

THE EMERGENCE OF SHEIKH MUHAMMAD EL-AMIN EL-KANEMI AND THE INVOLVEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF SHUWA ARABS IN STATE AFFAIRS 1808-1837

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Abstract

The emergence of Sheikh Muhammad al-amin El-Kanemi in the politics of Borno was at the instance of the Saifawa rulers who invited El-Kanemi to assist in the fight with the Fulani 'jihadists' in the opening years of the 19th Century. El-Kanemi, in carrying out this difficult-task, appealed to the Shuwa Arabs and Kanembu leaders to join him in the fighting which they did satisfactorily. El-Kanemi became influential, a power behind the throne and established his own council and found a new capital Kukawa in 1814. His supporters the Shuwa Arabs and the Kanembu were rewarded. They were appointed Executive Councillors, their names became institutionalised titles and the office of the Waziri i.e. Prime Minister rotated among the three Shuwa Arabs leaders, Mallam Tirab, Ahmed Gonimi and Ibrahim Wadaima thus bringing the Shuwa Arab leaders into the mainstream of administration in Borno in the 19th Century.

Keyword: Emergence, Involvement, Advancement, Shuwa Arab Affairs.

Introduction

The paper will take off by having a cursory look at the background of Sheikh Muhammad El-Amin El-Kanemi who was born in Fezzan to a renown Kanembu – scholar; Sheikh Muhammad Ninka Fahi and his mother was an Arab of Zawila Origin. Accounts on Sheikh Ninka's sojourns in North Africa and the Middle East varied but the dominant version in Borno States that Sheikh Ninka, El-Kanemi's father, was in the Fezzan province by the 17th century, and that it was there that he met and married El-kanemi's mother and gave birth to the Shehu in 1776.¹ Perhaps it is in this context that Sa'ad Abubakar observed that El-Kanemi belonged to the Arab Islamic tradition of Northeast Africa.²³ El-Kanemi started his education under the tutelage of his father, studied widely in Murzuk, Tripoli, Egypt, Mecca and Medina. While in Medina, he lost his father in 1790 and returned to Borno through Sudan, Baghirmi, Wadai and settled at Ngala preaching among the Shuwa Arabs and Kanembu. The local ruler of the area, Mai Ngalama gave him his daughter in marriage because he was impressed by El-Kanemi's outstanding scholarship, a quality which by this time was becoming known not only to his immediate environment of Ngala but to as far as Birni Ngazargamo, the seat of the Saifawa Mais of Borno.

The Outbreak of the Jihad in Borno and the Response of El-kanemi and His Shuwa Arab Allies 1804 - 1808

By 1804, the Sokoto Jihad had taken place in Hausaland. This Jihad, in the words of R. A. Adeleye led to the emergence of the leadership of Fulata Borno in the persons of Ardo Lerlima, Ibrahim Zaki and Sambo Digimsa who attacked Borno under the pretext of reforming Islam. The situation took a serious dimension when another Fulata Borno leader Goni Mukhtar attacked and sacked Birni Ngazargarno in 1808. The Saifawa Mais Ahmed and Dunoma were in a desperate situation and therefore compelled to look for a saviour from outside the Metropolis and this choice fell on El-Kanemi and his Shuwa Arab allies. The choice of Kanemi to redeem this situation may perhaps need explanations. El-Kanemi had bright credentials. Apart from his outstanding scholarship and large followership, had, before the sacking of Birni Ngazargarno in 1808, fought and defeated Muhammad Wabi the local fulata leader in Ngala.⁴ This singular act enlarged El-Kanemi's credentials as a military genius and, perhaps, this was also in the record of the Saifawa Mais. In quelling the uprising of Muhammad Wabi in Ngala region, a source maintains that El-Kanemi made use of his students and Mallams and of course, his Shuwa Arab Soldiers who were professional calvary. A personality with a sound educational background and a good military record with a large and loyal followership at this crucial period of crisis in the kingdom was, indeed, most needed and consequently El-Kanemi was summoned to Mai Dunoma's court to assist in the reconquest of Birni Ngazargarno which by 1808 had fallen into the hands of the fulata and by 1810, Borno had lost her southern and western dependencies or territories to the Fulata. Indeed, Brenner asserts that:

