

YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT:  
THE MEMOIRS OF °ABD ALLĀH AL-  
GHADĀMISĪ OF KANO, 1903-1908.  
PART I: THE BRITISH CONQUEST OF KANO

MUHAMMAD SANI UMAR AND JOHN HUNWICK

These native servants are the quintessence of loyalty, and devotion, and as time goes on, I am to find out that without them Nigeria would have been untenable by the white man.<sup>1</sup>

*Introduction*

Some time in 1902 a young man named °Abd Allāh arrived in Kano, 'from the north', presumably from Ghadames. We know nothing of the circumstances of his arrival, or of his ancestry. The document translated below is currently our only source of information on him. In it he describes himself as a 'student', but it is not clear in what sense he uses that term. There is no indication that he came to Kano to study, but we know that some years later he was acting as a clerk for his paternal uncles in Kano, who were evidently merchants.

°Abd Allāh al-Ghadāmisī arrived in Kano some eight months before the British conquest of Kano in early 1903, to which he was an eye-witness. Thereafter we know nothing until late 1907 or early 1908 when he responded to a call by C.L. Temple for an assistant who knew both Arabic and Hausa to work with him. This was at a time when Temple was preparing to go on leave, perhaps just after completing his stint as Resident of Sokoto in January 1908. Evidently between his arrival in 1902 and 1908 when he began his

1 F.P. Crozier, *Five Years Hard*, London 1932, 72-3.

appointment as Temple's assistant, °Abd Allāh had acquired fluency in Hausa. Indeed, his Arabic style betrays traits that are attributable to interference from Hausa, as will be discussed in the commentary on his document.

His position in Temple's entourage did not last long. He was alarmed by Temple's apparent brutality towards his retainers, and fled his service. Not long after he entered the service of H.R. Palmer, who was at this time engaged in rural tax assessment in Kano. As we learn from the second part of his memoirs (to be published in the next issue of *Sudanica Africa*), Palmer evidently treated him very differently, and °Abd Allāh al-Ghadāmisī's praise for him is fulsome. He is no doubt the 'young Arab' whom Palmer refers to in the introduction to his translation of the 'Kano Chronicle', as being in his employ and able to read and write colloquial Tripoli and Ghadamsi Arabic.<sup>2</sup>

It is not clear why he chose to write his memoirs; possibly Palmer encouraged him to do so. It is also not clear what he did after Palmer went on leave to England. He probably returned to his service, since the sole known copy of his memoirs has survived in Palmer's papers. They were evidently on very good terms. In fact, °Abd Allāh was originally scheduled to travel to England with Palmer on leave, but having got as far as Lagos, decided he could not face the long sea voyage. His memoirs are interesting for the picture they give of the Kano response to the British threat and the eventual conquest, and add to the growing literature of Nigerian memoirs of the colonial period. In a sense it is an insider's view, yet at the same time it is an outsider's view in as much as °Abd Allāh was not a Kano native, not even a Hausa. We may suspect that his view of events was tempered by his association with a British colonial official whom he held in high regard, and that as a Ghadamsi he exaggerated the role of the Kano North African community in the city's affairs.

The text published here is taken from the only known

2 See his *Sudanese Memoirs*, Lagos 1928, iii, 92.

copy of the work, presumably in the author's hand, in the Palmer Papers preserved in the Nigerian National Museum (photocopy in NU/Paden, 176). The paragraphing and punctuation are ours. The vocalisation is that found in the manuscript. After the second part of his memoirs detailing °Abd Allāh's service with Temple and Palmer, we shall offer a commentary, discussing in particular °Abd Allāh's perspective on colonialism.

### *Text*

كان رجل تلميذ يقال له عبد الله الغدامسي قد اتى لکنوا من ناحية الشمال الافريقية وهي ارض السودان واقام بمدينة التي تسمى کنوا في عهد اميرها علي بن عبد الله الفلاتي مكث مدة ثمانية اشهر ثم بعد ذلك حدث في تلك الايام خبر مزجع وفزع علي امير البلد بذلك الخبر وكتم ذلك في سره ولم يعلم لاحد عن ذلك فلما دخله الخوف جمع امرائه كلهم من الحاضر والبادي . فلما حضرهم بين يديه قال لهم: اعلموا ايها الناس باني كنت ناوياً السفر الى جهة سَكُوتُوا ومن كان منكم هو تحت حكمي وطاعتي فليهب نفسه للسفر معي فالحاصل جمع جميع امرائه وعماله ومن كان متعلق / بدولته وشاع لهم هذا الخبر على انه مسافرا لسَكُوتُوا لأجل زيارة آبائه واجداده واقاموا بعد ذلك شهرين

او اكثر وهم في تجهيز احوالهم . فلما قرب السفر حضر امير علي وكيله سَرَكِنُ شَانُو [ ] واوصاه وقال له الامير: يا سَرَكِنُ شَانُو قد حان الرحيل اي اريد السير الى جهة سَكُوتُوا لاجل زيارة آبائنا واجدادنا وانت قد وكلتك على بلاده<sup>3</sup> هذا من حاضرها وباديتها وجميع اقبالها . وبيتي هاهو على يدك فاني قد جعلته امانة على يدك وكن مستحفظاً لهذه الامانة على غاية الحفظ . وَمَعَجِ عثمان امرته ان يعينك على حفظ البلد مع جماعة العرب من اهل الغدامس واهل طرابلس . واذا اعترض<sup>4</sup> لكم شيء / في البلد او جاءكم الاعداء من النواحي فاجمعوا اموركم ورأيكم وتشاوروا مع جماعة العرب لكي يعينوكم في المشاورة .

ثم بعد هذا نادى الامير علي مَعَجِ عثمان وكلمه قائلاً له : يا مَعَجِ عثمان اعلم انني كنت مسافراً الى زيارة اجداد في سَكُوتُوا . وقد جعلتُ هذا البلد على ايديكما انت و سَرَكِنُ شَانُو . واذا اعترض لكم شيء من شان البلد او اتاكم خبر الاعداء من النواحي فاجمعوا ارائكم مع جماعة الذين كانوا ساكنين بهذا البلد لاننا متشاركين معهم هذا البلد لنا اهل<sup>5</sup>

3 كذا في الاصل، وافضل منه : بلادي .

4 في الاصل : عترض .

وعيالٌ وعبيدٌ ولهم عيال واموال وعبيد . اذا حدث شيء في البلد واطلبوهم بالمشاورة لانهم ذوو رأي سديد فلا تحقروا رأيهم . فها انا قد نويت الذهاب اربع في الشوال اذا قدر الله تعالى / اقوم من هنا واما قُوفًا كَنَسَكَلِي اي يعني باب الغربي فلا تغلقوها لأجل إرسال المراسلة بيننا . ثم قال امير كنوا علي لعبدك المذكور وهو سَرَكِنُ شَانُو انت وكيلى انت نائبي وكلمنا يقع لهذه البلد من ورائنا فعلمنا به في الجواب ولا ينقطع الينا مرسلوكم انت ومَعَجِ عثمان . واما امر الشريعة فتكون على القاضي [ ] وشأن الارض او شأن البلد وهذا يكون على ايديكما انت ومَعَجِ . واذا قدر الله لنا هذا المشي وسافرنا الى سكوتو وردنا الله تعالى بالسلامة ووجدتكم بالعافية ورأيت كلما اوصيتكم به قد وقفتم عليه افعل لكما شيئاً الذي يسركما من شأن الذي يكون في المكافأة أحسن لأن الله تعالى ذكر في القرآن الكريم هل جزاء الاحسان الا الاحسان . / وربنا يجمعنا واياكم في ساعة مباركة .

