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Ningi Raids and Slavery in Nineteenth Century Sokoto Caliphate

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Introduction

Ningi territory is located in the eastern region of Nigerian Hausaland at the northernmost end of the Jos Plateau massif. From remote times into the nineteenth century numerous small scale patrilineal and heterogenous societies settled into this frontier region; these societies consisted of the Butawa, Ningawa, Chamawa, Basawa, Warjawa, Sirawa and Pa’awa. By 1846 the population movements into this region occupied the major escarpments. Dissident Kano Hausa mallamai (religious practitioners and teachers) settled the area last; organized the acephalous non-Muslim mountaineer societies into revolt against the Sokoto Caliphate; and founded the Ningi Chiefdom ca. 1847. The Ningi resisted successfully the emirates of Bauchi, Kano, Zazzau, and many others. This paper highlights the Ningi raiding strategy against the imposition of Sokoto rule in the nineteenth century.

Pre-chiefdom era and Kano Imperialism

In the pre-chiefdom era, most of the stateless societies were the target of slave raiders. Mixed success marked the military strategy of the mountaineers against centralized forces. With the help of smiths, who made iron equipment, provisioning of war materials became available. Based on observations of plateau ecology, it is possible to extrapolate the reconstruction of military strategy, which was to set camp in the vicinity of the mountaineers. In a procedural manner, envoys were sent in the first stage with tribute demands usually for slaves needed in a variety of capacities. If the mountaineers decided to yield to the demands, there was no war but to the contrary, once the Tsafi chiefs and elders made the decision to fight, the hill guerilla contingents met the oncoming mixed forces with showering arrows, rocks, and other items of weaponry at the edge of the hills. When these materiels ran out, the hill warriors then retreated to the successive wave of hills with pursuing enemy forces where they repeated the strategy. Walls of rock served as barriers against enemy penetration, and pebbles hurt the unshod horses' hoofs. Once the plains cavalymen climbed down the hills against oncoming boulders and arrows, they were at continual

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disadvantage against the mountaineers. With these factors in mind, centralizing invading forces often pursued a waiting strategy in efforts to starve the people who would then come down in submission. Sometimes this strategy worked and at other times it did not. The hill dwellers often located their granaries on isolated hill tops, and aged women and children were hidden in hill valleys some distance away from the scenes of battle.

Evidence of warfare between the mountaineers and Kano imperialism appeared as far back as the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Yaji was the eleventh Sarki who reigned during the years AD 1349-1385. In efforts to consolidate, he moved his capital about and reigned at Bunu for two years in Kano. Yaji moved later to Kur which brought him in close contact with the Warjawa (“Worjawa”) and other transhumant mountaineers. The probable acquisition of horses by Yaji may have turned the tide against dwellers of dual ecology for he made war with Warji and remained there for some time. In time the praise song about the eleventh Sarki yielded clues to the growing power of Kano against the mountain societies: “Yaji, conqueror of the rocky heights, scattered hosts, lord of the town.” The subjugation of Santoló opened the way for continual contact with these societies southwesterly of Kano. However, the prowess of these societies caused innovation in Kano armor. Kanajéji, the thirteenth Sarki AD 1390-1410, was the first Hausa chief to introduce “Lifidi” or gilded armor to protect the horses, iron helmets, and flexible coats of armor to protect the body. He made innovations because of heavy losses suffered in the war against the Butawa (Umbatu). It is said that Kanajéji returned again to make war against the Butawa but without success. Not given to defeat, he came to Betu and stayed for two years, and being unable to till the soil, he starved out the people, and they agreed to his demands of 1,000 male and 1,000 female slaves plus children. Kanajéji granted a total peace when they gave another 2,000 slaves. This sizable demographic loss from the Butawa ranked caused considerable structural weaknesses.2

The strategy of uncoordinated frontier raids against mountain societies contrasted vividly with raids of centralized states in efforts to obtain slaves and booty. Stanhope White provides an interesting account about the effectiveness of this general strategy for reconstruction. The raiders camped with their horses some distance away from the planned area of pillage on the previous night for the dawn attack. A contingent with horses arrived at the foot-hill shortly before dawn. Then, the footmen moved forward and surrounded as many of the lowest situated houses as possible; the horsemen, who were left behind, would come charging forward at daybreak and carry away captives and cover the retreat. The perfection of this plan often failed because of a barking dog or a sleepless man and before they investigated all the compounds, the villagers gave the alarm and fled from the danger to the higher hillsides. From the vantage point, the refugees assessed the situation and the young men would return to fight. The unalarmed and

blind suffered in the households, but since there were few walls in mountain cultures, raiders entered easily. They searched grain bins and sought various other items.4 Generally in the search for captives, they killed the aged and the infirm, but the slaves most preferred were the young and children born into slavery and brought up within the society. It is said that people over twenty-five were most often unsuitable for retention because of their numerous efforts to escape, and upon capture the raiders sold off persons in this category as soon as possible.4 The strategy for catching slaves by raiders and centralized forces against the mountain people remained basically unaltered over several centuries. Away from home and under the captivity of Muslim owners, the mountaineers could only hope for the good treatment and possible manumission encouraged by the Qur’an. Indeed, slaves from Ningi came to hold high governmental positions in Kano history. The nineteenth century, however, introduced yet another dimension of religious and economic change onto the horizon of Nigerian Hausaland that created an even greater demand for raids and slaves.

Sokoto Caliphate and Plantation Slavery

In 1804-1808, the Sokoto Caliphate was founded. It was not only the most developed horizontal based state in the whole of West Africa in the nineteenth century, but its existence ended nearly a thousand year history of the Hausa-city states. Paul E. Lovejoy illustrates in his pioneering work on the economic history of Sokoto the presence of market weak forces and a regional based economy that was labor-intensive.4 The plantation (rinjì, gandu, rumde, tungazi) was the major land tenure development with slavery as its dominant form of labor, frequently organized in gangs. Its sector was most fully developed in the metropolitan region of the Caliphate in such emirates as Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, the Zamfara towns of Gusau and Kaura Namoda, and the capital districts of Gwandu and Sokoto; other emirates, though lesser in nature, were also significant. These emirates had large populations and experienced an unparalleled growth in the textile industry, iron production, livestock production, and leather manufacturing. Between town and country, there was a sizable commodity movement in such items as cotton, indigo, grain and other products.7

Sokoto’s acquisition of slaves occurred in the process of territorial expansion and consolidation from dar al-Islam (territory of Islam) into dar al-Harb (territory of war). Under the ideology of jihad or Holy War, war and slave raiding became the mechanisms for the mobilization of labor and for the production of output.8 Since the Ningi territory lay in dar al-Harb, it was ripe for jihad in all of its guises.

Islamic law regarding “spoils of war,” according to Majid Khadduri, allows the Imam either to enslave conquered populations refusing to convert to Islam or require that they work and pay Kharaj. The policy followed in
the case of the non-Muslim population of Ningi is not entirely clear. However, oral versions of the mountaineers hold that the Caliphate applied the “spoils of war” policy to them. To the contrary, from their point of view, they defined this idiomatically as Kifa Kwando, a process of being forced to do an undesired act. Zazzau lore described it as Bani-Bani. The Pa’awa say that they left Bauchi because the Emir Ya’qub used to send his retainers (fada’ara) to raid their homes and enslave members of their families; cattle and animals were also spoils in these raids. Boys were often required to come to Bauchi and repair the walls of the city. There is a consensus all over Ningi today that Kifa Kwando was a reality in the period under study.1

In 1855, for example, Dr Eduard Vogel was in Bauchi and witnessed the exploitative practices, which supports the oral tradition. In a long letter, Dr Vogel described the system of catching slaves. The non-Muslims affected resided in the frontier regions of Bauchi and Zazzau, and located their villages on top of the highest rocks. With a large military force the Sultan occupied the fields in the valleys; his horses trampled the green harvest; and in fear of starvation, the inhabitants sent down the number of boys demanded. Within three weeks, two hundred slaves in excellent condition went to Sokoto for sale. Since the Butawa of Dua agreed to tribute demands, Kifa Kwando did not affect them.16

Although future research may lead to the contrary, presently one is without success in attempting to establish a chronology for slave raids against the Ningi. This difficulty may be due to the widespread use of slaves in the economic structure of Kano and the direction of the export trade. These considerations explain in part why Koelle’s linguistic inventory of 1849 in Sierra Leone contains no references to narrations of slaves from Ningi and does not provide clues to the timing of the raids.17 It must not be ruled out that Ningi slaves were present but Koelle did not interview them. In Hausaland clan leaders or princes gained power through the control of the trade in captives during the course of the nineteenth century, which came to form a sizable investment. Slaves performed various functions,18 and according to Barth, they almost equaled the free population in Kano.19 The Kano aristocracy employed some slaves as domestics; others worked in the agricultural estates,20 two of which were between Kano and Ningi: Lajawal (East of Kano near Gaya), Nafara (East of Kano near Dutse) and Gurtiya (South of Kano).21 Still more slaves went as presents to married daughters, wives, sons or less fortunate relations; and others were exchanged for financial considerations.