The vast portion of Borno had now been overrun by the Fulani and almost all the territories West and South of Birni Ngazargarno had been laid waste, the once mighty kingdom was now in a state of chaos and on the brink of collapse.⁵

El-Kanemi accepted the invitation of Mai Dunoma and with the help of his allies, the Shuwa Arabs, who were on calvary and Kanembu infantry, routed the Fulani killing Goni Mukhtar. A popular tradition in Borno explains the victory of El-Kanemi on mythico-religious ground as; El-Kanemi having exceptional powers manufactured a cham in a calabash with which he routed the Fulata in Borno.⁶

Another tradition maintains that; The victory of El-Kanemi's could be explained by his ability to organise the courageous Shuwa Arab cavalry and his fellow kanembu infantry soldiers into a formidable fighting force.⁷

Thus, the courage and valour on the part of the military which consisted of Shuwa Arabs and Kanembu and El-Kanemi's profound religious and military genius go a long way in explaining the defeat and dispersal of the Fulata in Borno. Mai Dunoma, pleased with the victory of Borno over the Fulata, presented El-Kanemi with gift of money cattle and slaves.⁸ But the Fulata were not contented with the situation, in 1809 Ibrahim Zaki captured Birni Ngazargarno. El-Kanemi was again summoned to the capital but this time, he requested a piece of land, a fief around Ngurno, which was granted and El-Kanemi moved to Ngurno with a large number of Shuwa Arabs and Kanembu who had served previously under him in fighting the Fulata at Ngala, his first home in Borno.⁹

Factors Responsible for the Attraction of the Shuwa Arabs to El-kanemi's New Fief at Ngurno

When Mai Dunoma offered Ngurno to El-Kanemi as a reward for his efforts in saving Borno from collapse, this site was swarmed by his Shuwa Arab supporters and followers. Ngurno is quite a distance from Ngala yet it served as a center of attraction and witnessed waves of immigrants within a very short period.

An oral source maintains that the Shuwa Arabs were attracted to El-Kanemi's new fief at Ngurno for quite a number of reasons; first and foremost, the source continues, that El-Kanemi was born and bred among the Shuwa Arabs and for this reason he was considered as one of them. Thus, when he asked them to help, they came out in full force. Indeed, it is related that even before the Futata uprising in Borno, the Shuwa Arabs served him as his body guards. Secondly, El-Kanemi's new fief at Ngurno offered good grazing sites for the cattle of the Shuwa Arabs. They could, in the new setting, reap the benefits of this piece of land. Thirdly, they probably thought that by immigrating and setting at Ngurno, they could evade taxation, a measure which they resented throughout their sojourn in the Chad Basin. Fourthly, El-Kanemi's colleagues in the struggle against the Fulata uprising in Borno were Shuwa Arab gentlemen in the persons of Mallam Tirab, Ibrahim Wadama and Ahmed Gonimi.¹⁰ These gentlemen could defend the interest of the Shuwa Arabs, their Kith and Kin. It was therefore natural that when El-Kanemi sent messages, the Shuwa Arabs came in waves and increasing numbers enlarging and strengthening his army. Major Denham has argued that El-Kanemi encouraged the discontented peoples of other nations such as the Shuwa Arabs and Tubu to come and settle at his new fief at Ngurno.¹¹ The Shuwa Arabs and the Kanembu, by the close of the 18th century, were fleeing from the hostile conditions in the militaristic states of Baghirmi, Wadai and Mandara. Since these peoples were fleeing from the hostile conditions, they had no rear to retreat to and Ngurno, being a favourable site for their cattle, were naturally attracted to it and therefore stayed and defended Borno from the on slaught of the Jihadists.

