



**CALIPH ATTAHIRU,1902-1903: THE LACONIC REVELATION OF
WHAT TRANSPIRED DURING HIS INSTALLATION AND
MIGRATION TO THE EAST**

YUSUF SARKINGOBIR¹, ALIYU UMAR SHARU.²

¹*Department of Biology Shehu Shagari College of Education Sokoto, Nigeria*

²*Department of Islamic Studies Shehu Shagari College of Education Sokoto,
Nigeria*

Abstract:

Sokoto Caliphate was one of the major and important formations in 19th century Africa. It was formed by the Jihadist Shehu Usman Danfodiyo on a reformation agenda which swept the whole Hausaland and it's nearby. It is on the tradition that this reformation state formed by Danfodiyo would have an appointed time of 100 years like other reformations as related by Hadith. Based on this, the Sokoto Caliphate had sustained a number of leaders amounting to 12 Caliphs. Therewith, the 12th Caliph was Muhammadu Attahiru I(bn Ahmad Atiku), the last Caliph who vigorously fought the British. The period of Attahiru was the most shortest, but one of the most important and critical in the discourse of history of Sokoto,there was scarce information about his life and contribution on the throne. Thus, the objective of this paper revolved round to discuss the life of Attahiru before ascending the throne, his encounter with the British and sequel therein. Review of related literatures and key informants interviews were carried out. In this paper laconically, it elucidated that Attahiru was born and raised at the historic town of CHIMMOLA of Gwadabawa (A military and educational center). Therein, he was one-time the head of CHIMMOLA town, a position he hold before succeeding Caliph Abdurrahman (his uncle) at Wurno. During the selection of Attahiru, there was another contender Attahiru Aliyu(who later became Sultan after the migration of Attahiru Ahmad I), but Attahiru Ahmad defeated him. The selection of Attahiru was based on his requisite knowledge of war, islam, and the then political situation. Intially, some

selectors might be for Attahiru 2, but the powerful brother of Attahiru 1, Muhammadu MAITURARE Marafa Gwadabawa exerted his military power to ensure that his elder brother succeeded the throne, when he noticed some tokens trying to change the rightful candidate. After the ascension, Attahiru was heralded with the move of British to invade Sokoto. He fought with them in 1903, and after the defeat of his army he opted for Hijra to Makkah as prophesized by Usman Danfodiyo. His migration attracted the augmentation of many inhabitants of Sokoto Caliphate including leaders. Therein, he became another threat forceful enough to completely swept the Caliphate, thus, the British had to pursue him and met with him at Bormi. At Bormi, one of the most fiercely battle occured between the British and people of Attahiru (willing to migrate, envisaging of Segu, Masina, Sudan Mahdism, Sokoto Caliphate); which led to loses to all sides. Some traditions said Attahiru was killed and his remnants entourage migrated to Sudan, Makkah, and other parts of the world. Nowadays, the descendants of Attahiru are having leadership positions at Sokoto, and Sudan Republic. Certainly, Attahiru had put all he had to put both the primary and secondary resistance to forestall the parasitic invasion of Sokoto Caliphate in 1903. This, led to the sprung of Usman Danfodiyo's works to international rather than African status.

Keywords: *Sokoto Caliphate, Caliph Attahiru, British Invasion, migration, resistance,*

Introduction

From 1804 to 1808 Shehu Uthman was able to bring under his jurisdiction all the regions of Hausaland. His major supporters in these wars were his brother Abdullahi and his son Muhammad Bello. From 1810 to 1815 the Shehu moved to Sifawa from Gwandu, where he intensified his lectures and teachings. At Sifawa, Shehu would hold lectures every morning and evening. Some days he would lecture on the Quranic interpretation, Quranic recitation, the circumstances surrounding the revelation of certain verses, and the jurisprudence of the Qur'an. He would lecture on the science of Prophetic traditions, discussing the whole range of the six sound collections of traditions, and the methodology of drawing out judgments from these. On appropriate days the Shehu would lecture on the circumstances of death, life in the graves, the

