

# Sudanese Memoirs

Being Mainly Translations of a Number of  
Arabic Manuscripts Relating to the Central  
and Western Sudan

Three Volume in One

**H. R. Palmer**



*Routledge Revivals*

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# SUDANESE MEMOIRS

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## P R E F A C E

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*The MSS which are translated in these volumes have been obtained at different times and in different places in the Western Sudan during the past twenty-four years.*

*The text of the "Kanem War of Idris Aloomo" is the one procured by the traveller Barth in 1853 and sent by him to the British Foreign Office, as was its companion MS "A History of the First Twelve Years of the Reign of Mai Idris Aloomo." (1)*

*Many of the others are anonymous and some may be said to represent merely oral tradition.*

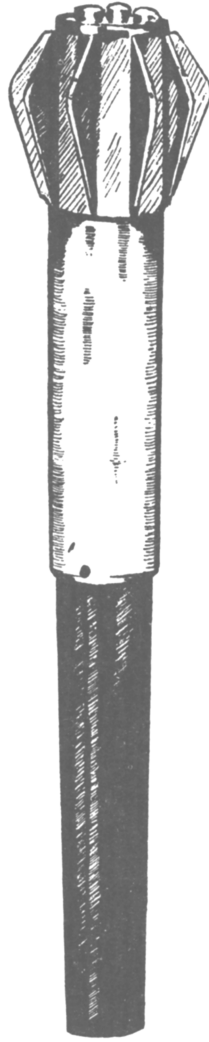
*I am much indebted to Mr. J. R. Patterson, both for correcting the proofs and for two maps, which illustrate the texts, prepared by him, also to Mr. A. E. V. Walwyn for permission to print his "Notes on the History of Daura."*

H. R. PALMER.

*Kaduna, April 2, 1927.*

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$\frac{3}{8}$  actual size

Sceptre of the Mais of Bornu.



The Sceptre of the Mais of Bornu. (Kan. babu).



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## INTRODUCTION TO KANEM WARS OF MAI IDRIS ALOOMA.

THE expeditions to Kanem which form the subject matter of this work and continue the account of Mai Idris Aloomā's reign given by Imam Ahmed ibn Fartua in his "The first twelve years of the reign of Mai Idris Aloomā," represent rather the struggles of rival branches of an originally homogeneous dynasty, the Magumi or Saifawa, for dominion over Kanem, than any racial hostility between the peoples of Kanem and those of Bornu. At N'gazargamu as capital, the rightful line of Sultans or Mais had established itself about 1470 A.D. after they had wandered about since the end of the preceding century, when Mai Umr Idrisimi finally left the old capital at N'jimi in Kanem and went West.

Mai Idris Katagarmabe, the grandfather of Mai Idris Aloomā, had, as this work records, first re-entered N'jimi in the year 1505, one hundred and twenty-two years after the first expulsion of the Saifawa Mai Daud Nigalemi from it. Idris Katagarmabe was succeeded in 1526 by his son Muhammad, who was able firmly to maintain his authority over Kanem and secure the respect of the Bulala, so much so that when he was succeeded by his brother 'Ali, about 1545, the latter married a Mairam (Princess) of the Bulala, who gave birth to Idris Aloomā as his posthumous son.

According to present-day tradition, this Bulala Mairam, Aisa Kili N'girmaram, who afterwards became the Magira or Official Queen Mother, had great difficulty in preserving Idris' life from his cousin Mai Dunama N'Gumaramma, and the son of the latter, Mai Abdullah, but on the death of Abdullah she became Regent, and is said to have built the brick palace and mosque at Gambaru on the Komadugu, the ruins of which still remain, in order that Idris might not be corrupted by the manners of the capital N'gazargamu or Birni, which lies some fifteen miles to the south of Gambaru.

The affection which, as the narrative states several times, Idris felt for the Bulala Sultan Muhammad ibn Abdullahi was thus, no doubt, due to the fact that Muhammad was his own maternal uncle, or otherwise closely connected with Magira Aisa Kili.

As a good deal of misapprehension and confusion has existed with regard to this Bulala Kingdom since the days of the Arab geographer Idrisi, owing to a confusion between the name of its original capital Ga'u, just north of Lake Fitri and east of the present Yawo, with the Gao or Gaoga which succeeded Kaukau or Kukia in the Niger Valley as capital of the Songhay Empire, it will be convenient here to record certain Kanuri songs which have reference to the Bulala Mais and also certain other facts and traditions.

Though, as Barth states, the actual Sultans or rulers of the Bulala were a branch of the Saifawa of Kanem, their first Sultan being known as Mai Jil Sukumami, the rank and file of the Bulala were not Magumi but Kayi or Keyi, from the Wadai region, who

intermarried with the N'gizim or Kuku tribes of the Fitri region, the Dajo.

The name Bulala is connected with the salutation bestowed on them in songs "Ye Kilalan" (Kiyi-ilala) which, among the Kanembu, means "O exalted Kiyi or Kayi," and with the Tamashek terms for "noble" or "freeman" Ili, Ilili, Illela, Lilloa, and Illam. In Bornu, the Bulala are commonly called "Kayi Bulala."

The precise date and relationship of Jil Sukumami\* is rather obscure, but he was a contemporary of the Mais Idris and Daud Nigalemi, and thus he flourished about the middle of the 14th century—1350-1380.

On the other hand, it appears evident both from the songs which will be given below and other facts, that he was not descended from Dunama Dabalemi or even from Umme Jilmi, but from the Mais Biyuma (Wayama) and Bulu, who lived before the Bornu Muslim era, which began with Umme Jilmi, circa 1086.

The centre of power of these Mais, as we learn from Idrisi's notice of Kanem, was not N'jimi, but the region of Madan or Madam (Idrisi's Matan) *i.e.* the south-eastern part of Kanem in the region of the modern Bâri and N'guri extending east to Lake Fitri.

Here was situated the original Biyo or Waiyo, whence comes the name Biyuma or Wayama, from which the Kanuri and Bulala rulers are by the Bagarmians called respectively Biyo and Biyo Bulala.

According to the Chronicles and Girgams, Bulu was the son of Biyoma or Waiyama. The descendants of Bulu are the Buluwa or Bulwa, who in the narrative are mentioned as almost synonymous with Idris' enemies in this region, and whose name compounded with the Tamashek "ilala" (nobles) is responsible for the name Bul-ilala = Bulala, and on the other hand, is the same name as the name Bolewa, which is applied to a ruling caste in the region of Fikka which formed part of one of the so-called Kororafa migrations into Nigeria at a very early period, and that of the sea port on the east of Lake Chad still called Bol.

To the immediate south of Lake Chad also lay Gamtilo one of the earliest Barbar settlements, and Balagi or Balge, an ancient capital which lay about five hours journey east of Gamtilo.

The following Tebu traditions current at Bulma concerning the Oasis of Kawar and neighbouring part of the Sahara are given by Captain Buchanan.†

"The first people of Kawar were Sos (giants) from the Fezzan. Legend declares they were a very big race, while it is still claimed by the natives that the skeletons of these giants, and the great houses where they lived, are even yet to be seen in the Fezzan near Tejerri. These giants were as tall as twenty elbows.

\* Sukuma denotes in Kanuri a woman all of whose children but *one* have died.

† "Sahara" by Angus Buchanan, M.C., F.R.G.S.  
John Murray, London, 1926.

“ In due course the Sultan of the Beri-Beri came to Bulma and asked the Sultan of the Sos for permission to settle there with his people. Whereupon the giant king, answering nothing, took a wand and, extending it, turned slowly round so that he formed a mighty circle, the edge of which extended to Yeggeba, in northern Kawar and to Dibbela in the south (a diameter of 100 miles or more); and within that area the Beri-Beri were permitted to live ”.

