



THE JIHAD OF KANEM-BORNO SULTANS AND SCHOLARS

THE FIRST PROPAGATORS OF ISLAM IN THE SUB WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN REGIONS

**950 Years Of The Founding Of The First
Caliphate, Launching Of The First Jihad
And The Unparalleled Contributions Of
Kanem-Borno Sultans And Scholars In
The Propagation And The Spread Of
Islam In The Sub West And
Central African Regions**

**Prof. Sani Abubakar Lugga, MFR, FNIM
The 5th Waziri of Katsina**



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By:

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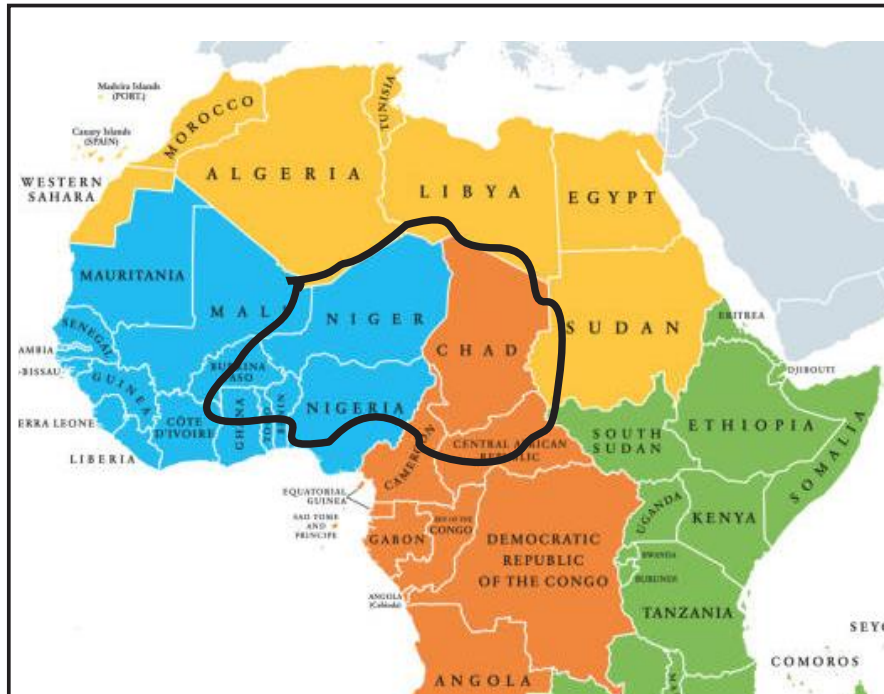
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MAJOR AREAS WHERE KANEM-BORNO SULTANS AND KANURI, SHUWA-ARAB AND BERBER SCHOLARS SPREAD THE ISLAMIC RELIGION MORE THAN WHAT SCHOLARS OF OTHER EMPIRES OR CALIPHATES DID



In 1075 AD (950 years ago), Sultan Humme established the first Caliphate in West Africa and launched the first formal Jihad to convert pagans to Islam mainly through Da'awah (preaching). Therefore, Kanem-Borno Sultans and Scholars (the Kanuri, the Berbers, the Shuwa-Arabs, etc) became the first and the major converters of the People to the Religion of Islam in all the areas of Sub-Saharan West Africa; especially in today's Nigeria, Chad, Niger Republic, Cameroon, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, etc.

**ANCIENT CAPITALS OF KANEM (NJIMI-700-1387 AD)
BORNO (KAGA-1387-1460) AND THAT OF
KANEM-BORNO (FROM 1640 AD)**

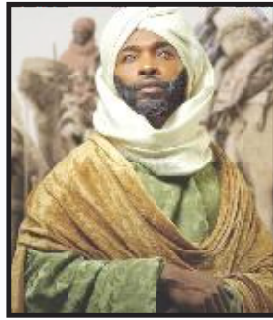


Kanem-Borno Caliphate started as Kanem with Njimi as Capital City around 700 AD under the non-Muslim and later the nominal Muslim Duguwa Dynasty with the ruling titles of “Mai”. The first Mai to fully become very devout Muslim, Mai Humme, changed the dynastic title to that of “Sayfawa” and the ruling title to that of “Sultan” in 1075 AD. The Sayfawa Dynasty was dislodged from Njimi City in 1387 AD under Sultan Umar bin Idris, forcing them to move to the Borno Area where they continued Ruling from their City of Kaga as Sultans. Sultan Ali Ghaji established a new Borno Capital at Ngazargamu around 1460 AD. The powerful Sultan Idris Katagarmabe conquered back Kanem and re-occupied the Njimi Capital City in 1507 AD; and publicly declared the merger of the two, Kanem and Borno, into KANEM-BORNO CALIPHATE under the strict Islamic Caliphate System.

THE GREATEST RULERS OF KANEM-BORNO CALIPHATE



Artist's impression of "Mai", later Sultan Humme (reign 1075 to 1097 AD). Founder of the Devout Muslim Sayfawa Dynasty



Sultan Idris Alooma 1545-1603. He was the Greatest Ruler of Kanem-Borno Caliphate under The Sayfawa Ruling House



Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ameen Al-Kanemi (1776-1837) Founder of Al-Kanemi Ruling House of the great Kanem-Borno

**THE FOUNDER OF
MODERN-DAY BORNO
AND THE FOUNDER OF
MAIDUGURI CAPITAL CITY**

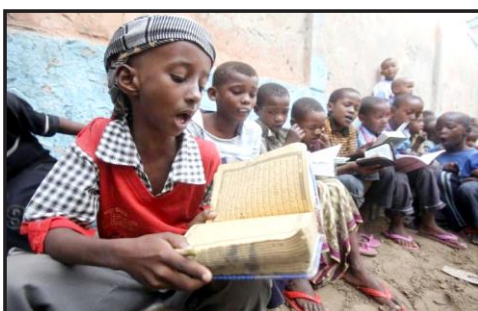


**Shehu of Borno
Alhaji Bukar Garbai
(1902-1922) Founder of
City of Maiduguri Titular
Capital of Kanem-Borno**

**THE FAMOUS LOGO OF
KANEM- BORNO DEPICTING
THE GREATNESS AND THE
POWER OF ITS FORCES**



KANEM-BORNO SULTANS AND KANURI, SHUWA-ARAB AND BERBER SCHOLARS SPREAD THE ISLAMIC RELIGION TO ALL PARTS OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA; MORE THAN WHAT SCHOLARS OF OTHER EMPIRES OR CALIPHATES DID

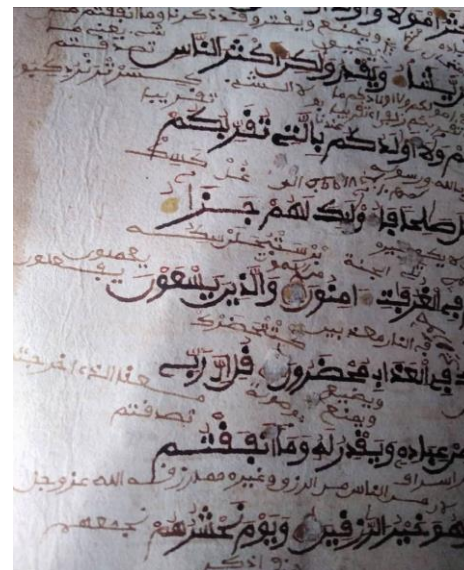
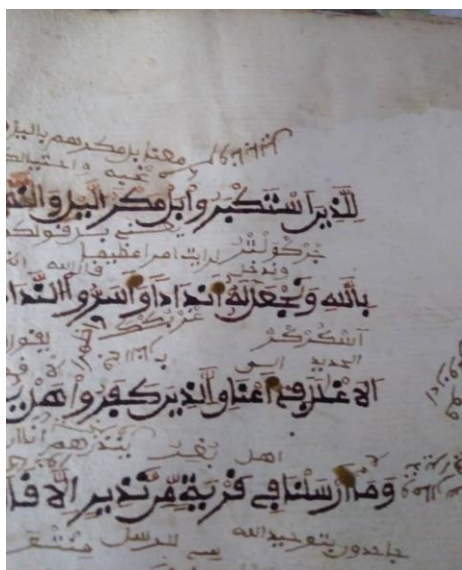
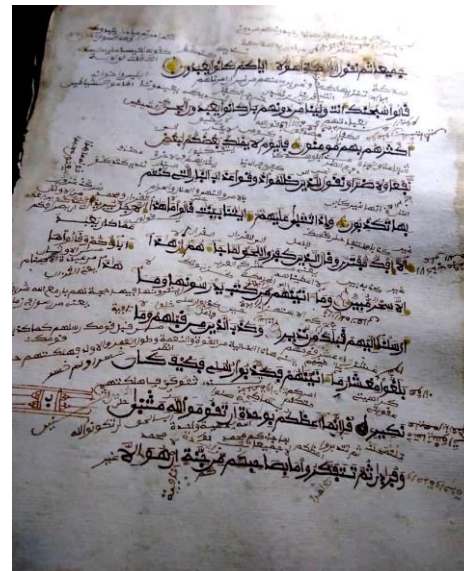
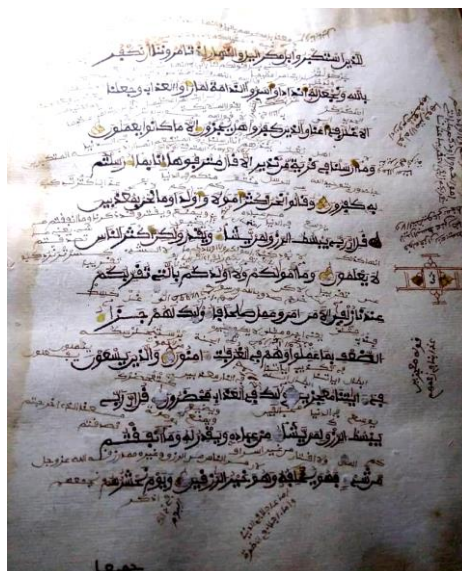


KANEM-BORNO ARMoured CAVALRY AND TURKISH MUSKETEERS THAT TRAINED SULTAN IDRIS ALOOMA'S GREAT MILITARY THAT SUTAINED EXPANSION AND PROTECTED THE MUSLIM JIHADISTS MILITARILY

(Images: gettyimages and pinterest)



COPIES FROM AN ANCIENT QUR'AN WHICH CARRIES TAFSIR IN THE KANEMBU LANGUAGE IN RED INK. IT IS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE WAZIRI OF GWANDU. IT WAS STUDIED BY PROFESSORS FROM CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND ESTIMATED TO BE OVER 500 YEARS OLD. IT WAS PERHAPS CARRIED TO HAUSALAND BY KANURI SCHOLARS DURING SULTAN IDRIS ALOOMA



COPIES OF THE ANCIENT QUR'AN MANUSCRIPTS SHOWING THE GREAT ISLAMIC REVIVAL IN THE KANEM-BORNO CALIPHATE FROM 1075 AD COVERING THE CHAD BASIN AREAS



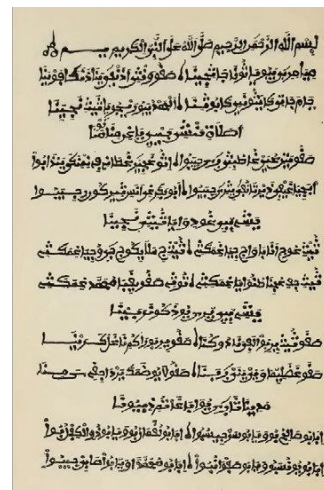
**Quran. Nguigmi, Old
Kanembu Manuscripts,
Digital Collections, SOAS,
University of London.**



**Borno and Old Kanembu
Islamic Manuscripts,
SOAS, University of
London.**



**Quran. Bibliothèque
nationale de France,
MS.Arabe 402, fol.249a.**



**a facsimile from Banfield
and Macintyre 1915,
frontispiece.**

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ONE OF THE BOOKS OF AL-BARNAM



فَتْحَةُ الْعُمَرِيَّةِ

شيخ الإسلام، الخليلي

المكتبة الثقافية

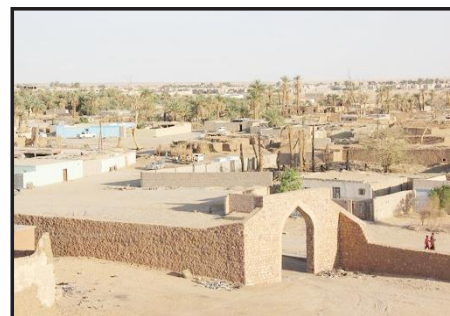


GOBARAU ISLAMIC CENTRE KATSINA



THIS IS THE MINARET OF THE FAMOUS GOBARAU MASJID AND ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN KATSINA CITY, WHICH WAS BUILT IN 1493 AD UNDER KING MUHAMMADU KORAU. KANEM-BORNO SCHOLARS SHEIKH QADI MUHAMMAD AIDA BIN AHMAD AL-TAZAKHATI (DANTAKUM) AND SHEIKH ALIYU JODOMA FULATA BORNO, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF SHEIKH MUHAMMAD AL-MAGHILI. IT FLOURISHED MAINLY DURING SULTAN IDRIS ALOOMA OF KANEM-BORNO IN THE 1550s

MURZUK ANCIENT MASJID, IN PRESENT DAY LIBYA, LOCATED NEAR THE LIBYAN FORT OF ANCIENT KANEM-BORNO IN THE FEZZAN REGION



Murzuk is an Oasis City and the Capital of the Murzuq District in the Fezzan Region of Southwest Libya. Murzuk developed around an oasis which served as a stop on the north-south trade route across the Sahara Desert. By 1300 AD, the area was ruled by the Kanuri Kanem Caliphate. The Fortress (ABOVE), now in ruins, was built around this time. By 1400 AD the City was ruled by the Borno Caliphate, and the legacy of Kanem-Borno sovereignty is still evident, as many streets have names in the Kanembu and the Kanuri Languages. (Images: George Francis Lyon (1821); britannica.com, wikimedia.org; destimap.com)

**GREAT AGADEZ MASJID, AGADEZ, NIGER REPUBLIC
WHICH WAS ONCE THE TENERE SULTANATE OF AIR
IN THE KANEM-BORNO IN THE 1500s**



