



a **CHRONICLE**
of **ABUJA**

BY ALHAJI HASSAN AND SHUAIBU NA'IBI

**TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
BY FRANK L HEATH**

PUBLISHED BY IBADAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1952

A chronicle of Abuja / Hassan, Malam Shuaibu, Malam Heath, Frank L. /

Author: Hassan, Malam

Published By: Ibadan, Nigeria: Published for the Abuja Native Administration by the Ibadan University Press, 1952. xii, 92, plates: map

HRAF Publication Information: New Haven, Conn.: HRAF, 1997. Computer File.

Restructured and uploaded by Abdalla Uba Adamu, 2023

Contents

A Chronicle of Abuja – Compiler’s Note	5
Part I	11
The History.....	11
The Origin of the Haƙe People of Abuja	11
The Legend of the Foundation of Haƙe Dynasties.....	11
How Bayajida Came to Daura. The Legend of the Snake.....	12
The Kings of Zazzau at Zaria.....	13
How The King of Zazzau, Muhamman Makau, Came to Zuba	14
The Land of Abuja in Olden Times	15
How the Fulani Invasion Was Held	15
<i>The Reign of Muhamman Makau, 61st Haƙe Sarkin Zazzau at Zuba, 1804-1825</i>	16
<i>The Reign of Abu Ja 62nd Haƙe Sarkin Zazzau, 1st Emir of Abuja 1825-1851</i>	17
The Foundation of Abuja.....	17
The Market.....	18
Religion.....	19
The Mayanka Falls.....	19
The Death of Abu Ja	19
The Burial of an Emir	20
The Installation of an Emir	20
The Regalia	21
1. <i>The Sword of Zazzau</i>	21
2. <i>The Kumbu</i>	21
3. <i>The Emir’s Drums</i>	22
4. <i>The Helmet Crown</i>	22
5. <i>The Five Spears</i>	22
6. <i>The Muskets</i>	22
7. <i>The Umbrella</i>	22
<i>The Reign of Abu Kwakwa, Dogon Sarki, 63rd Haƙe Sarkin Zazzau, 2nd Emir of Abuja, 1851-1877</i>	23
<i>The Reign of Ibrahim Iyalai, Dodon Gwari, 64th Haƙe Sarkin Zazzau, 3rd Emir of Abuja, 1877-1902</i>	24
War	24
The Defeat of the Emir of Kontagora	25
The Last Fulani Invasion (The Battle of White Water)	26
The War with Toto and Nassarawa.....	30
The Coming of the British	32

<i>The Reign of Muhamman Gani, 65th Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 4th Emir of Abuja, 1902-1917</i>	34
<i>The Reign of Musa Angulu, 66th Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 5th Emir of Abuja, 1917-1944</i>	36
<i>The Accession of Sulaimanu Barau, 67th Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 6th Emir of Abuja, 1944-</i>	37
APPENDIX I.....	38
Part II: The Land and the People	40
<i>The Land</i>	40
<i>Farming</i>	41
<i>Other Occupations</i>	42
<i>Trade and Markets</i>	43
<i>House and Household</i>	44
<i>Marriage</i>	45
<i>Adolescence</i>	50
<i>The Punishment of Bastardy</i>	52
<i>Birth</i>	53
<i>Naming and Marking</i>	53
<i>Death and Inheritance</i>	54
<i>Propitiation of Devils</i>	54
The Course of the Year	57
The Chiefs and Title-Holders of the Habe of Zazzau.....	63
Their Duties	64
The Emir In Council	72
<i>Justice</i>	73
<i>The Administration of the Country</i>	74
<i>Tribute and Taxation</i>	74
<i>The Wealth of the People</i>	75
The Character of the Habe	75
The Tribes of Abuja	76
The Zuma Rock.....	77
Pagan Festivals.....	78
Appendix III	82

A Chronicle of Abuja – Compiler’s Note

Sometimes in 2006, I was lucky to be a visiting scholar at a German university and I had visitor’s access to the entire internet via their library. On a cyberfishing expedition, I came across *A Chronicle of Abuja*. I was really excited – until I discovered it was not a PDF downloadable book, but HTML version, and even then, stringed up section by section and embedded with a lot confusing OCM codes. I decided to download the HTML files anyway.

The HTML files were from electronic Human Relations Area Files (eHRAF) collection on Ethnography. The collection is located at Yale University. It contains mostly primary source materials—mainly published books and articles, but including some unpublished manuscripts and dissertations on selected cultures or societies representing all major regions of the world.

Since then, I had consistently searched for *A Chronicle of Abuja* in its complete book form on various online repositories, but no luck. There could be two reasons for this. First, it was a local book on local historiography by relatively unknown authors. Second, although Ibadan University Press was an excellent publisher, its catalogue is still analogue and paper-bound, so although Google Books will list it, it remains just that – a listing, not digital copy. Further, things are generally become available on the internet if someone who thinks they are import enough, uploads them.

Sometimes in 2023 deciding that this is one of the few rare Hausa history and culture books, I spent a few days stitching it from the HTML files, removing a lot of Oracle Content Management (OCM) codes embedded in the document, and creating a clean copy. The end product was worth the hours spent in the laborious task.

The original was written in Hausa, but translated into English by Dr. Frank L. Heath. I did not temper with the text, except few spelling errors and few Hausa ‘hookings’. I also scripted a cover for the book that conveys the content, and got my graphic designer to come up with a stunning book cover. The original book contains many illustrations, but the eHRAF copy I have does not include them, perhaps for technical reasons.

The book is only 92 pages. In reformatting the book, I retained the page numbers, indicated by (Page: xx). This is critical for those wanting to quote sections of the book. However, I also generated a full ToC to provide a document map – easy if you want to jump to a particular topic.

To fully appreciate *A Chronicle of Abuja*, It might be useful to read it in conjunction with M. G. Smith’s “*Government in Zazzau, 1800-1950* (Oxford University Press, 1962/Routledge, 2020).

Abdalla Uba Adamu
Kano, Nigeria,
March 2023

Abstract

This is a history and cultural summary of the Emirate of Abuja by two of its officials. Abuja, the southernmost of the original seven Hausa kingdoms, is located slightly to the north of the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers, downstream from Nupe. The volume is divided into two main sections: the history, which is mainly an account of the kings of Abuja, and a cultural summary on the land and the people. This last section contains data on farming and other occupations, trade and markets, family life, the ceremonial cycle, the political system, and some information on the pagan peoples who live within the bounds of the Emirate. The book was written from the point of view of the natives themselves

Foreword

I would very much like to record the sincere thanks of myself, the Co- authors and my people to Dr. F. L. Heath for all the help he has given in checking and translating the Hausa version of this Chronicle into English. Without his encouragement and assistance, it is very doubtful whether this work would ever have been published, and we owe him a great debt of gratitude.

I would also like to express our thanks to Mr. E. H. Duckworth, Editor of 'Nigeria' for the considerable trouble he took in coming to Abuja especially to take the excellent photographs with which this work is illustrated. To Mr. John Harris, Librarian of University College, Ibandan, we are deeply grateful for the keen interest he has shown in our Chronicle and for all the work which he himself has put into its publication.

This record of the history and customs of Abuja Haƙe will, it is hoped, encourage readers to follow our example, so that in years to come there may be published a complete work on the peoples of Northern Nigeria. This I feel sure would be of the utmost interest and value in these changing times when some record of past history and customs is of so much significance.

S. Barau, Emir of Abuja November 1951

Introduction

The Emirate of Abuja lies almost exactly in the middle of Nigeria. It forms the eastern part of the Niger Province, and is bounded on the north by the Province of Zaria, on the east by the Benue Province, and on the south by Benue and Kabba. To the west, the Emirate of Lapai joins it to make the Abuja Division of the Niger Province; the wide Gurara river runs between.

It is a land of hills and huge outcropping granite rocks, of rivers and gorges and countless small streams, of forest and of open bush. It is exceedingly fertile, and healthy even for Europeans, for groups of hills rise two thousand feet above sea level. The scenery is delightful and varied throughout the Emirate; here are the three magnificent falls of the Gurara, Iku and Tafa rivers, and the remarkable Zuma Rock.

In olden times, this was the south-west part of the Kingdom of Zazzau — the southernmost of the seven Hausa States, whose traditional function it was to provide slaves for the other six. The population therefore has always consisted mainly of the various pagan tribes from which the slaves were taken. When the Fulani, in their Holy War of Conquest, drove the original Habe King of Zazzau from Zaria, he made himself a new kingdom out of these Abuja lands. Established here, he and his successors beat off every attempt of the Fulani (the last in 1893) to reduce their stronghold, one of the only three places left where the old Hausa customs survived almost unchanged. Bida fell, and most of the surrounding country was carved up into the principalities of Keffi, Nassarawa, Lapai, and, last, Kontagora; indeed, control of nearly all Northern Nigeria passed into the hands of the Fulani — but never Abuja.

In the time of the Emir Ibrahim, who was killed (1902) in the fighting against the British when he refused to surrender his independence and the old ways of life, the area under the domination of Abuja was considerable; but in the course of the establishment of effective control, new boundaries were set, new administrative divisions made, until now the Emirate has an area of little more than two thousand square miles. It is thus one of the smallest of the Northern Emirates, and the Emir ranks only as a second-class Chief, though he is still addressed ceremoniously by his people as 'Sarkin Zazzau', and until recently prayers were said daily in the Mosque for the return of the Habe to Zaria.

Now the Emirate is poor and underpopulated. Its total annual income, which comes almost entirely from the farmers, is less than ten thousand pounds sterling. The population is 70,000 of whom about one tenth live in Abuja town. There are only six thousand Hausa in the whole Emirate, a few Fulani, a few southern Nigerians in the towns, and all the rest are Pagans of various tribes, of which the Gwari form the overwhelming majority.

So far as is known, until now there has been no attempt to set down their story in writing, and nothing to keep it alive except the traditional tales told in the evenings and the memories of old men who grew up in Abuja before the British came. But the present Emir on his accession called for the writing of this Chronicle by two of his brothers, and much of the material has been gathered, just in time, from the rapidly diminishing band of Ibrahim's warrior-brigands and warrior-Imams. It does not pretend to be a history, for the only written record which survives is a list of the Kings of Zazzau and of the dates of their reigns. It is the story of Abuja; part legend, part tradition, part fact. Perhaps at times imagination comes rather strongly to the support of memory; perhaps they were not always quite so successful in battle or so virtuous in peace as they tell; perhaps their protection of the vassal Pagans was rather the preservation of their own slave-hunting grounds from poachers; perhaps their constant raiding of the recalcitrant was inspired less often by religious

fervour than by the desire for slaves and other booty and the mere love of fighting; perhaps they were cruel and ruthless, but not abnormally so, and seldom in cold blood.

If you ask these old men, they will tell you, with the instinctive courtesy of the Hausa, how much better it is to live in peace under British protection; but when they speak of some spectacular success, of the enemies they killed, of the slaves they captured, and of the amount of their booty, then the sudden animation of voice and gesture tells a different story; and sometimes they will look up and smile, and look down again and say softly: “It was better in the old days”. **(Page: vii)**

Those days have gone, but thanks to the forethought of the Emir and to the enthusiastic industry of his brothers, this record, incomplete and delightfully biased as it is, remains. I am indebted to Mr. P.H.G. Scott and other friends both British and African for suggestions in the arrangement and explanations in the translation—and, of course, above all to Bargery’s Dictionary.

Near Abuja, 1946

Frank Heath

(Page. X)

Illustrations [Missing from this version, but page number retained for references only]

Sulaimanu Barau, O.B.E., 6th Emir of Abuja frontispiece facing page
M. Shuaibu Na'ibi, Co-author, of the Education, v
H. Hassan, Co-author, Member of the Nigerian House of Representatives, 1
Abuja from the site of the old fort, 6
The Avenue of the Zauren Zazzau, 8
Abuja Market Scene, 10
The Maiyanka Falls at low water, 11
The Liman Magajiya, 6
The Madawaki. Chief Councillor, 20
South-West Zazzau and the Emirate of Abuja, 40
Dyeing in Abuja, 46
Decorating calabashes, 47
The Zuma Rock, 86

A Chronicle of Abuja

Part I

The History

The Origin of the Habe People of Abuja

(Page: 1) The Habe people¹ are the original Hausa of Northern Nigeria, but today it is only in three places that they and their customs survive untouched by Fulani influence. Three small islands of resistance stood out against the flood of conquest when the Fulani, in their Holy War, overran the rest of the country: these were in Daura, Argungu, and Abuja, and it is of the Habe of Abuja that we write.

They came to Abuja from the country of Zaria, which at that time was known as Zazzau by the Hausa peoples, by others as Zag Zag or Zeg Zeg. What the meaning of this word Zazzau may be, whether it was the name of the people who first settled there, or the name of some place or thing which they found there, no man knows.

The origins of the rulers of Zazzau are the same as those of the Habe rulers of Biram, Daura, Kano, Katsina, Gobir and Rano; indeed, they all spring from the same man, one Bayajida dan Abdullahi, who reigned in Baghdad long ago.

The Legend of the Foundation of Habe Dynasties

Now the reason why Bayajida left Baghdad was that he made war against a certain pagan people called the Ziduwa, and cut them up, and divided their land into forty parts; he took for himself the first part, and this brought him west to Bornu with all the strength which he had gathered from his Holy War against the Ziduwa, by which he had become stronger than the ruler of Bornu. **(Page: 2)**

Then his people counselled him, saying that they should kill the ruler of Bornu and seize his kingdom; but the men of Bornu heard this, and they went to their king and advised him to give his daughter in marriage to Bayajida. Therefore, he gave Bayajida his daughter Magira to wife, to be a bond of friendship between them. But each time that the ruler of Bornu prepared for war, he asked Bayajida for the loan of his forces, and he asked him to send them to his capital to go together with him against the enemy. And Bayajida sent his men. But each time that the ruler of Bornu came back from war, he gave the men towns in which to live, so they stayed with him. Thus he continued until there were none left to Bayajida except his brother who went to the country of the Bagharmi where he became king; so Bayajida was left alone save for his wife and his horse.

¹ The final e is pronounced: vowels as in Italian

Then the ruler of Bornu resolved to kill him, but he fled with his wife who was many months with child. They came to a town called Biram, but Magira could go no further, for the weight of the child within her. So he left her there and she was delivered of a son who, she said, should be named Burkimu, that is to say 'Welcome'; and the child grew up and became the ruler of Biram, which is now called Gabas, and this was the first of the seven Hausa states.

How Bayajida Came to Daura. The Legend of the Snake

At the time when Bayajida reached Daura, the ruler of Daura was a woman, and her name was Daura. The name of the first woman to rule over this country was Yakani, then came Tabwoi, then Waizam, then Waiwai, and after her Gidirgidif, and Nagari, and then this Daura whom Bayajida found upon the throne.

He came to the house of an old woman named Ayana, where he stopped and dismounted and asked for water both for himself and for his horse. But the old woman Ayana told him that there was no water, for in this place water could not be drawn every day, but only on each Friday. On that day, the men of the town would meet together at the house of the seer to perform the customary rites, and then they would go to the well to draw water for man and beast, after which there would be no more water till the following Friday.

Bayajida asked the old woman why they could get water on only one day of the seven, and Ayana told him that in this well there lived a huge snake which at any other time would devour anyone who went near to draw water.

But he told her to give him the leathern bucket, so she gave it to him; and all this happened at night. Then he went to the well and let down the bucket to draw water, but the snake heard the sound of the bucket being lowered, and seized hold (**Page: 3**) of it. So Bayajida pulled up bucket and snake together, and gripped the snake dragging half of its length out of the well, but the other half remained inside. Then the snake let the bucket drop and reared up to kill him, but he pulled out his sword and struck and killed the snake and cut off its head. Now the name by which the men of the town called the snake was Sarki. Then Bayajida drew water from the well and took it with the head of the snake to Ayana's house where he watered his horse and gave the rest to the old woman.

When the town woke next morning and saw what had happened to the snake, they marvelled greatly, for they saw the length of body which was outside the well and by it could judge the whole. The news spread to the Queen's dwelling, so with all her followers she made her way to the well, and when she saw what had been done to the snake, she declared that could she but find the man who had accomplished this, she would divide her country into two and give him half. Whereupon a man stepped forward and said that it was he who had killed the snake; but she asked him where was the head? and he said that he had not taken it. Then another came and said that he was the slayer of the snake, but neither could he bring the head before her.

When the old woman Ayana heard the lies that the men of Daura spoke, she told the Queen how last night a stranger had come to her house riding on a beast that was like a cow and yet was no cow (for horses were not known in Daura), and had asked her for water for himself and for his beast, and how she had told him that there was no water. Then he had told her to give him the bucket, and when he had come back she saw that he had water which he gave to his beast and also to her. So Ayana advised Daura to send for him to question him, and Daura sent her to fetch him;

and he got up and came to her. She asked him if he had killed the snake, and he answered 'Yes'. Then she told him to show her the head, and he brought it out and gave it to her.

Then she told him that she had made a vow which she would no-wise break, that whosoever should have killed the snake, with him she would divide her kingdom. But Bayajida said that he did not want the country to be divided in order to give him half, but he asked instead that she should marry him. To this she agreed, and they were married, and he came to her house. Henceforward, whenever the men of Daura spoke of the Queen's house, they called it the house of Makas-Sarki, the Snake-killer, and that is how the title of Sarki came to be given to the rulers of Daura, and from them to all the rulers of Hausaland, and to the chief man of any place or of any profession.²

Daura also gave Bayajida a concubine for his inner chamber, and she conceived, but Daura did not. When the child was born, (Page: 4) the concubine begged him to name it 'Munkarfi-gari', which is to say 'We have taken this town', and he agreed. Then afterwards Daura conceived, and when she was delivered, she asked Makas-Sarki to name the boy 'Bawo', and he agreed. Now Bawo means 'Give it back again'.

After his father's death, Bawo became Sarki, and he had six children whose names were Bagaudu, Kazuru, Gunguma, Kumaiyau, Duma and Zamagari. Bagaudu became King of Kano, Kazuru of Daura, Gunguma of Zazzau, Duma of Gobir, Kumaiyau of Katsina, and Zamagari of Rano; and these with Biram made up the seven Hausa states. It was the duty of Gobir in the north to defend the other states from invasion, and it was the duty of Zazzau in the south to provide them all with slaves. Now Bagaudu and Kazuru were born of one mother, and Gunguma and Duma were born of one mother, and Kumaiyau and Zamagari of one mother; and that is why the men of Kano are bound in friendship to the men of Daura, the men of Zazzau to the men of Gobir, and the men of Katsina to the men of Rano.

The Kings of Zazzau at Zaria

The Habe Kings who ruled over the country of Zazzau were sixty in number from Gunguma, the grandson of Bayajida, to Muhamman Makau who first came to Abuja. Their names and the order in which they ruled³ are to be found in the small book which the Imam of Kona in Zaria wrote, but we cannot say what each of them did or what happened in their times, for the book of the Imam of Kona gives only the lists and there is no written history.

They had their capital in several different places before the present town of Zaria was built in 1537 A.D. by the Queen Bakwa Turunku. She called it by the name of her second daughter; but the dwelling of the rulers of Zaria is called the house of Bakwa after the Queen herself. It was by her determination, too, that the Kwarrarafa, or Jukons, were prevented from overrunning the land of Zazzau in their invasion from the south.

The name of Bakwa's eldest daughter was Aminatu who herself led the armies in battle against many towns; and every town which she took she fortified with strong walls. It is of her that the

² Where the head of a state is implied, I have translated 'Sarki' as 'ruler' or 'king' up to the time of the Fulani Holy War, and after that as 'Emir'

³ See Appendix I

Sarkin (**Page: 5**) Musulmi,⁴ Bello of Sokoto, son of Osman dan Fodio, writes in his book '*InFakul Maisuri*':—

“Strange things have happened in the history of the seven Hausa States, and the most strange of these is the extent of the possessions which God gave to Aminatu, daughter of the ruler of Zazzau. She waged war in the Hausa lands and took them all, so that the men of Katsina and the men of Kano brought her tribute. She made war in Bauchi and against the other towns of the south and of the west, so that her possessions stretched down to the shores of the sea.”

Aminatu died at Attagara, which is the town now called Idah on the banks of the Niger. From her dates the predominance of the people of Zazzau who held wide dominion; from the Kwarrarafa to the Nufe country many districts came under her control. The King of Nufe sent her forty eunuchs and ten thousand kolanuts, neither of which had been seen in the Hausa lands before, and in her time came the first trade from the south, and she held sway for thirty-four years.

This predominance of Zazzau came to an end in 1734 when the Beriberi of Bornu made war on all the Hausa states. It was from this time that the people of Zaria began to pay tribute to Bornu, and for this reason that henceforward the Kings of Zazzau were always installed by a representative of the ruler of Bornu, the Magajin Malam; ⁵there was also an Emissary of the ruler of Bornu, called the Kachalla, sent to live at the court of the King of Zazzau. But after this there was no great war in Zaria until the appearance of the Fulani in their Holy War.

How The King of Zazzau, Muhamman Makau, Came to Zuba

In the year 1804, the Shehu Osman dan Fodio made war on the King of Gobir; and this was the first Holy War of the Fulani which they waged for six years against the Hausa States. Straightway, a certain Malam named Musa, who was a teacher of the strict Faith in the land of Zazzau, called together his fellow Fulani and went to the Shehu at Gobir, and from him received a Flag of Conquest; then he, with Yamusa, a Fulani of Bornu, and three hundred and thirty-three men came down to war against Zaria.

They fell upon the King of Zazzau, Muhamman Makau, on Saturday the tenth day of the month of Zulhaji in the year 1804 whilst he was at the prayer-ground of Idi outside the town. Though Makau had many men with him, he was defeated, for they could not get back inside the town to arm, and he was forced to flee. That is (**Page: 6**) why, when Abuja was built, the people had their prayer-ground inside the town until the coming of the British when they could again assemble outside the gates without fear of being surprised; and that is why the Emir's Bodyguard and the Archers stand behind him, facing west, whilst he turns in prayer to the east.

⁴ "Head of the Moslems" or "Commander of the Faithful" in Nigeria

⁵ See p. 13.

The Land of Abuja in Olden Times

Now at this time the south-west part of the kingdom of Zazzau, which was to become the country of Abuja, was populated by several pagan tribes: the Gwarin Genge ('Genge' is their language), who are the most numerous; the Gwarin Yemma, or Gwari of the West; the Koro, the Gade, the Ganagana, the Gwandara and the Bassa.⁶ Over these peoples ruled five Chiefs who owed allegiance to the Kings of Zazzau. They were entitled to the Drums and Horns of paramount chiefs and though their installation took place at Zaria, they were too remote for effective control and were subject to little interference so long as they paid the tribute of slaves demanded.

Although the Gwari were so numerous, the Koro have always held them in subjection, and of the five Chiefs, those of Jiwa, Kawu and Dogon Kurmi were Koro, and so was the Chief of Izom, but now his people have become absorbed by inter-marriage with the Gwari of the West; the Chief of Kuje in the east was a Gade. The Chief of Kuta in the district of Minna, who, though not one of the five, also owed allegiance to Zazzau, was a Gwarin Genge, and even to this day, when the Chief dies, the men of Kuta send to inform the Emir of Abuja; and when the new Chief is installed the Emir sends one of his Chief Councillors to witness the ceremony.

There was also a Chief of Zuba, a Koro, but his position was rather that of chief counsellor to the King in all matters that concerned the south-west part of the kingdom, and he was called the Sarkin Yemma, or Chief of the West, which is still his title, though the district is the south-eastern part of the present Abuja Emirate. He was of the family of the Kutunbawa, one of the Kwarrarafa (or Koro) tribes who had settled in Kano at the time of the great Kwarrarafa invasion of Hausaland; they left Kano in the time of King Alwali of Kano, who was afterwards (1807) killed by the Fulani, and settled at Zuba and became its chiefs.

