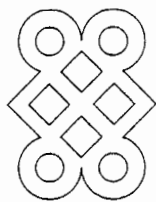


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A HISTORY OF

ISLAMIC SOCIETIES

SECOND EDITION



IRA M. LAPIDUS

Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley

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ISLAM IN AFRICA

CHAPTER 20

ISLAM IN SUDANIC, SAVANNAH, AND FOREST WEST AFRICA



The formation of Islamic societies in sub-Saharan Africa was similar to that in Indonesia. Whereas Islamic societies in the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent were established by conquest and ordered by states, Islam in Africa was diffused by the migration of Muslim merchants, teachers, and settlers. Linked by trading networks, family connections, teacher-student relationships and Sufi fellowship, Muslim communities were established within small-scale regional states and in stateless societies. The Muslims sometimes formed peaceful minorities in non-Muslim societies. Sometimes they converted local rulers and established a joint elite of warrior rulers and Muslim merchants. In some cases they made war against local rulers and conquered them in the name of Islam. The central and western Sudanic belt was the center of a succession of Muslim empires. The Guinean savannah, Senegambia, and Mauritania were regions of Muslim communal settlement from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries and of Muslim jihads and state formation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the next chapter I shall discuss the eastern Sudan and East Africa, and the establishment of European colonial empires throughout Muslim sub-Saharan Africa.

THE KINGDOMS OF WESTERN AND CENTRAL SUDAN

Before the coming of Arab and Berber Muslim tribesmen, traders, and settlers, the Sudanic region was already an agricultural and state-centered society. Herding was carried on in the Sahil, the grassy steppelands that border the Sahara. The Sudan, a broad savannah belt to the south, produced millet, maize, yams, groundnuts, cotton, tobacco, indigo, and other crops. Sudanic societies were built upon small agricultural villages or herding communities, sometimes, but not always, integrated into larger tribal and linguistic groups. The western and central Sudan was divided into a number of states, but there were also large areas that were not under state control. The Sudan region traded with other parts of Africa and the Mediterranean, often through Berber

intermediaries. The Sudan exported gold, slaves, hides, and ivory, and imported copper, silver beads, dried fruit, and cloth. Gold was found at Bambuk, at the confluence of the Senegal and Faleme Rivers. For centuries the Sudan was the principal source of gold for North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Sudanese gold sustained the Aghlabid, Fatimid, and Spanish Umayyad regimes and later formed the economic basis of the Almoravid empire in Morocco and Spain. Trade also stimulated the growth of desert port cities such as Takrur, Kumbi (Ghana), and Gao.

The western Sudan

The oldest of the Sudanic kingdoms was Ghana, probably founded between the second and the fourth centuries AD. In the ninth and tenth centuries Ghana was both a partner and a rival of Berbers for the trans-Saharan trade. To the west of Ghana was Takrur on the Senegal River. To the east the kingdom of Kawkaw had its capital at Gao on the middle Niger River. To the south of Ghana there were no large kingdoms, but a number of small chieftainships.

Sudanics states had their origin in family groups led by patriarchs, councils of elders, or village chiefs. The state came into existence when a local elder, an immigrant warrior, or perhaps a priestly ruler established his control over other communities. The key political factor was not the control of territory but the relations that enabled the ruler to monopolize religious prestige, draw military support, and extract taxes or tributes from the subject communities. A Sudanic empire commonly had a core territory integrated by ethnic, linguistic, or similar ties and a larger sphere of power defined by the rule of a particular person, or lineage, over numerous subordinate families, castes, lineages, and village communities. The kings were believed to have divine powers and were considered sacred persons. They did not appear in public and were not to be seen carrying out ordinary bodily functions such as eating. Around the kings were numerous office-holders who helped govern the realm, and provincial and district chiefs often recruited from the junior members of the noble families.

These societies acquired an Islamic identity as a result of trade and conversion. The Arab conquest of North Africa multiplied contacts among Arab, Berber, Saharan, and Sudanese peoples. North African Berbers converted to Khariji Islam in the seventh century, and Mauritanian Berbers were converted in the ninth century. By the late tenth and eleventh centuries most of the Sudanese trading towns had a Muslim quarter, and Muslims were important as advisors and functionaries at the courts of local rulers. For the sake of administrative support, legitimization, and commercial contacts, the rulers of Kawkaw, Takrur, Ghana, and Bornu adopted Islam in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. Islam became an imperial cult and the religion of state elites and trading peoples, but the agricultural populations maintained their traditional beliefs.

From the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries several kingdoms, in different geographical locations, succeeded each other as the principal centers of political power,

trade, and Islamization. Takrur was the leading state in the eleventh century. It exported gold and slaves to North Africa in return for wool, copper, and beads. Takrur was strongly committed to jihad against its non-Muslim neighbors, but came under the suzerainty of Mali in the thirteenth century and later disintegrated.

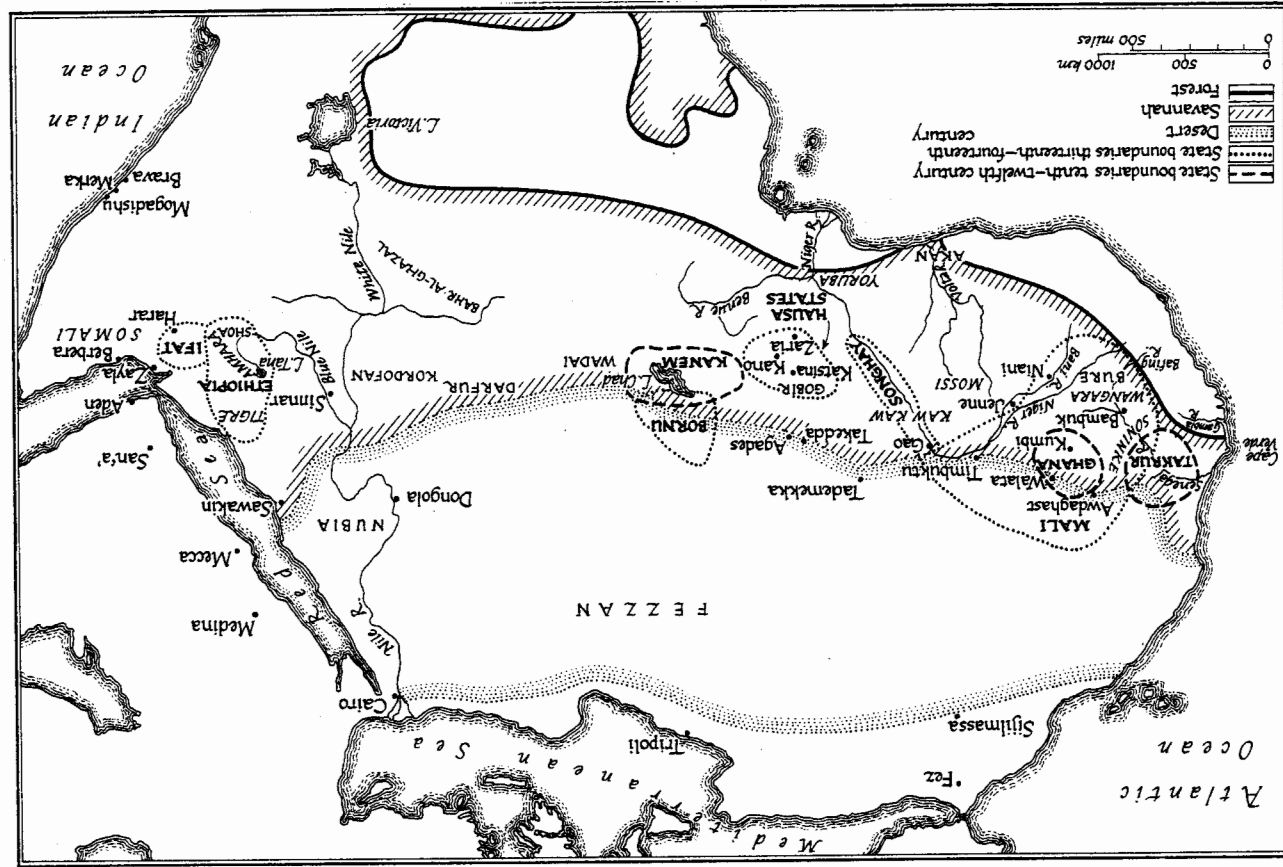
Takrur was replaced by Ghana as the preeminent center of Islam in the western Sudan. Before the conversion of its ruler the capital city of Ghana, Kumbi-Saleh, was a dual town, with one district for Muslims and one for non-Muslims. The Muslim town was equipped with mosques and religious functionaries including imams, muezzins, Quran reciters, and scholars. The Muslims provided the ruler with interpreters and officials. These local influences, reinforced by Almoravid economic, diplomatic, and cultural penetration, and by the proselytizing activities of the Almoravid leader Abu Bakr (d. 1087) and his colleague Imam al-Hadrami (d. 1096), prompted the acceptance of Islam. With the decline of the Almoravids in the twelfth century, Ghana became the richest kingdom in the Sudan, but in the thirteenth century its former tributaries freed themselves from central control and the kingdom disintegrated.

From the early thirteenth to the end of the sixteenth centuries, Mali became the dominant regime in the western Sudan and the principal center of Islam. Mali had its origin among Malinke peoples living between the Senegal and the Niger Rivers. A local chieftain, Sunjata (1230–55), of the Keita dynasty, was able to unite the Malinke chieftains, and capture the former territories of Ghana and the region between the Senegal and the Niger Rivers. The expanded territory included Bure, on the Upper Niger, the principal Sudanic goldfield, and afforded wider trading connections. The Keita dynasty ruled, with some interruptions, from 1230 to 1390. The most famous of its rulers, Mansa Musa (1307–32), made a sensational pilgrimage to Cairo in 1324, which made his kingdom legendary for its wealth in gold. Mansa Musa returned to Mali with Arab and Berber adventurers to serve in his administration. He built new mosques and palaces and introduced Arabic-style poetry to his court.

