ISLAM IN WEST AFRICA

Religion, Society and Politics to 1800

Nehemia Levtzion

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1994 by Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Limited

This edition first published in 2017
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-138-28929-1 (Set)
ISBN: 978-1-315-26723-4 (Set) (ebk)
ISBN: 978-1-138-23958-6 (Volume 3) (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-138-23960-9 (Volume 3) (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-29545-9 (Volume 3) (ebk)

Publisher's Note
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Nehemia Levtzion

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VARIORUM
1994

Published by VARIORUM
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Gower House, Croft Road,
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3HR
Great Britain

Ashgate Publishing Company
Old Post Road,
Brookfield, Vermont 05036
USA

ISBN 0-86078-444-4

British Library CIP Data
Levtzion, Nehemia
Islam in West Africa: Religion, Society and Politics to 1800
(Variorum Collected Studies Series; CS 462)
I. Title II. Series
297.1970966

US Library of Congress CIP Data
Levtzion, Nehemia
Islam in West Africa: Religion, Society and Politics to 1800
p. cm. — (Collected Studies Series: CS462)
Includes index. ISBN 0-86078-444-4 (alk. paper)
1. Africa, West—History—to 1884. 2. Islam—Africa, West—History. I. Title. II. Series: Collected Studies; CS462
DT476.L48 1994 94–10593
986—dc20 CIP

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences - Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984. ™

Printed by Galliard (Printers) Ltd
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, Great Britain

COLLECTED STUDIES SERIES CS462

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PREFACE

The essays collected in this volume supplement my major publications on Islam in West Africa: *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa* (1968); *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (1973); contributions to The Cambridge History of Africa, volumes 3, 4, and 5 (1975-1978), on Northwest Africa, from the Maghrib to the fringes of the forest from 800 to 1800; *Early Arabic Sources for West African History* (1981, with J.F.P. Hopkins), and *Chronicles from Gonja* (1986, with Ivor Wilks and Bruce Haight).

The first article, "Patterns of Islamization in West Africa," is based on a comparative study of islamization in two different regions and periods; medieval Mali and Songhay in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, and the states of the Volta Basin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The second article, "Slavery and Islamization in Africa," suggests that the slave trade discouraged the expansion of Islam across a boundary of violence south of medieval Kanem and Bornu, but helped the diffusion of Islam when the Muslim slave hunters established their camps within the country they raided. Slave farming provided the economic basis for autonomous Muslim communities.

The second section of this volume is on Islam in politics and the role of Muslim men of religion. Article III analyzes the dynamics of Islam in African states, as accomodation with the existing political system gave way in time to tensions between the *'ulamā'* and the political authorities, because the former began to press for a radical restructuring of the state according to Islamic models. As shown in article IV, the Muslim men of religion in Africa were ranged along a continuum from clerics, who played roles similar to those of traditional priests, to scholars, members of the worldwide body of the learned Muslim elite. In article V, both clerics and scholars are set apart from the merchants, without denying the close association between trade and Islam.

The articles in the third section look from different viewpoints at the background to the Islamic revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that completely changed the character of Islam in West Africa. Article VI re-evaluates the perceived dichotomy between rural and urban

Islam, which associated the former with popular Islam and the latter with scholarship. Rural Islam in West Africa was the breeding ground for the *jihād* movements, which emerged in the countryside and not in the towns. Article VII suggests additional factors that might have contributed to Islamic militancy; the role of the pastoralists, the development of religious writings in the Muslim vernacular languages; the impact of trade with the Europeans; and the influence of the southern Sahara. Another, perhaps the most important factor, the rise of Sufi orders, is the subject of article VIII. Sufi orders in West Africa are presented in the wider context of eighteenth- century renewal and reform movements across the Muslim world. Article IX looks more closely at the origins of Islamic militancy in the Futa Jallon, the first Fulani *jihād*.

The last two sections, and the ten articles within them, offer some glimpses into the historian's workshop and his craft. Article X is a historiographical essay on the desert-Sahel interface where, over a millennium, a pendulum moved north or south as political supremacy alternated between the nomads of the desert and the states of the Sudan. Article XI suggests that there is no record of Jewish traders in the Sahara and the Sudan. Jews and Ibadis lived together in the northern oases. They complemented each other because the former dominated the trade of the Maghrib and the latter the trade of the Sahara. Article XII analyzes the textual evidence on the Almoravids, the first Islamic militant movement in the southwestern Sahara. Article XIII on West Africa's relations with Mamluk Egypt was dedicated to Professor David Ayalon, the foremost authority on the Mamluks, who taught me textual analysis.

For a period of over eight hundred years the principal, sometimes even the only, sources for African history were the Arabic texts. Because these texts are relatively few, it is important to evaluate them critically. Article XIV studies Ibn Ḥawqal's account of a check in the southern Saharan town of Awdaghust. Article XV is a reassessment of some Arabic texts on ancient Ghana, including one that suggests a date, 1203, for the takeover of Ghana by the Soso. Article XVI solves some of the riddles of a twelfth-century anonymous text from North Africa, which bears evidence on West Africa. Article XVIII was my first printed article which, by correcting one mistake in the French translation of Ibn Khaldun by M.G. de Slane (in the mid- nineteenth century), made the genealogy of the kings of Mali more sensible. Article XVIII is perhaps the most often quoted article in this volume, because it completely changed the reading of one of the two major chronicles of Timbuktu. The last article reports the findings of a collection of Arabic manuscripts from Kumasi of the early nineteenth century, located at the Royal Library of Copenhagen.

I am grateful for permission to reprint the articles in this volume, to the following publishers: Holmes & Meier, Frank Cass, Syracuse University Press, the Ben-Zvi Institute, Cana Ltd; and to the editors of the following periodicals: *Asian and African Studies* (Haifa University), *Journal of African History*

(Cambridge University Press), *Journal of Semitic Studies* (Manchester University), *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, and Revue Francaise d'Histoire d'Outre Mer* (Paris).

My thanks go to Prescila Fishman for copyediting articles VIII, IX, X and the Introduction, and to Benjie Herskowitz for preparing camera ready copy of those parts of the volume, as well as of the index. I am grateful to John Smedley and Ruth Peters at Variorum for an effective and cordial collaboration.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
March 1994

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: The articles in this volume, as in all others in the Collected Studies Series, have not been given a new, continuous pagination. In order to avoid confusion, and to facilitate their use where these same studies have been referred to elsewhere, the original pagination has been maintained wherever possible.

Each article has been given a Roman number in order of appearance, as listed in the Contents. This number is repeated on each page and quoted in the index entries.

I

Patterns of Islamization in West Africa

The nineteenth-century *jihād* movements in the northern Sudanic belt of West Africa put an end to a peaceful process of Islamization which had been going on for almost a thousand years. Not only did the *jihād* cover earlier patterns of Islamization, but it also changed the ideas present informants may have on the role of Islam and the extent of its influence before this religious revolution. In other words, Muslims in the *jihād* states may often find it difficult to relate—with any sympathy and understanding—the older Islamic traditions.