ثم بعد ذلك خرج امير كنو علي اربع في الشوال وتوجه مع كافة جماعته من امرائه وعماله وشرطائه وعساكره الذين

اخترعهم هنا في السودان لانهم لا يعرفون شيئاً من شأن العساكر<sup>5</sup> الدولة لكونهم اعجام. وبعد خروجهم من كنوا بستة وعشرين يوماً اتى الخبر من جهة الغرب وهو ان تُورَاوى انجليز قدموا لکنو من جهة زَارِيى . واول دخولهم لارض كنو وجدوا قرية تسمى بيبيج ونهبوها وقتلوا عَرِيفَ البلد المسمى بسرکن فلان بيبيج. فلما جاء الخبر عند سَرَكِنَ شَأْنُو المذكور اخبر مَعَجَ عثمان واعلمه بجميع ما سمع له من الاخبار بان تُورَاوى انجليز قد دخلوا ارض كنو ودخلو بِيِيَجِ وقاتلوا اميرها سرکن فلان .

فلما سمع / مَعَجَ عثمان ذلك الخبر ارسل مرسوله الى جماعة العرب الذي كانوا مقيمين ببلد كنوا. فلما حضروا بين يديه اخبرهم بما وقع فيما سَمِعَ من خبر الخوف. ثم قال لهم: فما المشاورة وما الحيلة لهذا الشأن؟ قالوا له: اعلم يا معج اننا كنا غرباء في هذه الارض وليس لنا مشاورة في شيء ولا الحيلة لهذا الامر. اتما نحن اذا اَتَوُ<sup>6</sup> وادركونا هنا في بيوتنا وقصدوا للحرب نحاربهم لاجل اموالنا ونفوسنا كما قال صلى الله عليه وسلم من مات دون ماله مات شهيداً من

5 كذا في الاصل .

6 كذا في الاصل .

مات دون أَنفسه مات شهيدَه . وليس لنا قول بعد هذا . ثم قال لهم معج عثمان : افهموا قولي وأعلموا ان اميرنا عَلِيّاً حين خروجه من هنا اوصانا عليكم وقال اذا اعترض لنا شيء من شأن البلد او خبر الاعداء فلنشاور معكم فلا نحتقر رأيكم / لأننا متشاركين معكم هذا البلد ان كان هذا البلد هو لنا ولكم نصف فيها فالحاصل اسمعوا قولنا الآن نريد أن تعينونا وتعاونوا السلطان على بلده لدفع الاعداء . قالوا له : مَعَجٍ سرحنا لننصرفوا الى منازلنا . فسرحهم معج وما رأى منهم شيئاً من علامة وجه الاعانة فعادوا الى منازلهم ثم في المساء عاد اليهم مرسول وهو يناديهم فحضروا كلهم عند مَعَجٍ عثمان ثانياً وقال لهم : يا جماعة كيف رأيتم هذه المسئلة قالوا رضينا بما فعل الله بنا . ثم قال لهم : اذا أصبحنا الله بالعافية فتحضروا كلكم مع عبيدكم تحت السور وتجدونني في باب ببيج حتى نرى ما يفعل الله بنا . ثم قالوا له : سمعنا ما قلت وربنا ينصرنا عليهم وهو خير الناصرين . ثم مَعَجٍ عثمان بعث مرسوله الى سكتوا بالجواب ليعلم الامير / عن ما وقع لمدينة كنوا بعد خروجه فيها وفي غد ذلك اليوم بيوم الثلاثاء في الضحاء ركبوا بعض من

العرب مع عبيدهم ومشوا نحو باب المدينة ووقفوا تحت السور من داخل الباب وسلاحهم بأيديهم مع غلمانهم . وما كان الا ساعة واذا الرجال الذين ركبوا مع معج رأيناهم يركضون فوق خيولهم وقد ولوا مدبرين هاربين ولحقوا لبيوتهم اشتاتا اشتاتا وخافوا خوفا شديدا، لانهم قد شاهدوا امراً الذي لم يرون مثله في الدنيا قط وفزعوا فزعا شديدا وحين رجوعهم الى المنازل أتوهم بقية اخوانهم الذين تخلفوا في البيوت وسألوهم عن الخبر وقالوا: أننا قد شاهدنا امراً الذي كان يخرج الارانيبَ من وَكْرِهِ . قالوا لهم اخوانهم: / ما أصابكم بهذا الكلام . قالوا نعم هذا صحيح لأننا رأينا شيئاً الذي كان ينفينا لهذا البلد في هذا اليوم . قالوا لهم اخوانهم: ما هو الشيء الذي رأيتموه حتى فزعكم . قالوا قد شاهدنا النصرارى انجليز رأيناهم رأياً العين مع عساكرهم داخلين لهذا البلد ومع ضجة عظيمة أي رَغْمَر عجم من البنادق والمدافع وعساكرهم لا تحصى نعم هذا ما شاهدنا من الاهوال تحت السور .

وبعد ساعة نحن كنا في المدينة سمعنا المدافع تُضْرَبُ وهي المدفع التي يقال لها مَيُّ رُوَا . وحين ضربوها ضرب الاول

انكسرت باب المدينة ثم عاودوا الضرب الثاني وكسرت بيت البواب حالاً ونفذت القنبلة اي أَرْصَاسٍ عجم بجسد البواب فمات حينئذ . فلما سمعوا العربُ هذا الخبر قالوا اللهم احفظنا / من شر هذا اليوم حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل . ثم قاموا وتفرقوا وسار كل واحد منهم الى بيته ودخل وغلق الباب وطلع فوق السطح . وما مكثوا الا ساعة حتى دخل تُورَاوَى في وسط المدينة كنوا . وحين دخولهم بها توجهوا مع عساكر الى جهة<sup>7</sup> بيت الامير . فلما وصلوا بباب البيت دخلوا من باب قُوفًا كُذُّ وكبيرهم يسمي مَيَّ كُوَاغِرِ . ودخلوا الى وسط البيت ووجدوا رجلاً واقفاً بالبواب وبيده سيف مسلول . فلا يدرون ما هو . وهو سَرَكِنُ شَانُوا الذي كان موكلٌ على بيت الامير وعياله الذين قد تركهم معه في البلد وحين رآوه بتوريمي كُوَاغِرِ ضربه بالبندقية على صدره فسقط سَرَكِنُ شَانُوا فمات حالاً كمات في الامس فدخلوا لبيت الامير هم وعساكرهم والحمالون / من ورائهم يحملون الصناديق والزاد . فلما دخلوا داخل البيت ما وجدوا فيه احداً الا النساء والصبيان ونزلوا بتلك الدار في

وسط بيت امير كنوا علي .

ثم بعد ذلك في المساء مقدار ثلاث ساعات بعثوا مرسلهم عند مِيْ أَنْغُوَا مَالْمَ نَمَرُوْ قائلين له : اننا تُورَاوَى قد وصلنا هذا البلد في هذا اليوم ونريد منك يا مِيْ أَنْغُوَا مَالْمَ نَمَرُوَا أن تخبر لجماعة العرب الذين كانوا مقيمين لهذه البلد كلهم يحضروا عندنا فلا يتركوا احداً في بيت من كبارهم وصغارهم وحرارهم<sup>8</sup> وعبيدهم لنراهم كلهم بجوابنا [؟] وبمرادنا بهم فنادا هم مِيْ أَنْغُوَا المذكور واخبرهم بما قد أرسلوا اليه وقالوا سمعاً وطاعة واجتمعوا هولاء الجماعة ومشوا الى حضرة تُورَاوَى وهم نازلين بباب بيت الامير . /

واما التلميذ الذي كان يذكر هذه الحكاية لم يذهب معهم لخوفه من تُورَاوَى كي لا يُقْتَلَ . نعم . فلما سار جماعة العرب الى جهة تُورَاوَى ادركوهم بباب بيت الامير وهم جماعة كثيرة جلسوا فوق كراسيهم متصفين في الجلوس وكبيرهم في وسطهم . فلما حضر تلك الجماعة العرب لحضرة تُورَاوَى قربوهم واجلسوا<sup>9</sup> هم بمكان من بين يديهم ودعا كبير توراي لترجمانه ولا نعرف اسمه ووقفه بين

8 كذا غي الاصل، اي : احرارهم .