resurrection and Day of Judgment, and the hell fires and Paradise. Some days he would teach on the corruption that would fill world and the injustice which would lead to the appearance of the Mahdi, the Anti-Christ, the return of Jesus ibn Maryum, and the conditions of the Last Days. Some days were singled out for the study of the science of the purification of the soul (tasawwuf) and the methodologies of spiritual advancement. Other days the Shehu would entertain questions on jurisprudence and pass legal judgments. On Thursday nights the Shehu would teach against injustices and oppression in the Caliphate, against extortion from the poor and against the corruption of government officials. While in Sifawa, Shehu Uthman composed eleven of his most thought provoking and revolutionary works (Sayudi and Boyd, 1974; Farid, 2005; Bala and AINU, 2018; Sheriff and Altine, 2018).

In 1812 Shehu retired from active rule and appointed his brother and son at the head of the new empire. Abdullahi was placed over the western capital in Gwandu and Bello was placed over the eastern capital at Sokoto. In 1815 Shehu moved from Sifawa to Sokoto where he contented himself with writing to consolidate the Caliphate or to check the limits of the various Amirs. After, Caliph Muhammadu Bello successive Caliphs followed in Sokoto up to the time of Attahiru; the time when British invaded Sokoto in 1903. Data revealing the happenings during the time of Attahiru was very scarce. Therefore, the objective of this paper was to relate a summary of life of Attahiru especially during his ascension, his preparation for migration, battle of Sokoto, migration, and creation of Maiurno Sultanate of Sudan and the benefits therein.

Attahiru was born at CHIMMOLA, a town established by his father Caliph Ahmad Atiku. Attahiru was learned, cultured, and an erudite scholar. He was the head of CHIMMOLA before he became Sarkin Musulmi. He became 12th Sarkin Musulmi/Caliph of the Caliphate of Sokoto which was established by the great Usman Danfodiyo and his tremendous hosts. Attahiru was a devout Muslim, reasonable, open-minded and a suitable successor of Abdurrahman (Johnston, 1967).

Turbanning of Attahiru as Caliph

On 10th October the incumbent Sarkin Musulmi/Caliph Abdurrahman Atiku joined his ancestors by the will of Almighty God. Thus, there is need to select somebody who is very moulded to steer the affairs of the Caliphate in that trying

time, when the Caliphate was at the brink of invasion by the British Invaders. It was at that time exactly 100 years or circa after the Hausaland and nearby were enmeshed on one Caliphate system. This is in-line with the mandate of each reformer that his appointed time/light might reduce or halt in 100 years time. Thus, based on the knowledge, a dismay is bound to happen at the end of the initial creation of the Caliphate (haply 1808-1903, if initial years spent by Shehu on preaching and teaching were not included). After the death of Abdurrahman, the Electoral College converged consisting of Waziri, Galadiman, Marafa MAITURARE Gwadabawa, Sarkin Burmi, Sarkin Zamfara, and Sarkin Kebbi Yabo on 13th October and elected the most competent hand, who is Attahiru 1. Some of the contenders were: Attahiru Ahmad 1, Attahiru Aliyu 2, and Ummaru Sarkingobir Isa. The oath of allegiance was given to Muhammad Attahiru Ahmad 2 at the house of Waziri Buhari, instead of the traditional dwelling of mosque (this was similar to what transpired during the turbanding of Abdurrahman), and the Mubayyah was done on the third day after the death of the incumbent Caliph Abdurrahman (Hamza, 2009; Abdulqadir, 2016; Abba *et al.*, 2017;). It was related that one of the major actors who played a vital role in the selection of Attahiru was his younger brother, the very powerful Muhammadu Gwadabawa, a member of the Council of the selectors. MAITURARE hinted that if his brother was denied he would embark on military action. Due to the fear of the powerful MAITURARE the throne was given to Attahiru 1, albeit Attahiru is qualified for the job (Smaldone, 2008; Hassan *et al.*, 2019).

