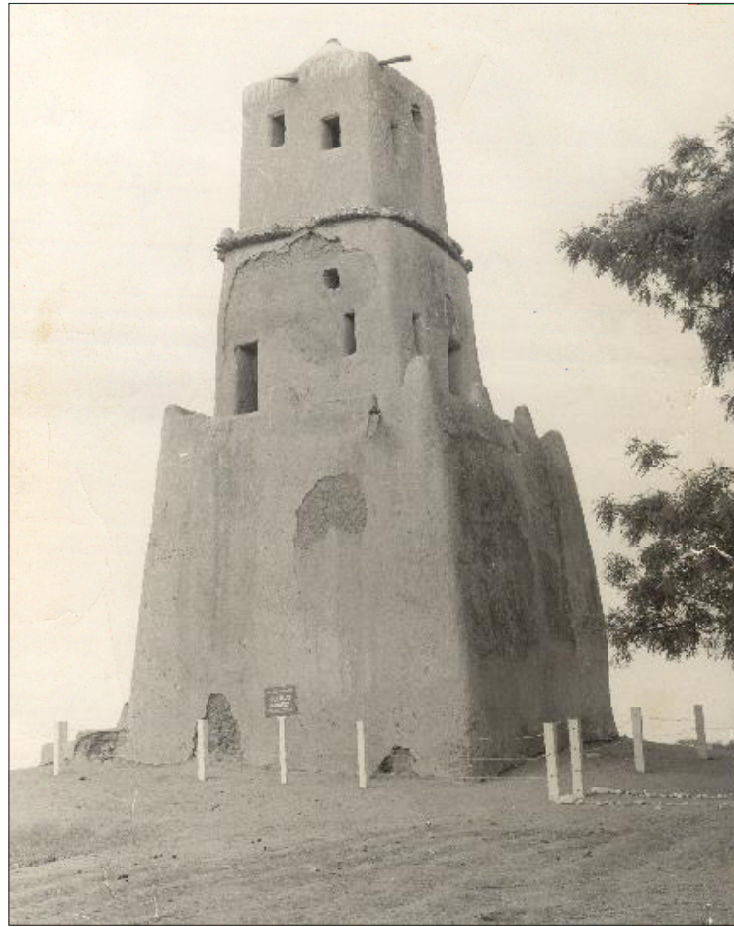


GOBARAU ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY



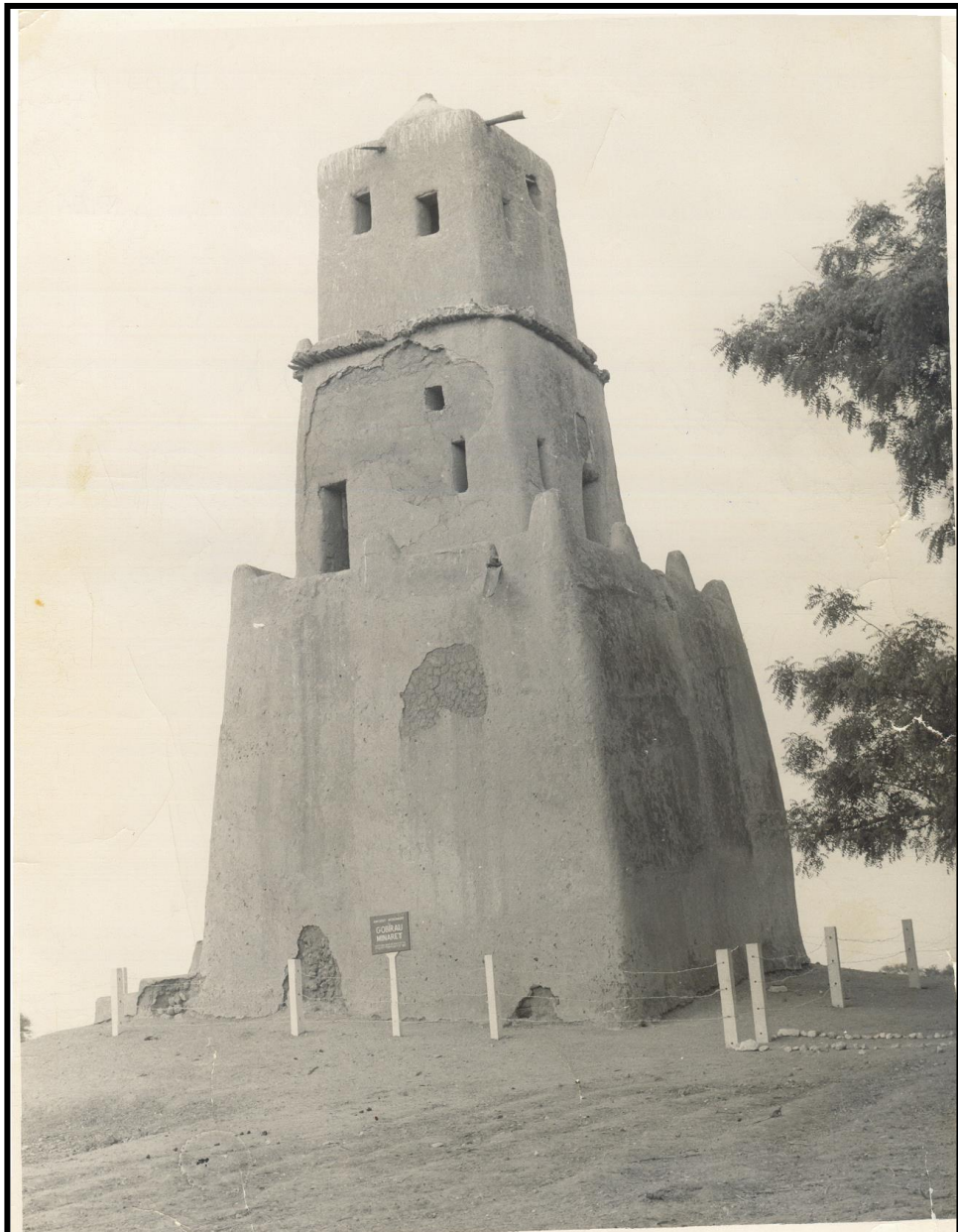
**PROF. SANI ABUBAKAR LUGGA
THE 5TH WAZIRI OF KATSINA**

Katsina led ancient Hausaland in Islamic educational development with the establishment of the equivalent of today's University in the City in 1493 AD. The relics of that Islamic Centre popularly known as “GOBARAU” is symbolised by the minaret of the Centre's Mosque, the Gobarau Minaret, which is currently a National Monument. Katsina also led Northern Nigeria in Western education with the establishment of KATSINA COLLEGE in 1921. Again, Katsina led modern Nigeria in the establishment of the first Islamic University in the Country, the KATSINA ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, in January 2005.

This book traces the history of GOBARAU UNIVERSITY, its link with the famous Sankore University of Timbuktu in the late 1490s and the famous scholars of Katsina among who was the Sheik who introduced Islam to Yorubaland and named the people of old Oyo area as “Yoruba” in one of his famous books! Also among the Katsina scholars was the one who travelled to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj and on his way back, stayed, and taught the Sciences and Astrology in Cairo in the late 1600s. He died there and was buried in the cemetery called the “Garden of Scholars”. These and many more are chronicled in this Book.

