

## Between Sokoto and Agadez: Inter-Ethnic Hierarchy in the Nineteenth Century

‘Ader, a sort of peninsula of cultivations stretching into the nomadic steppe, has played an inconspicuous role in the history of Hausa peoples. It has always existed apart, retired within itself, without a conquest spirit, depending alternatively on Kebbi or Sokoto to the South, or on the Tuareg to the North (Kel-Aïr, Oullimindens de l’Azaouac and Kel Gress)’.<sup>1</sup>

Urvoy’s portrait of Ader’s political marginality is accurate in outline, although its imperialist perspective emphasises Ader’s passive exposure to the expansionist schemes of its neighbours. This chapter starts by reconstructing Ader’s history on the basis of sources produced primarily by the elites of Sokoto and Agadez. It goes on to portray a ‘view from within’ based on local sources. This view reveals that, far from being passive, Ader-based societies made a virtue of necessity and turned their environmental and political marginality into a defensive strategy against exterior and interior enemies. It also suggests a different reading of the relations between the intertwined political systems of centralised polities and (semi-)nomadic societies in the West African Sahel.

The view from Ader is fragmented. Ader’s ‘society’ is a mix of the many groups that were integrated in shared political and economic structures, but nevertheless differentiated by language, religion, status, and economic specialisation. Probably the same could be said of Sokoto’s emirates and any of the more centralised political formations of the time. But the nature of the sources available for these regions, which

<sup>1</sup> Urvoy, *Histoire des populations*, p. 251.

overemphasise the perspectives of those who could produce written texts, renders this polyphony less audible in Sokoto than in Ader. There is no dominant viewpoint in Ader's sources. Instead the multiple perspectives of masters and slaves, warriors and clerics, farmers and traders, fundamentalist Muslims and syncretic followers of pagan and Muslim beliefs shape a sense of Self and Other in mutual, multi-relational interaction with each other. Ader's pluralist society offers glimpses into the hitherto understudied past of a region that appears in the historiography mainly as a periphery of Sokoto or Agadez, and has rarely been analysed in its own terms.<sup>2</sup>

The availability of a rich corpus of Arabic sources and the narratives of nineteenth-century European travellers has endowed us with numerous studies of the Sokoto Caliphate and some of its main emirates.<sup>3</sup> These studies foreground the viewpoints of Sokoto's elites, including women.<sup>4</sup> Alongside this rich tradition of research on Sokoto's political history, another strand of enquiry has concentrated on the main Hausa trade networks. Here pre-colonial and colonial sources are so vividly precise that the members of specific networks can easily be identified for the purpose of research.<sup>5</sup>

Attempts have been made to write the histories of those who turned out to be the 'losers' in Sokoto's *épopée* – who appear in the regional historiography under various generic guises such as Maguzawa, Asna, Anna, Arna, or Gwari.<sup>6</sup> The autobiographical testimony of Baba of Karo conveys Baba's experience of an intricate maze of relationships, offering a unique insight into everyday life in a Hausa rural community across the pre-colonial and colonial periods.<sup>7</sup> Compared to the wealth of studies on Sokoto, less has been written on Agadez, and many researchers have

<sup>2</sup> The most comprehensive contributions to the study of Ader have been made by the Nigerien historian Djibo Hamani (see particularly *L'Adar Précoloniale*) and the French anthropologist Nicole Echard (see particularly *L'Expérience du Passé*).

<sup>3</sup> To name a few: Hiskett, *Sword of Truth*; Hogben and Kirk-Greene, *Emirates of Northern Nigeria*; M. G. Smith, *Government*; Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*; Smaldone, *Warfare*; Stilwell, *Paradoxes of Power*. The list is long, especially if one considers doctoral theses and articles.

<sup>4</sup> Boyd and Last, 'The role of women'; Boyd, *The Caliph's Sister*; Mack and Boyd, *One Woman's Jihad*; Nast, *Concubines*; Bivin, *Telling Stories*.

<sup>5</sup> Lovejoy, *Caravans*; Lovejoy, 'Kambarin Beri Beri'; Dan Asabe, *Comparative Biographies*; Flegel, *Biography of Madugu*.

<sup>6</sup> Leroux, 'Animisme et Islam'; Greenberg, 'Influence of Islam'; Barkow, 'Muslim and Maguzawa'; Paiult, *Histoire Mawri*; Last, 'History as religion'; Last, 'Some economic'.