Agadez Masjid is located in Agadez, Niger Republic. It was constructed c.1492 AD. The Sultanate of Agadez (also known as Tenere Sultanate of Air, Sultanate of Air, or Asben) was a Berber Kingdom in the Air Mountains, located at the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. Agadez was jointly founded by the Tuareg (a Berber Clan) and the Hausa people as a trading post, which, by 1450 AD, had gained great prominence on the Trans-Saharan Trade Route. The Agadez Sultanate was once under both the Songhai and the Kanem-Borno Caliphates. (Images: traveladventures.org)

**ZINDER (DAMAGARAM) GRAND MASJID, NIGER
REPUBLIC; AN INTEGRAL ANCIENT STATE
OF KANEM-BORNO**



LARABANGA ANCIENT MASJID, GHANA



Larabanga Masjid was built in the Sudanese architectural style in the village of Larabanga, Ghana. It is the oldest Masjid in the country and one of the oldest in West Africa, and has been referred to as the "Mecca of West Africa", which was built in 1421 AD. According to historical sources, in 1421, an Islamic scholar/trader a Kanuri named Ayuba had a dream while staying here, near a "Mystic Stone", instructing him to build a Masjid. Strangely, when he awoke, he found that the foundations were already in place and he proceeded to construct the Masjid until it was completed

ABECHE GRAND MASJID, CHAD REPUBLIC, AN INTEGRAL ANCIENT PART OF KANEM-BORNO



**GHANA NATIONAL MASJID, KANDA AREA, ACCRA,
GHANA; CONSTRUCTION INFLUENCED BY THE KANURI
OVER 100 YEARS OLD CHIEF IMAM OF GHANA,
SHEIKH OTHMAN NUHU SHARUBUTU**



The Ghana National Masjid is located at Kanda (Kawukudi) Area of Accra, Ghana. It is the second largest Masjid in West Africa, after the Grand Masjid of Senegal. It was built at a cost of \$10 million; funded by the Turkish Hudai Foundation in Accra with the support of the Turkish Government. The complex has an Imam Residence and Offices for the National Chief Imam, Managers and others; a morgue, a library, a school, dormitories, workers and guests' residences; a fitted clinic and a pharmacy. The construction began in 2012 in an Ottoman revival style with four signature Minarets towering about 65m above the ground; and it was commissioned in July 2021. It is a close replica of the famous Blue Masjid in Istanbul. (shutterstock.com)



**MAIDUGURI CENTRAL MASJID, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA;
TODAY'S TITULAR CAPITAL OF ANCIENT KANEM-BORNO**



The old Maiduguri Central Masjid was built in 1918 and demolished in 1989 so as to give way for a modern one. For over 23 years, instead of a new edifice to come to life, the skeleton that was erected in place of the old one was left to rot for decades because of the myth surrounding the Masjid. According to legend, the Masjid was meant to remain the way it was built without any attempt to modernise, expand or change its original local architectural outlook. It was believed that if the Masjid was completed, prominent people whose lineage is traced to the old Kanem-Borno will die, particularly the reigning Shehu of Borno. However, His Eminence the Shehu of Borno, Alhaji Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai Al-Kanemi, CFR, took the gauntlet and said the dream of a befitting Masjid for Maiduguri will be a reality. A Committee was set up for the project and on Friday, 11th March, 2011, the Shehu's dream came to life as the contract for the completion of the Masjid was signed. The new super Masjid was commissioned on Friday 8th February 2019 (Image: ng.worldorgs.com)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My special gratitude is to Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, who gave me the strength, the health, the endurance, the wisdom and the intellectual ability to undertake the writing and the publication of this Book.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of this Project; who are too numerous to be individually mentioned here. However, I would like to thank His Eminence the Shehu of Borno, Alhaji Abubakar Umar Garbai Al-Kanemi, CFR; and His Excellency the Governor of Borno State Professor Babagana Zulum, CON. I am grateful to Dr. Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali, the Registrar of Yobe State University, for his contributions.

I wish to acknowledge the wonderful reception I always receive from His Royal Highness the Shehu of Bama Dr. Umar Kyari Umar Al-Kanemi, CON, from whose Emirate my ancestors originated; Mai Girma the Waziri of Borno Alhaji Shettima Mutawalli Abubakar; the Secretary of Borno Sultanate Council Alhaji Zanna Laisu Kazalma; the Borno Prince Abba Kawu and my in-laws, the family of Sheikh Sharif Ibrahim Saleh Al-Husainy, CON.

Special mention must be made of members of the family of my late grandfather, the first Waziri of Katsina, Sheikh Alhaji Haruna of Kanuri descent, who have been giving me all the cooperation, support and understanding since my

noble appointment as the 5th Waziri of Katsina by His Royal Highness the late Emir of Katsina, Alhaji (Dr) Muhammadu Kabir Usman, CFR, on Saturday 26th October 2002. I am very grateful to them all.

Lastly, but by all means not the least, I extend my love and profound gratitude to my wives, Hajiya Binta, Hajiya Hadiya and Hajiya Azhar, my children and grandchildren; and other members of my family for their continued obedience and respect; and for their patience and encouragement. May Allah bless all of you, ameen.

I pray to Allah to have mercy and to bless the souls of our late parents, Alhaji Abubakar Lugga, the Sarkin Dawa of Katsina and Hajiya Indo A'isha; and the souls of my late wife Hajiya Ummah and my late daughter Fatimah. We pray to Allah (SWT) that we shall all join them in Paradise. Ameen.

Prof. Sani Abubakar Lugga, MFR, FNIM
The 5th Waziri of Katsina

CHAPTER ONE

LAUNCHING THE GREAT JIHAD OF 1075 AD BY SULTAN HUMME OF KANEM CALIPHATE

The very influential and authoritative Encyclopaedia Britannica (www.britannica.com) records that:

*Kanem-Bornu was ruled by the Sef (Sayf) Dynasty that controlled the area around Lake Chad from the 9th to the 19th century. Kanem-Bornu was probably founded around the Mid 9th century, and its first Capital was at Njimi, northeast of Lake Chad. Toward the end of the 11th century, (1075 AD) the Sef Mai (King) Umme (later known as Ibn 'Abd al-Jalil) became a Muslim, and from that time Kanem-Bornu was an **ISLAMIC STATE**. Because of its location, it served as a point of contact in trade between North Africa, the Nile Valley, and the Sub-Sahara African Region.*

The above authoritative narrative has certainly placed Kanem-Borno as an Islamic State and its propagation of Islam (Jihad) started in the late 1070s AD! However, looking at the list of Kanem Kings, it is important to note that Islam has been introduced in the Kanem Area about one hundred years earlier and some Jews were also there before then, as Judaism preceded Islam. It is also important to note that when Banu Sayf left Yemen around 600 AD, Islam was not yet declared by Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

From the analogies of Richmond (1936), Palmer (1949), Urvoy (1949) and Smith (1971), a Table of Duguwa Kings (Mai) could be drawn as below. However the dates in the Table are not factual and need further research to correct.

TABLE I: DUGUWA KINGS (MAI) OF KANEM

No.	Mai	Reign	Details
1	Susam	c.692-725	Founder of Kingdom, holy man.
2	Jashar	725-783	The conqueror of other Kingdoms, established the religion of Qafir
3	Dugu (Bremmi)	c. 784-835	Introduces toilet paper and coffee, first Jews appear in the Kingdom
4	Mune	c. 835-893	First Muslims appear in 855 AD, good with Islam and Judaism.
5	Arso	c. 893-942	Persecuted Muslims in the Kingdom, killed in battle with Katun.
6	Katun	c. 942-961	A Muslim noble who wished to make the country Islamic. Overthrown in a pagan conspiracy by Yiyoma the Shkija.
7	Yayoladh (Yiyoma)	c. 961-1009	He led a revolution against Katun, expanded the Kingdom, return to pagan tradition, killed Muslims.
8	Dalabou	c. 1009-1034	Builder of Kukes, stagnation, peace with Muslims, his son Shahin-bey becomes Muslim.
9	Bozaxhi (usurper)	c. 1035-1067	Final pagan, couldn't prevent the rise of Islam and got killed in a battle against a Muslim called Samir-Agha.
10	Shahin-Bey	c. 1067-1081	Nominal Muslim noble, but later returned to paganism, and was killed by a Bektashi Muslim scholar called Samir Jalil.
11	Samir-Agha	c. 1081-1097	First truly Muslim Ruler of Kanem, got killed in battle against

			the pagan called Meloje.
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Kanem and Borno, which were later merged and became one as Kanem-Borno Caliphate; originated around 700 AD. It was located at the southern end of the Trans-Saharan trade route between Tripoli and the Region of Lake Chad and its surrounding Hausa and Tuareg Regions. It was also a vital crossroad between the north and the south Trans-Saharan Trade Routes to North Africa and the east and the west Trans-Saharan Trade Routes to Nubia. In additions, Kanem-Borno included a confederation of nomadic peoples who spoke languages of the Teda-Daza (Toubou) Group. One theory, based on early Arabic sources, suggests that the dominance of the Zaghawa people bound the confederation together.

Around 700 AD (or even much earlier as some records show), the Duguwa and later the Sayfawa took the Throne drawing on an ancestral link to Sayf, who was identified with the legendary Yemenite hero Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan. Due to the link to Sayf, it became customary to call the second ruling dynasty the Sayfawa Dynasty. Both the Duguwa and the subsequent Sayfawa seem to have belonged to the same ruling establishment of the Magumi. Also the royal title of “Mai” would appear to have been shared by the Duguwa and the Sayfawa, denoting the perception of the rulers as divine. The major factor that influenced the history of the State of Kanem was the early penetration of Islam into the area. North African traders, the Berbers and the Arabs, brought the new religion. Towards 1000 AD, Kanem began a process of Islamisation that can be traced to Humme, a Sayfawa Ruler who converted to Islam and declared it the official State Religion. He began a dynastic tradition of Muslim Sayfawa Sultans that would continue for about 800 years. Islam offered the Sayfawa Rulers the

advantage of new ideas from Arabia Peninsular and the Mediterranean World, as well as literacy in administration. But many people resisted the new religion of Islam, in favour of traditional beliefs and practices.

Once the pagan Duguwa lost political power, the royal establishment abandoned its Capital of Manan and settled in the new Capital of Njimi further south of Kanem, a credit given to the devout Muslim Ruler Humme. By the thirteenth century, Kanem's rule expanded, and was coupled with marked population growth in Njimi. Even though the Kanembu became the main power-base of the Sayfawa, Kanem's Rulers continued to travel frequently throughout the Caliphate and especially towards Borno, west of Lake Chad. Herders and farmers alike recognised the government's power and acknowledged their allegiance by paying tribute. Many of the people embraced Islam and truly made it the State Religion. The Kings made it their duty to propagate Islam in their lands and beyond.

Kanem under the Duguwa is mentioned as one of three great Areas in Bilad el-Sudan by Al Yaqubi in 872 AD. He describes Kanem as an Area of:

The Dhuguwa people who live in a place called Kanim, which included several Vassal Kingdoms, and their dwellings are huts made of reeds. Living as nomads, their cavalry gave them military superiority.

In the 10th century AD, al-Muhallabi mentions two towns in the Area, one of which was Manan, which was probably ruled by pagan Kings:

Their King was considered divine, believing he could bring life and death, sickness and health. Wealth was measured in livestock: sheep, cattle, camels and horses.

The Kanuri speaking Sayfawa gained complete control of Kanem, which included control of the trade links in the Central Sahara with Bilma and other salt mines. Yet, the principal trading commodity was slaves. Pagan Tribes to the south of Lake Chad who refused to accept Islam were raided and then transported to Zawila in the Fezzan, where the slaves were traded for horses and weapons. The annual number of slaves traded increased from 1,000 in the 7th century AD to 5,000 in the 15th century AD.

Mai (later Sultan) Humme began his reign in 1075 AD, and formed alliances with the Kay, Tubu, Dabir and Magumi. He was the first devout Muslim King of Kanem, and was made very devout by his Muslim tutor Muhammad bin Mani; and he established his Capital at Njimi. Islam flourished greatly during his reign as he declared the Area as a Caliphate and waged a Jihad on pagans.

The pre-Islamic Dynasty of the Duguwa Mai lasted until the conversion of the 12th Mai, Umme or Humme (1075-97) into Islam in 1075 AD. Later known as Humme bin Abd Al Jalil, he was the first very devout Muslim Ruler who took the ruling title of “Sultan” and changed the dynastic title into that of “Sayfawa” (after their progenitor, Sayf).

Gradually the power of Kanem matured, with Njimi as the Capital City. At this point, the first written records emerged from the pens of Arab writers such as Al Bakri and Yakubi in the eleventh century. They are followed by those of Al Idrisi and Ibn Said in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Al Bakri mentions the presence in Kanem in 1068 of people descended from the

Ummayyad adherents who had fled south to escape persecution at the hands of the Abbasids following their accession to the Caliphate in 750 AD. The period from 1075 to 1224 AD was one of growing prosperity and power. Both Sultan Humme and Sultan Dunama made the Pilgrimage to Mecca, the latter three times, and their horizons widened. The Diwan records that, Dunama was drowned in 1151 AD “in the sea of the Prophet Moses” (i.e., the Red Sea).

The Sultans of Kanem had continued the custom of marrying within the noble circle and especially with the Tomaghera, a noble Tubu tribe, but mixed marriages also became permissible and the Diwan Book (Chronicle) reports of Selma (1193-1210 AD) as the first black skinned Sultan. The word “Selma” means black and it was reported that Humme’s father was also called Selma, so perhaps the mixture of blood began much earlier. Dunama’s son, Biri I, was quite ineffective. He was actually put in prison by his mother for executing some thieves instead of following the Muslim Law and having their hands cut off. That was an interesting action on the power of the King’s Mother in Kanuri tradition; and the great regards and respects for the Muslim Shari’ah.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century, Kanem was unquestionably the dominant State in the Sudan. A sound political and administrative system of government had been established, with a mixture of Muslim Law and pre-Muslim tradition that did not contradict Islam Law.

The Sultan, whose legitimacy was by now based on the Islamic Shari’ah and some Arab principle of patrilineal descent, but who retained the matriarchal respect to the Mother, the Sister, and Wife of the Ruler (the Magira, the Magaram and the Gumsu

respectively). The Ruler was mysterious, withdrawn and semi-divine according to the typical Sudanese pattern. He was advised by a Council of Twelve, some of whom were Senior Slaves.