The empire he ruled may be taken as a typical West African Islamic regime. The basis of the political order was family and village units, the head of the family being both priest and chieftain. A group of villages in turn formed a *kafs*, or a territorial unit ruled by a chief called the *mansa*. The power of the mansa was originally based on election by a group of clans, but the support of his own kinsmen, clients, and slaves sometimes allowed him to escape the control of other families, usurp power, and make himself a local monarch. He could then adopt the Ghanaian and Sudanic concepts of kingship to institutionalize his power. As a ruler, he would surround himself with a bodyguard, servants, and elaborate ceremonies. A quasi-divine figure, the king was accepted as a symbol of the power of life and death.

The ruler and the royal clan were supported by a consortium of related clans. The descendants of the mansa supplied the principal functionaries. Client clans, castes of dependent craftsmen, and people allied by marriage or by past service

Map 22 Sub-Saharan Africa: eleventh to fourteenth centuries



also supported the ruler. Slaves and serfs worked in agricultural settlements to produce for the court, the army, and the administration. Taxes and tributes were extracted from dependent communities. For administrative purposes, there was a central core of territory, directly ruled by governors, and peripheral tributary territories ruled by vassal chieftains.

When Islam became the royal cult, rulers built mosques, and the king and the entire court took part in public prayers held on the great Islamic festivals. The rulers of Mali brought Muslim scholars from Cairo and Fez to help establish a West African tradition of Islamic learning. The religion of the commercial classes and portions of the political elite helped unify the kingdom and gave cultural support to the dynasty. Islam was a bond of empire. Muslim festivals, however, were also occasions for the performance of pagan ceremonies and dances. This was especially important in segmented African societies where only portions of the ruling elite and the trading classes were Muslim and the mass of the agricultural population was still pagan.

By the end of the fourteenth century the Mali empire was in decline. Jenne, probably settled by Muslim traders in the thirteenth century, became the crucial link to the Akan forest region (modern Ghana and the Ivory Coast) and new supplies of gold. Timbuktu (an important Tuareg trade and religious center settled in the thirteenth century) replaced Walata as a terminus of the Saharan caravan traffic. As the trade routes changed, local chieftains became independent, and reduced Mali once again to a petty chieftaincy. The people of Mali remained identifiable as having a common dialect and customs, but the empire was no more.

With the breakup of Mali, a local leader named Sunni 'Ali (1464/65–92) founded a new empire, Songhay, in the region of the middle Niger and the western Sudan and took control of the trans-Saharan trade. Sunni 'Ali seized Timbuktu in 1468 and Jenne in 1473, and built his regime on the revenues of their trade and the cooperation of Muslim merchants. Sunni 'Ali behaved as a Muslim in giving alms and fasting during Ramadan, but he also worshiped idols and practiced non-Muslim rites.

His successor, Askia Muhammad Ture (1493–1528), supported by Mande clans, defeated Sunni 'Ali's son, seized the state, and furthered the work of state formation by building a standing army to supplement village levies. He extended the empire into the former territories of Mali. Askia Muhammad also tried to rally the support of Muslim religious leaders. He made Islam the official religion, built mosques, and brought Muslim scholars, including al-Maghili (d. 1504), the founder of an important tradition of Sudanic African Muslim scholarship, to Gao. The legitimization of his regime also depended upon his investiture by the Sharif of Mecca as Caliph of the lands of Takrur. Still, Islam remained the religion of the governing elite while the mass of Songhay society continued to be pagan.

The empire of Songhay was destroyed in 1591 by a Moroccan invasion, and the *arma*, or the descendants of the invading army, became the ruling elite in the Niger region. Internal warfare and the shift of trade routes from the Sahara to the

Atlantic in the eighteenth century led to the decline of the regime. Tuaregs and Bambaras established new states. By the end of the eighteenth century the process of the rise and fall of empires with different capitals came to an end, and the once great Muslim kingdoms of the western Sudan disintegrated into a plethora of small states.

Central Sudan

The central, like the western Sudan, was also the home of diverse ethnic and linguistic groups and a center of state formation. The earliest state in this region was founded by Saharan nomads at some time in the ninth century, with its capital in the region of Kanem. Trade routes from the Fezzan brought Khariji merchants into the region, and by the late eleventh century Islam was accepted as the religion of the ruling elite. Not until the thirteenth century did the rulers of Kanem make the pilgrimage and build mosques. In 1240 a madrasa was established in Cairo for Kanuri students, marking the integration of the central Sudan into the international network of Muslim scholarship. However, in the fourteenth century, the dynasty, defeated by pagan peoples living east of Lake Chad, was forced to abandon Kanem and move to Bornu west of Lake Chad. By this time the state had progressively united the various peoples subject to them into the Kanuri nation.

'Ali b. Dunama (1476–1503) founded the new capital of Ngazargamo in Bornu, and Idris b. 'Ali (1570–1602) completed the process of state formation. He developed a standing army including a cavalry corps made up of members of the ruler's household and other chiefs, and an auxiliary infantry. The elite troops were provided with firearms. Idris b. 'Ali also furthered the Islamization of the country by reintroducing Muslim law and courts, and by building mosques and a hostel in Mecca for Kanuri pilgrims. In the seventeenth century Ngazargamo became the foremost center of Islamic education in the central Sudan. It had four Friday mosques, each with its own imam; the 'ulama' engaged in learned disputations at the court of the rulers. Islam, however, did not have a substantial following outside court circles and was not the religion of the majority.

Bornu's dominant interest was the trade in gold, salt, slaves, and weapons between the central Sudan, Tripoli, and Cairo. Its major rivals were the Hausa city-states; its major ally, the Ottoman regime in Libya. In 1551 the Ottomans had seized Tripoli and in 1577 the Fezzan, which had been a vassal of the empire of Kanem-Bornu. Bornu maintained good relations with Tripoli throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ambassadors brought rich presents of Ottoman weapons and luxury goods in exchange for slaves and gold. Bornu also maintained close trading connections with Cairo. However, by the middle of the eighteenth century Bornu's hegemony broke down, and it was transformed from a regional empire into a smaller, relatively homogeneous Kanuri state.

Hausaland, which now makes up northern Nigeria, lay between the eastern kingdoms of Kanem-Bornu and the western empires of Ghana and Mali. As a cultural

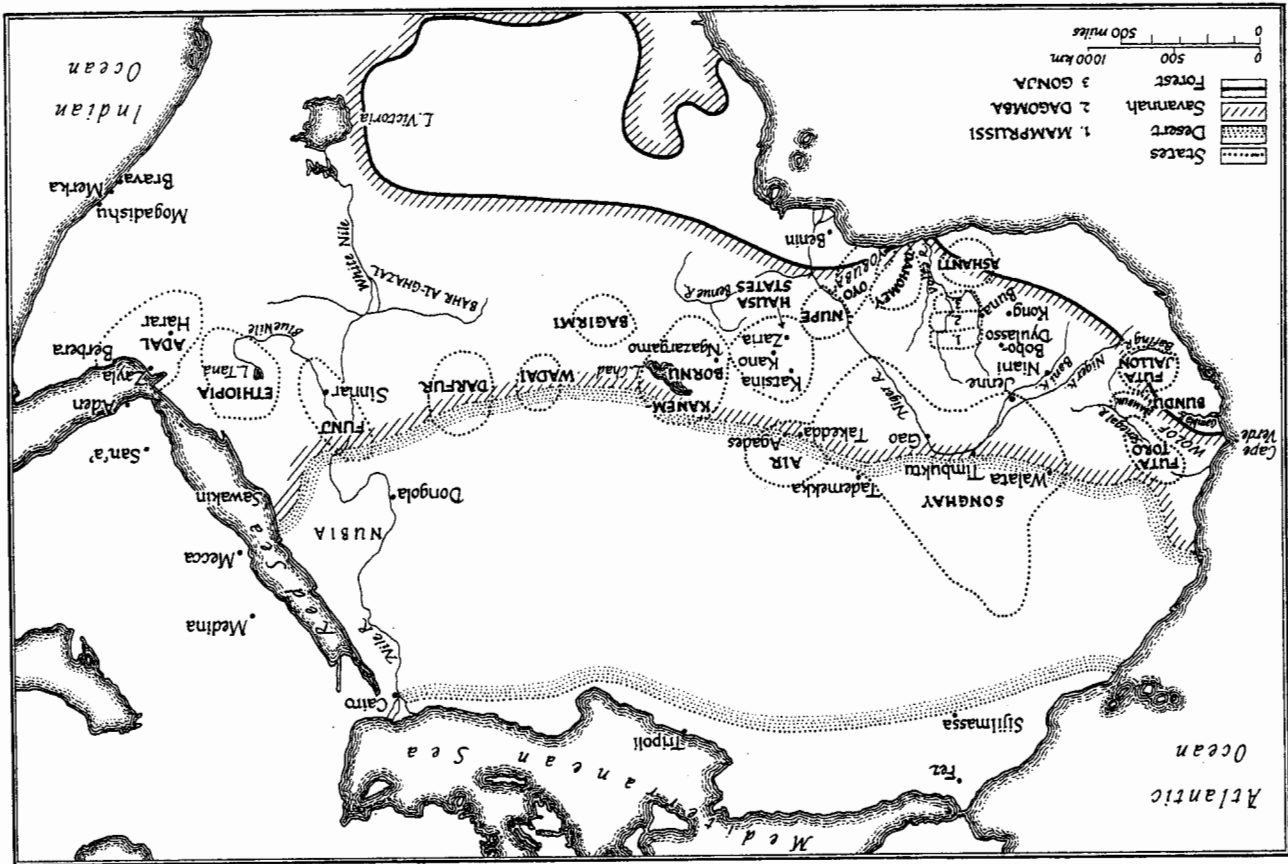
and political region Hausaland took shape in the last millennium as a result of the westward expansion of Hausa peoples. Their expansion was marked by the conversion of woodlands into open savannah and the introduction of grain cultivation and a denser peasant population.