9 كذا في الاصل .

يديه قائلاً له: كلم هؤلاء الجماعة اهذا تمام العرب الذين كانوا مقيمين لهذه البلد. فسألهم الترجمان عن مراد بتوري. قالوا هكذا كنا لهذه البلدة وما تركنا احداً في البيت الا الاولاد والصبيان. ورد الترجمان كلامهم على كبير بتوري وسمع وسكت ساعة ثم قال للترجمان: / قل لهؤلاء الناس انكم غرباء في هذه البلاد فلا بأس عليكم وما جئنا لهذا البلد من اجلكم او من اجل غيركم ولكن لا تعرفون الدليل الذي قد جئنا من اجله. هل لكم علم بذلك. قالوا له: لا نعلم ايها السلطان لاننا كنا تجار ونحن ما اتينا هذه الارض الا لاجل التجار<sup>10</sup> وليس لنا<sup>11</sup> علم شيء من امر السلطنة.

ثم قال لهم: اعلموا ايها العرب ان هذا المجيء له دليل وسبب. اننا كنا في جهة الغرب وقد كان لنا أخ بتوري يسمى مَيْلُون وهو رجل كبير فينا ومكث بالبلد تسمى كَفِّ دَنْ يَامُوسَى. هل تعرفونها. قالوا: نسمع بخبرها. نعم. فَإِنْ اخانا المذكور جاء لتلك الارض عند اميرها مَعَاجِ دَنْ يَامُوسَى بالامانة وجلس معه لاجل التعاون بعضهم

10 كذا في الاصل، اي: التجارة.

11 كلمة «لنا» اضفناها لسياق الكلام.

بعضاً. وفي ذات يوم ان اخانا / المرحوم كان مغفولاً وقد شغله الامن والعهد الذي كان تعاهداً مع مَغَاجِ دَا يَامُوسَى وليس له خبر بان النَّمَامِ قد دخل بينهما واذا بمغج قد دخل على أخينا المرحوم وقتله عمداً من غير ذنب ومات اخونا مقتولاً مظلوماً. ثم هرب مَغَاجِ دَا يَامُوسَى ووصل الى هنا عند امير كنو علي وانزله عنده واكرمه ووصل في اكرامه غاية واعطاه خيلاً وعبيداً ومالاً وبيتاً وأكرمه غاية الاكرام وسمعنا هذه الخبر من الناس عن ما فعل علي بظالمنا وسافك دم اخينا هدرًا. وكوت<sup>12</sup> قلوبنا وتأسفنا لذلك غاية الاسف. ثم بعد ذلك عزمنا وارادنا المجيء الى هنا لعلنا ندرك الامير علياً مع صاحبه مَغَاجِ ووصلنا الى هنا ولم نجدهم لهذه ولكن ايها العرب / انني ليس لي خبر بان امير علياً سافر الى سَكُوتُوا أنا أحلف لكم ايها العرب لو تحققنا وايقنا على ان الامير لم يكن بهذا البلد لما جئنا هاهنا. أنا حالف لكم ثلاث مرات أننا أدركنا الخبر في الطريق حين المجيء لهذا البلد بأن الامير قد سار الى جهة سَكُوتُوا. وأنا ما صدقتُ هذا الخبر ولو أيقنت لذلك لمشيت الى حيث كان وما أتينا

هنا الا لاجله وامينه مَغَاج . كونوا مطمئنين البال من اجلنا ولا تخافوا ولا تحزنوا ولا يصيبكم شيء من جهتنا ولا تفزعوا .

وبعد هذا قالوا لهم : فها نحن متوجهين الى حيث كان علي ومغَاج . وانتم اذا كان لكم البيع فبيعوا واشتروا مع أصحاب معاملتكم . واقضوا شواغلكم في الامانة وهنائة القلب ولكن الان نريد منكم شيئا من امر التعب . قد كان / عندنا الذرة هو زاد لاناسنا ونريد ان تطحنوه لنا برضاكم والامانة وليس بالقهر . قالوا لهم سمعا وطاعة مرحبا بكم وبما أتيتم به . وثم خرجوا لهم سبعين شِكَاَرَةً وهي بُهُو بالعجم وامروا الحمالين ان يوصلوه الى بيوت العرب وجاءوا به الى بيوت العرب . ثم قسموه العرب لعيالهم الذين كانوا في بيوتهم وامروهم باطحان تلك الذرة فأخذت العيال في الطحن في اول الليل<sup>13</sup> وما زرقت الشمس الا وهو حاضر مطحون . وجمعوا ذلك الدقيق كله مطحوناً وبعثوا الى حضرة تُورَاوَى ليعلموهم ان الذرة قد وُجِدَ دقيقه . فبعثوا الحمالين فحملوا تلك الدقيق ووصلوه الى حضرتهم . ثم بعد ذلك بيومين

زدوا لهم مائتان شكاراة اخرى فامرهم بتطحينه ايضاً .  
 فطحنوه لهم في ليلة واحدة ثم بعثوا / مرسولهم مع  
 الحمالين ورفعوا الدقيق مطحوناً ووصلوا الى حضرتهم  
 وفرحوا تُوراوى بذلك غاية الفرح وشكروهم شكراً كثيراً .  
 ثم بعد ذلك عزموا تُوراوى على المشي الى طلب أمير كنو  
 علي مع حبيبه مَعَاجِ دَا يَاموسى . وخرجوا في الكبار منهم  
 وتركوا بقيتهم من العساكر لحفظ البلد وذهبوا الى جهة  
 سكتوا . وفيما سمعناه من الخبر بأن تورأوى حين خروجهم  
 لارض كنوا دخلوا دَاجِ رُوبٍ وتصادفوا مع أمراء كنوا وهم  
 راجعين الى ارضهم من سكتوا . فلما إلتقيا تلك الفئتين  
 وكان كبير ذلك الامراء هو وزير آمدٌ وهو أخ لامير علي .  
 فأول ملاقتهم ناوشوهم تورأوى ولكن ما ضر احداً منهم  
 تحاربهم أهل كنوا وصار القتال بينهم وما كان الا ساعة  
 واحدة حتى / انهزمتهم جيشُ تُوراوى وشتت شملهم  
 وتفرقوا في تلك الصحراء . وبددهم تُوراوى فَرْداً فَرْداً و لولا  
 على أدبارهم منهزمين . فلما راتهم تُوراوى انهم قد شتتوا  
 في الصحراء تركوا وخلصوا سبيلهم ومضوا الى جهة سَكَّتُوا  
 واما امراء كنوا رجعوا وهم قاصدين الى بيوتهم بكنوا . فلما

وصلوا بقرب مدينة كنوا خرجوا عليهم تُورأوى ولاقوهم  
 بباب المدينة المسمى قُوفَرُ كَنَسَكَلِي عجم ويقودهم رجل  
 كنوي يسمى أوتًا.

