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**Military Turbulence, Population Displacement and
Commerce on a Slaving Frontier of the Sokoto Caliphate:
Nupe c.1810-1857**

Femi James Kolapo

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Programme in History
York University
North York, Ontario

MAY 1999



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by **Femi J. Kolapo**

a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of York
University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

The Nupe, together with some of their neighbours in the interior of West Africa, were embroiled in a widespread socio-political and military crisis during the first half of the 19th century. In certain respects, their condition was similar to the 'crisis of adaptation' that some coastal and hinterland 19th century West African states experienced during the change-over from Atlantic slave trade to legitimate commerce. This situation involved social, economic and political transformations and military turbulence, the result of attempts by the societies and their elite to adjust to problems arising from post-abolition economic changes. In Nupe, as in the affected West African societies, the crisis and its associated military activities involved domestic slave trade, slavery, population movements, and an evident boom in legitimate commerce.

However, a phase by phase examination of the Nupe wars and a close look at the characteristics of each phase reveal other causes for the Nupe crisis. The genesis and the dynamics of the wars show internal social and ideological factors to be more important than the factors associated with abolition of slave trade. The conjunction of local succession disputes and the insinuation into Nupe of the 1804 Sokoto jihad reform movement were decisive in the outbreak of the crisis.

Moreover, an analysis of the character of commerce between Nupe and the Delta communities discounts the possibility of a serious fall in southbound Nupe slave exports after 1807. Indeed, the subsumption of Nupe under the jihadist Sokoto

Caliphate and its huge market opened expanded slave-export opportunities to 19th century Nupe.

Also, Nupe did not have industrial produce like the oilseeds that was associated with painful structural and economic changes in the Niger Delta and Yoruba countries. Hence, overseas export production is also not implicated in the Nupe wars. In fact, the timing and outcomes of these wars, their final conclusion in 1857, together with the insignificant presence of muskets in Nupe, show that imported firearms played no role in the crisis. The Nupe situation thus betrayed a 'crisis', but not a crisis 'adaptation.' It involved expansion of slavery, but it was not an 'inland move of the slaving frontier.'

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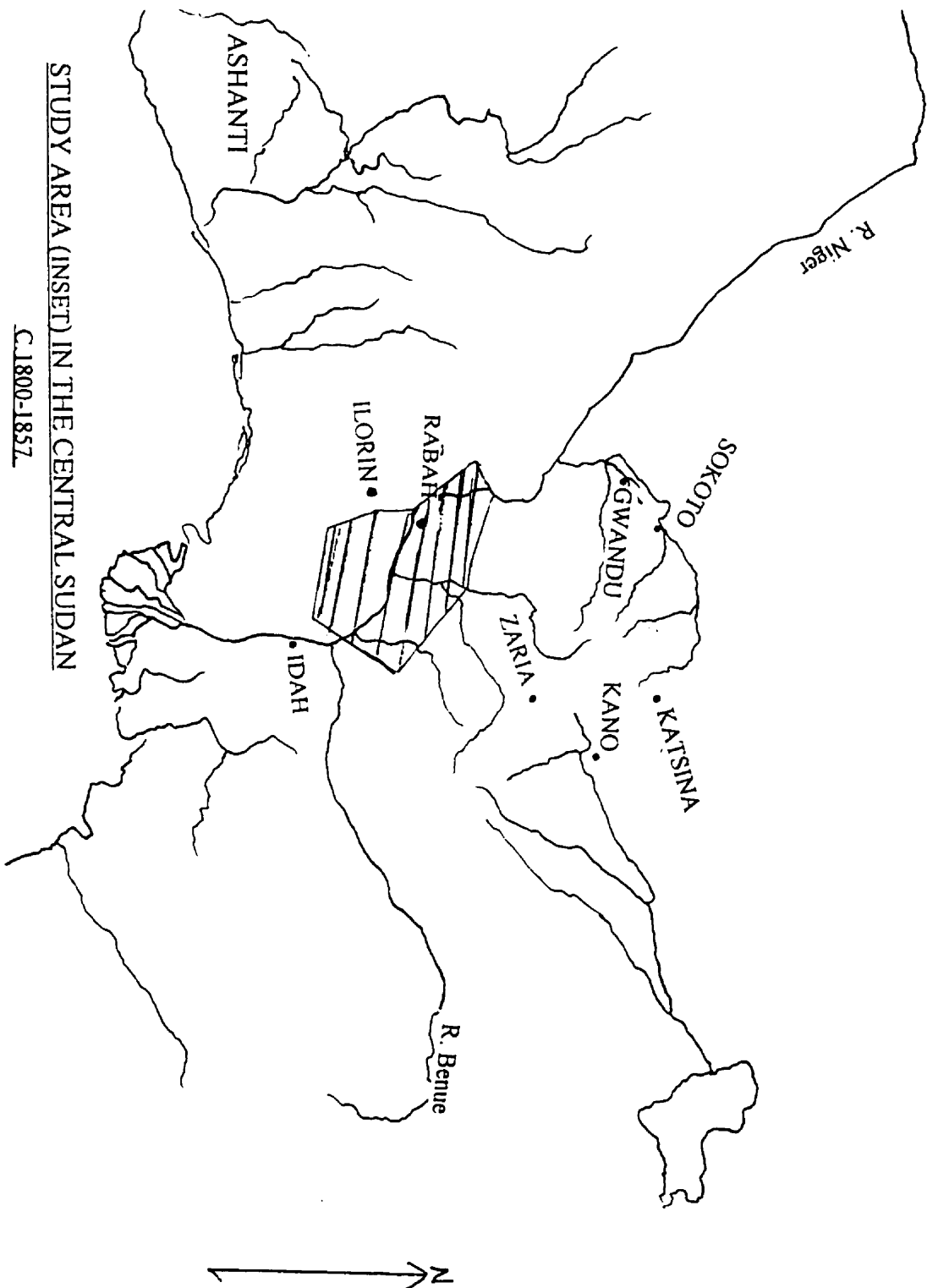
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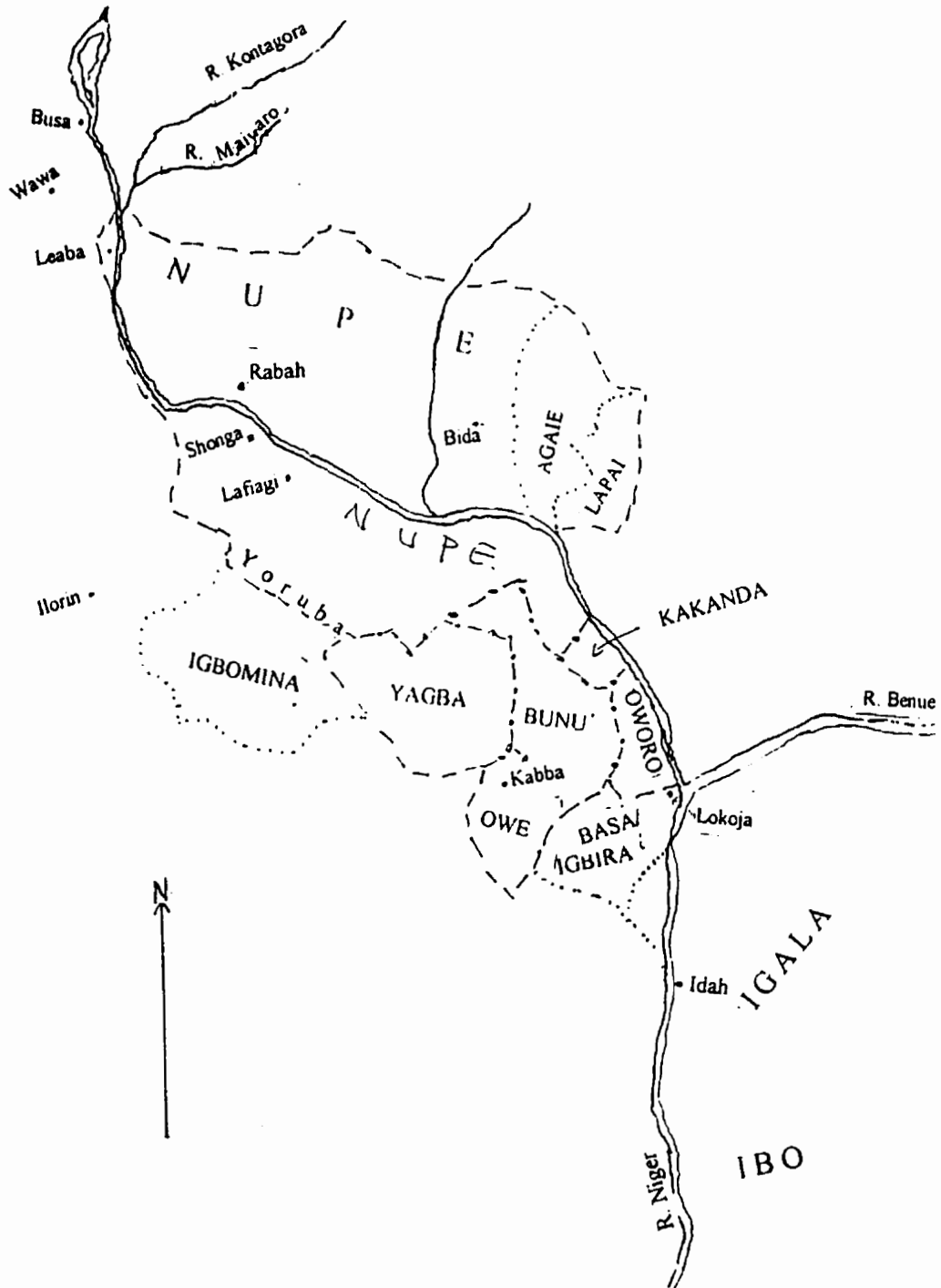
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STUDY AREA (INSET) IN THE CENTRAL SUDAN

C.1800-1857



THE NUPE AND THEIR SOUTHERN & SOUTH-EASTERN
NEIGHBOURS C.1810-1857

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVE

The impetus for this study originated from discussions during the course-work for my doctoral program at York University related to whether or not West African societies experienced a 'crisis of adaptation' following the British abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in 1807 and if so what forms it took. I became interested in exploring the character of the social and political crisis in the savannah areas of the Nigerian hinterland with a view to establishing if it could be structurally related to the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the introduction of legitimate commerce. In particular, I was interested in finding out whether the inland move of slaving frontiers and increased internal use of slaves following British abolition affected the southern emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate — Ilorin and Bida. The two emirates were not only hinterland states hundreds of kilometers distant from the Atlantic seaboard, they had come under strong Islamic influence by the turn of the 18th century. Also they soon became involved in the Sokoto jihad movement that broke out over the whole of Hausaland early in the 19th century. These two emirates, like many other states in the coastal and forest belts of the Nigerian area, went through the greater part of the 19th century embroiled in wars. Nupe alone is the choice of examination in the main chapters of this dissertation.

The dissertation attempts a detailed and a specialized examination of a Central Sudanese society during a period of endemic wars. An examination of the interrelationship of the wars with socio-economic currents in early 19th century Nupe should help to establish the type of relationship, if any, that there was between these wars and the inland move of slaving frontiers in response to the closure of the Atlantic slave export market. This dissertation, therefore, considers the general proposition that the outbreak of the socio-political crisis in Nupe was of a similar character to those that broke out in the early 19th century Niger Delta and Yoruba states nearer the Atlantic seaboard. Moreover, the unfolding of the crisis carried along with it the development and extension of slave societies, the obvious increase in slave trading, as well as the increased use of slave labour in every facet of life. But while the military and political developments and the pattern of economic organization that manifested during the wars were similar in form to those of the Niger Delta and Yoruba societies of the mid and late 19th century, other important components of the crisis of adaptation in the coastal societies were missing in the Nupe crisis. The absence of these components implies the possibility that other factors might be more important in an explanation of the Nupe crisis.

An important point in the crisis of adaptation in the Nigerian coastal societies is that the kings, chiefs and slave exporters were more or less economically marginalised after the closure of the Atlantic market. Hence, the military and political crisis that erupted is considered to have resulted from attempts by these social groups to reverse or lessen their

marginalisation. However, the little available evidence concerning Nupe commerce at the turn of the century does not indicate that the revenue of the Nupe elite declined. Neither does it show a constriction in the demand for slaves that could have affected their revenue to such a critical extent that it negatively affected social and political stability.

Concrete evidence about pre-19th century Nupe slave export is scanty, but there is a great deal of circumstantial evidence showing that Nupe indeed sold slaves across the Atlantic in what must have been significant numbers before the 19th century.¹ But the distance between Nupe and the coast was great and there was an intermediation of several ferocious middlemen states downstream along the Niger River, and of the powerful Oyo Yoruba state on the overland route to her south. Coupled with this was Nupe's geographical and cultural affinity with the Central Sudanese societies with which it carried on considerable commerce in goods and slaves. Under these conditions, the export of slaves across the Atlantic and the revenue that could be derived therefrom could not be as critical to the economic and political well-being of its leadership as it was to the coastal societies which did not possess Nupe's advantages. Hence, it is unlikely that the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade in the 19th century could produce as cataclysmic effect on them as it did among the societies which nearly totally depended on that trade and on the Atlantic market.

¹ See chapter 4

Another point seems to distinguish the Nupe condition from that of the coastal Nigerian societies that were affected by the crisis of adaptation. This was the absence, during the first half of the 19th century in Nupe, of any viable export produce comparable to the palm oil of the Niger Delta and Yoruba societies. Consequently, opportunities similar to those of the oil palm producers and marketers of the coastal societies, (peasants, women, and people of servile origins included) that undermined the economic and political hegemony of the kings, chiefs, warriors and slave merchants did not arise in Nupe. Thus the problems of profit and social control seem to be out of the question as the causes of the Nupe political crisis.

Although the study includes an analysis of the Nupe wars, it is not a thesis about warfare in general or Nupe warfare in particular. While it examines the causes of the wars and their impact, it goes further to situating the wars within the other currents of the subjects' social history. Such other historical currents include commercial organization and relations, demographic changes and the daily life of the people. These were intermediated by warfare in early 19th century Nupe and neighboring communities. Though these categories in themselves could stand separate analysis, the way they were dialectically related justifies exploring them within the framework of the military-political conflicts that afflicted Nupe from c.1800 to 1857. The study, therefore, seeks to analyze the linkages of these other historical categories and the early 19th century Nupe wars in a bid to

determine whether and to what extent they were influenced by the economic currents deriving from the 1807 abolition of the Atlantic slave trade.

THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The principal subjects of this research are the Nupe and their immediate south-eastern neighbours: the Kakanda, Yagba-Bunu, some Bassa and Igala. They occupy the lower portion of the Middle Niger river. The Nupe inhabit the 'low basin formed by the valleys of the Niger and Kaduna rivers, between 9°E 30' & 8°E 30' north.'² Forde estimated the total land area occupied by this people to be about 7,000 square miles.³ With reference to a modern map of Nigeria, Nadel's description, accepted by Forde and validated by Udo⁴ and others, remains satisfactory:

Drawn from Leaba, on the Niger, eastward to Kataeregi marks the northern boundary of Nupe land, another line drawn eastward from Shari (or Tsaragi) to Abugi and on to the Niger south of Baro the southern boundary. The Niger, flowing almost straight north-south between Leaba and Jebba, divides Nupe country from Yoruba in the west; the slowly rising country, east of Lapai and Gidi, sloping upward towards the hills of Gbari country, forms the eastern boundary of Nupe.⁵

To their immediate south and southeast are the Owe, Bunu, Yagba, Kakanda and a few clusters of Bassa. The latter two groups are settled on the west-bank of the Niger river as far down as just above its confluence with the Benue in Igala territory.

² S. F. Nadel, A Black Byzantium, London, 1942, p. 1; D. Forde, 'The Nupe' in Peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence, London, 1955, p. 23.

³ Forde, Peoples of the Niger-Benue-Confluence, p. 17.

⁴ R. K. Udo, Geographical Regions of Nigeria, Berkeley, 1970, pp. 116-117.

⁵ Nadel, Black Byzantium, p. 1

The Nupe group of emirates consisted of Rabah/Bida, Lapai and Agaie north of the Niger as well as Shonga and Lafiagi south of the river. Lapai and Agaie are not discussed in the thesis, other than in this introduction. No research was carried out on them as independent emirates either. However, they could not but feature in the affairs of their more dominant neighbor, Rabah/Bida, and in the general history of the Nupe. The analysis will also show the shared origin of the emirates, the interrelationship of the founders and their almost total eclipse by Rabah/Bida. The Kakanda, Owe, Yagba, Bunu and Bassa previously referred to, unlike the above emirates, constituted distinct non-Nupe polities. They all became entangled in varying forms of interrelationship with one another during the period under examination.

Both the Nupe and the Kakanda areas are generally low-lying; not more than 200ft above sea level in most parts. Nearer the riverbanks, the vegetation turns into considerable patches of 'thick riverain forest alternating with shrub and low bush.'⁶ Adjacent to the bank were creeks and marshy or swampy land. In the wet season, the rains turn all these into 'vast swamps.'⁷ In addition to the above, the entire area falls within what some geographers have termed the 'middle belt.'⁸ This happens to be 'the meeting point of the

⁶ Forde, Peoples of the Niger-Benue-Confluence, p. 17.

⁷ Ibid., p. 23

⁸ M. Mason, 'Population Density and 'Slave Raiding' - The Case of the Middle Belt of Nigeria', Journal of African History, 10, no. 4, 1969, pp. 551-564; M. B. Gleave and R. M. Prothero, 'Population Density and 'Slave Raiding' - A Comment', Journal of African History, 12, no. 2, 1971, pp. 319-327.

southern forest belt and the northern savanna,⁹ as a result of which the land was, and still is, able to support an overlap of the two major food economies of Nigeria: the savannah grain/pulse economy and the forest root economy.¹⁰ Thus, as Forde observed, 'Nupe country is the most northern area for oil-palm, yam, and the southern variety of maize: it is the southern limit for date-palm, shea nut, and millet.' The area also produced locust-bean, indigo, silk cotton, kola-nut and banana.¹¹ Apart from agricultural production, fishing was also very important, especially, for those with the rivers, the ponds and the creeks next to them.

The Owe, Bunu and Yagba live furtheraway from the flood plains. They are inland agricultural people living in the upland area on the southern border of the Nupe and west and south-west of the Kakanda and Bassa. The entire study area was equally a natural region for the transit trade from the north to the forest and coastal belts.

The temporal scope of the study spans the period c.1810 to 1857. The former date was when the 19th century wars in Nupe began. While there are references to political crises in which kings were removed and thrones usurped prior to c.1810, there is no mention in the oral and written sources to either prolonged warfare or warfare in which Nupe was effectively divided into more than two quasi-sovereign states with competing

⁹P. Koslow, *Lords of the Savanna. The Bambara, Fulani, Igbo, Mossi, and Nupe*, Philadelphia, 1997. p. 52; Forde, *Peoples of the Niger-Benue-Confluence*, p. 23.

¹⁰ Gleave and Prothero, 'Population Density', p. 324.

¹¹ Forde, *Peoples of the Niger-Benue-Confluence*, p. 3.

capitals. This trend only began with the wars of Abd al-Rahaman and his jihadist supporters, c.1810. Moreover, all the phases of the Nupe wars up to 1857 were linked successively and structurally to one another. Also, the jihad factor was nonexistent prior to this period, and the military-political activities of the Nupe basically relate to the expansion and consolidation of the emergent Tsodean Nupe state, its monarchy and the defense of its borders.

The terminal date for the study is 1857 because this was the year when the jihadist faction, one of the several involved in the crisis, finally emerged as sole ruler of Bida emirate. The dynamics that propelled the early 19th century Nupe wars changed after this date. In the first place, the struggles for succession to the kingship (Etsu), i.e., the local and internal political cause for the fragmentation of Nupe, became superseded when a new royal dynasty originating from outside Nupe replaced the old one. With the factor of the crippling internal succession dispute put in abeyance, an important factor that fuelled the military-political conflagration in Nupe society for the entire period was effectively removed. The jihad was equally an important factor that complicated the military conflict in early 19th century Nupe by increasing the number of contenders and by introducing a new socio-political and religious ideology based on Islam and led by non-Nupe immigrants. In 1857, the terminal date for this study, the jihadist cause and the jihadist faction became triumphant. Other contenders were defeated and the jihadist faction assumed overall

dominance, as well as imposed the jihad ideology on the entire society. Thus by 1857, the jihad, which had polarized Nupe society and contributed to the persistent crisis, was spent. The wars that followed this jihadist success were thus wars in which the new emirate, from a single center rather than from multiple poles of independent and autonomous military and political power, waged wars of expansion or fought battles to subdue rebellions.

Another factor informing the temporal scope of the study is that the few major studies on Nupe focused only on the second half of the 19th century. References to the first half of the 19th century have been very brief and sketchy. Hence, the period chosen for examination opens a window into a previously unresearched period of Nupe history. It also affords an opportunity to collate historical source materials to which interested researchers might have recourse for future studies on the same period of Nupe history.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation contains seven chapters in all. Chapter One introduces the thesis, its scope and the problems connected with the historical sources used in the study. Chapter Two provides an historical background to the Nupe society during the period immediately preceding the military-political crisis of the early 19th century. It includes a summary of the Nupe wars and raids,¹² some of the factors responsible for the phasing of

¹² In contrast to Appendix 1, Appendix 2 catalogues the military activities of leading Nupe jihadists from the heartland of Nupe against their southern and south-eastern Owe, Bunu, Yagba, Kakanda and Bassa

the wars and how the wars interlaced with the jihad and with political developments in Gwandu (Sokoto Caliphate). A full catalogue of the various phases of these wars and the details of the various actors, as well as the chronology of the various battles is attached to the dissertation as Appendixes 1 and 2.

Chapter Three details the impact of the wars on the socio-political structures of the Nupe and adjoining societies. Here the social means to mobilize and organize military violence are examined vis a vis the political structures of the pre-war period. The relationship between military recruitment, military equipage, and relationships between the political groups involved in the struggles and the scope and character of the wars are explored. An analysis of the effect of the Nupe wars on the womenfolk rounds off this chapter. Chapter Four contains an analysis of commerce on the Niger river between the Niger-Benue confluence communities, Nupe included, and the Niger Delta area during the first 50 years of the 19th century. The various types of commercial organization and their links to the political structures of the polities that participated in the cross-border trade are examined. The slave trade was an important feature of this commerce. The chapter shows how the Nigerian hinterland was commercially integrated with the coastal region in the early 19th century, and the fact that a section of Nupe nearer the basin of the Niger-Benue confluence actively participated in this commerce. Thus, the chapter examines the possible

neighbours. Unlike the major wars among the Nupe themselves, these have been called raids, razzias, expansionist wars, jihads, or simply slave-raids. See A. Obayemi 'The Sokoto Jihad and the O-kun'

links by which the effects of the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the introduction of legitimate commerce could have been felt in Nupe.

Chapters Five and Six examine daily life in the rural and, especially, victim areas of the Nupe wars. The two chapters try within the limits set by available data to descend from the generalized issues of war, warfare, and migration in the larger Nupe and surrounding area, to the microscopic level of the town, the family and the basic lives of individuals. They analyse the kind of population displacement, establishment of new communities and socioeconomic adjustments that characterized Nupe and some of its neighbouring communities during the time of crisis. Chapter Five is concerned with Gbebe, an important River Niger entrepot town, commercially important to Nupe but outside its direct military and political control. Chapter Six, on the other hand, deals with Egga, a subject Nupe community, and with the non-Nupe Kakanda communities that were subjected to Nupe military attacks and to tributary status during the wars. Chapter Seven provides concluding remarks to the arguments of the dissertation.

THE CRISIS OF ADAPTATION IN THE LITERATURE.

Following the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the eventual rise and expansion of 'legitimate' commerce, the sharp fall in slave exports is considered to have had very decisive effects on West African states and societies. It called for drastic readjustments in the face of a drastic drop in revenue for the exporters following the closure

of the Atlantic slave market. Also, legitimate commerce in palm produce for the Niger delta communities and the hinterland Yoruba states called forth new social structures that were subversive of the economic and political hegemony of the kings, chiefs, war-lords and large-scale slave-traders. This was because oil palm export production was easily accessible to masses of peasant retailers and slaves.

Hopkins' study of the reasons for the British colonization of Yorubaland included an analysis of the crisis of adaptation suffered by the Yoruba kings and warriors due to the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. He showed that the revenue of this category of people had suffered seriously from the closure of the Atlantic market. Moreover, unlike in the slave trade, the new market in oil seeds could not be centralized and monopolized by the warriors, the kings and the chiefs because it operated on the basis of multitudes of small scale producers who sold their produce directly to the buyers. Hence, the former slave traders, chiefs and kings lacked the direct economic means to make up for the revenue and profits they were used to. Hopkins argued that the military and political crisis of the Yoruba in the 1850s and 60s was partly a response of the Yoruba war-lords, chiefs and kings to the situation. To shore up their slipping revenues, they resorted to war and plunder.¹³

¹³A. Hopkins, 'Economic Imperialism in West Africa: Lagos, 1880-92', Economic History Review, 21, 1968.

The crisis of adaptation manifested itself in different ways among the coastal societies of the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Ibibio. For instance, it is argued that military and political conflicts occurred due to attempts by slaves and other lower class citizens of these Delta societies to use their new-found economic power as a lever to establish themselves in positions of political power or to achieve a measure of inclusion in political decision-making where they were previously excluded. Elsewhere, some communities to which the Atlantic slave market was now closed responded by diversifying their economies; former slave exporters, and especially the chiefs and kings, began to use slave labour for internal production to meet both internal market demands and the external demand of the new export produce.¹⁴ The analysis that was first done for Bonny¹⁵ was soon extended to other Niger Delta societies and similar processes were identified. These findings were soon generalized over the whole of West Africa.¹⁶

Another strand in the crisis of adaptation argument is that the 1807 British abolition of the slave trade resulted in a sharp decline in domestic slave prices, causing a

¹⁴ P. E. Lovejoy, Transformations in Slavery. A History of Slavery in Africa, London, 1983, pp.159-183; M. A. Klein, 'Social and Economic Factors in the Muslim Revolution in Senegambia', Journal of African History, 13, no. 2, 1972, pp. 419-44.

¹⁵ K. O. Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta: 1830-1885, Oxford, 1956.

¹⁶ A. J. H. Latham, Old Calabar 1600-1891: The Impact of the international economy upon a traditional society, Oxford, 1973; K. K. Nair, Politics and Society in Southeastern Nigeria 1841-1906: a study of power, diplomacy and commerce in Old Calabar, London, 1972; G. I. Jones, The Trading States of the Oil Rivers, International African Institute, London, 1963; P. C. Lloyd, 'The Itsekiri in the Nineteenth Century: An Outline Social History', Journal of African History, vol. 4 no.2, 1963, pp. 207-31; O. Ikime, Niger Delta Rivalry: Itsekiri-Urhobo Relations and the European Presence 1884-1936, London, 1969, pp. 38-40; A. Hopkins, An Economic History of West Africa, London, 1973, pp. 125-6, 135-164.

temporary glut in local coastal slave markets. This jacked up the purchasing power of slave-users, enabling them to acquire and re-direct cheap slave labour into internal agricultural, transport and other local employment.¹⁷ There was thus a transformation in the existing mode of production. The large-scale use of slave labour for internal economic production meant that the basis and organisation of production became more dependent on domestic slaves. The change in mode of production and the need for the supply of cheap slave labour, it was argued, accounted for the frequent outbreak of war and for the inland move of slaving frontiers in the 19th century societies in question.¹⁸

Explanations for the military-political turbulence in these societies were thus in two parts. On the one hand, due to the fall in slave prices after British abolition and their obvious inability to monopolise the new legitimate commerce, the slave merchants, the chiefs and kings resorted to wars and raids to acquire booty and increase their absolute slave sales in the local markets. This was to enable them maintain or increase their gross earnings. On the other hand, with the introduction of legitimate commerce and the redirection of slave labour into internal production of export goods and internal luxuries.

¹⁷ Lovejoy, Transformations, pp. 176-182; Klein, 'Social and Economic Factors', pp. 419-441 and P. Manning, Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades, Cambridge, 1990, p. 140.

¹⁸ Lovejoy, Transformations p. 182; Lovejoy, 'The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature', Journal of African History, 30, no. 3, 1989, pp. 365, 389-90; Manning, Slavery and African Life, p. 142.

a new viable market was created for slaves and captives, and this demand was met through increased warfare for the purpose of slave capture.

Other studies have minimised the effect of the 1807 British abolition on the Niger Delta societies. Several revisionist analyses have argued that the Niger Delta and Yoruba crises were not class conflicts, of the type that pitted slaves and peasants against the kings, chiefs and the nobility. Many of the crises in the Niger Delta were shown to have been no more than attempts by fractions of the elite to make the best of the developing export produce trade. In some other respects, the kings and chiefs were said to have maintained a general monopoly of the new trade, either because they still had easier access to credit and investment funds or actually controlled them. In other cases, while the peasants, women and slaves were shown to have increased their autonomous participation in the production process, the bulking, marketing and most profitable aspects of the trade were still in the hands of the former slave-owners, slave-users and chiefs.¹⁹

However, the various studies about the 'crisis of adaptation' in the Nigerian Delta and Yoruba societies agree that there was a rise in domestic slavery. They also agree that there was an increase in political and military conflicts, although, they differ in the causes they ascribe to these problems.

¹⁹ E. J. Alagoa, 'Nineteenth Century Revolutions in the Eastern Delta States and Calabar', Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 5, no. 4, 1971, pp. 565-574; O. Ikime, Merchant Prince of the Niger Delta: the Rise and Fall of Nana Olomu, London, 1968, pp. 7-8; Latham, pp. 80-82; S. J. S. Cooley, 'Trade, Social Mobility, and Politics in the Niger Delta: a Reconsideration', Journal of African Studies, 7 no.2 1980; S. Hargreaves, 'The Political Economy of Nineteenth Century Bonny: a Study of Power, Authority, Legitimacy

Eltis, Ajayi, and Austen opined that whatever increase was observable in the extent of slavery in West Africa, especially in the first half of the 19th century, can be attributed directly or indirectly to internal processes. These processes included 'rejuvenated Islam,' the rise of jihadist states with broadened bases for production and commerce, and political attempts of successor states to assert their hegemony over rivals.²⁰

The crisis of adaptation thesis has been applied to some interior societies further away from the coast. Meillassoux saw the fall in profit due to the initial price decline following the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade as a reason why the rulers of Sudanic and Sahelian Africa increased their slaving wars in the early and middle 19th century. This was because the closure of the external market for the portion of the booty normally exported did not reflect on the high cost of war that still remained high. Hence, 'for war to remain profitable, it had to be intensified: bigger populations had to be attacked, [and] military operations had to be more frequent.'²¹

Lovejoy and Richardson's study brings the Central Sudan into the stream of the argument.²² The authors reconsidered the price fall crisis that Eltis observed had plagued

and Ideology in a Delta Trading community from 1790-1914', Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1987.

²⁰ D. Eltis, Economic growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, London, 1987, p. 225; see also J. F. A. Ajayi's 'Ijaye War' in J. F. A. Ajayi and R. Smith, Yoruba Warfare in the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge, 1964, pp. 63-5.

²¹ C. Meillassoux, The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold, Chicago, 1991, pp. 62-3.

²² P. E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, 'The Initial 'crisis of adaptation': the impact of British abolition on the Atlantic slave trade in West Africa, 1808-1820', R. C. C. Law, (ed.) From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce: Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-century West Africa, Cambridge, 1995.

the coastal slave markets of West Africa following the 1807 abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. Eltis had argued further that this contraction in export markets must have been a disincentive to warfare. But, on the basis of new data, Lovejoy and Richardson argued that this price decline was actually 'localized and relatively brief'.²³ Gauged by the quantities of imports employed for exchange for slaves, rather than the recorded prices in European currencies, they observed that there was no long-term price decline, and that 'the initial crisis of adaptation' did not last longer than about a decade or so after 1807.²⁴

The price decline after 1807 suggests that there was a glut of slaves in coastal West Africa. Smaller export earnings resulting from fewer slaves being exported and lower prices caused a 'crisis of adaptation' to abolition, which lasted through the 1810s, until the depressed market for slaves had revived by the late 1820s. Competing demand for slaves within West Africa and from the trans-Saharan sector eventually pushed up prices, so that from 1826-30 until 1850, prices were high, even though trans-Atlantic exports from West Africa were significantly lower than in the late eighteenth century.²⁵

On the basis of their new price series, they asserted that 'the fact that prices were rising suggests that there were constraints on slave supply, including the possibility of rising internal demand for slaves. One result of this rise in prices was to encourage the inward expansion of slaving.'²⁶

This directly linked the Central Sudan, much further away from the palm producing and middleman coastal and forest belts, to the coastal seaboard. Lovejoy and Richardson noted that 'very few slaves from the far interior appear to have boarded ships for the

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Americas before c.1780', but by 'c.1790 through 1825, as many as 25 per cent of the slaves leaving the Bight of Benin were identified as Hausa, Nupe or some other ethnicity from the Central Sudan.'²⁷ The latter period encompasses the dates of the jihad wars of the Western and Central Sudan. The early 19th century Nupe wars under consideration in this dissertation were a part of these wars.

THE CRISIS OF ADAPTATION AND 19TH CENTURY NUPE.

In a study, David Geggus produced a regional and ethnic breakdown of African slaves imported to the New World by the French during the 18th century. It was based on French shipping records for the years 1715 to 1792 and on slave registers from Saint Domingue covering the years 1721 to 1797. These slave data include the Nupe as one of the ethnic categories represented.²⁸ Unfortunately, only the smaller portion of the data, the one derived from plantation records, includes an ethnic breakdown. The Nupe population in this record totals 161, out of 4,552 imported from the Slave Coast.²⁹ It is not known how many Nupe slaves were included in the shipping register that was the larger component; 77.4% of the total.

²⁷ P. E. Lovejoy, 'Background to Rebellion: The Origins of Muslim Slaves in Bahia', P. E. Lovejoy and N. Rogers, (eds.) Unfree Labour in the Development of the Atlantic World, London, 1994, and P. E. Lovejoy, 'The Central Sudan and the Atlantic slave trade', Robert Harms, Joseph C. Miller, David S. Newbury and Michelle D. Wagner (eds.), Paths toward the Past: African Historical Essays in Honor of Jan Vansina, Atlanta, 1994, p. 40.

²⁸ David Geggus, 'Sex Ratio, Age and Ethnicity in the Atlantic Slave Trade: Data from French Shipping and Plantation Records', Journal of African History, 30, no.1, 1989, pp. 243-44.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

Lovejoy's study on the origins of Muslims in 19th century Bahia also includes data showing the presence of Nupe slaves in Brazil around the turn of the century. They were captives from the wars of the Sokoto jihad.³⁰ The data include identifiable slaves of the Central Sudanese origin who had been imported into Bahia in Brazil and those who returned to or were landed in Sierra Leone after being rescued by the British anti-slave naval squadron. Reis' study, dealing with the early 19th century Muslim uprisings in Bahia, also contains substantial reference to the Nupe ethnic group. Some of the Nupe slaves and freedmen who participated in the uprisings had been exported to Brazil before the 19th century.³¹

The bits and pieces of data that related to the Nupe in these studies are of a shallow depth, hence any statement concerning the scale of Nupe slave export across the Atlantic, even for the years for which data are available, can only be tentative. However, it could be inferred from evidence concerning early 19th century Nupe slave exports to the Niger Delta and across the Atlantic that a substantial number of Nupe slaves must have been traded across the Atlantic prior to the 19th century. This evidence comes out in Chapter Four. Together with other evidence presented concerning the various elements of the proposition in this dissertation, it forms the basis of our examination of how related the Nupe crisis

³⁰ Lovejoy, 'Background to Rebellion.'

³¹ J. J. Reis, Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia, Baltimore, 1993. A few of the Nupe mentioned by Reis are listed in Appendix 5.

was to the crisis of adaptation experienced in the mid and late 19th century Niger Delta and Yoruba societies.

The Nupe wars of the first half of the nineteenth century became subsumed under the widespread Sokoto jihad wars of the early 19th century. As a result, this dissertation attempts to explain the crisis of adaptation in the context of these larger jihad wars that raged in the Hausa states during this period. Hence, while the timing of the wars in Nupe parallels the period immediately following the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, as well as the period of the social and political crisis in the Niger Delta societies, the economic demands of the jihad and the social and political rearrangements that followed, rather than the abolition of the Slave trade, seemed to have impacted more on Nupe.

Indeed, the jihad, with its resultant new Caliphate and emirates, clearly constituted a major force in the resolution of the political crisis that engulfed Nupe c.1810-1857. In the first place, the leading members of the contending factions in the Nupe wars demonstrated responsiveness to the jihad factor by a constant supply to the leadership of the Sokoto jihad of tribute, bribes, and gifts. They thus sought to advertise their political and military weight and thereby achieve supranational acceptance and accreditation and military assistance from the political center of the Sokoto jihad when possible. This was a situation that no doubt fuelled the crisis.

In the second place, the jihad wars in both Nupe and in the larger Sokoto Caliphate fed a huge market for servile labour.³² Many new urban centers developed and the use of slave labour in economic production and distribution increased. This situation produced more virile demand that for some time paralleled and then gradually sought to supplant the Delta market to which captives from the Nupe wars were sent. Subsequent to the consolidation in the mid 1830s of Rabah, the capital of the first Nupe emirate, there is evidence that a large percentage of south-bank Niger Nupe and the Niger-Benue confluence area trade, including slave trade, shifted northward towards these new centers. This shift took place at the precise time when the reverse should have been the case had the Nupe wars and slave production been responses to a crisis of adaptation attendant on the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. At the political and, to a large extent, economic levels, the Nupe emirate became ever more integrated with its northern neighbours. Accordingly, this translated into Nupe's strong commercial links with the various centers of Kano, Katsina, Borno, etc., to the north, to the disadvantage of the Niger trade links with the Niger Delta.³³

³² P. E. Lovejoy, Transformations in Slavery, Chapter 8.

³³ H. Clapperton, 3(iv) ADM 55/11 Folio 122; and H. Barth, Barth's Travel in Nigeria. Extracts from the Journal of Heinrich Barth's Travels in Nigeria, selected and edited with an introduction by A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, London, 1962, p. 117; Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa: 1849-55 vol. I, p.

SOURCES

The time span examined imposed some limits on the type and amount of evidence that was available for this study. Compared to the coastal areas, there is neither primary written documents nor oral data recorded by western-educated persons indigenous to the area until 1858. Even then, data refer to the period before 1858 in passing and are restricted both to the period since 1830 and to the zone between Lokoja and Rabah/Bida.³⁴

An initial attempt to collect oral information from people within the subject area ran into several logistical problems. The first revealed that it is almost impossible to recover any new information from oral memory regarding the period c.1810-1857. My experience also bears out Vansina's view to the effect that local details, names of actors and lesser events, not just chronology, obtainable from oral interviews 'for anything beyond 100 to 150 years is vague and unreliable.'³⁵ There was a tendency for answers to reflect present sociological and economic arrangements rather than the distant past.

Second, acute politicking amongst Nigerian communities, especially with regard to their political statuses within the administrative set up of local and state governments, affects the interpretation of the past. Fear that the information collected from them might

517 and vol. II, p. 96.

³⁴ The reference here are to the missionary records of Thomas James and Simon Priddy that are listed in the bibliography

³⁵ J. Vansina, 'Afterthoughts on the Historiography of Oral Tradition', B. Jewsiewicki and David Newbury, (eds.) African Historiographies: What History, For Which Africa, Beverly Hills, 1986, p. 109.

be used to redefine their administrative position vis-a-vis their neighbours to their political disadvantage affected how much and what information was given. Informants gave responses that sought to justify an earlier or simultaneous origin with another community, or its rulership.³⁶ Some informants related memories of periods of autonomy: they remained seemingly unaware of periods of subordinate and tributary relations that are evident in some written sources. Memory has been selective. An informant who was locally reputed to be knowledgeable about her community denied that her community had ever been at war with the Nupe. She insisted that she was not told of any such wars, and that only 'bad people' go about asking about such divisive issues nowadays when peace and development should be the aim of all. Obviously it was unwise to ask her further questions about the enslavement of her people by the Nupe. Moreover, feedback in oral accounts was a clear problem, as Henige has noted more generally.³⁷ My effort at collecting oral data turned out to be a forced consultation with just another secondary source, with the additional disadvantages that interpretation was consciously politicized and incomplete.³⁸ Hence, the attempt was abandoned.

There is much useful oral information derived from eye-witnesses within the body

³⁶ On one occasion some elders and their chief asked me to erase from my recorder an earlier piece of information given me during the same interview, while a new one was supplied as a replacement. They certified that I actually erased the said information.

³⁷ D. Henige, 'The Problem of Feedback in Oral Tradition: Four Examples From the Fante Coastlands', *Journal of African History*, 14, no. 1973, pp. 223-35.

³⁸ The title of Henige's first chapter in *The Chronology of Oral Tradition. Quest for a Chimera*, Oxford, 1974, p. 18, 'History as Present Politics', is an appropriate description of the situation here.

of published contemporary accounts of the European explorers of the early to mid 19th century who visited our area of study. Oral data also are available from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries who, from 1858 onwards, settled at the periphery of Nupe. Finally, ethnographic information collected by colonial officials in the first few decades of the 20th century consisted almost entirely of such oral sources. The most useful oral information from our area of study had been committed to writing within a period of thirty to fifty years of the events in question. Consequently, I have made extensive use of published primary materials of the European explorers, travellers missionaries and colonial administrators.³⁹

Appendixes 1 and 2 which constructed the chronology of the early 19th century Nupe wars, as well as the analyses based on them in Chapter Two, draw extensively on oral material. In interpreting oral data, I relied on available synchronism in the sources and I cross-referenced events to produce what might be considered a reasonable chronology. The methodology employed recognizes four types of synchronism mentioned by Henige. First is 'intra-societal tie-ins', where traditions and events of different clans or sections of the society might corroborate each other. Secondly, there is 'tie-ins with events or personalities from neighbouring societies.' The third type is 'references in tradition to astronomical phenomena which are theoretically identifiable and datable,' like eclipses; and

³⁹ These include Richard and John Lander, M. Laird and Oldfield, Allen and Thomson, Baikie, Crowther and Schon, and Bowen, all listed in the bibliography.

lastly, there is 'references in tradition to events in a literate society or, conversely, mention in written records of events in an oral society which may also be mentioned in that society's tradition.'⁴⁰ The last two, which Henige considered to be the most reliable and able to produce absolute dating, were usually 'the reward of perseverance, imagination, and good fortune.'⁴¹ No doubt his reference is to the historical attempts concerned with origins and the precedence in settlements far back in time, perhaps 200-300 years from the events in question. Nonetheless, for our area of study the availability of written sources and the oral data within such records enables a cross-referencing of dates. One might say that there is some element of 'good fortune' in this study. The preservation of any data at all is itself a matter of some good fortune.

The sources for the reconstruction of the history of slavery and the slave trade in Egga and the Kakanda communities, as they related to the Nupe wars in Chapter Six, are much thinner than those for Gbebe in Chapter Five. It was not until 1876, when Rev. C. Paul of the CMS took up residence at Kippo Hill opposite Egga creek as the resident missionary, that more written evidence about Egga was recorded.⁴² All documented evidence for the first half of the 19th century concerning Egga is thus from passing explorers and traders. This quantitative and qualitative disparity in the available source material is reflected in the richness of detail available for the analysis done for Gbebe in

⁴⁰ Henige, *Chronology*, p.18

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

contrast to the relatively more sketchy treatment given for both Egga and the Kakanda communities.

In general, there has been an unfortunate lack of quantitative data that could have helped some of the more economic analyses attempted in the study. The biographical data generated in Appendix 4 are sourced from the notes and diaries of observers who passed through Nupe while en route on the Niger, and missionaries who were resident in Gbebe. Much needed slave export and price data are still absent. Thus, in some places, the evidence used has been strained for as much as logic and inference would allow. The lack of quantitative data in the form of prices, lists, and records of slave and goods export, etc., has necessitated this pattern of proceeding for the analysis done in Chapter 4.

THE CHARACTER OF THE PRIMARY SOURCES

In the first few decades after the establishment of colonial rule, administrative officials embarked on the collection of the political histories of the mostly non-literate societies they had occupied. District officers and their assistants were instructed to gather all information relevant for the delineation of administrative boundaries. They became important in the eventual execution of the indirect rule system of the British colonial government. The information thus gathered was eventually put together in the form of Gazetteers for each province of colonial Nigeria.

⁴² C.M.S. Niger Mission.C.A3'O 28. C. Paul, 'Report for the year ending Sept. 1877.'

Thus, in 1920 and 1921, the Gazetteers of Nupe and Ilorin provinces compiled by E.G.M. Dupigny and K.V. Elphinstone respectively were published.⁴³ They were based on oral information collected from selected individuals by colonial officials. They thus constitute some of the earliest records of oral recollections and traditions concerning the period up to the time of recording. They have been widely used, especially in Nigerian universities, for graduate and post-graduate dissertations, and in all published texts dealing with the pre-colonial conditions of the societies they are about. Mason, Adeleye, Johnson, Last, Kirk-Greene and Law (all cited in the Bibliography) have used these materials.

The colonial period saw the Nupes split up between Nupe (subsequently Niger) and Ilorin Provinces. The Niger river was the divide between them. Thus any contemporary study of the Nupe that needs to utilize the Gazetteers must use the records for the two provinces. It is important, first of all, to note that the records concerning Nupe history in the first half of the 19th century in these gazetteers were not direct observation made by the colonial officials. Secondly, there is no way to discern whether the information were obtained from surviving participants or whether they were recorded as histories and traditions of second generation Nupe. Indeed, it is not clear whether this information was preserved as formal or semi-formal traditions.⁴⁴

⁴³ E.G. M. Dupigny, Gazetteer of Nupe Province, London, 1920; Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin Province, London, 1921. The colonial boundaries kept being redrawn and Nupe province expanded to become Niger Province.

⁴⁴ M. Mason, 'Nupe Kingdom in the 19th century: A political History', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1970, p.509, and in his critical article, 'The Tsoede myth and the Nupe Kinglists: More

Recourse to the field notes (district note books, touring notes or assessment reports) of the colonial officers will yield materials detailing what information was procured from whom. It will throw light on the methods used to collect the tradition and how credible the informants and the information are. For instance, the traditions recorded in the Gazetteer of Ilorin Province seem to have been collected from the Etsus of Pategi and Lafiagi, i.e., the Nupe royalty and nobility south of the Niger.⁴⁵ The other set of traditions was obviously from Bida on the north bank.

But a comparison of the touring notes with the gazetteers suggests that the gazetteers sifted and condensed the original oral data procured from informants. There was a definite attempt by the compilers to work the traditions into a readable and understandable history of their various provinces. As a result, using the gazetteers involves more than simply using collected traditions. While Dupigny did not bother to periodize events, Elphinstone consciously worked out probable dates. There are statements put in brackets that also suggest themselves to be observations or conclusions of the compilers rather than raw information. Unfortunately, the materials Elphinstone used for the dates

Political Propaganda?'. *History in Africa*, vol.1. 2, 1975, observed that in Nupe there is no evidence of any institutional means of preserving history. There were no official historians, only elders who had interest in their history.

⁴⁵ Compare documents of District officers who served in Lafiagi, Patigi emirate, e.g., Ilorin Prof. 324/1917 'Northern and Southern Province Boundary Palmer Hargrove Commission 1917: Historical Notes on Illa, Ishan, Iye and Ayede, Ikole, Ilesha, Osi, Obo, Autun, Ajasse, compiled by V. Biscoe an Assistant District Officer; Ilorprof. 6593 'Lafiagi Historical and Assessment- Lafiagi Assessment Report by Major Budgen', and SNP 7 166/1907 and the Gazetteer summations. A close look shows the similarity between some of the dating and records of events. This is not to be wondered at since the gazetteers were compiled from these sources.

and the bracketed conclusions are not exactly obvious. Thus, it is difficult to distinguish dates that he worked out himself from those supplied by others.⁴⁶

At a few points the traditions recorded by the two gazetteers seem to have been fed into each other, or, as Mason noted, the later compiler relied on the earlier.⁴⁷ Thus there is a great deal of verbatim repetition in some paragraphs describing particular events, which would indicate that the earlier document was used to fill in gaps in the later. However, there exist remarkable differences of detail in the two records, each apparently concerned with the unfolding of events from the local center from which the records derived. For instance, each tradition emphasizes the role of its subjects in a rebellion in which several subjects from different Nupe groups participated. Thus, while there is agreement as to the rebellion and the central outcome, the detail of who was the chief rebel, or to whom the death of an enemy in such a joint action was attributed, diverged. In this respect, the partisan nature of the information collected, rather than constituting a hindrance, enhances a multi-polar view of the history of the events of the early 19th century.

The third major primary source for the early 19th century Nupe wars was the published work of Leo Frobenius,⁴⁸ a German archaeologist/anthropologist, who in 1910-12 embarked on exploration of major African kingdoms including Nupe and Ife Yoruba in

⁴⁶ For example see paras. 3, 5, 8, 11, 13, etc., in Elphinstone, Gazetteer of Ilorin Province.

⁴⁷ For a severe look at such types of history making by the authors of the two gazetteers, see Mason, 'Tsoede myth', pp. 102-4.

⁴⁸ L. Frobenius, The Voice of Africa: Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African

Nigeria. His two volumes were published in 1913 and were subsequently translated from German into English. Nadel was aware of this work but did not use it, relying more on his own field notes. Mason, it seems, did not make much of the version of the tradition that it records.

Frobenius collected his version of the tradition pertaining to the wars at Mokwa, an ancient capital of Nupe and an area that constituted a major support base for one of the contenders. It is fortunate that here and there, Frobenius indicated from whom he collected his traditions. Thus, he mentioned a titled official of Mokwa, Lili,⁴⁹ and at another time, a certain 'Fulbe who was proud of the craftiness of his race and whom [Frobenius] had succeeded in making talkative.'⁵⁰ Other pieces of information he collected from 'an old woman.'⁵¹ He relied on information provided by 'very old people.'⁵² However, there is more often than not a blurred line between the information he got and his analysis of events. Frobenius also made reference to using manuscripts and other written records, but mentioned the whereabouts of only one.⁵³ In all respects, the traditions he collected are as useful as the other two.⁵⁴

Exploration Expedition in the Years 1910-1912. Translated by Rudolf Blind. 2 vols., London, 1913.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 593.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 601.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

⁵⁴ Unfortunately, it has been little used in works dealing with Nupe antecedents.

The adoption or rejection of the dates, names and course of events that are contained in the oral-based sources for this study is not arbitrary. They were based on comparing and cross-referencing them against several available written eyewitness accounts of missionaries and diplomats and travelers. The various pieces of evidence contained in the latter accounts are also cross-checked against one another for the most plausible, most likely and most appropriate statements, dates and record of events. The chronology worked out in Appendixes 1 and 2 is based on this methodology.

Nonetheless, because they are essentially oral histories of a period far in the past, though put in print, these oral sources lack social and economic details. They are biased toward the upper class, the aristocrats, the nobles, the kings and their establishments. The same reason accounts for their chronicle nature, whereby the same patterns of events, crisis, warfare, victory and defeat, are strung over the larger section of the accounts.

THE CHARACTER OF EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC/ MISSIONARY DOCUMENTS

There are also a number of published diplomatic, commercial and exploratory reports, diaries, journals, and records by European diplomats, traders and missionaries who visited Nupe and adjacent areas during the first half of the 19th century. These written documents constitute the second major type of primary source in use for the 19th century history of Nupe. The relevant ones cover the period between 1826 and 1857. They provide valuable complementary data ranging from first-hand and second-hand reports to rumors and solicited information. Together they provide a continuous report on the area for three

decades. But individually, their observations were concentrated within a very short duration of time - just the length of the stay and journey of the diplomats, traders or missionaries. Nonetheless, they provide us with critical eyewitness accounts in some areas; in some cases proving to be an earlier source for some of the traditions that were later recorded in the Gazetteers.

Perhaps the most important advantage provided by these documents is the possibility of assigning definite dates to a few major events and identifying particular actors involved in the wars as they played out during the visits of the European observers. These dates fill the chronological gaps. They help to put perspective on issues and problems that would otherwise prove difficult to resolve relying mainly on the available oral data. They provide corroboration of the periodization in the oral sources in form of references to length of reigns, seasons of wars and so on. They serve as a baseline for the creation of a workable time frame for events. They are also the sources from which the bibliographical data in the Appendix 4 have been compiled. These data have been very useful in the sections in this dissertation that analyze the nature of the slave trade and domestic slavery.

However, some of the information they record, as will be seen in the analysis, is as enigmatic as that recorded in the later compilations of the Gazetteers. Available missionary information, for instance, seems to be selective. In the first place, the missionaries' ideological and religious vocation and their assumed moral superiority imply a limit to what

the agents could have access to. Events that were construed as negative or disadvantageous in the mind of the informants of the missionaries and politically aware members of the communities might be withheld from missionary notice. On the other hand, the missionaries' preoccupation with moral issues seemed to have occasionally affected their ability to absorb or be interested in other social and economic issues that must have seemed mundane to them. Hence, the missionaries' almost total silence concerning agriculture in Gbebe, while they made references to the same vocation in surrounding settlements is entirely surprising and enigmatic.

But these were no insurmountable problems for this dissertation. The missionaries, in other respects were in an excellent position to provide fairly detailed information and intimate knowledge concerning the issues on which they reported. This provides a basis for a contextual critique of the historical source derived from their journals and letters and the possibility of a researcher arriving at a balanced opinion about matters they recorded. They were freed slaves who came back as missionaries to serve among the members of their own communities. They spoke the same language as the people of the town. Their families and relatives were both in the town and in the neighbourhood. Moreover, they all had been enslaved as youths, hence they had imbibed the culture and tradition of their communities before being exported. Hence, when they returned, cultural differences between the missionaries and the local people were very minimal and restricted to areas of religious ideology.

There are also problems with the records of diplomats and travellers who passed through Nupe area without having the opportunity to fully understanding the detail and the import of events they witnessed or were informed about. Lander and Baikie, for instance, both have journal entries whose meanings cannot be deciphered on the basis of other available pieces of information against which their data could be cross-checked. The Landers apparently passed by a large market town on the Niger between Egga and Ikiri. But there is no knowing what town it was, excepting that another town, Gori, was identified in latter voyages to be a big market next to Ikiri. But their record, in this case, does not contain geographical referents that could associate the town with any known Niger market town. They also opined that the 1830 Rabah port of Zaghozie was a bigger market and manufacturing town than Rabah itself.⁵⁵ Baikie also mentioned a name in connection with the expulsion of Masaba from Lade in 1854 that cannot be verified in any way.⁵⁶

The inability of the researcher at present to positively verify some of this information can only impact on research negatively if the problematic pieces of information in question are made the basis for a major argument. This dissertation avoids this. Where

⁵⁵ R. Huish, The Travels of Richard and John Lander, into the Interior of Africa, for the Discovery of the Course and Termination of the Niger; from Unpublished Documents in Possession of the late Capt. John William Barber Fullerton, with A Prefatory Analysis of the Previous Travels of Park, Denham, Clapperton, Adams, Lyons, Ritchie, & co. London, 1836, p. 636.

⁵⁶ W. B. Baikie, Narrative of an Exploring Voyage Uprivers Kwora and Binue commonly Known as the Niger and Tsadda in 1854. London, 1966, p.271.

such pieces of information are used, attention is drawn to their problematic nature. Moreover, a close interrogation of all the evidence pooled for use in this dissertation has been done. This seems to be the only appropriate method with which to handle the particular problems encountered in the sources employed for the write-up.

Mason made reference to Nupe accounts published in Hausa, one of which he considered valuable and used in his examination of the history of the Nupe wars. He also used an unpublished manuscript composed by an elderly Nupe official, part of which he has translated in Kano Studies.⁵⁷ These sources are not available for the present work. But the summations of Mason from them are considered in the overall analysis.

⁵⁷ Kano Studies. A journal of Saharan and Sudanic Research, Published for Abdullahi Bayero College. Kano Nigeria. London, 1972.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NUPE WARS OF C.1800-1857

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the Nupe and it examines in an outline form, the origin and the course of the political and military crisis that broke out in the Nupe and surrounding area during the first half of the 19th century. These wars broke out at the same time that other Nigerian societies were undergoing similar experience. The Hausa states to the north were in the throes of the jihad wars of Uthman Dan Fodio that began in 1804. The Yoruba wars were also being fought around the same time and before the close of our period of examination, the Niger Delta states were engaged with a similar social and political crisis. Since the similarity in form and the concurrent outbreak of the Nupe crisis and those that have been described as 'crisis of adaptation' are major elements in this study, the chapter describes the different phases of the Nupe crisis. Some of the factors that precluded the rise, before 1857, of an undisputed supreme political leader among the factions that contended for the throne of Nupe are also examined.

THE NUPE AND THEIR POLITICAL CONDITION C.1800

The Nupe are composed of several groups of people of distinct dialects and provenance: two of them deriving from outside of the present Nupeland. They speak different but mutually intelligible dialects of Nupe and they live within contiguous geo-political boundaries. These distinct groups include the Kusapa, the Chekpan, the Batachi,

the Bini, the Kyedye, the Benu and the Gbedegi. Apart from the last two groups who were said to have derived from Borno and Yorubaland respectively, the differences and identities of the various groups and the appellation by which they are known are fixed by ecological/geographical situation. The Kusapa are the forest dwellers and they thus traded in palm and kola that the geography of their area allowed. The Bata are the marsh-dwellers of the Niger floodplain. The Kyedye are the river people and the main Nupe transporters on the Niger. The Bini are renowned to be skilled in *chigbe* (medicine). The Benu were descended from Borno immigrants and were traders, and the Gbedegy, as the local name implies, where the Nupe of Yoruba origin whose name derived from the period when they first arrived into Nupe and could only speak Nupe 'a little'. Their cultural hero known as Tsoede or Edegi, their first king (Etsu) reputedly accomplished the transformation of these disparate groups into a single nation under one Etsu.¹

The basic unit of kinship organization was the extended family of male members descended from the same ancestor. Patrilineal descent was thus a condition for succession to the Etsuship. All the Nupe kings up to 1810, excepting an alleged usurper, were considered to have been members of segments of the royal lineage of Tsoede. However, there were also strong matrilineal aspects to Nupe kinship organization. Indeed, certain types of inheritance could pass on to the daughter. In this way, sons of princesses often

¹For a fuller discussion, see Nadel, Black Byzantium, pp. 26-33; Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms', pp. 8-14, 26-31.

could try to contend for the royal throne. It was the contradictory relationship between the patrilineal and matrilineal arrangements that started off the succession disputes that Nupe witnessed in late 18th century and early 19th century. The disputes eventually broke the state into two and allowed external forces a foothold in the socio-political affairs of the state, altogether resulting into about half a century of wars.²

An attempt to describe Nupe social and political conditions in the last two decades of the 18th century and the first decade of the 19th, as a background to the Nupe crisis of c.1810-1857, is hampered by inadequate source evidence. Mason who was faced with such a task described the nature of historical evidence on which such an analysis could be based as 'flimsy and uncertain.'³ As stated in the Introduction, the absence of published studies on early 19th century history of Nupe is due principally to the relative scarcity of evidence compared to the late 19th century. Therefore, writing a history of Nupe that goes further back in time than the early 19th century is even more problematic.⁴

Mason's work provides a rough outline of the probable nature of political developments in Nupe during about two hundred years before the 19th century. This account indicates that the Nupe or a section of them and some Hausa states to its north had important contacts with each other from as early as the 15th century. Some of these

² Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms', p. 10

³ Ibid.

interrelations involved military activities said to have been directed against the Nupe by the legendary queen Amina of Zaria and another in which the king of Katsina, Sarkin Korau, defeated a Nupe group.⁵ Yoruba traditions also record that a number of the early (Alaḥin) kings of Oyo were engaged in military skirmishes with the Nupe.⁶ The deified Alaḥin Sango of Oyo was said to be a son from a marriage between an Alaḥin and the daughter of a certain Elempe, purportedly, a Nupe king. Another Alaḥin Oluodo was said to have drowned in the Niger during a campaign against the Nupe sometime in the 17th century. Indeed, a Nupe army sacked Oyo Ile in the early 16th century, forcing the Alaḥin of Oyo to remove to a new capital of Igboho.⁷

There are also mentions of economic relations and exchange of Nupe slaves for horses from Zaria and Kano.⁸ Some of the horses that the Nupe bought from the Hausa states and Borno were resold to their southern Oyo neighbours. There are other evidence showing that Nupe was known in Borno in the 17th century and that during this period, Muslims from Borno emigrated to Nupeland. These bits and pieces of evidence concerning Nupe influence on its neighbours several centuries before the 19th century

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6; quoting H. R. Palmer, 'Kano Chronicles', *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. 3., Lagos, 1928, p. 102.