Attahiru was considered the best man for the job due to his spectacular peagentry including: " being a proper man; one with a valiant heart who was a tried warrior, and at the same time a man of letters, full of learning in the arts of war and it's preparation. Never at any time stopping to tyranny or oppression, he did not consort with those who did. Such men got but short shrift if they crossed his path"(Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Attahiru mounted the throne when the political situation of the Caliphate was charged due to the invasion of the British. Parable, they had already proclaimed the formation of Northern Nigeria in 1901, and onward made an intrusion in Bauchi, Bida, and Kontagora. Thus, Attahiru was well-aware of the situation and he was well-versed in military skills. Many responses were made to the intrusion of the British, among which was the proponents echoed by Caliph " I

have to inform you that we do not invite your administration in the Province of Bauchi and if you have interfered we do not want support from any one except God" as culled by (Audu and Osuala, 2015; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Handling of British Invasion by the Caliph Attahiru

When it became known to the Caliphate that the British are incline at taking over Sokoto and all its tributaries, debate on what immediate action should be excited ensued. The stakeholders ascribed to different views including: 1. Some proposed that they have to migrate and abandon the land for the Whites. Among the peak proponents to this believe was the Caliph Attahiru, the Cheif Alkali, Audu Mudi 2. Some ascribed to staying and making truce with the British, considering the knowledge they heard about the how British fought with the Caliphates of Segu, Masinah, and relations. They posited the better weapons of the British compared to their local ones, and the British had been encroaching on several fronts of African territories it will be difficult to find where to seek refuge. They believed the British will be preoccupied with the thirts of gather wealth, rather than the five pillars of Islam. The proponents of this view include Waziri Buhari, Alkali of Gwandu. Waziri elucidated that the preservation of Muslims relied on accomodation with the Turawa, emigration may turn the land into one of unbelief. It is dutiful upon some Muslims to stay in office (Paul and Hogendorn, 1990; Audu and Osuala, 2015). 3. There are those who ascribed to the need to slogging it out with the British at the battle ground to see the sequel of what Allah Almighty will brought. Then Hijra could be embark upon if the Caliphate armies failed the physical battle. One of the champions of this view was the powerful Marafa MAITURARE Gwadabawa, and he succeeded in wooing the people to follow his view (Paul and Hogendorn, 1990; Abba *et al.*,2017; Taiwo *et al.*,2017).

On February 1903 the British officer had notified the Caliph Attahiru their intention to attack Sokoto city. Based on that he converged all his district heads and decision was tooked. On Friday 13th March the Caliph set up his camp outside the walls of the Sokoto, and headed by him. On the left flank was the Sarkin Rabah, and on the right flank was the MAITURARE (a member of the selection committee of Caliph, and the best fighting man in Sokoto and a future Sultan. MAITURARE amassed about 2000 cavalry and 4, 000 foot soldiers waiting for the arrival of the British crowd. This might be due to the spies

initially sent by MAITURARE to analyze the situation of the British side. Therewith, Sokoto troops were laden with bows, arrows, and guns. The British arrived on Sunday 15th March 1903 and sequel encounter led to the overpowering of Sokoto forces. Noteworthy, during the battle of Sokoto and British forces, there is shorttime for Sokoto to be fully prepared. The Sokoto had less than half of it's usual force, since armies from KATSINA, Zamfara, and other places could not make it to Sokoto (Johnston, 1967; Abba et al., 2017).

