Ancient Ghana and Mali

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Preface to the 1980 Reprint
Ancient Ghana and Mali was first published in 1973. That edition now being out of print, colleagues and students have suggested that the book be made available once more. I was delighted that Africana readily agreed to undertake a reprinting. Since the book was published, I have continued to study this formative period in West African history, mainly through the reevaluation of Arabic sources. Other commitments, however, have prevented me from revising the original text. Although such an edition would have incorporated some new factual and interpretative evidence, I feel that the existing text remains historically valid and accurate.
Appended to this reprint is a bibliographical list and topical survey of recent publications related to ancient Ghana and Mali. The bibliography bears evidence of ongoing research in this field during the last six or seven years. New writings include doctoral dissertations, some of them by Malian historians, as well as books, essays, and articles by scholars who have already contributed to the study of this period. Among them I might mention a recent book by M. Ly, L’Empire du Mali. Using Portuguese sources, she stresses the survival of the western provinces of Mali on the Gambia in the sixteenth century. In view of her evidence, my treatment of the area, found here on pages 94 to 99, could be amplified.
I am grateful to colleagues who have used Ancient Ghana and Mali as a classroom text, and to reviewers of the book for their valuable comments and critiques.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem June 1979

Preface to the First Edition
This book attempts an analytical presentation of the available evidence - mainly Arabic, but also Portuguese, sources and oral traditions - on the history of the ancient kingdoms of Ghana and Mali. The monograph is divided into two parts. Part One follows the historical process in the Western Sudan from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries. Part Two is a topical analysis of the principal themes: government, trade, and Islam. Because the same sources were used for both parts, and often for many chapters, some repetition could not be avoided. Detailed references to the sources allow the reader to put the historical reconstruction to the test.

An introductory chapter on the sources may have been expected. I preferred, however, to evaluate the sources throughout the text as they bear evidence on the historical account. I am very much concerned with the revaluation of the Muslim historiography of Africa and there are some references to published and forthcoming papers on this subject. A more systematic introduction to the Arabic sources, and to individual geographers and historians, will appear in a volume I am editing for the University of Ghana Publications Board. The sources in that volume were translated into English by the late Dr Rajkowski and by Dr J. F. P. Hopkins. These translations and those by J. S. Trimingham (1962) were consulted when I translated quotations from Arabic texts in the present book.

Arabic sources, as the reader may see, form the basis of this study. I have preferred, therefore, to use the Arabic transcription throughout the book, even for African names. A book in English on an area covered mainly by French scholarship can hardly escape some inconsistencies in the spelling of place names.

PREFACE
Most references in the notes are to primary sources, and the few references to works by modern scholars are but a token acknowledgement of my debt to those in whose steps I follow. The responsibility for the writing of the history of ancient Ghana and Mali is now being taken over by young African scholars, who have introduced a new perception of African history. The originality of their
contribution has been well manifested in the Conference on Manding Studies, held at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the Summer of 1972. Papers submitted to this conference were consulted for lastminute amendments as this book was going to the printer.

A draft typescript of this book was read by some of the leading authorities on the history of the Western Sudan: J. D. Fage, H. J. Fisher, R. Mauny, D. McCall, C. Meillassoux, and Y. Person. I am grateful to these eminent scholars and good friends for their detailed comments and thoughtful suggestions. They saved me from many errors of fact and interpretation; those left are my own responsibility. Mrs Paula Sonnenschein carefully prepared the typescript, and Mrs Gillian Wright edited it with much skill and sympathy.

Grants from the Central Research Fund and the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem helped in meeting expenses incurred at different stages of the research and production of this work. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem July 1972 N.L.

PART ONE

In Antecedents

The name 'Ghana the land of gold' was first mentioned by the Arab geographer al-Fazari towards the end of the eighth century.1 By then, the kingdom of Ghana had been flourishing for some time, perhaps for centuries, though the date of its foundation cannot be fixed with any certainty. Through its trade in gold, the fame of Ghana extended beyond the Sahara, as far as Bagdad, where al-Fazari lived at the court of the 'Abb~sid Caliph. About a century later, in 872, al-Ya'qiibi counted other kingdoms of Bildd al-Sfiddn, 'the land of the Black Peoples', of which Ghana, Gao, and Kanem were the greatest.2 Were all the kingdoms at that early period located close to the desert, or were there other kingdoms farther south, in the savannah? Some records of Arab geographers suggest that the peoples south of the dominions of Ghana were loosely organized and fair game for slave raidings.3 Also, documentary and traditional evidence indicate a process of state-building which

Notes to Map I

1. The northern frontiers have been marked to include Awdaghust (in Ghana) and Tadmekka (in Mali). Mali may have expanded farther north into the Sahara.
2. Note that the majority of the Soninke were included within the
frontiers of Ghana (see Mauny, 1961, 510).
3. Note the distinction between the Sahel and the southern habitat of
the Malinke. The northern frontier of Mali, between the Upper Senegal river and
the Middle Niger, c. 1500 approximated to the
southern frontiers of Ghana (c. 1050) and Songhay (c. 1500).
4. The southern frontiers of Mali c. 1500 extended south of the
c. 1300 frontiers following the migration of the Malinke. This southward
migration, however, intensified after the disintegration
of Mali.

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expanded gradually from north to south: Ghana in the Sahel, Mali in the Sudanic
savannah, the Mossi-Dagomba states in the Guinea savannah, and the Akan states
of the forest; the more southern among these developed later in time.
Historians of the colonial period were inclined to attribute the creation of the
kingdoms of Sahel to nomad invaders from the north, of white origin and of a
higher civilization. Maurice Delafosse postulated a migration of the so-called
'JudeoSyriens', who wandered from Libia to Bornu or Air, and then westwards
across the savannah. To these white migrants, whom he regarded also as ancestors
of the Fulbe, Delafosse ascribed the creation of at least two kingdoms: Ghana and
Takrir. This and other hypotheses are based on fragmentary and inconclusive
evidence and are derived from the (now obsolete) assumption that the peoples of
the Sudan could not develop organized states themselves.
In the middle of the seventeenth century the authors of Ta'rikh al-
Sfiddn and Ta'7ikh al-Fattdsh (al-Sa'd! and Ibn al-Mukhtir), recorded old sayings that the first
kings of Ghana had been white and their subjects 'Wa'kore' (i.e., Soninke). This and other hypotheses are based on fragmentary and inconclusive
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kings of Ghana had been white and their subjects 'Wa'kore' (i.e., Soninke).5
Historical traditions recorded since the turn of the century among the Soninke
repeat the claim that their ancestor was a white man, who had come from the
east.6 It is significant, however, that none of the early Arabic sources before the
twelfth century imply that the rulers of Ghana (or, for that matter, of Songhay and
Takrai) weie, or had been in the past, other than black. al-IdrisI was the first
to write that the king of Ghana, 'according to what is reported, belongs to the
progeny of Sdlih b. 'Abdallih b. al-
Idrisi wrote after the Almoravids' conquest of Ghana and the islamization of that
kingdom. One is tempted to seek Islamic influence in the claim to white (often
Arab or even shariftan) origin.
However, the emergence of the earliest kingdoms close to the desert was by no
means accidental, and a certain northern

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influence must be taken into account. The Sahara, as modern research
convincingly indicates, was not a complete barrier between Tropical Africa and
Mediterranean Africa.
The story of the Sahara over thousands of years may be interpreted from rock
paintings and engravings. Until about the fourth millennium B.C. the Sahara was
humid and well-watered with rivers and lakes, as suggested by engravings of
elephants, rhinoceros, giraffes, hippopotami, crocodiles, and fish. The Sahara then entered upon a process of gradual desiccation. As the lakes dried up the aquatic animals disappeared from the rock paintings, but elephants, rhinoceros, and giraffes were still extant. By this period cattle appear in the rock paintings; the early hunters of the Sahara give way to pastoralists. Towards the end of the second millennium the big animals disappeared from the Saharan scene, and retreated north and south to the more humid zones. The elephants of Carthage represented the residual fauna of the Sahara. By the fifth century B.C., as indicated by Herodotus’ description of the Sahara, the desert had already assumed much of its present shape and characteristics. The population which had formerly been spread over large tracts of land in the Sahara was now concentrated in the few oases of the desert, around the water points. It is in these places that rock paintings of later periods were found.

Rock paintings showing chariots drawn by horses were discovered in oases between North Africa and the Niger. Two lines which link sites of chariot engravings indicate two main chariot routes across the Sahara: one from Tripoli via Gh5t, Tassili-des-Ajjes, Hoggar, Adrar-des-Iforas to Es-Souk (Tadmekka); the other, farther to the west, from the oases of Figuig via Zemmour, the Mauritanian Adrar, and Dhar-Walata to Goundam near the Niger. When cavalry replaced chariots in North Africa, c. 300 B.C., this change was reflected also in the rock paintings of the Sahara.

Significantly, among all the animals depicted in the rock paintings, one which is now so closely associated with the Sahara was missing. The camel does not appear in paintings of earlier periods, and is first seen towards the end of the 'horse period'. It is difficult to fix an exact date for the introduction of the camel into the Sahara from rock paintings, but Roman documentary evidence suggests that camels had first been used in the Sahara about the beginning of the Christian era. Once the North African nomads became acquainted with the camel, they lost no time in adopting this animal.8 Interpretation of the rock paintings suggests that the Tuareg, or the Libyans of antiquity, occupied the central Sahara in the first millennium B.C. as far south as Adrar-des-Iforas. They reached the gates of the Sudan on horseback, but horses were not well adapted to Saharan conditions and the mobility afforded was rather limited.9 Traffic across the Sahara, from the Maghrib to the Sudan, increased considerably with the introduction of the camel.

According to Henri Lhote, isolated black sedentary communities lived in the central Sahara over two thousand years ago as today, in the oases only. In the western Sahara there is archaeological and traditional evidence that black sedentaries occupied the country as far north as 200 N in Adrar, Tagant, and the Hodh. Neolithic sites there are attributed by the present nomadic population of the country to the Gangara, who were probably ancestors of the Soninke. Indeed, Azer, a Soninke dialect, is still spoken in Walata, Nema, Tichitt, and even in Shinqit, by small groups, mainly of black haratin. The haratin are isolated communities, subjects of the nomads (Berbers or Moors). They may represent...
remnants of those Sudanese communities that had formerly inhabited much of the country which is now desert.10
The gradual desiccation, of the Sahara, due to climatic changes, initiated the retreat of the black sedentary population to more humid lands. The process, however, was accelerated by the invading Sanhaja nomads. When the Sanhaja acquired

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enough camels, about the third or the fourth century, they pressed to the south, pushing the Sudanese before them. Black inhabitants of the Sahara were mentioned by Arab geographers. Writing in 1067–8, al-Bakri reported Sudanese highway robbers north of Awdaghust, beyond a country inhabited by the Sanh–ja. Tareshni, a Sanhaja chief at the beginning of the eleventh century, was killed in war against the Sudanese as far north as Adrar." Less than a century later in 1154, al-Idrisi recorded a tradition about the land of Qamniiriya, in present-day Mauritania: There were in the past famous towns of the Sudanese. But the Zagh–wa (sic) and the Lamt–ina of the desert, who live on both sides of that country, that is the land of Qamniiriya, coveted it. They annihilated most of the inhabitants, suppressed and scattered them over the land .... [In the past] they had chiefs and elders who administered their affairs and dispensed justice.... [Then] internal discord and raids from all directions followed one another. They penetrated that country and [its inhabitants] fled from there to seek refuge in the mountains. They dispersed in the deserts and accepted the protection of their neighbours .... Thus only a few of the people of Qamniiriya remain scattered over these deserts and near the coast .... Their conditions are harsh and they toil for their livelihood in a state of poverty, wandering over that land in peace because of the suspension of hostilities with their neighbours.12 Oral traditions in Mauritania now attribute the expulsion of the Sudanese from the Sahara to the Almoravid leader, AbiBakr ibn 'Umar.13 The Almoravids' invasion of BilWd al-Sfddn and their conquest of Ghana was the culmination of a long historical confrontation between the Berber nomads and the Sudanese sedentary population. As the Berbers advanced southwards the inhabitants of the Sahel changed and its landscape deteriorated from cultivated land to nomadic scrubland.

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Whereas the drying up of the Sahara and the general reduction in humidity were due to climatic changes, the extension of desert conditions into the Sahel was the result of human activity in historical times. Take, for example, the country around Koumbi-Saleh, believed to have been the site of Ghana's capital. The scene today is that of low pasture grass, thorny scrub, and scattered acacia trees, occupied by Moorish nomads. But traces of villages indicate that the region had formerly been more densely settled.14 al-Bakri says that around the capital of Ghana 'are wells with sweet water, from which they drink, and near which they grow vegetables'.5 Water can still be found by digging about ten feet under the sand. With the retreat
of the sedentary population the wells were neglected and became filled with sand, the nomads' herds destroyed the vegetation, and erosion impoverished the barren land. The limited amount of rain is just enough for a careful tilling, but this balance, so well maintained by the agricultural Sudanese, was violated by the nomads.

As smaller groups of nomads penetrated farther south, environmental conditions forced them into a gradual process of sedentarization. This was followed by a process of sudanization, or assimilation into the local population. These people, however, would retain the memory of their white ancestry. As nomads they were better drilled for raids and campaigns, and through military superiority they sometimes imposed their authority over the Sudanese. Yet the organization of the state was influenced by the more advanced culture of the sedentaries which the new rulers adopted. This, according to some interpretations, occurred in Kanem where the Zaghawa imposed their authority over the ('so-called') So.

The nomads of the Sahara had little experience in political organization and state-building. Even in the Western Sahara, where important trans-Saharan trade routes created conditions conducive to the development of more centralized forms of political organization, authority over the Sanhaja was loose and

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grew through periodical crises. Compared with the changing alliances among the nomads of the desert, the Sudanic kingdoms showed a greater measure of cohesiveness and stability. It follows that even if we admit - according to traditional and sometimes documentary evidence - that some of the early dynasties in the Sahel had nomad ancestors, the polity which emerged as a result of the imposition of alien rule was Sudanic in form and character. The Sudanic societies presumably developed a sociopolitical system which could furnish imposed alien authority with elaborated institutions, values, and ideologies. Faced with the pressure of nomads from the north such societies could also mobilize their own resources - without the intervention of outsiders - to reorganize on a larger scale under some central authority. Ghana may have developed in this way to ward off the Sanhaja.

The arrival of the Berber nomads in the southern fringes of the Sahara not only brought pressure upon the peoples of the Sahel, but also introduced them into the trans-Saharan trade complex. The chariots depicted in rock paintings across the Sahara suggest trans-Saharan contacts in the first millennium B.C. These were, however, war or hunting chariots and would hardly have been used to carry merchandise. Others were drawn by bullocks and could have been used only for local, shortdistance, transportation. According to the available evidence, the volume of trade carried over the desert had been insignificant before the introduction of the camel. The growth of the trans-Saharan trade during the centuries preceding the Arab conquest of the Maghrib was important in stimulating political reorganization in the Sahel. Berbers carried the trade and controlled it across the Sahara, but the gold which was the principal staple of this trade came from farther inland, beyond a country inhospitable to the desert.
peoples and to their camels. The gold was carried by Sudanese traders from its sources in the south to the Sahel, where it was exchanged for salt brought there.

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by the Berbers from the mines of the Sahara. In the Sahel goods changed hands and the means of transport was different: the camels of the Sahara gave way to the asses, bullocks, and porters of the Sudan. Shil is the Arabic word for ‘shore’, which is well understood if the desert is compared to a sea of sand, and the camel to a ship. Hence, the towns which developed in the Sahel - Takrdr, Ghana, and Gao - may be regarded as ports. These towns became both commercial entrepôts and political centres. Those who held authority in these strategic centres endeavoured to extend it in order to achieve effective control over the trade. Thus trade stimulated a higher level of political organization, while the emergence of extensive states accorded more security to trade. Political developments in the Western Sudan, throughout its history, are related to the changing patterns of intercontinental and trans-Saharan trade routes.

The Arab conquest of the Maghrib gave the trans-Saharan trade a new impetus. The Muslims in the Maghrib and beyond were interested in attracting the Sudanic gold on which their monetary system depended. As the trade grew in volume so did its effect on the political development in the Sudan. By the eighth and ninth centuries most of the traders engaged in the trans-Saharan trade were Muslims. These Muslim traders brought Islam to the Saharan nomads, and sowed its seeds in the Sudan. One should note, however, that Islam was not a factor in the emergence of the early states of the Sudan. All these states - Kanem, Songhay, Ghana, and Takrdr - started as non-Muslim states.

Our acquaintance with the political history of Africa is subject to the limitations imposed by the historical sources, documentary evidence and oral traditions. At the present stage of our knowledge these sources cannot take us farther back than the middle of the first millennium A.D. It was at that period that the northern among the Sudanese peoples - Wolof-Serer, Soninke, and Songhay - came into direct contact with the

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camel owners, nomads who hailed from across the Sahara. It was also about that time that the earliest states we know of in the Sudan came into being. We have tried to demonstrate above that there could have been more than one sort of relationship between the two historical processes. But, even if - as suggested - the earliest states developed as a result of confrontation with the Saharan nomads and participation in the growing trans-Saharan trade, the Sudanic societies must previously have developed to a stage where they were capable of responding to such external stimuli. Early economic, social, and political developments were the result of the agricultural revolution and the introduction of iron. Both innovations were due to outside influences that could have reached the Sudan from two directions: from the Sahara in the north and from the middle Nile valley in the east. Though
eastern influences should by no means be excluded, there is more direct and convincing evidence for the northern impact. Even Egyptian influences, which some scholars detect in the West African states, could have come from the north through the Libyans who had contacts with ancient Egypt.18 Archaeological evidence indicates a continuous distribution of Neolithic tools across the Sahara from the Sudan to North Africa. Neolithic civilization flourished in the Sahara in the fourth millennium when the region was well watered. The desiccation of the Sahara forced the cultivators to the southern and northern fringes. The main crops of the Sahara were wheat and barley, both winter rainfall crops, which do rather badly in summer rainfall areas. The people of the Nile valley south of Egypt faced similar problems. Acquainted with the techniques of food production, they had to experiment in domesticating local species of sorghum, millet and fonio. Whether invented independently in the southern Sahara and the Niger's bend or diffused westwards from the Nile valley, the cultivation of crops replaced gathering of wild seeds about the end of the second millennium B.C.19

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New light on the development of agriculture and its sociopolitical consequences has recently been thrown by P. J. Munson, who carried out archaeological research in the region of Dhar Tichitt-Walata.20 Radiocarbon dates indicate a sequence of settlements from about 1100 to 300 B.C. Large stone-masonry villages were constructed for the first time c. 1100 B.C. These villages were located at the base of the escarpment near the small lakes that existed at that time. Bones and carbonized plant remains suggest that people lived on the herding of cattle and goats with some hunting of wild animals and a limited amount of fishing. Wild seeds and fruits were collected, and a few impressions of seeds of the millet Pennisetum on the pottery may indicate a limited incipient cultivation. These were Neolithic sites: there were no indications of the use of metal. During the second phase, c. 1000-900 B.C., villages of a similar type were located on top of the high escarpment and were encircled by a masonry wall with other defensive structures on the approaches to the villages. This must have been a period of warfare and insecurity. More impressions on pottery are identified as those of cultivated grains and are clear signs of the development of agriculture. There were about four times more villages, which suggests a considerable increase in population. The third phase, c. 900-600 B.C., was marked by further development of agriculture, with only about twenty per cent of wild seeds, by the growing density of the population, and, significantly, by a greater measure of security, indicated by the lack of fortifications. The final Neolithic phase, dated between about 600 and 300 B.C., was one of very serious disturbances. The villages, much smaller now and heavily fortified, were hidden among the rocks at the summit of the escarpment. Standards of architecture and of the lithic and ceramic industries declined. At the end of this period agricultural settlements discontinued. Rock
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paintings of mounted warriors and tifinar inscriptions, as well as pre-Islamic Libyco-Berber tombs, clearly indicate that the culture of the cultivators was destroyed by the nomad invaders from the north. The Neolithic population of the south-western Sahara, physical anthropology tells us, was Negroid. Indeed, they may well have been proto-Soninke, ancestors of the Azer-speaking population which is still scattered over the area. Also, Munson found similarities between the plans of the masonry villages and the plans of the brush or wattle villages of the Soninke and related Mande-speaking peoples. He also suggests a continuity between the ceramic industry of the final Neolithic phase and that of the modern Soninke. Munson’s hypothesis is that the development of food production and the subsequent growth of population brought about competition over the land which caused internal warfare. Hence the fortified villages on the escarpment during the second phase. The greater security during the third phase might have been achieved as a result of the development of more complex, large-scale political organization in the form of chieftaincies. The cultural and political evolution of these protoSoninke people was, however, disturbed with the invasion of the early horse-riding Lybico-Berber nomads. But the cultural and political tradition had not been lost and it reappeared centuries later among the Soninke of the Sahel to the south. In the interim period the western Sudan was introduced into the Iron Age. The introduction of metallurgy brought about another technological revolution. Excavation in the copper mines of Akjoujt in southern Mauritania indicates that copper was extracted there as early as the fifth century B.C. As Akjoujt was close to the western chariot route it is likely that the manufacture of arms made of copper spread from North Africa. This early copper metallurgy may have paved the way for the introduction of iron. By 300 B.C. knowledge of iron-working spread from

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North Africa across the Sahara, or from Meroe along the open savannah, or from both directions.2' Those peoples of the savannah who first adopted the new techniques of the Iron Age achieved a more efficient mastery of the environment to increase their economic resources. Through the use of iron weapons they asserted military superiority over their neighbours who had softer weapons at their disposal. The people of Ghana, according to the twelfth-century geographer al-Zuhri, raided peoples who possessed no iron. The latter fought with staves of ebony, whereas the Ghanaians were armed with swords and spears.22 Armies of the centralized states had another advantage over their stateless neighbours by employing cavalry as a striking force. Arabic records assert that horses were important in all the Sudanese states, beginning with Ghana, both for military purposes and as a symbol of prestige for the king and nobility. The association between horses and kingship is of significance in Benin, where horses appear as royal symbols in works of art though they are now extinct in this forest.
region. It is likely that horses were first introduced to the Sahel about the first millennium B.C. when they first appeared in rock engravings. These may have been the ancestors of the small horses of Ghana recorded by al-Bakr.23

The development of agriculture, the introduction of iron and cavalry all contributed to social, economic, and political differentiation by the beginning of the Christian era. Some forms of more elaborate political organization, perhaps small chiefdoms, emerged. About the middle of the first millennium A.D., the increasing pressure of the Saharan nomads and the growth of trans-Saharan trade acted as stimuli for political reorganization on a larger scale in order to present a unified force against the nomads, and to achieve a wider and more effective control over trade. We may postulate the rise of one existing chiefdom under an able ruler, who spread his authority over neighboring chiefdoms. What we are really facing in the second half of the

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first millennium is the emergence of 'empires', or amalgamation of kingdoms. This is indeed what one may read into the text of al-Ya'qibi, writing in 872:

Then there is the kingdom of Kawkaw [Gao], which is the greatest of the realms of the Sudan, the most important and powerful. All other kingdoms obey its king.... Under it there are a number of kingdoms, the rulers of which pay allegiance to the king of Kawkaw, and acknowledge his sovereignty, although they are kings themselves in their own lands....

Then there is the kingdom of Ghana, its king is also very powerful. In his country are the gold mines. Under his authority are several kingdoms, such as _m and Sdma.24

Il" The Soninke Kingdom

The Soninke (called Sarakulle by the Fulbe) are the northern among the Mande-speaking peoples. They had the longest contact with the nomads of the Sahara. The pressure of the nomads and the inducement of trade contributed to the dispersion of Soninke from the Sahel to different parts of the Western Sudan. One may trace elements of Soninke origin among the Dyula of the Upper Niger and the southern savannah, the Marka in the region of Segu and Jenne, the Yarse in the Volta Basin, or the Diakhanke on the Upper Gambia.

Everywhere, clans claiming Soninke origin share the pride of having been once the people of the ancient Soninke kingdom of Wagadu. The legends about Wagadu are still functional in explaining the origins of different Soninke clans and groups. The status of a Soninke clan and its place in the parallel hierarchical structure of other peoples is often explained in terms of the role their ancestor had played in ancient Wagadu, or in the way this ancestor was affiliated to Dinga, the legendary ancestor of the Soninke. There are different versions of 'the legend of Wagadu', but only one theme.1

The story runs thus. Dinga came from the Orient and stayed in Jenne for some time. He then moved to Dyara-ba (Did) in Massina, where he married. One of his wife's sons was the ancestor of the Soninke in Didfiinu (in the Sahel near the
Kolimbine river), another son, Fade al-Hjj Suware, was the founder of Diakhasur-Bafing, which developed as the centre of the Diakanke. From Di Dinga moved to Kingui, and reached a place south-west of Nioro, which had been dominated by goblins. There followed a magicians' duel from which Dinga emerged.

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victorious and married the three daughters of the goblin. Dinga's sons from these wives were the ancestors of many Soninke clans; among them was the Sisse clan, the royal clan of Wagadu. Before his death Dinga wanted to bequeath his power to his elder son Khine. But (as in the story of Jacob and Esau) a younger son, Dyabe, outwitted Khine and obtained his father's blessing and power. Following Dinga's death, Dyabe had to flee from his brother's rage. He found refuge in the bush, when one day a mysterious drum (tabala) fell down from a tree before his feet. At the sound of the drum four troops of cavalry came out from the four corners of the bush. The four commanders recognized Dyabe as their superior, they became his lieutenants, and later - after the foundation of the kingdom - they became chiefs (fado) of the four provinces.

Dyabe, at the head of his new army, set out to establish a kingdom. He was directed to Kumbi, between Goumbou and Nema. The place was guarded by Bida, a black snake, who gave Dyabe permission to settle there on condition that he would be given the most beautiful young virgin every year. In return, Bida promised abundant rain and gold.

The new kingdom of Wagadu, with its capital at Kumbi, prospered under the rule of Dyabe Sisse and his descendants, who were given the title manga (or magha). The kingdom was divided into four provinces, each headed by one of the four commanders (fado). The descendants of Dinga and the four fado are recognized as the aristocratic clans of the Soninke, or the wago. The wago, who gave their name to Wagadu, are clearly associated with the history of that ancient kingdom of the Soninke.2

Once a year representatives of the four provinces of Wagadu assembled at Kumbi to celebrate the sacrifice of the virgin to Bida. This ceremony ensured the continuation of rain and gold, and may also have promoted cohesion of the kingdom. Some versions of the tale say that each year another province in its turn had to offer the virgin for Bida.

During the reign of the seventh king of Wagadu, when the

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virgin was brought forth to Bida's cave her brave suitor killed the snake. The dying snake pronounced a dreadful curse, which caused the desiccation of the land and the cessation of the gold. The head of the slaughtered snake fell down in Bure - in the country of the Malinke - which then became the land of gold. Deprived of rain and gold, Wagadu was ruined, its Soninke people dispersed and their country turned to desert.
The Soninke who had left their homeland carried with them the memory of their old kingdom. In the historiography of the Western Sudan the story of Wagadu accounts not only for the origin of the Soninke, but also for the beginning of the political history of the Western Sudan. This is indeed how the ancient Soninke kingdom is seen by the Muslim chroniclers of Timbuktu. The author of Ta'rīkh al-Fattish, himself of Soninke origin, recorded the following tradition over four hundred years after the rise of Mali:
The kingdom of Mali rose to power only after the fall of the kingdom of the Kaya-Magha, ruler of the whole western region. Until then the king of Mali was merely one of the vassals of the Kaya-Magha, one of his officials and ministers.
Kaya-Magha in the Wa'kore (Soninke) language means 'king of gold'. He was a powerful king. I have been informed by a trustworthy man, on the authority of the qd.i of Massina, Alf& Idd al-Massini, that the Kaya-Magha were among the most ancient of rulers, of whom twenty reigned before the coming of the Prophet. The name of Kaya-Magha's capital was Qunbi, which was an important town. Their dynasty came to an end during the first century of the hijra.
One of the elders told me that the last of them was Kanis'a'ay, who reigned at the time of the Prophet. He had a town called Kurunka, which was the residence of his mother.
It is still inhabited. It is said that he had a thousand horses tied up at his residence ....
Then Allah brought their rule to an end. He gave the most ignoble of their people power over their nobles. They killed all the children of their kings, even ripping open the women to kill those in the womb.
It is disputed as to the tribe to which these kings belonged; some say they were Wa'kore [Soninke], others say they were Wangara [Malinke] which appears improbable. Others say they were Sanhdja which seems to me more likely .... The nearest to the truth is that they were not black (min alsawedin). Allhd knows best because their days are far off, and the historian today has no evidence to bring forth to affirm confidently anything concerning them. No chronicle has been left about them upon which one may rely.3
Abd al-Ra'hm~n al-Sa'di, a Berber by origin, recorded another version of the same tradition:
Mali is the name of an extensive territory lying in the far west [of the Sudan] to the direction of the Ocean. It was Kaya-Magha who founded the first kingdom in that region.
His capital was Ghana, an important town in the country of Bdghana. It is said that their kingdom was in existence before the hijra, and that twenty-two kings reigned before it and twenty-two afterwards, making forty-four in all. In origin
they were white, though we do not know to whom they trace their origin. Their subjects, however, were Wa'kore [Soninke].
When their kingdom came to an end, the people of Mali succeeded to hegemony. They were black in origin.4
Both traditions as recorded by Muslim scholars from Timbuktu indicate confusion and uncertainty about the origin of the ruling dynasty. The authority of the Ta'rikhs enhanced theories about white origin, which have already been discussed above. The end of the dynasty, as described in T. al-Fattsh, suggests a revolution which 'gave the most ignoble of their people power over their nobles'. For Maurice Delafosse this revolution may refer to the rising of the black Soninke subjects against their rulers, the so-called 'Judeo-Syriens'.5

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The disagreement between the two versions as to the number of rulers before the hijra and after it suggests that these figures should be treated very cautiously, and could hardly be used for chronology. The symmetrical arrangement of the same number of rulers before the hijra and after it - as given by al-Sa'di - is typical of oral traditions, and should not be taken at its face value. What one may deduce from these traditions is that the kingdom of Kaya-Magha was an ancient one, founded before the coming of Islam to the Western Sudan.

The traditions about the kingdom of Wagadu recorded more recently, and the traditions about the kingdom of Kaya-Magha, recorded over three centuries ago, may refer to the same ancient kingdom of the Soninke. 'Wagadu' in Soninke and 'Baghana' in Malinke are two names for the same region in the Sahel west of the Niger. Both Kaya-Magha and Wagadu are associated with gold, as was, of course, Ghana of the Arab geographers. Kumbi is referred to as the capital of Kaya-Magha in T. al-Fattish and of Wagadu in the oral traditions. These references to Kumbi directed the archaeologists to Koumbi-Saleh, between Goumbou and Nema (15'46’ N 80 W), as the probable site of the capital of the old Soninke kingdom.

According to al-Sa'di, the capital of the Kaya-Magha was Ghana. He thus suggests identifying the kingdom of Kaya-Magha of the Soninke traditions with Ghana of the Arab geographers. Significantly, the name of Ghana does not appear in the oral traditions. Ghana is not mentioned even in T. al-Fattsh, a chronicle coloured by what one may call African historiography. There are in T. al-Fattsh many references to oral information but no evidence that any work by Arab geographers and historians was consulted. al-Sa'di, on the other hand, was acquainted with the earlier Arabic sources, as indicated by references to al-Hulal al-Mawshiyya, and to Ibn Batt&iia.6 This goes some way to explain why this scholar of Timbuktu cared to collate traditional and documentary evidence.

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Is it permissible to identify Ghana with the ancient Soninke kingdom of Wagadu? First we must try to explain how one kingdom could be known under three different names. The name of Mali, for example, appears in contemporary Arabic sources, in the Ta'rikhs of Timbuktu, and in the oral traditions recorded recently.
Mali, as we shall see later, developed as an empire out of a small chiefdom; when its power declined Mali lost the conquered territories and disintegrated into several small Malinke chiefdoms, which survived until the modern period. This continuity in the political history of the Malinke, and the survival of the Keita, Mali's royal clan, in the heart of the Malinke national territory, may explain the close correspondence between oral traditions and centuries-old documentary records. The Soninke kingdom, on the other hand, lost its political identity as early as the thirteenth century; many of its people - including the rulers - dispersed, much of the country became deserted and passed through many hands as new powers rose up. As a result, the traditions about this Soninke kingdom were not transmitted in the region where events had taken place, but over many parts of the Western Sudan.' This is what made it difficult, as C. Monteil remarks, to place the kingdom of Wagadu exactly in its historical context. Thus, in oral traditions the kingdom may be named after its geographical region (typical of the memories of people in diaspora, far from what is regarded as their natal land), while elsewhere it is known by one or another title (Ghana or Kaya-Magha) attributed to its rulers.

The oral traditions supported by the Ta'rikhs of Timbuktu assert the existence of an ancient kingdom of the Soninke in the first millennium A.D. According to contemporary Arabic records Ghana was then the most prominent kingdom in that part of the Sahel inhabited by the Soninke. Wagadu and KayaMagha, which feature legendarily in the oral traditions, become more concrete - within a territorial and chronological framework - in the accounts of contemporary Arab geographers.

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By the end of the eighth century Ghana was known in the Muslim world as 'the land of gold'. In the second half of the ninth century Kawkaw [Gao] and Ghana were the two powerful kingdoms of the Western Sudan, each with vassal chiefdoms under its dominion. The gold mines of Ghana attracted traders from the Maghrib who bartered salt, cloth, and other wares for gold. In the first half of the tenth century, according to al-Mas'iidi (d. 956), the gold of the Sudan was minted in Sijilmisa at the northern end of the Sahara. Ibn Hawqal, who visited Sijilmisa in 951, was impressed by the increasing volume of trade with the Sudan which had been carried over the desert.' A network of trade routes across the Sahara linked Ghana not only with the Maghrib but also with Egypt.

By the middle of the eleventh century Ghana had developed its natural and human resources, increased its political and military power, and elaborated its governmental and administrative systems. This one may try to analyse by following the earliest detailed account of the Western Sudan, that of Abi 'Ubaydalldh al-Bakri, written in 1067-8. al-Bakri, a resident of Cordova in Spain, never left his country. He based his writings on various written sources, in particular the one by Muh ammad ibn Yiisuf al-Warr~q (904/5-973/4), the original of which has not yet been discovered. al-Bakri also collected oral information from traders who visited the Sudan. His information was well up to date almost to the year of writing, which adds much to the intrinsic value of the
account, as he was writing at a crucial period in the history of the Western Sudan when confrontation was imminent between two powerful forces: the Almoravids of the Sahara and the Sudanic kingdom of Ghana.
al-Bakri's description of the capital of Ghana in the middle of the eleventh century is among the most detailed accounts of an urban centre in the Western Sudan. The city of Ghana consists of two towns in a plain. One of these towns is inhabited by Muslims. It is large with a dozen

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mosques in one of which they assemble for the Friday prayer. Around the town are wells of sweet water from which they drink and near which they cultivate vegetables.
The royal town, called al-GhAba ['the grove'], is six miles away [from the Muslim town], and the area between the two towns is covered with houses. Their houses are made of stone and accacia wood. The king has a palace and conical huts, surrounded by a wall-like enclosure. In the king's town, not far from the royal court of justice, is a mosque where pray the Muslims who come there on missions.14

al-Bakri placed the capital of Ghana in Awkar, the region between Tagant and the Sahel (in the south-eastern corner of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania). The ruins of Koumbi-Saleh are in the Hodh, about sixty miles south of the great moving dunes of Awkar. M. Delafosse was the first to suggest that the site of Koumbi-Saleh may have been the capital of Ghana. In 1913-14 A. Bonnel de Mezieres travelled in that region and found many ruins of towns and villages built of stone in a country which is now inhabited by wandering nomads only. Sedentary agricultural settlements begin some miles south of Koumbi-Saleh. Local traditions among the people of the area associate several sites in the vicinity with ancient Ghana, but Koumbi-Saleh proved to be the most promising. The site was excavated in 1914 by Bonnel de Mezieres, in 1939 by Lazartigues, and in 1949-51 by Thomassey, Mauny, and Szumowski. Excavations and aerial surveys revealed the remains of a large town which covered about one square mile. The town consists of two parts. The upper section to the north-east is built of stone and has spacious and rich buildings, some of them of two storeys, in which the ground floor seems to have been used as stores for merchandise. These houses belonged probably to rich merchants from the Maghrib. In the lower section of the town there are isolated stone buildings and traces of other habitations of lesser quality, similar to those of modern

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Sudanic towns. This, it is suggested by Mauny, was the Soninke quarter. Excavations at different points of the site indicate that the town was very densely inhabited. The houses are close together, with open spaces in between, and the streets rather narrow. There was one great avenue, which crossed the town from east to west. The avenue reached a width of 12 metres in front of the mosque, excavated in the centre of the town. The mosque was probably 46 metres from
west to east, and 23 metres from north to the south. The western half may have
been an open paved courtyard, a common feature in mosques of the Sahara and
the Sudan. This seems to have been the Friday mosque of the town. On both sides
of the great avenue there was open ground, probably market places.
Mauny estimates that the town had fifteen to twenty thousand inhabitants. The
importance of the town and its long duration are confirmed by two extensive
cemeteries. Koumbi Saleh was the largest town in the Sahara, and Mauny inclines
to identify it with the Muslim town of the capital of Ghana. Among the findings in
the site were iron objects such as lances, knives, nails, farming tools, a fine pair of
scissors. A few glass weights were recovered, so small in size that they must have
been used for weighing gold. There were also many fragments of Mediterranean
pottery, fifty-three stones with Arabic inscriptions of Koranic verses, and twenty-
four other painted stones with decorated motifs. All these findings indicate the
existence of a rich Muslim commercial community.
In medieval times the town was surrounded by agricultural settlements, but even
then the supplying of water to such a big town must have been a major problem.
On three sides of the town there are ponds, which may have stored water for some
time after the rains. Water may still be found at a depth of three metres below the
sand, and we know the people dug wells, as described by al-Bakri.
A carbon-14 date from a piece of charcoal taken from an

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excavation in the 'Great Avenue' indicated a date of 1210 (+150). It seems,
therefore, that the town continued to prosper even after the Almoravids' conquest
in 1076, and was abandoned only in the thirteenth century, under the rule of the
Soso or of Mali. The royal town of Ghana, which was six miles from the Muslim
town, may have been destroyed by the Almoravids. The elders of Walata,
however, took Bonnel de Mezibres to a place called Ghanata, about ten miles
north of Koumbi Saleh. There were extensive ruins but no sign of building in
stone, Mauny suggests searching for the town of Ghana in Dali Gumbe, where
water-pits have been located about six miles E-N-E of Koumbi Saleh, as the
proposed site of the Muslim's town (as in al-Bakri). Dali Gumbe is mentioned in
the legend of Wagadu as the capital of one of the four provincial chiefs.15
The royal town was very probably not as well built and spacious as was the
merchants' town. The Muslim town was not only an appendage to the local town,
but perhaps even more important than the latter. The relations between
the Muslim and the royal towns of ancient Ghana may be compared to the relations
between Salaga and Kpembe or Gambaga and Nalerigu in modern Ghana;
commercial-Muslim-cosmopolitan towns as against a royal-pagan-inward-looking
village.16 The twelve mosques of the Muslim town are in clear opposition to the
sacred grove (al-ghdba in Arabic) which was an extension of the royal town.
Around the king's town are domed huts and groves where
live the sorcerers, the men in charge of their religious cult. In these are also the
idols and the tombs of their kings. These groves are guarded, no one can enter
them nor discover their contents. The prisons of the king are there, and if anyone
is imprisoned in them, no more is ever heard of him ....
Their religion is paganism and the worship of idols. When the king dies, they build a huge dome of wood over the burial place. Then they bring him on a bed lightly covered, and put him inside the dome. At his side they place his ornaments, his arms and the vessels from which he used to eat and drink, filled with food and beverages. They bring in those men who used to serve his food and drink. Then they close the door of the dome and cover it with mats and other materials. People gather and pile earth over it until it becomes like a large mound. Then they dig a ditch around it so that it can be reached only from one place. They sacrifice to their dead and make offerings of intoxicating drinks."

This form of royal burial (reminiscent of the custom of ancient Egypt and known among other African peoples) is sometimes regarded as a trait of divine kingship. Excavations in two mounds near the lacustrine region of the Niger revealed tombs with burial rooms. In each grave there were two human skeletons with weapons, ornaments and beads. The tomb also contained other human skeletons and animals’ bones. V. Fernandes describes similar burial among the Malinke of the Gambia. The king was buried in his own home together with his weapons. His senior wife and people of his entourage were also brought in. The tomb was then closed, and a big mound of earth was heaped over the tomb to the height of a house.

One of the main themes in the Soninke tradition of Wagadu is the cult of the snake, guardian of the state. al-Bakri describes the cult of a snake by the Didfuqu who lived between Ghana and Galam, and were very probably Soninke themselves. The snake lived in a cave, and nearby lived the priests devoted to the cult. When their king dies all those eligible for kingship are assembled near the cave .... The snake approaches them, and smells one man after the other, until it pricks one with its nose. It then turns away to the cave, and the pricked man follows it as fast as he can run to pull from the snake’s tail or its mane as many hairs as he can. His reign will last according to the number of hairs, one year for every hair.

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In the reconstruction of early African history, corroboration of the various types of sources is difficult, indeed rare. The very fact that al-Bakri’s account is at all amenable to collation with oral traditions and archaeological evidence must add to the reliability of the eleventh-century geographer. Tunka-Menin succeeded to the throne of Ghana in 1063. 'He wielded great power and inspired respect as the ruler of a great empire.' The extent of his dominions, or rather his sphere of influence, may only be guessed from al-Bakri’s information. To the west Takrir was the dominant power over the lower Senegal river, and was - in all probability - a rival to Ghana both commercially and politically. Silld, a
dependency of Takrir, was twenty days travel from Ghana. In between there was a buffer zone of several smaller chiefdoms.22

To the east Gao, capital of the Songhay kingdom, was a rival commercial centre. As early as the eighth and tenth centuries Gao developed trading relations with Tahert in western Algeria.23 Under their first dynasty, the Dii, the Songhay did not extend their rule beyond the Niger's bend.24 Safanqu, north of Ra's al-MA' on the Niger, three days travel from Ghana on the route to Tadmekka, was the last province of Ghana to the east. Beyond Ra's al-M' and Safanqu, on the Niger's bend, the northern bank of the river was inhabited by nomad Berbers (who were undoubtedly independent of both Ghana and Gao). In their midst was TiraqqA, an important commercial centre and a meeting place for the traders of Ghana and Tadmekka.21

To the south-east early Soninke settlements between the Niger and the Bani rivers seem to have been part of the dominions of Ghana.26 Sama on the left bank of the Niger, west of Segu, may have been Sima, the province of Ghana, and its people, al-Bakam, described by al-Bakri as skilled bowmen, could well have been Bambara.27 Mema, north of Massina and west of Lake Debo, was also a province of Ghana, about which more will be said later.

To the south the authority of Ghana touched the gold-bearing

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region of Bambuk, beyond the Upper Senegal river. Ghiy~rdi perhaps Gundiru28 - which was the trading centre for the gold of Bambuk, seems to have been the last town of Ghana in this direction. Malal and Do, beyond the river, were independent chiefdoms of the Malinke.29

The northern frontiers were the most crucial throughout the history of Ghana. These frontiers were conditioned by the changing balance of power between the Sanhij a of the desert and the Soninke kingdom. In the second half of the ninth century 'the king of Ghust [Awdaghust]' raided into Bild4 al-Siddn.30 In the middle of the tenth century Ibn Hawqal recorded that 'the king of Awdaghust' exchanged gifts with the kings of Ghana and Kugha. 'These two kings stood in pressing need of the king of Awdaghust because of the salt which came to them [through his country] from the direction of [the lands of] Islam. They cannot do without this salt'.31 Diplomatic and commercial relations were vital to secure the flow of trade in salt and gold.

At the same period, according to al-Bakri, 'more than twenty kings of the Sudan owed allegiance to Ti-n-Yariltin [king of Awdaghust] and paid him tribute'.32 More significant was the aggressive intervention of Ti-n-Yaritin in a dispute between the chiefs of Misin and Awgh~m, both provinces of Ghana. Misin, whose chief called for the aid of the Sanhdja, may refer to the Azer-speaking Masna who inhabited some oases below the cliffs of Dhar Tichitt-Walata.3 Awghim, which was attacked by the Sanh~ja camelry, is described by al-Bakri as lying east of Ghana on the route to Ra's al-M&'.3 These northern vassals of Ghana were exposed to depredation by the Sanhdja, at a time when Ghana was too weak to arrest such aggressiveness. But within less than a century the balance of power changed again: Ghana expanded northwards, further than it had ever done before,
and the people of Awdaghust 'accepted the authority of the king of Ghana'.35 The confrontation between Sanhija and Soninke was about to reach its pitch with the rise of the Almoravids.

III The Almoravids
By the end of the ninth century the Sanhija tribes were spread all over the Western Sahara. The Lamta and the Jaziila occupied the northern fringes of the desert, in the vicinity of Widi al-Sis and Widi Dar'a. But they also descended south to raid caravans as far as Adrar.1 The Massifita dominated the route from Sijilmassa to Ghana and Awdaghust, served as guides to the caravans and levied dues from the traders.2 The Lamtnina occupied the central part of present Mauritania, the regions of Tagant and Adrar, and were in control of the prosperous trading centre of Awdaghust. The Juddda lived west of the Lamtina, along the Atlantic coast, some six days travel north of the Senegal river. They controlled the salt mines of Awil. All these Sanhija nomads were often referred to in the Arabic sources as Mulaththamfin, i.e., 'the veiled', after the muffler which covered their faces. In their midst, and as far as five days travelling north of Awdaghust, were important groups of black sedentaries.3 There is nothing in the contemporary sources to suggest a confederation of the Sanhija tribes of the southern Sahara.4 Ibn .Hawqal says that 'the Berbers of the desert have kings, chiefs, and tribal headmen.... The Massilfa have a king who rules them and administers their affairs. The Sanhija and other peoples of this region respect him because [his people] control the [trade] route. ...' During his visit to Sijilmdsa in 951, Ibn H.Iawqal met a trader who was well acquainted with Awdaghust.5 From this man he obtained valuable information about political authority in the southern Sahara:

Among those who live apart deep in the deserts are the Sanhija of Awdaghust.... Ti-n-Barfitdn ibn Iisfaishar, the

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king of all the Sanhida, told [Ibn Hawqal's informant] that he had been ruling over them for twenty years, and that each year people came to visit him whom he had never known before nor heard of nor set eyes on. He said he had under his authority 300,000 tents, shelters and hovels. Their kingship had always been vested in his family.6 This information may be collated with al-Bakri's account: During the 350s A.H. [A.D. 961-971] the ruler of Awdaghust was Ti-n-Yardt.n ibn Wasinii ibn Nazir, a man of the Sanhija.... His domains extended over two months travelling in length and width of inhabited country. He could put 100,000 camelry into the field.7 Ti-n-Barfitdn of Ibn .Hawqal and Ti-n-Yaritn of al-Bakri must refer to the same king.8 He was a Sanhija-nomad, very probably a Lamtnina. Though he ruled over Awdaghust, it is unlikely that he resided in that town or made it his capital. All the Arabic sources stress the nomadic, anti-urban character of the Sanhija.9 Marr-kush, founded by the Almoravids, was but a nomads' camp.1 Ab5 Bakr ibn 'Umar is reported to have said: 'We are people of the desert, and we have our
herds with us."11 A nomad chief of the Sanhija would probably not have settled down to live in a cosmopolitan urban centre such as Awdaghust, where most of the inhabitants were Zanita and Arabs. There is another example of a nomad chief of the Sahara who was ruling over a flourishing trading centre: in the fifteenth century Akilu, chief of the Tuareg, delegated the administration of Timbuktu to a governor, while he himself continued to live as a nomad of the desert.'2 Ti-n-Bartin, like killu, probably ruled over Awdaghust from his nomad camp, as a powerful tribal chief.

Awdaghust was not the capital of the Sanhija nomads, and the latter were not the urban traders who handled large export and import transactions. The traders of Awdaghust, as indicated

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by al-Bakri, were mainly Zanita Berbers from Ifriqiya Ibs in all probability - who, in the tenth century, gained a commercial monopoly over the trans-Saharan trade.13 The .anh. ja derived income and power from the trade by controlling the trans-Saharan routes as protectors and guides, and by exercising political authority over Awdaghust. The Zanita traders of Awdaghust were therefore not commercial or political rivals of the Sanhija of the Western Sahara;14 rather, they traded under the auspices of the Sanhja. When, however, Awdaghust was conquered by Ghana, these traders - committed to their economic interests only - 'accepted the authority of the king of Ghana'. This was a great loss for the Sanhja who were deprived of an important source of income and of their influence over a strategic trading centre. But, one must reiterate, with the fall of Awdaghust the nomad Sanhja chiefs did not lose their capital.