During the course of the century, the inflation of the cowrie currency rose to a point which made for difficult transport as a medium of trade. Captives were highly valued and by being mobile they carried other items; in this role, they served as multiple currencies.19 Barth noted the difficulty in determining the number of slaves exported in the slave-trade but he observed that small caravans carried the largest number to Borno and Nupe rather than to Ghad and Fezzan.17 But the successful Ningi rebellion cut off the supply of slaves from that region which had figured so prominently in aspects of increased internal revenue to the Caliphate.

Resistance and Political Change

In ca. 1847 the rise of the Ningi predatory state altered the existing tributary relationships among the mountain people and Caliphate. Changes in political scale brought more people into a closer relationship. In the absence of abundant natural resources for possible control by the mallamai, cleavages in status and wealth were slow to emerge, and the indigenous hierarchy of diffused roles offered the mallamai new opportunities for leadership. Although dissident Muslims later joined them from adjacent emirates, along with other outcasts and soldiers of fortune, they did so only after the venture’s success on the frontier was evident. Any opportunities that arose were by-products of changes in Caliphate administration and Islamic ideology.

The resistance against the Caliphate took on a variety of forms and stages: Hausa mallamai at Tsakuwa vis-a-vis the Kano Emirate; Hausa mallamai in retreat and vis-a-vis the mountaineers of Ningi and the united effort of the people led by the mallamai vis-a-vis Bauchi Emirate and in self-defence. As matters turned out, two types of resistance developed: resistance against aggression and, further, resistance to established rule. In Ningi resistance to Sokoto, the Hausa mallamai were outside the Community of Islam and in orthodox terminology, they were apostates.18 However, the mallamai themselves did not reject Islam, and they continued to perform their religious obligations even in resistance.

The mallamai experienced a number of internal and external changes during their efforts at consolidation in Ningi, and questions of survival and the selection of leadership in the developing tradition of resistance to empire occupied them. Several wars and numerous incursions followed in the aftermath of reorganization against Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The Caliphate’s concern about these raids was shown by its united retaliatory action against Ningi. A reconstruction of some Ningi raids reflects changing strategy and military innovation in the growth of offices. The far-flung penetration of the forays indicates the role of external alliances with Ningi, and Ningi leaders’ increased confidence.

The strategy of the Ningi raiding style began during the reign of Malam Abubakar ’Dan Maje (1855-1870). His predecessors - Malam Hamza ca. 1847-1849 and Malam Ahmadu ca. 1850-1855 - made forays into Bauchi Emirate but these incursions lacked frequency and intensity. But ’Dan Maje raided far and wide, and became famous for these raids. For the strategy of the Ningi raiders was never to strike the same place con-
The new regime needed to raid in order to recruit slaves into its ranks. Fatalities of the Tabela war against Bauchi from c. 1850-1857 diminished the number of mountaineers eligible for war. The frontier of Zazzau bordering Bauchi and Kano emirates contained a large population of non-Muslims. In the absence of remembered conflicts between Zazzau and the mallamas, few in Zazzau would expect the mountaineers to attack them. The mountaineers, therefore, could take revenge against a number of settlements en route who had aided Bauchi directly or indirectly against them. Distant raids usually required a month away from the capital, and involved other factors. M. G. Smith states that Ningi raiders came to Zazzau in the dry season. The seasonal timing of the raid was not just determined by the fact that the dry season was the best harvest period and abundant in commodities for the take. The type of terrain was also a factor. The rivers and streams are numerous in the Jos complex bordering the Zazzau frontier, and raiders could easily be cut off from their base in hostile territory by swollen flood plains, rivers and streams in their wake. Reports on the terrain were considered in the strategy of raids during the wet season. Further, the mountaineers consulted the quadratic plan (Djadwal) of divination to determine whether the raid would be successful or not. The Ningi ulama believed that secret relationships existed between the various components of Solomon’s seal (sab’a Kkawatim), Qur’anic consonants (sawa’ik, Sura 1:3), the names of God, the names of the seven spirits, the names of the seven kings of the djinn, the names of the days of the week, and those of the planets. These heterogeneous elements are correlated with the Djadwal. Hence, the Ningi raids were not undertaken haphazardly but had a well defined logic of their own. An oral version in Ningi describes this practice as the “common sense of our ancestors.”

While the chronology of the raids remains uncertain, it appears that ‘Dan Maje advanced in the direction of the eastern districts of Zazzau during the late 1850s onward. First, he conquered Marra and Turkuniya in Bauchi. In about 1858, he attacked the Hausa immigrants at Liruie-N Delmar. These immigrants had developed an indigenous technology of tin-ore smelting. They erected furnaces, and obtained the tin-ore from alluvial deposits in nearby and distant creeks. Tin rods in bundles of 100 each were sold for 1800 to 2000 cowries. According to Trevor Roberts in 1918, 1500 cowries were equivalent to one shilling, and in English currency, the price of 100 rods varied from 1s. 2d to 1s. 4d. The immigrants made profits through local and long-distance trade. Traders arrived from various places; some came from Borno; others came from Ibi; and even a few came from as far as present-day Ghana. Tin was used to produce decorative ornaments, spear heads, and swords. The reason for ‘Dan Maje’s attacks on Lirui-N Delmar are not clear. But the immigrants probably refused to pay tribute to him,
and in order to resist 'Dan Maje's demands, they may have traded rods with the surrounding population – for use as weapons against them. In response, the Hausa smelters sought refuge in nearby Badico in 1864, and remained until the British took over their tin industry during the twentieth century. Much of Roberts' account is supported by the oral traditions.

During the reign of Abdulahi (1856-1870) of Zazzau, 'Dan Maje pillaged the vassal district of Lere. This area lying between Baudi and Zazzau contained a number of old and new settlements. Gunn identifies at least fourteen distinct groups living in Lere and Kauru Districts, and disputants of various kinds of both Zazzau and Kano emirates often resettled in this frontier zone. 'Dan Maje sacked 'Dan Al-haji and took many slaves from the Kauru mountainous area. Abdulahi's early reign was a favorable time for attacking Lere in the East. Zazzau garrisons were probably redeployed to southern Zaria. Abu Kwakwa (1851-1877) of Abuja carried out numerous raids until night fall and finally located their camp at Chufi (or Chafai, Chibi). Misau forces refrained from attacking them that night and waited until morning. But while they prepared for attack, the mounted warriorners departed either during the night or at dawn. Misau forces followed their tracks again for a long distance, and once they were discovered, Saleh routed the mountedwarriors. Misau took horses, captured fifty men, including a few Muslims, and presumably freed the Misau captives. Misau's non-Muslim captives were Warji, and it appears that the defeat of the raids took place in the vicinity of Warji land. Saleh arrived at a town called Malaguya, but he realized that the distance between his forces and the source of water was too great. The horses had weakened; thus, he moved his forces from Malaguya and headed for a water source toward Misau. It appears that 'Dan Maje and the Warji people regrouped in order to regain booty and kinsmen. They pursued the Misau forces and were defeated for the second time. According to Emir Saleh:

We rose against them and my soldiers wrought great slaughter amongst them and they did not follow us after that. So we returned home safely laden with magnificence. And this is what I am writing to you Ibrahim about. Peace.

