THE ROLE OF SHAIKH SIDIYYA AND THE QADIRIYYA IN SOUTHERN MAURITANIA; AN HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

ABSTRACT

The first half of the 19th century in West Africa was a period of rapid islamization, marked by the establishment of four Islamic states which were created immediately before or during this period by mujāhidūn, and numerous religious settlements or zawayya which were established in areas not touched by the jihāds. These several movements appear to have had two common denominators: the objective of legal reform and strict application of the sharī'a, and the practice of the Qadiriyya Islamic brotherhood. This study sets out to examine the role of the Qadiriyya in the islamization of West Africa, but in a relatively 'controlled' context so as to isolate as much as possible the ideas and practices with which it was associated. The case study which is the subject of this study is the career of a Mauritanian shaikh, Sidiyya al-Kabir (d. 1868). This particular case study has been selected because of the wealth of Arabic manuscript documentation which is available in the family papers of the Shaikh's descendants and the similarities between his career and the careers of his teachers from the Kunta confederation, who

were the principal Qadiri shaikhs in West Africa from the mid-18th century until the end of the first quarter of the 19th century. Other reasons for selecting this case study are that Mauritanian history and the Moorish social structure are relatively unknown subjects and the chronological period of the study which terminates in 1868 pre-dates the competition which developed between the Qadiriyya and other _turuq_ in Mauritania. The main source of documentation for this study is the correspondence and literary works written by Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir, although French archival material, oral tradition and other Arabic texts have been used to supplement this manuscript source.

By way of introduction to the case study the first two chapters deal, respectively, with the geography and people of Shinqit, with particular reference to south-western Mauritania. The region is climatically in the Sahalian and pre-Saharan climatic zones and it has, for many centuries, been considered by the peoples of the western Sahara as among the most fertile pasturage areas in Shinqit. Natural resources include salt deposits, grain-producing lands in the Senegal River basin, and gum which is produced in the region and which has encouraged European commercial contacts with the Moors along the Senegal River and the Atlantic seaboard. The people of Shinqit, or Moors, are made up of a mixture of Berber, Arab and Sudani

peoples who, during the past milennium can be said to have emerged as a distinct physical type and cultural group. The society may be described as being dominantly segmentary in character, but it is not acephalous and there are several factors which are present that complicate the segmentary model. Among these are the hierarchical arrangement of social classes, the myth of hassani or warrior dominance over zawiyya (maraboutic) tribes, the cognatic relationships and the important social position of women in the society, and the presence of literacy which tends to preserve non-functional social relationships.

To place Shaikh Sidiyya in the context of other Islamic movements in West Africa in which the Qadiriyya was practised in the 19th century, chapter III takes up the foundation of the Qadiriyya and its spread into West Africa. The central theme in this is the role of the Kunta confederation, particularly the figures Shaikh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and his son Sidi Muhammad, to whom most of the _silāsil_ in the Qadiriyya in the 18th and early 19th century in West Africa can be traced. Two types of movements with which the Qadiriyya was associated at that time can be distinguished — 'militant' movements preaching _jihād_, and 'quietist' movements characterized by a single _'ālim_ settling, frequently as a stranger, in an area and creating a _zawiyya_ made up of his

students and offspring. These quietist movements have received somewhat less attention from historians than have the jihāds, yet they were probably of equal influence in the spread of Islam. Several types of quietist movements can be distinguished, including sudanis who have studied away from home and returned, putative Arabs who have come into the Sudan to propagate Islam, and southern Saharan shaikhs such as the Kuntas who have acted as teachers of the Sudanis. Shaikh Sidiyya is representative of this last type and a detailed examination of his career should shed light on this aspect of the quietist tradition in West African Islam as well as the practice of the Qadiriyya with which he was associated.

The date of Shaikh Sidiyya's birth is set as 1775; he was from the N'tishait fraction of the Awlad Ibiri tribe, which was a small undistinguished zawiyya unit in south-western Mauritania; the Shaikh's fraction was not among the descendants of Ibir, and because of this it had a low status within the tribe. From these relatively humble origins Shaikh Sidiyya rose to a position of 'king-maker' in southern Mauritanian politics and his tribe, by the time of his death in 1868, was one of the major socio-economic groupings in southern Mauritania. Chapters IV and V chronicle the Shaikh's career in the context of southern Mauritanian history, and chapter VI attempts to analyse the religious, economic and political

factors which contributed to the Shaikh's rise to influence.

Shaikh Sidiyya's early education was within his own tribe, but he began his higher education with a teacher from the Idaw 'Ali zawiyya tribe, and after seventeen (17) years there he continued his studies with a Djedjeba scholar. At age 35, after having completed his basic education in Arabic, fiqh and other Islamic sciences, Sidiyya travelled to the Azaouad region, near Timbouctou, where he continued his studies under Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti. Sidi al-Mukhtar died six months after Sidiyya's arrival in 1811, but he stayed on under Sidi al-Mukhtar's son and khalifa, Sidi Muhammad, until about 1826. During this period the Shaikh appears to have acted as a secretary and confidant to Sidi Muhammad. While he was in the Azaouad he also took up the study of tasawwuf and was initiated in the Qadiriyya. Upon returning to his home region of Trarza, Shaikh Sidiyya received the submission of his tribe and he appears to have immediately entered into political alliance with the dominant hassani lineage there. He also married into the lineage in which the leadership of the Awlad Ibiri had been and as its new temporal and spiritual leader he took steps to consolidate his tribe, both politically and geographically. Soon after returning home the Shaikh, with several of his disciples, left for Morocco on a book-buying and copying expedition, and he is said to have returned

from this visit in about 1835.

The Shaikh's early career in Trarza cannot be precisely dated, but the first major event in which he was involved appears to have been a blood money dispute involving his tribe, and his settlement of it gained for him a reputation as an equitable and generous man. He also became involved in hassani politics in the mid-19th century and between the years 1845 and his death in 1868 Shaikh Sidiyya was one of the dominant political figures in southern Mauritania. It will not be possible to describe all of the Shaikh's arbitrations and political settlements which contributed to his influence, but a summary of a series of these, as documented in his own correspondence and in French archival sources, has been mentioned. Shaikh Sidiyya is remembered today as having been the only figure to command wide, supra-tribal respect among the Moors in the 19th century prior to the appearance of Shaikh Ma' al-Anin at the end of the century.

Elements of Shaikh Sidiyya's religious influence, economic organisation and politics can be described, although the division of these spheres of his activities must be somewhat arbitrary. His administrative organisation can be traced in the secretaries, agents and ambassadors who he employed, and the Shaikh's religious influence can be judged from such things as the forms of address he used in correspondence, the tribes from which he drew his <u>murīdūn</u>, and the

murīdūn organisation itself. During Shaikh Sidiyya's career in Trarza his tribe was built up as a major economic unit in southern Mauritania and this was due in large part to a socio-economic group of talāmīdh which came to serve the Shaikh. Other factors in his economic position were the tax relief and income which was granted to him and his tribe because of his important religious position, and his efficient economic organisation. This involved the exploitation of salt deposits in Trarza on a large, commercial scale, gum trade and skillful livestock management. The Shaikh's politics may be characterized as non-involvement in the minor disputes of his day so as to be above them when there was need of a settlement, but this was within a commitment to the concept of hassani temporal authority in the form of 'amirs' in the regions of Mauritania. In terms of his own tribe, his unification of the Awlad Ibiri and creation of an effective sanctuary and his establishment of Boutilimit as an administrative centre with lines of communication between his permanent camp and Boutilimit are among his major accomplishments.

Two major themes reappear throughout the Shaikh's rise to influence -- the respect given to him as a faqīh and the authority he commanded as a sūfī shaikh -- and these themes are discussed in chapter VII in the context of the Moorish practice of jurisprudence and study of tasawwuf. The effectiveness of a mediator-jurist in Moorish society must be

appreciated not so much in terms of a faqīh's education, although this was important, as a reflection of the authority the society had granted to that faqīh. With this stated by way of introduction, the practice of fiqh in Shinqit can be described. In the 19th century the sharī'a in the Maliki madhhab was practised in a rigid, conservative tradition, but the use of al-maṣlaha, or the consideration of the public welfare, did frequently enter legal judgements. Shaikh Sidiyya's activities as a faqīh can be evaluated from his correspondence in legal matters -- the issues with which he dealt and the individuals to whom he wrote -- and from his library holdings and authors and texts employed in his fatāwā and ḥukm. The Shaikh's study of taṣawwuf can be similarly evaluated from his library and the references in his literary works relating to sufism. In this context some tentative conclusions can be made about his concept of the Qadiriyya ṭarīqa. There can be no doubt that the Islamic sciences of fiqh and taṣawwuf were complementary in Shaikh Sidiyya's study and practice of them and that the Qadiriyya, as an institution, was somewhat peripheral to the study of these sciences. What is more important, however, is the significance of these two sciences in the acquisition of authority in Moorish society; jurisprudence provided the basis of mediation, but effective mediation and political authority were the products of the powers attributed to the ṣūfī with the expertise of the faqīh.

In conclusion, the Qadiriyya appears to have played an important role in Shaikh Sidiyya's administration and economic system, in the form of the murīdūn who owed allegiance to the Shaikh and thus formed a supra-tribal body, but it was by no means crucial to Sidiyya's rise to influence in southern Mauritania. Of greater importance would seem to be the personality of the Shaikh and the complementary nature of fiqh and tasawwuf in the Moorish tradition of scholarship and in the context of a segmentary society where such a combination of roles of faqīh and sūfī shaikh made possible the acquisition of authority.

The implications of this case study, both in terms of Mauritanian history and the spread of the Qadiriyya in West Africa are several. From this account of mid-19th century politics in southern Mauritania it would appear that the French commercial interests had little direct influence upon the traditional political rivalries in the country, but the cumulative effect of French subsidies to the dominant hassani lineages in the area would seem to have been felt towards the end of the period we have considered, when amirs and amirates did begin to emerge with real political authority. In terms of the Qadiriyya, generally, in West Africa, the earlier noted phenomenon of its association with legal reform in movements throughout the Sudan in the 19th century would seem to be a reflection of the Kunta-Sidiyya type tradition of the study

and practice of fiqh and tasawwuf as complementary sciences. As such the Qadiriyya, which was associated with this approach to sufism, became a part of the religious 'ulamā'-establishment in much of West Africa, at least until the mid-19th century, and it bears no relation to the usual characterization of sūfī ṭuruq in the fringe areas of the Islamic world as the 'popular churches' of Islam.

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by
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PREFACE

This study began as an inquiry into the spread of the Qadiriyya in West Africa, initially intended as a M.A. thesis topic at the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ghana in 1963. My interest then, as it is now, was in the history of Islam in West Africa, largely because Islam was generally accompanied by the Arabic script, and a written language (whether it be Arabic or another tongue in Arabic script) in pre-literate societies offered one of the potentially most productive sources of documentation for research into the African past. Within the broad spectrum of Islam, the mystic orders or sūfī turuq were a logical point of departure for such a study because they were Islamic institutions which were not dependent upon state structures for their implementation, and, it was assumed, they were much more widespread and were more closely associated with the process of 'islamisation than were other Islamic institutions and practices such as the sharī'a, for example, or concepts of statehood, jihād or the kalifate. The turuq also presented a unique source of documentation in the silsila, or chain of authority, which each member of a brotherhood generally preserves, indicating who his teacher was, his teacher's teacher, and so on; in Ghana it was found that these silāsil were the most wide-spread type of extra-European historical document in that country. Having drawn these tentative conclusions in 1963 about the

advantages of a study of the Qadiriyya and the contribution which such a study might make to our understanding of West African history, the particular topic of the Qadiriyya was soon found to be too ambitious as a M.A. thesis and in its place was substituted an historical study of the Tijaniyya in Ghana.

However, the '<u>silsila</u>' of this present work may be traced directly to the research in Ghana, and much of my approach here may be attributed to corrections, revisions, and complete negations of my experience of working on the Tijaniyya there. In Ghana I was concerned with questions of when and where a <u>ṭarīqa</u> spread in a limited geographical area; here I have found myself increasingly preoccupied with questions of how and why the Qadiriyya was disseminated and what role it played in the Islam of the 18th and 19th centuries in West Africa.

Continuing down this '<u>silsila</u>' to the shaikhs without whose assistance this work would not have appeared in its present form, I owe a very great debt to my patron and friend Cheikh Harouna o/ Cheikh Sidia Baba and his family and tribe, the Awlad Ibiri. The majority of the Arabic manuscripts upon which this study has been based were made available to me by Cheikh Harouna, but this assistance, important as it has been was minimal when compared to his kindness, hospitality and friendship which he offered to myself and my family. I am also indebted to the Government of the Islamic Republic of

Mauritania for its hospitality, to the directors of Cultural Affairs in Mauritania while I was there, M. Mohammed o/ Daddah and M. Mohamed Aly Cherif, and the many scholars in Mauritania, notably Mokhtar ould Hamidoun and Mohammed ech-Chennafi, who were always ready to help with problems, real or imagined, which emerged during the period of my fieldwork in Mauritania. Similarly, M. Vincent Monteil played a crucial role in easing us into Mauritania in the first place, and without his personal interest it is doubtful whether the many preliminaries to fieldwork in Mauritania might have ever been resolved.

In Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, France and England there are numerous persons and institutions which have contributed to this work through their varying degrees of helpfulness, sympathy, or indifference, to all of whom I am, for very differing reasons, indebted. To mention a few of these, financial aid for this research in West Africa came from grants from Balliol College, the Bureau des Affaires Culturelles of the Mauritanian Government, and the Foreign Area Fellowship Program of the American Social Science Research Council. This last grant has also permitted a relatively unharassed year of writing up as well as financial support during twelve of the eighteen months' period of fieldwork. I will always be indebted to my mugaddim from the time I spent in Ghana, Thomas Hodgkin, for his encouragement and kindness and for his patience in reading through the typescript of the first draft

of this thesis. H.T. Norris, Ernest Gellner, and John Campbell have also taken time to read through or discuss sections of this work and their comments have been helpful. I am also indebted to my supervisor, Mr. Albert Hourani for his patience and encouragement and for having read through the drafts of this work. The ideas expressed below are, of course, not the responsibility of these individuals who have been kind enough to offer their comments, but rather they are my own.

Finally, in the best Moorish tradition I owe all of this to my wife, who has enjoyed the pleasures as well as suffered the pains of our nomadic life during the past five years which have included fieldwork in Mauritania and, most recently, typing the drafts and this version of the study. She has been my most constant but loyal critic, and without her aid I doubt very much whether this study would have been undertaken, much less completed.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.M.	Archives Marocaines.
Archives A.O.F.	Archives du gouvernement général de l'Afrique occidentale française.
Archives R.I.M.	Archives Nationale, République Islamique de Mauritanie.
B.C.E.H.S.A.O.F.	Bulletin, Comité d'Etudes historiques et scientifiques de l'Afrique occidentale française.
B.S.O.A.S.	Bulletin, School of Oriental and African Studies.
Bull. I.F.A.N.	Bulletin, Institut fondamental d'Afrique Noire (Dakar).
Cataloque	Harouna o/ Cheikh Sidia Baba, Cataloque of correspondence and literary works of Shaikh Sidiyya o/ al Mukhtar o/ al-Haiba.
C.H.E.A.M. Mémoire	Mémoire, Centre des Hautes Etudes d'Administration musulmane (Paris).
E.I. (1)	Encyclopedia of Islam (1st edition, Leyden).
E.I. (2)	Encyclopedia of Islam (2nd edition, Leyden).
G.A.L.	C. Brockelmann, Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur (Leyden, 1937-1949).
G.A.L. Suppl.	C. Brockelmann, Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur (Supplement-band).
I.A.S.	Institute of African Studies (Legon, Ghana).
J.A.H.	Journal of African History.

J.H.S.N.	Journal, Historical Society of Nigeria.
J.O.	Journal Officiel, Moniteur du Sénégal et Dépendances.
J.R.A.I.	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (London).
J.R.A.S.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (London).
J.S.A.	Journal de la Société des Africanistes.
Mémoire I.F.A.N.	Mémoire, Ecole Nationale de la France d'Outre Mer.
N.A.	Notes Africaines (Dakar).
R.B.C.A.D.	Research Bulletin, Centre of Arabic Documentation (Ibadan, Nigeria).
R.E.I.	Revue des Etudes Islamiques.
Ren. Col., B.C.A.F.	Renseignements Coloniaux, Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique Française.
R.M.M.	Revue du Monde Musulman.
T.T.	Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtār, al-Tarā'if wa talā'id bi karāmāt al-shaikhain al-wālida wa al-wālid.

GLOSSARY

The following French, Arabic and Hassaniyya words have been employed in the text and are terms with particular connotations in West African French or in Mauritanian Hassaniyya usage in the 19th century. Technical terms which do not appear in such standard references as C.H. Philips (ed.) Handbook of Oriental History (London, 1963) in the select glossary pp. 11-31 compiled by Professor Bernard Lewis or in other introductory surveys on the history or nature of Islam such as Alfred Guillaume's Islam (London, 1954) pp. 201-202, have also been included.

The abbreviations (Fr.), (Ar.) and (H) connotate the language in which these terms are used; combinations of these abbreviations indicate, first, the language of origin and secondly, the language in which the word is used.

'ādā (Ar.) custom.

aftout (H) plains.

agurram (pl. igurramen) a saint in the High Atlas in Morocco.

ajwabu (pl. ajwiba) (Ar.) answer; used here as a type of literature, written in response to questions put to the writer.

al-maṣlaḥa al-mursala (Ar.) the welfare of man.

'amal (Ar.) 'judicial practice'; a school of legal interpretation in Morocco which incorporates Berber custom into the sharī'a.

ard al-siba (H) land of dissidence, or country in which no central government authority is present to enforce regular taxation or the application of the shari'a.

arma a high social class in the city of Timbouctou; applied to the descendants of the Moroccan army which invaded Songhay in 1591.

aouker (H) plateaux formed by dunes.

auliyā': see wali.

baraka (Ar.) Divine benediction.

baisa (Fr/H) from the French 'pièce', meaning a piece of guinée cloth which measured approximately 15 metres in length.

bidān (Ar/H) literally 'whites'; used in reference to individuals of noble ancestry among the Moors.

bubu (H) the jalābiyya which is worn in Mauritania.

diyya (Ar.) blood money

dyula itinerant merchants in western Africa, a generic term which is generally associated with traders in the Mande linguistic areas.

escale (Fr.) a port of call on the Senegal River or Atlantic seabord during the early 19th century at which ships moored for the duration of a gum trading season.

fakhadh (Ar.) several firqān which recognise a common ancestor and/or are allied to firqān which are allied to a common ancestor; the French 'fraction'.

fraction (Fr.) see fakhadh

friq (pl. firqān) (Ar./H) a herding unit.

griot: see iggawen

guinée (Fr./H) cloth, initially named for its exclusive sale on the Gulf of Guinea; the most popular type of guinée in the mid-19th century in Mauritania was known as petite filature and was imported from India. Guinée was traded in pieces (baisa) and it became a sort of currency among the Moors.

haratine (H) a social grouping; freed slaves.

hassani (Ar./H) social grouping of descendants from Hassan of the Banu Ma'qil.

hassi (pl. hessiene) (H) deep wells.

hukm (Ar.) legal judgement.

ibādāt (Ar.) regulations in the sharī'a relating to worship.

Iggāwen (H) musicians, praise singers, wandering minstrals.

ijāza (pl. ijāzāt) (Ar.) certificate.

jamā'a (Ar.) council of elders.

lahma (H) see zenagha.

laptot (Fr.) irregular troops employed by the French government in Senegal, recruited from the areas under the jurisdiction of St. Louis; later applied to Senegalese soldiers, generally.

lauh (Ar.) small slate or board used by students for the memorization of Arabic texts; the Moorish lauh is distinguished from the slates used in Senegal by the presence of a small knob or handle at the bottom.

maître de lanque (Fr.) intermediary employed by merchants on the Senegal River for the negotiation and purchase of gum from the Moors.

m'allem (pl. m'allemīn) (H) smith.

marigot (Fr.) inland tributary or delta of a river which, in the dry seasons, is blocked off from the main channel and becomes a pool.

mu'alif (pl. mu'allifāt) (Ar.) literary work.

mu'āmalāt (Ar.) regulations in the sharī'a relating to social intercourse.

mujāhidūn (Ar.) those who wage holy war (jihād).

muqaddim (Ar.) one who is authorised to teach the wird and grant an ijāza of affiliation to a sūfi turuq.

N'dar (Wolof) St. Louis.

ogla (pl. ogol) (H) shallow well dug in the valleys between dunes and which is usually a few metres in depth.

palaber (Fr.) palaver, meeting for the resolution of differences.

qasida (pl. qasā'id) (Ar.) poem.

sharif (pl. shurfa) (Ar.) descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

silsila (pl. silāsil) (Ar.) chain of authority.

surba (Ar.) group, delegation.

tabī'at (Ar./H) a calf of two to three years of age, used as a currency in the settlement of diyya disputes.

tiab (H) 'converted' hassanis who have renounced their past life by the sword for a pacific life as the zawayya, guided in their actions by the Qur'ān.

tilmīdh (pl. talāmīdh) (Ar.) student; in Moorish society a socio-economic grouping of tributary status in the zawiyya tribes.

tulba (pl. tulub) (Ar./H) see zawiyya (Ar./H).

tyeddo (Pular) defined by Delefosse and Gaden (p. 31) as a name given by the Peuls of the Fouta Toro to people of negroid type or ancestory.

'umra (Ar./H) donation, generally of livestock, for a limited period of time.

'uqūbāt (Ar.) regulations in the sharī'a relating to penal law.

walī (Ar.) saint.

wasiyya (pl. wasāyyā) (Ar.) recommendation; used here as a type of literature.

wird (Ar.) litany.

zawiyya (Ar.) a religious establishment.

zawiyya (Ar./H) (pl. zawayya) a social group; a tribe which has chosen to live by the Book and has theoretically renounced the use of force in the settlement of disputes; sometimes known as tulba tribes.

zawiyya al-shums (Ar./H) zawiyya of the sun; a zawiyya tribe which is independent from hassani exactions or service.

zawiyya al-zill (Ar./H) zawiyya of the shade; a zawiyya tribe which pays hurma and/or serves a hassani tribe.

zenagha (H) a social grouping; tributaries to the hassani nobles; known in eastern Mauritania as lahma.

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is the Qadiriyya, an Islamic mystical (ṣūfī) 'way' or 'path' (ṭarīqa, pl. ṭuruq) in West Africa where, until the second quarter of the 19th century, it was the only ṭarīqa to be widely practised there. The Qadiriyya traces its origins to the life and practice of the Baghdad ṣūfī and jurist, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166). However, aside from introductory remarks, I have not attempted to survey in detail the rise and spread of the Qadiriyya, particularly across the numerous ethnic and linguistic frontiers of West Africa. Such a survey, valuable as it might be to the historian of Islam in West Africa, would leave unanswered the questions which must be central to understanding how and why the Qadiriyya was propagated and why it took the particular form which it did in this fringe area of the Islamic world. However, to depart from the general theme of the chronological spread of the Qadiriyya in West Africa for the particular theme of what the Qadiriyya represented to murīdūn, or what it came to be associated with in West African Islam, is to move from documented, historical 'fact' to interpretative, anthropological observation. I have called this 'an historical interpretation' partially because of my own limitations as an historian and partially because

of the historical nature of the subject itself, but I have relied heavily for this interpretation upon analytical tools which I have borrowed from anthropologists. One such borrowing is obvious in my approach to the subject.

This is a case study of the Qadiriyya in West Africa; I have concentrated upon a single shaikh and one social structure from which I will hope to illustrate and isolate certain themes and ideas which may have relevance to the propagation of the Qadiriyya in West Africa. This has been done for several reasons. The Qadiriyya, as indeed any religious institution, may be expected to have taken on particular attributes, roles or been associated with particular ideas in each social setting in which it was found. While the Qadiriyya for the most part remained associated with a religious and dominantly mystical set of ideas throughout West Africa in the 19th century, any examination of the tarīqa should move from the particular to the general if we are to understand and be able to evaluate the role which it played in 19th century West African Islam. It is for this reason that this study has been made in the context of a single social structure. Only with such a case study to build upon, might one begin to look further afield at the role which the Qadiriyya played across ethnic or cultural frontiers.

The social structure upon which this study is based is that of the Moors in southern Mauritania, and the period

with which we will be concerned is roughly 1830 to 1869. The people, geographical area and time-span have been selected for three reasons. The hero of this story, Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir (1775-1868), who was born and spent the later part of his career in southern Mauritania, was a disciple of the chief propagandists for the Qadiriyya in West Africa during the late 18th and early 19th centuries from a confederation of Moors known as the Kuntas. The Kuntas figure prominently among the dramatis personae who were responsible for the spread of the Qadiriyya throughout West Africa, particularly that group of the Kuntas which lived in the Azaouad region, north-east of Tombouctou. Indeed, these Azaouad Kuntas ought to have been the principal figures in this account of the Qadiriyya, but little documentation has yet come to light to explain their role in the propagation of the ṭarīqa, or to explain what would seem to be an allied phenomenon, the dramatic growth of the Kunta confederation at about the same time the Azaouad Kuntas were most actively engaged in propagating the Qadiriyya. Documentation from which such an explanation might be drawn, such as correspondence, contemporary chronicles and oral tradition, have either yet to be uncovered in large quantities or, in the case of oral tradition, are too far removed from the present day to be of substantial historical value. However, by concentrating upon

Shaikh Sidiyya who, like the Kuntas, was a Moor, one might expect to find a personality whose biography and writings reflect similar values and concepts to those of his Kunta masters, as might his propagation of the Qadiriyya. Also Shaikh Sidiyya is a more recent figure than are his Kunta teachers, and the oral and written documentation about him may be expected to be available in greater detail and accuracy than might be the case for the Kuntas.

Another reason for this case study is that the 19th century history of southern Mauritania, an area which had an important effect upon Islam in the areas to the south, has not been seriously examined by non-Moorish historians, and any details of this area and period might be of relevance to other historians of North Africa, particularly Morocco, and those areas of the west African Sudan which were in contact with the Moors. Finally, towards the end of the period with which we shall be dealing, another sūfī ṭarīqa, the Tijaniyya, was introduced into some of the areas in West Africa where the Qadiriyya was then practised, and from the mid-19th century there gradually evolved a competition between these two ṭuruq for spheres of influence. By terminating this study with the death of Shaikh Sidiyya's son and successor in 1869, the Qadiriyya can be presented largely in isolation from controversies between the Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya which

have characterized the recent history of these turuq in West Africa from the last half of the 19th century.

I am not a theologian or a jurist. We will touch upon matters of tasawwuf and fiqh below, in discussing Shaikh Sidiyya's studies and his concepts and practice of these two Islamic sciences, and I have cited references where detailed discussions of them are available. However, this is an historical study which has leaned more heavily upon the social sciences than the Islamic sciences, and until such an interpretative account as this has presented the social framework of the Qadiriyya in West Africa it was thought that a theological or literary analysis of Shaikh Sidiyya's writings would be somewhat premature.

This study is set out in seven chapters. They are divided into a geographical description of southern Mauritania, an ethnographical description of the Moors, a survey of the spread of the Qadiriyya in West Africa in the 19th century, a biographical sketch of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir in two chapters, an examination of elements of his religious, economic and political organisations, policies and spheres of influence, and an analysis of his writings on the themes of tasawwuf and the Maliki madhhab. Aside from the first two chapters, the theme throughout

is the role of the Qadiriyya in the career and thought of Shaikh Sidiyya with a view to defining, in conclusion, the implications which the Qadiriyya held in the Moorish social context. Hopefully, from this case study will emerge themes and hypotheses which may encourage further examinations of this important Islamic institution in other West African societies.

SOURCES

The greater part of the material which is drawn upon in this study was collected during eighteen months of research in Mauritania, Senegal and The Gambia, from January 1968 to July 1969, and it can be divided into four categories: Arabic manuscripts and books, government archival collections, travellers' accounts, and oral tradition.

Arabic Sources: The Cataloque

The main body of documentation comes from a collection of literary works and correspondence to and from the figure who is the subject of this study, Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir o/ al-Mukhtar o/ al-Naiba. This collection has been compiled

and parts of it meticulously recorded by the B'tishait archivist and historian Barouna o/ Cheikh Sidia Baba of Boutilimit and Tendouja, Mauritania. To Cheikh Barouna, who is a great-grandson of Sidiyya al-Kabir, I owe a very great debt of gratitude for his cooperation in allowing me to preserve much of this collection on microfilm. References have been made below to this collection by quoting a catalogue number for each particular item. This Catalogue is a compilation of, currently, 588 items which consist of rasā'il fatāwā, ijāzāt, mu'allifāt, ajwiba, etc. attributed to and received by Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir. The first 381 items were entered by Barouna o/ Cheikh in 1967 when he began listing the collection, and the subsequent 207 items are my own additions, either of items discovered since Barouna's first entries, or of pieces which, because of the sensitive nature of their contents in modern-day Mauritania, were omitted from the first entries.[1] Unfortunately, there is no particular order to the entries, although literary works tend to be grouped towards the beginning,[2] and correspondence, inter-

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1 Unfortunately, these items were frequently the pieces of the greatest interest; they include references or documentatior about tribes and individuals which may be considered today to be indiscrete or awkward. Such items may refer to blood debts, the lowly origins of an individual now considered to be a 'noble', disputes between individuals whose descendants today are on good terms, etc.

2 Catalogue, mss. nos. 1-134.

spaced with ijāzāt[1] and fatāwā[2] make up the greater part of the remainder of the Catalogue. Items which have been noted below with the prefix 'T' are along the first 134 entries in the Catalogue, but they have been assigned a temporary number until precise identification permits them to be numbered with their correct catalogue index number. This is a working, descriptive index of Shaikh Sidiyya's writings and it has been employed in references below only as a means of easily identifying items in a rather large and otherwise unstructured manuscript collection.

The nature of the material cited in the Catalogue will be described as particular items become relevant to the discussion and description below. However, I have drawn most heavily on the Shaikh's correspondence, which reflects to a higher degree of accuracy than any other documentation which I was able to find in Mauritania or in Government Archives, the exact nature of relationships, the impact of events and interpretations of particular concepts in the career and thought of Shaikh Sidiyya. Because of the wealth of documentation with which I was fortunate enough to work, it has been necessary to summarize frequently the contents of a particular letter of group of correspondence, and the extensive

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1 Ibid., mss. nos. 201A-207, 320-323 and 411-412.

2 Ibid., mss. nos. 67-68, 295-297, 303 and 324-332.

publication of texts must await further, detailed studies on particular aspects of the Shaikh's career or on southern Mauritanian history. Hopefully, the introduction of this manuscript material here in a survey form, will lend coherence and place in context any subsequent publication of specific items or sections of Shaikh Sidiyya's correspondence and literary works.

Other Arabic Sources

Additional Arabic documentation, generally as collaborating evidence for the Cataloque items, has, in the order of their importance, come from the personal library and works of Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, the Awlad Daimani historian, the A.O.F. Archives in Dakar, the personal libraries of individual marabouts in The Gambia and Senegal (e.g., Casamance), and the published texts of Mauritanian histories.

The specific items for which I am indebted to Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun are pages from his own historical study of southern Mauritania, with particular reference to the genealogies and origins of many of the tribes there, lists of principal murīdūn of the sūfī shaikhs in Mauritanian history, and the genealogical placement of numerous hassani personalities who appear in the texts of Shaikh Sidiyya's correspondence.

The A.O.F. Archives in Dakar also contains an important Arabic manuscript source in the form of letters received

from principally hassani chiefs in Mauritania. These are to be found in the dossiers 9-G-1,[1] 9-G-2[2] and 9-G-4[3] all of which contain correspondence received by the Governor from the 'kings' of Trarza and Brakna. Similar correspondence from a wider cross-section of chiefs is to be found in 3-B-63 and 3-B-64,[4] although these are letter-books and they only rarely contain entries of the Arabic texts. Finally, in 3-B-93 one finds a rich collection of "Correspondance avec les divers chefs Braknas 1851-1874". While this material must be used with caution, inasmuch as the French played a very ambiguous role in Mauritanian politics in this period, it nonetheless offers a useful insight into French-Moorish relations and it is particularly valuable as a source of documentation on how the Moors conceived of the French authorities at St. Louis.

Additional manuscripts have been volunteered to me by numerous marabouts in The Gambia and Senegal, particularly among the Diahanké and Manding shaikhs in the Casamance.

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1 Archives A.O.F., 9-G-1, "Correspondance du roi des Trarzas reçue par le Gouverneur du Sénégal, 1799-1864".

2 Ibid., 9-G-2, "Correspondance du roi des Trarzas reçue par le Gouverneur du Sénégal, 1865-1879".

3 Ibid., 9-G-4, "Correspondance du roi des Braknas reçue par le Gouverneur du Sénégal, 1817-1865".

4 Ibid., 3-B-63, "Correspondance avec les princes indigènes, 1837-1846"; and Ibid., 3-B-64, "Correspondance avec les princes indigènes, 1847-1850".

This material has been a useful source of perspective in evaluating the influence of Shaikh Sidiyya among the sudanis, but it has been only marginally drawn upon in the study below; where references are made to specific items which were communicated by these men, the full bibliographic reference has been made so as to avoid any confusion between this collection and the Boutilimit Cataloque.

Finally, I have drawn material from the published texts which relate to Mauritanian history, e.g., the al-Nasīṭ fī tarājim udabā' Shinqīṭ by Ahmad b. al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī (Cairo, 1961); Shiyam al-zawāyya by Muhammad b. Sa'īd al-Yadālī (d. 1753), Amr al-walī Naṣar al-Dīn and Kitāb al-Ansāb by Khalīd al-Daimānī which appear in Ismaël Hamet (ed. and tr.), Chroniques de la Mauritanie Sénégalaise; Naçer Eddine (Paris, 1911); and the numerous useful texts of poetry and prose which appear in R. Basset, Mission au Sénégal (Paris, 1913) and H.T. Norris, Shinqīṭī Folk Literature and Song (Oxford, 1968).

Archival Collections

The archives of the former Government of French West Africa (A.O.F.) lodged in Dakar have been drawn upon to supplement some themes and lacunae in the chronology when the Arabic sources have proved inadequate, and to document the role of French participation in southern Mauritanian politics in the mid-19th century. Owing to the nature of the

French intelligence system in southern Mauritania, which is explained below, the correspondence between French posts on the Senegal River and St. Louis does not reflect with any degree of accuracy the actual nature of internal power relationships in Mauritania in this period. As a result the A.O.F. Archives have been employed only marginally for the purpose of reconstructing a narrative of the political issues and relationships between the Moorish tribes. The A.O.F. Archives have, however, been a valuable source of information particularly on external economic affairs of southern Mauritania in the mid-19th century, and much of the interpretation of the historical narrative below would have been severely handicapped without the perspective which this material afforded.

Of less immediate value but of equal importance as a means of gaining perspective on the subject has been the archival collections at the Public Record Office in Bathurst, The Gambia for material on the English gum trade and Moors in The Gambia. Also the National Archives in Nouakchott, Mauritania has been a useful source of French administrative monographs dealing with southern Mauritania and notes on tribal organisation at the time this was being altered by the French administration. Similarly, monographs and local histories which were made available to me at the Centre des Hautes Etudes Administration musulmane (C.H.E.A.M.) and the Ecole Nationale de la France d'Outre Mer (E.N.F.O.M.), now

known as the Institut International d'Administration Publique (I.I.A.P.), have been useful sources of information. Finally the uncatalogued collection or archives at the Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (I.F.A.N.), Dakar has proved a particularly convenient source for French administrative reports and studies which otherwise appear to be only in government archives and are not readily available owing to their date or the nature of their contents.

Travellers

Travellers who saw or described southern Mauritania, contemporaneous with the period of this study, i.e., in the latter part of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century were S.M.X. Golberry,[1] G. Mollien,[2] R. Caillié,[3] M. du Château,[4]

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1 S.M.X. Golberry, Fragments d'un voyage en Afrique (Paris, 1802) and Travels in Africa (London, 1802); Golberry is particularly good for a description of the gum trade in the mid-1780's which, although it pre-dates the trade which is discussed in this study, may be assumed to hold true in the mid-19th century.

2 G. Mollien, Voyage dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique (Paris, 1820) and Voyages in the Interior of Africa (London, 1820). Although Mollien's journey took him principally to the sources of the Senegal and the Gambia Rivers, he does speak in chapter I about the 'Desert Moors'.

3 René Caillié, Journal d'un voyage à Temboctou et à Jenné dans l'Afrique centrale (Paris, 1830; reprinted Paris, 1965) and Travels through Central Africa to Timbuctoo (London, 1830). Caillié lived with the Djedjeba zawiyya tribe in Brakna from September 1824 until May 1825 in his first and abortive effort to cross to Tombouctou by way of the southern Sahara.

4 M. du Château, "Rapport au conseil d'administration d'une excursion chez les Braknas", Archives A.C.F., 1-C-19, dated 20.5.1848. This was a commercial mission, the object of

L. Panet,[1] H. Barth,[2] Capt. Vincent,[3] M. Bourrel,[4] Alioun Gal,[5]

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which was to settle the discord in Trarza and Brakna in 1840, and as such gives a summary of politics in these regions in that year.

1 Léopold Panet, "Relation d'un voyage du Sénégal à Soueira (Mogador)", Revue Coloniale, November-December 1850 and reprinted as Relation d'un Voyage du Sénégal au Maroc (Paris, 1968). Panet, who is the only one of the travellers to have intended to visit Boutilimit and receive Shaikh Sidiyya's baraka, unfortunately did not arrive there, but he has left behind a vivid account of the folk-legend which surrounded Sidiyya in 1845.

2 H. Barth, Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa (London, 1858). Although Barth's travels never took him into Mauritania, his description of eastern Moorish life and the political position of the Kunta tribe on the Niger Bend is extremely valuable.

3 Capitaine Vincent, "Voyage dans l'Adrar et Retour à Saint-Louis (1860)", Tour du Monde, 1861, pp. 49-65. Vincent, in fact, says little about Trarza, but his account of the Adrar and of Adrar-Tagant relations is useful.

4 M. Bourrel, "Voyage dans le pays des Maures Brakna", Revue maritime et coloniale, 1861, II, pp. 511-545, and III, pp. 18-77. Bourrel travelled in Brakna in the months of June-October 1860 under the protection of Sidi Ely, and has written perhaps the best ethnographic account of the Moors that is available.

5 Alioun Gal, in M. Regnault, Résumé des voyages d'exploration faits par ordre de Gouverneur du Sénégal en 1859, 1860 et 1861, avec des notes et une carte (Paris, 1864), who accompanied Bourrel's mission to Brakna in 1860 set off during that mission with the object of visiting Tombouctou and of then crossing to Algiers. These plans never materialised, but his account of commerce in the Hodh, including Oualata, Nema and their caravans is useful.

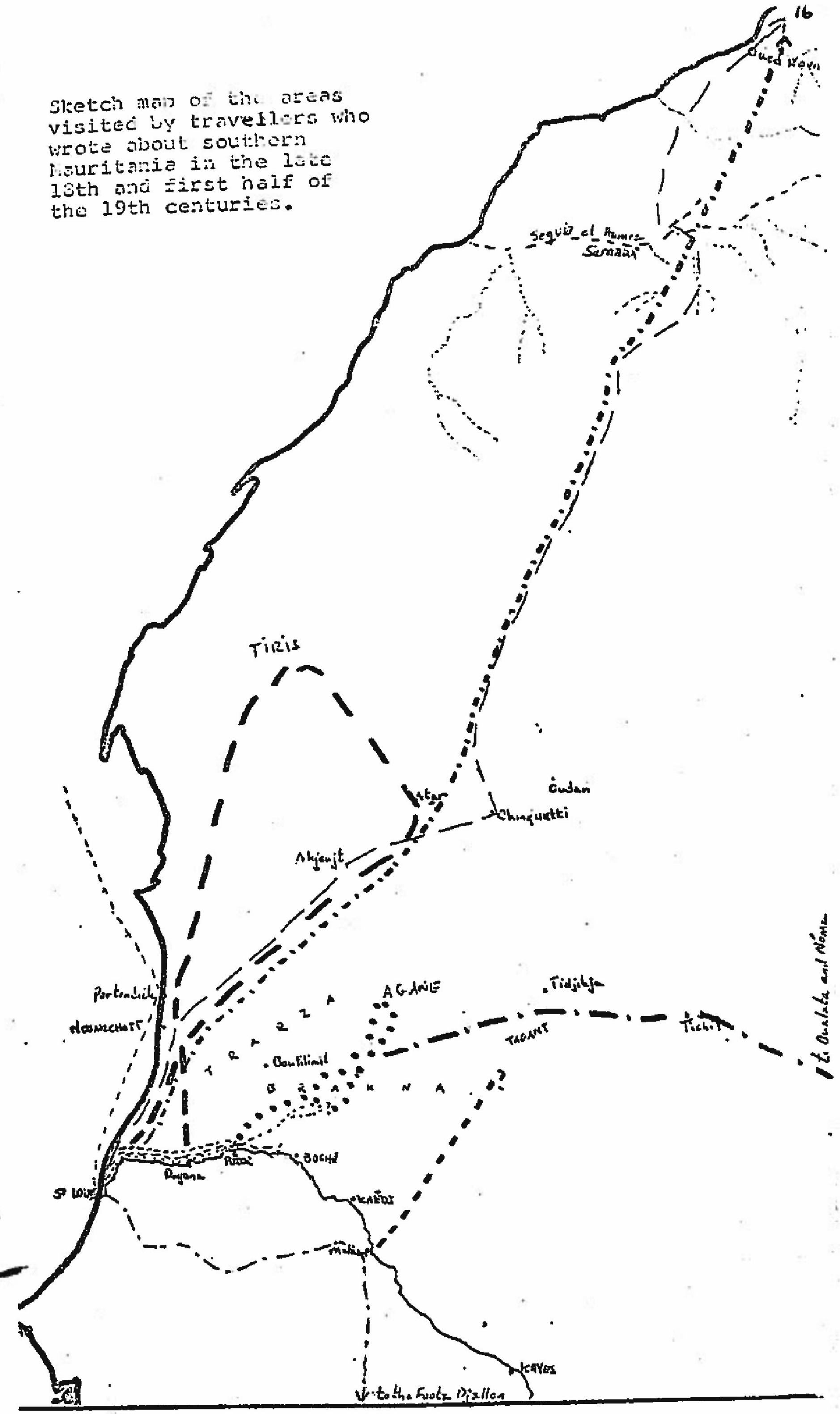
E. Mage[1] and Bou el-Moghdad.[2] The sketch-map below summarizes the geographical areas which these men visited. Seven of these figures were sponsored by the Government of the Colony of Senegal and four of them carried out their exploration between the years 1859 and 1864, under directives from Louis Faidherbe, and were part of a wider programme of exploration which included Bondou and the Fouta Djallon. The travels of these four men are summarized in M. Regnault's Résumé des voyages d'exploration faits par ordre de Gouverneur du Sénégal en 1859, 1860 et 1861, avec des notes et une carte (Paris, 1864), published as an extract from the Annuaire du Sénégal. Unfortunately, with the exception of Caillié and Barth, none of these figures spent any length of time among the Moors, and Barth's experience with the Kunta was

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1 E. Mage, "Voyage au Tagant", Revue algérienne et coloniale, July 1860, pp. 1-28. This is not to be confused with Mage's later voyage, in 1868, to Ségou. I have not seen this article, but judging from the dossier on the mission in the Archives A.O.F., 1-G-25, Mage never was allowed to get into Tagant owing to Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad's intransigeance and as a result the over-all value of the report's political commentary is likely to be slight.

2 Bou el-Moghdad, "Voyage entre Sénégal et Maroc", Revue maritime et coloniale, May 1861, pp. 477-494. Bou el-Moghdad was the principal government interpreter in St. Louis and he made this journey as the first stage of a hājj to Mecca which was underwritten by Faidherbe on the condition that he provide a geographical description of the area between St. Louis and Mogador. Unfortunately, on the first half of his journey Bou el-Moghdad retraced his steps (having accompanied Vincent the previous year), and little is recorded but the sites of his camps, although an interesting description of the Oued Noun does conclude the account.

Sketch map of the areas visited by travellers who wrote about southern Mauritania in the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries.



----- S.M.X. Golberry (1785-7)
-·-·- G. Mollien (1818)
·····R. Caillié (1824)
-·-·-M. du Chateau (1848)
——L. Panet (1848-9)
——— Capt. Vincent (1860)
·····M. Bourrel (1860)
—·—·— Alioun Sal (1860)
------E. Mage (1860)
——·····— Bou el-Moghdad (1860-1)

considerably to the east of the geographical area with which we are dealing. As a result, the commentary which these explorers have given us on political relations and events in Trarza and Brakna is invariably vague, misinformed, or subject to the particular prejudices of the tribe or individuals which served as a source of their information. However, for their descriptions of Moorish society we must be grateful, as many of their observations on the social structure in Mauritania, which are their most valuable contributions, remain today as the only ethnographic accounts of southern Mauritania available in print.

Oral Tradition

I have not relied heavily upon oral tradition as a form of documentation in this study, with the exception of certain descriptive information and volunteered commentary which came up in the course of conversations with Moors about specific aspects of Shaikh Sidiyya's life or mid-19th century tribal life in Mauritania. This has been done because of the wealth of written documentation which was available and which, it emerged in numerous interviews, was often the basis of oral accounts which were given to me when I inquired about specific subjects. Other problems in the extensive use of oral tradition, such as the ambiguities and variables which are always present in the use of such material in historical research, and the high degree of error one might expect when

enquiring after oral accounts of events 100 to 150 years removed from the speaker, explain my limited use of this type of source material. However, where written documentation was unavailable (particularly in The Gambia and Casamance), or stood in need of interpretation and explanation, oral accounts have been used to supplement other documentation. Where this has come through informal conversation I have cited the source as a 'communication' from the individual and have mentioned the approximate date; when formal interviews were held during which notes were taken or a tape recorder was employed, these have been cited as 'interviews' and the speaker and precise date have been noted.

Works, including the historical narratives of French administrators, written at the end of the 19th century or during the first two decades of this century have been employed with much the same caution mentioned above in reference to oral tradition. The greater part of these works which pertain to early and mid-19th century history in southern Mauritania appear to have been drawn from oral accounts which were given to the administrators by descendants of the historical figures who are mentioned, and very little collaborating evidence (aside from the equally highly flavoured French archival sources) was employed in their compilation. But these administrative studies must be appreciated, in this context, as recordings of largely oral tradition which is now two or three generations removed from the present writer,

and the relative accuracy of these accounts when other, collaborating evidence is not available is a not altogether satisfactory assumption which the historian must make. Among these studies the most significant are those of G. Poulet,[1] le Commandant Frèrejean[2] and P. Marty,[3] all of which must

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1 G. Poulet, Les Maures de l'Afrique Occidentale Française (Paris, 1904). This was the first effort to compile a comprehensive summary of the tribes in Trarza, Brakna, Tagant and Hodh, and Adrar -- their history, divisions, leaders and placement. As such it is largely inaccurate, but Poulet's ethnographic summary on pages 5-15 is good.

2 Le Commandant Frèrejean, La Région des Idouaich, Essai historique sommaire, fiscal et politique, sur les tribus de la Mauritanie Orientale, 1911. (see forthcoming edition by C. C. Stewart, Editions Berger-Levrault, Paris, 1970-1971). Frèrejean's study is an extremely valuable contribution to eastern Mauritanian history because much of his historical material was based upon oral tradition and private manuscript collections. The handwritten manuscript of this work, which has not yet appeared in print, was found in the Archives R.I.M. in a dossier number 10, labelled 'Tarts' (sic).

3 Paul Marty, "Etudes sur l'Islam Maure: Cheikh Sidia, Ida Ou Ali, Fadelia", R.M.M., XXXI, 1915-1916, pp. 1-219; Etudes sur l'Islam et les Tribus Maures; Les Brakna (Paris, 1921) in the Collection de la R.M.M.; and L'Emirate des Trarzas (Paris, 1919) in the same series. These studies appeared in R.M.M. before being published separately. The research for them was largely carried out by local administrators upon the request of the bureau of Muslum affairs, and as a result the quality of the accounts of the tribes and their histories varies considerably among the administrative cercles. The serious student is well advised to consult the original administrative reports and the background of the administrators whose work M. Marty drew upon. P. Marty's Brakna study appears to be based upon the monograph prepared by Lt. Duboc which is found in the Archives A.O.F., 5-D-40, item 31, "Notice historique sur les tribus du cercle du Brakna", dated 11.7.1908, and 9-G-40, items 51-181, which consist of paragraphs of Duboc's report, interspaced with occasional sentences written by P. Marty; this was evidently a working draft of Marty's Brakna book. His Trarza study drew heavily on the work by

also be praised as pioneering syntheses of Mauritanian history which have not yet been superseded by more recent studies.

TRANSLITERATION OF NAMES

Geographical names appear below as they do on maps issued by the Institut Géographique National (Dakar and Paris) inasmuch as most modern reference works which one might consult are likely to use those spellings, and they are the forms employed in Mauritania and French-speaking West Africa today. By the same rule, place-names which are mentioned from The Gambia or Nigeria are spelled in the form usually accepted

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Capitaine G. Gerhardt which appeared separately in R.M.M. (1911, XV, pp. 453-494) as "Section de Mauritanie", and information received from Shaikh Sidiyya Baba, Shaikh Saad Bu and 'Abdallah al-Atig. Marty's studies on Trarza and Brakna also owe a great debt to G. Poulet, I. Hamet and R. Basset (cited above).

I have used P. Marty's studies on Islam in other parts of French-speaking West Africa where, in the absence of direct contact with the areas or countries, I have had to rely upon his narratives and syntheses. These works are:-

"Les Mourides du Sénégal", R.M.M., XXV, 1913, pp. 3-165 and "Le Groupement de Bou Kounta", R.M.M., XXXI, 1915-1916, pp. 413-442, both of which appear in the volume Etudes sur l'Islam au Sénégal (Paris, 1917), 2 volumes: I, Les Personnes; II, Les doctrines et les institutions.

Etudes sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan (Paris, 1918-1921), 3 volumes: I, Les Kounta de l'Est, les Berabich, les Iquellad (1918-1919); II, La région de Tombouctou, Dienné, le Macina et dépendances (1920); III, Les tribus maures du Sahel et du Hodh (1921).

L'Islam en Guinée. Fouta Diallon (Paris, 1921) and in R.M.M., XXXIV, 1917-1918, pp. 68-124, XXXV, 1917-1918, pp. 285-233 and XXXVI, 1918-1919, pp. 160-227.

in those countries.

Tribal names and personal names of historical figures have been spelled wherever possible in the established form in which they appear in the french literature, though common names such as Muhammad, Ahmad, al-Mukhtar, etc. appear in the standard, Anglicized form of transliteration. This has been done as a compromise measure between the complicated transliteration system for Hasaniyya which has been devised by Mohammed ech-Chennafi and D. Cohen[1] which the non-linguist may find cumbersome, and the strict transliteration of Berberized personal and tribal names into classical Arabic, which would, for example, change the different names of M'hammad, Mhammad and Muhammad all to the last. Where a French pronunciation is obviously awkward, an Anglicized form appears, e.g., Idaw for the usual Idaou and Awlad for Oulad. The French abbreviation 'o/' has been retained for 'ould' (wuld), which is the Hassaniyya form of ibn (son). Where classical Arabic words or terms appear, these have been transliterated into a standard Anglicized form. Personal names of living persons appear in the form which they, themselves, use when transliterating their names into Roman script. The reader who might find these several styles of transliteration awkward will find in appendix I

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1 D. Cohen, Le dialecte arabe hassaniya de Mauritanie (Paris, 1963).

a listing of the personal and tribal names which appear most frequently in the text, transliterated into the standard form employed for Hassaniyya by H.T. Norris.[1]

GENEALOGIES

I have attempted to avoid unnecessary confusion by the frequent repetition of genealogies throughout the text, but genealogies are an essential fact of Mauritanian history. Several abbreviated genealogical tables have been included in the text so as to assist the reader in placing specific figures, and reference has been made in the notes to the placement of full genealogical charts in the appendices for specific tribes and fractions.

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1 H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, pp. xiii-xiv.

I. GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

> There is no doubt that this country [Shinqit] embraces a vast territory and famous towns and many oases and untrodden tracts of barren plain and desert in which no sand grouse has found its way. By and large it most closely resembles the Hijaz and Najd, not only as a country but also in its livestock and its plains and its crops, to the extent that a traveller in one could imagine himself to be in the other, so marked is the resemblance...
>
> Shaikh Muhammad al-Imam
> o/ al-Shaikh Ma' al-'Anin[1]

The geographical area which will be the focus of this study is southern Mauritania,[2] and the ethnic groups with which we will be concerned are those people known as the Moors, an appelation that at different times has been applied to peoples living in the areas from Spain to the Senegal River. However, the Moors who will be discussed below, the

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1 quoted in H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, p. 5-6.

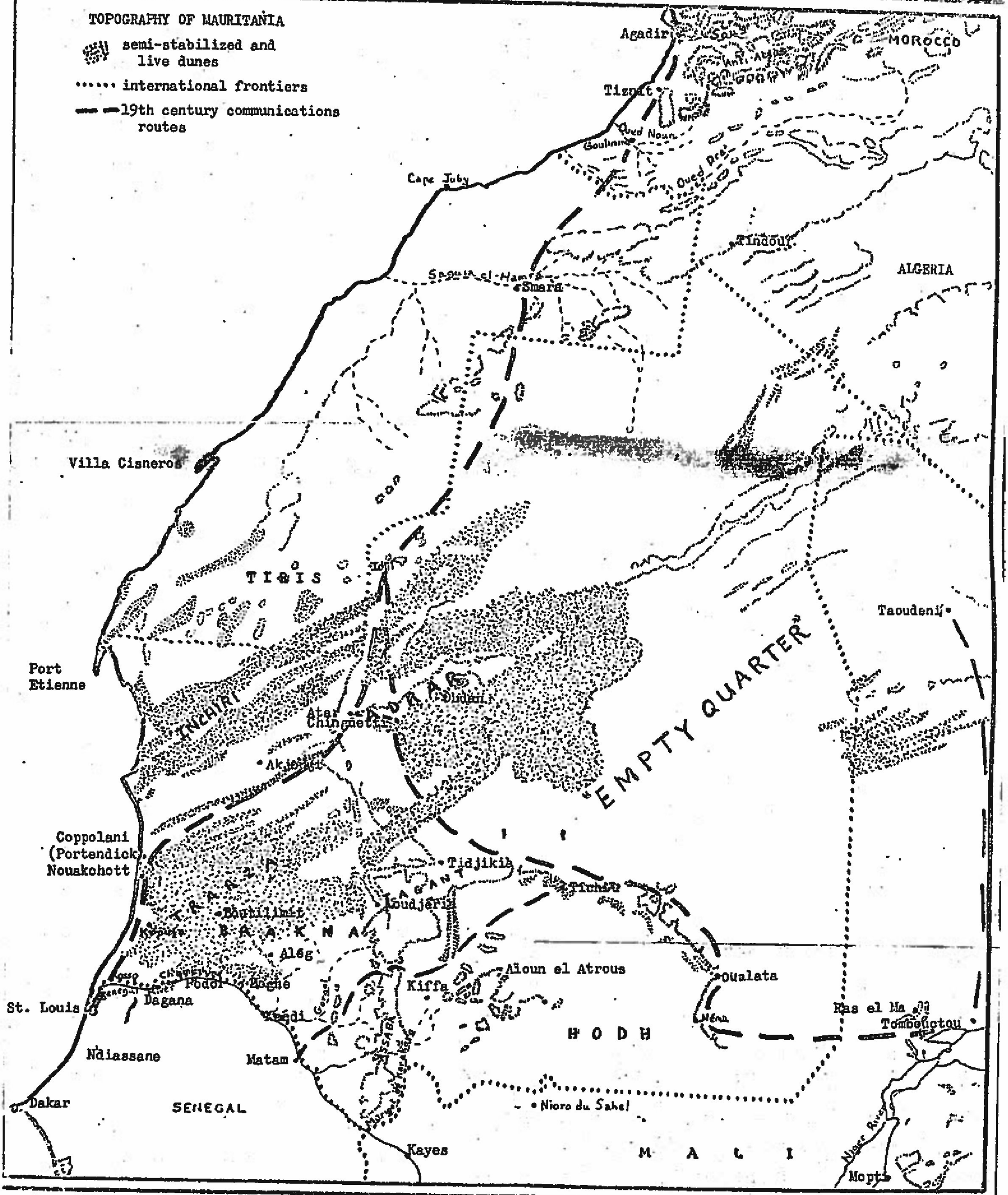
2 The peoples and the geographical area of southern Mauritania fall within the cultural and geographical entity known as Shinqit, a term which derives from the 13th (?) century city of Shinqit (see H.T. Norris, "The History of Shinqīṭ according to the Idaw 'Ali tradition", Bull. I.F.A.N., XXIV, B, 1962, p. 405) but it has long been employed in the Arab world to indicate the western Sahara and the people who live in or come from there. I have not employed Shinqit below in geographical descriptions because the area which is encompassed by that term stretches beyond Mauritania into Mali, Algeria and the Rio de Oro and in the Arabic literature it appears as a vague term of cultural and regional connotations more than as a definable geographical entity.

TOPOGRAPHY OF MAURITANIA

semi-stabilized and live dunes

international frontiers

19th century communications routes



Moors of Shinqit, do not figure prominently among the major ethnographic studies concerning North or West African peoples,[1] and research into the history and geography of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which encompasses thegreater part of Shinqit, has revealed only the bare outlines of a potentially very rich field of Mauritanian studies.[2] Therefore, by way of introduction to the country and in background to this study, this chapter will sketch something of the physical and human geography and natural resources of Mauritania, with especial reference to the south-western sections of the country, and

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1 Ethnographic works on the Moors or on particular tribes of them are of widely varying quality. See: E. Richet, "En Mauritanie. La Tribu maraboutique des Oulad-Biri", La Réforme Sociale, LXXVI, 1919, pp. 405-427; A.-B. Miské, "Une tribu maraboutique du Sahel. Les Ahel Barikalla", B.C.E.H.S.A.O. XX, 1937, pp. 482-506; P. Dubié, "La vie matérielle des Maures", in Mémoires de l'I.F.A.N., no. 23, Mélanges Ethnologiques (Dakar, 1953), pp. 113-252; J.C. Baroja, Estudios Saharianos (Madrid, 1955); and the numerous articles and notes by Albert Leriche which appeared in the Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N. from 1948 to 1956, and also in Notes Africaines. For a summary of these monographs on particular aspects of Moorish life, see "Albert Leriche, 1901-1957", Bull. I.F.A.N., XIX, B, 1957, pp. 335-336.

2 There have been valuable contributions made in Mauritanian studies recently in the fields of linguistics and literature by D. Cohen and H.T. Norris which have been mentioned above, and Charles Toupet at the University of Dakar has produced a series of important notes on the geography of the country. Among the current historical research in progress by Mauritanian scholars are studies by Mohammed ech-Chenaffi on the eastern Hodh region of Mauritania in the 17th and 18th centuries, by Mohammedhen o/ Babbah on Shurr Bubba, and by Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun whose general history of Mauritania is in progress. In addition to these studies there is the recent research into the Almoravids in Mauritania by P.F. de Moraes Farias, "The Almoravids: Some Questions Concerning the character of the movement during its periods of closest contact with the Western Sudan", Bull. I.F.A.N., XXIX, B, 1967, pp. 794-878.

this will be followed in the next chapter by a description of the people of Shinqit.

The regions of Mauritania have been succinctly described by H.T. Norris,[1] who, in turn, drew upon the two Arabic descriptions of the geography of the country in the Kitāb al-Wasīt[2] and in some of Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun's work which appears in translation in Précis sur la Mauritanie.[3] The general summary of the physical geography of Mauritania which follows can be found in greater detail in these sources and in the chapter devoted to geography and geology in A.G. Gerteiny's general work, Mauritania.[4]

Mauritania may be divided into four broad geographical areas. The southern-most area, known as the Chememma, consists of agricultural land and borders the Senegal River in the south-west of the country. The main southern area, in which the Chememma should be technically included is the Sahel, which is the name given by the Moors to the south of their country as well as the name of a climatic zone which encompasses much of the state of Senegal and southern Mauritania. The

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1 H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, pp. 6-10.

2 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, pp. 427-475.

3 Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, Précis sur la Mauritanie, Etudes Mauritaniennes, no. 4, Centre I.F.A.N. Mauritanie (St. Louis, 1952).

4 A.G. Gerteiny, Mauritania (London, 1967), pp. 3-10.

Sahel is characterized by stabilized and semi-stabilized dunes, scrub-trees, summer grasses and, in the richer, level areas it resembles the park-land savannah of the West African Sudanese belt. In the north the Sahel gradually merges with the less hospitable Sahara, made up of 'live' dunes and rocky land with a minimal amount of vegetation. The Atlantic seaboard consists of a narrow belt of land which divides the Sahara and Sahel from the ocean; rainfall averages tend to be less than in the Sahel and more than in the Sahara, but the absence of drinkable water makes the coastline one of the more inhospitable regions in Mauritania.[1]

Throughout the Sahara and Sahel the landscape is made up of a series of dunes, aligned in a north-east -- south-west pattern, which have great influence over nomadic and communications patterns, as do the rapidly decreasing annual precipitation rates as one moves from the Sahel or Atlantic coast into the Sahara itself. Three plateaux or chains of mountains punctuate this corrugated dune landscape in the Adrar, Tagant and Assaba, but aside from these and variations in the size of dunes or in their ability to shift, little else interrupts

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1 These geographical regions fall into four climatic zones: the Sahel, sub-Saharan and Saharan zones, the last two of which roughly fall within the Saharan region mentioned here, and the sub-Canary zone which stretches along the Atlantic coast. See Carte Agricole de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Présidence du Conseil, Direction de la documentation, carte no. 63, 1954.

the sunbaked, wind-whipped 'daliesque' countryside that makes up Mauritania. Small variations in the corrugated countryside do, of course, exist, and these are reflected in the place-names which are applied to occasional plains (aftout), plateaux formed by dunes (aouker), or hillocks and high dunes (nebka). The average temperature or precipitation levels for these regions in the western Sahara indicate little about the ecology of the area, as such factors are extremely variable from one year to the next.[1] For example, between May 1968 and June 1969, sections of the Sahel which normally receive an 'abundant' 100 ml. of rain had no rainfall at all, and the Tiris (in the Rio de Oro) was rich in herbage as the result of a rain received there from a Mediterranean storm.

The major geographical features, lines of communications and towns in Mauritania are indicated on a relief map which appears at the beginning of this chapter. Climatic zones in southern Mauritania are summarized on the map on p.37, which also indicates the agricultural zones in that area. Demographic maps appear on p.29 and p.30 for the contemporary nomadic and sedentary populations of Mauritania, and the nomadic population map also includes the administrative regions

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1 Statistical information relating to the climate in Mauritania and a more detailed description of the individual regions are available in Ch. Toupet, "Les grands traits de la République Islamique de Mauritanie", L'Information Géographique, 1962, pp. 47-56.

MAURITANIE

DOMAINE NOMADE

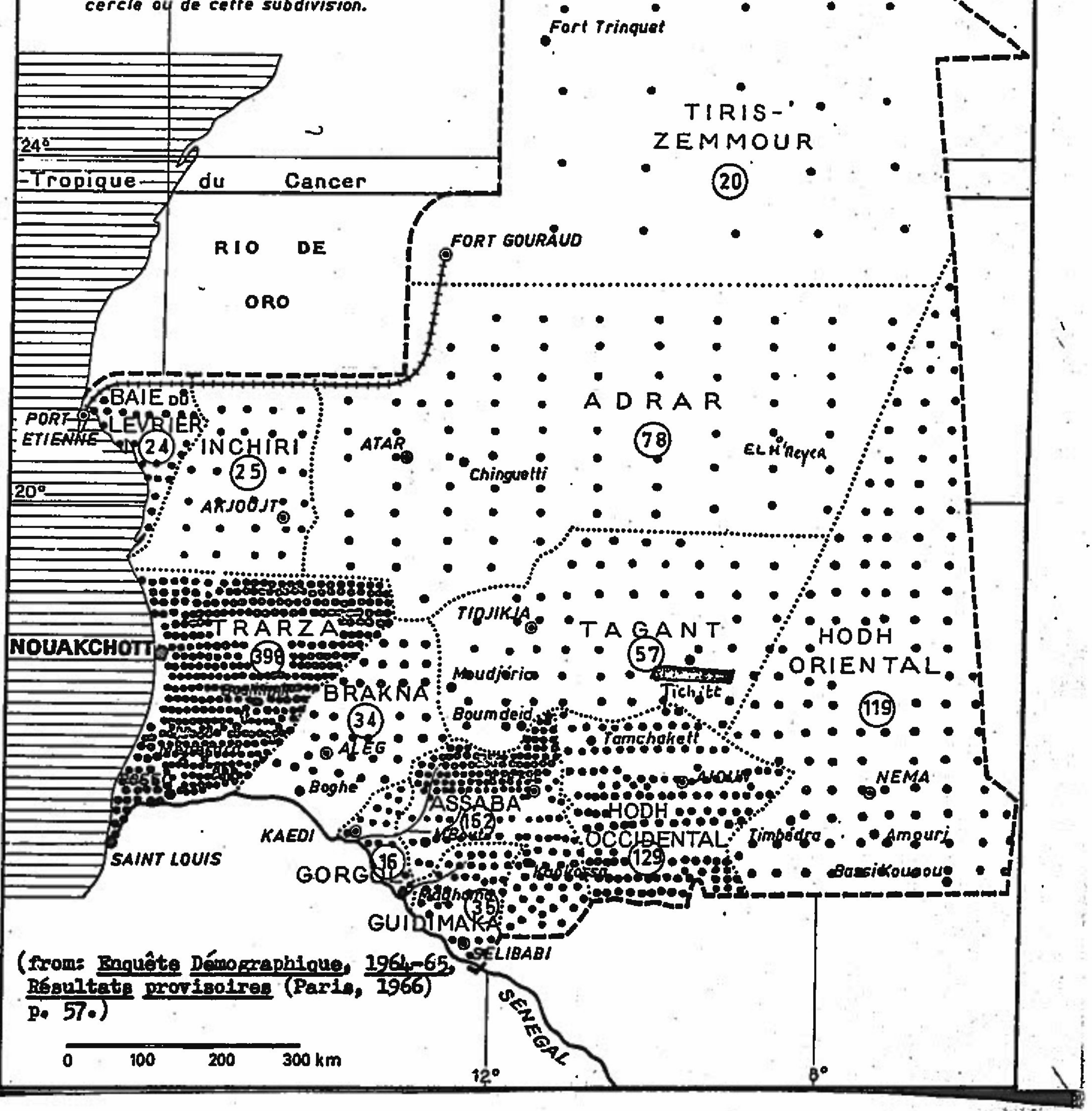
Limite de territoire

Limite de cercle

Limite de strate

(20) *Nombre de fakhads par cercle*

NOTE: Les points représentant des fakhads rattachées à un cercle ou à une subdivision sont également répartis à l'intérieur de ce cercle ou de cette subdivision.



(from: Enquête Démographique, 1964-65, Résultats provisoires (Paris, 1966) p. 57.)

DOMAINE SEDENTAIRE

TRARZA
39
BOUTILIMIT
BRAKNA
112
MOUDJERIA
TAGANT
ALEG
Mal
MEDERDRA
Dara
ROSSO
Tiékane
Dar el Barka
Podor
BOGHE
Fanaye
Dagana
MOUIT
ASSABA
36
Cascas
Bababe
Mbagne
Woloug
KAEDI
Lexeiba
GORGOL
98
M'BOUT
Soufa
Ndiago
SAINT-LOUIS
Koundel Reo
Matam
MAGHAMA
Dafor
Artemou
GUIDIMAKA
75
Testai
Bouly
Woumpou
SENEGAL R.
SELIBABI
Guidivol
Guemou
Bakel
Dipugoun Toutrou

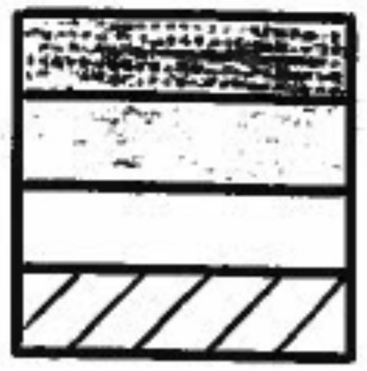
Limite de territoire
Limite de cercle
Chef-lieu de cercle
Chef-lieu de subdivision
Localité repère
Autre village
39 Nombre de villages par cercle

ECHELLE
km 0 20 40 60 80 100 km

(from: Enquête Démographique, 1964-64, Résultats provisoires (Paris, 1966), p. 43.)

31

CLIMATIC AND AGRICULTURAL ZONES IN SOUTHWESTERN MAURITANIA



Sub-Canary Climatic Zone

Sehelian Climatic Zone

Pre-Saharan Climatic Zone

area of the greatest concentration of gum trees

northern limit of gum trees

northern limit of millet cultivation

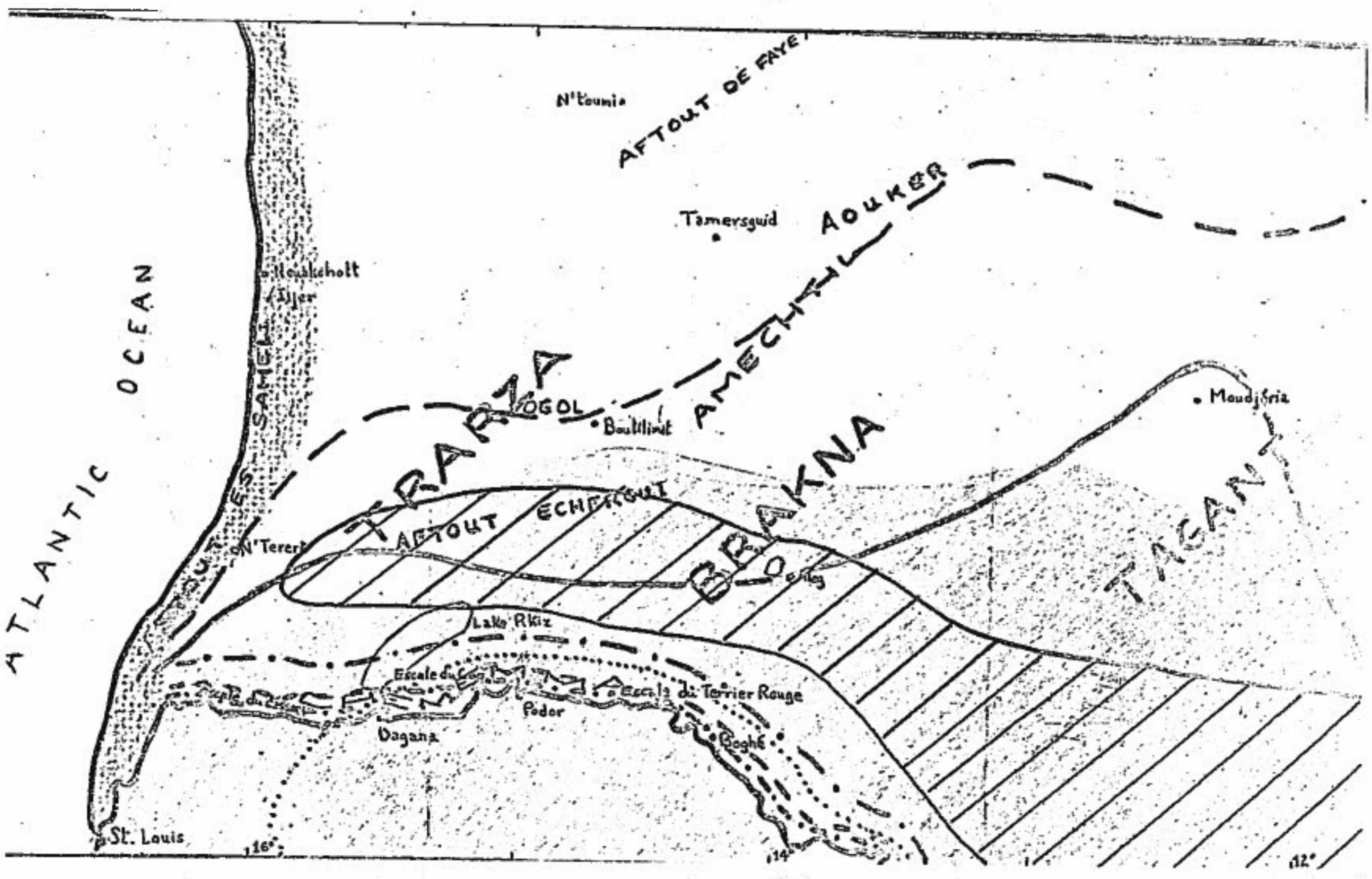
northern limit of groundnut cultivation

northern limit of corn cultivation

northern limit of cotton cultivation

southern limit for camels

(from: Carte Agricole de l'Afrique Occidentale Française,
Présidence du Conseil, Direction de la documentation, carte no. 63, 1954.)



which were employed by the Mauritanian government in the early years after independence. It will be noted that for the most part these regional names and the geographical areas which they designate correspond roughly to the historical regions which were known by the same names, especially those of Trarza, Brakna, Tagant and Adrar.

The 'land of milk and honey' in Mauritania is the area of the south-west, and in that area 53% of the population of Mauritania today can be found.[1] It is this area with which we will be concerned below, specifically those regions known as Trarza and Brakna. These regions are characterized by prolific vegetation in comparison to other regions of the country, particularly summer herbage, which is common throughout the Sahel, and a north-east -- south-west alignment of stabilized and semi-stabilized dunes which determine most of the nomadic patterns in the area. The only other

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1 Bulletin Statistique et Economique, no. 3, Service de la Stactistique, R.I.M., 1964, pp. 7-10. The density of population in this area is 4.5 inhabitants per square kilometre; the national average is .8 persons per square kilometre (Ibid., p. 10). See also the demographic maps of Mauritania reproduced above (pp. 29-30) which appeared in the Enquête Démographique 1964-1965, Résultats provisoires (Paris, 1966), prepared by the Société d'études pour le develpppement économique et social for the Ministère des Finances du Plan et de la Fonction Publique of Mauritania.

"Southern Mauritania", below, will be used in reference to that section of the country which lies to the south of a line extending due east of Nouakchott and particularly the southwest of the area so defined, i.e., the administrative districts of Trarza, Brakna, Assaba, Gorgol and Guidimaka.

features which interrupt this corrugated landscape[1] are Lake Aleg and Lake Rkiz, both of which vary, according to the season and the year, from actual pools of water to parched waste. The inhabitants of Trarza and Brakna may be broadly categorized as bidān,[2] as they call themselves, and sudanis. This latter group consist of tributaries of the bidān who are effectively incorporated within the Moorish social structure,[3] and Wolof or Toucouleur peoples whose cultural and historical traditions are, in the main, distinct from those of the Moors. The greater part of the sudanis live a sedentary life in the south of Trarza and Brakna, in close proximity to the Senegal River; the bidān are nomads or semi-nomads and most of them avoid the southernly section of Trarza and

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1 The semi-stabilized dunes which make up the corrugated landscape mentioned here are on the order of 200 or 300 feet high and they frequently have a kilometre or two between their bases. Thus it is only by air travel that one can easily appreciate this description.