In Pai and Kundu to the west, there were many Gwari of both kinds, and some Bassa; but later the Fulani came and settled there and ruled over the pagans. The districts of Ashera and Wako in the south were inhabited by Ganagana who came from the country of Lapai, but though the Chiefs of these places were strangers, yet they lived in peace and accepted the suzerainty of the King of Zazzau and his viceroys. (Page: 7)

How the Fulani Invasion Was Held

The Fulani followed Makau and he came to the gate of Kauru, but Jibrin, the Chief of Kauru, shut the gate against him, and Makau was filled with rage and cursed him and went on. But the Fulani followed him till they came to the gate of Kajuru, whose Chief, Haruna, opened the gate to Makau and his followers, and they went in. There the Fulani made war on him for six months, but they could not overcome him. Then Makau gave the Chief of Kajuru his blessing, and left, making towards the south. But the Fulani did not cease to follow him; they harassed him up to the gate of Zuba where he made a camp outside the town.

Now at this time, the Koro Chief of Zuba was Mohamman Gwabo, and he opened the gate of the town to Makau, but Makau did not go in, for he had pitched his camp outside the town in order to fight the Fulani. He fought against them for a year and three months from this war camp at the gate of Zuba, and during this time the Chief of Zuba died and was succeeded by Ali. In the year 1807 Makau was victorious; he drove the Fulani back, and they returned to Zaria. Then Makau went

⁶ See below, Part 2, pp. 85-86

into the town of Zuba, and this is why the Koro call Ali ‘the Victorious’; and the Gwari and the Koro all gave Makau their allegiance as they had done whilst he was in Zaria.

These were the chief men of Zazzau whom Makau brought with him to Zuba: the Madawaki,⁷ Sidi Umaru; the Galadima, Fadanko; the Wambai, Zabi; the Chief Imam, Abdullahi; the Salanke, Malam Musa, the Jarmai, Musa; the Barde, Auja; Bawa, the chief of Gayen; the Dallatun Magajia; the Magaji; Malam Ramadan, who was a chief Malam and the father of Malam Dahiru; the Kuyambana, Ramadan, who was the father of the next Madawaki, Audu; Malam Amadu Shekarau, the father of Maichibi; Malam Abdullahi Ashehu; Malam Momon, the Magajin Malam who as representative of the Shehu of Bornu; installs the rulers of Zazzau the Kachalla, Emissary of the Shehu of Bornu; and Abdu, father of the Imam of Gayen.

Of the ruling family,⁸ there were the successive holders of the title of Dangaladima, or Heir Presumptive, Muhamman Rabon Bawa; Abdu, the father of Danya; and Abdu, the father of Dakama. These three were the younger brothers of King Ishaku Jatau, the father of Makau. Of the other children of Ishaku, there were the Jarmai, Haruna, and the successive holders of the title of Sarauniya, Zainabu and Amina; and of that of Iya, Ramatu and Fatsuma; there were Chikuyi, Abu Ja and Abu Kwaka. These were the younger brothers and sisters of Makau; and there was the Sarauniya,

Fatsuma, the daughter of Makau. Now Makau and Abu Kwaka were born of one mother, and when the mother of Abu Ja died, he was taken (**Page: 8**) and fed at the breast of the mother of Makau(9) and of Abu Kwaka who thus suckled the first three rulers of the Abuja lands. And the number of people who followed Makau to Zuba from Zaria was about three thousand.

The Reign of Muhamman Makau, 61st Habe Sarkin Zazzau at Zuba, 1804-1825

His praise is sung:

“Makau, whose mother was Tasalla;⁹ the Man of many Spears. As Peppers make the Eyes run, so Men run before your Anger.”

After Makau had ended the war with the Fulani, he left Zuba and went to Jiwa. But the men of Jiwa mocked him and taunted him saying that the Fulani had driven him from Zaria, and therefore they would serve him no longer; so he fought against them for three years and seven months, and took their town. Here he found the Imam of Jiwa and his following who were of the tribe which claims descent from the Prophet. They came from the east and dwelt amongst the people of Zazzau and about five hundred of them were in Jiwa. These came out and threw themselves at the feet of those of their fellow-tribesmen who were with Makau, begging to be spared from slavery; and Makau had pity on them and spared them, but the other warriors were unwilling, for they had endured much in the fighting for the place. They wished to sell their captives as was the custom, in order to buy food and the gear which they needed, but Makau refused to give way. Now this caused the men of Zazzau to lose heart.

⁷ See below Part 2 pp. 72-80 for meanings of these titles.

⁸ For genealogical table, see Appendix II, p. 38. [Missing from this HTML rendered version]

⁹ Tasalla, that is, 'Born on the Feast Day' or 'Fortunate.'

From Jiwa, Makau went south to Panda and Toto; from there he went to Gulu and fought the Fulani, but the Salanke, who was with him, was killed. From there he went to the Gwari of the West at Izom and marked out the site for a new town. Then he went to Lapai to complete the destruction of the Fulani whom he had driven from Gulu, but the warriors of Makau were angry with him since the taking of Jiwa when he had forbidden them to make slaves of their prisoners. They supposed that if they gained the victory at Lapai, it would be worthless to them, for he would again forbid them to sell their captives, and they would have no profit.

Therefore when they went to Lapai, they fought until victory was in sight, and then they suddenly deserted him, leaving him with only the Jarmai, Musa, and his own younger brother, Abu Ja. So Makau ordered Abu Ja to go back and re-unite the people, for he should succeed him as Sarki. And the Jarmai, Musa, stayed with Makau until Makau was killed, but Musa was only wounded, and he recovered and went back home. This was in the year 1825. (**Page: 9**)

The Reign of Abu Ja 62nd Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 1st Emir of Abuja 1825-1851

His praise is sung:

“Light of Skin, Lord and Master of the Walled Town, and in the open Field the first to draw Blood.”

Abu Ja gathered the men of Zazzau together and went with them back to Izom of the Gwari of the West, where he was made Emir on the night of Sunday, the tenth day of the month of Sha’aban in the year 1825. He was a short man, about five feet six inches in height, thickset, and so light of skin that he was called Jatau or Ja ‘the red’. For three years he stayed at Izom, but then he resolved to build himself a town which should be the capital of his country, but further from the boundaries of Lapai; so he went to the bank of the river Tafa, crossed over, and encamped north of the river Iku.

The Foundation of Abuja

There is a small stream which runs south to join the river Iku about six miles north of Zuba of the Koro, and about thirteen miles south-east of Izom, and the men of Zazzau called it Wuchichiri after a big town in the land of Zazzau. Here at the foot of the hills, Abu Ja built the town to which he gave his name, making this stream the dividing line between the Madawaki, Commander of the Army, who is next in rank to the Emir himself, and the rest of his chiefs. The Madawaki and his followers built their wards to the east of the stream, whilst the Emir and the other chiefs built to the west; and where the Emir put up the first rough hut, there still stands to this day the old Entrance House of Zazzau. This was the first building to be made in Abuja, and it was set up on Thursday, the seventh day of the month of Rajab, in the year 1828.

In the next year, on the twelfth day of the month of Safar, they began to build the walls of the town. Then the Iya, Rumfa, built the ward of the Queen Mother near the great gate of the town; Bawa, the Chief of Gayen in Zazzau built the ward of the men of Gayen; the Galadima, Fadanko, built the ward of the Chief Eunuch; Dan Agudo built the ward of the Eunuch of the Slaves; the Madawaki, Umaru, built the ward of the Horsemen; the Kachalla, Zonuwa, built the ward of the Beriberi of Bornu; the Dallatu built the ward of the Emir’s Sons; the Sarauniya, Zainabu, built the ward of the Guardian of the Emir’s girl-children; Ibrahim, the Jarmai, built the ward of the

Warriors; Haruna, the Magajin Dangi, built the (Page: 10) ward of the Prayer-ground; Malam Ashehu, that learned man who came with Makau from Zaria built his ward; the Chief Imam, the Liman Juma Abdullahi, built the ward of the Mosque; the Salanke, Malam Abdu, built the ward of the Imam of the Horsemen; Abu Kwaka built the ward of the men of Zazzau; the Dallatu, Uguri, built the ward of the Hill; the Dangkaladima, Abu Rabon Bawa, built the ward of the Heir Presumptive; Malam Ramadan built the ward of the Princes; the Sarkin Fawa, Gandu, built the ward of the Butchers; a future Salanke, Sulaimanu, built the ward of the Scribes; and the Barwa, Momon, built his ward.

Beyond the gates of the town, Abu Ja fought against Kawu, but he did not take the place, for a tornado destroyed his camp. He made war on Masaka and the Gwari of the West at Kache, and subdued them. In his time, the Gwari of Ija came up against Abuja even to the gates of the town, but he shut the gates, and for seven days he ignore them, but when the seven days were ended he went out and drove them away. Then the Fulani Emir of Zaria, Mamman Sani, came against Abuja and made his camp before the gate of Chachi, but suddenly he raised camp and returned to Zaria without fighting. Now the reason for his withdrawal was this: Abu Ja went out at night to the war camp of the Fulani, and he met with Mamman Sani who was on his way to Abuja, so they talked together in honour and confidence. Then Mamman Sani declared that he had come to fight against pagans, not against the men of Abuja, and that in three days time he would go back to his country. But when at the end of three days, Abu Ja saw that the Fulani had not left, he called all the Malams together to pray for the intercession of God; and God heard their prayers, and the Fulani went away without fighting.

The Market

Though there was constant fighting against the pagans, yet there was farming outside the town; and the people of Wushafa and of Dutsen Alhaji began to dye cloth and to weave mats; and iron ore was found at Shingere and Kawu. A cereal called 'achcha' or 'hungry rice' because it is quicker to cook than other foods, grew in the country round Bwari, whilst yams were first grown at Diko and at Basan Zuba, and rice by the Gwari of Abuchi who also plaited grass to make trays, sieves, and cages for fowls. Millet was grown at Izom, Zuba and Paikon Kore. The Gwari of the West from Gawun wove cotton into a black and white cloth, the most valuable then known; they wove other cloths, and made robes of white cotton.

The men of Bwari and of Shere made farming hoes from the iron ore, whilst the Gwari cut wood and shaped handles for axes, bringing them into the town to sell. In the town, The Habe worked in leather, making the big hide shields from the skin of the (Page: 11) ox or of the wild buffalo, and harness for the horses; others were tailors and made robes, garments, and headgear of all kinds. The first market was set up in front of the Barde's compound, and there were also small markets in the other wards.

In the time of Abu Ja, too, the compounds of the chiefs and title-holders were built. Whoever succeeded to one of the important positions in the town came to live in an official compound which was served by slaves. Besides their compound in the town, the chiefs built little villages outside where they settled their slaves to farm for them.

Religion

Now the Malams began to teach the boys to read and to recite the Koran and the Holy Books, but no explanation or commentary was made, for that had never been done in Zaria, but passages of the Koran were taught by repetition. This was in the ward of Malam Ashefu, the learned man—he had the whole Koran by heart—who brought two copies of the Koran and of the Commentaries with him from Zaria; these are now in the hands of the Liman Magajia and of the Magajin Malam. On the day when the moon of the feast of Shawal was seen, the whole Koran was recited all night until dawn, and the Emir with all the chiefs came to hear; this was to encourage the boys in the learning which would give them knowledge of the Holy Books and of True Religion, and show them the way of understanding.

The Mayanka Falls

Now about a mile from the town of Abuja, to the south-west, there is a place in the river Iku called Mayanka, or the Place of Execution. Here there are mighty falls, for the river Iku is no small stream, and in the wet season when the flood is full, it stretches more than four hundred feet across. Here is a great rock down which the water pours until it has worn out of it a hollow like a house, and low down in it there is a pool, long and wide and very deep; and whenever in the rains the river rises, the water tumbles down from the hollow rock into the pool with such force that nothing which may chance to fall into the flood is ever seen again.

So dreadful is this, that Abu Ja made it the place of execution for those who were to suffer death. Here, the right hand was first cut off to be taken to the Emir to show that sentence had been carried out, then the man was struck with a club or sword and hurled into the pool. Abu Ja was the first to use Mayanka for this purpose. For fear of the Fulani, he stopped all traders and strangers from entering the town or vicinity of Abuja, and in his time any Fulani who was found in the country was killed for fear of what might have (**Page: 12**) brought him there: indeed, on one occasion, when a number of the nomad Fulani came with their herds, they were all put to death and their cattle, about three thousand head, divided up.

The Death of Abu Ja

Now the Emir of Nassarawa, Makama Dogo, made war on the people of Toto, who sent to Abu Ja for help. So Abuja sent the Abokin Sarki with a number of men and youths of his house-hold including his own sons. But in the fight, three of the sons of Abu Ja were taken prisoner. At this time, Umaru Nagwamatse, Emir of the Sudan (that is, of Kontagora) the famous son of the Sultan of Sokoto, was with Makama Dogo, and he counselled him not to slay the sons of Abu Ja, but to return them to their father. However, Makama was determined to kill them, though the Emir of the Sudan warned him that he would leave him if he did so; but he put them to death, and Nagwamatse returned to his country of Kontagora.

It was not long after this that Abu Ja died, on Monday the fourth day of the month of Shawal, in the year 1851. Amongst his symbols of office was a quiver in which were kept two hundred arrows poisoned at the tip so that any they might strike would die. It was the people of Burum who each year made these arrows, and the poison which they used was called ‘the tribe-slayer’, for not only

the man who was struck by it would die, but everyone who set eyes on the corpse would likewise perish. So the people were much afraid.

The Burial of an Emir

Now in the olden days, [unavailable] held the offices of Makama Karami, Turaki, Ma'aji, Sarkin Ruwa, Fakachi and Sarkin Zana.¹⁰ It was their duty each morning to go into the Emir's room to observe his health; and when the end of his days was drawing near, they would stay close to him until he died before their eyes. When he was dead, they would go and inform the Galadima and the Wambai, but if the Galadima and the Wambai were themselves eunuchs as was generally the case, they would enter the room before the death.

Now when the Emir is dead, it is the duty of the Magatakarda, or Chief Scribe, to wash the body and to wrap it in a winding-sheet; besides the winding-sheet, he puts on the body a white gown, a loin-strip, a white burncus and a turban. The Salanke says the prayers for him, and his Body Servants take him to the grave. When they lift him up to take him away, then the Emir's Drums sound, and the other drums, and the long metal horn is blown, and the Zabiya¹¹ leads the wailing of the women. The body is not (**Page: 13**) taken through the Entrance House of the Emir's Compound, but a part of the wall is knocked down, and through this opening it is taken to the compound of Wagu close by, which is the compound of the Emir's Body Servants, and buried there, after which the wall is blocked up again.

After the funeral the chief men go to the House of the Emir's Drums to pray, and then alms are distributed. To the Malams who offer up the prayers on the day that the Emir dies gifts of money are made, and three horses are given, one from the Emir's stable, one from the Madawaki, and one from the Galadima. On this day, the wives of the Emir whom he has taken in marriage, leave his compound and go to the compound of the Captain of the Bodyguard where they stay until the one hundred and thirty days of seclusion of their widowhood have passed; and during all this time the Bodyguard and the Archers stand round on guard.

The Installation of an Emir

In olden times it was the Emir himself who chose his successor from among the sons of the ruling houses after he had tried them one by one to discover who was the most likely to govern the people well and to avoid internal strife. But now the Emir is chosen by the Councillors.¹²

When the new Emir has been chosen, this is the customary manner of his installation: First of all, on the appointed day, the Galadima, the Madawaki, and the Magajin Malam (who is the representative of the Shehu of Bornu) meet together at night at the house of the Galadima; and when they are met, the Galadima and the Madawaki send a messenger to summon the man who is to become Emir. When he has come, they tell him that God has entrusted to him the house of Abu Ja. When they have spoken, he makes obeisance to them and puts dust upon his head; this is for the last time, for henceforward it is to him that obeisance must be made.

¹⁰ See below, Part 2. pp. 77-78.

¹¹ Leader of the female professional beggars.

¹² At present, the Madawaki, the Alkali, and the Sarkin Yemma.

Now the Galadima hands him over to the Magajin Malam who takes him away for the ceremonial washing. When this has been done, he brings him back to them, and they bid him instal the Emir. Then the Magajin Malam clothes him with the new garments which he has brought for him, robe and trousers, turban and shoes. Then he takes the garments which the Emir wore before, and gives them to the old woman who has heated the water for the ceremonial washing.

Then a horse is brought from the stable of the Galadima or of the Madawaki, and he is set upon it and brought to the old Entrance House of Zazzau. Here he dismounts and waits awhile. Then the wooden horn of the Emirs is blown, and it says “(Name), the son of (name), is the man on whom the Sun of Fortune shines.” **(Page: 14)**

Then he is again mounted on the horse and led to the Entrance House of the Emir’s Compound, but when he comes up seeking to enter, then the Bodyguards shut the door against him crying “Is this the man? Indeed, it is not he!” Three times he is challenged thus until the Galadima and the Madawaki speak and declare that this is the Emir. Then one of the guards comes up, looks closely at him, and says, “Yes, this is the man.” Then the guards bid him enter, and the Galadima and the Madawaki hand him over to the Makama Karami, a eunuch and the chief of the Private Counsellors,¹³ who takes him to the House of the Emir’s Drums.

Here he must remain for seven days before he may enter the private compound, during which time none of the sons of the ruling houses may see him. When the seven days have passed, he comes outside and sits upon a couch, whilst the Galadima, the Madawaki, and all the other chiefs of Zazzau come with salutations, one after the other. They dismount and make obeisance before him. Then he puts his hand on the shoulder of the Galadima and of the Madawaki to show that he relies upon their counsel and support; and when he has finished, he gets up and goes into the house.

The Regalia

1. The Sword of Zazzau

This is the most precious of the insignia of office, and was brought by Makau from Zaria when he fled. It is said that it came with Bayajida from Baghdad, and that the rulers of each of the seven Hausa states had a similar Sword, but this and the Sword of Daura alone survive. It is kept wrapped in cloth, and few have seen it drawn; it has a single cutting edge, and formerly the hilt was encrusted with gold.

In olden times it was taken out to the prayer-ground of Idi on the two Feast Days, surrounded by the best Archers of the Guard, and at no other time— except in war—was it seen in public. It is no longer taken out.

2. The Kumbu

This is next in importance to the Sword of Zazzau. It is a complete copy of the Koran, and was brought from Zaria. Whenever the Emir was about to go to the battle, it was set in a new calabash

¹³ Nowadays there are no eunuchs in office and the Makama Karam is a son of the ruling house, so another official has this duty.

covered with a white cloth and brought out of the Dakin Kaka, or House of the Ancestors, in the Emir's Compound where it is kept. It is said to be of great age, and is never opened. (Page: 15)

3. The Emir's Drums

They are three in number, quite small, and shaped like an inverted cone; the point rests upon the ground. The biggest is sixteen inches across and made of wood; the other two are of brass, ten inches across the top; the skin used is always calf-skin. The two brass drums were brought by Makau from Zaria.

They are beaten on ceremonial occasions: for seven days when a new Emir is appointed; every night during the Fast of Ramadan; and on the days of the Greater and Lesser Feasts.

They are kept in a special house called 'The House of the Emir's Drums' which also contains the skulls of three war horses which Makau brought from Zaria and rode in many battles. Their names were 'Morning Star', 'The Horned White', and 'Victorious'.

4. The Helmet Crown

A piece of mediaeval armour which the Emir must not remove from his head for the seven days which he spends in the House of the Drums.

5. The Five Spears

These are the spears which the Emirs took with them to battle.

6. The Muskets

Muskets were first used in Abuja in the reign of Abu Ja's successor, Abu Kwaka the Tall. These were given to him by Masaba, the Emir of Bida, when Abuja was opened to strangers and to trade.

7. The Umbrella

Each Emir has an Umbrella made for him, of no special colour or design. It is used only on Feast Days for the procession to the prayer-ground of Idi.

There is also another sword of ordinary design, and a ring which the late Emir, Musa Angulu, added to the regalia. Since the coming of the British there have been added the Staff of Office, the Letter of Appointment, the Seal and the Bugle.

The Ma'aji is the Treasurer who looks after the insignia of office until a new Emir is installed. On the day when the Sword of Zazzau is handed to him, the Emir gives a robe to its guardian, the Sarkin Fada, who is the chief Eunuch of the private compound. To the Sarauniya, the guardian of the girl- children, he gives cloth suitable to her position. (Page: 16)

The Reign of Abu Kwakwa, Dogon Sarki, 63rd Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 2nd Emir of Abuja, 1851-1877

His praise is sung:

“Dogo, the Friend of Malams and the Friend of Travellers. Tall as the Thunder and the High Hills and the Forests.

Abu Kwaka the Tall succeeded his brother Abu Ja on the night of Monday, the fourth day of the month of Shawal, in the year 1851. He was called Dogon Sarki by reason of his great height, for he was six and a half feet tall, but not heavily built; his skin was dark. He was a man who encouraged the teaching of religion, and he wished to make an end of devil dancing in the town¹⁴(14) ; moreover he allowed strangers and traders again to enter Abuja.

He sent his messenger to Audu, the Emir of Zaria, and he sent Audu Ayango to Masaba, Sarkin Nufe, the Emir of Bida, to tell them that the road was open to their people and their trade; so in his time Abuja grew and flourished.

The Rubawa, a tribe from Birnin Gwari, gathered all their people together and came to settle in Abuja; from Panda came the Yaskwa; from Pako near Gudupe, the Gwari came to the new ward of Koko, for Dankyuka brought them there; and the people of Kusheka also came from Birnin Gwari to settle in Abuja. At this time, too, came many important and learned men into the town; there was Malam Usman, the father of Nana; Malam Abdu, the grandfather of Naimi; Malam Gwani, the father of Naimi; Malam Ishaku of the ward of Koko; and Malam Umaru Alkali.

Abu Kwaka made war upon Gagai in the Kadara country, and overcame them; he fought against Gwadaji, Chibiri, Gwi and Makama Kura, and in these fights he took almost seventy places. He fought against Gwagwalada and the Gwari of Muye, against Kafin and Abasa Kadara and Sulu.

In his reign donkeys, camels, and ostriches were first seen in Abuja, and tamed hyenas which performed in the market. Now, too, that traders came freely into the town there was much fine merchandise to be seen, and strange clothes from the Nufe country; and many weavers of cloth settled here. Because of the coming of the traders and the strangers, the town was crowded with people, so that when an epidemic of small-pox broke out, as many as seventy died in one day. Encouraged by the Emir, men of learning came into the town, spreading their knowledge amongst the people, and Hausa and Pagans and strangers lived together in peace.

Then Abu Kwaka fell ill and died at sunrise on Sunday, the seventeenth day of the month of Rajab, in the year 1877; that night he was succeeded by Ibrahim Iyalai, Dodon Gwari, the son of Abu Ja.
(Page: 17)

¹⁴ See below, Part 2. p. 63

The Reign of Ibrahim Iyalai, Dodon Gwari, 64th Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 3rd Emir of Abuja, 1877-1902

His praise is sung:

“Who will stroke the Head of the Wild Buffalo? Beware of the Son of Abu Ja, the Victorious.”

Now Ibrahim was called Iyalai by reason of the number of his followers, and he was called Dodon Gwari, or the Terror of the Gwari, because in his reign they were finally subdued. Whilst he was away fighting at Ija, the locusts came in great numbers, more than had ever been seen in the reign of Abu the Tall, and they did much damage, for they destroyed the guinea-corn crop when it was ripening.

In his time, the town walls were extended from the gate of Pangamu to the gate of White Water and to the gate of Gwazunu, and when the Emir of Zaria, Abdu, was driven from his country, he sent a letter to Ibrahim to tell him that he wished to come with his following to Abuja, where he hoped they might settle in peace. But he did not come. However, in the year 1879, Mamman, the Chief Slave of the Emir of Zaria, came with seven hundred men, and Ibrahim set a place for them apart, outside the town to the north, where they built their own village ward, which is the ward of the men of Zaria. The Ibrahim gave Mamman the office of Dallatu, and after the death of the Galadima he gave him that title.

War

When the Emir had decided to go to war against some pagan town, he sent word to all his chiefs, telling them of his intentions so that they might make necessary provision and arrangements. Then he asked the chief Malams to discover for him a favourable day on which to set out, and four or five days before the one appointed, he had the war flag brought into the open space in front of his compound. This war flag, which disappeared, never to be seen again, in the confusion at the coming of the British in 1902, was white, and on it was written the verse from the Koran, “La’illa-ha illa-lah, Allahu, Akbar.” When the people of the town saw it set up, they knew that soon the fighting men would leave, and all made ready for the day, for it was the custom for each man to take his own food; and many women and children followed them.