Subsequently, 'Dan Maje made forays deep into Kano territory. Gira, the ex-Burra chief exiled by Emir Usman of Kano, lived at Rumo, and learned of 'Dan Maje's activities from visiting kinsmen. In efforts to curry favor Gira probably sent word to the Emir of Kano about 'Dan Maje's activities. 'Dan Maje probably used this as an excuse to pillage Rumo where he killed Gira, but his family was allowed to remain. According to Adamu Fika, these raids inflicted severe losses on the defenders. 'Dan Maje plundered Borgoro, and captured many slaves at Maganni. It is said that he reached within twenty miles of Kano. Sarkin Rano Aliyu intercepted them at a place called Tuguugu, just east of Bunkure. Rano forces defeated 'Dan Maje overwhelmingly. The mountaineers were dispersed and some gave them-
selves up. They returned for battle two years later at Rantan - west of the Kano River - and Aliyu, a leading Kano warrior, was killed along with many others. After these battles, some Rano inhabitants took refuge at Bunkure. The inhabitants of Fulungu, Mashaura, and Gwunki villages returned only periodically to their farms. Seeing that it was impossible to live in dispersed villages with safety, the Jalurawa built Gurjiya surrounded by moat and wall; the town was never sacked. The people of Gobo village were not so fortunate. Ningi captured women and children. Some Gobo people later traveled to Ningi and ransomed their relatives with payments of ten bags of cowries per head. 29

In 1868 'Dan Maje plundered the Dutse estate. Sulimanu was the Fulani chief at this time. According to the oral tradition, he had a premonition about his death. He killed an ox in preparation, and gathered his family. Addressing them as orphans, he requested that each member come before him. Sulimanu gave them meat for the last time. He rode away for battle, and Sulimanu's premonition came true in the battle at Fajewa in Sumaila. He was killed along with the Madakin Kano Ismailu and other members of leading Kano families. This was one of Kano's most disastrous defeats at the hand of Ningi. 30

Emir Abdullahi (1855-1882) of Kano was determined to bring the predatory activities of the mountaineers to a halt. Abdullahi's acquaintance with the Hausa mallamai stemmed from Tsakawa, for they had led a tax revolt in his field as Galadima of Kano Emirate. The raiding success of Ningi and other resistance states against Kano may have been related to Abdullahi's centralizing administrative policy. He deposed many of his leading subordinates and replaced them with palace slaves (cucanawa). If the deposed officials did not ally outright with marauding bands, they may have acquiesced in Abdullahi's dominance in matters of military concern. 31 This may explain in part why Abdullahi assumed an enormous role in military matters, and this eagerness was demonstrated against Ningi. The Kano Chronicle maintains that Abdullahi invaded the center of the Ningi mountains at Kuluki of the Butawa (Umbatu). Two special camps were later built at Takai and Kefin Bako for war against Ningi. And Abdullahi lived for two years at Kefin Bako warring against 'Dan Maje. 32

The Warjawa also came under attack. Abdullahi learned of their secret alliance with 'Dan Maje and of his intrigues among them against Kano and adjacent emirates. In Islamic theory and practice the Warjawa had broken the trust arrangement (aman) between them and Kano. In preparation for war the Warjawa of Gimati, Gabaya, and Gaganga usually met at the sacred hill of Pachar Gila Tlura. On this occasion the confederation decided against dissolving their alliance with 'Dan Maje and prepared for war against Kano. Their granaries were placed upon isolated hill tops, and the women, children and old men were hidden in distant hill caves. The Warji drummers and musicians began to play continuously the song of war until all warriors reached a state of frenzy, and they all marched to meet Abdullahi at Sir or Sinfa. Abdullahi slaughtered about 400 Warjawa and took many into slavery back to Kano. He returned and repeated these attacks and again many captives were taken. Warjawa women are famous for their beauty and were, therefore, of special interest to pillagers. Warji women found mobility in marriage and concubinage to various echelons of the Kano Emirate. Slaves from Warji were numerous in Kano. After a series of repeated defeats, the Warji confederation asked Abdullahi to restore the peace (aman) under the conditions of discontinuing the tributary alliance and trading with 'Dan Maje. The peace was granted. 33

But the war between Ningi and Kano went on. 'Dan Maje attacked Takai. Yusufu, Abdullahi's son, was in command. They fought a hard battle at Dubaiya. But Yusufu's soldiers deserted him, and 'Dan Maje slew some of them and captured others.

By the late ca. 1860s Abdullahi stepped up the offensive against Ningi through united action and penetrated once more far into Ningi territory. Surrounded with war captains of unusual fighting expertise, Abdullahi engaged 'Dan Maje in war at Woso. The battle took place as the evening waned. Since the mountaineers fought a losing battle, 'Dan Maje was saved from capture and a certain death by both retreat and the fading sunset. In efforts to defeat 'Dan Maje, Abdullahi stayed at Falali for three years. Several emirs of the surrounding emirates rendered military aid. They attempted to encircle 'Dan Maje, but he avoided confrontations with them. The Caliphate forces stayed at Babaldu, Tififi, Bungu, Fagam, Sirfa, and Darazo but 'Dan Maje did not come out to fight. The encampments at Babaldu, Fagam and Darazo suggest emirates' effort to secure the trading caravans from 'Dan Maje's assaults. He probably also seized in bulk tribute on route to Sokoto from Adamawa and Bauchi. In order to weaken 'Dan Maje's control over the mountaineers, Kano received permission - presumably from the Amir al-Muminin - to destroy their farms rather than to wage war against them. The horses were allowed to feed on the unharvested crops for forty days and that which could not be eaten was burned. After having spent a long time away, Abdullahi and his troops returned to Kano. 34

The Caliphate's united action was successful against 'Dan Maje, for he turned southward away from the powerful eastern emirates. By about 1869 'Dan Maje attempted an attack upon the ribat of Kafin Madaki during the time of Abdulkadiri I (1858-1897). The Fulani had numerous supplies, cattle, and grain inside the walls of this ribat. The fact that Rauta was the most strongly fortified of the ribats, may account for the selection of the weaker Kafin Madaki. An oral version describes the strategy of 'Dan Maje on one such occasion. The wells and other drinking facilities were located outside the walls on the eastern side of Kafin Madaki. People of the surrounding forest also used this drinking facility. 'Dan Maje's forces settled in hiding at the drinking area between the forest people and the ribat.
They waited to intercept those coming for water, and hoped to lure others into alarm who would come outside in the search. The strategy failed. The Madaki saw ‘Dan Maje moving under a nearby tree, and ordered the doors closed and allowed no one to go outside. ‘Dan Maje’s lieutenants came directly to the town wall and tore away a few of the logs preparing to enter. But one of the Madaki’s servants covered the hole with part of his body. However, the Madaki realized that this expediency would not suffice; hence, he ordered his men to bring dried thatch against the Limoro may have occurred as early as the late 1860s. In efforts to Chokobo from Kajong to Kapene, and finally to Shmkafi. Nmgl still Chokobo began around 1870 and continued up to about 1890. The raids east. This region lies between Toro and Bauchi City. The Chokobo and the forces passed the ing forest came out of hiding with their animals, weakened and starved.<5

According to James Morrison’s research on the Jos Plateau, the mountains came as far South towards Jos as 10°20’-25’ north and 8°50’-55’ east. This region lies between Toro and Bauchi City. The Chokobo and the Limoro people are located in this region of Jere District. The raids on the Chokobo began around 1870 and continued up to about 1890. The raids against the Limoro may have occurred as early as the late 1860s. In efforts to escape the Ningi raiders, for nearly twenty years, Nasonkani led the Chokobo from Kajong to Kapene, and finally to Shinkafi. Ningi still managed to capture many of the Chokobo people in these settlements. Then the Chokobo moved away among the Jere people; they were beyond the reach of Ningi. The Limoro people lived originally in the Kwandon Nkaya hills, north of Panshanu Pass. During the time of Sagui, Ningi attacked them in order to take slaves, but the Jere people helped the Limoro people against Ningi.35

‘Dan Maje met his ultimate fate at Toro. Bauchi heard about ‘Dan Maje’s forays into southern Bauchi. In returning to Ningi, ‘Dan Maje had to pass through Toro in order to take the road leading northward by way of Gumo, Tulu, Sabon Gari, Marra, and finally to Ningi. The other northward routes were ruled out because they led to Lame (ribat) and Bauchi City. Ibrahim assembled his mallam and sarkin yaki. The strategy was to block the main road leading out of Toro toward Gumo. Another aspect of this strategy is expressed in Bauchi lore. An oral tradition holds that a malam told Ibrahim that ‘Dan Maje had a crocodile as a totem, and if it was killed, ‘Dan Maje would also die. The crocodile lived in Jings River at the eastern part of Kafin Madaki. Ibrahim went to Bago, and assigned skillful divers to search for the crocodile. Besides being good swimmers, these divers possessed the special ability to communicate with animals and reptiles. After a search in the Jings, they found the “red crocodile” that belonged to ‘Dan Maje and brought it out front for the Emir to see. The malam asked a small boy in the puberty stage to shoot it with a bow and arrow. He shot the crocodile at the base of the ear, and the crocodile died. The malam replied that: “’Dan Maje is now as good as dead.” On that same day the Emir received news of ‘Dan Maje’s death.37

