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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَي سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا

Literature Review on the Sokoto Caliphate

Introduction.

The theocratic Islamic state of Sokoto was arguably the most enduring example of Islamic government in West Africa. From 1803/04-1903, the Fulani scholar-warrior Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio and his kinsmen, governed the *Sokoto Caliphate* (Islamic State)—an expansive territory that spanned over four-hundred-thousand kilometers (Marjomaa 11) and included within its boundaries modern day Burkina Faso, all of Hausaland (Northern Nigeria), southern Niger and Cameroon. Perhaps, the most distinguishing characteristic of the Caliphate lay in the way Sokoto's ruling and scholarly elite deployed messianic ideas in order to galvanize the dispersed community of supporters and Muslim coreligionists in and around Northern Nigeria, into a formidable *jamat* (Islamic body politic). The Islamic revivalist movement lead by Shehu Uthman dan Fodio eventually culminated into the "Fulani Jihad" and the *jamat's* successful establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate following the overthrow of the traditional rulers of Hausaland.

Several authors writing on the history of the Sokoto Caliphate have acknowledged that central themes taken Islamic eschatological discourse concerning the *ashraa't 'l sa'a* (signs of the hour) have played a significant roll in shaping the ideology of Dan Fodio and his succesors. Ideas that formed the core of Sokoto rulers' belief in "the end time" scenario included anticipation of the awaited Mahdi (Rightly Guided One)—a central figure of Islamic eschatology who would emerge in order to restore order in a world filled with injustice. Connected to the narrative of the Mahdi is the tribulation of *Ad-dajjal* (The Anti-Christ) and the tyranny and oppression carried out by he and his minions. Many Muslims believe that an epic battle will occur between the Mahdi and the dajjal, and the sequences of events surrounding this confrontation constitute definitive signs of the imminence of "the day of judgment".

Counted among the minions of the dajjal were those European colonialists who profess, or were believed to be Christian by Sokoto ruling and scholarly elite. This occupation by European forces was seen as an invasion of Christian armies that would usher in a new epoch where the Caliphate of Sokoto would be under forced assimilation and tyranny. Perhaps the most significant of the events dealing with Islamic articulations of the last day was the violent "reckoning" associated with "the day of judgement" when all of humanity will be ressurected before God and held into account for everything that they have done on earth. Proclamations concerning the eschaton were deployed in the writings and sermons of the *umar'a* (Muslim rulers) and *mallams* (scholars) of the Sokoto Caliphate, serving as pious reminders to the faithful not to fall short in their devotion to God, lest they be plagued with *fitnah* (tribulation) in this life and eternal punishment in the hereafter.

Additionally, there were eschatological discourses internal and unique to the Torodbe Fulani ethnicity with whom Dan Fodio and many of his co-religionists indentified. Numerous poems and treatises were written by the Sokoto 'ulema in their native language of Fulfulde (or Pulaar) and Arabic which admonished the community concerning the advent of the last day and its signs. This literature was disseminated alongside traditional Sunni Islamic interpretations of the eschaton and proved to be significant during times of internal strife and rebellion within the Islamic state.

What follows is a review of select English literature written by British, African and American scholars. Our intention is to first chart the progression of the English narrative regarding Northern Nigeria within some of the earlier sources and thereafter examine how English writers shift from a focus on Colonial myth making and reports of conquest, to a thorough examination of the political and ideological infrastructure of the Sokoto Islamic State and the ideology of its founders. We also examine the perspective of Muslim scholars writing on Sokoto in order to gain a varied perspective on the English literature available. Our aim is to pay particular attention to how these writers deal with the roll of spirituality and eschatology within the Sokoto Caliphate before and after British colonialism.

Several questions raised during the compilation of this literature review include: How did the response of Sokoto's ruling and scholarly elite reflect the eschatological discourses already existing at Sokoto? How did British colonialism factor into the broader eschatological discourse in Islam? Also, when looking at the various ways in which the 'ulema and umar'a of Sokoto responded to British colonialism how much of that response was informed by the *shari'a* and how much was informed by a belief in the spiritual or transcendental realm, in which the position

of both the colonized and colonizer were understood vis a vis a much broader cosmological order?

Early English discourses on the Sokoto Caliphate

Ironically, the most recently published work reviewed in this study, is perhaps most apt to deal with the early history of English discourses on the Sokoto Caliphate. Dr. M. Sani Umar's book, *Islam and Colonialism* (2006) begins by examining the trends and bias's that left lasting impressions on research written by Western academics regarding Sokoto. Much of this literature was the byproduct of colonial endeavors undertaken by British agents, officers and administrators during the later 19th century. As Professor Umar (1998) points out, the accounts of Northern Nigeria contained in Heinrich Barth's *Travels...* (1857), Clapperton's *Journal of the Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1829) and Lugards *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), sought to construct a narrative that justified policies of economic exploitation, political subjugation and physical violence towards the Muslim population of Northern Nigeria.