فلما وصلوا بباب المدينة خرجوا الى خارج الحصن ووقفوا  
 مقدار ساعة فاذا هم تلك الامراء أتوا ليدخلوا المدينة  
 ووقفوهم بالباب وأخذوا منهم جميع اسلحتهم وهذا الامر  
 قد صار في الشتاء في وقت الضحاء. فلما اخذوا ما كان  
 لهم من السلاح / تركوهم واذنوا لهم بالدخول بأن كل  
 احد فليذهب الى منزله. فذهب كل واحد الى بيته وحينئذ  
 وكبيرهم هو وانبى عباس. وبعد ذلك انصرفوا تُورأوى الى  
 منزلهم ونادوا جماعة العرب واعطاهم مشاورة يعني اختياراً  
 على ان من هو أولى بالامارة في بني عبد الله. وقالوا لهم  
 العرب ان من هو احق بها هو وانبى عباس وهو خيارهم لان  
 كبيرهم قد مات وهو وزير أحمد. قالوا نعم. ثم بعد ذلك  
 سألوا من كبار اهل كنو واختارت مثل ما اختارت الجماعة  
 الاولى

وبعد ذلك رجعنا بخبر تُورأوى الذين ذهبوا من كنوا الى  
 جهة سكتوا بعد فراقهم مع امراء كنوا بتلك الصحراء وحين

دخولهم بارض سكتوا اجتمعوا مع اخوانهم تورأوى / الذين كانوا مقيمين ببلد أرغُنْغُنْ وهي ناحية من نواحي سكتوا. وحين تلاقوا مع اخوانهم توجهوا الى مدينة سكتوا بعشية يوم السبت. وبدأ القتال بينهم حتى غربت الشمس وبات كل من تلك الفريقين في مكانه. فلما اصبح الله الصباح عادوا في مكان الامس بالقتال فتقاتلا قتالاً بينهما اي بين تورأوى واهل سَكْتُوا. وما كان الا ساعة حتى انهزموا اهل سكتوا مع اميرهم وهو الطَّاهِرُ عَبْدُ وَقْتِلَ منهم من قتل وهرب من هرب وقرَّ اميرُ المسلمين من بينهم وقرَّ وزيرهم المسمى [ ] وكل واحد منهم اتخذ سبيله للفرار بغير التفات أخيه. وزير توجه جهة الشمال والامير جهة الشرق وتشتتوا كلُّهم في النواحي ودخلت تُورأوى لمدينة / سَكْتُوا وصاروا يلاطفوا الناس بكلام لطيف.

ويقولون للناس ااعدوا في بيوتكم فلا تخافوا منا عن شيء ااعدوا بالامانة وقد تمت العركة.<sup>14</sup> فلا تفزعوا ولا تحزنوا وكونوا مطمئنين القلوب فلا ضرر عليكم. وجعلوا يلاطفوهم بالكلام حتى اطمأنت قلوب الناس. ثم بعد ذلك

14 كذا في الاصل، اي : المعركة.

جاء بتورِي المسمى بغمنا والس ولتم<sup>15</sup> جماعة امراء سكتوا  
وكلمهم وتصالح معهم ورضوا به . واما سركن مسلمي لم  
يكن فيهم لانه قد فر بكذبه وجهله فيما يزعم انه يقدر ان  
يتحارب مع اهل الله الذين قد ارسلهم الله تعالى بالعدالة  
وجعلهم خلفاء الله في أرضه . ولم يعلموا بذلك من الله  
لجهلهم وكذبهم حتى رأو حكم الله قد قضى بين يديهم . /  
واما امير كنوا علي بن عبد الله الفلاتي الذي ذكرنا اسمه في  
السابق فيما سمعنا من خبره انه ايام الذي كان جالسا فوق  
سرير ملكه اذ ذات يوم اتاه مرسل المسمى بابا كنوا . جاء  
من لوكوج وبيده قرطاس من آدم جكاد . فلما جاء المرسل  
دخل عند امير كنوا علي وسلم عليه ومد له الورقة فتناولها  
منه ففتح الورقة وقرأها في السر بين الجماعة ورأى في تلك  
الجواب :

فمن آدم جكاد النصرارى سلام الى امير كنوا علي ابن عبد  
الله بعد السلام فهناك مرسل هو باب كنوا قد ارسلته اليك  
بهذا الجواب ويخبرك هو من فمه ولكن اعلم أيها الامير ان  
توراوى انجليز قادمين اليك لا محالة ولا بطالة فاحذر نفسك

كذا في الاصل، اي : وألتم . 15

وانظر شأنك ان قلتَ / انك تقدر على قتالهم فقم وانتبه  
 نفسك من النوم وجهز نفسك وان رايتَ نفسك انك لا  
 تقدر على قتالهم فطاوعهم واسأل منهم الامانة بالتواطع<sup>16</sup>  
 وطلام<sup>17</sup> طيب وهدية جزيلة لكي تجد العافية من نفسك  
 وعلى سائر الناس وسائر أهلك فيها أنا قد نصحتك لله تعالى  
 ان رضيت بنصيحتي فالحمد لله فلا يصيبك والا فلا أعود  
 انصحك مرة أخرى .

فلما قرأ عليُّ تلك الجواب في مجلسه بين امرائه فلم بين لهم  
 شيئاً وكتب ما سمعه من جَكَادَ . ثم التفت على الرسول  
 وقال : اعلم يا بَابَ كُنُوا فاني لا اطيع النصرارى ولا اطلب  
 منهم الامانة بل افعل القتال معهم اذا جاء الينا هنا في ارضنا  
 وقد قال هذا القول بين الجماعة جهرا واما في السر ليس  
 بذلك فقد / اختار الهروب في قلبه وخبأ ذلك على  
 جماعته . ومن تلك اليوم قام في تجهيز نفسه للسفر الى  
 سكتوا . ثم جهر<sup>18</sup> نفسه وتوجه الى جهة سَكْتُوا لكي لا

16 كذا في الاصل، ولعله اراد : بالتواطع .

17 كذا في الاصل، اي : كلام .

18 كذا في الاصل، اي : جهز .

يدر كونه تُورأوى في بلد كنوا وتأوى<sup>19</sup> الهروب .  
فلما وصلوا الى سكتوا اقاموا اياما يسيرا ثم انصرفوا  
وتوجهوا جهة الشرق من سكتوا وهم قاصدين الرجوع الى  
أرضهم كنوا . فلما وصلوا ارض زَمْفَر دخلوا بلدة تسمى  
غداً غُوغَا ونزلوا بتلك البلدة مع اميرهم علي . فلما كان بعد  
المغرب خرج أمير كنوا علي من تلك المنزل وجلس بباب  
تلك البيت في الدهليز مع جماعة قليلة لأنه اول الليل . واذا  
بامراته تسمى كُبْرًا قد جاءت فوق فرسها من الغلمان فلما  
وصلت باب المنزل دخلت داخل الدهليز فرآها زوجها علي  
وعرفها / وقام على قدميه ودخل للبيت فسألها فقال لها:  
ما لك يا كُبْرًا ما الخبر؟ قالت : ايها امير ان نصارى قد دخلوا  
بيتك ونهبوا بلدك ونزلوا في وسط قصرك وتفرقت العيال  
وشتتوا ملكك وقال : لا اله الا الله متى وقع هذا الامر؟ قالت  
له : من ورائك بثلاثين يوماً بعد خروجك . ثم قال لها : وما  
الحيلة وما الدبارة؟ قالت : له ان كنت تريد النجاة من  
نفسك فاهرب من هنا فلا تذهب الى كنوا ولتعلم ان من  
هرب نجا وبعد خروجنا بتلك البلد سمعنا انهم قد خرجوا

مفتقدون بك ونحن من يوم خرجنا من كنوا ليس لنا ليلا  
 ولا نهار نجد السير في الليل والنهار لكي نجدوك ونعلمك بما  
 قد وقع من ورائك . فلما سمع علي منها هذا الكلام تحير في  
 نفسه وتكدر عليه / الامر وشاورها على الهروب فقالت له  
 اهرب لكي تفز<sup>20</sup> بنفسك من شر الاعداء وهروبك خير لك  
 من دخولك الى الذلة وقام في وسط الليل وجhez نفسه  
 وعياله الذين كانوا معه في حضرته ورفع آتاه فوق البهائم  
 وساق عياله معه وتوجه بعياله جهة غُوبِرْ

واما اخوانه لما اصبح الله الصباح وركبوا خيولهم وجاء الى  
 باب منزل اميرهم فلم يجدوه في المنزل وسألوا عن الخير<sup>21</sup>  
 لانه حين هرب اخوانه<sup>22</sup> ليس لهم خبر . قيل لهم : ان عَلِيَّ قد  
 هرب في الليل . فقال الوزير : ما الدليل على ذلك ؟ قيل له :  
 ان امرأته كُبراً وصلت هنا في البارحة الامس واخبرته أن  
 النصرارى قد دخلوا كنوا ونهبوها ونزلوا في بيته وحينئذ قال  
 الوزير آمَدُ : لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله / انا لله وانا اليه  
 راجعون . اين ذهب هذا الرجل فإنه قد عمل لنا عاراً فلماذا

20 كذا في الاصل، اي : تفوز .

