Hausa Tales and Traditions Vo Cb

Being a Translation of Frank Edgar's Tatsuniyoyi Hausa

Edited by
Neil Skinner

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Hausa Tales and Traditions

An English Translation
of
TATSUNIYOYI NA HAUSA
Originally compiled by Frank Edgar

Translated and edited by
NEIL SKINNER

With a foreword by M. G. SMITH

In three volumes
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Foreword

Neil Skinner probably invited me to contribute this Foreword to his translation of Frank Edgar's Hausa folk stories as a gesture of friendship and because he knows my admiration for Edgar's work and for the Hausa people. In accepting, I am struck by the strange indirect association of these two men which dates in my experience beyond 1958 when Neil Skinner showed me a mass of Edgar's unpublished writings which he had purchased while on leave in Britain the year before for the Northern Region Literature Agency (NORLA) from the estate of Frank Edgar's widow. Assisted by a Hausa Arabist of the NORLA staff at Tudun Gaskiya, Zaria, I spent an exciting week with these papers; all clearly handwritten on foolscap, they filled three shelves, each five feet long. To list them I catalogued these papers by their titles, and grouped them in provisional categories by topic or region. If Edgar's published corpus is in fact the most extensive collection of African folklore yet issued by a single author, these and other works published by Edgar in his lifetime represent merely a portion of his total literary output, little of which was written in English. Surely among the many scholarly officials who have devoted their lives to the study of Northern Nigeria, Edgar can have few peers as a field collector of folklore and tradition.

In 1963 when Neil Skinner was teaching Hausa at the University of California, Los Angeles, Professor William Bascom of Berkeley asked him to translate the three volumes of *Tatsuniyoyi Na Hausa*, Edgar's major work, thereby making it available to scholars unfamiliar with Hausa. Without thought of possible publication, Neil Skinner agreed and returned to New Zealand with a photocopy of Edgar's text, long out of print. For the next three years he worked at the translation of Volumes I and II of the *Tatsuniyoyi*, whenever he could. Only then and with some urging did he contemplate the prospect of publication. To translate a work of such heterogeneity and character is no mean feat; and to undertake this task as an end in itself without ulterior purposes illustrates remarkable devotion; but perhaps in the wearier stretches the translator recalled the bulk of Edgar's work, unpublished and perhaps prepared without thought of publication. It is odd, the

indirect association of these two men, spanning half a century, both former Administrative Officers in Northern Nigeria, both talented linguists, both steeped in the lore and language of the North, both undertaking major literary tasks for their own sake, the older man as collector, the younger as translator. It is odd too that the man who finally translated Edgar's compendium of Hausa folklore should earlier have rescued the greater part of Edgar's remarkable work from loss or destruction by purchasing it, on his own initiative, for Northern Nigeria where this treasure rightly belongs; and it is quite fitting that as the former Director of NORLA, Neil Skinner should have volunteered for this strenuous task of translation, one commensurate perhaps with Edgar's initial compilation.

Edgar's published collection of Hausa folklore was made primarily in Sokoto Province at the direction of Major John Alder Burdon, the first Resident of Sokoto, who in 1910 gave Edgar some Hausa texts written in the Ajemic script for transliteration into Roman characters as reading matter 'of real use to Hausa students,' that is, to Europeans who wished to learn Hausa. Together with some extracts from the Maliki Law book and other texts that he had collected himself, Edgar prepared the first volume of the *Tatsuniyoyi* for publication in 1911. The two later volumes contained materials he collected himself.

Burdon had two major interests in directing Edgar to prepare a collection of Hausa folk tales and texts for publication: firstly, to provide British Administrative Officers with suitable materials for Hausa language study, and secondly to increase their knowledge of Hausa society and culture by presenting these folk tales and traditions. Both interests reflect the pattern of Indirect Rule by which the British sought to administer the large Hausa–Fulani Emirates through their traditional rulers and institutions. Such administration required British officials to have a sound knowledge of the native language, history and culture. With this end in view, officials strove to collect folk tales and historical traditions, proverbs, riddles, statements of native custom and belief, and manuscripts on religious, legal and historical subjects from Hausa and Bornu. Besides Burdon and Edgar, H. R. Palmer, E. J. Arnett, A. J. N. Tremearne, R. S. Rattray, J. R. Patterson and others undertook such enquiries in Hausaland and in Bornu.

Thus it is to Lugard's system of Indirect Rule that we owe the relative abundance and high quality of the documents on the history and customs of these Central Sudanic Emirates, their languages and folklore, compiled by Administrative Officers during the first decades of this century. By comparison with other African regions of similar size, this official contribution to the study of Hausa and Kanuri culture and history in Northern Nigeria is outstanding alike in its depth, quality, variety and volume. In this stimulating milieu, Frank Edgar compiled his enormous corpus of Hausa folk literature.

By 1913 Edgar had published his *Grammar of the Gbari Language* with attached Dictionary, together with the three volumes of *Tatsuniyoyi Na Hausa*. Thereafter he published a Hausa selection from the Thousand and One Nights in Roman script. His unpublished manuscripts now at the Regional Archives in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria, reveal the range of his interests and efforts. These scripts include, besides a monumental Hausa–English Dictionary, some poems in Ajemic and Roman script, a store of proverbs, riddles and similar word-plays, numerous folk tales and historical texts on Bornu, Bauchi, Zaria, Katsina, Biu, Jukun, Potiskum, Fika, Kano, Gobir, Kebbi and Sokoto. In addition there are many old texts on legal, political, theological and historical subjects in Arabic, Hausa Ajemic and Roman Hausa versions. Apparently most of these materials were collected after the publication of the *Tatsuniyoyi*; and perhaps the greater portion consists of historical texts with varying character and range, from terse king lists of local states to extensive accounts of particular incidents and personalities. How many of these scripts were included in the *Tatsuniyoyi* I cannot say.

The Hausa whose folklore Edgar recorded so industriously are the largest ethnic group in Northern Nigeria and number many millions. Settled in the north-western quarter of that territory, for centuries Hausa have been open to influences from North Africa and from the Middle East as well as from other Central Sudanic states. For centuries also Hausa have traded eastwards to Bornu and west to Gao and the Niger Bend, north to Ghadames and Ghat, southwards to Yoruba and Nupe. Settled on the high fertile savannahs that stretch north to the sahil below the desert, Hausa were simultaneously enriched by trade and exposed to military and

political domination for much of their history. Of foreign influences that bore upon them, medieval Islam was both the most complex and important. Then, after centuries of religious syncretism, the traditional Hausa chiefdoms, nominally Muslim but still attached to heathen idioms, were challenged and subdued by a movement of militant Islamic reform led by Shehu dan Fodio, a local Fulani cleric; between 1804 and 1810 the region experienced a major upheaval as the Shehu and his followers, mainly Fulani, overpowered the various Hausa states and established their theocratic regime. Since then most Hausa chiefdoms have had Fulani rulers who claim authority and descent from the Shehu's lieutenants; and despite the British occupation of 1900 to 1903 under Lugard, the Fulani have retained their dominance until and since 1960, when Hausaland passed from British rule as part of the independent Nigerian Federation.

Since at least the fifteenth century, Hausa have lived in contiguous centralised chiefdoms whose capitals were large fortified towns where the ruler's palace and the central market stood. For centuries before the Jihad of Shehu dan Fodio the Hausa people were organised in a series of overlapping social strata based on hereditary occupational classes. In each state the royal family and the official nobility had precedence, followed by the Muslim intelligentsia of native and immigrant clerics, jurists, preachers, teachers and scribes, *sherifai* descended from the Prophet and wandering holy men or marabouts. Next came the wealthier merchants engaged in local and long-distance trade (*fatauci*); then craftsmen and other traders such as the commission-agents, vendors of salt or slaves, weavers, leather workers, silversmiths, dyers, master builders and blacksmiths, few of whom in the cities probably farmed for subsistence, though their rural counterparts generally did so. Then as now, the mass of Hausa people lived in rural villages and hamlets, farming the sorghum and millet staples and the cotton they wove for cloth. Besides this free population were the slaves, some captive or purchased, others born locally to whom Hausa language and culture were native. Chiefs and a few others had eunuchs in their households, and in several states eunuchs served as senior administrators in palace and public affairs. The traditional society was further complicated by the presence of several relatively endogamous ethnic groups whose

ancestors, attracted by the prosperity and prospects of these Hausa societies, had moved and settled there; such immigrants included Arab traders from Ghadames, Tuareg from Asben and Air, Berbers from Bornu, Nupe from Bida, some Yoruba from Old Oyo, settled and nomad Fulani, some Mandinka, and yet others. Thus the traditional Hausa society, before as after the Holy War of 1804–10, was a complex of overlapping strata, communities and groups differentiated by religion, language and ethnicity, by connubium, by political and legal status as Muslim or pagan, free, eunuch or slave, rulers or ruled, aristocrats by birth or nobles by office, city folk and countrymen, farmers, craftsmen, traders of various sorts, the Muslim intelligentsia (a hereditary group), the wealthy and the destitute, the old, the mature and the younger men.