“ The Sos were at that time settled in the oasis in the valley of Bulma, the rainfall of which was coming from Jado, and going to Fachi and Termit\*”.

After this legendary time it is said that: “ In 800 A.D. there was a great invasion of Beri-Beri, who were Muslims. They came from Yaman in Arabia by way of the Fezzan and Kawar, and continued to the country of Mao (Kanem territory) leaving in their passage some people who thought the country of Bulma attractive and suitable to settle in.”

“ In this way the foundation was laid of Jado, Siggidim, Dirku, and Bulma.”

“ Furthermore all oases † between Bulma and Chad were colonised by Beri-Beri. Some of them were already occupied, but the inhabitants were ejected by the Beri-Beri. The original people were a tribe named Koiyam and representatives of the race are still to be found in Bornu.”

“ When the Tebu came to the region they found the Beri-Beri had already been in occupation of Kawar for a long time. The first Tebu came from Termit, and it is claimed that the tribe originated from lawless people who had committed murder in their own countries to the south, and were obliged to flee and become lawless. Later in their history, when the Tebu were an established race in Tibesti, the first of the tribe to discover Kawar chanced across it by accident when in pursuit of strayed camels. This adventurer found the country promising to live in, and returned to Tibesti with the news. As a consequence of this discovery a number of Tebu crossed to Kawar with their families to settle.”

“ In this way Ashenumma, Arrigi, Tiggumama, N'gassar, and Chimmidur were founded.”

“ In time the Tebu grew in strength and gained supremacy over the Beri-Beri, who became subject to them.”

“ Later on the Tuareg of Air came to Bulma and Fachi, and took them over as colonies, exacting tax, which for a long time was paid to the Sultan of Agades. But the Tuareg never occupied the country.”

“ The three oldest towns in Kawar are: Bulma, Dirku, and Gazbi. Of these Bulma is by far the most important because of its prolific salt-pits.”

“ As a place of outstanding fame in the Sahara it is naturally rich in local history. At various periods the town has occupied

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\* An extremely interesting geographical observation, for no water-course exists along that line to-day; it suggests evidence of physical change and decay in the Sahara.

† Another observation of particular interest. Wells, at places, are all that remain along that line of territory at the present time.

three different situations. The site of the oldest town, known to the natives as Birabirn, is about a quarter of a mile south of the Bulma of the present."

With regard to the ancestry of the Saifawa or Magumi who, as has been seen, were the "Magge" or Royal "Clan" both of the rightful Mais of Kanem and of the Bulala, the Bornu legend set forth more than once in these pages, is that their paternal ancestor was Saif ibn Dthi Yazan of Yaman.

Saif is a historical personage and, round the regions where he lived, Yaman and Adan (Aden), there centres much myth not unmixed with history.\*

According to Arab tradition Bilkis, Queen of Sheba, came from Saba in Yaman, the "Arabia Felix" of the Romans, which lies to the north and west of Aden, and embarked at Aden for her visit to King Solomon. Cain, also, after killing his brother, was, it is believed, tempted by Iblis, the common enemy of mankind, to become a fire-worshipper, as his brother Abel had been, with the words "Be thou also a worshipper of fire, and the sovereignty of the earth of which thou hast been deprived shall be restored to thee and thy progeny." Cain and his progeny are supposed to have erected their first fire altar at Aden. In the 23rd verse of the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, Aden is described on equal terms with Sheba in its commercial relations with ancient Tyre.

The history of the people of Aden is bound up with that of the people of Yaman. The earliest inhabitants of Yaman were those of the other parts of Southern Arabia bordering the Red Sea and beyond. The evidence of the Bible and of tradition is that the Kushites were the first known race who peopled those tracts. How long they lasted cannot be conjectured, but Ibn Khaldun, the Arab historian, states that they were succeeded by a tribe who were the descendants of Sham, *i.e.* Semites, from which the inference is that the Kushites were non-Semitic. The first Semites did not remain long in southern Arabia, but migrated northwards along the west coast. They left behind them the tribe of 'Ad, of whom Sheddad, son of 'Ad is said to have built, not far from Aden, a wonderful palace.

The next invasion of Southern Arabia differed from previous ones in that it came from the west, when the Amalekites of the Bible, called the Bani 'Amar, overran the country. It is supposed that in course of time the Bani 'Amar, became amalgamated with the Sabaeans and formed the Himyarites; but, however evolved, there existed a line of Himyarite rulers of Aden and Yaman for several hundreds of years before the birth of Christ. The Himyarite power declined and finally disappeared in the destruction wrought by the Roman expedition to Yaman under Elius Gallus, Prefect of Egypt, in the reign of Augustus in about A.D. 110. With eighty ships of war, 130 transports, and 10,000 Roman infantry, this Roman general made incursions into Arabia and left traces of Roman civilization behind him, although he did not penetrate as far as Sana'a.

It was, perhaps, in the centuries before and after the birth of

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\* For fuller accounts of Aden see Journal of Central Asian Society 1927-1928.

Christ that Aden attained its second period of greatness. It became a great market. Spikenard, alabaster, and frankincense were much in demand not only in Europe, but also in India and China. Merchants and their ships crowded the ports of the Red Sea, where these and other luxuries were obtained. The harbour of Aden was full of ships either passing up the Red Sea with the products of Arabia and Eastern Africa, or waiting for a favourable wind which would blow them to the Gulf of Cambay in India, whence also they would be blown back to Aden by the return monsoon.

It was only about half a century after the birth of Christ that the unknown author of the "Periplus" placed on record the prosperity of Aden in his book of mercantile jottings. He calls the place "Eudaimon Arabia" and tells us that it "is a village by the shore, having convenient anchorages and watering-places sweeter and better than those at Ocelis (the modern Sheikh Saad, near Perim); it lies at the entrance of a bay, and the land recedes from it. It was called 'Eudaimon' because, in the early days when the voyage was not yet made from India to Egypt, and when sailors did not dare to sail from Egypt to the ports across this ocean, all came together at this place. It received the cargoes from both countries, just as Alexandria now receives the things brought both from abroad and from Egypt. But not long before our own time Charibael (*i.e.* a Yamanite king) destroyed the place."

After the destruction of the town of Aden, referred to in the "Periplus," there is no historical mention of the place for two or three hundred years. Christianity began to supplant other creeds in Europe. The Emperor Constantine sent Christian embassies to many places, and among them one to Aden, where a church was erected in 342 A.D. But Christianity did not flourish in Aden, although it met with more success in the Yaman proper. Its spread ended in a massacre, crushing out the new religion. A few survivors of this massacre fled to Abyssinia, where they induced the Najash, who was a Christian, to take up arms to avenge the fate of their brethren. The Najash agreed to the suggestion, and despatched an army of 70,000 men, under the command of his son Aryat. This force landed at Aden, and marched into Yaman, after Aryat had burnt his transports to show his troops that for them the question was one of death or glory. This happened about 525 A.D. The Abyssinians after routing the Jew authors of the Christian massacre, and after driving the Himyarite ruler, Dthu Nowas, to die by a voluntary jump over a cliff to avoid being taken, remained in the land they had captured.

