

CHAPTER 6

Persistence of the patriciate

The social tradition which we have introduced and further described in the preceding chapters gave the scholars certain roles, along with elements of status and influence, which are more or less characteristic of an urban patriciate. In seeking now to outline chronologically the persistence of the patriciate from the seventeenth century onwards we are confronted with two major problems pertaining both to methodology and sources. Firstly, the later history of Timbuktu, and especially from the eighteenth century onwards, was undeniably one of economic, demographic and cultural decline. To be sure, the period of the *jihāds* restored to the city some of its earlier importance, but in the second half of the nineteenth century this was followed by an exceptionally accelerated pace in the process of decline. It has become almost customary to correlate economic factors somewhat exclusively to politico-military events. This approach is valid to an extent and may, indeed, attribute the special decline of the late nineteenth century to the militarization of the Kunta and, ultimately, to the ascendancy of the Tuareg Kel Tingeregif. By all accounts, or judging primarily by French accounts, the policies of the Tingeregif were predatory in nature and their exactions taxed what had remained of the local commerce. Other economic transformations, however, beginning with the resurgence of Walāta and, later the rise of Sasanding and Segu, deprived Timbuktu of a large share of its earlier sources of wealth. Recent studies have shown that the trans-Saharan trade continued to be an important factor in the nineteenth century. Such studies are, however, generally documented by reference to Hausaland, an area which had its own direct links to North Africa and which contributed marginally to the commerce of Timbuktu.¹ The same is most certainly true of Walāta which had its own direct links northwards, among other things via Shingit, and southwards via Segu. In other words, while the Saharan trade was itself in general decline, the share which Timbuktu received declined most dramatically. The city retained its basic social traditions and modes of organization, but its patriciate by the time of the French conquest was no longer as powerful and wealthy as it used to be even in the early nineteenth century.²

Basing his anthropological study upon observation of Timbuktu society in the 1940s, Horace Miner has found in that society an example of what he considers to be 'the primitive city'. For our part, in a historical study, we have to contend with the factor of change over the centuries. At best we see an element of stability in the fact that the decline of Timbuktu was commensurate with the contribution of its emigrant merchants to the growth of commerce elsewhere. The period following the French conquest is of great interest in itself but it lies beyond the scope of this study. It may well be that, at some point, the composition of Timbuktu was seen in terms of Arabs, Tuaregs and Ruma-Songhai, each group with its own slaves or servile clients, as Miner observed.³ Historically, however, we find no strong basis for this categorization and we may even doubt its validity in recent times. Miner, for example, describes the *imāms* of the mosques as drawn from the Songhai, while their *mu'adhdhins* he ranks among the Ghabibi.⁴ Yet, as known by their specific lineages, the *imāms* of Jinger-ebr, Sidi Yahya and Sankore are identifiable, allowing for intermarriages, as, respectively, Fulani, Wangara and Sanhaja. The role of scholars or *alfas* appears minimal in Miner's study, but from our vantage point it is almost impossible to understand the historical integration of the diverse ethnic groups in the city without recourse to the social tradition which evolved around the status and influence of scholars.

Secondly, the problems of interpretation are exacerbated by the difficult nature of the sources which are available for the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Beginning with the death of al-Sa'di around 1655, or at least the completion of his chronicle at that time, we have to rely almost exclusively upon the lists of the Pashas in *Tadhkirat al-Nasyān* and *Diwān al-Mulūk*, both dating to around 1750. Besides reproducing the information of al-Sa'di on the early Ruma, these sources share the same materials between them and are almost certainly of common authorship. The *Diwān al-Mulūk*, which lists the Pashas according to the sequence of their reigns, was probably the original source from which the *Tadhkira* was drawn. However, while the only extant copy is quite disordered and defective, the *Tadhkira*, with its awkward alphabetical listing, is a more complete source. The two might appear substantial, but they supply only indirectly the type of information which is sought after by the social historian. They are taken up with listing the nomenclature and regnal durations of 97 Pashas who alternated over the Tibshāsha fully 157 times in nearly as many years.⁵ Indeed, if we take into account the fact that the first 25 Pashas reigned on the average for a period of slightly over two and a half years each, it becomes apparent that the overwhelming majority of later reigns lasted less than one year. Succession over the post of Farma at Kabara and over the post of Hākim at Jenne, much as over the command of the main military divisions, was almost equally as rapid. If tenure of these posts and honours was to be indicative of the actual

on patrilineal descent gave way in the face of common usage of the Songhai language as early as the seventeenth century.¹⁰

The social traditions of Timbuktu, exhibiting an extraordinary capacity for assimilating and absorbing ethnically diverse newcomers, no doubt constituted an important factor. Ultimately, the Ruma were thoroughly integrated into Jenne society as well, and at Gao all the inhabitants claimed a Ruma identity by the nineteenth century.¹¹ In the earliest phase, however, it seems that Pasha Judar, commander of the Moroccan expedition, felt that the position of his forces would be tenuous at Gao and this determined the choice of Timbuktu as the capital of the new state. In rationalizing his decision, evidently against the wishes of al-Sulṭān al-Manṣūr, Judar pleaded that Gao was ill-built and was not as suited for quartering the main army as Timbuktu.¹² Al-Manṣūr retaliated by dismissing him from his post, though leaving him in the administrative-fiscal governorship of the conquered territories (*ḥukm al-ard*), while sending Maḥmūd b. Zarqun to replace him in command of the army. Later, Maḥmūd b. Zarqun was killed on one of his campaigns against the forces of Askia Nūh, now reigning in the main Songhai homelands at Dendi, and the seat of the Ruma state remained at Timbuktu. The city offered the conquerors the advantage of already having a large number of North-African settlers, though paradoxically, it was these settlers who were most displaced by the conquerors. More importantly perhaps, the Arabic language spoken by the conquerors was widely known in Timbuktu on account of the extensiveness of the body of literati and scholars.

A second important factor, much more crucial in the long-run, was the absorption of a Songhai military elite as part and parcel of the Ruma state. Recent studies have emphasized the survival of the independent Askia at Dendi as an expression of Songhai patriotism, but have erroneously underestimated the comparable influence of the Askia at Timbuktu.¹³ After the first defeats of the Songhai armies, which by far were the most devastating, Askia Ishāq was deposed in favour of his brother Muḥammad Kāgh in the hope that the latter might be in a better position for reaching an acceptable settlement with the Moroccans. The ill-advised Askia Kāgh, however, trusted his fate and that of his followers to the Pasha Maḥmūd b. Zarqun under the most precarious terms. The Moroccans later fell upon them and arrested all who could not flee, and subsequently, as many as 60 were murdered in cold blood.¹⁴ From then on, the leadership of the Songhai split into two factions, with the majority joining Askia Nūh at Dendi. The other faction was led by Askia Sulaimān, a son of Askia Daūd who had been arrested along with Muḥammad Kāgh, but was spared his fate.¹⁵ Sulaimān was later invested as Askia at Timbuktu, and the posts of Kurmina Fari, Balma'a Farma and Banku Farma were likewise revived and entrusted to Songhai military commanders. *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh* claims that 'those who came with Askia Sulaimān b. Daūd to Timbuktu from

configurations of power, then it would seem that some 30–50 individuals shared control of the Ruma regime in each generation. In fact, as we shall see, the actual reins of power rested in the hands of a few Ruma families which contributed the largest numbers of Pashas, Farma and Hākims, and wielded the greatest power in any case, irrespective of who held the main offices at any one time. The competition between the main families, coupled with the inability of any one among them to achieve dominance, accounts more than anything else, for the swift sequence in which Pashas and other officials were elected and deposed. In short, a wide latitude of interpretation is necessary for the purpose of adequately utilizing the evidence of the *Tadhkira* and the *Diwān*.

The Ruma regime in Timbuktu, with considerable emphasis on the background of events in Morocco preceding the conquest of the Sudan, has been the subject of a recent study by Michel Abitbol.⁶ The author covered in detail the structure of the military hierarchy, including close attention to the chronology and sequence of reigns, besides tracing the fluctuations in the territorial extent of the Ruma empire. Our own study, therefore, need not dwell at length on these subjects, some of which indeed have been covered by more general studies as well.⁷ Abitbol has, however, attributed the rise of 'an oligarchy of descent' among the Ruma to the first half of the eighteenth century. For our part, we recognize that a restricted number of Ruma families contributed the largest numbers of Pashas during the same period from 1700 to 1750,⁸ but this was the culmination of an earlier development which, indeed, laid the basis for future configurations in the nineteenth century. This development will be one of the main themes in this chapter of our study, because it reveals the *modus vivendi* which regulated the relationship between military elite and scholars.

Seen against the background of inadequate sources, the most extraordinary feature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Niger bend area is the phenomenon whereby foreign conquerors are fully integrated into, and absorbed by, local society. The Ruma retained a special status, to be sure, and this is exemplified by the fact that, while the rank-and-file literati specialized in the tailoring craft, the Ruma commoners came to specialize in the manufacture of sandals and presumably other leatherwork. When Caillié reached Timbuktu in the early nineteenth century however, he could not distinguish between the 'Ruma' governor at the time and the majority of the Songhai-speaking population.⁹ The 'naturalization' of the Ruma, as it were, began some 30 years after the Moroccan conquest, with the rise to military rank of many born locally, principally from Songhai mothers. Awareness of actual descent in the male line was strong only among the notables and chiefs, both Ruma and Songhai. Ultimately, even these distinctions tended to disappear, and among the common soldiery we may safely assume that distinctions based

among the original soldiers of the Askias were few and did not exceed forty-seven men, both horsemen and footmen'. According to this source, Sulaimān later brought together remnants of the Kurmina, Balma'a and Banku armies, till at last he assembled a force of 100 men.¹⁶ And, indeed, we learn that even the Khaṭīb of Gao discouraged some of the sons of Askia Daūd from joining the defectors.¹⁷ Ultimately, however, an implicit peace was struck between the Ruma and the independent Askiate at Dendi, and, by gaining new recruits, the Askiate in Timbuktu became an important factor.¹⁸

Incorporation of the Songhai system, even if only partially, into the new regime suggests an awareness on the part of the Moroccan Ruma that their position in the Sudan, and even at Timbuktu, would be tenuous unless reinforced by the presence of sons of the Askias among them. The first Askia at Timbuktu, Sulaimān b. Daūd, probably exercised little real power, though the Ruma honoured him highly. When 13 years later he was caused to be succeeded by Askia Hārūn, however, the latter proved unacceptable to the Songhai and after four years they used the occasion of their presence in a campaign at 'Unkubu to depose him. The Moroccan commander of the expedition at that point, 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni, could do little more than restrain the Songhai soldiery from deposing their Askia until the expedition had safely returned to Timbuktu.¹⁹ Henceforth, the Askiate devolved primarily on sons and descendants of the once-loved rebel, Muḥammad al-Šādiq, though the descendants of 'Umar Kumzāghu and of Askia al-Hājj II also had a share. The Pashas occasionally resorted to deposing the Askias, but in appointing successors they did not have full freedom of choice. The Askias enjoyed their posts for a far longer period (some ten years on the average) than the Pashas themselves. Like the chiefs of the Maghsharen and the Ardos of Massina, they enjoyed an independent source of power, though not nearly as independent as the chiefs of the Wulmdān. By the mid-seventeenth century, the Pashas also interfered, though with limited success, in the selection of Askias at Dendi as well. The two Askiates interacted rather closely with each other, a factor which furthered the independence of those who reigned at Timbuktu.²⁰ In 1076 A.H. (1665/6 A.D.), the Songhai soldiery arose against the reigning Askia al-Hājj b. Muḥammad Bankanub. Muḥammad al-Šādiq, again on their return from an expedition.²¹ Some 50 years later, we learn of an internal struggle among the Songhai over the Askiate in which the Pashas did not seemingly interfere.²² This type of evidence suggests rather strongly that the Askiate was governed by internal criteria of power and influence, independently of the Pashas. Indeed, in 1151 A.H. (1738 A.D.), the reigning Askia al-Hājj rescued the remnants of the Ruma army when it was virtually decimated in open battle by the Kel Tadmekkat.²³

Besides their merger with the Songhai military elite, a factor which facilitated the assimilation of the Ruma was the presence of southern Moroccan Saharan troops among them. Al-Manṣūr's main *kātib*, or Wazīr

al-Qalam, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Fishtālī, even claimed in his chronicle that the soldiers who conquered the Sudan, mainly Andalusian and 'Ulūj, were recalled back to Morocco and replaced by Saharan troops from the Sūs, the Ḥaḥa clans and the Maṣāmida.²⁴ This, in fact, appears to have been al-Manṣūr's original plan when he envisaged the conquest, but it was never carried out. Certainly, we know that Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn never returned to Morocco, as al-Fishtālī claimed, but was killed in the Sudan. Later, Mawḥay Zaidān complained with some exaggeration to Ahmad Bāba that his father had sent 23 000 soldiers, from the country's choice forces to the Sudan, but only 500 returned.²⁵ The returnees might have included a large number of 'Ulūj (Christian renegades) whose division in Morocco, under the command of Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn, had been considered the most loyal.²⁶ Similarly, many of the Andalusians, who appear to have been numerically dominant in the original force which conquered the Sudan, must have returned with Jūdār. The latter had been commander of the Andalusian division in Morocco and he returned somewhat reluctantly after repeated orders from al-Manṣūr that he should do so.²⁷ A few subsequent Pashas, appointed directly from Morocco, came in the company of northern Saharan forces, including both Shīrāqa and Māsa. These were more familiar to the nomadic and semi-nomadic inhabitants of the Timbuktu-Gao region and were thus in a better position to be assimilated, as Abitbol has suggested. Indeed, their presence might have influenced the obscure but important transformations which began taking place in the southern Sahara sometime around 1600.²⁸

A change in the composition of the Ruma forces is also suggested by the reorganization of the army in the Sudan. In Morocco, the Sūsī and Shīrāqa divisions enjoyed ceremonial precedence, but the bulk of the army was made up of the 'Ulūj on the right wing and the Andalusians on the left wing.²⁹ Shortly after the conquest, this system was reversed whereby the main two divisions became the Fāsiyyīn, including apparently eastern Moroccans, and the Marākishiyyīn, including mainly western and southern western Moroccans. The 'Ijī and Andalusī divisions were made subsidiary to these two and were later absorbed by them. The Shīrāqa division apparently retained its identity for some time and its presence was necessary for formalizing the investment of a Pasha.³⁰ It was mainly the commanders of the Marākishi and Fāsi divisions who alternated over the Tibshāsha. These included 'Ijī, Andalusī, Ḥāḥi, Māsi and Shīrāqa commanders, but power devolved primarily on the descendants of a few early commanders. The top ranks in the Marākishi division were enjoyed by the Shīrāqi descendants of 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni and by the Drāwī descendants of 'Alī al-Mubārak al-Darā'i. In the Fāsi division, on the other hand, the Zaghāri descendants of Pasha Maṣ'ūd and the Tazarkini descendants of Pasha 'Alī b. Bashūt Muḥammad were predominant. Others who at various times contributed to the main posts were Shīrāqi

descendants of Pasha Mahmūd b. Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān al-Ya'qūbi, and their in-laws, the 'Ijji kinsmen of Pasha 'Ammār besides especially the descendants of Pasha Nāṣir b. 'Abdullāh al-A'māshī al-Darā'i, al-Shaikh 'Alī al-Darā'i and Pasha Muḥammad Buwa al-Shuṭūki. One Andalusi family, descended from Pasha Yahya al-Gharnāṭi, was also prominent, but the *nisbas* on the whole suggest that the Ruma who were of native Moroccan background became most influential. The Darā'is, including three separate families, stood in an especially favoured position probably because merchants from Wādī Dir'a had settled in the Sudan before the Moroccan conquest.³¹ An additional factor may lie in the fact that scholars bearing a Darā'i *nisba* had achieved veneration and fame in Morocco and one Darā'i scholar, indeed, occupies an important position in the southern Saharan chains of transmission of learning.³²

Perhaps the most important factor which accelerated the assimilation of the Ruma was their dissociation from Morocco, under the conditions of an intense pressure from scholars, at a relatively early date. As we shall shortly see, the conquest of the Sudan received bad propaganda even in Morocco itself, and in Timbuktu it was represented as an ominous act. It is not clear to what extent the Timbuktu scholars could at that time exert an influence on public opinion in Morocco. It seems, however, that they somehow succeeded in discrediting al-Manṣūr without necessarily holding his commanders, excepting Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn, directly responsible. We have, for example, an 'Anonymous chronicle of the Sa'did dynasty', written during the seventeenth century in Morocco, which claims that al-Manṣūr had sent a whole army across the Sahara, before Jūdār's expedition, simply to get rid of its rebellious troops.³³ Under the impact of such stories, and especially in view of the strife that swiftly followed upon the death of al-Manṣūr in Morocco, the pressures exerted upon the Ruma to forsake their Moroccan connection must have been immense. In any case, the sequence of events, as we shall see, gave the Ruma regime the basic structure of an independent state very early in its history.

Pressures against Morocco and the Ruma

We have not tried in this study to give a detailed account of the Moroccan conquest and its immediate circumstances because that subject has been treated in many recent studies. The broad outline of events is already quite familiar, but certain peculiarities in the Timbuktu chronicles need to be put in perspective. As we may recall, al-Sa'di's main *Tārīkh* was written over half a century after the Moroccan conquest. It reflects the collective interpretations of two generations of scholars and traditionists besides providing a factual account of the events. No doubt some of the same interpretations entered the *Tārīkh al-Fatāsh* as well, especially since, as is generally believed, the work was edited with modifications sometime

around or after 1665 anonymously by Ibn al-Mukhlār. A few years before that, the Sa'did dynasty in Morocco had given way to the nascent 'Alawi dynasty and, in Timbuktu, even the formal acknowledgement of Moroccan sovereignty during the Friday *khuṭba* had been discontinued. In any case, it is clear that al-Sa'di, even at an earlier juncture, had unreservedly condemned the Moroccan conquest and had freely expressed his contempt towards a series of Pashas under whom he served as *Kātib*.