THE FAMOUS GOBARAU MINARET-1963

**Rehabilitated from the 1927 remnants by Sarkin
Katsina Alhaji Muhammadu Dikko in 1930**

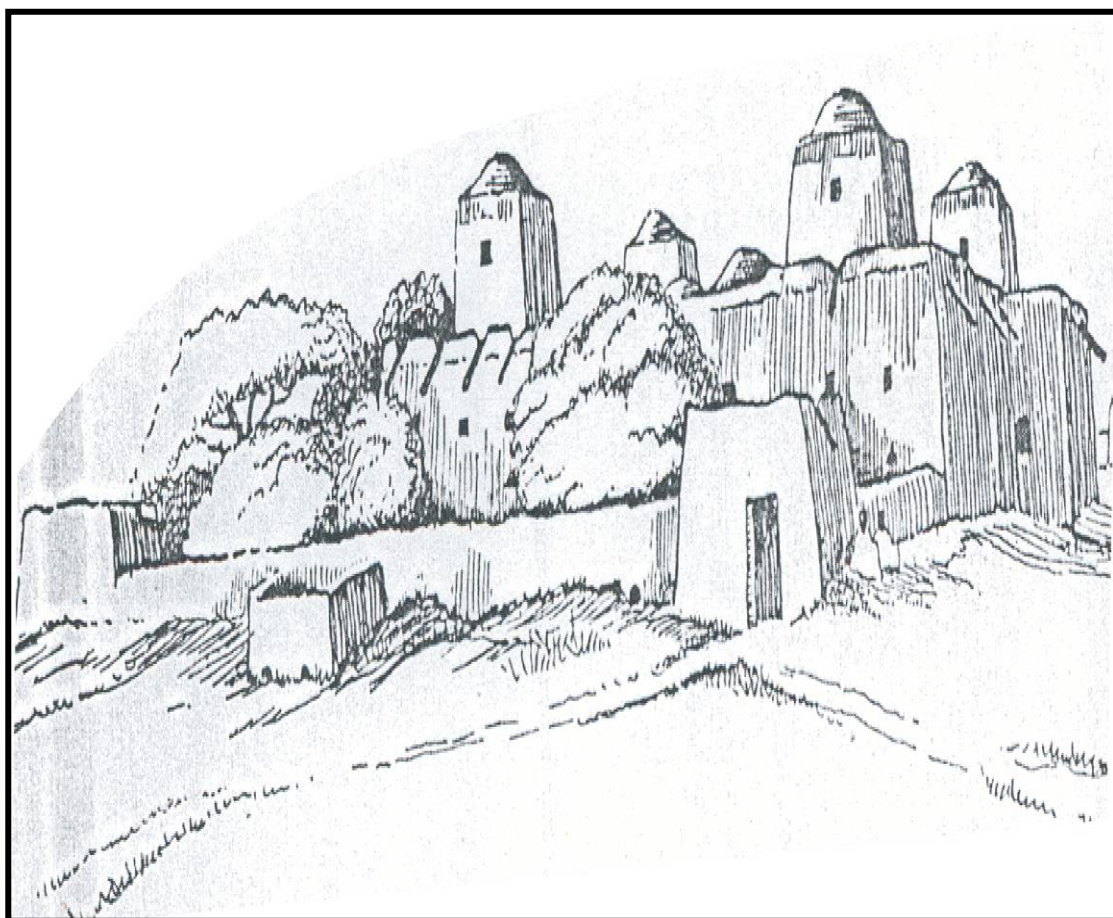


THE FORMER KATSINA CENTRAL MOSQUE

Located at the site of present Jama'atu Nasril Islam Hq.

**Sketch by Mr. C. Graham when he visited Katsina in
1932. It was demolished in 1937**

Source:- The Nigerian Field, No.2 of 1968



Dated 24th Safar 1070 Hijrah (10/11/1659)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم على سيدنا محمد وآله
 السلام
 يا ليتنا نرى للشيخ الجليل العالم محمد بن
 الصالح رحمه الله تعالى وآله بعدد ما
 لا يحصى من خيرات الدنيا والآخرة
 في الاستقامه ما فقه كان في عقله
 من غير علم الا سلام الله يومنا
 وعز ربنا الوعوه ناسنا
 نبوة رسول الله بآيات
 عليه وآله الشرح بآيات
 قنا ولها من ابريقه ما
 واخصهم من ريشه وشعره
 جزيه فاما الله قد بعثنا
 بقدر رسول الله عن الله
 سور دايه في يومنا
 على ارضنا بعز
 نورنا بعزنا
 عليه من الله
 بقدره والله
 فينا من الله
 انا عبدك
 في يومنا
 في يومنا
 في يومنا

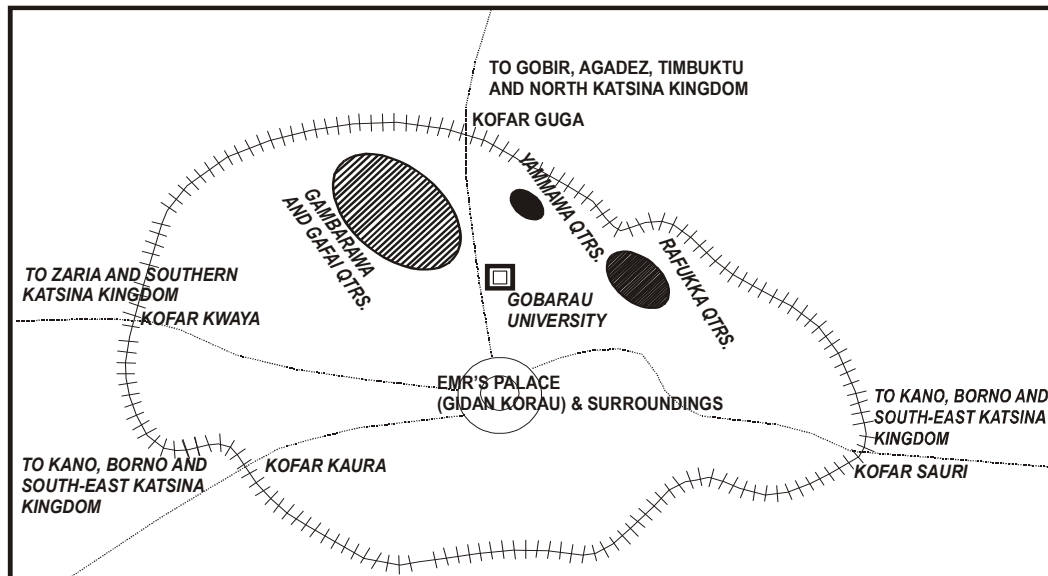
A PAGE FROM SHEIK DANMARNA'S POEM IN PRAISE OF SULTAN OF BORNO ALI IBN UMAR

(The Sultan ruled between 1639 and 1677 AD)

Source:- The Arewa House, Kaduna



SKETCH MAP OF SETTLEMENTS IN KATSINA CITY AT THE TIME OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOBARAU UNIVERSITY (c1490 AD)



KATSINA AND THE FAMOUS TRANS-SAHARAN TRADE AND TRAVEL ROUTES



GOBARAU ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

By:

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All gratitude is to Allah (SWT), who gave me the strength, health, endurance and foresight to write this book on the only known ancient University in Hausaland, the GOBARAU UNIVERSITY.

As is expected of a work of this magnitude, many people, who are too numerous to be individually mentioned, contributed to its success. From idea generation and articulation, to research, analysis of data, documentation, typesetting and publication, several people gave in their helping hands. As it is impossible to list each one of them here, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of them collectively.

However, I would like to register my specific appreciation to my several friends and associates who always stand by me. I must also acknowledge the contributions of Mallam Sani Danbaushi of Katsina State History and Culture Bureau, Mallam Abubakar Ibrahim Zaria of Ahmadu Bello University and Alhaji Muhammad Sagir Adam of Katsina Islamic University for assisting with the fieldwork and analysis of the data so collected. My sincere appreciation also goes to the former Director of the Katsina State History and Culture Bureau Alhaji Shehu Ibrahim Bakori and to my able Managers and personal staff who assisted immensely in the documentation and/or typesetting of the manuscripts.

I wish to extend my specific thanks to all those who responded to our interviews and all those who tirelessly filled in the questionnaires given to them, which added substance to the quality of the work. They included late Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman and Professor Mannir Mamman both of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and all those whose names appeared in the Reference section of this book.

Lastly, but by all means not the least, I extend my love and profound gratitude to my wives, my children and other members of my family for their continued loyalty, patience and understanding. May Allah bless us, pardon our sins and grant us peace, ameen.

Prof. Sani Abubakar Lugga, MFR
The Waziri of Katsina.
January 2012.

PREFACE

Islamic Religion, embraced by the people of Hausaland in the 10th century, brought with it a complete way of life. It provided the Muslims with spiritual and social etiquettes as well as basis for interpersonal relations. Islam acts as a guide for proper conduct. Islamic jurisprudence helped to establish courts where cases were heard and disputes resolved according to the Shari'ah (Islamic Law). Indeed, explorers writing about ancient Hausa States had written extensively on the prominence of Katsina as the chief city of education and commerce in Hausaland. One of such explorers, Dr. Henry Barth wrote in 1853 about Katsina town in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as follows:- “... *In fact, Katsena, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of our era, seems to have been the chief city of this part of Negroland, as well in commercial and political importance as in other respects; for here that State of civilization which had been called forth by contact with the Arabs seems to have reached its highest degree..... the manners of Katsena were distinguished by superior politeness from those of other towns of Hausa..... Muslim scholars provided advisers, viziers, judges and councillors in courts of Emirs*”.(Hodkin 1974)

Islam brought with it literacy and the art of writing using Arabic letters and numerals to Hausaland (most of today's Northern Nigeria) around 1100 AD. The Southern parts of

present day Nigeria gained the art of writing or literary education in the 1840s with the arrival of the Christian missionaries who established schools in the Badagry and the Lagos areas (Ikime 1977). That development placed Hausaland about seven hundred years ahead of its Southern counterparts in terms of literary education and the writing culture. Katsina led ancient Hausaland in Islamic educational development with the establishment of the equivalent of today's University in the City in 1493 AD. The relics of that Islamic Centre popularly known as GOBARAU UNIVERSITY is symbolised by the minaret of the Centre's Mosque, the Gobarau Minaret, which is currently a National Monument.

