 given in *tarṭīb al-aṣḥāb* is more likely than local accounts giving a date of 1809. Since Bodinga (only a few miles south-west of Sifawa) fell inside the western portion of the territory granted to Abdullahi, logically the division must have been made when Abdullahi was at Bodinga, that is, after 1810.

⁴⁰³ Balogun (1973) *Succession tradition*: 18. As Balogun is right to point out, Usman's division of 1812 was probably intended as a temporary arrangement, under which the administrative responsibilities of this vast amount of land were divided between "Senior Wazirs", each man organising separate forces to extend the jihad in his area of command.

⁴⁰⁴ See Lovejoy (2016) *Jihād in West Africa*: 93–4. For the Hausa, the east-west division between Bello and Abdullahi likely had a deeper historical significance, marking the division between the *Hausa bakwai* that would become the Sokoto Caliphate (Biram, Daura, Gobir, Kano, Katsina, Rano, Zaria), and the *banza bakwai* that would form the Emirate of Gwandu (Zamfara, Kebbi, Yauri, Gwari, Nupe, Kororofa [Jukun], Yoruba), with some important consequences for their rule.

was treating both Abdullahi and Bello as senior figures in the *jamā'a*. Around the time of the division of 1812, Abdullahi completed his *magnum opus*, the *tazyīn al-waraqāt*, a history of the jihad that collected together the best of his poetical *diwan*. Strikingly, in the preface to this work, Abdullahi announced that he would be composing no more poems from now on because “there was no benefit in them...as regards religion”.⁴⁰⁵ In the following years, he would instead continue his “*ḍiyā'*” series of works on correct Islamic governance.

While in the first part of this chapter it has been necessary to give a contextual overview of Abdullahi's changing role in the jihad and its aftermath, this thesis concerns first and foremost the debates around authority going on “behind the scenes” through the medium of Arabic written texts. The rest of this chapter will examine a series of written exchanges between Usman and Abdullahi during, and for some time after the period just discussed. Abdullahi's vision of a “proper” Islamic state and its ruler in subsequent works of his “*ḍiyā'*” series came to be ever more at odds with Usman's own evolving views on the subject. Abdullahi's challenge to Usman cut to the heart of the inconsistencies between the harsh judgements required in the process of dissent and the more pragmatic views the latter had adopted in the process of accommodation. Abdullahi re-examined the circumstances of the jihad of 1804 and the rulings that were made to justify it. He also identified the questionable logic with which Usman defended the actions of the jihadists in its aftermath. In short, his works constituted an intellectual challenge to the Sokoto project as envisioned by Usman, and now Muhammad Bello as well.

⁴⁰⁵ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 84.

The intellectual challenge of Abdullahi 1810 – 1817

We are fortunate that both Usman and Abdullahi took the care to date the various works in which they clashed, allowing us to place the debate between them within a precise chronological period. Abdullahi's first attack on his fellow jihadists, though not citing Usman directly, was *ḍiyā' ūlī al-amr*, which he completed on 15 December, 1810. In *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*, completed on January 19, 1812, Abdullahi did single out Usman, critically commenting on two of his earlier works in which he began to adopt the process of accommodation, *miṣbāḥ li-ahl hādhā-l-zamān* (1808) and *sirāj al-ikhwān* (1811). Usman responded to these criticisms in *najm al-ikhwān*, which he completed the following year. After this period of conflict, both men continued to produce works on Islamic government and legal practice, but without explicit reference to the other.⁴⁰⁶

It is important to note that during this period, Abdullahi was not solely occupied with criticising his brother. Neither did he wish to undermine the Sokoto project. He composed many other works that make no reference to events in the *jamā'a*,⁴⁰⁷ and both he and Bello sought to calm people who were misinterpreting his criticisms and causing divisions in the community.⁴⁰⁸ However, that Abdullahi raised his objections in this period makes sense. As we

⁴⁰⁶ Usman (1813) *tawqīf al-muslimīn* (see below); (1813) *shams al-ikhwān*. Abdullahi (1813) *ḍiyā' al-umarā'*; (1815) *ḍiyā' al-wilāyāt*.

⁴⁰⁷ Abdullahi (1811) *ḍiyā' al-mujāhidīn*, a summary of al-Naḥḥās's treaty on jihad; (1811–12) *ḍiyā' al-umma*, a summary of *kashf al-ghumma 'an jamī' al-umma* of al-Sha'rānī (d.1565) on *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

⁴⁰⁸ Abdullahi *kaff al-ikhwān 'an al-ta'arruḍ bi-al-inkār 'alā ahl al-īmān* "Restraining the brothers from antagonising those who are believers"; Bello *kaff al-ikhwān 'an ittibā' khuṭuwāt al-shayṭān* "Restraining the brothers from following the steps of Satan". Unfortunately, I was not able to consult either of these works.

have seen, 1810–1812 was exactly the period in which Usman and Bello began a process of accommodation to excuse the excesses of the jihad and normalise the Fodiawa’s rule of Hausaland, which was looking less and less like the rule of the Rashidun Caliphs. This conflict was taking place in the context of a *jamā’a* which as the jihad expanded outwards was becoming increasingly divided geographically, and as scholars began to digest the events of the jihad years, doctrinally diverse. It was also a precursor to the nascent dispute between Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello which would erupt in 1817, covered later in this chapter.

As outlined in Chapter One, Prophet Muhammad made few statements about who should lead the Muslim community after his death. Usman and Abdullahi came to adopt radically different interpretations of these few hadith, attesting to the very different visions of Islamic government they had in mind for Hausaland after the jihad. The point of contention was over the concept of kingship, or *mulk*, a term featured in the two *hadith* in question:

The beginning of this Umma is prophethood and grace. After that, *khilāfa* and grace. After that, rapacious kingship. After that, tyranny and corruption.⁴⁰⁹

The *khilāfa* in my Umma after me will be for thirty years. All after that will be *mulk*.⁴¹⁰

In Abdullahi’s opinion, these statements were a clear indication that the age of the Rashidun Caliphs was over. There could be no more *khulafā’* after them.⁴¹¹ The only way to be a true Islamic ruler – a position Abdullahi refers to by the term *imām* or *amīr* – was to imitate the

⁴⁰⁹ Prophetic hadith narrated by al-Ṭayālīsī.

⁴¹⁰ Prophetic hadith narrated by Ibn Ḥanbal.

⁴¹¹ See Abdullahi *ḍiyā’ ūlī al-amr* (2a) in which he calls Caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz *the seal of the Caliphs* [Ar. خاتم الخلفاء *khātīm al-khulafā’*]. Significantly, Abdullahi makes no reference to the slightly different narration of this hadith found in the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal and replicated in Chapter One, ending with the text, “Then, the Caliphate (*khilāfa*) shall come once again based on the precept of Prophethood”.

ways of the *rāshidūn* in every aspect. While the Caliphate was no more, other forms of Muslim statecraft such as an Imamate (*imāma*) or an Emirate (*imāra*) were possible. But Abdullahi made a strong distinction between a Muslim *imāma* and the kingship or *mulk* mentioned by Prophet Muhammad:

[The imām should i]mprove the religion and the livelihood of the populace following the Sunna of the messenger of God. He should act as a deputy⁴¹² for the messenger of God to the Muslims as their leader (amir). He should not come to his position through inheritance and lord over the people by force to obtain the riches of the world, with complete freedom to do as he wishes and take pleasure in fine foods, clothing and living quarters, for [all] that is kingship (*mulk*).⁴¹³

From the above we understand that for Abdullahi, *mulk* pertained to any form of government that contrasted with Muslim statecraft.⁴¹⁴ He depicted a king – *malik* – as an un-Islamic and tyrannical ruler who “lords over his people like a master over his slaves”⁴¹⁵ and, importantly, one whose power was hereditary.⁴¹⁶ For Abdullahi, it was the confusion between these terms – “*mulk*” and “*imāma*” or “*imāra*” – that had led to the tyrannical government of the Hausa Kings:

Our ignorant ones believe that kingship is praiseworthy in Islam and in fact is a duty. They do not distinguish between it and the praiseworthy caliphate and emirate.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹² *khalīfa* used in its original meaning as “deputy”. See Crone and Hinds (1986) *God's caliph : religious authority in the first centuries of Islam*.

⁴¹³ Abdullahi (1810) *ḍiyā' ūlī al-amr* MS Paris (BN) Arabe 5364: 2b.

⁴¹⁴ See Abdullah (1813) *ḍiyā' al-umarā'* in Alkali (2004).

⁴¹⁵ Abdullahi (1812) *ḍiyā' al-sultān*: 4. He is referring to al-Maghīlī's definition of a king in answers to the Askiya.

⁴¹⁶ See Mahibou (2010) *Théorie du gouvernement* : 206–8. He cites Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-ḥukkām*; *ḍiyā' al-sultān*.

⁴¹⁷ Abdullahi (1810) *ḍiyā' ūlī al-amr*: 2b.

Further, Abdullahi did not believe that the jihad had rid Hausaland of the *mulk* of the Hausa kings. In fact, the jihadists were simply copying their behaviour and becoming kings themselves. To remove such confusion, Abdullahi reasoned that the terms *mulk* and *malik* referred only to a non-Muslim ruler. He claimed this was the sense in which the Prophet had meant the term *mulk* in the hadith above, and that al-Maghīlī had well understood this point in his works on Islamic governance:

He [al-Maghīlī] specified “*imāra*” and “*amīr*” because it is the Islamic praiseworthy name and more precise than “Caliph without kingship”. And [he specified] “*mulk*” because it is the term applied to the kings of the world before Islam. As the Prophet said, “The beginning of this Umma is prophethood and grace. After that, *khilāfa* and grace. After that, rapacious kingship. After that, tyranny and corruption.”⁴¹⁸

Abdullahi’s censure of *malik* and *mulk* had clear repercussions in the *jamā’a*. As Usman explained in a particularly revealing passage in his riposte to Abdullahi, *najm al-ikhwān*, his brother’s followers had challenged the terminology Usman was using to talk about leadership in Islam and, implicitly, his own judgement as to what constituted a legitimate ruler:

The reason why I have dwelt so long on this matter [of kingship] is that the people have inundated me with questions about it and asked me for a response on the truth of it. Some of the students [*ṭalaba*] having heard the censure of the word king [...] in *ḍiyā’ al-sulṭān* and *ḍiyā’ ūlū al-amr* written by my brother, Abdullahi, think that they should censor the use of the word king in this Umma. One of them even told me, “We will not use the word ‘king’ to describe the ruler, but rather ‘*imām*.’”⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Abdullahi *ḍiyā’ al-sulṭān*: 3.

⁴¹⁹ Usman (1812–13) *najm al-ikhwān* MX Niamey: 33.

For his part, Usman had a very different standpoint on the terminology of a Muslim ruler. Like Abdullahi, this also reflected his vision for the government of Hausaland post-jihad:

There is no harm in applying the terms *khilāfa*, *imāma*, *imāra*, *wilāya*, *sulṭana* and *mulk*⁴²⁰ to the leaders of Islam because they are found in the Sharia. If their utterance was not merited, it would not have been found in the Sharia. None of them imply censure or praise in themselves, but only in their manifestations.⁴²¹

As to Abdullahi's interpretation of the hadith in question:

the censure of "rapacious kingship" is due to the *rapaciousness* [...] not to pronouncing the word "king"⁴²²

Usman's difference with Abdullahi was not merely a question of terminology. It went to the heart of a much deeper division between the two men as to the legitimacy of governance and the objective of the Sokoto project. Abdullahi considered the only period of *true* Islamic governance to span the thirty year rule of the Rashidun. The only legitimate means of government after that period was to "cultivate Sunna and do what the Prophet of God and his Rightly Guided Caliphs did."⁴²³ But Usman suggested otherwise:

"King" can be applied to the kings of the infidels and the kings of Islam from the time of Mu'āwiya⁴²⁴ to judgement day because of the Prophet's words, "The *khilāfa* in my Umma after me will be for thirty years. All after that will be *mulk*." His words should not

⁴²⁰ "caliphate", "imamate", "emirate", "state" or "sovereignty", "sultanate" and "kingship" respectively.

⁴²¹ Usman *najm al-ikhwān*: 28. My emphasis.

⁴²² Usman *najm al-ikhwān*: 30. My emphasis.

⁴²³ Abdullahi (1812) *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān* MS Paris (BI) 205: 7.

⁴²⁴ Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān (602–680 AD) was a prominent member of the Meccan elite. Initially hostile to Muhammad and his Companions, he converted to Islam and led Muslim military campaigns, becoming Governor of Damascus. He disputed the appointment of the Prophet's nephew, 'Alī ibn 'Alī Ṭālib, as fourth Caliph and after 'Alī's assassination, declared himself Caliph, ruling from Damascus. His seizure of power marked the end of the rāshidūn Caliphs and the beginning of the hereditary Umayyad dynasty. The role of Mu'āwiya as a historical precedent for the Fodiawa's rule will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

be taken literally⁴²⁵ but rather by the specific understanding that he means the *mulk* of the infidels, namely, the king who “lords over his people like a master over his slaves.”⁴²⁶

In Usman’s interpretation of the hadith, true Islamic governance *could* in fact extend past the time of the *rāshidūn* under the appellation of *mulk*, as long as it was not “rapacious kingship”. Such a logic gave the Fodiawa a free hand to craft the kind of Muslim statecraft they saw fit for Hausaland. As long as they were not overly oppressive towards Muslims, the Fodiawa could be temporal “kings” of Hausaland and still demand the authority owed to a Muslim ruler. As they were not legally bound to follow only the actions of the Rashidun, they could develop more pragmatic solutions for the governance issues they faced.

In his early works such as *masā’il muhimma* and *ajwiba muharrira*, Usman had incited dissent through a selective interpretation of the legal sources available to declare that the Hausa kings and those Muslims who helped them were infidels. These rulings facilitated a wave of raiding, looting and violence that the Fodiawa struggled to control, epitomised by events in Bornu. Abdullahi, on the front lines of battle, knew very well what this looked like. To maintain their authority as Muslim jurists, the Fodiawa had to find ways to substantiate their earlier claims that the Hausa Kings and the *Mai* of Bornu were not Muslim rulers but in fact apostates from Islam. Abdullahi, for his part, had helped in this discursive effort. As we recall from the previous chapter, both Usman and Bello had quoted the parallel he had made between the Hausa kings and Sonni Ali in *diy’ā’ al-sulṭān* to back up their claims that the jihad had been

⁴²⁵ Ar. على ظاهره المذكورة *‘alā ṣāhirihi al-madhkūra*.

⁴²⁶ Usman (1812–13) *najm al-ikhwān*: 30; 35.

legitimate.⁴²⁷ However, Abdullahi also dedicated a significant portion of this same work to fundamentally undermining Usman's justifications for the jihad.

In the *sirāj al-ikhwān* (1811), Usman reiterated his judgement of *takfir* on those who claimed to be Muslim but performed none of the acts of Islam, or else mixed Islamic and non-Islamic rituals. In this he claimed to be following the judgements of al-Maghīlī in the *ajwiba*.⁴²⁸ Abdullahi, perhaps informed by his own experiences during the jihad campaign, demonstrated that such a blanket judgement had some negative consequences:

the Sheikh's judgement that those infidels could be killed or captured without differentiating between them may be misinterpreted⁴²⁹

Abdullahi suggested that before declaring *takfir* there were additional considerations, and that *takfir* could be made unilaterally, but only on a case by case basis:

the act that confirms infidelity must undoubtedly be defined as one that has infidelity as its intention. Therefore, only actions that pertain exclusively to acts of infidelity can be a reason for anathematisation⁴³⁰

He gave as an example some initiation rites of the Fulani, which Usman had criticised previously.⁴³¹ Abdullahi ruled that these actions could not be grounds for *takfir* since the Fulani

⁴²⁷ Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 39. Quoted in Usman (1812–13) *najm al-ikhwān*; Bello (after 1821) *miṭṭāḥ al-sadād*.

⁴²⁸ See Usman *sirāj al-ikhwān* in Shareef (2000) *The Guiding Light of the Brethren*: Chapters 3–4.

⁴²⁹ Ar. *فيه ما فيه* *fī-hī ma-fī-hī*. Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 55.

⁴³⁰ Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 56.

⁴³¹ See Usman (c.1810–1817) *nūr al-albāb* in Hamet (1897).

were not engaging in these rites for a purpose that would specifically negate their belief in Islam, such as worshipping shrines.⁴³²

A second point of contention between Usman and Abdullahi concerned the reason Usman had given after the jihad for his judgement of *takfir* on the Hausa kings, who were self-professed Muslims. Usman claimed that their maintenance of friendly relations (*muwālāt*) with the infidels and providing help (*naṣr*) to them against the Muslims in war was grounds enough for *takfir*:

They assist and support the unbelievers, and even aid their forces against the Muslim armies -not from [motives] which might be interpreted, indirectly at least, to bring some advantage to the Muslims, but purely for the sake of consolidating their own domains.⁴³³

The same was the case for the *Mai* of Bornu:

We fought them only because they began to attack us; they were the first to commit aggression against us. What led them to commit such aggression was their co-operation with the unbelievers.⁴³⁴

Usman's basis for this judgement was al-Maghīlī's interpretation of Quran 5:80 in his work *misbāḥ li-l-arwāḥ*.⁴³⁵ According to al-Maghīlī, this verse pertained to *muwālāt* with the sense of helping the infidels in battle, and as such constituted apostasy from Islam. But in the *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*, Abdullahi questioned al-Maghīlī's logic:

⁴³² Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 57.

⁴³³ Usman (1813) *ta'lim al-ikhwān* in Martin (1967): 87.

⁴³⁴ Usman *ta'lim al-ikhwān* in Martin (1967): 89.

⁴³⁵ Quran 5:80 (Pickthall translation) "Thou seest many of them making friends with those who disbelieve [Ar. يتولون *yatawallūna alladhīna kafarū*]. Surely ill for them is that which they themselves send on before them: that Allah will be wroth with them and in the doom they will abide."

as for him placing infidelity on someone who helps the infidels in their armies against the armies of the Muslims, this is not evident for me because the verse that al-Maghīlī used as evidence in fact pertained to aiding [the infidels] in their infidelity. This is an action of the hypocrites for whom this verse was meant, as the *tafsir* scholars have made clear.⁴³⁶

That is to say, the verse was meant for those within Muhammad’s own community who ingratiated themselves with the pagan Meccans to continue personal or financially beneficial relations, not to assist them in battle against the Muslims.⁴³⁷ Abdullahi goes on:

Al-Maghīlī spoke of “aid” (*naṣr*), but he did not define it. He equated “aiding them” in general terms with “infidelity”, not “sin”. Now, aiding them in infidelity is infidelity. However, aiding them in committing sin is not infidelity at all, but rather it is sin. So if the act is not in itself infidelity, then how can the action be infidelity by default?”⁴³⁸

In essence, Abdullahi was saying that “aiding the infidels” by itself did not warrant a judgement of *takfir* such as al-Maghīlī had ruled. Usman himself pointed out that this literalist interpretation of the verse in question raised doubts about the whole basis of the anathematisation of the Hausa kings:

His [Abdullahi’s] interpretation suggests that [Muslims] waging war on Muslims is not judged to be infidelity, even after they have made *muwālāt* with the infidels (i.e. procuring their help and assistance against the Muslims, agreeing jointly to fight the Muslims, and supporting actions that contravene the Sharia). This is absolutely not the case. Rather, fighting them having made [this type of] *muwālāh* with the infidels is infidelity, as al-Maghīlī has pointed out.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁶ Abdullahi *ḍiyā’ al-sulṭān*: 59.

⁴³⁷ See *tafsir al-jalālayn*. Meanwhile, another *tafsir*, *tanwīr al-miqbās fī tafsīr ibn ‘Abbās* (Mokrane Guezzou, 2017 trans.) clearly has it: “Thou seest many of them (many of the hypocrites)”.

⁴³⁸ Abdullahi *ḍiyā’ al-sulṭān*: 59.

⁴³⁹ Usman (1812–13) *najm al-ikhwān*: 64.

Abdullahi grounded his critiques of the process of dissent on a literalist and scholarly reading of the sources of Islamic law. However, his plea for the *jamā'a* to look more closely into each case before making the judgement of *takfir* clearly went against the spirit of an aggressive jihad campaign with a simple message of “with us or against us”. In his summary of the conflict between Usman and his younger brother, Abdulkadir dan Tafa, a fervent supporter of Usman, defended the harsh judgements of the early 1800s by presenting them as a necessary evil, given the context in which they had been made:

In his judgements, the Shaykh had taken into consideration the circumstances of time and place. He adopted the path of rigor and severity in order to intimidate those who might adopt similar behaviour⁴⁴⁰

From this work we understand that Abdullahi's views on *muwālāt* had made him particularly unpopular among Usman's followers, who “condemned Abdullahi because he was not in agreement with the Sheikh....going as far as to brand him ignorant and lost.”⁴⁴¹ But the need to write a defence of Usman suggests that Abdullahi had received support from those “*tullāb*” who shared his more rigorous, literalist approach to the Sharia.

Another subject of dispute that we can link more closely to Abdullahi's experience on the front lines of battle concerned the treatment of Muslims who remained in the *dar al-ḥarb*. Just as blanket rulings on *takfir* had caused many Muslims to be killed or taken captive, blanket rulings on the possessions of Muslims remaining in the lands of the enemy had resulted in mass looting of Muslim possessions:

⁴⁴⁰ Abdulkadir dan Tafa *'ashara masā'il fī al-khilāf* in Mahibou (2010): 258.

⁴⁴¹ Abdulkadir dan Tafa *'ashara masā'il fī al-khilāf* in Mahibou (2010): 259.

Some of them who claimed to be Muslim before this jihad of ours presumed that the possessions they had consumed were *halal* since they heard that we did [not] object to that. But this was not the case.⁴⁴²

We saw in the previous chapter that Usman had attempted to distance himself from these rulings by adopting the cautious approach of *inkār al-ḥarām*. His objective was not to address the issue of stolen property, but rather to preserve his legal authority in the eyes of the *jamā'a*. In the *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān* however, Abdullahi argued that Muslims whose possessions were taken in the jihad could reclaim them if they had sufficient proof, even if their possessions had ended up in the *bayt al-māl*, or state treasury.⁴⁴³ Abdullahi reported that rather than facilitating a system of redress, judges on the ground had concocted a legal argument to prevent Muslims from claiming back their possessions. Their judgement was that since the fall of Alkalawa marked the transition from *dār al-kufr* to *dār al-islām*, a Muslim only had legal recourse to recover his possessions if he could prove that they had been taken after the fall of Alkalawa.⁴⁴⁴ For Abdullahi, this legal chicanery was not acceptable:

It is plain to see that the fall of Alkalawa is not a date upon which to base correct legal judgements. What was before it and what is after it is the same. This is what we know from the books [of law]. Whoever claims otherwise, let him come to us with clear evidence and if we find such then we will follow it, if God wills, and if not, then we shall rely on what we know.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 42.

⁴⁴³ Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 41–2. With the caveat that those who claimed to be Muslims but were judged to be simply bands of raiders (*muḥāribūn*) such as many of the pastoralist Fulani tribes, could not reclaim their possessions since they had no doubt stolen them from others first.

⁴⁴⁴ See Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 42.

⁴⁴⁵ Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 42.

The existence of this legal ruling led Abdullahi to depict Hausaland after the jihad as a society in which, far from liberating Muslims from pagan rule, Muslims were actually living at a disadvantage:

They judge that all the Muslim possessions consumed before the fall of Alkalawa by the infidels who had a peace settlement with us, or a passage of safe conduct, or who claimed to be Muslim, should not be enquired after. If the [Muslim] owner comes across [his possessions], all he can do is either buy them [back] or abandon them. Even if they had taken a free Muslim from us or bought him before [the fall of Alkalawa], the [judges] say that they will not enquire about the matter and they leave [the infidels] to do what they will with the possessions of the Muslims and their females,⁴⁴⁶ to consume their goods and have sexual intercourse with their women [...] and what heinous act of Islam is greater than putting free men into servitude and making [Muslim women] sexually available for the infidels and immoral folk!⁴⁴⁷

These highly emotive and fantastical claims must have generated considerable unease among the *jamā'a*. Further, Abdullahi's quip that he and his followers would "rely on what [they] knew" was a clear challenge to the *status quo* enforced or at least permitted on Usman's authority. Indeed, while Abdullahi at no point referred to his elder brother by name, we gather by Usman's response to these assertions in *najm al-ikhwān* that he had indeed endorsed such a policy:

What he [Abdullahi] said was well and good, but I want to inform you all of some matters in regard to these issues. In the situation [he] mentioned, if the raiders [ḥarbiyīn] present us with a passage of safe conduct and have in their party Muslims whom they took as booty from us, they are not obliged to release them but can instead return with them to their land, whether the captives are male or female, freemen or slaves⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁶ Ar. حريم *ḥarīm*. It is unclear whether this refers to female concubines or female family members captured in war.

⁴⁴⁷ Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 43.

⁴⁴⁸ Usman (1812–13) *najm al-ikhwān*: 72. My emphasis.

The judgement that Muslims had no right to recover their relatives or their possessions lost in war cannot have been the most popular, especially for purists such as Abdullahi. However, it was surely the most pragmatic standpoint to take. Hausaland had witnessed some eight years of constant warfare and pillaging. Innumerable captives were taken on both sides, many forced into enslavement or concubinage. The fighting resulted in mass migration. Some settlements and rural areas became depopulated, while other areas swelled with refugees. The practicalities of locating lost relatives, slaves and possessions in such circumstances would be monumental. Abdullahi, however, was not a pragmatist. He saw his duty as upholding the legal stipulations of the Sharia, and rooting out those judgements that did not have a firm precedent within it.

During his early teaching tours, Usman would no doubt have said the same thing. Even in *tanbīh al-ikhwān*, dated 1811, Usman claimed to make rulings by the maxim, “prefer the usual to the unusual”.⁴⁴⁹ But as outlined in the previous chapter, Usman went on to adopt a new maxim, *inkār al-ḥarām*. This maxim stated that any subject found to be in dispute among the scholars – even by a tiny minority – could neither be permitted nor forbidden. As a result, Usman cited a series of quite *unusual* rulings to justify some actions of the jihadist troops and the new Muslim leaders appointed by the Fodiawa. As I have argued, *inkār al-ḥarām* allowed Usman to enforce a “new normal”, maintaining his authority at a time of consolidation and accommodation. In his criticisms of Usman’s policy, Abdullahi stuck to his elder brother’s earlier maxim of “prefer the usual”, arguing that a true *muqallid* should always adopt the majority

⁴⁴⁹ Usman (1811) *tanbīh al-ikhwān* in Palmer (1915) *An early Fulani conception of Islam (continued)* : 54.

view. Though their disputes were framed in reference to the longstanding debates of Maliki legal scholars around these topics, we will see that this debate was directly relevant both to events on the battlefield and to the authority of Usman as leader.

First, let us examine Usman's judgement on wearing gold. The Prophet had clearly stated that Muslim men were not permitted to wear gold, silk or other fineries. However, faced with many jihadist troops displaying their captured war booty, Usman referred to the story of Surāqa b. Mālik⁴⁵⁰ to rule that they were simply showing "gratitude to God". While the majority of scholars ruled against wearing gold, citing this single *hadith* allowed Usman to claim that, following the logic of *inkār al-ḥarām*, it was "one of the subjects over which the scholars are in dispute" and thus could not be forbidden. As we recall, the covetousness and lavish displays of the jihad troops was one of the reasons Abdullahi left the jihad. In this context, his opposition is not surprising:

To cite the story of Surāqa as evidence for the permissibility of wearing gold and silver "out of gratitude to God" does not appear correct to me. The writer of *al-mi'yār*⁴⁵¹ did not mention this and I did not find any of our Maliki scholars saying anything to this effect. Making Surāqa wear those things was to validate the miracle of the Prophet [...] how can wearing them be showing gratitude [to God] when that is one of the things He has forbidden of us?⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ Surāqa b. Mālik was a member of the Quraysh elite of Mecca. Initially hostile to Muhammad, whom he attempted to assassinate, he later converted to Islam. According to the *hadith*, Muhammad promised Surāqa that he would one day wear the gold and silver bangles of the Persian king, Khosrow. Years later, after the successful campaign in Persia, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb adorned Surāqa, who lay on his deathbed, with the plundered robes of the Persian king, fulfilling the words of the Prophet.

⁴⁵¹ *al-mi'yār al-mu'rib*, the noted fatwa collection of North African Maliki jurist Aḥmad al-Wansharīsī (1430/1–1508 AD).

⁴⁵² Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān*: 61.

Secondly, we come to Usman's judgement on playing musical instruments. Again, the majority of scholars ruled that playing musical instruments was forbidden unless to encourage troops in battle or to celebrate a marriage. Usman cited a single *hadith* reporting that the Prophet allowed a drum to be beaten in his honour to rule that playing of musical instruments on other occasions was also permitted. Abdullahi, who had singled out the playing of musical instruments as one of the outrages he encountered in Kano and claimed to have turned the city's drums into feed troughs,⁴⁵³ naturally disagreed:

this *hadith* was either equivocal, not authentic, or abrogated [...] otherwise, why else would all the scholars have abandoned it?⁴⁵⁴

Thirdly, we examine Usman's ruling on dressing in fine clothes. As stated above, this was considered to be forbidden by the majority of scholars. However, Usman ruled that it was acceptable for Muslim rulers to wear fine, expensive clothes if it was to gain respect in non-Muslim lands where people expected their rulers to dress extravagantly. Again, his ruling was based on a single *khābar*⁴⁵⁵ in which Caliph 'Umar accepted the excuses of Mu'āwiya, Governor of Syria, for his adoption of local dress. As such, it was also "one of the subjects over which the scholars are in dispute" and thus, not forbidden. For Abdullahi, lavish robes were a symbol of the *mulk*, or pagan kingship, discussed above. But his criticism in this case was subtler:

From the above [words of Usman], we have understood that it is not required for Imams to dress differently to the Companions of the Prophet except under necessity. "And the

⁴⁵³ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1963): 121.

⁴⁵⁴ Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sultān*: 64.

⁴⁵⁵ "*khābar*" An historical anecdote *not* involving the Prophet, but compiled and transmitted in the same manner as a *hadith*.

necessities have rulings of their own.”⁴⁵⁶ A situation of “necessity” results from the breakdown of Islamic law and the absence of respect for religion. Such [a practice] is demanded of every Imam who lives among a nation where the people do not glorify religion so as he does not lose advantage. But as for [the Imam] who differs in dress from the Companions but lives among a nation of people who glorify religion over clothes and other such fineries, his actions are not based on the Sharia but on worldly concerns, so beware of this satanic conspiracy. Know that our community today – God be praised – needs only that its Imam be pious and follow the Sunna. For the most part, its system has not broken down, may God preserve us from that.⁴⁵⁷

Abdullahi’s argument was that in a place such as Hausaland where Islam had already been well established, there was no need for a ruler to impress his subjects with fine clothes. Here, a Muslim ruler gained respect by following the Sharia and the actions of the Rashidun Caliphs, as he had put forward in his earlier works, not by acting like a pagan king. Hadn’t Usman said himself that after the jihad:

*We have appointed Muslim Governors over the land, and it has become a land of Islam, without doubt.*⁴⁵⁸

Therefore, if Usman’s excuse was that Hausaland was not “a nation of people who glorify religion” –Abdullahi reasoned – he was surely contradicting himself. As we saw previously, Usman had indeed changed his mind over the status of Hausaland several times, depending on the differing requirements for the processes of dissent and accommodation. Again, Abdullahi was frustrating Usman’s efforts to smooth over the contradictions between these various stances.

⁴⁵⁶ Another legal maxim, to which we will return in subsequent chapters.

⁴⁵⁷ Abdullahi *ḡiyā’ al-sultān*: 65.

⁴⁵⁸ Usman (1811) *tanbīh al-ikhwān* in Palmer (1915) *Early Fulani conception (continued)*: 54.

In the previous chapter, I concluded that Usman's shift between *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* was necessary to change a process of dissent to a process of accommodation. Abdullahi's followers had also read Usman's works, and had also noticed this shift. But they suggested that Usman's acceptance of minority positions equated not to *taqlīd* but in fact to *ijtihād*, which they considered haram. In *najm al-ikhwān* Usman stuck by his assertion that he was a *muqallid*, one who only compiles the judgements of other scholars:

If you said, "What you have done is *ijtihād* [...] so how can that be?" the answer is: "This is not *ijtihād*, but rather joining like with like and that is praiseworthy"⁴⁵⁹

Indeed, *najm al-ikhwān* should be understood as a defence and elaboration of Usman's (new) methodology for dealing with legal issues which, as I have argued, amounted to a process of accommodation that served to defend and reinforce the *status quo* that was developing after the jihad. Having picked out some of Usman's core arguments, let us take a broader view of this text.

Usman starts *najm al-ikhwān* by reminding the *jamā'a* that they should be seeking agreement, not division. He follows this sentiment with a veiled critique of Abdullahi:

"The Sharia has three hundred and thirteen ways, and of these ways, there is not one which the servant of God will meet his Lord other than entering paradise."⁴⁶⁰ Thus, only someone who were to know all these paths of the Sharia and find one way that does not accord with any of the others has [the right] to dispute. But if he is ignorant of even one path, he does not.⁴⁶¹

[...]