Excluding Tuareg, all ethnic groups in this society stressed paternal descent in residence, inheritance and succession to office or to civic status. Compounds enclosed families linked through the agnatic kinship of their male heads; polygyny was common as well as preferred; on marriage, women moved to live in their husband's home, generally among his close kinsfolk; and first marriages were normally arranged between first cousins. However, under pressure from Islam the old pagan lineages had been transformed by proscriptions of exogamy and levirate and by differentiation of descent lines and inheritance subdivisions.

This traditional society had also official Muslim courts, Koranic schools for children and for adult scholars, elaborate military and civil organisations, youth associations, hereditary occupational groups, cults for the worship of pagan spirits by possession, institutions for long-distance trade, guilds of prostitutes under titled head women, currency, markets, a literate intelligentsia, slave estates attached to particular offices or owned by individuals, and various other social formations characteristic of a complex, prosperous society with relatively high levels of technological development and social differentiation.

In this society women, though central to the private domain of kinship and marriage, remained minors at law under the guardianship of their senior male kin who commonly acted on the advice of an elderly kinswoman. This co-ordinate situation enabled women to divorce their husbands at will with support from their kin; alternatively, spirited women, rejecting their subservient

status, might leave husband and kin to join the prostitutes in another town or state.

This, briefly, was the traditional pattern of Hausa society in which the Shehu proclaimed his *jihad* and to which most of the stories and traditions recorded by Edgar relate. For its members, differences of social and ethnic status provided a broad framework in which other differences of individual situation, temperament and fortune were easily appreciated. A fine and firm web of institutionalised relations distributed constraints and opportunities for initiative unequally among individuals of differing social categories. Relations of clientage and bond-friendship allowed men to select their patrons or peers for personal or structural considerations. To those who sought fortune (*arziki*) in commercial success, the market offered exciting opportunities; warriors and others pursuing political position might move from one Hausa chief to the next by changing their patrons. Devout Muslims could combine adventure and travel with the search for grace and knowledge by pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Islam; other scholars could pursue their religious and legal studies at home or on periodic journeys within the Central Sudan; slaves might seek their master's favour or even manumission; adepts of the pagan *bori* (spirit) cult, prostitutes, wastrels and immigrants were free also within Islamic limits to pursue their interests in a tolerant, eclectic milieu. Some of the following stories illustrate these qualities of the traditional society; others exhibit its less pleasant features – ethnic intolerance, chiefly high-handedness, the depressed position of women, slaves, and so on.

After the tradition of folk literature, Edgar's narratives assume the reader's familiarity with these variegated patterns of Hausa society; and, except for a few remarks on grammar and orthography, Edgar neither discusses his materials nor reports their sources nor the methods of their collection. Evidently he enjoyed his task as collector of native folklore; his activities were justified by the current demand among British officials for suitable Hausa reading materials in Roman script. Edgar accordingly converted Arabic or Ajemic texts into Roman Hausa and gave little thought to their analysis. Lacking explicit academic interests, he was content merely to record and to transliterate; and on retiring to Britain Edgar seems to have ceased work on his massive collection, except

perhaps for fair copying and transliteration. Nothing suggests that he seriously considered its analysis beyond the natural categories of the folk classification, in which *tatsuniyoyi* or fables were separated from other materials (*labaru* or *labarai*), most of which referred to real persons, events, customs or situations.

However, Edgar's practice sometimes invalidates this broad distinction. As fables, and thus wholly fictitious, the *tatsuniyoyi* are distinguished from old folk literature which treats situations of real life, whether in poems, proverbs, legal codes, historical scripts, descriptions of custom and ethnic types, or legends of uncertain validity. Even so, many of these *labaru* seem quite as fabulous as some *tatsuniyoyi*. Though Edgar, writing in Hausa for officials familiar with Hausa society, was unconcerned by such anomalies or by the grossness of the folk classification he employed, it is necessary in translating these materials for presentation to a wider audience to develop a more meaningful organisation. H. A. S. Johnston, another ex-official of Northern Nigeria, in his recently published *A Selection of Hausa Stories** which is based largely on Edgar's work, has organised its eighty-six items for Westerners unfamiliar with Hausa culture in six categories; and Neil Skinner in presenting the 443 fables and 240 *labaru* of Edgar's compilation, has ordered the former in fourteen classes, the latter in twelve. Clearly these two reclassifications are in part designed to facilitate the orderly presentation of these very diverse and exotic materials to Western readers, including specialists in comparative folklore. By provisionally adopting Edgar's gross distinction between fables and *labaru*, we can tentatively distinguish their contents and contexts and thus indirectly indicate some of their values for the study of Hausa ethnography and culture history.

Neil Skinner distinguishes certain folk tales which treat the marvellous, sometimes offering etiological explanations, or Just So Stories about common everyday things. Many of these tall stories deal with animal or mythical beings who inhabit a curiously Hausa world and conduct themselves after the fashion of Hausa. Since the etiological value of such tales is minimal, while they are clearly pleasurable and generally non-didactic, it seems that they are related for entertainment rather than instruction, or perhaps to

* H. A. S. Johnston, *A Selection of Hausa Stories*, Oxford, 1966.

pass the time pleasantly. Sometimes these fantasies or fables treat problem situations current in Hausa society, though in idealised forms.

Another group of tales centres on relations between the sexes, with marriage, adultery and child nurture as its major themes. These stories are often ribald, rarely sentimental and only in a gross way moral. Many present male comments on the attractions and defects of the opposite sex, but most seem morally indifferent and few are etiological in any sense. All presuppose standard Hausa patterns of relations between individuals of specified sex, age, status and kinship, so that as a group these stories of men and women provide a broad indirect account of heterosexual relations in Hausa society.

Though many stories treat Hausa Islamic beliefs, institutions and representatives, sometimes satirically, fewer present local beliefs in *dodos*, witchcraft, tree serpents, *kwari*, the impersonal supernormal power Polynesians call *mana*, or *iskoki*, the named spirits personified through possession in the bori cult. Edgar provides little information on the characters and doings of these pagan spirits by comparison with A. J. N. Tremearne.* Undoubtedly these omissions reflect Edgar's dependence on literate Hausa who belonged to the Muslim intelligentsia for much of his materials. Such men were unlikely to possess a wide knowledge of the *iskoki* cult or to admit familiarity with its lore.

To seek a single function for these folk tales, despite their differing genres, presupposes their functional uniformity. Often such questions assume mistaken equations of function and purpose. Whereas purpose involves conscious intention, function denotes the latent and unintended effects of particular modes of social action. Thus to say that, while these tales are related for their entertainment value, their primary function is broadly educational, involves no inconsistency. Hausa tale-tellers and audiences share certain institutional orientations and conceptions which are largely embedded in Hausa speech. When the narrator relating his stories seeks to dramatise events to achieve appropriate effects, these

* A. J. N. Tremearne, *Hausa Superstitions and Customs*, London, 1913. A new edition with an introduction by M. Hiskett is in preparation by Frank Cass, A. J. N. Tremearne, *The Ban of the Bori*, London, 1914. Reprinted Frank Cass. 1968.

histrionic efforts presuppose accepted canons of thought and conduct common to himself and his audience. Without this shared background, the dramatic gestures would often misfire, thereby destroying the tale. Because the story has its context and meaning in the common culture, the audience responds by evaluating its incidents, characters and presentation in terms familiar to them, drawn from their own social experience, thereby indirectly revitalising the cultural norms and social models to which they were socialised. Indeed, folk tales, even when dealing with fabulous creatures and events, serve as media for the socialisation of successive generations of Hausa children who are gradually inducted from realms of cultural phantasy in which animals talk and act like Hausa adults into the lore of white (good) and black (bad) spirits, of magic and the mysterious, and so, with certain transformations and changing stress, into the complex workaday society where differentials of birth, status and power are often interpreted in mystical terms, as for instance when abrupt changes of fortune are explained by possession of a *dodo*. In a traditional society where schools are devoted to the study of religious texts in a foreign tongue, folk tales, proverbs, historical legends and etiological narratives that represent approved and deviant behaviours and their consequences are, virtually for lack of competition, among the most influential instruments for the transmission and reinforcement of customary values and attitudes. Such broadly educational effects do not imply that such folklore has an educational purpose, solely or primarily; but its educational value is surely enhanced by its qualities as entertainment. Moreover, in a traditional preliterate society, folk education consists mainly in the transmission and reinforcement of stereotyped folk attitudes, values and conceptions, rather than in the transfer of technical 'knowledge', data or moral maxims.