⁷ R. C. C. Law, *The Oyo Empire c.1600-1836. A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Oxford, 1977, p. 37.

⁸ S. Johnson, *The History of the Yoruba. From the Earliest Time to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*, Lagos, 1957, p. 159; Law, *Oyo Empire*, pp. 34, 37, 190.

⁹ Palmer, 'Kano Chronicle', p. 111.

might indicate that the Nupe had achieved a noticeable measure of political and economic significance in the Nigerian area long before the 19th century.

Unfortunately, specific evidence concerning the last two to three decades leading up to the outbreak, in c.1810/11, of the Nupe wars are also known only in outline form. Evidence for the period is sparse and reconstruction of the course of events could only be schematic. Much of the details worked out by Mason are derived from oral sources, supplemented by a few Arabic written sources, which themselves were oral-based.⁹

During the last two or three decades leading up to the early 19th century Nupe wars, evidence shows that Nupe was in a state of political instability. The long-term influence of Islam had produced in Nupe a king Jibrilu, early in the 18th century, who was an Islamic reformer. The reformer king started off an era of instability when he 'tried to extend Islam at the expense of traditional polytheistic practices' and as a result was overthrown in a rebellion.¹⁰ Mu'azu who succeeded him was also removed and exiled to Yauri after eight years on the throne. Jiya, during whose reign, between c.1760 and 1785,¹¹ Nupe was said to have extended its borders on all direction succeeded Mu'azu. He was a popular king. Jiya's successor, however, was driven from the throne when exiled Mu'azu made a comeback to the throne.

⁹ Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms', pp. 46-7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹¹ Baikie's calculation in 'Notes on a Journey From Bida in Nupe to Kano in Hausa', Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. 37, 1867, p. 105.

The death of Mua'zu marked the transition in Nupe from the period of instability to outright political crisis. Events precipitated into the splitting into two of the Nupe state among rival sections, touching off a long period of war. Mu'azu's son, Kolo was removed as king, according to Baikie, because an alternate royal line was due for succession to kingship and Kolo's ascension violated this understanding. He was also said to have been a weak king who was controlled by his mother.¹² After his removal, Kolo and his supporters settled in the land of his patrilineage in Zugurma where they constituted themselves into an independent Nupe state with Kolo as king over them. From this time onward Nupe had two kings and two capitals. A certain Yikanko, allegedly a usurper, taking advantage of the confused situation surrounding the succession dispute, seemed to have been able to establish a third capital at Mokwa.

In the midst of this political instability, a local jihad broke out. The local jihadists soon invited Sokoto jihadists from outside of Nupeland to their aid, hence between c.1810 and 1812, the Nupe wars and the larger Sokoto jihad became intertwined. This resulted in a complex web of intrigue, shifting alliances, and warfare of an epidemic proportion that afflicted Nupe in the first half of the 19th century.

Unfortunately, the effects of the wars are better known than the causal events. Among the well-known effects up to 1857 is the unfortunate fate of those people who

¹² *Ibid*; see also Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, vol.1, p. 576.

suffered capture, enslavement and exportation.¹³ Yet, the nature of the warfare that produced these visible effects has not been studied in detail. Reports from many of the 19th century European expeditions to Niger are replete with records of devastation wrought on communities bordering the Nupe in the Niger valley area.¹⁴ These reports were able to capture the magnitude of capture and enslavement suffered by the victims. Published studies have made no more than generalized, schematic and inadequate references to the scale and prevalence of violence in these societies.¹⁵

This situation contrasts sharply with the work that has been done by historians on the jihads and wars in Hausa and Yoruba countries, respectively. The nature of the warfare — the organization, technology employed, logistics, issue of leadership and general consequences — have also been researched.¹⁶ The same has not been done for

¹³ P. Curtin and Jan Vansina, 'Sources of the nineteenth century slave trade', *Journal of African History*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1964, pp. 185-208; Mason, 'Population Density and 'Slave Raiding'; Lovejoy, 'Background to Rebellion'.

¹⁴ These are represented especially in Chapter 4.

¹⁵ For cursory mentions of the Yagba, Akoko, Kaba with respect to the Nupe wars of early 19th century, and at best, outline sketches of these wars in general, see M. Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, London, 1962, p. 91; R., Hallet, 'Introduction' in Richard and John Lander, *The Journal of Richard and John Lander*, (edited and abridge with an Introduction by Robin Hallet), London, 1965, pp. 25-6; H.A. S. Johnston, *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*, London, 1967, pp. 136-8; J. Hatch, *Nigeria: The Seeds of Disaster*, Chicago, 1970, p. 114; M. Mason, 'The Jihad in the South: An outline of Nineteenth Century Nupe Hegemony in North-eastern Yorubland and Afenmai', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 5, no. 2, June, 1970; S. A. Akintoye, *Revolution and Power in Yorubaland 1844-1893: Ibadan Expansion and the Rise of Ekitiparapo*, London, 1971, p. 35; R. A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria 1804-1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and its Enemies*, London, 1971, pp. 34-5, 56; E. Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*, London, 1983, p. 212; A. R. Mohammed, 'The Sokoto Jihad and Its Impact on the Confluence Area and Afenmai', *State and Society in the Sokoto Caliphate*, edited by Ahmad Mohammad Kani and Kabir Ahmed Gandi. Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, 1990, pp. 142-157; S. J. Idris, 'The Establishment of Pategi Emirates. The Historical Background c.1810-1818', M. A. Thesis Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1992, pp. 207-9.

¹⁶ J. F. A. Ajayi, 'The Aftermath of the Fall of Old Oyo', J.F.A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, Vol. II, Longman, 19774, pp. 129-166; S. O. Biobaku, *The Egba and their Neighbours*,

Nupe. Only one published text contains a chapter that attempts a serious reconstruction of the early 19th century Nupe wars. Appendixes 1 and 2, a chronological reconstruction of the course of these wars, and the present chapter that, more or less, summarises some of their details, are attempts to fill these gaps. They are detailed analyses of the early 19th century Nupe wars. They identify the major participants, the duration and the widespread and successive nature of the wars.

WARS AND RAIDS OF THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY NUPE

The Nupe wars occurred in at least nine more or less clear phases between c.1810 and 1857. During the first identifiable phase, sometime between 1810 and 1812, Abd al-Rahman, a local jihadist reformer, fought and occupied 'the Nupe capital', most likely the capital at Mokwa, for six months.¹⁷ Yikanko who was king at Mokwa was able to drive out the reformer after six months of war. Abd al-Rahman's inability to hold Mokwa seemed to have occasioned his request for military assistance from the Sokoto jihadists.¹⁸ With this external assistance, Yikanko was killed, his forces defeated, and Mokwa was subdued. However, the Islamic reform motive of the war did not seem to have permitted

1842-1872. London, 1957; Ajayi and Smith, Yoruba Warfare; R. C. Law, 'Chronology of Yoruba Warfare in the Early Nineteenth century', Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, vol. 5, no. 2, 1970; Akitoye, Revolution and Power; Johnson, History of the Yoruba; T. Falola, The Political Economy of a pre-colonial African State: Ibadan 1830-1900, Ile-Ife, 1984.

¹⁷ H. Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa from the Bight of Benin to Sokatoo, to Which is Added the Journal of Richard Lander from Kano to the Sea Coast, London, 1829, pp. 121, 123, 133.

¹⁸ M. Last, The Sokoto Caliphate, New York, 1967, p. 40, footnote no.113 and Mason, The Foundation of Bida of Bida Emirate, Zaria, p. 26.

either leaders of the allied reformers to make himself king in place of the one who was killed at Mokwa. The Muslim community seemed to have simply settled within Nupe.

The second phase of wars involved the remaining two local royal claimants from their separate capitals of Rabah and Gbara. Manjiya, who probably participated in the sack of Mokwa, was able to mobilise the support of the immigrant scholars and jihadist forces that came from Sokoto in his bid to become the undisputed Nupe king.¹⁹ Etsu Jimada was killed at Gbara by the forces of Manjiya and allies, and the latter temporarily emerged as the only Nupe king with his capital at Rabah. Jimada's son, the heir to the Gbara throne, and Makolo, the military commander of Jimada, together with some supporters, escaped and eventually ended up in Ilorin.

During the third phase of the Nupe wars, c.1820-1824, Manjiya directed his military forces against his erstwhile jihadist allies and other immigrant Muslim clerical communities both to the north and south of the Niger. He expelled them from Nupe, and they fled to Ilorin where another Muslim cleric had established a considerable political following.²⁰ At Ilorin the exiles invited the remnant supporters of the Jimada royal line led by Idirisu to join their group in opposition to Manjiya. In a bid to pre-empt the danger brewing on his southern border, Manjiya sent a large expedition against the Muslim forces in Ilorin. His attack failed and his enemies counter-attacked and succeeded

¹⁹ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 9 para. 11; Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 30, para. 3.

²⁰ Elphinstone, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, p. 31, para. 6; and Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms,' p. 65.

not only in driving him back across the Niger, but out of Rabah.²¹ This left the Muslim forces of Mal. Dendo and their allies, the Nupe who supported Idirisu, as the most powerful political group in Nupe.

The instrumentality of the Muslim forces in deciding which local royal line and its supporters had the upper hand constituted the clerics as kingmakers, and in major respects, as the predominant ruling force in Nupe. Nonetheless, Idirisu was made Etsu Nupe by the jihadist forces in place of Manjiya. Several aristocratic Fulani clerics, whose communities in Nupe land were also dispersed and who had been exiled to Ilorin by Manjiya, had teamed up with Dendo in the counter attack that led to the defeat of the former. These clerics seized the opportunity of the defeat of Manjiya in 1823-24 to return to their former territories, and there they organised campaigns by which they were able to establish their independent little territories. This resulted into the establishment of the emirates of Lafiagi and Agaie.²²

The fourth phase of the Nupe wars began when Idirisu who was made Nupe king turned against his allies and, cashing in on the apparent neutralization of Manjiya's forces, sought to drive out Dendo and his supporters from Rabah by laying siege against the city. Dendo, however, wooed Manjiya back into another alliance. Manjiya's

²¹ M. Sulu, 'History of Ilorin.' Compiled by M. Sulu, Ilorin Native Courts Registrar chiefly From accounts given to him by old people in Ilorin Town in 1953.' Mss. Afr. 1210, Bodleian Library Oxford. See also, Frobenius, p. 578; Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31 para. 8; Dupigny, Nupe Province, 1920, p. 10, para. 15.

²² Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 10 para. 15; Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31, para. 9.

supporters came to the rescue of the Muslim forces at Rabah and together they drove off Idirisu and his soldiers.²³ This phase of the wars took place between 1825 and 1828. Here again the wars went on for several years and concurrently at different locations south and north of the Niger. Lafiagi, which was established by compatriots of Dendo after the defeat of Manjiya, came under the attack of the supporters of Idirisu. The wars assumed a protracted and indecisive nature during this phase, each side winning and loosing battles. Manjiya, who had again become the leading Etsu Nupe, maintained a continuous alliance with the jihadist faction until his death, c.1841.²⁴

The fifth phase of the wars began in 1833, shortly after Dendo's death and following the appointment of Usman Zaki as the emir at Rabah. Masaba (Mohammad Saba), Usman Zaki's brother contested Zaki's choice of Momadu Gborigi as heir to the throne. His rebellion was short-lived as he was driven out of Rabah. Masaba settled at Lade near Lafiagi and from here organised a large following aimed at sacking Rabah. He allied with the two local royal lines that had been sidelined by the rise of Usman Zaki to the position of Emir of Nupe, a position that clearly made them subordinates. Together with his allies, around 1834-35, he launched an attack on Rabah but was repulsed.²⁵ Meanwhile Masaba's rise to prominence at Lade impinged on Idirisu's political sphere

²³ Frobenius, Voice of Africa, vol.1, p. 579. Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 10 para. 16.

²⁴R. Lander, Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa, London, 1967, vol.1, pp.179,180-181.

²⁵ Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 10, paras. 19 and 20.

and it brewed hostilities between them. This led to a couple of military encounters between the two on the south side of the Niger.²⁶

The sixth phase of the Nupe wars occupied the period between 1838 and 1844. For this phase, there is a record of at least seven battles in which Tsado the successor to Manjiya, supported by both Masaba and Idirisu, engaged the Rabah forces.²⁷ South of the Niger, between 1842 and 1843, forces loyal to Tsado and Masaba invaded Lafiagi and Shonga country to dislodge Usman Zaki loyalists. The capital of these two emirates were attacked and their kings fled into exile.²⁸ Meanwhile on the north side of the Niger, after Tsado's yearlong siege against Rabah, Usman Zaki gave in and fled into exile. By this period, Masaba was in an unassailable military and political position as undisputed Nupe king south of the Niger with his capital at Lade. In a series of raids, he expanded his sphere of influence by bringing the northeast Yoruba and southeastern Kakanda, and some Igbira and Bassa groups under his political sway. The untimely death of the apparently charismatic Etsu Tsado shortly after the sack of Rabah further enhanced Masaba's emergence as the most powerful of the Nupe leaders.²⁹

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11, para. 21

²⁷ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, vol. 1, pp. 583-4; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 11, para. 26; S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger. Journals and Notices of the Native Missionaries accompanying the Niger Expedition of 1857-1859. By the Rev. Samuel Crowther and the Rev. John Christopher Taylor. Native Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society*, London, 1968, pp. 192-3.

²⁸ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 34 para. 20.

²⁹ See Appendix 2.

The seventh phase of the Nupe wars broke out due to the conflicts produced by Masaba's attempts to eliminate the two contending local Nupe rulers who now constituted his rivals and who were a threat to his position. Accordingly, in a series of moves between 1844/45 and 1848/49, he instigated the two Etsus against one another. He then leagued up with the forces of Etsu Isa, successor to Idrisu, and the soldiers of the visiting emir of Gwandu in a battle against Etsu Jia who succeeded Tsado. Eventually, Masaba directed his forces against Etsu Ma'azu Isa who succeeded Etsu Isa, driving him out of his capital in c.1848/9.³⁰

The battles fought in 1853 and 1854 made up the eighth phase of the Nupe wars. Masaba's military general, Umar, rebelled against him and offered his services instead to Etsu Maza of the Manjiya royal line. The allies invaded Lade and drove Masaba into exile. During this phase, Masaba with the help of Ibadan soldiers that were equipped with guns organised a counter-attack to no avail. The war-general, Umar, assumed preeminent position in Nupe and for the next three years practically reigned as the Nupe king.³¹ The wars connected with Umar's eventual defeat made up the ninth and the last phase before the reunification of Nupe in the jihadists' hands.³²

³⁰ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, paras. 30 -31; Dupigny, Nupe Province, p.13, para. 33

³¹ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 35, para. 26, pp. 35-6, para. 29; Baikie, Narrative

³² Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 36, para. 32-34; Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 14, para. 40-41; A. C. G. Hastings, The Voyage of the Dayspring. Being the Journal of the Late Sir John Hawley Glover, R.N., G.C.M.C., Together With Some Account of the Expedition up the Niger River in 1857, London, 1926. p. 90.

Following Umar's defeat in 1857, Usman Zaki was recalled from exile to reign as the first emir of the united Nupe state of Bida emirate. Masaba, who was recognised as the heir to the throne, became emir in 1859 following the death of Usman Zaki.

A consideration of the duration and the overlapping nature of the phases of the Nupe wars (some were fought at different locations at the same time) shows that the maximum duration of peace in between battles enjoyed by the Nupe during this 50-year period never exceeded three years. Also, no part of Nupe escaped from the brunt of these wars; both below and above the Niger, the far northwest and the far southeast, all areas experienced significant military activities. The analysis of the available evidence in Appendixes 1 and 2 clearly indicates that no other emirate of the Sokoto Caliphate compared with the Nupe in the scale, duration, and general complexity of its military crisis. In fact, until the mid-19th century, it would be wrong to refer to a central Nupe army carrying out a jihad. There were prolonged and continuous wars arising from intrigues and tussles among several contending Nupe and jihadist factions.

The wars began as an internal civil war between members of the Nupe royal family. It was only with the assistance of one of the parties by clerical immigrants and revolutionary jihadists from the Sokoto caliphate that the character of the wars became even more complex and their general progress and outcome, henceforth, were affected by the factor of Islamic jihad. In addition to the jihad factor, however, nationalist, cultural, militarist and economic elements also contributed to give the Nupe wars their unrelenting,

vicious and complex character. However, the jihad factor eventually triumphed as the single most important element. This was demonstrated in the successful establishment of five emirates in Nupe: Lafiagi, Shonga, Lapai, Agaie, and Rabah/Bida. Rabah/Bida was the largest and dominant of all.

FACTORS IN THE PHASING OF THE NUPE WARS.

What used to be a normal ideological and political problem that was local to Nupe was transformed into a full-scale military contest between several actors of local and foreign provenance c.1810. This transformation was connected with the link-up between the local Islamic scholar and reformer, Abd al-Rahman and his community, and the Sokoto jihadists to the north. While it is not known what was the strength of the forces sent from Sokoto to assist Abd al-Rahman's local jihad, it is clear that the assistance changed the balance of military and political power very drastically. Abd al-Rahman's inability to hold Mokwa for more than six months, and the fact that it took the combination of the allied forces of the Sokoto contingents, probably with the support of Manjiya's forces, to subdue Mokwa by killing Yikanko, suggest that the various contenders were generally equally matched. The success that the alliance recorded against Yikanko must have inspired Manjiya to seek for a similar alliance in his struggle against Etsu Jimada in Gbara. It was another such alliance forged with the jihadists and Muslim immigrants that effected the defeat of Jimada and temporarily unified Nupe in the hands of Manjiya.

Another factor connected with the foreign jihad element from Sokoto was the opportunity that Islam, and particularly a jihad philosophy, provided Abd al-Rahman, and later Manjiya, for mobilizing supporters beyond local ethnic boundaries. It equally provided a respectable external source of moral and cultural legitimation for the contestants' bid for independent political power. Islam and the reformation of the Nupe society in line with the Islamic tenets were conveniently put forward as the moral basis of the struggle for the throne and of the fight to unseat Jimada. Manjiya thus projected the image of his force and his political goals as part of a larger Sokoto caliphate movement.³³

However, it soon became clear, in the struggle for Nupe political leadership, that the immigrant clerical forces and their followers on their own did not command sufficient military and political power to single-handedly take over the control of Nupe. Indeed, with the Gbara capital suppressed and Jimada killed and his supporters sent into exile c.1819, and with Abd al-Rahman apparently isolated, Manjiya found himself in a better military and political position relative to his rivals. As a result, between 1822-1824, he was able to mobilize a force that drove out the jihadist forces out of Nupe and to follow it up by carrying his attack against them far south to Ilorin.

Once a victory was won during these wars, it seems that a new balance of power was often quickly attained until new political alignments were entered into which would

³³ See Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition, p. 121; Lander, Records, p. 175. for Manjiya's Islamic credentials.

again change the balance of power and produce a new series of wars. Thus, a careful consideration of Appendix 1 shows that almost all cases where contestants single-handedly attacked the faction that had temporary pre-eminence at a given time always resulted in failure. Conversely, temporary successes and ascension to a superior position relative to other contestants were often attained after alliances had been entered into with the forces of one or two of the contending factions. The final phase of wars between 1855 and 1857 in which the jihadists eventually emerged overall victors and were able to unite Nupe under them was no exception to this trend. The condition of a general balance of forces seemed to have prevailed over the period of the struggles, leading to attempts by contenders to seek military political dominance by the formation of convenient alliances, by intrigue and by warfare. It was not until 1857, after all other contestant had been virtually liquidated and their support bases scattered, that a single faction, the jihadist faction, was able to assume supremacy in Nupe.

The raids organised by the Rabah and Lade military-political factions against non-Nupe communities on their borders, though different in motivation, were nonetheless closely related and important to the wars raging among the Nupe factions within Nupeland. These cases of military violence, which were apart from the major wars between power and influence wielders within Nupe, have been variously termed raids, razzias, expansionist wars, jihad, and slave-raids; they were perpetrated against weak and

defenseless communities at the southern frontiers of the Nupe. It is clear from the analyses in Appendix 2 that the military campaigns thus described range from full-scale war to simple ambushes or early morning raids organised to kidnap a few people.³⁴

Mason distinguishes two types of wars, although he cautions that the distinction between them were never strict.

In one, the united army of the capital set out to achieve a definite and limited objective, often with the aid of allies. Campaigns such as these were planned in advance and required elaborate preparations. As far as can be seen there were only rarely smaller campaigns carried out apart from, but simultaneously with, them. Often they lasted more than a single dry season and on a number of occasions they were directed by the Etsu himself.³⁵

In contrast to the above, which to some extent satisfies a description of the internal Nupe wars, there is a second category:

... the smaller campaign which was frequently little more than a raid. This was often carried out under the direction of a single, major *tiçi*, [chief] such as the Benu, or even a title-holder's military commander, like Ndako Damisa, for instance.³⁶

Though external, these wars were organically linked to the internal wars within Nupe. As a matter of fact, the dynamics of the one meshed with those of the other. While these

³⁴ C. Meillassoux, referencing Mungo Park's evidence for the interior of Western Sudan, distinguishes between two types of wars: 'one consisted of raids executed by a restricted number of individuals, the other involved mounted expeditions in which a greater number of soldiers participated.' And again, 'wars which represented the bloody expression of the settlement of account between kingdoms, armies versus armies, princes versus princes and which were carried out with a certain degree of formality: [in contrast to] the great expeditions, bringing along thousands of men to the pillage of some distant country, in the course of which no quarter was given.' The former describes the wars among the Nupes and the immigrant clerical aristocrats with their military bodies while the latter, with some modifications, fits the raids under consideration in this chapter. The modification to the latter is that they did not have to be 'great', although some were. The soldiers involved, where it was a raid by a subordinate official to the emir, might not number in the 'thousands' and the victims did not have to be a 'distant country.' See also 'The role of slavery in the economic and social history of Sahelo-Sudanic Africa', J. E. Inikori, (ed.), Forced Migration: The impact of the export slave trade on African societies, New York, 1982, p. 78.

³⁵ Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms', pp. 454-5. See also Nadel, Black Byzantium, p. 110.

³⁶ Nadel, Black Byzantium, p. 455.

wars also had their different characteristics, nonetheless, they were fought and are better examined in the context of the internal wars within Nupe.

In the first place, these were military activities carried out by military fractions of the contending Nupe warlords against societies that were culturally, politically and ideologically distinct. These societies were at the same time small scale and in the frontier area shared by the Nupe, Ilorin, Igala and Ibadan states. The wars were directed outward from Nupe and the victim societies were essentially a frontier of incursion and expansion. Official state of hostility was never declared against the victims. Neither are there references to these victim societies mobilizing to counter-attack. In most cases, they resisted by fleeing if they received timely warning of the approach of their enemies. More often than not the attacks were conceived to surprise the victims. But, some of these military activities were not petty military actions by subordinate officers who simply wanted a little booty. The entire mobilized army of Masaba carried out some of these wars and they may involve prolonged operations. In many cases, it was through these wars that the victim societies were made subject to Nupe — a process by which they effectively became part of the Nupe state. In the second place, from time to time, the military and political struggles within Nupe seemed to have limited the scope of the wars fought in these places, and to have transformed the relationship between the victim people and the victors.

The earliest of such raids recorded, occurring between 1831 and 1834 against the Kakanda, Yagba, and Bunu, were directed from the newly entrenched jihadist political centre at Rabah. These raids took place during the fifth phase of the internal Nupe wars. The jihadist faction by then had temporary supremacy over its local rivals. However, this supremacy was achieved through a series of alternating alliance with one local faction against the other. The Rabah jihadist faction was as yet in a fragile political and military position within Nupe. Hence, the raids they conducted against their southern and southeastern south-Niger neighbours did not seem to be aimed directly at extending the boundary of the Nupe. They seemed rather to aim only at taking captives, conscripting troops and levying tribute. These raids might also have been linked to the wars that saw the defeat of Idirisu, Jimada's son, by Manjiya-supported Rabah forces during the period 1825 - 1828. The raiders passed through the areas of Idirisu's support and some of the attacks could have been designed to further weaken Idirisu and prevent the possibility of his renewing hostility against Rabah.

Between 1838 and 1841, during the six phase of the Nupe wars, there was an extension of these military raids to the communities on both side of the Niger between Egga and the Niger-Benue confluence. By this time, Masaba, one of the contenders in the Nupe wars, who had been driven out of Rabah, was able to establish a rival Nupe state with its capital at Lade on the south bank of the Niger. From his capital, he leagued up with other local contenders in several abortive attacks against Rabah before their final

success. Masaba was said to have been prominent in the alliance that eventually drove Usman Zaki out of Rabah in 1844/5. The raids carried out by detachments of Masaba's army against the Kakanda and others could, therefore, be placed within the context of his need for slaves, soldiers and tribute to facilitate his diplomatic and military policies.

However, beyond the above point, Masaba had established a state that needed a constant flow of economic and financial resources. Since he was not initially successful in the struggle against Rabah, the alternative, surest and easiest means of realizing his military and political ambition in the interim, was to attack the Kakanda, Igbira of Koton Karfi, the Oworo and Bassa around the confluence of the Niger and Benue. These peoples were not centrally organised and they did not possess formidable military capabilities. This objective also explains Masaba's 1845 military expedition against the Yagba to enforce payment of tribute. These raids thus constituted important elements in the political policy of Masaba in his bid to establish himself as the supreme leader in Nupe, by first consolidating his Lade base through the taking of captives. The slaves could then be sold to bring in needed revenue that would enhance his military capabilities and his overall support, altogether facilitating his attempts to attack Rabah and overthrow Usman Zaki. His acceptance, during the same period, of a joint invitation from the Obi, King of Aboh, and the Attah, the Igala King, to send troops for an expedition to punish some Delta communities who had obstructed the free flow of coastal commerce over the Niger can also be understood in this context.

CULTURE AND IDENTITY DURING THE NUPE WARS.

A phenomenon that marked the socio-political development within Nupe during the period of the Nupe wars was the formation of shifting and changing identities and socio-political alliances. Identity redefinition or reformulation was an important component in the processes and events that characterized the twists and turns of the wars.

While not the primary means used to define identities, ethno-nationality seemed to have been one of the readier and more easily accessible socio-cultural frameworks employed for military/political mobilization. It was especially employed by rival indigenous and immigrant political elite to define socio-political boundaries to their individual advantage and to the disadvantage of their opponents. All the available evidence points to the fact that the categories 'Felatah' and 'Nupe' were important in certain respects during the course of the struggles.

These ethno-categories implied inclusion or exclusion in the functioning social-political groups of the crisis period. Thus, a Yoruba soldier in the army of Rabah was called a Felatah by a victim population that sought to present their Rabah attackers as different and oppressive invasion group. This identification thereby aroused local nationalist feelings of fellow victims and aided in the mobilization of opposition. Everybody associated with the political establishment of Rabah would fit the classification done by the victims. On the other hand, the jihadist conquerors, whether or

not ethnically Fulani, also identified publicly and proudly as Fulani (Felatah) and contraposed this ethno-political identity to the despised category of their victims, the Nupe. Hence, it was a double edged political tool, used hegemonically by the jihadist ruling class and as a tool by the victims to evoke a feeling of resistance to those, who by the appellation, were marked out as aggressors.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Nupe culture and tradition was still expanding and absorbing immigrants, the latter substituting the Nupe language for theirs and becoming effectively integrated into the various sections of Nupe, all united around the Etsu Nupe.³⁷ The religious aspect of this tradition was still essentially non-Islamic. By the turn of the 18th century, Muslim Fulani immigrant clerics arrived and started building up their support base. This included Nupe and other ethnicities and nationalities. When they eventually became deeply involved in Nupe political affairs and started to gain political foothold, at the expense and the disadvantage of the indigenous Nupe leadership, the local Nupe rulers, Manjiya and Masaba included, mobilized the Nupe against the immigrants on the basis of orchestrated cultural-nationalist differences.

It was not until 1854-7 that the Nupe were eventually able to grow out of their provincial nationalism. The new outlook gradually developed in the midst of warfare, migrations, population admixing, and the distress associated with the wars. It culminated, once again, in a united Nupe under the Usman Zaki/Masaba regime.

Mason observed that

the faction that won out in 1857 was foreign and that its success in part derived from its identification with Islamic reform and its acceptance of the material price implied by this connection. In concrete terms the alliance with the reformed states to the northwest yielded military aid in return for tribute.¹⁷

Pace Mason, however, much of the evidence for the success of the victorious faction, however, does not seem to support putting any weight on the military support that Gwandu gave to the faction it or gave to others it chose to back during the course of the struggle. The most important factor seems to have been the gradual change in the self-definition and identification, first and foremost, by the local Nupe cultural/political elite, and followed eventually by the generality of the people. This facilitated the change from the general opposition of the local Nupe to support for the jihadist faction.

In 1854, during the ninth and the last phase of the wars in which Nupe was again reunited under one king, the Nupe faction north of the Niger rose against the 'usurper' military general Umar. Developments during the crisis had convinced the Nupe that the position of the general was antithetical to their interests. They now requested the leadership of Umoru Majigi, whose uncle, Usman Zaki, they had earlier chased out of Rabah into exile. Part of the reason for this, at least among the Nupe north of the Niger, was the unmasking of the warlord Umar's unacceptable intention to become the Nupe

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

¹⁸ M. Mason: 'Production, Penetration and Political Formation' The Bida State, 1857-190' in D. Crummey and C. C. Stewart (eds.), Modes of Production in Africa: The Precolonial Era, Beverly Hills, London, 1981, p. 207.

Etsu. This miscalculation on the part of Umar precipitated a political backlash against him. The Nupe perhaps saw this as a desecration of the Tsoede royal throne by a common man who had no traditional right to it. Worse still was Umar's mindless exposure of the skull of Etsu Jia, a worthy son in the direct line of the founder of the Nupe nation, whom he killed. All this was a negation of their symbolic adherence to a royalist legacy begun by Tsoede. It is not surprising that Umar was entirely abandoned by his erstwhile Nupe champions, and had to resort to recruiting mercenaries from Womba to fight his last battles.

The years of the supremacy of Umar over Nupe seemed to have greatly impacted on Nupe identity. The period marked the high point in the pandemic of wars with its tremendous social, economic and political pressure on the people. It was equally the high point in the swift and multiple changes in both the poles of authority and centres of loyalty. The period also witnessed the wiping out of the social and cultural basis of the indigenous support for the local Etsus. This was especially so following the total defeat of the Isa faction and the 'voluntary' invitation by the only remnant of organised Nupe of the Manjiya section, of Umoru Majigi, grandson of Dendo to be their leader.

It was then, it seems, that Masaba's earlier activities that had partially succeeded in narrowing down the sense of difference between the invading Fulani and the victim Nupe was eventually successfully consummated. There was a successful transformation in the Nupe sense of self-definition to include the Fulani. From the south across the

Niger, Masaba, the product of a Fulani/Nupe marriage, had over the years successfully won over the loyalty and support of a considerable portion of the Nupe of the Jimada royal fraction. His establishment and reign at Lade from c.1835-1852 and his rearguard military action against Umar from 1853, no doubt, aided in the continuing refashioning of their self identity by the Nupe section to the south of the Niger. Masaba had been immensely successful as a politician and had expanded his territory even to non-Nupe areas in the tradition of their famous founder Tsoede. Masaba's evident successes, his mixed Fulani/Nupe descent and the important fact that he identified with the Nupe in opposition to his own full-blooded Fulani brother must have smoothed over the traditional consciousness of the dichotomy between the invading Fulani and the victim Nupe and their endangered indigenous royal houses. In the course of his rise to fame and struggle against his brother and other contenders, Masaba was able to completely insinuate himself into the Nupe's ethos. This process was consummated in 1857. This was at the eventful moment of the consolidation of a new single Nupe emirate by the protagonists of the jihad, represented by the linking up of Masaba's south bank and Umoru/Uthman Zaki's north bank Nupe factions during the war that ended Umar's military coup d'État.

There is no doubt that in this process of re-definition of identity by the Nupe, very close social relations across ethnic divide, especially, of marriage between the leadership of the Nupe and the immigrant Fulani cleric and jihadist leadership, played an

important role. However, of equal significance was the ability of the jihadist factions to polarize the two disaffected local ruling houses, thereby maintaining a prolonged state of hostility between two Nupe factions that were otherwise of the same ethnic provenance. This cleavage in Nupe ethnic and cultural solidarity gave room for the grafting of the foreign elements into what was originally a local leadership that was narrowly defined in terms of the Tsoedean lineage.

Another important factor that suggests itself is the factor of the considerable mobility that the wars forced on the Nupe population. There was social, but more importantly, demographic mobility. The Nupe who found themselves conscripted into the army of the jihadists enjoyed some of the social and political privileges that followed the slow success of the faction. The various alliances between the jihadists and the respective indigenous leaders, with their followers, also meant that opportunities of a measure of leadership/followership interaction and building up of mutual interests at very close levels were taking place during the period of the wars.

The reconciliation efforts and interventions by Halilu, the Emir of Gwandu, in the course of the Nupe wars, could be expected to have played an important role in the process of ethnic integration that became manifest in Nupe by 1857. As can be seen in Appendix 1, either by design or sheer helplessness, at no time could the Emir of Gwandu eliminate either of the local royal Nupe factions. He could not by fiat decree them obsolete in preference to sole-rulership over the Nupe of either of the contending jihadist

leaders whose titles and ideology were based on Islamic philosophy. Indeed, the only occasion, during the seventh phase of the wars between 1845 and 1848, when the Emir of Gwandu directed his forces against one of the local Etsu, Jia, it was only in alliance, and perhaps at the invitation both of Masaba and the second Etsu, Isa.

For as long as the indigenous Nupe Etsu showed viable military and political clout, the Emir of Gwandu was resigned to accepting their legitimacy. He settled problems among the contenders by partitioning Nupe into spheres of influence where each contender was to operate, thereby showing himself impartial. When Usman Zaki was booted out of Rabah in 1845, the Emir of Gwandu came down to put his imprimatur on the new political power configuration and on his return to Gwandu, took Usman Zaki along with him into exile. In these subtle ways, the very process of the wars progressively imposed on the Nupe psyche a willingness to submit to Gwandu Fulani administrative, juridical and moral influence, and to gradually accept integration into the political and cultural dictates of the Fulani leadership of another emirate.

The split of the jihadist faction into two, together with the seeming impartiality of the Emir of Gwandu in accepting the *fait accompli*, was equally a vital factor in the emergence of the new Nupe outlook. Since Masaba who had a Nupe bloodline through his mother caused the split, his faction naturally appealed to Nupe sentiments to rally support against Usman Zaki, his full-blooded Fulani brother. In this process, Masaba was able to constitute a section of the Fulani, especially those that supported him, into friends

of the Nupe, while no doubt, Usman Zaki must have done the obverse thing in his part of the Nupe which he held.

Thus while the cleavage into two of the Nupe royal dynasty and their supporters weakened insular attachment to Nupe sense of solidarity built around the person and institution of the Etsu, the obverse was the case with the cleavage among the Fulani leadership of the jihad. It diluted the hatred and antagonism of the Nupe people that a single Fulani-led jihadist faction would evoke. It resulted into the lining up of a section of the jihadists Fulani leadership and its Nupe supporters against another section of jihadist Fulani leadership and its Nupe supporters. These processes must have gradually changed the sense of self-definition among the Nupe and the Fulani groups in the two opposing camps during the very long period of the crisis. Over the period of about five decades that this social interactive processes were going on, the Nupe must have increasingly been able to identify one or the other fraction of the Fulani with what hitherto used to be local Nupe political, military, economic and social interests.

The overall effect was that the framework of social and political self-identification by the Nupe elite, and perhaps by a large portion of the generality of the Nupe over the years, was expanded. It now included the Fulani, the 'Felatah.' The period of acute instability in Nupe and the processes that established the Nupe emirate of Bida was then concluded in July of 1857. Henceforth, either north or south of the Niger, there was going

to be only one Nupe ruler for the Rabah/Bida emirate. This was from the royal house of Dendo. It remained so until the colonial period and far down into the present time.

CONCLUSION.

The motivations and method of prosecution of the early 19th century Nupe wars differed from each other. This gave the wars and the phases in which they were fought distinctive characteristics. Abd al-Rahman's brief war has been described as an indigenous jihad. Unlike recent migrants such as Dendo and Musa, another notable migrant Islamic scholar in early 19th century Nupe, Abd al-Rahman was born in Nupe of a Nupe mother. The indigenous tenor of his jihad did not accommodate the encroaching political influence of non-native jihadists. Thus while he welcomed Sokoto's military assistance in his jihad, he was obviously unwilling to yield first place to Sokoto's representatives or underlings at Rabah. For this reason, the Dendo faction that had pledged allegiance to Sokoto had to neutralize him.

Having started a conservative war, Jimada died defending himself against the combined attack of Manjiya and Dendo. While Manjiya professed Islam and invited immigrant clerics to fight on his behalf, his entire motivation in the battle against Jimada was rather conservative and secular than religious. It was a continuation of the local attempts to revive or remake the succession rules to the old Nupe throne. Dendo's support of Manjiya in this war was perhaps, at least from hindsight, strategic than reformist in conception. To carry through his jihad goals, he would help one enemy

eliminate the other until he was left as the most prominent in the political equation of Nupe.

Manjiya's attack on the immigrant Fulani clerics and their supporters and the expulsion of their communities from Nupe following his replacement of Jimada clearly show the shallow nature of any claim he might have made as a jihadist while fighting Jimada. He soon championed a nationalist course to terminate the unwelcome ideological and political danger of the jihadists. His was a counter-jihad war to conserve his traditional *Etsuship* of the Tsoede royal house. *Etsu* Tsado carried this to its height and temporarily succeeded in dislodging the jihadists from Rabah.

Masaba's wars were more miscellaneous in nature. As a scion of the foremost jihadist in Nupe, he automatically assumed the same ideological status and role as his father. But the majority of his wars, against his brother and against the two *Etsu* Nupe were non-jihadist. They were simply civil struggles in which he sought to acquire or consolidate his leadership position. His wars against Lafiagi and Shonga can not be characterized differently from this. The raids he carried out against the small states of Kakanda, Northeastern Yoruba and Ekiti, were tactical 'resource farming' campaigns.³⁹ They neatly dovetailed into his bigger intentions of either creating an independent 'Reich' without any particular reference to its being or its not being a jihadist state, or taking over the pre-existing state structure at Rabah. The motivation of Masaba's wars was

essentially secular. Masaba's jihadist inclination came out only after he had assumed leadership in Bida following the death of Usman Zaki, far outside of our period of consideration when he used Islamic philosophy to consolidate his large emirate and to conciliate the caliphate political elite.

Warlord Umar's wars were out-rightly aimed at usurping the Nupe throne through a military dictatorship. His shifting allegiance and alliance; first against Usman Zaki, then against Masaba; his alliance with *Etsu* Maza, his killing of *Etsu* Jia; his embassies to Gwandu while he was in power and the use of one of Dendo's grandson as a foil, all show him to be an ingenious politician and opportunist. He waged war on all comers to maintain his newfound position. His was the closest to the successful scenario developed in south-western Nigeria among the Yoruba of 19th century Ibadan, where the basis of political legitimacy was overturned from heredity to purely military achievement.

Nonetheless, the jihadist factor was, overall, the most important in the direction and outcome of the wars. The question, however, still remains for those wars that were carried out under the banner of jihad. What else motivated them? Could they be economic, political, religious or ethnic factors?³⁹ Were they rebellions of ethnic Fulani

³⁹ See the next chapter.

⁴⁰ For explanatory models that categorise African wars according to either political or economic causes, see, P. D. Curtin, Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade, Madison, 1974, pp. 156-168; E. P. LeVeen, 'The African Slave Supply Response', African Studies Review, 1, 1975, pp. 12-13; Cf. Inikori, 'Introduction', Forced Migration, pp. 45-51, where he questions the dichotomy between the economic and political spheres that the models include.

minorities against the oppression of the local Hausa rulers?⁴¹ Eltis discounted economic motives relating to either the Atlantic slave trade, its abolition or the introduction of legitimate commerce from early 19th century West African jihad wars and argued that such early 19th century wars in West Africa were autonomous outplay of religious-political problems. He considered them to be conceptually separated from the slaving wars directed towards the supply of the Atlantic export.⁴² He opined that low slave prices that followed the 1810 abolition of the Atlantic slave trade had killed any impetus for slave raiding. On the other hand, Lovejoy and Richardson argued that the abolition impacted the wars of the interior. Thus the jihad wars could be linked to the increase, due to decline in slave prices in the coastal belt, in demand for slaves employed in production for the new legitimate commerce, and attempts to maximize income from illegal export sales of slaves following price rebound post 1820.⁴³ If applied to the Sokoto jihad, this view implies

⁴¹ For conceptions about the jihad of the Sokoto Caliphate, see Barth, *Travels*, vol. III, London, 1965, pp. 110-116; M. R. Waldman, 'The Fulani Jihad: A Reassessment', *Journal of African History*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1965, pp. 333-355; Johnston, pp. 29, 95, 25-6, and 95; M. Last, 'Aspects of Administration and Dissent in Hausaland 1800-1968', *Africa*, vol. 40, no. 4, Oct., 1970, p.345; Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy*, pp.5-10; R. A. Adeleye, 'The Sokoto Caliphate in the Nineteenth Century', *History of West Africa*, vol. II, (ed.) J.F.A. Ajayi, and M. Crowder, London, 1971, pp. 526-530; Y. B. Usman, 'The Transformation of Political Communities. Some Notes on the Perception of a Significant Dimension of the Sokoto Jihad', *Studies in the History of Sokoto Caliphate, The Sokoto Seminar Papers*, Zaria, 1975, pp. 334-55; H. J. Fisher, 'A Muslim William Wilberforce? The Sokoto Jihad as Anti-Slavery Crusade: An Inquiry into Historical Causes', Daget, S., *De La Traite a l'Esclavage*, pp. 537-555.

⁴² D. Eltis, *Economic Growth*, pp. 223-231; D. Eltis, and Lawrence C. Jennings, 'Trade between Western Africa and the Atlantic World in the pre-Colonial era', *American Historical Review*, vol.43, no. 4, 1988, pp. 936-59.

⁴³ Lovejoy, *Transformations*, p.182; Lovejoy, P. E., and David Richardson, 'The Initial 'crisis of adaptation': the impact of British abolition on the Atlantic slave trade in West Africa, 1808-1820', Law, R. C. C. (ed.) *From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce: Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-century West Africa*, Cambridge, 1995. For a supporting view see also, Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, p. 142.

that the Sokoto jihad wars were an extension inland of the slaving frontier in the early 19th century. Evidence of many Sokoto caliphate slaves exported to Bahia and those that were liberated in Sierra Leone in the early 19th century (Nupe inclusive),⁴⁴ have been shown by the latter researcher to support an economic element in the motivation of the jihads and its dominance over political element.⁴⁵

However, the analysis done in this chapter and, especially in Appendix 1, and the details of the complications introduced into the Nupe wars, argue for independent internal causes for the wars. Examining the different phases of the wars individually brings out the fact that the outbreak of the wars involved internal political problems of succession. The local succession dispute became unmanageable when the factor of jihadist reform that had made its way into Nupe exacerbated the cleavages between the ruling lineages. This eventually threw up non-royal clerical Abd al-Rahman, who not only challenged the entire royal institution of the Nupe and the culture and tradition that was its justification, but went ahead to invite Islamic reformers of the Sokoto caliphate to assist his reform. This process effectively linked Nupe's internal political and ideological problems to the trans-ethnic and supra cultural Islamic revolution that had broken out and was spreading all over the Hausa states further to the north of the Nupe. Thereafter, the flow and ebb of

⁴⁴ Lovejoy, 'Background to Rebellion'; See also Appendix 2.

⁴⁵ Lovejoy, 'Problems of Slave Control in the Sokoto Caliphate', P. E. Lovejoy, ed., Africans in Bondage, Madison, 1986, pp. 238-9.

the wars was related to the balance of military power and to the internal politics and economics of the wars. The latter theme is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

WARFARE AND THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE
OF NUPE AND ITS OUTLYING COMMUNITIES, C.1800-1857.INTRODUCTION

The last chapter was an analytical reconstruction of the Nupe wars and the prevailing military-political cleavages in Nupe during the crisis. This chapter explores the impact of the wars on the socio-political and demographic structures of the Nupe and other adjoining societies. It examines the internal dynamics that gave the Nupe crisis its characteristic stamp. The economics of the military mobilizations and campaigns launched by several contending Nupe factions are examined, as well as the political and economic implications for the Nupe warring factions of the conjunction between the Nupe crisis and Gwandu/Sokoto's political and economic interests. These factors articulated in particular ways that helped to sustain the wars through their various phases, as well as defined their character.

Published studies on the Sokoto Caliphate, as well as the few ones on Nupe, by their telescopic generalization and the all too brief treatment of the episode, seem to blur the important issues connected with the Nupe crisis.¹ In the first place, as can be seen from the

¹ Nadel, Black Byzantium; Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms', pp. 447-457; J. Goody, Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa, London 1971; R. R. C. Law, The Horse in West African History. The Role of the Horse in the Societies of pre-colonial West Africa, London, 1980; H. J. Fisher and V. Rowland, 'Firearms in the Central Sudan', Journal of African History, vol. 12, no. 2, 1971, pp. 215-239 and J. P. Smaldone, Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: Historical and Sociological Perspectives, Cambridge, 1977. Of those who

phase by phase reconstruction attempted in the last chapter, over the long haul, these military activities were epidemic and persistent in nature. There was hardly a period between 1810 and 1857 without major military mobilizations and violent clashes. The distances covered by some of the campaigns give an indication of the range of impact. Once camp was struck, only success, defeat or the onset of the rainy season suspended war.

Not much can be said about the number of soldiers in the various sectional armies of the Nupe during the first half of the nineteenth century. Informants told Nadel that Manjiya invaded Ilorin in 1823/4 with 10,000 strong army and that the final struggle for the Nupe throne in 1856/7 involved some 4,000 horsemen.² Oldfield in 1833 reported that Usman Zaki's cavalry and infantry numbered about 5,000 and 20,000 respectively.³ Given the fact that each side in the Nupe struggle had its cavalry,⁴ it may be assumed that the size of the entire military force fighting in Nupe during some of the major wars was considerable.

One thing is sure, Nupe had a martial cavalry-based tradition. Tsoede, the founder of unified Nupe, was said to have owned no less than 5,555 horses; and stirrups supposed to have belonged to him are preserved at Gbagede in Nupe.⁵ As Ade Obayemi indicated, the traditions of the surrounding peoples also show the Nupe as a major cavalry state. These

have done some work on such military issues as are contemplated here, only the first two studies give some specific attention to the Nupe.

² Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 78.

³ M. Laird and R. A. C. Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa by the River Niger in the Steam Vessels Quorra and Alburkah in 1832, 1833 and 1834*, London, 1837, vol. II, p. 86; Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms', pp. 449-50 unfortunately does not provide estimates for pre-Bida armies.

⁴ This is evident from the instance of 800 of defeated Idirisu's soldiers defecting to Wawa in 1829. See Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 106.

traditions of hostility are borne out in the early history of Nupe/Oyo relations. Oral sources relate a period in the history of Oyo when an invading army of the Nupe, apparently with the support of some of the Alafin's subjects and succeeded in entering Old Oyo, forcing the Alafin (King) Onigbogi into exile.⁶ As a cavalry-using state, Nupe may have bred horses, besides importing them from its northern trading partners.⁷ At any event, Nupe had an important trade in horses from Kano and Borno and was also the principal supplier of Oyo.⁸

From a careful analysis of the events that determined the scope of the Nupe wars, a pattern of military development can be perceived. Particular arrangements in the nature of military requirements and recruitment are implied. Nadel interviewed surviving soldiers of Usman Zaki and Masaba, and he was able, thereby, to piece together the military organization that engendered such wars and campaigns as described in Chapter Two and Appendix 1. However, his information relates to the period from 1860, outside the scope of the present study. Moreover, as he warned, the sketch he provided was 'based entirely on information and the historical recollections of informants.'⁹ The time dimension of this information is particularly important, because the 1860s were far removed from the period of generalized military-political disturbances that are the concern of this analysis. This was a

⁶ Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 74; Law, *Horse*, p. 20.

⁷ A. Obayemi, 'States and peoples of the Niger-Benue Confluence Area', O. Ikime, (ed.) *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan, 1980, p. 158; Law, *Oyo Empire*, p. 39.

⁸ Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 20. Nadel was informed that the Benu group of Nupe, who had immigrated from Borno tried their hands at horse breeding but were forced to abandon it due to tsetse induced failures.

period when no single central power was able to exert its dominance for more than a decade, when there were competing poles of authority, influence and allegiance, all of which affected military organization.

Secondly, by 1934 when Nadel collected his information, the ideological and legal supremacy of the emirate authorities had been established over all rivals. The reconstitution of the emirate as a colonial administrative apparatus through the Native Authority system in colonial Nigeria involved increased systematization and enforcement of the legal codes of the *sharia*. Hence, Nadel's highly structured picture represents an idealization drawn mostly from royal and noble informants. How different things were for the unstable period that we are concerned with is not clear. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that much that was recorded applied to the first half of the 19th century as well.

MILITARY ORGANIZATION, WARFARE AND NUPE SOCIETY

According to Nadel,

War was essentially a concern of the Nupe state... But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups.¹⁰

For the greater part of the period we are concerned with, the state, as Nadel would have it, was unstable in Nupe. At most times, there were three or more centres of authority with the temporary dominance of a central state structure usually sustained by the partial co-option

⁸ Lander, Records, vol. II, p. 13.

⁹ Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 108-9.

of the superseded rivals. In this condition there was little control over the outbreak and scope of wars. The various centres of power and influence were themselves targets of military attacks. The breakup of the royal house of *Etsu* Nupe into two contending factions, the invitation to Dendo, his active service in aid of Manjiya and the eventual independent military activities of Dendo and the immigrant Fulani clerics of the Lafiagi area resulted a situation of pandemic wars in Nupe. Many centres were capable and willing to organize war to enhance their positions. Indeed, up to 1855 when Etsu Maza was killed in the seventh phase of the Nupe wars, the two *Etsu* Nupe, though overshadowed, were nevertheless able to maintain their royal courts and the ability to mobilize and raise military establishments. They also received tribute from their subjects, and one or the other was consciously counted by each ascendant Fulani jihadist ruler of the day.¹¹

The decentralized nature of military organization and mobilization in Nupe during the crisis ca. 1810-1857 meant that more than one centre had access, even if by sufferance, delegation or default, to the means of violence. Each of the centres had a military organization that was capable of killing off enemies en masse; they could each effect mass destruction of communities, mass relocation of population and mass enslavement of people. Depending on the levels of their subordination and discretion, the various feudal lords, nobles, district and town officials, and household heads from whom slave and free conscripts were obtained, no doubt wielded and executed the power. They could terrorize, capture,

¹¹ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, pp.171,185,198; Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II.

raid, and/or enslave in accordance with the opportunity and their power. The geographic scope, the pervasiveness and the large extent of destabilization that would result from such scattered execution of military violence might match if not exceed that of a monarch with a powerful centralized standing army. The widespread state of disturbance and disruption of agricultural production resulting from slave raiding, kidnapping and military violence reported by contemporary witnesses seem to support the foregoing assertions.¹²

The entire population of Manjiya's hometown of Tabria fled to Igualinze in Borgu during battles between Idirisu and Manjiya a year or two before Clapperton's visit.¹³ Lander reported a disturbance around Kulfo in 1828 in which people in

the walled town of Koofo captured and sold, contrary to custom, the wife of a man belonging to a neighboring village, who was supposed to have been slain in one of these engagements. The consequence was a mutual system of retaliation and petty warfare which embroiled all the country in domestic dissensions.¹⁴

He reported that

the combatants arm[ed] themselves with bludgeons, bows and arrows, and spears; and the conflict [was] in almost every instance, prosecuted with the bitterness and animosity of the most ruthless savages, frequently terminating in the death or capture of numbers of each party, when the latter [were] uniformly sold into slavery.¹⁵

pp. 31, 35, 39, 67, 78, 108.

¹² See J. P. Smaldone, 'Firearms in the Central Sudan: A revaluation', Journal of African History, vol. 13, 1972, pp. 598, 605 and Goody, pp. 49-56.

¹³ Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition, pp. 125, 128.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 193.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 193.

Also, during his visit to Manjiya's war camp in 1829, Clapperton passed totally ruined settlements. He actually met Manjiya with his troop armed with clubs, hoes and pick-axes on their way to destroy a village. He travelled with a party of Manjiya's enforcers on their way to capture people who had returned without permission to work the farmlands of their desolate towns.¹⁶ This situation continued both north and south of the Niger and around the confluence throughout the period of study. In 1857, W. H. Clarke came across ruined villages at the southern border of Lafagi territory; he was told that they were victims of Masaba's wars during the previous years.¹⁷ In 1858, D. J. May was overwhelmed with emotion when he saw the extensive ruins, resulting from the Nupe wars, of Lade on the south bank of the Niger and of Rabah on north bank.¹⁸

Nadel's research showed the Nupe army to be composed of 'a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard', and 'levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers...' Moreover, according to Nadel,

The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, while others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe... The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ W. H. Clarke, *Travels and Explorations in Yorubaland 1854-1858*, Ibadan, 1972, p. 171.

¹⁸ May, D. J., 'Journey in the Yoruba and Nupe Countries in 1858.' *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol. XXX, 1860, pp. 228, 230.

¹⁹ Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 109.

It is to be doubted whether one could refer to the slaves and clients who were enlisted as feudal levies as 'regular troops.' Nonetheless, the general pattern painted by Nadel for the latter part of the 19th century had been established in the earlier period. The prevalence of wars, the threat of war, and overall insecurity perpetrated by the contending elements within the fabric of the Nupe political community meant a virtually permanent body of troops that were handy and could be called upon in emergencies.

Evidence clearly indicates the presence, in the Nupe armies, of a considerable number of mercenaries and volunteers. This was especially true for Masaba's army. Recruitment in Ilorin and Nupe had followed the strategy of granting liberty to slaves on condition of serving the jihad army. The Nupe factions with the jihad flags could thus recruit slaves into their military.

In 1830 Richard Lander recorded Nupe military recruitment policy during one of the early phases of the Nupe wars:

It has been the policy of Mallam Dendo, who, by all accounts, is an able and crafty chief and a courageous man, to advance foreigners of all nations to certain lucrative and important posts, either about his person, in the army, or as governors of conquered towns; and by this means he conciliates, in a great measure, the black, or original population of the country, confirms his reputation, and establishes his sovereignty with little trouble over lands and districts which he may have subjugated and added to his dominions....the number of foot soldiers he has at his command is so great, that it is not known. All runaway slaves are encouraged to join the ranks on condition of receiving their freedom; and they are joined by a vast number from surrounding country. The natives are commanded by captains from among their own countrymen, and the Falatahs, also by theirs; the greatest good-will prevails among them, and we have nowhere observed quarrelling of any kind.²⁹

Oldfield also reported in 1833 that the

army of Rabah is composed of liberated slaves, whose freedom is granted them on consideration of their taking up arms. In the winter or wet season they follow their ordinary occupations; and in the summer or dry season, when the Quorra [Niger] is low, they assemble from all parts of the kingdom of Houssa, Soccatoo, Kano, &c. They travel very quickly, taking the unsuspecting inhabitants by surprise. They seldom fail in capturing hundreds of prisoners, as well as cattle, horses, &c.... The Felatah army of Rabah is commanded by several Bornouese.²¹

The leverage that mercenaries, volunteers, and foreigners had in the Nupe army of Mallam Dendo and Usman Zaki seems to have been considerable. This is seen from the critical positions occupied by the Bornouese Umar Bahaushe and the Yoruba Ubandawaki, who was his second. At the apogee of his career, Umar, three years became the undisputed military lord of Nupe. Such foreign elements and chosen slaves came to constitute the core of the standing armies of many Western Sudanese states by the middle of the 19th century.²² Masaba helped to establish the pattern, as the account of his imported Ibadan professional auxiliaries in Chapter Two demonstrates. As late as 1862, Rev. Samuel Crowther in reference to Frederick Abbega, a freed slave of Kano origin, mentioned 'many of his [Abbega's] roving countrymen who have hired themselves to the services of Masaba in destroying towns and villages from which they derive very little advantage.'²³ Some of Masaba's military assistance also came from Ilorin, and there is a record to the effect that Masaba had given Ere, a Yagba town, to Ilorin in return for Emir Shittu's help in his attempts

²⁰ Lander, *A record*, pp. 192-3.

²¹ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, pp. 87-8.

²² See Smaldone, 'Firearms', pp. 599 and 601.

²³ *Niger Mission*. C. A3/O 4 (a) *Rev. Samuel Adjai Crowther*. Letters and papers 1857-63. Crowther to CMS Sec. Gbebe, Oct. 3rd 1862.

to regain Lade.²⁴

The use of slaves in the military was of such importance in the royal guard, as well as in the mass of foot-soldiers that members of each contending party, from senior nobility and well-off client-soldiers (*harau*)²⁵ to the least of the slave soldiers, were concerned with acquiring these human resources. Since new captives could be impressed into the military, perhaps after a period of 'seasoning', it can be imagined that slave capture influenced the expanded scope of the campaigns analysed in the last chapter.

However, given the fact that the major wars were essentially carried on within Nupe, captives from among opponents might prove very intractable. They spoke the same language as their captors; they could easily locate their places of origin. They could thus find it easy to effect escape or find someone to ransom them. They would prove, in contemporary commercial language, to be 'high-risk goods', too risky to impress into the military.

An explanation for the expanded scope of the military campaigns at this time was the need to limit the advantages of the opponents by killing off their warriors or capturing them for sale. This perhaps explains such oral traditions as recorded in the Gazetteer of Ilorin for the third phase of military activities in Nupe, when *Etsu* Manjiya was reported to have routed the 'Filani — killing a great many of them ...capturing their women and children as

²⁴ NAK Ilorin 6593 Lafiagi Historical and Assessment - Assessment Report, Lafiagi District June 1912 Report by Major Budgen. 'Historical Notes', para. 5.

²⁵ These were young peasants and townsmen both native and foreigners who volunteered to enter the

slaves.²⁶ On another occasion, it was said of Masaba, sometime in 1848-50, that he 'sent an army which defeated the Nupe under *Etsu Maazu*, killing hundreds of them. All who fell into their hands were murdered, and all women who were thought to be pregnant were put to death by being ripped open.'²⁷

Another plausible explanation for the expanded scope of the wars was the need for slave-booty that could be acquired from defeated opponents. These could be converted into resources for the purchase of war implements, including horses, foreign slaves and mercenaries, from outside Nupe. In his study of Nupe military organization, Nadel learnt that the cavalry

represented the elite of Nupe army. It was composed of senior *bara*-men whose sons might be fighting in the foot-troops—and younger relations, sons and brothers, of the feudal lord himself... They carried shields, swords, and spears... Many of the feudal lords, princes and civil nobility... would themselves join the army at the head of their household troops.²⁸

Nevertheless, the composition of the cavalry elite force in Nupe cut across all social groups to include slaves as well as free commoners and nobles.²⁹ Therefore, the use of cavalry by the various Nupe warlords implied a steady importation of horses from Bornu and Sokoto at prime cost, besides their need for slaves. In 1833, Oldfield reported that Usman Zaki was 'daily purchasing horses to add to his troops.'³⁰ Perhaps, other than the slaves, the horse was the next most valuable item. As well as being an important military article, like the

service of a feudal lord as clients. Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 110.