⁴⁵⁹ Usman (1812–13) *najm al-ikhwān*: 60.

⁴⁶⁰ A Prophetic hadith.

⁴⁶¹ Usman (1812–13) *najm al-ikhwān*: 6–8. My emphasis.

“Division of opinion [*ikhtilāf*] in my Umma can be avoided by not doing three things (1) not disputing he who chooses the words of whomever he wills from his own legal school (2) not disputing he who chooses the words of whomever he wills from a different legal school to his own (3) *not pressing upon matters of dispute*.”⁴⁶²

Here, Usman seems to be pushing the process of accommodation to its extreme. He argues that the writings on Islamic law are so numerous and so diverse that as long as he *follows* any scholar from the Maliki School or indeed another accepted legal school, whether their view constitutes the majority view or not, there can be no reason to question his authority.

Usman’s second chapter concerns “disparaging the present time and its people [when] there is no curtailing of religion but in fact a rise in good counsel”. This is another veiled criticism of Abdullahi. Instead of disputing the basis of the jihad and the new legal rulings developed in its aftermath, Usman encourages the *jamā’a* to accept the *status quo*:

Know my brothers that thankfulness is a duty, given what God has bestowed upon you in your time both in religion and worldly comforts. If it is lacking with respect to what God bestowed upon those ancestors who came before, this is because you are in the end of days and all matters are lacking in the end of days. But despite this, religion endures and truth is manifest⁴⁶³

The *jamā’a* should not be looking for inconsistencies with the time of the Rashidun or “rely[ing] on what they know”, as Abdullahi was doing, but rather accept what their current leaders are telling them:

⁴⁶² Usman *najm al-ikhwān*: 8, quoting Prophetic hadith. My emphasis.

⁴⁶³ Usman *najm al-ikhwān*: 22.

My brothers, occupy yourselves with reading the works of the scholars of your age, because they are the ones who know what is most important in your time. Their works explain what is most beautiful from the works of scholars.⁴⁶⁴

In the final part of *najm al-ikhwān*, Usman reframed the whole conflict between himself and Abdullahi in a positive light. He presented Abdullahi's criticisms as contributions to a shared body of literature:

Occupy yourselves with reading the works of my brother, Abdullahi, because he is concerned most often with maintaining the manifest aspects of the Sharia. Occupy yourselves with reading the works of my son, Muhammad Bello, because he is concerned principally with maintaining the knowledge of the policies of the Umma regarding people, goals, times, places and circumstances. Occupy yourselves also with reading my own works, because I am principally concerned with maintaining the two aspects. All of our works explain what is most beautiful in the works of the scholars who have preceded us and the works of the scholars who have preceded us explain what is most beautiful in the Book and the Sunna.⁴⁶⁵

The notion of the Fodiawa as a "triumvirate" of scholars, now standard in Sokoto historiography, may first have been conceived in this very paragraph. But knowing what we know, it was far from an accurate reflection of things as they stood at that moment. Rather, it was an attempt by Usman to project the unity of the *jamā'a* and curtail different interpretations of the jihad and its legacy. In his earliest works on *takfir*, Usman had presented himself as the middle ground between extremist students of theology and *laissez-faire* court scholars. Now, he placed himself in the middle ground between the literalist Abdullahi and the more pragmatic Bello.

⁴⁶⁴ Usman *najm al-ikhwān*: 84–5.

⁴⁶⁵ Usman *najm al-ikhwān*: 85.

Usman sought to expand his definition of *taqlīd* even further in *tawqīf al-muslimīn*, written around the same period as *najm al-ikhwān*.⁴⁶⁶ He stated that when it came to legal position, a *muqallid* could remain with one madhhab, or chose another one. He could even follow a particular madhhab on one issue and a different madhhab for another.⁴⁶⁷ Such flexibility allowed Usman to rule however he liked and still be able to maintain the link between Islamic knowledge and legitimacy to govern. Abdullahi by contrast had emphasised that legal rulings must agree with the Maliki madhhab, “so as not to confuse some of the students”.⁴⁶⁸ In their later works, neither referenced the other and one gets the impression that by this stage Usman and Abdullahi – with their respective followers – had parted ways in matters of Islamic law.

Returning to the work of Usman’s fervent supporter, Abdulkadir dan Tafa, we understand that that there was a *third* camp in the debate over *taqlīd*. Another group of the *jamā’a* also believed that he was *mujtahid*. However, they did not view his use of *ijtihād* as a stain on his authority. Rather, it actually confirmed the ultimate sign of his legitimacy to rule: a link to the promised Mahdi.

[In these judgements] the Shaykh acted as a *mujtahid* and was successful in his *ijtihād*. The singular place that the Shaykh occupies and his superiority over all the scholars of his age appeared in shining light. This *ijtihād* of Shaykh Usman is in and of itself proof of his shared qualities with the Mahdi. It is said that among the distinctive signs of the

⁴⁶⁶ Usman *tawqīf al-muslimīn ‘alā ḥukm madhāhib al-mujtahidīn* “Preventing the Muslims from judging the religious schools of the mujtahids” completed 7 June 1813. By *religious schools of the mujtahids*, Usman is referring to the schools of Islamic law established in the early days of Islam by scholars using *ijtihād*, such as the school of Anas b. Mālik, which the Fodiawa followed.

⁴⁶⁷ Usman (1813) *tawqīf al-muslimīn* ME NU/Hunwick 124: 40-42, quoting *al-durar al-multaqaṭa* of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Damīrī, among other sources.

⁴⁶⁸ Abdullahi (1811-12) *ḍiyā’ al-umma*: 2a.

Mahdi is that in his judgements he will be in disagreement with the majority of the scholars [of his age].⁴⁶⁹

Such words indicate that there were many in the *jamā'a* whose adherence to the Sokoto project still depended on the anarchic, charismatic authority they had vested in Usman. Still, we have seen in this chapter how in his final works on governance Usman was creating the bureaucratic authority of a state. He used the victory in 1804 to craft a mandate to rule, and took control of its legacy. Meanwhile, Abdullahi continued to believe that authority came exclusively from the extent to which the Sokoto project resembled the golden age of rightly guided Islamic rule. As a result, he was a thorn in the side of Usman and Bello's efforts to create a Muslim state suitable for a nineteenth century West African context, and the necessary compromises such a venture entailed.

⁴⁶⁹ Abdulkadir dan Tafa (n.d.) *'ashara masā'il fī al-khilāf* in Mahibou (2010): 258.

Challenging Bello's succession of 1817

Since Abdullahi's change of heart on the way to Alkalawa, Bello had been the rising star of the *jamā'a*. In April 1817, Usman dan Fodio died at Sokoto and Muhammad Bello succeeded him.⁴⁷⁰ Three weeks after the event, Abdullahi wrote *sabīl al-salāma*, a document challenging the legal basis of the succession. Bello, now addressing himself as *amīr al-mu'minīn*, wrote his response, *al-inṣāf*, some nine weeks later.⁴⁷¹ This exchange put to the test the theories of Abdullahi and Usman regarding Muslim statecraft, and certainly exposed the judicial tools used to negotiate it. As such, they must be analysed in detail.

When we look to the content of the two texts in question, they are remarkably similar. Both Abdullahi and Bello based their rulings on the same set of Islamic legal sources on the election of a ruler: the well-known *al-aḥkam al-sulṭānīya* of the late Abbasid jurist al-Mawārdī (972–1058), as well works of later North African jurists such as al-Qurtubī (1214–1273) and Mayyāra (1591–1692). The vast majority of each text consists of direct quotation from these works. We have discussed previously the link between quoting and authority in Sahelian knowledge elites. In this delicate situation, direct quotation was essential. But both Abdullahi

⁴⁷⁰ Aside from Bello's own words on this event, covered in the next chapter, there are various secondary accounts: Sa'd ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1840–1) *tartīb al-aṣḥāb*; Al-Ḥājj Sa'īd (c.1854) *taqāyid*; Ahmad b. Sa'd (1908) *lubāb mā-fī tazyīn al-waraqāt*; the anonymous *History of Gando* (translated 1909); an account by Alhaji Umaru recorded in the early twentieth century in Piłaszewicz (2000); account by Wazir Junaidu in Last (1967). Because these accounts were all composed or recorded many years after the event, they will not be discussed here. Clapperton (*Narratives: 97–8*) heard in Sokoto that Atiku, an elder son of Usman, had unsuccessfully attempted to succeed Usman as *amīr al-mu'minīn*. There does not seem to be any allusion to this in the manuscripts.

⁴⁷¹ For analysis of this exchange between Abdullahi and Bello, see Zahradeen (1976) *'Abd Allah Ibn Fodio's contributions to the Fulani Jihad in nineteenth century Hausaland*: 179–184; Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 48–58.

and Bello skilfully worked with the material to make their own opinions clear enough, and suggest that historical precedent was on their side. Much of what Abdullahi says is a reiteration of his earlier confrontation with Usman, although he now put across the historical basis for his resistance more clearly. Meanwhile, Bello's contribution to the debate was highly original in the context of the Fodiawa's oeuvre. It suggested that his would be a new style of rule, based on a new kind of authority.

As we recall, Abdullahi considered hereditary rule an inherent component of pagan kingship (*mulk*). He first discussed the subject in his *ḍiyā' al-ḥukkām* (1807–8), mentioned above. In the *ḍiyā' ūlī al-amr* (1810), he had ruled that the *Imam* should not lord over his subjects “by force, subjugation or through inheritance”.⁴⁷² Meanwhile, in the *ḍiyā' al-ṣulṭān* (1812), Abdullahi again referred to the cautionary words of al-Maghīlī on hereditary succession, urging his readers to “reflect carefully [...] it is often for this reason that the relation between an Amīr and his subject deteriorates.”⁴⁷³ In the *sabīl al-salāma*, Abdullahi ruled that upon the death of a ruler, the community should form an electoral council⁴⁷⁴ to choose the most suitable candidate to replace him. The previous ruler – that is, Usman – could overrule this electoral council and appoint a successor. However, if his choice was “a son or father”, Abdullahi suggested that the prevailing legal consensus was against him.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Abdullahi (1810) *ḍiyā' ūlī al-amr*: 2b.

⁴⁷³ Abdullahi *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān* in Mahibou (2010): 76.

⁴⁷⁴ Ar. أهل الحل والعقد *ahl al-ḥal wa-l-'aqq*.

⁴⁷⁵ Abdullahi (1817) *sabīl al-salāma* MS NU/Paden 244: 2, quoting Mayyāra *sharḥ al-Zaqqāq*. Mayyāra gives three schools of thought, two of which rule against hereditary succession from father to son.

If Abdullahi's views on hereditary succession were not sufficiently clear at this point, he then moved to a historical study on the origins and consequences of hereditary rule in Islamic history. Abdullahi cited Mu'āwiya, discussed above, as the first Muslim ruler to appoint his son to succeed him.⁴⁷⁶ Usman had also brought up the example of Mu'āwiya, who famously declared that he was "the first of the kings", as a justification for kingship in Islam.⁴⁷⁷ But following Abdullahi's definition of *mulk*, Mu'āwiya was a pagan king. This made the rule of his son, Yazīd, illegitimate in Islamic terms:

Mu'āwiya was the first [caliph] to pledge the caliphate to his son, and wrote to Marwān [ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakām] in Medina, demanding he honour his appointment. Marwān proclaimed [to the Medinans], "The *amīr al-mu'minīn* [Mu'āwiya] thinks that to appoint his son Yazid over you is following the Sunna of Abu Bakr and 'Umar". 'Abd al-Raḥmān, son of [caliph] Abī Bakr stood up and said, "This is rather the Sunna of Khosroes and Caesar! Abu Bakr and 'Umar did not pass [the caliphate] to their sons or to any member of their families"⁴⁷⁸

According to Abdullahi, the actions of Mu'āwiya led to the permanent *fitna* of the Muslim *Umma*, divided between those who accepted the accession of Mu'āwiya and his son (who would become the Sunnis) and those who upheld the claim of 'Ali and his son Ḥusayn (who would become the Shia). Whenever there was hereditary succession, argued Abdullahi, there was *fitna*:

had it not been for them appointing their sons, there would have been good counsel between the Muslims until judgement day⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ Relatively early in his reign, Mu'āwiya appointed his son, Yazīd, as prince regent. Yazīd assumed power after Mu'āwiya's death in 680AD, the first of many hereditary rulers of the Umayyad dynasty.

⁴⁷⁷ See Usman (1812–13) *najm al-ikhwān*, supra.

⁴⁷⁸ Abdullahi *sabīl al-salāma*: 9, quoting al-Suyūṭī *tārīkh al-khulafā'*.

⁴⁷⁹ Abdullahi (1817) *sabīl al-salāma*: 9, quoting from the works of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.

Having given the example of a proverbially bad ruler, Mu'āwiya, Abdullahi moved on to a proverbially good one, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Azīz.⁴⁸⁰ In previous works, Abdullahi had referred to 'Umar II as the “seal of the caliphs”. As opposed to Mu'āwiya, who famously stated that he was not able to follow the path set by the Rashidun, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz declared upon his accession to power that he had “returned things to how they were in the time of the Messenger of God”. Furthermore, he did not attempt to engage in any kind of *ijtihād*, humbly stating that he was “not a law-maker but an implementer, not an innovator but a follower”.⁴⁸¹ Whereas the rule of Mu'āwiya had introduced an irreversible *fitna* to the Muslim community, under the rule of 'Umar II, Abdullahi tells us, “the land filled with justice, iniquities were repelled and the true Sunna was followed”.⁴⁸²

Here, Abdullahi was making a clear historical parallel with the situation in 1817. He believed Bello's appointment was contentious, and would result in a schism of the *jamā'a* between those who accepted the succession and those who did not. But given that Bello had already been declared *amīr al-mu'minīn*, should the community follow him? Unless the ruler was “like 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz”, Abdullahi did not think that allegiance to such a ruler was lawful.⁴⁸³ On the contrary:

if the *Imam* is unjust, then rebelling against him is just and just rebellion is obligatory until God's religion is made manifest.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸⁰ 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (682–720 AD), also known as 'Umar II, was an Umayyad Caliph. Because of his proverbial noble character and his attempts to return the Islamic government to what it had been under the *rāshidūn*, he is often referred to as the “fifth” Rashidun Caliph.

⁴⁸¹ Abdullahi *sabīl al-salāma*: 10, quoting al-Suyūṭī *tārīkh al-khulafā'*.

⁴⁸² Abdullahi *sabīl al-salāma*: 10, quoting *sunnan Abū Dāwūd*.

⁴⁸³ Abdullahi (1817) *sabīl al-salāma* in Minna (1982): 53–5.

⁴⁸⁴ Abdullahi *sabīl al-salāma*: 3.

Whether Abdullahi meant this as a threat or not, several rebellions against Bello – covered in the next chapter – rested on the accusation that he was an unjust, oppressive ruler.

When we turn to the work of Bello, almost three times as long as that of Abdullahi, we find that despite quoting from the same body of texts, Bello's idea of a ruler, his duties and the obligations of the community towards him were very different to those of his uncle. Whereas Abdullahi's ideal leader was 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, "not an innovator but a follower", Bello's was "a *mujtahid*, not needing anyone else to make *fatwas* based on hadith". For Abdullahi, the key duty of a Muslim ruler was to correctly follow the Sharia. But Bello included knowledge in a host of more practical matters such as "experience and sound judgement in matters of war, the management of armies and the securing of forts".⁴⁸⁵

On the election of a ruler, Bello quoted the same material as Abdullahi: a ruler could be appointed (1) by the electoral council, or (2) by the will of the preceding ruler. He even conceded that most jurists disputed the legality of hereditary succession. However, he had something of his own to add:

We have even come across from [the writings of] some of our learned Shaykhs that the Imamate could be established through a third means: and that is, through over-coming and the might of arms; and it is forbidden to oppose him [thus] committing the lesser of two evils⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁵ Bello (1817) *al-inṣāf* MS Paris (BI) 206: 4–5, quoting al-Qurṭubī.

⁴⁸⁶ Bello *al-inṣāf*, adapted from Minna (1982): 58. My emphasis.

Essentially, Bello was saying that the candidate who had the most military support should be accepted (the lesser evil) to avoid the loss of Muslim life (the greater evil), irrespective of his qualities. As Bello put it:

Even if a slave is appointed by [only] some of the imams, or overturns the country with his power and the strength of his following, he should be heard and obeyed⁴⁸⁷

According to Bello, blame for any *fitna* that arose from such a succession lay not with the ruler who was appointed on the basis of “the lesser of two evils”, but with those who opposed him:

Whoever causes dissent among you and divides your community, kill him”⁴⁸⁸

This, too, could be construed as a threat, on which only months after the succession he was forced to act with the rebellion of Abd al-Salam.

⁴⁸⁷ Bello *al-inṣāf*: 31, quoting al-Nawawī’s (*minhāj*) interpretation of the Prophetic hadith, “Hear and obey [your ruler], even if he is a slave”.

⁴⁸⁸ Bello (1817) *al-inṣāf*: 32–3, quoting Mayyāra. This is also a Prophetic hadith.

Conclusion

This chapter first explained how the writings of Abdullahi in the period 1807–1817 came to represent an intellectual challenge to the legitimacy of the jihad and the formation of an Islamic state in the Sahel. Abdullahi pointed out some negative consequences of the process of dissent, and its shaky legal foundations. He also correctly asserted that after victory in the jihad, rather than governing society in the manner of the *rāshidūn*, Usman simply found ways to make the inconsistencies between their own time and this Islamic golden age justifiable in Islamic terms. This I have called a process of accommodation. In his responses, Usman used the weight of the jihadist victory and his own authority as an established Muslim leader to develop the “bureaucratic authority” of the state. The succession of Bello, and Abdullahi’s fruitless attempts to overrule it, ended that intellectual challenge. However, while Abdullahi himself did not contest the succession again (at least in the written sources that are preserved today) many others used his arguments to do so. In the next chapter, we will examine the first years of Bello’s rule. This period saw widespread dissent from his rule which some scholars have termed the Tawaye Rebellions.⁴⁸⁹ Underpinning the rebellions was the idea that Bello was not a legitimate Muslim ruler but an “oppressor”. In his response, Bello continued the process started by Usman, projecting his authority through the growing power of the state he ruled.

⁴⁸⁹ Most recently, Lovejoy (2016) *Jihād in West Africa*. The term comes from Hausa *tawaye*: “rebellion”.

CHAPTER FOUR: “THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS”: BELLO’S STRATEGY OF LEGITIMACY 1817 – 1821

Authority for the jihad of 1804 came from a shared ideal for a perfect Islamic society, as well as a shared set of grievances against existing Muslim political structures in Hausaland. As we have explored so far, this authority came from several distinct sources that were not necessarily complementary. From the moment that the *jamā’a* began to fight the Hausa kings, the abstract ideas shared by so many had to be reified. The result was a disappointment to many.

In the previous chapter, we analysed the conflict between Usman and Abdullahi and identified two distinct and conflicting visions for Hausaland after the jihad. The death of Usman in 1817 and the hereditary transfer of power to Muhammad Bello carried many negative connotations both in Islamic tradition and in the context of the hereditary rule of the Hausa kings. What is more, Bello presented his rule not as a faithful replication of the Rashidun, but as “the lesser of two evils”. Many within the *jamā’a* as well as some regional Muslim powers rejected his assertion.

In this period of widespread strife and uncertainty, Bello attempted to enforce the legitimacy of his succession from Usman and a pragmatic basis for his rule over Hausaland at a time when much of the country was in open rebellion against him. In the wider region, Bello sought to normalise his relations with other Muslim powers and establish his hierarchy within

them as Muslim leader of a territorial entity. As such, he had to explain exactly what kind of government Sokoto was and what position it held in the geopolitical landscape of the time. Other regional leaders such as Ahmad Lobbo of Masina, Muhammad al-Jaylānī and ‘Abd al-Salām also sought to assert themselves in this wider Muslim world, bringing them into conflict with Bello.

This chapter analyses Bello’s strategies to gain legitimacy for his rule. It argues that Bello sought to convert the arguments he had used to justify his succession from Usman into a coherent philosophy of government. His Arabic writings during this period imply the bureaucratic authority of an established Muslim ruler. Bello came to ground his authority not only on arguments from Islamic history and law, but on the circumstances of the time and the mandate provided by the jihad of 1804 and his appointment as Usman’s successor. This chapter (1) gives a summary of geo-political events in the period 1817–1821, (2) analyses Bello’s expansion upon the theme of “obedience to the ruler”, and (3) explains and elaborates Bello’s use of the “the lesser of two evils” and “preference to the first” maxims through his conflicts with regional figures.

A Second Jihad...

The period 1817–1821 was one of widespread rebellion. Many of the territories gained in the jihad had now shaken off the imposition of Fodiawa rule. In the context of the irredentist Hausa, this event is known as the Tawaye Rebellions.⁴⁹⁰ Muhammad Bello was forced to reconquer these territories in what amounted to a “second jihad”. But in truth, rebellion against Bello’s rule came from many parties, and was not always solved by military intervention. Like the *ridda* wars that occurred on the Arabian Peninsula after the death of Prophet Muhammad, to which Bello made a conscious parallel,⁴⁹¹ it was more that various actors in the Sahel region – both Muslim and non-Muslim – used the death of Usman as an excuse to renege on their promises of allegiance, or else seek to topple a nascent state structure they had no wish to see implanted. This section makes a survey of the threats to Bello’s rule in this period, and his responses.

First, let us examine the situation in Hausaland. Contrary to popular assumptions, the defeat of the Gobirawa in the 1804 jihad did not lead to dissolution of the Hausa state of Gobir. The *sarauta* were still living in their capital of Alkalawa. In 1814, under *Sarki* Gonki dan Kaura Gado, the Gobirawa expelled the governor put in place by the Fodiawa and were in open rebellion upon Bello’s accession to power.⁴⁹² Rebellion also raged in much of Katsina and Zamfara as communities ousted the Fulani governors put in place and restored the power

⁴⁹⁰ Hausa: *yan tawaye*: “rebel”.

⁴⁹¹ See Bello (after 1821) *miḡtāḥ al-sadād*.

⁴⁹² See *History of Gobir* in Tilho (1910) *Documents scientifiques de la Mission Tilho (1906-1909)*.

structures that had existed before the jihad. Meanwhile, much closer to home, the Bā Arewa leader Abd al-Salam, one of the only non-Fulani to play a prominent role in the jihad,⁴⁹³ rebelled against Bello after having initially pledged allegiance. He and his community, in a conscious repetition of the *jamā'a*'s actions towards the ruler of Gobir, cut themselves off from Sokoto and declared sanctuary for all those fleeing his repression of the Tawaye.⁴⁹⁴ His community's attacks on trade caravans on their way to Sokoto effectively cut off communications with many of the newly established emirates, as well as Masina.

Not long after his failed succession bid, Abdullahi had returned to Gwandu, a jihadist fortified town south-east of Sokoto. He refused to recognise Bello as *amīr al-mu'minīn* and also cut off communications with Sokoto.⁴⁹⁵ He did nothing to help Bello against the Tawaye and soon after Usman's death, Abdullahi –addressing himself as *amīr al-mu'minīn* – had asked Ahmad Lobbo to pledge allegiance to him. He subsequently accepted Lobbo's arguments for independence from Sokoto at a time when Bello adamantly refused them.⁴⁹⁶

To the east, in Bornu, the power of al-Amīn al-Kānamī –whose missives against the jihad had caused the Fodiawa so much anxiety – was growing ever stronger. Al-Kānamī wished to return the western territories that the Fulani had captured in the jihad to the rule of Bornu. In 1814 he built his own capital, Kukawa, and his authority quickly came to overshadow that of the

⁴⁹³ For more on Abd al-Salam and ethnicity, see *infra*.

⁴⁹⁴ See Bello (c. 1817) *sard al-kalām* translated Harris (1909) and analysed in Last (1992; 2014).

⁴⁹⁵ Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 42. Last (1992) suggests Abdullahi's actions were an "exile option" offered to him by Bello in a strategy of dealing with dissent.

⁴⁹⁶ See [Abu Bakr 'Atīq MS] analysed in Kani & Stewart (1975); Stewart (1976). Discussed *infra*.

Mai in Kanem.⁴⁹⁷ To the west, in Masina, Aḥmad Lobbo had earlier pledged allegiance to Usman dan Fodio in return for the latter's endorsement of his jihad against Segou.⁴⁹⁸ After Usman's death, Bello requested that Lobbo pledge allegiance to him as Usman's successor. Buoyed by his victory at Noukouma in 1818, Lobbo refused, making use of the conflict between Abdullahi and Bello over the succession to throw off his allegiance to Sokoto and operate independently.⁴⁹⁹

In the north, under the support of the Fodiawa, the *aneslem* Ait Awari Tuareg leader, Muḥammad al-Jaylānī, had established a reformist community along the lines of the *jamā'a* at his stronghold east of Tahoua. From there, between 1809 and 1815, al-Jaylānī and his followers raided the *imajeghen* Tuareg clans such as the Kel Gress, Itesen, Kel Away and Iwellemmedan in Ader and Air, whom they branded non-believers. However, al-Jaylānī's new regime proved unpopular.⁵⁰⁰ An alliance of Temazgidda and Kel Gress defeated al-Jaylānī and in 1816, he fled to Sokoto.⁵⁰¹ The alliance, headed by a fellow *aneslem*, Ibra of the Temazgidda, now took their raids to Sokoto's northern territories, allying with the Tawaye. Despite being offered sanctuary in Sokoto, al-Jaylānī wavered in his allegiance to Bello, often accusing him of hypocrisy in response to his words of advice.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁷ Brenner (1979) *Religion and Politics in Bornu: the Case of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi*: 166.

⁴⁹⁸ See Bâ and Daget (1962) *L'empire Peul du Macina* 36; [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS].

⁴⁹⁹ See [Abu Bakr 'Atīq MS] analysed in Stewart (1976) and Minna (1982). On Ahmad Lobbo and Masina, see Brown (1969) *The Caliphate of Hamdullahi ca. 1818-1864: a study in African history and tradition*.

⁵⁰⁰ Rossi (2015) *From slavery to aid : politics, labour, and ecology in the Nigerien Sahel, 1800-2000* : 51.

⁵⁰¹ Norris (1975) *The Tuaregs : their Islamic legacy and its diffusion in the Sahel*: 154; Rossi (2015) *From slavery to aid : politics, labour, and ecology in the Nigerien Sahel, 1800-2000*: 50–51, quoting Alojaly, *Histoire*, and Y-Tarichi.

⁵⁰² See Norris (1975) *The Tuaregs : their Islamic legacy and its diffusion in the Sahel*: 156–7.

Beyond Masina were the Kunta of Azawad. As we recall, they had approved of the jihad of 1804. By granting Usman the Qadiri *wird*, they both fortified Usman's charismatic power and preserved their role in the Sahelian spiritual hierarchy. Although no record exists of the Kunta's opinion of Bello's succession, they continued their friendly relations with Sokoto.⁵⁰³ According to Norris, they did not share Bello's support of al-Jaylānī, whose Islamic revivalism damaged their relations with the Tuareg and compromised their own missionary activity in the region.⁵⁰⁴ Their position regarding Ahmad Lobbo is still unclear, given the scarcity of sources.⁵⁰⁵

In sum, in the period 1817–1821, Bello faced rebellions from the irredentist Hausa *sarauta*, many of the non-Fulani supporters of the jihad, as well as attacks from the Tuareg. Borno threatened invasion,⁵⁰⁶ Ahmad Lobbo of Masina refused to pledge allegiance to him, as did his own uncle, Abdullahi. The Kunta were supportive in word, but their pragmatism and, perhaps, clerical pacifism⁵⁰⁷ prevented them taking any practical steps to assist him. The *jamā'a* was also split into factions stemming from the debate between him and Abdullahi. Still, Bello

⁵⁰³ See al-Bakā'ī's visit to Sokoto, *infra*.

⁵⁰⁴ Norris (1975) *The Tuaregs : their Islamic legacy and its diffusion in the Sahel*: 158.

⁵⁰⁵ Ahmad Lobbo's aggressive forays into Fittuga threatened to disrupt grain imports to Timbuktu as well as salt and tobacco exports to Gwandu and Sokoto. Stewart (1975; 1976) argues that –like Bello – the Kunta also refused to accept Lobbo's independence from Sokoto and even supported the unsuccessful rebellions against Lobbo's rule in Fittuga. However, Mauro Nobili (forthcoming) suggests that their attitude was one of pragmatism, containment and compromise, and that the Kunta only expressed hostility to Lobbo when he invaded Timbuktu in 1826.

⁵⁰⁶ See exchange in the *infaq* between Bello and al-Kānamī in Shādhilī (1996) *infāq al-maysūr*: 229–286.

⁵⁰⁷ Note Ba & Daget's (1962: 109) assertion that during al-Bakā'ī's visit to Sokoto, Bello asked his guest to help him defend their trade routes from Tuareg incursions. Al-Bakā'ī replied to Bello that his "religious preferences and family status and traditions" would contradict such a course of action. Thus, Bello could not rely on the Kunta for military support in this situation either.

had the Fulani elite in Sokoto on his side, and those Fulani emirs who had not been deposed by the Tawaye remained loyal to him.⁵⁰⁸

The reasons for rejecting Bello's authority were as numerous as the rebellions that faced him. The irredentist Hausa had never accepted the authority of the Fodiawa. They wanted to reclaim the territory they had lost in the jihad and wreak vengeance on the Fulani specifically for raiding their towns and taking their dependents captive. Abd al-Salam, who did fight on the jihadist side, clearly stated that his desertion came down to disappointment at his share of the territory gained in the jihad and perceived discrimination because he was not a Fulani.⁵⁰⁹ The jihad's non-Fulani supporters had already witnessed the excesses of Fulani mercenaries fighting in the jihadist armies. Usman's appointments to the new emirates had been exclusively Fulani, while the 1812 division of territories – with the exception of Abd al-Salam's paltry share – was between the Fodiawa's inner circle of Fulani clan leaders. Bello's appointment as *amīr al-mu'minīn* confirmed suspicions that the jihad had turned into a "family affair" in which non-Fulani were not welcome. Thus, as Murray Last reasons, "the Sudani element in the jihad movement began to detach itself from the leadership" and sought to rule their own territories independently.⁵¹⁰

Tuareg resistance to the jihad meanwhile was never ideological but rather driven by internal clan divisions. *Ineslemen* Tuareg such as al-Jaylānī were more likely to support the jihad,

⁵⁰⁸ For a list of these emirs see Bello (1812) *infāq* in Shādhilī (1996) *infāq al-maysūr*: 309.

⁵⁰⁹ Bello (c.1817) *sard al-kalām*. See Minna (1982): 413–20; Zehnle (2015) 441–444.

⁵¹⁰ Last (1992) 'Injustice' and Legitimacy in the Early Sokoto Caliphate: 48. See analysis of *sard al-kalām*, *infra*.

while most *imajeghen* would oppose it.⁵¹¹ Given Bello's support of al-Jaylānī and refusal to hand him over to his enemies, those *imajeghen* Tuareg who wished to avenge themselves of the latter's raids allied with the Tawaye, bringing them to the outskirts of Sokoto.⁵¹² As for Aḥmad Lobbo, he may well have been genuinely at a loss for what to do, given the demands of allegiance from him by both Abdullahi and Bello, and the loss of contact with Sokoto on account of the widespread rebellions. However, his continued refusal to recognise Bello as *amīr al-mu'minīn* even after Bello had suppressed the Tawaye and reconciled with Abdullahi suggests that he sought to rule independently of Sokoto all along.⁵¹³

By 1821, Bello had removed most of the immediate challenges to his rule. In 1817, he launched several attacks on the Gobirawa, killing *Sarki* Gonki and forcing his followers to flee further north under Ali dan Yakubu, who suffered more defeats before appealing for a truce with Bello in 1823.⁵¹⁴ In January 1818, Bello's forces attacked the community of Abd al-Salam and forced them out of their settlement. Abd al-Salam was wounded in this attack and later died in Zamfara.⁵¹⁵ Al-Ḥājj Sa'īd reports a rumour that after defeating Abd al-Salam in 1817, Bello planned to turn his attentions to his uncle, explaining Abdullahi's hurried move from Bodinga to Gwandu around eight months after the succession went to Bello, where he did not threaten him militarily.⁵¹⁶ For several years, a group of Tawaye led by Dan Boya held Gwandu

⁵¹¹ Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: ix; Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 98.

⁵¹² Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 96.

⁵¹³ Inferred in Bello (c. 1821) *jawāb shāfin*.

⁵¹⁴ See *History of Gobir* in Tilho (1910) *Documents scientifiques de la Mission Tilho (1906-1909)*.

⁵¹⁵ Last (1992) *'Injustice' and Legitimacy in the Early Sokoto Caliphate*: 55.