Several myths, regarding the leaders of Sokoto, that circulated widely among European intellectuals of the later 19th and earlier 20th centuries, depicted the Hausa-Fulani as inept and "ineffectual" rulers, ill-fitted to govern and preoccupied with "slave raiding" (Umar 218). Africa was also viewed as the "the dark continent" which became synonymous with a type of inherent inferiority and backwardness that European pseudo-scientists and authors imagined the Africans having. (ibid 218) The accounts of these authors, while shedding light on the extent of British machinations into the political affairs of the Sokoto Islamic state, did little to help us understand the infrastructure of the Sokoto empire, or those institutions which provided the core ideology of it's founders.

During the mid-twentieth century there emerged a body of English literature that sought to understand the development of the Sokoto Caliphate by examining the trove of literature produced by ulema from within *Hasualand* Northern Nigeria. British Orientalists like C.E.J Whitting (1943), A.D.H. Bivar (1962), and Mervyn Hiskett (1962) attempted to codify and catalogue the enormous body of Arabic and Ajami manuscripts (native Fulfude written using Arabic characters) that by the late sixties had still been largely understudied. (Bivar 104) During this period we are informed of text written by Sokoto ulema dedicated entirely to what Whitting called “Mahdist themes” (1943).

Through the scholarly research of early British Orientalists, a foundation was laid upon which many other Western historians would build. In his book, *Emirates of Northern Nigeria* (1966) Hogben probed deep into the history of early Arab settlers in North and West Africa and attempted to chart the genesis of Islam in Northern Nigeria through a succession of West African Islamic dynasties beginning with the jihad movement of *al- Murabitun* in the 11th century. The traditional narrative cited by Hogben, which has become the standard narrative among Western scholars, is that the Murabitun emerged from the Senegalese river basin sweeping eastward, conquering the kingdom of Ghana. After toppling Christians forces in Morocco and Spain, the Murabitun went on to conquer the Iberian Peninsula by the end of 11th century (48/9). We now know that the Murabitun conquest of Spain brought with it an, often times, uncomfortable mixture of North and West African Islamic cultures, along with the culture of one of the most heralded ruling dynasties in the Arab and Islamic world —the *Bani Umayya* or Umayyads (Hogben 23).

It must be mentioned that Hogben's work is plagued by British colonial residue as evidenced by his pre-occupation with the "pigmentocracy" associated with the notion of race hierarchy. Thus when discussing the complicated ethnic origin of the Fulani and their many skin tones, Hogben mentions how "... the red Fulani show fundamental difference from the Negro, His hair is sometimes wavy, but never wooly; his nose is aquiline, but never flat ..." (112) The Fulani are even known to "blush" on occasion and many have "blue eyes". Yet for all of their "European" features, Hogben seems compelled to settle on the notion that the Fulani "must today be numbered among the Negro peoples (ibid 112).

That many European scholars struggled with the idea of "Black" empire builders and rulers may seem quite absurd to some, however knowing something of the discourses of the "dark continent" helps one chart the shift in focus regarding literature written on Northern Nigeria. This reality, in our opinion, speaks to the need for a more varied and nuanced reading of the history of the region from scholars across myriad demographics of class, ethnicity and academic fields.

European academic discourses on Sokoto's scholarly tradition

This period of English scholarship characterized by Hiskett (1973), Martin (1976) and Clarke (1982), puts forth the notion that the ideas that emerged from the Sokoto ulema were part of a well-established and discursive tradition of Islamic scholarship related to various Islamic sciences including the *Maliki* school of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic mysticism from a myriad Sufi brotherhoods, the science of *hadith* (prophetic traditions) and *tafsir* (Qur'anic interpretation), the last two when combined create the hermeneutic of Islamic eschatology.

Peter B. Clarke's work, *West African Islam*, picks up where Hogben left off, except there is no racial hair-splitting here. Clarke is quite clear in his belief that scholars of Northern Nigeria were connected to a well established tradition of Arabic literacy and Islamic scholarship that traces its spiritual and ideological lineage through the Fulani Jihad states of the 18th Century Senegambia, the empires of Songhai and Mali of the 15th Century, and the 11th century jihad movement of the *al-Murabitun* mentioned earlier.