²⁶ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p.32 para. 6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35, para. 23. See Appendix 2.

²⁸ Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p.110.

²⁹ See Law, *The Horse*, 148 and A. W. Banfield, *Life Among the Nupe Tribe*, Berlin, Ontario, 1905, p. 6.

acquisition and possession of slaves, owning a horse was also mark of nobility or achievement. Egga was an important market for further southward importation of Borno horses into Nupe and other south-of-confluence communities.³¹ So also was Rabah. Right from Idah up to Rabah, missionary and European visitors to the Niger observed that slaves and horses were complementary trade articles.³² In 1833, Oldfield reported at Rabah that the

finest horses are brought from Soccatoo by the Arabs: they are all entire, and capable of enduring great fatigue. The white horse, the property of the king — was a noble animal, about sixteen hands high, and in England would be worth about a hundred and fifty guineas. The horses between Rabah and Idah, the latter being the first town where many are met with, are of a much smaller breed, and very sure-footed: they are to be purchased at Iccory markā (the Bocqua of Lander), for sixty thousand cowries (three pounds).³³

Captain Trotter stated that a charger at Rabah in 1833 cost as much as a young female slave 'sixty to one hundred and twenty thousand cowries.'³⁴ Allen and Thomson also provided information about the brisk trade in horses from Idah and Niger-Benue confluence up to Egga during their 1841-2 expedition. Early in 1842, they reported that 'a horse was valued at 22,000 cowries around the confluence.'³⁵

Thomas King a member of the 1841 Niger expedition supplied information on the tactical importance of the horse in slave raiding activities. He observed that 'parties of about

³⁰ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 86.

³¹ W. Allen and T. H. R. Thomson, A Narrative of the Expedition sent by Her Majesty's Government to the River Niger in 1841 under the command of Captain H. D. Trotter, London, 1968 [1848] vol. II, p. 100.

³² Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, pp. 133, 409; vol. II., pp. 80; Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 85.

³³ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 88.

³⁴ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 401.

³⁵ Ibid., vol. II, p. 365.

ten horsemen and some foot soldiers would lie in wait in the "bush", near a village, and at daylight, when the unsuspecting natives go to their work in the fields, they are seized and hurried off to their camp.³⁶ All this bears out Robin Law's point that the connection

between the horse and slave trade lay in their relation to war. Horses were valued primarily for their use in warfare, and were perhaps especially useful in the pursuit and capture of fleeing enemies, that is in securing slaves. Slaves, conversely, were most readily obtained through capture in warfare. The exchange of horses for slaves therefore, tended to become, it is often suggested, a 'circular process': horses were purchased with slaves, and could then be used in military operations which yielded further slaves, and financed further purchases of horses. Trade and war fed upon each other in a self-sustaining process which reinforced the domination of the warrior aristocracies — producing what Smaldone has christened the 'war complex' of the western Sudan.³⁷

Guns also seemed to have been used in the period in question, though their effectiveness in battle is not clear. However, they were considered vital to the turn-around in the military fortunes of Idirisu in 1828. His Beni³⁸ supporters were said to have used guns very effectively. Lander learnt that they made use of 'a great number' of 'European muskets' and that 'very few [of their enemies] escaped with life.'³⁹

Thus guns had obviously found their way up the Niger as far as Labozhi where there were colonies of Beni/Kyada people. These riverain Nupe must have procured guns by trade contact with Idah or from Aboh traders who visited the trade marts of the Niger-Benue confluence.⁴⁰ In 1830, the Lander brothers saw many muskets in the assortment of weapons that were held by people they came across in their journey downstream. The use of guns

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

³⁷ Law, *The Horse*, p. 63.

³⁸ The Beni sub-tribe of Nupe was meant, rather than Benin that was recorded.

³⁹ Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition*, pp. 180-1.

⁴⁰ Baikie, *Narrative*, pp. 293-294.

could be expected to increase following Masaba's employment of soldiers from Ibadan in 1853-4. He had made contact with Ibadan and the southern traders [Brazilians] and must have courted their friendship while he was in exile in Ilorin in the late 1840s. Guns also served the tactical function of frightening people in sudden attacks. Loud and repeated gunshots created terror and facilitated the seizure of captives.⁴¹

However, guns seemed to have been neither a permanent nor a prominent feature in the wars before the 1850s. The Nupe in particular did not use many guns. Gun sales and gun use was more common among the Igala, Igbira, and Kakanda than in Nupe territory.⁴² The chief weapons of war were bows and arrows, spears, swords and bludgeons were.⁴³ None of the effects that the early 19th century warfare had on the people of our area of study related to the acquisition of guns or the attempts to monopolize them. But their occasional use could be expected to have had a demonstrative effect for the particular battles in which they were employed. It is interesting to note that all the people or groups in the Nupe area mentioned in connection with guns were eventually subject to defeat, raids and tributary status by the jihadists whose principal weapons consisted of javelins, swords, bows and arrows. Umar's bow and arrow infantry and cavalry soldiers equally eventually defeated

⁴¹ See Smaldone, 'Firearms', p.594 quoting Baikie in F.O. 97/334, Baikie to Russell, no.3 of 1864, 20 Jan. 1864; and R. A. Kea, 'Fire-arms in warfare on the Gold Coast and Slave Coasts from the 16th to the 19th century', *Journal of African History*, 12, no. 2, 1971, p.209.

⁴² References to guns outside of Nupe: Lander, *Records* vol. I, p.180 and Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, pp.184, 230, 268, 277, 294-5.

⁴³ References to the bows, arrow, spears, clubs, swords together with horses could be found in Lander, p.193; Lander and Lander, *Journal*, pp.184,192; Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, pp. 2, 3, 86, 194.

Masaba's forces that used guns.

The nature of military armaments imposed an economic dynamics on the prosecution of war. For war to be effectively carried through, there had to be manpower and resource mobilization. These included the purchase of horses and weapons. Once the wars began, a logic was imposed on them such that gruesome political terror and gory massacres were set off against an underlying economic calculation. The scope of the wars was broadened; the violence, the length of the campaigns and the areas covered by wars were extended to consolidate military/political over-lordship and to acquire booty. Booty was the profit of war; convertible value for procuring the services of mercenaries, for the purchase of horses, foreign slaves and other goods, all of which would enable more effective campaigns in the future.⁴⁴

Apart from the high cost of horses,⁴⁵ the logistical problems of maintaining a cavalry force were enormous. In the first place, the greater part of Nupe is tsetse infested. Thus, the combined mortality of horses due to wounds sustained in battle and the prevalence of tsetse-induced disease imply a high turnover in horses.⁴⁶ The pressure to procure booty and especially slaves to finance this military apparatus would in itself have occupied a major place in the war-slave-horse-war cycle.

⁴⁴ This was a widespread practice, see Denham and Clapperton, 1826, A, p. 326.

⁴⁵ See Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 401.

⁴⁶ Reporting about his experience with horses in one of the Nupe areas where the early 19th century wars were fought, Banfield reported c.1904, that 'In seven months I lost three horses by these flies, and I noticed that in the months of November, the natives of Pategi lost twenty three. All these horses died with the same disease.' Banfield, Life Among the Nupe, p. 72.

Nadel was convinced that 'warfare in Nupe possessed its etiquette, its conventions, and rules, which show how highly developed and specialized a technique it had become.'⁴⁷ He gave an example of the fact that an 'ultimatum' was issued prior to attacking an enemy.⁴⁸ However, it is doubtful if this was the case before 1857. Due to the reasons of increased frequency, scope and length of military activities, and the use of mercenaries and soldiers of fortunes, it is more likely that military etiquette and ethics of war would be held more in the breach than otherwise. For instance, in 1843, soldiers returning from Masaba's aborted campaign against the people of the Niger Delta ran amok and pillaged some of the communities from which they came.⁴⁹ Thus, a contemporary opinion that the soldiers had 'no principle to restrain their cupidity,' is perhaps not far from the mark.⁵⁰ There are other records for the period as late as 1857/8 to the effect that military elements acting independently of centralized control imposed capricious demands on helpless victims communities.⁵¹ There is no evidence that the feudal levies that engaged in the various Nupe wars betrayed a chivalric culture. Indeed, the presence of several military-political centres with separate feudal levies having primary loyalties to their immediate superiors would render the military generally un-amenable to such ethics. As Smaldone observed, the

⁴⁷ Nadel, Black Byzantium, p. 110.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ S. Crowther, Journal of an Expedition up the Niger and Tshadda Rivers, undertaken by MacGregor Laird Esq., in connection with the British Government in 1854, London, 1979 [1855] p. 39.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ S. Crowther and J. C. Taylor, The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger. Journals and Notices of the Native Missionaries accompanying the Niger Expedition of 1857-1859, London, 1968, pp. 70, 72 and 155.

'institutional relationship between fief-holding cavalry, and military functions presumed and sustained a dispersion of power.'⁵² In such situations, a centralized code of military ethics would have been difficult to uphold. In fact, a central point of the wars was the centripetal attempts to centralize diffuse political and military power.

It could therefore be expected that, apart from their politico-military and economic objectives and capabilities, the mixed groups that constituted the competing military contingents in Nupe did not possess necessary ethical and institutional restraints to the violence they could unleash on their victims. In situations where Ibadan warriors, Borno mercenaries and Kakanda volunteers found themselves operating as a military force against an enemy, conflicting allegiance, attempts to make the effort pay and differences in military traditions would have shaped the particular nature that warfare assumed during this time. The increased violence, the torching of towns and villages, the killing of many and enslaving of many more, rather than being ordinary effects of warfare, seem to be a reflection of the nature and activities of a mixed soldiery that unrestrained by effective ethical codes.

The mass mobilizations of military personnel to fight over the distances in the wars and for the length of time indicated entailed material expropriations, requisitions, and violence unleashed on the populace that found itself along the line of military advance. The soldiers were generally not centrally provided for and had to fend for themselves once the provisions they set out with were exhausted. Volunteers were said to have set out for war

⁵² See Smaldone, 'Firearms', p. 605.

carrying 'their own weapons and rations sufficient for two or three weeks in the field'.⁵³ Thereafter, the satisfaction of the soldiers' food requirement after three weeks could not but lead to considerable impositions on the civilian populace and severe exaction or extortion from conquered people. Crowther's 1857 report probably applies to the entire first half of the 19th century. He observed that the 'king's soldiers [were] not paid, but [were] obliged to provide for themselves the best way they [could]'.⁵⁴ He went on to show that declaration of war on a victim district was all the license they needed to start plundering, kidnapping and exacting on the unfortunate people. In this way they kept themselves supplied with provision, captives and money.⁵⁵

Some of the 'smaller raids organized by feudal lords' consisted of mobile forces of limited military contingents that swept through territories, burning, looting, and taking captives. They seem to have had no reasons other than to procure booty, slaves included. In many cases, these invasions led to up-front payments of tribute or the surrender of a number of people as slaves. In most cases, the victims were either sold off into slavery or released to their relatives on payment for exorbitant ransoms.⁵⁶

Given the need of the competing factions to maintain ready military contingents, capable forces with enough horses and mercenaries, the raids seem to be vital economic

⁵³ Ibid., p. 598

⁵⁴ Crowther and Taylor, The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, pp. 162-3, entry for April 23.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, pp. 23, 85; Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, pp. 91-2; Crowther and Taylor, The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, pp. 70, 72.

elements in the entire equation of the military-political problems of Nupe during this period. Mercenaries had to be paid or rewarded and clients encouraged with presents. Soldiers also cemented their relationship with their nobility by giving their patrons a portion of booty they got from raids and battles. Nadel's research indicates that

the *hara* soldiers could keep all booty in kind—called *dukia*, (wealth)—but were expected to present some of it to their overlords as 'gift of thanks': of the slaves whom they captured they had to surrender half the number to their overlords. The independent fighters, i.e. the sons of noble houses, kept whatever they captured, both 'wealth' and slaves, except for a voluntary gift to the head of the house

While describing Usman Zaki's 'frequent' expeditions for 'kidnapping and plundering', Crowther observed that in

the event of slaves being caught, the kings and chiefs claim[ed] the larger share, and the soldiers but a very small portion for his pay or part of the spoils. However, to distinguish such, he [was] either provided with a sword, or rewarded with a robe; and if very deserving, he [was presented with] a horse, to aid him in his future acts of man-stealing.⁵⁸

These various forms of emolument interacted with the causal factors of the wars to reinforce each other in vicious and unending circles. No doubt, Nadel was justified in considering warfare in Nupe as 'a profession' and 'a source of income'.⁵⁹ This conclusion can be applied to the latter part of our period of examination.

The nature of military organization in Nupeland in the first half of the 19th century was reflected in bigger and more frequent wars, more violence, and in the general brutalisation of the Nupe population. All these seem to have encouraged both great slaughter and huge

entry for Aug. 29.

⁵⁷ Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 112. For legal distribution of booty from a jihad expedition see Mason, *Foundation*, p. 32. See also Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 106.

capture of opponents where possible. Guns, slaves, horses and cowries (tribute-money that could buy these articles) were complementary goods that served military, social-political, and economic purposes all at once. Each of them also constituted a store of wealth, and they were generally interchangeable, as one was sold to procure the other.⁶⁰ These articles were very important tools in the execution of military violence. They were also important as booty of war and store of wealth in the larger society. Their procurement and deployment in the Nupe wars linked military-political and economic factors together, thereby giving Nupe military activities the characteristics of a totality of purpose.

THE POLITICS OF GWANDU'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE NUPE WARS

The play of political intrigue during these years of serious military-political crisis embraced actors outside Nupe. The Emir of Gwandu, in whose sub-jurisdiction the eastern Emirates of the caliphate fell, was an active party to the fray. Ilorin, Lafiagi and Shonga were also involved at various times in the disturbances. Moreover, the need for mercenaries outside Nupe involved actors from these areas in Nupe politics.

It is especially interesting how the incumbent Emir Halilu of Gwandu, who reigned between 1833 and 1858, effectively insinuated himself into the fray. He intervened to conciliate opponents, to support one against the other, to confirm claims of contestants, to

⁵⁸ Crowther and Taylor, The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, pp.162-3, entry for April 23.

⁵⁹ Nadel, Black Byzantium, p. 106

⁶⁰ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, pp. 80, 88.

participate in some of the battles, to contain tendencies towards independence and, generally, to entrench and maintain Gwandu's interests.

The entire political agenda of the Fulani *ulama* of Mallam Dendo's time was based on the ideological justification and political legitimization of Usman Dan Fodio's jihad. Thus the mobilization of slaves against the indigenous political authorities, the eventual establishment of rival and encroaching jihadist Fulani leadership in Ilorin, Lafiagi, Lade, Shonga and Rabah, were all based on a prior acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Sokoto Caliphate and its higher authority over them.

Though the political contestants in Nupe adopted independent attitudes and policies, they nevertheless appreciated the powerful legitimization that was conferred on those approved by the Caliphate, in this case by Gwandu. They individually sought Gwandu's approval and engaged in diplomacy to defame their rivals. Well after Mallam Dendo was established at Rabah, forces from Sokoto were sent to assist Manjiya in his war against Idrisu. Lander was convinced that the auxiliaries were sent from Bello at Sokoto. It should be noted that there are assertions that Sokoto did not directly interfere in the territories already put under Gwandu jurisdiction and that Lander must have been mistaken in assuming that such assistance was from Caliph Bello. However, Clapperton and Lander provided details with regard to foreign assistance to Manjiya that do not support this administrative theory.⁶¹

⁶¹ See S. A. Balogun, 'Gwandu Emirate in the Nineteenth Century with Special Reference to Political

Shortly after flouting Usman Zaki's authority and, consequently, being driven to Lade, Masaba seemed to have been able to influence Emir Halilu of Gwandu. Their intrigue resulted in the deposition of Emir Aliu of Lafagi, who had shown strong disapproval of Masaba's disloyalty to Usman Zaki.⁶² Emir Halilu of Gwandu tacitly approved Masaba's failed rebellion against Usman Zaki. This gave Masaba control of Lafagi Emirate and must have contributed to the rapid build-up of his support at Lade from where he eventually ousted Usman Zaki.⁶³

The alliance between Masaba and the two rival factions of the Tsoede royal family that drove Usman Zaki out of Lade soon broke down. War ensued first between Masaba and Idrisu, then between the two indigenous *Etsu* factions. Again, the traditions recall Emir Halilu of Gwandu as having intervened. In a deft diplomatic move, he confirmed all the contestants as justifiable and legal power holders in Nupe.⁶⁴ Usman Zaki's war-general Umar Bahaushie's change of allegiance helped in the former's overthrow.⁶⁵ Here again, there is indication that Gwandu encouraged Umar's action, accepted it or at least informally served notice that all the actors, including the rebel-general, were under its sway. Directly or

Relations: 1817-1903', University of Ibadan. Ph.D Thesis, 1970, p. 147; and his 'Historical Significance', p. 24 footnote no.14; and Mason, *Foundation*, p.30 and p. 43 fn 39.

⁶² Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 33, para. 18.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, and Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, pp. 11-12, paras. 20-22. Accomplished with the assistance of his allies

⁶⁴ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, para. 22, p. 12.

⁶⁵ Crowther and Taylor, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger*, p. 57.

indirectly, it reconfirmed to all the contestants that Gwandu's moral and political approval was vital in any political equation on the ground.⁶⁶

On three occasions, Gwandu forces participated in the multi-cornered fights. In one, Gwandu forces joined Masaba and *Etsu* Isa against the other *Etsu* Jia.⁶⁷ Then, in support of Masaba's hegemony after Usman Zaki's deposition,⁶⁸ the military contingent that accompanied the Emir of Gwandu to Nupe again fought and routed a pocket of rebels at Echu.⁶⁹ After a grand tour through the emirates of Ilorin, Lafagi and Nupe,⁷⁰ the visiting Emir of Gwandu personally took Usman Zaki into exile at Gwandu.⁷¹ During the war against Umar, Gwandu supported Masaba and the two rival Nupe factions in the final assault that ended Umar's usurpation of the Nupe throne.

An important point to note is that the predisposition of Gwandu to each of the contenders in the Nupe struggle seems to have been affected by the comparative strength of the claimants as well as by the flow of bribes, tribute and presents.⁷² The intrigues between rival power groups and the obvious interest of Gwandu in playing the rivals against one another definitely translated into the contenders' need for resources that could be sent to Gwandu as tribute and presents. Therefore, on the one hand, the military contests

⁶⁶ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 35, para. 26.

⁶⁷ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 13, para. 32.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12, paras. 27, 28; Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 34 paras. 20, 21.

⁶⁹ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 35, para. 22.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5, paras. 21-22.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35, para. 22; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 12, paras. 28-29.

⁷² Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, pp. 12-13, paras. 30-32; Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 37, para. 37.

encouraged expansive military activities in both central Nupe and the outlying areas. They enabled the contenders to acquire both military and domestic/servile manpower. On the other hand, the military activities of this period were very important to the rival parties for the generation of impressive gifts which could be sent to the central Caliphate authorities and other important emirs and allies to boost their rival standings within the Caliphate's emerging political order.

Until the death of Mallam Dendo, who was contemporaneous with Usman Dan Fodio, the emerging Nupe Fulani leadership did not warm to the idea of being subjected administratively to Gwandu. In 1830, the Lander brothers were made to believe that Dendo was cousin to Caliph Bello at Sokoto.⁷³ They felt that Rabah's subjection to Sokoto itself was nominal.⁷⁴ Three years later the impression was no different; the Landers reported that 'Rabah [was] tributary to Sultan Bello of Soccatoo,' but there is no reference to political subjection to Gwandu. In confirmation of the Landers' observation of a direct relationship 'military assistance and tributary status' between Nupe and Sokoto, Usman Zaki himself insisted that the Oldfield party visit Sokoto, assuring the visitors that Bello 'would be glad to see [them] and give [them] anything [their] hearts wished for.'⁷⁵ Oldfield also reported that Caliph Bello from Sokoto 'occasionally sends soldiers to assist the Rabah army in

⁷³ Lander and Lander, Journal, p. 190.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 192.

⁷⁵ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. 2., p. 86 .

plundering excursions.⁷⁶ Care seemed to have been taken by Rabah leaders not to make any reference to Gwandu and its overlordship over them. Strictly speaking, the invitation to Sokoto should have been worded to accommodate a trip via Gwandu. As late as 1857 Baikie was still under the impression that the Rabah leadership, by then at Bida, was 'next to the Sultan of Sokoto [as] the most powerful ... in this part of Central Africa.'⁷⁷ The Rabah leadership seems to have considered themselves to be the lords of the south, and they made sure that the display of their wealth via tribute and gifts to Sokoto demonstrated this to the Caliph. All this must have constituted a tremendous amount of pressure on the jihad leadership to generate captives that could be sold for horses or cowries or sent to Sokoto as tribute and gifts.⁷⁸ If Nupe had to send similar gifts and tributes to Gwandu, as we would expect, however grudging it might be, then the conclusion could be reached that the pressure was doubled.

The prolonged crisis of leadership in Nupe, therefore, created a vicious cycle that sustained the Nupe wars. Presents and tributes were needed to impress Sokoto and Gwandu with the position of the contenders and to secure their support for the particular contender. So also money [cowries,] slaves and booty were needed to create and maintain *bara* which

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ F. O. 2/23. Baikie to Earl of Clarendon, Dayspring - Off Rabba, River Kwora Central Africa, 28 Sept. 1857, Folio page. 292 .

⁷⁸ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 204 documents the forwarding of captives to Sokoto.

was important in the creation of a supporting military. The survival and effectiveness of the big the military machines and the remuneration of the mercenaries, ordinary levies, volunteers and allied troops was related to the number of captives and booty procured. These in turn were directly related to the frequency and seriousness of the wars.

The breakup of the royal house of Tsoede, the subsequent hardening of positions between claimants, and their tenacious hold on their traditional role as the custodian of Nupe culture and identity, all served to further warfare. While the division of the kingdom into two predated the onset of the jihad, it facilitated the constitution of two poles of opposition, each more vigorously defensive of the Nupe traditional royal system and titles and opposed to the jihadists as much as they were opposed to each other. Their opposition to each other served to harden their positions, resulting in each of them stressing nationalist sentiments in order to win Nupe support. Thus, the sensitization of Nupe against the jihadist destruction of their culture and tradition was inadvertently carried on forcefully by two parties instead of what might have been only one. The employment, from time to time as was judged appropriate, of the tactics of opposing or collaborating with the jihadists to maintain their traditional Etsu institution served to complicate the military equation. It obstructed the jihadists in realizing their objectives.

The Nupe held their royal institution in esteem, and their loyalty to pure jihadist sentiments as was the case with some of the central emirates of the Sokoto caliphate was more limited. This created a situation where the course of the jihad in Nupe was through a

prolonged struggle for leadership and supremacy between many factions. The jihad forces were ultimately successful, but only after a generation of the jihadists had been 'Nupeized' and could legitimately canvass Nupe loyalty and champion Nupe traditional Etsuship and at the same time promote a jihad philosophy. The further loosening of Nupe exclusivity was enhanced by the straitened conditions of the last war-years when the majority of the Nupe that gathered around Tsado Zuru invited Umoru Majigi to be their saviour against Umar. This was why the wars in Nupe were not concluded until 1857 when Masaba, Dendo's son from a Nupe woman, together with Usman Zaki his brother who had been recalled from exile, became joint Sarkin Nupe.⁷⁹

CHANGES IN MILITARY STRUCTURE/TACTICS

The military struggles of the early part of nineteenth century started changes that became pronounced in the second half of the century.⁸⁰ There was an increase in the professionalism of the military. In 1830, while at Wawa, the Lander brothers observed that 800 of Etsu Idirisu's 'horse soldiers' deserted to Wawa following their defeat, thereby raising, at least temporarily, Wawa's military rating above Borgu's.⁸¹ By 1857, this development had gone further, especially with respect to the military establishment that resulted from Masaba's search for guns.

The reports of Clapperton and Lander in 1826 and 1830 indicate that guns were

⁷⁹ For a similar account of the conditions that predisposed the prosecution of the jihad to failure and slow success, see Balogun, 'Gwandu Emirate', p. 130-1.

⁸⁰ On the rise of professionalism due to war, see, Isichei, p. 213.

available in the hinterland in small numbers but that they did not have any significant impact on military engagements. The Ibadans who assisted Masaba in his war against Umar were themselves still mainly armed with long swords and other cutting and piercing weapons during their 1840 war with Ilorin. But by 1851 muskets had become the major weapons.⁸² And these were to quickly spread throughout Yorubaland.⁸³

With the wars in Yorubaland intensifying, the procurement of firearms and ammunition became a preoccupation of the state among the Yoruba. State control no doubt posed tremendous problems to Masaba's efforts to acquire guns through ordinary commercial means.⁸⁴ To gain access to guns in the wars of 1854, Masaba had to apply to the Bale Ogunmola Alatise of Ibadan for soldiers.⁸⁵ This was a military technology he wished to acquire one way or another to enhance his political and military campaigns in Nupe. He entered into an alliance with Ibadan that led to Ibadan support in several Nupe wars.

In the area of military structure, Masaba's use of Ibadan auxiliaries was of great import. By his employment of foreign soldiers, he initiated a policy that was to recur in other emirates in the two decades following the 1850s. Emirs began to centralize the military through the creation of slave regiments equipped with firearms, thereby gradually extricating

⁸¹ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 106.

⁸² Smaldone, *Warfare in Sokoto*, p. 103.

⁸³ Ajayi and Smith, *Yoruba Warfare*, p. 18.

⁸⁴ Smaldone, *Warfare in Sokoto*, p. 103.

⁸⁵ Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. XX.

themselves from dependence on feudal levies.⁸⁶ As Smaldone puts it, 'slave musketeers and standing armies commanded by slave officers supplanted levies of feudal cavalry, the social and functional integration of the ruling elite was necessarily undermined.'⁸⁷ In Masaba's case, his elite strike force and bodyguard during the struggle for the Nupe throne consisted of trained soldiers of another independent state, with which he had managed to establish a working diplomatic relationship. At the general level, Masaba was perfecting one of the means that could ensure his effective centralization of the military and, consequently, state structure. The foundation of a unified military/political state structure—the Bida emirate—over and above the divisions into dynastic sections, was being laid during this time of war, forged in the very processes of war that had cost the people so much.

There were other changes. Many authors have stressed the seasonal nature of Sudanese wars.⁸⁸ Many jihad campaigns were launched during the dry season. Most battles stopped during the rains.⁸⁹ Many factors contributed to the seasonal nature of the jihad wars. These include the pre-industrial nature of the wars, the problem of horse mortality due to disease-carrying tsetse flies that were prevalent during the rains. Lying along the banks of the Niger and some of its tributaries and having access to more moisture and more wooded vegetation than the more northerly emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate, Nupe had more tsetse flies. Other factors include the need for military levies to return to their farms during the

⁸⁶ Smaldone, Warfare in Sokoto pp. 132, 146-7.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 146.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 76-7. See also, Law, The Horse pp. 138-9 and Lander, p. 176.

farming season without which there might have been famine and the prospect of newly harvested crops being plundered after the rains. Nupe was not exempted from these factors. The deployment of cavalry forces, therefore, tended to be aligned with the onset of the dry season. Manjiya's invasion of Ilorin with his 4000 horsemen was reportedly executed around March/April.⁹⁰ The two warring Nupe parties of Manjiya together with his allies and Idirisu suspended hostilities on April 12 1826. Clapperton and Lander were told that the war would resume after the rains.⁹¹

To some extent, the dry season rule in Nupe warfare started giving way from the 1850s. The one-year siege of Etsu Tsado against Rabah, the expulsion of Masaba from Lade, and Masaba's counter-offensives, all lasted through both dry and wet seasons. In the first case above, Tado's ability to keep his troops for over a year was perhaps a result of Tsado's charismatic leadership. Nonetheless, he was able to maintain an unbroken source of military supplies, most likely through better organization and distribution of what the Nupe had produced. Masaba's year round warfare, on the other hand, was a product of military/technological innovation. He used 1000 infantry soldiers from Ibadan armed with guns, which overcame the draw-backs of dying horses, and the need to replace them, of the mass of cavalry and the logistical problems of feeding the mass of the soldiers and grazing the horses.

⁹⁰ Smaldone, Warfare in Sokoto, pp. 36, 73-4.

⁹⁰ Johnson, History of the Yoruba, p. 201.

⁹¹ Lander, Records, p. 176.

Perhaps more than anything else, the 1000 soldiers equipped with guns were the major factor that enabled Masaba to control the Lafagi/Lade area between 1854-5, and perhaps why Ilorin was very heedful of him.⁹² With the help of this foreign troop, Masaba staged a quick comeback to the Lade area in late 1854. Baikie reported, in late 1854, that Masaba had succeeded in winning the support of his people at Lade with the promise of a more responsible rule. But the threat of force that was provided by his loyal Ibadan auxiliary troop must have been a factor in silencing his enemies in Lade.⁹³ As professional soldiers, the onset of the farming season had little significance in the lives of these foreign soldiers. Masaba thus was responsible for initiating the modernization of a traditional military establishment in Nupe and probably in the whole of Northern Nigerian area.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

The Nupe wars impacted on the demographic structure of the society. There is evidence for a depletion of the population of the rural districts of Nupe and the concentration of population into urban and semi-urban areas. Immigration attendant on preparation and mobilization for war caused urbanization. On the other hand, depopulation of the rural districts was caused by the removal of youth through military conscription into the various armies, as well as by the flight of people as a result of military violence or its

⁹² F. O. 84/1278, MacLeod to Stanley, 2nd January, 1867 cited in Mason, Foundation, p. 94, footnote 2.

⁹³ Baikie, Narrative, p. 271; Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 35, para. 29.

threat. Other factors include transfer, as tribute, and settlement in new towns and villages, of captives and slaves.

The outbreak of the jihad in Nupe witnessed an influx of immigrant groups. These included traders, cattle-rearing Fulani, intellectuals and clerics from Hausaland and Borno, and traders. By 1810, the military/intellectual group had already joined in the immigration into Nupeland. The concentration of various groups of immigrants in particular locations within Nupe apparently depended on the nature of their vocations and how they played out in the social and political condition of early 19th century Nupe.⁹⁴

THE PATTERN OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

By the beginning of the 19th century, the articulation of these immigrations with politically induced internal population relocation within Nupe resulted in the rise and decline of rival political centres. The division of the Nupe monarchy into two factions in the early part of the 19th century resulted in the establishment of urban Rabah as a rival capital-city to Gbara.⁹⁵ Its rise, following Manjiya's expulsion from Gbara,⁹⁶ was facilitated by immigrant Fulani mallams and mercenaries who supported Manjiya, as well as local Nupe partisans relocating away from areas liable to victimization or attacks by Jimada's forces and supporters. Rabah became an important market and a powerful military centre in Nupe. Its

⁹⁴ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, 'Nupe History', pp. 30-31, paras. 3-4. For instance, clerics like Mal. Musa and Dendo, ended up in bigger towns and political centres where they could be patronized by the noble and kingly elements

⁹⁵ Nadel, Black Byzantium, p. 77; S. Ibrahim, The Nupe and their Neighbours From the 14th Century. Nigeria, p.29.

⁹⁶ S. J. Idris, 'The Establishment of Pategi emirates. The Historical Background c.1810-1818', M.A.

successful establishment with the assistance of immigrants, in defiance of Gbara, encouraged more immigrants to come to Rabah.⁹⁷

Other population centres like Zugurma, Lafiagi, Shonga,⁹⁸ Agaie, Lapai, Yeni Lade and Bida, were established by similar processes. Prior to their development into urban or semi-urban centres as a result of such immigrations, a few of these settlements like Zugurma, Lafiagi, Yeni were small Nupe villages. Others like Lapai, Agaie, Shonga were newly founded in the process of the jihad campaigns. As new religious and political centres, they offered prospects for military-political promotion. These new centres offered abundant prospects of economic benefits to traders and to militarily inclined immigrant elements.⁹⁹ Hence, from very humble beginnings, Rabah, then Lade and later Bida, each attracted traders, scholars, artisans and every other category of immigrants from the Yoruba states, Ilorin, Hausaland, Borno, etc., to become big urban political centres. By the mid-19th century, Bida was one of the largest cities, as well as one of the most popular markets in central Nigeria.¹⁰⁰ Because these settlements arose and became political centres in the process of war, a large portion of their populations consisted of captives, slaves, pawns and other servile categories. Each contending party in the Nupe wars was particularly mindful of procuring captives, some of

Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1992, pp. 223-4.

⁹⁷ Balogun, 'Gwandu Emirates,' pp.134-5. See especially oral information Balogun collected to the effect that Dendo's 'following increased' his influence grew ... as a result of which the followers started demonstrating their strength by ...overbearing attitude'. Also, Idris, p. 217.

⁹⁸ Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms', on Shonga, Lafiagi.

⁹⁹ See also Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 36, para. 31; Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 14, para. 37.

¹⁰⁰ In less than a year of its establishment, it was estimated to have contained at least 60,000 inhabitants. See F. O. 2/23. Baikie to Earl of Clarendon, Letter No. 15, 28 Sept. 1857, para. 7.

which were sold to buy horses and trade slaves from distant countries. But many were impressed into the military, perhaps after a period of 'seasoning'; and others were retained for domestic use.

Between 1857-59, after Usman Zaki's restoration as Sarkin at Bida, according to Mason, no less than fifty-two agricultural slave settlements were established near the capital. The decades after our period of investigation witnessed an expansion in the establishment of such villages. It is possible that such settlements had been in use in Nupe even before 1850, perhaps around Lade, Lafiagi, Shonga and Lapai.¹⁰¹ And as Mason remarked, the

captives in question were taken either during the wars between the members of Dendo's lineage or during subsequent campaigns of expansion. They were therefore people who would earlier in the century have been sold to the slave buyers from the north and the south.¹⁰²

This was an instance of the articulation of political, economic and demographic policies by the jihad rulers of Bida. It was an internal immigration policy deliberately pursued by the act of government to organize its servile working population more efficiently by relocating it. In this case, the agricultural slave settlements were established close to the capital, Bida.

The relocation of the captives and slaves from place to place within the advancing or retreating military forces were completely woven into the fabric of the military-political programs of the various Nupe political contenders. This is due to the fact that raiding, capture and transfer of captives and slaves constituted important sources from which

¹⁰¹ Mason, 'Production, Penetration', p. 214.

mercenaries (and regular soldiers) were paid. Invariably, this led to forced migration of both freed and slave/captive population from which urban centres benefited during the Nupe wars.¹⁰³ References in contemporary sources to captives, tribute and slaves moved or sent to various centres (Rabah, Egga, Gori, Ikini, Sokoto, Gbebe, Lokoja, Otuturu, Idah, Lade, and Bida) are evidence of this forced relocation.¹⁰⁴ Because some of this population relocation happened along the line of advance or retreat of the soldiers, the result was the mix of peoples of different ethnic backgrounds observed in many settlements in Nupe.¹⁰⁵

Almost all Nupe slave trading towns were urbanized or at least semi-urbanized. The influx of traders and travellers could be expected to have contributed to this, as was the case for Gbebe, Egga, Rabah and Gori. But because the trading towns dealt in slaves, they retained slaves for both trading and domestic employment. They were thus centres of immigration with a constant supply from the various wars, raids, kidnapping and from the market.

As the military/political balance changed in the Nupe-Igala-Igbira area during the first half of the 19th century, so the political and economic fortunes of towns and cities changed. Some towns and villages disappeared, others declined and lost their fame while new ones

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 214 -15.

¹⁰³ The observations recorded by Clapperton are particularly useful in this regard. Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition*, pp. 122, 125, 128.

¹⁰⁴ Each of these cases can be found in Appendix 4.

¹⁰⁵ Examples of many liberated Africans from different parts of the Nigerian area coming across their relations on stations along the Niger river can be found in Crowther and Taylor, *Gospel on the Banks of the Niger*, p.204.

replaced them. The direction of population influx also changed accordingly. Rabah, the first capital of the jihadists and a big trade mart, was destroyed and deserted. Lade, Masaba's capital which replaced it, eventually suffered a similar fate. The populations of the cities were not only transferred to centres like Egga and eventually Bida, but the roles of the cities as important slave and goods markets ceased. Egga and Lade took over from Rabah, Gori, Idah, Gbara, Kulfo, while Bida took over from Lade and Egga.¹⁰⁶ The movement of slave and captive population followed other directions.

DEPOPULATION OF THE RURAL DISTRICTS.

In contrast to the urban situation, the rural Nupe districts suffered a loss of population. A typical army of an Etsu Nupe consisted of three categories of troops: 'ordinary foot-soldiers, called *dakari*, foot-troop carrying guns, or *hidingacizi* and horsemen, or *dokocizi*,' all contributed by the nobility to their patron's cause. Of the latter categories, the *dakari*, who were said to be volunteers entering the service of a feudal lord as soldier-bara or "'client"' were all young men' composed of 'peasants and townsmen, Nupe as well as foreigners.'¹⁰⁷ A greater part of these levies, together with other youth, pawns and slaves that were attached to local nobles, royal tribute collectors and supporters of the indigenous Nupe rulers and other rival factions, were drawn from the rural districts. Whenever hostilities commenced, they were moved out of the rural districts under the leadership of their 'Etsu *Dakari*, Chief of the Foot-Troops, a *bara* of higher rank, who was

¹⁰⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 72. Entry for Aug. 31.

in charge of these volunteers and was responsible for their training.¹⁰⁸ This was the first step in their loss to the rural districts and their relocation to pre-war and post-war urban centres. Many became captives and slaves, distributed within and outside Nupe according to the whims of their captors, owners and according to the dictates of market forces.

An obvious change in settlement pattern is the case of the Kakanda, Oworo, Bassa and some Nupe groups on the west-bank of the Niger. Their towns and villages were destroyed and the entire area left vacant due to direct military attack or its threat.¹⁰⁹ The corollary is that refugee centres developed on the east side of the Niger, some of which became permanent settlements with considerable populations.

Hence, one of the general results of the Nupe wars was that a wide strip of depopulated areas emerged beside new clusters of fewer but larger and mixed refugee-fed communities. Thus Crowther observed in 1854 that

the left bank of the river is now more thickly populated than in 1841. In consequence of the invasions of the Filatas, all the inhabitants of the right side have removed to the left, and built their houses upon the mountains as places of refuge.¹¹⁰

New large centres like Gande and Gbebe,¹¹¹ and others settlements newly established by the Bassa, were thrown up where there were previously none.¹¹² Crowther in 1857, noted a cluster of about twenty village groups 'in the district of Orisapia,' with two of the groups

¹⁰⁷ Nadel, Black Byzantium, pp. 109/10.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Crowther, Journal of An Expedition p. 46: Entry for Aug. 9.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., entry for Aug. 3, p. 37

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 38; entry for : Aug. 4

¹¹² Ibid., p. 46, entry for Aug. 9:

entirely 'Nupes, who, during the political disturbances of their country, sought refuge here in the country of Igara.'¹¹³

The situation for the Kakanda, Igbira-Igu, and Igala on the banks of the Niger also applies to the heartland of Nupe. Contemporaries observed a noticeable presence of displaced Nupes outside their homeland. Allen and Thomson noted that 'the long continuance of civil wars' and the frequent invasions of the Filatahs' have scattered them [Nupe] among all the surrounding nations, where they are the most active manufacturers and merchants.'¹¹⁴ Confirming this observation, Crowther in 1859 also remarked that 'slave wars ... scattered ... many Nupes among the inhabitants of the lower parts of this river...'¹¹⁵

Demography might be one of the conditioning factors in the resort by Masaba and other contestants in the Nupe struggles to wooing and impressing foreign conscripts, seasoned mercenaries and volunteers from across the Nupe borders.¹¹⁶ The change in military recruitment policy was thus forced on them. Because the rural districts had lost a large percentage of male youth to recruitment, emigration and war, perhaps the depopulated rural districts became incapable of meeting further recruitment demands of the multiple armies. This might also explain the south and southeastward directions of Masaba's military expansion and his eventual conscription of his Bunu, Yagba and Kakanda non-Nupe

¹¹³ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, pp. 52-3, entry for Aug. 9.

¹¹⁴ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I. p. 380.

¹¹⁵ C.M.S., Niger Mission. C. A3/O 4 (a) Rev. Samuel Adjai Crowther. Letters & papers 1857-63. Letter to Sec. CMS. Dec. 3rd. 1859, para. 11.

¹¹⁶ Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, 'Preface', p. XX.

tributaries¹¹⁷ as well as his hiring of Ibadan soldiers. Given this dire demographic situation and the urgent need for soldiers, it could be expected that the withdrawal of youth and other able-bodied persons by recruitment into the military from within the rural areas must have been pushed to near inelastic limits between 1810-1857.¹¹⁸

WOMEN AND THE NUPE CRISIS.

Available data reveal very little about the role of women and children in the military/political turbulence of early 19th century Nupe. The traditions record one or two cases of diplomatic moves involving women, one on the part of Manjiya sometime around 1825/6, during the fourth phase of the Nupe wars. He gave his daughters in marriage to leading sons and warriors of Mallam Dendo, the jihad leader with whom he had resumed an alliance in order to defeat his indigenous Nupe rival, Idirisu. By forming these social linkages to important military, political and diplomatic personages among the Dendo party, Manjiya was consciously trying to link himself and his supporters with the increasingly powerful and dangerous jihadists. He wanted to 'Nupeize' the immigrants. In giving daughters from

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.39; Baikie, Narrative, pp.302-3.

¹¹⁸ See for instance, the complex nature of population mobilization painted by Crowther, pp.57-8. Entry for Aug. 13 in Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Bank of the Niger; also, the discussion with regard to low population densities between Mason Gleave and Prothero cited in the bibliography; and concerns from colonial officials about low population density in Nupe recorded in NAK Nigeprofl62/12/24. NO. Ma2. 1/44. 'Decline of population among the Nupe of Niger province'; A. T. Jacobs, and J. Kolo, 'Report on Nupe Areas of Niger and Ilorin provinces', Traditional Land Tenure Surveys - 1964 Research, Institute of Administration, Zaria, 1965, p.117.

the aristocratic line of Tsoede to them in marriage, Manjiya and his supporters were accepting the Dendo party as Nupe.¹¹⁹

The second case occurred in 1847-8. The Kuta ruler the Kyedye sub-tribe of Nupe gave his daughter in marriage to one of Masaba's sons. With Masaba's rise at Lade to a position of prominence and power, Kuta used the marriage to establish a social bond for the purpose of maintaining peace and amity. Masaba on the other hand hoped that the marriage alliance would give him access to the canoe fleet of Kuta in Masaba's war against Etsu Issa. However, Kuta and Etsu Issa were kin, and Kuta was obliged to refuse the assistance that Masaba eventually asked for.¹²⁰ Masaba fought Etsu Issa all the same, but the diplomatic process to secure Kuta's assistance and the cost to Masaba of not having a ready naval support, were for a period of time hinged on the manipulation of kinship relationship forged around daughter, son-, mother- and father-in-lawship.

These instances need to be put in perspective to throw some light on the subject of women in Nupe. By 1841, Usman Zaki's faction assumed a pre-eminence among the contestants for the political control of Nupe. Warfare, capture, enslavement and general insecurity were still the order of the day in the outlying Nupe villages.¹²¹ Under these conditions, Allen and Thomson noticed that '[t]he Filata never give their women in marriage

¹¹⁹ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, p. 579.

¹²⁰ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 11, para. 21.

¹²¹ Mamajia, Kinami, Eggan, Fofa were all Nupe towns from which acts either of violence, kidnapping or extortion were perpetrated on ordinary citizens. See Appendix 4.

to Nupe men,' but by contrast, Nupe women were marrying the victorious jihadists.¹²² Thus at the personal level, marriage of daughters to the conquerors was a strategy that permitted some measure of inclusion in the ruling group. In a society where individuals attached themselves to nobles as clients even before the jihad, giving daughters to warriors, rich slave dealers and traders was common. Masaba, who eventually re-unified Nupe with support cutting across fractional, ethnic and religious boundaries, was himself the offspring of such a mixed marriage.¹²³ Marrying into the right group was one way of marrying well but more than that, it went to the heart of individual and corporate search for peace and security. Marriage patterns were essential to the politics of the formation of an acceptable leadership in Nupe.

Unfortunately, a definitive statement about polygamy can not be made due to the absence of data on marriage to base a comparison of the period before and during the crises could be based on. However, rich men and men of noble birth were credited in the sources with having 'wives' numbering beyond what Moslems are traditionally allowed to marry. More men died in wars than women, and there was probably a general surplus of women over men. On the other hand, more women and children ended up in captivity than men, and as such the pool for concubinage and marriage was enlarged. Men of status by virtue of military, political, or economic circumstances were thus able to afford more slaves and consequently had the greatest chances than other citizens, of multiplying wives and

¹²² Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 106.

concubines from this source.

As Frobenius recorded at Mokwa, Etsu Jimada 'had plenty of wives, [even though] he had but few children, while Edsu Madjia, his nephew, had but few wives and three hundred children.'¹²⁴ Definitely, Manjiya's 'wives' were few only in relative terms. Assuming fifteen children to a woman, no less than twenty 'wives' might be required to produce that much offspring. A certain old Mallam, a merchant, and a powerful political figure at Egga, with whom Oldfield interacted in 1833 was reported to have at least six 'wives'. That he had more than six 'wives' is clear from his statement to the effect that Oldfield 'might have any ten of his wives' if that was going to induce the European traders to set up base and reside in Egga.¹²⁵ These ten 'wives' could not be other than concubines, since Muslims could legally marry only four wives. They also reported that Usman Zaki's 'master of the horse, (sullikeen Door Kee)' [*Sarkin doki*] had an harem of 'thirty wives'.¹²⁶ They were no doubt concubines. At the death of one of the sons of the Attah of Igala at Idah, Oldfield reported that sixty of his wives were put through the poison ordeal to identify and punish those who might have had a hand in their husband's death.¹²⁷

¹²³ Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 9, para. 12.

¹²⁴ Frobenius, Voice of Africa, p. 576. An implication of the literal acceptance of the wording of this tradition is that Manjiya did not consider himself bound by the Islamic injunction that limits men to only four wives.

¹²⁵ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 113.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 69.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 278. Given a series of non-Islamic rituals and cultural practices that some of the Idah nobility were identified with by Oldfield, and the fact that majority of the people were not Muslims, the dead son of Attah might have had more than four wives.

There is a more obvious but no less significant aspect to the question of what women and children did and what happened to them during the tumult in Nupe and its outlying areas during the first half of the 19th century. This is the issue of physical (and no doubt psychological) victimization of women and children through the violence of war and war conditions. In 1832, Laird noted that no less than 20,000 of his estimate of 30,000 residents at Panda were children.¹²⁸ One could not but wonder what happened to these children when Nasarawa jihadists attacked the town in 1854.¹²⁹ The same question applies to Yimaha that also suffered the same fate. The popular trade mart of Odokodo that flourished in the 1820s and 1830s above the confluence was no more. Jihadists from Rabah attacked it three times and eventually destroyed it. It was not rebuilt until 1861-3. As discussed previously, the ruins of towns and villages littered the countryside both within Nupe and in Igbira (Koton Karti), Yagba, Owe, Bunu and Kakanda areas.¹³⁰ D. J. May passed through the extensive ruins of old Lade in 1858. He also reported that the ruins of Rabah in just one direction covered an area that took him one hour to traverse on horseback. He wondered 'what had become of the many thousands, harmless and homeless, who had once peopled it.'¹³¹ What happened to the people, especially women and children, who once lived there? The answer

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I., p. 223.

¹²⁹ There is no record to indicate that Panda engaged in any war since the observation was made in 1832 and its sack in 1854. Hence, it could have maintained its population and, perhaps, its age distribution.

¹³⁰ See Appendix 2 for details of this.

¹³¹ May, 'Journey' p. 230.

would of course be that they were displaced, relocated, captured, enslaved, killed or kidnapped.

In war situations, women were more or less defenseless; the mothers, encumbered with children, less swift in escape, were liable to be more easily caught and enslaved with their children than men and others not so encumbered. In the general state of insecurity prevalent during war or in between battles, more women and children than men fell to kidnappers.¹³² No doubt many of them died from wounds or exhaustion suffered during attacks. Nor were noble children totally protected from the dangers of such times. Etsu Tsado was said to have lost two of his children with whom he retreated to Borgu, sacrificed, according to the oral testimony given to Frobenius, in order to procure the magic that eventually won Tsado his following and success.¹³³ In light of the crisis of the time and the reality of belief and cultural systems permissive of human sacrifice, this story shows what dangers children faced during these times of war. After Umonu defeated him in 1855, Maiyaki Umar was said to have fled accompanied only by his wife and his son Alliadj.¹³⁴

The course of action taken by the inhabitants of Yoohai, above the confluence on the Benue in 1833, is instructive of the meagre protection that women and children had in the face of a military attack. The Oldfield party, on its approach, was mistaken for jihadist enemies. Consequently the people of Yoohai had their women and children removed into

¹³² Lander, *Records*, p. 193, observed such a case of kidnap and sale of women into slavery at Koofu near Kulfa, resulting into retaliatory kidnapping, sale into slavery and war between two villages.

¹³³ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, p. 582.

the bush.¹³⁵ Given the jihadist strategy of torching towns and villages and using horses to round up women and children after killing any resisting men, had there been a real attack by jihadists, many men would have been killed for resisting and many would escape across the river, but much more women and children would have fallen to the invaders as booty. Nor would Yoochai women and children have escaped capture if the jihadists used a method reported by Thomas King where

parties of about ten horsemen and some foot soldiers, lie in wait in the 'bush', near a village, and at daylight, when the unsuspecting natives go to their work in the fields, they are seized and hurried off to their camp.¹³⁶

They would all have been rounded up from their hiding places in the bushes — smoked out and hounded till none was left. Indeed, shortly after, Oldfield observed just such an unfortunate turn of events for many communities on the right side of the Niger.¹³⁷ There is also a report that 'numerous canoes' owned by the Attah of Igala constantly plied the Niger and Benue around the confluence area, and as it seemed to Laird, were 'continually lurking about stealing children.' He reported that 'scarcely a night passed but we heard the screams of some unfortunate beings that were carried off into slavery by these villainous depredators.'¹³⁸

In times of trouble, women and children also seemed more expendable than men. It might have been easier to dispose of one of many 'wives', especially concubines, on charges.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 593.

¹³⁵ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. I, p. 433.

¹³⁶ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, p. 361.

¹³⁷ See Chapter Six and Appendix 2 for details.

founded or not, of adultery. There is such a case on record of our area of study, and many in other societies during the 19th century. Children were also pawned and in some instances, sold off to pay debts or to procure food.¹³⁹ In 1842, to foreclose a debt of '40,000 cowries, about fifty shillings', an aggrieved creditor at a Niger-Benue confluence went to the house of his debtor in the absence of the latter, and with some helpers, 'carried off his wife, child, and servant.' It must have been common, for this act was done in day light in 'face of the whole population of Pandaiki; who made no other attempt at a rescue than by vociferations and threatening gesticulations.'¹⁴⁰

Such instances produced the women and children observed in the slave markets. One tradition concerning the third phase of wars in the early 1820s mentions the case of Etsu Manjiya of Rabah's fight against the 'Fulani in the Kamberi country.' He was said to have routed them, 'killing a great many of them and capturing their women and children as slaves.'¹⁴¹ Likewise, in 1830, the Lander brothers noted that the Rabah market was 'generally well supplied with slaves of both sexes' our men counted between one and two hundred men, women and children, who were all exposed for sale in ranks or lines — for the most part captured in war.'¹⁴² Ikin market of 1833 also exposed children for sale. Oldfield observed a large number of 'male and female slaves — children of misfortune — sitting

¹³⁸ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, pp. 148-9.

¹³⁹ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 362.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 362.

¹⁴¹ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31, para. 6.

¹⁴² Lander and Lander, Journal, p. 193, entry for Oct. 12th.

pensive and melancholy, apparently in deep thought — some [were] eating yams and Indian corn bread, while their owners [were] making a bargain or bartering them away for elephants' teeth or cowries.¹⁴³ The pitiable cases of children and women in slavery could be replicated for Rabah,¹⁴⁴ Egga, Kinami, Sokoto, Gbebe, Adamugu,¹⁴⁵ Aboh¹⁴⁶ and Lade.¹⁴⁷

Appendix 4 contains all individually identifiable cases of enslavement, slavery, pawning, and redeeming. Because of the arbitrary nature of the data, only tentative statements could be made from them. They are nonetheless interesting. Out of the six incidents of kidnapping, there were three cases each for male and female. For the incidents respecting males, two were in their late adolescence and one was in his early teens. (i.e., no adult male was represented.) While there was no adult male among the six kidnap cases, two of the females were adult women and a third was a nubile girl. Moreover, of the total identifiable incidents of 138 slaves in Appendix 4, 47 or 34.05% are females. Even more indicative is the total number of incidents for adult male and female which is only 66 or 47.82% while incidents for children, teens and adolescent total 72 or 52.17%. From these data which are the only available ones for now, it is clear that women and children constituted the categories that were more prone to kidnap.

¹⁴³ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 322.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 102; this case was just in a province adjacent to Rabah, just a little way down the Niger.

¹⁴⁵ Lander and Lander, Journal, pp. 31, entry for Nov. 5th

¹⁴⁶ Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, p. 184. Entry for Oct. 31

¹⁴⁷ W. Cole, Life in the Niger or the Journal of an African Trader, London, 1862, pp. 87, 89, for Lade and Gbebe kidnap cases. Others cases are tabulated in Appendix 4.

In other respects, women supplied the life-line (provisioning the war machine) that war camps and battle fronts required to operate effectively during military campaigns. Clapperton saw women economic viability as well as a semblance of sedentary life to Manjiya's battle camp. He saw 'women spinning cotton, others reeling off, some selling *foofa* and *accassons*, others crying [advertising their] yams and paste, little markets at every green tree...' But for other martial elements, he concluded that the camp 'would pass for a well-inhabited village.'¹⁴⁸

While Lander did not specify what impact the Nupe crises had on women, he observed that the war situation had a deleterious effect on the Nupe psyche. The local troubles of inter-town warfare around Koulfo,

united to the formidable civil war that was desolating the kingdom of Nylle, [Nupe] had caused the minds of the people to be in a perpetual state of fermentation and alarm, occasioning their angry and incited passions to have the ascendancy over their milder virtues.¹⁴⁹

This he concluded to be the principal reason for what he considered to be 'the absence of that kindness and hospitality, amongst the natives generally, which were so cheerfully bestowed upon [them] in the less civilized kingdoms of Yariba [i.e., Oyo] and Borghoo [Borgu].'¹⁵⁰

However, there are sources that suggest that women in some Kakanda communities had an aggressive and martial predisposition. At a place south of Gori but near Budan, where the Lander brothers decided to rest for the night in their trip down the Niger in 1830, they

¹⁴⁸ Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition*, p. 127.

¹⁴⁹ Lander, *Records*, p.194.

faced an armed crowd insistent that the visitors leave. Lander observed that when the war-cry was raised, not only 'every man' but 'every man and woman armed themselves with swords and dirks, and bows an arrows.'¹⁵¹ Thomas King who, for a while in 1842, was in charge of the 1841/42 expedition's Farm Settlement at the Niger-Benue confluence reported another case:

some natives near Adda Kudda, [Odokodo] attacked a canoe, belonging to Pandaiki, on the way to the market; they were beaten off, mainly by the courage of a woman, and some of the aggressors captured. The exploit was celebrated at her village, by rejoicings during the night, and she came in procession to the farm singing her song of triumph.¹⁵²

Admittedly these examples are too few to generalize for the entire study area. On the whole, women had limited resources to resist physical violence.

Women within the Nupe area were prominent in both local and middle-distance trade.¹⁵³ At Ikiri, Gbebe, and Egga, women were active traders on the river and on land. While men tended to specialize in slave, ivory and cloth, women dealt in all articles, although their slave trading was limited, seldom dealing in more than one or two slaves.¹⁵⁴ Since women and children hawked foodstuffs and other domestic items within and between towns and sometimes to the border markets, this exposed them to robbery and kidnap in unsettled

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 210.

¹⁵² Allen and Thomson, *Expedition sent to the River Niger*, vol. II, p.362.

¹⁵³ See observations to this effect in Lair and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. I, 165; Baikie, *Narrative*, pp. 274-5.

¹⁵⁴ see Appendix 4.

times.¹⁵⁵ In other areas they were subject to extortion from officials of the rival governments and their wares, as well as their money were in frequent dangers.¹⁵⁶

Brief reference should also be made to upper class women like queen mothers, senior wives of warlords and children or close kin of rulers and nobles. They derived definite benefits from their positions, and they used their positions to advantage in the crisis situation. Manjiya's mother sometimes wielded political power in the absence of his son and husbands at war.¹⁵⁷ Some were traders in valuable goods, slaves inclusive.¹⁵⁸ There are references in the sources to wives of administrative officials¹⁵⁹ and to well-to-do women slave owners and traders.¹⁶⁰ The latter category of women, most likely, had no particular scruple about using and dealing in female slaves, a slave, male or female, being no more than an economic unit.

¹⁵⁵ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, pp.361-2; Cole, Life in the Niger, pp. 88-9.

¹⁵⁶ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 102; Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 325; Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 362.

¹⁵⁷ Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition, pp. 120, 122; Lander, Records, p. 176; for political roles of Manjiya's mother and senior wife; and Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, p. 201 for a landlady's case at Panda.

¹⁵⁸ Lander, Record, vol. II, p. 153; Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 203.

¹⁵⁹ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 10, cites a case of one of the tax gathering officials from Rabah riding back to Rabah in a canoe with his wives with the tax collected from the people.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 110; Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 210.

CONCLUSION.

The structures of Nupe and its neighbouring communities underwent many changes as a result of the Nupe wars of the first half of the 19th century. The factionalization of Nupe into multiple poles of political, economic and demographic power contributed in a large measure to the intense and prolonged nature of these wars. The logic and economics of financing the war machines and maintaining good standing with the Emir of Gwandu were important factors for the scope the wars assumed. The jihad further heightened the stakes in the struggle, giving the entire period the characteristic stamp of warfare fuelled by slavery, slave catching, and slave and horse trading. Changes in military strategy and technology were taking place. The social structure of society was not lightly touched; the institution of marriage, for instance, underwent some stress and readjustment. All these elements constituted the internal motor that sustained the character of the Nupe wars of the early 19th century.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NIGER RIVER TRADE WITH THE DELTA C.1800-1859

INTRODUCTION.

This chapter examines the water-borne commerce between the Niger-Benue confluence communities of the Nupe, Kakanda, Igbira, Yagba, Owe, and Bunu, and the Delta region in the first half of the 19th century. The analysis of the character of this commercial link is placed in the context of the socio-political conditions of the confluence basin area. It assesses how close was the crises experience of the Nupe and their neighbours to those suffered by communities in the Niger Delta and the Bight of Benin following the British abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the introduction of legitimate commerce. Subsidiary reference to the better known overland trade of the Nupe will be included in the last part of the chapter to set the total commerce of Nupe in a broader perspective. The sectoral context of the river trade with the Niger Delta and the extent or limits of its impact on Nupe will then emerge against the background of her overland commerce.

CONFLUENCE-DELTA TRADE C.1800-1857.