2 Bidān is employed in the sense of 'the white race' and is essentially a social rather than a colour classification. Bidān status requires a genealogy claiming Arab descent which is socially acceptable, i.e., which is credible to other bidānis; as a result of intermarriage with sudanis there are numerous, very dark-complected bidan personalities in Mauritania, but their status as bidan is not challenged as a result of their colour.

3 'Moor' and 'Moorish social structure' will be used below to describe those people in Mauritania, the bidān and their sudani tributaries, who share the common hassaniyya language and whose economic and political systems are mutually recognised as being interdependent. Thus the description 'Moor' will include non-bidani elements of very diverse origins, but excluded from it will be the neighbouring ethnic and linguistic groupings to the east and south such as the Touareg, Sarakoli, Toucouleur/Peul and Wolof.

Brakna because it is considered unhealthy and inhospitable.[1] Before reviewing the natural resources and human geography of the regions of Trarza and Brakna, these regions should be placed in their geographical context.

The southern border of Trarza and Brakna is defined by the Senegal River, and the narrow strip of agricultural land that lies immediately adjacent to the river, the Chememma,[2] which has been noted above. The Chememma is intensively cultivated in the summer months, after the Senegal has overflowed its banks, and the Chememma and the low-lands approaching it, which are interlaced with small marigots,[3] are the granary of Mauritania. However, while the Moors depend upon the area for their cereal crops, it is infamous as a disease-ridden area for man and beast, particularly because of the malaria-

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1 For an elaboration of this theme, see the interesting and provocative note by Bou Haqq, "Noirs et Blancs aux confins du désert", B.C.E.H.S.A.O.F., XXI, no. 4, 1938, pp. 480-488, in which the attitudes of the Moors towards the sudanis are examined in the region of the Niger Bend. From my own observations, the prejudices and myths described by Bou Haqq for that region bear a great resemblance to those in southern Mauritania.

2 The term Chememma is applied to various sections of the right bank of the Senegal River, but it would appear to include in its widest sense (which we will use here), all of the land between Dagana and Boghé on the right bank of the river.

3 A marigot is a French term used in West Africa to describe inland tributaries or interior deltas which may be seasonally connected to a large river during the rains, but otherwise serve as separate water supplies.

bearing mosquitoes which are found there.

The western frontier of Trarza is defined by the Atlantic Ocean and the coastal area consists of salt flats and shallow inlets up to several kilometres in width which tend to insulate the interior from the strong wind and dangerous surf of the ocean itself. The network of inlets broadens in the extreme south to make an almost inpenetrable barrier to direct communication with the largest natural harbour along that section of the Atlantic coast, where the city and port of St. Louis was founded. A small bay which is approximately 35 kilometres north of Nouakchott, known as Portendick by the 17th, 18th and 19th century sailors, also provided shelter for ships, but neither the volume of trade nor the water supply at this site, now known as Coppolani, encouraged its development into a major port.

To the north of the regions of Trarza and Brakna is the Sahara itself, which is marked off in part by the area known as the Aouker where many Trarza and Brakna tribes spend their summer months. The area in which the Sahel merges into the Sahara is charaterized by increasingly sparse vegetation and a rapidly falling water table; beyond the Aouker the wells of Brakna and Trarza become the oases of Adrar. However, it is the camps in these northern limits of the nomadic patterns of the Brakna and Trarza tribes that are most frequently glorified in the <u>qaṣā'id</u> of their poets, and the easier life of the Sahel in no way compromises the southern

Mauritanian Moors in their attachment to the Sahara itself.

The north-eastern area of Brakna is dramatically marked off by the rise of the Tagant plateau which, further south, becomes the Assaba plateau; the eastern Brakna border runs approximately along the seasonal river known as the Gorgol Blanc. In the administrative system established by the French the regions of Gorgol and western Assaba and Guidimaka were carved out of an area which appears to have once been within the sphere of influence of the Brakna tribes, or at least disputed between them and the rulers of Tagant. In the discussions below these administrative regions of Assaba, Guidimaka and Gorgol will not be taken into consideration, but rather reference will be made to only the traditional spheres of influence of Brakna and Tagant.

No natural frontier exists between the regions of Trarza and Brakna which are terms that designate the descendants of two men, Terroz and Brakanni, as well as the geographical areas in which many of these descendants live.[1] Efforts by French administrators to draw a line for administrative purposes between these areas were disputed by tribes which

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1 To avoid confusion, where 'Trarza' and 'Brakna' are used below they will be in reference to the geographical areas; if the people of Trarza or Brakna are meant, the Arabic form 'Ahl Trarza' or 'Ahl Brakna' will be employed.

nomadized along the border of the regions[1] and today the administrative regions of Trarza and Brakna are divided by an arbitrary line. This division has only approximate significance as an historically accurate delineation of the spheres of influence of the Ahl Trarza and Ahl Brakna.

The natural resources and subsistence economy in Trarza and Brakna may be summarized by descriptions of the water tables in those regions, the livestock husbandry, the external gum and internal salt exploitation and commerce, the Moor's material culture, the communication patterns and the nearby urban centres. The chief natural resource of the area is most graphically illustrated by the water tables in Brakna and Trarza.[2] Wells are relatively abundant and the depth of the water table, which reaches 55 metres in the northern areas, is not extreme.

The two main categories into which wells may be placed are the ogol (sing. ogla) or shallow water holes which, after heavy rains, can be dug in many valleys, and often do not exceed a metre or two, and hessiene (sing. hassi; also abar, sing. bir) which are deeper wells, dug by specialists and

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1 For controversies over the administrative division between these two regions see Archives A.O.F., 9-G-24, item 3, and Archives R.I.M., 0-3, reports by Lt. Cheruy of 23.11.1909, 11.12.1909 and 10.1.1910.

2 See H. Peloc, Carte Hydrogéologique du Bassin Sud-Ouest Mauritanien et Notice Explicative, prepared by the Bureau de recherches géologiques et minières for the Ministère de la Planification (Dakar, 1962).

generally lined with branches, stones or, today, cemented. Wells generally are considered as the property of the tribal sub-division (see below) which sunk, inherited, received as a gift, or renovated them (if they have fallen into disuse), but the water which they produce is free, following the Qur'anic stipulation on the distribution of water. However, pasturage rights in the immediate area of a well are generally conceded to the unit whose well it is and passing herds which do not belong to that unit are not encouraged to find forage on the grasses which might be in a radius of two or three kilometres of a well.

The economy of Trarza and Brakna is based on livestock husbandry, primarily cattle in the southern areas, safely removed from the Chememma, and camels in the northernly areas. Sheep and goats are found throughout the regions, as are asses.[1]

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1 The smaller animals were generally the only livestock kept by lower social classes whose diets depended upon the meat from goats and sheep, and milk from the goats, although a family might have, independently from their master, one or two milch-cows also. Asses were used at the wells to pull up water-bags, to transport water to camps nearby and in other capacities as beasts of burden. They were almost never used as personal transport. Although the camps of the nobles maintained flocks of goats and sheep for their own meat supply, they also kept large herds of camels and cattle, principally milch-cows. It was an age group of cattle, between two and three years of age and known as tabī'at, which acted as a form of currency between people of the zawiyya, and a cattle herd thus represented the treasury of each unit. Horses were not unknown and annual tributes of horses are recorded between units, although they appear to have represented very considerable wealth.

Much of the annual cycle of nomadic movement for the provisioning and health of the livestock depends upon the rains which each region might have received. However, during the dry season, from November to May, the animals are generally brought south, but no further south than is thought necessary for purposes of adequate pasturage. After the spring rains, herding units generally return to the more northernly reaches of their nomadic patterns where they remain until forced to bring their animals south again for pasturage.[1] However, the extent or pattern of nomadism can vary considerably depending upon annual precipitation levels. For example, in the recent years of drought mentioned above, some Trarza tribes sent all of their camels to the Tiris in the Rio de Oro and, because of the lack of rain in the south, most of the cattle never left their summer camps. The actual search for pasturage and supervision of herds in the 19th century was generally in the hands of the lower classes, and as a result the nobles in the herding units did not always have to move with their animals; indeed, some maintained permanent camps from which they would direct agents in the movements of their camel and cattle herds.

It has been mentioned above that this was a subsistence

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1 The north-east -- south-west routes which are followed in this search for pasturage follow the valleys between the dunes, which have been noted above in the description of the geography of Brakna and Trarza.

economy in the 19th century, and it was carried out by small scale units which did not allow for a very great degree of economic specialisation.[1] Salt provisions and cereal crops, such as could be grown by subservient classes within a tribe, were strictly for the tribe's own use and, particularly in the instance of cereal crops, were chronically inadequate. The only cash crop for most tribes was gum, and the profits which were to be made on gum collection and the sale of gum to European traders were considerably reduced after payments had been made to the several middlemen, protectors and suzerains, under whom the classes who harvested and marketed the gum worked.

The Senegal River in the 19th century was also a major natural resource, as almost all the European trade and transport to and from St. Louis was conducted on the river. The sites of the European, in the main French, commercial activities were initially situated at _escales_ on the

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1 This should be qualified, as such specialist classes as _m'ālleminn_ and _griots_ (see below) lived by their trades and intellects and the economic system supported these professions. Similarly, because manual labour was provided by subordinate classes, wealthy men of noble birth were free to carry out their 'professional' duties. Among the zawiyya tribes this meant full-time teaching and study, and a zawiyya noble avoided manual labour at all costs. However, the statement here remains valid in terms of the units upon which the economy was based, which were small and were not, in themselves, specialised.

river[1] where trading ships or barges moored for the duration of the trading season, buying gum in exchange primarily for cloth (guinée). Several of these escales later were situated on the banks of the river, protected by forts, and eventually some developed into river towns,[2] chiefly for the purchase of gum and the protection of French commercial interests. Another escale at Portendick on the Atlantic coast, which has been mentioned above, was used sporadically throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

The objective of the European commercial activity in the 19th century in Trarza and Brakna was the purchase of gum for the textile, pharmaceutical and confectionery industries in France and England.[3] The greatest concentration of acacia

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1 The escales adjacent to Trarza and Brakna and the dates of their establishment are as follows: Escale du Désert or Escale des Darmankours (the site was later known as Richard Toll) (1686), Escale du Coq or Escale du Braknas (1723), and Escale du Terrier Rouge (1723).

2 Forts were established at Bakel in 1820 and Dagana in 1821, but the greatest concentration of permanent military establishments came in the mid-19th century during the war with al-Hajj 'Umar when forts were built at Podor (1854), Médine (1855), Matam (1857) and Saladé (1859). The population at Podor was reported in 1867 to fluctuate between 1000 and 3000 persons depending upon the gum trading season (Archives A.O.F., 13-G-23, item 15, dated 19.7.1867).

3 A comprehensive report on the uses of gum, as well as technical aspects of its production today appears in Survey on the Market for Gum Arabic in the Major Importing Countries, prepared by the International Trade Centre, G.A.T.T., of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

senegal and other varieties of gum-producing trees[1] are found in a belt, about fifty kilometres wide at its narrowest, western points, which stretches east from Mederdra into the Hodh. Up to one-third of the gum which is harvested from these trees is used locally today as food substitutes, in drinks, in a variety of medicinal preparations, and in the manufacture of inks and dyes. But gum was also the Moors' principal export in the 19th century, and much of the political history of 19th century Trarza and Brakna involved the price of gum, the customs duties it fetched, and the protection which gum caravans and escales required from the raids of dissident elements among the major Moorish tribes in the area.

Another major resource of the area is salt which, in the 19th century, was extracted from two major sites in Trarza, Toueidermi and N'terert, both about 10 kilometres from the Atlantic coast and about the same distance apart. However, it was only at N'terert that bar salt was extracted, which was superior in quality[2] and more economically transported

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1 Other varieties include acadia verek, acacia arabica and acacia tortilis; see p. 31 above, for a map of the gum producing areas in southern Mauritania. Studies of the Mauritanian gum industry which include historical notes appear in Mohamed Salem ould M'Khaitirat, "La Gomme en Mauritanie", Mémoire E.N.F.O.M., 1958-1959; and G. Désiré-Vuillemin, "Essai sur la Gommier et le Commerce de la Gomme dans les Escales du Sénégal", 2ème thèse for the Doctor of Letters, mimeographed by Clairafrique, Dakar, n.d.

2 See G. Mère, "Les Salines du Trarza", in Archives R.I.M., E/2/121, dated 30.4.1911; the most comprehensive study of salt exploitation in the western Sahara is J. Clauzel's l'Exploitation des salines de Taoudenni, monographies régionales, no. 3, Institut de Recherches Sahariennes de l'Université d'Alger (Paris, 1960).

than the loose salt gathered at Toueidermi. Salt might also have been imported from the Idjil fields in the Adrar, but most of that supply was carried via Tichitt towards the Niger Bend. The salt trade was an extremely lucrative activity throughout the Sahel from the Atlantic coast to Tombouctou, although the investment in time, men and animals which was necessary in the salt cutting, transport and marketing made the expense of it prohibitive for the greater part of the tribes whose interests were chiefly in procuring supplies of salt for their own animals and people.

In addition to the natural resources and economy of Trarza and Brakna which, with the water tables and rain, access to the Senegal River, gum and salt, made that region a relatively wealthy area in Shinqit, one must not overlook the natural threats to life in the 18th and 19th centuries which limited population increase and were hazardous to livestock husbandry. Among the common diseases which effectively controlled population increases were yellow fever, cholera and measles; livestock holdings were frequently reduced by rinderpest; and agricultural land was periodically visited by locusts. Drought, too, took its toll on the subsistence economy practised by the small family units, either in their lack of nutrition from reduced cereal crops or in forcing them to consume their livestock which acted as a treasury for each herding unit. Even in years of plentiful pasturage in the Sahel and drought in the regions north of Trarza and Brakna, an influx of men and animals from

the Adrar could be expected to restrict the pasturage grounds of the more northernly sections of those regions.

The material culture of the Moors, as among any nomadic group, was severely limited by their way of life. Usually two or three camels or pack-oxen were able to carry the essential household items (tent, blankets, cloth, mats, skins, cooking and eating pots and calabashes for drinking, cushions etc.) and the implements of the household head's profession or class (books and writing materials, firearms and powder, or smithing utensils, etc.).[1] Certain professional supplies were dependent upon external supply from North Africa or, later, through the European posts on the Senegal River, or at St. Louis and Portendick. Paper, firearms and cloth (although tents and some cloth were woven locally) were imported, but the greater part of the Moors' material culture, from padlocks and pipes to tents and ink was of their own, local manufacture.

Internal communications and commercial routes, like the nomadic patterns, followed a north-east -- south-west pattern, except for those peoples living along the Atlantic seaboard where a north-south nomadic and communications line was possible. Certain east-west lines of communication operated, particularly in linking Brakna and Trarza with external

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1 See the thorough and well illustrated studies of the Moorish material culture by Jean Gabus, Au Sahara. Arts et symboles (Neuchâtel, 1958) and Au Sahara. Les hommes et leurs outils (Neuchâtel, 1955).

commercial and educational centres such as Tichitt, Oualata and Tombouctou, but the Trarza _savant_ who wished to travel to these eastern centres of learning had to do so by going north first, to the Assaba plateau and Tagant. Communications with North Africa were probably easier, via Adrar, but the expanse of the 'Empty Quarter'[1] had to be skirted and water supplies were always a consideration for the traveller who ventured beyond the Aouker. In spite of the difficulties of travel, Morocco probably held a greater attraction for the inhabitants of southern Mauritania in the 19th century than did the towns in the vicinity of the Niger Bend, and this may have been due in part to the relative ease of regular communications with the south of Morocco.

No reference has yet been made to urban centres in this review of the natural resources and economy of southern Mauritania because prior to the 19th century, in the regions of Trarza and Brakna, there were no villages or towns outside those in the Chememma. The major trading establishments which grew up along the Senegal River at the sites of Richard Toll, Dagana and Podor were foremost French and Toucouleur or Wolof commercial centres and, although the _escales_ were in large part responsible for the gradual decline of such

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1 See Th. Monod, _Majābat al-Koubrā: Contribution à l'étude de "Empty Quarter" de l'Ouest saharien_, Mémoires de l'I.F.A.N., no. 52 (Paris 1958), and "Majabat al-Koubrâ (supplément)", _Bull. I.F.A.N._, A, 1961, pp. 591-637.

Saharan commercial entrepôts as Tichitt and Oualata from the mid-19th century, they never, during the period with which we are dealing, emerged as Moorish urban centres. Upon the arrival of the French administration, settlements were founded or enlarged at Nouakchott, Nederdra, Boutilimit and Aleg, but only one of these sites (Boutilimit) existed in the mid-19th century, and none could have been considered to be a part of the urban Islamic world. Indeed, few of the larger towns which have existed in the history of Shinqit (all of which were outside of Brakna and Trarza) such as Chinquetti and later, Atar in the north and Tichitt and Oualata and Néma in the east, could have been compared with the major North African commercial and educational centres, although at their respective heights of activity each was known as a centre of scholarship and as an important Saharan entrepôt.[1] However, for the Moor who might have lived in the region of Brakna or Trarza, the closest of these towns was between 225 and 325 miles away, and such centres as Oualata and Tombouctou were, respectively, 600 and 850 miles distant;

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1 For studies relating to the cities and towns of Shinqit, see I. Hamet, "Villes sahariennes", R.M.M., XIX, 1912, pp. 260-279; H.T. Norris, "The History of Shinqit according to Idaw 'Ali tradition", Bull I.F.A.N., XXIV, B, 1962, pp. 393-413; D. Jacques-Meunié, "Cités caravanières de Mauritanie: Tichite et Oualata, J.S.A., XXVII, 1957, pp. 19-35, and Cités anciennes de Mauritanie (Paris, 1961). The importance of the western Saharan trading centres in mediaeval times is well documented in R. Mauny, Tableau Géographique de l'Ouest Africain au Moyen Age, Mémoires de l'I.F.A.N., no. 61 (Dakar, 1961).

Marrakech was approximately 1050 miles to the north. Perhaps it was as a result of their geographical position, where the Moors of Trarza and Brakna had access to European and North African goods from the Senegal River and Saharan commercial contacts, and their convenient location north of the grain-producing Chememma, that the nomads of southern Mauritania never found it necessary to compromise their nomadic life by regular contact with urban centres. Certainly their scholarship in the Islamic sciences developed and thrived in spite of an absence of urban centres, which is perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Mauritanian history and one which will be taken up in greater detail below.

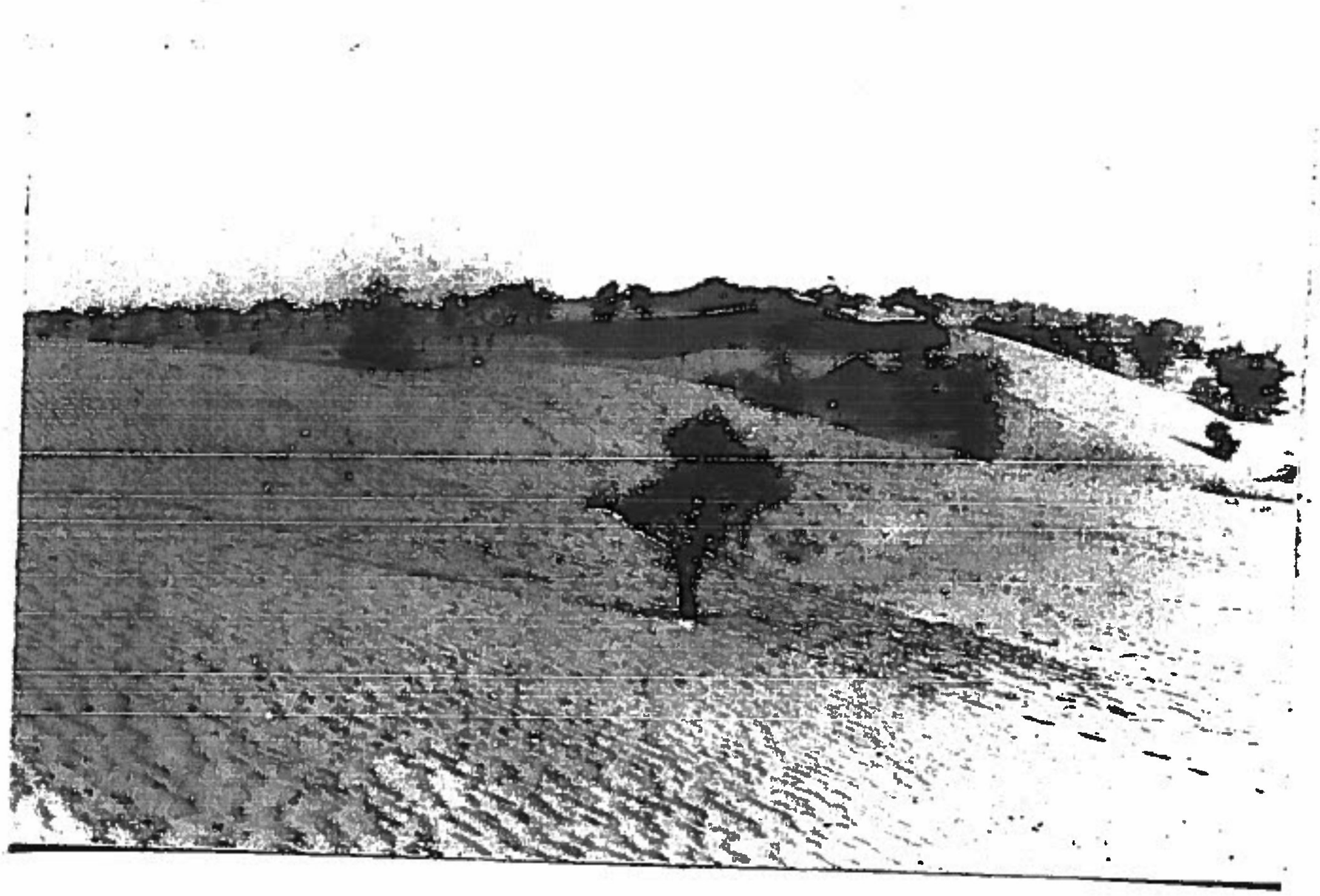
The description of the geography of Brakna and Trarza in the 19th century, their meagre natural resources and subsistence economy in the rather barren landscape of southern Mauritania, is not entirely just, if the impression has been given of simply a harsh climate, disease-infested land devoid of urban centres and character, in which the subsistence economy is in constant threat from the forces of nature. The area is also one of an austere beauty, and this emotive aspect of the country is well illustrated in a poem about the Aouker written by Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya. The poet, who normally spent his summers in the Aouker, was with the Awlad Delim in the Tiris and had been away from his own region for a considerable period. The translation which follows comes

from H.T. Norris.[1]

> ... Will the recompense of a return to Awkār ever be granted to me?
> Where familiar landmarks appear to you shining in a blaze.
> Their beauty delights the eyes of those who see them,
> If the hand of rain adorns them with tender herbs which blend the beauty of their whiteness with verdue.
> That is my land, which I love and long for. It is, indeed, the habitation of free men.
> Its water is sweet and only the finest vegetation grows there.
> The sarh tree, the mimosas, and the artā send forth shoots, like one who imitates the virgin's tattoo marks in the sand dunes....

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1 H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, pp. 10-11.



Landscape at Tendouja, in the north of the Amechtil, near the Aouker

II. THE PEOPLE OF SHINQIT

> Tous ces Maures n'ont point de roy; mais chaque canton reconnoit pour maitre quelqu'un d'une famille riche et considerable entre eux; ils se font souvent la guerre, les uns aux autres, sans l'avoir déclaré, le plus fort faisant une irruption soudaine dans le pays du plus foible, pour piller et enlever tout ce qu'il rencontre; apres quoy, il se retire jusqu'a ce que l'autre trouve une occasion favorable pour prendre sa revange. Ils ont neantmoins du respect pour les marabouts ou religieux de leur loy, et les laissent en repos parce qu'ils craignent leurs gris gris ou caracteres.
>
> Sieur de la Courbe (1685)[1]

The mixture of Berber, Sudani and Arab peoples which make up Mauritanian society may be said to have produced "a distinctive physical type and distinctive cultural and social structure",[2] though the definition and description of the

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1 Sieur de la Courbe, Premier voyage du Sieur de la Courbe fait à la Coste d'Afrique en 1685 (Paris, 1913), p. 147.

2 H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, p. 12. The physical type of the Moors of purest 'bidān' blood is comparable to an olive Mediterranean complexion and their stature is that of most North African peoples of Arab-Berber extraction. However, bidān is a social, not a colour classification, and one frequently finds white men of a black complexion, i.e., bidān whose noble genealogies are in tact, but who, as a result of one or several generations of black haratine concubines in their family, have taken on many negroid features. As one moves down the social scale, which will be discussed below, the colour of the classes becomes increasingly darker; haratine and slaves are of a negroid physical type. This is, of course, a generalisation and there are many exceptions; some individuals from the lower, tributary classes are much lighter complected than their noble masters.

'type' and 'social structure' is not an exercise which many Moors might agree to with any degree of unanimity. This is due in part to the vast geographical area which encompasses the people of Shinqit in which a great variety of institutions and types of social relationships and wide variations in the common Hassaniyya tongue all find a unity in the classification of being 'Moorish'. Similarly, at varying levels in the society and at differing points in time, one may expect to find interpretations and explanations of the Moorish social structure which do not agree with one another. These complexities are due in part to the gradual change that appears to have been taking place during the past 300 years which has produced a mutation of a segmentary society which is not acephalous but which still exhibits dominantly segmentary characteristics. Other complications arise from the tradition of literacy and historical scholarship among the Moors and the fact that the society is both horizontally stratified and divided vertically in its leadership between two classifications of nobles whose ways of life and bases of authority differ considerably, but who live along side one another and share the water and pasturage which is available. The Moors, themselves, explain the structure of their society in terms of a model which imposes yet another series of classifications and relationships upon the actual, and not always similar, horizontal and vertical

divisions in Moorish society. The importance of these divisions and the social values placed on them should, however, be seen in the context of Mauritanian history.

The peopling of Mauritania and the creation of the Moorish 'type' and 'culture' has been the result of numerous infusions of largely North Africa but occasionally West African peoples who, for varying reasons, have sought out or have been forced to accept the western and southern Sahara as their home. This process of migration, and occasionally invasion, has a history of perhaps 1000 years, although the first documented instance of a large scale infusion of North African peoples is that of the Almoravid followers of Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar. The original inhabitants of Mauritania, known as the Bafours, are believed to have been gradually pushed south by the arrival of the tribes which accompanied the Almoravid leader and most of the peoples who subsequently came into the western Sahara from the 11th century onwards were probably Berbers or Berberized Arabs.[1] The exact sequence of the migrations or emigrations

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1 For details of the pre-18th century history of Mauritania see I. Hamet, Nacer ed-Din; R. Basset; F. de la Chapelle, "Esquisse d'une Histoire du Sahara Occidental", Hespéris, XI, 1930, pp. 35-95; H.T. Norris, "The History of Shinqit, according to the Idaw 'Ali tradition", Bull. I.F.A.N., XXIV, Series B, nos. 3-4, 1962, pp. 393-413, and "Znaga Islam during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries", B.S.O.A.S., XXXII, part 3, 1969, pp. 496-526; and P. F. de Moraes Farias.

The language which is now spoken in Mauritania, Hassaniyya, is described in Norris (Folk Literature, p. 32) as the lingua

and the character of the groups which came into Mauritania is a major preoccupation among Mauritanian historians today, as it has been for several centuries, and the importance of this history will be discussed below in reference to bidān genealogies and status in Mauritania.

From the end of the 14th century one can date the beginning of a steady influx of peoples whose origins are traced to Hassan of the Banū Ma'qil, a tribe whose fame rests chiefly upon their opposition in the mid-13th century in the Oued Dra' region to the Merinid empire and their presiding over the collapse of Merinid power in the extreme south of Morocco in the 14th century. During the next 300 years the hassanis, as they have come to be called, gradually filtered into the southern regions of Mauritania, and they

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franca of the western Sahara; particularities of Hassaniyya grammar are explained in Ibid., pp. 194-196. Two other tongues are, or have been in the near past, spoken in Mauritania -- Azayr, an ancient Sudanic language, virtually extinct now, but until a few years ago found in Oudan and Tichitt, and Znaga, a Berber dialect found in small 'islands' in Trarza. Dubié ("L'îlôt berberophone de Mauritanie", Bull. I.F.A.N., II, 1940, pp. 316-324) estimates there are 13,000 Znaga speakers left in Trarza today, but Znaga was at one time the language of zawiyya tribes. There is little doubt, from the personal and place names in Mauritania, that the Berber Znaga has had a considerable influence in the formation of Hassaniyya. See A. Leriche, "Au sujet des langues parlées par les habitants de Chinquetti et de l'origine de ces langues", N.A., no. 32, October 1946, p. 19; and "Contribution à l'étude de la langue maure", N.A., no. 38, April 1948, pp. 12-15.

came to be established along side the more numerous and longer resident Berber emigrants who had preceded them.[1] By about the 16th century the south-western region of Mauritania had received two major groupings of the hassanis, which are said to have been the descendants of two brothers, Terroz and Brakanni o/ Heddaj, from whom the regions of Trarza and Brakna have received their names. For the next 100 to 150 years the hassani emigrants appear to have lived in an uneasy peace with the tribes who had preceded them in southern Mauritania, extracting from them, when they could, a tribute as protection against raiding, and patronizing their commercial and cultural activities. However, the tribute which was extracted from these peoples and their probable harassment by hassanis evidently caused considerable tension in some areas of the region which erupted in a battle or series of battles in 1674 which are known as

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1 We will not take up the fortunes of specific hassani tribes which are said to have politically dominated sections of Shinqit in this period, as accounts of this historical period are available elsewhere. See P. Marty, Trarza (chapters II, III and IV) for the most comprehensive synthesis relating to this period, and H.T. Norris, "Znāga Islam" where new material is presented about this period before the event known as Shurr Bubba (1672), which is discussed below.

"The War of Bubba" or Shurr Bubba.[1] Shurr Bubba was a watershed in southern Mauritanian history and it is the event from which modern Mauritanian history can be dated.

Very briefly, Shurr Bubba is said to have been a war in which the indigenous Berber peoples fought, under the direction of the Awlad Daimani, Nasar al-Din, against the more recently arrived and bellicose Banu Maghfar, descendants of Hassan.[2] The war was allegedly caused by unjust taxation which was imposed by the descendants of Hassan upon the autochthons, and one popular interpretation of the war is that it centred around the disputed case of an individual called "Bubba".[3] The war itself is described by some Mauritanian scholars as having been a jihād, fought by the

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1 This conflict is frequently described in terms of the Berber autochthons rising up against the Arab intruders, which neatly fits into a pattern of ethnic determinism which is widely used in North African French historiography. The apparent linguistic difference between the Znaga-speaking autochthons and Arabic-speaking hassanis might support this argument, but such an oversimplification of Shurr Bubba is, I think, misleading. For a critical account of this Berber versus Arab theme in North African historiography, see John Wansbrough, "The decolonization of North African History", J.A.H., IX, no. 4, 1968, p. 645.

2 Hassan b. Aqil b. Hamad b. Maqil b. 'Abdallah b. Ja'far al-Tayyar b. Abu Talib in one version given by I. Hamet, Nacer ed-Din, facing p. 242.

3 See H.T. Norris "Znāga Islam", p. 500, note 5.

pacific "zawiyya tribes"[1] against the hassanis, but our imperfect knowledge about the nature of support which was enjoyed by either the Banu Maghfar or Nasar al-Din make evaluations of the conflict difficult. The outcome was victory for the hassani forces and the defeat of the Ahl Zawayya.

Recent research has placed the date of this conflict at about 1674,[2] although oral tradition reports the affair as having lasted up to 30 years[3] and only concluding at about that time. As a result of the settlement of Shurr Bubba, the direction over southern Mauritanian peoples is said to have been assumed by the victorious hassanis,[4] who won the right to bear arms and levy taxes, and the autochthons, who were defeated, renounced the use of arms, and pledged to

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1 For a note on the origin of zawiyya (pl. zawayya) as a social grouping in Mauritania, see Ibid., p. 511, note 20. These zawiyya tribes were also known, individually as tulba (pl. tulab) and, by the French, as marabouts. The form "zawiyya" will be employed below as it appears to be the most common form used by the Moors themselves.

2 See H.T. Norris, "Znāga Islam", p. 520.

3 P. Marty, Trarza, p. 51.

4 The hassanis, or descendants of Hassan, appear most frequently in the French literature as the 'querriers', in opposition to the pacific marabouts or Ahl Zawayya.

live thereafter by the Book (Qur'ān). The latter were the People of the Zawayya who were subjected to certain levies and services imposed by the hassanis, and specific zawiyya tribes were thereafter attached to each major hassani unit. Both hassanis and zawayya had tributaries, made up of people whose origins or ancestors were less noble-blooded than their masters, freed slaves (haratine) and slaves. Within this framework there were numerous shades of classification for each level, whether noble or tributary, and at the bottom of these classifications were the iggawen or griots, who were praise-singers and wandering minstrels, and the m'āllemīn (sing., m'āllem) or smiths. Both of these were despised and feared classes, one for their double-edged tongues capable of singing praises or heaping abuse upon their patrons or enemies, and the other for the power implicit in their abilities to fabricate tools of warfare or the essential utensils for a people's survival.

This description of the horizontal stratification of post-Shurr Bubba Moorish society, led by hassani temporal authorities who were followed in importance by the Ahl Zawayya and a variety of subordinate tributary classes (zenagha, lahma, haratine, 'ābaid, m'āllemīn and iggawen) is, roughly, that which most Mauritanians might be expected to recount, if asked about the classes which make up their society

and the origins of those classes.[1] Indeed, this is the Moors' model and their conception of the origins and functions of social classes in the Mauritanian social structure. As a result, most accounts of the Mauritanian social structure, written in good faith by researchers who have relied on oral information supplied to them by the Moors, describe this rigid hierarchy of social classes. The fact that a similar hierarchy most probably existed prior to Shurr Bubba,[2] or that these series of classifications gloss over numerous exceptions to the Mauritanians' model of their own social stratification appears to have little relevance to the sociological importance of the model or to the popular

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1 The zenagha (known as lahma in eastern Mauritania), are reputed to be descendants of the Sanhaja who, from Almoravid times, have occupied a lowly social status as herders and cultivators. They have also gained reputations as warriors, and the outcome of many of the battles which were fought in southern Mauritania during the 19th century was determined by zenagha units.

The haratine are freed slaves, sudanis and their descendants, who generally live apart from their former masters. They pay a regular tribute to their former masters, and form an essential part of the economy in any fraction or tribe of nobles.

For further details of these tributary classes, see A. Leriche, "Notes sur les classes sociales et sur quelques tribus de Mauritanie", Bull. I.F.A.N., 1955, XVII, series B, pp. 173-202 and H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, pp. 20-21.

2 There are indications that the basic relationships between hassani and zawiyya groups did not alter dramatically as a result of Shurr Bubba (see H.T. Norris, "Znāga Islam", pp. 499-500), although they may have become more formalised. Certainly the divisions of peoples who live by the sword and peoples who live by the Book in Mauritania have antecedents back to Almoravid times (see H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, p. 21, note 1).

acceptance of it as being, at least in its present form, a product of Shurr Bubba.

The discussion below will concentrate upon the exceptions to the Moors' model of their horizontally stratified society and in this we will be concerned with the hassani and zawiyya, bidān classifications, because the direction of society rested in their hands. There are quite probably an equal number of exceptions to the model which are to be found among the zenagha and haratine classifications.[1] This analysis is based on largely mid-19th century Arabic correspondence from Mauritania, traveller's reports and archival sources, supplemented by observation in the field. During the period under review in the later chapters of this study Moorish society was undergoing a major change in which dominant lineages among the hassani and zawiyya tribes were emerging, under the influence of the French economy, as temporal authorities in their own right, and although the analysis which follows is an effort to reconstruct the Moorish political structure in the mid-19th century, it must be appreciated that this was in flux.[2] For

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1 H.T. Norris, Ibid., pp. 19-24 reviews the major gradations of these classes, their functions and some of the factors which determine social classifications.

2 A more thorough description and analysis of the Moorish social structure will be forthcoming in my contribution to a book on North African ethnic and political relations, to be edited by E. Gellner and C. Micaud.

reasons which should become clear below in a discussion of Moorish social organisation we will discuss Moorish society as being segmentary, and the hassani and zawiyya bidān classifications will be discussed below in terms of the dominant lineages within this segmentary society.[1]

'Zawiyya' and 'hassani' are perhaps best described as 'occupational classes'[2] which in the main are derived respectively from descendants of the Berber peoples who were established in southern Mauritania when the Banū Ma'qil descendants of Hassan arrived there and those descendants of Hassan. However, numerous peoples of hassani origin are counted among the people of the zawayya, having renounced

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1 Within segmentary societies are frequently found foci such as territoral units, specialised types of elective office, dominant lineages or other types of cohesive forces which act against the natural tendency towards segmentation and fission. The point at which such a focus, dominant lineages in the Moorish example, produce asymmetrical structures and thus emerge as non-segmentary in character (and the society non-acephalous) would seem to be very fine. For the purpose of this description the Moorish example will be considered as a segmentary society, but not as acephalous.

2 This phrase, unsatisfactory as it may be, is one which a group of elderly Moors, representing a cross-section of Trarza zawiyya tribes, offered after a lengthy discussion about the nature of hassani and zawiyya origins and traditions. The only way they were able to reconcile the contradictions in the standard explanations of hassani and zawiyya classifications by genealogies, activities, economic structures, etc., was to state that these were only 'occupational classes', or terms descriptive of the way a people lived and acted.

their life by the Book either before Shurr Bubba, or since that time. Similarly, some zawiyya groups have taken up arms and by their frequent participation in warfare or bellicose tendencies have become as militant as the most resolute hassanis; in these instances, if such groups have no hassani genealogy, their zawiyya status is merely regarded as having lapsed.[1] These hassani and zawiyya distinctions are important because, contrary to the Mauritanians' model which sets hassanis over zawayya, the direction of Moorish society was -- in actual practice -- divided vertically between the hassanis and zawiyya. A brief examination of the powers held by each of these groups and their leaders may clarify the bases of their authority.

THE HASSANIS

According to the terms of settlement of Shurr Bubba

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1 This is one of several examples of the rigidity of the hassani and zawiyya labels, in spite of numerous contradictions contained within each. The Idaw 'Aish are of 'zawiyya-type' origins, i.e., are descendants of the Almoravid followers of Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar, but the amir of Tagant in the 19th century was from the Idaw 'Aish. They were not re-classified as being hassanis because of their dominant political position in that region. 'Hassani' is, above all else, a genealogical designation for which the Idaw 'Aish neither qualified nor would have wished to have been considered. The zawiyya status of that tribe may be said to have lapsed. A 'converted' hassani unit, however, which counted itself, and was widely regarded, as one of the Ahl Zawiyya tribes for several generations, and then reverted to a life by the sword, could quite conceivably revert to hassani status as a result of this.

certain dominant hassani lineages retained temporal authority over their society, which took the form of bearing arms, levying taxes, and, under particular circumstances, acting as superior mediation authorities for the resolution of differences between other hassani and occasionally zawiyya tribal units within their sphere of influence. What, in fact, this sphere of influence may have been for any one dominant hassani lineage must be re-defined in geographical and social terms for each generation and leader. In southern Mauritania two dominant hassani lineages were established by the early 18th century; the Ahl 'Ali Shandora from the Awlad Ahmad min Daman, who were descendants of Terroz in Trarza, and the Awlad 'Abdallah, who were descendants of Brakanni in Brakna. However, in the 18th century the dominant Brakna hassanis held considerable control over succession within the dominant lineage in the Ahl 'Ali Shandora in Trarza, and this was reversed in the mid-19th century when the dominant Trarza hassanis through their allegiance to particular Brakna tribes and fractions had great influence over a series of successions to leadership in the Brakna Awlad Siyyid branch of the Awlad 'Abdallah. Thus the influence of a particular hassani lineage could vary considerably from one generation to the next, and the greater part of the conflicts between the hassanis of Brakna and Trarza may be attributed to competition over spheres of

influence.

The means by which a dominant hassani lineage exerted its authority was through its ability to raid rivals or to protect allies, and this authority was dependent upon the strength, fighting ability and loyality of the dependents and tributaries of the dominant lineage. These followers were only in part made up of blood relations, and the greatest part of any raiding force was generally made up of zenagha tributaries. The reputations of zenaghas as warriors varied considerably, and the loyality of such support was not always predictable. As one might expect in a segmentary society such as that of the Moors, for each dominant hassani lineage there existed a nearly equal opposing lineage, also served by zenagha warriors. Thus just as the Brakna and Trarza hassanis competed for spheres of influence, so too within Brakna, for example, the dominant lineage of the Awlad 'Abdallah was divided between two rival sections, the Awlad Siyyid and the Awlad Naghmash. Details of these rivalries in the context of the mid-19th century will be discussed below.

Within Trarza and Brakna the dominant hassani personality was generally addressed as 'Sultan' or 'Shaikh', which was an acknowledgement by his fellow Moors of the temporal authority which lay in his prerogatives to lead those who

bore arms and to collect taxes.[1] In spite of the hassanis' power to impose taxes and to enforce their will through raids and punitive expeditions, the chief of the dominant hassani lineage in each region was no more than a first among equals within his family, tribe and hassani cousins in his region. The hassani amir was elected by the jamā'a of his tribe which was made up of the elders of that unit. He was not a man of great personal fortune and his authority was dependent upon his own personality and the power which was invested in him by other hassani colleagues;[2] as an individual he could not take independent action on behalf

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1 The French authorities addressed these figures by the title of 'amir' which, by the early 20th century, had become their accepted title among the Moors as well. To avoid confusion the principal hassani chieftains will be called 'amirs' below, but the significance of this title, which in its Mauritanian context has little resemblance to the classical Arabic use of 'amir' as a 'commander', must be appreciated.

2 Travellers in the 19th century and early French administrators report at some length and with considerable surprise the relatively meagre resources and weak positions of the hassani leaders in comparison to their zawiyya counterparts. A typical reaction was that of M. Bourrel, writing of the Brakna amir in 1860, "...il n'a le droit de rien entreprendre sans consulter les princes et convoquer le conseil (jémaha)," (p. 524) and see also p. 522 where he contrasts the rich material culture of the marabouts with the poverty of the warriors. However, this had little bearing on the formulation and implementation of French policy towards Mauritania which hinged on indirect rule through the amirates.

of his jamā'a.[1]

The forms of hassani taxation were varied and the mechanisms by which the levies were imposed are unclear, however certain general points can be made about the types of levies and the method in which the principal tax, hurma or gharāma, was collected.[2] Hurma [حرمة] was a form of tribute paid annually by subservient zawiyya or zenagha families to specific families within the dominant hassani

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1 The jamā'a of a unit is made up of the collective elders and men of influence who may or may not be those individuals who are also entrusted with the leadership of the sub-units which comprise the unit. For instance, the jamā'a of a tribe would probably be composed of the heads of each fraction in that tribe and, in addition, other elders, but it quite possibly might exclude the heads of some fractions which are attached to the tribe but which do not share a common ancestor with the other fractions.

2 Revenue systems in traditional Mauritanian life have been described by G. Gerhardt, le Commandant Frèrejean (typescript pp. 265-374), and P. Marty, Brakna, pp. 323-334, and references also appear in P. Dubié, "La vie matérielle", p. 143 and pp. 167-173 and in H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, pp. 19-24, but these descriptions rarely agree in detail, largely because of the wide differences in interpretation and application of the types of taxation summarized below. It would appear that each hassani unit enjoyed the prerogative of collecting revenues which were limited only by the social and economic considerations of themselves and the groups upon which they imposed the revenue. The hassani economy was thus similar to that of other bedouin peoples whose economic base was the income gained from raiding and extracting protection money from subservient peoples.

The summary below is based on oral information given to me by Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun and it applies to the regions of Brakna and Trarza, but particularly to the latter.

lineage in the region, or the hassani unit to which they were attached. Hurma rights could be inherited or sold and, if they lapsed, they could not be collected retroactively. In the case of a man who paid hurma and who had two sons, at their majority the sons, too, were each expected to contribute the same amount to their hassani protectors as did their father. Hurma payments thus tied specific zawiyya or zenagha families to each hassani family, but the exact nature of this connexion and its social implications must await a detailed study of the hassani Moors.[1]

The origins of hurma payments are generally traced back to the settlement of Shurr Bubba when certain zawiyya and most zenagha families ('tents') were required to pay to their protectors, on demand, an annual sheep, or two calves, or one piece of guinée cloth, etc.[2] Another, similar

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1 The French administration was particularly active in the acquisition of hurma rights in their effort to break what they conceived of as a feudalistic system of indentured tributaries. As a result there exists a great deal of French administrative documentation on the nature of hurma and the prices paid for the purchase of it by the French at the beginning of the 20th century. For details, see Archives R.I.M., D/2, 255; and Archives A.O.F., 9-G-40, item 234, dated 29.7.1908, which is a report by Lt. Duboc. This report also appears in P. Marty, Erakna, pp. 324-331.

2 The importance of guinée cloth, which was a standard item of exchange paid by European traders to the Moors for their gum will be discussed below.

form of tribute was the ghafar [غفر] which could be either tribute paid by subservient hassani families to the dominant hassanis in their areas, or protection money paid by caravans for the assurance of an uninterrupted passage through the hassani's sphere of influence. Ghafar in this latter sense was also known as tāmjārat [تامجارت] in Trarza which appears to have been applied particularly to the maîtres de langue[1] at Dagana and Richard Toll. The hassanis also had the right to collect hukka [حُكّة], (meaning "to scratch"), which was a tax levied upon people who were not obligated as tributaries to the hassanis. There were numerous types of levies on agricultural produce and lands, although the most wide-spread appears to have been abbākh [ءَبّاخ] which was set according to the size of the palm grove or agricultural land under cultivation, and was paid in mudds of dates, millet etc. In Brakna the ndiouldi or dioldi was a similar levy, but paid by agricultural villages

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1 Maîtres de langue were the intermediaries employed by the French traders at escales and posts on the Senegal River. These men served as interpreters and they negotiated gum sales with the Moors who brought the gum to the river. At some escales, Richard Toll and Dagana, for example, the maîtres de langue were mainly from a single tribe (the Awlad Benyuk) and their positions were directly dependent upon the good will of the amir of Trarza.

before the sowing of crops.[1] In each region in Mauritania the form that each of these levies took had slight variations, and when a new source for revenue was found, which tended to be in connexion with stranger groups such as Europeans, travellers and sudanis, the types of taxes which became applicable to them and the income gained from them illustrate well the flexibility of the hassani levies.[2]

The instances of hassani mediation among the tribes within the sphere of influence of a particular hassani unit were limited; this sort of activity was more commonly left in the hands of shaikhs from among the people of the zawayya. Unlike the politically active zawiyya leaders, the hassani

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1 Levies on agricultural lands and their use which have been documented in other studies on the revenue system in the Chememma include the kra which was a gift paid for use of land; the massac, a type of abbakh in Trarza which included protection; and zakāt, which in Trarza and Brakna constituted at least half of the produce harvested on right-bank lands by Wolof and Toucouleur peasants. Most of these appear to have been levied exclusively on the sudani farmers who worked the right bank; the haratine and slaves who were associated with Moorish tribes do not appear to have been subject to these levies.
The amirs, whose responsibility it was to protect each escale, were paid a customs duty for this by the French authorities, which, among the Moors, appears to have been regarded as another form of protection money. In Brakna this payment was called the amkubal. See H. Gaden, "Du Régime des terres de la Vallée du Sénégal au Fouta Antérieurement à l'occupation française", B.C.E.H.S.A.O.F., XVIII, no. 4, 1935.

2 In Hassaniyya all these levies are known as lempu [لمپو], a corruption of the French, impôt, which suggests that while they are recognised as a formal form of taxation today, it was only with the French administrative efforts to codify the revenue system that the whole range of these levies were incorporated into one concept.

amirs had little authority outside their tribe. Where the amirs did become involved in arbitration it generally involved their immediate families and dependents, and only very rarely zawiyya tribes.

THE AHL ZAWÀYYA

In contrast to the post-Shurr Bubba image of hassani tribes as being somewhat undisciplined temporal powers which exploit subordinate units by numerous methods of taxation, the idealized image of the Ahl Zawàyya is one of pacific tribes engaged in pastoral activities and pious mediation. According to the settlement of Shurr Bubba the zawiyya tribes were to renounce the use of force in the settlement of disputes and to act as the guardians of the Moors' spiritual and cultural heritage. To this idealized role, which some of them did fulfill, must be added their guardianship of the physical resources of their society, their exploitation of those resources, and their own systems of gathering revenue. We will examine briefly each of these and, in conclusion, compare the position of the zawiyya chiefs with that of their hassani counterparts.

The people of the zawiyya, generally, did live by the Book and their observance and application of the sharī'a is perhaps their most distinguishing feature by comparison to the hassanis. As the spiritual guardians of the society

they conceived themselves as imposing the discipline of the sharī'a upon hassanis, wherever possible, and this is seen in their frequent participation in mediating disputes, acting as qāḍīs for hassani tribes, and occupying the positions of spiritual counsellors to the dominant hassani figures. It was among the zawayya that literacy flourished, and by virtue of this the Moors' culture (adab) and indeed the very structure of their society[1] was in the hands of the zawiyya scholars.

Emphasis ought to be placed here on the zawiyya scholars; just as the character and spirit of the hassanis as a group were personified by the amir and his lineage, so too the character and spirit of the Ahl Zawiyya were personified by a small number of erudite men whose libraries, literary works and students represented the ideal of zawiyya achievement. In this respect the learned zawiyya figures resemble, in their scholarship and mediation activites, the igurramen described by Ernest Gellner in the central High Atlas of Morocco.[2] The vast majority of the Ahl

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1 This is elaborated below (p. 93 et seq.) in reference to the importance of genealogies in the social placement of and relations between southern Mauritanian tribes. Briefly, because of their tradition of literacy, the zawiyya historians were the guardians of the vital genealogical information which, in the Moors' model of their social structure, set out the degrees of relationship between tribal units. The importance of this information is illustrated, in part, by the reverence and respect the Moors give to any historian in their midst.

2 E. Gellner, Saints of the Atlas (London, 1969), pp. 74-80.

Zawáyya were not, of course, mediators and scholars, although there was a firmly established tradition of literacy among the zawiyya tribes generally. In Gellner's terminology, most of the Ahl Zawayya were laicized.[1]

Many of the smaller, laicized or latent zawiyya tribes found it in their interests to be associated with larger, often politically active zawiyya units which, because of their size, the prestige of their leader, or prestige of a

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1 This is not the place to go into the many parallels and important differences between the functions of the Moroccan zawiyya settlements, described by Gellner, and the Mauritanian zawiyya tribes, but it should be noted that in the Mauritanian context every zawiyya scholar was not, a priori, a mediator, nor were mediators necessarily considered to be men of a higher order than were non-mediating scholars who were not involved in the politics of their region. The subject of this study, Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir, happens to have been a mediator and political figure, but among his contemporaries there were several apolitical figures who are remembered today as having been more widely read and more illustrious zawiyya personalities than was Sidiyya.

One important distinction which ought to be made between the Mauritanian situation and that which prevailed in Morocco generally is that of the position of shurfa. Shurfa, per se, do not occupy an elevated social and political position among the Moors. Several groups of people, the hassanis included, trace their origins to the Prophet, but this does not distinguish them as shurfa. Elsewhere, attached to zawiyya tribes one finds small lineages of shurfa who are recognised as such, much as other lineages are identified by the ancestor from whom their fraction descends. In Tichitt the shurfa in the 19th century very nearly dominated the affairs of that town. Shurfa who are recognised by that title alone are revered and respected personalities, but they make up only a very small proportion of the population and their religious and political activities do not set them off from the Ahl Zawáyya, of which they are a part.

past leader, might offer more effective protection from hassani exactions than would be otherwise possible. Thus small clusters of zawiyya allies, much like the knots of hassani allies, characterize one level of political groupings among the Ahl Zawayya; these clusters did not necessarily live together, nor was an agnatic or cognatic connexion between the groups necessary although it was common. However, a laicized unit in such a cluster could, for instance, request its politically active zawiyya colleague to intervene on its behalf in matters of collecting diyya, where the gravity of the offence might be minimized were a powerful, guilty hassani or zawiyya party not dealing with a large, politically active unit.

The zawiyya tribes have been characterized as controlling the economic resources of the country; the exploitation of salt and its marketing, and the gathering and selling of gum were among the responsibilities of the Ahl Zawayya. Hassanis were thus dependent upon the industry of the zawiyya tribes for their salt revenue (in Trarza, where the amir controlled salt mining), and for their customs duties gained from gum sales. Only zawiyya tribes could create and maintain wells, and hassanis were permitted to use them only during specified hours (from sunrise to sunset). As a result, hassani movements were somewhat dependent upon the water supplies of the zawayya. Commercial caravans, also,

were organised by the zawayya, but the protection of those caravans rested with the hassanis. Although the greater part of the livestock in southern Mauritania was in the hands of the zawiyya tribes, and the total population of the zawayya was much greater than that of the hassanis, most of the zawiyya tribes were divided into small dispersed herding units for the purposes of pasturage, and they were usually highly vulnerable to the attacks of hassani units which were not bound to protect them or to honour their protection by another hassani tribe.

In the zawiyya tribes there was also a system of gathering revenue, not unlike the taxation of the hassanis. This centred around various forms of religious offerings such as the zakāt (frequently referred to in the corrupted form, assaka), which was paid to noble families or chiefs of apparently either hassani or zawiyya descent. Revenues which were exclusively the prerogative of the zawayya were the ghabd [گبض], paid to shaikhs and their families; hadiyya [هدية], or religious offerings to shurfa or, in Trarza, shaikhs in general; and tajhārbit [تجارْبيت], given to a teacher, qādī or savant for their baraka[1] or upon

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1 To this end the tajhārbit was an honorific offering which might be given by hassanis as well as other zawiyya personalities and tributaries to a shaikh.

a son's completion of the Qur'ān. Other revenue came from hubus [حبس] and 'umra [عُمْرَى], both being gifts in the form of endowment for varying lenghts of time.[1]

In contrast to the hassani chief as a primus inter pares the shaikh of a zawiyya grouping held very real authority. Large zawiyya tribes were frequently divided in their leadership between temporal and spiritual authorities, but the balance of power appears to have rested with the spiritual head. Although the consent of the jamā'a was advisable for a zawiyya shaikh, his authority and influence was derived in large part from Allah, and because of this he could and did often initiate affairs on behalf of the jamā'a, such as admitting new tributary units to the tribe, or committing the tribe, independent of any authority invested in him by his jamā'a, to the defense of a non-tribal unit.

Something ought to be said here about the inter-dependence of the hassani and zawiyya bidān and the lower classes

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1 The description of these revenues as a taxation system would not be acceptable to most prominent zawiyya personalities, although the difference between spiritual and physical threats as a means to encourage gifts from a subordinate in 19th century Mauritania appears to have been marginal. However one interprets these revenues, the fact remains that the large, politically active zawiyya units or their shaikhs in the 19th century did have recourse to institutionalized forms of levies which no doubt varied enormously in their application and effectiveness.

of tributaries, haratine, smiths and griots. Most noble hassani and zawiyya families, inside and outside the dominant lineages, were served by a number of tributaries whose food, clothing and general welfare were the responsibility of the head of the noble family. The master-servant relationship which existed between the nobles and their subordinates, however, did not preclude an obligation among the people of the zawayya to educate their attendants, at least in the fundamentals of Islam, nor the noble children being joined in circumcision ceremonies and camaraderie with their contemporaries from these lower classes. This is not to assert that all masters looked upon their tributaries and haratine with benevolence and care, or that the tributaries and haratine faithfully and consistently served their masters' interests. The shifting of alliances, particularly ~~between~~ by zenagha tributary groups, was common and it was not unknown for zenagha or haratine groups to create effective chiefdoms which could negotiate their rights with their masters or seek advice and counsel outside the tribe to which they owed allegiance.[1] These manoeuvres

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1 H.T. Norris notes that there is a difference in the status of the haratine and zenagha tributaries between the Ahl Trarza and the Ahl Brakna; the former tribes show more regard for the haratine than for the zenagha units, and the latter hold the zenagha in higher esteem than the haratine. (Folk Literature, p. 21).

by groups subordinate to the hassani and zawiyya leadership tended to be motivated by a number of factors, among them the burden of tribute, the geographical proximity of another tribe which was capable of defending their interests and which might consent, for example, to the purchase of their hurma rights or to pay a gift to their abandoned masters. Other factors include the prestige or greater degree of security or wealth which might be obtained by joining a neighbouring tribe, and the genealogical connexions which one might discover or which might already be known to exist between the subservient group and their new masters.

In brief, lateral mobility for zenagha or haratine families existed within the social organisation of southern Mauritania and where the tributaries of hassani tribes were concerned this lateral mobility could determine the balance of power between opposing hassani groups. On a smaller scale there also existed a vertical mobility for zenagha or haratine individuals by which a particularly gifted man, either by his service to a shaikh or amir or by virtue of his erudition, could be elevated through marriage or direct fabrication of his genealogy, to the status of bidan.[1]

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1 Genealogical legitimations do not seem to be a regular occurrence in noble lineages during the post-Shurr Bubba period; indeed, one of the remarkable aspects of many genealogies among the zawiyya tribes in Mauritania is the rarity of genealogical fabrication or, conversely, the historical validity of the greater part of the noble genealogies since Shurr Bubba. This will be examined in greater detail below, in discussing genealogical history.

From these descriptions, certain conclusions may be drawn about the groups which exercised direction over Moorish society in the early 19th century in southern Mauritania. Traditional Moorish society was directed by two, theoretically separate segmentary, patrilineal groupings, each dependent upon the other for its physical or spiritual security. Nobles from the Ahl Zawāyya enjoyed a life of greater ease and comfort than did the hassanis, yet they were in constant need of hassani protection. The hassanis, whose security was assured by their allies and fighting ability, but who were in a minority, lived a more nobile life yet were dependent upon the zawayya for their water, gum revenues and spiritual salvation. Strong leadership was in the hands of the zawiyya shaikhs who exercised, in theory, no temporal authority; temporal authority was the prerogative of the hassani chiefs, whose only power lay in the directives given by their jamā'a. Thus the segmentary principles of opposition and complementarity balanced the numerically superior zawayya against the militant hassanis, the pastoral against the raiding economies, and spiritual against physical protection.

Yet there are two discordant elements in this picture of dual leadership of Moorish society by dominant hassani and zawiyya lineages: the social myth of hassani superiority, and the fact that there has been, historically, very

little conflict between these two groups. These problems are not unrelated. If the Moorish model of hassani domination was not maintained, and the balanced structure of hassani and zawiyya lineages was recognised, the tensions between these two groups could not be contained and the important zawiyya activity of mediation in conflicts would be subordinated to the tensions and conflicts between themselves and their hassani rivals. Such tensions and conflicts are, however, rare, and this may be explained in part by the social myth of hassani superiority and the separateness of the hassani and zawiyya traditions, styles of life, economies, attitudes towards religion, etc. Battles between zawiyya units were common, and fighting between hassani tribes was frequent, but very few instances of conflict between a hassani tribe and a zawiyya unit are known. This can be interpreted in structural terms. The Ahl Zawayya did not stem from a single ancestor, but rather a host of individual 'founding fathers', and few of the zawiyya tribes were large enough to militarily challenge an amir and his tributaries. Conversely, the hassanis were dependent upon zawayya for their revenue and spiritual salvation, and it was in their interests to protect rather than make war on the zawayya which were geographically close to them. Also cognatic links between hassanis and zawayya were not unknown, and where these existed they served to

ally specific groups. We will return to this theme in discussing feud and the absence of the law of talion in Moorish society (see chapter VII below) in connexion with the application of the sharī'a and the zawiyya mediators.

MOORISH SEGMENTARY SOCIETY

The descriptions above have attempted, in a very summary fashion, to outline the basic organisation of Moorish society, both in terms of the Moors' own model of horizontally stratified classes, and in terms of the actual vertical division between hassani and zawiyya units which direct southern Mauritanian society. By emphasis upon the dominant hassani and zawiyya lineages which direct Moorish society it has become evident that the Moors cannot be described as being acephalous in their political structure. However, the overriding principles of social cohesion are those of a segmentary society and greater depth to this description of Moorish social organisation is possible through an examination of the patrilineal segmentary lineage system in Mauritania. This will explain in large part how and why the politics of southern Mauritania took the particular form which they did in the 19th century. Models of segmentary lineage systems have appeared in several

anthropological studies[1] and there is no need to build an elaborate model here in order to illustrate that structure. However, before discussing the specific Moorish version of this structure, it would be useful to summarize some of the basic characteristics of segmentary societies, and for this summary the recent study by Ernest Gellner will be used.[2]

A diagram of a segmentary society resembles a genealogical tree, with successively more numerous segments as one moves from top to bottom, each owing allegiance to a common ancestor from whom a segment is either descendant or it is affiliated to such a descendant. Seen from within and in terms of ego, a series of concentric circles surround him, each representing degrees of relationship,

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1 To mention a few, the classic work on segmentary societies is E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer (Oxford, 1940), and his The Sanusi of Cyrenaica (Oxford, 1949). Other important contributions appear in the introduction and studies presented in J. Middleton and D. Tait, Tribes without Rulers: Studies in African Segmentary Systems (London, 1958); Emrys Peters, "The Proliferation of Segments in the Lineage of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica", J.R.A.I., 90, 1960, pp. 29-53; and E. Gellner, Saints.

2 E. Gellner, Saints, pp. 35-69. Professor Gellner's study will be referred to extensively here and below in discussing the arbitration of the zawiyya tribes in Mauritania because of the numerous parallels, in principle, which exist between the structure and function of arbitrating groups in the High Atlas and in southern Mauritania.

from his closest kin to his widest territorial or linguistic unit. Each of these units -- family, clan, subdivision, tribe etc. -- is, in the model, balanced by opposing units of equal strength, and it is because of this equilibrium between segments that the political direction of the society is dispersed equally throughout it and there is an absence of concentrated authority.

By way of definition, Professor Gellner has described four basic "notions of a segmentary society". First, there is a fundamental and overriding idea that cohesion and cooperation within units in the society are a product of an external threat, and this threat from without operates on all levels. "What defines a segmentary society is not that this does occur, but that this is very nearly all that does occur."[1] Secondly, in describing the tree-like structure of segmentary systems, Gellner ascribes this also as an attribute of singular importance, "...not that a system of groups satisfying these conditions can be found within it [the segmentary society], but that only such a system (or very nearly) can be found within it."[2] The implications of this for the application of a legal code such as the *sharī'a* will be discussed in chapter VII. Unilineal descent, it is

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1 Ibid., p. 42.

2 Ibid.

suggested by Gellner, is another element of segmentary systems and segmentation may or may not be associated with territorial groups. However, Gellner doubts that unilineal kinship and segmentation can be separate, insofar as the defining characteristic of segmentary societies is "not merely the presence of segmentation, but also the absence (or very nearly) of anything else."[1] Thus kinship must be subordinate or parallel to the segmentary model. Gellner's last characteristic of segmentary systems is that of 'monadism', i.e., that smaller units tend to be mirror reflections of the larger ones, although he stresses the very different functions of smaller as opposed to larger units, and he suggests the importance of this particular facet of segmentary societies may be exaggerated.

It is instructive to note that Gellner's four characteristics of segmentary societies -- cohesion as a product from without the unit, the tree-like structure of relationships between units within the structure, unilineal descent and monadism -- are put forward as a model which can be applied with remarkable purity to the Moroccan context. This relative purity is possible as a result of another factor, the igurramen, or saints, whose role it is to regulate and mediate affairs between units in that segmentary

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1 Ibid., p. 48.

society.[1] Similarly, within other such societies which have been described in Middleton and Tait, there often occur regulatory devices which act to minimize the effects of such institutions as feud.[2] These regulatory devices frequently appear as religious institutions or personalities and their function, like the <u>igurramen</u>, seems to be crucial, as referees to the processes of segmentation, complementary opposition, fusion and fission. In short, we might add a fifth 'notion' about segmentary societies; that they tend to be found in conjunction with a regulatory device of a religious nature, which is seen as capable of rendering supreme justice, if need be, to which the whole society or sufficiently large sections of it may be answerable. Through such a device, the segmentary society is provided with a 'back-up' system to complementary opposition which normally is responsible for the "self-maintaining order and disorder".[3]

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1 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 68.

2 Middleton and Tait, pp. 22-25.

3 E. Gellner, <u>Saints</u>, p. 53. It is important to note that these 'regulatory devices' are, themselves, segmented and any authority which may be inherent in such religious institutions is therefore unlikely to disrupt the segmentary principles of the society.

The model of Moorish segmentary society is very similar to that which as been described by Gellner and by Peters.[1] The nuclear unit in Mauritania is the khaima [خيمة] (pl. khaiām) or tent, composed of a man, his wife and children and non-married servants. Several khaiām make up a frig (pl. firgān) or herding unit, which may vary in size (up to 15 tents) and permanence depending upon ecological factors such as the type of animals they are grazing and the area of the country in which they are living. Several firgān make up the fakhadh (pl. afkhādh) or subdivision, called fraction by the French, and afkhādh make up a qabīla, or tribe. Each unit traces its origins to a common ancestor, and thus a large tree-like diagram can be constructed to illustrate the relationship of each unit within a tribe to other units and, in some instances, a series of tribes to one another. The same diagram will clearly mark off segmentation and fission over time and the complementary opposition within and between units on tribal or sub-tribal levels. The unilineal descent basis of this tree is clear in this patrilineal society and relationships within and between smaller units tend to reflect the same type of relationships which exist within and between larger units. Thus the model of a segmentary

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1 E. Peters, pp. 31-43.

society is clearly applicable to the Moorish social organisation.

What is far less clear are the functions of the several elements which complicate and corrupt this model in Mauritania. Some of these elements have been mentioned above in reference to the hierarchical structure of Mauritanian society and dominant noble hassani and zawiyya lineages. The horizontal stratification of nobles, various classes of tributaries and slaves has little relevance to the basic segmentary nature of the units of nobles, to which subordinate units are alligned, although the asymmetrical groupings of zenagha warriors among hassani units, for example, or the presence of a particularly effective sanctuary among zawiyya tribes does tend to encourage non-equalitarian relationships, at least of a temporary nature, between tribal units. The divisions of leadership between hassani and zawiyya tribes offers an equally asymmetrical structure, if one is to accept the Moors' own model of zawiyya subordinacy to hassani leadership. However, as we have seen above, this model does not stand up to an examination of the roles and functions of these two groups, and in practice dominant lineages of both the hassanis and zawayya appear to exercise an equal control over the direction of their society. The dominant hassani lineages tend to be balanced by the presence of one or more principal zawiyya

units whose political authority, much like the Moroccan iqurramen, stems from their activities as mediators. Thus the horizontal and vertical stratifications of Moorish society appear to have a marginal effect upon the actual segmentary model, in spite of these stratifications somewhat contravening Professor Gellner's statements about the fundamental principles of segmentary societies. The reasons for this are not obscure. These stratifications are subordinate to the segmentary structure of the tribes, i.e., the tree-like arrangement of segments within and without an individual zenagha tribe, for instance, is of greater importance than a sense of 'zenagha-ness' between fellow tributaries.[1]

Another complication to the segmentary model in Mauritania involves the position of women and the principle of unilineal descent in this segmentary society. The Moors are patrilineal and inheritance is strictly determined according to the sharī'a. Marriage is, as a rule, monogamous, but in spite of divorce being considered dishonourable, particularly among the zawiyya tribes, serial monogamy is practised, and it is not unusual for a man to have had three or four wives during his lifetime. Monogamy, it is said, is determined

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1 This is best illustrated, in another social context, by the custom among nobles when visiting the camp of another tribe or an urban centre, to stay with their own agnatic or cognatic kin, or even with a lowly smith from their own tribe, in preference to the hospitality of a noble from another tribe.

by the women who can, and do, specify before marriage that no other women is to be taken by her husband. Concubines are found, occasionally among the wealthy and well-placed nobles, but this is relatively rare. During the frequent and often extended absences of the men from their camps, the direction of the frigs is left to their wives who virtually run the camps in consultation with the chief herders. Women from noble families are generally educated at least to the point of Qur'anic memorization, reading and writing, and several of the famous scholars and auliyā' of Shinqit have been women. A well educated woman may, in the event of marrying a less educated man, specify as a condition of marriage that he receive tutoring from her, and virtually all of the pre-puberty education of a woman's children is her responsibility or that of her brothers, often taking place in the camp of the woman's kin. In many tribes, divorced women retain the bride price which they have received; after two or three divorces these bride price collections can amount to a sizeable sum for a well-placed noble woman and she often controls greater wealth than does

her spouse.[1]

This position held by women in the Moorish social structure is of little relevance to the discussion above of segmentary societies, so long as there is no variation from the Moor's preferred patrilateral parallel cousin marriage pattern, i.e., ego's father's brother's daughter. In such instances the woman of a household remains within her husband's patrilineage and any wealth or influence she may possess is a reflection of that patrilineage. However, as in Emrys Peters' analysis of marriage among the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, cross cousin matrilateral marriage, i.e., ego's mother's brother's daughter, also takes place,[2] and for a family that wants to ally itself to another segment in their fraction or another fraction in their tribe, this type of marriage might be preferred over the parallel patrilateral cousin union. As in the Cyrenaican situation, once started, such unions tend to continue over several generations

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1 The role of women in Moorish society is an extremely important theme which has not yet been examined seriously. Notes on Moorish women appear in G. Poulet, pp. 10-13; A. Leriche, "De l'enseignement arabe féminin en Mauritanie", Bull. I.F.A.N., XIV, 1952, pp. 975-983; and H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, p. 13. A note on the custom of bride price in southern Mauritania appears in Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 525. Many interesting comparisons exist between the Moorish women and the role of Touareg women; see J. Nicolaisen's encyclopedic, Ecology and Culture of the Pastoral Tuareg (Copenhagen, 1963), pp. 456-478.

2 E. Peters, pp. 44-46.

and there develop cognatic ties which compete with the agnatic relationships. Similarly too, the relationship between ego and his mother's brother is on a far more familiar basis than are his more formal, agnatic relations. What would appear to intensify the Moorish ramifications of cross-cousin marriage as it has been described in Cyrenaica is the custom of monogamy and of educating children, at least among zawiyya tribes, in the camps of their mother's kin. Perhaps the importance of the position of women in Moorish society is best illustrated by the matrilineal lines of descent which are recalled by learned women and historians in Mauritania for historically important 'mothers', with very nearly the same ease by which patrilineal descent can be recounted.[1] Most fractions among the Moors maintain some cognatic links to at least one other fraction, outside their tribe, and when people speak of this it is said, "We have a special relationship with the such-and-such". The same cognatic links operate

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1 This is rarely a continuous matrilineal line. The usual pattern is that it will tie into some outstanding patrilineage which may be politically relevant for the purpose of indicating the noble origins of the matrilineage. On one instance I was offered a line of matrilineal descent which went back six generations (Marium mint Fatima mint Ishatu mint, etc.) before the object in point, a very important male historical figure was arrived at, when the patrilineage was inserted.

within a tribe as well, and specific fractions regard themselves as particularly 'close' as a result of such ties. The level at which these cognatic relations are effective would seem to be within and among fractions where several generations of cross-cousin marriages have taken place, usually within the same lineages.

Another factor which lends complexity to this segmentary society is that the bidān Moors do not claim descent from a single, common ancestor. It is appropriate for a unit which has bidān status to ultimately trace its origin to the Hijaz, preferably to the Prophet himself, but in terms of 'founding ancestors' who are believed to have come to Mauritania, there exist numerous tribal traditions. One large bloc of tribes does trace a common origin to Hassan b. al-Mukhtar b. Muhammad b. Maghfal of the Banu Ma'qil, and these are the units which are or were at one time known as hassanis. However, along side the hassanis live numerous other tribes, generally of earlier origins in Mauritania and certainly of more diverse ancestry. One bloc of these claim Himyarite origins and trace their ancestors' entry into Shinqit to the Almoravid armies of Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar;[1]

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1 The tribes which claim descent from the Himyarites include the Tendera, Massuma, Lemtuna, Tachedbit and Idagmolla (according to the Kitāb al-ansāb, I. Hamet, pp. 259-260 and Arabic text, p. 291; and R. Basset, p. 447). These groups are also said to be descendants of the followers of

others trace themselves more or less openly to Berber tribes of southern Morocco or from the central Algerian oases of Touat. Thus an over all tree-like structure encompassing all the tribal units of Shinqit does not exist, but rather one finds a series of segmentary structures, competing along side one another for, among other things, the prestige which is associated with having had a longer tradition of residence in the country. Among zawiyya tribes this length of residence is regarded as a sort of proof of the purity of their pacific tradition and their pious intentions.

When one continues down the genealogy of a noble family from the arrival of its ancestor in Shinqit to more recent times, the event that is inevitably mentioned in southern Mauritania is Shurr Bubba (1674). This is the juncture in any genealogy which is the most crucial, as Shurr Bubba marks the beginning of modern Mauritanian history. Whether a tribe or family took part in Shurr Bubba

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Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar, the Almoravid chieftain who invaded the western Sahara in the mid-11th century. This claim of Himyarite origin is also made for the Idaw 'Aish (see P. Amihart, "Petite Chronique des Id Ou Aich", R.E.I., 1937, p. 46), and the Djedjeba, Medlish and Mechdouf (P. Marty, Trarza, p. 11). Other major groups which also claim to have arrived in Shinqit at this time or shortly thereafter are the Tashumsha, Kunta (who claim descent from 'Uqba b. Nafi'), Idaghanzainbu (who claim Quarish descent by the Umayyads), Idaw al-Hajj (who assert Ansar origins) and the Taghnanit, Idaw 'Ali and Ida Belhassan (descendants of 'Ali).

or not, and on which side and in what role, is of utmost importance for the social placement of that tribe or family in relation to other tribal or lineage units.

Among the zawiyya tribes there is no commonly agreed ideal as to what constitutes the most advanageous historical role to have played in Shurr Bubba. Families and tribes which fought with Nasar al-Din (zawiyya al-zill)[1] tend to think the less of those tribes which took no part in the war (zawiyya al-shums);[2] those who took no part, and thus incurred no restriction upon their independence by the victorious hassanis, tend to consider themselves somewhat the less compromised. The common point of agreement among all zawiyya tribes of southern Mauritania is that at the

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1 Zawayya al-zill or 'zawayya of the shade' is the name which is applied to those zawiyya tribes which fought with Nasar al-Din in Shurr Bubba and, as a result of their defeat, live under the shadow of hassani claims on their hospitality, the payment of hurma and other forms of service (as secretaries, legal counsellors etc.) to the hassani victors.