The earliest Hausa societies were confederacies of kinship groups led by a priest-chief. The groups in the confederacy specialized in fishing, hunting, agriculture, and crafts such as blacksmithing and salt digging. Sometimes, kings emerged by the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of one priest-chief, who then expected the others to legitimize his rule. Such kings often turned to a universalistic religion, such as Islam, to acquire autonomous legitimization and to undermine the authority of their competitors. In other cases kingship was not an indigenous institution, but grew out of the dominance of a foreign trading community. In the towns of Kano and Katsina monarchical rule was established by colonies of Muslim traders who either directly seized the state or converted a local ruler. Yaji (1348–85) was the first Muslim ruler of Kano. He appointed a qadi and an imam as part of the state administration. Muhammad Rumfa (1463–99) is credited with the advancement of Islam by building mosques and schools. He commissioned al-Maghili to write a treatise on Muslim government. Other scholars from Egypt, Tunis, and Morocco turned Kano into a center of Muslim scholarship. In the sixteenth century, the new ruling dynasty of Katsina, founded by Muhammad al-Korau (d. 1541–22), formally adopted Islam, and invited Muslim scholars from North Africa and Egypt to reside in Katsina. An 'ulama' class emerged under royal patronage. It seems probable that the new rulers tried to convert local peoples and subvert the authority of local chiefs, but were eventually obliged to compromise. Hausaland then remained divided between a Muslim cosmopolitan urban royal society and the local kinship animistic rural societies.

The city regimes were characterized by a centralized chieftainship with a fortified capital, an elaborate court, and a substantial officialdom. By the fourteenth century, Kano had acquired a powerful military machine. The *madauaki*, or chief cavalry officer, was the commander of a professional officers' corps. The Kano armies were equipped with iron helmets and coats of mail. By conquest, Kano acquired great numbers of slaves who were used as soldiers, officials, agricultural laborers, and porters on the trade routes. Colonies were created to produce agricultural revenues. The power of the state was also based on extensive trading networks. Kano became a base for the trans-Saharan trade in salt, cloth, leather, and grain, and for trade with the Ashanti and the Yorubas. Islamization generally facilitated the expansion of trade. It was the basis of an enlarged marketing network, and the 'ulama' provided legal support, guarantees, safe conducts, introductions, and other services.

In the course of the fifteenth century, under the influences of expanding international trade and intense economic and political competition with surrounding states, the Hausa system expanded to other cities and some Hausa city-states were transformed into little empires. From the time of their institutional consolidation in

Map 23 Sub-Saharan Africa: sixteenth to eighteenth centuries



the fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century the Hausa states were at war with each other and with neighboring peoples. In the late eighteenth century the Hausa states, like those of Bornu and the western Sudan, were economically and politically exhausted.

Thus between the tenth and the eighteenth centuries a succession of Sudanic kingdoms were converted or organized under the banner of Islam. These kingdoms owed their existence to Muslim trading communities. In some cases the traders provided the economic resources, weapons, and horses that enabled local adventurers to establish states. In other cases they were themselves the conquerors. In still other cases existing Sudanic states, based upon nomadic conquests or chieftainships, found economic support and legitimization in Islam. The prayer, rituals, amulets, and magical books of the Muslim traders were as important as their financial and administrative assistance.

Muslim communities and holy men in the Sudan

The relationship between Muslim beliefs, rituals, and holy men and African chiefs was variable. In some cases the chiefs remained pagans but employed Muslims as officials, traders, and advisors. In other cases the chiefs converted to Islam but maintained a cultural style that synthesized Muslim rituals and festivals with pagan customs and ceremonies. African rulers built mosques, instituted public prayer, patronized Muslim scholars, and celebrated Muslim holidays – but ceremonial dances, recitations of poets, and the drama of court life had non-Muslim sources. In the history of a dynasty, early rulers often stressed their pagan warrior virtues while later rulers stressed their Muslim ones. They maintained a double cultural orientation to express both their Islamic and their indigenous bases of authority. African kings were not retrograde Muslims; they simply followed the universal tendency of Muslim regimes to blend Muslim and non-Muslim cultures. In cases such as Takrur and Bornu the chiefs became fully Muslim and active patrons of Muslim religious life. Whatever the degree of their attachments, when chiefs accepted Islam, their lands were regarded by Muslims as being part of the realm of Islam (*dar al-islam*).

Muslim regimes favored the work of 'ulama' and holy men. Only a small number of scholars held positions at court or as judges and prayer leaders, but their influence was considerable. The Muslim clerics presided over prayers, sacrifices, and festivals, applied Muslim law, and established a Muslim tradition of culture. Arabic thus became important not only for the diffusion of religion but for communications and trade. It was used for official correspondence in the Ghana empire before the end of the twelfth century and in Mali in the mid-fourteenth century, where the highly Islamized state of Mansa Musa had qadis and administrative departments. The earliest known Arabic texts, though, come from Bornu at the end of the fourteenth century; Arabic reached Hausaland at about the same time; fifteenth-century immigrants brought Arabic books on language and theology. Kano became a great center of Muslim learning when it was visited by al-Maghili and other North African and Egyptian scholars.

Timbuktu was probably the most important center of Arabic and Muslim studies. Its scholarly elite was drawn from a number of interrelated families representing the numerous tribal and ethnic subgroups that made up the populace of the city. While the state regimes of Mali, Songhay, and the area of Morocco rose and fell, the scholars sustained Timbuktu society. The qadi was generally the head of the community, the principal spokesman before military regimes, and the principal mediator of internal commercial and religious disputes. His influence was maintained by his connections with trading groups, and with the families who made up the *jama'as*, or communities, of the four main (and several lesser) mosques. Due to the qadis and the scholars, Timbuktu remained an organized community and a center of Muslim scholarship regardless of the fortunes of political regimes.

The scholarly families were sustained by trade, investments in cloth, camels, cattle and urban property, contributions of rulers and state officials, and the donations of their students and disciples, who worked as traders and tailors. For centuries the 'ulama' of Timbuktu maintained a rich and vital tradition of Quranic, hadith, and legal studies, supplemented by studies in theology, linguistics, history, mathematics, and astronomy. An important biographical dictionary of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century scholars, written by Ahmad Baba (1556–1627), indicates a high level of Arabic and Muslim learning, and close contact with Mecca and Egypt. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Timbuktu became a center of regional historical scholarship as well.

MERCHANTS AND MISSIONARIES IN THE DESERT, FOREST, AND COASTAL REGIONS

Outside the Sudanic region Muslim merchant, pastoralist, and cultivator communities, groups of warriors, traders, and religious teachers, lived in small and scattered settlements as caste-like enclaves within the larger society. After the breakup of the Songhay empire at the end of the sixteenth century, the Saharan regions from Mauritania to Lake Chad, regardless of ethnic or linguistic identity, came to be hierarchically stratified into a dominant warrior elite, usually ruled by a single lineage, and subordinated peoples. The subordinated peoples included religious lineages, artisan and slave groups. The religious lineages, called *zawaya* or *inslimen*, lived by pastoralism and commerce but were held in high esteem for their scholars and because they claimed Arab or sharifian descent. Each of the major caravan trading posts such as Walata, Timbuktu, and Agades was the base of a particular religious community and a center of its economic and religious networks. Knowledge of law was the basis of judicial and political authority, and the personal capacity to adapt textbook law to real situations resulted from training in Sufism. The combination of technical knowledge and personal insight, religious qualities, and the reputation for being able to perform miracles made religious leaders important as political mediators.

The Kunta family is the best-known example of a scholarly lineage with widespread influence throughout Mauritania, Senegambia, and other parts of the western

Sudan. The family's history goes back to Shaykh Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i (d. 1504) who established a Qadiri zawiya (Sufi residence) in Walata. In the sixteenth century the family spread across the Sahara to Timbuktu, Agades, Bornu, Hausaland, and other places, and in the eighteenth century large numbers of Kunta moved to the region of the middle Niger where they established the village of Mabruk. Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (1728–1811) united the Kunta factions by successful negotiation, and established an extensive confederation. Under his influence the Maliki school of law was reinvigorated and the Qadiri order spread throughout Mauritania, the middle Niger region, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Futa Toro, and Futa Jallon. Kunta colonies in the Senegambian region became centers of Muslim teaching.

A student of Sidi al-Mukhtar, Shaykh Sidiya al-Kabir (1775–1868), established another Islamic network in Mauritania. Sidiya began his religious education by memorizing the Quran and then went on to studies of poetry, theology, grammar, and law. In 1809–10 he apprenticed himself to Sidi al-Mukhtar. As student, secretary, and advisor to a family that had a powerful part in the revival of the Qadiri order, extensive trading operations, and political authority in the southern Sahara, Sidiya was introduced into one of the most sophisticated of Saharan and West African societies. He studied both law and mysticism, including the works of al-Ghazzali and Ibn al-'Arabi. After some thirty-five years Sidiya returned to his home community, established his residence at Boutlimit and, as a successful mediator became wealthy from gifts of livestock, the revenues of gum and salt caravans, and the work of clients who cultivated his fields. The shaykh thus became the head of an association of believers who looked to him for guidance in political, economic, legal, and moral matters. As a successful mediator and economic organizer, Sidiya acquired a reputation as a miracle worker. After his death his eldest son, Sidiya Baba (1862/3–1926), succeeded him. Even after France occupied Mauritania, Sidiya's family was able to maintain its political influence.