These traditions, however, have been retained farther to the south in areas where Muslims have been influential minorities for some centuries, but remained outside the orbit of the *jihād*. There—in states like Gonja, Dagomba, or Mamprusi—Islamic influence has by no means been static during the last three centuries; it has, however, developed along a pattern which may be detected from oral traditions, and is reflected in the present situation, which the researcher may observe. In other words, we are accorded the opportunity to look at a process as seen by the actors themselves.[1]

As I worked among Muslims and chiefs in the Volta Basin, where Islam gained ground since the seventeenth century, I had a strong feeling that I was dealing with a process similar to that which had taken place farther to the north some centuries earlier. Indeed, when I turned back to the Arabic

1. N. Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 192–193.

This essay was first published in N. R. Bennett and D. F. McCall, eds., *Aspects of West African Islam*. Boston University Papers in African History, vol. 5 (Boston, 1971), pp.3–33.

sources and oral traditions of the early Sudanic states, the evidence became more revealing, as if the texts had been tuned to a new key.

What I am about to try here is to offer a model for the process of Islamization, based on an interpretation of the evidence on Islam in the Sudanic belt from the tenth to the sixteenth century, indicating parallels with the Volta Basin, in the southern savannah belt, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. A comparative study of these two areas readily suggests itself because both were exposed to intensive peaceful trading activities.

Following the Arab conquest of North Africa, the Berbers gradually accepted Islam. The Berbers carried Islam across the Sahara to hand it over to the Soninke in the *sāḥil*, the "shore" of the desert. The Soninke brought Islam to the Malinke, their neighbors to the south, and Malinke-speaking traders—the Dyula—spread Islam as far as the fringes of the forest. This way of transmitting Islam, in relay, within wider cultural contacts between neighboring peoples, helps to explain the peaceful process of Islamization. Indeed, the Islamization of Africa became more successful because of the Africanization of Islam. Islam proved its vitality because of its rational basis, simplicity, and adaptability on the one hand, and its tradition of scholarship on the other. These two aspects account for two trends in West African Islam—compromise and militancy.

These two trends were represented already in the eleventh century. In Gao, according to al-Bakrī, the people were pagans and the king Muslim, but pre-Islamic customs persisted in the court.[2] In Takrur, the Muslim king forced his subjects to accept Islam; he introduced the Islamic law, propagated Islam among neighbors, and waged a holy war against the infidels.[3] It is the compromising attitude—the symbiosis of Islam and the African traditional religion—which was typical of Islam in West Africa before the eighteenth century, whereas the militancy of Takrur was the exception, and may be explained by its position on the lower Senegal in continuous and intensive contacts with the nomads of the southwestern Sahara. (Indeed, because of that, Islam in Senegal is an exception in other aspects as well, such as the role of the brotherhoods and its contemporary political implications.)

In Ghana of the mid-eleventh century, Muslims lived in a separate town or quarter—like the *zongos* of modern Ghana—under the auspices of a pagan king. This king "was praised for his love of justice and generosity towards the Muslims. . . . He had a mosque near his court where Muslims prayed when they called upon him. His interpreters, the official in charge of his treasury, and the majority of his ministers were Muslims."[4] In Gao such

2. Al-Bakrī, *Al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik: kitāb al-mughrib fī dhikr bilād Ifrīqiyya wa'l-Maghrib* (Paris, 1911), p. 183, translated as *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale* (Paris, 1913), pp. 342–343.

3. Ibid., p. 172/ tr. 324.

4. Ibid. pp. 174–176/ tr. 327–330.

close contacts with Muslims brought about the conversion of the king. This had not happened in Ghana by the time of al-Bakrī. The king adhered to his ancestral religion, perhaps in defiance of his northern enemies, the Sanhaja Almoravids, who represented Islamic aggressiveness. Acceptance of their religion might have implied political submission. Elsewhere I have tried to explain in a similar way the resistance of the Mossi to the Islamized empire of Songhay in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[5] In both cases peaceful traders were welcomed, but Islam would be rejected if it represented an obvious danger to the political system. Ghana, however, was conquered by the Almoravids, and its resistance to Islam broke with the destruction of its military and political power. Ghana of al-Zuhrī and al-Idrīsī in the twelfth century was a Muslim kingdom.[6]

Not all the Muslims in Ghana before the Almoravid conquest were foreigners; many probably were Soninke.[7] These were the traders who commuted between the Sahel and the goldfields. Through their trade they became urbanized and detached from the peasants' way of life, and in dealing with the traders from the Maghrib, they were exposed to Islamic influence. In their wanderings they could find hospitality and a sense of community among fellow-Muslims in the trading centers, such as those described by al-Bakrī, along the routes leading from Ghana to the goldfields.[8]

As most traders in the Sahel and the savannah were Muslims, trader and Muslim became almost synonymous. Not only did traders tend to become Muslim, but there are documented cases in which traders who settled down as peasants went through a process of de-Islamization, gradually losing their Islamic characteristics.[9]

As long as Islam was confined to the trading communities, it operated in the fringes of the West African societies. There was a dispersion of Muslims rather than a spread of Islam. The latter happened when Muslims succeeded in winning over the chiefs. An early account of such a process is offered by al-Bakrī.

The small chiefdom of Malal, beyond the upper Senegal, was afflicted by drought from one year to the other. All the prayers and sacrifices of the local priests were in vain. Then a Muslim promised that, if the king accepted

5. Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs*, pp. 163–164.

6. Al-Zuhrī, *Kitāb al-Jughrāfiyya* in Youssouf Kamal, *Monumenta Cartographica Africae et Aegyti* (Cairo and Leiden, 1926–1951), 3, p. 802; Al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-afāq: ṣifat al-Maghrib wa-arḍ al-Sūdān wa-Miṣr wa'l-Andalus* (Leiden, 1866), p. 6, translated as *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne* (Leiden, 1866), p. 7.

7. Al-Bakrī (p. 175, 176/ tr. 329, 330) suggests a distinction between Muslims and "followers of the king's religion" (*ahl dīn al-malik*), and not between white Muslims and black pagans.

8. Ibid., p. 177/ tr. 332.

9. Y. Person, "Les ancêtres de Samori," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 13 (1963), pp. 133–134, 139–140, 147–152; Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs*, p. 144.