2 Zawayya al-shums, or 'zawayya of the sun' is the term applied to those tribes which remained neutral at the time of Shurr Bubba (quite possibly by not being close enough to the conflict either geographically or socially to have taken part) and as a result suffered no loss in prestige or rights to the hassanis. These 'zawayya of the sun' who are independent from the 'shadow' of hassani claims on them consider themselves somewhat closer to the ideals of zawiyya neutrality than their zawayya al-zill colleagues.

time of Shurr Bubba there did exist a zawiyya 'establishment'. These were either zawiyya tribes which traced their origins in Mauritania back to the followers of Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar or certainly to pre-14th century times[1] or hassanis who had become zawayya by the time of Shurr Bubba and who had forsworn their militant past. Hassanis who have renounced the sword for the Book since Shurr Bubba are known as tiab, which can be a somewhat disparaging term with connotations among the established zawayya both of possible infidelity and of bellicose tendencies. Their social and political status as tiab is questioned and distrusted by hassanis and zawiyya alike. These formal categories of hassani, zawiyya al-zill, zawiyya al-shums and tiab, the origins of which revolve around Shurr Bubba and its aftermath, are another more specific ordering of social and political relationships than is found in the categorization of tribes by their arrival in Shinqit. But of still more immediate relevance for the assessment of social distance between tribes are events which have taken place since the time of Shurr Bubba.

Since Shurr Bubba there have been localised conflicts and alliances many of which are of more immediate relevance in the determination of a unit's enemies or allies than the

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1 That is to say, before the first hassani migrations into Shinqit. See note 1, p. 89 for a summary of these units.

position another tribe might have taken in Shurr Bubba or the point in time when its founding ancestor arrived in Shinqit. These regional conflicts and alliances for any particular tribal unit have provided a justification for, or partially erased, the otherwise somewhat formal distinctions between hassani, zawayya and tiab nobles which underlay all social relationships between these groups. Among the zawayya the conflicts could be due to well disputes and blood feuds or rather pedantic matters of the vowelling of a passage in a legal work or the pronunciation of the letter jīm. Alliances, likewise, could arise from the necessity of collective protection against other zawayya or hassani threats, cognatic links or a close relationship between a teacher and his student transferred, because of the fame of either pupil or master, to a fractional or a tribal level. It is these post Shurr Bubba conflicts and alliances (or, in terms of a segmentary society, the historical facts of segmentation, complementarity, fission and fusion) which constitute the most immediate basis upon which social distance is effectively determined on a supra-fractional level.

A final complication to the functioning of the segmentary structure among the Moors is their tradition of literacy, at least since the time of Shurr Bubba and among the Ahl Zawayya. The function of genealogies in the

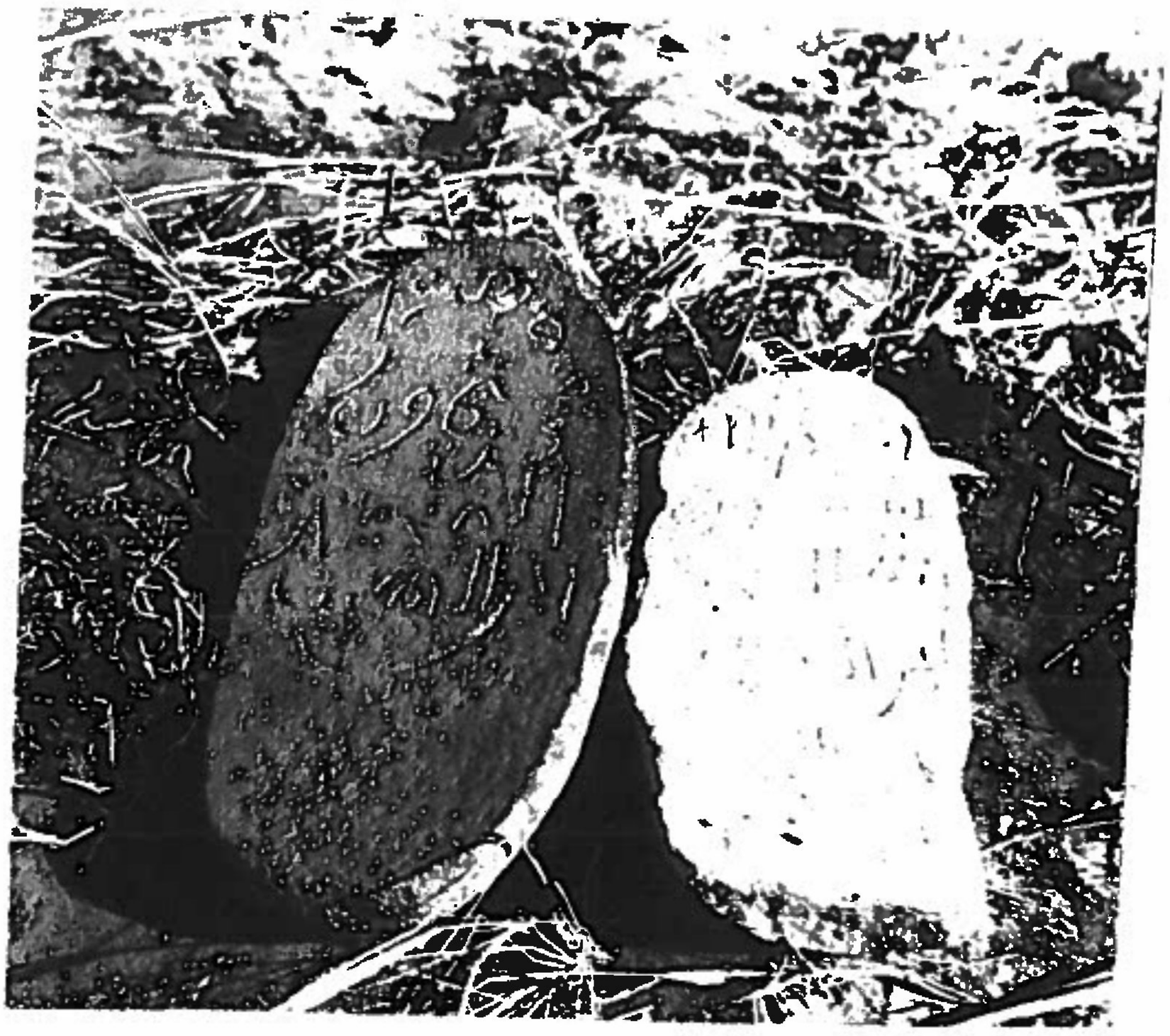
legitimation of segments which have attached themselves to other units is a frequently described aspect of segmentary societies, and to speak of 'genealogical beliefs' or the social relationships which are found on the ground as determining genealogical structures is common. Up to a point this is the case among the Moors; genealogies tend to be very narrow from the origins of a particular tribe down 20 to 25 generations to the time of Shurr Bubba, after which time they suddenly flare out in a profusion of detail. The 12 to 15 generations since Shurr Bubba are recorded in minute detail. In the pre-Shurr Bubba section of the genealogies telescoping and invention has obviously taken place, and here 'genealogical beliefs' may best describe the function and historical validity of these pedigrees. However, in the post-Shurr Bubba period these genealogies among the Ahl Mawayya tend to be recorded by historian-genealogists within each tribe. Two factors militate against fabrication. First, there exist several, separate historical traditions among the Ahl Mawayya, and it is in the interests of each group to compile enough information about its neighbours or rivals to have a record of their noblesse for purposes of marriage, or a record of their genealogical fabrications for purposes of challenging their authority. Secondly, many of these genealogies are written and, while this does not preclude the fabrication of a written document, once written they take on a permanence and receive a circulation the

effects of which are not easily altered.

Evidence of what would seem to be the relative historical validity of these recent genealogies is found in the inclusion of numerous non-functional or less than illustrious figures. For example, there are occasional references to haratine concubines who were the mothers of very important, noble figures, or the frequent entry of two or three figures who, it is explained, died in infancy, or were not married, or went away and did not return. Other times, a lineage which claims a particular ancestor may be pointed out as highly suspect or the connexion as unlikely. This sort of detail might be explicable as the product of well trained memories were it only available in recent generations, but when it becomes common to find such detail about ancestors five, six and seven generations removed from the present, the explanation may be found in the tradition of literacy among the Ahl Zawayya. This is not to assert that genealogical history cum literacy is 'real history', but neither is it simply genealogical belief; the two are intermingled, and one ramification of this is that the genealogies in the post-Shurr Bubba period do not always have a similarity to social relationships on the ground. Indeed, relationships on the ground can be, in particular circumstances, determined or at least influenced by the genealogies themselves.



The cemetery of Baladiyya, near Boutilimit, where Shaikh Sidiyya Baba is buried. The preservation of genealogies is well illustrated by the tomb stones in this photograph.



The grave site of a woman, "Maimun bint al-Mukhtar b. al-Haiba" at Indūghlāt, a cemetery 15-20 km south-east of Boutilimit.

Notice the stone on the right which has been washed out by the sand and wind and which has been replaced by a recently etched stone on the left. This is very common practice and it is one ramification of the tradition of literacy among the Moors which tends to preserve genealogies.

It may be argued that this phenomenon of relationships on the ground being determined in part by genealogies is an indication of a relatively stable social structure. Indeed, if the tradition of literacy has preserved the memory of relationships that are no longer functional, this may seriously complicate fission and fusion in the Moorish segmentary society. But it should be emphasized again that this discussion has been chiefly concerned with the zawiyya nobles of the dominant lineages; not all of Moorish society was literate, and relationships on the ground probably were of far greater importance than the sometimes embarassing written tradition. Among the hassanis, where literacy was not so common as with the zawàyya, or among tributary classes, one may assume that far more flexible means of judging social distance prevailed. What is important to note is the additional complication which the presence of literacy brings to the Moorish segmentary society.

THE GENEALOGY OF THE AWLAD IBIRI

By way of illustrating the descriptions above of hassani-zawiyya status, the Moorish segmentary society and genealogical history, it might be useful to examine one genealogy in some detail so as to see the relative social values placed on structural patterns and historical events. For this the genealogy of the Awlad Ibiri tribe

will be used, as this is the unit to which the subject of this study, Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir, was affiliated. The lineage of Ibir, who is the putative 16th century ancestor from whom the Awlad Ibiri have descended, is as follows:-

(1)	Ja'far al-Tayyar	— cousin of the Prophet
(2)	'Abdallahi	
(3)	'Ali	
(4)	Muhammad	
(5)	'Abdallah	
	. . . . .	
(6)	Maghfal	
(7)	Muhammad	
(8)	al-Mukhtar	
(9)	Hassan	— ancestor of the hassanis in Mauritania
(10)	'Adi	
(11)	al-Maghafara	
(12)	al-Maghfar	
(13)	'Uthman	
(14)	'Umran	
(15)	Haddaj	
(16)	Brakanni	— ancestor of the Brakna hassanis in southern Mauritania
(17)	'Abd al-Jabar	— ancestor of the Awlad Ahmad
(18)	Muhammad	
(19)	Ibir	— ancestor of the Awlad Ibiri (fl. late 16th century)

The earlier part of this genealogy is somewhat self explanatory; other versions exist from other descendants of Hassan which tie Hassan (9) into the family of the Prophet,

but this having been accomplished here for the Awlad Ibiri the first pre-requisite for establishing their noble descent is satisfied. That either invention or telescoping obviously has taken place is of no great relevance to the social importance of such a connexion between Hassan and Ja'far al-Tayyar. Indeed, as the Berber and Berberized names suggest throughout the hassani and zawiyya genealogies, whether or not these figures are of Berber origin is of little relevance, inasmuch as the early section of the lineage offers such genuine 'proof' of an Arab origin.

The first figure of relevance to the placement of Ibir within Mauritania is Hassan, the ninth descendant of Ja'far al-Tayyar and the putative ancestor of the hassani grouping. Seven generations later in the lineage of Ibir appears the name of Brakanni, ancestor of the Awlad 'Abdallah, Awlad Ahmad and Litama, and the figure after whom the Brakna region has been named.

Ibir, the marabout, then, emerges as a great-grandson of the hassani figure whose descendants have occupied Brakna probably since the last quarter of the 17th century. 'Abd al-Jabar, his grandfather, was the ancestor of the Awlad Ahmad, one of the most turbulent Brakna hassani tribes in the 19th century. However, it is related in tradition that Ibir, his uncles and his brothers renounced their past of living by the sword and joined the people of the zawiyya

under, first, the tutelage of the Tendera, a solidly zawiyya tribe of probably Berber origin which traces its origins to the followers of Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar, the Almoravid leader. From the Tendera Ibir and his family are said to have gone to live with the Medlish, a tribe of the same origin as the Tendera and also highly regarded among people of the zawiyya.

If this explanation of the 'conversion' of Ibir to zawiyya status has any historical validity, then at this point in time (mid-17th to mid-18th centuries) our account is confused by a series of events in which Shurr Bubba appears to have been only part of a general disruption throughout North and West Africa of formerly established patterns of political alliances and social relationships.[1] In Mauritania this period was not only marked by Shurr Bubba, but there also appeared at this time the first of a body of hassani literature which H.T. Norris attributes to a revival of Arabic scholarship among independent Znaga-

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1 Among the major events in this period were the emergence of the Alawite dynasty in Fes, the decline of the Moroccan pashas' control over the Niger Bend (see al-Sa'dī, Taʾrīkh al-Sūdan, chapter 35), the establishment of the Kunta in the Azaouad, and the first thrust of Peul migrations into the Fouta Toro (L. Tauxier, Moeurs et Histoire des Peuls (Paris 1937), p. 7).

speaking tribes in southern Mauritania.[1] Both these elements may be said to have contributed to, or been the product of, an historical consciousness from which the modern historical period in Mauritania can be dated.

For the Awlad Ibiri the mid-to-late 18th century is the period in which the tribe is believed to have established itself as an independent entity; individuals who figure as ancestors of the major fractions were the five sons of Ibir, his three brothers and three uncles. It was this nucleus and the sons of Ibir's offspring, particularly the seven or eight sons of Mrabat Makka (Ibir's second son), who make up the ancestors of the segments or fractions which comprise the Awlad Ibiri today.

The fraction of the tribe into which Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir was born, the N'tishait, also appears to have originated at about this same time. Oral tradition relates that N'tishait himself was a son of Muhammad o/ Maham, a man of Tendera origin who, at the end of the 17th century and following internal conflicts within the Tendera, left that tribe for the Awlad Ibiri. There, his son N'tishait married a daughter of Mrabat Makka o/ Ibir and between that

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1 H.T. Norris, "The Sanhajan contribution to Mauritanian Islam", seminar at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 25 January 1967, p. 14.

time and the 19th century intermarriage between the two groups led virtually to the incorporation of the N'tishait into the Awlad Ibiri.[1] However, the discovery in 1968 of a document dated 1131/1718 which claims that N'tishait was a son of Mrabat Makka has considerably revised this oral account, at least among some N'tishait historians.[2] According to this document the mother of N'tishait was a 'daughter of N'tishait al-Tandaghi the sharif' and as a result this particular son of Mrabat Makka was named after his maternal grandfather.[3] Such name-giving from maternal relations is not uncommon in Mauritanian society,[4] but occurring within a family of seven other brothers, all of whom were produced from two women (with the exception of N'tishait) and none of whom are named for their maternal kin (again, with the exception of N'tishait), the alleged filiation of N'tishait

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1 Oral tradition relating to the origins of the N'tishait is reported in P. Marty, "Cheikh Sidia", in R.M.M., p. 31.

2 See C. C. Stewart, "A New Document Concerning the Origins of the Awlad Ibiri and the N'tishait", Bull. I.F.A.N., XXXI, B, no. 1, 1969, pp. 317-319.

3 Ibid., p. 314.

4 Examples within the Awlad Ibiri include the four sons of Abu Bakr o/ N'tishait whose names came from his wife's brother, father, grandfather and great-grandfather; also, see below p. 171 where al-Falli is noted as having been given a name from his mother's people.

from Mrabat Makka raises numerous questions. This document goes on to assert that N'tishait remained in confederation with his Tendera maternal relations until his death, at which time his sons, Abu Bakr, Aissa and al-Mukhtar, returned to the Awlad Ibiri.

This document remains highly controversial among Mauritanian historians and the certainty of N'tishait's filiation has by no means been resolved by it; even within the fraction itself there are individuals who question the authenticity of the document.[1] It is significant that neither Shaikh Sidiyya nor his grandson, Sidiyya Baba, knew of the existence of this genealogical account as both accounted for their fraction's origins by the oral tradition version mentioned above.[2] We can deduce from the document that the sons of N'tishait were integrated within the Awlad

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1 The historians from within the fraction who challenge this document are, it must be admitted, western educated, but this does not alter the significance of the general suspicion which met this obviously very old document from other Mauritanian historians who are not western educated, but who are from other tribes. If the purpose of genealogical legitimation is to gain status in the eyes of society at large, this would seem to be accomplished only with extreme difficulty in a literate society of diverse origins such as the Ahl Zawiyya in Mauritania.

2 P. Marty, that great sceptic of putative ancestry in West African Islamic communities went so far as to praise Shaikh Sidiyya Baba for the unadorned account of his humble origin (P. Marty, "Cheikh Sidia", in R.M.M., p. 31.

Ibiri and that this was most likely contemporaneous with, or one generation preceding, Shurr Bubba. In terms of the 18th and 19th centuries, at which time this second version of the origin of the N'tishait was not known, one may assume that the position of the N'tishait within the Awlad Ibiri was probably similar to that held by most affiliated fractions whose origins were different from that of the larger tribe of which they were a part. The affiliated fraction received the protection and prestige of the tribe by association with it, and in return that fraction accepted a subservient position and added to the tribe's resources, principally in livestock but also in men. For such a fraction the principal means of elevating their social status was through the careful arrangement of marriages between themselves and the socially more prestigious fractions within the larger tribe. This the N'tishait did quite successfully, particularly through marriage within the Awlad Ibiri[1] into the Awlad Mahandnalla, Ida Bamar, Awlad Adaja and Awlad Ahmad al-Falli and, significantly, the Ida Belhassan, externally.[2]

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1 For a table indicating the important N'tishait marriages in the first five generations of that fraction, see appendix VI. The Awlad Ibiri fractions and their ancestors are summarized in the abbreviated genealogy on p. 163.

2 The Ida Belhassan played an important role in the later religious organisation of Shaikh Sidiyya. The marriage referred to here was between Ahmad Daula o/ Abu Bakr and the daughter of a chief in the Ida Belhassan.

By the time of the birth of Shaikh Sidiyya his fraction had come as close to being fully integrated into the Awlad Ibiri as might have been possible for an affiliated fraction.

We will take up the Awlad Ibiri again, and the social milieu into which Shaikh Sidiyya was born, in chapter IV. For the moment it will suffice to point up that the Awlad Ibiri were one of the 'converted' zawiyya tribes, dating from the pre-Shurr Bubba period and, not having taken part in that conflict, they were one of the '<u>zawiyya al-shums</u>'. The fraction into which Sidiyya was born was most probably an attached unit to the Awlad Ibiri which had transferred to that tribe from a cognatic allegiance to the Tendera. The historical details of the tensions and events which led to the fission of the Awlad Ibiri from their hassani brothers, or the N'tishait from the Tendera are not known, although there appear to be no grounds on which to challenge the historical fact that such events took place. Other themes which have been discussed above in reference to the hassani and zawiyya divisions of the nobles and the segmentary structure of Moorish society will also be taken up below in description of Shaikh Sidiyya's career and his legal and religious influence in southern Mauritania during the mid-19th century.

III. THE FOUNDING OF THE QADIRIYYA ṬARĪQA AND ITS SPREAD INTO WEST AFRICA

> Tout le mouvement religieux du Soudan occidental se trouva ainsi dirigé par les influences kadriyennes, pendant la premiere moitié du [19ème] siècle. Il y a lieu de tenir compte à cet egard des reserves faites précédemment, de ne pas perdre de vue que les Kadriya eux-mêmes étaient en petit nombre, et qu'ils se trouvaient représentés seulement en dehors de quelques points, par les Thalibé, les élèves formés dans leurs écoles.
>
> A. Le Chatelier (1899)[1]

In preface to our case study of Shaikh Sidiyya and the Qadiriyya in southern Mauritania, this chapter will sketch, by way of background, the spread of the Qadiriyya in West Africa. This survey of the Qadiriyya in West Africa is intended only as an outline, and as such it will be restricted to a chronological account of the spread of the ṭarīqa, and examples of the movements and individuals with which it was associated in the 19th century.[2] Unfortunately,

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1 A. Le Chatelier, L'Islam dans l'Afrique Occidentale (Paris, 1899), pp. 166-167.

2 Descriptions of the West African Qadiriyya appear in studies of the ṣūfī turuq generally (A. Le Chatelier; O. Depont and X. Coppolāni) or in studies of North African Islam (L. Rinn; P.J. Andrè) and West African Islam (P. Marty; A. Gouilly, J.S. Trimingham; V. Monteil). Many of these have employed the administrative reports submitted by French officials of the A.O.F. in the late 19th and early 20th centuries whose principal concern was the political containment of the turuq so as to avoid a recurrence of the experience in Algeria of resistance to French penetration. Indeed, the experience of Algerian officials was steadily

at this particular stage of our knowledge of the Qadiriyya in West Africa, there are more questions which may be raised from such an account than answers which can be put forward. But if some questions are set off in relief by this account about the role that the Qadiriyya played in West African Islam and how and in what form it was propagated in West Africa in the 19th century, then this survey will have served its purpose, because these will be the questions which we will be asking in the case study itself, and the reasons for the particular Mauritanian case study which will be discussed below will be evident.

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drawn upon by the A.O.F. administration in St. Louis in their inquiries into the nature of Islam in west Africa (see Archives A.O.F., J 85, item 23, for example).

Because of the nature of the reports which were submitted, the vast amounts of information which were compiled in St. Louis and the reports upon which many subsequent studies have been based, have, in the main, examined such Islamic institutions as the turuq as either organisations potentially dangerous to the French administration for their appeal across ethnic and linguistic frontiers (Depont and Coppolani), or as impotent, localised religious sects confined in their importance to specific ethnic groups (Marty). Both analyses have left their impression on French administrative efforts in the early 20th century and on subsequent studies of Islam in West Africa, but until very recently no effort has been made to consider more seriously the turuq per se. Only the recent studies by Murray Last, John Paden (both dealing with an area outside the former A.O.F.) and John Willis have substantially contributed to a re-interpretation of the roles played by the turuq in West Africa.

For the full references to the above cited authors, see bibliography.

The dramatis personae in this story of the spread of the Qadiriyya in West Africa are dominanted by the Moorish Kuntas from the Azaouad region, north-east of Tombouctou, who have been mentioned above. The particular Kunta figures were Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and his son, Sidi Muhammad, whose lives span the century from 1725 to 1827, and it is to them and the Kunta confederation that most of the Qadiri silāsil in West Africa can be traced. However, before taking up the Kuntas and the Qadiriyya, we will briefly review the life of the founder of the Qadiriyya, and the spread of the ṭarīqa prior to its introduction into West Africa.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE QADIRIYYA

ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Jilāni (470-561/1077-8 - 1166) was born in the Persian town of Naqf in Djilan from whence comes his nisba "al-Jilani", but at the age of eight he went to Baghdad where his future studies and career were to be formed. His studies there included philology, sharīʿa (within the Hanbali madhhab) and ḥadīth, and he was also introduced to ṣūfism, which was at that time a dynamic and rapidly expanding force in Islam, by Abu al-Khayar Hammad al-Dabbas (d. 523/1131). Within six years of his first efforts as a preacher, at the age of 50, he became responsible for a madrasa of Hanbali persuasion in Baghdad, where he also directed a ribat. It would seem a logical conclusion from

these two positions which 'Abd al-Qadir held, that the heated controversy of his day and of subsequent generations of Islamic scholars over the inclusion or exclusion of ṣūfī interpretations and guidance in the Islamic sciences, was not at issue for him.[1]

Specific ideas associated with the Qadiriyya at its foundation are difficult to define, as the ṭarīqa in even recent times has had no one litany (wird) or other easily identifiable characteristics with which it has been associated. If one examines 'Abd al-Qadir's sermons and life for a specific set of ṣūfī interpretations or guidelines, one finds no emphasis intended for an exclusively ṣūfī audience, and in his teaching the incorporation of ideas of ṣufism into orthodox teaching is perhaps the principal theme which can be associated with the early years of the ṭarīqa's spread. 'Abd al-Qadir was known as a great mediator and this spirit is well illustrated in his own reconciliation of ṣūfī interpretations and guidance with

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1 Biographies of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani appear in D.S. Margoliouth, "Contribution to the Biography of 'Abd al-Qadir", J.R.A.S., 1907, pp. 267-310; W. Braune, Die Futûh al-Gaib des Abd al-Qadir (Berlin, 1933) and "'Abd al-Kadir", E.I. (2); G.W.J. Drews and R. Ng. Dr. Poerbatjaraka, De Mirakelen van Abdoelkadir Djaelani (Bandung, 1938); Mehmmed Ali Aînî, Un Grand Saint de l'Islam, Abd Al-Kadir Guilânî (Paris, 1938 and 1967); and D.S. Margoliouth in E.I. (1), "'Abd al-Kādir", I, pp. 41-42, and "Kādiriya", II, pp. 608-611.

his Hanbalī legal scholarship. In terms of the early propagation of the Qadiriyya, there are suggestions that it was spread on a popular level during and immediately after the lifetime of its founder. For example, murīdūn were accepted by either subordinating their will to 'Abd al-Qadir and thus personally receiving his khirqa, or by declaring their personal attachment to him from afar. In the light of subsequent developments associated with the ṭarīqa in west Africa seven centuries later, it is interesting to note that 'Abd al-Qadir's notion of jihād was that of an obligation upon all believers to fight within themselves the struggle of self-will, and that physical battle against the kāfir was secondary to this.[1] The Qadiriyya is also associated generally with a reputation of charity and tolerance.

However, such a body of ideas which were preached by the founder of the Qadiriyya are of relatively limited value in analysing the practice or understanding the role of the ṭarīqa in a particular social context. The general and rather vague notions which are associated with the Qadiriyya and which are by no means unique among ṭuruq, emphasize the vague nature of 'the ṭarīqa' which is held to be patterned after the life and teachings of 'Abd al-Qadir

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1 W. Braune, E.I. (2), p. 70.

al-Jilani.

At the death of 'Abd al-Qadir (561/1166) he was succeeded in his direction of the Baghdad madrasa by two sons;[1] other sons and descendants are said to have propagated his ideas of sufism during and after his lifetime in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and perhaps Mecca.[2] Precise dating of the dissemination of the 'Qadiriyya', as the body of those who conceived of themselves as guided by the teachings of 'Abd al-Qadir came to be known, is difficult to establish owing to the legend and prestige which accompanied that name as the oldest and largest of the turuq in the Islamic world.

In North Africa the tarīqa may be dated from its introduction into Fes by a group of Jilani shurfa who fled from Spain shortly before the fall of Granada (897/1492). These shurfa traced their origins to Ibrahim (d. 582/1196) and 'Abd al-Aziz b. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani who are said to have migrated to Spain during their father's lifetime.[3] However, it may be accepted that the Qadiriyya tarīqa was

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1 'Abd al-Wahab (552-593/1157-1196) and 'Abd al-Salim b. 'Abd al-Wahab (d. 611/1214).

2 A. Le Chatelier, Les Confréries du Hedjaz (Paris, 1887), p.35.

3 M.G. Salmon, "Les Chorfa filala et Djilala des Fès", A.M., III, no. 1, March 1905, p. 109.

widely known, in some form, in North Africa before the late 15th century.[1]

No attempt will be made here to document the spread of the tarīqa in North Africa, nor to define the symbols, rites, or organisation of the Qadiriyya there;[2] such an approach implies that the tarīqa existed as a body or association of ideas and men which can be defined in a summary description of the order and its points of strength in a particular geographical area. In spite of French documentation[3] that suggests each North African tarīqa was an organisation led by a hierarchy of shaikhs, muqaddims, etc. which followed a prescribed code of behaviour, multiple membership in turuq was common, and the factors which determined the role of a tarīqa and the degree to which it became a social, economic

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1 For instance Shaikh Abu Madian (Sidi Bu Median) (520-596/1126-1198) is said to have studied under 'Abd al-Qadir; the Shadhiliyya, founded by Sidi Bel Hassan al-Shadhili in 656/1258, is an offshoot of the Qadiriyya (see D.S. Margoliouth, "Shādhiliyya", E.I. (1); and L. Rinn, pp. 211-264), as is the Arusiyya, founded by Abu al-Abbas Ahmad b. al-'Arus (d. 865/1460-1461), (see L. Rinn, p. 268).

2 D.S.Margoliouth in E.I. (1), "Kādiriyya" points out that adepts of branches of the Qadiriyya in North Africa may be distinguished from one another by the recitation of the hizb or dikhr to the accompaniment of different instruments, or that some adepts deposit white cocks in the zawiyya courtyard in Tangiers. Such local customs appear to have a limited relevance to the general practice of the Qadiriyya in North Africa.

3 O. Depont and X. Coppolani, pp. 193-210; and P.J.André, pp. 57-68.

or political association in any particular society or community appear to have been highly localised. To attribute to the vast majority of North African turuq any wider significance is to distort their importance as local institutions.[1]

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE QADIRIYYA INTO WESTERN AFRICA

The story of the Qadiriyya in western Africa begins with the son of a 15th century Saharan figure, Shaikh Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i b. Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti. Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i is held to be the common ancestor of the three major branches of the Kunta confederation which are found today in a triangle roughly defined by the Azaouad[2] (the area north-east of Tombouctou on the Niger Bend), the Tagant and Saquia el-Hamra[3] (in the Spanish Sahara), and Louga

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1 For descriptions of the Qadiriyya in North Africa, see L. Rinn, pp. 173-201.

2 The Azaouad and eastern Hodh Kuntas are in the main descendants of Sidi 'Umar al-Shaikh b. Shaikh Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i, and Sidi 'Umar's brother, Abu Bakr al-Hajj. For an abbreviated genealogy of these Kunta figures, see appendix VII.

3 The Tagant Kuntas which may be found as far as the Saquia el-Hamra are largely made up of descendants of Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti al-Saghir.

and N'diassane (Senegal).[1] At the time of Sidi Ahmad and his father the family is said to have lived in the central Algerian oases of Touat.[2] The Kunta claim descent from 'Uqba ibn Nafi' but they are quite probably of Berber origin[3] and, through intermarriage with such prestigious western Saharan tribes as the Tajakanat,[4] they have

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1 This is a small group, but an important commercial contact, from the Ahl Sidi al-Wafi of the Tagant branch of the Kunta (in Louga), and a family of the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti in N'diassane; see p. 157 note 1 below. Although the descendants of Shaikh Bu Kunta, who direct an impressive and somewhat gaudy zawiyya at N'diassane, are not within the Saharan nomadic patterns of the Kunta, their centre, along with the commercial quarters of the Louga Kuntas, does maintain commercial connexions with their fellow Kuntas visiting Senegal.

2 The ksar within Touat is said to have been that of Bou-'Ali which is reported to have been dominated by members of the Bakka'i family (L. Rinn, p. 338). Interestingly enough, this is the same ksar in which H. Barth reports the family of al-Maghili to have lived in Touat (H. Barth, annex II); on the importance of al-Maghili in the Kunta tradition, see p. 116, note 1.

3 The name 'Kunta' in fact comes from the maternal father of Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti. Sidi Muhammad's mother is said to have been a daughter of Muhammad 'Alim b. Kunta b. Zazam, the chief of the Idawkil Sanhaja (quoted in I. Hamet, "Les Kounta", R.M.M., XV, September 1911, p. 307).

4 Of the 28 marriages recorded by Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti in his al-Tarā'if wa talā'id bi karamāt al-shaikhain al-wālida wa al-wālid (here after referred to as T.T.), five references to Tajakanat women make up the largest unit of non-Kunta unions. See Ismaël Hamet, "Litterature Arabe Saharienne", R.M.M., X, 1910, pp. 194-213, and XI, pp. 380-405 for a synopsis of the T.T. in translation.

A summary of the T.T. manuscripts which are known to be extant in the southern Sahara and in France are listed in the bibliography.

succeeded in elevating their social status to a point where their alleged Arab ancestry is accepted.[1]

Shaikh Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i had three sons, Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti al-Saghir, Abu Bakr al-Hajj, and Sidi 'Umar al-Shaikh, who are the ancestors of the three major segments of the Kunta confederation. The baraka of Sidi Ahmad was passed on to his youngest son, Sidi 'Umar, who is said also to have introduced the Qadiriyya into the tribe. Whether or not the Kuntas had previously been affiliated to a ṭarīqa is not clear, although Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti is reported to have studied under the mystic and scholar Abu l'Abbas Ahmad b. Ja'far al-Sabti al-Khazraji in Touat and later in Ceuta,[2] and if this is true the precedent for

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1 The Kunta have not in recent times had their Arab origins seriously challenged, largely, one suspects, because of the position and influence of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (d. 1811). Indeed, there are indications that the Kuntas acted as judges of other tribes' putative Arab origins, as is indicated in their criticism of Muhammad Fadal's claims (see below, p. 153).

2 This is reported in I. Hamet, "Les Kounta", in a translation of a document he calls Tarikh Kounta, received by Capitaine Maurice Cortier from Bal o/ Cheikh sid Omar in 1909 at Telia. In this document, al-Sabti is said to have assigned to Sidi Muhammad the rank of "Pole of the Mystics". Unfortunately, this ta'rīkh has not been located, to my knowledge; M. Cortier, in his D'un rive à l'autre du Sahara (Paris, 1908), p. 396 makes reference to the manuscripts which he collected as having been lodged with the Société de Géographie de Paris.

See also Mohamed Ben Cheneb, "al-Sabti", E.I. (1).

sūfī study among the Kuntas would appear to have been clearly established by the time of Sidi 'Umar. Sidi 'Umar is reputed to have met Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim b. Muhammad al-Maghili al-Tilimsani (d. 1504 or 1532)[1] in the early 16th century (?) and received through him, or with him, the Qadiriyya ṭarīqa from 'Abd al-Rahman al-Suyuti in Cairo.[2]

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1 Al-Maghili was a 15th century jurist who was obliged to leave his residence in Touat (in 1490?) after having been instrumental in the persecution of Jews there for their unauthorised building of a synagogue. His subsequent travels took him to the Sudanese cities of Katsina, Kano and Gao, during which time he wrote a number of works, three of which, Ta'rīf fīmā yajib 'ala 'l-mulūk and Mukhtaṣar mimmā yajūz fi-hukkām fī radd al-nās 'an al-harām addressed to the Sultan of Kano, Muhammad al-Rumfa circa 1491, and Ta'līf ajābahu fīhi 'an masā'il, regarding belief in the Sudan, were quoted extensively in the works of the Fulani mujāhid, 'Uthman dan Fodio. The T.T. mentions that Sidi 'Umar and al-Maghili travelled together for thirty years, during which time al-Suyuti conferred upon them the Qadiri wird. This is reported in the T.T. and is documented in the Kunta silsila for the Qadiriyya, but recent work by J.O. Hunwick has very seriously questioned the logic of such a connexion (see "The State of Islam in the Central Sudan at the close of the 15th century: a new look at an old document", African Perspectives (ed. C.H. Allen and R.W. Johnson, in press). If this story is, in fact, a fabrication, as it may be, then it throws an interesting light on the importance of al-Suyuti in at least the Kunta legal scholarship in western Africa.
Biographical notes on al-Maghili appear in J.O. Hunwick, Ibid.; P. Marty, Les Kounta, pp. 20-21; A. Leriche, "Notes pour servir a l'histoire maure", Bull. I.F.A.N., XV, no. 2, 1953, p. 739; and A.D.H. Bivar and M. Hiskett, "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804", B.S.O.A.S., XXV, 1962, pp. 106-109.

2 That such a connexion may be proved highly improbable, as Hunwick suggests, does not, of course, preclude a spiritual connexion or Revelation to a writer since the time of Sidi 'Umar who saw his own legal training as a reflexion of the heritage of al-Suyuti and al-Maghili.

Sidi 'Umar died in about 920/1515 and was buried at Oualata. It was in this way, under circumstances which are not entirely clear from the literature,[1] that the Qadiriyya is said to have been introduced into western Africa. If this account of the arrival of the Qadiriyya via Sidi 'Umar and al-Maghili is correct, the Kuntas evidently were introduced to the tarīqa at about the same time that the Ahl Sidi 'Umar branch of the Kuntas are recorded as having begun to migrate south from Touat into the Azaouad region, north-east of Tombouctou.[2]

For the next two centuries, the shaikh of the Kunta murīdūn in the Qadiriyya was found among the descendants of Sidi 'Umar al-Shaikh, but little beyond the genealogies of these figures is extant[3] and there is no documentation of

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1 The T.T. is quite clear on this connexion between Sidi 'Umar, al-Maghili and al-Suyuti, as have been subsequent Kunta authors, but one of the more vexing problems in dealing with Kunta historical material is that it comes almost entirely from the pens of Kunta figures, e.g., within the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar. In this connexion, there is no collaborating evidence for this story of the introduction of the Qadiriyya outside the Kunta's own chronicles.

2 The major influx of Kunta fractions into the Azaouad may be dated from the 17th century; see forthcoming thesis on the life and writings of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti by Aziz Batran at the University of Birmingham.

3 Such details that appear in the T.T. concern the khalifas of the Qadiriyya among the Kunta, which may also be accepted as a listing of spiritual leaders of that confederation. This is reported in H. Barth, annex IV; O. Depont and X. Coppolani, pp. 231-232; and I. Hamet, "Littérature Arabe", pp. 209-210.

an active propagation of the Qadiriyya during this period. The Azaouad Kuntas furthermore, with one exception, do not appear in any of the histories or biographical dictionaries which include North or West African 'ulamā' in the 16th and 17th centuries,[1] and one may assume that during these centuries their numbers were few and their influence was limited. This could be confirmed by the succession of Sidi 'Ali b. al-Najib b. Muhammad b. Shuaib, five khalifas removed from Sidi 'Umar, as khalifa of the Qadiriyya. Sidi 'Ali was not of Kunta origin, but he was a sharif, and although he is remembered as a learned and able spiritual leader, his presence in the Qadiri silsila strongly suggests that the particular branch of the Kuntas which had dominated their spiritual direction no longer could draw men of the requisite calibre from its own ranks.[2]

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1 With the exception of a biographical notice of Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i in the Fath al-shakūr fī ma'rifat a'yān 'ulamā' al-Takrūr, the Kunta figures do not appear in the Tārīkh al-Fattāsh, Tārīkh al-Sūdān, Ahmad Baba's Nayl al-ibtihāj bi-tatriz al-Dibāj, al-Wafrani's Tadhkirat al-nisyān fī akhbār mulūk al-Sūdān, or al-Ifrani's Nuzhat al-hadī. I have not seen W.A. Brown's recent discovery in Tombouctou, the Izālat al-raib by Ahmad Abu l-A'raf al-Tinbukti, reported in R.B.C.A.D., III, no. 2, 1967, pp. 135-136. For full references to the above cited works, see bibliography.

2 His full name was Sidi 'Ali b. al-Najib b. Muhammad b. Shuaib who is described in the T.T. as a Sharif from Tekrur. Praise of him is generous in the T.T., and particular emphasis is placed on his sharifian origins, which may be read either as genuine appreciation of his qualities as a scholar (which he no doubt was) or an over compensation for the appearance of a 'stranger' in the midst of the Kunta tradition, in a pedigree-minded society.

It was with Sidi 'Ali b. Najib's successor, Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (1142-1226/1729-30 - 1811) that the direction of the Qadiriyya returned to the Kuntas, but to a different family than had previously held the 'khalifate' of the tarīqa.[1] Sidi al-Mukhtar, sometimes known as Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kabir, was widely renown for his sanctity and scholarship throughout West and North Africa[2] and to him is attributed the revival of the Qadiriyya and the Maliki madhhab in much of West Africa.[3] He studied under Sidi

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1 An abbreviated genealogy of the Kuntas appears in appendix VII, which illustrates the shift in families which held the spiritual leadership of the Kuntas (and Qadiriyya). Such an event was most likely to have been associated with a re-shuffling of the social and political balance of power among the Kuntas.

The silsila of the Qadiriyya which was propagated by the Kuntas is given in Appendix III.

2 While passing through the Maghrib en route to Paris, Ahmad Rifā'a al-Tahtawi reports having heard of the fame of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti. See his Takhlīs al-ibrīz fī talkhīs barīz (Cairo, 1323/1905), pp. 37-38.

3 This appears to have been first suggested by A. le Chatelier (L'Islam dans l'Afrique, p. 158) who described Sidi al-Mukhtar as exercising the preponderant religious influence over all the Saharan peoples and his disciples as working for the triumph of Islam among the western Sudanese. P. Marty (Les Kounta, p. 27) expands Sidi al-Mukhtar's religious influence as being "Dans tout le Soudan islamisé", and Trimingham (History of Islam, p. 156) carries it a step further, stating that it is to the Kuntas that "all the strains of the Qadiriyya tariqa in West Africa go back." In fact, no study has yet appeared relative to the influence of the Kunta figures either in the islamization of western Africa or in the Qadiriyya, but the outline of this hypothesis would appear valid with regards to the Qadiriyya in southern Mauritania and quite possibly in the lands to the south (Senegal, Guinea, Mali).

Charles Smith has questioned this Kunta influence in

'Ali b. al-Majib in his youth and soon excelled in fiqh, grammar, usūl, hadīth and tasawwuf. At the death of his master in 1170/1756-1757 Sidi al-Mukhtar succeeded him as khalifa of the Qadiriyya, and in this position he presided over the growth of the Kunta confederation. At this point in time the Kunta were roughly divided, as they had been for nearly 200 years, between two geographical areas, the Tagant and Azaouad, and while they had attained considerable strength, they appear by no means to have commanded the prestige or numbers of such dominant contemporary groupings in the western and southern Sahara as the Tajakanat, Berberish or Tuareg Kel Antessar. However, by the end of Sidi al-Mukhtar's lifetime in 1811 the Kunta Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar and their attached and confederated fractions and tribes had become a major influence in the political, economic and religious affairs of the western Sudan and southern Sahara.[1]

Northern Nigeria, pointing out that none of Shehu 'Uthman dan Fodio's ijāzāt contain references to the Kunta figures, nor do those of Muhammad al-Amin al-Kanemi and "neither of these reformers owes anything that I can discover to the teaching of the Kunti mystics." (H.F.C. Smith, "Islam in West Africa", Ibadan, March 1963, p. 31.)

1 An analysis of the putative ancestors of Kunta fractions as recorded by French administrators at the end of the first decade of this century indicates that a very large percentage of the Azaouad Kunta fractions trace themselves to figures who lived in the mid-to-late 18th century, i.e., to figures contemporaneous with Sidi al-Mukhtar and Sidi Muhammad. The clear implication from such an exercise (the results of which may be highly untrustworthy), is that the size of the Kunta confederation and thus their power and influence is a very recent thing, and can be traced directly to the lifetime of Sidi al-Mukhtar.

Disciples of Sidi al-Mukhtar could be found from Northern Nigeria[1] to the Fouta Djallon and from southern Mauritania to Marrakech, and the Qadiriyya was practiced by reformist mujāhidūn or their followers in the Fouta Djallon, Fouta Toro, Northern Nigeria, and was about to be taken up in Massina.

This is not the place to examine in detail the processes by which the Kuntas came to hold the religious influence in West African Islam or the political influence in the western Sahara which they had in the early 19th century, but some hypotheses about how this happened may be suggested. Sidi al-Mukhtar was a distinguished and accomplished faqīh and sūfī in a geographical area in which training in these Islamic sciences was highly respected. He was not the temporal head of the Kunta confederation, but perhaps it was because of this that he developed a policy of political neutrality from which came much of his influence as an arbitrator

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1 Until further documentation is brought to light the use of the word "disciples" in relation to Northern Nigeria should be qualified. Evidence does exist for the cordial relations between Muhammad Bello and Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i (H. Barth, p. 43 and p. 163), and at an earlier date (pre-1817) 'Uthman dan Fodio, himself, received correspondence from the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar camps addressed to their brother in the "al-Mukhtariyya wa al-Muhammadiyya" (see chapter IV, p. 185, note 4.

SKETCH MAP OF WEST AFRICA

indicating geographical areas
and place-names mentioned in the text

Idjil
SPANISH SAHARA
ADRAR
MAURITANIA
TAGANT
TRARZA
Boutilimit
BRAKNA
Kroufa
HODH
Oualata
Tombouctou
AZAOUAD
Niger River
Gao
St. Louis
Senegal River
OUALO
Louga
Cayor
Ndiassane
FOUTA TORO
Dakar
Thiès
Nioro
SENEGAL
Kaolack
KHASSO
BONDOU
MASSINA
MALI
Djenné
Ségou
NIGER
GAMBIA
Gambia River
Barassassoum
(Casamance)
GUINEA-BISSAU
Touba
FOUTA DJALLONE
UPPER VOLTA
Sokoto
Katsina
Bobo Dialasso
Kano
GUINEA
Kankan
NIGERIA
Kaduna
Kong
SIERRA LEONE
TOGO
DAHOMEY
IVORY COAST
GHANA
LIBERIA

in political affairs.[1] He appears to have created, or at least efficiently organised already existing, Kunta commercial operations, e.g., long-distance salt trade between Idjil and the Niger Bend,[2] which gave to his people an economic influence. This economic position tended to lend weight to Sidi al-Mukhtar's opinions as a faqīh and mediator and it benefited the increasing number of clients who took up residence with the Kunta fractions. Gathered about Sidi al-Mukhtar were also individuals, families and fractions from neighbouring tribes who sought the social, economic or political advantages of close association with him. This group of clients, known as the talāmīdh, accounted in large part for the phenomenal numerical increase of the Azaouad Kunta during the lifetime of their shaikh, just as the economic and political ramifications of their presence in his camps accounted in part for Sidi al-Mukhtar's reputation as a generous patron and the reputation of his tribe as a place of sanctuary. Further details of the religious, economic

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1 The temporal leadership of the Kunta fractions rested with the chief of each group, and no single temporal authority dominated the confederation. For one interpretation of the policy of neutrality encouraged by Sidi al-Mukhtar, see the M.A. thesis on this theme by Ross Dunn, University of Wisconsin, 1966, which is a synthesis from secondary sources.

2 For a contemporary survey of the Kunta salt trade, which is relevant to understanding their economy in the 18th and 19th centuries as well, see J. Geneviève, "Les Kountas et leurs activités commerciales", Bull. I.F.A.N., 1950, XII, pp. 1111-1127.

and political organisation of Sidi al-Mukhtar and his son, Sidi Muhammad, must await further study of the Kunta,[1] but an outline for such a study will emerge from the biography of Shaikh Sidiyya whose career and writings very closely parallel the life and thought of Shaikh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti.

Sidi al-Mukhtar was succeeded in the spiritual direction of the Kunta, and the Qadiriyya, by his son, Sidi Muhammad (d. 1826) who, fortunately, appears to have left behind a more voluminous body of descriptive literature than did his father.[2] However, Sidi Muhammad either did not command the respect which his father did,[3] or the circumstances of his fifteen years as khalifa were greatly altered from the period of his father's dominance over the Kuntas in the last

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1 This should be clarified in the forthcoming thesis, now in preparation, by Aziz Batran at the University of Birmingham.

2 see C.C. Stewart, "Notes on North and West African manuscript material relating to the West African Qadiriyya tarīqa", R.B.C.A.D., IV, December 1968, pp. 1-25; see also Cataloque, ms. no. 403.

3 This has been noted by A. Le Chatelier, L'Islam dans l'Afrique, p. 159.

half of the 18th century,[1] because fission began within the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar shortly after Sidi Muhammad assumed his father's position.[2] By the time of Sidi Muhammad's death much of the former strength of the Kunta confederation in the Azaouad had dissipated, and when he died additional fractions began to drift to the west, into the Hodh and Tagant. The khalifate of the Qadiriyya again passed to a scholar external to the Kuntas, Shaikh Sidiyya, or perhaps

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1 Challenges certainly arose during the period of Sidi Muhammad's khalifate which were more complex than those in the time of his father; among the central issues of his day were the influence of the Ahl Sidi Mahmoud and Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad in the west (see Frère Jean, chapters IV and V), Ahmadu Lebbu and the Massina jihād which threatened Kunta control over Tombouctou to the south, in addition to maintaining the Touareg alliances with tribes on the north and east, which had been the legacy of his father.

2 This fission, of course, may have taken place for a number of ecological and political reasons, which we shall not go into here. The most notable division took place upon Sidi Muhammad's succession to his father's position, when Sidi Baba Ahmad left for the Hodh with a number of his relations and a section of the talāmīdh. The descendants of this breakaway movement, known as the Ahl Shaikh, include the Ahl Hammadi o/ Baba Ahmad, Ahl Baba o/ Bakka'i and Ahl Shaikh o/ 'Abdin (see appendix VII; and Marty, Brakna, p. 184). The significance of this is difficult to evaluate, inasmuch as these fractions which came west were in fact located little beyond the normal Kunta nomadic patterns, and this division may have been due to internal tension within the Kunta as much as to their harassment by the Massina Fulani. If one is to believe Barth, the Kunta influence which remained in the mid-19th century in Tombouctou was formidable, a full two generations after the Kunta appear to have reached their apogee.

was divided between him and descendants of Sidi Muhammad.[1]

However, during the lifetime of Sidi al-Mukhtar and, to a slightly lesser extent, the period of his son's succession, i.e., the three-quarters of a century from 1756-1757 to 1826, the Kunta enjoyed an unrivalled religious and economic position in the southern Sahara. By virtue of this position they also held political influence among the southern Saharan and sudanese peoples on and to the north of the Niger Bend, and a considerable part of their religious influence appears to have been promoted, albeit perhaps indirectly, by their practice of the Qadiriyya. Before taking up the spread of the Qadiriyya outside the Kunta confederation in West Africa it might be useful to place the Qadiriyya in context by briefly surveying other turuq in the western Sudan.[2]

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1 Kuntas writing to Shaikh Sidiyya addressed him as the khalifa of Sidi al-Mukhtar and Sidi Muhammad, and it is in this role that he appears to have been regarded by the Kuntas who had come into the Hodh, Tagant and Brakna. I have not seen sufficient correspondence to Sidi Muhammad's successors in the Azaouad, Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Saghir (1827-1847) and Shaikh Sidi al-Bakka'i (1847-1865), to determine whether these khalifas were similarly addressed. However, inasmuch as Shaikh Sidiyya issued the ijaza in the Qadiriyya to Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Saghir, one may suggest that during his period as spiritual leader of the Azaouad Kuntas, those under his influence joined him in his spiritual allegiance to Shaikh Sidiyya.

2 The period with which we shall be concerned here is roughly 1786 to 1883, or the 13th century A.H. Inasmuch as the 13th century A.H. is a less awkward reference than its equivalent time span in Christian years, this shall be frequently employed below.

OTHER TURUQ IN WEST AFRICA DURING THE 19th CENTURY

At the time that Sidi al-Mukhtar and Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti were actively propagating the Qadiriyya, two other turuq, the Shadhiliyya and the Tijaniyya, made their appearance in western Africa. The followings these initially had were confined to the ethnic and tribal groups of the individuals who introduced them. The Shadhiliyya, for instance, greatly influenced the teaching of a Peul scholar from the Fouta Djallon who came in contact with one 'Ali al-Sufi al-Fasi during a visit to Fes. He, in turn, preached and promoted the Shadhiliyya in the Fouta Djallon upon his return, and zawayya formed by his disciples were established at Goumba, N'dama and Jawiya. But the influence of the Shadhiliyya was small and confined to these areas which were later overtaken for the most part by the Tijaniyya.[1]

Another branch of the Shadhiliyya, found in Mauritania and known as the Nasiriyya, was founded by Muhammad b. Nasir al-Dra'i (d. 1079-1080/ 1669) from the Oued Dra' region.[2] It was introduced into Mauritania in the 17th century,

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1 This account is documented in P. Marty, "Guinée", in R.M.M., XXXV, pp. 285-323, who in turn appears to have drawn upon Archives A.O.F., 7-G-86, item 69, dated 1909; however, I know of no other collaborating evidence on the formation and propagation of the Shadhiliyya in the Fouta Djallon.

2 See G. Drague, Cahiers de l'Afrique et l'Asie, Esquisse d'Histoire Religieuse du Maroc (Paris, 1951), pp. 185-226. See also O. Depont and X. Coppolani, p. 467.

allegedly by Hamdi o/ al-Mukhtar Muhjub of the Idaw 'Ali zawiyya tribe. In the 19th century two Nasiri figures are frequently mentioned as the principal muqaddims of the ṭarīqa in Mauritania, Sidi 'Abdallah o/ al-Hajj Brahim (d. 1815) of the Idaw 'Ali tribe and Ahmad Talib o/ Ta'ir al-Jamma of the Idaw al-Hajj, both of whom received the Nasiri wird in Fes. This Shadhiliyya branch in Mauritania had a limited practice among the Tegunannat and Tajakanat in addition to the Idaw al-Hajj and Idaw 'Ali.[1]

The end of the 18th century also marked the introduction of the Tijaniyya into Mauritania by the Idaw 'Ali zawiyya tribe and, from 1828, with the return of al-Hajj 'Umar Tal from Mecca, the Tijaniyya was also propagated in the Fouta Djallon, then Fouta Toro and Massina. Just as the Tijaniyya among the Idaw 'Ali appears to have made little impression beyond the sphere of influence of that tribe,[2] so too the first several generations of that ṭarīqa under al-Hajj 'Umar's direction appears to have had little effect outside his hierarchy of command and immediate following of Toucouleurs. Indeed, in this latter and more popular branch of the Tijaniyya in West Africa there are few indications that the ṭarīqa was taken up outside the towns and villages

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1 Archives R.I.M., E/2/67-68, J. Beyries, "Les Confréries Religieuses de Mauritanie".

2 J. Abun-Nasr, The Tijaniyya (Oxford, 1965), p. 104.

directly under the control of al-Hajj 'Umar; certainly in the Fouta Toro it was not until the closing years of the 19th century that the Tijaniyya may be said to have had a popular following. Until that time the principal figures in Fouta politics, as well as Fouta scholars, were consistently Qadiri in adherence to a sūfī way.[1] Indications are that this may have been the case in the Fouta Djallon also.[2]

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1 Communication from D. Robinson, Dakar, December 1968, whose extensive research in the Fouta Toro will soon be written up in a Ph. D. thesis for Columbia University. Although the spread of the Tijaniyya under the influence of al-Hajj 'Umar has long been assumed to have been a spontaneous and widespread phenomenon dating from the mid-19th century, the evidence available from detailed analyses of the political and religious structures in the Fouta Toro indicates that such families as the Kanes and Wanes remained firmly in control of the political destiny of that area during that time, just as they led the Qadiriyya communities. Unfortunately, there has not yet appeared a critical study of the Tijaniyya tarīqa in West Africa and our knowledge of its activity in other centres, such as Massina, is limited to oral tradition (A.H. Ba and J. Daget, L'Empire Peul du Macina, The Hague, 1962) or syntheses of French administrative reports (J. Abun-Nasr, The Tijaniyya). Hopefully the recent work by W.A. Brown (thesis) will offer new material on Massina.

2 Oral tradition and European travellers in the Fouta Djallon report in the 19th century that the religious and legal scholarship in that region was centred around Touba, where Diahanké, Qadiri scholars maintained a zawiyya, to which Peul leaders came when in need of legal counsel. How, to what extent and when the Qadiriyya was replaced in importance by the Tijaniyya in the Fouta Djallon among the Peuls is not known, but the lasting prestige of the Touba (Qadiri) centre throughout the 19th century lends doubt to the usual assumption that the Qadiriyya was swept away by al-Hajj 'Umar in the 1850's. For an account of the importance of the Touba 'ulamā' in the Fouta Djallon in the late 19th century, see V.S. Gouldsbury, "Report on the Upper Gambia Expedition", Public Record Office, Bathurst, Despatches to Sierra Leone, Gambia no. 120, dated 8.9.1881.

In the second half, and particularly last quarter of the 19th century, numerous branches of the Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya developed in West Africa. The Tijaniyya served as the foundation for the influence of two shaikhs in Senegal, al-Hajji Malik Si (1855-1922) in Tivaouane[1] and Cheikh Ibrahima Nyass in Kaolack (b. 1902),[2] as well as the 20th century Hamiliyya, founded by Hamahu 'llah b. Muhammad b. 'Umar (1886-1943)[3] of Nioro, Mali. In addition to the Kuntas, the Qadiriyya came to be represented by the family of Shaikh Sidiyya in Boutilimit, Muhammad Fadal (1780-1869) under the name the Fadaliyya, and particularly by his sons, Shaikh Saad Bu (1850-1917) at Khroufa in Trarza and Ma' al-Anin (1831-1910) in the Adrar,[4] Shaikh

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1 See J. Abun-Nasr, pp. 143-146 and the forthcoming biography of al-Hajji Malik Si by M'Boun Samba Kaley.

2 See J. Abun Nasr, p. 146.

3 See P. Marty, Soudan, IV, pp. 218-222; A. Gouilly, L'Islam dans L'Afrique Occidentale Française (Paris, 1952), pp. 134-161; and Archives R.I.M., E. Destaing, "Hamalisme". The Hamaliyya is a 20th century ramification of the Tijaniyya which is relatively well documented in its political aspects, owing to French administrative concern over its influence and power during the 1940's in Mali.

4 For accounts of Saad Bu and Ma' al-Anin, see P. Marty, "Les Fadelia" in R.M.M., pp. 137-219. For further detail on Ma' al-Anin, see the extremely useful traveller's account of C. Douls, "Cinq mois chez les Maures nomades du Sahara occidental, 1887", Tour du Monde, 1888, pp. 177-224; Ahmad al-Shinqiti, pp. 365-372; Julio Caro Baroja, Estudios Saharianos (Madrid, 1955), pp. 285-335; and the bibliographical note relating to Ma' al-Anin in H.T. Norris, "Shaykh Mā' al-'Aynayn al-Qalqamī in the folk-literature of the Spanish Sahara", B.S.O.A.S., XXXI, 1968, pp. 113-136 and 347-376.

Bu Kunta at N'diassane, Senegal,[1] Ahmadu Bamba (1850-1927) under the name Muridiyya,[2] and Muhammad al-Aghdaf (d. 1860) under the name of Ghoudfiyya.[3] The reasons behind, and the processes of, this fractionizing of the turuq in West Africa at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century would make an interesting study in their own right. For the moment one may only suggest that it might have been, in part, as the result of the social and political insecurity of this period caused by European penetration and occupation of western Africa, the very rapid rate and popular level of islamization that was taking place at that time in West Africa, and perhaps as part of a general phenomenon of segmentation which seems to occur in the third or fourth generation after the appearance of a particularly revered shaikh in most turuq. However, this phenomenon of tarīqa fractionizing took place outside of the

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1 See P. Marty, "Le Groupement de Bou Kounta", R.M.M., XXXI, 1915-1916, pp. 413-442.

2 See P. Marty, "Les Mourides du Sénégal", R.M.M., XXV, 1913, pp. 3-165; Cheikh Tidiane Sy, La Confrérie Sénégalaise des Mourides (Paris, 1969); V. Monteil, "Une Confrérie Musulmane: Les Mourides du Sénégal", Archives de Sociologie des Religions, no. 14, 1962, pp. 77-102, for the major historical studies, and Donal Cruise O'Brien, "The Mourids of Senegal: the Socio-Economic Structure of an Islamic Brotherhood", Ph. D. thesis presented at L.S.E., 1968-1969.

3 The Ghoudfs, not unlike the Hamalists, attracted considerable attention to themselves in the second quarter of the 20th century, and the French administration compiled impressive dossiers on this Qadiri branch; see particularly Archives R.I.M., E/48.

chronological period with which this study is dealing, and it will not be considered here.

During the period up to the mid-19th century in West Africa there were only two sūfī paths which could claim a large following outside the ethnic group of their shaikhs. One of those, the Tijaniyya, had only recently been introduced and aside from a few limited areas it was not yet in a position to challenge the dominant position of the Qadiriyya. The Qadiriyya was largely under the influence of the Kunta Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar on the Niger Bend and it was established throughout West Africa; until the second quarter of the 19th century it was the only major ṭarīqa in West Africa.

THE QADIRIYYA IN WEST AFRICA IN THE 18th AND 19th CENTURIES: THE MUJĀHIDŪN.

The Qadiriyya in the 13th century A.H. in West Africa was propagated by two broad types of religious movements; militant movements preaching jihād against the backsliders and pagans, and more localised 'quietist' movements led by individuals and families of maraboutic background. The former movements were found in the Fouta Djallon, Fouta Toro, Northern Nigeria and Massina where jihāds were launched in the 18th and 19th centuries under the direction of Toucouleur or Fulani reformers. Each of these men or their descendants and followers are reputed to have had connexions with Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, or his descendants, and one

may assume that the Qadiriyya which these men and their followers practised was, at least in part, of Kunta inspiration. The 'quietist' Qadiri legalists were found in no distinct geographical area nor were they of a specific ethnic origin, but they tended to be teachers and learned men who, upon settling in specific areas, established small followings and created zawayya which served as the basis for their economic and occasional political activities, the legacies of which have often survived to this day among their descendants.

The first of the four major West African jihāds in the 13th century A.H. in which Qadiri figures were involved was in the Fouta Djallon. This was led to successful conclusion by two men, Alpha Ibrahima (also known as Alpha Ba), a religious figure, and Ibrahima Sori who served as the movement's military leader. It is said that this movement was launched about 1725 and ended only fifty years later, in 1775, when the recently arrived Peul Muslims triumphed over the indigenous non-Muslim Jalanké. Thereafter the Fouta Djallon state developed into a complex and carefully balanced political organisation, the leadership of which was divided between the descendants and followers of the two leaders of the jihād -- the Soriyas and the Alfiyas. With varying success a pattern of alternate elective office was shared between these two parties, and it was under this form

of government that the French found the Fouta Djallon upon their arrival there.[1]

The Qadiriyya was clearly practised in the Fouta Djallon in at least the early years of the 19th century, by Diahanké fuqahā' from the Touba area and Bondou, and this branch (see below) was directly linked to Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti. Presumably the Qadiriyya was practised by sections of their Peul suzerains also, but precise information about the date and means by which it was introduced into the Islam of these mujāhidūn has not yet come to light. Similarly, there has yet to appear any analysis of the role, if any, the Qadiriyya or adherents to it played in the jihād or government or leadership in Islam in the 18th and early 19th centuries in the Fouta Djallon.[2]

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1 The details of this sophisticated constitution which was established in the Fouta Djallon are described in P. Guebhard, "L'Histoire du Fouta Djalon", Ren. Col., B.C.A.F., 1909; P. Marty, "Guinée" in R.M.M., pp. 76-89; and L. Tauxier, Moeurs et Histoire des Peuls (Paris, 1937), book III. Trimingham (History of Islam, pp. 169-170) has summarized these accounts. For a useful chronology of the Fouta Djallon events see the interesting collection by Alfâ Ibrâhîm Sow, Chroniques et Récits du Foûta Djalon (Paris, 1968).

2 See pp. 145-148. Aside from the Touba Qadiris, mentioned below, and the Kankan Qadiris, both on the fringes of the Fouta Djallon, the only documented activity of Qadiri adepts in that region is that of the curious group known as "Houbbous", which revolted in 1270/1853 under the reign of Alfa Yaya, and actually occupied Timbo for a time. They are mentioned again in 1864 when they were responsible for concluding the reign of Almamy Ibrahima Dara, and in 1870 when they were involved in a major battle. (see A.I. Sow, pp. 19-20 and pp. 139-141, "La Rebellion Houbbou"). The leader of the Houbbous, according to a French administrative report in

Somewhat better documented are the early years of the jihād in the Fouta Toro, led by Tierno Suliman Bal, a Toucouleur who is said to have studied in the Fouta Djallon and returned home in 1775. There he led his fellow Toucouleurs in a jihād against the non-Muslim tyeddo suzerains of the Fouta. Tierno Suliman's successor in 1776, 'Abd al-Qadir, continued the jihād against the Wolof of Cayor (1796-1797) and he also fought with the Trarza Moors (1786-1787). After a somewhat inglorious conclusion to his career in 1806, the leaders of the confederation of states which has come to be known by the names of two of them, the Fouta Toro, established an elective administrative post (the Almamyate) which frequently changed hands, but remained as a governing institution of gradually decreasing effectiveness as French participation in Fouta politics increased during the last half of the 19th century.[1]

1891, was alleged to be a disciple of Shaikh Sidiyya with whom he had spent 7 years in study (Archives A.O.F., 7-G-76). No record of the presence of the leader of the Houbbous, Modi Mamadou Djoné, has yet come to light in the Sidiyya papers, but such a connexion is not impossible. I am indebted to R.W. Johnson for bringing to my attention the archival reference to the Houbbous.

1 Accounts of the jihād and subsequent governmental structure in the Fouta Toro are forthcoming in the Ph. D. theses by J. Johnson at the University of Wisconsin and D. Robinson at Columbia University, dealing respectively with the first half and second half of the 19th century. For this later period there is also the useful archival work by Y. Saint-Martin, L'Empire Toucouleur et la France, un demi-siècle de relations diplomatique (1846-1893), (Dakar, 1967). The classic study upon which most subsequent work on the Fouta Toro has been based is

The Qadiri connexions in the Fouta Toro are not well documented,[1] although the Qadiriyya is said to have been practised there. Information exists about the Qadiriyya being practised by certain Fouta Toro families of 'ulamā' and fuqahā' in the early 19th century, and the relationship between these 'ulamā' and the Kuntas is clear.[2] As in the Fouta Djallon the evidence has yet to be studied which might produce anything definitive about the popularity and role of the Qadiriyya in the religious, social and political structures of the Fouta Toro. However, it would appear to have been practised within the religious-political 'establishment' and as such it became inextricably linked with all that al-Hajj 'Umar sought to upset when he preached in the

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M. Delafosse and H. Gaden's Chroniques du Fouta Sénégalais (Paris, 1913). An abbreviated narrative of the Fouta Toro jihad and governmental organisation are found in Trimingham (History of Islam, pp. 171-174).

1 Le Chatelier (L'Islam dans l'Afrique, p. 163) specifically denies that the Kuntas had any influence in the Fouta Toro. This is not in agreement with the evidence for the adherence of the Kane and Wane families, for example, who were Qadiris; these families had Almamys representing them several times in the 19th century, and the evidence suggests that they venerated the Kunta figures. See the useful review of Fouta scholars which will appear in the introduction to M. 'Umar Ba's forthcoming translation of the Qur'ān into Poular, "La biographie des hommes de culture arabe au Fouta Sénégalaise entre le XIXe et le XXe siècle".

2 Catalogue, mss. nos. 288 and 467 are letters addressed to Almamy Biram from Shaikh Sidiyya, the Kunta khalifa; see also oral accounts of Kunta and Sidiyya spiritual direction of Fouta murīdūn in Fonds Robinson, I.F.A.N., Dakar, Tierno Dahirou Anne, 9.3.1968, séance 1; Amadou Bokar Alfa Ba à Hôréfondé, 17.4.1968; Ma Diakhité Cissé Kane, 8.4.1968, séance 3.

Fouta.

The next major West African jihād, chronologically, was the movement led by 'Uthman dan Fodio (1754-1817) in Northern Nigeria. He was from an emigrant Toradbe Fulani family and, not unlike his predecessors in the Fouta Djallon and Fouta Toro, he gathered around him students, drew opposition from the ruling Hausa clans for his politically explosive teaching about reform in Islam, and was forced to take flight in 1804. The jihād which followed led to rapid control over the Hausa states and even temporary control over Bornu by 1810; in 1812 'Uthman dan Fodio divided the state he had established between his son, Muhammad Bello, who received the Sokoto Kaliphate, and dan Fodio's brother, 'Abdallahi, who administered Gwandu; both, however, remained vizirs uhtil the death of dan Fodio. The literature which is extant from the pens of these three figures and their followers make this movement one of the most thoroughly documented episodes in West African history, and numerous analyses and interpretations of the thought and times of the leaders of this jihād have been published.[1]

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1 The best recent study is Murray Last's, The Sokoto Caliphate (London, 1967); see also M. Last's bibliography for articles by A.D.H. Bivar, El-Masri, M. Hiskett, T.L. Hodgkin, J.O. Hunwick, M.A. al-Hajj, B.G. Martin, H.F.C. Smith and N. Tapiero.

Unfortunately, no one has yet utilised this voluminous material for a study of the Qadiriyya -- its role or the role of its followers in the jihād and subsequent administrative system.

The Qadiriyya was the established tarīqa of the jamā'a in Nigeria, and it appears to have played a central role in the movement from the outset. It was upon the advice received in a vision from 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani that 'Uthman dan Fodio was advised to make his hijra in 1304.[1] The Sokoto and Kano communities were addressed as "Kadirawa",[2] and arguments were put forward that since the Shaikh was a Qadiri, every community which followed him should also be so.[3] Certainly the most learned families in Sokoto, the fuquhā' and sūfīs, as well as the political establishment followed the Qadiriyya. As elsewhere in West Africa at this time the Qadiris in Nigeria practised no communal dhikr,[4] and some connexions between the Nigerian 'ulamā' and the Kunta

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1 M. Last, p. 10, cited from the Raud al-jinān or Karāmat al-Shaikh, f. 66, cf. f. 3.

2 Ibid., p. lix, note 1, cited from 'Abdullah b. Fodiye, Tazyin al-waraqāt, pp. 81-82.

3 Ibid., p. 216, cited from a gloss on the last folio of Kashf al-Hijab (anon.), Kaduna archives (Sokprof 28:39).

4 Ibid., p. 216.

shaikhs are evident.[1] Of the four major jihāds[2] launched in the 13th century A.H. in which the Qadiriyya was involved, the Nigerian movement, because of the voluminous documentation, would seem to hold the greatest possibility for an understanding of the role the Qadiriyya might have taken on in a centralized political system.

Finally, in Massina in 1818 a fourth jihād, led by Ahmadu Lebbu or Shaikhu Ahmadu (d. 1844) who was also a Toucouleur, sought to reform the syncretic practices in Islam and to convert the non-Muslims in that area. The state which Ahmadu Lebbu established survived until al-Hajj 'Umar's invasion of it in 1862. The Massina empire appears to have been efficiently administered, based on a number of provinces, each with assigned judicial, treasury and military officials.[3]

Tradition relates that one of the great influences in the early education of Shaikhu Ahmadu was a work by 'Abd

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1 See above, p. 119, note 3, and p. 121, note 1.

2 Reference is made here to the 'major' jihads, but there were others in this period which deserve serious study, both from the point of view of the turuq and their part in the pattern of jihads in West Africa during the 13th century A.H. For example, little is known about the jihad of the Touareg Muhammad Jailani in Adar which came to be intimately linked with the Sokoto Khalifate under Muhammad Bello. See M. Last, pp. 109-111.

3 See Ch. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta, (Paris, 1924) and Une Cité Soudanaise: Djenné (Paris, 1932); L. Tauxier, book II, p. 116; A.H. Ba and J. Daget; and the Ph. D. thesis by W.A. Brown (I have unfortunately not yet had the opportunity to read this thesis).

al-Qadir al-Jilani, and that the dominant tarīqa in the Massina empire was the Qadiriyya.[1] Documentation exists which indicates that the sons of 'Uthman dan Fodio and Shaikhu Ahmadu were in contact with one another, although this appears to have concerned legal affairs rather than matters of Qadiri solidarity.[2] The relations between Massina and the Kuntas were initially good, but occasionally tenuous, particularly after the lifetime of Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (d. 1826). However, religious gifts were regularly sent to their Kunta spiritual suzerains by the Massina Qadiris.[3] With the succession of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Saghir to the Kunta 'khalifate' in 1826, the acknowledgement of Kunta suzerainty over Massina in religious matters became subservient to the political control of Tombouctou, then largely under Kunta domination, and warfare between Massina and the inhabitants, e.g., the arma of Tombouctou, drew the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar into opposing the Massina administration. Only with the growing threat of al-Hajj 'Umar did the Kunta,

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1 A.H. Ba and J. Daget, I, p. 62.

2 This is reported in Ibid., p. 114, and I have also seen correspondence among Shaikh Sidiyya's papers in Boutilimit that was described to me as an instance of Kunta intervention in Massina-Sokoto affairs in a mediation effort over the boundary between the two spheres of influence. Details of this will be forthcoming in an article.

3 A.H. Ba and J. Daget, p. 116.

then under the direction of Ahmad al-Bakka'i (Barth's protector), resolve the hostility which had developed between themselves and Massina,[1] but this appears to have been motivated more out of the Kuntas' fear of a united Massina / al-Hajj 'Umar / Toucouleur thrust into Tombouctou than an indication of any inherent solidarity between Qadiri masters and their murīdūn.

In summary, these militant Islamic movements have several points in common, in addition to the Qadiriyya having been present at some level in them all. All were launched by Toucouleur/Fulani aristocracies, and all had some contact with the Kunta confederation, notably with Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti. The objective of each movement appears to have been the reform of a declined Islam or the submission of neighbouring syncretists or kāfirs to Islam, and the means by which this was done was a rigorous application of the sharī'a. For those leaders about whom we have information, their training in the sharī'a appears to have been thorough. Unfortunately, detailed studies of the function of the Qadiriyya in the centralized governmental structures which were established by these jihāds are not yet available, nor do we have information on the

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1 This latter period of Massina-Kunta difficulties is reviewed in P. Marty, Les Kounta, p. 90-92.

possible political role which was played by the tarīqa in any of these movements. The Kunta-Qadiri connexions and theme of legal reform are the principal common denominators, and these recur again among the 'quietists' who propagated the Qadiriyya.

18th AND 19th CENTURY 'QUIETISTS'

In recent years the attention of historians of Islam who have been working in West Africa has been drawn, quite understandably, to the 13th century A.H. mujāhidūn and to the Islamic movements at the end of the 19th century which were a response to increased European interest in the interior of Africa. However, the result of this preoccupation has been virtually to ignore the vast areas of West Africa which were not directly affected by the jihāds in the 13th century A.H., but in which the process of islamization was carried on with a vigour often equal to that found under the governments established in the name of Islam. One of the reasons for frequently by-passing these 'quietist' islamizing elements is obviously the difficulty of documenting the actual influence of the individuals involved, or of collecting representative literature from the remains of the zawayya in areas which were only marginally touched by other

major historical movements.[1]

However, the second means by which the Qadiriyya was spread in west Africa during the 18th and 19th centuries was by the preaching of such individual marabouts of superior education. This 'quietist' aspect of the Qadiriyya was characterized by an 'ālim settling in an area, often as a 'stranger', and there taking up a career of teaching for the duration of his life. Frequently his children and grandchildren followed in his steps, either having been educated within their own families or having been sent back to their father's masters, or to the sons of his master.