How or why these tales and other forms of folk literature took their present shape, we do not know. Clearly, while some tales were diffused among Hausa by contacts with foreign peoples, including immigrants, others were probably indigenous; tales of either sort vary in their age and purity; but whether borrowed from abroad or fashioned locally, for their preservation among the Hausa, these tales depend on their appeal and their meaningfulness for Hausa narrators and audiences. So, regardless of their differing

origins, Hausa folk tales are socially selected items of local lore, reworked and simplified or amplified in the processes of transmission. Various versions of Edgar's tales, collected in the same or different Emirates, illustrate certain features of these transforming processes, including omissions or reallocations of roles, recombinations of motifs, events and the like. Clearly in such processes those items which lack immediate intelligibility or cogency are most likely to be modified or omitted, while those which have local relevance will be retained and perhaps elaborated or transferred to other narratives.

To substantiate some of the preceding remarks we may review briefly the contexts in which *tatsuniyoyi* and *labaru* of differing sorts are generally told. Some tales that deal with animals, the marvellous, and so on, are identified with old women who relate them to groups of young children in family compounds at night, often in the old dame's hut where the children will sleep. Baba of Karo, an old Hausa lady who narrated her life history, makes frequent references to these nightly tale-tellings.* Hausa describe such sessions as *hira*, a term which includes conversation or gossip. *Hira* thus has as many varieties as situations, audiences, and types of discourse. For example, the tales which are told by old dames to children differ in content from those that are appropriate for old men to tell. Old men avoid the miraculous and animal stories, preferring instead to discuss the legendary foundations of their community or chiefdom, the family genealogy and history, traditions of local saints, of marabouts, princes or warriors – that is, events or personalities believed to belong to the real world of Hausa society. In Koranic schools, at craft sessions, during Ramadan and at certain festivals, old men may tell such tales to children and adolescents. However, fathers are segregated from children and women in the daily round, and perhaps elderly men addressed their stories mainly to their last-born (*auta*), the favourite child, and to grandchildren, their joking relations.

In youth groups and as apprentices to some craft whose traditional lore summarises its distinctive ethos and relations with other segments of Hausa society, young boys take part in special social contexts, each with its appropriate lore. Perhaps among the crafts,

* Mary Smith, *Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Moslem Hausa,* pp. 52–55, 59–60, 75, 152, 177, 179, 251, London, 1954.

long-distance traders (*fatake*), butchers, blacksmiths, and praise-singers maintain the richest special traditions, if we exclude the spirit-possession cults, clerics and officialdom. Young girls have also their own lore, linked with bond-friendship, betrothal, sex, petting (*tsarance*), marriage and the magico-religious complex which includes, besides witchcraft (*maita*), magic (*boka*), medicines (*magani*), the pre-Islamic nature spirits (*iskoki, bori*), and Islamic charms (*layu*) or prayers (*addu'a*). Girls also learn a lore of marketing by peddling wares around the village and find contexts in their own youth associations for Hausa lore about relations between the sexes.

Ribald stories that treat of sexual matters are told to mixed audiences of younger adults in *hira* sessions nightly at the local brothel or at the salon of some leading prostitute (*karuwa*). Such tales may also circulate on certain festive occasions, such as marriage, among co-wives and female guests within a compound, or among men segregated by work or on journeys, idled by rain, darkness or other circumstances. The lore of *iskoki*, the old Hausa spirits, their praise-songs, genealogical and other relations, attributes, powers and needs is vested in bori cult-groups, each locally anchored in the prostitutes' guild; thus the stories and music of the spirit-possession cult are indirectly linked with lewder tales through recital by the same persons in the same milieu. More specialised information about particular spirits, their diseases, susceptibilities and powers, is available privately from bori specialists who preserve and know them. Not all of these devotees are women; nor are all female cultists prostitutes.

Yet other folklore traditions are centred in the capitals, concentrated among the elderly savants of particular wards and especially at and around the ruler's court. There we should find the major oral traditions of the chiefdom's history, often apparently bizarre and uneven. These include, besides legends of the state's foundation and origin, cryptic king-lists, some of which specify the length of each king's reign, tales of pre-Fulani rulers and their deeds, of local battles during the Shehu's *jihad*, tales of the Shehu's miraculous powers and leadership, of Fulani Emirs and their wars, their characters and difficulties, of civil commotion and strife, of the coming of the British and their early forceful years. Tales of rulers and events nearer in time can still be checked against narratives

by old men who witnessed or heard directly of these events from those who witnessed them. For earlier histories we must seek either the narrator's source and authority, following the model of a Muslim *isnad*, or admit the folk element in the narrative and its interpretation equally. Such quasi-historical tales form the majority of Edgar's *labaru*. They centre about the actions of chiefs and have their most authentic sources at or near the court, especially in Edgar's case the imperial courts of the Sultan and Vizier (Waziri) of Sokoto. Some of these tales are well known to older men, even in rural areas; others that detail events more finely, may be private to official or aristocratic circles; and even these latter are often found in differing versions that express corresponding political alignments.

Yet other stories, which purists might exclude from Hausa folklore, are related by clerics, having their core in Traditions of the Prophet and his Companions, supplemented by tales of famous Sudanic figures such as Shehu dan Fodio and his brother Abdullahi, Mohammed Askia of Gao, Bawa Jan Gwarzo of Gobir or Kanta of Kebbi. This clerical tradition also includes legends that exalt the cleric's mystical powers over heathen magicians and his role in assuring the success of his clients in their search for fortune – princes for the throne, officials for office, women for children, peasants for various boons and Emirs for victory in the field.

Thus in this corpus each major body of folklore and narrative has its appropriate milieu and content, and most represent the traditions of special groups in the complex, differentiated Hausa society. The tales are thus differentially associated with differing Hausa institutions such as praise-singing and prostitution, the pagan bori cult or the Muslim intelligentsia, youth associations and the premarital petting sessions known as *tsarance*, kinship ceremonials of betrothal and marriage, childbirth and the following ablutions, bond-friendship and the routine round of compound life in city, rural town or bush hamlet, the market place, the law court, the palace, officialdom and the army, and with particular chiefdoms. There are tales also of wells, or fishermen and of hunters, of hereditary thieves and other craft specialists, tales of madness and personal misfortune and social stereotypes of various ethnic groups – Maguzawa or pagan Hausa, the Bugaje (s. Buzu) or Tuareg serfs, Fulani pastoralists and Nupe craftsmen, Gwari

pagans, Arab merchants from Ghat or Ghadames, the Kanuri and the country bumpkins ill at ease in town. Beyond the lore of these specialised contexts stand the cycles of fables and wonder stories that old women relate to the young.

These folk tales accordingly offer very diverse and valuable evidence on particular institutional contexts and differentiated groups of the traditional Hausa society. They also provide many comments on the structures they describe and on the stereotyped situations and ethnic and social categories they feature. Besides such indirect information and commentary, Edgar also collected many texts which describe Hausa customs, such as marriage or inheritance directly, and others that summarise folk evaluations of ethnic and occupational groups or people of different states such as Kano or Katsina, of women, conjugal relations, relations between co-wives, siblings, commoners and chiefs or clerics and their clients. Such direct descriptions and evaluations delineate important features in the contexts of many traditional tales; they also furnish an excellent account of Hausa practice and cultural orientations at the turn of this century, before European influences had taken their present effect. Used with caution, they can thus serve to identify later changes.

Although non-narrative and explicitly descriptive, such direct statements form a natural part of Hausa folklore, since the conceptions and attitudes they express are important elements of the folk tradition. These summary descriptions always refer to concrete social situations and to local types. They are thus quite distinct from the strictly Islamic texts that declare or discuss the Law, the Faith, Prophetic Traditions or the norms of Muslim government. Such Islamic materials differ in source, character, manifest purpose and range from local lore. They express, in Hausa form, the universalistic orientations of Islam which contrast sharply with the ethnic axes of Hausa society.