Ibn .Hawqal's account of groups of people who came to pay allegiance to Ti-n-Bardtan, many of whom he did not know before, is typical of life in the desert. These were weak tribal groups who sought the protection and patronage of a powerful chief, whose power increased with the number of his subjects. Periods of strength and of weakness in the life of a tribe or in the history of a chiefly family are also known in the desert.

Ibn AbI Zar', followed by Ibn Khaldfin, describes the political organization of the Sanhija in the southern Sahara as a loose confederation of tribes, with periods of cohesion and disintegration. But a critical review of their accounts would reveal that they do not represent coherent historical traditions, but an uncritical manipulation of al-Bakri's text and other unknown sources in the 'scissors-and-paste' method.15 'The period of weakness among the Sanhja (during which Awdaghust was conquered by Ghana) is related by Ibn Abi Zar' as '120 years of disunity and confusion as they could not agree on one ruler. Then they became united again when they appointed as their

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chief (Abfi 'Abdallh) Muhammad (ibn Tifat) known as Tareshni al-Lamtni'.16 This chief was Muhammad alias Tareshni, of al-Bakri, a pious man of virtue who went on pilgrimage and led the jih&Z. He was chief of the Lamtfina who
wandered in the desert between Bil‘l al-Islām and Bil‘l al-Sidn, and was killed in battle against a Sudanese tribe.\textsuperscript{17} al-Bakrī says nothing about the relationship between this Tareshnī and the Sanhāja ruler of Awdaghust, Ti-n-Yarātān (see p. 30). It is likely, however, that both were paramount chiefs of the Lamtīnā and members of the same chiefly family, that of Banfi Warṭāntaq. The future leaders of the Almoravids, Yaḥyā and Abū Bakr, sons of ‘Umar and their cousin Ya‘qūb ibn Tāshfin, also belonged to that family.\textsuperscript{\textquoteright} Following this account of the Lamtīnā, al-Bakrī turns to the Juddālā, another tribe of the Sanhāja. Their chief Yaḥyā ibn Ibrāhim went on pilgrimage and brought back with him ‘Abdallāh ibn Yūsīn.\textsuperscript{19} al-Bakrī does not indicate any relationship between the two tribal chiefs Tareshnī of the Lamtīnā and Yah yi of the Juddālā; each of them is mentioned in the context of his own tribe. But Ibn Abī Zar‘, again followed by Ibn Khādīlīn, tries to bring all these fragments into a coherent chronicle by making Yaḥyā of the Juddālā succeed Tareshnī of the Lamtīnā. The two chiefs, according to this version, were related by marriage, and Ibn Khādīlīn adds that it was because of this affinity that the Lamtīnā and the Juddālā presented a united front after that long period of disunity prior to the accession of Tareshnī.\textsuperscript{20} It is quite possible that the two chiefly families of the Lamtīnā and the Juddālā inter-married, and the mother of Abū Bakr ibn ‘Umar is said to have been a Juddālā.\textsuperscript{21} Is it possible that inter-marriage between the chiefly families of the two groups (with matrilineal succession among the Sanhāja) resulted in the rotation of the chieftaincy among Lamtīnā and Juddālā chiefs? A similar proposition has recently been offered as one explanation for the transfer of the leadership from the Juddālā to the Lamtīnā during the formative stage of the Almoravid movement.\textsuperscript{22} The following account attempts another explanation. In 427 A.H. (A.D. 1035/6) Yaḥyā ibn Ibrāhim, the chief of the Juddālā, set out for the pilgrimage. He visited Qayrawān on his way back from Mecca, and met there Abī ‘Imrān al-Fīsī, a leading exponent of the Mīlīkī school of law. His conversation with Abī ‘Imrān made it clear to Yaḥyā that Islam among his people was weak and superficial. He wanted a scholar to teach the true Islam in the Sahara, but Abī ‘Imrān could not find even one of his disciples ready to undertake the hardship of the desert. He therefore directed Yaḥyā to his former student, Wajdāj ibn Zālī, whose school in al-Silīs al-Aqṣī was known as Dār al-Mūrdbītīn. Yaḥyā arrived there in Rajab 430 A.H. (March/April A.D. 1039).\textsuperscript{23} Wajdāj was a Sanh-ja of the Lamtā tribe. ‘Abdallāh ibn Yūsīn, whom Wajdāj chose for the mission to the desert, was of the Jazīlā, another tribe of the Sanh-ja. His mother was from a village situated on the edge of the desert [which adjoins] the town of Ghana’.\textsuperscript{24} In 1039/40 Ibn Yūsīn reached the tents of the Juddālā in the company of their chief Yaḥyā ibn Ibrāhim. From the very beginning Ibn Yūsīn carried out his mission as a jikid, by combining religious teaching with military exploits. Under the dual leadership of Yaḥyā and Ibn Yūsīn the Juddālā attacked the Lamtīnā (or
a section of this tribe), and forced them to join the new movement. The force of the movement had been growing until its first crisis. As Ibn Yasin hardened his reforms and censorship, dissatisfaction became widespread among the Juddila. As long as Yahyl ibn Ibrihim, their chief, was personally committed to the reform, the Juddila acquiesced. But soon after his death they rebelled against Ibn Yisin. 'They took from him the administration of their public treasury, expelled him, and looted his possessions. He left the Sanhija tribes, and

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secretly visited his master, Waji j ibn Zalii.'25 Ibn Ydsin was about to give up his mission, but Waji j encouraged him to carry on.

The crisis brought about a retreat, hijra, which had both religious and political implications. The hijra is associated with the creation of a new community.26 It was only after the hijra that Ibn Ydsin consolidated his position as the supreme authority, and only then did the real Almoravid movement emerge out of the secular tribal society, with the shari'a (the Muslim law), as interpreted by Ibn Yisin, to guide personal, economic, political and military conduct.

The political outcome of the Juddila revolt against Ibn Yasin was a new alliance between the latter and Yahyd ibn 'Umar, chief of the Lamtina. The Lamtina now became the core of the movement. Religious inspiration and leadership added to the military potential of the tribe by giving it purpose and unity. Earlier, when Ibn Ydsin had led the Juddila to the jihld, they overcame the Lamtiina, but as the Juddila lapsed, and Ibn Ydsin's 'ark' came into the camp of the Lamtiina, the latter emerged as the leading force in the desert.

The Almoravids came out of their retreat in 434 A.H. (A.D. 1042/3),21 that is three or four years after Ibn Ydsin had first come to the desert. With his Lamtina followers under the command of Yahyd ibn 'Umar, Ibn Ydsin concentrated on bringing the Sanhija of the southern Sahara - Juddila, Massifia and other smaller tribes - into the movement, by persuasion or by force.

The Juddila had only reluctantly been coerced into returning to the movement, and were waiting for an opportunity to throw off Ibn Ydsin's authority. This they did when the main force of the Almoravids was engaged in military operations in Sijilm~sa and Awdaghurst, in 448 A.H. (A.D. 1056). The rebellious Juddila attacked Yahyd ibn 'Umar, who was entrenched in Jabal Lamtiina (Adrar), and killed him together with many of his

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warriors. 'From that time the Almoravids made no more attempts against the Juddila.'28

Disturbances in the desert occurred again after the Almoravids had conquered southern Morocco. Abii Bakr ibn 'Umar left Ibn Tdshfin in command of the Almoravids' force in the Maghrib and himself returned to pacify the desert tribes. According to one source the ferment was caused by another raid of the Juddila on the Lamtina, and according to another, it was a war between the Massifia and the Lamtina.29 Both sources, however, imply that the Juddila and the Massifia resented the domination of the Lamtiina as leaders of the Almoravid movement.
But, in spite of the inter-tribal tension in the desert, thousands of Juddla and Massfifa took part in the military exploits of the Almoravids in the Maghrib and in Spain.30

Why did the Almoravids leave the desert to conquer the Maghrib? According to Ibn al-Athir (1160-1233) there was over-population in the Sahara 'as the desert became too narrow for them'.3' This is unlikely, because the Sahaj a were then still advancing southwards at the expense of black sedentarism. Whereas the pressure to the south went on for centuries, before the Almoravids and after, an invasion of the Maghrib by Saharan tribes, coming from the southern fringes of the desert, was not only an isolated episode, but one which ran against the general stream of migration. In seeking other explanations for the Almoravids' drive north, we should first turn to the political and religious situation in Morocco on the eve of this invasion.

Repeated attacks by the Sanh~ja during the tenth century forced the Zan~ta of the central Maghrib (Algeria) to retreat west to Morocco. With the support of the Umayyads of Spain the Zandta became rulers of Morocco. Bani! Ifrin ruled over the northern plains with their capitals at Sale and Tadli, whereas the Maghriwa created three principalities in Fes, Sijilm~sa, and Aghm~t. As the Umayyad Caliphate in Spain declined, the Zan~ta rulers became independent and were free to resume

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internal feuds. In Morocco, as in Spain, the last decades before the Almoravids' conquest were those of mulzik el-tawd'if, or party kings.32

Constant warfare between the Zandta chiefs put an end to the short period of peace and prosperity that Morocco had enjoyed under Zandta rule. Shortly before the arrival of the Almoravids, the Zandta rulers, who had already taken the best lands of the local population, oppressed their subjects, seized their property, shed their blood, and violated their women. Commodities became scarce and prices went up. 'Misery replaced prosperity, security changed into fear, and tyranny substituted justice.' Under these circumstances the arrival of the Almoravids was regarded as a salvation, especially as they immediately abolished all illegal taxes.33

The aggressive domination of the Zandta over the two important trading centres of Sijilm~sa and Aghmit also affected the trans-Saharan trade, owing to the burden of taxation and the deterioration of security. The Zanita expanded south in Morocco as far as Wadi Dar'a, and interfered with the free transhumance of the semi-nomad SanhOja of the region. These Sanhija - Lamta, Jazflla, and other groups - could not themselves challenge the Zandta aggression, but they had good reason to seek alliance with their Sanha-ja brothers of the great desert. The spirit of solidarity among the Sanhija in their dispersion was still alive.34 It served as another link between the Sahara and Morocco, besides the more personal link represented by Ibn Ydsin al-Jazili, who had been sent to the Sahara by Wajdj al-Lamti.

Ddr al-Murabitin of Wajdj militated against the widespread heresy in southern Morocco.35 Very likely, Waj~j resented Zandta rule, both as a member of a
Sanh-ja tribe and in defence of the oppressed local population. The fuqahā' of Qayrawdn, whose tradition Waj-ji followed, had espoused the cause of the people against the tyranny of their rulers. By the middle of the eleventh century the Zandta in Morocco were orthodox

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Sunnites, but less than a century before many of them had been heretical Khirijites. Their conversion to the sunna, as allies of the Umayyads, had political more than religious motivation. A militant and puritan faqih such as Wajid may have regarded the orthodoxy of the Zandta as dubious.

We have already noted that Wajid helped Ibn Yasin to overcome the first crisis among the desert nomads. After the victory over the Sanhija of the Sahara Ibn Ydsln sent presents to the Muslim scholars of Masmila land, probably to his colleagues of Waj-ji's circle. The Almoravids became known all over the Sahara and the desert. Then, the fuqahā' of Sijilmisa and Dar'a invited Ibn Ydsin to save their country from the injustice and tyranny they had suffered under the ruler of Sijilm-sa, Masf'id ibn Wansdin al-Zaniti al-Maghraw. The Almoravids' drive to the north was, therefore, in response to the call of the fuqahā' of southern Morocco. In 1312-13 the anonymous author of Mafdkhir al-Barbar wrote: 'These two, namely Waj-ji and 'Abdallahu ibn Ysin, were the reason for the egression of the veiled people, known as Murbitian, out of the desert.'

The mission of Ibn Ysin and the rise of the Almoravids may therefore be interpreted as a scheme to recruit the potential force of the Sanhija of the desert, by inspiring them with a new militant Islamic ideology: to fight for the cause of pure Milikism and for Sanhdja supremacy. The veiled Sanh-ja accepted this alliance as an opportunity to reassert their authority over the trans-Saharan trade. After they had conquered Sijilmisa, the northern gate of the Saharan route, the main Almoravid force drove back across the desert and captured the southern terminus of Awdaghust, then under the rule of Ghana.

In 446 A.H. (A.D. 1054/5), while the Almoravids were fighting in the south, Sijilmdsa was recaptured by the Zanita, and the garrison left there was massacred. The people of Sijilmdsa immediately sent a mission to Ibn Ysin, calling the

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Almoravids back. Yahya ibn 'Umar, the military commander, had to stay behind to deal with the Juddala revolt. He was killed in the fighting and his brother Abji Bakr - then governor of Dar'a - succeeded him as amir, the supreme military commander. Abil Bakr ibn 'Umar reconquered Sijilmdsa and put an end to the resistance of the Zanita in the region of Dar'a. Between 448 and 451 A.H. (A.D. 1056/7-1059) the Almoravids conquered the Siis. A community of Shi'ites in the town of Tarildant was exterminated. The Masmida submitted without resistance, probably because of their enmity towards their Zandta oppressors. The Zandta, however, fought back and their capital Aghmat was conquered after a siege and a fierce battle. Laqqfit ibn Ytisuf al-Maghrawi, the ruler of Aghm-t, fled to Tadld, the capital of the Banii Ifndn, his Zandta kin. Abfi Bakr followed him, defeated the Banii Ifrn, killed Laqqiit and
conquered Tadla. The Almoravids then reached the frontier of the land of the Barghawta. In the fighting against these heretics Ibn Ydsin was killed in 451 A.H. (A.D. 1059), but the Barghawta were defeated and their power was destroyed.40 Abii Bakr had not yet completed the conquest of the Maghrib when news reached him of a dispute between the Lamtfina and the Massilfa in the desert, where their stock, their roots and the source of their reinforcement lay. He feared dissension and the severance of the bonds of unity. He [therefore] returned to restore his authority.41

Ibn Khaldin clearly illustrates here where Abii Bakr ibn 'Umar's real interests lay. Though he was fighting in the Maghrib he still regarded the desert as his base. He therefore hurried back to restore order at home. He appointed his cousin Yiisuf ibn Tishfin as his deputy in Morocco with one half or one-third of their forces to continue the war against the Zanita. This occurred in 453 A.H. (A.D. 1061), according to Ibn Abi Zar', or in 463 A.H. (A.D. 1071), according to Ibn 'Idh-r.42 Yiisuf's father, Tdshfin ibn Ibrahim, was the brother of

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'Umar, father of Yahya A and Abfd Bakr. Yiisuf ibn Tishfin was therefore next to Abdi Bakr ibn 'Umar in the line of succession to the chieftaincy of the Lamtfina. Under the leadership of AbB Bakr, Yiisuf was always in command of the advance troops.4

Ydisuf was therefore left as a deputy only, but events followed a different direction, owing to the intervention of the beautiful, intelligent, cunning and ambitious woman Zaynab. She was the daughter of a trader from Qayrawin, who had settled in the Sils. It is said that she had first been married to the Masmiida chief of Aghmit. As the Zandta took possession of Aghmit Zaynab transferred her loyalties to the new ruler and married Laqqiit ibn Yiisuf al-Maghriwi. After Laqqdit had been driven away by the Almoravids, Zaynab again followed the most promising course, and married Abfd Bakr ibn 'Umar.4 Before he left for the desert, Abii Bakr divorced Zaynab so that this woman, accustomed to urban luxury, would not have to undertake the hardship of the desert. As soon as the legally prescribed period of waiting elapsed, Ibn Thshfin took Zaynab to wife.45 This time she married a deputy only, but she was already resolved to make him a king.

Zaynab gave Ibn Tdshfin a large fortune, to which he added large sums levied from his tributaries. With this money he mobilized troops, bought Sudanese slaves and purchased Christian captives to whom he gave mounts.48 He introduced drums and flags to the army.47 In this way he changed the character of the Almoravids' army; instead of a force composed exclusively of the veiled Sanhaj a, he was building an imperial heterogeneous army. He also fortified his personal position vis-a-vis his leader Abii Bakr. Always under the influence of Zaynab, he sent letters to some of the Lamtiina who were then with Abfi Bakr in the desert, and incited them to join him. Many were tempted by the promised reward. At that stage, however, Ibn Tishfin made no attempt to break ties with Abii Bakr, and was still reporting to him by correspondence of events in the Maghrib.48
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In the meantime Abi Bakr accomplished the pacification of the Sahara, and may have also raided towards the Sudan. As news reached him about the growing power of Ibn Tishfin, he turned back from the Sahara to depose Ibn Tishfin, and to replace him by another governor. Ab5 Bakr probably had no intention of settling in the north as the ruler of the Maghrib. His attachment to the desert is attested by Ibn Khallikin (1211-82):

Ab5 Bakr ibn 'Umar was accustomed to simple life, a goodnatured man. He did not incline to luxurious life, and preferred his own country to that of the Maghrib... After he had conquered the Maghrib, Abdi Bakr heard that an old woman in his own country, who had a female camel stolen from her in a foray, cried: 'Abdi Bakr ibn 'Umar neglected us when he entered the Maghrib'. This induced him to appoint one of his companions, Yfisuf ibn Tishfin, as deputy over the Maghrib, and he returned to his country in the south.50

Ibn Tishfin was distressed by Abi Bakr's return: 'it was difficult for him to depart from the kingship after he had tasted its sweetness'. But the shrewd Zaynab assured him that as 'Abii Bakr had not tasted its savour', and as a man who hated bloodshed, he would not fight for the kingship.51 Ibn Tishfin should give Abdi Bakr not the kingship but rich presents, 'because he is coming from the desert where everything is regarded as exquisite'.52 This he did, and faced Abdi Bakr boldly. The latter, a humble sheikh of the desert, gracefully conceded to his ambitious cousin: 'I cannot live out of the desert, and I came only to hand over authority to you.... I will soon be back in the desert, the residence of our brothers and the seat of our Sultans'.53

The crisis was over, and Abi Bakr returned to the Sahara in peace. Ibn Tishfin remained at the head of the northern wing of the Almoravids, and established an empire in Morocco and Spain. Yet, until the death of Abi Bakr in 480 A.H. (A.D. 1087)

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Ibn Ydsin paid him nominal allegiance. Abdi Bakr remained the supreme leader of the Almoravids, who had been installed by Ibn T-shfin. He was also the senior member of the chiefly family of the Lamtfina. Between 450 and 480 A.H. (A.D. 1058-87) the golden dindrds of the Almoravids were struck in the name of al-amir Abi Bakr ibn 'Umar. Ibn Tishfin's name appeared on coins only after the 480s A.H.54

Ibn AbI Zar' states that Ibn Tdshfin's dominions extended over the Sahara and reached as far as 'the mountains of gold' in Bildd al-Siiddn. 55 He implies therefore that like his former leader Abi Bakr, Ibn Tishfin was acknowledged as the head of the two wings of the Almoravids, in the Maghrib and in the desert. In other words, there was no complete break between the Almoravids of the north and south. Other references may indicate continuous political relations between the Almoravids of the Maghrib and rulers of the Sudan. The twelfth-century Kit b al-Istibdsdr mentions a letter from Ghana to Ibn Tishfin.56 Yjqit (1179-1229)
described the visit of the king of Didffinnii, a province of Bildd al-Sfzddn, to Marrikush to the veiled Lamtfina king of the Maghrib (perhaps in the first half of the twelfth century). This Almoravid ruler paid much respect to his Sudanese royal guest.57 An indication of the close relations between Gao and Spain about 1100 is provided by royal gravestones of this period from Gao, which follow the Andalusian style.58 Marrdkush, the capital of the Almoravids in southern Morocco, was close to the desert, and its rulers maintained relations with the Sanh~ja of the Sahara. Abfi YahyA al-Massiifi, a brother-in-law of the Almoravid ruler 'Ali ibn Yiisuf ibn Tdshfin (1106-42), ruled over several tribes of the Sahara.59 Under the Almoravids the trans-Saharan trade flourished, and the flow of gold from the Sudan enabled them to strike large quantities of golden dindrs. Because of their high value, these dindrs were in great demand outside the Almoravid empire, in Ifriqiya and in Sicily. The Hildlian invasion at that time disturbed the

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flow of gold from the Sudan to the Central Maghrib. The western trans-Saharan route became all the more important and the Almoravids more interested in controlling it.60 Whatever relations existed between the Sudan and the Maghrib under the Almoravids, the major impact of this militant Islamic movement in the Western Sudan was due to the exploits of Ab-i Bakr ibn 'Umar. It is therefore to the southern wing of the Almoravids that one has to refer to take up the threads of the history of Ghana.

IV The Soninke Successor States
Back in the desert after his leadership of the Almoravids in the Maghrib had been barred by Ibn Tdshf in, Abi Bakr ibn 'Umar led the southern wing of the Almoravids in the jihad against the Sudanese. The base for his operations seems to have been Azukki (Azuggi), first mentioned as the fortress in Jabal Lamtfina (Adrar) where Yahyi ibn 'Umar had been besieged and killed by the Juddila in 1056. The fortress was built by Ydnnil ibn 'Umar, brother of YahyA and Abii Bakr.1 Azukki, according to al-Idrisi, was the Berber name of a town on the route from Sijilmisa to the Sudan; the Sudanese called it Qfiqadam Kikudam, as Yiqfit spelled it, was a town in the country of the Mulaththamfin, where the veiled rulers of the Maghrib - the Almoravids - came from. In this town artisans manufactured weapons and other tools for the nomads.3 Before it was conquered by the Almoravids Azukki, known in oral traditions as Madinat al-Kildb ('the town of the dogs'), is said to have been inhabited by Sudanese.4 Perhaps the artisans referred to by Yiqfit were black caste-men in the service of the Sanh~ja. Tareshnii, the Lamtfina chief in the first half of the eleventh century, was killed in fighting a tribe of the Sudanese west of the town Banklabin, near Waran in Adrar.5 Abii Bakr ibn 'Umar was himself killed in war against the Sudanese in Tagant, where his grave is shown about thirty-five miles south of Tijikja.6 The Almoravids continued the long struggle with the Sudanese, both those who were
then living in the desert and those of the Sahel. Oral tradition in Mauritania ascribes the expulsion of the Sudanese from the Sahara to Abii Bakr ibn 'Umar.7

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On the lower Senegal river Abfi Bakr ibn 'Umar is remembered as father of Ndyadyan Ndyay - the first brak (king) of Walo and the ancestor of the royal family of Djolof - born to him by a woman of the Torodbe clan (from Takrdir).8 Perhaps this attachment to the memory of Abdi Bakr was due to the cordial relations which developed between the Almoravids and TakrFir, then the leading power on the lower Senegal. Wir-Dydbe (or, War-Ndyay), the first Muslim king of TakrFir, died in 1040/1,9 or about the time Ibn Ydsin first came to the desert. The islamization of TakrFir had begun, therefore, in the pre-Almoravid period. 'When 'Abdalldh ibn Ydsin saw that [the Sanhdja] turned away from him and followed their passions, he wanted to leave them for the land of those Sudanese who had already adopted Islam'.10 This could only have been the land of TakrFir. Indeed, with the rise of the Almoravids, the king of TakrFir became their ally. Labi, son of Wdr-Dydbe, joined YahyA ibn 'Umar in fighting the rebellious Juuddla in 1056.11 The alliance between Tak-r-ir and the Almoravids was prompted by Islam, but it was also directed against a common enemy - Ghana. Indeed, it seems as if TakrFir of the twelfth century, as described by al-Idrisi, gained strength and wealth at the expense of Ghana. Its authority expanded up the Senegal river as far as Barisa which, al-Idrisi says, paid allegiance to TakrFir.12 In the middle of the eleventh century this important trading centre on the Upper Senegal, facing the goldfields of Bambuk, was clearly within the sphere of influence of Ghana, which also controlled the overland routes and the supply of salt.13 In the twelfth century Barisa received the salt of Awil by way of TakrFir and the Senegal river.14 This, if the evidence is correct and accurately interpreted, was one of the changes brought about as a result of the Almoravids' conquest of Ghana. Some decades before this, Ghana took possession of Awdaghust which had been held previously by the Sanhaja. The reconquest of this trading town was amongst the first objectives

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of the Almoravids and they turned their attention there in 1055, soon after the conquest of Sijilmdsa. Their hatred of Ghana found expression in the treatment of the people of Awdaghust: 'the Almoravids thus persecuted them because they had accepted the authority of the king of Ghana.'15 Al-Bakri concluded his account in 460 A.H. (A.D. 1067-8), when Abfi Bakr ibn 'Umar was back in the desert.16 According to Ibn Khaldin the Almoravids conquered Ghana, imposed tribute on the Sudanese, and converted many of them to Islam.17 This took place perhaps in 1076-7, as reported by al-Zuhri (writing in the mid-twelfth century):18 The inhabitants of that town [Ghana] were, of old, infidels until 469 A.H. [A.D. 1076-7], when Yahyd ibn Abi Bakr, amir Massfifa (sic) came forth. They were converted to Islam
during the times of the Lamtina [the Almoravids].
Seven years later, according to al-Zuhri, the Almoravids helped Ghana in war against Tadmekka, which then became Muslim. Tadmekka, an important commercial centre in the southern Sahara, must have been influenced by Islam well before the end of the eleventh century. But through its link with Tahert and Wargala (see pp. 136-7) the people of Tadmekka may have adopted the Ibdiyya. Thus the Almoravids supported the newly converted Ghana in enforcing Islamic orthodoxy in Tadmekka, and in the eradiction of early Ibidi influences from the southern Sahara and the Western Sudan.
al-IdrIsi, a contemporary of al-Zuhri, says that the king of Ghana and his people were Muslims.19 The islamization of the kingdom was one important result of the Almoravids' conquest, though we do not know whether the Almoravids retained the old dynasty or established a new Muslim dynasty, which claimed descent from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tlib.
Abii Bakr ibn 'Umar died in 1087,20 that is ten or eleven years after the conquest of Ghana. The position of the veiled Sanhaja,

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following the rise and fall of the Almoravids, is well described by Ibn Khaldiin about three centuries later:
These Mulaththamfin and their tribes remain to this day
wandering in the neighbourhood of the Sudanese.... Those of them who had founded an empire in Morocco and Spain were lost. These, as already mentioned, were some of the Lamtfina and the Massilfa. They were consumed by the exercise of authority, swallowed up in the vast territories, destroyed by luxury, and were finally annihilated by the Almohads. Those of them who stayed behind in the desert, remained as of old fragmented and divided. They are now in subjection to the king of the Sidn, pay him tribute, and are recruited to his army.21
In the long confrontation between the Berbers and the Sudanese the scales turned in favour of the latter. The power of the Sanhija who had taken part in the Almoravids' exploits was drained through migration to the north and through casualties in the wars. According to traditions of the Lamtiina, Abfi Bakr was succeeded in the leadership of the Almoravids' southern wing by six rulers: his descendants and those of his brother Yahyd. Anarchy then followed and the community was divided. But even before that the Almoravid government in the Sahara had been loose and amorphous.22 They could not have held authority over the Sudan for long. Consequently Ghana, now a Muslim kingdom, regained its independence, perhaps at the beginning of the twelfth century. In the middle of that century Ghana was described by al-Idrisi as 'the greatest country in Bildd al-Sfiddn, the most populous and had the most extensive trade. Wealthy merchants go there from the surrounding countries and from other regions of al-Maghrib al-Aq-s.'23
The capital of Ghana, according to al-Idrisi, was astride the river, and not in the Sahel as indicated by al-Bakri. It has been suggested that following the Almoravids' invasion, the centre of
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the kingdom of Ghana moved south and a new capital was built on the Niger.24 Perhaps this was not the great Ghana of the pre-Almoravid period but one of its successor states, like Mema, which will be mentioned shortly. Or maybe this is one of alIdrisi's inaccuracies, as a scrutiny of his text will indicate that he handled sources of different periods with little care.25 References to Ghana in Arabic sources of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are rather vague and do not even prove its continuous existence. The authors probably relied on earlier sources or on traditions associated with the people of that kingdom or its area.26 The town excavated in Koumbi-Saleh and suggested as the ancient Muslim town of Ghana - flourished in the twelfth century.27 By the thirteenth century Ghana lost its role as a commercial centre when Walata became the principal terminus of the trans-Saharan trade. More will be said about these changes later.

In the oral traditions of Wagadu the catastrophe came about when the snake Bida, guardian of the kingdom, was killed. This may be taken as a dramatic representation of a critical event in the history of the Soninke, perhaps a break with the ancestral religion and the adoption of Islam.28 Significantly, whereas in some other kingdoms of the Sudan, as in Mali, islamization reinforced the state, in Ghana it marked the kingdom's disintegration.

Empires in the Sudan do not disappear without trace. They disintegrate and are followed by successor states. The collapse of the all embracing Soninke kingdom gave rise to many smaller states of the Soninke. Political fragmentation rendered the history of this period more confused. The scarcity of contemporary Arabic sources makes it necessary to rely more heavily on oral traditions. The following tradition is recorded in Ta'rikh al-Fattish:

There was an ancient and important town in the land of Kaniaga called Sain-Denba, which was built before Di-ra, and preceded it as a capital. It was the town of the people of Di-finu, who are known as Diffinke. It existed in the times of the Kaya-Magha, and was destroyed when the kingdom of the Kaya-Magha collapsed as a result of their wars. Didra was founded after its destruction. Some people moved to Kusita, and are known as Kusa, while others moved to Didra.29 The Diffinke now live west of Kingui. In another tradition they are said to have been descendants of Sirman Mesane, a son born to Dinga in Did.30 Dinga was the ancestor of the rulers of Wagadu (see p. 16), and it is likely that Diffinu was within the political orbit of that kingdom.

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One may further speculate that they are referred to in alBakri's account of the Sudan as the Didfuqii, who lived west of Ghana. They worshipped a snake, which recalls the snake of Wagadu.31 There are two intriguing references in sources of the first half of the thirteenth century to the kingdom of Diffinu, where it is described as a powerful Sudanese kingdom. Its king had high prestige among the rulers of the Sudan, and was also much respected by the Almoravid ruler of the
Maghrib. Ydqfit's information must be related to the first half of the twelfth century before the end of the Almoravids' rule in the Maghrib in 1147. One is tempted to postulate that following the decline of Ghana Diiffinu emerged for a short time as a leading power in the Sahel. The enigmatic Diiffinu, however, soon disappeared to give place to Didra.

The first dynasty of Didra was of the Niakhate clan. Traditions say that following the fall of Wagadu, anarchy reigned in the region of Kingui, which was raided by Malinke bands from the south. Then Mana Maghan Niakhate, a Soninke merchant who used to pass through this region, organized an army consisting of his own followers and of the local people - Soninke and Diawambe. He defeated the raiding bands and was asked by the people to stay with them. He settled at Diira and became their king.

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The Niakhate of Didra later became vassals to the Soso, and then came under the domination of Mali. As vassals of Mali the Niakhate were left to rule their kingdom with a commissioner as representative of Mali to guarantee their loyalty. Towards the end of the fourteenth century the Niakhate were overthrown by a new dynasty, the Didwara, who took advantage of internal dissensions within Didra, and of the weakness of the Mali kings. Returning to the tradition recorded in Ta'rikh al-Fattsh, we read that after the kingdom of the Kaya-Magha had been destroyed, people known as Kusa migrated to Kusita. Kusita is now in the region between Nioro and Goumbou. In some legends the Kusa are said to have been crown slaves in Wagadu, but a recital of the traditional history of the Kusa, as recorded recently from a griot of the Kusa in Goumbou, refers very vaguely, if at all, to the participation of the Kusa in the ancient kingdom of Wagadu.

C. Monteil suggests that Mema was founded by a chief of the Kusa, after the extinction of Wagadu. Indeed, the Soninke traditions refer to Biranin Tunkara, the slave who had accompanied Dinga in his early adventures, and whose descendants later became chief slaves of the crown in Wagadu. A son (read a descendant) of Biranin Tunkara, called Fare Birama Tunkara, reigned over the state of Mema. Tunkara was the title or the patronymic of the rulers of Mema.

About twenty-five miles north-east of Nampala, on the road leading to Niafounke, is a small lake. Around it there are traces of an old town, which may have been an important one. The Fulbe who frequent this place call it Gallou (and under this name it appears on the maps), but the Soninke still remember it as Mema. In the country between Timbuktu and Nampala there are many mounds, which were probably royal burial places like those excavated in El-Oualadji, and resemble the description of the burial customs in Ghana by al-Bakri. These mounds are very probably pre-Islamic, before the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Traces of settlements which cover this

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country and are found as far south as Did, clearly suggest that the country - which is now inhabited by the Fulbe and Moorish pastoralists - was more densely populated by sedentaries in the past. The depopulation of this country was due to wars which ravaged it and to the gradual desiccation of a branch of the Niger, 'lefala de Molodo'.

Of all the smaller Soninke states Mema seems to have been the closest heir to Wagadu. It played an important role in the history of the Western Sudan. Early in the thirteenth century the young Sundjata (later founder of the empire of Mali, see p. 58), when in exile, is said to have stayed for some time with Misse Tunkara the ruler of Mema, who gave him troops, including cavalry, for his war against the Soso. It is even possible that Mema did not come under the rule of the Soso. Later, Mema became a province of Mali, and was visited by Ibn Battuta. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, when the power of Mali declined, Mema became independent for a few decades. About the middle of the fifteenth century it was conquered by the Songhay ruler, Sonni Silimdn Ddma, predecessor of Sonni 'Ali the Great. He put an end to the dynasty and destroyed the country. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Fulbe of Massina extended their transhumance over the devastated Mema. The Fulbe 'Sultan of Massina' used to come over to the ruined town of Mema to pay allegiance to the 'king of Mema', who was then poor, and had not even an animal to ride on. The Fulbe chief came to accept the blessing of this 'king', who was still regarded as the ritual 'master of the land'.

There are other places associated with Soninke clans who had migrated from Wagadu. In Marka villages east of Segu traditions record the arrival of warriors from Wagadu, who had been driven from there by white people. The Niare chiefs of Bamako are now Bambara but claim to have been Soninke, descendants of Mana Maghan, ruler of Kumbi. They recall a version of the tradition of Wagadu, and still have a python as their sacred guardian.

Among other Soninke groups whose history begins with the migration from Wagadu, one can mention those of Guidimakha and Gadiaga. In the Western Sudan, where a thriving trade took place on an international scale, the decline of one power left a vacuum which called for the rise of a new power to hegemony. Neither Diara nor Mema, both founded by refugees (from Ghana/Wagadu), could build up a formidable force. The northern Soninke of the Sahel had been weakened through the long conflict with the Berber nomads, which reached its climax in the Almoravids' conquest of Ghana. The initiative was taken by a southern group of the Soninke, the Soso, who lived in Kaniaga north of Beledugu. The first dynasty that ruled over the Soso is recorded in the legends as Diariso. They were probably vassals to Ghana and became independent after the collapse of the Soninke empire. In the twelfth century the Diariso were overthrown by the Kante, a clan of blacksmiths. Under its Kante rulers Soso extended its authority over its neighbours and reached the height of its power during the reign of Sumanguru Kante, early in the thirteenth century; the former territories of Ghana and those of the Malinke chieftaincies came under his rule.
By the end of the twelfth century Islam had been adopted by many of the northern Soninke, but the Soso remained faithful to their ancestral religion. Indeed, traditions stress the pagan character of this kingdom, by presenting Sumanguru as archmagician who spread terror among his subjects and neighbours. The Malinke war for freedom against the tyrannic domination of Sumanguru was led by Sundjata, hero and founder of the empire of Mali. The war was a bitter and a cruel one. After their defeat, the Soso were forced to leave their old territory, and migrated en masse to the south-west, first to Futa-Djallon, and then, under the pressure of the Fulbe, to the coastal regions of Guinea.

Soso, as the intermediate state between Ghana and Mali,

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both in its geographical position and its historical role, is not mentioned in contemporary Arabic records. It figures clearly, however, in the oral traditions. That these traditions are historically valid may be confirmed by the fact that they were current in the fourteenth century, about a century and a half after the power of the Soso had been broken by Sundjata. Ibn Khaldiin recorded these oral traditions, and used them skilfully to reconstruct the political history of the Western Sudan. The following is an excellent precis of about five hundred years of Sudanic history:

When Ifriqiya and the Magrib were conquered [by the Arabs] merchants penetrated the western part of Bilbi alSfiddn, and found among them no one greater than the king of Ghana....

Later the authority of Ghana waned and its power declined whilst that of the veiled people, their neighbours on the north next to the lands of the Berbers, increased. The latter overcame the Sudanese, plundered their territories, imposed upon them tribute, and converted many of them to Islam. As a result, the authority of the rulers of Ghana dwindled away, and they were overcome by the Sisii, their Sudanese neighbours, who subdued and crushed them completely.

Later, the people of Mali outnumbered the Sudanese peoples in their neighbourhood and expanded over the whole region. They conquered the Sisii and took over all their possessions, both their original territory and that of Ghana, as far as the Ocean to the west.

The Emergence of Mali

The transfer of hegemony from Ghana to Soso and then to Mali, marks a gradual shift of the political centre of gravity southwards; from the Sahel on the fringes of the Sahara to full Sudanese savannah. Three factors, related to each other, go some way to explain this process. First: the weakening of the Soninke and their dispersion; second, the development of Bure (on the Upper Niger) as the principal source of gold in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; third, with the extension of the trade routes southwards to the new goldfields and beyond, a wider section of the Sudan became involved in the continental trade system.
The beginnings of a more elaborated political organization and the emergence of chiefdoms among the Malinke in the eleventh century may be inferred from al-Bakri's account:

On the opposite bank of the 'Nile' [from Yaresnd, the trading centre on the right bank of the Upper Senegal] is a great kingdom, over a distance of more than eight days travel; the title of its king is Do. The people there use arrows in fighting. Behind it is a country called Malal; its king is known as al-Musulmdni.1

This king of Malal was converted to Islam through the agency of a Muslim who lived in his country. The Muslim came there as a trader, or with traders, and it may not be wrong to associate the emergence of the kingdom with the development of trading activities.

al-Idrisi was acquainted with al-Bakri's account when writing this more extensive description of the region:

South of Barisa [identified with Yaresnd], at a distance of about ten days, is the country of the Lamlam. The people of

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Barisa, Silla, Takriir and Ghana raid the country of the Lamlam, capture its inhabitants, and bring them to their own countries, where they sell them to merchants who come there. The latter export them to other countries. In the whole country of the Lamlam there are only two small towns, like villages, one is called Malal and the other Do. Between these two towns is a distance of four days journey....

Malal is a small town, like a large village, without a wall. It is built on an unassailable hill of red earth. The people of Malal seek protection there from attacks by the other Sudanese.2

Lamlam is one of the names given by Arab geographers to what they regarded as primitive and savage peoples. In fact these were stateless peoples, with a loose political organization, who lived beyond the country known to the Arabs.3 They were fair game for slave raiders coming from the organized states.

The geographical description of Lamlam, Malal, and Do clearly indicates that the Arabic authors were referring to the Malinke country south of the Upper Senegal. Do and Malal were therefore two of the early chiefdoms which developed among the Malinke. Indeed, oral traditions record several small chiefdoms of the Malinke which preceded the empire of Mali, among them Do and Kiri. One is inclined to identify the former with Do of al-Bakri and al-Idrisi, whereas Malal of the Arab geographers may refer to any other Malinke chiefdom. Mali is the name the Fulbe give to Manding, and Malinke (the people of Mali) is used by the Fulbe for Mandinka. These forms became current in the Western Sudan.

Though modern scholars do not agree about the exact locations of the early Malinke chiefdoms of the oral traditions, one may safely adopt the distinction suggested by Charles Monteil between the northern chiefdoms of the Malinke
which developed earlier, and the southern chiefdoms which later became the nucleus of the empire of Mali. al-Bakri and al-Idrisi furnish,

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therefore, the earliest documentary evidence on the northern Malinke chiefdoms. The early chiefdoms may have resembled the present-day kafus of the Malinke. The kafu is a regrouping of neighbouring villages under one chief. Every chiefdom, according to the traditions, was ruled by one of the noble clans of the Malinke: the Traore ruled over Kiri; Do or Dodougou was under the Konate; Sibi was ruled by the Kamara. All these chiefdoms were later incorporated by Sundjata into his empire.

The kings of Mali were of the Keita clan, rulers of a chiefdom on the Sankarani river. The Keita claim descent of Bilali Bunama, who is said to have come from Mecca. The Keita may refer to Bilal ibn Rabh, the black companion of the Prophet and the first mu'adhdhin (the man who calls for the prayer) in Islam. Adoption of ancestors drawn from stock of Muslim hagiography is common to royal dynasties in the Sudan. It is significant, however, that whereas other dynasties chose a white man as their ancestor, the Keita of Mali trace back to Bilal the black. We have considered possible white influences on dynasties in the Sahel, close to the desert. The traditions about Mali, farther to the south, indicate that it was a genuine Sudanic creation. While al-Sa'di says that the Kaya-Magha kings were white in origin, the kings of Mali - even for him - were black in origin.5

Bilali Bunama, the ancestor of the Keita, is said to have come from Mecca to the country of the Malinke. There he was succeeded by his son Lawalo. But it was Lawalo's son - Latal Kalabi - who established the chiefdom and conquered the country lying between the Dj oliba (i.e. the Niger) and the Sankarani rivers. Different versions of the traditions count ten rulers from Latal Kalabi to Nare-Maghan, the father of Sundjata. I Lahilatul Kalabi, 'grandson' of Latal Kalabi, is said by one version to have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.8 Another version says that Allako Miisi Djigu, a descendant of Bilil, went four times to Mecca.9 Similar traditions were current in

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the fourteenth century, when Ibn Khaldiin recorded a tradition that the first Muslim king of Mali was Barmandana, 'who made the pilgrimage, an example followed by his successors'.10 The attempt by Delafosse to identify the names of these pilgrims as referring to the same ruler is adventurous, and difficult to prove given the diversity of the traditions." But all these traditions indicate an early Islamic influence among the Keita, before the rise of the empire of Mali. Such an influence is attested also by the eleventh-century account of al-Bakri about the islamization of the king of Malal.

Lahilatul Kalabi, 'the pilgrim', had two sons. The elder, Kalabi Bomba, succeeded his father to the kingship, while the younger son, Kalabi Dauman, 'preferred
fortune and wealth and became the ancestor of those who go from country to country seeking their fortune. 1 These are the traders known as Wangara or Dyula, and one is reminded of the distinction made by the seventeenth-century Ta'rikh al-Fattish between the Wangara and the Malinke: 'they are of the same origin, but whereas the Malinke are warriors, the Wangara are traders'.6 The tradition associates the beginnings of trade with that of kingship, and we have already pointed to the possibility that the consolidation of chiefdoms among the Malinke was stimulated by the extension of trading activities to their country. Kalabi Bomba was succeeded by his own son, Namadi Kani. He was a hunter-king, like the first kings of Mali. It was he who invented the Simbon, the hunter's whistle; he communicated with the spirits of the forest and the bush. These spirits had no secrets from him, and he was loved by Kondolon and San6 [goddess of the hunters and her companion]. His followers were so numerous that he formed them into an army which became formidable; he often gathered them together in the bush and taught them the art of hunting. It was he who revealed to hunters the medicinal leaves which heal wounds and cure diseases. Thanks to the strength of his followers he

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became king of a vast country; with them Namadi Kani conquered the lands which stretch from the Sankarani river to Bure.14 This tradition is now supported by the fascinating study of Youssouf Ciss6 on hunters' associations among the Malinke, which suggests an interesting interpretation for the beginnings of the empire of Mali.15 The inhabitants of the three provinces Do, Gangara, and Kiri - were hunters, led by the Traore clan. Indeed, the Traore remained the leading war chiefs of the empire. Later, other clans converged on the Upper Niger; the Kone came from Sankaran (now in the north of the Republic of Guinea) and the Kamara from Sibi. Two noble clans - the Keita and the Konate - are said to have come from Wagadu (sic.). A more complex society emerged with different clans, status groups, and castes. The old hunters' associations (donso-ton) survived, however, and were recruited by Namadi-Kani of the Keita clan to build up his military strength. Among the Malinke it is believed that the hunters possess supernatural power through their communication with the spirits of the bush. Hunters are initiated into esoteric associations, which fill important functions in society. They may furnish meat as food in periods of hunger when the agricultural products have all been consumed before the new harvest. More important still is the fact that hunters' associations were armed groups, which protected the villages and could serve as a striking force. Certainly Namadi-Kani recruited these hunters' associations to further his own political aims at a period when the Malinke country was introduced into the orbit of the continental trade system, with the opening up of the Bure goldfields. He had at his disposal a military force which cut across clan, status, and caste boundaries. Its loyalty to the king was reinforced by the role of the hunter-king skilfully played by Namadi-Kani. Under his rule, probably towards the end of the eleventh
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The Malinke chiefdom of the Keita on the Sankarani first secured a place of eminence among the other Malinke chiefdoms south of the Upper Senegal. Over a century later, at the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Malinke were subjugated by Sumanguru, the powerful king of Soso. The Malinke war of independence was led by the great hero Sundjata, who, like his ancestor Namadi-Kani, is ascribed with the attributes of a great and skilful hunter. His mother Sogolon was given to the king Nare Maghan by hunters.16 Youssouf Cissé suggests that the revolt of the Malinke against the Soso was carried mainly by the hunters' associations, which were able to unite the different Malinke clans and chiefdoms at that crucial moment.

The epic of Sundjata forms a pivot in the historical traditions of the Malinke. He was born crippled and his mother suffered much humiliation from her rival-wife, whose son Dankaran-Tuma grew into a handsome and able boy. When Nare-Maghan died his son Dankaran-Tuma succeeded him. Then, by a miracle and with the help of the chief blacksmith, Sundjata stood up on his once-feeble legs, and became from that time a great hunter and warrior. Many young men of the capital, among them some vassal and allied princes, joined his company. The contempt which the queen, mother of the reigning king, felt for Sundjata and his mother turned into fear of Sundjata's growing power; she even made attempts on his life. Sundjata went into exile, and his withdrawal saved the chiefdom from a bloody struggle between competing half-brothers, known among the Malinke asfadenya.17

There are different versions about the wanderings of Sundjata in exile. Niane's version takes Sundjata through the courts of some Malinke chiefs who could not give him asylum for fear of the vengeance of Dankaran-Tuma. Sundjata then left the Malinke country and stayed in the court of the king of Mema, where he was distinguished as a warrior, and was given important commanding positions.18

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The Malinke then came under the rule of Sumanguru, whose tyranny was so oppressive that Dankaran-Tuma revolted.19 The Soso army invaded the Malinke chiefdom, pursued the defeated Dankaran-Tuma, devastated the country, and destroyed its towns. Sumanguru was determined to crush the political and military power of the Malinke. But a descendant of the royal family survived, and envoys were sent in secret to find Sundjata and call him back to lead his people. Sundjata left Mema with troops, including cavalry, given to him by the king of Mema. He scored a series of victories against the Soso which marked the retreat of Sumanguru towards his own country and the advance of Sundjata into the heart of the Malinke country. The decisive battle was still to come, and took place in Krina on the Niger, south of Beledugu, on the border between the Soso and the Malinke territories.

The legends dramatize the battle of Krina as a struggle between two powerful magicians, Sumanguru and Sundjata. The victory of Sundjata was secured only after he revealed Sumanguru's secret; he obtained, by treachery, some of
Sumanguru's wine, which he used to prepare a poison. The poison was injected by means of a white cock's nail, because Sumanguru, like most warriors, had been treated against wounds torn by iron only.20

Following the victory over Sumanguru in Krina, Sundjata sent his armies to fight against Sumanguru's allies: the Diakhanke in Bambuk and the chief of Kita. These expeditions were followed by others in which the commanders of Sundjata's army conquered territories in all directions. It is difficult to define the extent of Sundjata's conquests. One tradition, however, says that Sundjata stopped where the so ends. The so is a tree of the savannah, related to the karité or the shea butter tree. At present, the limit of the karité is still regarded by the Malinke as the end of their country.2'

Following his military victory, Sundjata concentrated on consolidating the empire. According to Niane's sources he

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achieved this in two stages. Before the decisive battle of Krina all the Malinke chiefs met in Sibi. At this impressive gathering, the unity of the Malinke, which had been forged in their war of independence, was confirmed. After the war had ended all the chiefs gathered again at Ka-ba (Kangaba). There the Malinke chiefs swore fealty to Sundjata as their sovereign; each chief then accepted his own chiefdom from Sundjata. The country of the Malinke ceased to be an alliance of independent chiefdoms and became one empire with dependent provinces, with the Keita as the ruling clan.22

After the great assembly at Ka-ba Sundjata settled at Niani which was then in ruins. The small ancestral village became the capital of a great empire, a political and commercial centre.2 Thus, according to Niane's sources, Niani is regarded as the capital of Mali under Sundjata and his successors. This may be supported by al-'Umari and Ibn Khaldiin in the fourteenth century. The name of the capital of Mali in the manuscripts can be read in more than one way due to the absence or misrepresentation of the diacritical dots. It is likely, however, that it may be best read as Y.N.Y. for Niani.24 Such a reading will accord with the name given in Ta'rikh al-Fattah.