The Ngurno fief became the centre of El-Kanemi's activities in Borno. He was able to collect tax in this fief and financed his followers especially the Shuwa Arabs and Kanembu who were constantly immigrating into this fief. Through these ways, he became the most powerful individual in Borno.

The Reaction of the Saifawa Courtiers to El-kanemi and His Shuwa Arabs and its Aftermath

After the second Fulata invasion and the recapture of Borno by El-Kanemi and his Shuwa Arab followers, there were so many difficulties facing the State. In the first place, Mai Dunoma was unable to sit in one place and establish his authority over the State, The courtiers saw the growing influence of El-Kanemi and his new elements, the Shuwa Arabs and the Kanembu as detrimental to their positions in the court, therefore most of them withdrew their confidence from Mai Dunoma. Furthermore the courtiers were totally against Mai Dunoma's growing friendship with El-Kanemi and his new people, the Shuwa Arab and Kanembu on whom Dunoma came to depend for the security of the State. The situation

resulted in a palace coup in which Mai Dunoma was overthrown and replaced by his uncle Ngileruma.¹² But Ngileruma became unpopular among his courtiers. Dunoma was able to ally with his former friend, El-Kanemi to whom he promised a fief covering from Ngurno to Ngala if he Dunoma would be restored again. Thus, by 1813, El-Kanemi had gained enough support which enabled him to depose Ngileruma and restore Dunoma, Obviously by restoring Dunoma to the throne again, El-Kanemi became the most powerful individual in Borno. This time he was virtually in control of half of the land possessed by the Mai. This period also marked the waning position of the Mai whose power was only limited to Birni Kafela and especially over his countries. From 1814 to his death in 1837, El-Kanemi seemed to possess influence over the Mai in the State. He could be rightly described as the power behind the throne. It was obvious that his service was needed in the state therefore every request by the Mai with regards to the security of the state was manipulated by El-Kanemi to his own advantage and to the benefits of his new immigrants; the Shuwa Arabs and the Sugurti Kanembu. The Shuwa, served as his personal standing army who were totally loyal to him in case of any eventuality. The Shuwa had seen the hope of liberation in El-Kanemi and he in them a readily military resource which he manipulated to suit his own interest.¹³ This, one can say, is the basis of the alliance between El-Kanemi and his allies, the Shuwa Arabs.

El-kanemi and the Changing Status of the Shuwa Arabs 1814-1837

When El-Kanemi moved and stayed at Ngurno, he was followed by his Shuwa Arab scholars and their followers and his Kanembu Kinsmen. He established an intellectual community in Ngurno which he headed. He took for himself the title of Sheikh, El-Kanemi had now risen from a position of relative obscurity to central position of power in Borno. El-Kanemi and his intellectual group moved and established a new capital at Kukawa in 1814. Here, he founded a council of State. At this juncture, one may ask how the Shuwa Arabs feature in the new political arrangement?

The Shuwa Arab Courtiers in El-kanemi Council

The council is traditionally known as the Majlis which is the highest decision making body of the State. It is worth noting that since his days in Ngurno and when he moved to Kukawa, El-Kanemi has been advised by six people namely; Muhammad Terab, Ibrahim Wadama and Ahmed Gonimi, all Shuwa Arab gentlemen; Mallam Tafari, Shettima Kubri and Muhammad Hajj Sudani were his supporters and associates in his early struggles.¹⁴ A close look at composition of El-Kanemi's Majlis reveals that the Shuwa Arabs formed the better half of the council. The administrative hierarchy, therefore, had El-Kanemi at the apex with the Shuwa Arab leaders immediately followed by the Shuwa Arab Sheikhs and their commoners looking up to them. This was no doubt a change in the status of the Shuwa Arabs for the first time in the long history of Borno's dependent peoples, the Shuwa Arabs were given a stake in the central government. The decision by El-Kanemi to coopt the Shuwa Arabs into his government is not difficult to understand. It can be recalled that at the time of the Fulata uprising in Borno it was with the aid and collaboration of these Shuwa Arab leaders and their respective followers that El-Kanemi succeeded in saving the kingdom from total collapse in the 19th century. Thus after attaining a position of Prominence in the politics of