Other categories of quietists are the itinerant merchants, generally known by the generic term 'dyula' in the westernly areas of west Africa and 'wangara' in the more easternly areas, and the court scribes. The traders were generally Muslims and their influence in the islamization of the areas with which they were in regular contact, while some-

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1 For the important studies on Islam outside the areas touched by the jihāds, see N. Levtzion, Muslims and Chiefs in west Africa: a Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the pre-colonial period (London, 1968); and Ivor Wilks, "The Growth of Islamic learning in Ghana", J.H.S.N, II, 1963; "The Saghanughu and the Spread of Maliki Law: a provisional note," Research Revue (I.A.S., Legon), II, no. 3; "The position of Muslims in metropolitan Ashanti in the early nineteenth century", Islam in Tropical Africa (ed., I.M. Lewis, London, 1966); and "The Transmission of Islamic Learning in the Western Sudan", in Literacy in Traditional Societies (ed., J. Goody, Cambridge, 1968), pp. 161-197.

what over emphasized by some writers, did bring Islam, and the Qadiriyya, into major commercial centres. Court scribes and legal advisors who were employed by chiefs in pre-literate and non-Islamic states should also be mentioned among the quietists, although their powers as propagandists were frequently curtailed by their employers. In terms of the actual religious influence exerted over a particular community, the resident learned local man or Arab 'stranger' frequently held greater power and produced a more lasting effect upon the local practices of Islam than did his itinerant merchant or royal employee brother. In any event, the categories of figures who promoted Islam which have been described here are not mutually exclusive, and such an analysis should be framed in terms of roles played rather than social positions held. A Diahankê dyula, for example, affiliated through marriage to the Touba zawiyya (see below) could conceivably have acted in the off trading season as a scribe at the court in Bondou. Such a combination of roles is, indeed, quite likely to emerge with further research into the Muslim holy men - merchants in the islamization of West Africa.

We will illustrate this quietist tradition in the propagation of the Qadiriyya by brief sketches of four men and their religious influences who are representative of broad categories of the quietists. One is a sudani who

had studied under Moors in the southern Sahara and returned home to establish a religious centre, one is an alleged Arab who came into West Africa and created a zawiyya, and two are Moors who were active in propagating the Qadiriyya, one by starting an offshoot of the Qadiriyya, and the other by his faithful reproduction of the Kunta 'model' among his own people. These summaries are intended as a balance to the more fully documented activities of the 19th century mujāhidūn, and as a representative selection of the types of numerous quietist marabouts whose commerce, social role, conception of Islam, piety or syncretism caused them to turn away from a jihād of the sword.

One of the little known West African centres of Arabic scholarship in the 19th century was at Touba, in the Fouta Djallon, where a small number of Diahanké scholars came to be grouped in about 1805.[1] The founder of Touba, in whose family the leadership of the zawiyya rested throughout the

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1 Monographs concerning Touba are available in P. Marty, "Guinée" in R.M.M., pp. 160-185, and J. Suret-Canale, "Touba, Holy Place of Islam", in African Perspectives (C.H. Allen and R.W. Johnson, ed., Cambridge, in press). This latter version, which corresponds very closely to P. Marty's account, is a translation of a history which was written expressly for M. Suret-Canale about the town's history; further details about the Diahanké, generally, are available in the numerous books and pamphlets produced by such Diahanké scholars as 'Abd al-Qadir Silla in Marassassoum (Casamance, Senegal). See his Bayān li-janna al-difā' 'an al-katt al-hadīdī ila al-'ulamā' al-islāmī (Damascus, 1349/1931).

19th century, was Karam Ba (al-Hajji Salimu: c. 1750-1829) of the Gassama clan originally from Bondou. Karam Ba's studies are well documented; he moved from Bondou (Khasso) to Diounbourou, Djenné and then Kankan studying works on grammar, fiqh, tawhīd and majic over a thirty year period. During this time he was evidentally initiated into the Qadiriyya, perhaps while in Djenné or during his sojourn in the Fouta Toro, but there is no documentation about where he received the Qadiri wird. After returning home, and with some difficulty, he established the village of Touba on the edge of the Fouta Djallon, where he later died, leaving twelve sons whose descendants account in part for the numerous Diahanké families found today in Guinée-Bissau, the Casamance and The Gambia who claim 'Fouta Touba' origins. Karam Ba's sixth son, Muhammad Tasliminka inherited his father's position as leader of the Touba community. He is said to have left Touba only once during the ensuing twenty years, and that was to visit Shaikh 'Abd al-Latif al-Kunti and Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya from whom he received the Qadiri wird.[1] The fifth of Muhammad Tasliminka's

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1 This 'Abd al-Latif is presumably the same figure who is said to have visited Touba and the Fouta Djallon, and while there written a legal commentary which is today in the possession of al-Hajji Kemo Kamara, Pikine, Dakar. According to the oral tradition about 'Abd al-Latif, he returned to Boutilimit and took with him a Touba copyist, or was himself the copyist, who made a copy of the T.T., perhaps the version which is now in Boutilimit. Interview with al-Hajji Bou Bakar Sahou of Thiès, in Boutilimit, 23.1.1969.

fourteen sons, Karamoko Qutubu (known as 'Abd al-Qadir: c. 1830-1905), in turn succeeded his father as spiritual leader of the community and, like his father, travelled to Boutilimit to be confirmed in the Qadiriyya by Shaikh Sidiyya. En route he learned of the Shaikh's death, and so he saw Sidiyya's son, Sidi Muhammad. This dates this visit to the single year, 1868-1869 in which Sidi Muhammad succeeded his father before his own death. Karamoko Qutubu was a prolific writer and at least fourteen literary works are attributed to him.[1] The decline of Touba may be dated from the arrest of Karamoko Qutubu's second son and successor, Karamoko Sankoun (c. 1860-1912), who was taken prisoner by the French garrison at Touba in 1910 out of fear of an alleged plot against the French administration in Guinea.

Touba, throughout the early and mid-19th century, was essentially a zawiyya populated by perhaps 7,000 Diahanké, largely from the Gassama clan, and their students. The mosque of Touba was among the largest in the Fouta Djallon and the library of Karamoko Qutubu is said to have numbered 500 volumes.[2] Touba was one of the two holy towns in that region (the other being Kankan), and in spite of the Peul

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1 P. Marty, "Guinée", in R.M.M., p. 165; copies of many of these are with Karamoko Qutubu's descendants in Marakissé (Casamance, Senegal), e.g., al-Hajji Mawi Swari and his brothers.

2 Ibid., p. 181.

state and the legal reform which is said to have accompanied the jihād in the Fouta, Touba was recognised, at least in the late 19th century, as an important zawiyya and as the centre of legal scholarship for that area.[1] The Qadiriyya, too, was regarded as nearly an ethnic creed (as it still is) by the Diahanké, and their allegiance in this is traced directly to the Kuntas and their khalifa, Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir.

Karam Ba and the growth of the Touba Diahanké zawiyya have been noted here because both are representative of other, similar learned men who, upon returning from their studies, have established villages and gathered about them a nucleus of their own ethnic and linguistic groups, with a greater or lesser degree of success, in order that they may lead exemplary lives governed by the sharī'a. Similar zawiyya-like establishments existed at Bobo-Dialasso and at Kong. That these centres have tended to be found along commercial routes and their economic bases were generally the labour of their students explains in part the multiple functions which they played. Until detailed studies are

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1 "Toobah was the largest town we saw throughout the whole of the expedition. ...and its mosque is, I believe, the largest in the kingdom. Toobah is the seat of the Mohammedan Hierarchy of the nation, and is, as it were, the Canterbury of the country. Whenever the Foulahs are about to make war they send to Toobah to invoke the prayers of its priests for success in their enterprise." (V.S. Gouldsbury, p. 33).

available on a number of these zawiyya centres, one can hazard few general comments. However, it does seem clear that it was from such centres that the Qadiriyya was propagated outside or along side the geographical areas touched by the jihāds in West Africa. One of the roles played by the Qadiriyya in such centres was that of linking the shaikhs and their students to a wider Islamic world, which frequently meant specifically links to the bidān shaikhs of the southern Sahara.

The second holy place of Islam which was near the Fouta Djallon was situated at Kankan, an important centre on the eastern frontier of the Fouta and a southern terminus of the Niger River trade. The influence of the village of Kankan was due in large part to Sharif Lamine, and his descendants. Sharif Lamine, presumably a late 18th century figure, was the son of a Sharif Ismail from Baghdad who is said to have travelled to West Africa via Cairo, Fes, Tombouctou, Diafounou and Ségou where he died leaving seven sons. In Tombouctou it is alleged that he met Sidi Bakary (Bakka'i ?) al-Kunti, at which time he was charged with the mission of bringing Islam to the lands to the south. Sharif Ismail's sixth son, Sharif Lamine, continued on from Ségou to the Fouta Djallon and Kankan where he died, having renounced jihād in favour of conquering the hearts of men. His successors and descendants were Sharif Aikali Mahmoud,

Sharif Tida Mahamadi (who is said by the French to have acted as a baggage carrier for René Caillié at Touré), Sharif Sidiki Karomoko (who was Samory Turé's religious master and confidant, and whose brother acted as Samory's governor of Kankan) and Sharif Seku Muhammad, called Sharif Fanta Madi (1875-1955).[1]

Unfortunately, details of the part played by Kankan in the islamization of adjoining areas are not yet known, but the centre was clearly an important link between the Fouta Djallon and the communications and commercial routes of the Niger River, leading to Djenné and Tombouctou, as well as the other sudanese centres of Islam in Kong and Bobo Dialasso. On the strength of oral tradition concerning the shurfa of Kankan and their connexions with the Kunta shaikhs, the arrival of the sharif appears to have marked the introduction of the Qadiriyya in Kankan, although knowledge of the precise nature of the link between Kankan and the Kuntas must await further research in Guinea and along the Niger River.

Although the details of the Kankan shurfa and their activity in the spread of the Qadiriyya in the 19th century is unclear, they do illustrate a pattern of Moorish and allegedly Arab figures who were regularly in contact with

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1 Archives R.I.M., series E, "Notice...sur le Chérif Panta Madi", and A. le Chatelier, L'Islam dans l'Afrique, pp. 162-163.

the sudanis of West Africa. The majority of these men were probably traders (and also, presumably, had an only rudimentary educational background) and their influence in the islamization of the areas in which they were in contact was very limited. But there were also such figures as the Sharif of Kankan, 'Abd al-Latif (al-Kunti ?) in Touba, and Shaikh Bu Naama (Bu Kunta of N'diassane),[1] who were learned men in the Islamic sciences, and the zawayya they established or were associated with played a major role throughout the 19th century in the rejuvenation or introduction of Islam in the areas in which they settled.[2]

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1 Shaikh Bu Naama was of Kunta descent, having been educated in the Azaouad in the Hemmel fraction of the Kunta. He first came in contact with the St. Louis area while there on a mission buying horses for his shaikh, and upon returning to the Azaouad he requested the blessings of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti to return to Senegal and to settle there to help reform Islam in that area. This was granted, as was the permission of the Damel of Cayor for Bu Naama to settle in his region. The descendants of Bu Naama live today at N'diassane, one of the three holy towns within a 15 kilometre radius which includes Pire, the early 19th century educational centre that played an important role in the higher education of many Fouta Toro students, and Tivaouane, the site of al-Hajji Malik Sy's zawiyya. For an account of Shaikh Bu Naama and the N'diassane zawiyya, see P. Marty, "Sénégal", in R.M.M., pp. 415-416.

2 Similarly, the centres from which these shurfa and putative Arabs came in the southern Sahara played an important role, not yet assessed, in the islamization of black Africa. One example of these southern Saharan zawiyya groupings is the Kuntas, but others can be mentioned. For example, it was among the Awlad Daimanis that 'Abd al-Qadir in the Fouta Toro is said to have received his education (M. Delafosse and H. Gaden, p. 59). The same tribe was responsible for the education of several generations of the Seck family, e.g., Bou el-Moghdad and his son, who had the same name (Archives R.I.M., E/2/124,

Other examples of quietist Islam which had considerable influence in the training of West African 'ulamā' and in the propagation of the Qadiriyya, are found among the Moorish 'ulamā' and shaikhs in the southern Sahara. Among the Moors four figures stand out as the principal 13th century A.H. Qadiri muqaddims. Three of them, who were considered as Shaikh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti's chief disciples in Mauritania -- Shaikh al-Qadi, Shaikh al-Manni and Shaikh Sidiyya we will consider together below. The fourth, who will be considered separately and first, was Shaikh Muhammad Fadal (c. 1780-1869), the founder of a Qadiriyya offshoot known as the Fadaliyya. Muhammad Fadal traced his origins to a sharif who was said to have migrated into the Hodh of Mauritania in the 17th century where his people, the Ahl Talib al-Mukhtar estab lished themselves between Goumbou and Oualata. This ancestry is widely challenged in the Hodh, particularly by the Kuntas, where the Ahl Talib al-Mukhtar are considered as a tribe of

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"Mémoires de Bou el-Moghdad"). The Seck family had a very great influence over the direction and implementation of French West African Muslim policy in the 19th century by acting as qādīs for the Muslim community in St. Louis, translators and Arabic scribes for the government and agents in Mauritania and in the Fouta Toro for various French governors.

These Saharan zawiyya influences cannot always be identified with sufī propagation, although such training usually did form a part of the education a sudani might expect to receive among, for example, the Idaw 'Ali or Awlad Ibiri.

lowly zenagha stock.[1] Perhaps partly as a result of this controversy, and the vocal part played in it by the Kuntas, Muhammad Fadal never allowed his sons to study under the Kunta shaikhs in the neighbouring Azaouad, and by virtue of this the form of the Qadiriyya which Muhammad Fadal preached represents one of the few non-Kunta traditions for the tarīqa in western Africa.[2]

This independence from the Kunta-Qadiriyya tradition is dramatically illustrated in the practice of the Fadaliyya, which stresses communal dhikrs, with recitations at elevated voices, and the incorporation of all other turuq within the body of the Fadaliyya. Both of these aspects attracted adherents to the order, especially among the sudanis in the Circle of Goumba. Partially as a result of these departures from the austere, legalist and 'intellectualized' tradition of the Qadiriyya represented by the Kuntas, and partially because of his 48 sons and 50 daughters, Muhammad Fadal left behind a legacy that was to expand the beginnings he had made in establishing the Fadaliyya.[3] Among Muhammad Fadal's sons,

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1 P. Marty, "Les Fadelia", pp. 139-140.

2 The silsila for the Fadaliyya includes none of the standard figures who appear in the Kunta Qadiri silsila (i.e., al-Maghili, al-Suyuti, or al-Ghazali). For arguments about the independence of 'Uthman dan Fodio's version of the Qadiriyya from the Kunta tradition, see p. 119, note 3.

3 P. Marty, "Les Fadelia," pp. 141-146.

the two who have received the most attention by subsequent historians are Shaikh Saad Bu and Shaikh Ma' al-Anin.[1] No analysis has yet appeared on the influence or role of the Fadaliyya in the first half of the 13th century A.H. either in Mauritania, although there are indications that its influence there was slight indeed, or among the sudanis who are said to have taken up the Fadaliyya with much enthusiasm.[2] However, until further information is made available, it would appear a valid conjecture that the Fadaliyya enjoyed a following which was largely outside the social group of Muhammad Fadal, i.e., it was made up of non-Moors or non-bidān Moors. This following was largely posterior to Muhammad Fadal's life under the influence of his sons and daughters, but especially Shaikh al-Hadrami and Saad Bu; the latter is said to have dispensed both the Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya.[3]

The three other Mauritanian Qadiri figures mentioned above all attained their positions as muqaddams and shaikhs after study with Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and/or his son, Sidi Muhammad. Numerous 18th and 19th century Shinqiti scholars trace part of their education to the Kunta 'ulamā', but the individuals mentioned here are the three principal

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1 See p. 130, note 4.

2 P. Marty, "Les Fadelia", p. 143 and 145.

3 According to Depont and Coppolani (p. 318) Saad Bu also granted wirds in the Shadhiliyya and the Aissawiyya.

Kunta <u>muridūn</u>. Of these three shaikhs, Shaikh al-Qadi (d. 1815) of the Djedjeba, Shaikh al-Manni of the Taghat, and Shaikh Sidiyya of the Awlad Ibiri, we will outline the career of the last by way of illustrating these Kunta <u>muqaddims</u> and introducing the subject of this study.

Shaikh Sidiyya, called "al-Kabir" (1775-1868), was from the N'tishait fraction of the Awlad Ibiri tribe which is located in Trarza in south-western Mauritania.[1] The career of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir is extremely well documented and the Shaikh's extant literary works and correspondence represent perhaps the largest body of this type of literature from the pen of a nineteenth century Islamic personality that has yet become available to historians of West Africa and the southern Sahara.[2] He is also of considerable importance to our knowledge of the influence of the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and the evolution of the Qadiriyya in western Africa. because Shaikh Sidiyya duplicated within his own tribe, the Awlad Ibiri, the Kunta tribal aggrandizement accomplished by Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, albeit on a slightly

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1 The title of "al-Kabir" was added to his name by later generations of his family and followers so as to distinguish between him and his grandson, Shaikh Sidiyya, known as "Baba", whose assistance to Coppolani in the French 'pacification' programme in Mauritania gained for his family and tribe its greatest notoriety in the eyes of most European students of that country.

2 For a brief explanation of the 587 items which appear in the <u>Catalogue</u> of this collection, see the discussion of sources, above, in the Introduction.

lesser scale. In so doing many of the concepts he employed in the organisation of his tribe and administration of his religious followers appear to have been influenced by, or even borrowed directly from, his Kunta masters. The growth of the Awlad Ibiri and the religious and political influence of Shaikh Sidiyya may thus suggest certain lines of inquiry about the less adequately documented phenomena of the growth and influence of the Kuntas in West African Islam.

Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir enjoys a reputation among the 'ulamā' today in Mauritania which is comparable to the reputation of Shaikh Ma' al-Anin, who is generally recognised as the historical figure who succeeded Shaikh Sidiyya in Mauritania as a supra-tribal religious and political leader, mediator and jurist. During Shaikh Sidiyya's lifetime one finds correspondents, which include Kuntas, addressing him as "the khalifa of our Shaikh Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtar [al-Kunti]", and it would seem a fair assumption on the grounds of this that his religious influence and political position somewhat over-shadowed his colleagues in Tagant and Brakna who also had studied under Kunta direction. Similarly, from the oral and written literature the Shaikh clearly was the dominant personality in the Qadiriyya in Mauritania during his career from 1828 to 1868.

It is for these reasons of rich documentation left by Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir, his role as a Qadiri muqaddim, his close relationship with his Kunta masters and the

extent of his influence in Mauritania in the mid-19th century which is recognised today as having been unique in the period of his lifetime, that Shaikh Sidiyya was selected as the focus of this study.

At the outset of this survey of the spread of the Qadiriyya in West Africa it was emphasized that our knowledge of the tarīqa in West Africa was minimal and that this survey was likely to provoke more questions than it answered. The actual spread of the Qadiriyya in West Africa is not difficult to outline and types of movements with which the Qadiriyya was associated can be described. The common themes throughout these descriptions, whether they be of mujāhidūn or of quietist marabouts, are the practice of the Qadiriyya and the preoccupation with legal reform or application of the sharī'a. Another aspect of the Qadiriyya which has not been emphasized is the relatively small numbers of Qadiri murīdūn during the early 19th century. The tarīqa itself, was widespread, but until very recent times its followers remained a small body of, generally, learned men whose scholarship and Qadiri practice were complementary. Indeed, sufism appears to have been an essential part of the education of many of these 'ulamā'-shaikhs. This perhaps explains why the Qadiriyya tended to be identified with the religious establishment by al-Hajj 'Umar; it was not a

popular tarīqa in the early 19th century but rather, in the Kunta tradition, it represented a highly intellectualized sūfī science which was open to only a few. But beyond these general remarks, little is known about the role of the Cadiriyya in the 18th and 19th century West African Islam, a period and area in which there were numerous important islamizing movements with which it was associated. Ignoring for the moment questions which arise in the last half of the 19th century when the Tijaniyya and Cadiriyya and their offshoots created new tensions and competitions between turuq, the survey above raises questions about the nature of the Kunta religious and political influence in West Africa and the extent to which the Kunta Qadiri murīdūn reflected or transferred this. Other questions involve the consistant link in these movements between legal reform or scholarship in the sharī'a and the Qadiriyya, and the explanation for the practice of the Qadiriyya within a religious elite in West Africa. These are types of questions which cannot be easily answered outside a carefully 'controlled' situation, and for this reason, and those summarized above, we will next take up our case study -- the career and writings of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir.

IV. SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S STUDIES AND TRAVELS

> And when he [Shaikh Sidiyya] was well versed from his education [received in Trarza and Brakna], he set out for Shaikh al-Mukhtar al-Kunti in the Azaouad. ... [And when] he returned to his tribe, the Awlad Ibiri, they received him as a man of his standing ought to be received and they treated him reverently, and they acknowledged his virtues, and his virtues continued to become so apparent that the zawayya and hassanis submitted to him, and he became like a king among them, and no one questioned his command.
>
> Ahmad al-Shinqiti (1911)[1]

By way of introduction to Shaikh Sidiyya's biography we will examine briefly the social and political milieu of the Awlad Ibiri and the Shaikh's fraction, the N'tishait, at the end of the 18th century in southern Mauritania. For this we are largely dependent upon later literature which is contemporaneous with Sidiyya's career in Trarza (1835-1868), and this has been supplemented by oral tradition and information which can be deduced from his genealogy.

Until the time of Shaikh Sidiyya's early studies, 150 years and some seven generations after the appearance of the Awlad Ibiri as a tribe, our knowledge of that tribe is extremely sketchy. The only major event in this period which has not been summarized above in discussing the Awlad Ibiri genealogy is a dispute which took place between the

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1 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241.

Awlad Ibiri and the Tendera,[1] quite possibly over water rights at the well of Aguillel. Both Awlad Ibiri and Eastern Tendera are reluctant to discuss this affair today and the only account of the dispute which is easily available comes from an oral source external to these tribes.[2] According to this source the affair began when some Awlad Ibiri tributaries, the Tadaissa, left the Ahl Mrabat Makka to join the Tendera of the East. The Awlad Ibiri sent a mission to request their return and the Tendera replied by despatching to the mission a large and generous calabash of milk, but without a ladle with which to drink it. The Awlad Ibiri mission, feeling themselves insulted, threw the milk upon

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1 The Tendera have been mentioned above as one of the tribes which accompanied Abu Bakr ibn ʿUmar in the Almoravid invasion of the western Sahara; the tribe also took part in Shurr Bubba, and in the social fragmentations and consolidations which followed they divided into two groups, presently known as the Tendera of the East and Tendera of the West. It is the latter group, which is situated along a line extending south from Nouakchott to the Senegal River, that accounts for the greater part of the Tendera (three of the five major fractions). The Tendera of the East, located in eastern Trarza, was the section of the tribe involved in the Awlad Ibiri - Tendera conflict. The particular wells which are said to have been abandoned by the Tendera after the battle until the tribe was pardoned by Marium Mamma (Shaikh Sidiyya's mother's mother) were Ashwara, el-Badru, Maihum, Touffi, N'toufqt and Aguri, which lie along a NE-SW line between Boutilimit and Aleg.

2 Interview with Mokhtar ould Hamidoun, Nouakchott, 22.4.1969; see also a version of this in P. Marty, Trarza, p. 248-249.

the ground and withdrew.

Shortly afterwards a Tendera man was killed by a man from the Awlad Ibiri and the qãdĩ judicating, who is today said to have favoured the Awlad Ibiri, ruled that no compensation need be paid to the Tendera. Infuriated at this, the Tendera took their revenge at the well of Aquillel which was being sunk by the Awlad Ibiri at the time, by killing nine men from that tribe, one Awlad Ahmad and one smith. A series of skirmishes between them followed. The Awlad Ibiri recount that the battle, in which they were in alliance with their hassani cousins, the Awlad Ahmad, lasted eleven days, and each day is named after one of the eleven men killed by the Tendera. After eleven days the Tendera, severely beaten, withdrew across the Senegal River, returning only after the affair had quieted down. It was only settled finally some forty or fifty years later allegedly by Shaikh Sidiyya's mother's mother.[1] The exact timing of this major episode in Awlad Ibiri history has been given by Ahmad al-Yadalli, who dates the conclusion of hostilities as the year of Shaikh Sidiyya's birth (1190/1776).[2] While this

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1 This is the version of the settlement offered by the Awlad Ibiri; the woman was Marium Mamma who is recognised today as a scholar and salĩk whose baraka was widely respected. She was also the mother of Muhammadhan Habib Allah (called 'Menni') o/ Atgfagha Abaid who was the war chief of the Awlad Ibiri in their battle with the Tendera.

2 Communication from Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, Nouakchott, 22.4.1969. Ahmad al-Yadali is a contemporary historian living in Nouakchott.

coincidence may appear to be a case of dating after the fact so that the Shaikh's birth-year might coincide with the cessation of hostilities, other evidence suggests also that the battle took place between 1180 and 1190 (1765/66 and 1775/76).[1]

An assessment of the relative strength of the Awlad Ibiri as an independent entity in relation to other Trarza tribes in the 18th century, or even a statistical summary of their numbers or a definition of the wealthier fractions can only be approximate at best.[2] However, one may suggest with some certainty that the six largest fractions were the Ahl Mahandnalla (in whose hands rested the direction of the tribe), Ida Hiss, Ahl Ahmad al-Falli, Ida Bahum, Ida Mijin and Awlad Khajil, probably in that order. Later, mid-19th century figures suggest that roughly three quarters of the nobles from the tribe were to be found in these six fractions and within the first three were probably nearly half of the tribe's population.[3] Of these six fractions, the Ida Bamar

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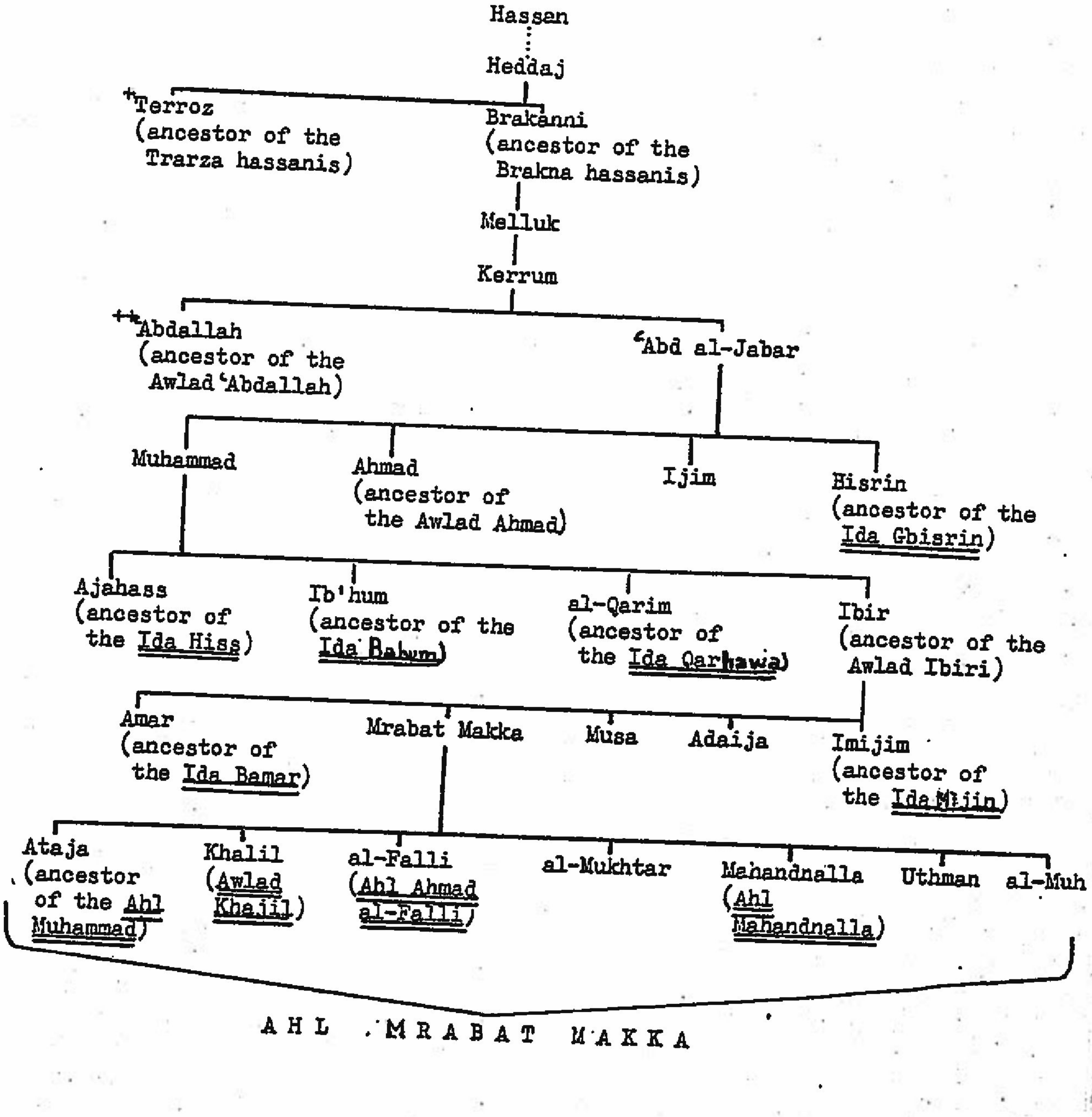
1 Ibid., Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun recalls his father telling of Tendera men who came to the Awlad Daiman (Tashumsha) in request of aid in 1185/1771, and he thinks that the hostilities would have pre-dated that time.

2 For this and subsequent discussions concerning the fractions (afkhādh) of the Awlad Ibiri, see the chart on p. which summarises the fractions and their ancestors; the map following indicates the nomadic patterns and wells of the Awlad Ibiri.

3 Catalogue, mss. nos. 405, 427, 428 and 429.

ABBREVIATED GENEALOGY OF THE AWLAD IBIRI

indicating the ancestors of the
fractions of that tribe in the 19th century



Principal attached fractions: Idaw Rish
Idaghaniyya
N'tishait
al-Hajjaj

+ For an abbreviated genealogy of the Trarza hassanis descendant from Terroz, see p. 206.

++ For an abbreviated genealogy of the Brakna hassanis descendant from Brakanni, see p. 128.

- SOUTHWESTERN MAURITANIA

Indicating nomadic patterns of the Awlad Ibiri and principal tribes mentioned in the text

Awlad Ibiri fractions

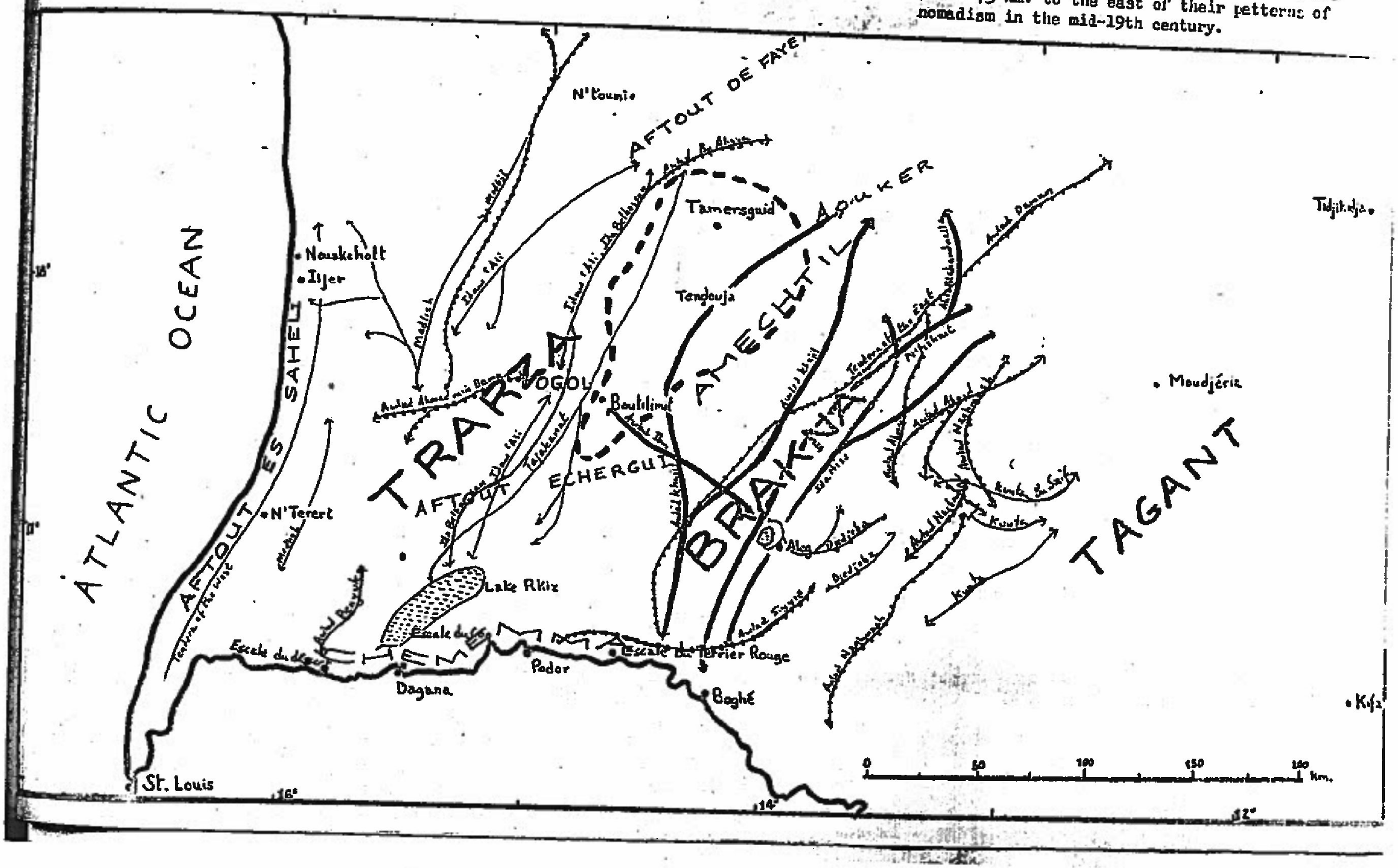
Other zawiyya tribes

Hassani tribes

Area of the greatest concentration of Awlad Ibiri wells and cemeteries

This abbreviated map of nomadic patterns is taken from F. Bonnet-Dupeyron, Transhumance et Nomadisme en Basse-Mauritanie vers l'est: jusqu'à Aïoun el Atrouss, carte provisoire (Office de la Recherche Scientifique Coloniale, Bureau d'Etudes Humaines, Paris, 1950).

Indications from the placement of wells and cemeteries of the Awlad Ibiri suggest that the present nomadic patterns of that tribe are 50 to 75 km. to the east of their patterns of nomadism in the mid-19th century.



as Eastern Awlad Ibiri were not directly concerned with the nucleus of the tribe and might almost be treated separately in any assessment of balance of power within the tribe.[1]

In 19th century correspondence about the payment of a blood debt, Shaikh Sidiyya set the total number of nobles by blood or attachment to the Awlad Ibiri at between 1150 and 1340,[2] which is to suggest that two generations before, at the end of the 18th century, that number might be (generously ?) estimated at 1000 nobles, perhaps 800 to 900 of which were of 'pure' Awlad Ibiri origin, i.e., counted among the descendants of Ibir and his brothers and uncles, but not including attached fractions such as the N'tishait. Although this number does not include, of course, the lower classes of smiths, griots, slaves and haratine, comparison of this number with that of the present population of the

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1 The Ida Bamar, Awlad Adaja and Idaw Rish nomadized in an area to the east of the main body of Awlad Ibiri fractions (see map, p. 164), and they were addressed in mid-19th century correspondence as a unit unto themselves, "The Awlad Ibiri of the East"; see Catalogue, ms. no. 369.

2 Catalogue, mss. nos. 405, 427, 428 and 429. During the settlement of this diyya affair (see below, pp. 219-224) Sidiyya made a show of force which amounted to some 300 noble men from the Awlad Ibiri. Such a figure would appear to represent the minimal number in the Awlad Ibiri jamā'a in the mid-19th century.

Awlad Ibiri (20,000 persons),[1] now a dominant Trarza tribe, gives some indication of the relative numerical importance of the tribe at the end of the 18th century. Another comparison may be made by noting major 19th century campaigns fought by the amir of Trarza against Oualo, Brakna or the French when his forces were such that the French prepared to meet him with a number of men equal to that which appears to have constituted the whole of the Awlad Ibiri at the end of the 18th century.[2]

In terms of extra-tribal relations one must assume, largely on the grounds of there being little information available about the Awlad Ibiri until the lifetime of Shaikh Sidiyya, that up to the end of the 18th century, the Awlad Ibiri played no significant role in zawiyya politics in southern Mauritania. The Tendera dispute had, of course, only just taken place, but the Awlad Ibiri victory in that conflict in alliance with their infamous Awlad Ahmad cousins

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1 Archives R.I.M., 2-D-254.

2 Muhammad Lhabib's strength on the battle field is not reported, but in one major engagement in 1856 the French prepared a force of 934 men -- calvary, infantry, artillary etc. -- to meet him. (Archives A.O.F., 13-G-120, item 76, dated 8.6.1856). A population estimate of Trarza in 1858 reported 25,000 hassanis and 30,000 zawayya (Moniteur du Sénégal, dated 25.2.1858). According to any of these comparisons, approximate as they are, the Awlad Ibiri emerges as a small unit in comparison with the mid-19th century hassani or zawiyya tribes.

can hardly be said to have elevated their prestige among their zawiyya colleagues in the area. Today, numerous learned men and women from the Awlad Ibiri are recounted as having enjoyed reputations for their scholarship or piety in the 18th century,[1] but such figures are to be found in most every zawiyya tribe. The fame and abilities of such individuals often bear direct relation to the fame and abilities of a widely renown figure who appears several generations later in their genealogy, and whose family and followers legitimate their veneration of the figure by reference to the tradition of piety or erudition which he represents.[2] This is not to cast doubt upon the existence of learned men and women among Shaikh Sidiyya's ancestors in the Awlad Ibiri. But in relation to other zawiyya tribes in the 18th century, the Awlad Ibiri was in no scholastic

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1 Examples are Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh al-Mustaf al-ʿArabi, who was a disciple of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti before Sidiyya returned from the Azaouad and Muhammad o/ Mulud o/ Mahmud Dhalla (Ahl Mahandnalla), who wrote a mathematics text for Sidiyya while he was in the Azaouad; the poet ʿAbd al-Malik o/ Imam (Ida Qarhawa); ʿAbd al-Rahman o/ Mahammidu o/ Kattab (al-Hajjaj) and Marium Mamma mint Maham (Ida Bamar) who was mentioned above.

2 In this same sense the numerous 16th and 17th century Kunta figures who are glorified in the T.T., emerge as far more learned and pious men than might have been the case were Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti not to have successfully avoided Tajakanat efforts to crush the nascent Kunta expansion in the 18th century or had his political ambitions been successfully thwarted elsewhere.

position to challenge the three principal maraboutic tribes or confederations in southern Mauritania -- the Tashumsha (e.g., Awlad Daiman and Ahl Barikallah), the Idaw 'Ali and the Tajakanat. Nor did the tradition of scholarship among the Awlad Ibiri rival such secondary, but longer established zawiyya tribes, such as the Djedjeba or Ida Belhassan, not to mention the then expanding and influential Kuntas further to the east. Perhaps the most telling indication of the somewhat insecure position held by the Awlad Ibiri in relation to their neighbours was their continued use of a cattle and camel brand, until 1827, which was a variation on the Tendera brand [↑]. It may be assumed that this was a carry-over from Tendera influence over the tribe in pre-Shurr Bubba days.[1]

There is little that can be said about Awlad Ibiri - hassani politics in the 18th century. The modest numbers of

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1 Until Shaikh Sidiyya introduced the elongated bā' (ـــــ) as the Awlad Ibiri brand, the tribe used enlarged variations of the Tendera symbol, known as the lahbāra (↑). The Awlad Ahmad al-Falli employed the camel brand ↑ and ↑ , the N'tishait ↑ , the Ida Mijin ↑ , the Awlad Khajil ↑ , the Ida Bamar ↑ , etc; each was known by a specific name.

The camel and cattle brand was used in southern Mauritania principally by the Ahl Zawayya and it constituted an assurance that any lost or raided livestock, mistakenly taken into other herds whose owners recognised the spiritual or temporal influence of the unit whose brand it was could see to the animal's return. One way that appended fractions to a tribe indicated their incorporation into the tribe was by adopting the brand, or a variant of it, and by this they placed themselves under the protection (and liabilities) which that brand might offer.

the tribe, alone, suggest that they must have been extremely vulnerable to hassani razzia, though this danger may have been somewhat mitigated by the cognatic ties between the Awlad Ibiri and the Awlad Ahmad. It has been noted above that Ibir, the converted zawiyya, was a nephew of the putative ancestor of the Awlad Ahmad hassanis, and cognatic links between the Awlad Ibiri and the Awlad Ahmad were maintained throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.[1] This evidently afforded sufficient alliance for the probably decisive Awlad Ahmad intervention on the side of the Awlad Ibiri in the Tendera dispute. Throughout the 19th century one finds a tacit alliance, as between brothers, as both the Awlad Ibiri and Awlad Ahmad increased in influence, each with increasing success, along their very different zawiyya and hassani paths. One finds today the narrative of this alliance the source of some embarassment to some members of the now-established Awlad Ibiri, and some of their Awlad Ahmad cousins assert that to categorize the Awlad Ibiri among the

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1 Some of the important Awlad Ibiri - Awlad Ahmad marriages took place between N'tishait men and Awlad Ahmad women. Examples of the offspring from such unions are Rajil o/ Bashir whose mother was from the Awlad Ahmad, as were the mothers or grandmothers of Sidiyya o/ Talib o/ Haiba and Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya; Habib o/ Mrabat of the Ahl Mahandnalla and the Ahl Limhaba of the Ahl Ahmad al-Falli also had Awlad Ahmad mothers. Communication from Bu Bakar o/ Salif of the Awlad Ahmad, Nouakchott, 24.4.1969.

'legitimate' zawayya is entirely misleading.[1] One must assume that in the 18th century these lines between the Awlad Ibiri's hassani past and zawiyya present were even less distinct.

But whatever the Awlad Ibiri practice as people of the zawiyya was at that time, the alliance with their Awlad Ahmad cousins presumably compromised them in the eyes of their fellow zawayya, just as it most assuredly protected them against undue hassani exploitation.

When Shaikh Sidiyya was born in the third quarter of the 18th century, his fraction, the N'tishait, was four generations in 'depth' (the Shaikh and his cousins being the fifth generation). This genealogical reckoning is based on information given by historians within the tribe today, and there would appear to be no serious reason for questioning the authenticity of these post Shurr Bubba genealogies. If one assumes that the N'tishait fraction was formed about the time of Shurr Bubba this yields a very plausible generation length of slightly over 21 years. Although this is three to five years below what is considered to be the usual age for male marriage [2]

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1 Ibid.

2 The age at which men marry is set at 26 years according to a contempoary author, Brahim o/ Cheikh Sidia Baba in The Introduction to the Customs of the Bidāns (al-'Awā'id al-Bidāniyya al-muqaddima). The manuscript is in the possession of the author at el-Maimoun, Trarza, and is being edited by Mokhtar ould Hamidoun. The same author places the marriage age for women at 15; the age of 26 for men (see folio 13) may be questioned as being, in fact, slightly elevated from the actual mean age at which men marry, perhaps somewhat influenced by the date of the Prophet's marriage. In Mauritania men generally marry between the ages of 21 and 25.

today, it is likely to be very near to the actual norm for marriage in a family in the somewhat insecure social and economic position in which the N'tishait appear to have been in the 18th century. According to the full genealogy of the fraction,[1] Shaikh Sidiyya's father, al-Mukhtar o/ al-Haiba, had 18 male cousins which constituted the fourth generation of the fraction and which most assuredly would place the number of N'tishait firgān at something less than 18. Thus the N'tishait was one of the smaller fractions within the Awlad Ibiri.

Within the N'tishait the dominant family at that time was that of the descendants of al-Falli, e.g., Atgfagha Abaid, the second son of Abu Bakr o/ N'tishait. This is explained, in part, in al-Falli's name; he was named after the ancestor of his mother's fraction, the Awlad Ahmad al-Falli, which was probably among the dominant fractions within the Awlad Ibiri at this time. It was this family of Atgfagha Abaid o/ al-Falli into which al-Haiba (Shaikh Sidiyya's grandfather) married.[2] Likewise, two of Shaikh Sidiyya's three brothers married into the same family.

Within a cross-section of 38 figures in the first six generations of the N'tishait genealogy, about two-fifths

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1 See a full genealogy of the N'tishait in appendix II.

2 This would have meant that Sidiyya's father would have received his initial education among the Ahl Atgfagha Abaid camps, and been on familiar terms with them.

of them married within the N'tishait, most of them to parallel, patrilateral cousins of varying degrees of distance. A slightly larger number of these marriages were to other Awlad Ibiri women, notably the Ahl Ahmad al-Falli, Awlad Khajil, Ahl Mahandnalla, Awlad Adaja, Ida Bamar and Ida Mijin. These unions established close cognatic ties between the N'tishait and these other Awlad Ibiri fractions which are reflected in the particular fractions from which Shaikh Sidiyya drew his closest associates. Finally, a small but extremely important group (9 of the 38 marriages) were exogamous, involving women from outside the Awlad Ibiri, notably the Ida Belhassan[1] and Awlad Bu Saif Kuntas among the Ahl Zawayya, and among the hassanis, the Awlad Ahmad, Awlad Mansur, Awlad Daman and Awlad Bu Aliyya. Reference to such cognatic ties between the N'tishait and units outside the Awlad Ibiri reappear often in Shaikh Sidiyya's correspondence, to justify his intervention on behalf of

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1 The Ida Belhassan are a revered zawiyya tribe which traces its origins to the companions of Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar, and any marriage into such a tribe, particularly into a principal family of it, carried with it considerable prestige. The N'tishait kept alive this affiliation with the Ida Belhassan established through the wife of Ahmad Daula, and in Shaikh Sidiyya's time one of his principal disciples, Shaikh al-Hasan, as well as some of Sidiyya's strongest non-Awlad Ibiri support was drawn from the Ida Belhassan.

the such-and-such, maternally related unit, or to explain, to them the grounds on which he is taking them to task over their neglect in a particular matter. A full summary of the marriages of the principal figures in the first six generations of the N'tishait appears in appendix VI.

In summary, Shaikh Sidiyya's fraction, the N'tishait, was one which was then accepted to have been an appendage to the Awlad Ibiri in the 19th century, and at that time the N'tishait was only four or five generations in depth. Within this fraction, Sidiyya's own family cannot be said to have been in a dominant position. However, his immediate family as well as his fraction had made judicious marriage alliances within the N'tishait and the tribe, respectively, and the N'tishait were firmly established, albeit probably in a somewhat subservient position, within the Awlad Ibiri by the end of the 18th century.

SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S EDUCATION

An effort has been made in the preceding section of this chapter to explain the social and political milieu of Shaikh Sidiyya's family, fraction and tribe in southern Mauritania. However, the early years of Sidiyya's education were not prejudiced by his relatively humble origins or

the undistinguished position of his tribe among the Ahl Zawayya, as he followed the well established pattern for the noble son of a zawiyya family in learning to read, write, memorize the Qur'ān and generally acquiring adab.

The patterns and variations of this first stage in traditional Mauritanian educational system have been well described elsewhere and they will only be summarized here.[1] Initial training which includes the alphabet and beginning the memorization of sūras is the responsibility of the mother and maternal kin (grandmothers, aunts). This is not, of course, a formal stage in the educational process but a continuation of the child's early development (walking, talking, praying etc.), and it is influenced by the mother's own degree of education. If the mother is only recently

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1 Several accounts of the Mauritanian educational system have been published: see Ahmad al-Shinqiti, pp. 517-518 and 519-521; Brahim o/ Cheikh Sidia Baba, pp. 20-23; Ahmed Baba Miské, "Al-Wasît (1911), Tableau de la Mauritanie à la fin du XIXe siècle", Bull. I.F.A.N., XXX, series B, no. 1, 1968, pp. 122-127, and "Le Nomad Maure", Mémoire 21, E.N.F.O.M., 1958-1959; Dah o/ Halba, "La vie d'un enfant maure", Mémoire from Centrifan, Mauritania, n.d., Archives I.F.A.N., XIII-3, item 63; and an article by Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun in the newspaper, Mauritanie (now discontinued), which appeared in 1961, about the traditional Moorish educational system.

married or the child is her first, these early years may be spent entirely in her parent's camp, and if not, and her people are not too distant, it may be assumed that the child would spend a very considerable amount of his time in her camp. During this time such oral literature as genealogies of the families and tribe and its social distance with stranger groups is absorbed by the child. The beginning of a more formal education (reading, writing and sūra memorization), marked by the use of a lauḥ, generally begins after circumcision (usually at age 5), as do obligatory prayers five times per day with the family. Soon afterwards, a male tutor is appointed to supervise the child's memorization of the Qur'ān which is generally completed by age 13 or 14. At this stage much depends upon the intellectual abilities of the child himself and the resources of his family; most girls go little further than these rudiments of education. Boys of noble origin, if they possess the means to do so, will go on to further studies, the exact elements of which depend upon the tradition for this higher education in the tribe or region. In Adrar and Tagant this means al-Akhdari,[1] Ibn

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1 The authors listed here are taken from Ahmad al-Shinqiti's short description (pp. 517-519) of classical education in the regions of Mauritania and they are intended as a representative selection of the authors who are studied; a more comprehensive treatment of the basic texts used in Mauritania is found in Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, Mauritanie.

The reference here is to al-Ṣadr b. 'Abd al-Rāhman b. al-Walī al-Ṣalih al-Akhḍarī, fl. 943/1534 (G.A.L., II, p. 355 and G.A.L. Suppl., II, p. 705).

Ashir[1] and the Risāla of Khalil;[2] in Trarza the next stage is poetry and perfection of Arabic generally, and dogma in al-Ashari[3] and al-Sanusi.[4] Following this, grammar and law may be taken up as a basis for advanced work in logic or rhetoric or other sciences, depending largely upon the teachers and books that are available to the student.

Shaikh Sidiyya's first 13 years of Qur'anic education are, quite understandably, not documented although one may assume that during this period his education followed a pattern very similar to that which is described above. Initially this would have been done under the supervision of his mother, Marium barka mint ʿAbdallahi o/ Abu Bakr o/ N'tishait, and his maternal relations (see the abbreviated genealogical chart for the N'tishait below). As the eldest son of al-Mukhtar o/ al-Haiba and Marium barka we do not know whether the young Sidiyya lived with his maternal kin during this period, but insofar as one of Sidiyya's brothers (Talib) married a grand-daughter of his maternal uncle, Sidi o/ ʿAbdallah, one

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1 Abu Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. ʿĀshir al-Andalusī al-Fāsī, d. 1040/1631 (G.A.L. Suppl., II, p. 699).

2 Khalīl b. Isḥāq b. Mūsā al-Jundī al-Malikī al-Miṣrī, d. 767/1365 (G.A.L., II, p. 83-85).

3 Al-Ashʿarī, either G.A.L. Suppl., I, p. 345 or al-Ashʿarī al-Yamānī, G.A.L. Suppl., I, p. 558.

4 Muḥammad Yūsaf b. ʿUmar al-Ḥasanī al-Sanūsī, d. 892/1486 (G.A.L., II, pp. 250-252).

may assume that the two families were in close relation. During these 13 formative years Sidiyya did complete his Qur'anic memorization and he began elements of grammar, but evidentally his family thought that further study would best be accomplished outside the Awlad Ibiri (which may reflect their assessment of their own level of scholarship), and he was sent first to Hurma o/ 'Abd al-Jalil al-Alawi of the famous Idaw 'Ali zawiyya tribe.

The Idaw 'Ali tribe has been mentioned above as one of the principal zawiyya tribes in Mauritania which traced their roots in Mauritania to the Almoravids and had, at the time Sidiyya went to study there (1766/1769) a long-established tradition of scholarship. At the end of the 18th century the tribe was located in three areas of Mauritania, western Trarza, Tijikja and Adrar, as the result of internal divisions produced by an Idaw 'Ali civil war in the 17th century, probably as a part of the general upheaval which has been noted above in discussing Shurr Bubba. The fame of the Idaw 'Ali to students of North and west African history lies in the tribe's active propagation of the Tijaniyya <u>tarīqa</u> during the first quarter of the 19th century. It was to the Trarza Idaw 'Ali that Muhammad al-Hafiz o/ al-Mukhtar returned after his contact with Ahmad al-Tijani in Fes shortly after 1789, and it was between this time and the death of Muhammad al-Hafiz (1830) that the Idaw 'Ali throughout Mauritania are said to

have taken up the Tijaniyya. The tarīqa was established, we are told, as a 'national faith'[1] within the tribe. Unfortunately, adequate documentation has not yet been presented which might assist an assessment of the historical or religious role of the Tijaniyya in Mauritania or West Africa, much less among the Idaw 'Ali. Shaikh Sidiyya, who was most certainly present in Idaw 'Ali camps at the return of Muhammad al-Hafiz to Trarza, nowhere mentions the Tijaniyya in his voluminous correspondence, nor does his writing reflect any sort of inherent rivalry among turuq in western Africa. However, one must not entirely discount the contacts he may have had with Muhammad al-Hafiz or the possible impact upon him of ideas which were associated with the Tijaniyya during his studies with Hurma o/ 'Abd al-Jalil.

Hurma o/ 'Abd al-Jalil, Shaikh Sidiyya's master among the Idaw 'Ali, is portrayed in the Kitāb al-wasīṭ[2] as a man of great discipline and forbearance who held the confidence and respect of all his students. He was, himself, a student and advocate of al-Mukhtar al-Buna al-Jakani, the Tajakanat mujtahid and Kunta rival whose qasīda against the arrogance of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti is related in the Kitāb al-wasīṭ.[3]

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1 J. Abun-Nasr, The Tijaniyya (Oxford, 1965), p. 103.

2 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, pp. 24-30.

3 Ibid., p. 282.

It is said that none of Hurma's students attained such a level of scholarship as did Shaikh Sidiyya and Mahand o/ Sidiyya ʿAbdallah al-Shaqrwi.[1]

During his first four years under Hurma, Sidiyya studied the Arabic language (presumably grammar and poetry, though we do not know the specific texts), and a commentary of Ibn Darīd. The following thirteen years (1792/93 - 1805/06) were also spent with Hurma, though the specific subjects which he took up are not known.[2] No doubt much of his time was spent serving his master and learning, through association with him, of a wider world, which was the usual form of higher education at the feet of a distinguished scholar in Mauritania. This education would have included a voluminous body of oral literature, much of it in the form of Hassaniyya poetry. It is by these later and informal aspects of the educational process as much as by the formal memorization and copying of established texts that adab is judged in the Mauritanian social context.

The Kitāb al-wasīṭ includes in the biography of Shaikh Sidiyya a short and very credible resumé of his life with Hurma o/ ʿAbd al-Jalil. In this passage Sidiyya is portrayed as a devoted servant, diligent student and confidant:-

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1 Ibid., p. 25.

2 Harouna o/ Cheikh, Tārīkh li-hayāt al-Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabīr, in process; the work had reached the eleventh cahier-book in May 1969. Cahier 3, p. 13.

> And one who had seen him during a period of his study under him [Hurma o/ 'Abd al-Jalil] said, "I asked Hurma, the forementioned, about the student that went first among them to the water, to water the cows, when the servant responsible for this duty was not present, and no one was appointed to this other than Shaikh Sidiyya. And when he returned with the cows he [Hurma] would begin to read with the student by the light of the fire. And I asked them again [about] who among them milked the cows, and no one was appointed to this other than Shaikh Sidiyya. Then, he returned after milking the cows and began to read again. And he delivered messages for Hurma also. When one of them brought food for the visitors residing near him, no one was appointed to this other than Shaikh Sidiyya.[1]

This first experience for Sidiyya outside the camps of the N'tishait must have been important both for his future academic career and for the formation of a broad outlook on inter-tribal affairs which he demonstrated later in his life. His educational accomplishments in poetry, Arabic grammar and oral hassani literature evidentally were very well advanced by the end of his 17 years among the Idaw 'Ali; in his last year there, or immediately after leaving Hurma, Sidiyya completed his first dated work (1 Rabi' II, 1220/ July 1805) which was a commentary on an abridgment of Ibn Darid.[2]

Sidiyya left Hurma o/ 'Abd al-Jalil at the beginning of 1220/1805, at which time he would have been aged 30, and the

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1 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, pp. 240-241.

2 Sharh maqsura Ibn Darid; see Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun and Adam Heymowski, Catalogue Provisoire des Manuscrits Mauritaniens en langue arabe préservés en Mauritanie, Nouakchott and Stockholm, 1965-1966, p. 94.

following year he continued his studies under Habib Allah o/ al-Qadi (d. about 1815) of the Djedjeba tribe which nomadized immediately to the east of the Awlad Ibiri, in the region of Brakna. The Djedjeba were also a long established zawiyya tribe, though not with an academic reputation nor with a population comparable to the Idaw 'Ali; their reputation in the early 19th century was chiefly built around Shaikh al-Qadi (d. about 1780), under whose son, Habib Allah, Sidiyya continued his studies. Shaikh al-Qadi had been a disciple of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti.[1] The Djedjeba claimed Himyarite origins, had taken part in Shurr Bubba against the Awlad 'Abdallah and as a result had since that time served as consultants to the amirs of Brakna. Habib Allah o/ al-Qadi was from the fraction of the Djedjeba (the Idagfara) which exercised religious direction over the tribe and it must be assumed that Sidiyya sought him out as much for Habib Allah o/ al-Qadi's reputation as a mystic, which he shared with his father, as for his family's experience as religious and legal counsellors to the Djedjeba and, in turn, to the Awlad Siyyid fraction of the Awlad 'Abdallah.

It was under the direction of Habib Allah that the first of Sidiyya's legal studies can be definitely documented, commencing with Khalil, and it appears that during his four years with the Djedjebas he concentrated on fiqh. It was at

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1 P. Marty, Brakna, p. 165.

this time that Sidiyya wrote a commentary on Lamiyya al-Af'āl of 'Ibn Malik' (completed Rabi' I, 1222/ May 1807).[1] It is unclear whether he became interested in the Qadiriyya at this stage of his education, although there must have been a marked contrast between the attitudes held towards Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti by Hurma o/ 'Abd al-Jalil, an avowed opponent of the Kuntas, and Habib Allah o/ al-Qadi, who was a murīd of Sidi al-Mukhtar. On the evidence from Sidiyya's writings[2] it would seem doubtful that he thought himself ready for the step which the Qadiriyya represented to him.

At the conclusion of these four years (1809/1810) and quite probably due to the influence of his Djedjeba master, Shaikh Sidiyya set out for further study under Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, who was then at the conclusion of a career which was without parallel among his contemporary religious leaders in the southern Sahara. We have reviewed above the career of Sidi al-Mukhtar and it only remains to emphasize the reputation which he evidently enjoyed throughout western Africa at this time. His disciples could be found in Mauritania, the Fouta Djallon, Bondou and the Fouta Toro where it appears they attracted considerable attention as jurists and religious leaders.[3] For Sidiyya, who was by this time a well educated

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1 See Catalogue, ms. no. 3.

2 See an analysis of the Shaikh's writings about the Qadiriyya and sufism, in general, in chapter VII below.

3 See above, chapter III, p. 119 *et seq.*

man, continued study under Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti represented one of the most advantageous options available to him from an academic point of view. In religious terms, there is also evidence that he believed the next stage in his formal studies ought to lie in the acquisition of the means to mystical knowledge (haqq),[1] and that he sought out the Kuntas for the extra-academic tutoring which this demanded.[2]

At age 34 the Shaikh set out for the Azaouad by commercial caravan, a long and tedious route which necessarily led him northeast via Tichit where, for reasons not entirely clear but possibly due to only seasonal caravans or his own financial means, he stayed one year. No doubt he became familiar at this time with the libraries there in the hands of the Shurfa of Tichit, and collected or studied additional oral and written literature. At the same time he probably learned more about his future master, as the Shurfa of Tichit were still within the Kunta sphere of influence at this time. Also, one may assume that he became acquainted with the politically influential families in the Hodh and

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1 The meaning here and below of the term haqq will be Truth in the sūfī sense of that Divinely guided insight into the Nature of Allah's purpose in the universe which compliments all other knowledge in the Islamic sciences.

2 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241 and p. 361.

Tagant. Unfortunately, we have no detailed account of his stay there. The following year he went on to the Azaouad, arriving there the first day of Dhu al-Hijja, 1225/ 28 December 1810. Only five months later on Wednesday night Jumādī I, 1226/ 28 May 1811, and much to the disappointment and sorrow of Sidiyya, his shaikh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti died.[1]

The entire structure of the Kunta religious hegemony in the southern Sahara which had built up around Sidi al-Mukhtar and the scholarship which had evolved under his patronage stood in danger of disintegration. Sidiyya stayed on temporarily, but after eight months he wrote a letter to Sidi Muhammad o/ Sidi al-Mukhtar, his shaikh's khalifa and son, requesting permission to return to Trarza. Sidi Muhammad's response (dated 12 Rabi' II, 1227) was a work of some forty pages in which he requested Shaikh Sidiyya to remain with him, offering in the text convincing evidence of the value Sidi Muhammad placed on the talents and services of his Mauritanian tilmīdh.[2]

Shaikh Sidiyya remained with Sidi Muhammad for the next 15 years during which time he appears to have served as his secretary and counsellor. As such Sidiyya was intimately involved in the political issues and problems in the not

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1 T.T. in I. Hamet, "Littérature", p. 201. Harouna o/ Cheikh, Tārīkh, Cahier 3, p. 1.

2 Harouna o/ Cheikh, Tārīkh, Cahier 3, p. 1.

altogether successful efforts of Sidi Muhammad to maintain the religious hegemony he had inherited. We have noted above the challenges presented to the Kuntas at this time in their disputes with the Ahl Sidi Mahmoud, Idaw 'Aish, Tajakanat and Idaw al-Hajj. Sidiyya must have also been aware of the events in Massina which led to Ahmadu Lebbu's near-invasion of Tombouctou (1825/6)[1] as he quite probably knew of the rescue of Major Laing (29 January 1826) from the Hoggar Tuareg which is attributed to Sidi Muhammad.[2] From his correspondence at this time and subsequently, Sidiyya also appears as a collector and authoritative commentator on Kunta religious tracts[3] and he, himself, initiated some works, such as his qasīda (pre-1817) to 'Uthman and 'Abdallahi dan Fodio and Muhammad Bello dan 'Uthman.[4] He also assisted in one instance in judicating the geographical borders between Ahmadu Lebbu and 'Uthman dan Fodio. The fact that he issued an ijāza at this

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1 For an account of this see A.H. Ba and J. Daget, vol. I, pp. 211-213.

2 P. Marty, Les Kounta, p. 67; see also "Letters of Major Alexander Gordon Laing, 1824-1826", in E.W. Bovill, Missions to the Niger (London, 1964), vol. I.

3 The Boutilimit library of Shaikh Sidiyya contained numerous Kunta works; one of Sidiyya's compilations of Kunta writings is cited in Harouna o/ Cheikh, Tārīkh, Cahier 3, p. 4.

4 Ibid., p. 10; and Catalogue, ms. no. 483.

time to Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Saghir,[1] who had previously studied under both Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and his father Sidi Muhammad, would indicate that Sidiyya's level of scholarship was highly regarded among the Kuntas. At the same time he must have read and studied in most of the libraries available to him; among Sidiyya's papers is a list, in his handwriting, of the literary works written by Sidi al-Mukhtar and Sidi Muhammad. Unfortunately this bibliography of Kunta works is incomplete, but all of the 32 works on it were presumably available to him.[2] Some of Shaikh Sidiyya's dated works can be definitely affixed to this period when he was in the Azaouad[3] and it may be assumed that others of his undated mu'allifāt were also composed while serving with the Kuntas.

It is during the time of Sidiyya's study and work in the Azaouad that we can date the end of his formal education and the commencement of his career, ~~may be dated~~, although the precise date for this is difficult to set. Neither an ijāza nor wird presented to Sidiyya by Sidi al-Mukhtar or Sidi Muhammad is known to be extant, yet it may be assumed that he accepted the Qadiriyya while he was in the Azaouad; subsequent ijāzāt which he issued in the Qadiriyya and the

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1 Harouna o/ Cheikh, Tārīkh, Cahier 3, p. 11.

2 Cataloque, ms. no. 403.

3 For the list of dated works which can be set in this period, see Harouna o/ Cheikh, Tārīkh, Cahier 3, pp. 1-11.

Islamic sciences (see below) all stated that his authority was derived from the written and oral permission of the Kunta shaikhs. The Kitāb al-Wasīṭ adds that Shaikh Sidiyya studied with Sidi Muhammad until the latter was surpassed in his knowledge of the ṭarīqa and the knowledge of secrets.[1]

Shaikh Sidiyya's 17 years of study and service with the Kuntas appear to have made a more lasting impression upon his future career than all his previous studies and later travels. His intimacy with the Kuntas after this time, particularly with the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, was comparable in social distance to that of the relationship between a nephew and maternal uncle (the exact roles which were taken being dependent upon the seniority of the Kunta personality involved). It has been noted above that Kunta correspondents commonly referred to Shaikh Sidiyya as the 'khalifa' of Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtar, and this spirit of respect was extended to all relationships between the Kuntas and Awlad Ibiri. Kuntas, almost regardless of their fraction, although particularly those from the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar, were regularly given hadiyya by Sidiyya, and when visiting Awlad Ibiri camps they were given places of honour. This deference to the Kuntas survives among the Awlad Ibiri today.

SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S RETURN TO TRARZA

The precise date of Shaikh Sidiyya's departure from the

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1 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241.

Azaouad is not known, although there is evidence of his presence in Trarza by Rabi' II, 1243/ October or November 1827. But certain alterations in his style suggest that a commentary compiled on 11 Sh'abān 1242/ 10 March 1827, might well have marked the conclusion of his Azaouad study.[1] Either of these dates is compatible with Paul Marty's narration that Shaikh Sidiyya was en route home when, hearing of Sidi Muhammad's death (May 1826), which followed a fever epidemic, he returned to preside over the burial of his shaikh.[2] The Kitāb al-Wasīṭ adds that on his return to Trarza Sidiyya embarked first for the Tendera but he was not received well and for this reason returned to his own tribe.[3] Within the N'tishait this somewhat inglorious version of the Shaikh's return is not mentioned, but it is recalled today by the Tendera that he visited them first upon his return and five of their young men went off with him as students.[4] That he returned with a small retinue

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1 This has been suggested by the linguist and historian Mohammed ech-Chennafi, cited in Harouna o/ Cheikh, Tārīkh, Cahier 3, p. 12.

2 P. Marty, Les Kounta, p. 68.

3 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241.

4 Interview with Mohammed Yahya o/ Aghfaghadaraja, qādī of Boutilimit and a noted Tendera historian, 18.4.1969, Boutilimit. It was also added that the tribe presented Sidiyya with 100 pieces of quinée and camels during the five days he spent with them at the well of Butimsquit.

is confirmed among the Awlad Ibiri, and this included individuals who were among his first disciples from the Tendera and the Awalad Ibiri fraction, the Ahl Mahandnalla.[1]

Upon entering the Amashtil region Shaikh Sidiyya passed among the Ida Mijin, Ida Samar (the fraction into which his sister had married), Ahl Ahmad al-Falli, Ahl Mahandnalla, and on through the tribe's fractions, renewing acquaintances after his absence of 38 years of study and travel and receiving the submission of the individual fractions. His principal concern at this time was to immediately group around himself his own N'tishait fraction. After this, according to oral tradition within the Awlad Ibiri today, Sidiyya's first major action was to assemble representatives of all the fractions of the Awlad Ibiri in what was then an unoccupied valley, convienently located mid-way between winter, dry season pasturage close to the Chememma and summer pasturage on the fringes of the Sahara. In this valley, known for its rich summer herbage (tilĪmĪt), for asses and sheep, wells were sunk, agricultural lands were demarcated near-by, and there evolved an administrative and economic centre which served as a focal point for the Awlad Ibiri and for Shaikh Sidiyya's influence; the beginning of the Shaikh's career in Trarza was thus marked by the creation of Boutilimit.[2]

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1 Ibid.

2 Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, 16.4.1969.

The Shaikh settled among the Ahl Mahandnalla during his first years back in Trarza where, tradition relates, he received an enthusiastic welcome[1] which accounts for his initial teaching being based on that fraction. It has been noted that the political direction of the Awlad Ibiri also rested with the Mahandnalla fraction at this time, and it was in his association with the Ahl Mahandnalla, particularly the Ahl Mustaf and the frig of the Ahl 'Ali o/ 'Abdi that Sidiyya's political career was based. All of that fraction offered religious gifts (hadiyya) to him, and by taking up residence there he placed himself at the centre of Awlad Ibiri affairs. Sidiyya's chief activity during these initial years after his return was in the re-grouping of the Awlad Ibiri, which then was widely dispersed throughout Trarza. This policy is most graphically seen in his introduction at this time of the Awlad Ibiri camel and cattle brand, an elongated bā' (⟶)[2] which was borrowed from the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti's bā' lām-alif (⅄ ⅂) brand which represented an abbreviation of basmallah. The camel brand

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1 Interview with Harouna o/ Cheikh, 16.1.1969, Boutilimit and communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, 4.2. 1968, Boutilimit.

2 see above, note 1, p. 168. The date of this introductio is documented in the Hassaniyya proverb current among the Awlad Ibiri:

بوُل أدَاهْ البجْبل كَانِتْ امْدَرِّسْ إلِى جَاهَ سَمَّكْ اجْلْ عَنَّه الدَّرِيز

اعَادْ هوَ عَشَرتَه الاعَطْ عَاشَت وذن ارعَاج فيه يجَبْلْ

to the effect that upon Shaikh Sidiyya's return from the Azaouad, the tribe's brand was replaced and this new brand was so wide spread in its adoption that it was as if the former brand had never existed.

in Mauritania, signifying as it does the patronage or baraka by which the owner wishes his animals to be identified and protected, is one of the indications of a tribe's sphere of influence. Sidiyya's brand, initially unique to his own animals and those of his fraction, was by the end of his lifetime employed (or variations on it) on herds of several tribes and fractions outside the Awlad Ibiri, some located as distant as modern-day Spanish Sahara and southern Morocco.[1] His introduction of a new brand at this time and the acceptance of it by the Awlad Ibiri is the most convincing evidence of the tribal cohesion which was created by his presence and prestige.

A brief glimpse at the Shaikh's domestic life comes from his marriage, shortly after his return from the Azaouad, to a woman from the Ahl Mahandnalla, Meme mint 'Ali o/ 'Abdi o/ Mustaf o/ Mahandnalla. This family, it has been noted, was the one with which he stayed upon returning to Trarza and, at the same time, it was one of the most advantageously placed families among the Awlad Ibiri into which the Shaikh might have married. Meme gave to Sidiyya a son who was the Shaikh's only offspring and his successor, Sidi Muhammad,

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1 Among the tribes and fractions which were using variations of the ⟶ brand employed by the Awlad Ibiri at the turn of the century were sections of the Awlad Daiman, Ida Belhassan, Awlad Tiderin and Tekna. It is said that Muhammad Lhabib also began to use this brand when Sidiyya returned to Trarza (Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, 19.1.1969, Boutilimit).

who was born within a year or two of their marriage which took place in about 1828-1829. This marriage was of considerable importance to Sidiyya's later career; by virtue of her family's position, Meme tended to legitimize the dominant role Shaikh Sidiyya came to play within the Awlad Ibiri. Without this marital connexion it might be seriously questioned whether Shaikh Sidiyya, as a revered 'ālim from a relatively insignificant fraction of the tribe, might have ever risen to political chieftaincy of the Awlad Ibiri.

Oral tradition relates that the Shaikh's first contact outside the tribe was with Amar o/ al-Mukhtar, the amir of Trarza (1800-1827) and chief of the dominant Trarza hassani tribe, the Awlad Ahmad min Daman. With him an agreement was reached whereby Sidiyya supported the family of Amar o/ al-Mukhtar in its rivalry with the branch of the Awlad Ahmad min Daman led by Amar's cousin, Muhammad o/ 'Ali Kuri who was then challenging the influence of Amar o/ al-Mukhtar in the tribe. Sidiyya also agreed that only the descendants of Amar o/ al-Mukhtar should hold the amirate among the Trarza hassanis, and that French steamers plying the coast should be permitted to visit regularly so as to promote gum exports. In return for Sidiyya's assent to these three policies laid down by the amir, Amar o/ al-Mukhtar pledged to him an annual hadiyya which was paid throughout the Shaikh's

lifetime.[1] Likewise, until his death in 1863 Shaikh Sidiyya continued to act as a counsellor and moral guide to the successors of Amar o/ al-Mukhtar, and in so doing Sidiyya contributed significantly to the relative stability of hassani politics in Trarza. One of the results of this agreement was that Sidiyya became widely recognised in southern Mauritania as holding a privileged position as a mediator and negotiator in affairs involving the amir of Trarza, and in return his family and tribe received the not inconsiderable advantages of security and income which this arrangement offered.

Our chronology for the twenty years following Shaikh Sidiyya's return from the Azaouad is somewhat incomplete. Certain events can be approximately dated from French archival sources, oral tradition or the dates of the principal figures who appear in the literature, but an unavoidable degree of error may be anticipated in this chronology. Sometime soon after Sidiyya's return to Trarza and, according to family

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1 Interview with Harouna o/ Cheikh, 19.1.1969, Boutilimit. This early and very important political initiative on the part of Shaikh Sidiyya is said to be documented, and although I have not seen the written agreement which was drawn up, subsequent close relations between the amirs of Trarza and the annual hadiyya Sidiyya received from them are documented in correspondence and tend to support this story. In the light of this, the political influence of Sidiyya which can be documented in his later career, appears to have been considerable from the outset of his return to Trarza.

tradition, before his son Sidi Muhammad attained the age of circumcision (5 years), the Shaikh travelled to Morocco to purchase books. This journey, which presumably involved an absence from his tribe of one to three years, might be dated but for the uncertainty of Muhammed's birth date, which was shortly before or at the beginning of 1246/ June 1830-July 1831.[1] Tentatively, the journey may be set as having taken place between 1830 and 1834, perhaps as an extension one season of Sidiyya's nomadizing pattern which we know occasionally took him as far north as near the Manwayhla and in the Tamkarker, between Tagant and Adrar.

En route he passed via the Awlad Tiderin, a tribe of 19 major fractions today which occupies an area to the south of the Saguia el-Hamra.[2] It is said that before his departure from that tribe the entire group had submitted to him as his talāmīdh. One fraction of the Awlad Tiderin returned with Sidiyya to Trarza where they live today with the Awlad Ibiri, and some of the Awlad Tiderin in modern-day Spanish Sahara brand their animals with Sidiyya's elongated bā'.[3] He also

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1 Communication from Mohammed ech-Chennafi and Harouna o/ Cheikh.

2 see Julio Caro Baroja, Estudios Saharianos (Madrid, 1955), pp. 131-190; the fractions of the Awlad Tiderin are listed on pp. 145-146.