During the thirteenth century, just about when Sundiata Keita finally destroyed Ghana, Kanem reached her peak in the reign of the 17th Sultan, Dunama Dabalemi (1221-1259 AD), with diplomatic contacts in Egypt and North Africa and no rival power in the Sudan.

The celebrated Ibn Battuta writes of Kanem as,

A Moslem Country of excellent slave-girls, eunuchs, and fabrics dyed with saffron; whose Sultan never shows himself to his people nor talks to them except from behind a curtain". Magrizi describes Kanem at the height of its power as follows: *"The inhabitants of Kanem cover the head with a veil. The Sultan does not show himself to the public except at the time of the two religious festivals (Eid El Kabir and Eid El Fitr), in the morning and in the afternoon at the Palace; and those who talk to him are placed behind a screen... They are of the sect of the Imam Malik. They are particular in enforcing justice and extremely severe as regards the Islamic Religion. In the year 640 AH (1242 AD), they built in the town of Fustat (Cairo, Egypt), a college for people belonging to the sect of the Imam Malik known as the College of Ibn Rashid. It is in this College that members of this Nation reside if they come to Cairo.*

Ibn Khaldun states that, it was in Sultan Dunama Dabalemi's reign that Sultan Al-Mustansir of Tunis received a gift of a giraffe from the "Sultan of Kanem and the Master of Bornu".

Further evidence of Kanem's fame and importance comes from the writings of Ibn Battuta (1304-68 AD) the famous Arab Traveller;

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 AD) the greatest of the medieval Arab Historians; Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442 AD) from Cairo and Al-Qalqashandi (died 1418 AD) also from Cairo.

Al-Maqrizi writes:

The inhabitants of Kanem are a great people, and for the most part Muslims. Their City is called Njimi... Their Sultan is a nomad in mode of life. When he sits on his Throne his courtiers prostrate themselves before him, and fall on their faces. His army, on horse and on foot and transport, number 100,000. Between Njimi and Yalamlam is an immense number of pagans. Their Sultan in the year 700 AH (AD 1300) was Al-Hajj Ibrahim of the sons of Saif Ibn Dhi Yazan, who occupied the Throne of Kanem, which is the seat of power of Bornu. There reigned after him his son Al-Hajj Idris. Then Idris's brother, Daud Ibn Ibrahim; then Umar Ibn Idris; then the brother of the latter, Uthman Ibn Idris. A few years before the year 800 AH (AD 1397) the people of Kanem revolted, and there only remained to the Saifawa the Nubians of their Kingdom, who are Muslims and wage holy war on the people of Kanem... Their first seat, on the side which is near to Egypt, is called Zuwila. Between this town and the town of Kaukau (probably Gao), which is on the opposite (Western) frontier, the distance is three month's march.

CHAPTER TWO

THE JIHAD EXPANSION UNDER SULTAN DUNAMA DABBALEMI OF KANEM CALIPHATE

Dunama Dabbalemi, or Dounama Dibbalem, of the Sayfawa Dynasty, was the Ruler of Kanem from 1210 to 1259 AD. Kanem's expansion peaked during the long and energetic reign of Sultan Dunama Dabbalemi who initiated diplomatic exchanges with Sultans in North Africa, sending a gift of a giraffe to the Hafsid Monarch of Tunisia, and arranged for the establishment of the Madrasa (School) of al-Rashiq in Cairo to facilitate pilgrimage to Mecca; and to encourage wider Islamic knowledge. The Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun, remembers Sultan Dabbalemi as *the "King of Kanem and the Lord of Bornu"*; and reports a Kanem Embassy in 1257 AD to Tunisia. This Embassy was established in order to facilitate trade and maintain diplomatic relations with the North African Kingdoms as well as the Southern European Kingdoms and Empires such as the Romans, the Greeks and the Spaniards.

During his reign, Sultan Dabbalemi declared Jihad against the surrounding pagan tribes and initiated an extended period of conquest with his cavalry of over 41,000. According to some reports, he fought the Bulala for 7 years, 7 months, and 7 days. After dominating the Fezzan, he established a Governor at Traghan, allowing Kanem to have control of the northern trade routes. And he delegated military command amongst his sons. As the Sayfawa extended control beyond Kanuri tribal lands, fiefs

were granted to military commanders, as “Cima” (master of the frontier). Kanem’s influence also extended westward to Kano (in present-day Nigeria), eastward to Ouaddai, and southward to the Adamawa grasslands (in present-day Cameroon). Through his wars, Sultan Dabbalemi captured many pagan slaves that he sold to the North African Traders as the main item of the Trans-Saharan Trade at that time.

Sultan Dabbalemi devised a system to reward military commanders with authority over the people they conquered. This system, however, tempted military officers to pass their positions to their sons, thus transforming the office from one based on achievement and loyalty into one based on hereditary nobility. Sultan Dabbalemi suppressed this tendency, but after his death, dissension among his sons weakened the political authority of the Sayfawa Dynasty. Dynastic feuds degenerated into a civil war, and Kanem’s outlying peoples soon ceased paying tribute.

The new power of Kanem, based now on the town of Njimi, grew to such maturity that at the beginning of the twelfth century AD Sultan Dunama, son of Sultan Humme, extended his influence as far as Egypt. According to Dunama’s Diwan record, *“His horses numbered 100,000 and his soldiers were 120,000, not counting mercenaries”*.

Kanem, under the rule of the seventeenth Sultan, Dunama Dabalemi, reached great heights of prosperity and her influence was felt from the Niger River to the Nile River; and from Fezzan to Dikwa. The celebrated Ibn Battuta writes of Kanem as, *“A Moslem Country of excellent slave-girls, eunuchs, and fabrics dyed with saffron; whose Sultan never shows himself to his people nor talks to them except from behind a curtain.*

Ibn Khaldun, noted that, “*Kanem is the greatest power in the Sudan*”.

Magrizi describes Kanem at the height of its power as follows: *The inhabitants of Kanem cover the head with a veil. The Sultan does not show himself to the public except at the time of the two religious festivals (Eid El Kabir and Eid El Fitr), in the morning and in the afternoon at the Palace; and those who talk to him are placed behind a screen. The principal food of this people is rice which grows wild in the country. They have also cheese, guinea corn, figs, limes, melons, pumpkins and fresh dates. As regards money, they use a kind of cloth which they make and which is called ‘Wendy’. Each piece is ten cubits long (5 to 6 yards), but for facility of exchange it is cut up into pieces a quarter of a cubit or smaller (about 5 inches). Other substances such as shells of different kinds and pieces of copper or gold are equally used in commerce and their value is estimated in an equivalent amount of cloth. In this country the pumpkins are so big that they are used as boats to cross the River... They are of the sect of the Imam Malik. They are particular in enforcing justice and extremely severe as regards the Islamic Religion. In the year 640 AH (1242 AD), they built in the town of Fustat (Cairo, Egypt), a college for people belonging to the sect of the Imam Malik known as the College of Ibn Rashid. It is in this College that members of this Nation reside if they come to Cairo especially on their way to or from Mecca.*

It should be noted that, the Ibn Rashid College built by the Kanuri Sultan of Kanem in Fustat (Cairo, Egypt) is today called, the Rawak Borno College. Ibn Khaldun states that, it was in Sultan Dunama Dabalemi’s reign that one of the Sultans of Tunis received a gift of a giraffe from the King of Kanem and the Master of Bornu; related as follows:

In the year 635 AH (1257 AD) the Sultan Al-Mustansir of Tunis received a rich present from one of the Kings of the Negroes, the sovereign of Kanem and Lord of Bornu, a town situated on the meridian of Tripoli. Among the gifts which this Negro delegation presented to him was a giraffe, an animal whose external characteristics are most diverse. The inhabitants of Tunis ran in a crowd to see it, to such an extent that the plain was choked with people; they felt profound astonishment at the appearance of a quadruped whose strange appearance recalled at the same time the distinctive marks of many animals of diverse species.

Further evidence of Kanem's fame and importance comes from the writings of Ibn Battuta (1304-68 AD), the famous Arab Traveller, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406 AD), the greatest of the medieval Arab Historians, Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442 AD) from Cairo and Al-Qalqashandi (died 1418 AD) also from Cairo. Al-Maqrizi wrote (Hodgkin, 1960) as follows:

All the Sudanese derive their origin from Fut, the son of Ham. Their tribes number nineteen... The inhabitants of Kanem are a great people, and for the most part Muslims. Their City is called Njimi... Their Sultan is a nomad in mode of life. When he sits on his Throne his courtiers prostrate themselves before him, and fall on their faces. His army, on horse and on foot and on other mode of transport, number 100,000. Between Njimi and Yalamlam is an immense number of pagans. The Sultan of Kanem has five feudatory Kings Subject to him... Their Sultan in the year 700 AH (AD 1300) was Al-Hajj Ibrahim of the sons of Saif Ibn Dhi Yazan, who occupied the Throne of Kanem, which is the seat of power of Bornu. There reigned after him his son Al-Hajj Idris. Then Idris's brother, Daud Ibn Ibrahim; then Umar Ibn Idris; then the brother of the latter, Uthman Ibn Idris. A few years before the year 800 AH

(AD 1397) the people of Kanem revolted, and there only remained to the Saifawa the Nubians of their Kingdom, who are Muslims and wage holy war on the people of Kanem... The first seat of this Caliphate on the side which is near to Egypt is called Zuwila. Between this town and the town of Kaukau (probably Gao or Kukawa), which is on the opposite (western) frontier, the distance is three month's march.

At that time Zuwila was an important trade centre in the Fezzan, on the Kanem-Kawar-Cyrenaica caravan route. Al Bakri described it in the eleventh century AD as follows:

A Town without walls situated in the middle of the desert.... It is from Zuwila that slaves are exported to Ifriqiya (North Africa) and to neighbouring countries. Purchases are made there through the medium of short pieces of reed stuff. Beyond the Desert of Zuwila, and forty days from that Town, is situated the Land of Kanem, a race of Negroes, whom it is very difficult to visit...

CHAPTER THREE

THE JIHAD UNDER SULTAN ALI GAJIDENI OF BORNO CALIPHATE; WHO FOUNDED THE GREAT CAPITAL OF NGAZARGAMU

Sultan Ali Gaji, or Sultan Ali Gajideni Dunamami ibn Zeinab, or Sultan Ali ibn Dunama, was another great Ruler of Borno. After Ruling Kanem from Njimi for over 300 years, the Sayfawa Dynasty was dislodged from Kanem in 1387 AD under Sultan Umar bin Idris. After their expulsion from Njimi, the Kanuri under their Sayfawa Sultans spent the next eighty years wandering up and down the banks of the Komadugu/Yobe River. By its banks, they built a series of temporary Capitals, such as Wudi, Birnin Kimi and Yamia (Muniyo); until, in about 1460 AD, Sultan Ali Ghaji Al-Dunamami founded Birnin Ngazargamu (the City of Nagazargamu). Here water was plentiful, contact with Kanem was convenient, and it was a safe distance from the pinpricks of Tuareg raiders operating from their new base of Agades in the Asben Oasis.

It was Sultan Ali Ghaji, described as: “*He of the tall-walled towns and long spears and mighty horses*”; who finally defeated the Bulala after almost a century of their harassing the Kanuri, in a great battle at Lade. Thereafter the Bulala Chiefs were reduced to *Mainawa* or Princes of Kanem and Fitri. Sultan Ali Ghaji’s reign thus marked a definite period in Kanem-Borno history.

For the next over three centuries, Birnin Ngazargamu remained the Capital of Bornu. Sultan Idris Katagarmabe re-conquered Kanem

and reoccupied Njimi in 1507, but the Kanuri found their new Capital of Ngazargamu much more conveniently situated, therefore they stayed there. The major change was that the centre of political gravity now moved to the west, Kanem became a Province of Bornu instead of Bornu being a Province of Kanem. At the peak of its glory, Birnin Ngazargamu covered six square miles and was estimated to have contained 200,000 people. An account of the City written in 1658, as in Palmer (1936), gives the following description:

In the City of Ngazarganu, there were four Friday Mosques. Each of these had an Imam who led the Friday Prayer with the people. At each Mosque there were twelve thousand worshippers. The names of the four Friday Mosques were as follows: The first was called Garibaya and the name of its Imam was Sheikh Muhammad Ajirami. The second was called Talusu and the name of its Imam was Sheikh Sunuramma. The third was called Iyamu and its Imam was called Sheikh Karagwama. The fourth was called Dayamu and the name of its Imam was Sheikh Ahmad Bultu Zawamma. The Amir, Sultan Ali ibn Hajj prayed behind the Imam.

At Ngazargamu there were six hundred and sixty roads cleared and widened, called Le. Sixty of these roads were well known to the Amir, for he traversed them, but many of the roads were unknown to the Amir since he did not traverse them and so did not know them. In Ngazargamu there were many God-fearing Mu'allim and many blameless nobles and many unworldly people and Learned Saints.

CHAPTER FOUR

JIHAD UNDER SULTAN IDRIS KATAGARMABE WHO MERGED KANEM AND BORNO TO FORM KANEM-BORNO CALIPHATE

The 48th Sultan was Idris Katagarmabe (1503-26), a warlike Ruler and grandfather of the most famous of all the Sayfawa Sultans, Idris Alooma. Sultan Idris Alooma was the posthumous son of Sultan Ali Zeinami ibn Idris Katagarmabe who was killed while fighting against the Bulala and whose praise-song was “*Ali Kange Bulalabe*” (Ali, the smoke of the Bulala).

Palmer (1936), Urvoy (1949), Smith, Abdullahi (1972) and Meredith, Martin (2014); aver that, Sultan Ali Ghaji established a new Bornu Capital at Ngazargamu around 1460 AD. He publicly declared Bornu as a Caliphate and himself as a Caliph. The powerful Sultan Idris Katagarmabe conquered back Kanem and reoccupied the Njimi Capital City in 1507 AD; and publicly declared the merger of the two, Kanem and Borno, into **KANEM-BORNO CALIPHATE** under the strict Islamic Caliphate System as earlier similarly declared by Sultan Ali Ghaji.