the kingdom, El-Kanemi appointed them into the highest political roles of being members of the inner council with considerable legislative powers.¹⁵ The council came to be dominated by Shuwa Arab gentlemen who were reported to be accomplished scholars like El-Kanemi himself. Each councillor, according to Muhammad Adam, was given specific territories as fiefs and each used his position and influence to ensure the loyalty of the various localities under his control.¹⁶ Ahmad Gonimi, for instance, controlled the area running from Monguno, Marte, Kukawa and Ele Ibrahim Wadama was given the Ngumati region and Muhammad Tirab was in charge of the Firki areas of Borno; Ngala. Kala and Rann.¹⁷ Apart from the roles of executive councillors, the source continues, these Shuwa Arab councillors had specific functions to perform.¹⁸ Ahmad Gonimi for instance was responsible for conduction naming and death ceremonies while Muhammad Tirab had more or less religious function particularly relating to prayers and sighting of the moon. He was also the head of the Military.¹⁹ Muhammad Tirab who merged the leader of the advisers founded a dynasty of Shuwa Arab Waziri's in Borno who exercised a very strong influence in Borno's politics throughout the 19th century.

For instance, during the Shehuship of Umar, Hajj Bashir, son of Muhammad Tirab became the Waziri of Borno, Shehü Umar entrusted power to Hajj Bashir who became the power behind Umar's throne just as the Shehus had been shadow rulers of the Mais. It has been reported that Bashir's corruption, greed and excessive wealth cost him his life. But even after the exit of Bashir, Laminu Njrtiya and Waziri Abdulkarim, rose to favour and confirmed Shuwa Arabs dominance in Borno up to the last quarter of the 19th century. Apart from their specific functions, these councillors headed specific Shuwa Arabs groups and clans as follows.²⁰

- i) Mahlam Muhammed Tirab, for instance, headed the Wulad Sarar Bani Wayil, Assale, Tunjur and Wulad Muharib.
- ii) Ibrahim Wadama took charge of Am-Kelebe, Jubrat, Shaibat, Wulad Mihimit, Balwa Hamra Hanabiyye, Masanbu, Khuzzam, Juleifat.
- iii) Ahmed Gonimi administered Bani Badr, Wulad Sahim, Wulad Amire and Hamadiyya.
- iv) Muhammad Hajj Sudani was in control of Salamat, Beni-set and some sections of Wulad Amire. Hajj Sudani was a Kanembu but in charge of Shuwa Arabs affairs, perhaps for the fact that his mother was a Shuwa Arab.

The Evolution of the Shuwariwu Families as a Nobility in Borno

The Kanuri nobility refer to the three Shuwa Arab executive councillors as *Shuwariwu* meaning these leaders are of Shuwa Arabs background. The *Shuwariwu* became a tiny political elite but with a significant followership at the bottom. This group occupied the office of the Waziri which rotated among them and at the same time retained their names as titles such as *Tirab*, Ahmad Gonimi, Ibrahim Wadama, and passed these titles to their descendants. It is interesting to note that while the Jihad in Hausaland transferred power from the Hausa to Fulani, in Borno the shift was from Kanuri to Shuwa and Kanembu. Thus, the three Shuwa leaders, Mohammed Tirab of Wulad *Sarar* and, Ibrahim Wadama of Wulad *Himet* and Ahmed Gonimi of Wulad *Salim* became the most powerful advisers to the Shehu.

Muhammad Tirab, it was said, was the most powerful and influential of the group. It is said that among the Shuwa Arab leaders, he was the first to promise aid to El-Kanemi and perhaps for this reason, Tirab sat very close to the Shehu in the council *Majilis*. And being the head of the military, he was duly in charge of horses and popularly referred to as the master of horses.²¹ These three Shuwa Arab nobles together with the two others founded a council of state and advised the Sheikh and we have also seen that they took charge of various groups of Shuwa clans and indeed commanded various military expeditions. Reports have it that Mallam Tirab alone could muster a force of 5000 Shuwa at a time.²² This is no doubt an indication that the Shuwa Arabs were a force to be reckoned with as far as the security of the State was concerned. They also became stakeholders in the administration of Borno.