3 Ibid., pp. 89-90, though Baroja's description of the brand of "Bu Tilimit, el qaf ق ", is either wrong or the Sidiyya brand has undergone a mutation; also Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, 2. 1969, Boutilimit.

stayed with the Tekna in the Oued Noun after he learned that they had pillaged camels belonging to the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, and while there he wrote to M'barik, chief of the Tekna, to see to their restitution.[1] Upon arriving in Marrakech Sidiyya wrote to the Sultan to explain his interests in the purchase and copying of books and to request the assistance of the court in this. The Kitāb al-Wasīṭ adds that he had perhaps intended to perform the hajj at the same time,[2] only stopping temporarily in Marrakech, but there is no documentation to support this interpretation of the journey.

During his stay in Morocco Shaikh Sidiyya was granted an interview with Sultan Mulay 'Abd al-Rahman,[3] and at that meeting he was presented with a book inscribed by a chamberlain to the Court.[4] Sidiyya's familiarity with certain members of the Court and his reception must have been warm on the evidence of one of his most widely publicised miracles, described here by Ahmad al-Amin:-

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1 Catalogue, ms. no. 358.

2 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241.

3 Catalogue, ms. no. 443; this is a small piece of paper, assigning to Shaikh Sidiyya the day of his appointment with the Sultan, but the year is unfortunately omitted.

4 Catalogue, ms. no. 444.

> The learned 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jazwali, known in Marrakech as Ibn Talamud, and whose father was a secretary to Mulay 'Abd al-Rahman, told me that he [Shaikh Sidiyya], when he arrived in Marrakech, found Mulay Zaidi Muhammad b. al-Mulay 'Abd al-Rahman stammering and he was unable to converse. And [Shaikh Sidiyya] spat in his mouth and he proceeded in the conversation.[1]

The exact nature of the relations between Mulay 'Abd al-Rahman and Shaikh Sidiyya cannot be precisely defined, though one may assume that each man formally submitted his services to the other[2] (quite possibly after Sidiyya had been kept waiting several months for the interview).

The principle purpose of this journey appears to have been the collection of books, either by his disciples copying texts or by purchase. The Kitāb al-Nasīḥ notes that when purchasing books the Shaikh did not bargain the

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1 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241.

2 Subsequent correspondence between Sidiyya and the son of Mulay 'Abd al-Rahman, Mulay Muhammad, indicates that the Shaikh kept up with the Court at Marrakech; see A. Leriche, "Deux lettres du temps de la pacification (Mauritanie)", Bull. I.F.A.N., XIV, no. 2, April 1952, pp. 632-633 for a translation of Catalogue, ms. no. 462; this letter is a reply to Sidiyya's request that the Sultan send him books, and it is dated 3 Rabi' II, 1277/ 1860-1861. Other items in the Shaikh's correspondence would indicate that he was not a stranger to the workings of the Court at Marrakech. Among Sidiyya's papers is a copy of a letter made during his years in the Azaouad from the Alawite Sultan to 'Uthman dan Fodio, investing him as his khalifa in the western Sudan, and another letter (Catalogue, ms. no. 481) from Mulay 'Abd al-Rahman to Shaikh Sidiyya which was probably written at the time of the Shaikh's visit to Morocco. Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241 notes only that Sidiyya enjoyed great favour with the Sultan.

prices, but gave to the seller whatever the asking price was.[1] The implication clearly is that Sidiyya either had a reputation for generosity or was above haggling over a price placed on the word; both interpretations are valid observations on his character. When he returned Sidiyya brought back to Trarza a total of 200 volumes, in some instances more than one copy of the same text, which was to comprise a major section of his personal library. This library, which was probably one of the finest established in southern Mauritania in the early 19th century, was praised in two poems by Baba o/ Ahmad Bayba, an Idaw 'Ali *savant* and colleague of Sidiyya's from his days spent with Hurma o/ 'Abd al-Jalil.[2] A breakdown of the subject matter in this collection provides a useful index to the interests of Shaikh Sidiyya (as well as to the book market in early 19th century Marrakech and Fes); 27 volumes dealt with Qur'anic commentary, 51 in *hadīth*, 25 in Arabic language,

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1 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241.

2 Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, 5.1969, Boutilimit. This is particularly significant as Baba o/ Ahmad Bayba was not a *murīd* of Sidiyya's but, on the contrary, as an Idaw 'Ali scholar he had every reason to regard the N'tishait shaikh's abilities and accomplishments with sceptism.

20 in tasawwuf, tawhīd and tibb, and 77 in fiqh.[1]

On his return journey from Marrakech, Sidiyya stayed with the Tawbbal where Sidi Ely and his brother Sidi al-Hassan joined the Shaikh's entourage as talāmīdh. As an acknowledgement of Shaikh Sidiyya's spiritual suzerainty all of the tribe is said to have adopted his brand. Sidiyya's son, Sidi Muhammad, was later given his Qur'anic education under the supervision of Sidi al-Hassan, mentioned above.[2]

Shaikh Sidiyya's return to the Awlad Ibiri and establishment of his camp at Tamersguid marked the end of his external studies and travels; with few exceptions he remained at Tamersguid or within the nomadic patterns of the Awlad Ibiri until his death 33 years later.[3] At the time of his

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1 Catalogue, ms. no. 448; an elaboration of this collection is contained in a 26 folio document which lists all of the books purchased and copied in Morocco, including where they were bought and by whom. Shaikh Sidiyya was accompanied on this journey by his murīdūn Mahmud o/ Brahim o/ Bu Bakr (Shurfa), Hamdi o/ Bulud (Idaw al-Hajj), and 'Abd al-Rahman o/ Ahmad Saghir (Kunta), and these men copied and bought books on his behalf. These works will be summarized in a forthcoming article.

2 Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, 1. 1969, Boutilimit.

3 Departures from the area roughly demarcated by Tamersguid, Tendouja and Boutilimit were usually associated with his seeking mediation between tribes outside Brakna and Trarza. The most protracted of these mediation efforts involved his journeys to Tagant in the Kunta-Reguibat conflict (see below) and into Brakna in settlement of the Awlad Ibiri-Djedjeba diyya affair.

return from Morocco he was about 58 years old and one of the best educated and most widely travelled men living in southern Mauritania; he was married into the leading family of his tribe and had a son; he had struck a politically advantageous and lucrative bargain with the dominant hassani power of Trarza; and he had successfully consolidated his tribe in which he appears to have been recognised as its temporal as well as its religious head. In addition, and of equal importance, he carried with him the baraka and khalifate of the Kunta shaikhs, and he possessed one of the largest libraries in the region. In Mauritanian society the word (even literacy) meant power in no mere figurative sense because it was power to interpret the destiny of men's lives; in this form of power Shaikh Sidiyya was supremely qualified. The next 33 years of his life is a chronicle of the evolution and application of Sidiyya's religious influence, the basis of which was the power of the word.

V. SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S RISE TO POLITICAL INFLUENCE

SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S EARLY CAREER

We have reviewed above how it was that with diplomacy or good fortune Shaikh Sidiyya was established among the Awlad Ibiri and the dominant Trarza hassanis upon his return from the Azaouad, and it was to this same position that he returned after his trip to Morocco. Unfortunately the following 10 to 15 years of the Shaikh's activities in Trarza are not as fully documented nor as precisely dated as are his preceding years or the concluding years of his life. But it was during these next 10 to 15 years (1835-1845/50) that the foundations were laid for his later political career both within and outside the Awlad Ibiri.

Before discussing the context in which this took place it would be well to emphasize what can be reconstructed of the Shaikh's own outlook and interests at this time. Shaikh Sidiyya was, in his own estimation, most assuredly a faqīh and an ʿālim (though an extremely modest and humble one) and the greater part of the people with whom he corresponded seem to have regarded him as such also. He had thus arrived at the pinnacle of zawiyya achievement, as a custodian of his society's conscience and a guardian of the sharīʿa in a social structure which was very delicately balanced between physical force, characterized by the hassanis, and spiritual salvation based upon the zawiyya interpretations of the sharīʿa. For this achievement, Sidiyya was granted respect

from the hassanis as well as from people of the zawiyya persuasion. But custodianship of the society's conscience and guardianship of the sharī'a alone did not have any direct relevance to the political manoeuvres in Trarza in the 19th century, and respect did not universally mean concurrence. However, Sidiyya's experience with the Kuntas had also endowed him with an insight into religious truth (haqq), as well as an organisational method to which we shall return below. It would appear that it was largely because of his access to this mystical knowledge that his views did have the influence which they came to exert in the political direction of Mauritanian society, and he gained the large following which characterized his later career. But Shaikh Sidiyya was foremost a scholar and religious figure, both to himself and to his followers, and the analysis below represents a frame of reference to which the principle figures in the story might not accede.

The summary which follows of the principal themes in mid-19th century southern Mauritanian political history must, by necessity, be an over simplification. The political and economic history of this period and area, so rich in local Arabic and external (largely French) documentation, has not yet been written, and the account here can only touch on the high-lights of an extremely complicated system of power relationships involving genealogical links, real and alleged, marriage alliances, social and religious hierarchies,

political and economic control in gum collection and marketing, the attempts at manipulation of Moorish politics by French commercial interests, cereal and salt exchanges between sudanis and Moors, Fouta Toro and Cayor politics, etc. The narrative below is an effort to provide only the context in which Shaikh Sidiyya's political career evolved, and in so doing to establish some perspective from which that career may be evaluated.[1]

Southern Mauritanian society in the 19th century has been described by at least one Mauritanian writer as anarchic,[2] which may be appropriate in a strict sense as applied to relationships between tribes, insofar as the area was recognised to lie within the ard al-siba and no governmental structure existed which might apply a uniform legal code. But there did exist a well defined pattern of relationships between elements in the society, just as there were other quite clearly definable patterns of tensions and conflicts. Within the social structure were a series of checks and

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1 The narrative which follows has been largely drawn from the Archives A.O.F., G. Poulet, pp. 28-58, R. Basset, pp. 524-538, P. Marty, Trarza, pp. 109-124, and P. Marty, Brakna, pp. 66-78. Specific references have not been made except where an archival source or other material, external to the standard (and by no means entirely trustworthy) accounts above differ in fact, or support a variant interpretation.

2 A.-B. Miské, "Al-Wasīṭ," p. 132.

balances built upon genealogies, marriages, alliances, social roles and classes etc. which set out for each individual and tribe the social, economic or political possibilities and limitations of their position. Nonetheless, the social organisation and patterns of tension were extremely complex, and a brief digression, by way of explanation, will be necessary before taking up the events which led to Shaikh Sidiyya's involvement in southern Mauritanian politics.

The most striking fact of Trarza hassani politics during the period of Sidiyya's career in Mauritania is the relatively orderly succession to political leadership within the dominant hassani tribe, the Awlad Ahmad min Daman. The relatively long term Muhammad Lhabib served as amir (1827-1858), followed by his son Sidi (1858-1871) in an undisputed succession contributed very greatly to the security of Trarza (and to the career of Shaikh Sidiyya). This is not to say that there were no 'pretenders' to hassani leadership in Trarza. We have noted above that Sidiyya, shortly after his return from the Azaouad, agreed to support Muhammad Lhabib's father and his descendants against rival branches of the family, led at that time by M'hammad o/ 'Ali Kuri. Immediately after this agreement M'hammad o/ 'Ali Kuri was killed in a battle with the Awlad Ayshar (1827), and that same year Amar o/ al-Mukhtar also died leaving his title of 'Sultan of Trarza' to his son, Muhammad Lhabib. A challenge to this

title followed, made by Muhammad Lhabib's brother, Ahmad Laigat, and the history of this rivalry for power between the brothers[1] constituted the principal theme in Trarza hassani politics throughout the lifetime of Shaikh Sidiyya.

This division had also external ramifications, owing to Ahmad Laigat's search for support among fractions of the Brakna Awlad ʿAbdallah which, in turn, was countered by Muhammad Lhabib's efforts to manipulate Brakna politics by bringing the Awlad ʿAbdallah, insofar as this was possible, under his control. In so doing Muhammad Lhabib successfully reversed the dominance which Brakna had held over internal Trarza hassani politics in the 18th century. In Brakna a succession of chiefs between 1841 and 1865[2] left that region relatively defenceless to the threats of Trarza dominance and because of this the greater part of the hassani rivalries in southern Mauritania in this period were fought out on Brakna soil.

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1 Ahmad Laigat, also known in the literature as Ibn Laigat, was eventually killed by the Elub in Adrar, where he had taken refuge from Muhammad Lhabib, but he was succeeded in his role as 'pretender' by other individuals or parties such as Sidi Ahmad of the Awlad Ahmad min Daman, a cousin of Muhammad Lhabib's who assassinated him in 1858.

2 This insecurity was due in part to the only recent emergence of the Awlad Siyyid as temporal authorities in Brakna and the greater participation by French commercial interests in Brakna politics than was the case for Trarza.

Among the descendants of Brakanni, a major shift in the political direction of the Awlad 'Abdallah had taken place at the beginning of the 19th century. The previously dominant Awlad Naghmash tribe had been forced to hand over political leadership of the Brakna hassanis to the Awlad Siyyid, and it is this cleavage between the Awlad Naghmash and Awlad Siyyid -- much more fiercely fought out than the dispute between amir and pretender in Trarza -- which was the recurring theme in the first half of the 19th century in Brakna. As one might expect, a Trarza pretender or discontent invariably found support throughout this period among the Awlad Siyyid, just as Muhammad Lhabib quite consistently found it in his interest to encourage the usurped Awlad Naghmash and their allies.[1] These were the principal themes in Trarza and Brakna hassani politics; the dominant parties were almost always those allied with Muhammad Lhabib and the Awlad Ahmad min Daman.

Similarly in eastern Mauritania the principal 'hassani'[2]

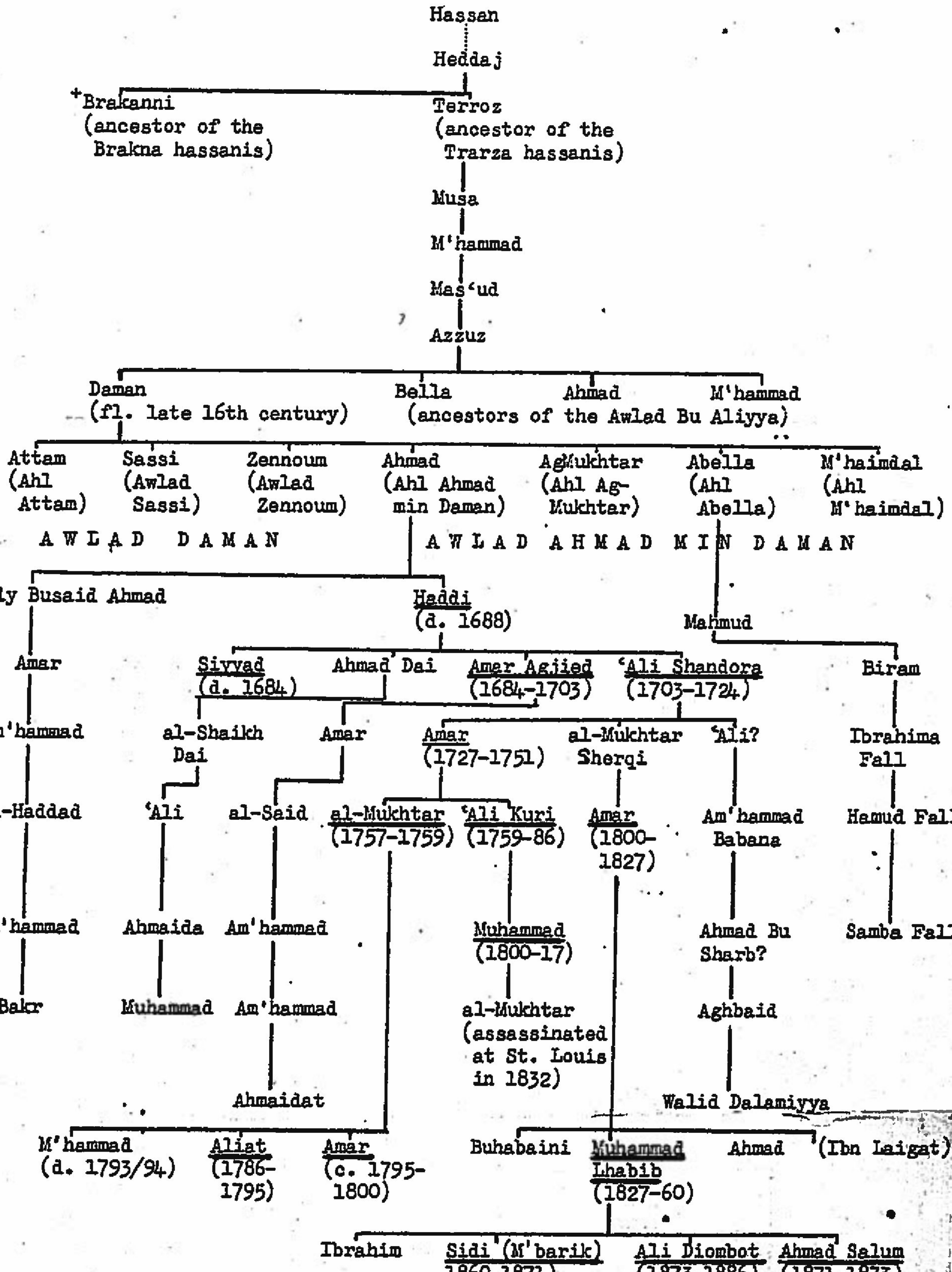
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1 Awlad Naghmash allies almost always included the Awlad Ahmad, cousins of the Awlad Ibiri, and the Awlad Mansur. In Shaikh Sidiyya's correspondence, the vast majority of Brakna hassani rasa'il were sent to the chiefs and notables of these dissident Awlad 'Abdallah tribes.

2 The Idaw 'Aish constitute one of the best examples of the exception to the hassani and zawiyya divisions of Mauritanian society; they trace their origins to the invaders who accompanied the Almoravid expedition of Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar, and therefore they ought to be people of the zawayya. The Idaw 'Aish were the only 'amirate' in 19th century Mauritania which did not claim to trace its origins to Hassan.

ABBREVIATED GENEALOGY OF THE AWLAD AHMAD MIN DAMAN [1]

(the dominant Trarza hassani grouping) indicating the 18th and 19th century 'amirs' of Trarza.
(red underlinings indicate amirs)



+ For an abbreviated genealogy of the descendants of Brakanni see p. 125 .

1 This genealogy represents a corrected and enlarged version, through the assistance of Mokhtar ould Hamidoun, of the Trarza genealogy which appears in P. Marty, Trarza, p. 64.

group, the Idaw 'Aish, was divided into two camps in the 19th century, the Sharitits and Abakaks and dominated by the latter group under the direction of Swaid Ahmad (d. 1245/1836) and then Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad (1836-1905). Both of these groups of Idaw 'Aish were actively drawn into the Trarza and Brakna disputes during the 19th century from 1245/1831,[1] the Abakaks generally in alliance with the Awlad Naghmash and Awlad Ahmad and the Sharitits frequently siding with the Awlad Siyyid.[2]

In the Adrar, the dominant hassani grouping was the Ahl Yahia bin 'Uthman which entered Trarza and Brakna affairs only marginally during the first half of the 19th century, generally in alliance with the Awlad Siyyid or Idaw 'Aish Sharitits against Muhammad Lhabib. The participation of the Ahl Yahya bin 'Uthman in Trarza politics was precipitated by a raid into Adrar led by Muhammad Lhabib (in 1846-1850?) when it was thought that the amir of Adrar, Ahmad o/ Aiyyda, was harbouring a Trarza 'pretender'.

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1 This was the intervention of Swaid Ahmad's contingent, in alliance with the Awlad Naghmash, against Ahmadu o/ Sidi Ely and the Awlad Siyyid; the latter were victorious at Youga, near the marigot of N'Guet N'Guere; P. Amilhat, pp. 73-74.

2 This is explained, in part by the marriage of Ahmadu o/ Sidi Ely, the amir of Brakna from 1818 to 1841, to Laila mint Rassul o/'Ali o/ Muhammad Shain, daughter of the Sharitit (Idaw 'Aish) chief.

In addition to these themes outlined above of cleavages, rivalries and alliances within Trarza, Brakna, Tagant and Adrar, important catalysts to the 19th century power struggles and occasional active participants were the European, in the main French, commercial interests on the Senegal River and in St. Louis.[1] The main object of French commercial activity in Mauritania, which was gum, has been noted above, and documentation of their policy on the Senegal River during the 19th century is available elsewhere.[2] What remains is to briefly assess the extent to which the French presence was felt in the rivalries for power and influence among southern Mauritanian hassanis during the first half of the 19th century.[3]

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1 Although the English were active in the gum trade on and around the Senegal River from 1779 to 1815 and later, sporadically, on the Atlantic coast at Portendick until 1857, their presence never constituted a direct threat to the internal balance of power among Trarza hassanis. Therefore, except where otherwise noted below, this narrative will be limited to French activities in southern Mauritania.

2 For narrative history P. Marty's studies on Islam in Trarza and Brakna are not insignificant contributions towards a history of French policy in Mauritania at this time. Other more comprehensive accounts of French policy towards Senegal and West Africa are available in M. Chailley, Histoire de l'Afrique Occidentale Française (Paris, 1968), and A.S. Kanya-Forstner, The Conquest of the Western Sudan (Cambridge, 1969), see Ch. I and II.

3 While the effect of European trade on the Senegal River, viz., cloth trade, was ultimately felt in Adrar and Tagant, the immediate impact of the French in these areas was not seen in the internal political rivalries or direct French intervention into their politics, and therefore we will consider here only those southern regions of Mauritania which were in direct contact with the French commercial interests.

The French policy at this time in Mauritania was to undermine the influence of the amir of Trarza and his family and to promote the stability of Brakna, i.e., to avoid the concentration of political power in southern Mauritania in the hands of one man, Muhammad Lhabib, but the outcome of this policy was precisely the reverse. In the case of Trarza, under the relatively strong leadership of Muhammad Lhabib (1827-1860) and his son Sidi who succeeded him (1860-1871), the customs duties paid by the French, and occasionally English, merchants to the amir, based on the total gum bought at the escales which he protected, tended to augment his powers of patronage and his family's control over their zenagha tributaries. The importance of this income for the consolidation of his power was fully appreciated by Muhammad Lhabib and his son, no less than by Muhammad Lhabib's father who had sought Shaikh Sidiyya's agreement in 1827 to the regular visits of French ships. As a result there was a minimal disruption of trade from succession disputes and 'pretenders' in Trarza, and when trade was interrupted (for a total of five years during this period) no real threat to the ruling hassani family was ever felt. In Brakna, where the dominant hassani family was much less secure, and the middle part of the 19th century was marked by frequent succession disputes, French commercial interests tended to make the positions of the several amirs still less secure by alternating their subsidies and customs payments between several hassani families. Thus the French economic interests

in the mid-19th century tended to encourage the politically viable groupings in Trarza and to contribute to the ineffectiveness and divisions of the dominant lineages in Brakna.

Considered chronologically and in terms of the indirect effects on internal, hassani politics one may recognise two stages of French activity on the Senegal River in the first half of the 19th century. In the first, which terminates about 1846, French involvement was characterized by formal commercial treaties, minimal intervention in Mauritanian affairs and commercial activities; the Moors' attitudes toward the French and vice versa reflected a considerable naivete about the political and commercial organisation of their trading partners. For the French this took the form of an ignorance of what individuals or tribes governed or influenced others and where the gum came from; among the Moors there was no precise knowledge of what the relation was between St. Louis and the traders and what the gum was used for; and both sides shared a well-deserved distrust of the other's trading practices. During this period, in spite of French intervention into Trarza affairs in 1832-1835[1]

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1 This was as a result of Muhammad Lhabib's marriage to the 'Queen of Oualo', Ndété-Yallo or Guimbotte, which was intended to consolidate his authority in that country. The French, interpreting the move as an open threat to their interests annexed Oualo and fought skirmishes for two years with Muhammad Lhabib's forces; this affair ended with Muhammad Lhabib being forced temporarily to abandon any traditional Trarza claims of suzerainty over Oualo.

and in Brakna in 1843,[1] the French incursions into the affairs of Trarza and Brakna were simply in terms of the security of St. Louis or their protection of escales, and the hassani chiefs appear to have been little affected by the French presence on the river or at St. Louis.

However, in the years following 1846 this altered dramatically. In that year a Bureau des affaires extérieurs was established at St. Louis[2] and from this time the ever increasing amount and accuracy of intelligence that the French collected about the interior of Trarza and Brakna set the scene for an expanded activity by the French in these areas. The lack of precision in this intelligence and the misunderstanding of the Mauritanian social structure which it reflects was not nearly so relevant as the confidence this increased body of information about the interior of Mauritania provided for such ventures as Louis Faidherbe's war with Trarza and Brakna in 1856-1858. Certainly by the end of Faidherbe's second posting at St. Louis (1865) many of the Moors in positions of authority were well

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1 French intervention in Brakna affairs in 1843 involved the deportation of al-Mukhtar Sidi, then amir of Brakna but in alliance with the Awlad Ahmad and other 'dissident' Brakna hassanis (see p.227fg below). The French authorities saw these alliances as a threat to their control over Brakna affairs and al-Mukhtar Sidi was asked to travel to St. Louis for a meeting with the Governor. There he was arrested and sent to Gabon where he died two years later.

2 Archives A.O.F., 5-B-15, dated 12.11.1846; the Bureau des affaires extérieurs was established by the dépêche ministerielle number 373 of 21 November 1845.

aware that they were dealing with a phenomenon similar to that of the French presence in Algeria about which they had no doubt heard. The French were most likely on the Senegal River to stay, at least for the present generation, and every effort should be made to limit their movements and interests to the left bank of the river.

The actual implementation of French policy in Mauritania in the early 19th century, was misdirected owing to the assumption by the administrators at St. Louis that Brakna and Trarza constituted amirates, each led by a powerful and absolute ruler. In fact, as we have noted above, the so-called 'amirs' had neither authority nor power inherent in their positions, but their influence rather depended upon their personality, social position and the composition of the jamā'a within the dominant hassani tribe or tribes in the region which granted them authority to deal with each specific circumstance. Efforts by the French, then, to subsidize pretenders to the 'amirate', or to keep a particular 'amir' or his family in the pay of St. Louis, much less to appoint one, inevitably made increasingly complex the already complicated and delicate system of marriage and lineage alliance, fission and fusion by which an equilibrium of political power and influence was maintained in Mauritanian society. The only group of leaders who did have the discretionary powers which the French had attributed to the hassani leaders were the zawiyya chiefs, such as Shaikh Sidiyya, and this Faidherbe

alone appears to have appreciated.[1]

This, of course, in no way minimizes the economic importance of the French gum trade in Trarza and Brakna, which was considerable and the economic significance of which was fully understood by the hassani chiefs.[2] The financial security and, in consequence, latitude for political manoeuvre which the French customs payments allowed to the amir of each region, his family and his ministers contributed greatly to regularised succession among the Awlad Ahmad min Daman, and eventually, the Awlad Siyyid.[3]

To summarize hassani politics in southern Mauritania during Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir's career in Trarza one can reduce the tensions and rivalries which were involved to disputes over succession and over the delimitation of spheres

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1 Archives A.O.F., 3-B-93, dated 28.4.1856 is a letter from Faidherbe to Shaikh Sidiyya in which Shaikh Sidiyya was requested to assist in establishing peace between Brakna and Trarza, and he was saluted as a mediator and man of power.

2 see appendix IV for an approximation of the revenue and European products which entered southern Mauritania as a result of the gum trade in the mid-19th century.

3 What emerged in the 20th century, with the formal institutionalization of the amirates during French indirect rule in Mauritania was a constitutionalized form of the same structure which the French had thought they had been dealing with for the past century. Only in the 1930's did the administration begin to re-evaluate the institution of the amirate and, discovering that it was not of traditional origin, seriously debated whether they ought to abandon it. The fact that the amirates had become a part of the Moorish authority structure by this time had, of course, no part in the French re-evaluation, except insofar as controversies over the power of and successors to the amirate precipitated the inquiry.

of influence. At any one time throughout this period each hassani camp either had major cleavages within its leadership, or supported factions within other groups which were divided, or both. These divisions were not simply over matters of succession or between pretenders to dominant positions within the leading hassani tribes, though this was often the case. At times conflicts arose over a geographical area (generally on the border of differing spheres of influence), over subservient tribes which were claimed to be under the influence of one 'warrior' group at the expense of another or over the protection of a particular escale on the Senegal River. These patterns of alliances, reversal of allies, and delicately balanced power bases were not, of course, new to the 19th century. One may assume that such rivalries within families and alliances between clans in a segmentary lineage system had been a central theme in Mauritanian history for centuries beforehand, although the intricacies of these rivalries are well documented only in the 19th century. What was new to this period was the French commercial contribution which, through prices paid for gum, the 'kings' rights', custom duties, etc., had raised the status of the dominant hassani families and therefore tended to heighten the competition and intensify the disputes which had always been a part of hassani politics.

No mention has yet been made in this brief survey of the mid-19th century hassani powers' relationships with the sudanis

(Toucouleur states in the Fouta, Cayor and Oualo), nor to the numerous zenagha (tributary hassani tribes) and the zawiyya tribes. The sudani states, falling as they did outside the system of relationships which make up the Moorish social structure, also were exterior to the patterns of disputes and rivalries described above. Temporary alliances between Fouta Almamys, for example, and Brakna or Trarza chiefs can be documented,[1] as can be numerous raids on the part of Moors against Toucouleurs and vice versa.[2] But these relationships, with the possible exception of Muhammad Lhabib's marriage to Ndété-Yallo,[3] were transitory in nature, except insofar

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1 Many examples of this can be documented; see Archives A.O.F., 2-B-30, dated 27.2.1850, when the amir of Trarza is reputed to be in alliance with Oualo and the Fouta against Brakna, or the al-Mukhtar Sidi - Fouta alliance against the Awlad Siyyid reported in P. Marty, Brakna, pp. 53-54.

P. Marty states that the Brakna Moors had a great influence over the Fouta Toro in the 19th century (Ibid., p. 42) and the activities of Brakna Moors on the left bank of the Senegal certainly were numerous, but to extend this to imply that the Brakna Moors held a great political influence or control over Fouta politics would, in my estimation, be a mis-reading of the available archival literature.

2 For examples of Fouta raids on Brakna see J.O., dated 22.4.1856, and Oualo raids on Trarza see Ibid., dated 2.12.1856, in which issue also appears a report of a Trarza raid on Oualo; see also Ibid., dated 5.5.1857. Probably a majority of notices in the Archives A.O.F. in which the Moors are mentioned are in reference to their raids on the left bank of the Senegal.

3 See above, p. 210 , note 1; this is the 'Guimbotte' of the French literature about the 'Queen of Oualo'. There was one son from this marriage, Ely, to whom Muhammad Lhabib attempted to entrust Oualo in 1848. As such, this particular instance stands out in Moorish-sudani relations as one of the few instances in which a permanent Moorish-sudani alliance was forged.

as they served to solidify a stereotyped antipathy each ethnic group held (and holds) for the other.[1] Perhaps it is largely for this reason that the political history of the .olof and Toucouleur .Sudanis has had such marginal relevance to the Moors.

The importance of the numerous zenagha and zawiyya tribes to hassani politics may be similarly explained, though for very different reasons. The zenagha, as the subservient backbone of the hassani military power, had little choice in the battles they fought and a limited voice in the issues for which they fought. Their services were in the hands of their hassani masters, much as the <u>laptots</u>, as professional mercenaries, were in the pay of the French at St. Louis. Of course a zenagha tribe or part of it could break off from one hassani camp to join another, frequently an opposing camp, which might turn the tide of an engagement even before it took place. By such manoeuvres one might argue that zenagha tribes such as the Aralines or Touabir played a major role in the political fortunes of the Awlad Siyyid throughout the early 19th century. But the social status of the zenagha warriors, as with the sudanis to the south, was unchanged in spite of whatever initiative they themselves might take or role they might play in political matters, and therefore their ability to influence the fundamental themes of hassani rivalries was

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1 There are, of course, exceptions to these stereotypes; see p. 75.

limited.

The zawiyya have been mentioned in this same context as being outside the basic hassani patterns of tensions and conflict, but whereas the sudanis and zenagha were either outside or had no status within the hassani power structures, the zawiyya tribes considered themselves above it. Within the hands of the zawiyya tribes lay the spiritual and cultural direction of their society, and as such they shared, as an equal partner with the hassanis, the responsibilities of directing Mauritanian society. Thus they acted as a brake on the excesses of their hassani cousins. To those zawiyya tribes (zawayya al-zill) which served hassanis as a result of the terms of settlement after Shurr Bubba, their attachment was rarely so strong so as to overshadow their roles as independent judicial authorities, mediators and negotiators. The ideal relation between an important zawiyya tribe and any important hassani group was as little relation as possible, beyond that which was considered mutually necessary for physical and spiritual protection. The most revealing documentation for this is the infrequency of conflict between zawiyya and hassani tribes.[1]

This is by no means to imply that the zawiyya tribes did not battle between themselves or internally. The fission of

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1 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 492. This analysis of the role of the zawayya in Mauritanian society is intended to apply to only post-Shurr Bubba relations.

the Idaw 'Ali, noted above, is alleged to have been due to an internal conflict between 'blacks' and 'whites' in their genealogies, and a detailed account has also been made above to the bloody Awlad Ibiri - Tendera conflict. Major zawiyya conflicts in the 19th century were fought between the Kunta and Tajakanat, the Ida Belhassan and Idaw 'Ali, Tajakanat and Laghlal, Kunta and Idaw al-Hajj and, at the end of the century, Awlad Ibiri and Djedjeba. The reasons for these conflicts were generally in marked contrast to the family in-fighting characteristic of the hassanis. Zawiyya wars tended to concern more mundane affairs such as water rights, or control over agricultural lands or pasturage, and generally were more biterly fought and protracted in their settlement.

The account above of the patterns of conflict between hassani tribes, and the involvement of hassanis, sudanis, zenagha and zawayya with each other is intended in part to emphasize that there were degrees of 'hassani-ness', or commitment to live by the sword among those tribes which claimed descent from Hassan (and many who did not). Similarly, there were degrees of 'zawiyya-ness' among those tribes which maintained the social myth of their renunciation of the use of force in settling differences. Also, in large tribes or zawiyya hegemonies such as the Tajakanat, Idaw 'Ali or Kuntas, sections of the confederation in one part of the Sahara often interpreted their social and political roles in an entirely different light from those of another segment of the

tribe perhaps a thousand miles distant. For example the Kunta confederation, which had an impeccable reputation as a zawiyya tribe in the early 19th century due to the notoriety of the Azaouad Kuntas, was also made up of other segments, far removed from the Azaouad, whose bellicose activities seriously called into doubt their zawiyya status. However, the existence of a social myth of the division between hassani and zawiyya tribes appears to have been important for the stability of the society. These classifications and the tenacity with which they are held in the literature suggest quite clearly that a tribe which might bridge these categories by being of zawiyya persuasion but fully capable of contending with hassani rivalries would be a threat to the rather precarious and ill-defined vertically stratified hassani and zawiyya groups which directed Mauritanian society. However, there appear to have been instances in which a bridge was effectively forged between the hassani and zawiyya traditions, when particular individuals have succeeded in gaining the respect or support of both traditions, and when this has happened on a large scale the individuals have generally emerged as major historical figures. Examples of this may be found in the careers of Nasar al-Din, Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and Shaikh Sidiyya.

This rather lengthy diversion has been necessary if we are to appreciate the events which thrust Shaikh Sidiyya into the hassani political arena in southern Mauritania. The particular event which appears to mark the beginning of the

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Shaikh's active extra-tribal political career, a blood-money settlement, cannot, unfortunately, be dated with any precision though there are indications that it may have occurred in the early 1840's, quite probably before 1845.[1] This was the settlement of an affair which involved the Awlad Ibiri in the payment of blood money for five men of the small Brakna zawiyya tribe of the Tabiyyat and one man from the Bassin, tributaries to the Awlad 'Abdallah. The details of the settlement are remarkably well remembered and documented,[2] but the precise cause has been somewhat obscured by the Awlad Ibiri historians who would prefer to minimize the dishonour of the event. The six men were killed by a party of Awlad Ahmad which included three men from the Awlad Ibiri (said not to have been armed) while evidently raiding in Brakna. The Tabiyyat, no doubt fully aware of the futility of extracting the diyya due them

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1 This is quite hypothetical, based on a dated letter (Cataloque, ms. no. 426) in which Sidiyya refers to all the differences between the Awlad Ibiri and Tabiyyat as being settled; it is dated 1262/1845. Two French archival references mention a palaber between the Awlad Ibiri and Djedjeba as taking place in 1848 (Archives A.O.F., 5-B-14, dated 18.10.1848; and Ibid., 3-B-64, dated 26.1.1848). The former would correspond to the same month in which Léopold Panet heard that Sidiyya had been absent for five months from Boutilimit (see below p. 224), but this date would appear to be too late and the meeting might have involved other matters. The dates suggested by P. Marty, Brakna, p. 86, of "about 1860" and P. Amilhat (p. 81) who set the date as 1874 are clearly not correct.

2 Cataloque, mss. nos. 192A, 292, 305, 231 and 426 to 438.

from the Awlad Ahmad, and unable to retaliate against such formidable hassanis, appear to have consulted the Djedjeba, their spiritual masters, on the best procedure to follow. What emerged, in brief, was an accusation made against the Awlad Ibiri for the murder of the six men (which may in fact have been the case, though it appears somewhat improbable). This accusation on the part of the Djedjeba was brilliant from a tactical point of view, insofar as Shaikh Sidiyya would have been unlikely to want to lose prestige by disputing the claim. Of course the accusation itself, leveled against the Awlad Ibiri, was likely to damage the prestige of the tribe, which was already attracting the jealousy of such tribes as the Djedjeba because of Sidiyya's increasing economic and political influence. Furthermore, according to custom, as a result of their intervention on behalf of the Tabiyyat, the Djedjeba stood to collect a percentage of the <u>diyya</u> that would be due to the Tabiyyat and Bassin. It would appear that largely for this latter reason the Idaw 'Aish, under Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad, also claimed a share in the <u>diyya</u> on grounds that the Tabiyyat[1] were also under Idaw 'Aish protection.

Whatever might have been the intention of the injured parties in the affair, Shaikh Sidiyya's generous and efficient

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1 P. Amilhat (p. 81) has written that the Idaw 'Aish claimed suzerainty over the Djedjeba, but this is clearly an error, caused by the central role of the Djedjeba in this affair. Since the time of Shurr Bubba the Djedjeba have been marabouts to the Awlad 'Abdallah.

settlement of the matter made out of it an example of justice and equity in the application of the sharī'a for 19th century Mauritania. It also proved to be a major contribution to his own reputation upon which much of his later fame as a mediator and negotiator was founded. His first action was to call a meeting of the Djedjeba at which time he, accompanied by a surba of 300 men, presented the Awlad Ibiri case of non-involvement in the affair. However, he declared that they would not go to war over the issue, and then proceeded to outline the proposed settlement.[1] The diyya was paid to the Tabiyyat and Bassin families, but he refused to allow the Djedjeba to siphon off a percentage for themselves. Shaikh Sidiyya declared that diyya compensation was due only to the families of the dead men, but he did offer to meet Djedjeba claims in what appears to have been a humiliating blow to them, by giving them double the total diyya rate which was due to the Tabiyyat and Bassin.[2] Likewise, he refused to recognise the claims of Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad, but he did present him with a gift of 100 calves.

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1 Cataloque, mss. nos. 125, 177, 291. For an explanation of the mechanics of negotiations between surba and injured parties, see Ahmad Miské, "Les Ahel Barikalla", p. 498.

2 Diyya at this time in Mauritania amounted to 200 tabī'at (a calf between 2 and 3 years old) for each noble killed; the letters from Sidiyya to fractions in the Awlad Ibiri indicate that the Tabiyyat received a total of 700 calves, and the Basin 250 calves according to one document (Cataloque, ms. no. 428) but numerous census and distribution figures are also available in other manuscripts (see p.220, note 2 above) and this may represent but a portion of the total payment.

The correspondence concerning this diyya affair represents the largest collection of items concerning a single event in the N'tishait family papers, and Sidiyya's organisation of the payment of the diyya offers among the most detailed information extant on the political structure and organisation of the Awlad Ibiri.[1] Our immediate concern, however, lies in the political implications of this settlement for Shaikh Sidiyya's later career as well as the future of the Awlad Ibiri. It is difficult not to find a degree of political calculation in the generosity of this diyya payment, even for a man who enjoyed great fame as a selfless giver. In one move he expurgated his tribe's name from a disgraceful matter of diyya, he shamed the opportunism of the Djedjeba, and he brought to the Awlad Ibiri unequalled fame among contemporary zawayya for fairness, generosity, sympathetic consideration for the less powerful tribes and, obviously, material resources. The poems,[2] and legends which praise Sidiyya's settlement of this affair[3] are in themselves documentation of the social

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1 Sections of this correspondence have been drawn upon to document the Shaikh's economic and religious organisation, which is summarized in chapter VI.

2 Cataloque, ms. no. 558.

3 P. Marty, Brakna, p. 86 and P. Amilhat, p. 81 each report this event from oral tradition, though the sources used by these authors had confused Sidiyya with his grandson, Sidiyya Baba, or the date or specific details of the participants (see p.221, note 1 above). What is revealing is the wide-spread circulation this story had, and continues to have, in southern Mauritania.

impact this <u>diyya</u> payment had. Although Shaikh Sidiyya's tribe and following -- individuals, families and whole fractions which had joined him since his return from the Azaouad -- must have been large enough to raise the nearly 4000 head of cattle this <u>diyya</u> represented, one may assume that it grew even more dramatically afterwards, as did his own reputation. It is possible that during this settlement Sidiyya had his first political contact with such men as Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad, and the cheifs of the Awlad Naghmash and Awlad Siyyid, as prior to this time the Shaikh's correspondence with hassanis appears to have been mainly directed to, and involved with local Trarza 'warriors'.

At the end of the 1840's we are fortunate to have a traveller's account of the mystique which had built up around Shaikh Sidiyya. This account comes from the mission of the St. Louisien Léopold Panet who travelled from Senegal to Morocco, leaving St. Louis on 17 October 1849 destined initially for Boutilimit. Panet had planned to receive the blessing of Sidiyya for his proposed voyage, so as to authenticate his claim to be a Muslim converted from Christianity, after which he felt sure he would be able to travel anywhere in Africa safely. Unfortunately, he never arrived in Boutilimit. After hearing that Shaikh Sidiyya had been away from Boutilimit for five months he became wary of a long wait near the Senegal River and the chance of his Muslim guise being discovered by St. Louis traders when the gum trading season opened, and he went on by another route to Morocco. However, the account

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of Boutilimit and Shaikh Sidiyya which Panet left behind, although it is second-hand, is our most vivid external, contemporary description of the legend which had grown up around Sidiyya, and of the importance of his administrative centre of Boutilimit.

Describing Boutilimit, Panet says it is:-

> ...un centre de réunion où l'on trouve des voyageurs de tous les points de l'Afrique, des personnes avec lesquelles nous aurions pu faire route ensemble jusqu'aux possessions françaises de l'Algérie, en passant par Tonat (sic), terme que j'avais posé moi-même.[1]

The day before he hopes to meet Shaikh Sidiyya, (in fact, before he finds that a trip to Boutilimit might risk too much time) Panet envisages his submission to Shaikh Sidiyya and at the same time gives us a useful description of the folk legend which surrounded the figure of Sidiyya at this date:-

> ...Demain, quand les fidèles de Mahomet viendront prosterner leurs fronts sur la terre pour saluer les derniers rayons du soleil; quand la nuit viendra couvrir de son voile noir la pâle lueur du crépuscule, j'irai me jeter a genoux aux pieds du vénéré Cidiya [Sidiyya], qui, après m'avoir rasé la tête avec son yatagan, me proclamera ensuite musulman devant ses élèves reunis; et, cette formalité remplie, je traverserai toute l'Afrique sans être inquiété par personne; au contraire, on m'offrira partout des ovations; il suffit pour cela que je dise; La main de l'homme qui, habitant à 2,000 lieues de la Mecque, y va néanmoins faire sa prière toutes les nuits régulièrement, a touché ma tête.[2]

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1 Panet, p. 32.

2 Panet, p. 31.

SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S LATER POLITICAL CAREER

Shortly after Shaikh Sidiyya's settlement of the Djedjeba-Tabiyyat diyya affair he also took several initiatives in the hassani politics of Trarza and Brakna, as a result of which he became firmly established as a mediator and negotiator between hassani and zawiyya groups alike.

The background to this is the rather involved story of succession disputes and 'pretenders' in Trarza and Brakna summarized above, and the central figures are the Trarza pretender Ahmad Laigat and his family. We have noted that after being successfully chased from Trarza in 1848, Ahmad Laigat took refuge in Brakna among his Awlad Siyyid maternal relations.[1] This began two years of raiding and campaigns led by Muhammad Lhabib and supported by the Awlad Ahmad and Awlad Naghmash in an effort to drive Ahmad Laigat from Brakna.

The Brakna hassanis were at this time in the midst of several political rivalries. The Awlad Siyyid amir, Ahmadu o/ Sidi Ely (1818-1841) who had succeeded his father as only the second amir from this younger branch of the Awlad 'Abdallah, had been poisoned, reputedlyby his Idaw 'Aish Sharatit wife. His cousin and successor, al-Mukhtar Sidi, was accepted by a majority of the Brakna hassanis (the Awlad Naghmash, Awlad

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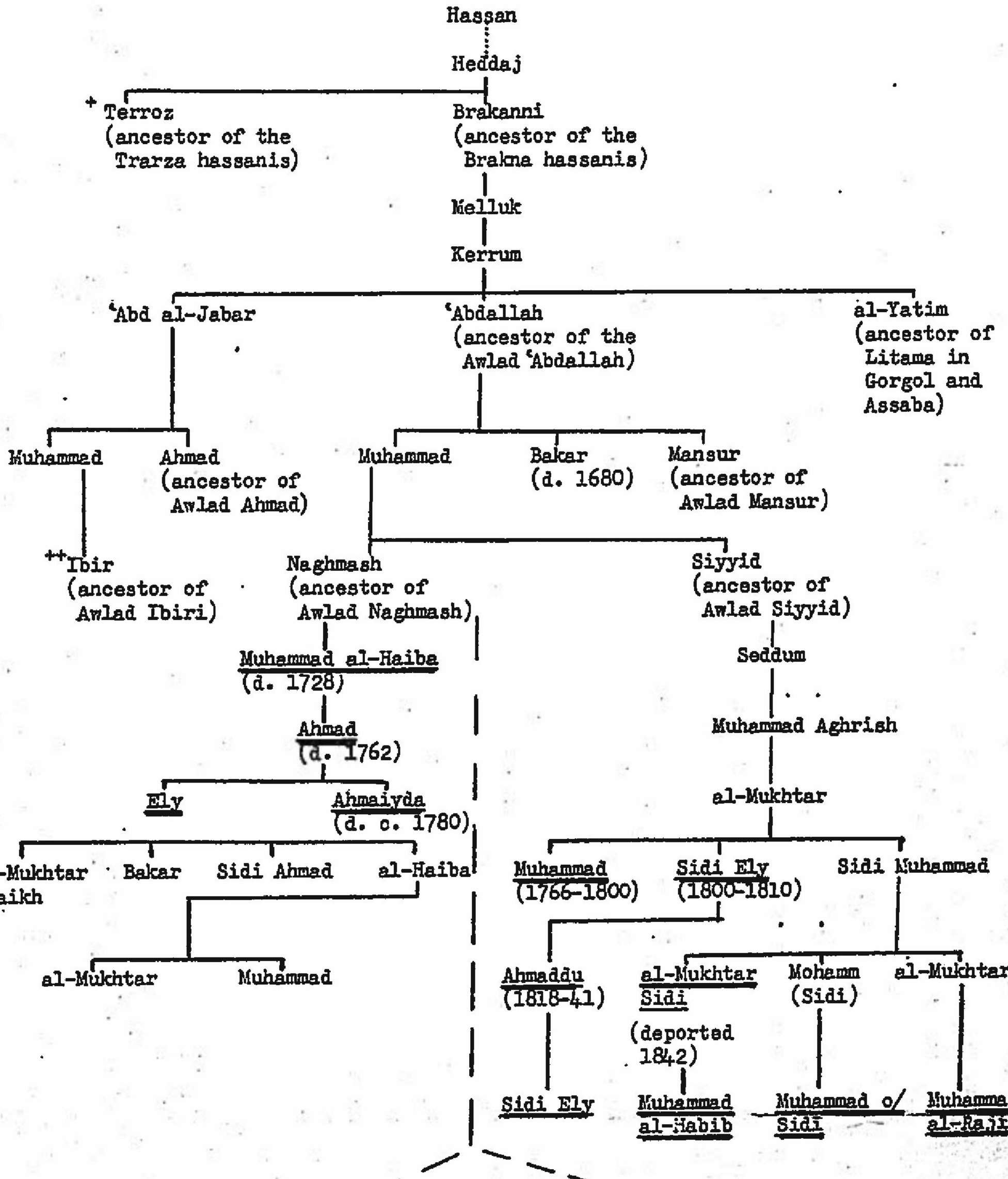
1 Archives A.O.F., 2-B-27, dated 26.6.1848 refers for the first time to Ahmad Laigat being in Brakna. This is confirmed two weeks later in Ibid., dated 19.7.1848.

Ahmad, Awlad Mansur and the Ahl Amar Brahim fraction of the Awlad Siyyid) and also enjoyed the support of Muhammad Lhabib in Trarza, who had formerly been his guardian. Largely because of this latter relationship al-Mukhtar Sidi gained the enmity of the French who had him deported to Gabon in 1842, and who thereby formally inaugurated a policy of imposing amirs in Brakna which was to exacerbate hassani politics in that region for the next twenty years. During this period there were two major divisions in Brakna amiral politics. The first was composed of the supporters of the Ahmadu o/ Sidi Ely lineage, represented first by Muhammad al-Rajil (1842-1851) and later by Sidi Ely o/ Ahmadu o/ Sidi Ely (1854-1893) and encouraged by the French and a segment of the Awlad Siyyid. The second was made up of the supporters of the deported al-Mukhtar Sidi, and his lineage, generally encouraged by Muhammad Lhabib and the vast majority of Brakna hassanis, including the Awlad Ahmad and Awlad Naghmash. Candidates put forward by this latter group included Muhammad o/ Sidi, known in French references as 'Mohammed Sidi' (1845-1848) and Muhammad al-Habib (1860-1864).

At the time of Muhammad Lhabib's harassment of Brakna for harbouring Ahmad Laigat, Muhammad al-Rajil was theoretically the amir of that region, i.e., the French paid to him the customs duties at Podor, but the Moors and French alike regarded him as an ineffectual, interim leader uhtil a stronger

ABBREVIATED GENEALOGY OF THE AWLAD 'ABDALLAH[1]

(the dominant Brakna hassani grouping) indicating the 18th and 19th century 'amirs' of Brakna.
(red underlinings indicate amirs)



1 This chart is drawn from P. Marty, Brakna, p. 22 and it unfortunately has not profited from the minor corrections which are frequently necessary with the Marty genealogies and which can only be done by an historian of the Awlad 'Abdallah. However, for our purposes here of a check-list of mid-19th century figures within the Awlad 'Abdallah this chart will suffice; correspondence from the mid-19th century Brakna chiefs to Shaikh Sidiyya indicates that the last three generations shown above are correct.

+ For an abbreviated genealogy of the Trarza hassanis, see p. 206.

++ For an abbreviated genealogy of the descendants of Ibir, see p. 98.

personality could be found.[1] To this end Muhammad Lhabib, in collaboration with the Awlad Ahmad and, it appears, under the direction of Shaikh Sidiyya, announced in February 1845 the succession of Muhammad o/ Sidi to Brakna leadership.[2] The French, however, continued to support Muhammad al-Rajil as a regent until Sidi Ely[3] would come of age. As a result during the period from 1845 until 1851, when the French finally abandoned their support of Muhammad al-Rajil and recognised Muhammad o/ Sidi as amir of Brakna, that region was torn between two amirs, two pretenders, and a complicated series of rapidly shifting alliances.

After Muhammad Lhabib's final campaign in Brakna (1848-1849) successfully expelled Ahmad Laigat, who took refuge in Adrar in 1850 (?),[4] the remnants of Muhammad al-Rajil's

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1 This was occasionally interupted (Ibid., 3-B-64, dated 4.8.1848) and not without problems (Ibid., 2-B-30, dated 1.8.1851), but the French officially remained supporters of Muhammad al-Rajil until 1851.

2 Ibid., 2-B-24, dated 26.2.1845.

3 Sidi Ely, the son of the former amir, Ahmadu o/ Sidi Ely, was at this time a minor (P. Marty variously sets his birth date as 1833 (Brakna, p. 53) and 1836 (Ibid., p. 60)). The French regarded Muhammad al-Rajil and Muhammad o/ Sidi as regents until Sidi Ely reached his majority. Ahmad Laigat, as Sidi Ely's maternal uncle and guardian (Ibid., p. 73) brought Trarsa politics into this Brakna succession problem.

4 Archives A.O.F., 13-G-33, item 11, dated 27.11.1850 and 2-B-30, dated 29.3.1851. Both these sources imply that Ahmad Laigat had fled to Adrar, but the precise date this took place is unclear.

following were dispersed. This was not only the result of the military successes by Trarza, but also was encouraged by Muhammad al-Rajil's humiliating dependence upon French assistance during the May 1849 Trarza raid, and his consent to Sidi Ely being taken to St. Louis for education at that time.[1] However, even after the French recognised the succession of Muhammad o/ Sidi to the amirate of Brakna in 1851 and the death of Ahmad Laigat which occurred that same year in Adrar, the power struggle in southern Mauritania in no wey abated. For the following seven years Muhammad o/ Sidi and Sidi Ely, who had now reached his majority, fought for control over the Ahl Brakna[2] and, as a result of other tensions, Muhammad Lhabib recognised and supported each of these amirs at differing times during this period. The French, having plotted the demise of Muhammad Lhabib from 1849, finally launched a war under Louis Faidherbe's direction against him and Muhammad o/ Sidi in Brakna which lasted from 1856 to 1858. Much to the satisfaction of the commercial interests along the river, in 1858 Sidi Ely succeeded to the amirate of Brakna by assassinating Muhammad o/ Sidi. Two years later Muhammad Lhabib met the same fate at the hands

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1 P. Marty, Brakna, p. 63.

2 See J.O. news items of 16.3.1856, 16.4.1856, 17.6.1856, 16.9.1856, etc. for references to skirmishes which characterized these years in Brakna from roughly 1851 to 1858. A convenient source is the J.O., "Nouvelle du Fleuve", items for the period 1856 to 1859.

of a group of Trarza dissidents and he was succeeded by his second son, Sidi M'barik.

Ramifications in Adrar from these Trarza and Brakna struggles are less well documented, but they also appear to be less complicated. The Adrar was drawn into the Ahmad Laigat affair when Muhammad Lhabib launched a punitive expedition against Ahmad o/ Aiyyda, the amir of Adrar,[1] for his role in harbouring Ahmad Laigat in 1850. This was returned by a combined Awlad Yahia bin 'Uthman - Idaw 'Aish (Sharatit) attack on the camps of Muhammad Lhabib which concluded, according to Basset, with their carrying away Muhammad Lhabib's wife, al-Miah.[2] Retaliation by Muahmmad Lhabib never got under way because, it is said, of his own involvement in Oualo at this time[3] and the increasing threat posed by French activity in Brakna politics which eventually led to the 1856-1858 war.

To recapitulate this rather turbulent period in southern Mauritania, roughly 1845 to 1860, the conflict grew out of an attempt by a dissident faction within the Trarza Awlad Ahmad min Daman to remove Muhammad Lhabib and the efforts of France to

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1 See p.229 note 4 above, and Archives A.O.F., 13-G-33, item 24, dated 1853.

2 R. Basset, Mission, p. 530.

3 See Ibid., p. 531 and P. Marty, Trarza, p. 111, but the reason may have been due to Sidiyya's intervention which is noted below.

impose upon Brakna an amir who had little support among the Awlad 'Abdallah dominant lineage in Brakna. The flight of dissident Trarza elements first into Brakna, then into Adrar brought on punitive expeditions from Muhammad Lhabib, retaliatory raids by the injured parties and, before it was settled, a three-party dispute to the succession of Brakna leadership, and Idaw 'Aish (Sharatit) and French participation as well. Further complications to the several succession controversies involved numerous genealogical and bureaucratic interconnexions among these individuals and groups.[1] Throughout these conflicts one of the only constants in the balance of power in Brakna was the influence of the Awlad Ahmad, which

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1 To mention the obvious genealogical interconnexions which have relevance to our disfussion here, Ahmadu o/ Sidi Ely, the amir of Brakna, was married to the daughter of the Sharitit (Idaw 'Aish) chief. Sidi Ely o/ Ahmadu, the candidate for the Brakna amirate was in the care of his 'maternal uncle', Ahmad Laigat, pretender to the amirate of Trarza, and Muhammad o/ Sidi, who had been raised by Muhammad Lhabib, was in alliance with him and the Awlad Ahmad, who were cousins of Shaikh Sidiyya.

'Bureaucratic complications' came from the independent line followed throughout the mid-19th century by the principal 'ministers' of the amirs of Trarza and Brakna; these men were the intermediaries between their respective amirs and the French authorities, and they received a substantial remuneration from the French administrators for their services. These 'ministers', particularly Mukhtar Ndiack who was the minister of diverse amirs in Brakna between 1840 and 1875, and the ministers' families are often found in critical positions in Brakna succession disputes in the mid-19th century. They virtually directed French intervention in select affairs, and they greatly influenced Wolof and Toucouleur sympathies for specific 'pretenders'. A brief reference to these men is found in P. Marty, Brakna, p. 70-71.

also generally included the Awlad Naghmash. It would appear that during the period 1842-1865, when the Awlad Ahmad steadily opposed French efforts to influence Brakna politics through the Awlad Siyyid, the particular alliance which was able to claim Awlad Ahmad support generally held an advantage over their opponents numerically and militarily.

It was in this context that Shaikh Sidiyya took the initiative of appointing the successors to the Brakna amirate in 1845 and, with this accomplished, he turned to reconciling Muhammad Lhabib with his Brakna and Adrar cousins in 1856.[1] By so doing his mediation successfully avoided the increasingly explosive hassani political rivalries which even threatened to involve some of the zawiyya tribes. The effectiveness of Sidiyya's intervention into hassani politics in the 1850's is indicated by the few disputes over the successors to the amirates in Trarza and Brakna whom the Shaikh, himself, sanctioned.

What precisely motivated Sidiyya to involve himself in hassani politics in the 1845 Brakna succession dispute must be left to speculation. One possible explanation comes out

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1 Actually a series of mediations eventually settled the several outstanding disputes between Muhammad Lhabib and Brakna and Adrar. The first of these was the reconciliation brought about between the Trarza amir and Bu Bakr Khudish (reported in Archives A.O.F., 3-B-93, dated 10.11.1851), who had been an opponent of Muhammad o/ Sidi and an ally of Sidi Ely.

of the five years following the deportation of al-Mukhtar Sidi, which were plagued with the vacillation of Muhammad al-Rajil, the intrigues of Ahmad Laigat, and the power manipulations of Muhammad o/ Sidi. This period might well have had an adverse economic effect within the Awlad Ibiri, geographically placed as it was between Brakna and Trarza. Sidiyya clearly saw that the choice for Brakna leadership was between Sidi Ely and Muhammad o/ Sidi, and he informed his cousins, the Awlad Ahmad, that of the two cnadidates for amir in Brakna, Sidi Ely was too young and therefore lacked respect.[1] He therefore recommended that Muhammad o/ Sidi be supported as amir. This directive to the Awlad Ahmad was probably crucial to the emergence of Muhammad o/ Sidi as an effective Brakna amir from 1848 to 1858. Unfortunately, the precise date of this letter is not known, but reports from the French post at Podor would suggest that it was in January or February 1845, at which time the Awlad Ahmad are reported to have requested that Muhammad Lhabib declare Muhammad o/ Sidi as amir of Brakna.[2]

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1 Catalogue, ms. no. 571.

2 Archives A.O.F., 2-B-24, dated 26.4.1845. This is also reported in R. Basset, Mission, p. 529, but P. Marty (Brakna, p. 65) sets this date as 1848, drawing probably on Archives A.O.F., 2-B-50, dated 1.8.1851. It was in August 1848 that the Brakna regent, Muhammad al-Rajil ceded to Muhammad o/ Sidi one-third of his customs duties at the conclusion of a major battle between the two men, and two years previously Muhammad o/ Sidi had married a daughter of Ahmadu o/ Sidi Ely, thus legitimizing his claim to the amirate in the eyes of many Brakna hassanis (Ibid., 9-G-4, item 20, dated 8.6.1848).

The principal reconciliation which Shaikh Sidiyya brought about between the amirs of Trarza, Adrar and Brakna followed ten years later during the height of tension between these groups. Again, the date for this does not appear on the correspondence connected with the settlement but it would have had to be after the death of Ahmad Laigat (1851), the reprisal raid on Trarza made by Adrar and Idaw 'Aish (Sharitit) forces (1851), and at the conclusion of the period in which Muhammad Lhabib actively opposed Muhammad o/ Sidi as amir of Brakna (1851-1855). Letters are extant in which Shaikh Sidiyya wrote to Muhammad Lhabib telling him of the desire of the Ahl Khandusa to conclude hostilities and instructing him to come to Boutilimit to settle the affair.[1] At the same time he wrote to the amir of Adrar informing him that he should come in seven days' time to make peace between himself and Muhammad Lhabib.[2] The meeting which followed was probably the conference of January 1856 which the French authorities at Podor reported as having taken place in Sidiyya's camp at Tendouja. If so, the Shaikh's intention of peacefully solving the explosive succession disputes in Brakna and Trarza and their complications were entirely misread by the French authorities who

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1 Catalogue, ms. no. 156A. The Ahl Khandusa was the lineage to which Ahmad Laigat was attached.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 156B.

believed the meeting to be a council of war. Faidherbe understood that Muhammad Lhabib had urged a jihād against the French, and largely because of this conference Faidherbe despatched troops to Koundi by late March 1856 and launched his attack on Trarza in June.

It would be appropriate here, at the conclusion of one of the largest and most significant hassani mediation efforts in Sidiyya's career, and the subsequent meeting which made him out to be a militant Muslim fanatic in the eyes of the French administration and subsequent French historians of Mauritania,[1] to examine his attitude towards the French presence along the Senegal River and the French attitudes towards him. The Kitāb al-Wasīṭ implies, as have other 20th century Mauritanian historians, that Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir was in fact violently anti-French,[2] but this does not appear

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1 Archives A.O.F., 13-G-120, item 65, dated 13.2.1856; and P. Marty, Brakna, p. 68.

2 Ahmad al-Shinqiti reports an incident in the life of Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya when, after repeated rebuffs, he finally presented to his father a poem that pleased him, which is quoted in full by Ahmad al-Shinqiti (pp. 246-277) and quoted in part in A. Leriche, "Deux lettres au temps de la pacification (Mauritanie)", Bull. I.F.A.N., XIV, 1952, pp. 629-630. This qaṣīda urges the faithful to oppose all European infidels. Opinion among scholars today in Mauritania is divided on the issue of Sidiyya's sentiments towards the French, though in the popular mind he is considered as having been anti-French.

A plausible explanation of this came from an N'tishait faqīh Isma'il o/ Cheikh (communication, Boutilimit, 27.1.1969), who suggested that Sidiyya al-Kabir has been built up into an anti-French figure as a result of friction arising out of the cooperation given by Sidiyya Baba, his grandson, to Coppolani. Any enlargement of the contrast between the two men allows for continued veneration of Sidiyya al-Kabir for his correct attitudes and a magnification of the 'disservice' to Islam and to his country rendered by Sidiyya's grandson, in the 'pacification' of Mauritania.

consistant with his views expressed to Muhammad Lhabib on the conditions for jihād[1] nor the training and example he received from his Kunta masters who have been widely lauded for their tolerance of European travellers and encouragement of European commerce.[2] Indeed, on the basis of his two letters to Faidherbe,[3] and the mission to St. Louis in which the Awlad Ibiri took part which asked for French restitution of losses suffered by zawiyya caravans during the 1856-1858 war,[4] Shaikh Sidiyya might be characterized as a scholar whose appreciation of the French as a commercial outlet for gum and source of European goods in no way compromised Islam and religious truth as he understood it. Of course, one cannot read from these attitudes in the mid-19th century what their likely turn might have been fifty or sixty years later at the time of the French occupation of Mauritania, but the emergence of Sidiyya's grandson as one of Coppolani's

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1 Catalogue, ms. no. 461.

2 See the laudatory comments of P. Marty, Les Kounta, pp. 87-89; the same sentiments earlier appeared in A.O.F. administrative accounts as early as 1859. See Archives A.O.F., 3-B-97, dated 6.7.1859 and J.O., dated 12.7.1859 in which the Fouta Muslims are urged not to depart from the Divine Law as propagated by Sidi al-Mukhtar-al-Kunti and Sidi Muhammad.

3 Catalogue, ms. no. 156B; Archives A.O.F., 13-G-123, item 23, 10.6.1865; and A. Leriche, "Deux Lettres". See also Catalogue, ms. no. 570 which is addressed only to the "Amir of N'dar [St. Louis]".

4 J.O., dated 25.10.1859 and Archives A.O.F., 9-G-40, item 106.

greatest aids in the 'pacification' of Mauritania is in keeping with the Shaikh's pragmatic attitude toward the French. What appears from the literature as the most acceptable characterization of Sidiyya's political stance towards the French is that of non-involvement. He wished neither collaboration with them (for the compromise this would mean to his own role as a mediator and a religious figure in Trarza and Brakna) nor alienation from them (for the serious economic repercussions this might mean for his tribe[1] and southern Mauritania).

The attitudes of the French administration towards Shaikh Sidiyya cannot be characterized with such clarity. Although the French apparently knew of his presence in 'Brakna' at least by 1849[2] (and probably considerably earlier) no reference to Sidiyya was made in government correspondence to and from

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1 In chapter VI below, specific economic benefits accrued to the Awlad Ibiri from French commerce are noted, but one must also recognise that the social, political and religious position to which the tribe had risen by the mid-19th century was also due, in part, to the general prosperity and security in Trarza which appears to have been greatly encouraged by income from the French commerce. That this was well appreciated by the principals in this story is supported by a letter from Sidiyya to Muhammad Lhabib in the Ahl Khandusa affair (Catalogue, ms. no. 156A) in which he points out the danger of disrupting trade as a result of warfare.

2 The first reference to Sidiyya I have come across appears in the report of the mission of Léopold Panet in 1849. (Panet, pp. 32-33).

St. Louis until 1851,[1] and only in 1857[2] was the Government of Senegal aware that Shaikh Sidiyya was the temporal leader of the Awlad Ibiri. After that time his movements were more carefully watched and the camps of his talāmīdh were plotted.[3] But in the light of the false assumptions about the political structure of Mauritanian society upon which the French were gathering intelligence and formulating policy, it is understandable that the Shaikh does not appear as one of the principal political figures in the administrative archives. Where he does appear in French correspondence during the period 1856-1868 we are left with glimpses of his activity. He is generally characterized as offering advice and comfort to the amirs of Brakna[4] and Trarza[5] by his mediation,

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1 Archives A.O.F., 3-B-93, dated 10.11.1851.

2 Ibid., 9-G-4, dated 25.8.1857.

3 Ibid., 13-G-122, item 50, dated 6.6.1864. This line of analysis may be questioned, with some validity, as regular administrative correspondence from the posts (escales) along the Senegal River did not begin until 1854 when Louis Faidherbe reorganised the command of the Colony of Senegal. However, the fact that Sidiyya, who was known in St. Louis to exist, and who had played the role of king-maker before this time, was not credited with these accomplishments tends to support this argument.

4 Ibid., item 78, dated 20.11.1864.

5 Ibid., 13-G-123, item 12, dated 18.3.1865.

sanctuary[1] and reconciliation.[2] In the administrative reports from Podor during this period we learn that: his presence in an Awlad Ahmad camp is reported to have panicked the black soldiers engaged by the French for an attack on that tribe in 1856;[3] he counselled Muhammad o/ Sidi to renounce war;[4] he offered protection to the assassin of a Futa personality;[5] he averted a battle between the Awlad Ahmad and Awlad Bu Aliyya by solving their blood-money dispute;[6] he offered sanctuary to Muhammad al-Habib o/ al-Mukhtar;[7] he offered protection to the Awlad Ahmad;[8] and he conspired to turn out the French-proclaimed amir of Brakna.[9] In the French archival literature of this period no other religious personality in southern Mauritania figures so

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1 Ibid., item 60, dated 11.9.1866.

2 Ibid., item 67, dated 17.12.1866.

3 Ibid., 13-G-120, item 76, dated 8.6.1856.

4 Ibid., item 77, dated 15.6.1856 and item 78, dated 19.6.1856.

5 Ibid., item 127, dated 20.9.1859.

6 Ibid., 13-G-121, item 112, dated 2.12.1863.

7 Ibid., item 114, dated 5.12.1863.

8 Ibid., item 40, dated 23.5.1864.

9 Ibid., item 51, dated 6.6.1864.

prominently.[1]

In French policy at this time, the overriding fear with respect to Mauritania was that Trarza and Brakna might somehow merge under the single authority of Muhammad Lhabib. This, it was thought, would threaten the infant commercial ventures which were the only justification for the enormous expenses in maintaining the Colony of Senegal. The problem for such a policy which sought to separate the politics of Trarza and Brakna regions was to maintain some sort of equilibrium between the natural inclinations toward fission within the segmentary social structure which were much intensified by French interventions, and a minimal degree of stability which was necessary for the success of trade. As a result the French attitude towards mediators such as Shaikh Sidiyya (insofar as an 'attitude' can be said to have existed) was ambiguous. While Faidherbe praised Sidiyya for his peace-keeping efforts,[2] he was at the same time viewed with apprehension for possibly harmonizing discordant elements in Trarza and Brakna.[3] The close relations Sidiyya enjoyed

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1 Numerically the references to "Chems", the title given to a succession of chiefs of the "Darmankours" (or Idaw al-Hajj) traders is greater, but these are to Chems the commercial contact and not the religious or political personality of a zawiyya tribe (which the Idaw al-Hajj tribe are).

2 Archives A.O.F., 3-B-93, dated 24.4.1856.

3 Ibid., 13-G-120, item 65, dated 13.2.1856.

with the Awlad Ahmad (who figured conspicously in all the anti-Awlad Siyyid, and thus anti-French, campaigns) added further suspicion to the Shaikh's movements and activities. However, one must not over emphasize French preoccupation with Shaikh Sidiyya. He was recognised by administrators in St. Louis towards the end of his life as perhaps the most influential religious leader in Mauritania whose services as a negotiator had come to the notice of officials several times between 1856 and 1868. Beyond this, it is doubtful whether the French knew or particularly cared about his activities and standing in southern Mauritania.

A revealing illustration of the internal political position which Shaikh Sidiyya held in the late 1850's and early 1860's comes at the time of the succession of Sidi Ely to the Brakna amirate, following his assassination of Muhammad o/ Sidi in December 1858. Muhammad o/ Sidi, the Brakna amir who had been supported by Muhammad Lhabib in the mid-1840's, had experienced steady opposition from Sidi Ely for seven years in the form of raiding and provocation, with the assistance of the French. There are indications that towards the middle of his career as amir, Muhammad o/ Sidi had also been opposed by Muhammad Lhabib and, more important, the Awlad Ahmad, whose support was vital to Muhammad o/ Sidi's tenuous control over Brakna.[1] Following his assassination by Sidi Ely, a degree

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[1] Awlad Ahmad opposition to Muhammad o/ Sidi is first reported in Ibid., item 56, dated 31.7.1856 and confirmed in Ibid., item 85, dated 20.2.1857.

of rapport was evidentally established between Sidi Ely and his Trarza rival, Muhammad Lhabib[1] and by 1861 Sidi Ely was claiming to the French that almost all of Brakna was under his control.[2]

It is related in oral tradition that after the assassination of Muhammad o/ Sidi in 1858, Sidi Ely went directly to the camp of Shaikh Sidiyya where he remained for seven days, in hopes of receiving the Shaikh's consent to his becoming the amir of Brakna. When this assent was finally granted Sidi Ely returned to the Awlad Siyyid, and thereafter his right to the amirate was unchallenged in Brakna. It has been noted above that ten years previously Sidiyya had favoured Muhammad o/ Sidi as amir over Sidi Ely on account of the latter's youth; Sidi Ely would, by this time, have reached his majority.

However, French archival sources indicate that after Sidi Ely assassinated his rival, he continued to receive active opposition from the Awlad Naghmash and Awlad Ahmad (as well as encouragement from the French), and during 1863-1866

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1 Ibid., item 119, dated 15.2.1859 where Sidi Ely and Muhammad Lhabib are reported to have met and to have forged an alliance, and Ibid., 3-B-93, dated 13.2.1860 where in a letter to the French Governor at St. Louis, Muhammad Lhabib announces that Sidi Ely is the undisputed amir of Brakna and that half of the Awlad Naghmash and Awlad Ahmad have submitted to him.

2 Ibid., 13-G-120, item 151, dated 23.12.1861; this was with the notable exception of the Awlad Ahmad.

he was successfully opposed by a protegé of the amir of Trarza, Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib. In September 1860 Muhammad Lhabib had been assassinated by a group of dissident Awlad Ahmad min Daman, led by Sidi Ahmad o/ Khamlish, who then fled to an Awlad Siyyid camp for protection. Muhammad Lhabib's son and successor, Sidi, found them and killed most of the assassins[1] and assumed his father's position with no opposition. As during the last years of his father's life, relations between Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib and Sidi Ely appear to have been cordial at the outset,[2] but for a period of three years (November 1863 to November 1866) Sidi Ely ceased to be recognised as amir of Brakna by his Trarza cousins. This, it is said, was the result of Sidi Ely having insulted the amir of Trarza by sending a diplomatic mission to Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib, led by only a zenagha man. In his place Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib, in collaboration with Shaikh Sidiyya, put Muhammad al-Habib,[3] who was the son of the former deported

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1 One member, Ahmad o/ Obbi, is reported to have fled to Shaikh Sidiyya's camp where he was granted sanctuary (P. Marty, Trarza, p. 121).

2 Archives A.O.F., 13-G-121, item 16, dated 16.6.1862.

3 The repetition of names, frequently in alternate generations in the same family, is one confusing aspect of Mauritanian proper names. Muhammad al-Habib o/ al-Mukhtar Sidi here is no direct relation to Muhammad Lhabib o/ Amar (the Trarza amir, 1827-1860); although both names are spelled and pronounced in the same manner, to reduce confusion here Muhammad al-Habib o/ al-Mukhtar Sidi will be spelled with a classical Arabic transliteration and Muhammad Lhabib o/ Amar with the phonetic French transliteration.