The Lander brothers provide the earliest written account of commercial, social and regional linkages between the coast and the communities of the Niger-Benue confluence. Their travel on the Niger in late 1829 and 1830, together with stop-overs and delays at Adamugu, Aboh and Brass, lasted only thirty one days. It was a journey of over 500 nautical miles through at least 3 distinct ecological zones and several autonomous communities and polities. However, their information is sketchy and telescopic, and in some

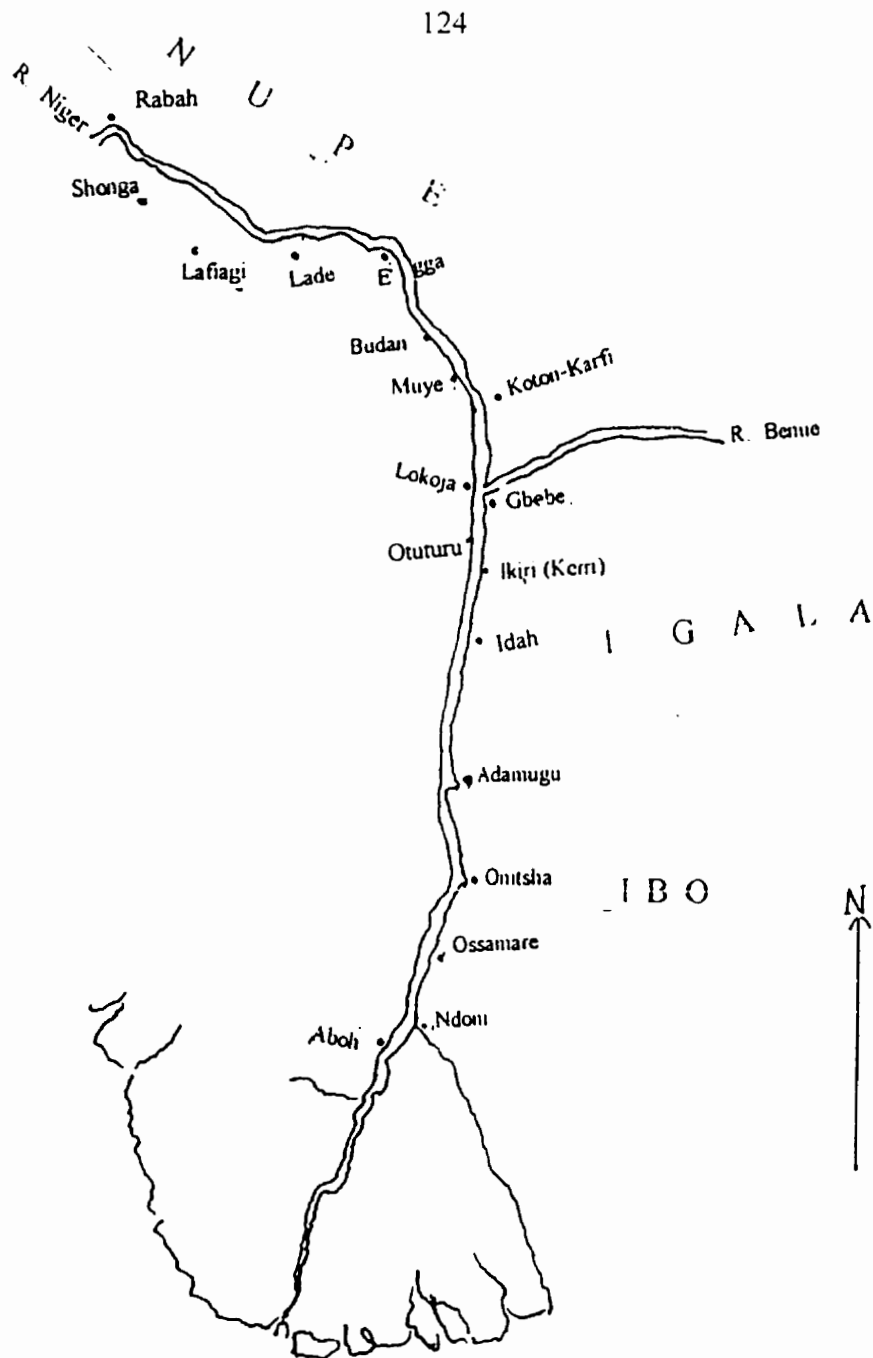
respects, unclear. This is because the accounts consist of observations made during the relatively short period of about thirty days during their journey when, consequently, they had only fleeting opportunities of active interaction with the people.

The next more substantial written account for 1832-1834 came from Laird and Oldfield. The travellers spent over a year on the Niger and several months around the Niger-Benue confluence area. Because they were traders who had close interaction with the people, their observations were more detailed. The information they gathered about the socioeconomic and political conditions of the communities is, therefore, more extensive and varied. They were followed by Allen and Thomson, Commissioners of the British government in 1841, whose reports are generally comparable to Laird and Oldfield's.

These are the earliest written documents for any examination of the relationship between the confluence communities and the Delta societies. Fortunately, these reports make references to the period earlier than 1830s and 1840s, when the observations themselves were made. They allow a glimpse of the early currents of legitimate trade between the Delta and the confluence before 1830.

COASTAL IMPORTS: GUNS, POWDER, CLOTHES AND SUNDRY GOODS.

At Egga in 1830, the Lander brothers observed that 'communication is kept up between the seacoast and this place.' They saw 'Benin and Portuguese cloths ... worn ... by



From the Niger-Benue Confluence to the Delta c.1810-1857

many of its inhabitants.'¹ They learnt that the cloths were procured from Koton Karfi, further down the Niger above the confluence. Egga obviously carried on a vigorous trade with the latter place, which the Landers were told had 'a celebrated market for Nouffie cloths, trona, slaves, Nouffie knives, bridles, stirrups, brass ornaments, stained leather, and other things.'² On leaving Egga on their way downstream, the Landers passed by 'a very large market-town [on their] left' and 'observed an immense number of canoes lying off it, built in the same manner as those of the Bonny and Calabar rivers.' A great number of these canoes were seen busily conveying goods and passengers, 'to and fro on the river.' Information from subsequent Niger explorers suggests that this was Gori town.³ This market was followed further down by Ikin (Bocqua) and then by Odokodo which was destroyed in an 1838 jihadist attack. Later travellers discovered that these market towns hosted trade fairs that were attended by traders from states and societies along the Niger from the Delta to north of the confluence.

As the Landers discovered, the people of Ikin were in direct contact with traders from the coast. When they intruded into the town unannounced, an alarmed and irate troop of villagers, who apparently thought them to be jihadist invaders, approached to ward them off. Among the weapons with which they were armed were muskets. These they subsequently fired off in joy when latter they discovered that the intruders were no more

¹ Lander and Lander, Journal, p. 207.

² Ibid., p. 209.

³ Ibid., p. 210; for identification of this market town as Gori, see Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p 83.

than visiting harmless white men. The visitors learnt from the interpreter that buyers and sellers attend this market 'not only from places adjacent but also from remote towns and villages, both above and below, and on each bank of the Niger.'⁴ This was further confirmed at Adamugu, at the southernmost boundary of the Igala, at which town they saw a trading expedition leave for Ikiri.⁵ In this town, the Lander party both saw European articles and heard people speak English, unequivocally demonstrating that there existed strong trade links between the community and the coast. They were told that people from Bonny, Calabar, Brass and Benin came to their town to buy slaves and they met a man from the Delta, 'the chief of Bonny's messenger' dressed in European clothing, who spoke English.⁶ At Adamugu, European dress (especially, Manchester cottons), creolised English, rum, muskets and swivels were part of daily life.⁷ During the celebration that was held in honour of the Landers' party, the firing of muskets was so incessant that visitors could not sleep. Pascoe, one of the Landers' attendants, who stayed out late to enjoy the party, reported that every man had a musket. They learnt that these muskets were exchanged specifically for slaves and ivory.

Adamugu, an exile settlement of Abokko, a noble from Idah, was established around 1826 following political problems in Idah.⁸ Part of the extensive number of muskets

⁴ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 219.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30. Some of the merchants in the town left for the market on the 31st of October and returned on the 3rd of November.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁸ J. S. Boston, *The Igala Kingdom*, Ibadan, 1968, pp. 111-113.

observed here by the visitors might have been brought along from Idah, while they continued to acquire more during the four years since their establishment. In either case, it is clear that the Igala had close trade relations with the lower Niger. They also sold goods further up river and inland as far as Koton Karifi and Egga. Due to the distance and the risks involved, the most valuable of these articles were slaves, ivory, muskets, powder and imported cotton cloth.

Two years later at Adamugu, members of the 1832-34 expedition were also treated to a similar ceremony of welcome in which guns were fired all night. But they also noted that a 'great number of the natives' of 'very ferocious appearance' with whom guns were found 'were elephant-hunters.' Oldfield observed that 'their guns were idols; several of them hung with charms enclosed in leather, and one was literally covered with small studs of lead about the size of a nail's head.'⁹ They had come to pay their half-yearly tribute to Abboko; they paid this with the game they had killed, with ivory and slaves, and with other unspecified articles.¹⁰ Like the Landers' party of 1830, the European visitors found it impossible to sleep because there was so much firing of muskets.¹¹ On getting to Idah, they found that guns were still plentiful.¹²

At Ikin, Laird and Oldfield used gunflints to buy rice, but there does not seem to have been a shortage, which suggests that, a steady supply of flint and gunpowder moved

⁹ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, pp. 184-5.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 250.

¹² Laird and Oldfield., Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, pp. 230, 258, 264, 268.

between the lower Niger and this popular trade mart.¹³ The regular price for a flint was a bag of rice.¹⁴ However, as they went further away from the confluence area, they mentioned fewer guns and muskets. The entire arsenal of Panda, according to Laird, consisted of six muskets, three of which were unserviceable.¹⁵ It is to be noted, though, that Panda was on the decline. They were more the raided than the raider and were located inland. The extensive arsenal that had allegedly wrought havoc on an earlier jihad invasion was no longer to be seen.¹⁶ This suggests guns had been captured and distributed or sold further inland.

The anti-slave trade commissioners on the 1841 expedition were equally surprised at the quantity of muskets they found around Adamugu. In 1841, Allen and Thomson noted that muskets and gunpowder fetched very high prices at Idah. In 1854, Baikie learnt that Idah supplied muskets to the Inam and Nsugbe, south of her borders. These were brought from Aboh. The price of one ranged from 10,000 to 12,000 cowries.¹⁷ It is not clear whether the price had risen or fallen and whether gun quality changed this far up the Niger since 1832/3. Rev. Schon, who expected to see firearms displayed for sale at the Egga market was disappointed because he found none, but he observed 'gunpowder carelessly packed in grass bags.'¹⁸ Guns, for which the gunpowder was marketed, were no doubt in use around Egga. On their way downstream, the Kakanda people informed them that soldiers who had

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 133. There is no evidence of local manufacture.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹⁶ Lander, *Records*, vol. I, p. 180.

¹⁷ Baikie, *Narrative*, pp. 293-294.

¹⁸ Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 175.

just raided them had not only 'plenty of swords, spears, and arrows, and a great number of horses,' but that each one of them was also 'armed with a gun.'¹⁹

An examination of the trade links between the Niger-Benue confluence communities and the Delta addresses J. E. Inikori's concern for the need to 'locate the places in the interior to which the large quantities of guns and powder exchanged for slaves in Bonny in the late eighteenth-century were ultimately sent.'²⁰ A good portion of these guns found their ways into the Niger-Benue confluence area, among the Igala, Kakanda, the Igbira of Koton Karifi and Panda, and some, no doubt reached South East Nupe at Egga. It was most likely from Egga that the soldiers of Idinisu were able to procure the muskets used in their defeat of Manjiya in an 1826/7 battle.²¹

THE SLAVE AND IVORY TRADE OF THE CONFLUENCE BASIN.

Information is also available on ivory and slaves, articles exchanged for the guns and other European imports, that yields a clear picture of inter-regional trade between the lower Niger and the Niger-Benue confluence area. Because of the high value of ivory, and the fact that slaves could be made to carry tusks, and exchange could be made in either article, slave dealers have often been ivory dealers and ivory sellers were usually linked to slave dealers.

Many of the communities of the lower Niger were large-scale consumers of ivory. most of this ivory came from the country extending from the confluence northward. At

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

²⁰ Inikori, 'The Sources of Supply for the Atlantic Slave Exports from the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Bonny (Biafra),' in S. Daget, (ed.) De la Traite a l'Esclavage: Actes Du Colloque International sur la Traite Des Noirs, vol. II, Nantes, 1985, p. 36.

Aboh, Oldfield noted that 'the superior class of females wear immense anklets of ivory, seven or eight inches wide, and an inch thick: they are almost unable to walk with these immense weights round their legs...'²² In 1832-4, Laird and Oldfield had come across such respectable women who had come all the way from Aboh to Idah heavily decked with ivory anklets.²³ Two decades later, Hutchinson made a similar observation for Aboh and Ossamare. He observed that 'ivory anklets, with white cloths tastefully wrapped round the body, formed the chief points of dress in the females.' At Ossamare, he noticed 'most of the women wearing ivory anklets, as at Aboh'.²⁴ That ivory anklets for women were very fashionable was demonstrated by the head-wife of Tshukuma, the first son of late King Obi Osai. She donned what Hutchinson described as 'enormous anklets of ivory, each weighing at least six pounds, ... for which ... the value of three slaves had been given to purchase.'²⁵

The local consumption of ivory among the Igbo and in the Niger Delta was considerable because people were buried with their ivory anklets and leglets.²⁶ Traders from as far south as Bonny and Aboh were no doubt the principal targets of ivory suppliers at the popular Ikin market. In 1833, Laird and Oldfield reported that visitors to the market heard ringing continuously, the sing-song of enslaved hawkers of ivory: "'Gewaw, gewa' (A

²¹ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, pp.180-181. See also Appendix I.

²² Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. I, p. 392.

²³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 102, 378,411; vol. II, p.146.

²⁴ T. J. Hutchinson, *Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda, and Binue Exploration including a Report on the Position and Prospects of Trade up Those Rivers, with Remarks on the Malaria and Fevers of Western Africa*, London, 1966, pp. 169 and 172.

²⁵ Hutchinson, *Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda, and Binue Exploration*, pp. 42-3; and Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 30.

tooth, a tooth.)”²⁷ Upper-Niger traders from Egga, Koton Karfi, Panda as well as ‘great numbers from the interior country on both banks of the river’ brought ivory and other goods like ‘cloths of native manufacture, beads, ... rice, straw-hats, and slaves’. They exchanged these for articles like ‘cowries, and European goods, chiefly Portuguese and Spanish.’²⁸ It is clear that ivory and other trade goods were bought and sold profitably whenever the opportunity arose.²⁹

Returning from ‘the Eggarah market’ in 1841, the Igbo traders, who included the son of the Obi of Aboh, had ivory as a major component of the trade goods they had bought. The Obi’s son had ‘purchased a large quantity of ivory.’³⁰ The commissioners of the 1841 expedition noted a steep rise in ivory prices as they moved downstream. At Rabah, a pound of good ivory could be bought for 500 cowries. At the confluence, the price was between 1,000 to 1,500 cowries. At Idah, the price was higher still, and at the lower Niger ports it was said to fetch up to three times the confluence price³¹

During the 1854 expedition, Hutchinson, the officer in charge of trade, discovered that Otuturu, one of the new markets that replaced Ikini, dealt in provisions and foodstuffs. However, there was some ivory destined for the lower Niger port-town of Aboh where ‘they can get a good price for it.’ In return for ivory and, no doubt, slaves, the traders issuing

²⁶ Baikie, Narrative, p.316.

²⁷ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 322.

²⁸ Ibid., vol. I, p. 166.

²⁹ Ibid., p.132.

³⁰ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 267.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 401- 2.

from the confluence area bought 'the articles of salt and crockery-ware, which come up from the oil rivers, and which are the currency most prized by the natives up here.'³² While at Ossamare, Hutchinson observed that '[a]ll the ivory bought here is brought from the market at Ototouro.'³³ The Kakanda, the traders of Gori, the peoples of Egga and Rabah all traded in ivory.³⁴ Up the Benue, Baikie and Hutchinson reported seeing large herds of elephants and a brisk trade in ivory.

Hutchinson linked the high volume of the ivory trade to the growth of 'legitimate' commerce occasioned by the abolition of the export slave trade.³⁵ References cited here for the period after 1841 could also be linked to 'legitimate' commerce. It is clear from other evidence that in the heyday of slave exports, ivory and foodstuffs constituted important complements to the goods exchanged for European articles.³⁶ What Hutchinson observed might be no more than a continuation of trade at a scale that had long been established on the Niger river route. There is no doubt that ivory was exported together with slaves prior to 1807.³⁷ This ivory came from areas around and beyond the Niger-Benue confluence. In addition, the internal consumption of ivory was probably greater than external export to Europe. Most of the elephant population that supplied these demands was located inland

³² Hutchinson, Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda, and Benue Exploration, p. 161.

³³ Ibid., p. 172. Emphasis added.

³⁴ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, pp. 82, 84 and 194.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 401.

³⁶ D. Northrup, 'The compatibility of the Slave and Palm Oil Trades in the Bight of Biafra', Journal of African History, vol. 17, no. 3, 1976, pp. 353-364.

³⁷ For the relationship between gun trade and ivory, see, J. E. Inikori, 'The Import of fire-arms into West Africa 1750-1807: A quantitative analysis', Journal of African History, vol. 18, 1977, p. 351.

far away from the Niger Delta communities.³⁸ These nodes of commerce and their communication and exchange linkages to markets further down-river in the Niger-Delta area were not new links. They clearly predated the Lander brothers' visit in 1830.

The network of river market towns spanning the Niger from Egga, Gori, Idah, Adamugu, Onitsha, Aboh and Bonny, constituted a single system with grids extending inland eastward and westward. The reports of the Landers and of Laird and Oldfield on the Niger trade indicate a relay of exchange in high value goods from the Delta to Idah, to Gori and Egga, and from these places to Rabah and other places north of the Confluence. It is noteworthy that the Rogang, chief of Egga, told Lander in 1830 that neither his power nor that of the Fulani, who were now his overlords, extended further south than Egga on the Niger. Thus, the articles of coastal origin noted along the Niger river were brought to markets across several political boundaries. The cross-boundary trade was thus organized in a definite pattern of relays. This pattern remained until the 1850s.

What applied to ivory also applied to slaves. Almost all the trade in ivory from Ikin down-river to Bonny was connected with the trade in slaves. For instance, Abboko's 'brother', on his way to Aboh to sell his 'sixteen elephant's teeth' had also 'number of slaves' on board his canoe.³⁹ This seems to have continued the pattern of long distance trade and the communication pattern that had been in place since 1830 when chief Abboko of Adamugu sent, among other things, some six slaves to Aboh in the canoes that conveyed

³⁸ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p.93. See also, references in Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, pp. 41, 51-3, 87, 141.

the Landers to the sea continued. King Pepple's messenger, Aggary, whom the Landers met at Adamugu, together with whom they travelled sea-ward in 1830, was still plying his routes in 1833 when Oldfield found him in Idah trading for slaves with 'rum, iron bars, and cloth.'⁴⁰ Moreover, Aggary was not the only person from Bonny trading at Idah. A year before, in 1832, Laird on his party's first ascent had reported the presence at Idah of 'two men from King Pepple of Bonny' who were buying slaves for their master with European trade-goods.⁴¹ Guns and gunpowder must have been important articles exchanged for these slaves. Idah frequently organized raids against the hapless communities under her influence on the Niger and Benue, and shipped the captives down the Niger to Aboh in canoes.⁴²

At Budan, the Kakanda informed Allen and Thomson 'that they had been great slave-dealers, ... that the trade had been their great source of emolument.' The Attah, ruler of the Igala sent an emissary to proclaim to the Kakanda, as his subjects, the articles of the anti-slave trade treaty that he had entered into with the British government. They agreed to stop further trading in slaves and to retain only the domestic slaves that they already held.⁴³ One of the interpreters on the expedition, James Macauley, a recaptive from Sierra Leone, had been a slave in the town in 1820 and was sold down the Niger to Aboh and thence to Bonny before being finally shipped out to sea.⁴⁴ Having being kidnapped from his town of

³⁹ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, p. 114.

⁴⁰ Ibid., vol. II, p. 121.

⁴¹ Ibid., vol. I, p. 124.

⁴² Ibid., vol. II, p. 274.

⁴³ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 117.

⁴⁴ Ibid., vol. II, p. 119.

Mamaja in Nupe, he was sold to Egga and his movement to the coast followed the Niger. Again, the relay of trading is evident in Macauley's experience. The Niger was a communication resource jointly managed and shared by communities through which it passed.⁴⁵ Each community protected its interest on the river by effectively regulating the use by citizens and outsiders of its territorial waterways.

Near Gori, the anti-slave trade commissioners of the 1841-2 expedition impounded a canoe with three slaves and freed the slaves on the grounds that slave trading in the Attah's territory was a violation of the abolition treaty recently signed at Idah. The story of one of the liberated women paralleled that of James Macauley. Her 'husband' sold her to a slave dealer

who at the time happened to be trading in their country. She declared that before she saw the water [i.e., the Niger] the slave-gang to which she belonged travelled wearily every day for nearly a month. They were some days on the water before they reached Egga; and during the passage parties of her unhappy companions were from time to time disposed of at villages on the banks of the river. At Egga she was exposed for sale in the market-place, where she became the property of a slave-merchant there; and shortly afterwards passed into the hands of a third master, [Ajimba.] who was conveying her to Muye.⁴⁶

She was Yagba, hence her journey from her home was northward. The gang must have started on the Niger a considerable distance upstream for the journey to have taken some days on the water before they reached Egga. However, it is noteworthy that the slave gang headed for the Niger. Thereafter a Kakanda merchant from Muye bought her and took her

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 109-20.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p.87; Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 148.

coastward from Egga market.⁴⁷ James Thomas, a Church Missionary Society (CMS) Missionary stationed at Gbebe and Lokoja between 1858 and 1878, had also been a kidnap victim in 1834. He was seized in his native Eki-Bunu country, south west of the Kakanda and south-southeast of Rabah. Immediately disposed of to a slave dealer, he 'was brought down at once [to] the [Niger] river.'⁴⁸ From his homeland, he either had to travel north to the Nupe country or east through the Igbara and Bassa territories to reach the Niger. He was taken to Aboh, where he served for a short time before being finally sold into external slavery.⁴⁹ In 1858, the commissioners of the Niger mission were informed by an agent for a slave-dealer that trade had dwindled at Egga, and that demand for slaves

had been once so great, for the Gori and Kiri markets [but] ... now altogether ceased ... [He went on] that it would be necessary to send all the slaves now, to Rabah, which ...[was]... considered to be the chief slave-market in the interior of Africa.⁵⁰

Rabah's rise to prominence as a slave mart and its ability to outstrip Gori and Ikiri in this capacity was connected with the initial entrenchment of Fulani political hegemony there in the later 1820s and its clear ascendancy following Usman Zaki's succession in the mid 1830s.⁵¹ The former period was about the time that Manjiya was driven out of Rabah and was supplanted by Dendo and his sons. Before this time, Gori and Ikiri were the most important slave marts on the Niger. With both Gori and Ikiri strongly linked to Adamugu

⁴⁷ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p.87.

⁴⁸ C. M. S., Niger Mission, C A 3\ O 38. James Thomas to Rev. H. Venn, Gbebe. September 2nd 1859.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 'Journals - June 25th [1858] to September 26th 1859', entry for July 29th.

⁵⁰ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 101.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 107 and Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp.190-1. See Appendix 1.

and markets further south, the slave supplies that they sent downstream must have come from wars going on nearby. This was the time when other Fulani jihadist groups were consolidating their small territorial holds in the frontier area south and east of the Nupe heartland at Lafagi, Shonga, Agae and Lapai.⁵²

Slave-related evidence is not restricted to observations made in the Niger- Benue confluence. There are reports and observations obtained further down river that stress the commercial links between the communities of the Niger Delta and those around the Niger- Benue confluence in the early 19th century. Far down the Niger, at Onya (Owhyha), below Aboh, a woman trader offered to sell a slave to Oldfield and Lander. This slave was 'a native of Kacundah, or Ibbodah.'⁵³ At Aboh, yet another slave, 'a native of Kacundah' was presented to Lander by the Obi. Following the Landers' ascent up the river, this man had the opportunity briefly to see his Kakanda homeland of Budan again.⁵⁴ When in the Brass river in 1833, on his way down river with Lander at the end of their first ascent, Oldfield went on board a Spanish slave-ship at the behest of its captain to treat some of the sick crew. This ship had on board three hundred and twenty-nine slaves that were all procured in two days. Oldfield observed that most of these slaves 'were natives of Eboe and Nuffie.'⁵⁵ The Nupe component of the cargo must have been traded down river from Rabah, Egga, Gori, Ikiri and Adamugu.

⁵² Mason devoted a chapter to these four small emirates in his Nupe Kingdom, pp. 211-254.

⁵³ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 375.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 259.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 350-52.

Allen and Thomson mentioned a boy that Captain Trotter took to England at the request of Oldfield. This individual,

a native of Bornu, ... had been sold when a boy by the Nufi traders to the King of Idah, and by him to Obi, who again sold him to the Nufi people. He was then taken by the Filatahs in one of their predatory excursions, and, by the chances of war, came once more into the hands of Obi.⁵⁶

This became known when King Obi demanded to know what had happened to the boys he lent to the gentlemen from England. This particular situation is interesting because it shows a reverse sale of slaves upstream between Aboh and the Nupe heartland between the 1810 and 1830. But the predominant direction was downstream; the slave-boy in reference eventually made his final journey on the Niger southward and ultimately over the Atlantic.

The commercial link between the Igala and the Nupe was still very vital two decades later. In fact, King Obi, while signing the treaty abolishing the slave trade, revealed that 'his son ... was then engaged in purchasing slaves at a town up the river.'⁵⁷ On their way up river, the anti-slave trade commissioners soon met with the said son returning from the 'Eggarah market', in the midst of a flotilla of

about sixty canoes of all sizes, each containing, from two or three, to seventy persons. He said he had made a good market, having purchased a large quantity of ivory. There were a number of boys and some girls in the canoe, but whether slaves or no, could not be determined; though ... hardly doubted ..., as the King had acknowledged that his son was away at the market, for the purpose of making such purchases.⁵⁸

In 1858 at Aboh, James Thomas observed that the majority of the canoe-men returning from a battle with Osomari were 'slaves, most of them ... Bunu, Nupe, Bassa and

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

the Igaras people.' These were obviously no trade slaves. They had been seasoned and domesticated, recruited into the trading houses and war canoes of their patrons. As Thomas noted, some of them have been slaves in these communities for a long period of time.⁵⁹ Coming from the middle-Niger societies, they were brought down the same river route. Groups of these slaves actually visited him. A day before Thomas arrived at Aboh, he met five Bunu slaves among a group of about forty in the canoe of a chief of a subsidiary village to Aboh.⁶⁰ The route by which Thomas reached Aboh some twenty-five years before, it seems, was still in service. While paying a visit to slaves of Bunu origin whom he affectionately referred to as 'my country people' he encountered the son of the man who had sold him to Bonny.⁶¹ Given the persistence and pattern of the disturbances that engulfed the area immediately south of Nupe during the half-century, the son of the slave trader most likely followed a route not totally different from the one which in 1834 had brought James Thomas to Bonny as a slave.

For the better part of the first half of the nineteenth century, slaves sold from Nupe emirates and their tributaries on the south side of the Niger seemed to have moved towards the coast via the Niger. Captives from the particular Nupe wars were more likely to have been traded down the Niger than northward. Such captives included those deriving from to the establishment of Lafagi, as well as those acquired by Etsu Jimada, Idirisu, Isa and

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.267.

⁵⁹ James Thomas, 'Journals - June 25th [1858] to September 26th', 1859 Entry for July 17th, 1858.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid. Entry for Aug. 2.

Masaba, all of whose capitals were in eastern Nupe and to whom most of the Nupe south of the Niger gave their support during the wars. Manjiya and his successors, Dendo, Usman Zaki, and Umar the military usurper operated generally north of the Niger and seemed to have had the support of the central and north-western Nupe. Except for Manjiya who was from northwest Nupe, they were immigrants from further north with official and unofficial links to the Islamic jihad whose centre was at Sokoto. Thus, their allegiance, its affirmation in terms of tribute, gifts and bribes sent to Sokoto and Gwandu, and their commercial focus were directed northward. Hence, proportionately more of the captives that fell to them could generally be expected to have gone northward.

Many slaves from the Niger-Benue confluence and Nupe were sold to the Niger Delta via the Niger river route. The indications that the trade route was already well established before 1820 and the large extent of trade reported in slaves along this route are telling. They support the view that the Igbos and Kalabari of the Bight of Biafra, as much as the coastal peoples of the Bight of Benin, must have been net receivers of slaves from further inland before 1800.⁶² Lovejoy's slave biographical data drawn largely from Bahia and Sierra Leone are informative in this regard. Although, the data are not drawn from a census and are not representative of gross or net export figures, nevertheless, they allow for tentative inferences concerning the comparative utility of the Niger and overland trade routes for overseas export of Nupe and Niger-Benue confluence slaves c.1810-1850. His new data confirms his earlier opinion about the possibility of a considerable export of slaves across

the Atlantic arising from the 19th century jihads of central Sudan.⁶³ But more importantly, when disaggregated, the data also show that there was about a 50% chance for slaves exported across the Atlantic due to the Nupe wars to pass along either of the routes.⁶⁴

SECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

The next section examines the organisational patterns of this commerce. This is necessary to show how adjustments to the 1807 abolition of Atlantic slave export and the economic benefits accruing from the Niger river trade were structurally related to social-political groupings in societies of the Confluence area. This is able to highlight those most vulnerable to changes attendant on the British abolition and the subsequent expansion of legitimate commerce.

LOCAL TERRITORIAL TRADE

Ogedengbe's observation that traders of the Niger had the option of middleman and long-distance trading is a useful starting point for an examination of the organizational features of the Niger-river trade.⁶⁵ As could be observed in the various instances of trading reproduced in the foregoing paragraphs, traders from various polities, and particularly from the bigger and more powerful ones, helped to maintain the strong linkages between the Delta and the Niger-Benue confluence area. This they did through 'visiting each others' markets

⁶² Inikori, 'The sources of supply', pp. 29-33.

⁶³ Lovejoy, 'Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade', pp. 379-80, and *Transformations*, pp. 176-79.

⁶⁴ See Appendix 5, where relevant portions of Lovejoy's biographical data are reproduced from 'Background to Rebellion' with minor amendments and addition.

⁶⁵ Ogedengbe, K. O., 'The Aboh Kingdom of the Lower Niger, c.1650-1900', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1971. p. 312.

and receiving or supplying, in relays, local and imported goods to meet both local and interregional consumption needs. The qualification that needs to be made for the lower Niger and Niger-Benue confluence communities is that the two options could still be distinguished from a third: intra-boundary or local trade. These three layers of commerce interacted to further the general flow of goods and money over both long and short hauls.

Observations recorded about the markets of Egga, Gori, Ikiri, Odokodo and Onya include descriptions a full range of the valuable long distance articles like slaves, palm oil, ivory, gun and powder, cloths and other European imports. Different assortments of foodstuffs, local manufactures, agricultural and fishing implements, and other low value goods of local use were equally prominent. The latter goods were within the range of every woman and man who chose to engage in trading. Besides, such traders either came from or ferried goods between nearby towns and villages. Here common traders could hawk their small stores of articles either on their personal accounts or in the service of some master/mistress or major long-distance merchant. These traders also redistributed the bulk imports from long distance expeditions. In this important way they were structurally linked to the current of the long-distance and middle-distance trade mentioned by Ogedengbe.

Such small-scale traders paid canoe transporters to ferry them across the river or between creeks within their territorial waters for day-markets at Idah, Egga, Zagoshi, and elsewhere. Thus, at the local or intra-territorial level of trade, and especially with respect to local export goods and low value non-military articles, the organization of trade seems to have been loose and free. Royal or semi-royal monopolistic practices are not evident in the

available data. On the contrary, the various European traders, travellers, explorers and commentators observed and were impressed by the mass participation of the citizenry, both male and female, in commerce.⁶⁶

There were royal restrictions to some aspects of this local trade. There is evidence for Adamugu, Idah, Odokodo, and indirectly for Rabah, that the kings and chief men and women pursued policies that precluded some lines of products from being directly traded by the ordinary people. The sale of ivory to the European trading expedition of 1832-4 and the purchase and use of some prestige goods that royalty appropriated as emblematic of their hegemonic status over the ordinary people are cases in point. No doubt ordinary non-royal and non-noble hunters killed elephants and could have utilized the opportunity of visiting European traders to dispose of these prizes profitably. There is evidence that some of them did. But this was usually in territories where people had some measure of independence or in distant portions of the Niger and areas where the agents of the Idah or Rabah royalties could not observe the transactions.⁶⁷

There is evidence, within the immediate territorial waters of Idah, of one old man who brought a tusk for sale;⁶⁸ and there was a commission agent/broker, '*dilal*',⁶⁹ who represented northern traders at Odokodo and Ikin. Other than these, most purchases of ivory were made by the Expedition from the king the queen, the noble sons of Abboko.

⁶⁶ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, pp. 165-6; Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 431

⁶⁷ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, p. 168; vol. II, p. 310.

⁶⁸ Ibid., vol. II, p. 244.

Abboko himself, the king's eunuchs and the commission agents. Soho, another independent trader, had to come surreptitiously at night to dispose of a tusk because it paid him better than selling it to the king's men, to whom he usually sold.⁷⁰ Right before the eyes of Oldfield and Lander, the Idah trade controller and one of Attah's eunuchs turned back traders who approached Oldfield's vessel with the intention to sell their ivory.⁷¹ Eventually, it became common knowledge that ordinary traders had been forbidden to trade with the expedition. The Attah had spies all over his territorial waters to ensure this.⁷² In fact, the Oldfield party was so frustrated that eventually the expedition left Idah for the upper reaches of the Niger. Only then did the expedition become more successful in procuring goods from private traders. The 1841-2 expedition recorded this monopolistic practice by the Attah, the consequence of which was that little trade was done at Idah as people would not bring ivory. The king wanted the trade 'in his own hands.'⁷³ But this might have been caused by the disruption of the substantial middleman/broker roles of these kings by the coming upriver of European trading expeditions to trade directly with ordinary traders. The kings had been used to collecting a considerable amount of ivory from individuals and sending them down river at marked up prices. The restrictive practice might have been a reflection by kings and nobles to mitigate their losses.

⁶⁹ From *dilali* in Hausa

⁷⁰ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, p. 410.

⁷¹ Ibid., vol. II, pp. 213-14.

⁷² Ibid., vol. I, p. 153.

⁷³ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 402.

Guns, it seems, and velvet cloth were articles not to be bought by ordinary people from the European traders in the river markets, but by the kings and nobility. It is not clear whether this was the case before the European merchant pushed his way upriver. At any rate, the economics of long-distance trade must have made sure that the kings, nobles and their trade representatives had the advantage over any individual competitors. However, this advantage was greatly compromised when it became both possible and more profitable to by-pass kings, nobles and their representatives to sell directly to European traders. Nonetheless, there is evidence that individual men and women sold small amounts of ivory and slaves at boundary markets without any serious intervention by the kings. In fact, as can be seen from the case of Soho, bold and enterprising single-item traders managed to elude these royal restrictions.

The other way in which the local trade came under royal control was through tolls. In 1830, when the Landers were passing down-river, they were warned not to stop at Idah because of the possibility of detention and extortion by the Attah. This was why they rowed past Idah at night. But they did not escape for long. At Adamugu, they were soon accosted by some of Abokko's canoe-men and brought back to the Aboko. They were accused of attempting to pass without paying their due respects to the chief. It seems that they were expected to pay a toll⁷⁴ At Koton Karfi's port town of Addapah, a toll was exacted from traders, and Oldfield and Lander had to pay a small amount during their ascent

⁷⁴ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 223.

of 1833.⁷⁵ The 1841-2 expedition found that the big market of Gori fetched a lot of revenue for the chief. They learnt that '...every canoe bringing goods to the market pays a duty of fifty cowries for each of the crew. The same duty is demanded on each bag of salt.' On this particular occasion, about sixty canoes were seen in the market.⁷⁶

However, the tolls do not seem to have restricted private trade or to have given any particular advantage to wealthy traders. Tolls might have reduced the profitability on a single article or few items and would thus discourage participation until more goods could be accumulated to make the transaction pay its way. Such cases might also indirectly enhance the use of a third party, broker or agent who bulked goods and facilitated transactions. Royal trading representatives were probably exempt from such duties. As there is no direct data for this, we can only consider it as a possibility.

LONG DISTANCE TRADE.

Ogedengbe noted that some traders covered the entire length of the lower Niger trading system from the Niger Delta to the Niger-Benue confluence. Representatives of King Pepple of Bonny to Idah and Ikiri mounted frequent and regular trading expeditions. The Attah of Igala was known as far as the coast as the wealthiest and most powerful trader-monarch on the Niger.⁷⁷ No doubt the facility afforded the Bonny merchants at Idah was reciprocated, and the Attah's trading representatives probably went as far as Bonny.

⁷⁵ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 402; Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol., 2. p.13.

⁷⁶ Schon and Crowther, Journals of Rev. James Frederick, p. 146; Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II. p.84.

Hence, an English merchant at the Benin port of Ughoton in the early 1820s was able to collect 'much valuable information from traders who came thither from Haussa and other provinces of the Sudan.'⁷⁸

This type of trade obviously required considerable capital. Merchants had to provide canoes, recruit the number of hands required for the long-distance voyages, and estimate the number of days to be spent travelling and trading after arrival at the trade destination to cover the cost of maintenance of the members of expedition. A large proportion of goods had to be high in value. Thus Aggary was said to have traded rum, iron bars, and cloth for slaves and no doubt ivory.⁷⁹ Two other Bonny men representing King Pepple were trading at Idah in 1832. They came with 'European trade-goods.'⁸⁰ Traders whom the Landers met at Adamugu in 1830 were no doubt of the same sort. Beyond the formidable capital, the safety of the expedition, its general feasibility and ultimate profitability required skills and credentials that combined strategic political/diplomatic, cultural, and ideological links with the different polities and communities through which the expeditions would pass.⁸¹ Shared economic interests also could facilitate this kind of relationship as witnessed when the Obi of Aboh and Attah of Igala found common ground in the Niger river trade to encourage

⁷⁷ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, pp. 124, 149.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Ogedengbe, 'Aboh Kingdom', p. 312.

⁷⁹ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, p. 121.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 124.

⁸¹ For the nature of some of these links, see, R. N. Henderson, The King in Every Man. Evolutionary Trends in Onitsha Ibo Society and Culture, London, 1972. pp. 66-68 and this is also discussed in relation to the period before 1650 in P.A. Oguwagha, 'Igbo-Igala Relation before c. A.D 1650', Part II, 'Historical and Traditional Evidence' in P. A. Oguwagha and A. U. Okpoko, History and Ethnoarchaeology In Eastern Nigeria: A Study of

Masaba, the Nupe ruler at Lade, to invade Brass country in the early 1840s.⁸² These traders were also armed in readiness for pirates and robbers who might not be mindful of any political or cultural guarantees of the immunity of such traders.

The isolated evidence for this trade suggests that these expeditions were based on political understanding between independent polities. The various parties preferred to base the success of these long-distance ventures on ideological, political and reciprocal bonds rather than compromise their successes by recourse to large-scale arming of trade expeditions. The Lander brothers, for instance, were delayed at Adamugu until they could travel downstream together with the trading agents of the Bonny king. It was obvious that the convoy had some guarantee of safety, a kind of diplomatic immunity on the river. In fact, when they eventually fell into the hands of some Aboh river pirates, there was no indication at all that they were heavily armed in a way that implied that they thought they were at great risk in the first place. Moreover, the ensuing 'palaver' restored most of the goods that had been plundered, and the leader of the pirates received a death sentence. The unfortunate pirate was said to have merited this because he had acted without the political sanction of his monarch.⁸³ No doubt some norm had been broken by this particular piratical

Igbo-Igala relations with special reference to the Anambra Valley, Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 7. BAR International Series 195, 1984.

⁸² Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, p. 39.

⁸³ Lander and Lander, Journal, p. 241.

act. It is doubtful that royal traders would attempt to use routes that passed through areas that were openly hostile to their monarch or people.⁸⁴

The overheads, high risk and the state political connections involved in this trade meant that only the kings or their direct representatives pursued it. Since the value of goods was considerable and the goods were usually such high-end products as slaves, ivory, European cloth, guns and muskets, the immense profit that accrued from this trade was restricted to the kings and perhaps a few top people closely connected with the court.

MIDDLE DISTANCE TRADE

Some merchants only travelled half the route from the Delta to the confluence. This was also long distance, but the northern traders did not go beyond Aboh, while the Brass traders went as far as Aboh to dispose of their goods and receive upriver goods in exchange. Aboh traders came as far north as Ikin and as far south as the Nun branch of the Niger. From Rabah, Egga and in between, northern traders came down as far as Koton Karfi and Ikin markets. There was a decided policy of going only 'half-way' and allowing middlemen to become involved in the redistribution of imports and exports.⁸⁵

This trade revolved around spheres of trading influence. The most frequent and heaviest exchanges took place during the trading expeditions or market-fairs associated with middleman trade. Here the various trading powers on the Niger, from Egga to Muye, Ikin,

⁸⁴ One of the escorts that Abboko assigned to the Landers as escort followed them all the way down to the Sea. In the course of the years, he became a reputable elderly trader and died more than 30 years later during a period of political crises at Gbebe. Samuel Crowther, CMS, Niger Mission, 'Notices of the Atta of Idda in the Igara Country.'

Osomari and Aboh, fully regulated trade flows over their portion of the Niger. They placed officers in charge of their section, and their warriors and armed traders were ready to do battle with any trespassers. The Lander brothers encountered this situation all the way to the sea. It is in this respect that Allen and Thomson reported that the merchants of different polities on the Niger 'never traverse a foreign state to visit a distant market.'⁸⁶ Ogedengbe more appropriately explained the situation to mean that 'trade was ... negotiated between the monarchs on the Niger, and permission was granted their respective merchants to trade in one another's markets.'⁸⁷ An important feature of the trading relationship between the various polities on the Niger was the establishment of boundary markets on their shared borders.⁸⁸ Allen and Thomson commented that '... the large fairs held at different points on the river, about once a fortnight, [stood] for what may be called their foreign trade, or intercourse with neighbouring nations.' They considered this to be 'the principal feature' of the Niger river trading communities.⁸⁹ This was not new; the Laird and Oldfield exploration also observed this in 1833,⁹⁰ as had the Lander brothers in 1830.⁹¹

Attendance at these markets was usually heavy. Trading went on for three or four days and those who attended the markets prepared to be absent from home for the length of

⁸⁵ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 237.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ogedengbe, 'Aboh Kingdom', p. 314.

⁸⁸ Henderson, The King in Every Man, pp. 65-66.

⁸⁹ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 398.

⁹⁰ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, pp. 132-3.

⁹¹ Lander and Lander, Journal, pp. 229-30.

time involved.⁹² These markets were visited by people from neighbouring and distant mainland communities. Canoe traffic on the Niger during these days of Niger-mart trade was very heavy.⁹³ The traders often went in convoy as representatives of their kingdoms and of their various noble trader-masters/mistresses. After the Lander party was plundered off Asaba in 1830, a convoy of about twenty canoes of Adamugu traders, another of Kalabari traders and yet another of Panda traders were instrumental in rescuing the Lander brothers and their party and restoring to them some of their goods. The 'Eboe' fleet that attacked them numbered about fifty canoes. These canoes each had the capacity of carrying between sixty and seventy passengers. They were all going to the market. The latter piratical group wanted to capitalise on the presupposition that a group of richly laden but unaffiliated or 'uninsured' canoes in which two white men were passengers were passing downstream to plunder.⁹⁴

In consequence of these hazards, trading expeditions, particularly those visiting from the Delta and lower Niger polities, were usually well armed with guns and muskets. A considerable portion of the crew of these expeditions consisted of slaves.⁹⁵ Oldfield encountered such a river-caravan in 1833. It included Aboh canoes with the Obi's canoes prominently at the command centre. They totalled 'about three hundred, going up to Kirree

⁹² Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, pp. 132-3. See also, Lander and Lander, Journal, pp. 229-30.

⁹³ Lander and Lander, Journal, p. 210; Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 83

⁹⁴ Lander and Lander, Journal, pp. 33-241.

⁹⁵ For descriptions of other examples of this types of hazards, see Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 362; Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 2.

market; and the river had the appearance of a regatta, almost every canoe having a piece of white cotton fly ing, on which were painted various devices, as skulls, crocodiles, trees, &c..’ obviously coats of arms or standards.⁹⁶ The pattern was not a temporary one. In 1841, Allen and Thomson reported that they ‘fell in with the Ibu traders returning from the Eggarah market. There were about sixty canoes of all sizes, each containing, from two or three, to seventy persons. Obi’s son came alongside in one distinguished by a red flag edged with yellow. He said he had made a good market, having purchased a large quantity of ivory.’⁹⁷

These border fairs were the most important outlets for all consumer imports. In the confluence communities and their markets, guns and pistols were never displayed or sold to individual customers. These would constitute special or military-strategic articles, capital goods — exchanged only between royal/noble representatives on behalf of their masters/mistresses. There is no record of muskets or guns being seen in markets or being hawked in the country by traders. Even those sold by European traders or given as gifts were given to the kings and a few noble personages.⁹⁸ A second reason for the restriction of guns to a few hands might also have to do with the cost. Only slave and ivory dealers were rich enough to pay for these guns. They were those who used guns for other than military purposes.⁹⁹ After the flooding of the Niger markets with the cowries plundered from Lander

⁹⁶ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 178.

⁹⁷ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 267.

⁹⁸ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 183

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 184-5.

when his party was fired on by some people at Angyiamah, goods that Oldfield said he had not been able to dispose of included guns. These were sold at Ikin market. Unfortunately, we are not told to whom the guns were sold, but it can safely be inferred that only slave and ivory dealers were able to accumulate cowries from the Ibo market, and principal among these were representatives of kings and nobles. Consequently, they were most likely the ones that could buy the guns.

Moreover, all sorts of locally produced and imported goods changed hands at these border fairs: gun-powder, flints, yams, beads, cloth, iron bars, knives, rice, goats, fowl, calabashes, mats, country beads, horses of a small breed, and ivory. The fairs also traded in kola nuts, guns, powder, cottons of a showy pattern with red and blue stripes, rum, small looking-glasses, palm oil, dogs and live stock and red wood. Ivory, slaves, and cowries were important articles of exchange here also.¹⁰⁰ While these articles were usually brought to the various boundary fairs by traders from adjacent settlements, traders attending these fairs from considerable distances could be expected to specialize in only the high-end category of the listed goods. Other than this, the low value goods might be found among returning cargoes after a successful disposal of articles brought to the market. They could serve as ballast.

This trade also involved a high level of capital investment. This is due to the fact that it required long distance voyages, the organization of armed flotillas and a stock of high value goods. From Rabah to Egga and Brass, this longer-distance commerce was handled by the

agents of royalty, relatives and important clients of kings and nobles, sons of powerful princes and chiefs, husbands of royal daughters, queens, other royal wives, royal eunuchs and rich and influential mallams.¹⁰¹ A major, or at least substantial, portion of this trade was therefore, also dominated, if not monopolized, by the upper classes of these communities.

The traders that did not go beyond the boundary markets did not need to be part of a corporate trading organization other than perhaps as passengers in the corporate canoes. Thus, the nobles and other rich people with canoes were able to make money as transporters of the middle and lower-level traders. A careful look at the evidence clearly indicates that transport and commercial sectors were different. Non-riverain and non-canoë owning traders, for instance, were either ferried across the Niger within their territorial waters to link with mainland routes for a fee, or they could arrange with a canoe-owning trading organization for trading expeditions to markets on beyond their state's borders.¹⁰² Unfortunately we do not have data relating to the cost of trade canoes. They seem to have been out of the reach of the ordinary trader in because of the cost of the vessel itself or the cost of operating them. Water-craftmanship and seafaring seem also to have been restricted to particular riverain clans and thus other traders irrespective of their wealth might simply consider owning a

¹⁰⁰ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, pp. 180, 181.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., vol. I, pp. 126, 130, 133, 222, 245, 319, 410; Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, pp. 84-5.

¹⁰² Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, pp. 313-14; vol. II, pp. 361-2.

canoe inappropriate or impractical. Such traders relied on commercial transportation¹⁰³ that was provided by huge canoes found all along the Niger.¹⁰⁴

Commercial transportation, of course, was clearly an indistinguishable and integral part of middleman trading and cannot be analysed separately from the trading activity of which it was the carrier, the way we can when discussing local trade. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the more enterprising individuals, either on their own account or for their master/mistress, could book passage and protection in a fleet of canoes heading for distant markets outside their immediate neighbourhoods. A certain trader named Zuri, whom the Anoja Ameh Abokko, ruler of Gbebe, sent out to guide Baikie's party upstream on the Benue in 1854 is a good example of such an enterprising individual. He was a renowned trader with many wives scattered over several station points, and though not very rich and essentially independent of royalty or nobility, his contacts and wives at the various points along the Benue where he traded gave him tremendous advantages.¹⁰⁵ The woman trader whom Oldfield employed to sell and buy articles in the markets near Idah is another example. She had to utilise canoe transport services provided by canoe-owners.¹⁰⁶

The royal traders at Rabah, Idah, Aboh and Brass had first access to European articles. At Aboh, Idah, and Rabah, other traders could not engage in external trade until the kings had declared trade open by first selecting articles and bargaining with visiting long

¹⁰³ It must be said, however, that more research needs be done before anything definitive can be said about this. This I admit is no more than presumption.

¹⁰⁴ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, pp. 2, 21-22, 44, 46.

¹⁰⁵ Baikie, Narrative, pp. 243-6.

distance traders, and in the process selling their own accumulated goods.¹⁰⁷ At Idah, some articles of prestige like velvet cloth could only be bought or used by common people and slaves at the risk of losing their lives.¹⁰⁸ That this was not just an occurrence that began with the coming upriver of Europeans is clear from the repeated statements of prominent kings along the Niger to the effect that nobody would trade until they first declared trade open. At Rabah, too, even the Arabs could only trade with the visiting European traders when they were sure that the king's men would not apprehend them.¹⁰⁹ However, at Egga, in contrast to Rabah, evidence for the period up to the 1830 suggests that the operating principle for the dominance of some noble Nupe traders over the multitude of ordinary private individual retailers was economies of scale. However, how the nobles of Egga accumulated their wealth, which enabled them to have the advantage of economics of scale, might not be unconnected with political or military policies. Nonetheless, everybody could trade freely with the Europeans however much or little were the stock of goods or money involved.¹¹⁰

Northern traders from beyond Nupe, who traded at the Ikiri, Odokodo, Egga and Rabah markets, made use of trade-agents and brokers to facilitate their buying and selling. These trading agents were usually long-time settlers at the market towns and they possessed

¹⁰⁶ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, pp. 221, 26, 290.

¹⁰⁷ This would apply to the period before legitimate commerce and to times before Laird and Oldfield's trading expeditions. The King of Bonny's traders mentioned earlier on would be expected to deal first with the Attah before they would venture to trade with other people in the kingdom. These kings and nobles, more than others, were usually the beneficiaries of the trust system. See Ogedengbe, 'Aboh Kingdom', pp. 322-3, for his opinion that the trust system anti-dated the 1820s.

¹⁰⁸ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, pp. 223, 252.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 108-9.

considerable knowledge of local conditions and practices. Their services were therefore very valuable for traders from polities outside the market areas. They supplied credit and provided storage facilities, accommodation and boarding for these long-distance traders. They were usually wealthy, well-connected traders in their own right and they seemed to be generally politically influential. At Odokodo and Ikiri, Oldfield and Lander encountered such trading agents during their 1832-4 trading expedition. So too did the Trotter expedition of 1841-2. Thus Oldfield noted in his report that the 'traders from the upper country usually employed a broker named Mallam Cantab, an inhabitant of Addakudda, to trade for them, and paid him a regular commission.' Oldfield got a clear impression at Odokodo that this was 'the common practice of the country', definitely predating the 1830s.¹¹¹ Another such trading or commission agent, also referred to as an auctioneer, was a man called Soho, a native of Koton Karfi. He was himself a very active trader, plying the Niger and the Benue. Laird and Oldfield encountered him at Odokodo, Ikiri and on the Benue. Apparently, the Attah of Igala did not permit these *diladi* (commission agents) to operate in his territory freely and only tolerated them since they seemed to facilitate trade with northern merchants in Igala country. Soho was expected to sell his ivory to the trading agents of the Attah. To avoid this, he sought out Lander under the cover of darkness to sell his stock of ivory.¹¹² Allen and Thomson reported that their expedition also encountered such a trading agent at Egga in 1841. In this case the agent was dealing in slaves. The agent's discussion with

¹¹¹ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, p. 168.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 410, 433; vol., II, pp. 310, 312.

Stanger and Schon indicates that he had been at this business for quite a while. He made reference to earlier times when, according to him, Egga was a major supplier of slaves. He said that 'there were few slaves sold now [at Egga], compared with former days; [when] the demand [for slaves] ... had been at one time so great, for the Gori and Kiri markets.'¹¹³

The relationship of these commission agents and brokers to rich long-distance traders and to noble or royal trading representatives was clearly symbiotic—at least outside Idah. However, their relationship with the small-scale traders and hawkers can only be conjectured. It is unlikely that hunters with one or two tusks or sciveloes, or small-scale traders with one or two slaves, made use of the services of these trade agents. Either to save time and effort, or because of the additional cost that transporting trade goods to distant market would entail, such small-scale traders or individual hunters could definitely make use of the trading agents. The latter would bulk the goods for wholesale redistribution. They were also handy to do illegal deals that might require promptness such as helping a kidnapper to quickly dispose of his or her illegal prize.¹¹⁴ It could be surmised that the trading agents, though a category of upper class merchants and obviously useful to royal/noble trading representatives, did not inhibit the trading capabilities of the ordinary Niger-Benue confluence seller and buyer. Rather, they seemed to have enhanced them.

¹¹³ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I. pp. 100-101. And for Rabah and Bishi, respectively, see pp. 399, 407.

SOME ASPECTS OF OVERLAND NUPE TRADE.

However, much more than the Niger Delta communities, the Nupe and Niger-Benue confluence communities had other viable and valuable commercial outlets. Important overland trade routes linked them to big market centres in the heart of the Central and Western Sudan. They were also linked to markets of the Bight of Benin. Because of their location on the northern portion of the Guinea savannah, north-south trade routes using draft animals, which linked the southern portion of the savannah belt and the Hausa states to the coastal states, passed through Nupe and the territories of some of its neighbours.¹¹⁵

Mason opined that Nupe did not have any 'major interregional markets or significant trade routes within the area prior to the warring lineages.' His reason was that the 'major highways which carried the long-distance trade between the Gulf of Guinea and the savanna were further to the east and to the west of Nupe.'¹¹⁶ This observation is only partially correct. There might be 'no evidence of rulers in Nupe sustaining themselves principally from the profits of trade' before the 1850s. But it is difficult to accept the suggestion that 'there were no markets in Nupe which in themselves could yield profits from exchange sufficient to maintain ruling groups of anything but the most petty proportions.'¹¹⁷ The failure of Nupe rulers to earn revenue by taxing trade surpluses during this period could only

¹¹⁴ Cole, Life in the Niger, p. 89.

¹¹⁵ A. Mahadi, 'The Delivery of Slaves from the Central Sudan to the Bight of Benin in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' in Henry A. Gemery and Jan S. Hogendorn, eds., The Uncommon Market. Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, New York, 1979, p. 173.

¹¹⁶ Mason, 'Production, Penetration and Political Formation', p. 209.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 211.

be due to the chaotic military situation and general underdevelopment of the requisite administrative structures. This explains Mason's observation that after the jihadists' defeat of important trading towns,

no subsequent attempts were made to establish government monopoly over trade, no tax or tolls levied on trade. The subjects were left to trade on their own account and traders gave presents to their host [broker-hosts] rather than to the rulers of Nupe or their representatives.¹¹⁸

More in accord with evidence and analysis presented in the foregoing paragraphs is Mason's submission that the

years prior to 1857 were too full of strife between rival lineages for anything approaching a tributary system to have emerged, that is, for there to have emerged new social relations defined as being simultaneously economic, political, and social.¹¹⁹

It can be inferred from evidence from the 1830s that prior to the rise of Rabah, and its Zaghozi port, there were major interregional markets and important cross-roads to the north-south trade routes which served Nupe. In years up to 1826, Kulfo was one such interregional market visited by caravans of traders from Bornu, the Hausa country, Dahomey, Asante and Oyo. Although it was located in the extreme northwest, it was an important Nupe town. Also, every mention of Raka about which little, unfortunately, is known, indicates that it was an important trading port connecting Nupe to Old Oyo and Yoruba countries to the south. Both towns were thus stations on the main north-south trade route linking the savannah to the coastal/forest countries. Indeed, Caliph Bello of Sokoto was convinced that Raka was in territory under his influence, although Baikie seemed to imply

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

that it was an Oyo port. That it was destroyed in the Nupe wars might mean that a large Nupe population, partisans of one of the Nupe contenders, resided in the town, thus drawing attack upon itself.¹²⁰

The leather, weaving, dyeing, brass and bead-making industries that were evident by 1830 when the Landers visited Rabah and Zaghozi were obviously not new industries. Many of the slaves carried away from Nupe were by 1826 known in Sokoto and Kano to be 'the most expert weavers in Soudan, and the women the best spinner[s].'¹²¹ If this description applied to Nupe slaves in these cities, it applied as well to Nupe refugees there. They had practised their skills and disposed of their products in inter-regional commerce decades before their enslavement. The quick development of Rabah and Zaghozi into important trading towns by 1830 can be seen only in the context of forced and voluntary relocation of the expert artisans and merchants of previous market towns that were either attacked or destroyed.¹²²

The second main north-south route from Bornu through Bauchi to the Benue had termini at Panda, Koton Karfi, Abinsi, Ibi, Muri, Yola, and Wukari. They all had important crossroads linking them to Kano and Zaria via Nupe.¹²³ By 1830, Egga was already a

¹²⁰ Mason, *Foundation*, p. 62.

¹²¹ Huish, *Travels of Richard and John Lander*, p. 342.

¹²² Mahadi, 'Delivery of Slaves' p. 173 mentions this north-south route as passing through Nupe. However, because Rabah was one of the stopping places mentioned along the route and the discussion was in the post-jihad context, by implication the study inadvertently dates the route's shift through Nupe to c.1830.

¹²³ A. Mahadi, *The Hausa Factor in West African History*. Zaria and Ibadan, 1978, p.46. Also, C. C. Ifemesia, 'British Enterprise on the Niger 1830-1869', unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1959, has a brief description of these routes, pp. 13-16.

famous Nupe market linked not only to Koton Karifi and above-mentioned Benue trading towns, but also to the Niger Delta. There is likelihood that its importance as an eastern Nupe market town predated the rise of Rabah and Zaghobie.