Islam, he would pray for his relief. When the king agreed, the Muslim taught him "to recite some easy passages from the Koran, and instructed him in those religious obligations which no one can be excused of not knowing." On the following Friday, after the king had purified himself, the two set out to a nearby hill. All that night the Muslim prayed, emulated by the king. "The dawn only started to break, when Allah brought down abundant rain. The king ordered the idols broken, he expelled his sorcerers, and became Muslim together with his family and the nobility. But the common people remained pagans." [10]

This Muslim succeeded in winning over the king by demonstrating the omnipotence of Allah; praying to Allah having saved the kingdom where all sacrifices by local priests had failed. Islam made its earliest appeal in competition with the African traditional religions, proving its superiority as a source of blessings. The eighteenth-century Gonja Chronicle has a similar theme as a charter for the bond between Muslims and chiefs. Muḥammad al-Abyaḍ—ancestor of the Gonja imams—made a miracle, in the name of Allah, to bring a victory in a fierce battle. "When the king of Gonja saw this it made him wonder. This faith, he said, is better than our religion. He became devoted to Islam together with his brothers." In a later version of the Gonja oral traditions, we find the following significant statement: "Actually, if you want to wage war, and you do not find a Mallam, then it is impossible for you to do so." [11]

Chiefs were particularly inclined to seek the prayers of Muslims, and their highly appreciated amulets. Chiefs were under greater strains—competition over the chieftaincy, fear of plots, wars with other chiefs, or responsibility for the welfare of the whole community—than the common people whose way of life harmonized with the rhythm of the traditional religion. Also, chiefs, rather than commoners, came into physical contact with the Muslims; in controlling the Muslims' trading activities, in inquiring of Muslims about conditions in other countries, and in employing literate Muslims in the administration. I therefore emphasize the role of chiefs as early recipients of Islamic influence, and consequently the importance of centralized chiefdoms in the process of Islamization. Indeed, a survey of the spread of Islam in West Africa clearly shows that Islam did not spread among stateless peoples, even where geographical conditions were the same.

The king of Malal together with members of his family and the nobility accepted Islam, whereas the commoners remained pagans. As mentioned above, this was also the case for Gao at the same period. Islam thus became a divisive factor within African kingdoms and a potential source for internal crises. This may have been of considerable concern for the king of Aluken, a province of Ghana, who, according to al-Bakrī, "is said to have been a Muslim, but concealed this." [12]

10. Al-Bakrī, p. 178/ tr. 333–334.

11. Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs*, pp. 51–54.

12. Al-Bakrī, p. 179/ tr. 335.

Chiefs found themselves in a difficult position between an influential Muslim minority, living close to the center, monopolizing the trade, and having extensive outside relations, and the majority of the pagan subjects. The way out of this dilemma was for them to maintain a middle position between Islam and paganism, to be neither real Muslims nor complete pagans. That a negative definition is necessary indicates that it is difficult to locate the exact position of the chiefs between the two poles of Islam and paganism. From the middle position some dynasties or individual rulers sometimes advanced toward a more complete acceptance of Islam and sometimes fell back to regain closer relations with tradition. The position of a dynasty or a ruler lent the color to their kingdoms which made some appear Islamic and others pagan. The historical circumstances in which such changes may have taken place will now be illustrated by tracing the development of Islam in Mali over the centuries.

Arabic sources and oral traditions agree that chiefs among the Malinke were under Islamic influence before the time of Sundjata, founder of the empire of Mali, in the first half of the thirteenth century.[13] Sundjata, therefore, came from a dynasty which had already accepted Islam, at least nominally. Yet, the traditional epos of Mali, in telling the story of Sundjata, contains hardly any Islamic elements. Sundjata is presented as a great hunter and magician,[14] which, indeed, reveals as much about the nature of the oral traditions as about the image of Sundjata. But one may suggest that in a critical hour of history, when he had to mobilize the national resources of the Malinke in their war of liberation against the Soso, Sundjata, though nominally a Muslim, turned to the traditional religion for support—to the particularistic spirit of the nation rather than to the universalistic appeal of Islam. He, therefore, came very close to the pagan pole.

From its center on the upper Niger, Mali expanded into the Sahel to include the old Islamic centers of Walata, Dia, and later Timbuktu and Jenne. Muslim traders operated over an extensive network of trade routes across the length and width of the empire. Sudanese and North African Muslims came to live in Niani, the capital. Through its involvement in the trans-Saharan trade, Mali came closer to the outside Muslim world, especially under those kings who made the pilgrimage to Mecca and visited Cairo on their way. There were diplomatic relations between Mali and Morocco. As the small Malinke chiefdom turned into a vast multi-ethnic empire with an influential Muslim minority within and extensive Islamic relations without, its rulers changed their orientation from closer attachment to the ancestral religion toward an Islamic outlook.

13. Ibn-Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar: kitāb ta'rīkh al-duwwal al-islāmiyya bi'l-Maghrib* (Algiers, 1847–1851), 1, p. 264, translated as *Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique du Nord* (Paris, 1925–1956), 2, pp. 110–111. For oral traditions, see, among others, C. Monteil, "Les Empires du Mali," *Bulletin du Comité d'Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques de l'A.O.F.* (1929), pp. 349–350.

14. D. T. Niane, *Sundjata ou l'épopée mandingue* (Paris, 1961), *passim.*

During its golden age, at the time of Mansa Musa in the fourteenth century, Mali was regarded as a Muslim empire and was accepted as such in the Muslim world. A critical review of the evidence, however, will reveal the vitality of the pre-Islamic heritage, which sustained elements of the traditional religion.

In the fifteenth century, Mali lost the Sahel together with Timbuktu, Jenne, and other centers where Islam was more firmly established. Mali was deprived of direct contact with the Muslim world north of the Sahara. The capital declined and was deserted by its floating population, the commercial Muslim community. Hence, those factors which had lent strength to the Islamic magnetic pole ceased to function. As more ethnic groups escaped the domination of Mali, the kingdom contracted to its original Malinke nucleus, contributing to the reassertion of traditional values. Muslim divines remained attached to the chiefs' courts and continued to render religious services to chiefs, but the chiefs had lost the Islamic zeal and appearance of their fourteenth-century predecessors and were sliding back toward the pagan pole.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account of his visit to Mali in 1352–53 is of great significance for any analysis of Islam in fourteenth-century Mali. He was present at the two Islamic festivals, which he described in great detail. The king was present at the public prayer, making it an official ceremony to which non-Muslims may also have been attracted. In return, all the prestige of Islam was mobilized in exhorting loyalty to the king, as revealed by the contents of the preaching. But, as the Islamic festival became a national feast, it also had to accommodate pre-Islamic ceremonies, which are among the sources of the kingship's legitimacy. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa described a dance of masks on the afternoon of the festival day as well as a recital of oral tradition by the griots.[15] In Gonja, Dagomba, and Mamprusi, Islamic festivals also became the principal national feasts, but few Islamic elements remain there in the way these festivals are celebrated by chiefs and commoners.[16]

As a pious Muslim from another culture, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa regarded "the ridiculous recital of the poets" among the "vile practices" of the people of Mali, along with other pre-Islamic customs, such as the rule that "all women must come before the king naked without any cover," or the practice of sprinkling dust over the head as a sign of respect before the king.[17] This practice was later among those condemned by 'Uthmān dan Fodio.[18]

15. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār fī gharā'ib al-amṣār wa-'ajā'ib al-asfār; Voyages* (Paris, 1922), 4, pp. 409–414.

16. Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs,* pp. 55, 89–90, 98, 133.

17. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, pp. 423–424.

18. M. Hiskett, "*Kitāb al-Farq*: A Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to 'Uthmān dan Fodio," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies [BSOAS]*, 23, no. 3 (1960), p. 563, 569.

Individual kings, like Mansa Musa of Mali or Askiya Muḥammad of Songhay, sincerely attempted to be devout Muslims; they supported the '*ulamā*' and sought their advice. But even these kings were unable to relieve the monarchy of the pre-Islamic traditional basis. Askiya Dāwūd (1549–83) followed the example of his father Askiya Muḥammad in his attachment to Islam; he could recite the whole Koran, and is said to have studied the *Risāla*, a basic work of the Mālikī school.[19] He was visited in his palace by one of the leading '*ulamā*' of Timbuktu, who was shocked by the persistence of pre-Islamic practices and said to the Askiya: "I thought you were mad when I saw you [doing all these]." "No," the Askiya replied, "I am not mad myself, but I am the king of the mad."[20]

Within the political system, Islam and traditionalism were by no means abstract concepts, but represented different social groups competing to extend their influence over the rulers. Part of the history of Songhay—which is quite well documented in the *Ta'rīkhs* and reflected in the oral traditions—may be explained in terms of this tension as it was related to the competition among candidates for the kingship. Some of the Askiyas relied on the custodians of traditionalism and departed from the policy of alliance with the '*ulamā*' which had been initiated by Askiya Muḥammad.[21]

The core of my argument is that, though kings were instrumental in introducing Islam, supported the Muslims, and came themselves under Islamic influence, they did not become unqualified Muslims as long as they did not free themselves from the traditional basis of their authority. That a chief cannot be a good Muslim is implied by the Kano Chronicle. Umaru, Sarki-n-Kano in the first half of the fourteenth century, was a Mallam and associated with Mallams before he became Sarki. Some time after his accession one of his Muslim friends admonished him: "O Umaru, you still like the fickle dame who has played you false." Umaru then called the people of Kano and said: "This high estate is a trap for the erring, I wash my hands of it." "Then he resigned . . . and spent the rest of his life in regret for his actions while he had been sarki."[22]

During my field work in the Volta Basin, my informants—both chiefs and Muslims—were consistent in emphasizing the distinction between being a chief and being a Muslim. When I asked about a certain chief whether he was a Muslim, Muslim informants would laugh in embarrassment. They could not say a chief was a pagan, but neither could they accept him as a Muslim. One way of answering this perplexing question was to say

19. *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, pub. and tr. by O. Houdas and M. Delafosse (Paris, 1913), p. 94/ tr. 177–178.

20. Ibid., p. 114/ tr. 208–210. See also J. O. Hunwick, "Religion and State in the Songhay Empire, 1464–1591," in I. M. Lewis, ed., *Islam in Tropical Africa* (London, 1964), pp. 310–311.

21. On the tension between Islam and paganism in Songhay, see J. Rouch, *Contribution à l'histoire des Songhay* (Dakar, 1954), pp. 200–204.

22. H. R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs* (Lagos, 1928), 3, p. 108.

that "he was praying." Indeed, chiefs—though not Muslims—do pray occasionally.[23]

Islamic influence reached the various social groups within a kingdom in different degrees. Because of its adaptability in compromising with traditional African ways of life, Islam could appeal differentially to a wide section of the population. Commoners in the capital and near the courts of other chiefs may have been drawn into the orbit of Islam by attending official ceremonies in which Muslim prayers were said. These were indeed professed pagans, but they are to be distinguished from other pagans not incorporated in an Islamized kingdom. In Dagbane, the term *chefera* (from the Arabic *kafir*) is reserved for the stateless Konkomba and Bassari, who are completely untouched by Islam. It implies that the non-Muslim Dagomba are regarded as less pagan than the Konkomba.[24]

Professed Muslims with little or no Islamic education regard praying as the principal manifestation of their faith. For those Muslims, who were very probably the great majority, the ritual rather than the legal aspects of Islam were of greater importance. Even the Koran was regarded as a source of blessing rather than a revelation of the divine law.[25] In the Volta Basin the Imam, with his ritual functions, is the leader of the Muslim community, and most Muslim communities have no Cadi to administer the Islamic law. Even in a city like Jenne, as late as the seventeenth century, according to *Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān*, Sudanese Muslims did not refer to the Cadi but preferred to litigate before the preacher, who settled their affair by conciliation (and very likely with reference to customary law as much as to the *shari'a*).[26]

Imams and Koranic teachers, Cadis and scholars were members of the '*ulama*' class. But even here we must distinguish two groups: those who lived with the chiefs, and rendered them religious services, and those who lived in the commercial towns, in autonomous Muslim communities.[27] Those who served the chiefs became integrated into the socio-political system of the state. Though in their personal conduct they endeavored to observe the obligations of Islam, they must have accepted the realities of compromise in presenting Islam to their chiefs in mild and diluted forms. For al-Maghīlī and 'Uthmān dan Fodio these were the vile '*ulamā'*,[28] yet for centuries they carried the burden of extending the frontiers of Islam.

23. Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs*, pp. 108–109.

24. Ibid.

25. See, for example, the story about the Koran of Larabanga (in Gonja, Ghana): M. El-Wakkad and I. Wilks, eds. and trs., *Qiṣṣat Salangha Ta'rīkh Ghunjā*—"The Story of Salaga and the History of Gonja," *Ghana Notes and Queries*, 3 (1961), pp. 12–15; Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs*, p. 73.

26. Al-Sa'dī, *Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān*, pub. and tr. by O. Houdas (Paris, 1900), p. 18/tr. 33.

27. On the *'ulamā'* in the court of Mali, Ibn-Baṭṭūṭa, 4, p. 404; on Muslim autonomous communities, *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, p. 179–180/ tr. 314–315.

28. M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," *BSOAS*, 25, no. 3 (1962), p. 581.

In the autonomous Muslim communities in the commercial towns—for which Timbuktu is the most illustrious example—the *'ulamā'* maintained a high standard of Islamic scholarship, had connections with other centers of learning in the Muslim world, and were concerned with the application of the Islamic law. These *'ulamā'* represented normative Islam—as taught in the books—whereas the majority of the Muslims practiced what may be called popular Islam. Continuous communications between the remotest Muslim communities and the centers of learning prevented the widening of the gap between normative and popular Islam, but the very existence of such a gap inspired the *'ulamā'* in their attempts toward reform.