Brakna amir, al-Mukhtar Sidi (1841-1842). The French authorities at Podor reported on 20 November 1863 that the Awlad Naghmash and Awlad Ahmad, "Both protected by the King of Trarza and the great marabout Schij [Shaikh Sidiyya]", had refused to obey Sidi Ely and had named in his place Muhammad al-Habib.[1] Two weeks later news arrived at Podor that Muhammad al-Habib o/ al-Mukhtar Sidi had been officially installed as amir of Brakna with the support of the Awlad Siyyid, Awlad Ahmad, Awlad Naghmash, Aralines, Twabir and with the approval of Shaikh Sidiyya and Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib, the amir of Trarza. The following three years were marked by a complete reversal of the former authority-dissidence roles in Brakna; Sidi Ely continued to receive French assistance and continued his earlier (1851-1858) efforts to harass the tribes and commerce upon which the amir's influence was based, and the Awlad Naghmash, Awlad Ahmad and amir of Trarza sought to promote the stability of 'their' amir. In 1864 French reports of a meeting in Shaikh Sidiyya's camp[2] indicate a solid front of these figures against Sidi Ely, in spite of Sidi Ely's offers of presents and hostages to Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib. In a move that would appear to have been intended to challenge this alliance

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1 Archives A.O.F., 13-G-121, item 109, dated 20.11.1863.

2 Ibid., 13-G-122, item 78, dated 20.11.1864.

against himself, Sidi Ely is reported to have gone to consult with Sidiyya immediately after this meeting.[1] Two years later, in November 1866, another conference in Shaikh Sidiyya's camp re-established Sidi Ely as amir of Brakna, with the support of the Awlad Naghmash, Awlad Ahmad, Torkoz and the Awlad 'Abdallah.[2] Two months prior to this reversal in policy Muhammad al-Habib o/ al-Mukhtar Sidi had taken refuge with Shaikh Sidiyya.[3]

The exact reason for this three year break in Sidi Ely's direction of Brakna hassani affairs or the conditions of his re-instalment are not clear. There are indications that Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib was envious of the privileged economic position Sidi Ely held vis-à-vis the French, or at least that he feared Sidi Ely was moving towards a position of greater independence from Trarza in 1863[4] in comparison to the previous twenty years. Another, more sinister explanation for Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib's and Shaikh Sidiyya's action was offered by a French administrator at Podor, i.e., that an agreement had been reached whereby Muhammad al-Habib

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1 Ibid., item 79, dated 3.12.1864.

2 Ibid., 13-G-123, item 65, dated 24.11.1866.

3 Ibid., item 60, dated 11.9.1866.

4 Ibid., 13-G-121, item, 121, dated 28.12.1865.

o/ al-Mukhtar Sidi had agreed, if he were given the amirate of Brakna, to pay Shaikh Sidiyya one quarter of his (quinée) customs duties and to divide the remainder with Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib.[1] Whatever the precise reasons for this interruption of Sidi Ely's tenure as amir, or for that matter the exact timing of the submission made by Sidi Ely to Shaikh Sidiyya (this possibly has been altered in oral tradition and might have taken place after the Muhammad al-Habib o/ al-Mukhtar Sidi episode), the part played by Shaikh Sidiyya, in alliance with the Awlad Ahmad, as a king-maker in Brakna appears quite clear. By the end of his life, due in part to his representing a continuity between the mid-1850's and mid-1860's in the southern Mauritanian authority structures (when a change in hassani leadership both in Trarza and Brakna posed a threat to the dominant hassani lineages) Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir was a major political influence in Mauritania.

No effort has been made here to produce an exhaustive listing of all the major mediation and arbitration efforts which have been attributed to Sidiyya, nor all the principal affairs which are documented in his correspondence. These are numerous and even those which can be offered as examples of his political activity add little to the account above of

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1 Ibid., 13-G-122, item 51, dated 8.6.1864.

the evolution of Shaikh Sidiyya from an 'ālim to a political potentate. It might be useful, however, to summarize here four categories into which the correspondence relating to his political settlements or mediations can be grouped, as these categories appear to roughly delineate an order of priorities in the Shaikh's own conception of his political role. These four categories may be roughly defined as affairs involving his own tribe or murīdūn, affairs concerned with hassanis in Trarza or Brakna, conflicts among neighbouring zawayya, and affairs involving individuals or groups outside the strict bidān classification in Moorish society, e.g., zenagha, haratine, and sudanis on the left bank of the Senegal.

Within the Awlad Ibiri and among the Shaikh's personal following there were few conflicts of any magnitude, largely because of Sidiyya's close supervision over problems within his own community. Examples of his settlements involving the Awlad Ibiri include the negotiation of a dispute between a man of the N'tishait and another from the Awlad Khajil;[1] the restitution of cattle raided by the Ahl Ammoni (Awlad Yahia bin 'Uthman of Adrar) from the Awlad Ibiri;[2] the mediation between two brothers of the Awlad Ahmad al-Falli;[3] and the

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1 Catalogue, ms. no. T8.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 414.

3 Ibid., ms. no. 365.

and the Ahl Mahandnalla;[1] the settlement of a dispute between the Ida Hiss - Taghat and Ida Bahum;[2] and the counsel in the settlement of a debt between the Ida Mijin and Tajakanat.[3] These internal settlements, offers of advice and reconciliation appear to have received a priority over all other political matters.

Shaikh Sidiyya's involvement in hassani affairs has been summarized above, largely for the dramatic narrative it provides for the growth of his political influence in Mauritania. This participation in hassani politics was the result of the Shaikh's tribe's descent from Brakarni, and their cousins, the Awlad Ahmad, the geographical positioning of their tribe between Brakna and Trarza, and Sidiyya's political alliance with the amirate of Trarza. Among Sidiyya's correspondence with hassani tribes in Brakna and Trarza one finds a general directive to the amirs of these two regions to make restitution to sudani Muslims;[4] a letter to the Awlad Ahmad commanding them to make restitution to the Awlad Ibiri (Awlad Adaja);[5]

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1 Ibid., mss. nos. 212 and 350.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 416.

3 Ibid., ms. no. 137.

4 Ibid., ms. no. 232.

and reconciliation between the Awlad Ahmad and the Awlad Siyyid;[1] a settlement of a dispute between the Awlad Ahmad and Twabir;[2] a demand to the Awlad Ahmad min Daman that a servant who was taken from his Awlad Ibiri camp be returned;[3] a letter to the Awlad Mansur requesting restitution of pillaged goods from the Awlad Ibiri;[4] a demand to Muhammad Lhabib that he make restitution of items raided from the Idainib (Taghat);[5] a request that he make restitution to Kuntas[6] and to the Laghlal[7] of camels taken; a letter settling a diyya affair for the Awlad Mansur;[8] and mediation between two brothers of the Awlad Ahmad min Daman.[9] While few of these affairs, in themselves, had profound effects upon the course of hassani or zawiyya politics in Trarza and Brakna, each did contribute to the status of Shaikh Sidiyya as a political figure and to the stability and security of southern

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1 Ibid., mss. nos. 305 and 337.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 313.

3 Ibid., mss. nos. T16 and T47.

4 Ibid., ms. no. T22.

5 Ibid., ms. no. 277.

6 Ibid., mss. nos. 310 and 465.

7 Ibid., ms. no. 144.

8 Ibid., ms. no. 197.

9 Ibid., ms. no. 464.

Mauritania.

Sidiyya's zawiyya relations were somewhat limited outside of the group of murīdūn and talāmīdh who were directly under his religious influence, and one cannot ascribe to the Shaikh's involvements the same sort of political activity that has been described above in relation to southern Mauritanian hassanis. Indeed, his involvement in such affairs as the Idaw 'Ali - Ida Belhassan settlement (mid-1840's)[1] and the Kunta - Reguibat mediation[2] may be more appropriately considered as negotiations on behalf of his own followers (the Ida Belhassan and Kunta in these instances) than political activity as an independent faqīh in zawiyya problems.

Finally, a few but very interesting political involvements on the part of Shaikh Sidiyya outside the zawiyya-hassani circles in Mauritania in his active encouragement given to zenagha,[3] haratine groups,[4] and, on one occasion, a warning to the amirs of Trarza and Brakna to respect the sudanis in

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1 Ibid., ms. no. 340.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 218.

3 See for example, Ibid., ms. no. 381, in which Awlad Bu Aliyya fractions are protected from Muhammad Lhabib.

4 See Ibid., ms. no. 189, in response to letters from the Kunta Bu Saif haratine group who wrote in request of a teacher, and their letters to Sidiyya, Ibid., ms. no. 385 and ms. no. 399.

the Fouta as Muslims[1] indicates his open attitude towards these disenfranchised groups. Unfortunately, information on this last point is limited, but other indications in his economic and religious policy (see discussion of talāmīdh and sanctuary in chapter VI below) suggest that he took an active interest in the rights and welfare of these depressed, lower class members of his society.

As a final note on Shaikh Sidiyya's own thorough understanding of the political influence he had come to wield by the end of his lifetime, this analysis of the growth of his political involvement in southern Mauritanian society will conclude with extracts from a letter which he wrote towards the end of his life. It is addressed to four of the Shaikh's chief murīdūn, Muhammad Sidina, Iktawashan, Mahmud and Sidi Ahmad o/ al-Salim, and its purpose is to prepare and instruct them in the obligations and responsibilities which Shaikh Sidiyya would some day leave behind him.[2]

The letter opens with a salutation to the four men, addresses them and speaks of their devotion and love,

> ...and then, the reason for this letter to you, may God always keep His Grace for us and for you, is to inform you about the fabrication of gun powder. ...

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1 Ibid., ms. no. 137.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 587; a letter in two folios, in the hand of Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya.

Here follows an explanation of the accomplishments of the Shaikh and a suggestion that there is much jealousy felt towards the Awlad Ibiri by other tribes. This section of the letter, unfortunately, is very difficult to decipher owing to the age and paper of the document, but it concludes with the statement that a man came "out of the blue"[1] to Sidiyya's camp (an indication of God's will ?) and stayed with the Shaikh.

> ...And we asked him about the manufacture of the above mentioned [gunpowder] in conversation, and he alleged that he could not say [anything about the advisability of our fabricating it] except a verse of Abu Tamām about 'him and her' i.e., 'She was fit only for him and he only for her.' [The manufacture of gunpowder at this time is appropriate and right.] And he asked us that we should furnish him with what was possible in the way of equipment, such as kettles and earthen beakers, etc., and the saltpetre[2] etc., and the sulphur and charcoal.[3] And he must have a good mortar and pestle also, and a kettle

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1 Folio 1, line 23; unfortunately the individual is not otherwise specified.

2 Folio 2, line 1; the word appears to be 'al-muhādir', which has not been traced; saltpetre is generally al-bārud, but as this is the only other ingredient about which he could be talking here, I have assumed it to be a local variant of saltpetre.

3 Folio 2, line 2; the phrase is 'humum al-'ashar', which is probably a type of charcoal, made from a specific wood. Another explanation may be 'the charcoal which is given as zakāt'.

which he specified, namely a kettle of copper which he had seen with the Ahl Ghiti[1] at al-Hasā. And we sent you this letter in order that you may send us what you can of this, and what you send to us of these [things] will be returned to you, if God wills, after the completion of the purpose [we have] with it. Peace.

Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir died at about midday on the last day of Dhu al-Hijja 1284 (28 April 1868)[2] at the age of 83. He was buried at Tendouja, on a small hillock some seven kilometres east of the present-day well bearing that name. There, in a small qubba built by his talāmīdh from St. Louis, Shaikh Sidiyya, his wife Meme, and son Sidi Muhammad, rest today. 1868 and 1869 were particularly difficult years on both sides of the Senegal River because of heavy floods[3] and a cholera epidemic which raged throughout southern Mauritania and the lands to the south. Shaikh Sidiyya appears to have died a few months before the epidemic of 1868 was under way, but his son's death coincides with the heaviest wave of the cholera the following

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1 The Ahl Ghiti [اهل الگبيطي] and the place-name, probably a well, of al-Hasā, have not been identified.

2 Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, May 1968 and also reported by the French at Podor as April 28th. (See Archives A.O.F., 13-G-124, item 15, dated 13.5.1868).

3 Ibid., 13-G-104, item 22, dated 25.9.1868.



Remains of the qubba erected around the grave site of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir at Tendouja. The large blocks of stone are not found near Tendouja and were transported to the site from many miles away.



Interior of the qubba, showing the tomb stone of Shaikh Sidiyya. Standing to the left of the grave is Harɔuna o/ Cheikh and his son, Baba. Behind them is the grave of Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir.

year,[1] and he quite probably was one of the hundreds of Moors who died as a result of it. The death of Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya came thus much as he had wished, according to the Kitāb al-Wasīṭ, where he is quoted as telling his father that he had no desire to live beyond Sidiyya's time.[2]

Unfortunately, we do not have voluminous documentation about Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya whose life had many parallels to that of his namesake, Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti. Sidi Muhammad's 43 years were spent in his father's shadow, although he obviously was an important part of Shaikh Sidiyya's administrative machinery.[3] Sidi Muhammad's frequent autograph on numerous important

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1 Ibid., 13-G-124, item 51, dated 27.5.1869; item 88, dated 6.7.1869; and item 36, dated 12.4.1869 in which reference is made to the cholera specifically being in the camp of Shaikh Sidiyya. Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir died in the spring of 1869.

2 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 244.

3 It ought to be emphasized that Sidi Muhammad was Shaikh Sidiyya's only child, a fact which makes the Shaikh's influence all the more remarkable if one considers the number of offspring which other, contemporaneous Islamic figures had in western Africa. For example, Muhammad Fadal is said to have had 48 sons and 50 daughters; Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, eight sons; and Shaikh Bu Kunta at N'diassane left 17 sons and 28 daughters.

letters[1] is an indication of this activity. Some letters from Shaikh Sidiyya addressed to Sidi Muhammad and his mother[2] suggest that Sidi Muhammad may have been a significant link between Sidiyya at Tamersguid and other Awlad Ibiri fractions, particularly Sidi Muhammad's maternal kin in the Ahl Mahandnalla. His political role is further illustrated by the fact of Sidi Muhammad's marriage into the Awlad Adaja, one of the three eastern Awlad Ibiri fractions. He was also an accomplished man of letters, and his poetry is praised by Ahmad al-Shinqiti in the Kitāb al-Wasīṭ.

> He was fluent in his style, [writing] tender poetry in an eloquent Arabic. We have not seen anybody criticize him except [in] very insignificant matters which became obliterated by the excellence of his good metaphors and the fluency of his articulation. ...and he was distinguished in knowledge of grammar and history and other things.[3]

Upon Shaikh Sidiyya's death, we are told in the Kitāb al-Wasīṭ that,

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1 Such matters appear in the hand of Sidi Muhammad as Catalogue, mss. nos. 156B (Shaikh Sidiyya to Faidherbe), ms. no. 166 (Shaikh Sidiyya to the Awlad Bu Aliyya) and, interestingly enough, a letter from Muhammad al-Habib o/ al-Mukhtar Sidi to Faidherbe, complete with Sidiyya's characteristic ⟶ at the top right corner, now in Archives A.O.F., 9-G-4, item 152 and roughly translated into French in item 151, dated 21.12.1864.

2 Catalogue, mss. nos. 376 and 457.

3 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 245.

> ...people used to assume that nobody would fill Shaikh Sidiyya's place, but when he died and his son continued in his place there was no alteration from the way his father used to act towards the people.1

This activity is twice documented in the French archives, once before his father's death when Sidi Muhammad is said to have visited the Commandant de Cercle at Podor.[2] After the death of Sidiyya there was also the report of a meeting under Sidi Muhammad's supervision at Boutilimit, including the chiefs of the Awlad Naghmash, Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad and Sidi Ely, to organise reprisals against the Sharitit who had been raiding Brakna.[3] It was perhaps at this time (late 1868) that a letter from Sidi Muhammad to the leaders of the Awlad Ahmad and Awlad 'Abdallah can be dated, in which he outlines for them his intentions to continue Shaikh Sidiyya's role as mediator and counsellor to southern Mauritanian hassanis.[4] But Sidi Muhammad's career as khalifa to his father lasted no more than twelve months.

The life of Sidi Muhammad's eldest son, Sidiyya Baba

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1 Ibid., p. 244.

2 Archives A.O.F., 13-G-123, item 39, dated 2.1.1866.

3 Ibid., 13-G-124, item 29, dated 17.11.1868.

4 Catalogue, ms. no. 471.

(1862-1863 to 1926) falls outside the scope of this study and we shall not attempt to bridge here, as did his life, the 19th century period of Mauritanian history and the early 20th century epoch of Franco-Mauritanian history.[1] At the turn of the century when France attempted to step beyond her earlier role of commercial activity to that of a governing power, and the massive economic influence of France was brought to bear on hassani and zawiyya leaders, the 19th century patterns of tribal alliances and political tensions were considerably altered. As a result, little of the political activity of Shaikh Sidiyya Baba is relevant to the economic and political circumstances in which his grandfather lived. But it can be said that the basic tribal structure upon which Sidiyya Baba built and the advantages he and his family and his tribe held and hold in 20th century Mauritania were founded in the political and economic power of the religious position which was bequeathed to them by Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir. It is to the nature of this religious position that we will next turn.

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1 For an archival-oriented, French military view of this early 20th century period, see G. Désiré-Vuillemin, Contribution à l'Histoire de la Mauritanie, 1900-1934 (Dakar, 1962).

VI. ELEMENTS OF SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S ORGANISATION AND POLICY

...Rien chez les Maures ne correspond à ce que nous connaissons ou sommes accoutumes de voir. Tout y est vague, imprécis et flottant. ...

Georges Poulet (1904)[1]

The analysis that follows of the organisation and policy employed by Shaikh Sidiyya has been arbitrarily divided into religious, economic and political sections. Many of the institutions and policies which will be discussed here cannot be clearly differentiated by a specific religious, economic or political function, in the Awlad Ibiri or among the Shaikh's followers, but the placement of them for the purposes of this analysis has been according to the principal role each institution or policy had in the social structure.

The descriptive terms ''organisation' and 'policy' are imperfect in the Mauritanian context. Both are meant to denote the administrative patterns which Shaikh Sidiyya evolved over the course of his career in Trarza, but it is doubtful whether either was ever highly formalised in the Shaikh's own thought. His concept of 'organisation' may be characterized as what appeared to him as a natural, hierarchical arrangement of priorities which were ordered by a similar hierarchy of command; this was basically the Moorish concept of his society

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1 Poulet, p. 2.

as a whole.[1] In brief it is doubtful that the Shaikh's organisational structures were as formalised as the descriptions below necessarily will make them out to be. Similarly, the Shaikh's 'policy', while somewhat better defined than those structures which we will call his 'organisation', was pragmatic and reflected more the necessity of flexibility in leadership, on several levels in a segmentary society, than a clear formulation of one set of attitudes and actions which were only dependent upon the shaikh for their implimentation. In spite of the inadequacies of these terms, and the disadvantage of overlapping religious, economic and political categories, this approach has the advantage of having been suggested by the oral and written literature itself, and largely for this reason it has been employed here.

Shaikh Sidiyya's organisation and policy will be the general themes in the following analyses, but there remain limits to the use of these terms in fully explaining the religious, economic and political ramifications of the Shaikh's

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1 It has been suggested above that many of the ideas which contributed to the organisational method of Shaikh Sidiyya may have been a product of his lengthy and intimate contact with the Kunta Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar. Until a comprehensive study has been made of the Kunta confederation and particularly of that family, one must regard this suggestion as only a highly probable hypothesis. This does not alter the fact, however, that the organisational framework which Sidiyya created was largely a reflection of the Moorish social structure and much of its effectiveness must be seen as a result of the compatability of his organisational framework with the society's model of its own structure.

activities. Therefore, an effort will be made to also assess the scope and nature of Sidiyya's actual influence in religious, economic and political matters[1] in mid-19th century southern Mauritania. Before taking up the Shaikh's religious organisation and influence, a few prefatory remarks ought to be made about his administrative machinery.

SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

The basis of Shaikh Sidiyya's administrative organisation was a chancery, staffed by a series of secretaries whose periods of service to their shaikh presumably overlapped during the years of Sidiyya's Trarza career. Most of these secretaries had come to Sidiyya as students, and had excelled in their studies of Arabic. They had proven themselves proficient copyists with legible hands, and had sought to further either their careers or their salvation through service to the Shaikh.

The secretaries whose names appear the most frequently in Sidiyya's correspondence are Ahmad o/ al-Mukhtar o/

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1 'Influence' here and below is intended to indicate the power, real or fictitious, but socially definable, which the Shaikh exerted over persons, institutions or events. To define this influence is difficult, as it is made up of numerous factors ranging from genealogical subservience and social distance to economic wealth and mystical insight. In the following discussions of the scope and nature of Shaikh Sidiyya's influence the particular religious, economic and political contexts should more clearly define 'influence' as it is used here.

al-Zwain,[1] Muhammadhan Fal o/ Suliman,[2] Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya,[3] Muhammad o/ Ibn 'Umar o/ Mahamda,[4] Sidiyya, called 'Dah', o/ Daddah,[5] Muhammad o/ Ibnu 'Umar,[6] Shaikh al-Hassan o/ Muhammadhan[7] and Baba Ahmad o/ Shaikh Muhammadhan M'barik.[8] Among these eight, two were Sidiyya's relations within the N'tishait (a son and brother's son), and two were relations by the female lines (a sister's son and a sister-in-law's son). Among the remaining four, two spent a total of some sixty years in their Shaikh's camp, and thus were effectively incorporated within the Awlad Ibiri. These four

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1 Ahmad o/ al-Mukhtar o/ al-Zwain was from the Taghat tribe, and he appears to have been a sort of archivist among the secretaries (see note 2, p. 263 below).

2 Muhammadhan Fal o/ Suliman was from the Awlad Daiman, and a maternal nephew of Sidiyya.

3 Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya, the Shaikh's son, has been mentioned above; he was his father's successor for one year, and he is reported to have taken over the duties and obligations which Sidiyya left behind as his khalifa.

4 Muhammad o/ Ibn 'Umar o/ Muhammadhan was the Shaikh's cousin by reckoning of his mother's-mother's-brother's son's-son and his brother-in-law's cousin in the Ida Bamar fraction of the Awlad Ibiri.

5 Sidiyya (called 'Dah') o/ Daddah was the Shaikh's brother's son.

6 Muhammad o/ Ibnu 'Umar was from the Tashumsha, Id Eiqub.

7 Shaikh al-Hassan o/ Muhammadhan was from the Ida Belhassan and is reputed to have stayed with Sidiyya for 20 years.

8 Baba Ahmad o/ Shaikh Muhammadhan M'barik was from the Lemtuna tribe.

may also be said to have been representatives of their tribes in the Shaikh's camp; two of the tribes so represented, the Tashumsha and Ida Belhassan, were among the three Trarza confederations or tribes outside the Awlad Ibiri in which the largest concentrations of the Shaikh's disciples were to be found.[1] Each of these men was well educated in his own right and the ijāzāt issued by Shaikh Sidiyya for several of them are extant.[2] Although some of them were occasionally sent on missions[3] or acted also as Sidiyya's agents (e.g. Dah o/ Daddah) most of these secretaries appear to have permanently resided with their Shaikh at Tamersguid, Boutilimit or Tendouja. It is likely that this body of secretaries acted also as an informal council for the discussion of particular issues, as they represented several of the tribes which were among the Shaikh's most loyal followers.

From the rasā'il themselves[4] it is possible to distinguish

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1 see below, p. 276.

2 Catalogue, mss. nos. 207 and 410 (Ahmad o/ al-Mukhtar o/ al-Zwain), and 201A (Shaikh Muhammadan M'barik).

3 see below, p. 27/ where these missions are described among these secretaries Ahmad o/ al-Mukhtar o/ al-Zwain and Sidiyya o/ Daddah are mentioned as having been included on them.

4 The generalisations which follow in reference to Shaikh Sidiyya's correspondence come from a survey of 425 letters which he wrote, copies of which are in my possession (see Introduction: sources). These items appear to represent a fair sample of his correspondence, chronologically, in subject matter, and in the social groups to whom he was writing. What proportion this sample is to the total number of letters Sidiyya sent and received is not, of course, possible to know, but one may assume that it is well under half.

something of the responsibilities held by the secretaries and the methods by which the chancery worked. The most delicate or diplomatically sensitive matters were generally written in the hand of Shaikh Sidiyya, himself; indeed, nearly half of all correspondence from his camp bore his autograph.[1] Sidi Muhammad o/ Shaikh Sidiyya and Muhammad Fal often assisted Sidiyya in what may be called his diplomatic correspondence, and the two of them appear to have written in Sidiyya's name nearly as many letters as the Shaikh himself wrote. However, in letters going to another zawiyya tribe, particularly one in which an Awlad Daiman, Idaygub or Ida Belhassan secretary's hand was likely to reinforce the Shaikh's appeals, requests or counsel, one of the secretaries from these tribes would write the letter.[2] In those letters from Shaikh Sidiyya which do not appear in his hand, there evidently was a policy whereby he re-read the previously dictated message, as several rasā'il bear the marks of his

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1 The Shaikh's writing was a rather tortured Maghribi script and towards the end of his life it became increasingly unsteady, but throughout his career it is very easily recognisable. For the purpose of this analysis, the method by which delivered versions of correspondence have been distinguished from copies is by the numerous folds which mark the paper (and often obliterate portions of the script) and the blue, indigo dye which frequently was left on the bottom right-hand corners of the reverse sides of the paper, both being the result of the letter having been carried, nearly folded, in the dyed guinée-cloth turbans of the messengers.

2 For example, see Catalogue, ms. no. T23, a letter to al-Amin o/ Habib Allah of the Awlad Daiman written by Muhammadhan Fal o/ Suliman of the Awlad Daiman.

hand, in their margins, by way of correction or addition to the copied text.[1] Ahmad al-Mukhtar o/ al-Kwain has been mentioned above as an 'archivist', and he appears to have made copies of a great deal of the outgoing correspondence;[2] many letters, the originals of which are lost or extant today only in extremely poor condition, survive and can be read only in the copies he made of them. His work occasionally appears as an individual item, but more often it is methodically compiled into small books, made up of dozens of copied letters.[3]

The standard form for this correspondence opened at the

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1 For example see Ibid., ms. no. T20, folios 2 and 3, a letter to Muhammad Lhabib.

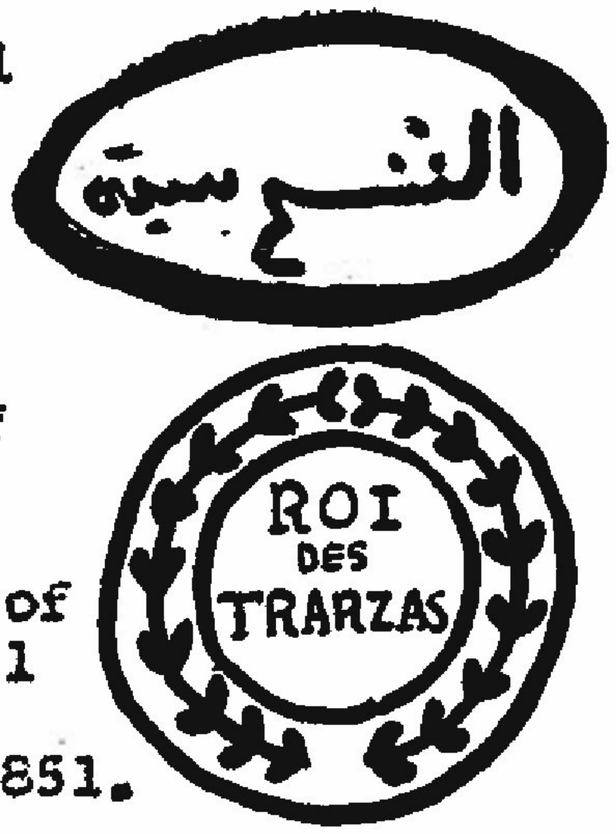
2 Whether Ahmad al-Mukhtar o/ al-Kwain might be legitimately be described as an archivist is open to question (Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 5. 1968). It was common practice in the 19th century that murīdūn of a man, upon seeing a letter in his hand or written at his direction would copy the message for the guidance it might some day give to them. Thus numerous copies of particularly significant rasā'il are extant, as a result of copies having been made in camps through which the messenger for those letters passed. The fact that some letters specifically state that they are to be seen by any of the community that so wishes gives further documentation to this 'open diplomacy' method of transmitting information. However, Ahmad o/ al-Mukhtar o/ al-Kwain's efforts were far more elaborate than those of the occasional copyist, and he appears to have amassed a collection of Sidiyya's pronouncements comparable to the several hundred letters which Shaikh Sidiyya himself collected while serving with the Kuntas as a secretary and aid. (See my forthcoming analysis of this Kunta material).

3 Folios from these books appear in Catalogue, mss. nos. 1, 156B, T13, 450 and 451.

top right corner with an elongated Ba', taken from the camel and cattle brand employed by the Shaikh, and in several instances closed with an oval seal encircling the words 'Shaikh Sidiyya'.[1] Beyond this, the style of Shaikh Sidiyya's several hundred extant letters is standardised; they open with the usual salutation praising God and His Prophet, followed frequently by an exhortation to beware of the power of Allah and to obey the sunna of His Prophet. The body of the letter is frequently quite direct, but in correspondence with his intellectual inferiors (generally hassanis), Sidiyya often opened with a lengthy general statement including Qur'anic or hadīth quotations, to the point which he finally brings up, usually with great force, that a particular raid, conflict or other misdemeanor must be righted immediately. Before concluding, when he is intervening on behalf of a family or tribe external to the Awlad Ibiri, he includes that group's credentials -- their relationship by marriage, alliance or religious submission -- and the circumstances under which he

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1 These occasions were highly formal ones in which Sidiyya was corresponding with the Djedjeba and Tabayyat about the Awlad Ibiri blood debt payment. The size of the seal varied slightly and was rather crude in execution, (see Cataloque, mss. nos. T12 and 291). What is interesting in this is that if the dating of the diyya affair is correct, this seal pre-dates the introduction by the French, of a cast, metal seal in the amirate of Trarza which first appeared on letters in 1851 and an example of which can be found in the Archives A.O.F., 9-G-1, item 129, dated 9.9.1851.



came to hear of the affair. In the letters written on behalf of Sidiyya a separate paragraph follows stating that the work was completed under instructions from the writer's Shaikh who then identifies himself and signs in Sidiyya's name.[1]

In addition to the chancery Shaikh Sidiyya also had a number of disciples or agents throughout southern Mauritania, though for the most part within the geographical area nomadized by the Awlad Ibiri. To these men were entrusted the administrative details of delivering letters, collecting hadiyya, looking after hubus and investigating details of cases brought before him. These men were also concerned, in part, with overseeing Awlad Ibiri herds, flocks, wells and agricultural lands. Twelve of these agents received the majority of outgoing correspondence which instructed people outside Sidiyya's camp in the administrative responsibilities and duties for his tribe and his followers.[2] These men were Dah, Abah and Sidi

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1 for examples see Cataloque, mss. nos. 165, 166, 192B, 197, 206 and 289.

2 In all some 35 to 40 men might be included in this list, all of whose names are documented in a series of small notes pertaining to Shaikh Sidiyya's economic affairs and routine administrative matters, but the figures here are the dominant men and between them they account for well over half of this type of correspondence. As such they are also representative of the type of men whom Sidiyya selected as agents. See Cataloque, mss. nos. 484-550 for the main body of this material which consists of small notes, frequently only one 5 x 3 inch folio in size, instructing specific groups or individuals in providing hospitality for the bearer of the note, or receiving hadiyya from a specified individual, or paying out a number of animals to another, etc.

Ahmad o/ al-Salim (N'tishait), Muhammad Sidina (Awlad Khajil of the Awlad Ibiri); Ahmad o/ Anbagh (a tiab) and Ely Sahab al-Jama (a m'allem; both from the Awlad Ahmad); Muhammad o/ Amhammad and Amhammad o/ Ahmad al-Saghir (both from the Kunta Awlad Bu Saif al-Khul); Ikhtawashan o/ al-Mukhtar and Ahmad o/ Habib Allah (Ida Belhassan); Ibrahim al-Nafa' (Tashumsha, Idaghfagha); and Ibrahim o/ al-Amin (unidentified). These men, as with the secretaries above, appear to have lived with the Awlad Ibiri fractions, if they were not originally from that tribe, and the greater part of their descendants have since been incorporated into the Awlad Ibiri.[1] Several of these agents were of a relatively low social status, e.g., the Awlad Ahmad tiab and smith, and most of them no doubt gained considerable social prestige, which might not have otherwise come to them, in their association with Shaikh Sidiyya. In addition to the important economic aspects of their activities (summarized below), they also acted as a communications network largely in their roles as Shaikh Sidiyya's emissaries. One finds messages to them directing that such-and-such an affair be investigated or so-and-so be despatched to bring news of a matter.[2] Also they delivered letters, where

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1 This is the case with the two Awlad Ahmad men and the two Kunta figures.

2 See Catalogue, ms. no. 200.

necessary read them[1] (as well as informing the murīdūn en route of their contents, if the letter stipulated, as it often did, that the message could be read to any of the community who might be interested), and returned with them. This explains why there are extant among the N'tishait family papers such a high percentage of the original hassani correspondence which had been sent to the hassani chiefs. These letters were read to them and brought back to Sidiyya's camp because of the high rate of illiteracy and, it is said, the lack of veneration for the written word among hassanis.[2] Occasionally, the agents were entrusted with mediation on Shaikh Sidiyya's behalf,[3] or with making the preliminary

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1 For an example see Ibid., ms. no. 238 to the Awlad Ahmad in which the bearer of the letter, al-ʿAbidin o/ al-Shaikh al-Mustaf o/ al-ʿArabi, is instructed to read it to the illiterate of the Community.

2 Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 2. 1969. This is a contemporary explanation which may be valid in spite of the emphasis above on the respect hassanis showed to their literate zawayya cousins by virtue of their literacy. If so it would seem to indicate that the written word by itself held no mystical connotations in 19th century Moorish society, unlike large areas of islamized Africa further to the south. In fact, although the myth is maintained, as a part of the general hassani-zawiyya distinction, that hassanis were illiterate, most of the major figures in 19th century hassani politics in southern Mauritania did read and write (Muhammad Lhabib, Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib, Sidi Ely, Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad, etc.).

3 Catalogue, ms. no. 578 to ʿAbd al-Rahman o/ Ahmad al-Saghir of the Awlad Ahmad min Daman, instructing Ahmad o/ al-Mukhtar al-Zwain in the ransoming of a slave girl.

arrangements prior to the Shaikh's entry into an affair.

This last aspect of the Shaikh's agents' activities, in diplomatic missions, provides an example of the careful balance of men and talents he sought throughout his organisational structures. It has been noted above that Sidiyya's secretaries were representative (as were his agents) of those peoples who were within his sphere of religious influence, and they also contributed greatly to the effectiveness of the economic and political aspects of his influence. When Shaikh Sidiyya had a delicate mission or embassy to be sent to another zawiyya or hassani group, he regularly included in it one of his murīdūn (generally from the highest possible social rank) from that tribe. Often individuals other than those among the core of agents named above were selected for this type of duty, if a representative of the tribe was not otherwise among them.[1]

In summary, Shaikh Sidiyya's administrative organisation was staffed by his murīdūn, and those in key positions tended to be close relations, by either paternal or maternal reckoning. However, there was also represented within this body of men who served Sidiyya a cross-section of hassani and zawiyya tribes, e.g., the Awlad Ahmad, Tashumsha, Kunta, Ida Belhassan and Lemtuna, in addition to the Shaikh's own

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1 Interview with Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 20.1.1969; see also Cataloque, ms. no. 134 .

Awlad Ibiri. Comparison of the tribes of these men with the tribes from which Shaikh Sidiyya drew his greatest number of followers (see below) indicates a high degree of coordination. The administrative structure described above represents a pattern of close but evolving relationships which grew more complex with the increasing burden of responsibilities placed on the Shaikh. The common theme which united this body of men, as with the wider body of Shaikh's followers, was their respect for the religious truth which Sidiyya represented. It is to this religious influence held by Shaikh Sidiyya that we will next turn.

SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

Any assessment of Shaikh Sidiyya's religious influence must be a highly subjective exercise and, as we will see below in discussing specific aspects of his economic and political organisation, the Shaikh's religious influence is more easily evaluated in its economic and political ramifications than in abstract terms. However, contained in the Shaikh's correspondence and literary works is a rough outline of his own conception of the extent and nature of his influence as a religious figure and this material will be useful background to the discussion which follows. We will examine below, on the basis of this literature, Sidiyya's own distinctions between the categories of followers which were under his influence, the tribal units from which he drew

followers, his definition of types of relationships which were proper between a Shaikh and his disciples, and the role played by the Qadiriyya in this.

From Shaikh Sidiyya's correspondence it is possible to approximate the categories in which he conceived his correspondents to be, and from these categories a rough assessment can be made of the social and political distance which divided him from his correspondents. This, in turn, gives an indication of the Shaikh's religious influence. These categories come out of an analysis of the titles by which he addressed the recipents of his letters in the salutation, which generally included one of (or a combination of) four terms -- ikhwān, aqrān, talāmīdh or murīdūn. Each of these appears to have had specific connotations to the Shaikh, just as it had to the men of his time. Ikhwān, or ikhwān bi-allāh were respectful titles, used to address zawiyya personalities with the connotations of 'colleague' and 'comrade'; almost all letters addressed to a zawiyya jamā'a, i.e., the leadership of a tribe or fraction, begin with a salutation to the collective ikhwān, whether it was Awlad Ibiri fractions or Kuntas or the Djedjeba.[1] Ikhwān rarely appears in hassani correspondence,[2] but in its place frequently

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1 For examples see Ibid., mss. nos. 173, 177, 291, 142, 355 and 193.

2 Ibid., see ms. no. 259 to Muhamd Fal o/ Amar o/ Ibrahim Fal of the Awlad Bu Aliyya; for an explanation of this see note 2, p. 278 below.

is agrān (equal), or maqaddma ahl zmān (guardian of the people of his [the hassani's] time).[1] Sometimes hassani individuals are also addressed as talāmīdh and often no descriptive phrase is used at all. Talāmīdh was used as a collective and individual term in reference to the socio-economic grouping under Sidiyya's protection which is discussed below, and for groups or individuals considered to have only rudimentary knowledge of the Islamic sciences; as such it held slightly perjorative and paternalistic connotations. The Tabiyyat were sometimes addressed as talāmīdh,[2] as, interestingly enough, were figures in the Awlad Ahmad min Daman and Awlad Diman,[3] but the term was never employed to address Kunta individuals, well placed people of the zawayya or Awlad Ibiri figures. Murīdūn was a far more intimate title, appearing exclusively in correspondence with individuals who had studied under the Shaikh, or perhaps their sons and close relations. The murīdūn were also, it may be assumed, the regular contributors of hadiyya. Virtually all of the correspondence with the agents whom Sidiyya

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1 Ibid., see mss. nos. T19 and 461 to Muhammad Lhabib and Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib and ms. no. 170 to Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad.

2 Ibid., see ms. no. T24.

3 Ibid., see ms. no. 577 to a brother of Muhammad Lhabib and mss. nos. 192B, 579 and 583 to Awlad Daman figures.

maintained in southern Mauritania was addressed to them in their positions as murīdūn,[1] and it also was a common form of address to Kunta personalities.[2] Murīdūn was never used as a collective form of address, even to the jamā'a of the N'tishait.

Other forms of address are, of course, found in combination with these four terms -- al-sadīq, al-habīb, al-nāṣih etc. -- but it is generally by the appearance of one of the four titles above that one can ascertain the social distance between Shaikh Sidiyya and his correspondents. Three of these, ikhwān, aqrān, and talāmīdh, appear, in fact, to be re-definitions of the zawiyya-hassani religious and political categories as Sidiyya conceived them. Murīd, however, as a term descriptive of an individual who had made his spiritual submission to the Shaikh's will, carried entirely different connotations, because the murīdūn were outside the Moorish social and political structures which were otherwise reflected in the Shaikh's classifications of brothers, equals and followers.

The extent of Shaikh Sidiyya's religious influence may be defined by the major social divisions in his society. He counted followers among a wide cross-section of zawiyya tribes a few hassani tribes and some individuals (sudanis and Arabs)

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1 Ibid., see ms. no. 485 et seq.

2 For examples see Ibid., mss. nos. 190, 288, 290 and 452.

outside the Moorish social structure. Within the Mauritanian zawiyya tribes this influence can be traced from his correspondence, the poems and works written in praise of him, and his own references in literary works (mu'allifāt) he was asked to write. Not all of these individuals were, of course, his murīdūn, though the greater part offered him hadiyya and all gave him the respect due to a legal and religious authority. The basis of Shaikh Sidiyya's zawiyya following came first from his N'tishait fraction and his own tribe. After the Awlad Ibiri, the next largest concentration of disciples came from the Kunta confederation, dominated by individuals of the Awlad Bu Saif al-Khul and the Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar. The next largest bloc of disciples came from the Tashumsha, e.g., the Awlad Daiman and Idaghfagha, and the fourth ranking group was the Ida Belhassan. Other tribes in which ten or fewer individuals are attributed today to have been among the principal followers of the Shaikh were the Taghnit, Taghat, Djedjeba, Tegussunat, Shurfa, Ida Busat Tendera, Laghlal, Idaw al-Hajj, Idaw 'Ali, Lemtuna and Tajakanat

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1 The basis of this summary of Sidiyya's following among zawiyya tribes in Mauritania is a list of approximately 200 names provided for me by Harouna o/ Cheikh during the months of April and May 1968 in Boutilimit. As a check against this N'tishait source, a second abbreviated listing of principal disciples of Shaikh Sidiyya was provided by the Awlad Daiman historian Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun. This summary, in spite of inevitable errors, appears to be a valid sampling of Sidiyya's relative strength among southern Mauritanian zawiyya tribes. This list includes only the major literary figures or otherwise distinguished men whose numerous works written for Sidiyya or voluminous correspondence with the Shaikh, clearly document themselves as devoted disciples. The actual numbers involved here, of course, are no indication of the total following of the Shaikh.

It is difficult to analyse (in sociological terms) this following the Shaikh enjoyed among these zawiyya tribes without going into the family histories of each of the individuals, their fractions and their tribes in turn. However, one might characterize the larger concentrations of Sidiyya's followers as coming from well placed families of nobles within their respective fractions, though not consistently so. In the tribes with small numbers of the Shaikh's followers, these tended to be found within a single family (paternal and maternal sides).[1]

Among the zawiyya tribes the nature of Sidiyya's religious influence appears to have been that of a jurist and scholar. He was recognised as an ʿālim and faqīh, and it was by those titles that he was frequently addressed by such recognised personalities of his time as al-Mukhtar b. Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Bakkaʿi of the Kunta Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar.[2] Sidiyya was celebrated at the same time for his religious knowledge, and specifically his sūfī training, and perhaps as many of his zawiyya followers were attracted to him on these grounds as on the basis of his knowledge in the Islamic sciences. On balance, today, Mauritanian historians (of non-Awlad Ibiri

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1 For example the Idaw ʿAli muqaddims of the Shaikh all issue from the Ida Bija, and descendants of ʿAbd al-Rahman o/ Fal o/ al-Khiri still reside among the Awlad Ibiri today; the Tajakanat murīdūn were from the Awlad Ramazin fraction and family of Zalamta ('Ahl Bouna' in the French sources), descendant from al-Mukhtar al-Buna whose mother was from the N'tishait.

2 Catalogue, ms. no. 384.

origin) see him as perhaps more of a sūfī shaikh than a faqīh, though the same men admit that his sūfī training alone would not have accounted for the zawiyya following he had. In any event, a clear distinction between sūfī training and legal education was not generally made by 19th century Mauritanian scholars.[1]

In determining the scope of Shaikh Sidiyya's religious influence among the hassani tribes one is dependent upon his extant correspondence and the reconstruction of historical events in which Shaikh Sidiyya was in contact with the hassani powers. In Trarza we know that he addressed the chiefs of the Awlad Ahmad min Daman and Awlad Daman as both his talāmīdh and aqrān, and that Awlad Bu Aliyya figures were considered as ikhwān and talāmīdh,[2] which suggests that within these tribes lay his principal influence among Trarza hassanis. Among the Brakna hassanis the Awlad Ahmad, of course, were

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1 See chapter VII below, for a more detailed discussion of sufism and jurisprudence in Mauritania, and an analysis of Sidiyya's roles as a sūfī and faqīh from his writings.

2 The Awlad Ibiri and Awlad Bu Aliyya, a zenagha tribe tributary to the Awlad Ahmad min Daman, were linked through several marriages, including Sidi al-Mukhtar, called 'Mutal', a cousin of Shaikh Sidiyya's in the N'tishait, who married Muhama mint Muhammad o/ Samba Fal. One of Sidiyya's major reconciliation efforts among the hassanis of Trarza was his mediation of an affair between an Awlad Bu Aliyya fraction and Muhammad Lhabib (see Catalogue, mss. nos. 94, 166, 259, 286, 289 and 362).

saluted as talāmīdh and brothers,[1] as were select figures in the Awlad Siyyid,[2] but the greater part of the Awlad Siyyid correspondence,[3] with the Awlad Mansur,[4] Awlad Naghmash[5] and Awlad Aiyyid[6] is of a formal nature which omits salutory adjectives. We know from the Shaikh's biography that his reputation as a religious figure extended as far as the Ahl Sidi Mahmud in the Hodh[7] and Tagant and the Ahl Yahia bin 'Uthman in Adrar.[8] But his actual influence over the course of events in these areas was less than in Trarza and Brakna where he played a very active role in mid-19th century hassani politics. The nature of Sidiyya's influence among the hassanis is to be found in the real political power of his position as a religious figure. For those who attributed

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1 See Catalogue, mss. nos. 163, 172, 568 and 573.

2 See Ibid., ms. no. 569 "to the talāmīdh among the Awlad 'Abdallah chiefs".

3 For an example see Ibid., ms. no. T12.

4 For an example see Ibid., ms. no. 137.

5 For an example see Ibid., ms. no. 261.

6 For an example see Ibid., ms. no. 282.

7 Ibid., ms. no. 405 which is a submission to Shaikh Sidiyya from 'Abdallahi o/ Sidi Mahmud.

8 See Ibid., mss. nos. 380 and 461 which both include instructions to Muhammad Lhabib about the reconciliation of the Ahl Trarza to the Ahl Adrar and ms no. 584, a request from Ahmad o/ Aiyyda to Sidiyya for his intervention in Adrar-Trarza affairs.

to him an insight into religious truth and recognised that he potentially held the destiny of less learned men in his hands, Sidiyya was accorded a power and respect every bit as awesome as that attributed to the most resolute of the hassanis. As has been done in chapters IV and V, this influence can be evaluated in political terms.

Shaikh Sidiyya's religious influence among those outside the Moorish social structure is unfortunately not well documented. He had disciples among the Wolof, Toucouleur, and Diahanké who were found from the banks of the Senegal River to Bondou and the Fouta Djallon. Among the figures who are documented in Sidiyya's correspondence are Sidi 'Dar', so named for his participation in the construction of Sidiyya's Boutilimit residence, and the grandfather of Ahmadu Bamba,[1] Shaikh Bu Kunta,[2] Almamy Biram,[3] who, over his six terms as Almamy of the Fouta Toto came to be a dominant personality in the mid-19th century Fouta, and Muhammad Tasliminka and

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1 Ibid., see ms. no. 50.

2 See Ibid., ms. no. 383, a request to Sidiyya for a work on sufism, and ms. no. 22A for the response, Khalas al-nafs mih al-habs.

3 Ibid., see mss. nos. 228 and 467; Almamy Biram is not to be confused with the figure mentioned in Archives A.O.F., 13-G-163, item 12, n.d. [1860's] which is a letter from Tierno Brahim to the merchants at Bakel, in which he announces himself as "Brahim, student of Shaikh Sidiyya", and item 61, dated 1.2.1865, item 71, item 72, item 75 and item 78.

Karamoko Qutubu of Touba in the Fouta Djallon.[1] The nature of this religious influence among the sudanis was two-fold. On a popular level he was a man of impressive mystical powers who was capable of burning villages to the ground which were miles away with the lifting of a finger,[2] and reducing his opponents to fear and impotency.[3] But on another plane, among learned men, he represented the continuity of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and Sidi Muhammad, as the Kuntas' khalifa in the "madhhab mālikiyya wa ṭarīqa qādiriyya".[4] It is this latter recollection of the Boutilimit shaikh which remains today among the grandsons of Sidiyya's sudani students.[5] Among his disciples

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1 See the ijāza issued to Muhammad Tasliminka (Catalogue, ms. no. 323) and chapter III above, pp. 146-147.

2 This is reported in the Archives A.O.F., 9-G-4, item 117, "Aperçu géographique sur le pays habité par les Maures Braknas", by M. Perraud.

3 See J.O., dated 17.6.1856.

4 Al-Hajji Qutubu Silla, Bakadaji, North Bank, The Gambia, in a biography of Shaikh Muhammad al-Sanusi Silla written for me on 27.7.1968, folio 14.

5 Interviews with 75 religious figures in The Gambia, Casamance (Senegal) and Dakar to St. Louis, July-September 1968. These are the Diahanké and Manding speaking marabouts who give annual hadiyya offerings to Boutilimit representatives who are descendants of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir. While a depressingly large number of them do this, and maintain their father's and grandfather's links with Sidiyya's family out of habit and fear of some sort of Divine retribution were they to break this connexion, among the exceptions to these men are several scholars in the Islamic sciences, and it was in their villages that one hears Sidiyya being praised as a faqīh.

who lived outside West Africa, two figures appear in Sidiyya's correspondence, one from Mecca[1] and another in Marrakech.[2] Unfortunately, the information which is available about these figures is inadequate to judge whether they were chance acquaintances or representatives of a wider following, albeit perhaps on a small scale, which the Shaikh had elsewhere in the Islamic world.

In brief, the extent and nature of Sidiyya's religious influence varied with the major segments of Moorish society with which he was in contact. A somewhat schematic summary of his religious influence would indicate the base of it in his own tribe and other people of the Zawayya who accorded him respect principally as a mediator and legal scholar.[3] This was fortified by Hassani chiefs who attributed to him political roles out of respect, in large part, for his religious, sufi training. For Sudanis outside the Moorish social structure who were part of, or in contact with, the Kunta

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1 Catalogue, ms. no. 128.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 307.

3 It has been mentioned above that contemporary Zawiyya historians conceive Sidiyya as having been more of a sufi than a faqih, but that these distinctions were (and to a lesser extent are today) not clear in Mauritania. The themes which appear in the Shaikh's correspondence and his large following of Zawiyya peoples would, however, tend to support the interpretation that he was to his own Zawiyya contemporaries foremost a legal scholar and political mediator.

tradition, the Shaikh was accorded the respect due to a khalifa of the Kunta scholars. To what extent one may attribute these distinctions in Sidiyya's religious influence to a conscious effort on his part to appeal in different ways to different segments of his society cannot be determined. Shaikh Sidiyya, himself, appears to have recognised in some form the duality of his influence with the zawiyya and hassani peoples within his own society,[1] but this may only be a reflection of, or natural extension of, the Moors' idealized social division between these groups.

Sidiyya's own conception of what his religious influence ought to have been is reflected in his responses to letters which questioned him about the correct nature of shaikh-murīd relationships. His answers to such questions are particularly relevant inasmuch as the institution of the murīdūn was essentially a system of social relationships which was not founded on familial or tribal structures, and the particular form this institution took under Sidiyya's influence may reflect his own conception of the ideal religious community under his command.

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1 For example, in hassani correspondence, the force with which he addresses recalcitrant hassanis or his threats of God's retribution in the event of disobedience to him, is of a style that rarely appears in his zawiyya letters. Under similar circumstances Sidiyya's zawiyya correspondence could be characterized as moderate pleas to reason and application of the sharī'a in disputes.

For Shaikh Sidiyya the ideal murīd-shaikh relationship, insofar as it can be reconstructed from his mu'allifāt appears to have been the product of his own educational experience, particularly under the Kuntas. On several occasions Sidiyya was asked by students about this relationship[1] -- the length of study, the advisability of taking the Qādirī wird from a sūfī shaikh or from a faqīh, what was correct in serving ones' shaikh after leaving him, etc. From his responses one can construct something of Sidiyya's own training and his impression of what should constitute his own influence as a shaikh. The control which was held by a shaikh over his murīdūn was absolute and his word was final. This did not prohibit a murīd from leaving his shaikh for another, but such a move was only done at the risk of losing the shaikh's baraka and his fellow murīdūn's respect.[2] From Sidiyya's responses to his murīdūn's questions there emerges a concept of a tightly knit, absolutely controlled body of men whose loyalty, indeed spiritual salvation, was firmly in their shaikh's hands.

In actual practice we know that Sidiyya's obligations to Sidi Muhammad in the Azaouad were such that he had to ask twice before he was released from his service to the Kunta shaikh. Also, we have noted above Sidiyya's maternal uncle/nephew

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1 For examples see Catalogue, mss. nos. 25, 75, 81 and 321.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 25.

type of relationship with the Kuntas after returning from his study in the Azaouad, and his regular hadiyya offerings that were sent to the Kuntas throughout his life. That he might have expected any less devotion from his own murīdūn seems unlikely.

In this discussion of Shaikh Sidiyya's murīdūn no reference has yet been made to the Qadiriyya or the wird and ijāza of initiation into the Qadiriyya and silsila, largely because the term murīd appears to have been used most commonly in its sense as a 'follower' or 'adherent', but specifically to the Shaikh himself. That these murīdūn had in common the Qadiriyya in the form of an ijāza and wird issued by their shaikh was most probably secondary in their devotion to him. In fact relatively few ijāzāt issued by Shaikh Sidiyya appear to be extant,[1] but the form of those that are extant suggests that great numbers of them were written. The standard form for the ijāza opens with a salutation and statement that it is a certificate and the chain of authority (ijāza wa al-isnād) although the entire silsila is rarely given. It goes on to announce that who ever might read the certificate should know that the holder is a brother and a murīd (and here the individual's name is inserted) by taking the Qadiriyya wird and being part of those

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1 Ibid., see mss. nos. 50, 128, 155, 201A, 201B, 201C, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 320, 321, 322, 323, 411, 412 and 468.

who are directed by the Muhammadiyya and Mukhtariyya.[1] A statement follows to the effect that the certificate is granted with the known conditions and with the customary procedure, by God's Grace, and that the student has been counselled in whatever he requested by way of guidance. He is certified as being familiar with the litany and it is said that he will not be remiss with it. Sidiyya's authority is then documented, by proclaiming the ijāza in the names of "the Khalifa, Sidi Muhammad, and our Shaikh, Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti", from whom authority was given him (Sidiyya) in both written and oral form. Authority for Sidiyya's issuing of ijāzāt is also mentioned as having come from the uncles of the above mentioned, Sidi Habib Allah and Sidi 'Umar. The date generally follows, and a closing.

This formula, with the alteration of only a few words, and then synonyms, is the pattern upon which most of the ijāzāt are written. Occasionally an additional phrase is added in praise of the murīd named, or reference is made to his having received at the same time a certificate in all the (Islamic) sciences, and the salutation and conclusion is more or less eleborate, but otherwise the presentation and wording is

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1 The Qadiriyya was always mentioned in connexion with the "al-Mukhtariyya" and the "al-Muhammadiyya", i.e., the teachings of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and his son, Sidi Muhammad. See chapter VII for a discussion of some of the implications of this.

identical. These ijāzāt and their implications will be discussed in greater detail in chapter VII, but for our purposes here it will be sufficient to note the formalised character of the ijāza, the theme of the murīd's submission to his shaikh, and the phrase which usually appears, acknowledging that the adept is entering the 'umma al-Muhammadiyya, or community of those who practice the Qadiriyya within the Punta tradition.

The Qadiriyya (Mukhtariyya/Muhammadiyya) emerges then as the institutional and formalised acknowledgement on the part of a murīd of the spiritual direction over his life by Shaikh Sidiyya. Just as the Qadiriyya represented to the Shaikh the final stage of his educational training without which his studies in the Islamic sciences were incomplete, so too it was to his murīdūn. Therefore the Qadiriyya was not an open charter to every tilmīdh, nor was there an appeal to the camaraderie of fellow adepts, but it was, to Shaikh Sidiyya's murīdūn, a method of prayer practised by their shaikh in which they joined as an indication of their respect, devotion and service to him. The Qadiriyya may therefore be considered foremost as a form of personal devotion and a means of the religious insight which was held by Sidiyya and which accounted in large part for the very considerable religious influence he came to hold. While he does not appear to have promoted a movement or constructed an organisational

framework in the name of the Qadiriyya, it did remain the only formalised link between the murīdūn and their shaikh and the only common link among murīdūn who represented a wide cross-section of zawiyya tribes in Mauritania. The murīdūn may be defined as a closely-knit group of followers with a very particular allegiance to their shaikh, which appears to have transcended their bonds of tribal allegiance. None of this has revealed a clearly defined religious organisation, but rather an association or jamā'a of believers who, for varying reasons, looked to the shaikh for moral, legal and religious guidance. This position held by the shaikh was not unique in southern Mauritania, although his following was among the largest and the political ramifications of his religious influence perhaps the most widespread. Others, contemporaries of Shaikh Sidiyya (Shaikh Muhammad Fadal, Shaikh Muhammad al-Mami, Habib Allah o/ al-Qadi), occupied similar, but more localised, positions as moral, legal and religious counsellors, which was the social role for any of the learned zawiyya figures. What was unique in Sidiyya's position was his institution of the murīdūn, on a large scale, and an efficient economic organisation, to which we will next turn.

SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

Shaikh Sidiyya's economic structures are more easily defined and evaluated than is his religious influence, largely

because of the precise information about his economic affairs which appears in his correspondence and because of the material which is available about the mid-19th century southern Mauritanian economy generally. The principle elements of the Shaikh's economic organisation were revenue from religious offerings (hadiyya), agricultural lands, livestock, salt caravan gum marketing, and a manpower resource in his group of talāmīdh. He also enjoyed taxation exemptions which were granted him because of his religious position.

One of Shaikh Sidiyya's principle sources of revenue was the hadiyya he received from his murīdūn and followers. This, when considered with his awqāf or ahbās,[1] presents one of the most definitive assessments of the economic advantages of his religious influence in practice. Hadiyya, as the name implies, was an entirely different type of revenue from the forms of taxation collected by the hassani powers in Trarza

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1 On the subject of awqāf, only occasional references appear in Sidiyya's correspondence, although one knows, for example, that the Adrar palm groves, which still nominally belong to the N'tishait, were awqāf donnated to the Shaikh and that one of the re-occuring themes in his legal opinions concerned the disposition of awqāf, generally, which in 19th century Mauritania commonly consisted of livestock, given on a temporary or permanent basis to a revered individual. (see Catalogue, ms. no. 20 for an example of Sidiyya's ajwiba relating to animal awqaf.) This was quite possibly a major source of revenue for Shaikh Sidiyya, but precise information on it is limited.

and Brakna, e.g., zakāt (assaka), hurma, abbākh, tāmjārat, hukha, ghafar etc.[1] These hassani levies were essentially taxes which were set at the discretion of the dominant hassani power or families. Hadiyya, on the other hand, was, in principle, an entirely voluntary gift presented to a religious figure only once or at intervals by an individual who was seeking his intervention in a spiritual matter, his patronage or his general good will.

However, under Shaikh Sidiyya hadiyya became somewhat institutionalized into a regular payment, and today this is looked back upon by some Mauritanians as a major cause of the economic growth of the Awlad Ibiri.[2] It is certainly clear that Sidiyya was not adverse to promoting the concept of hadiyya into a regular, levied contribution, which is evident from his requests in letters for overdue hadiyya,[3] calling attention to insignificant contributions,[4] and his

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1 See chapter II for a discussion of the taxation systems in southern Mauritania.

2 Communication from Mokhtar ould Hamidoun, Nouakchott, 3. 1969.

3 See Catalogue, ms. no. T15 to Ahmadhu and Muhammad o/ Ahmaidhu (of the Awlad Ahmad min Daman) reminding them of their hadiyya, which was one horse and 10 pieces of guinée.

4 For an example see Ibid., ms. no. 136 to Amhammad o/ Muhammad o/ Sidi (of the Awlad Siyyid) in the conclusion of which he is requested to increase his hadiyya.

network of collectors.[1] Whatever compulsion might have been employed in the collection of hadiyya, it appears that such methods had greater impact among his murīdūn and dependent talāmīdh than with other hassani and zawiyya individuals, from whom there are only infrequent references to the despatch of hadiyya.

The regularised haddiyya system which was established by Shaikh Sidiyya may well have been an adaptation of a similar system in operation under the Kunta shaikhs in the Azaouad. The size of both the Kunta and the Awlad Ibiri certainly increased at a dramatic rate under the leadership of their respective shaikhs (largely as a result of the talāmīdh who joined them, discussed below) and hadiyya income presumably played a part in this. This might explain in part the antagonism the Awlad Ibiri and Kuntas drew from other zawiyya tribes which were smaller in population and for whom hadiyya was not regarded as regular income.

It would be appropriate to emphasize here, in the light of his hadiyya revenue, the general economic advantages which came of Sidiyya's religious position. Because he was a holy man, it was thought extremely unwise for an hassani tribe to interfere with Sidiyya's caravans, and any individual or

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1 For an example see Ibid, ms. no. 210B; see also p. 268 above.

group so foolish to do so was severely dealt with.[1] Even correspondence from the French administrator at Podor reflects the dire consequences that might be expected when some sheep were raided from a group of Sidiyya's talāmīdh, were restitution not immediately made.[2] The Awlad Ibiri as zawiyya al-zill were also not subject to obligatory hospitality rights generally imposed upon zawiyya tribes by the hassanis, which accounted for the severe exploitation of many zawayya.[3] As a result of Shaikh Sidiyya's position his tribe's agricultural lands and animals bearing his brand, his palm groves, caravans, etc. were all widely recognised as lying outside what was regarded as legitimate hassani revenue sources, either by raiding or taxation.

But there was another side to this privileged economic position enjoyed by the Shaikh and that was the responsibility he held for the distribution of wealth which was channelled

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1 An example of the Shaikh's karāmāt in dealing with one instance of his caravans being stopped for customs payments in the Fouta is described below, along with other accounts of reprisals which were generally believed to befall those who crossed Sidiyya or his followers. Although these actions may be classified as miracles, there is no reason to doubt the very real apprehension with which they were regarded in the mid-19th century or the efficacy of these karāmāt.

2 Archives A.O.F., 13-G-123, item 83, dated 13.6.1867.

3 Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 1. 1969.

into his tribe. Unfortunately, the precise means by which this was done are not well documented, though one may assume that the Awlad Ibiri did not suffer any great economic hardship from it. Sidiyya did have a reputation as a generous and selfless giver; the Tabiyyat-Bassin-Djedjeba diyya affair mentioned above is one example and his frequent hadiyya to Kunta figures and his provisioning of talāmīdh are others. The Kitāb al-Wasit dwells at some length on his hospitality and the efforts by his students to reduce his frequent and generous gifts.

> And no day had past in his [the Shaikh's] place but thousands of people [have come whom] he has fed and clothed and served all their needs, until he died, and no one asked him [about] a need but he gave it to him, whatever it was.
>
> And his students used to strive that they [might] lessen this, and they had no influence. And somebody asked him one day [for] a donkey, and he said, "Give him the such-and-such donkey". And they said, "It is not here", and he said, "Give him the such-and-such camel". And they said, "Indeed, the donkey is [now] present", and he said, "Give them both".
>
> And one of the sons of his shaikh [Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti] came to him, and he gave him all of what he possessed in this world. Then he [the son of Sidiyya's shaikh] returned to him after some time, and he did this three times. 1

In brief, in spite of the economic advantages held by Shaikh Sidiyya and his tribe from awqāf and such regular revenue as the hadiyya and the prerogatives granted them by

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1 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, pp. 241-242.

virtue of Sidiyya's religious position, the responsibilities were considerable. The Shaikh is not remembered today as having been a wealthy man so much as a generous man. However, for all the obligations Sidiyya took on in the distribution of his wealth there are indications that his tribe and followers profited from this wealth at the same time.

The foundation of the Shaikh's economic organisation rested squarely on the cadre of talāmīdh who sought out his protection and spiritual guidance. As noted above, the word talāmīdh did not simply imply 'students' or intellectually inferior individuals, though the term was employed in this sense in correspondence with certain hassani and a very limited number of zawiyya figures. To distinguish this group from the socio-economic grouping of talāmīdh, defined below, these talāmīdh who generally did not consider themselves as affiliated to the Awlad Ibiri will be called 'non-residential talāmīdh', i.e., individuals who were willing to be addressed as Sidiyya's talāmīdh, but who were not considered to be a part of his tribe.

Talāmīdh also came to mean the disenfranchised individuals, families or fractions who were discriminated against and who, by coming to Shaikh Sidiyya, evidentally considered themselves socially if not economically elevated by association with the Awlad Ibiri. Not all of the talāmīdh who placed themselves under the Shaikh's direction faced discrimination or were of disenfranchised and lowly origins, but that they sought a

social or economic advantage in leaving their former alliance to join the Awlad Ibiri appears a valid conclusion. This phenomenon of talāmīdh as a socio-economic, supra-tribal body which owed allegiance only to its shaikh is said to have first appeared in the western Sudan and Sahara under Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti.[1] One may assume that Shaikh Sidiyya repeated the same basic structure on much the same lines as he had found it in the Azaouad,[2] and it was apparently repeated again in the talāmīdh organisation which supported Shaikh Mā' al-Anin one generation later in the Adrar.[3]

The 'non-residential talāmīdh' generally gained their status by direct submission to Shaikh Sidiyya, as was the case of the chief of the Ahl Sidi Mahmoud[4] and Amar o/ al-Mukhtar,

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1 The origin of the use of the term 'talāmīdh' to indicate a socio-economic grouping which owes its allegiance uniquely to a shaikh whose protection the talāmīdh have sought out, is unclear. The first usage in the western Sahara was under Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, according to Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, and no written accounts appear to pre-date this 18th century Kunta introduction. However, by the time of the French occupation of Mauritania, their administrators were describing zawiyya dependents generally as belonging to a class of talāmīdh, which they wrongly equated with the zenagha dependents of the hassanis.

2 Unfortunately, little is known about the talāmīdh organisation of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, but it is clear that a large body of talāmīdh did owe allegiance to him.

3 Communication from Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, Nouakchott, 5. 1969.

4 Cataloque, ms. no. 405 which is a submission to Shaikh Sidiyya from ʿAbdallahi o/ Sidi Mahmud.

his son, Muhammad Lhabib, and grandson, Sidi.[1] This did not necessarily mean physically joining the Awlad Ibiri (particularly where hassani leaders were involved), but rather acknowledging Sidiyya's supremacy in spiritual matters and obeying his advice, when it was offered or sought, in temporal affairs. For hassanis who so submitted to the Shaikh this was not necessarily an exclusive commitment to him; it is known that Muhammad Lhabib, for example, in the interests of his own political and spiritual security submitted to other religious leaders in Trarza as well.[2]

The most common method of gaining the status of the talāmīdh socio-economic group was simply by joining a fraction of the Awlad Ibiri, and informing the Shaikh that this had been done.[3] This might be done by an individual family, clan or whole fraction of another tribe, be it zenagha,

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1 See above, chapter IV, pp.192-193, about this arrangement made upon Sidiyya's return from the Azaouad, one of the terms of which was an annual hadiyya paid to Sidiyya by the amir of Trarza.

2 This is difficult to place in perspective, inasmuch as a dominant figure such as Muhammad Lhabib maintained religious and legal counsellors in his camps from the Awlad Daiman, and he also maintained ties with the Idaw al-Hajj chief, 'Shems', owing to the economic importance of the Idaw al-Hajj in gum commerce (Archives A.O.F., 9-G-1, item 220, 221, n.d. [1864]). However, from the narrative of 19th century Mauritanian history in French archival sources, many of Muhammad Lhabib's political actions appear to have been influenced by Shaikh Sidiyya and from this one may deduce that Muhammad Lhabib conceived of Shaikh Sidiyya as his principal mediator.

3 See E. Richet, p. 408 for the only concise statement about the Awlad Ibiri talamīdh which I have found.

hassani, zawiyya or haratine. The reasons for so joining the Awlad Ibiri varied from escape from the harassment or extractions being made by a suzerain family or tribe to avoidance of prejudice owing to social origins and betterment of economic position, e.g., security. A large number of these talāmīdh were, we are told, of Toucouleur origin, or other sudanis, who were settled in the Chememma where they cultivated fields belonging to the Awlad Ibiri.[1]

Finally, there were those talāmīdh whose entry into the Awlad Ibiri was negotiated by Shaikh Sidiyya, generally through the purchase of their hurma rights from the hassani families which held them in servitude. These individuals were then set free, but they invariably found their way back to the cadre of talāmīdh which supported the Shaikh's economic structure. These purchases of hurma appear to have been infrequent but the protocol is clearly established in the documents which are extant.[2]

The exact number of talāmīdh under the Shaikh's direction is impossible to determine. Today over half of the Awlad Ibiri would appear to be made up of the descendants of these

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1 Interview with Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 20.1.1969.

2 For examples see Catalogue, mss. nos. 424, 425 and 441.

individuals,[1] and it is said that the greater part of the appendages to the tribe joined during the lifetime of Shaikh Sidiyya. Smaller groups of talāmīdh were frequently attached to one of the Awlad Ibiri fractions, notably the N'tishait but the larger ones retained their original tribal names.[2]

The economic strength which the talāmīdh provided was in the human resources of their numbers and in their agricultural activities in the Chememma. Diyya payments, for example, included contributions from the talāmīdh at the same rate per person as for the tribe, and without his sizable talāmīdh following it is uhlikely that Shaikh Sidiyya could have arranged the generous diyya paid to the Djedjeba, Tabiyyat and Bassin mentioned above. Their numbers also provided a vast reserve of livestock as well as manpower

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1 This is a delicate point upon which information is difficult to collect owing to the impropriety of inquiring after one's origins if they are less than impeccable. However, a glance at the census sheets for sections of the Awlad Ibiri or N'tishait today indicates a very high number of affiliated families who trace their connexions within the Awlad Ibiri for only five or six generations. Another useful index is the 1948 Awlad Ibiri census in which the 'telemids' are listed separately from the tribe, and in which the total tribal units (fractions) listed are 34, and the talāmīdh units are 38.

2 Examples of these are the Awlad Tiderin; the Luagfa, of Djedjeba origin; the Ahl Ghasari, from the Idaw 'Ali; the Awlad Bu Said of Awlad Nasr origin; and the Ahl Reguibat.

which allowed for such extra-subsistence activities as well digging, commercial caravans, and large scale gum collection. Each of these aspects of the Awlad Ibiri economy will be discussed in turn, below, in the context of southern Mauritanian economic life generally.

Intensive farming is practised in southern Mauritania largely on the narrow strip of land bordering on the Senegal River (the Chememma) which is annually inundated or receives heavy rains usually in the months of July through September. The cultivation of the Chememma is shared between Toucouleur, Wolof and Moorish (haratine and zenagha) farmers. Another, smaller strip surrounding and including the bed of Lake Rkiz is also farmed by the haratine, as are small plots sprinkled throughout low-lying regions of southern Mauritania. All of this land is carefully divided among the tribes which use it largely for the cultivation of millet, a staple cereal crop in the diets of the people who live in contact with the Senegal Basin. The combined cultivated lands which are used by the Moors are chronically inadequate for the demands placed upon them, which explains in part the regular interest succeeding generations of Moors in the 18th and 19th centuries had placed in controlling the left bank of the river. It also explains why the Chememma was the traditional meeting place for Moorish caravans, seeking out millet from the richer and more extensively cultivated lands of the

Toucouleurs.[1] The Chememma was also, of course, the meeting place of Moorish, Toucouleur and Wolof cultivators and it provided fertile ground for the growth of myth among these peasants about their opposite numbers.

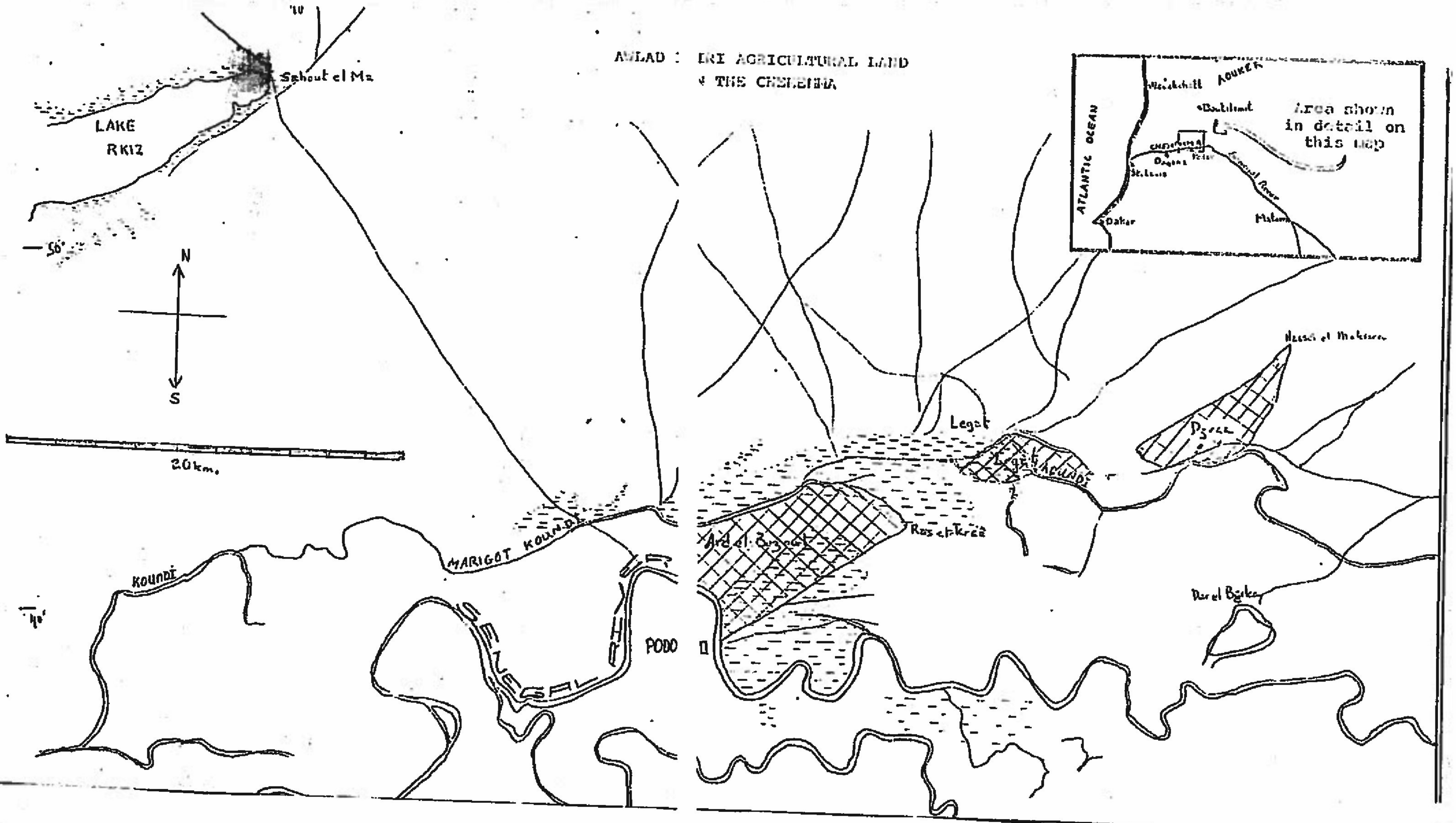
The Chememma lands farmed by the Awlad Ibiri are in three closely grouped sections: the Ard el-Bezoul, which borders on the Senegal River opposite Podor and is approximately 10 by 5 kilometres at its longest and widest points, the Legat and the Ozraa. These last two are adjoining strips which span and then border the right bank of the Koundi Marigot, beginning approximately 15 kilometres northeast of Podor and stretching on perhaps 20 kilometres in the same direction, a few kilometres in width.[2] This area fell under the jurisdiction of the amir of Brakna in the 19th century, as did all of the Chememma between Podor and Boghé on the right bank. Shaikh Sidiyya's chief agent for the Chememma was one 'Umaru, a Toucouleur, whose duties included provisioning the Awlad Ibiri, e.g., his Shaikh, with millet and negotiating with the dominant

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1 For studies of the Chememma and the land usage there see H. Gaden, "Note sur le Régime des Terres du Fouta Sénégalais sous la domination des Almamy" (1909), Archives R.I.M., E-2-7; and H. Martin, "L'association agricole ou 'širka fe-l harata' en Mauritanie" (1939), Archives I.F.A.N., XIII/6, item 9. An extremely valuable recent study is J.-L. Boutillier, et. al., La Moyenne Vallée du Sénégal (Paris, 1962).