21 كذا في الاصل، اي : الخير .

22 كذا في الاصل، اي : اخوانه .

يهرب . ثم ان الوزير احمد ضَمَّ اخوانه كلَّهم واعلمهم بما  
 قد وقع من الخبر وبما فعله اخوهم وقالوا له اخوانه اننا تحت  
 اوامرك طايعين لله وطايعين لك وقد فوضنا اليك الامر فانظر  
 ماذا ترى لانك انت كبيرنا فوصل بنا الى ديارنا كنوا . ثم  
 قال لهم الوزير فليركب كل واحد منكم فرسه لتتوجه الى  
 بيوتنا بكنوا فقال اياك نتبع فحينئذ انصرفوا للرجوع الى  
 كنوا /

رجعنا الى اخبار ونبى عباس . فلما اصطفاه الناس من دون  
 اخوانه تولى الامارة من النصارى وجعلوه اميراً لأهل كنوا  
 وصار أميراً في يوم الجمعة في العشي واقاموا اهل كنوا في  
 الفرح واللعب وضرب الطبول الى سبعة ايام . / ثم بعد ما  
 ولى الامر دعاه غُومَنَه في دُنْغُرْمٍ وسار هو مع امرائه وعماله  
 الى دُنْغُرْمٍ . فلما وصل لزنغيرُو وصل الى حضرة الغمنا  
 وتكلم معه وشكره وفرح بقدومه وزاد له الدرجة ثم سلمه  
 ورجع اهله الى كنوا واقام في شان امارته .

### Translation

A man—a student (*tilmīdh*) called °Abd Allāh al-Ghadāmīsī—came to a town which is called Kano, which is the land of the Sūdān, from North Africa during the time of

its emir °Alī b. °Abd Allāh al-Fallāī.<sup>23</sup> He stayed for eight months and then there befell in those days a troublesome piece of news. °Alī, the emir of the land, was alarmed by that news, but kept that secret and did not tell anyone about it. When fear entered him he gathered all his officers (*umarā'*), those of the city and of the countryside. When they were gathered before him he said to them: 'Know, O people, that I am intending to journey to Sokoto. Let those of you who are under my command and in obedience to me bestir themselves to travel with me.' As a result, he gathered all of his commanders and officials and those who had anything to do / with his court and broadcast to them the news that he was journeying to Sokoto to visit his fathers and grandfathers.<sup>24</sup> They remained two months or more after that making themselves ready. When the time for travel approached, Emir °Alī summoned his agent, the *sarkin shanu* [ ]<sup>25</sup> and advised him. The emir said to him: 'O *sarkin shanu*, the time for travel has come, that is to say, I wish to travel to Sokoto to visit our fathers and grandfathers, and you, I have put this land in your charge, its urban and its rural areas, and all its district heads (*aqyāl*). This is my house[hold] which I put in your hands. I have made it a trust in your charge, so protect this trust to the utmost degree. I have ordered *ma'aji* °Uthmān<sup>26</sup>

23 °Alī, known in Hausa as Aliyu Babba, became the sixth emir of Kano in 1894 at age thirty-six. On his reign, and in general on the events described in the present document, see Adamu Mohammed Fika, *The Kano Civil War and British Over-Rule, 1882-1940*, Ibadan 1978. See also Paul Lovejoy *et alii*, 'C.L. Temple's "Notes on the History of Kano" [1909]: a lost chronicle on political office', *Sudanic Africa*, 4, 1993, 7-76.

24 *Amīr al-mu'minīn* °Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr °Atīq died in 1902, and al-Ṭāhir, a grandson of °Atīq was appointed. The various views on the reason for Emir °Alī's visit to Sokoto just before the British attack on Kano are discussed in the commentary.

25 A blank space is left in the original. The office of *sarkin shanu*, literally 'lord of the cows' is one of the highest-ranking palace offices in Kano.

26 The *ma'aji* is the official in charge of the treasury.

to assist you in protecting the city together with the Arab community, the people of Ghadames and Tripoli. If anything happens to you / in the city or if enemies come from any direction, act in concert and with one mind, and take counsel with the Arab community so they may assist you with advice.'

After this Emir °Alī called *ma'aji* °Uthmān and spoke to him saying: 'O *ma'aji* °Uthmān, be aware that I am travelling to visit [my] ancestors in Sokoto, and I have placed you and the *sarkin shanu* in charge of this land. If anything happens to you in the city or you receive news of enemies from any quarter, act in concert with the community [of Arabs]<sup>27</sup> who are living in this city, since we share this city with them. We have family and dependents and slaves and they have dependents and property and slaves. If anything happens in the city, seek them out for advice, for they are people of sound opinion. Therefore do not disdain their opinion. Now I am intending to go. If God Most High so ordains, / I shall leave from here on 4 Shawwāl.<sup>28</sup> As for Kofar Kansakali, that is the western gate, do not close it, on account of sending messages between us.<sup>29</sup> Then Emir °Alī of Kano said to his aforementioned slave, that is the *sarkin shanu*: 'You are my agent, you are my deputy. Whatever happens in this city after our departure, inform us about it in a letter, and do not let messengers from you and *ma'aji* °Uthmān cease coming to

27 Since the phrasing here parallels the wording of the charge given to the *sarkin shanu*, it is to be presumed that the writer merely omitted the words 'of Arabs' by an oversight.

28 Apparently 4 Shawwāl 1320, corresponding to 3 January 1903.

29 Kofar Kansakali— 'the Gate of the Sword'—is close to Dalla Hill at the western edge of the perimeter which encloses the city itself and extensive agricultural lands. On the walls and gates of Kano, see H.L.B. Moody, *The Walls and Gates of Kano City*, n.p. [Lagos]: Department of Antiquities, n.d.; *idem*, 'The walls and gates of Kano City: historical and documentary references', *Kano Studies*, iii, 1967, 12-26; *idem*, 'Ganuwa—the walls of Kano city', *Nigeria Magazine*, xcii, 1967, 19-38 and Bawuro M. Barkindo, 'The Gates of Kano City. A Historical Survey' in B.M.Barkindo (ed.), *Studies in the History of Kano*, Ibadan 1983, 1-30.

us. As for the affairs of *sharīʿa*, they will be in [the hand of] *qāḍī* [ ],<sup>30</sup> and the affairs of the city, these shall be in your two hands, you and *maʿaji*. If God decrees for us this journey, and we travel to Sokoto, and God Most High returns us [to Kano] safely, and I find you prospering and I see that you have undertaken all that I counselled you to do, I will do something for you which will please you both with something which shall be a better compensation, for God Most High has mentioned in the Noble Qurʾān: “Is the recompense of goodness, anything other than goodness?”<sup>31</sup> / —may our Lord unite us again with you at a blessed moment.’