Ta'rikh al-Fattah gives an interesting account of the town: 'The town, which had formerly been the seat of government of the king of Mali, was called Djariba; then [the inhabitants moved to] another town called Y.N'. [Niani]. The people of both towns drew water from the river Kdla, where they used to go early in the morning, returning in the afternoon.'25 Kaala is the name of the Niger upstream of the inner delta.

In the 1920s Vidal and Gaillard collected oral traditions in Niani, on the Sankarani river, and in two other old towns associated with Keita, in Kangaba and Keyla. They also made brief archaeological surveys of Niani and its environs.26 According to traditions collected in Kangaba and Keyla the kings of Mali never settled outside the country of the Malinke. (This excludes any earlier hypothesis that the capital was once much

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farther to the north, near Nyamina on the route to Kulikoro.) The Keita of Mali had successive capitals, of which Niani flourished during the great imperial period of Sundjata and his successors. In the seventeenth century Niani was destroyed by Bambara and Fulbe, and the senior branch of the Keita moved to Mani- (or Mali-) Kura, that is 'new Mali', a village on the right bank of the Niger close to its confluence with the Sankarani. In this village live families of 'ulamd' ('marabouts') of the Berte and Ture clans, who claim to be descendants of the 'ulamd' who served the kings of Mali. From Mali-Kura the Keita moved to Kaba (or Kangaba) on the opposite bank of the Niger. Kangaba remains the sacred centre of the Keita, where they meet every seven years to re-enact the building of an ancient sanctuary.

The fact that oral sources record several successive capitals of the Keita has led some scholars to suggest that 'the site [of the capital] has little real significance in Sudan history, for the residence of the ruler was continuously changing'. What may be inferred from the traditions is that the Keita had various capitals at different periods in their long history, but it is very likely that during the imperial period, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, Mali had one capital only. This capital, as described by the Arabic records of the fourteenth century, was by no means a village. According to al'Umari, whose informant, the sheikh al-Dukkli, lived in Mali, the capital was spread over a large area. The scattered conical houses were built of clay with roofs of wood and reed. The king's palaces were grouped together, encircled by a wall.

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The early archaeological surveys conducted by Vidal and Gaillard in the 1920s can now be supplemented by more thorough investigations carried out in 1965 and 1968 by a Polish archaeological mission, accompanied by Djibril T. Niane, the foremost authority on the traditional history of ancient Mali. They found that the country around Niani was covered by traces of ruined villages which suggest that the region had been more densely populated in the past; very probably in the imperial period of Mali when peace and security reigned there. Niani itself is strategically placed at a point where it may easily be defended. The fertile plains of the Sankarani river make up its agricultural hinterland. There is a fairly high percentage of iron ore in the soil, and its exploitation is attested by traces of iron-smelting furnaces.

Niani was an important cross-road. A route to the north-east, leading to the Sahel, is still known as Sedekule-sila, 'the route of the Sarakulle', i.e., the traders' route. Another route, leading north and then north-west, is called Manding-sila, 'the Manding route', which reached Niagassola and the country regarded as the cradle of the Malinke. Other routes to the west and to the south were probably of lesser importance. On the bank of the Sankarani there are traces of an old river port.
Close to the northern routes (the Sarakulle and the Manding routes) there are traces of an extensive suburb, which may have been the 'Arab village', or the Muslim quarter. Significantly, close to the road there is a cemetery, which may fit the description of Ibn Batuitta. Future excavations may yield more evidence. In the mean time, indications from Arabic records, oral traditions, and archaeological surveys point to Niani as the imperial capital of Mali.

VI" The Kings of Mali
The Arabic sources offer a series of glimpses of the Western Sudan at different periods from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. Only by connecting pieces of information from sources of different periods may one reconstruct something of the dynamics of the history of the Western Sudan. Of all the Arabic sources, Ibn Khaldun alone produced a chronicle of a dynasty in the Western Sudan; a history which is not static but moving across the centuries. This he did because he recognized the value of oral traditions. He recorded traditions from people of the Sudan whom he met in Egypt and in the Maghrib, and supplemented it by information from people of the Maghrib who had stayed for long periods in the Sudan. Because he had oral evidence at his disposal, Ibn Khaldun was acquainted with the existence of Soso as an intermediate kingdom between Ghana and Mali. For the same reason he is the only Arabic author who mentions Sundjata under the name of Mdr-Djta. In this way Ibn Khaldun's chronology is the valuable link between oral traditions and written records.

In oral traditions of the Malinke, as recorded by Yves Person, there are four generations only between Sundjata (in the first half of the thirteenth century) and Niani Mansa Mamudu (c. 1600). Over three centuries of history - the empire of Mali in greatness and decline - were telescoped into four generations. The epos of Mali is summed up in the great career of Sundjata, followed by anti-climax. The historical perspective is rectified by Ibn Khaldun, who recorded the traditions of Mali almost six centuries before Yves Person. In the fourteenth century succession to the kingship of Mali was a living issue, and as the royal genealogy back to Sundjata was important in

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any claim to authority, it was well remembered. Ibn Khaldun admits, however, that he had no information about the genealogy of Sundjata himself. The pre-Sundjata period was of lesser importance in the internal politics of fourteenth-century Mali. Also, the history of Mali is important for Ibn Khaldun only since its accession to hegemony.

The story of Sundjata, which is related with much detail in the oral traditions, is briefly summed up by Ibn Khaldun: 'Their greatest king who overcame the Soso, conquered their country, and seized power from their hands, was M-ri-Djida. ... He ruled for twenty-five years, according to what they relate. ' Mri-Djida was succeeded by his son Mansa Uli. 'This Mansa Uli was one of their greatest kings, and he made the pilgrimage in the days of al-Zdhir Baybars.' Baybars, the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, ruled in 1260-77. MansA Uli was succeeded by his brother Witi, and after him authority passed to another brother,
Khalifa. 'Khalifa was weak-minded and used to shoot arrows at his people and kill them for sport. So they rose against him and killed him.' A degeneration in the ruling dynasty undermined the authority of the kings; troubles at the court followed.

After the deposition of Khalifa, the kingship was given to Abii Bakr, a grandson of Mari-Djita by one of his daughters. 'They made him king according to the custom of the non-Arabs, who give the kingship to the sister and the son of the sister [of a former king].' Ibn Khalddin may have been acquainted with the matrilineal succession among the Berbers of the southern Sahara (described by Ibn Bat.fit'a) and in the royal dynasty of Ghana (reported by al-Bakri). But his own list of the kings of Mali clearly indicates a patrilineal-collateral succession from one brother to the other, or to the eldest eligible male. The accession of Abli Bakr, son of a sister of three brothers who had succeeded each other, was in fact a divergence from the rule. According to one oral tradition this Abli Bakr, called

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Bata-Mande-Bory, was a son of Sundjata's daughter, adopted by his grandfather as son. It is possible also that Abai Bakr was made king by the officers of the court, who had deposed Khalifa, because his claim to the kingship was dubious. They expected such a king to be more amenable to their policy.

The power of the officers of the court, among whom slaves and freed slaves were prominent, grew as the rulers became weaker. 'Then one of the clients [of the ruling family] usurped the kingship. His name was Silkiira. He went on pilgrimage during the reign of al-M−lik al-Ndsir [ibn Qald'iin, sultan of Egypt], and was killed at Tajiira while on his way back.' Sdkfira's pilgrimage took place probably immediately after 1298. With Sdk-dra, Mali again had a powerful ruler, and reached a new climax after its first glory under Mari-Djita and Mansi UlII: During his powerful government their dominions expanded, and they overcame the neighbouring peoples .... Their authority became mighty and all the nations of the Sudan stood in awe of them. Merchants from the Maghrib and Ifriqiya travelled to their country.

After the death of the usurper Sdkdra, the throne reverted to the legitimate heirs. The next king was Mansd Qil, son of Mansd Uli. The latter was the only son of Mdri-Djita said to have been a powerful king.5 Mans5 Qdi was succeeded by his son Mansii Muhammad, and after him 'the kingship passed from the line of Miri-Djita to that of his brother Abdi Bakr. Mansii Miis son of Abfi Bakr became the king.'6 Bakari or Bogari, the Sudanese variants of the Arab name Abdi Bakr, is mentioned in some oral traditions as the brother of Sundjata, his closest associate in exile and in the foundation of the new empire.7 It is likely, however, that Mansd Miisi was Abfi Bakr's grandson, and not his son, because he ruled about a hundred years after Mi rl-Ddj.a. Indeed, some oral traditions refer to Faga-Laye as son of Bogari and father of Miisi.8 Ibn Khalddin, who recorded

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names of kings only, omitted the name of Abii Bakr's son, of little significance in the history of Mali, and affiliated Mansd Mfisi directly to his grandfather, who took part in the foundation of the empire and forms the link with Sundjata at the apex of the royal genealogy.

The twenty-five years of Mansd Mfisi's reign were the golden age of the empire of Mali. Sundjata and MansA Miis were the two greatest kings of Mali, but whereas the former was the godhero of the oral traditions, the latter was the favourite of the Muslim writers, Oriental and Sudanese. Sundjata made a small Malinke chiefdom into an empire; Mansd Mfis accomplished the work of his predecessors in shaping the Islamic outlook of the empire, and in giving it universal fame. His pilgrimage in 1324 left a deep impression in Egypt. His reign may be dated 1312-37.

While MansA Miis was absent from the capital during his pilgrimage, he appointed his son Muhammad as deputy. Ibn Khaldfin records that Muhammad succeeded his father: 'On Mansi Mfis's death his son Mansd Maghd succeeded him as ruler of Mali. MaghA with them means "Muhammad".' By appointing his son Maghi-Muhammad as his deputy and later as his successor, Mansd Miis deprived his brother Sulaymdn of his right to the kingship as the eldest male in the family. Sulaym-n did not give up his claim, and he became king after Mansd Maghi, who died in the fourth year of his reign. The shortness of Mansd Maghd's reign raises the suspicion that he was deposed by his uncle Sulaym-n. Subsequent events confirm such an interpretation of a rupture in the ruling dynasty."

Mansd Sulaymdn was a powerful ruler, and held together the vast empire that his brother Mansd Miisd had consolidated. He continued the exchange of embassies with the Moroccan Sultan initiated by Mfis. Ibn Batiita, who visited Mali during Sulaymn's rule in 1352-3, described the security which reigned throughout the empire. The same traveller met Sulaymdn and

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noted that the people hated him because of his parsimony in contrast to the generosity of his brother Mansd Miis. Ibn Battita was eye-witness to an episode which throws light on relations inside the royal family:

It happened during my sojourn in Mali that the Sultan was angry with his chief wife, the daughter of his paternal uncle. She was called Qisi, which means with them 'the Queen'. She is his partner in kingship, according to the custom of the Sudanese, and her name is mentioned together with that of the king from above the pulpit. He imprisoned her with one of the chiefs, and put in her place another wife, Banjfi, who was not a king's daughter. The people talked about it, and disapproved of his actions .... The chiefs [also] spoke in Qfisd's favour, and so the king assembled them in the audience chamber, and Dughi [the linguist] said on his behalf: 'You have said much in favour of Qdsd, but she committed a capital crime.' Then a female slave of Qdsd was brought in with chains on her hands and legs. She was told: 'Say what you know.' She told them that Qisi had sent her to Djita, the king's cousin, who had fled from the king to Kanburni.
Qisi invited him to overthrow the king, informing him that she herself and all the armies were ready to accept his authority. When the chiefs heard this, they said: 'Verily, this is a capital crime, and she deserves death.'

Mansi Sulaymdn succeeded in averting the coup d'etdt of 1352 or 1353. But seven years later in 1360, the year he died, civil war broke out between his house and that of Mansii Miis his brother. In his chronicle Ibn Khaldfin's account is rather dry: 'Sulaymdn's reign lasted twenty-four years, then he died, and his son QasA (or better, Qanbi) ibn Sulayman succeeded him only to die nine months after his succession. After him ruled Mdri-Djeta, son of Mansi Maghd son of Mansi Mfis, whose reign lasted fourteen years.' Once again, the very short reign of Qasd and his replacement by Mansd Maghi's son may indicate

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the seizure of the kingship. This is confirmed by Ibn Khaldiin in another context: Mansd Sulaymin died... dissension broke out among the people of Mali. Authority over them became divided and their [rival] rulers contested the kingship. They killed each other and were preoccupied with civil war until finally Mansi Djta came out [victorious] and consolidated power in his hands.14

This Mansi Djta (or, M-ri-Dj Eta) may be identified with the rebellious prince Djta of Ibn Battita. Djta, whose father Mansa Maghi had been deposed (and killed) by Sulaymiin, had been in hiding outside the capital, waiting for an opportunity to avenge the death of his father and to restore the kingship to the house of Mansi Miis. He failed once during the life of Sulaymin, when the plot with the queen Qisd was unveiled. After Sulaym-n's death, Djta challenged the succession of Sulaymin's son, and there followed civil war in which Djta was victorious.

The next thirty years, 1360-90, are well documented by Ibn Khaldfdn because he had first-hand contemporary information. This was a troubled period in the history of Mali, which marked the beginning of the decline of the empire after it had reached its zenith under MansA Mis5 and Mansa Sulaym-n.

M-ri-Dj ta ibn Mansd Maghi ibn Mansi Misd reigned for fourteen years [762-775 A.H. or A.D. 1360-1373/4]. He was the most wicked ruler they had, because of the punishment, tyranny and corruption he imposed upon them.... He depleted the treasury, and nearly pulled down the structure of the government. . . . He was afflicted by sleeping sickness for two years and died in 775 [A.D. 1373/4]. They appointed his son Miis to succeed him. He adopted the way of justice and consideration towards his people and abandoned the ways of his father. ... But authority has been usurped from him by

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his wazir [minister]. Mdri-Djeta .... The latter held the sultan Miis in seclusion and monopolized the government in his hands. He concentrated on mobilizing the army, and gathering the squadrons. He subdued the eastern provinces of their country, passed beyond the frontiers of Kawkaw to lay siege on Takedda....
We have [recently] been informed that Mfis died in 789 [1387]. He was succeeded by his brother Mansd Maghd. The latter was killed after a year or so, and was succeeded by Sandiki (which means wazir), who married Misi's mother. After a few months he was assailed by a member of MirDjta's family. Then there came out from the land of the pagans [which extends] beyond them a man called Mahmiid, who claimed descent of Mansi Qi! ibn MansA UIi ibn Mdri-Djdta the Great [Sundjata]. He seized authority, and became their king in 792 [1390] with the title Mansd Magh&.15
Miri-Dji.a II succeeded in restoring the house of MansA Misi to the throne, but he was a despot and in his hands the state fell to ruin. Mis, his son, had good intentions, but he was weak and took no part in the government, which was exclusively held by his chief minister. The latter did not depose the sultan, who remained the nominal ruler for fourteen years until his death. As the real ruler, Mdri-Djdta, the wazir, succeeded in restoring the empire from its deterioration during the civil war and the irresponsible reign of Mdri-Djta II. Once again, as with the earlier case of S-kdira the usurper, we find that when weak kings endanger the existence of the empire, a court official comes forward, and either seizes the throne for himself or makes the sultan his puppet, thus succeeding in recovering the resources of the empire.
MansA Maghd II reigned only for a year and was probably ANCIENT GHANA AND MALI also, like his brother Misi, a toy in the hands of the officers of the court. This time the legitimate king was deposed, and the throne was usurped by another wazir, who married the widow of Mdri-Djta II, Mfsi's mother. He did not stay long on the throne, and was avenged by a descendant of MAri-Djdta. In this ferment the throne was claimed and seized by a descendant of the old branch of the ruling dynasty, the house of MariDj.ta the Great.
The wheel had come full circle: at the end of Ibn Khaldfin's chronicle, the kingship was reclaimed by a descendant of MiriDjta the Great, the founder of the empire, and the starting point of the chronicle. Six descendants (sons and grandsons) of Miri-Djita ruled after him for over half a century. But their laxity and impotence caused the kingship to pass to the descendants of Abi Bakr, Miri-Dj Ata's brother. The first ruling generation of this new branch - Mansi Misi and Mansd Sulaymin brought the empire to its peak. But the succeeding generations again proved incompetent and there was a need for regeneration, which was achieved by transferring authority from one branch of the dynasty to another. Such a change took place twice within a century and a half. Within the ruling dynasty there was a clear preference to give the kingship to descendants of such powerful kings as Mansi Uli and Mansi Msa.
Among fourteen kings of royal descent (excluding usurpers) only four may be described as great kings, but their rule extended over more than half the period under review (c. 1230-1390). Twice, kings were deposed by royal rivals, twice by non-royal usurpers, and in two other cases kings were merely puppets under the patronage of the court's officers. The latter, among whom slaves and freed slaves were prominent, played a very positive role in the political history of the empire
as they intervened when the irresponsible rule of the king endangered the existence of the empire. Under the rule of Sdkiira the usurper or the regency of the wazir Miri-Djiita, the empire regained something of its former strength.
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In spite of periods of laxity and sporadic cases of usurpation, the throne remained with the same dynasty, the Keita, till the end of the period under survey and, indeed, until the final dissolution of the empire.

A note on the genealogy
In his chronicle, Ibn Khaldun (1847, I, 264; tr. 112) calls Mansi Qari son of MAr- Djita, but later the same author (ibid., 268; tr. 116) refers to the seizing of the throne in 1390 by a certain Mahmefid, a descendant of Mansi Qai, son of Mansi Uli son of Miri-Djita the Great. The latter version, which regards Mansi Qfi as grandson, not son, of MAr-Djita, seems more consistent with the chronology, as the three sons of MAr-Djita (Uli, Wati, and Khalifa) reigned in the third quarter of the thirteenth century, while Mansi Qfi ascended the throne only at the beginning of the fourteenth. It may now be suggested that following the deposition of Khalifa there was no son of MAr-Djita to succeed, and Abfi Bakr, son of MAr-Djita's daughter, was installed. After the reign of the usurper S!kira, when the kingship came back to the royal family, it was given to Qfi, son of Mansi Uli.

According to the traditions of Kangaba-Niani, Sundjata had only one son - Yerelinkon, identified with Mansi Uli of Ibn Khaldun. The traditions of Dioma give a list of four sons: Yerelinkon (Mansi Uli), Ko Mamadi (Mansi Qfi), Bata-Mande-Bory (Abfi Bakr), and Niani Mamadu (Muhammad). (Niane, 1960, 22.) Wati and Khalifa, mentioned by Ibn Khaldun, are omitted from the list, probably because of their insignificance. According to our reconstruction of the genealogy based on Ibn Khaldun: Qfi was a son of Mansi Uli; Abfi Bakr was a son of MAr-Djita's daughter; Muhammad was a son of Qfi. Thus we find that out of the four sons of Sundjata mentioned by the traditionalists of Dioma, only Yerelinkon (Uli) was a son of Sundjata, while the others were his grandsons. This Yerelinkon is the only son of Sundjata recorded by the traditions of Kangaba-Niani, and the only powerful king from among the sons of MAr-Djita according to Ibn Khaldun.

VII" Mali in the Sahel
In the fourteenth century, during the period of its greatest expansion, the empire of Mali extended from the Lower Senegal and the Gambia rivers in the west to the Songhay country on the Niger below Gao in the east; from the Upper Niger in the south to the fringes of the Sahara in the north. This vast territory may be divided into two distinct regions: the central Malinke land in the savannah to the south and the non-Malinke country in the Sahel to the north.

In leading the war of independence against the Soso Sundjata united the Malinke chiefdoms under his authority. He thus laid the foundation of Mali. Following the victory over the Soso, Mali expanded northwards to territories which had formerly been part of the kingdom of Ghana. This same region later passed over to the rule of Songhay when this empire, in its turn, achieved hegemony in the Western Sudan. In the Sahel Mali ruled over alien peoples and over a country
which was coveted by every rising power in the Sudan. An area rich in commercial centres for the trans-Saharan trade, it was here that Mali came into contact with the outside world. It was also, however, the first of Mali's acquisitions to be lost in the fifteenth century. From its centre on the Upper Niger Mali expanded also to the west and to the south. Here, expansion was accompanied by a process of colonization by Malinke migrants, for the frontiers of Mali almost paralleled the limits of Malinke settlements. This is one reason why the authority of Mali survived longer in these southern and western regions.

One has to refer to various sources in order to study the history of the two regions. Contemporary Arabic records of the fourteenth- and the seventeenth-century Ta'rikhs of

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Timbuktu only provide evidence on the history of the northern provinces of Mali in the Sahel. Because of the vicissitudes in the history of this region, oral traditions recorded recently contain little evidence on the period of Mali's rule. In the country of the Malinke, on the other hand, oral traditions are of great importance for this period. The lack of Arabic records is one reason, but more important still is that these traditions are concerned with the history of Malinke settlements and chieftains which were closely associated with the history of the empire of Mali. From the end of the fifteenth century the Portuguese came into contact with the Malinke on the Gambia, and their records furnish some valuable information about Mali at that late period.

During his exile Sundjata is said to have stayed at the court of the Tunkara king of Mema. The latter was an ally (and formerly a subject) of the Sisse kings of Wagadu. When Sundjata set out to liberate the Malinke, he received troops from the kings of Mema and Wagadu. After the victory over Sumanguru and his allies, Sundjata sent an embassy with rich presents to Mema, to pay his debt to the king who had given him protection and support. This embassy contracted alliance between the Sisse-Tunkara of Wagadu-Mema and the Keita of Mali. In the account of the division of the empire among Sundjata's lieutenants it is said that 'Wagadu and Mema kept their kings who continued to bear the title of mansi, but these two kingdoms acknowledged the suzerainty of the supreme manse'. This may explain an obscure passage by al-'Umari (writing between 1342 and 1349) on the authority of the sheikh Sa'id al-Dukkli: 'No one in the vast empire of this ruler [of Mali] is accorded the title of king except the ruler of Ghana, who is really only his lieutenant, although a king.'2 The kingdom of Ghana, as known to the Arab geographers until the twelfth century, had probably ceased to exist by the fourteenth century. Ibn. Battfita, who must have crossed Wagadu on his way from Walata to the capital of Mali, did not even mention it. On the other hand, Ibn Battuta did visit Mema, then a province of

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Mali.3 The close association of Wagadu and Mema in the oral traditions may suggest that beyond reminiscence of the ancient empire, Ghana as a political
entity was represented in the fourteenth century by Mema, one of the Soninke state successors to Ghana. Mali extended northwards to include Kaniaga and the former dependencies of Soso. Mema, which lay north-east of Soso, was not conquered but was incorporated into the empire as an ally. It therefore preserved a greater measure of autonomy, and its ruler enjoyed a higher status among the vassal kings and provincial chiefs. Mali’s conquests were continued under Mansd Uli, son of Sundjata, who is described by Ibn Khaldfin as one of the most powerful kings of Mali. It was probably under his rule that Mali expanded over the Sahel and took control of the trading centres of Walata, Timbuktu and Gao. The conquest of this northern belt of the Sudan should have preceded MansA Uli’s pilgrimage to Mecca (between 1260 and 1277). None of our sources attribute the conquest of Gao to Mansd Uli, but - significantly - to the other two powerful kings of Mali who went on pilgrimage, Sdkiira and Mans& Miism. The Muslim chronicler of the seventeenth century, associates the conquest of both towns Gao and Timbuktu - with the pilgrimage of MansA Ul passed Timbuktu without establishing his authority over that region, and perhaps over Gao as well. Both Sdkfira and MansA Msms probably had to reestablish their authority over Gao, a remote and rebellious tributary, before undertaking the pilgrimage. Further evidence follows to support this view. In the traditions of Songhay, as recorded in the Ta’rikhs of Timbuktu, the change from the first dynasty of DiA to the second dynasty of Sonni (or SI) is associated with the liberation of Songhay from the rule of Mali. According to al-Sa'di, ‘Ali Kolon and his brother Salman Ndri, sons of the Songhay king DiA Assibai, were hostages at the court of the king of Mali.

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'Ali Kolon secretly prepared their escape by hiding arms and supplies on the route to Songhay. He left Mali with his brother, probably at the head of the troops he had commanded in the service of the king of Mali. During his flight he fought against forces sent by the king of Mali to stop him. He reached his homeland, made himself its ruler and 'liberated his people from the rule of Mali.' According to the anonymous author of the second appendix in Ta’rikh al-Fattush, "Ali Kolon was born in Mali and grew up in the service of the king of Mali.’ The two versions disagree about the origin of ‘Ali Kolon and about the measure of continuity between the Did and the Sonni dynasties. This important problem, however, more concerns the history of the Songhay. For our purpose we may rely on the agreement of both sources that Songhay had been conquered by Mali during the period of the Dii dynasty, and that it was liberated by the founder of the Sonni dynasty.

The anonymous author of the second appendix records that Mans, Mfisi passed Gao on his pilgrimage during the reign of the fifth king of the Sonni dynasty. It is clear, therefore, that 'Ali Kolon had secured the independence of Songhay some decades before Mansi Mfisid's pilgrimage. He probably took advantage of a periodical decline in the power of Mali which occurred when weaker kings held
authority. Five kings of the Sonni dynasty ruled before MansA Misi's pilgrimage in 1324-5. It is likely, therefore, that the founder of the dynasty, 'Ali Kolon, revolted in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, between the reigns of Mansd UlI in the 1260s and/or the 1270s and Sdkiira (c. 1300), probably under the reign of the weakminded Khalifa.9

The independence of Songhay did not last for long. The resources of the empire of Mali were mobilized by Sdkiira to bring Songhay back into the fold. The authority of Mali was re-asserted when Mansd Miisd, on his way back from the pilgrimage, built a mosque in Gao. In the 1340s al-'Umarl counted Gao among the provinces of Mali; Mill, down-stream of Gao,

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was regarded as the last province of Mali to the east.10 In 776 A.H. (1374/5), Ibn Khaldii met a Muslim from Sijilm~sa who had served as qadi (judge) in Gao. He confirmed that Gao was then part of Mali.” By the end of the fourteenth century, increasing troubles in the court of Mali weakened the empire, then almost two centuries old. Songhay became independent and only a couple of decades later even took the offensive against the disintegrating empire of Mali.

During periods of strength when Mali effectively controlled Gao, its authority extended also to Tadmekka, generally identified with the ruins of Es-Souk in Adrar-des-Iforas, about 200 miles north-north-east of Gao. Tadmekka was a flourishing trading town of the Tuaregs and its position in relation to Gao was similar to that of Awdaghust in relation to Ghana.

In an excellent article, published in 1956, H. Lhote cogently argues that whenever Ibn Khaldfin mentioned Takedda, he was in fact referring to Tadmekka. Ibn Khaldii's own confusion may have resulted from his reading of Ibn Ba#ttita's travels. From Gao Ibn Battita proceeded to Takedda, which is now identified with Azelik in the south-western part of the Massif of Air. Ibn Battita did not visit Tadmekka, and made no reference to it.12 But Ibn Khaldii, who did obtain information about that town of Adrar-des-Iforas, thought that this was the flourishing centre visited by Ibn Battita, and followed him in calling it Takedda.

The Takedda of Ibn Khaldii is described as being about seventy days travel south-west of Wargala.13 This is the direction of Tadmekka, whereas the Takedda of Ibn Battita in Air was south-east of Wargala. According to Ibn Battita the copper of Takedda was exported to Gobir, Bornu and other countries, all of them in the Central Sudan. Tadmekka, on the other hand, like the Takedda of Ibn Khaldii, was trading with the Western Sudan, and its trade was closely associated with that of Wargala.14 In 1353, the year Ibn Battita visited Takedda and

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described its Sultan as an independent ruler, Ibn Khaldfin met in Biskra an envoy of the ruler of his Takedda, who told him that the town was answerable to Mali.15 One is led to conclude that Takedda in Air was far removed from Mali, and that it was Tadmekka that came within the orbit of the empire of Mali. The forces of Mali never reached as far as Air or Hausaland, as has been suggested by earlier
scholars. Only under Askia A al-Haj Muhammad, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, did a Western Sudanic empire conquer Air and Hausaland. This was done by Songhay, whose political centre lay east of the Niger's bend. In the 1340s al-'Umari recorded that there were three independent kingdoms of the Berbers in the Sahara: Awdaghust, Tadmekka, and Air (the latter is probably the same as Takedda of Ibn Battuta). Though in 1353 Ibn Khaldun was informed that Tadmekka was subject to Mali, its ruler was quite autonomous as he maintained diplomatic relations with the ruler of Biskra (in the Zab). The authority of Mali was effectively established over Tadmekka only when there were powerful kings on the throne. During the oppressive and destructive reign of M-r-Djta II (1360-1373/4) the authority of Mali was seriously weakened, in particular over remote regions with irredentist tendencies. Another Mr-Djta, the wazir who ruled in the name of Mansi Mis II (1373/4-1387/8), made a last effort to impose the rule of Mali in this direction. He mobilized forces, marched eastwards, passed the territory of Gao and laid siege to Takedda (read: Tadmekka). He was unsuccessful and had to raise the siege. Tadmekka did not fall under Mali rule again.

In Ghadames, on his return journey from the pilgrimage, Mansi Mfis met one, Muhammad Abu 'Abdallih ibn Khadija al-Kfumi. He was a Fatimid propagandist in the Zab and led raids with guerrilla bands of Arabs. He visited Mansi Mfis ‘in the hope of obtaining help against his enemy [the ruler of Wargala] and support for his mission, because Mansi Mfis' power was highly regarded [and dreaded] in the desert adjacent to the territory of Wargala.'

According to Ibn Khaldun, at least some of the veiled Berbers (Mulaththamfin) were 'in subjection to the king of the Sudan, paid him tribute and were recruited to his armies'. These were Lamtiina and Massiifa, whose power had been drained through their participation in the Almoravid movement. It is difficult to confirm what authority a Sudanese ruler could have had over the nomads of the Sahara. Presumably, the king of Mali attempted to maintain some control over the southern sections of the trans-Saharan routes leading to the salt mine of Taghza and to the Maghrib. Two centuries later the askiya-s of Songhay appointed a governor in Taghdza, but in the fourteenth century, as we learn from Ibn Battfa, Taghza had been in the hands of the Massufa.

In the thirteenth century the nomad Arabs of Bandi-Ma'qil reached the Sfis and W-dl Dar'a in southern Morocco, and in the fourteenth century the Banfi Hasan began their advance to the south. By the end of the century, according to Ibn Khaldun, the Ma'qil reached Siqiyat al-Hamrd'. This was the beginning of a process in which Arabs or Moors replaced the Sanhija Berbers as masters of the Western Sahara. These new warlike nomads interfered with the long-established order and security of the trans-Saharan routes.

Whatever influence Mali had over tracts of the Sahara, for one - like Ibn BatRtta - who came from the north Walata was 'the first province of the Sudan', administered by a governor, deputy of the king of Mali. In 1352, when visited
by Ibn Battita, Walata was still the principal terminus of the trans-Saharan trade, more important than Timbuktu. At that time most of the people of Timbuktu were veiled Massifita, whose tribal heads were ceremonially appointed by a resident governor in the name of the king of Mali.25 About a century earlier, in the middle of the thirteenth century, when the empire of Mali expanded northwards to the Niger's bend, Timbuktu must have

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been a small nomad settlement. It was under the rule of Mali that it grew in size and significance. It reached its greatness and world fame as a centre of trade and learning under the rule of Songhay in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

al-Sa'idi, as mentioned above, reported that Timbuktu had been conquered by Mansa Mfisd on his way to the pilgrimage. This statement runs against the evidence that Gao had been conquered about half a century earlier. Mali's advance to Gao followed the course of the Niger river, and the region of Timbuktu must have been taken over before the troops proceeded to Gao. The anonymous author of the second appendix to Ta'rikh al-Fattdsh says that when 'All Kolon, the founder of the Sonni dynasty, fled from Mali to liberate the Songhay (in the later part of the thirteenth century), the king of Mali had a royal residence - the Ma'dugu - in Timbuktu.26 al-Sa'idi, on the other hand, attributes the foundation of the same Ma'dugu to Mans Mfis.27 For this Muslim chronicler Mans Mfis is the great builder and conqueror; indeed, the only king of Mali worth remembering. Mali was the first empire in the Western Sudan to extend its rule over both sides of the Niger's bend, or over the territories which had formerly been under two different kingdoms, that of Ghana and Songhay. Being at the junction of these two regions Timbuktu assumed greater strategic and political significance. The building of a royal residence there suggests that Timbuktu developed into an important provincial capital. The urban transformation took place from the second half of the fourteenth century when Timbuktu gradually replaced Walata as the principal terminus of the trans-Saharan trade. This sprawling town, lying some four miles from the Niger in the open country, was difficult to defend against invaders. al-Sa'idi records an invasion of the Mossi, who forced the horrified representatives of Mali's authority to flee. But these pagan invaders from the south did not come to stay. They destroyed the town, burned it, killed many people, seized booty, and then retreated to their own country. When all was safe, the people of Mali took up the reins again.28

Early in the fifteenth century the Tuareg Maghsharen, founders of Timbuktu, raided the town and wrought destruction in its environs. Formerly these Tuaregs had accepted the authority of Mali, but as the empire weakened its rulers were unable to protect the town. The people of Timbuktu felt that 'a king who is unable to defend a town has no right to be its sovereign'. In 1433/4 (A.H. 837) the last vestiges of Mali's sovereignty over Timbuktu were removed, and the town was taken over by killu Akamuwal, chief of the Tuareg. The latter continued to lead the life of a nomad chief and the town was administered by the governor,
Muhammad-n-Adda, a Sanhdja who had held the same office under the rule of Mali. At the same time, the Tuaregs conquered Walata. Some forty years later, when Timbuktu was conquered by Sonni ‘Ali, Xfillu the Tuareg chief sought refuge in Walata. In 1477, when in Tuat, the Italian Antonio Malfante heard that the Tuaregs had control over the Negro towns adjacent to their own country, they had no authority, however, over the country on the right bank of the Niger, where the Songhay kingdom then extended its influence.

In the Sahel, between the Niger and the Senegal rivers, Mali ruled over Soninke states, successors to Wagadu, like Diifilnu33 and Dira. The rulers of Dira, capital of Kingui, were the Niakhate, and they became vassals of Mali. Later the people of Kingui revolted against Mali and killed its amir. In the uprising the Niakhate were overthrown and a new dynasty - the Didwara - became rulers in Dira. Some traditions say that Sundjata overcame the Dyulufu mansa, that is, the king of Djolof. It suggests that the authority of Mali was extended, at least indirectly, over the Senegal valley.

About the middle of the fifteenth century Mema was conquered by Songhay. Some time before that the king of Mema, with a dozen sub-chief sons under him, asserted his independence.

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The secession of Mema from the empire of Mali may have followed the conquest of Timbuktu by the Tuaregs as Mali lost its hold over the Sahel. It was probably about that time, in the 1430s, that the Didwara of Kingui broke away from Mali. The accumulated evidence indicates an interesting process, in which former provinces of Mali exploited its weakness to become independent. Their independence, however, lasted for a few decades only, after which they were incorporated, through conquest, into the new emerging empire of Songhay. Such an interpretation may help us to sort out the conflicting evidence about the position of Jenne. According to al-Sa‘di, the rulers of Mali did not conquer Jenne even when their power was at its peak. They tried ninety-nine times and failed. In Ta‘rikh al-Fattash, on the other hand, one reads that the ruler of Jenne (Jenne-koy) was one of the humble vassals of the king of Mali; so low was his status that he brought his tribute to the king’s wife, and was not received by the king himself. Jenne, between the Niger and the Bani river, was well defended by the surrounding water. For seven years, seven months and seven days (sic) Sonni ‘Ali besieged Jenne until he finally conquered the town - and this despite the fact that he had the Sorko fleet at his disposal. It seems that the king of Mali found it difficult to impose his authority over Jenne by military force. Yet Jenne developed into an important commercial entrepôt in the fourteenth century, and its trade depended heavily on the Niger waterway which linked it with Timbuktu. Both Timbuktu and the Niger waterway were under Mali’s control, so it is likely that Jenne was within the same imperial system, perhaps as a fAef, which gave yearly tribute in return for autonomous rule. When Mansd Milis returned from pilgrimage he found the chief of Jenne in open revolt. This is another indication of his bellicose character.
In the first half of the fifteenth century, when Mali was pressed by the Songhay and the Tuaregs and the province of the northern Sahel threw off the domination of Mali, Jenne also

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asserted its independence. al-Sadi's account may refer to this period, up to the conquest by Sonni 'Ali in 1473. The authority of the chief of Jenne extended from the neighbourhood of Diarafarabe in the west to the Bandiagara mountains in the east, from Lake Debo in the north (where it bordered on Mema) to the provinces of Mali, Kala, and Binduku, in the south. Jenne then controlled most of the Inner Delta of the Niger, and an important section of the Niger waterway leading to Timbuktu.

The authority of Mali, north of the Malinke country, was reduced to the three provinces described by al-Sa'di: Kala (probably on both sides of the Niger in the region of SansandingSegu-Nyamina), Bindugu (on both banks of the Bani in the region of San), and Sibiridugu (south-west of Kala) closer to Mali proper. The people of Mali were very powerful and their strength passed all limits .... Their oppression, arrogance and excess at the end of the dynasty caused Allah to destroy them by his punishment.... They became weaker from that moment, until the reign of Askiyd al-Hijj Muh ammad. He and his sons raided them continuously.

This is a symbolic, perhaps popular, account of the decline of Mali. The process itself may be summed up as follows: internal disputes at the court contributed to the disintegration of the empire, as one province after the other seceded. The decline of Mali's power on the Middle Niger in the first half of the fifteenth century attracted the Mossi of the Upper Volta Basin to increase their mobility, before their political frontiers became stabilized. The Mossi raided and retreated, thus increasing the sense of insecurity on the Middle Niger. The political vacuum was filled by the Songhay empire, which under Sonni 'All and Askiyd Mulhammad exerted increasing pressure on Mali.

**VIII v The Weight of Songhay**

Songhay became independent of Mali at the end of the fourteenth century. It began to build up its military power, in particular the fleet manned by the Sorko, fishermen of the Niger. The territorial expansion of Songhay west of the Niger's bend began during the reign of Sonni Silm-n D~ma or Dandi (died 1464) who conquered Mema. This was a prelude to the military exploits of Sonni 'All the Great (1464-92), the real founder of the Songhay empire. Mema had already been independent, and it is significant that during the first phase of Songhay's expansion, Sonni 'Ali conquered territories which had already been lost to Mali. In the transitory period, between the decline of Mali and the expansion of Songhay, the Mossi raided the Middle Niger. c. 1430 they raided Binga, near Lake Debo. In the 1470s they invaded Massina, and reached Walata in 1480. They were defeated by Sonni 'All in 1483, who drove them back to their country.
Sonni 'Ali was more concerned with the danger of the invading Mossi than with Mali. He also had to deal with the nomads, Tuaregs and Fulbe. In 1468 he seized Timbuktu from the Tuaregs, but the latter retreated to the desert and continued to present a threat to Songhay's newly acquired possessions. Sonni 'All persecuted the 'ulam' of Timbuktu because he suspected that they favoured the Tuaregs, and would help his enemies. His hatred of the Fulbe of Massina was even greater. 'He could not see any of the Fulbe without killing them.... He decimated the Sanqare tribe and only left a group small enough to gather under the shadow of one tree.' The insubordinate Fulbe dominated the vital Niger waterway between Timbuktu and Jenne.

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After he had conquered Jenne in 1473, Sonni 'All attacked Mali twice, probably with little gain. Both attempts were made on the frontiers of Mali along the Niger or the Bani rivers (against Kala or Binduku which were adjacent to Jenne). There, the king of Mali and his vassals put up a strong resistance. The fleet formed the core of Songhay's force and all Sonni 'All's conquests were therefore along the Niger waterway. His reluctance to undertake military expeditions away from the river, where he would lose the support of his fleet, is best illustrated by his plans to dig a canal from Ra's al-MA' on the Niger to Walata, when he planned to conquer that land-locked town.5 AskiyA Muhammad, on the other hand, undertook long over-land expeditions far into the desert, such as the one to Agades in 1514/156 or that against Tengella, ruler of the Futa Toro, in 1512/13. In praise of the latter expedition, which was regarded as an extraordinary military feat, it was said: 'see how at the head of a huge army the Kurmina-FTri crossed the vast desert without water, a distance of over two months, between Tendirma and the Futa'.7

AskiyA Muhammad broadened the basis of the Songhay military power by building stronger units of infantry and cavalry, besides the nucleus of the Sorko fleet. These new measures allowed him to expand his authority over the country away from the Niger. When he resumed the offensive west of the Niger's bend, after his return from the pilgrimage, AskiyA Muh ammad did not attack Mali along the Niger, where the frontiers were better fortified, but aimed at the provinces of the Sahel. Most of these expeditions were led by the Kurmina-FTri, governor of the Western provinces, who was second to the askiyd in the hierarchy. His residence was in the new town of Tendirma, in the lacustrine region.

In A.H. 905 (1499-150) Askiyi Muhammad led an expedition against the Bdghana-Fdri, 'Uthm~n, in which a Fulbe chief was also killed8 Bighana, astride the Hodh and the Sahel to the west of the lacustrine region, was the centre of the ancient

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Soninke kingdom of Ghana/Wagadu. Following the disintegration of Ghana, the titlefdri orfdren (chief) was carried by many provincial chiefs among the Soninke.9 The Bdghana-Fdri became one of Mali's vassals. Early in the fifteenth century a group of Fulbe migrated to Massina 'in the country of the Bdghana-
Fdri. He gave them permission to settle there, and appointed their leader as chief (ardo) of the Fulbe. The Fulbe of Massina remained allied with the Bdhana-Fdri, and when the latter was attacked by Askiya Muhammad the son of the Fulbe chief of Massina, Demba Dumbe, took part in the battle and was killed. Neither in the account of the Fulbe migration nor in the account of Askiya Muhammad's raid is there any reference to the position of the Bdhana-Fdri vis-d-vis Mali. Under the rule of the Songhay empire the Fulbe chief of Massina was appointed by the askiyd himself. Similar appointments in Mali (such as that of the Mass-ifa chief in Timbuktu, according to Ibn Battolta) were the prerogative of the imperial sovereign. The fact that Maghan, the Fulbe chief, was appointed by the Bdhana-Fdri without reference to the sovereign of Mali may suggest that by the 1430s this provincial chief, like his neighbours to the west (the Didwara) and to the east (Mema), had become independent of Mali. Later Songhay expeditions to the west are explicitly stated to have been against provinces of Mali.

In A.H. 907 (1501/2) Askiya Muhammad sent his brother 'Umar Kamdiagu, the Kurmina-Fdri, to Dialan to fight its governor, who ruled in the name of the king of Mali. 'Umar was unable to overcome the town, and called for Askiya Muhammad. The latter arrived with more troops, captured the town and destroyed it. He pillaged the royal residence of Mali there, and took prisoners. Askiya Muhammad stayed there for some time to introduce reforms and reorganize its government."

In A.D. 1508 or 1509 Askiya Muhammad raided Galam on the Senegal, which is said to have been in Mali. By that time the independent kingdom of the Diwara in Kingui had acknowledged the sovereignty of Songhay, and in A.H. 918 (1512/13) the THE WEIGHT OF SONGHAY

Diawara called upon Askiyd Mulhammad to fight against Tengella, then ruler of the Futa. The expedition against Tengella brought the Songhay as far west as the Senegalese Futa, and with the earlier conquests of Galam and Diala, the frontier between Songhay and Mali followed the course of the Upper Senegal. Sibiridugu (perhaps Beledugu north of Bamako) was regarded in 913 (1507/8) as the border which divided the territories of Askiya Mulhammad from those of the Sultan of Mali. In 1512 Leo Africanus visited the Sudan, and left the following description of Mali:

Melli extends along a branch of the Niger for a distance of about 300 miles. It borders upon the kingdom of Jenne to the north, and is confined by a desert and arid mountains to the south. To the west there are wild forests which reach the Ocean, and to the east it borders upon the territory of Gago [Gao or Songhay]. In this country there is a very large village of about six thousand inhabitants called Melli .... The last of the rulers of Melli became a tributary of the Ischia [askiy]. The latter's attacks are so heavy that the king [of Mali] cannot even give food to his family. However, Mali had a respite of almost forty years, from 1508 to 1542/3, when Askidy Mulhammad directed his forces on Katsina and Agades in the other
direction (1513-16). The expedition to Agades ended with the revolt of Kebbi (1516/17), which again taxed the power of Songhay. Between 1519 and 1528 the old and blind Askiyd Muhammad lost control over his own court and empire. He was deposed in 1528 by his son MisA, who by this act initiated a series of disputes, assassinations and deposions among the sons of Askiyd Muhammad. Askiyd Mfisi was assassinated in 1531. He was succeeded by Muhammad Benkan, son of 'Umar Kamdiagu, who ruled until 1537 when in his turn he was deposed by Ism,'il, another son of Askiyd Muhammad.15

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The deposed Askiyd Muhammad Benkan fled to Timbuktu, and thence to Tendirma where he was pursued by the troops of the new askiye. In order to escape the rage of his cousin, the deposed askiy left the territory of Songhay and proceeded to Mali. He settled there under the auspices of the Sanqara-Zilma', the military commander of the southern provinces of Mali. The people of Mali humiliated and ridiculed the Songhay refugees Muhammad Benkan and his brother 'Uthmin. These two bore it calmly until they could suffer no more. "Uthmdn emigrated to Walata (which was not under the askiyds' effective rule), and the deposed Askiy Muhammad Benkan moved to Silma, the remotest town of the province Kala of Mali, not far from Segu.16 According to another version Muh ammad Benkan fled to Mali and settled at Ta'ba, which is described elsewhere as the remotest town in the province of Binduku, facing Segu on the other side of the Bani river."

This is an interesting episode in the relations between the two Sudanese empires. When the more powerful Songhay was troubled by internal strife in the royal dynasty, Mali was released from an otherwise constant pressure. Mali became partially involved in the internal politics of Songhay when it gave asylum to a deposed askiyd, but the people of Mali, who had already suffered from attacks by Songhay, took revenge by harassing the Songhay refugees. The deposed askiyd and his brother may have regarded it safer to stay with the SanqaraZdma' in the southern provinces of Mali, where they were far from the reach of the reigning askiyd. But there in the south, among the Malinke, feelings against Songhay were probably stronger and Muhammad Benkan moved north to Sama which, though closer to the frontier with Songhay, could have been more hospitable, as the inhabitants there were Marka (of Soninke origin) and Bambara. Askiyd Ism&'Il, who deposed Muhammad Benkan in 1537, put an end to a decade of internal troubles. He released his father, the old Askiyd al-Hiij Muhammad, from the island to

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which he was confined, and recovered the legitimacy of the lineage. The great Askiyd Muh ammad died in honour in 1538, and a year later his son Askiyd Ism 'il died a natural death. The regeneration of the dynasty is attested by the fact that four askiyds succeeded each other peacefully for almost half a century. It was
marked also by the reign of two powerful rulers, Askia A Ishiq (1539-49) and the
great Askia A Diwild (1549-1582).18
As the Songhay empire regained power, its rulers resumed the pressure on Mali.
During the first phase of its expansion (under Sonni ‘Ali), Songhay conquered
territories which had already become independent of Mali. Later, under Askia A
Muhammad, the Songhay attacked the north-western provinces of Mali beyond
the Upper Senegal. In the 1540s the attacks were directed against the provinces of
Mali on the Niger and the Bani rivers, the provinces which defended the access to
the centre of Mali and its capital. This therefore turned out to be the most
dangerous confrontation for Mali.
In 1542/3 Askia A Ishiq led an expedition against Ta’ba.19 This was a prelude to a
more daring expedition, which brought the Songhay army into the capital of Mali.
In 952 A.H. (A.D. 1545/6) Askia A Ishiq sent his brother Dawiid, the
KurminaPiri, against Mali. The king of Mali escaped and the Songhay army
occupied his town, in all probability the capital. D Awiid remained there for seven
days, during which time he gave licence to the soldiers to relieve themselves
inside the king's palace. He then evacuated the town, and the people of Mali
flooded back, horrified by the left-over filth.20 This expedition was not intended
to be a conquest of the capital of Mali, but rather a raid and a harassment.
The king of Mali could not resist the advance of the Songhay army, but the
Songhay would have found it difficult to firmly establish their rule over this hilly
country, where the vegetation was dense. Askia A Muhammad himself advised
that 'any one who does not keep away from fighting in the mountains and in

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the forest exposes his army to ruin and casualties'.21 In addition, the Songhay
could not employ their powerful fleet against the heart of the Malinke country,
because it lay beyond the Sotouba falls upstream of Bamako. When Mali was at
its height, these falls divided the empire in two, separating the Malinke country
from the conquered lands. The Niger waterway, therefore, could not foster unity
and enhance central authority in Mali, as it did to Songhay. In the sixteenth
century these falls protected Mali and marked the south-western limits of
Songhay expansion.22
So rather than conquering and subjugating Mali, the askiyds preferred to whittle
away its power by repeated attacks. In 966 A.H. (A.D. 1558/9) Askia A Dwid
raided the province of Soma in Mali. The chief of Soma died, and Askiai Dwifid
appointed the chief's son to succeed him. He then proceeded to Dibikarala where
he overcame a deputy of the king of Mali. In the course of this expedition the
askiyd married a daughter of the king of Mali, whom he took back to Songhay,
accompanied by rich presents.23 It is possible that following the askiyd's victory,
the king of Mali sued for peace and gave his daughter in marriage to his
victorious enemy. The expedition itself must have reached the country south of
Segu, because on his way back Askiai Dwidiid passed Sdma in the region of
Segu.
The provinces of Kala and Binduku, which until the beginning of the sixteenth
century had protected the northern frontier of Mali on the Niger, were now in a
state of confusion. The expeditions of AskiyA Ish-q and Askiyi Dwfid were directed against some of the rulers of these buffer chiefdoms or against the centre of Mali beyond them. Chiefs in Kala and Binduku became independent of Mali, but were subject to interventions from Songhay. We have seen that following the death of the chief of Soma, Askiyi Dwfiiid confirmed the latter’s son as his successor. In 1571 he sent an expedition to punish the chief of Da’, in the province of Binduku, because of some perversion and misconduct.2 These provinces,

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however, were not integrated into Songhay and political adversaries of the askiyds found asylum in towns of Kala as late as the 1580s.25 AskiyA Ishq II, the last independent ruler of Songhay, led an expedition against Kala in 999 A.H. (A.D. 1590/1), when the invading Moroccan force commanded by Jiiddr Pasha was already close to the Sudan.26 The Moroccan conquest brought about far-reaching changes in the Western Sudan, as described by al-Sa’di in this wellknown and much quoted passage: This expeditionary force [under Jiidir Pasha] found the Sudan one of God’s most favoured countries in prosperity, comfort, security, and vitality.... Then all that changed; security gave place to danger, prosperity made way for misery and calamity, whilst affliction and distress succeeded well being. Over the length and breadth of the land people began to devour one another, raids and war spared neither life nor wealth. Disorder spread and intensified until it became universal.... Since the reign of AskiyA al-Hjj Muhammad none of the provincial chiefs had dared to attack the sovereigns of Songhay because of their power and valiancy. ... On the contrary, they [the askiydis] used to successfully attack the chiefs in their respective countries .... 27
With the collapse of the central authority, chiefs became independent and organized raids against their neighbours. The Bambara raided the region of Jenne, burnt villages, pillaged property and captured women. Local chiefs in Kala and Binduku foraged and looted about, as did the Fulbe of Massina. The great empire of Songhay collapsed as its army was defeated by the Moroccan musketeers, and the three principal towns - Gao, Timbuktu, and Jenne - were taken over by the new conquerors. Mali, the old and declining empire, was hardly affected by the Moroccan conquest. On the contrary, the century-old pressure on its northern frontier ceased. Instead of the aggressive Songhay empire, there was a much weaker

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authority on the Middle Niger beyond a disintegrated country of warring chiefs. The king of Mali saw new prospects for reviving something of the power of his ancestors. In 1599 Mahm-id, the king of Mali, made preparations for attacking Jenne.28 He first tried to win allies among the local chiefs, who had formerly been vassals of Mali. He also sent a messenger to the Kala-Sh ‘a Bokar, inviting him to join the
When the Kalasha heard that the SanqaraZdima and the Faran-Sara, formerly the two military commanders of Mali's territorial army, would not join the king of Mali in his attack on Jenne, he reached the conclusion that there was little prospect of a victory. He therefore set out to join the Moroccans in defending Jenne.