This book traces the history of GOBARAU UNIVERSITY. It goes down history lane to prove that Gobarau University had links with the famous Sankore University of Timbuktu in the late 1490s. It also highlights the famous scholars of Katsina among whom was the Sheik who introduced Islam to Yorubaland and named the people of old Oyo area as "Yoruba" in one of his famous books, a name they now proudly profess! Also among the Katsina scholars was the one who travelled to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj and on his way back, stayed, and taught the Sciences and Astrology in Cairo in the late 1600s. He died there and was buried at the famous cemetery called "Bustanu Ulama" in Arabic, meaning, "the Garden of Scholars".

CHAPTER ONE

ESTABLISHMENT OF GOBARAU

Research conducted so far had not revealed the exact day, month or year in which the Gobarau Islamic Centre (University?) was built. Available information concerning Gobarau was fragmentary and it was more a pity that only the minaret of the Mosque that formed part of the sprawling Islamic Centre remained.

It could be assumed that the construction of a mosque with pyramidal minarets at the Gobarau Centre was in sequence with the age-long relations that Katsina city had with the North and West African Islamic States, Empires and Cities of that time. Katsina shared with those Islamic States all facets of trans-Saharan trade and was also privileged to be the first Hausa State to always receive new ideas and innovations from those places. Evidence abounds in Katsina and elsewhere that indicated that the Gobarau Centre was built during the reigns of the early Muslim Rulers of Katsina.

The Gobarau Islamic Centre was specifically believed to have been built during the reign of the first Muslim King, Muhammadu Korau (1348-1398) around the year 1393 AD (Dankousou, 1970). It was said to be originally located somewhere between the *Gidan Korau* (present Emir's palace) and the main city centre (*cikin birni*) but later moved to the present site of the Gobarau Minaret (evidence

of Alkali Maiwada Gafai). The existing structure was believed to be the main minaret of the *Juma'at* Mosque which was part of the Islamic Centre built in 1493 (exactly 100 years after the first centre) during the reign of King Usman Tsaga Rana I (1475-1525).

Historians are of the opinion that the famous Sheik who visited Katsina after pilgrimage at Mecca, Sheik Muhammad bin Abdulkarim bin Muhammad Al-Maghili, supervised the building of that Mosque. Whatever was the case, the consensus opinion was that the “Gobarau” building served as a Mosque, an Islamic Centre (the equivalent of today’s University) and a tower to watch for approaching war enemies because of its height.

Up to the release of the first edition of the book, THE GREAT PROVINCE (written by this author) in 1993, the colonial dating of the minaret (300 years old) was upheld, even by the government. However THE GREAT PROVINCE established that the famous North African from Tlemsen, Algeria, Sheik Muhammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Maghili, who came to Hausaland after pilgrimage in Mecca, visited Katsina around the year 1493 AD (Hunwick 1964). It was also established that the Gobarau Mosque was built around the same time with Sheik Al-Maghili as its first Chief Imam. Therefore, that mosque must not be less than 500 years old as at 1993! It is pleasing to note that the authorities have rectified that dating anomaly and are now

using the new dating established by this author. This 519 years old building is now a National Monument.

Sheik al-Maghili was not the only driving force in the establishment of the Gobarau Islamic Centre. King Muhammadu Korau, and his successors, seemed to have been influenced to build such a Centre by some powerful figures of their times. The main factors being the seriousness with which the Islamic religion was held at that time and the prominence of Katsina as a commercial centre.

Available data and information indicated that the personalities that featured prominently in the affairs of Gobarau were the then Songhai Emperors and Islamic clerics from the Timbuktu intellectual orbit. Locally based Katsina scholars also contributed greatly in the establishment of the Gobarau Centre. Those believed to be closely associated with the establishment of that Centre, the evidence of the existence of which is the present minaret, included:-

ASKIA AL-HAJJ MUHAMMAD BIN ABUBAKAR AL-TURI - EMPEROR OF SONGHAI (ruled 1493 – 1528).

He was born in the City of Gao, the then capital of the Songhai Empire. He was a pureblooded Negro and the Chief Minister and architect of the successes of Emperor of Songhai, Sonni Ali the Great (ruled 1464-92). On the death of Emperor Ali, his son, Sonni Bakari, succeeded him. Muhammad bin Abubakar wrested the throne from Sonni

Bakari and established himself as a ruler in 1493 with the title of “Askia” (Hogben and Kirk Green, 1966).

Besides the expansion of the Songhai Empire to include most of Hausaland, Askia Muhammad was instrumental to the establishment of more Mosques and Islamic Centres throughout the Empire. Hogben and Kirk Green, (1966) reported Askia Muhammad’s Islamic revival as follows: -

“Learning too received a great impetus. The University of Sankore at Timbuktu became the centre of Muslim learning in the Sudan, indeed in Africa. It attracted the attention of Professors from the Maghrib and Egypt, from the Universities of Fez, Tunis and Cairo”.

During Askia Muhammadu’s reign, Katsina was conquered by the Songhai forces in 1513 AD and was brought into the Songhai Empire (Stride and Ifeka). Askia Toure was a highly devoted Muslim and might have visited Katsina on his way to or back from his numerous pilgrimages to Mecca even before the 1513 conquest. It was likely that his political and religious influences on the *Sarakunan* Katsina prompted the establishment of the Gobarau Centre in the 1490s. After the formal takeover of Katsina in the 1510s, he was likely to have directed for the renovation and improvement of the design of the Gobarau Mosque with structural and architectural resemblance to the Mosques at Jenne, Timbuktu and Goa, his main bases. It was also possible that such incidents pioneered the subsequent

integration of Katsina into the Timbuktu religious zone, thereby making the Gobarau Centre an appendage of the Sankore University in Timbuktu.

SHEIK UMAR BIN MUHAMMAD AQIT AL-TIMBUKTI (Died 1495).

Sheik Umar was the most celebrated member of the famous religious and intellectual Aqit family of Timbuktu. That family produced great Islamic scholars including Professors of the famous University of Sankore. He travelled widely propagating the religion of Islam. He was believed to have sojourned in Katsina around 1487–1493 (Hunwick, 1964). While at Katsina, he might have contributed in influencing the Sarkin Katsina to build such an Islamic Centre.

SHEIK MUHAMMAD BIN ABDULKARIM BIN MUHAMMAD AL-MAGHILI (Died 1503).

According to Abdal-Aziz Abadl-Lah Batran in the Journal of African History (1973), Sheik Al-Magili was born in Tlemsen, North-West of Algeria into the Barber family of the Magila tribe. He was a very bright student who committed the Qur'an to memory in a very tender age. He grew to become a great Islamic Scholar who was tutored by great Sheiks of Islam. They included Imam Abdulrahman al-Tha'alibi (died 1470 AD) and Qadi of Touat Sheik Abu-Zakariya bin Yadir bin Atiq (died 1472 AD). His uncompromising stance on Islam led to his collision with

the ruling Banu-Wattas family of Morocco. He wrote a book titled “*Ta’alif*” in which he urged the rulers to stop collaborating in state affairs with the Jews and the Christians whom he termed as infidels. The famous scholar, Abu Abdal-Lah bin Ghazi (1437-1513) commented on the book thus, “*This is a monumental work, the composition of a noble, knowledgeable and judicious man who is ahead of his time....*”

The raging controversy led to Sheik Al-Maghil withdrawing from Morocco to Tout. From there he left for the Sudan. It was strongly believed that he crossed the sea to perform the Hajj from the Sudan and then embarked on an Islamic educational tour of the *Bilad al-Sudan* visiting Takidda, Timbuktu, Katsina, Kano and Gao

As discussed earlier, Sheik al-Magahili visited Katsina around 1493 AD. It was also widely believed that he was directly instrumental to the building of the Gobarau Mosque and establishing the place as an educational centre in the same fashion as the Sankore Mosque in Timbuktu (widely known as the “Sankore University”). It was widely believed that Sheik al-Maghili was the first Chief Imam of the Gobarau Friday Mosque with Sheik Dantakum (a Katsina resident) as the “Vice Chancellor” of the University section.