Then after that Emir ʿAlī of Kano went forth on 4 Shawwāl, and together with his entire retinue made up of his commanders, his officials, his bodyguard (*shuraṭāʿ*),<sup>32</sup> and his army which he raised here in the Sūdān, for they know nothing about standing armies, since they are non-Arabs. Twenty-six days after they left Kano,<sup>33</sup> news came from a westerly direction that the English *turawa*<sup>34</sup> had reached Kano from the direction of Zaria. On first entering the land of Kano they found a village called Bēbēji,<sup>35</sup> and they sacked it and killed the headman (ʿarīf)<sup>36</sup> known as *sarkin Fulani* Bēbēji. When news reached the aforementioned *sarkin shanu* he informed *maʿaji* ʿUthmān, and told him of all the news he had been given to hear, to the effect that the English *turawa* had entered the land of Kano and had entered

30 A blank space is left in the original.

31 Q 55:60.

32 Hausa: *dogarai*.

33 That is, on 30 Shawwāl/29 January 1903.

34 That is, ‘fair-skinned, white persons’, a Hausa term for Europeans and Arabs. This term and its singular, *bature*, are used throughout al-Ghadāmīṣī’s memoir for the British, and have been retained as such in the translation.

35 A small town about thirty miles south-west of Kano, and evidently regarded as a border town for Kano emirate in this direction.

36 The author’s terminology is inconsistent, first referring to *sarkin Fulani* as ʿarīf and then as *amīr*.

Bēbēji and killed its emir, the *sarkin Fulani*.

When / *ma'aji* ʿUthmān heard that news he sent his messenger to the Arab community resident in Kano city. When they were assembled before him he informed them what had happened based on what he had heard of the fearful news. Then he said to them: ‘What advice [have you] and what strategy for this affair?’ They said to him: ‘Be aware, O *ma'aji*, that we are strangers in this land. We have no advice about anything, nor any strategy for this matter. It is simply that if they came intending to make war on us and caught us in our houses, we would fight them in defence of our possessions and our lives, in accordance with what [the Prophet], may God bless him and grant him salvation, said: “Whoever dies defending his property dies as a martyr to it; and whoever dies defending his person dies a martyr to it”. We have nothing to say beyond that.’ Then *ma'aji* ʿUthmān said to them: ‘Understand my words and be aware that our emir ʿAlī, when he left here, commended you to us, saying that if anything occurred in the city’s affairs or there was news of enemies, we should consult with you and not disdain your opinion / since we share together with you in this city, having half of it each. In sum, listen to my words now. We want you to help us and to aid the sultan to defend his country against the enemies.’ They said to him: ‘*Ma'aji*, release us to go off to our houses’. So the *ma'aji* released them, and he saw no sign of any sort of help from them. So they returned to their houses and in the evening a messenger went back to them summoning them. They all assembled once again before *ma'aji* ʿUthmān, and he said to them: ‘O people, what is your opinion about this matter?’ They said: ‘We accept whatever God shall do with us’. Then he said to them: ‘If God brings us to morning safe and sound, attend all of you with your slaves before the city wall, and you shall find me at Bēbēji gate, so we shall see what God will do with us’. They said: ‘We hear what you say. May our Lord give us victory over them, for He is the best of victors.’

Then *ma'aji* °Uthmān sent his messenger to Sokoto with a letter informing the emir / of what had happened in the city of Kano since his departure.

The next day, Tuesday,<sup>37</sup> in the morning, some of the Arabs rode with their slaves and went towards the city gate and stopped by the wall inside the gate, with their weapons in their hands accompanied by their retainers (*ghilmān*). Shortly afterwards we saw the men who had ridden out with *ma'aji* °Uthmān galloping on their horses, having turned tail and fled. They reached their houses in disorder and in great fright, since they had witnessed something the like of which they had never before seen in this world, and they were extremely scared. After they returned to their houses they were joined by their fellow citizens who had stayed behind and they asked them what the story was. They said: 'We saw something that would drive rabbits from their lairs'. Their fellow citizens said: / 'What makes you say that?' They said: 'Yes, it is true, for we saw something which would drive us out of this city on this very day'. Their fellow citizens said: 'What is the thing that you saw that so scared you?' They said: 'We witnessed the English Christians. We saw them with our very eyes with their soldiers entering this land, and with a mighty noise, that is *rigimar* in Hausa,<sup>38</sup> from firearms and artillery (*madāfi*°), and their soldiers were too numerous to be counted. Yes, these are the terrors we witnessed beneath the city wall.'

Shortly afterwards we were in the city and we heard guns being fired, the gun called *mai ruwa*.<sup>39</sup> When they fired it the first time they broke the city gate. Then they fired a second time and the gatekeeper's house was smashed at once.<sup>40</sup> The shell (*al-qunbula*), that is *arṣās* in

37 The following day, 1 Dhū 'l-Qa°da, was a Friday.

38 The author gives Hausa glosses for some terms, indicating this by a word or phrase such as '°*ajam*' or 'bi'l-°*ajami*'.

39 The Maxim gun, a machine gun cooled by water (*ruwa*).

40 In fact, a considerable shelling of the Zaria (Dukawuya) gate by 75 mm artillery failed to open it up, and an assault was then made on

Hausa,<sup>41</sup> pierced the body of the gatekeeper and he died instantly. When the Arabs heard this account they said: ‘O Lord, protect us from the evils of this day. God is sufficient for us; how fine a guardian is He.’ They then scattered, each one to his house, and went in, bolted the door and ascended to the roof. Shortly afterwards the *turawa* entered the centre of Kano city. When they entered they and their soldiers made for the emir’s palace. When they reached the palace they entered by Kofar Kudu,<sup>42</sup> and their commander was called *mai kwagiri*.<sup>43</sup> They went inside the palace and found a man standing at the door with a drawn sword in his hand. They did not know who he was, but he was the *sarkin shanu* who had been put in charge of the emir’s palace and his family whom he had left with him in the city. When the *bature mai kwagiri* saw him he shot him in the chest with his gun, and the *sarkin shanu* fell down dead on the spot, like the one who died the previous day.<sup>44</sup> They entered the emir’s palace, together with their soldiers with the porters / behind them carrying their boxes and provisions. When they entered the palace they found no one except the women and children. They made camp at that house, in the midst of the palace of ʿAlī, the emir of Kano.<sup>45</sup>

Then in the evening at about 3 o’clock they sent their messenger to *mai unguwa* Mālam Na-Marwa,<sup>46</sup> saying to

the Kawbuga gate in the same manner. In the end a party of soldiers had to use ladders and scale the wall to effect an entry. See Richard H. Dugate, *The Conquest of Northern Nigeria*, London 1985, 179.

41 Hausa: *arsas*, ‘bullet’, from Arabic *al-raṣās*, ‘lead, bullet’. The Arabic *qunbula* means ‘bomb, shell’. Since the Hausa had no experience of artillery shells, they had no specialized term for them, and hence the writer glosses with the word for bullet.

42 That is, the south gate.

43 Literally, ‘the one with a cane’. A cane or swagger-stick was part of the formal dress of a British military officer.

44 That is, *sarkin Fulani* Bēbēji.

45 Crozier remarks that the Emir’s palace was ‘big enough to accommodate the whole expedition in comfort’, see *Five Years Hard*, 139.

46 The title *mai unguwa* means ‘ward head’. The name Na-Marwa

him: ‘We the *turawa* came to this city today, and we want you, O *mai unguwa* Mālam Na-Marwa, to inform the Arab community who are resident in this city that they should all assemble before us, leaving no one behind at home either young or old, free or slave. Let us see them all responding to us and to our desire.’ The aforementioned *mai unguwa* called on them and informed them of what he had been sent to say [?] and they said: ‘We hear and obey’. And these people assembled and went to the presence of the *turawa*, who were encamped at the gate of the emir’s palace.