The king of Mali failed in his attempt to recruit the former vassals of the empire since the two army commanders and all but two of the chiefs in Kala and Binduku did not respond to his invitation. The two who joined him were the chiefs of Oma in Binduku and of Fadaku or Faraku in Kala, south-east of Sansanding. The chief of Fadaku in the 1640s was called Mansi Muhammad ibn MansR 'Ali. Both the title mans and the Muslim names suggest close relations between the chiefs of Fadaku and the rulers of Mali.30 Soua, the principal town of the chief of Oma (or Ama) is described as an important market. This town may have rivalled Jenne, and the Moroccan pasha was advised that the chief of Oma not only supported the king of Mali but also had some influence on his decision to attack Jenne.31 In 1632 the chief of Oma supported another revolt against the Moroccans in Jenne.32

The third of Mali's allies in the attack on Jenne was Hamadi Amina, the Fulbe chief of Massina. The Fulbe were reluctant subjects, and the askiyds had had to use both diplomacy and force to maintain a limited authority over them. A similar policy was pursued by the Moroccan pashas who, like the askiyds, were apprehensive of the strategic position of Massina on the vital waterway between Timbuktu and Jenne. In 1598

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Hamadi Amina refused to come to Timbuktu when called there by the pasha Jfidr. The pasha sent a punitive expedition to Massina, but the Fulbe ardo avoided open battle, fearing the Moroccan superiority in fire-arms. He retreated to Kaniaga beyond the reach of the Moroccans. However, the pasha took the ardo's family as captives, holding them in custody in Jenne, and appointed a new ardo over Massina as their protégé.33 This may have induced the exiled ardo to join the king of Mali in attacking Jenne.

As the king of Mali with his three allies advanced towards Jenne, the governor of the town asked the pasha in Timbuktu to send reinforcements. The pasha sent two q'ids with troops, which were carried in boats up the river Niger. When these troops reached Jenne they found the town encircled by the numerous troops of the enemy. The waterway leading to the town was also blocked, and it was there that the fighting began. The Moroccan troops, though inferior in numbers, charged the enemy, backed up with a heavy fusillade of guns, and succeeded in breaking through into the besieged town. This was on the last day of Ramadn 1007, or the end of April 1599. At the advice of the Kala-Sha'a, the governor of Jenne decided to leave the protection of the town walls and attack the enemy on the same day. The king of Mali and his allies were caught by surprise and were soon defeated. The king of Mali fled on horseback. He was pursued by the Kala-Sha'a and another local chief. When these two overtook him, they dismounted and greeted him in the way a great king is greeted. They advised him to hurry lest he should
be caught by the Moroccans and be disgracefully treated. The defeated king of Mali, a descendant of the great emperors of Mali, was accorded a royal respect by those who had formerly been vassals of the empire, and had now joined his enemies. This was a moving scene, and marked yet another stage in the decline of Mali, which ceased to be a political factor on the Middle Niger, and is mentioned no further in the Arabic records of this region.

IX Malinke Expansion
and Political Fragmentation
We have followed the history of Mali in its northern expansion along the Niger valley and into the Sahel. There, Mali spread its authority over a region which saw the rise and fall of great kingdoms. This was the region known to Arab geographers and historians. Looking from the north, through the Arabic and Muslim records, Mali was gradually reduced to a kingdom of local importance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Yet during these two centuries a new light is thrown on Mali from another direction. As the Portuguese navigators reached the Senegal and the Gambia rivers they became aware of the powerful inland empire of Mali, which exerted influence as far as the Atlantic coast.

About 1445 a young Portuguese, Joio Fernandes, spent some time among the Moors in the Sahara, from whom he heard 'that in the land of the Negroes there is another kingdom, called Melly, but this is not certain.... 1 In 1455-6 Ca da Mosto visited the Gambia, soon after its discovery, and found that the senior chief in that region, the Forosangole, lived about ten days travel from the coast. He had many chiefs under his authority, on both sides of the Gambia river, but he himself was a vassal of the king of Mali, ruler of all the Negroes.2 In 1456 Diogo Gomes sailed up the Gambia river to Cantor, an important town close to the Barrakunda falls, the end of the navigable part of the Gambia. He asked the people there about the hinterland, its trade and government: They told me that the king Bormelli ['king of Melli’ in Wolof] ruled over all the country of the Blacks. All the region

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on the right side of the river is under his domination. They themselves were his subjects .... They said that Farisangul was a subject of Mormelli [sic] .... They told me that on the other side of the river, that is on the left bank, was a powerful chief of all the southern regions, called Batimansa.3 Half a century later, in 1506-7, Valentin Fernandes recorded: The Mandinga kingdom begins in the Gambia river.... The king of Mandinga is called Mandimansa .... He is the sovereign of many vassals who pay him much tribute. He lives 700 leagues inland in a town called Jaga. .... 4

As they sailed up the navigable sections of the Gambia, the Casamance, Rio Cachen, and Rio Grande (Canal du Geba) the Portuguese encountered representatives of the imperial authority of Mali. By the middle of the fifteenth century the vassal kingdoms of Mali extended from the southern bank of the
Gambia to Rio Grande. This area developed into an imperial sub-system of Mali known in traditional accounts as Kabu. The establishment of the authority of Mali there was associated with a westward migration of the Malinke, traders, peasants, and warriors. Traders went to the Gambia in search of maritime salt and of gold from the Kabu goldfields. The warriors are said to have come under the leadership of Tiramakhan Traore, one of the more important war chiefs of Sundjata. It was after he had defeated the king of Djolof that Tiramakhan combined with earlier Malinke migrants to conquer the country south of the Gambia. Many chiefly houses in this area trace their origin to Kabu and to Tiramakhan. It is likely that he initiated the process of state-building. North of the Gambia, the Guelowar royal clan of the Serer states claim descent from Malinke warriors from Kabu.5 Two main types of states emerged between the Gambia and the Casamance rivers: states where both subjects and rulers were Malinke, and states which had not been colonized by Malinke peasants but were rather loosely integrated into the

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Malian imperial system, being governed by rulers of Malinke origin. Very often these rulers became assimilated into the local population. The non-Malinke states were farther west and south, where the savannah gives way to denser vegetation. One of these states was Kasa, whose king was known to the Portuguese as Casamansa (hence the name of the river). Towards the end of the sixteenth century de Almada reported that Casamansa, though a powerful monarch himself, was subordinate to the farin (ruler) of Kabu, who in his turn paid allegiance to Mandimansa, the king of Mali.6 By that time the authority of Mali might have been only nominal, but the traditions insist that the farin of Kabu had to go to the capital of Mali to be ceremonially installed by the king there. The Portuguese impression of the political situation was that there was a hierarchy of chiefs, though even those at the lower levels had considerable autonomy. With the appearance of the Portuguese on the Gambia and the growth of trade along this river, the western provinces of Mali assumed greater importance. Trade over the navigable part of the river, as far as the Barrakunda falls, was mainly in the hands of Africans or mulattos in the service of the Portuguese. Two important commercial centres developed near the falls: on the south bank Cantor, which was part of Kabu; on the north bank Sutuco, capital of Wuli - a strong Malinke kingdom. While Cantor was still integrated into the empire of Mali in the sixteenth century, Wuli came under the ambit of the new rising empire of Djolof in the second half of the fifteenth century. Malinke chiefs on the Gambia sent tribute to Mali, and the empire benefited from the westbound trade. Yet as a result of their share in the trade and their contact with the Portuguese, local rulers increased their power at the expense of their remote overlord. From the middle of the fifteenth century the whole region of the Senegambia became agitated, experiencing economic, social, and political transformations. 7

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In the thirteenth century the authority of Mali extended north of the Gambia over the Wolof and as far as Futa Toro. It is now suggested that Ndyadyan Ndyay, founder of the Djolof empire, lived in about the middle of the fourteenth century. The Wolof may have become independent of Mali during the disturbances after the death of Mansi Sulaymdn. By the second half of the fifteenth century the Djolof had extended their authority over the Malinke states on the northern bank of the Gambia (Nyumi, Badibu, Nyani, and Wuli), to participate in the trade with the Portuguese.

In the fifteenth century, when the power of Mali declined in the Sahel, waves of Fulbe migrants came from the region of Termes (in present-day Mauritania). This migration was caused by inadequate pasture for the growing numbers of these cattle breeders, and also by the pressure of the Tuaregs of the Sahara. One wave of these Fulbe migrants reached Massina where, as mentioned above, they became the reluctant subjects of successive imperial authorities. Other waves, the Lam Termes and Lam Taga, reached the Futa Toro where they overthrew the Tondyon dynasty, probably vassals to Mali. Futa Toro was divided into small units which lacked political cohesiveness.

A careful interpretation of Portuguese documents by J. Boulegue suggests that in the middle of the fifteenth century yet another wave of Fulbe migrants crossed the Upper Senegal and the Gambia rivers to reach Rio Grande. There they were defeated by the local population and the survivors reorganized on the Futa Djallon highlands which they found most suitable for their cattle.

In the 1460s Tengella (or Temala) emerged as the leader of the Fulbe of Futa Djallon. In challenging the authority of Mali, Tengella brought under his leadership other ethnic groups of the Futa Djallon: Tenda, Djallonke, Landoumas, and also Malinke. About 1493 an ambassador of the Portuguese king, D. Jo~o II, visited the king of Mali, Mansa Mamudu, who was then fighting against 'the king of the Fulos, called Temala'.

In 1512, according to the Ta'rikhs of Timbuktu, Tengella, 'king of the Futa' or 'Silatigi', invaded Didra in Kingui, which was then under the sphere of influence of the Songhay empire. The chief of Di-ra sought the aid of Askiyi al-.Idjj Muhammad. The latter sent a strong expedition led by the Kurmina-fdri, 'Umar Kamdiagu. Tengella was defeated and killed. Koli, Tengella's eldest son, did not take part in the fighting, and when he heard of his father's death he hurried forth to, lead the defeated army. He retreated to the Futa Toro, where he built up his own kingdom and founded the Denianke dynasty which ruled for over two and a half centuries.

The power of the new state increased at the expense of its neighbours, the Berber nomads to the north and Djolof to the south. About 1534 Koli attacked Bambuk, then under Mali’s rule, in an attempt to gain control over the goldfields. He was defeated, perhaps because of the intervention of the Portuguese, who were called
in by the ruler of Mali. Koli died in 1537, but his successors continued his expansionist policy. They took advantage of the collapse of the Songhay empire in 1591 and spread their authority for some time in the western Sahel. An anonymous text written in Spanish about 1600, discovered by Teixeira de Mota and analysed by J. Boulegue, indicates that the new 'Empire of the Grand Foul' extended from the Sahel to the Futa Djallon and over the Upper Senegal, including the important commercial centre of Diakha-sur-Bafing. At the end of the sixteenth century the Fulbe became for some time masters of the Bambuk goldfields. Significantly, Mali lost the goldfields of Bambuk between 1590 and 1600. This loss almost coincided with the defeat of Mansd Mahmiid at the gates of Jenne. It is very likely that

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this date marks the collapse of Mali and its final disintegration. In 1620-1 Richard Jobson travelled up the Gambia river, and noticed that 'the petty kings on the south side .. had all reference to the great king of Cantore', who presumably represented Kabu. The northern bank was then divided between the bur of Salum and 'the great king of Wuli'. Jobson probably heard nothing of Mali far in the interior.13

In 1599 the king of Mali, the same who was defeated in Jenne and who also lost Bambuk, was Mansi Mahmild. He is identified by Y. Person as Niani Mansi Mamudu, to whom many genealogies of the Keita chiefs trace back. He is named after the ancient capital of Mali because he was the last great ruler who had his residence there. He is remembered as a great warrior, and the attack on Jenne was only one of his numerous expeditions to recover the power of Mali. Many of his wars were against invasions of Bambara and Fulbe into the valley of the Niger. These invasions were more serious than the threat of the Moroccans, who did not venture south of Jenne, for they threatened the heart of the empire, the land of the Malinke themselves. Niani Mansd Mamudu may have divided the country between his sons and other war chiefs in order to defend it. He himself was forced to leave the capital and died at Soro, in the centre of the Manding mountains. After the death of Niani Mansd Mamudu even the nucleus of the empire, 'the old Mande', broke up into its components, the kafus. It is likely, however, that three of the sons of Niani Mansi Mamudu - Nyamakhan, Mansii, Kanda and Mansd Kuru - and their descendants, were recognized by chiefs of the other kafus as their sovereigns. Yves Person suggests that it is to this period that al-Sa'di, a contemporary historian, may have referred in his account of the disintegration of Mali:
Then they split into three sections, each in one part of the country, and each having its ruling clan claiming the kingship.14

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Nyamakhan, son of Niani Mansi Mamudu, ruled in Kita. He gained control of the Bure goldfields and expelled the Fulbe and the Bambara invaders across the Sankarani river, where they formed the Wasulunke, Bambarized Fulbe. In the
course of the seventeenth century the Mansakurusi, descendants of Mansa Kuru, assumed the leading role among the Malinke. The land of the Malinke was saved from the invaders, but any attempt to expand Malinke political influence to the north was blocked by the rise of the Bambara to political hegemony on the Middle Niger.

The Bambara, or as they call themselves, Banmana, are closely related to the Malinke and speak a similar dialect. On the Middle Niger, in the region of Segu, the Bambara came in contact with Soninke immigrants from the north. The latter, though fewer in numbers, carried with them some of the heritage of the old Soninke kingdom of Ghana/Wagadu. Many of them were traders and therefore wealthier, and were acquainted with more elaborate political structures. These Soninke adopted the Bambara language and came to be known in this area as Marka. The convergence of Soninke and Bambara gave rise to the numerous chiefdoms of the provinces of Kala and Binduku. In the thirteenth century these provinces were integrated into the empire of Mali. Under the dual influence of the Marka and Mali some of these chiefs were islamized. During the sixteenth century these chiefdoms gradually came into Songhay's sphere of influence. After the Moroccan conquest, the divided provincial chiefs, with no imperial support, became exposed to the growing menace of the pagan Bambara.

By the middle of the sixteenth century the governor of Jenne was already worried about these pagan Bambara whose number and audacity increased. During the chaos which reigned after the Moroccan conquest the Bambara raided the region of Jenne, and wrought destruction. Bambara bands supported the Fulbe of Massina in their revolts against the Moroccans. In 1645 the Bambara revolted against the local chiefs of Sana and Fadaku in...

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Kala and Binduku, chased these chiefs out of their capitals and pillaged and destroyed the towns. The collapse of these chiefdoms in the middle of the seventeenth century put an end to the territorial political organization bequeathed by Mali, and paved the way for the emergence of the Bambara states in the eighteenth century.

In 1300, when the empire of Mali was at its peak, the Malinke did not expand south of Siguiri (on the Upper Niger) and Bougouni (on the Baule river). Half a millennium later, c. 1800, the Malinke were spread up the Niger river to its source, and as far south as the fringes of the forest in the present Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. The southward migration of the Malinke set off a series of local migrations and changed the ethnic composition not only of the savannah and the pre-forest zones - now occupied by Malinke - but also of the Upper Guinea coast and the forest.

On the Gambia the westwards expansion of the Malinke is associated in the oral traditions with Sundjata. The southward expansion is associated with Niani Mansa Mamudu, to whom all the genealogies of the Keita trace back. Whereas the earlier migration of the Malinke to the west was one of colonization supported...
by the growing might of a great empire, the later migration to the south was a
retreat from a disintegrating empire.
By the fifteenth century the enterprising Dyula traders had opened routes from the
Niger to the Akan forest for trade in gold and kola, and to Worodugu, 'the land of
the kola', in the forest of the Ivory Coast.20 According to Ta'rikh al-Fattsh, the
king of Mali was very rich; 'you know enough when you hear of the gold mine in
his country and of the kola plantations'.21 It is unlikely that Mali ever exercised
direct political authority over the kola-producing forest or, for that matter, over
the southern goldfields of the Akan forest. Yet Mali certainly had a stake in the
organization of trade to this area by its Dyula traders. The Portuguese were well
aware of the fact that the Mande-speaking

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traders they met both in the Senegambia and on the Gold Coast were part of an
all-embracing sub-continental trade system associated with the empire of Mali.22
Caravans which reached the Gambia travelled under the orders of the king of Mali
and were accompanied by Malinke warriors,23 and the same is probably true for
the caravans travelling to the forests in the south. Mande-speaking warriors, who
moved south along the trade routes, established the kingdom of Gonja at the end
of the sixteenth century.24
The southern migration of Malinke groups, which began in the fifteenth or the
sixteenth century, intensified as the pressure over Mali increased. Mali never
ruled over the new territories acquired by the Malinke, but the latter - and
especially the Keita royal clan - carried on the imperial traditions of Mali.
Politically, however, they were fragmented into numerous kafus of several
villages each, resembling the pre-imperial situation before the small Malinke
chiefdoms were united by Sundjata. The kafu was ruled by a mansd, the title of
the kings of Mali of which the seventeenth and eighteenth century mansds were a
miniature replica only. The largest kafus counted not more than 15,000
inhabitants, while the smallest did not exceed six miles in diameter. This
fragmented political order was occasionally disturbed by the rise of war-chiefs
who extended their military domination over wider areas without establishing,
however, any territorial organization. Such conquest states were ephemeral and
hardly survived the death of the founder. In the last quarter of the nineteenth
century there was a last ambitious effort by Samori to recreate a Malinke empire.5

PART TWO

X  The Monarch and his Court
In following the political history of Ghana and Mali some features of government,
politics and administration in the early Sudanic kingdoms have already been
suggested. A review of the evidence will allow a more detailed account, but first a
word of caution about the nature of the sources.
Contemporary Arab authors, whether they obtained information indirectly - like al-Bakri, al-'Umari and Ibn Khaldin - or observed events and ceremonies themselves - like Ibn Batitita must have been biassed by their own experience with political institutions and their ow~a social values of the Muslim world north of the Sahara. The Muslim authors of the seventeenth century Ta'rikhs were well acquainted with African institutions, but they were removed by six centuries from the days of Ghana's glory and by three centuries from Mali's hegemony. They were acquainted with the Songhay empire and the political structure of Mali was viewed with the assumption of institutional continuity in the imperial system of the Western Sudan. The use of oral traditions and ethnographical data also assumes that the basic structure of Malinke societies at the level of the kinship group, the village, or the district, have not changed radically during a millennium. Though there are no exact measures to rectify possible variations from past realities, gross errors may be avoided if one recognizes the limitations of the sources.

The extended family, the lu, is the basic social unit among the Malinke. The head of the family, the fa, administers the communal property and regulates relations among members of the group with the advice of other elders. He represents the link with their ancestors and also fulfills priestly functions.

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The village head, dugu-tigi, is the fa of the lu believed to have been the earliest occupants of the place, whose ancestor had first established relations with the spirits of the land. The dugu-tigi is at the same time chief of the village and priest. In the administration of village affairs he is helped by a council of the tun-gigi, headmen of the leading families.

The unity of the village, beyond the autonomy of the lu, is enhanced by initiation associations (or secret societies). The elders of the village are often the senior members of these associations.

Villages among the Malinke are grouped in kafus. A kafu may develop out of one village through fission. The dugu-tigi of the original village would then become chief of the kafu. A kafu may be created by the emergence of a powerful leader who imposes his protection over neighbouring villages. Whereas at the level of the village the ritual function of the dugu-tigi is of primary importance, the political functions are central for the mansd, chief of the kafu. The kafu represents the supremacy of the territorial factor over the kinship group. The kafu therefore has some of the basic elements of a state.'

The development of Mali from a kafu ruled by the Keita clan to the hegemonic empire in the Western Sudan progressed in two stages. Through alliances and coercion Sundjata, son of the mansd of one Malinke kafu, was recognized as the supreme leader of the war of liberation against the Soso by the mansds of the other Malinke kafus. During this stage chiefs of other kafus lost their sovereignty and the title mansd; this title was henceforth reserved for Sundjata and his successors. In the second stage the conquests by Sundjata and his successors brought them to the Sahel. Their dominions then became ethnically heterogeneous and they inherited the imperial legacy of Ghana.
The monarch of a Sudanic kingdom grew out of the office of the family headman and the village chief, who combined secular and religious authority. As his power increased, so the sacred aspect of his role became more emphasized. His elevated position further removed him not only from commoners but also from the nobility, members of his own lineage and lesser chiefs. Elements of divine kingship may be traced in some Sudanic monarchs. The earliest, and most explicit, evidence for divine kingship in the Sudan is in the tenth-century account of Kanem by al-Muhallabi: They exalt their king and worship him instead of God. They imagine that he does not eat.... If any of his subjects meet the camels which carry the food [secretly to the palace] he is instantly killed .... Their religion is the worship of their kings, for they believe that they bring life and death, sickness and health.

The burial of the king of Ghana, described by al-Bakri, suggests some similarities to burial customs in ancient Egypt and in other societies regarded as having a divine kingship.

In Gao of the eleventh century the king’s meal was shrouded in mystery: ‘When the king sits down [to eat] a drum is beaten ... and no one is allowed to travel about the town until the king finishes his repast.’ While in Cairo, on his way to Mecca, Mansil Miisd ate alone with no one present. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, V. Fernandes recorded that Mandimansa - very probably the king of Mali - was not allowed to be seen eating, even by his wives who served the food.

Rules concerning the ceremonial submission before the king had to be strictly followed by commoners and nobles coming into the royal presence. They had to fall prostrate before the king and place dust and ashes on their heads. This custom is recorded by al-Bakri for Ghana, and by Ibn Batiiia, al'Umari and Ta'rikh al-Fattdsh for Mali. A Mali ambassador to the Moroccan Sultan sprinkled dust on his head whenever the Sultan made a favourable comment, as he would have done in his own country.

Sprinkling dust was only a part of a more elaborate procedure of greeting. ‘The farba came forward, greeting [Mansi Mdsa] in the way a king is saluted; that is, he takes off his gown and wraps himself in it. He then kneels down, beats his breast and scatters dust over himself.’ Similar and more detailed accounts of humility and submissiveness are reported by Ibn Battfita, an eye-witness to ceremonies in the court of Mali, and by Ibn Amir H. jib who saw how Mansi Mdsa was saluted by his subjects during the royal visit to Cairo. No one was allowed into the king’s presence with his sandals on; negligence was punished by death. No one was allowed to sneeze in the king’s
presence, and when the king himself sneezed those present beat their breasts with their hands.1
The king, as was common among other African chiefs, spoke in public through a spokesman, who repeated the words of the king in a loud voice.12 When the king addressed them, the officers of the court removed their headgear and stroked the strings of their bows in approval of the king's words.13
The etiquette of the court emphasized the distance between the monarch and his subjects. The ceremonial audience of the king manifested his power, his wealth, and dignity. al-Bakri's account of the audience of the king of Ghana shares much in common with the accounts by al-'Umari and Ibn Battila of ceremonies at the court of the king of Mali:14 the domed pavilion in which the audience took place; the display of gold, silver, and ivory; the bodyguard of armed slaves; the presence of the dignitaries of the state; saddled and bridled horses ready for the king; and the announcement of the king's arrival by a tattoo on the royal drums. Dogs of excellent pedigree, which in Ghana were always present, were replaced in Mali—perhaps under Islamic influence—by two rams, kept as protection against the evil eye.

The royal umbrella as one of the royal emblems in fourteenth-century Mali was in all probability borrowed from the Mamluk sultans of Egypt, who were visited by several kings of Mali.5 Flags were introduced earlier, and were carried before the kings of both Ghana and Mali. The colours of the flags of Mansa

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Miisi were yellow on red.16 It is interesting to compare the pomp and ceremony at the courts of Ghana and Mali with the contrasting simplicity in the court of the Didwara:
Their kings have not that awe-inspiring appearance of [other] kings. They do not sit [for audience] dressed in a kingly fashion nor do they go out decorated. They never put on a turban nor are they seated on carpets. Their king has only a cap on his head. Sometimes when he sits down among his people one would not recognize him among them.1 Though he has a large cavalry force he owns one horse only. They used to say: 'The adornment of his authority and kingship is sufficient for a king who needs no other ornaments."8
Ta'rikh al-Fatt sh implies that the Didwara kings were exceptional in their simplicity and austerity. Other kings were richly ornamented, clearly distinguished from their followers. In eleventh-century Ghana only the king and the crown prince could wear sewn clothes; all other people wore robes of cotton, silk, or brocade, according to their means, made of unstitched lengths of cloth.19 In fourteenth-century Mali, the king was dressed in a long garment made of a European cloth.20

The king of Mali had a large harem; beautiful girls from all over his country were brought to the palace as concubines.2 In Songhay the askiyas used to take the daughters of their soldiers as concubines.22 All the askiya-s who ruled in the sixteenth century were sons of concubines.23 In Cassan [Kasa], a Malinke
chiefdom on the Gambia, a son of a noble wife deposed his elder brother, son of a concubine, with the people's approval. Among the king's wives one was regarded as senior, 'whose name is mentioned from the pulpit [in the Friday khutba] along with the king's name'. There was much resentment in the court when Mansd Sulaymn put Qdsi, his senior wife, in prison and raised another wife of lower status in her place (see p. 67). In-ri Kunte, who accompanied Mansd Milsi to Mecca, was probably his senior wife. It was to the senior wife that the ruler of Jenne brought his tribute. Both the Soninke (of Ghana) and the Malinke (of Mali) follow a patrilineal mode of succession and did so, in all probability, at the time of the great empires. Evidence of matrilineal succession in eleventh-century Ghana is based on the single authority of al-Bakri and may refer to an exceptional case rather than to a general rule. The oral traditions of the ancient Soninke kingdom of Wagadu also indicate patrilineal succession.

In Mali in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there were signs of conflict between the brother of the previous king and the latter's son. This conflict brought about a civil war between the house of Mansd Miisi and that of his brother Mansd Sulaymn. Another division within the Keita dynasty was between the descendants of Sundjata and those of his brother Abi Bakr. When in the fourth generation Sundjata's descendants were unable to hold authority, the kingship passed to Mansd Miisi, grandson of Abi Bakr. Four generations later Mis&A's descendants weakened and came under the control of the court officials, and a descendant of Sundjata came back to power (see pp. 64-70).

The intervention of the court officers, either as patrons of weak kings (Abi Bakr, c. 1290 and Mis II, 1373/4-1388/9) or as usurpers (Sikiira, c. 1300 and Sandi in 1388/9) may be regarded as attempts to ensure the survival of the empire rather than as coups to dispossess the Keita dynasty. In other Sudanic kingdoms (such as Di-ra or Songhay) dynasties were overthrown, but in Mali, in spite of recurrent crises, the kingship returned to the Keita.

Mali prospered under powerful kings and was shaken to its foundations when weak kings occupied the throne. This is an indication of the strong personal role played by the king in the government of the empire. Indeed, the kings of both Ghana and Mali were personally active in exercising authority.

In Ghana the king used to ride through the streets of the town every morning: 'Every one who had suffered injustice or misfortune came before him and stayed there until the wrong was remedied.' In Mali, Mansd Sulaymin punished the mushrif (comptroller) of Walata for his ill-treatment of a merchant (see p. 163). All subjects, according to al-'Umari's informant, could appeal for justice to the

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king. On the return of an official from an important mission the king himself interrogated him about all that had happened since his departure.32 Information about the court officials in Ghana and Mali is scarce. Of Ghana, al-Bakri says: 'the king's interpreters, the official in charge of his treasury (bayt al-mdl) and the majority of his ministers are Muslims'.3 The literate Muslims initiated the rudiments of a central bureaucracy. The king of Mali, according to al-'Umari, had scribes and chancelleries. Most of the king's orders, however, were transmitted orally.34 Correspondence was probably used more extensively for external relations. Mansd Mis sent a book, written by one of his scribes, to the Sultan of Egypt.35 The king of Ghana wrote a letter to the Almoravid ruler in Morocco.38 In Ghana the senior official in the king's entourage was known to al-Bakri as Wili al-Madina (lit. 'governor of the town'). He was seated on the ground surrounded by the ministers.37 In Mali, according to Ibn Battita, the nc'ib (lit. 'deputy') led the fardriya ('the emirs') into the king's audience.38 The farriya were commanders of the cavalry, but they also played an important role in the king's court. They tried to intervene in favour of the queen Qisd, when she was imprisoned by Mansd Suaymin. But when they were informed of her treason they agreed to the most severe punishment.39 When injustice was suspected in the kingdom, the fardriya followed the king in cleansing themselves of any wrongdoing.40 The power of Mali depended on its military strength and this enhanced the importance of the army commanders in the king's court. The king cultivated their good will by grants of slaves

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and villages.41 and gifts of gold, horses, and luxurious clothes. For efficiency in fulfilling their duties the commanders of the cavalry were decorated with gold anklets, and were honoured by ever wider trousers. Wider trousers marked higher distinction, and the king's trousers were always the widest.42 Sons of vassal kings were sent to the capital as hostages. In the court of the king of Ghana were 'sons of the kings of his country'.4 Sundjata's companions in exile were 'the sons of Mema's vassal kings'.44 Two sons of the king of Songhay, then vassal of Mali, were taken into the service of the king of Mali, 'according to their [the people of Mali] custom with the sons of the kings under their authority. This custom is still [seventeenth century] current among all the Sudanic kings. Some of these sons return to their country after their service, while others stay there until they die.'45 All sections of the population contributed to the military efforts of the empire. The free peasants were often left to cultivate their fields in peace so that they could supply food for the warriors. The castes - such as blacksmiths and cobblers - produced arms and saddles. Muslims offered prayers to recruit supernatural aid. Active fighting was confined to groups in both ends of the hierarchy, to the noble clans and to the slaves.46
Slaves, in particular those born in captivity, were regarded as loyal to their masters, and were entrusted with delicate and responsible tasks. The man closest to Mansi Miis was the farba, ‘the slave who was chief of his slaves and of his household’. To him the king gave orders and he was responsible for the execution of these instructions. The comptroller (mushrif) of Walata was the mansd-dyon or the ‘king’s slave’.

The promotion of slaves in the court and the administration at the expense of the inherited aristocracy marked the growing autocracy of the monarch. Power was concentrated in the hands of slaves who owed loyalty to him only. Under strong kings the slaves executed the policy of the monarch. But when weak kings came to the throne, the slaves took control, either as patrons or

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as usurpers, to save the monarchy and the empire. The usurper Sikira (ruled c. 1300) was a freed slave of the royal clan. Sandiki, who seized power in 1357/8, was perhaps the dyon sandigi, ‘chief of the slaves’.

The court official who appears most prominently in the historical sources is the dyeli, a bard (griot) and a spokesman. He played the leading role in royal ceremonies and therefore attracted the attention of foreign observers. As custodians of the oral traditions the dyelis share the glory of history with their kings. Before his death Nare Maghan told his son Sundjata, founder of the empire of Mali:

In Mali every prince has his own dyeli.Doua's father was my father’s dyeli, Doua is mine and the son of Doua, Balla Fasseke here, will be your dyeli. Be inseparable friends from this day forward. From his mouth you will hear the history of your ancestors, you will learn the art of governing Mali according to the principles which our ancestors have bequeathed to us.

The dyeli was the king's counsellor and intimate friend, the only man who could see the king in his wrath. ‘All that day,’ according to the epic, ‘the king did not emerge and Doua was the only one to enter and leave the palace.’

In public affairs, ‘when a quarrel breaks out between tribes it is we [the dyeli] who settle the difference, for we are the depositories of the oath which the ancestors swore’. Before the war, ‘in the middle of a great circle formed by the sofas, Balla Fasseke extolled the heroes of Mali…. He mentioned all the chiefs by name and they all performed great feats; then the army, confident in its leadership, left Sibi [for the battle].’

When Mansi Sulaymin had to explain the guilt of the queen Qisi, it was Dugh-& his chief dyeli - who talked to the faririya. In the king's public audience Dugh was always at the front, holding two spears in his hand, to mediate between the king and his people. Ibn Battuta called him al-turjmdn, i.e.

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interpreter or linguist. The role of the linguist is well described in the traditional epic: ‘Then Sundjata spoke as mans&. Only Balla Fasseke [his dyeli] could hear
him, for a mansi does not speak like a town-crier.'56 In Cairo MansA Mfis spoke through his linguist only.57

Dughd was also master of ceremonies. On Fridays and on festival days he led the musicians and the dancers in their performance before the king and the dignitaries. These were very likely his followers who appeared with masks in the form of birds reciting the history of the former rulers of Mali. For this Dughd' and his followers were generously rewarded by the king and the faririya.58

The dyeli were among the nyamakala, people of occupational castes. They were considered inferior by the freemen, but the latter feared their sharp tongues; they praised but they could also slander. Smiths, nyamakala as well, were also brought close to the king for their expertise both as manufacturers of arms and as masters of magic and divination. Like the dyeli they were despised and feared at the same time.

Significantly, officials of the court, the king's confidants, were either slaves or people of castes. Their low status, added to their dependence on the king and the fact that they had no kin among the nobility and the freemen, made them more reliable, Muslim scribes and divines in attendance at the court were also, in a way, an outside group who had no immediate links with those who could challenge the king's authority.

XI" The Economic Basis of Government

The trans-Saharan trade was one of the factors that stimulated territorial organization on a larger scale. It also contributed to the growing power of the monarch through the accumulation of wealth, association with foreign merchants and a nearly monopolistic control over imports of strategic importance such as horses and metals. The rulers of Ghana and Mali regarded direct authority over the commercial centres as more important than intrusion into the goldfield areas; they derived their income from controlling the routes to the sources of that precious metal: 'On every donkey's load of salt the king of Ghana levied one golden dinAr when it entered his country and two dindrs when it left. On a load of copper five mithqlds and on a load of other merchandise ten mithqlds.' The 'other merchandise' were luxurious goods of high value and were therefore subject to the highest tax. Copper was several times dearer than salt,2 hence the difference in the amount of duty levied. Copper and other merchandise imported to Ghana were consumed within the empire and were therefore taxed once only. Some of the salt, on the other hand, was carried to the goldfields across the southern frontiers of Ghana, and was taxed a second time at twice as high a rate when it left, because the value of the salt increased considerably when carried farther south.3

There seems to have been no tax on exported gold. The king received profits from the gold production by ruling that 'rare nuggets [weighing between an ounce and a rotl, i.e., 1 lb] found in the mines of his country were reserved for the king, and only gold dust was left for the people'. This he did, according to al-Bakri, 'lest people would accumulate gold until its value depreciated'.4 Rather than a measure for regulating the flow of
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gold this law was aimed at securing royal monopolistic rights over the lion's share of gold production. To the same purpose he exploited the mysterious value attached to gold nuggets among the Sudanese, which only the king with his supernatural attributes could overcome. The rulers of both Ghana and Mali boasted of rare blocks of gold. 'The king of Ghana had in his castle an ingot of pure gold of natural formation weighing thirty rotls.'5 'Among the prized possessions of the treasuries [of the kings of Mali] was a stone of gold from the mine weighing twenty qin tairs.'6

According to al-Dukk–li, who spent thirty-five years in their capital, the kings of Mali learned from experience that whenever they had imposed direct rule over the pagan people of the goldfields the production of gold decreased considerably. They therefore preferred to leave the goldfields in the hands of the inhabitants and were satisfied with tribute extracted from them.7 This remote control over the goldfields was enough for the kings of Mali to accumulate vast quantities of gold, some of which was so lavishly distributed in Cairo by Mansi Miisi (see p. 212). Later, the Songhay empire was to be even farther removed from the main goldfields of Bure and the Akan forest, yet would still benefit from the passage of the gold trade through its territory.

Trade, so important for the central government of the empire, was limited to a small segment of the population. The greater majority of the people of Mali were engaged in agriculture, fishing, and cattle breeding. Taxes were levied in kind by the local rulers, and part of it was given as tribute to the central government.8 Besides regular taxation a levy was imposed on special occasions. Before his pilgrimage MansA Mfisf sent to all corners of his country to collect food supplies.9

The principal ethnic groups in the empire of Mali - Malinke, Bambara, and Soninke - were agriculturalists. They cultivated mainly millet, sorghum, and fonio. On the Gambia much rice was produced. The Bozo, the Somono, and the Sorko were

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fishermen. The Fulbe were pastoralists. Farmers, fishermen, and cattle breeders lived close to each other and exchanged their products. The diversity of primary products stimulated local trade and also broadened the economic basis of the empire. Large-scale territorial organization of different geographical regions encouraged the development of longer distance trade in agricultural products.10 Rice was transported from the Gambia to the hinterland in exchange for iron. "Millet and sorghum, grown by Bambara and Malinke of the savannah, were sent to Timbuktu and Walata for consumption, as well as farther north into the desert as far as the salt mines of Taghdza.12 Agriculture in the Sudanic savannah is one of the most developed in West Africa, because there is sufficient rainfall. Farther north in the Sahel agriculture is more rudimentary because of the scarcity and irregularity of the rainfall. Agricultural technology, however, in both regions was based on the hoe as the principal tool
and on burning the vegetation for fertilizing. Even so, farmers produced a surplus for exchange and taxation. Through taxation part of the agricultural surplus was channelled into paying for the army and the administration of the central government. With the apparent lack of useful technological innovations, production could have been increased only by expanding the cultivated land. This the imperial authority could do by organizing the exploitation of labour. The rulers established slaves in new villages to till the land and fill the royal granaries.

A detailed account of such slave villages at the time of Askia D5wild of Songhay is given in Ta'rikh al-Fattdsh. On one farm there were 200 slaves under four headmen, and above them the farm chief, a slave himself. The latter was responsible to the askiya for the supply of a thousand sacks of rice. The farm handed over its quota of a thousand sacks and the surplus was kept by the chief slave who became quite wealthy in spite of his servile condition.13 Slaves therefore took their part in the system of exploitation. When such a wealthy slave died, the askiyi seized his fortune, and in this way the slaves' wealth was eventually absorbed by the ruler.14 From what is known about the role of slaves in Mali, it is very likely that a similar economic system also prevailed in that empire.

Slaves who worked on the land, and could have been sold or bartered, were of the lowest status. The domestic slaves (woloso) fared much better, and had closer relations with their masters, who entrusted them with responsible positions. Domestic slaves of the king or other chiefs held economic, administrative; and military offices.

That the economic and social institutions of Mali were adopted by Songhay is explicitly mentioned in connection with the twenty-four servile 'tribes'. Information about these groups, though somewhat confusing, is of great interest. They lived in villages along the Niger, and were of diverse origins. They were distinguished from slaves in that they had never been free. They were not allowed to intermarry with the free population. Some were regarded as personal property of the rulers, and were his domestic servants and bodyguard. Others were associated with riverain occupations, iron-working and agriculture. They had to pay annual tribute of dried fish, grains, and other products.15 But sadly, this information, which could have been used for an analysis of the socioeconomic basis of the Sudanic empires, is suspected as being part of a nineteenth-century fabricated addition to the original seventeenth-century text of Ta'rikh al-Fattdsh.16

Beyond the textual criticism there are other objections to the information about the twenty-four 'tribes' of the 'Zanj'. It is difficult to relate these servile groups to any known category in the social organization of the Western Sudan. In this region, where there was no shortage of land and peasants could leave their residence in search of new land under a more favourable chief, serfdom as in...
medieval Europe could not have developed. Land tenure in no way entered into the relations between a sovereign and his subjects; neither free men nor caste might be attached by force to the land.' The sovereign's rights to taxes and to service were not based on any claim to land ownership, but on political and military coercion. The peasantry was therefore not legally servile, as some modern historians postulated following the information in Ta'rikh al-Fattsh. They did pay tribute to the conqueror who became their political sovereign, and it is true that peasants and fishermen on the Middle Niger experienced subjection and exploitation under the authorities of the empires which succeeded each other in this region. Both in their free status and in their socio-economic role in the Sudanic empires, peasants and fishermen who paid tribute differed from slaves who had been placed as workers on royal farms. For this reason it seems unlikely that the ruler could dispense villages of 'servile Zanj' to Muslim 'ulami' and shurafa' (those who claimed to be descendants of the Prophet). He made donations of slaves, which were regarded as alienable property. But the rulers well knew the value of slaves and these donations were to the tune of 10 or 27 slaves to an individual and not 1,700 and 1,500 'Zanj' or 70 'servile villages' as related in those passages of Ta'rikh al-Fattsh. The blacksmiths were people of caste and certainly not slaves. Their status was low, but by no means servile. They were attached to the nobility, and as artisans they contributed to the great variety of saleable goods - an important economic factor. Castes of artisans were also respected for the esoteric value of their technological know-how. The nyamakala artisans - workers in iron, hide, and wood - maintained a rudimentary industry necessary in the more elaborated political system. Occupational castes developed in hierarchical societies and it is therefore possible that the origin of these castes may be traced back to the social and economic transformation in the process of state building.22 One industry, perhaps the most developed of all, was not restricted to the nyamakala. Weaving and other branches of the textile industry seem to have expanded in the Western Sudan along with Islam. Centres of Islam - Timbuktu and Jenne boasted many workshops of weavers and tailors who were part of the Muslim aristocracy. In the hierarchical structure of the Sudanic society Muslims became distinguished not only by their religion, but also by their economic role as traders and promoters of the textile industry. Barter was the elementary mode of exchange. The accounts of the 'silent trade' (see p. 153), in which gold was exchanged for salt, are the best illustration of the earliest stage in the development of trade. The most essential commodities of the
trade eventually became media of exchange. In the eleventh-century commercial centre of Silld on the Senegal these were 'millet, salt, copper rings, and small strips of cotton'. Salt was at that time the currency in Gao.25 Two centuries later Ibn Battita paid in pieces of salt (as well as in glass ornaments and aromatic goods) for food he bought during his travels across the dominions of Mali.26 Copper was used as currency in Kanem and in Takedda in the fourteenth century.27 Pieces of cloth were the money in Zawila, in the Sils, on the Gambia, and in Kanem.28 Gold was the standard currency of North Africa. The mithqdl, weighing 4.25 to 4.725 grams, and its equivalent coin the golden dindr, were quoted by Arab authors for prices of goods. In the commercial centres of the southern Sahara and the Sahel gold was the current money. In eleventh-century Awdaghust the medium of exchange was gold dust (tibr). In Tadmekka, at the same time, there were unstamped dincrs of pure gold.29 Over four centuries later, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, gold was the currency in Jenne and Timbuktu. In both cities, however, gold was used for larger transactions. In order to buy goods of lesser value, mainly food provisions, people in Jenne paid in pieces of iron and in Timbuktu cowrie served as small change.30 Cowries, shells fished in the Indian Ocean, were imported to

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the Western Sudan as early as the eleventh century.31 A large quantity of cowries was found among the goods of the lost caravan, discovered by Monod in the Sahara in 1960, and dated to the twelfth century.32 al-Bakri, however, does not mention cowries among the various currencies used for exchange. Is it possible that they were then in demand as ornaments and charms only? 3 Cowries as currency were first mentioned by al-'Umari, writing in the 1340s: 'Transactions in the land of Takrir [i.e. Mali] are in cowries (wada').34 During the next decade Ibn Battita noted during his visit to Gao: 'Its people carry out their transactions, buying and selling, with cowries, as do the people of Mali.'35 By the first half of the fourteenth century, therefore, cowries were established as currency in Mali, along with other media of exchange.

In his study of 'archaic economic institutions' Karl Polanyi relates the introduction of currency to state-building and to an economic reorganization which followed the political evolution:

Once set on the course of state-building, the monarchy was engaged in organizing an army and its provisioning 'in kind', the launching of a currency as an instrument of taxation, and the creating of markets and of small change for the distribution of the food.... [The] cowrie gained the status of currency by virtue of state policy, which regulated its use and guarded against its proliferation, . . . Cowrie-using areas and areas where it was not accepted for payment were as if their boundaries had been drawn by administrative authority.36 In the Western Sudan, Claude Meillassoux noticed that cowries were in use in regions within the orbit of the two Bambara states of Segu and Kaarta.37 From
the example of Hausaland and Bornu in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively, it appears that 'there was no obstacle to a ruler introducing the cowrie currency into his domains for his own profit'.

Cowries were introduced as currency into the Western Sudan when the empire of Mali attained its greatest territorial expansion and its most elaborated political, economic, and administrative organization. Eleventh-century Ghana, following al-Bakri's evidence, did not succeed in integrating the Sahel and the Sudan to one unit. Under Mali integration was advanced and the introduction of a monetary system was both possible and necessary. Greater social and economic differentiation - the court, the army, peasants, occupational castes, and slaves - stimulated the marketing of food. Cowries, with recognizable units of minute value, were most suitable for the developing market economy. Large-scale and long-distance trade continued to be carried on through the medium of gold.

Beyond the advantages of cowries as currency already mentioned, it should be added that they could not be counterfeited and were not easily damaged. Yet this in itself does not explain why and how cowries were adopted as currency. They were used as money in some regions of the Far East, but those who transported them from India to the Western Sudan, Venetians and Arabs, never used them in this way. They might, however, have suggested this use to the Sudanese, and would have had an excellent economic reason for so doing. al-'Umari says that 'the traders who bring the cowries [to Mali] derive great benefits'. This was well illustrated by Ibn Batūta, who visited the source of the cowries (Cypraea moneta) in the Maldive islands and their point of final destination in the capital of Mali. In the Maldive islands one golden dindr bought 40,000 cowries, but in Mali 1,150 cowries only. Early in the seventeenth century the rate of exchange in Timbuktu was 500 cowries for one dindr. Food at that time was scarce and expensive and since cowries were used mainly for the purchase of provisions their value soared. The main reason, however, for fluctuation in the value of cowries was variations in their supply.

There is an important difference between the medieval states of the Sudan and the states which emerged in the forest regions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The latter Ashanti and Dahomey, for example - tended to establish state monopoly over external trade which was geared to the needs of the court. In the Sudanic empires trade was left in the hands of private enterprise, both foreign and local. The authorities maintained security and improved the roads. The state’s profits came from taxes and customs and not from direct participation in trade. This certainly encouraged the Sudanese traders to take part in a wider international trade.