Sheik Al-Maghili was later invited by King Muhammadu Rumfa of Kano (around 1496) in order to assist in

compiling a book on Islamic Administration for the Kano Kingdom. The Sheik obliged and with the permission of the King of Katsina left for Kano and wrote the book in Arabic, “*Taj al-Din fi-ma yajib ala al-Muluk*” which translates to, “The Obligation of Princes (or Rulers)”. A copy of the book was obtained from Wazirin Katsina Sheik Haruna by the Katsina Colonial District Officer who forwarded it to the Resident in Zaria (on 19th February 1929), who in turn forwarded it to the Secretary for the Northern Provinces in Kaduna (on 25th February 1929). A translation of the book was made into English and sent to Morocco for vetting. Details of these are contained in the Colonial Provincial Correspondence Jacket for 1929 available at the National Archives Kaduna.

Sheik Al-Maghili left Kano for Gao, the then capital city of the Songhai Empire (around 1498) where he became the advisor to the Askia al-Hajj Muhammad. While in Gao, Al-Maghili received the news that his son, Abdal Jabbar had been killed by the Jews in the village of Tamantit near Touat in retaliation for the Sheik’s campaigns against them. He garnered a strong force of his followers in West Africa and headed home to North Africa. He successfully seized the Tamantit vicinity, punished the Jews, and re-established complete Muslim rule in the area. He then retired into his *zawiyah* at Bu-Ali in Touat where he died in 1503 AD.

Abdal-Aziz Batran concluded his article in the Journal of

African History by emphasising that *“no African scholar earned as great a reputation or had so far-reaching an impact in both North and West Africa as Al-Maghili”*.

SHEIK ALHAJI ALIYU JODOMA.

Not much was known on Sheik Aliyu Jodoma except that his name implied a Fulani descent. He visited Katsina on his way back from pilgrimage at Mecca. In Katsina oral traditions, Alhaji Jodoma featured prominently in the affairs of the Gobarau and some mysteries were even attached to him (evidence of Alhaji Alin Kalla Gambarawa, Malam Mamman Kankiya, and Alhaji Iro Kaura, Gwagware, Sararin Tsako).

One of such mysteries was said to have occurred when the builders of the Gobarau Mosque were seeking for the exact *Qibla* (direction Muslims face in prayers, i.e. the Holy Ka’aba Mosque at Mecca). Sheik Jodoma pointed at the direction with his wooden staff and asked, “was it not the Holy Ka’aba we face as our *Qibla* and was this not the Holy Ka’aba?” It was reported that those present sited the Holy Ka’aba Mosque!

Sheik Jodoma was thereafter highly respected and made a personal guest of the Sarkin Katsina. The palace officials and other scholars in Katsina naturally felt very jealous of the Sheik. They plotted to upset the good relationship between the King and the Sheik. They succeeded and Sheik Jodoma left Katsina for the village of Guga near the

Zaria/Katsina boarder (Dankouso, 1970 and Charanci, 1999).

The Sheik left Katsina through the Kofar Kwaya town gate where he performed another miracle. He looked at the gate and said, “For such an innocent servant of Allah to leave a place he loved through you, the areas of all other town gates shall be habited before yours”. He left Katsina around 1495 and it was not until all other gate areas in Katsina had been fully habited that people habited the Kofar Kwaya area around 1990. That was almost 500 years after the Sheik’s prophesy! Sheik Aliyu Jodoma stayed at Guga in present Bakori Local Government of Katsina State and established a large school, which he ran up to his death. His tomb is still located at Guga.

SHEIK QADI MUHAMMAD AIDA BIN AHMAD AL-TAZAKHTI (DANTAKUM)

Sheik Muhammad al-Tazakhti popularly known as *DANTAKUM* was also very much associated with the building of the Gobarau. Indeed, some Katsina oral traditions ascribe the *Qibla* (direction Muslims face in prayers, i.e. the Holy Ka’aba Mosque at Mecca) miracle mentioned earlier to Sheik Dantakum and not to Sheik Jodoma.

According to Hunwick (1964), Sheik Dantakum was among the Timbuktu scholars who settled in Katsina on their way back from pilgrimage at Mecca. He taught and

served as a Judge (Qadi) in Katsina for over fifteen years. He died in 1529 and his grave is located and specially marked with an enclosure some few meters from the Gobarau Centre. The vicinity of the grave is now the largest and oldest Muslim graveyard in Katsina, the Dantakum Cemetary, named after him. Indeed, out of all those associated with the Gobarau Centre, only Sheik Dantakum's grave is visibly located within its vicinity. He was reputed to be the first "Vice Chancellor" of the Gobarau University with Sheik al-Maghili, as the first Chief Imam of the Friday Mosque section. Some of these assertions may be contentious, but what was not in doubt was that Sheik Dantakum met with or was even a student of Sheik al-Maghili, Sheik Zakariya al-Assari, Sheik al-Liqani al-Qalaqashandi and Sheik al-Nawawi (Sulaiman Shehu, 1992). He was also described as a very just and fair Chief Judge of Katsina. (Mahmud in Nigeria Magazine, No. 145 of 1983).

**SHEIK IMAM JALALUD-DIN AL-SUYUDTI,
ABDULRAHMAN BIN AL-KAMAL BIN ABUBAKAR
BIN MUHAMMAD ASH-SHAFI'I**

He was born in the Muslim Month of Rajab 849 Hijra (1425 AD) in Egypt. He was closely associated with Hausaland, which he referred to in his writings as "*Bilad al-Tukrur*". He wrote booklets for Hausaland Kings on Islamic Law and Administration. He wrote a booklet and

sent it to the King of Katsina in 1505 AD, just about the time the Gobarau University was at its peak. He addressed the booklet in Arabic to “*Sahab Katysina*” meaning the “King of Katsina”.

The writings of Imam al-Suyditi assisted the Gobarau Scholars greatly. Many History scholars believe that Sheik al-Suyudti visited Hausaland, while many others believe that he only made contacts through correspondence and emissaries (Kani, 1992). What is not in doubt; however, was that Sheik al-Suyudti was a great scholar whose books and booklets form study texts in many parts of the Muslim world. Equally, it is not in doubt that the Sheik took particular interest in West Africa in general and Hausaland in particular. He centred many of his teachings to the needs and peculiarities of those areas.

CHAPTER TWO

GOBARAU AS A MOSQUE & UNIVERSITY

GOBARAU AS A MOSQUE

Available information indicated that the Gobarau Mosque was mainly used for the Juma'at (Friday) prayers as it was built at a site, which could be regarded (in that period) as the most central place of the cosmopolitan Katsina city. The existing settlements in Katsina at that time were the *Unguwoyin* (quarters or wards of) Gambarawa and Gafai that bordered Gobarau at its south, Yammawa in the west, Rafukka in the north and the Gidan Korau (present Emir's Palace) in its eastern side.

No records could be found of the name of the *Sarkin Magina* (Head Builder) and his assistants or the number of labourers who worked at the site, or the amount of money expended. However, it was certain that the original building was made with red earth and possibly burnt bricks or sun baked clay blocks. Equally, the names of the earliest *Limamai* (Chief Imams) and *Ladanai* (Prayer Callers) are yet to be unearthed. However, some evidence had shown that due to the escalating height of the minaret, nine (9) *Ladanai* had died in the course of their duties (Dankoussou, 1970). There was, however, every likelihood that most of the *Limaman* Gobarau resided at the Gambarawa quarters, as it was the nearest to the Mosque at that time. In fact, it was stated that some of the earliest settlers of Gambarawa

quarters served as *Limaman* Gobarau out of whom three names were given as Liman Muhammadu, Liman Abarshi and Liman Abubakar. The descendants of Liman Abubakar are still residing in Gambarawa Quarters and operating a large Qur'anic School. Regrettably, however, no date of the tenure of the Gobarau Imams could be ascertained (evidence of Alhaji Alin Kalla and Alhaji Musa Kaya Gambarawa).