When the day came, the Emir called together all the people of the town at the gate by which he was leaving; and the Madawaki, who was the Commander of the Army, had his special instrument brought out and played. This instrument was made of two flat pieces of metal joined on a stem, and it was struck repeatedly with a horn rousing the people to great excitement. **(Page: 18)**

Then the Emir had kolanuts brought out and piled in a heap on an ox-hide; these he divided amongst his chiefs and the chief men. Next the Emir exhorted his men to follow strictly the orders of their leaders in the battle, the Malams offered up prayers for the success of the expedition, and they all set off together, leaving the Galadima in charge of Abuja, for he did not go to war. The Chief Imam also stayed behind, but the Salanke and the other Imams went with the fighting men.

When they came close to the town which they were to attack, they picked 2 site for the war camp, and they spent three days building it; but during this time patrols were kept out to prevent the enemy attacking before the camp was made. Next they set about making their dispositions for the fight. If the town had no strong defences so that its men would be forced to come outside to fight,

then a suitable stretch of ground was chosen, and the Emir dismounted at the foot of a shade tree in the rear of his forces. Then he called all his chiefs and chief men to join him before the fight began, and divided kolanuts amongst them just as he had done when they were about to set out; and to the men with muskets he gave bullets and powder which they poured into a small calabash slung round the neck

Then the Emir gave the order to attack, and immediately the people shouted together with all their might “Allahu Akbar”; this they did three times, and rushed upon the enemy. The foot-soldiers armed with bows and arrows and spears went first, and with them, but spaced to give a clear view of the enemy, were the men with muskets; behind them came the mounted warriors, but very little distance separated them from the foot, and often they were all mixed up together. The Emir followed behind or stayed beneath a shade tree in the rear, for he was not permitted to take part himself in the fighting lest any harm should come to him, for then his people would lose all heart and the battle be lost. He was surrounded by the chiefs of his Household, and before him went his personal attendant.

In the front of the battle, fighting men and drummers were mixed together, and sometimes a drummer would throw down his drum to join in the fight; and though the other women stayed behind in the war camp with the children, yet the Zabiya¹⁵ and her followers would go into the middle of the battle singing and shouting encouragement to the men. Sometimes if the fighting became jammed so that there was no advantage to either side or if the enemy were unexpectedly resistant at some point, then the Chief Drummer would begin to play the Emir’s own call, and this is what the drums said, “Who can crunch the bone that the Hyena cannot crack?” When the Emir heard this, he would be overcome with fury, and seize his spear and press towards the place; but when the chiefs saw (**Page: 19**) this they would beg him not to go, promising to finish the battle for him. Then the fighting men redoubled their efforts in their anger; they drove the enemy right back and captured the town, and the Emir rewarded them with kolanuts, robes and wives. The Emir of Abuja, Ibrahim, fought many battles, east and west, north and south, taking the towns of Lakwada, Kakuru, Zanda, Muye, Kafin, Fuka, Jibidiga, Paikon Minna, and Tagbare, and all these places were subject to him.

The Defeat of the Emir of Kontagora

Now the men of Gusoro were allied to the Emir Ibrahim not by conquest but of their own free will, so also were the men of Kurmin Gurmana; and when Ibrahim Nagwamatse, Emir of Kontagora, the Sarkin Sudan, son of that Umaru who had wished to prevent the slaying of the three sons of Abu Ja, came down to raid the town of Kurmin Gurmana, they sent to the Emir of Abuja to help them. He called the Kuyambana and the Madawaki, Mohamadu, and they consulted together. The Kuyambana advised that he should go himself against the Fulani whilst the Madawaki stayed to help the Emir with the defence of the town and countryside in case of surprise. He asked for footmen and horsemen of the best, so the Emir gave him four hundred foot and two hundred horse; but some of the foot went back for they could not keep up with the horses, and the Kuyambana sent back some of the horsemen to help the Emir, keeping only one hundred and fifty with him.

Now the Kuyambana told the men of Gusoro and the men of Kurmin Gurmana to take twine from the kalgo tree and bind elephant grass on their heads so that he should know them from the enemy

¹⁵ See above p. 12

and not kill them by mistake in the heat of the battle. So the men of these two towns did as they were told; Gusoro bound their heads with twine from the kalgo tree, and Kurmin Gurmana wore elephant grass. When the battle began, the Fulani saw the men of Abuja give ground, and they pressed forward to rout them, for they did not know that this retreat was a trick. But when he had drawn the Fulani away from Nagwamatse's camp, the Kuyambana ordered the Gwari of Gusoro and of Kurmin Gurmana to make their way round to the rear and set fire to it, for when they should see their camp on fire, the Fulani would surely rush back to it. So, whilst the fight went on, the Gwari set fire to the Fulani camp.

When the Kuyambana saw the smoke rising up, he called out, taunting the Fulani, "I see clouds of smoke behind you. Is yours a dye-pit or a war camp that such fires burn in it?" And when the Fulani saw the fires, they wheeled round and galloped back to their camp, but they could not get in, for the Gwari of Gusoro and of Kurmin Gurmana covered it with their arrows. Now the Kuyambana and his people drove the enemy before them with great slaughter, (**Page: 20**) until the Emir of Kontagora saw that there was nothing for it but to abandon his camp with his store of kolanuts to the flames.

At dawn the next day, the Gwari went back to the Fulani camp and came across countless piles of kolanuts, all scorched. They had never seen kolanuts before, so they began to pick out those which were not too badly charred and to cook them like yams, for they supposed that it was some kind of food. When the nuts were cooked, they pulled them out to cool, and when they were cool, each man took one and put it in his mouth. But the taste was bitter, and when they tasted the bitterness, they spat it out.

So the Fulani of Kontagora had neither pleasure nor profit from their meeting with the Kuyambana, for the numbers who were slain were beyond reckoning. They went back about seven hundred men and fifty horses fewer than they came, without counting those who were picked off in the bush, for it was the arrogant custom of the Fulani to go out to battle dressed in their finest Feast Day robes, voluminous garments which prevented them from moving fast. But when the men of Abuja went to war, they put on short trousers to the knee, and coats reaching only to the trouser top; and in the bush, amongst the trees, they could move freely, for they carried no great banners or flags but could gallop their horses through copse or gorge or thicket.

The Last Fulani Invasion (The Battle of White Water)

In the year 1893, the Gwari of Ija, under their leader Jagaje, rebelled against the Emir Ibrahim, but he put down their revolt, and from that time they began to conspire with the people of Kwaka and other pagans to rise in general rebellion. They found a man of Abuja named Ibrahim, the son of the Barwan Dawaki, who gave them information about the defence of the town and of the villages. Then they began to raid all the farming communities, and at this time they even drove the people of Gwazunu, which is very close to Abuja, out of their homes; moreover, they came up to the gates of Abuja itself by night, and set fire to them. Then, whilst they were thus engaged, they conceived a further piece of treachery.

They sent Samu, the son of the chief of Ija, saying that they wished for peace again and friendship, and would invite the people of Abuja to come and trade in the market of Ija. The Emir Ibrahim, believing them, sent for a robe which he put on the son of Jagaje as a token of friendship; so the men of Abuja went to Ija to market and they returned safely. Then they went a second time, but

now the chief of Ija seized them to the number of more than one hundred and fifty. Of these he took thirty, sending them with the traitor Ibrahim to Zaria, to the Emir Yero, saying that he sent these Abuja prisoners in proof that he had begun the conquest of their land and town; and he begged Yero to come and help to destroy them utterly. (**Page: 21**)

This is the reason why the Emir of Zaria invaded our land in the year 1893, for he swore that wherever there were Abuja men to be found, he would come with war and destroy them. So he set out with a large well-armed host of his men towards Abuja. When he had travelled for a few days, he came to the bank of the Gurara river, but it was in full flood and there was no means of crossing, so he stopped with all his host at a village called Bwani on the river bank, waiting for the waters to fall.

At this time, the Emir Ibrahim was close by on the Abuja side of the river fighting against a town called Kabo; and now he heard that the Emir of Zaria had come to the Gurara with a mighty host, well armed. So he chose some of his warriors, the Captain of the Bodyguard, the Barden Kankana, the Barden Kuyambana, the Madawakin Makama and seven other horsemen and sent them to the river to discover the truth of the matter. They set off and came to the river, and as soon as they came there they saw a man standing on the bank of the Zaria side, who called out to them in Gwari so that the enemy might not understand, "Is that the Barden Kankana there?" and the Barden answered "Yes." Then the man continued, speaking still in Gwari, "They are coming over to attack you. When you get back, tell the Emir of their strength, and that he cannot beat them here, but should return to Abuja."

When they heard this, they recognised the voice as that of an Abuja man, the Garkuwa Karami, who had gone on a visit to some relatives in Zaria where he was held and forced to come with Yero's forces to show them the best ways.

So they went back and told the Emir what they had heard, but he said that he would not retreat to Abuja. But our men heard of the overwhelming strength of Zaria, so at night most of them left the camp and went back home, leaving Ibrahim with only a few followers. Then the Madawaki, Mamman,¹⁶ told the Emir that he must lead the rest of the people back to Abuja. So they set out, and all that day the rain poured down and they were sodden and dispirited.

A few days later the waters fell. Then Yero, the Emir of Zaria, crossed over with his host and set up his war camp near a small town called Diko, not far to the north of Abuja; he spent almost a month making this camp which was near the present Leper Settlement. The place is known to this day as "Yero's camp". All this time his men were raiding the nearby villages for food, but though they knew of this, the men of Abuja made no retaliation but ignored them, because the Emir said that they should be left alone if they had come only to forage, not to fight. And so it went on, until in the course of these raids the Fulani came to a village called Daguru, where some Abuja people were living. There was a little fighting in which one Abuja man, Usman, who was the Sarkin Fada of the Iya, was killed; also they captured the wife of another man named Abun Kure, who was with child, and took her to Zaria, where (**Page: 22**) she gave birth to a son; but when the British came to Zaria, she ran away, and came back to Abuja with the child.

Now there was a certain man in Abuja at this time who was the greatest warrior ever known. This was the Jarmai, Kauran Chachi. In the whole history of Abuja none had been known to equal him in courage and daring, not even such famous men as the Jarman Dawaki or the Madawaki, Abdu.

¹⁶ See p. 31

He was born in a little Gwari village called Pazami, and when he was a youth he was sold as a slave to a certain butcher named Mamuda, the grandfather of the present Liman Magajia. Soon he started to show himself unbeatable in the boxing matches: he would always end by knocking down his opponent, but no-one ever succeeded in getting the better of him. So it was, too, with the farm work; when he picked up his hoe and started to work with his companions, he never stopped when they did to rest or for a drink of water. Then his master put him to work on a farm near a village called Chachi, where because of his skill and hard work, he made him the headman, or Kaura, next in importance to the over-seer. That is why he was called Kauran Chachi although his real name was Mamman.

Whilst he was employed in this way, he also began to follow the warriors when they rode off on their raids. Always he distinguished himself, for he feared nothing and never gave up, and he had great powers of endurance. When one of the sons of Abu Ja, named Koko, noticed his courage and diligence, he spoke with him; and after the death of Kauran Chachi's master, gave him his freedom, making him one of his warriors to go raiding, to get him slaves and booty. He gave him a horse and sent him off to fight, and wherever he went he won the praise of all men for his deeds, so that people talked of no other warrior in Abuja. Once in a raid upon a town called Gafare in the south, he accomplished such feats as no man of Abuja had ever done; and that is why, when the Jarmai died, he was appointed in his place, for the Jarmai was the Chief Warrior.

Because of his mighty deeds and of the respect which he inspired, a song of praise was made for him; and this is what they sang:

“See the Hyena comes,
And men tumble over each other to escape!”

He was a dark skinned man, short but heavily built, and on his face were the Gwari tribal markings.

Now as soon as he heard of this raid on Daguru and of the capture of the woman, the Jarmai, Kauran Chachi, made all ready and went to wait at the gate of the town for his followers to come out with him to fight. This was at the gate of White Water which the British call the Bida Gate. On the Saturday, our men were ready and went out to raid the enemy, but before they reached Yero's war camp met them in the bush, and fought with them all day until evening. Seven of our men were killed, but we captured seven of their horses and two prisoners; then we cut off the prisoners' hands as was the custom, and let them go. **(Page: 23)**

In this fight, that same Koko who had taken Kauran Chachi to be one of his following, was cut off by the Fulani and pursued, but they could not catch him for he disappeared from their sight by the bank of a stream: his companions thought that he had been killed, but afterwards they saw that he had rejoined them. In this clash, too, the Jarmai's horse fell, hit in the croup by a spear. Immediately one of his followers, the Durumi, jumped off his horse, a huge cream dun, and gave it to the Jarmai who continued his pursuit of the Zarians right through their war camp; but they did him no harm, and he came back to his men.

On Monday, the twenty-first day of the month of Safar, the Emir Yero himself set out with all his host, intending to overwhelm Abuja. Wherever you might look that day, you would see horsemen making their way through the bush; but our men knew nothing of this, they went out expecting to find the enemy where they had met them before. It was not until they were some little distance from the town that they came face to face with them in the valley of a stream near the village called Zariyawa which Mamman, the Chief Slave to the former Emir of Zaria, had built for his

followers.¹⁷ Immediately, the Jarmai and the Barde ordered all the foot soldiers back to the town at top speed to give the news and send reinforcements. So they turned and raced back to Abuja, but the Jarmai and his horsemen held the passage against the whole of the van of Yero's forces and prevented them from crossing.

When the Fulani saw this, one of them galloped back to give the Emir of Zaria the news, saying, "Long life to you, Master. One single man of Abuja is holding up the whole force". Then Yero was filled with rage, and he said "What! An army of you stopped by one man, and he not even their Emir? We will go and see!" So he set off with all the strength of his army to swallow up this man of Abuja, and on the way he came suddenly upon the Jarmai and the others who, when they saw the might of Zaria, turned and galloped back for the town. Thereupon the enemy tried to cut them off, but they could not come up with them though they shot one man, the Barde of Zuba, who fell from his horse and was killed; but the horse ran back home, and the Fulani could not catch it.

The Emir Yero came close to the gate of Abuja and stopped at the foot of a huge bokoko tree whilst our fighting-men came out to the gate of White Water making their final preparation for the battle and watching what the enemy might do. At this time the Emir of Abuja was still in his house; indeed he was not aware of what was going forward. Then one of the Emir of Zaria's trumpeters began to blow his horn, and he blew the same phrase time after time which said, "Look, Ibrahim, look! Yero, son of Abdu, has come!" Whilst this was going on, the enemy released towards Abuja seven pigeons on which a spell had been laid that would bring harm to us. **(Page: 24)**

Then three warriors galloped up to the Emir Yero, and each vowed that he would not draw reign until he had taken the life of one of our men; but before they reached the line two of them changed their minds and went back; but one man did not fail, he galloped right through and felled an Abuja man named Isiaku, turned, and was about to gallop back to his Emir to tell him what he had done, when the Jarmai, Kauran Chachi, struck him through the neck with his spear killing him on the spot.

A little later the Emir of Abuja, Ibrahim, came out to the gate and met the Madawaki who was lamenting and crying, "This day's battle will go ill for us. We are lost. What can I do?" When the Emir heard this, he called the Jarmai and asked him "Who are they over yonder?" and the Jarmai said, "It is the army of the Emir of Zaria." So Ibrahim said "Very well, I must go back; be patient until I return." And the reason why he went back home was to fetch his spears and the sword of Zazzau, for our people believed that they would certainly gain the victory against any enemy who saw them with this sword. The Jarmai answered, "Go, then; before any man of Zaria shall pass this gate and come to your house, we shall be dead with the ants crawling into our mouths."

So, the Emir went back, but shortly afterwards the men of Abuja fell upon the enemy furiously, and they, after a short resistance, turned in flight; but the Jarmai had surrounded them and now his men began to cut them down, driving in amongst them until they had pressed them back into a gorge by the stream called Saiwa. The Zarians knew nothing of this gorge, and in it many of them were trapped and slaughtered; here, the Madawaki of Zaria, the son and heir of Yero, whose name was Kwasau,¹⁸ fell, and his horse ran away, so he laid his shield on the ground and sat upon it, saying, "Yero would not listen to us when we advised him against this war; now he has got what he wanted, perhaps he will be satisfied!" Thereupon one of the Zaria warriors rode back to the Emir and said, "Long life to you, Master. Alas! the Madawaki is lying there unhorsed. The enemy

¹⁷ See above, p. 17

¹⁸ Succeeded his father in 1897. Deposed in 1902

will kill him.” So the Emir turned and came back to where his son was, but they lost about one hundred men before they succeeded in rescuing him.

So the men of Abuja drove the enemy in front of them and chased them back to their war camp with great slaughter, but then, as night was falling and they were certain that Yero had been decisively beaten and driven away from Abuja, they went back home. Then they collected all the prisoners who had been taken, three hundred men, at the Gate of White Water in order to cut off both their hands so that they should not fight again, but the Wambai said, “No. If we do that, enmity will never cease: better kill them outright.” So all the three hundred prisoners were killed (Page: 25) except one man, the son of the Makama of Zaria, Jafaru, who was the half- brother of the Emir Yero, for it was the custom of the Habe people of Abuja not to kill any prisoner who was a son of the ruling house of their enemies. Then their heads were cut off, and put on poles which were stuck along the wall of the town so that everyone who came in or who left by the Gate of White Water should see them; and this battle increased the enmity between the Fulani and Abuja until the coming of the British put an end to the strife. But after a little time had passed, the Emir Ibrahim gave the Makama of Zaria’s son garments and money for his journey and handed him on to the Sarkin Keffi to be sent back to Zaria, for at that time Keffi was on terms of friendship with both Zaria and Abuja.

The War with Toto and Nassarawa

After this there was no other important fighting except the war with Toto which the Fulani Emir of Nassarawa waged against the people of Abuja for two years. Now the reason for this war was that there were two peoples in Toto, the Habe and the Kwatawa. They lived together in peace until one day a quarrel arose, whereupon the Hausa people sent to the Emir of Abuja telling him that the dispute was serious, begging him to come and settle it. So the Emir took counsel with his chiefs, and said, “You, Madawaki, shall go to settle this quarrel amongst the men of Toto, and you shall bid them not to quarrel again.” And they decided this because the place was in the Madawaki’s province.

So, he set out with his men and others of the chief men of Abuja, and when he reached the gate of Toto, he camped there. He sent a messenger to the men of Toto to say that he had come to settle their quarrel, bidding them meet him outside the walls of the town to talk. But the Kwatawa refused. They would not go out with the Habe to greet the Madawaki, but after three days drove them all from the town into the Madawaki’s camp.

The next morning, the Madawaki began the fight with the Kwatawa at dawn, and it lasted until midday. Then one of the sons of the Chief of Toto, named Atuga, came out of the town to one of the chiefs of Abuja, and asked to be led to the Madawaki. He told the Madawaki that he wished to put an end to the fight, for until now Habe and Kwatawa had lived together in peace, and war between them was an evil thing. So the Madawaki said, “Go back into your town, then, and if it is truth that you speak, come again with the Chief of Toto and your other chiefs.” But the Sarkin Toto refused to come out, and Atuga again came to the Madawaki and said, “I am the Chief’s son; but he is the Chief and his word must be obeyed. His word is that he will not settle his quarrel with talk.” (Page: 26)

Then a certain slave of the Emir of Nassarawa named Magayakijaki came from the town of Afako with four horses and a hundred foot-soldiers to help the Kwatawa against the Habe, for the Emir

of Nassarawa is the Chief of the Kwata people. But when they saw that they could accomplish nothing against the men of Abuja, they sent to the Emir himself to come to help them. So he set out with his army and they came to Toto on the thirteenth day of the month of Zulhaji.

On the very day of his arrival he went out against us but we took three of his horses and killed thirty of his men without having a single man killed that day. When the Madawaki saw this, he made a new camp on the road from Toto to Nassarawa in order to interrupt the enemy's supplies; and the fighting went on, though sometimes they would rest for seven days and then they would fight for two or three days on end.

Then the Emir of Nassarawa sent out a summons to a certain town called Katakwa to come and help him; and they sent twenty men armed with harpoon-guns such as they used for hunting elephant, and six hundred bowmen. When he saw how strong these reinforcements were, that day he divided his forces into two parts, intending to trick the Madawaki by sending some to fight on the usual battle-ground, whilst he himself with his horsemen and the harpooners and two hundred bowmen moved round the back of the Abuja camp to burn it. You see his cunning!

When the men of Abuja saw the enemy come out to battle as usual, they left the camp to come to grips with them, but Kauran Chachi, the Jarmai, said, "There is something strange in the fighting today. I shall not go to the usual place, but I shall patrol the camp." So he got on his horse, and whilst he was patrolling round with a few other mounted warriors, he came suddenly upon the Emir of Nassarawa and the harpooners. He did not know that they were harpooners and he charged towards them, but they did not stir. He made another charge towards them, but still they did not move, so he stopped short and did not come right up to them. Then he called to another great warrior, the Sarkin Fada, saying "Today these men come in strength; you see that when I feint at them they do not stir" So the Sarkin Fada answered "Then we must attack them without delay." So they fell upon them and drove the Emir of Nassarawa from the field; they killed the harpooners every one, and the men with muskets; they drove all the archers in flight, and the Emir of Nassarawa led the flight. Our men pursued him up to the gate of the town, and for all his hurry he hardly reached it in time; they captured many harpoons and muskets and arrows, but they lost six horses by the harpoons.

So the fighting continued without respite, and the men of Abuja came together in council. They said, "Let us dig a deep ditch round our camp, for who knows when this war will end?" So, they (**Page: 27**) began to dig a ditch round the camp, but the warriors spoke together and said, "Let us end this digging like slaves, and finish the war by our valour in battle." So, they ceased digging.

After this they rested for three days, but on the fourth day they went out to the battle ground. In the fight Koko was struck so that he fell from his horse; he could not get to his feet and the Nassarawans hastened to come up and kill him, but his son Alawa held them off as he cried "Father, rise quickly from the ground and mount this horse and let us get back to the camp." So, Koko was lifted on to the horse and brought back to camp.

Now when he was recovering from the wound, Koko called together the fighting men of Abuja and he said "I want the gate of Toto brought to me, and I will give you a thousand thousand cowries." So they said that they would fetch the gate. Early in the morning they went out to the gate of Toto to bring it away, but when they began to tear at it, the Fulani and the Kwatawa came out to prevent them, and they fought. Now amongst our men this day there was no great warrior or chief save for one of the Emir's sons named Kuren Kaka, but nevertheless they pulled the gate

away, some of them fighting, some tearing at the gate, until they brought it to the camp to Koko, who gave them the thousand thousand cowries. And the fighting continued without respite.

Then our men heard that a certain robe was being brought to the Emir of Nassarawa. Now had they done nothing to prevent it reaching him, they would have been lost, for this was a magic robe, and if he had put it on and gone out to fight wearing it, he must have destroyed them. So the Madawaki chose some of the boldest of his warriors, the Jagaban Dawaki, the Barden Galadima, the Madawakin Barde, and other horse and foot, telling them to block the road from Nassarawa and to seize the charm before it could reach the Emir. So they went and hid on the road between Barno and Buga. Then the Nassarawans came, at their head was the Dallatu, but the warriors fell upon them, killing the Dallatu and seizing all the loads together with the magic robe which they brought to the Madawaki.

Now when the Emir of Nassarawa heard this and learned that his charm had been captured, he was mad with fury. He collected all his men and rushed out to battle, and on that day the Barden Zuba, one of the Abuja warriors, was killed. After this the Emir conceived a stratagem. He found some white gunpowder and sent certain evil men of his company by night to the Abuja camp. At dawn the camp was fired, and the fire spread over the whole camp so that it was utterly destroyed and not a hut remained standing. Then when the Nassarawans saw that the fire had taken hold, they fell upon the men of Abuja to slaughter them. But when our men saw this, they left the fire to burn itself out, and rushed to battle, driving the enemy right back to the gate of Toto. And this day we beheld a wonder, for we had taken a Pagan of the Gade tribe (**Page: 28**) prisoner and had tied him fast. We took him out to an open space and threw him to the ground to slit his throat like a sheep, but he disappeared from the sight of all men and was never seen again.