XII a The Gold of the Sudan
The trans-Saharan trade was carried over three distinct climatic and cultural zones: the Maghrib, the Sahara, and the Sudan. Four factors were of particular significance in promoting this trade at its height: (a) the camel, which was a suitable beast of burden for the difficult journey across the Sahara; (b) the Berber tribes on both shores of the Sahara, who acted as a human bridge; (c) Islam, the common religion of the North African traders, the Saharan nomads, and the Sudanese traders and rulers; (d) the large-scale empires in the Sudan. All these were absent in classical times. Trans-Saharan contacts then depended on casual, often hostile, relations between the rulers of North Africa - Punic or Roman - and the nomads of the Sahara, as well as between the latter and the black peoples of the Sudan.'

The Garmantes of Fezzan traded with the Punic centres on the coast of Tripolitania. They brought the precious 'Carthaginian Stones', also known as 'carbuncles', which they obtained in the south-west, and Sudanese slaves, whom they hunted in the south. In their attempt to impose peace and order in North Africa, the Romans fought the Garmantes, and penetrated deep into the desert where they left traces of Roman civilization. Between the first and the fourth centuries A.D. there was a certain amount of trade between the Romans and the Garmantes. The latter bought glassware, pottery, cloth, wine, and oil, and exported carbuncles, ivory, and slaves. The Romans built at least three forts beyond the limes - at Ghadames, Gheria al-Gharia, and Bu Njem - to protect the routes leading to Djerma, the capital of the Garmantes. Chariots depicted in rock paintings suggest early trans-

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Saharan routes from Ghadames and Djerma - via Gh-t, Tassilides-Ajjers, Hoggar, and Adrar-des-Iforas - to Es-Souq (Tadmekka). Reported findings of Roman material (including coins) along the northern part of this route bear evidence to commercial links with Roman North Africa. Yet the trade carried over this route was necessarily very limited in volume.2

Another route marked by a line of chariots in rock-paintings, ran across the Western Sahara from the oases of Figuig (south of Oran) - via Zemmour, the Mauritanian Adrar, and along the Dhar Tichitt-Walata - to Goundam near the Niger. From this main route several 'chariot routes' branched off towards the Atlantic coast, from Sdqiyyat al-Hamri' in the south to Agadir in the north. It is along this coast, in all probability, that the Carthaginians carried a 'silent barter' in gold (see p. 244 n. 6), as reported by Herodotus in the fifth century B.C. The most famous maritime adventure of the Carthaginians beyond the Pillars of Hercules was that of Hanno about the middle of the fifth century B.C. Hanno's account, said to have been copied from an inscription in a temple at Carthage, should be cautiously and critically treated.3 He sailed along the western coast of present-day Morocco, and established (or reinforced) Punic trading colonies. The most southern of these colonies was that on the island of 'Kerne', identified either with Mogador or Herne. In the fourth century Palaiphatos described the inhabitants of Kerne as 'very rich in gold'.4 It is quite possible that the Carthaginians had been acquainted with a sprinkling of an overland trade in gold.
which reached North Africa, and, like the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, they tried to capture the gold by establishing factories on the coast. Strabo (58 B.C.-A.D. 25) recorded that the Moors of Roman Mauritania wore gold ornaments, and that 'the Pharusii occasionally come into contact with the Maurusei; they ride across the desert, fitting water skins under the bellies of their horses'.5 The Pharusii nomads were perhaps the middlemen of a rudimentary trade in gold, and the maritime enterprise of the

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Carthaginians on the west coast of Morocco may have been regarded as dangerous competition. This may explain the attacks by the Pharusii on the Punic colonies along the coast. Trade on the Atlantic coast declined and disappeared after the fall of Carthage.

Lacking the naval skill of the Carthaginians, the Romans did not venture to sail along the Atlantic coast. During the Roman period the camel was introduced into the Sahara, and nomad Berbers who made use of this valuable animal migrated southwards. These Berbers bridged the Sahara with the result that the trans-Saharan trade increased in volume. The kingdom of Ghana emerged in the Sahel and large-scale political organization in the Sudan further encouraged the supply of gold.

Southern Morocco was conquered by the Arabs at the beginning of the eighth century. From there, the Umayyad governors were soon attracted by the gold of the Sudan, and in 734 an expedition led by Habib ibn 'Ubayda ibn 'Uqba seized and brought back large quantities of gold and many slaves.6 However, the Arab governors soon realized that such raids could not secure a continuous flow of gold, and they consequently encouraged the trade, which had been conducted by the Sanh-ja of the desert. 'Abd al-Rahmiin, son of the above-mentioned Habib, in his capacity as governor of Ifriqiya in 747-55, ordered that wells be dug along the trails leading from the oases of southern Morocco to the Sudan. The last of these wells was about sixteen days travel from Wadi Dar'a. 7 In the second half of the eighth century independent Khdrjite principalities ruled over the northern gates of the Saharan routes from Jabal Nafilsa in the east to Sijilmansa in the west. They contributed to the development of private enterprise by Muslim merchants in the Sudanese trade.

Gold, along with silver, constituted the basis of the Muslim monetary system. The minting of gold coins in the Muslim caliphate, as in Byzantium, was the exclusive privilege of the sovereign, the caliph. For almost two centuries the golden

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dinirs of the caliphs, made chiefly from gold taken as booty in Syria and Egypt, circulated in the Maghrib and in Spain. There the Muslims also laid their hands on the gold which had been accumulated in the treasuries of Christian churches and monasteries. The principal source of new gold was then in Wadi 'Alliqi, south of Egypt.8 Even at that early period the gold of the Sudan was already known; al-
Faziri called Ghana 'the land of gold' towards the end of the eighth century.9 In reviewing the gold sources which replenished the Muslim treasuries and mints, the south Arabian scholar al-Hamd~ni (died in 945) said: 'the most productive gold mine in the world is that of Ghana'. His information came from the master of the mint of San'a in Yemen.10

From the middle of the eighth century the flow of gold from the Sudan to the Maghrib increased through the efforts of the Khdrijite traders. This helped the Aghiabids to strengthen their position as autonomous rulers of the Maghrib in the name of the 'Abbisid caliphs. In 800 the founder of this dynasty, Ibr~hIm ibn al-Aghlab, undertook to pay 40,000 dindrs to the imperial treasury in return for a large measure of autonomy and for the right to bequeath his dominions to his heirs. According to numismatic evidence, he began to strike dindrs c. 804. The Aghlabids paid the tribute to Bagdad with their own dindrs, which must have been made of Sudanese gold."

In 909 the Aghlabids in Ifriqiya were overthrown by the Ftimids. Whereas the dindrs of the Aghlabids were issued in the name of the 'Abbsid caliph whoe vassals they were, the Ftimids challenged the legitimacy of the 'Abb~sids and established a rival caliphate. Their dindrs, of independent sovereigns with shi'ite inscriptions, were of high quality, and were used to support their campaign against the 'Abbsid empire. Vast amounts of gold were used to pay for their propaganda network, mainly in preparation for the conquest of Egypt, which they accomplished in 969. The economic and political expansion of the Ftimid caliphate was much aided by the gold of the Sudan.

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The Ftimids destroyed the Khdrijite principality of Tahert and conquered Sijilmisa. In 951 Ibn Hawqal visited Sijilmisa, and his account indicates the evergrowing trade of this town with the Sudan as well as the great revenue the Fdtimids derived from that region32

The rise of the Ftimid caliphate put an end even to the theoretical unity of the Muslim world. The Umayyads in Andalusia (Spain) were virtually independent of the 'Abbsids from the middle of the eighth century, but as Sunnites they accepted the existence of one caliph, and were styled amirs only. In the tenth century the Ftimids created a second caliphate, which spatially separated the Umayyads of Spain from the 'Abb~sids. The Fdtimids were the Umayyads' rivals in the Maghrib, and under these circumstances the greatest of the rulers of Muslim Spain, 'Abd al-Rahmn III, assumed the title amir al-mu'minin, or caliph, in 929. A year earlier he struck his own gold dinirs as a symbol of complete independence, but also to prevent the introduction of Ftimid dinirs into his dominions. Under his son al-Hakam II (961-76) the minting of gold dinirs in Spain reached its peak.13

In the tenth century, therefore, rulers of the two powers in the western parts of the Muslim world introduced dinirs, and for this they must have used Sudanese gold only. Thus the demand for gold increased considerably, the trans-Saharan contacts intensified, and so did the supply of gold. This was, literally, the Golden Age of
Islam or, as Lombard coined it, Islamic civilization was then 'carried over that wave of gold'. South of the Sahara the empire of Ghana flourished. Fatimid authority over Sijilmis continued intermittently until their conquest of Egypt in 969, from which time Sijilmis and the rest of Morocco fell under the rule of the Zanz-ta, allies and vassals of the Umayyads. An analysis of the numismatic evidence indicates a correlation between the extent of the Umayyads' authority in Morocco and the abundance of gold coins struck in Spain during the second half of the tenth century. 

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century. In the 970s when the Zirids, vassals of the Fatimids, attacked Morocco in an attempt to regain Sijilmisa, fewer gold coins were minted in Spain. In the 990s, on the other hand, when the supremacy of the Umayyads in Morocco was established, more gold reached Muslim Spain and more dinars were minted there. In the first decades of the eleventh century the Umayyad caliphate declined and the Zandta rulers of Morocco became independent. The rarity of gold coins in Andalusia at that time, and more so during the period of political fragmentation after 1031, was probably caused by a decline in the flow of gold across the straits.15

The trend was changed dramatically with the conquest of Morocco and Spain by the Almoravids. Both in Morocco (in the mints of Sijilmisa, Aghmdt, Marrikush, and Fes) and in Spain (in the mints of Seville, Cordova, Malaga, and Almeria) the Almoravids produced rich and varied coinage.6 This may be explained by the supply of vast quantities of gold which reached Morocco. Far from disturbing the trans-Saharan trade, the Almoravids - whose authority spanned the Sahara, Morocco, and Spain for some time - raised the gold trade to a new peak. The dinars of the Almoravids were made of pure gold, and were therefore in great demand in the Maghrib and Europe, even after the fall of their state. The same high standard of gold coins was maintained under the Almohads and under the Hafsids of Ifriqiya.17

In the second half of the eleventh century, when the Almoravids' empire thrived on Sudanese gold, Ifriqiya seems to have been short of gold. No gold coins of the Zirids after 1067 have been found.18 This has often been explained by the interruption of the supply of gold from the Sudan across the Sahara caused by the Hil-lian invasion, which devastated the countryside and disturbed trading in the second half of the eleventh century.19 A recent revaluation of the role of Banii Hill in Ifriqiya suggests that these nomads did not intervene directly with the trade routes,20 but they reduced the authority of the Zirids and

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thus contributed to the fragmentation of Ifriqiya. The Arabs also exerted pressure on the Ibdi communities of the Djarid, who finally lost their commercial pre-eminence having almost monopolized the trade of Ifriqiya with the Sudan for three centuries. Wargala, to the south-west, became the new trading centre for the
distribution of gold. Much gold was attracted to Ftimid Egypt, where dindrs of the
best quality were minted by the caliphs al-Musta’lI (1094-1101) and al-iAmir
(1101-30).21 Indeed, Egypt in the east and the Almoravid empire in the west
attracted gold at the expense of the weaker Sanhija rulers of Ifriqiya. However, at
the beginning of the thirteenth century the Hafsids resumed the minting of
excellent gold coins in Tunisia and even exported gold to Italy.22
Political and economic changes in the Muslim world from Spain to Egypt
influenced both the destination and the volume of the trans-Saharan gold trade.
Until the twelfth century, however, most of the gold of the Sudan remained in the
Muslim world. The eleventh and the twelfth centuries saw the beginning of a new
era in the relations between the Muslim world and Christian Europe. In the
preceding centuries Western Europe abandoned gold as the basis of its monetary
system because, among other reasons, most of its gold had been drained through
an adverse balance of trade with the east. When Europe gradually recovered from
its long economic recession its exports - mainly cloth - paid for the imports and
even attracted a growing amount of gold.2
The growing commercial enterprise of the Italian cities Genoa, Florence, Venice,
and Pisa - was backed by a corresponding growth in the power of their fleets. For
some centuries the coasts of Italy were exposed to attacks by Arab pirates. In the
eleventh century these attacks were repulsed and the Italians, in their turn, raided
the North African coasts. The Muslim rulers of North Africa signed treaties which
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In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

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Italian merchants established factories (fundsqs) in the principal coastal towns of
the Maghrib, from Tripoli to Ceuta on the Mediterranean, and as far as M.ssa on
the Atlantic. Varieties of European cloth were in great demand in the Maghrib
because of their quality and durability. Other exports to the Maghrib included
grain, spices, copper, beads, precious stones, and perfumes. The most important
imports on record were skins, leather goods and alum, needed for the dyeing
industry. References to gold imports from the Maghrib to Italy are few, but this is
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traders.2 Gold obtained by the Italians in the Maghrib was sent to the Latin
kingdoms of the crusaders in the east. In order to participate in the economy of the
Orient the crusaders produced gold coinage, in imitation of the Ftimids' mints.25
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imitation of the highly valued gold dindrs of the Almoravids.6 Muslim gold coins
had first circulated in Europe in their original Islamic forms, after which Christian
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coins, they began by imitating the Muslim dindrs in order to extend confidence in
the new coinage. Gold coins were minted in Marseille from 1227, in Genoa and
Florence from 1252, and in Venice from 1284. From the trading cities of the
Mediterranean the trend of this return to gold currency spread to northern Europe
in the first half of the fourteenth century.27 This was closely associated with the
demographic and economic expansion of Europe at that time and with the growth of international trade. For centuries while gold was rare in Europe, its value compared to silver was very low because there was little demand for it. In the second half of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the countries of Europe, one after the other, returned to the gold standard, the demand for gold increased and caused a considerable rise in its value. This

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For centuries while gold was rare in Europe, its value compared to silver was very low because there was little demand for it. In the second half of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the countries of Europe, one after the other, returned to the gold standard, the demand for gold increased and caused a considerable rise in its value. This

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reached its peak between 1305 and 1339, first closer to the Mediterranean and then farther north. The crisis, however, was temporary only, and by the middle of the fourteenth century the price of gold (in terms of silver) was stabilized at the ratio of about 1: 10, compared to 1: 14, 1:19, or even 1:24 during the rush on gold. The fall in population caused by the Black Death (1348-50), and the subsequent shrinkage of trade, reduced the need for precious metals. Also, the production of the Hungarian gold mines increased. Nevertheless, at that period about two-thirds of the world's production of gold came from the Sudan to replenish the raw material needed for the European mints.

The rising demand for gold in Europe and its high price stimulated an ever-growing trade between the two shores of the Mediterranean. The Italian traders were joined by those of Marseille and Majorca. Among the latter Jews played an important role, and through contacts with the Jewish communities of Morocco extended their commercial activities into the interior. They contributed to the growing knowledge of the trans-Saharan trade as indicated by maps and planispheres produced in Majorca.

In these circumstances the trans-Saharan trade reached a new peak by the middle of the fourteenth century. The empire of Mali thrived on this trade which was much encouraged by the security which prevailed in its dominions. By that time, the Mande-speaking Muslim traders - Wangara or Dyula - developed their network of routes and entrepôts over the Western Sudan. In response to an increased demand for gold the Dyula extended trade routes from the Middle Niger to the goldfields of the Akan forest.
The ascendancy of the Italian merchants in the trade of African gold was well established. Even much of the gold which the Catalan traders brought to Majorca and Barcelona eventually reached Italy. Records in the 1360s mentioned the shipping of gold from 'Yspania' to Genoa. Towards the end of the fourteenth century Venetian gold ducats as well as florins circulated in Egypt as currencies in international transactions.32

Significantly, while the Italian cities had rich supplies of gold and produced highly-valued coins, the yellow metal seems to have been rare in some parts of the Iberian peninsula. Navarre had no gold coins of its own between 1383 and 1481, and Portugal did not produce gold coins between 1383 and 1435. The resumption of gold minting in Portugal in 1436 was one result of the Portuguese conquest of Ceuta, on the Moroccan coast, in 1415. During the fourteenth century Ceuta was a major entrepôt for the gold trade, and Genoan traders were prominent there. But the Genoans, who had cultivated propitious relations with their Muslim hosts, found it difficult to continue their trade under the rule of the Portuguese, who were at the same time commercial competitors. Once they had lost control of their trade in Ceuta the Genoans did not succeed in re-establishing it in alternative ports such as Tangier, Arzila or Larache.

The commercial prospects of the Italians worsened as the Portuguese advanced along the Atlantic coast and established factories there to attract caravans on their way to the north. While Portugal resumed the minting of gold, the Italian cities felt the shortage of the gold supply. This was aggravated by the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans and the subsequent interference with other sources of the precious metal. Alarmed by the apparent success of the Portuguese shipping merchants in obtaining gold, the Italians seem to have decided to venture overland into the interior.3 In 1447 one of the principal merchants of Genoa sent his agent, Antonius Malfante, to the Sudan. Malfante reached the oases of Tuat, at the northern end of the trans-Saharan route.3 In 1469 Bendetto Dei, an agent of the Portinari firm in Florence, is said to have reached Timbuktu, where he was supposed to explore the prospects of exchanging Lombardian cloth for the gold of the Sudan.35

About 1440 the Portuguese introduced a newly designed caravel more suited to sailing in the open ocean. In 1441 Cape Blanco was discovered, and three years later Cape Verde, beyond the desert, was passed. In Arguin the Portuguese came closest to a Saharan caravan route. After 1455 they established a factory there and developed commerce with the nomads. The Portuguese sold horses, wheat, cloth, silver, precious stones, and spices. They bought mainly slaves, skins, gum, and some gold dust. During the reign of Jogo II (1481-95) they penetrated inland and built an entrepôt in Wadan, an important crossroad of the Sahara. Wadan, however, was soon deserted because of the harsh
conditions of the desert. Only 20-25 kilograms of gold were bought annually by the Portuguese from Arguin in the last quarter of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, and gold trading there soon declined. This was because the Portuguese came closer to the sources of the gold further south, and no longer had to depend on the nomads as intermediaries. Also, the trade in Arguin was a rigid royal monopoly, and suffered from the competition by private merchants on the Guinea coast.36

In 1471 the Portuguese reached the site where a decade later the fort S~o Jorge da Mina (to be known as Elmina) was established. It was there that for the first time large quantities of gold reached the Portuguese on the coast, for they were close to the goldfields of the Akan forest (in the present republics of Ghana and the Ivory Coast). Some of the gold which had been carried north to the Middle Niger and the Maghrib now turned south along a much shorter route to reach the Christian customers. An unpublished Portuguese document bears evidence to competitiveness between the Dyula and the Portuguese over the gold of the Akan forest. In 1513 the governor of Elmina complained that much gold was bought by the Mandinga (Dyula), but had there been enough supplies of slaves and other merchandise he could have obtained any amount of gold the king of Portugal demanded. Another unpublished letter, dated to the second quarter of the sixteenth century, complains of a powerful Portuguese trader who flooded the Gambia (Rio

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de Cantor) with commodities of value to Elmina, so that Mandinga traders who used to go to Elmina traded their gold at Cantor. There was, therefore, an interconnection of gold routes between the Gambia and Elmina through the very sophisticated and elaborate commercial system of the Mande-Dyula and Diakhanke.31

For about half a century after 1482 Elmina was visited every year by about a dozen ships which carried over 400 kilograms of gold annually to Lisbon. In the second half of the sixteenth century the supply of gold to Lisbon declined as the Portuguese lost their century-old monopoly over the trade with Guinea. English, followed by French and Dutch, ships frequented Elmina to take gold. The competition between traders of different European nations created more favourable conditions for the trade. Though the amount of gold which reached Lisbon decreased considerably, traders of other European nations in Elmina obtained ever increasing quantities of the metal.38

In the sixteenth century a new dynasty in Morocco, the Sa'dids, succeeded in warding the Portuguese off most of their strongholds along the Atlantic coast of Morocco. In this way the North African termini of the trans-Saharan trade were restored to the Muslims. The southern-oriented policy of the Sa'dids culminated in the conquest of Timbuktu and the Songhay empire in 1591. Immediately after this successful military feat, much gold dust reached Morocco, which earned the Moroccan sultan Mawlay Al~mad al-Mansfir the honorific al-Dhahabi, 'the Golden'. But a couple of decades later the flow of gold to Morocco decreased. In
the Western Sudan itself the collapse of the political system maintained by
the successive empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay also disturbed the patterns of
trade. These developments in Africa coincided with the discovery of America and
its gold. In the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries the Western Sudan
gradually lost the position it had enjoyed for many centuries as the principal
source of gold for the Muslim world and Europe.

Xlii a The Saharan Trade
In opposition to Arab rule and to Islamic orthodoxy, Berbers in the Maghrib
accepted the teaching of the Khdirjiyya, a protest movement of religious and
political character. Their revolt in the middle of the eighth century was defeated
and the Khdirijites were forced to retreat to the south. There, beyond the range of
the mountains in the pre-Saharan steppes, the Khirijites controlled the northern
end of the trans-Saharan routes to the Sudan. In their trading centres, such as
Zawila and Sijilmdsa, were people who hailed from Kifif, Basra, and Khurds-n.1
These people were themselves Kh-dirijite refugees from the East and contributed to
the development of commercial enterprise along the Saharan routes.

Two sects of the Khdirjiyya were established in the Maghrib
- the Ibiyya and the Sufriyya. Adherents of the latter were among the founders of
Sijilmdsa. The Ibiyya were more) widely dispersed, from Jabal Naffisa in
Tripolitania, across the Djarid in southern Tunisia to Tahert in Algeria. The state
of Tahert was founded by 'Abd al-Rahmin ibn Rustam after he had been expelled
from Qayraw-n in 761. Soon after its foundation Tahert became an important
centre for trade with the Sudan. The ruler of Tahert, Aflah ibn 'Abd al-Wahab
(823/4871/2), sent one of the wealthy citizens as envoy to the Sudan. Diplomatic
relations followed commercial contacts. Tahert's principal link seems to have
been with Gao, by way of Wargala and Tadmekka, but some of its trade reached
the Sudan via Sijilmsa and Awdaghust.2 In 909 Tahert was conquered by the
Ftimids; the Ibdite state was destroyed and the town declined. In the middle of
the tenth century, according to Ibn Ijawqal, the Berber inhabitants of Tahert were
poor.3

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The last imdm of Tahert found refuge in Wargala to the south-east, which
succeeded Tahert both as centre of the Ibiyya and as an entrep6t for trade with
the Sudan. Wargala also connected the Ibdite settlements of the Djarld with
Tadmekka. Abl Yazid ibn Kayddd, who led the revolt against the Ftimids in 943-
7, was born in Tadmekka. His father, a native of Tozeur in southern Tunisia,
traded with the Sudan.4

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Ibdites traded in gold and slaves with the
Sudan. The Sudan became something like the 'New World' to which people
tavelled to become rich. A sheikh from the region of Wargala travelled to Ghana
and got as far as Ghydra, where he died among 'idolatrous people'.5 Ghydra is
perhaps Ghydrdi of al-Bakri, the town closest to the goldfields. In the twelfth
century, according to al-Idrisi, the rich merchants of Wargala travelled to Ghana
and Wangara to bring back gold for the mint.6 By the end of the twelfth century most of the Ib~dites were gradually integrated into the orthodoxy. Wargala, however, remained the gate to the Sahara and the Sudan for the traders of the central Maghrib. 7 The role of the Ib~dites in the trans-Saharan trade may explain the prominence of people from Ifriqiya among the inhabitants of Awdaghust in the tenth and eleventh centuries. According to al-Bakri, these were Naffisa, Lawdta, Zanta, and Nafz~wa. In the north, members of these tribes were among the adherents of the Ib&.iyya, and so were, in all probability, the residents of Awdaghust. Indeed, one of the traders of Awdaghust was Abdi Rustam al-Naffisi, a typical Ib~dite name.8 The presence of traders from Ifriqiya in Awdaghust is an indication of the growing importance of the western route. Though the principal route for the Ib~dite merchants of Ifriqiya was via Tadmekka, there are references to traders who preferred to travel first to Sijilmisa and then across the Sahara. Though they belonged to different sects of the Kh~rijite, the rulers of Tahert and Sijilmisa maintained close relations and even intermarried.9

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Sijilm~sa was founded by Berbers of the Mikndsa tribe, adherents of the Sufriyya, after they had been defeated in the general Kh~rijite revolt of 740-2.10 It was ruled by the dynasty of Bandi-Midr~r. The Berbers were joined by refugees from Andalusia and by Jews who contributed to the prosperity of Sijilmsa. In 951 Ibn Hawqal visited Sijilmsa and was impressed by its commerce and its industrious people: It has uninterrupted trade with Sudan and other countries, abundant profits, with caravans following one after the other. The inhabitants are dignified in their behaviour and perfect in morals and deeds. They do not share the meanness of the other people of the Maghrib in their business and habits, but act with great frankness .... Nobility, tolerance, natural generosity and good manners are peculiar to them on account of their numerous travels.11 This was the aristocratic and cosmopolitan character of the people of a flourishing commercial town. It was at Sijilmsa that Ibn I.{awqal saw the famous cheque for 42,000 dinirs, which bears evidence to the volume of trade between Sijilmsa and Awdaghust.12 In the 920s Sijilmsa contributed about half the income of the Ftimid state in the Maghrib.13 The Ftimids left rulers of the Bandi-Midrdr dynasty as governors of Sijilm~sa, but occasionally they had to dispatch military
forces to reassert their authority. By that time the Khdirjite heresy had lost momentum and the rulers of Sijilmdsa returned to the sunna.

In the 970s the Midrdrids were overthrown by the Maghr~wa dynasty of the Zandta, vassals of the Umayyads of Spain.14 In the first half of the eleventh century, following the disintegration of the Umayyad caliphate, the Maghrdwa were involved in the internal disputes among the Zandta dynasties of Morocco. Security deteriorated, oppression increased, and the burden of taxes lay heavy on citizens and merchants. In these circumstances, the Almoravid conquest in 1054-5 was greeted as salvation.15

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Under the Almoravids, the trans-Saharan trade prospered again. The abundant supply of Sudanic gold replenished the mints of Sijilmisa, Aghmat, Marrikush, and Fes, to strike the highly-valued gold dindrs of the Almoravids. In 1145 Sijilmisa came under the rule of the Almohads, and eight years later - in 1153-4 - it is said: 'The buildings of the town are pretty, although in our times the conflicting parties wrought much destruction and arson upon them.'16 The contrast between the time of the Almoravids and the period soon after the Almohads' conquest, is repeated in the description of Aghmit, the capital of the Siiis:

The people of Aghmit are wealthy merchants. They go to Bild al-Sfidcn with many camels loaded with rich merchandise of copper, red and other colours, garments, woollen clothes, turbans, aprons, all kinds of beads of glass, shell or stone, varieties of spices and perfumes, as well as manufactured iron tools. Their slaves and agents go in caravans of seventy to a hundred camels, all loaded.

No one was wealthier and in better condition under the rule of the Mulaththamfin [Almoravids].... But now, when we write this book, the Masmida [Almohads] have carried away most of their wealth, and changed what they had of Alldh's blessing. Yet they are still rich, wellto-do, and have not renounced their dignity and pride.'17

The army of the Almohads, which was composed mainly of sedentary Berbers, did not venture deep into the desert, but security over the western Saharan routes probably deteriorated. At the end of the twelfth century the Almohad governor of Sijilmisa executed highway robbers who had disturbed the route between Sijilmisa and Ghana.'18 In 1209 the chief of Bani-Ghaniyya, in war against the Almohads, led an invasion along the pre-Saharan steppes from southern Tunisia to Sijilmisa and wrought destruction over the town and its environs.9

The period of Almohad rule in the Maghrib coincided with the

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transitory period of the Western Sudan, between the decline of Ghana and the rise of Mali. When Mali reached its prime, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Morocco was ruled by the Banil-Marin. Sijilm.sa prospered again and its
importance is attested by the fact that the Sultans of Fes used to appoint as its governor a member of the royal family, in many cases a son of the Sultan.20 Following the death of the Marinid Sultan Ahmad al-Mustansar (c. 1393) the people of Sijilmasa revolted; they killed the governor and destroyed the wall around the town. Since then, as reported by a visitor to Sijilmasa early in the sixteenth century, the town remained in ruins, and the people - many of them Jews - lived in small hamlets (qāṣṭār). There, in the qāṣṭār, the economic life of Sijilmasa continued; gold and silver coins were struck in the mint and rich merchants crossed the desert to trade with the Sudan.21 The name of Sijilmasa survived into the seventeenth century, and then sank into oblivion.

For the middle of the thirteenth century, when an intensive trade was carried over the Sahara, there is an excellent account of the operation of a great commercial firm owned by five brothers of the Maqqari family from Tlemcen.22 Tlemcen took the place of Tahert as the commercial entrepôt of the central Maghrib. al-Bakri described it as the destination of traders from all directions.23 A century later, al-Idrisi regarded Tlemcen as the third richest town in the Maghrib after Fes and Aghmehdt.2 The commercial importance of Tlemcen increased with the growth of trade with the Europeans. Italian boats came to Hunayn, which served as port to Tlemcen. So important was the trade of Tlemcen with the Sudan that the ruler of Tlemcen at the beginning of the fourteenth century said that he would have sent all traders away save those who traded with the Sudan. The latter brought into the country the precious gold needed all over the world. The other traders, on the contrary, sent this gold out of the country to pay for perishable goods.25

Two brothers of the Maqqari family - Abīl Bakr and Muḥammad-142

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Mad - lived in Tlemcen, where they traded in North African and European merchandise in exchange for goods of the Sudan (hides, ivory, kola nuts, and gold). The two youngest brothers 'Abd al-Wahhīd and 'All - lived in Walata, terminus of the caravans in Mali. There they distributed the merchandise received from the north to local traders and collected from them goods to be sent to their brothers in Tlemcen. The eldest brother, 'Abd al-Rahmān, probably the head of the firm, had his headquarters in Sijilmāsa, where he obtained information about prices of goods in the markets of North Africa and the Sudan. He could therefore regulate the flow of goods to gain the best profits. The Maqqari firm also invested in the organization of the principal trans-Saharan trade route from Sijilmāsa to Walata via Taghaza; they dug wells and afforded security to the traders. Their wealth increased to the extent that it could scarcely be computed.

In Sijilmāsa traders from all over the western and central Maghrib assembled to join the caravans for the trans-Saharan journey. In 1352, Ibn Battīta bought camels in Sijilmāsa and foddered them there for four months. He then set out with a caravan led by a Massūfīa guide.26 The role of the Massūfīa as masters of the Western trans-Saharan routes and guides of the caravans was described by Ibn Hawqal.21 Guides were essential for the journey across the desert, as no routes...
could be seen in the sand. One of the traders in Ibn Battuta's caravan lagged behind and was lost in the desert.28

In the eleventh century traders from SijilmAsa, Aghmit, and other centres in Morocco assembled in Widi Dar'a, the southern limit of the inhabited land of the Maghrib. Leaving Widi Dar'a on the route to Awdaghust, the caravans passed three groups of wells, dug by 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Habib, governor of Ifriqiya, in the middle of the eighth century. The third well was reached after sixteen days travel, or c. two-fifths of the distance from Sijilmdsa to Awdaghust. Then the caravans passed the ridge of Adrir and entered the most difficult part of the route, through a

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desert of shifting dunes without water (the desert of Waran). The travellers on this lap were relieved by a source of sweet water about halfway along. The caravans then crossed Tagant into Awkar, where they reached watering places every one, two, or three days.29

On another route described by al-Bakri, leading from Widi Dar'a to Ghana, there were again three successive wells 'dug in antiquity by the Umayyads'. The caravans made their way through the great desert (al-Majiba al-Kubrd) for eight days without water. The last part of the route was again easier, with watering places at distances of up to four days.30

These routes through the Western Sahara crossed the country of the nomad Sanhaja, mainly the Lamtina. It was along one of these routes, known as Triq Lamti-na, that the Almoravids moved north and south in their military exploits. All these principal routes left the salt mine of Tatental away to the east. In Tatental, twenty days travel from Sijilmalsa, salt was dug out and cut like stone and sent to Sijilmalsa, to Ghana, and to other countries of the Sudan.31 Tatental is in all probability Taghdza, which Ibn Battuta reached twenty-five days after his caravan had left Sijilmalsa.32 By the fourteenth century the route through Taghdza had become the principal highway of the Sahara. It was very probably because of the growing importance of the salt mine of Taghza that caravans took this route, for it was much more difficult than the western routes described by al-Bakri, where watering places were available at short intervals.

In Taghdza, Ibn Battuta's caravan had to fill up with as much water as possible for the ten days journey between Taghiza and Tasarahla, where there was no water, excepting some ponds left over by the rain. Tasarahla is identified with Bir al-Ksaib, the only important watering place between Taghza and Walata. There, the caravan paused to rest before entering the most difficult part of the desert, where shortage of water was made worse by the danger of the moving dunes.33 A caravan could not

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cover the distance between Tasarahla (Bir al-Ksaib) and Walata with its own water supply only. From Tasarahla one of the Massilfa was sent as scout (takshif)
to Walata to inform the people there of the coming caravan. The people of Walata then went out with water a distance of four days travel to meet the tired and thirsty caravan. If the scout did not reach Walata, the whole caravan might perish. A caravan would also be in danger if its guide lost the way to the watering place.

The desert was crossed after the rainy season when the water ponds were full, and there was some pasture for the camels. The camels were loaded every day at dawn and the caravan marched until the sun was high up in the sky. They then pitched camp and rested until the afternoon prayer, after which they set off and continued well after dark, until the night prayer.

On the last stage of the route to Walata, Ibn Batātia's caravan began its daily march after the afternoon prayer only and travelled throughout the night until sunrise, and then stopped for the rest of the day. When the waterskins were empty, they used to slaughter camels and drink the water in their stomachs.

From the ninth to the eleventh centuries the more important Saharan routes led to Awdaghust. It is suggested that Awdaghust flourished on the site of Tegdaoust. Excavations carried out there since 1960 indicate a medieval settlement from the eighth or ninth to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. The oldest city was built of stone and houses were of a Mediterranean style. Among the objects found were pottery and iron tools of local production, but also imported glassware and enameled ceramics. Many oil lamps were discovered of a type which was widespread in the Muslim world until the thirteenth century. Decorative objects of copper found in Tegdaoust were similar to those found in Koumbi-Saleh, the probable site of the capital of Ghana. Glass ornaments were found of the same type as those excavated in Raqqda, the ninth-century capital of the Aghlabids in Ifriqiya. Small-scale standard weights of glass may be regarded as indication of a gold trade. Indeed, five gold bars

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and trinkets were found wrapped in a piece of cloth. These are the first gold bars ever unearthed in a medieval site in West Africa.

There is a vague similarity between the names of Awdaghust and Tegdaoust, but the linguistic analyst remains cautious about relations between the two. Tegdaoust, however, was an important commercial centre in communication with the Maghrib, as was Awdaghust of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Though the identification is not certain, it remains a plausible proposition. Awdaghust flourished at the same time as the capital of Ghana, some fifteen days travel to the south-east. Tadmekka, the site of which is now known as Es-Souk, had a similar position in relation to Gao. Awdaghust and Tadmekka were not only resting places for the caravans before the last stage of the journey to the Sudan, but developed as commercial towns in their own right. The North African traders preferred to have their commercial base in the neighbourhood of the Sudan, but still in the domain of the Berbers and in the land of Islam. The rapprochement between Berbers and Sudanese developed with the intensification of trade and the advance of Islam. One may even mark it by a review of the evidence in the ninth (al-Ya'qibi), tenth (Ibn Hawqal), and eleventh (al-Bakri)
centuries. The cleavage, it will be shown, was completely healed by the thirteenth century, by which time there was no further need for two rival trading centres - one Berber and the other Sudanic.

al-Bakri described Awdaghust as it was before the Almoravids’ conquest. ‘The people there - mainly Zanita and Arabs - are very well-to-do, and possess much fortune. The market there is always full of people.’ Awdaghust exported the best gold in the world and ambergris of high quality.43 In 1055, the Almoravids conquered Awdaghust and destroyed it. A century later al-Idrisi described Awdaghust as ‘a small town in the desert with little water .... Its population is small in number 146

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and there is not much trade’.44 According to the archaeological evidence, however, the commercial centre on the site of Tegdaoust flourished until the thirteenth century.45

At the beginning of the thirteenth century Walata developed as the principal terminus of the trans-Saharan trade. In this position Walata replaced both Awdaghust and the capital of Ghana. Indeed, whereas the existence of the two contemporaneous trading centres of Awdaghust and Ghana can be explained by the dichotomy between the Berbers and the Sudanese, Walata had a mixed population of Berbers and Sudanese. This was a result not only of the long contact between the two ethnic groups, and the advance of Islam among the Sudanese, but also because of the shift of the political centre of gravity farther south with the rise of Soso and Mali. In Ghana, the capital of the kingdom was also a principal terminus of the trans-Saharan trade. Walata, and later Timbuktu (which also counted Berbers and Sudanese among its inhabitants), were commercial centres, Muslim cosmopolitan towns.

Some traditions relate that following the conquest of Ghana by Sumanguru, king of Soso, the principal Muslim families of the capital of Ghana moved to the small Soninke village of Biru, to escape the oppressive rule of this pagan ruler.46 These Muslims were, in all probability, the Arab and Berber traders as well as their Muslim Soninke associates. Walata, the Berber name for Biru, soon attracted more traders from the Maghrib.41 The neighbouring Massiifa nomads, who had already been involved in the Saharan trade as guides, also settled in Walata. When Ibn Battita visited Walata most of its inhabitants were Massilfa. The Berbers were the leading traders and the 'ulami', whereas the Soninke rendered services to local and foreign traders.48

The people of Walata, as we have seen, used to come out to meet the arriving caravans with water to help them in crossing the last difficult part of the way. The messenger sent to announce the coming of the caravan also carried letters from 147

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the traders to their friends in Walata, asking them to hire lodgings for them.49 In Walata, as in other trading centres of West Africa, resident traders served as hosts
to the foreign traders, introduced them to the local chief or the governor, informed them of current prices, and acted as brokers in commercial transactions.

In 1352, Walata was the north-western province of Mali, under a Sudanese governor. The caravan traders first paid their respects to this governor. They later presented themselves before another official, 'the overseer' (al-mushrif), probably the inspector of the market. He was designated mansd-dyon, perhaps 'the king's slave'. He may have been the king's commercial agent, who had the right to buy from foreign traders before they disposed of their merchandise elsewhere.

This mushrif was later dismissed by the king, following a complaint of illtreatment by a merchant, who had been paid only a hundred mithqdl's by the mushrif for what was six hundred mithqdl's worth.

At the same time that Walata replaced Awdaghust as the southern terminus of the trans-Saharan trade, significant changes occurred also at the northern end of the Sahara. By the beginning of the thirteenth century Arab nomads of the BanddMa'qil became masters of the Siis and Widi Dar'a. Security deteriorated, and the caravans from Sijilma, which had previously travelled to Wadi Dar'a before crossing the desert, now set out directly to the desert, to avoid the Arabs. This was another factor, besides the growing importance of the Taghiza salt mine, which induced caravans to take the more eastern route of Sijilma-Taghiza-Walata.

In the fourteenth century the Arab nomads occupied tracts of the country between Mali and Morocco and took an active part in diplomatic exchanges between the rulers of these two empires. Later in the same century Ibn Khaldiin reported that the Arabs of the Siis attacked caravans on their way to Walata from Bid, the most western qaṣr in the oases of Tuat.

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Caravans, therefore, moved eastwards and made Tamentit, at the eastern end of Tuat, their rendezvous. The route from Tamentit reached the territory of Mali at a town called Ghr. This was yet another shift of the Saharan trade to the east which contributed to the decline of Sijilma and Walata at both ends of the desert. These were replaced by Tuat in the north and by Timbuktu in the south. There is some contemporary evidence on the growing importance of Tuat during the fourteenth century. In 1324 Mansd Miisd set out for the pilgrimage from Walata and crossed the desert via Tagh-za to Tuat. In 1339 the map of Angelino Dulcert indicated a route from Sijilm-ssa via Bidd (in Tuat) to Walata and Mali. On the map of Abraham Cresques (1375), the route from Sijilma to Timbuktu passed Tuat and Taghaza. In 1413, the planisphere of the converted Majorcan Jew, Mecia de Viladestes, showed a route from Sijilma via Bidd, Tabalbalat and Tamentit (in Tuat) to Timbuktu. In 1455-6 Ca da Mosto recorded that part of the Sudanese gold was taken from Timbuktu to Tuat and Tunis.

The best description of the trade in Tuat is that by Antonius Malfante, an agent of a Genoan firm. In 1447 he landed at Hunayn (the port of Tlemcen) and joined a caravan which made its way to Tuat in eighteen days. In the oases of Tuat he
counted 150 to 200 qs ir. He himself stayed at Tamentit, then the most important entrepôt for trade with the Sudan. There, traders from the south carrying gold met their counterparts from the Mediterranean coast. The people of Tuat acted as brokers for a very high commission. Malfante's host was a rich merchant, who had spent some thirty years in Timbuktu and had travelled for fourteen years in the Sudan. There were also Jewish goldsmiths in Tuat.61 (In the 1490s the zealous cleric al-Maghili incited a massacre of these Jews of Tuat.62)

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the Arab nomads imposed their 'protection' over the Berbers who traded with the Sudan. In the Western Sahara, in Wd.di Dar'a as well as in the

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pre-Saharan oases of North Africa, the Arabs did not take part directly in the trade, but exacted tribute from the traders.63

Trade in the Western Sahara, along the routes across Adrar, increased again in the fifteenth century with the growing importance of the salt mine of Idjil. Following a rather vague reference to this mine by Ca da Mosto in 1455,64 its trade was described in detail by V. Fernandes half a century later. Walata, along with the desert towns of Tichitt and Wadan, participated in the salt trade of Idjil.65 Wadan was then the principal town of Adrar, and the only town with a wall.66 Part of Mali's gold, according to Ca da Mosto, was sent to Hoden (Wadan) from where it was distributed to Oran, Hunayn, Fes, Marrdkush, Safi, and Mdssa, to be sold to the Italian merchants.67

When the Portuguese reached the Saharan coast in the middle of the fifteenth century they established their factory in Arguin, close to the flourishing trading towns of Adrar. For a short time the Portuguese even tried to establish an entrepôt in Wadan (Adrar). Because of the hardships of the desert and the hostility of the population the Portuguese abandoned Adrar but continued their involvement in the Saharan trade from Arguin. Gold brought from the Sudan was divided into three parts: one was sold to the Portuguese to buy European manufactured goods; with another part of the gold they bought camels from the Arabs to carry the salt. This salt of Idjil the traders of the Sudan bought from the Sanh~ja with the third part of their gold.68

By that time - from the middle of the fifteenth century - Mali had lost direct influence over the Saharan trade, after the northern provinces had escaped its authority. In the sixteenth century the political control over Saharan trade was contested between the askiyls of Songhay and the Sa'did sharifs of Morocco. Most of the trade across the Sahara was between the Sudan and the Maghrib. Part of the trade of the Sudan, however,

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turned also to Egypt. Ibn al-Faqilh al-Hamadhini (c. 903) described a route from Ghana over Gao, Air and Tibesti to 'al-Waht' in Egypt, that is, to the oases of Kharga and Dakhla.69 Ibn al-Faqilh's information must refer to the end of the
ninth century, because al-Istakhri, writing a few decades later, said that the oases of Egypt which had formerly been inhabited were ruined and deserted in his time. Ibn Hawqal, who visited these oases himself, knew that they declined after the Egyptian ruler Ahmad ibn Tiflin (868-84) had forbidden traders to take the route from al-Waht to Ghana. He took this step because many caravans had been lost in sandstorms or attacked by brigands. 7 al-Idrisi mentioned two towns on the route from the oases to the Western Sudan which had prospered before they were covered by the sands and their water resources dried up. 72 This route may have been revived in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, because al'Umari described a route from Upper Egypt over the oases, and through a desert inhabited by Arab and then Berber tribes, to Mali and Ghana. 7 Leo Africanus says that the oases were inhabited by many villages, and that the people there were wealthy because of their position between Egypt and Gao. Elsewhere he added that the people of Manfaloth (about 225 miles south of Cairo on the left bank of the Nile) were rich because they traded with the Sudan (undoubtedly via the oases of Dakhla and Kharga). 75 From the fourteenth century there is evidence of active trade with Egypt along other routes. In 1353, Ibn Baitita reported that the people of Takedda in Air were trading with Egypt. His caravan, after leaving Takedda, reached a crossroad in the Sahara, probably In-Azaoua, where one route turned north-west to Tuat and another to the north-east over Gh~t to Egypt. 76 The same year (1353) Ibn Khaldfin was informed of large caravans of 12,000 camels (sic), passing Tadmekka in trading between Egypt and Mali. 77 In 1447, Malfante mentioned that Egyptian traders came to Tuat to meet traders from the Sudan. 78 In 1455-6, Ca da Mosto heard that part of the gold from Mali was taken in caravans to Cochia (Gao) on the route to Egypt and Syria. 79 The trade between Mali and Egypt may have increased after Mansi Miisd's visit to Cairo in 1324.80 MansA Miis& and his followers spent much gold in Cairo, where they purchased goods of all kinds; Turkish slaves, bought in Cairo, attended the king of Mali. 81 Ibn Battita reported that the people of Walata wore Egyptian clothes. 82 and Egyptian traders frequented Mali. 83 The fourteenth century was the period of greatest economic expansion for Mali. Its gold reached Egypt, the Maghrib and Europe; its traders reached the fringes of the forest to exploit new sources of gold.

XIV Towns and Traders
The Goldfields
Gold was the most important staple in the trans-Saharan trade, yet little reliable information reached Arab geographers and historians about the location and nature of the goldfields. Gold is frequently associated with legends and myths, however. A common description in the Arabic sources is that of gold growing like...
Sudanese chiefs and traders tried to keep secret the sources of the gold to ward foreign traders off the goldfields. The host of Antonius Malfante in Tuat traded with the Sudan for many years, but admitted that he could not obtain any information about the place from which gold was collected. The same experience was shared by Europeans on the Gold Coast. Villaud de Bellefond, a visitor to the Gold Coast in the seventeenth century, said that he could get no accurate information about the way gold was found; he heard many false explanations, not because people did not know, but because they tried to conceal the truth. In 1710, La Courbe, the director of the French Compagnie du Sénégal, advanced up the Senegal river and reported that the Marabouts of Bambuk prevented foreigners from getting close to the gold mines.

Not only did the Sudanese middlemen prevent foreigners from reaching the goldfields, but the gold producers themselves were reluctant, at least in the earlier periods, to meet even local traders face to face. This is best illustrated by that peculiar method of barter known as 'the silent trade'. Traders coming from the north laid down their goods on the bank of a river and withdrew. Then came people with gold, laid some of it against each pile of goods and retreated. When given the sign the traders came forward, and if satisfied by the amount of gold left, they took it; otherwise they withdrew again and waited for the local people to add more gold. As soon as the traders disappeared with the gold, the local buyers collected the goods they had bought in this way. This method of trading was probably not as general as one might infer from repeated accounts by Arab and European authors. Yet it was mysterious enough to encourage speculations about the reasons for its existence. Europeans were inclined to believe that the people of the goldfields avoided contact with foreigners because they were ashamed to appear with their alleged thick lips or canine teeth. Malfante's host, on the other hand, related that the people of the goldfields regarded white men as monsters. V. Fernandes suspected that the account of 'the silent trade' was invented by the Wangara, in order to exclude others from trading in the goldfields. Even the representatives of the powerful king of Mali were unwanted. The Wangara told Ca da Mosto that the king of Mali once sent his messengers with the Wangara to the gold-bearing country. They deceitfully captured one of the local people in order to obtain information about the goldfields from him. The captive refused to speak, to eat, or to drink, and died. In retaliation the gold owners stopped trading for three years. Such information about a complete lack of communication between the king of Mali and the gold producers is exaggerated. In the court of Mali, Ibn Battūtah saw natives of the country where gold was found. These were probably Jallonke from Bure.

The king of Mali was able to subdue the people of the goldbearing country, but he learned from experience that whenever one of the gold provinces was conquered, and Islam propagated, gold production in that region stopped, while the output in
the neighbouring regions increased. The rulers of Mali did not rule the gold

country directly, therefore, but were satisfied with the

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tribute paid and with the income accrued from controlling the gold trade through

their dominions.10 Rulers of the Sudanese empires had to respect the 'masters of

the gold', because only through their ritual association with the local spirits did

the land yield the precious metal."