At an earlier time, it seems that traditionists had evolved a more neutral or conciliatory interpretation of events. Thus, the lost chronicle *al-Durar al-Ḥisān*, which was probably written early in the seventeenth century, is quoted *verbatim* in a rather perplexing passage of *Tārīkh al-Fatāsh* which claims that the Moroccan conquerors were well received on their first arrival at Timbuktu. According to the quoted passage, when Jūdār and his army rode towards Timbuktu after defeating the Songhai and entering Gao, they approached the city rather cautiously:

They encamped outside the city of Timbuktu, to the east, on Thursday, the first of Rajab, in the year 999 (25 April 1591). The notables of the city received them with welcome and they obeyed [Jūdār] in rendering the *bi'a* [acknowledging the sovereignty of al-Manṣūr]. They made a reception to receive him (*dayyafūdu*) and then he arranged to obtain the Qaṣba inside the city. He obtained it and then entered it with his soldiers.³⁴

Remarkably enough, the *Fatāsh* proceeds to contradict this passage, and the evidence of al-Sa'di does not confirm it either. Indeed, a consistent pro-Moroccan bias in the *Durar* may conceivably account for the fact that no copies of this work have survived. Al-Sa'di makes a point of indicating that al-Qāḍi 'Umar received Jūdār quite discourteously. The Moroccan Pasha had entered Gao after defeating Askia Ishāq's forces and the Khafīb there had raised a banquet to receive him. 'Umar, on the other hand, did not make a reception for the Moroccans (*ma-dayyafahum bi-shay'*) and at first merely sent the Mu'adhdhin to greet Jūdār. Subsequently, on learning that Jūdār was enraged, he did raise a banquet, and this change of heart 'caused people of intelligence to question the wisdom of that'.³⁵ As we know from Moroccan sources, Jūdār brought with him a letter to al-Qāḍi 'Umar in which al-Manṣūr praised him highly while threatening him at the same time with dire consequences if he should refuse to cooperate. The text of the letter, which is still extant, treated al-Qāḍi 'Umar as though he was already a subject of al-Manṣūr on the grounds that the Sharīfian descent of the Sa'dis automatically entitled them more than the Askias to the allegiance of Muslims in the Sudan.³⁶ We do not know what was 'Umar's response to the letter, but the initial contact between him and Jūdār set the pace for what happened afterwards.³⁷

The claim originating in the *Durar* that the Moroccans entered Timbuktu gracefully is repeated in the letter, already mentioned above, which

Mahmūd b. Zarqūn addressed to al-Qāḍī 'Umar in the aftermath of the uprising against the conquerors. The Pasha claimed that the people of Timbuktu had no cause for grievance against the Ruma because on entering the city they had not harmed them in any way. According to Mahmūd, they had paid for all the supplies which they received and had consciously sought to avoid conflict. Yet we know from *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh* that the Ruma had exacted 1200 *sunīyyas* of grain from the merchants of Timbuktu each month. The same source indicates that they entered the Ghadāmsi quarter, which they soon demolished to raise their citadel, virtually by assault: 'There was never a calamity which befell the people of Timbuktu greater or more bitter than this'. People were driven away from their homes before they could even move away their goods and their furniture, just as the Moroccans proceeded to pull the houses down. Furthermore, the same people, along with rich merchants from other quarters, were required to send their servants and slaves, along with their daily supplies, to work on building the Qaṣba. The detailed information of *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh* and of al-Sa'di contrasts sharply with the brief statement above-quoted from *al-Durar al-Hisān*.³⁸

The chroniclers have not left us a straightforward account of the immediate circumstances which led up to the uprising. We know that al-Qāḍī 'Umar had pleaded with Jūdār to postpone the building of the fort until people had a chance to find accommodation for their families and their properties, but the Pasha, soon joined by Mahmūd b. Zarqūn, wanted to quarter a garrison in Timbuktu before resuming his campaigns against the Songhai. According to *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh*:

It is impossible to exhaust the list of calamities which befell Timbuktu when the [Moroccans] first entered it. Nor is it possible to enumerate the various acts of deception which they committed. The worst thing was that they pulled out the doors of the houses in the city and cut down the trees in it to use the timber for building their boats. Then they ordered the boats to be dragged from Timbuktu to the Niger.³⁹

It is only reasonable to assume that, as soon as the main Ruma army left the city, the notables sought to arrange a Songhai re-entry to Timbuktu, much as happened at Jenne. Al-Qāḍī 'Umar was alarmed when his colleague in Jenne, al-Qāḍī Banba Kanati, was arrested and imprisoned. In that case, a Songhai detachment was able to enter the city and free the Judge. Similarly, north of the Niger, the Timbuktu Mundhu, Yahya walad Bardam, who had fled the city upon the entry of the Moroccans, had in the meantime assembled a small force, apparently near Tindirma, which was supported by Zaghrāni warriors from Yurua. Al-Sa'di blames Yahya for his recklessness whereby he charged against the Ruma fort quite heedlessly and was the first to be shot and killed. Later, al-Qā'id al-Muṣṭafa al-Turki had the satisfaction of cutting off Yahya's head and

parading it through the streets. His soldiers mocked the citizens by telling them 'this is the head of the Mundhu of your town'. Strange as it might seem, this very sequence of events precipitated the rebellion a few weeks later.⁴⁰

It seems that the fall of the Timbuktu Mundhu encouraged the Ruma soldiery to commit daily outrages against the citizens. Some of the notables pressed al-Qāḍī 'Umar at this point to issue an order, or more formally a *fatwa*, condoning an armed uprising. Other notables, however, feared the consequences of a retaliation and advised restraint. Finally, one night, the Qāḍī found it necessary to act, and sent the Ashra' Mundhu with a message to the Shaikh of the Sharifs, 'Umar al-Ṣaqali, to the effect that the citizens, presumably in the Sarekeina quarter, 'should take precautionary steps' against the Ruma. According to al-Sa'di, the Ashra' Mundhu changed the message and told the Sharifs: 'The Qāḍī orders you to rise in *Jihād* against them'.⁴¹ Whatever the case may be, the next morning the people of Timbuktu all rose up in arms and the fighting lasted for two months. One of the first to be killed was a certain Walad Kuzunful, a previous Songhai official who, after falling out with Askia Ishāq, had fled to Morocco and returned with Jūdār's expedition. A total of 76 Ruma soldiers were killed and the rest of the garrison was besieged inside the newly built fort.

It seems almost certain that the purpose of the uprising was to drive the Ruma out of the city altogether and to pull down the fort. At the very least the notables hoped to impress upon the Ruma the fact that they commanded a source of power of their own. It is tempting to conjecture that some contact between the Aqits and the main Songhai forces south of the Niger was still taking place. From Zarqūn's letter to 'Umar Aqit, we get the impression that the Qāḍī of Timbuktu was in a better position to be informed about the various developments than the Pasha himself. The chronology of events outside Timbuktu in the years 1591-2 is most uncertain however. In the throes of the crisis Timbuktu may have been still unaware of the overthrow of Askia Ishāq and of the ensnarement of Askia Muḥammad Kāgh who pointlessly replaced him. In retrospect, the chroniclers were favourable to the memory of Askia Ishāq and they were certainly partial towards Askia Nūh who ultimately led the resistance. We may mention, for example, that the Moroccan Sultān had postured as a scholar and, among other things, had obtained an *ijāza* from Muḥammad al-Bakri in Cairo. The *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh* makes a point of mentioning that Askia Nūh had had a correspondence with al-Bakri's son, Zain al-'Ābidin.⁴²

Besides counting on a possible Songhai comeback, the Aqits probably expected some support from the Maghsharen as well as the Zaghrānis. The Maghsharen, however, proved to be disunited, whereby the Eastern branch sided with the Ruma while the Western branch stood against them. The former, though led by Awsanbu who had grown up with the Aqits,

treacherously turned against them. For, as soon as the Ruma were pinned in the fort at Timbuktu, Awsanbu rode in with his clansmen and started putting the peripheral quarters to fire. A great battle apparently took place at the Jingerebir quarter but its outcome is uncertain. It may have reopened contact between the Ruma garrison and the Niger at least, while Awsanbu controlled the southwestern quarters surrounding the fort. The Sankore quarter, and probably the adjoining wards, remained under the control of the citizens for the most part until the arrival of Ruma reinforcements sent by Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn.

So far as we can tell, Timbuktu could count on the support of the Western Maghsharen, allied to the Zaghrānis and the Fulāni-Sanḥāja, but their help proved ineffective. They did not intervene directly until al-Qā'id Māmi, who was sent to reinforce the garrison at Timbuktu, marched against Yurua and reduced its inhabitants to slaughter and captivity. Returning to Timbuktu with the main army afterwards, Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn made conciliatory gestures towards the Aqīts and the notables, while proceeding to reinforce his position for a showdown. He sent a garrison to be stationed at Rās al-Mā' in order to forestall any intervention from the Western Maghsharen. The latter and their allies were able to storm the fort there and kill all members of its garrison, but they proved no match in open battle for any large Ruma force.⁴³ At best, they prevented the Ruma from extending their power westwards and, thus, helped insure the future autonomy of Walāta. Many citizens had fled to that place on hearing of the approaching reinforcements of al-Qā'id Māmi, and the Aqīts may themselves have considered that option. However, the deceptive actions taken by Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn led them to believe that a reconciliation was possible.

Tārīkh al-Fatāsh includes the dubious story that when Maḥmūd heard of what had happened at Timbuktu he sent Māmi at the head of 700 *rumiāt* instructing him to put the people of Timbuktu to the sword for seven days. The latter allegedly objected on the grounds that 'the people of Timbuktu cannot withstand an hour of that sort of action. They are the kindest of people and the softest of heart. If you kill three of them, seven would die out of fright.'⁴⁴ Once again, we are dealing here with a controversial interpretation of events, possibly quoted *verbatim* from *al-Durar al-Hisān*. The *Fatāsh* goes on to show that the citizens of Timbuktu were far from meek and feeble. Thus, when Māmi eventually went to the house of al-Qā'id 'Umar, he found the inhabitants, in the Sankore quarter at least, braced for battle. As our source says:

When the warriors of Timbuktu saw al-Qā'id Māmi going to the house of the Qādi, they thought him going there for an evil purpose. They therefore assembled and went up to the roof of the Sankore mosque with their spears and arms. Others stationed themselves over the roofs of the nearby houses. Then when Māmi talked gently, kindly and submissively, the Qādi sent al-Faqīh Muḥammad Baghayyūghu to call the men down . . .⁴⁵

The *Fatāsh* claims that Māmi went as far as to kneel before al-Qādi 'Umar and kiss his knees and feet. We may perhaps doubt this, but nonetheless, the letter which Māmi brought with him from Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn projected similarly deceptive signs of respect. The Pasha held 'Umar responsible for the uprising only on the grounds that he was the acknowledged leader of the city. He added: 'However, the true state of affairs has become clear to us and we have accepted your excuse on that basis. We need nothing from you except your good blessings. May your *baraka* accompany us.'⁴⁶

The Aqīt's acceptance of these gestures, whereby the citizens laid aside their arms, apparently proved to be their downfall. As a first step, al-Qā'id al-Muṣṭafa, who had been besieged at the citadel, executed the two main leaders of the warriors as soon as the city calmed down. The 'martyrs', as they came to be seen, were Bāba b. 'Umar al-Ṣaḥāli, apparently son of the above-mentioned al-Shaikh 'Umar, and his cousin al-Shaikh Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān.⁴⁷ Later, when Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn returned and secured the position of the Ruma, he treacherously put most of the scholars under arrest. Under the pretext of asking them to renew their *brā'a* to al-Sulṭān al-Manṣūr, he caused all to assemble at the Sankore Mosque, where they were seized. All, excepting al-Qādi 'Umar, were led in chains towards the fort. When one of those arrested, a Wangara notable, struck one of the Ruma soldiers, a carnage ensued. Fourteen men were killed, including Aḥmad Maghia, Muḥammad al-Amin b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. 'Umar Aqīt, al-Faqīh al-Muṣṭafa b. Misir And-'Umar and other scholars and non-scholars. The event left an indelible mark upon the conscience of Timbuktu for a long time thereafter.

In exile in Morocco the Aqīts had a greater influence upon public opinion than would be expected. It appears almost certain that al-Manṣūr brought them to Marākish so that, after breaking their spirit, he could use them to strengthen his position in the Sudan. That might explain why his official historian, al-Fishtālī, describes 'Umar Aqīt as al-Manṣūr's *Qādi* over the Sudan without indicating that the old scholar actually perished in prison during his exile.⁴⁸ Some recent historians have been inclined to believe that the Aqīts were accommodated in comfortable quarters and were merely placed under house arrest. Recent evidence, however, suggests that they were sent to the common prisons of the Sa'did capital and were probably at first not allowed any contact with the outside. The poor conditions of the prison might explain why most of them died during the plague which hit Marākish in 1005-6 A.H. (1596-8 A.D.). Moroccan sources indicate that they had been released in 1004 A.H., an event which 'brought happiness to the heart of Muslims', but as al-Maqqari points out few survived besides Aḥmad Bāba.⁴⁹ It seems that the Aqīts were released, though prohibited from returning to the Sudan, under pressure from the local scholars. For, already in 1002 A.H., Aḥmad Bāba used the opportu-

ity of embarking on his commentary on *Al-Sanāsiyya* in prison to indicate the conditions under which he and his relatives lived. He said:

After ordaining that I should enter Marākish in that way . . . , God made it possible for me to have access to a number of marvellous books which I had not seen before. Despite the conditions of restriction and imprisonment that I am in, students have been frequently coming to me, and bringing books with them, on account of their love of strangers of their own kind.⁵⁰

In the colophon, Ahmad Bāba indicated that he completed the work in 1004 A.H. 'in the city of Marākish, where I am now in prison with a group of my people, may God speed our relief'. This plea, as it were, in a work which was probably well circulated, may account for the release of the Aqīts in that year. We know that the other Aqīts also made an impact, judging by the survival of a short poem by a grandson of Ahmad Bāba, a son of a daughter named Muḥammad who released a rhymed expression of homesickness to Timbuktu. Al-Maqqari in his work quotes this poem, while al-Wufrāni quoted another one by Ahmad Bāba which was addressed to the people of Timbuktu on the occasion of the death of 'Abd al-Rahmān Aqīt during the plague.⁵¹

Ahmad Bāba spared no effort to defame al-Manṣūr and to praise the scholars of his own family and of Timbuktu generally. In his biographical dictionary of the Māliki scholars, and in other writings, he acquainted the Moroccan literati with the careers and works of Maḥmūd b. 'Umar Aqīt, al-'Aqib al-Anṣamuni and, most especially, Muḥammad Baghayughu. Indeed, he set aside a rhymed composition on the subject of the *mujaddidin*, the renovators of the faith, in which he advanced the novel idea that these appeared in different regions at the end of each century. In the tenth century of the Hijra the *mujaddid* appeared in the Sudan, he claimed, and the candidate for that honour was none other than his master, Muḥammad Baghayughu. We have no reason to doubt that Ahmad Bāba's views were well received in Morocco, and he seems well aware of that factor. In writing the biography of Khalīl b. Ishāq al-Jundi, he indicated that before his exile he had embarked on a compilation of the various commentaries on *Mukhtasar Khalīl* which was not completed because 'the tribulation fell upon us, dispersing our ranks, and scattering our best books'.⁵² Even as late as 1609 A.D., he recalled in a commentary on the important passages of *Khalīl* 'the difficult circumstances and worries and the mastery of evil people over us'.⁵³

The strongest evidence of an influence on the part of Timbuktu exiles over public opinion in Morocco comes from the 'Anonymous chronicle of the Sa'did dynasty' which we mentioned above. For while the official history of the conquest, written by al-Fishṭālī, praises the conduct of the conquerors in glowing terms, the 'Anonymous chronicle' portrays them as faithless marauders who abused the advantage of their superior arms. It is

rather clear that the author, whoever he may be, was most inimical to al-Manṣūr himself. For he accuses him of having first sent a rebellious army towards the Sudan and arranging for it to be lost and to perish in the Sahara. Otherwise, he describes the victory of Jūdār's own expedition against the Songhai as the result of stratagem and treachery rather than the outcome of an honourable military contest in open battle. Further, he indicates in no uncertain terms that Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn slaughtered the Songhai who came to him peacefully though during the carnage they raised their arms and repeatedly declared, 'We are your brothers in the faith'. Finally, as the chronicler sarcastically states, when Manṣūr heard of what happened in the Sudan:

He ordered a feast to be held for three nights and days in order to celebrate the killing of God's Muslim worshippers. The commanders and the superficial 'ulamā', who have no clear sight, along with the *umana*, who do not deserve the name, came to congratulate him for fighting the people of Islam, for seizing their properties and enslaving their families and their children. He attained great happiness from all that.⁵⁴

We do not know what was the position of the Moroccan scholars *vis-à-vis* the conquest of the Sudan in the first place. According to al-Manṣūr's official chronicler, they objected to the project only on the grounds that they did not believe it realizable. However, the sympathy towards the Aqīts which is expressed by all the Moroccan chroniclers, except al-Fishṭālī, suggests that the scholars had been dubious about the merits of the conquest from the beginning. Mūlāy Zaidān, who succeeded his father after a series of family struggles, probably expressed the views of others as well when he said that the conquest drained the military resources of the kingdom in vain.⁵⁵ Though further research may be necessary on this point, it seems that the loss of some of the most disciplined forces to the Sudan contributed to the deterioration and, ultimately, the collapse of the Sa'did dynasty.