The Hijra of Caliph Attahiru and sequel

After the Sokoto encounter which happened between the Sokoto and British forces, the Caliph Attahiru and his hosts opted for migration to reach the east/Makkah. Albeit, the British had enjoined Attahiru to stay, but he denied their request, because he don't want to live with the Christians. Due to the incline of Attahiru to leave, a vacancy was left at Sokoto. Thus, there is need to re-install another leader in Sokoto who will live with the people who are unable to opt for Hijra with Attahiru, and are ready to maintain truce with the British and embroiled in secondary resistance option. Some of the major Sokoto officials envisaging Attahiru's entourage for Hijra include: Ubandoma, Alkali Mudi Audi, Ahmed Bn Audu, Sarkin Konmi, Madaki. Amir of Kano ALIYU had migrated early to reach Makkah on the help of Attahiru who assisted him to get papers to enter Makkah (Farid, 2005). Wherever Attahiru passed amassed a large crowd, in other places the inhabitants are giving his entourage food and necessary support. Therein, the British followed Attahiru with a view to quash his possible potential to spur threat. When they reached Gusau on 13th April he had already outstripped. On 20th April 1903, Attahiru reached Kano land (particularly at Karate, the followers of Caliph became multifold) and British are still pursuing him under the command of Kano Resident. On 23rd April 1903, the British forces met with Sarkin Musulmi at village called Gormi in Kano land and battle was ensured. Consequently, the British forces had to retreat to Kano (Hamza, 2009; Abba *et al.*, 2017; Muhammed, 2020).

On 16th May 1903, the British attacked Attahiru and his people (from Hausaland, Segu, Massina, Adamawa in tenths of thousands) at a town called Bornu in the Gombe. At the end British was defeated, and their forces were forced to retreat. It shocked them, because they have to send for possible augmentation from Southern Nigeria, Lagos, Sierra Leone, and Ghana(Gold

Coast). Therewith, the British head office at Lokoja had dispatched 3 columns or more of armies of over 500 men and their weapons to attack Bormi on 29th July 1903 after they had laid siege there for days (Farid, 2005; Abba et al., 2017). In that encounter, the British had spent more than 32,710 ammunitions in a bid to throughly extirpate the town of Bormi. It was said that Caliph Attahiru passed away on that battle. There are some traditions which believed that Attahiru outstripped the British onslaught and had reached Makkah (Baba Yahaya, 2021). Among the leaders who passed away at the Burmi battle include: Alkali Audu, Waziri Shehu Gidado Gajere etc. The deceased troops may amount to 600 loyal soldiers. Therein, Attahiru delegated some people under the headship of his 5th son of Muhammadu Bello Maiurno to move to the east/ Makkah. Along this historic journey they succeeded in creating another Sultanate at Sudan (nowadays Sudan Republic) (Farid, 2005; Umar, 2010; Abba *et al.*, 2017; Yerima and Udengwu, 2019).

Among the entourage of the new leader (Bello Maiurno) installed by Attahiru to lead to the east include: Ahmed Bn Salih (Amir of Missau), Alfa Hashim, Cheif Alkali of Sokoto Ahmad, Alkali Audu Mudi. Therein, Ahmed reached eastern Sudan and established Hadija, Alfa Hashim made it to Madina, Calip Muhammad Bello made it to Sudan and established another Sultanate which is still viable and significant (Farid, 2005).

On March 21 1903, the remaining Sokoto leaders such as Waziri, Galadiman, Marafa MAITURARE Gwadabawa (who later became Sarkin Musulmi), Magajina Gari etc gathered and selected new Sultan, as Muslims cannot be stranded leaderless whichever the situation happened (Farid, 2005; Abba *et al.*, 2017).

Selected children of Caliph Attahiru and their hegemony domains

Based on the available information obtained the following children of Caliph Attahiru compiled:

- Amadu Maichimmola
- Maigandi Karami (Makkah)
- Shehu Madawaki
- Shehu Maiurno
- Mamman Sani
- Abdu Goshin Bauna

- Isiyaka- Maigari
- Madi
- Aliyu
- Bello Maiurno

Presently, they are holding the hegemony of Sultan Maiurno Sudan Republic and Bunun Kalaba(a village head of Kalaba village of Gwadabawa local government, Sokoto state, Nigeria)(Ummaru, 1998; Abba *et al.*,2017).