Following the scanty contemporary evidence about the location of the goldfields

and recent surveys by geologists, it is possible to indicate three principal
goldfields, besides others of lesser importance: Bambuk, between the Senegal and

the Faleme rivers; Bure on the Upper Niger; and the Akan goldfields near the

forest of the present republics of Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

The goldfields of Bambuk were exploited when Ghana was the leading power in

the Western Sudan. al-Bakri says that the best gold of Ghana came from the town

of Ghiydrii, eighteen days travel from the capital. GhiydrUi, on the right bank of

the Upper Senegal, not far from Kayes, was a trading outpost facing the goldfields

of Bambuk.1 Bambuk, closed in by the Senegal and the Faleme rivers, may well

have been 'the island of gold' or Wangara, known to al-Idrisi, where alluvial gold

was collected.13

Wasteful methods reduced the productivity of the goldfields of Bambuk, when

closer contact with the Maghrib across the Sahara increased the demand for the
gold of the Sudan. In the eleventh or twelfth century, the Sudanese traders

ventured southwards and opened up the new goldfields of Bure on the Upper

Niger, in the region of Siguiri. The shift of the principal gold sources coincided

with the decline of Ghana, and is echoed in the Soninke traditions of Wagadu;

Bida, the snake which had brought gold and prosperity to Wagadu, was killed and

'his bleeding head disappeared and fell in Bure, which became the country of

gold'.14 Mauny suggests that Yaresnd of al-Bakri (or Barisa of al-Idrisi) was the

market town facing the goldfields of Bure.15 al-Bakri and al-Idrisi alluded to the

emergence of two principalities among the Malinke - Malal and Do - in a country

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of loosely organized peoples. We have already suggested that the rise of Mali to

hegemony in the thirteenth century was associated with the development of the

Bure goldfields and the control over its trade. The production of the goldfields of

Bure was about eight times that of Bambuk.16 In the nineteenth century the gold

of Bambuk was described as yellow and that of Bure as rather whitish.17

The demand for gold in Europe increased in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
The enterprising Sudanese traders responded to this challenge and opened routes
to the goldfields on the fringes of the Akan forest. Bono-Mansu and Be'o
developed as a result of the gold trade with the Niger and the Sahel. A central
theme in the traditions of Bono-Mansu, one of the earliest Akan states, is the trade
in gold and kola, on which 'its prosperity and advanced civilization depended'.18
Be'o was the southern outpost of the Mande traders who plied between the goldfields and Jenne.19

Jenne and Timbuktu

Early in the sixteenth century V. Fernandes reported that salt was transported by canoe along the Niger river from Timbuktu to Jenne. In Jenne the salt bars were divided into smaller pieces and taken on porters' heads by the 'Ungaros' (Wangara) to the gold mines.20 Raymond Mauny rightly suggests that salt for the goldfields of Bure would not have been unloaded at Jenne, but could be carried by boats up the main course of the Niger, as far as the river was navigable. In any case, it seems that much of the salt for Bure was sent to Niani, the capital of Mali, on camels.21 On the other hand, Jenne may have developed as a commercial centre for the trade with the goldfields of the Akan forest. Located in the south-eastern end of the inner delta of the Niger, Jenne was the farthest point on the waterway in that direction.22

al-Sa'di may refer to the same trading pattern: 'Jenne is one of the greatest Muslim markets, where traders carrying salt from the mines of Taghdza meet traders with the gold of Bitu ... 23 It is because of this blessed town [Jenne] that caravans come to Timbuktu from all points of the horizon....'24 Leo Africanus also described the traders of Timbuktu as carrying their merchandise in small boats on the Niger to Jenne.25 The Niger waterway between Timbuktu and Jenne connected two important overland routes; the salt route from Taghdza to Timbuktu, and the gold route from Jenne to the fringes of the forest. The close commercial relationship between Timbuktu and Jenne suggests that these two important market towns developed simultaneously.

It has already been shown that some time in the second half of the fourteenth century the principal trans-Saharan routes shifted eastwards.26 Timbuktu superseded Walata as the destination of the more important caravans. 'The prosperity of Timbuktu was the ruin of Biru [Walata],' al-Sa'd says in his excellent account of the history of Timbuktu:

Timbuktu was founded by the Tuareg Maghsharen at the end of the fifth century A.H. [A.D. 1100].... They chose the site of this town ... as a store for their property and grain.

It was passed by travellers going to and fro.... Then people began to settle there .... They came from all directions until the town became a market for trade. Most of those who had come to trade there were the people of Wagadu. The market had previously been at Biru [Walata]. Caravans used to come there from all points of the horizon. The pick of scholars, pious, and rich men from every tribe and country lived there; people from Egypt, Awjila, Fezzan, Ghadames, Tuat, Dar'a, Tafilelt, Fes, Siis, Bitu, and other places. Then, all these gradually moved to Timbuktu, where they were joined by different Sanhja groups. The building of Timbuktu was the ruin of Biru.... At first people's houses in Timbuktu were thorny stockades and huts roofed with...
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grass, then they changed to built-up walls, which were so low that whoever stood outside could have seen everything within. Later they built a Friday mosque, according to their ability. Then the Sankore mosque was built. At that time, everyone who stood at the gate of the city could see those who entered the Friday mosque, because the town was devoid of walls and solid buildings.

The prosperity of the town was established only at the end of the ninth century [end of the fifteenth century A.D.]. Its building, the joining of all its parts together, was completed only in the middle of the tenth century [mid-sixteenth century A.D.], during the reign of Askyyd Ddwiid ibn AskyyA al-I.Hdjy Muhammad [1549-82].

This historical precis by a son of Timbuktu fits other available evidence very well. In the twelfth century Timbuktu was a small settlement of the Tuaregs. Tiraqq&, east of Timbuktu on the Niger's bend, was then an important trading centre.

The capital of Ghana to the west still attracted much of the Saharan trade. Following the liquidation of this empire, and the destruction of its capital, Timbuktu became a regional market town frequented by the Soninke traders of Wagadu. In the second half of the thirteenth century it became a provincial capital of Mali, because of its strategic position, facing the land of the Tuaregs, and as a link with the eastern province of Gao. Walata, which had been the principal commercial town until the middle of the fourteenth century, later lost this position as well as its religious and commercial elite to Timbuktu. It was therefore towards the end of the rule of Mali in Timbuktu that the town emerged as a famous centre of trade and Islamic learning. The golden age of Timbuktu was under the askiyds of Songhay, for whom it was a second capital.

The market towns which preceded Timbuktu - Awdaghust, Koumbi-Saleh, and Walata - were all land-locked towns. The Sudanese traders used to carry their merchandise on donkeys or on porters' heads. Timbuktu served as a terminus for the desert caravans, but at the same time had its port on the Niger, a dozen miles away. It was, in the words of al-Sa'di, a rendezvous for those coming by boats and by land.

Timbuktu was close enough to the Niger to benefit from water transportation, yet far enough to be outside the river's flooding area. It was therefore accessible by land throughout the year. Jenne, in the inner delta of the Niger, turns into an island during the flood, and may be reached at that time of the year by boats only. Jenne was better defended than Timbuktu, but was also more dependent on the river for its trade and everyday life.

According to oral traditions the early inhabitants of the region of Jenne were the Bozo fishermen. The town of Jenne itself was founded by the Nono, traders of Soninke origin. Because of their advanced civilization and wealth they succeeded in building up political power over the Bozo. The Nono came to Jenne from Did, which preceded Jenne as a commercial and religious centre.
According to al-Sa'di, Jenne was founded in the middle of the second century A.H. (eighth century A.D.) and was islamized at the end of the sixth century A.H. (c. 1200). Both dates seem much too early for Jenne itself, but it is possible that al-Sa'di, following the oral traditions, combined the history of Jenne with that of Did. If related to Did, these dates - though not certain - may be accepted. Did may have been founded by the Soninke as part of the expansion of their empire, and it became Muslim when traders of Soninke origin made it their centre. Dyula families far and wide remember Di'A as the town of their ancestors.

The prayers of the first Muslim king of Jenne are typical of a ruler concerned with the growth of a commercial centre:

He asked them [the gathering 'ulamd'] to offer three prayers for that town: let everyone who emigrated from his own

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country out of distress and poverty be given by Allah wealth and prosperity, so that he will forget his home country; let the foreigners in the town be more numerous than its local people; let patience be taken away from those who come to the town for trade, that they will be tired of it and will sell their merchandise to its people cheap, so that the latter make great profits.

The people of Jenne, a city of commerce, were deeply immersed in worldly affairs. Competition was fierce, and the people hated any one among them who had achieved fame. They kept their hatred secret until misfortune overcame such a man.

Jenne is first mentioned by name in Malfante's report of 1447. Over sixty years later, Leo Africanus described the considerable profits made by the traders of this town, and its trade with Timbuktu over the Niger. He marked the abundance of barley, rice, livestock, fish, and cotton. Unlike Timbuktu, in its arid surrounding, Jenne had an agricultural hinterland. al-Sa'di indicated that the region of Jenne was densely populated, and there were 7077 villages (sic.) close together. Whereas Timbuktu depended mainly on external trade across the Sahara, Jenne also developed intensive trade in agricultural products; some of it for local or regional consumption and some for export to the Sahel and to the Sahara. The great merchants and the leading 'ulamd' of Timbuktu were mostly Berbers. In Jenne, on the other hand, they were mainly Sudanese. This distinction is related to the role of foreign and local merchants in the trade system of the Western Sudan.

The excavations at Koumbi-Saleh (Ghana), as well as the ruins of Tegdaoust (Awdaghust) and Es-Souk (Tadmekka), indicate the strong influence of the Maghrib on the material culture of these ancient towns. The carriers of this influence were North

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African traders who settled in the market towns of the Sahel as agents or partners of commercial firms in the Maghrib, or as independent entrepreneurs. Ibdites from the southern fringes of the Maghrib were among the earlier adventurers of the trans-Saharan trade, and some of them moved south of the Sahara for shorter or longer periods. They probably made up the foreign population of Awdaghust in the eleventh century. In Awdaghust Berber traders from the Maghrib lived in the Berber milieu of the southern Sahara, though they were Zan–ta in the midst of Sanhdja. In the capital of Ghana these Muslim traders of the Maghrib settled under a non-Muslim Sudanese king. There, as in Gao, the Muslims had their own town, separated from the king’s town. This pattern still exists in West Africa for migrants of different ethnic origin and religious affiliation: as in the zongo in modern Ghana, where Muslims from the north live apart from the local Akan people; or the sabon-garis in Northern Nigeria, where Christians from the south have their own quarters outside the old Hausa Muslim towns. In the eleventh century Muslims in the capital of Ghana included both foreign traders from the Maghrib and Soninke converts. The pagan ruler was hospitable to the Muslim traders in his country. In the twelfth century most of the Soninke of Ghana and their king were Muslims. The decline of the capital of Ghana as a commercial centre is associated with its conquest by the pagan Soso.40

By the thirteenth century both Awdaghust and the capital of Ghana had lost their commercial importance, and their role was taken over by Walata, a Berber-Soninke town. Besides the Massdifa, who formed part of the local population, there were also traders from the Maghrib as residents in Walata. One of them was Ibn Baddi’ of Sale, with whom Ibn Battita lodged in 1352.41 Among the foreign traders in Walata in the middle of the thirteenth century were the brothers ‘Abd al-Wdhid and ‘Ali of the Maqqari family. They built stone houses, married local women, and possessed slaves. When Walata was conquered by Mali the Maqqari brothers suffered big losses and hired warriors to defend their property. One of the brothers sought audience with the king of Mali: he was well received and the king confirmed their position as leading traders in his country. The king of Mali even corresponded with the brothers in Tlemcen asking them to purchase goods for him. The Maqqari brothers’ business expanded, but their sons wasted what the fathers had accumulated. The sons suffered as a result of local disturbances and the oppression of the sultans. They were reduced to poverty, so that the qdi Abii ’Abdalldh Muhammad, great-grandson of Abdi Bakr of Tlemcen, inherited only a library from his father.42

The flourishing firm of the mid-thirteenth century disintegrated after the first generation, and the branch of the Maqqari family in Tlemcen lost all its assets. But nothing is said about the fate of a branch of the family, the descendants of ’Abd al-W–hid and ’Ali, in the Sudan. Perhaps one of the descendants moved from Walata to the capital of Mali, where Ibn Battita met ’Abd al-Wdhid al-Maqqari.43
'Abd al-Whid al-Maqqar! was in-law of Muhammad ibn al-Faqih al-Jazilli (i.e., of the Jazilla tribe in southern Morocco), the head of the white community in the capital of Mali. Ibn al-Faqih himself married a cousin of the king of Mali, and had easy access to the court. Together with the local qdi and the khatib he introduced Ibn Battita to the king. Other prominent foreigners in the capital were Shams al-Din ibn al-Naqwish al-Misri (the Egyptian), and the learned 'Ali al-Ziidi alMarrakushi (of Marraskush). The North African community had its own ward in the town, but they were closely involved in the affairs of the capital, which was now Muslim. The residents acted as intermediaries between foreign traders passing through and the local authorities. No one was allowed to enter the capital without permission, and Ibn Battita wrote in advance to Ibn al-Faqih to announce his arrival.4"
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moved from one centre to the other; from Awdaghust and Ghana to Walata, and then from Walata to Timbuktu, or from Did to Jenne. They were attached to a town as long as it performed its commercial function, and were among the first to leave a trading centre in its decline. These traders were very sensitive to the attitude of the local authorities, and would defy a governor by deserting his town, as did the merchants and the 'ulamad' of Jenne in 1637. When the Moroccan qa'id oppressed them, they moved to the neighbouring town of Bing.52

In the northern centres of the Sahel, such as Walata or Timbuktu, the percentage of white traders, Berbers of the Sahara and Arab-Berbers of North Africa, was high among the leading merchants. In the market towns farther inland, in Dig or Jenne, there were more Sudanese traders in the big commercial enterprises. The wealthy merchants were directly connected with the trans-Saharan trade; they bought salt and other goods brought by the caravans and loaded the caravans with gold and other exports of the Sudan.

Until the eleventh century the Arab authors had little information about trade south of the markets of the Sahel. This trade was first described by al-Bakri. He mentioned Sudanese traders, known as Bandf Naghmirtah, who transported the gold of Ghiydrdi to neighbouring countries. They operated in a country inhabited by pagans who respected these Muslim traders. West of Ghiyi ri, on the Senegal ('the Nile'), they had their own centre Yaresnd, a Muslim town surrounded by pagan settlements.- Yaresnd is undoubtedly the same town as Barisa of al-Idrisi, who says that its inhabitants were itinerant traders. They took part also in the slave trade to the Sahel, where they sold captives to North African merchants.r

TiraqqA was an important market town on the Niger's bend in the eleventh and twelfth century, before the rise of Timbuktu. There traders from Ghana and Tadmekka met.55 For al-IdrisI Tiraqqi was one of the towns of Wangara. (Wangara is also the name of the gold bearing country.)56 al-Idrisi's confusion is 164

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significant, because the term Wangara was used both for the country of the Manding and for the Mande-speaking traders. A seventeenth-century scholar was aware of the ambiguity of the term Wangara and explained it: 'the Wangara and the Malinke are of the same origin, but whereas the Malinke are the warriors, the Wangara are those traders who travel from one end of the world to the other'.57 Tiraqqi was therefore a trading centre of the Wangara, linking both sides of the Niger's bend. Dii, or Didgha of Ibn Battita, was another centre of the Wangara, one of the earliest stages in their southward expansion. Jenne, its successor, remained for a long period the centre of the Wangara's commercial operations. One of the best accounts of the Wangara is that by V. Fernandes (1506-10): Jenne is a great town built of stone and lime and encircled by a wall. The merchants who go to the gold mines come to this town. These traders belong to a particular race, called the Ungaros; they are red or brownish. In fact, only the members of this race, to the exclusion of others, are allowed to
approach the mines, because they are considered trustworthy. No other person, whether white or black, can get there. When these Ungaros arrive at Jenne, each trader brings along with him one or two hundred black slaves, or even more, to carry the salt on their heads from Jenne to the gold mines, and to bring back the gold .... The traders who take the journey to the gold mines make considerable business. Some of them carry out a trade of over sixty thousand mithqdlrs; even those who only bring the salt to Jenne do business worth ten thousands of mithqdlrs. They trust each other without receipts, written agreements, or witnesses. The credit that they are given extends until a certain date in the year, because the Ungaros come to Jenne once a year only. They are so honest that if one of them died before the payment was due, his son or his heir would hastily repay the debt exactly .... They are liked by all, by the people of Guynee [the Sudanese] as well as by the Christians [the Portuguese]. They travel with their merchandise very far into the interior, farther than any other people of that region. They go even as far as the fort of Mina [on the Gold Coast] overland.

Throughout the centuries the Wangara continued to expand their commercial network. Until the second half of the fourteenth century they seem to have operated in the region marked by the Senegal and the Upper Niger rivers, or within the dominions of the empire of Mali. Mali was the first Sudanese empire which gave all this part of the Sudan an effective political unity, but the Wangara had always ventured beyond the political frontiers of empires. In the fourteenth century they reached the Akan forest to bring its gold northward; they opened routes to Worodugu ('the land of kola') on the Ivory Coast; they made contact with the peoples of the Western Atlantic Coast, and more significant still, they built up trade with Hausaland to the east.

'The Wangarawa,' says the Kano Chronicle, 'came from Mele, bringing with them the Mohammedan religion.' This was during the reign of the king of Kano, Yeji, probably in the second half of the fourteenth century. Early in the sixteenth century Leo Africanus described the kingdom of Guangara, or Wangara: 'The inhabitants of the kingdom are very rich, as they go with their merchandise to remote countries.' The importance of elements of Wangara origin in the commercial community of Hausaland as late as the mid-nineteenth century is attested by Barth, who says: 'almost all the more considerable native merchants in Katsena are Wangarawa (Eastern Mandingoes) '.

Wangara is the generic name of the contemporary Arabic and...
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Portuguese sources for all the Mande-speaking traders. But as these traders dispersed and became associated with trade in distinct sections of the Sudan, living among different peoples, each group became known under its own particular name. The people of Soninke origin in the Middle Niger, of Jenne and its environs, who lived among the Bambara and adopted their language, are known as Marka. Those who settled in the Mossi-Dagomba group of states - in the country between Jenne and the Ashanti forest - are known as Yarse. They speak the language of the people among whom they live. Best known of all the Wangara are the Dyula, a name which became a synonym for ‘a trader’.

Yves Person makes a distinction between two groups of Dyula. Those Muslim traders who live among their Malinke kin (in Guinea and the north-western Ivory Coast) are also called Malinke-mori, i.e., Muslim Malinke. They are distinguished from their neighbours by their Muslim religion and commercial profession only. They had first moved south for the trade in kola. Their migration, however, intensified from the sixteenth century for the trade with the European factories on the coast. The second group of Dyula settled in commercial communities among non-Muslim and non-Mande peoples in the north-eastern Ivory Coast, along the route from Jenne to Be'o (and later to Bondouku). There, they also form a distinct ethnic group. The Dyula communities of Kong, Bobo-Dyulasso, Buna, and Bondouku were founded towards the end of the seventeenth century. But Muslim groups in these centres claim to have come from the older market town of Be'o.

The Wangara who, according to Fernandes, visited the Portuguese fort of Elmina by the end of the fifteenth century, must have been Dyula from Be'o. A century later, Mande-speaking warriors from the Middle Niger advanced south along the trodden Dyula route to reach the region of Be'o, where they crossed the Black Volta river to found the kingdom of Gonja.64

At Elmina on the Gold Coast, the Portuguese first traded in

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gold with the Dyula, who came down to the coast from Be'o. But in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the gold trade was taken over by the rising Akan states in the forest region. Most of the gold from this region was carried south, and little of the precious metal was left for the trade of the Dyula with the north. On the Gold Coast, therefore, the arrival of the Europeans badly affected the Dyula trade, but on the Gambia the Europeans stimulated a vigorous trade system.

The Mande-speaking Muslim traders, with whom the Portuguese negotiated on the Gambia, were the Diakhanke. The Diakhanke clans are of Soninke origin, and their traditions go back to Dinga, ancestor of the ruling dynasty of the ancient kingdom of Wagadu. Like other groups of Soninke origin (such as the Ture) they remember Dii in Massina as the town of their ancestor, Suware, a great marabout and a saint. Suware and his followers established a new town at Bambuk, called Diakha-ba (or Diakha-sur-Bafing) after their old centre at DiA. This new Muslim community was attracted by the gold of Bambuk. In the thirteenth century
Bambuk was conquered by Mali, and colonized by Malinke. The Diakhanke allied themselves with the new Malinke chiefs, served them as Muslim clerics and adopted the Malinke language and customs. An early migration of Diakhanke traders to the Upper Gambia and the Casamance may have been stimulated by the goldfields of Kabu (Portuguese Guinea). As the Malinke expanded westwards to the Upper Gambia, the Diakhanke followed them as traders and clerics. In the middle of the fifteenth century, when the first Portuguese reached the Gambia, they met islamized Malinke chiefs and Muslim clerics at their courts; the latter were probably Diakhanke. When Diogo Gomes visited the Gambia in 1456 he was able to obtain gold in exchange for cloth and rings, and collected information about the trade of Timbuktu and about the gold sources. This is clear evidence that the Gambia had already been linked to the trade system of the Western Sudan. Maritime salt was taken up by the river, and some gold came down. This local trade became international with the arrival of the Portuguese. From their centre in Bambuk, the Diakhanke spread to Bondu, Kedougou, and Futa Djallon and established new communities such as Niokholo and Dantilia - in order to secure a monopoly over the trade with the Europeans.

The Diakhanke traders brought down the Gambia river slaves, hides, local cotton cloth, and gold which they exchanged for horses and fancy clothes. In 1620, Jobson called the local Muslim traders on the Gambia 'Mary-bucks'. One of them promised the English explorer large quantities of gold. The principal town of the Mary-bucks was Jaye, that is Diakha, where gold was abundant. The same town, under the name of Jaga, is mentioned by J. B. Labat as the centre of 'a Republic of marabouts' in Bambuk. These marabouts, then autonomous, held all the trade in their hands and were respected by their neighbours because of their sanctity.

Jobson's account of the life and trade of these ubiquitous itinerant traders may apply to other sections of the Wangara in other parts of West Africa: The Mary-buckes are separated from the common people, both in their habitations and course of lives.... They marry likewise in their own tribe or kindred, taking no wives but the daughters of Mary-buckes .... These Mary-buckes are... going in whole families together, and carrying along their bookes, and manuscripts, and their boyes or younger race with them, whom they teach and instruct in any place they rest, or repose themselves.... They can speake of more countries then their owne native places: one chiefe reason to encourage their travell, we have learned, which is, that they have free recourse through all places, so that howsoever the Kings and Countries are at warres, and up in armes, the one against the other, yet still the Mary-bucke is a privileged person, and may follow his
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trade, or course of travelling, without any let or interruption of either side....
They goe in companies together, and drive before them their Asses, whose
ordinary pace they follow, beginning their dayes journey, when the day appears,
which is even at the Sunne rising and continue travelling some three hours, then
are they enforced to rest all the heate of the day, some two hours before the
Sunne seteth, going forward againe, and so continue untill night comes, whenas
they are sure to harbour themselves, for feare of wilde beastes, except in some
Moone light nights, and then they will travell the better. Likewise when they
come to some speciall Townes, they will rest themselves and their Asses two or
three daies together, laying all their burdens under some shadie trees, close to the
town, set forth such things as they have to sale, maintaining in the time they are
there a kind of market. ...
The onely and principallest man that maintained the greatest Trade, was that
Buckor Sano, who maintained and kept three hundred Asses following that
tedious travell. ... In our time of trading together, if it were his owne goods he
bartered for, he would tell us, this is for my selfe, and you must deale better with
me, than either with the Kings of the Country or any others, because I am as you
are, a Julietto [Dyula], which signifies a Merchant, that goes from place to place...
I seeke abroad as you doe; and therefore am nearer unto you.

XV The Staple Commodities
Gold was in great demand in the Maghrib and in Europe to lubricate a monetary
system. Salt was needed in the Sudan, where the body loses much salt through
perspiration. So, the precious yellow metal was exchanged in the trans-Saharan
trade for the indispensable salt. It was because of their great need for salt that the
people of the goldfields reluctantly came out to trade with foreigners. Ca da
Mosto says that the people of Mali consumed much salt lest their blood would dry
up.' According to Fernandes the owners of the gold put salt on their thick lips, 'lest
these would dry up and fall down'. He adds that the Sudanese heal many internal
diseases with salt.2 Leo Africanus reported that whenever people of the Sudan ate
bread, they used to lick a piece of salt.3 So highly was salt valued that people far
inland in the Sudan, close to the goldfields, bought it for an equivalent weight of
gold.4
Maritime salt from the Atlantic coast was carried into the interior in some places,5
but was unsuitable for distribution over vast and remote areas in the hot and
humid climate of the Sudan. On the other hand, salt bars extracted from mines in
the Sahara were dry and solid enough to be carried undamaged over long
distances. There were several deposits of salt in the Sahara, which became
principal sources for the salt trade in different periods.
Nearest to Bildd al-Siidddn were the salt mines of Awlil mentioned by al-Bakri (in
the country of the Juddlida) and by al-Idrisi (on an island near the coast). These
were the salines of Trarza in southern Mauritania, not far from the Senegal river.
The salt of Awlil was taken either by caravans overland, or by boats upstream to
Takriir, to Silld, and as far as the goldfields of
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Bambuk. In Bambuk this salt had to compete with the salt bars of the Sahara, which were of better quality, because they were thicker and more solid. Taghdza, about half way between Sijilmisa and the Sahel, was the principal salt mine between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries. Al-Bakri described the mine of Tatental (probably Taghdza), twenty days travel from Sijilmisa, where salt was dug about two fathoms under the ground and cut like stones. In this mine the fort and houses were built of salt stones. Salt buildings in Taghdza were reported also by Ibn Sa'id, al-Qazwini, Ibn Battuta (who visited Taghdza) and by V. Fernandes. The labourers in the mine were slaves of the Massifia. No food was produced in Taghdza, and the people there lived on dates brought from Sijilmasa and Dar'a, on millet imported from the Sudan and on camels' meat. It was a miserable and unhealthy place, yet 'in spite of its wretchedness, transactions in tremendous sums of gold took place in the village of Taghiza'.7

As a result of intensive exploitation the mines of Tagh~za were gradually exhausted and impoverished. Raymond Mauny points to the decline in quality of the salt by reviewing information of different periods. Whereas Ibn Battuta reported that two salt bars made a camel's load, Leo Africanus - who visited the mine about a century and a half later - found that a camel carried four salt bars. In other words, between the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries the size and weight of a salt bar were reduced by half. This is confirmed by Fernandes, a contemporary of Leo, who says that it was very difficult to load up the salt bars of Taghdza because these were too thin, and tended to crumble.8 Fernandes recorded also that Tagh~za had been deserted some time before because its water pits dried up. This, however, was for a short time only. In 1582 the Tuaregs, allies of the Songhay, evacuated Taghdza and opened the new salt mines of Taodeni, following the Moroccan conquest of Tagh~za.9 They left behind exhausted mines.

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As the productivity of Tagh~za declined, the salt mine of Idjil, between Rio de Oro and Fort Gouraud, gained importance. Its name - Ygild - was first mentioned by V. Fernandes. It is likely, however, that about half a century earlier Ca da Mosto had referred to the same mine - six days travel north of Wadan - though he still called it Taghdza.10

V. Fernandes described the pattern of the salt trade of Idjil. Traders from Wadan, which flourished on this trade, bought a camel load of salt at Idjil for one and a half mithqdlrs. In Wadan itself the price reached two or three mithqdlrs. From Wadan the salt was taken to Tichitt, where it fetched up to seven mithqdlrs for a camel's load. The merchants of Walata came to buy the salt at Tichitt and sent it to Timbuktu, where a camel load was sold for a hundred or a hundred and twenty mithqdlrs.11 A seventy-fold increase in the price of a camel load between Idjil and Timbuktu, a distance of about 875 miles, may be somewhat exaggerated. Ibn Bat~ita says that a camel's load of salt from Tagh~za was sold for eight to ten mithqdlrs at Walata, and for twenty to thirty, and sometimes even forty, mithqdlrs.
at the capital of Mali. Whatever the exact prices of the salt at each market town on the trade routes, it is certain that for such a bulky commodity the cost of transportation was much higher than the basic cost of the salt. Gold, on the other hand, was easier to carry. This is why it is reported that of the four hundred camels charged with salt on the way south, only twentyfive came back north with gold. The other camels were sold in the Sahel.

From Timbuktu the salt was sent by canoe up the Niger river to Jenne. Part of the salt reached Mali on camels over the Sahel. At Jenne or at Niani, the capital of Mali, the salt bars were broken into smaller pieces to be carried to the goldfields on porters’ heads, at the service of the Wangara traders. The same traders and porters carried the gold northwards.

Gold was found as powder or in nuggets. It was used in the courts of the kings of Ghana and Mali to decorate state emblems. Undoubtedly there were goldsmiths in the towns of the Sahel, who introduced this art from the Maghrib. Early in the sixteenth century V. Fernandes mentioned Jewish goldsmiths at Walata. Current traditions in Mauritania attribute Jewish origin to Moorish goldsmiths, and it is possible that these were descendants of Jews who had come down from southern Morocco, perhaps from Widi Dar’a.

Part of the gold was worked in the towns of the Sahel. alBakri noted that the gold of Awdaghust - considered the best in the world - was exported as twisted threads. The dindrs struck in Tadmekka were called ‘balds’, because they carried no inscriptions. Proper gold coins, dindrs, were struck north of the desert only. In the tenth century al-Mas’iidi reported that the gold bartered in the Sudan was coined into gold dindrs in Sijilmisa. Two centuries later, al-Idrisi said that the gold of Wangara was bought by traders of Wargala and the Western Maghrib. They carried it to their own countries, where dindrs were minted.

Kanem in the Central Sudan had no gold to offer, and its trade was mainly in slaves. Zawila, on the route from Kanem to Tripoli, became the most famous centre for the slave trade in the Sahara. In the Western Sudan, where gold dominated the market, slave trading was on a more limited scale. This difference in the role of gold and slaves between the Western and the Central Sudan respectively, had far-reaching historical consequences. For the gold trade it was vital that peace and security should prevail over all the country between the gold sources and the market towns of the Sahel. This trade encouraged the formation of states, their integration in large-scale empires, and the spread of Islam far inland to the south. An intensive slave trade, on the other hand, was based on continuous raids, which bred terror and hostile relations between the raiding kingdoms in the north and the invaded countries to the south, the sports ground for slave raiders. This may be one of the reasons why Kanem and Bornu had throughout their history antagonized

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'savage' tribes on their southern frontiers; why a series of 'neoSudanic' states did not develop in the immediate hinterland of Bornu, which remained pagan until the nineteenth century.

Though of lesser importance than in the Central Sudan, and second to the gold trade, slave trading in the Western Sudan did exist. Slaves were important in different stages of the trans-Saharan trade. They worked in the salt mines of Taghiza and in the copper mines of Takedda. They were porters in the service of the Wangara traders in the southern section of the trading system, where beasts of burden were of little use. At the end of the fifteenth century the Mandinga (Dyula) traders bought slaves in Elmina, whom the Portuguese had shipped from Benin. These slaves were needed as porters to carry gold and other commodities. Slaves also constituted a source of wealth for the royalty and the nobility.

War captives were made slaves and sold to traders. But there were also organized raids to obtain slaves. Armed bands from Silli, Takriir, and Ghana raided the country of the Lamam for slaves, as did the people of the trading towns of Barisa and Ghiyirdi. These slaves were sold to merchants from the Maghrib. Lamam is the name given to the stateless peoples, who lived outside the orbit of the Sudanic kingdoms and were fair game for the latter. Portuguese sources reported that chiefs used to capture their own subjects to be sold as slaves to the Europeans. This is by no means typical of Sudanic rulers. It may have been the immediate result of the new demand for slaves near the coast following the arrival of the Portuguese. In some societies people were sold into slavery for serious crimes, such as theft or adultery.

No contemporary account exists of the way slaves were carried across the Sahara to the Maghrib. It was not, perhaps, so different from what Caillié described in the 1820s. He travelled in a caravan of 1400 camels. Slaves were put on camels which carried loads of lesser weight such as ostrich feathers and cloth; others went on foot. They were given very little water

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and suffered more than others from the heat. Some of the Moors in Caillie's caravan treated the slaves very harshly. Ibn Batita joined a caravan from Takedda to Sijilmāsa which carried six hundred slaves, very probably from Bornu in the Central Sudan, so Tripoli traded in slaves with Gao in the Western Sudan. Leo Africanus recorded that the merchants of Mesrata (east of Tripoli) traded in European goods, bought from the Venetians, for Sudanese slaves. That these slaves could have come from the Western Sudan is suggested by the presence of 'Abd al-Wdsi’ al-Masrdtī (from Mesrata) at the court of AskiyA Diwfid in Gao, where he proposed to buy five hundred slaves. The trade was indeed very complex; in 1446 Joao Fernandes reported that the Arabs and the Azen~gues (.an-h-ja) of the Western Sahara captured Negroes, and sold them to the Moors or took them themselves as far as Barca in the kingdom of Tunisia. A decade later Ca da Mosto found that slave caravans conducted by the Arabs were divided at
Wadan; one part was taken to Barca and then to Sicily, one part to Tunisia, another to the coast of Barbary, and a fourth to the Portuguese in Arguin. In southern Morocco and the oases of the northern Sahara, mainly in trading centres such as Tagaoust, Dar'a or Wargala, Leo Africanus noted a great number of black people and mulattos born of Sudanese slave women. In Morocco Sudanese slaves were owned by commoners, and in Fes it was a custom to add a slave girl to the gift given to a fiancée. More important were the Sudanese slaves in the service of the rulers of the Maghrib. They formed the bodyguard of the Zirid rulers of Ifriqiya. When Ibn Tdshfin sought to strengthen his position vis-à-vis Abdi Bakr ibn 'Umar, and was preparing for future military exploits, he bought two thousand Sudanese slaves to serve in his army (see p. 39). Most of the servants of the royal household in Fes were Sudanese slaves, and Sudanese eunuchs guarded the royal harem.

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From Morocco Sudanese slaves were sent across the straits to Andalusia. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries Sudanese slaves were recorded in Cordova and Algeciras. In the fourteenth century they appeared in the Christian states of Catalan, Valencia, Majorca, in Marseille and Montpellier. Yet at these northern latitudes they were never found in great numbers. Towards the end of the fourteenth, and during the fifteenth, centuries Sudanese slaves appear in European documentation. In Naples they amounted to 83 per cent of the servile population. In Sicily they were employed in agriculture. Genoa and Venice also had black slaves at that period, which Malowist associated with the scarcity of labour in Europe. Significantly, most of the Sudanese slaves in Southern Europe were attested to have come from 'the Mountains of Barca', or Cyrenaica. This fits very well with the information of João Fernandes and Ca da Mosto from the 1400s to the 1450s, that some of the slaves of the Western Sudan were taken to 'Monde Barque', or the Mountains of Barca. At that time, however, Europeans became involved directly in the slave trade along the Atlantic coast. When the Portuguese reached the Saharan coast they used to make forays from their ships to kidnap Moors, whom they brought to Portugal. Later, captured Moors were exchanged for black slaves brought by the Moors from the Sudan. South of the mouth of the Senegal river a more regular trade developed with the African rulers. The Portuguese were more successful in obtaining slaves than gold. They paid for the little gold and the many slaves in cloth and in other manufactured textiles, in beads, in tin or in silver, but most important of all, in horses. Horses were in great demand among the African chiefs, who were ready to pay for these in slaves. Horses were wanted by chiefs for military purposes and for prestige. The thousand horses in the stables of the Kaya-Magha (of Wagadu) were individually looked after. The Didwara rulers of Kingui created a formidable force of cavalry. The king of Ghana had small horses which were of local breeding.
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Timbuktu, according to Leo Africanus, short horses only were bred, and these were used by the merchants and courtiers. The better horses came from the Maghrib and were first offered to the ruler. The price of horses in Timbuktu was four or five times the price in Europe.44 Ibn Battitla found that horses in Mali were more expensive than camels.45 The king of Mali is said to have had about ten thousand cavalry mounts. He also had to provide horses for his army captains and paid considerable sums for Arab horses brought by merchants from beyond the desert.46 The artisans of Beni Goumi in the northern Sahara used to invest their earnings in horses they bought in Fes, and later sold them to merchants going down to the Sudan.47
When the Portuguese reached the Atlantic coast, they responded to the demand for horses by the African chiefs of Djolof, Sine-Salum and the Malinke. Fernandes was told that the Djolof chiefs bought horses mainly for prestige, and did not even mind buying sick horses.48 Nevertheless, cavalry was the striking force in the Sudan and afforded military superiority over an army of bowmen. A better supply of horses in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries may have strengthened the power of chiefs closer to the coast, who posed a serious challenge to the military superiority of Mali.
The close connection between slaves and horses is shown by the fact that in Ifriqiya the nakhdhs traded in both: he transported horses on the way south and slaves on the way back north.49 The king of Bornu raided his neighbours to the south and captured slaves. These slaves were exchanged for horses brought by merchants from the Maghrib. With these horses his army became stronger, his raids more effective and the number of captured slaves increased. 50 One may draw parallels between the trade in horses in the Sudan and the trade in fire-arms in the Gulf of Guinea; horses, like fire-arms, were paid for in slaves, and both contributed to the intensity of slave raiding.
Salt, gold, and slaves were among the earliest staples of the trans-Saharan trade. It was through exchanging these basic staples that the trade system became more complex. New items of more luxurious character were introduced as a result of the cultural contacts which followed trading relations. The rural people in the Sudan, according to Ibn Sa'Id, used to go naked, but the Muslims covered their privy parts. Most of them wore skins, but those who mixed with the white men [i.e., the foreign traders] put on imported clothes of cotton and wool.51 This suggests that clothing was introduced and diffused through trade and Islam.
In the tenth century Ibn al-Faqih noted that the Sudanese people of Ghana wore skins.52 A century later al-Bakri described the commoners in Ghana wearing robes of cotton, silk, or brocade. Only the king and the crown prince had the right to wear sewn clothes according to the Muslims' fashion. Away from the capital, in the province of Sama, the people went naked, and women only covered their...
sexual parts with skins. The people of Malal, in the country of the Lamlam, were naked according to al-IdrisI. When the king of Malal was converted to Islam he was given a cotton dress. Islam helped in creating a market for clothes and encouraged the increase of imports as well as the expansion of local manufacturing.

It is significant that the cotton tree and the manufacture of cloth were first reported from Takrfrir, the earliest Muslim state. The cloth industry in the Western Sudan, which started in the eleventh century, reached its highest point of prosperity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Production was for the local Sudanese market and for export to the Sahara and the Maghrib. The more important centres of trade and Islam, Timbuktu and Jenne, were also famous as centres of weaving. In the seventeenth century there were twenty-six workshops of tailors in Timbuktu, each with fifty to a hundred apprentices. The development of a local textile industry did not reduce the volume of cloth imports. These were mainly luxurious clothes such as the Egyptian dress of the wealthy people in Walata and the European imported clothes of the king of Mali.

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products were exported to the Sudan from Tunisia and Granada. About 1470 Bendetto Dei reported an active trade of European cloth in Timbuktu. Leo Africanus met the same in Gao. These European products reached the entrepots of the Sahel across the desert. By that time the Portuguese on the Atlantic coast had begun to trade in cloth, responding to a great demand by the local traders. On the Casamance, where the people wove fine cloth, the Portuguese exchanged their cloth for the local woven cloth. In Elmina the Portuguese met with a demand for Moroccan cloth, as the people there developed a taste for this cloth, which had reached them for some time through the Dyula commercial network. The cloth was, however, very expensive because of high transport costs incurred in the long overland route and because it changed hands many times. The Portuguese bought the cloth in Morocco, and by taking it directly by sea, sold it on the African coast at lower prices.

Copper, used mainly for ornaments, is often mentioned among the imports. It came from southern Morocco, and later also from the Byzantine empire. The twelfth-century 'lost caravan' discovered by Monod in the Sahara carried some two thousand rods of copper at the total weight of about a ton. Some silver, tin, and lead also reached the Western Sudan as well as perfumes, bracelets, arms, and books. Beads of stone, coral, and glass were in demand both for ornaments and as currency. Musk extracted from the civet cat, spices, ambergris, ostrich feathers, hides, and kola nuts were among the exports. While grains, sorghum, and millet were exported from the Sudan to the Sahara for the consumption of the Sudanese, the Arab and Berber communities in the Sahel imported wheat from North Africa. They also imported sugar, raisins, and dried dates and figs.
Three arboreal products were important in the trade of the Western Sudan: the gum tree of the Sahel, the shea butter of the savannah and the kola of the forest. The gum tree was observed near Awdaghust in the eleventh century and its products were exported to Andalusia. There is little information in the Arabic sources on the trade in gum. Arabic gum was among the products brought to the Portuguese factory of Arguin at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It became of considerable importance in the European trade on the Mauritanian coast from the seventeenth century. The oil extracted from the shea butter, or the karite, was used for cooking, for light, and for manufacturing soap. The shea butter was exported to the north and was observed by Malfante at Tuat in 1447. Kola, however, was by far the most commercialized fruit in West Africa. 'The nut' (al-jauz) is mentioned among the articles exported from the Sudan by the Maqqari brothers in the thirteenth century. In 1586, the private physician of the Moroccan Sultan Ahmad al-Mansfir al-Dhahabi described harrtb alSfidn ('carob of the Sudan'), also called goro. The fruit came from a place called Bitii close to the gold mines. It was transported in bags covered by wet leaves which kept the fruit fresh until it reached the Maghrib. The author saw the fruit, and he recorded the information about the tree and its location from a merchant who was trading with the Sudan.

The Akan forest is the only region where both gold and kola were abundant and it was very likely this region that the sixteenth-century Maghrib source referred to as 'Bitfi close to the gold mines'. The gold mines and the kola plantations are said to have been the two principal sources of the wealth of Mali. The bitter fruit, a diet of many Sudanese in the fourteenth century, may well have been the kola. By the sixteenth century there is clear evidence for its widespread consumption, and that people became almost addicted to it. Kola nuts were given as presents by the askiys. This scanty evidence indicates that during the age of the great empires the kola nut already fulfilled many of its more recent economic and social functions.

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liquid acts as a stimulant which helps to overcome thirst. Because of its value the kola comprises a most appropriate present and is often exchanged between a host and his guests or a chief and his subjects. The kola grows in the forest, but it is consumed mostly by people of the savannah and the Sahel. Hence its importance in generating long-distance trade.

A small amount only of the kola was exported to the Maghrib, and most of it was destined for markets south of the Sahara. The volume of the gold trade and its destination were conditioned by the changing relations of West Africa with the outside world. The kola trade, on the other hand, was an internal African affair. From the seventeenth century, when the gold trade declined, the kola trade
expanded in response to an ever growing demand. During these centuries, the kola trade was crucial in the spread of Islam between the Sahel and the fringes of the forest.

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XVI Islam in the Sudanic Kingdoms

Muslim traders from the Maghrib frequented the trading centres of the Sahel from the eighth century. As these centres were also capitals of the early kingdoms, the Sudanese rulers came under the influence of the Muslims. In the eighth century Gao (Kawkaw) had commercial as well as political relations with the Ib~dite state of Tahert. I In the tenth century Gao was divided by the Niger into two towns. East of the river was the merchants' town and on the western bank the king's town. The king and most of his people behaved as if they were Muslim.2 'Their king,' al-Bakri wrote in 1067-8, 'is a Muslim, for they entrust the kingship to Muslims only. When a king comes to power, he is given a signet-ring, a sword, and a copy of the Koran, which they claim were sent by amir al-mfi‘minin [the caliph].' 3 The royal tombs of Gao prove that by the end of the eleventh century the kings of Gao were Muslim.4

al-Bakri's intriguing information indicates, however, that though the king was Muslim and the royal emblems Islamic, 'the common people worshipped idols as did the [other] Sudanese'. Also, pre-Islamic customs persisted: 'When the king sits down [to eat] a drum is beaten... and no one in his town may go about until the king has finished his meal.' The nominal and partial acceptance of Islam in Gao may be compared with the zealous adherence to Islam of the king of Takrfir on the Lower Senegal (see p. 44):

The people of Takriir are black and were previously idolators like the other Sudanese and worshipped dakdkir, idols in their language, until the reign of Wdr-Dydbe ibn Rabis. He adopted Islam, introduced the Islamic law, compelled them to observe its rules, and opened their eyes to see the Truth.

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Wdr-Dydbe died in 432 A.H. [A.D. 1040/1] and the people of Takriir are Muslims today. From the town of Takfrir you would go to Sill .... Its people are Muslims. They were converted to Islam by Wdr-Dydbe .... The king of Silli is at war with the infidels.5

The kings of Gao and Takriir set the example for two trends in the development of Islam in West Africa: that of a symbiotic relationship between Islam and the traditional religion represented by Gao, as against the militant Islam of Takriir, which aimed at the imposition of the new religion in all its vigorousness, forcing the subjects to adopt Islam, introducing the Islamic law, carrying the propagation of Islam among neighbours and waging the holy war against the infidels. A compromising attitude, as represented by Gao, was more typical of Islam in West Africa until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it is the early militancy of Islam in Takriir which needs some explanation.
In the western parts of the Sahara the influence of the ocean moderates the harsh desert conditions which prevail farther east, and makes it more suitable for human life. It was therefore in this region that contacts between the white nomads and the black sedentaries were continuous and more intensive throughout the centuries. This fact may account for the greater influence of maraboutism in modern Senegal, compared with other parts of West Africa. Takrîr of the eleventh century, like the people of the Lower Senegal before the French conquest, was under the influence of militant white nomads.

Wdr-Dydbe died in 1040/1, that is, about the time 'Abdalldh ibn Ydsin came to the desert (see above, pp. 33-4). The king of Takrîr was therefore converted in the pre-Almoravid period, probably under the pressure of the Sanhdja. After they had become Muslims the Sanhdja continued their raids on the Sudanese as a jidd. Unlike Ghana, Takriir was too weak to resist the Sanhija impact and its king adopted Islam. Among

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the riverain sedentaries of Takrîr the teaching of Islam probably found more fertile ground than among the Saharan nomads. 'When 'Abdall–h ibn Ydsin saw that they [the Judd.la] turned away from him, and followed their own passions, he wanted to leave them to go to the Sudanese, who had already adopted Islam.' As he was then among the western Judddla, it is very likely that he intended to go to Takriir.

Islamization brought about a rapprochement between the Almoravids and Takriir. Farther to the east the confrontation between the Almoravids and Ghana was hostile. It was a continuation of the centuries-old struggle between the Sudanic kingdom of Ghana and the Sanhdja nomads. It may be suggested that the adherence of the king of Ghana to his ancestral religion may have been in defiance of his northern enemies, who represented the expanding wave of Islam. Acceptance of their religion could imply political subjugation. By fortifying the traditional (national) religion the king of Ghana may have tried to protect his kingdom from the impact of the north.8 An element of resistance to Islam in the royal court of Ghana has been stressed because the Islamic presence in Ghana seems to have been intensive enough to bring about the islamization of the king:

The city of Ghana consists of two towns in a plain. One of these towns is inhabited by Muslims. It is large with a dozen mosques, in one of which they assemble for the Friday prayer. There are imdms, mu'adhdhins, salaried reciters of the Koran as well as jurisconsults and learned men .... The royal town is six miles distance from this one and is called al-Ghaba. Between these two towns are contiguous habitations .... In the king's town, not far from the court, is a mosque where Muslims pray when they call upon him .... The king's interpreters, the official in charge of his treasury, and the majority of his ministers are Muslims. The religion [of the people of Ghana] is paganism and the
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worship of idols .... When the people who follow the king's religion approach him, they fall on their knees and sprinkle dust upon their heads, for this is their way of greeting him.
The Muslims, on the other hand, greet him by clapping their hands.... Their former king Basi, who died in 455 A.H. [A.D. 1063], led a praiseworthy life; he loved justice and was friendly to the Muslims.9
The position of Islam in Ghana exemplifies yet another pattern in the spread of Islam in West Africa, that of Muslims who live under the auspices of pagan rulers.10 The king of Ghana was interested in attracting Muslim traders to the capital, because the prosperity of his kingdom depended on the trans-Saharan gold trade. He let the Muslims practice their religion without interference. Both parties, however, preferred to live apart. The Muslims were interested in retaining an autonomous Muslim community, whereas the king tried to restrict Islamic foreign influence over his subjects. There were, however, points of contact, and the king employed the literate Muslims in his court as interpreters, in the treasury, and whenever a knowledge of writing could be of use. Muslims were welcomed, in fact, as long as they did not represent an obvious danger to the political system. The ground for the islamization of Ghana had already been prepared through the long, peaceful influence of the Muslim residents. But it needed the Almoravids' conquest to destroy the political and military power of Ghana, which had stiffened opposition to Islam."