Then at last the Nassarawans took counsel of each other; they said, "We must end this war." The Emir sent his son, the Chief of Chiji, to the Madawakin Abuja to say that he wished to end the dispute there and then. So the Madawaki called the men of Abuja together to tell them the words of the Emir of Nassarawa, and they said, "Let us end it." They said to the messenger, "Go then back to the Emir and say that we are agreed; we will meet him at Sharu to settle the quarrel." So they met, and agreed upon the day when they should come together in Toto. There the quarrel ended, and they said, "Never again will we fight one another till the end of the world, but live in peace and confidence."

So the Emir of Nassarawa left Toto with all his men and went back to his own country; then the Madawaki left with all his men and came back to Abuja, and there was no more fighting between them, only peace and friendship. After this there were no more wars before the coming of the British.

The Coming of the British

It is said that the first white men to come to Abuja came in the reign of Abu Kwaka the Tall. It was a Doctor Baikie who came with six others from Lokoja, and they camped at the foot of a cotton tree across the river Iku. They sent word to the Emir who sent back his greeting, and they were much pleased; but at this time white men were not known and it was thought that they were Arabs. Then they told the Emir that they wished to build a trading shed and trade with the people, so the Emir sent the Town Crier to cry to the people that they should take anything they had to sell to the white men as well as food. The people took chickens and eggs, ducks, bananas and other

food to them, and the white men paid for all the goods that were brought to them with pieces of fine cloth; but after they had stayed for two days they left and went to Zaria.

By the year 1900 the British were in Zaria, and in this year a white man came to Zuba of the Koro near Abuja, but the gate of the town was closed in his face and he was refused admittance by the people. So the Chief of Zuba sent a letter of excuse to Sir Frederick Lugard, the High Commissioner, who accepted it, but sent a letter of warning and explanation together with a Union Jack. Both the letter¹⁹ and the flag have been preserved to this day.

About this time there were certain men of the footsoldiers of Abuja who lived in the district of Kutada, Tawari and close to Uma'isha in the south, which towns were in the province of (**Page: 29**) the Madawaki of Abuja. Amongst them there was a young brother of the Madawaki named Uban Koro, and a son of the Madawaki named Angulun Mashi, and there was Musa of the ward of Kurenkaka. These were the leaders, and they did nothing but rob travellers and roister on the highways.

Now these places were on the trade route from Lokoja through Abuja to Zaria and the other Hausa states, and by this way men passed to Keffi and the other big towns to the east and north, to Jos and Bauchi. If the Madawaki's men found any traveller upon this highway, they would kill him and seize his goods; and if they made a big haul of goods, they would take their share and send the rest to the Madawaki, who would take out a share for the Emir. At this time a British Resident named Carnegie was killed at Tawari near Uma'isha, and then, in the month of June in the year 1902, in the course of these lawless ways a Christian convert named Bako was set upon and killed together with a messenger of the British, their goods were stolen, and there was no-one to prevent it. Many complaints were made to Lokoja, and the Emir, the Madawaki and the other chiefs responsible were warned several times, but they would not mend their ways.

So, in the month of August of the year 1902 at the height of the rains, Captain Moloney, the Resident of Nassarawa Province who was shortly afterwards murdered at Keffi, together with Lieutenant-Colonel Beddoes and a company of soldiers which included about sixteen British,²⁰ crossed the river Iku and camped at the spot where the first white men had stayed. The Resident sent his messenger Abdu Tinti, to the Emir to say that he wished him to come and speak with him, but the Emir refused to come, saying that anything that the Resident might have to say could be said to the Madawaki. The latter, with the other chiefs of Abuja, came out and stayed by the town walls, but the Emir would not leave his house. Then the Resident sent for the Madawaki to come to him, and he came and was arrested.

When the other chiefs saw that the Madawaki was being held, they made an attempt to rescue him; but they found that they could accomplish nothing, and scattered in confusion, and the whole town was in confusion, and the soldiers came in.

Then the Emir fled to the Abuchi Hills rather than fall into the hands of the British, but the soldiers followed him. There was a little fighting in the village where he had taken refuge, and in it Ibrahim

¹⁹ See Appendix III

²⁰ Details given in the Annual Report for 1902 by Sir F. Lugard to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary for the Colonies, are: "Officers 6; British N. C. Os., 4; Rank and File 218; Guns, 2; Maxims 2; Doctor 1. Casualties, Nil. Remarks: much sickness."

was mortally wounded. The soldiers took up his body and brought it back to the town where he was buried in the compound of Wagu. So died the last independent Emir of Abuja. **(Page: 30)**

Now Ibrahim was one of the warrior Emirs who did his utmost to guard the land of Abuja and prevent it from falling into the hands of the Fulani as all the surrounding country had long since fallen, and he helped the Pagans in other parts to fight the Fulani, for, because of the slave raiding, they dared not live in the open country to farm or trade but fled to the forests and the hills, though many of them were caught and taken to be sold in other districts. Yet the coming of the British was of the Mercy of God, that the chiefs of Abuja might rest from their strife with the Fulani, that they might live in peace with them now that the raids were at an end, and in friendship and marriage. And the Pagans came out of the forests and down from the hills to farm and trade in the open country, and those who had been taken away as slaves were restored to their homes.

The Reign of Muhamman Gani, 65th Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 4th Emir of Abuja, 1902-1917.

His Praise is Sung:

“Look not with too friendly Eyes upon the World. Pass your Hand over your Face in Meditation, not from the Heat of the Sun. The Bull Elephant is wise and lives long.”

After the Emir Ibrahim had been buried, Captain Moloney asked the Madawaki to name the man who was next in the succession, so that there might be peace in the country; and the Madawaki named Muhamman Gani, son of Abu Kwaka the Tall, and he became Emir in August 1902. When the people saw that no harm was intended to them, and that no strange ruler had been imposed upon them but a rightful heir, then they came back into the town from the bush and the villages and the other places where they had hidden. But Koko fled to Ija and refused to obey Muhamman’s order to return with his men because he was jealous of him, but his resistance was soon overcome, and he was seized and sent to exile in Lokoja together with the Madawaki so that they should not disturb the peace; and from that time the deposed Madawaki whose name was Mamman was called ‘Maje-Bariki’, or “off to the Barracks!” Then the Resident and the soldiers went back to Keffi, where Captain Moloney was murdered by the Magajin Keffi, so it was not until eighteen months later that a fort was built above the town and close **(Page: 31)** control of Abuja was established. In 1904 a company of soldiers came,²¹ but after a few years they were withdrawn to Keffi again.

In April 1905, the Emir himself went to Keffi where all the other Chiefs of the Province of Nassarawa (for Abuja was at first included in that Province, which no longer exists) had gone to meet the High Commissioner, Sir Fredrick Lugard, who had come to confirm them in their titles, explaining what would be required of them,²² and giving to each a Staff of Office. Then he chose Keffi as the capital of Nassarawa.

Now the chief business of this gathering was to settle the boundaries of Abuja, so the British asked the Emir and his advisors what were the original boundaries; but they did not understand the reason for this question. They thought that they might be blamed for everything that had happened in the whole area, so they spoke only of the country near the town itself. So the whole of the Kafin-Kuta-

²¹ “. . . in April 1904 I was again compelled to put a stop to their lawlessness, and Abuja was occupied by a garrison.” (Sir F. Lugard, Annual Report for 1904.)

²² “The attitude of the many native chiefs . . . appeared most satisfactory, with the exception, perhaps, of Abuja, to whom I spoke somewhat emphatically regarding conduct in the past. The warning seemed to have considerable effect.” (Ibid).

Paiko country was left outside, and the boundaries were set at the river Gurara to the north and west. The high plateau which runs down from the country of Jos westwards right to Keffi and Nassarawa became the eastern boundary, whilst a range of hills divided Abuja from Nassarawa to the south. In the year 1910, Koton Karfi, which had been included in Keffi, was restored to Abuja; but in 1913, the acting-Governor, Mr. C. L. Temple, visited Abuja, and in that year Koton Karfi was given to the Nufe country; Jere and Jajjale were also taken away and given to Zaria, and the northern boundary set back to the river Tafa. The loss of all this territory²³ was a great blow to Abuja and to the prosperity of the Emirate. After the boundaries had been settled, then District Heads and Village Heads were appointed and other officials both within and outside the town; and those Pagans who had stayed in the forests and on the hill tops were brought out to live in the open country.

Muhamman Gani was a tall, light-skinned man, God-fearing and good to his people. In his time the first Alkali, the Native Judge, was appointed, and this was Malam Umaru; the first Treasury was built, Malam Hasan of Kano becoming the Ma'aji or Treasurer, and the first taxes were collected; the office of Waziri was created and another Kano man, Malam Gambo was appointed, but now (**Page: 32**) this title and the later title of Wakili and all other titles foreign to the Habe of Abuja have been abolished, except only that of Alkali.

Now, too, the first mangoes, coconuts and kolanut seeds came up from Lokoja, sheanut and locust-bean trees were planted on the Abuchi road all the way from Kaka to Shafatoka, and dhub grass from Nassarawa was planted in Abuja town. The first hand-ginery was established, and cotton grown and prepared for sale. Rubber, too, was produced for the first time and taken to Yewuni, Girinya and Lokoja for sale; and the British began to buy cotton, rubber, sheanuts and palm-oil; and European goods were seen in plenty.

In his time the prayer-ground of Idi was moved outside the town from the open space in front of the Emir's Compound where it had been set for fear of the conquering Fulani; and now the nomad Fulani came into the country with their herds, and their first Chief was Sadiku. The Courthouse and the Mosque were built in the space beside the Emir's Compound; and pupils were sent to the new School for the Sons of Chiefs at Kano. The market was moved from the centre of the town right out to the foot of the Salanke's Hill, but this was against the wishes of the people who called it the 'Compulsory Market'; so later it was brought back inside the town to its present site. A house for the British Administrative Officer was also built, this was on the site of the fort, for which there was no further use. Work on the railway between Minna and Baro was done by men from Abuja, and the Emir went to Lafiagi in Bida to see it; and in 1913 he attended the first gathering of the Northern Chiefs at Kano. In 1917, Muhamman Gani was retired from office and went to Zaria to the Emir of Zaria, Alihu dan Sidi, and he lived there on pension until he died in 1919.

²³ See map at back [not included in this version].

The Reign of Musa Angulu, 66th Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 5th Emir of Abuja, 1917-1944.

His Praise is Sung:

“Even the Skin of the Hyaena frightens the Dogs; so much the more is your Anger to be feared. Swift to act, yet you condemn Rashness.”

Three days later, the Councillors chose Musa Angulu, son of Ibrahim, to be their new Emir. He had held the title of Madawaki, and had been district head of Izom since 1912. He was of short stature, not very dark-skinned, a God-fearing man, fond of his **(Page: 33)** people and happy to live at peace. He was tireless in his work, and insisted that all his chiefs should attend faithfully to their duties and deserve his trust, for he hated deceit, seeking only the truth.

In his time, many new things came to Abuja. The money introduced by the British instead of cowry-shells came into full use; the town of Abuja was cut by new wide roads; a huge cement bridge was put across the Gurara river at Izom, linking Abuja by road with Minna and the railway; and others were built across the Iku and the Usuma linking Abuja with Keffi and the east. Motor cars became a common sight in the Emirate, and Musa was the first Emir of Abuja to go up in an airplane. Much of the work on the railway between Lafiyan Barebari and Kafanchan was done by men from Abuja, and in 1926 the Emir was honoured by the King of England for this, receiving the King's Medal for African Chiefs. In the previous year he had gone to Kano to the assembly of Northern Chiefs to meet the King of England's son, the Prince of Wales.

Many new buildings were put up in the town, a new Treasury, an Alkali's Courthouse, the Workshops and the Central Office. An Elementary School was built, and of their own accord the younger men formed a Literary Society, and a Reading Room was opened in which was collected books written in nearly every language of Nigeria as well as English.

In the reign of Musa, ploughing by oxen was introduced and to encourage the people he bought oxen for his own farms in addition to those used on his Administration's Experimental Farm. The British brought many other new ways of farming, and men were chosen to be trained in the new methods so that they might go out amongst the ignorant people and spread their knowledge. Some were taught about trees and timber, and became Forest Guards; others were trained in Sanitary work to look after the cleanliness of the place and the health of the people. A Dispensary was built in the town, others at Bwari, Gerki and Kwali; and Sleeping Sickness teams came to fight this disease. When the locusts came, the British brought poisons to kill them.

In his time, too, gold and tin and columbite were found in the Emirate, and many miners, European, Syrian and African came; but, as yet no extensive or lasting deposits have been discovered. The United Africa Company set up a canteen in Abuja town to buy the local produce and to sell European goods.

Just before the death of Musa, an epidemic of cerebro-spinal meningitis broke out, but the young men of the Native Administration staff did a great work in taking the miraculous new drugs to the sufferers in the isolation huts outside the town by the Iya's Gate; so the sickness passed with but few deaths. For some years the Emir had been blind, but nevertheless he did not at any time relax his care for the welfare of his people. He died on Thursday, March 3rd., 1944. May God take his soul in keeping. Amin. **(Page: 34)**

The Accession of Sulaimanu Barau, 67th Habe Sarkin Zazzau, 6th Emir of Abuja, 1944-

His Praise is Sung:

“Be patient, and listen not to idle Tales. Poisoned Chaff attracts the silly Sheep—and kills them.”

On Sunday, the thirteenth of March, God gave the succession to Malam Sulaimanu Barau, son of Muhamman Gani, who before this had held many important posts. He was educated at Bida Provincial School from 1918-22, and he was chosen to go from there to the Training College at Katsina to complete his studies. He was the first Nigerian Emir to have received this education, and the first English-speaking Emir to be appointed.

He spent five years at Katsina, and then came to teach in Abuja in 1927; he was at Keffi from 1927-30, and at Bida from 1930-31. From Bida he was brought back to Abuja and made District Head of Diko, receiving the title of Iyan Bakin Kasuwa. In 1936 he returned to Abuja town to the Central Office of the Native Administration, having the Treasury, the School, the Workshops, the Dispensary, and all the other departments under his supervision; and this was in order that he might help the Emir Musa, who in old age had lost his sight.

When he was appointed Emir, he abolished some of the old customs of the Habe, and in particular he put an end to the practice of people going down on their knees and pouring dust on their heads in obeisance before him or any other person. In the first year of his reign, a motor road was opened from Kwali to the boundaries of Koton Karfi, linking up Abuja with the south-east; whilst in Abuja town an Infant Welfare Centre with a house for a resident midwife was built and given to the people by some British friends. Many other plans for the development of the Emirate and the welfare of the people are in hand, for the Emir is anxious above all to improve the condition of the people of Abuja, whatever their race or religion. God grant him long life. God grant him happiness. God grant him success. Amin. Amin.

End of Part One [of the HTML version of the book]

Note:

Since this was written, many new responsibilities have fallen upon Malam Sulaimanu Barau. His wide experience in (**Page: 35**) educational matters led to his appointment as one of the two Emirs on the committee of the Northern Provinces Board of Education; he is also the representative of the Native Authorities of the North on the committee of the new Clerical Training College.

He was a member of the Legislative Council for all Nigeria under the new constitution introduced by Sir Arthur Richards. He was chosen by the second-class Chiefs of Niger Province to be one of their three representatives in the Northern House of Chiefs; and this body, at their inaugural meeting, elected him, together with the Emirs of Gwandu, and Katsina and the Atta of Igbirra, to the full Legislative Council of Nigeria.

When the revised Constitution came into effect in 1952, he was made an honorary Officer of the British Empire in recognition of his services.

APPENDIX I

The Rulers of Zazzau who reigned in Zaria

1. Gunguma
2. Matazu
3. Tumsah
4. Tamusa
5. Sulaimanu
6. Maswaza
7. Dinzaki
8. Nagogo
9. Katchina
10. Nawanchi
11. Machikai
12. Kawo
13. Bashi Kar
14. Majidadi
15. Dhirahi
16. Jinjiku
17. Sakannu

These are the Mohammedan Rulers:

18. Monan Abu, 1505-1530
19. Gidan dan Masukanan, 1530-1532
20. Nohir, 1532-35
21. Kawanissa, 1535-1536
22. Bakwa Tunkuru, 1536-1539
23. Ibrahim, 1539-1566
24. Karama, 1566-1576
25. Kafo, 1576-1578
26. Bafo, 1578-1581
27. Aleyu I, 1581-1587
28. Isma'ilu, 1587-1598
29. Musa, 1598-
30. Gadi, 1598-1601
31. Hamza, 1601-
32. Abdulla, 1601-1610
33. Burema, 1610-1613
34. Aleyu II, 1613-1640
35. Muhama Rabo, 1640-1641
36. Ibrahim Basuki, 1641-1654
37. Bafo II, 1654-1657

38. Sukana, 1657-1658
39. Aleyu III, 1658-1665 (**Page: 37**)
40. Ibrahim, 1665-1668
41. Muhaman Abu, 1668-1686
42. Sayo Ali, 1686-1696
43. Bako dan Musa, 1696-1701
44. Ishaku, 1701-1703
45. Burema Ashakuka, 1703-1704
46. Bako dan Sunkuru, 1704-1715
47. Muhammadu dan Gunguma, 1715-1726
48. Uban Bawa, 1726-1733
49. Muhammadu Gani, 1733-1734
50. Abu Muham Gani, 1734-
51. Dan Ashakuka, 1734-1737
52. Muhama Abu, 1737-1757
53. Bawo, 1757-1759
54. Yunusa, 1759-64
55. Yakubu, 1764-1767
56. Aleyu IV, 1767-1773
57. Chikkoku, 1773-1779
58. Muhama Maigamo, 1779-1782
59. Ishaku Jatau, 1782-1802
60. Muhamman Makau, 1802-1804 (1808 according to Murray Last, 1966, p. 467).

Last, Murray D. 1966. A Solution to the Problems of Dynastic Chronology in 19th Century Zaria and Kano. D. M. Last Source: *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, (3), 3: 461-469.

Part II: The Land and the People

The Land

The land of Abuja is exceedingly fertile, and with the small population, the people have plenty of room for farming, which is their chief occupation.

They do not stay and farm one particular strip of ground for long, but make a new farm in fresh ground every three years. One reason for this is that there is no lack of good land in the open bush, and the other is the absence of manure to keep the old farm fertile, for not all the country is suitable for cattle because of the tsetse flies, particularly in the south, though sheep and goats are kept, and pigs in the towns and villages of the Gwari. Artificial manures are not known, and so it is easier for the farmers to go further afield and leave the old ground fallow. Often the new farms are three or four miles from the village, so the men build huts and spend the whole day there, returning only at night; some indeed spend the night there, cooking their own food. Often you will go through a village in the day time and find no-one there but the women and small children.

Rainfall is abundant, between 65-70 inches, and so the people are able to grow very many different kinds of crops. Amongst the most important of the foods grown are guinea-corn from which also beer is made, maize, hungry-rice, and other cereals, various kinds of yam, and a grass with edible seeds. Then, too, there is rice; but this is considered to be a food for the well-to-do, except on the occasion of a wedding feast; and there are groundnuts, sweet-potatoes, Indian hemp and cassava. But cassava was not liked by the people of Abuja in former times, and only a little was planted by farmers in the bush, for even to this day there is a superstition which holds that whenever the planting of cassava increases, in that year we shall know hunger; indeed, there is an old curse which runs, "Cassava, false as Pharaoh, good ground is no place for you. May God deny you the light of the sun!"

Of all the foods which we have mentioned, the favourite with the people of Abuja has always been yam, pounded and mixed into a thick paste to eat with soup. They also drink a water gruel because formerly they could not, as now, mix milk with their corn-meal, for the Fulani were their bitter enemies and they would not allow even the nomad Fulani to enter the country. But at last the Emir Muhamman Gani allowed these Fulani to come with their herds to spend the dry season in his country.

There are, too, herbs and spices from which soups and gravies are made and flavoured, native tomatoes, peppers, chillies and the leaves of the baobab tree. And the peppers grown in Abuja give a (Page: 44) better flavour to the dish than any others grown in Nigeria. In the forests there is fine timber, whilst in the marshlands are the oil-palms which give both red oil and palm-wine (but to take this is harmful to the trees), and bananas, pawpaws, and even an edible fungus which some call "Gwari meat". Cotton seeds are also made into a paste which is excellent in soups. Honey is plentiful, and from the earliest times sweets have been made of flour and honey and peppers. A gruel of corn-meal called in Hausa 'koko' is also made and sold in the mornings for breakfast. But the people of Abuja do not call it 'koko' but 'ashalafiya' which means 'drink in peace and health', and the reason for this is that there was once a powerful man, a son of Abu Ja, named Koko, the same who fought against Yero and at Toto and was afterwards exiled with the Madawaki by the British, and he declared that no old woman should go hawking and shouting his name around the town, so the name was changed to avoid offending him. But it became a thing of derision with

other Hausa men that the people of Abuja should be so much afraid of a man that they changed the language to please him.

Inside the town, the Hausa have small irrigation farms where they grow onions, chillies, native tomatoes, and other spices and vegetables; and every farmer has a mud-built corn-bin at the back of the house where he stores the gathered corn and produce. Each householder has land of which his family owns the farming rights, and if another man, a new-comer, goes to him and asks him for land on which to farm, then he will give him some, and allow him to farm it for three years or more without payment, or sometimes he will take part of the crop in payment. If, afterwards, any dispute arises, it is taken before the Emir or the Council, but no-one may go and farm another man's land without his permission or the permission of the Village Head or of the Council.

Farming

In olden times, the people of Abuja worked under conditions very different from those of today, for then there were slaves who did all kinds of work for their masters, and so it was not necessary to earn a living in the modern way. Every master of a compound, whether he were Hausa or Koro, Gwari or Gade, or of any other tribe, had a farm on which the men of his compound would go out to work every day from early morning until noon, and after this they might go each to his own little farm to work. This little individual farm was called an 'evening' farm, for it was not until the evening that much could be done on it. From the produce of the general farm, the master would feed and clothe all his people and find them wives or husbands; but he took no tribute from the individual farms, each man might do with his produce whatever he wished.

In some compounds, when a youth married he was given a hoe and other tools and a farm of his own to work, and he would no (**Page: 45**) longer work on the general farm; but amongst the Gwarin Yemma the youths continued to work on the general farm even after marriage. This system is maintained by them to this day, with the sons of the household taking the place of the slaves.

The number working at normal times on the general farm depended on the numbers of the household, but if the guinea-corn harvest was good, the master would take extra women to carry the sheaves to his compound. Then he gave to each a quarter of what she carried, so that if she had carried four sheaves she would have one for herself as her reward. But in the case of crops which could not be gathered in a single day, such as beans, cotton, peppers and the like, the master would send and collect women to go and work for three or four days for him, and then they might go and pick for one day for themselves, a custom which the farmers still follow today.

The nuts from the oil-palm were gathered by the master's wives, who pressed the red oil from them. This oil would belong to the master, but the meat of the nut which remains belonged to the women. This is still so today, and to this day, also, the sheanuts which grow in the open bush belong to the women of the nearest town or village, and anyone of them may go out and collect them and do with them what she pleases; but those which grow inside a farm are the property of the farmer whose wife will pick them and make oil from them. The locust-bean trees belong to the men who pick the pods and give them to their wives to pound; the beans themselves belong to the husband who sells them to the makers of bean cakes, but the edible yellow powder which coats the inside of the pod belongs to the women.

If the owner of a farm could see that the work was too much for his people or that they would be late with the sowing, then he would send to other compounds to ask that they should come and

help him. He would have foods of different kinds prepared for them, and if he had the means he would buy kolanuts for them and beer to drink. So, too, the Emir or any Chief would call together the people of his own or of a near-by town to come and help on his farms; and in addition to the kolanuts and the beer, he would give the leaders robes and new hoes.