Another likelihood was that the famous Wangarawa Dyula scholars who were said to have migrated from the West in around 1432 AD and settled permanently in Katsina and who were reputed to have boosted the religion of Islam in the city, might have served as the *Limaman* Gobarau. Records show that some of the descendants of those Wangarawa left Katsina together with the expelled Habe Kings after the Jihad conquest of the 1806. Some of such descendants are still active as Chief Imams and *Malamai* (scholars) of Maradi in Niger Republic.

GOBARAU AS A UNIVERSITY

There is ample evidence to suggest that at a certain period in its history, the Gobarau Mosque had served as a School (*Madrassa* in Arabic) or even a kind of University. Indeed, the tradition of making a Mosque to serve not only as a prayer house but also as a school and a town hall is still upheld in many parts of the Muslim world. The Holy Ka'aba at Mecca and the Holy Prophet's Mosque at

Medina serve the tri-purposes of prayer houses, schools and meeting grounds for Muslims. The oldest University in the World, the Al-Azhar University in Cairo established over 1,000 years ago, started from the Al-Azhar Mosque and metamorphosed into a full-fledged University. In Nigeria, the National Mosque at Abuja, the Federal Capital, not only has a prayer hall but has a conference hall, a library and a school attached to it. Most Mosques in Nigeria today have school facilities attached to them and some even have shops and other commercial facilities. It is no wonder; therefore, that the Gobarau Mosque served a similar purpose.

There are also strong reasons to believe that the Gobarau School might have been directly linked to or was even part of the Sankore University at Timbuktu. That was because many reputable scholars from there visited and imparted knowledge in Katsina on their way to or from the pilgrimage at Mecca. Hunwich (1964) stated that, “Many of the Timbuktu scholars made the Pilgrimage to Mecca and on their way back to Timbuktu settled for a period to teach in Katsina.” Many such scholars might have stayed permanently in Katsina City. With time, Katsina grew into a great city of learning attracting students and scholars from the width and breadth of the Central and Western Sudan and several others from the other neighbouring Hausa States and the Borno Caliphate.

Katsina had been recognized for a very long time as a seat of learning by many notable educationists, colonial administrators and the public at large. Many writers on Africa, historians as well as adventurers, as far back as the 15th century had reported the influx of Islamic Scholars from West African regions to Katsina. Those scholars came all the way from towns like Jenne, Timbuktu, Gao, Agades and from other North African towns and States. The scholars did not only document aspects of Islamic religion but also aspects of history connected to events that had taken place in Hausaland.

Even Lord (Sir) Frederick Lugard, who was the British Northern Nigerian High Commissioner and later the Nigerian Governor General, acknowledged the importance of Katsina as a seat of learning as amply demonstrated in his annual reports.

The British Colonial Administration considered Katsina's historical educational prominence in establishing the first College in Northern Nigerian at Katsina. The colonial Northern Nigerian Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, while defending the location of Katsina College in his memo to London, wrote that, “...*Katsina was held in high repute as a seat of learning and piety... (and was also) not as yet so close to the railway and to the commercial centres of Nigeria as to make it unsuitable for that quite and tranquillity and that freedom from distractions which are*

so necessary for young men who are devoting their lives to study.” (Bello, 1962)

In a letter to the British Colonial Secretary in London, the then Acting Director of Education for the Northern Region said “... *Katsina town had traditionally been the home of learned and devout scholars.*” (Indabawa, May 1992).

According to Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (Sardaunan Sokoto), in his book, MY LIFE, (1962), “*Katsina has always had a considerable local reputation for learning, taking its place after Timbuktu in this respect. For centuries, people have come from all over West Africa to sit at the feet of learned Mallams of Katsina to improve their learning and enlarge their experience. It has been claimed that there was in effect a University there. In these days of special learning, it could probably be unwise to use so definite a name*”.

Katsina therefore had a high reputation for learning and as attested by the descendant of the great Sheik Usman Bin Fodio, the Sardauna of Sokoto, “there was in effect a University there”. Indeed Sheik Danfodio was a student in Katsina under the tutelage of Sheik Mallam Kisko of Gambarawa.

GOBARAU PROFESSORS

It could be deduced that the pioneer Professors of Gobarau University were, Sheik Qadi Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Tazakhti (Dantakum), who was considered as the first Vice Chancellor, Sheik Muhammad bin Abdulkarim al-Maghili

(considered as the Chief Imam of the Friday Mosque) and Sheik Umar bin Aqit of Timbuktu. (See Chapter 1 for details on these scholars).

Others might have included Sheik Makhlef bin Salil al-Balbali, Sheik Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti, Sheik Aqib Al-ansumani al-Marakushi, Sheik Najib al-ansumani al-Marakushi, Sheik Aliyu Jodoma and many others whose names and activities in Katsina are yet to be unearthed. The Wangarawa scholars could also have been part of a retinue of lecturers at the Gobarau University (Kani in Tsiga and Adamu, 1997).

TRADITIONS OF LEARNING (CURRICULUM)

As most of the scholars at the Gobarau University were believed to be from the Timbuktu intellectual zone, the traditions of learning and other curriculum might have resembled that of the Sankore University, Timbuktu.

The Qur'an recitation, memorization and exegesis might have formed the major subjects in the curriculum. The Hadith (sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad SAW) and its commentaries and then the Fiqh (Jurisprudence) and Shari'ah (Law) followed that. Other likely subjects that might have been taught included History (Tarikh), Astronomy (Ilm-alnujum), Astrology (Ilm assir), Mathematics (al-jabr), Medicine (Ilm al-dibb,) Philosophy (Fassafy), Grammar (Nahwu), Logic (Mandiq) and Prosody (Arrud) e.t.c. (Dubois, London 1897). This

curriculum clearly distinguishes Islamic Education as all encompassing and not just a “spiritual education” as erroneously being peddled. Islam is a complete way of life!

The languages of communication at the Gobarau University would have been Arabic and Hausa. Many books in different disciplines of learning might have been read in the University and an equal number might have been written by the scholars and students while others might have been imported from far away countries such as Muslim Andalus (Spain), Egypt, Morocco and Mecca. Perhaps one of the most famous of such books was the “*Tuhufatul Hukkam*” on the Shari’ah written by Sheik Abubakar bin Assim of Granada, Muslim Spain around 1440 AD, which is still in use in Katsina and other parts of the Muslim world. It is worth noting that Spain was at that time under Muslim rule.

Graduates of Gobarau University, like their counterparts at the Sankore University, would be given a written certificate in the Arabic language. The certificate would contain the *Silsila* (names and chains of teachers and subjects studied) and the *Ijaza* (the license to teach others and to preach).

CHAPTER THREE

THE DECLINE OF GOBARAU

No evidence, written or oral, had been uncovered that would provide a hint as to the exact causes for the decline of Gobarau and the complete abandonment of the monument. It was, however suggested that the decline of the Gobarau School might be connected to the general lack of enthusiasm towards Islam and its education among the larger populace within the Hausa States in the 17th and 18th centuries. Mr. J.O. Hunwick described that period as one in which Islam lost ground, scholarship disappeared and the forces of evil gained ground, a phenomenon that among others prompted Sheikh Usman Danfodio's Islamic revival in the 19th century (Hunwick 1964).

It could also be suggested that the first major blow that was inflicted on the status of Gobarau and which became a precursor to its gradual decline was the collapse of the largely Islamic-oriented Songhai Empire.

Other reasons could be the subsequent proliferation of mosques in every quarter of the city which led to decentralised congregational prayers and learning. There was also the increase in the tendencies of running schools in the *Zauruka* (entrance halls to local houses) by the City's Ulama'a (scholars) which led to individual scholars choosing to establish small schools headed by them in their

houses as against a large collective school in a centralised area under several teachers.

As no date could be ascertained for the abandonment of Gobarau, many historians believe that it was because of the building of another Central Mosque and Islamic Centre by the 1806 Sheik Usman Danfodio's Jihadists in Katsina. Many Saints were buried within the Gobarau vicinity and as such, there was the tendency of grave-worship by the ignorant and blessing-seeking Muslims. The fear of that and other reasons might have led the Dallazawa Rulers (the Jihadists of 1806) to abandon the Gobarau and build a new mosque at the site of the present Gidauniyar Jihar Katsina and Jama'atu Nasrul Islam offices in front of the Emir's Palace, Katsina. Regrettably, the demolition of that Dallazawa mosque in 1937 had denied the later generations of access to some of the architectural wonders of the early 1800s. (Graham, 1930 in *The Nigerian Field*, Vol. XXXIII No. 2, 1968).