Al-Manṣūr's public rationalization of the conquest is known to us, among other things, from a dialogue he had with Ahmad Bāba after the latter's release from prison. As quoted by al-Wufrāni:

Abu'l-'Abbās [Ahmad Bāba] said to him: 'What purpose did you have in plundering my properties, scattering my books and bringing me in shackles from Timbuktu so that I fell from my camel and broke my leg?' Al-Manṣūr answered: 'We wanted to unify the word of Islam, and in your country you are among its masters. If you submit, others will submit.' Abu'l-'Abbās retorted: 'Why then do you not unify the word with the Turks of Tlemsen, and the countries lying beyond? These places are nearer to you than we are.'⁵⁶

From the fact that this celebrated dialogue is quoted in a number of sources, it seems that many Moroccan scholars shared Ahmad Bāba's view. At first, their opposition might have been softened by the promise,

or at least by the propaganda, that the conquest would further the expansion of Islam in the Sudan. The appearance of the accomplished Timbuktu scholars in chains, however, soon convinced them that the conquest was more liable to damage than advance the cause of Islam.⁵⁷

Aḥmad Bāba was in a position to influence the public in Morocco because he taught some of the most outstanding scholars of the time. He himself says that queries on legal questions were addressed to him from various regions, including Egypt, and we have no reason to doubt him. Certainly, his *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*, with the variant *Kifāyat al-Muhtāj*, attained the widest readership, and al-Qādiri at first wrote his biographical dictionary as an appendix to the *Kifāya*. The even more influential al-Maqqari boasted that he received from Aḥmad Bāba the rough draft of *Nayl al-Ibtihāj*.⁵⁸ Among his students, Aḥmad Bāba counted Muḥammad al-Marrākushi, who praised him in his *Fahrāsa*, Aḥmad al-Hashūki al-Sanhāji, who wrote the widely quoted *Badhl al-Munāsaha*, Aḥmad al-Zanāti (better known as Ibn al-Qādi), who was author of two biographical dictionaries and became Judge of Meknes, and Muḥammad al-Qaṣṣār, who became Mufti of Fez.⁵⁹ Yet, despite all the honour which he attained in Morocco, Aḥmad Bāba wished for nothing better than to return to his hometown. It is related that when Mūlāy Zaidān, on becoming king, allowed him to return to Timbuktu, some scholars who came to bid him farewell expressed the hope that he would return so they might see him again one day. At that point the old scholar withdrew his hand from the man who was greeting him and said: 'May God never return me to such a rendezvous, nor bring me back to this land again'.⁶⁰

The fact that such details were quoted and requested by Moroccan authors suggests widespread misgivings about the conquest of the Sudan. These misgivings were apparently given further circulation during the strife and calamities which followed upon the death of al-Manṣūr. Even before al-Manṣūr's death, one of his sons rose up in arms against him and later the struggles between the royal contenders reached such bloody dimensions that Abu'l-Mahalli, who launched a religious movement against them, repeatedly declared that 'the sons of al-Manṣūr have killed each other over the throne and have caused many people to perish between them. Properties have been plundered and sanctities have been violated and, therefore, their power must be broken'.⁶¹ We need not suggest that the Aqit survivors could have had strong influence on these events. Nonetheless, it is interesting that Mūlāy Zaidān, according to one Moroccan source, promised Aḥmad Bāba that he would allow him to return to the Sudan, should he become king.⁶² More interestingly yet, Abu'l-Mahalli, whose forces drove Zaidān for a time out of Marākish, is counted by al-Wuḥrāni and later Moroccan chroniclers among the students of Aḥmad Bāba.⁶³

Our interest in Abu'l-Mahalli's rebellion lies in the fact that it gave Timbuktu its first opportunity to revoke the sovereignty of the Sa'dids. Indeed, locally al-Sa'di considered the entry of Abu'l-Mahalli's forces into

Marākish as the culmination of a series of events which were viewed as signs of divine vengeance against al-Manṣūr and his sons for the plight of the Aqits. The people of Timbuktu were especially impressed when the property which had been plundered by Abu'l-Mahalli's forces from the palaces of the Sa'dids in Marākish reached the Aqits as part of the trans-Saharan trade. This apparently confirmed the local belief that al-Qādi 'Umar had invoked God's wrath against Marākish when he was led to that town in chains.⁶⁴

We find it most extraordinary that Abu'l-Mahalli himself was aware of similar beliefs which were current in Morocco well before the launching of his religio-military movement. For in his little-known work *al-Aslīf* he mentioned a legend which held that the conquest of Timbuktu was an eschatological sign that the world was nearing its end. The legend was allegedly based upon a prophecy by an unknown Timbuktu sage who once declared:

Oh, people of Timbuktu, if it should come to pass by God's ordinance that you will go out of this town, whereby it will be ruined, and some of its people will die in chains, after having been dispersed from it, prepare ye then for meeting your lord with evidence of good deeds, for that is one of the signs of the end of the world.⁶⁵

It is possible that this legend came to North Africa with fugitives who had been displaced from the Ghadāmsi quarter where the Moroccan fort was built. The fugitives no doubt later learned that some of the Aqit exiles, and certainly al-Qādi Abu Ḥafs 'Umar, died in prison. Abu'l-Mahalli did not endorse the credibility of the legend insofar as it heralded the end of the world. He mentioned a variant upon the same prophecy, however, which said that the conquest of Timbuktu would be followed by 'a drought in the extreme Maghrib (Morocco), along with evils and enmities which would result in an absence of security . . . all of which has happened in our own time just as the [sage] predicted'.⁶⁶ This is precisely what al-Sa'di in Timbuktu claimed too, namely that the persecution of the Aqits 'opened the door' for a series of misfortunes in Morocco which were an expression of divine revenge.

It goes without saying that such legends left a great impression upon the Ruma in Timbuktu itself. Judging from al-Sa'di's *Tārīkh* especially, the city subscribed to a highly moralistic interpretation of history: even the ancient empire of Mali, according to local legend, had succumbed as a result of divine vengeance for oppression which its rulers had committed during the last heyday of their power.⁶⁷ Similarly, the Songhai empire collapsed, not so much under the force of Ruma arms, but in retribution for immoral practices which were introduced at Gao as early as the reign of Askia Muḥammad. Even the founder of the Askia dynasty did not escape the judgement of moralistic traditionalists, for it is alleged that when he defeated the sons of Sunni 'Alī he seized 73 men from among their sons

and servants and killed them at a place called Tansha. It was at that same place that Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn seized a similar number with Askia Muhammad Kāgh from among the descendants of Askia Muhammad and their followers.⁶⁸ To mention only one more example, traditionalists believed that the reduction of Shenengu by the Ruma brought vengeance upon its townsmen for having once aided a Bambara campaign which crossed the Niger and devastated the land of Jenne.⁶⁹

Dramatization of the fall of the Aqīts served Timbuktu in lieu of a constitutional legend which would emphasize the moral sanctions against violating the persons or property of scholars. Much like Sunni 'Alī, Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn, and the 'Uluḡ more generally, came to be held most responsible for the atrocities committed during the conquest. Al-Qā'id al-Muṣṭafa likewise suffered in reputation, and it is stated that on the day when the two Shurfā were executed by his order 'the sky became clouded and a red dust arose in the air'. The Ḥakīm of Timbuktu at the time, who was directly responsible for executing the order, is alleged to have been stricken by paralysis of the hands immediately after the event.⁷⁰ Almost all the commanders who were prominent at the conquest suffered from bad propaganda and their descendants did not feature prominently in the subsequent history of Timbuktu. By contrast, 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsani, who is praised for his moderation, became the founder of the earliest family of Ruma notables. As we shall shortly suggest, he was also essentially the founder of the Ruma state in its stable form which was to survive for generations to come.

Independence from Morocco

Even in its briefest outline, the story of Ruma independence from Morocco begins in the first year of the conquest when Jūdār Pasha favoured a peaceful accommodation with Askia Ishāq. The events of the next decade or so, up to the death of al-Manṣūr in 1603, indicate that the Moroccan Sulṭān's control of his forces south of the Sahara was a tenuous one. By 1608, when Aḥmad Bāba returned to Timbuktu, it became clear to the Ruma locally that a *modus vivendi* with the Songhai Askiate at Dendi, the kingship at Jenne and the Fulāni sultanate of Massina would alone ensure the survival of their state. Four years later, in the wake of the Abu'l-Maḥalli rebellion in Morocco, 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsani became the first Pasha to hold the post without authorization from Morocco. When Mūlay Zaidān was restored to Marākish, by the help of Sīdī Yahya al-Sūsi, he sent a small force with orders to execute 'Alī. Nonetheless, the Pashas continued to be selected locally from then on, and the sovereignty of the Sa'did, and later the 'Alawite, sulṭāns was reduced to a formality.

Recently, the Moroccan writer Muhammad Aḥmad al-Gharbi suggested that Jūdār conceived the project of carving a state of his own on arrival at Timbuktu after having defeated Iskia Ishāq and entered Gao. According to this view, Jūdār struck an agreement with the Aqīts whereby the Songhai empire would be split into two states, one centring upon Timbuktu, ruled by the Ruma, and the other under continued Songhai rule, centring upon Gao.⁷¹ This bold thesis, if true, might explain al-Manṣūr's anger against his Pasha and his dismissal in favour of the more loyal Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn. However, it is equally possible that al-Manṣūr was merely angered by Jūdār's reluctance to lead his army in pursuit of the Songhai across the Niger. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that the Ruma commanders immediately aligned themselves into opposing factions with minimal recourse to the orders of al-Manṣūr.

We know that Jūdār was strongly associated in his decision to seek a peaceful settlement with al-Qā'id Aḥmad b. al-Ḥaddād al-'Umari, the fifth ranking commander in the expedition, who in Morocco had been in charge of the Makhaziniyya force. It seems that Aḥmad was instrumental in sending a letter to al-Manṣūr which emphasized the advisability of accepting Ishāq's terms. The Sulṭān was so angered by this that he immediately sent orders to have Aḥmad executed, though later, at the intercession of his courtiers, he sent another letter reversing his own order.⁷² In the meantime, Aḥmad acted swiftly in conjunction with Jūdār to safeguard his position in any case. He assembled the lieutenants (*al-kawāhī*) and the sergeants (*bashūṭis*) and distributed to them 100 *mithqāls* each during a banquet in which they all undertook that no harm would befall him. This move, which became characteristic of the actions of future commanders when in trouble, ensured that Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn would not be able to harm Aḥmad beyond demoting him. It seems that Maḥmūd himself likewise distributed large sums to the soldiery to secure his own position. Thus, we learn that Aḥmad retaliated for his demotion by fleeing secretly to Morocco and telling al-Manṣūr that Maḥmūd had seized enormous sums from the houses of the Aqīts and had dissipated most of the funds. The Aqīts on their arrival in exile apparently confirmed the truth of this, and the Sulṭān sent al-Qā'id Maṣṣūr b. 'Abd al-Rahmān to replace, and presumably punish, Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn. The latter seemingly heard of his imminent downfall and proceeded, though with inadequate forces, to campaign against Askia Nūḥ in difficult terrain. He took the recently-appointed Askia Sulaimān with him, but the latter refused to follow him in the end. The outcome was that Maḥmūd was killed and his head was sent by Askia Nūḥ to the Sulṭān of Kebbi.⁷³

The sending of Maḥmūd's head to Kebbi might provide a clue perhaps to the territorial extent of the state which al-Manṣūr had hoped to carve out in the Sudan. We know that the then-reigning Sulṭān of Bornu had sent a formal act of allegiance to al-Manṣūr well before his conquest of the

Sudan. Though the text of the *bi'a* is still extant, the circumstances which brought it about are quite obscure.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, it had helped encourage al-Manṣūr to plan his conquest of the Sudan, whereby his realms would stretch past Dendi into Kebbi and the rest of Hausaland. This grand design seemed to Jūdār rather impractical, but Maḥmūd was more willing to try and carry out his master's order. His fall, therefore, in the contest against Dendi, fully put an end to any further hope of Moroccan expansion.

Subsequent events further weakened al-Manṣūr's control of the increasingly independent Ruma. Indeed, every Pasha who was sent directly from Morocco, beginning with Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn himself, had to be dispatched with a force of his own to ensure that his position would not be undermined. It was this which caused Mūlāy Zaidān to complain to Aḥmad Bāba that his father had dissipated the strength of the Moroccan army. Indeed, when Abū'l-Maḥallī's forces entered Marākish, Zaidān could not marshal a sufficient army to confront him. His reliance on the Sūsi forces of Sayyid Yahya to quell the rebellion contributed further to the territorial disintegration of the Sa'did state.⁷⁵ We learn, among other things, that the above-mentioned al-Qā'id Maṣṣūr, who replaced Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn, had served as commander of the Aṣḥābiyya elite force in Morocco, an honour which raised him to the status of commander-general (Qā'id al-quwwād) of the Moroccan army. The man died under mysterious circumstances in the Sudan amidst rumours that Jūdār poisoned him. His successor, Maḥmūd Ṭābi, who came with a force of 1000 men, seized the army from Jūdār and went in the company of the locally-unloved al-Qā'id al-Muṣṭafa al-Turki to resume Maḥmūd's campaigns against the Songhai. He too died amidst rumours of being poisoned by Jūdār, however, while al-Qā'id al-Muṣṭafa was strangled upon his return from the campaign to Timbuktu. Eventually, Jūdār returned reluctantly to Morocco, after repeated threats from al-Manṣūr against him, and much later fell in one of the succession struggles.⁷⁶ The last Pasha sent by al-Manṣūr was a certain Sulaimān who actually took the precaution of establishing himself at the outskirts of Timbuktu rather than at the fort. He was recalled on al-Manṣūr's death by Mūlāy Bū-Fāris, but was sent again towards the Sudan when Mūlāy Zaidān became Sultān. However, on his second journey he was killed in southern Morocco by Shraḥa clansmen who had apparently supported the claims of Bū-Fāris.⁷⁷ Actual power in the Sūdān devolved unofficially from then on upon al-Qā'id 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni.

We have no direct evidence that Jūdār had established any special links with the Aqīts or any other local notables. It is possible, however, that he sought to ingratiate himself with the people of Timbuktu after the initial upheaval caused by his entry. Al-Sa'di makes a point of emphasizing his enmity to Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn, who was most directly responsible for the

fall of the Aqīts. Moreover, we have some evidence that his close associate, the above-mentioned Aḥmad b. al-Haddād, won some sympathy from the Timbuktu notables. For, besides testifying against Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn, we encounter one of his brothers on the side of the scholars during the carnage which resulted in the 'martyrdom' of Aḥmad Maghīa. The brother rode up to the scholar Muḥammad b. al-Amin Gānu just as he was about to be struck down by one of the Ruma. He lifted him to his horse and thereby allowed him to proceed safely to his house. This act almost certainly created a bond of friendship between the Gānu family and al-Qā'id Aḥmad, and also perhaps between the family and Jūdār. That might explain why the quoted passage from the lost chronicle *al-Durar al-Hisān* paints Jūdār's entry into Timbuktu in favourable light. The author of the *Durar* is known to us as Bāba Kūr (or Gūr) b. al-Ḥājī Muḥammad b. al-Amin Gānu. This makes him the son, though possibly simply a nephew, of the scholar who was thus rescued.⁷⁸

Before exiling the Aqīts, Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn apparently sought to confer some legitimacy upon the act. He drafted a letter to al-Manṣūr in which he said:

We did not arrest these *fujā'ira*, al-Qā'id 'Umar and his brothers and followers, until their enmity to the sultān became clear to us, and we became sure that their sympathies were towards the Askias and that they were assembling men for them so that they might fight us, after having already killed from the army of the sultān seventy-three men, and we have the testimony of most of the notables and grandees of Timbuktu on that, including the corroboration of al-Qā'id Muḥammad.⁷⁹

The reference to al-Qā'id Muḥammad may conceivably implicate Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, of the al-Ḥājī family, who succeeded 'Umar Aqīt to the judgeship. Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn took the letter to Muḥammad Baghayughu, however, and tried to force him into signing it. The controversial text of the *Fatāsh*, which is our only source on this detail, reads quite ambiguously. It is open to the conclusion that Maḥmūd implied that he would recognize Muḥammad Baghayughu as Qā'id should he prove willing to testify against the Aqīts. The old scholar was adamant in his refusal, however, though Maḥmūd threatened to expose him as a secret ally of Askia Nūh. He said: 'A testimony can be based either on witnessing an event or on learning firmly of it or on receiving the testimonies of others about it. As for me, I have neither personally witnessed nor learned about this, nor am I willing therefore to testify.'⁸⁰

We do not know when Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān accepted the judgeship, and the reticence of the sources might further suggest that he complied with Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn in compromising the Aqīts. Al-Sa'di tells us little more than that the old enmity between the two families had persisted till towards the end of the Songhai period.⁸¹ It seems to us doubtful that Muḥammad could have accepted the judgeship

immediately after the arrest of the Aqīs in late 1593. Rather, he was probably invested after their exile, which dates in the spring of 1594, some five months later.⁸²

At first, it seems, the Ruma offered the judgeship to the erudite Mufti 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad Boryo, of the And-Agh-Muḥammad family, but this scholar declined the post, probably pleading on the basis of his old age. The Ruma apparently availed themselves of a stipulation in Mālikī Law that it was incumbent upon a scholar to accept the judgeship should he be considered the most qualified for the post. They subsequently offered the position to Ḥabīb b. Muḥammad Bāba, son of the illustrious commentator on al-Suyūṭī. We have been inclined to recognize the father of Ḥabīb, namely Muḥammad Bāba b. Muḥammad al-Amin, as none other than the above-mentioned al-Hājj Muḥammad b. al-Amin Gānu. The coincidence may suggest that Pasha Jūdār's party, rather than that of Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn, eventually determined the choice of the Judge. Ḥabīb once again declined the judgeship and we even learn that his father, Muḥammad Bāba, paid a sum of 400 *mithqāls* to relieve him of the responsibility. Nonetheless, it seems that Ḥabīb was instrumental in nominating Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān who accepted the post.⁸³ The latter's tenure lasted for 14 years, till shortly before his death in 1616 A.H. (1607/8 A.D.) he apparently abdicated upon the return of Aḥmad Bāba. According to *Tārīkh al-Fatāsh*:

This *qādī* was one of the most noble and most generous of people. He was the kindest of heart, may God have mercy upon him. When Sidi Aḥmad Bāba returned from Marākīsh he found him still alive. The *qādī* went to greet him and to congratulate him upon his return. Then he went back to his house and did not go out again during the remaining days of his life until he died.⁸⁴

It is almost certain that Aḥmad Bāba could have become Judge at this juncture had he wished to discharge the function. As things turned out, the judgeship went to the And-Agh-Muḥammad family for some time and was later taken over by sons and grandsons of Aḥmad Maghia.

The return of Aḥmad Bāba coincided with a series of revolts which seriously threatened the position of the Ruma throughout the Sudan. It is almost certain that agitation in Timbuktu was a major precipitating factor. The Ruma in the meantime had remained disunited whereby the leadership of the peaceful party was inherited from Jūdār by 'Ali b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni while the aggressive party was now led, among others, by Ḥaddu b. Yūsif al-Ajnāsi. After an ambush and defeat of the Ruma in 1618 A.H. (1610 A.D.) at the hands of the Songhai, the latter returned to Timbuktu and virtually imposed a state of emergency upon the city:

Al-Qā'id Ḥaddu and his companions wore the hides of tigers against the people of Timbuktu and prohibited them from holding their normal meetings and assemblies. The town remained for a long time whereby two people could not talk together in

any [of the customary places of] meeting. Even before the arrival of the [defeated] force at Timbuktu, the Pasha had ordered that the *Mudāhūn* should not meet after the afternoon prayers, as was customary in Ramaḍān, but rather after the evening prayers.⁸⁵

A few years earlier, the Fulāni Sulṭān of Massina, Ḥammādi Āmina, had annihilated with Bambara support a force which was sent against him from Jenne, and now 'the whole land of Jenne rose up in arms' against the Ruma. Even the Songhai at Timbuktu had recently asserted some independence by overthrowing Askia Ḥārūn in favour of Askia Bakr Kanbū following a campaign led by 'Ali b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni in Massina. It seems doubtful that the new Askia was sympathetic to the rebels, for he was later instrumental in having the Jenneko, Kal Shā Muḥammad, against the wishes of 'Ali b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni, dismissed and executed. However, the Massina, Jenne and Dendi rebels were probably in contact with each other, and possibly with opponents of Ḥaddu b. Yūsif al-Ajnāsi in Timbuktu. By and large, it seems that the events of 1608-10 A.D. brought the newly established Ruma state to the verge of collapse. The Maghsharen allied to the Ruma had for various reasons ceased to be an important force, and their decline in the seventeenth century was rapid. In Morocco, Zaidān was in anything but a strong position, and the prospects of reinforcements arriving from that quarter were remote.