Hiskett too seemed to be pulling from earlier research conducted with Bivar when he noted in his seminal work *The Sword of Truth* (1973) that particular scholars and their ideas seem to have had more influence on Sokoto ulema than others. Taking this idea a step further, Hiskett identifies the famed Algerian jurist and Qadiri sufi Abdul Karim al-Maghili (d. 1505) as one of the scholars whose ideas regarding the advent of the mahdi and the interpretation of events surrounding his appearance, had the most profound influence on the eschatological discourses of Dan Fodio. On the subject of eschatology and Dan Fodio's perception of himself and his mission within that broader cosmological order, Hiskett cites Dan Fodio's treaty *Siraj al-Ikhwān* (The Guiding Lamp of the Brethren) as a prime example of Dan Fodio's ideas. Hiskett believes that the characteristics of the *mujadid*, or renewer of the Islamic faith Dan Fodio describes, were in reference to himself and his mission. The *mujadid*, according to Dan Fodio, will be sent at the beginning of every century in order to purge the religion of innovations and correct the affairs of the Muslims, especially those among the oppressed. (Hiskett 121)

Hiskett also credits Al-Maghili with introducing the Qadiri sufi order into Hausaland. This significance is that, more than any of Islam's theological strains, the community of Sufi's are identified with imbuing their discourses with narrations

regarding the coming of the Mahdi and his special space within the celestial hierarchy, of Prophets, the Rightly guided Caliphs and Islamic saints. Hiskett's thesis regarding al-Maghili's influence on Dan Fodio's ideas about his being the *Mujadid* and precursor to the awaited Mahdi, would find resonance among many of the writings of Western scholars in the years that followed.

Five years after Bivar and Hiskett's journal examining Arabic literature in Northern Nigeria, Murray Last, professor emeritus of history at *The School of Oriental and African Studies* in London, published his exhaustive work, *The Sokoto Caliphate*. Last improved on the previous efforts of Bivar and Hiskett by including an even more extensive list of works produced by Sokoto ulema, categorizing each Arabic and Ajami source by author, most notably that of the of Shehu Uthman dan Fodio, his brother Abdullahi ibn Muhammad, and Dan Fodio's son, Sultan Muhammad Bello. Last's work also provides a concise yet cogent account of several of the Caliphs who held the office after the Shehu. Also included in the collation of texts are dates approximating when each work was written and the specific location where each manuscript was housed at the time of its examination. Last also situates the primary sources according "those written in the 19th century and those compiled after the British conquest of Sokoto in 1903. (Last xxv)

To further inform his research, Last pulls almost exclusively from primary sources written by ulema from Sokoto as he attempts to "reconstruct the way the Community of the Shaikh (Uthman dan Fodio) developed through means used to maintain a framework in which there could both practice of Islam and the Islamic scholarship for which Sokoto is distinguished". (Last xxiii) *The Sokoto Caliphate* remains one of the most thorough historical accounts of the establishment of that

Islamic state and of the educational and governmental institutions that accounted for its infrastructure.

The works of both Hiskett and Last were some of the most significant pieces of English literature written on Sokoto. Hiskett's work, much like Last's, is a historical account that relies heavily on primary sources written in Arabic. However where Last sought to provide a "framework" that would explain how the infrastructure of the Sokoto Islamic state was developed and maintained, Hiskett's stated intention was "...to describe Shehu Uthman dan Fodio and his life and times as he, his contemporaries and the generations that followed him saw them" (vii). Additionally, Hiskett highlights how Dan Fodio credits his mystical experiences as being the final motivation for the establishment of the Jihad.

While in a transcendental spiritual state Dan Fodio claims to have been brought into the presence of the Prophets and the angels and by his spiritual master—the famed Sufi mystic and polymath Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani of Persia. It was while in the company of this group of this elite group of God's servants that Dan Fodio claimed to have been "girded with the sword of truth" (Hiskett 66) and given spiritual and political dominion over the entire *Bilad as-Sudan* (The Land of the Blacks). This account is cited in an extant text attributed to Dan Fodio called *Kitab al Wird* (The compiled litany) and points to the important roll that belief in the *ghaiba* (unseen) palyed as an impetus for the Jihad of Dan Fodio. (Ibid 64)

During the later part of the 20th century one begins to see the emergence of several English texts that raise yet more questions about the motivation of the architects of the Islamic state of Sokoto. These works delve deep into the history of the Caliphate and seek to understand the religious methodology and Ideological motivations of Dan Fodio as well as that of his scholarly kinsmen and progeny. Many

of these works build upon the earlier foundations of British authors while provided a more in depth look at particular socio-political and religious phenomena treated in previous works.