A similar kind of Muslim religious community and scholarly tradition was found in the forest and coastal regions south and west of the Sudanic states – in the Volta River basin, and the Guinean forests. In this region the Muslim communities were founded by merchants and cultivators, generally known as *wangara*, or Dyula, linked by family ties and trading networks. Their communities grew up along the trade routes at the crossings of rivers, at toll posts, and at stopping places for caravans where merchants settled down to trade with the local populace. The trading communities often developed agricultural interests, and in some cases Muslims became the custodians of specialized crafts such as weaving and dyeing. Their scholars and holy men carried on the tradition of Islamic learning and offered their religious services to local chiefs.

As in the Sahara, these communities were established amidst a highly segmented society built around political lineages, age-group associations, secret societies, religious cults, occupational groups (including iron and leather workers and musicians), and different types of free men and slaves. Political units were not based

upon ideology or a history of shared culture and ethnicity, but rather upon sudden conquests by small minorities. They governed heterogeneous populations which did not necessarily share a common language or customs. Heterogeneity was reinforced by rapid fluctuations in state power, migrations, and conquests, and by the movements of roving bands of refugees needing protection, warriors looking for conquests, or traders seeking profits.

The Upper Volta region attracted Muslim merchants and settlements in the fifteenth century by the opening of the Akan goldfields, and the opportunity for trade in gold, kola nuts, and salt. Some of these merchants were Soninke-speaking peoples from Timbuktu and Jenne who later adopted Malinke dialect and became known as Dyula. They settled the towns of Bobo-Dyulasso, Kong, Bunduku, and other places leading to the goldfields. Other traders came from Kanem, Bornu, and the Hausa city-states and moved into Gonja, Dagomba, and other parts of the Volta region. The most important merchant center in this area was Begho, on the edge of the Akan forest, crucially situated for the exchange of gold and kola nuts. Begho became the terminus for the trade routes connecting Buna, Kong, Bobo-Dyulasso, and Jenne. Muslims married local women and raised families, which were tied to the Muslim community through the father and to the local pagan community through the mother. The offspring of such marriages often inherited chieftainships and brought about the conversion of local peoples. They organized festivals, offered prayers and divination at local courts, distributed talismans, and participated in anti-witchcraft rituals. As a result, Muslims in the Middle Volta region were not a distinct language group but regarded themselves as part of the Dagomba, Gonja, or Mossi kingdoms.

Muslim religious influence was strongest in the kingdoms of Gonja and Dagomba. The Gonja state had been established toward the end of the sixteenth century by Mande warriors with the help of Muslim advisors and courtiers. Though the chiefs came under Muslim influence they did not formally convert to Islam. Court ceremony and culture remained a mixture of Islamic and pagan practices. The children of chiefs were circumcised and took Muslim names, but this was done in accordance with pagan and not Muslim ceremonies. Festivals followed the Muslim calendar but had no obvious Muslim features. Thus the chiefs tried to maintain elements of both pagan and Muslim ritual in order to satisfy the cultural interests of their double constituencies.

Islamic influence among the political elite spread from Gonja to Dagomba. Dagomba chiefs adopted circumcision, Muslim names, the Muslim calendar, and Muslim festivals and burial practices. Maliki law influenced customary law, and pre-Islamic pagan festivals were merged into Muslim ones. The relatively centralized political system of the Dagomba also favored the spread of Islam. Since the state was divided into territorial and village chieftainships each of which, in imitation of the royal court, sought the religious and magical support of Muslim clerics, a Muslim presence was established throughout the region. Sons of Dagomba chiefs

who had no prospect of obtaining ruling positions commonly converted to Islam. The chiefs also gave their daughters in marriage to Muslims in order to draw the two estates closer together.

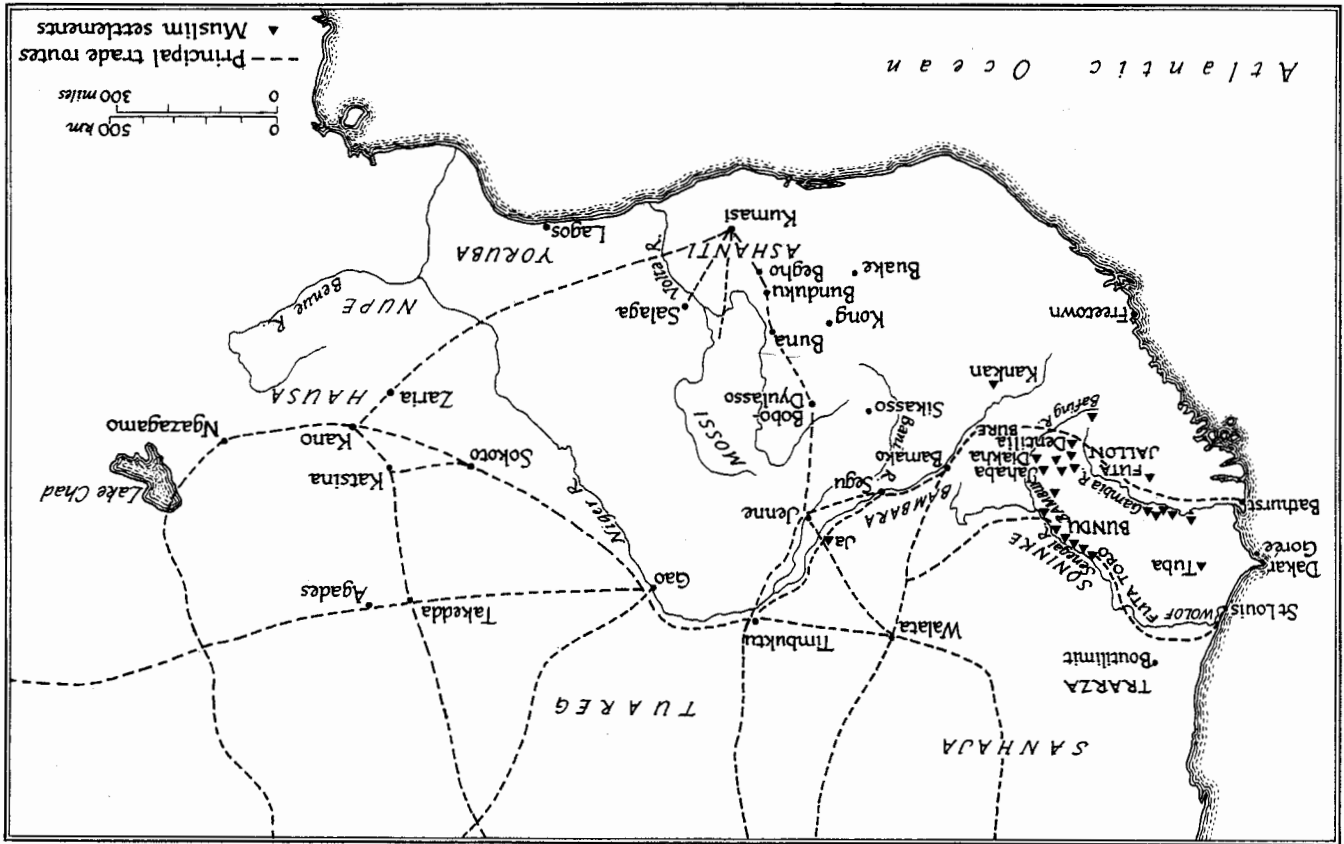
In Dagomba Muslims came to perform important functions such as circumcision, washing the dead, officiating over festivals, and slaughtering animals for meat. By the early nineteenth century imams were widely appointed in Dagomba villages. The imam of Yendi, the capital city, held a position of particular importance as the head of the Muslim community. He was the leader of Friday prayers and the enforcer of Muslim law. By the end of the nineteenth century, though the political chiefs remained pagan, many Dagomba families had Muslim members and Muslims were considered part of the Dagomba people.

While Muslims of Gonja and Dagomba were assimilated into the general society, west of the Black Volta the Muslim trading communities remained isolated enclaves, and kept their own languages and a separate ethnic identity. Muslims maintained isolated communities built around their neighborhoods, mosques, and schools. Here Muslims were important as traders, courtiers, and religious magicians, but they had little missionary spirit and did not try to convert local peoples to Islam.

The Muslims of the Ashanti capital, Kumasi, were an example of this type. In the early nineteenth century Kumasi had a Muslim community of about a thousand, drawn mostly from neighboring Gonja and Dagomba, but also including Dyula from Senegal and Arabs from North Africa. The Muslims were headed by Muhammad al-Ghamba, who was imam and qadi, and principal of a Quran school. The Kumasi Muslims acted as agents for the Ashanti princes in the gold, kola nut, slave, and salt trades, and served Ashanti rulers as diplomats, bureaucrats, courtiers, soldiers, and religious functionaries. They provided amulets and performed rituals. Despite the importance of Muslims, Ashanti culture was not notably influenced by Islam. Muslims were not integrated into the local society, and non-Muslims were not usually converted. However, in the late nineteenth century strong reformist influences stimulated poetical and historical writing, and raised Muslim exclusivist consciousness and a sense of commitment to Islam. Classical Middle Eastern and North African Arabic works, and West African books produced outside the Ghana region were widely circulated.