This system of mutual help is still common today, and this is how a man sets about arranging for it. He will tell his friends or relations which day he wishes the work to be done, and he will also send word to the drummers. When the day comes, all the people will gather at the farm. Then the drumming begins, the pipes blow, and the traditional phrases of encouragement are shouted and sung. The men spread into one long line, and the leader bends to the first stroke of his furrow, the others starting one after the other on theirs. There is competition amongst them to see who can finish first, but there are always some good workers and some lazy ones and the drums and the shouts encourage them to greater efforts until sometimes (**Page: 46**) the place is turned into a playground, with frequent presents going to the drummers and Beggars²⁴ to encourage them also.

Formerly, unmarried youths did not seek help in this way on their little individual farms but they would call two or three friends to help them; and if all of them needed help, they would go round in turn, one day to each, until all was finished; but they could do none of this until work on the general farm had ended.

Women also help each other by working together when they have a floor of beaten earth to lay inside the house or before the entrance.

Other Occupations

The majority of the people are farmers, and so they do not consider any other occupation to be of equal importance; the master of a compound in the old days did not trouble to put his sons or his slaves to any business except farming, but he would always have a general farm for his people and allow them individual farms for themselves.

Only after the farming is finished do most people turn to other matters, for when the guinea-corn harvest is in, then the heaviest work is over. Iron ore is melted in the Bwari and Kawu districts, and so it is the men of those places who, together with those of Abuja, are the best blacksmiths, making knives and hoes and all the other tools for the farm.

The Gwarin Genge are the best at working wood, and they make the pestles and mortars for the kitchen, and also tobacco pipes. The Nufe in the Emirate are the best at making small canoes, door frames, stools for women, and clogs. The farmers themselves cut the handles for their hoes and axes; they choose one man to spend the day making the handles for them, and then they go together to his farm and do a day's work there to repay him.

In most towns and villages there are weavers of white cotton cloth; others make narrow strips with threads of black and light blue, closely woven, and women weave the heavy patterned cloth, white, with stripes of different colours, which is much used for night-wraps. The Hausa are the best tailors

²⁴ The Maroƙa, or professional beggars, praise-singers and, generally, musicians—who are the principal feature of all Hausa celebrations

of the long wide robes, but many other people can make the shorter and smaller kinds; the Hausa, the Gwarin Genge, the Ganagana and the Koro of Zuba are all good dyers.

The Hausa are the best builders and thatchers, too, though there are builders in all the tribes; and they are best, too, at leather work.

Three different kinds of mats are woven by the different tribes; the Gwarin Genge are the best at weaving produce bags; string and twine are made everywhere. Gwari women make the clay cooking vessels, and besides this and their weaving, it is the women who make sweets and savoury foods to sell. (Page: 47)

The Bassa make traps for fish, and follow the rivers fishing; and the farmers of all the tribes go hunting after the harvest in the dry season when the grass is burned off and there is no farming to be done. There are elephant in the forest land round Kawu, and buffalo and many kinds of antelope especially near Abuja itself; there are monkeys of many kinds and baboons and hyena almost everywhere; leopards are more numerous in the southern part of the Emirate. Guinea-fowl, bush fowl, crown birds and most of the other birds common to the North are found in Abuja.

Trade and Markets

As the people of Abuja are mostly occupied in farming, it is the produce of this, together with the products of home industry, which largely fill our markets. These are in charge of a market-master who sees to the cleanliness of the place, that full measure is given to buyers, and that disputes are settled quickly and fairly; for his pay, all the people who come to sell in the market will take a little of what they have brought and give it to him. Nowadays the three most important markets of the Emirate, those at Abuja, Madalla (Zuba) and Diko, are in charge of a master who is paid by the Native Authority.

Seven important trade routes pass through Abuja; along these, surplus produce is taken and goods not easily found here are brought back. We take mats, sheanut oil and honey to Bida, bringing back henna and plaited straw hats, woven baskets, harness for horses—particularly the metal parts, lamps and kettles made of clay, and many European goods. ToKatcha, passing through Badeggin-Lapai, we take ‘hungry-rice’, locust-beans, locust-bean cakes and peppers, and bring back kolanuts, fish, palm-oil and more European goods. Then there is the cattle route through Koton Karfi to Lokoja, along which we also take mats, peppers, benniseed and sheanut-oil, returning with kolanuts, fish and European goods. To Zaria we take soap, calabashes, mats, ginger, peppers and a kind of kolanut which women particularly like, and from there we get more kolanuts, cattle, sheep, goats, dogs, and also large white robes and turbans. The fifth is to Minna, and there we take especially honey and peppers, and from there we get more kolanuts and European goods. The route to Jos takes and brings much the same kinds of goods as the Zaria road; whilst the last, to Keffi, is used to take kolanuts through from Minna, and to bring back farming hoes and a crude kind of salt.

Nowadays much European cloth is used, but in the old times the people of Abuja wove their own and used that, both men and women, though the well- to-do and the Chiefs would buy robes from Bida and Ilorin. Then, no caps were worn by those who were with the Emir, much less turbans—however well-dressed they might be, they always went bareheaded, and this was because of the custom of (Page: 48) pouring dust over the head in obeisance. Now the present Emir has put an

end to this; he does not like a man to come before him with head uncovered, so every man wears such cap or hat or turban as he pleases or his position demands.

The women adorn themselves with coloured cloths, beads (of which the most desirable are of agate), necklaces, earrings and bracelets of gold or silver or brass. Round the waist, next the skin, they wear a number of girdles of beads or, more often, of flat disks made from the shell of the palm-nut or the coconut. These disks are about half an inch in diameter and usually very thin; hundreds of them are threaded on a cord and sometimes as many as ten cords are worn at once if the woman has the means, for they wish to make themselves attractive with large hips; even the girl-children wear them, beginning almost as soon as they can walk. Women plait and dress their hair in many different ways, but they do not, in Abuja, pile it up on the head over a pad. And all this has not changed since the old days.

House and Household

In town and village alike, the people live in compounds of circular huts built of clay and thatched with grass; there are no two-storied buildings because of the heavy rainfall, but most men make a roof of clay beneath the thatch. Nowadays the more prosperous men build a separate sleeping hut or house for themselves, but others sleep in their wives' houses in turn. If a man has two or three or four wives in marriage, he divides his time between them; when he has spent two days with one wife, then he will spend the next two with another and so on always. The wife with whom he sleeps prepares his meals and attends to the household affairs for those two days, when a rival wife succeeds her.

In each of these houses there is a bed built of clay with a hollowed space underneath in which fire is kindled. The houses are enclosed within a compound by plaited mats of coarse grass or by mud walls, and to each compound there is one or more entrance house or anteroom for visitors where the master of the place sits to chat with his friends in the evenings; and in most compounds there is a clay cornbin with a small place for chickens underneath.

The majority of men in Abuja have two, three or four wives. It is very rare to find a man with only one wife, and rarer still to find a grown man who has never married or who, having married and lost or parted from his wife, has not married again; for both men and women consider this to be a shameful thing. The husband supplies food and clothing and the many other necessities of life for his family, but the money that he earns is never enough to provide fully for them, so he has a farm to help him with the food, whilst the wives work to get money for themselves with which to buy anything they need beyond the necessities provided by the husband. **(Page: 49)**

They spin cotton or weave or do a little trading, and with the proceeds they buy more clothes, coloured mats, ornaments and trinkets for personal adornment, henna and scent; but it is the husband who pays for their hair to be dressed. To the marriage the woman nearly always brings the cooking utensils, pots and pans, mats and brooms; but occasionally the husband will supply these, and when they are worn or broken he must replace them.

The main market at Abuja is held on Sundays, when the husband will buy whatever he lacks in his farm together with food-oil, fire-wood for the week, and meat if he can afford it. He provides clothes for his wives and children at least once a year, usually at the time of the Lesser Feast; and at the Greater Feast he must buy a ram to kill for his dependants. He buys oil for the lamps, and pays to have water drawn and carried for his household; he pays for any repairs necessary to the

house, and he is responsible for the taxes. Besides all these things, a man must help his poorer relations when they are in need, or with their marriage celebrations or with their taxes.

Marriage

Now these are the ways of marriage in Abuja, different for the ruling families and for ordinary people; and the Emir has the right to arrange the marriage of any child born to the ruling houses²⁵ If a man sees one of the Emir's daughters and desires her for wife, then if she is a young girl who has not been married before, he will go to the Emir, but if she has been married before, to the Sarauniya. For a niece of the Emir, the man will go first to her parents. In each case he takes four thousand cowries.²⁶ When this money, which is called the 'Greeting' has been accepted, he is told that he must go to the Galadima, for it is he who is responsible for all marriages amongst girl-children of the ruling houses.

When he goes to the Galadima, he takes ten thousand cowries more and says, "I have seen the daughter of such a one, and wish to marry her. Here is my Greeting." The Galadima answers, "I understand; but you must go and bring me something that I can show to the Emir to witness your good faith, for the decision rests with him."

So the man goes away and fetches more money, after which the Galadima hands him on to his Sarkin Fada (who is the chief official of any title-holder's house) to be taken before the Emir. When they come before the Emir, the Sarkin Fada says, "This man has seen your child and wishes to marry her. Therefore the Galadima has sent me to bring him before you. The matter is in your hands. (Page: 50)

Here is his Greeting to you." The Emir answers, "I agree; but he shall first bring the Marriage Pledge of sixty-thousand cowries." If the man is willing to pay this sum he goes to fetch it, and when he has returned with it, the Emir says, "Very well; go now, and when I have decided on the day, I will inform you."

After a little time, the Emir summons the Galadima, the Sarauniya, the Turaki, the Makama Karami, the Sarkin Ruwa and the Fakachi²⁷ to consult with them about the day of the wedding. The people of Abuja call these the Private Counsellors, for the Emir will take no action whatsoever without their knowledge; in former days these were the only officials who might go into the Emir's private quarters, for they were Eunuchs (but the Sarauniya is a woman), and all other officials had to wait in the entrance house.

When the matter has been settled, then the Emir sends for the Madawaki to tell him what has been agreed, saying that he wishes the marriage of his child (or children, for it is often arranged that as many as twenty marriages are celebrated together) to take place on such a day of such a month. After this, the Emir has kolanuts bought and distributed to the townsfolk, announcing the date of the marriage. When all the invitation nuts have been sent out, the Galadima sends for the young men who are to be married, and tells each of them to go and fetch a goat, a cock, five measures of 'hungry rice', locust- bean cakes, salt and palm oil, for all these things must be brought before the

²⁵ A considerable number in polygamous society.

²⁶ Nowadays in modern coinage. The value of cowries differed considerably in various parts of Nigeria; in Abuja they were reckoned at 3,000 to the shilling, but that is not much indication of their purchasing power

²⁷ See pp. 74-80 for meanings of these titles

marriage takes place. When he has brought them, they are taken to the Emir's Compound and on the day of the wedding the goat is slaughtered, and large quantities of food are cooked and eaten with the meat. In olden times, it was on the Dutsen Jure, a fetish stone, that the goat was killed.²⁸

Before the marriage, each bridegroom brings to the Galadima a piece of white cloth big enough to cover his bride, a pair of slippers, two baskets of kolanuts of one hundred nuts each, and eight thousand cowries. When all these have been brought, then on the morning of the wedding day (for all weddings take place in the morning) the Galadima sends for Magajin Malam, the Salanke, the Chief Imam and the Chief Scribe, who are the religious leaders in the town, and when they have come to his house, he puts all these gifts together and shows them to the Magajin Malam one by one. Then the kolanuts are divided into two parts, one of which is for the Emir and the Galadima; the other is again divided into two, and half taken out for the marriage celebration and half given to the near relatives of the girl.

Then the Salanke recites the prayers and performs the marriage ceremony, and this is what he says and does: first, there in the anteroom where the marriage is taking place, he speaks to the man who is giving the girl away, but neither the bride nor the bridegroom (**Page: 51**) comes to the ceremony, nor is any woman present save for the Boroka, the old woman servant who has brought the basket of wedding gifts to the room. The Salanke, speaking their names, says, "Momon, do you give Rakiya to Haruna for his wife?" And Momon answers, "Yes, I give her to him." He asks him this three times, then he turns to the men sitting round and asks them, "O People, do you hear and witness?" And they reply together, "We hear and witness." This also he asks three times. Then he asks, "What is the Marriage Pledge?" and when Momon has told him, he asks again, "Has it been paid, or has it been promised?" And Momon says, "It has been paid".

Then the Salanke says, "O People, let us say the Prayer to the Prophet ten times." After this he prays, "O Angels of Almighty God, you have witnessed that Momon has given me authority to marry Haruna and Rakiya. O God, we pray thee to grant them that they may live together in harmony such as Thou didst vouchsafe to Adam and his wife Eve, to the Prophet Mohammed and his wife Aisha, and to the Caliph Ali and his wife Fatsuma." Then all the people pass their hands over their faces and the prayer is ended and they rise.

Meanwhile the brides remain hidden in the compound with the Emir's wives, and after the second prayer of the day, a certain fetishman known as the Dodon Wagu appears in front of the Emir's Compound. Then the Sarauniya sends to summon the brides, and when they come out, each is given a white chicken to hold in her hand. Now in the old days, when the Sarauniya learned that the Dodon Wagu had come, she would take one of the slave girls of the Emir's household and make her lie down across the threshold of the third ante-room, which is still called the Room of the Slave-Girl. When, on her way out, the bride reached the girl lying in the doorway, she would step across her with the right foot—even were there a hundred of them to be married together, each would have to do this. The girl was called by the people of Abuja "The Bridge of the Emir's Children", and when the brides had passed, she would get up. That day she was freed from slavery and was herself married. But this custom is no longer observed, for there is no more slavery in the land.

When the brides are leaving the Emir's Compound, the drummer sits in the entrance house and drums until they have passed. As each comes out, she gives away the white chicken which she has

²⁸ See p. 63

been carrying to the first person she meets, and so there are always many people waiting for them to come. The Dodon Wagu follows them as they run all the way to the Sarauniya's compound, but when they reach it, he returns.

Now this Dodon Wagu²⁹ comes from the pagan village of Wagu, about ten miles north-west of Abuja, where they have a more powerful fetish than any other in the land of Abuja; and whenever (**Page: 52**) the Emir arranges such marriages, he sends to let them know. There is also an official of the household known as the Wagu; the Emirs are buried in his compound, in a place set apart.

In the Sarauniya's compound the bride is bathed with ceremony, and after dark she is taken to her husband's house together with the white cloth which is there draped over her, and the slippers are given to her. Then the husband will give to the Emir's messenger who has brought her, the gift of a robe, and to the Sarauniya's messenger a piece of coloured cloth. This is their share of the 'gift' which they have brought, for it is the custom of the Habe people of Abuja to give back to the bringer of any gift one tenth of its value for himself, so that he may bear witness that the gift has been received with joy.

The next day in the afternoon, the bride's parents send marriage gifts to her. These consist of many different things: first, there is food, such as guinea-corn, rice, 'hungry-rice', herbs and spices; then there are pots and pans and cooking utensils; and also clothes, a necklace, and one robe for the husband. Except for this robe and for the food, these marriage gifts are for the bride and belong to her. They are the same for children of the ruling houses as for ordinary people, except that in the former case a silver bracelet is also given.

Then, on the day when the husband first enters the room of his bride, which is the eighth day after the marriage ceremony in the case of the Emir's children and the fifth day for others, he sends to the Sarauniya a silver ring, two baskets of kolanuts and ten thousand cowries. And these customs are observed to this day.

If a young man who is not a son of the ruling houses sees a girl whom he desires to marry, he will call her aside and tell her so; if the girl is willing, she will tell him that he must go to her guardian for his consent, but he will not go without first giving her a small present of money so that she shall not change her mind. Then he calls his friends and sends them with a small present to her guardian; this is called the Visiting Money. If the guardian agrees, he will tell the youth to bring the Seeking Money. It is to the guardian that the young man goes, for it is the custom with the majority of the Habe people of Abuja that their children should be brought up, not in the parent's compound, but by some near relation—a brother of the father or a sister of

the mother—until they have reached the age for marriage. Then the girls usually return to their parents for the ceremony, though some are married from the guardian's house; the youths go back home so that they may have their due place allotted to them in the parents' compound.

After the seeking money, the young man will bring the Greeting, and then he will be told the amount of the Marriage Pledge. In former times he would also give the girl a small present of money which was called the Playing-in-the-Dust Money because it was given to persuade her to leave her childish play; after this, the date of the marriage is arranged. (**Page: 53**)

Now the day that the marriage is due to take place, the girl, who has not been told of it by her parents (though she knows very well) pretends to have learned of it by chance, and so she runs

²⁹ See pp. 89-90.

away and hides in the house of a friend. Then her relations go round asking if anyone has seen her, and after a time she is 'found' and brought back home. Then her parents tell her what

has been arranged, whereupon she breaks into loud weeping and lamenting, for she would be ashamed not to seem reluctant. The bridegroom, too, will feign the same reluctance, though it is not until the evening, after the marriage ceremony but before the bride is brought to his house, that he will run away and hide; but his friends fetch him back before she comes. This is because in former times marriages were arranged by the parents, and the children often did not know the one they were to marry, and were afraid.

Now the youth will already have brought the white cloth, the slippers, the Marriage Pledge and also the kolanuts which are to be divided amongst the Malams, the bride's relations, and the other guests; and nowadays he brings a mat which the bride will afterwards give to the chief drummer at the celebrations. Then on the morning of the wedding he will give a small present of money to the elders of the ward in which he lives—in former times to the Sarkin Fada of the ward—and send one shilling to the Emir to notify him of the marriage.

Nowadays the various sums of money to be paid as the marriage goes forward have been established at an easy rate so that parents may not refuse an industrious young man in favour of a richer and probably older rival; but there is a great deal of trickery practised in order to increase the amount. The parents, and the girl too, will often encourage three or four youths to court her at the same time, each of whom will give presents of money both to her and to her parents to persuade them to choose him. Therefore, although the Marriage Pledge has been set at 30/-, the Greeting at 10/- and the other gifts proportionately lower, yet the accepted suitor has often to find six or seven or even ten pounds in order that the money which the others have given may be returned to them, for such monies must always be repaid. No bride—no money—for as the blacksmiths say "If there is nothing to work on why waste charcoal?"

On the day appointed, the Malams say the prayers and the people bear witness just as in the case of the Emir's children, whilst the girl remains in her house. In the afternoon, the bridegroom sends to her parents a cigarette-tin which has been covered with coloured leather to make a money-box, and inside he will put some money which is called the 'Bargaining for Night' money, for when it is dark his friends will go to her parents to persuade them to let her come to him early.

In the afternoon, the first ceremonial bathing of the bride takes place. This is inside the house, and only two or three older women are present. It is called the "Slave-Girl Bathing", that is to say, **(Page: 54)** after it she is no longer a child to be treated by her parents as an irresponsible slave. Now she is grown up, and may tie her cloth above her breasts, no longer leaving them bare like a child or a slave, for it was the custom when slave-girls were taken to the market to be sold, that they should leave their breasts uncovered so that the buyer should see that they were young. No unmarried girl may cover her breasts, for if she does, it will be thought that she is pregnant.

Then after dark the second bathing takes place, this time in the open compound in the presence of many of the women relatives both of the bridegroom and of the bride. First the relations of the bridegroom, then those of the bride, throw money into the water in which she is being washed. Two kolanuts are put into her mouth, one in each cheek; and these she must hold and not bite; and all the time she keeps her eyes closed. When it is over, then the women who have washed the bride take the money from the water and divide it, and they also take the two kolanuts from her mouth. Then the bride is taken to the houses of her mother's relatives to say goodbye to them, and they wish her good fortune in her marriage and give her good advice.

Meanwhile the bridegroom, if this is his first marriage, will be bathed by a Malam to whom he will give in return the loin-cloth which he has been wearing; but if he has been married before, there will be no ceremonial washing.

Now in former times, after these visits the bride was taken home again and set upon the back of a mare and led to her husband's house with singing and dancing. When she came to the door, she dismounted, and water and corn were brought to her to give to the mare; then the mare was led away and the bride entered the house. But nowadays she is taken secretly to her husband's house without any noise and accompanied only by two or three old women. Meanwhile the friends of the bridegroom are gathered at the entrance of the compound from which she is being married, and there is drumming and dancing, for they have come to fetch the bride. So a mare is brought out and a young girl, wrapped in the bride's white cloth is set upon its back and they go off to the husband's house. But this is the Mock Bride, for the real one has already gone.

The reason why, nowadays, the real bride is not taken on the mare's back is because of the mischievous tricks of the youths and girls who go with her, for they constantly worry her with teasing and tickling until sometimes she falls off, so a younger girl takes her place. Whenever they come to a cross-roads, the girls begin to cry out and they seize the mare's bit declaring that they will not let the bride pass until they have been paid the cross-roads toll. Then the youths scuffle with them and sometimes drag them past by force, but sometimes they give them a little money for the toll. So they go on, stopping at every crossing until they reach the bridegroom's house. When they arrive, the bridegroom's mother will send the food which she has prepared in a large calabash, together with chicken (**Page: 55**) gravy made from a full grown hen, to the young people to eat, and the bridegroom will give them some money. Then bride and bridegroom go to the separate houses in which they will stay until the fifth day.

The next morning at dawn the bride's relatives bring food, and, this is known as the Embrace. Then, about four in the afternoon, the marriage feast, also provided by the bride's relatives, is set, and the bridegroom will send a return gift to them according to his means. After dark, his best friend sends for the drummers and musicians to start the celebrations. This is called the "Settling In", and much money is spent upon it and upon the Beggars. But from the day when the bride comes until the fifth day after, both bride and bridegroom will stay inside their separate houses and will not come out at all. All this time the bride remains with her white cloth wrapped round her and her head covered, and the bridegroom, too, will cover himself—but not usually his head—with a night-wrap. Each of them will keep a piece of twine bound round the temples, for it is said that if either of them unties this before the time, he or she will always suffer from headaches. For these four days, dried leaves of henna, powdered and steeped in water, are bound on to their hands and feet to stain them red, and all this time they and the youths who are with him and the girls who are with her will eat the food brought for the feast; it is the duty of the best friend of each to attend to this.

On the fifth day comes the unveiling or "Uncovering of Heads". Early in the morning an old woman comes into the bridegroom's house and finds him sitting with his head covered with a shawl. All the time uttering shrill cries, she takes two small pieces of wood or grass stalks and with them lifts the shawl up from his head. This she does three times, then she strips off the shawl, throws it behind him, and goes out. Then the bridegroom goes to bathe himself and comes back to put on the finest clothes he has: on this day, indeed, he dresses like a young Chief. Then he and his friends go out to visit the bride's relations and offer their greetings. They are followed by drummers beating their drums as loud as they can, and the Beggars shouting, "Come out and see

the bridegroom, this King of the Forty Days, how he is welcomed!” And they call him this because the gifts of food for the wedding used to last that time, and he lived ‘like a king’ whilst they lasted. At every house where he calls he will be given a present of money or of kolanuts and much good advice to be patient with his wife.

On his return, he and his best friend will give an old woman a little money to take to the bride: this is called the “End of Shyness” gift, and it is set aside till the afternoon when her relations come. Then it is shown to them, and the unveiling is performed for her just as it had been for him. She, too, goes to bathe herself and comes back to put on her finest robes, covering herself entirely with a long piece of cloth. Now an old woman goes into her house, pulls her out by the hand and sits her down on a new mat which has been (**Page: 56**) spread in the open inside the compound, whilst the women run round her uttering piercing cries of greeting. Then one of her relations brings a spinning basket and a little cotton which she gives to her, saying, “Here is cotton; let us see how you can spin.” So the bride takes them up and spins a little, and when she has spun a little so that all the women can see, they tell her that that is enough. Then one of the women takes a little corn and says to her, “Here is your share of the corn today for food.” She takes it and goes back into her house, and the women go away.

After the unveiling, the bride’s white cloth and slippers are given to the woman who has looked after her, and a small sum of money together with a kerchief are given to her best friend. On this day, all the young girls who have come with her will go back home, but before they go they will sometimes bring water for the bride—in the old days, they collected firewood for her—and the bridegroom gives them a parting gift of money. That night the bridegroom may sleep with his bride, but before night he must give her a small present to induce her to speak to him, and all his older relations must do likewise or she will not speak to them; and this is called “Buying her Mouth”.