As for the student who has been recounting this story, he did not go with them for fear of the *turawa*, lest he be killed. Yes, when the Arab community went towards the *turawa* they met them at the gate of the emir’s palace. They were a great company sitting on chairs in rows, with their chief in the middle of them. When the Arab community presented themselves to the *turawa*, they brought them close and sat them down in a place in front of them.<sup>47</sup> The chief of the *turawa* called for his interpreter—we do not know his name—and made him stand before him saying: ‘Ask this company if this is all the Arabs resident in this city’. The interpreter asked them about what the *turawa* wanted to know. They said: ‘This is how we are in this city. We left no one at home but wives and children.’<sup>48</sup> The interpreter relayed what they said to the chief of the *turawa*, who listened and was silent for a while. Then he said to the interpreter: / ‘Tell these people: “You are strangers in this land and no harm shall come to you. We did not come here on your account, or on any one else’s account.

probably indicates that he came from Marwa, a village about 10 miles south-east of Zaria.

- 47 Some sort of meeting between the British officers and the Arab community seems confirmed by Crozier’s casual remark (speaking of the days immediately following the fall of Kano): ‘We chat with Arabs and while away the time...’, see Crozier, *op. cit.*, 141.
- 48 Arabic: *al-awlād wa’l-šibyān*. The word *awlād* normally means ‘children’, but here it is probably metonymy for ‘wives’ (cf. Sudanese colloquial Arabic usage).

You do not know the reason why we came. Do you have any knowledge of that?” They said: ‘No, O Sultan, we are merchants, and we only came here on account of commerce. We know nothing of government.’

Then he said to them: ‘Be aware, O Arabs, that our coming has a reason and a cause. We were in the west, and we had a brother *bature* called Maylawni,<sup>49</sup> a senior man among us who stayed in a town called Kafīn Yāmūsā. Do you know it?’ They said: ‘We have heard of it’. ‘Yes, indeed our aforementioned brother came to this land to its emir *magaji* ‘Dan Yāmūsā under safe-conduct, and stayed with him (*jalasa ma<sup>c</sup>ahu*) so they might help one another. One day our late / brother was off guard, having been taken in by the safe-conduct and the pact which they had agreed upon with *magaji* ‘Dan Yāmūsā. He did not know that slanderers had entered in between them. Suddenly the *magaji* entered upon our late brother and killed him in cold blood without [his] having committed any fault. Our brother died, a victim of unjust homicide. The *magaji* ‘Dan Yāmūsā fled and came to the emir of Kano ʿAlī and the latter gave him shelter and honoured him most highly, giving him horses, slaves, money and a house. He honoured him to the fullest extent.<sup>50</sup> We heard this information from people about what Emir ʿAlī did for the one who wronged us and freely shed the blood of our brother. Our hearts were seared and we were extremely saddened by this. Then we resolved and desired to come here hoping to catch Emir ʿAlī with his friend the *magaji*. We reached here and did not find them.

49 That is, Captain Moloney, who was murdered in Keffi. The *magajin* Keffi fled to Kano, thus provided a perfect excuse to attack the city, as is to be seen from what follows.

50 Maimaina Jega, a retainer of *magaji* ‘Dan Yanmusa, witnessed this event, and accompanied the *magaji* to Kano. Sixty years later he recounted his experience to D.J.M. Muffett who recorded it in his *Concerning Brave Captains: Being a History of the British Occupation of Kano and Sokoto, and the Last Stand of the Fulani Forces*, London: Andre Deutsch 1964, 63-8.

However, O Arabs, I had no information that Emir °Alī had travelled to Sokoto. I swear to you, O Arabs, had we been certain and sure that the emir was not here in this city we would not have come here. I swear to you with a threefold oath,<sup>51</sup> we received intelligence whilst on our way to this city that the emir had travelled towards Sokoto. I did not give credence to this intelligence. Had I been convinced of it I would have gone to where he was. We only came here because of him and his close friend the *magaji*. Put your minds at rest regarding us. Do not fear or be downcast. Nothing shall befall you from us, nor should you be frightened.’

Then they said: ‘Now we are going to make for where °Alī and the *magaji* are. If you have buying and selling to do with your business associates, pursue your occupations in security and peace of mind. But now we desire from you something which is a matter of effort. We have some corn (*dhurra*), which is the staple food of our people and we want you to grind it for us of your own free will and in good faith, not under duress.’ They said: ‘We hear and obey. We welcome you and what you have brought.’ Then they brought out for them seventy sacks, that is *buhu* in Hausa, and ordered the porters to take them to the houses of the Arabs, and they did so. Then the Arabs divided it up among their families who were in their houses and told them to grind that corn. So the families began to grind it in the early evening, and the sky had scarcely grown dark when it was ground and ready. They brought together all that ground flour and sent word to the *turawa* camp (*ḥaḍra*) informing them that the flour of the corn flour was ready.<sup>52</sup> So they sent the porters and they carried that flour and took it to their camp. Two days later they sent another two hundred sacks and also told

51 This is a typical Arabic formula—*wa’llāhi, bi’llāhi ta’llāhi*—for asserting the truth of a statement, and no doubt comes down through a double translation for emphasis, rather than representing in any literal way what a British officer might have said.

52 Literally ‘had been found’.

them to grind it. They ground it for them in a single night. Then they sent their messenger with the porters who carried off the ground flour and took it to their camp. The *turawa* were extremely pleased and thanked them very much.

After that the *turawa* decided to go in search of the emir of Kano °Alī and his friend *magaji* ‘Dan Yāmūsā. They went off with their senior ranks (*fī ’l-kibār minhum*) and left the remainder of the soldiers to guard the city. They went towards Sokoto. According to the news we heard, the *turawa* when they left Kano, entered Dajin Rubin and there came across the Kano officers returning to their land from Sokoto. When the two parties met—their leader was Wazir Āmadu, a brother of Emir °Alī—they skirmished with the *turawa* at their first encounter but none of them was hurt. The Kano people fought back and there was a battle between them. Within an hour the *turawa* army defeated them and broke their ranks and they scattered in that wilderness. The *turawa* broke them up one by one, and they took to their heels and fled. When the *turawa* saw that they had scattered in the wilderness they abandoned them and let them go, and continued on to Sokoto.<sup>53</sup> The Kano officers returned and made for their houses in Kano. When they got close to the city of Kano the *turawa* came out to meet them at Kofar Kansakali (a Hausa word), led by a Kano man called Awta.

When they reached the city gate, [the *turawa*] came out of the walled city and waited for about an hour. When those officials came to enter the city they stopped them at the gate and took away all their weapons. This incident occurred in winter at mid-morning time. When they had taken away whatever weapons they had they left them and gave them permission to enter, on the understanding that everyone would go to his house, and this they did. Their leader at the time was *wambai* °Abbās.<sup>54</sup> After that the *turawa* went off to

53 Cf. Maimina Jega’s account in Muffett, *Concerning Brave Captains*, 117-37.

54 Emir °Alī’s brother and soon to be installed as emir himself by the British. The title *wambai* is given to the heir apparent in Kano, and

their quarters and they summoned the Arab community and gave them a consultation (*mushāwara*), that is to say [presented them with] a choice (*ikhtiyār*) of who is most fitted for the office of emir among the sons of °Abd Allāh.<sup>55</sup> The Arabs said to them: ‘The one most deserving of it is *wambai* °Abbās. He is the best of them, since the most senior among them, that is the wazir Aḥmad, is dead.’ The British replied: ‘Yes, indeed’. Later they asked the elders of Kano, and their choice was similar to the choice of the first group.