Throughout the region, the Dyula communities maintained a high standard of Muslim education. A Dyula family enterprise based on the *lu*, a working unit consisting of a father, his sons, and other attached males, could afford to give some of its younger men a Muslim education. Thus there emerged an 'ulama' class known as *karamokos*, who were educated in Quran and commentary, hadith, and the life of the Prophet. A student read these works with a single teacher over a period varying from five to thirty years, and earned his living as a part-time farmer working on the lands of his teacher. Having completed his studies, a *karamoko* obtained a turban and an *isnad*, his license to teach, and set forth in search of further instruction or to start his own school in a remote village. A highly educated *karamoko* could become

Map 24 Trade, settlements, and the diffusion of Islam in West Africa: 1500-1900



an imam or a qadi. Certain families provided scholars generation after generation. The Saghanughu was a Dyula lineage living in the northern and western Ivory Coast and in parts of Upper Volta. The lineage may be traced back to Timbuktu, but its principal figure was Muhammad al-Mustafa Saghanughu, the imam of Bobo-Dyulasso, who died around 1776–77. He produced a system of education based on three canonical texts of Quran commentary and hadith. His sons continued his teachings and spread out through the towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast, founding Muslim schools and acting as imams and qadis.

Islam in the Senegambian region

To the west and north of Ghana and the Ivory Coast, throughout Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Senegambia, Muslims also had a complex role to play. In Senegambia the legacy of the Takrur and Mali empires was faintly kept alive in a number of small-scale states. To this was added Muslim village communities and town quarters – amidst, but politically independent of, non-Muslim peoples and states. By the eighteenth century there were important Muslim settlements in Kankan, the hinterlands of Sierra Leone, Gambia, Futa Jallon, and Futa Toro. Nineteenth-century Freetown, for example, originally a Christian settlement for liberated slaves, had colonies of Dyula migrants and Hausa and Yoruba Muslims taken from slave ships. The various ethnic groups were organized into *jamats* (communities) which had their own mosques and imams. Taxes were imposed on the communities to provide for religious services and to support the poor. A council of *almamis* (religious leaders) shared a Friday mosque and a joint Muslim government high school founded in 1891, and organized banquets and prayers to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet. The Muslims acquired land and political power but commonly lived under their own chiefs (*alkalis* and *almamis*) and pursued their own lifestyle.

The Muslim scholarly lineages were particularly important in this region. In Senegambia, the Jakhanke inhabited scattered towns and villages in Futa Jallon, Bundu, Dentilia, Bambuk, and other places. They claimed to originate in Ja on the Niger River and Jahaba on the Bafing River, from which they moved into Bundu, Futa Jallon, and Gambia. The Jakhanke were not merchants, but agriculturists supported by slave labor. The various Jakhanke villages were independent of each other and of the local chiefs. The Jakhanke were committed to peaceful coexistence and refused to become engaged in politics or war. When threatened they simply moved their villages into safer territory. Often their villages enjoyed the privileges of sanctuary, judicial independence, and freedom from military service.

The Jakhanke had a reputation for exceptional learning. They traced their spiritual ancestry to al-Haji Salim Suwari, who probably lived in the late fifteenth century. They adhered to Maliki law although they were tolerant of customary practice. They stressed the importance of obedience to the murshid, or Sufi master, and of stages of initiation into the teachings of the community. They interpreted dreams and gave amulets for protection. They celebrated the birthday of the Prophet and the feasts of the end of Ramadan and other Muslim holidays. Though saint worship

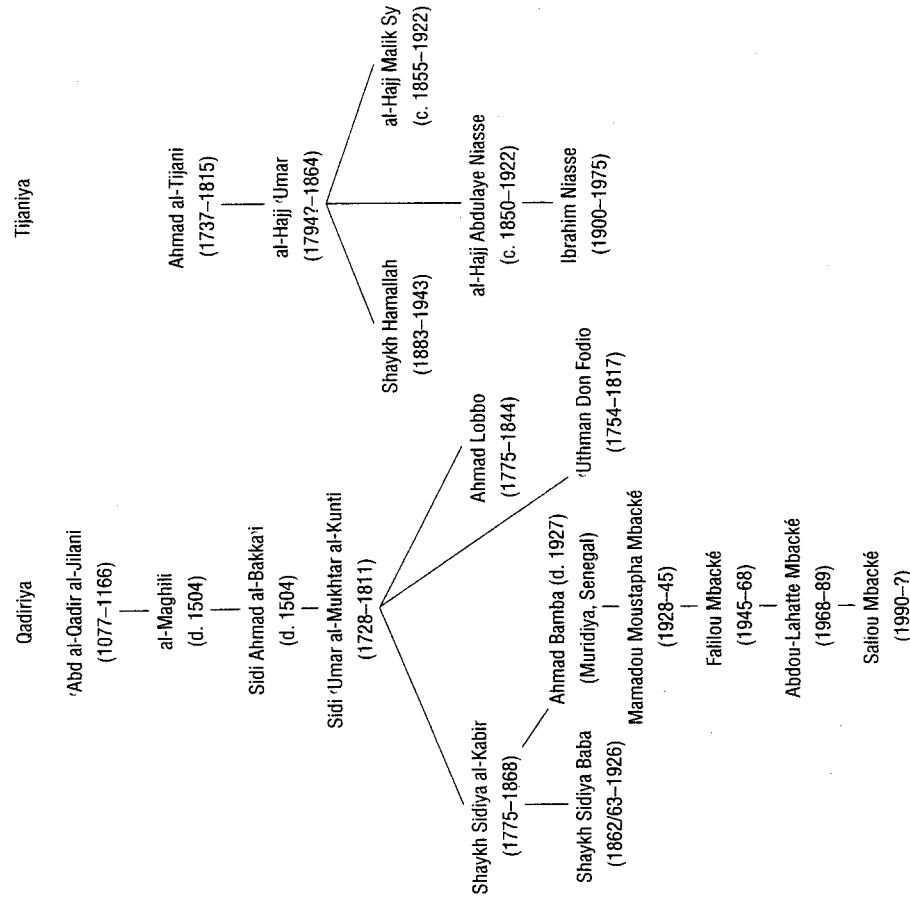


Figure 8 The Qadiriya and the Tijaniya in West Africa

was not common in West Africa, they believed that the spirits of dead saints kept guard over their followers and interceded for them before God. The graves of al-Haji Salim and other great teachers were centers for pilgrimage. In all but name the Jakhanke extended family was a Sufi lineage.

These communities, organized by religious and lineage ties, made up, without a territorial identity or states, a self-sufficient type of Islamic society. By the end of the eighteenth century Islam in West Africa was the religion of scattered groups of Tukulors and Songhays, and of Dyula trading colonies, some Hausa towns, and of the dominant classes of the central Sudanic states. Islam also had a foothold among the Wolof, the Yoruba, and the Mossi. The Kunta, the Saghanughu, the Jakhanke, and others were closely linked by trading networks, affiliation with the Qadiriya brotherhood, and by shared religious and intellectual traditions. Other Africans were sometimes converted to Islam when traditional agricultural communities broke down and their populations were merged into larger social, political, and cultural units. Slave trading and state

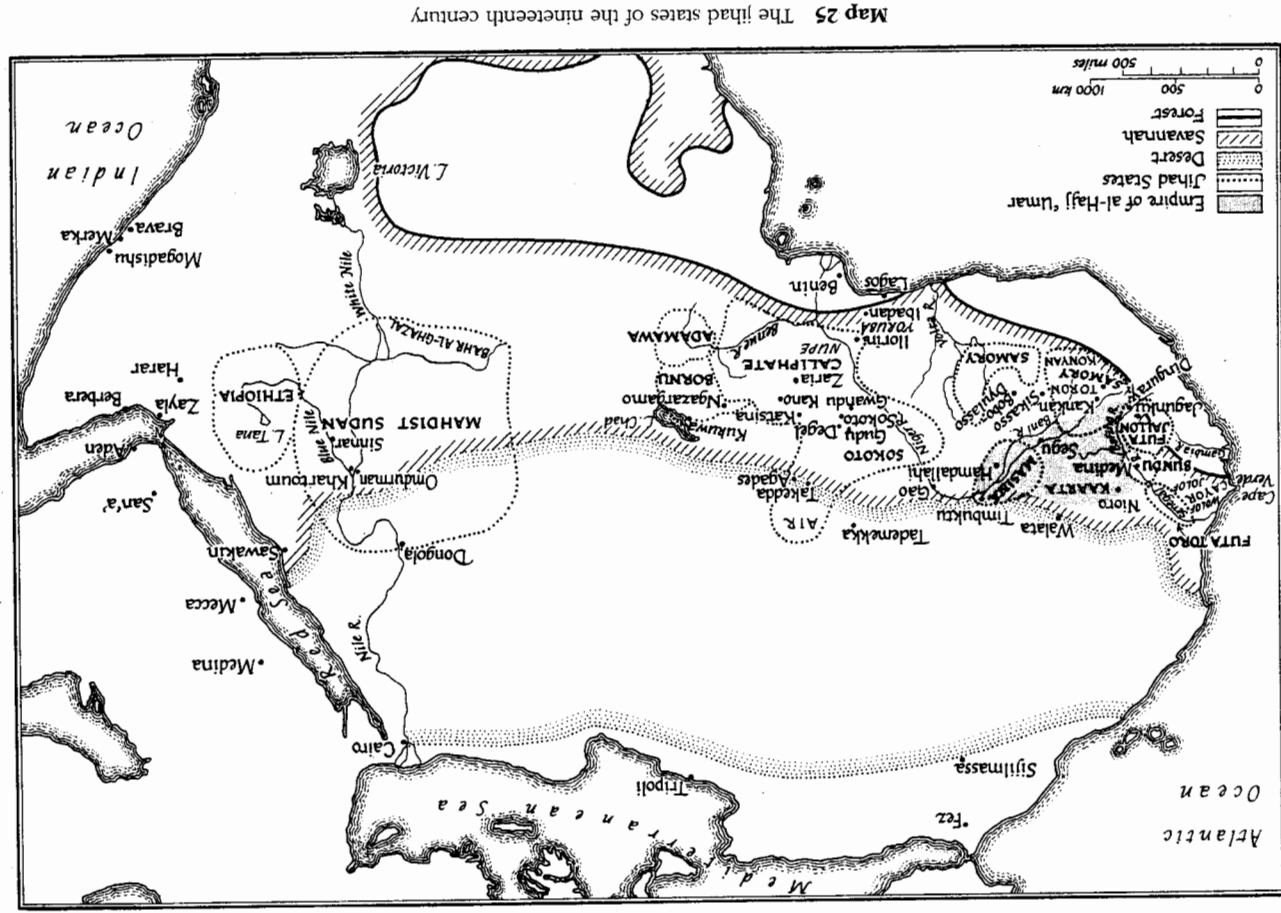
formation therefore favored Islam. Reciprocally, communities without extensive trading connections or political centralization found it easier to preserve a non-Muslim identity. The durability of family and village institutions, the depth of African religious culture, and the strength of traditional authorities helped to maintain a non-Islamic African majority.