Historical and quasi-historical texts, not all of which are narrative, also form an extremely valuable section of Edgar's compilation. Besides several king-lists of certain states, often given in different versions, these texts include origin legends for the Hausa states and some local communities, apocryphal tales of Kanta, Bawa and the Shehu, some stories that illustrate important features of traditional government, and others that characterise particular

rulers, such as the Sultans Umaru and Abdu Danyen Kasko of Sokoto, or the Emir Abdullahi of Kano, together with a mass of illuminating incidental materials on historical events and personalities during the century of Fulani domination that followed the *jihad*. If we accept the folk interpretation of unusual events by reference to destiny (*rabo*) or magic, and the unavoidable variants of a common tale, we have no reason to doubt the intended accuracy of many of these 'historical' traditions, though naturally such intent cannot guarantee their historicity. To assess this, we should first correlate these variant versions with any others still available and identify their similar or dissimilar contents, sequences, characters and interpretations. It may then be possible to collate an abstracted probable or common sequence with other data drawn from the Emirates to which specific narratives relate, to determine the probable historical situation and sequence. Naturally such procedures presuppose adequate bodies of independently derived data for the events under study, and also substantial consistency, detail, and credibility among the various traditions. However, much historical information can still be gathered by field enquiries in Hausa emirates and checked by the study of official and other records*

Setting aside their uncertain historical values, these tales of past events show how Hausa conceive the histories of their states, the characters of their rulers, and their institutions of government and law. These traditions are thus equally important as documents of folk thought and as historical sources.

The academic values of Edgar's collection are many and various; to students of Hausa culture and history, it provides a comprehensive body of diverse materials, much of which, being explicitly fictive, is of great ethnographic significance as a projection of Hausa attitudes and practice on to other planes. Together these texts, descriptive and narrative, supply rich firsthand materials on Hausa institutions, inter-ethnic relations and social stratification, supplementing such standard sources as the Kano Chronicle and

* M. G. Smith, 'Field Histories Among the Hausa', *Journal of African History*, vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 87–101.

S. J. Hogben and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *The Estimates of Northern Nigeria: A. Preliminary Survey of their Historical Traditions*, London, 1966.

other Emirate histories*, and presenting, with insight and economy, the characteristic failings, virtues and orientations of Hausa differentiated by rank, sex, age and circumstance. Directly, and in narrative obliquely, the texts also present many insights into Hausa values, beliefs and social orientations. As documents that transmit the flavour of Hausa life and the background of individual experiences, they have few rivals. Within this compilation we can also distinguish various items that derive from different levels of Hausa social history, thereby indicating certain broad courses of Hausa cultural development. Many tales, for example, centre on Fulani Emirs; though they express the broadest traditions of Hausa lore, others dwell upon ancient Hausa chiefs and yet others, of uncertain age, seem rather more ancient in content and manner. Perhaps by employing our knowledge of major developments and cultural innovations in Hausa society we may provisionally identify historical periods to which such tales and traditions relate; and thus by procedures of exclusion, we may perhaps reduce part of this corpus to a reasonable chronological order. For folklorists and others not directly concerned in Hausa culture history, these abundant materials invite and permit other analyses, thematic, stylistic and distributional, independently or in comparative contexts. For those readers with a general interest in the customs and conditions of life in exotic countries at earlier periods, this remarkable collection needs no further recommendation.

* H. R. Palmer, 'The Kano Chronicle', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 38, pp. 58–98.
S. J. Hogben and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, 1966, *op. cit.*

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Translator's Introduction

Litafi Na Tatsuniyoyi Na Hausa by Frank Edgar, to give it its full title – hereafter it is referred to as TATS – appears to have been published in 1911 (Volumes I and II) and 1913 (Vol. III); but the edition of the first two volumes from which this translation has been made is dated 1924 on the title page (though the Preface bears the original date of 1911). Major Edgar was one of the early British Political Officers in Northern Nigeria. Appointed in December 1905, he retired in July 1927 and died about ten years later. He and Major J. Alder Burdon, first Resident of Sokoto Province, collected large numbers of manuscripts in Hausa, written in Arabic script. He transliterated them himself into Roman script, then just starting to be used for Hausa, and published them while on leave in Britain.

The material was hardly sorted or edited, though Edgar did include short notes on the Hausa of the first volume, and are a remarkable miscellany: fables, history, quasi-history, proverbs, riddles, a few songs or poems (there is only one Hausa word for the two things), tongue-twisters, brief letters and notes (some of quite ephemeral interest), and religious and legal items. A collection of similar MSS – including some of the originals of these – obtained from Edgar's executors was handed over by the translator in 1958 to the newly-formed regional archives at Kaduna.

The three volumes have been unobtainable for some time, and until 1966 none had been translated. In this year, H. A. S. Johnston published translations of some sixty of them in *A Selection of Hausa Stories*. The versions in these volumes have been compared with his and reference is made where applicable, using the abbreviation J. References are also given, for each story, to the numbers in Edgar's original work, so that those able to consult it and wishing to compare the English and the Hausa may do so. Other references have been given to variant versions in other collections of Hausa tales. Edgar made a dichotomy in each volume between *tatsuniyoyi* and *labarai,* the former being mostly fables and tales of fancy; the latter being historical and other traditions, Muslim material and miscellanea. This dichotomy has been retained to the extent that the first two volumes of the present work contain

mainly *tatsuniyoyi* and the last *labarai*. In fact though, in the Hausa, a *tatsuniya*,* which is also freely referred to as *almara*, will also very often be called *labari*.* A *labari* (history, tradition) will, on the other hand, not be called a *tatsuniya*.

Other than translation, the only major change has been in the order of the tales. They have been classified, the *tatsuniyoyi* into fourteen sections; and the *labarai* into twelve. From the nature of the former, the task has been a difficult one. So many of them have the characteristics of several categories, and whereas a Spider Tale or a Tall Story is a fairly easily distinguishable genre, some of the other categories set up are by no means so. The story titles, which were usually just a list of the main characters, have mostly been left unchanged. Where, however, the story is included in a sub-category named after a principal character, his name has been omitted from the titles of the individual stories, to avoid tedium. A small number of titles has also been changed for aesthetic reasons, for the sake of clarity, or perhaps to indicate why it was felt that the story was categorised as it was. It is noteworthy that the best criterion of the story's genre is often to be found, not in the title, which, as stated, is a mere *dramatis personae*, but in its tail. The art of the story-teller is to keep the punch-line till the end.

Few textual emendations have seemed necessary, and these have usually been noted at the foot of the page. In particular, Arabic script does not use capitals, nor does it punctuate in the same way as does Roman, and Edgar's choice in this matter has sometimes been departed from. If anything has been omitted, because it is not understood, such omission is duly noted. In this connexion, the reader of fifty-five years later may perhaps smile at Edgar's words written in 1913: 'Many of the tales, of course, cannot for obvious reasons be translated into English, but as it is important to get an insight into the minds and habits of natives, I have felt justified in including them.' What would his comment on *Fanny Hill* have been, I wonder?

In Hausa the story usually begins *ga ta ga ta nan* ('see it, see it here'), to which the audience can reply *ta je ta komo* ('let it go, let it come back'), or a *ta zo, mu ji* ('let it come, for us to hear'). So a *gatanan* is often another name for a *tatsuniya*. The traditional finish is *kungurus kan kusu* (probably 'the rat's head is off'). *Bera*, the

* Singular.

commoner word for 'rat', sometimes replaces *kusu*, and *kungurus* (an ideophone, perhaps to be rendered by 'chop-chop') has the variants *kunkurus* and *kurungus*. Other endings, less common, are 'I ate the rat, not the rat me'; 'it wasn't because of Spider that I made it up – I was making it up in any case' (Rattray, however, prefers this to be a question, 'You don't think I should have made it up if it hadn't been for Spider do you?'); and the longest one, rare in TATS, which can be read at III/17,† and is also quoted by Tremearne. In TATS – perhaps because they were given to Edgar in written form – the initial and final formulae are often omitted, or something more mundane or Muslim inserted by the scribe. So we have, for the beginning, often merely 'a tale' or 'another tale' and, for the ending, *haza wassalamu*, 'this with peace', the normal epistolary ending, or even the Arabic *tammat* (rendered 'finis').

The story tellers are the mothers and grandmothers and the motifs are, of course, well known. In 1954 the North Regional Literature Agency advertised, offering 5s. for a good story, and in the following months received several thousands, mostly sent in by schoolboys. In fact, the quantity proved embarrassing. They are now also broadcast from Kaduna.

The language of TATS, as would be expected with such a large number of pieces collected from various sources, is fairly variable. On the whole, though, it tends to exhibit characteristics of the language as spoken in Sokoto and Katsina rather than the now standard (for writing) Kano speech. This is truer of the first two volumes than of the third. The third volume also shows far fewer archaisms and anomalies than the first two. One example of this difference is in the use of the word *amma* (usually rendered 'but', but far rarer than 'but' is in English). This is an Arabic loan-word, whose meaning has undergone change since being adopted by Hausa. In the two earlier volumes, the word is not infrequently used in the Arabic way; also in a rather bewildering variety of usages, as if the scribes were experimenting with something that was not yet firmly established. In the third volume, on the other hand, the modern usage has almost completely established itself* – probably because Edgar here employed scribes from a different area, whose idiom was the modern one.