Unlike the *'ulamā'* in the chiefs' courts, who were dependent on the chiefs, the *'ulamā'* of Timbuktu dealt with the rulers from an independent standing. They were therefore in a position to preach to the kings and admonish them without compromising.[29] It was this tradition of the *'ulamā'* which brought about the militant *jihād* movements in the nineteenth century.

At the time of Askiya Muḥammad, a militant *'ālim*, al-Maghīlī, tried to introduce reforms through the Songhay monarch. Yet, in spite of the best intentions of Askiya Muḥammad, he failed to transform Songhay into an Islamic empire, as became evident under some of his successors. Indeed, the experience of many centuries proved that the ruling dynasties could not go all the way to become Muslims to fit the standards set by the *'ulamā'*, because of their residual pre-Islamic heritage. This radical break with the past could not be accomplished through evolution; an armed revolution was necessary. In other words, if chiefs cannot turn true Muslims, then the only way to make the state Islamic is for the *'ulamā'* to become chiefs.

Most of the states which emerged as a result of the *jihād* movements were not, strictly speaking, theocracies (indeed few, if any, of the states in the wider Muslim world were theocracies). But a significant change occurred as a result of these Islamic revolutions. Islam moved from the periphery to the center of the socio-political system and became the only source of legitimacy for the state and its rulers. In terms of our model, the pagan pole was deprived of its magnetism. For the first time the commoners themselves were gradually moving toward Islam, not only because of greater coercion but also because this was the way to identify oneself with the socio-political system and its values. Those who remained pagan, irrespective of their numbers, were relegated to the lowest status and to the fringes of the society. Only by becoming Muslims could they again become recognized members of the system. The Hausa-Fulani emirates of Northern Nigeria are the best example of such a process.

I have not as yet said anything about one of the most important institutions in West African Islam, the *tarīqa*s or Muslim brotherhoods. The

29. On the confrontation between the cadi Maḥmūd Aqīt of Timbuktu and Askiya Muḥammad, *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*, p. 60/ tr. 116.

reason is that, in my opinion, the brotherhoods became significant in the eighteenth century only. Indeed, I could not trace any clear reference to brotherhoods in the seventeenth-century *Ta'rīkh al-Sūdān* and *Ta'rīkh al-Fattāsh*. In other parts of the Muslim world the brotherhoods are sometimes associated with popular Islam, but, in West Africa—apart from Senegal which is a case in itself—the brotherhoods were associated with the better educated elite rather than with the rank and file. In the Volta Basin I had the impression that to become a *Tijānī* is regarded something like a second conversion into Islam of a higher level.

As the influence of the brotherhoods—first Qādiriyya and then Tijāniyya—spread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the more deeply Islamized Sudanic belt, a new spirit of devotion to Islam was inspired. The brotherhoods enhanced solidarity and cohesiveness in the elite corps of Islam to bring about more militant and uncompromising attitudes. The brotherhoods therefore played an important role in stimulating the *jihād* movements. On the other hand, I believe that in West Africa, excluding Senegal, the brotherhoods were of little, if any, importance in the early stages of the spread of Islam; in the process of extending the frontiers of Islamic influence.

Throughout this paper it may appear as if I were posing as a censor of Islamic ethics and conduct by using such terms as "true Muslim," "unqualified Muslim," or "not complete Muslim." In fact, for the purpose of my studies I accept as Muslim every individual who regards himself as a Muslim. I could not, however, avoid making the distinction between different levels of practicing Islam, and for that purpose have tried to follow the standards set by the *'ulamā'* for what I call normative Islam. My perception of the process of Islamization is of a movement of individuals and groups, departing from any form of traditional religion before its contact with Islam and following a line which ends with normative Islam. Everyone along this line may regard himself as a Muslim, and it is for Allah to judge his faith and deeds. It is impossible for us to weigh in quantative terms what percentage of non-Islamic elements he carries with him in order to be able to place him exactly in the appropriate section on that line. But where we have enough evidence we may say that he has not yet gone through the complete process. The conviction that the process should be completed is again not mine; it was manifested by the very occurrence of the *jihād*s.

II

Slavery and Islamization in Africa: A Comparative Study

The present paper is a preliminary study of the impact of slavery on the spread of Islam in different parts of Africa. It is part of an extended comparative study of Islamization in Africa and across the Muslim world which seeks to discern patterns in the expansion of Islam which have evolved in different geographical regions and historical circumstances, among peoples of diverse religious systems, cultural values and social structures.[1] Whereas most studies of the spread of Islam are on a regional basis, here I attempt a thematic approach, and will present some general thoughts on the relationship between slavery and Islamization. I wish again to stress the preliminary nature of the study and its need of elaboration and refinement by additional research.

In explaining differences in the relationship between politics and trade Richard Gray and David Birmingham suggest that "the first, and possibly the most significant, factor was the nature of the commodities traded."[2] The same factor, one may add, also helps account for different patterns of Islamization.

In the Sahel and the Savannah, between the Niger and the Senegal rivers, the trade of the successive kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhay was mainly in gold. For a long period slave trading was of secondary importance only. Around Lake Chad, on the other hand, the successive states of Kanem and Bornu, having no gold to offer, depended primarily on the slave trade for their commercial relations with North Africa. This difference in commodities of trade, gold and slaves, influenced political dynamics and the progress of Islam in the Western and Central Sudan.

In the Western Sudan trade routes from the Sahel extended inland to the sources of gold, first in Bambuk, then in Bure on the Upper Niger and, by the middle of the fourteenth century, as far south as the

goldfields of the Akan forest.[3] Gradually, larger sections of the Western Sudan between the Sahel and the forest were linked in a commercial network. The benefits accruing to those who controlled, and secured, the routes along which gold and other valuable goods were transported, encouraged the formation of chiefdoms, their integration into large scale states, and the spread of Islam far inland to the south.

There was no similar southward expansion of trade, state formation and Islam from Lake Chad. During periods of strength Kanem and Bornu expanded not to the sources of slaves, in the south, but to the north along the Saharan routes, as far as Fezzan.[4] Bornu's alternative direction for expansion was towards the Hausa states in the west.

South of Lake Chad the expansion of Bornu was hindered by natural barriers: the mountains of Mandara, dense vegetation and the marshes created by the seasonal flooding of the Lake and of the Logone and Shari rivers. Moreover, the countries south of Lake Chad were better exploited as a hunting ground for slaves if left outside the bounds of Bornu. The southern border of Bornu thus became a hostile frontier crossed only by slave raiders. The lack of peaceful communication and the absence of Muslim settlements or even individuals beyond that boundary inhibited the spread of Islam.