B.G. Martin in his *Muslim Brotherhoods in 19th Century Africa* (1976) sought to locate the importance of the Qadiriyya Sufi brotherhood in the religious ideology of Dan Fodio. His work, similar to the hypothesis put forth by Hiskett, asserts that Dan Fodio relied heavily on the Qadiri brand of Sufism to support “millenarian” beliefs. These ideas, according to Martin, were wide spread among the people of Hausaland (Northern Nigeria) from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Martin’s scholarship further highlights how contemporary Qadiri Sufis from outside of the empire, namely the sufi master Shaykh Mukhtar al Kunti, a Berber from the Zawaya clan established at Timbuktu, may have had a more direct influence on the Mahdist perspective of Dan Fodi than previously expected.

The contribution of African scholarship to English discourses on Sokoto

Valuable contributions to our understanding of the religious and spiritual dimensions of the Sokoto Caliphate come via historians and scholars from continental Africa. Dr. Ismail Balogun, in his book *The Life and works of Uthman Dan Fodio* (1975), offers the reader an insiders perspective from someone academically trained in an environment influenced by the totality of Sokoto history. Dr. Balogun was a senior lecturer of Arabic Studies at the University of Ibadan and Professor in the Institute of Islamic-African Studies International Dept. of Religion at the University of Illorin, Nigeria. His work on Shehu Uthman dan Fodio was significant in that a Nigerian academic had put pen to paper and composed a scholarly work on the life Dan Fodio intended for a wide English speaking audience.

Balogun's work offers a brief chronology of the life of Dan Fodio and his community, couched within the nomenclature of Islamic scholarship. Unlike Hiskett, Martin and other British authors, when Balogun uses the word "mujadid" to denote the Shehu as a "renewer" or "reformer", he is speaking the language of Sunni Muslim theologians steeped in the Islamic sciences of hadith and Qur'anic interpretation. Balogun locates the term *mujadid* within a much broader Islamic lexicon where it is often used synonymously with the term Mahdi. While Balogun's categorization of Dan Fodio as a reformer was not new to English discourses on Sokoto, the author was very deliberate in not wanting to cast a political shadow over Dan Fodio's motivations. Balogun believed that because the political career of Dan Fodio has often overshadowed his spiritual depth and scholarly contribution to Islamic literary canon, it becomes important to try and understand Dan Fodio through the context of his own words.

Again, this idea may echo the intentions of Hiskett and others, however, Balogun's work is distinct in that he endeavors to shed light on Dan Fodio's religious "thought" by dedicating his entire book to the study of the Shehu's most celebrated epistle of Islamic theology—*Ihya Sunna wa Ikhmad'l bid'a (Revival of the Sunnah and the destruction of Innovation)*. In this work, Dan Fodio provides those prophetic traditions that provide the foundational proof for those branches of Islamic theology said to constitute the foundation of the religion (*usul ad-deen*). Balogun thus identifies the three branches of the Islamic sciences which Dan Fodio identifies as the foundation of the deen—they are: 1) *Islam* and the outward manifestation of the religion 2) *iman* and those aspects of belief that form the core of one's religious creed and 3) *ihsan*, the science of *tasawwuf* or spiritual purification commonly referred to as Sufism. (Balogun 53) In spite of its brevity Balogun's work includes extensive tracts

of the *Ihya* written in Arabic and infused with religious commentary that give voice to a perspective rarely heard in Western academia.

Ibraheem Sulaiman, professor of law at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Northern Nigeria, has also published some of the most extensive English literature on the history of the Sokoto Caliphate written by an African Scholar to date. His first two books, *A Revolution in history: The Jihad of Usman dan Fodio* (1986) and *The Islamic State and the Challenge of History: Ideals, Policies and Operation of the Sokoto Caliphate* (1987) were recently re-issued in one volume aptly titled *The African Caliphate* (2010). This work is unapologetically Islamic in tone, scope and presentation, positioning it well beyond the purview of those Western academics operating within the politically correct parameters of a secular liberal hermeneutic.

In fact, after reviewing the aforementioned texts Hiskett seemed compelled to acknowledge that, “The present reviewer is one among several who may have dealt so blandly with the reform movement and its aftermath so as to distort the reality.” (Journal 637) It is the opinion of this author that Hiskett’s comments are exactly what make Sulaiman’s work distinct and significant among the existing literature. Professor Sulaiman’s position as one of Northern Nigeria’s foremost Islamic intellectuals and thinkers gives his unique perspective on the events surrounding the establishment of Sokoto a kind of verve akin to the very subjects being discussed.

Further, when reading works of Islamic history written by Muslim authors, those of us within the academy might benefit by taking cues from Professor Saba Mahmood who, in her work *Politics of Piety* (2005), cautions Western intellectuals not to succumb to a normative discourse of religion that is both hegemonic in its assertion of “transparent universalism”, while simultaneously promoting fear and “discomfort” towards the kind of “social conservatism” religious communities are

believed to represent (Mahmood 38). Through this kind of “vigilance”, Mahmood argues, we may find value and meaning in the overtly religious perspective of scholars like Professor Sulaiman.