They [the people of Ghana] were converted to Islam during the times of the Lamtina [Almoravids], and they proved this conversion to be sincere. They are now Muslims and they have scholars, jurists and reciters of the Koran,.. . . Some of their chiefs and notables performed the pilgrimage. . ., and they spend much wealth for the jihdd [holy war].12

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Not all the Muslims in Ghana before the Almoravid conquest were foreigners from the Maghrib; many were Soninke. al-Bakri distinguished between Muslims and 'followers of the king's religion' (ahl din al-malik), and not between Muslims and local people. The Muslim Soninke were traders who operated over the routes leading south to the gold sources. In Ghana, as in the other commercial towns of the Sahel, these Sudinese traders were in close contact with the North African Muslim traders. Through their trade they became detached from the agricultural and tribal ways of life, in which the traditional African religion is rooted. Hence they adopted Islam more easily, and in their wanderings they found hospitality as well as a sense of community among fellow Muslims in the trading centres which developed along the routes. These were described by al-Bakri: The best gold in the country [of the king of Ghana] comes from the town of Ghiydrfl, eighteen days travelling from the king's town ... Gharantal [on this route] is a large territory and an important kingdom. Muslims do not live there, but the people treat them with respect, and come out to meet
them, when they enter the country. The town of Ghiydrii is twelve miles distant from the Nile, and there are many Muslims. West of Ghiydrii on the Nile the town of Yaresna is inhabited by Muslims, but is surrounded by pagans. From Yaresna Sudanese, known as Banfd Naghmirtah, trade in gold to [all] countries. In the middle of the eleventh century these trading centres on the Upper Senegal, opposite the goldfields of Bambuk and Bure, were the southern outposts of Islam. In subsequent centuries, as the trade routes extended southwards, Muslims established new trading centres, which by the end of the fifteenth century reached the fringes of the forest. This was one aspect in the spread of Islam, which may be better defined as the dispersion of Muslims. The next phase, in which Islam was transmitted by the Muslim traders who had hailed from the Sahel to the local people, began when closer relations developed between the hospitable chiefs and their Muslim guests. We may now turn back to al-Bakri’s text, where we left it above, to follow an account of the islamization of an African chief at that early period:

Opposite Yaresnd, on the other side of the Nile, is a great kingdom ... the title of its king is Do .... Beyond it is a country called Malal, the king of which is known as alMuslim–ni. He was so called because his country once became afflicted with drought one year following another. They prayed for rain through their sacrifices, to the extent that they almost exterminated the cattle, but the drought and distress only increased. The king had a Muslim guest with him, who read the Koran and studied the Sunna. The king complained to this Muslim of the calamities that assailed them. The Muslim said: ‘0 king, if you only believed in Allih the exalted, and testified to Him being One, and to the prophetic mission of Muh ammad (Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him), and if you accepted all the religious laws of Islam, I would pray on your behalf for deliverance from your plight. You would bring Allah’s mercy upon the people of your country, and your enemies and adversaries would envy you on this account.’

He persisted with the king until the latter sincerely adopted Islam. He taught him to recite some easy passages from the Koran and instructed him in those religious obligations and practices [the minimum] which one ought to know.

Then the Muslim asked the king to wait until the night of the following Friday, when he told him to be purified by a complete ablution, and clothed him in a cotton robe he had with him. Then they set out to a mound of earth, where the Muslim stood praying and the king, on his right, followed his example. They prayed throughout the night; the Muslim reciting invocations, and the king saying the amen. The...
When dawn had just begun to break, Allih brought down abundant rain. Then the king ordered that the idols be broken and the sorcerers expelled from his country. He, together with his descendants and the nobility, became sincerely attached to Islam, but the common people of his kingdom remained pagans. On this account, their kings have since been given the title of al-Muslimiini.14

The Muslim succeeded in winning over the chief by demonstrating the omnipotence of the great Alh. Praying to Allah saved the kingdom where all sacrifices performed by the local priests failed. One is reminded of the contest between the Prophet Elijah and the Prophets of the Baal on mount Carmel.15 Islam had made its earliest appeal in competition with the traditional religion and had proved its superiority. Over large parts of West Africa Muslim amulets, highly appreciated because of the written passages from the Great Book which they hold, paved the way for the spread of Islam. These amulets were in great demand by pagans even before they came under strong Islamic influence. The prayers of Muslims and the miracles they could perform were called for by non-Muslim chiefs.16 Indeed, chiefs were particularly inclined to seek the aid of Muslims in recruiting supernatural support, because they were under greater strain than the common people whose way of life harmonized with the rhythm of the traditional religion.

The role of chiefs as early recipients of Islamic influence underlines the importance of chieftdoms in the process of islamization. In al-Bakri's account, Islam was introduced to one of those Malinke chieftdoms which had emerged among the loosely organized Lamlam. The Muslim taught the king of Malal 'to recite some easy passages from the Koran, and instructed him in those religious obligations and practices [the minimum] which one ought to know'. This is indicative of the rudimentary islamization of the chief. The king of Malal, together with

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members of his family and the nobility, accepted Islam, whereas the commoners remained pagans. The same was true of Gao at this time. Islam thus became a factor of division within African kingdoms and a potential source of internal crises. This may have been of considerable concern to the king of Alukan who 'is said to have been a Muslim, but concealed his religion'.1 Islamized kings were placed in a delicate position between an influential Muslim minority (who lived close to the centre, monopolized the trade and had extensive outside relations) and the majority of their pagan subjects. They were thus obliged to hold a middle position between Islam and the traditional religion; they were neither real Muslims nor complete pagans. From this middle position some chiefs or dynasties might turn towards the true Islam, while others might fall back to regain closer relations with their traditional religion. The historical circumstances in which such changes may have taken place will now be illustrated, as we trace the development of Islam in Mali over the centuries.
Traditions assert that chiefs among the Malinke came under Islamic influence before the time of Sundjata, founder of the empire of Mali. Ibn Khaldfin, on the authority of the sheikh ‘Uthman, says that ‘the first of them to embrace Islam was a king named Barmandana who made the pilgrimage’.18 Elsewhere Ibn Khaldiln says that the people of Mali were islamized in the seventh century A.H. [the thirteenth century A.D.].19 Allakoi Milsd of the oral traditions, three generations before Sundjata, is said to have performed the pilgrimage four times.20 Islam is accommodated into the traditional thought of the Malinke. The Berte, Ture, Sisse, Saghanogho, and Jane are the five maraboutic clans of the Malinke, who appear from the oral traditions to have been essential components of the nation. Marabouts, or Muslim divines, play the role of advisers in traditional histories. The Berte are masters of the ceremony in the septennial ceremonies of the Kamblon at Kangaba. There is an alliance by oath between the royal Keita and the Berte. The

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latter are said to have come with Sundjata from Mema. The first wife of Sundjata was of the Berte clan.21
In the traditional epos of Mali Sundjata appears as a great hunter and magician, who fought against another powerful magician, Sumanguru the king of Soso. In a critical hour of history, when he had to mobilize the national resources of the Malinke, Sundjata - though a nominal Muslim - turned to the traditional religion for support, to the particularist spirit of the nation, rather than to the universalistic appeal of Islam. Significantly, the same may be true of Sonni 'Ali, who made the small kingdom of Songhay into a large empire. Kings like Sundjata and Sonni 'Ali, founders of empires, remain the god-heroes of the national traditions, and not their successors like Mansi Mfis of Mali and Askiyd Muh ammad of Songhay, who were to become famous as great Muslim kings through the Arabic records. From its centre on the Upper Niger Mali expanded into the Sahel. Old centres of Islam, like Diii and Walata, became part of the empire. Muslim traders operated over the wide network of routes that spread across the empire. These traders, as well as North African Muslims, came to live in the capital of Mali. Through its involvement in the trans-Saharan trade Mali came closer to the Muslim world north of the Sahara, and more so for those kings who went on pilgrimage to Mecca. As the small Malinke chiefdom turned into a vast multi-ethnic empire, with influential Muslim elements inside and extensive Islamic relations with the outside, the kings changed their orientation from closer attachment to their ancestral religion towards an Islamic outlook. Islam as a supra-tribal religion contributed to the cohesiveness of the multi-ethnic empire, just as the trade routes became like veins that would make this vast empire a functioning organism. Because of the inadequacy of the Arabic sources in the thirteenth century it is difficult to follow from contemporary evidence the parallel growth of imperial power and Islamic

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influence. By the fourteenth century, for which the excellent accounts of Ibn Fadl-Alldh al-'Umari, Ibn Battīṭa, and Ibn Khaldūn are available, Mali had already taken on the character of an Islamic empire - or this, at least, is the impression one gets from reading these accounts. Yet a more critical review of the information furnished by these Egyptian and North African authors may present a more balanced assessment of the position of Islam in a Sudanic empire.

Mansūr Miṣrī was a pious and righteous man, and there had been no one among [the kings of Mali] like him in piety and justice.22 'He made his empire part of the land of Islam; he built there mosques and Friday mosques with minarets; he instituted the Friday prayer, the public prayer, and the call to prayer. He attracted Miḳī scholars, established himself as the sultan of the Muslims, and was devoted to Islamic studies.'23 During the reign of Mansūr Miṣrī (1312-37) Islam in Mali was in a stronger position than before, and it is to this period and that of Mansūr Sulaymān (c. 1340-60) that the bulk of the evidence is related. In 1352-3 Ibn Battīṭa was present during the two great Islamic festivals - 'īd al-fi ṣr and 'īd al-adh dār - and gave a detailed account of how these were celebrated in Mali: The people come out, dressed in their best white clothes, to the place of prayer, which is close to the palace of the Sultan. The Sultan came mounted ... with the qād, the khatīb [preacher], and the fuqūḥd' [jurists] in front of him, calling 'la illāhī illā llāh' ['There is no God but Allah'], and 'allāhu akbar' ['Allah is Great']. In front of him were red silken flags. The sultan entered a tent, which had been pitched close to the place of prayer, to prepare himself. He then came out to the place of prayer. After the prayer and the sermon had been accomplished, the preacher came down, sat in front of the Sultan, and made a long speech. There was a man, holding a spear in his hand, who explained the preacher's speech to the people in their language. The speech was an admonition and a warning to the people; it praised the Sultan and urged his people to obey him and to fulfil their obligations to him.24 The presence of the king in the public prayer made it an official occasion, to which non-Muslims in the capital may also have been drawn. In return for this support accorded to Islam by the king, the whole prestige of the new religion was directed to exhorting loyalty to the ruler. The alliance between kingship and Islam made the latter into an imperial cult. But as national feasts the Islamic festivals also had to accommodate traditional ceremonies, since it was these rituals which had strengthened and upheld the legitimacy of the kingship. On the two festivals following the afternoon prayer the Sultan sits on the bembe [dais]. The sword-bearers come with their wonderful arms ... four amirs stand behind him... while the army officers, the qādī and the preacher sit according to the custom. Then Dughṭā the linguist comes in with his four wives and about a hundred slave girls ... Dughṭā sits down on a chair prepared for him, and plays an instrument made of reed with gourds underneath [a balafon]. He sings a song praising the king, an account of his wars and deeds. The
women and the slave girls sing together with him, and play on bows.... DughA
performs this ceremony every Friday following the afternoon prayer.

After DughA had completed his play, the poets, called
dyul, plural of dydli, entered dressed in a masked-figure made of feathers,
carrying a wooden mask with a red beak, as if they were birds. They stood in
front of the king in this ridiculous form and recited their poems. It was explained
to me that their poem was a kind of sermon telling the Sultan that among the
kings who had occupied that dais [before him] was so-and-so whose praiseworthy
deeds were such-and-such, and another whose deeds were so-and-so. Now
[addressing the king] you should do good that will be remembered for posterity.... I have been told that this was an old custom,

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which had been current among them before [they adopted]
Islam, and they persisted in it. Ibn Battita, the pious Muslim, regarded this 'ridiculous reciting of the poets'
among 'the vile practices' of the people of Mali. As expected, the other practices
he mentioned were also pre-Islamic customs, such as 'the way slave-maids and
young girls appeared in public naked, with their private parts visible'.
I myself saw many of them in this way in the Ramadn. It
is the custom of the amirs that they break the fast in the Sultan's residence.
Everyone brought with him his own food carried by twenty or more slave-maids,
all naked. All women must come before the king naked without any cover, as do
also the king's own daughters. On the twenty-seventh night of Ramadn [i.e., laylat
al-qadr, the night on which the Koran was revealed] I myself saw about one
hundred naked slavemaids coming out with food from the palace, and with them
two of the king's daughters, in the bloom of youth, with no
cover on them. Here, as in the case of the griots' performance at the Muslim festivals, the pre-
Islamic customs were still practised among those who adopted Islam, and on
occasions which are specifically Islamic. Another custom deplored by Ibn Battita
- that many of them ate non-ritually killed animals, dogs, and donkeys - was
probably practised by pagan commoners only. Ibn 'Umari noted the extensive use
of magic in Mali. 'On this subject they come constantly before the king, saying:
"So-andso killed my brother by magic, or my son, or my sister, or my daughter."
A murderer is punished in retaliation, and a sorcerer is put to death.'
Ibn BaitAfta was also critical of the practice of sprinkling dust and ashes on the
head as a sign of respect before the king. This was similarly regarded as an evil
custom by the nineteenthcentury reformer 'Uthmin dan Fodio 'because it is a sign of

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excess'. It was contrary to the Muslim concepts of individual dignity, and the
obligation to worship none other than Allih.31 In Ghana, under a pagan king, the
Muslims were exempted from this practice, and greeted the king by clapping hands only. As al-Bakri states explicitly that only those who followed the king's religion knelt down and sprinkled themselves with dust, it appears that the exemption was applied also to Sudanese Muslims, subjects of the king. But in the islamized empire of Mali the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects was obliterated and all - excluding North African Muslims - had to follow the custom. In other words, as long as Islam stood in opposition to kingship, as in Ghana, Muslims were not obliged to perform what they regarded as a pagan custom. But under islamized kings, who themselves combined Islamic and traditional elements, pre-Islamic customs had to be accommodated. Mansi MiisR, the Muslim king, kept the old Sudanese custom that the sovereign does not eat in the presence of any of his subjects."

Ian Batita was much impressed by the punctiliousness with which people in Mali observed prayers and by their concern for the study of the Koran: Among the practices of the Sudanese which I appreciate

*. is that they are devoted to the prayers and keep praying in congregation, which they impose also on their children. If a man does not come early in the morning to the mosque he will not find a place to pray because of the large crowd. It is their custom that each one sends his slave with the prayer carpet, which is spread out in the place that he is entitled to until the master comes to the mosque ....

*. Also their custom of dressing in handsome white clothes on Friday. Even if a man has one worn gown only, he will wash and clean it for the Friday prayer. Also their concern with the study of the Koran by heart. They will put their children in chains if it appears that they neglect their duty of studying [the Koran], and [the chains] will not be taken off until they memorise it.35

Praying and the study of the Koran, both of which may be regarded among the ritual aspects of Islam, were well observed by Muslims in the Sudan. The Islamic law, on the other hand, was but loosely practised in the islamized court of Mali, and clearly had less appeal. Ibn Amir hdjib, an official at the court of the Mamluk Sultan in Egypt who had met Mansd Miisd in Cairo, said that this Sudanese ruler 'was pious, and he strictly observed the prayer, the recitation of the Koran, and the mention of Allah's name'. But, the same informant added, this king had a custom that if one of his subjects had a beautiful daughter he brought her to the king's bed without marriage, as if this free woman were a slave concubine. One day I told him that this was not permitted to a Muslim by the letter or by the spirit of the law. 'Not even to kings?' he asked. 'Not even to kings,' I replied; 'ask the learned scholars.' 'By Allah,' he said, 'I did not know that. Now I will renounce it completely.'36

Shortcomings in the application of the Muslim law were most apparent in marriage customs and sexual behaviour. The free sexual relations among the
Massiffa of Walata, including the q4i there, shocked Ibn Battdita.31 In Mali itself, as we have seen, he was critical of the naked women going about in public. The precepts of Islam were observed in different degrees by the various social groups in the kingdom. Through its adaptability to the African ways of life, Islam could appeal to a wider section of the population. Commoners in the capital and near the courts of provincial governors may have been drawn into the orbit of Islam by attending public prayers on Islamic festivals and other ceremonies in which Muslim clerics took active part. The king, his chiefs, and nobility were more deeply islamized,38 though they still adhered to some traditional customs.

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unacceptable to puritan Muslims. At a higher level Islam was practised by those Sudanese Muslims who became detached from the traditional way of life. Traders and clerics were in close communication with the foreign Muslim community of North Africans. The latter played an important role in setting the example for a Muslim way of life closer to that prescribed by normative Islam.

In Jenne Sudanese Muslims did not refer to the qdi, the Muslim judge, but preferred to come before the khatib, the preacher, who settled their affairs by conciliation (and very likely with reference to customary law as much as to the shari'a). The white residents, on the other hand, litigated before the q i.39 A scholar from Sijilmasa, Ibn Wdsill, was qdi in Gao before 1374.40 He probably dealt with the judicial affairs of the white Muslim community in Gao, which also had its own mosque. Ibn Battfita's host in Gao was the imdm of the whites' mosque (imdm masjid al-biddn), a man from Tafilet in southern Morocco.41

In the fourteenth as in the eleventh century, the separation between the two towns - Muslim and local - in Gao was preserved. In the capital of Mali the whites had their own quarter, though it was probably not separated from the town. The foreign Muslims there, Moroccans and Egyptians, were closely associated with the king of Mali.

The official clerics in the capital of Mali - the qdi and the preacher (khatib) - were Sudanese. These two had a recognized official status at court. They were present at the royal audience, along with the other titled officials of the state. The mosque and the preacher's house were sanctuaries for people fleeing from the king's justice or his wrath.42

In the kingdom of Mansi Misd no one is allowed to shake his hand but his q~di, who is known as anfari43. Koma is the clan from which their qddi is appointed. They do not know the [term] qd4i and say only anfari43

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Who was the Muslim official in Mali whom Ibn Battata called q i? Was he the anfari-koma mentioned by the seventeenth-century chronicler? More research is needed into this problem. From Ibn Battfita's account it seems that the kha tib
rather than the qd4i was the chief representative of Islam at the court of Mali. His house, not that of the qdi, was the sanctuary. In the following chapter we will consider the role of Islam in the autonomous commercial towns of Mali and the relations of this Sudanic empire with the outside Muslim world. During the fourteenth century, when the empire of Mali was at its peak, Islam made its greatest impact. The kings of Mali at that period, such as Mansd Mfisd and Mansd Sulaymiin, regarded themselves as Muslims and were accepted as such by local and foreign Muslims in the Sudan as well as in the Muslim world north of the Sahara. Yet a closer review of the contemporary evidence reveals the survival of pre-Islamic customs which sustained elements of the traditional religion. The outcome was not syncretism, nor the moulding of Islamic and traditional elements, but rather a dualism, in which the two systems existed side by side. These two cultural systems did not exist in abstraction, but were represented by social groups within the empire. Whereas Islam gained ground in the urban centres, in the trading community and among the ruling estate, it had little impact on the rural communities, which remained closely attached to the traditional religion. The king, we have already suggested, was at the centre. He communicated with pagans and Muslims and endeavoured to keep the allegiance of both. His position between the two poles of Islam and paganism was conditioned to a large extent by the relative strength of the opposing social groups in a given historical context. In the fifteenth century Mali lost its control over Timbuktu, Jenne, and the other centres of the Sahel which formed the Islamic foci of the empire. Mali was deprived of direct contact with the trans-Saharan routes and with the wider Muslim world. The capital declined together with the empire, and the foreign Muslim community left Niani. Hence all the factors which had lent strength to the Islamic pole ceased to function. As more ethnic groups escaped the domination of Mali, the kingdom gradually contracted back to the Malinke nucleus. Once again, as in the time of Sundjata, the traditional particularist spirit of the Malinke nation triumphed over the universal supra-tribal appeal of Islam. Muslim divines remained attached to the courts of the many Malinke chieftoms and continued to render religious service to the chiefs. But the latter lost the Islamic zeal and appearance of the fourteenth-century kings of Mali. The chiefs returned to the middle position between Islam and the traditional religion, with a greater inclination towards the latter.44 As the Malinke ruling estate became less committed to Islam, the burden of carrying on the spread of Islam was again left to the traders. The Dyula brought Islam as far as the fringes of the forest, and initiated there a process of islamization, parallel to that experienced centuries earlier in the northern belt of the Sudan.45

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XVII "Scholars, Pilgrims, Ambassadors
The long, peaceful process of the islamization of Africa was paralleled by the Africanization of Islam; Islam was integrated into African societies, and though foreign in origin it became one of the African religions. While winning over converts, Islam also assimilated African traditional elements. In view of the adaptability of Islam to differing traditional environments, one might have expected the development of very particularistic forms of Islam in Africa. There are indeed some localized Islamic customs, but in spite of its diversity Islam in Africa preserved its unity and universality.

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The trade routes over which Islam spread later served as lines of communication between remote Muslim communities and stronger Islamic centres. There, Muslim scholars constantly referred to the literary tradition of Islam and to its written code. Hence normative Islam has always been able to prevent the widening of the gap with the multicoloured popular Islam.

The centres of Islamic learning were the commercial towns from where the influence of the 'ulamā' radiated. Muslims who lived in the capital of the empire or in the provinces rendered religious service to islamized chiefs. They were pious and observant believers themselves, but had to tolerate the more diluted forms of Islam as practised by their chiefs, and even to take part in ceremonies in which pre-Islamic rites were performed. In purely Muslim towns, centred around the market and not around a chief's court, Islam tended to be more exclusive and the Muslim 'ulamā' held greater authority.

Dia'ba, a town of the fuqahā', was in the middle of the land of Mali, but the Sultan did not enter it. No one had authority

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there but its qā'il. Any one who entered this town was safe from the Sultan's oppression and his outrage. [Even] one who killed a child of the Sultan could not be avenged there. It was called 'the town of Allāh'.

Dia'ba is Did, the old town of the Muslim Soninke traders in Massina. According to Ibn Battītīta 'the people of Didgha [Did] were Muslims of old, and are distinguished by their piety and their quest for knowledge'.2 For the seventeenth century there is evidence on the autonomy of Gundiuru (or Konjuru), an important centre of trade and Islam on the Upper Senegal.3 In the sixteenth century the qā'id held authority in Timbuktu.4

The recorded history of the Muslim community of Timbuktu begins in the first half of the fourteenth century under Mansd Mīsd. In 1353, when Ibn Battītīta visited Timbuktu, it was still a small town inhabited mainly by the Massīfī. He noted, however, the tombs of two Muslims who had followed Mansd Mīsd across the Sahara.5 One of them was Sarmj al-Dīn ibn al-Kuwayk, a merchant from Alexandria, who died in Timbuktu in January 1334 (Jumādā I, 734). He was on his way to Mali to claim a loan from Mansd Mīsd. In Timbuktu he was a guest of Abī Ishāq al-SMhili, a poet and an architect from Andalusia, who accompanied Mansd Mīsd on his return from pilgrimage. After building a magnificent palace for Mansd Mīsd in the capital, he settled in Timbuktu, where he died in October 1346 [Jumādā al-Akhīra, 747].7 His descendants, however, settled in Walata.
Though Timbuktu began at that time to develop into a cultural centre, Walata, the principal terminus of the Saharan trade, was even more attractive than Timbuktu. Leo Africanus mentions that the great mosque of Timbuktu was built by an Andalusian architect, which must refer to Abii Ishq al-Sahili. This would follow the strong traditions, also recorded in the Ta'rikhs, that the great Friday mosque (al-jdmi' al-kabir) was built by order of Mansi Mism.10 Mansa Miisd encouraged Islamic learning by sending Sudanese 'ulame' to study in Fes. This

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was continued at least until the end of Mali's rule in Timbuktu, early in the fifteenth century; Kitib Mfši, the last Sudanese imdm of the great Friday mosque in Timbuktu, was among those who went to study in Fes." The high standard of learning acquired by these Sudanese 'ulamid' is illustrated in an anecdote related in the name of the great sheikh Sidi YahyA, who died in 1461/2: Sidi 'Abd al-Rahm-n al-Tamimi came from the .ij z. He settled in Timbuktu, and realized that it was full of Sudanese fuqahk'. When he saw that they surpassed him in [the knowledge of] fiqh [jurisprudence] he travelled to Fs [Fes] to study fiqh, and then returned to Timbuktu to settle there. Sidi 'Abd al-Rahmin al-Tamimi followed the custom of the local scholars in going to study in Fes. He became integrated into the scholarly community in Timbuktu and his descendant Habib served as q4i of Timbuktu in 1468-1498/9.13

Under the rule of Mali the imdms of the old Friday mosque were Sudanese. The last of these imdms, Kiltib MiisA, officiated for forty years both before the Tuareg conquered Timbuktu in 1433 and afterwards. He was also the qid. He was succeeded by the first white imdm, Sidi 'Abdalldh al-Balbali (of Tabalbalat, an oasis west of Tuat). He came from Fes with his predecessor K~tib Miisii, when the latter returned from his studies in the Moroccan capital. Sidi 'Abdalldh held office during the later period of the Tuaregs and at the beginning of Sonni 'Ali's reign. His successors in the imdmship of the Friday mosque were Abd 'l-Qdsim al-'Tuati (died 1528/9), Mansdir al-Faz-ni and Sidi 'Ali al-Jazilli (whose deputy was 'Uthm-n al-Tishiti).14 We may conclude that from the middle of the fifteenth century the imdms of the Friday mosque were whites, Berbers or Arabs from the northern Sahara or the Maghrib, and not the Sanhaja from Timbuktu's immediate neighbourhood. The relevance of this distinction within the white community will soon be discussed.

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Under the protection of Mali and in the early Tuareg period, not only the imms were Sudanese but also many of the 'ulame'. 'At that time the town was full of Sudanese students [from the Western Sudan] who diligently pursued science and piety.' Their master was shaykh al-shuyfikh (shaykh of the shaykhs) Mobido Muhammad al-Kbori. He was a native of K~bora, very probably the same Kdbora on the Niger mentioned by Ibn Battita together with Did (Didgha), and identified by Delafosse as Diafarabe in Massina. K~bora was an important
centre of 'ulam' and of Islamic learning; Mori Magha Kanke, one of the famous 'ulam' of Jenne, studied in Kidora in the middle of the fifteenth century." Siddiq ibn Muhammad Ta'alli, imdmi of the Friday mosque of Timbuktu in 1541-65, came from K~bora.18 Many of the students of Mobido Muhammad al-K5bori himself were from Kidora, and it is said that around his tomb (in Timbuktu) 'some thirty men of K~bora are buried, all scholars and men of piety'. Two prominent white scholars of Timbuktu, 'Umar ibn Muh ammad Aqit and Sidi Yahyd, studied under him.19

The development of Timbuktu as the principal commercial city at the expense of Walata took place, it has already been shown, in the second half of the fourteenth century. The close association between commerce and Islamic scholarship was again proved as the 'ulamd' followed the merchants from Walata to Timbuktu: The market had previously been at Biru [Walata]. Caravans used to come there from all directions of the horizon. The pick of scholars, pious and rich men from every tribe and country lived there .... Then all these moved to Timbuktu.0 There is some biographical evidence on migration from Walata to Timbuktu in the first half of the fifteenth century. al-fhaqi al-Hajj came from Walata to become qddi of Timbuktu towards the end of Mali's rule.21 The ancestor of the famous and influential Aqit family, Muhammad ibn 'Umar al-Sanhiji

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al-Massiffi, came to Timbuktu from Walata when Xkillu, the Tuareg chief, ruled over Timbuktu. Muhammad Aqit entered Timbuktu only after an old enmity with kkillu had been settled.22 About Abfi 'Abdalldh And-ag-Muh ammad, a qddi of Timbuktu in the middle of the fifteenth century, Ahmad Bdbd said: 'He was the first of my ancestors who dedicated himself to the study of the Islamic sciences ....23 It was therefore at that period that a new tradition of intellectual celebrity began. Members of these three families - Aqit, And-ag-Muh ammad, and al-faqih al-I.Hdij - formed the core of what was known as 'the people of Sankore', that quarter of Timbuktu famous for its mosque. The Sankore mosque was built by a wealthy woman (probably of the Tuareg), but it is not known at what date. The first known imdm of this mosque was Mahm-id ibn 'Umar ibn Muh ammad Aqit, appointed c. 1480. He was succeeded in this office by a grandson of And-ag-Muhammad.24 Under the askiyas all the qdis of Timbuktu were of this group. About the middle of the fifteenth century, under the rule of the Tuareg, there was a significant change in the religious leadership of Timbuktu. White imdms replaced the Sudanese in the great Friday mosque, and about the same time Sanhdja 'ulami' became prominent. This coincided with the migration of 'ulami' from Walata to Timbuktu. This, one should reiterate, was not the beginning of Islamic scholarship in Timbuktu, for it had been cultivated by Sudanese 'ulam' for about a century before. Only the character of the scholarly community changed. Though some of the eminent scholars of Timbuktu in the sixteenth century were Sudanese - such as Muhammad Baghayogho and his brother Ahmad
the leadership was taken over by Sanhaja 'ulam'. Their close association with the Tuareg chief, became evident when Timbuktu was conquered by Sonni 'Ali:

When Akillu heard of the coming of Sonni 'Ali, he brought a thousand camels to carry the fuqah' of Sankore, and he

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went with them to Biru [Walata]. He said that they concerned him more than anything else. Among those who went was al-faqih 'Umar ibn Muhammad AqIt with his three sons 'Abdalldh, Ahmad and Mahmid - as well as al-faqih alMukhtar ibn al-faqih And-ag-Muhhammad, their maternal uncle....

The godless tyrant [Sonni 'Ali] was engaged in slaughtering those [of the people of Sankore] who remained in Timbuktu, and in humiliating them. He claimed that they were close friends of the Tuaregs, and that it was on this account he hated them.

Sonni 'Ali put And-ag-Muhammad's daughter, mother of the future qdi Mah mfd AqIt, in jail, killed two of her brothers and ordered that thirty virgins of that family be slaughtered. In 875 [A.D. 1470-1] 'those who remained of the Sankore people fled to Biru', but they were overtaken on the way and killed. 'He then turned to the descendants of al-qd.i al-H iij; he despised and humiliated them. Many of them ran away to Takedda... to seek the aid of the Tuaregs there ... while Sonni 'Ali killed many of those who stayed behind and imprisoned many men and women.'25 Although al- ijj and his descendants always lived outside Timbuktu, they were counted among the people of Sankore.26

Notwithstanding all the wrong and pains. Sonni 'Ali inflicted upon the 'ulamdt', he acknowledged their eminence and used to say: 'Without the 'ulam' the world would be no good.' He did favours for other 'ulamd' and respected them.27 Who were the 'other' 'ulamd' favoured by Sonni 'Ali? After the fuqahd' of Sankore had fled to Walata, Sonni 'Ali appointed Habib, a descendant of Sidi 'Abd al-Rahmdn al-Tamimi, as q.i of Timbuktu (the former qddi was probably among those who had left the town). Habib held office for thirty years, throughout. Sonni 'Ali's reign. He was so influential that he pleaded with Sonni 'All for the return of Mahmild AqIt, with the

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result that the latter returned from Walata in 1480 and was appointed imim of the Sankore mosque. Sonni 'Ali had the greatest respect too for al-Ma'mimin, jabib's cousin.28 He honoured Sidi 'Abdalllh al-Balbali, the first white imd of the Friday mosque.29 Sonni 'Ali's secretary was Ibrdhim al-Khadar from Fes, whose house was in the quarter of the Friday mosque.30 Those favoured by Sonni 'Ali represented two groups in Timbuktu. Habib and al-Ma'mfin, descendants of Sidi 'Abd alRah mdn al-Tamimi, belonged to the older group of 'ulamd' who had been prominent under the rule of Mali. The imain SidI
'Abdalldh of Tabalbalat and the secretary Ibrdhim of Fes were foreign immigrants from the northern Sahara and the Maghrib. These groups lived in the quarter of the old Friday mosque, whereas the Sanhaja lived in the Sankore quarter. The Sanhajja 'ulam' were kinsmen of the Tuaregs and Sonni 'All persecuted them because he suspected them of collaborating with his nomadic enemies. Sonni 'Ali's reign and his attitude towards Islam and Muslims, are outside the scope of this study. But reference to these events is helpful in analysing the structure of Timbuktu's scholarly community, shortly before the period of its splendour. Under Askia al-Hijj Muhammad and his successors the Sanhaja 'ulam', led by members of the AqIt family, not only dominated the town of Timbuktu but became influential in the councils of the imperial government. The excessive independence of the qdi, Mahmud ibn 'Umar, under the rule of Askia al-Hijj Muhammad, brought about the following dialogue between these two strong personalities: Askia al-Hijj Muhammad said: 'I have dispatched my messengers to look after my own affairs. Are you ruling in my place in Timbuktu that you have sent away my messengers, and prevented them from carrying out my orders? Did not the king of Mali rule over Timbuktu?'

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The shaykh replied: 'Yes, he did.'
- 'Was not there a qdi at that time?'
- 'Yes, there was.'
- 'Are you better than that qdi, or was he better than you?'
- 'He was better and greater than me.'
- 'Did that qdi prevent [the king of Mali] from acting freely in Timbuktu?'
- 'No, he did not prevent him.'

From the above dialogue, one may assume that there were learned qidqcis in Timbuktu under the rule of Mali. But the qdi did not act freely and dared not defy the king of Mali or his representatives. The growth of Timbuktu and its Muslim community - merchants and 'ulam' - as well as the structural changes analysed above, go some way to explain the difference in relations between the imperial authorities of Mali and Songhay and the religious leadership of Timbuktu. al-Sa'di, a son of Timbuktu, proudly said: 'Never has Timbuktu been sullied by the worship of idols, and never has any man prostrated on its earth but to the Most Merciful.' The same could not have been said of Jenne, for this town 'began in infidelity'. Its king became a Muslim after Jenne had developed as an important commercial centre in the late fourteenth century. He demolished his royal palace and built a Friday mosque on the site. At the end of the fifteenth century, a pious 'dlim, Fodi al-faqih Muhammad Sanii Wanga, came to Jenne from the land of Btii in the south. He began by destroying the idols' house, which the ignorants [or pagans] worshipped, as well as the houses surrounding it that had been left empty since the people adopted Islam.'
In the Sudanese town of Jenne Islam gained ground slowly and its first qd/i was not appointed until after 1498. Even later than this the local people used to litigate before the khatib (preacher), who settled their affairs by conciliation.3” In Jenne

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all the q-dis and the other religious officials were Sudanese. In other words, Jenne fits better than Timbuktu into the general pattern of islamization in the Western Sudan. In the centuries that followed Jenne became a centre for the Dyula who contributed to the spread of Islam, while Timbuktu set the example for a higher level of observance and learning.

In addition to Islamic scholarship, pilgrimage was another important factor in enhancing the universality of Islam, and in promoting a sense of Islamic solidarity. The pilgrimage was also a source of inspiration for reforming the Islamic milieu, in an attempt to bring it closer to the shari'a and to the way it was taught and practised in the principal centres of Islamic learning, be it Mecca, Fes, or Cairo. Many Muslim scholars from Mali (or Takrīr, as it was known in Egypt) went to Mecca and visited Cairo. Some of them were held in high esteem there, because of their piety and learning.37

The pilgrimages of West African kings often had more immediate consequences, because of the impression they left on those who held authority. The Almoravid movement had its origin in the pilgrimage of the Sanhij a chief Yahyd ibn Ibrhim, who met the great scholar Abil-'Imrān al-Fāsī (see p. 33). Askīy d Muhammad of Songhay met Jādīl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī in Cairo, and consulted this venerable 'Slim on problems concerning the government of his empire. His Islamic policy gained new impetus after the pilgrimage.38 The impact of Mansūr Miisi's pilgrimage will be discussed later in this chapter.

There was a long tradition of royal pilgrims in West Africa. At least two Sanhīja chiefs - Muhammad Tareshnd of the Lamtiina and Yahy a ibn Ibrdhim. al-Juddūn - performed the pilgrimage at the beginning of the eleventh century.39 In the twelfth century, after their conversion, chiefs and notables of Ghana are reported to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca and to Medina.40 Barmandana, the first Muslim king of Mali, 'made the pilgrimage and was followed in this practice by the kings after him.'41 Pilgrimage by kings of Mali in the pre-Sundjata

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period (probably the twelfth century) is also recorded in the oral traditions. According to one version, it was the pilgrim king Lahilatul,42 and according to another it was Allakoi Misa Djigu, who made the pilgrimage four times.43 What was it that made early islamized kings undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca? Was it, as suggested by Trimmingham, ‘with a view to enhancing their status in the new religion?’44 As the new religion was not shared by the subjects of the king, who remained pagan, a pilgrimage to Mecca as an Islamic religious act could increase the prestige of a king in the eyes of the Muslim minority only. But the oral traditions, which usually represent the non-Islamic ideology, assert that
certain pagan cults of the Malinke (some say the Komo) were introduced by Mansd Miisid or other pilgrim kings after they had returned from Mecca. It is significant that the pilgrim king is credited also with enriching the traditional religion. The blessing (baraka) which was ascribed to pilgrims was respected by both Muslims and non-Muslims, and could add another dimension to the status and authority of the king.

The pilgrimage across the Sahara, over the Maghrib and Egypt to Mecca, took more than a year. Only kings whose authority was well established could absent themselves for so long a time from their kingdoms. The three rulers of Mali who, according to Ibn Khaldfin, went to Mecca were all regarded by the same authority as powerful kings. Mansd Uli, son of Sundjata, visited Cairo on his way to Mecca during the reign of the Mamluk Sultan Baybars, 1260-77. Following the reign of weaker kings (Witi, Khalifa, and Abil Bakr), the usurper S~kilra set out for the pilgrimage. He visited Cairo during the reign of the Mamluk Sultan al-Malik al-Ndsir ibn Qald'fin, c. 1300. Sakira died on his way back from the pilgrimage (see p. 65).

Of all the Sudanese pilgrims the most famous was Mansi Mfisi. His visit to Cairo left so deep an impression in Egypt that it was recorded in Egyptian chronicles as one of the principal

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events of the year 724 A.H. (A.D. 1324): 'In that year Mansd Misid king of Takrdir came [to Cairo] on his way to the hajj.' This is repeated even by Ibn Iyas, the last historian of the Mamluks 'who died in 1524.48 Both Ibn Fadl Alldh al-'Umari and Ibn Khaldfin collected information about Mansd Mfisil's pilgrimage from people who had met the Sudanese sovereign on his way there or in Cairo. In the seventeenth century the following tradition was recorded from Muhammad Quma, 'custodian of the ancestors' tales':

It is said that Gongo Miisa killed his mother Nina Gongo accidentally. In his agony, and being afraid of punishment, he gave a large fortune to charity. He resolved to fast for the rest of his life. He asked one of the 'ulamd' what he should do to obtain forgiveness for this capital crime. The 'lim replied: 'It is my opinion that you should seek asylum with the Prophet (God bless him and grant him salvation); run to him, enter his sanctuary, and beseech him to intercede on your behalf with Alldh.' He was determined to do this the same day.49

MansA Mis's spirit of penitence and devotion during the pilgrimage is echoed also in al-'Umari's contemporary account. After completing the rites of the pilgrimage, and the visit to the Prophet's tomb, 'he returned to his country with the intention of abdicating in favour of his son and leaving all power in his hands, so that he might return to the Venerable Mecca to live in the neighbourhood of its sanctuary'.

In preparing for the pilgrimage Mansd Miisi collected provisions from all over his country. He then consulted one of his elders (ba'd mash'dikhihi) as to an appropriate day for the journey. He was advised to wait until a Saturday which
would fall on the twelfth day of the (Muslim) month. Miisi had to wait nine months for such an appropriate day. It is significant that the advice to go to Mecca is said to have been given by a Muslim scholar ('Wlim), whereas the day for the journey was

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indicated by an elder (shaykh). The latter was also a Muslim, but probably of another class - one of those divines who catered for the king's welfare through cabalistic devices.51

Many thousands of his subjects accompanied Mansi Miisi on the pilgrimage: slaves to carry the provisions, soldiers to guard the caravan, and state dignitaries.52 He was also accompanied by his senior wife, Indri-Kuni.te, with five hundred of her maids and slaves.53

He started out from his capital, made his way along the Niger to Mema,54 and then either to Timbuktu or to Walata. The large caravan, whose route passed through Taghdza and Tuat and eastwards towards Egypt,55 suffered a good deal from the hardships of the desert. MansA MiisA took another trans-Saharan route on his way back, passing through Ghardames to Gao and Timbuktu.56 While the king's caravan took an overland route from Timbuktu to the capital, the baggage, the women, and the shuraf'd' he brought back with him from Mecca were sent by boat up the Niger river.57

MansE MiisE entered the land of Egypt, and camped near the pyramids for three days. He sent a rich present of fifty thousand dindrs to the sultan of Egypt to announce his arrival and herald his greatness. He entered Cairo in Rajab 724 (July 1324), and remained there for about three months (including the Ramadn) before setting out for Mecca.58

The meeting between the Sudanese and the Egyptian sultans was a source of embarrassment to the Sudanese, for Mansi MisA, the most powerful ruler of the Sudan, in whose presence people prostrated themselves and put dust on their heads, was himself obliged to kiss the ground before the Egyptian sultan.59 However, in other respects Mans5 Miisd was given royal treatment. The sultan lent him a palace for the duration of his stay in Cairo. He presented the Sudanese king and his principal officers with robes of honour (khil'a), and gave orders that the king of Mali should be stocked up with provisions for the journey to Mecca. 211

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The Sudanese visitors joined an Egyptian pilgrims' caravan, whose leader, amir al-h jj, received explicit instructions from the sultan to treat the king of Mali with deference. They left for .jjijdz in Shawwld (October), returning to Cairo over four months later.60

Mansd Miisa brought with him much gold to pay for his expenses, and to display his wealth and generosity.61 He distributed presents and alms among the tribes he passed on his way from his country to Cairo, in Cairo itself, and to the people of the two holy cities in the Hijdz. He gave presents of gold to the Egyptian sultan
and to those Egyptian officials who looked after him. Among the possessions of
the mihiminddr, the Mamluk official responsible for the reception of important
visitors, there were thousands of ingots of raw gold presented to him by the
Sudanese ruler. So much gold was brought to Cairo by Mansî Misî, distributed
there as presents and spent in the markets, that the value of gold decreased
considerably, from ten to twenty five per cent, according to the different sources.

The merchants of Egypt and Cairo made great profits in their dealings with the
Sudanese followers of Mansî Misî. They exploited the simplicity and naivety of
these customers, and charged five dindrs for a commodity which cost one dinar
only. This is on the evidence of an Egyptian author, al-'Umari, who added that
once the people of Mali realized how they had been deceived in Cairo, they
changed their manner towards Egyptian merchants who visited Mali, and handled
them roughly.

The vast quantities of gold Mansî Misî had brought with him were all exhausted
in Cairo through the lavish presents he distributed and the expensive shopping. By
the time he reentered Cairo after his pilgrimage to Mecca he had no money left
and was forced to borrow from Egyptian merchants. The interest on these loans
was so high that he paid back seven hundred dinîrs for every three hundred dindrs
borrowed. al-Qalqashandi adds that Mansî Misî repaid the loans after he had
returned to his country. Sarij al-Dîn ibn al-Kuwayk of

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Alexandria had lent money to Mansî Misîl and to his officers in Cairo. He sent
his agent back with them to Mali to claim the money. But as the agent preferred to
stay in Mali, Sardj al-Dîn himself, together with his son, proceeded there. He got
no further than Timbuktu, where he died. His son continued to the capital of Mali,
accepted the money due to his father and returned to Egypt.

Mansî Misîl surrounded himself with Arab followers, whom he attracted on his
return from pilgrimage. We have already mentioned the Andalusian poet and
architect Abdi Ishiîq al-Sahilî, and the Ismî'ili missionary al-Mu'ammar Abdi
'Abdallh ibn Khadija al-Kflmî. In Mecca Mansî Misîl asked for two or three
shuraîfd', descendants of the Prophet, to accompany him to his country, 'so that the
people there would be blessed by looking at them, and the country would be
blessed by their footprints'. At first the Grand sharîf of Mecca refused this request
lest one of these holy men should fall into the hands of the infidels. But after
Misî had long entreated him, the sharîf agreed that Mansî Misîl should take
with him any shuraîf who were prepared to follow him. The king of Mali
announced in the mosques that a thousand mithqîds of gold were offered to every
sharîf who would follow him to his country. Four men from the tribe of Quraysh
(the Prophet's tribe) came forward, and travelled together with their families to
Mali in Mansî Misîl's company.

The pilgrimage of Mansî Misîl became a landmark in the history of Mali and the
Western Sudan. Its importance is vindicated by sources of different nature and
origin: Muslim and non-Muslim traditions in the Western Sudan, Egyptian
chronicles, as well as Jewish and Christian maps and planispheres. Mali came to be known in Europe; its trade with Egypt increased; some innovations may have been introduced into the court in imitation of the Egyptian Mamluks. It is possible also that Mansil Mfisid's Islamic policy was more ardently pursued after the pilgrimage; he built mosques and sent 'ulaind' to study abroad in Fes. One should not, however, ascribe too much importance to a single event, as this pilgrimage itself was but one manifestation of the golden age of Mali. The trans-Saharan trade reached new dimensions with the European rush on gold, and Mali became very much an integral part of the Muslim world.

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There were friendly relations and exchanges of gifts between this Sultan Mansd Miisd and his contemporary, the Marinid king of the Maghrib, the Sultan Abu '1-Hasan. Eminent personalities were despatched from one kingdom to the other. Their successors continued these relations.

Elsewhere, Ibn Khalidiin offers a more detailed account of the embassies exchanged between Mali and Morocco:

When Abu '1-Hasan took over Tlemcen from Bandi 'Abd al-Wd [in 737 A.H./A.D. 1337], and conquered the kingdoms of the central Maghrib, .. the news spread far and wide. The Sultan Mansi Miisd of Maii greatly desired to address him, and despatched two of his subjects with an interpreter from the neighbouring .anhgja. They presented themselves before the Sultan and congratulated him on his victory over his enemies. The initiative came from MansA Mfis, after Abu '1-Hasan asserted himself as master of the central and western Maghrib. 71 Abu '1-Hasan himself 'was well known for his pride and his presumption in vying with the mightiest monarchs, in imitating their practice of exchanging gifts with their peers. .. At that time the king of Mali was the greatest of the Sudanese monarchs'. So Abu '1-Hasan responded favourably to Miisd's initiative; he treated the emissaries with deference and reciprocated by sending a deputation with rich presents to the king of Mali. Mansi Misi died before the embassy returned from Morocco and Abu '1-Hasan sent the presents to Mansi Sulaymdn. In the years following Mansd Mfisd's death the kingship was contested between Magh, son of Mfisd, and Sulaymin, brother of Mfis. 72 Sulaymin overcame his nephew, but when the Moroccan deputation arrived he was still struggling to consolidate his authority. Hence, while the first deputation from Mali to Morocco had been sent by Mansd Mfisd, a powerful ruler of a mighty empire, the Moroccan deputation, which brought presents and greetings in exchange, found a troubled empire. Mansd Sulayman may have taken this opportunity to obtain support from the Moroccan
sultan for his own position. With reference to this background we may explain the somewhat puzzling account of Ibn Khaldun:

Mansd Sulaymdn accorded a lavish reception to the Moroccan embassy and honoured them during their visit and on their departure. They returned with a deputation of dignitaries from Mali, who lauded the authority of the [Moroccan] Sultan, acknowledged his prerogative, conveyed the submission of their king and his willingness to pay the Sultan his dues, and to act according to his wish and advice. They fulfilled their mission, and the Sultan achieved his aim of setting himself above other kings and making them submit to his authority. He thanked Allah for his favours.

An exchange of embassies and gifts between two sovereigns is presented here as an act of submission. Was it because Mansd Sulaymdn sought the sultan's support, or was this perhaps the subjective view of Abu 'l-Hasan, then at the height of his power and seeking to extend his authority? If so, this is an early sign of the claim by Moroccan rulers to sovereignty over the Sahara and the Sudan beyond it.

This Moroccan sultan, however, could not have boasted for long. In 1348 an official deputation from Mansd Sulaymdn of Mali was eye-witness to one of the greatest disasters that befell Abu 'l-Hasan; it marked the end of his expansionist policy and

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the decline of the Marinid dynasty. In 1347 Abu 'l-Hasan conquered Iftiriquiyah and took over the Ifsids dominions. Among those who came to greet him was a deputation from Mali. They were in Constantine when the news of the defeat of the Marinid army by the Arabs of Iftiriquiyah, between Tunis and Qayrawin, reached that town. The people of Constantine revolted and the emissaries of Mali narrowly escaped with their lives. Abu 'l-Hasan was beaten, his fleet sunk, and what was left of his kingdom was seized by his son Abii 'Inn.

Abu 'l-Hasan died in 1351 and a year later Ibn Battuta was present at a memorial ceremony for him held at the court of MansA Sulaymdn. This is another indication of the close relations between the two kingdoms and their sovereigns. Ibn Battuta himself, though on a private visit to the Sudan, had been received by the Sultan Abii 'Inn before he left. He also reported to Fes during his travels, because the sultan knew his whereabouts and sent a messenger to Takedda ordering him to come back. When he returned to Fes, Ibn Battuta immediately called at the sultan's court, kissed his hand, and probably also gave a detailed account of what he had seen.

Relations between Mali and Morocco in the early 1350s during Ibn Battuta's visit - changed once again. The Marinid sultanate had declined in power, while Mansi Sulaymdn had established his authority and restored the power of the empire. Any sign of Moroccan supremacy which may have been implied at the beginning of Sulaymdn's reign had by then disappeared.