⁵¹⁶ Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 61, citing al-Haj Sa'īd *taqāyīd* in Whitting (n.d.) *History of Sokoto*: 190.

under siege from their base at Kalambayna.⁵¹⁷ In 1821, Bello sent his Wazir, Gidado dan Layma, to negotiate with the rebels.⁵¹⁸ After the negotiations broke down, the combined forces of Sokoto and Gwandu sacked Kalambayna, ending the four year rift between Bello and his uncle.⁵¹⁹ After the victory at Kalambayna, Abdullahi recognised Bello as *amīr al-mu'minīn* and Bello for his part recognised Abdullahi as Emir of *Gwandu*, healing the rift between the two men.⁵²⁰ Aḥmad Lobbo continued to assert his independence, but did not threaten Bello territorially and in time, their relationship improved.⁵²¹ In 1820, al-Kānamī sent Bello a letter reportedly drawing up the border between their two territories, leading to a temporary peace between Sokoto and Bornu.⁵²² The Tuareg leader Ibra was still to cause problems for Bello throughout his rule but with the Tawaye repressed, Bello had greater freedom to deal with the Tuareg threat.⁵²³ The Kunta increased their friendly relations, crowned by the visit of Aḥmad al-Bakā'ī, brother of al-Mukhtār al-Kabīr, to Sokoto in the late 1820s.⁵²⁴

⁵¹⁷ Gwandu (1977) *Abdullahi b. Fodio as a Muslim jurist*: 56–57.

⁵¹⁸ Zahradeen (1976) *'Abd Allah Ibn Fodio's contributions*: 185. It is not clear whether Abdullahi asked for Bello's assistance directly, or Bello came of his own accord having received intelligence that Abdullahi was in danger of losing control of his territory. According to *tartīb al-ashāb*, a source otherwise favourable to Abdullahi, assistance from Bello came only after a desperate appeal from one of Abdullahi's wives.

⁵¹⁹ Gwandu (1977) *Abdullahi b. Fodio as a Muslim jurist*: 85. See also Balogun (1974) *The place of Argungu in Gwandu history*.

⁵²⁰ Balogun (1973) *Succession tradition*: 20. The story cited by Last (1967) is probably apocryphal, but nevertheless served to illustrate the rapprochement between Sokoto and Gwandu, confirmed by Lobbo's comments in his exchange with Bello, *infra*.

⁵²¹ Bello (c.1821–28) [*maktūb fī radd masā'il 'an Aḥmad Lobbo*]. I adopt the title suggested by Mauro Nobili (forthcoming).

⁵²² Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 137–138, citing a letter from al-Kānamī reproduced in Tilho (1910) *Documents scientifiques de la Mission Tilho (1906-1909)*.

⁵²³ See Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 94–99.

⁵²⁴ See Bâ and Daget (1962) *L'empire Peul*; Zebadia (1974) *The career and correspondence of Ahmad Al-Bakkay of Timbuctu : an historical study of his political and religious role from 1847 to 1866*.

While these were the events on the ground, in the period 1817–1821 Bello also wrote prolifically. He entered into lengthy correspondence with many of the regional figures mentioned above, some of which survives in manuscript form, and wrote several short treatises addressing criticism of his rule. This chapter now moves to an analysis of these documents. It explains how Bello turned many of the arguments against him on their head through deft use of the juridical toolset to claim a new sort of authority for himself and the nascent state over which he presided.

“Fear them not, but fear me”: Obedience to the Ruler

Faced with rebellions on all sides, it is not surprising that Muhammad Bello quickly formulated a policy for dealing with dissent and enforcing obedience to himself as ruler.⁵²⁵ The first chapter of Bello’s kingship manual, *al-ghayth al-wabl*, contains a summary of the arguments Bello made in his correspondences with Abd al-Salam, Emir Ya‘qūb, Muḥammad al-Jaylānī and others several years previously.⁵²⁶ It begins:

Know that obedience to the Sulṭān outwardly and inwardly is incumbent according to the Qur’ān and the Sunna and the Consensus of the learned.⁵²⁷

Across these works, Bello mentioned several times that obedience to the emir is obligatory “even if he is unjust” and went as far as to say that:

Verily by means of the corrupt ruler (*al-fājir*) Allah protects the roads, jihad is undertaken by him against the enemies, the dead lands are revived, the prescribed punitive punishments are established, pilgrimage is made to the House and by means of him Muslims worship Allah until the appointed time comes.⁵²⁸

The process of dissent against the Hausa kings was founded on the notion that an unjust and corrupt ruler deserved no allegiance. Indeed, the Fodiawa had relied upon the precedent set by al-Maghīlī when he told the *Askiya* that unjust rulers should be designated unbelievers.⁵²⁹ To

⁵²⁵ Bello (1818) *al-ishā‘a fī ḥukm* (1818) *risāla lil-amrāq*; (1819) *kashf al-ghīṭā’*. See *infra*.

⁵²⁶ For these previous works, see Ismail and Aliyu (1975) *Bello and the Tradition of Manuals of Advice to Rulers*.

⁵²⁷ Bello *al-ghayth al-wabl* in Bello (1983) *The political thought of Muhammad Bello*: 235.

⁵²⁸ Bello *al-ghayth al-wabl* in Shareef (2002) *The Abundant Downpour (Chapter 1)*: 15, quoting the words of ‘Alī b. ‘Alī Ṭālib as related by al-Bayhaqī.

⁵²⁹ Usman (1811) *sirāj al-ikhwān*: Chapter 5, quoting al-Maghīlī *ajwiba*.

understand why Bello now justified obedience to such a figure, we have to look to the context in which he was writing: the Tawaye Rebellions and, specifically, Abd al-Salam's refusal to pay obedience to Bello.

As outlined above, Abd al-Salam was one of the Fodiawa's only prominent non-Fulani supporters. Bello described him as the leader of the *Bā-Arewa* or "Northerners", a reference to the Mawri people centred around Dogondoutchi in the present-day Niger Republic.⁵³⁰ Like Usman, he had been a well-known teacher and reformer before the jihad. Prior to the *hijra* of Usman, Abd al-Salam had in fact made his own *hijra* from Gobir territory to Kebbi, building a settlement and attracting many (non-Fulani) followers. It was the Gobirawa's attack on this settlement, Gimbana, and the jihadists' forcible release of the captives taken by the former that set in motion the events of 1804.⁵³¹

In 1817, Abd al-Salam initially swore allegiance to Bello, after some hesitation. During the Tawaye Rebellions, Bello commanded Abd al-Salam – like other regional rulers – to send troops and cease communications with the rebels. Abd al-Salam sent a reply declaring Bello an "oppressor"⁵³² and cut off communications, arguing that the unity of the Muslims was no longer desirable if it resulted in the harm of one party.⁵³³ This was a clear reference to the perceived injustices towards non-Fulani under Usman, and now under Bello. Indeed, to prove his point,

⁵³⁰ See Bello *sard al-kalām* MS Kaduna (NA): 1. Ar. من قبيلة آريو *min qabīlat arīwa*. Historically, the *Arewa* lived between areas of Hausa and Songhai influence, and speak the Zarma language. See Piault (1970) *Histoire Mawri : introduction a l'étude des processus constitutifs d'un État*.

⁵³¹ For more on the history of Abd al-Salam before 1817, see Bello *sard al-kalām*; Last (1992) 'Injustice' and *Legitimacy in the Early Sokoto Caliphate*; Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*: 329–330.

⁵³² Ar. ظالم *zālim* "oppressor"; "tyrant"; "unjust person".

⁵³³ Bello (1817) *sard al-kalām* in Harris (1909): 9–14; Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 413–420.

Abd al-Salam drew Bello a map indicating his share of the 1812 division of territories was paltry compared with that given to the Fodiawa and other Fulani.⁵³⁴ In conscious imitation of Usman's actions vis-a-vis the ruler of Gobir, Abd al-Salam declared his settlement, just outside of Sokoto, a sanctuary for the refugees fleeing Bello's suppression of the Tawaye Rebellions. He also opened his gates to traders from non-Muslim territories. His justification, again, was that obedience was not due to an oppressor who "transgressed the right [course]".⁵³⁵ This argument, as we recall, was invoked by Abdullahi in the *sabīl al-salāma*:

If the Imām is unjust, then rebelling against him is just and just rebellion is obligatory until God's religion is made manifest⁵³⁶

But Bello tapped into Usman's writings on *muwālāt* to equate Abd al-Salam's stance against his "unjust" rule to apostasy from Islam. In a message addressed to the *jamā'a*, he stated that by obeying the ruler, "you are obeying God and the Messenger of God"⁵³⁷ and emphasised that to die without paying allegiance to the Muslim ruler meant dying a pagan.⁵³⁸ Key to this logic was the assumption that *muwālāt*, or friendship with the infidels, meant non-belief in Islam. As we recall, this assumption had been a subject of debate between Usman and Abdullahi. Bello's addition of "with the meaning of aiding them [against the Muslims]" in the

⁵³⁴ See analysis in Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*: 441–444.

⁵³⁵ Bello *sard al-kalām* in Harris (1909): 17–19.

⁵³⁶ Abdullahi (1817) *sabīl al-salāma*: 3, quoting Mayyāra.

⁵³⁷ Bello *risālat Amīr Muḥammad Bello ilā jamā'at al-muslimīn* MS Niamey: 2.

⁵³⁸ Bello *jawāb shāfin*: 7.

title of his treatise on *muwālāt*, the *kashf al-ghīṭā'*, is a clear a reference to this debate.⁵³⁹

However, Bello did not mention the debate again and took Usman's judgement to the extreme:

muwālāt with the infidels with the meaning of aiding them [against the Muslims] is akin in disbelief, to bowing before idols and covering the holy text in filth, wearing the zunnār⁵⁴⁰ and everything that shows a contentment in disbelief and a mockery of Islam⁵⁴¹

A series of events allowed Bello to interpret Abd al-Salam's actions as apostasy, justifying a military intervention against him. Bello heard that Abd al-Salam had welcomed the Emir of Kore – a non-Muslim – to Gimbana.⁵⁴² He wrote to Abd al-Salam demanding that he hand the Emir of Kore and his people over to Sokoto. It seems Abd al-Salam suspected that Bello considered the people of Kore –as non-Muslims – to be his slaves. With this in mind, he reasoned that, "I deem it best not to send them because I am like one of them myself."⁵⁴³ In response, Bello summoned the Emir of Kore's brother and supported his takeover of Kore if he converted to Islam. The Emir of Kore, with the help of Abd al-Salam, returned to Kore to restore his rule. As the new Emir installed by Sokoto was –now – a Muslim, in helping a pagan king regain his throne, Abd al-Salam was entering into "*muwālāt* with the infidels, with the meaning of helping them against the Muslims".⁵⁴⁴ Therefore, following the logic established by Usman,

⁵³⁹ *kashf al-ghīṭā' wa-l-sitr fī muwālāt al-kuffār bi-ma'nā al-naṣr* "Revealing the cover and the veil concerning friendship with the infidels, meaning aiding them". My emphasis.

⁵⁴⁰ A sash worn by members of the Christian priesthood.

⁵⁴¹ Bello (1819) *kashf al-ghīṭā'*: 1.

⁵⁴² In the *sard al-kalām*, Bello mentions he had infiltrated spies into Abd al-Salam's community. This is perhaps how Bello had received this information as it was not included in any correspondence between them.

⁵⁴³ Bello *sard al-kalām* in Harris (1909): 9.

⁵⁴⁴ The definition of *muwālāt* necessitating takfīr as cited by Usman in *najm al-ikhwān* and adopted by Bello.

he had apostatised from Islam.⁵⁴⁵ In the account of this event Bello gave in the *sard al-kalām*, Abd al-Salam's *muwālāt* goes hand in hand with his unbelief:

Those who were with him acknowledged him as their prince and he proclaimed the word “*tawaye*” [...] it is a word that has been appointed by the Infidels and the warriors as a mark of entrance into their path and of admission into their religion⁵⁴⁶

It is highly unlikely that Abd al-Salam publicly renounced his Muslim faith, however little that faith may have had in common with the Islam promulgated by the Fodiawa. As we have seen, his opposition to Bello was in fact based on Islamic legal rulings, believing that he was facing oppression from a tyrant regime. Meanwhile, his actions in Kore had more to do with ethnicity and ethnic solidarity in the face of perceived Fulani injustices. But once he dissented from Bello's authority, Bello and his supporters considered that he has apostatised from Islam.

In the early jihad campaigns, Abdullahi had proudly spoken of “our Fūlānī and our Hausa all united”.⁵⁴⁷ As he had done with the Hausa kings in *infāq al-maysūr*, Bello now entrenched the association of Abd al-Salam's rebellion with unbelief by using racialised language to set him apart from others in the *jamā'a* describing him as “a man from the blacks”, which as we discussed earlier, implied enslavability and paganism.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁵ Murray Last (1992) suggests in his analysis of Bello's exchange of letters with Abd al-Salam, that Bello formulated a “strategy” for dealing with dissent. This strategy forced the dissenter into committing an act of apostasy, justifying military action against them. He cites Bello sending a “tempting” caravan right past Gimbana, which Abd al-Salam raided. I think this may be reading too much into the case.

⁵⁴⁶ Bello *sard al-kalām*: 21.

⁵⁴⁷ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett: 110.

⁵⁴⁸ Ar. رجل من أهل السودان *rajul min ahl al-sūdān* in Bello *sard al-kalām* MS Kaduna (NA): 1. Later accounts of the rebellion of Abd al-Salam, such as that in the *kanz al-awlād*, also racialised the conflict. See Appendix III. See also the sympathetic account of Abd al-Salam given by Alhaj Umar in Piłaszewicz (2000). In this version of Usman's

It was not only among the community of Abd al-Salam that Bello was considered an unjust ruler. In his letter of 1820, al-Jaylānī had evidently told Bello that since succeeding his father as *amīr al-mu'minīn*, many considered him to be an oppressor. In his reply to al-Jaylānī, Bello turned the equation of oppressive rule with rebellion on its head. Despite his strident denial that he was “one of those who oppress the common man”, Bello readily accepted that oppression by some in the *jamā'a* towards others had been “widespread since the days of the Shaykh [Usman]”. He used this fact to argue that oppression does not come from authority, but rather from its absence:

Even a perfect Caliph will be incapable of establishing justice if he can find no assistance. Religion, if not raised up by consensus, will descend into warring factions. In this manner, [a ruler] is strengthened by his people and weakened for lack of them and these days, the people of truth are very few indeed⁵⁴⁹

Therefore, it followed that if the *jamā'a* truly wanted to get rid of oppression, they should be obedient to their leader. Echoing Usman's comments in *najm al-ikhwān*, and even quoting some of his poems on the subject included in that work, Bello stated that the community should be thankful for his authority, not resentful of it:

division of territory gained in the jihad, Abd al-Salam is tricked out of a share of the divided territory by a conspiracy between the Fodiawa.

⁵⁴⁹ Bello (1820) [risāla ilā Muḥammad al-Jaylānī] MX Niamey: 5; 8. Note that there is some confusion between this document and another of Bello's responses to al-Jaylānī, *jawāb shāfin wa khiṭāb minnā kāfin*. While Hunwick & O'Fahey (*ALA II: 121*) say that this text is the same as the [risāla] quoted here, MX Niamey 1744 appeared to be a completely different document.

It is no sin that God Almighty commanded us to promote the good and forbid the bad, to enter into allegiance and to wage jihad, to establish mosques, appoint judges [...] and implement many of the rulings of the sharia⁵⁵⁰

He argued that his “oppression” was in fact the establishment of the right and the removal of the iniquitous and that *true* oppression came from lack of firm governance and a descent into factionalism. In earlier correspondence with regional emirs during the jihad of 1804, Bello had emphasised the obligation of jihad on its own terms.⁵⁵¹ Now, in light of Bello’s succession and the widespread rebellions accompanying it, he ordered his emirs to conduct jihad against the rebels not out of an obligation to jihad but, again, “because of the obligation of obedience to the *Imām*”.⁵⁵² In sum, Bello found a way to equate “oppression” not with the rise of a tyrant, but with a *lack* of obedience to a good Muslim ruler such as himself.

Another legitimacy problem for Bello was the *ṭullāb*. Those who equated Usman’s process of accommodation in works such as *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān* with *ijtihād* only increased their attacks once Bello became *amīr al-mu’minīn*. Like Usman, Bello identified these *ṭullāb* squarely with Abdullahi.⁵⁵³ The *ṭullāb* disputed Bello’s authority to rule by pointing to some of his habits, such as extravagant dress, and his adoption of Usman’s acceptance of some unorthodox hadith interpretations. Bello’s writings on Islamic law during this period are essentially a defence and elaboration on these rulings, but he also set a new standard for how the ruler could interpret the law.

⁵⁵⁰ Bello (1820) [risāla ilā Muḥammad al-Jaylānī]: 9.

⁵⁵¹ See Bello [Letter to Amīr Ya’qūb].

⁵⁵² Bello *risāla lil-amrāḍ shāfiya* quoting al-Qurṭubī in Shareef (1995) *A Letter of Healing*: 108.

⁵⁵³ See Bello *kaff al-ikhwān*.

While Bello repeated Usman's justifications for such rulings, his reasoning was underlined by a different legal approach. Now that he had assumed leadership of the *jamā'a*, Bello set out a new position, stating that he would abandon the literal meaning of Islamic law (*zāhir al-fiqh*) in favour of *legal principles* whose applications changed according to the needs of the community and, of course, the needs of its ruler.⁵⁵⁴ In *najm al-ikhwān*, Usman had stated that *zāhir al-fiqh* was the principal merit of Abdullahi's works. Now, working with legal principles and not literal meanings meant that as leader, Bello would have a far greater command of the law than either Usman did or Abdullahi would have done. The new principle of "*rifa*" or tolerance⁵⁵⁵ in legal interpretation when it came to upholding the "common good"⁵⁵⁶ allowed Bello the flexibility to make new policy decisions specific to the local context without reference to standard works of Islamic law. As we will see in the following chapter, Bello grounded these rulings not on Islamic authorities of the past, but on his own authority as established Muslim leader.

In Bello's 1817 response to Abdullahi, *al-inṣāf*, he had made no direct reference to his own actions. The authority he used to defend his succession came from his reading of and direct quotation from the works of al-Māwardī and other Maliki jurists. But in this same work, the *shifā' al-asqām*, which he wrote after assuredly winning the contest, he changed his tone. In

⁵⁵⁴ Bello *shifā' al-asqām*; *kitāb al-taḥrīr*; *shams al-zāhira*. All are undated but assuredly written c. 1817–1821. The *shifā'* is a summary of the *kitāb al-taḥrīr* and the *shams al-zāhira* was not available to me. I am basing my understanding of its content on the analysis of Minna (1982): 185–192.

⁵⁵⁵ See Bello (1983) *The political thought of Muhammad Bello*: 213–220. See also Muhammad Bello's reply to Aḥmad Lobbo concerning his misunderstanding of these policies in [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS].

⁵⁵⁶ Ar. المصالح المرسلة *al-maṣāliḥ al-mursala*. See explanation of this concept in Gwandu (1977) *Abdullahi b. Fodio as a Muslim jurist*: 172–189.

the preface, Bello uses a Qur'anic injunction to demand that the *jamā'a* pay unwavering loyalty to him as amīr al-mu'minīn, despite the critics:

In order to make it easier to accept what I am telling you, if you are people of good sense⁵⁵⁷ then “*save such of them as do injustice - Fear them not, but fear Me!*”⁵⁵⁸

Another section of the *shifā'* deals with Bello's education. From this we can infer that the *ṭullāb* also questioned Bello's authority by asking whether he – then in his thirties – had the necessary knowledge of Islamic law to assume leadership of the *jamā'a*. In his writings during this period, Bello found a way to use his hereditary succession – otherwise counting against him – to his bolster his claims to possess unparalleled 'ilm.

Bello had already composed a work detailing his education, the *ḥāshiya*.⁵⁵⁹ Written in direct response to Abdullahi's *īdā' al-nusūkh*, Bello's aim had been to demonstrate that he too had studied widely, under a range of teachers. In the *ḥāshiya*, Bello dedicated only a single paragraph to his father, Usman, as the first of his teachers, while the list of works he cited was a modest: 29, comparable to Abdullahi's 38.⁵⁶⁰ But when we move to the *shifā'*, Bello claimed to have read “innumerable numbers of books. I even counted them over some days, getting to 20,300 books.”⁵⁶¹ The subjects he listed covered all areas of the “core curriculum” of Islamic

⁵⁵⁷ Ar. أهل الرشد و الفلاح *ahl al-rushd wa-l-fallāḥ*.

⁵⁵⁸ Bello *shifā' al-asqām* MX Niamey: 5a. Text in *italics* is Quran 2:150 (trans. Pickthall). The Qur'anic verse quoted by Bello concerns the tumult caused in the early Muslim community when the Prophet abruptly changed the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca. When Muhammad heard that a certain party of his followers (the “them” in the Surah) questioned this decision, God (the “Me” in the Surah) revealed this verse to reassure the believers that they should fear Him, rather than recriminations from other Muslims.

⁵⁵⁹ The precise date around which Bello composed this document is uncertain. See Naylor (2018) *Abdullahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello's Debate over the Torobbe-Fulani*.

⁵⁶⁰ See Chapter One, *supra*. A full English translation of Bello's work, the *ḥāshiya*, can be found in Appendix I.

⁵⁶¹ Bello *shifā' al-asqām* MS Niamey: 12.

sciences but especially the areas of tafsīr, Islamic jurisprudence and hadith interpretation; all areas in which his judgement was being challenged. However, the emphasis is not on the works themselves, but on the – unlikely and contradictory – assertion that he had studied the majority of them under the guidance of Usman. Through his close connection to Usman, Bello arguably sought to take on his mantle in the eyes of the *jamā'a*, and perhaps tap in to the immense charismatic power of his father that had been so effective at garnering support for the jihadist movement. Indeed, aside from the Islamic sciences, Bello hinted that Usman had taught him a lot more:

he [Usman] acquainted me with the finest points of his knowledge and made me aware of the strange aspects of his hidden things [gharā'ib maknūnātihi]⁵⁶²

This knowledge also extended to millenarian predictions. Like Usman, Bello continued to incorporate Mahdism into his legitimacy discourse. Minna considers that Bello's works on the Mahdi written during the period of succession crisis should be seen purely as a "weapon for political control", while Albasu points to Bello falling under the Tijani millenarian theory of al-Ḥasan al-Bilbālī.⁵⁶³ But I would also suggest Bello was, like Usman, in the awkward position of struggling to delay or redirect anarchic Mahdist sentiments while needing to maintain a monopoly on Mahdist knowledge. In *qawl al-mukhtaṣar*, written in 1820, Bello gave a date for the Mahdi's appearance (1280 AH / 1863 AD) that would conveniently come after his rule,

⁵⁶² Ibid.: 12.

⁵⁶³ Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 337 ; Albasu (1985) *A Glimpse at Muhammad Bello's Views on the Mahdi and Mahdist Expectation*: 14.

leaving his successors to deal with the problem.⁵⁶⁴ While in an undated letter written to

Modibbo Adamu, Usman's flagbearer in Adamawa, Bello instructed him to:

...dispatch troops to the south of Wadai, the south of [Dar]fur and to the banks of the Nile because our Sheikh told us that his community would reach these parts by the time of the Mahdi's appearance to join him and pledge allegiance to him.⁵⁶⁵

By pro-actively preparing for the Mahdi's appearance at a fixed point in time, Bello arguably rallied those who would otherwise have joined anti-authority Mahdist movements to his side.

But Bello's Mahdist theories only gained credence because of his assertion that he was acting in accordance with that Usman had taught him. Adherence to Bello meant a chance to learn some of the hidden knowledge that he claimed Usman had entrusted him with.⁵⁶⁶ By virtue of being Usman's son, Bello had learnt things no other candidate to the *imāra* could:

the Sheikh did not pass away until he had made rulings and ensured I had inherited understanding⁵⁶⁷

Across his works of this period, Bello hinted that Usman had indeed been grooming him for the succession, consciously passing on both his *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* knowledge. If it was true that *ʿilm* could be "inherited" as Bello claimed, this was a strong case for the hereditary succession so excoriated by Abdullahi and other Muslim authorities in the region, and a strong case for his educational credentials as well. After all, Usman was accepted by most of the *jamā'a* as the foremost scholar of the age.

⁵⁶⁴ Albasu (1985) *Bello's views on the Mahdi* : 16.

⁵⁶⁵ Bello (n.d.) in *majmū' ba'ḍ ras'ā'il* : 12–16.

⁵⁶⁶ This theory is confirmed in Gidado dan Layma's hagiographic biography of Bello, *al-kashf wa-l-bayān*. Bello's successor, Atiku, would also rely heavily on the possession of secret knowledge from Usman.

⁵⁶⁷ Bello *wathīqa ilā jamā'at al-muslimīn* MS Niamey: 2b.

“The Lesser of two Evils” and “Preference to the First”

Over his correspondence with Ahmad Lobbo of Masina during the period 1817–1821, Bello expanded upon his claim that his accession to power was the “lesser of two evils”. He also revealed that the inspiration for these ideas, and the role he saw for himself, was based on an extensive reading of Muslim historical and geographical works. This correspondence, carefully preserved in Sokoto, helped Bello to situate himself within the geopolitical order of the Sahel and claim legitimacy not as a scholar, but as a territorial ruler. As such, it deserves careful analysis.

Bello justified his succession to Ahmad Lobbo in a far more direct manner than he did to Abdullahi. As he explained:

The *imāma* is achieved by two means. The first is by free choice (*ikhtiyār*), to which many conditions are attached depending on the time and the ability. The second is by compulsion (*iḍṭirār*), for which none of the above conditions need apply but belief in Islam and that the majority of people flock to him on account of the superiority of his power⁵⁶⁸

Further, he did not defend his assertion with passages from al-Māwardī or other such Abbasid legal treatise. Instead, he used examples from the wider Muslim world through historical and geographical works.

⁵⁶⁸ Bello (c. 1821) *jawāb shāfin*: 2–3. This response to Ahmad Lobbo has escaped attention, not appearing in *ALA II*. It may have been confused with Bello’s response to al-Jaylānī, *jawāb shāfin wa-khiṭāb minnā kāfin risāla ilā Muḥammad al-Jaylānī*.

Figure 4: Pertinent Written Exchanges between the Fodiawa and Aḥmad Lobbo c. 1817–1821⁵⁶⁹

| Date | Source/Title | Correspondence | Purpose |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1817 ⁵⁷⁰ | Mentioned in [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS] | Lobbo to Usman | offering allegiance and requesting authority for his jihad |
| c. 1817 | Mentioned in [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS] | Abdullahi to Lobbo | requesting allegiance to him as amīr al-mu'minīn |
| c. 1817 | Mentioned in [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS] | Bello to Lobbo | requesting allegiance to him as amīr al-mu'minīn |
| after 1817 | Cited in [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS] | Lobbo to Abdullahi | explaining his refusal to pay allegiance to him |
| after 1817 | Mentioned in [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS] | Abdullahi to Lobbo | accepting his break in allegiance and his arguments |
| c. 1821 ⁵⁷¹ | Cited in [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS] | Lobbo to Bello | explaining his refusal to pay allegiance to him |
| c. 1821 | Cited in [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS] | Bello to Lobbo | refusing to accept his explanations |
| c. 1821 | Mentioned in <i>jawāb shāfin</i> | Lobbo to Bello ⁵⁷² | asking for more clarification for Bello's reasons |
| c. 1821 ⁵⁷³ | <i>jawāb shāfin li-l-murīd</i> | Bello to Lobbo ⁵⁷⁴ | expanding on his reasons |

⁵⁶⁹ Adapted from Kani and Stewart (1975) *Sokoto-Masina Diplomatic Correspondence* in collaboration with Mauro Nobili.

⁵⁷⁰ According to Ba & Daget (1962), Lobbo sent a delegation to Sokoto to seek support for the battle of Noukouma, which took place in 1818, in the form of a flag from Usman. That Usman gave a flag suggests that the delegation had pledged allegiance to him. Usman died in April 1817, thus the pledge will probably have been made earlier that year. That such a pledge was made is proven by some comments in *jawāb shāfin* and [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS].

⁵⁷¹ See [Abu Bakr Atiku Manuscript]: 12 "and as for our continuing [not to pledge allegiance] after we heard of the resolution of the issue between you [Bello and Abdullahi]". My emphasis. Therefore, Lobbo probably wrote his reply after the battle of Kalambayna had taken place in 1821.

⁵⁷² Assumed from Bello *jawāb shāfin*.

⁵⁷³ Bello *jawāb shāfin*: 1 "[Lobbo's messenger explained] that you [Lobbo] were obliged to withhold [allegiance] for the second [time?] [...] We consider our [first] answer to be sufficient [...] but when you requested even more [in way of an answer], we wrote to you what came to mind [...]." Therefore, Bello wrote *jawāb shāfin* after his c. 1821 reply to Lobbo. However, his reference to rebellions closing the road between Sokoto and Masina suggest it was written in the "second jihad" period, not long after his first reply.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| | | (jawāb shāfin) | |
| 1821– 1828 ⁵⁷⁵ | <i>maktūb fī radd masā'il 'an Aḥmad Lobbo</i> | Bello to Lobbo ⁵⁷⁶ | summarising Lobbo's arguments and his responses |

In *sabīl al-salāma*, his work disputing the succession, Abdullahi had vilified Mu'āwiya as a tyrant who, by appointing his own son as successor and departing from the practices of the Rashidun had permanently divided the Muslim community and brought the true Caliphate to an end. In his correspondence with Lobbo, Bello came to develop a different view of Mu'āwiya. Informed by his reading of later historical works such as the monumental *al-bidāya wa-l-nihāya* of Ibn Kathīr (lived 1300 – 1373), Bello came to see Mu'āwiya's rise to power as the perfect example of the “lesser of two evils” maxim”. Citing a passage from Ibn Kathīr's history:

Do you not see when Mu'āwiya called [on people], in a sermon, to pay allegiance (bay'a) to his son, Yazid? He said, “Whoever wants to debate this matter, one equal to him [Yazid] should come before us.”⁵⁷⁷ Even in that case, we would be more deserving of it than him and his father.”⁵⁷⁸

Bello explained that:

In this instance, allowing the transfer of power to him who is not permitted to take it is less damaging than allowing *fitna* to rise up, for which there is no cure and no salvation.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁴ Bello *jawāb shāfin*.

⁵⁷⁵ Written before the death of Abdullahi, but after the above correspondences all of which are summarised therein.

⁵⁷⁶ Bello [*maktūb fī radd*]. Probably never sent to Masina.

⁵⁷⁷ He is referring to one of the sons of the Rāshidūn Caliphs who challenged Yazīd.

⁵⁷⁸ Bello (c.1821) *jawāb shāfin*: 6, quoting the history of Ibn Kathīr.

⁵⁷⁹ Bello (c.1821) *jawāb shāfin*: 3; 4.

He invited his readers to “follow the histories” to see that from eleventh century Al-Andalus to Ottoman Turkey, the principles of “the lesser of two evils”⁵⁸⁰ and “preference to the first”⁵⁸¹ were always followed. Bello paid no attention to the character of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, so revered by Abdullahi. Instead, he focussed on later rulers of largely hereditary, Muslim dynasties such as the Ottoman Caliph Suleiman the Magnificent. What appealed to Bello was not the extent to which they followed the ways of the Rashidun, but the authority they wielded and the reach of their territorial claims:

The majority of lands of Islam were under his obedience such as Iraq, al-Sham, Yemen, Egypt, *al-ḥaramayn*,⁵⁸² *ifrīqīya* (Tunisia), *Barqa* (Cyrenaica, E. Libya), *al-Jazā’ir* (Algeria) and more.⁵⁸³

Such observations confirmed his view that the candidate with the superior power, who assumed leadership as “the lesser of two evils”, always served the *Umma* best.

Bello argued that “preference to the first” also applied to his rule as well. He stated that had come to power through “the pledge of the previous imam”, Usman, to whom Lobbo had pledged allegiance. Despite Lobbo’s claims to the contrary, Bello stated that Usman had made him his successor as *amīr al-mu’minīn* in front of the Sokoto elite:

Know that I am surprised when he [Ahmad Lobbo] said so. If he was far away when the covenant was written [katb al-‘ahd], those present wrote to him about that while giving him their excuse for not waiting for him, and to the effect that the covenant had been confirmed⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸⁰ Ar. أخف الضرر *akhaff al-ḍararayn*.

⁵⁸¹ Ar. الأول فالأول *al-awwal fa-l-awwal*.

⁵⁸² i.e. Mecca and Medina.

⁵⁸³ Bello *jawāb shāfin*: 14, citing al-Suyūṭī *tārīkh al-khulafā’*.

⁵⁸⁴ Bello (c.1821–28) [maktūb fī radd] in Minna (1982): 109.

As one aspect of obedience to a ruler was obedience to his pledge, Lobbo must respect Usman's choice and "maintain the pledge as it should be". Bello made clear that the consequences of reneging on such a pledge would be severe:

It is plain to see from the outset that you did indeed pledge allegiance and hesitation after all doubt has been eliminated is not acceptable.⁵⁸⁵ Not showing allegiance to one to whom it is due is judged to be rebellion [khurūj]⁵⁸⁶

But one of the reasons that Ahmad Lobbo had withdrawn his obedience was because, notwithstanding Bello's succession by pledge of Usman, he did not think that Bello's authority applied to Masina:

Look upon this with a just eye: did your ruling [jurisdiction] reach us since the death of our Shaikh, the late 'Uthmān, up to the present date? If you are certain that your rule did not reach us, on this basis is it not then permissible to have more than one ruler?⁵⁸⁷

He argued was that since a superior Muslim authority existed in another part of the world, the Fodiawa were simply regional emirs to this wider Islamic Caliphate. They did not have the authority to appoint emirs themselves, or demand allegiance from other regions.⁵⁸⁸

In his response, Bello sought to integrate a jihadist state of "Sokoto" into the geopolitical hierarchy of the Sahel region, and revealed that his territorial claims included Masina. During Usman's rule, I argued that the Fodiawa were content to consider themselves regional

⁵⁸⁵ Presumably, Bello is referring to the confusion over whether Lobbo should pledge allegiance to himself or to Abdullahi.