Regrettably, there was no evidence as to the builders of the original Gobarau (over 500 years ago) but happily, there was information on the *Sarkin Magina* Katsina (head of local builders) who rehabilitated the Gobarau in 1930. In 1927, one of the teachers at the famous Katsina College, Mr. E. L. Mort (who was later to become the Principal in 1938) took a photograph of the remains of the Gobarau minaret. That picture and the concern generated by the

people of Katsina and the British Colonial Officers led to the massive rehabilitation of the Gobarau minaret in 1930 by the Emir of Katsina Alhaji Muhammadu Dikko who made it what it is today. (Hogben and Kirk-Green, 1966).

What remained of the famous minaret in 1927 was a tall pillar-like structure with no stairs or casing. The Emir commissioned his *Sarkin Magina* Mallam Jibrin to construct a casing, stairs and support around the remains of the then 437 years old structure. The Sarkin Magina appointed his son Alhaji Wowo Magini to head a team for the important assignment. The rehabilitation was carried out to the satisfaction of the Emir and the people of Katsina. The minaret seen today is a product of that exercise. The incumbent Sarkin Magina, Alhaji Ma'aruf took over the maintenance of Gobarau on the death of his uncle, Alhaji Wowo (evidence of Sarkin Magina Ma'aruf).

CHAPTER FOUR

SAVING GOBARAU

Just before the June 2004 rainy season, the late Emir of Katsina, Alhaji (Dr) Muhammadu Kabir Usman asked Sarkin Magina Ma'aruf to effect some repairs on the dilapidated Gobarau in order to save it from total collapse. While explaining the reasons for the current deterioration of the Minaret, the Sarkin Magina Ma'aruf opined that the use of cement to plaster the monument had caused the present condition.

Such structures, he argued, were best maintained using a local mixture, which would last for 50 years before being re-done. Cement absorbs rainwater and causes the plaster to separate from the mud building while the local mixture does not absorb water but produces a slippery surface for water to drain off easily. The local mixture called "*Katsi*" is normally made up of some elements obtained from dye-pits; some leaves and barks of *loda* plant and waste animal skin hair from the tannery.

The Gobarau Minaret, the only remnant of the famous Gobarau University, as at the time of compiling this book, is in a serious state of disrepair and needed urgent attention to save it from total collapse. The area surrounding the minaret had been encroached by private buildings on the northern and southern ends while the eastern end had been turned into a refuse dump.

The Gobarau edifice could still be saved. The authorities concerned should ensure its permanent maintenance for posterity. The authorities should also organize a comprehensive research work to facilitate the speedy compilation of the rich history of the Gobarau and other places related to Katsina's history. The literary works of both the teachers and students of Gobarau University of blessed memory, which are believed to be dumped in Libraries across West Africa, Asia, Europe and America, should also be retrieved.

The Government and/or the Emirate Council should construct a Mosque and a Library at the site of the Gobarau and all the materials retrieved should be displayed there with a view to reclaiming the monuments' glory and boosting tourism in the State. The nearby primary school buildings could also be handed over to the Katsina Islamic University to run as one of its Islamic Studies campuses. That would rekindle the Gobarau's links to the Sankore University. The Gobarau University once served as an outreach campus or an affiliate of the famous Sankore University in Timbuktu. Therefore, history would be repeating itself if it were turned into a campus of the Katsina Islamic University.

CHAPTER FIVE

AL-KASHINAWI SCHOLARS

The reputation of any institution of learning is measured by the quality of scholars it produced. The Gobarau University lived up to expectations by producing Islamic Scholars of international repute who excelled in the studies of the Glorious Qur'an, the Hadith, Jurisprudence, the Sciences, etc. Many of those scholars had the prefix, "Sheik" and had miracles attached to them. Those who performed miracles got the additional titles of *Waliyyi* or *Wali* in Hausa, meaning the "Saint" in English. Interestingly, this is the practice today by some Religions, particularly the Catholics.

In the course of time, Katsina produced local scholars who either graduated from or were students of the graduates of Gobarau University. There were also those who had some form of intellectual association with those connected to the Gobarau. Each of the Katsina indigenous Katsina scholars bore the title of "*al-Kashinawi*" meaning "of Katsina". Many of them had international reputation crossing the Hausaland borders into West Africa, North Africa, Egypt and the Sudan. The most famous of those scholars included:-

**SHEIK ABU-ABDULLAH MUHAMMAD BIN-
MASANI BIN GAMIHI BIN MUHAMMAD BIN-**

ABDULLAH BIN-NUHU AL-BARNAWI AL-KASHINAWI (DANMASANI). (1595-1667)

Sheik Muhammad bin Masani's full names listed above were as contained in his book, *Nafhatul Ambariyyah*. His prefix, Dan-Masani literally means "Son of the Learned". His father was named "Masani" (the Learned) by the King and people of Katsina of that time due to his vast Islamic knowledge. When the father died and Sheik Muhammad took over the great school established by the late Masani, he was named "Dan-Masani" (the Son of the Learned). That name turned into a family title of descendant scholars who head the Masani School.

Sheik Muhammad Danmasani was born around 1595 and died in December 1667 (Mahmud in Nigeria Magazine, 1983). An anonymous writer gave his birth date as 1583 and year of death as 1658 (History and Culture Bureau files, Katsina). Sheik Danmasani was of Kanuri-Borno descent as his name implied i.e. al-Barnawi, al-Kashinawi meaning "of Borno by descent" and "of Katsina by birth". As one of the patron saints of Katsina, he was believed to have written many books and poems, some of which are still in use both in Nigeria and other parts of the Muslim World. His works included:-

1. Tazyin al-Asa fi Darbi Hammat man Asa (Adornment of the Stick for the Execution of Him Who Rebels).

2. Nafhatul-Ambariyyah fi Sharh al-Ishiriniyyah (Commentary on the songs in praise of the Prophet Muhammad SAW)
3. Buzugh al-Shamsiyyah fi Sharh al-Ashmawiiyyah (Commentary on the famous Asmawih book on Fiqh-Islamic Jurisprudence).
4. Azharur-Ruba fi Akhbari Bilad Yoruba (This book gives the History of Yorubaland)
5. Shu'aur Ruba fi Tahrir Fuqaha'i Bilad Yoruba (This is an account on Yoruba Scholars)
6. Ainul Ikhlas fi Tilawati Surat al-Ikhlas (A commentary on one of the most important chapters of the Holy Qur'an)
7. Tahfun ala Ma'arifat ma Yaqbalu Sarf wa Adamha (On Arabic Grammar)
8. Fathul Maram (Opening on what is desired)
9. Juz Intfin Manzum wa laisa fihi harf manqut fauqaniyya wala takhtaniyya (On Arabic Language).

Sheik Danmasani was a great scholar who was versed in all aspects of the Islamic religion, Arabic Grammar and the Sciences. He ran a great school in the Masanawa Quarters of Katsina city. He was also remembered for his preaching travels. He was reputed to be among those who introduced Islam to Yoruba-land. He travelled annually to where he called in Arabic, "Bilad Yoruba" (Yoruba Towns) for preaching purposes and brought back cola nuts to Katsina.

The absence of the location of his grave gives credence to the belief that he died in Yoruba-land during his visit there in 1667 AD. Another belief, which was also tied to one of the miracles of the Sheik, was that he sensed that some people might turn his grave into a worship centre so he prayed to Allah not to allow people to locate his grave after his burial. Allah answered his prayers and even those who buried him could not locate the grave immediately after the burial. Katsina oral traditions had it that the author of the “*Ishiriniyyat*”, the famous Islamic poetry book in praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Sheik Alfa-Zazi, visited Sheik Danmasani and sat under a tree in front of Danmasani’s residence. Sheik Alfa-Zazi commented that he was feeling as if they were in Mecca and Sheik Danmansani replied that they were indeed in Mecca and pointed at the Holy Ka’aba, which suddenly became visible. Sheik Alfa-Zazi thereafter informed the people that his action was deliberate in order to affirm to them that Sheik Danmasani was indeed a Saint.

Some of the books he authored (see above list) contained the histories of Yoruba-land. He also referred to Yoruba scholars in his writings. Of great historical significance in Nigeria today are his two books mentioned above on Yoruba-land. Historians generally agreed that those books were the first written mention of the tribe YORUBA and the area YORUBA-LAND (Discussions with Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman).