Sulaiman’s work may therefore be classified as a synthesis of Islamic thought culled from those Arabic texts written by the Caliphates three most influential leaders whom Sulaiman refers to as “triumvirate”—Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio, Abdullahi ibn Muhammad, and Muhammad Bello. The works of the triumvirate thus provide the ideological foundation for the ideas that follow in each chapter. In the chapter entitled *Building the Community*, the Sulaiman identifies Dan Fodio’s *Tariq al-Janna* (The of Paradise), Muhammad Bello’s *Ta’at al- Khalaq bi Makarim al-akhlaq* (Obedience to the creator by the Noble traits of Good Character) and Abdullahi bin Muhammad’s *Sabil an-Najaat* (Way of Salvation) (Sulaiman 65) as those primary text which best capture the kind of *tarbiyyah* (spiritual training) undergone by the men and women who comprised “the nucleus of the Shehu’s followers in the emerging new order—the Jama’a” (ibid).

Each of these texts were designed to train the individual dedicated to the spiritual path of *tassawwuf* by promoting the acquisition of sacred “knowledge”, “cognition” regarding Gods commandments and prohibitions, “repentance” from sins committed, *zuhd* (abstention) from excess and extravagance and *sabr* (patience) in times of ease and hardship . Sulaiman explains how these qualities (any many others) were seen by Dan Fodio as necessary requisites for any community who sought to be grounded in the *sunnah* of the Prophet (Sulaiman 227-229) which he identifies as the *raison d’être* of Dan Fodio’s entire campaign towards the establishment of *khilafah* (Islamic governance). With Dan Fodio positioned as the *Mujadid* or “renewer” of the religion of Islam, Sulaiman would have us view the entirety of the Shehu’s campaign

as a complete *tajdid* movement or “Islamic revival”, which has at its objective the restoration of those beliefs and practices reminiscent of the first Islamic city state of *al-Medina*, whose chief governor was none other than the Prophet Muhammad, himself.

The Caliphate’s response to British Colonialism

The discussion of European colonialism in Northern Nigeria and the subsequent dismantling of the Sokoto Caliphate at the hands of the British in 1903, were not discussed at length by any of the authors in the literature reviewed thus far. What we’ve tried to highlight in the first half of this brief overview of English literature, is the level of attention various scholars have paid to the ways in which Islamic spirituality and Islamic eschatology helped shape Dan Fodio’s interpretive lens with regard to religious practices and his political vision for the Muslim community of Northern Nigeria. Some of the main points extracted from the literature which are important to this study are 1) Several English sources acknowledge that Dan Fodio and his followers saw his position as that of a mujadid or reviver of the religion of Islam and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad 2) As the Mujaddid, and one of the subsequent Islamic Caliphs, Dan Fodio and his community also saw themselves within the broader realm of Islamic cosmology as a community whose endeavors were to presage the awaited Mahdi mentioned in the Prophetic traditions.

When discussing the advent of British colonialism within the Sokoto Caliphate, it is important to note that there were several internal conflicts that may have made the Islamic State susceptible to encroachment from outside forces. In his book *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1906*, (1971), Dr. R. A. Adeleye offers a cogent political analysis of the inner-workings of the Caliphate,

probing deeply into the machinery of its governmental structure, and the relationship between the seat of power at Sokoto and the outlying *emirates*.

Dr. Adeleye's work pays specific attention to the way internal rebellions helped foment British machinations to subvert the Caliphate from without. One of the earliest and most significant of these conflicts began with the rebellion of Hayat ibn Sa'id b. Muhammad Bello ibn Shehu Uthman dan Fodio, "a rebel of the Shaikh's family" (Adeleye 103) Hayatu is alleged to have left Sokoto "for pilgrimage" in 1873 following his disaffection with the appointment of his brother Abu Bakr to the office of Caliph. (Ibid) From 1881 to 1885 Hayat ibn Said lead a campaign to subdue the Eastern regions of the Islamic state under his leadership, becoming a constant thorn in the side of the state officials at Yola and Adamawa. In an episode of providential irony, the Umar'a loyal to the Caliph at Sokoto found themselves trying to put down a revolt lead by Hayat ibn Sa'id and Mahdist rebels who had pledged their allegiance to self-proclaimed Mahdi of the "Nilotic Sudan", Muhammad Ahmad, who began his movement in 1881. (Shareef 44)

Shareef notes that many of Muhammad Ahmad's supporters were actually emigrants (2005) from various regions through out West Africa which may corroborate the view of Umar (1999) and others that messianic ideas concerning the emergence of the Mahdi and the advent of "the end of time" were wide spread through out various regions of Islamic Africa well before the emergence of Dan Fodio's movement at Sokoto. Scholars also contend that Dan Fodio's own writings may have reinforced the actions of various Mahdist movements that sprang up in regions outside the Caliphate. That Muhammaad Ahmad's movement "found not sympathy but hostility among the authorities of the Sokoto Caliphate" (Adeleye 104) is still puzzling to Adeleye.