The ecology of Toro was equally as important in ‘Dan Maje’s death as the killing of the crocodile totem. Toro is surrounded by escarpments and deep ravines with connecting tributaries to the Delimi River. ‘Dan Maje’s forces were pushed backward near the bank of a deep tributary in the Salaram valley. Some fell over the cliff to their death; others managed to escape; many became captives; and ‘Dan Maje, who was shot behind the ear as the crocodile, lost his life along with Malam Baa, the sarkin yaki. ‘Dan Maje was buried secretly between Badico and Wuno in the Kwandon Nkaya vicinity. It is said that a Fulani man saw the burial take place while hiding behind a tree, and later showed the sarkin yaki where ‘Dan Maje was buried. They identified the exhumed corpse as that of ‘Dan Maje, cut off his head, and took it to the Bauchi Emir.38

By 1870, however, Ningi had become a micro-power to be reckoned with. Internally, the mountaineers were secure in their new capital, and the development of offices - though not yet complete - enabled them to stabilize their administration. Externally, they had won some battles against the surrounding emirates and had lost some too. Frontier violence was in evidence, for all of their leaders up till then had died in battle. However, through constant raids on the frontier, the name “Ningi” spread; and appeared even in documentation for the first time. The mountainners generally began to develop a consciousness of a collective territorial identity, despite the continued existence of segmentation in the respective societies.39 There was even a changing strategy in the raids, and some internal revenue was obtained through the ransoming of captives taken during the raids.

Malam Haruna Karami (ca. 1870-1886) was selected next as leader of Ningi, and he created a number of offices during his reign that reflected the exigencies of the raids. The office of sarkin yaki was instituted by his predecessor. Both holders of this office were killed in the previous reign. Haruna named Mallaka, a slave from Marra, as sarkin yaki, and went on to institutionalize the office of barde. First, Haruna consolidated all the separate barde compounds under a single head, and since Dan Yaya had been reared in a strong warrior tradition, he was a natural choice for the office. Members of this office formed the front infantry ranks in battle. The office further functioned as a distributor of the booty which was divided into five parts. The malam leader, participants in the raids outside of Ningi, the old people in the capital, the small ulama, and the barde themselves all received one part each. Through the dispensing of booty, the holder of this office could gain a large number of followers and hold widespread support against the ruling family. The power of this office could be decreased by the
discontinuance of the raids or through a negotiated peace (aman). This was a trend that the office holder might not wish to incur. It is important to keep this in mind for later developments. In time Dan Yaya came to be powerful, indeed, by virtue of holding this office.

Slaves also held offices. Mohammed Yayo, who was a slave seized in a raid at Maganni in Kano, headed the office of maga-yaki. This office grew out of the need for surveillance and scouting in pre-raid strategy. Although ‘Dan Maje made numerous forays, Haruna increased the raids, and much of the success of these raids was without doubt due to this office. The scouting reports of the maga-yaki came directly to the barde, and much of the annual tribute destined for Sokoto fell into the barde hands. During the reign of ‘Dan Maje, a small boy called Idi was caught in one of the raids. Idi grew up in the palace and later held the office of shamaki. Shamaki Idi was in charge of all the palace slaves, who were numerous in Haruna’s time, and this office was influential in later power politics. Slaves did the maintenance work, some farming and served in the Haruna’s large army.  

The Raids and Changing Strategy

Haruna Karami also changed the raiding strategy remarkably. In ‘Dan Maje’s time mostly isolated villages and ungarrisoned fiefs were raided. The mountaineers usually raided together as a single unit. In contrast the growth and consolidation of offices suggest greater pillaging scope and latitude, especially during Haruna’s reign. He attacked large towns and sent mountaineers to raid in different directions simultaneously in the early 1870s. For example, Haruna gave Abduraman of Burra a separate raiding con tin­

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Butwa made forays as far as Anchau in eastern Zazzau. Since the hills and mountains are their natural habitat, they stood a better chance of being successful against the hill dwellers of the Kauru. Also going it alone, the sarkin yaki Malaika destroyed Zuntu in Zazzau and took numerous slaves. Malaika also attempted incursions against Gimbau and Turawa but the inhabitants drove him away. He went on to Faki, near Zozo, and siezed cattle and donkeys before going back to Ningi. Malaika returned to Zozo again, but the people were prepared and fought a winning battle against him. Haruna allowed Dan Yaya to attack and burn Dutsin Gari, a town belonging to the sarkin yaki of Kano. Cattle, slaves and about forty-five horses were taken. By engaging the eastern emirates on several fronts, Haruna kept them guessing about his moves.  

Haruna learned from the fate of ‘Dan Maje and avoided being trapped in the mountainous Jos complex. Instead of raiding Bauchi territory by way of the ribs, Haruna went to the eastern side of Bauchi toward Gumbe Emirate and circled around Bauchi’s backside. He took numerous goods and slaves at Bulun on one such occasion. Groom reports that Haruna destroyed Kundun Habe in Bauchi, and during this time Haruna was challenged by

Usman chiroma of Bauchi. The forces met, but the Bauchi forces scattered. The chiroma was left alone, and faced the Ningi warriors by himself. His display of courage brought no challengers from Haruna’s forces who departed with the chiroma in full control of the battleground.  

Emirate vigilance relaxed somewhat during the emirs’ and their officials’ annual trips to Sokoto. Haruna took advantage of this between 1876 and 1878. During the second reign of Abdullah b. Hammada (1873-1878) of Zazzau, Uthman, the son of Abdullahi b. commander of the army, wrote a letter to the Abdullahi b. Gidado, the Waziri of Sokoto (1876-1881). Uth­

man had returned from Sokoto and found the people of Zazzau in a fearful state. He wrote that a battle had taken place between his people and the “tyrant of Ningi,” Haruna. From Farada to Saye Haruna had come and captured many people; killed numerous others; and destroyed their property. Remember that eastern Zazzau was fortified against Ningi incursions during ‘Dan Maje’s time, and in spite of being garrisoned Haruna still made forays into the area.  

The Galadima Yusufu of Kano (1860-1877) inflicted a major defeat upon Haruna in the later 1870s. Takai (ribat) was Yusufu’s headquarters, and he used it as a base to organize counter-raids against Ningi. Kano’s overall strategy of containing Ningi was formulated from Takai. Both Groom’s oral account and the Kano Chronicle concur on the confrontation at Kasuan Jambo. Haruna suffered a humiliating defeat. Most of the mountaineers ran away, and Yusufu captured nearly 900 less fortunate men along with some horses. Haruna fled to Ningi and stayed in seclusion for the remainder of the year. It is said that he made two fleeting raids into Kano the following year, and in revenge for previous losses he engaged in ruthless slaughter. Perhaps enough time had elapsed for full recovery, and Haruna made overtures for peace (aman). This was the origin of diplomatic relations between Ningi and Sokoto.  

The Islamic institution of peace (aman) came into being through time. It is a stated pledge of security granting protection (Scripturary or polytheist, or harbi) to the non-Muslim upon request. With the cessation of war, the harbi is secured (musta’min). The aman is granted for less than one year; if the harbi request more time, he must agree to pay the poll tax and enter into the status of dhimmi. An official aman can be given either by the Imam or his representatives through truce (mukhadana or muwada’a), or by individual Muslims. Al-Mawardi stated that a woman, a free man, and even a slave can all grant an unofficial aman, but the role of the slave in aman has limitations. He must have received authorization to fight in jihad before enjoying full privileges of granting aman. One who profits from granting aman is declared an enemy.  

The procedure for granting aman is that the harbi must first request it. Once the intention is known, the harbi merely has to make a sign or say a word in any language and aman is granted. If the believer did not intend to
give an aman but by inference aman is understood, aman is valid. The aman is usually granted with conditions attached. Harbi messengers that carried requests for aman to the Imam were allowed to enter into dar al-Islam under diplomatic immunity. Without proper letters of credentials, messengers were liable to be killed. Through the institution of aman, Haruna made peace with Sokoto.