* See article on this word in *J. African Languages*, Vol. VI, Pt. 2 (1967).

† See Appendix.

There is not space in this introduction to mention more than one or two of the main characteristics of the language of TATS. Many of these are of the nature of spoken Hausa – but less so of Hausa as increasingly written in 1966, or indeed as used for speeches:

1. The style is staccato. The sentences are short. There are none of the cumbrous monstrosities of modern newspaper writing, introducing strings of subordinate clauses, due to the influence of bureaucratic English. Even the use of Hausa particles is kept to the minimum. The overwhelming preponderance among them of *sai* ('then, thereupon, etc.') taxes the ingenuity of the translator to avoid monotony. This is perhaps especially true of Volume I and, in it, of those pieces about Argungu history, presumably contributed by Argungu scribes. Nor do we get the more recent Arabic loan-words and phrases, many of which have been borrowed to meet the increasing complications of modern society. It goes without saying that English loan-words are virtually non-existent (see Glossary under 'Cowries'). On the other side of the picture – words that have since dropped out of use – there are not many of these that occur frequently in TATS. The word for 'cowries' (*kud'i*/*kurdi*) has become the word for modern money, but other idioms used in connection with cowries are now obsolete; also a number of words and phrases used in connection with the institutions of slavery and old-style warfare (such as *goron yaki*, 'cola-nuts of war', bestowed by the chief on one determined to do or die.) Nor, other than *kud'i*, do many of them seem to have survived with altered connotation. *Dakare* (infantryman) gave way for a short time to *askar* (Arabic 'soldier'), but very rapidly *soja* prevailed. The practical Hausa realised that this was a new genus, not a mere variant, for whom the same word could be extended. Perhaps this resistance of the language to change indicates that, for all its ready welcome of English and Arabic loans, the solid core of Hausa has changed little.

2. Direct speech is always preferred to indirect. In the only story where the opposite is true, I have suggested that this is occasioned by its being a translation from the Arabic. Here again the translator is taxed by the monotonous Hausa use of *ce* ('say'), where in English there would be a wide range of expressions such as 'exclaim, ask, reply, answer, suppose, say to oneself' not to

mention all the adverbial expressions, such as 'angrily, shocked, in surprise, indignantly,' etc. Hausa leaves it to the teller to express all these by his voice. The most it does by way of indication to a reader is to put an interjection at the beginning of the quoted passage, which gives some guidance as to the feelings of the speaker. Thus, for example, *Saitace 'Wayyo!...'* ('she said "Alas..."') will bear translating – though I have not usually done so – as 'She answered sorrowfully'.

3. TATS is unbelievably repetitive. Not only is this true of plots and motifs – understandable in folklore (for, once again, such repetition gives the teller scope to exhibit his powers of playing different roles, and the audience the opportunity of joining in, knowing well what is coming next). But it is true also of the language. A passage such as this would be impossible in English:

> 'The chief told the boy to go and fetch the girl. The boy went and fetched the girl. The boy said to the girl, "Come." The girl came.'

and yet this is of the very stuff of TATS and occurs in paragraph after paragraph. In translation, again to avoid monotony, I have used phrases like 'He did so' and 'He obeyed'; also I have made greater use of pronouns and surrogates such as 'the former', 'the latter', 'the other' and the like.

Next, a word about the translation itself. Looking back over it, I am conscious that the style has changed as the work proceeded. The latter half is far more literal than is the earlier part and, perhaps for this reason, does not read so well in English. I decided at the start to translate literally the Hausa masculine and feminine pronouns. This was perhaps a mistake, since whereas 'he' and 'she' have connotations of sex difference in English, *ya* and *ta* cannot have these in the same way in Hausa. There is no natural basis for the Hausa division into masculine and feminine of the vast majority of nouns. As a result, there are some interesting anomalies. For example, in III/66 the *shirwa* (kite-hawk) is the husband, but the word is feminine; so in the same sentence, where we are being told that the bird was the husband of Auta's sister, the pronoun switches from feminine to masculine, thus avoiding absurdity, at the expense of syntactical regularity. In contrast with this, in Mischlich,* No. 4, there is a case where the *damisa* (usually

* See p. xxx

feminine, but with this teller apprently masculine) becomes feminine when he is speaking of a leopardess.

Sarki I have rendered by either 'emir' or 'chief' but not 'king'; *Sarkin Musulmi* (the Hausa equivalent of *amīru lmu' minīn*, 'commander of the faithful') I have rendered 'Sultan' in accordance with modern usage. *Zakara* I have translated sometimes as 'cock', sometimes, in deference to American usage, as 'rooster'; *damo* is sometimes 'land-monitor', at others 'iguana', but it is the same reptile; *ƃera/kusu* in Hausa may be either 'rat' or 'mouse'. *Gida* has usually been 'compound', but frequently 'home'. *Cikin gida* which is the inner part of an important man's compound, or alternatively, for others, just 'inside the compound', has also varied. *Rafi* strictly means 'stream' and has usually so been translated, but the phrase *ta je rafi* means 'she went to the source of water' and will, as often as not, be a well; so, in some places where 'stream' has been used, this may very likely be inaccurate. *Bebe* is given by Bargery in his dictionary as 'deaf-mute', but, unlike Johnston, I have usually rendered it simply as 'dumb', since the inability to hear usually seemed irrelevant to the story. *Tsarance* will be found in the Glossary, but I have sometimes translated it as 'courting' or 'dating' or even 'petting'.

Which brings us to other sexual and excretory words. I have been as colourless and scientific as I could, unless I felt the Hausa was being deliberately vulgar and shocking, in which case I permitted myself an English vulgarism. This was particularly so in the matter of breaking wind, where it was referred to in a proverb; I felt here that something so folksy required 'fart'. In general, Hausa – as Greenberg noted – uses the Arabic loan-word, rather than the native one as the polite word in such instances, and it is these mostly that the scribes of TATS have given us.

Wānē, 'So-and-So' is quite often used either where the storyteller wishes to indicate that a name is used, but as most of the characters are anonymous, he is forced to use this surrogate; or because the speaker is avoiding using the name (probably because of name-avoidance customs). I have sometimes rendered this literally, but felt it very awkward in English, and more often presumed that it was the former case and turned e.g. 'he said "Hey, So-and So" ' into 'he addressed him by name'. The same applies to *kaƶā*, 'such-and-such', used of place names.

Zane, 'cloth', usually a woman's body-cloth or wrapper, has been rendered simply as 'cloth'. On one or two occasions the phrase *ta dauki zane*, 'she took up the cloth' has been literally rendered, where it probably connotes that she actually wrapped it round herself as well. *Sallama*, 'say *sallam alaikum*' (obligatory for Muslims coming to another's presence or home) has usually been translated as 'made formal greeting' to distinguish it from the less formal greetings that follow. Difficulties with *ce*, 'say' have been mentioned above, but other ubiquitous combinations which occur have also necessitated varying renderings in the interests of readibility. Such are:

1. *ya/ta/*etc. *ce 'To'* = 'he/she/etc. said "OK" '
2. *ana nan* at start of paragraph = 'one-being there'
3. *sun zauna* at end of story = 'they sat'

1. which seems to give expression to the Muslim attitude of acceptance, I have varied as much as I could. There are at least two places where it follows after the speaker has been told that he or she is to die, where to render it 'She said "OK" ' in English would be, to put it mildly, frivolous. 2. is usually 'Time passed', 'Presently', 'Things continued thus for a while', 'After a while' and the like. 3. I have been unable to bring myself to translate as 'They lived happily ever after', though it takes the place of this in our own tales. The idea of happiness seems foreign to the spirit of Islam, so I have usually made it 'They settled down again' or 'Everyone relaxed again'.

Some titles are explained in the Glossary, others I have simply rendered as 'the Ubandawaki', 'the Yarima' without further explanation. 'Prince', etc., are surely inapplicable in a translation such as this.

The many biblical echoes of the translation may reflect my own basic vocabulary, but I think more probably are a result of trying to be as literal as possible, and Hausa, being a member of Greenberg's Afro-Asiatic family of languages and so related to Hebrew, seems to lend itself to the sort of English that King James's translators found appropriate to Scripture.

Lastly, acknowledgements are gratefully made to Professor Bascom, who prompted the translation; Tom Lanagan, without whose Herculean achievement of xerographing the UCLA copy

of the Hausa, I should have had nothing to translate; the African Studies Center at VCLA, who provided funds for the xerographing; Mike Smith, without whose encouragement the work would never have been published; B. M. McFarlane, for information about Frank Edgar, and M. Ahmadu Ingawa, for his answers to a number of queries, where the dictionaries and my own knowledge of Hausa failed me.