Perhaps reasons for the Sokoto authorities rejection of Muhammad Ahmad's Mahdist claim, may be found in the writings of African-American historian and Islamic scholar, Muhammad Shareef bin Farid. In his work *The hour of the Christians*, Shareef follows in the tradition of previous African scholars who speak as Muslims writing essentially about history they see as their own. Again here, I am want to apply Hiskett's contextual framework for reading the work's of Ibraheem Sulaiman, to the prose of Shareef for I feel the same rules apply. In explaining the context by which works like Sulaiman's are rendered most beneficial, Hiskett writes, "To read him is to thus savor, almost at first hand, the fierce ideological ardour of this movement and it's ferocious intolerance." (Hiskett 637) Intolerance here of course is in reference to their not being any governing body of principles in competition with the shari'a—which the founders of Sokoto most certainly stood for.

Shareef's historical account discusses at length the *fitna* that ensued as a result of Hayatu's rebellion against the Islamic state during the reign of Caliph Umar. However, the spread of Hayatu's Mahdist ideals were curtailed, not by military might, as Adeleye has duly noted (107) but through the successful ideological war waged by the ulema of Sokoto against the machinations of Hayatu (Shareef 45). Dr. Adeleye notes how there had been communication between Hayatu and leading members of the family including "his father Sa'id," "the Amir al-Mumineen...Umar "and one of Dan Fodio's daughters, Maryam bint Uthman dan Fodio. (Adeleye 105) What Adeleye does not mention however are the details of the exchange, namely Maryam bint Uthman's response to Hayatu's "exhortations" for them to make *hijra* or "emigrate" (ibid) eastward in order to join him and those forces loyal to Muhammad Ahmad.

Shareef mentions how Maryam, as one of the last surviving children of the Shehu, had served as one of the foremost advisors to the Caliph during Hayatu's rebellion. In fact it was Maryam bin Shehu's scholarly treaty entitled *Wathiqat ila Amir Kano fi Amr'l Mahdi* (Treaty to the Governor of Kano regarding the affair of the Mahdi), written in response to the claims of Hayatu and his liege, Muhammad Ahmad, that ameliorated the confusion that emerged in the Caliphate. Maryam started by reminding the community of the teachings of Dan Fodio concerning the actions that should be taken when the authentic moment of the hijra had arrived.

Further Shareef notes that Maryam mentions how her father, the Shehu, "...informed us about our eventual hijra from the lands of the Hausa but he did not designate a specific time for the hijra except that he said that when the time did come no one would be unawares. Rather this event will be as obvious as a fire." (Shareef 45/6) The author also cites how Maryam bint Shehu makes mention of "the holding back of rain" and "...the seas of tribulations, which will occur in the western lands..." (Ibid) causing the people of the region to "flee". These two signs, she says, will be a prelude to the true hijra of the people of Hausaland. Maryam then ends her proclamation by pointing out how both these signs were "reliable based upon the narration of the two, my father, the Shehu Uthman and his son Muhammad Bello..."(ibid)

This theme of hijra is central to Sokoto eschatology and the implications of Maryam bint Shehu's letter with regard to the Caliphate's response to British colonialism will be hopefully made more clear in the final section of this review. However what is important to note from the passage cited above, are how messianic ideas, unique to the Torodbe Fulani clan, were passed down within the family of Dan Fodio and circulated throughout the Caliphate. Shareef further posits that Maryam's

treaty in fact “extricated” the Caliphate from the ideological threat posed by Hayatu and his Mahdist supporters along the eastern frontier, underscoring the fact that the demonstrating how her *Wathiqa* was deployed in order to correct the claims of the Sudanese mahdi, Muhammad Ahamad.

While the *Wathiqa* may have assuaged any doubt among those within the *amirates* close to the center at Sokoto, the socio-political unrest on the eastern fringes of the Caliphate still had not yet been put down. As Adeleye points out (107) the areas on the outskirts were difficult to control and Hayatu’s campaign was further invigorated by the conscription of one Mallam Jibril Giani, who established his base at Burmi, enjoying both tactical and military support from Hayatu during his reign of terror along the eastern borders of the Islamic state. Mallam Jibril’s activities would eventually come to a halt during the first battle of Burmi following the death of he and several of his followers at the hands British forces in 1903 (Adeleye 108). Mallam Jibril’s decision to fight instead of surrender would later prove beneficial to that faction within the Caliphate who chose to make their last military stance in the face of the British colonialism during the second battle of Burmi that same year.