True to the style of Ningi history, the peace did not last long. Apparently, the mountaineers broke the peace (ci aman) between 1874 and 1878. The request for peace was renewed again at Kano. During the years 1877-1878, the Amir al-Muminin Mu'adh (1877-1881) wrote the Emir Ibrahim that the “tyrant of the hills” Haruna had dispatched his messengers to Abdullahi at Kano requesting aman, but Abdullahi had driven them away. The messengers had returned to him a second time, which implies that Haruna may have suffered a severe defeat on the frontier. On this occasion Abdullahi sent Ningi's letter to Sokoto. Mu'adh agreed to the peace on condition that the mountaineers desist from fighting Muslims in the East, West, South, and North. This indicates that Ningi had taken on all of the eastern Emirates at one time or the other.

This letter fills significant gaps in Ningi-Sokoto relations and several inferences of practical importance can be drawn. First, the reason for addressing the Kano letters to the Waziri of Sokoto was that most of the eastern emirates were in his charge. The letters further suggest that diplomatic efforts were made to settle the problem of Ningi with the highest authority within the Caliphate. The Ningi fina was not just a conflict between Kano, Zazzau, and Bauchi, but involved the Caliphate itself. Further, when Ningi messengers failed directly with Kano, they wrote to Sokoto. It would appear that they were recognized as an autonomous power by the Amir al-Muminin because he dealt with them directly.

Sokoto's grant of peace to Ningi implied neither implicitly nor explicitly the state of equality. Numelin shows that powerful pre-colonial states often entered into negotiations of various types with weaker ones. Finally, although not stated in the correspondence, Sokoto's negotiated peace carried implicitly the resumption of normal trade relations and sanctioned the respect for safe routes of trade.

Ci Aman; Major Escalation of War Against the Eastern Emirates

Malam Haruna Karami took advantage of changing relations within several of the emirates and broke the peace at the end of the 1870s. In 1878 Zazzau was immersed in conflicts between the rotating families of diverse ethnic origins over succession. Bauchi endured a devastating civil war in 1881. Kano changed emirs in 1882 and numerous depositions followed. Kata-gum's lack of military vigilance in the western Shira District made for easy

prey. The mountaineers had recovered during the prevailing intervals of peace from their numerous defeats by Caliphate forces.

Zazzau administration was marred by internal struggle. In 1878 Emir Sambo distributed key offices to dynastic rivals, and sought to maximize his own power through the creation of new units under his control. He invested two offices to his client Suleimanu, which placed him in charge of the capital. Since Suleimanu did not have other backing, Sambo thought that he would have full control over both of Suleimanu's titles, the sarkin ruwa and galadima. The combined power of these offices was enormous indeed. Unfortunately, Sambo soon discovered that he could not make appointments or dismissals without his new galadima's consent. Through bargains with the Emir and the transference of officers' fiefs to his domain, Suleimanu made the Emir increasingly dependent upon him. Even the capital became his fief. Suleimanu watched carefully the Emir's attempts to whistle away his power. According to M. G. Smith, Suleimanu was of Hausa descent, and this factor voided any ethnic commitment to Fulani rule. Conditions were favorable for the seizure of power. Suleimanu realized that the Fulani of Zaria and nearby emirates would unite against him, but he could expect some help from foreign allies. He recruited Ningi. Suleimanu and Haruna had something to gain in the overthrow of Sambo. Suleimanu would become Emir. Haruna would obtain booty, and probably received the guarantee that Zazzau would not unite against him when raiding nearby emirates. Both were hostile to Sokoto rule.

The general strategy required that Haruna gather his forces and wait at Yakasai, a pre-jihad town to the northeast of Zaria City and about twelve miles distant from it. Yakasai was administered by the galadima, and Haruna was, therefore, spared military incursions against himself. The annual tribute homage to Sokoto was in preparation. This meant that Sambo was shortly to leave the capital. The plan was this: Suleimanu was to inform Haruna about the exact time of Sambo's departure. When Sambo moved outside the City, Haruna was to kill the Emir and take possession of the tribute to Sokoto. The galadima was to remain inside the palace walls during the Emir's absence and was to seize the throne immediately. While waiting at Yakasai, an oral version states, Haruna busied himself with secret knowledge (asiri) against Sambo. He gathered his malam warriors; incantations and magical rites were performed of the type harmful to people at a distance (jifa). Ironically for the conspirators, Haruna's letter to Suleimanu containing the details of the plans for attack inadvertently fell into the hands of Sambo at Tukur Tukur, located outside the walls of Zazzau. Sambo speculated about what was to happen and quickly returned to the capital. The mountaineers attacked before the Emir's people reached safety, and the fortunate ones fled in haste. Wombai Nuhu attempted to defend the Emir but was killed at the gates of Zazzau.

Haruna seized much of the tribute intended for Sokoto. The failure to
achieve the main objective was a disappointment, and Haruna took revenge by devastating the area surrounding Zaria City. It is believed that he put 5,000 of Sambo's subjects into slavery or execution. The royal Bornawa suffered heavily. Haruna enslaved nine children of the Madaki Anu. Royal families later ransomed their slaves probably in cowries, and others of lesser nobility with substantial means followed suit.55

This episode had broad ramifications for the history of Zazzau and its foreign participants. Sokoto looked unfavorably upon Zazzau's administration. The military weakness of Zazzau encouraged the resistance state of Maradi to invade its northern districts. Abuja pillaged the caravan routes in the South. Ningi incursions continued to the south and center of Zazzau reaching Kacia, 'Dan Alhaji, Soba, Dutsen Wai, and Makarka.60

Haruna led the mountaineers in forays against Bauchi during the early 1880s and met defeat at Inkil. The galadima and madaki of Bauchi killed several of his men, captured horses, and took numerous spoils. Not to be undone, Haruna returned to battle and destroyed the small towns of Gubi, Durum, and Sammo. During the interregnum of investiture at Sokoto, in 1881, Bauchi was without an Emir. Haruna's forces made camp at the Shadawanka hill just outside the site of the later British government station in Bauchi City. Haruna almost encircled the palace walls, but Bauchi held up inside and refused to come out to fight. Not being strong enough to sack the town, Haruna went elsewhere. In 1914 J. F. Fitzpatrick observed that a ridge of stones crossing the road from the government station to Bauchi City at right angles might well have been the remains of a wall built by Haruna's forces.63

Haruna invaded Rano District during the installation of Emir Muhammed Bello of Kano in 1882. His forces pillaged the Bono village area for women at Tugugu, and the people ran into the hills for safety. It is said that Yesko, a Bono man, shot and killed an intimate servant of Haruna's entourage. The mountaineers were set upon retaliation the following day, but the Bono people guessed the details and sought refuge in the hills. This angered Haruna, and at Bulu by the Bono River, he caught and cut the throats of a hundred Bono prisoners. Haruna is reported to have said to Shamiya: "Tell Bello here is how I support the feast of his installation!" (Gatwun biki nan.)69

Haruna turned eastward and made forays against Katagum Emirate in ca. 1882. Emir Haji was holidaying in the Shira District collecting tribute in preparation for the annual Sokoto visit, and unprepared for military confrontation. When Haruna mobilized his forces for attack, Haji heard at Zadawa that Haruna was near Tumfafi. Even though his advisers warned him to summon cavalrymen from Shira, Azare, Hardawa, and Chinade, Haji ignored their advice and galloped off to do battle. On this day they proved to be no match for Haruna, who overwhelmingly defeated them at Tumfafi. The mountaineers killed Katagum's sarkin yaki, galadima, madaki, and dan-

delima. Waziri Hamji and Shamiki Mala were wounded. Emir Haji barely escaped with his life, and Haruna seized the standard flag presented to him by the Caliph as a prize of war. This was a day of disaster for Katagum.60

The emirates united against Ningi, and even Borno pitched in. Since Haruna had seized the tribute to Sokoto, the Caliph excused Haji from the annual trip. Borno and the surrounding emirates sent fresh horses, armor, and gowns to Katagum officials in efforts to replace losses. Sometime later Haji enlisted the support of emirs from Hadejia and Jema'a in a gigantic effort in retaliation. But to their dismay, Haruna defeated them again just south of Shira. The emirate's forces fell into disarray during the ensuing skirmishes, and only the intervention by yeriman Chinade saved Haji and men from capture or death, for they had fallen into an ambush.64