Then at dawn the bridegroom will give to the bride a present of money and of kolanuts whether he has found her to be a virgin or not. In former times it was the custom with the Habe people of Abuja, if the girl was found not to be a virgin, for the husband to knock a hole in an old calabash which he would then hang up in the doorway of her house to declare her shame; but this did not mean that the marriage was broken, it was done to humiliate her before the other women in the compound. Nowadays nothing is done. When this present has been given to her, then her parents will send her food and savoury broth in two big wooden bowls, and milkgruel in two large calabashes; but after this she will herself prepare her husband’s food, and that is the end of all the ceremonies.

There is a third kind of marriage, which is rare and in any case is only for Malams. This is known as the Alms Marriage: in it, the father will give the girl away without any payment at all, and he will also provide everything necessary for the marriage, hoping for his reward in heaven.

Adolescence

Apart from marriage, there is the custom of youths and girls sleeping together; and this is the manner of it in Abuja.

In former times, if a youth saw a girl with whom he desired this friendship, he would go to her parents’ house with four hundred cowries to tell them that he had seen their daughter and wanted her to be his friend. They, when they accepted the money, would say, “Very well; here is the girl,

we commit her to your care. See that no harm befalls her—that you do not get her with child — and the **(Page: 57)** day when she fails to come to your house as usual, let us know.” Then on the next Feast Day, either the Lesser Feast of Id el Fitr at the end of Ramadan³⁰ or the Greater Feast of Id el Kebir,³¹ the young man would send to the parents four hundred cowries for the girl to have her hair dressed; whilst she would prepare food and send it to him to share with his friends at the feast. If she did this on three successive feast days, then his friends would all give some money and buy a piece of cloth for her.

This is what happened when they slept together: the girl would go to the young man’s house about ten o’clock at night and lie down beside him, and they would talk together until sleep overcame them. But just before dawn, when they heard the muezzin’s first call to prayer, the girl would get up and go home; and this she would do every day. But in order that they should do no harm to each other, the youth would tie his loin cloth tight between his legs and the girl would do the same with her skirt.

This sleeping together was not a prelude to marriage between the pair, for they would normally have been promised to some friend of the family long before, so that we think the reason for this custom may have been to allow boys and girls to learn something of the ways of the other sex before the time came for them to be married; but when it came, these two would part, and have no more to do with each other ever again, unless perhaps they might happen to meet by chance and be reminded of their former friendship.

That is what happened in former times, but nowadays this custom has utterly degenerated, for there is no longer any promise or understanding between the youth and the girl’s parents, but the majority of girls go and sleep with anyone they fancy for as long as they fancy him, and some will go to four or five different youths in the same night, so that no-one knows where they may be sleeping. Nor do they tie up their bodies or practise any restraint so that nowadays few girls come to marriage as virgins, and the old word for a virgin in Hausa has come to mean only ‘an unmarried girl’. If therefore the parents are not watchful, and do not do their utmost to prevent it, they will find that their daughter is with child. When this happens, an evil thing is done in secret, for they find medicine which they give her to drink so that she may miscarry before her condition is seen. Some parents, in order to forestall such misfortune, marry their daughters before they reach puberty, in which case the girl is taken to the house of her husband’s parents who will see that nothing happens to spoil her. Or if the parents find no opportunity to marry the girl whilst she is still quite young, they may keep her strictly to the house and compound, and forbid her to wander about at large. **(Page: 58)**

One thing in particular encourages this deplorable practice, and that is the business of hawking. If you walk through any town in Nigeria, not Abuja alone, in every lane or street you will find young girls hawking kolanuts or groundnuts or other foods, and at every small market you will find a crowd of them selling sugar-cane. They stand about flirting with the youths, and that is how the trouble generally starts. It is difficult to stop this, and we think that the only thing to do is to try to teach them to understand the evil consequences of such behaviour, so that they will not encourage each other to follow this practice. For their part, parents should forbid their daughters to sleep in a young man’s house, but keep them safe at home; for in the eyes of God there is no difference between such intercourse and mere fornication.

³⁰ See p. 70.

³¹ See p. 72.

All the youths and girls of Abuja (and also of the other towns and large villages of the Emirate) in each succeeding generation organise themselves into one large company for their mutual benefit and pleasure. The youths choose a suitable leader and go with him before the Emir, and the girls similarly choose one of their number to be their Queen. After this, each of them chooses a 'Court' of followers to hold the other native titles such as Galadima, Madawaki, Imam, and so on, and nowadays they have added King-of-England, Lagos-Governor, Kaduna-Governor and all the official titles introduced by the British even of occupations such as Lawyer, Doctor, Surveyor. They call the bearers by these titles in their play, for the chief amusement of young people is the nightly singing and dancing before they sleep.

If one of the youths is about to marry, then the leader, the Sarkin Samari, calls all the others together to go and help with the celebrations; and when the wife gives birth to a child, then he calls on them all to go out and cut wood for her use. So, too, the girls help their companions. Sometimes the Emir will call the young people to perform some task for him, such as fetching the sand for the floor of the mosque or clearing the open space in front of his residence where horses are galloped, or any other similar task which he needs done quickly; and when they have finished he gives them kolanuts.

This banding together of youths and girls has been recognised in Abuja since the time of the Emir Muhamman Gani. He appointed the first leader of the youths whose name was Umaru Makigani, and since then there has been no break in the tradition. The leaders both of the youths and of the girls have complete control of their followers: whatever they say is to be done, is done at once: whatever they forbid, is not touched; and no-one thinks of disobeying. All this teaches them obedience and discipline in their dealings with one another from the time that they are old enough to take part till they are married; when they marry, others take their place, though sometimes a leader will continue for several years after marriage. (Page: 59)

The Punishment of Bastardy

In former times, if an unmarried girl was found to be with child, she was brought before the Emir and he would send her to an official called the Barwa, or Warden, in whose compound she would stay. The Barwa would send to collect all the guinea-corn in his ward, and every day she would be set to grinding it. When the time for delivery came, she was taken to the nearest gate of the town, which was the Gate of the Kuyambana, where she would give birth to the child. Then she would be sent back to her parents' house with her child, but it would not live long, for it was given poison to drink. If she would tell the name of the man who was responsible, he would be fined a hundred thousand cowries.

Nowadays when this thing happens, the matter is brought before the Alkali. The man is fined £6, and the girl is fined £3 which her parents are compelled to pay as a punishment for not looking after her better.

Birth

When a woman's time is near, she will boil the leaves of a certain tree and drink the water. This tree is named in jest "Follow-me-with-a-shroud" because of the thoroughness of the purging which it produces. Also, she soaks the peeled stems of Indian hemp together with the pods of beans, and drinks the infusion; for if she does these things, she will give easy birth. When the pains of labour seize her, she goes to a corner of her house where a hollow has been made in the floor, and there she kneels to bear the child. Then the midwife is called to come and take the child, and the mother gets up and goes to lie on the bed, whilst the afterbirth is taken and buried behind the house. Then the women utter their piercing cries to tell the neighbours that the child has been born, three times for a boy and four for a girl; a custom which is observed to this day.

A large fire is kept burning in the mother's room so that there is always plenty of hot water. For forty days she must drink very hot gruel; she is washed twice a day in very hot water, and almost boiling water is sprinkled over her body. The midwife looks after the child and treats the umbilical cord with warm sheanut oil until it comes away, when it is sewn into a leather locket which is hung round the child's neck. Whenever the child shows signs of stomach ache, this locket is put into water in a small calabash; then the child is given the water to drink, and that is the cure.

Naming and Marking

The father will already have bought a ram for the naming ceremony which takes place on the seventh day after the birth; before the day itself, he will also buy four ox-feet and have them cooked (**Page: 60**) with savoury sauce. When they are cooked, he pours all into a large calabash which he sends together with forty kolanuts to the parents of the mother to divide amongst their relations. Nowadays some people send money and fifty kolanuts instead of ox-feet. The father also sends two calabashes of food, one of chicken, the other of ox meat; and until these have been sent to them, the mother's parents will not come to the naming. On the actual day of the birth the father will have whispered the child's name into its ear, now on the naming day the Malam says the prayers and speaks the child's name softly, and the Beggars shout it aloud to the people. Then the ram is killed: of the meat, the parents of the mother are given a shoulder and part of the liver, whilst the loins and the intestines belong to the mother herself. After this, the father gives to the mother's parents ten kolanuts each. The next day the child's uvula is cut out.

Now it is a most pitiful thing to see how the barber forces a wooden gag into the baby's tiny mouth to hold it open whilst he callously cuts away with his razor. Ah! these barbers, they are pitiless folk indeed. But some of the tribes do not have the baby's uvula cut out, instead they give medicine to drink so that the uvula shall not give trouble, for it is thought to be the cause of frequent vomiting amongst children. Besides this, the tribal and family markings are cut on the forehead and belly, and the head is shaved.

On the forehead only one small perpendicular cut is made between the eyes for the Habe people of Abuja, and there is no more marking on the face except for the people of Zariyawa, the village ward of the men of Zaria who came with Mamman, the Chief Slave of the deposed Emir Abdu, in 1879; they have a diagonal cut on the left cheek running down from the side of the nose. There are three different patterns of markings for the belly, all elaborate, and each is the work of a different family of barbers whose art and special design are handed down from father to son. There is one design for the Children of the Ruling Houses, and two for other people. All these designs consist

of bands of three or four straight lines, parallel and set close together, forming patterns of triangles with common sides, and with an open spear or diamond at the top; there are also two or three short perpendicular cuts below each breast.

In Abuja, boys are not circumcised until they are seven years old, and we have never had female circumcision. It is the custom of our women never to speak the name of their first-born child, be it boy or girl; and all these things are the same as in the old days.

Death and Inheritance

When a death occurs, the mourners gather at the house for seven days. Sometimes the dead man will have named the one whom he wishes to wash his body ready for the prayers which the Chief Imam will say, going himself to the house of all ordinary people for this (**Page: 61**) purpose. After this the funeral takes place as soon as possible. In olden times the people of Abuja were buried inside their own compounds, but strangers were taken outside the walls for burial and their sleeping mats burned for fear of such infections as small pox. Now there is a burial ground outside the town, and all who die are taken there except the Emirs alone who lie in the compound of Wagu. For seven days food is prepared for the mourners, then on the seventh day they gather together again for prayers before going home.

In former days the property and goods of the dead man would be brought out after a few days and divided amongst his heirs, both children and wives, for matters of inheritance were not brought before a judge as now, but were settled privately at home. Formerly, if one of the Emir's officials died, all his property fell to the Emir, and none to the wives and children; if any son of the ruling houses died, all his property fell to the Dangaladima, the Heir Presumptive; if it was a daughter who died, all her property went to the Sarauniya, and similarly if any of the Emir's concubines died, their property went to the Iya. But now everything is referred to the Alkali for decision, and no-one may share in an inheritance except as Moslem law provides.

Another custom of the Habe people of Abuja which is still followed, is that when anyone falls sick, however high his rank, the Emir may not visit him personally, but will send a messenger to enquire of his health and offer greetings. This is because the Emir's spirit is so much stronger than other men's that no sick man could survive his visit three days. For this reason, too, the Emir does not go near the dye-pits, for his spirit would take all the virtue from the dye.

Propitiation of Devils

Now there is a practice which is common today in Abuja and indeed in all the Hausa lands: a very old practice called 'Bori', for which women are chiefly responsible. This is the propitiation and worship of devils which take possession of the human body. The performance of the various rites is always accompanied by much drinking of beer and of palm-wine until the devotees become quite intoxicated and dance and throw themselves about with wild howls and screams. In Abuja it is only the women who practise this; if you see a man here engaged in it, then you may be sure that he is a stranger, for the men of Abuja greatly dislike this thing, but the women, even of the Chiefs' households, spend much money upon it.

Sometimes a woman feels her strength desert her as if she were no longer in control of her body, and a weakness comes upon her until she is near to losing her senses. She feels a darkness on her

face as if some invisible covering were there, or as if some shape (**Page: 62**) had passed very close by her. After a little time her head begins to ache, and she becomes ill, sometimes to the point of death. When the 'Bori' devotees hear this, they say that indeed an evil spirit has entered the woman, and only initiation into the cult will prevent the spirit from destroying her. And this is the manner of it.

At the place of initiation, the Bori mistress takes a number of pieces of onion, a red cock, eggs, beniseed, beans, and sometimes a goat, and a new calabash. The onions, beans, and beniseed are put into the calabash and given to those who have come to the ceremony. Then the Mistress of the Bori, who is also the leader of the harlots in the town, (or, in towns where men take part, the Master—and he is the leading brothel-keeper) slaughters the cock and goat and divides the meat amongst the devotees and other greedy folk. Then the eggs are broken and swallowed raw by the novice, and after this the milk of a goat is brought and spewed over her whole body. Then the dried droppings of a fowl are pounded up together with some soot, some cotton seeds, the droppings of a civet cat, and seven peppers; this is set on a fire and the novice is made to breathe in its vapour, after which she will be well again until the next time that the spirit comes into her. But in order to prevent the spirit troubling her continually or causing her harm, she is given a brew of herbs³² to drink at all times, so that when any sudden emotion or hypnotism of the music or of the dance gives the spirit its chance to get back into her body, then no matter how she may throw herself about, she will come to no harm. But if a mistake is made in preparing this potion, then a bad thing happens, for the woman will lose her mind and babble nonsense all the time, whether the spirit is in her or not.

If the woman can speak, she will now name the spirit which has possessed her, but if she has lost her senses and cannot speak, then the initiates will speak the name when they have observed her behaviour under its influence as she sits or lies. For when the spirit enters into her she does not know what she is doing, nor does she see other people as before, and she will roll and shake her head violently about, but comes to no harm because of the potion which she has drunk. The devils do not touch very young girls, but wait until they reach the age of nine or ten and are old enough to have some understanding.

At a Bori gathering, the players of stringed instruments, guitar and fiddle, are accompanied with a clapper made of pieces of corn-stalk split at the ends, which is rubbed between the hands, or sometimes with the long gourd which the women tap like a small drum, or sometimes with tapping on an inverted calabash; but there is no proper drumming. Once the rites have begun, the initiate does not come outside the house for seven days, which time is occupied in (**Page: 63**) general drinking and debauchery. The chief time of the year for these ceremonies is after the guinea-corn harvest, when the heaviest work is over, food is plentiful, and there is corn for making beer.

Now this devil dancing has been known in Abuja since the days of the first Emir and the foundation of the town, and long before that in Zaria and the rest of the Hausa lands. It used to take place here in the ward of Malam Ramadan, but he later drove it from his ward, and so the Bori people went to another which was called the Ward of the Gourd Drummers; there they stayed until the time of the second Emir, Abu Kwaka. Now he, Abu the Tall, was a God-fearing man who wanted none of this evil business or any form of devil worship in his country, but only the way of the Prophet (upon whom be the prayer and blessing of God), so one day he ordered some of his foot soldiers

³² The herb called 'zakami' is commonly used. This is *Datura metel* or 'Hairy Thorn-apple' of which Dalziel says, "The seeds, in globular prickly capsules, are a deliriant poison."

to go and smash down the Bori house, take away everything in it, and drive the people out. News of this came immediately to the Iya, Fatsima, who sent word to the Bori women to come and use one of the ante-rooms of her compound for their practices. Then she sent to the Emir to tell him what she had done—daring him to come and smash down her house too. So the matter was left, for not only was she his daughter, but she held one of the chief offices in Abuja. Then the other woman title-holder, the Sarauniya, followed this example, inviting some of the Bori women to her compound. This was all that was needed to spread the cult everywhere, through town and village alike, even into the Emir's own compound—so quickly does mankind follow the ways of the Devil and find pleasure in his works.

Nowadays it is only in the Sarauniya's compound that they practice these things, for as we have said, it is women who encourage this business. They give to the devils which possess them the names of Spirits, such as, 'The Lord of the River', 'The Hyena', 'The Tall Woman', or of powerful Chiefs such as, 'The Danggaladima'; but Abu Kwaka told the dancers that anyone who so much as spoke his name in the Bori would, by the Grace of God, speak little afterwards.

In the middle of the Emir's compound there lies a Bori fetish-stone; it is two feet long and a foot broad, but its thickness cannot be told for it is set in the ground. The Bori devotees say that it was brought all the way from Zaria at the time of the flight, and they call it the Hyena Stone after one of the Spirits. In the old days, whenever one of the Emir's wives conceived and was seven months with child, she would take a cock, a hen, and four hundred and forty cowries to give to the Bori women in order that they should supplicate the fetish to grant her safe delivery. After the invocation, the cock and hen were not killed but taken back to the wife who would continue to feed them herself until the child was born. When the forty days of her cleansing were completed, the cock and hen were taken and killed on the stone. Again, when the child was about to be weaned, which is at the age of two years and four (**Page: 64**) months, the mother took a goat, a cock, a hen, ten kolanuts and four hundred and forty cowries for the fetish. The animals were killed on the stone by the Bori mistress and their blood poured over it; then one of the women who was possessed would lap up the blood from the stone. The same thing was done whenever one of the Children of the Ruling Houses, youth or maiden, was to be married; but not for ordinary marriages, for the cult of this stone was confined to the Emir's Compound.

The present Emir, Malam Salaimanu Barau, on his accession at once put an end to this ugly practice. The Bori house in the compound of the Emirs was pulled down, the Hyena Stone buried, and no devil worship of any kind takes place there now.

Now we think that the origin of Bori may have been this: that people who were afflicted by some disease which they could not understand, or were subject to fits, and could not find a cure, would believe that they had been bewitched. In despair they would go to a wise man or wise woman who was skilled in the finding and use of herbs, to ask for medicine. In order to increase their own importance and power over the ignorant people, these witch-doctors would confirm that the sufferers were bewitched, name the particular devil which had taken possession of them, and offer to brew a special potion. This potion, although it would not drive the spirit away, (they did not pretend that they could do this, for it would have been of little advantage to them to get rid of the spirit altogether) yet would make it much less powerful to harm them; or if there were several spirits fighting for possession of the same body, it would give the greatest influence to the least malignant. So the preparation of the brew was surrounded by all sorts of ceremonies until a regular cult had been established, and music and dancing were added to make it more attractive.

As it became more popular, so people hastened to claim that they, too, had a devil; until there was scarcely a woman or girl who would not claim to be possessed. Some indeed, whether possessed or merely hypnotised, do perform astonishing feats without coming to harm; but most only pretend, and attempt no difficult acrobatics. Usually now the whole performance is merely an excuse for an orgy, encouraged by the beggars and the harlots; and this kind is called 'Camp' Bori.

The Course of the Year

Now after the customs which we have described above, we shall tell of those which the people of Abuja follow in certain months of the year. First there is: (**Page: 65**)

Watan A Chi-A-Koshi, or Chikachiki, or the Month of Full Bellies (Arabic: Muharram).

It is in this month that we remember how in the time of the prophet Noah the waters of the Great Flood took possession of the whole earth for forty days. On the tenth day of this month, every head of a household in Abuja tries to increase the day's allowance of food to his family to five times what they usually receive. That night they all eat until they can eat no more, and that is why in Abuja we call it the Month of Full Bellies. In the old days, to prove that they had eaten all they could, the children used to take the food which was left, both corn-meal and pounded yam, and throw it to stick on the wall.

Then when the meal is over, the young men and girls go out of the town gates down to the bank of the river to drink its waters and to wash in them, and afterwards to take some home to their relations; for it is said that on this night all the waters in the world take on the virtues of the Pool of Paradise, so that all who drink of them will have increase of health and fortune. Indeed it is a pleasant thing to see the youths and girls going down to the river in a crowd, singing together. And this is what they sing:

"O mighty Chief, Swallow the Pagans!
Tomorrow the Emir rides to war; Swallow the Pagans!
God grant him Victory; Swallow the Pagans!
God Grant him two hundred Slaves; Swallow the Pagans!
God grant him a thousand Slaves; Swallow the Pagans!
His concubines rejoice; Swallow the Pagans! His slave lads rejoice; Swallow the Pagans!"

When they reach the bank of the river, they strip off their clothes and go into the water to wash and play. When they are tired of this, they come out and play a fire game for which the youths split up into their different wards and chase each other with lighted torches. Then they go back into the river, wash again, and go home taking some water with them.

As soon as they are back, drummers call for the boxing games to begin in the open space in front of the Emir's Compound, but this is only for the young men. These games go on for seven consecutive days, and there are two meetings each day, one in the evening (**Page: 66**) and another from eight to ten o'clock at night. When the boxers come into the clearing and begin to fight, if at first no heavy blow is struck and neither succeeds in knocking the other to the ground, then they are separated and made to rest awhile before they go against each other a second or even a third

time. If by then no winner is seen, they stop until the next day when the fight is continued. But if one knocks the other to the ground, they are immediately separated and may not fight again until the next year.

At dawn on the morning after the feast, the Malams and the other important men of the town gather together at the entrance to the Emir's Compound.

When they have come, the Chief Scribe tells them what the New Year will bring, and he speaks that verse of the Koran which they must write down and wash off into water to drink, and he tells them what kind of alms must be given that God, the Master of Mankind, may soften the blow of any misfortune which may come upon us. This giving of advice for the New Year is called 'The Opening of the Book', and in former times no man would leave the town to set out on any journey until he had heard what the year would bring.

Then, when they disperse from this meeting, all the people go round and collect 'The Slave's Wage', that is the traditional token gift of money from Master to Servant, which grandparent gives to grandchild, cousin to cousin, Malam to hunter, blacksmith to barber, the men of Zaria to the men of Gobir, wherever the obligations of old custom lie.

Watan Bawan Gani, or the Slave Month³³ of the Birth of the Prophet (Arabic: Safar)

Of all the months of the year it is this which is most full of superstitious customs for the Habe people. It is considered to be an inauspicious month, not only by the Habe but by the majority of Moslems in the country. There are many things which the men of Abuja will not do during this month. No marriages of young girls or even re-marriages of older women take place, and no distant trading journeys are undertaken. In this month no-one will climb a tree, for there is a superstition which says that any injury received in this month will be long and difficult in healing, so all risk of accident must be avoided. So much so, that even to gallop horses is forbidden, for many men go riding, especially on Friday evenings after the prayers in the Mosque when it is the custom to go outside the town for a gallop and come back still at a gallop to pull up (**Page: 67**) before the Emir's Compound in greeting to him. If any misfortune of any kind comes upon a man during this month, it is said that he will be unfortunate throughout the year; but if any good fortune befalls him, then he will have a year of good luck.

Watan Gani, or the Month of the Birth of the Prophet (Arabic: Rabi-ul-awal)

Since long ago this has been a month of rejoicing for the Habe people. When the eleventh day comes, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, the Chiefs and all the important townsmen put on their finest robes, get on their horses as if for one of the great Feasts, and come to the open space in front of the Emir's Compound. When the Emir comes out, the drummers and trumpeters begin to play, and the whole place is filled with happy clamour. From here they set off together for the Sarauniya's compound, and there dismount and enter with a thousand greetings. Coming from

³³ The Slave Months are those preceding the months proper—as slave went before Master on the road.

there they go to the compound of the Iya and greet her likewise. From the Iya's compound they return to the Emir's and then disperse, each to his home, and dismount.

After the last prayer of the day, the drummers go out in front of the Emir's Compound and begin to play, both men and women joining in the singing and dancing. Now the Beggars start to sing the praise of anyone who has done some deed of note, whoever he may be, even the Emir himself, and likewise they shout out the story of any misdeed, naming the culprit and holding him up to the mockery of the people—to each according to his deserts. When the play begins, no-one may dance until the Emir himself and his chiefs have danced; but when they have finished anyone may join in. This dancing goes on for seven days, but the Emir dances only once, on the first day.

This rejoicing is for the birth of the Prophet Mohammed—upon whom be the prayer and blessing of God—and during this month the number of marriages of young girls increases. In former days when this moon arose every man of Abuja who was away from home would try to get back in time, however far and fast he had to travel.

Watan Warewaren Fari, or the First of the Uneventful Months

(Arabic: Rabi-ul-Thani) (**Page: 68**)

Wataran Warewaren Karshe, or the Second Uneventful Month

(Arabic: Jimada'i-ula)

Watan Bawan Azumin Tsofofi, or the Slave Month of the Fast of Old People

(Arabic: Jimada'i-ukbra)

There are no special customs connected with these three months, but this is not because of any superstition.