The Muslim settlements were centers for the diffusion of Islamic and Arabic culture. Towns such as Timbuktu made the Quran, the sayings of the Prophet, and Islamic law familiar to local peoples. The translation of religious texts into vernacular Swahili, Wolof, Hausa, Somali, and Zenaga followed. Arabic had a strong influence upon Fulbe, Wolof, and other African languages which borrowed Arab and Muslim vocabulary and came to be written in Arabic script. Arabic was used to record family histories, dowries, debts, merchants' accounts, information about trading itineraries, and so on. It became increasingly important as an ordinary means of communication for government and merchant elites.

THE WEST AFRICAN JIHADS

Alongside peaceful Muslim colonization there was a parallel tradition of militant determination to turn small colonies into Muslim states by defeating corrupt Muslim rulers, conquering the pagan populations, converting them to Islam, and ruling them according to Muslim law. With the Almoravid movement as a shadowy precedent, the jihads burst out from Mauritania to Chad in the sixteenth century. At first the jihads rose in disparate places, but gradually they influenced each other, and culminated in a region-wide struggle to establish Muslim states. The jihads of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were led by Muslim scholars and teachers, itinerant preachers and their student followers, and the religious leaders of trading and agricultural communities. They took their inspiration from the militant reformers of the fifteenth century such as al-Maghili, from Islamic literary influences, and from the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, which may have brought West African scholars into contact with reformist Sufi circles. The jihads were finally suppressed by the British and the French at the end of the nineteenth century.

The jihad in Mauritania had its origin in the resistance of Berbers to the dominance of the Arab Banu Ma'qil. Nasir al-Din denounced the rulers for failing to perform the prayers, consorting with musicians and jugglers, and pillaging the people. He claimed to have been sent by God to stop the oppression. He called himself alhami (imam) and amir al-mu'minin, the traditional title of Muslim Caliphs, proclaimed the end of time and the coming of the mahdi, and demanded that his followers conform to the teachings of the Quran. His followers swept through southern Mauritania in 1673, but Nasir al-Din was killed in 1674 and the movement defeated by 1677. The outcome of the wars was the lasting military dominance of the Arab tribes over the Berbers. Paying tribute to the Arab Hassanis, the Berbers (called *zawaya*) took up the roles of qadis, teachers, and spiritual counselors, and



Map 25 The jihad states of the nineteenth century

were economically engaged in the mining and marketing of salt and gum arabic, maintaining wells, organizing caravans, and raising livestock. The zawayya would continue the struggle for Islamic principles, and later gave rise to both peaceful missionary movements and jihads in Senegal.

In Senegambia, Muslim jihads had their origins in the efforts of small Muslim communities to overthrow local rulers and to establish states of their own. Senegambian society was stratified into three main caste levels: the nobility, whose power rested upon training in war, the Islamic communities, and commoners engaged in crafts and agriculture. These castes were forbidden to intermarry, though one could leave either the noble or peasant caste to be initiated into the Muslim community. The basic conflict was between the military nobles and the Muslim clerics. The nobles based their claim on experience in war and the Muslims based theirs upon superior knowledge; the conflict was symbolized by the use of alcohol by the former and its rejection by the latter.

Muslim leadership came from a stratum of society called the *torodbe*: Muslim 'ulama', scholars, teachers, and students. Though they spoke Fulbe as a common language, they had no ethnic or tribal identity. Some torodbe were supported by the work of students or slaves and the contributions of artisans, but many were wandering beggars. Uprooted peoples, outlaws, vagrants, and runaway slaves were also attracted into their ranks.

The first torodbe-led jihad came in Bundu at the end of the seventeenth century, where Malik Dauda Sy founded a Muslim regime. In the 1690s he and his successors organized a state with the power to appoint and dismiss village chiefs. In the eighteenth century the rulership reverted for a time to pagans, but by then Bundu had become predominantly Muslim.

The Futa Jallon jihad was the work of the settled Muslim communities allied with Fulani pastoralists. Both groups were subordinated to the dominant Jalonke landlords to whom they paid taxes on trade and cattle. In the eighteenth century both the Muslim settlers and the pastoralists improved their economic position as a result of a growing trade in cattle and hides with Europe, and allied against the Jalonke. Islam became the banner of their solidarity and their resistance to the non-Muslim elites. In 1726 Ibrahim Musa, known as Karamoko Alfa (d. 1751), proclaimed a holy war and took the title of almami. He gathered the support of young men's gangs, renegades, and slaves and began a long struggle against the political elites. The Muslims finally prevailed in 1776, when Ibrahim Sori (1776-93) was named almami. The new state was divided into several provinces, which formed a council to elect a ruler. The almami was selected alternately from among the descendants of Ibrahim Musa and Ibrahim Sori; the former tended to represent the more pacific tradition of Muslim learning, the latter the more aggressive tradition of jihad. Under the authority of the almamis the provinces were ruled by appointed governors, and the *mitsidi*, or family hamlets, were ruled by local chiefs and councils of elders. The most important state activity was jihad, which was the source of slaves for export and for use on agricultural plantations. The central power, however, was gravely

weakened by the emergence of a landowning aristocracy who descended from the original jihad warriors and by succession disputes between the two families that provided the almamis. Futa Jallon eventually became a French protectorate in 1881, and recognized French suzerainty in 1896/97.

In the Senegal River Valley, Futa Toro was the center of another jihad. Closely related to that of Bundu, the Muslim movement in Futa Toro was the work of the torodbe religious teachers and itinerant beggars who rebelled against the local dynasty in protest of fiscal oppression and lack of protection from Mauritanian raids. Under the leadership of Sulayman Bal (d. 1776) the torodbe established an independent territory. Sulayman was succeeded by 'Abd al-Qadir (1776-1806), a highly educated teacher, judge, and mediator, who had studied in Cayor province and thus was closely related to the widespread Senegambian and Guinean network of Muslim teachers. After his inauguration the torodbe became more militant. The new state encouraged the construction of mosques, and furthered settlement of the river frontiers with Mauritania. It invoked jihad to attack the Moors in 1786 and invaded Walo, Jolof, and Cayor by 1790. The Muslim state expanded into the upper Senegal as well. After a critical defeat in 1790, the almamate disintegrated. The torodbe intermarried with the former rulers, seized land, and became an elite of local chieftains. While almamis continued to be appointed throughout the nineteenth century, they no longer had any political power. However, memory of the early successes would again inspire jihads in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Uthman Don Fodio and the central Sudan

The central Sudan was another locus of jihad. Here, too, Muslim clerics and reformers dreamed of establishing an Islamic society on the model of the life of the Prophet and the early Caliphs. Such teachers as Jibril b. 'Umar had traveled to Mecca and Medina, where they were influenced by reformist Sufi views. They returned to preach the principles of the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet, uphold the rule of Shari'a, and encouraged individuals to seek personal sanctity. They also taught the doctrine of the double jihad: the inner jihad, the struggle against the corruption of the body, must precede the outer jihad, the war against pagan rulers and corrupt Muslim governments and their hired 'ulama'. Hijra, migration to a true Muslim community, and jihad, a war in the name of the faith, were the overriding obligations. Thus they introduced a universalistic and theocratic concept of Islam as the supreme arbiter of social life and as the transforming force in the lives of individuals. For them Islam was an exclusive religion incompatible with African cults. This new message was preached with messianic fervor. Throughout West and Central Africa the thirteenth Muslim century (corresponding to the nineteenth century) was expected to mark the victory of Islam over the infidel world. This was to be the age of the mujaddid, or renewer of Islam, who comes once every century, and of the Caliph of Takrur, the twelfth Caliph, whose rule would be followed by the coming of the messiah.

'Uthman Don Fodio (1754-1817) was the greatest of these new leaders. 'Uthman was a descendant of a torodbe family, well established in Hausaland, a student of Jibril b. 'Umar, an uncompromising opponent of corrupt practices, and a proponent of jihad. He began his African preaching in 1774-75, wandering from place to place as an itinerant *mallam* (religious scholar). For a time he accepted the patronage of the Hausa state of Gobir. His position was like that of the Muslim scholars who for centuries had found in the Hausa courts attractive opportunities to establish their influence, but who chafed against the restrictions placed upon them. Publicly expressing his frustration with the failure of the rulers to put Islam into practice, 'Uthman broke with the royal court. Disillusioned, he returned to Degel to preach to his followers.

