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**SHUWA** (etymology of this name obscure), a group of Arabs, of nomadic origin, found by early modern times (the 19th century) in the central Sudan belt of Africa, now coming within the countries bordering on Lake Chad, sc. western Chad, north-eastern Nigeria, northern Cameroons and the south-eastern tip of Nigr.

1. History.

Their origin was in Dārḥūr and Wādāy [q.v.], and they migrated westwards at an unknown date, perhaps as early as the 14th century; in the 17th century they were present in Bagirmi [q.v.] to the southeast of Lake Chad as that nation took shape. The earliest arrivals adopted the Kanuri language, but in the main they preserved their Arabic dialect, distinct from the Arabic of North Africa and the Western Sudan [see below, 2.]: A further impetus to their westwards migration was when, in the early 19th century, Shaykh Muhammad al-Kānemī [q.v.] used them as aides against the eastwards advance of the Fulani. The Shuwa do not seem to have passed beyond Borno or Bornu [q.v.] in northeastern Nigeria, and only small numbers went southwards to the Mardawa and Adamawa regions. Some of the Shuwa remained pure camel nomads (the *abbālā*), but others converted to cattle nomadism (the *baqqāra*) and some became agriculturists around the southern shores of Lake Chad, where there arose Shuwa villages, cultivation being done by Negro serfs or clients. They do not, however, seem ever to have formed towns or to have had a permanent home centre. Hence they were often in a dependent relationship with local potentates, such as the Kanembu *Mais* of Kanem. In 19th century Borno, many Shuwa held high court and administrative posts and the Shehu rulers took their womfolk as wives.

The Shuwa were a significant factor in the Islamisation of the region. Two of the most important and

influential nomad groups in Bornu, the Awlād Sāra and the Awlād Muḥārib, claimed Sharif [q.v.] status, and traditions of eastern Hausaland include the chiefs of the Shuwa amongst those allegedly receiving copies of the Qur'ān from the Prophet Muḥammad's own hands. According to Trimmingham, the Shuwa, unusually for the Muslims in this region, are Ḥanafī in madhhab.

**Bibliography:** Of older bibl., see A. Schultze, *The sultanate of Bornu*, Eng. tr. London, 1913; O. and C.L. Temple, *Notes on the tribes, provinces, emirates and states of the northern provinces of Nigeria*, 1919, 1922; J.S. Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, Oxford 1959; idem, *A history of Islam in West Africa*, London 1962. See now the indices to *Camb. hist. of Africa*, iii-v, esp. H.J. Fisher in iv, 111; and see BORNŪ; KĀNEM; ĀD in Suppl. (Ed.)

2. Dialect.

The term Shuwa (شوى) refers to the spoken Arabic dialect and its approximately 2 million speakers who currently inhabit the former territories of Bagirmi [q.v.] and Kanem [q.v.]-Borno, today's Borno State [see BORNŪ], Northeast Nigeria, and parts of Cameroon and Chad. The largest concentration of Shuwa Arabs presently lives in and around Maiduguri. There is no consensus on the etymology of the word Shuwa. The people themselves favour a Kanuri [q.v.] (Nilo-Saharan) etymon *šawa* "beautiful"; however, much more probable is an Arabic source *šuwāh* "sheep" (sing. *šāh*), demonstrating that the Shuwa are part of Baggāra Arab culture.

Shuwa Arabic is but one micro-dialect of a distinct Sudanic macro-dialect spoken between Lake Chad and the Red Sea. A major characteristic of Shuwa Arabic is the preservation of Old Arabic (OA) short vowels, especially *a*, in unaccented open syllables (*kabīr* "big"), which have elided in the Maghrib and the Levant. Another is that it has no diglossia with Modern Standard Arabic.

Some principal features of the Shuwa dialect are:

- (1) the OA pharyngeals have become laryngeals or zero (OA *qa'ad* > *gaat* "he stayed"; OA *aḥmar* > *aḥamar* "red")
- (2) OA *ġ* > *q* (*qanam* "sheep")
- (3) OA *m* > *b* in a few lexemes containing nasals (*bakān* "place")
- (4) OA *ḏ* > *d* in a few lexemes containing sibilants (*šadar* "trees")
- (5) the development of an inchoative-intransitivising prefix *al-* (*fākkār* "remind", *al-fākkār* "remember")
- (6) verbal reduplication (*lāmma* "gather", *lāmlam* "gather a lot")
- (7) final stress in *-i* "my", *af'al* elatives, and singularative *-ā* (*bāti* "my house", *akbār* "bigger", *qanamā* "1 sheep")
- (8) front and back vowel harmony (*būṣil* "he takes", *bugūl* "he says")
- (9) syllable and word-final position devoicing (*tač* "you m.s. come", *mak'at* "place where one stays")
- (10) many loanwords (including idioms) from non-Semitic African languages, such as Kanuri, Hausa (*rās alkalām* "topic", lit. "head of the talk", *dugó* "then, afterwards" < Kanuri *dugó* "first, before")

Two major groups of Shuwa dialects can be distinguished, Eastern (E) and Western (W). The major E isoglosses are:

- (1) OA *θ* > *s* (E *sār* "bull", W: *tār*)
- (2) l. plural imperfect subject suffix is *-u* (E *nimšu* "we go", W *nimši*)
- (3) active participle with object suffix *-in* (E *kātibin* "has written it, f.", W *kātibha*)

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