We now return to the account of the *turawa* who left Kano making for Sokoto after parting company with those Kano officers in that wilderness. When they entered the territory of Sokoto they joined up with their fellow *turawa* / who were residing in the town of Argungu which is one of the districts of Sokoto.<sup>56</sup> Having met up, they together made for Sokoto on Saturday evening. The battle between them began and lasted until sunset, and each group spent the night where it was. When God brought in the morning they returned to the spot of the previous day and fought—that is the *turawa* and the people of Sokoto. Within a short while the Sokoto people with their emir, who was al-Ṭāhir °Abdu, were defeated, and some were killed while others fled. The Commander of the Faithful took flight from their midst and their wazir called [ ].<sup>57</sup> Everyone made his own way in flight without turning towards his fellow man. The wazir made for the north and the emir made for the east. They all scattered in different directions, and the *turawa* entered Sokoto city and set about reassuring people with gentle words.<sup>58</sup>

They would say to people: ‘Remain in your houses and do not be afraid of us at all. Stay in security, the fight is over, so do not be scared or upset. Be at ease, no harm

in seniority he is fourth after the emir, the *galadima* and the *madaki*.

55 That is, the sons of Emir °Abd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm Dabo (*reg.* 1855-1882).

56 Argungu was the capital of Kebbi, and was not a district of Sokoto.

57 Left blank in the manuscript. The wazir was Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, who later negotiated the surrender of Sokoto to the British.

58 Cf. Jega’s account in Muffett, *Concerning Brave Captains*, 144 ff.

shall come to you.’ They began to reassure them with words until people felt secure. Then after that a *bature* called Governor Wallace came,<sup>59</sup> and the body of Sokoto officers assembled and made peace with them and they were content with it. As for the *sarkin musulmi*,<sup>60</sup> he was not among them, for he had fled, having lied and out of ignorance claimed that he was able to make war on God’s People whom God Most High had sent with justice and whom God had made his vicegerents on His earth. They did not realise that [which came] from God, because of their ignorance and lies until they saw God’s judgment executed before their very eyes. /

As for the emir of Kano ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Fallāṭī whose name we mentioned previously, according to what we heard in accounts about him (*min khabarihi*), when he was sitting on the throne of his kingdom, one day a messenger came called Baban Kano. He came from Lokoja and in his hand was a letter from Adamu Jakada.<sup>61</sup> When the messenger came he entered upon the emir of Kano ʿAlī and greeted him and handed over to him the letter which the emir took from him and opened it and read it silently in front of his assembly. What he saw in the letter was:

‘From Adamu, messenger (*jakada*) of the Christians:

59 William Wallace was not a ‘governor’. A former Agent-General of the Royal Niger Company, he had been appointed Deputy High Commissioner when the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria was proclaimed on 1 January 1900. The High Commissioner was Brig.-Gen. Frederick D. Lugard.

60 The Hausa equivalent of the Arabic *amīr al-muʿminīn*.

61 Adamu Jakada (‘the courier’) was from a wealthy Agalawa trading family. He received an advanced Islamic education and became a teacher before entering the service of the Royal Niger Company in the 1880s and eventually became a political officer. For a while after the British conquest he was employed by Emir ʿAbbās as a broker between the emir and the British, but was relieved of his post in 1907. Thereafter his fortunes varied, and he made a fortune and lost it. He died in 1943. See Philip A. Afeadie, ‘Adamu Jakada’s intelligence reports, 1899-1901’, *Sudanic Africa*, 5, 1994, 185-224.

peace. To the emir of Kano °Alī b. °Abd Allāh, after greetings, this is the messenger Baba Kano. I have sent him to you with this letter and he is to inform you orally. However, be aware, O Emir, that the English *turawa* are coming to you. This is inevitable and unstoppable, so be prudent and look to your affairs. If you say that you can fight them, then arise and wake yourself from sleep and make ready. If you consider that you are not able to fight them, then submit to them and ask them for safe-conduct in humility and with good words and a generous gift, so that you may obtain wellbeing for yourself and for all of your people and your household. I have counselled you for God's sake. If you will agree to my counsel then—God be praised— nothing shall befall you. If not, then I shall not counsel you again.'

When °Alī read that letter in his council before his officers he did not disclose anything to them, but concealed what he had heard from Jakada. Then he turned to the messenger and said: 'Be aware, O Baba Kano, that I shall not submit to the Christians, nor shall I ask safe-conduct from them. Rather I shall do battle with them if they come to us here in our land.' He said these words openly before the assembly, but in secret it was not like that, for in his heart he had / determined upon flight and he hid that from his council. From that day forth he began to prepare himself for travel to Sokoto. Then he readied himself and made for Sokoto so that the *turawa* should not catch him in Kano city, and he intended to flee.

When they reached Sokoto they stayed a few days, then went off to the east of Sokoto intending to return to their land of Kano. When they reached the land of Zamfara they entered a town called Gidan Goga<sup>62</sup> and stayed there with their emir °Alī. After the sunset prayer Emir °Alī went out from that house [where he was staying] and sat by the door of the house in the antechamber (*dihlīz*)<sup>63</sup> with a small group,

62 Birnin Goga.

63 *Dihlīz* is the Arabic translation of the Hausa *zaure*, a circular entrance chamber leading to the main courtyard of a house. Teachers often hold their classes in the *zaure*.

since it was the first part of the night. Suddenly there came his wife called Kuburā upon her horse [accompanied by] retainers. When she reached the door of the house she entered into the antechamber. Her husband °Alī saw her and recognized her / and stood up and went inside. He said to her: ‘What’s wrong with you Kuburā? What is the news?’ She said: ‘O Emir, the Christians have entered your abode and have looted your city and settled themselves in the centre of your palace, the dependents (*al-°iyāl*) have scattered and they have shattered your kingdom’. He said: ‘There is no god but God. When did this happen?’ She said to him: ‘Thirty days after you left’. Then he said to her: ‘What strategem is there, what plan?’ She said to him: ‘If you desire to escape with your life, then flee from here and do not go to Kano. Be aware that he who flees escapes. After we left that city we heard that [the *turawa*] had come out searching for you. Since we left Kano we have known neither day nor night, but have travelled day and night so we might find you and inform you of what happened after you left.’ When °Alī heard these words from her he was perplexed and the matter troubled him, / so he consulted her about flight. She said to him: ‘Flee in order to save yourself from the evil of your enemies. Fleeing is better for you than humiliation.’ So he rose in the middle of the night and prepared himself and those of his dependents who were with him in his camp (*ḥaḍra*). He raised his standards above his riding beasts (*rafa°a ālātahu fawq al-bahā°im*) and took along his family with him and made off with them in the direction of Gobir.

As for the rest of his party, when God ushered in the morning they rode their horses and came to the door of their emir, but did not find him in the house. They asked news of him, since when he fled his party had no information. People said to them: ‘°Alī has fled during the night’. The wazir said: ‘What is the evidence for that?’ He was told: ‘His wife Kuburā arrived here yesterday and told him that the Christians had entered Kano and plundered it and had made camp in

his house'. Then the wazir Āmadu said: 'There is no might or strength save in God. / To God we belong and to Him shall we return. Where did this man go? He has caused us disgrace. Why did he flee?' Then the wazir Aḥmad gathered all his fellow men and informed them of what had happened, and what their brother [the emir] had done. They said to him: 'We are under your orders in obedience to God and to you. We delegate matters to you, so see what you think for you are the senior among us, so get us back to our homes in Kano.' Then the wazir said to them: 'Let every one of you ride his horse and let us make for our houses in Kano'. They said: 'We follow you'. Then they departed to return to Kano.

We return to the story of *wambai* °Abbās. When people chose him in preference to his peers he was appointed to the emirship by the Christians. They made him emir of the people of Kano, and he became emir on a Friday in the evening. The people of Kano rejoiced and celebrated and beat drums for seven days. After he acceded to office the governor in Dungurum summoned him and he and his officers and officials travelled to Dungurum. When they reached Zungeru they went to be received by the governor. He spoke to the emir and thanked him and expressed pleasure at his coming. He gave him an increase in rank. Then he released him and the emir returned to Kano and undertook the government of his emirate.