Sultan of Maiurno Sudan Republic

Attahiru 1 was born at Chimmola of Gwadabawa, Sokoto Caliphate. He was raised at Chimmola to the family of Sarkin Musulmi Ahmadu Atiku bn Shehu Danfodio. Attahiru had established a village called Darnar Kango when he was a prince. Attahiru was very learned, erudite, and well-cultured. Attahiru became Sarkin Musulmi or Caliph in 1902-1903. Circa, he spent about 9 months on the throne. His period was very short but, very interesting in the history of Sokoto Caliphate, because it was the time when the Independence of Sokoto Caliphate was at the verge on been threaten by British Invaders. He came on throne in a period of great challenges and hardship. Attahiru in the course of his reign he demonstrated courage, virility, and commitment to safeguard the tradition of Islam and his forefathers (Ummaru, 1999; Farid, 2005). After the fall of Sokoto City, Attahiru migrated towards the east, but he was vigorously fought and killed by the British forces at Bormi in the now Gombe state. Before his death he delegated his son and entourage to reach Makkah. Part of this delegation reached Makkah, part of it became dispersed to many parts of the world such as America, Mali and relations. One of Attahiru’s children Muhammadu Bello Maiurno established a city called Maiurno (bearing his name) at present Sudan Republic. The descendants of Attahiru are still bearing the Sarkin Musulmi or Sultan of Maiurno City in Sudan Republic (Farid, 2005; Jabo, 2008; Abba, 2017; Sarkingobir, 2020; Sarkingobir,2021ab). The scions of Attahiru that had been on Maiurno sultanate were listed in table below:

Table 1: The descendants of Sarkin Musulmi Attahiru on the throne of Maiurno Sultanate

<i>Serial number</i>	Name	Title	Reign
<i>1</i>	Muhammadu Bello Maiurno bn Sarkin	Sarkin Musulmi	1903-1940

	Musulmi Attahiru		
2	Muhammadu Tahir bn Maiyurno	Sultan	1940-1969
3	Muhammadu Bello bn Tahir	Sultan	1969-1970
4	Alhaji Abubakar bn Tahir	Sultan	1970-2016
5	Ali bn Muhammadu Tahir	Sultan	2016- Date



Figure 1: At Sarkingobir Gwadabawa palace. The one in the middle is the Sultan of Maiyurno Sultan Ali, the one in white turban is the Sarkingobir Gwadabawa Muhammadu Lawal Zayyana (descendant of Maiturare). The one in black turban is Sarkin Kudun Sifawa



Figure 2: The one in white gown was Sarkin Rafin Illela Muhammadu Tukur (Scion of Maiturare), and the one in Alkibba (upper gown) was the Mustapha Balla Sardaunan Maiurno (descendant of Caliph Attahiru)

Significance of the Hijra of Attahiru

Many positive effect can be tapped from the resistance put by Caliph Attahiru against the British parasitic invasion of Sokoto Caliphate. He had forcefully fought the British and died doing. Therein, he dissipate light of Shehu's reform to other parts of the world. Due to his Hijra another flank was added to the Sokoto Caliphate by creation of Sultanate at Sudan. It also led to spread of Shehu's cause to Mali, USA, Makkah, Uk and relations; which are still viable and waiting for the disclosure of the real Mahdi.

Conclusion

Forsooth, Attahiru was a high moral and educational stance. He was learned in war and battle affairs. He had prior experience of leadership by heading CHIMMOLA and later ascended the throne as Caliph in 1902. His time was characterized with vehement resistance to British Invasion of Sokoto. Later, hie followers created another Sultanate at Sudan Republic and sprung the Shehu's jihad to multifold parts of the world.