For the next over three centuries, Birnin Ngazargamu remained the Capital of Bornu. Sultan Idris Katagarmabe re-conquered Kanem and reoccupied Njimi in 1507, but the Kanuri found their new Capital of Ngazargamu much more conveniently situated, therefore they stayed there. The major change was that the centre of political gravity now moved to the west, Kanem became a Province of Bornu instead of Bornu being a Province of Kanem. At the peak of

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The sixteenth century AD was a golden age of Borno. During five reigns, the country was triumphant and prosperous. On the death of Sultan Ali in 1503, his son, Idris Katagarmabe, assumed the Sultanate and brought Kanem once again under Sayfawa Rule, after a lapse of 125 years. But the Royal House did not resume residence in Njimi. Kanem was run as a Protectorate with the Bulala as vassal Kings, a situation which continued for about a century though the Bulala made more than one attempt to shake off the Sayfawa control.

On the death of Sultan Idris Katagarmabe in 1526, his son, Muhammad, succeeded to the throne and was reputed to be a “warrior and fortunate”, extending his power to the west. His brother, Sultan Ali, who was the next Sultan, must have been the famous Borno Sultan who tried conclusions with the redoubtable Kanta of Kebbi, Askia's rebellious vassal. Sultan Ali had been called to the assistance of the Air Tuareg to fight off Kanta. He was bold enough to attack Kanta in his Fortress of Surame and forced him to evacuate it, but fearful of being cut off so far from home he beat a retreat, marching through Katsina Mama, south of Katsina City, for his Borno base. He was hotly pursued by Kanta and got a worst engagement near Nguru. On the return journey Kanta was ambushed and killed at Dan Ashita area in Katsina Kingdom and his body taken back to Kebbi.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE JIHADIST SULTAN IDRIS ALOOMA: THE GREATEST RULER OF KANEM-BORNO

Sultan Idris ibn Ali Zeinami ibn Idris, more popularly known by his nickname of “Alooma” deriving from the fact that he was buried on the shores of Lake Alo near present day Maiduguri; was undoubtedly an outstanding statesman and the greatest Ruler of the vast Kanem-Bornu Caliphate. He was born in 1545, became Sultan of Kanem-Borno at the age of 25 years and ruled for 33 years between 1570 and 1603 AD. He is today the most famous of all the Kanem, the Borno and the Kanem-Borno Sultans.

Sultan Idris Alooma was, indeed, the outstanding World figure of the century he lived in, and his reign marked the recrudescence of Kanem-Borno’s power comparable to the prosperous days of the glorious reigns of Sonni Ali and his successor, Askia Muhammed, in the rival Songhai. Sultan Idris Alooma is remembered for his military skills, administrative reforms and Islamic piety. His feats are mainly known through his chronicler, Grand Imam of Kanem-Borno Sheikh Ahmad ibn Fartuwa. The virtues of Sultan Idris Alooma are eulogised in Barth (1857) as follows:

His warlike energy was combined with wildness and intelligence; his courage with circumspection and patience; his severity with pious feelings.

Sultan Idris Alooma’s civic principles is written by the Empire’s Grand Imam and his chronicler, Sheikh Ahmad ibn Fartuwa, that:

Among the most surprising of his acts was the stand he took against obscenity and adultery, so that no such thing took place

openly in his time. Formerly the people had been indifferent to such offences, committed openly or secretly by day or night. In fact he was a power among his people and from him came their strength. So he wiped away the disgrace, and the face of the age was blank with astonishment...

He kept no secrets from those in whom he reposed confidence. As regards this, if he was upon a journey and heard any news of the enemy by night or by day, he did not rest but went forth among his people to the source of the news with the army following him; leading by himself for fear of any misfortune should befall which he was able to avoid, or by his power to save.

He relied on his Lord in everything and Allah (God) was his support, sure that nothing would happen except by the foreknowledge of Allah (be He Exalted). Hence he was a brave warrior who advanced everywhere, appearing promptly without pausing or beating around, until what he proposed was accomplished. Such was his character and his disposition. Among the gifts with which Allah had endowed him, was an impressive appearance. All his followers, small or great, never felt contented except in his presence. Even though he sent large Armies in one direction and went in some other direction with a small Force, his Captains were not content to go without him.

The 48th Sultan was Idris Katagarmabe (1503-26), a warlike Ruler and grandfather of the most famous of all the Sayfawa Sultans, Idris Alooma. Sultan Idris Alooma was the posthumous son of Sultan Ali Zeinami ibn Idris Katagarmabe who was killed while fighting against the Bulala and whose praise-song was “*Ali Kange Bulalabe*” (Ali, the smoke of the Bulala). The Magira or Queen Mother, Aissa Koli, whose praise song was, “*Aisa Kili*

Ngirmaramma”, (Aisa, owner of the great white horse), became Queen or Regent of Kanem-Bornu on the death of Sultan Abdullah in a campaign against the Ngizim in 1562 AD. The title of Magira denotes an official personage and not necessarily the actual mother of the Sultan.

According to Bornu traditions, Magira Aisa had great difficulty in preserving the life of the young orphan, Idris (whose mother was a Bulala *Mairam* or Princess) from the machinations of Sultan Dunama and his son Sultan Abdullah. Therefore, when the Magira became the Regent she ordered the building of a special Palace and a large Masjid at Gambaru, beautifully situated on the banks of the Komadugu at a safe distance from the corrupting Court manners of the Capital, Birnin Ngazagarmu. This lovely sixteenth-century Palace, whose admirably constructed brick walls are still standing and whose shady site by the edge of the colourful River Yo still retains its gentle atmosphere of days of long ago; soon became, in the words of Dr Barth, “*The favourite retreat of the Kings of Bornu during the flourishing period of the Caliphate*”.

The position of the Magira is of considerable influence in the political structure of the Kanuri Court and even in modern times she, along with the Magaram or the official Elder Sister of the Sultan, and the Gumsu or Chief Wife of the Ruler, exercises no mean political influence; though they no longer possess Land or Towns of their own, where they ruled.

The sixteenth century AD was a golden age of Borno. During five reigns, the country was triumphant and prosperous. On the death of Sultan Ali in 1503, his son, Idris Katagarmabe, assumed the Sultanate and brought Kanem once again under Sayfawa Rule, after a lapse of 125 years. But the Royal House did not resume

residence in Njimi. Kanem was run as a Protectorate with the Bulala as vassal Kings, a situation which continued for about a century though the Bulala made more than one attempt to shake off the Sayf control.

On the death of Sultan Idris in 1526, his son, Muhammad, succeeded to the throne and was reputed to be a “warrior and fortunate”, extending his power to the west. His brother, Sultan Ali, who was the next Sultan, must have been the famous Bornu Sultan who tried conclusions with the redoubtable Kanta of Kebbi, Askia's rebellious vassal. Sultan Ali had been called to the assistance of the Air Tuareg to fight off Kanta. He was bold enough to attack Kanta in his fortress of Surame and forced him to evacuate it, but fearful of being cut off so far from home he beat a retreat, marching through Katsina Mama, south of Katsina City, for his Bornu base. He was hotly pursued by Kanta and got a bad engagement near Nguru. On the return journey Kanta was ambushed and killed at Dan Ashita area of Katsina Kingdom.

On Sultan Ali's death in 1546, his son, later to become Sultan as Idris Alooma, was too young to succeed him, so the next Sultan was his nephew, Dunama (1546-63), followed by Dunama's son Abdullah (1564-70). In each reign, there was a great famine. Sultan Dunama scored a big success against the rebellious Bulala in Kanem, but he had trouble in meeting attacks from the Tub and the Tuareg in the north and from Kwararafa in the south. For a while after Sultan Abdullah's death, his sister, the Magira or Queen Mother, Aisa Kili, acted as Regent until Idris Alooma was old enough to become Sultan. Idris Alooma's mother was the daughter of the Bulala King. During the reign of Dunama and Abdullahi, the Magira feared for the safety of herself and the child Idris, therefore she was said to have built for him the Gambaru

Palace at some distance from the Royal Court and Capital.

Of all the Sayfawa Sultans, Idris Alooma (1571-1603) was the most famous. He was the outstanding figure of the period and during his reign all the neighbouring tribes were subdued, and conquest followed after conquest. In contrast, was the tragic fall of Bornu's great rival in the west, the Askia of Songhai, before the forces of Morocco in 1591. From that shattering event, he learnt the value of fire-arms, and from Tripoli he was said to have secured firearms and the services of musketeers to teach his men. After campaigns in the subjugation of the So tribes, he harassed the various settlements of the Hausaland including Kano, Katsina and Zazzau. There followed the defeat of the Tuareg of Air, and the Tubu in the north, which secured his communications with North Africa, and enabled him to make the Pilgrimage to Mecca as befitted a great Muslim Potentate. To the end, he continued to make successful war against the Mandara and other hostile tribes; and with frequent State visits, he displayed his power in Kanem and Bornu and other parts of his vast Kanem-Bornu Caliphate. He met a warrior's death in action in 1603 AD, and was buried near Lake Alo (hence Alooma name), not far from modern Maiduguri.

The three sons of Sultan Idris Alooma ruled in turn after him and peace reigned. But under Sultan Ali ibn Haj Umar, some seventy odd years after Sultan Idris Alooma, there was trouble from Kwararafa and also from the Tuareg of Air. At one time, both enemies were at once besieging the Capital, but Sultan Ali managed to beat them. There was a terrible famine at that time, and again in about 1725 there was a famine that lasted for seven years. According to Urvoy (1949), between 1731 and 1743 Bornu attacked Kano, Katsina, Gobir and Zamfara. The last three Sultans of Bornu up to 1810 were said to be great Muslim Scholars with

divine powers.

In the decade of the 1580s, Sultan Idris Alooma led no less than seven expeditions against the King of the Bulala, Abd al Jalil. Kanem-Borno historians, in particular the Grand Imam, Ahmad ibn Fartuwa, have recounted these Bulala wars in some detail. According to Fartuwa, there were many other campaigns undertaken by Mai Idris against the Tuareg Lands, Damagaram, Fika, Kano, Zazzau, Hadejia, Kazaure, Katsina and other Hausaland Cities, Jos and Adamawa Plateaus, Fezzan Lands, etc. Typical of these is this account:

They were rebellious and stubborn, and did many evil and wicked actions. They had a false idea of their own strength by reason of two things. Firstly, their numerous archers, who used poisoned arrows, and secondly the strength of their walled towns. These two factors induced them to be rebellious and hostile, as has always been the case with the heathen, and there was no concealment about this fact. But when our Sultan Haj Idris ibn Ali observed their wicked rebellious acts, he made up his mind to go to the Town of Mawa, after celebrating the Id al Fitr in the Town of Mugulum. From Mawa he moved to Gija Gijami, and thence without halt he came to the Town of Fika and camped there. On this journey Sultan Haj Idris visited the wonderful water called Jinjina, after crossing Fika country.

Sultan Idris Alooma's strong Islamic piety led to his declaring all his wars and battles as JIHAD. It is important to recall that this was done earlier by one of his predecessors, Sultan Dunama Dabbalemi of Kanem between 1221 and 1259 AD. Another predecessor, Sultan Ali Ghaji, who established the Bornu Capital at Ngazargamu around 1460 AD, also publicly declared Bornu as a

Caliphate, himself as a Caliph and his wars as Jihad. During Sultan Aloomā's reign, conquered pagans were taken as slaves and sold or treated as such. The Sultan introduced a number of legal and administrative reforms based on his Islamic religious piety and belief; and on the Islamic Law (Shari'ah). His desire to make sure that his Court properly reflected the virtues of Islam led him to mandate that major political figures lived at the Court, and he reinforced political alliances through appropriate marriages (Aloomā himself was the son of a Kanuri father and a Bulala mother).

In addition, Sultan Idris Aloomā ensured and/or sponsored the construction of numerous Masjid (Mosques), Madrassa (Islamic Schools) and Shari'ah Courts in all the Lands he conquered or those that came under the direct influence of Kanem-Bornu. He also ensured that Imams, Teachers and Judges (Qadi) were appointed to man the Mosques, Schools and Shari'ah Courts. It would be recalled that Sultan Dunama Dabbalemi initiated diplomatic exchanges with Sultans in North Africa and established a special Hostel/College in Cairo to facilitate the performance of the Hajj (pilgrimage) from Kanem to Mecca and to promote Islamic education. The Sultan also performed the Hajj himself. So did Sultan Idris Aloomā. He performed the Hajj to Mecca with thousands of his subjects and established Hostels for the Kanem-Bornu pilgrims. The Hostels were located in the Holy City of Mecca and the Hostel in Cairo then became a transit Hostel.

One epic poem by the Grand Imam Ahmad ibn Fartuwa extols Sultan Idris Aloomā's victories in 330 wars and more than 1,000 battles. His military innovations included the employment of fixed military camps with walls, permanent sieges and scorched earth tactics where soldiers burnt everything in their path,

armoured horses and armoured riders as well as the use of Berber camelry, Kotoko boatmen, and iron-helmeted musketeers trained by Ottoman Military Advisers. Sultan Aloomo fostered diplomatic relations with Tripoli, Egypt and the Ottoman Caliphate, which sent a 200 member ambassadorial party across the desert to Sultan Aloomo's Court at Ngazargamu. As with other dynamic politicians, Aloomo's reformist goals led him to seek loyal and competent Advisers and Allies, and he frequently relied on trusted slaves who had been educated in noble homes. He regularly sought advice from a Council composed of the Heads of important Clans.

Unlike other Lands in some Regions of West Africa, the Chadian Region did not have gold. Despite that, Kanem-Bornu under Sultan Idris Aloomo was strong and wealthy, due to the revenue demanded from conquered territories and tributes from allied territories under his influence; the sale of captured pagan slaves, and duties from the control of the trade routes linking the Lake Chad area to the Trans-Saharan trade. Between Lake Chad and Fezzan lay a sequence of well-spaced wells and oases, and from Fezzan there were easy connections to North Africa and the Mediterranean Sea. Many products from Kanem-Bornu were sent to North African Nations of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco as well as Egypt; in addition to the Mediterranean European Empires and Nations of Rome, Spain and Portugal. The goods traded included natron (sodium carbonate), cotton, kola nuts, ivory, ostrich feathers, perfume, wax, hides and skins; but the most important of all were pagan slaves. Imports included horses, silks, glass, muskets, iron and copper.