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January 1967 *University of Wisconsin*

Publications Referred To In The Text

	Abbreviation
Edgar, *Tatsuniyoyi Na Hausa*, Vols. I, II and III References are to the story or tradition by arabic or roman numeral. Thus the sixth story in Volume II is II/6; and the thirtieth tradition in Volume I is I/XXX. See Appendix.	TATS
Abraham, R. C. *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*. London. 1962	ABR
Charlton, L. *A Hausa Reading Book*. Oxford. 1908	C
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Johnston, H. A. S. *A Selection of Hausa Stories*. Oxford. 1966	J
Labaru Na Da da Na Yanzu.* Education Department. Nigeria. 1931 (This is the only one of these publications where the stories have not been translated either into English or into German.) Reprinted 1968. N. Nigerian Publishing Company, Zaria	LND
Mischlich, A. *Neue Marchen Aus Afrika*. Leipzig. 1929	M
Olderogge, D. A. *Skazky Khausa*. Afrikanskiy Etnograficheskiy Sbornik V p. 259, etc. Leningrad. 1963	O
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Schön, J. F. *African Proverbs, Tales and Historical Fragments*. 1886	S
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Tremearne, A. J. N. *Hausa Superstitions and Customs*. London. 1913. New ed. Cass. 1968	TR

Glossary

acca (sometimes, in older style, *acha*) — Small cereal, *Digitaria exilis*; not now part of Hausa diet, but grown on the Plateau by non-Hausa tribes.

alewa (probably from Arabic *ḥ l w*) — Boiled sweet (candy), made from sugar or honey or a number of fruits and involving (as Edinburgh Rock) much pulling from a suspended hook.

aya — Tigernut, *Cyperus esculentus*.

baure — *Ficus gnaphalocarpa*, grown for both shade and fruit.

ɓukka — Temporary shelter, beehive in shape, made by nomad Fulani of a frame of sticks covered with leaves or grass. In the text this is sometimes translated 'booth' or 'shelter'.

cediya — *Ficus Thonningii*, grown for both shade and fruit.

cowrie-shells — These gave way to the British currency rapidly at the start of the century, the rate being 100 to ½d.; so rapidly in fact that there are several tales in TATS where *sule* and *ƙwabo* occur – the only English loan-words in the corpus, with the exception of military words in the accounts of the Satiru rising.

daddawa — Small black cakes made from the fermented seeds of the locust-bean tree and used for flavouring *miya*, q.v.

dara — The Hausa version of draughts, each player having six rows of six holes, and twelve draughtsmen, those of one player being stones, of the other, sections of cornstalk.

dinya — *Vitex Cienkowskii*, a tree whose plum-like fruit are used for a number of purposes.

durmi — *Ficus syringifolia*, grown for both shade and fruit.

fura	The usual morning meal, preferably of millet, mixed with buttermilk and 'drunk'. Its preparation involves pounding, winnowing; pounding, winnowing – five or six times; washing; back into the mortar for a last pounding; making into balls and putting into boiling water; taking out and pounding again until quite smooth; rolling in flour; putting into a calabash with buttermilk and mashing.
gawasa	Gingerbread-plum tree, *Parinarium macrophyllum*.
geza	Various species of *Combretum*.
haza wassalamu	'This with peace' – see Translator's Introduction.
imam (Hausa) (Arabic, *limam*)	The chief *malam* of the village or town, who leads the prayers at the Friday mosque.
jekadiya	Female messenger of a chief or notable (being female she has access to purdah compounds).
kalgo	*Bauhinia reticulata*, whose bark is much used for rope-making.
kanya	African ebony tree, *Diospyros mespiliformis*.
kibshi	Thin strips of meat dried in the sun, sprinkled with pounded nuts and grilled.
kirari	'Praise-songs', epithets, personal slogans or theme tunes.
kungurus kan kusu/bera	See Translator's Introduction.
kunu	A gruel, that is quick to make as a substitute for *fura* or *tuwo*, and so, not popular as a food. The grain is ground and then, apparently, only pounded once. Then a lump of dough is put in a calabash and hot water poured over it and it is stirred till viscous.
kurna	*Ziz yphus Spina-Christi*.

Magajiya — Title of the chief prostitute (Hausa *karuwa* which strictly=any mature woman not married; see BABA, p. 25), having a number of other social roles in addition.

Maguje — See Introduction to Section 2.

maiwa — *Pennisetum spicatum* millet.

malam — Muslim cleric, the standard of whose scholarship varies from a nodding acquaintance with the Koran to an extensive knowledge of the Book, the Hadiths and the Maliki legal treatises. At the lower levels he is much involved in the traffic in charms (see Trimingham J. S., *Islam in West Africa*).

maroki — Praise-singer, panegyrist, 'beggar-minstrel'.

miya — Soup, or sauce, poured over *tuwo* before eating; usually *romo*, 'broth' thickened with various condiments such as *daddawa* and baobab leaves.

nakiya — Sweetmeat made of pounded guinea-corn (or other grain) mixed with honey, and peppers.

tsarance — This is defined in BABA as 'institutionalized love-making between unmarried youths and girls.' In TATS it has sometimes been left untranslated, sometimes rendered as 'dating' or 'courting'.

tuwo — The usual evening meal – the Hausa food *par excellence* – taken with *miya* and 'eaten'. Millet, guinea-corn or – less commonly – maize is used. As with *fura*, it involves five or six poundings and winnowings, and washing before proceeding to cook. The rougher flour is put into the boiling water first; later the finer flour. Various stages of simmer and cool follow, before dishing out into a wooden bowl. Then the *miya*, which has been prepared separately, is poured over; and, probably, groundnut oil, which has been heated, added on top.

waina (or *masa*) — A small fried cake made from guinea-corn, millet or rice. It does not require such intensive pounding as *fura* and *tuwo*. Then, having been mixed with water, the mixture is left overnight to get acid. Next morning it is spooned into the different compartments of the *tanda*, groundnut-oil is poured over, and it is then fried, turning over, when the one side is done. 'Remove each *waina* as it is done and sell for 1 *anini* (tenth of a penny) each' (c. 1930). One of the sources of women's income is the hawking of such, though nowadays they would sell for more like ½d. each.

wasawasa — A food made from bean-flour.

zagi — One of the retainers of a chief, whose function is to walk before him (or sometimes run) when he is riding. He carries usually, as a mark of his office, a red blanket over his shoulder. The number that a chief has varies in accordance with his status.

zana — Thick grass screen used for fencing or for roofing (between framework and outer thatch). A single *zana* might be eight feet by twelve, made of stout, feathery grass.

PART I

MAINLY ANIMALS

These are arranged under the name of the leading character of each tale. Rightly or wrongly, I have made each animal male or female according to whether the Hausa word is masculine or feminine.

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I

SPIDER

Spider [*Gizo*] and His Wife Koki*

TATS does not, unlike Rattray, attempt to render the poor pronunciation of Hausa, that Gizo (as a foreigner) is supposed to have. This is not to say that the story-teller did not add it, when speaking the part. R. No. 6 gives a tale about the origin of Gizo – which is nearly the ordinary name for 'spider' in Hausa – telling how he came into existence when the lion trampled on a smith thus giving him many legs.

One of the concluding formulae, involving Gizo, which occurs several times, would appear from Rattray to be 'Do you think I would have made it up if it hadn't been for Gizo?', but the versions in TATS sometimes differ slightly from this.

The Crested Cranes and the Lion† [I/3]

One day twelve crested cranes made a journey to eat the fruit of a *baure* tree in the middle of a river. As they were leaving they passed Spider's house. One of the figs fell into Spider's house. Said he to them 'Stop, you crested cranes.' So they stopped. Said he

**Kokikoki* in Hausa is a kind of mantis.

† Cf. I/153; also TR. No. 36; also M. No. 35 (where the throwing of eggs into the fire is made part of a game): but the start of this tale appears as the opening of M. No. 36, a different version of the tale. Cf. also R. No. 27 (for the second half) and R. No. 28 (for the first half – a much fuller version). Also D. No. 88 (for second half) and D. No. 91 (for first half). Cf. also S. p. 92 and p. 165.

'Crested cranes, won't you take me with you to eat of the *baure*?' Said they 'But, Spider, you have no wings!' Said he 'Pluck me one each from yours.' And each of them plucked him a feather from his own wing.

Then they took him along and went with him to eat of the *baure*. But Spider prevented them from eating of it. Whereupon they, in their turn, took back their wings and flew off, leaving him asleep on the *baure*. After a while he woke, straightened himself to take off – and fell into the river.