References

- Abba, A., Jumare, I.B., and Aliyu, S.S. (2017). Sultans of Sokoto: A biographical history since 1804. Kaduna: Arewa House, Centre for historical and Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna.
- Abdulqadir, U.A. (2016). Traditional rulers and security administration in Nigeria: Challenges for the 21st century. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 21(8):1-11.
- Audu, M.S., and Osuala, U.S. (2015). The British conquest and resistance of Sokoto Caliphate, 1897-1903: Crisis, conflicts and resistance. *Historical Letters*, 22:39-43.
- Ayama, B.M. (2018). Takaitaccen tarihin Masarautar Gwadamawa. Sokoto: Kalenjeni Printing Press Sokoto.
- Bala, A.A., and AINU, H.A. (2018). The role of Shyakh Uthman Bn Fodiyo in teaching and Da'awah activities towards the spreading the Sunnah and Combating Bid'ah in the Bilad Al-Sudan. *International Journal of arts and Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(8):34-38.
- Farid, S.F. (2005). Zaman 'n-Nasaara 'The Hour of the Christians' African Muslim Resistance to European Colonialism. Sankore Institute of Islamic - African Studies International. www.sankore.org/www.siiasi.org
- Hamza, I. (2009). "Chargill's Mistakes": A study of British policies on the Madaki District, Kano Emirate, northern Nigeria, c 1903-1919. A PhD Dissertation submitted at York University.
- Hassan, I., AZM, M.N.L., Lawan, M.I. (2019). Drama, history, and postcolonial resistance in Northern Nigeria: A review of Ahmed Yerima's Attahiru. *Arabian World English Journal*, 3(2):165-176.
- Jabo, U.S.B. (2008). Takaitaccen tarihin Sarkin Gobir: Alhaji Muhammadu Zayyanu (MFR) da Masarautar Gwadamawa.
- Johnston, H.A.S. (1967). The Fulani Empire of Sokoto. London, England: Oxford University Press.
- Muhammad, M.G. (2020). Western Education and British Invasion and subjugation of Muslim land in northern Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*, vii(iv):234-238.
- Paul, E.L., and Hogendorn, J. S. (1990). Revolution mahdism and resistance to colonial rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905-6. *The Journal of African History*, 31(2):217-244.
- Sarkingobir, Y. (2020). The brief history of the 7th Sarkingobir of Gwadamawa, Alhaji Muhammadu Zayyanu MFR. *International Journal of Educational Research and Studies*, 2(1): 01-06.
- Sarkingobir, Y. (2021a). A brief account of Gwadamawa Semi-Emirate/ Metropolitan district: Yesterday and today. *Frontiers of knowledge Journal Series International Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(1):1- 35.
- Sarkingobir, Y. (2021b). The role of traditional hegemony in community development: A case study of Gwadamawa district, Sokoto state, Nigeria (1931-1968). *Frontiers of knowledge Journal Series International Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(1): 35-51.
- Sayudi, S. and Boyd, J. (1974). Infakul Maisuri Na sarkin Musulmi Muhammadu Bello. *Fassara a takaice*. Zaria, Nigeria: Northern Nigerian Publishing Company Limited
- Sheriff, V.F., and Altine, Z. (2018). The struggle of Shaykh Uthman Bn Foduye in reformation of faith and social vices among the people of Gobir Kingdom: a critical analysis. *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 886-891.

- Smaldone, J.P. (2008). Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: Historical and sociological perspectives. African Studies Series 19. UK; Cambridge University Press. www.cambridge.org.
- Taiwo, A.S.O., Oladipupo, A. A., and Michael A.O. (2017). Psyche, nightmare and religion: precursors of colonial conquest in Ahmed Yerima's Attahiru. *Advances in Language and Literacy Studies*,8(3):32-37.
- Tibenderana, P.K. (1997). The making and unmaking of Sultan of Sokoto Muhammadu Tambari; 1922-1931. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*,9 (1):93-134.
- Umar M.S.(2010). Islam and colonialism: Intellectual responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British colonial rule. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*,1(2):239-243.
- Ummaru, U.J. (1999). *Daular Atikawa*. An unpublished document prepared by Danmasanin Gwadabawa Ummaru Jekada Ummaru.
- Yaya, H.G.(Sun,January 17, 2021). Tomb of Sultan who fought the British neglected in ghostly Mbormi. Dailytrust. www.dailytrust.com.
- Yerima, A., Udengwa, N.(2019). Unstable geographies, history, and theatrical expressions: A study of three Nigerian plays. *The creative Artist: African Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*,13(1):39-58.