The Sultan took keen interest in trade and other economic matters. He is credited with having the roads cleared, designing better boats for use at the Lake Chad, introducing standard units of measure for

grains, and moving farmers into new lands. In addition, he improved the ease and security of transit through the Caliphate with the goal of making it so safe that “A lone woman clad in gold might walk with none to fear but Allah (God)”.

Undoubtedly, it was under the reign of Sultan Idris Aloomaa that the Kanem-Bornu Caliphate reached its zenith, geographically, historically, politically, economically and socio-culturally. In these regards, the Panther News Letter website edition (panthernewsletter1.files.wordpress.com) of May 2011; has the following to say on the greatness in the World of Sultan Idris Aloomaa of Kanem-Borno Caliphate: *Sultan Idris Aloomaa was the greatest Ruler of the Central African State of Kanem-Bornu. He was a most successful politician of the period who gained considerable international prestige.*

Dr Heinrich Barth, the nineteenth century German traveller, described Sultan Idris Aloomaa as,

An excellent Prince, uniting in himself the most opposite qualities: warlike energy, combined with mildness and intelligence; courage, with circumspection and patience; severity with pious feelings.

Lady Lugard states that,

His (Sultan Aloomaa) military prowess was outstanding with Armies, possibly the first in Africa, to have muskets; acquiring them from the Turkish Empire. North, south, east, and west he carried his conquering Armies. To give a list of the many peoples' that he subdued could only weary the reader

Sultan Idris reformed and standardised the judiciary by establishing a system of Islamic Courts. He himself ruled according to Islamic political theory, taking a stand against, among other things, immorality in the Capital. Oliver and Atmore wrote

that: “He (Sultan Aloomma) presided over a Court famous for the high standard of its legal and theological disputations”. Like his Songhai contemporaries, he was a patron of learning, encouraging scholars from many other African countries to take up residence in Kanem-Bornu. He improved navigation on the Yobe River and the Lake Chad. He commissioned the building of longer, flat-bottomed boats for his Navy. For land transportation, he imported a much greater number of camels replacing the dependence on mules, oxen and donkeys. The great Sultan was also a builder, raising new brick Mosques in the Cities that replaced the older buildings. He also founded a Hostel in Mecca for Kanem-Bornu pilgrims. Following the fall of Songhai in 1591, the great Sultan Idris Aloomma became the undisputed champion of the Muslims in the Region. And the Kanem-Bono Caliphate became the Muslims power base!

Phillip Koslow, a modern historian, declared that:

His (Sultan Aloomma) contemporary, Queen Elizabeth I of England, a shrewd and strong-willed monarch who gave her name to an age and has been repeatedly celebrated in books and films, could hardly have claimed greater achievements in war, administration or diplomacy

It was on yet another expedition, the Baguirmi Campaign against the Mandara in 1603 AD, that Sultan Idris ibn Ali Zeinami ibn Idris was fatally wounded, which led to his death. He was buried near the present day City of Maiduguri, by Lake Alo, from which his posthumous name of “Aloomma” was derived.

The piety of Sultan Idris was exemplified when it was said that, bright lights were often seen on the Waters of Lake Alo at night due to the presence of the body of Sultan Idris Aloomma by the

CHAPTER SIX

THE JIHAD UNDER SULTAN ALI IBN UMAR WHO DEFEATED THE KWARARAFKA KINGDOM

Sultan Ali bin Umar (also known as Sultan Ali III) was the Ruler of the Bornu from 1639 to 1680. Sultan Ali succeeded his father Sultan Umar in 1639 and had a relatively long reign. During the early years of his reign, Bornu was threatened with incursions from its neighbours, mainly the Tuareg Kingdom in the north and the Kwararafa Kingdom in the south. He was able to hold both forces at bay and finally defeated them in 1668. After his victory, he consolidated his Caliphate, controlling the vital Trans-Saharan Trade Routes, and rekindling Islamic teaching all over the Caliphate. He is remembered for his piety, constructing several Masajid (Mosques) and making three Hajj pilgrimages to Mecca.

The famous defeat of the Kwararafa Kingdom by Sultan Ali was celebrated by Muslims from all over Kanem, Borno and Hausaland. The great Muslim Scholar from Katsina who had Kanem-Borno descent, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Muhammad al Sabbagh (Sheikh Danmarna) wrote a Poem around 1670 in Arabic to commemorate Sultan Ali's defeat of the Kwararafa, a copy of which is displayed at the Arewa House Centre for Historical Documentation and Research of Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna State of Nigeria. The Poem is displayed with the Title:

Poem By The 17th Century Katsina Scholar, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Sabbagh Bin Muhammad Bin Alhaji, Known As "Dan Marina", In Praise Of Sultan Ali Bin Umar Of

Kanem-Bornu Who Defeated Kwararrafa Kingdom When They Attacked Kanem-Bornu In 1668 AD (Original Copy is on display at the Arewa House Archives, Kaduna, Nigeria)

The English Translation below is by this Author from the Hausa Translation that was made from the Arabic Text (which is on Page 15 of this Book) by Prof. Muhammad Sagir Adam of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Al-Qalam University, Katsina, Nigeria.

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful; Peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his household.

The Amirul Mumineen (Leader of the Faithful) Aliyu has been victorious over the Infidels (the Jukun of Kwararrafa)

When he (and his Army) fought them in the fight for uplifting Allah's Words

He has now surpassed all Rulers and Kings for none is comparable to him

He is the most gallant officer above all other gallant officers who has the tenacity to attack the foe and succeed

He has given us Muslims the impetus to unite, without which our hearts should have been divided forever by the actions of Infidels

We are in the state of fear because of the misery that we are in; but Sultan Aliyu has now saved us, our children and grand children from disgrace

O! You people! Let everyone pray with a raised voice; for Allah to bless and reward Sultan Aliyu with the best of Allah's rewards

He has destroyed the Army of the Jukun People completely; therefore Allah Has scattered their groupings

I have it on authority that Sultan Aliyu was on his way to the Lands of the Infidels to completely scatter their People

*O Allah! Assist the Sultan and his Army, make them victorious
A victory that shall be our uplifting and a relief for all of us
The few Infidels of the Black-Sudan Lands were very pompous
Then appears this Great Sultan who has shamed whoever thought
there would not appear such a Warrior who could cross all Lands
and Rivers
Kwararrafa People travelled to the Land of their doom; when they
attacked the one who is successful and fortunate in this World and
in the Hereafter
Someone who has the blessings of piety in Allah when he
performed the Hajj at the Holy Mecca; and a follower of the Great
Faith of Islam
He partakes in Holy Fasting; and partakes in Jihad
And he relies and depends only on Allah the Most Gracious
This is a praise from the servant of the Sultan, who has been
blessed and who has defeated the enemies of Islam
I am Dan Marina who has been well known. Those who do not
know me are either illiterates or the jealous ones
All Praise and Gratitude is due to Allah for saving and securing
the Great Sultan from the machinations of the Infidels
We thank this Sultan for uplifting the greatness of Muslims who
are residing in the Black-Sudan
Alhamdu lillah Rabbil Alameen, Wassalatu Wassalamu Alaa
RasululLahi Sallahu Alaihi Wasallama*

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ROLE OF KANEM-BORNO *ULAMA* (SCHOLARS) IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND ITS PROPAGATION IN THE SUB WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN REGIONS

This Chapter gives a lot of credence to a Paper by Dr. Kalli Alkali Yusuf Gazali the Registrar of Yobe State University, Damaturu, Yobe State of Nigeria on the topic: “The Role of Kanem-Borno Ulama in Qur’anic Education, Before Colonial Rule in Nigeria”.

Kanem-Bornu Ulama played a remarkable role in the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and scholarship in West Africa in particular and in Africa in general, before the colonial era. Kanem Bornu, as an acknowledged ancient Islamic polity for over one thousand years, has achieved great heights in scholarship and learning in the entire Central Sudan and beyond. The Kanem-Bornu Ulama travelled far and near to pursue and to impart Islamic knowledge. The Ulama as traders, itinerant teachers, nomads, etc; had over the centuries moved to other areas for various reasons, ranging from scholarship to commerce and warfare, or as nomads, etc. Generally, their presence had greatly contributed to Islamic propagation, teaching and learning in different parts of what is present day Nigeria, West Africa and Africa in general; that is particularly in what is today’s Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Niger, Sierra Leon, Benin, etc.

Kanem-Bornu geographically lies in the centre of the extended

Trans-Saharan Trade Routes; and was a major route to the Holy City of Mecca. This position greatly contributed to its very strong and stable economic and commercial links to the great international trade networks. As a result of that, Kanem-Bornu attracted an influx of diverse people with commercial, religious and scientific interests from far and near. That strategic location had eventually formed a sound basis for the well established tradition and culture of not only political, commercial or social development, but also of an Islamic society throughout the history of *Bilad Al-Sudan*, Africa South of the Sahara. Clerk (1982) avers that Kanem-Bornu made its first contact with Islam through the trade links with Tripoli in North Africa via Kavar and Fezzan. It was these trade routes that provided the gateway for Islam to penetrate into Kanem-Bornu. That advent of Islam marked the emergence of Islamic scholarship and learning in Kanem-Bornu; and a strong structure and character of Muslim Ummah was firmly established on the basis of knowledge, acquired through its ultimate sources, the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The Sultans of Kanem-Bornu maintained, strengthened and developed a strong tradition of Islamic Education, through effective culture of scholarship throughout the Caliphate and beyond. As observed by Sifawa (1991), *"That Kanem Borno people recognised learning as the order of Islam and pursued it with vigour until, there emerged from among them scholars of high reputations. These scholars were to carry the challenge by passing Islamic learning and scholarship to other parts of Africa especially their immediate neighbours. Kanem Borno Scholars contributed to the development of both dominant and productive scholarship"*

Historically, Islamic scholarship occupied the attention of the

Sultans of Kanem-Bornu. The Ulama were the teachers and scholars of the Glorious Qur'an, the Prophetic Hadith, the Shari'ah, etc. They were highly respected by the Rulers who encouraged them to maintain the culture of Islamic scholarship in the society. The Ulama were granted *mahram*, a grant in privilege exempting them from military and other services to the State, purposely for them to concentrate and to be preoccupied with teaching of the Qur'an and other Islamic Sciences. They were generally considered as the role models of proper social behaviour. Their habits of speech, dressing and behaviour were accepted as the ideal by the Muslim Ummah.

The first fully committed Muslim Sultan of Kanem-Bornu, Sultan Humme, had high respects for scholars and scholarship. His reign was characterised by a lot of Islamic propagation and missionary work. Sultan Humme's great gesture of granting *mahram* to the Ulama attracted scholars of international repute from far and near to Kanem-Bornu. The grant of *mahram* to the Ulama served not only as a privilege of exempting them from military service, tax and other State obligations, but also served as honour, protection, security and freedom to facilitate and strengthen the propagation and the spread of Islamic scholarship.

Alkali (2013) reports that, Sultan Ali Gaji, in conformity with the long established tradition of the *mahram*, granted to Ibn Abdul Quwata the privileges of exemption from military service and taxation and his family was given "*the land of Marra, Kwolo and Miyo to the service of Allah and his Noble Prophet (SAW) till the distant age of our descendants.*" The Sultan further ensured the future security of his declaration warning all his successors to adhere strictly to his order. "*He who takes their goods and land which I have given them be my son or grandson or remotest*

descendants may Allah take from him his Kingdom and humble him in the dust before another”.

The regular performance of Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) by the earlier Rulers of Kanem-Bornu made them to take great interest in the field of scholarship. As a result, Kanem-Bornu Caliphate soon became known to the Arab writers.

By the 15th century AD, Kanem-Bornu had firmly established the culture of Islamic scholarship. Their Scholars and their Rulers were well known for their intellectual pursuits. Their posture for the search of knowledge, encouragement and patronage for scholarship, coupled with their interest and their zeal in Islamic knowledge, was greatly recognised in the Muslim World. The Rulers had always created conducive atmospheres for Scholars to pursue knowledge by granting *marham*, facilitating and supporting the establishment of centres of learning, building of schools (*madrasa*) and hostels in Cairo, for advance studies; and scholarship awards to Kanem-Bornu students to study abroad in the Al-Azhar University. So important was their commitment to Islamic scholarship that, Kanem-Bornu established a Maliki *Madrasa* in Cairo as described by Al-Maqrizi, “*This Maliki School was situated in the Hamam Al-Arish Quarter in the city of Cairo and was built by the Kanimiyun (people of Kanem)*”

Having established a great culture of Islamic Education and Islamic Tradition, Kanem-Bornu Sultans encouraged their Scholars to move to various Lands and educate their various Peoples. The movement and the migration of the Kanem-Bornu Ulama led to the establishment of Centres of Islamic Education not only in Kanem-Bornu itself but in many parts of Africa and beyond. Such Centres under the Kanuri and the Shuwa Arab Ulama of Kanem-

Bornu descent can be found in many parts of today's West and Central Africa, the Sudan, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Republic of Benin, Niger Republic, Chad Republic; and even in some North African Countries and Saudi Arabia. At this juncture and for the purposes of examples, emphasis shall be laid on the various places such Centres have been established in areas that made-up what is present-day Nigeria, especially in Fombina (Adamawa), Hausa States, Nupeland and Yorubaland.

1. KANEM-BORNO ULAMA ROLES IN FOMBINA (ADAMAWA)

The Upper Benue Valley of Fombina Region (today known as Adamawa) was a long-time trading partner of Kanem-Bornu. The traders were engaged in trade of various items including ivory, salt, copper, brass, silver rings, bracelets from Murzuk in Libya, red woollen caps, woven cloth Turkey carpets, etc. That led to the settlement of Kanem-Bornu people, including the Ulama in Madagali, Budang, Gunjur, Uba, Sheboa, Hong, Song, Sarou, Belel, etc. Hammawa (1990) opines that, the migration played a significant role in the foundation and development of Centres of Islamic education in the Adamawa/Fombina Region.

For example, the Song Kanuri settlement at Selomsowa established their renowned Qur'an School where the strong culture of Islamic scholarship was firmly established. In Song Town, the Kanem-Bornu Ulama constructed a Mosque and Qur'an Schools long before the Sokoto Jihad.