⁵⁸⁶ Bello (c. 1821) *jawāb shāfin*: 25.

⁵⁸⁷ [Abū Bakr 'Atīq MS] in Stewart (1976): 504.

⁵⁸⁸ See Lobbo in [maktūb fī radd] MS Kaduna (NA): 4 "as you know, all th[ese judgements] that you mentioned concern caliphs, not regional emirs (*umarā' al-bilād*) such as we have".

representatives of larger Muslim powers with caliphal claims, such as the Sultanate of Morocco and the Ottoman pashaliks of Tripoli and Egypt. I showed that the jihad of 1804 did not owe its success to the promise of a “Sokoto Caliphate”, but rather to the promise to remove corruption and establish a reformed Islamic society in Hausaland and parts of Bornu. However, to justify his territorial claims over Masina, Bello outlined a very different vision for the kind of state he wished to rule, the designation of the one who led it and the reach of his power.

Quoting from Abdullahi’s *ḍiyā’ al-ḥukkām*, Lobbo reasoned that it was permissible to have more than two Muslim rulers if the expansion of the *dār al-islām* meant communication between different regions was impossible, such as the rulers of Al-Andalus and Khorasan. In reference to Bello’s claim over Masina, Lobbo retorted that Bello may as well claim that Al-Andalus and Khorasan belong to him as well, if he expected allegiance from regions that his rule could not reach. While Bello’s response was that “the reaching of their [Masina’s] books on bay’a is enough for unity and necessitates his obedience to what I order”,⁵⁸⁹ Lobbo’s comment about Al-Andalus and Khorasan started a lengthy argument between the two men in which they tied their knowledge of Islamic geography to their legitimacy claims.

From their exchange, it is evident that among the Muslim elite of the nineteenth century Sahel, there was no consensus as to what the nearest Muslim power to their region was, and to what degree they owed it obedience. The Ottoman Caliph in Istanbul was represented by the Pasha of Tripoli, Yusuf Karamanli and –nominally – in Egypt by Muhammad Ali Pasha. The Alaouite Sultan of Morocco, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, also claimed the *khilāfa* due to his family’s descent

⁵⁸⁹ Bello (c.1821–28) [maktūb fī radd]: 4.

from ‘Alī b. ‘Alī Ṭālib, the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law. Both Tripoli and Fez were aware of – and supported – the jihad of 1804.⁵⁹⁰ While Usman was alive, paying allegiance to a greater Muslim state was never in doubt. The question was, to which one?

He [Usman] ordered me [Bello] to write letters of allegiance to the Caliph in Istanbul and send him a gift. I told him, “Shouldn’t the letter be written to the one who is in Fez? For he is a Qurayshi,⁵⁹¹ while the one in Istanbul is a Turk.” However, Usman said, “[No,] he is the one who is in the line of communication and the majority of the Muslims are with him”. Therefore, I wrote letters and had them sent to the Lord of Tripoli⁵⁹² who sent them on to him. However, it was not possible for me to send the gift.⁵⁹³

Using geographical works such as the *kharīda al-‘ajā’ib* of Ibn Wardī, Bello clearly established the position of Sokoto and Masina within a landscape of Muslim powers:

It should be obvious to the likes of you that this region in which both you and I [live] is one country and the issue of a distance the like of that between Khorasān and al-Al-Andalus does not figure. It is clear that this south-western, *sūdānī*, *Takrūrī* region (qaṭr [of ours]) forms some parts of the zone (*iqlīm*) of Egypt.⁵⁹⁴

As outlined above, Bello understood Egypt to be only a representative of the Ottoman Caliphate. He observed that Istanbul was very far away from Sokoto and Masina, and “[t]he

⁵⁹⁰ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān: Muḥammad Al-Bāqirī, Sultan of Agadez, first wrote to the Sultan of Morocco informing him of Usman. He received a reply, dated July 1810, urging him to support the jihadists. The Sultan also sent a message to Usman, presumably around the same period, supporting his jihad and wishing for the successful establishment of his state (*dawla*). Yusuf Karamanli: Contact with Tripoli seems to have begun under Bello. In Bivar (1959) *Arabic Documents of Northern Nigeria*: 344–8, Yusuf Karamanli referred to Bello as *ṣāḥib wilāyat al-sūdān* “lord of the province of al-sūdān” just as Bello referred to Karamanli as *ṣāḥib [wilāyat?] Ṭarābulus* “lord of the province of Tripoli”. This terminology suggests a common superior, the Caliph in Istanbul, which agrees with Usman’s statement, *infra*, but the evidence is certainly not conclusive.

⁵⁹¹ “a Qurayshi” The Alaouite Sultanate of Morocco, whose rulers claim descent from ‘Alī ibn ‘Alī Ṭālib.

⁵⁹² Presumably Pasha Yusuf Karamanli.

⁵⁹³ Bello (c.1821) *jawāb shāfin*: 35–6.

⁵⁹⁴ Bello *jawāb shāfin*: 18.

news of its ruler or his jurisdiction does not reach us.”⁵⁹⁵ Following legal consensus, Bello reasoned that:

If the seat of the Imam is so removed that he cannot enforce his rule in some far off lands, it is permissible to appoint someone else [to govern] that region.⁵⁹⁶

Bello argued that the Sahel region was far enough away from other Muslim polities to necessitate the establishment of an independent Muslim state, but small enough to allow for only one Muslim ruler to govern it, himself. Therefore, “preference to the first” should be followed and in this case, “Usman was the first to show imāma in this region”.⁵⁹⁷

This statement went against another characteristic of Usman’s discourse leading up to 1804. As I have previously pointed out, the Fodiawa never stated that they were the first Muslim reformers in the Sahel. In fact, I demonstrated that by citing of the precedent of Askiya Muḥammad, the Fodiawa were tapping into an idealised vision of Muslim statecraft thoroughly engrained in the wider region as a legitimising device. Further, the term *khalīfa* was never used to describe Usman, or used by Usman to describe himself, since no one had conferred it upon him. But now Bello claimed that:

As he was a *khalīfa*, after his appointment it is not permissible for anyone in this region to claim to be caliph. Those [who live] in this region can do nothing but pay allegiance to him.⁵⁹⁸

If this statement seems surprising to us, Lobbo was also taken aback:

⁵⁹⁵ Bello (c.1821–28) [maktūb fī radd] in Minna (1982): 108.

⁵⁹⁶ Bello (c.1821) *jawāb shāfin*: 20.

⁵⁹⁷ Bello (1821–28) [maktūb fī radd]: 5.

⁵⁹⁸ Bello [maktūb fī radd]: 5. My emphasis.

I never heard such words, nor did he put it in any book and it was not in his nature to conceal⁵⁹⁹

Lobbo's incredulity is testament to the fact that what I outlined above concerning Usman's concept of his position and its geopolitical implications were common assumptions in the wider region.

As evidence for Usman's *khilāfa*, Bello cited the passage of the *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*, discussed in Chapter Three, in reference to the al-Suyūṭī's prediction that the eleventh Caliph was yet to come and the twelfth Caliph was the awaited Mahdi:

I hope that I am the first of them and the awaited Mahdi the second⁶⁰⁰

He thus inferred that Usman considered himself to be a *khalīfa*. In the next chapter, we will see how Bello capitalised on this vaguest of statements to bolster his own rule of a Sokoto "Caliphate". In time, Lobbo also claimed to be a *khalīfa* through an apocryphal passage added to the *tārīkh al-fattāsh* by his supporter, Nūḥ b. al-Ṭāhir, which also relied on the prophecy of the twelve caliphs.⁶⁰¹

In his exchange with Lobbo, Bello showed the superior command of Islamic historical and geographical sources.⁶⁰² But whether the arguments were on his side or not, Lobbo continued to rule independently of Sokoto. Over time, relations between Sokoto and Masina

⁵⁹⁹ Bello [*maktūb fī radd*]: 11.

⁶⁰⁰ Usman (1811) *naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān*: 37.

⁶⁰¹ See Nobili and Mathee (2015) *So-called Tārīkh al-fattāsh*. The *fattāsh* proclaims Lobbo to be the twelfth caliph after the Askiya, with the Mahdi not included in the "twelve caliphs", hence the lack of a similar Mahdist agitation coming from Masina. This may also explain Lobbo's reticence to accept a *khilafa* in Sokoto.

⁶⁰² Lobbo's arguments contain several inaccuracies. See Nobili (forthcoming).

became open and relatively cordial.⁶⁰³ Nevertheless, Bello and his successors carefully maintained this correspondence and even produced fresh summaries of it that in all likelihood were never sent to Masina.⁶⁰⁴ This suggests a domestic use of such texts, namely, creating and maintaining the authority of Muhammad Bello and his successors as rulers of a Muslim state, Sokoto.

⁶⁰³ Bello, for example, wrote to Lobbo informing him of Clapperton's arrival and his desire to travel westwards into Masina territory. The Abu Bakr Atiku Manuscript notes that Bello soon apologised to Lobbo for the views he expressed during this earlier dispute.

⁶⁰⁴ [*maktūb fī radd masā'il 'an Aḥmad Lobbo*] was probably compiled by Bello between 1821 – 1828. [Abū Bakr'Atīq MS] was produced by Bello's successor, Atiku, c.1837–42.

Conclusion

Bello's treatment of Islamic history focused on a number of maxims about the transfer of power that held true through centuries of Islamic statecraft. The leader who had the greatest force of arms and support triumphed, irrespective of his qualities or any decision of an electoral council. What is more, this led not to *fitna*, but to the harmony of the Muslim community. Meanwhile, the first to declare himself ruler and gain allegiance always defeated other contenders. Bello demonstrated that like the majority of rulers in Islamic history, he had come to power by "the will of the previous imam", since he claimed that Usman had declared him his successor before he died. All who had pledged allegiance to Usman pledged also to follow his will. Thus, they now had to pledge allegiance to Bello. Although Bello would never have the same charismatic power as Usman, he reaffirmed and repurposed this power to justify his own rule, emphasising his personal connection to Usman not just as his preferred son but as an inheritor of both *ẓāhir* and *baṭīn* knowledge.

Bello's use of Islamic sources to justify and define his authority to rule is testament to the importance of Arabic writings as legitimising devices, a central argument of this thesis. Further, debates over the minutiae of Usman's intentions show the extent to which Sahelian elites kept a careful eye on the literary production of their contemporaries. It also informs us that Usman himself, his Arabic writings and the jihad he had called for, had also become a site for debates over authority and legitimacy. Bello was able to control the narrative of his rise to power and convert the conditions of his succession into a source of legitimacy for his rule. He

provided the discursive framework for “Sokoto” to become a jihadist state, on a par with established Muslim powers in the region such as Morocco and Agadez, and even the Ottoman Caliphate. Victory in the 1804 jihad, the election of Bello and his defeat or containment of the threats that faced him were themselves sufficient to cement the bureaucratic authority this new Muslim state. In his future Arabic writings, Bello largely dispensed with the kinds of legitimacy devices required for the processes of dissent and accommodation, consisting of alternative readings of Islamic law. Instead, he dispensed with such legal texts all together, coming to rely principally on his own authority as a Muslim ruler to be “feared and obeyed”.

CHAPTER FIVE: “GOD LAID OUT THESE COUNTRIES FOR ME”: BELLO’S RULE OF SOKOTO 1821–37

To announce to the people any public measure [...] the city crier is sent round, who first proclaims, “This is the will of the sultan;” the people replying “Whatever the sultan does, is good; we will do it”

*Records of Captain Clapperton during his first visit to Sokoto, March 1823*⁶⁰⁵

Muhammad Bello saw his rule as a continuation of the mandate granted by God to his father, Usman. Such can be understood from a close look at his work *qadh al-zinād*, which from internal references he wrote some time after the Tawaye Rebellions. The *qadh al-zinād* is at first appearance a collection of various chapters of the *infāq al-maysūr*. However, when we take a closer look, Bello has amended the text of the *infāq* to incorporate his rule. In the *infāq*, Bello had said of Hausaland after the jihad:

As for today, it has become a house of Islam, for God has removed its blemishes and maintained its purity due to the blessing of this Sheikh. His appearance was a gift from God, who made his hands manifest miracles and dazzling lights [...] God subjugated this land for him and he presided over it with justice and fairness between its subjects.⁶⁰⁶

But in the *qadh al-zinād*, Bello clearly changed the pronoun to read, “God laid out these countries for **me**.”⁶⁰⁷ After suppressing the Tawaye Rebellions, and buoyed by a sense of divine

⁶⁰⁵ In Denham and Clapperton (1826) *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*: 97.

⁶⁰⁶ Bello *infāq* in Shādhilī (1996): 299–300. The passage is drawn from a note towards the end of *infāq*, in which Bello explains “the necessity for this jihad of ours”.

⁶⁰⁷ Bello (after 1821) *qadh al-zinād* MS Paris (BN): 13a. My emphasis.

appointment, he set about turning Sokoto into a multi-ethnic, urban Muslim Empire with him as its undisputed sovereign.

Although later rulers of Sokoto continued to push its frontiers further outwards through jihad, Bello's unchallenged from 1821 until his death in 1837 is considered its golden age. The visits of British explorer, Hugh Clapperton, to Bello's court in 1825, and again in 1827, capture this period of Sokoto's history in vivid detail. The meeting between Clapperton and Bello is frequently cited as a significant early encounter between a West African ruler and a western agent in the context of global and colonial studies,⁶⁰⁸ while the importance of the map Bello drew for Clapperton has been used to explain concepts of geography in pre-modern West Africa.⁶⁰⁹ Bello's system of garrison forts – the *ribat*⁶¹⁰ – as well as his planned cities of Sokoto and Wurno with their palaces, city walls and mosques, are the lasting physical manifestations of his grand vision.⁶¹¹ Meanwhile, the slave plantation economy that developed during this period, the lynchpin of Sokoto's export market, informs much of the literature on slavery and economic history in the Sahel region.⁶¹²

Thanks to this impressive body of research, we have a colourful picture of Sokoto's "Muslim Empire". But Bello set down the rules that governed this empire in Arabic texts.

⁶⁰⁸ See introduction to Lockhart and Lovejoy (2005) *Hugh Clapperton into the interior of Africa*.

⁶⁰⁹ Lefebvre (2015) *Frontières de sable*; Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*.

⁶¹⁰ See Dantiye (1985) *A Study of the Origins, Status and Defensive Role of Four Kano Frontier Strongholds (Ribats) in the Emirate Period (1809-1903)*; Salau (2006) *Ribats and the Development of Plantations in the Sokoto Caliphate: A Case Study of Fanisau*; Philips (2016) *Black Africa's Largest Islamic Kingdom Before Colonialism: Royal Ribats of Kano and Sokoto*.

⁶¹¹ See DeLancey (2005) *Moving East, Facing West: Islam as an Intercultural Mediator in Urban Planning in the Sokoto Empire*; Hakim and Ahmed (2006) *Rules for the built environment*; Last (2013) *Contradictions in Creating a Jihadi Capital: Sokoto in the Nineteenth Century and Its Legacy*.

⁶¹² See Lovejoy (1978) *Plantations*; Stilwell (2004) *Paradoxes of power*; Lovejoy (2005) *Slavery*.

Without their discursive underpinning, such emblematic features of Sokoto – from ribats, to urbanisation programs, to the availability of slave labour – would never have come about. In these writings, Bello laid out his vision of a coherent social and political structure in which certain groups, such as the nomadic Fulani, were to be reformed and accommodated while others, such as the Tuareg, were to be excluded. Further, by setting the standards by which a person could be legally enslaved and linking enslavability with geographic location, Bello established the rules by which the plantation economy and continued jihadist expansion functioned in tandem.

Whereas Muhammad Bello wrote prolifically on governance and administrative matters once he had become *amīr al-mu'minīn* of Sokoto, no documents of this nature survive from Abdullahi's tenure of the Emirate of Gwandu in Nigeria's national archive collections, or elsewhere.⁶¹³ But from what we know of Gwandu's later history, it would seem that Abdullahi had initiated a very different kind of Muslim statecraft to Bello's Sokoto, one more in keeping with his own concepts of rightful authority in Islam.

This chapter (1) introduces and explores the concept of Bello's "multi-ethnic" empire, (2) examines what we know of Abdullahi's rule of Gwandu, and (3) details Bello's policies on (a) enslaveable groups (b) the Tuareg (c) the nomadic Fulani clans. As Bello shifted from presenting "arguments" to enacting "policies", he moved away from matters that were debated throughout the Muslim Umma to focus exclusively on the local context of Sokoto. By honing in on specific examples such as these, I seek to demonstrate that because Bello's authority now

⁶¹³ Zahradeen (1976) reported that some private manuscript collections existed in Gwandu.

came from his position as the accepted ruler of a Muslim empire, citing works from the Islamic past became less important.

Bello's Sokoto: A Multi-Ethnic Empire

As we recall, the perceived discrimination of non-Fulani in the growing jihadist state was one reason for the Tawaye Rebellions, notably that of Abd al-Salam. As *amīr al-mu'minīn*, Bello sought to accommodate non-Fulani at an administrative and cultural level. Part of this process involved reinstating some practices of the old Hausa *sarauta*. One of Bello's first dated works, *raf' al-shubha*, was a list of "abominable practices" of the Hausa ruling classes which he wrote in 1801, when he was barely 20 years old. Moving forward to Clapperton's visit in 1825, it is remarkable how many of these practices survived or were perhaps even revived during Bello's tenure as *amīr al-mu'minīn*. On Bello's list is "wearing excessively ornamented clothing and other contemptible adornments". On his first visit to Sokoto, in 1823, Clapperton described Bello's dress without comment.⁶¹⁴ Upon meeting him again in 1825, he remarked that Bello now "dresses better" and on that day was wearing "the finest tobies that the country produces".⁶¹⁵ Among other "deeds of the iniquitous" that Bello listed in his 1801 treatise was that the rulers "take a *muqaddam*", which the copyist described as "a slave boy that precedes his mount".⁶¹⁶ Barth remarked that each of the regional emirs had "a crying man" who preceded his horse that

⁶¹⁴ Denham and Clapperton (1826) *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*: 83, "He was dressed in a light blue cotton tobe, with a white muslin turban, the shawl of which he wore over the nose and mouth in the Tuarick fashion".

⁶¹⁵ Lockhart and Lovejoy (2005) *Hugh Clapperton into the interior of Africa*: 28.

⁶¹⁶ Bello *raf' al-shubha* MX Niamey. I deduce that this is the copyist's addition since MX NU/Paden (p.7) and ME NU/Hunwick (p.7) do not include a definition for *muqaddam*. The Hunwick copy also differs in its wording. The *muqaddam* is probably a reference to the *zegui*, a male of slave descent cultivated to be fervently loyal to the *Sarki*. His job was to walk before the *Sarki's* horse and frighten enemies away with his shouts. See Smaldone (1977); Rossi (2015: 157).

matches this description.⁶¹⁷ Further, in 1801 Bello deemed playing musical instruments among the “actions of the *jāhiliyya*”, yet Clapperton was welcomed by the “drums and trumpets” of Bello’s escort.⁶¹⁸ Further, documents describing Bello’s court show how its multitude of positions resembled the Hausa *sarauta* system, including large numbers of stable masters, court eunuchs and concubines. The names betray a wide range of ethnicities and backgrounds.⁶¹⁹

We should not view the disparity between Bello’s views as hypocritical. Aside from illustrating the contrast between the idealism of youth versus the more pragmatic approaches of later years, Bello was simply following his father’s appeal to take into account time and circumstance which, as we saw in the preceding chapter, Bello had advanced to advocate abandoning the literal meaning of the law in favour of *legal principles* whose applications changed according to the needs of the state. Now, as ruler of a vast empire, it made sense for Bello – as it did also for the Abbasid and Ottoman Caliphs whom he held in such high esteem – to maintain an elaborate court structure and conspicuous consumption for the purposes of patronage. In this way, competing groups could all be satisfied, and the more positions Bello was able to dole out and the more diverse his patronage networks, the less chance of a coordinated rebellion against him.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁷ Lockhart and Lovejoy (2005) *Hugh Clapperton into the interior of Africa*: 279.

⁶¹⁸ Denham and Clapperton (1826) *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*: 77.

⁶¹⁹ Most commonly the *majmū’ aṣḥāb* of Gidado dan Layma. See also the anonymous *fihrist bi-Asamā’ wa aṣḥāb wa wuzarā’ Amīr Muḥammad Bello*.

⁶²⁰ For more on empire and ethnicity, see Cooper (2014) *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*.

Bello's plans to create, in the words of John Philips, a "new, urban Islamic society in which Hausa became the lingua franca but which was multi-ethnic in orientation"⁶²¹ required Bello to re-examine the noble *nasab* of the TorodBe proposed by Abdullahi, which he had quoted uncritically in the *infāq al-maysūr*. Here, Bello had remained open to various theories as to the TorodBe's origin:

it is said that they are from the Jews and it is said that they are from the Christians and it is said that they are from the Bambara people.⁶²²

Nevertheless, he stated that "what we find in our books and [what] the TorodBe hear" was that the TorodBe were converted to Islam by a prestigious Arab warrior in the early days of the Muslim conquests. Bello also quoted from Abdullahi's poem which described the TorodBe as "maternal uncles of the Fulani and blood brothers of the Arabs" without comment. Some time afterwards,⁶²³ Bello changed his mind on some of these stories and came to dismiss Abdullahi's writings on the TorodBe as "untrue" and "not at all reliable". He instead looked to other sources:

What he [Abdullahi] said about the origins of the TorodBe being from the Christians is not at all reliable. Al-Ḥasan al-Bilbālī⁶²⁴ has informed me that what is upheld among them in Futa [Toro] is that the origin of the TorodBe is the Banbara, a black African people.⁶²⁵

⁶²¹ Philips (1992) *Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate: selected studies, 1804-1903*: 232.

⁶²² See Muhammad Bello *infāq* in Shādhilī (1996): 329–336. See also translations in Delafosse (1912); Arnett (1922).

⁶²³ As outlined above, the date that Bello composed the *hāshiya*, the text in which he outlined these theories, is not clear. For the full English translation of this text, see Appendix I of this thesis.

⁶²⁴ See Chapter Two of this thesis, n. 302.

⁶²⁵ i.e. "Bambara". Ar. بَنْبَارٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ السُّودَانِ *banbara min ahl al-sūdān* Bello *hāshiya* MS Paris: 298–9.

Bello's rejection of an Arabic ancestor trope for a more local and humbler origin for the TorodBe could be seen as another attempt to make non-Fulani feel more welcome. The Fodiawa, surely seen as foreign usurpers by many, would have greater acceptance among those whom they termed "*ahl al-sūdān*" such as the Hausa, Bā Arewa and other non-Fulani if they could emphasise their own ancestral connection to the *bilād al-sūdān*.

However, by describing Bello's empire as "multi-ethnic", I do not suggest that Bello treated all these ethnicities equally. On the contrary, Bello saw it as his duty to order and categorise his subjects by ethnic origin. In Sahelian jurisprudential logic, this also entailed a judgement on whether the majority were Muslim or non-Muslim, and thus their degree of loyalty to him as Muslim ruler.⁶²⁶ As such, these works capture Renan's dictum on both the exclusivity and selective memory of a state: Bello decided which historic "facts" were to be remembered, and which to be forgotten. He decided which groups would be incorporated into Sokoto's national myth, and which would be denigrated and eradicated from it.⁶²⁷

The crowning glory of Bello's transition to a Muslim ruler in the Sahel was the visit of Aḥmad al-Bakā'ī (1803–1865) to Sokoto in the late 1820s. Aḥmad al-Bakā'ī was the younger brother of al-Mukhtār al-Saghīr (1790–1846/7), who had taken over leadership of the Kunta after the death of his father in 1825/6. It was their grandfather, Sīdī al-Mukhtār, who had first initiated Usman into the Qadiriyya in the 1790s through his agent in Hausaland. Around the

⁶²⁶ See Bello (after 1821) *miṭṭāḥ al-sadād fī aqsām ḥāthihi al-bilād*, discussed *infra*.

⁶²⁷ See Renan *Œuvres complètes Vol 1* : 892 "*Or l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses*". On the subject of the selective forgetting of history in a West African context, see Moraes Farias (2011) *Local Landscapes and Constructions of World Space: Medieval Inscriptions, Cognitive Dissonance, and the Course of the Niger*.

time of this visit, Muhammad Bello wrote a letter to Muḥammad al-Saghīr to congratulate him on his new office. This letter reveals much about how Bello saw his place in the geopolitical environment of the Sahel.

After lavish quatrains of greetings that we can assume will have been carefully prepared by several scholars of Bello's court, Bello states that the purpose of his letter is first and foremost:

To confirm the connection between us and you and to facilitate love and affection that is here [in Sokoto] for you eternally by rights and out of respect for your glory.

To announce that I – God willing – attach myself to your robes and cling to your ropes and those of all your family and children⁶²⁸

As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, a spiritual hierarchy operated in the nineteenth century Sahel headed by the Kunta. To have a place within it guaranteed stability, but also set strict limits on the amount of charismatic authority one could wield. In the jihad years, several documents suggested that the Fodiawa “jumped the chain” of this hierarchy – or at least, that was a common belief among their followers – and had received the *wird* of the Qadiriyya directly from ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. After this ambiguity, here Bello firmly returned the Fodiawa to a deferential relationship to the Kunta. Further on in the text, Bello asks al-Kuntī al-Saghīr to send him some more *wirds* from the time of his father and grandfather, confirming that the Fodiawa's supply of *baraka* now came exclusively through the Kunta, at least officially.

But Bello's letter soon turned to more practical matters:

⁶²⁸ Bello (c. 1825/6) [*Letter to al-Mukhtār al-Saghīr al-Kuntī*]: 35a–b.

I wish to open the road between us and you in order to enable the continuation of what we have between us. Aid us from your borders by [securing against] your neighbours the Tuareg. If God makes this easy for us and spreads security in these strange and harsh [regions],⁶²⁹ this will enable us to contact and visit each other. Whosoever from us that wanted to contact you could come to you, and whosoever from us that wanted to visit you could visit. Traders and travellers from our land could come to our borders and [traders and travellers] from us could go to the borders with Timbuktu and its environs. May God make this easy for us and help us in this.⁶³⁰

Thus his deference to the Kunta in spiritual matters notwithstanding, Bello seemed to see the Kunta as equal partners, having equal obligations to secure what Bello understood to be the shared borders of their territories.

During his meeting with Clapperton, the two discussed the issue of trade. Clapperton suggested to Bello that were he to open a sea port, his empire could trade with Britain. Bello replied:

“I will give the King of England,” says he, “a place on the coast to build a town: only I wish a road to be cut to Rakah, if vessels should not be able to navigate the river.” I [Clapperton] asked him if the country he promised to give belonged to him? “Yes:” said he, “God has given me all the land of the infidels.”⁶³¹

Although this venture was not to be,⁶³² Bello’s comments show that he envisaged Sokoto becoming a vast territorial empire, incorporating many peoples under his rule.

⁶²⁹ Minna translates “remote eastern regions” but I cannot see how he arrived at this rendering.

⁶³⁰ Bello (c. 1825/6) [*Letter to al-Mukhtār al-Saghīr al-Kuntī*]: 38.

⁶³¹ Denham and Clapperton (1826) *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*: 90.

⁶³² Raka was destroyed in the Nupe wars, though some thirty years later the British established a trading station at Lokoja, in the emirate of Bida. See Lockhart and Lovejoy (2005) *Hugh Clapperton into the interior of Africa*: 61.

Abdullahi as Emir of Gwandu: The manuscript trail runs cold

When Abdullahi and Bello renewed their communication after Kalambayna, they were in very different situations. Bello was in his political and literary prime. Abdullahi, at 55 years old, had largely retired from matters of government.⁶³³ Since 1812, he had left the running of Gwandu in the hands of his sons, Muhammad Wani and Khalīl, and later put Usman's younger son, Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, in charge of Nupe. Abdullahi continued to write, though the only documents surviving from this period show him a mature scholar with a concern for his soul, rather than an administrator concerned with the government of his territories.⁶³⁴

There may be other reasons that documentation from the early history of Gwandu Emirate does not survive. Perhaps Gwandu's literary output was not considered politically expedient to preserve. Alternatively, due to the frequent attacks on Gwandu by the Kebbawa rebels,⁶³⁵ or the complicated nature of Gwandu's apportionment among the French, Germans and British, its records may have been misplaced or destroyed.

⁶³³ There is a story (Muhammad Shareef, personal correspondence) that after helping Abdullahi at Kalambayna, Bello gave Abdullahi a short treatise by Usman in which he summarised the reasons he had retired from active rule and encouraged his younger brother to do the same. Tensions between Usman and Abdullahi were such that the message was not delivered until this point. This letter is entitled the *waṣīya* and, although there is a Manuscript Edition by Gaskiya Corporation, I have not been able to consult it.

⁶³⁴ *dawā' al-waswās* (1826) is a manual for the correct performance of prayer; *tahdhīb al-insān* (1827) concerns the education of young children; *ḍiyā' al-qawā'id* (1828) encourages men of religion to live in seclusion and focus on the redemption of their souls rather than seeking to correct others' behaviour.

⁶³⁵ For the remainder of Abdullahi's life, Gwandu was involved in a protracted defensive struggle with the Kebbawa, which continued largely unabated until the annexation of Gwandu by the British in 1903. For more on this topic, see Hogben (1967) *An introduction to the history of the Islamic states of Northern Nigeria*; Johnston (1967) *Fulani empire*; Balogun (1973) *Succession tradition*; Balogun (1974) *The place of Argungu*; Gwandu (1977) *Abdullahi b. Fodio as a Muslim jurist*.

Whatever the case, there is some evidence to suggest that even if Abdullahi had moved on to writing on other topics, his earlier ideas about correct Muslim statecraft did influence the running of Gwandu in a significant way. According to his companion, Sa'd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Abdullahi journeyed to Gwandu with 750 scholars.⁶³⁶ There, unlike Bello, he undoubtedly intended to keep authority among a circle of legal specialists, rather than concentrating judicial power in the hands of the *amīr al-mu'minīn*. Balogun reports that Gwandu had few titled officials, with administrative decisions made by a "council of elders",⁶³⁷ while Murray Last suggests that Gwandu under Abdullahi would have resembled an "old-style tsangaya community".⁶³⁸ There are perhaps certain parallels with the *batu mawdo* or "great council" of Ahmad Lobbo in Hamdallahi, which came to be predominantly composed of legal scholars and Fulani clan leaders. Their daily discussions of state –as well as state appointments – took place in a secluded inner council.⁶³⁹ This arrangement would certainly match Barth's description of Gwandu's court under Abdullahi's successor, Khalil, to which he was not allowed admittance and from which, he says, Khalil and his officials rarely emerged.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁶ Sa'd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1840–1) *tartīb al-aṣḥāb wa tajmī' al-arbāb min aṣḥāb al-shaykh 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Fūdī* "List of companions and bringing together of venerable persons from the companions of Shaykh Abdullahi b. Muhammad Fodio".

⁶³⁷ Balogun (1973) *Succession tradition*: 22–23.

⁶³⁸ Last (2014) *From dissent to dissidence: the genesis & development of reformist Islamic groups in northern Nigeria* : 10, referring to the Tsangaya Qur'anic school system of Nigeria.

⁶³⁹ Loimeier (2013) *Muslim societies in Africa*: 122. See also Diagayete (2017) *The Contributions of Fulani Scholars to the Development of Islamic Scholarship in Mali, 18th–19th Centuries*.

⁶⁴⁰ See Barth (1857) *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa : Being a Journal of an Expedition Undertaken under the Auspices of H.B.M.'s Government, in the Years 1849–1855*: 196–7.

In Gwandu, age and seniority seemed to outweigh any other leadership qualities. It became accepted that Abdullahi's eldest surviving son would become *Dan Galadima*, effectively a prince regent, succeeding the Emir upon his death.⁶⁴¹ While Abdullahi had clearly expressed his dislike of hereditary succession, giving preference to age followed precisely the arguments that Abdullahi had put forward during his debate with Bello over the succession. Meanwhile, power rested in the hands of a few elite families of TorodBe scholars who had little to do with the Hausa majority, and Fulfulde remained the language of government.⁶⁴² Such an arrangement concurs with Abdullahi's views of TorodBe origin, which Bello had since found to be a hindrance in his attempts to integrate the Hausa language and population into the running of the state.

The small number of titled positions, a rigid succession tradition and preference to TorodBe-Fulani were to have an adverse effect on Gwandu's development. Without the patronage tools of administrative positions, marriage alliances or the promise of integration into the political elite, the Emirs of Gwandu had trouble maintaining loyalty – and thus a flow of tribute – from its territories and sub-emirates.⁶⁴³ While Sokoto used its two major centres of production – Kano (leather, textiles, kola) and Zaria (plantation labour) – to establish a viable export economy, even with a greater quantity of productive land, Gwandu was not able to do

⁶⁴¹ See Balogun (1973) *Succession tradition*.