Without formally being Pasha at this point, 'Ali b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni stepped into the breach and secured an acceptance of the Ruma state on a lasting basis. Al-Sa'di indicates that 'Ali had occupied a position of prestige in the Moroccan state but had fallen in status on account of his drunkenness. He seems to have arrived in the Sudan as a commander in Jūdār's first expedition but he was not among the highest ranking *quwwād*. He rose locally in rank very rapidly however, and much of the campaigning after the death of Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn devolved upon him. In 1606 A.H. (1597/8 A.D.), Jūdār had sent him on a campaign led by al-Qā'id al-Muṣṭafa al-Turki which resulted in a slaughter at Shenengu wherein many captives were taken, including men and women and even some scholars. 'Ali and his companions distinguished themselves by releasing all captives who fell to their lot.⁸⁶ Later, on the accession of Mūlāy Bū-Fāris in Morocco, he had secured from him exclusive right to the revenues of Tindirma. He repelled a force led against him by Ḥaddu b. Yūsif al-Ajnāsi and essentially established an independent power for himself based at Tindirma. It seems that the conflicts between the sons of al-Manṣūr in Morocco had their reflections on the alignments and realignments which arose in the Sudan. Since this subject is too complex to be treated here, however, we need only mention that 'Ali probably belonged to a party which opposed the enthronement of Zaidān.

During the widespread rebellions against the Ruma, 'Ali endeared himself to the people of Jenne by sparing and honouring the rebellious

Jennekoy Kal Sha'.⁸⁷ Subsequently, his decision was reversed by the then-reigning Pasha Mahmūd Lunku (or Lungo). Nonetheless, he was determined to pursue a conciliatory policy and was apparently in contact with some of the notables in Timbuktu. Thus, when his independence at Tindirma was challenged by the Pasha and the Amīn, Sayyid 'Alī al-Tuāti went to him and told him not to retaliate. The notable said to him, 'Do not risk losing this army because it is coming to your hands soon, God willing'.⁸⁸ The climax of 'Alī's conciliatory policies took place shortly after the pacification of Jenne when he led virtually the whole Ruma army into a confrontation with the forces of Dendi, then led by the Dendi Fāra, Sayyid Kara Iji (Idye). According to al-Sa'di:

Each detachment stood opposite its counterpart in the two armies facing each other. Then they parted without fighting. One went this way and the other went the other way. It is related that Askia Bakr [of Timbuktu] declared: 'I have never seen two parties who rode to each other in state and then their state disappeared as happened to these two'.⁸⁹

We learn that the Dendi Fāra, Kara Iji, was nephew of Bakr Kanbu' b. Ya'qūb b. Askia al-Hājj b. Askia Daūd, who had been raised to the chieftaincy by the Songhai at Timbuktu. 'Alī had arranged through the latter for the confrontation to be peacefully resolved without bloodshed. This angered Askia al-Amīn who was reigning at Dendi and, after being accused of accepting bribery from 'Alī, Kara Iji actually committed suicide. Nonetheless, the above event essentially put an end to the bitter struggle between Ruma and Songhai which lasted two decades.⁹⁰ 'Alī, for his part, returned to Timbuktu and assumed the Pashalik after deposing the reigning Mahmūd Lunku.

The reign of 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh, the first Pasha to attain the post without authorization from Morocco, corresponded with the growth of the Abu'l-Mahallī rebellion against Mūlāy Zaidān and the entry of the rebels in triumph into Marākish. It is rather obvious that the notables, and certainly the Aqits, were pleased at this turn of events. If indeed Abu'l-Mahallī had been a student of Ahmad Bāba, then the old scholar probably counselled that the Ruma should endorse the *bi'a* of the rebel and revoke that of Zaidān. All we know is that the people of Timbuktu, including the Pasha, acknowledged the sovereignty of Abu'l-Mahallī and were followed in that by the Ruma at Jenne, though not by those at Gao. Unfortunately for the Pasha, Zaidān was restored after his flight from Marākish by the clansmen of Sīdī Yahya al-Sūsi who marched against Abu'l-Mahallī and defeated him. At this point, the people of Timbuktu, under pressure from Jenne, reversed their decision and reacknowledged the sovereignty of Zaidān. A few years afterwards, Pasha 'Alī was overthrown, and the following year, in 1618, a force of 400 Ruma sent by Zaidān brought orders which secured his execution. This, in fact, was the last force ever to be sent from Morocco

and its members were dispersed in the various detachments and garrisons of the Ruma state.⁹¹ Choice of the Pashas henceforth devolved upon the Ruma locally, and was to be held in alternation between the commanders of the Marākushi, Fāsi and Shīrāqa divisions. It is most interesting that the Ruma army was reorganized along these lines, for in Morocco itself, Fez remained for a long time under the rule of its notables, independent of Marākish.

Concerning the sequence of Pashas who succeeded 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh, little need be said except that most died violently, after reigning some two to three years, amidst intense succession struggles. The struggles did not affect the population at large, nor indeed the Ruma soldiery, but were restricted to the top ranks in the army. The administration at Timbuktu rested primarily upon the *Qādi*, for the gubernatorial post of Ḥakīm, much like the post of Farma at Kabara, increasingly served as an avenue towards attaining the Pashalik or Tibshāsha. The Pashas sought to ingratiate themselves with the local population so that even Haddū b. Yūsif al-Ajnāsī, on finally gaining his turn to the Pashalik after a period of drought and famine, distinguished himself by abolishing some of the taxes.⁹² Already in 1035 A.H. (1625/6 A.D.), a certain al-Shaikh al-Munīr was sought after by the Ruma commanders to mediate between them. Other scholars, beginning with Muḥammad Baghayūghu and Ṣāliḥ Takun, set themselves apart from the dynastic struggles but interceded with the Pashas on matters affecting the civilian public.⁹³

One Pasha who deserves special mention is a certain 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Qādir who may conceivably have been one of the first Ruma to be born locally in the Sudan. The factor which most strongly suggests partial Songhai descent is his attempt to emulate certain aspects of the career of Askia Muḥammad. The man must have been the son of one of the earlier lieutenant-commanders (*kāhīas*) for he too held that rank shortly before attaining the Tibshāsha. He enjoyed the advantage of succeeding a rather weak Pasha whose troops took advantage of the situation to commit various extortions from the people of Timbuktu. At his accession, according to al-Sa'di:

He appeared like the sword of God unsheathed against the villains and extortioners of the days of Pasha Ibrāhīm al-Jarānī. He insulted, humiliated and killed them until they started seeking refuge in the mosques and at the houses of the virtuous, hiding in fright from him . . . He reigned four years and five months.⁹⁴

It seems that at the beginning of his reign (1628–32) 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Qādir duly observed the sovereignty of Mūlāy 'Abd al-Malik who had recently attained the throne in Marākish. He soon started contemplating the establishment of a new dynasty, however, fully independent of Morocco. As a first step, al-Sa'di associates him with the building of Jāmi' al-Hanā' in the northern sections of Timbuktu, the same mosque which traditionists identify as having been built for the exclusive use of the virtuous.⁹⁵ As a second step, he used the occasion of campaigning towards Dendi to ask Askia Daūd b. Muḥammad Bān b. Askia Daūd for one of his daughters in marriage. This event finally sealed the

peace pact which in practice had existed between Timbuktu and Dendi since the days of 'Ali b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni. Finally, the Pasha conceived the project of making the pilgrimage while leaving his brother Muḥammad al-'Arab as his deputy, much as Askia Muḥammad had entrusted the rulership of Songhai to his brother 'Umar Kumzāghu during his absence in the East and at Mecca.

Al-Sa'di tells us that the *Qādi* and the *Fuqaha* in Timbuktu assembled with the Pasha at the Sankore Mosque before his departure across the Sahara and warned him of possible dangers during the journey. The wording of the chronicle may remotely suggest that the scholars opposed the project in principle but it seems that they mainly questioned its feasibility under the circumstances. First of all, al-Qādi Sayyid Aḥmad b. And-Agh-Muḥammad, who occupied the judgeship at the time, was remembered by later traditionalists for contrasting the 800 soldiers who accompanied Askia Muḥammad on the pilgrimage and the small force of 80 men which went out with 'Ali b. 'Abd al-Qādir.⁹⁶ And, indeed, we learn that 'Ali had requested a reinforcement of 50 men from the Ruma garrison at Gao but this was denied him. The Pasha nonetheless set out towards Tuāt with an inadequate force, while leaving his brother facing the threat of a possible rebellion inspired by the Ruma of Gao.

Secondly, the scholars were certainly aware of the political implications of a pilgrimage by a ruler and of the fact that his passage might require prior contact with the Ottoman authorities. Whatever the case may be, it is probable that some scholars still favoured the project and saw in it an opportunity for formally revoking Moroccan sovereignty. The Pasha was accompanied on his journey by none other than a son of Aḥmad Bāba, a factor suggesting continued influence on the part of the Aqits. Another scholar who accompanied the caravan was a certain Sayyid Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Jarrāri, possibly a Ruma elder who had joined the ranks of scholars.⁹⁷ 'Ali's caravan halted apparently a long time at Arwān, where it presumably negotiated for Tuareg-Barābīsh escort across the Sahara. Nonetheless, it was pursued to Tuāt by al-Filāli b. 'Issa al-Rahmāni, chief of the Rahāmīna Barābīsh, who prevented the Pasha from proceeding any further. The scholars and the rest of the caravan continued their journey, but the soldiers were sent back to Timbuktu and the Pasha was likewise forced to follow them.

It is quite conceivable that the Barbūshi chieftain was acting in the interest of Morocco, though his father, 'Issa b. Sulaimān, had given refuge to one of the Aqits who had managed to escape the grip of the Moroccans in 1594. Alternatively, the chieftain may have concerted his efforts with the Ruma garrison at Gao, which since the days of 'Ali b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni began asserting its independence from Timbuktu. Upon his return, the Pasha sent his brother, Muḥammad al-'Arab, against Gao, but its Ruma arrested Muḥammad and did not release him until Muḥammad Bankānu b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq b. Askia Daūd, who was the reigning Askia at

Timbuktu, interceded on his behalf. Indeed, we learn that the Ruma of Gao sought to persuade Muḥammad Bankānu to remain with them 'so that they may have his blessing', presumably in the hope that that would strengthen them against Timbuktu. Later, when 'Ali b. 'Abd al-Qādir led his army in a campaign towards Gao, his forces deserted him and he was overthrown. Strangely enough, 'Ali sought refuge with the Barbūshi chieftain in his flight,⁹⁸ but he was turned over to the newly elected Pasha who had him killed.⁹⁸

The independence of the Ruma from Morocco was henceforth a gradual process which culminated in the rendition of a *br'a* to the locally reigning Pasha in 1657 A.D. The occasion for that was the fall of the last Sa'did king and the rise of the 'Alawite dynasty, though still in embryonic form, in Morocco. At the completion of his chronicle, al-Sa'di had recorded with inexplicable satisfaction the accession of Muḥammad al-'Abbās in Marākish after the death of his father Muḥammad al-Shaikh in 1655. Yet from Moroccan sources we learn that the Sa'dids could not have controlled much territory beyond their capital by this time and, even earlier, events in southern Morocco would have made contact between the Sa'dids and the Sudan logistically tenuous.⁹⁹ Further research may perhaps be necessary on this point especially since Abitbol in his recent study has tended to overemphasize the factor of continued Ruma subservience to Morocco.¹⁰⁰

The crucial step in formally revoking the sovereignty of the Sa'dids at Timbuktu was taken by al-Qā'id Muḥammad b. al-Hājj b. Daūd al-Shuṭūki. The *Tadhkirat al-Nasyān*, which for reasons to be mentioned below is not favourable to this Ruma commander, describes him as 'an understanding *tālib* who had acquired somewhat of learning'.¹⁰¹ Our source indicates that his Marākushi division advanced his candidature to the *tibshāsha* because, being a man of wealth, they hoped to be generously remunerated. At that point he stipulated that he wished to be recognized as 'Sulṭān, Commander of the Faithful, Caliph of the Muslims'. And, indeed, as we read:

During this period [1657-60], the *khulba* in favour of the sons of Muḥammad [al-Manṣūr] al-Dhahabi ceased in Takrur. That is because al-Shuṭūki made himself Sulṭān, with the agreement of all the town. The *qādi*, the *imāms* and the merchants rendered *br'a* to him, and all the army agreed on that except the Fāsiyyin. The *khulba* was in his name at Timbuktu and Gundam only, while elsewhere it was in the name of Pasha Ḥammū.¹⁰²

The *Tadhkira* includes these details under the biography of Ḥammū b. 'Abdullāh al-'Ijji, who overthrew the Pasha and succeeded him, rather than in the biography of Muḥammad al-Shuṭūki himself. Elsewhere, the author betrays a bias in favour of the Fāsiyyin, and most especially in favour of the Tazarkīni family. It would be tedious to discuss the various subtle details which indicate this bias, but we may mention that although the chronicle terminates with the reign of a Pasha from the powerful

Mubārak al-Dara'i family, the recapitulation of the list of Pashas ends somewhat awkwardly with 'Ali b. Maṣṣūr b. al-Qā'id 'Alī al-Tazarkīni. From the later chronicle, *Dhikr al-Wafayāt*, we learn that this Pasha reigned only five months during the year 1178 A.H. (1764/5 A.D.) and was later succeeded by Bahaddu b. Bakr b. Alfa Maṣṣūr al-Dara'i, who had preceded him to the *ṭibshasha* and now became dominant among the Ruma for a long time to come.¹⁰³ It is possible that several hands contributed to the making of *Tadhkirat al-Nāsyān* but it has not been possible to draw any firm conclusions from comparisons between this document and the variant *Dīwān al-Mulūk* because of the incompleteness and defectiveness of the latter source.

There are some indications which have been mentioned by Abitbol which may suggest that Timbuktu acknowledged the new 'Alawite dynasty in Morocco in 1669/70 and that the *khuba* was recited in the name of Mūlay Ismā'il from sometime around 1688–90.¹⁰⁴ After al-Shuṭūki's reign however, this became a thoroughly theoretical issue, for we have a copy of a letter addressed by Ismā'il to Timbuktu which suggests that his dynasty had fully lost contact with the Ruma. The extant copy, which is not dated and which is lacking its prolegomena, seems to have been made by a son of Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Aḥmad al-Mujtahid, possibly al-Qāḍī Maḥmūd whose tenure of the judgeship in the early eighteenth century is not precisely dated.¹⁰⁵ In any case, we know that the factor which revived Ismā'il's interest in the Sudan was the occasion of his victory over the Spaniards at al-'Arish in 1708. As we may now mention, al-Manṣūr had conquered the Sudan in the wake of his victory against the combined Portuguese-Spanish invasion, at the battle of Alcazar (Wādī al-Makhāzin), and it seems that a similar exploit against non-Muslims encouraged Ismā'il to believe that his sovereignty would be welcomed by the people of Timbuktu. For, as he wrote them, 'Since your city has virtuous and elect men, and you are neighbours to pagan blacks, we conveyed to you the good news of our victory'. He implicitly threatened to send an army against Timbuktu but, recalling the experience of al-Manṣūr, he said:

If we send an army to you from here it might do more harm than good. It would disperse you and destroy your system (*dīwān*) . . . The army itself which we might send would be lost to us and would not return to its proper place here . . . However, if you request from us such an army, and accept it voluntarily so that it might strengthen you against your enemy, we would be willing to reinforce you with it in the shortest space of time.¹⁰⁶

Ismā'il mentioned in the letter that an emissary had returned to him from Timbuktu bringing presents from the city along with an instrument acknowledging his sovereignty. He expressed his satisfaction at this turn of events, but the details surrounding the embassy suggest that it was of

dubious credentials. The emissary was a certain Muḥammad b. al-'Asri al-Jakani who first appeared at the court of Ismā'il to complain that the people of Timbuktu had plundered his goods. The *bī'a* which he subsequently brought back from across the Sahara may have been a rather shabby document because the extant beginning of the letter mentions 'very few words indeed, not amounting even to a page'.¹⁰⁷ Subsequently, Ismā'il allowed the same Muḥammad al-Jakani to purchase supplies at state expense so that he might take them as presents to Timbuktu, but the man went away and never returned, and the monarch enquired, among other things, concerning his whereabouts. Locally, in Timbuktu, the *Tadhkirat al-Nāsyān* mentions an emissary of Ismā'il who arrived in 1121 A.H. (1709 A.D.) and indicates that the reigning Pasha arranged a military parade to entertain him. The source suggests, however, that the visit made no impact on Timbuktu's relations with Morocco and, indeed, it adds, 'It has been said that the visitor was an emissary of one of the commanders of the Sulṭān [rather than of the Sulṭān himself]'.¹⁰⁸

Recent research, as partly also the above-mentioned letter, suggests that Mūlay Ismā'il extended his influence southwards in the Western Sahara towards Walāta. Indeed, in 1151 A.H. (1738 A.D.), as the author of the *Tadhkira* relates:

News reached us from people in the West who said that the Maḥalla (Moroccan force) which had been there from the past had approached the people of the West [possibly of Walāta] and arose from there heading towards our town of Timbuktu.¹⁰⁹

This proved to be a false alarm, but it is interesting that the reigning Pasha Aḥmad b. Alfa Maṣṣūr al-Dara'i called for an assembly of the merchants on hearing the news and requisitioned a sum of 1000 *mithqāls* which was given to him in full. This suggests that both Ruma and notables were opposed to renewed intervention from Morocco. It is doubtful that Ismā'il's influence was perceptible at Walāta itself, though here as in Timbuktu some of his sons and grandsons were well received when they visited the Sudan in an unofficial capacity.¹¹⁰ These visits, duly recorded south of the Sahara, may have given currency to the legend that it was Ismā'il rather than al-Manṣūr who originally conquered the Sudan. The legend is featured in a history of the Wulmdān (Ouillimiden), thereby possibly reflecting the acceptance by this Tuareg confederation of Ruma sovereignty during Ismā'il's reign.¹¹¹ Otherwise, Ismā'il's alleged conquests circulated primarily in Morocco where, in the late eighteenth century, the English consul Jackson heard about them. By that time, clearly, Morocco had barely any official contact with Timbuktu, though the citizens held on to the idea of theoretical 'Alawite Sharīfian sovereignty for a long time to come. Thus, when the French eventually approached the city at the end of the nineteenth century, the notables sent an embassy to Morocco and asked the reigning Mūlay al-Ḥasan to aid them. The monarch, no doubt surprised by this, asked them for documentation to prove that they had historically acknowledged the sovereignty of his state or dynasty.¹¹²

The emergence of Ruma notables

The growth of Ruma families of notables was a gradual process which began sometime in the mid-seventeenth century when the sons born locally to the earliest Ruma commanders attained seniority in the ranks of the army. The various factors which affected this process are rather obscure, but we are inclined to believe that the attitudes of scholars, with their exceptional influence in matters of public opinion, contributed greatly towards determining the patterns of precedence and prestige among the Ruma. This is strongly suggested by the fact that 'Ali b. 'Abdullāh al-Tilimsāni, who had distinguished himself by his conciliatory policies, became the founder of the earliest family of Ruma notables. Though he himself fell in the wake of acknowledging the sovereignty of Abu'l-Mahalli against Zaidān, he was succeeded as early as 1056 A.H. (1646 A.D.) by his son Ahmad. The occasion led the chronicler al-Sa'di to observe that 'Ahmad was a man of generosity and wisdom; he was noble of descent and was the like of his father in virtue'.¹¹³ Statements such as this indicate that the patrician tendency among the scholars themselves was already being imparted upon certain select segments of the Ruma. We have already observed that Haddu b. Yūsif al-Ajnāsi ingratiated himself with the people of Timbuktu during his short reign, though previously his conduct had alienated them. His son Ahmad (also Hāmad, Hāmmadi), who reigned in 1651-54, further sought to strengthen his family's standing among the city's notables. Al-Sa'di indicates that 'he was kind to people and was highly respectful towards the virtuous and to all people of merit'.¹¹⁴

Though the Ajnāsi family did not ultimately occupy a position of any special precedence, the Tilimsānis remained prominent among the top ranks till the early eighteenth century. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. 'Abdullāh was succeeded by at least one brother, namely Nāṣir, who reigned in 1667-69, and both were eventually succeeded by their sons Ahmad al-Khalifa b. Ahmad and 'Abdullāh b. Nāṣir. Indeed, 'Abdullāh enjoyed the royal honour four or five times between 1698 and 1712, but was not able to pass his prestige to his sons al-Qābily and Muḥammad.¹¹⁵

We have already mentioned above another Pasha who became the founder of a very influential family. This is Muḥammad al-Shutūki, also known as Muḥammad Buwa, who adopted the posture of scholar and had himself proclaimed as sovereign Sulṭān. Indeed, Muḥammad was the first Pasha to reign twice, for after his initial dismissal in 1660 he was again briefly invested in 1667. He owed his second reign, it seems, to a certain Pasha 'Ammār b. Ahmad 'Ajrūd al-Sharqi (Shrāga) who, upon his dismissal, insisted that Muḥammad should succeed him. This 'Ammār was allied by intermarriage to Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān al-Shārqi. The latter had reigned in 1643-46 and was responsible for appointing the chronicler al-Sa'di to the post of Katib. His descendants

included a line of three Pashas down to his great-grandson. Among them was al-Qā'id 'Ammār b. Sa'ūd Bakarna (Bagarna), the last to serve as commander of the Shrāga division before its absorption by the Marākushi and Fāsi divisions. He boasted of two grandfathers who occupied the Tibshāsha, including his father's father and his mother's father.¹¹⁶ His son 'Ali flourished as late as 1172 A.H. (1758/9 A.D.), but the descendants of Muḥammad al-Shutūki remained important till even later. Initially, they contributed many members to the office of Kabara Farma and four among them, besides the founder, attained the rank of Pasha. The evidence on other lesser lineages suggests that a great proportion of Pashas, of whom many reigned two or three times, were drawn from a total of some ten families. Among these, the Shūtūkis and Sharqis were prominent but, unlike the Tilimsānis in their heyday, they did not quite occupy the positions of top rank among the Ruma.