Similarly, the influx of Kanem-Bornu Ulama, especially the Falata-Bornu (Bornu-Fulani) with the culture of Islamic scholarship into Adamawa also intensified the efforts and more centres of Islamic Education were established. The movement of Sheikh Modibbo

Adama from Bornu to Adamawa also facilitated the emergence of more Qur'an Schools in Adamawa as described by Sa'ad (1977) *"That Modibbo Adama stayed for ten (10) years in Bornu studying the Book (Qur'an) before returning to the Upper Benue Valley"*.

Gazali (2007) states that, around 1846 the then Lamido of Adamawa Modibbo Lawan appealed and requested the Shehu of Bornu to assist and dispatch learned Ulama to help in prayers for peace and for the propagation of Islamic education in his domain. As a result, Shehu Umar sent a group of one hundred (100) learned Kanuri Ulama from Bornu to assist him. The team of Scholars were mostly drawn from Konduga, Goniri, Garuwa, Geidam, Ngurno, etc. After the conquest of Bagale with the assistance of the Borno Ulama, Lamido Lawan requested them to stay permanently in Fombina. The Ulama team under the leadership of Goni Gomboni were offered a settlement under the foothills of Bagale which formed a Kanuri settlement that became known as Wuro Dole (a forced settlement). It was a renowned Centre of Islamic scholarship in Adamawa. Goni Mammadu also established his Islamic Centre, which was rated as one of the most renowned Centres of learning and graduated many Scholars in Adamawa and beyond. While Goni Kawu, a Kanem-Bornu Scholar was said to have travelled extensively to various places to pursue and impart knowledge. He visited Centres of Islamic knowledge in Wadai in Chad, Marwa in Cameroun, etc. He later returned to Adamawa and continued teaching, where Scholars from Marwa, Garwa, Ngaudere, Adamawa, etc, came for teaching and learning.

In Jalingo Goni Muktar Al Barnawy was said to have migrated from Kukawa to the Fombina Region. Goni Muktar migrated through Ganjuwa and was a guest of the Emir of Muri, Lamido

Mafindi. Who personally requested Goni Muktar to establish a Qur'an School for teaching and learning in his domain. Goni Muktar constructed a Mosque and Qur'an School at his Mutum Biyu residence. The Islamic Centre became famous and attracted Scholars and students from all over; many have graduated from the Centre in various fields of Islamic Sciences. Currently his descendants are heading the Islamic Centre. Among its graduates were Goni Kachalla Muri, Goni Sulaiman Durma, Sheikh Waziri Melle, Sheikh Mustafa Sulaiman, etc.

In Kolere Abana along Mayo Nbullo (River Nbullo) Goni Musa Al Barnawy's Qur'an School was established in the late 18th century. The School attracted students from Jada, Wuro Bappa, Rai, Ngaudere, etc. Goni Musa Shehu with his brother Goni Ibrahim Al Barnawy later moved to Kochel Bole and established another Qur'an School, for the propagation and development of Islamic Education in the area. The School later developed into a large and outstanding Qur'an Centre with great numbers of teachers and students.

Hamidu Alkali (in Gazali 2007) observed that the Kanem-Bornu Kanuri Ulama had greatly contributed to Islamic scholarship in Fombina Region, their remarkable role in the propagation, development and spread of Islamic Education was extended beyond that modern day Adamawa Region. He avers that, "*The Kanuri Ulama group had the Islamic influence to dominate not only in Adamawa but other places like Garwa, Marwa, Ngaudere, Muri, Jada, Mutum Biyu etc*".

2. KANEM-BORNU ULAMA ROLES IN KANO

The migration and the settlement of the Kanuri Ulama in Kano predates the movement of the Capital of Kanem-Bornu to

Ngazargamu as rightly observed by Bala Usman (1981) that, *“Bornu and Kano relationships had developed a powerful tradition of Islamic learning and active participation in public affairs long before the acceptance of Islam as the State Religion in the area”*. In the 14th century when Bornu Sultan Idriss bin Nikale was expelled by the Bulala accelerated crisis, he migrated and took refuge in Kano with his followers including Ulama of high repute. Similarly, Sultan Usman bin Idriss known as Kadai Afuno, was also said to have migrated to Kano with a large number of followers including the Ulama, who later established various Centres of Islamic Education in Kano. In 1421/2 Sultan Biri ibn Dawud was deposed by his *Kaigama* (Commander in Chief), Kaigama Nikale bn Ibrahim, and he was made a *Dagachi* (Minor Chief). He therefore migrated to Kano with a large number of Ulama who later established Islamic Centres. As time goes on, various people from Kanem-Bornu migrated and joined the earlier groups as traders and Qur’an teachers. Among them were Buduru, Koda, Dangaron Duma etc, as in Barkindo (1985).

Gazali (2005) emphasises that, Kanem-Bornu Ulama settlers founded the Yan Doya Ward in Kano City and established a Qur’an School which later became a large Centre of Islamic scholarship. The Kanuri Leader of the Group, Goni Goron Duma was not only a Title Holder in the Emir’s Palace but also one of the ten (10) leading advisers of Sarkin Kano Abubakar Kado. The Kanem-Bornu Ulama formed the core of the Kano religious establishment and served as respected guardians of the high Islamic culture and were brought to the forefront in the Islamic Education and in Politics. Liman Yondoya of Borno origin was said to have been grossly involved in bringing about an end to the wars between Kano and Katsina. Similarly, another group of

Kanem-Bornu Ulama were said to have migrated to Kano from Lagone, a renowned Centre of Islamic Scholarship around 1565 and 1573. The group was led by Goni Gesu and Malam Sheriff, and their arrival was associated with increased Islamic Scholarship in Kano especially in places like Gabari, Zangon Bari-Bari, Bakin Zuwo etc.

3. KANEM-BORNU ULAMA ROLES IN ZAZZAU

Zazzau has a long history of contacts and relations with Kanem-Bornu not only based on a fair representation of the Kanuri in their political establishment, but some identified Ulama immigrants of Kanem-Bornu origin were said to have established great Centres of Islamic Education in Zaria.

The existence of a Kanuri Traditional Emir's Ruling Stool in Zazzau and the three Senior Officials of Bornu origin in the Zazzau Palace, gives credence to a great presence of the Kanuri in Zazzau. The Officials are the Bakon Bornu, (Guest of Bornu representing the Sultan of Bornu) the Magajin Malam and the Kadaa; whose families are still very active.

Of prominence in Zaria was the Sheikh Yamusa Islamic Centre that was established by Sheikh Yamusa Babarbare before his ascension to the Throne of Zazzau in 1821. Sheikh Yamusa was a renowned Islamic Scholar of Kanem-Bornu origin. The Ulama at the Centre were known to have been devoted to the caring of their Islamic Schools and Mosques. They were said to have played hosts to most of the Kanem-Bornu Ulama immigrants on transit to other parts of Nigeria; especially the Ulama who migrated from Kanem-Bornu and passed through Zaria to Nupeland and Yoruland. Sheikh Yamusa Islamic Centre graduated a great number of Scholars who served throughout the

Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba Lands.

It is pertinent here to relate how the Kanuri (Barebari) Ruling Dynasty in Zazzau came into existence. It was as a result of the formal appointment of Malam Yamusa Babarbare as the second Emir of Zazzau in 1821 AD. Emir of Zazzau Malam Yamusa Babarbare was duly appointed under the Sokoto Jihad of Zazzau. Malam Yamusa was a son of a very prominent Scholar of Arab origin, *Sadauki* Malam Ibrahim who came to Kanem-Bornu from the areas of present day Republic of Sudan.

Sadauki Malam Ibrahim taught the Holy Qur'an and other Islamic Books in the Sudan. It was in the Sudan that he came to learn of the prominence of Kanem-Bornu from the merchants who traded across the West African Regions. These narrations made him to develop a strong interest on Kanem-Bornu, which he visited and was warmly received by the Sultan of Kanem-Bornu Ali (Arri) Dunamami who implored him to settle permanently. In order to foster his permanent settlement in the Capital, the Sultan gave him his daughter to marry who bore him a child named Musa (Yamusa in the Kanuri language).

The young Yamusa was brought up under the watchful eyes and guidance of his father, Malam Ibrahim, who ensured that his son was tutored to become a great Islamic Scholar. As a result of the death of Malam Ibrahim, his son, Malam Yamusa, left Kanem-Bornu Capital and settled in Misau with his mother and a great number of his students. Malam Yamusa became a highly respected Islamic scholar in Misau and was engaged in the preaching and the propagation of Islam in Misau and its environs. It was from his preaching tours that he learnt of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, who preached in Gobir. That information propelled him instantly to

decide to visit Shehu Usman Dan Fodio. On his way, he stopped at Zaria where he became a respected Scholar and where he met Malam Musa Bamalli (the first Jihad Emir of Zazzau) and other great Scholars like Malam Kilba of Barnawa. Ultimately, Malam Yamusa was among the Scholars who met Shehu Usman Danfodiyo and accepted to carry the banner of the Jihad in Zazzau. With the declaration of the Jihad in Zazzau and the success of the *Mujahiddun* (Jihadists) Malam Musa became the first appointed Emir of Zazzau and Malam Yamusa, who was then the Madaki of Zazzau, occupied the Throne on the death of Malam Musa in 1821.

4. KANEM-BORNU ULAMA ROLES IN KATSINA

Katsina was one of the States in Hausaland where the Ulama of Kanem-Bornu played a remarkable role in establishing a long culture of Islamic scholarship. Specially was the contributions of the great Saint, Sheik Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Masani bin Muhammad bin Nur Al Barnawy Al Kashinawy a 17th Century Scholar of Bornu origin. He wrote several Books that are still in use and he propagated Islam from Katsina up to Yorubaland. Of important note was that, the Kanem-Bornu Ulama in Katsina formed the four (4) major renowned Centres of Islamic Education in the City at the Quarters of Masanawa, Gafai, Tsohuwar Kasuwa and Gambarawa.

The name “Masanawa” Quarters was coined from the local title of the father of Sheikh Abu Abdullah who was mostly known as “Masani” (i.e. the knowledgeable one). Sheikh Abu Abdullah was later given the title of Dan-Masani (son of the knowledgeable one), a title that still exists in the family and bestowed on them by the Emir of Katsina. It is therefore evident that, the Scholars of Masanawa, were the descendants of Sheikh Abu Abdullah Al

Barnawi Al Kashinawy where the centuries old Islamic Centre, Mosque and residences of their illustrious ancestors still exist. They were known and acknowledged to have greatly contributed to Islamic Scholarship in Katsina and they were said to have taught Sheikh Usman Danfodio through their ally Sheikh Malam Kisko of the nearby Gambarawa Quarters.

Tsohuwar Kasuwa Quarters was also a settlement of the Ulama of Kanem-Bornu origin in Katsina. The most prominent among them were Malam Usman Al-Barnawy and his son Malam Ladan Al-Barnawy. They both have established a great reputation as Scholars and their Centre of learning not only attracted large numbers of students and scholars but had produced great Scholars of high calibre, who also established their respective Islamic Centres elsewhere.

Bala Usman (1981) relates that, to the south and the east Lands from Katsina City, were Qur'an Schools established by Kanem-Bornu Ulama, at Bade, Dan Ashita, Dan Yanuka, Dallaji, etc. In Dallaji Sheikh Mustafa Al-Barnawy, a recognised Scholar of international repute was said to have earlier taught at Yandoto in present Zamfara State of Nigeria. His son Malam Usman Al Barnawy travelled far and wide and was engaged in Islamic Scholarship in many places; and his family was said to have greatly contributed in mobilising support for the Sokoto Jihad from Katsina Kingdom.

The Author of this book feels obliged to relate the extensive roles of four great Kanuri Scholars of Kanem-Bornu origins who were closely associated with the establishment of the Great Gobarau Islamic Centre in Katsina, the evidence of the existence of which is the present Gobarau Minaret, a towering over 500 years old edifice

in Katsina City.

Sheikh Qadi Muhammad Aida Bin Ahmad Al-Tazakhti (Dantakum) (prominent c.1490 and died. 1529)

Sheikh Muhammad Al-Tazakhti popularly known as “Dantakum” was very much associated with the building of the Gobarau Centre. Indeed, some Katsina oral traditions ascribe the miracle of showing the *Qibla* (direction Muslims face in prayers, i.e. the Holy Ka’abah Masjid at Mecca) to this great Sheikh. The miracle was said to have occurred when the builders of the Gobarau Masjid were seeking for the exact *Qibla* and Sheikh Dantakum 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 Masjid! According to Hunwick (1964), Sheikh Dantakum was among the Timbuktu Scholars who settled in Katsina on their way back from pilgrimage at Mecca. However, some traditions ascribe the descent of Sheikh Dantakum to Kanem-Bornu as he was a Kanuri who studied at Timbuktu. He taught Islamic Studies and served as a Judge (Qadi) in Katsina for over fifteen years.

Sheikh Dantakum 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 City, the Dantakum Cemetery, named after him. Indeed, out of all those associated with the building of the Gobarau Centre, only Sheikh Dantakum’s grave is visibly located within its vicinity. He was reputed to be the first “Vice Chancellor” of the Gobarau “University” with Sheikh Al-Maghili, as the first Chief Imam of the Friday Masjid. Some of these assertions may be contentious, but what was not in doubt was

that Sheikh Dantakum met with or was even a student of Sheik Al-Maghili, Sheikh Zakariya Al-Assari, Sheikh Al-Liqani Al-Qalaqashandi and Sheikh An-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)

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, "Sheikh" 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. 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. Many of them had international reputation crossing the Hausaland borders into West Africa, North Africa, Egypt and the Sudan.

Among the most famous of the Gobarau Scholars was the Kanuri Scholar and onetime Student and Lecturer at Gobarau Centre, **Sheik Abu-Abdullah Muhammad Bin-Masani Bin Gamihi Bin Muhammad Bin-Abdullah Bin-Nuhu Al-Barnawi Al-Kashinawi (Danmasani) (1595-1667)**

Sheikh Muhammad bin Masani's full names listed above were as contained in his book, *Nafhatul Ambariyyah*. His suffix, 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. In addition, the Katsina Traditional Title of “Danmasani of Katsina” is only bestowed on those family members. Sheikh 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 and Bornu descent as his name implied i.e. Al-Barnawi, al-Kashinawi meaning “of Bornu by descent” and “of Katsina by birth”. As one of the Patron Saints of Katsina, he had written many books and poems, some of which are still in use both in Nigeria and in other parts of the Muslim World. His works include:-

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-Ashmawiyyah (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 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 Grammer)

8. Fathul Maram (Opening on what is desired)
9. Juz Intfin Manzum wa laisa fihi harf manqut fauqaniyya wala takhtaniyya (On Arabic Language).