⁶⁴² See Gwandu (1977) *Abdullahi b. Fodio as a Muslim jurist*: 56; Willis (1978) *Torodbe Clerisy*: 208. From *kanz al-awlād*, it is clear that Muhammad Sambo Kulwa and his son, Bayero, considered themselves a part of such a TorodBe elite. Much of the *kanz al-awlād* concerns the tracing of *nasab* and encouraging the use and study of Fulfulde. See Appendix III, *infra*.

⁶⁴³ Elderly residents interviewed by Hopen (1958: 45) reported that before the British administration, they had paid the annual tribute to Gwandu only every two to three years if at all, without facing any penalty. Tribute from sub-emirates was particularly important for Gwandu, since the only tax paid in Gwandu proper was zakat. See Jumare (1995) *Land Tenure in the Sokoto Sultanate of Nigeria*.

the same because it never exerted the necessary control over its production centres of Jega and Nupe.⁶⁴⁴

In modern times, those in Sokoto often refer to Gwandu as the “little brother”, an appellation that brings to mind both their shared kinship and their intense rivalry for seniority.⁶⁴⁵ Heinrich Barth was to discover the extent of this rivalry during his travels through Gwandu Emirate. Barth had unwisely presented Emir Gwandu Khalil with a present inferior to that which he had given Atiku in Sokoto and had to make up the value of his gift before Khalil would allow him to leave.⁶⁴⁶ The roots of this rivalry stem from a historic event: the succession of Muhammad Bello and the chagrin of his uncle Abdullahi. However, what is of interest to our study is that the differing concepts of government in Sokoto and Gwandu seem to have been the direct result of the transfer of ideas through written texts.

Murray Last framed the conflict between Abdullahi and Usman as a choice between government through a “circle of scholars” or “a more positive political leadership”.⁶⁴⁷ While Abdullahi saw the *ulama* as the primary interpreters of the law, Usman envisioned that the judgements of the ruler and his administration would supersede them. Although due to a lack of evidence it is not possible say exactly how Gwandu was governed while Abdullahi was alive, we understand that it was in part a reflection of this concept of Islamic governance that he had espoused in his writings.

⁶⁴⁴ See Charles Stewart’s unpublished work, “A condensed summary of Historians and History Writing in Nigeria: Sokoto’s Past Through 180 Years”, which discusses this period of Gwandu’s history in some detail.

⁶⁴⁵ In West African usage the term has a hierarchical connotation, suggesting one with less power.

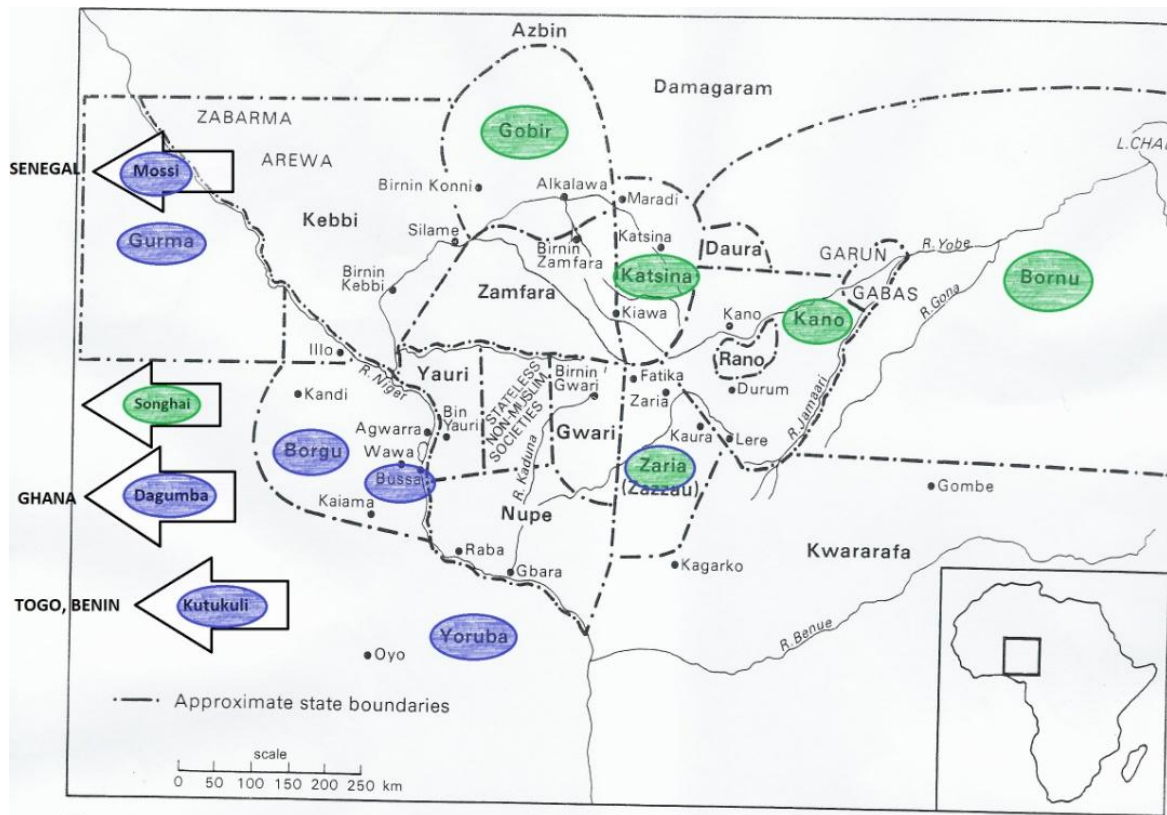
⁶⁴⁶ Barth (1857) *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa : Being a Journal of an Expedition Undertaken under the Auspices of H.B.M.’s Government, in the Years 1849–1855*: 198–99.

⁶⁴⁷ Last (1966) *An Aspect of Caliph Muhammad Bello’s Social Policy*.

Enslavement policy under Bello: The Ahmad Bāba of Sokoto?

Sokoto's plantation economy relied on slave labour. As discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, deciding whether captives were enslavable or not was a longstanding legal question in the Sahel. The most authoritative voice in this debate was still Ahmad Bāba, who stated in his 1614 *fatwa* that only non-belief in Islam, rather than blackness of skin colour, was grounds for enslavement. To facilitate the classification of captives as Muslim or non-Muslim, he devised a geographic key for enslavability derived from his knowledge about the Islamisation of the West African region. From thereon, knowing a captive's geographic origin was the key to deciding whether he could be enslaved or not. The Fodiawa used Bāba's judgement to discuss whether Hausaland was Muslim or not, but the three approached his work and legacy in different ways.

Figure 5: Regions of Belief and Unbelief in Ahmad Bāba's *al-kashf wa-l-bayān* (1614)⁶⁴⁸



Map adapted from Robinson and Smith (1979) *Sources of the African past : case studies of five nineteenth-century African societies*: 124. Areas in green denote areas of Islam, areas in blue denote areas of unbelief. N.B. Bāba mentioned that only “some of Zegzeg [Zaria]” was Muslim.

Usman originally stated that Hausaland was a land of Islam, quoting Bāba’s judgement. However, as part of the process of dissent, Usman liberally interpreted Sīdī Muḥammad al-Kuntī’s words on the subject to suggest that Hausaland was in fact a pagan land. After the jihad, he clarified that while for the most part the common people were Muslim, the rulers had been pagan and therefore had to be overthrown. In a process of accommodation to the new *status*

⁶⁴⁸ Information taken from Hunwick and Harrak (2000) *Mi’rāj al Su’ūd: Ahmad Baba’s Replies on Slavery*.

quo, Usman stated that with the jihadists taking power, Hausaland had returned to being a land of belief, thus Ahmad Bāba’s judgement was valid once again.⁶⁴⁹

Abdullahi on the other hand did not use Bāba’s judgement so inventively. In the final chapter of his voluminous legal compendium, the *ḍiyā’ al-siyāsāt*, Abdullahi included Bāba among other legal commentators on enslavement policy but exhibited no preference among them. After quoting the same judgement cited by Usman verbatim, he simply added, “And what he said is the truth, which everyone who has made contact with these countries knows full well”.⁶⁵⁰

At no point did Usman – or for that matter, Abdullahi – comment on the inherent discrepancy between the judgement of Ahmad Bāba and that of Sīdī Muḥammad. Abdullahi’s objective was simply to record various judgements on enslavement in West Africa for the purposes of knowledge preservation, while Usman’s use of the two statements can be understood within the different requirements of the processes of dissent and accommodation discussed previously. In sum, neither Usman nor Abdullahi considered the judgements of Bāba and al-Kuntī to belong to a particular time or place. Rather, they were both arguments that had inherent authority in legal disputes.

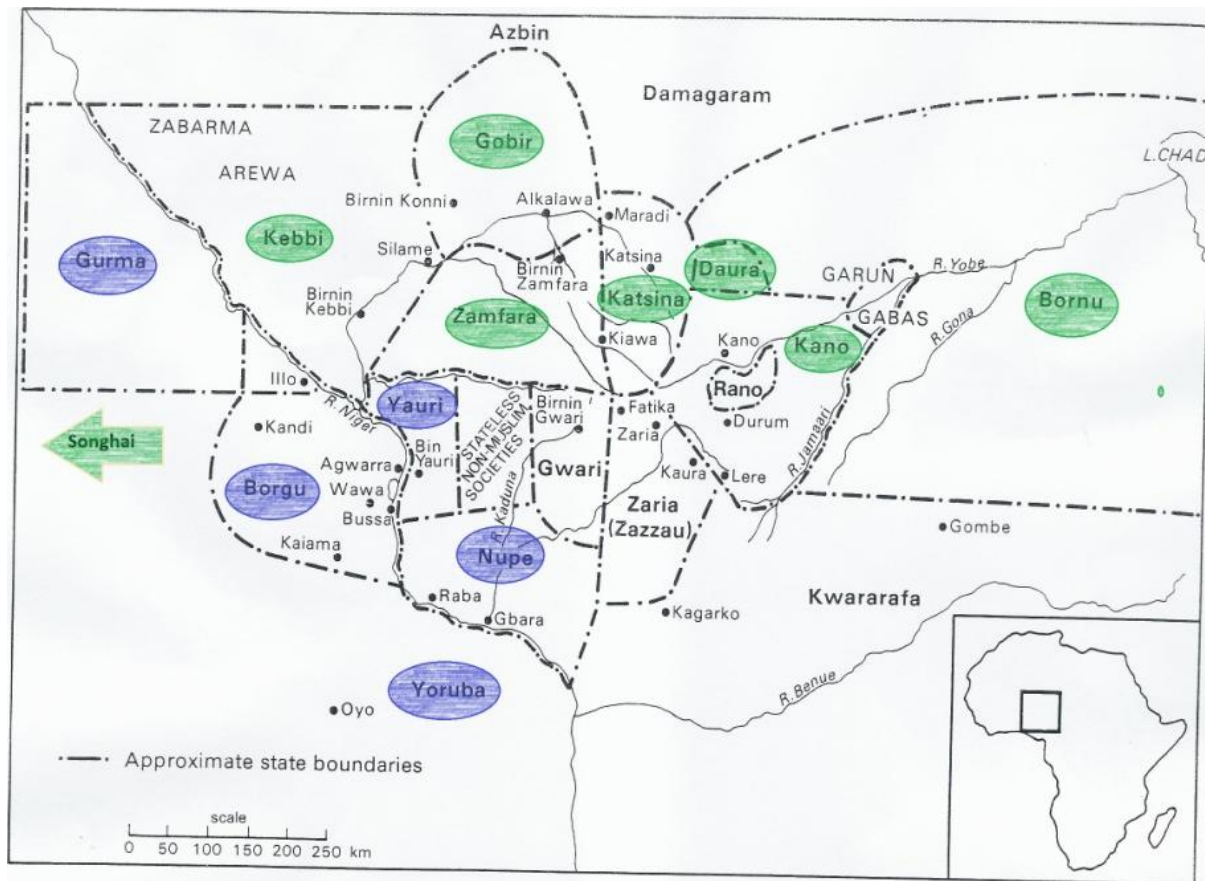
When we turn to Muhammad Bello, we see that even before he became *amīr al-mu’minīn* he had a different approach to debates around enslavability. Bello provided a very detailed account of the Hausa region in *infāq al-maysūr*. While many of the places Bello listed in

⁶⁴⁹ See Usman (1811) *tanbīh al-ikhwān*.

⁶⁵⁰ Abdullahi (1819–20) *ḍiyā’ al-siyāsāt* in Kani (1988): 164.

this text as being “lands of Islam” are much the same as Bāba’s ruling, there is no mention of Ahmad Bāba or the *kashf* in any surviving copies of the *infāq*.⁶⁵¹ Further, Bello did not mention those Muslim and non-Muslim regions mentioned by Bāba that were not actually in Hausaland, while adding additional regions that Bāba did not mention, such as Kebbi and Zamfara (Muslim) and Nupe and Yauri (non-Muslim) that accurately reflected the jihad campaigns at the time Bello was writing.⁶⁵²

Figure 6: Areas of Belief and Unbelief in Muhammad Bello’s *infāq al-maysūr* (1812)



⁶⁵¹ See Bello (1812) *infāq al-maysūr* in Shareef (2008) Chapters 7 and 8.

⁶⁵² The only region outside of Sokoto influence indicated by Bello is Songhai. No doubt the reason for its inclusion was due to the fact that *Askia* Muhammad’s rule of Songhai was the ideological precedent for the Fodiawa’s jihad.

Unlike Usman and Abdullahi, Bello went on to point out the contradiction between the rulings of Bāba and al-Kuntī on the beliefs of the Hausa and sought to resolve this discrepancy. In a later passage of the *infāq*, he concluded that al-Kuntī had been correct and Bāba had been wrong:

As for the words of Aḥmad Bāba who answered that these lands of Bornu, Katsina, some of Zakzak and [those lands] nearby are lands of Islam, it could have been (1) because they became Islamised in the times preceding Aḥmad Bāba and then apostasised afterwards; (2) due to his lack of inspection of them and knowledge of the truth, he ruled by what appeared to him and spread in the news; or (3) he was referring to the spread of Islam among them with the exception of their rulers.

The second possibility [that Aḥmad Bāba did not really know the nature of these lands] is more apparent, because if they had Islamised and then abandoned their religion, we would have heard. However, it has not reached us that they have abandoned the ways of their pagan ancestors up to the present day, even if they exhibited good [behaviour] and Islam outwardly.⁶⁵³

Bello's rejection of Ahmad Bāba's judgement is significant. While Usman had found ways to get around the inconvenience of Bāba's statement to the legitimacy of the jihad campaign, Bello had overruled it not through any counter legal opinion, but through his own observations as an inhabitant of Hausaland:

What we have mentioned is closer to the truth and worthier and more deserving of acceptance because we have lived in their company and mixed with them and know their ways, for *the owner of the home knows best what is inside it*.⁶⁵⁴

Once he had become ruler, Bello used this same authority to formulate a coherent enslavement policy. Comparing the text of the *infāq* to the *qadh al-zinād*, written after 1821, we

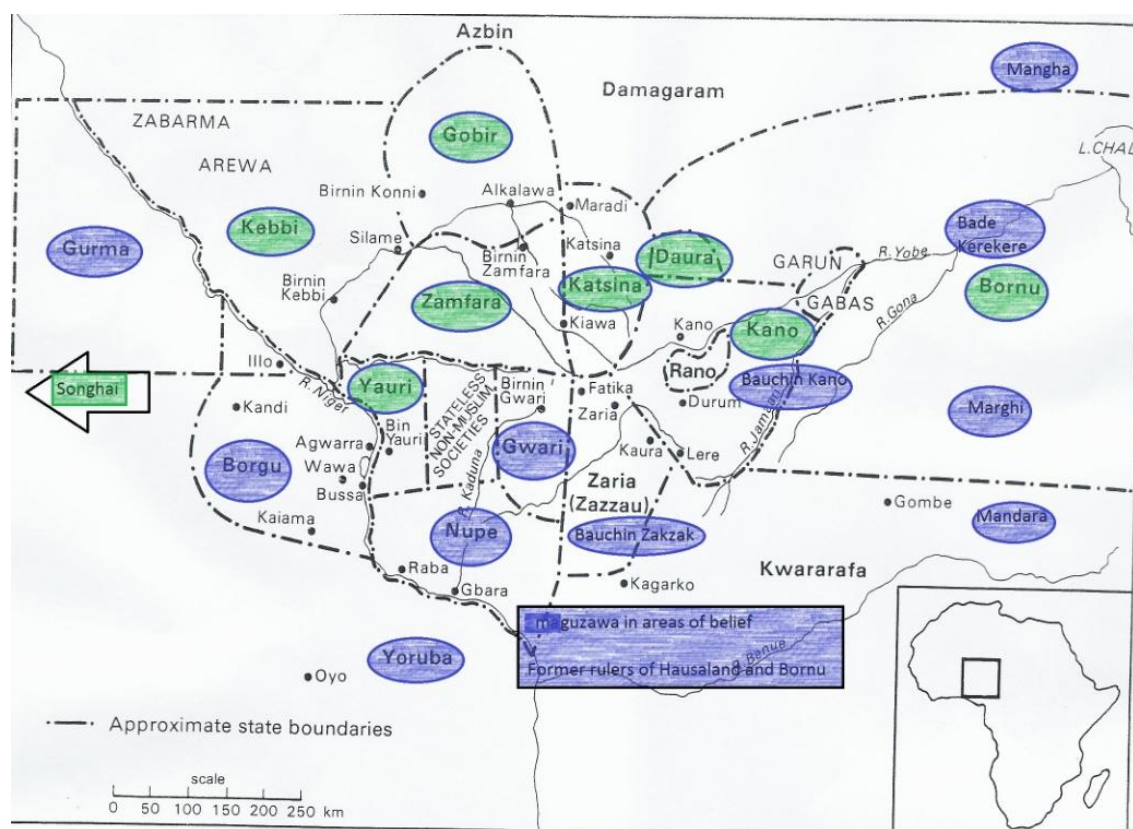
⁶⁵³ Bello *infāq* in Shādhilī (1996): 298–299.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.: 299. My emphasis.

find that after dismissing Bāba's *fatwa*, Bello inserted some additional text. In the manner of Ahmad Bāba, he noted the areas of his territory whose populations could be enslaved:

Whereas if the acquired person is not from our country, namely those acquired from the land of Bedde, Ghijiwi, Kere-Kere, Bauchin Kano, Bauchin Zakzak, Gwari and the surrounding lands,⁶⁵⁵ then there is no harm in enslaving them without any investigation or hesitation. Since Islam had not spread to them until this jihad [of 1804] took place, the Muslims fought them and filled their hands with their captives.⁶⁵⁶

Figure 7: Areas of Belief and Unbelief in Muhammad Bello's *qadh al-zinād* (after 1821)⁶⁵⁷



⁶⁵⁵ According to Murray Last, "Bauchi" was a standard term for any pagan area, in this case pagan areas of Kano and Zaria. See Last (2010) *Ancient Labels and Categories: Exploring the 'Onomastics' of Kano*. I am very grateful for the help of Dr. Last in deciphering these ethnonyms.

⁶⁵⁶ Bello *qadh al-zinād*: 15a.

⁶⁵⁷ Names of non-Muslim groups amalgamated from both *qadh al-zinād* and *miftāḥ al-sadād*, which also features a similar list of areas of unbelief. Geographical locations of non-Muslim groups are based on information in Temple and Temple (1922) *Tribes, Provinces, States and Emirates* and are highly approximate. In reference to the table inside the map, Bello also included Maguzawa, wherever they lived, as well as the former rulers of Hausaland and Bornu, as unbelievers.

This information provided, no doubt, a rubric for local representatives in the outlying provinces of Sokoto – to whom this work was addressed – to aid them in decisions of enslavability they would have to make on the ground. While the geographical regions cited by Bello will no doubt inform our understanding of enslavement patterns in the early history of Sokoto, my focus here is on Bello's positionality. He does not depend on the authority of Ahmad Bāba to make statements about enslavability. Rather, Bello saw himself as the Ahmad Bāba of his time, assuming the right to divide his subjects into Muslim and non-Muslim for reasons that were no doubt moral, practical and political. This departure marks a new turn in the evolving discourses of legitimacy in Sokoto that we have been following throughout this thesis. It also betrays a new way of looking at Sokoto as a territorial state with fixed borders and subjects beholden to the policy decisions of their governor.

Policies of Exclusion: The Tuareg

The Fodiawa's relations with the Tuareg groups inhabiting the northern regions of Sokoto territory were changing and complex. During the jihad of 1804, Tuareg cavalry frequently switched sides, playing a decisive role in both the wins and losses of the jihadists.⁶⁵⁸ Some Tuareg, such as Aghali of the Kel Gress, had been important supporters of Usman in the early days of the jihad. Bello's *Wazir*, Gidado dan Layma, listed seven Tuareg war leaders (*ṭubūl*) as supporters of Sokoto.⁶⁵⁹ However, many *imajeghen* Tuareg sided with the Hausa against the jihadists and in the first years of Bello's reign, many Tuareg joined the Tawaye and fought with them against him.

As his authority and territory increased, Bello was able to gain more leverage over Tuareg groups. The Kel Gress and Itisen needed to be on good terms with Sokoto to guarantee access to its markets, and to grazing land that was now within Sokoto's northern territories.⁶⁶⁰ Similarly, the Sultan of Agadez had an interest in keeping relations with Sokoto open due to the desert salt trade and other commercial ties. Despite this, the caste and social structure of the Tuareg allowed for a fragmented authority and did not impose serious punishment for divided loyalties. While the Sultan of Agadez gave his allegiance to Bello, many of his tributaries made regular raids on Sokoto territory.

⁶⁵⁸ Bello *infāq al-maysūr*; Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt*; Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution*: 96.

⁶⁵⁹ Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 19. Aghali later gave Bello one of his daughters in marriage.

⁶⁶⁰ See Barth (1857) *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa : Being a Journal of an Expedition Undertaken under the Auspices of H.B.M.'s Government, in the Years 1849–1855*, who mentions that these groups had an important role in the north-south caravan trade.

Back in 1816, Bello had attempted to reform the Tuareg from the inside by supporting the movement of Muhammad al-Jaylānī, an *aneslem*, advising him on how to sedentarise his nomadic supporters from the Tuareg.⁶⁶¹ However, in 1816 al-Jaylānī's movement fell apart. He abandoned the urban outpost he had established near Tahoua to seek sanctuary in Sokoto. Al-Jaylānī had been defeated by a confederation headed by Ibra of the Temezgidda (himself also an *aneslem*), who remained an implacable enemy of Bello, harassing the northern territories until his final defeat in 1836. By 1821, Bello clearly felt that the nomadic Tuareg were not compatible with the urban Muslim society he was building in Sokoto, characterised by an obedience to the *amīr al-mu'munīn*. He formulated a policy to systematically stigmatise and exclude the Tuareg from the Sokoto project.⁶⁶²

Bello's work, *miftāḥ al-sadād*, is a history of defining belief and non-belief in the Sahel region. It is a validation of both al-Maghīlī's anathematisation of Sonni Ali, and the Fodiawa's anathematisation of the Hausa kings. However, Bello moved on to discuss the beliefs of one group which Usman had never mentioned, the Tuareg:

The answer is that the Tuareg in the country before this jihad were of three types: a part of them were thieves and brigands (*muḥāribūn*) who claimed that they were Muslim but had little care for religion and rather more for bloodshed, stealing of property and maintaining many customs from the time before Islam, and this type is of the majority in this country.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶¹ Bello *jawāb shāfin wa khiṭāb min-nā kāfin* in Norris (1975): 152. Not to be confused with Bello's letter to Ahmad Lobbo discussed previously, *jawāb shāfin li-l-murīd*.

⁶⁶² Minna, whose analysis of Bello's relations with the Tuareg (1982: 94–99) is to my knowledge the only extensive examination of this topic, does not mention either of these works.

⁶⁶³ Bello (after 1821) *miftāḥ al-sadād* MX Kaduna (NA): 17.

He went on to state that although there were some rare examples of Tuareg who were pure pagans, and some who were true believers, the majority were *muḥāribūn*, concluding that:

The Tuareg in our country today are apostates of God and infidels for making friends with the infidels (*muwālāt*), taking sides with them and supporting them [against the Muslims].⁶⁶⁴

While the immediate impetus for Bello's judgement was Tuareg support of the Tawaye Rebellions, it also hinged on historical legal treatment of the Tuareg in the Sahel region. Bello took the term *muḥāribūn* directly from the aforementioned *al-jar'iyya al-ṣāfiyya* of Sīdī Muḥammad al-Kuntī, whose ruling that all of Hausaland was non-Muslim he had adopted over that of Ahmed Bāba. According to Sahelian scholars such as al-Kuntī, the Tuareg had the legal status of *mustaghraq al-dhimma* – also known as *ḥarbī* or *muḥāribūn* – because they were thought to gain their possessions through raiding and theft. As such, they had no legal right to what they owned, which could be regarded as war booty if captured in raids. As Bruce Hall explained, the judgement of *mustaghraq al-dhimma* was “a way to exclude warrior lineages from wider Muslim society, legitimise the confiscation of their possessions and forc[e] them to live under the authority of the scholarly class.”⁶⁶⁵ That Bello regarded the possessions of the Tuareg as belonging to him is clear from the exchange of letters between Bello and al-Jaylānī. Bello had written to al-Jaylānī, censoring him for plundering caravans belonging to his Tuareg allies. Al-Jaylānī retorted that he had understood from Bello that “the property of the Tuareg

⁶⁶⁴ Bello (after 1821) *miḥtāḥ al-sadād*: 17.

⁶⁶⁵ Hall (2011) *History of Race* : 74.

are forms of legal booty” and had watched Bello himself presiding over the theft of Tuareg property “every day”.⁶⁶⁶

Bello’s judgement on the Tuareg, made irrespective of grouping or caste, could also have been a way to seek revenge on the regular Tuareg raids which threatened the security and the prosperity of Sokoto, as well as hampering the outward expansion of the jihad. Bello understood Tuareg social structure and no doubt knew that trading and raiding groups were linked by clan ties. Perhaps he saw that the only way to stamp out these threats for good was by allowing raids on all Tuareg groups regardless of caste status to bleed the resources of the warrior groups. Such can be assumed by Al-Jaylānī’s retort that Bello had been raiding the caravans of Tuareg traders “before they waged war against Muslims and before their apostasy”⁶⁶⁷ to avenge himself of the warrior groups to whom they were tied. Similarly, after a raid by the Kel Gress inside Sokoto territory, Clapperton witnessed Bello sending a proclamation that “all the Tuaricks belonging to that tribe should depart from Bello’s dominions in three days, under the penalty of death”.⁶⁶⁸

While Bello’s judgement on the Tuareg was highly pragmatic, it relied on the link between *muwālāt* with non-believers and apostasy from Islam established in the process of dissent, as well as Sahelian jurisprudential norms. However, when we turn to Bello’s second work concerning the Tuareg, *al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq*, we sense a more assertive position grounded less on the authority of texts and more on Bello’s will as *amīr al-mu‘minīn*. From its outset, *al-*

⁶⁶⁶ Al-Jaylānī’s reply to Bello in Norris (1975) *The Tuaregs : their Islamic legacy and its diffusion in the Sahel*: 156–7. Norris gives no title or source for this reply.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.: 156–7.

⁶⁶⁸ Denham and Clapperton (1826) *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries*: 108.

nuqūl is not a reasoned argument, but a policy directive written “to advise the *Umma* not to trust the Tuareg”.⁶⁶⁹

Over the course of this thesis, I have portrayed Bello as a consummate historian with a keen sense of the temporality of his sources. However, in this work Bello deliberately conflates different historical periods and peoples to portray the Tuareg as atavistically treacherous and, because of their nomadism, inherently immoral. Throughout *al-nuqūl*, Bello conflates “Tuareg”, “Berber” and “Bedouin”, drawing on stories of the treachery of the Arabian tribes who rebelled against Caliph Abu Bakr, the Amazigh (Berbers) who repelled the early Muslim conquests of North Africa, and even a stock figure of treachery in Islamic thought, the Jews of Yathrib.⁶⁷⁰ Rather than sticking to established legal texts on the subject, he seizes upon any derogatory statements he can find, regardless of their authenticity: A questionable hadith about the Berbers (“The scum of the world are of seventy types. The Berbers make up sixty nine of them and the humans and jinn make up one”); A report that Muhammad advised Abū Hurayra, one of the Companions, not to keep a Berber slave he had purchased at his house because “his nation has killed forty prophets, eaten their flesh and thrown their bones on the rubbish heap”; a stanza from an anonymous satirical poem about the Berber (“If I was in Paradise and a Berber came * I would turn from this tranquillity and walk to Hell!”), and what must surely be an apocryphal hadith about the Tuareg themselves:

⁶⁶⁹ Bello (after 1821) *al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq* MX Niamey. Unfortunately, I could only access this MS for a short time and did not note down the page numbers.

⁶⁷⁰ Yathrib, the former name of Medina. According to Islamic history, the Banū Qurayza, a Jewish tribe who also lived in the oasis town, made a pact with Muhammad but later broke it and betrayed the Muslims, leading Muhammad to order their massacre.

You will find trust and faith and carrying out promises and righteousness scarce among the Tuareg and lies and deceit and treachery widespread.⁶⁷¹

Bello even turned to the Tuareg language for further evidence of their infidelity:

And there is the appearance of heathenism in the languages and utterances of some of the Tuareg, some of which can be explained and some of which cannot, such as some of them calling God “Father”⁶⁷², or referring to him as “uncle”.⁶⁷³

These comments do not reflect Bello’s ignorance of Tuareg society. As we have seen, he was no stranger to the Tuareg. The Fodiawa had longstanding links to Tuareg and Berber scholars, Jibrīl b. ‘Umar being one of them. Some Tuareg had been a major help to the early *jamā‘a*, such as Aghali, who had given Bello one of his daughters in marriage. Bello also had some knowledge of the Tamasheq language. However, as nomadic pastoralists, Bello viewed the existence of the Tuareg as an existential threat to the urban and centrally educated society he had in mind for Sokoto. Bello ends *al-nuqūl* with a quatrain from the pre-Islamic poet al-Mutanabbi that has become proverbial in Arabic-speaking countries. This poem sums up his attitude towards the Tuareg:

*A courtesy lent to a courteous person wins you his favour
While courtesy to a lowly person only results in arrogance
And putting dialogue in place of the sword
Is more harmful than putting the sword in place of dialogue*⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷¹ Bello *al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq*.

⁶⁷² Ar. باب *bāba*.

⁶⁷³ Bello *al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq*.

⁶⁷⁴ Bello *al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq*.

When Bello was writing his treatise on urbanisation of the Tuareg addressed to Muḥammad al-Jaylānī, he evidently believed that it was possible to make certain Tuareg groups amenable citizens of an urban, Islamic society. However, with the failure of al-Jaylānī's movement and continued manoeuvres against him from various Tuareg clans, in his later works on the Tuareg Bello relied on crude stereotypes to conclude that the Tuareg were a treacherous, uneducated and inherently "foreign" people who could only be made to submit to authority with violence and intimidation rather than dialogue and reason. Bello highlighted the "otherness" of the Tuareg by equating them with other nomadic and outsider groups from Islamic history who did not fit the vision of a well-ordered and urban Islamic society he had in mind for Sokoto. Just as in his works on enslavability and non-belief, Bello passed down his own judgements on these "others" as the voice of complete authority, and as the representative of "civilisation" and normalcy.

Policies of Urbanisation and Accommodation: The Fulani

There were two distinct branches of the Fulani of Hausaland. One, scholarly communities such as the TorodBe, who while often living in remote rural encampments were not truly nomadic and the second, pastoralists who, like the Tuareg, had no fixed location and whose practice of Islamic ritual was not strict. Bello's views on this pastoralist branch of the Fulani were far less accommodating than the other Fodiawa. Abdullahi idolised all the Fulani as descendants of the Arab Islamizers of the *bilād al-sūdān*, while Usman persuaded pastoralist Fulani to join the jihad by upholding their grievances against the Hausa kings, and tried to excuse the excesses they committed in the jihadist army.

Unlike his views on the Tuareg, Bello's attitude towards the pastoralist Fulani was remarkably consistent. Before the jihad, he had linked the success of the jihadist movement to the sedentarization of the Fulani, relating a prophecy that Usman's Fulani supporters "will not herd cattle, as is the custom of the Fulani".⁶⁷⁵ During the jihad campaigns, Bello was disappointed that the pastoral Fulani were too preoccupied with their herds to participate in the fighting. He wrote to Ya'qūb of Bauchi to complain that the "owners of cattle" were lagging behind the troops.⁶⁷⁶ In his treatise on the urbanisation of the Tuareg that Bello wrote for al-Jaylānī around 1815, he also mentioned that "this tribe of ours [i.e. the Fulani] has become infatuated with the love of cows and cattle, despite the fact that the Prophet did not own

⁶⁷⁵ Bello (1812) *infāq al-maysūr* in Shareef (2008) Chapter 10: 1.