Some of the most informative research regarding the roll of Islamic eschatology in the response of Northern Nigerian Muslims to British colonialism may be found in the writings of Muhammad Sani Umar, Associate Professor of Religion at Northwestern University. In his article *Muslims’ Eschatological Discourses on Colonialism in Northern Nigeria* (1999), Umar asserts that the Mahdism invoked in late 19th and 20th century West Africa has too often been characterized as a response to colonialism and the activities that stemmed from it. He thus argues that West African “mahdist discourses on colonialism are better understood within the larger framework of Islamic eschatology” (Umar 61) and that Muslims who used Mahdism

as an impetus for colonial resistance did so, understanding that British colonialism was merely a “sign” of an unfolding narrative connected to “the end of time”. Much like Balogun, Sani seeks to move away from ‘social and political’ classifications of Mahdism that he believes has dominated the discourse, particularly among authors from the 1960’s onward.

The author opts for a more holistic view of these phenomena mentioning that in Sokoto, Mahdsim was not merely a response to the British invasion, but rather a thoroughly entrenched idea that had been in place well before the coming of European colonialism, as indicated by the writings of the Sokoto scholars. West African Mahdsim then, according to Sani, was less about Muslims reacting to colonialism and more about where colonialism fit within the broader narrative regarding Islam’s end time scenario. “Mahdist discourses identify colonialism” as one of the signs of the end of time. (ibid) Umar also identifies four distinct “eschatological discourses” around which responses of Sokoto scholars and rulers can be classified: 1) The Discourse of armed confrontation (2) Discourse for withdrawal hijra (3) Discourse for moral restoration and religious revival and (4) Discourse for supporting the colonial regime (Umar 67-70)

Sani further provides the contextual and historical framework for the basis of his theory with the publishing of *Islam and Colonialism* (2006). In this work Sani seeks to move beyond the binary discourse that characterizes British Colonialism in predominantly Muslim lands, as either “supportive or subversive of Islam” (Umar 6). Instead he complicates the issue by raising questions that offer an alternative perspective on the ways in which modern scholars and historians understand the response of Northern Nigerian Muslims to British colonialism. Umar unearths his perspective by interrogating primary sources that include Islamic treatises, poems and

novels written by Northern Nigerians in both Arabic and Hausa, secondary source materials written in English by Western and non-Western academics, and interviews recorded during his extensive field research through out the region. What emerges are a three-tiered perspective of colonialism from the vantage point the Umara of Northern Nigeria, the ulama or mallams (Nigerian Muslim scholars).

Over the course of each narrative, Umar demonstrates how Nigerian Muslims' response to British colonialism varied from *jihad*—overt military struggle waged by *Umara* and their followers, to the decision to make *hijra*, when it is believed that leaving one's homeland would do more to preserve Islam than remaining in it. It is on this point of *hijra* and its impact on the future of the Sokoto Caliphate that is of specific importance in this review.

Regarding the decision to emigrate, Shareef (58) reinforces Umar's assessment that the opinion involved a concerted effort between both the scholars of Sokoto, namely the legal rulings of Qadi Abdullah ibn Ali— known as *Mudi Abdu*, and the sanctioning of his opinions by the legitimate Sultan of Sokoto at that time, Attahiru I. (Umar 68) Both authors cite Mudi Abdi's work *Risala wa-Nasiha* (A Letter and Sound Advice to the responsible people of the time), as the most thorough legal and juristic articulation of the reason for emigration.

Although Umar does not make this claim explicitly, my reading of both he and Shareef suggest that the history of the *hijra* and the community of Muslims who emigrated with Caliph Muhammad Attahiru I, was perhaps the most comprehensive response of the Caliphate to British colonialism. The treaty of Mudi Abdu encompassed the both the legal and eschatological traditions of Sokoto, as Shareef and Umar point out. Yet I would go even further and say the treaty of Mudi Abdu encompassed every Islamic response cited by the Umar save the last—that being,

support of British colonial Rule. I further believe that there is significant work to be done on that facet of Sokoto history beginning with the emigration lead by Caliph Attahiru I after the British sacking of Sokoto in 1903, and the series of battles that took place at Burmi that same year between the combined forces of Attahiru, and the Mahdist rebels lead by Mallam Jibril Giani.