But Saif ibn Dthi Yazan, the descendant of the Himyarite kings, seeing the people turning against the Abyssinians by reason of their cruelty and oppression, sought aid to regain the kingdom of his fathers, and applied first to Byzantium and then to Kosroes Parwiz, King of Persia. There were four Abyssinian kings of Yaman, and it fell to the last of them, Masruk, to meet the new invaders. At first Kosroes had refused to entertain the request of Saif, but the latter changed his ground when he saw that his appeal

to sympathy was likely to be ineffective. He described the wealth of his lawful possessions, and played upon the cupidity of the Persians with better effect. Finally, Kosroes collected an army of 3,600 men—mainly prisoners and condemned criminals—and despatched them by sea to Aden with the remark: "If they conquer these regions, it will add to my kingdom; if they perish, they but suffer the just punishment of their crimes." Saif himself led this force, which fought its first battle just outside Aden. Masruk was killed, and the Persians established their dominion over Yaman, where Saif ruled as a Persian Viceroy. This was in about the year A.D. 575.

The last Persian Viceroy, Badan, became a follower of Muhammad, and after his death in A.D. 632, Aden and Yaman passed into Muhammadan hands, and were governed by the house of Ummayya until A.D. 749, when they passed into the possession of the Abbaside Caliphs, Daud ibn Abd al Majia being appointed Governor of Aden. In A.D. 932, Yaman threw off its allegiance, and its rulers became independent under the style and title of Imam. It is a remarkable fact that many of the rulers of Yaman after Badan bore Persian names.

El Bekri, the Arab writer who lived towards 1050 A.D., states that in his day the people of Kanem were idolaters but that princes of the fugitive Beni Ummayya of Damascus were in the country. The Bornu writers also speak of the Caliphate shifting to Bornu after the death of the Ummayyad Caliph Umr ibn Abd ul Aziz, but it is doubtful whether El Bekri's statement should be taken too literally, while again, the fact that the Ummayyads did rule Yaman for a time and that the Bornu people claimed descent from Saif ibn Dthi Yazan may well have led to such an inference.

The Timbuctu authors also state that the kings of both Bornu and Songhay came from the "army of the Caliph Umr ibn Abd ul Aziz."

A much better authority, however, is Yakubi who states definitely that the rulers of Kanem were of the Barbar tribe of Zaghawa while Leo Africanus states that they were of the Libyan tribe of Bardoa.

The fact is that while it is probable that some travelling Arab chief, possibly an Ummayyad, or possibly a Himyarite, married into the Zaghawa or Kayi, his sons who succeeded made good their claims to rule not through him but through their mothers.

To all intents and purposes both Saif ibn Dthi Yazan and his son Ibrahim are a myth, and the first real Mai of Kanem was Mai Dugu Bremmi, who succeeded because he was the "Dugu" or son of the chief's daughter or sister.\*

He was followed by Mai Fune, *i.e.* a Kayi (Kindin) or Zaghawi Mai, who wore a litham or mouth covering (fune) like the Tuwareg, of whom the Zaghawa were a branch.

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\* In Tamashek—Tegasi.

As regards this succession by the sister's son in the Sudan there is a relevant passage in MacMichael's *History of the Arabs of the Sudan*, Volume I, page 138: "At first the king of Nuba attempted to repulse them (the Guhayna) but they failed: then they won them over by giving them their daughters in marriage. Thus was their (*i.e.* the Nuba) Kingdom disintegrated on account of their mother, according to the custom of the infidels as to the succession of the sister's son."

These early Barbar chiefs of Kanem were nomads as appears from Yakubi's (891 A.D.) notice of Kanem (a term which denoted the Sudan in general to the south of Tibesti) as also from Ibn Khaldun's extract from the work of Ibn Said; but whereas Dugu may perhaps have lived mainly in the region between Lake Fitri and Borku, and from there made his famous expedition to Yari Arbasan near the Sanaga River in the Congo Basin, his successor Fune, according to the consensus of the different records, died in Kanem, where his people (called Funiyawan in one Girgam) had at least a grazing ground in the regions which lay towards the south-east corner of Lake Chad or on the Bahr-ul-Ghazal.

Barth gives to the place where Fune died, the name of Malana: most Girkams give N'galan Bute or N'gala M'bute; one reads Muli Funiyawan.

It seems however that the variant readings all denote the same region, and that probably the best reading of all is Malan, *i.e.* Idrisi's Manan, or Matan (Madan) which in his day (1150), was the most important part of Kanem. This Manan or Malan possibly denoted the region called Kuluwan or Kuluwa in the Arabic Lists where Funi's second successor Katuri died. It was in the Kulu region where, in the chronicle translated below, the Bulala made their big stockade to accommodate all their followers in Kanem. The place is now called Mowal Kukulma.

The settlement or even semi-settlement of this ruling family of Magumi in this region would naturally result in their kindred on their mother's side, other Kayi or Kindin, following in their wake.

That they did so hardly needs proof, especially as there is no doubt that the Bulala were the result of intermarriage between Kayi (Kindin) and the N'gizim or Kuka tribes of the Fitri region. The latter, according to tradition, supported to some extent by notices in Arab authorities, were in part of Kushite or Gara extraction, for they were apparently pastoral people (Fellata) who possessed sheep and goats, if not cattle.

The origin of the Bulala is however put beyond doubt by the following extracts from their songs concerning their Magumi Mais.

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Extracts from Bulala Songs.

Translation.

1

Bula Jil, Ye Kiyi-ilála:  
Maina Jil, Kafe, Salmami,

O town of Jil: O noble Kiyi:  
Prince Jil: He whose path is  
open as the plain: Son of  
Salma,

Extracts from Bulala Songs.	Translation.
Sikumami, Adamami, Kanje bula N'jimibe.	Son of Sikuma, son of Adama, The Smoke of the town of N'jimi.
2	
Karumarammi, Abdul Karim Lefiami Dunama- rammi; Yange sube jeye n'zu libillabe.	Son of the daughter of the Gara (Kara) Abdul Karim, son of Lefia the daughter of Dunama; Who has greaves of iron tied with a girdle of silver.
Abdul Karim Lefiami, Lefia Dunamarambe. Karadin Kasaga Kimewa;	Abdul Karim son of Lefia, Lefia daughter of Dunama. In the palm of his hand he holds a red spear;
Bibien laya Kimewa;	On his arm is a charm covered with red leather;
Tata n'girma Kimelan;	A boy (he is) mounted on a red war-horse;
Jibchia, Kilusu Kimelan.	When he dismounts he alights on a red carpet.
Wayye kuru chigurosko,	Presently, (he says) I shall seek council of God,
Allah chiworin:	He asks God if it will be propitious (to go to war);
Yalan Kindin Yisoro, <sup>1</sup>	The Kindin have come against the North.
Allah Chiworin;	He asks God if it will be propitious (to go to war);
Futen Magumi Saifu chiguduro,	In the west the Magumi of Saif ibn Dthi Yazan descend like rain,
Allah chiworin;	He asks God if it will be propitious (to go to war);
Karima Mairammi, Mairam Wadairambe, Andi Kirigu fandan'de dugo Kutu faniyen.	Abdul Karim, son of a princess, The Princess of Wadai, If we go not forth to war We shall be unhappy.
Allah Yalan Bohadi chiguduro,	God has sent the Buhadi (Fezzanis) like rain on the North,
Allah Chiworin;	Yet he asks God if it will be propitious (to go to war).

1. The meaning from this point to the end of the poem appears to be that the singer is inciting Abdul Karim to go to war and finding excuse for his doing so.