⁶⁷⁶ Bello (after 1817) [*Letter to Amīr Ya'qūb*].

them”.⁶⁷⁷ Bello decreed that such nomadic pastoralists should instead be rearing horses to help in the defence of Muslim territories and the extension of the jihad.⁶⁷⁸ Like the animals they raised, Bello argued, this “flock” of herdsmen were often led astray and must be educated by “shepherds” from the city. He stated that nomadic pastoralist groups should appoint a representative to receive an *imam* from an urban region to teach their children. In this way, they would learn “the proper interaction between members of their society.”⁶⁷⁹ Bello stated that he himself planned to spend two months in rural areas, “putting their affairs in good order”.⁶⁸⁰ Turning to his own emirs in Sokoto – for the most part, Fulani – at the start of his reign, Bello wrote a treatise in which he warned them:

When you become overly concerned with earning questionable profit and following the tails of cows, and become content with farming and you leave the struggle; Allah will subjugate you with humiliation.⁶⁸¹

Later, in 1820, Bello composed a short treatise in which he discussed the best ways of earning a living in an Islamic society. Jihad was at the top of the list, “because it is universally beneficial for what is in it of keeping the Islamic social order from being destroyed”,⁶⁸² while herding was at the bottom. Around the same time, he composed *kifāyat al-muhtadīn*, a work berating those

⁶⁷⁷ Bello *jawāb shāfin wa khiṭāb min-nā kāfin* in Norris (1975): 152.

⁶⁷⁸ Hakim and Ahmed (2006) *Rules for the built environment*: 2–3.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 2–3.

⁶⁸⁰ Norris (1975) *The Tuaregs : their Islamic legacy and its diffusion in the Sahel*: 153.

⁶⁸¹ Bello (c. 1817) *risāla li-l-amrāḍ shāfiya* in Shareef (1995): 110.

⁶⁸² Bello (1820) *tanbīh al-ṣāhib* in Shareef (1990) *Advice to the Friend*: 27.

young men who did not go out on jihad, preferring to remain in commercial and agricultural occupations.⁶⁸³

In sum, Bello's attitude to the pastoralist Fulani was the same as to the nomadic Tuareg. Their lifestyle represented a problem for the urban, Islamic society he was creating in Sokoto. When we turn to his policy work, *al-miftāḥ al-sadād*, he even stated that:

Their description is close to that of the Tuareg except that they do not preserve pre-Islamic customs nor do they help the infidels against the Muslims.⁶⁸⁴

And described other Fulani clans as: "infidels, who do not call themselves Muslims, deny resurrection and practice sorcery". Though, unlike the case of the Tuareg, Bello concluded that the majority of the Fulani were Muslims, he did not plan to accommodate them as they were. Rather, he sought to subject the pastoralist element of the Fulani to the same intense program of sedentarization and re-education that he had proposed for al-Jaylānī's Tuareg followers.

Bello's views on nomadism versus urbanism were not controversial or unusual for a Sahelian scholar. Prophet Muhammad encouraged urban living, and Islamic jurists agreed that an abandoned child found in the countryside could be taken to the city, but not vice versa.⁶⁸⁵ In wider Sahelian culture, deserts and other wild places were thought to contain evil forces that could corrupt good Muslims should they live there long enough. Breeding cattle and other livestock was especially denigrated, since it was associated in the popular imagination with

⁶⁸³ See translation in Shareef (2001) *The Sufficiency of those who are Guided Aright*.

⁶⁸⁴ Bello *al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq*.

⁶⁸⁵ Hakim and Ahmed (2006) *Rules for the built environment* : 2–3.

lustful actions.⁶⁸⁶ As al-Jaylānī stated to Bello, “the desert is the ruin of religion, the feebleness of Islam and its negation”.⁶⁸⁷ But at the same time, the jihadist movement had gained support predominantly in the countryside. Bello’s father, Usman, and those before him had lived in small rural settlements precisely to avoid the “corruption” of the cities.⁶⁸⁸ In the epic poems of Abdullahi discussed earlier in this thesis, he frequently described rural and desert areas as a welcome sanctuary from iniquity, or at least a place to gain closeness to God through solitude and hardship.⁶⁸⁹ Such contrary associations ran deep in Islamic discursive tradition and can perhaps be traced to Ibn Khaldun’s statement that “sedentary life constitutes the last stage of civilisation and the point where it begins to decay”.⁶⁹⁰ Again, the Fodiawa tapped into these opposing discourses at different times, in line with their current circumstances.

In this case, Bello’s preference for urban living was less ideological than highly pragmatic. As Ibn Khaldun had also astutely observed, urban settlements were far easier to defend and control.⁶⁹¹ Bello was inspired by the major urban centres of Islam such as Baṣra, Kūfa and al-Fuṣṭāṭ, which had begun as fortress towns placed at the outward limit of the Muslim conquests, to build his own system of garrison towns, or ribats, following what Stephanie Zehnle has termed “jihadist frontier urbanisation”.⁶⁹² Coupling the idea of the *ribat* with the

⁶⁸⁶ See Abdullahi, *risālat al-naṣā’ih* in Hiskett (1963:100) who appeals to the TorodBe to: “tur[n] away from the abyss of lust. It is in the pastures of lust that you tend flocks; and verily you set a bad example!”. Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*: 295–8 makes a thorough analysis of these concepts.

⁶⁸⁷ Bello *jawāb shāfin wa khiṭāb minnā kāfin* in Norris (1975) *The Tuaregs : their Islamic legacy and its diffusion in the Sahel*: 149.

⁶⁸⁸ Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: lxx–lxxiv.

⁶⁸⁹ Abdullahi (1813) *tazyīn al-waraqāt* in Hiskett (1973): 122–3, among other references.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibn Khaldūn *muqaddima* in Rosenthal (1958) *The Muqaddimah: an introduction to history* Vol 1: 255.

⁶⁹¹ Ibn Khaldun *muqaddima* in *ibid.* Vol 2: 235–240.

⁶⁹² Zehnle (2015) *A Geography of Jihad*: 295–8.

sedentarisation of pastoralist Fulani, Bello ensured, as Philips states, that “by settling the Fulani and stationing former herders away from areas controlled by clan leaders he [Bello] strengthened the authority of himself and the scholars whom he thought ought to be ruling society”.⁶⁹³ Thus, while the ribats founded by Bello quickly became multi-ethnic centres of commerce and learning, they also remained in the control of Bello or members of his immediate family, staffed by scholars handpicked by Bello himself.⁶⁹⁴

Bello’s works on the Fulani and urbanisation, offer another opportunity to see how Bello believed he had the right to dictate the correct behaviour of his subjects, expressed in Arabic texts. While Bello integrated Hausa culture and language, he reserved “othering” discourse for those who did not fit into his vision of urban society, and that included those pastoralist Fulani who did not change their ways. For Bello, no amount of Arabic genealogy would give the Fulani the status of a natural “ruling race”. Only through abandoning a nomadic lifestyle could they play a part in his multi-ethnic empire.

⁶⁹³ Philips (1992) *Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate*: 231.

⁶⁹⁴ For an comprehensive list of ribats in Sokoto and their commanders, see *ibid.*: 236–7.

Conclusion

As Clapperton observed, Sokoto's inhabitants obeyed Muhammad Bello not because his orders corresponded to Islamic legal norms, nor because they were carefully justified by precedents from the Islamic past. Bello believed that the successful jihad of 1804 and his victory over the Tawaye meant that God had truly granted him sovereignty over a vast amount of territory, and all those who had received land and titles on this account would surely be inclined to agree. The growing legacy of the jihad and its aftermath, carefully maintained and aggrandised by this Sokoto elite, came to supercede the authority tied up with the citing of legal texts.

After Bello's death in 1837, he was succeeded by his brother, Atiku. According to Al-Ḥājj Sa'īd, Atiku "changed many of the reprehensible practices which came about through the policies of Bello". Indeed, his first act as *amīr al-mu'minīn* was to kill the royal drummers remarked upon by Clapperton.⁶⁹⁵ Still, Muhammad Bello had set a precedent. Atiku for his part came to rely even more on the legacy of Usman's charismatic knowledge, rather than Islamic scholarship, to assert his authority to rule.⁶⁹⁶ I suggest that Bello's assertion of authority on his own terms, rather than beholden to arguments from the Islamic past, allowed Sokoto to outlast other pre-colonial West African Muslim states and remain a lasting, quasi-national identity in

⁶⁹⁵ Al-Ḥājj Sa'īd *taqāyīd* MS Paris (BN) Arabe 5422: 7a.

⁶⁹⁶ See *kitāb al-asrār*, attributed to Atiku and discussed in Last (1967) *Sokoto Caliphate*: 65; 81.

the region. However, as I set out in the conclusion to this thesis, below, this new development also effectively ended the literary explosion of the previous thirty years.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Abdulkadir dan Tafa [...] read the *ḍiyā' al-sulṭān* to the people, saying “the Sultan must have such and such characteristics”, challenging [*amīr al-mu'minīn* Atiku] and pointing at him.

Al-Hajj Sa'īd *taqāyīd* MS Paris (BN) Arabe 5422: 8b.

This thesis started out by suggesting that the Arabic writings of the Sokoto Fodiawa were first and foremost devices of “legitimation and delegitimation”. Using legitimacy as the focus of my enquiry, in Chapter One I first explored what was meant by legitimacy in the nineteenth century Sahel and how one could acquire it, preserve it or lose it. I have shown how the concept of legitimacy in Islam is multi-faceted, requiring distinct but inter-related aspects: knowledge of Islamic religious practices, law and history (*'ilm*), charismatic power (*kashf*), and genealogical heritage (*nasab*). But I also pointed out the inherent flexibility of Islam itself, which supports a number of different discursive traditions. Fluctuating between accommodation and syncretism, and the strict dogmatism of religious reformers such as 'Abd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī, the history of Islam in West Africa is a clear testament to this fact.

Over the period covered by this thesis – some thirty years – the Fodiawa rose from a close-knit community of scholar-rebels fighting to overturn the political order, to scholar-rulers seeking to preserve the *status quo* and suppress dissent across a vast territorial empire. Throughout all these changes, they produced hundreds of Arabic treatises in which they used Islam's fluid set of discursive traditions to justify what often seemed like abrupt *volte-face*. The

Fodiawa were very far from being a united “triumvirate”. As time wore on, Usman, Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello came to disagree about the aims of their jihadist movement, and over the question of where authority in a Muslim society should ultimately lie. This thesis set out to demonstrate that by zooming in on the numerous “questions and disagreements” over authority both between the Fodiawa and with others from the Sahelian knowledge elite, we could gain a better understanding of how Muslim statecraft functioned and evolved, and the key role of Arabic texts in this process. It went on to outline why the Fodiawa pursued a succession of discursive strategies to maintain their authority and legitimacy on their path from rebels to rulers, and how they were able to do so.

In Chapter Two, I demonstrated how, from the 1790s until around 1810, the Fodiawa began what I term a “process of dissent” to overturn the social order in the form of a jihad of the sword against the rulers of Hausaland and Bornu. While following a well-established legal logic to equate the actions of these rulers with apostasy from Islam, the Fodiawa also employed charismatic features of Islamic belief such as the expected Mahdi figure, the Sufi concept of *kashf*, or divine revelation, as well as the alleged roles of West African peoples in the early history of Islam in the Sahel. However, victory in the jihad meant that the Fodiawa had to both justify their seizure of power from fellow Muslims, and find a way to blend their identity as religious reformers with the pragmatism necessary to form a legitimate new political order in Hausaland. The second part of this chapter detailed how Usman modified or reversed completely the legal logic of his earlier writings – while reining in many of the destructive

charismatic forces that had been unleashed in the jihad years – in order to maintain the new *status quo* in what I called a “process of accommodation”.

Chapter Three is a narration and analysis of Usman’s conflict with his younger brother, Abdullahi, who disagreed with the process of accommodation and began to elaborate a different vision for how Hausaland should be governed after the jihad. While Usman sought to cement his rule by claiming the authority to define the law for himself as circumstances demanded, Abdullahi continued to hold the view that any ruler who did not follow the Sharia and the actions of the early rulers of Islam could be legitimately challenged. The theories of the two men were put to the test when, in 1817, Usman died and Muhammad Bello claimed the authority to succeed him as ruler, which Abdullahi disputed. The second half of this chapter surveyed their arguments.

Though Muhammad Bello ultimately triumphed over Abdullahi, the death of Usman in 1817 spelled an end to the unity of the jihadist camp and led to a period of crisis (1817–1821). . In Chapter Four, I outlined Bello’s various strategies to assert his authority in the face of substantial opposition. I showed how Bello turned to Islamic history to legitimate a “process of accommodation” to his own rule and sought to increase his regional authority as a Muslim leader. By 1821, Muhammad Bello’s rule of Sokoto was undisputed. In Chapter Five, we saw how Bello used his own authority as ruler, rather than any form of legitimising discourse outlined above, to draw up a series of policies for Sokoto that presupposed a territorial entity with geographical limits, and subjects that could be classified and controlled. Now, in the conclusion to this thesis, I will explain why the death of Muhammad Bello in 1837 marked an

abrupt bust to this literary boom, and give an outline of how discourses of (delegitimation) continued to evolve after this period.

The subjects of this thesis, Usman dan Fodio, Abdullahi and Muhammad Bello, were some of the most prolific writers in a century during which West African rulers and scholars expressed their views on statecraft in an unprecedented wealth of Arabic treatises. In comparison, *amīr al-mu'minīn* Atiku, and Khalilu, Emir of Gwandu, – the successors of Bello and Abdullahi – left behind them only a handful of writings. Gidado dan Layma and his descendants, the hereditary *wazirs* of Sokoto, for the most part concentrated their literary efforts on retelling the lives of the Fodiawa.⁶⁹⁷ Nana Asmau, daughter of Usman and a prolific poet, was a notable exception to this downward trend.

The decline of literary production after the period of the Fodiawa – or at least a lack of interest in its preservation – can be explained by the hypothesis set out at the beginning of this thesis, that the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa should be seen primarily as vehicles for authority and legitimacy. As we see from al-Ḥājj Sa'īd's anecdote at the beginning of this concluding chapter, it was not that Sokoto's successive generations of rulers no longer considered Arabic scholarship as a source of legitimacy, or indeed were not able to produce scholarly texts. On the contrary, because the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa were now recognised as the *sole bearers* of authority and legitimacy, to this day the legitimacy of the Sokoto elite lies in carefully preserving the physical manuscripts themselves, and controlling the narrative of Sokoto's foundational period they allude to. Conversely, the Fodiawa's often conflicting ideas of Muslim

⁶⁹⁷ See Hunwick and O'Fahey (1995) *ALA II*: 184–212.

statecraft would at various points both shore up but also challenge the legitimacy of Sokoto's rulers long after the period of this study.

David Robinson once stated that Al-Hajj Umar's "Toucouleur Empire" was neither Toucouleur, nor was it an empire.⁶⁹⁸ At the outset of this thesis, I suggested that for most of the period 1803–1837, neither was the "Sokoto Caliphate" considered a caliphate, nor was its identity intimately connected to the town of Sokoto. The Fodiawa themselves did not consider *khilāfa* an acceptable nor a correct term for their venture at first. It only became so later under specific political circumstances. After the death of Muhammad Bello, the Sokoto elite continued to mythologize the founding of Sokoto and projected Usman and Bello – but not Abdullahi – to the status of saints.⁶⁹⁹ The narrative of the jihad and of the early history of Sokoto written down at the behest of the British colonists in 1903 was already the product of decades of evolution. As with the Toucouleur, the idea of a "Sokoto Caliphate" was one that appealed as much to the administrators of British indirect rule in Nigeria as it did to the architects of Northern Nigerian nationalism. Such shifting meanings and political circumstances have been the purview of this thesis.

Likewise, discursive traditions of legitimacy making and breaking came in cycles. The nineteenth century witnessed several counter-trends to the development of a fixed "national identity" for Sokoto. The "process of dissent" began by the Fodiawa and upheld by Abdullahi and his followers did not simply fade into the past. The embers of this idealistic yet anarchic

⁶⁹⁸ Loimeier (2013) *Muslim societies in Africa*: 110, citing Robinson (2002: 107).

⁶⁹⁹ See works by Gidado dan Layma such as *rawḍ al-jinān fī dhikr ba'd manāqib al-shaykh 'Uthmān* (1816–17); *al-kashf wa-l-bayān 'an ba'd aḥwāl al-sayyid Muḥammad Bello b. al-shaykh 'Uthmān* (1838). These works have much in common with that genre of Sufi hagiographies known as *karāmāt al-awliyā'*.

“Maghīlite Madhhab” remained a consistent counterforce against the authority of the Sokoto elite, resting as it did on the legacy of dissent against established rulers. As the kind of authority they claimed became ever more removed from the idealistic vision of an Islamic golden age that had catapulted the jihadists to power, it became ever more likely that the process of dissent which had toppled the hegemony of the Hausa kings could threaten them as well.

In his rebellion against Bello, Abd al-Salam had invoked Abdullahi’s words that rebellion against an oppressive ruler was a duty.⁷⁰⁰ In 1862, al-Ḥājj ‘Umar Tāl waged war on the rulers of Hamdallahi because of their “*muwālāt*” with non-Muslim powers, citing Usman’s equation of such *muwālāt* with apostasy, discussed at various points in this thesis.⁷⁰¹ In the same document, Tal also claimed that Muhammad Bello had secretly been a Tijani, threatening the legacy of Usman’s unique spiritual connection to ‘Abd al-Qādir.⁷⁰² The rapid spread of the Tijani movement in Hausaland and the accusation that Bello had himself been a Tijani, unseated the spiritual hegemony of Sahelian Qadiri elite, which included Sokoto’s rulers.

Meanwhile, a resurgence of Mahdist movements and – eventually – the emergence of a Mahdist state in the Sudan, took the destructive power of Mahdist sentiment out of the hands of the Sokoto elite. Atiku’s reign saw a mass migration to the east, in expectation of the coming

⁷⁰⁰ See Chapter Four of this thesis, *supra*.

⁷⁰¹ See Mahibou and Triaud (1983) *Voilà ce qui est arrivé: plaidoyer pour une guerre sainte en Afrique de l'Ouest au XIXe siècle*.

⁷⁰² See al-Ḥājj ‘Umar Tāl *bayān mā waqa’a*. Bello purportedly revealed his membership of the Tijaniyya in a manuscript entitled *shamsīyat al-ikhwān*. In response, Gidado dan Layma and other members of the Sokoto elite wrote defences of Bello. For more on the Tijaniyya controversy, see Minna (1982) *Intellectual contribution* : 363–389.

of the Mahdi, predicted by Bello,⁷⁰³ while Muhammad Ahmad, the Mahdi of the Sudan, appointed Hayatu, a grandson of Usman dan Fodio, to be his representative in Sokoto. Similarly, Sokoto's "*muwālāt*" with the British in 1903 caused a schism in the jamā'a. Those loyal to the deposed ruler, Muhammadu Attahiru I, made their own Usmanesque *hijra* to the margins. The hijra ended at the Blue Nile, where the party of loyal followers founded the town of Maiurno. This event fulfilled both the Mahdist predictions of an eastern migration, and a prophecy that Usman's descendants would one day reach the Nile.⁷⁰⁴

Many groups have since drawn on the reformist legacy of Usman dan Fodio and the Muslim state he founded to bolster their own discursive legitimacy-making strategies. Most prominent among them is *Boko Haram*, who in their rejection of the authority of the "infidel" government of Nigeria and declaration of an Islamic Caliphate, claim to be following the model of the Sokoto jihadists.⁷⁰⁵ However, many other groups interpret the legacy of Usman and Sokoto differently. The Qadiriyya is still a potent force in Hausaland, while other reformist, anti-Sufi groups such as *Sunnance* and *Izala* draw subtler messages from the Fodiawa and their legacy.⁷⁰⁶ Outside the West African region, charismatic Muslim groups in the Americas have

⁷⁰³ See Atiku *intiqāl min balad Hawsa ilá al-Hijāz*.

⁷⁰⁴ See Duffield (1978) *Hausa and Fulani settlement and the development of capitalism in Sudan: with special reference to Maiurno, Blue Nile province*. Muhammad Shareef has conducted extensive research and digitisation of Maiurno's collection of Arabic MSS.

⁷⁰⁵ See Kassim (2015) *Defining and Understanding the Religious Philosophy of jihādī-Salafism and the Ideology of Boko Haram*.

⁷⁰⁶ For a general summary, see Loimeier (2016) *Islamic reform in twentieth-century Africa*. For the *Izala*, see Kane (2003) *Muslim modernity in postcolonial Nigeria: a study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*; Sounaye (2009) *Izala au Niger : une alternative de communauté religieuse*. For the *Sunnance*, see Sounaye (2017) *Salafi Aesthetics: Preaching Among the Sunnance in Niamey, Niger*. For the clash between Sufism and Salafism in contemporary Nigeria, see Umar (1993) *Changing Islamic identity in Nigeria from the 1960s to the 1980s: From Sufism to anti-Sufism*.

reconceptualised the jihad of Usman dan Fodio in the context of race struggle, as they seek to reconnect to an African-Islamic past,⁷⁰⁷ while in Europe, veneration of dan Fodio has taken other forms.⁷⁰⁸

This thesis seeks to bring Sokoto studies into the wider field of intellectual history. Its methodological approach to Arabic primary source material can and is being replicated in different areas and periods where Arabic writing played a key role in political developments in the African world. But while I have shown that we can make sense of the Arabic writings of the Fodiawa only by placing them in their precise historical context and semantic landscape, I have also alluded to the fact that the ideas within them are not confined to this historical period. Indeed, the shifting discursive strategies to which I make reference, and the various sources of authority and legitimacy invoked by the Fodiawa, should be familiar to many specialists of different areas and ages throughout the Muslim world, whether in the disciplines of history, sociology, political science or anthropology. In the conflict arenas of these regions today, the same cycles of dissent and accommodation are turning as a new generation of rebel-rulers seek to assert their legitimacy, using similar sets of textual tools.

⁷⁰⁷ See for example the *Masjid Nur'az Zamaan* in Pittsburgh, PA <http://www.lightoftheage.org/> accessed 21 July 2018.

⁷⁰⁸ See for example the *National Organisation of Russian Muslims*, who in 2008 shifted to Maliki-Ashari fiqh and formed links in West Africa.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX I: MUHAMMAD BELLO'S ḤĀSHIYAT ĪDĀ' AL-NUSŪKH

I base my translation on MS Paris (BN) Arabe 5432: 298–9 and MS Niamey 23. Both items equate to three sides of Arabic text and neither copy is complete. Maurice Delafosse made a part translation of the ḥāshiya into French in his 1912 work, “Traditions musulmanes relatives à l’origine des Peuls” (pp. 257–264), to which I referred also. While he translated the first section on the origin of the TorodBe, he did not translate the second section, concerning Bello’s education. Here, for ease of reference, I have bolded the names of Bello’s teachers and underlined the works and authors they taught him whenever they appear in the text. I know of no other translation of the ḥāshiya.

***The Book of Firm Establishment and Steadfastness: A Commentary to the
Preface of the Repository of Texts Concerning Those Sheikhs from Whom I Took
Knowledge, composed by the amīr al-mu'minīn Muḥammad Bello b. 'Uthmān
Fūdī. May God grant him mercy, Amen.***⁷⁰⁹

[after the doxology]

[298b] When I came across the preface of our Sheikh and teacher, blessed in vowelled and vowelless consonants, named *The Repository of Texts Concerning Those Sheikhs from Whom I Took Knowledge*,⁷¹⁰ as well as the versified treatise of my brother al-Muṣṭafá b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad⁷¹¹ mentioning what he took [of texts], my soul yearned to add to them. Even though I had already made note of them in my *infāq al-maysūr*, nevertheless my soul set out to allude to them and the individuals mentioned by making a commentary to the preface of our Sheikh, as well as noting some of the things he mentioned that are untrue. By my objection, I do not wish to attack him nor overlook him, but only to bring benefit to the quest for knowledge.

I quote, and success is with God, his [Abdullahi's] words, "and they (that is, the TorodBe) are the origin of the Fulani and their language is Fulfulde".

⁷⁰⁹ Ar. *kitāb al-tamkīn wa-l-rusūkh ḥāshiyat idā' al-nusūkh man akhadhtu 'anhum min al-shuyūkh*. This extended title occurs only in the Paris BN MS copy. Hunwick & O'Fahey (ALA II) list the shorter title for the ḥāshiya. The dedication that follows was presumably written by a copyist.

⁷¹⁰ i.e. Abdullahi's *idā' al-nusūkh*.

⁷¹¹ Presumably al-Muṣṭafá b. 'Uthmān b. Muḥammad [Fūdī].

As for what he said about the TorodBe being the origin of the Fulani tribe, it is well known amongst historians that the mother of the Fulani tribe was Yajma'u, daughter of the King of the TorodBe, whom 'Uqba b. Nāfi' al-Fihri married. She gave birth to four sons: Di'ta, Nāsu, Wūwy and Ru'ba.⁷¹² Di'ta fathered the Fittuga and from the Fittuga are the Snghrū and their ilk. Nāsu fathered the Ba'āwīyīn, ancestors of the Wulrba. Wūwy fathered the Firubbi, and the tribes of the Firubbi are well known among the Fulanis. Ru'ba fathered the Wālbw,⁷¹³ and these are a part [?] of the amir of the Fulanis.⁷¹⁴

As for what he mentioned about the language of the TorodBe being Fulfulde, this runs contrary to what is well known by historians, who say that the language of the TorodBe before the Fulanis was Wākr,⁷¹⁵ a language of the Banbara. Likewise, it is common knowledge that the children of 'Uqba started to speak the Fulfulde language when they were growing up and most of the tribes of the TorodBe here know no other language on account of their mixing with the Fulani and the distance from their homeland.

Now to his words, "and they [the TorodBe] preceded them [the Fulani] in the land of the Hausa by seven years". This we have never heard. On the contrary, what we hear is that the Fulani preceded the TorodBe to the land of the Hausa by seven years, and this is common knowledge.

And as for his words:

⁷¹² Niamey MS "D'bu, Bās and R'b", later mentioning "Wy".

⁷¹³ Niamey MS "Wālr".

⁷¹⁴ This loosely resembles the account of TorodBe origin Abdullahi gave in *aṣl al-Fulātīyīn*. See *supra* n. 367.

⁷¹⁵ Niamey MS "Wākar".

and their origin (meaning the TorodBe) from what we hear was with the Christians of Byzantium to whom the armies of the Companions [of the Prophet] arrived. Their King converted to Islam and married off his daughter to 'Uqba b. 'Āmir, Companion of the Prophet, mujāhid and the Emir of the West. He fathered the famous Fulani tribe.

[299a] What he said about the origins of the TorodBe being from the Christians is not at all reliable. Al-Ḥasan al-Bilbālī has informed me that what is upheld among them in Futa [Toro] is that the origin of the TorodBe is the Banbara, a black African people.⁷¹⁶ The son of their King, *Tūr*, journeyed to Futa beside two rivers and took possession of it. They established themselves there alongside the Jews and the Christians who were on the islands. [For this reason] it is said of them that they are from the Jews and the Christians, and God knows best.

And as for his assertion that it was 'Uqba b. 'Āmir who married the daughter of the TorodBe King and that this 'Uqba was Emir of the West, this is simply wrong. 'Uqba b. 'Āmir al-Anṣārī al-Khuzrajī al-Sulamī⁷¹⁷ died a martyr at the battle of Yamāma in the days of [Abū Bakr] al-Ṣiddīq, before the Arab armies went to Syria and Egypt. And if it was 'Uqba b. 'Āmir ibn Qays al-Juhānī,⁷¹⁸ he died in Egypt when he was governor there. He did not reach the west and was not Emir of the West at all. As is well known, this figure is 'Uqba b. Nāfi' b. 'Abd Qays al-Fihri and he was not a Companion of the Prophet but he was born in the age of the Prophet, a son of the maternal aunt of 'Umar b. al-'Āṣ.⁷¹⁹ As it says in *al-isti'āb*:⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁶ i.e. "Bambara".

⁷¹⁷ Niamey MS "al-Muslimī".

⁷¹⁸ Niamey MS "al-Qays".

⁷¹⁹ Paris BN "'Umarū Ibn al-'Āṣī".

⁷²⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr *al-isti'āb fī ma'rifat al-aṣḥāb* "Full Comprehension regarding knowledge of the Prophet's Companions".

and it is not correct to attribute companionship of the Prophet to him [‘Uqba b. Nāfi’]. He was the son of the maternal aunt of ‘Umar b. al-‘Āṣ and ‘Umar b. al-‘Āṣ gave him command of *ifrīqiyya* [Tunisia], in Egypt. He came to the Lawāta and Mazāna who submitted and then turned to disbelief and therefore it became legal to fight them. In 41 AH he killed and took captives and in 42 AH conquered Ghadames. In 43 AH he killed and captured and conquered two districts of *al-sūdān* and conquered the whole of the country of the Berbers. It was he who founded Qayrawān in the time of Mu‘āwiya and was killed in 63 AH after having fought in Sūs al-Quṣwā.⁷²¹

And by this you know⁷²² that this ‘Uqba was the Amir of the West and he was the father of the Fulani tribe, if it is proven and correct. But God knows best and it is by His order that His word is enforced.⁷²³

As to his words, “And of my sheikhs is the *amīr al-mu‘minīn...*”,⁷²⁴ he is also one of the sheikhs from whom I took [knowledge]. I read with him some of the *alfiyyat Ibn Malik* and the *umm al-barāhayn* [by Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī] and some of *al-kabrī* and the *shifā’* of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ and *al-Bukhārī* and *al-hukm* of Ibn ‘Imād⁷²⁵ Allāh and *al-insān al-kāmil* and all his compositions. I thoroughly studied their content and it took me two years⁷²⁶ before its unseen blessings came to me, praise be to God. And I alluded to the words of some of its content, its glories and its method in the *infāq al-maysūr fī tārikh bilād al-takrūr*. But to return, this is a book that has never been seen the like of in this region and it is beneficial and useful – if God wills – for whoever depends upon it.

⁷²¹ That is, the extreme end of Sous, Morocco. But the location is obscure.

⁷²² Niamey MS “it is known”.

⁷²³ Delafosse ends his translation here.

⁷²⁴ Bello uses the term *ilkh*, a shortening of *ilā ākhirihi*, akin to “etc/et cetera”.

⁷²⁵ Paris (BN) “‘Aṭā’ Allāh”.

⁷²⁶ Paris (BN) “many years”.

As to his words, “And of them is **Ibrāhīm b. ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Barnāwī...**”, I also took from him some of the mukhtaṣar which God helped me to complete with him, to understand, to apply and to be devoted to, and to trust in God in every circumstance for there is no strength nor power but with God.

And as to his words, “And of them is Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān...”, rather it is **[Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān] b. Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān** and if he had traced back to the grandparents then the *nasab* would have been plain enough. This is how I learnt all the obscurities.⁷²⁷ He is also one of the sheikhs from whom I took knowledge. I read with him al-khalāṣa and some of the introductions to grammar.

And as to his words, “And of them is the son of our maternal and paternal uncle and son of our maternal aunt, **Muḥammad al-Farbarī b. Muḥammad...**”, he is also one of those from whom I took knowledge. He benefited me with examples from all the arts, especially history.

And as to his words, “And of them is our master, son of our paternal uncle and maternal uncle, **al-Muṣṭafá b. al-Ḥājj ‘Uthmān...**”, he is also from whom I took [299b] knowledge. I read with him al-hawamīm in the study.⁷²⁸

And as to his words, “And of them is **Maḥmud al-Zanfarī al-Ṭūrī**”, he is also one of the group from whom I took knowledge. I heard with him al-shifā’ and read with him some of al-rāmiza and he passed away, may God grant him mercy, while we were part way through it.

⁷²⁷ The phrase is unclear.

⁷²⁸ Ar. المكتب *al-maktab* “study”, “office”, “place of writing”. The precise meaning here is unclear.

And as to his words, “And of them is **al-Imām Muḥammad Thanbu...**”, he is from the group of Sheikhs. I read with him some of the *mukhtaṣar* and *al-mudawwina of al-Barāda’ī*, may God reward him.

This is the last we wish [to recall] of his words.⁷²⁹

And from those from whom I took knowledge is [my] brother **Muḥammad Sa’d**. I read with him the *ājurrumiyya* and *al-‘Amrīṭī’s* versification of it, the *tuhfa of Ibn al-Ward* and *al-Mūbī’s commentary of al-shudhūr al-dhahab* and his book *al-i’rāb ‘an qawā’id al-i’rāb*, as well as *al-Ḥaysūbī’s* versification of it and some of *al-khulāṣa* up to the chapter entitled “*jam’ al-taksīr*” and the line “*tamm al-‘adad fa-ahl mamadan fa-iqbalnā ilā istimā’ al-tafsīr*”. He died at the end of the month, may God give him mercy.