The book, “Misrepresentation of Nigeria” by Yusuf Bala Usman and Alkasum Abba (CEDDERT, Zaria, Nigeria, 2005) stated that:- *“The fact is that, the earliest record we have of the use of the very name “Yoruba” was in the Hausa language and it seems to have applied to the people of the Alafinate of Oyo. This came from the writings of the seventeenth century Katsina scholar, Danmansani (1595-1667) who wrote a book on Muslim scholars of the “Yarriba”. But it was from a book of the Sarkin Musulmi Bello, written in the early nineteenth century that the name became more widely used. The Bishop Ajayi Crowther, the Reverend Samuel Johnson and his brother Obadiah Johnson, among others came in the nineteenth century to widely spread this Hausa name to the people who now bear it in their writings”.*

Sheik Danmasani’s descendants are still living in Katsina and holding a traditional title bearing his name, i.e. the *Danmasani of Katsina*. His residence and Mosque are also preserved and serving as Islamic schools manned by his descendants who are also great Islamic Scholars.

MUHAMMAD BIN MUHAMMAD AL-SABBAGH AL-KASHINAWI (DAN MARINA) (died c1675)

He was another patron saint of Katsina. He was nick named *bin-Sabbagh* in Arabic meaning *Dan-Marina* in Hausa, literally meaning the “son of the dye-pits”. That name emerged from his miraculous birth. Tradition had it

that an Arab named Sheik Muhammad visited the King of Katsina and prayed to Allah for the successes of the King and the prayers were answered. The King sent in gifts to the Sheik who rejected them and requested the hands of one of the King's daughters in marriage. The King obliged and the married couple were given a house near the Katsina dye pits. The Arab Sheik later travelled out and left the wife with a pregnancy. The wife died in labour and was buried near the dye pits. She was said to have delivered the child in the grave. The child was fed miraculously and was coming out of the grave every night to play with the dyestuff. The Sarkin Marina (head of the dyers) caught the child one night as he was playing with the dyestuff. That was how Sheik Muhammad bin Muhammad got the nickname, *Danmarna*. The King handed him over to the Danmasani family for care. He grew up to become a very intelligent young man who memorised the Holy Qur'an at a very tender age and was versed in all the fields of Islamic education. He was a student of Sheik Danmasani (Bala Usman, 1981).

Sheik Danmarna lived and taught in Katsina. As the location of the grave of his teacher, Sheik Danmasani was not known, that of Sheik Danmarna is located and marked with a special enclosure at the second largest Muslim graveyard in Katsina, the Danmarna Cemetary, named after him. Interestingly, the residence or family members of Sheik Danmarna are not known while those of his teacher,

Sheik Danmasani are known. That seemed to justify the reported prophecies of both Sheiks. Tradition had it that Sheik Danmasani prophesised that his student's family would not be known but his grave would be marked up to the end of time. The student, Sheik Danmarna replied that the family of his teacher shall be recognised up to the end of time but his grave would not be located. Many history books date Sheik Danmarna's death around 1655 AD while some few ones date it at 1675. However, he wrote a poem in praise of King Karya Giwa of Katsina which he dated 1070 Hijra, equivalent to 1659 AD (copy obtained from Arewa House Kaduna and published in this book). Therefore, those who date his death at 1675 AD seemed to be more correct.

Sheik Danmarna had written many books most of which are yet to be recovered. His works included:-

1. Muzjaratul-Fityan, (Which contained injunctions to the young ones).
2. Buzughus-Shamsiyyah (Appearance of the Sun), which is a commentary on the "Ishriniyyat" of Sheik Alfa-Zazi. This book, which praises the Holy Prophet SAW, is widely available and being sold in two volumes.
3. Madh al-Sultan (Poem in praise of the King of Katsina Karyagiwa in praise of his credible actions in the defence of Islam dated 24th Safar 1070 Hijra (10th November 1659)

4. A Poem in praise of Shehu of Borno, Mai Ali ibn Umar (1639-1677) for his gallantry in the defeat of the Jukum Kingdom of Kwararrafa.

MUHAMMAD BIN MUHAMMAD AL-FULANI AL-KASHINAWI (1660-1741)

Sheik Muhammad al-Fulani al-Kashinawai was born in Katsina in 1660 AD. He was internationally acclaimed as one of the greatest Muslim Scientists the world had ever seen. His popularity grew when he visited Mecca for the pilgrimage where he taught the Sciences.

Sheik al-Fulani was described as “*the fountain of knowledge*” by great scholars of his time. Mahmud, in Nigeria Magazine, No. 145 of 1983, reported that the Egyptian Historian, Abd al-Rahman bin Hassan al-Jabarti (1754-1822) mentioned that Muhammad al-Fulani entered the circle of scientists and astrologers cultivated by his father Hassan al-Jabarti in Cairo. Abd al-Rahman further asserted that even his father, the leader of the Cairo Sheiks; received instructions in many subjects from that Katsina Pilgrim. Indeed, Sheik al-Fulani died while still a guest of the al-Jabarti Household in the year 1741. Sheik al-Fulani al-Kashinawi was retained by the Sheiks of Cairo on his way back to Katsina after pilgrimage at Mecca. Several of his writings on astronomy, astrology, mathematics, mysticism and Arabic grammar could be found in libraries in Cairo, Morocco, and the University of London (Dr.

Hassan Gwarzo in the *Research Bulletin* of the Centre of Arabic Documentation, University of Ibadan, vol.3 no.2, July 1967). Sheik al-Fulani's works included:

1. "Kitab Bahjatul Afaq wa Ida al-Lubs wal Ighlaq fi Ilm Huruf wal-Awfaq". This Book was written on the Theory of Chronograms.
2. "Al-Durr al-Manzum wa Khulasat al-Sirr al-Makhtum fi Ilm al-Talasim wal-Nujum". This book exposed the Sheik as an astronomer, astrologer, mathematician and mystic.
3. "Manhul Kuddus". This was also a book on astrology.
4. "Badiun ala Kitabid-durr Wattiryak fi Ilmil Afaqi". This book discussed the horizon and the atmosphere.
5. "Izalatu Abus an Wajh Manhil Kuddus". This was a commentary on books Nos. 3 and 4 above.
6. Bulugul Arb min Kalamil Arab. This was written on Arabic Grammar.

The Egyptian Islamic Scholar and Historian, Sheik Abdul-Rahman bin Hassan al-Jabarti (1754-1822) wrote an excellent three-volume book on Islamic History where he gave briefs not only on general events but also on the lives of 741 World-renowned Islamic Scholars. Sheik Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Fulani al-Kashinawi was listed in volume one and seemed to be the only one from this part of the World to have made it into the famous books of al-Jabarti. This author had the rare privilege of

visiting the Grand Sheik of al-Azhar University, Cairo on 13th December 1998 and the Grand Sheik mentioned the fame of Katsina and its educational links with Cairo via Sheik al-Fulani al-Kashinawi of blessed memory.

Sheik al-Jabarti's account of the life of Sheik al-Fulani could be summarised as follows:-

Sheik Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Fulani al-Kashinawi was an Imam of great knowledge and resource. He was a mutafannin (knowledgeable in all fields) who had his early education in his town of Kashina from great scholars like Sheik Imam Muhammad ibn Sulaiman ibn Muhammad Annawali al-Barnawi, Sheik Muhammad Bandhu, Sheik Hashim Muhammad Fudu and Imam Buhari. Sheik al-Fulani was versed in the Qur'an, the Hadith, Adab (literature), Sarf (etymology), Nahwu (grammar), Huruf (phonetics), Usul (principles of education), Ma'ani (rhetoric), Hisab (mathematics), Mu'awakit (solar and lunar timings), Mandiq (logic) and several other branches of Islamic education. He also studied several famous Islamic books under renowned scholars.

The Sheik left Katsina for pilgrimage at Mecca and spent several years on the way studying under great Imams and Sheiks in the Borno area, the Darfur region, the Sudan, etc. He performed the pilgrimage at Mecca in the year 1142 Hijra. He started writing his book in Mecca, titled, Al-Durr al-Manzum wa Khulasat al-Sirr al-Makhtum fi Ilm al-

Talasim wal-Nujum which exposed him as an astronomer, astrologer, mathematician and mystic. Sheik a-Fulani moved from Mecca to Medina and finally to Cairo in the Muslim month of Rajab, 1146 Hijra. He spent 8 years in Cairo teaching mathematics, the sciences, astrology and mysticism. He also finished writing his first book and wrote all the other books mentioned above in Cairo. He died there in the residence of Sheik Alwalid in 1154 Hijra. He was buried in the special cemetery reserved for famous Muslim scholars named “Bustanul Ulama” meaning the garden of the Muslim scholars.