The frontiers of Islam south of Lake Chad were, however, influenced by a long process of political transformation which began towards the end of the fourteenth century with the shift of the Saifawa dynasty of Kanem to Bornu, southwest of Lake Chad. With the establishment of the state in its new environment the Kanuri, a new society incorporating the local population, generally referred to as So, developed. In the sixteenth century, the state of Bagirmi emerged southeast of Lake Chad on the right bank of the Shari river, in a region which formerly had been raided for slaves. Not long after the creation of the state the rulers of Bagirmi became Muslims, at least nominally. The Islamization of the people of Bagirmi, however, took longer. In the middle of the nineteenth century H. Barth remarked:

> Their adoption of Islam is very recent, and the greater part of them may, even at the present day, with more justice be called pagans than Mohammedans.[5]

The people of Bagirmi, nevertheless, consider themselves superior to their neighbours. "Proud of their supposed pre-eminence in religion, and eager for the profits of the slave trade," they raided their neighbours.[6] Those seeking the protection of Bagirmi paid tribute in slaves. In defending themselves against raiders some ethnic groups,

like the Musgu, developed chieftaincies, the "sultans" of which adopted some external features of Islam.[7]

H. Barth accompanied an expedition from Bornu, "the object of which was to weaken the Musgu tribes, who, behind their natural defences of rivers and swamps, had hitherto been able to maintain their independence." One of their chiefs, Adishen, "enjoyed the friendship and protection of the rulers of Bornu. . . . The order had been given through the encampment [of the expedition] that all the property in the villages of Adishen should be respected, and nothing touched." The inhabitants of the villages, however, "thought it more prudent to take care of their own safety by flight than to trust themselves to the discretion of the undisciplined army of their friends and protectors." Despite the order, the warriors looted everything which had been left behind.[8]

During the same expedition Barth was witness to a ceremony in which two local chiefs who had sought the protection of Bornu avowed their subjection by an oath and "were officially dressed in black robes as a sort of investiture."[9] Political association had cultural and religious consequences. "Adishen [the Musgu chief] had shaved his head, in order to give to himself the appearance of a Muslim, and wore a robe; but of his companions, only one had adopted this foreign garment, all the others having their loins girt with a leather apron."[10]

In the country of the Musgu, Bornu policy oscillated between slave hunting and the establishment of some kind of political authority. Farther north and west, in the more accessible "border-country of the Marghi" integration into the Bornu polity was more advanced, as reported by Barth during his trip to Adamawa. On the third day after having left Maidaguri, Barth reached a village "which originally formed part of the Marghi country, but has been separated from it and annexed to Bornu, its former inhabitants having either been led into slavery or converted to Islam, that is to say, taught to repeat a few Arabic phrases, without understanding a word of them."[11] The next day Barth reached another village of the Marghi, where "the inhabitants, who, at least outwardly, have become Mohammedans, go entirely naked, with the exception of a narrow strip of leather. . . . They spoke Kanuri with me, and their own language between themselves."[12]

Barth's account suggests that a country which had previously been a hunting ground for slaves experienced a political and cultural transformation; the emergence of chieftaincies, closer political association with Bornu and the beginning of Kanurization and Islamization.

In the nineteenth century the Shehus of Bornu pursued a policy of territorial expansion which confirmed their hegemony over the Kotoko states to the south and brought them under the direct administration of Kukawa, the Bornu capital. Large portions of the Marghi country were also conquered. In its southward expansion Bornu departed from its traditional policy of not incorporating these areas into the empire (for this would theoretically have protected them from slave raids). Bornu turned to the south after its thrust to the west had been checked by the rise of the Sokoto caliphate. Moreover, its southern hinterland was being threatened by the northward expansion of the emirate of Adamawa.[13]

Barth's account reflects the ambiguous relations between the territories he visited and Bornu. The protection offered by Bornu was more formal than effective. Chiefs who had paid allegiance to Bornu in return for protection were still subject to raids and were expected to pay a tribute in slaves. Nevertheless, contacts between the Kanuri of Bornu and their southern neighbours were no more restricted to raids and violence only. Local chiefs in contact with representatives of Bornu imitated Kanuri manners, including the externals of Islam.

East of Lake Chad the Muslim states of Bagirmi, Wadai and Darfur raided peoples to the south. Those peoples were referred to not by their particular ethnic names, but by general abusive labels which implied an undifferentiated mass of uncivilized people with the inherent quality of slaves who therefore could be hunted like animals. To the south of Bornu and Bagirmi they were known as Kirdi, those raided by Wadai were called Janakhara, and those south of Darfur were dubbed Fartit.[14] The latter were also referred to as Niamniam.[15]

Niamniam is undoubtedly a variant of Namnam which, together with such terms as Lamlam, Damdam, Amima and Barbara, appears in the works of the medieval Arab geographers from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. The Damdam, according to al-Bakri (writing 1067/8), are "the people who eat anyone who falls into their hands."[16] Al-Zuhri (*floruit* 1137) described how "the people of Ghana make raids on the land of the Barbara and Amima and capture their people. . . . The Amima follow the religion of the *majus*."[17] Al-Idrisi (writing in 1154) called those people Lamlam: "The people of Barisa, Sila and Ghana make forays into the land of Lamlam, and capture its inhabitants. They bring them to their own country and sell them to the visiting merchants."[18]

The general impression from these accounts is that but for slave raiding there were no contacts between the Muslim kingdoms of the Sahel and the uncivilized, allegedly cannibalistic, inhabitants of the

interior. "On account of their paganism," al-Zuhri says, "no one enters their country and no merchandise is imported into it."[19] As a result of political developments in the interior, this absence of contact gradually gave way. Al-Idrisi's account suggests the beginning of a process of state formation among the Lamlam:

> The town of Malal in the country of Lamlam is a small town, like a large village without a surrounding wall. It is built on an unassailable hill of red earth. The people of Malal seek protection there from the other Sudan, who attack them.[20]

In defending themselves against the raiders the Lamlam created the nucleus of a chieftaincy. The ruler of such a chieftaincy, according to the account of al-Bakri, was converted to Islam by a Muslim who was resident near his court.[21]

Contacts with their Muslim neighbours initiated a process of acculturation among these peoples, as described by al-Dimashqi (writing in 1324):

> The heathens are divided into the Lamlam, Namnam and Damdam. Those [among them] who live near to the Muslims cover their privy parts with skins, but those who live away from the Muslims, namely the Damdam, eat anybody not of their own race who falls into their hands because of their extreme alienation from [other] men.[22]

In the Western Sudan political transformations and increasing opportunities for cultural contacts helped prepare the ground for the spread of Islam. These processes were themselves encouraged by the opening up of the countries of the interior to trade in other commodities, mainly gold and kola nuts.