Extracts from Bulala Songs.	Translation.
<b>3</b>	
Buluwari Bulama, Hadijami;	Chief of the land of the Bulwa, son of Hadija;
Kâ sube, Kirkiron'zu libillabe <sup>1</sup> ;	Whose staff is of iron Spiralled with silver:
Bula Wayo Futemi.	His town Wayo (Biu) in the west.
Ye Kiyi-ilâla, Kwa Wayoma;	O noble Kiyi, warrior and ruler of Wayo;
Falmatami Dunamarammi.	Son of Falmata the daughter of Dunama.
Kagil subewa:	Owner of <sup>2</sup> an iron anvil.
Madama Futemi,	At Madama in the west,
Ali Adamami Bundirambe	Ali son of Adama the daughter of a lion.
Bula Madamin kargo.	At the town of Madama lies.
<b>4</b>	
Kukade <sup>3</sup> Aminami;	Owner of the town of Kuka, son of Amina;
Kuguma Hauwami;	Owner of the fiddle <sup>4</sup> , son of Hauwa.
Kugun'zu libillabe:	Whose fiddle was of silver:
Bula Kukaden kargo.	He lies in the town of Kuka.
<b>5</b>	
Bula Ferum, ye Kiyi-ilâla,	O town of Ferum, O noble Kiyi.
Fiema Aisami,	Fiema son of Aisa,
Bula Ferumnin kargo.	He lies at Ferum.
<b>6</b>	
Kwa Idrisu	The warrior Idris,
Idrisu Aisami	Idris son of Aisa,
Fefeturam duniabe	Whose protecting wings <sup>5</sup> spread over the world,
Bula Fefelan Kargo.	He lies at the town of Fefe.

1. Kirkirno = lit., to mix, mould, with a turning movement. Here the word evidently means the metal binding a spear shaft.

2. Translating the postfix -wa = in possession of.

3. or ? Kukabe.

4. "Kugu" = goge (H) = fiddle. So in following line.

5. Fefeto "wing." The idea apparently is of protection.

Extracts from Bulala Songs.	Translation.
<b>7</b>	
<p>Am Jihad, ye Kiyi-ilâlam  Aji Fantami, Aji Lilawan Fan-  tami,  Aji, kuduwan, Fantami,  Aji, tumbal deguwa, Fantami;  Aji Mairam Barimarambe;  Aji jibturam deguwa,  Jibturam fal Wasuri Buhadibe,  Jibturam fal Kindin ikilanbe;  Jibturam fal Magumi Saifube,  Jibturam fal Wadai Kwodeyibe:  Haji, yaji, Fantami,  Lilawan Mairammi,  Kwâ Barima, Bukr Zeinambe.</p>	<p>Am Jihad (town), O noble Kiyi,  Hajj son of Fanta, Hajj son of  Fanta of Lilawa,  Hajj, of many towns, son of  Fanta,  Hajj with four clan drums, son  of Fanta;  Hajj son of the Princess of Bari;  Hajj with four halts,  One halt among the Wasuri  Buhadi,  One halt among the slaves of the  Kindin,  One halt among the Magumi of  Saif,  One halt among the Kodok of  Wadai:  Hajj the little, son of Fanta,  Son of the Princess of Lilawa,  Warrior, ruler of Bari, Bukr son  of Zeinam.</p>
Ni dugu kime	You are the red grandson of a king,
Fune chilimwa Karau kau chilimwa	With the black mouth-veil And armlets of black stone.
<b>8</b>	
<p>Amaramma, ye kelalan  Kwâ, Tahir Hauwami,  Hauwa Budumarambe,  Mairam Kelu Budumarammi,</p>	<p>Owner of Amaram, O noble Kiyi,  Warrior, Tahir son of Hauwa,  Hauwa daughter of the Buduma.  Son of Princess Kelu of the  Buduma,</p>
Mairam Aisha Budumarammi	Son of Princess Aisha of the Buduma
Kwâ Buduma Fannami	Warrior, a Buduma, son of Fanna,
Yirimarammi	Son of the daughter of the Yirima,
Mai Bula Yelabe	A king whose town is in the North.

It will be observed that in spite of the fact that their Mais were descended from the early Magumi Mais, and in spite of the fact that they distinguish as enemies not only the Magumi Saifu but the Wasuri (Buhadi) of Fezzan and the Kindin, the singers address the Bulala in general as "Ye Kelalan" which latter is merely a lengthened form of Keyi or Kayi, *i.e.* people who are *imoshagh* in Tamashek.

Bulala, as the name of a people, was a compound of their tribal name Bulwa or Bul, and "ilala" plural of "ili" meaning "free men" or "nobles" in the Tuwareg languages.

To this same general type of population we must also assign the Kananiyya mentioned in this history. In the text their ethnic affinity is not definitely stated, but from the location of their habitat (the north of Kanem), as well as the general description of them and, in particular, the fact that they were large cattle owners, it does not appear that they were primitive pagan negroes. The theological abuse showered on them further indicates that they were probably not racially unconnected with the Kanuri, as indeed might also be inferred from the position of their towns.

Had they been of Teda or Tubu affinity, they would have been part of the Bulala confederation which apparently they were not. The inference is therefore that, whether they were Hadadi or Bongo (Blacksmiths) in part, as Barth suggested, they were of Barbar or Tuwareg connection, and not dissimilar from the Ikli whom Barth discusses with them (vol. ii, p. 277). Ikli or Takili is the Tamashek term for slaves as a caste or grade of society, and not primarily a place name.

In the days of Makrisi (circa 1400), there obviously were communities of Ikli resident in Kanem, and it seems therefore highly probable that these Kananiyya were Ikli who had remained in Kanem throughout the civil war between the Saifawa and Bulala.

But apart from these considerations, the name Kananiyya or otherwise Kinaniyya, may be connected with both the general Kanuri words for Barbar Tuwareg, Kindin (Kinin), and Amakitan on the one hand, and on the other, with the place names Kanan (district south of Bauchi), Kwana, Gwana and Kana, which latter terms were used by the Kanuri to denote the so-called Kwararafa who were akin to themselves, and dominated Eastern Nigeria from about 1300 to 1750 A.D.

Similarly the name Kananiyya seems to bear a relation to the half forgotten Barbars of Kordofan, called Anag or Abu Gonaan (Kanaan). The fact that these Ikli were still a numerous people in Kanem as late as 1570 is interesting as showing that, before the civil war which began about 1370 A.D. the Teda or Tubu had not penetrated Kanem in any considerable numbers.\*

Moreover, as these Ikli were a branch of the Zaghawa from whom the ruling dynasty were drawn, it would seem to follow that the connection between the Kwana (Kwararafa) and the Kanuri is that they were both in origin Zaghawa Barbars.

A consideration of the ethnological data set forth above leads to the conclusion that from possibly 900 A.D. onwards to the time of

\* See also the Tubu accounts given by Capt. Buchanan quoted p. 3 *supra*.

the Kanem Civil War towards 1400 A.D. and, as this history shows, even after it, a very large proportion of the population of Kanem, apart from the so-called Saifawa or Magumi themselves (the ruling house), was of the caste which in the Sahara is called Imghad, *i.e.* they were the product of Sudanese women by Barbar or Kindin (Kayi) men. As the number increased and they split into communities and septs they were in many cases called Ikli, strictly speaking "slaves", though naturally all acknowledged the authority of the Magumi Mais who were *imoshagh*, *i.e.* descended from a Kayi woman who had married an Arab and thus acknowledged by the Ikli as their noble or governing caste.

In Wadai, too, a Wadaian Chronicle, from which extracts are appended, shows that the case was very similar there also during the period in question. Northern Wadai was ruled by Kindin (Beli) or Kayi, with whom the rising Kayi-Magumi are said to have had battles in the deserts to the north of Masrub on the road to Dongola.

It is probably impossible to arrive at an accurate ethnic description of the tribes which inhabited Kanem when these invading Barbars first came there from the east towards 800 A.D. but it is evident that at this period Kushite races had been long established and were in fact the dominant factor in the tribal organisations that obtained in those regions.