Dugate's (1985) discusses the details of the battles in two brief chapters in his work where the incidents at Bormi are viewed within the broader context of British colonial endeavors in Northern Nigeria. His insights into the first battle that occurred on May 13th in 1903, chronicles the defeat of British military forces by a cadre of warriors that included Mahdist stalwarts loyal to Mallam Jibril, and, those forces that made the hijra with Caliph Attahiru. (Dugate 207) Marjomma (1998) notes how Burmi in 1903, which had been a source of conflict within the Caliphate for over a decade, had become a "safe haven for many dissidents from all over Hausaland and beyond" (194). Marjomma further notes that members of the Tijaniyya sufi order, who had previously fought alongside the scholar warrior al-Hajj Umar Futi Tal in his campaign against the French, had joined the forces of Attahiru during the hijra, comprising a significant portion of the ranks that were unified under Attahiru's leadership during the second battle at Burmi. (204)

On July 26th 1903, the Caliph Attahiru and hundreds of his followers fell to the British Maxim gun during their second encounter at Burmi, but not without a transfer of leadership occurring in which Attahiru's son, Muhammad Bello Mai Wurno, was appointed the successor. Sultan Mai Wurno was among the few that actively fought against the British at Burmi and actually escaped. He, along with thousands of supporters and followers, finally completed the hijra, settling in a village along the Blue Nile in Eastern Sudan in 1906 (Shareef 75).

This village—eponymously named Maiurno, is an extremely significant, yet often overlooked facet of the post-colonial narrative of the Sokoto Caliphate. In *Maiurno of the Blue Nile: A Study in oral biography* (1980), the miracle tradition, as well as the eschatological traditions associated with the descendants of Dan Fodio, are the central focus of this small and concise narrative compiled by Ahmad A. Nasr. Nasr begins his narrative by recounting the real threat British officers felt Sultan Maiurno posed upon his arrival to Sudan. Rumors of another Fulani jihad lead by Sultan Maiurno circulated widely within British intelligence circles. There was also the belief that he was gathering support in order to vanquish British forces in his return back to Nigeria, this time as the legitimate Caliph of Sokoto lead by none other than the long awaited Mahdi himself (8).

Nasr's work focuses mainly on the life and exploits of Muhammad Bello Maiurno as articulated by the words of his former griot (praise singer) Musa al-Tahir Maitanaka. The oral interviews take place over the course of two months beginning on April 16th 1976 and ending on June 6th that same year. Nasr records the words of Maitanaka, which allows him to present the spiritual and cosmological realm of the Hausa-Fulani of Maiurno. In this world saints like Dan Fodio and Maiurno, act as intermediaries between the common folk and the spiritual realm of *jinn* (hidden, sentient beings), *awliya* (holy-men), and the entire kingdom of the unseen. (24/5) Nasr's usage of Venn diagrams and charts to explain these concepts, further adds an empirical component to the study of "miracle narratives" that the writer has not seen express elsewhere. (Ibid)

Conclusion

The focus of this literature review was to flush out what has already been written regarding the roll that Islamic eschatology, cosmology and spirituality played in the ideological formulations of Sokoto's founders. We also sought to chart how the Caliphate used these ideas in their response to British colonialism. The works of Nasr and Shareef are among the few English sources that I've encountered that tackle the history of Maiurno, Sudan within the context of its storied connection to the Sokoto Caliphate. Thus, this review is also part of a broader research project, whereby the author seeks to contribute to that facet of history dealing with the social, political and religious implications of the community of Maiurno on the history of the Sokoto Caliphate.

It is also important to note that Al-Hajj Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad Attahiru I was the Sultan of Maiurno during the period of Nasr's research in 1976 and he remains the current Sultan of Mai Wurno still today. (Shareef 76) I should also remind the reader that Caliph Muhammad Attahiru I was the last Sokoto Caliph to be chosen outside of the purview of British colonial officials and was viewed by the vast majority of Sokoto's ruling elite as the legitimate *Amir al-Mumineen* despite the creation of the shadow Caliphate that emerged following the British installation of Muhammad II in 1903. (Umar 67) This raises obvious questions about the current political legitimacy of the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'adu Abu Bakr who took office in 2006. Further, if the community of Dan Fodio and their Muslim co-religionists through out West Africa and Sudan, saw Muhammad Bello Mai Wurno as the legitimate heir to the Sokoto Caliphate, as Nasr has indicated (Nasr 11), then what position does the current Sultan of Maiurno, al-Hajj Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad Bello, occupy within the existing political hierarchy of Sokoto? A thorough examination of

these questions may help us understand the ways in which Colonialism has affected ideas of religious and political legitimacy among different rulers within various parts of the Muslim world.

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