In Darfur, the violence on the boundary (which had been created by slave raiding into Dar Fartit) was somewhat mitigated by the exploitation of the copper mines of Hufrat al-Nuhas within Dar Fartit. In the eighteenth century a Muslim community of mixed origin lived around the mines under the nominal suzerainty of Darfur. Most of the copper was sent north to Darfur, but part was traded in the south. Itinerant Muslim traders, the *jallaba*, penetrated along these routes deep into the interior, where they traded with the Kreish and the northern Azande, exchanging their merchandise for ivory and slaves. They operated under the protection of local chiefs who levied tolls on them. The jallaba extended the area of slave recruitment farther south than the region which had been raided by parties from Darfur. They also created opportunities for social contacts and cultural communication, especially in the markets which developed along the routes.

Conditions in the hinterland of Darfur changed after the Bahr al-Ghazal Basin had been opened up by the more aggressive traders from

Khartum. The latter used force to subdue the local chiefs who had been taxing the jallaba. The traders in turn created a network of *zaribas*, thorn enclosures where traders and their servants established themselves as an alien ruling caste. Whereas the jallaba had come south during the dry season only, and returned after a few months, the zaribas introduced a permanent and continuous presence of Muslims in the area. The traders in the zaribas were joined by *fakis*, Muslim divines who produced amulets and other charms, and who contributed more than the traders themselves to the propogation of Islam.[23]

The zaribas were depots for ivory and slaves. Some of the slaves were hunted by the Arabs, others were obtained from local chiefs. Over most of Dar Fartit the slave and ivory trade wrought destruction and the disintegration of ethnic groups. But around the zaribas a new society emerged as a result of the fusion of Arabs, their servants, slaves and local people. Those in the service of the Arabs adopted the manners and dress of their masters. Some even became Muslims.[24]

Many of the slaves were obtained from Azande chiefs on the M'Bomu and Uele rivers. Firearms supplied by the Arab traders increased the power of those chiefs who nevertheless were careful to prevent direct Arab intervention. Azande chiefs adopted different attitudes towards the Arabs, ranging from open collaboration to hostility.[25] The Arabs, however, succeeded in exploiting dynastic rivalries among the Azande for their purpose of gaining access to new areas abundant in slaves and ivory, and established zaribas in the territories of defeated Azande chiefs. Many of the northern Azande were compelled to serve as porters to the Arabs whom they had resisted for many years, and saw their own people sold into slavery.[26] As in other areas, contact with the Arabs brought with it cultural influence on manners and dress. One observer noted, however, that among the Azande the Arabs "introduced Moslem customs *sans* religion."[27]

In the southern Sudan the Mahdist intervention sparked a new wave of violence, causing a further breakdown of African society. The peoples resisted the attempts to impose Mahdist rule and religion upon them, and the Mahdiya left a legacy of bitterness, hate and fear. It destroyed not only the Egyptian administration but also that commercial network which, despite the violence involved in the slave trade, had initiated a process of acculturation. "Paradoxically," G.N. Sanderson says, "the Mahdiya also arrested the development and consolidation of Islamic influence on the Upper Nile."[28]

In Bahr al-Ghazal, which had suffered most from slave-raiding, the influence of Islam and the Arabic language and culture survived after

the British occupation. A significant change occurred in that region when raiding bands from Darfur into Dar Fartit gave way to the domination of slave traders, mainly Dunqulawis from the Nile. Arab influence among the people of Dar Fartit on the eve of the Mahdi's revolt is described by R.O. Collins:

> The Negroid tribes bordering on Darfur and Kordofan . . . had long had intimate contact with the Arabs to the north; and such tribes as the Dembo, the Shatt, and the Shilluk Loo had become thoroughly Arabicized and were, in fact, ruled before the coming of the Egyptian Administration by a powerful Dunqulawi merchant named Qinawi, whose manners, dress, and religion they readily imitated. Other Arabicized tribes, like the Feroge, the Njangulgule, and the Togoyo, even claimed to be of Arab origin.[29]

A similar process occurred west of Dar Fartit, in Dar Runga and Dar Kuti (in Chad and the Central African Republic). Those regions had for many years been raided from Bagirmi and Wadai. Islamization began there, however, when the area became a base for slave raiding into other areas, particularly Dar Banda farther to the south. Rabih b. Fadl Allah, who having entered Dar Runga and built up a powerful slave army, united Dar Runga and Dar Kuti and installed his lieutenant Muhammad al-Sanusi as sultan. During that period Arabic came to be widely spoken and people adopted Arab dress and manners. This process of acculturation was most evident among the chiefs and in the trading villages.[30]

In the Nile-Congo divide, in the interior of Africa, Arab slave raiders from the north encountered the advanced parties of Arab slave raiders from the east. This encounter took place only a few years before the European intervention drove out the Arabs. French, British and Belgians arrested a process of Islamization and Arabicization which might have changed the cultural and religious map of Africa. Rabih and Tippu-Tip were agents of Islamization whose activity could be curtailed by the colonial powers because like the latter they too used force to dominate other peoples. On the other hand, the colonial powers were unable to stop the spread of Islam where its agents were traders, clerics and local chiefs. The principal vehicle for the expansion of Islam into the interior of Africa was trade, in ivory and slaves. The impact of Islam, however, depended on many factors, particularly the nature of the trade, its carriers, and the socio-political structures of the local societies.

The Yao, considered "the most significant example of an almost completely islamized people in the far interior of East Africa,"[31] may also be taken as the best example for the study of the impact of the slave trade on internal political developments and on the spread of Islam.

The Yao had traded with the coast for a long period, but it was only with the rise of powerful territorial chiefs in the nineteenth century that "Islam seems to have begun to take hold among them."[32]

The lucrative ivory trade, which preceded the slave trade, had already opened up opportunities for the attainment of political power. But it was the slave trade which led to the emergence of territorial chiefs who succeeded in recruiting followers and warriors from outside their own matrilineal group. Guns, used to capture slaves and to achieve military domination, were the monopoly of the great chiefs. Hoping to share in the benefits of the trade and seeking protection from the havoc wrought in the countryside by slave hunting and the raid of the Ngoni, people flocked to villages of powerful chiefs. Yao villages developed into towns which were further swelled with the chief's slaves.[33]

As long as Yao traders frequented the coast, Swahili civilization influenced only individuals but not the society as a whole. The process of acculturation began after Swahili and Arab traders entered Yaoland and established Muslim communities in the trading villages or towns. People adopted Swalhili manners and dress, and built houses which betrayed the influence of Swahili architecture. They built dhows like those of the Arabs and "planted coconuts with the object of making the lake shore resemble the coast."[34]

Islamization here followed a pattern similar to that in West Africa. The Swahili and Arab traders were accompanied by *mwalimu*, divines and religious teachers who introduced Muslim education. The religious teachers were respected by the Yao chiefs who also employed them as scribes for trading business with the coast. The Muslim divines offered their amulets and prayers as an additional source of blessing, complementary to traditional magical devices. The adoption of Islam, Edward Alpers suggests, helped the Yao chiefs overcome tensions created in the course of enlarging the scale of socio-political organization.[35] The Islamization of traditional dances, initiation rites and installation ceremonies helped the chiefs maintain their legitimacy and contributed to the permeation of Islam to other levels of Yao society.[36]

The Yao were deeply involved in the slave trade as partners of the Swahili and Arab traders. Other peoples in the interior (like the Fipa, Sangu and Bungu in the corridor between the lakes of Tanganyika and Nyasa) were also partners in the slave trade, as raiders and traders, but the influence of Swahili culture and of Islam among them was rather limited.[37] This may have been because they had not developed professional long-distance trade and were confined to a local,

subsistence oriented trade. Christopher St. John explains:

> The possibilities of long-distance commerce were transmitted to the corridor only a few years before foreign professional traders entered the region. New entrepreneurial roles were filled by those outsiders before indigenous traders had a chance to appreciate them.[38]

The two peoples of the interior who competed successfully with the Swahili and the Arabs in professional long-distance trade were the Yao and the Nyamwezi. Both had lengthy trade experience, and had reached the coast before the coastal traders came upcountry.