Throughout the eighteenth century, top rank among the Ruma devolved on the Tazarkinis and Mas'ūdis and, primarily, upon the family of Mubārak al-Dara'i. The Tazarkinis, in fact, were responsible for weakening, and almost destroying, the Tilimsāni family. The initial cause for what later gave rise to a bloody upheaval was the convergence of a number of families around 1700 all staking their own claims to the Tibshāsha. In the process, it seems, the claims of the Tilimsāni family were bypassed for some time. In 1106 A.H. (1694/5 A.D.), Ahmad al-Khalifa went as far as to post himself at Wīki on the way to Jenne, and taxed the passage of the merchants there, in order to reassert his family's rights to the Pashalik. It seems that he amassed a fortune in the process and the whole Ruma army gradually defected and went over to him at Wīki. His enthronement at that place, with all the pomp and ceremony which had come to characterize the investment of Pashas at Timbuktu, was an unprecedented event in the history of the Ruma period. According to the *Tadhkira*, which is not favourable to the Tilimsāni Pashas, 'the grantees (*al-kubārā*) could no longer support his actions and they sent to him the army so that it might take from him the funds which reached his hands before he could cause even greater harm to them and to the generality of Muslims'. Ahmad al-Khalifa returned as Pasha to Timbuktu, but he was soon deposed and banished to Kūna. Later, both he and his sons had occasion to repeat similar actions which were directed especially against the Tazarkinis and other affiliates of the Fāsi division.¹¹⁷

The Tazarkini family was relatively a newcomer which strengthened its position among the Ruma in a very short period. The founder was a certain Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Tazarkini, described as a *bashāt* or a lower-ranking officer. His son 'Ali rose to the Tibshāsha in 1072 A.H. (1661 A.D.) and, although he reigned briefly without distinguishing himself by any actions, four of his sons became Pashas between 1696 and 1735. The eldest of these sons, namely Ahmad, reigned three times, and at his death in 1703

A.D. he left a clan of Tazarkinis behind him, including several sons who became Pashas. This earned him the title of 'father of sultāns' in *Tadhkirat al-Nasyān*. During his second reign, he distinguished himself by leading a campaign against Ahmad al-Khalifa al-Tilimsāni when the latter once again established an independent authority, this time at Ankabū. According to the *Tadhkirat*, Ahmad al-Tazarkini was specifically elected Pasha so that he might lead an army against Ahmad al-Khalifa and, indeed, after the campaign he was duly deposed. In the meantime, he defeated the Tilimsāni contender and, at the advice of al-Qā'id Sanbar (also San Ber) b. Mas'ūd al-Zaghari, he had him executed. This further intensified the enmity between the Tilimsānis, leaders of the Shīrāga division, and between the Tazarkinis and Zaghari, leaders of the Fāsi division.¹¹⁸

The Zaghari family was older than the Tazarkinis in importance but, owing to a confrontation with the scholars and, later, with the Tuaregs, it fast declined in prestige during the mid-eighteenth century. The first member of this family to become Pasha was Mas'ūd b. Maṣūr al-Zaghari who enjoyed a relatively long reign in 1637-43, but at a time of famine at Jenne and Timbuktu. Even before that, at the dismissal of al-Sa'di from the imamate at Jenne, Mas'ūd was already exercising the foremost influence among the Ruma from behind the scenes. It seems that he was one of several persons who secured the dismissal of Ahmad b. Ḥammu b. 'Ali al-Dara'i from the governorate of Jenne after the latter had committed the exceptional act of demoting an *imām*. During his reign, however, Maṣūr did not distinguish himself in any particular way and, after his deposition in the wake of opposition from Jenne, he spent the rest of his life in prison.¹¹⁹

The family was raised to an exceptionally high status by Mas'ūd's son, Maṣūr, nicknamed Sanbar, who paved the way for the accession of four sons to the Tibshāsha. As in most other cases, we know very little about Maṣūr's career other than his two reigns in 1688-89 and 1698-1700. We learn indirectly, however, that he married a daughter of Pasha Muḥammad b. Shaikh 'Ali al-Dara'i. This is mentioned incidentally to illustrate the fact that his eldest sons Mas'ūd (also sometimes confused with Maṣūr) and Muḥammad Buḥ were grandsons of a Pasha on their mother's side as well. The event must have been very significant, for under the biography of Mas'ūd, known as Pasha Kuri, we find an obscure reference to the fact that he was 'the son of the daughter of the King (*ibn bint al-mālik*)'.¹²⁰ The 'King' in this case, namely Muḥammad b. Shaikh 'Ali al-Dara'i, is given a very short biography in connection with his brief reign during 1682. On genealogical grounds, however, this Pasha seems to be none other than Muḥammad b. 'Ali al-Mubārak al-Dara'i whose biography shows him to have reigned previously in 1672-3.¹²¹ More importantly yet, Muḥammad was the first of a long series of Pashas from the Mubārak al-Dara'i family

who emerged dominant in Timbuktu during the second half of the eighteenth century.

The origins of the Dara'is, or Drāwis as they were collectively called in Timbuktu, are obscured by the existence of several families bearing this *nisba*. Thus, we know of a few Pashas who are distinguished from other Drāwis by their descent from 'Abdullāh al-A'mashī al-Dara'i. Even before the Moroccan conquest, we learn that a certain Ḥammu b. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Dara'i was arrested and imprisoned at Gao by Askia Ishāq after being accused of spying for al-Manṣūr. This same Ḥammu was later appointed *Amīn*, to represent al-Manṣūr's fiscal interests, but was discredited and imprisoned after Ahmad b. al-Ḥaddād accused him and Maḥmūd b. Zarqūn of dissipating the wealth plundered from the Aqīs. Later, a certain Ḥammu b. 'Ali al-Dara'i became Pasha in 1621, without however adopting the title. A son of Ḥammu, namely Ahmad, was the governor of Jenne who was responsible for dismissing the chronicler al-Sa'di from the imamate of Sankore there. This governor subsequently met a violent death at the hands of Mas'ūd b. Maṣūr al-Zaghari, and his kinsmen did not retain any influence. We learn of a series of Kabara Farma, however, including one who later became Pasha, who were descended from a certain Ibrāhīm Jami' al-Dara'i. These might somehow be related to the Mubārak al-Dara'is, for indeed the latter inherited their predominant position at Kabara.¹²²

Though other particulars are obscure, it seems certain that the Mubārak al-Dara'i family was raised to prominence by 'Ali and Maṣūr, sons of Mubārak, who occupied the governorships of Jenne and Gao, respectively, at one time or another in the mid-seventeenth century.¹²³ By the mid-eighteenth century, the sons and descendants of 'Ali had contributed no less than 12 Pashas, of whom one reigned as many as four times. The Tazarkinis contributed an even greater number of Pashas but they gave way in influence to the Dara'is, in the wake of stronger acceptance for the latter among scholars. By the late eighteenth century, and well into the nineteenth, the Dara'is enjoyed full mastery among the Ruma.

The growth of Ruma families of notables was accompanied by a series of transformations which changed the character of the Ruma state. One of the most immediate results of the process was a growing moderation between the Ruma notables themselves in their struggles over the Tibshāsha. For, while most of the early Pashas met a violent end after the *coups d'états* which overthrew them, from the mid-seventeenth century onwards the deposed Pashas increasingly retained their influence. The deposition of a Pasha came to be secured by a rather simple process, whereby a fragment of the army would go to him and declare publicly 'there is no well-being (or felicity - *ḥanā*)' under him'. It is peculiar that this phrase was chosen, in view of the legends mentioned above concerning Jami' al-Hanā'.¹²⁴ In any case, the system enabled the deposed Pashas from each family to regain

the post or, alternatively, to be eventually succeeded in their own lifetime by brothers and cousins and sometimes by nephews. This meant that the sources of power became more stable, being lodged in the family rather than in the individual. However, the same system soon generated an intense competition between the various families and their respective protégés among Ruma commoners. Thus, by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the struggles over the Tibshāsha were no longer between individual commanders but, rather, they often involved pitting whole sectors of the Ruma population against each other. At times, they took the form of virtual battles between quarters of the city or at least some of the wards of the Sarekeina and Jingerebir quarters. This trend had a paralysing effect upon commerce and, while contributing to the decline of Timbuktu, it gradually ushered in the end of the Ruma state.

Another development which accompanied the above transformation was the fact that direct taxation of the wealthy gradually superseded the imposts on the passage of goods as a source of revenue for the state. The system was almost certainly preferred by the scholars and notables for it gave them a voice in determining the amount and frequency of the taxation. The custom was that each Pasha, or at least those who commanded sufficient influence, would request a specific sum usually upon his accession. The sums requested varied greatly, though generally within the range of 1000–3000 *mithqāls*. Some Pashas requested even a lesser amount, the evidence in such cases suggesting that the notables were not predisposed to deliver a larger sum. In other cases the Pashas received less than they requested, and this seemingly had a bad reflection on their prestige. The *Tadhkirat* praises 'Abd al-Ghaffār b. Usāma b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Tazarkīnī for requesting a sum of 4000 *mithqāls* and for receiving that amount in full. According to our source: 'They gave it to him without discussion because of the prestige and gravity of stature which God gave him'.¹²⁵ This Pasha apparently distributed the whole sum equitably among the army, giving the various grades of officers 50–200 *mithqāls* each. It transpires, however, that the Tibshāsha had been vacant for two years previously at that time in 1748, and the later chronicle *Dhikr al-Wafayāt* barely mentions 'Abd al-Ghaffār's short reign.¹²⁶

The system of direct taxation, though it sustained the Ruma army for a long time, deteriorated in the face of patronage by Ruma notables during the eighteenth century. Many Pashas withheld most of the funds for themselves so that they might patronize only their followers. A practice also arose whereby the main Ruma families acted as protectors for foreign merchants who did not dispose of an independently strong position in Timbuktu. We learn, for example, that at one point in 1723 the Tazarkinis plundered a house belonging to the merchant Bel-Ḥasan Jahshi who was a protégé of the Dara'is. The merchant, it seems, had left the town and taken most of his possessions with him. Al-Qā'id Baḥaddu al-Dara'i had asked

him whether he should post some soldiers at the house to protect it but the latter replied: 'We are not leaving much in it, and I will post my slaves to guard it'. Strange as this might seem, the *Tadhkirat* nonetheless states that when the Tazarkinis entered the house 'they plundered great amounts from it, including cloths, salt and Leghbu'.¹²⁷ The story suggests that the Ruma families of notables were not wealthy at this juncture, and the same impression is created by other evidence. At the deposition of Mas'ūd b. Mansūr al-Zaghari, following a major upheaval to be discussed below, it was found that he had accumulated a fortune of 12 000 *mithqāls* at a time when no other Ruma owned more than 1000 *mithqāls*. In this case, however, we know that Mas'ūd drew part of his wealth from plunder, whereby his slave-troops even entered the houses of the Mujtahid family of scholars and the Aqits.¹²⁸ At his fall, his fortune seems to have been taken over by the Dara'is who helped overthrow him and this indeed, dating to 1719, may have invited the retaliation of the Tazarkinis, aided by the Zagharis, in the above-mentioned attack on the house of Bel-Ḥasan Jahshi. In the long run, plundering the merchants did not play an important role in sustaining the Ruma families for we know of only one additional case, at least insofar as merchants at Timbuktu are concerned, in which such plunder was practised. This took place in 1743 when the Dara'is attacked merchants arriving from the north at Abaradyu and plundered, among others, a merchant affiliated to the Tazarkinis.¹²⁹

Eventually, each Ruma family established an independent source of income and wealth. The Zagharis, beginning perhaps during Mansūr b. Mas'ūd's career (c. 1700), raised huge herds of cattle on the Niger at Yindibugh, the same place where the Ḥājj family of scholars were once strongly represented. It is possible that the original herds were plundered from the Tuareg, for the Zagharis contributed more than anybody else towards alienating the Kel Tadmekkat against the Ruma. The Tazarkinis, on the other hand, seem to have increasingly participated in the commerce of Jenne, where its members contributed a large number of governors. Finally, the Dara'is almost certainly owned many storage buildings both at Kabara and in the Sarekeina quarter. In both places, they and their Drāwi kinsmen and followers established numerical dominance.

The first few decades of the eighteenth century, and perhaps up to c. 1750, could be characterized as a period of showdown between the main Ruma families. The deterioration of the Ruma system began in 1716, a year when, according to the *Tadhkirat*, a number of innovations entered the life of Timbuktu. A virtual civil war broke out whereby the southern quarters of Timbuktu became the battlefield. A leading figure in the conflict was a certain 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥājj b. Sa'id al-'Amrāni, a commander who without belonging to any of the main Ruma families controlled the Tibshāsha more frequently than any other notable. By playing the main families against each other, it seems, he managed to reign fully seven times

during the period between 1713 and 1730. It was during his third reign that the Ruma civil war broke out and, lacking strong support from kinsmen, he brought Bambara troops, led by a certain Maru, to help sustain him in office. This action may have given rise to the stories later current in Morocco which claimed that Timbuktu fell under the sovereignty of one of the Bambara states.¹³⁰ More importantly, 'Abdullāh's action invited further outside intervention in Timbuktu, for Mas'ūd b. Maṣṣūr, who led the campaign for deposing the Pasha, brought the Tuareg Kel Tadmekkat to help him. According to the *Tadhkira*, this was the prelude for the later supremacy established by the Kel Tadmekkat over the Ruma.¹³¹

Unlike al-Sa'di, the author of the *Tadhkira* rarely reflects upon the details which he narrates. Accordingly, it is impossible to assess the various factors which contributed to the intensity of the conflict. All we know is that the opposing camps polarized virtually the whole city between supporters and opponents and the fighting took the form of exchanging sniper fire from rooftops. It seems that 'Abdullāh was established at Sarekeina while Mas'ūd and his followers were based in the Jingerebir quarter. Many people, it seems, died in the crossfire and the main market was deserted throughout the four months of fighting. The bulk of the army, including Tazarkinis and Dara'is, appeared to have remained neutral until, at the end, they abandoned Pasha 'Abdullāh. He was replaced by Mas'ūd b. Maṣṣūr, who apparently capitalized on a promise of restoring law and order but ended by alienating the scholars. They apparently showed weakness during the conflict, and this eventually encouraged Mas'ūd's men to commit outrages against some of them.¹³²

The reign of Mas'ūd b. Maṣṣūr b. Mas'ūd in 1716-19 witnessed the first and only serious case of conflict between Ruma and scholars since the banishment of the Aqits in 1593-4. It is most remarkable that the Pasha in question was one among very few Ruma who adopted the posture of scholars and yet was the one who most alienated the scholars. Before attaining the Tibshāsha, Mas'ūd 'spent some time studying under the *Fuqahā*' and he sat among the *talba* to acquire learning... claiming in those days that he has quit the Ruma and left their ways'. Subsequently, however, it seems that he began using his learning for the purpose of self-aggrandisement:

He talked good Arabic and was almost as eloquent in that language as some Arabs. He made friendship with the *'urban* and often visited their encampments and married among them. Whenever he saw a scholar he honored him highly and asked him about legal questions, and he acted in the same way whenever he saw a *tālib*. He would keep discoursing with him and would not leave him until he would find out his stature in learning and knowledge. If he found him unable to answer his queries he would laugh at him and take pride over him in knowledge.¹³³

This conduct was probably itself reprehensible to the scholars and perhaps especially to the Shurfa who often enjoyed the same stature as scholars, on

the basis of their acknowledged descent from the Prophet, without being particularly learned. And, as we shall see, the leaders of the upheaval against Mas'ūd, after a relatively long reign of over three years, devoted primarily on the Shurfa.

Mas'ūd b. Maṣṣūr (or simply Maṣṣūr, as he is sometimes called) came to the Tibshāsha from a position of exceptional strength in the wake of the above-mentioned civil war. His learning no doubt enhanced his image and, as already mentioned, he boasted of dual descent from Pashas on his father's and his mother's side. Moreover, it seems that he inherited from his father a body of client and slave-troops, identified as the Legha or Leghat of al-Qā'id Maṣṣūr, which served him as a personal army. As a result of this, he could act far more independently than other Pashas of the main Ruma families and the main troops. Indeed, his initial policy, which was probably encouraged by scholars, was systematically to reduce all the various factions of Ruma soldiers and officers and restore among them the strict discipline of a professional army. In a short time, it seems, he put a stop to the variety of avaricious acts which the soldiers had been accustomed to and prohibited all but the grandees (*al-kubarā'*) from participating in any types of commerce or escort of merchants. The text is somewhat ambiguous on this point but it states that he allowed the Ruma 'none of their habitual sources of income, except what came to them from him, by way of salaries, supplies and gifts'.¹³⁴ These policies would probably have been welcome to the civilian population, but while the Legha of Mas'ūd soon started plundering the humiliated Ruma soldiery, they eventually extended their outrages to civilians and even to the descendants of scholars.