Despite the fact that Haruna had won major victories, he sought peace with the Kano Emir Muhammed Bello c. 1883. Bello wrote a letter, which now appears incomplete, to the Amir al-Muminin 'Umar b. 'Ali (1881-1891). He had made an earlier request for permission to invade the "unbelievers of the mountains" in retaliation, and thanked Caliph 'Umar for his letter granting Kano permission. The Caliph also wished them victory. But just as Kano was preparing to call its commander of the army, the messenger of Haruna arrived at the court. Bello writes that: "He pleased with us to beg the Amir al-Muminin to conclude a compact and a covenant aman with him, Haruna, all his life." Further, Bello explained that Haruna had gone to Kano representatives in the vicinity of Ningi territory and asked them to request a messenger from Kano to negotiate with him. Kano refused Haruna's request and insisted that if Haruna wanted peace he would have to come to them. During this particular occasion, Haruna did just that, and the peace was granted.65

But the reasons why Haruna requested this aman are not entirely clear. The mountaineers had achieved major victories on all fronts, and Haruna commanded an army of over 4,000 horsemen. But Haruna suffered recurring pains from an earlier wound received at Kufi in Bauchi near Gombe, and this may have prompted him to seek peace. His inability to continue raiding in the absence of a peace meant that the overall leadership would fall to someone else. The barde Dan Yaya often expressed his interest in becoming leader of Ningi and thought that Haruna was expendable. Duels centered on displays of manliness took place on several occasions between the two of them, and it is said that Haruna always won. From this it appears that Haruna did not want the leadership to fall to Dan Yaya, and, realizing that his final days were near, probably instructed his powerful and loyal shamaki on just who his successor was to be. On the other hand, the peace also preserved the territoriality of Ningi, for Haruna's intelligence system maga-ya'aki no doubt informed him about Kano's intention to invade Ningi. Because no one had been successful in achieving this objective did not mean that the good omen would remain favorable to Ningi, especially
Reigns of 'Dan Maje and Haruna and Changing Patterns of Economic Growth

Since the year of their arrival among the mountain people ca. 1847, the Tsakuwa mallamai and their offspring were always in a minority. They survived the local and united efforts by the Caliphate to suppress them, and each leader contributed something of an intangible and tangible nature for the continuance of a raiding power. From the initial settlement onward, the mountain people supplied the mallamai with food, and once the chieftdom's foundation was completed in 'Dan Maje's and Haruna's time, annual tribute from the people came at the end of Ramadan or Sallah. The mallamai did not farm themselves and administrative offices were not initially based on fiefs. "Warring was their farming" (yaki nomarsu) as the saying goes among Ningi informants - and they might have added "except during the hot season." It was not militarily sound to raid too far from dependable sources of water because of the requirements of the horses.67

The raiding character of the mountaineers required, therefore, food and manpower to sustain it. Elsewhere in Africa concerning a similar society it was observed that actual raiding brought booty and threatened raiding brought tribute.68 This is applicable to the Ningi case. Ningi did not raid every community but, in fear of being raided, some people gave them what they wanted. Fatalities were high as the fate of Ningi leaders suggests, and the warrior ranks could not be filled by natural increase. The mallamai increased their numbers through external pillaging, and in Zazzau, especially, when one includes the forays of other resistance states, this prohibited the rise of rigid and caste-like stratification.69 In Ningi, slave women came to be wives and concubines of warriors and produced children. The exchange system of marriage implied women scarcity, and men would join the warriors to obtain women. Through the absorption of slaves and unransomed captives, the mallamai further increased their ranks. The administration could not expect to feed the expanded number of people from internal and external tribute, nor would there be tribute alone suffice.

Changing attitudes toward innovation produced economic development. New grain crops supplemented Acha, and land was cleared in Ari and on the present site of Ningi Town. Slaves worked these estates from the time of 'Dan Maje (ca. 1855-1870) to the end of the nineteenth century. In time the few administrative offices became inextricably linked to these developing estates as fiefs. More significantly, when Sokoto's containment policy worked more effectively to curtail the raids, the estates supported mallamai, slaves, and clients. Patterns of sustained growth can be discerned, even though raids continued.70

External alliances figured prominently in Ningi success. Much support came from dissident elements within emirates. Suleimana's alliance with Ningi has been previously examined, but during the Bauchi civil war of 1881 several elements of Bauchi's population either joined Ningi or formed an outside alliance. The Gerewa people and other rural dissidents lived in the ribat areas. They revolted against the enormous demands of Bauchi which were required to suppress the civil war, and they supported Halilu. A large number of them emigrated to Ningi and other dissident areas such as Duguri and Dass. After Halilu's execution, surviving Fulani supporters fled Bauchi City and the majority of them massed at Zalanga and Zala. From these quarters they formed an alliance with Ningi in efforts to maintain their independence.71 An oral tradition states that Halilu in bid for the Bauchi throne had offered Haruna all the districts of the Pa 'awa which included Wushu, Zango, Zida, Lubai, Lamban Dutse, Kiti, Fifili, and Kalasu.72 Moreover, the Ningi government levied no taxes on its citizens, who paid only gaisuwa in the form of chickens, foodstuffs, rams and the like. When taxes came to be considered oppressive in Katagum, Gombe, Zazzau, and Kan, some Fulani and other people came to Ningi. They colluded with the Ningi intelligence system (maga yaki) and informed its members about places both abundantly rich and poor. And occasionally the Fulani traveled ahead of the maga yaki as spies in search of places to raid. Ja'O was one such Fulani man who came from Durba in the Sumaila District of Kano during Haruna's time. He joined the ranks of other Kano Fulani already in Ningi such as Dabo, Kure, Sarkin Riga Adamu, Bono Ardo Baya, and Ardo Siga. Ardo Baya remained in charge of Ningi cattle into the 1890s.73 Finally, the inflation of the cowrie currency made for an unstable monetary policy from the 1850s onward. Since captives in raids became increasingly significant as multiple currency in the Caliphate,74 I suspect that some Fulani princes exchanged horses with Ningi for slaves, which certainly went against Caliphate policy. Thus, Ningi was able to sustain military innovation through cooperation with the Fulani princes of the eastern emirates.

Malam Haruna Karimi: The Last Days ca. 1886

Malam Haruna Karimi died in the Ningi palace about 1886, the first of the Ningi rulers to do so. He reigned for about sixteen years and certainly not more than seventeen. His death was followed by a struggle for power and leadership. The consensus basis of the electoral council broke down. The successionist dispute that followed split the Ningi chieftdom, and its impact, which is still being discussed, remains a basis for conflict among the ruling families.

The successionist dispute of ca. 1886 sought to continue leadership control in a single family line. This had worked up until this time. All
previous leaders had shown courage in war. The non-Muslim mountaineers made this leadership trait a prerequisite for their support. Gradual and internal administrative growth brought new and powerful forces into play. 

Malam Gajigi – a man of peace, not war – emerged as the new leader, and continuing intrigue brought him down, and produced yet another leader whose reign introduced a third new family into the ruling hierarchy.

Malam Usman Dan Yaya surfaced as the new leader in ca. 1890, and broke the peace (ci aman). He began raiding on several fronts. The southern region of both Hadjia and Katagum Emirate continued to be favorite targets. Dan Yaya built a camp near a town called Itar, located close to Auyo in Hadjia, and used it as a base for pillaging. He sacked Kayiel, Sugudi, Gireti, Gabati, and Zigam in Katagum. In Kano, he raided Abdullahi, in Hadjia, and used it as a base for pillaging. He sacked Kayiel, Sugudi, Garu, Kuka, and Yayar, where he killed Tukur the chief. Many slaves were taken at Kangiri near Birnin Kudu. He also attacked Gwaram and numerous other towns in Kano. In Bauchi at Kafin Madaki Malam Na Tando went to Ningi and made a deal with Dan Yaya. Tando promised to inform him about the most appropriate time to attack Kafin Madaki. By chance the Madaki received a warning in time and closed the doors. The mountaineers were thus unsuccessful in their attempt. Tando – the plotter – was found and executed by Bauchi officials. Other raids took place in this vicinity but it appears that no further direct attacks took place against Kafin Madaki. While Dan Yaya was away, one Fulani attendant in charge of Dan Yaya's cattle attempted to steal a sizable number during the southward grazing drive. His intentions became known to Dan Yaya, who seized and killed him on the spot and returned the cattle to Ningi.