The Power and Influence of Shuwa Arab Courtiers in the Shehu's Council at Kukawa

The Shuwa Arab Councillors were said to have been very powerful in the Shehu's court. This is largely in theory, for in practice, we should not overlook the fact that the Shuwa Arabs councillors owed their rise to El-Kanemi. They had no legitimate right to wilfully check the Shehu. As trusted friends of El-Kanemi, they remained loyal and faithful to him. Similarly even if they could muster a strong voice to counter any decision or verdict passed by the Shehu in the council, the possibility should be borne in mind that El-Kanemi could play one councillor against the other. Furthermore, nearness to the Shehu and competition for favours and best fiefs by the councillors might discourage the councillors from sabotaging El-Kanemi's ruling in council. Finally, these councillors had established themselves in government and would naturally wish their positions be passed down to their descendants and would therefore not gamble out this golden opportunity at their hands.

Outside the council, legal matters of minor nature such as inheritance divorce were handled by various Mallams living in Kukawa who were empowered by El-Kanemi to act as judges. Although we have no direct evidence one can maintain that since the Shuwa Arabs were the most learned group under El-Kanemi the possibility that Mallams among them might have participated in judicial matters at the local level in matters regarding the Sharia could not be overlooked.²³

As can be seen, El-Kanemi was at the apex of the structure as earlier mentioned followed by his executive councillors although the Mainin Kinindi and Talba were legal advisers with some considerable powers, yet they came under the executive Councillors. The council was clearly equipped to undertake both functions of the legislative as well as those of administration. The Shuwa executive councillors, for instance, levied taxes on their fiefs, appointed *chimas* who maintained law and order on their behalf, organised trade and provided military contingents and ensured the loyalty of their fellow Shuwa Arabs at the bottom. The Shuwa Arab commoners looked up to the big three in the Shehu's court who protected them and responded to their pastoral needs. El-Kanemi's period no doubt saw the emergence of Shuwa Arab figures to the forefront of the political scene in Borno. Among the Shuwa Arab privileged class were generally the Shuwa Arabs *Mallams*, the *Kogena* and the *Sheikhs*. The commoners among the Shuwa Arabs, however, paid cattle tax *Jangale* to the authority through their Sheikhs. Commoners were only privileged in the sense that they were responsible only to the Shehu and cases involving them were settled at the headquarters.²⁴

The *Majlis* had the function of both the legislature and the administration of the State. It was the highest court of appeal for the whole State. Thus, the councillors were very important in decision making and policy implementation in the State.

The *Majlis* in the realm of justice dealt with criminal cases including murder and serious land disputes. Kyari Tijani gives a picture of the working session of the *Majlis* thus:

When a case was being heard, the Talba, a scribe made three copies of the minutes. The Mainin-Kinindi, acted as the legal adviser only. The six close followers Mallam Tirab, Ahmed Gonimi, Ibrahim Wadama, Hajj Al-Sudani, Mallam Tatar and Shettima Kubri would then deliberate on the case and declare judgement, the final approval had to come from Monarch, El-Kanemi, himself, after submitting the gist of the case through first the Digima, then Zaifata and Makinta. Should the Monarch resist to endorse the verdict, the Shettima Kanumbe would invite the Monarch into the council chambers for consultation. At this stage, it was necessary to cast votes and that of the Monarch counted for two and each of the councillors counted for one only, the outcome was binding on all.²⁵

As can be seen from the above, El-Kanemi and his councillors operated from Kukawa while the Mai and his titled nobility retained the ceremonial function of the State. This situation led to a dual leadership in Borno but effective authority lay with El-Kanemi who, like a prime minister, was the power behind the throne and whose advice the Mai was forced to comply with.²⁶

One of the major sources of El-Kanemi's authority in Borno is undoubtedly his reliance on the Shuwa for the security of the State. It is for this reason and to increase his own influence that he surrounded himself with Shuwa Arabs advisers who advised him on State and also ensured the readiness of a standing Shuwa Arabs cavalry in matters of crisis or any eventuality as earlier mentioned.