The leading tribe or confederation was that of the N'gal-agma whose traditional origin brings them first from Yam or Yayambal (on the Nile) but ultimately from "Bagdad" *i.e.* Mesopotamia, or southern Arabia.

N'gal (the tribal) and N'gala (the place name) however, are but variants of the common Barbar name which was almost universal in the Sudan for the Kushite races, *i.e.* N'gala, Gara, Kara, Kola or Kolli, Gola and other metatheses between K and G and L and R with variant medial vocalisation. These names meant to the Kayi-Kanuri and to all other Barbars, the "servile Hamites" or Kush, whom they conquered, as opposed to the negroes proper, to which terms such as Dam-Dam, Dama, N'yam-N'yam, etc., were applied.

That these Kushite tribes lay, generally speaking, to the west of the Kindin or invading Barbars, is shown by the old Bornu title N'gal-ti-ma (Galladima), *i.e.* "ruler of the land of the N'gal". The Galladima's sphere of action was always the western segment of an arc resulting from theoretical lines drawn through the capital city as centre, north-west to south-east, and north-east to south-west. Just as the N'gal-ti-ma ruled the west so the Kagha-ma (Kaigamma) ruled the south, and the Yeri-ma the north, while the east being their own country had to take its ruler's title from the name of a town such as Mastur (Mastrema).

It therefore hardly admits of doubt that in the period of the Christian era prior to the Kayi invasion of Wadai and Kanem, these Barbars (Kindin) were domiciled to the east of Wadai, *i.e.* in northern Kordofan or the region called Mākida which the Magumi records claim to have been their ancestral home.

The period in question is however the period roughly 1-800 A.D., when the dominant power in that region was the people called Blemmyes. It is then so probable as to be almost certain that Kindin, Blemmyes, and Tuwareg are much the same people.

Moreover, since during the period of Roman ascendancy in Egypt, Saharan Gara races called Nobatae (Nuba) had, with Roman assistance, driven the Blemmyes west into the desert and Fezzan where they reappear as Hawara, Hawaza, Buhadi, Uzlan or Illam, it will be apparent why the Magumi and Kayi called the Kushite Gara of Fitri, with whom they first came in contact at a very early date, by the name of Nuba. The name Nuba has stuck to them ever since though they have other tribal names for themselves which are entirely different.

The text from which this translation has been made is, in the main, that of the manuscript which Barth obtained from the Wazir Haj Bashir in 1853 and sent home to the Foreign Office.

There exists, however, in Bornu, a manuscript here called manuscript (A) which belonged to the late Maina Gumsumi, the senior representative of the Saifawa. This manuscript, however, is imperfect for at page 53 it skips about seventy pages and proceeds straight to the final exordium about the Kuraish and Beni Saif.

Though in the parts which are common to both, the sense of the two manuscripts is identical or almost so, they differ in diction in places, as is natural with scribes who regard the *ipsisissima verba* of an ordinary author as in no way sacred, but rather as statements which they are at liberty to amplify or adorn in any way their taste indicates.

In general, therefore, Barth's manuscript has been followed and minor verbal differences ignored, save, in such passages as seemed to convey either different information or further information not in Barth's manuscript, a translation of the text of manuscript A has been added in brackets after the translation of the text in Barth's manuscript.

These passages are however few in number, the only one of importance being the final exordium.

Appended to this translation of Imam Ahmed's Kanem Wars of Idrisi Alooma, are a number of translations of Arabic documents relating to the history of Bornu and Wadai which are still extant in Bornu and of which I have copies.

For the acquisition of copies of these old manuscripts, which are now difficult to obtain, I am indebted to many of the present day Bornu Chiefs, from the Shehu downwards, and particularly to Galladima Kashim, a descendant of the last real Mai—Mai Dunama Lefiami.

I am also greatly indebted to Mr. P. G. Butcher and Captain R. C. Abraham of the Nigerian Political Service for their very great assistance in preparing independent translations of much of the second half of the 'Kanem Wars', which have been of great service in the final revision of the whole work.

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### CHRONOLOGY OF THE EXPEDITIONS TO KANEM.

With an inconsistency or lack of exactitude not unusual among Sudanese writers, the Imam Ahmed makes in his preface statements about the season at which the respective expeditions took place which, in strictness, do not tally with his text.

The discrepancy however is caused by the fact that, evidently, when writing his preface, the Imam regarded the fighting expeditions as five in number with a final visit, six in all, whereas, in the succeeding pages, seven distinct visits are mentioned.

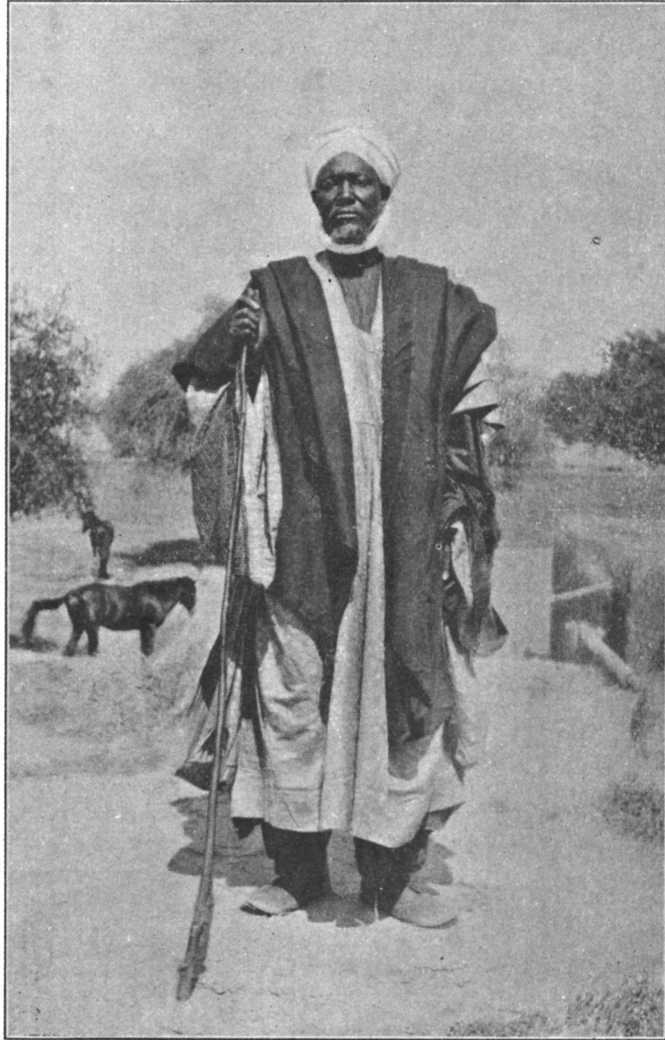
Clearly the expedition numbered V in the text, was the expedition made in the *saiif*, or hot season, whence it follows that the ensuing one, VI, was the one made in the *kharif* (wet season).

The following dates appear to fit the circumstances :—

- Sec. 12.** *Expedition i.*—Set out on the last day of Sha‘aban and celebrated ‘Id ul Saghir at Aghafi, *i.e.* set out on 19th December, 1571.
- Sec. 35.** *Expedition ii.*—Beginning of the cold season. Celebrated ‘Id ul Saghir at Shami, winter of 1572-73.
- Sec. 48.** *Expedition iii.*—In the hot season. The ‘Id is not mentioned. Winter of 1573-74, presumably after 24th January, 1574, the date of the ‘Id.
- Sec. 55.** *Expedition iv.*—In the early date season of the year 1574.
- Sec. 69.** *Expedition v.*—When the height of the cold season had passed after the ‘Id ul Saghir. Not long after the 14th January, 1575, the date of the ‘Id ul Saghir.
- Sec. 103** *Expedition vi.*—Set out on Thursday, 15th Jumada al Ula. The expedition took place in the *kharif* (rainy season). It took place in August-September 1575, (8th August was 1st Jumada al Ula).