Watan Azumin Tsofofi, or the Month of the Fast of Old People

(Arabic: Rajab).

In this month the old people keep the day-long fast, and some, too, who are not yet old; when the month is ended, some continue through the Slave Month and the Month of the Fast of All People, that is to say three months in all, eating or drinking nothing between sunrise and sunset.

There is a custom among our people of Abuja that in this month there shall be a token feast of guinea-fowl meat. On the twenty-seventh day, the Emir sends for some guinea-fowl, ten or more, has them cooked and sends a piece of the meat to each of his chiefs, title-holders, and the most important of the towns-folk, some of whom will do likewise for their own followers.

Also in this month the reading of the Holy Book 'Ashafa' is begun at the house of the Chief Imam and at the house of the Salanke, and it is not until the month of the Fast of All People that the Book is closed.

Watan Bawan Azumin Du-Gari, or the Slave Month of the Fast of All People

(Arabic: Sha'aban)

This is the month in which greatest number of marriages of young girls takes place, so that they may spend the Fast in their husband's house. (**Page: 69**)

Watan Azumin Du-Gari, or the Month of the Fast of All People

(Arabic: Ramadan)

When this moon first appears, the Emir comes out into the open space in front of his compound, guns are fired off, and prayers are said. This night the Emir and his chiefs go to the house of the Emir's Drums where the Salanke says the prayers to which the 'Asham' is now added, whilst the Chief Scribe enters the Private Compound to lead the women in prayer.

When the Salanke arrives accompanied by the chief of his household, his Sarkin Fada, he finds the Household Servants there with the Bodyguard and the Eunuchs. Then the Bodyguard and the Eunuchs go to the Private Compound to fetch the Emir, and when he is ready to come out, two of the Eunuchs begin to shout with all their might "Go carefully, Master", and ten or more of the Bodyguard cry in answer "God grant him Health and Peace and Happiness". They continue to shout these greetings until he reaches the place of prayer; and this is to warn the people of his coming, for afterwards none may enter.

In former times when the Bodyguard went into the Private Compound, they would pull their gowns half-way off, keeping one shoulder covered, and they would take off their caps. The reason why they were allowed to enter the private apartments at all, not being eunuchs, is that they were recruited from amongst the Emir's grandsons; for except on this occasion, the only men other than eunuchs allowed inside were the Chief Scribe, who is the Emir's personal Imam, and the slaves who came to repair the buildings.

To the place of prayer come also the Trumpeter of the Famfani, the long wooden horn of the Emir; the Chief Drummer of the Emir's Drums; the Chief Drummer of the ordinary drums; and the Trumpeters of the Kakaki, or long metal trumpets. When the Emir has come, the prayers begin; and when the prayers are ended, the Chief Drummer begins to beat the Emir's Drums and the trumpeters and the other drummers join in. This is to tell the people that the Emir has finished praying, and the Bodyguard and the Household Servants escort him back to his private apartments whilst the people disperse.

Next day before dawn the Chief Drummer of the Emir's Drums and the other drummers and trumpeters play again in order to rouse the town for the meal which must be eaten before day-break; and this they do throughout the month of the Fast. On the fifteenth day, the meal of the Middle Fast is served in the Emir's Compound. The Emir has a large number of dishes of food prepared for the minor title-holders who will come there to eat after sunset. Again, on the sixteenth day he has food prepared, this time for the Children of the Ruling Houses; the women and girls have their meal inside the (**Page: 70**) Private Compound, but the men and boys eat theirs outside, and when they have finished the Emir goes out to them and gives them presents of sweetmeats and money to make them happy.

The readings of the Koran are begun this month at the house of the Abokin Sa[unavailable]ki and in the ward of Malam Ashehu; every night ten of the sixty chapters are read, and when it is finished they start at the beginning again. This ends on the twenty-fifth night for the Abokin Sarki, but not until the Eve of the Feast for Malam Ashehu's ward, and on this last night, not ten chapters, but the whole Koran is read from beginning to end. Similar readings take place, but in the day-time, at the house of the Chief Imam and of the Salanke, the former ending on the twenty-eighth of the month, the latter on the twenty-ninth.

Watan Sallan Azumi, or the Month of the Lesser Feast

(Arabic: Shawal).

Early in the evening of the day when the new moon is due to appear, you will find all eyes turned towards the western sky, eagerly watching, and when it is seen the women everywhere utter their piercing cries of joy. This is because the long day-time fast is at an end, and because of this there is a proverb which says, "It is the end-of-fast moon which catches most eyes".

All that night there is a happy hubbub of drumming and singing in front of the compounds of all the chiefs, and before the Emir's Compound his drums are played.

In the early morning of the Feast Day, all the men go to the prayer-ground of Idi outside the town, those who have horses riding. But the Emir does not go to the prayer-ground until his Bodyguard and the chiefs, the bowmen and the men with muskets, have gathered together. Then he gets on to his horse and sets out with the others round him; but on the way there is no drumming or playing of trumpets or any music at all. After the short prayers have been said, the Emir and the other horsemen mount but stop at the edge of the prayer-ground. Then the Chief Drummer stands in front of him and plays the special call of each of the Emirs from as far back as can be remembered to the present day, beginning with Mai-gamo who reigned in Zaria from 1779-82; and whilst he is playing, all the other drummers and buglers are silent, listening.

As soon as he has finished, the Bodyguard shout together in a loud voice, saying, "God grant you Health and Peace and Happiness". Then the men with muskets fire them off, all the drummers begin to play, and all the chiefs, one by one, ride up to the Emir, raising the right hand in salutation. Then they all move off together, nowadays going first to the house of the District Officer to greet him. He gives the Government's message of greeting to the Emir and (**Page: 71**) the people, and a gift of kolanuts. Then they go down to the open space in front of the Emir's Compound, the Emir riding last whilst the rest of the horsemen spur ahead, wheel, and gallop back to pull their horses up on their hind legs in salutation before him. They move on to the Entrance House where the Emir offers the same greeting to the Sarauniya, then he turns his face towards the people whilst the Makama Babba goes to fetch the Madawaki from his place.

When the Madawaki reaches the Emir's side and has greeted him, then the Chief of the Beggars shouts to the drummers and trumpeters for silence, and the Emir addresses his people, saying:

"I offer thanks to God, and to Mahommet, the Messenger of God. I thank the Madawaki. I thank the Galadima, the Wambai and the Dallatu. I thank you all, Men of Zazzau. May God grant us peace and prosperity. I wish you always to remember the ties of blood and the duty of obedience. God grant that next year also we may reach this Feast Day safe. Amin."

When he has finished speaking, the Madawaki replies for all the people: "Whatever the Emir orders us to do, that we shall surely do, by day or by night, in storm or in sunshine."

And when he has said this, all come to greet the Emir once again, and then they go each man to his house.

At dawn the next day come the visits of greeting. The Kuyambana, the Makama Babba, the Makama Karami and the Garkuwa meet all four together at the Kuyambana's house. From there they go to greet the Madawaki, the Sarauniya, the Wambai, the Iya, the Galadima and the Sarkin Gayen; wherever they stop, food is brought to them together with many kolanuts, and they eat a little of the food and move on. When they have finished, the Makama Babba and all the other title-

holders who go with the Kuyambana, escort him back to his house before going to the Emir to show him the gifts they have received for their greetings. He takes out a very little by way of token, returning the rest to them; then they go back to their homes. The Dangkaladima, too, visits the compounds of all the more important chiefs to greet them on this morning, and each gives him a robe, some food and kolanuts, most of which he will divide amongst the sons of the ruling houses who follow him, but nowadays he is not very often given a robe, only the food and kolanuts.

In the evening all the chiefs and title-holders go again to the Emir's Compound to greet him, and he gives them kolanuts before dismissing them. The sons of the ruling houses follow the Dangkaladima to escort the Madawaki home, and there he gives them a large calabash of food which they eat. Then he gives the Dangkaladima a robe and some kolanuts which they take to the Emir to (**Page: 72**) show him, and he, when he has taken a little out by way of token of acceptance, returns the rest to them. The others now escort the Dangkaladima home, and disperse.

These Visits of Greeting are paid in the same way also at the time of the Greater Feast, nor is it only the chiefs and title-holders who follow this custom, for the ordinary people, too, go visiting their friends and relations in the town, receiving presents of money, food, kolanuts and scent.

Watan Bawan Sallan Laiya, or the Slave Month of the Greater Feast
(Arabic: Zul-qiida).

There are no special customs connected with this month, but this is not due to any superstition.

Watan Sallan Laiya, or the Month of the Greater Feast
(Arabic: Zul-qiida).

When the tenth day of this month comes, the Emir and the people go out again to the prayer-ground of Idi just as they did for the Lesser Feast, and when the prayers have been said, then the Emir has a ram brought up which he orders the Salanke to slay there on the prayer-ground, and one of the servants takes the carcass to the Emir's Compound. But in the old days it was a slave whom the Emir intended to free who took the carcass, and when he had put it down in the compound, he was a free man and was given a Moslem name like any other son.

The reason why the Emir has the ram slaughtered at the prayer ground is so that every man may see that the prayers are ended, and may go home and kill his own ram according to the rites of Islam; for it is said that any ram killed before the Emir's counts for nothing, and the man has sacrificed it in vain.

The Chiefs and Title-Holders of the Habe of Zazzau

There were seven different groups of Chiefs and title-holders amongst the Habe of Zazzau and these were: (**Page: 73**)

1. The Chief Councillors

The Madawaki (or Madaki), the Galadima, the Wambai and the Dallatu.

2. The Turbaned Councillors

These were divided into two sections, those who followed the Madawaki:

The Kuyambana, the Sata, the Garkuwa Babba, the Makama Babba, the Lifidi, the Wagu and the Shenagu; and those who followed the Galadima:

The Iyan Bakin Kasuwa, the Barwa, the Sarkin Fawa, the Wandiya and the Dankekasau.

The Sarkin Gayen who came with Makau from Zaria was the Chief of a small town there, and though he had no position among the seven groups, he followed the Galadima because he came to live in his ward in Abuja. For the same reason the Dangaladima or Heir Presumptive also followed the Galadima.

3. The Body Servants

The Sarkin Fada, the Jarmai, the Barde and the Hauni with their followers: The Chinchina, the Jagaba, the Bakon Barno, the Gwabare and the Magayaki followed the Sarkin Fada.

The Chiritawa and the Madakin Jarmai followed the Jarmai, as also did the Kachalla because he lived in the Jarmai's ward.

The Durumi, the Kangiwa, the Barde Kankana, the Barden Mai-Daki, the Garkuwa Kankane, the Magayakin Barde and the Madakin Barde all followed the Barde.

The Madakin Hauni and the Barden Hauni followed the Hauni

4. The Emir's Eunuchs

These were the officials of the Private Compound, and the Emir's private counsellors: The Makama Karami, the Ma'aji, the Sarkin Ruwa, the Turaki, the Fakachi and the Sarkin Zana.

5. The Household Servants

The Sirdi, the Shamaki, the Madakin Gabas, the Kunkele, the Sarkin Karma, the Banaga, the Sarkin Bindiga, the Sarkin Baka, the Magajin Kwa, the Sarkin Noma, the Bikon Tambari, the Magajin Nagaba and the Boroka.

6. The Children of the Ruling Houses

Those who held office were the Dangaladima and two women, the Sarauniya and the Iva.

7. The Imams

The Magajin Malam, the Liman Juma, the Salanke, and the Magatakarda. (**Page: 74**)

When the Chief Councillors or the Turbaned Councillors met, it was in the old Entrance House of Zazzau which none but they might enter. It was there, at night, that successors to these titles were appointed, and for a new Chief Councillor or for the Kuyambana, the Sata, the Iyan Bakin Kasuwa, the Sarauniya or the Iya, the Emir's Drums would play for seven days. Of the Emir's Body Servants, the Sarkin Fada and the Jarmai alone were appointed at night, but the Emir's Drums did not play for them, only the long wooden horn was blown; and so it was for others of the Turbaned Councillors, for them only the horn was blown.

Their Duties

Almost all the old titles are still preserved in Abuja, but only one or two are anything more than honorary nowadays. They are usually given to people who hold some post of responsibility in the Native Administration or in local affairs. These were their duties in the old days:

1. The Chief Councillors

The Madawaki

He was next in importance to the Emir and was, under him, Commander of the Army to protect the land from enemies. He was in charge of one half of the town, the part built to the east of the Wuchichiri stream. He advised the Emir upon the appointment or dismissal of title-holders; he replied to the Emir's address on Feast Days; he summoned the Chief Councillors and the Turbaned Councillors to their meetings. With the other Chief Councillors he chose the new Emir, but later, if any of these were themselves members of the Ruling Houses, then he called upon the Kuyambana and the chief Malams to help him.

The Galadima

He was always a eunuch, and was left in charge of the town when the Emir and the other chiefs went out to war. He arranged the marriages and naming of the Children of the Ruling Houses.

The Wambai

He was always a eunuch and in addition to his duties as adviser, he took part in the naming of the children. He was also responsible for seeing that the private latrines and urinals of the Emir and his wives were kept clean.

The Dallatu

When the Emir went to war, he was responsible for building his quarters in the war camp where, too, he performed all those duties which the Galadima performed in the town. **(Page: 75)**

2. The Turbaned Councillors

These were chosen from amongst the most important men in the town; even former slaves might hold these titles. Following the Madawaki were:

The Kuyambana

He was the Madawaki's chief adviser in all matters.

The Sata

He was in charge of the Household Servants and was responsible for seeing that the open space in front of the Emir's Compound was swept and the grass trimmed. He also was the thatcher of the Entrance House of the Emir's Compound.

The Garkuwa Babba

At the war camp he kept watch over the enemy's movements. He led the foot-soldiers in the war dance before the Emir; originally, the Emir himself used to lead the dance.

The Makama Babba

He was responsible for the disposition of the troops in battle, and for sharing out the booty afterwards. With the Wagu, the Lifidi, the Shenagu and the Dankekasau he stood guard at the Entrance House of the Emir's Compound at feast times until the Emir came out to go to the prayer-ground of Idi.

The Lifidi

He was the Captain of the Shield-bearing Horsemen.

The Wagu

He guards the burial ground of the Emirs and keeps it clean. It is to him that the Dodon Wagu comes at the time of marriage in the ruling houses.

The Shenagu.

He made the tethering ropes for the Emir's horses. Following the Galadima were:

The Iyan Bakin Kasuwa

He was responsible for the markets in the town and in the satellite villages.

The Barwa

He was responsible for the arrangement of the Emir's quarters in the war camp. In the town, any unmarried girl found to be with child was put into his charge. When a new Emir was appointed, he draped his body with leaves³⁴ and sat at the door of the House of **(Page: 76)** the Emir's Drums for the seven days that the Emir must stay inside. It was he who taught the new Emir the royal gait or 'Takama'—to walk with a dignity befitting his rank.

The Sarkin Fawa

He slaughters the cattle and other beasts in the Market.

The Wan-diya.

He obtained the white marriage cloth for the weddings of Children of the Ruling Houses, and helped with the preparations.

The Dankekasau

It was his duty to stand on one leg at the Entrance House of the Emir's Compound on feast days until the Emir came out to go to the prayer-ground of Idi, and this he did in case the Emir came out in an angry mood, so that he should see him and laugh.

3. The Body Servants

The Sarkin Fada

He was the chief official of the household. In time of war he helped the Makama Babba to divide the spoils; it was he who took the Emir's share and handed over the Madawaki's share to the Makama Babba. His followers were:

The Cbinchina

He was the chief spy who would report on the state of the country and note any signs of unrest.

³⁴ Of the kujeme tree ('*Lophira alata*' Banks: Dipterocarpace) which is believed by the Pagans to be a powerful 'medicine' against all kinds of sickness and misfortune.

The Jagaba

He was chief of the heavily-armed foot soldiers. It was his duty to travel always one stage ahead of the Emir to see that all was well.

The Bakon Barno

Messenger to the Shehu of Bornu.

The Gwabare

He was responsible for the thatching of all houses inside the Emir's Compound. During the month of the Fast of All People he attended to the lamps for the evening prayers, at the end of which time the Emir would give him a robe.

The Magayaki

Assistant to the Jagaba

The Jarmai

He was the chief warrior in the actual fighting; it was his special duty to come to the help of the Madawaki's forces if they were hard (**Page: 77**) pressed. In times of peace he helped the Sarkin Fada in the house-hold. His followers were:

The Chiritawa

He was the Jarmai's shield-bearer.

The Madakin Jarmai

Assistant to the Jarmai

The Barde

With his followers he would go ahead of the Emir in his journeyings to see that all was safe and ready for him. In war he would spy out the position of the enemy and their strength and report on it to the Madawaki. In times of peace, he also helped the Sarkin Fada in the household. His followers were:

The Durumi

It was his duty to see that the Emir was properly guarded in the war camp, and that his section of the camp was well built, and to get the poles and plaited grass with which it was enclosed.

The Kangiwa

He received all the game that the hunters brought for the Emir, and was given the head of the beast for his share.

The Barde Kankana

He would support the Barde in battle.

The Garkuwa Kankane

Assistant to the Garkuwa. The Barden Mai-Daki. He would build and thatch the house of the Emir's chief wife, and serve her.

The Magayakin Barde

Assistant to the Barde.

The Madakin Barde

Assistant to the Barde and his messenger to the Emir.

The Hauni

He would take the place of the Jarmai when the latter was away; he looked after the other household servants and helped the Sarkin Fada generally. (**Page: 78**) His followers were: The Madakin Hauni and the Barden Hauni.

4. The Emir's Eunuchs

The Makama Karami.

He was the spokesman of the Private Counsellors, and the messenger whom the Emir used to communicate with the Liman Juma, the Magatakarda, the Sarauniya, the Iya or the Garkuwa Babba.

The Ma'aji

He was the Treasurer to the Emir

The Turaki

The Emir's messenger to the Salanke and to the Chief Councillors with the exception of the Galadima.

The Sarkin Ruwa

The Emir's representative and messenger to the fishermen and for all matters concerning the rivers.

The Fakachi

The Emir's messenger to the Galadima, the Dungaladima, the Sarkin Gayen and the Magajin Malam.

The Sarkin Zana

He was in charge of all parts of the Emir's Private Compound. He stayed in it all day until the Emir retired at night when he would fasten all doors. He was in charge of the Sword of Zazzau. If any women or children of the Household deserved punishment, it was his task to see that it was properly administered. He was the Emir's messenger to the women of the Household.

7. The Household Servants

The Sirdi

He was in charge of all the harness of the Emir's horses.

The Shamaki

He was in charge of the horses themselves

The Madakin Gabas

He was the guard of the rear part of the Emir's Compound, and responsible for the corn-bins.

The Kunkele

He was Captain of the Shield-bearers (foot).

The Sarkin Karma

He was in charge of the fire-raising party in surprise dawn attacks on towns and villages. (**Page: 79**)

The Banaga

In charge of those who cleared paths through the forests for the army.

The Sarkin Bindiga

The Captain of the Musketeers.

The Sarkin Baka

The Captain of the Archers.

The Magajin Kwa

The Emir's Barber

The Sarkin Noma

He was in charge of the Emir's farms.

The Bikon Tambari

The Chief Drummer of the Emir's Drums.

The Magajin Nagaba

The Chief Drummer (ordinary drums).

The Boroka

The female messenger and servant of the Emir's wives and concubines.

6. The Children of the Ruling Houses

The Dangaladima

He was the Heir Presumptive.³⁵

³⁵ Though, in fact, only one Dangaladima has ever become Emir of Abuja; this was Abu Kwaka.

The Sarauniya

She was usually the daughter of an Emir, and looked after the women of the Household during the absence of the Emir. She was in charge of the arrangements at the marriage of the girl children; and with the Iya she prepared the food for the feasts given by the Emir at the Middle Fast.

The Iya

She was usually a wife of the Emir's father, but not necessarily the Emir's mother. She arranged marriages for the Emir's concubines when he died.

7. The Imams

The Liman Juma.

He is the Chief Imam. He goes to the house of every ordinary family in the town where a death has occurred in order to say the prayers. He officiates at the service in the Mosque on Fridays. He was sometimes consulted in the choice of a new Emir. **(Page: 80)**

The Salanke

He officiates at the prayer-ground of Idi, and prays at the death bed of all chiefs and title-holders; he was sometimes consulted about the choice of a successor to the Emir.

The Magajin Malam

The representative of the Shehu of Bornu. It is he who actually installs the new Emir.

The Magatakarda

The Chief Scribe and private Imam of the Emir's Household. He opens the Book at the Feast of the Month of Full Bellies.

8. Other Title-Holders

The Kachalla.

Messenger to the Shehu of Bornu.

The Sarkin Gayen

He has no position amongst the Councillors for he was not an official in the town of Zaria, but the Chief of a small town outside. He helps the Galadima.

The Abokin Sarki

When the Emir marries, he acts as his personal representative and best friend.

9. The Bodyguard and Watch

The Dogarai

The Emir's Bodyguard. They looked after minor offenders and shared the work of guarding serious offenders with the Yan Doka.

The Yan Doka

They were mainly responsible for the custody of prisoners charged with serious offences. They inflicted the punishment of whipping, and acted as executioners. They were also used as Town Criers and Watchmen.

The Emir In Council

At dawn the Emir's Eunuchs entered the private apartments to greet him, and if he had any matter to resolve that day in council, he would tell them so, and when they had discussed it awhile amongst themselves, they would go out to the House of the Emir's Drums, which was the Council Chamber, the Makama Karami leading. Behind him went the Ma'aji, then the Sarkin Ruwa, next the Turaki, then the Fakachi, and after him followed the Sarkin Zana wearing a sword. Then came the Emir himself, and after him the Boroka.

When the Emir was about to sit upon his couch, two of these counsellors would stand in front of him holding out their wide robes (**Page: 81**) so that no-one should see him in the act of sitting down. When they were all seated, the Turaki got up again and came before the Emir, and hiding his mouth with the sleeve of his robe, told him that the Sarkin Fada had arrived and was waiting at the door of the Entrance House. Being sent to fetch him, he went and, hiding his mouth with the sleeve of his robe, gave the message. Then the Sarkin Fada, the Jarmai, the Barde and the Hauni went through, and when they came to the House of the Emir's Drums they greeted the Emir two or three times before going in to sit down.

When they were all seated, the Makama Karami informed the Sarkin Fada of the matter under discussion and of the opinions already expressed. Then the Sarkin Fada would consult the Jarmai, the Barde and the Hauni who would either agree with the opinion of the others or else make their own suggestion. If it was clear that no agreement was likely without further consultation, the Emir sent the Turaki to summon the Chief Councillors, and the others would go out and leave them with the Emir. After a little time the Chief Councillors would usually go out and across to the old Entrance House of Zazzau where first the Kuyambana would be called, then all the other Turbaned Councillors, and the matter examined. Their opinion was then reported to the Emir by the Turaki.

Now the Emir sent for the Eunuchs and the Body Servants who came in, greeted him, and sat down. Then he told them what the Madawaki and his counsellors had advised. If all were agreed, the Emir announced the decision, but if they still could not agree, the Emir put an end to the argument by making the decision himself. Sometimes however, if it was a matter which they did not wish to become the subject of general discussion and gossip, the Madawaki and the Sarkin Fada would settle it privately.

Four times a year also, on the day of greeting in the months of Full Bellies and of the Birth of the Prophet, and at the Lesser and the Greater Feasts, the Chief Councillors and all the Turbaned Councillors would meet in the old Entrance House of Zazzau where, before going to visit the Emir, they discussed any matter that had arisen. When they were ready, the Madawaki went out first, the others following in order of rank.

At the threshold of the Entrance House of the Emir's Compound, they would find the Body Servants drawn up in two lines to greet them; then they went in, and the Emir, informed of their coming by the Turaki, summoned them to him in the House of the Drums. The Sarkin Fada and the rest of the Body Servants waited in the Entrance House whilst the Madawaki and the Councillors went through to the Emir. At the threshold of the House of the Drums stood the Dogarai, the Yan Doka and the Shamaki; passing them, the Madawaki and the others greeted the Emir in turn, went in, and sat down. If there was anything to discuss, this was now done; otherwise only greetings were exchanged, after which the Dangaladima would escort the Madawaki home. **(Page: 82)** The Emir would discuss anything concerning the girl or women Children of the Ruling Houses with the Sarauniya; the youths with the Dangaladima ; the concubines with the Iya.