El-kanemi and His Shuwa Arab Allies in the Defence and Consolidation of the Shehu Dynasty

El-Kanemi's gradual rise to power in Borno was challenged by quite a number of states and groups of people in Borno. The Saifawa Mais too, naturally, challenged the authority of this new ruler and his allies, Some of these states included Baghirmi, Wadai, on the eastern frontier, Kanem, the Musgu people and the Black Shuwa of Damaturu area under Lawan Kwana to mention just a few. The task before El-Kanemi and his allies was therefore to subdue these states and peoples. El-Kanemi therefore directed his campaigns to these states.

Major Denham provides a fairly good picture of these campaigns. Denham was opportuned to visit Borno in 1820s and personally took part in some of the Campaigns. He claimed that Borno could muster 15,000, Kanembu and Shuwa Arabs in the battle field.²⁷ It is however, regrettable that most of the sources only mentioned the Shuwa Arabs as participating category in the various campaigns such as that of Musgu and Baghirmi, without

specifying the sectors of the commanders of the various military units. Denham, has, however, mentioned that during the campaign in Kanem against the Shuwa rebel, Sheikh Yamnuk, Borno's army was joined by 400 Dagana Shuwa Arabs besides furnishing them with 100 horses.²⁸ Barth has also stated that during the war with Wadai in 1846, which is outside the scope of this paper, when the Saifawa Mai Ibrahim invited the Sultan of Wadai to help him regain his power from El-Kanemi dynasty, the Borno army was swelled by a crowd of faithless Shuwa.²⁹ Above all, Barth has given us more insight into the role of the Shuwa in military expedition in the 19th century. He not only referred to their bravery but also listed the Shuwa leaders who took part in the Musgu war of 1852, the areas they came from and the number of men they contributed. Describing one episode he said; I saw the Shuwa on the Island who exposed themselves to the greatest of the danger and press on tire farthest.³⁰

Although courage and total commitment were the main factors, it must be noted that the Shuwa with their light cavalry enabled them to gallop back and forth striking the enemy with much ease.³¹ Barth gave out a list of Shuwa Arab leaders in the Musgu campaign which was commanded by Hajj Bashir, the Waziri of Borno. Each of these chiefs, according to Barth, had some hundreds of horsemen with him and that only two great chiefs did not join the expedition namely, Mohammed Konewa of Shegawa and Lawan Ngubdo of Lardo.³²

The Baghirmi Campaign

El-Kanemi after assuming power of the State had to deal with the task of consolidation and effective control of the kingdom which could only be achieved with a strong and well trained and dynamic fighting force. This he found in the Shuwa Arab who formed the cavalry of his army and used it effectively and efficiently. His first task was therefore to quell the recalcitrant vassal states surrounding the kingdom, El-Kanemi's first target was the conquest of Baghirmi and reimposition of its status as a tributary State of Borno. Initially, he kept his Shuwa Arab army off the scene by seeking the assistance of Sultan Abdulkarim Sabun of Wadai to pacify Baghirmi which he did by killing Abdulrahman of Baghirmi and Wadai intervened and established her hegemony over Baghirmi. This intervention meant that El-Kanemi lost both Baghirmi and Wadai on the frontier.³³ This was a critical situation which needed urgent military action. El-Kanemi, therefore, despatched some of his Shuwa Arab cavalry to support the force of Burgomanda.³⁴ But even the imperial army failed to normalise the situation to El-Kanemi's satisfaction. He therefore entered into alliance with Tripoli which assisted him with Fezzani troops.³⁵ The army was enlarged and broadened but comprising of preponderant number of Shuwa Arabs and Fezzani troops. The joint forces pacified the Kotoko city State of Ngulfei, an ally of Baghirmi in 1819.³⁶ But, again, Brenner says that the fortunes of Borno were reversed, a large Baghirmi army intercepted the victorious returning forces of the Shehu and routed them. El-Kanemi lost his son Saleh and many of his Shuwa Arab lieutenants were killed in the encounter.³⁷ The following year 1820, the army was enlarged. This time, it was not only made up of the traditional Shuwa Arab and Fezzani troops, but a new element, the Aulad Sulaiman Arabs also joined in the campaign.³⁸ This joint expedition sacked Tunjur, Babaliya and Gawi before reaching Baghirmi and sacking Mesanya the capital. Baghirmi was pacified but only