And of them is our teacher, my aforementioned paternal uncle [**Abdullahi dan Fodio**]. With him I read the last part of the *alfīyat [b. Malik]* and the *lāmīyāt al-af’āl* with its commentary, *al-jāmi’ bayna al-luḡha wa al-taṣrīf, al-jawhar al-maknūn*⁷³⁰ in the original [poetry] and its abridgement, the *badī’ al-badī’* and the *nāẓm al-niqāya of Muhammad al-Wālī*, the *iqdā’at al-dajna, al-kawkab al-sāṭi’* regarding *uṣūl [al-fiqh]*, and his *alfīyat al-uṣūl*. We [studied] repeatedly *al-Bukhārī’s al-jāmi’ al-ṣaḥīḥ* in its sections. I also heard some of his [own] compositions and benefitted much from him. Indeed, it was under his tutelage that I became distinguished. For that, we ask God to reward him.

⁷²⁹ That is, of Abdullahi’s words.

⁷³⁰ Here ends MS Niamey.

And of them is the supremely knowledgeable, the intelligent, **Mūdi Ḥafīd ‘Alī Jubbu**.

With him I read some of the *diwān of al-Aṣma’ī* and *al-ḍarab fī al-ḥisāb* as well as some works of *adab*. From him I gained uncountable examples of the arts, so we ask God to reward him.

As for those who have benefitted me other than these [cited above], they are uncountable. There is my brother, **Muhammad Thanbu**, our brother **al-Muṣṭafá b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad**, **Ghidād b. Aḥmad b. Ghār Ghidād b. Layma** in *masā’il*.⁷³¹ There are others such as our brothers from Agadez, **Muḥammad b. Ākuākakā** and **Aḥmad** our lord⁷³² **al-Faqīh Aḥmad Akk** and the two judges, **Ṣāliḥ** and **Muṣṭafá**, and the *muḥtasib*. There are others still, each [teaching me] according to what he possessed and the extent of his ability,⁷³³ so we ask God to reward them.

I feel I must mention some of them in verse as well as in prose, so praying to the One God for strength:

[after the doxology]

And now, the intention of this composition in *rajaz*

Is to mention my teachers in brief words

The scholars from whom I took knowledge

⁷³¹ The study of legal cases.

⁷³² The Arabic could possibly read *ibnā*, “our son”.

⁷³³ Lit. “the rich one has his ability and the constrained one has his ability”.

Or the brothers from whom I gained benefit

When I was growing up, I read the Qur'an

In the study⁷³⁴ of my parents and relations

I took to reading the prefaces

That corrected faith and actions

Then I took from my radiant brother

al-Ṣanhāī's Ājurrumīya

And its versification by al-'Amrītī al-Mahdī

Then the tuhfa of Ibn al-Ward

And the commentary to the shudhūr al-dhahab

Then [his] book on al-i'rāb, for know

That⁷³⁵

⁷³⁴ Ar. *maktab* .

⁷³⁵ Here ends MS Paris (BN).

Arabic Text

كتاب تمكين الرسوخ حاشية إيداع النسخ من أخذت عنهم من الشيوخ تأليف أمير المؤمنين محمد بل بن
عثمان فودي تغمده الله برحمته

...

أما بعد فلما وقفت على مقدمة شيخنا وأستاذنا البركة في السكون و الحركة وهي المسمى بإيداع النسخ من
أخذت عنهم من الشيوخ و منظومة أخينا المصطفى بن محمد بن محمد في سرد من أخذ عنه بغيت النفس
تتشوق إلى الرمي معهما و إن كان سبق منّي التنبيه عليهم في إنفاق الميسور في تاريخ بلاد التكرور ولكن
انبعث النفس إلى الإشارة إليهم و أفرادهم بالذكر بوضع حاشية على مقدمة شيخنا و أستاذنا لأنّ غالبهم فيها
مع التنبيه على أشياء ذكرها مع أنّ الصواب بخلافها غير قاصد بذلك اعتراضاً عليه و لا غضاً منه ولكن
تتميماً للفائدة في الصادرة و الواردة

فأقول وبالله التوفيق قوله و هم يعني التورود أصل قبيلة الفلان و لغتهم هي لغة الفلان انتهى

و ما ذكره من أنّ التورود أصل قبيلة الفلان هو المعروف عند المؤرخين من أنّ أم القبيلة الفلانية بجمع بنت
ملك التورود تزوّجها عقبة بن نافع الفهري فولد منها أربعة دُعَت و نَاسُ و وُوى و رُعَبَ فولدت دعت فُتَغَ
فمن فتغ سنغروغيرهم و ناس ولد البعاويين فمنهم قبائل وُلربَ بضم الواو و غيرهم ووى ولد فُرَبَّ و قبائل
فُرَبَّ معروفة عند الفلان و رعب ولد والوب و هذه جزا <؟> أمير الفلان

و ما ذكره من أنّ لغة التورود هي لغة الفلان خلاف المعروف من المؤرخين و أنّما يقولون لغة التورود قبل الفلانيّين و اكر وهي لغة أهل بنبر كما هو معلوم شايع من أنّ لغة الفلانيّة أنّما تكلم بها أولاد عقبة حين نشؤوا و لا يبعدوا إن كان غالب قبائل التورود هنا لا يعرف غيرها لاستهلاكهم في الفلان و بعدهم عن بلادهم

و قوله سبقوا الفلان إلى حوس بسبع سنين فيما نسمع بل المسموع أنّ الفلان سبقوهم إلى حوس بسبع كما هو شايع معلوم

و قوله و أصلهم يعني التورود فيما نسمع من نصارى الروم وصلت إليهم جيوش الصحابة فأمن ملكهم فتزوج بنته عقبة بن عامر الصحابة المجاهد أمير الغرب فولد قبيلة الفلان المشهورة انتهى 299 أ

و ما قاله من التورود أصلهم من النصارى غير معتمد عليه حدثني الحسن البلبالي أنّ المعتمد عندهم في فوت أنّ أصل التورود بنبر من أهل السودان سار ابن ملكهم تور إلى فوت بجنب البحرين و استولى عليها فنشئوا هناك و جاؤوا اليهود و النصارى الذي في الجزائر و قيل أنّهم من اليهود و النصارى و الله أعلم

و ما قاله من أنّ عقبة ابن عامر هو الذي تزوج بنت ملك التورود و أنّه أمير الغرب خلاف الصواب أصلاً لأنّ عقبة بن عامر الأنصاري الخزرجي السلمي قُتِلَ يوم اليمامة شهيداً أيام الصديق الأكبر قبل نفوذ الجيوش إلى الشام و إلى مصر و إنّ كان عقبة بن عامر ابن قيس الجهني فإنّه توفى في مصر والياً عليها و لم ينفذ إلى الغرب و لم يكن أمير الغرب رأساً و إنّما المعروف عقبة بن نافع بن عبد قيس الفهري و ليس بصحابي لكنّه وُلِدَ على عصر النبي صلى الله تعالى عليه و سلم و هو ابن خالة عمرو ابن العاصى قال في الاستيعاب

ولا تصح له صحبة و كان ابن خالة عمرو ابن العاصي و ولاه عمرو بن العاصي افريقيّة و هي على مصر و انتهى إلى لواتة و مزانة فأطاعوا ثم كفر فغزاهم من سنة و قتل و سبى و ذلك في سنة إحدى وأربعين و افتتح في سنة اثنين وأربعين كورتين من كور السودان و افتتح عامة بلاد البربر و هو الذي اختلط القيروان في زمن معاوية و قُتِلَ سنة ثلاث و ستين بعد أن غزا سُوسَ القصوى انتهى ملخصاً و بهذا تعرف أنّ عقبة هذا هو أمير الغرب و هو أبو القبيلة الفلانيّة إنّ ثُبِتَ و صح و الله أعلم و بأمره أحكم

قوله و من شيوخي أمير المؤمنين الخ و هو أيضاً من شيوخي الذي أخذت عنهم قرأت عليه بعض ألقية ن ملك و أمّ البراهين و بعض الكبرى و الشفاء للقاضي عياض و البخاري و الحكم لأبي عطاء الله و الإنسان الكامل و عامة تواليه و تصفحت أحواله و لازمته سنين حتى حصلت له لي من بركاته ما ترى الحمد لله و قد أطنبنا الكلام في شرح بعض أحواله و مناقبه و طريقته في كتابنا إنفاق الميسور في تاريخ بلاد التكرور فليراجع وهو كتاب لم أسبق إلى مثله في هذا القطر و هو نافع مفيد إنّ شاء الله لمن عول عليه

قوله و منهم إبراهيم ابن علي بن إبراهيم البرنوي و أنا أيضاً أخذت عنه بعض المختصر اعانني الله على اكماله عليه و فهمه و العمل به و الإخلاص فيه و الاتكال على الله في جميع الأحوال و لا حول و لا قوة الا بالله

قوله و منهم محمد عبد الرحمان الخ بل ابن اسماعيل بن عبد الرحمان و إن كان يسوغ إلى الجدّان كان النسب معروفاً وهذا كما علمت في غاية الخفاء وهو أيضاً من الشيوخ الذي أخذت عنهم قرأت عليه الخلاصة و بعض مقدمات النحو

قوله و منهم ابن خالنا و ابن عمنا و ابن خالتنا محمد الفريزي بن محمد الخ وهو أيضاً ممن أخذت عنهم أفادني بمسائل بسائر الفنون ولا سيما التاريخ

قوله و منهم صاحبنا ابن عمنا و خالنا المصطفى ابن الحاج عثمان الخ وهو أيضاً ممن أخذت 299 ب عنهم وعليه قرأت الحواميم في المكتب

قوله ومنهم محمود الزنفرى التوري وهو أيضاً من جملة من أخذت عنهم سمعت عنه الشفاء و قرأت عليه بعض الرامزة فتوفى رحمة الله عليه و نحن في اثنائها

قوله ومنهم الإمام محمد ثبّ الخ وهو أيضاً من جملة مشايخ قرأت عليه بعد المختصر و المدونة للبرادعي جزاه الله خيراً

هذا آخر ما أردنا إيراده من كلامه

و ممن أخذت عنه أخي محمد سعد قرأت عليه الجرومية و نظمه العمريطي و تحفة ابن الوردي و شرح شذور الذهب للمؤلف و كتابه الإعراب عن قواعد الإعراب و نظمه للحيسوبي و بعض الخلاصة إلى باب جمع التفسير إلى قوله تمّ العدد فأهل رمضان فأقبلنا إلى استماع التفسير فتوفى في آخر الشهر رحمة الله عليه و منهم أستاذنا العم المذكور عليه قرأت آخر الألفية و لامية الأفعال بشرحها الجامع بين اللغة و التصريف و الجوهر المكنون و أصله التلخيص و بديع البديع و نظم النقاية لمحمد الوالي و اضاءة الدجنة و

الكوكب الساطع في الأصول و ألفية الأصول له و الجامع الصحيح للبخاري مراراً في اجزائها و سمعت بعض مؤلفاته و استفدت منه فوائد و زوائد بل عليه نبغت فجزاه الله عنا خيراً و منهم العلامة الزكي المتفنى مؤد حفيد علي جُبُّ قرأت عليه بعض ديوان الأصمعي و الضرب في الحساب <؟> و الأدب و استفدت منه من مسائل الفنون ما لا يحصى فجزاه الله عنا خيراً

و قد افادني غير هؤلاء ممن لا يحصون مثل أخي محمد ثبُّ و أخينا المصطفى بن محمد بن محمد و غداد بن أحمد بن غارو غداد بن لئيم في مسائل و غير هؤلاء و لا مثل اخواننا الأغسثيين محمد بن أكأكَا و أحمد ربنا⁷³⁶ الفقيه أحمد اكك و القاضيان صالح و المصطفى و المحتسب و غيرهم كل بحسب ما عنده على الموسع قدره و على المقتر قدره فجزاهم الله عنا خيراً و ينبغي أن نسرد بعضهم في النظم كما في الأصل و بالله الاستعانة لا رب سواه

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| الحمد لله و صلى الله | على نبينا الذي اصطفاه |
| محمد و الله النجباء | و من تلا بعد من العلماء |
| و بعد فالقصد بهذا الرجز | ذكر شيوخه بكلام موجز |
| من علماء قد أخذت عنهم | او اخوان استفدت منهم |
| لما نشأت و قرأت القرآن | في مكتب الولدان بل و الأقران |
| أخذت في قرائها المقدمات | تصحح الإيمان و المعاملات |
| ثم أخذت عن أخي الوهاج | كتاب جرومية للصنهاج |
| و نظمه للعمريطي المهدي | ثم كتاب تحفة ابن الوردي |
| شرح شذور الذهب للمؤلف | ثم كتاب الإعراب فاعرف |

⁷³⁶ ابننا or

APPENDIX II: SELECT TRANSLATION OF MUHAMMAD BELLO'S *QADĤ AL-ZINĀD FĪ AMR HĀDHIHI AL-JIHĀD*

*This translation comes from MS Paris (BN) Arabe 5576. Hunwick (ALA II: 126) describes this work as “on the causes of the jihād in Hausaland and Bornu, and who may be legally enslaved”. However, the majority of qadĥ al-zinād is not an original work, but consists of selected chapters from infāq al-maysūr with some slight modifications. I made a preliminary note of these modifications by checking my translation with Shādhilī’s 1996 Arabic edition of the infāq (pp. 298–302). I am certain that thoroughly cross-checking the entire text of qadĥ al-zinād with Arabic editions of the infāq will bring to light further changes to the original text. But for now, I highlight only a short passage. Text from the infāq is in normal type while Bello’s later additions are in **bold**. To my knowledge, Bello’s additions have not previously been translated.*

[12b] As for the words of Aḥmad Bāba who answered that these lands of Bornu, Katsina, some of Zakzak and [those lands] nearby are lands of Islam, it could have been (1) because they became Islamised in the times preceding Aḥmad Bāba and then apostasised afterwards; (2) due to his lack of inspection of them and knowledge of the truth, he ruled by what appeared to him and spread in the news; or (3) he was referring to the spread of Islam among them with the exception of their rulers.

The second possibility [that Aḥmad Bāba did not really know the nature of these lands] is more apparent, because if they had Islamised and then abandoned their religion, we would have heard. However, it has not reached us that they have abandoned the ways of their pagan ancestors up to the present day, even if they exhibited good [behaviour] and Islam outwardly.

The Sheikh of our Sheikhs, Jibrīl b. 'Umar, said:

And as for what went on in the lands of the Blacks, I mean to say those mixers of the acts [13a] of paganism and the acts of Islam – and this is the majority of the kings of this country and their troops – it is not innovation nor distortion nor change nor adoption of Sunna, but their infidelity which they maintained. Nobody has reported that they ever left it, and if it was reported we would have heard.

Then he said:

Though they introduce the lights of prayer and fasting and pronouncing the *shahāda* into their iniquity and the fool and feebleminded presume that they are Muslims, no, they are not Muslims.

The third possibility [that Islam spread to the people but not to the rulers] is also very likely since it is well known that the law of a country is the law of its ruler. If he is a Muslim, the land is a land of Islam. If he is an infidel, that country is a land of unbelief from which one must flee to elsewhere, if such a place exists and is possible [to reach].

That which we have mentioned trumps the words of all those who judged these lands to be a house of Islam before this jihad. What we have mentioned is closer to the truth and worthier and more deserving of acceptance because we have lived in their company and mixed with them and know their ways, *for the owner of the home knows best what is inside it*. But God knows best.

As for today, it has become a house of Islam, for God has removed its blemishes and maintained its purity due to the blessing of this Sheikh. His appearance was a gift from God, who made his hands manifest miracles and dazzling lights. The happy heeded his call and they heard and obeyed. The wretched repressed [him] out of arrogance, **but they repented and were saved**,⁷³⁷ for he removed doubt and error and today there is no more remnant of it. God subjugated this land for **me**⁷³⁸ and he [Usman?] presided over it with justice and fairness between its subjects and in each region he installed a representative for it, to carry out orders as it should be. I uphold the prayer and I distribute zakat and I carry out holy war.⁷³⁹ [13b] Learning has spread widely, civil strife has been extinguished, rebels have been repressed and the oppressed have been given justice. The roads have been made passable and religion and the world have been made safe. And he is certainly from the *khulafā' al-rāshidūn*⁷⁴⁰ and the guiding and rightly guided imams. He is the renewer of the age. God brings relief to his servants even in the end times.

⁷³⁷ Shādhilī (1996) "they gave in and became obedient".

⁷³⁸ Shādhilī (1996) "for him".

⁷³⁹ Shādhilī (1996) "Prayer was upheld, zakat was distributed and holy war was carried out".

⁷⁴⁰ Ar. *wa lā jarama annahu min al-khulafā' al-rāshidīn*.

If you wish, I will describe him either briefly or in great detail. If you wish, I will summarise or speak at length. But verily, description detracts from his merits. He is the greatest pole of the age, the mightiest succour. The scholars are stars and he is the sun and the moon, but it should not be said that he is the awaited Mahdi [...].

Here it is suitable that we devote some words to the ruling on enslaving the inhabitants of this country. We put forward that there are three categories of people in these lands:

1. Purely faithful people. These were rare before the appearance of the Sheikh.
2. Mixers of the acts of paganism with the acts of Islam. These are the majority of the kings of these lands, their soldiers and venal scholars.
3. Original non-believers, who never entered Islam. These are all of the blacks called “Maguzawa”.

If you understand what we have presented, then you know that if the acquired person is from the Maguzawa he can be enslaved because the original non-believer, his children and his wives can be made prisoner and his wealth be divided up and there is no divergence among the scholars in this regard. Now to those who left the Islamic faith openly and declared [14a] that they had departed from the Islamic faith and entered into a faith of the non-believers, or else claimed that that they were Muslim but we ruled that they be anathematised because there came from them things that could only come from a nonbeliever – such as the majority of the

kings of these lands before the jihad, their soldiers and their scholars who made permissible the forbidden and clothed truth in falsehood on their account, or else assisted their fight against the Muslims by aiding them and did not repent. If they repent, then leave them. But if they do not repent, then kill them by sword as an infidel. However, there is dispute [among scholars] as to their enslavability.

[...]

From this it should be clear to you that it is obligatory for all who acquire a slave from this country, that is, Borno, Daura, Katsina, Kano [14b], Gobir, Zamfara, Kebbi and Songhai [?] to hold off buying until it is clear that he is from the Maguzawa ethnicity and from [the people of] those rulers who are original unbelievers, because they exist for the benefit of Islam (except for their rulers, as we explained). As for the rulers, even if they are infidels for the most part, the correct thing to do is not to enslave their descendants and children because they are apostates. The majority of them profess Islam and pronounce the words of the *shahada* but mix acts of unbelief with acts of Islam, as is well-known in their regard. Therefore, we judged them to be unbelievers on account of that.

As for the ones from among them who do not profess Islam, there is no harm in enslaving their descendants for those whose case is clear. As for he who does not hesitate and buys from among them one who is clearly not from the Maguzawa ethnicity or from the original non-believing rulers, then he is to release him; and all the more so if he is from the party of apostates. [15a] Releasing him is the correct course because otherwise this would open the

door of corruption in searching out the wealth of others. Due to the frequency of this occurrence, we are left with committing the lesser of two evils; all the more so because the matter is one of division [among the scholars].

Whereas if the acquired person is not from our country, namely those acquired from the land of Bedde, Ghijiwi, Kere-Kere, Bauchin Kano, Bauchin Zakzak, Gwari and the surrounding lands,⁷⁴¹ then there is no harm in enslaving them without any investigation or hesitation. Since Islam had not spread to them until this jihad [of 1804] took place, the Muslims fought them and filled their hands with their captives.⁷⁴²

As for those who say that **the blacks from these lands are from the royal slaves⁷⁴³ of the Sultan of Bornu,**⁷⁴⁴ if [this is] true then they are fay' [legal booty].

[End]

⁷⁴¹ See n. 646, *supra*.

⁷⁴² This text is absent from Shādhilī (1996).

⁷⁴³ Ar. *mamālīk*.

⁷⁴⁴ Shādhilī (1996) "the blacks from these lands are the royal slaves of the Berber from Bornu".

Arabic Text⁷⁴⁵

<12ب> وأما قول أحمد باب حين أجاب بأنّ هذه البلاد التي هي برنو وكاشنة و بعض زكرك وما قاربها بلاد الإسلام فيحتمل أن يكون أسلموا في الأزمنة المتقدمة إلى زمان أحمد باب ثم ارتدوا بعد ويحتمل أن يكون لعدم مخالطته بهم و معرفتها بالحقيقة فحكم بما ظهر له وفشا في الأخبار ويحتمل أن يكون نظر إلى استفاضة الإسلام فيها في غير سلاطينها

والاحتمال الثاني أظهر لأنهم لو أسلموا و خلصوا دينهم لسمع ونقل إذ لم يبلغنا أنهم فارقوا أحوال أجدادهم الأولين الكافرين إلى زماننا وإن كانوا ظاهروا بالخير والإسلام

قال شيخ شيوخنا جبريل بن عمر وأما ما وقع في بلاد السودان-يعني من المخلطين أعمال<13أ> الكفر بأعمال الإسلام الذين هم غالب ملوك هذه البلاد وجنودهم-فليس ببدعة ولا تحريف ولا تغيير ولا اتخاذ سنة بل هو كفرهم الذي بقوا عليه إذ لم ينقل عن أحد أنهم تركوه قط ولو نقل لسمع ثم قال إلا أنهم لما أدخلوا على ظلمهم أنوار الصلاة والصيام والتبليغ بلا إله إلا الله ظنّ الجاهل بهم وقليل العلم أنهم مسلمون كلا إنهم ليسوا بمسلمين

وأما الثالث من الاحتمالات فمرجوح أيضاً لأن المعروف في حكم البلد حكم سلطانه فإن كان مسلماً كان البلد دار الإسلام وإن كان كافراً كان البلد بلد كفر يجب الهجرة منه إلى غيره إن وجد وأمكن

⁷⁴⁵ Footnotes refer to Arabic text as it appears in Shādhilī (1996) edition of *infāq al-maysūr*.

وعلى هذا الذي ذكرناه يحمل قول كل من حكم في هذه البلاد بأنّها دار إسلام قبل هذا الجهاد والذي ذكرناه فيها أنسب إلى الحق وفي القبول أولى وأحرى لأننا ساكناهم وخالطناهم وعرفنا أحوالهم وصاحب البيت بما فيه أدري والله أعلم

وأما اليوم فقد صارت دار إسلام إذ أزال الله شوبها وأبقى خالصها ببركة هذا الشيخ الذي من الله بظهوره وأيده بالكرامات الظاهرة والأنوار الباهرة فنفع السعداء دعوته فسمعوا وأطاعوا وقمع الأشقياء البعداء سطوته فقرعوا و انقادوا⁷⁴⁶ فأزال فيها شبه الضلال فلم يبق فيها اليوم أشكال فدوّخ الله لي⁷⁴⁷ هذه البلاد وأقام فيها بالعدل والقسط بين العباد وأقام في كل إقليم نائباً عنه يقوم بالأمر كما ينبغي فأقيم⁷⁴⁸ الصلاة و آدمي⁷⁴⁹ الزكوة وأقيم⁷⁵⁰ الجهاد<13ب> ونشر العلم وطفّي⁷⁵¹ الفتن وقمع البغاة وأنصف المظلوم وسُبلت السبل وصير الدين والدنيا ولا جرم أنه من الخلفاء الراشدين والأئمة الهادين المهتدين وهو المجدد في هذا الأوان إذ لله تنفيس لعباده ولو في آخر الزمان

فإن شئت فأوجز في وصفه أو أطنب وإن شئت فقصر أو أسهب فإن الوصف يقصر عن مزاياه فهو قطب الوقت الأفخم والغوث الأعظم فالعلماء نجوم و هو الشمس و القمر بيد أنه لا تدع أنه المهدي المنتظر...

⁷⁴⁶ فادعنوا <فأذعنوا> وانطاعوا

⁷⁴⁷ له

⁷⁴⁸ (passive voice) فأقيمت

⁷⁴⁹ (passive voice) أدت

⁷⁵⁰ (passive voice) أقيم

⁷⁵¹ (passive voice) أطفّي

وينبغي أن نسوق الكلام هنا في حكم استرقاق أهل هذه البلاد وقد قدمنا أن أقسام أهل هذه البلاد ثلاثة

قسم مؤمنون مخلصون وهؤلاء النادر قبل ظهور الشيخ وقسم مخلصون أعمال الكفر بأعمال الإسلام وهؤلاء غالب ملوك هذه البلاد وجنودهم وعلمائهم السوء وقسم كفار بالأصالة لم يدخلوا في الإسلام أصلاً وهؤلاء عامة السودانين الذين يقال لهم ماغزاوى وإذا فهمت ما قدمناه علمت أن المجلوب إذا كان من ماغزاوى يسترق لأن الكفار بالأصالة تسبى ذراريهم ونساؤهم وتقسم أموالهم ولا خلاف في ذلك بين العلماء وأما الذين ارتدوا عن دين الإسلام ارتداداً ظاهراً وصرح<14أ> بأنه خرج عن دين الإسلام ودخل في غيره من دين الكفار أو كانوا يزعمون أنهم مسلمون وحكمنا بكفرهم لأجل أنه صدر منهم ما لا يقع إلا من كافر كغالب ملوك هذه البلاد قبل الجهاد وجنودهم وعلمائهم الذين يحللون المكس ويلبسون لهم الحق بالباطل أو يعينوهم على غزو المسلمين بنصرهم وهؤلاء يستتابون فإن تابوا تركوا وإن لم يتوبوا قتلوا بالسيف كفرة وفي استرقاقهم...

فبان لك من هذا أنه يجب على كل من جلب له العبيد من هذه البلاد التي هي بُرْتُو و دَوْرَا و كاشنه و كنو <14ب> و غوبر و زنفر و كب و سنوى أن يتوقف في الشراء حتى يتبين له أنه من جنس ماغزاوا و السلاطين الكفار بالأصالة لأنهم موجودون منهم لاستفاضة الإسلام فيها في غير سلاطينها كما قدمنا و أما السلاطين و إن كانوا كفار في الغالب فالصحيح عدم استرقاق ذراريهم و أولادهم لأنهم مرتدون إذ غالبهم يدعون لأنفسهم بالإسلام و يفوهون بكلامتي الشهادة لكن يخلصون أعمال الإسلام بأعمال الكفر كما هو من شأنهم معلوم مشهور فحكمنا بكفرهم لأجل ذلك

و أما الذين لا يدعون منهم بالإسلام فلا بأس في استرقاق ذراريهم لمن تبين له أمرهم و أما من لم يتوقف و اشترى منهم فتبين أنه من غير جنس ماغزاوى و الكفار من السلاطين بالأصالة فإنه يطلق و لاسيما إن كان <15أ> من جنس المرتدين فإنه يطلق على الصحيح اللهم ألا أن يكون في ذلك فتح باب مفسدة في البحث في أموال الناس لكثرة هذه الواقع فيترك ارتكاباً لأخف الضررين و لاسيما المسئلة مسئلة خلاف

و أما المجلوب من غير هذه البلاد كالمجلوب من بلد بد و عجو و كركر و باوش كنو و باوش زكرك و غار و ما ضاهي هذه البلاد و فلا بأس في استرقاقهم من غير بحث و توقف لأن الإسلام لم ينتشر فيها حتى قام هذا الجهاد فغزاهم المسلمون و ملوا أيديهم من سبائهم

و أما قول من قال إن السودانيين من أهل هذه البلاد من ممالك سلطان برنوا⁷⁵² فإن صح فهم فيء

⁷⁵² ممالك البربر من برنو

APPENDIX III: A NOTE ON THE *KANZ AL-AWLĀD*, ALONG WITH A TRANSLATED SECTION OF THIS WORK

Introduction

In a 2008 article, Murray Last mentioned a work entitled *kanz al-awlād*, “a history of the Sokoto jihad purportedly written by Muhammad Thanbu b. Ahmed around 1818–19 but actually produced by a scholar in Gusau in the early 1950s.” Last added that this apparent forgery “may yet gain a life of its own and be cited in doctoral theses as a historical source.”⁷⁵³ In this regard, his statement was prophetic. I have – cautiously – included the *kanz al-awlād* in this thesis.

Here, I give a summary of the confused history of this document, and propose that there may in fact be two manuscripts bearing this title. One, a genuine historical document of considerable importance and the other, as Last suggests, a recent forgery. What follows is (1) an explanation as to why I believe there to be two different documents entitled *kanz al-awlād*, (2) a summary of the other *kanz al-awlād* based on the two copies I have consulted, and (3) a translation of a section of this *kanz al-awlād* detailing the rebellion of Abd al-Salam.

I will not conduct an extensive analysis of the *kanz* here, but hope that including some basic information as an appendix will stimulate awareness of this curious document and – whatever conclusions are reached about its authenticity – encourage its use by scholars.

⁷⁵³ Last (2008) *The book in the Sokoto Caliphate*: 150.

Two distinctly different MS...

According to Hunwick (ALA II: 231), four copies of the *kanz* exist: Cambridge (African Studies Centre); Kano (Bayero University); Niamey (MARA); Sokoto (SHB). My suggestion that there are two fundamentally different MS entitled *kanz al-awlād* comes from the fundamental inconsistencies between the alleged contents in the Bayero University MS – referenced by Last and others – and the notes on the *kanz* made by Balogun (1987), Hunwick (1995), and my own study of the Cambridge and Niamey copies which I consulted during my own period of archival research.

Last asserted that the forged *kanz al-awlād* was made in the “strongly Tijani, Kano-oriented and pro-NEPU” Gusau, an opinion shared by M.A. al-Hajj.⁷⁵⁴ Last based his opinions on two copies of the *kanz* he had consulted in Kano some time in the 1980s. He stated that one remained in private hands, while the second had been sent to Bayero University. Another scholar who has mentioned a “*kanz al-awlād*” with the characteristics of a Tijani text is Salisu Bala.⁷⁵⁵ In personal correspondence (April 13, 2017) Dr. Bala said that he first came across this text as a student at a Kano *madrasa* some time in the 1990s. He also consulted a manuscript copy in the Al-Torodi Collection, a private archive in Salame. Is this perhaps the copy Last spoke of as being in private hands?

⁷⁵⁴ Last (2011) *The Book and the Nature of Knowledge in Muslim Northern Nigeria, 1457-2007* : 179.

⁷⁵⁵ Bala (2011) *History of Origin Spread and Development of Tijjaniyyah Sufi Order in Hausaland: The Case of Zaria City, Circa, 1831-1933*.

Bala describes the *kanz al-awlād* as a short text which he claims was authored by Usman dan Fodio or, more precisely, an Arabic translation of a work he originally composed in Fulfulde. In the text, Usman predicts the coming of the famous Tijani Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse, describing some of his teachings and characteristics. In 1937, the Emir of Kano recognised Niasse as leader of the global Tijaniyya. In this context, it would not be surprising for a devotional work connecting the legacy of the Shehu to the *fayda* movement to be circulating in Kano around the 1950's.

But when we move to the work of S.U. Balogun, who used the *kanz* as a historical source without questioning its authenticity, we find a quite different description of this text:

It [*kanz al-awlād*] has three hundred and thirteen folios. It discusses the origin of the Fulani, gives the derivation of some Fulani names and meanings of some Fulani words. It also discusses the differences between the terms Fulata and Fulani and the descendants of each of them.⁷⁵⁶

This also matches Hunwick's description of the *kanz* in ALA II (p.231), which bears no resemblance to the document described by Dr. Bala, and assumed from the comments of Last and al-Hajj:

⁷⁵⁶ Balogun (1987) *The Fulani in Arabic Sources* : 83.

1. *Kanz al-awlād wa'l-dharārī fī ta'rīkh al-ajdād wa'l-diyār min qabā'il al-Fullān al-aḥrār wa-dhikr ansābihim al-akhyār.*

Written in 1234/1818-19. The first one third of the book is not concerned with the main topic of the work as announced by its title, but consists of sections on topics in early Islamic history (life of the Prophet and the first four caliphs, the merits of the Quraysh, notes on meritorious men (and some women), such as al-Ash'arī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Suyūṭī, the *qāḍī* 'Iyād, the founders of the law-schools, the collectors of *ḥadīth*, and Sufis such as Junayd, al-Ghazālī, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, al-Shādhilī, al-Jazūlī, Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī, Aḥmad al-Badawī and Ibrāhīm al-Ḍasūqī. This part of the work concludes with a reading list of essential works in history. The rest of the work concerns the genealogy and history of the Fulani, but is not well regarded in Sokoto and has, for this reason, been neglected by scholars.

MSS: Cambridge (African Studies Centre), uncat. photocopy (over 300 pp.); Kano (BU), O.B.350 sam; Niamey, 1605; Sokoto (SHB), 848 (old number).

These discrepancies suggest that there are two different manuscripts both bearing the title *kanz al-awlād*.

In his 1987 article, Balogun stated that the copy of the *kanz* which he consulted was “still in manuscript form” and was from the “private collection of Mallam Boyi”.⁷⁵⁷ Neither of the copies that I consulted (Cambridge: African Studies Centre; Niamey: MARA) were in manuscript form. Niamey (MARA) consisted of photographs pasted onto paper and hardbound. Cambridge (African Studies Centre) was a Xerox, while Northwestern University also holds a partial copy of the Cambridge Xerox copy. Unfortunately, I was not able to photograph Niamey's copy of the *kanz*, but if my memory serves me correctly, it was very similar in appearance to that of Cambridge. It may be that the Cambridge copy was Xeroxed from these photographs. It may also be that these three documents are all identical copies of the original manuscript consulted by Balogun.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid. : 83.