It would appear that after Idris’ return from this expedition to Kanem, he set out on the expedition against Amsaka in Mandara, which is related in “The first twelve years of the reign of Idris Alooma”, for Amsaka apparently fell on the 4th December, 1575.

- Sec. 117** *Expedition vii.*—In Shawwal. This final expedition probably took place in December or January, 1576.



**The Kaigamma, " General of the South " of Bornu.  
(Kaigamma Kakami).**



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## THE KANEM WARS.

*By Imam Ahmed ibn Fartua.*

IN the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. May the blessing of God be upon our Lord and Prophet Muhammad, the chosen and perfect apostle, the Seal of the prophets, the Imam of the pure, and upon his relations and his companions, the god-fearing, and those who follow them righteously, until the day of meeting and recompense. Praise be to God in his mightiness and greatness. His mightiness transcends the how and where and other conceptions of man. He is the Guide of him who does His will in reading His book which embraces all wisdom and which exalts His people, the Muslims, above all other people, setting forth all in due order with proofs, rousing the conscience to the passing of days and of nights.

God sent our Prophet, our Lord and Master Muhammad, the greatest of the prophets and messengers, upon whom be the highest blessing and peace. He sent him to the whole of creation. Before him Infidelity struck its flag, idols and fetishes became his slaves, wrong-doing and ignorance rose and went off to the most distant lurking places.

He did not cease striving in Jihad with tongue and lance and pitiless sword, giving good-tidings and warning, a missionary in the path of peace, until truth appeared, emerging from error just as morning comes out from the darkness of night. A king is among the things most desired by men; his position is conspicuous to fame whereas an enemy of the Faith dwells nigh to the rivers of error and insolence and sin, even though, there is in fact, no holy war.

Even so the King, the great King, acts in His kingdom according to the desires of His heart, without asking help or hindrance or remorse.

May the blessing of God and peace be upon the Prophet and upon his relations and companions of proved nobleness, everlasting blessing, and peace without ceasing.

We have undertaken to write of the Kanem Wars which were waged by our Sultan, the Commander of the Faithful, the vicegerent of the Lord of the Worlds in this land of Bornu; Al Hajj Idris, ibn Ali, ibn Idris, ibn Ali, ibn Ahmad, ibn Othman, ibn Idris, ibn Nikale, ibn Ibrahim, ibn Ahmad, ibn Salma, ibn Bikuru, ibn Biri, ibn Dunama, ibn Umme, ibn Abdul Jalil, ibn Huwa, ibn Rike, ibn Bulu, ibn Wayama, ibn Katuri, ibn Arsu, ibn Fune, ibn Duku, ibn Ibrahim, ibn Saif, ibn Dthi-Yazan, of the Himyar of the Kuraish.

He waged five wars against Kanem, three in the cold season, the fourth in the hot season, and the fifth in the season of the rains.

The Sultan Ibrahim son of Saif, mentioned above, so we have heard from the lips of our elders, buried his father in the land of Yaman in the valley of Sana'a and then migrated from Yaman by slow stages till he came to the land of Sima in Kanem. He settled

MS.  
Page 2.

there, he and his son and grandson. Years passed, till the time of Daud ibn Nikale.

**MS. Page 3.** Before the time of Sultan Daud, there was no discord, or quarrel in any of the four quarters of the realm, and everyone was under the authority and protection of the Mais of Kanem.

We have heard from learned Sheikhs that the utmost extent of their power in the east was to the land of Daw and to the Nile in the region called Rif; in the west their boundary reached the river called Baramusa. Thus we have heard from our elders who have gone before. What greatness can equal their greatness, or what power equal their power, or what kingdom equal their kingdom.

Far away! Far away!

The author of the book 'Ifrikiya', relates that the people of Himyar son of Ghalib are the successors of the Bani Hashim, successors whose title is undisputed, Hashim being of the seed of Luwai son of Ghalib. They are therefore brothers. We have mentioned their affairs above. Luwai ibn Ghalib was ruler of Hijaz. Himyar ibn Ghalib was king of Yaman and enjoyed the power that his brother Luwai ibn Ghalib gave him. The Amalik came from the seed of Himyar; and from the seed of the son of Ghalib came every excellence, and nobleness, and the Prince of the Prophets. (The blessing of God and peace rest on him and them all).

**MS. Page 4.** This is all far away! We saw in the book 'Ifrikiya' that Himyar conquered the world, and had a magnificent kingdom. He built between Kufra and Irak one thousand houses of crystal, and placed in every house a bed with eight legs of silver, each leg gilded with gold, and on each bed was a slave of the daughters of the kings. Himyar was the brother of Luwai ibn Ghalib and Luwai was the ancestor of the Kuraish.

We have seen also written in the above mentioned book that when the Bani Hashim and the Himyar obtained booty in war they divided it since the Himyar were the heirs of the Bani Hashim. So we read in 'Ifrikiya.'

We have seen also in the book 'Fatuhu Sham' that one of the kings of Yaman named Saif ibn Dthi Yazan foretold our Prophet's coming, since God inspired him with wisdom and eloquence so to do.

Let him who reflects take heed to the words we have quoted from the book 'Ifrikiya' and the book 'Fatuhu Sham', that he may know the ancestry of our Sultan Al Hajj Idris ibn Ali (may God ennoble him) for he is of the exalted race. Truly his descent is traced back to the Kuraish and such is not the case with many people.

Let us now return to the story of Sultan Daud.

During his reign as Khalifa mischief sprang up and evil doing, by the power of God most high and mighty, in his absolute foreknowledge.

Thus God caused men of the tribe of Bulala and of the people of Fitri and Madama to enter Kanem. They settled down in Kanem and could not be expelled until the time of the pious, just, and courageous Sultan, Commander of the Faithful, Idris ibn Ali ibn Ahmad, may the blessing of God rest on his posterity till the blast of the horn.

**MS.  
Page 5.**

When Idris ibn Ali (Katagarmabe) was made Khalifa of the land of Bornu he assembled his many armies, red and black, and went to the land of Kanem.

He reached Garni Kiyala, and there ensued a battle between him and Sultan Dunama ibn Salma. Sultan Idris gained a great victory, and Sultan Dunama and his army fled and retired to the borders of a far country.

Then the Sultan Idris ibn Ali went to Sima (N'jimi) famous for the kings of the dynasty of Saif ibn Dthi Yazan and stayed there to his great delight.

We heard from the Sheikh Dunama ibn Rusku that between the date of Daud's quitting Sima and the date of the Sultan Idris's entry, there was an interval of 122 years exactly. The Sultan Idris ibn Ali then stayed at Sima as long as God willed, and returned to Bornu.

He had not yet planned to return a second time when news came to him from Kanem that Sultan Dunama ibn Salma was killed and that his brother Adam ibn Salma had been made Emir. This did not deter him from going to Kanem. He marched to Kanem as he did before, and reached the town of Jugulgul. A battle took place between him and Sultan Adam. God helped him, and gave him victory and Adam's army fled, and did not stop till they were far from Kanem—very far.

**MS.  
Page 6.**

Then Sultan Idris went to N'jimi as he did the first time, and remained there as long as God willed. The story goes that afterwards Sultan Idris ibn Ali ordered Adam to come to Kanem with all due ceremony and made him swear an oath of fealty in the name of God most high and mighty.

The Sultan Idris ibn Ali returned to Bornu with his wrath appeased, and delighted with his good fortune, and lived in his country till he met the end that God (exalted be He) willed for him.