The tradition of reform in which 'Uthman preached also had African origins. In the fifteenth century al-Maghili had denounced the corrupt and un-Islamic practices of West African Muslim states. He condemned illegal taxation and the seizure of private property, and denounced pagan ceremonial practices and "venal" mallams who served rulers without adequate knowledge of Arabic or Islam. Al-Maghili called for the implementation of Muslim law by a strong and committed Muslim ruler, and introduced into West Africa the concept of the mujaddid. In this vein, 'Uthman criticized the Hausa rulers for unjust and illegal taxes, for confiscations of property, compulsory military service, bribery, gift taking, and the enslavement of Muslims. He also criticized them for condoning polytheism, worshipping fetishes, and believing in the power of talismans, divination, and conjuring. Another strand in his preaching derived from the tradition of Maliki law, communicated through Timbuktu and Bornu and reinforced by reformist religious currents emanating from Mecca and Medina. 'Uthman denounced pagan customs, the free socializing of men and women, dancing at bridal feasts, and inheritance practices that were contrary to Muslim law. As in other Islamic societies, the autonomy of Muslim communities under 'ulama' leadership made it possible to resist the state and the state version of Islam in the name of the Shari'a and the ideal Caliphate.

'Uthman's influence was based on deep knowledge of Muslim law and his mystical visions. A vision in 1789 led him to believe he had the power to work miracles, and to teach his own mystical wird, or litany. He later had visions of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, the founder of the Qadiriya, and an experience of ascension to heaven where he was initiated into the silsila of the Qadiriya and the Prophet. Here he was named the imam of the walis (saints), and presented with the sword of truth. His theological writings were concerned with the concepts of the mujaddid, the hijra, the role of 'ulama' in teaching the true faith, and the role of reason and consensus in the derivation of Muslim law. All of these concerns bear on the problem of the authority of an individual scholar to challenge the established political and religious elites. Out of these concerns, 'Uthman produced numerous tracts on political theory, biographies, histories, and other works in Arabic and Fulbe. Many people regarded him as the mahdi come in fulfillment of popular prophecies. 'Uthman's

appeal to justice and morality rallied the outcasts of Hausa society. He found his principal constituency among the Fulani. Primarily cattle pastoralists, they were dependent upon peasants for access to river beds and grazing lands, and were taxed accordingly. Hausa peasants, runaway slaves, itinerant preachers, and others also responded to 'Uthman's preaching.

In 1804, the conflict between 'Uthman and the rulers of Gobir came into the open. The rulers forbade Muslims to wear turbans and veils, prohibited conversions, and ordered converts to return to their old religion. 'Uthman declared the hijra and moved from Degel to Gudu where he was elected imam, amir al-mu'minin, and *sarkin muslim* - head of the Muslim community. There he declared the jihad. In the wars that followed, the Muslims rallied Fulani support, and by 1808 had defeated the rulers of Gobir, Kano, Katsina, and other Hausa states. They expanded into the territory south of Lake Chad and into Nupe and Yorubaland as far as the forest zone. By 1830 the jihad had engulfed most of what is now northern Nigeria and the northern Cameroons. The regime founded by 'Uthman is known as the Caliphate of Sokoto. 'Uthman was Caliph; his brother 'Abdallah, based in Gwandu, and his son Muhammad Bello, based in Sokoto, were his viceroys. 'Uthman retired to teaching and writing, and in 1817 Muhammad Bello succeeded him.

Sokoto was a combination of an Islamic state and a modified Hausa monarchy. Bello introduced an Islamic administration. Muslim judges, market inspectors, and prayer leaders were appointed, and an Islamic tax and land system was instituted, with revenues on the land considered kharaj and the fees levied on individual subjects called jizya, as in classical Islamic times. The Fulani cattle-herding nomads were sedentarized and converted to sheep and goat raising as part of an effort to urbanize them and bring them under the rule of Muslim law. Mosques and schools were built to teach the populace Islam. The state patronized a large community of religious scholars (mallams), some of whom were tied to the government as administrators and advisors, while others rejected worldly power and lived among the common people. The jihad movement helped to fortify the practice of Islamic law in Hausaland and also generated a theological, legal, astrological, and vernacular poetic literature in the Hausa language. Sufism became widespread and Hausa society became fully part of the Muslim world. Kano became famous for law, Zaria for Arabic grammar, and Sokoto for mysticism. The Sokoto scholars were mainly affiliated with the Qadiriya, but the Tijani order was introduced by al-Hajj 'Umar during the 1830s.

Under the authority of the Caliphate, the territories were divided into emirates appointed by and responsible to the Caliphs. Many emirates corresponded to the former Hausa states, and accepted Hausa methods of administration and palace organization. The power of the Amirs was based on military force, but they governed with the aid of the Fulani lineages and the advice of the mallams. For rural administration the emirates were divided into fiefs, some of which were controlled

by the rulers and some by local Fulani chiefs. Village chiefs administered their subjects through appointed ward-heads and through the chiefs of organized craftsmen. The crafts were also the fiefs of officials who were responsible for the collection of taxes, observance of Muslim law, and maintenance of public property such as mosques, roads, and walls. The fact that the greater part of the territory nominally ruled by Sokoto remained in the hands of local fief-holders and chieftains meant that Islamic ideas were only occasionally applied in the provinces. Government by secular-minded Fulani chieftains led quickly away from Muslim norms, and many of the practices that had been criticized by the Muslims flourished again. Despite the claims of reform, it is arguable that the emirates were only a modified version of the older Hausa states.

The economy of the Sokoto Caliphate was based upon slave villages or plantations. First developed in the Sokoto region after 1760 (and again after the jihad of 1804–08), the plantations produced cotton, indigo, grain, rice, tobacco, kola nuts, and other crops. The state also promoted indigo and textile industries. The plantation economy flourished until the late nineteenth century, when colonial rule and the suppression of slavery allowed for a revitalization of the peasant economy.

The jihad of 'Uthman spilled out from its homeland in northern Nigeria to Bornu, the Lake Chad region, and to southern Nigeria, and inspired other jihads in the western Sudan and Senegambia. In the seventeenth century Bornu was already a center of Muslim learning, but it also had a substantial Fulani population aggrieved by landlord domination. Inspired by 'Uthman, the Fulani rose up to attack the rulers of Bornu. Bornu, however, successfully resisted the jihad by revitalizing its own Muslim credentials. Al-Kanemi, a mallam living in Ngala, helped the rulers to defeat the Fulani, and became the most powerful chieftain in Bornu. In 1814 he built his own town, Kukawa, expanded the area of his hegemony, appointed his own officials, and essentially displaced the rulers. Speaking for Bornu, he denied that jihad was legitimate when waged against Muslim peoples, regardless of whether they were good or bad Muslims.

Thus a new dynasty and a new Muslim state was, ironically, founded as a reaction against the jihad. The new regime was built upon an aristocracy consisting of the royal family, courtiers, and nobles called *kogonas*. The regime appointed qadis and imams, and professed to be as genuinely Muslim as the rival Sokoto Caliphate. It had a double structure of administration. One system was applied to the control of territories and all the resident populations; the other was directed to clans and ethnic and craft associations. The existence of both territorial and group administrations indicates a society in transition from clan lineage to territorial forms of organization.

The jihad inspired by 'Uthman also helped spread Islam into southern Nigeria. Muslim traders from Bornu, Songhay, and Hausaland came to Yorubaland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and converted the first Yorubas to Islam. With the help of the Sokoto Caliphate Muslims won control of Ilorin, and Muslim quarters



20 Nigerian men and horses in quilted cloth armour

were formed in Abeokuta, Lagos, and other towns. Their communities were organized under the leadership of imams, who led the prayers and festivals and mediated disputes.

Still other jihads led to the formation of Muslim states south of Lake Chad in Air, north of Sokoto among the Tuaregs, and in Masina. The Masina state, led by Ahmad Lobbo, had its capital at Hamdallahi and lasted from 1816 to 1861. It was based on a highly organized army supported by a system of granaries created to provision the soldiers and spare the local population from abuse. A council of state was made up of religious teachers; the local administrative apparatus was filled with relatives and clients of the learning counselors. New legislation was introduced, including controls over women, and the suppression of fortune telling, tobacco smoking, and prostitution.

Al-Hajj 'Umar

The jihads of the central Sudan indirectly inspired a revival of jihad in the Senegambian region. The tradition of Futa Toro and Sokoto were combined to inspire al-Hajj 'Umar (1794?–1864), another great nineteenth-century leader of West African Muslim movements. Al-Hajj 'Umar was born in Futa Toro, became one of the torodbe, and in 1826 made the pilgrimage to Mecca, where he was initiated into the Tijani order and returned as the order's khalifa for the Sudan. He stayed in Sokoto from 1831 to 1837 and married a daughter of Muhammad Bello. In 1840 he settled in Jagunku on the frontiers of Futa Jallon, where he could preach to local peoples. Growing tension with the leaders of Futa Jallon forced him to move in 1851 to Dingiray, where he began the militant phase of his mission. There he organized his followers into a professional army equipped with French weapons, and in 1852 proclaimed a jihad against pagan peoples, lapsed Muslims, and European intruders.

'Umar claimed a transcendental personal authority. He denied the importance of adherence to a school of law and favored *ijihad*, or personal religious judgment. He taught that a believer should follow the guidance of a Sufi shaykh who has immediate personal knowledge of the divine truth. The teachings of such a shaykh, he held, would be in full accordance with the law. 'Umar claimed the titles of amir al-mu'minin, khalifa (the successor of the Prophet), mujaddid (renewer of Islam), qutb (pole of the universe), and wazir of the mahdi. He claimed to possess *isfihbara*, or divine guidance in time of difficulties. Thus he claimed virtually every form of Muslim spiritual and temporal authority. His allegiance to the Tijaniya was the basis for a break with all established Muslim authorities and for a personal appeal as shaykh and savior.

His appeal in Futa Toro, the scene of an earlier and by then aborted effort to establish a Muslim state, was enormous. 'Umar appealed to the populace on the basis of local grievances against the military elites. His followers regarded him as their almami and reviver of the eighteenth-century revolutions. His community also

appealed to rootless individuals of mixed ethnic background, who found new social identity and opportunities for conquest under the aegis of Islam. He came to embody the torodbe ideal of religious revival and conquest of pagans.