In 1826, Kulfo was described as 'the principal town to trade in Nyffe [Nupe] at present; and at all times a central point for trade in this part of the interior.' It had daily markets and two weekly fairs on Mondays and Saturdays 'resorted to by traders and people inhabiting the sea coast.' Some fifteen Dahomian slave merchants whom Clapperton had seen at Wawa also traded to Kulfo. They belonged to the category of distant traders who brought 'cloths, earthen ware, brass and pewter dishes, and sell them in Houssa, Nyffe, and Youri, for slaves and beads.'¹²⁴ Merchants from Youriba (Oyo), Borgoo (Borgu), Soccato (Sokoto), Houssa (Hausa states), Nyffe (other parts of Nupe), and Benin were said to have patronized Kulfo.¹²⁵ A contemporary observer recorded that

caravans from Bornou and Houssa, which halt[ed] at Kulfo a considerable time, bring horses, natron, unwrought silk, silk cord, beads, Maltse swords from Bengazi, remounted at Kano; clothes made up in the moorish fashion, Italian looking glasses, such as sell for one penny and upwards at Malta, tobes undyed, made in Bornou, khol for the eyelids, a small quantity of attar of roses, much adulterated, gums from Mecca, silks from Egypt, moorish caps, and slaves.¹²⁶

The town was itself a manufacturing centre. It sold slaves, as well as employed them in production of export items. It was observed that there was 'great number of dyers, tailors, blacksmiths, and weavers' all of who also 'engaged in traffic.'¹²⁷ Slaves in Kulfo 'intended

¹²⁴ Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition*, pp. 122, 123, 134.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Huish, *Travels of Richard and John Lander*, p. 406.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

for sale, are confined in the house mostly in irons' from where they were sold.¹²⁸

Information from Morocco that seems to be contemporaneous with the early successes of Dendo in Nupe has references to a Nupe trading city that in several respects fits Kulfo.¹²⁹ The report observed that Moors, Moroccans, Fezzanis and other Arab traded to this Nupe town and that many North Africans settled there as men of letters.¹³⁰ Many inhabitants of this great Nupe trading town were merchants doing extensive trade in slaves. As a result they were very rich and the town was characterized by an easy and convenient lifestyle.¹³¹ They were said to have traded to Timbuctou, Katsina and other large bazars of the Sudan, bringing back slaves. Prices of articles were reportedly low. Slave dealers in the town quartered their slaves in compounds where they were sold.¹³²

In 1826, Clapperton and Lander witnessed a large number of captives taken from northwestern Nupe being marched to Sokoto. Indeed, between 1824 and 1826, refugees from the war in Nupe were considered one of the principal reasons for the visible increase in Kano's population.¹³³ The wars that forced out the refugees were also responsible for the large number of captives and slaves of Nupe origin found in Kano and Sokoto. They slaves, like the Nupe refugees in Kano, were the 'expert weavers' of 'blue check tobes called sharie'.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Mohammed Ibn Omar El-Tounsy, *Voyage au Ouday*, Paris, 1851, pp. 296-7, 301-302.

¹³⁰ Apart from North Africans who came to trade, Clapperton came across those who had settled down as 'men of letter' in official or semi-official capacity. One of these Arabs was married to Manjiya's daughter. See Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition*, pp. 121, 124, 128, 134.

¹³¹ Huish, *Travels of Richard and John Lander*, pp. 404-5; Lander also had captivating description of the drinking and partying life of the Kulfo's people in *Records*.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ H. Clapperton, in 3 (iv)ADM 55/11, Folios 122, entry for Monday 25 July 'Arrival in Kano - July

a costly fashionable cloth exported to North Africa, and they were 'the best spinners' that Clapperton and Lander saw in Sokoto and Kano.¹³⁴

By 1830 when Lander and his brother again visited Nupe, Rabah had become a huge market town in its own right with Zaghozi as its trading port. As impressive as Rabah's commercial status was, Lander considered Zaghozi even greater as a market town, describing it as 'one of the most important trading places in the whole kingdom of Nouffie, not excepting even Coulfoo'.¹³⁵

While the routes by which trade passed into Nupe shifted and changed, it is unlikely that the Nupe wars affected external commerce in a very drastic way. While many Nupe were sold as slaves and others fled into refuge, their places were filled by those enslaved and used within Nupe for productive purposes. Moreover, Nupe might have been a net receiver of slaves. The Moroccan information referred to above, as well as the observations of Lander and Clapperton in 1826 and of Barth and Richardson in 1851 supports this view. They show that slaves from the central emirates of the Sokoto caliphate, from Zinder and other places were being sent to Nupe to be exchanged for coastal goods and Nupe manufactures.¹³⁶

In the early 1850s when Barth and Richardson visited Borno, Kano and Katsina, Nupe trade with Hasusa, both in goods and slaves, was still large. In these cities, articles

1826'.

¹³⁴ Huish, Travels of Richard and John Lander, p. 342.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 636.

¹³⁶ Barth, Travels I, (p. 517) and Richardson's Journal, II, pp. 203, 228-29; See also H. Barth, Barth's Travels in Nigeria. Extracts from the journal of Heinrich Barth's travels in Nigeria, 1850-1855, selected and edited with an introduction by A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, London, 1962, p. 117.

from Nupe accounted for a considerable percentage of the volume and value of export commerce observed by the European diplomats. Barth observed that 'the importance which Katsena has still preserved, in a commercial aspect, is due to its position with respect to Nupe, with which it keeps up a tolerably lively intercourse.'¹³⁷ He noted that the Nupe were one of the principal groups in the large Kano population.¹³⁸ Nupe traders were noticeable in Kano market. Caravan of natron from Bornu passed through Kano to Nupe.¹³⁹ Huge amounts of Nupe cloth were imported to Kano market from where they were further re-exported to north and northwest Africa.¹⁴⁰

In 1857, Crowther was at hand to observe trade caravans from Hausa and other northern Nigerian societies crossing the Niger near Rabah, all passing through Nupe. Even at the crossing, trade was going on so briskly that Crowther commented that 'such a scene of active business is not often seen or met with in Africa.' His party observed

large caravans of about 3000 people and upwards of 1000 head of cattle, horses, donkeys, mules, and bullocks were being taken across from Rabba to the opposite shore towards Ilorin: at the same time, the returning caravans were crossing to Rabba for the interior, with their beasts of burden. It was in vain to try to count either men or beasts: forty-one large canoes were employed both Tuesday and Wednesday in crossing them, some carrying as many as six or eight horses and donkeys, with their drivers. The principal merchandise they had were slaves, silk, trona, and cattle.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Barth, Travels II, p. 96.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 114.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁴¹ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, p.. 148-9, Entry for Jan. 27.

CONCLUSION.

High-value goods like guns, flints, powder and European cloth regularly quantities found their way up the Niger as far as Gori, which up to the 1840s was the limit of Idah's influence, and Egga in Nupe territory. Conversely, because of their exchange values, these imports could only have been procured in exchange for local articles of similarly high value. Up to the 1830s and 1840s, these local articles were slaves, ivory, horses and salt.¹⁴² As far as the Niger trade was concerned, the various patterns observable in the 1830 continued throughout the first half of the 19th century. The only apparent difference in the 1840s was that the political centre of these societies changed when they were subjected directly or indirectly to the political and economic dictates of the newly emerged jihadist political centres of Rabah and Lade. Consequently, economic activities in these societies became more responsive to Rabah's and Lade's economic and political demands. Such demands included slaves. This new focus could have cut a slice off the Niger trade to the south. In general, commerce in imported goods with the Delta and European traders expanded, especially with the movement inland of European traders, while the export of slaves and ivory seemed not to have been hindered in any way. Trade in slaves between the Niger Delta region and the Nupe, Kakanda, Bassa, Igala and Igbira continued. How much of the continuing demand was due to post-abolition production reorganization in the Delta region is unknown.

¹⁴² Hutchinson, Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda, and Binue Exploration, p. 161.

But the Niger-Benue confluence communities also enjoyed the benefit of alternative markets that were as valuable as were the Niger Delta markets. Apart from the fact that the Nupe and other Niger-Benue states extended further inland and thus had diversified markets, other intervening variables mitigated the indispensability of the Niger traffic to them, as well as the effects that the abolition of Atlantic slave export could have had on them. This was especially true of the Nupe and Igala. In the first place, a number of states and societies between them and the sea had turned from middlemen slave exporters to become primary slave users. The market closed by the British abolition of the slave trade seemed thus to have been replaced, at least for the Nupe and Igala, by others. In the second place, the sheer distance and relays of inter-mediatory transactions between Nupe and the sea-coast meant that the shock and the ripple effect of abolition had been diluted before it got to the heartland of Nupe.

Alternatives to the market of the Niger Delta for the Nupe were guaranteed by the overland routes that provided access both to coastal markets in the Bight of Benin and to markets in northern Ghana and other sub-Saharan areas of Western and Central Sudan. Moreover, these Nupe and their neighbours were part and parcel of the trans-Saharan trade, and they were linked to the huge overland commerce of the other emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate to the north and to other overland markets to their west, southwest and south. Kakanda and Bunu commerce in slaves and non-slave goods were also fed into these markets. However, while the Niger-Benue states had access to legitimate imported manufactures from overseas, they did not participate, before the 1860s, in the export of the

new industrial produce like the vegetable oils that had such dramatic impact on the Niger Delta. Igbo and Yoruba communities on the coast. Perhaps, the only serious change following the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade that could have had a serious impact on these communities was the inland shift of the exchange frontiers for imported goods.

CHAPTER FIVE

GBEBE: A NIGER RIVER EMPORIUM DURING THE NUPE WARS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, Gbebe¹ is examined as an example of the kind of population displacement and economic adjustment that characterized the Niger-Benue confluence region during the first half of the nineteenth century. The analysis includes details of domestic slavery and the slave trade of Gbebe. It demonstrates the importance that servile labour assumed during the period of the Nupe wars, no doubt, because large numbers of captives were in supply from both the Nupe wars and other mechanisms of slave production in the region. The rise of Gbebe occurred late in the period under examination in this dissertation, but its history is demonstrative of one of the different types of relationship that neighbouring communities had with the Nupe during the war years.

By 1858, Gbebe was a famous town peopled by refugees, traders, itinerant mallams and peoples from different cultures and polities from both far and near the Niger-Benue confluence.² It was located on the east bank of the Niger, a mile below its confluence with the Benue, and about 300 miles from the Atlantic Ocean.³

The Nupe wars directly impacted on the formation of Gbebe. Firstly, the wars and raids of Masaba against the Kakanda, Yagba, Bunu and some of the Niger-Benue confluence

¹ Also called/spelled Bebbe, Igbebe, Gbebe, Gbobe or Igboi.

² J. Whitford, Trading Life in Western and Central Africa [with an] Introduction by A. G. Hopkins, London, 1967, p. 190.

³ T. J. Hutchinson, Impressions of Western Africa with Remarks on the Diseases of the Climate and a

communities caused many of the victim population to relocate to the left side of the Niger. Many of these refugees found their new homes in towns like Gbebe. Secondly, Gbebe had a significant Nupe quarter within the town. These were not only refugees, but also traders. Thirdly, Gbebe's social and economic life was structurally linked with the Nupe wars: as a trading emporium, it fulfilled the role of an important slave port for the distribution of Nupe slaves and goods southward over the Niger and southeastward into Igala land. Gbebe also distribute overseas and coastal articles into Nupe.

GBEBE AND THE NUPE WARS

The rise of Gbebe began sometime during the 1840s. Its formation resulted from a mix of historical currents, one of which related to internal wars and jihad in Nupe. The settlement seems to have developed from a small town called Shimri into which refugees fled when, in 1838, the famous market town of old Odokodo on the westbank was sacked by soldiers from Rabah.⁴ An 1841 report concerning Shimri and another town called Gandeh says that the 'chief of [the] place [Shimri]...was also the Annaja [of Idah, and the] Governor of the district.' The 'Annaja' in question, Ameh Abokko, was eventually known as the Onoja of Gbebe. By 1854, while Gandeh was still mentioned in contemporary records, Shimri had disappeared and on its site was now Gbebe. Gbebe seems to have swallowed up Shimri, possibly reducing it to one of its famous ethnic-based wards.⁵ This supposition seems to be confirmed by Crowther's observation that

Report on the Peculiarities of Trade up Rivers in the Bight of Biafra, London, 1970, p. 92.

⁴ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, pp. 338-340 and 368.

Ameh-Abokko was not at this place when the Expedition was here in 1841, and the town was very small then; but since Dasaba's invasion of the right bank, a great many of the inhabitants of that part of the river have fled to this place, and to other localities on the left side, for security.⁶

Between 1841 and 1859, its population was estimated to have increased from some 1,500⁷ to about ten thousand (10,000).⁸

The decades between 1810 and 1850 were characterized by tremendous political disturbance connected with the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Nupe and their immediate neighbours to the south were experiencing an unparalleled state of military and political disturbance. The jihad activities in Nupe, Nassarawa and Keffi involved the massive dispersal of communities south of the Niger and on the right-bank of the lower Benue. Inhabitants of hundreds of communities were captured, enslaved, killed or dispersed. Multitudes fled their homes in search of security elsewhere. More specifically, due to the military activities of the jihadist leadership at Rabah and of Masaba from Lade, the right-bank of the Niger from the Confluence down to Adamugu, was desolate. The Kakanda, the Bassa, the Bunu and Igbira in the neighbourhood of Koton Karfi were all raided, and those who could not escape were captured and enslaved.⁹

These military activities resulted in a major relocation of population to the left of the

⁶ Niger Mission C A 3038, James Thomas to Rev. Henry Venn, September 2nd 1859.

⁷ Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, p.38.

⁸ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 340.

⁹ James Thomas to Rev. Henry Venn, September 2nd 1859.

⁹ James Thomas to Henry Venn, Sept. 2nd 1859; and Mason, 'The Jihad in the South', p. 195; Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p.99; Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, p. 39.

Niger where they were safe from the attacks of the armies of Masaba from Lade and Usman Zaki from Rabah. Towns like Idere, Ikelebe and Muye that were formerly on the right bank of the Niger shifted to the left bank or on to inaccessible islands on the Niger as a result of the frequent military attacks by soldiers from the contending Nupe and jihadist factions.¹⁰ Refugees and immigrants from the west-bank of the Niger and from the north bank of the Benue fled from the areas that were vulnerable to the raids of Masaba and other jihadist armies. They crossed the Niger and the Benue to put the rivers between themselves and their enemies. In search of security, they flocked into towns and villages or formed entirely new settlements on the east of the Niger. Gbebe was one such settlement. Together with other settlements like Patta and Tshewu, Gbebe became a refuge-center into which people fled from the marauding visits of Masaba.¹¹

After its formation, Gbebe itself escaped jihad raids, but it was affected by the demographic relocation resulting from the Nupe and other jihad wars. Hence, Gbebe was composed of an amalgam of nationalities and ethnicities from outside its immediate area. These included Nupe, Igala, Igbira, Bassa, Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Gbari, Doma, Djuku and Kakanda.¹² The town developed separate quarters for people of different cultural and ethnic origin. The Igbira, Nupe and Bassa, each had their quarters.¹³ Gbebe and other such new

¹⁰ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, p. 66.

¹¹ Baikie, Narrative, p. 272.

¹² James Thomas to Rev. Henry Venn, September 2nd 1859; Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, p. 167; and CMS. Niger Mission, C. A3/O 4 (a) Rev. Samuel Adjai Crowther, Letters & Papers 1857-63, Samuel Crowther to [Sec. Church Missionary Society] n.d; Baikie, Narrative, p. 68.

¹³ Journals of James Thomas from June 25th [1858] to September 26th 1859, entry for July 12.

towns met the need for security and the imperative of re-establishing basic social and economic facilities for the mix of a trading, farming, and refugee population. These conditions created an enlarged market area within which Gbebe operated, and an inexhaustible source of slaves which it used and traded.

GBEBE MARKET AND THE NUPE WARS

Several observers commented upon the flourishing nature of Gbebe, as well as its importance as an inter-regional market center. Hutchinson described Gbebe, as one of the 'chief trading stations' on the river Niger. He noted that

at Igbebe, about 300 miles from the sea, British manufactured goods, which are brought up from Bonny, Brass, and Benin, as well as across the Yoruba country from Lagos, are exposed in the market for sale; and they have also here glass beads of a double pyramid shape that are carried over the continent from Mecca¹⁴

The reflection of the diversity of trading visitors to Gbebe is shown in the half-dozen languages that Crowther noted were spoken in the town. He observed that

Yorubas find their way to the Confluence by way of Lade or Rabba from Ilorin. People speaking Doma and Djuku, the language of Kororofa, also visit the market at Igbebe at the Confluence, and the Ibo traders come up as far as this from the Delta¹⁵

In 1874, eight years into her civil war and past our period, Gbebe's market was still remarkable. Whitford, a trading agent, gave an impressive description of the Gbebe market scene:

Women squatted, standing underneath sheds or in the open air, surrounded by baskets, have spread out for sale heaps of corn, small pyramids of salt, native soap in balls, small white beans, and a variety of seeds. They also sell native-made razors, of very rude workmanship, but uncommonly sharp; native-made iron shovels, country cloths woven of

¹⁴ Hutchinson, Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda, and Binue Exploration, p. 253.

¹⁵ Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, p. 167 entries for Oct. 23 and 24.

grass-fibre and cotton combined, cotton reels, raw cotton in bags, palm-oil and Shea butter in jars, and very good honey; English goods are likewise offered. There is a great abundance of fowls, ducks, and goats, and at the butcher's stalls rough joints of elephant and hippopotami.¹⁶

The analysis in the last chapter includes the role that Niger river marts like Ikin, Odokodo, Gori, Egga and Gbebe played in facilitating intensive commercial intercourse among the peoples of the Niger area and between those near the confluence of the Niger-Benue and those of the Niger Delta. Gbebe was one of the important river ports for the export of captives from the Nupe wars. Apart from the resident Nupe traders, it is known that merchants from Lade, Rabah, and elsewhere from Nupeland visited the market.¹⁷ Moreover, due to its advantageous situation among other factors, Gbebe society as a commercial town was characterised by activities almost totally related to slavery and slave trading. It thus had easy access to war captives for employment in the domestic sector and for sale to other slave using peoples with whom its merchants traded.

SLAVERY IN GBEBE

Although Gbebe did not suffer any jihad attack, it nevertheless participated effectively in the distribution of the captives and slaves from Nupe and other territories around the basin of the Niger-Benue confluence. In 1854, Crowther observed many slaves in canoes alongside their steam-vessel at Gbebe. He noted that they were captives produced by

¹⁶ Whitford, *Trading Life*, pp. 193-4.

¹⁷ Cole, *Life in the Niger*, pp. 88-89; James Thomas to Rev. Henry Venn, September 2nd 1859; Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. 167; and CMS Niger Mission. C. A3/O 4 (a) Rev. Samuel Adjai Crowther, Letters & Papers 1857-63, Samuel Crowther to [Sec., Church Missionary Society?] n.d; Baikie, *Narrative*, p. 68.

the war between Dasaba and his brother, and such as have fallen a prey to the Filatas at the destruction of Panda.¹⁸ At the market, he came upon two slaves displayed for sale and asked sarcastically to buy the woman-seller of one of the slaves.¹⁹ Slaves were brought from up-river for sale at Gbebe. Baikie also made references to slaves held and used in Gbebe by two traders, one of who himself was a slave, a eunuch of the Idah royal family.²⁰ In 1857, a certain trader at Gbebe market, who was from Rogan Koto on the Benue, told Crowther he had twenty slaves for sale.²¹

These slaves were connected with Gbebe commerce, as they were either on sale or held by traders.²² These scattered contemporary observations provide us with a historical context in which to situate the more detailed eye witness accounts of missionaries and others who were resident in Gbebe and in Lokoja from the late 1850s to the 1870s. From an examination of the data, it is clear that the detailed observations from 1859 onwards, a period falling outside the scope of this study, are nevertheless instructive. They suggest a continuation of the economic and the political conditions of the period between 1854 and 1857.

Officially, Gbebe did not tolerate the kidnapping of its own citizens, and there are no records of direct or indirect official sponsorship of kidnapping or slave raiding on neighbors. However, a visitor who wandered alone into dark alleys or the outskirts of the town might be

¹⁸ Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. 42.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.41, entry for August 5.

²¹ Baikie, *Narrative*, pp. 75-79.

²² Crowther and Taylor, *Gospel on the Banks of the Niger*, p.57, entry for August. 13.

kidnapped, as was the case, in 1853, of a girl who accompanied her father on a trading mission to Gbebe.²³

There are two recorded incidents of armed sectional disturbances; one in 1864 and the second in 1866, the latter ruining the town and sending about half its population into exile for some 12 years. Missionaries who were witnesses to these two cases did not make any reference to captives, ransom or members of the community being sold into slavery early in the war. Instead, members of the opposing parties were killed and others were wounded. But, with atrocities continuing for several years and producing skirmishes on the Niger and occasional guerrilla attacks on Gbebe, the situation degenerated to the point where captives were taken and sold into slavery.²⁴

Members of the community were not enslaved or sold into slavery except on clear-cut judicial grounds. Gbebe slaves were, therefore, all outsiders, acquired from the ongoing wars in Nupe and other areas. There is only one record of judicial enslavement. A youth was sold into slavery for stealing. However, evidence shows that there were professional kidnappers in Gbebe, who would seize any luckless child for sale if conditions were favourable. The Eki/Bunu people were very reluctant to send their children to the mission school in 1859, according to James Thomas, for 'fear ... [that] bad people will steal them and sell them away on account [that] the mission yard [was a] little far from the Eki

²³ See Appendix 4.

²⁴ Cole, *Life in the Niger*, p.89. She was kidnapped about a month after the sack of Lade, which makes it 1853.

²⁵ CMS Niger Mission C.A.3/O 4 (a). T. C. John to S. A. Crowther. January 7th 1868 and Whitford.

town [or quarter.]’²⁵ Thomas’ record includes the kidnapping by a slave and some accomplices of the free-born son of a Gbebe man. On being discovered, the slave-kidnapper was put to death.²⁶

Thomas recorded the missionaries’ perplexity over ‘the unsettled state of the town’ due to problems arising from kidnapping. On one occasion, a Nupe slave-woman was kidnapped by an Igbira man and was sold to another town. The slave was discovered and redeemed by her owner. On application to the King, the culprit was asked to pay back the redemption fee, but he failed to do so. Shortly after, another Igbira man’s plan to kidnap six fellow Igbira was foiled and the culprit was condemned to death. The Nupe thereupon became indignant at what they considered a double standard of justice that denied them similar justice when the victim was Nupe.²⁷

Other evidence shows that these were not isolated expressions of concern but a concrete expression of on-going and possibly increasing cases of kidnapping. The Onoja (chief) of Gbebe in December 1858 had to summon the leading members of Gbebe and neighbouring towns to a meeting. The purpose was to reinforce the rules governing the inviolability of the persons of Gbebe natives, and to secure the right of slave-owners to their runaway-slaves. Instead of these fugitives being returned to their owners, the chief complained that they were sold off by ‘bad’ people into whose hands they fell. The meeting

Trading Life, p. 196

²⁵ Journals of James Thomas from June 25th [1858] to September 26th 1859, entry for July 12th.

²⁷ James Thomas, 1862 Journal, entry for Nov. 30th, para. 2.

²⁸ James Thomas, 1858-9 Journal, entry for Nov. 19th.

discussed other lawless acts like arson and robbery. It was agreed that anybody caught stealing or robbing would be executed.²⁸ This obviously included kidnappers as well.

While there are no data to support a firm opinion, it is not inconceivable that Gbebe women participated directly in kidnapping.²⁹ At any rate, Gbebe women sold, held and used slaves. There was nothing to prevent them from behaving like some men who encouraged or instructed their slaves to kidnap people for sale on the understanding that a percentage of the proceeds went to the slave-kidnappers.³⁰

While kidnapping was frowned upon, slave trading was legal, open and engaged in by both great and small, men and women. No doubt the elusive kidnappers were as much slave merchants as the legal one-man or large-scale slave merchants. They probably only had to endure the trouble of selling their loot far from home, or from sight—at night, speedily and perhaps for less profit, lest they be discovered while tarrying. Such was the case of an Aboh Nupe slave-woman kidnapped from Gbebe. Her recollection was that she

was seized upon by the Dowdoo's people, who transported me to Oko Kaie, about a mile from Idah. My father again sought me, but his approach being heralded, I was hurried to the Rialto where merchants most do congregate, and then I was sold'. On the morrow I was brought down to Aboh.³¹

Gbebe people bought slaves for use and for (re)sale. The earlier evidence from Crowther and Baikie and the material in Appendix 4 demonstrate this. Records have been

²⁹ *Ibid.*, entry for December 8, 1858.

³⁰ Olaudah Equiano mentioned a woman to be among those who kidnapped him and his sister. 'The Early Travels of Olaudah Equiano', P. Curtin (ed.) *Africa Remembered. Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade*, 1967, p. 85.

³¹ See the row for 1862 in Appendix 4 for data on the slave-kidnapper and 'Master/Mistress' column for women slave-owners.

unearthed relating to eighty-nine slaves identified in available missionary documents for Gbebe. Forty-three were held and served in Gbebe. Of these forty-three, seven were sold, earmarked for sale or redeemed just before been sold. Another slave sold in Gbebe by three Bassa men was brought from elsewhere. At least thirty-one other cases were sighted in the market, inside canoes or in charge of traders ready for disposal or in transit, but not serving in Gbebe.

Of all the recorded cases of slaves in Gbebe, the method of enslavement could be ascertained only for seven. There is one record of enslavement via purchase — a slave sold by three men. Another case was that of a woman who had been enslaved through warfare but was redeemed by the CMS mission. There were two cases of kidnapping and one of enslavement by judicial sentence. Two others were home-born slaves. A last case seems to be redemption of a kidnapped favorite slave-woman or concubine. However, for the remaining cases of Gbebe-held slaves for which there is no indication of how they were enslaved or acquired, it is safe to conclude that they were either brought along to Gbebe by their masters and mistresses, or they were bought from slave dealers. Since Gbebe did not fight wars to acquire slaves and kidnapped children of neighbours could not be safely held in the town, the only obvious option was through purchase. The records demonstrate that Gbebe people bought, sold and used slaves. Thomas in 1858 reported that Gbebe was

great in slave trade at present but ... we try to speak to them to give up trading in human beings... to trade [instead with] the Factory ... [in]... ivory, palm oil, shea butter & nut oil, goat & sheep and other articles [as these articles would equally fetch] ... them good

¹² Cole, *Life in the Niger*, p. 89.

cowries.¹²

Gbebe people were no doubt important slave traders. However, it is evident that the source of its trade and wealth in slaves was not just middlemen commerce, but also production via illicit kidnapping.

SLAVE TRADING AND PAWNSHIP IN GBEBE.

Sparse evidence makes it difficult to know the proportion of Gbebe people who engaged in slave trade. There are two records of partnerships, one in 1858 of three people who sold a slave and another partnership in 1859 that kidnapped a boy. There are also, at least six clear cases of decisions by individual masters and/or mistresses regarding the sale of one or two slaves. Considered together with the qualitative evidence on the prevalence of slave-dealing by Gbebe, two conclusions are warranted. In the first place, common people traded in slaves in Gbebe. The pooling of the resources of two or three partners to effect a single legal and open slave transaction solved problems of capital outlay. Capital could also be raised through credit or pawning for a single-slave deal.³³ In the second place, the percentage of the common people who dealt in slaves might have risen through their illicit participation in kidnapping — for themselves or on behalf of some big merchants or nobles.³⁴ The convocation of Gbebe leaders by Onoja Ameh Abokko to discuss such issues in 1859 perhaps referred to the huge scale of this activity. The outcome of this meeting was

³³ James Thomas, 1859 Journal, entry for Dec. 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, entry for Friday March 25 for evidence of this.

³⁵ For a possible indication of agency arrangement see James Thomas, Journal for 1862, entry for Nov. 30th, para. 2 and, CMS Niger Mission, CA3\O33. Simon Benson Priddy, Letters and Journals 1862-4, 1862-63 Journal, paras. 7-17.

an agreement that any one caught committing arson, robbing and stealing (goods and children) would henceforth be put to death.³⁵

Since there are as many references to Gbebe slave-mistresses as to slave masters selling or ready to sell their slaves, it is likely that many women bought and resold slaves. There is at least one reference to a woman trader with her slave at the market.

We can safely take for granted that the upper-class people, the chiefs and richer citizens dealt in slaves, usually, but not always through agents. Zuri, who guided Dr. Baikie's party up-river on the Benue in 1854, was a renowned Gbebe trader with many wives scattered over several station points.³⁶ He claimed that the slave boy he brought back to Gbebe from the trip was for the Onoja.³⁷ Zuri's denial that the boy was a slave might have been calculated to prevent the anti-slave trade crusaders from freeing the boy, hence it most likely reflected a common pattern. Olumody, the chief of one of the neighboring Bassa towns came twice to buy slaves in Gbebe.³⁸ The titled officers also seem to have engaged in slave dealing of this sort.

As for big-time slave-traders or people who were able to deal in many slaves at a time, there were many in Gbebe. Appendix 4 contains records of people who had between

³⁶ James Thomas, 1858-9 Journal, entry for 8th December 1858.

³⁷ Baikie, *Narrative*, pp. 243-6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

³⁹ Rows 53 & 56 in Appendix 4.

two and twenty slaves to dispose of at a time. Crowther made reference to 'King Ama Abokko ... [and] many other influential traders in slaves and ivory.'³⁹

Unfortunately, there are only two references to pawnship.⁴⁰ The first was the 1858 case of a Nupe man who pawned himself for a sum with which to satisfy a creditor from whom he had bought a slave. The slave died the day after the Nupe man bought him. The second reference was in respect of an Igbira man who died from wounds sustained in a disturbance. He was considered very rich, and two wives, five slaves, four pawns and many bags of cowries survived him. Unfortunately, this gives us only a tenuous basis to establish serious linkages between slavery, slave trade and pawnship in Gbebe.⁴¹

A poor Nupe man in 1858 attempted to change his economic status by a conscious manipulation of the institutions of credit, pawnship and slavery. He bought the slave on credit, with the promise to pay the following day. A credit arrangement must have been struck with some rich person prior to this purchase. It is reasonable to suppose that the creditor was waiting to receive collateral in the form of a pawn to secure his investment. Had the slave not died, the poor Nupe man could have pawned him to the creditor. The slave's death simply changed the victim and not the method intended to secure the loan. Straining this single piece of evidence further, it seems that even the poor freeborn people of Gbebe considered slave trading and slave holding to be able to offer them opportunities for

³⁹ CMS Niger Mission. C. A3/O 4 (a) Rev. Samuel Adjai Crowther. Letters & Papers 1857-63. Crowther to Revd. [H. Venn], Oct. 3rd 1862.

⁴¹ Items 52, 79 & 80 in Appendix 4.

⁴² For discussion on pawnship, credit and slavery, see T. Falola, and Paul E. Lovejoy, (eds.) Pawnship in

economic and social promotion. The initial capital required for this economic enterprise was acquired through the pawning of relatives. If many poor Gbebe people could have access to loans to buy single slaves, it is plausible to conclude that they actually took such loans and bought slaves who they used on their farms, pawned to other people, or resold at a profit.

The second reference shows that in the social determination of assets and liabilities in Gbebe, access to accumulated, readily and easily exploited labour was important. The wealth of the dead Igbira man was calculated, not just in cowrie terms, but also in terms of the 'two wives given to him as a present...[and of] five slaves and four men pawned to him.' These pawns might have been free men who were relatives of the debtors. If they were slaves, Thomas's rather detailed records might have indicated them to be such.

Pawning was perhaps very important in the heightened climate of the commercial opportunities in mid-19th century Gbebe. It might have been one of the sources for the mobilization of small-scale credit and the accumulation of capital to deal in slaves and other goods could. It is not clear whether rich people pawned their slaves and their relatives to raise capital. But the struggling poor, who hoped to strike it rich might be expected to pawn himself or herself, a relative or a child, or slave for a sum of money. However, other reasons, like calamity, hunger or general indebtedness might also be the cause for such pawning. For more detailed analysis on pawnship in Gbebe, one can only speculate until further data are unearthed. The only clear statements to be made relating to this are as follow: Firstly, pawns in Gbebe could be either poor free-born or slaves; secondly, they supplied the second best

type of labor and wealth to whoever held them; and, thirdly, they fitted perfectly into the relationship between money, credit, slaves and goods that lubricated the commerce and production of Gbebe.

SLAVE OWNERSHIP AND SLAVE USE.

Slave holding in Gbebe cut across status and sex. Since both lower and upper-class people of Gbebe bought and sold slaves, it is to be expected that ownership must have been widespread. As it is revealed from the data in Appendix 4, ordinary men and women owned slaves. James Thomas described the aforementioned slave buyer as a 'poor Nupe man.' He could afford to buy only one slave and that with a loan for which the slave was to be the collateral. He still took the loan to pay the slave dealer but instead of the slave, he himself became the collateral, a pawn.⁴² There is reference, also, to a woman who had just one slave, and several references to masters and mistresses. Upper-class people like the Onoja Ameh Abokko and Ogbe the eunuch of a late Attah held large numbers. Five of Onoja Abokko's slaves were sacrificed at his burial. A woman redeemed by Crowther was one of the slaves of a wife of Ameh Abokko. Crowther in 1859 was taken aboard a canoe manned by nine slaves of Ishinakozi, a Gbebe man. There is a reference to the 'head-slave' of a certain Singala, a man of importance in Gbebe who must have owned several slaves to have made one their head-slave.⁴³

⁴³ James Thomas, 'Journal... 1858-9', entry for Dec. 4th 1858.

⁴⁴ These included records about their farms, farming, their being great farmers and their chiefs or the people being away or working on their farms. See C. M. S., Niger Mission. CA3/04 Bp S. A. Crowther. Letters & Papers 1876-78. Thomas Joseph to Bp. S. Crowther, Lokoja, June 28th 1876.

Somehow, farms and farming are not significant items in the categories that came to the attention of visitors and resident missionaries in Gbebe. One is left to imagine that besides trading, the people of Gbebe also farmed. The role of slaves in agricultural production is thus obscure. Since Gbebe emerged to be consolidated essentially as a trading settlement, it might be assumed that the abundance of farm produce and foodstuff available in the market, to which there was copious references by resident missionaries were imports. However, almost all references to the neighbouring Bassa towns visited by the missionaries include several observations relating to farming.⁴⁴ In fact Olumody, the Bassa chief of Kpaata-Asembo, to whom we referred earlier, told Thomas that he wanted the slave he just bought for farm-work.

The silence on agriculture in Gbebe might be because it was taken for granted. Or perhaps because it was an occupation in Gbebe engaged in by the ordinary, less slave-dealing members, it was not significant enough to come to the notice of the missionaries. However, the interest shown in the same vocation in other towns and in other vocations like cloth weaving, trading and transportation suggests that the latter explanation is less convincing. It seems that commerce was the all-consuming passion of the people.

Nonetheless, the only two references to farming available for Gbebe give much food for thought. Thomas' report seems to indicate that one Abraham Ayikuta was often away

⁴⁴ James Thomas, *Journal*- 1862, para. 36. See also addendum titled 'Rabba Feb. 8th 1859' enclosed in Crowther to [Sec. C. M. S.], Dec. 2nd 1858. Niger Mission. C. A3/O 4 (a).

for extended periods on his farm.⁴⁵ He was the most remarkable of the upper-class converts in Gbebe. He was the most knowledgeable, and his name one of the most frequently mentioned of all the male native Christian converts in the missionaries' journals. Not once was he mentioned in connection with slaves. His conversion might have biased him against the possession and use of slaves. He actually took it upon himself to plead for the life of one of the slaves that was to be sacrificed at Abokko's burial.⁴⁶ On the other hand, because his conversion to Christianity generated considerable hostility from his father, it might have prevented him from being able to use his connections, (as Abokko's nephew and the first son of the hangman of Gbebe.)⁴⁷ to employ family slaves on his farm. He stayed on his farm together with a free partner, an erstwhile Ifa worshipper, whom he managed to convert to Christianity.⁴⁸

The second reference is to a slave woman sent to her master's farm as punishment for attending Mission classes or to get her away from mission influence. Baikie redeemed her through the intervention of the missionaries when her late master's family eventually decided to sell her. However, there are records of slaves working on the farm in towns near Gbebe. This is true for several Bassa towns, for Kippo Hill for Egga and for Idah. Ayikuta and his father were upper class Idah people who moved to Gbebe. Other Abokko supporters clearly moved to Gbebe and it is likely that they would have continued to use

⁴⁵ James Thomas, 'Journal 1862-3,' para. 57, entry for 6th.

⁴⁷ The Journal of Gbebe kept by Simon Benson Priddy. School Master in the Confluence.' Para. 17 in Niger Mission. C.A.3/ o 33, Simon Benson Priddy. Letters & Journals 1862 -4.

⁴⁸ James Thomas, 'Journal, 1863-4,' para. 7.

⁴⁹ James Thomas to Rev. Samuel Crowther, June 9th 1863. Gbebe in Confluence, para. 6.

slaves on their farms, however much commerce became their chief vocation. While trading seems to have overshadowed farming as a vocation, there can be no doubt that slaves were employed for agricultural work.

Where the yams, shea-butter, palm kernel oil, grains and other produce sighted at Gbebe market by visitors were produced by slave-labour, it could be expected that hawking of these produce in the markets would also be done by their slaves. With the background of the thriving commerce as the case was for Gbebe, it is plausible to suppose that slave labour was employed by all levels of people. Appendix 4 includes a record of a slave that was employed in trading (hawking) for her mistress and another one who was sent to her owners' farm to punish her for a misdeed.

The commerce of Gbebe and other 'trade marts' of the Niger-Benue area was water-borne. Canoe transportation was, therefore, very important. Trade in slaves, ivory, hippo teeth, palm kernel, salt, horse, shea-butter, foodstuff and articles of local and European manufacture were most efficiently and economically transported via the Niger and some of its branches in large and small trading canoes. The complementarity of trading for the master in the canoes, and transporting cargoes or ferrying travellers and traders for a fee, no doubt placed a premium on slave canoe-hands. The importance of slave paddle-hands is demonstrated by the effect of the removal in 1859 of some Igbira children from the CMS mission school to work as canoe-boys. Its immediate impact all but closed down the

school.⁴⁹ Gbebe slaves, as transporters and traders, constituted valuable manpower resources for their masters and mistresses.

In a number of trips by canoe that Crowther made from Aboh to Idah; from Idah to Gbebe; and from Gbebe to Muye, slaves of both sexes and all ages were very important operators of the canoes. In a number of cases, the canoes were entirely manned by slaves. This was the case for one of his trips from Gbebe to Budan.⁵⁰ Crowther's observations in this regard show that the slave canoe-boys had the privilege of being in sole charge of some commercial transport operations. They could withhold (and must have) withheld portions of their earnings. They conducted, on their personal accounts, trade in small items they had accumulated before or during the course of their journeys. They were allowed to own small properties and did travel out of the reach of their masters. They often worked together with their masters or with free agents or relatives of the latter.⁵¹ Service as canoe-hands seemed to have given the slaves a stake in the maintenance of a slave-based water-transport and commercial system on the Niger.

The death in January 1863 of Ameh Abokko, the chief, plunged Gbebe into a period of civil war that lasted for more than a decade.⁵² It is likely that the various contenders recruited many of their soldiers, bodyguards and enforcers from the ranks of the male slaves.

⁴⁹ James Thomas, 1859 Journal, Entry for July 12th.

⁵⁰ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, pp. 395-8, 402-405. See also addendum 'Rabba Feb. 8th 1859' and Charles Paul's 'Report for the year ending Sept. 30th 1874. Lokoja, River Niger, West Africa' in CMS Niger Mission, C.A3'O 28. Journals and Reports 1866-79.

⁵² Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 395-8, 402-5.

⁵³ James Thomas, 1862. Journal, para. 33, entry for Jan. 12th.

For instance, at the earliest stages of hostilities, on the grounds that the missionary Charles Paul dissuaded Mr. Fell, the acting British Consul at Lokoja from selling him gun-powder, one of parties in the conflict had his gang of slaves seize yams bought for Fell.⁵³

Slaves became vital for military purposes. In 1864 a neighboring community involved in the war by alliance had to suspend the custom of killing slaves in sacrifice following the death of an important chief so that it would not suffer manpower reduction.⁵⁴ Reports of river blockade abound during the Gbebe war. These were effected by the war-bands of aggrieved chiefs, or of pirates; and these bands obviously included large numbers of slaves.⁵⁵ A large percentage of the armed following accumulated by the notorious 'pirates' and river-warriors who terrorized users of the Niger were slaves.⁵⁶

The significance of slaves in the establishment and sustenance of these pirate or river-warrior communities demonstrates their value in the struggles for the accumulation or concentration of political power by the contending war-lords/pirates. The significance of the slaves to the commercial well-being and success of their competing masters and mistresses—as trustworthy traders and transporters beyond family or clan members—also demonstrates their importance in the heightened climate of commercial activities of the

⁵³ Crowther to Revd. H. Venn., Gbebe, August 21st 1865 in CMS Niger Mission C.A.3/O 4 (a) Bp. Samuel A. Crowther. 'Letters. 1864-8'.

⁵⁴ James Thomas. 1864-1865 Journal, Entry for December 9th.

⁵⁵ S. A. Crowther, 'A charge Delivered at Lokoja at the Confluence, on the 13th Sept. 1869.' in CMS Niger Mission C.A.3/ O 4 (a) Bp. Samuel Crowther. Letters & Papers. 1869-72.

⁵⁶ These included Abaje whose party was driven out of Gbebe, Agabidoko and Simakoji. See T. C. John. to S. A. Crowther, January 7th 1868, Lokoja, Confluence, River Niger. C.A.3/O 4 (a) Bp. Samuel A. Crowther. Letters. 1864-8. See also 'The Journal of James Thomas. Lokoja from October 6th 1867'. Entry for October 31st.

mid-19th century Gbebe and the Niger-Benue confluence area.

The role of slaves in Gbebe provides an insight into the likely contribution that slave-augmented families or clans played in the establishment of the new market towns and communities that sprang up along the length of the Niger from the late 1830s to the 1850s. These towns are comparable to slave settlements that were established by emirs Usman Zaki and Masaba of Bida. Slaves were incorporated into the social unit as kin, into economic units as extra-hands from whom profit could be extracted, and into military/political units as war-boys and river-pirates. Thus labour organization and surplus withdrawal were enhanced with structural operations going beyond the usual clan and family limits.

The evidence of resident missionaries shows that Gbebe slave-owners valued their working slaves for the various socio-political and economic reasons mentioned earlier on and hardly sold them. Evidently, this is not just because the demand for slaves was drying up due to the ending of Atlantic export: internal-demand elsewhere down-river was still brisk and the analysis in Chapter Four and the record of trade in slaves shown in Appendix 4 prove this.

Again, while the data in Appendix 4 can not be over-stretched, interesting inferences can be drawn from them. For instance, in the clear-cut cases of slaves held in the town, only seven cases of re-sale or attempts to sell came to the notice of the missionaries or of Baikie. One case was of a freeborn sold into slavery for judicial reasons. The remaining cases involved only women (4) and children (1 boy and 1 girl). Of the four incidents for women, one was due to a problematic debt that her master and mistress had to defray. The remaining

three cases concerns slaves whose masters/mistresses wanted to sell because they were proving refractory. The record of a home-born slave girl sold was for the daughter of one of the refractory women mentioned above. The only slave-boy who was eventually sold might or might not have been refractory. But he was one of several slave-boys put in the mission school who was withdrawn by their masters/mistresses to the more productive work of paddling canoes. All the cases suggest that only exceptionally did mid-19th century slave-owners in Gbebe sell useful and trustworthy slaves.

Only newly acquired trade-slaves were sold for cash or traded for imported goods. These were sent onward to the palm oil belt further south. The record of slave trading for Gbebe in Appendix 4 is insufficient to permit a definite conclusion about numbers and destinations. This is undoubtedly because as avowed abolitionists, many transactions relating to slavery and the slave trade of the town would have been kept away from the knowledge of our witnesses.

The fragmentary nature of the data forecloses detailed analysis of the way in which Gbebe's slave trading was related to the new conditions of legitimate commerce. However, Gbebe supplied customers as far afield as Aboh from where traders were reported to be visiting its market. Aje the energetic *de facto* ruler of Aboh was reported to be on friendly terms with the Abokko party. After the demise of Oniah and Ikiri markets and the

establishment of Otuturu and Gbebe, it was reported that Aje was still coming up to these new settlements to trade.⁵⁷

Of course, it must be emphasized that Gbebe was only one of several settlements that emerged in the context of historical currents referred to in this chapter. The socio-political and economic condition both further afield and near Gbebe all produced a busy multi-cultural market centre. The demographic impact of the disturbed political situations in Nupe was felt here. Several such new mixed communities sprang up next to one another along the southern bank of the lower Benue and the left bank of the Niger to a point just before Idah around the so-called English Islands. Some older ones, like Egga took on new characteristics.

CONCLUSION

The demographic and commercial changes that produced Gbebe and sustained it were connected with the 19th century wars and jihads in Nupe and the jihad crisis that broke out elsewhere to the north of the Niger-Benue confluence. Towns such as Gbebe, by facilitating the disposal of war captives, were important in the dynamics of the Nupe war. The profitability of war, the procurement of resources that could be used to recruit soldiers, and the operation of the settlement as a place of refuge, all directly and indirectly impacted on the fortune and course of the Nupe wars.

The place of slavery in the economic life of Gbebe and in the commercial and domestic establishments of its leading people shows that a slave mode of production could

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 286.

be applied to the economic organization of the community. The abundant supply of slaves caused by the Nupe wars which made this possible is similar to the condition of the slave 'glut' on the coast that was said to have resulted in the redirection of trade slaves into internal agricultural and other employment. However, the similarity is to the coastal glut situation of the 1810s and 1820s is only so much. The rise and development of the Gbebe slave society and the abundant supply of slaves for local use and for sale obviously had nothing to do with the effect of the closure of the Atlantic slave market from 1807. The character of Gbebe as a slave society was rather the result, among other internal factors, of the wars in Nupe and the Sokoto Caliphate. It was a product of the internal dynamics of domestic slavery and slave trade in the area.

CHAPTER SIX

EGGA AND THE KAKANDA TOWNS DURING THE NUPE WARS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter, like the last, also examines demographic and economic adjustments at micro levels. It examines Egga and the Kakanda as a complement to what was done for Gbebe in the last chapter. It explores the areas of difference in their experiences and adjustments during the Nupe wars. In contrast to Gbebe, both Egga and the major Kakanda towns experienced militarily attacks by the Nupe. The references to Nupe raids against their southern and southeastern neighbours in Chapter Two¹ apply to these communities. They were politically subjugated and occupied by military contingents and political officials from Rabah and Lade. However, like Gbebe, Egga was also a Niger trading port and was linked by commerce to Gbebe and other Niger-Benue confluence market towns. The town was also an important port, especially, for the Nupe north of the Niger. The Kakanda also had an important river trading port at Gori, and they traded with both Gbebe and Egga. They were also slave societies that showed evidence of considerable use of slaves for economic, domestic, political and military purposes. The domestic slavery and slave trade of these communities were directly and indirectly connected to the ongoing Nupe wars of the 19th century. These were in turn linked to the abundant availability of captives that could be shared (or purchased) by warlords, nobles and kings. These communities make interesting

¹ A more detailed chronological treatment is given to these raids in Appendix 2.

subjects of analytical comparison with Gbebe: they engaged in similar commercial functions as did the Niger ports of Gbebe, Ikiri, and Otuturu, etc., but unlike Gbebe, they experienced military attacks and direct political subjection to Nupe.

EGGA AND THE NUPE WARS

Egga was a Chekpan Nupe market town located on the bank of the Niger in southeast Nupe. In 1830, the Lander brothers discovered that the fame of Egga as an important entrepot town reached far away Borgu on the west of Nupe. In Borgu, ever before they entered Nupe, they were informed that Egga was the centre where they could obtain all the information they needed.² In 1830, the Muslim half of its population consisted mostly of immigrants.³

Egga supported Idirisu⁴ and had come under the jihadists' attacks before 1830, possibly in one of the 1826 - 1828 battles. In October 1830, the Rogan, its indigenous chief, solicited a charm from Richard Lander 'to prevent the Falatahs from ever again invading his territory'.⁵ The indecisive nature of the wars at this date is indicated by the visitors' observation that Egga's 'allegiance to the king of Nuouffie appears to be merely nominal'.⁶ A measure of Rogan's defiance and independence of Rabah was demonstrated by his

² Huish, Travels of Richard and John Lander, p. 641.

³ The Landers observed that, '... the population is one-half of the Mahomedan religion, and the other the original Pagan', Journal, p. 209.

⁴ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 108.

⁵ Lander and Lander, Journal, p. 208.

⁶ Ibid.

insistence that the Christian visitors stay in his territory to assist him against the menace posed by the jihadists.⁷

But by 1832, Egga's political situation had changed. It was now fully subject to Rabah. This was reflected in the Rogan's request that the Oldfield party should 'remain [with him] and assist in driving away the Felatahs.'⁸ Sons and representatives of the Rabah monarch were placed at Egga.⁹ When, for instance, Lander arrested and detained one of Dendo's sons at Egga because his father had refused to honour a debt of 135,000 cowries, the Rogan was forced to quickly raise the fund to settle the debt and free the boy.¹⁰ Rabah's military and political sphere, by this time, had proceeded further south beyond Egga as far as Odokodo, where its soldiers attacked many towns and exacted impost from them.¹¹ The town was already paying a bi-annual tax of 60,000 cowries¹² to Rabah and by 1841, this had jumped to 400,000 a year, besides other capricious demands for slaves.¹³ In fact, the Rogan in 1841 was more reluctant proffer any information about his Rabah overlords to the probing visitors. What intelligence he provided them was in the privacy of his inner room

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, p. 108.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 105.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 103/4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-7.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 39. Oldfield reported that they 'were informed that the Felatah tax-gatherer, or collector, had received the half-yearly taxes of Egga, amounting to sixty thousand cowries.'

¹³ Schon and Crowther, *Journal of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 194; Schon reported that 'a still larger sum is annually exacted from them under various pretenses, chiefly as fines for real or alleged offenses. They only paid 50,000 cowries to their own king, before the Fulatahs obtained power over them.'

and with only trusted elders present.¹⁴ By 1841, contingents of the jihadist army from Rabah were not only stationed in Egga,¹⁵ but another company of Rabah soldiers had advanced further south to Budan from where they made forays into adjacent towns and villages.¹⁶ Thus Egga served as an important base from which the jihadist faction of Rabah tried to neutralize Masaba at Lade.

Through his Rabah soldiers and officials at Egga, Usman Zaki established a heavy presence in the eastern part of Nupe and neighbouring areas to the left of the Niger where Masaba's influence constituted an ever-present danger to his position. Eastern Nupe had traditionally been loyal to the indigenous ruling house of Jimada. Indeed, it was to Adama-Lelu, south of Egga on the Niger, that young Idrisu fled after his father was killed in battle. Egoji (Haygojee), described as the 'landing town' of *Etsu* Idrisu was also in the same area and near Egga.¹⁷ These areas were, therefore, refractory to the rule of Rabah.¹⁸ Hence, the observation by Trotter's party in 1841 that the people in the entire Lafagi/Lade area were joined together with Egga in an anti-Usman Zaki plot. By 1841, Egga felt so politically oppressed and economically exploited that it was already actively involved in a plot to rebel.¹⁹ This was the rebellion that broke out in 1842 during the sixth phase of the Nupe

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.316: Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p.98.

¹⁵ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 322.

¹⁶ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 80.

¹⁷ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 35.

¹⁸ According to Crowther, 'The people between Bidan and Egan are called Sitakotsi, a tribe of Nufi, who it appears are unwilling to pay tax to the Felani kings'; Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, p. 409, entry for January 25.

¹⁹ Allen and Thomson reported that 'One of our interpreters, a Filatah man, found out to-day that it was

wars. It eventually succeeded in destroying Rabah, sending Usman Zaki into exile c.1843/4.²⁰ The volatility of Egga seems to be one reason why Rabah's military contingent was stationed there.²¹

CHANGES IN EGGA.

Egga was an unwilling subject of Rabah throughout the first half of the 19th century. But though it participated in insurrections to overthrow Rabah's political dominance in Nupe, it benefited from the general success of the jihad. The town derived advantages from the commerce, immigration, domestic slavery and the slave trade that were associated with the jihad.

The intelligence that the Lander brothers received of Egga in Borgu was not only confirmed when they arrived at Egga, but was subsequently supported by other observations they made between Egga and Adamugu. They further observed that Egga was connected with the famous Koton Karfi, and by implication, with Panda. Before the 19th century, the latter towns were acclaimed among the Hausa as important trade centres visited by caravans from further north and linked by the east/west trade route passing from Bornu and Bauchi to Gonja and other places in the Western Sudan. Egga's relationship with Koton Karfi also implies that it was commercially linked to Odokodo and Ikiri markets on the

generally understood that Mamagja Ederisa, the chief of Egga, and a younger brother of Sumozariki had resolved to unite their powers to remove their common oppressor'. Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 107; also, Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 190-91; Ibrahim, Nupe and their Neighbours, p. 39. A reconciliation of the different dates for the ouster of Usman Zaki has been done in a previous section of this chapter.

²⁰ Baikie, Narrative, p.74; PRO No. 15 of 1857 Baikie's letter, dated Dayspring Off Rabba, River Kwora Central Africa, 28 Sept. 1857 para. 8.

confluence, to which Koton Karfi was also linked. Thus, Egga's importance as a Niger port in the southeast of Nupe might have developed as early as that of the other marts with which it traded around the Niger-Benue confluence.²² However it is noteworthy that only Kulfo, Koton Karfi and Panda are mentioned in indigenous written records before the 19th century. It is, therefore, likely that the emergence of Egga as the important trading town which the Landers observed in 1830, was connected with the rise of Rabah as the *de facto* Nupe capital in the early 1820s. It was strategically located as the first Nupe port on the Niger river trade route between the Nupe border and the Niger-Benue confluence. It was thus, able to command trade coming into Nupe over the Niger river from these directions and that which left Nupe along the same route.

With the successful establishment of the jihadists at Rabah in the early 1830s, Egga rose to become the second largest [slave] market in the Nigerian interior. The military-political situation in Nupe also threw up a new class of aristocracy, military hangers-on and an incipient bureaucracy. These categories of people constituted a large and viable centre of consumption and purchasing power. Located on the border of Nupe, Egga disposed of a portion of Rabah's slaves and produce as well as imported southern and imported European goods and transshipped them to Rabah.²³ Thus a large traffic of canoes laden with

²¹ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 322.

²² Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 176-177. Discussed in Chapter Five.

²³ Oldfield's entire diary for the days they spent in Egga and Rabah testifies to this.

merchandise plied between Egga, Rabah and Rabah's Zagozhi port.²⁴ At Egga, the Landers 'were struck with the immense number of large, bulky canoes that lay off it, and which were filled with trading commodities, and all kinds of merchandise.'²⁵ The local industrial products from Zaghozi and Rabah found markets further south via Egga and Koton Karfi.²⁶ Horses and saddlery from the two towns were exported southward through Egga.²⁷ Hence, the information given to the Lander brothers that Koton Karfi of the Igbara was a 'celebrated market' for Nupe manufactures.²⁸

Due to its commercial and military roles, Egga was by 1841 a densely populated town. The immigrant population of military and political officials must have enhanced the purchasing power of the town. Consequently, it attracted more traders. Schon in 1841 observed many of these categories of immigrants at Egga and described them in his diary as 'strangers from various other kingdoms.'²⁹ By 1841 many other more economically productive people moved in. Yoruba traders visited it from Ilorin, some permanently settled for the purpose of trade. Arabs from the north visited it, passing through it to Ilorin, to Kakanda country and back on their return northward. Igala traders and the Igbara from Panda

²⁴ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 197.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198. Entry for Oct 19th.

²⁶ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, pp. 46-49, 109; Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 142; Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, p. 100.

²⁷ Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 175; Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, pp. 85, 365.

²⁸ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 209.

²⁹ Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, pp. 183, 322.

and Koton Karfi visited Egga for commercial purposes.³⁰ Hence, while in 1836 it was said to have been a closely packed town with an 'immense population',³¹ by 1841 it was considered to be larger than any other town on the Niger below it.³² That Egga was considered a wealthy commercial centre is implied by the increase in its yearly tribute assessment payable to Rabah by over 300 percent between 1833-4 and 1841.³³

With the destruction of Rabah in 1843/4 and Lade in 1853, Egga became the most densely populated Nupe town until the rise of Bida after 1857. In 1857, Crowther who knew the Egga of 1841 observed that

there were then [in 1841] open spaces about, where the weavers had room to stretch out their works, but now [in 1857] it is one mass of huts, as thickly built as they can be put together. This place being an island, has become a place of refuge for the fugitives since the destruction of Rabba and the desertion of Lade, at the late revolution of Umoru against Dasaba³⁴

In a very clear demographic and economic sense, there is no doubt that the Nupe wars impacted on Egga. It dropped to second place only when the successive capitals at Rabah, Lade and Bida functioned.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 180, 317; Lander and Lander, *Journal*, pp. 204, 209.

³¹ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, p. 36.

³² Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. 2, p. 102.

³³ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, p. 39. Oldfield reported that they 'were informed that the Felatah tax-gatherer, or collector, had received the half-yearly taxes of Egga, amounting to sixty thousand cowries.' See also, Schon and Crowther, *Journal of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and M. r. Samuel Crowther*, p. 194, where it is reported that 'a still larger sum is annually exacted from them under various pretenses, chiefly as fines for real or alleged offenses. They only paid 50,000 cowries to their own king, before the Fulatahs obtained power over them.'

SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE IN EGGA

Egga was a famous commercial centre and slave market. Data in Appendix 4 and eyewitness reports of European diplomats and missionaries concerning Egga show clearly that the town occupied an important place among those that the visitors had observed, for the employment of slaves for social, economic and military and domestic pursuits, as well as for slave trafficking. The character of Egga as a slave society could be directly linked with its garrison position and commercial function within Nupe during this turbulent period of Nupe history.

On its arrival at Egga in 1833, the Oldfield trading party learned that slaves were one of the many regular articles sold in the market.³⁵ At Gori in 1841, the anti-slave trade commissioners of the Trotter expedition impounded a canoe ferrying three slaves that had been bought at Egga. The slaves were liberated to enforce the anti-slavery treaty that the Attah of Igala had signed with the British commissioners. Information from the slaves indicates that Egga was linked by over-land trading paths to the towns and villages of Bunu and Yagba east-southeast of Nupe through a chain of itinerant slave merchants.³⁶ Traders in nearby towns like Kinami, Muye and Budan on the Niger would go directly to Egga to buy or sell slaves. Moreover, it seems that Egga was the nearest bulking centre for the traders who scoured the Bunu, Yagba, and Nupe inland towns for slaves. It had resident slave

³⁴ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, p. 72.

³⁵ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 36.

³⁶ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, pp. 86-88; Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 146-8.

trading agents who had warehouses in which they accumulated their purchases and where those not immediately disposed of were kept.³⁷ Egga served as an important outlet for captives and slaves generated by the Nupe wars and raids. It seemed to be the primary point of distribution for Nupe slaves heading southward on the Niger, at least until in the early 1840s when a strong northern pull of the demands of the Sokoto Caliphate seemed to have intervened in this trend.

M. Adamu observed that the Hausa states, by the mid-19th century, were experiencing what he called 'slave inflation.' This was a major reason, according to him, for the emergence of open slave-markets where slaves were displayed.³⁸ This situation applies to Egga also. Slave sales were no longer conducted only within the privacy of an agent's compound. For the Hausa emirates, Adamu attributed this development to three causes, two of which also applied to Egga in varying degrees. One of the two reasons given that is relevant to this analysis is 'the tremendous slackening in the export of slaves across the Sahara.' The second relevant reason is 'the substantial increase in the number of slaves available, most of whom were prisoners of war captured during the numerous jihad campaigns that followed the Islamic reform movement centered at Sokoto.'³⁹

For Egga, the situation of slave glut that facilitated open market display of slaves for

³⁷ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, pp. 86-88; Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 146-8, 307.

³⁸ M. Adamu, 'The Delivery of Slaves from the Central Sudan to the Bight of Benin in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', Henry A. Gemery and Jan S. Hogendorn, (eds.), The Uncommon Market. Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, New York, 1979, p. 171.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 171-172.

sale seems to be connected with 'slackening in the export of slaves' over the Niger to the Niger Delta and other southern markets. In 1841, an important slave-trading agent at Egga reported that the town was witnessing a decline in slave export. In comparison with 'former days,' he said, the 'demand [from]' Gori and Kiri markets' which used to be 'so great' [was] now nearly altogether ceased.'⁴⁰ The dealer concluded his observation with the statement 'that it would be necessary to send all the slaves now, to Rabah, which he considered to be the chief slave-market in the interior of Africa.'⁴¹ Here, the drying up of the demand down-river seems to have reduced the vitality of the Egga slave market, by slave deflation, perhaps as a result of slackened supplies from small-scale traders, rather than its leading to 'slave inflation.'