Sheikh 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 Yorubaland. 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 Yorubaland during his visit there in 1667 AD. Another belief, which was also tied to one of the miracles of the Sheikh, 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), Sheikh Alfa-Zazi, visited Sheikh Danmasani and sat under a tree in front of Danmasani’s residence. Sheikh Alfa-Zazi commented that he was feeling as if they were in Mecca and Sheikh Danmansani replied that they were indeed in Mecca and pointed at the Holy Ka’aba, which suddenly became visible. Sheikh Alfa-Zazi thereafter informed the people that his action was deliberate in order to affirm that Sheikh 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 Yorubaland. Historians generally agree that those books were the first written mention of the tribe YORUBA and the area YORUBALAND (Discussions with Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman).

The book, “Misrepresentation of Nigeria” by Yusuf Bala Usman and Alkasum Abba (CEDDERT, Zaria, Nigeria, 2005) states 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”.*

Sheikh 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 Masjid are also preserved and serving as Islamic Schools manned by his descendants who are also great Muslim Scholars.

Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Sabbagh Al-Kashinawi (Dan Marina) (died 1675) 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 a Kanuri

(some say a Shuwa Arab), named Sheikh Muhammad visited the King of Katsina and prayed to Allah for the successes of the King in some affairs and the prayers were answered. The King sent in gifts to the Sheikh 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 Sheikh 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 Sheikh 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 Sheikh Danmarna is located and marked with a special enclosure at the second largest Muslim Graveyard in Katsina City, the Danmarna Cemetery, named after him. Interestingly, the residence or family members of Sheikh Danmarna are not known while those of his teacher, Sheikh Danmasani are known. That seemed to justify the reported prophecies of both Sheikhs. Tradition had it that Sheikh Danmasani prophesised that Danmarna's family would not be known but his grave would be marked up to the end of time. The student, Sheikh Danmarna replied that the family of his teacher Danmasani shall be recognised up to the end of time but

his grave would not be located. Sheikh Danmarna wrote a poem in praise of King Karya Giwa of Katsina which he dated 1070 Hijrah, equivalent to 1659 AD (a copy of this Poem is at Arewa House Kaduna). Sheikh Danmarna was also the writer of a Poem in praise of Sultan of Bornu, Ali ibn Umar (1639-1677) for his gallantry in the defeat of the Jukum Kingdom of Kwararrafa (a copy of this Poem is at Arewa House Kaduna). His death was put at 1675 AD. Sheikh 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 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 Hijrah (10th November 1659)
4. A Poem in praise of Sultan of Bornu, Ali ibn Umar (1639-1677) for his gallantry in the defeat of the Jukum Kingdom of Kwararrafa.

Sheikh Malam Kisko of Gambarawa Quarters of Katsina was a later Great Muslim Scholar of Wangarwa/Kanuri descent who was associated with the Gobarau. The Wangarawa were itinerant famous traders of the Trans-Saharan Trade and great Muslim Scholars. Sheikh Kisko’s family were initially based in Kanem-Bornu where they were assimilated into the Kanuri Tribe and later arrived Katsina where they served as Gobarau Imams as they were very learned Muslim Scholars. Sheikh Kisko ran a very large

school, which attracted students from all over West Africa including Sheikh Usman Danfodio who studied under Sheikh Kisko before the 1804 Jihad which he led (evidence of Sheikh Lawal Katsina, Chief Imam of the Katsina Central Mosque). A miracle attributed to Sheikh Kisko was that he foresaw that Sheikh Danfodio was to lead a great Jihad in Hausaland. 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 in these Lands, so he deserved to be very knowledgeable.

Sheikh Kisko married a wife from another learned family at the Unguwar Liman Quarters of Katsina. She bore him a child called Idris whose family produced eleven Katsina Central Masjid Chief Imams including the late Katsina Chief Imam, Sheikh Muhammad Lawal of blessed memory and his brother who is currently the Chief Imam.

Sheikh Alhaji Haruna: Of recent history, Sheikh Haruna, a Prince and Scholar from Kanem-Bakashe, which since 1579 was under the Kanuri Ruling House from Gulumba in present day Borno State of Nigeria; arrived in Katsina in 1897 in search of Islamic education. He was however recognised as great Islamic Scholar and therefore was retained in Katsina where he established a School and was appointed as the Chief Imam of the Kofar Sauri Mosque in the metropolis. He was subsequently appointed as the first Waziri of Katsina in 1906 and he was the father of Waziri Isa Kaita, Northern Nigeria's Minister for Education who presented the bill for the establishment of Ahmadu Bello University in 1963. General Hassan Usman Katsina, the first and only Military Governor of Northern Nigeria, was his maternal grandchild. In addition, the Waziri of Katsina, Professor Sani Abubakar Lugga, who pioneered

the establishment of the first Islamic University in Nigeria (Al-Qalam University Katsina), is his paternal grandchild.

5. KANEM-BORNU ULAMA ROLES IN ZAMFARA, KEBBI AND SOKOTO AREAS

In the late 18th century, a group of about 200 Kanem-Bornu indigenes including the Kanuri, Shuwa Arab and Berber Ulama migrated and settled at Yandoto-Tsafe in the Zamfara area. They established a famous Institution that was compared to today's University there. Some of them later moved to Gummi, a Town on the Zamfara River. Their presence in those Zamfara areas influenced the culture of Islamic Education greatly long before the Sokoto Jihad. They were said to have had access to the Muslim Camp during the Sokoto Jihad through their leader, Sheikh Dantoga, a Foreign Minister to the Gummi Ruler.

A Group later moved to Sifawa Town and established a Centre of Qur'an Studies, where Sheikh Usman Danfodio studied the Qur'an for a period of time (Lovejoy 1980 and Sifawa 1991). Similarly, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fallati, Sheikh Al-Bakari and Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Barnawy were said to have taught both Sheikh Usman Danfodio and Sheikh Abdullahi Danfodio respectively at that Centre.

6. KANEM-BORNU ULAMA ROLES IN LAFIA

Lafiyan Bare-Bari (now Lafia), is a Hausa coinage literally meaning "The Health or the Peace of the Kanuri". It describes the Kingdom that is known today as Lafia Emirate. Lafia is a settlement founded by Kanuri emigrants from Kanem-Borno and it is today the Capital City of Nasarawa State of Nigeria with a full pledged Kanuri First Class Emir. Descendants of the Sayfawa Sultans of Kanem-Borno and a group of learned Ulama of high recognition

were led to Lafia by Prince Dunama, the son of Sultan Ali IV (1755-1793), son of Sultan Haj Hamdan (1723-1737), son of Sultan Dunama VI (1704-1723), son of Sultan Ali III (1645-1685) who was reputed to have defeated the Kwararrafa Kingdom. Perhaps that influenced the movement of Prince Dunama to Kwararrafa Lands of which Lafia Area was under at that time. Sultan Ali III was the grandson of the Greatest Ruler of Kanem-Borno Idris Alooma who ruled for 33 years from 1570 to 1603.

Prince Dunama was with his close associates like Madaki Dibi, Zanna Bussami, Dallatu Kwayam, Laminu Gayam, Moyi Barguma, Ahoda, Wambai Magaji, Galadima Umaru, etc. They founded the State (Kingdom) of Lafia, which they ran under the Caliphate System of Government, with every administrative aspect within the Islamic tenets of the Shari'ah. They also established influential Houses and Centres of Qur'an and Islamic Studies, which greatly contributed to the propagation, development and spread of the Islamic Religion in the Area, including at Nasarawa, Egon, Akwanga, Makurdi, Gidan Waya, Kurgumi, Shendam, Keana, Obi, Doma, Awe, etc.

7. KANEM-BORNU ULAMA ROLES IN NUPELAND

The trade contact between Nupeland and Kanem-Bornu dates back to earlier than the 16th century. The geographical and strategic location of Nupeland facilitated the earliest Islamic influence through the Muslim merchants from Kanem-Bornu who carried to the South items from Wadai and Cairo, which included cotton, glass, beads etc. Sometimes in the 17th century people of Kanem-Bornu origin were recorded to have migrated to various parts of Nupeland. The First Class Kanuri Emir's Stool in Minna, the

Capital of Niger State today, testifies to the presence of the Kanem-Bornu people in Nupeland. It is also around the same 17th century that the son of Sultan Ali ibn Dunama, Maina Ibrahim ibn Ali ibn Dunama migrated to Kutigi, after he lost the Throne to his brother (Mora, 1989). Their settlement in Kutigi town marks the establishment of Centres of Islamic Education in the Area. It was after over one hundred years that Kutigi was founded, that the Fulani hegemony established their Rule in Bida. (Gazali 2007). Kanem-Bornu Ulama greatly contributed to Islamic Education not only in Kutigi but other places in Nupeland, including Enagi, Lapai, Bida, Kagara, Kontagora, Borgu, etc. The Kutigi Chief Imam's Islamic Centre was established by Goni Muhammad bin Abdullahi Al Barnawy. The School excelled not only in Qur'an studies but in other subjects like Fiqh, Nahawu, Tafsir, Hadith, etc. The Centre attracted Scholars and students from Nupeland and beyond.

8. KANEM-BORNU ULAMA ROLES IN BIDA, BORGU AND LAPAI

Goni Mala Al Barnawy and Goni Adam Rone Al Barnawy, established Qur'an Schools, first on arrival at the outskirt of Lapai Town. Consequently, due to their activities and teaching experiences in Qur'an Studies coupled with their revolutionary zeal on Islamic propagation, the Ruler granted them express permission to establish more Islamic Centres in the Town and appointed the Leader of the Group as Chief Imam to lead the congregational prayers. The Centre produced prominent Scholars who established other Centres of Islamic Education. They included Sheikh Abubakar, Sheikh Sulaiman Mokwa, Sheikh Bako Kutigi, Sheikh Ali Enagi, etc.

In Borgu and Bida the family of Sheikh Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Turkummani Al Barnawy first settled at Borgu and latter moved with his followers to Bida. A renowned Scholar of high repute, on arrival, Sheikh Abdullah constructed a Mosque and a School for Islamic studies. The School taught both Qur'an and other principles of Islam to the elders, while children were taught the basic teachings of Islam. Sheikh Abdullah was recognised as having taught in many places in Hausaland, especially in Zaria where he stayed with Sheikh Magaji Isiaka and Sheikh Na Iya. He was in Kano, Katsina, Gwandu, Kontagora, Yauri, Daura, Lagos, Ibadan, Benin etc.

After the death of Sheikh Abdullah Al Barnawi, his son and successor Sheikh Waziri Mamman Bida bin Abdullahi bin Muhammad Al Turkummani Al Barnawy, took over the teaching and the propagation of Islam. Sheikh Waziri Mamman Al Barnawy was a great Scholar of high repute who excelled in many Islamic Sciences and who studied both at home and in the Arab World. Sheikh Waziri was certainly a famous Scholar in Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba Lands. He wrote over one hundred (100) Books. His intellectual activities did not only contribute to effective Islamic Scholarship but also made a remarkable impact on his students like Sheikh Adam Abdullah Al Ilori who stated that, *"He was the greatest Scholar/Preacher in Nigeria"*. Sheikh Al Ilori continued that, *"I started preaching and writing without any guide. I started by composing letters and poems and my model in this regard was Alhaji Muhammad bin Abdullah Al Barnawy the Waziri Bida"* (Musa (1994).

Sheikh Waziri Bida Al-Barnawy taught many students, who became erudite Scholars who specialised in various fields of Islamic Sciences. Prominent among them were Sheikh Adam Al

Ilori, Sheikh Yahaya Jibril the Qadi of Kutigi, Sheikh Yunusa Kenji, Sheikh Ahmed Rufa'i, Sheikh Haruna Gaga of Ibadan, Sheikh Lalemi the Chief Imam of Lalemi Mosque, etc. Some of his students established Islamic Centres in places like the Efu Islamic Centre founded by Nda Goni. Sheikh Nda Kolo established his School at Bida Central, Malam Ba Goni established his School at Kabari Gudu Bida, etc. Sheikh Waziri Al Barnawy taught in Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, Bida, Zaria, Katsina etc. One of his students Sheikh Ahmed Rufa'i described him as a *"Rare gift from Allah. He went deep into the Science of Islamic jurisprudence and its branches, so as was he in the Science of Qur'an recitation and was a genius in the Science of Exegesis. His qualities are so many that I am unable to enumerate them all"* (Musa (1997)).

9. THE ROLES OF KANEM-BORNU ULAMA IN YORUBALAND

The early trade contact between Kanem-Bornu and Yorubaland had facilitated the acceptance of Islam and the establishment of Islamic Scholarship in Yorubaland. By the 17th century, immigrants from Kanem-Bornu had settled and greatly contributed to the spread of Islamic knowledge in many Yoruba Lands. They established centres of Islamic Education in Ilorin, Ibadan, Lagos, Ilaro, Iboro, Ibese etc.

In Ilorin were the Kanem-Borno Ulama families of Sheikh Mustafa bin Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Turkumani Al-Barnawy, Sheikh Imam Matase Al-Barnawy, Sheikh Anaagun, Sheikh Kabara Al-Barnawy, etc. The Soro Islamic Centre in Ilorin, was founded by Sheikh Mustafa bin Muhammad Al-Turkumani Al-Barnawi. He was a teacher, a prolific writer, a preacher and a Linguist as

manifested by his ability to teach and preach in six different languages of Kanuri, Hausa, Fulfude, Yoruba, Nupe and Dindu. His literary works were in Tafsir of the Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Arabic Grammar, etc. His students came from Ilorin, Oyo, Bida, Lagos, Ibadan, Benin, Togo, Gwanja, Upper Volta, Niger Republic, Republic of Benin, etc. Quality teaching and learning processes have been the profile of the Soro Islamic Centre. Their zeal in Islamic propagation was specifically motivated by their age long poem, inherited from their forefathers, that is:

"We the sons of Al-Barnawy (Kanuri of Borno) are people endowed with piety, purity and generosity in Islamic teaching and learning. We are transforming the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowledge." Gazali (2005).