There are several points that cast the likelihood that this *kanz* is a Tijani forgery into question. First, at over 300 folios long, it would have to be an unusually complex and sophisticated undertaking. Second, many chapters focus exhaustively on an exposition of the merits of the Qadiriyya and its founders. A strange feature for a purported Tijani text. From what I could tell, it does not mention the Tijaniyya at all. Thirdly, the author of the MS is clearly stated as Muhammad Sambo Kulwa, with several appendices by his descendants. At no point whether in the main body or in the copyist's notes is there any mention of Usman dan Fodio being the author of the text.

Contents of the Niamey/Cambridge *kanz al-awlād* by Chapter⁷⁵⁸

Chapter One: Mentioning the reasons for the composition [of this book] and the text of the letter of Abdullahi b. Fodio⁷⁵⁹

Chapter Two: Mentioning of the most important reasons for composing this book

Chapter Three: Mentioning the good qualities of God's creations and their ranks

Chapter Four: On the four Imams [the founders of the four schools of Islamic law]

Chapter Five: On the major compilers of Hadith

Chapter Six: On the major Sufis

Chapter Seven: On the leaders of the Qadiri Tariqa

Chapter Eight: On the masters of tafsīr (Qur'anic exegesis)

Chapter Nine: Mentioning the names of the books which must be consulted and studied in great depth concerning Arab and non-Arab history

Chapter Ten: The first inception of the history of the Fulani in its entirety and what is connected with it⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁸ All folio numbers below refer to the Cambridge MS, starting from the dedication page rather than the *basmala*.

⁷⁵⁹ The author stated that he composed the *kanz* at the request of Abdullahi dan Fodio, who had requested [f.4]: "A document that lays down for us the customs of the Fulani [and] something of the first of our tribe along with a short note on the history of some brothers other than us".

While these ten chapters complete the *kanz al-awlād*, approximately one third of the Cambridge texts consists of “*additions, addendums and attachments*” composed by Bayero, son of Sambo Kulwa and completed on 24 Dhu al-Hijja 1247 AH (24 May, 1832):

- *al-wathīqa al-wuthqá* [ff. 204–12], a letter by Abdullahi dan Fodio praising the *kanz* and its author.
- Supplementary material asked of Muhammad Thanbu from Muhammad and Ibrahim al-Khalīl, Abdullahi’s eldest sons [ff. 214–218].
- Various Fulfulde writings of Usman and Abdullahi and their Arabic translations, as well as an account of their physical description, their family members and a list of their Arabic writings [ff. 219–END].

At the end of the Cambridge MS, the copyist states that the copy was completed on 14 Muharram 1391 (11 March, 1971), with no further information as to their identity or that of the MS they copied from.

⁷⁶⁰ The author describes this as “a long chapter which with its length reaches until end of the book”. The chapter includes an extensive section on the *nisba* of the author, an explanation of various aspects of Fulani history with a focus on etymology, and a history of the 1804 jihad. Part of this chapter is translated, *infra*.

Translated Section of the Kanz detailing the history of the dispute with Abd al-Salam [ff.102–105]

The tribe of Gimbana⁷⁶¹ are the ones from whom the famous and well known Abd al-Salam Ganbanāwī came. He was at first among the companions of Shaykh Usman. Now what happened in these days has happened between us and the aforementioned Abd al-Salam, one of the senior figures among the chiefs of Gimbana. Abd al-Salam has become a hateful rebel after having been a praiseworthy and pious man [...] He has become foolish and confused after having been a true Qadiri [...].⁷⁶²

The reason for that was the excessive generosity of *amīr al-mu'minīn* Muhammad Bello towards him and his over-concern for him when he acceded to the Caliphate after the death of his father, Shaykh Usman [103]. Seeing signs of the grand ambition of Abd al-Salam and his arrogance towards him, he [Bello] took to sending him many gifts one after the other, more and better gifts than all the gifts that he was sending to those like him: gifts of felicitation, gifts to make allegiance, gifts to influence, and other gifts. Whatever the issue in this region, whether Fulani or Nubian, [Bello sent him gifts] to charm him and win him over and content him and all his Nubian, Zanj brothers.⁷⁶³ He thought that those gifts would gain him [Abd al-Salam's] love

⁷⁶¹ Ar. qabīlat ginbanāwiyīn

⁷⁶² Here follows an extensive list of oppositional puns and wordplay.

⁷⁶³ Ar. *nūbī*; zanj. Note that these racial terms are completely absent from Fodiawa MSS but were used further west in Masina and Timbuktu, where Muhammad Sambo Kulwa claimed to have studied under one al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. Ḥamza al-Tūrūdī al-Fūtī al-Māsinī al-Tinbuktī. See *kanz al-awlād*, Chapter One.

and affection and prevent against his extreme arrogance, his ignorant fanaticism, his enmity towards him and [his] lying to the Sudanis by [falsely] speaking the words of the Prophet: “Give gifts and thereby increase your love for each other.” [It was also] because he is the master of all the blacks in this land and gave them confidence in the Shaykh [and helped] those who so desired to travel to him.

Muhammad Bello was of an extraordinarily generous and open-handed nature. If it had been anyone other than the aforementioned Abd al-Salam, then [the saying] “be generous, and the lowly becomes generous without conflict” [would have applied]. The speaker [of these words] may have been Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān. On top of this, [Abd al-Salam] had been among the most senior companions of his father, Usman [...]. When it was said that Shaykh Usman was being altogether too generous with him in order to satisfy him and all the blacks, [this was] because [his generosity] had led to the spread of Islam among the blacks, the strengthening of their faith and their dedication to Islam. Therefore, Muhammad Bello was [trying to] win him over like his father had done, surpassing his father’s example in that. This was because his father, Shaykh Usman, was the master of following the example of the Prophet to the letter when it was said that He [the Prophet] won over all the tribes, leading to them to embrace Islam. Therefore, Muhammad Bello followed his father like his father followed the Prophet. But [these efforts] only led Abd al-Salam to be more conceited. [Indeed], despite all of that, Abd al-Salām was like him of whom [the poet Mutannabi] said:

When you are generous to the generous, you have won him over

When you are generous to the ignoble, he becomes all the more intransigent

[...]

[104] May God save us from the like of what Abd al-Salam did; this disgraceful person who reneged on the *bay'a*, went back on the pact of allegiance and broke his promise. This Abd al-Salam has now generated a great *fitna*, an almighty feud and an extreme animosity between the Muslim brothers on account of his reneging on the *bay'a* and refusing it categorically. [He has] planted animosity and bitterness in the hearts of the Muslims by dividing them. [He has] separated the black Muslims and the Fulani by goading them to hate each other when previously they had been a single entity that could not have been broken, due to the shared faith and brotherly love between them with no differentiation or division. As the Prophet said, "One believer is to another like two buildings. One strengthens the other." [...] All of th[ese actions of the Prophet are] evidence for the prohibition of racial division [and] hatred, for this is the driving factor of *fitna*, feuds and ill fortune.

[Abd al-Salam] sent a large volume of letters and dispatches to the black tribes inciting them to show enmity towards the Fulani, to hate them with a passion, to put them to flight and push them to make war on the Fulani tribes; to fight them and their kin wherever they were. Many of the black tribes heard his call, and while some of them did not heed his corrupting words and false messages, those of the right opinion were but few. The situation has worsened until the present time, when the matter between us has almost become today a second army, a vain jihad, and an endless war between all the brothers among whom there is no difference – that is, between the Fulani and black faithful. This is because of the boiling hatred and enmity between these two groups stemming from the fractious dispatches of Abd al-Salam. [Such

dispatches] sever that religious kinship and Islamic brotherhood which is eminently more important than [any] kinship based on race⁷⁶⁴ since this [former kind] will remain forever in the next life. [The] letters which he was sending out to the black tribes created divisions among the brothers, as he tried hard to make this once again a tribal matter [i.e. return to tribalism] as opposed to what things were like in the time of our Shaykh Usman.

When he [Usman] was still alive, things were Islamic, religious and of the Sunna of Muhammad with no tribalism whatsoever and only the rarest moments of ethnic division. It is said that almost one hundred and twenty of his dispatches were seized before they arrived to some of the black tribes and if it were not for fear of digression [...] I would have mentioned the text of some of the seized letters, in which he criticised all of the Fulani tribes, cursing them with the most hideous curses. While at times he left our Shaykh Usman out [of his curses], at other times he did not leave out any of the Fulani.

Perhaps these events are down to changes in time and place [...]. Such a fact is obvious for those with expertise in [105] fortune telling,⁷⁶⁵ a deep grounding in astrology and an understanding of the stars; who has learnt it correctly and in a permissible manner, with no accursed or forbidden faults [...]. There is nothing strange or uncanny [about these events] because our Shaykh Usman gave sufficient allusions while he was still alive as to how the matter of Abd al-Salam would turn out for anyone with a sufficiently clear mind and a sound and pure opinion [to understand]; as well as what would happen to him [Abd al-Salam] after his death.

⁷⁶⁴ Ar. *al-riḥm al-ṭīnīya*

⁷⁶⁵ Ar. *‘ilm al-ḥisāb*.

Now all that the friend of God⁷⁶⁶ Usman said would happen to him has happened to the letter, just as this *walī*, this renowned revealer [*mukāshif*] and famous renewer [*mujaddid*] said that it would.

⁷⁶⁶ Ar. *walī Allāh*.

Arabic Text

قبيلة غبناويين هذه هم الذين خرج منهم عبد السلام غبناوي المعروف المشهور من أصحاب الشيخ عثمان أولاً ؟ و قد جرى الآن بيننا و بين عبد السلام المذكور الذي هو من أكابر سادات غبناويين ما جرى في و صار كادرياً سفيهاً بعد أن كان قادرياً ... هذه الأيام و صار عبد السلام اليوم متمرداً حاسداً بعد أن كان متبركاً ناسكاً ... صحيحاً

و سبب ذلك هو شدة اكرام أمير المؤمنين محمد بل اياه و كثرة اعتناؤه به بعد وفاة والده الشيخ عثمان و بؤيع له بالخلافة بعد موت والده شيخنا عثمان 103 بن فودي تغمده الله برحمته و رأى علامة تكبر عبد السلام و نخوته عليه صار يرسل إلى عبد السلام بهدايا كثيرة مرة بعد مرة أكثر و أفضل من جميع الهدايا التي كان يرسلها إلى أحد من أمثاله من الهدايا التهنئية البيعية الإمريية و غيرها من الهدايا أي أمر كان في هذا الإقليم فلاتياً كان أو نوبياً تكرمه و مداراة إليه و استرضاء له ولكافة إخوانه النوبة الزنوج ظناً منه أن تلك الهدايا تجلب إليه محبته و مودته و تدفع عنه تكبره و نخوته الشديدة و حميته الجاهلية و اعتراضه الكثيرة عنه و كذاباً في السودانين لقول النبي صلى الله و سلم تهادوا تحابوا لأنه سيد جميع السودانين كلهم أجمعين في هذا الإقليم و اسطنتهم إلى الشيخ في وصولهم إليه لمن أراد منهم ذلك

و قد كان أمير المؤمنين محمد بل ذا سخاوة و بذل جدّاً خارقة للعادة و كان كريماً إلى غاية و لو لغير عبد السلام المذكور كما قيل كن كريماً تعطك الكرام اللئام من غير قتال الحكمة و لعل القائل هو معاوية بن أبي سفيان رضى الله عنهما ... و كل هذا مع زيادة أنه من أكابر أصحاب والده الشيخ عثمان ... لما قيل أن الشيخ

عثمان كان يكرمه غاية الاكرام خلاف العادة استرضاءً له و لجميع السودانين لأن ذلك ادعى إلى اسلام السودانين و ثبوت ايمانهم واستقامتهم على الاسلام و الايمان و لذا كان أمير المؤمنين محمد بل يداريه المدارة كمدارة أبيه اياه أو أفضل اقتداءً بأبيه الشيخ عثمان في ذلك لكون أبيه الشيخ عثمان صاحب الاقتداء برسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم جداً لما قيل أنه صلى الله عليه و سلم كان يدار كل قبيلة بما هو ادعى إلى اسلامها و لذلك اقتدى أمير المؤمنين محمد بل والده كما اقتدى والده برسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم و ما زاد جميع ذلك كله عبد السلام المذكور إلا كبراً و كان عبد السلام مع ذلك كله كما قال القائل:

متى كنت اكرمت الكريم ملكته و إن كنت اكرمت اللئيم تمرّداً 104

...اعاذنا الله من مثل فعل عبد السلام هذا القبيح من نقضه البيعة و نكثه العهد و خلفه الوعد و قد أوقع عبد السلام المذكور الآن فتنة كبيرة و نصومة عظيمة و عداوة شديدة بين الإخوان المسلمين لنكثه البيعة او ابايتها اياها البتة أولاً و أدخل العداوة و البغضاء في قلوب المسلمين بتفرقة المسلمين و تمييز المسلمين السودانين و الفلاتيين باغرائهم على عداوة بعضهم بعضاً بعد أن كانوا أولاد الجوهر الواحد الذي لا يقبل القسمة من الإيمان لحب الإخوان بعضهم بعضاً بلا تفرقة ولا تمييز كما قال عليه الصلاة والسلام المؤمن بالمؤمن كالبنيان يشد بعضه بعضاً...

وكل ذلك كان إشارة إلى تحريم التفرقة العنصرية او كرهتها بشدة فذلك الايقاع للفتنة والخصومات والمصائب بكثرة الرسائل والوثائق إلى قبائل السودانين شتى لاغرائهم على عداوة الفلاتيين و بغضهم بشدة و فرارهم جداً و حثهم على حرب قبائل الفلاتيين وقتلهم واذابتهم أينما كانوا وقد استمع كلامه كثير من قبائل السودانين ولم يصغي بعضهم إلى مقالته الفاسدة ودعوته الباطلة وهم ذوو الرأي هم الصائب وقليل منهم و

قد اشتد ذلك الشأن الآن حتى كاد الأمر اليوم بيننا إلى أن يكون جيشاً ثانياً وجهاداً معللاً و حرباً عواناً بين جميع الإخوان المؤمنين الذين لا فرق بينهم أولاً أي بين المؤمنين الفلاتيين و السودانيين وذلك لاشتداد غليان البغض و العداوة بين هذين الفريقين المذكورين بسبب وثائق عبد السلام القاطعة للرحم الدينية والأخوة الاسلاميّة التي هي أحقّ بالاهتمام من الرحم الطينية لكونها هي الدائمة في دار الآخرة و رسائله الفارقة بين الإخوان التي كان يرسلها إلى قبائل السودانيين يجتهد فيها على اعادة هذا الأمر أمراً قبيلياً خلاف ما كان عليه بوقت شيخنا عثمان بن فودي أي حين كان في قيد الحياة من كون الأمر أمراً دينياً اسلامياً و سنياً محمدياً لا قبيلية فيه البتة و لا التفرقة العنصرية الا نادراً قليلاً جداً حتى قيل قد غصب نحو مائة و عشرين من وثائقه المرسله قبل وصولها إلى بعض قبائل السودانيين المرسلين اليهم تلك الوثائق ولولا خوف التطويل و الستر الفلاتي الفلاكوي لذكرت نصوص بعض وثائقه المغصوبة قبل وصوله إلى محلها التي يذم فيها جميع قبائل الفلاتيين ويعيبهم غاية التعيب و يسبهم بأقبح السبب الا أنه يستثنى شيخنا عثمان بن فودي تغمده الله برحمته تارة في بعضها و تارة لا يستثنى أحداً من الفلان

و لعل ذلك لاختلاف الأوقات و الأحوال ... ولا يختفي ذلك لكل من له باع طويل في علم 105 الحساب و قدم راسخ في علم فن النجوم و فهم فن الفلك الصحيح المأذون في تعلمه دون السقيم الملعون الممنوع...ولا عجب في ذلك ولا استغراب لأن شيخنا عثمان بن فودي تغمده الله برحمته قد أشار إلى ما يؤول إليه الأمر عبد السلام هذا بإشارة كافية لكل من له عقل صحيح كافٍ و رأي صالح صافٍ شافٍ منذ هو في قيد الحياقة ما سيكون اليه شأنه و ما يصبر عليه أمر عبد السلام و ما سيقع في شأنه بعد وفاته و قد وقع عليه الآن جميع ما أخبر به ولي الله الشيخ عثمان حرفاً بحرف كما أخبر به هذا الولي المكاشف المشهور

APPENDIX IV: SOKOTO CHRONOLOGY⁷⁶⁷

Usman dan Fodio

| | | | SOURCE | DISPUTE? |
|---|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PRE-JIHAD PERIOD (1774–1804) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| | 1784–5 | mi'rāj al-'awamila | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| | 1793 | iḥyā' al-sunnah wa ikhmād al-bid'a | Balogun (1967) | |
| 4 Aug | 1794 | tabshir al-umma | Date in MS | |
| | 1794? | [lamma balaghtu] | Contextual reference | |
| 08-Mar | 1803 | masa'il muhimma | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | c.1774–1804 | ajwiba muḥarrira 'an as'ilah muqarrira | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1774–1804 | ḥiṣn al-afḥām min juyūsh al-awḥām | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1774–1804 | ḥukm jahhāl bilād al-ḥawsa | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1774–1804 | ifḥām al-munkirūn | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1774–1804 | kifāyat al-muhtadīn | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1774–1804 | mir'āt al-ṭullāb | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1774–1804 | naṣā'ih al-umma al-Muḥammadiya | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1774–1804 | shifā' al-ghalīl | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1774–1804 | tamyīz al-muslimīn min al-kāfirīn | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1804 | [Letter to a Hausa leader] | Contextual reference | |
| JIHAD PERIOD (1804–1810) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| 7 Apr | 1805 | al-amr bi muwālāt | Date in MS | Hunwick (ALA II): 1811–1812 |
| | 1806 | bayān wujūb al-hijra 'alā al-'ibād | El-Masri (1978) | Hunwick (ALA II): 1809 |
| 20-Nov | 1808 | miṣbāḥ li-ahl hadhā-l-zamān | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| 08-Oct | 1808 | tanbīh al-fāhim | Date in MS | |
| | before 1809 | kitāb muddat al-dunya | Contextual reference | |
| | before 1809 | tanbīh al-umma | Contextual reference | |
| 23-Jul | 1809 | amr al-sā'a wa-asrāṭihā | Date in MS | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | c.1804–1810 | kitāb al-maḥdhūrāt | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| | c.1804–1810 | wathīqa ilā jamī' ahl al-sūdān | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| CONSOLIDATION PERIOD (1810–1817) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| | 1811 | naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān | Hunwick (ALA II) citing Kani (1988) | |
| 04-Sep | 1811 | sirāj al-ikhwān | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| 11-Nov | 1811 | tanbīh al-ikhwān | Date in MS | |
| | Dec 1812–Jan 1813 | najm al-ikhwān | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| 20-May | 1813 | shams al-ikhwān | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| 07-Jun | 1813 | tawqīf al-Muslimīn | Date in MS | Hunwick (ALA II): 9 June |
| 07-Dec | 1813 | ta'lim al-ikhwān | Martin (1967) | |
| 15-Nov | 1814 | taḥdhīr al-ikhwān | Hunwick | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | c.1810–1817 | kitāb al-farq | Last & Al-Hajj (1965) | |
| | c.1810–1817 | nūr al-albāb | Al-Hajj (1977) | |
| DATE NOT ASSIGNED | | | | |
| | | wathīqa ilā al-rajul | | |

⁷⁶⁷ For clarification, the phrase DATED in the tables means that I have assigned the work a date in this thesis, and not necessarily that the MS itself bears a date. The precise information that led to me dating the MS is located in the SOURCE column.

Abdullahi dan Fodio

| | | | SOURCE | DISPUTE? |
|---|-----------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| PRE-JIHAD PERIOD (1774–1804) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| 26-Mar | 1800 | kifāyat al-‘awām fī al-buyū’ | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| JIHAD PERIOD (1804–1810) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| Jan | 1806 | kashf al-lu‘m | Date in MS | |
| | 1807–8 | ḡiyā’ al-ḥukkām | Contextual reference | Hunwick (ALA II): 1806–7 |
| | 1810 | ḡiyā’ ūlī [walī?]-l-amr | Date in MS | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | 1804–1810 | ḡiyā’ al-muqtadīn | Contextual reference | |
| CONSOLIDATION PERIOD (1810–1817) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| 10-Aug | 1811 | ḡiyā’ al-mujāhidīn | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| | 1811–12 | ḡiyā’ al-umma | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| 19-Jan | 1812 | ḡiyā’ al-sultān | Date in MS | |
| 07-Oct | 1812 | īdā’ al-nusūkh | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| 30-Jun | 1813 | ḡiyā’ al-umarā’ | Alkali (2004) | |
| | 1813 | tazyīn al-waraqāt | Hiskett (1963) | |
| | 1815 | ḡiyā’ al-wilāyāt | Gwandu (1977) | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | 1815–16 | ajwibat ‘an as’ilat Aḥmad Lobbo | Contextual reference | |
| SUCCESSION CRISIS (1817–1821) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| 04-May | 1817 | sabīl al-salāma | Date in MS | |
| 29-Mar | 1820 | ḡiyā’ al-siyāsāt | Kani (1988) | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | c.1817 | kitāb al-nasab | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| RULE OF GWANDU (1821–1828) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| | 1826 | dawā’ al-waswās | Hunwick (ALA II) | Shareef (1994): 1807–8 |
| | 1827 | tahdhīb al-insān | Shareef (2003) | |
| | 1828 | ḡiyā’ al-qawā’id | Shareef (2010) | |
| DATE NOT ASSIGNED | | | | |
| | | aṣl al-Fulātīyīn | | |

Muhammad Bello

| | | | SOURCE | DISPUTE? |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| PRE-JIHAD PERIOD (1774–1804) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| | 1801 | raf' al-shubha | Date in MS | |
| JIHAD PERIOD (1804–1810) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| | 1805 | miftāḥ al-baṣā'ir | Date in MS | |
| | c.1810 | Replies to al-Kānamī (in <i>infāq</i>) | Minna (1983); Brenner (1992) | |
| CONSOLIDATION PERIOD (1810–1817) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| 10-Nov | 1812 | infāq al-maysūr | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | c. 1812 | al-ghayth al-shu'būb | Contextual reference | Hunwick suggests 1813 |
| | after 1812 | ḥāshiya | Contextual reference | |
| | after 1815 | jawāb shāfin wa khiṭāb min-nā kāfin | Contextual reference | |
| SUCCESSION CRISIS (1817–1821) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| 10-Jul | 1817 | al-inṣāf fī dhikr | Date in MS | |
| 21-Sep | 1819 | kashf al-ghīṭā' | Date in MS | |
| 27-Jul | 1820 | al-qawl al-mukhtaṣar | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| Nov/Dec | 1820 | [risāla ilā Muḥammad al-Jaylānī] | Date in MS | |
| 13-Jun | 1820 | tanbīh al-ṣāhib | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| | 1820–21 | al-ghayth al-wabl | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | c. 1817 | sard al-kalām | Contextual reference | |
| | after 1817 | al-ishā'a fī ḥukm | Contextual reference | |
| | after 1817 | shifā' al-asqām | Hunwick (ALA II) | |
| | c.1818 | risāla li-l-amrāḍ shāfiya | Shareef (1995) | |
| | after 1817 | [Letter to Amīr Ya' qūb] | Contextual reference | |
| | 1817–1821 | kitāb al-taḥrīr | Contextual reference | |
| | 1817–1821 | risālat Amīr Muḥammad Bello | Contextual reference | |
| RULE OF SOKOTO (1821–37) | | | | |
| DATED | | | | |
| | 1825–6 | [Letter to al-Mukhtār al-Saghīr al-Kuntī] | Contextual reference | |
| NON-DATED | | | | |
| | c. 1821 | jawāb shāfin li-l-murīd | Contextual reference | |
| | c.1821–1828 | [maktūb fī radd masā'il 'an Aḥmad Lobbo] | Contextual reference | |
| | after 1821 | kifāyat al-muhtadīn | Contextual reference | |
| | after 1821 | miftāḥ al-sadād | Contextual reference | |
| | after 1821 | al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq | Contextual reference | |
| | after 1821 | qadh al-zinād | Contextual reference | |
| DATE NOT ASSIGNED | | | | |
| | | [majmū' ba'ḍ al-rasā'il] | | |
| | | shamsīyat al-ikhwān | | |
| | | wathīqa ilā jamā'at al-muslimīn | | |

Fodiawa Compared (Part I)

| PRE-JIHAD PERIOD (1774–1804) | | USMAN DAN FODIO | ABDULLAHI DAN FODIO | MUHAMMAD BELLO | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| DATED | 1784–5 | mi'rāj al-'awamila | 28-Mar 1800 | kifāyat al-'awām fi al-buyū' | 1801 | raf' al-shubha | |
| | 1793 | iḥyā' al-sunnah wa ikhmād al-bid'a | | | | | |
| | 4 Aug 1794 | tabshīr al-umma | | | | | |
| | 1794? | [lamma balaghtu] | | | | | |
| | 08-Mar 1803 | masa'il muhimma | | | | | |
| | NON-DATED | c.1774–1804 | ajwiba muḥarrira 'an as'īlah muqarrira | | | | |
| | | c.1774–1804 | ḥiṣn al-afḥām min juyūsh al-awḥām | | | | |
| | | c.1774–1804 | ḥukm jahhāl bilād al-ḥawsa | | | | |
| | | c.1774–1804 | ifḥām al-munkirūn | | | | |
| | | c.1774–1804 | kifāyat al-muhtadīn | | | | |
| | | c.1774–1804 | mir'āt al-ṭullāb | | | | |
| | | c.1774–1804 | naṣā'iḥ al-umma al-Muḥammadiya | | | | |
| | | c.1774–1804 | shifā' al-ghalīl | | | | |
| | | c.1774–1804 | tamyīz al-muslimīn min al-kāfirīn | | | | |
| | | c.1804 | [Letter to a Hausa leader] | | | | |
| JIHAD PERIOD (1804–1810) | | | | | | | |
| DATED | 7 Apr 1805 | al-amr bi muwālāt | Jan 1806 | kashf al-lu'm | 1805 | miftāḥ al-baṣā'ir | |
| | 1806 | bayān wujūb al-hijra 'alā al-'ibād | 1807–8 | ḍiyā' al-ḥukkām | c.1810 | Replies to al-Kānamī (in <i>infāq</i>) | |
| | 20-Nov 1808 | miṣbāḥ li-ahl hadhā-l-zamān | 1810 | ḍiyā' ūlī [walī?]-l-amr | | | |
| | 08-Oct 1808 | tanbīh al-fāhim | | | | | |
| | before 1809 | kitāb muddat al-dunya | | | | | |
| | before 1809 | tanbīh al-umma | | | | | |
| | 23-Jul 1809 | amr al-sā'a wa-ashrāṭihā | | | | | |
| | NON-DATED | c.1804–1810 | kitāb al-maḥdḥūrāt | 1804–181 | ḍiyā' al-muqtadīn | | |
| | | c.1804–1810 | wathīqa ilā jamī' ahl al-sūdān | | | | |
| | CONSOLIDATION PERIOD (1810–1817) | | | | | | |
| DATED | 1811 | naṣīḥat ahl al-zamān | 10-Aug 1811 | ḍiyā' al-mujāhidīn | 11-Nov 1812 | infāq al-maysūr | |
| | 04-Sep 1811 | sirāj al-ikhwān | 1811–12 | ḍiyā' al-umma | | | |
| | 11-Nov 1811 | tanbīh al-ikhwān | 19-Jan 1812 | ḍiyā' al-sultān | | | |
| | Dec 1812–Jan 1813 | najm al-ikhwān | 07-Oct 1812 | idā' al-nusūkh | | | |
| | 20-May 1813 | shams al-ikhwān | 30-Jun 1813 | ḍiyā' al-umarā' | | | |
| | 07-Jun 1813 | tawqīf al-Muslimīn | 1813 | tazyīn al-waraqāt | | | |
| | 07-Dec 1813 | ta'līm al-ikhwān | 1815 | ḍiyā' al-wilāyāt | | | |
| | 15-Nov 1814 | taḥdīr al-ikhwān | | | | | |
| | NON-DATED | c.1810–1817 | kitāb al-farq | 1815–16 | ajwibat 'an as'īlat Aḥmad Lobbo | c. 1812 | al-ghayth al-shu'būb |
| | | c.1810–1817 | nūr al-albāb | | | after 1812 | ḥāshiya |
| | | | | | | after 1815 | iawāb shāfin wa khitāb min-nā kāfin |

Fodiawa Compared (Part II)

| ABDULLAHI DAN FODIO | | | MUHAMMAD BELLO | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|---|
| SUCCESSION CRISIS (1817–1821) | | | | | |
| DATED | | | | | |
| 04-May | 1817 | sabīl al-salāma | 10-Jul | 1817 | al-inṣāf fī dhikr |
| 29-Mar | 1820 | ḍiyā’ al-siyāsāt | 21-Sep | 1819 | kashf al-ghīṭā’ |
| | | | 27-Jul | 1820 | al-qawl al-mukhtaṣar |
| | | | Nov/Dec | 1820 | [risāla ilá Muḥammad al-Jaylānī] |
| | | | 13-Jun | 1820 | tanbīh al-ṣāhib |
| | | | | 1820–21 | al-ghayth al-wabl |
| NON-DATED | | | | | |
| | c.1817 | kitāb al-nasab | | c. 1817 | sard al-kalām |
| | | | | after 1817 | al-ishā’a fī ḥukm |
| | | | | after 1817 | shifā’ al-asqām |
| | | | | c.1818 | risāla li-l-amrāḍ shāfiya |
| | | | | after 1817 | [Letter to Amīr Ya’qūb] |
| | | | | 1817–1821 | kitāb al-taḥrīr |
| | | | | 1817–1821 | risālat Amīr Muḥammad Bello |
| RULE OF GWANDU (1821–1828) | | | RULE OF SOKOTO (1821–37) | | |
| DATED | | | | | |
| | 1826 | dawā’ al-waswās | | 1825–6 | [Letter to al-Mukhtār al-Saghīr al-Kuntī] |
| | 1827 | tahdhīb al-insān | | | |
| | 1828 | ḍiyā’ al-qawā’id | | | |
| | | | NON-DATED | | |
| | | | | c. 1821 | jawāb shāfin li-l-murīd |
| | | | | c.1821–1828 | [maktūb fī radd masā’il ‘an Aḥmad Lobbo] |
| | | | | after 1821 | kifāyat al-muhtadīn |
| | | | | after 1821 | miftāḥ al-sadād |
| | | | | after 1821 | al-nuqūl al-nawāṭiq |
| | | | | after 1821 | qadh al-zinād |

Fodiawa Compared (Part III)

| RULE OF THE FODIAWA | SOKOTO ELITE | OTHERS |
|--|--|---|
| | DATED 1817 <i>rawḍ al-jinān</i> (Gidado dan Layma) 1823 <i>rawḍāt al-afkār</i> (Abdulkadir dan Tafa) | 1818 <i>kanz al-awlād</i> (Sambo Kulwa) |
| SUCCESSORS OF BELLO | DATED 1838 <i>al-kashf wa-l-bayān</i> (Gidado dan Layma) 1839 <i>tabshīr al-ikhwān</i> (Nana Asmau) NON-DATED 1837–42 [<i>Abū Bakr 'Aṭīq MS</i>] (Atiku) 1837–42 <i>intiqāl min balad Hawsa</i> (Atiku) 1837–51 <i>kashf al-ḥijāb wa-ra' al-niqāb</i> (Gidado dan Layma) | 24-May 1832 [<i>additions to kanz al-awlād</i>] (Bayero b. Sambo Kulwa) 1854 <i>taqāyīd mimmā waṣala</i> (al-Ḥājj Sa'īd) c. 1862 <i>bayān mā waqa'a</i> (al-Ḥājj 'Umar Tāl) |
| EARLY BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION (1903–1920s) | DATED c. 1903 <i>ta'nīs al-ikhwān</i> (Muhammad al-Bukhārī) 1908 <i>lubāb mā fī tazyīn al-waraqāt wa-infāq al-maysūr</i> (Aḥmad b. Sa'd) | 1908 Historical Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes (Burdon) – informed by Muhammad al-Bukhārī 1909 History of Gando (McAllister) – informed by Aḥmad b. Sa'd 1914–15 <i>Tanbīh al-Ikhwān</i> , An Early Fulani Conception of Islam (Palmer) – informed by Muhammad al-Bukhārī 1922 The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani (Arnett) |
| NATIONAL PERIOD (1950s–mid 1970s) | 1956–66 Historical works of Sir Ahmadu Bello (<i>Sardauna</i> of Sokoto) 1959–78 Historical works of Junayd (Wazir Sokoto) | 1960 Government in Zazzau, 1800-1950 (M.G. Smith) 1966 The Emirates of Northern Nigeria (Kikgreene-Hogben) – informed by Sir Ahmadu Bello 1967 The Fulani Empire of Sokoto (Johnston) – informed by Junaydu 1967 The Sokoto Caliphate (Last) – informed by Junaydu 1971 Power and diplomacy in northern Nigeria (Adeleye) |