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Volume IV

The Writings of Western Sudanic Africa



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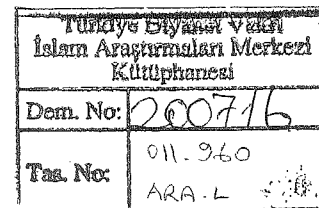
THE WRITINGS OF
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al-Bakkā'ī, who took up residence in Timbuktu, and worked to retain the city's independence in the face of attempts at domination by Aḥmad Lobbo and his successors, and of the Tijānī shaykh al-ḥājj 'Umar, who established a state based on Segou in the early 1860s.

In the closing years of the nineteenth century, two grandsons of Sī. Muḥammad distinguished themselves by their differing reactions to French colonial overrule. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn declared a *jihād* against the French, following their occupation of Timbuktu in 1894, and continued to present a menace to them in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Sh. Bāy b. Sī. 'Umar, a scholar and man of saintly repute, took up residence in the Adraḥ-n-Iforas, and encouraged both the Iforas and the Ahoggar Tuareg to avoid conflict with the French. He came to be recognized by the French as a judicial authority in the region, though he did not hold a designated post.

The Kunta produced numerous scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of whom the best-known and most prolific were direct descendants of Sh. Sī. al-Mukhtār al-Kabīr. Their Qādiriyya disciples carried the *ṭarīqa* widely over western Sudanic Africa, though the Tijāniyya became a powerful rival to it in the twentieth century.

al-MUKHTĀR b. AḤMAD b. ABĪ BAKR al-Kuntī al-Wāfī, Abū Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, b. 1142/1729, d. 1226/29 May 1811

Fath, 152-3; Marty (1920), i, 27-62; Batran (1971, 1974, 1979, 2001); McDougall (1986); *EI* (2), v, 393-5; *CCIM*, art. by Mahmoud Abdu Zouber, pp. 215-8. See also *Missions to the Niger*, ed. E. M. Bovill, Cambridge, 1964 i, 301, n. 3.

He was born in the region of Kathīb/Erg Oralla a large dune just north of Mabrūk. His father died when he was ten, and he was educated by his brothers Muḥammad Abū Ḥāmiya and Abū Bakr, and by his maternal grandfather Bādi b. al-Ḥabīb. He also spent time living with and studying among the Kel Inalbash branch of the Kel al-Sūq, and the Kel Ḥurma. His principal teacher, however, was Sī. Alī b. al-Najīb of Arawān, a leading shaykh of the Qādiriyya in the region. He spent the years 1754-7 studying in Morocco, and on his return married a distant cousin of his, a pious and learned woman simply known as al-Shaykha (d. 14 January 1810).

On the death of Sī. 'Alī, he succeeded him as shaykh of the Qādiriyya, and established a *zāwiya* at Bū 'l-Anwār in Azawād, some 400 km. NE of Timbuktu [15-20 km NE of the well of Aneschchag, 18° 42' N - 1° 02' W]. From there he exercised his intercessory powers over various inter-tribal disputes, especially those of his own tribe with the Barābīsh. He was on especially good terms with their chief Muḥammad b. Raḥḥāl and supported the succession of the latter's son 'Alī. Relations with the Kel Antasar, however, deteriorated, and hostility remained between them and the Kunta until the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, Sī. al-Mukhtār retained good relations with clerical clans such as the Kel Inukundar. He was also a spiritual advisor to Kawa Ag Amma, the *amenokal* of the Ullimiden.

Sī. al-Mukhtār maintained a wide range of contacts with other Islamic leaders of the region and a network of discipleship that extended from southern Mauritania to Bornu and southwards to the forest zones of Ivory Coast and Guinea. Among those who traced their Qādirī *wird* through him were Sh. 'Uthmān b. Muḥammad Fodiye (see *ALA* II, 55), and Sh. Aḥmad Lobbo of Māsina. He was buried at his *zāwiya* at Bū 'l-Anwār.

1. *Ad'iya wa-aḥzāb*

Some collections of prayers exist without title, while several individual prayers circulate independently. These are listed first:

i) *Da'wat āyat al-kursī*

MS: Timbuktu (CEDRAB), 5624.

ii) *Du'a' al-awliyā'*

Opens: *Allāhumma laka al-ḥamd bi-kulli shay'in nuḥibbu an nuḥmada bihi.*

MSS: Timbuktu (CEDRAB), 611.

iii) *Du'ā' al-basmala*

See also no. (v) below.

MS: Timbuktu (CEDRAB), 3072.

iv) *Ḥizb al-asrār*

MSS: Rabat (KhA), D2257, pp. 614-26, J962, pp. 1-9.