A deputation prepared by Mansd Sulaymdn shortly before
his death and despatched by Mdri-Djita II in 1360, 'presented themselves before the [Moroccan] Sultan, and delivered their message, affirming the affection and the sincere friendship [of their sovereign]... '.77
This was the last deputation recorded by Ibn Khaldiin. During the rest of the fourteenth century both kingdoms - Mali and Morocco - were in decline and a prey to dynastic rivalries; the courtiers on both sides of the Sahara wielded real power at the expense of the kings. It is likely that under these conditions diplomatic activity diminished.

XVIII Ancient Kingdoms and New Republics
In 1957 the British colony of the Gold Coast became the independent state of Ghana. The association with the ancient kingdom resulted from attempts by historians of the Gold Coast to seek the origins of the Akan people of the forest, whose traditions indicate that they migrated from the north. Following some early and vague references to historical connections with Ghana,1 this was put forward more explicitly by the Rev. W. T. Balmer in 1926: 'It is very probable that the Fanti, Ashanti, Ahanta and Akan people in general formed part of this ancient Negro kingdom.2
In the 1950s another English writer, Mrs E. Meyerowitz, in her contribution enriching the historical heritage of the Akan, produced an elaborated hypothesis about the Akan and Ghana. She argued that the founders of ancient Ghana and of the Akan kingdoms were of common origin, as both hailed from the 'White Desert' in the far north. She suggested also that a series of migrations from Ghana brought refugees from the north to the early Akan kingdoms.3 Mrs Meyerowitz's hypothesis was convincingly refuted soon after she had published her books and articles, and it would be superfluous to repeat it here.4
Modern scholarly interpretations of the history of the Akan do not support claims which trace their origin to Ghana.5 The historical link of the Akan with the ancient kingdoms of the Western Sudan developed after the fourteenth century when the Dyula traders opened up routes to the goldfields and the kola plantations of the Akan forest. This trade, we have already noted, contributed to the emergence of Bono-Mansu, one of the earliest Akan states.6

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The theories of Balmer and Meyerowitz have not proved valid explanations for the origins of the Akan. Yet they were important in stimulating the imagination and the spirit of nationalists in the Gold Coast. Dr J. B. Danquah was fascinated by the myth of Ghana as early as 1928. Though he also tried to prove historical connections between the Akan and ancient Ghana, his main concern was to give the people of the Gold Coast a symbol for inspiration, a link with the glorious past of Africa and a break with the colonial period.7 Significantly, the myth of Ghana appealed more to politicians with academic backgrounds and close associations...
with chiefs. In 1952 Dr Busia called his party the Ghana Congress Party. It was after much historical speculation and considerable discussion that the name of Ghana was adopted for the new state. In May 1956 Kwame Nkrumah said, 'We take pride in the name, not out of romanticism but as an inspiration for the future.'

The new republic of Ghana on the Atlantic coast is separated by many hundreds of miles from the ancient kingdom of Ghana on the shore of the desert. When black Africa came to the notice of the medieval Arab geographers, the first kingdom they heard of was Ghana. It appeared to them as a concrete political entity which deserved consideration in the midst of what they regarded as a social and political chaos. Modern Ghana was the first independent African state to bring to the world the message of new Africa as it escaped from colonial domination. Ancient Ghana was known as 'the Land of Gold', while modern Ghana was 'the Gold Coast'. Both were important in the international trade of Africa and in its earliest contacts with outside civilizations, the Moslem world across the desert and Europe overseas.

Connections between ancient and new Ghana are explicable in symbolical terms only. In Mali there is a more organic continuity between the ancient kingdom and the new republic. Though the boundaries of the two are not identical, most of the territory of ancient Mali is within the present republic. Moreover, one may distinguish the same two core areas in both.

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ancient and new Mali. One extends along the Niger river as it links the historical trading centres. The other - farther to the south and to the west - is the land of the Manding-speaking Malinke and Bambera. The successive hegemonies of Malinke and Bambera over the territory of Mali bequeathed their related dialects as a widely spoken language which added to the unity of the country. Modern Mali also inherited the urban tradition which had developed under the ancient kingdoms, with the bourgeoisie of merchants and 'ulamā'. Islam, which became part of the imperial system in ancient Mali, is an integral component of the national ethos in modern Mali. The people of Mali have a strong sense of history and they say 'our wealth is our civilization'.

Notes
[For full bibliographical details, see Bibliography.]

PART ONE
CHAPTER I
1. Quoted in al-Ma'mūsī (1861-77), IV, 37-8.
2. al-Ya'aqūbī, K. al-ta'rikh (1883), 219-20.
3. al-Idrīsī (1866), 4/tr. 4; Ibn Sa'id (1958), 24.
4. Delafosse (1912), I, 207-26, II, 22-5. For a critical view of this approach see Mauny (1954), 204-5.
5. T. al-SfMdn, 9/tr. 18; T. al-Fattdsh, 42/tr. 78. For a quotation see below, pp. 18-19.

6. For a collation of these traditions, see Ch. Monteil (1953), 369.


8. Lhote (1955), 64-75; on the desiccation of the Sahara see Mauny (1961), 197-211.


18. On contacts of the Libyans with Egypt, see Lhote (1955), 85, 92 ff.; Mauny (1952b), 587.


NOTES TO PAGES 11-21

CHAPTER II
1. Ch. Monteil (1953), 397-406; Meillassoux (1963), 188-92; Smith (1965), 238. The different versions of the legend - Tautain (1895), Adam (1903), Delafosse (1912), (1913), Arnaud (1912), Vidal (1923b) - were collated by Ch. Monteil (1953), 369-82. Monteil recorded his own version from a griot (bard who recites
traditions) in Goumbou, that is, in the region of Wagadu itself. The other versions were recorded in different regions of Mali and Senegal. Some of them are coloured by Islamic influence, especially Delafosse (1913), which is a translation of an Arabic manuscript.

4. T. al-Sfiden, 9/tr. 18.
5. Delafosse (1912), I, 226.
6. T. al-Siddn, 8, 25/tr. 15, 42.
7. Compare the explanation as to why the Tagdawest left no traditions in their country of origin, in el-Chennafi (1970), 106.
8. Like other Arab geographers, al-Bakri used the name of Ghana to denote both the kingdom and its capital. Yet he said ‘Ghana is the mark [title] of their kings’. Indeed, there is the Malinke word Gana or Kana which still has the meaning of a war-chief. al-Bakri himself, however, never used the word Ghana as the title of the ruler. We have at least two other titles for the ruler of Ghana: Magha or manga of the oral traditions, and tunka, which was part of the name of the reigning king in 1067/8, Tunka Menin. Tunka in Soninke means ‘a chief’, and it is still used in this sense by the modern Soninke. al-Bakri’s statement may be taken simply as another attempt to explain the meaning of the name Ghana, which still remains a riddle.

2. Ibn Hawqal (1938-9), 101/tr. 99-100; al-Bakri (1911), 149/tr. (1968), 43.
4. On a confederation of the Sanhdja, see La Chapelle (1930), 60-2. 5. This was the holder of the famous 42,000 dinars cheque. It is now suggested that Ibn Hawqal himself did not visit Awdaghust, see Levitzion (J.A.H., 1968).
8. In Arabic script the two names differ in one diacritical dot only.
15. A critical textual analysis of the evidence on the political organization of the Sanhaja of the southern Sahara will be presented in a forthcoming paper by the present author.
21. Ibn Abi Zar' (1843-66), 85/tr. 185. 22. Norris (1971), 260-2. 23. This narrative, which follows al-Bakri's account, is common to all the principal sources. The dates, however, are given only by Ibn Abi Zar' (1843-66), 76, 78/tr. 165-8.
NOTE TO PAGES 33-39
24. al-Bakri (1911), 165/tr. (1968), 60. For a more detailed study of the historical and religious background of the Almoravids, see Levitzion (forthcoming).
25. ibid.; according to Ibn 'Idhieri (1961, 47), Ibn Ydsin wrote to Waj-j and did not go to al-Sfis al-Aq s% himself.
31. Ibn al-Athir (1851-76), IX, 427; see also Terrasse (1949), I, 217-18.
32. This analogy with mulflk al-ftawt'if of Spain is made by Ibn 'Idhiri (1961), 48. For the history of that period, see Terrasse (1949), I, 136-208.
33. Ibn Abi Zar' (1843-66), 71-2/tr. 155-7; see also Ibn al-Athir (1851-76), IX, 428.
34. There is evidence for that feeling of solidarity in Mahmild (1957), 41-2; Terrasse (1951), 675.
35. For a fuller discussion, see Levtzion (forthcoming).
37. ibid., 81/tr. 175. According to Ibn Khaldian (1847, I, 238/tr. II, 69) this invitation came from Wajj himself, for according to this source Wajj's residence at this time was in Sijilmâsa (ibid., I, 237/tr. II, 68).
47. Ibn Abi Zar' (1843-66), 89/tr. 195.

NOTES TO PAGES 39-44

CHAPTER IV
1. al-Bakri (1911), 167/tr. (1968), 62; at Zuhri (1968), § 312, p. 190.
2. al-Idrîsî (1866), 3, 60/tr. 3, 69.
3. Ydq-dt (1866), IV, 229.
5. al-Bakri (1911), 164/tr. (1968), 59; see also ibid., 157/tr. 51. Perhaps Madinat Banklidbin is the same as Madinat al-Kilib of the oral traditions.
6. Basset (1909), 446; La Chapelle (1930), 64.
8. V. Monteil (1966), 26-8. Historically this is unlikely because Ndyadyan Ndyay could not have lived before the fourteenth century.
9. al-Bakri (1911), 172/tr. (1968), 68. 10. Ibn Abi Zarʾ (1843-66), 78/tr. 170. 11. al-Bakri (1911), 167-8/tr. (1968), 62. 12. al-Idrisi (1866), 4/tr. 4; Ibn Saʾid (1958, 24), writing in 1240 and following al-Idrisi's account, says that 'the town of Barisa is a very well-known town in Takrdir. Whenever the king of Takrdir becomes weaker the ruler of Barisa asserts his independence'.
13. In al-Bakri (1911, 177/tr. 1968, 74) this town is called Yaresna or Irṣani (a r . which in Arabic script is quite close to the reading of Barisa .

NOTES TO PAGES 44-49
14. al-Idrisi (1866, 2/tr. 2) adds that the boats which carried the salt also reached Ghana, Wangara, Kilgha and the rest of the Sudan. It follows al-Idrisi's false notion of the course of the river. 15. al-Bakri (1911), 168/tr. (1968), 62-3. 16. ibid., 170/tr. 64.
19. al-Idrisi (1866), 6/tr. 7.
23. al-Idrisi, loc. cit.
24. Ch. Monteil (1929a), 329-30. 25. At this point it may be instructive to refer to the earliest analysis of the Arabs' geographical knowledge of Africa by Cooley (1841, 50-1): 'Now in El-Idrisi's geography there is no mention made of Singhana [which El-Bakri described as standing on both banks of the river], but its description is transferred to Ghana, which is made to stand on both banks of the river' (my italics). I incline to accept some of Cooley's criticism of al-Idrisi, and in particular the confusion of Sanghina and Ghana. See also Mauny (1954), 202, 205.
28. Compare the sacrilegious act of opening the mune in Kanem associated with the refutation of the old imperial cult during the

NOTES TO PAGES 49-55
38. Ch. Monteil (1929a), 853.
39. Ch. Monteil (1953), 370, 403-4. Tunka-ra means ‘one who belongs to the tunka’; tunka was one of the titles of the king of Ghana/Wagadu.
40. Niane (1965), 36.
41. Vidal (1923c), 66; Ch. Monteil (1929a), loc. cit. Barth (1858), III, 696 says ‘lim... is a locality still bearing this name, although the place is at present deserted, a little to the west of Lere’. 42. Mauny (1961), 93-7.
43. Niane (1965), 36-7, 47-8.

CHAPTER V
1. al-Bakri (1911), 178/tr. (1968), 74.
2. al-Idrisi (1866), 4, 6/tr. 4, 6-7.
3. ‘The Lamlam are neglected people who eat men.... The Namnam are brothers in descent of the Lamlam, and are similar to them in their behaviour’ (Ibn Sa'id, 1958, 24, 25). ‘The Damdam [beyond Kawkaw] eat those who fall into their hands’ (al-Bakri, 1911, 183/tr. 1968, 79). Lamlam, Namnam or Damdam are the terms used for these ‘primitives’.
4. The identification of these places is disputed; for the different opinions, see Ch. Monteil (1929), 298-9, 305-6, 343-7; Niane (1959), 38, and (1965), 87, n.13; Pageard (P.A., 1961), 59.
5. T. al-Stddn, 9/tr. 18-19.
6. Having the grandson of the ancestor as the real founder of a kingdom may represent the beginning of the historical period freed from the myth. Compare Naba Oubri in Mossi or Na Nyaghse in Dagomba (Levtzion, 1968, 197-201). Significantly, Latal Kalabi appears as the first chief in a list recorded at Keyla by Vidal.
NOTES TO PAGES 55-61
There is some disagreement about names of rulers and their chronological order.
9. Delafosse (1913), 298.
15. Cissé (1964), 175-6, 188-90. 16. Niane (1965), 4-9. 'Sundjata was quite young when he received the title of Simbon, or master hunter' (ibid., 23). When Sundjata led his victorious army to Niani 'he had donned his costume of a hunter king' (ibid., 80).
17. ibid., 12-26; Pageard (P.A., 1961), 61. 18. Niane (1965), 26-38; also Vidal (1924), 322. According to Delafosse (1913, 289), Sundjata did not leave the Malinke country. 19. According to another version - Ch. Monteil (1929a), 321 - the Soso attacked the Malinke during the reign of Nare-Maghan, Sundjata's father, who was killed.
24. al-'Umari (1927), 52; Ibn Khaldfin (1847), I, 267/tr. II, 116. However, al-Qalqashandi (1915, V, 283), in quoting al-'Umari, spells out the name of the capital of Mali as B.N.B. In two recent papers, Hunwick (Manding Conference) and Meillassoux (Manding Conference) reject the identification of Niani with the fourteenth-century capital of Mali. Though both have Ibn Battfita's itinerary as their main source, they reach different conclusions. According to Hunwick the capital was on the Niger north of Bamako, while Meillassoux places it on the Upper Gambia.

NOTES TO PAGES 61-74
(1929a, 303) was doubtful about the identification of Niani as the capital of Mali visited by Ibn Battíta (1922, IV, 397) because no cemetery had been found in the 1920s.

CHAPTER VI
1. Ibn Battíta (1922, IV, 419-20), does, however, refer vaguely to S-riq-Djita, grandfather of Mansí Mfíss, who may be identified also with Sundjata.
3. The chronicle which will be quoted extensively in this chapter appears in Ibn Khaldíin (1847), I, 264-8/tr. II, 111-16.
6. See Levtzion (1963), 346-7, where a fallacy of earlier scholars, that Abíi Bakr was son of Mdri-Dj.ta's sister, is refuted.
7. Ch. Monteil (1929a), 356, 362; Niane (1965), 23, 31, 34, 81. Here he is called Manding Bory.
9. For the calculation of the dates of the reigns of Mansí Mis, his son Mansí Maghi and his brother Mansí Sulaymin, according to Ibn Khaldíin's evidence, see Ch. Monteil (1929a), 321-2; Levtzion (1963), 349-50, also N. Bell (Manding Conference). 10. al-'Umári (1927), 73.

CHAPTER VII
1. Niane (1965), 78.
2. al-'Umári (1927), 59; though Niane excuses himself as being only the translator of recorded traditions, it is clear that he enriched these traditions by his knowledge of other historical sources. Has he not been influenced by this passage of al-'Umári?

NOTES TO PAGES 75-81
3. Ibn Bar-títa (1922), IV, 430.
4. Walata was conquered by Mali about the middle of the thirteenth century when the Maqqári brothers operated there (see below p. 162).
5. Two versions from two informants in Ibn Khaldíin (1847), I, 264/tr. II, 111.
7. ibid., 5-6/tr. 10-12.
8. T. al-Fattash (second appendix), tr. 334.

NOTES TO PAGES 82-83
38. T. al-Fattash, 37/tr. 65.
39. ibid., 37/tr. 64.
40. T. al-Sudan, 13/tr. 25; see Ch. Monteil (1932), 1. 41. ibid., 9-10/tr. 19-20; Ch. Monteil (1965), 485-9; Pageard (J.S.A., 1961), 74-6.
42. T. al-Sudan, 10-11/tr. 20-1.
43. Compare the destruction of the Kaya-Magha dynasty, T. al-Fattash, 42/tr. 77.
44. T. al-Sudan (27/tr. 45-6) recorded a tale about a raid of the Mossi on Benka (the lacustrine region on the right bank of the Niger up-stream of Timbuktu) at the time of al-faqh al-.Tilijj, qe4i of Timbuktu towards the end of Mali's rule in that town. This Mossi raid must therefore have taken place in the early decades of the fifteenth century. An earlier Mossi raid on Timbuktu has already been mentioned (see above, p. 80, T. al-Sdn, 8-9/tr. 16-17). This raid occurred, according to Ch. Monteil (1929a, 414-15; see also Izard, 1970, 36-7, 198) in 1337, because the French translation reads '[le Soultan du Mossi] retourna dans son pays. Les gens de Melli rentr~rent ensuite 'Tombouctou et y deumeurgrent encore en maitres durant cent ans'. Timbuktu was lost to Mali in 837 A.H., so the Mossi raid a hundred years earlier should have been in 737 A.H. (1336/7), probably soon after Mans.
Misi's death. The Arabic text of T. al-Sudan should be read as follows: 'The people of Mali returned to Timbuktu. They ruled over it for a hundred years.' In a subsequent passage, al-Sa'di (22/tr. 37) estimates the number of years each power ruled over Timbuktu: 'Mali's rule in Timbuktu lasted for a hundred years.' It is
clear that by a hundred years al-Sa'adi refers to the whole length of Mali's rule, and not to the period since the episodal raid of the Mossi. The dates given by al-Sa'adi for the rule of the Tuaregs, the Songhay and the Moroccans are quite accurate. His hundred years for the rule of Mali is probably too short by more than fifty years. His information about this early period was much vaguer, and for him Mali's rule in Timbuktu began with Mansi MfisA. Whatever the case, the hundred years are no indication of the date of the Mossi raid, and there is nothing in the text to help place it. As far as the interpretation of history is concerned, it would have been more convenient to suggest that the raid on Timbuktu was closer in time to the raid on Benka, towards the end of Mali’s rule in Timbuktu.

NOTES TO PAGES 84-88

CHAPTER VIII
1. T. al-Fattash, 42-3/tr. 80-1. An earlier expedition against Mali by Sonni M. Da'o, father of Sonni 'Ali the Great, in which servile groups were captured, is reported in T. al-Fattash (55/tr. 107). This, however, appears in MS. C. only, and its authority is seriously suspected, see Levitzion (BSOAS 1971).
2. On the conquests of Sonni 'Ali, see T. al-Sidan, 65-71/tr. 103-16; T. al-Fattash, 43-52/tr. 81-100; Rouch (1953), 182, n. 4.
4. T. al-Fattash, 44/tr. 83.
5. T. al-Sidan, 70/tr. 114-15; Rouch (1953), 183.
6. T. al-S&Idn, 78/tr. 129.
7. T. al-Fattash, 77/tr. 146.
8. ibid., 70/tr. 135; T. al-Suddn, 75/tr. 124.
10. T. al-Sudan, 185/tr. 283. The date for the arrival of the Fulbe in Massina is calculated according to the genealogical list of the kings of Massina (ibid., 185-9/tr. 283-8). The fourth king, a grandson of Maghan who led the migration, fought the Mossi invasion some time between 1470 and 1483.
11. ibid., 75/tr. 124; T. al-Fattash, 70/tr. 135. In a recent dissertation (referred to by Y. Person, Manding Conference) Mine M. Ly identified Dialan with Didra in Kingui. But Didra, as mentioned before (p. 81), had already been independent of Mali earlier in the fifteenth century. Ch. Monteil (1965, 497) identified Dialan with Diala of Kaarta.
12. T. al.Sudan, 76-7/tr. 126-7; T. al-Fattash, 75-7/tr. 143-7. On Tengella and Koli-Tengella, see below p. 98.
13. T. al-Fattash, 73/tr. 140. This appears in a document written for AskiyZ Muhammad, which Ibn al-Mukhtar, author of Ta'rikh al-Fattdh, himself saw.
14. Leo Africanus (1956), II, 466. 15. For a summary of the principal events in Songhay under Askiy\& Muhammad and his successors, see Rouch (1953), 195, n. 6 and 200, n. 16.
17. T. al-Fatt\dh, 85/tr. 160; on Ta'ba, see T. al-Sidan, 10/tr. 20; Ch. Monteil (1965), 487.
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NOTES TO PAGES 89-95
27. ibid., 142-4/tr. 222-4. 28. ibid., 182-3/tr. 278-9. 29. Kala-Shi'a was probably an office created by the Songhay, and its holder may have been responsible for guarding and administrating the southern frontiers of Songhay on the Niger. He may have acted also as a commissioner in dealing with the chiefs of Kala. Following the Moroccan conquest, the Kala-Sha'a Bokar collaborated with the pashas, and took part in their wars against the Fulbe. His residence was in Kukiri or Kokri (up-river from Ke-Macina). On Kala-Shd'a, see T. al-Sldn, 89, 120, 124, 131, 179/tr. 148, 193, 199, 209, 273-4. See also Pageard (J.S.A., 1961), 75. 30. ibid., 266/tr. 406; see also 143/tr. 223. 31. ibid., 183/tr. 280. 32. ibid., 249/tr. 381. 33. ibid., 179/tr. 273-4.

CHAPTER IX
2. Ca da Mosto (1895), 158-9; V. Fernandes (1951), 35-7.
3. Diogo Gomes (1959), 38, 40.
4. V. Fernandes (1951), 37, 43, 55, 59, 69, 75. Here the capital of Mali is said to have been Jaga. Perhaps for Diakha (-sur-Bafing) centre of the Diakhanke (Malinke-speaking traders of the Gambia). Diogo Gomes (loc. cit.) called it Quioquia. Names of places in the hinterland are rather confused and distorted in the Portuguese sources, most of them cannot be identified, and identifications suggested are not certain.
5. On Kabu and its traditions, see papers read to the Manding Conference by S. M. Cissoko, B. K. Sidibe and A. S. Diop. See also Girard (1966), 541-3; Aubert (1923).
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NOTES TO PAGES 96-102
7. The rest of this chapter is based to a large extent on the very convincing paper of Y. Person (Manding Conference). Yves Person, in his turn, made much use of
the unpublished dissertation of Jean Bouglue, La Sgnkgambie du milieu du X Ve
8i–cle au debut du XIIe siecle. I am greatly indebted to these two scholars. 8. On
the rule of Mali over Futa Toro or Takrir, see al-‘Umari (1927), 54-6; Ibn
Khaldin, Muqaddima 46/tr. I, 118; T. alFattidsh, 39/tr. 69.
9. Y. Person (Manding Conference) is relying on the unpublished dissertation of
B. Barry, Le royaune du Waalo, 1659-1859.
10. Compare with the conflicts between the Fulbe of Massina and the
Songhay and Moroccan authorities. Hammadi Amina, leader of the Fulbe
resistance in Massina, entered into an alliance with the Bambara and other
neighbours in challenging the imperial
authority.
11. De Barros (1844), I, 22, Ch. VIII. 12. T. al-S idan, 47-8/tr. 127-9; T. al-
Fattidsh, 40/tr. 72-4; Soh
15. Paques (1954), 45-6; R. Pageard, Notes sur l’hi8toire des Bambara
du Segou (Paris, 1957). In two consecutive articles Pageard (J.S.A., 1961 and
1961a) put forward a proposition about the role of the Traore chiefly clan in the
region between the Niger and the Bani rivers. He even postulated the possible
existence of a
bi-familial empire of the Keita-Traore. 16. T. al-Sudan, 105/tr. 172.
17. ibid., 143/tr. 223.
18. ibid., 179, 183/tr. 274, 280.
19. ibid., 274, 275/tr. 418, 420.
20. On the Dyula trade to the Akan
forest and as far as Elmina on the
Gold Coast, see below p. 167. Also Wilks (1961); Teixeira da Mota
(Manding Conference).
22. Fernandes (1951), 47.
23. Rodney (1970), 41, according to information by de Almada. 24. Goody
(1964); Levtzion (1968), 51-3. 25. Y. Person (1968), 64-76.
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NOTES TO PAGES 106-110
PART TWO
CHAPTER X
2. Yiqfit (1866), II, 932-3.
4. al-Bakri (1911), 183/tr. (1968), 80.
5. al-‘Umari (1927), 72; al-Qalqashandi (1915), V, 301.
7. al-Bakri (1911), 176/tr. (1968), 72; Ibn Battitla (1922), IV, 407-9; al-‘Umari
(1927), 68; T. al-Fattidsh, 35/tr. 59-60. See also on Songhay, T. al-Fattdsh, 98/tr.
184-5; T. al-Siddn, 84/tr. 139, and Leo Africanus (1956), II, V, 468. See also on
this custom among the Malinke on the Gambia, Fernandes (1951), 43-5; Jobson
8. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 409; Ibn Khaldun (1847), II, 459/tr. IV, 344.
16. al-Idrisi (1866), 7/tr. 8; al-'Umari (1927), 69, 72; Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 410.
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NOTES TO PAGES 110-114
28. On royal succession in Ghana, see Levtzion (1972), and in Mali, see above p. 64, and Levtzion (1963).
29. The present dichotomy between the Keita of Hamana (who claim descent from Abdi Bakr, father of Mans& Milsil) and those of Dioma (said to be the descendants of Niani Mamudu or Mu.ammad, son of Qfi, grandson of Sundjata) may represent the division into the two branches (Niane, N.A., 1960, 125).
30. al-Idrisi (1966), 7/tr. 8; for a similar nocturnal tour of the capital by the Kaya-Magha, see T. al-Fattith, 42/tr. 27. 31. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 416. 32. al-'Umari (1927), 69, 33. al-Bakri (1111), 175/tr. (1968), 70. 34. al-'Umari (1927), 69-70. 35. ibid., 79-80.
41. On slaves and villages see below, pp. 117-19. 42. al-'Umari (1927), 66-7; the expression 'large trousers' is synonymous among the Malinke with 'a great man', Laing (1825), 129. 43. al-Bakri (1111), 176/tr. (1968), 72. 44. Niane (1965), 36. 45. T. al-Sidan, 6/tr. 10-11. 46. Diagne (1970), 861-2. 47. T. al-Fattith, 34/tr. 59. 48. Ibn Battita (1922), 386; see Ch. Monteil (1929a), 417. 49. Ibn Khaldun (1847), I, 264, 267/tr. II, 111, 116; see Ch. Monteil (1929a), 450.
50. Niane (1965), 17. 51. ibid., 11.
52. ibid., 1.
53. ibid., 58-9.
54. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 418. Dua is a contracted form of the name DughR.
NOTES TO PAGES 115-120

CHAPTER XI
1. al-Bakri (1911), 176/tr. (1968), 73; a mithqal is equivalent to a standard dinar.
2. For an argument about the relative price of salt and copper, see Lhote (B.I.F.A.N., 1955), 367-9.
3. cf. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 378: a camel's load of salt was sold for eight to ten mithqals in Walata and for twenty to thirty (or even forty) mithqals in the capital of Mali.
4. al-Bakri, loc. cit.
5. al-Idrisi (1866) 7/tr. 8; a rotl is equivalent to about 11lb.
6. Ibn Khaldfín (1847), I, 266-7/tr. II, 115. See also Diogo Gomes (1959), 38. One quintar is equivalent to 100 rofis, or about 100lbs.
7. al-'Umari (1927), 58-9, 70, 72.
8. T. al-Fattash, 37/tr. 65 (the tribute of Jenne); Ibn Khaldfin (1847), I, 260/tr. II, 104 (tribute by the veiled Berbers).
9. T. al-Fattash, 33/tr. 57.
10. On agriculture, fishing, and animal husbandry, see Mauny (1961), 235-93; Lewicki (1965b); Tymowski (1971).
11. V. Fernandes (1951), 47, 49; Niane (1961), 46-8. 12. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 378; Leo Africanus (1956), 464; see also Tymowski (1967), 82 on the transportation of food supplies to Timbuktu on the Niger river.
20. Niane (1961) 32-5 suggests that Sundjata subjugated the population in the provinces which had formerly been ruled by the Soso, and reduced them legally into a servile status.
22. M. Sidibé (1959a); Diagne (1970), 850-1; Bokar N'Diaye (Manding Conference). Occupational castes do not exist among those Mande-speaking peoples - like the Mende and the Guro - who had migrated to the forest before the rise of the empire of Mali. It is
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NOTES TO PAGES 120-126
also likely that occupational castes were introduced among some Voltaic and Senegambian people under the influence of the Manding: see R. Launay (Manding Conference).
23. Ch. Monteil (1926), 604. See also Marion Johnson (Manding Conference).

24. al-Bakri (1911), 173/tr. (1968), 68. 25. ibid., 183/tr. 80. 26. Ibn Battuta (1922), IV, 393-4, 432. 27. al-‘Umari (1927), 44 (Kanem); Ibn Battuta (1922), IV, 441 (Takedda).

28. al-Bakri (1911), 11/tr. (1913), 29 (Zawila); al-‘Umari (1927), 44 (Kanem); Leo Africanus (1956), II, 89-90 (the Sfis); Jobson (1932), 122 (Gambia).

29. al-Bakri (1911), 158/tr. (1968), 52 (Awdaghust); ibid., 181/tr. 78 (Tadmekka).


CHAPTER XII
1. On the trans-Saharan trade in classical times, see Mauny (1947); Lhote (1951) and (1955), 1138-1228; Bovill (1968), 13-44; Law (1967).

2. Mauny (1961), 398. Mauny (1970, 82) even suggests that the gold of the Sudan was not known in the Mediterranean world until the Arabs arrived in the Ss in the seventh and eighth centuries.

3. For a critical study of this account, see Germain (1957); Mauny (1960), 1-25.

4. Quoted in Law (1967), 188.

5. Quoted ibid., 189.

6. al-Baladhuri (1863-6), 231-2; Ibn ‘Abd al-Hakam (1922), 217.

NOTES TO PAGES 126-136
7. al-Bakri (1911), 156-7, 163/tr. (1968), 50-1, 58.


CHAPTER XIII
1. al-Ya'qubi, K. al-Buldun (1892), 345/tr. 205; Ibn Hawqal (19381939), 61/tr. 58.
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NOTES TO PAGES 136-142
3. Ibn Hawqal (1938-9), 96/tr. 94.
4. Ibn al-Athir (1851-76), VIII, 315; Ibn Khaldfin (1847), II, 17/tr. 120.
5. Lewicki (1960), 20-1.
6. al-Idrisi (1866), 8, 120-1/tr. 9, 141.
16. al-Idrisi (1866), 61/tr. 70.
17. ibid., 66-7/tr. 76-7.
18. al-Maqqari (1855-61), 74.
22. The source for the story of the Maqqari firm is a note by the q4i Abdi 'Abdalldh Muhammad al-Maqqari, who died in December 1357. The famous wazir of Granada, Lisdn al-Din Ibn al-Khatib (d. 1375) studied with the q4i Abdi 'Abdallh and copied his note (Ibn al-Khatib, 1319 A.H., II, 136-8). Ibn al-Khatib's account was reproduced in the seventeenth century by al-Maqqari, 1949, VII, 129-32. English translation in Pascual de Gayangos' translation of al-Maqqari (1840-3), I, 301-4. See also Pers (1937). The genealogy of the q4. Abr 'Abdallh may help in suggesting an approximate date for the operation of the Maqqari firm. He was Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Al.h.mad b. Abi Bakr b. Yahya b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Maqqari. Ab- i Bakr, one of the five Maqqari brothers, was the grandson of 'Abd al-Rahman, a
companion of the famous saint Abu Madyan who died in 1199. Abii Bakr was the
great-grandfather of the qd(i Abji `Abdallh who died in 1357. It is likely,
therefore, that Abfi Bakr and his four brothers

NOTES TO PAGES 142-147
lived about the middle of the thirteenth century. This date fits well with the
conquest of Walata by Mali under Mans& lii (see
above, p. 75).
23. al-Bakri (1911), 77/tr. (1913), 156; a century earlier Ibn .Hawqal
(1938-9, 89/tr. 86) had nothing to say about the trade of
Tlemcen.
24. al-Idrisi (1866), 80-1/tr. 92-3. 25. Ibn al-Khatib (1319 A.H.), II, 137; al-
Maqqari (1949), VII, 131/tr.
I, 303-4.
Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 379-80. 29. al-Bakri (1911), 156-7/tr. (1968), 50-2;
65-6. 32. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 377. 33. This is the desert of Mreyye, see
Monod (1958), 19-20, 27-8. For a
modern account of this journey, see Captain Fevez, (1922), 241250.
34. Ibn Battata (1922), IV, 378-83. 35. Leo Africanus (1956), I, 53-4. 36. Ibn
Battita (1922, IV, 379) crossed the desert in February-April.
See also Ibn .Hawqal (1938-9), 103/tr. 101. 37. al-Idrisi (1866), 31/tr. 38. 38. Ibn
Battita (1922), IV, 384-5. 39. al-Qazwini (1848), 11; Ibn Sa'id (1958), 47; Leo
Africanus (1956),
42. al-Bakri (1911), 180-3/tr. (1968), 77-9. 43. ibid., 158-9/tr. 52-3. 44. al-Idrisi
the very end of the twelfth
century the Almohad governor of Sijilmsa sent 'a letter to the king of the Sfidn
in Ghana, reproaching him for detaining traders, and saying: "we may live as
good neighbours though we differ in [our] religions". (al-Maqqari, 1855-61, II,
72.) This reference is somewhat surprising as the king of Ghana would have been
Muslim by then. Perhaps this letter was sent following the conquest of Ghana by
the pagan king of Soso who, the traditions say, persecuted the Muslim traders.
This letter was written only a

NOTES TO PAGES 147-151
few years before 1199 when, according to al-Sarakhsi quoted by al-Maqqari, this
governor of Sijilmsa came to Marrakush to pay allegiance to the new Almohad
sovereign, al-Nasir Muhammad b.
al-Mansir Ya'qfib. If so, the date suggested by Delafosse for the conquest of
Ghana by the Soso - in 1203 - is perhaps no more than
ten years too late.
64. Ca da Mosto (1895), 54-5. 65. V. Fernandes (1938), 79-85. 66. Zurara (1960), 214. 67. Ca da Mosto (1895), 64. 68. V. Fernandes (1938), 115. 69. Ibn al-Faqih (1885), 68; see Mauny (1961), 139; Lewicki (1965), 296.
70. al-Istakhri (1870), 52. 71. Ibn awqal (1938-9), 153/tr. 151. On brigands south of the oases, see al-Bakri (1911), 17/tr. (1913), 40. 72. al-Idrisi (1866), 35, 41/tr. 41, 48. 73. al-'Umar (1927), 80. 74. Leo Africanus (1956), II, 457-8. 75. ibid., 532.

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CHAPTER XIV
1. Ibn al-Faqih (1885), 87; al-Mas'ididi, Akhbd al-zamdn in Youssouf Kamal III, 629; Abu Himid al-Andalusi (1925), 41-2; Yiqt (1866), III, 822.
2. al-`Umari (1927), 70-2.
3. La Ronciere (1925), I, 157.
4. ibid., I, 97.
5. Labat (1728), IV, 1-18.
6. The 'silent trade' was first described by Herodotus (The Hi8tory, IV, 196). It is then related by Arab geographers: al-Mas'ididi (1861-77), IV, 92; Ydqfit (1866), 1, 821-2; al-Qazwini (1848), 11; al-`Umari (1927), 83. Similar accounts are repeated by some early European explorers: Ca da Mosto (1895), 57-8; Jobson (1932), 138.
7. Ca da Mosto (1895), 61; V. Fernandes (1938), 89; D. Pacheco Pereira (1956), 65-7; Jobson (1932), 138-41. Significantly, none of the Arab authors attributed monstrous appearance to these people.

NOTES TO PAGES 157-164
51. Ibn Batt\i\vta (1922), IV, 390-1, 421. 52. T. al-Sfddn, 258/tr. 395. 53. al-Bakri (1911), 177-8/tr. (1968), 74. 54. al-Idrisi (1966), 4/tr. 4.

NOTES TO PAGES 164-173
CHAPTER XV
1. Ca da Mosto (1895), 56.
2. Fernandes (1938), 87.
3. Leo Africanus (1956), II, 574.
5. Fernandes (1951), 75; Pacheco Pereira (1956), 83; Jobson (1932), 120; Mauny (1961), 324, 362; Rodney (1970), 18-20.
6. al-Bakri (1911), 171/tr. (1968), 66; al-Idrisi (1866), 2/tr. 2; Ibn Sa'id (1958), 23-4; Mauny (1961), 325-6, 357-8; Gaden (1910).
9. T. al-Sidan, 106-7, 160-1/tr. 174, 193-4. 10. Fernandes (1938), 79; Ca da Mosto (1895), 54. 11. Fernandes (1938), 83-5; caravans from Wadan to Timbuktu were mentioned also by Ca da Mosto (1895), 44-5 and Diogo Gomes (1959), 20.

NOTES TO PAGES 174-178
23. al-Qazwini (1848), 16; Ibn Batita (1922), IV, 378, 440-1; Leo Africanus (1956), II, 479; Fernandes (1938), 87.
24. Teixeira da Mota (Manding Conference); see also Wilks (1961), 32, Fage (1962), 343-4.
25. Malfante in La Ronckre (1925), I, 151; Leo Africanus (1956), II, 468; Fernandes (1951), 55.
26. al-Idrisi (1866), 4, 6, 9/tr. 4, 7, 11. 27. Ca da Mosto (1895), 76-7; Fernandes (1951), 21. 28. al-Bakri (1911), 173/tr. (1968), 69; Jobson (1932), 72. 29. Caffli6 (1830), II, 358-9, 365. 30. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 444-5; on slaves from Bornu to Takedda, see ibid., 441-2.

NOTES TO PAGES 178-181
64. Fernandes (1951), 59. The Portuguese may have sold this Casamance cloth in Morocco, where Sudanic cloth was in demand. In the nineteenth century cloth and clothes were among the merchandise carried from Timbuktu to Morocco (Callie, 1830, II, 365).
65. Teixeira da Mota (Manding Conference); see also Fage (1962). 66. al-Bakri (1911), 159/tr. (1968), 53; al-Idrisi (1966), 3/tr. 3; alDimashqi (1866), 268; Leo Africanus (1956), I, 115-16, II, 421, 67. La Roncière (1925), I, 156. 68. Mauny (1970), 154. 69. Mauny (1961), 368-80. 70. al-Bakri (1911), 158/tr. (1968), 52. 71. Pacheco Pereira (1956), 39, 72. See al-'Umari (1927), 62; Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 312-13. 73. La Roncière (1925), I, 155, 74. Ibn al-Khatib (1319 A.H.), II, 137; al-Maqquiri (1949), VII, 131/tr. (1840-3), I, 303; P-r-s (1937), 413. 75. Renaud (1928), 51-3. 76. There is, however, yet another region of gold and kola: Jobson (1932, 184-5) tasted the kola on the Gambia: 'The Portingals will make as if they bring them into the river, by a trade they have in a great baye beyond Cacho, where they meete with a people, that brings them gold, and many of these nuts'. He may refer to Sierra Leone.
77. T. al-Fattadh, 39/tr. 67. 78. al-'Umari (1927), 63. 248
NOTES TO PAGES 181-189
79. T. al-Sfiddn, 92/tr. 152.
CHAPTER XVI
1. Lewicki (1962), 523-5; see above, p. 136.
2. Quoted in Ydqfit (1866), IV, 329. 3. al-Bakri (1911), 183/tr. (1968), 80.
5. al-Bakri (1911), 172/tr. (1968), 68.
6. Tareshnd, the Lamtfina chief, is said to have been 'a pious man of virtue' who performed the pilgrimage and led the jiihdd (al-Bakri, 1911, 164/tr. 1968, 59).
8. For a similar interpretation of the Mossi reaction to the pressure of the Islamic militancy of Askiyd al-Hdjj Muhammad, see Levtzion (1968), 164.
9. al-Bakri (1911), 174-6/tr. (1968), 70-2. 10. For other Muslim communities under pagan rulers, see Levtzion (1968), 7 (Bono-Mansu), 21-2 (Djougou), 175-9 (Borgu), 181-7 (Ashanti).
11. It is also possible that the Almoravids imposed a new dynasty over Ghana, who claimed descent from Hasan ibn 'All. al-Idrisi (1866), 6/tr. 7.
12. al-Zuhri (1968) § 336, p. 182. Compare al-Bakri's account of the Muslim town of Ghana (quoted above), as having scholars, jurists, and reciters of the Koran. For a jihad of Ghana, supported by the Almoravids, against Tadmekka, see above p. 45. 13. al-Bakri (1911), 176-7/tr. (1968), 73-4. 14. ibid., 178/tr. 74-5. A thirteenth-century Ibdite source says that the king of Malal was converted by an Ibdite trader from southern Tunisia, 'All b. Yakhlafl al-Nafisi. But this man visited the Sudan in 1179/80 only, or more than a hundred years after al-Bakri (Lewicki, 1961, 7-8). For a detailed discussion of the possible role of the Ibdites in the spread of Islam, see Triaud (1968).
15. I Kings 18.
16. For evidence on Muslim amulets and prayers to chiefs, see Levtzion (1968), 51-4, 90-1, 108, 126, 182-7.

NOTES TO PAGES 190-197
The term for a bard (or griot) in Malinke is jeli or dyeli. The plural dyuld in this text seems to be an Arabicized adaptation. Certainly it has nothing to do with the term Dyula, meaning traders (see p. 16). Actually the jeli or griots do not appear in masks. Ibn Battfita may have confused the two ceremonies he had observed: a recital of the griots and a dance of masks.

27. ibid., 423-4.
28. ibid., 424; ritual slaughtering is one of the first Islamic customs adopted by chiefs (see Levtzion, 1968, 101).
29. al-`Umari (1927), 64.
33. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 409; Ibn Khaldfin (1847), II, 459/tr. IV, 343; see also Jobson (1932), 134 on a prominent Muslim trader before a Malinke chief on the Gambia; T. al-Fattdsh, 11/tr. 13 on Songhay.
34. al-`Umari (1927), 72; in Songhay only shurafa' and `ulamd' could eat with the king (T. al-Fattadh, 11/tr. 14).
35. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 421-3. 36. al-`Umari (1927), 72-3. A Songhay king in the thirteenth century was married to two sisters. al-Sa`di (T. al-Sfdn, 5/tr. 9-10) noted this deviation from the Islamic law.
37. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 388-90. 38. Ibn Battita met Muslim provincial governors; two of them accompanied Mans& MfisA on pilgrimage, and one had a Muslim jurist (faqih) as his secretary. (Ibn Battita, 1922, IV, 426-7, 430, 432-3.)
44. For a more elaborated discussion of these patterns of islamization, in a wider context, see Levtzion (Boston, 1971).
45. Yves Person (1968, 131-51) has useful comments on the Dyula 'ways of Islam'.

CHAPTER XVII
1. T. al-Fattash, 179/tr. 314.
2. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 395. Claude Meillassoux (Manding Conference) has doubts about the identification of DiU with Dia’ba and Di-gha. His study of DiU suggests that Islam was not established in that town before the seventeenth century.
4. T. al-Fattadh, loc. cit.
5. Ibn Batita (1922), IV, 430-2.
6. For this date, see Ibn I.Iajar al-`Asklfini (1350 A.H.), II, 405.
7. For this date, see al-Maqqari (1855-61), 589-90.
9. Leo Africanus (1956), II, 467. 10. T. al-Siddn, 56/tr. 91; see also T. al-Fattdsh, 32/tr. 56. 11. T. al-Sfiddn, 57/tr. 92.
12. ibid., 51/tr. 83-4. In this anecdote it is said that 'Abd al-Rah man al-Tamimi came in the company of Mansd Mfisd on his return from pilgrimage (i.e. c. 1324). But elsewhere (ibid., 47/tr. 78) it is said that 'Abd al-Rahman al-Tamimi was a contemporary of Sidi Yahyd (d. 1461-2) and al-faqih And-ag-Mul.ammad (d. before 1468). This is more likely; a century must have elapsed since the days of Mansd&Mfisd for Timbuktu to become full of learned fiqaha'.

13. ibid., 66, 74/tr. 107, 123.
14. ibid., 57-60/tr. 92-8.
15. ibid., pp. 47-8/tr. 78.
16. Ibn Battfita (1922), IV, 396; Delafosse (1924a), 526. In the translation of T. al-Siddan it is hardly possible to distinguish between Kgobra and Kabara, the port of Timbuktu. In the Arabic text Kgobra is written K&B-R (I-C) and Kabara K.B.R (_LS). (For the latter see T. al:Sfidan, 66, 68, 70, etc./ tr. 107, 112, 115, etc.) The identification of Kdbora with Diafarabe is supported by al-Sa'di's description of the frontiers of Jenne: 'from Tenne [near Say] on the border of the country of the Sultan of Kibora. . .' (ibid., 13/tr. 25).

17. ibid., 16/tr. 29.
18. ibid., 61/tr. 99-100.

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NOTES TO PAGES 203-209
19. ibid., 48/tr. 78. 20. ibid., 21/tr. 36-7. 21. ibid., 27/tr. 45-6. 22. ibid., 35-6/tr. 58-9. Muhammad Aqit had left Massina for Walata because he hated the Fulbe and did not want his descendants to marry them.
40. al-Zuhri (1968), § 336, p. 182. See also Abi Hiimid al-Andalusi
44. Trimingham (1968), 64. 45. Trimingham (1959), 107; V. Monteil (1964), 46; see also Traoré (1947); Person (1968), 81, n. 62.

NOTES TO PAGES 209-213
48. Ibn Iy~s (1311 A.H.), I, 163. 49. T, al-Fattadh, 33/tr. 56. 50. al-`Umari (1927), 73. 51. For references on the role of Muslim divines in indicating 'good' or 'bad' days in the nineteenth century, see Levtzion (1965), 101 and (1968), 156; Lander (1830), 274-5.
59. al-`Umari (1927), 76; but see also Ibn Kathir (1932), loc. cit.; al-Maqrizi (1936), loc. cit.
60. al-`Umari (1927), 77-8; al-Maqrizi in al-`Umari (1927), 91; alMaqrizi (1936), loc. cit.
61. For different estimates of the amount of gold brought by MansA Mfsil, see al-`Umari (1927), 75; Ibn Khaldfin (1847), I, 265/tr. II, 113; Ibn Khaldfin (1284 A.H.), V, 434.
62. al-`Umari (1927), 78-9; see also Ibn I.Iajar al-`Askl dni (1350 A.H.), IV, 383-4.
63. al-`Umari (1927), 79; Ibn Kathir (1932), XIV, 112; al-Maqrizi (1936), II, 255.
64. al-`Umari (1927), 78-9. 65. ibid., 75; al-Qalqashandhi (1915), V, 296. 66. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 431-2; Ibn Khaldfin (1284 A.H., V, 434) says that Mansi Miisi had died before the son of Sardj al-Din claimed the debt.
67. See above pp. 78, 201. 68. T. al-Fattadh, 37/tr. 63-4. 69. Gaudfroy-Demombynes (Introduction to al-`Umari, 1927, lxi) suggests that the decorated umbrella as a royal insignia in Mali may represent an Egyptian influence.
NOTES TO PAGES 214-220
70. Ibn Khaldin (1847), I, 266/tr. II, 114. 71. In a recent paper, J. Hunwick (Manding Conference, b) draws attention to a visit Abu Ishq al-Sahil paid to the Maghrib during his residence in Timbuktu (Ibn al-Khatib, 1319 A.H., I, 337, 349). He was received by the sultan Abu'l-Iasan, to whom he addressed a poem encouraging him to attack Tlemcen. This attack actually took place in May 1337. Is it not possible, Hunwick asks, that al-Sahili played a part in promoting the diplomatic exchanges between the sultans of Morocco and Mali?
72. A war of succession between a son and a brother of the former king confused outside observers; in this context Mansi Sulaym-n is called 'son of MansA Miisil'. Ibn Khaldfin (1847), II, 395/tr. IV, 244; see above, pp. 66-8.
75. Ibn Battita (1922), IV, 400. 76. ibid., 376, 444, 448. 77. Ibn Khaldfin (1847), II, 459/tr. IV, 343.
CHAPTER XVIII
5. See Boahen (1967).
6. See above, p. 156; Levzion (1968), 6-7.
9. Kimble (1964), xviii. 10. One may add also that the name Ghana accidentally resembles names of the three main ethnic groups of the Gold Coast - Ga, Guan, and Akan.

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B.G.A. Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum
B.I.F.A.N. Bulletin de l'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire
B.S.O.A.S. Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
C.E.A. Cahimer d'Etudes Africaines
E.I. Encyclopaedia of Islam
J.A.H. Journal of African History
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