The 'slackening in the export of slaves across the Sahara,' the first of Adamu's other two points cannot be demonstrated for Egga. In 1841, Arabs were still visiting Egga, and they seemed to be exporting a considerable number of the available slaves. In 1841, a Yoruba slave assistant to some Arabs informed Crowther that 'the Arabs very often carry away many slaves from hence and Rabba across the Desert; some owning forty, fifty, and some a hundred, each according to his circumstances.'⁴² However, available evidence does not provide us with an idea of what could be described as a 'slacken[ed] export of slaves across the Sahara' for Egga. But Adamu's point, that the 'jihad campaigns' resulted in a 'substantial

⁴⁰ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, pp. 100/101.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 320-1. Entry for Sept. 28th.

increase in the number of slaves available, most of whom were prisoners of war...' clearly applies to Egga between 1830 and 1841. Crowther's note, mentioned in an earlier chapter, that a contingent of jihadist soldiers in 1841 just returned from a campaign in which up to four thousand Bunu and Kakanda were taken captive supports this assertion. On their march to Rabah, the captives passed through Egga, where those who belonged to military/political leaders and merchants at Egga were retained.⁴³

Competition between Egga and Rabah is implied in the information given to Schon and Crowther by the Egga slave-trading agent mentioned above. Since Rabah was the political headquarters of an active jihadist state to which Egga was subordinated, the latter was at a relative disadvantage to the former. Apart from being an important centre of supply and sale of slaves and other goods in its own right, Rabah was also able, by virtue of its political position, to command the supply of slaves in the form of captives, tributes and perhaps criminals.⁴⁴ It, therefore, must have been able to undercut Egga that depended primarily on market forces for her status as a slave-mart. Her relative economic decline could thus be accounted for by the fact that in the 1840s there was a slackening in demand from down-stream. Moreover, Egga was upstaged by unfair advantages of military and political

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁴⁴ For possibilities of enslavement due to crimes committed or alleged to have been committed, see Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II. p. 92; Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, pp. 188.

lever by Rabah. In fact, the settlement itself was often a victim of Rabah's demand for slave tribute separate from the normal yearly money tax.⁴⁵

At any rate, Egga traded in slaves and employed them for domestic and other labours. There were mentions of masters and headmen, slave-dealers and slave agents. Its market was held every five days, and it was noted for slave trading.⁴⁶ The proportion of slave to free in Egga is unknown. In 1841, Rev. Schon who had expected a ratio of 3:1 reckoned that 'it does not appear that the number of domestic slaves is as great as has been stated.'⁴⁷ The observation by Schon and the fact that Egga was a popular commercial port town, seem to suggest that Egga was more of a slave mart, distributing slaves to others than it was willing or able to utilize for its own internal production.

A possible reason why, according to Schon, the slave population of Egga was not considerable might be because a transformation was taking place amongst the servile populace. Probably the role of the slaves in the booming commerce of Egga and the high profits that trade might have brought to proprietors from the labour of their slave canoe-boys or/and slave-trader agents called for a situation that gave more freedom of action to the slaves. Schon's evidence seems to suggest that the feudal structure for which Bida emirate became famous was emerging, whereby serfs were now more numerous than out and out slaves. Another possibility from his evidence might be that many in Egga were second or

⁴⁵ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, pp. 72-3.

⁴⁶ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 92.

⁴⁷ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 187, entry for Oct. 1.

third generation slaves who as a result had attained a considerable measure of integration into the free population. In any case, Schon thought that he saw more free men than slaves at Egga in 1841.⁴⁸ He reported that

to ascertain the truth, I enquired of several persons, whose accounts always agreed in the main points. The slave is allowed half of his time, to work for himself; and the other half he must spend in his master's service, for which he receives food and clothing, both of which are very cheap. The slave is allowed to sell the produce of his farm, after his master has disposed of his own; and if he is engaged in trading, and employed in canoes visiting the various market-places, he may have his own articles of commerce, and dispose of them to his own advantage. He is permitted to purchase as many wives as his means will allow; and his offspring are free. If the slave can produce money enough, it not unfrequently happens that he purchases his own liberty; after which, he is allowed to remain unmolested at the place where he has before been a slave; or, if he chooses, he may return to his own country. The former is done more frequently than the latter. The term "domestic slaves" requires an explanation here. It is obvious, that when they purchase slaves, they are at liberty to sell them again, or to employ them for their own works as they find most convenient for themselves. When, therefore, they speak of domestic slaves, and of the limits under which they are with regard to the infliction of punishment or the re-selling of them, they can only speak of such slaves as have been long at the place, and entered into the relations of life through marriages, &c., and have thus become members of the community from which they cannot be separated so easily.⁴⁹

EXAMPLES OF SLAVE USE.

A rich old mallam, a notable trader in Egga and an important customer of Lander and Oldfield provide a good example of an aristocrat making use of slave labour. He placed a first order for one hundred red caps worth 200,000 cowries.⁵⁰ Four days latter, he came on board and placed another order for goods worth 74,000 thousand cowries. Persuading the European traders to live and trade with them, he assured Oldfield that 'if you will only stay and live

⁴⁸ *Ibid*; also see Inikori's stimulating discussion as to the need for historians to specify different servile categories clearly: J. E Inikori, 'Slavery in Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade', Jalloh A., and S. E. Maizlish, (eds.), The African Diaspora, College Station, 1996, pp. 39-72.

⁴⁹ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 187-189 entry for Oct. 1.

⁵⁰ Laird and Olfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p.108.

with us ... I have plenty of houses, cowries, slaves, and bullocks, and plenty for all of you to eat.'⁵¹ Oldfield and his crew learnt that the man had 'two or three houses on shore filled with cowries and was one of the most extensive traders in this part of the country'.⁵²

There is no doubt that such an influential man and a wealthy trade used servile labour. Oldfield observed that he had both male and female slaves employed in various capacities for his domestic use. It is also likely that the gift of any 'ten of his wives' that Oldfield said he was awarded if only the members of the expedition would take their residence with the mallam at Egga could refer only to slaves or slave-concubines.⁵³ The Nupe were never known to entertain visitors with their own free wives and as a mallam, Islamic injunction allowed him only four wives. There is no doubt that some of the mallam's trusted slaves were engaged as traders or vendors for him. The large amount of goods he single-handedly ordered within a few day's interval shows that he had a good distribution network. His slaves and other trade agents could have furnished such a network.

A great deal of labour was required in the production of the various articles seen at the Egga market. Allen and Thomson in 1841, just like Lander in 1830, considered the locally manufactured cloths of Egga to be first class. They were of the opinion that these clothes could be bought and exported to Accra on the Gold Coast for a reasonable profit. No less than 200 looms were seen in operation at Egga.⁵⁴ The production of cotton, the sowing,

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 109; entry for Saturday, October 12.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 113/114.

⁵⁴ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 100.

weeding, picking, ginning, spinning, and weaving and the processes involved in producing the finished product involved lots of work to which servile and slave labour would no doubt have contributed. The same could be said for the production of tobacco, indigo and camwood, the processing and marketing of which involved a considerable amount of labour.⁵⁵ Such investment of labour was the case for all the other articles that were anxiously advertised by hawkers and vendors for sale in the markets.

While some of these articles were taken to the market in Egga, some were taken to other regional markets for disposal. Allen observed a mob of traders in the market all 'anxious to sell their little wares.' These wares included

calabashes beautifully wrought and carved, silk from Bornu, natron from the same place, country cloth, net work, Guinea corn, yams, Indian corn, sweet potatoes, dried fish, a few European articles, a piece of cotton handkerchiefs, beads and gun-powder, about fifteen horses, and Guinea corn pounded with shea butter.⁵⁶

Other than those employed in a military or administrative capacity, it could be reasonably assumed that slaves like those held by the old mallam, were engaged at various levels in the kind of economic production and distribution analysed above.

Direct evidence as to the employment of slaves in the canoe transport business is scanty. What is available is limited to the general observation by the Lander brothers and

⁵⁵ At harvest, the leaves were carefully dried, they were then 'plaited, and made up in coils, weighing from six to ten pounds.' ['V]ery great quantities' of these were said to be cultivated in Egga. They were then hawked in the markets. *Ibid.*, vol. I. p. 401. Indigo was also said to be in abundance at Egga: see *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 402. For the labour involved in the production of camwood, see also, *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 100.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II. pp. 99/100.

another by Schon that have been mentioned earlier on.⁵⁷ However, based on knowledge of what obtained at Gbebe, Idah and Budan, it is safe to expect that slaves, together with free men, constituted important manpower resource for this important industry. It is likely that a great percentage of the slave-labour in Egga, as at Gbebe, went into the transport business and commerce.⁵⁸ This is suggested by the evidence of the booming commerce within Egga and between and it and other trading towns like Pandah, Zagozhi, Rabah, the Kakanda communities and Koton Karfi, etc., and the observation of Schon to the effect that not much cultivation of the ground was done in Egga. There is no direct evidence about the incidence of pawns and pawnship at Egga.

OTHER VICISSITUDES OF WAR.

What happened to Egga as a market town during the last three phases of the Nupe wars between 1843/44 and 1857, when the whole of Nupe was in such turmoil and different power-holders replaced one another in the course of their changing military-political fortunes, is not clear. Egga was an important member in the conspiracy that saw the destruction of Rabah and the exile of Usman Zaki, c.1843/44. The blockade of Rabah must have been effective only with the support of the Zaghozi and Egga canoe-men in refusing to ferry product and people to or from Rabah. Egga might also have contributed warriors. The various slaves and clients of the old mallam and other nobles who supported *Etsu* Issa and other partisans of Masaba would have constituted important contingents in the force that

⁵⁷ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 198, entry for Oct 19; and Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p.188 entry for Oct 1.

eventually ousted Usman Zaki. What exact impact this had on Egga is not known from currently available data.

The implication for Egga of the congruence of objectives among Masaba at Lade, Issa south of Egga and Etsu Tsado at Tafi in the months prior to the 1843/4 sack of Rabah is also unknown. However, the shift of the most important capital in Nupe to Lade from Rabah might have changed the direction of trade, thereby negatively affecting the importance of Egga. Lade, with its own ferry, was strategically located to command the traffic of both the Kaduna and the Niger. Lade, from the 1840s to 1853, became famous for its slave market and Masaba more notorious for his slave drives.⁵⁹ The confusion that ensued with the crisis that saw Masaba ousted in 1853/4 and the wars attendant on Umar's assumption of power could as well have shifted the locus of commercial and political power away from Egga as could have concentrated it there.

Egga was much nearer Lade than it used to be to Rabah. Hence Lade could have had more control over Egga than distant Rabah ever had. Lade's closeness to Egga also meant that its chances of maintaining the paramount leadership position in the commerce of Nupe were slim given the context of the unequal competition at least, for as long as Lade remained the Nupe capital.

The Nupe military-political crisis worsened in the meanwhile. The situation in Nupe between late 1840s and 1857 was described by Baikie as a 'state of anarchy' and

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁵⁹ This has been examined in Chapter Three.

confusion.⁶⁰ By September of 1857, i.e., a few months after Umar's defeat and the restoration of Usman Zaki and Masaba to the Nupe throne, political conditions in Egga seemed to have been destabilized. The commercial and fiscal spheres seemed to have been subjected more to direct military-political power than to market forces. Extortion in the market place state officials was rampant.⁶¹ The desertion of Lade sometimes in 1854/5 seemed to have sent an exodus of refugees into Egga. There were more soldiers now in the town and they were reported to be very oppressive. Their presence, however, increased Egga's population density.⁶²

By 1857, due to the exaction of the conquerors, and possibly as a result of disturbed economic conditions, poverty seemed to be on the rise among the inhabitants. Crowther reported that

the soldiers have taken unrestrained liberty to oppress the poor inhabitants, in addition to the exorbitant annual tax of fifty bags, or 100,000 cowries,⁶³ laid upon them; so much so that when cowries are demanded of them by the soldiers, and none are forthcoming their goats and sheep, and even unfinished cloths from their looms, are taken away, which, if finished and sold, would have paid the share of the tax and have left something for the support of the weavers.⁶⁴

However, these were unsettled times when Bida the capital was still in its early formation and the emirate administrative structures have not developed. Crowther indicated that the oppressive behavior of the soldiers was brought to the attention of the Caliph in Sokoto

⁶⁰ F.O. 2/23, Baikie to Hutchinson, Letter No. 15, 28 Sept., 1857, para. 8.

⁶¹ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, p. 72.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ The drop in the tax paid by Egga to 100,000 by 1857/8 from 400,000 cowries in 1841/2 perhaps also reflects the dwindled economic condition of the town due to the impact of the prolonged military and political crisis.

who therefore, 'sent orders to stop these most tyrannical acts of oppression.'⁶⁵ The Nupe between Egga and the Kakanda were widely known to be very uncooperative with 'Fulani' rule. They were noted to have resisted paying taxes to the jihadists. All this must have been the contributing factor to the considerable military presence of the victorious duo of Masaba and Usman Zaki by 1857/8 in Egga.⁶⁶

The free flow of canoe traffic between Egga and the Niger-Benue confluence was also disrupted. There is an indication of much more disorder. As of 1857/8, the conditions that hitherto facilitated more structured commercial transactions across national boundaries seem to have suffered considerable damage. It became difficult to get a direct canoe passage from the confluence to Egga. There seems to have been a recourse to the practice reported by Lander and Schon for the period before 1840 whereby national carriers covered only the distance to last point on their own border before a relay of vessels from the next polity carried on. The fact that Masaba's army was in the vicinity of the communities normally engaged in trade with Egga created a more disturbed situation. Many towns downstream from Egga were deserted as a result of the fear of imminent attack by Masaba's soldiers.⁶⁷ Egga and the neighbouring communities must have found it more hazardous to depend on market forces for normal commercial and social interaction among themselves. Military-

⁶⁴ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, p. 72.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 407.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 405-410.

political factors, under this condition, could be expected to become more reliable avenue for safety and profitability of major commercial transactions.

THE KAKANDA: BUDAN, GORI AND MUYE

The Kakanda were another people on the frontier of Nupe who suffered military attacks in the course of the 19th century. They had been part of the Igala socio-political system, and the Attah still laid claim to their allegiance as late as 1841.⁶⁸ Budan and Gori each paid a 'nominal tribute of a horse a year' to the Attah and so did several of the villages in the neighbourhood of Gori.⁶⁹ In all likelihood, the other major towns of the Kakanda such as Rikido and Muye paid the same. In addition to tribute, they were liable to a levy of soldiers in time of need.⁷⁰

In 1830, Budan was well known and well spoken of at Egga. The Lander brothers were advised to make for the town if they were to avoid the awful dangers that some purportedly wild people on the Niger might pose to them.⁷¹ The night following their departure from Egga, at a small village where they had stopped, they learnt of Budan. They were told that if they could journey further downstream, it would not be long before they arrived 'at a city of considerable importance, called Kacunda.'⁷²

⁶⁸ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 300; vol. II, p. 82.

⁶⁹ Ibid., vol. II, pp. 85, 116.

⁷⁰ Ibid., vol. II, p. 85.

⁷¹ Lander and Lander, Journal, pp. 208, 213.

⁷² Ibid., p. 211. Kakanda (Kacunda) was the name mistakenly applied by several of the European

THE NUPE WARS AND PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES IN KAKANDA COUNTRY

The Kakanda were particularly important to the commerce of the confluence marts of Ikiri, Otuturu and Gbebe. They manufactured 'mats, cloths, and winter hats, with rims nearly a yard wide.' They were farmers who cultivate[d] a great quantity of yams, Indian corn and rice.⁷³ Apart from raw foodstuffs, they also brought game meat and manufactured articles to the market.⁷⁴ Gori that was their chief commercial town held its market, which included a slave section, every thirteenth day. In 1841, it was said to be inferior only to Ikiri market.⁷⁵ Roving Arab traders visited the Kakanda, selling and buying. The goods and slaves that they procured from the Kakanda was conveyed to Egga and Rabah and northward towards the desert.⁷⁶

Articles like blue English beads and some jewellery of French origin observed in use at Budan and in the Kakanda area indicate the Kakanda links with both North Africa and the Atlantic. They visited other markets and were being visited by foreign traders.⁷⁷ A number of them traded ivory and slaves to Ikiri market.⁷⁸ Oldfield described those of them whom he

explorers to the capital town, Budan.

⁷³ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, pp. 24-5, 347.

⁷⁴ These included dried buffalo's meat, fish, shea butter, tobacco, blue and red dye-balls of Tephrosia and camwood, native whips of hippopotamus skin, earthen pipe heads, chalk in small squares, swords and daggers. Ibid., p. 345-6.

⁷⁵ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 175, 303.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 321.

⁷⁷ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, pp. 116, 147.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 309.

was acquainted with as 'speculative traders.'⁷⁹ A less popular market also was also held at Budan.

Unfortunately, the Kakanda suffered from frequent military attacks by various bands of jihadist soldiers. The result was that the Kakanda lost a considerable portion of their population during these years. Allen and Thomson and Schon reported that many of them ended up in Sierra Leone as recaptives who were intercepted by the British anti-slave trade naval patrol. Many more surely made it across the sea to the Americas.⁸⁰ A number of its towns, Budan and Muye included, shifted their locations to more inaccessible areas. Many Kakanda citizens became refugees at Gbebe.⁸¹ Many of them were impressed into Masaba's army; a process that no doubt assured their individual security, but in the process, ensured their participation in the jihadists' attacks against their own peoples.⁸²

By the time of the 1841 Niger expedition, the immense supply of provisions in Kakanda reported for 1833-4 by Oldfield seemed to have shrunk considerably. The canoes heading for the Gori market from Budan were now seen to have 'but few articles of trade.'⁸³ The expedition sought to buy meat at Budan but met with disappointing results. Schon

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 115-6.

⁸⁰ On the basis of his knowledge of the people that categorized themselves as Kakanda at Sierra Leone, Baikie erroneously concluded 'the term Kakanda embraces three distinct tribes, named respectively Bassa, Ishabe, and Bonu, differing from each other in language and in national marks. In Sierra Leone people from all these three places unite and live together.' Conceding the possibility of error was his candid statement that though on the Niger River, he had 'not visited their countries', Baikie, *A Narrative*, pp. 271-2.

⁸¹ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, 81; Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. 38.

⁸² Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. 39.

reported that '[f]resh provisions [were] very scarce. [They] could scarcely procure fowls, ducks, and goats enough for [their] invalids... No fruit of any kind could be obtained, and yams were by no means plentiful.'⁸⁴ The latter produce, yam was reported to be in abundance in 1832, but not in 1841.

It is not entirely clear what caused the relative scarcity of saleable foodstuff. The possibilities include a redirection of labour away from agriculture, an absolute decline in manpower or a drought and famine condition. The latter might or might not be connected with Nupe attacks. Nonetheless, there was evidence recorded of disease of small pox and dysentery breaking out yearly and carrying off some of the people.⁸⁵ How much these diseases decimated the population of the communities is not clear from the evidence. Nor is it very clear either, how related this condition was to the military/political subjection of the Kakanda. However, the demise of Gori market by 1857 was clearly connected with Nupe attacks and with the general military-political crisis in early 19th century Nupe.⁸⁶

SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE AMONG THE KAKANDA TO 1857

The Kakanda considered themselves to have been great slave traders, but they claimed to have abandoned the trade after the Attah of Igala to whom they paid allegiance

⁸³ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 141.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 82.

⁸⁶ Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, p. 150.

published the law abolishing the trade in 1841.⁸⁷ Notwithstanding their claim, a few weeks after this abolitionist declaration, slaves newly bought by some notables of Idah from the Kakanda were seen in canoes on the river.⁸⁸ Gori remained a famous slave market. Slaves were still being displayed for sale in the market. Prospective buyers were visiting the market from further south, while neighbouring Kakanda towns sent their trickling of slaves to Gori for profitable disposal.⁸⁹ Kakanda merchants bought slaves from Egga for use and for sale.

No doubt slave labour contributed to the Kakanda production for domestic and commercial purposes. The Kakanda employed slave labour for their farming, fishing and for canoe transport.⁹⁰ Thomas King's evidence also points to the fact that quarrels among Kakanda villages often ended in skirmishes, slave raids and ambushes, all which producing captives for sale.⁹¹ James Macauley, a member of the 1841 anti-slave trade expedition to the Niger, was a slave in Budan before been sold off around 1820.⁹²

The economies and societies of the Kakanda were structurally connected to the Nupe wars in several ways. They were direct victims of aggression and enslavement. They

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 207.

⁸⁸ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, p. 352.

⁸⁹ Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, pp. 144, 146.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

⁹¹ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, pp. 360-4.

⁹² *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 109-20; vol. II, p. 118; Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 204.

also served as unofficial agents of the slave raiders and of the warring Nupe aristocracy in disposing of spoil of war and supplying whatever useful goods the Nupe market required.

CONCLUSION

The Nupe wars had different points of articulation with communities that were attacked or subjected to jihad raids and political control during the first half of the nineteenth century. In general, the political element in the wars caused a progressive northward shift of focus by these communities to the successive political centres at Rabah, Lade and then Bida. As was to be expected, there were corresponding changes in the economic outlook and fortunes of these towns and villages. Up to 1857, they operated in relation to the Nupe military political centres, as markets to supply, to consume or to re-export slaves and other goods. They also related to the Nupe jihad centre as tributaries that supplied captives and forwarded tribute to their overlords. Kakanda was clearly a slave society. Their political, economic and demographic responses to the jihad centre, as well as to the successive capitals of Nupe clearly highlight the direction from which the dynamics of change for them emanated between 1832 and 1857. Political and economic influences from the north assumed increasing significance over those from the south.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The analysis in this study has been informed by an attempt to establish in what practical ways the concept of crisis of adaptation can be applied to the interior Muslim Nupe society of the first half of the 19th century. Some earlier studies attributed the causes of the socio-political problems of the 19th century Niger Delta middlemen states to the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the transition to palm oil production or the attempts to adapt to the new economic regime. But recent studies have challenged many aspects of these crisis of adaptation analyses for the Niger Delta states, as well as for other societies to which the thesis has been applied. The hinterland producer states, for instance, have been shown to have experienced a 'crisis', but not to have been able to effectively adjust or 'adapt' to the crisis. Therefore, the major point of this concluding chapter is to answer, in summary, the question of the possible ways in which the concept of crisis of adaptation may or may not apply to the early 19th century Nupe.

Clearly, there was a major social and political crisis among the Nupe between 1810 and 1857, and it was expressed in widespread military conflicts, social cleavages, enslavement, and demographic changes. It is also clear, that aspects of the political and social disruptions similar to those suffered by the Delta and the Yoruba states could be identified in Nupe during its period of crisis. There were civil wars and secessions within Nupe and aggressive or expansionist raids directed by competing Nupe factions against some of their weaker neighbouring states. But in the Niger Delta, the political crisis more or less, created

conditions of social status mobility. Certain members of the lower classes like the slaves and peasants were able to rise in political, economic or social status. They were able to participate in the economic production and the political processes that were hitherto closed to them and, in some situations, they even supplanted some members of the classes that had monopolized the positions. In Nupe, there were no such developments. The reason for the difference is found in the character of the Nupe trade with the Delta.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL FACTORS IN NUPE POLITICAL CRISIS c.1800-1857

It is beyond dispute that the jihads of the Central Sudan sent captives into Atlantic slavery. Slaves from the Sudanese interior were sent along the Niger to the Bight of Biafra, and overland to the Bight of Benin. This explains Lovejoy's observation that '[b]y c.1790 through 1825, as many as 25 per cent of the slaves leaving the Bight of Benin were identified as Hausa, Nupe or some other ethnicity from the Central Sudan'.¹ Since the south-bank Nupe lived nearer to the lower Niger river trade route, they must have contributed an appreciable percentage of slaves shipped abroad from Bonny ports during the period c.1790 to the late 1830s.

For the greater part of the period of study, the military-political division in Nupe more or less followed a north-bank/south-bank line. The north-bank Nupe were under the influence of the Rabah jihadists and Manjiya's royal line, and the Nupe of the south bank were under the influence of the successors of Etsu Jimada and king Masaba. Given the

¹ This is in contrast to the earlier period before C.1780 when 'very few slaves from the far interior appear to have boarded ships for the Americas'. Lovejoy, 'Background to Rebellion', and 'The Central Sudan and the Atlantic slave trade', Robert Harms, Joseph C. Miller, David S. Newbury and Michelle D. Wagner. (eds.).

economics of the wars discussed in Chapter Three, the military political centres that were located south of the Niger — bases for Idrisu, Isa, Muazu Isa and Masaba — had a more immediate access to the Niger-Delta market for slaves and goods than the rival centres north of the Niger. But the progress of the wars increasingly linked all of the Nupe contenders and their supporters on either side of the Niger to the Sokoto Caliphate, and in particular to Gwandu. This linkage also translated into the gradual integration of the economies of both the north-bank Nupe and the south-bank Nupe with those of the various emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate. Thus, the ascendancy of the jihadist contenders to the leadership of Nupe and their consolidation of Rabah between 1830 and 1840 resulted in re-routing a large share of Niger river slave traffic of the communities around the Niger-Benue confluence, including the southbank Nupe. There was a re-routing northward into the heart of Nupe and the Sokoto caliphate. Hence, it is likely that the greater percentage of the Nupe slaves sold to the Delta markets along the Niger went in the years before 1840.² This implies that the boom decades of the Nupe-Delta trade in slaves predated the effective establishment of the jihadist government over the whole of Nupe.

By 1840/41, the larger caliphate market had begun to assert very perceptible control over Nupe's economic production. Outlying Nupe provinces were pulled into the commerce of Rabah, and through Rabah into the markets of the northern emirates of the Sokoto

Paths toward the Past: African Historical Essays in Honor of Jan Vansina, Atlanta, 1994, p. 40.

² Observations of Schon and Crowther in Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, pp. 176-7 and Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 101, support this.

Caliphate. Also, the visibility of Arab traders and north Africans in Nupe export commerce seem to have increased. Even when slaves ultimately flowed southward, they generally headed first northward towards Rabah. It was from Rabah that they were then redirected southward across the Niger and overland to Ilorin and Yoruba country.³ However, although the Nupe slave trade with the lower Niger from c.1840 had decreased relative to the period from c.1840 to 1857, the Nupe slave trade on the Niger still remained significant. Nupe, therefore, had the best of two worlds. Its Niger trade with the Delta communities continued for as long as it remained practicable and profitable. This was carried on by the Nupe nearer the Niger-Benue confluence. But the trade of the various sections of Nupe with Rabah, Lade and eventually Bida (consecutive Nupe capitals), and with the Sokoto caliphate trading communities continued to assume increasing dominance.

Therefore, the 1807 British abolition was unable to diminish the gross regional demand for Nupe slaves. Rather, the newly established Nupe political and economic centres that were linked to the Sokoto caliphate and to the huge Caliphate actually opened up a vast market for the Nupe. It thereby facilitated the diversification of the sources of demand for Nupe slave and non-slave exports. Under these conditions, the Nupe economy of the first half of the nineteenth-century did not experience any structural change in production that could be attributed to British abolition.

Moreover, for the Nupe, all the non-slave goods they traded with the Niger Delta during this period were those that had always complemented slaves. The most important of

³ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 139.

these was ivory. Since the Nupe did not produce industrial goods for legitimate commerce, there was no opportunity for the development of new social relations of production and marketing organization as the case was in the Niger Delta and the Yoruba states. Nupe's pre-abolition relations of production remained unaffected, except for the increased employment of slaves for military purposes and, beginning from the end of the wars in 1857, the settlement of slaves in agricultural villages. Thus, the sphere of production of produce for the export market was unproductive of any form of libertarian social revolution in Nupe. Indeed, the increase in slaving and slave trading could be said to have further hardened the line between slave and free, and between noble and plebian.

The absence, other than ivory, of legitimate export commodities before the 1860s meant that the pull of new markets further south was too weak to directly impact on Nupe military-political activities. The deployment of slaves to produce shea butter for legitimate commerce in Nupe was an event of the 1860s. The slave farms or villages for which Bida became noted came into existence only after 1857, after the establishment of a stable and united administration. Before this period, captives and slaves were sold into Sudanic slavery, sent down to the coast or put to military/domestic use.⁴ Several land routes remained vital for conveying Nupe captives and slaves towards demand centres in West and North Africa.⁵

With the absence in Nupe of the type of wealth and the substantial level of socio-economic liberty generated by the production and marketing of palm oil among the Niger

⁴ Mason, 'Production, Penetration and Political Formation', p. 213.

⁵ Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition*, p. 123; Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 139; Lovejoy, 'Background to Rebellion'.

Delta and Yoruba communities, the Nupe underclass had no comparable lever with which to challenge the upper class. The Nupe military-political crisis did not include a crisis of social classes. There were no attempts by the slave or the peasant class to challenge the economic or political positions of their overlords. Hence, the principal subjects of the political rivalry and military confrontation in Nupe were members of the royal lineage. The underclasses were no more than cannon fodder in the conflicts. Thus, in the absence of abolition and legitimate commerce-induced economic change that could cause social and political crises, it seems very clear that the principal causes of the Nupe crisis were internal. These causes were basically problems associated with secession in Nupe, the fragmentation of the society around fractions of royal and jihadist contenders and the accompanying unmanageable socio-political situation.

However, a revolutionary political aspect to the Nupe crisis became evident when aristocratic Muslim immigrants holding to a jihad philosophy challenged the indigenous royal lineages for Nupe throne. The legal, moral, and the social basis of kingship in Nupe was subjected to a drastic alteration. A new faction of the upper class, immigrant and Islamic in character, challenged and eventually usurped the position of the indigenous Nupe rulers, a position which had hitherto been restricted to Nupes with heredity claims. The basis of this revolution was thus ideological and Islamic. It was facilitated by the initial fractionalization of the local Nupe Etsuship in the early 19th century.

Nadel argue that

impetus of religious zeal, which drove the Fulani armies across Northern Nigeria, was spent when, as rulers of Nupe, the Fulani turned their faces southward. [E]conomic considerations

were involved in the building and maintenance of the kingdom in many other, more subtle ways. The incentive of gain will appear not only as an abstract, impersonal, historical stimulus, but as a concrete element, directly affecting individual action and directly shaping the motives and interests by which the individual agents of the political system are animated."

However, this position cannot hold if it is applied to any period before 1860. The characteristics of the individual battles and the phases of war during the Nupe crisis do not support it. It is also unsupported by the pre-1840 timing of the largest overall export of Nupe slaves overseas and by the chronology of military engagements.

This study, no doubt, shows that a considerable portion of captives from the military activities connected with Masaba's establishment at Lade between 1835 and 1851 were sold to the south both overland via the Yoruba country and over the Niger. But his wars, nonetheless, were determined more by political factors within Nupe, and across the Niger in Gwandu and Sokoto than they were responses to economic factors related to the abolition or legitimate commerce. Indeed it is tempting to interpret Masaba's attempt to send out a military campaign against the inhabitants of the Delta as a deliberate policy of going after European/Delta commerce, especially guns. But it is to be noted that Masaba was only invited by the other two monarchs whose states had more direct links with legitimate commerce than Masaba's portion of Nupe. Masaba did not initiate the campaign. Moreover, he was unable to go far, aborting the campaign at a point opposite the southern boundary of the Igala, and instead turning his war machine on the Kakanda community that were in the

⁷ Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 86. But he applied the argument to the period from when what he described as 'real history' began, i.e., post-Tsoede era, and especially from c.1800.

way of his returning soldiers. Masaba's 'religious zeal' as a jihadist reformer rather than a secular state builder between 1835 and 1854 is questionable. At any rate his wars were not related to any desire to participate in legitimate commerce.

It was after the establishment of the Bida emirate in 1857 that the jihad in Nupe, in a practical sense, effectively crossed the Niger. It was then that the jihad ideology was able to assume a significant role as a tool for political expansion and consolidation. Not until then was the prospect of acquiring a dominant access to European commerce became an important economic issue with the Bida rulers.⁷ It was in this period, and not before, that economic forces operating from the south and from across the Atlantic could be said to have 'influenced and directed the political growth of Nupe'.⁸ The Nupe crisis was clearly not a response to economic problems unleashed by currents flowing from the south.

GUNS AND SLAVES DURING THE NUPE WAR TO C.1854.

The study shows clearly that guns were imported from the Delta into the Niger-Benue confluence communities in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Igala, the Igbira of Panda and Koton Karfi, the Bassa, the Kakanda and the south-bank Nupe, all patrons of the Niger-Benue confluence markets, had access to guns from very early in the 19th century. The acquisition and use of firearms by these Niger-Benue basin communities

⁷ Nadel's opinion, excellent if applied to post-1857 Nupe, but wanting if extended to the pre-1857 period, was applied by Mason more specifically to the 1820s and 1830s: 'Access to the goods which flowed along this route [eastern north-south trade route via the Panda, which linked the lower Niger to southern Hausaland and the towns of the Benue valley] (which is a different matter from the monopolizing of trade or the effective taxing of traders) was one of the most earnest aims of the new parties which rose to power in the 1820s. Mason, 'Production, Penetration and Political Formation', p. 210.

⁸ Nadel, Black Byzantium, pp. 85-86.

continued throughout the greater part of our period of study. It is noteworthy that this was an area from where large numbers of slaves were sold to the Niger Delta up to c.1840.

The large number of Abaji elephant hunters seen armed with guns in the early 1830s were also linked to the slave trade. Part of the prizes seen with them included slaves.⁹ It is of course plausible to argue that the Abaji hunters bought the slaves with which they paid tribute than hunted them. But it is no less credible to argue that they used their guns to raid or kidnap. The 1832 observation by Oldfield demonstrates the interrelationship between the ivory and the slave trades. Both were often pursued together by the same persons: the kidnapers or the raiders were also the slave sellers and ivory merchants.

But outside of the Niger-Benue confluence in Nupe area northward beyond Egga access to large quantities of guns was infrequent. There are no references in the records of European visitors who travelled beyond Egga in Nupe between 1830 and 1841 to encounters with soldiers carrying guns and powder or local traders selling guns. The Igala state and the Niger-Benue communities of the Kakanda, Igbira and Bassa seemed to have been able to absorb most of the firearm import and, perhaps, to have deliberately prevented significant quantities of firearms from passing into the hands of their enemy and rival, the Nupe. The nature of the lower Niger trade to which the Nupe were appended at the northern end, as well as the monopolistic tendency of the Attah, the Igala king must have facilitated such restrictions.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the two references to large-scale use of guns in Nupe proper were in connection with a pitched battle between contending Nupe Etsus and a raid by

⁹ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, pp. 184-5.

jihadists from Rabah on frontier communities.¹¹ Both types of warfare in Nupe produced large numbers of captives.

Most of the direct evidence relating to slave hunting among the Igala, the Kakanda and the Nupe as far as Egga, separate from records of pitched battles caused by wider socio-political problems within the heartland of Nupe, are in connection with bows and arrows, swords, daggers and horses. This type of slave production seems especially to have relied to a large extent on incendiarism. However, the possible role of guns in this type of military activity is clear from the Kakanda complaint that indicated that their attackers, in addition to other weapons they were armed with, each had a gun.¹² Guns constituted tactical weapons for slave raiders. They were fired to terrify victims, to increase panic and aid capture of victims after a settlement had been torched.¹³

The specific cases of gun-use the organized armies of the Nupe were few and especially far between. Apart from the knowledge that they had guns in their armouries, evidence is too sparse to allow for a viable deduction as to whether firearms played any at important roles in the Nupe military. The evidence of weapon-use seems to de-emphasise firearms in both the major wars and raids that involved the Nupe up to 1857. On the other

¹⁰ This is laid out in Chapter Four.

¹¹ Lander, *Records*, vol. I, p. 180; vol. II, pp. 47-54.

¹² Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 207: that this statement is an exaggeration calculated to give the abolitionists commissioners the impression of the extreme suffering that the jihadists subjected the Kakanda is not in doubt. Not a single one of the travellers reported seeing any jihadist or 'Fulani' soldier with a gun. Yet the soldiers openly carried other assorted types of weapons on their persons. Hence, while some of these attackers could have carried guns, not every one of them would have had guns as reported.

¹³ F.O. 97/334, Baikie to Russell, no.3 of 1864, 20 January 1864: Smaldone, *Warfare*, pp. 112-4.

hand, the emphasis in the evidence points to cavalry as the pre-eminent military means employed by the Nupe in their warfare. But when Nupe and its southern and southeastern neighbours of the Confluence are considered together, the evidence shows that when available, guns seem to have been more related to raids than to major wars. For both direct slave-hunting and indirect military activities productive of captives and slaves, all the communities around the Niger-Benue confluence including southeast Nupe used guns.

But the guns were only accompanying weapons in raids, and they were used only in a couple of cases in the major wars. Hence, it seems unlikely that until the early 1850s, these wars and the general political crisis in Nupeland were propelled by the need to acquire guns. Despite the report of the dramatic impact that firearms had in the outcome of the two reported battles where they were used, they were not the weapons employed in the overwhelming majority of the wars. Therefore, it could not be inferred that gun trade over the Niger fuelled the Nupe wars.

Moreover, the outcome of the individual battles in which guns were employed, and the general outcome of the Nupe wars did not seem to have much bearing on who had or who did not have firearms.¹⁴ In the main battles north of the Niger in which the usurper Umar was defeated, Masaba's military assistance to Umuoru from his Ilorin base receives less emphasis in the source evidence than the cavalry and bow and arrow reinforcement from Gwandu. Indeed, there is likelihood that by 1857, the firearm-equipped Ibadan auxiliaries of Masaba were already scattered or had returned home following Umar's final rout of Masaba

¹⁴ Appendix 1 contains the details of these battles.

in 1854. There was no further mention of these soldiers in either written or oral record up to the 1857 defeat of Umar. These auxiliaries only had an initial success in their 1854 attempt to restore Masaba to his Lade throne after he was sent fleeing by forces that supported Umar. There is no indication that the 1000-strong Ibadan musketeers were at hand to provide any resistance when in late 1854 Umar himself eventually invaded Lade and Lafagi territory sending Masaba into permanent exile.

The only other case of seemingly heavy use of firearms within Nupe during the crisis was by Etsu Idirisu's supporters in 1828. While his forces were said to have been particularly successful in this battle against Manjiya and his Rabah jihadist supporters, it did not produce a lasting change in the balance of military power. Idirisu and his allies were defeated in subsequent battles and driven across the Niger by Manjiya's cavalry and infantry forces that had no guns. Moreover, neither Idirisu nor any of his successors were again mentioned in connection with firearms in later battles against their foes. Most of the other reported cases of gun-use were either to the south of, or around the Niger-Benue confluence among the Igala, Igbira and Bassa. Moreover, most of them were reported mainly in connection with very civil, ceremonial and non-military uses.

SOME HISTORIOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS.

Overall, this study joins others in showing the different ways in which West African states were affected by the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. The Nupe case betrays a paradox. There is evidence of a fairly heavy trade connection between at least a section of the Nupe and the Atlantic slave export market sometime from the late 18th century through

the first half of the 19th century. The prolonged military/political crisis of 19th century Nupe, beginning around the time of the British abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, was more or less similar to those experienced by the Niger Delta and Yoruba states when they lost their Atlantic slave market. Yet in spite of the Nupe's Delta and Atlantic trade connections, the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade does not seem to have constituted a major factor in the character or outcome of the Nupe crisis. Thus, while a socio-political crisis was evident, its causes were internal and uneconomic. The question of adapting to structural or social changes caused by the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade did not apply to the people.

How the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade and the crisis of adjustment to legitimate commerce interacted with socio-economic processes in interior Nigerian societies was time-dependent. It also depended on whether or not they were able to participate effectively in legitimate commerce, as well as on how other internal factors like political and ideological problems influenced the effects of the British abolition and legitimate commerce on the society. The particular fashion in which these factors operated set the Nupe crisis in its essential form apart from the crisis of adaptation suffered by the Yoruba or some of the Niger Delta states.

The study also shows that by the early 19th century, the Nigerian interior was connected to coastal commerce — at least the Nupe and their Igala neighbour. This revises the view that the sources of the 18th century export slave trade from the Bight of Biafra were restricted to the coastal belt and its immediate hinterland. It shows that the interior

communities did not have to await an inland move of the slaving frontier — by way of the wars that resulted from the economic and political fall-out of the abolition and the introduction of legitimate commerce — before they began to participate in the overseas slave traffic. On the contrary, the Niger river had all along facilitated the export of Nupe and other slaves of the Nigeria interior to the Atlantic export market ever from time before the 19th century.

Also, the phase by phase analysis of the Nupe crisis done in this study demonstrates the merits of a dis-aggregated examination of the wars that have been lumped together as jihad. The omnibus concept of jihad blurs different distinguishing characteristics of the wars that constituted a major component of the crisis. The Nupe factions that had the most direct links to the jihad tradition and ideology, and to the political elite of the Sokoto caliphate, were faced with issues that demanded the use of other tools outside of religion for identity formation and popular mobilization. It was not until after 1857 that the socio-political fabric of a united Nupe became easily accessible to engineering by an overall jihad political philosophy. Hence, the different phases of the Nupe wars can be assigned to their proper categories: conservative or reformist cultural nationalism in the Tsoedeian tradition, secular militarist revolution and Islamic jihad. Also, the identification and analysis of the distinct phases and different battles of the Nupe wars demonstrate that the Sokoto jihad encountered a strong and prolonged resistance in Nupeland. Moreover, it they show that this resistance was very much different in character than was usual. It was a resistance that was carried out through several layers of intermingled and opposing sectional interests.

intrigues, and various forms of expression of indigenous Nupe cultural, traditional and ethnic vitality.

APPENDIX 1.

A CATALOGUE OF THE NUPE WARS C.1810-1857¹

The Nupe wars of c.1810 - 1857 occurred in nine identifiable phases. Though related to each other, the phases of the wars nonetheless had distinct characteristics. Three emirates, Lafiagi, Shonga, and Bida, (the largest) emerged out of the struggles. Lapai and Agaie were also Nupe emirates, but their establishment was unconnected with the struggles under discussion.

First Series of Wars: The Sack of Mokwa

The first series of wars affected only the two western Nupe states that at the beginning of the 19th century had their capitals at Zugurma and Mokwa. They were pitted against the community of Abd al-Rahman, a local jihadist reformer. The cause of these wars, other than the ferment created by succession disputes, seems to have revolved around Abd al-Rahman's determination to establish an Islamic state based on his own autonomous jihad ideal. But with his failure, Abd al-Rahman was forced to seek external assistance from fellow jihadists to the north. Thus the help of the Muslim jihadist forces from Sokoto was called up.

Muhammed Bello cited two campaigns, the first in April in which Sokoto soldiers were sent to Nupe to 'help Abd al-Rahman al-Nufawi against the army of Nupe' and the second in which he reported that his contingent 'proved themselves, taking many

strongholds, and delivering our people who were in them.' These two campaigns have been dated to 1810 by Arnett and Last.²

Abd al-Rahman, the local jihad leader, was described by one of Clapperton's Arab or Fulani attendants as 'a noted chief of banditti [who] with his followers overran Nyffe and held possession of the capital for six months.'³ Mason suggested that the information from Bello and Clapperton refer to the same event. This would date the start of the wars and the earliest involvement of the Sokoto jihadists to 1810. However, it is more plausible to date the occupation of the capital town by Abd al-Rahman, an event that lasted only six months, to a period before the successful assistance of soldiers from Sokoto.

There were three concurrent 'Nupe' capitals before the rise of the Fulani-led jihadists to a position of political eminence in Nupeland. The first was Gbara, where Jimada reigned as the legitimate Nupe king. The second capital was in or around Jangi in Zugurma where Kolo, a former Nupe king who had been deposed, set himself up as king after he and his followers had seceded from the rest of Nupe. Manjiya who rebelled against Jimada moved into this settlement. The third was Yikanko's capital at Mokwa, established in the confused

¹ The chart in Appendix 3 summarises the Nupe wars and raids in a very simplified outline form.

² See Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate*, New York, 1967, p. 40 and especially footnote no. 113; In Mason, *Foundation*, p. 26, viz., 'Muhammed Bello wrote of a second campaign in the same year. 'when we returned from the Gwari expedition the army went out to Nupe. And they proved themselves, taking many strongholds, and delivering our people who were in them.' This deliverance suggests that Muslims that were sympathetic to the Sokoto Caliphate were dispersed through out a number of towns in Nupe. One of these towns was probably Mokwa in Zugurma, and only a few miles from the ferry at Rabah. It was here that Nyikako was killed in the 'Autumn' of 1810.'

³ Clapperton, *Journal of a Second Expedition*, p. 133. Clapperton seemed to have derived his information mostly from a 'native of Moorzuk, named Mohammed Ben Ahmet', who interpreted for him, as well as a

situation of the struggles between Manjiya and Jimada.⁴ Nupe traditions agree that *Etsu* Jimada died in the war in which Gbara was sacked. Moreover, since there is no mention in the traditions that Jimada was engaged in any other war prior to Manjiya's rebellion against Jimada's choice of Idirisu as heir, this implies that the capital that was sacked and occupied by Abd al-Rahman was not Gbara.

The capital which Abd al-Rahman captured for six months must be either Manjiya's Zugurma capital at Jangi⁵ or the third capital at Mokwa where Yikanko, allegedly a usurper, established himself before he was killed in 1811/12.⁶ There is no evidence that shows that there was an attack on Zugurma, and hence it seems that Mokwa was the capital that Abd al-Rahman attacked and occupied. It was perhaps his failure to hold it that finally prompted him to invite Sokoto's assistance. Bello's reference to the assistance his forces gave to Abd al-Rahman seems to point to this military action, and it is most likely that Yikanko was killed during the same operation.

Another source, Tazyin al-Waraqat of Abdullahi Mohammed composed in Arabic, states that:

then after that the armies followed each other to the country of Nufi in consecutive years, conquering many fortresses on each occasion, killing and taking prisoner, and giving safe-conduct to some of the unbelievers if they asked for it. Then they broke their pact, and thus the unbelievers are accustomed to break their pact every time, and they do not fear God. I

certain 'Omar the Brave, a black eunuch.' *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 123 .

⁴ There is a slightly varied version in Idris, 'Pategi Emirates', pp. 207-9.

⁵ Zugurma was itself the name of a town and the province in which it was situated and, because of its fame and the fact that earlier Nupe *Etsus* had fled there, outsiders in far away Sokoto must have considered it to be the Nupe capital. With Manjiya's rebellion, his Jangi settlement would have superseded Zugurma.

⁶ The preference for c.1812 rather than 1810 that was suggested by Arnett is explained a few paragraphs below.

composed a non-Arabic qasida on the capture of Nufi, but because it was not in Arabic I did not write it down⁷

Other evidence further helps in determining the chronology of the involvement of the Sokoto jihadists in Nupe. Prior to their interventionist campaigns, there had been three other expeditions that involved Bello's Sokoto jihad forces. One took place in mid 1810 against Gurma and the second, with 'a small army' against an unnamed people 'at the western ford [near] Ilu' during the raining season in mid-1811. The third campaign was one in which Bello took the field against the Gwaris. The last corroborates Bello's report concerning his forces' battle with the Gwaris.

Then shortly after their return Muhammad Bello, son of the Commander of the Believers 'Uthman collected an army for (war against) the country of Qari.[Gwari] whose people were iniquitous unbelievers who raided the countries of Islam. No king had ever conquered their country because it had many fortresses, castles, hills and wadis.⁸

The above account of Abdullahi shows that, until then, the jihadist army had not crossed southward beyond the northern border of the Gwari. The three campaigns were carried out against people who lived between the jihadists in Gwandu/Sokoto area and the Nupe, and it was only with the success of the third against the Gwari that the jihadist crossed over into Nupe. Hence, the campaigns in Nupe to help Abd al-Rahman which both Bello and Abdullahi referred to came after these three campaigns.

⁷ A. Muhammad, Tazvin al-Waraqat, edited and translated with introduction by M. Hisket, Ibadan, 1963, p. 130.

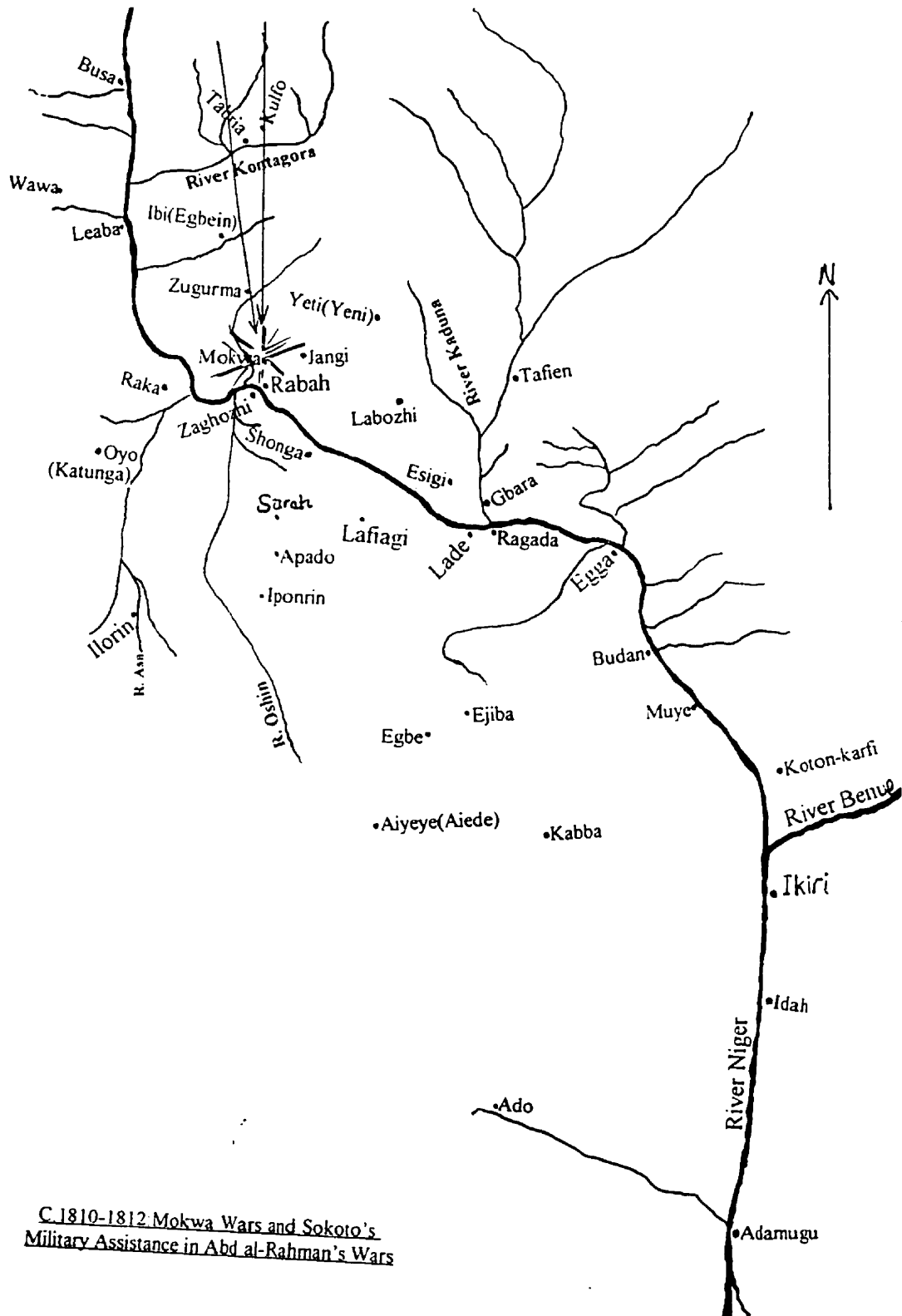
⁸ Ibid., pp. 129-30.

By October 1813 when Abdullahi finished his poem, January of the same year would have passed into the previous year in the Islamic calendar. If the 'consecutive years' Abdullahi refers to are two years, as they can only be, the last of them must refer at the latest to the 'year' before he finished the composition of his poem. For the campaigns in Nupe we are thus left with the dates (late dry season of) 1811 - late 1812, i.e., between the short period after the campaign by Bello against the Gwari and the year previous to the terminal date of Abdullahi's composition. The sack of Mokwa occurred between these two periods. This dating is about two years later than the 'autumn of 1810' that Arnett suggested for the campaign against Mokwa.⁹

By 1812, the allied forces seemed to have subdued the Mokwa center, leaving Abd al-Rahman's community with the upper hand. The jihadist allies of Abd al-Rahman eventually settled at Rabah and it was here that the same group that had come to his aid two decades earlier finally killed him in 1829.¹⁰ But Manjiya also seems to have benefited tremendously from the demise of the sack of Mokwa. The death of Yikanko reduced the number of Nupe capitals to two, and with the support of the Islamic forces, Manjiya was able to unify Nupe under himself. But the wars that accomplished this were second in the series.

⁹ E. J. Arnett, Rise of Sokoto Fulani, Kano, 1922. p. 23.

¹⁰ Mason, Foundations. pp. 29-30.



C. 1810-1812 Mokwa Wars and Sokoto's
Military Assistance in Abd al-Rahman's Wars

Second Series of Wars: The Rise of Manjiya

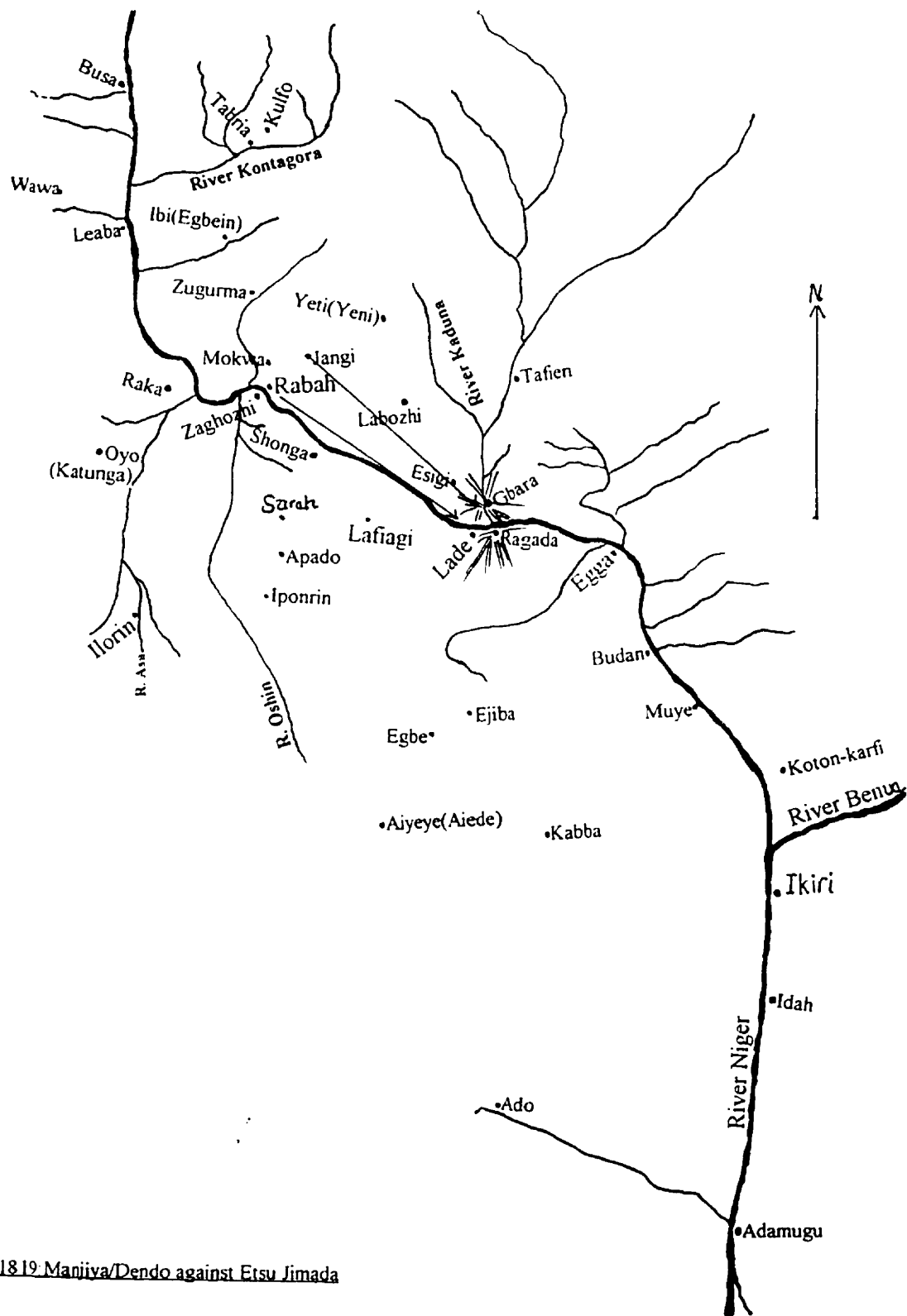
The second phase of the Nupe wars pitted the remaining two Nupe royal houses against one another: Manjiya's faction at Zugurma and Jimada's at Gbara. All the traditions refer to the events in one form or another, but the details are different. The two Gazetteer traditions record that Manjiya's faction had the support of the Muslim clerics and their jihadist warriors. They state that Mallam Dendo arrived in Nupe to become Manjiya's mallam.¹¹ The Bida tradition claims that Manjiya received a flag from Uthman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, thereby establishing him as a Jihad leader.¹² These traditions indicate that there was a strong relationship between Manjiya and the immigrant Muslim clerical community. The possibility that Manjiya and his followers were allied with the Sokoto forces that came in aid of Abd al-Rahman in the first series of wars seems to confirm this. Manjiya rebelled and declared war on Jimada during the latter's eleventh year on the throne because he designated Issa his son as heir apparent instead of Manjiya.¹³ Since Jimada was killed in 1818/19, if he reigned for 18 to 19 years as the traditions claim, his reign lasted from 1800 to 1818/19. This dates Manjiya's rebellion to 1811/12.

According to the Lafiagi account, the founders of Lafiagi and their followers participated in the war. This tradition claims that it was Mallam Manjuma, the brother of

¹¹ Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 9, para. 11; Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 30, para. 3.

¹² Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 9, para. 7.

¹³ Frobenius, Voice of Africa, p. 576.



Mallam Maliki, the founder of Lafiagi emirate, who struck the fatal blow that killed Jimada.¹⁴ The record of their involvement in the defeat and death of Jimada requires a reconciliation of the two claims.

It seems that two clearly identifiable forces, each from the opposite side of the Niger, converged in the battle or battles that finally routed Jimada. However, the nature of the involvement of forces from Lafiagi must have been different from that of the allies Manjiya and Dendo. The immigrant mallams and their community in Lafiagi could have seized on the opportunity presented by the confused situation following Jimada's death to send out raiding parties of their own. Perhaps it was this situation that was historically reconstructed in Lafiagi to assume the same status as the original war initiated by the Manjiya/Dendo party in which Ragada was destroyed.¹⁵ That their participation was no more than an opportunistic raid is borne out by the fact that Lafiagi was as yet an unconsolidated immigrant community. It might explain Manjiya's anger, threats and eventual military expedition directed against them.¹⁶ It was after two or three years, following Manjiya's defeat and expulsion from Rabah by the alliance of Dendo and Idirisu, that its leaders, who had fled from Manjiya's wrath, eventually returned to have Lafiagi established as a settled

¹⁴ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31, para. 5

¹⁵ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31, para. 4. According to this tradition they already received a Jihad flag from Uthman Danfodio as his representative long before Dendo.

¹⁶ Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 9, para. 10; Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31, paras. 5-7.

emirate. The second phase of the Nupe wars, therefore, closed with the death of Jimada, the defeat of his Nupe force, and his son's flight to Adamulelu.¹⁷

Third Series of Wars: the Expulsion of the Clerical Immigrant Community and Their Reoccupation of Rabah.