His jihad began in 1852 with the conquest of Futa Toro. There he came into conflict with the French, who were attempting to establish their own commercial supremacy along the Senegal River. At Medina in 1857, they defeated 'Umar, and closed off the Senegal valley. In 1860 'Umar made a treaty with the French which recognized their sphere of influence in Futa Toro and assigned him the Bambara states of Kaarta and Segu. In quest of new territory, 'Umar and masses of followers from Futa Toro invaded Masina, thus carrying the war to Muslim peoples along the Niger bend. His enemies, led by Ahmad al-Kunta al-Bakka'i (of the Qadiri order), denounced this as an illegitimate war of Muslims upon Muslims and promoted a coalition of local states, including Masina and Timbuktu, to resist. His enemies defeated and killed him in 1864, but his followers captured Hamdallahi and established a state which lasted until 1893.

'Umar's state was officially Muslim, and forbade dancing and the use of tobacco and charms, and prohibited pagan ceremonies and the worship of idols. He was strongly influenced not only by West African reformist concepts but also by the teachings of the Tijaniya and of other reformist movements which stressed the importance of strict obedience to Muslim practice. Apart from this, its Islamic content was limited, and the primary function of the state was predatory warfare, slaving, and the accumulation of booty. The conquest state was not linked to the productive economy. The decline of the central government only accentuated the tendency to warfare, since local chieftains took to raiding to support their troops. Muslim jihad shaded over into a purely military exploitation of the surrounding peoples. 'Umar's state, in disarray, was finally overwhelmed and absorbed into a growing French West African empire in 1893.

After 'Umar's death jihad flared again in other parts of Senegambia. In the middle and latter parts of the nineteenth century the action shifted to the Wolof people of Senegal. Berber and Tukulor Muslim teachers had been active since the eighteenth century in the provinces of Walo and Cayor, where they were respected for their literacy and their magical amulets. In the nineteenth century Muslim influence increased further, owing to the suppression of the slave trade and the growth of the peanut, oil, and soap industries. The development of the new industries favored the economic and political power of Muslim peasants against the *tyeddo* slave military elites. In response to new economic and political conditions Islam provided the idiom for peasant resistance to *tyeddo* rule and for the integration of peasants and traders into a larger economy.

The great Senegambian jihad of this period was led by Ma Ba (1809–67), a Quran teacher and the founder of an independent settlement. Rebellious against *tyeddo* domination, his followers swept through Senegambia, burning villages, killing pagans, and enslaving their enemies. Ma Ba himself never actively participated in

battle and retired whenever possible from political affairs, but his victories stimulated other Muslim rebellions. Lat Dior, the ruler of Cayor from 1871 to 1883, was defeated by the French and killed in 1886; despite defeat, the cumulative effect of the Senegambian jihads was the substantial conversion of the Wolof to Islam.

In the jihad period, Islam also spread in the stateless regions of the Upper Volta, the Ivory Coast, and Guinea. The most important campaigns in this region were launched in Guinea by Mori-Ulle Sise, educated in Futa Jallon, who gathered bandits, vagrants, and other rootless people, built the city of Medina, and launched a jihad in 1835 in the region of Toron and Konyan. Defeated and killed in 1845, he was succeeded by a local adventurer named Samory Ture. Samory was born about 1830 of a Dyula family. He served the Medina state, engaged in various local struggles, sometimes on the pagan side, and worked relentlessly to enlarge his personal army. In 1871 he gained control over the Milo River Valley, seized Kankan in 1881, and became the principal power-holder on the upper Niger. By 1883 he had brought the local chieftains in the territory southwest of 'Umar's state under his control, and founded the kingdom of Wasulu.

This new state was governed by Samory and a council of kinsmen and clients who took on the management of the chancery and the treasury, and administered justice, religious affairs, and foreign relations. The army was the essential institution. Samory imported horses and weapons and modernized his army along European lines. At first the new state made local chieftains its vassals, but after 1878 the conquered territories were organized under military governors supported by tribute payments. In the 1880s Samory attempted to convert his regime into an Islamic state. In 1884 he took the title of almami, opened Muslim schools, forbade the use of alcohol, and required his followers to pray. He destroyed pagan sacred groves and cult symbols and forbade pagan worship. Muslim teachers and holy men were posted as officials in non-Muslim areas to enforce the Shari'a, and defeated peoples were forced to convert to Islam. Dyula traders supported Samory because of his encouragement of commerce, though they did not play a central part in the creation of the state. His Muslim policy, however, eventually led in 1888 to revolts which forced him to tolerate pagan religious associations and cults.

Samory's would-be Muslim empire was undone by the French, who pushed him eastward to Upper Volta and the Ivory Coast, where he conquered new territories and set up a new state between 1892 and 1896. In this eastern zone Samory came into conflict with both the French and the British. The French took Sikasso in 1898, and sent Samory into exile, where he died in 1900.

Jihad and conversion

With the defeat of Samory the era of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century jihads came to an end. Beginning in the western territories of Mauritania and Senegambia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they had spread throughout Sudanic and Guinean Africa. These movements represented an uprising of Muslim

religious teachers and their followers against the military elites. The uprisings, however, took various forms. Most common were the revolts of Fulani pastoral peoples against landowning elites in Bundu, Futa Jallon, Hausaland, Bornu, Fombina, and other places. In some cases Muslim Fulanis formed coalitions with non-Muslim Fulani clans or with Muslim communities formed of uprooted peoples, former slaves, and oppressed peasants. In other cases the jihads represented peasant rebellions. Throughout Senegambia Muslims who opposed the tyeddo slave military elite overthrew their masters. In some of the Wolof-inhabited parts of Senegal the Muslim assault overthrew the old social structure and paved the way for massive conversions. In the Volta region, Ivory Coast, and Guinea, Dyula peoples established independent states.

Aroused Muslim populations also provided support for the expansion of Islam into new regions. The jihad of 'Uthman spilled over into the Chad region and southern Nigeria. Under the leadership of al-Hajj 'Umar torodbe elites and Tukulor peoples of Futa Toro carried jihad into the western Sudan. Similarly, Muslims supported the movement of Samory Ture in Guinea. The Muslim mission therefore involved not only local social struggles but also wars of expansion and conquest. In certain cases, such as that of Samory in Guinea, revolts in the name of Islam were the work of military adventurers manipulating Muslim symbols for the sake of a tenuous legitimacy. While some Islamic movements aimed at reform and conversion, all aimed at territorial empire. Throughout West Africa Islam had come to be the almost universal language of political ambition and moral reform.

The use of this language varied. In many cases Islam provided for the unification of heterogeneous peoples and the creation of states. Many Muslim leaders waged jihad simply in the name of Islam and of putative Muslim states, but in the case of 'Uthman, a sophisticated Sudanic African tradition of religious reform also prompted a creative literary and religious effort. Al-Hajj 'Umar turned for his religious vision to the reformist teachings of Mecca and Medina, and returned from the holy places with Sufi inspiration. Otherwise, the West African religious movements were inspired by an indigenous tradition of Muslim efforts to generate Muslim states.

As a result of the jihads, the Sokoto Caliphate took control of Hausaland and conquered satellite regions in Bornu and Chad. Muslim populations were consolidated in much of what is now northern Nigeria, Chad, and the Cameroons. New states were also founded in Masina, parts of Guinea, and Senegambia. The formation of these states led to the conversion of local peoples to Islam. Parts of Senegambia and Masina became Muslim. Converts were made among the Fulani, Soninke, and Wolof peoples. This widespread conversion of Sudanic farmers marks the breakdown of the traditional order of society under Muslim pressure and the emergence of Islam as a principal organizing force in the creation of new societies. While Islam had frequently been adopted as an imperial cult without being spread among the subjects, the nineteenth-century jihads created Islamic states which sought to include the whole population rather than a limited aristocracy, and to create

a political people out of smaller groups of diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

Though great numbers of people were converted to Islam, the process of conversion was slow and the change in institutions and beliefs variable. The result was not the formation of a uniform Islamic culture but of a plethora of local variations upon Islamic practice. While we may speak about conversion and the syncretism of Islam and African practices, there was no single cultural expression of Islamic civilization in sub-Saharan Africa. Among western Sudanic peoples, Islam appeared in family festivals, spirit practices, and legends. Among central Sudanic peoples, Islam was the cult of the aristocracy and of specialized groups.

In the first stage of conversion African peoples accepted elements of Islamic culture and practice without forming a Muslim identity. Elements of Islamic material culture, including ornaments, dress, food, amulets, and some religious and mythological concepts, became part of the African cultural repertoire. In the second stage formal conversion was achieved and 'ulama' were recognized as the sole representatives of God's will. The power of communal cults waned and the worship of Allah became supreme. A third stage of Islamization involved changes in conduct and custom, as Muslim communities took on Arabic Islamic norms. At this stage Muslims recognized the supremacy of Islamic law, worshiped according to the five pillars of Islam, and incorporated Islamic practices into the rituals of circumcision, marriage, and death. Older customs and institutions were reinterpreted in Islamic terms. There may also have been legal and social changes from matrilineal to patrilineal forms of family, and from communal to private ownership of property.

At the very moment when masses of Sudanese peoples were being converted to Islam, Muslim expansion was being checked by European intervention. In the late nineteenth century the French and the British began to assert their domination. The French took possession of Senegal and of the state founded by 'Umar in 1893. They then defeated Samory in 1898. The British defeated the Sokoto Caliphate in 1903. The great century of jihad came to an end with the defeat of all the Muslim states and their absorption into European colonial empires.