The first outrage committed by Mas'ūd's personal troops implicitly alienated Sayyid Ahmad b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh b. Ahmad Maghia who, since 1698/9, had occupied the judgeship of Timbuktu. The Legha beat Alfa 'Abdullāh b. al-Imām Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad Wagarab and later apparently whipped the chief of the muleteers, the Arukoy Bilāl b. Arukoy Mūsa, though the latter's actions probably fell under the jurisdiction of the Judge. Whatever the case may be, a confrontation with the muleteers led one of them to flee and seek immunity at the tomb of Ahmad Maghia. The fugitive was nonetheless violently arrested, after some hesitation on the part of the Legha, and this naturally gave rise to rumours that divine punishment would be inflicted upon the Pasha. And, indeed, a few days later Mas'ūd fell down while riding and his horse dragged him for a distance. The humiliation, coupled with whatever agitation surrounded it, caused Mas'ūd not to venture much out of his home until the day of his actual overthrow.

In the meantime, the Legha became even more bold in their conduct and actually plundered houses which belonged to descendants of the still-venerated Aqits. One night they entered the house of Alfa 'Abdullāh

b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ahmad al-Mujtahid. The family discovered them and fought back, but an infant was killed in the incident. The climax took place when the Legha killed a Shurfa notable identified as Mūlāy Hāshim b. Mūlāy Ahmad Būdiyya. This caused the chief of the Shurfa, a certain Mūlāy 'Abdullāh b. Mūlāy Ḥamad b. Mūlāy Muḥammad, to take an oath that he would never again wear his cap, the symbol of the Shurfa, until the action was avenged. Mas'ūd was frightened at this point but he ordered one of his lesser slaves killed, a boy who had nothing to do with the murder. Mūlāy 'Abdullāh was not satisfied with this gesture and, after some skirmishes it seems, he forged an alliance with Bahaddu b. Yahya b. al-Mubārak al-Dara'i.

Then there arose a struggle between the Pasha and all the people of Timbuktu in their entirety. It has even been said that al-Qā'id Bahaddu sent someone up to the minaret of the Jazuli mosque to declare a *jihād* against him.¹³⁵

Mas'ūd fought back for a time, but when the Shurfa and the Drāwi Ruma besieged the ward of the Jingerebir quarter in which he lived, he made his escape via Kabara to Yindibugh. It is stated that the Shurfa gave Bahaddu 500 *mithqāls* for his support, but the Qā'id was probably willing to participate in a popular cause in any case. For one thing he was able to succeed Mas'ūd, though this was no great honour, for he had reigned twice previously. More importantly, Mas'ūd had given over to his Legha full control of Kabara, though the Drāwis had been predominant there. Now Bahaddu, in alliance with the Shurfa, proceeded to destroy the Legha systematically. Thirdly, and most importantly, the alliance of the Drāwis with the Shurfa and the scholars raised them above everybody else in prestige. Today, while the traditionalists consider the 'Uti the lowest-ranking among the Ruma, they hold the Drāwis to be the most noble.¹³⁶ And in practice, the Mubārak al-Dara'i family emerged predominant out of the internal struggles of the eighteenth century among the Ruma.

The decline of the Zagharis after this incident was a slow rather than a dramatic one and, in the long run, it was not as complete as that of the Tilimsānis. The resourceful Mas'ūd, reappearing under the name of Mansūr after his flight from Timbuktu, managed to rehabilitate himself by various means and, although he never again became Pasha, three of his younger brothers attained the post. It seems that after the flight of Mansūr the persecution of his followers was so intense that captured Legha from Timbuktu and Kabara were executed on a daily basis for over two months. The chief of the Legha, a certain Buru Kandi, sought refuge in the house of Bāba al-Mukhtār b. al-Qā'id Muḥammad of the Zankanu family, later to become Judge, but he was nonetheless seized and executed. This detail might suggest that there were differences between the Maghias and the Zankanus who alternated over the judgeship. Whatever the case may be, it seems that Mas'ūd feared reprisal against his immediate kinsmen and,

riding with Agashikh b. Karidanna, Chief of the Wulmdān, marched against Timbuktu:

The Ruma went out to them, along with the Shurfa and their slaves, accompanied by the men of Timbuktu, all of them, without exception that day. They drove them back and they, in turn, did not stand to them, but fell back towards the woods in flight.¹³⁷

Mansūr and his allies made another attempt at forcing an entry into the city from the north, at a later juncture, but they were driven back by Bahaddu and his army alone. In a third attack, however, Mas'ūd brought with him the Tuareg of Houssa and Gurma, along with the Ruma of Banba, besides presumably the Wulmdān. No attempt was made upon the city itself, but an escort accompanying the muleteers to Kabara was attacked and dispersed on arriving at the port, whereby many travellers were killed. Among the dead was al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad Baghayughu b. Gurdu, besides a few other notables and eleven Ruma. Subsequently, Agashikh rode with Mas'ūd to the tomb of Ahmad Maghia, already then outside the city, and sought a peaceful settlement. The Wulmdān chief was given a generous 3000 *mithqāls* by Bahaddu, clearly from funds left behind by Mas'ūd in his flight, and although Mas'ūd himself was not immediately repatriated, this turn of events later enabled him to enter Timbuktu at a time of strife between Dara'is and Tazarkinis. The brother of Mas'ūd subsequently stood between the two main warring factions and this enabled them to have several turns at the Tibshāsha.¹³⁸

One of the results of the internal struggles among the Ruma was the virtual destruction of the Tilimsāni family a decade or so after the upheavals involving Mas'ūd. The conflict in this case began building up in 1708 when, after his fourth reign, 'Abdullāh b. Nāsir b. 'Alī al-Tilimsāni was deposed. At that time, supporters of the Tilimsānis in the army once again closed the route to Jenne and, although 'Abdullāh was later enthroned once more, for one day, they resolved to revenge themselves for their exclusion from the Tibshāsha. The magnitude of the upheaval is apparent from the fact that the Tazarkinis mounted a force of over 700 *rumāt* (men carrying firearms), besides numerous auxiliary forces, against the sons of Ahmad al-Khalifa at Wiki. The latter had been stopping all boats headed towards Jenne and imposing their own taxation upon them. Moreover, they apparently destroyed some boats as well, and especially those belonging to kinsmen and associates of the Tazarkinis. By 1730, it seems, there was a general condemnation of the actions of the Tilimsānis and possibly even a *fatwa* accepted by the Qā'id and scholars that these actions amounted to 'closing the roads of Muslims'. In any case, it is recorded that the salt merchants supplied 40 of the 100 or so boats which carried the force to Wiki and that 300 of the *rumāt* who attacked the town were drawn from among the merchants or their clients.¹³⁹ The result was a total defeat of the Tilimsānis and, besides the fact that their town of Wiki was destroyed, most of their

notables were killed in the battle. The family henceforth essentially disappeared from the ranks of Ruma notables while the Tazarkinis, who were seen as having accomplished a great feat on behalf of 'Muslims', gained considerably in prestige. Their triumph was, indeed, one of the factors which helped restore the Zagharis, as both families were closely associated with the Fāsi division and, ultimately, with the Alfasin Kunda, in the Jingerebir quarter.

In the wake of the above events, almost all the 30 or so tenures of the Tibshāsha between 1730 and 1760 were held by Zagharis, Tazarkinis and Dara'is. With the passage of time, the leaders of these three families joined the ranks of urban notables, irrespective of whether or not they adopted a military career, while the rest of the Ruma, excepting a few representatives of the Shuṭūki family, were being assimilated among the commoners. The process was accelerated after 1737 when the Kel Tadmekkat finally broke the power of the Ruma. The origins of this conflict are obscured by the alignments and realignments between various Ruma and Tuareg factions. The Zaghari family, however, which first invited Tuareg intervention in Timbuktu, was also historically responsible for alienating the Kel Tadmekkat.

The Tadmekkat had settled in the Hausa area north of the Niger, between Timbuktu and Gao, during the mid-seventeenth century. They arrived in a humbled state and accepted Ruma sovereignty after being defeated and driven away by the Wulmdān who had split from them. By 1688, they might already have started challenging Ruma authority in the region of Gao, for Maṣūr al-Zaghari, father of Maṣ'ūd, is recorded to have conducted a campaign against the Tuareg in that region. The Pasha in that case 'killed their grandees, enslaved their youths, women and children, and drove their cattle away with him'.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, Maṣ'ūd also campaigned against the Tadmekkat in 1716/17 A.D., apparently after having already obtained their help, under the leadership of Alāl, against 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥājī b. Sa'ūd al-'Amrāni and his Bambara allies. The *Tadhkira* does not comment upon this peculiar turn of events but states that legends were already in circulation that Maṣ'ūd or one of his brothers would lead the main Ruma army against the Tadmekkat and would suffer utter defeat at their hands. In any case, it appears almost certain that the Tadmekkat, led by Alāl's brother Aghmir, determined to avenge themselves upon the Ruma generally and the Zagharis in particular. When Maṣ'ūd fled from the Shurfa and Bahaddu they did not come to his aid, and he therefore had to seek reinforcements from the perhaps more powerful but distant Wulmdān. The latter's ascendancy was more or less acknowledged throughout the Saharan fringes of the Niger bend area, as well as further north and west. Their presence in the region of Timbuktu, however, was restricted to the arrival of their chiefs upon their accession to power so that they may be formally invested by the Pashas.¹⁴¹ The arrival of Aghashikh in actual support of Maṣ'ūd, and especially his receipt of 3000 *mithqāls* from Bahaddu, threatened the Tadmekkat with a real Wulmdān predominance in the area.

On the accession of Muḥammad Buḥḥu b. Maṣūr al-Zaghari, in the wake of the Tazarkini triumph over the Tilimsānis, the Tadmekkat fell upon his kinsmen at Yindibugh and seized their cattle and clients.¹⁴² A period of extreme insecurity ensued under the following few Pashas, though al-Qāḍi Bāba al-Mukhtār arranged for a peace agreement with Aghmir. A drought was ravaging the area at this time and many Saharans had come to Timbuktu for relief from strife and famine. The climax took place in 1737 when Ḥammādi b. Maṣūr al-Zaghari, after a brief initial reign which witnessed a confrontation with the Tadmekkat, was again restored to the Tibshāsha. He sent out detachments to check the movements of Aghmir's clansmen and this angered the Saharan chieftain. He now assembled his entire confederation, including women and children weakened by the famine, and marched with them past Timbuktu. Most of the Ruma had already left the town by this time, and when the merchants came out with their clients to defend the northern outskirts, he counselled his clansmen to ride on. Later, on being contacted by a Kunta settler, he declared:

There has remained [in Timbuktu] today only the *Fuqaha*, the *Tulba*, the merchants, the poor and weak, and the women. We know all of them and we know that those who have gone out are men like us. They have come out in the open to challenge us and if they stand up to us we will meet them. Otherwise, we have nothing against the people of Timbuktu nor any purpose in the city itself except dealing with its thieves and warriors.¹⁴³

Ḥammādi committed the error of taking Aghmir fully up upon his challenge and ventured his forces into unfavourable Saharan terrain against the advice of his officers. The result was a total defeat for the Ruma at Tuwa in which 300 *rumāt* were killed, besides innumerable auxiliary (or lesser armed) forces. Among the dead were a number of Zaghari, Tazarkini and Shuṭūki notables, besides Ḥammādi himself, while the Dara'is also suffered appreciable losses. The decline of the Zaghari family shortly thereafter was one of the lesser consequences of this event. The main consequence was Tadmekkat control over the region of Timbuktu mitigated only by the continued theoretical (and potential) ascendancy of the Wulmdān and by the increasing influence of the Kunta on both confederations.¹⁴⁴

It is remarkable that even in the immediate aftermath of the defeat the internal Ruma struggles did not cease. It seems that the Dara'is had not put their full weight behind Ḥammādi al-Zaghari even though Aghmir had seemed to threaten the whole Ruma. The sons of Bahaddu b. Yahya, who had allied himself with the Shurfa and with the whole city in driving away Ḥammādi's brother Maṣ'ūd, had remained behind in Timbuktu, along with the scholars and merchants, and did not venture into the open against the Tadmekkat. Bahaddu's eldest son, Muḥammad, indeed acted conjointly with the Qāḍi, in arriving at a settlement with Aghmir after the battle. This

was apparently interpreted as some sort of treason by the survivors of the battle of Tuwa who assembled south of the Niger and dared not return to Timbuktu for months. When Muhammad b. Bahaddu went over to bring them back they actually killed him 'lest he should cause us all to perish'.¹⁴⁵ When his cousin 'Ali b. Hamad al-Jasim heard of this event, he marched against them but, for a reason which is not fully known, he could not venture any further than Kabara. Ultimately, it devolved upon none other than the reigning Askia al-Hajj to arrange a compromise and escort the fugitives back to Timbuktu. This chief was son of Askia Bakr b. Muhammad Šadiq b. Askia al-Hajj b. Muhammad Bankanu b. Muhammad al-Šadiq b. Askia Daud b. Askia al-Hajj Muhammad. Being preoccupied with listing the Pashas, the *Tadhkira* supplies very little information about the Askias who reigned at Timbuktu besides delineating their lineages. It is clear from this episode however, that, while they stayed away from the internal Ruma conflicts, they acquired a position of particular veneration and prestige. Askia al-Hajj's leadership of the defeated Ruma back to Timbuktu apparently became a memorable event in the annals of the city:

He rode before them out of the island after the conciliation which they reached amongst themselves at the hands of Askia al-Hajj himself. They walked after him in the manner of walking behind a Pasha with the flag of the Pasha, his drum and his armour beside him.¹⁴⁶

At Kabara, the procession was joined by 'Ali b. Hamad al-Jasim, and on arrival at Timbuktu a great lamentation arose over those who it was learned had died at Tuwa. By that time, the distinction between Songhai and Ruma, as between the two and the population generally, had gradually eroded owing to constant intermarriages between the various groups. The main families of scholars had, to an extent, retained a separate identity, and the same was true among the top leadership of Ruma and Songhai. Among the Songhai, two lineages descended from Askia Muhammad, besides a third descended from 'Umar Kumzāghu, probably retained notability status till the nineteenth century and contributed almost as many members to the overall body of notables as the Ruma.¹⁴⁷

It would be tedious to go into the details of the subsequent struggles between Dara'is and Tazarkinis over the Tibshasha. Suffice it to say that while we leave the two families intermittently in conflict at the completion of *Tadhkirat al-Nasyān* around 1750, their petty disputes are taken up in the opening pages of the later chronicle, *Dhikr al-Wafayāt*. In the meantime, the city remained during frequent interludes without a Pasha, and in 1741, one was briefly appointed simply to invest the visiting Ghamān b. Aghāshikh b. Karidanna, who had succeeded to the chieftaincy of the Wulmdān.¹⁴⁸ The Amenokals received presents on such occasions, and their visits reminded the local Kel Tadmekkat of their continued interest in at least a nominal Pashalik at Timbuktu. Locally, as well as

among the Kunta, the scholars too had evolved a vested interest in sustaining a small Ruma army, which would keep the Saharan arrivals in check during the caravan seasons.¹⁴⁹ The Dara'i and Tazarkini Pashas, for all their squabbles, somehow managed to keep remnants of the Marākushi and Fāsi divisions in the semblance of a disciplined urban-based force. The Songhai askiate, for its part, increasingly based itself outside the city, and may even have merged by the mid-eighteenth century with the chieftaincy at Dendi.¹⁵⁰ From *Dhikr al-Wafayāt* we learn that the Dara'is emerged predominant around 1766, under the leadership of Bahaddu b. Bābākr b. Alfa Mansūr b. Muḥammad b. 'Ali b. al-Mubārak al-Dara'i. This Ruma notable had first reigned in 1163 A.H. (1750 A.D.) but now he enjoyed the Tibshasha fully for nine years, and hence longer than any other Pasha, till his death in 1775. Subsequently, the Tibshasha remained vacant for 20 years, but it is clear that Bahaddu's sons, and especially Bābākr, were implicitly recognized as the chiefs of the Ruma and, theoretically, of Timbuktu. Bābākr was formally invested for one year in 1794 and, three decades later, the first European visitor, Caillié, gained the impression that his son 'Uthmān was 'King of Timbuktu'.¹⁵¹ It is interesting that the lineage which led the Dara'is was descended from Alfa Mansūr (also Mansūr), a previous Kahia rather than a Pasha, for his title suggests that he acquired some learning. Subscription to the Muslim tradition of scholarship, besides support of the Shurfa and scholars in 1719, may indeed have paved the way for the precedence of the Dara'is. We know at least that Alfa Mansūr's cousin, Aḥmad (Ḥammadi) b. Kabara Farna 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Ali b. al-Mubārak al-Dara'i, had been a literatus. The earliest extant copy of al-Maghili's answers to Askia Muḥammad was written by him in 1715.¹⁵²

The resurgence of scholars

It should be apparent from the above that a continuous though subtle influence on the part of scholars was a permanent feature of the Ruma regime. Indeed, immediately after the Moroccan conquest, the accession of a judge from the ancient Hājji family, followed by And-Agh-Muḥammad, affirmed the old order whereby the affairs of the civilian population would be discharged by the religio-legal administration dominated by scholar-notables. The accession of 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Aḥmad Maghia in 1651/2, later to be succeeded by other kinsmen, further asserted the independence of the civilian administration from the Pashas. For it implicitly honoured the memory of the fallen Aḥmad Maghia, whose martyrdom had come to symbolize the rejection of the Ruma regime in its initial brutal form. Moreover, traditionists tended to see the precedence given to the Maghias as partly shared by the Aqīs on basis of an undetermined kinship relationship between them. Today, the *imām* of

Sankore, Alfa Sālum, is believed to be descended from a lineage owing its ancestry to both families and to the Zankanus. The basis for this seems to be the fact that the earlier Zankanus were descended from a daughter of al-Qāḍī al-ʿAqīb b. Maḥmūd Aqīt, while the first Zankanu Judge, al-Qāḍī Muḥammad, was half-brother to al-Qāḍī Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdullāh b. Aḥmad Maghia, through a common mother.¹⁵³

The dynastic factor in the inheritance of the judgeship no doubt strengthened the hands of the judges and minimized the possibility of influence by the Pashas on their succession. Unfortunately, however, we do not have much by way of substantive detail concerning the careers and policies of the Maghia and Zankanu judges. We know that seven of these judges administered the civilian population for well over a century, at an average of some 18 years each, up to c. 1780. This means that each of them saw the rise and fall of numerous Pashas and, although they were themselves invested by the Pasha reigning at their accession, it is probable that they indirectly influenced the succession to the Tibshāsha at all times but the period of serious strife in the early eighteenth century. At that time, the judgeship was held by Sayyid Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdullāh b. Aḥmad Maghia who reigned for fully 38 years till death at the age of 94 in 1734/5. This old Judge is known only for mediation attempts between the various Ruma factions which, however, were mostly unsuccessful. In 1712, the Ruma deposed Mas'ūd b. Maṣūr, after a brief first reign by this Pasha, without even telling him of the fact. He suffered the humiliation of appearing at Mas'ūd's house for the customary recital of *Bukhārī* in Ramaḍān, later to be told that the man was no longer Pasha.¹⁵⁴ Soon afterwards, in 1714, he allowed a virtual trial to take place in his presence, presided over by the reigning Pasha Baḥaddū al-Darā'i, in which his was not the dominant voice. The occasion was a murder of a Drāwī and a Filāli in which four Shurfa were implicated. At the call of the Pasha:

Al-Qāḍī Sayyid Aḥmad b. al-Faqīh al-Qāḍī Ibrāhīm came with all the Fuqaha of the town excepting al-Faqīh Muḥammad Baghayughu [b. Gurdu] to the Qaṣba. The Pasha asked them what is to be done, and he repeated his question several times till he called each by name but they did not reply. . . . Then al-Imām al-Faqīh Sāliḥ b. al-Imām Aḥmad b. al-Imām Sa'ūd b. al-Imām Muḥammad Gidādu rose and said to the Pasha: 'Kill the [Shurfa culprits], all of them, because retaliation is more lawful than compensation in such a case, and the spilling of their blood is my responsibility'.¹⁵⁵

As it turned out, the Pasha executed only one of the implicated Shurfa, but the weakness of the *Qāḍī* in this instance further eroded the prestige of scholars and of Shurfa. This probably was one of the factors which encouraged the Legha of Pasha Mas'ūd to extend their excesses to scholars and Shurfa, as already mentioned above, in 1718-19. Indeed, it seems possible that al-Qāḍī Sayyid Aḥmad lost his universal recognition as Judge,

for we have one independent reference to Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Aḥmad al-Mujtahid as Judge.¹⁵⁶ We have already seen that the latter's kinsmen fought back the Legha of Maṣūr when they assaulted one of their houses. Moreover, we learn that the chief of the Legha in his flight from Shurfa and Drāwis sought refuge with Bāba al-Mukhtār b. Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār b. Muḥammad Zankanu, who was later to succeed Sayyid Aḥmad formally, rather than with the Judge himself. Altogether, it seems that Sayyid Aḥmad's indecisiveness during a long tenure of the judgeship, was partly responsible for the bloody dimensions of the internal Ruma struggles in the early eighteenth century.