With their establishment at Rabah, the immigrant clerical aristocrats and their supporters became very powerful in Nupe. In the third phase of the wars, on the major characteristics of which the three traditions agree, Manjiya decided to expel the increasingly fearless and politically threatening communities associated with the immigrant Muslim clerics.¹⁸ The clerical immigrants in Nupe, including those who settled in Lafiagi area, were put to flight. The discomfited Fulanis and their supporters fled to Ilorin where another clerical family had been established.¹⁹

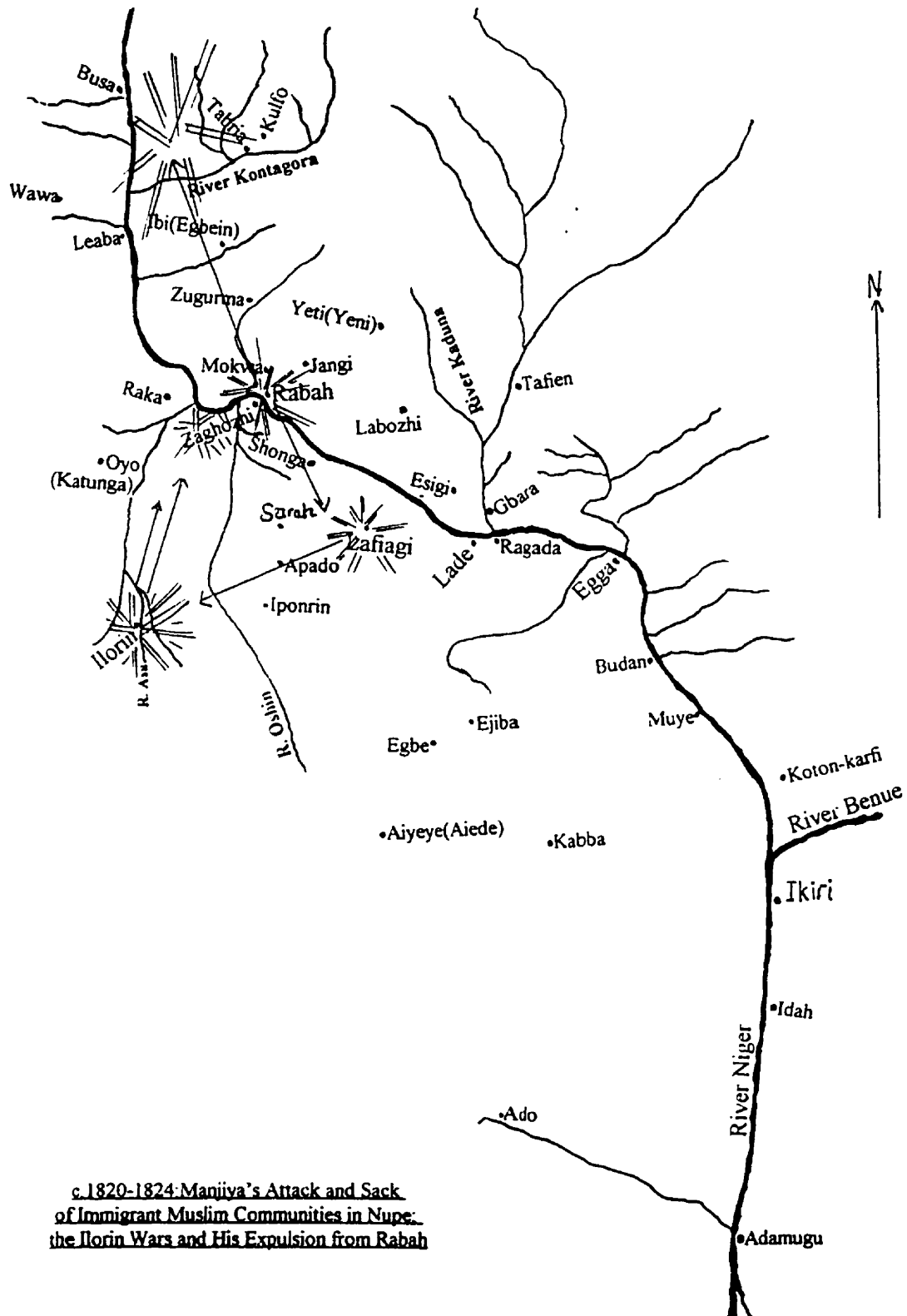
At Ilorin, the exiles teamed up with the supporters of the late Etsu Jimada to create a reinvigorated opposition group against Manjiya. To pre-empt this threatening danger, Manjiya directed his army southward across the Niger to engage the entire Fulani/Idirisu group at Ilorin. Samuel Johnson claims that the Alafin (king) of Oyo joined Manjiya in his assault on Ilorin.²⁰

¹⁷ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 9, para. 14.

¹⁸ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 31, para. 6.

¹⁹ It is difficult to see the sense in which Dendo's removal to Ilorin could possibly have been an hijra as Mason suggested. See Mason, 'Nupe Kingdoms,' p. 65.

²⁰ Johnson, *History of the Yoruba*, p. 201.



The opposition alliance, supported by the Ilorin army, was able to beat back the invading Nupe forces.²¹ Manjiya's forces were forced to flee across the Niger, and the combined group of Idirisu's partisans and the followers of Mallam Dendo completed Manjiya's rout and ejection from Rabah.²² At the end of this campaign, the various contingents of Fulani clerics and soldiers returned to consolidate the emirates of Lafiagi, Shonga, and Agaie in the areas from which Manjiya had driven them. Idirisu retired to establish a new Nupe capital at Edda or Edun while the sons of Dendo had their father from Ilorin returned to reclaim Rabah.²³

This series of wars can be tied to the reign of Emir Abdul Salami of Ilorin and the appointment of Aliyu as the second Balogun Gambari.²⁴ The wrong date that Elphinstone calculated for this series of wars was 1808/9.²⁵ The most likely date for the accession of Abd al-Salam, according to Abdullahi Smith, was c.1823.²⁶ This phase of the wars, therefore, occurred c.1823 and 1824.

²¹ Sulu, 'History of Ilorin'.

²² Frobenius, Voice of Africa, p. 578; Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31, para. 8; Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 10, para. 15.

²³ Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 10 para. 15; Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31, para. 9.

²⁴ Sulu ms.

²⁵ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 31, para. 8.

²⁶ A. Smith, 'A little New Light on the Collapse of the Alafinate of Yoruba', A Little New Light: Selected Historical Writings of Abdullahi Smith, Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, Zaria, 1987, p. 152. See also S. A. Balogun's calculation in 'Historical Significance of Ilorin: A preliminary Survey', Confluence: An Academic Journal of the Kwara State Council For Arts and Culture, vol. 1 no.1, June, 1978, p. 24.

Fourth Series of Wars: Manjiya/Dendo's Wars of Attrition against Idirisu

Idirisu replaced Manjiya as Etsu. The youthful *Etsu* Idirisu and Mallam Dendo's community co-existed for some years. The Gazetteer of Nupe claims that there was a 7-year period of peace,²⁷ after which Idirisu, alarmed by the threat of Fulani plans to unseat him,²⁸ ordered the expulsion of all Fulani from Rabah.²⁹ Thus began the fourth series of the wars. The expulsion could not be effected before Manjiya seized upon the occasion to reinforce Mallam Dendo's forces. The siege of Rabah was broken and Idirisu was driven towards the east to Ekagi in Agaie province³⁰ and eventually across the Niger to Toji.³¹ After this victory, Manjiya moved his headquarters again to Jangi and was recognized as *Etsu* Nupe by Mallam Dendo and the immigrant clerical/ Fulani community at Rabah.³²

Across the Niger in the southeastern Nupe core area of his supporters, the defeated Idirisu was still able to create considerable difficulties for both Dendo and Manjiya. In alliance with the Shonga Fulani who opposed the Lafiagi faction, Idirisu and his Nupe supporters fell on Lafiagi country, driving Emir Manjuma of Lafiagi into exile at Ilorin. Emir Abd al-Salam (1823-1836) was said to be on the Ilorin throne by then.³³ A series of indecisive battles followed until 1827. When Clapperton and Lander entered Nupe in April

footnote no. 18.

²⁷ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 10 para. 16.

²⁸ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, p. 578.

²⁹ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 10, para. 16.

³⁰ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, p. 579; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 10, para. 16.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 579.

³² Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 10, para. 18.

of 1826, Idirisu had just been defeated.³⁴ During the seventeen months between this defeat and August 1827 when Lander returned to Kulfo, war had resumed. Idirisu's party, supported by Nupe Beni who had acquired guns, managed to defeat Manjiya and his allies.³⁵ In early August 1827, Manjiya was said to have 'experienced another signal overthrow' at the hand of Idirisu's army.³⁶ In May 1829, the Lander brothers at Wawa in Borgu country reported another battle dating to 1828 between these two factions. Manjiya, supported by the Jihadists of Rabah and Muslim supporters from Sokoto, had forced Idirisu to seek refuge in the Beni area of eastern Nupe. The Landers were appraised of the presence in Wawa of '800 "horse soldiers" the remnant of the army of Ederesa, [who] deserted him in his misfortunes.'³⁷

In September 1829 when the Lander and his brother re-entered entered Nupe, they were met and escorted by the joint delegation of Manjiya and Mallam Dendo, the first residing at Jangi and the latter at Rabah. No doubt Mallam Dendo was the *de facto* ruler over the major part of Nupe, but Manjiya was still being recognised as *Etsu* Nupe by the Dendo faction.³⁸ By 1833 when Lander, Oldfield and Allen visited Rabah, the situation changed little, except that it was now clear that the Rabah Fulani clerical aristocrats, with their army,

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 32, para. 13.

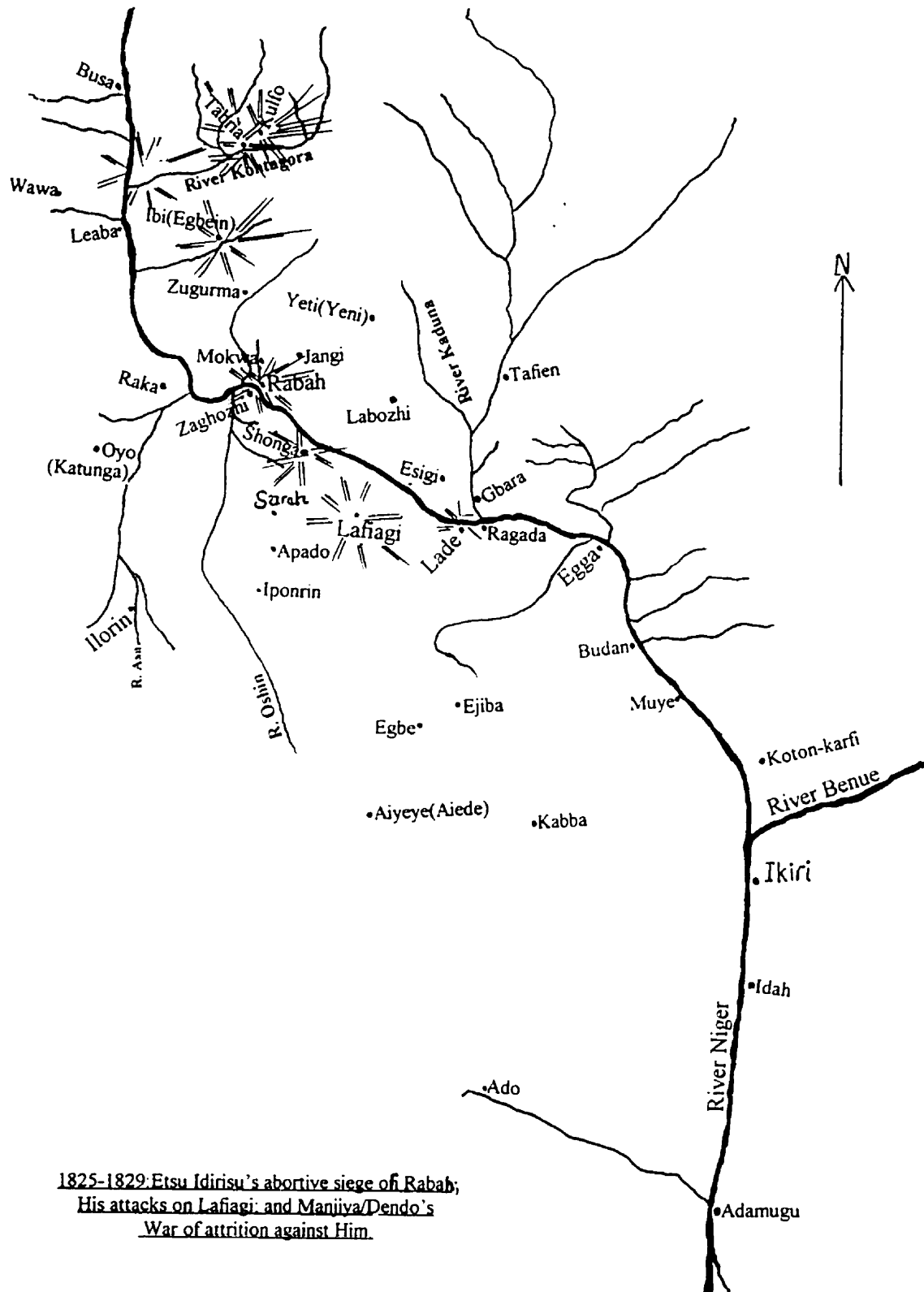
³⁴ Lander, *Records*, vol. I, p. 179.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³⁷ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 106.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 171.



1825-1829: Etsu Idirisu's abortive siege of Rabah;
His attacks on Lafiagi; and Manjiya/Dendo's
War of attrition against Him.

were in the paramount position relative to either *Etsu* Manjiya or Idirisu. His supporters no doubt considered Idirisu *Etsu*, but Manjiya was the designated *Etsu* Nupe acknowledged by the Fulani at Rabah. Overall, while Idirisu seems to have been defeated and reduced in power, he was able to maintain a base until 1841 and to remain a threat to both of the other parties.³⁹

The beginning of these wars can be dated to Idirisu's attack on Lafiagi country. Emir Manjuma of Lafiagi was said to have been driven into exile as a result of this war. Aliu who succeeded Manjuma was turbaned emir of Lafiagi around the same time that Usman Zaki was made emir of Bida and probably by the same emissary from Gwandu, i.e., c.1833/4.⁴⁰ Since Manjuma was said to have reigned as emir for nine years before he died, his reign was probably from c.1824/5 to 1833/4.⁴¹ The Ilorin gazetteer records that Manjuma was removed from his throne and sent into exile only three years after becoming emir of Lafiagi. This would date the Lafiagi war to 1827/8.

Another point emerges from this chronology: there was no seven-year period of peace in Nupe between the jihadists' defeat of Manjiya and the outbreak of war between Idirisu and Dendo. The battles waged against Idirisu by Manjiya and Dendo took place sometime before 1827—perhaps in 1826. As calculated for the last phase of the Nupe wars, Dendo and Idirisu emerged out of their Ilorin exile to defeat Manjiya and establish their

³⁹ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, p.39. He was followed during his visit to the *Alburkar* in 1833, by his own 'principal men'. Several communities, the village or town-head of whom he appointed, were said to be subject to him and to be paying him tribute.

⁴⁰ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 33, paras. 15-16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33, para. 14.

respective camps at Rabah and Ekaji in 1823/4. If at all there was a period of peace, it lasted for a maximum of three years.

Fifth Series of Wars: the Masaba Factor in the Nupe Wars.

The fifth phase of the Nupe wars began soon after the death of Mallam Dendo in 1833 and the succession of Usman Zaki as the emir. Usman Zaki appointed Mamodu Gborigi, son of Moma Majigi, i.e., grandson of Dendo, as *Yerima*. Masaba, the seventh son of Mallam Dendo by a Nupe woman, considering himself heir apparent, objected to the move. In the weeklong battle that ensued, he and his supporters were driven out of Rabah.⁴²

He then ended up at Doku across the Niger from where, according to the Bida tradition, 'he began intriguing with Manjiya and Idirisa, saying that his mother was a Nupe woman, and that they must help him drive Usman Zaki out of Nupe.'⁴³ Information in the Gazetteer of Ilorin suggests that this happened very quickly, between the last month of 1833 and the first month of 1834.

Mallam Dendo died on 29 September 1833 and Usman Zaki was turbaned emir in his place within thirty days.⁴⁴ The Lafiagi tradition that Masaba began to quarrel with Usman

⁴² Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 10 para. 19; Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 33, para. 17. Rather than the actual number of days involved, this representation might simply imply its brevity. Nonetheless, when the traditions were collected between 1810-20, a few eyewitnesses to the events of 1834 might still have been alive who could give such specific details. In fact, in 1934 when Nadel conducted his research among the Nupe, a few old people who were his informants had either participated in or witnessed some of the major wars of the late 19th century. Nadel, p. 113. Dupigny does not mention the duration of the war.

⁴³ Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 10, paras. 19 and 20.

⁴⁴ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, p. 33, para. 17.

Zaki only three months after Aliu's installation as emir suggests likely dates of December 1833 and January 1834.⁴⁵

Within six months of settling at Lade, most likely not later than the end of 1834,⁴⁶ Masaba succeeded in rallying the two contending indigenous royal Nupe houses to his support. They formed an alliance to attack Rabah.⁴⁷ A prince of Lafiagi, Abdulkadir, who *Emir Aliu* of Lafiagi had passed over as *Yerima* or heir apparent and who seems to have sought to curry Masaba's favour, joined this alliance.⁴⁸ Abdulkadir's supporters joined Masaba in his assaults on Usman Zaki, the first of which was unsuccessful.⁴⁹ This seems to have taken place sometime in late 1834/35.⁵⁰

This phase ended with the dissolution of the alliance among the trio. With the success of Masaba at Lade and his effective influence over the Lafiagi and Shonga *emirates*, Idirisu evidently became weary of Masaba and, especially, of his growing influence at his own expense and in his territorial area. Therefore a dispute ensued, leading to two military encounters between their rival forces. Peace was restored between the two with the intervention of the emir of Gwandu.⁵¹

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33, para. 17. The authenticity of this piece of information concerning when Masaba was driven out of Rabah into Lafiagi country lies in the historic significance of the event in the subordination of Lafiagi and its emir to a son of Dendo.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 17.

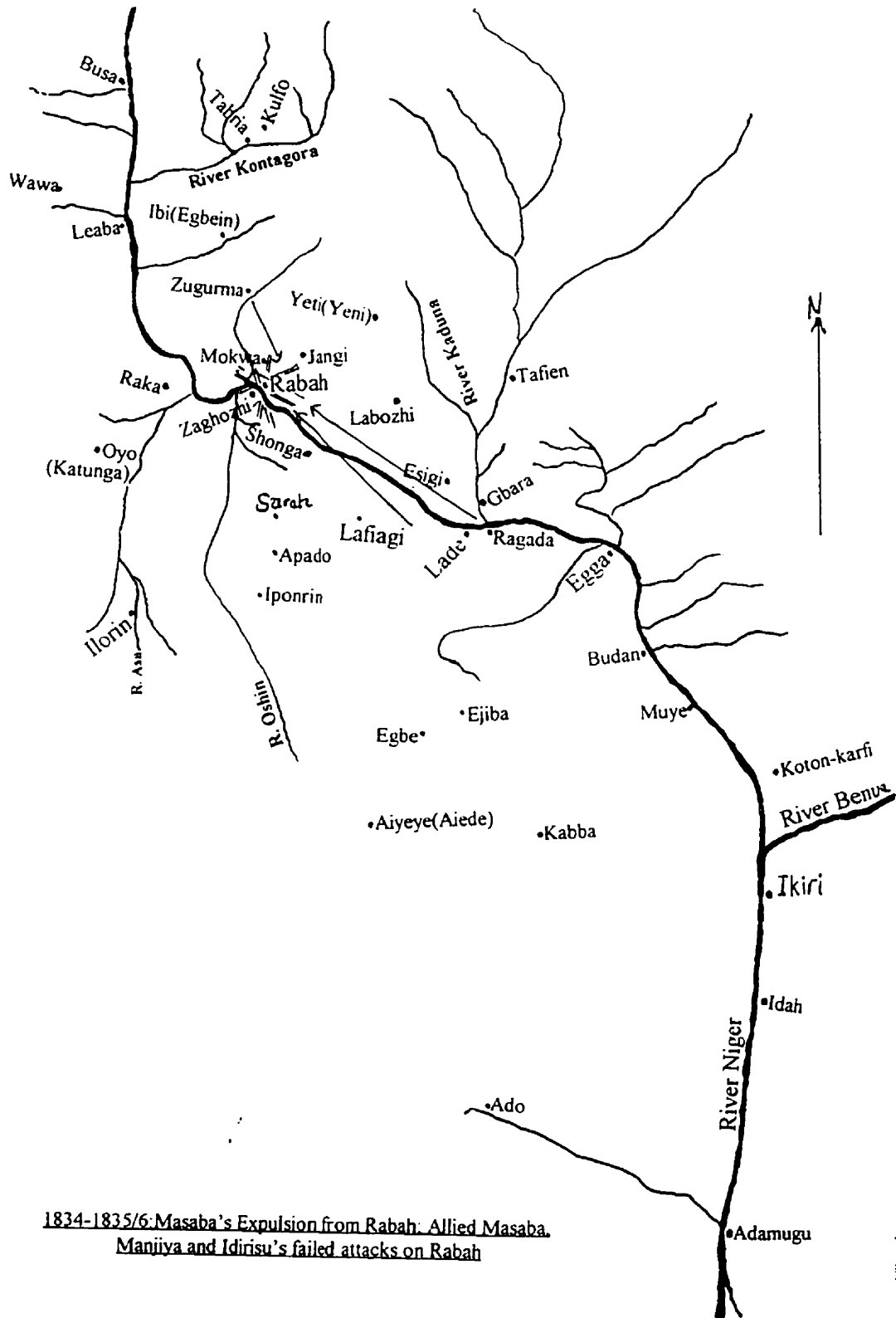
⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 20.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33, paras. 14-18.

⁴⁹ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 10, para. 20; Ibrahim accepts this in his *Nupe and their Neighbours*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Compare with Baikie who states that Masaba was driven out of Rabah about 3 years after Mallam Dendo's death, i.e., about 1836; Baikie, 'Notes', p. 107.

⁵¹ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 11, para. 21.



Gwandu now had to reckon with four powerful poles of political influence in Nupe: Usman Zaki at Rabah, Masaba at Lade, Idirisu at Gbara (Jimunli) and Manjiya at Zugurma.⁵² The last of the battles probably took place in 1835, immediately after the failed attempt to sack Rabah.⁵³ This likelihood suggests itself as it was around the same time, according to the Lafiagi tradition, that the emir of Gwandu was said, to have removed Aliu from the Lafiagi throne, and according to the Bida tradition to have worked out a peace for the entire Nupe country.⁵⁴

Sixth Series of Wars: Tsado, Masaba and the Sack of Rabah.

The sixth phase involved the ultimate success of the triumvirate group of Masaba, Idirisu and Manjiya in their renewed alliance against Usman Zaki. During their visit to Egga in October 1841, the commissioners of the British Niger expedition learnt that the triumvirate was preparing to assault Rabah the following month in a renewed bid to drive out Usman Zaki.⁵⁵ The traditions recorded by the Ilorin and Nupe Gazetteers do not mention the roles of Manjiya and Idirisu in the final expulsion of Usman Zaki from Rabah. Rather, *Etsu Tsado*, who succeeded Manjiya, is mentioned as the principal partner of Masaba.⁵⁶ Frobenius

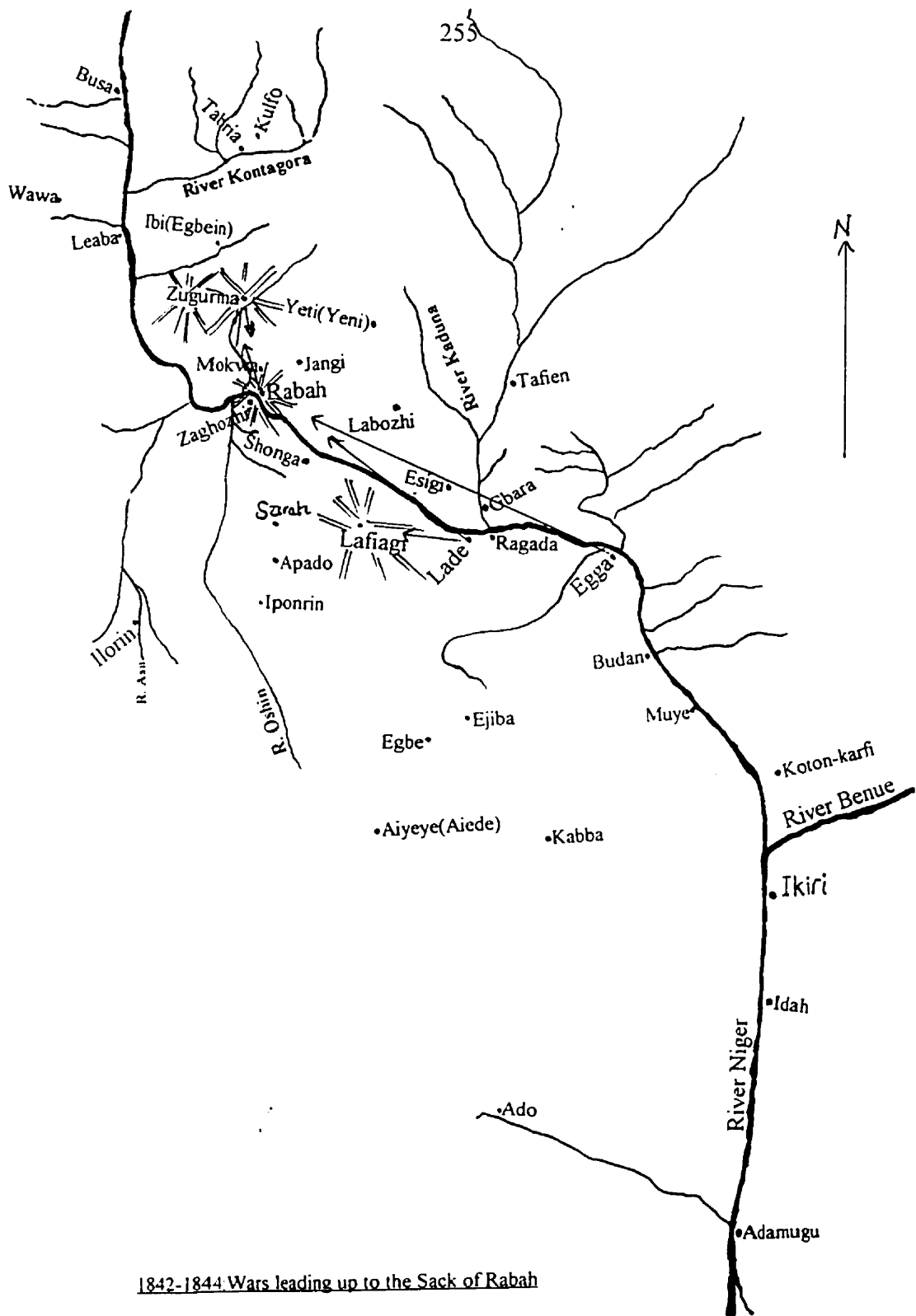
⁵² *Ibid.*, para. 22.

⁵³ See Baikie's slightly different date to the effect that 'Masaba was driven From Rabba about three years after Mallam Dendo's death or about 1836'. Baikie, 'Notes', p. 107, para. 8.

⁵⁴ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, para. 22; Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 33, para. 18.

⁵⁵ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, p. 107. It is not clear whether they did eventually carry it out that year or delayed until 1842.

⁵⁶ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 34, paras. 19 and 20; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 11, para. 23.



attributed the entire course of the war to Tsado.⁵⁷ The most plausible explanation for this paradox might be that these rival *Etsus* died before the commencement of the attack on Rabah. Frobenius included a statement to the effect that Manjiya died a natural death at Zugurma after fruitless attempts by Usman Zaki to poison him.⁵⁸ The possible death of the two *Etsus* during the preparation for the rebellion would account for Allen and Thomson's mention of them in connection with the preparations for the war and their apparent absence in the execution and success of the rebellion.⁵⁹

The Ilorin Gazetteer suggests that the indignation and exasperation of the Nupe with Usman Zaki and his eventual ousting from Rabah began with the death of Manjiya and the succession of his son Tsado as *Etsu*. Usman Zaki, hitherto known only as the *Sarkin Fulani* (King of the Fulanis) 'sent for Tsado and informed him that now he (Usman Zaki) was chief of all the Nupe country, and that there was no longer an *Etsu* Nupe and he took Sado's *kakaki* [royal trumpet] and insignia of office away from him'.⁶⁰ The version in the Nupe Gazetteer indicates that Tsado refused to surrender the royal insignia and the title of *Etsu* and interpreted the demand as a declaration of war.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, pp. 582-585.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 582.

⁵⁹ Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, also give crystal clear indication that these two Tsoede ruling house contenders were then alive, though superseded by Usman Zaki; pp. 160-162.

⁶⁰ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 34, para. 19.

⁶¹ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 11, paras. 23-24.

Thus began a new series of wars. The Bida tradition and the Frobenius record each mentions three encounters between Tsado's forces and Zaki's forces in which the latter was worsted.⁶² Each tradition agrees that Yeni and Rabah were important venues in the war against Usman Zaki. But they each record two different additional venues for Tsado's victories. Most importantly, all the traditions agree that the Nupe forces under Tsado, supported by Masaba, besieged Rabah for a full year, starving many of the soldiers to death. Rabah was eventually razed and Usman Zaki fled to Agaie.⁶³

In 1854, Dr. Baikie dated the sack of Rabah to 'about 1845 or 1846.'⁶⁴ Usman Zaki was quoted in 1857 as saying that he had been absent from Nupe for 11 years i.e., since 1846.⁶⁵ According to information gathered by Glover, Umar Bahaushé ruled Nupe for three years. Working backwards and deducting the additional year of war that led to Umar's defeat, those events occurred in 1853-1856. Masaba reigned seven years from 1846 to 1853 before the outbreak of his quarrel with Umar Bahaushé and his defeat and exile to Ilorin.⁶⁶ Frobenius also calculated the destruction of Rabah to have taken place in 1847.⁶⁷ However, the equally first-hand information recorded by Allen and Thomson implies it took place in 1841. Nadel

⁶² Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, pp. 583-4; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 11, para. 26.

⁶³ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, p. 584; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 11 para. 26-7; Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 34, para. 20; Crowther, *The Gospel on the Banks of the Niger*, pp. 192-3.

⁶⁴ Baikie, *Narrative*, p. 270.

⁶⁵ Hastings, *Voyage of the Dayspring*, p. 102.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁶⁷ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, p. 585.

accepted the latter date of 1841.⁶⁸ The difference between the former range of dates (1845-7) and 1841 is not slight and requires an explanation.

Allen and Thomson received the intelligence in October of 1841 of the attack planned for November on Rabah to be carried out by allied forces of 'Masaba, Edirisa, Magia and the Rogang of Egga.' Nadel's conclusion might also have been based on Allen and Thomson's record to the effect that '[t]he coalition which Dr. McWilliam heard was meditated had been successfully planned and executed. The branch of the Filatah bandits that had their stronghold at Rabah has been humbled.'⁶⁹ But Webster, on whose note this portion of Allen and Thomson's report was based went on to record a further impression. He observed that 'the snake was only 'scotched,' and probably ere this they have, with the assistance of their lawless compatriots at Sakatuh, taken fearful vengeance on the less warlike Nufi people...'⁷⁰ Thus, the November 1841 attack was only temporarily successful. It must be the first set of attacks that the triumvirate launched but was said in the tradition to have been repulsed. If Rabah was sacked in 1841/42, it was only temporary.

This was the time when *Emir* Abdulkadir of Lafiagi was driven out of his capital to Ilorin. Abdulkadir had refused to support Masaba and probably actively assisted Usman Zaki. His exile to Ilorin must therefore, have occurred shortly before or immediately after the

⁶⁸ Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 80. The Elphinstone also cites 1841-2 for this incidence; so also Ibrahim, *Nupe and their Neighbours*, p. 39.

⁶⁹ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, p.429.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

fall of Rabah. This is suggested by the reason given in the tradition for which Masaba drove the former out: ‘Abdulkadir had remonstrated with Masaba saying it was not a good thing that he (Masaba) should allow men of the same race and religion to die of starvation.’⁷¹ Tradition recorded in the Ilorin Gazetteer claims that the antagonism between the two began in the seventh year of Abdulkadir’s reign as emir of Lafiagi. Aliu, his predecessor, was Emir of Lafiagi for one year before being removed and sent back to Shonga. This event took place sometime late 1834 or early 1835. Hence, the disagreement between Abdulkadir and Masaba began around 1841/42 and in 1842-3 Masaba drove Abdulkadir into exile. These dates correspond with Elphinstone’s calculation of 1843-44.⁷²

The Nupe invasion of Lafiagi and Shonga country was concomitant with the siege of Rabah. The two capital towns, Lafiagi and Shonga, were sacked, the *Yerima* Momoh Nuhu of Shonga killed, and *emir* Aliu fled to an obscure Lafiagi village.⁷³ From all indication, these Nupe invaders were Isa or Tsado’s men or their supporters south of the Niger. Tradition reports that Masaba then became supreme in Lade country.⁷⁴ The popular and charismatic *Etsu* Tsado died shortly after the sack of Rabah. Jia who succeeded could not match Masaba’s influence and sagacity and, this left Masaba in an unassailable position.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 34, para. 20.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

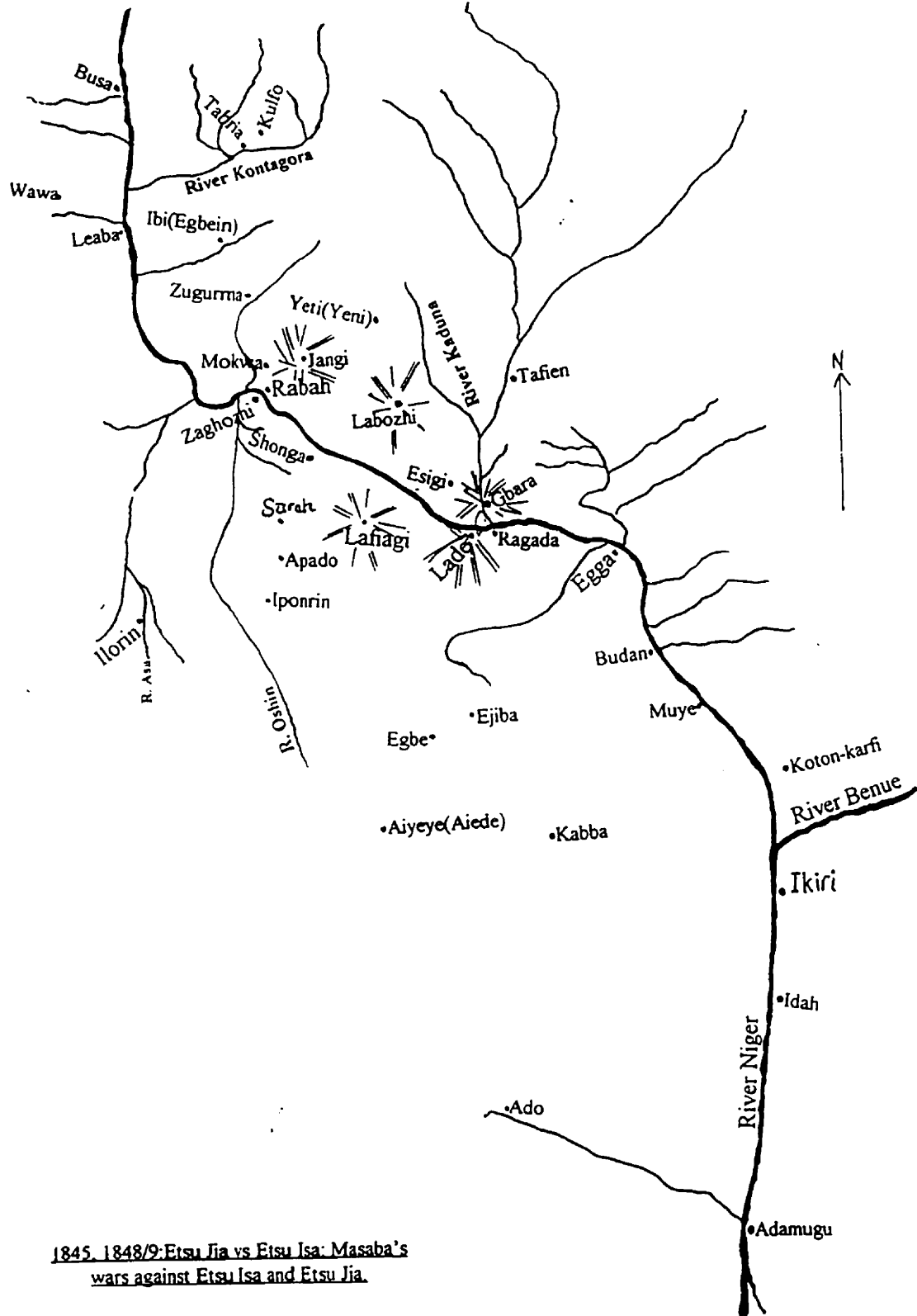
Seventh Series of Wars: Masaba against the Two Etsu Nupe.

The seventh phase of military activities in Nupe started with Masaba trying to consolidate his position and eliminate the two Edegi royal houses. The bitter struggle for pre-eminence seemed quickly to have resurfaced among the contestants. This seems to be within a few years of Masaba's establishment at Lade i.e., c.1844/5. The post-Rabah period saw Masaba implementing his plan to eliminate his two rivals, *Etsu* Isa and Jia. He played them off against each other and at different times supported each against the other. By intrigue and deft diplomacy, he soon got the two rivals at loggerheads with each other. Thus, after a brief period of rest, 'civil war began again in Nupe.'⁷⁶ Masaba succeeded in persuading the visiting Emir of Gwandu of the need to subdue *Etsu* Jia and, on an appropriate pretext, the forces of the *Surkin* Gwandu Halilu. Masaba and *Etsu* Isa attacked and defeated Jia at Lemfa (near Gbara.) The latter fled to Yeni where he died c.1852 and was succeeded by Maza.⁷⁷ With Jia subdued, at least temporarily, Masaba directed his attention at subduing *Etsu* Isa, and again fortune was on his side.

⁷⁶ Frobenius, Voice of Africa, p. 586.

⁷⁶ Elphinstone, Ilorin Province, paras. 30 and 31. Jia's defeat can be dated to 1849. The quarrel that led to the fight and the defeat definitely happened just before the fight. This could be seen from the fact that Emir Halilu's visit was already being awaited before Jia went to Gbara to ask for the Masaba's flag, the action that caused the fight between the two Nupe *Etsus*. We suggest a date of 1847/8.

⁷⁷ Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 13, para 32: *Etsu* Jia died at Yeni three years after Mallam Halilu, the *Emir* of Gwandu, Masaba and *Etsu* Isa fought against him and defeated him. He died about 1852, since his son *Etsu* Maza ruled 'for three years' until he was killed by Umar and Tsado Tzuru sometimes 1855. This, therefore, suggests the year 1849 for Jia's defeat.



Etsu Isa died and the succession to *Etsuship* by his son Maazu Isa was disputed by Liasu, Nakworiji of Gbara. Supported by a military contingent from Masaba, *Etsu* Maazu was defeated and fled to Labozhi.⁷⁸ This must have been about 1848/9. The suggestion is based on the timing of the second exile of Abdulkadir, the Emir of Lafiagi, to Ilorin. Abdulkadir again refused to support Masaba against *Etsu* Maazu Issa, causing Masaba to move his forces towards Lafiagi. Emir Abdulkadir fled, and Emir Aliu of Shonga was recalled to replace him. Aliu reigned again at Lafiagi for some six years until Umar, Masaba's general, rebelled in 1854. Umar's forces crossed the Niger, removing both Masaba and Aliu, his protege at Shonga. Hence, Aliu's second reign was from 1848/49 to 1854. Abdulkadir's second exile was, therefore in 1848/49, and the war he would not support and which caused his exile can likewise be dated to 1848/49.

Eighth Series of Wars: Usurpation of the Nupe throne by General Umar.

From around 1852/3, the theater of war shifted further north to Labozhi and the eighth phase of war began. *Maiyaki* Umar, on Masaba's orders, besieged Maazu Isa for five months at the stronghold of Labozhi to which the latter had earlier escaped. According to Baikie, it was in this war that 'all the old Nupe insignia of royalty were burned.'⁷⁹ In an intriguing move, the rival Edegi royal house led by *Etsu* Maza, son of Manjiya and successor

⁷⁸ Dupigny, Nupe Province, p 13, para. 33; Elphinstone's compilation seems to have confused issues here: p. 35, para. 23. While Dupigny states that Nakworiji contested and usurped *Etsuship* from Maazu Isa the son of late *Etsu* Isa, Elphinstone rather states that the contest was against *Etsu* Isa himself. As the 'brother' of *Etsu* Isa, an 'uncle versus cousin' problem seems more plausible. With his brother *Etsu* Isa's death, Liasu the uncle clearly sought to deny the younger cousin the right to succeed to the throne.

to *Etsu Jia*, sent to assist *Etsu Isa* and to conduct him safely to *Yeni*, the former's capital town. Alarmed by this dangerous alliance, *Masaba* promptly mobilized his forces and instructed *Maiyaki Umar* to renew the fight against the two *Etsus*. But *Umar*, according to tradition, refused to carry out the order, and this marked the beginning of *Umar's* rebellion⁸⁰.

The Labozhi wars can be dated to very late 1852 or early 1853.⁸¹ *Etsu Jia*, who was succeeded by his cousin *Maza*, reigned for three years before his death around 1852. This means that *Maza* reigned between 1852-55. His alliance with *Etsu Isa*⁸² in the Labozhi war in which *Umar*, as *Masaba's* general, moved against *Isa* would also fall within these dates. The time can further be narrowed down to a period that excludes *Umar's* rebellion against *Masaba*, as well as the last eight months of his war against *Masaba*.

Umar, the rebel-general, was said to have set up his camp at *Marabagi*, where 'the *Nupes* flocked to him for protection against *Masaba*.'⁸³ The next move by *Umar* was to offer his services to *Etsu Maza*. As a result, the tradition in *Nupe Gazetteer* records that 'the *Fillani* hearing of *Umar's* new departure left *Masaba* and joined *Etsu Maza*.'⁸⁴ He was said

⁸⁰ Baikie, 'Notes', p. 106, para. 8.

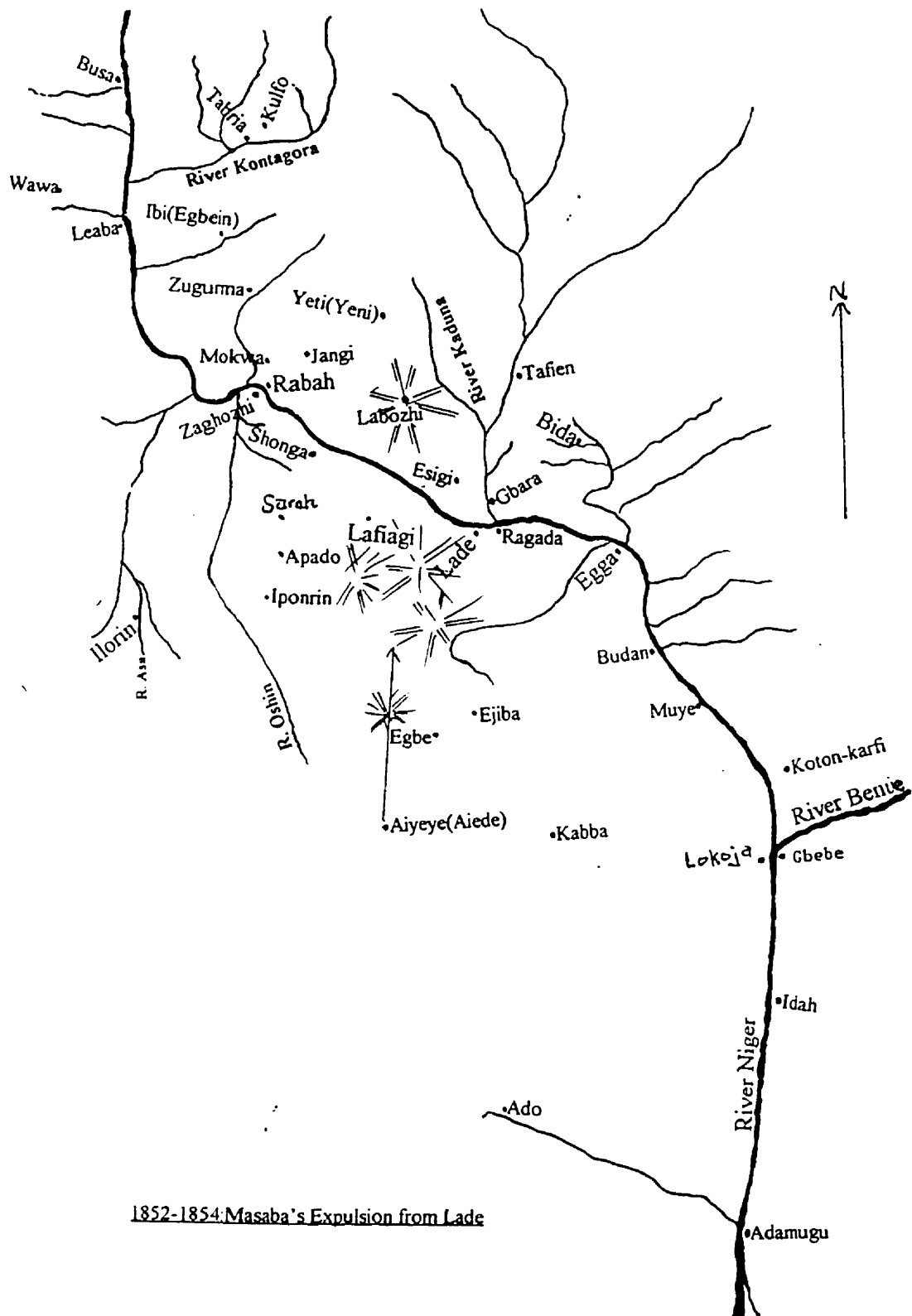
⁸¹ Mason also suggested that 'it was in connection with this campaign that a major disagreement developed between *Masaba* and his military staff.' The result was *Umar's* rebellion; *Foundation*, p. 39.

⁸² Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 13, para. 33.

⁸³ After Baikie had recorded *Masaba's* 1854 ouster in his diary, he went on to note that 'A young *Nupe*, who was on board, who was lately from *Lade*, spoke of *Issa* as present King of *Nupe* [which] meaning could not be well ascertained.' Since *Umar's* refusal to fight against the united forces of *Etsus Jia* and *Isa* (*Maazu*) began the process of *Masaba's* defeat, it is likely that none other than *Etsu Maazu Isa* was meant by this young *Nupe*. Baikie, *Narrative*, p. 285.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13, para. 33.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, para 34.



to have become 'very popular.'⁸⁵ According to the Ilorin Gazetteer, the *Yerima* Usumanu, heir-apparent to the throne of Lafiagi, who bore a grudge against Masaba, joined Umar's forces.⁸⁶ From Ilorin, Abdulkadri, the exiled emir of Lafiagi also seemed to have actively supported Masaba's removal.⁸⁷ This was sometime in late 1853/early 1854.

In late 1853, the allies crossed the Niger and sacked Lade. Masaba seems to have retreated fighting. Meri is mentioned in the Nupe Gazetteer as the first place to which he withdrew. He then retreated to Lalagi, where in another battle Masaba's forces were routed and Lalagi destroyed. He then went 'towards the Yagba country' managing to kill *Yerima* Usumanu of Lafiagi who was in pursuit.⁸⁸ Collecting an army 'from among the Yagbas, Aiyedis and Ibadans', Masaba attempted to regain his lost power at Lade. The opposing armies fought for six months at Lalagi. Masaba was defeated and had to flee to Isanlu in Yagba country from where forces sent by the Ilorin Emir, Shita, 'captured' him and took him to Ilorin.⁸⁹ The definite date for this signal defeat of Masaba and his exile to Ilorin was the early part of 1854 as reported by Baikie.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13, para. 34.

⁸⁶ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 35, paras. 24-7.

⁸⁷ NAK Ilorprof 6593 Lafiagi Historical and Assessment. 'Historical Notes - Lafiagi' para. 6 - Asst. Resident Ilorin. T. A. G. Budgen. [10th Oct. 1913.]

⁸⁸ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 35, para. 26.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6 para. 29.

⁹⁰ Baikie, *Narrative*, p. 271; T. J., Bowen, who visited Ilorin in 1855 wrote in his journal that Masaba was driven from his throne in the year 1852 in the revolt by the citizens of his capital, 'Ilade'. *Adventures and Missionary Labours in several Countries in the Interior of Africa From 1849 to 1856*. London, 1968, p. 197. Bowen's information can at best only be taken to be a reference, unclarified by whoever provided him with it, to the beginning of the rebellion against Masaba. Both Baikie and Crowther in their 1854 exploration diaries provide incontrovertible evidence that the final date that Masaba was driven out of Lade was 1854. Crowther actually linked the abundance of slaves on sale along the upper Niger river route to this war. He also

This did not end the conflicts, for Baikie went on to note that

since that time [August 1854] another change had taken place, and Dasaba, assisted by Moslemin from Ibadan and Ilorin, had effected a bloodless revolution, having, by dint of promises of better behavior for the future, induced his subjects again to receive him.⁹¹

With his new allies, Masaba seems to have been able to re-impose himself on Lade. The *Bale* of Ibadan in 1855 confirmed Crowther's observation of late 1854, that about a thousand Ibadan soldiers were assisting Masaba around Lade.⁹²

The tradition in the Ilorin Gazetteer records the attack by Masaba's son, Momadu, on Lafiagi, in sympathy with his father. This war reportedly lasted six months before the *Emir* of Ilorin was able to negotiate a truce.⁹³

Sometime during the war against Masaba, Umar wooed Yusufu Tsado Zuru, a grandson of Mallam Dendo and nephew to Masaba, into his camp at Ezhigi. Umar made him the shadow *Emir* of Nupe⁹⁴ until he considered the situation right to remove him. Perhaps this accounts for the intelligence Crowther received that '...Dasaba was driven out of Lade by his brother near Rabah, because the Nufi people preferred him to Dasaba, the latter being too tyrannical for them. Dasaba has fled to Ilorin for refuge.'⁹⁵ The reference in this

saw Yoruba soldiers from Ibadan who were contracted out to fight for Masaba around Lade area. See Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, pp. 38, 42 and, p. xx: Preface: 'extract From the journal of the Rev. Samuel Crowther, Jan. 1855'. Bowen's date thus might indicate the time when the rebellion against him at Lade came into the open. His informant must have conflated the beginning of the rebellion with the date of its success.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

⁹² See Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, 'Preface', p. xx: 'extract from the journal of the Rev. Samuel Crowther, Jan. 1855'

⁹³ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, pp. 35, 36; paras. 28, 29.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35, para. 28.

⁹⁵ Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. 38; see page 42 for a second reference to 'war between Dasaba and his brother.'

information to Masaba's brother must have been to Tsado Zuru.⁹⁶ On the other hand it might substantiate the Frobenius tradition that, Abiba, Usman Zaki's sister who did not go into exile, sent for Umoru Majigi from Gwandu. Umoru was said to have arrived with a military contingent and, putting up as a supporter of Umar, bided his time until he was able to foment disaffection against Umar and eventually to rouse the Nupes against him.⁹⁷ Umoru, thus, could also have been interpreted to be Masaba's brother. Umar's supremacy lasted only three years.

Ninth Series of Wars: Jihadists' Recapture of Nupe

The last phase of the wars to be considered resulted in the defeat of Umar, Usman Zaki's recall from exile and a guarded reconciliation between him and Masaba.⁹⁸ The death of *Etsu* Maza seemed to have divided the Nupes of Manjiya's house into two camps. With Maza out of the way and Yusufu Tsado Dzuru relegated to the sidelines, Umar declared himself *Emir* of Nupe.⁹⁹ The Nupe supporters of the late Maza had retreated into Borgu country from 'where they rallied.' They seemed to have decided that it was necessary to break with tradition if they would be able to create an effective leadership that would be capable of challenging Umar and rout all immigrant usurpers of the Tsoede throne. Thus,

⁹⁶The words brother or sister in most part of Nigeria encompass many types of close relations, including cousins and nephews.

⁹⁷ Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, pp. 589-90.

⁹⁸ Hastings, *Voyage of the Dayspring*, p. 93. Hastings's submission is most appropriate; viz. 'But, in the days when the expedition visited Bida, the political situation was strained, and I know well how Usman Zaki and Masaba must have been watching each other like cats, on the *qui vive* to get a chance of useful intrigue.'

⁹⁹ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 36 para. 30.

instead of raising up another scion of the Manjiya royal line, they 'elected one Baba, a son of Sachi, as their *Etsu*.'¹⁰⁰ This man belonged to a separate branch of Manjiya's family.¹⁰¹ A close reading of the evidence indicates that some of the Nupe did not retreat with the rest to Borgu country. This group either did not accept the choice of Baba or did not want to remain rudderless: they elected to have Zurigi, alias Jia, the son of *Etsu* Tsado and grandson of Manjiya, as *Etsu*.¹⁰²

The latter group was said to have invited Umoru Majigi, son of Moma Majigi, the eldest son of Mallam Dendo, to their war camp as leader against the Umar.¹⁰³ He agreed to lead the Nupe force against Umar. Accordingly, at their head,¹⁰⁴ he defeated Umar in thier first encounter at Egbe or Egbien near Zugurma.¹⁰⁵ Umar was said to have withdrawn to Womba, in Dakakeri country, from where the *Sarkin* Womba assisted him with what seems to have been a formidable mercenary army. He then 'returned and defeated Umoru Majigi and the Nupes at Tatun [close to Dabba], and following up on this victory, defeated them a

¹⁰⁰ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 13, para 36.

¹⁰¹ Baikie, 'Notes,' p. 107 para. 8.

¹⁰² Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 36, para. 31; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 13, para. 36.

¹⁰³ NAK SNP 1431/1922. Assessment Report, Zugurma District; Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 36, para. 31; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 14, para. 37.

¹⁰⁴ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 14, para. 37. While he accepted to lead the Nupe army, Umoru rejected the offer of *Sarkin* Nupe.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

second time at Eduki Luko [Edogi].'¹⁰⁶ The Ilorin Gazetteer has a third name, Sakpi, for its second scene of battle; Edogi was considered to have been a temporary place of retreat.¹⁰⁷

From Ezhigi, which seemed to have been his capital since he ousted Masaba, Umar prepared for the last time to fight Umoru Majigi who had encamped at a village near Bida. He took Umoru's fort and forced him to retreat inside the walls of Bida. Umoru Majigi fortified the walls and held off Umar for three months until reinforcements arrived from Gwandu and Ilorin.¹⁰⁸ With the reinforcements, Umoru was able to put a quick end to the war by an unexpected night attack on Umar.¹⁰⁹

It can be surmised that the wars in the last phase took place between the early part of 1856 and July 1857. In September 1857, Glover and Crowther visited the Bida war-camp soon after Usman Zaki and Masaba had defeated Umar Bahause. It is clear from Glover's account that this victory was accomplished sometime in July of the same year.¹¹⁰ Umar's three month-siege of Bida took place during the months of April/May to July.¹¹¹ This siege had begun before 'a messenger of Aliu dan Bello, who was at that time Sarikin Musulmi, and

¹⁰⁶ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 36, para. 31; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 14, para. 39. Names in braces are from the Dupigny compilation.

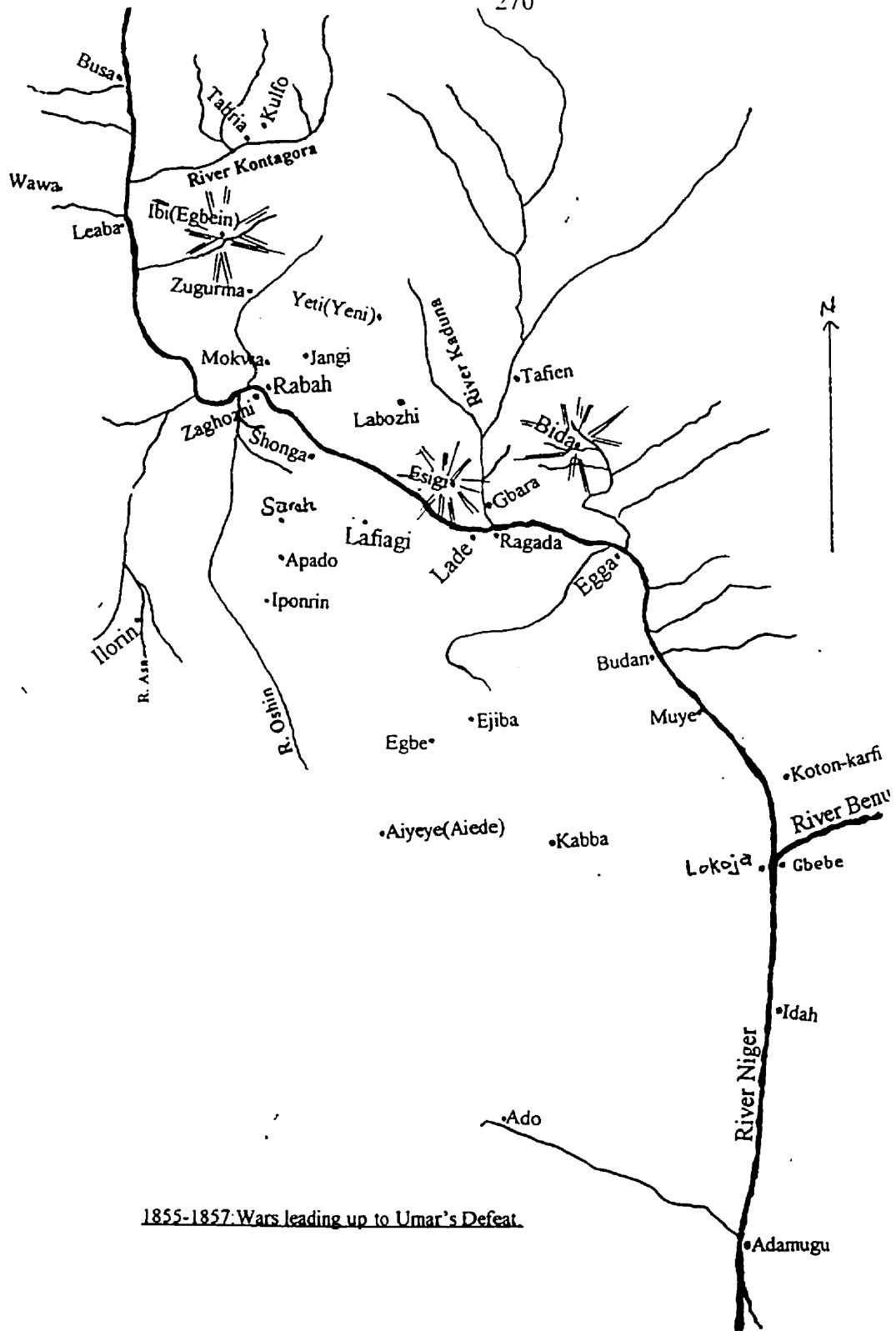
¹⁰⁷ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 14, para. 39.

¹⁰⁸ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 36, paras. 32-34; Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 14, paras. 40-41. See also Ibrahim, *Nupe and their Neighbours*, p. 17; and Hastings, *Voyage of the Dayspring*, p. 90.

¹⁰⁹ Mason feels that the reinforcements tarried and that it contributed nothing to the defeat other than that their reputed coming boosted the morale of Umoru's. *Foundation*, pp. 71-2.

¹¹⁰ Hastings, *Voyage of the Dayspring*, p. 90.