temporarily for in 1824, the Baghirmi army, met the forces of El-Kanemi at Ngala, the home base of the Shuwa Arabs in which Baghirmi was defeated.³⁹ One of the factors explaining the defeat of Baghirmi at the battle of Ngala is that the Shuwa capitalised on the topography of the area to the disadvantage of the invading Baghirmi forces.⁴⁰ With the defeat of Baghirmi and Kotoko peoples along the bank of the river Shari, the trouble in the eastern territories were 'nibbed in the bud'. To maintain effective control, El-Kanemi appointed Shuwa Arabs army officer in charge of the eastern dependancies and the kotoko principalities in the person of Kachalla Barka Gana.

While El-Kanemi succeeded in pacifying eastern Borno as indicated above, the western territories of Borno were, lost to the jihadists and never regained from them.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that the emergence of El-Kanemi to the limelight of history brought the Shuwa Arabs close to him. The Shuwa Arabs, considered El-Kanemi as their own and supported his cause which eventually led to the restoration of the Saifawa dynasty but after his death in 1837, his son Umar and the courtiers who had served El-Kanemi conspired and routed the Saifawa. The Saifawa were in 1846, ousted from power and Umar, the son of El-Kanemi became the Shehu of Borno. The Shuwa Arab Courtiers continued to serve Shehu Umar as they did same with El-Kanemi and emerged as a strong political elite locally referred to as Shuwarewu. They retained the names of their forebearers as titles and the office of the Waziri i.e. Prime Minister rotated among them. El-Kanemi's period was therefore a milestone to the Shuwa- Arabs.

Notes

¹ Group interview with Mai Ngalama Ibrahim; Goni Mai Kura Bukar Domobe in the Mais official residence at Ngala on 21st September, 1987. Also see Baba Gana Kachalla 'The Transformation From a career of Islamic scholarship to politics and political leadership in Borno: A case study of the Career of Mahammad El-Kanemi seminar paper presented to Borno Museum society on 3rd September, 2000.

² This Islamic tradition has a long pedigree. In Borno, students and scholars enriched their scholarship by becoming itinerant and this moved from one reknown sheikh to the other in search of knowledge; Borno scholars visited North Africa and the Middle east for this purpose. Sheikh Muhammad Ninka and his son El-Kanemi were a product of this long established traditional of Borno.

³ R.A. Adeleye, Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria (London, 1971), p.25.

⁴ Interview with late Alhaji Musa Daggash and Mallarn Hassan Taifur in Maiduguri on 12th July, 1988 and 15th July, 1988 respectively.

⁵ Louis Brenner, The Shehu's of Kukawa (London, 1973), p.24.

⁶ This view is held by the chief Imam of Dikwa town and is popularly accepted among the scholars of Borno and the traditional nobility.

⁷ Alhaji Musa Daggash 12th July, 1988.

⁸ Brenner op.cit, p.37; Also; Goni Bukar Domobe and Mai Ngalama Ibrahim confirmed Brenner's position on this point.

⁹ Louis Brenner, Ibid,p.38.