Relying almost exclusively on records of the Tibshāsha, the anonymous author of *Tadhkirat al-Nayān*, born in 1700 as he tells us, left no appreciable details on any judges other than Sayyid Aḥmad and Bāba al-Mukhtār, who occupied the judgeship during most of the author's lifetime. Bāba al-Mukhtār proved a formidable *Qāḍī* who, judging by various indications, helped put a stop to the arrogance of the main Ruma families. He formally attained the judgeship in the year 1147 A.H. (November 1734), the same year in which the Ruma, led by Ḥammād b. Maṣūr al-Zaghari, were decimated by the Tadmekkat. We learn, incidentally, that the Judge had no sympathy for Ḥammād, and for none excepting perhaps the Darā'is among the other Ruma families. Ḥammād came to the Tibshāsha shortly after Bāba Mukhtār's formal assumption of the judgeship and he proceeded to enhance his image by presiding at a restoration of a section of the Jingerebir Mosque though such a privilege was a prerogative of *Qāḍīs*. The *Tadhkira* is ambiguous on this point, saying that the *Qāḍī* 'may have given him permission' (*sic*) to do so, but it goes on to record that the *Qāḍī* and two of the *imāms* absented themselves from the ceremony.¹⁵⁷ Besides amounting to a subtle power struggle, this probably gave a signal to the Tadmekkat chieftain, Aghmir, that the leadership of the scholars, and hence the civilian population, dissociated itself at this point from the leadership of the Ruma. As already mentioned above, the chieftain reciprocated by declaring that his warlike moves were strictly directed against the warrior Ruma.

The fact that the *Qāḍīs* commanded the allegiance of the entire civilian population is best illustrated by the events immediately following the defeat of Ḥammād's army at Tuwa. When news of the defeat first reached Timbuktu on the evening of the battle, as we read in the *Tadhkira*:

Al-Faqīh al-Qāḍī Bāba went out to the courtyard of the Sankore mosque and sent for the Shurfa and the main merchants to come to him. He said to them: 'What are we to do at this time, after what has happened, by way of arranging for ourselves, our children and our families tonight?' They answered: 'You are our Judge, our Faqīh and our Shaikh. Whatever you order us to do, we will obey.' He said to them: 'Go back to your houses and post guards [around the city] for the night, and we will look into the matter tomorrow morning'.¹⁵⁸

For all this, the author of the *Tadhkira*, apparently a lesser literatus who did not rank among the notables, leaves us only an indirect impression that the *Qāḍi* reached a settlement with Aghmir. This might further suggest that prior agreement existed between the two and had been reached through the good offices of 'Abd al-Mu'min b. Sayyid Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa b. Aḥmad b. Gāda al-Kunti. The ancestor in this case may be Aḥmad Agadda, the founder of the Ṭālibna lineage of scholars in Arwān.¹⁵⁹ However, even the patrilineal Wulmdān have a certain Aḥmad b. al-Adda in their ancestry and it is possible that the Kunta, whatever may be their origins, were matrilineally related to both Wulmdān and Arwān. Their influence on Timbuktu, which began at this time, or perhaps slightly earlier in the eighteenth century, was to become a very strong feature in the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁰

Al-Qāḍi Bāba al-Mukhtār did not put a final stop to the internal struggles among the Ruma, now mainly between Dara'is and Tazarkinis, but he certainly moderated the effects of these struggles. The rise of the Shurfa as an urban-based military power, coupled with the fact that the body of notables as a whole could marshal an army of their own if the need arose, contributed towards humbling the Ruma notables. By 1743, when a struggle broke out between Dara'is and Tazarkinis, they brought their case to be settled in court before the *Qāḍi*.¹⁶¹ This was a step towards bringing the whole population again, with the distinction between civilian and military gradually eroding, under the religio-legal authority of the Judge. Bāba al-Mukhtār was succeeded by 'Abdullāh Bābī b. Sayyid Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad Maghia, whose accession in 1750 is the very last event recorded in the *Tadhkira*. The source apparently compensated for its inadequacy on the careers of judges by including an extraordinarily elaborate praise of 'Abdullāh and his ancestors.¹⁶²

The system which evolved in Timbuktu by the end of the eighteenth century essentially survived intact up to the French conquest at the end of the nineteenth century. As known initially from the collection of obituaries in *Dhikr al-Wafayāt*, and later from European records and other sources, the system bore essential similarity to the period of Maghsharen Tuareg ascendancy in the mid-fifteenth century. Indeed, in one respect, it recalls the brief observations made by Ibn Baṭūta during his visit in the fourteenth century when Timbuktu was under Malian sovereignty. The traveller had occasion to observe that the native governor, bearing a Malian title, invested the chieftains of the nearby Saharan clans. The privilege at the time was probably shared by Timbuktu and Gao, and later under the Songhai empire, it became an exclusive right of the Askias. The Pashas at Timbuktu inherited that right, by first investing the chiefs of the Maghsharen, and possibly the Barābīsh, and after 1690 by investing the chiefs of the predominant Wulmdān. This system survived five centuries after Ibn Baṭūta until at least 1796, when Kāwī Ag-Amma Ag-Agashikh b.

Karidanna came for his ceremonial robes and horses like his great-grandfather.¹⁶³ It just so happened that Bābā b. Baḥaddu b. Bābākr b. Alfa Maṣṣūr al-Dara'i had been named Pasha two years previously. Though now deposed, he served as *de facto* chief of the Ruma for many years. Kāwī was therefore ceremoniously invested according to tradition and this preserved a much older sense of order in the relationships between the city and the Sahara. For reasons not entirely known, the Kel Tadmekkat often stayed beyond the reach of this theoretical order of relationships and, indeed, in 1770 when their chief Habīt was killed by the Ruma, they placed Timbuktu under a state of siege. Al-Mukhtār al-Kabīr al-Kunti interceded at this point and secured a peaceful settlement. Not long thereafter, a split began taking shape among the Tadmekkat themselves whereby eventually one of the two fractions, known as the Tingeregif, became predominant.¹⁶⁴ Under the leadership of Awwāb, in the mid-nineteenth century, the Tingeregif (still at times calling themselves Tadmekkat) were under the influence and direction of the Kunta while implicitly recognizing the superior power of the distant Wulmdān.¹⁶⁵ Towards the very end of the century, they helped the Kel Antasar in reducing the Kunta and, for a brief period, enjoyed an undetermined sort of sovereignty over Timbuktu.

The role of Pashas, or Kābias or Amirs as they came to be known, became very similar to that of the Timbuktu-Koy Muḥammad Naḍ, of the fifteenth century. The Dara'is were dominant among the sector of the population which still identified itself primarily as Ruma, and especially in the Sarekeina quarter. Other than that, however, their leader at any one point was looked upon by the notables as first among equals. Indeed, it is more than probable that the later Maghia and Zankanu judges stood before the Dara'i Pashas on many occasions in precedence. Certainly this was true of the Shurfa judges, beginning with 'Abd al-Qāḍir al-Sanūsī and Sān Sirfī, especially since the former combined the emirate with the judgeship at the rise of the Massina Caliphate of Hamdullāhi. In any case, it seems that the precedence given to the Amīr increasingly bore the same elements of veneration which extended to elders, scholars and judges. Even in the old days, the Pashas had increasingly been drawn from the ranks of middle-aged persons and elders. Now, notability became contingent upon seniority in terms of age and descent, besides a moderate level, at least, of learning. Beginning perhaps as early as 1760, and all the way up to 1894, rulership of the city essentially devolved upon the *Jamā'a* of Timbuktu, already discussed in Chapter 4, which was made up primarily of scholar-notables. This, of course, was a reversion to the older tradition which crystallized under Malian rule and the Maghsharen ascendancy and had been characteristic of the Songhai period as well.

Local sources of the nineteenth century are numerous, but their information is almost as fragmentary as that of the European sources. Altogether, the combined evidence suggests a proliferation of power and

influence among notables from the late eighteenth century onwards. Thus the Astrakhāni merchant Wargee, after visiting Timbuktu in 1821, left us a second-hand account which was written by his English interviewers at Cape Coast. Besides describing the houses belonging to a certain 'Sulṭān Muḥammad', Wargee observed that 'the houses of the rich people are built in the same style as that of the Sulṭān'. This already suggests that there was no 'royal palace' of any particular distinction at the time in Timbuktu. Furthermore, we read that:

Sulṭān Muḥammad is . . . independent, although not powerful; for he (Wargee) says, that his control does not extend much beyond Timbuktu itself. Muḥammad succeeded Sulṭān Abu Bakr, who, he heard, died about eight years ago, but he is ignorant who was his predecessor. Abu Bakr was extremely rich. Wargee remained at Timbuktu five weeks, during which time he lived in Sulṭān Muḥammad's house, and was treated by him with the greatest kindness.¹⁶⁶

We know, of course, that Abu Bakr (Bābakr b. Bahaddu b. Bābakr al-Dara'i) had become Pasha in 1794, but he simply had had no predecessor because the Tibshāsha had been vacant for two decades previously. The administration of Timbuktu had devolved primarily upon the Judge, Abkar (Abu Bakr) b. Bāba al-Mukhtār b. Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār b. Muḥammad Zankanu up to 1779/80. The latter's death apparently left the judgeship *de facto* in the hands of one or more of the Maghia and Zankanu scholars until one of them, identified only as al-'Āqib (possibly Muḥammad al-'Āqib), was formally invested at the accession of Pasha Bābakr. The *Qāḍi* probably outlived the Pasha who, as we know independently, died in 1230 A.H. (1814/15 A.D.), and it is remotely possible that the same al-Qāḍi al-'Āqib was Wargee's Sulṭān Muḥammad.¹⁶⁷ We know that Pasha Bābakr had a brother named Muḥammad who, however, died in 1792. He also had a son named 'Uthmān who was later believed King, several years after Wargee's visit, by Caillié. At this juncture, 'Uthmān may have acted as Kahia, theoretically a military post which by this time combined the prerogatives of the Timbuktu-Mundhu and Ashra' Mundhu of Songhai times. Wargee specifically associates Sulṭān Muḥammad with judicial functions and mentions no instrument of power other than a prison manned by a few guards during his visit to Timbuktu.¹⁶⁸

Alternatively and more probably, Sulṭān Muḥammad was none other than Sidi Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār al-Kabir b. Abu Bakr al-Kunti. Actual control of the area of Timbuktu, and certainly the management of its relations with the Tuareg, devolved primarily on the Kunta scholars well before Wargee's visit. The first Kunta intercession between the Tuareg and Timbuktu dates back to 1720 when a certain al-Shiddiq al-Kuntāwī was prominent in the area. It has been suggested by Marty that this Shiddiq was none other than Abu Bakr, grandfather of Sidi al-Mukhtār al-Kabir.¹⁶⁹ The Kunta enjoyed strong links with the learned Ke'el-Suq, besides the scholars

of Arwān and Walāta, and shared reference to Timbuktu scholars, especially the sons and grandsons of Muḥammad Gurdu, as their direct or ultimate masters. Al-Mukhtār al-Kabir consolidated a position which he partly inherited from his father and his other kinsmen whereby the Kunta virtually *managed* the affairs of the southern Sahara, besides strongly influencing some of the clans of the northern Sahara. They did so by establishing for themselves a middle position between the Ahoggār and the Wulmdān, the two greatest Tuareg confederations. The Ahoggār, far to the east and northeast, could not directly influence the state of affairs in the region of Timbuktu but they kept the Wulmdān in check and the latter, in turn, checked the power of the Tadmekkat and, later, of the dominant Tingereg fraction of the Tadmekkat. Al-Mukhtār al-Kabir al-Kunti strengthened this order of relationships, and extended it to other Tuareg, Barābish and Hassāni clans, so that by his death in 1811 recognition of the special role of the Kunta was universal. He did not, except in youth, reside at Timbuktu, but his son Sidi Muḥammad established himself at the city in 1234 A.H. (1818/19 A.D.) in a move mentioned by several sources which became celebrated.¹⁷⁰ Sidi Muḥammad no doubt immediately established an ascendancy over all other notables, though still as first among equals, until his death in 1241 A.H. (1825/26 A.D.).

Insofar as the nineteenth-century history of the Timbuktu area has already been researched, the greatest emphasis has been placed on the role of the Kunta.¹⁷¹ This is quite justified by the fact that the clan, or at least the lineage descended from al-Mukhtār al-Kabir, controlled the relations between Tuaregs and between the Jihādī state of Massina. Indeed, just before the death of Aḥmad al-Bakkā'i, grandson of Sidi Muḥammad, the Kunta established some sort of sovereignty over Massina which, though quite ephemeral, lasted till towards the end of the century. It would be impossible to cover adequately these events, which are the main focus of attention in the local sources, and we will therefore essentially restrict our discussion in this final section to the configurations of power and influence which pertained at Timbuktu itself.

The rise of the Jihādī state of Hamdullāhi in Massina was a momentous event for the scholars, or at least it was seen as such in retrospect, though it did not accomplish the desired hope for a stable state modelled after an idealized version of the Songhai empire. The Timbuktu scholars found favour in Aḥmadu Lobbo's claim to be the spiritual successor of Askia Muḥammad and, in the person of al-Mukhtār b. Ṭahir, a student of Sidi al-Mukhtār al-Kunti, they introduced this legend into the text of *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh*. Indeed, a son of Sān Sirfi, who does not fully identify himself, also incorporates into one of his compositions the claim that Askia Muḥammad had prophesied the future advent of Aḥmadu Lobbo, or at least a Mujaddid from the Sanqara Fulāni clan who would revive the faith and establish a virtuous Muslim state.¹⁷² The scholars of Timbuktu may have adhered to this constitutional legend throughout the sovereignty of Aḥmadu Lobbo

(1825/6–1844/5) but, especially during the reign of Ahmadu's grandson, Ahmad b. Ahmad, elements which were closely related to the emendations in *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh* were rejected.

Ahmadu Lobbo's triumph over the Ardo of Massina, and his control over Jenne and Massina by 1818, were welcomed by the scholars of Timbuktu, but the extension of his control to their city did not entirely go unchallenged. Our sources are somewhat reticent on the sequence of events, but it seems that the Jihādists seized the opportunity of the death of Sīdī Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār al-Kabīr in 1825/6 to request formal recognition of his sovereignty. He sent al-Amīr al-Ḥājj Mūdū, at the head of a large army, as an emissary to al-Qā'id 'Uthmān b. Bābakr who, as already suggested, had been Kahia in charge of a small force at Timbuktu. According to Sān Sirfī's son, who is our only source on the subject, Mūdū merely requested 'Uthmān to give up the use of the drum and other ceremonials and 'they entered under his *bi'a* and he agreed to give up the wax (candles?) and the drum'.¹⁷³ The visit of Caillié took place shortly after this but, in confusing the scholars for Moors and describing 'Osman' as king of the Kisoor, the French traveller hardly adds anything to our information. From elsewhere, we learn that several years later, in 1249 A.H. (1833/34 A.D.), 'Uthmān revoked the sovereignty of Massina and, supported by the Kel Tadmekkat, led a small Ruma army in a march against Hamdullāhi. The force was intercepted by a greater one and was decimated, but Timbuktu was spared direct rule through the intercession of Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Ṣaghīr, son of Sīdī Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār al-Kabīr, who established himself at Timbuktu a year later.¹⁷⁴ Ahmad al-Bakkā'i, who later succeeded al-Mukhtār al-Ṣaghīr to the leadership of the Kunta, and hence to precedence among the notables at Timbuktu, recalled this event simply as follows: 'I found that my brother had entered between [the Tuareg] and al-Shaikh Muḥammad Ahmad b. Ahmadu Lobbo and made peace between them for the benefit of the country and for the sake of its security'.¹⁷⁵

The resistance to Lobbo rule, followed by the 'conquest' of the city, did in fact result in some political realignment coupled with a measure of retaliation. For we read that a third of the property of each Ruma who participated in the campaign with the Tadmekkat was confiscated.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, there has survived a copy of a letter addressed to Ahmadu Lobbo by a scholar who pleads against sequestration of a third of the property of his own kinsmen.¹⁷⁷ This might suggest that the notables as a whole backed 'Uthmān and the Tadmekkat. We know, at least, that the Lobbos prohibited throughout the new state the use of tobacco, a commodity which had an important place in the commerce of Timbuktu. This and other legislation introduced by the Jihādists state were to remain a permanent bone of contention between Timbuktu and Hamdullāhi.