He died at Walamma. May God have mercy upon him.

After Idris's death his son Muhammad ibn Idris ibn Ali was made Khalifa in the land of Bornu. He reigned long. The Bulala Sultan Kadai ibn Abdul Jalil came to Bornu. We have heard that between his coming and the installation of Sultan Muhammad ibn Idris there was only an interval of forty days. The Sultan Kadai was killed at a place called Iada; so we have heard from our venerable Sheikhs.

**MS.  
Page 7.**

From that time Sultan Muhammad ibn Idris ibn Ali found no one to oppose him in Kanem, till the ordained end of his days. May God have mercy upon him.

He was succeeded by his full brother Ali ibn Idris the Khalifa and he dwelt long in power, feared as was his brother, Sultan Muhammad ibn Idris, his predecessor. No one in Kanem refused to follow and obey him, till the end which God had decreed for him on the tablet came to him. May God have mercy upon him.

Then Dunama ibn Muhammad became Khalifa.

Discord arose between him and Sultan Abdul Jalil ibn Kadai until Abdul Jalil invaded Bornu. The above mentioned Sultan Dunama ibn Muhammad met him with his army and a battle took place in Bornu. God gave our Sultan Dunama a great victory and Abdul Jalil returned in flight.

**MS.**  
**Page 8.**

Sultan Dunama then went to Kanem; gained a second victory, and returned to Bornu, after killing Chiroma Biri and his peers such as Kagutima Doniyo and others of the Bulala.

After that time the Sultan Abdul Jalil made no more attacks on Sultan Dunama, but he made forays in Bornu without intending to fight. Every time he came to raid in Bornu, he ran away with great haste and did not stand for fear Sultan Dunama might catch him at his secret designs, and conquer him.

The Sultan Abdul Jalil continued to act thus, till the death of Sultan Dunama, who predeceased him.

Afterwards Sultan Abdul Jalil died.

Abdul Lahi ibn Dunama was made Khalifa in Bornu while Sultan Abdul Jalil was still alive.

Thereupon Abdul Jalil ibn Kadai made a raid in person, with his people, and emirs, and chiefs. They continued to make forays into Bornu day and night, as they formerly had done in the time of Sultan Dunama ibn Muhammad, and did not cease from this detestable habit till Sultan Abdul Jalil died.

His son Abdul Lahi was made Khalifa of the Bulala kingdom in the time of our Sultan Abdul Lahi ibn Dunama. They never had a real battle but constant raiding went on as before, till Sultan Abdul Lahi Dunama died.

**MS.**  
**Page 9.**

To him succeeded, our just, God-fearing and noble lamp, dispelling darkness; pilgrim to the two illustrious cities; Idris ibn Ali ibn Idris (may God ennoble his face). He deterred the people of Bornu from wrongdoing, impurity, and all kinds of iniquity, and Truth and Right came by their own, and shone in the land of Bornu.

Evil went and hid her footsteps and the path of righteousness was plainly established without let or hindrance, or deviation, so that all the notable people became Muslims except atheists and hypocrites and malevolent persons. For such there is no remedy. God will count them and requite them on the Last Day.

We learn (for to God belongs what He has concealed and to us what He has revealed) that when justice reigned in the days of Hajj Idris ibn Ali in Bornu east and west and south and north. the Muslims were no longer troubled with the Bulala raids, or the N'gafata or Tatala or other similar bandits.

The Bulala had advanced and had occupied the towns of Tal, and Gatiga. Between these two towns and Kanem there was constant raiding day and night which was hurtful to our land of Bornu.

When our Sultan Hajj Idris ibn Ali ibn Idris (may God ennoble him in both worlds) became Mai, the Bulala returned to Kanem, and on the Bornu side there was no desire to raid or wage war for a single day. Persons who entered the country did so openly and after asking leave, and presenting themselves to the Sultan. Peace and friendship were established between our Sultan Hajj Idris and the Sultan of Kanem Abdul Lahi ibn Abdul Jalil, so that they even became related by marriage. A written pact of friendship was made between the two towns above mentioned after duly consulting the notables and chiefs of Kanem and Bornu. Thus was the matter concluded.

There was neither hatred, nor offence, nor grievance, between the people of Kanem and Bornu except in the matter of three towns which the people of Kanem had seized in days gone by at the time of the fighting between Sultan Ahmad (Dunama) ibn Muhammad and Sultan Abdul Jalil ibn Kadai.

**MS.  
Page 10.**

After the latter laid hands on the three towns, Tal called Kali, Guguti, and Bulugi, they never sent any messenger to Bornu, and the people of Bornu on the other hand always wished to regain them till the death of the Sultan Abdul Lahi ibn Abdul Jalil.

When his son Sultan Muhammad ibn Abdul Lahi succeeded, he neither hindered the towns coming in to Bornu nor yet handed them over. But this proud, envious, and evil people then dethroned him for no reason at all, and made his paternal uncle Sultan Abdul Jalil ibn Abdul Jalil their Khalifa.

He it was who abandoned the friendly relations which had been established between the Sultans Abdul Lahi and Idris and between Sultan Muhammad and our Sultan, and cast them away in contempt.

When the matter of the three towns was mentioned to him, he took no notice, and did not show any good will at all. Sultan Idris then proposed to him and his chiefs and emirs to submit the matter to the Shari'a and arbitration, but they were unwilling to follow the Sunna.

**MS.  
Page 11.**

A second time when our Sultan proposed to have the matter settled by the Courts, they wrote a letter and sent it to him. When he opened it he found its argument based on "forcible seizure"—to the effect that these towns had been taken from us by Sultan Salma "by force" in the past, and why therefore should they return them.

We saw the contents of the letter. Sultan Hajj Idris was astonished at their being so illogical and wanting in perception, and their failure to realise that our Sultan had, after the death of their Sultan (Salma) visited Kanem twice, and taken over Kanem and all the country under it, after putting to flight the two Sultans,

Dunama and his brother Adam, sons of Salma. He was also astonished and we also, at their argument for another reason; namely that "forcible seizure" only holds good as an argument for possession where infidels are concerned.

#### E X P E D I T I O N I .

**MS.**  
**Page 12.** Then our Sultan Idris ibn Ali made up his mind to go to Kanem himself. He assembled his notables in council, his emirs and his captains and his chiefs and others and they all agreed that a rapid expedition should be made.

Idris then left his capital called Birni and halted at Gambaru.

Thence he moved to Zantam, then to Kasimwa, in the west.

After he had been there a few days, the son of Hajj Birki, called Hajj Lefia, came on behalf of Sultan Abdul Jalil ibn Abdul Jalil, in the capacity of an ambassador. But our Sultan would not discuss with him the question of "forcible seizure" at all, and he was obliged to return to Kanem.

Then our Sultan Hajj Idris left Kasimwa and went east, and again halted at Zantam some few days and nights.

From Zantam he went to Ghotuwa, and thence onwards by easy stages in the midst of his own land till he came to Bari which lies round about the stockade of Gatiga, which is a town well known to all the inhabitants of Bornu, who from near or far visit Kanem, as a grazing ground for camels.

**MS.**  
**Page 13.** Hajj Idris stayed there a few days, three or so, to concentrate his army, and moved forward at the end of the month Rajab. Some people however said it was the 1st of Sha'aban, as there was the usual dispute about seeing the moon on the twenty-ninth day.

The Sultan passed Sakala, continued marching past Gayawa and spent the heat of the day at Furtu with a huge army. His emirs, and chiefs, and captains, amused themselves with much talk by the way. It was on that day that Asiyama Ali ibn Fuguma Thani died; a Thursday.