2 A map of Awlad Ibiri agricultural lands in the Chememma is on p. 301 .

AWLAD : ERI AGRICULTURAL LAND
& THE CHELIFFA



power among the Brakna hassanis when occasions arose in which Awlad Ibiri claims in the Chemeммa were queried. In addition to the Chemeмma lands Shaikh Sidiyya instituted cultivation in several areas around Boutilimit, and for these fields we have detailed lists of the areas, individuals charged with the responsibility of cultivation and the appointed chief of each group.[1] The method and detail revealed in these lists suggest that the Shaikh also supervised the larger Chemeмma lands with equal care and organisation, though the details of this are not extant.

When millet was not available, in cases of drought or at the end of a dry season after the past year's supply had been consumed, the Moorish diet depended largely on the products of their own livestock. Milk and milk products provided the major source of nutrition when millet was not available, and meat (mutton and goat) was eaten in greater quantities at such times. Livestock husbandry was therefore of utmost importance for the subsistence of the tribe. Equally important was the breeding of tabī'at (a small cow of two to three years) which was used among the zawiyya tribes as a currency, just as guinée cloth was a medium of exchange

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1 See Catalogue, mss. nos. T31, 495 and 556.

between hassanis.[1] It was in tabī'at, or its equivalent, that diyya and other debts were calculated and paid, and the frequently changing price of European guinée cloth was stabilized by translating it into tabī'at.[2] Livestock, then, and particularly cattle represented the treasury of each frig and, collectively, of each fraction and tribe, and the overseer of the cattle in each camp was among the most trusted and respected servants of the camp.

The patterns of nomadism followed by the Awlad Ibiri fractions have been mentioned above; these are at best an approximation of the established lines along which pasturage and the wells of the tribe provided the minimal requirements for the life of each herd. Shaikh Sidiyya assigned to each herd -- camels, cattle, sheep and goats -- a separate overseer whose responsibility was to breed, take in and pay out his animals. Some of these men can be identified: the chief of

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1 Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun and Harouna o/ Cheikh have frequently mentioned this distinction of 'currency' in Mauritania as if to emphasize the separate economies, as religious observances, adherence to the sharī'a, etc. which distinguish hassanis from the people of the zawāyya. While this may be true, in terms of Sidiyya's correspondence this distinction does not appear particularly clear, as he frequently made reference to the 'baisa', a corruption of the French 'pièce', of guinée as a monetary unit in his dealings with other tribes.

2 P. Dubié, "Monnaies et mesures en Mauritanie", Première Conférence internationale des Africanistes de l'ouest, Comptes rendus (Dakar, 1951), II, p. 237.

the tabī'at was Ahmad o/ Anbugh, an Awlad Ahmad tiab;[1] the camels were the responsibility of 'Ali al-Waziz, an Awlad Ahmad m'ālleм by origin and also Sidiyya's caravan guide; a N'tishait cousin of Sidiyya, Abah, was one of the chief guardians of the sheep, as was Ahmad o/ Nehriri from the Ahl Idaghfagha (Tashumsha) and Ahmadu o/ Muhammadhen, a tiab from the Ahmad o/ Taghnit. Other herders included Sidi o/ Badouai (Medlish), Muhammadi o/ al-Nassar (unidentified) and Muhammad al-Hassan and his son Sidi Hamad, both Shurfa and talāmīdh of Shaikh Sidiyya.[2] Although no contemporary report is available, we do have information two generations after the death of Shaikh Sidiyya that the Awlad Ibiri, as well as the Tendera and Ahl Barikallah in Trarza, were excellent camel breeders[3] and it is quite possible that this reputation was established during the lifetime of the Shaikh.

The camels were at this time of vital importance in caravan organisation (as well as in milk production) although pack oxen were also employed for caravan transport particularly in the south and during the rainy seasons, within the Chememma. Caravan patterns in early 19th century Mauritania may be summarized briefly as short distance, small scale (under 100 beasts) domestic or localised enterprises (perhaps arranged

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1 The chief herder for the cows in each camp also acted as that camp's imam. Interview with Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 20.1.1969.

2 Ibid.

3 A. Gruvel and R. Chudeau, A Travers la Mauritanie Occidentale (Paris, 1909), I, p. 228.

by several firqān or fractions) largely for the supply of millet from the Chememma. When dealing with external outlets, i.e., Toucouleur or European commercial interests, the media of exchange was salt and gum, or livestock, respectively. Salt came from one of two Trarza supplies, at N'terert or Toueidermi, where bar salt could be exploited.[1] Numerous coastal sites provided in addition loose salt extracted from the sea, but this salt, for reasons of difficult transport and inferior quality, was not widely exploited commercially. Dates were also carried south, but by the same occasional, small-scale 'domestic' caravans. These small caravans can be explained in terms of the economic structure of the tribes in the area, which did not allow for the investment of large human or animal resources in such enterprises.

Shaikh Sidiyya is remembered today in southern Mauritania as the first person to introduce long distance, large scale (300 or more camels) commercial caravans to that region. This innovation, formed largely on the pattern of the Kunta salt trade in the Azaouad region,[2] also was based on the exploitation of salt, at N'terert, where Muhammad Lhabib absolved Sidiyya

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1 For a detailed study on the Trarza salt deposits, see G. Mère, "Les salines du Trarza", Archives R.I.M., E-2-121, 30.3.1911.

2 See J. Geneviève, "Les Kountas"; M. Lt. Barthe, "Taoudeni et son sel gemme", C.H.E.A.M. mémoire no. 1772, 1950; and Capit. d'Arbaumont, "Le sel en Mauritanie et au Soudan", C.H.E.A.M. mémoire no. 1609, 22 July, 1949.

from the payment of taxes on the salt.[1] Caravan organisation was in the hands of 'Ali al-Waziz who operated in the dry season on a 250 kilometre route between N'terert and Boghé, and after the rains, between Adrar and the Awlad Ibiri camps. From the Chememma came millet and some European products (paper and <u>guinée</u>) and to the river went salt and gum. No taxes were paid on the caravans' movements, and one instance of an attempt to extract revenue from one of Sidiyya's caravans in the Fouta precipitated one of his more dramatic <u>karāmāt</u>. (The <u>mariqot</u> waters parted and the caravan passed across the bed of the stream in defiance of the Toucouleur toll collector who operated a ferry there.) The produce carried by these caravans was diversified so that a year of poor gum harvests could be offset by increased trade in salt. The most lucrative aspect of the caravan trade was the transport of salt; each beast was able to carry four slabs of salt, or their equivalent, each weighing approximately 30 kilos. A caravan of 300 animals was thus capable of carrying 36,000 kilos (or 36 metric tons) of salt, gum or millet which, at the rates for these products in 1846, for example, represented approximately 1311 bushels of millet valued at 6,135 francs, or gum to the value of 27,000 francs/ or 1800 pieces of <u>guinée</u>.[2]

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1 Interview with al-Hajji Bou Baker Shaou of Thiès, Senegal, in Boutilimit, 2.2.1969.

2 For a discussion of equivalents in the Moorish and French economies in the mid-19th century, see appendix V.

When the rains interrupted the salt traffic in the Chememma, Sidiyya's caravans had the responsibility of date transport from the Adrar. The details of this trade are not well documented, but at least one caravan annually carried south the produce from the Shaikh's date palms in the Adrar. His interests in the north were supervised by Rhamdan o/ Ely Mazza, a murīd from the le-Mheyser fraction of the Idashilli, who was among the Shaikh's most loyal followers. Under Rhamdan's direction numerous palm groves were planted, other trees were received in the form of hadiyya or waqf, and some were bought.[1] As the Shaikh's religious representative in the Adrar, Rhamdan also collected and despatched hadiyya for him from his followers in that region.

A last and important aspect of the southern Mauritanian economy in the 19th century and one in which Shaikh Sidiyya's talāmīdh and caravan organisations participated in directly was the harvest and selling of gum to the European traders. French posts and escales for the purchase of gum on the Senegal River were located by 1859 at Dagana, Podor, Saladé, Matam and Bakel; English commercial activities were limited to periodic visits at Portendick on the Atlantic coast, after the French re-occupation of St. Louis in 1816. The Portendick trading rights were given up by the English only in 1857, but the occasional nature of their trade and difficult geographical

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1 Interview with Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 20.1.1969.

position of their escale militated against the English merchants ever taking part in the gum trade on a large scale after 1816.

The collection of gum was the responsibility of haratine families attached to zawiyya tribes who otherwise generally farmed in the Chememma, and the marketing of their produce was largely in the hands of their zawiyya masters. The gum was collected and buried, and when a sufficient quantity was judged to have been collected and the trading seasons were opened, a caravan was organised to pass among the camps of the collectors and to carry it on to the escales. There, maîtres de langue or agents of the commercial firms would superintend the weighing and purchase of the product, and they would buy it on a guinée cloth standard, which depended upon the quality of cloth, supply and demand of the gum, and its quality.[1] In times of conflict between hassani units the transport of the gum to the river and the return of the caravans to the zawiyya camps with cloth or other European goods was a very hazardous operation, owing to the caravans'

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1 Aspects of the gum trade have been extensively documented, but no description of gum commerce in the 19th century or historical evaluation of this important sector of the southern Mauritanian economy has yet been made. See S.M. Golberry, I, pp. 142-220; R. Caillié, I, p. 11 and pp. 90-92; and Mohamed Salem ould M'khaitirat, "La Gomme en Mauritanie", E.N.F.O.M. mémoire, n.d. [1958-1959].

vulnerability to hassani or zenagha raids.[1]

There is no question that the Awlad Ibiri participated in this gum trade, quite likely on a large scale and with the support of the Shaikh's talāmīdh. But unfortunately, little information is available about details of the gum trade. No records were kept by the French authorities at Podor (where the Awlad Ibiri traded their gum) of the specific tribes which came to sell; they were only known as 'marabouts'. The several references which do appear in the A.O.F. Archives to Awlad Ibiri figures at Podor or visitors at Podor from Sidiyya's camp[2] suggest that the tribe was in frequent contact, probably as a result of the gum trade, with the French traders, but it has been noted also that the largest of the tribe's agricultural holdings bordered on the river opposite Podor. Further documentation of Awlad Ibiri participation in the gum trade comes from occasional references in Sidiyya's corres-

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1 During the numerous conflicts between hassani groups in southern Mauritania over succession rights (and thus rights to the 'custom' which the French paid to the man they approved of as 'amir' in each region), it was invariably in the interests of the parties out of power to harass commerce in an effort to force the French authorities to recognise themselves as the most effective insurance against trade disruption. This was normally done through the intimidation of zawiyya tribes' caravans travelling to the escales, or raiding them on their return.

2 For examples see Archives A.O.F., 13-G-122, item 29, dated 16.4.1864, and item 50, dated 6.6.1864, and 13-G-123, item 5, dated 18.1.1865.

pondence[1] and in the complaint lodged in 1858 with the French administration in St. Louis by the Awlad Ibiri and several other zawiyya tribes because of pillages of their caravans during the 1856-1858 war.[2]

Shaikh Sidiyya's interest in the gum trade appears to have been principally in the procurement of two items, cloth and paper. Cloth in southern Mauritania was at this time rare and, as mentioned above, became a medium of exchange, particularly among those hassani families and their allies who controlled an escale. In the year 1845, for example, archival records indicate that there was paid out to Trarza individuals (for the most part hassanis or their servants) a total of 289 pieces of guinée in customs, 30 pieces in gifts and an unspecified amount as a percentage of all gum which was traded at the escale of Dagana.[3] These customs alone represent roughly 4,785 metres of cloth.[4] Unfortunately, we do not have information on the extent to which the Awlad Ibiri participated in the trade and thus might have entered into the

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1 See Catalogue, ms. no. 260.

2 Archives A.O.F., 9-G-40, item 106, and reported in J.O. of 25.10.1859.

3 Ibid., 9-G-10; see appendix IV for a full account of the 1845 customs paid to Trarza.

4 Guinée cloth was measured by the pièce (baisa in Hassaniyya) which was roughly 15 metres in length.

'cloth-zone' economy, but the Shaikh frequently does make reference to <u>guinée</u> pieces in his correspondence about financial matters.[1] There also exists a reference to Sidiyya's purchase of paper on at least one occasion in exchange for gum,[2] but the paper of few of his letters bears watermarks and further identification of the paper he used is not possible.

In summary, the basis of Shaikh Sidiyya's economic organisation was in the large body of <u>talāmīdh</u>, whose numbers allowed the tribe to support a greater degree of economic specialisation for such activities as commercial caravans than would normally have been the case for zawiyya tribes in Mauritania. The <u>talāmīdh</u> also provided the man-power reserves for extensive cultivation, herding and gum collection activities, and they and their families added appreciably to the livestock reserves of the Awlad Ibiri. Another important element in the economic growth of the tribe was the protection and freedom from taxation and exploitation which members of the tribe and their dependents enjoyed by virtue of their association with the Shaikh. The economic power of the Shaikh's religious position was a very real factor in the

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1 See <u>Catalogue</u>, ms. no. T15.

2 <u>Ibid.</u>, ms. no. 260.

growth and prosperity of Sidiyya's followers. Shaikh Sidiyya's wealth came to him through several sources -- hadiyya, livestock husbandry, long distance commercial caravans, date palm groves and the gum trade. But this same wealth was also distributed by him and, while it may be argued that the Awlad Ibiri benefited from their privileged economic position, the Shaikh himself was not a wealthy man. A theme one finds throughout Sidiyya's economic organisation is that of an efficient, hierarchical organisation which begins with the Shaikh's secretaries and agents and then passes down to local chiefs frequently drawn from local ethnic or tribal groupings. Most of the individuals in this hierarchical structure of command were murīdūn of the Shaikh and the men who directed them were frequently those select murīdūn who also held responsibilities for the spiritual guidance of the community which was immediately around them. This combination of religious and economic roles being held by the same individuals appears again in Sidiyya's political organisation, as does the same hierarchical, murīd-based organisation.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE

In the account above of Shaikh Sidiyya's life, emphasis has been placed on his political activities. Here we will concentrate upon specific elements which contributed to the Shaikh's political influence, viz., his consolidation of the

Awlad Ibiri, the establishment of the Awlad Ibiri as a political sanctuary, the creation of Boutilimit, Sidiyya's relations with the Awlad Ahmad, and his karāmāt.

The basis of Shaikh Sidiyya's organisation and political influence was his tribe. This was obviously foremost in the Shaikh's mind when he returned from his studies and began, immediately, to consolidate the Awlad Ibiri geographically and politically.

His temporal and spiritual leadership of the Awlad Ibiri is one major contrast between his career in Trarza and the careers (which his so closely parallels) of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and Sidi Muhammad, who held no direct political control over the Kunta confederation. With a carefully constructed cadre of N'tishait and Awlad Ibiri representatives and agents in which his religious and economic officers were duplicated, he was able by the time of his death to establish his tribe as one of the dominant economic and political powers in southern Mauritania. Clearly, it was the economic and numerical strength of the Awlad Ibiri that lent weight to many of Sidiyya's interventions in Brakna and Trarza temporal affairs.

Effective leadership was, of course, expected from a tribe's temporal chieftain, but it was not always so successful or so methodical. One aspect of this was the annual meeting of the jamā'a of the Awlad Ibiri when their common problems were discussed and aid, for example of livestock, was arranged

for fractions and families in need.[1] These regular meetings of the jamā'a helped to regularise and contract the tribe's nomadic patterns as well as to provide a focus for the annual nomadic cycle of the Awlad Ibiri. The Shaikh also took immediate interest in the solution of any internal quarrels within a fraction of the tribe,[2] and saw that the external obligations any fraction of the tribe had taken on were made good.[3] At the same time the economic benefits of Sidiyya's religious position, e.g., the security which was assured to livestock bearing the brand of the Shaikh, were first and most effectively felt by his own tribe and their dependents. The simple fact of the tribe's growth, due largely to the attached fractions and talāmīdh additions, reflects the advantages and effectiveness of Sidiyya's consolidation efforts within the Awlad Ibiri.

Under the supervision of Shaikh Sidiyya the Awlad Ibiri were also established as a sanctuary to which numerous individuals and groups fled, thus enlarging the ranks of the tribe and the reputation of its Shaikh. Zawiyya tribes commonly acted as refuges for the politically inept or fallen elements or peoples who were otherwise discriminated against in Moorish

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1 For an example see Ibid., ms. no. 428.

2 See Ibid., ms. no. 421 (Ahl Ahmad al-Falli) and ms. no. 422 (Idaw Riah).

3 See Ibid., ms. no. 416.

society,[1] but they were effective in this role only insofar as their leader commanded the respect and spiritual domination of the major hassani powers in the region. The Kunta, Ahl Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, were one of the better known and most effective of the 19th century political sanctuaries in the southern Sahara and West Africa,[2] and Sidiyya's encouragement of the Awlad Ibiri sanctuary appears to have been inspired by the Kunta example.

The majority of individuals and families within the Awlad Ibiri sanctuary were part of the talāmīdh, though not all of them necessarily fled from another power to the protection and security of the Shaikh for political reasons. Another, smaller number of persons and families who sought out the sanctuary of Shaikh Sidiyya's tribe can be described as criminal offenders and political refugees.[3] An impressive list of these appears in the French administrative reports. If we are to believe the French descriptions of the men who

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1 A limited amount of information about southern Mauritanian sanctuaries is available in R. Caillié, pp. 75-76 for the Djedjeba, and in E. Richet, p. 408 for the Awlad Ibiri.

2 The Kunta sanctuary is described in H. Barth, vol. IV, p. 504 and vol. V, pp. 68-69, 136, 160, 223, 226, etc.

3 Among the Moorish political refugees who sought out Sidiyya's protection were the Ahl Khandusa, Muhammad o/ Sidi and Muhammad al-Habib o/ al-Mukhtar.

sought out Sidiyya's protection they included assassins[1] and generally rebellious elements.[2] So long as an offender remained in Sidiyya's camp or among the Awlad Ibiri no external (worldly) force dared to interfere, and before the offender left the camp (and some never did) Sidiyya had generally arranged a settlement between him and his antagonists. The Kitāb al-Wasīṭ comments on the effectiveness of this sanctuary:

> And the Arabs in the land of Shinqit used to make of him [Shaikh Sidiyya] a matter of sacred security, and he who killed his father or his brother would meet with him, and they would sit down at one table. And only until the criminal reached the border of the land in which he [Sidiyya] lived, was he saved.[3]

The origin of the Awlad Ibiri sanctuary is obscure, as it does not appear to have been an institution which was purposely created by Shaikh Sidiyya, though it certainly was his policy to accept discordant elements within his society in hopes of reconciling them to the whole. For analytical purposes the Awlad Ibiri sanctuary may be best understood as an expression of the Shaikh's political influence as a mediator, attributed to him largely by the hassani powers around him. Thus the sanctuary grew in importance and

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1 See Archives A.O.F., 13-G-120, item 127, dated 20.9.1859 and the report in J.O., dated 13.12.1859.

2 See Archives A.O.F., 13-G-121, item 114, dated 5.2.1863; and 13-G-122, item 41, dated 23.5.1864.

3 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 241.

effectiveness in direct relation to the Shaikh's own involvement in the political affairs of Trarza and Brakna. The Awlad Ibiri sanctuary acted both in a practical sense as a place of refuge for individuals fleeing vengence, and as a very important political insitution, an appeal to which might avoid unnecessary bloodshed or feud through the mediation of Shaikh Sidiyya. The importance of Sidiyya's sanctuary and mediation to the political balance of the Moorish segmentary society is reflected in the effectiveness and fame which was attributed to it.

Perhaps the Shaikh's most original contribution to the politics of religious figures in southern Mauritania was his creation of Boutilimit as a focus for his activities. It has been noted above that Boutilimit was evidentally established shortly after Sidiyya's return from the Azaouad, though the precise date for its creation is not known. The site was well located, midway between the tribe's agricultural lands in the Chememma and the rainy season pasturage in the Aouker and it was set between two large, semi stabilised parallel dunes lying north-east — south-west which flanked the valley. In the valley was heavy vegetation in the form of gum and other small scrub trees, and the name itself came from the rich spring herbage (tilImIt) which annually covered the

area.[1] On this site Shaikh Sidiyya directed to be sunk the first well of Boutilimit which now stands capped some 25 yards east of the market in the town. Sidiyya also had built a small lodge approximately 75 yards north of the well, and a second structure at the summit of the west dune which was used for the storage of grain.[2] The location of Boutilimit suggests that it was meant as an administrative centre;[3] it was there that the meetings were held to negotiate the future of the Adrar-Trarza dispute, and Sidi Ely is said to have come to seek his investiture as amir of Brakna, and its placement was directly on the north-east -- south-west nomadic patterns of the Awlad Ibiri. The Shaikh himself lived at Tamersguid, and later Tendouja, and it was presumably to these camps that his students came, but on the evidence of

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1 Much of this vegetation has since been destroyed, largely by French troops in the first decade of this century. After establishing their post on the west dune, above Boutilimit, they cut the greater part of the trees in the valley to make a log (corduroy) road. The wind erosion and harsh climate of the area has made the replacement of these trees impossible. It is remembered today that in 1900 a camel rider could not ride through the valley from one end to the other without ripping his garments to shreds because of the density of the growth.

2 Communication from Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 4.1969.

3 Numerous references to Boutilimit appear in the Shaikh's correspondence; see examples in Catalogue, mss. nos. 568 and T4 (which discusses the Boutilimit wells and care for the poor there).

Panet[1] and the French officers at Podor,[2] Boutilimit was widely regarded as the centre of Sidiyya's activities.

Not unrelated to the creation of Boutilimit was Shaikh Sidiyya's sinking of wells at Tamersguid, Tendouja and l-Haymun el-gebli.[3] The expense of well digging both in manpower and time was prohibitive for most tribes, and in addition there were the problems in the organisation of workers and providing for their supplies.[4] These three sites had been wells belonging to the Awlad Ibiri which had fallen into disuse, but the feat of adding these to the resources of the tribe, even if only for Sidiyya's own residences and line of communication into Boutilimit, was a considerable accomplishment.[5]

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1 L. Panet, p. 32.

2 The first reference to Boutilimit in the French administrative records appears in J.O., dated 17.5.1859, where it is described as the place where Shaikh Sidiyya lives.

3 Interview with Khalil o/ M'hammad o/ Cheikh and Harouna o/ Cheikh, Boutilimit, 3.2.1969. These wells extend in a north-north-east line from Boutilimit, approximately 30 to 40 kilometres, or, in the 19th century, one day's journey, apart.

4 The depth of wells in Trarza varies from a few metres in the oglats to 57 metres; the Tamersguid well, today, is 36.2 metres in depth and those at Boutilimit are 40.1 metres. See A.O.F., Carte hydrogéologique, p. 23 and p. 25.

5 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 242, remarks on this as one of Sidiyya's more remarkable achievements.

Boutilimit and the additional wells which the Shaikh established thus acted much as the permanent sites which other nomadic leaders have created to serve as a focus for their movements and to improve their lines of communication.[1] This, however, does not imply that he sought to sedentarise his followers as has been the suggested motive of other such efforts in nomadic societies, for to do so would be to remove Sidiyya from the ecological realities of nomadic life in Mauritania; in terms of water supplies, agricultural production and economic viability it would not have been possible. But to establish in his tribe and following a fixed geographical point which they might consider as their centre was to give them a degree of cohesion with which spiritual, economic and political administration might be possible. It would appear that this was the objective of Shaikh Sidiyya's foundation of Boutilimit.

We have reviewed in Sidiyya's biography the major events in his political career, and at that time his policies with respect to hassanis, zawayya, the French and other social groups which were external to the Moorish segmentary system were summarized. However, we have not yet discussed the special relationship between the Awlad Ibiri and the Awlad Ahmad whose turbulent participation in raiding and general

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1 Obvious parallels may be found with the headquarters al-Sayyid Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Sanusi at Jaghbub (see E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Sanusi of Cyrenaica (Oxford, 1949), pp. 14-18) and Mā' al-Anin's establishment of Samara (C. Baroja, pp. 304-318).

dissension from hassani authority in Brakna in the 19th century appears to have stood in opposition to all that Sidiyya promoted. Shaikh Sidiyya was confronted by General Faidherbe with this question in a letter in January 1864 in which Sidiyya was charged with the responsibility of controlling the Awlad Ahmad, inasmuch as that tribe recognised him as their spiritual leader.[1] The response was a lengthy letter of three folios informing Faidherbe that he had been gravely misinformed of Sidiyya's power, that the Awlad Ahmad, as hassanis, had zawiyya tribes in their power and not the reverse, and that the Awlad Ahmad, as hassanis, were outside the sharI'a.[2] The letter is a useful outline of the Shaikh's official attitude towards the Awlad Ahmad and it also provides an interesting commentary on the social myth of hassani-zawiyya divisions, but a closer look at Awlad Ahmad - Awlad Ibiri marriages and external relations presents a more balanced account.

In spite of historical events which separated the Awlad Ibiri as people of the zawayya from their hassani Awlad Ahmad cousins, the validity of this relationship between cousins was not called into question throughout Sidiyya's lifetime. The exact nature of his control over the Awlad Ahmad chiefs is not easily defined from the correspondence which took

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1 Archives A.O.F., 3-B-93, dated 22.12.1863.

2 Catalogue, ms. no. 156B.

place between them, but there would appear little doubt that Shaikh Sidiyya was able to depend upon the Awlad Ahmad, in the main, to give backing to his political initiatives. As a result, Sidiyya's influence over the Awlad Ahmad, coupled with his general support for Muhammad Lhabib and Sidi in Trarza, effectively gave to the Shaikh a larger degree of control over southern Mauritanian politics than was centred in any other individual among his contemporaries in that country.

Sidiyya's policy towards other hassanis in Brakna and Trarza may be summarized as one of non-involvement, but non-involvement within the limits imposed by his belief, one may assume, that a strong hassani authority was less of a danger to the political and economic stability of the region than a weak one. He thus supported Amar o/ al-Mukhtar, Muhammad Lhabib and Sidi o/ Muhammad Lhabib successively in the amirate of Trarza. In Brakna he appears as much more of a king-maker, supporting Muhammad o/ Sidi, followed by Muhammad al-Habib and then Sidi Ely. However, beyond his brief, but very effective, incursions into hassani rivalries current in his day, Shaikh Sidiyya's notion of non-involvement appears to have found expression in the distance he maintained from the numerous petty quarrels, whether hassani or zawiyya, which threatened the stability of southern Mauritania in the mid-19th century. Evidence of this policy is in the existence of a political sanctuary within the Awlad Ibiri,

which was not so much the Shaikh's creation (although he certainly encouraged it) as the creation of the society around him. Another example of the Shaikh's ability to rise above a conflict so as to be in the position to judge the participants is in his classic handling of the diyya payment to the Djedjeba, Tabiyyat and Bassin.[1] This idea of non-involvement should be seen as a by-product of Sidiyya's legal education, though his association with the Kuntas, whose reputation as mediators and negotiators was widespread, must have also contributed to this policy. The geographical position of the Awlad Ibiri nomadic patterns and the placement of Boutilimit in the territory which divided the spheres of influence of the Ahl Brakna and Ahl Trarza, also contributed very greatly to Sidiyya's position as a mediator, and theoretically neutral figure.

A precise definition of Shaikh Sidiyya's sphere of political influence is as difficult as is a definitive statement on his religious influence. If one measures the former by the effectiveness of his interventions in temporal matters, the Shaikh's political influence was much more localised than was his influence as a religious figure. In this sense his temporal authority lay only in a few, but dominant, hassani lineages in Trarza and Brakna.[2] However, if one considers

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1 See above, chapter V, pp. 219-224.

2 The Trarza and Brakna tribes in which Sidiyya's direct influence was felt have been mentioned above; they include the Awlad Ahmad min Daman, Awlad Daman, Awlad Ahmad, Awlad Naghmash and Awlad Mansur.

those hassani leaders who attributed to Sidiyya the powers of an intermediary between man and the next world, and by virtue of this a degree of influence over their personal affairs, one may attribute to the Shaikh a much wider moral and political influence, nearly corresponding with his sphere of religious influence.

One aspect of Shaikh Sidiyya's life which has not received attention and which will be considered here as a contributing element to his political influence is the miracles attributed to him. Reference has been made above to several of these karāmāt and a lengthy list might be compiled, but we shall mention here only several examples. The Shaikh's karāmāt involved the demonstration of sūfī power in religious and medical matters[1] such as flying to Mecca each evening for prayers or curing the stuttering of Muhammad b. Mulay 'Abd al-Rahman in Marrakech, and the demonstration of the physical and metaphysical powers which had social effects, granted to a man of his religious knowledge. It is this latter aspect of his karāmāt which contributed considerably to his temporal authority. Among these, examples may be given of a murderer to whom he gave sanctuary along with his camel in the depths of the front

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1 See below, chapter VII; tasawwuf and tibb were commonly conceived of as two aspects of the same thing at this time in Mauritania, i.e., ministrations to the soul and body.

pocket of his bubu (jalābiyya) for three days,[1] or his setting villages in the Fouta alight by the utterance of a single word,[2] or the example given above of his name being responsible for the parting of waters on a marigot when his caravan was threatened with having to pay an exorbitant rate to cross by ferry. The most frequently quoted today, and obviously most important karāmāt were those which illustrated his superior physical or metaphysical power in comparison to the hassani families, and the object lesson of this was not lost on them.

We have surveyed above Shaikh Sidiyya's administrative machinery, the scope and nature of his religious influence, his economic structure and organisation, and his politics; each of these areas of his activity was integrated with the others, but all appear to have emerged from Sidiyya's position as a religious figure. This interdependence of religious, economic and political influence, organisation and policy is extremely complex. To take one example by way of illustration, the murīdūn, who have been discussed above as an element in Sidiyya's religious influence,

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1 Interview with Khalifa Silla, Kunting, The Gambia, 25.7.1968.

2 Archives A.O.F., 9-G-4, item 117.

provided at the same time probably the principal source of revenue (in hadiyya) received by Sidiyya, and quite probably received, in turn, the greater part of the Shaikh's charity. They also frequently acted as Sidiyya's representatives in religious and economic matters and, by virtue of their numbers and the cross-section of tribes which they represented, they constituted a political base which may well have been far broader than that enjoyed by any hassani group. These functions of the murīdūn are particularly significant inasmuch as the murīdūn represent a social institution which was essentially external to the patterns of alliance and conflict common to the segmentary Moorish society in the mid-19th century. While murīdūn do not appear to have originated with Shaikh Sidiyya in Mauritania, he was the first shaikh to have built up such a large-scale unit of them. Similar multi-function descriptions might be given of the talāmīdh, a socio-economic grouping of considerable political value which was bound to the shaikh in his position as a religious figure, or of Sidiyya's politics of non-involvement with its economic and religious implications. Likewise the Shaikh's karāmāt, hadiyya, and even the Qadiriyya can be analysed in religious, economic or political terms.

These religious, economic and political factors in Shaikh Sidiyya's rise to influence explain how he became a dominant figure in southern Mauritania in the mid-19th

century. These factors need not be explained away, in Poulet's phrase, as "vague, imprécis et flottant", but neither can they be summarized with precision, largely because of the context of the segmentary society in which Shaikh Sidiyya was living. However, patterns do emerge from this material such as the core of agnatic and cognatic functionaries among the Shaikh's murīdūn, and representative murīdūn from the tribes and fractions which looked to the Shaikh for their spiritual and moral guidance. Throughout, one also finds an efficient hierarchy of command in which the Moors' inclination toward social hierarchy is refined by Shaikh Sidiyya's own, perhaps sūfī-inspired hierarchy in which he held very considerable authority. The central figure in all this is Sidiyya himself; the support he received can be described and the growth of the Awlad Ibiri can be documented, but it all is subordinated to the character of the Shaikh. Therefore, if we are to ask why, rather than how, the Awlad Ibiri came to hold the dominant position which it did, we must focus on the Shaikh himself and his role in Moorish society.

Perhaps Sidiyya's greatest asset and, if one factor can be singled out, the most important element in his rise to influence was in the duality of the role which he held in Moorish society, which is reflected in the deference with which he was regarded by both zawayya and hassanis. To those individuals, largely from the Ahl Zawayya, who

respected his neutrality and scholarship he seems to have been principally a jurist and an arbitrator in this world; for those who attributed to him an insight into religious truth, largely hassanis, he was also a sūfī and an arbitrator of man's Destiny in the next world. One can argue that it was because of Shaikh Sidiyya's adroit ability to command the respect of these two social groups which were so very different in their world view that he and his tribe were able to acquire the religious, economic and political standing which they did.

Sidiyya obviously did rise above the hassani and zawiyya divisions in his society, and the themes which have been suggested here -- the respect which was given to him as an arbitrator and the veneration which was granted him as a sūfī shaikh -- appear to explain in large part why it was that he came to play the role which he did in mid-19th century Mauritania. These themes, in the form of the Maliki madhhab and the sūfī ṭarīqa will be the subject of the next chapter. They are concepts, in Shaikh Sidiyya's interpretation of them and his society's acceptance of his interpretation, which dominated his long period of education as well as his later career as a religious and political figure. Hopefully, the discussion of these elements of the Shaikh's thought will also shed some light on a similar union of the ideas of madhhab and ṭarīqa which is found with his Kunta masters and, to a certain

extent, throughout 19th century Islam in western Africa.

VII. AN EVALUATION OF SHAIKH SIDIYYA'S ACTIVITIES AS A FAQĪH AND A SŪFĪ

Two themes have dominated the account of Shaikh Sidiyya's biography: his activities as a faqīh and his religious position as a sūfī shaikh. Each of these themes, it has been suggested, appears to account, in different ways, for the respect and following he enjoyed from both the hassanis and the people of the zawayya. If this is valid, then Shaikh Sidiyya's jurisprudence and his practice of the Qadiriyya may have played an important role in the expansion and influence of the Awlad Ibiri in the 19th century, and examined together, they ought to define with some precision the basis of Shaikh Sidiyya's authority in southern Mauritania. We will discuss below the legal school (madhhab) practised in Mauritania which is attributed to Ibn Malik and the science of sufism in 19th century Mauritania, both with reference to Shaikh Sidiyya's writings. From this it will be possible to demonstrate that the Shaikh had studied the Islamic sciences of fiqh and tasawwuf and had attained a high level in those studies. Also, we will be able to evaluate, in the context of Shinqiti scholarship, the practice of jurisprudence and the form of mysticism in which Sidiyya

was engaged.

By considering these two subjects - fiqh and tasawwuf - separately, an arbitrary division between two Islamic sciences has been made which would be alien to much of 19th century Islamic scholarship in western Africa. Enlightened and rightly-guided fuqahā' were very frequently sūfī shaikhs, and one of our objects below will be to illustrate and explain why this was in the context of Mauritania. However, it will be necessary to consider the Maliki madhhab and sufism separately, so as to define their uses and implications, before taking up the connection which existed between the two.

SHARĪ'A IN MAURITANIA: THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

To understand how and in what circumstances the sharī'a functions in Mauritania is to understand the segmentary society in which it operates. The segmentary nature of Moorish society has been summarized in chapter II, above, but a few general points from that explanation, and their implications for the administration of the sharī'a among the Moors should preface a description of the Maliki madhhab in Mauritanian practice.

While discussing the model of segmentary societies reference was made to the principle of opposition and complementarity, or balance between segments. This provides

a fundamental element of social cohesion owing to the unity within each segment against opposing segments. This also explains the premise upon which justice in such a society is administered. Authority is not concentrated in an individual or group, and therefore there is no 'administration' of justice as one might envisage it in a centralized governmental structure; authority, like the society, is segmented. Therefore, in the segmentary model lies an explanation of its administration of justice; theoretically each segment is balanced by an equal segment. The transgressions of one unit or a representative of it are held in check by an opposing unit.

However, as Gellner has pointed up in his discussion of self-maintaining order and disorder, "so as to work at all, the system must also not work too well."[1] If the model was transferred directly into practice, and remained pure, the element of fear from without which provides the essential cohesion for units would be lacking. A society with absolute symmetry where each segment was balanced by an equal segment (thus making unnecessary a legal system which, after all, would serve to correct asymmetrical structures) would no longer correspond to the segmentary model. Of course, segmentary models are not identical with

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1 E. Gellner, Saints, p. 53.

the societies they are meant to represent; asymmetry is an essential fact of such societies.

We have examined in chapter II the presence of religious institutions in segmentary societies which, it has been suggested, play a vital role in maintaining and stabilizing the segmentary structure. It has been noted that functionaries of religious institutions act in different ways, but they essentially function as checks on the natural process of fragmentation (fission) in segmentary societies through their supposed control over supernatural powers which have a potential to wreck vengeance on a large portion of the society for the misconduct of a few members. It is thus in the interests of the society that supernatural sanctions are not necessary or, conversely, that divine retribution for misconduct is avoided.

Where such religious functionaries effectively contribute to the 'stability' of segmentary structures is in their arbitration with, or mediation between, opposing (asymmetrical) segments which might, in the absence of the threat of supernatural sanctions, play out the role assigned to them in the segmentary model, i.e., feud or go to war. Thus the presence of religious functionaries on one hand controls the segmentary society, pulling it away from its natural tendency toward fragmentation, and on the other hand

they push it, theoretically, to a condition whereby fear from without is abolished and the segmentary society is transformed into something else. Such religious functionaries also serve as a threat to the segmentary society because of the real, religious authority which is invested in them that cannot be normally challenged by members or units of the society at large. However, this religious authority is, itself, segmented and dispersed, and only under very particular circumstances does it become concentrated in a single individual so that the fundamental principle of dispersed authority in the segmentary society is altered.

What is important to note here is that such religious figures, by virtue of their possessing authority which comes from outside the segmentary society, are generally adjudicating figures as well, and the juridical role which is attributed to them by their society is indistinguishable from their position as religious men. To be an effective mediator is to command respect (based on supernatural authority) and to have this authority recognised by a sufficiently large proportion of the society. In the first half of this chapter we will concentrate upon the techniques and methods of effective mediation in Mauritania; in the second half our subject will be the corollary to this, supernatural authority.

We have noted briefly in chapter II the mediation powers that were held by certain politically active zawiyya tribes in Mauritania. To use Gellner's classifications of 'holy' (politically active) and 'lay' saints, we have drawn parallels between the 'holy' zawiyya units in Mauritania and the igurramen in the High Atlas, insofar as their distribution degrees of holiness and other factors which determine effectiv mediation are concerned.[1] Certainly, the types of cases with which learned men of the 'holy' zawiyya tribes in Mauritania dealt, and the limitations placed upon their authority and judgements by virtue of Moorish segmentary society, bears very close resemblance to Professor Gellner's descriptions of the igurramen. But there is a major difference between the two situations which lies in the tools which are used in mediation. Whereas among the igurramen scholarship in the Islamic sciences is more attributed than real, and only token reference is made to the sharī'a in mediation,[2] the mediator-scholars among the Ahl Zawayya in Mauritania are, in fact, mediator-fuqahā'. The tradition of scholarship in Shinqit, which has been described in detail in reference to Shaikh Sidiyya's studies, is one of the most striking features about the practice of Islam in Mauritania.

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1 E. Gellner, Saints, pp. 74-77. Gellner lists the prerequisites of agurramhood as holy genealogy, possession of baraka, generosity and wealth, and pacifism.

2 Ibid., p. 105.

The politically active zawiyya tribes were not only supposed to have leaders who were well versed in the sharī'a, but in a society where the tradition of legal counsel was well established, they had to have men who were learned in Islamic jurisprudence if they were to be politically effective.[1] The most 'holy' zawiyya units, therefore, tended to have the most able fuqahā'. In order to assess what this involved, we must turn to a summary of the practice of the Maliki madhhab in Mauritania.

THE MALIKI MADHHAB IN MAURITANIA

The introduction of the Maliki madhhab into West Africa is generally attributed to the influence of Ibn Yasin, but particularly to Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar in 1056, at the time of the Almoravid invasion of the ancient commercial centre and empire of Ghana. The extent to which the sharī'a was widespread in that and subsequent western Sudanese states is not known, though among the ruling classes and the North African merchants there are indications that the Maliki

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1 This is, of course, an over-simplification. Mediators among the Moors were subject to the same pressures as were their igurramen counterparts to produce settlements which were politically acceptable to both parties, as well as to enforce the sharī'a. The mediator whose settlements were considered to be unjust or too harsh by either party would, in time, simply be cut off from potential clients who would seek more flexible arbitrators. Thus many other considerations -- economic, social and political -- went into the evaluation of the politically effective faqīh, but the fact remains that the basis of his arbitration had to be his own competence in the sharī'a, and this was easily judged in a society where the science of figh was widely taught.

madhhab not only survived its implantation by the Almoravids, but it gained an increasingly large following as centres of Islamic scholarship grew in number and sophistication in West Africa.[1] Conflicts arising from the incorporation of ʿāda (custom) in the sharīʿa, and legal reform in West African Islamic communities have been major themes in West African history but surprisingly little attention has been given to the evolution and ramifications of the Maliki madhhab by historians. It will not be possible to examine the broad spectrum of the history of fiqh in West Africa here, but on a much smaller scale we will survey the application of the sharīʿa in southern Mauritania among the Ahl Zawayya with a view to evaluating the role played there in the 19th

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1 References to the practice of Islam, presumably according to the Maliki madhhab appear in al-Bakri, where the twelve mosques of Ghana and juriconsultants and learned men are mentioned in 460/1067-8 (in de Slane, ed., Description de l'Afrique Septentrionale (Paris, 1911), p. 174) and al-Idrisi (in R. Dozy and J. de Goeje, Description de l'Afrique et l'Espagne (Leyden, 1864), pp. 5-7) and Ibn Khaldun (in de Slane, Histoire des Berbères (Paris, 1925-56), vol. I, pp. 263-4) both refer to the practice of Islam in Ghana and imply that the sharīʿa was administered.

century by Shaikh Sidiyya as a faqīh.[1]

The sharī'a is generally divided into three broad classifications; ibādāt, or regulations relating to worship, mu'āmalāt (literally, 'social intercourse'), and 'uqūbāt ('punishment') which may be summarized as regulations relating to juridical and political matters. We will not be concerned in this section with ibādāt except to note that the observance of the 'five pillars' of Islam, which are often accepted as forming the basic content of the precepts in the sharī'a relating to worship, are rigorously upheld in Mauritanian zawiyya practice. Of these five pillars, shahāda, ṣalāt, zakāt, ṣawm and ḥājj, the practice of the third is difficult to define in the Mauritanian context, but the Shaikh and most of his zawiyya contemporaries did conceive of themselves as faithfully observing prescriptions relating to the donation of zakāt.[2] The fifth item, ḥājj

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1 Studies relating to 'customary law', i.e., non-French code, in Mauritania are: "Exposé des principales coutumes suivies par les Maures Brakna" (Archives R.I.M., series E, 2ème partie, no. 74, dated 1933); P. Dubié, "Le Droit Penal Maure" (Archives de l'I.F.A.N., XIII/6, 1938); R. Lemoyne, "Enquête sur le droit penal de la Mauritanie" (Ibid., XIII/6, 1938); P. Dubié "Le Droit Penal Maure et le Justice des Cadis", C.H.E.A.M. mémoire no. 511, 1941); A. Leriche, "Châtiments prévus par la loi musulmane", Bull. I.F.A.N., XIXB, 1957, pp. 446-463.

2 see Catalogue, mss. nos. T33 and T34 for ahkām dealing with questions of zakāt.

was an observance which required impressive fortitude and, in the early 19th century, was undertaken only with extreme difficulty for the West African pilgrim. As a result, until the present century, relatively few Moors took part in the hājj. However, aside from these two considerations, the personal obligations in Islam which are incorporated in the ibādāt were in the 19th century, and are today, rigorously and correctly maintained by the Mauritanian zawayya[1] in their practice of Islam.

Sharī'a regulations which relate to juridical and political matters (mu'āmalāt and 'uqūbāt) are much more difficult to define; for this we will employ Joseph Schacht's classification of these branches of the sharī'a under three broad headings:

1) family law (marriage, divorce, and that which sets out family relationships), inheritance and religious foundations;

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1 I am not going into controversies concerning the way arms are to be folded or held at the sides during prayers, or the prohibition or acceptability of smoking tobacco, etc. Controversies over such regulations frequently mark off rival traditions within the practice of West African Islam, and although these points are argued in terms of doctrine, they tend to have a greater bearing on the sociology of Islam than the rigour with which regulations relating to 'uqubat may be observed. By rigorous and correct observance of Islam here is meant the conscientious observance of Ramadan, five prayers daily, the giving of alms, etc., or, in brief, the practice of Islam by persons who are characterized by certain French writers as Muslim "fanatics."

2) the law of contracts and obligations; and

3) penal law, constitutional law, taxation and law of war.[1]

The degree and effectiveness of the application of the sharī'a to each of these categories is roughly in the order in which they have been listed above. Family law and law governing inheritance and religious foundations have traditionally been the areas in which the sharī'a has had its greatest effect; and in matters of penal law, constitutional law, etc., the sharī'a has always been weak if not non-existent. It would appear to be particularly this latter aspect of the sharī'a that prompted Schacht's observation that in juridical and political matters the sharī'a "was weakest, and in some respects even non-existent ...."[2] Certainly, in the Mauritanian context the application of these aspects of the sharī'a is much more difficult to summarize than are the observances of obligations and duties laid down with respect to ibādāt.

One approach to understanding the way in which the sharī'a was employed in Mauritania lies in an examination of the basic sources of jurisprudence, i.e., the usūl al-fiqh,

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1 J. Schacht, An Introduction to Islamic Law (Oxford, 1964), p. 11.

2 Ibid., p. 76.

which were employed in early 19th century Mauritanian legal practice. Four sources are generally recognised as making up the usūl al-fiqh: the Qur'ān, the sunna of the Prophet (which includes ḥadīth), ijmā', and qiyās. However, in the Mauritanian context, until very recent times the last of these sources, qiyās, was not widely employed as a source in jurisprudence.[1] The explanation for this which is given today in Mauritania is that qiyās, as it was understood there, required a breadth of knowledge, i.e., a thorough understanding of all the four madhāhib in Islam, which was not generally found among the Shinqiti scholars. Furthermore, the employment of qiyās was thought to be an extremely hazardous exercise which might easily warp the sharī'a to the personal ends of clever mujtahidūn.[2] This certainly was the position which was taken by Shaikh Sidiyya and Kunta fuqahā', who did not consider themselves to be mujtahidūn. Thus, judging from the usūl al-fiqh which were

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1 Communication from Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, Nouakchott, 4.1969.

2 Four Mauritanian scholars who are remembered today as having been mujtahidūn are: Mukhtar o/ Bunna (Tajakanat: see Ahmad al-Shinqiti pp. 277-284 for a biographical account); Sidi 'Abdallah al-Hajj Brahim (Idaw 'Ali: see Ahmad al-Shinqiti pp. 37-40 for a biographical account); Muhammadhan o/ Babba (Awlad Daiman) and Shaikh Muhammad al-Manni (Ahl Barikallah: see H.T. Norris, Folk Literature, pp. 92-94 for biographical notes). Communication from Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, Nouakchott, 4.69.

employed by Mauritanian fuqahā' in the 19th century, the sharī'a per se appears to have been practised within a carefully circumscribed, conservative tradition. This conservative tradition is further illustrated by a non-acceptance by Shinqiti fuqahā' of the Maliki doctrine of 'amal ('judicial practice') which played an important role in parts of Morocco from the late 9th/15th century onwards as a method of incorporating local custom into the sharī'a.[1] Similarly, 'āda, or local custom, was, of course, not recognised as a legitimate legal source.

However, two elements in the Mauritanian practice of the Maliki madhhab appear to have compensated for the reduced emphasis on qiyās and the absence of such a convenient method as 'amal. These are the liberal Maliki employment of ijmā' to include the consensus of Medina scholars, and the use of al-maslaha al-mursala.[2] Both of

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1 Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir brought back from Morocco one work on the Maghribi 'amal, by 'Isa al-Suktānī (d. 1062/1652). al-Suktānī was a Sous jurist who played an important role in establishing 'amal. This work, it is said among Shaikh Sidiyya's descendants, was never quoted in the Shaikh's legal opinions, but his grandson, Shaikh Sidiyya Baba, did use 'amal and considered it a legitimate legal source. Both in respect to 'amal and the use of qiyās, 20th century Mauritanian fuqahā' tend to be far more liberal than were their 19th century counterparts.

2. This is the doctrine in cases concerning ri'āyat al-maslaha, or the welfare of man; it is used in reference to legal opinion in which a chain of deduction does not run smoothly or is not free of gaps back to the starting point of legislation. It is defined by al-Ghazali as, "consideration for what is aimed at for mankind in the law." R. Paret, E.I. Suppl. (1938), pp. 103-104.

these were legitimate legal methods in the Maliki madhhab and both could broaden a jurist's scope of legal interpretation, but it was particularly the resort to al-muslaha al-mursala that made the sharī'a more flexible than the otherwise highly rigid and conservative legal tradition which Mauritanian jurisprudence might suggest. Examples of the types of cases in which al-maslaha was employed in 19th century Mauritania are those dealing with the purchase of hurma,[1] and the legitimation of several types of usury,[2] although the general interest of the community prevailed most frequently in such matters as determining qisās or diyya as a means of settling affairs of homicide or corporal offences.

Central to the employment of al-maslaha al-mursala was the personality of the faqīh who was, in effect, offering a legal opinion which had no proven precedent within the usūl al-fiqh. In many respects the use of al-maslaha differed little from qiyas except in the

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1 Communication from Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun Nouakchott, 4.1969; see Catalogue, mss. nos. 424, 425 and 441 for documents concerning the purchase of hurma.

2 Communication from Mokhtar o/ Hamidoun, Nouakchott, 4.1969; seven types of usury are practised in Mauritania and justified by the use of al-maslaha. The absence of lex talionis in Moorish society is discussed below.

implications of the judgement itself. Both were aimed at the sanctioning or prohibiting of practices which were not covered in other standard legal sources, but qiyās was a technical ruling written for the fuqahā' which could only be challenged by the fuqahā'. Al-maslaha, on the other hand, was employed for the general welfare of the Community and involved the use of ra'y or 'opinion' which could be challenged by the Community itself, if its interests were not being served by it. Thus a faqīh who employed al-maslaha had to be widely read and, of greater importance, he also had to command sufficient authority within his region for the Community of Believers to agree that their general interests were being served by his legal opinions. Thus we return from theory of fiqh in Mauritanian practice to the social context in which the fuqahā' operated. One may categorize two social levels at which the sharī'a was applied in the mid-19th century southern Mauritania: within the tribes, and between hassani or zawiyya tribal units. The application of the sharī'a will be discussed first in the context of tribal units, with particular reference to the zawiyya tribes, and in terms of the adjudicating method and the types of law which were applied.

The authority structure within each tribe or fraction dealt with most instances of regulations relating to mu'āmalāt. This appears to have been done normally at the

relevant level within the structure of the unit.[1] Where adjudication was necessary the qādī of the fraction or tribe could be called upon for an opinion, or an appeal. The greater part of these applications of the sharī'a in matters of mu'āmalāt which were dealt with by the tribal fuqahā' correspond roughly to the first two categories of sharī'a regulations set out by Joseph Schacht, which have been mentioned above, viz., family law (marriage, divorce, and that which sets out family relationships), inheritance and religious foundations (awqāf and hubus), and the law of contracts and obligations. These types of rulings, indeed, constituted the main scope of the sharī'a practised throughout the Islamic world,[2] and it is not surprising, in view of the tradition of legal scholarship in southern Mauritanian Islam, that this should be the chief preoccupation of the sharī'a in the Moorish ard al-siba.[3] Our object here is not

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1 For example a divorce or inheritance dispute which involved two widely separated friqs within a fraction would be dealt with by the qādī of that fraction; within a family such a dispute would be settled by the head of the family.

2 J. Schacht, Islamic Law, p. 76.

3 The Moors considered themselves to be within the ard al-siba in the 19th century which might be considered as an extention of the bled al-siba in Morocco or 'the land of dissidence' which was in opposition to the bled al-makhzan, or area under the control, for the purpose of taxation, of the Sultan. It would seem that the legal significance of this concept of ard al-siba was not one of allegiance to the Sultan at Marrakesh so much as it was a recognition that no governmental bureaucracy held control over the administration of justice in Shinqit.

to analyse the applications of regulations relating to mu'āmalāt in mid-19th century Mauritania, but it is worth noting that the Moorish social structure appears to have been reflected in the preoccupation of the fuqahā' with certain types of cases. This is not to imply that 'āda entered the practice of the sharī'a among Mauritanian fuqahā' any more than one might describe local values and issues which occupied the time of legal scholars elsewhere in the Islamic world as 'āda.

Examples of this may be found in the preoccupation of Moorish fuqahā' with the rights of women. The role of women has been mentioned above; marriage was monogamous and a great deal of the wealth of the camps was in their hands. The position which they occupied in itself had no bearing on the sharī'a; inheritance, for example, remained strictly patrilineal and according to the prescribed formulas, and women remained, for legal purposes, the half of men. But this position of women in Moorish society was reflected in the preoccupations of the fuqahā' with legal opinions and counsel in matters of marriage, divorce, the rights of women and care for children. The frequency of divorce has been noted above in the practice of serial monogamy, and this was an action which, according to a liberal interpretation

of Malik, women and men could initiate alike.[1] Among the consequences of these marriage and divorce patterns which are linked to issues of the care of children and the rights of women, were numerous rulings and recommendations (wasiyya) by the Mauritanian fuqahā' on these subjects. In matters of religious foundations, the application of al-muslaha al-mursala have been noted above, largely for the lack of guidance which was available in the legal texts on the type of hubus which was prevalent in Mauritania, i.e., the bequests of livestock, and affiliated problems of donnations such as 'umra.[2] To a lesser extent the law of obligations and contracts (as defined by Schacht) appears to have been observed, but in a very limited context, e.g., in relation to the payment of debts, the obligations of oaths and in the contravention of usury prohibitions.

In brief, within the authority structures of a tribe, the sharī'a could be, and was, applied rigorously in matters of family law. Enforcement of the law was in the interests

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1 In fact, I have never heard of an instance where a woman has had to divorce her husband, but rather she threatens to do so, by a procedure involving witnesses and a formal ceremony which is so humiliating to the man that he readily consents to the divorce. The act of divorce thus remains with the husband, but a woman's coercion can, in practice, produce a divorce with as much ease as can a man's renunciation of his wife.

2 'Umra is a donation presented for the lifetime of the recipient; in Mauritanian usage where awqāf were also presented to individuals for limited periods of time, it appears that 'umra was a variation of waqf and hubus.

of the agnatic community which was defined by the tribe, and their dependents. As we have seen in the N'tishait and Awlad Ibiri genealogies, and ecology, the combination of kinship ties and such ecological factors as common water points, agricultural land in the Chememma and patterns of nomadism effectively linked the tribe together as a jural unit.[1] Within that unit were numerous legal scholars who could adjudicate disputes or resolve questions arising from the sharī'a, as well as a system of appeal. While the personality of the faqīh might be of importance within the jural unit, or the relative social position of the litigants might have some relevance to the outcome of the case, the shari'a per se had priority in determining the grounds on which a case was considered and decided.

No reference has yet been made to regulations relating to 'uqūbāt (punishment) or the third category of Schacht's classification of the sharī'a, viz., penal and constitutional law, taxation and the law of war. Such regulations in the shari'a which might have relevance to the Moors would have had their greatest influence outside the jural communities or tribes, i.e., in affairs between tribes. Constitutional

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1 For the purposes of our discussion here the jural unit in southern Mauritania will be defined as the group of agnates which unites for the payment of a blood debt contracted by one of its members.

law and taxation, of course, had no relevance in the ard al-siba where there existed no centralized government and taxation systems consisted of a series of levies imposed upon subordinate social classes by the nobles. In matters of penal law the method in which the sharī'a was employed and the effectiveness of its employment was dependent upon the personal influence of the faqīh, and it is in this context that the function of mediation and arbitration by religious authorities in segmentary social structures is best illustrated.

In instances of the application of penal law between tribal units every effort was made by the mediator to apply the sharī'a, but the deciding factor in the effectiveness of the mediation was not the rigorous application of the sharī'a itself, so much as the influence of the mediator and the respect he commanded from the litigants in a particular dispute. At first sight the choice of a third party for arbitration in Mauritanian politics appears to have been haphazard; there were no established lodges of saints whose roles in this respect were institutionalized as one finds among the High Atlas saints[1] with whom there

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1 E. Gellner, Saints, pp. 140-145. Gellner stresses the numerous factors which may determine the selection of a particular lodge for the arbitration of a dispute (pp. 131-134), but it is instructive to contrast this with the surprise voiced by many Moors who have visited Morocco and who remark on the rigidity of the machinery for regulating disputes there, by comparison to the Moors' own methods.

are so many other parallels with the Mauritanian zawiyya mediators. Many zawiyya tribes had their fuqahā' who, in a particular set of circumstances, might act as arbitrators to a greater or lesser extent, and some of the most active zawiyya units in this respect, such as the Awlad Ibiri, evolved to this position only with the appearance of a strong personality such as Shaikh Sidiyya. Thus, mediation efforts among the Moors did not follow an easily defined pattern, either by established 'saintly' settlements or tribes, or by the geographical location of the mediating figure. But at a given point in time, there generally were found, in each region, particular individuals and tribes that we have referred to above as being 'politically active' or 'holy' and these stand out above their contemporary zawiyya mediators or potential-mediators as having had a more wide-spread religious and political influence. Shaikh Sidiyya and the Awlad Ibiri were one such individual and one such tribe in the mid-19th century. Thus it was to such mediators as Sidiyya that the responsibility frequently fell to adjudicate affairs in penal law which involved more than one jural community; or, in terms of our discussion of the administration of justice in segmentary societies, to such individuals as himself were entrusted the control over the natural tendencies towards fission and uncontrolled anarchy in Moorish society. The effectiveness of mediators

such as the Shaikh in this can be seen in the suppression of such institutions as feud in Moorish society.

No reference has been made to the institution of 'feud'[1] in Mauritania and this is a result of the near-elimination of lex talionis in Moorish society. Ahmad al-Shinqiti goes so far as to state that among the Ahl Zawayya retaliation (qisās) is renounced,[2] and the reason which is most generally given for this is that retaliation would lead to interminable fighting. In legal terms this means that the alternate of qisās as a means of retribution in cases of voluntary homocide was not practised. In fact, we have seen above that instances of retaliation can be cited in Mauritanian history in the mid-19th century, but the institution of feud did not play a functional role in Moorish society. This, one might expect, is reflected in (or a reflection of) the practice of the sharī'a in Mauritania, or more precisely, the effectiveness of arbitration by politically active Ahl Zawayya.

The settlement in cases of homicide which involved two

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1 Feud will be defined here in Middleton and Tait's terms, as "fighting between people as groups...the groups being in such a relationship that although they fight they both accept the obligation to bring the fighting to a close by a peaceful settlement, there being machinery to achieve this conclusion." J. Middleton and D. Tait, Tribes, p. 20.

2 Ahmad al-Shinqit, p. 532.

tribes was conducted through the mediation of a third, zawiyya party and the alternates for settlement were limited to the payment of a diyya, exile, or dismissing charges against the culprits. This last solution appears to have been common in cases of homicide within a jural unit or where the social status of the injured party was such that a full settlement was not necessary. An example of the levy of diyya has been noted above in the career of Shaikh Sidiyya; the entire tribe contributed, including tributaries, and the actual diyya which was paid could vary considerably, depending upon the social status of the families involved and the political implications of the offence.

This social implication of diyya payments is an important aspect of ʿuqūbāt in Moorish applications of the sharīʿa and may be regarded as the major introduction of ʿāda into Moorish legal practice. All penalties were evaluated on a sliding social scale which viewed with great gravity offences against nobles of high rank, and tended to minimize those offences which were commited against individuals of the lower classes.

The most frequent instances of mediation between jural units were cases involving the restitution of livestock which was raided generally by hassani tribes from other, frequently zenagha or zawiyya, units which were not

protected by hassani tribes in alliance with the raiders. In these instances the mediator could invoke the shar*I'a* in the form of Qur'anic prohibitions or hadIth which would support his request for the return of the raided livestock, slave, or other property, but the success of such a request was entirely dependent upon the mediator's personal, religious authority and his relationship with the heads of the jural units with which he was dealing.

In conclusion to this brief survey of the practice of the Maliki madhhab in Mauritania, several tentative suggestions can be made about the nature and application of the shar*I'a* in the mid-19th century. On the basis of the usūl al-fiqh (the Qur'ān, hadIth and ijmā') which were recognised as legitimate tools by the vast majority of Mauritanian fuqahā' one may characterize the Mauritanian legal tradition as conservative, but by way of compensation for a loss in flexibility as a result of not practising qiyās, the Maliki maslaha tended to expand the scope of legal interpretation. The application of the shar*I'a*, if it is viewed in categories of regulations concerning ibādāt, mu'āmalāt and 'uqūbāt, may be very roughly equated with individual, tribal and supra-tribal levels in the Moorish social structure. If one is to accept the Moor's conception of the Ahl Zawayya as the guardians of their adab, then in an examination of the zawiyya employment of the shar*I'a* at

the tribal and supra-tribal levels (e.g., in matters of mu'ālalāt and 'uqūbāt) one finds that the Maliki madhhab was conscientiously applied to a variety of problems and issues which differed little from the concerns of fuqahā' throughout the Islamic world. Certain elements in the Moorish social structure caused a preoccupation on the part of jurists with some areas of family law, and the political condition of being within the ard al-siba severely restricted the application of the sharī'a outside of jural units. 'Āda did not enter into the application of the sharī'a except insofar as respect was maintained for the hierarchical arrangement of social classes in Moorish society. From these tentative conclusions about the nature and application of the sharī'a in mid-19th century Mauritania Shaikh Sidiyya's juridical activities can be evaluated and some conclusions can be drawn about his activities as a faqīh in Southern Mauritania.

SHAIKH SIDIYYA AS A FAQĪH

An evaluation of Shaikh Sidiyya's legal writings must be the subject of another study, but something can be said of the themes upon which those writings concentrated by way of illustrating his activity as a jurist and his society's acceptance of him in that role. The largest source of documentation for Sidiyya's juridical activities comes from

his correspondence, and it is from this source and from his fatāwā that the comments below will be based. In this we will be concerned only with the correspondence in which a legal judgement (hukm) has been delivered; often one finds reference to the Qur'ān, or hadīth in his wasāyyā to various tribes and individuals, but these wasāyyā, by the nature of their purpose or content, are outside the domain of fiqh.

By way of introduction to Shaikh Sidiyya's writings it might be useful to survey the subjects with which he dealt in correspondence, so as to see the distribution of hisahkām in relation to other themes with which he was concerned. In a very general subject matter classification of 420 items attributed to Shaikh Sidiyya in the Cataloque, which have been divided into 33 categories,[1] one finds the following distribution of his writings. The numbers in brackets following the categories listed below indicate the number of items relevant to that subject.

a) mediation [57]

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1 These categories were ad hoc classifications of the Shaikh's correspondence and literary works at the time I catalogued and indexed them. The categories range from "directions to camel caravans" to "answers to questions on tawhīd", but after having catalogued the items, 33 subject headings were found to have reappeared consistently; the 12 which are listed here account for 73% of the 420 items catalogued.

b) wasāyyā in matters of correct behaviour, prayers etc. [35]

c) directives that the bearer of the note be given hospitality, a specified number of animals, etc. [32]

d) women and institution of marriage [31]

e) restitution [31]

f) diyya [27]

g) discipline and directives on correct behaviour, e.g., the relation of a murīd to his shaikh [24]

h) general counsel to follow the sunna, observe the sharī'a, prohibit the haram, etc. [20]

i) 'passports', i.e., authorisations that the bearer of the note is a murīd [17] (often similar to 'c' above)

j) divorce [16]

k) hadiyya [15]

l) requests to expedite debts and pledges [10]

This listing of twelve principal categories into which the Shaikh's correspondence falls is not, of course, of any statistical value, but it does serve the purpose of a random selection to indicate a series of relative priorities in his general correspondence and, in items a, d, e, f, j and l, are indications of the principal legal themes with which he was concerned.

The distribution of these items concerning fiqh according to the tribal groups with whom the correspondence took place indicates a pattern much as one might expect from the political and religious position held by the Shaikh.

The greatest concentration of correspondence relating to matters of family law (e.g., marriage, divorce and inheritance) was received by individuals within the Awlad Ibiri or by the Shaikh's murīdūn. A nearly equal amount of correspondence relating to these matters of mu'āmalāt was received by individuals from other zawiyya tribes which were allied through Sidiyya's murīdūn or by marriage ties with the Awlad Ibiri; but only two such documents in this category were ever sent to hassani recipients. Where the concentration of hassani correspondence occurred was in Shaikh Sidiyya's mediation efforts and demands for the restitution of livestock which had been raided, with some specific items about diyya arrangements. Correspondence about mediation also appears in Sidiyya's zawiyya correspondence where his arbitration efforts also account for the largest category of his exchanges with the Ahl Zawayya. Among both hassani and zawiyya groups, the distribution of correspondence with tribal units appears to be evenly spread across the Trarza and Brakna tribes which have been noted above as being among those which had submitted to the Shaikh's religious influence.

This is not the place to take up individual fatāwā or ahkām written by Shaikh Sidiyya for the purpose of analysis and comparison with the writings of other, Middle Eastern fuqahā' on similar themes, although this would be an extremely

interesting study. Our purpose here is to evaluate Shaikh Sidiyya's activities as a faqīh in terms of his own society in southern Mauritania. The latter has been demonstrated both in his biography, the role he played as a mediator between jural units, and in the cross-section of hassani and zawiyya tribes, noted above, which consulted with him in matters of mu'āmalāt and 'uqūbāt. The quality of the Shaikh's legal education and his proficiency as a jurist may be examined in two ways -- from the library he had to work with and from the legal texts themselves.

Conclusions about a man's scholarship cannot be drawn solely from his library holdings, but the size and contents of Shaikh Sidiyya's library does suggest that he was widely read and that he was firmly within the tradition of nomadic scholarship in Shinqit. We do not know, today, the precise numbers of Sidiyya's books which can be classified as Qur'anic tafsīr, for example, or al-fiqh, but there are a number of his volumes which remain in the hands of his descendants, and from the dated manuscripts or notes in Sidiyya's hand, we know that there are extant at least 15 of his volumes on Qur'anic tafsīr. In jurisprudence and usūl al-fiqh there are today 33 volumes which can be definitely traced to Sidiyya's

library.[1] Both of these numbers are extremely conservative as only the dated works have been counted. The Shaikh's purchases in Morocco, alone, numbered 77 works in al-fiqh, 51 in hadīth, and 27 on the Qur'ān.[2]

A more satisfactory evaluation of Shaikh Sidiyya's background in jurisprudence comes from his legal texts.[3] He was obviously a widely read man, and his style was clear and precise. if not always highly sophisticated, but he was frequently dealing with audiences which did not have a highly sophisticated grasp of legal technicalities. One of the Shaikh's fatāwā which has appeared in a volume of

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1 Parts of this library have been analysed in an article by L. Massignon, "Une bibliothèque saharienne; la bibliothèque du Cheikh Sidia au Sahara", R.M.M., VIII, 1909, pp. 409-418, when Sidiyya al-Kabir's collection was in the hands of his grandson, Sidiyya Baba. The remarks here and below to the Shaikh's library are drawn from a lending record and catalogue which has been drawn up of those sections of Sidiyya's library which are now in the possession of Harouna o/ Cheikh. At the death of Sidiyya Baba the collection was divided between his sons, according to their individual academic interests, but most of the library is in, or within a 50 mile radius of Boutilimit.

2 See Cataloque, ms. no. 448, folios 15-17.

3 In the evaluation of Sidiyya's legal texts which follows I am indebted to Dr. Mujahid al-Sawwaf for his expert appraisal of these Mauritanian texts. Dr. al-Sawwaf, as a faqīh and teacher of the sharī'a at the Sharia College in Mecca, was able to confirm my own conclusions about the level of scholarship which Shaikh Sidiyya's work indicates, i.e., that his work compares favourably with the writings in that science elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Mauritanian poetry and prose,[1] concerning inheritance may be cited as an example of his thorough understanding of such complex subjects as 'ilm al-farā'id (distributive shares in estate),[2] and elsewhere in his writings are indications that he was well versed in the Hanifi madhhab[3] as well as Maliki law[4] and at least one work of Shafi' jurisprudence is among the extant volumes from his library.[5] His knowledge of hadīth and tafsīr was wide, and references to such writers as al-Qurtubi[6] and al-Suyuti appear frequently in Sidiyya's ahkām. Qur'anic references appear throughout his correspondence, and there is no doubt that in addition to having committed the Qur'ān to memory, he also had memorized many hadīth.

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1 Taswīr li-'abqariyya al-ibidān wa thaqāfahum (Indar [St. Louis], n.d.) pp. 1-2.

2 The manuscript version of this published fatwa appears in Cataloque ms. no. 329.

3 see Cataloque ms. no. 20; Abu Hanifa is quoted in reference to his not allowing animal hubus.

4 The standard Maliki texts, such as the abbreviation of Ibn Malik by Khalil, were, of course, employed also; among Sidiyya's Moroccan purchases were three copies of Khalil's Mukhtasar (Cataloque ms. no. 448, folio 20).

5 Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's, al-Wishāh fī fawā'id al-nikāh.

6 Cataloque, ms. no. 25; a tafsīr of al-Qurtubi is mentioned to document al-Qurtubi's disapproval of ruqan (spells, charms).

In brief, Shaikh Sidiyya's competence as a faqīh is revealed both in his impressive command and erudite use of a wide cross-section of legal texts and familiarity with at least two madhāhib, and in his society's acceptance of him in such a role.

SUFISM IN MAURITANIA: THE QADIRIYYA

From the sūfī texts which were in Shaikh Sidiyya's library and which were mentioned in his wasāyyā to murīdūn some tentative conclusions may be drawn about his training in the science of tasawwuf, and from the use of those texts in his ajwiba, or answers to questions put to him by his murīdūn, we have a glimpse of his concept of sufism. From this context the Shaikh's practice of the Qadiriyya can be evaluated, and something can be said about the implications of the Qadiriyya in the practice of Islam in southern Mauritania in the mid-19th century.

It has been noted that the Shaikh probably began his studies in tasawwuf under Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti in the Azaouad. He excelled in these studies and he is said to have become more proficient in that science than was his master. Ahmad al-Shinqiti, writing of Shaikh Sidiyya's study in the Azaouad, relates:

> ...Then Shaikh Sidi al-Mukhtar died and he [Shaikh Sidiyya] remained under his son, Sidi Muhammad [who was] accepted as khalifa because

> he filled the place of his father. And he [Shaikh Sidiyya] accompanied him for twenty years,[1] serving him until he [Sidi Muhammad] was surpassed in the knowledge of the way/path (tarīqa) and the knowledge of secrets.[2]

What texts, in fact, Sidiyya studied while he was with the Kuntas are not known, although the libraries of Sidi al-Mukhtar and Sidi Muhammad were both open to him, and many of his subsequent writings may be assumed to have been influenced by the works which he studied in the Azaouad.

Among the authors who appear in the Shaikh's religious counsel to his murīdūn clearly the most important was the jurist and mystic Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (450-505/1058-1111) whose Revival of the Religious Sciences (Kitāb ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn) and Bidāyat al-hidāya are both quoted extensively in Sidiyya's literary works.[3] The Kitāb ihyā' was one of al-Ghazali's major works and the central theme throughout its four volumes, the sharī'a as a means of man's final salvation, is one which is reflected in Sidiyya's concept

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1 This is an error; the time spent under Sidi Muhammad was actually 15 years.

2 Ahmad al-Shinqiti, p. 240.

3 Each literary work in which Sidiyya made reference to these and subsequent texts will not be cited in the notes below, but rather examples from the Shaikh's writings in which these authors appear will be noted.
The Kitāb al-ihyā' is quoted in Catalogue ms. no. 49; the Bidāyat al-hidāya is mentioned in Ibid., ms. no. 20; Ibid., ms. no. 2, a general wasiyya, contains unspecified references to al-Ghazali.

of tasawwuf generally.[1] Among Shaikh Sidiyya's purchases of books on sufism in Morocco are two works by Ibn al-'Arabi (560-638/1165-1240), one of which was his al-Futūhat al-makkiyya, his principal work in which a complete system of mystical knowledge is set out in 560 chapters.[2] Also among the Moroccan purchases is a commentary on al-Sanusi's (d. 895/1490) al-'Aqīdat al-kubra,[3] and we know that another gloss of al-Sanusi, by Ahmad Baba al-Tinbukti, was in the Shaikh's library (the copy of which is dated 1272/1855-6).[4] One of the works on tasawwuf written by al-Suyuti (849-911/1445-1505), his Kitāb al-durar al-hisān fī 'l-ba'th wa na'īm al-jinān, was most

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1 On al-Ghazālī and the Kitāb ihyā', see W. Montgomery Watt, The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali (London, 1953) and Muslim Intellectual, A Study of al-Ghazali (Edinburgh, 1963) and the useful bibliography in this latter work; also see his article on al-Ghazali in E.I. (2).

2 Muhyi al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī; editions of this work were published in Buluq, 1274/1857-8, and Cairo, 1329/1911.

This and subsequent references to Sidiyya's Moroccan purchases come from Catalogue, ms. no. 448, folio 20.