One action taken by Ahmadu Lobbo which had an effect on later

configurations of power was the appointment of 'Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad al-Sanūsī, a member of the Shurfa, as Qādi and Amir of Timbuktu. This took place immediately after the defeat and capture of 'Uthmān, who was taken to imprisonment for two and half years at Hamdullāhi. Subsequent events are rather obscure, but Sān Sirfī, who acted as *kātib* under 'Abd al-Qādir, continued to do so when the latter was deposed in favour of al-Qādi Alfa Sa'id b. Bāba Gurdu. 'Abd al-Qādir had studied under the Gurdus and, therefore, his dismissal in favour of Alfa Sa'id is not easily explained. However, Sān Sirfī outlived both, and emerged as the most powerful figure, closely allied to Ahmad al-Bakkā'i, in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁷⁸

The Lobbo dynasty sufficiently enforced a stable regime in the Niger bend area so that the commerce of Timbuktu became a major beneficiary. At a later time it was even claimed that the city attracted so many merchants and settlers that it was restored to its previous size under the Songhai.¹⁷⁹ This does not seem true, but a measure of growth is certainly evidenced by Barth's observations concerning the extensiveness of storage buildings at Kabara. In the late eighteenth century that port-town had been under constant threat of depredation by Tuaregs, and even the Sankore quarter at Timbuktu had to be walled in one case, after being evacuated in a conflict with the Tuareg.¹⁸⁰ Now, thanks partly to the Kunta, the Tadmekkat, under the leadership of Awwāb, were integrated as cattle producers into the economy of the region. The rise of a new Jihād led by Ḥājj 'Umar, who overthrew Ahmad b. Ahmad b. Ahmad Lobbo in 1862, plunged the region once again into a state of even more extreme strife.

Though a working relationship had secured unusual stability for Timbuktu throughout the period of Lobbo sovereignty, the extremely puritanical interpretation of Islam by the monarchs, and especially by the less-learned Ahmad III, was a cause of constant complaint on the part of Timbuktu scholars. The best known example of the tension surrounds the visit of Henry Barth whose stay at Timbuktu as a guest of al-Bakkā'i was opposed on the grounds that he was a Christian by Hamdullāhi. We have also already mentioned the prohibition of smoking tobacco, though the jurists of Timbuktu had long legalized it. A third complaint which al-Bakkā'i specifically lodged against the Lobbos was their insistence that Islam required women to be fully segregated from the men throughout the state. This ran counter to Tuareg-Hassani custom and, indeed, al-Mukhtār al-Kabīr had issued several *fatwas* against it.¹⁸¹

Unfortunately, the views of al-Bakkā'i are known mainly from a letter by Ahmadu III himself which he addressed to his commander Ghūru b. Sa'id. The most serious cause of complaint, as far as we can tell from the letter, is that the Lobbo state reduced many tribes and villages in their realms *de jure* to slave status. The emendations introduced into *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh* along with the claim that Ahmadu Lobbo was the long-awaited

twelfth true caliph, attributed the enslavement of many groups to historical precedent which was allegedly set by Askia Muhammad. The defective manuscript C of *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh*, which alone is a complete copy, mentions the groups by name and alludes by various means to their original alleged slave status. Yet, no document had survived from the time of Askia Muhammad, aside from al-Maghili's *Risāla*, other than the privilege already mentioned elsewhere in this study which was issued by the monarch in favour of Ahl Mūri Kuyra. That had clearly formed part of the original text of the *Fattāsh* and, in giving the impression that some groups were relegated to slave status, it served as a basis for further embroidery on the subject. Even the Ghābibi of Timbuktu, who were free though lower status traders and craftsmen, were assigned a slave origin. We do not know what were the motives of Ahmad al-Bakkā'i nor to what extent he reflected the views of other Timbuktu scholars, but he apparently objected that the non-Muslim villages and tribes in the Massina state were subject to the *Kharāj* (special tax in Muslim jurisprudence) but not to enslavement. Ahmadu III simply countered the argument by saying, 'We have owned them by the right of their ownership by Askia Muhammad, as we saw in *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh*'.¹⁸² It is almost certain that his appeal to the same groups enabled al-Hājj 'Umar to overthrow the Lobbos swiftly when he launched his *Jihād* against them.¹⁸³

So far as we can tell, the embroilment of Timbuktu against Hājj 'Umar in a struggle which thoroughly disrupted the entire commerce of the Niger bend area was primarily the result of the conflict between the Kunta-led Qādiriyya Sufi Tāriqa, on the one hand, and the Tijāniyya Tāriqa which was now being disseminated by the disciples of Hājj 'Umar. In ways which require to be researched further, the Qādiriyya brotherhood had gradually built strong links between scholars and literati throughout the southern Sahara, and now it was threatened by the rising force of the more closely knit Tijāniyya brotherhood. Another factor was an attempt by Hājj 'Umar, after the initial acceptance of his sovereignty, following his entry into Hāmdullāhi, to establish more direct rule than his predecessors had accomplished over Timbuktu. After having captured Ahmadu III and executed him, he demanded that the notables of Timbuktu, led by Bakkā'i himself and presumably San Sirfi, along with the chiefs of the Tuareg, or at least Awwāb, should present themselves at his court for a formal act of allegiance. Al-Bakkā'i responded by withdrawing from Timbuktu on the innocent plea that Hājj 'Umar's agents in the city were committing unlawful acts which he did not want to witness. This withdrawal, in fact, symbolically amounted to a Hijra such as preceded the *Jihād* of 'Uthmān Dan Fodio in Hausaland and Ahmadu Lobbo in Massina. San Sirfi then acted on behalf of all the notables in drafting a *bī'a* in favour of al-Bakkā'i should he wish to lead a struggle against Hājj 'Umar. At the same time, it seems, the kinsmen of the fallen Ahmadu III in Massina drafted a similar *bī'a*. After throwing Hājj 'Umar's agents out of the city, the combined forces of the Kunta and the Tuareg

Tadmekkat (now more commonly known by the name of the Tingeregif fraction) marched on Hāmdullāhi and brought down Hājj 'Umar.¹⁸⁴

Under the influence of later conciliation between the Tijāniyya and the Qādiriyya, the chroniclers have not left us much information concerning some important details of the conflict. From letters addressed to him by his supporters, we learn that Ahmad al-Bakkā'i was recognized as Muslim sovereign, including the title Commander of the Faithful, but the old scholar barely lived one year after the triumph to enjoy the honour.¹⁸⁵ The death of Hājj 'Umar, after his flight from besieged Hāmdullāhi, is surrounded by controversy and legend, while it seems possible that San Sirfi also met a violent death in the conflict.¹⁸⁶ To exonerate other Kunta, Tijāni accounts sometimes claim that most of Bakkā'i's warriors were Tuaregs of ill-repute, but it is obvious that Kunta clansmen stood foremost in the Massina campaigns and were principally allied to the Fulāni supporters of the fallen Lobbos rather than the Tuaregs. The Timbuktu citizenry no doubt also contributed a substantial portion of the warriors, and they continued to do so for two decades thereafter. Beginning even before the untimely death of al-Bakkā'i, the victors were divided amongst themselves between Lobbos and Kunta. Conflicts between the allies ensued and this enabled Hājj 'Umar's son, Ahmad Tijāni, to wrest some victories and, after a long and bitter struggle, to preserve a 'Umarian state based at Segu. The Kunta's claim to sovereignty, or at least to leadership in Massina, somehow survived until 1880 when the *bī'a* of 'Abidin b. Bakkā'i b. Muhammad al-Amin b. Sidi Muhammad b. al-Mukhtār al-Kabir was revoked in favour of the Lobbo Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abu Bakr.¹⁸⁷ By that time, the militant stance of the Kunta had eroded their special prestige, and in 1876/7 a struggle had escalated between them and the clerical Kel Antasar in the southern Sahara. The Tuaregs as a whole, it seems, led by the Tingeregif, supported the Antasar, with the result that the Kunta were defeated and some of their encampments were plundered.¹⁸⁸ It is possible that the Wulmdān, once again, checked the Tingeregif from pursuing their victory and that this preserved some of the influence of the Kunta. Visiting Timbuktu in 1880 in the wake of this conflict, Oscar Lenz still gave precedence to 'Abidin over the chief of the Tingeregif, Ed Fandagoumou, in listing the most important persons of the region. However, the traveller could not have gained an accurate picture of the new configurations of power, for he assigned to the Kahia of Timbuktu, whom he does not name, a position of unspecified special importance.¹⁸⁹ In practice, for the next 13 years till the French conquest, the Timbuktu region was essentially under the control of the Tingeregif who now came to be distinguished as the noble-warrior class (Imoshagh) among the Tuareg.

Current tradition holds somewhat vaguely that the last *amīrs* of Timbuktu belonged to the Mas'ūdu branch of the Ruma. The group is a rather large one which is believed to be descended from Mas'ūd b. Mansūr al-Zaghari,

the very first Pasha of that nomenclature who flourished at the time of the chronicler al-Sa'di in the mid-seventeenth century. No details are cited to confirm these traditions, however, nor are they supported by the few available sources. At best, the traditions suggest a fuller assimilation of a few Ruma and Songhai families, besides the Dara'is, into the ranks of urban notables. Haquard mentions that a certain Bourahim son of Amar was *Amir* of Timbuktu till his death in 1884. And, indeed, in the same year of 1884, the French at St. Louis received an embassy from Timbuktu accompanied by a letter from 'Kahia Ibrāhīm, Amir of Timbuktu', but the language of the letter, which is almost illiterate, is one of several indications that the ambassador, a certain al-Ḥājj b. Bābākr (Bakkā'i) al-Jaibar, did not enjoy strong credentials.¹⁹⁰ Haquard states that Ibrāhīm had been appointed by Ḥājj 'Umar (presumably c. 1862) but another French document which describes the same as Ould el Kahia or Sidi el Aya (*sic*) says that he was appointed by al-Bakkā'i.¹⁹¹ *Dhikr Waqāt* mentions the *Amir* of that time as a certain Sidi b. Ahmad 'Umar who died in 1283 A.H. (1866/67 A.D.).¹⁹² If Sidi was the honorific title of Ibrāhīm, as appears to be the case, then he could not have reigned more than a few years. His successors are not known by name, but it seems that two of his sons were recognized as *amirs*, one replacing the other briefly in 1893, as the French were approaching Timbuktu. The Drāwis, for their part, had an influential notable around the turn of the century in the person of Sān wuld al-Qā'idī Bābākr. According to one traditionist this was Sān b. al-Qā'id Bābākr b. al-Khalifa Sān b. al-Qā'id Muḥammad b. Bāhaddu al-Dara'i.¹⁹³ In a letter to the French by al-Qā'id Ahmad Bāba b. Abu'l-'Abbās, however, the same notable makes an appearance as Sān b. al-Qā'id Bābākr b. 'Alī b. Mas'ūd.¹⁹⁴ As in most cases, we are dealing here with a copy rather than the original text of the letter. Scribal errors cannot, therefore, be ruled out, but the combination of two lineages by the same man may suggest a putative kinship between the later Dara'is and Zagharis. In any case, it seems certain that other factors besides descent, and perhaps principally wealth and patronage, determined the criteria of precedence among the Songhai-Ruma. Holding the emirate or chieftaincy of Timbuktu, coupled with alternation over the chieftaincy of the main four quarters, afforded a basis for the non-learned to share honour and influence with the scholars.

Among the scholar-notables, the element of descent, though always reinforced by learning, remained important up to the present century. The ancient Gidādus, who dominated the imamate of the Main Mosque for over a century, essentially disappeared from the picture after the eighteenth century. Recollection of their importance, however, if not direct lineal descent, is exemplified by the nomenclature of Alfa Sa'id b. Gidādu. This scholar was widely enough respected throughout the city to be elected chief or *Amir* of Timbuktu during the crisis which was occasioned by the

French conquest. At that point, the scholars dissociated themselves and the city from the resistance which the French had met at Kabara and from the massacre of the Bonnier column at Tacoubao. As a result, the Tingeregi, who certainly led the attack, bore the brunt of French retaliation, but the scholar-notables continued to entertain good relations with Kunta, Barābish and Kel Antasar rebel clansmen for many years to come. Ultimately, with the outbreak of the First World War, the scholars issued a voluntary act of support and allegiance to the French. At that point, many towns in the Sudan were requested to do so, but in all cases the statement of support was in the form of a brief letter. The scholars of Timbuktu, on the other hand, drew up an elaborate jurisprudential treatise in which they almost surveyed the whole history of their city. They pointed to Moroccan support of the French as a factor favouring their own stance with the allies, not so much because they had once owed allegiance to Morocco, but rather because the 'Alawite dynasty was Sharfian in descent and because, according to *hadīth* which they cited, supreme leadership in Islam belonged to the Prophet's clan, Qurāish, and hence to the Shurfa. Further, as they might have explained with implicit reference to Askia Muḥammad's pilgrimage, leadership in the central lands of Islam did not devolve on the Ottomans but rather upon the Sharif of Mecca: 'We are bound by God and the Prophet to recognize the religious supremacy of the Sharif of Mecca. It is he who has the right in truth to command our obedience, and no one else has that right.' Since the Sharif at the time was concerting his efforts against Turkey with the Allies, the people of Timbuktu would support the French and the Allies also.¹⁹⁵

Among the families of scholar-notables which had historically been prominent, the Gurdus had been closely related to the Gidādus, as both were originally Fulāni. Indeed, according to current information, the Amir Alfa Sa'idu b. Gidādu was descended from the Gurdus at least on his mother's side. The Gurdus had contributed at least one Judge, in the early nineteenth century, and had inherited the imamate of Jingerebir. In turn, they passed on the parochial leadership of the city to in-laws under the following circumstance: 'Abd al-Rahmān (nicknamed Suyūti) b. al-Imām Bāba b. Ismā'il Yoro b. Muḥammad Gurdus married his daughter, Yaya, to Alfa Bānia b. 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad al-'Irāqi, a scion of an ancient family. The offspring of the union, Muḥammad Baghayughu, became ancestor of several *imāms*, the present-day *imām* of Jingerebir, Alfa Humal, being his fourth-generation descendant. In the early part of this century, the family had a prominent scholar-notable in the person of Imām Suyūti b. Muḥammad b. Imām Suyūti and Alfa Humal is his nephew.¹⁹⁶

We do not have much information concerning the Maghia and Zankanu scholars but their continued importance is evidenced from the elaborate nomenclature of their descendants as recorded in French sources. Very

prominent as a notable and as a teacher in the present century was Sidi Ahmad b. Bābir b. 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Bābir b. 'Abdullāh b. Ahmad Maghīa. Sidi Ahmad's father was *imām* of Sankore in his own time, and so was Ahmad's brother, Maḥmūd. The present-day *imām* of Sankore is Maḥmūd's son, the widely respected elder Alfa Sālum.¹⁹⁷ A contemporary of Sidi Ahmad, in the early part of this century *imām* of Sankore, was Saifu b. Bāba Mukhtār Aita b. 'Abdullāh b. Abu Bakr. Saifu's great-grandfather, Abu Bakr (also Abkar) was brother of the illustrious eighteenth-century Judge known to us above as Bāba al-Mukhtār b. Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār b. Muḥammad Zankanu.¹⁹⁸ The stability of the patriciate formed by scholar-notables is in no case as evident as in that of the Baghayughu Wangara scholars. Beginning with Muḥammad Baghayughu in the sixteenth century, the scholars of this family have uninterruptedly held the prestigious imamate of Sidi Yahya down to the present *imām*, Alfa Ahmad Banio b. al-Ḥasan b. Ahmad Baghayughu b. al-Imām Muṣṭafa. We know nothing about Ahmad Banio's great-grandfather, namely al-Imām Muṣṭafa, but the latter's brother, al-Imām Ibrāhīm, who died in 1258 A.H. (1842/3 A.D.) is known to us from a short composition by Sān Sirfi as the maternal uncle of this powerful Judge.¹⁹⁹ Finally, the chronicles confront us with a minor though indicative difficulty in outlining the sequence of events in the late nineteenth century.

For while they show that Sān Sirfi was succeeded by two sons to the judgeship, they do not specifically indicate the duration of their tenure of the post. That is because sometime after 1880, the Tingereḡif claimed formal sovereignty over Timbuktu, apparently after a disagreement with the Sirfis, and named their own Judge in the person of a certain Dūmma Koy (sometimes Duwana Koy) al-Madān. According to the information of Alfa Humal:

The Tuareg brought a man from the people of Buna named Alfa Douanakoy, but he did not really discharge the judgeship because people did not hold him in respect as he was not from among them. Subsequently, Ahmad Bāba, who was later to become Judge, helped him strengthen his position, and he married a sister of Ahmad Bāba. Then Ahmad Bāba himself became Judge under the French.²⁰⁰

Ahmad Bāba b. Abu'l-'Abbās b. Mūlāy 'Umar b. Zayyān is the only Shurfa notable in Timbuktu whose descent is traced for more than two or three generations. Otherwise, we know virtually nothing about the origin of the powerful Shurfa who in the eighteenth century helped overthrow Mas'ūd b. Mansūr. Likewise, we do not know the descent of al-Qāḍi 'Abd al-Qāḍir al-Sanūsī and Sān Sirfi. We are inclined to believe, however, that the Shurfa in Timbuktu, beginning with Bāba b. 'Umar and Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān, who fell in the wake of the Moroccan conquest, descended from the early sixteenth-century settler Ahmad al-Ṣaqālī. Certainly, Ahmad Bāba traced his descent in the male line to Ahmad al-Ṣaqālī though we

have no confirmation that the original settler had any offspring other than daughters.²⁰¹ Whatever the case may be, the Shurfa had always occupied an important position as some sort of middlemen between scholars and other non-learned notables. The rise of 'Abd al-Qāḍir and Sān Sirfi reflects a later stage whereby, under the influence of the Gurdu scholars especially, they increasingly joined the ranks of the learned. Ahmad Bāba was himself a scholar and he derived his prestige from close association with the Kunta, for we learn that, besides presumably studying under them, he participated in their campaigns in Massina.²⁰² This made him more acceptable than Douana Koy and it is probable that Sān Sirfi's sons gradually relinquished their judicial functions to him. By the arrival of the French, he was to all practical purposes already the Judge of Timbuktu, and his sons subsequently succeeded him.

Under the French regime, Ahmad Bāba was theoretically second in rank to Alfa Sa'īd b. Gurdu, a scholar who was elected *Amīr* of Timbuktu. After only a few years of colonial rule, however, the French observed a fact which had always been characteristic of Timbuktu: although the Judge did not necessarily enjoy ceremonial precedence, he was nonetheless effectively the man in control of the city. The Pasha or the Kāhīa, or later the *Amīr*, much like the Timbuktu Mundhu of Songhai times, was understood to be the highest post, at least insofar as part of the populace was concerned. Among the scholar-notables, however, the Judge embodied their views and saw to the implementation of their collective interests. In short, the primacy of the judgeship – along with the idea of collective leadership by the '*Jamā'a*', was a legacy of the earliest periods which exerted its influence on the organization of Timbuktu even after the establishment of French colonial rule.