Now, in this river there was a big town. It was into this that he fell. He greeted the townspeople 'Peace be upon you'; and they replied 'Welcome, stranger!' Then said their chief 'Take him to the fishes' hut.' Spider settled down. Then said he to the Chief of the Water (head ferryman) 'Bring me the children that I may teach them to read.' The children were collected together for him. He kindled a fire in the school*.

Then he chanced to see ten crocodile's eggs. So he picked one up, put it in the fire and said to the children 'If you hear a pop, say "Stranger's fart, stranger's fart".' This he continued doing till he had used up† the ten eggs. Then he said to them 'Tell the Chief of the Water to have me taken home' and he was entrusted to ten fishes to take him to the bank.

When they had brought him to the bank, he said to them 'Come out a little way on to the land and let's play the entering-bag game.' Out they came. Said he 'If I enter, don't strike it!' Then he got into the bag and out again, and said to them 'Now it's your turn to enter.' But when they were in the bag, he tied up the mouth of the bag with them in. Then he kindled a fire and began to grill them. As he finished grilling them up comes the lion. Says the lion 'Peace be upon you, Spider.' Says Spider 'Welcome, Big Brother.' And the lion says 'Give me some fish!' and he took the fish. Whereupon Spider burst into tears. Says the lion 'Crying for the fish, Spider?' And Spider replied 'No, it's the smoke.'

They were sitting there when a guinea-fowl got up, and Spider, speaking of her, said 'Shameless creature, just as if it wasn't me who gave her her markings!' Then a bush-fowl got up and Spider said 'Look at her! I'm just preparing to give her some markings

* An open-air one, likely.

† Or, perhaps, to be taken literally – 'eaten up'.

too, when off she goes!' Says the lion 'Can you really do those markings, Spider?' and Spider replies 'Of course I can!' Then the lion says 'Do you think you could give me markings like that?' and Spider answered 'Get a rope of ox-hide.' And he brought him one.

Then Spider seized the lion and tied him to a tree-trunk; and he put an iron rolling-pin* in the fire till it was red-hot. Then pressed it against the lion's body, cauterizing him, and off he ran. Along came the termite and said to the lion 'You're tricky, ungrateful people: if one gives you day, you return night.' Says the lion 'I won't return night to you.' So she chewed through the ox-hide rope and the lion made off.

He went to look for Spider. When Spider heard that the lion was seeking him, he took the corpse of an oribi, dried up, and put it on his body. Then he met the lion, who said to him 'Oribi, have you heard news of Spider?' And the oribi answered the lion 'Run, lion, run. Don't you know, if Spider looks angry at a man, he'll fade, or die. You've been warned!' And the lion set off running.

Big Fleas and Little Fleas† [I/6]

Spider was sick. When he got up, he said to his wife 'I haven't any meat.' And he said, sitting at the door of his compound 'I invite all the wild beasts to help.' So she went off and told them, saying 'You are all invited, Spider summons you all to help him.'

Next morning first thing along comes the cockroach, he's the first. Says he to Spider 'Here I am, answering your call to help.' And Spider answered 'Into a hut with you before the others come!' Next up comes the cock. Says he to Spider 'Where are all the others?' and Spider said 'The cockroach is in the hut – in you go and kill

* For ginning cotton.

† Cf. I/5 and I/75 for the meat craving, a common motif; cf. the next tale and III/145; and for a variant of this common story M. Nos. 42 and 43; R. No. 26 (where the dung-beetle replaces Spider as the trickster); and F. p. 99.

him!' and the cock went into the hut, killed the cockroach and down he sat.

A little later up comes the cat. Says he to Spider 'Where are all the others?' and Spider answered 'There's the cock in the hut there. Go and kill him!' Into the hut went the cat and killed the cock, and there was the cock, in the hut, dead.

And there was the cat too, when up comes the dog. Says he to Spider 'Where are all the others?' and Spider answered him 'Into the hut with you! The cat's there, go and kill him.' And in he went and killed the cat.

And as he sat in the hut, up came the hyena and said to Spider 'Here I am, come to help.' And Spider said 'There's the dog in the hut. Go and kill him!' And the hyena went in and killed the dog.

And she settled in the hut. Then along came the leopard and said to Spider 'Here I am, come to help' and the Spider said to the leopard 'There's the hyena, go in and kill her!' And the leopard went in and killed the hyena. And while she was still in the hut, up came the lion. Says he to Spider 'Here I am, come to help' and Spider said to him 'There's the leopard, go and kill her!' Then the lion and the leopard both came out and joined battle. And as they fought, Spider came up and ground up a pepper fine, and, taking some, threw it in the lion's eyes. Then he took some more and threw it in the leopard's eyes. And they shut their eyes and couldn't see. Then he took a stick and started beating the lion, beating the leopard, saying

'Leave off, lion; leave off, leopard! For who may enter the fight of you great ones?' until he killed them. And he got meat enough to satisfy him. And he ate and grew fat.

A Variant* [I/94]

It is said that once Spider recovered from an illness and felt the desire for meat. Not finding any he summoned all the beasts of

* Cf above, I/159, III/38, III/125; also see J. p. 7 (a composite version, introducing the important motif of the spear, missing from this, rather bare one).

the bush to come to his compound and do some work for him.

When it was light, the first to arrive was the cockroach. 'Peace be upon you' said he. 'And upon you peace' said Spider. 'Haven't the others come yet?' asked the cockroach, and Spider answered' Go into a hut and sit down, till they arrive' and the cockroach entered a hut and sat down.

After a while the rooster arrived. 'Peace be upon you' said he to Spider. 'And upon you peace' answered Spider. 'Haven't the others come?' he asked, and Spider answered 'Only the cockroach has come so far. He's there in the hut. Go on in and kill him.' So the rooster went in and killed the cockroach. Then he too sat down in the hut and waited.

After a while the cat came along. Says he to Spider 'Where are the others?' and Spider answered 'They haven't collected yet. The rooster is the first to come. He's there in the hut. When you go in, kill him!' Then the cat went into the hut, and killing the rooster, sat down and waited. And Spider just went on sitting there at the doorway of the entrance-hut.

After a while the dog came along, and asked Spider 'Haven't the others come yet?' 'Not yet' said Spider. 'Just the cat so far – he's there in the hut. When you get in, kill him!' So the dog went and killed the cat and sat down and waited in the hut.

After a while the hyena came along. 'Haven't the others come yet?' says she to Spider. 'No' says Spider. 'Just the dog so far.' 'Where's he?' says she. 'In the hut' says Spider. 'When you go there, kill him!' and in went the hyena and killed the dog, and she too sat down in the hut and waited.

After a while, along comes the leopard. 'Where are the others?' says she to Spider. 'Haven't they collected yet?' 'Not yet' says Spider. 'Except for the hyena – she's here. She's sitting in the hut there. If you go in, kill her!' So the leopard went in, killed the hyena and sat down in the hut and waited.

After a while, along came the lion. Said he to Spider 'Haven't the others collected?' 'No' said Spider. 'Not yet – except only the leopard, she's there in the hut. Go and find her, and kill her!' So the lion went on and found the leopard in the hut, and he seized the leopard, and the leopard in her turn seized him and they fought.

Now Spider had had some pepper pounded up for him and put it by. When he heard the lion and leopard fighting, he went up to

them, and taking some of the pounded pepper he threw it in the lion's eyes. And taking some more, he threw it in the leopard's eyes. Then the eyes of both of them were closed and they couldn't see, and Spider, picking up a big stick, began to hit them both hard, saying as he did so 'Lion, leave off! Leopard, leave off! For who may enter the fight of you great ones?' And he went on hitting the lion and the leopard in turn until he had killed them and there they were, dead. Then he called Mrs. Spider and they gathered up the meat, and ate and ate, and had their fill of meat. *Kurungus kan kusu.*

The Malam and the Hyena*[I/7]

One day a certain malam set out on a journey. And as he rode along on his mare, up came a hyena and said to him 'Where are you going?' And he answered 'I'm going to school.' And she said 'May I come too?' and he answered 'Certainly, come along!'

As they went along, the malam's mare collapsed and could go no farther. Then said the hyena 'Malam, give me the mare to eat. Get on me and we'll get along.' And the malam said to her 'Very well, take her and eat her!' So she took her and ate her, and then ran off, leaving the malam with his saddle and bridle.

He put his saddle up on his head and set off, and as he went along he met with Spider. Says Spider 'Malam, where are you off to?' and he answered 'I came out and met a hyena as I was going. She asked me to give her my mare to eat, saying I could ride her. But when I gave the mare and she had eaten her, she ran off, and I haven't seen her since.'

Says Spider 'Where's the place she ate your mare?' and the malam answered 'Come along with me and I'll show you!' Off they went and he showed Spider where the hyena had eaten her. She had left the liver, the head and the hooves. Spider took the liver and put it in his bag. Then he said to the malam 'You stay here!' And

* Cf. R. No. 9.

the malam sat down waiting for Spider, while Spider went off to look for the hyena.