The Sultan and his army were at Furtu three days awaiting reinforcements both horse and foot, bearers of shields and archers, from all directions till the number of the people became very great.

The Sultan left Furtu on the Sunday. Our Bornu people knew this place by three different names. Some called it Ikli, others called it Galjadu, while others again called it Furtu, the name adopted in this book.

The big drum (Tobol) was beaten, and the force moved to the east on the Sunday morning, and marched on to Alali, where it bivouacked.

**MS.**  
**Page 14.** In the morning the drum sounded. The army got ready, saddled up, and went east with the Sultan to N'gibiwa-Kanjewa, thence to Digala, Burum, Ruru, Kasuda, Gumami, Sulu, Mulighim, Kuru, and the stream called Malahe. From there to Rimbawa and Ma'o—a town well known to all the people of Kanem.

Sultan Hajj Idris was fourteen days marching between Furtu and Ma'ò, without halting for two days. He reached Ma'ò on a Saturday before midday, and remained there nine days without being attacked by Sultan Abdul Jalil except one day on which detachments of the Bulala and Bornu armies met. This was caused by Abdul Jalil ibn Bi coming in the evening from the town of Yitukurma where the Sultan Abdul Jalil ibn Abdul Jalil had resided. This Abdul Jalil ibn Bi who has been mentioned and his people came to where we were, and slept behind our position. In the morning they went to the west and to the north with the idea of surprising us.

The Wazir Idris ibn Harun had gone out with his force to look for the camel-men in a northerly direction.

When Abdul Jalil ibn Bi and his men saw the dust of the Wazir's force on the plain they fled in fear from them into the bush. The Wazir at first did not see what was afoot.

But when Abdul Jalil ibn Bi had retired to a distance, he found a few men belonging to the Bornu army who had got separated from the Wazir by carelessness or forgetfulness. The Bulala wrought havoc among them, except for those whom God saved by flight.

MS.  
Page 15.

The son of Kajalma Abdullahi ibn Hawa was killed.

Then a report reached the Wazir Idris ibn Harun that Abdul Jalil ibn Bi was inflicting loss on Bornu people near our camp, and that there was only a dune between him and the scene of the action.

He advanced at once with all speed. Maidalla Muhammad ibn Fatima joined forces with him and came forward and placed himself before his uncle in the advance.

When the Bulala nearest to them saw them, they fled into the bush, putting spurs to their horses and galloping away, for fear Maidalla and his men should come up with them.

Maidalla took up the pursuit in front and the Wazir Idris followed on his nephew's tracks. The three chiefs went on like this till they had covered a considerable distance. Maidalla then stopped the pursuit, as also the Wazir Idris ibn Harun, and they returned to our camp—the Bulala having retired a long way in flight into the bush, since God had afflicted them with great fear. They returned to their Sultan and informed him of what had happened. So we heard.

The Muslims accepted the flight as a favourable augury for a great victory over the Bulala. Their cowardly retreat was a sign from God that He had strengthened us and given us the victory, and made them weak and feeble.

MS.  
Page 16.

So matters went on between them and us till God gave us a great victory over them on a Monday, the last day of the month Dthu'l' Kiida, by His strength and munificence, for on God do the Faithful rely, and lean on Him in every contingency.

We will relate the origin of the fight, God (exalted be He) being willing, at the end of this book.

Let us return to the original story concerning Ma'ο and Yitukurma. Not one of the captains and emirs of the Bulala came out against us after Abdul Jalil ibn Bi came out against the stragglers of our people on one day only, until our Sultan Al Hajj Idris ibn Ali left Ma'ο after nine days. The distance between Ma'ο and Yitukurma is a half day's journey for a strong man.

The Sultan was an accomplished diplomatist and was conversant with correct procedure and methods of negotiation. God most high had endowed him with knowledge. As has been said before in this book:—

“There is no forbidding what God has given,  
“Nor can that be given which God has forbidden.”

This maxim Idris, with the wise political instinct which, as we have noted, he was endowed, followed in sending an embassy with a note to the Sultan of the Bulala and his captains and his emirs and his chiefs. The ambassador was Fuski ibn Kilili of the tribe of Kayi.

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The note ran as follows:—

“If my note reaches you in safety, and you read it at leisure, know that my desire is that you should send to me an upright and sensible man to hear what I have to say about the true reason of our coming here, and return to you.”

Such was the tenor of our Sultan's letter to the Bulala.

When it reached them, and they had read the contents in the presence of their people, they became very angry and positively refused to send anyone. They sent a letter written by Hajj ibn Dili, but sent no representative though they had plenty of sensible men to send to us even as we had sent to them.

The contents of their letter were to the effect that they could not understand our action, in that “you have burnt our houses on your way, and done evil in our land. You have done it and that is all.”

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That is what they said. When we saw their letter we were utterly astonished, and saw that their action was that of men puffed up with pride, and that none would return answer like this save people confident in their power and strength over all. Had matters been as they thought and argued and supposed, we should have remained at home in our country. Alas! Alas! the matter was not as they thought. Sultan Idris left Ma'ο on a Monday after being there nine days. When his people mounted and got under way, the dust arose and spread to the four quarters of heaven, so that no one could see the road. A short halt was therefore called for the dust to settle while the men stood still, but at that moment the wind sprang up and cleared away the dust through the beneficence of God towards our Sultan and his army; a blessing which will never cease. Under these conditions the Sultan divided his army

into two divisions, one of which was under the leadership of the Wazir Idris ibn Harun and was on the west of the line of advance, and the other under the Sultan's personal command on the east.

Both the divisions advanced to the north of Kanem making for Wasami. All the sick and the baggage followed behind the Sultan.

Thus they marched till they reached the town Wasami about midday. At Wasami water is plentiful. The army halted here and every one built himself a hut. They halted on Monday and Tuesday there.

News then came in that the Bulala and their Sultan had come to Kirsila, and were threatening Wasami, so all our people armed, put on mail, mounted, and moved off to the east of Kirsila where the Bulala army and their Sultan were.

After passing a hill our Sultan and his army halted to await the attack of the Bulala, but they saw nothing; so after the two o'clock and four o'clock prayers had been observed there, they returned to their quarters.

In the evening of that day the Ramadan moon was seen, and that was Wednesday night (Tuesday night) following the last day of the month of Sha'aban. The people spent the night preparing for the Ramadan fast.

In the morning the Sultan commanded the people to move off and to leave none behind. So they moved off and went towards Kirsila to give battle. We marched from early morning till about 9 o'clock, when we saw a body of Bulala drawn up in five parties, each party remaining stationary awaiting our approach.

When we had advanced to about bow shot from them or perhaps rather further, they fled to the east, and putting spurs to their horses, scattered. Our people followed them a long way, and then returned to our Sultan Hajj Idris (may God give him victory). The big drum was then beaten as a sign of victory, as our enemies had fled in fear.

On this day we saw the one and only beautiful egg fall near the head of one of the Bulala, when they turned in flight. Kulaima Muhammad ibn Kina took it. From this every intelligent man knows of their cowardice and fear on that day.

The Sultan returned from pursuing the enemy, and advanced to the south of Kanem arriving at Manmana in the afternoon or evening on a Thursday. The Sultan slept there with his army, and in the morning moved to Tusa. It was a Friday. On this day there was such a violent sand storm, that no one could see in front of him and so we had to feel our way. Thus we reached Tusa about midday. The Sultan halted near a well to water the horses and the people who were thirsty as they had found no water at Manmana where they had slept. Of the people some stayed near the well like the Sultan to get water, while others followed the drum with the intention of camping; but the Sultan ordered the drummers to mount a hill to the west and pile the baggage there. When the press of people round the well became great, the majority followed

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