¹⁰ Mohammed Adam, The History of the Shuwa Arabs in Borno, B. A. Dissertation ABC/Bayero University, Kano, 1976, p.32

¹¹ Denham Accounts of Travels in Western and Central Africa in the years 1822, 1823 and 1824, London, vol. II, p 4.

¹² Denham, Account of Travels, vol.II, Ibid, p. 45.

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- ¹³ Saad Abubakar, Borno in the 19th century in Obero (edn) Groundwork of Nigerian History (Ibadan: Heinemann, 1980), p.333.
- ¹⁴ Sad Abubakar Borno in 19th century Ibid, p.
- ¹⁵ H. Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa vol.II, (London, 1959), p.600.
- ¹⁶ Mohammed Adam, the History of the Shuwa Arahs in Borno op.cit. p.35.
- ¹⁷ Ibid p.35.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. pp.36-38
- ¹⁹ J. B. Webster and A. Boahen, The Revolutionary years West Africa since 1800, London, p.40.
- ²⁰ Mohammed Adams The History of the Shuwa Arabs in Boron op.cit, p.38.
- ²¹ J. N. Webster and A. A. Boahen, The Revolutionary years, op.cit, p.38.
- ²² Shettima Adam maintained that Mallam Tirab headed the Military and was in charge of supplying horse to the Shehu's army and that he led several military campaign in Baghirmi, Wadai, Madara etc interview with Shettirna Adam at Bama 4th 1983.
- ²³ Ibraliim Modu, The Shuwa Arabs in Kanern Boron History staff Seminar paper, Department of History, University of Maiduguri, 1986, p.18.
- ²⁴ Ibraliim Modu, The Shuwa Arabs - Ibid, p.19; Goni Anjile maintained that reknown Islamic scholars at the time of El-Kanerni include Goni Domman, Goni Hassan Musa, Goni Abdullahi, Isa and Goni Ali Al-Ahmar were well versed respected recognised in Kukawa. The possibility that these scholars settled cases outside the council between the people could not be overlooked.
- ²⁵ Baba A. Jidda, 'The administration of the Shuwa Arabs in Borno B.Sc. Dissertation submitted to the Department of Political Science A.B,U. Zaria, 1976, p.24.
- ²⁶ Baba A. Jidda, 'The Administration of the Shuwa Arabs ... Ibid, pp. 25-27.
- ²⁷ Ibid, pp 25-27.
- ²⁸ K. Tijjani, Political and Constitutional Changes in Borno under Shehu Muharnmad El-Kanemi: The case of the Majlis' in studies in the History of pre-colonial Borno, ed. Bala Usman and Nur Alkali Zaria, p.136.
- ²⁹ K. Tijani, 'Political and Constitutional changes Ibid, p.137.
- ³⁰ J. B. Webster and A. A. Boahen, eds. The Revolutionary Years op.cit. p.40.
- ³¹ Denham, Clapperton and Oundey Travels and Discoveries ... vo1.I, p.157.
- ³² Denharn, Travels and Discoveries, Vol.II, Ibid, p.603.
- ³³ H. Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa, vol.II. op.cit, p.603.
- ³⁴ H. Barth, Travels and Discoveries Ibid, p.363.
- ³⁵ Ibid, p.49.
- ³⁶ Ibid, p.51.
- ³⁷ Ibid, p.49.
- ³⁸ Saad Abubakar, 'Borno in the 19th century' in Groundwork of Nigerian History Op. cit. p.56.
- ³⁹ Saad Ibid, p.57; Also Ibrahim Modu, "The Shuwa Arabs in the 19th century Borno Politics" 1808-1902", M. A. Disssertation submitted to the Department of History University of Ibadan, August 1989, p.34.
- ⁴⁰ Louis Brenner, 'The Shehu's ...', op.cit, p.34; Ibrahim Modu' The Shuwa Arabs in the 19" century Borno politics...p.38, Kachalla Barka Gana and Kachalla Jime were the prominent Kachallas of El-Kanemi's period. Their descendants to this day are referred to as the Kachallabu in Borno.