A little later he met with the hyena and said to her 'Where are you going?' and she answered 'I'm on the run. I ate a malam's mare, after telling him a lie.' Says Spider 'Come along, we'll go and I'll take you to some meat.'

As they went along Spider said to the hyena 'Today you'll eat meat till you're full.' Says the hyena 'I say, Spider, you wouldn't be after taking me to that malam would you?' and he answered 'No.'

Then Spider said to the hyena 'If we're to get along briskly, I must ride you' and the hyena answered 'O.K., hop on and let's go.' And Spider got on the hyena.

Then, as they were going along, Spider said 'Here, I'm not comfortable riding you, hyena' and she said 'Put that thing of the malam's on me, that'll be comfortable for you.' So Spider put the bridle on the hyena, and the saddle, and spurs too. And he got on her and spurred her. And the hyena said 'I say, Spider, you wouldn't be after taking me to that malam would you?' and he answered 'No. If you're doubtful, see here, here's meat. Have some! Eat!' and he took the liver in the bag and gave it her to eat. And she said 'O.K., let's go!' And Spider's sitting there on top of her.

Now, when they got near to the malam, Spider spurred the hyena and brought her to where the malam was. When they reached him, the malam said 'Thank God! For He has caught you, hyena.' Then he got on her and travelled on with her for three days. But when he had got off and was resting, the hyena again ran off, leaving the malam where he sat.

Then the hyena went off in search of Spider. She met him as he went along, and said 'Thank God – I've found you, Spider, you treacherous devil.' But Spider said to the hyena, 'Come on and I'll take you to some meat!' She answered 'No you don't, Spider–you'll take me to the malam–won't you?' And he answered 'Hyena, hyena, don't you know, the malam's gone?' And she said to him 'O.K., lets go!'

Off they went, till they came to a place where a trap had been set, with a leg of beef in it. And the people were all around it. Then Spider said to the hyena 'Hyena, here's meat, come and eat!' Up came the hyena to take the beef, but as she made to take it, the trap

closed on her neck, and she said 'Spider, Spider is this what you have done to me!' But before she could say more, the people had clubbed her to death.

Then the malam said 'My thanks to you for killing for me this hyena that told me a lie.'

The Iguana (Land-Monitor) [I/9]

Spider and the iguana lived together, each with his wife. It was the time of heat just before the rains, and they set out one day to their farms to sow. But while the iguana was busy sowing guinea-corn, Spider just fried his guinea-corn and ate it, sowing nothing. Then came the time for hoeing, and they hoed. The iguana had guinea-corn to hoe, but Spider had nothing.

Then the iguana collected his guinea-corn together, and built two store-bins, one for the bundles, one for the threshed grain. But Spider got into the iguana's store-bin and stole guinea-corn from it, two baskets full. And when the iguana came and looked into the bin he saw two baskets of guinea-corn missing. And he said to himself 'No one else could have robbed me but Spider' and again 'I'll be even with Spider for what he has done to me!'

Then said the iguana to his wife 'Chop me up and put me in a pot and cook me with rice and take me to Spider!' And she chopped up the iguana and put him in a pot and cooked him with rice and took him to Spider.

And she said to Spider 'Here's meat for you – the iguana said to bring you *tuwo*.' And Spider said 'Thank God! I am grateful.'

Then Spider took the meat and ate it and finished it all up. He had started on the *tuwo*, when the iguana moved in his inside and said 'And *now*, Spider, if you don't bring out my guinea-corn, I'll pierce your stomach and come out, and you'll die.' Then said Spider to his wife 'Hi, Koki! Bring that guinea-corn, but keep a bit out!' And she brought the guinea-corn but kept a bit out. And the iguana started hitting Spider's inside again. And Spider shouted

'Oh! Oh! My God! Hey, bring him all of his guinea-corn.' And she brought all of the guinea-corn and gave it to the iguana. Then Spider went and squatted down, and the iguana came out and went off home.

Then said Spider to himself 'Now it's *my* turn to get even with the iguana for what he did to me.' And he said to his wife 'Take me and chop me up and cook me and take me to the iguana. Say to him 'Spider says "Here's some meat for you".' 'O.K.' says she and takes hold of him to chop him up. Then he hollers out 'Ow! That hurts. Just take me like this. Put me in a wooden bowl and cover me up with gravy.'

Then she picked up Spider and put him in a wooden bowl and took it to the iguana's compound. Says she to the iguana 'Here's meat for you, Spider said I was to bring it.' 'Thank God' says the iguana.

Then says the iguana to Spider's wife 'You know, we tailors always prick a thing over with a needle before we eat it.' But when Spider heard that the iguana was going to prick him as he was in the bowl, out he got and ran off. And after that he didn't again share a home with the iguana.

The Man and his Wife and the Heads* [I/22]

There was once a man who had quarrelled with his wife and he was on his way to the home of his in-laws to persuade her to come back. As he went along he came to the foot of a shea-butter tree. As he was resting there, a shea-nut fell down and he picked it up and ate it. He threw away the stone, when out popped a head. The head said to him 'Hey, you. Where are you off to?' and he answered 'I'm away to call on my in-laws.' And the head said 'I'll come with you, but you must take me up and put me in your trousers.' 'Right' says the man and taking up the head, put it in his trousers.

* Cf. D. No. 105 and C. p. 38.

So they went on till they came to the home of his in-laws. There he made formal greeting at the door and the people of the house answered. They then enquired after each other's health and the visitors were taken to where they were to sleep. And whenever food was brought them, the head would take it and eat it up. Whenever *fura* was brought, the head took it and drank it up.

Thus it was for three days. The man got very thin and came near to dying of hunger. Then said he to his in-laws 'I'm going to return home, now that I have made my call on you.' And they replied 'Very well, but take your wife with you.' And they gave him back his wife and off he went.

And as he went, he got back to the foot of the shea-butter tree where he had rested when he was on his way. Again he sat down and again he rested. When he had rested, he got up and was going off, when the head said to him 'What, man! Are you going to leave me just like this, after my coming with you to get your wife back? Now, you just divide your wife up and give me my share.' But he refused.

And while they were arguing, two more heads popped out. And they said 'Hey there, man! What are you arguing about?' And the head answered 'It's like this – I went with him to get his wife back and now he says he won't divide her up with me.' And the other heads said 'Since you went with him, by all means he should divide and share her with you – and with us too, though we didn't go!'

They were hard at it, when twenty more heads popped out and said 'Hey, what goes on here?' And the two heads said 'We went with him to get his wife back, and now he says he won't share her with us.' And they said 'Since you went with him, by all means he should divide her with you – and with us too, even though we didn't go.'

And they went on and on and the husband began to get frightened and said to himself 'What on earth can I do about these heads?'

But as he was lamenting, who should come by but Spider. He came up to the man and said to him 'Hey there, what's the matter?' And he answered Spider 'I went to get my wife back. I got here and, while I was resting, these heads said I should divide and share my wife with them.' And Spider said to him 'Leave them to me, you'll have no more trouble from them.'

Then Spider picked up a shillelagh,* aimed carefully at one head and hit it, and the head shattered. He looked at another and struck it. Whereupon all the heads scattered and left the man and his wife. Then the two of them went off home. That's all. *Kurungus kan kusu.*

The Hyena and the Goat†[I/31]

They say that once the hyena was walking in the fields near a town and came near to the house of a man who kept goats. And she saw a goat that had just produced a kid, licking her son. And she said 'My God! Some people have all the luck! (*lit.* those with possessions can feed during the day). Look at that goat licking her son!'

Well, it happened that Spider was watching her and followed her closely wherever she went, till she came to her lair. There he saw her children, and they had eaten fat meat, eaten their fill of it, and one little hyena had even taken a piece of fat and had put it on her head and was playing with it. Then said Spider 'Some people are always lucky.' (*lit.* those with possessions have possessions). Then the hyena said to him 'Hey there, Spider! What makes you say that?' and Spider answered 'When *you* saw the goat had produced a kid and was licking her son, why did *you* say "Some people have all the luck"?' The hyena replied 'Well!! Because I saw the goat licking her son, neither eating him nor leaving him alone. That's why I said "Some people have all the luck".' Spider replied 'And *I*, it's because *I* saw your children eating meat, eating their fill of it and taking the fat and putting it on their heads – it was obvious they had more than enough meat, so *I* said "Some people are always lucky".' The hyena answered 'Spider, you are too fond of pettifogging questions. I'll have nothing to do with you. Be off with you!'

* *guduma* is actually a throwing-stick, with a knob on the end.

† Cf. M. No. 37.