3 On Muhammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī, the Tlemcen sūfī, see Mohammed Ben Cheneb in E.I. (1), "al-Sanusi", and G.A.L., II, p. 250.

4 On Ahmad Bābā al-Tinbuktī and his works see J.O. Hunwick, "A new source for the biography of Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbukī (1556-1627)", B.S.O.A.S., XXVII, 1964, pp. 568-573; the work referred to here is possibly the item cited by Hunwick on page 587, item 37, and page 580, note 119, which is an abridgement of al-Mawāhib al-quddūsiyya fī 'l-manāqib al-Sanūsiyya (G.A.L., II, p. 250).

probably also in Sidiyya's library.[1] Other references in the Shaikh's works indicate his familiarity with the arguments of such venerated or controversial sūfī figures and philosophers as Hassan al-Basri[2] and Ibn Rushd (Averroes),[3] although his knowledge of these figures may have come through other sources, as their works or commentaries on them cannot be traced from Sidiyya's Moroccan purchases or among the extant manuscripts in the Ahl Shaikh Sidiyya libraries which were clearly in the Shaikh's possession. It should be added that among his Moroccan purchases and locally produced copies of works on tasawwuf there are many other titles, not all of which are as widely known in the Islamic world as the above, but which have a wide circulation in the southern Sahara and West Africa. Among these were works by al-Maghili, such as his Misbāh al-arwāh fī usūl al-falāh,[4] many works by

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1 see C. Brockelmann, "al-Suyuti", E.I. (1), and G.A.L., II, p.145.

2 Catalogue, ms. no. 20, folio 5.

3 Ibid., folio 2; this particular reference occurs, not in the context of sufi arguments, but rather in a matter of jurisprudence in which Shaikh Sidiyya is discussing the question of livestock hubus. However, the works of Ibn Rushd appear to have been known by the Shaikh.

4 Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim al-Maghili (see page 114, note 1, above. This work is cited in Bivar and Hiskett, p. 108, item 8.

Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti[1] and Sidi Muhammad b. Sidi al-Mukhtar,[2] a commentary on al-Shadhili by Ahmad b. Muhammad Zaruq,[3] and a work by Muhammad al-Yadali al-Daimani.[4] In all, the Shaikh brought back 20 volumes from Morocco relating to tasawwuf and tibb (medicine),[5] and among the 45 works on this science which are currently in the hands of Sidiyya's descendants, well over half of them can be dated to the period of the Shaikh's lifetime.

Shaikh Sidiyya's knowledge and sophisticated use of these texts as well as his concept of sufism is perhaps best illustrated in an answer and recommendation he wrote to Ahmad o/ Muhammadhan o/ al-Nahar in which he spoke about the difference in approach to ma'rifa (knowledge,

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1 These include his Fath al-wadd wa sharh al-muqsūr wa al-mamdūd and a work entitled Kitāb al-minnat fī i'tiqād ahl al-sunna (see Stewart, "Manuscript material", p. 16, item 16 and p. 18, item 33).

2 Among these works are his Risālat al-murīd (perhaps item 11, p. 22 in Stewart, "Manuscript Material") and Irshād al-sālik ilā aqwam al-masālik.

3 Sharh hizb al-bhar al-Shādhilī.

4 Farā'id al-fawā'id and Sharh khātimat al-tasawwuf.

5 Tasawwuf and tibb are frequently considered under the same rubric in the categorization of sciences by Moorish 'ulamā', and the practice of medicine was highly developed in Shinqit where several medical texts by Mauritanian authors have wide circulation. The connexion between these two sciences is explained in terms of the medicine for the body and medicine of the soul being two facets of the same concept.

gnosis) between scholar-jurists and sūfīs.[1] The issue of 'arīf among the scholar-jurists is well described elsewhere,[2] and it will suffice here to note Shaikh Sidiyya's use of al-Ghazali and al-Sanusi to support his Ghazalian view towards tawhīd al-'ārifīn. Sidiyya distinguished between the tawhīd of the 'ulamā' and the tawhīd of the 'ārifīn and he warned against the vanity of scholars whose chief interest was in their own status rather than true knowledge;[3] "knowledge, knower and known are One."[4] This attack on the 'ulamā' who busy themselves with minute legal points at the expense of sūfī haqīqat was not new with al-Ghazali, but it was al-Ghazali's arguments from the Kitāb ihyā' which supported Shaikh Sidiyya's re-statement of this classic sūfī critique of the jurist-scholars. Indeed, were a characterization of Shaikh Sidiyya's concept of tasawwuf possible it would probably be found to owe a great debt to al-Ghazali and this notion of the unity of knowledge. Sufism was the Islamic science in which the unity of all other sciences was forged, and through this insight into the nature of knowledge God's Will could best be understood

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1 Catalogue, ms. no. 490.

2 see Farid Jabre, La Notion de la ma'rifa chez Ghazali (Beruit, 1958) for a detailed discussion; a less technical explanation is available in W. Montgomery Watt, Muslim Intellectual, pp. 108-116.

3 Catalogue, ms. no. 490, folio 4.

4 R.A. Nicholson, The Mystics of Islam (London, 1914), p. 29.

and interpreted.[1]

What, then, is the relevance of this to the Qadiriyya in the Shaikh's thought and practice? Clearly a distinction must be made, at least for analytical purposes, between tasawwuf as an Islamic science and tasawwuf as it is practised in the sūfī turuq. The essential elements of a sūfī tarīqa may be summarized as the wird (litany), ijāza or silsila (certificate or chain of authority which indicates one's teacher in the wird, his teacher's teacher, etc. back to the founder of the tarīqa), dikhr (literally "remembrance" or prayer at which time the wird is recited), and wasiyya (recommendation or principles of the tarīqa). All of these are patterned after the teachings of the founder or lead to the founder of the tarīqa, and all of these elements were present in the practice of the Qadiriyya by Shaikh Sidiyya. His followers were initiated into the al-Mukhtariyya, al-Muhammadiyya and the Qadiriyya, i.e., the body of men who were guided in their affairs by the teachings and practice of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani.

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1 The 'stages and states' of sufism, described as the "ascetic and ethical discipline of the sūfī" and the "psychological chain" of sufism by R.A. Nicholson (Mystics, pp. 28-29) do not appear to have played an important role in Shaikh Sidiyya's conception and practice of tasawwuf. Although he may have been familiar with literature which set out these stages and states, this type of sūfī theory does not appear, to my knowledge, in his writings.

Baraka was attributed to the shaikhs, and the wird, ijāza and dhikr of the Qadiriyya were all essential elements of Sidiyya's Qadiri practice. According to Depont and Coppolani, the Kunta practice of the Qadiriyya differed little from the practice in Baghdad; "...toutes ces corporations, distintes au point de vue matériel, n'ont rien abandonné de l'enseignement de la confrérie-mère [à Baghdad]."[1] Depont and Coppolani go on to say that the dikhr in Tombouctou was identical to that which was delivered in 1897 at Baghdad, although the dikhr al-kabīr or the long prayers, were not imposed upon the people of the desert.

> "...leur longueur s'accommoderait mal avec l'esprit peu développé de ces races encore dans l'enfance; mais, dans leurs zaouïa, ils seraient en honneur.[2]

Other evidence also suggests that Shaikh Sidiyya, in the Kunta tradition, did not simplify the practice of the Qadiriyya in as much as he was also familiar with the writings of 'Abd al-Qadir. In his library was 'Ali b. Yusuf al-Shatanufi's Bahjat al-asrār, subtitled Kitāb futūh al-ghaibā ta'līf 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlanī (The Book

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1 Depont and Coppolani, p. 317.

2 Ibid.

of the Opening of the Secret in the literary work of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani),[1] one of the basic works on 'Abd al-Qadir's tasawwuf. Also, the silsila in the Qadiriyya which the Shaikh held corresponds closely, in its more distant authorities, to the patterns of Qadiri silāsil described by Depont and Coppolani which are common throughout the Islamic world.[2] The organisation of the Qadiriyya under Shaikh Sidiyya's influence, likewise, conforms to the classic sūfī hierarchy of shaikhs, khalifas, muqaddims, murīdūn and talāmīdh, although a few terms which appear in other sūfī movements, such as nāib (pl. nuāb) or intermediary by which muqaddims are sometimes known and faqir (pl. fuqra) or ikhwān by which murīdūn are sometimes addressed, were not employed in Mauritania in this sense.[3] Thus all of the 'equipment' of a tarīqa, and a thorough knowledge of the Qadiriyya was present in Shaikh Sidiyya's practice.

The science of sufism which Shaikh Sidiyya and his

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1 Depont and Coppolani, p. 293; for 'Ali b. Yūsuf al-Shatanūfī (647-713/1249-1314), see G.A.L. Suppl., II, p. 147.

2 Depont and Coppolani (p. 92) list two standard patterns for the transmission of sūfī silāsil between Allah and Abu al-Qasim al-Junaidi; the Kuntā silsila (see Appendix III) omits only two of the figures listed in one of the two patterns, viz., Halil al-Hajami and Daud b. Nasr al-Tai'.

3 It has been noted above that 'ikhwān' was frequently a form of address in Sidiyya's correspondence, but not with the connotation of 'brothers in the Qadiriyya'; also the dual meaning of the term talāmīdh has been discussed in the context of the socio-economic groupings associated with Shaikh Sidiyya.

Kunta masters studied was clearly within the classic, Ghazalian tradition of a search for the truth which might make all other knowledge whole, by integrating the other Islamic sciences into it; this was the tawhīd al-'ārifīn. For this the writings of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani served as a convenient framework, indeed the only such framework which was widely known in the southern Sahara and West Africa at the time. Thus it was the Qadiriyya, i.e., the writings and life of 'Abd al-Qadir, which Shaikh Sidiyya conceived of himself as following in his sūfī practice. This took the form of practising the dikhr as it was in Baghdad and receiving the personal satisfaction of involvement in one of the oldest sūfī traditions in the Islamic world. However, all Believers were not capable of the rigours which this pursuit for the truth demanded; before the science of tasawwuf could be taken up lengthy preliminaries were involved which required a thorough knowledge of the rules and regulations for a rightly guided life as set out in the sharī'a. The idea of a tarīqa as an institutionalized path which, if followed, could by itself lead to the truth for which Sidiyya searched, appears to have contradicted the very rudiments of sufism as studied and practised by the Kuntas and Sidiyya. The Shaikh's loyalty was not to a particular body of fellow Qadiris or to an institution of the Qadiriyya so much as it was to his teachers and their

combined loyalties were to 'Abd al-Qadir, the man.

This then brings us to the question of the Shaikh's role among his own murīdūn. We have noted above the form of the ijāzāt which he issued, and it has been mentioned that he demanded absolute loyalty from his murīdūn. These disciples received certificates in the al-Mukhtariyya, al-Muhammadiyya and al-Qadiriyya, but they were not, all of them, as well versed in the Islamic sciences as was their shaikh. Their duty therefore was to obey him and follow his guidance as one who was erudite and capable of demonstrating to them the true significance of tawhīd al-'ārifīn. On this Shaikh Sidiyya was quite specific. His wasāyyā and ajwiba repeat with great frequency the importance of obeying the scholars and learned men.[1] In correspondence to his murīdūn he was fond of the theme, quoted from Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, that the service of a murīd to his shaikh is equal to worship for over 100 years.[2] The murīdūn were also enjoined to recite the litany (al-wird) out of loyalty to their shaikh.[3] Sidiyya was the spiritual mediator in affairs concerning his murīdūn, just as he mediated in temporal affairs in Moorish society.

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1 see Catalogue, ms. no. 20 folio 5.

2 Ibid., ms. no. 25, folio 18.

3 Ibid., ms. no. 49, folio 8.

This point of all loyalty being channelled back to the Shaikh himself is illustrated in the relatively unimportant position of mugaddims. Mugaddims were appointed by Shaikh Sidiyya, and certain silāsil are recounted today as having originated with Sidiyya, but come via such-and-such a mugaddim. It was still the Shaikh's wird which had been received and his guidance which would be sought; as a spiritual middleman the mugaddim counted for little. We have little information about relationships between murīdūn, their sense of brotherhood, marriage ties, etc., but no communal dikhr was practised, and it would seem a safe assumption in the absence of other institutional equipment that while a murīd's loyalty to his shaikh might, and often did supersede his tribal loyalties, his obligations to fellow murīdūn, on the principle of their being murīdūn alone, would not.

We have noted the material advantages and security which were generally afforded to Shaikh Sidiyya's followers, but something more ought to be said about the spiritual attraction which Shaikh Sidiyya or the Qadiriyya held for murīdūn. This is a theme which an historian cannot evaluate, but some suggestions can be put forward. Presumably Sidiyya's followers came to him for a wide variety of reasons, spiritual as well as material (although to separate these two motives might be artificial). Whether the Qadiriyya as such had any

attraction may be questioned; it most probably held a certain prestige, but of far greater relevance was the attraction of the Kunta-Sidiyya tradition of studies in tasawwuf. For the initiated the Qadiriyya may well have come to represent their contact with the wider, Islamic world — Shaikh Sidiyya's Qadiri murīdūn in The Gambia and Casamance live in several villages named 'Bakadaji', a direct transfer into Mandingo of 'Baghdad',[1] Certainly in this century the institutional aspects of the Qadiriyya tarīqa are recognised, and the term 'tarīqa' itself is employed, which suggests that the Qadiriyya has become a means of identification and, the corollary to this, it has become an attraction to talāmīdh in its own right.

Reference has been made in Sidiyya's biography to individuals or groups 'submitting' to him, and a distinction ought to be made here between his murīdūn and those who acknowledged his spiritual supremacy. Murīdūn were linked to the Shaikh by ties of the Qadiriyya and the relationship between Sidiyya and his murīdūn was as much a product of their long studies and service under him as their acknowledgement of his direction over their lives; this relationship

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1 Reference is made to the village of Bakadaji in The Gambia, founded by descendants of Shaikh Sidiyya's murīdūn; the present chief of the settlement there is al-Hajji Qutubu Silla. Other villages by the same name are found in The Gambia and Casamance.

has been described as consisting of close, cognatic-type ties. However, many individuals and groups submitted to Sidiyya and this was not always synonymous with joining the Qadiriyya; indeed, matters of tasawwuf rarely directly entered into such relationships which might be best described in terms of political allegiance. This is not to deny the spiritual or even physical security which such a submission might have brought, or the embarrassment of the Shaikh's reprimand, were it necessary, to such a submitted group for some transgression. But submission, alone, to Shaikh Sidiyya's religious influence was not synonymous with joining the Qadiriyya.

In summary, the high level of Shaikh Sidiyya's studies in tasawwuf has been stressed here because it also suggests an approach to understanding his conception of sufism; this was a science which complemented and unified all other Islamic sciences. In practice a thorough understanding of the sūfī truth and tawḥīd al-ʿārifīn was open to few, but by emulating the mystic, ʿAbd al-Qadir, largely through service to his shaikh, a murīd under Shaikh Sidiyya could participate in the search for truth and knowledge. The form which this took did not involve the brotherhood of fellow murīdūn in an easily identifiable or institutional Qadiriyya ṭarīqa so much as it meant service to one's shaikh.

SHAIKH SIDIYYA, THE MALIKI MADHHAB, TASAWWUF AND THE QADIRYYA

From this account it would seem clear that within the writings and thought of Shaikh Sidiyya there was no contradiction between fiqh and tasawwuf and that, indeed, these two Islamic sciences complemented one another. This, it appears, was in the 19th century, and to a lesser extent is today, an assumption which is reflected in the work of many other Mauritanian scholars. Jurisprudence provides the texts of legal scholarship, and mystic truth and knowledge provide the interpretation; the sūfī's insight into the Divine Purpose complements the faqīh's knowledge of legal technicalities. The study of one is not complete without the study of the other.

In preface to these discussions of Shaikh Sidiyya's activities as a faqīh and a sūfī, reference was made to the social context in which the sharī'a was practised in Mauritania. One explanation of Shaikh Sidiyya's rise to influence, and the influence of his tribe with him, would seem to be found in his combination of sūfī and faqīh roles in a society where both were essential preconditions for the acquisition of temporal authority.

This can be examined on two planes, either in terms of the complementarity of tasawwuf and fiqh in Mauritanian practice of both, or in terms of the social structure of the society. The Maliki madhhab in Moorish practice was

dependent in large part upon the use of al-maslaha al-mursala, in the absence of qiyās among the recognised usūl al-fiqh. The effectiveness of this, like the effectiveness of applying the sharī'a generally in matters external to, or between jural units, depended upon the personality and authority of the faqīh or mediator. The authority of a faqīh in such matters was judged by the party or parties involved, but where the faqīh's own opinion might enter into his judgement, e.g., in cases in which al-maslaha was employed, the disputants naturally looked to the best qualified jurist. This is where tasawwuf becomes important in the practice of the sharī'a in Mauritania. Shaikh Sidiyya was regarded as a sufī with an insight into the nature of knowledge; from such a position he was superbly qualified as a faqīh in the ard al-siba where the welfare of the community (al-maslaha) was an important consideration in the application of the sharī'a. Only an individual with an insight into the essential nature of knowledge and truth, such as Shaikh Sidiyya, could be expected to interpret what was necessary for the public welfare, when necessary, in a way which would be compatible with the sharī'a. In this sense the Shaikh's scholarship in the sharī'a was complemented, indeed completed, by his studies in tasawwuf just as his studies in sufism, as he conceived that science, were incomplete without a thorough understanding of God's law.

In terms of the Moorish segmentary society we have seen that religious authorities served to check the natural tendencies toward fission in the society by their mediation and arbitration efforts. The authority of a mediator was based upon his position as a religious figure, and the effectiveness of his mediation was a product of his society's (or the disputants') respect for the supernatural powers which he might call upon to enforce his arbitration. Here too, Shaikh Sidiyya's role as a sūfī was of utmost importance. As a mystic with an understanding of the ways of the Divine, and as a mediator between God and man, Shaikh Sidiyya was attributed with supernatural powers by large sections of Moorish society, and these powers were evident in his karāmāt. Until the appearance of Shaikh Ma' al-Anin one generation later, no other Mauritanian mediator commanded such respect as did Sidiyya.

Whether one approaches the Shaikh's dual role as a mediator and faqīh in terms of the application of the sharī'a in Mauritania, or in terms of the Moorish social structure, his position was greatly enhanced by his study of tasawwuf. Indeed, it was this unique combination of mystical and legal competence which explains in large part how he came to have the religious, economic and political position which he held in southern Mauritania. The Qadiriyya was an integral part of Sidiyya's own practice of sufism and

his <u>murīdūn</u> were linked to him through it; as such it was an important element in the Shaikh's administrative machinery, revenue sources, and indirectly in his effectiveness as a mediator. Sidiyya's role as a <u>sūfī</u>, and its implications for his legal and political position, and his activities as a Qadiri shaikh with their ramifications in his personal following and economic organisation, tended to be functionally separate. But the Shaikh's study of <u>tasawwuf</u>, alone, would not have resulted in the economic growth and enlargement of the Awlad Ibiri, nor could one conceive of the Qadiriyya, alone, accounting for his effectiveness as a <u>faqīh</u> and mediator. Of course these two elements -- the theory and the practice of sufism -- cannot be divided, just as Shaikh Sidiyya's legal competence, in the context of the Moorish segmentary society, cannot be separated from his studies in <u>tasawwuf</u>.

EPILOGUE

I

This study set out to examine, broadly, the role of the Qadiriyya in West African Islam in the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries, a period during which the growth of Muslim communities throughout West Africa was dramatic and a time in which the Qadiriyya appears to have played an important role in the process of islamization. We have briefly reviewed the militant and various forms of quietist movements with which the Qadiriyya was associated, and as a case study we have examined the career of a Mauritanian 'quietist', Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir, who was a disciple and khalifa of the principal Qadiri shaikhs in West Africa in the 18th and early 19th centuries from the Kunta confederation . From the outline which is available of the careers and writings of the Kunta shaikhs it would appear that Shaikh Sidiyya's practice of the Qadiriyya and, indeed, much of his religious, economic and political organisation were based on the Kunta model. We have seen elements of Sidiyya's economic and political influence and this has been described in terms of the growth of the Shaikh's tribe. His own authority and influence in Mauritania must, in the final analysis, be explained in terms of his own personality and studies. Shaikh Sidiyya had a highly

developed sense of organisation and a well disciplined mind which are demonstrated in his hierarchy of command and his distribution of authority among his followers, and are illustrated in his writings such as his categorization of book purchases in Morocco. He was also a very well educated man and he was fully capable of applying his theoretical knowledge from the Islamic sciences to the affairs of southern Mauritania. As the temporal leader of the Awlad Ibiri, unlike the Kuntas, he was able to combine the spiritual and temporal direction of his tribe in his own hands, and from this position came his authority in southern Mauritania. Shaikh Sidiyya's authority as a supra-tribal figure is particularly apparent in his effectiveness as a jurisconsult and in his fame as a mystic. These are qualities which can only be evaluated in terms of the Mauritanian social structure and particularly the values which the Moors, themselves, placed upon the Shaikh's activities as a faqīh and a sūfī. These sciences, fiqh and tasawwuf, have been shown to be not only compatible in southern Mauritanian practice, but complementary in Shaikh Sidiyya's understanding and application of his studies. It was the combination of his legal counsel and mystical insight which made him such an outstanding religious figure in Moorish society. That these factors were crucial in the Shaikh's rise to influence may be demonstrated both in his

writings and in the notions the Moors held about jurist-mystics, and the reasons for both of these are reflected in the structural organisation of Moorish society.

The Qadiriyya emerges from all of this as a somewhat peripheral entity, important for what it was associated with in the Kunta tradition of scholarship and as a link between the sūfī-fuqahā' and their disciples, but lacking in institutional characteristics or an esprit de corps which might have served as a rallying point for initiates or might have promoted its popularity. The reason for this may be found in the intensive study of sufism and the Ghazalian concept of tasawwuf which was held by Shaikh Sidiyya and with which the Qadiriyya came to be associated. Certainly the Qadiriyya under Shaikh Sidiyya did not conform to Gibb's characterization of the sūfī turuq as 'popular Islam'. The Qadiriyya represented the practice of a highly specialised science of tasawwuf and as such it came to be associated with scholars representing the religious establishment. This was true at least in the Kunta tradition which was represented by Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir.

With this said by way of qualification it is instructive to note that among Shaikh Sidiyya's contemporaries in southern Mauritania who were also sūfīs or fuqahā' or both but who were not associated with a tarīqa, none had the status or held the influence which was enjoyed by the Shaikh.

To what extent one can attribute Sidiyya's unique position to his being the only Shaikh in the Qadiriyya in the area is a moot point; other shaikhs of other turuq (the Nasariyya and the Tijaniyya) were among his contemporaries, and from this one can conclude that Sidiyya's position was not solely the product of a tarīqa affiliation and his organisation of murīdūn. However, the core of disciples which his Qadiri murīdūn represented were certainly a very important factor in his rise to influence, in addition to his education, personality and economic and political organisation.

II

This case study has been concluded in 1869 with the death of Shaikh Sidiyya's son, Sidi Muhammad, but a few words ought to be said in conclusion to our story so as to place it in the context of 19th and 20th century West African history. Shaikh Sidiyya's religious, economic and political structures which we have described above did not dissolve upon the deaths of himself and his son, though they were seriously challenged. Sidi Muhammad had five children, two of whom, a boy and a girl, died in infancy. Of the remaining three, two sons and one daughter, the two sons continued in the tradition of their father and grandfather as scholars and holy men, but it was particularly the elder son, Shaikh Sidiyya, called 'Baba' (d. 1926), with whom the fame and baraka of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir came to be

associated. Shaikh Sidiyya Baba left behind him 25 sons and daughters and it is widely held that since the passing of Baba there has not appeared a comparable leader among the Ahl Shaikh Sidiyya. Sidiyya Baba's chief fame rested on his active cooperation with Xavier Coppolani's programme of the 'pacification' of Mauritania, and as a result Mauri-tanian history in the early 20th century is polarized between the camps of the 'collaborators' led by Sidiyya Baba in the South and the 'resisters' led by Shaikh Ma' al-Anin in the North.

Within the Awlad Ibiri, the N'tishait retained its dominant position and within the N'tishait the Ahl Shaikh Sidiyya remained the dominant lineage until recent times when the descendants of Muhammad al-Ghrali have become prominant in national, Mauritanian affairs on a wider and more effective scale than the descendants of Shaikh Sidiyya. However, there have been numerous marriages between the offspring of Sidiyya Baba and the Ahl Muhammad al-Ghrali and the present position of either lineage can in part be attributed to the other. The prominance of the Ahl Muhammad al-Ghrali in national affairs has emerged during the pre-independance years in Mauritania when Mukhtar o/ Ahmad Mahmud, called "Daddah", became involved in Mauritanian politics. Today, as President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Mokhtar o/ Daddah has regularly drawn from his

own lineage and fraction for ministers, ambassadors and highly placed functionaries. This is not to imply that the government of Mauritania today is in the hands of the N'tishait and the Awlad Ibiri, although I have heard some Mauritanian nationals in moments of frustration allege this, but numerous descendants of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir are firmly implanted in the government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. The immediate reason for this may be traced to Sidiyya Baba's encouragement to the first French madarsa in Mauritania being located in Boutilimit, and to the tradition of legal studies (which President Mokhtar o/ Daddah took up in Bordeaux) and position of affluence and political awareness which has long been associated with the N'tishait and Awlad Ibiri. But the foundation for this was carefully laid by Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir in the first half of the 19th century and the legacy of Sidiyya has been adroitly maintained by his descendants who have emerged 100 years after his death, in a somewhat more secular role, as the dominant lineage in a government which still reflects to a remarkable degree the authority structures in the segmentary Moorish society of the mid-19th century.

Similarly, the memory of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir has remained alive in the surrounding regions, largely through the activities of Shaikh Sidiyya Baba and more particularly his sons who have propagated the Qadiriyya in Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal and The Gambia. My

own inquiries into the influence of the Ahl Shaikh Sidiyya in this present century in Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea, which will be the subject of another study, were based on an itemized listing of well over 100 Boutilimit talibé which Moussa o/ Cheikh Sidia Baba drew up for me. Mousa spends about nine months out of every year touring on ziyāra among the Boutilimit murīdūn in Senegal, Gambia, Casamance, Guinea and occasionally Guinée-Bissau. Counted among these murīdūn are the Prime Minister of The Gambia and the father of the Senegalese Minister of Education. Elsewhere in the area are several zawayya which recognise the spiritual direction of Boutilimit such as those at Bakadaji and Suta Koba in The Gambia and Marakissé and Marassasseum in the Casamance which are among the most highly developed educational centres in these areas. In brief, the traditions of education and scholarship which Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir was associated with in the mid-19th century have found their expression today, consciously or unconsciously, in the Boutilimit murīdūn and their descendants in surrounding countries.

III

The objects of a case study ought to be two: an examination in depth of a particular example for its own sake, and the projection of the findings from that example

onto a broader spectrum of related issues. For the latter of these objects we must move from conclusions to hypotheses which have been raised from the themes touched by this study concerning southern Mauritanian history and the Qadiriyya in West Africa generally.

Evans-Pritchard has written that the authority of a shaikh among the Bedouin of Cyrenaica can only "be defined in terms of a complicated network of kinship ties and structural relations."[1] This might be carried a step further: to understand and evaluate the historical significance of a particular event in a nomadic, segmentary society requires a grasp of the kinship ties and structural relations of all the parties involved in that event. We have tried to do this in the very limited context of Shaikh Sidiyya's career and relations, but from this account arise numerous questions particularly about the nature of authority structures in Moorish segmentary society and the historical significance of the alterations in Moorish authority structures which appear to have been taking place during the period which has been discussed above. As a result of an increasingly active French presence on the Senegal River and French subsidies to the amirs in southern Mauritania, it would appear that the amirate in southern Mauritania emerged as a viable

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1 E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Sanusi, p. 59.

political institution in the last quarter of the 19th century, and perhaps this can be dated as early as the 1860's. If this may be proved to be the case then Shaikh Sidiyya's historical role was that of an interregnum authority in southern Mauritania, at a turning point when the leadership of dominant hassani lineages was being institutionalized in an amirate system. The emergence of the hassani amirs at that particular point in time would also explain in large part the confusion which has arisen over the nature of the Moorish social organisation; it is a theme which clearly needs further investigation by social anthropologists and historians in Mauritania.

Another theme which this study has touched upon is the historical significance of Shaikh Sidiyya's innovations in the Moorish social structure which contributed to his influence and organisation. The contemporary ramifications of what he created in the Awlad Ibiri have been mentioned above as a conclusion to our story, but within the social structure of Shinqit and in the 19th century one finds suggestions that elements of the Shaikh's organisation may have been duplicated by other figures. One example of this is in his organisation of talāmīdh which was repeated by Shaikh Ma' al-Anin and was so widespread among zawiyya tribes in Mauritania that some French writers have assumed that the talāmīdh as a social category among zawayya was to be

equated with the tributary status of zenagha among hassani tribes. Shaikh Sidiyya's role as king-maker in his own day has been noted above, and if Sidiyya's interregnum between types of hassani political authority may be a valid interpretation, then one might ask if the Shaikh, consciously, was engaged in the establishment of a governmental system in southern Mauritania.

The influence of the French in Mauritanian history in the mid-19th century is also a theme which has been raised and it is one which has wide relevance beyond Mauritanian history. Because of the wealth of documentation which is available in the Arabic manuscripts in Mauritania the answers to questions about the economic and political effect of the French presence in the pre-colonial period are more likely to be found there than in other, pre-literate societies which were also in commercial contact with the European powers. Aside from a few military expeditions and regular commercial relations, the Moors had relatively little contact with the French. This case study has been written, as much as possible, from the 'inside' of Moorish society and the French have been discussed only where they clearly entered into the calculations or historical events of the Moors themselves. This presentation is, I think, a valid reflection of the Moorish view of the French in the 19th century; even in the 20th century the cultural and political influence of the

French colonizers in Mauritania was relatively slight by comparison to other former French colonies in West and North Africa. Yet the French presence on the Senegal River in the mid-19th century obviously did contribute to change in the economic, social and political structures among the Moors. This change was occasionally by design but more often was effected out of ignorance or indifference on the part of the French administration towards the Moors. Examples of this French influence which need further investigation include the quinée-cloth standard economy, the emergence of the amirates (which the French assumed were always present), the effectiveness of zawiyya figures (whom the French never really knew about) as a result of the income and thus patronage powers which were given to them from their participation in the gum trade, and the effect to which the French participation in traditional rivalries might have actually altered their outcome. The implications from this case study are that direct French participation in southern Mauritanian politics had relatively little effect upon traditional hassani rivalries or their resolutions, which is in contradiction to most archival-based studies of similar societies in the mid-19th century. To what extent this may be attributed to the geographical position of the Moors, in touch with alternate North African markets as well as the French Senegalese River trade, and within a tradition of literacy and a cultural tradition which provided an alternate to la civilisation française, are problems which must be explored.

In terms of the process of islamization, generally, in West Africa and the role of the Qadiriyya in this, one may draw several working hypotheses from this case study. The Qadiriyya, per se, does not appear to have played a particularly instrumental role in Shaikh Sidiyya's rise to influence, and in the form in which the Shaikh practised it the Qadiriyya would seem to have had little direct relation to the process of islamization in West Africa, except insofar as the Qadiriyya meant or was associated with the teachings of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti and his disciples. What would seem to have been of greater import was the study of tasawwuf by the Kuntas and by Sidiyya within the Moorish social structure, viz., the combination of tasawwuf and fiqh as complementary Islamic sciences in a segmentary society where only from such a combination of religious and juridical activities might emerge a position of authority which was above the social divisions and segmentary nature of authority in the society. That this position of temporal and spiritual authority which was held by the Kuntas and by Sidiyya came to be associated with the Qadiriyya in West Africa is explicable, as it was the Qadiriyya which linked them to other sūfī-fuqahā' who put into practice similar concepts in widely varying social conditions. This explains in part how it was that the Qadiriyya under the Kunta influence became associated with movements which sought to apply the sharī'a

and to reform Islam; the Maliki madhhab and the Qadiriyya were propagated as one set of complementary ideas. The Kunta-Sidiyya tradition in the Maliki madhhab and the Qadiriyya also account for the significance which some standard legal texts appear to have in West African Islam, such as the work of al-Suyuti and al-Maghili. Both these figures are alleged to have been instrumental in the introduction of the Qadiriyya in West Africa and both are among the authors who reappear throughout the libraries of Qadiri-fuqahā' in West Africa.

The Qadiriyya was not, in the early and mid-19th century, an expression of 'popular Islam' and it does not appear to have played an active role in the expansion of Islam among those peoples on the fringes of the jihāds or ziwayya settlements. This appears to have come later. When the Tijaniyya became wide-spread after the collapse of al-Hajj 'Umar's state, and when the colonial administrations, particularly the French, came to place considerable importance in the West African turuq as potentially subversive elements to their administration, the Qadiriyya did begin to take on a certain institutional character and the Qadiriyya, like the Tijaniyya and in a popular form, did become associated with the process of islamization. The West African sūfī turuq in last years of the 19th century is the subject for another study and no attempt has been made to outline it here. What

would seem to be clear, however, is the early 19th century association among Qadiris of their particular tarīqa and the application of the sharī'a, and with it, the very limited relevance of the Qadiriyya to the concept of a "popular church" in Islam.

Finally, a general theme which has recurred throughout this study and one which is of interest to Middle Eastern historiography generally is the presence of literacy and a tradition of scholarship in Shinqit. There can be little question that the scholarship of Shinqit is firmly within the tradition of the study of Islamic sciences elsewhere in the Islamic world, albeit perhaps in a slightly archaic form if one is to compare 19th century Islamic scholarship in Mauritania to its counterpart in Middle Eastern urban centres where aspects of the sharī'a, for example, were experiencing challenges from a new, western set of legal concepts and direct European economic and political intervention. What is important, however, is the fervour with which the sharī'a was studied and applied in this nomadic society, the precedent for which may be found in Ibn Yasin and the Almoravid reformers who also came out of the area which is known as Shinqit, to purify Maghribi Islam. The background to this tradition of scholarship is obviously deeply rooted, and the reasons for it are far from clear. However, the implications of literacy are many in the Moorish segmentary social structure, in the

practice of Islam on the fringe of the Islamic world, and in the cultural tradition of the Moors which is considerably deeper than in other islamized but pre-literate societies in West Africa. The traditions of literacy and the historical sense of the Moors have had a great impact on the practice of Islam in the bilād al-sūdān, and our examination here of one aspect of that impact -- the Qadiriyya -- has hopefully brought to light both the complexities of a study of the islamizing process and the necessity for further work on this theme.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

TRANSLITERATIONS

The following transliteration of Mauritanian place-names, tribal names and personal names which appear most frequently in the text is based on H. T. Norris's system of transliterating Hassaniyya in Folk Literature, pp. xiii-xiv, which he describes as a broad phonological one, based on the Moor's own "concepts of a phonemic structure rather than on phonemic theory evolved for North African dialect studies" (p. xiii). My own rendering of these names into what I have thought to be an easily pronounceable English version, reasonably close to the Moors' own pronunciation, is listed in the left-hand column. Where these differ from the form in which they appear in the French literature, such as P. Marty's studies, the French version has been entered in brackets along side or beneath. The transliteration of names follows in the middle column; linguists will be able to check this system, which is not so detailed as that which is employed by D. Cohen, against the written version of these names in the right-hand column.

These transliterations have been divided into place and tribal names in section A and personal names which appear frequently in the text in section B.

A. Place and Tribal Names

spellings in the text	transliteration	Arabic form
Adrar	Adrār	ادرار
Ahl Ahmad al-Falli (Ahel Ahmed oul el Falli)	Ahl Ahmad wuld al-Fālli	اهل أحمد بن الفالي
Ahl Atghfagha Abaid	Ahl al-Faq 'Abaid	اهل الفڤ عبيد
Ahl Barikallah (Oulad Barik Allah)	Bārakallāh	اهل باركلّ
Ahl Mahandnalla (Ahel Mohanden Allah)	Ahl Mahandnalla	اهل محنض نلل
Ahl Mrabat Makka (Ahel Mrabet Mekka)	Amrābṭ Makka	اهل امرابط مكة
Ahl Reguibat	Ahl Rgībāt	اهل رقيبات
Aftout	Afṭūṭ	افطوط
Aouker	Awkār	اوكار
Awlad Ahmad min Daman (Oulad Ahmed ben Daman)	Awlād Ahmad wuld Damāñ	اولاد احمد بن دمان
Awlad Aiyyd (Oulad Aïd)	Awlād 'Āyyd	اولاد عايد

Awlad Bu Aliyya (Oulad al-Bou Alia)	Awlād al-Bu 'Aliyya	اولاد البوعلية
Awlad Bu Saif (Oulad Bou Sif)	Awlād Bu Saif	اولاد بوسيف
Awlad Daiman (Oulad Diman)	Awlād Daymān	اولاد ديمان
Awlad Delim (Oulad Delim)	Awlād Dalīm	اولاد دليم
Awlad Daman (Oulad Daman)	Awlād Damān	اولاد دمان
Awlad Ibiri (Oulad Biri)	Awlād Ibīrī	اولاد إبيري
Awlad Khajil (Oulad Khadil)	Awlād Khājīl	اولاد خاجيل
Awlad Mansur (Oulad Mansour)	Awlād Mansur	اولاد منصور
Awlad Naghmash (Oulad Normach)	Awlād Naghmāsh	اولاد نغماش
Awlad Nasr (Oulad Nacer)	Awlād Nāsir	اولاد ناصر
Awlad Siyyid (Oulad Siyed)	Awlād Sayyid	اولاد سيّد
Awlad Tiderin	Awlād Tīdrārīn	اولاد تيدرارين

Azaouad	Azawād	ازّراد
Boutilimit	Butīlīmīt	بوتليميت
Brakna	Brākna	براكْنَ
Chememma	Shamāma	شامة
Djedjeba (_____, and Dieïdiba)	Ijaijba/Idaijba	إجَيْجَبَ/ إدَيْجَبَ
al-Hajjaj	al-Ḥajjāj	الحجّاج
Haratine	ḥrāṭīn	حراطين
Hodh	Ḥawḍ	الحَوْضْ
Ida Bahum (Ida Abhoum)	Idābhum	إدَابْهُمْ
Ida Bamar (Ida Ba Amar)	Idab'amar	إدَبَعْمَرْ
Ida Belhassan (Ida Belhasen)	Idabilḥasn	إدْبَلْحَسْنْ
Ida Busat (Id Eïboussat)	Idibusat	إدْبُبَسَتْ
Idaghaniyya	Idaghaniyya	إدَغَنِيّ
Idaghanzainbu	Idaghzainbu	إدَغْزَيْنْبُ

Idaghfagha (Id ag Fara)	Idāgfagha	إداجْفَغَ
Ida Hiss (Ida Adehes)	Idādhass	إدَادْهَسْ
Ida Mijin (Id Ammijen)	Ida Mijīn	إدَ مِيجِينْ
Idaw ʻAish (Idouaich)	Idaw ʻĪsh	إدو عيش
Idaw ʻAli (Id ou Ali)	Idaw ʻAli	إدو على
Idaw al-Hajj (Ida Ou al-Hadj)	Idaw al-Hājj	إيدو الحاجّ
Idaw Rish (Ida Rich)	Idaw Rīsh	إدو ريش
Kunta (Kounta)	Kunta	كنتى
Laghlal	al-Laghlāl	الاغلال / الغلال
Lemtuna (Lemtouna)	Lamtūna	لمتونى
Medlish (Medlich)	Midlish	مِدْلش
N'tishait (N'tachait)	Intashāit	إنْتَشَايْتْ
Saguia el-Hamra	Sāqiya al-ḥamrāʼ	ساقية الحمراء

Sharitit (Charitit)	Sharitit	شَرِطِبْطْ
Shinqit (Chinguett)	Shinqīṭ	شنڤيط
Shurfa (Chorfa)	Shurfa	شورف
Tabayyat (Tabouit)	Tābiyyat	تابيت
Tagant	Tagānit	تڤانت
Taghat (Tagat)	al-Tāgāṭ	التاڤّاط
Tajakanat (Tadjakant)	Tajakānat	تجكانت / تجاكانت
Tashumsha (Tachomcha)	Tashumsha	تَشْمْشَ
Tendera (Tendara)	Tandara	تَنْحَرَ
Trarza	Trārza	ترارز
Twabir (Touabir)	al-Ṭawābīr	الطوابير

B. Select list of personal names which appear frequently in the text. Names which are not of Berber or Wolof influence have been omitted (Habib Allah, Ahmad, al-Mukhtar, etc.).

spellings in the text	transliteration	Arabic form
Abah	Abāh	اباه
Ahmad Laigat	Aḥmad wuld Laigāṭ	احمد بن الليگاط
Ahmad o/ Aiyyda	Aḥmad wuld ʻAiyda	احمد بن عيدّ
Ahmad o/ Anbugh	Aḥmad wuld Anbug	احمد بن انبگ
ʻAli Shandora	ʻAlī Shandūra	علي شندور
Amhammad	Amḥammad	أمحمّد
Bakar o/ Swaid Ahmad	Bakkār wuld Swayd Aḥmad	بكار بن اسويد احمد
Bakka'i	Bakkā'i	البكائي
Bu Bakr o/ Khudish	Bubakr wuld Khudish	ببكر بن خُدِشّ
Daddah	Dāddāh	دَادّاه
Dah	Dāh	دَاه
Ibrahim al-Nafa'	Ibrahim al-Nafā'	ابرهيم النّفاعْ

Iktawashan	Iktawashin	إكتوشن
Ma' al-Anin	Mā' al-'Aynan	ما ء العينين
Mahand	Mahand	محنض
Mahmud	Mahmud	محمود
Muhamd Fal	Muhamd Fāl (Vāl)	محمد فال
Muhammad Sidina	Muhammad Sidīna	محمد سيدين
Muhammad o/ Sidi	Muhammad wuld Sidi	محمد بن سيد
M'hammad	Mhammad	مُحَمَّد
Muhammadhan	Muhammadhan	مُحَمَّدًا
Shaikh Sidiyya o/ al-Mukhtar o/ al-Haiba	Shaikh Sidiyya wuld al-Mukhtar wuld al-Hayba	الشيخ سيدى بن امختار بن الهيب
Shems (Chems)	Shims	شمس
Sidi Ely	Sidi A'alī	سيد اعلى

APPENDIX II

GENEALOGY OF THE N'TISHAIT

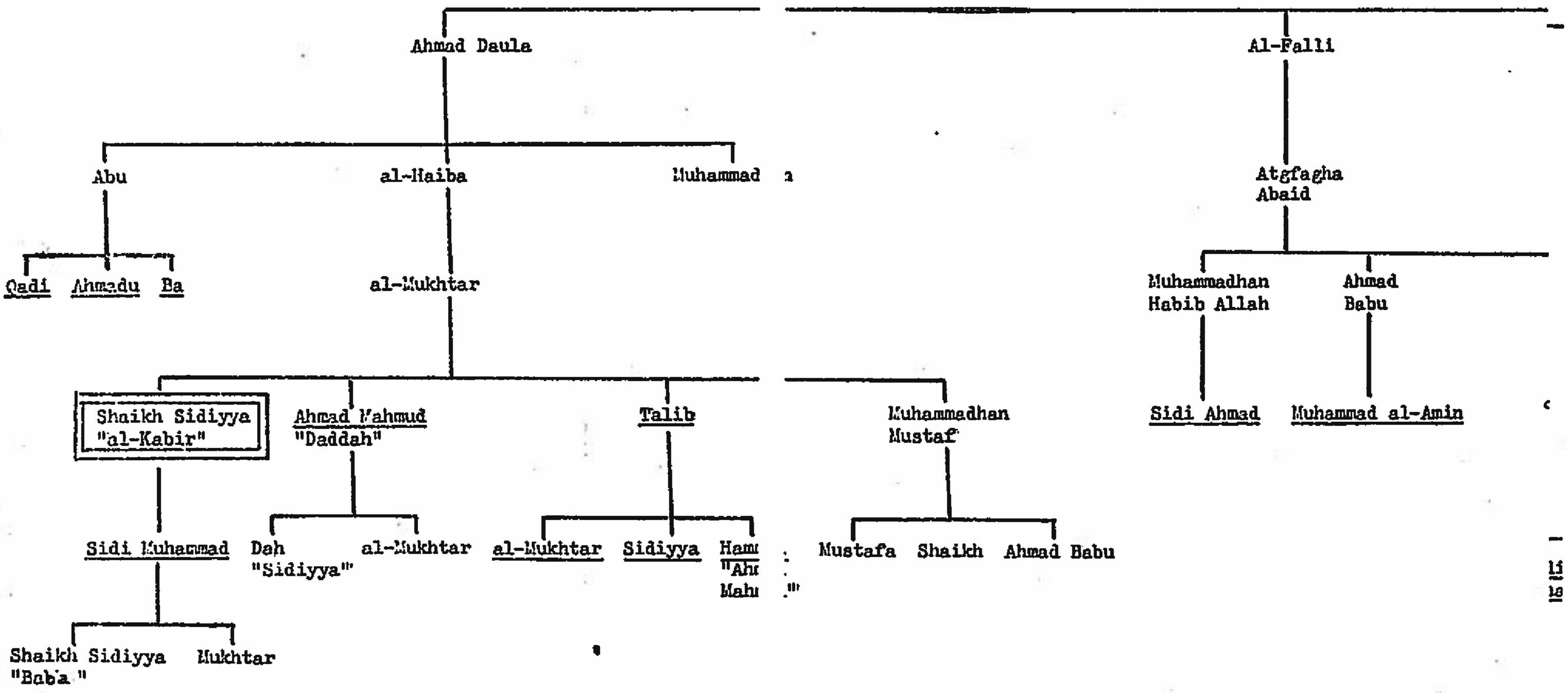
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APPENDIX II

GENEALOGY OF THE FIRST SEVEN GENERATIONS OF THE N'[illegible] HAIT

indicating by underlinings close associates [illegible]
Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir.



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D

N'TISHAIT

Abu Bakr

Muhammad Ghrali

Muhammad Mukhtar

Habib

Sidiyya

Ahmad Mahmud

Hurma

Babi

Abdi Bakri

Ahmadu

Muhammad

Sidi al-Mukhtar

Ahmad Muhammad "Dadda"

al-'Aiyyd

al-Mustaf

Muhammad Mukhtar

Shaikh

Ahmad Mahmud

"Dah"

Mukhtar

Mulud

Shaikh Huna

Muhammadhen

Muhammad

Sidi al-Mukhtar

Habib

Brahim

Sidi Muhamm

- Aissa "Zu Khajil"
  - ʿAbdallah Baba
    - Sidi
      - Muhammadhan
        - Bu Bakr
          - [illegible]mad
          - Sidi Ahmad
          - Sidi Mukhtar
          - Muhammad Mukhtar
      - Habib Allah
        - Mahmud
          - Muhammad ʿAbdallahi
    - Ahmad
  - Habib Allah "Billa"
    - Asshur
      - Hamud
        - Muhammadhan
          - Muhammad Fal
      - Muh[illegible]madhan
        - Ahmad al-Al[illegible]
          - Bashir
          - Idajfagh[illegible] Mukhtar
        - Ibnu
          - Daddi
    - Maham
      - [illegible]madhan
      - Ahmad
  - Jaba "Khajil"
    - Habib Allah
    - Mu'barik
      - ʿAbdallahi
        - ʿUmar "Kabir"
          - Baba Ahmad
          - Sidi Muhammad
          - Sidi Mukhtar
          - Shaikh
    - al-Fali
      - al-Fali
        - Muhammad
          - Sidi
  - al-Mukhtar
    - Hurma

APPENDIX III

Ijāza in the Qadiriyya which was held by Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti[1]

ALLAH
The Angel Gabriel
Prophet Muhammad
'Ali b. Abu Talib
al-Hassan b. Abu al-Hassan al-Basri
Shaikh Abu Mahfuz ibn Firuz al-Kirkhi
Abu al-Hassan Sari b. al-Mughillis al-Safati
Sid Abu al-Qasim al-Junaid b. Muhammad al-Qauariri
Abu Bakr Dalfa ibn Hajur al-Shabali
Abu Muhammad al-Shanbaki
Shaikh Abu al-Uafa'i
Sidi 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani
Shaikh 'Ali b. Haita'
Abu Najib al-Shahruzdi
Muhammad al-Din b. Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. al-'Arabi al-Hatimi
'Abd al-Salam b. Mashish
Shaikh 'Ali al-Shadhali
Abu Hammud Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghazali
Nasar al-Din Abu Musa Umran b. Musa b. Yusuf al-Mashaddali
Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Abu Bakr b. Marzuq al-Tujibi ('Abu 'Abdallah')
Muhammad b. 'Abdallah b. Muhammad b. 'Abdallah b. Ahmad ('Ibn 'Arabi')
Sidi 'Abd al-Rahman al-Suyuti
Sidi Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim al-Maghili
Sid 'Umar al-Shaikh b. Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i
Sid Ahmad 'al-Fairim' b. Sid 'Umar
Shaikh Sidi Muhammad al-Raqqad b. Sid Ahmad
Shaikh Sid Ahmad al-Khalifa b. Sid Amar b. Sid Ahmad al-Raqqadi
Shaikh Sid al-Amin Abu Naqab b. Sidi Ahmad b. Sidi Muhammad al-Raqqad
Sharif Sidi 'Ali b. al-Najib b. Muhammad b. Shuaib
Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti

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1 This silsila, with a lengthy commentary appears in T.T. (folios 92-117 in the Boutilimit copy) and in a poem (see Catalogue, ms. no. 558).

APPENDIX IV

REPRESENTATIVE TRARZA CUSTOMS INCOME

APPENDIX IV

REPRESENTATIVE CUSTOMS DUTIES RECEIVED FROM THE FRENCH BY THE AMIR OF TRARZA, HIS FAMILY AND PRINCIPAL TRADERS FOR THE YEAR 1845.
(from: Archives A.O.F., 9-G-10)

	guinée bleu	fusil (2 coups)	fusil (1 coups)	fusil de traite	poudre (kilos)	balls	pierres	mousseline	escarlate (metres)	platilles (pièce)	sucre en pain	cassonade blonde (kilos)	girafle (grams)	fer longues	melette rouge
Hamet Moctar Falle	2	1			1.956	100	100								
Hamet Chèyne	4	1			4.890	200	200								
Sidi Moctor (Hamet Chèyne)	25			11	9.788	500	500		1.18	2		2.957	31		
valet de Sidi Moctor	1			1	.979										
nouvelle coutumes pour Omar, prince	12	2			4.890	200	200								
Ali Coury	33			21	14.685	600	500		2.37	3		5.87	61		
7 maîtres de langue de Ali Coury	7			7	6.853										
Aleit	33			21	14.685	600	500		2.37	3		5.87	61		
maître de langue d'Aleit	7			7	6.853										
fils d'Aleit et Amer Couba	6	2			4.890	200	200								
Boubacar Cirre	25+5			11	9.788	500	500		1.18	2		2.937	31		
valet de Boubacar Cirre	1			1	.979										
nouvelle coutume au son fils	6	2	2		4.890	200	200								
Omegdad	4			2	2.447	50	50								
Chems	15							1 pièce							
Amet Fal, son ministre	2														
Braimemat ou Boubacar Saidique	8			4	4.895	100	100								
fils de Boubacar Saidique	2	1			2.445	100	100								
Roi de Trarza	33+25			27	14.685	600	500	5.95m.	2.37	3	3	5.874	61	5	1
7 maître de langue d'Hamer Moctor	7			7	6.853										
nouvelle coutume pour Hamer Moctor	30	1	2		9.780	500	500	1 pièce	2.38						
ministre du roi de Trarza, Hamer Moctor	6	1			1.956	50	50								
fils d'Amar Bouckar	4	1			4.890	200	200								
Ely Birahime Falle	6	1			4.890	200	200								

A useful compilation of treaties between the French and successive amirs of Trarza is found in P. Marty, Trarza, annexes I - XVII for the years 1785-1842. Most of these contain statements or redefinitions of the annual customs due to the amir and his retinue and the principal traders (e.g., Idaw al-Hajj). In addition to these customs duties, the amir also had the right to one piece of guinée for every 1000 kilos of gum traded at the escales under his protection.[1]

A review of the income received by the amir of Trarza in 1859 from these sources reveals that the French administration at St. Louis paid him 6,525 francs at the opening of the trading season, the traders paid him that year two pieces of guinée per ton (1000 kilos) of gum traded, each building at Dagana was paying 100 to 150 francs as a land tax and, in addition to this, there were gifts presented to him. Five years later the Trarza amir agreed to the establishment of a flat three percent duty on all caravans passing through his territory (which was necessary for any land transport to and from St. Louis on the right bank of the Senegal River). That same year he also consented to Sidi Ely as the amir of Brakna upon the condition that he pay the Trarza amir a gift of 250 pieces of cloth and one quarter of all customs duties collected at Podor.

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1 Archives A.O.F., 13-G-23, item 3, dated 12.1854.

There can be little doubt that the French commercial interests played a major role in the evolution of the amirate system in southern Mauritania, largely through the gifts and customs duties which were paid to their 'amirs' and which, in turn, provided the amirs with new powers of patronage which were not formerly available. However, it should be noted that these duties were so distributed that an amir did not have a monopoly on guns or cloth and, as has been noted in chapter II above, the segmentary structure of Moorish tribes did not at this time (mid-19th century) allow authority to be concentrated in the office of 'sultan' or 'amir'. However, this did not discourage intense competition for succession to that office, and the summary above explains, in part, the stakes which were the object of this competition.

Appendix V

Money Equivalents and Commerce in Mid-19th Century Southern Mauritania

The problems which arise from attempting to equate economic values in southern Mauritania during the 19th century are many and complex. However, from the French archival literature and the correspondence of Shaikh Sidiyya some tentative equivalents may be suggested which may, in turn, make the exact volume of European trade and its relative importance for the Mauritanian economy more easily understood. The figures used in this statement are frequently incomplete and several approximations have been necessary. As a result the equivalents here (which in any event may hold true for only a two or three year period) are put forward only as a tentative note.

During the period 1840-1848 the French authorities recorded enough statistical material about the gum trade that one may draw tentative conclusions about the gum exports. Gum exports appear to have fluctuated considerably, between 1,500,000 kilos and 2,500,000 kilos per annum, although a report in 1840[1] claims that the latter figure was the average annual trade. In the import-export figures for the

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1 Archives A.O.F., 2-B-18, dated 13.10.1840

Colony of Senegal and Dependencies in 1842[1] the gum exports account for approximately 75% of the colony's exports, the remainder being gold, palm oil and groundnuts. That same year, guinée cloth, which was the medium of exchange for gum purchases, accounted for slightly less than 20% of the colony's imports. In the last decade of the period with which we are concerned in this study, i.e., 1859-1869, the Senegal Colony increased her exports dramatically, from 19 to 36 million francs per annum; but this was due to the establishment of Gorée as a major port, and the gum commerce which passed through Saint Louis remained at about the same level as is described here.[2] Thus gum was the major export from the Colony of Senegal and Dependencies in the mid-19th century which explains the interest which the French administrators had in the politics of southern Mauritania and the security of the Senegal River.

For the period mentioned above (1840-1848), the figures which are available permit this gum trade to be placed in the economic context of southern Mauritania.[3] For example, in the year 1846 the French merchants bought 2,217,931

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1 Archives A.O.F., 2-B-23, dated 15.9.1843.

2 Ibid., 13-G-23, item 17, dated 25.10.1869.

3 Gum was also traded from the Ferlo in Senegal, but the quantities of gum coming from the left bank were minimal in comparison to the purchases from the Moors.

kilos of gum at escales on the Senegal River and the English in an extremely profitable year, bought some 140,000 kilos at Portendick.[1]

The price paid by French traders that year was 1 piece of guinée cloth (the petite filature, Indian import) per 20 kilos of gum.[2]

That same year one-half cask (barrique)[3] or approximately 112 1/2 litres or 88 kilos of millet could be bought for 1 piece of guinée[4] which was the same price of millet in 1848 when it was also reported to be abundant.[5]

The price of guinée in francs during these years varied slightly from 16.92 francs per piece of guinée in 1841[6] to 15 francs per piece in 1845,[7] and for our purposes here we shall accept the relatively steady figure

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1 Archives A.O.F., 2-B-27, dated 12.8.1846 and 2.3.1847.

2 Ibid., 9-G-4, item 16, dated 3.1846.

3 A barrique or wine cask holds approximately 225 litres of liquid; millet which is a fine grain, has for purposes of obtaining an approximate dry measure here, been equated with the weight of rye and Indian corn, both of which may be equated at 1 bushel (56 pounds) with 35.2383 litres.

4 Archives A.O.F., 9-G-4, item 16, dated 3.1846.

5 Ibid., 5-B-14, dated 16.4.1848.

6 Ibid., 2-B-23, dated 15.9.1843.

7 Ibid., 2-B-24, dated 26.11.1845.

of 15 francs per piece which was presumably the St. Louis price for traders on the River. In fact, this price gradually rose as the petite filature became increasingly rare, which led the traders in St. Louis to try to go off the 'petite filature standard' in 1858,[1] only to be forced back on it six months later[2] when the Moors refused to trade for inferior cloth of French manufacture.

From these figures one can arrive at the following approximate set of equivalents for the year 1846: 1 piece of petite filature guinée cloth measuring 15 metres was the equivalent of 15 francs, or 20 kilos of gum or 88 kilos of millet.

Such an approximation of the ratio of values between these goods is, of course, dependent upon variables such as the number of traders, the quality of guinée, the quality of gum and its supply (and the cunning of the Moors in weighting down their gum with rocks and the merchants in falsifying their scales), the millet harvests and the time of year. All of these factors fluctuated considerably from year to year. For example, in 1845 which was a good year for the gum harvest, approximately 500,000 more kilos of gum were exported from St. Louis than in 1846, and 97

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1 Archives A.O.F., 3-B-79, dated 17.7.1858.

2 Ibid., 3-B-79, dated 7.2.1859.

ships were involved in the trade on the River,[1] and gum was reportedly bought at 15 kilos per piece of <u>guinée</u> or 2.25 francs per kilo.[2] The previous year (1844) 10 to 11 kilos of gum bought 1 piece of <u>guinée</u>,[3] and in 1843-1844 approximately 17 1/2 kilos of gum bought 1 piece of cloth.[4] The millet price apparently halved between 1846 and 1867, which was a good year for it, when 12 to 15 francs would buy a cask of millet.[5]

However, with these variables taken into account, a comparison may be made of the relative values of produce for the one year (1846) in which an approximate ratio has been established above. In 1846 a single caravan of 300 animals, which would be capable of carrying 36,000 kilos of gum, could earn in exchange that year enough cloth to clothe 3600 persons.[6] The exact number and size of

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1 <u>Archives A.O.F.</u>, 2-B-24, dated 26.2.1845.

2 <u>Ibid.</u>, dated 26.11.1845.

3 <u>Ibid.</u>, dated 12.11.1844.

4 <u>Ibid.</u>, Q-3, p. 192.

5 <u>Ibid.</u>, 13.G.148, item 43, dated 21.2.1867 and <u>Ibid.</u>, 13-G-158, item 3, dated 4.2.1867.

6 This is based on the current use of about seven metres of cloth in a Mauritania <u>bubu</u> (<u>jalābiyya</u>)or one-half a <u>baiga</u> (which was 15 metres of <u>guinée</u>). A fully loaded caravan of gum would not, of course, only sell the gum for <u>guinée</u>, but rather would also collect such items as millet, guns, powder, paper, tobacco, etc.

caravans which a single zawiyya tribe might mount during one year depended upon the weather, the internal security of the country, the size of the gum harvest, and above all, the number of haratine or other labour which could be spared for the task. Inasmuch as a report from Matam in 1858 refers to a "small caravan" as bringing in 4000 kilos of gum,[1] one might suggest that a normal annual trade from the major zawiyya tribes and their dependents would involve at least one large caravan. A single caravan of 300 beasts would have earned in 1846 the equivalent of one and one-half of the total budget at St. Louis which was assigned to the Office of the Directeur des affairs exterieurs, or the native intelligence unit, in its first year of operation in 1848.[2]

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1 Archives A.O.F., 13-G-157, item 24, dated 21.1.1858

2 Ibid., 2-B-27, dated 2.9.1848.

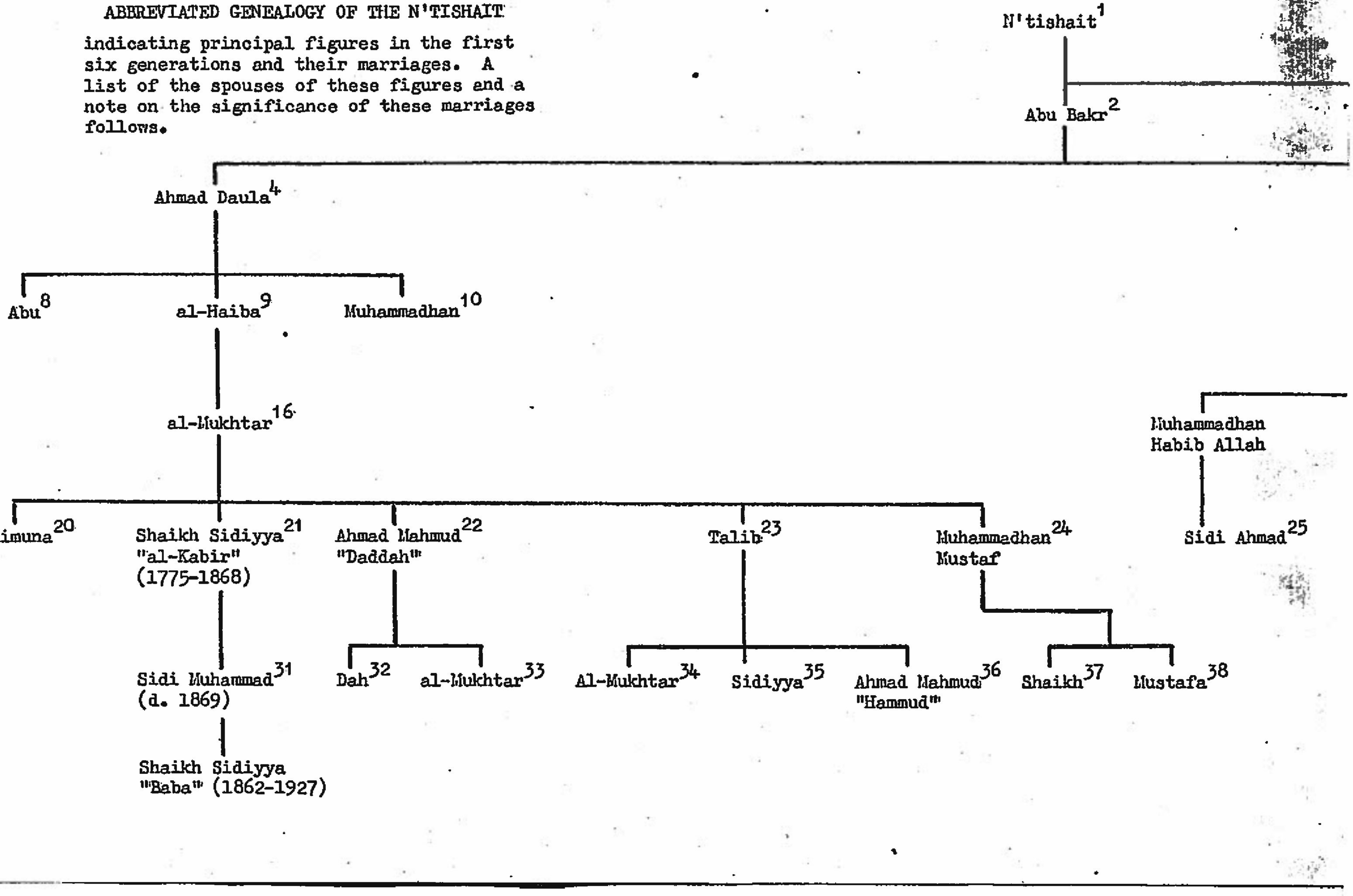
APPENDIX VI

N'TISHAIT MARRIAGES

APPENDIX VI

ABBREVIATED GENEALOGY OF THE N'TISHAIT

indicating principal figures in the first six generations and their marriages. A list of the spouses of these figures and a note on the significance of these marriages follows.



Bu Khajil Aissa[3]

al-Falli[5]

Muhammad Ghrali[6]
"al-Habbish"

'Abdallah[7]
Baba

Atgfagha[11]
Abaid

Muhammad[12]
al-Mukhtar

Habib[13]

Sidi[14]

Marium
Barka

Ahmad[15]

adhan
Allah

Sidiyya[17]

Ahmad[18]
Babu

Aishatu
al-mumina

Muhammadhen[19]

i Ahmad[25]

Muhammad[26]

'Abdi Bakri[27]

Ahmadu[28]

Aishatu

Khajita

Muhammad[29]
al-Amin

Bu Bakar[30]

Izegt

1	disputed: either a daughter of Mrabat Makka o/ Ibir, or less probably, a daughter of the sharif, N'tishait	(Tendera)
2	Marium mint 'Abdallah o/ Ahmad o/ al-Falli	(Ahl Ahmad al-Falli: Awlad Ibiri)
3	a woman from the Ida Mijin	(Ida Mijin: Awlad Ibiri)
4	a) a daughter of the chief of the Ida Belhassan (the mother of al-Haiba)	
	b) Ishaiatu mint Adaja o/ 'Abdallahi	(Awlad Adaja: Awlad Ibiri)
5	a daughter of al-Falli o/ Muhammadhan	(Ahl Ahmad al-Falli: Awlad Ibiri)
6	a) Isherigh mint Muhammad b. Said	(Awlad Nasar origin living with Awlad Bu Saif, Kunta)
	b) a Tajakanat woman	
7	Fatimatu mint Babu o/ Abu Bakar o/ Hamid	(Awlad Khajil: Awlad Ibiri)
8	two N'tishait women	(N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)
9	Aishatu al-Mumina mint Atghfagha Abaid	(N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)
10	not known	
11	a) Marium Mamma mint Maham o/ al-Falli (the mother of 'Menni' and Ahmad Babu)	(Ida Bamar: Awlad Ibiri)
	b) Muminin mint Maham (a sister of Marium Mamma; the mother of Sidiyya)	(Ida Bamar: Awlad Ibiri)
12	Aminatu mint Nasar al-Din o/ Ahmad	(Awlad Ahmad al-Falli: Awlad Ibiri)
13	Marium mint Taheda	(Ida Bisrin: Awlad Ibiri)
14	Marium mint Aliyya al-Khalli	(Ida Mijin: Awlad Ibiri)
15	not known	
16	Marium Barka mint 'Abdallah o/ Abu Bakr	(N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

17 Marium mint Sidi o/ Muhammad 'Abdallahi (Ahl Mahandnalla: Awlad Ibiri)

18 Aminatu mint Muhammad Ghrali "Muhammadhan Mubarik" (N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

19 Manna mint Brahim Ladieb (Awlad Ahmad)

20 al-Mukhtar o/ Muhammadhan o/ 'Wahu' (Ida Bamar: Awlad Ibiri)

21 Meme mint 'Ali (Ahl Mahandnalla: Awlad Ibiri)

22 Aishatu mint Sidiyya o/ Atgfagha Abaid (N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

23 Izegt mint Muhammadhan o/ Sidi (N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

24 Khajita mint Ahmad Babu o/ Atgfagha Abaid (N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

25 Marium mint Ahmad Babu o/ Atgfagha Abaid (N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

26 died in the Azaouad where he was with Shaikh Sidiyya; no descendants

27 Fatimatu mint Ahmad o/ al-Wayyis (Laghlal of Shingit)

28 a woman from the Awlad Ahmad

29 Fatimatu mint Muhammad al-Mukhtar o/ Muhammad al-Ghrali (N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

30 Fatimatu mint Muhammad La'amar o/ Shargi (Awlad Mansur)

31 Marium Tajalat mint Sidiyya 'Abd al-Wadid (Awlad Adaja: Awlad Ibiri)

32 Marium mint Abu o/ Ahmad Daula (N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

33 not married

34 Marium mint Sidi o/ Haimudan (Awlad Bu Khajil of the N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

35 Fatimatu mint 'Aliyya (Awlad Daman)

36 Khajita mint Hamaida (Ahl Ragkaba, tālāmīdh of the N'tishait: Awlad Ibiri)

37 Muminun mint al-Tah — (Awlad Khajil: Awlad Ibiri)

38 a) Fataima mint Atgfagha Lamin — (Ahl Ahmad of the Awlad Khajil: Awlad Ibiri)

b) Marium mint Sidi Ahmad o/ Menni — (Ahl Atgfaghanalla: Awlad Ibiri

The preceding genealogical chart and list of marriages includes a total of 38 marriages within the first six generations of the N'tishait. Four of the figures noted were either not married or their wives are not known, and four of the figures noted had, during their lives, two wives, each of whom have been mentioned.

Endogamous marriages, within the N'tishait generally followed the preferred parallel patrilateral cousin pattern; 13 of these 38 unions may be so described.[1] Unions between the N'tishait and other fractions of the Awlad Ibiri number 16.

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1 The genealogical distance between cousins is sometimes considerable, particularly in the generation of Shaikh Sidiyya al-Kabir, 5 generations removed from N'tishait. Among all three of the Shaikh's brothers, for instance, the parallel cousin unions took the form of FaFaFaBrSoSoDa. However, cognatic ties also existed, and the same unions coudd be, and often were reckoned in terms of the matrilineage if this was more convenient. In the case of the figures no. 21 and 23, this took the form of FaMoBrDa and in the case of figure 22 it was MoBrSoDa.

These may be summarized as follows: marriages between N'tishait figures and

the Ahl Ahmad al-Falli	(3 unions)
Awlad Khajil	(3 unions)
Ida Bamar	(3 unions)
Ahl Mahandnalla	(2 unions)
Awlad Adaja	(2 unions)
Idamijin	(2 unions)
Ida Bisrin	(1 union)

In summary, well over three quarters of the marriages listed above, or 29 of the 38, took place within the N'tishait fraction or within the tribe.

Marriages between N'tishait men, and women external to the tribe account for the smallest number of unions; 9 such marriages have been listed. But the cognatic ties which were formed by them are important in understanding the career of Shaikh Sidiyya. Among the Ahl zawayya they are:

the Tendara

Awlad Bu Saif (Kuntas; actually this was with an Awlad Nasar fraction, living with the Awlad Bu Saif, but it is the Kunta connexion which is preferred and which is functional)

Laghlal

Tajakanat

Among the Hassanis:

Awlad Ahmad (2 unions)

Awlad Mansur

Awlad Daman

Another marriage, not mentioned above, from the Bu Khajil side of the N'tishait, tied the fraction into the Awlad Bu Aliyya, which ought to be listed among the hassani and zenagha units, above.

APPENDIX VII

GENEALOGY OF THE KUNTA CONFEDERATION

APPENDIX VII

ABBREVIATED GENEALOGY OF THE KUNTA CONFEDERATION

indicating the branches mentioned in the text and their geographical placement. Khalifas in the leadership of the Qadiriyya are underlined and the order of succession is indicated by numbers. (after the T.T., and I. Hamet, "Tarikh Kounta", pp. 306-313).

'Uqba b. Nafi'
al-Akal
Ya'qub
Shaqir
'Abdallah
'Umar (d. 1484: buried at Touat)
'Uthman (buried at Touat)
Sidi Yahya (buried at Touat)
Sidi 'Ali (married to a daughter of Muhammad b. Kunta of the Idawkil Sanhaja)
Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti
Shaikh Sidi Ahmad al-Bakka'i (d. 1512)

Sidi Muhammad al-Kunti al-Saghir
Sidi Hamma al-Karim
Sidi Abu Bakr → AWLAD SIDI AL-OUAFI
Sidi Waiys → AWLAD BUSAIF
Sidi 'Umar → METERAMBRIN
Sidi al-Mukhtar
Sidi al-Wafi
Sidi Habib Allah

Abu Bakr al-Hajj
[illegible]mad
Sidi 'Abd al-Rahman

Sidi 'Umar al-Shaikh[1]
Sidi Ahmad[2]
Shaikh Sidi Muhammad[3] al-Bakhad (d. 1517)
Shaikh Sidi[4] Ahmad (d. 1652)
Sidi 'Umar
Sidi 'Ali[5] (d. 1689)
Shaikh Sidi Ahmad[6] Khalifa (d. 1678)
Shaikh Sidi[7] al-Amin (d. 1717)
Sidi Muhammad Abu Hamia
Sidi Abu Bakr Abu Hamid
Sidi al-Mukhtar[9] (d. 1811)
Sidi 'Ali
Zain al-Abidin
Sidi Muhammad al-Bakka'i
[illegible] Hamma
Sidi Baba Ahmad (d. 1826)
Sidi Muhammad[10] (d. 1826)
Shaikh Sidi al-Mukhtar[11] al-Saghir
Sidi Habib Allah
Sidi 'Umar
Sidi Muhammad

al-Wafi
Sidi Habib Allah
Sidi Muhammad
Abu Bakr
Ahmad

W E S T E R N K U N T A
(inhabit the Hodh, Tagant, Brakna and Senegal)

E A S T E R N K U N T A
(inhabit the Azaouad)

AHL SHAIKH
Ahl Hammadi o/ Baba Ahmad
Ahl Baba o/ Bakka'i
Ahl Shaikh o/ 'Abdin
(Migrated to Hodh - 1812 or 1815)

Sharif Sidi 'Ali b. Najib[8]
b. Muhammad b. Shaib
(Takruri - non Kunta)

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II Maps

III Unpublished monographs, theses and collections

IV Arabic Sources

Bibliographical Aids

Arabic Works

V Works in European languages

Bibliographies

Other Works

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ADDENDA

p. 54, note 1, addition

A recently discovered document which is now being studied in Nouakchott suggests that there were, in fact, two wars which have been telescoped into a single event we know as Shurr Bubba. One probably took place about the time of the first incursions of the Banu Ma'qil into Shinqit, and the second is the one which we have, in the past, assumed to be Shurr Bubba. If collaborating evidence may be found for this new theory, much of our dating in Mauritanian history will be altered, and the account here of Shurr Bubba will have to be re-thought. (Communication from H.T. Norris, 6.5.1970).

p. 422, additions

2 B 18: Correspondance départ du Gouverneur du Sénégal au Ministre (1839-1842).

2 B 23: Correspondance départ du Gouverneur du Sénégal au Ministre de la marine et des colonies (1843-1845).

3 B 79: Correspondance des Postes du bas du Fleuve (1859-1861).

p. 424, additions

13 G 148: Saladé. Correspondance du commandant de poste au gouverneur (1865-1871).

13 G 157: Matam. Correspondance du commandant de poste au gouverneur (1857-1864).

13 G 158: Matam. Correspondance du commandant de poste au gouverneur (1867-1874).

p. 438, addition

La Courbe, Sieur de, Premier voyage du Sieur de la Courbe fait à la Coste d'Afrique en 1685 (P. Cultru, ed., Paris, 1913).

p. 441, addition

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