Tactical Innovation in Warfare and Dan Yaya's Aman

The introduction of firearms technology into the Caliphate restricted the range of raids. Before the dissemination of firearms, Joseph P. Smallwood stated, cavalry constituted the main shock force in Central Sudanese armies, and in the battle order Commanders assigned to it the first forward position. The remainder of the tripartite formation consisted of infantry and a reserve guard in the rear. This formation underwent change when the expanding musketeer forces increasingly demonstrated their effectiveness in the main shock position. Contingents of gunmen moved from the center of the formation to the front as supporting units; in open battle, they fired volleys at long range. The new echelon developed into infantry, cavalry, and reserve. This tactical innovation made for maximum use of infantry, equipped with guns.

Although this innovation required some adjustments in the existing formation, it certainly posed additional problems to states and raiding powers without firearms, such as Ningi. In Zazzau, Emir Uthman Yero (1888-1897) received a supply of firearms from Lokoja, and, after training slaves in the use of these weapons, he employed some of them as detachments in eastern Zazzau. M. G. Smith mentions how Yero terrifed the population with his loyal musketeers (yan bindiga), but his detachments also scared Dan Yaya, who discontinued the earlier deep penetrations into Zazzau. James Morrison states that Ningi stopped pillaging the Chokobo and Limoro people at Kwandon Nkaya after 1890. By the 1890s if not before, North African merchants with their enormous financial resources and international commercial contacts imported firearms to Kano.

Where emirates acquired firearms but kept their slave detachments near the palace for royal protection, Ningi was not seriously challenged by cavalry operating under the traditional mode of warfare. But these new acquisitions minimized the Ningi threat against others, despite the fact that Dan Yaya continued to terrify the surrounding Kano villagers. Numerous complaints came to Emir Muhammed Bello demanding that something be done about Dan Yaya.

Muhammed Bello knew that Dan Yaya had contempt for him. Once during the time when Haruna had requested a peace, Dan Yaya had attacked Bello's messengers at Ningi; this had not only created a rift between Haruna and Dan Yaya, but was in violation of diplomatic immunity which Ningi messengers obtained during their sojourns in Kano and Sokoto. Furthermore, the Amir al-Muminin had pressured Bello to do something about Ningi for some time. Bello found a warrior equal to Dan Yaya, when he appointed Sarkin Gaya Dabo to curtail the raiding activities of Ningi. Kano subjects joined Dabo and formed a formidable force. They gave a stunning defeat to Ningi at Kachake in 1891. After having invaded Kano's territory, Dan Yaya attempted to negotiate with Sarkin Gaya who looked upon this demarche as a sign of Ningi weakness. With his forces intact, he charged with temerity and scattered the Ningi troops. Dabo seized 166 horses and took more than 800 captives.

From this time onward, Sarkin Gaya Dabo moved from defensive to offensive warfare. It will be recalled that Malaika and Shamaki Ibi went to Kano from Bauchi and some way they may have joined Dabo's surveillance team. Either way, Dabo sent spies to Ningi and was kept informed of its state of affairs. A second battle took place between Dabo and Dan Yaya, and again Ningi suffered heavy casualties, and Dabo took some 500 prisoners. According to C.N. Ubah, 365 of these were dispatched to Emir Bello, and in recognition of the Caliph's persistent encouragement, Bello sent ninety of them to Sokoto. A final expedition against Ningi resulted in a request for peace. This time, however, Bello was not willing to grant aman.

Aman and Foreign Relations

Dan Yaya dispatched his messengers to Bello with a letter. Even in defeat he was still daring; he informed Bello that he wanted to build a city north of
Duru but would not do so without Bello's explicit permission. Dan Yaya was attempting to set up a frontier post of defense in Kano. Bello was not gullible, and dictated to Dan Yaya instead the conditions for the peace. It required that Dan Yaya discontinue fighting with anyone residing to the south-east and west of Ningi, such as Gombc, Misau, Karagum, Dilara, Shira, Hadejia, and Zazzau. Bello explained that emirates other than Kano were included because "all Muslims are allies alike." Before a final decision could be made, he reminded Dan Yaya that he must inform the Amir al-Muminin, Caliph 'Umar b. 'Ali (1881-1891), and obtain his approval. Bello warned that without the Caliph's approval the request for peace was not acceptable; furthermore, in any case, he told Dan Yaya that the raids of aggression must be discontinued.

Dan Yaya replied to Bello. And his surviving letter in Arabic indicates his understanding of the validity of pacts in diplomatic relations. Its clarity can be illustrated by examining the full text below:

From the Khalifa the agent of Ningi, Usman Dan Yaya, son of Malam Haruna Baba, best greetings, good will and respect to the Sultan of Kano, Mohammed Bello, son of the late Ibrahim Dabo.

Your letter has reached us and we have read it and understood what is in it completely. And as for me, I ask peace of you, peace between us and you; for peace aman is in the hands of God and His Prophet meaning, you cannot avoid making peace because it is God's will. And if there is recognition of justice between us, send to us one of your servants of whom you approve, and I will make the covenant with him for this aman, which will not be broken if God wills. This is the extent of my desire. This is all. Peace.

Obviously Dan Yaya was not sincere in this request for peace and neither was Bello. But Dan Yaya's request indicates an interest in Ningi's territorial survival under new unfavorable circumstances.

The Caliph 'Umar acknowledged Bello's letter and expressed satisfaction with Dan Yaya's request for peace. He told Bello to inform Dan Yaya that he consented to the peace agreement, to send him gifts, and to make the stay of Dan Yaya's messengers in Kano a pleasant one. Kano's hospitality apparently surprised the Ningi messengers. They thanked Emir Bello and took the numerous gifts to Dan Yaya. Until Bello's reign ended in 1893, no additional wars between Ningi and Kano occurred nor presumably, based on the conditions of the pact, with the surrounding emirates either.

But when Bello died in 1893, a dispute over succession erupted into a civil war that involved Ningi. Caliph 'Abd al-Rahman appointed Tukur, the son of Bello, to the emirship, which angered the sons of Abdullahi b. Ibrahim (1855-1882). They left Kano for Takai with Yusufu as a rival claimant to the throne. Yusufu's large support included the sympathetic Arab merchants in Kano, who equipped him with swords and arms, and such anti-Sokoto states as Damagaran, Gummel, and Ningi. According to Adamu Fika, Yusufu, a Fulani prince, sent Shehu Usman (Emir 1912-1926) to negotiate an alliance with Ningi. Since Shehu Usman's mother was a Warji woman, Yusufu no doubt thought that the negotiations would run more smoothly, for the mountaineers remembered his wars against them as galadima under Abdullahi. In return for military support, Shehu Usman promised Dan Yaya a sizable amount of the war booty but apparently guns were not offered to Ningi. In efforts to maintain parity with the surrounding emirates, Dan Yaya presumably asked for them but was unsuccessful.

Dan Yaya realized, however, that Yusufu's forces had guns when he joined them at Takai. Apparently, neither ally trusted the other. An oral version at Takai recollects how Dan Yaya came even during the rainy season and used to attack them without warning; he often waited until the men went out to farm before either raiding their unprotected villages in search of Fulani women or seizing the men on the farms. But this time the conditions were different. When Dan Yaya settled at Lunari, a small village located just to the east of Takai, Yusufu slaughtered cows and rams in honor of Dan Yaya's, which delighted the latter. Festivities went on during the preparation for attack against Tukur, and all appeared in order until one of Dan Yaya's praise singers (maroki) composed a song. It suggested to Dan Yaya that Yusufu was not to be trusted, and that the mountaineers should break camp. Dan Yaya heed the praise singer's apprehension, and when the Yusufu forces awoke, they discovered that Ningi forces had already departed during the early dawn.

Dan Yaya went on a raiding rampage through Sumaila District. Being a fertile district, a series of roads and trails linked the productive villages. Ningi followed the lesser used ones in their surprise attacks. Dan Yaya burned the small villages of Mungu, Unguwar Kuka, and Unguwar Musa. He seized women and animals, and he made forays against Sarina, and went on to Huggu, to Unguwar Busau, to Fajewa, and Tarmo. The raiding venture proved a success, and he returned to Ningi. But change in the emirship of Kano brought aggressive challenge to Ningi's survival.