The Nyamwezi controlled an important part of the trade of the interior. Their commercial system extended from Katanga to the coast, and it is estimated that at the end of the nineteenth century about a third of the male population of Unyamwezi went to the coast each year as traders and porters.[39] The opening up of Unyamwezi to Arab traders resulted in strong competition to the indigenous trade, but also provided local chiefs with the opportunity to obtain wealth by raiding caravans and extorting tolls. The chiefs became increasingly interested in trading, raiding and warfare, which was a significant change in their role. In place of the traditional rain-makers, magicians and arbitrators, a new class of secular chiefs emerged. The most well known was Mirambo, who built an extensive chiefdom.[40]

The emergence of powerful chiefdoms, frequent visits of many Nyamwezi to the coast and the growth in the interior of Arab-Swahili towns, like Tabora and Ujiji, created conditions which in West Africa would have brought about the spread of Islam. Among the Nyamwezi many people adopted customs of the coast and spoke Swahili, but Islam made little impression before the German occupation.[41]

Recent studies of the religious dynamics in the interior of East Africa suggest that the cultural contacts and socio-political changes brought about by the ivory and slave trade had significant religious repercussions. Some of the problems of maintaining social cohesion during periods of political transformation and of communication between members of different ethnic groups within an expanding commercial network, which in West Africa led to the spread of Islam, were solved in the interior of East Africa by the diffusion of other cults. Those cults were the indigenous ingredients of the composite religious system of the Swahili. Swahili spirit possession cults spread over wide areas and included initiates from different ethnic groups. The Nyamwezi members of the Swezi cult found hospitality with fellow members of the cult in the country between Unyamwezi and the coast.[42] The development of another institution, the *utani* relationship

between different tribes, provided travellers with a social security similar to that which they could have expected within their own tribe. Members of tribes, who were related through the utani, settled together in the coastal towns.[43]

More research is needed in order to explain different patterns of acculturation and religious change in the interior of East Africa, especially between the Yao, who were more receptive to Islamic influence, and the Nyamwezi, who experienced a process which might be described as Swahilization without Islamization. A factor which may have contributed to such differences is the nature of the relationship between the coastal traders and the local authorities. While the Yao chiefs apparently cooperated with the Arabs, the relationship between the Arabs and the Nyamwezi chiefs was fraught with tension. It is worth noting that a somewhat similar process of acculturation without Islamization also occurred among the Azande, whose relations with the Arabs were also rather hostile.

Western Tanzania was not itself a hunting ground for slaves, largely because its inhabitants were themselves promoters of the slave trade. In that capacity they helped open up new areas of exploitation west of Lake Tanganyika, in the eastern provinces of the Congo (Zaire). In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Islam made more progress there, in terms of the number of local adherents, than in Western Tanzania. The colonial occupation, however, arrested the spread of Islam in the eastern provinces. In Western Tanzania, on the other hand, where the ground had been prepared by developments in the nineteenth century, the process of Islamization accelerated under the colonial administration.

In Western Tanzania and in Katanga the Arab traders operated in territories which were under the control of local chiefs and warlords. Hence the tension between Mirambo and other Nyamwezi chiefs and the Arabs. West of Lake Tanganyika, where there were no powerful chiefs, the Arabs had to support their commercial exploits by the creation of some kind of political order. The long distance separating them from their base on the coast obliged the Arabs to create an autonomous political and commercial system. The Arab presence west of Lake Tanganyika was therefore more intensive and its impact stronger.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the region of Maniema was ravaged by Arab commanded slave armies. It was in this and in neighbouring regions that the horrors of the East African slave trade, as recorded by Europeans, were most dreadful. But in the two principal Arab centres, Nyangwe and Kasongo on the Iualaba river,

African slaves and fugitives clustered to form the nucleus of a new society. They imitated the Arabs in custom, dress and rituals. Most of the local chiefs in Maniema, who maintained a semblance of authority within the Arab protectorate, became Muslims. Slaves captured in Maniema were recruited to the raiding bands of the Arabs. Many of them converted, and as they moved together with the Arabs down river to the Stanley Falls, they functioned as the local representatives of Islam. After the troops of the Independent Congo State had expelled the Arabs from the Congo Basin, those former slaves and followers of the Arabs remained, scattered over the entire area of the Arabs' operation. Though the first wave of Islamization was checked, these islamized elements, the legacy of the period of slave raiding, were instrumental in the resuscitation of Islam in the Congo during the colonial period.[44]

In another area of intensive slave raiding, on the western shore of Lake Nyasa, a Muslim "sultanate" had been established in the mid-1840s. Its ruler, the Jumbe, was engaged in slave raiding and in shipping slaves across the lake. During half a century of Arab rule Muslim communities developed, composed of local people and uprooted slaves and refugees. After the destruction of the "sultanate" by the British and the expulsion of the Arabs, the progress of Islam was arrested. But the Muslim community which had survived resisted all attempts by the Christian missionaries to eradicate Islam from the shores of Lake Nyasa.[45]

At the close of this survey, it may now be possible tentatively to adduce two main patterns of the impact of the slave trade and slave raiding on Islamization in different parts of Africa. The first pattern is that of slave raiding across a boundary which separated Dar al-Islam from the land of the heathen destined to be enslaved. At that stage hardly any Islamic influence reaches the territory beyond the boundary of violence and enmity. The process of Islamization begins when the Muslim state expands its authority over a territory which previously had only been raided.

It has often been suggested that Muslims engaged in slave raiding and slave trade "were careful not to convert people who could be enslaved or heavily taxed."[46] The complexity of this problem has been analyzed and documented by Humphrey Fisher, and will not be repeated here. It seems, however, that protection from slave raiding was as much a matter of political as of religious status. Political integration of some sort protected a territory from slave-raiding. Only rarely did Muslim rulers raid their own non-Muslim subjects.[47] Unless they feared the competition of another power (as in the case of