Justice

In olden times there was no Alkali, but anyone who had a complaint to make came before the Emir and told him of it. The Emir was always there in his Compound with the Sarkin Fada and the rest of the Body Servants, and anyone with a grievance would come and tell him his trouble. If the matter was of no great importance, not a question of murder or serious wounding, then the Emir would deal with it himself. But if it were serious, the Councillors were consulted; and though there was no Alkali, he would always seek the advice of the Chief Malams on questions of Islamic law.

If a man was found guilty of an offence for which he must be imprisoned, the Turaki would order the Dogarai to seize him and take him to the Ward of the Jailors. There was no prison, but there were stocks in the Entrance House of the Jailors' Compound where the prisoners were kept; and the jailors brought them food from the market and cooked it for them. In the jailors' ward there are still preserved two chains which were brought from Zaria in the old days; one is twenty-six feet long, the other nineteen. They were used to secure prisoners accused of murder, and in the olden times the jailors made a fetish of them, sacrificing to them. There was also a chain in the Bodyguards' compound, which is called the Compound of Dada, and one, too, with the Galadima; but these have disappeared. The Galadima's chain was for people who had been fined, to hold them until the money had been paid. If a man had done some wrong but would not tell the truth of the matter, he was put into one of the chains and his leg compressed by tighter and tighter locking until he spoke; but if he was an ordinary prisoner he would not be tortured. The punishment for theft was the cutting off of a hand; those condemned to death were taken to Mayanka to be killed.

The Administration of the Country

Outside Abuja itself, the principal Chiefs were those of the towns of Izom, Kuta, Jiwa, Kuje, Zuba and Gwazunu, each of whom had a representative in Abuja town. Whatever happened in their districts these Chiefs would report to their representatives who would then inform the Emir. The Turaki was the representative of the Chief of Izom; the Fakachi of Kuta, Abuchi, Gwazunu and Zuba; the Sarkin Ruwa of Kawu; the Galadima of Jiwa; and the Wambai of Kuje.

Supervision of the smaller towns was divided amongst the Councillors and the Children of the Ruling Houses; the Madawaki was responsible for Kafin, Kagarko, Panda and Tawari; the Galadima (**Page: 83**) for Guni and Gusoro; and so on. The Emir himself was the lord of Kurafe, Koton Karfi, Uma'isha and Abaji, and it was from these last two places that eunuchs were supplied to him.

Tribute and Taxation

The Chiefs of all these towns and the Headmen of all the smaller places used to pay tribute to the Emir in money and in slaves. Each of them sent one slave or more to him, together with one hundred thousand cowries, or more; this they would pay once a year, or sometimes more often. To their representatives in Abuja they would pay one tenth as much as they paid to the Emir. The people would give a part of the produce of their home industries: the Kadara would give one hundred mats to the Emir and ten to their representative; the people of Gawu one hundred lumps of iron ore; and so on.

All traders who came in with cattle, horses, sheep, goats, potash, salt, onions or whatever it was they brought, would take some of each kind to the Emir; and those who stopped in the Madawaki's or the Galadima's Ward gave them also a share. Besides this, the Emir received money from the Councillors and title-holders on their installation: from the Madawaki and the Galadima he had one million cowries each; from the Wambai and the Dallatu, five hundred thousand; from each of the rest of the Councillors about two hundred thousand; and from the other title-holders according to their position and means. A share of the spoil of any raid came always to their Emir and to the Madawaki; and when the Fulani were allowed to come, they paid a tax of ten thousand cowries on each head of cattle.

In return, the Emir had many obligations to his chiefs and people. When a new Madawaki or Galadima was appointed, he gave him a burnous, a robe, a turban and a horse; to the Turbaned Councillors he gave a robe and a turban; whilst to the rest of the title-holders he gave a robe.

Whenever the Chief of any town or district sent word that they were threatened by enemies, he would send warriors to help them fight; and he provided horses for his warriors and rewarded them for their bravery. If it was reported to him that any one was robbing or oppressing his people, he would send to seize the man and pass judgement on him.

He bought canoes for the big rivers so that the people might cross, and built bridges over the smaller streams. He helped needy strangers and destitute folk with clothing and with food; he helped the poor to provide for the marriage of their children and for the naming ceremony, and when death came he would give the winding sheet.

He provided gifts at the completion of the readings of the Koran; and when a young man had finished his first learning of the **(Page: 84)** Koran, he was brought before the Emir who gave him a fez and a robe—but first he would see if the youth could read what was written on his writing board.

The Wealth of the People

In olden days the prosperity of Abuja depended upon the slave trade. The Chiefs went raiding the pagan villages to capture slaves whom they brought into the town to sell to the well-to-do and the traders, obtaining in exchange money and fine robes. These rich merchants would take the slaves down into the Nufe or the Ilorin country and sell them there, buying with the proceeds all kinds of robes and garments, harnesses for horses, muskets and gunpowder, which they would sell for further profit on their return. Sometimes the Nufe and Ilorin traders would come with their goods to Abuja and take back the slaves with them. A good slave, boy or girl, would fetch as much as two hundred thousand cowries, and therefore when the British came, those men who had been earning a rich living by this trade saw their prosperity vanish, and they became poor men.

Nowadays many people understand that this slave traffic was an evil thing, and they have turned to useful occupations such as farming, weaving, tailoring and trading in goods. During this last German war trading has increased very much because the Government have bought large quantities of farm produce such as guinea-corn, rice, groundnuts, palm-oil nuts, beniseed, peppers and honey. Many new kinds of fruits and seeds have been introduced, such as oranges, grapefruit, English potatoes, and new varieties of rice; even wheat is now planted in Abuja.

The Character of the Habe

The men of Zazzau cannot endure to be treated with rudeness or contempt, but admire courtesy and generosity. In one thing we are very foolish, for we treat our relatives' children better than our own sons and daughters. Not many of us observe the custom of purdah very strictly, but allow our wives to go out. The men of Zazzau are loyal to their chiefs and to the ties of blood; they do not betray their trust, and are not afraid to speak the truth; they hate underhand ways.

In olden days our people were known far and wide as highway robbers on the trade routes; also, they used to make surprise attacks upon towns by finding their way in at night and concealing themselves until dawn when they would set fire to the place and carry off booty and slaves in the confusion; but they would seldom break into houses like common thieves to steal either by day or by night.

The men of Zazzau will do any kind of useful work, for they have no false pride and do not like to live on charity or to beg. **(Page: 85)** They do not like leaving their own home and town, but do so only of necessity; and this, together with the dislike of having much to do with other races, is the reason why they have so little knowledge of the world or how other people live.

The Tribes of Abuja

The Habe people of Zazzau who came from Zaria live mostly in the town of Abuja and in the villages which lie within five miles of its walls; but they are also found in all the large places where there is a market, for they are by nature mostly traders, either in a large way and as brokers, or of small wares.

There are many different tribes in the Emirate, the biggest of which are the Gwarin Genge and the Gwari of the West; next, but a long way behind, come the Koro, the Gade and the Ganagana. There are also a few Gwandara, Bassa and Fulani.

There have been some Fulani living amongst the Pagans of Pai and Kundu since the earliest times, before the Holy War. As long ago as the reign of Ishaku, the Habe King of Zazzau (1782-1802), a certain Damfani who became the father of the first Fulani Emir of Lapai, brought cattle into the Ganagana country, and Ishaku made him Chief of the Fulani in his Kingdom.

The Bassa have been here so long that no-one knows the real truth about their origins, but there are Bassa in the Keffi country to whom they are related. The Ganagana are related to the Ganagana of Lapai, for they came from there across the Gurara and settled in the southern parts of the Abuja lands. There are also Ganagana and Gwari of the West round Minna and Bida, and it is thought that their origins are the same as the Nufe of Bida.

Of the origins of the Gwandara, it is said that there was a man named Karshi, a son of the King of Kano, who was driven out of the country by his father because he refused to become a Moslem or to give up the fetish dances. Because of this, he and his followers were called Gwan-da-rawa-da-Salla or Gwandara, which is to say "Rather dance to the fetish than pray to God". They made their way south from Kano, founding, in the Keffi country, the town to which Karshi gave his name, and offered to accept the overlordship of the Habe King of Zazzau. Karshi fought against the Bassa and the Gade, and won for the Gwandara great possessions, so that his name became known everywhere in the south of Zazzau. Later, some of these people moved over from Keffi to settle in what is now the Abuja Emirate.

The Koro and the Gade are of the same original stock, but for a long time now there has been a wide difference between them, both of language and customs, and this is due to their intermarriages with other tribes. The people whom we call Koro are the descendants of those Kwararrafa or Jukons who conquered the whole of the Hausa lands in the seventeenth century. Some settled in Zazzau, (**Page: 86**) others in Kano, and in the reign of the last Habe King of Kano, Alwali, who was driven out and afterwards killed by the Fulani, some of the latter moved down to join their fellows in Zazzau and fought against the Bassa and the Ganagana and took their lands. These are the Hausa-speaking Koro of Zuba and Kawu.

The Gade are descendants of other Kwararrafa from the town of Doma. It is said that a certain hunter came from there to the forest by the Usuma river where he killed a wild buffalo and skinned it. Afterwards, if any man was going to this forest, he would say that he was going to the place of the skinned buffalo, which is in Hausa 'kujejen bauna'; and that is why, when they came and settled there, they called their town Kuje. The town of Wako was also founded by these people.

The Gwarin Genge and the Gwari of the West found the Koro already settled in this land when they came from the east, and they became subject to them; even today the Koro have a natural authority over them. Of all the peoples of Abuja, it is the Habe Hausa of Zazzau who have ruled the others from the earliest times, and after them the Koro, the Gade and the Ganagana. The Gwari

have never had any authority anywhere where these other peoples were found, for they came after them and settled amongst them by permission and not by right of conquest. But the numbers of the Koro, the Gade and the others are becoming less, whilst the Gwarin Genge are increasing rapidly and spreading everywhere, so that now they alone comprise more than one half of the total population of the Emirate.

The Zuma Rock

About five miles to the south-east of the town of Abuja near Zuba of the Koro, a single rock³⁶ shaped like a kneeling elephant, rises massive from the plain. Since the earliest times the men of Abuja have told many different stories about the rock, and even today most people believe that certain spirits have their dwelling at its foot, and that a band of Pagans serve them.

A very thick forest surrounds the foot of the rock, and deep inside a family of Koro live in a single small village, and it is their chief who is the priest of the fetish of the rock. This fetish lives in a small rock near the other, and it is at the foot of this small rock that the sacrifices are made. The duty of these people is to keep others away from the rock, and indeed nobody goes near them except some of their fellow-tribesmen who live in a village named Chachi on the outside edge of the forest, and not many of these will ever venture far inside. So few people have dared to go to the fetish village that it is commonly supposed to be invisible to human sight. **(Page 87)**

In former times, just before the beginning of the rains, each year the Emir would send a black ox, a black he-goat and a black dog to the villagers of Chachi to be handed over to the guardians of the rock for sacrifice to the fetish. Even at the present day a fire is sometimes seen burning on the top of the rock, and when this fire is seen, men say that before the year is out something of note will happen in the land of Abuja. It is certain that no human hand lights this fire, for no man born of woman could climb the sheer smooth granite flanks of the rock, and none but the birds or perhaps a passing airman have ever seen its top.

Two years ago for the first time a party of men from Abuja, the District Officer, the Iyan Baƙin Kasuwa who is now our Emir, the Sarkin Malamai who is now the Sarkin Ruwa, together with the Chief of Zuba who is now the Sarkin Yamma, went to find out the truth about the rock. It was said that we should never reach it alive, and the priest would not see us if we did. It was said that this priest wore no clothes and neither cut nor dressed his hair; and it was said that in the old days human beings, usually virgins, were sacrificed to this fetish.

We went to Chachi, and the men of Chachi would not come into the forest with us, but they showed us the path leading to the village. This we followed for a long way over difficult ground and came at last to the village. The fetish priest had some unexpected visitors that day! We sat outside his house and all the people came out to welcome us. There they talked to us in proper Hausa—not in any strange tongue which needed interpreting. We found that all the stories we had heard were nonsense—the priest was just like other men, properly clothed and shaved as we were. He showed us the place where the former priests are buried, and said that he knew nothing of human sacrifices but believed that at one time they had been made. Nowadays the sacrifice is made, not to the rock itself, but to the spirits of the dead priests, his ancestors.

³⁶ Koro, 'Zu-ma' 'big rock'

Thus, we were the first men, except for some of their fellow tribesmen of Chachi, ever to visit these guardians of the rock. Very many people prophesied that before the year was out we should all suffer some great misfortune; but the time passed and nothing untoward occurred, on the contrary each of us has since then been given a title of greater honour. Wonderful are the works of God!

Pagan Festivals

In order to tell something of the pagan fetishes and festivals, we have taken two examples: the Gwarin Genge of Diko, and the Nulu Koro of Ija.

Many many years ago when the Gwarin Genge came into these lands from the east in search of new hunting grounds, one of their hunters founded the town of Diko some eight miles to the north of Abuja, and it has grown to be one of the biggest settlements of (**Page: 88**) this people. The place was named by some of the Koro who were already in the Abuja lands, for in their tongue 'Diko' means 'stranger'. The Gwarin Genge are completely pagan, but they are in no way treacherous, nor wantonly mischievous. Recently many of them have been converted to the teachings of the Mission which is established at Diko.

They have two kinds of festival in the year. The first is held about the middle of March when the first light rain has fallen, and this is in honour of the fetish whom they call Karma and who, they believe, cares for the health and happiness of mankind. The name of the priest of Karma is Jibada, and he has six helpers. On the day appointed, these take a black he-goat and a black cock to the fetish place which, in Diko, is at the foot of a huge granite boulder on the east side of the town, and there Jibada slaughters them both. Then the bodies are lifted up and held close over the rock so that the blood may fall down on to it.

When the blood has ceased to flow, they move to a certain spot where a fire is kindled; on this a large cooking pot is set. Then the meat of the goat and of the cock is stewed, a great deal of salt and peppers being added. Meanwhile a quantity of corn-meal is also cooked. When all is ready, it is taken from the fire, and a lump of corn-meal is dipped into the stew and then stuck on the rock as an offering to the fetish.

Whilst all this is going on, the Chief of Diko waits with his principal followers at some distance from the rock, for they may not go close to the fetish place, and when Jibada has made his offering, then he takes some of the food to the Chief and his followers who eat it with joy, for this is the food of the spirits. When they have finished, the Priest speaks certain magic words to Karma in the rock, and begs him to protect the people of Diko. That is the end of the ceremonies, and now they all go back to the town to the open space in front of the Chief's compound where they drink beer and dance and make merry all through the night till the new day breaks, when they go home.

Twice a year also, once when the corn-shoots first begin to pierce the earth, and again when the ears begin to swell, the Gwarin Genge hold a feast to the fetish they call Dawuya. This is what happens. When the time draws near, the Chief calls together all the headmen of the town, to decide on the actual day of the feast, and every head of a household is told to bring to the Chief one pitcher of beer from his own brew. Should any man steal the corn which has been set aside for this brewing, he will fall sick of a terrible aching in the head, for this corn is dedicated to Dawuya. The Chief also sends round to the neighbouring settlements inviting the people to the feast, for he is himself the Priest of Dawuya who the Gwari believe to be the Spirit of their Ancestors.

The fetish place is a very small hut, built of stones, outside the town in what was formerly a forest. Inside this hut there is an (**Page: 89**) earthenware bowl. When the time comes, the Chief of Diko goes to this place followed by all the men and youths of the town (but the women may not go) and there he slaughters a goat and pours its blood into the bowl; it is through the medium of this blood in the bowl that he is able to speak with the spirits of the ancestors. Then they cook the meat of the goat and eat it, and go back to the town where the dancing now begins.

At the dancing place, the youths deck themselves out in a costume of plaited leaves of the oil palm which reaches from head to knee; their faces are hidden in an old net coloured red, and by a kind of mask which has eyes at the back as well as in front. No woman may see this dancing; if she does her belly will swell up and she will die. If a woman is caught watching them, the dancers will seize her and beat her severely. This feast lasts for three successive days and is held in the clearing in front of the Chief's compound.

In every town there are people whom the Gwari call Zokuda, the Wise Ones. If anyone has had a troublesome dream, he or she will go as soon as it is light to the house of a Wise One to have the dream interpreted. In this way the Wise One hears many things and will often be able to warn the Chief of some danger which is approaching, or of some mischief which is being hatched in the town. If a man has had a bad dream about another man (or woman) who, he believes, is trying to bewitch him by thus forcing a way into his mind and taking possession of it whilst he is asleep, he will go in the morning to a Wise One who will describe for him the kind of person who is bewitching him, though he will name no names. Then the Wise One goes to the Chief and says "All is not well in the town for we have a witch (or wizard) here. You must go and cleanse us of this evil."

Then the Chief takes two young men with him to the hut where the fetish Dawuya, who is the Spirit of the Ancestors, lives, and he kneels down and speaks to the bowl: "I hear that there is a witch in our town who seeks to do us harm. I beg you by your great powers to help me drive her from amongst us. Here are two youths whom I bring before you that you may give them authority to go and drive the witch away." Then the two youths go out and put on the fetish dress and mask which they wear for the dance, and they run through the town crying in a certain voice, "Take heed, you (then follows the description which the Wise One has given) and leave this town lest an awful death come upon you."

About ten miles east of Abuja there is a town called Ija inhabited by a tribe of Koro who say that they came there from Zazzau long long ago. They, too, hold the first fetish festival about the middle of March when the light rain has fallen. This is called Wuye, and its object is to ensure fertility of man and beast and soil. The Chief of Ija is himself the Priest of this fetish, and he has five helpers. On (**Page: 90**) the day appointed, each head of a household must bring to the Chief one pitcher of beer from his own brewing, and the hunters go out to catch a duiker alive for the sacrifice. If, in any year, they are unsuccessful in this hunt, then they say that their Chief is unlucky to them, having no favour with the fetish; so they depose him lest harm befall the town.

This fetish lives beneath a large stone encircled by seven smaller ones in an open space outside the town. Here the duiker is brought and slaughtered by the Chief who pours its blood on to the large stone. Then they go back to the Chief's compound and the fetish dancers come out together with the Dodon Wagu, and the dancing begins. They dance and shout and drink, and this goes on for six days. Both men and women come to watch and even strangers from other places.

This Dodon Wagu is the kind of fetish man of whom we told in the story of the marriage of the Children of the Ruling Houses, and the Pagans believe him to have especially great powers. He covers himself completely with a large piece of drapery, so large that it trails behind him, but the chief men of the town know his real identity, only the women and children do not know but think he is a Djin. In Ija there are three men who act as Dodon Wagu at various times.

Barren women go to the house of the Dodon Wagu for his help, and each takes him a gift of a pitcher of beer. There she meets the guardian of the place, who gives her greeting. After a little while she hears the Dodon Wagu muttering some charms, and when she hears this, she kneels down and throws dust upon her shoulders in obeisance whilst the guardian of the place interprets to her what the Dodon Wagu is saying, for he does not speak in modern Koro, but in the old tongue of Doma. The woman is given a potion of herbs and roots to drink, and when her prayer is granted she brings a he-goat as a gift.

Besides this, the Koro have another fetish festival which they call Madumako, and this is held at the time of the eating of new yams, about the end of June. On this day all the hunters go out to get as much meat as possible for the feast; in former times they would spend five days on this hunt. When they come back, they light a huge fire in the fetish hut near the town. Then the leaders rub a certain medicine on their bodies and go to dance and play with the fire, picking it up in their hands and passing it all over their bodies. No women are allowed to see this dance, so when the time comes they stay indoors. If a woman does see it, even by accident, she must give the Priest, who is called Musa, a pitcher of beer and a black cock or else she will meet a horrible death. This feast lasts for seven days.

But the women have their own fetish which is called Kaka Maiwa. A big hut is built for him outside the town, and there his (**Page: 91**) robes are kept. Certain men are chosen for this office, but the women and children do not know who they are. There is no special day on which Kaka Maiwa comes out; whenever a woman wishes to celebrate some happening, she will brew beer and take it to the hut and say that she wishes the Kaka Maiwa to come out that night; so in the evening he puts on his robe of banana leaves and comes out to dance in front of her house. Only when the corn is scarce, that is when the old corn is nearly finished and the new crop is still ripening, the Kaka Maiwa does not come out.

All the Koro have a rainmaker, who has the power to bring or drive away the rain. When there is too much or too little falling, he will go into the forest and there pick certain leaves. Then he will kill a young cock and pour its blood on to the leaves which he will then hang up in his house; and the rain will come or go as he has directed.

Koro and Gwari all kneel before their Chiefs and pour dust on their heads in obeisance. It is the Chief who settles all disputes and deals with all complaints, and he will call upon his advisors (who are named Madawaki, Galadima, Wambai and so on just as in Abuja town) to help him. The Chief of each settlement and the Priest of the Fetish hold their titles by right of descent, but the rest are chosen by the Madawaki and the Galadima. Sons of the Chief's house hold such titles as Dangaladima, Sarkin Fada, Makama Karami, Jarmai, Barde and Jagaba. Chiefs of the Gwarin Gengi are installed by the Koro Chiefs, who also settle disputes about the succession.

They make for their dead the kind of grave that we Moslems call 'Lahadu'. First they make a hole as if for a well, but only as deep as a man's chest, then they dig out a space in the south wall. In this they bury the old folk with their faces to the east, for that is the quarter to which men turn in hope. The graves for old people are dug inside a hut in the compound, but children are buried at

the entrance, outside. The Koro call the grave-diggers 'Aluyo'; they bury five bodies in a grave. When a child dies, the family stays in the compound for four days to receive the condolences of mourning; for a grown person the period is seven days.

These tribes begin to count the months of the year from the time when they start to clear their farms for the new season's crops, which is in April. Outside every village there is a fetish made of the wood of the wild fig tree which they set up at the crossing of two paths. When a new moon rises, they move it to the next place, so that any man who knows the order can tell which moon it is and when the new moon has risen. They have their own names for the months, but they do not count the days of the week and have no names for them; they reckon by their market days, for they hold a market every fourth day; but now they are beginning to learn the names of the days from the men of Abuja. **(Page: 92)** Although they are Pagans and worship fetishes, yet they know the name of God, which in the Koro tongue is 'Eshe', and in Gwarin Genge 'Shakohi', for there is no God but God, and God is Indivisible, and God is Great, and God is Merciful. Blessed be the Nine and Ninety Names of God. Amen.

Appendix III

“The Fourth Day of May in the Year 1900. This letter comes from Governor Lugard:

Greetings and more honour to Mahamman, the Chief of Zuba, together with the expression of my confidence.

After this:

I let you know that I have seen the messenger whom you sent, and I have heard your message and understood all that you have said.

After this:

I tell you that you have done wrong; but since you realise this, I will forgive you and pardon your fault.

After this:

I tell you to watch your actions carefully. I have heard what you have to say and I have also heard all the white man’s report.

After this:

I warn you with the utmost seriousness to take heed of your conduct and to pass on this warning to your people. Also you shall take care of this flag; do not treat it lightly. Every town which possesses a flag such as this becomes thereby a place of importance, for this flag is the flag of our Queen and not to be treated lightly. Should you hold it cheap, it is your own honour and authority which you cheapen.

After this:

I notify you that I am clearing a road from the bank of the Niger to your town, and from there to the banks of the Kaduna river, so that even a woman travelling alone with her load may pass in safety, or a child. This is my intention. As to the road from Kurmin Giwa to Zaria, all is well; with the road from Lafiya to Wukari, all is well as far as the Birnin Gwari road; every man, woman, and child, the old and the young, may pass in safety.

After this:

I tell you that we are the rulers of the world. If a man does aught by night, we know of it by morning; if by day, we know of it by night, you may be sure of that. Therefore, take heed of your behaviour. I have accepted your explanation and forgiven you for what is past, but for the future take care that nothing shall happen to harm our mutual confidence and respect.

That is all.”