Ningi as Nemesis to Emir Ali b. Abdullahi of Kano

The Kano civil war ended in 1894 and a warrior emir came to power. Before Yusufu died at Garko in July 1894, he told his slaves and principal supporters to give full support to his thirty-six year old brother Aliyu, who immediately took up the fight against Emir Tukur. Aliyu's forces showed unflinching strength against Tukur's forces, and Tukur fled to Katsina after his expulsion from the capital. In August 1894, Aliyu entered Kano City, and marched against Tukur at the town of Tafashia, where Tukur was slain in March 1895. Circumstances forced the Amir al-Muminin to
recognize Aliyu as the new Emir (1894-1903). As had his father, Abdullahi (1855-1882), Aliyu stayed on the battlefield and for Ningi this meant trouble, for he renewed the policy of his father. As had his father, Abdullahi trouble, for her renewed the policy of his father.

Aliyu took defensive measures against Ningi and made attacks on several occasions. He built a number of interlinking towns to guard the Kano border. While Dando was rebuilt, he founded Magami, Siti, Kwajali, Sansanii, Kanawa, and Kawo Gumbas. These towns were never captured, which illustrates their success in defending against Ningi. In about 1895, Aliyu allowed Sarkin Gaya Dila to go against Dan Yaya. The two forces met at Garwa in the Ningi vicinity, and along with the defeat of the Kano forces, Dan Yaya slew Dila. In order to avenge Dila’s death, Aliyu took personal charge of his forces and with boldness he invaded Ningi. Aliyu burned the granaries on the Kafin Dan Yaya estate. Shortly after taking office Dan Yaya had developed this estate by clearing a large tract of land for the purpose of growing food. In that sizable land tenure change in Ningi used slave labor, this estate appears to be a replica on a smaller scale of the plantation structure in the Caliphate. (The Kafin Dan Yaya estate became the site of the present day Ningi Town in 1934 – the present capital of Ningi in the new Bauchi state.) This innovation was apparently in response to the defense measures that Sokoto took against Ningi. In the course of the late nineteenth century the Caliphate built armed camps or ribats, intensified urbanization in southern Kano and northern Zaria, and relocated freemen and slaves into walled settlements for protection. But as soon as the alarm was sounded that the raiders were coming, the slaves were often evacuated; at least the Kano plantation followed this practice.

Now in Ningi, Aliyu made repeated attempts to bring havoc to Dan Yaya’s estate, and the two forces clashed at Tiffi, where Turaki Bello, Aliyu’s son, died in battle. In anger, Aliyu went on to destroy the crops and invaded Warji. He marched into the Lulu hills, where families took refuge, and captured women and children before returning to Kano.

The Rev. Charles H. Robinson was in Kano from December 1894 to March 1895 during some of Aliyu’s expeditions against Ningi. He observed that one thousand slaves were brought to the Kano market during one of these raids. When Aliyu refused Robinson and his entourage privileges of buying food in the Kano market, they decided to move beyond his influence. Robinson marched for four days before reaching what appears to be Ningi territory. He noted that Aliyu had just completed a raid for slaves in the district, and destroyed the food supply. Robinson’s account supports the evidence for the number of Kano Emirate raids against Ningi cited in the praise song of Dan Yaya:

Let us call upon Dan Yaya! ... the ant hill, the hump of the farm when scattered over the land, ant hills give fertility to the soil; he who is courageous; he that belongs to Haruna Baba father and sarkin yaki under ‘Dan Maje [ca. 1855-1870]; he that had talisman for war [a type of medicine placed around the arm for protection]. In each village that he approached, there would be no morning prayers, nor cooked food nor remains of the previous night ... ant hill, hump of the farm! Wandara, the cow that became a bull by force [In war strategy, he deceives the enemy; people thought that he was coming in one direction but to their surprise he appears someplace else] ... Dan Yaya even his enemy would not call him a coward! The father of Shaho and Dada [powerful slaves of Dan Yaya] ... twice the Emir of Kano [Aliyu] came [1895, 1898] but he could not win and left the Ningawa alone.

Praise Song of Malam Usman Dan Yaya by the Ningi Palace Musicians, Sarkin Jauge

Aliyu did indeed invade Ningi again in 1898. He made camp near the Kojelli River at the base of Dutsi Jerige. The Butawa of Burra were on the alert, and as he marched toward them the next morning, they ran into the hills at Kurmi. Aliyu entered Burra; killed two blind men left behind; and burned the town. Meanwhile, Majiri, the Buta leader, mobilized his people on the hills surrounding Burra and prepared for attack. Realizing how effective the guerrilla tactics of the mountainers could be, Aliyu commanded his troops to retreat. The Kano forces made camp some distance away during the evening, and to their surprise, the Butawa ran down from the hills and routed them. The Kanawa fled the scene in haste, and left behind many horses, camels, and men. Dan Yaya arrived the next morning, only too late to help Majiri; but, when he took the camels and the best horses and returned to Ningi, the Buta people became extremely angry. The people pressured Majiri into sending a message to Dan Yaya stating that they severed their allegiance to him. Dan Yaya acted quickly because he realized that Burra was an indispensable ally to him. He sent conciliatory messages and forty cows to the Buta people in efforts to bring them back into the Ningi fold. The stratagem worked, and resolved the crisis.

But the sporadic encounters with Kano continued. On one of these occasions, Aliyu tricked Dan Yaya by acting as if he were going to invade Burra again; Dan Yaya deployed his forces quickly to Burra; but Aliyu, instead, invaded Ningi from the North. He stopped his forces in the vicinity of Tiffi, only to discover that the Pa‘awa had poisoned the water. The Kano forces headed for Warji. Raiding and counter-raiding for slaves went on intermittently between Ningi and the surrounding emirates until the coming of British rule in 1902. 


NOTES

1. The research for this paper was funded by the Foreign Area Research Program from July 1972 to January 1974 in northern Nigeria, and based on my dissertation: "The Nguem Chad and the African Frontier: Mountaineers and Resistance to the Sokoto Caliphate, c.a. 1800-1900" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975), and expressed henceforth as Patton, Thesis. I express the usual disclaimer.


3. Stanhope White, Descent from the Hills (London: Fred Murray 1963), pp. 35-36; Malam Yahaya, Age 95, interviewed at Ningi Town on July 27, 1973 (Tape No. 9); Malam Mohammadu Muhuni, Age 49, interviewed at Zaria City on 10 June 1973 (Tape No. 9).


15. Field Notes (1973), Ningi.


17. Barth, Travels, p. 515.


20. Smith, Government in Zazzau, pp. 82, 101, 170, 177, 183, 185-7, 190 for references to Ningi. I also discussed Nguem-Zazzau relations with the author.


24. A.W. Groom, "Report on Ningi District June 18th to August 18th 1910."}


27. A.W. Groom, "Report on Ningi District June 18th to August 18th 1910."
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60. Smith, Government in Zazzau, pp. 183, 185; Malam Ibrahim Steven Audu, Turkun Isawa.
62. District Note Book, Rano (Nasarawa Local Government Division, Military Governor’s Office).
64. Low, Three Nigerian Emirates, p. 188.
66. Field Notes (Karuba and Sonoma), 6 December 1973; Akuli Ningi (Saliu Mai Turare), Age 62, interviewed at Ningi Town on 12 September 1973 (Tape No. 17, Side A); Malam (Tape No. 1).
69. Smith, Government in Zazzau, p. 82.
72. Alhaji Abubakar Garba, et al. (Tape No. 21).
75. A. W. Groom, “Report on Ningi District June 18th to August 18, 1910.”
77. Smith, Government in Zazzau, pp. 190-1.
80. C.N. Ubah (M.A. Thesis), pp. 84-5.
83. Malam Usman Dan Yaya (1890-1902), son of Malam Haruna Baba to Sultan Muhammed Bello, son of the late Ibrahim Dabo (1883-1891), ca. 1891, Bauprof, Outward Correspondence, Vol. 1, p. 45, NAK.
84. Palmer, Palmer Papers, pp. 7-8.
86. Malam Yusufu Abdullahi Takai, Age 82, M. Aliyu Hanza Takai, Age 73, M. Abdullah Adamu Wakili, Age 37, interviewed at Takai on 2 December 1973 (Tape No. 26, Side A). It is interesting to note that this tradition is also found in a colonial document of 1924.
88. Noad, “Kano Emirate, Sumaila District Re-Assessment Report.”