The Sheikh Kabara family members were the descendants of Sheikh Adam bin Alim Umar bin Dunama Al-Barnawi, who was the writer of the *Dala ilul Khairati*, written in Kulum Fardo, on a Friday (1184 AH). The Kabara family moved and settled at Oke Suna, a popular settlement of Ulama of Kanem-Borno origin in Ilorin. They taught and graduated Scholars from various places in different fields of Islamic Sciences, e.g. Qur'an Studies, Fiqh, Jurisprudence, Tafsir, Arabic Grammar, etc. The family's Centre of Islamic Education was engaged in the culture of Islamic scholarship before the reign of the first Fulani Jihad Ruler of Ilorin Sheikh Alimi.

Among the renowned Scholars who graduated from the School were, the Imam Ita Kudimo, Sheikh Amsa, Imam Jamiu Ile Ogba, Sheikh Yakubu, Sheikh Alfa Iliya Abuke Abikan the Chief Imam of Masalachi Kokorokan, Sheikh Alfa Sahbal Alakin who taught the Tafsir of the Qur'an and Arabic Grammar; to

mention but a few. Most of the Scholars who graduated from the Kabara Islamic Centre have established various Centres of learning in their respective places.

In Iseyin, the Kanem-Bornu Ulama established Qur'an Schools in the 17th century. Among the Ulama were the Alaaso Agbaje (Agbaji) Sheriff Abba Aji Al Barnawy, Sheikh Yunusa Al Barnawy, Sheikh Saware Al Barnawy, Sheikh Kanaki Al Barnawy, etc. The Alaaso Community, under the leadership of Sheikh Muhammad Mustafa Al Barnawy constructed a Mosque and a Qur'an School in the 17th century, for the purpose of teaching and learning of the Qur'an. It was described by Olayiwola (1995) as,

“One of the peculiar and attractive features of the Kanuri Alaaso Community in Iseyin, was in the field of Qur'an studies not only in Iseyin Town but in the whole of the Yorubaland.”

Products of the Centre have excelled in various fields of Islamic Sciences; some were Lectures in the Universities of Lagos, Ilorin, Ibadan, etc, while some others have established their respective Islamic Centres in places like Benin, Ogbomosho, Abeokuta, Ilorin, Oyo, Iseyin, etc. Prominent among them were Imam Lajori of Oke Ola, Imam Abdul Rasheed Olukuta, etc. The Community reconstructed their Mosque in 1805 after over one hundred (100) years of its first construction. The Alfa Sheriff Abba Aji Qur'an School was established in the 17th century in Iseyin and it has graduated a number of renowned Islamic Scholars who have greatly contributed to the propagation, development and spread of Islamic Education in Nupe and Yorubalands. Sheikh Alimi the founder of the Ilorin Emirate graduated from that Centre.

In Oyo, Ibadan and Lagos Alfa Usman Al Barnawy, the Chief Imam of the Alaafin of Oyo's Palace, established his Centre of

Islamic Education in the 18th century. The Centre taught and graduated many Scholars, prominent among them were Alfa Imam Jimoh of Fiditi, Alfa Bisiriyu of Ilaro, etc. Their disciples and descendants have founded Centres of Learning in Oyo, Ibadan, Lagos, Ilorin etc.

Alfa Imam Zakariya Al-Barnawy of Ibadan and Imam Nafi'u Gana Al-Barnawy of Lagos Tinubu Central Mosque, have established Centres of Islamic Education in Ibadan and Lagos respectively. The Ibadan Islamic Centre was founded by Alfa Ibrahim bin Ahmed Zakariya Al-Barnawy in 1871 at Alapafiya Ile Alfa Oke Seni Ibadan. Over the years, the School has grown to become a large Centre of Islamic Education where various Islamic courses were taught ranging from Qur'an studies to Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir, Arabic Grammar, etc. The Centre has graduated many prominent Scholars in Ibadan and other places in Yorubaland.

The Chief Imam of Lagos Imam Nafi'u Gana Islamic Centre was established in 1775 as the first Friday congregational Mosque, which also became the first source of Islamic propagation centre in Lagos. The Centre taught and graduated many Scholars from various places, especially the students from Ibadan, Ilaro, Ibese, Iboro, etc.

The Kanem-Bornu Ulama settlement in Ilaro was led by Sheikh Musa Kanne Dunama who established and inaugurated Qur'an School for Islamic Learning in Ilaro in 1860. His efforts facilitated the nurturing and spread of the culture of Islamic scholarship in Ilaro, Ajilete, Igna, Iboro, Ibese, Tpokia, Oke Odan, Itaegbe etc. Imam Musa Dunama Al-Barnawy, up to the period of Imam Dunama Musa II, who continued with the culture of Islamic

Scholarship from 1929 to 1959, was described by the Ilaro Muslim Community during his 40th year remembrance calendar as:

Son of who reads (the Quran) to win slaves; He who prays to win prizes (from Allah); Son of Bornu who sets the pace; The tall Lion, leader any day; The great Lion who is able to intimidate a thousand hunters

10. KANEM-BORNU ULAMA ROLES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

Generally, the history of Islam in Kanem-Bornu is synonymous with the history of the establishment, development and spread of Islamic Education in present day Nigeria, West Africa and Africa. The Islamic influence was the main historic event which dominated not only the Kanem-Bornu Societies, but the whole of the Central Bilad Al Sudan.

Of great note is that, Kanem-Bornu Ulama succeeded in establishing various Islamic Centres in: Ghana, Cameroon, Benin Republic, Chad Republic, Niger Republic, Burkina Faso, the Sudan, Sierra Leone, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt, etc. Some examples are:

1. **The Sudan:** Goni Mustapha Jalalainima of Mahal, Goni Dumdum of Kasala and Goni Balumi of Sifawa, established Centres in the Sudan.
2. **Sierra Leone:** In Sierra Leone Goni Isa Umar Al-Barnawy established a renowned Centre of Islamic Education
3. **Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt, etc.:** As examples, Goni Ahmed Ngurdiyi, Goni Muhammad Gana, Goni Sale Zakariya, Goni Ammani, Goni Ngurama, and Goni Maliki respectively established Centres of Islamic Learning in

Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. While Goni Sale Zakariya was also in Ethiopia, Eretria and Egypt, where he taught for over nine years respectively. Among them was Goni Ahmed Ngurdiyi of Sudan and later Saudi Arabia was described by his student Goni Mahmud Gana in his letter of condolence to the family as follows:-*Afterwards, the intent of this verse is to bewail our lost patient Scholar;*

Ahmad, the sea of knowledge of his time; its drink is guidance for youths;

Verily, broken is the glass of the lamp; locked is the house without a key;

Extinguished is the light into the darkness;

The great tragedy that occurred; Hearts of all Scholars fell apart

It is not in any doubts that Kanem-Bornu Kanuri Ulama have greatly contributed to Islamic Scholarship in present day Nigeria and other parts of West Africa; and indeed even in some North African and Arab Nations more than any other Tribes or Nationals in Sub-African History South of the Sahara. They achieved the feats mainly through the establishment of Rural and Urban Centres of Islamic Teaching and Learning. Some of such Centres were crude in the forms of *Tsangaya* (local and temporary) Qur'an Schools and others were made of fully developed Semi-Permanent and Permanent Structures in Towns and Cities. Some Kanem-Bornu Ulama and the Kanuri People participated fully in the Imamate Systems of Leaderships in Mosques and in Communities, as Imams and as Political Leaders. These are evident in the various Kanuri Descendents who served and/or are serving as Imams, Emirs and Senior Palace Officials like the Waziri, the

Galadima and the Madaki in Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba Lands of Nigeria.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE NEED TO PROPERLY DOCUMENT AND WIDELY CIRCULATE THE KANEM-BORNO GREAT ISLAMIC SCHOLARLY WORKS

Kanem-Borno *Ulama* (Scholars) played remarkable roles in the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and scholarship in West Africa in particular and in Africa in general, before the colonial era. Kanem Borno, as an acknowledged ancient Islamic polity for over one thousand years, has achieved great heights in scholarship. Generally, the Kanem-Borno Ulama presence had greatly contributed to Islamic propagation, teaching and learning in different parts of what is present day Nigeria and in what is today's Chad, Niger, Cameroon, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leon, Benin, etc. The Sultans of Kanem-Borno developed a strong tradition of Islamic Education, through effective culture of scholarship throughout the Caliphate and beyond. As observed by Sifawa (1991):

That Kanem Borno people recognised learning as the order of Islam and pursued it with vigour until, there emerged from among them scholars of high reputations. These scholars were to carry the challenge by passing Islamic learning and scholarship to

other parts of Africa especially their immediate neighbours. Kanem-Bornu Scholars contributed to the development of both dominant and productive scholarship.

Kanem-Borno Scholars have widely been recorded to have established Islamic Scholarship Centres in all the Regions of the Lake Chad Basin and beyond. In today's Nigeria for example, Borno Scholars have established bases in all major Cities in the North-East, the North-West and the North Central States. The Scholars also have renowned bases in Oyo State, Lagos State and in other parts of Yorubaland.

The Books authored by these Kanem Bornu Scholars are locally but not widely in circulation despite their great benefits to Muslims, to Islam and to people generally as they covered not only worship (*ibadat*) but also worldly dealings (*mu'ammalat*). Below are very few examples:

1). Sheik Abu-Abdullah Muhammad Bin-Masani Bin Gamihi Bin Muhammad Bin-Abdullah Bin-Nuhu Al-Barnawi Al-Kashinawi (Danmasani) (1595-1667):

This Kanuri Scholar's 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 Katsina Traditional Title of "Danmasani of Katsina", which is only bestowed on his family members up to today.

The suffix "Al-Barnawi" established his Bornu descent. He was also remembered for his preaching travels. He was reputed to be among those who introduced Islam to Yorubaland.

He travelled annually to where he called in Arabic, "Bilad Yoruba"

(Yoruba Towns) for preaching purposes.

He wrote several important Books amongst which was *Buzughus-Shamsiyyah* (Appearance of the Sun), which is a commentary on the “*Ishriniyyat*” of Sheik Alfa-Zazi. I have a copy of this Book, which praises the Holy Prophet (SAW), and it is in two volumes of 1037 pages.

Of great historical significance in Nigeria today are his two Books on Yorubaland. Historians generally agree that those books were the first written mention of the tribe YORUBA and the area YORUBALAND.

The book, “Misrepresentation of Nigeria” by Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman and Dr. Alkasum Abba (2005) both of Ahmadu Bello University, states that:

“The fact is that, the earliest record we have of the use of the very name “Yoruba”, which seems to have applied to the people of the Alafinate of Oyo, came from the writings of the seventeenth century Katsina/Kanuri Scholar, Danmansani (1595-1667) who wrote a Book on Muslim Scholars of the “Yarriba”. Bishop Ajayi Crowther, Reverend Samuel Johnson and his brother Obadiah Johnson, among others came in the nineteenth century to widely spread this Hausa/Kanuri name to the people who now bear it in their writings”.

2). Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Sabbagh Al-Kashinawi (Dan Marina) (died 1675):

He had Kanuri and Shuwa Arab ancestry and he wrote several Books and wrote the famous Poem in praise of Sultan of Borno, Ali ibn Umar (1639-1677) for his defeat of the Jukum Kingdom of Kwararrafa. This Poem is on display at Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University History Department, Kaduna.

Prior to the above mentioned Poem, he had written a Poem in praise of the King of Katsina Sarki Karya Giwa for his gallantry in subduing pagans in his land. That Poem was dated 24th Safar, 1070 AH (10th November 1659 AD).

3) The Waziri of Bida, Sheikh Waziri Mamman Bida bin Abdullahi bin Muhammad Al Turkummani Al Barnawy: He was a great Kanuri Scholar of high repute in Bida who excelled in many Islamic Sciences and who studied both at home and in the Arab World. Sheikh Waziri was certainly a famous Scholar in Hausa, Nupe and Yoruba Lands.

Waziri Sheikh Mamman al-Barnawy wrote over five hundred (500) Books and Pamphlets. His intellectual activities did not only contribute to effective Islamic Scholarship but also made a remarkable impact on his students like Sheikh Adam Abdullah Al Ilori who stated that, *“He was the greatest Scholar/Preacher in Nigeria”*. Sheikh Al Ilori continued that:

“I started preaching and writing without any guide. I started by composing letters and poems and my model in this regard was Alhaji Muhammad bin Abdullah Al Barnawy the Waziri Bida”.

Kanem-Bornu Ulama succeeded in establishing various Islamic Centres in far away Nations. As examples, Goni Ahmed Ngurdiyi, Goni Muhammad Gana, Goni Sale Zakariya, Goni Ammani, Goni Ngurama, and Goni Maliki respectively established Centres of Islamic Learning in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia respectively.

Goni Mustapha Jalalainima of Mahal, Goni Dumdum of Kasala and Goni Balumi of Sifawa, established Centres in the Sudan. In Sierra Leone Goni Isa Umar Al-Barnawy established a renowned Centre of Islamic Education, while Goni Sale Zakariya was in

Ethiopia, Eretria and Egypt, where he taught for over nine years respectively.

Those Ulama achieved the feats through the establishment of Rural and Urban Centres of Islamic Learning. Some of such Centres were crude in the forms of *Tsangaya* Qur'an Schools and others were made of fully developed Semi-Permanent and Permanent Structures in the Towns and Cities. The great scholarly documents of the Kanem Bornu ancient Scholars have all been left loosely in local homes.

Equally, those documents by modern Scholars of Kanem Bornu (the Kanuri, the Shuwa Arab, etc) have been left to rest in some few Universities' Libraries. These have left knowledge not shared thereby giving room for misconceptions.

Kanem Bornu covered more lands than any other Caliphate or Empire in Africa, but this is not widely known due to the absence of publications and publicity. Because of the great importance of the scholarly documents written by Kanem-Bornu Ulama of ancient and of modern times, it is highly recommended that a Team of Experts be assembled to travel widely in Nigeria and to other parts of Africa to compile all such relevant literature on Kanem Bornu and by its Scholars for wide dissemination to the academic communities and the general World.

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