¹¹¹ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 14, para. 41.



the Waziri dan Adama of Gando, arrived at Bida with Usuman Zaiki.¹¹² From Ilorin, Masaba also headed northward, sending his soldiers ahead of him to assist Umoru Majigi.¹¹³ This rendezvous must be what Glover had in mind in his letter where he stated that 'a few months ago, peace being made between the two half-brothers, Othman Zarki came back from Sakoto, and joining his forces with those of Dansaba he attempted to drive Almoza from the land.'¹¹⁴ The two or three campaigns of Umar against Umoru Majigi-led Nupe forces in which the latter were defeated must have taken place in the second half of 1856. When *Etsu* Maza who succeeded Jia was killed by Umar, he was said to have 'been *Etsu* for three years.' Jia had died in 1852.¹¹⁵ This dates Maza's death to c.1855.¹¹⁶ It was after this year and after Umar and Tsado Zuru killed *Etsu* Maza that the Nupe retreated to Borgu. It was also the date when Zurigi, alias Jia, was elected by the Nupes who did not go into exile. Zurigi, it seems, was the center of resurgent Nupe mobilization against Umar and it was into his camp that Umoru Majigi was invited lead them against Umar. It can thus be deduced that Umoru Majigi arrived at the Nupe camp sometime in early 1855. The outcome of the series of battles between 1855 and mid 1857 was the routing of Umar's army and his capture and death. The conclusion of this series of wars unified Nupe into the hands of the jihadist for the first time in about half a century.

¹¹² Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 36, para. 32.

¹¹³ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p. 14, para. 41.

¹¹⁴ Hastings, *Voyage of the Dayspring*, p. 90. Almoza is no doubt a reference to the war-general Umar.

¹¹⁵ See the determination of this date in phase six.

¹¹⁶ Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 36, para. 30.

APPENDIX 2.

EXTERNAL MILITARY ACTIVITIES OF THE NUPE, 1830-1854

A catalogue of the major wars between the various factions within Nupe does not exhaust the military disturbances that pervaded the region in the 19th century. Both oral and written records detail cases of military violence carried out against communities on the immediate periphery of Nupe. These military activities were different from the wars within Nupe in several respects. They were organized by some of the factions within Nupe that were contending for the leadership of the state, but directed toward weaker societies outside of the Nupe border. In origin, they had no links with the Nupe succession dispute or with the jihadist ideological movement. But they raids had structural links with the ongoing wars for Nupe throne. The raids were launched to generate resources with which to effectively prosecute the internal Nupe wars.

A RECORD OF RAIDS1831-34

Direct evidence concerning military raids directed southeastward from Rabah began with the Laird and Oldfield expedition in 1833/4. For most of the time, the trading expedition was stationed at Idah. The expedition proceeded as far as Rabah on the Niger and as far as Yimaha on the Benue. They engaged in extensive trading transactions, hence, they entered

into direct communication with many people. They were eyewitnesses to some military situations and had firsthand information about others that had taken place before their arrival.

While Laird was at Koton Karfi, he was informed that in a few days 'the Felatahs' were to attack 'the western or Kacundah side of the river.'¹ This intelligence alone plunged the entire western bank into a panic. Laird reported that these terror-stricken people started 'flying in dismay [to the] opposite bank, which for many miles was covered with their barracoons, or temporary huts hastily erected of mats.' He reported that,

Great numbers encamped close to us, particularly your Addah Kuddah [Odokodo] friends, who had, at the first intimation of the approach of their dreaded enemies, conveyed all their little property in canoes to the eastern bank, putting the river between them and the Felatahs, who being destitute of boats could not follow them.²

The attackers captured many members of the communities. Laird reported 'the shrieks of the unfortunate wretches that had not escaped, answered by the loud wailings and lamentations of their friends and relations ... at seeing them carried off into slavery and their habitations destroyed.' Laird was moved; the situation 'produced a scene which...had seldom, if ever, before been witnessed by European eyes, and showed to [him] in a more striking light than [he] had hitherto beheld it, the horrors attendant upon slavery.'³ On visiting the towns a few days later, Laird and his colleagues 'found them deserted; the roofs

¹Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, p. 246.

²Ibid., p. 247.

³Ibid., pp. 247-248.

of all the houses ... burnt and the clay walls only standing.'⁴ In very graphic language, Laird noted that 'a column of smoke, rising in the air about five miles above the confluence, marked [the] advance [of the invaders], and in two days afterwards the whole towns, including Addah Kuddah and five or six others, were in a blaze.'⁵

Nor was this the first time the 'Felatahs' raided these communities. Oldfield and Lander on their way to Koton Karfi, arrived 'at Adassah, a small town, about five miles from Cuttum-Curaffee, and the nearest point on the river.' Coming across a wrecked bridge, they were informed 'that it had been destroyed by the Felatahs, ...sacked and burnt ... twelve months before. [i.e., 1831.]'⁶ This town had not recovered, consequently it presented a 'very ruinous appearance' with a population that did 'not exceed five thousand, though, from the extent of its walls, it may have contained four times that number.'⁷

On their way further up the Niger, scenes of destruction met their eyes and similar tales of woe came to their ears. The Kakanda had also been attacked, and their chief informed the visitors that 'fourteen hundred of his subjects were made prisoners, and sold, in the late excursion of the Felatahs.'⁸ Many were busy re-thatching their burnt-down huts while others

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 241-42.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁸*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 23.

had not yet returned from their island refuge on the sandbanks of the river Niger.⁹

In 1829, the primary concerns of the Kakanda were domestic and commercial, and they seem to have been largely unaware of the threat of military incursions from the north.¹⁰ But by 1832, the independent cultural and economic relationship with visiting mallams from Egga and elsewhere up to 1829¹¹ had been come to an end. The Kakanda were now subjected to jihad raids and pecuniary exaction. Budan, the Kakanda capital was reported to have come under frequent attacks.¹²

By 1832,¹³ the Kakanda were paying annual tributes to Rabah of up to 50,000 cowries per major town.¹⁴ The obviously wealthy market town of Gori paid 350,000 cowries a year.¹⁵ Some of the citizens were seized as captives during the raids and sold into

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 21/22

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 213. The chief asked Lander in 1829 for 'charms — to insure a continuance of peace and prosperity to prevent quarrels, abuses, and disturbances in the market-place; to obviate the shedding of human blood therein, which has recently been of frequent occurrence; and to bring to the market a greater number of buyers and sellers. Another charm he wants — for preserving all persons, whilst bathing from the fangs of the crocodiles, which infest the adjoining slough in great numbers, and which, it is said, have lately carried off and destroyed several children.'

¹¹Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 212; see also Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II., p. 82, for their role as surgeons.

¹²Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. I, 379. The reference here is to notes taken by Allen in the Laird and Oldfield's expedition of a decade before.

¹³In 1841, the Kakanda calculated that it was then about ten years since they started paying tribute to the Felatahs. This would be around the time of the visit of Laird and Oldfield in 1832. See, Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, p. 116.

¹⁴*Ibid.* The demand for 100,000 cowries annual tribute to be shared between Rikido and Budan seemed to be a new demand, possibly an increase over previous rates.

¹⁵Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 145.

slavery.¹⁶ The experience was similar up to Egga in Nupe territory. Laird and Oldfield saw towns in 'ruin' or 'partly in ruins' and reported 'several towns and villages ... [still] on fire, the Felatahs having just left their ruinous work.'¹⁷ The islands in the Niger as far upriver as Egga were filled with refugees. 'Several temporary huts were seen, erected on sand-banks opposite the towns.'¹⁸ As Oldfield observed, the 'scene of devastation was visible along the whole extent of this reach.'¹⁹

As of this period, the jihadists at Rabah were not yet split into opposing royal factions. Dendo was still alive, and it seems that his sons, together with other military officers, were building the power base of their government. The soldiers of Rabah passed through the center of Nupe far to the southeast where Idirisu had his staunchest supporters. This is an indication of the scale of their military and political strength after Idirisu had been routed.

The Yagba, Owe and Bunu people subjected attacks of the military bands from Rabah. James Thomas reported in 1859 that a prince Mamudu, Mallam Dendo's son, had waged war against his community, the Bunu, in 1832. Thomas did not clarify the particular

¹⁶ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, pp. 116-8.

¹⁷ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. II, p. 26.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

nature of this campaign.²⁰ But from evidence in subsequent decades, it is most likely that this was an initial raid that subjected them as tributaries of Nupe. The goals of the raid were to take captives, conscript troops and levy tribute. The attack must have been similar to those which Laird and Oldfield reported for the west-bank communities above the Niger-Benue confluence between 1831-1833.

1838-1841

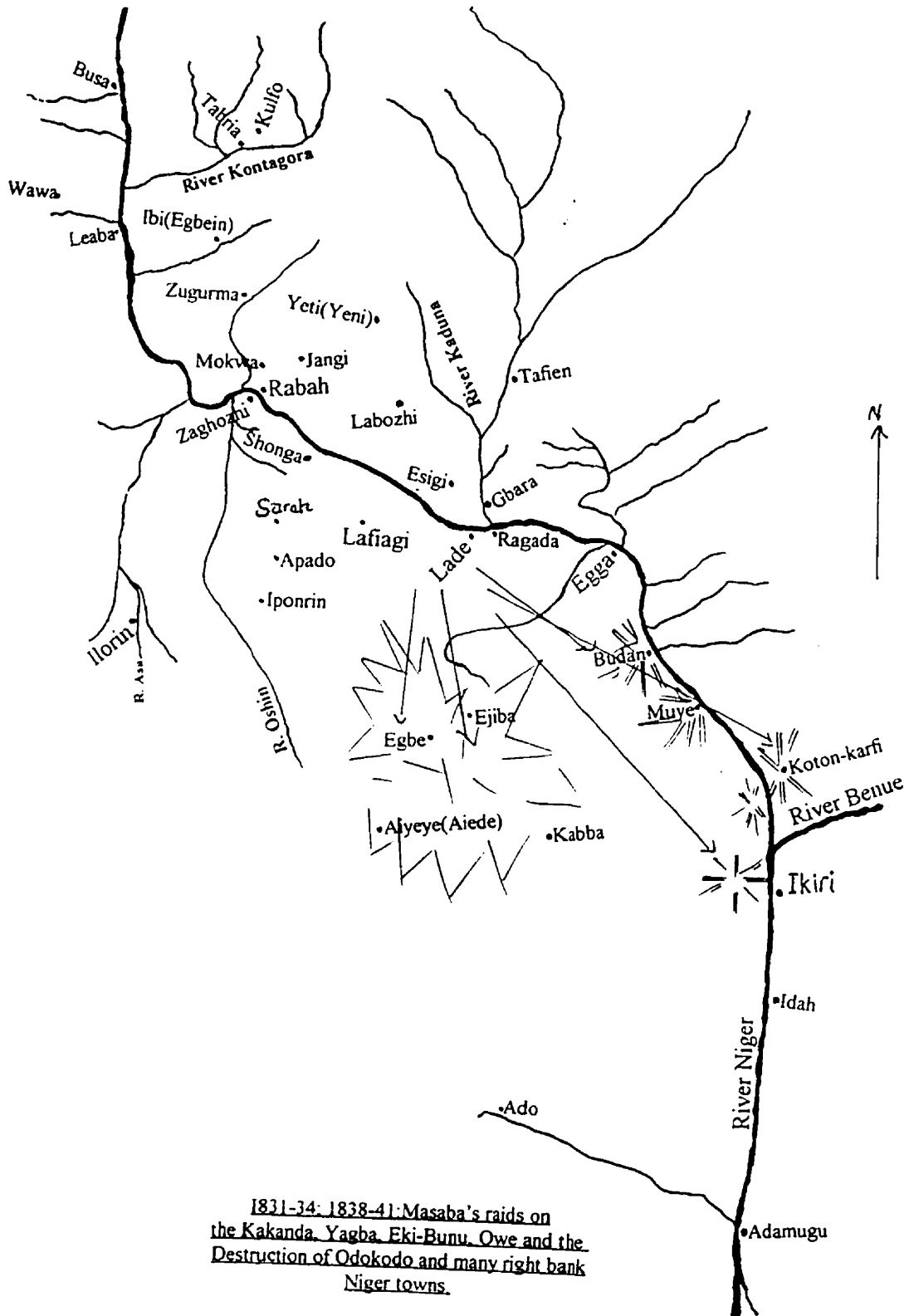
The reports of the 1841 expedition are not different from earlier ones by Laird and Oldfield in 1832-4. Raiders again visited Odokodo and its surroundings in 1838.²¹ This time, the area was left in total ruin. The people had to seek refuge in Idah territory and in Bassa country. Refuge settlements grew up, especially, on the opposite bank of the Niger.²² The Kakanda district was also a perennial target for raiders from Nupe. Allen and Thomson were informed that 'their great enemies, the Filatahs, [kept] them in a continual state of apprehension and uncertainty [because] scarcely a year passes without a predatory visit.' This particular group of 'Filatah' was Masaba's military men.²³

²⁰C.M.S., Niger Mission C A 3\ O 38 James Thomas to Henry Venn, Sept. 2nd 1859; and Mason, 'The Jihad in the South', p. 195.

²¹Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p.368.

²²Ibid., pp. 300, 337, 338.

²³Ibid., pp. 338-340, 368.



The area between Odokodo south of the confluence to Konton Karfi north of it was depopulated. Temporary settlements on the sand-banks of the Niger which were recently occupied as places of refuge from Masaba's raiders were seen by the members of the 1841/2 British anti-slavery expedition.²⁴ Kelebeh had been attacked just before the expedition arrived. During the night, the town was torched, many of the huts destroyed, with 'numbers of the inhabitants made prisoners.'²⁵ Kinami, beyond the Kakanda in the Egga territory had suffered a similar fate, the impact of which was observed in the abject poverty of the inhabitants.²⁶ From what was heard at Budan, the Kakanda capital, it seems that several detachments of the invaders encamped at strategic positions and from there '...constantly [made] predatory excursions to the neighboring villages, from which they generally returned with captives, whom they enslaved.'²⁷ The location of Lade which was north-west on the south side of the Niger beyond Egga, as compared to Odokodo and the Kakanda that were located to the southeast on the west side of the Niger-Benue confluence, far below Egga indicates that the 'Felatah' in question were Masaba's soldiers

The references cited above indicate the frequent and systematic nature of the raids. These raids reflected Masaba's political and economic needs. He was building his political

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 368-9.

²⁵*Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 80.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 90.

base, raiding to undermine the combined influence of both the Nupe Etsus and Usman Zaki at Rabah.²⁸ The notoriety of Masaba's military activities during this time is seen in the perception by the victims that the raids were no more than slave catching expeditions.²⁹ The raids were economically motivated: the booty of slaves, cowries and other articles of value helped to build Lade as a trade mart, especially for slaves, provision his army and facilitate his diplomatic relationship with Gwandu.

It is also noteworthy that Masaba subjected Kinami, a Nupe town, which was recorded by Allen and Thomson to be under Manjiya, to a raid.³⁰ There is no doubt that other towns and villages near Kinami were also victims. These incidents indicate that military attacks were not just against non-Nupe neighbours but also Nupe elements who were subject to either of the Etsus who was in contention with Masaba.

Late 1841

When the 1841 Niger expedition arrived at Egga late in 1841, they learnt that a military campaign had just been successfully prosecuted against the Kabba and Yagba people in September 1841. Schon noted in his journal that

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁸ Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, pp. 12-13, paras. 30-32; Elphinstone, *Ilorin Province*, p. 37, para. 37. A section is devoted to this issue in Chapter Three.

²⁹ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, p. 118.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

Some soldiers returned from the war with the Bunu, a people between Kakanda and Nufi: some were taken captive, and others driven into the bush or to the opposite side of the river. It is said ...that there were sent to Rabba last month, 4000 Bunu and Kakanda slaves, 1000 black cattle, and 1000 measures of cowries, being plunder taken from the countries of these people.³¹

Undoubtedly, this again refers to Masaba's soldiers. Egga was a Chekpan market town with many Kyedye settlers all loyal to Etsu Isa and generally sympathetic to Masaba.³² Rogang, the chief of Egga assisted Masaba's putsch of Usman Zaki.³³ Since Rabah was further north, the movement of the soldiers to Egga was in the area of influence of Masaba.

That many west Niger bank communities were victims of this particular campaign is implied by the reference to those driven 'to the opposite side of the river.' The Bunu lived inland and could have run into the 'bush.' The Kakanda and perhaps some Oworo were those nearer the Niger and, hence, were the most likely to make the river their security. While the figures for the spoils could have been exaggerated, distribution of war booty was regulated by Islamic law, in which case, such round figures as given in this information could be expected.³⁴ Whatever the actual distribution, the extent of such campaigns and their

³¹ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 324. Emphasis added. This observation was made in October.

³² S. F. Nadel, 'The Kede: A Riverain State In Northern Nigeria', M. Fortes, and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, (eds.) African Political Systems, London, 1940, pp. 166, 172.

³³ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p. 107.

³⁴ Last, Sokoto Caliphate p. 106; A. G. B. Fisher, and Humphrey J. Fisher, Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa. The Institution in Saharan and Sudanic Africa and the Trans-Saharan Trade. London, 1970. p.19:

compounded impact on the victim communities were clearly devastating as reflected in the volume and value of booty reportedly acquired by the soldiers.

Indeed, the continuous attacks on the Yagba, Bunu, Owe and Eki people by jihadists from Rabah and Lade³⁵ caused so much insecurity that as late as 1862, people could only travel safely in large armed groups.³⁶ In 1862, at Ifure, one of the women who accompanied James Thomason his journey from Gbebe to the Bunu hinterland came across her sister from whom she had been 'separated for about 35 years', [i.e., since 1828].³⁷ The traveling sister had been captured in war or kidnapped in a raid.³⁸ In the late 1850s, many Eki and Bunu people at Gbebe were refugees who fled from their war-ridden homes. Some were traders and farmers, others were slave traders and some were slaves.³⁹ The presence of an Eki quarter, one of the three principal sections of refugee-filled settlement of Gbebe, was a result of the wars and raids that sent the people fleeing from their towns.⁴⁰ The cases of the enslaved

Mason, *Foundation*, p. 32; Nadel, *Black Byzantium*, p. 112.

³⁵ C.M.S., Niger Mission, C A 3 O 38. James Thomas to Henry Venn, Sept. 2nd 1859; see also Dupigny, *Nupe Province*, p.12 para. 30.

³⁶ James Thomas, 1862 Journal, entry for Dec. 29, para. 29 shows that the two men he hired were soldiers attached to Mr. Meheux who appointed by Emir Masaba on the recommendation of Crowther, to oversee Lokoja as a 'Sub-manager'.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 22. Entry for Jan. 1st. 1863.

³⁸ All mention of Yoruba/Eki communicants in Thomas's journals almost invariably involved slaves or freed slaves.

³⁹ Journals of James Thomas 'From June 25th [1858]-1859' Entries for Sept. 26th and Dec. 4th 1858.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, entries for Sept. 8th 1858 and July 12th; James Thomas to Rev. Henry Venn, Gbebe, September 2nd.

woman mentioned above and James Thomas, himself once kidnapped and sold to Bonny,⁴¹ are testimonies to the wars and raids the Nupe armies inflicted on the Bunu, Yagba, Eki and Owe people in the first half of the 19th century.

The report of a 1973 archaeological excavation of the ruin of the Eki town of Apra (Akpaa) also gives evidence of the crisis of the period. Human skeletons were discovered in one of the trenches dug on a rubbish dump. In his preliminary analysis, Ade Obayemi, who conducted the excavation observed that the rubbish dump

was already serving [its] function as *etutu* or *etitun* (Yoruba: *aatan*) [i.e. rubbish dump] or had served as such when the corpses of the two adults were buried there. For a society which obviously had very elaborate funerary and mortuary rites in honour of the dead including the digging of deep vaults, the provision of grave goods in brass and other materials, and very expensive festivities, etc., [the interment on this rubbish dump] raises serious questions about the burials here.⁴²

As Obayemi suggests, these could indicate that 'the society was passing through very trying time when proper funerary observances could not be observed.'⁴³

Between 1841 and 1857, Budan, Rigido, and other Kakanda towns effectively became a frontier of expansion for the Nupe. During these years, the Rabah army maintained a more

⁴¹James Thomas to Rev. H. Venn, Gbebe, September 2nd 1859.

⁴²A. Obayemi, 'An Archaeological Mission to Akpaa', Confluence: An Academic Journal of the Kwara State Council for Arts and Culture, vol. I, No.1, June 1978, p. 63/4.

⁴³Ibid. Four charcoal samples from the sites were carbon dated to 1665 AD, 1655 AD, 1615 and 1755 AD, all plus or minus 80 years. These charcoals came from either of two periods. They could have derived from the period when the site was built and inhabited before the walls collapsed and the site became a rubbish dump. They might also derive from the period after the building had collapsed and the site was turned into a rubbish dump with household sweepings including the charcoals allowed to pile up. Thus, the skeletons were much more recent than the charcoals and one could hazard a guess as to the possibility that they

or less permanent regiment of armed men, first around Kelebeh and eventually at Budan.⁴⁴ By 1856-7 Budan had a jihadist representative, in addition to Nupe soldiers stationed in the town to 'see after the interest of the Felani.' From here, the soldiers raided other towns and villages from where they exacted tribute in cowries and slaves or ransom in lieu of slaves.⁴⁵ The only brief period of reprieve they enjoyed was between Masaba's dethronement at Lade in 1854 and his return with Usman Zaki in 1857.⁴⁶

1843

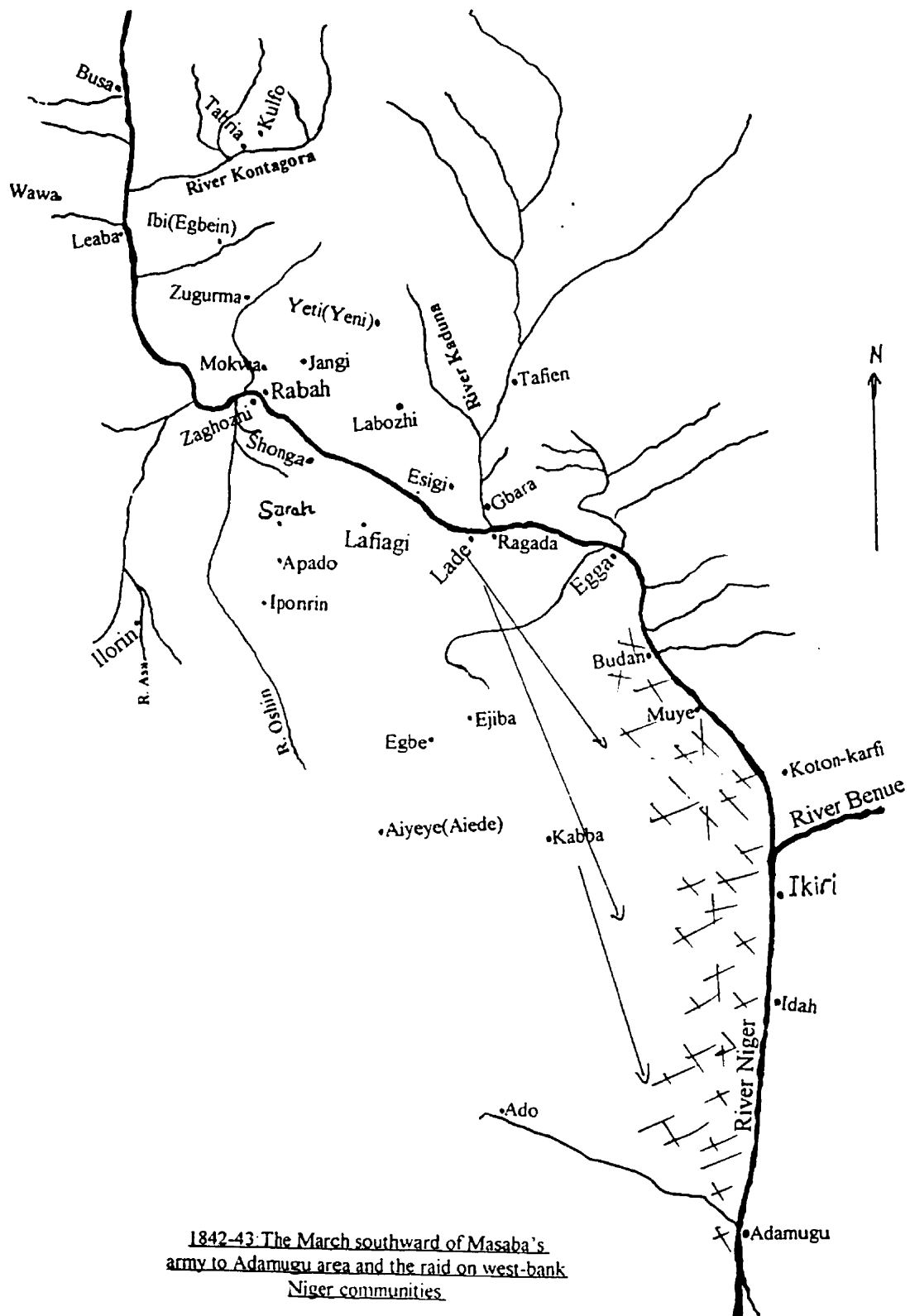
Masaba's forces also embarked on a very daring and ambitious campaign designed to subdue communities in the Niger Delta hindering the smooth flow of trade and communication from the coast northward to the middle Niger area. This particular expedition is of interest because it linked up Masaba with two other major political and economic interests. The latter were the Attah (king) of Igala and the Obi (king) of Aboh. Each of these potentates wanted to protect and encourage the newly introduced legitimate trade. The incident that prompted the alliance was the murder, south of Aboh, of Alfred Carr who was to supervise the Farm

belonged to people who died at Akpa during the closing decades of the 18th century and first half of the 19th century.

⁴⁴ Allen and Thomson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. II, p.80; Schon and Crowther, p. 138; Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, p. 68.

⁴⁵ Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p. 207; Crowther and Taylor, Gospel on the Banks of the Niger, pp. 68/69.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.68



Settlement that the members of the 1841 Niger expedition established at Lokoja. The three kings thought the culprits should be punished. Masaba told a European visitor:

that king Obi of Aboh had sent to inform the Attah of Igara of the conduct of the inhabitants of the Delta, who had killed the white man coming to establish trade with the upper country, and that something must be done to keep the road open for free communication between them and the white men: that the Atta not having sufficient power to do this, sent to him as one concerned in the matter, and powerful enough to keep the road open; and that he promised to bring a large force of horse and foot, provided the Atta would furnish canoes to take them across the creeks and rivers.⁴⁷

This must have provided an excellent opportunity for Masaba to exercise whatever political ambitions he had in respect to territories along the route his forces would pass through. Accordingly, he was said to have

brought down a large force, and encamped for a considerable time at the model farm: the Kakandas joined his army, and they marched downwards as far as opposite Adamugu, when Dasaba commenced his attack seaward, at which time about one hundred towns and villages were destroyed, but being afraid of losing many of his men and horses in the swamps, he returned.⁴⁸

But while the Delta was his original target, those who bore the brunt of the campaign were the Kakanda, Kabba and Yagba. When the campaign was aborted, the returning soldiers of Masaba attacked these communities and pillaged them. It was reported that

the remainder of the Kakandas who had not taken timely warning to flee for safety to the left bank out of the way, fell a prey to Dasaba's soldiers on their way home. Thus nearly all the right bank of the Niger, from opposite Adamugu to the Confluence, has scarcely a village to

⁴⁷Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition*, p. 39.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 39; Baikie, *Narrative*, pp. 302-3. The sources of this information for both Baikie and Crowther were different. While Crowther got his from 'Mr. Richards, who accompanied Mr. Beecroft to Rabba in his last visit to that place in 1845,' Baikie had for his source 'Aliheli'. The latter related the story to him in relation to the role of King Obi of Aboh in the event. Baikie further said that he 'heard [it] confirmed at Idda, and at Igbegbe'

be seen, while the left bank is full of new and extensive towns and villages, which were not there in 1841.⁴⁹

It is plausible to date this southern campaign to 1843. It must have been carried out between the 1842 termination of the Trotter-led Niger expedition and before Masaba ultimately succeeded in his rebellion against Usman Zaki. The 1845 interview with Masaba that provided this information was held at Rabah and not the Masaba's former capital of Lade. This indicates that Masaba had driven out Usman Zaki by the date of the interview.

1845

Nupe traditions refer to Masaba's war against the Yagba, who reportedly refused to pay tribute. Masaba's forces had the support of contingents from the two rival Nupe *Etsus*. This was obviously a major military campaign, but it was called off soon after it was launched. Nonetheless, a number of captives were taken and payment of tribute was enforced while it lasted. Perhaps those slaves constituted the wherewithal, on his arrival from the campaign, with which Masaba started distributing largesse. He hoped to convince his erstwhile opponents that they should represent him in a favorable light to the visiting Emir of Gwandu.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, p. 39.

⁵⁰Dupigny, Nupe Province, p. 12, para. 30.

In the course of the wars, the Yagba, Eki and Bunu were compelled by their tributary status to contribute contingents to Masaba's army. So many of them were enlisted that by 1859 Masaba was trying to disband and encourage them to return home to go into farming and help to increase agricultural production in his domain.⁵¹

1851

At Aboh, Baikie was told of a war fought about 1851, 'with Dasaba, [Masaba] when one Abo man, and ten or twelve of Dasaba's party were killed.' This information is particularly problematic because it lacked additional details. However, with the ease of communication along the Niger, and particularly with Aboh traders trading as far as Ikiri, Otuturu and Gbebe markets, it is unlikely that Baikie's informant would be mistaken in linking the party they fought against with Masaba.

While they might not have been 'Fulatah' raiders, they were most probably one of the parties with whom Masaba was in alliance. There are references to several of such alliances, any of which might explain what the Aboh people considered as Masaba's soldiers. Yoruba soldiers from Ibadan were important in Masaba's 1854 counter offensive against his rebel general, Umar. They helped him to re-establish a very transient hold on Lade.⁵² The 1863 journals of two CMS missionaries in Gbebe provided information about a certain Aje

⁵¹ 'Journals of James Thomas, [1858] to September 26th 1859.' Entry for Oct. 15th.

who was either previously Masaba's expatriate soldier or was his ally. The missionaries' understanding of the relationship between the two was that Aje previously acknowledged Masaba's sovereignty over the northern Ekiti people of Agonigo but eventually converted the area into his personal fief. This stopped the remittance of tribute to Masaba, and it led to a war in which Masaba decided to reassert his authority.⁵³

Tshukuma's questions to Crowther during the same expedition seem to support the possibility that Masaba's allies or ex-allies were operating far south of Nupe. Tshukuma had asked Crowther whether they saw and spoke to 'the king of the Filanis' to which the latter replied 'yes'; and that Baikie had visited and spoken with him too, though it took them three days to reach the capital from the bank of the river. Tshukuma then pointed to three little boys standing by and said, 'he Filanis sold all these.'

It is not certain whether the two parties in this dialogue meant the same thing by the 'king of Filani.' On the one hand, given the report of Baikie that Aboh had engaged a detachment of soldiers somehow linked with Masaba in 1851, it seems most likely that

⁵²Baikie, *Narrative*, p. 271.

⁵³C.M.S. Niger Mission, C.A.3./ O 33. Simon Benson Priddy, 'The journal of Simon Benson Priddy - School Master in Gbebe on the Confluence - 1863', and James Thomas, 1863 Journals, para. 1. This Aje has been identified elsewhere as Ayorinde. According to Akitoye, *Revolution and Power*, pp.49/50, Ayorinde was one of the minor Ibadan chiefs who stayed behind in the early 1850s after Ibadan's invasion of Ekiti. He went to Aiyede as guest of Esugbayi and from there conquered many towns and villages in Eastern Ekiti. Esugbayi helped him establish himself in Akoko in 1856. He was said to have pursued a successful military career for close to a decade.

Tshukuma meant Masaba, especially since the latter was then engaged in an ongoing war against Umar. Not only did the news of these events spread along the banks of the Niger, but captives from the wars were important in the Niger trade downstream to the Delta. But Crowther may have misconstrued the subject of Tshukuma's inquiry.⁵⁴ Neither Crowther nor Baikie had seen Masaba on this particular trip. They were told that Masaba had been ejected from Rabah earlier in the year. Both of them then reported the presence of Masaba's men around Lade. It is also clear that Umar, as the rebel general, could not have been referred to as the 'king of the Fulanis.' Unless Crowther just wanted to humour Tshukuma, then it is clear that this king of the Fulani was the Emir of Muri, whom they had visited at 'Hamaruwa' (Muri), on the middle Benue.

⁵⁴Crowther, Journal of an Expedition, p. 184.

APPENDIX 3.

AN OUTLINE OF THE WARS AND RAIDS IN NUPE AND NEIGHBOURING
COMMUNITIES, C.1810-1857.¹

(A Summary of the details of Appendixes 1 & 2 and Chapter Two)

Phase 1

Before 1812:	Yikanko's establishment at Mokwa.
Before 1812:	Abd al-Rahman's war against a Nupe capital that he occupied for six months.
1812:	Two battles in which soldiers from Sokoto assisted a faction in the Nupe wars, one of which was Abd al-Rahman's. It resulted in the sack of Mokwa.

Phase 2

1812/13-1817:	Manjiya's rebellion against Jimada and the crisis surrounding his expulsion from Gbara.
1818/1819:	War in which Jimada was killed at Ragada by the Manjiya/Dendo alliance

¹The entries in italics are for raids against non-Nupe communities. They are fitted into the table so that their relationship in time to the major Nupe wars would come out, not because the raids were carried out in recognisable phases.

Phase 3

- c.1820: Manjiya's war against the Fulani in Kamberi country.
- c.1821/22: Manjiya's expulsion of the Dendo clerical community and other Muslim immigrant communities, including the Fulani of the Lafiagi area, leading to their removal to Ilorin.²
- c.1823/24: Manjiya's invasion of Ilorin; the counter-attack from Ilorin; battles on the Niger; the defeat of Manjiya; his evacuation from Rabah and the establishment of Mallam Dendo as the most powerful political power in Nupe.
- c.1824: The establishment of Lafiagi and Agaie.

Phase 4

- 1825-26: Idirisu's siege of Rabah. The relief of the siege by Manjiya and Idirisu's retreat to Ekaji.
- 1825-26: Manjiya's renewed attack on Idirisu. Idirisu driven across the Niger to Toji.

²Perhaps Alimi was still alive, as traditions seem to have connected him at least with the coming of the exiles into Ilorin. The exiles could have been in Ilorin when he died and might actually have helped Abdul Salam to beat Solagberu. Frobenius, *Voice of Africa*, p. 577; Nadel, *Blank Byzantium*, p. 78.

- Early 1826: End of a campaign in which Idirisu was defeated Etsu Idirisu.³
- Late 1826-
Aug. 1827: The victory of Idirisu and his gun-equipped allies over Manjiya and his allies⁴
- 1827: Idirisu's concurrent war against Lafiagi. Emir Manjuma of Lafiagi driven out.
- 1828: Manjiya's renewed attack against Idirisu. Idirisu was defeated.⁵

Phase 5

- 1831-34: *Kakanda, Yagba and Bunu territories raided by Rabah soldiers of Dendo, led by Dendo's sons.*
- 1833/34: Masaba's rebellion against Usman Zaki and his expulsion from Rabah.
- Late 1834/35: Masaba, Idrisu and Manjiya's failed attack on Rabah.
- 1835: Two encounters between the forces of Idirisu and Masaba.

³ Lander, *Records*, p. 179.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-81.

⁵ Lander and Lander, *Journal*, p. 106.

Phase 6

- 1838-1841: Odokodo, the Kakanda, Igbira of Koton Karfi raided by Masaba's forces alone, or with bands from Rabah.*
- Late 1841: Yagba, Bunu and Kakanda and the Bassa and Oworo area raided.*
- 1842: Etsu Tsado's initial losses in battles of Ikeleberi, Mokwa and Safini, and his retreat to Borgu to re-mobilize and recoup.
- 1842: Initial attack on Rabah reported by Allen and Thomson, only temporarily successful.
- 1843: Tsado won three victories against Usman Zaki on the battlefield.
- 1843: Nupe (supporters of Tsado and Masaba) invasion of Lafiagi and Shonga country.
- 1843 Masaba's soldiers sent southward on a campaign aimed at a Niger-Delta people. On the army's return, they raided the entire western bank of the Niger from Adamugu up to the confluence of the Niger and the Benue.*
- 1843/44: Etsu Tsado's one-year siege of Rabah. Usman Zaki driven out of Nupeland into exile.

Phase 7

- 1845: Masaba's raids against the Yagba to enforce the payment of tributes.*
- 1844/45: Wars between Etsu Isa and Etsu Jia.
- 1848/49: Masaba-assisted war of Nakworigi of Gbara against Etsu Mazu Isa; the Etsu was driven to Labozhi.
- 1851: A clash between a military band that was identified as Masaba's soldiers and Aboh defenders.*
- 1852/53: The 5-month war of Umar, as Masaba's general against Etsu Mazu Isa at Labozhi.

Phase 8

- Mid/late 1853: The alliance of Etsu Maza and Umar sacked Lade.
- Late 1853/54: Masaba fought unsuccessfully for six months to expel Umar's soldiers.
- Early 1854: Masaba was finally beaten and driven to Ilorin.
- 1854/55: Masaba's son harried Umar's supporters of Lafiagi country for about six months.

Phase 9

Early 1855:	Umoru Majigi's initial victory over the forces of Umar.
Mid-late 1855:	Umar re-mobilizing
1856:	Umar's three successful campaigns against Umoru and the Nupe group.
Apr-July 1857:	Umar's siege of Bida.
July 1857:	The rout of Umar, his death and the return of Usman Zaki, together with Masaba, as the undisputed Nupe rulers at Bida.

APPENDIX 4.

ALL INCIDENTS OF SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE FOR AREA OF STUDY
1820-67.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
1820 ¹	James Macaulay; freed African from Sierra Leone	Mamagia in Nupe	Budan/ Egga	Kidnapped from his town of Mamagia, he was sold to Egga and down the coast via the Niger
1830 ²	6 slaves: 3 women, 2 men and a little boy	Adamugu	Old Abboko	They were sent down to the Obi of Aboh as gifts from Abboko
1833 ³	A Kakanda male slave from Budan	Oniya	a very stout woman	She had a male slave, a native of the Kakanda country, in the canoe. His mistress offered to sell him to Laird and Oldfield for 'a gun, some powder, and a few yards of printed cottons.'
1833 ⁴	15 or 20 pullaboys	Adamugu/ Idah	the brother of Abboko	They rowed a canoe with the union jack flying on it. They were conveying their master and two of his wives towards Aboh.
1833 ⁵	female	Idah	Attah's	She accompanied the king's wife

¹ Allen and Thompson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol. I, p. 109-20; vol. II, p. 118: Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p.204 puts his enslavement at 'twenty years since.'

² Lander and Lander, Journal, p. 231.

³ Laird and Oldfield, Narrative of an Expedition, vol. I, p. 375.

⁴ Ibid., p. 400.

⁵ Ibid., p. 412.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
	slave		wife	who brought in some foofoo and dressed fowls to entertain the Laird and Oldfield party.
1833 ⁶	Abboo, a male slave	Outskirts of Idah, in Idah waters on the Confluence	Mallam Catab traded him to Oldfield and Lander	He was originally sold by 'his own brother' for 30,000 cowries (about 25s. sterling.) The Oldfield party redeemed him for 15,000 cowries that he might act as one of their interpreters.
1833 ⁷	Two eunuchs	Idah	Attah	They knelt at the Attah's feet, their shoulders serving for a footstool.
1833 ⁸	a Kakanda male slave native	Aboh	Presented to Lander	'At the confluence, he absconded' until he was discovered by Mr. Hector, at Bocqua, where he was on sale; his own brother having enticed him on shore from the Alburkah and brought him down to the market as a slave.' On sighting the boat, he twisted free from his captor and swam desperately onto the safety of the boat where he was received back into the Alburkah.
1833 ⁹	slave of the old Mallam at Egga		An old rich Mallam of Egga	Oldfield, with Lieutenant Allen's assistance, removed a tumour from his forehead by surgery.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20; vol. II, p.5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 414.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 104.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
1833 ¹⁰	one of Mallam's slaves	Egga	the old rich Mallam of Egga	He was using a whip, with eight thongs, made of the skin of the hippopotamus, to control the crowd that was pressing on Oldfield and co.
1833 ¹¹	captives	a town above Koton Karfi	Idah soldiers	Idah soldiers had 'been at war with a town above Cuttum-Curaffee, which they had destroyed, and had taken a number of slaves, some of whom they had on board, and were anxious to dispose of to us.'
1834 ¹²	some slaves	Up river on the Niger banks just before Adamugu		The slaves were engaged in the cultivation of tobacco.
1834 ¹³	adult male	Idah		A careless slave who set part of the Attah's palace on fire when drunk. The Attah ordered his head cut off, and his body cast into the Niger.
1834 ¹⁴	A Bornu slave boy	Idah/Aboh / Nupe country	Nupe traders; Attah of Igara; King	'Sold when a boy by the Nufi traders to the King of Iddah, and by him to Obi, who again sold him to the Nufi people. He was then

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 105-6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 150.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 182.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁴ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. I, p. 226.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
			Obi of Aboh in succession	taken by the Filatahs in one of their predatory excursions, and, by the chances of war, came once more into the hands of Obi.' This became known when King Obi demanded to know what had happened to the boys he lent to the gentlemen from England.
1834 ¹⁵	some slaves	brought to Adamugu	Some hunters first, then Abboko	Given to Abboko at Adamugu by some elephant-hunters as their half-yearly tribute.
1834 ¹⁶	Amerboo, a polyglot female, native of Panda	Idah/ English island		Employed by Oldfield to purchase provisions for the traders. Oldfield initially mistook her for Abokko's slave. But she claimed to be a free woman. At any rate, she was kidnapped while engaged as a trading agent for Oldfield.
1834 ¹⁷	adult male	Idah	Abboko	He died from fever February 1 1834.
1834 ¹⁸	al -Hadge and Muzza.	Idah and surroundings.	Abboko	Two of Abboko's head slaves. Muzza was eventually manumitted by Abboko.
1834 ¹⁹	trade-canoe slave pullay-boy, about twelve	Idah		Executed by the Attah of Igara for 'wearing king's cloth'. The boy had picked up 'two or three little pieces of velvet, about an inch and half long. After making them into a

¹⁵ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, p. 184.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 221, 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 255 and 304.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
	years old			bag, he put some seeds into it, and, according to custom, wore it round his loins as a charm to protect him from danger.'
1834 ²⁰	10 year old female	Egga	an old rich mallam, Etsu Isa's supporter	She was offered to induce Oldfield and his party to stay at Egga.
1834 ²¹	Slaves on the way to a market	Neighbourhood of Panda	a man	
1834 ²²	James Thomas, of Bunu origin	served at Aboh		He was enslaved through kidnap. After serving at Aboh, he was put aboard ship for the trans-Atlantic journey to the Americas but was rescued by the British anti-slave trade squadron and sent to Sierra Leone where he trained as a missionary and returned to Gbebe to serve with the CMS.
1834 ²³	'pullay-boy slaves'	Kakanda	A respectable Kakanda ivory and slave trader.	They brought aboard the vessel, Alburkah, a young female to attend upon the sister of their master.
1834 ²⁴	adult male	Fundykee	chief of Fundykee on the	Mr. Laird had hired him for 600 cowries, as their pilot.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

²¹ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. I, p. 235.

²² CMS Niger Mission C A 3\ O 38 James Thomas to Samuel Crowther, September 2nd 1859.

²³ Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition*, vol. II, pp.20-21.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 429-430.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
			Benue bank	
1834 ²⁵	girl	Kakanda	a Kakanda lady	She was brought in to attend to her mistress who was recovering from an eye operation that was performed on her by Oldfield.
1834 ²⁶	6 women, 3 with babies		Soho, a trader from Koton Karfi	Soho purchased the slaves with the cowries paid to him by Oldfield for 71lb. of ivory.
1834 ²⁷	2 slaves	Koton Karfi	the King of Koton Karfi	Sacrificed by the King of Koton Karfi 'to appease [an] evil spirit.'
1834 ²⁸	a young female slave	Rabah	Abusettoo the 'principal wife of Sullikeen Door Kee, master of the horse at Rabbah'	Detailed to shampoo the hair of the members of the Oldfield trading expedition at Rabah.
1841 ²⁹	2 female and 1 male slaves. One was Yagba/Bunu	Bought at Egga from one Shem. They were en route to	Agiddi, the Chief of Muye	The headman first stated that he 'paid for the strongest and healthiest woman 40,000 cowries, and for the rest 20,000 each: he afterward said that he paid for the whole, six muskets, one keg of

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20-21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

²⁹ Allen and Thomson, *Expedition to the River Niger*, vol. II, p. 85; Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 147.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
		Muye		powder, and three fathoms of red cloth about £5 or £6 sterling'. One woman was sold by her husband, most likely on charges of adultery.
1841 ³⁰	12 women; and 3 boys about 7 or 8 years old	Egga market	in the charge of a slave-dealer	They were captured in a war; 40,000 cowries was asked for each of the women, and 20,000 for each of the children.
1841 ³¹	boy	sent to Egga to be disposed off		Seized by 'Felatah' raiders and refused for ransom to his parents because money offered was not sufficient.
1841 ³²	Fulatah slave	Egga		He provided Rev. Schon and Crowther with information about the military activities of the Fulatah.
1841 ³³	2 boys, sons to James Macaulay's sister	carried to Sokoto perhaps from Mamagia		They had been captured in war. Their mother followed Macaulay, her newfound brother, to Rev. Schon to appeal for the visitors' intervention on her behalf to assist the return of her sons.
1841 ³⁴	A Yoruba slave	Egga/ Ilorin and other places	Arab traders	He informed Crowther that 'the Arabs very often carry away many slaves from hence and Rabba across the Desert; some owning forty, fifty, and some a hundred, each according to his

³⁰ Allen and Thompson, Expedition to the River Niger, vol.ii, pp. 100-101.

³¹ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 92.

³² Schon and Crowther, Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther, p.324

³³ Ibid., pp. 204.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 320-321, Entry for Sept. 28.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
				circumstances.'
1853 ³⁵	girl	Lade	Masaba	She was offered as a substitute for a girl whom Masaba had seized and was to marry. The fiancé had 'seized upon an individual belonging to a different tribe, declaring that he would hold him until [his betrothed wife's] liberation was effected.' She effected her escape on the day Lade was sacked, the same day that her marriage to Masaba was to be solemnized.
1853 ³⁶	a girl	kidnapped at Gbebe and sold to Aboh	Abboko or his men	A Nupe girl, she accompanied her father from somewhere near Lade to Gbebe on a trading expedition. Her father turned down Abokko's request for her hand in marriage whereupon a few days later she was kidnapped by Abokko's men and was soon sold to Aboh.
1854 ³⁷	some slaves	along the ship at Gbebe		'They were in a canoe alongside the ship to-day...unfortunate persons who have suffered in the war between Dasaba and his brother, [or] fallen a prey to the Filatas at the destruction of Panda.'
1854 ³⁸	Ogbe, old Eunuch	Idah/ Gbebe	late Attah	A eunuch of the late Attah who came with his own slaves to trade

³⁵ Cole, *Life in the Niger*, p. 88.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89. This happened less than a month after the sack of Lade, i.e., 1853.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁸ Baikie, *Narrative*, pp. 75-6.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
				at Gbebe.
1854 ³⁹	Ogbe's slave	Idah/ Gbebe	Ogbe, late Attah's eunuch	One of the slaves attending Ogbe at Gbebe, who on Ogbe's instructions brought a 'japanned earthenware jug' to show to Baikie. Ogbe wanted Baikie to give him another one like it
1854 ⁴⁰	Orobo, a youth	Gbebe	Zuri, a trader resident in Gbebe	Together with Musa, Zuri's son, he was in the party sent by Ameh Abboko, the chief of Gbebe to guide Baikie's party up river on the Benue.
1857 ⁴¹	20 slaves	put up for sale in Gbebe	in charge of Asaban Rogan-Koto, the merchant	'Asaban, or Saban, the one-legged man of Kogankoto of 1854 ... offered to supply Dr. Baikie with [the said] twenty slaves.'
1857 ⁴²	3 slaves	-	Tshigidi Amsala, a Kakanda trader from Idere	Tshigidi was going to the Confluence to trade, having heard of the ship's arrival there; he had other merchandise on board his canoe.
1858 ⁴³	A male slave of Bunu origin	Ode		James Thomas came across the man below Aboh.
1858 ⁴⁴	Five male slaves of	Village south of	A chief of a village near	On his way to his missionary station James Thomas met some

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 64-5.

⁴³ CMS C A 3\ O 38. James Thomas, Journals -[1858] to 1859. Entry for July 10th enclosed in James Thomas to Rev. Samuel Crowther.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, entry for July 17th.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
	Bunu origin	Aboh	Aboh	five of his countrymen among a group of about forty in the canoe of a chief of a subsidiary village to Aboh.
1858 ⁴⁵	3 female slaves; two Nupe and one Bassa.	Aboh	--	They visited James Thomas and Mr. Cline at their lodgings and petitioned to be redeemed. The missionaries had no money to oblige them but preached patience and the prospect of future redemption to the slaves.
1858 ⁴⁶	Eseyi, a male slave, one of the canoe-war men. native of Bunu.	Aboh	-	He was from James Thomas' neighbourhood and told of the destruction that war had wrought on their homeland.
1858 ⁴⁷	A male slave of Bunu origin	Aboh	unknown	While paying a visit to slaves of Bunu origin whom he affectionately referred to as 'my country people', James Thomas encountered the son of the man who sold him to Bonny!
1858 ⁴⁸	a man	Gbebe	poor Nupe man	Died a day after he was bought by his master. The latter was unable to pay the following day as he had promised and became a pawn for the sum needed to defray the debt.
1859 ⁴⁹	9 slave-	Gbebe	Ishinakodzi	Rev. Crowther was a passenger

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, entry for Aug. 11th 1858.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, entry for July 29th.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, entry for Aug 2nd.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, entry for December 4th [1858].

⁴⁹ Schon and Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schon and Mr. Samuel Crowther*, p. 405.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
	canoe boys			from Gbebe to Muye in the trading canoe they operated.
1859 ⁵⁰	adult slave woman of Nupe connection	Gbebe	A Nupe man	Kidnapped slave-woman who was redeemed for 120,000 cowries.
1859 ⁵¹	a 30 years old male slave of Eki Bunu origin	brought to Gbebe	Olumody, a Bassa chief	Re-sold to Olumody by three Bassa men for 84,000 cowries.
1859 ⁵²	two Igbira boys	Gbebe	—	Two of the slave children with whom James Thomas opened his mission school. They were soon removed to pull canoes, and the one that was particularly keen on learning was sold.
1859 ⁵³	man	Gbebe	a 'gentle-man'	Accused of sleeping with his master's wife. After an ineffective poison ordeal, he was beaten to death and thrown into the Niger.
1859 ⁵⁴	a 7-years old boy	sold in Gbebe to Kpata-Asembo	Olumody, a Bassa chief	He was bought at Gbebe for 76,000 cowries.
1859 ⁵⁵	two slaves	Gbebe	James Thomas' relation	They were to be given as price of redemption for James Thomas who was supposed to be still in

⁵⁰ James Thomas, 1859 Journal, Entry for Nov. 19th .

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, entry for March 25th [1859] Friday.

⁵² *Ibid.*, entry for July 12th 1859.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, entry for April 26th [1859].

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, entry for June 13th [1859].

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, entry for July 13th Friday. [1859].

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
				slavery.
1862 ⁵⁶	Akwa the pilot'	Gbebe	Meiza	Ransomed by Dr. Baikie and transferred to Lokoja where he was employed as a labourer by Baikie.
1862 ⁵⁷	Yeye Tsade's wife - redeemed woman	Gbebe	Gbebe mistress	To prevent her being seized [for sale], Dr. Baikie 'forcibly took her out of the power of the Gbebe people as a get off for a debt of 100,000 cowries due to me by a relative of Yeye's mistress'.
1862 ⁵⁸	Yeye	Gbebe	Gbebe mistress	
1862 ⁵⁹	Yeye Tsade's daughter; slave-born	Gbebe	Yeye's mistress	She was of Yeye's daughter. born and brought up in Yeye's mistress' yard. She was sold to Idah.
1862 ⁶⁰	a slave woman	Gbebe		Dr. Baikie included reports he received from Gbebe in his letter to Rev. Crowther to the effect that: '[Mr.] Reader had found and wished to redeem a country woman.' He was advancing him cowries to effect this redemption.
1862 ⁶¹	Hannah Aisatu - redeemed	Gbebe	a Nupe	Redeemed by Bp. Crowther; Christian convert; died Nov. 6 at Lokoja.

⁵⁶ (A copy of Dr. Baikie's letter) Bida, 2nd March 1862 in CMS Niger Mission. C. A3/O 4 (a) Rev. Samuel Adjai Crowther. Letters and Papers 1857-63

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ 'A List of the Baptized Candidates, showing the Family Connections of Some of them, and Their Respective Tribes.' in CMS C. A3/O 4 (a) Letters and Papers 1857-63, para. 9. See also Charles Paul. Report for the year ending September 30th 1868, Lukoja. Entries for Nov. 6 and 7th.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
	elderly Yoruba woman			
1862 ⁶²	Maria Ayin - redeemed elderly woman of Eki Bunu	Gbebe	first wife of Ama-Aboko	She had been 'reserving cowries towards her own ransom which has been effected by [Rev. Crowther's] inter position since last year.'
1862 ⁶³	Phebe Amaye of Eki Bunu	Gbebe	-	Described as Maria Ayin's companion with whom she joined the church and enrolled for classes together. [She is, therefore, likely to be a slave.]
1862 ⁶⁴	Lydia Lane redeemed Gbari woman	Gbebe	Mohammed an family	'Since 1859... there was some disagreement between her and her master and mistress. They determined to sell her to the Abo people though on the eve of being a mother...she was relieved from her troubles by a loan of five bags of cowries...Her infant son ... was born in the mission yard shortly after her removal...'
1862 ⁶⁵	Yoruba woman slave for	Gbebe		A long serving slave; she was persuaded to forgo [working] trading on Sabbaths.

⁶² *Ibid.*, para. 5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, para. 6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 10.

⁶⁵ James Thomas, 1862 Journal, entry for Saturday Nov. 1.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
	many years			
1862 ⁶⁶	9 redeemed children	Boarding School at Gbebe	redeemed by Dr. Baikie	'... nine Children who may be called liberated African children ... they were ransomed by Dr. Baikie and sent over to school as boarders in the mission compound.'
1862 ⁶⁷	man -about 25 years old slave	Gbebe	a 'prince' called Ama dakiconra. He usually retained 7/8 of the thief's takings, assuring the latter protection in case of trouble.	Described as an 'habitual' and 'notable' thief. [kidnapper]. He was apprehended, with two other men, for the kidnap of the son of a Gbebe man and was executed.
1862 ⁶⁸	'little boy', son of a Gbebe man	sold out of Gbebe	—	Kidnapped by a slave and two free accomplices.
1863 ⁶⁹	5 people	Gbebe	Ameh Aboko	Buried with the dead chief of Gbebe, Jan. 6th 1863.
1863 ⁷⁰	32 persons	Agbadza	[a] Chief of Agbadza called	All sacrificed; 14 to effect recovery from the sickness suffered by the chief; 16 killed following his death

⁶⁶ Niger Mission. C. A3/O 4 (a) Rev. Samuel Adjai Crowther. Letters and Papers 1857-63.

⁶⁷ James Thomas, 1862 Journal, entry for Nov. 30, para. 2. See also Simon Benson Priddy, Niger Mission. C.A.3./ O 33, 1862-3 Journal, paras. 7-17.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ James Thomas, 1862 Journal, entry for Jan. 12th[1863], para. 33, and 1862-3 Journal of Simon Benson Priddy, paras. 17-18.

⁷⁰ James Thomas, 1863 Journals, entry for December 17th, para. 4. See also Simon Benson Priddy, 1862-3 Journal paras. 18-19.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
			Aba[must own out of the lot]	and 2 buried alive with him. The dead chief was the richest person in Oworo Bunnu.
1863 ⁷¹	redeemed woman	Gbebe	an Igbara man, followed by his son after the man's death	Her master had her manacled for 3 months for attending Christian services. On the latter's death she fled to Dr. Baikie when she was about to be sold by the family of the deceased. Dr. Baikie redeemed her.
1864 ⁷²	Suma's son, a Gbebe youth			Sold into slavery for stealing. The method of enslavement was by judicial process.
1864 ⁷³	Elizabeth Alady redeemed adult and mother	Gbebe		Enslaved during one of 'Dasaba wars'; redeemed a year after conversion to Christianity. She and her son were to be sold to pay off her master and mistress' debt.
1864 ⁷⁴	Elizabeth Alady's 3 years old son	Gbebe		To be sold together with his mother to pay off a debt owed by his mother's master. He was born in slavery.
1864 ⁷⁵	5 slaves	Gbebe	Igbira man of Gbebe	Slaves to a man who died from wounds sustained in a 1865 sectional disturbance in Gbebe
1864 ⁷⁶	Four pawns	Gbebe	Igbira man of Gbebe	Pawned to a man who died from wounds sustained in a 1865

⁷¹ Ibid., and James Thomas to Revd. Crowther, June 9th 1863 - Gbebe Mission House, para. 6.

⁷² James Thomas, 1863 Journals, entry for Jan. 12th 1864.

⁷³ Ibid., entry for April 16th 1864, para. 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ James Thomas, 1864 -1865 Journal, entry for Nov. 4, para. 6.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
				sectional disturbance in Gbebe
1865 ⁷⁷	woman	Gbebe	Igbira woman	She was put to death by poison ordeal, accused of causing, by sorcery, the sickness and death of all three children of her mistress.
1865 ⁷⁸	person	Gbebe/ Odokodo		To appropriate this slave, his/her mistress was killed by the ordeal of poison administered by the son of the mistress' dead relation. The mistress was accused of having a hand in her relation's death.
1866 ⁷⁹	a little boy -redeemed			Redeemed [by Rev. J.C. John 'on the [CMS] Society's foundation.'
1866 ⁸⁰	male slaves	Gbebe		'King's slaves [who] seized some yams from Mr. Paul which he had bought for Mr. Fell and Edward....'
1866 ⁸¹	about 18 adult slaves	Adanakpa	late Amanaho of Adanakpa	No less than 18 slaves who ran into the bushes to escape being sacrificed at the burial of their dead master, the Amanaho, as was the custom.
1867 ⁸²	Jane Onitsha - redeemed adult	Gbebe at the confluence		Thomas Joseph redeemed her. She was a Christian convert; mission educated; died of asthma. Jan 20.
1867 ⁸³	3 of 9 boys	Gbebe		They were tagged 'government

⁷⁷ Ibid., entry for Jan. 17, 1865, para. 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid., entry for February 26, 1865.

⁷⁹ Thomas John to Rev. Crowther. Mission House Lokoja. Feb. 17th 1866. CMS C.A.3/O 4 (a) Bp. Samuel A. Crowther. Letters. 1864-8.

⁸⁰ Thomas John to Rev. Crowther, Mission House Lokoja. Feb. 17th 1866.

⁸¹ James Thomas, [Report for 1866], Entry for December 9.

⁸² Journal for the year ending Sept. 1867 [title crossed out and replaced with] Paul's report, Gbebe. Entry for Wednesday February 21, 1867 by Charles Paul.

⁸³ Ibid., entry for Sunday 21st.

Date of record/ Serial number	Name [Male/ Female]	Transit/ Work station	Master/ Mistress/ Trader	Remarks
				boys' by Mr. Maxwell the Consul at the Confluence. They had been redeemed by Dr. Baikie and put in the Mission School at Gbebe.
1867 ⁸⁴	slave girl	Gbebe	mistress	While hawking articles for her mistress, she stole away to the mission school for instruction.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

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