**SHEIKH ABDULLAHI IBN MUHAMMAD IBN
ABDULSALAM AL-FUTY AL-KASHINAWI
(ABDULLAHI THIQAH) (born c1741)**

Sheik Abdullahi Thiqah was a Fulani of Futa Toro descent, the same descent to that of Sheik Usman Danfodio. He was born in Katsina and he operated a great school in the city. He travelled widely in search of knowledge. That took him to Agadez, Fezzan, Takedda and some North-West African countries. He was highly respected for having memorised the Holy Qur'an and all the six canonical books of the Hadith (*al-sitta Sihah*). His most famous book was the “Atiyal al-Muti” (On Fiqh- Islamic Jurisprudence) which is widely in use particularly in Hausaland. He was also said to have written several other books.

SHEIKH MUHAMMADU MODE AL-KASHINAWI

He was an Islamic Scholar of high repute who excelled as a Qadi (Judge). He wrote the book, “Sar al-Imam” which dwelt on the path a good leader should tread.

SHEIKH AL-TAHIR BIN IBRAHIM ALFALLATI

He was a physician and well versed in the Islamic Medicine. He wrote the book, “Treatise on the treatment of haemorrhoids”.

SHEIKH MALAM KISKO GAMBARAWA

Sheik Kisko was a descendant of the Wangarawa Gobarau Imams and a very learned scholar. He ran a very large school, which attracted students from all over West Africa including Sheik Usman Danfodio who studied under Sheik Kisko before the 1804 Jihad which he led (evidence of Sheikh Lawal Katsina, Chief Imam of the Katsina Central Mosque). A miracle attributed to Sheik Kisko was that he foresaw that Sheik Danfodio was to lead a great Jihad in Hausaland and beyond. His students one day asked him why he was paying special attention to the young Usman Danfodio and he replied that the young man would one day lead others to the revival of true Islamic teachings so he deserved to be very knowledgeable. Sheik Kisko married a wife from another learned family at the Unguwar Liman Katsina. She bore him a child called Idris whose family produced ten Katsina Central Mosque Chief Imams including the current Katsina Chief Imam, Sheik Muhammad Lawal.

KATSINA, THE GREAT PROVINCE

Katsina Province (now Katsina State) and its indigenes had set several achievement records at Regional and National levels. Many of such achievements would certainly escape the mind, but an attempt is hereby made to list as many as possible.

1. The first College to be built in Northern Nigeria was the Katsina College, built in 1921 and commissioned in 1922.
2. The first Northerner to become a Permanent Secretary in the regional civil service was late Alhaji Ahmadu Kumasi in 1960.
3. The first Hausa to become an Army General was General Hassan Usman Katsina in 1973.
4. The first Northerner to hold a political office under a Military dispensation was General Hassan Usman Katsina who became the Governor of Northern Nigeria in 1966.
5. The first Northerner to become a Veterinary Doctor was late Alhaji (Dr) Abu Mawashi in 1951.
6. The first International Radio Broadcaster was Alhaji Isa Kaita, Wazirin Katsina, who along with Alhaji Bello Dandago from Kano served the BBC, Accra station in 1941.
7. The first Pharmacy School in Northern Nigeria (called Medical Class) was built in Katsina in 1927.

8. The first Northerners to become Chattered Accountants were Alhaji (Dr.) Hamza Zayyad Rafindadi (Wazirin Katsina) and Alhaji Umar Idris Sandamu in 1962.
9. The first Emir in Nigeria to travel officially to England was late Sarkin Katsina Muhammad Dikko in 1921.
10. The longest reigning Emir in modern times was late Sarkin Daura Abdul-Rahman who ruled from 1911 to 1966 (55 years).
11. The first modern day Emir to perform the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj) was late Sarkin Katsina Muhammad Dikko in 1921. Also, the first Traditional Ruler to travel to Mecca for the Hajj by motor vehicle from Nigeria was late Wazirin Katsina Haruna in 1928.
12. The first Northerners to become Lawyers were Justice Muhammadu Bello and Justice Mamman Nasir in 1955.
13. The first Northerner to become Minister of Justice was Justice Mamman Nasir (Galadiman Katsina) in 1960.
14. The first Northerner to become Chief Justice of Nigeria was Justice Muhammadu Bello in 1987.
15. The first Northerner to become a Civil Engineer was Engineer Mahmud Urwatu Armaya'u in 1953.
16. The first Female Hausa to become a Doctor was Dr. HalimaYalwa in 1976.
17. The first Nigerian Nurse to receive a National honour was late Alhaji Mande of Katsina General Hospital fame in

1963.

18. The first Traditional Musician to receive a National Honour and to be awarded a Doctorate Degree was Dr. Alhaji Mamman Shata Katsina.

19. The first Treasury to be established in Northern Nigeria was at Katsina near the Emir's Palace in 1906.

20. The first Polo Club in Northern Nigeria was established in Katsina in 1921.

21. The first Minister to move from Lagos to the new Federal Capital, Abuja, was Alhaji Samaila Mamman, the Minister of Commerce, in 1987.

22. The best Polo team in Nigeria was that led by late Sir Usman Nagogo with a combined handicap of plus (+) 20.

23. The most famous sports gallery in Nigeria is that at the Emirs Palace Katsina with over 500 trophies.

24. The most famous well in Nigeria is the Kusugu well in Daura dug over 1,100 years ago.

25. The best Polo player ever produced in Nigeria was late Sir Usman Nagogo with a plus (+) 7 handicap. He was also the best Nigerian Horse Racing Jockey with 51 gold and hundreds of Silver winnings. In addition, the Emir was the first Northerner to be appointed a Federal Minister in 1946.

26. The Province with the highest number of Ministerial appointments in the first Republic was Katsina Province. No other province ever produced up to seven Ministers at

the same time, except Katsina (1964-66).

27. The first Agricultural Research Centre in Northern Nigeria was the Cotton Improvement Centre at Daudawa near Funtua established in 1920 and later moved to Ahmadu Bello University at Samaru, Zaria.

28. The first Hausa to become the Inspector General of Police was Alhaji M.D. Yusuf in 1975.

29. The first Hausaland kings were the grandchildren of Bayajidda who ruled the seven Hausa States around 990 AD.

30. The first Palace to be built in Hausaland was that of Queen Daurama in Daura which is over 1,200 years old.

31. The first community owned University in Nigeria is the Katsina Islamic University under a non-governmental organization, the Katsina Islamic Foundation. Its construction started in November 1999.

32. The first veterinary centre in Northern Nigeria was built at Modoji village (present Government House vicinity) Katsina in 1919.

33. The most famous Hausaland equivalent to today's University was the Gobarau Islamic Centre established in 1493 AD and affiliated to the famous Sankore University at Timbuktu.

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THOSE WHO RESPONDED TO INTERVIEWS

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2. Alhaji Malam Dan Masani (Masanawa Quarters Katsina on 28/11/04)
3. Alkali Alhaji Maiwada (Gafai Quarters, Katsina on 28/11/04)
4. Alhaji Mamman Kankiya (Gobarau Quarters, Katsina on 29/11/04)
5. Alhaji Malam Musa Kaya (Gambarawa Quarters, Katsina on 02/12/04)
6. Alhaji Alin Malam (Gambarawa Quarters, Katsina on 02/12/04)
7. Alhaji Ma'aruf, Sarkin Maginan Katsina (on 12/3/05)

THOSE WHO RESPONDED TO DISCUSSIONS

1. Alhaji Malam Ibrahim Tahir (Galadanchi Quarters, Katsina on 28/11/04)
2. Alhaji Malam Sabi'u (Rafin dadi Quarters, Katsina on 29/11/04)
3. Alhaji Malam Ashiru (Kofar Guga Quarters, Katsina on 29/11/04)

4. Alhaji Lamis bin Muhammad Sani (Farin Yaro Quarters, Katsina on 30/11/04)
5. Alhaji Abu Modibbo (Gambarawa Quarters, Katsina on 02/11/04)
6. Malam Ibrahim D. Nababa (History and Culture Bureau, Katsina, on 02/11/04)
7. Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman (History Department, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria on 09/11/04)
8. Dr. Mannir Mamman Katsina (Department of Nigerian & African Languages Ahmadu Bello University Zaria on 09/11/04)
9. Liman Muhammad Lawal, Chief Imam of Katsina Central Mosque (on 27/5/05)

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