<sup>7</sup> Baba's testimony was collected and recorded by Mary Smith, *Baba of Karo*.

looked at specific Tuareg groups rather than at their structured interaction in one location.<sup>8</sup> Outside these spotlights, the pre-colonial history of the Central Sahel remains scarcely understood, with a dearth of studies on the pre-nineteenth-century past.<sup>9</sup>

The tendency of African historiography to concentrate on a few, relatively better documented, regions has left areas such as Ader in the shadow, mentioned only, if at all, as peripheries – as in the quotation from Urvoy that opened this chapter. This yields a partial understanding of the ways in which centralised societies interacted with other social and political systems. And it says little, if anything, about the political rationales that existed in less densely populated regions. In the nineteenth century Ader's social and political organisation was polycentric, with localised hierarchies integrated into broader inter-ethnic hierarchies headed by Tuareg warrior elites. Criteria of prestige and technologies of power did not fully overlap between Tuareg warriors and clerics, Hausa chiefdoms, and Asna groups. Tuareg nomadic chiefs 'broadcast' their power not by controlling permanent infrastructure from fixed locations – as the rulers of centralised polities do – but by projecting the frequencies of their drums across vast spaces as they moved.<sup>10</sup> One chief's drumming exacted different responses from loyal subjects or fearful targets.

Warrior elites were engaged in frequent raiding, and insecurity shaped the livelihood strategies of settled villagers. Even farmers, under the combined threat of raids and droughts, integrated constant mobility in their farming practices. And while Muslim clerics supported the military endeavours of one or another warrior group through their Islamic knowledge, Asna communities negotiated with spirits who accorded protection in exchange for sacrifices. These sparse and diverse groups, engaged in different productive activities, economic specialisations, and religious practices, were joined into complex inter-ethnic stratified networks. Skewed alliances across groups with complementary skills increased safety.

This chapter relies both on external sources and local testimonies, some of which are reproduced at length in the pages that follow. These

<sup>8</sup> See in particular Bernus, 'Recherches'.

<sup>9</sup> This is a general tendency in African history; see Reid, 'Past and presentism'. For a discussion of pre-Sokoto studies of Hausa-speaking societies, see Haour and Rossi, 'Hausa identity'.

<sup>10</sup> The notion of the state's capacity to 'broadcast' its power is taken from Herbst, *States and Power*.

texts reveal their authors' perceptions of the life of their parents and grandparents. I triangulated testimonies collected from elders born in the first decades of the twentieth century and belonging to different groups. On some questions, I had to accept that there are different views about past events. Did slaves fight in wars? Testimonies differ, and in the pages that follow I chose to retain inconsistencies rather than create the illusion of uniformity. Disagreement across testimonies can be the outcome of actual variation: some slaves fought in some wars. But what about confusion over dates of battles, or over the identities of the parties who fought in battles?<sup>11</sup> Confusion could not always be cleared up, but perspectival differences offered valuable insights into the experiences of different groups and individuals. Bias reveals as much as it hides.

The men and women I talked to described wars in which their ancestors had been involved. Memories of past status are inexorably tied up with the present status of speakers. It is possible to account for this, as we can account for the ways in which Islamic fervour coloured jihadist descriptions of pagan practices, or racism swayed colonial discussions of native custom. The testimonies discussed below alongside published sources bear witness to what Ader's commoners learned from their elders and what they chose to transmit. Unlike the testimonies of the descendants of elites, they did not magnify the acts of noble warriors: they presented an experience of war that emphasises exposure to violence more than invincibility and glory.

Ader's societies retained a semi-autonomous status in relation to both Agadez and Sokoto. However they were constantly and directly confronted with an environment that functioned, at once, as a challenge and a resource. Ader's environment imposed mobility. This influenced both forms of suzerainty and everyday strategies of production, reproduction, trade, and resistance. In order to understand political and social relations it is therefore necessary to start from the land, and consider how survival or supremacy, as the case may be, were attained in Ader's dry mesas.

<sup>11</sup> I compared the testimonies I collected on the main pre-colonial battles with the testimonies recorded by Edmond Bernus amongst the descendants of the former Tuareg chiefs. Only one testimony overlapped with the descriptions of battles provided by Bernus, 'Récits historiques', p. 443 (battle of Derkatin), p. 451 (battle of Jirkat), p. 465 ff. (battles of Tchinzigaran, Izeroa and Tamat Tederet).

LAND AND PEOPLE

Ader is a land of contrasts. It lies at the boundary between the desert regions of Azawagh and Aïr to the north and the fertile savannah of Sokoto to the south. The name Ader (or Adār) denotes a ‘land of crevasses’.<sup>12</sup> In geological terms Ader is a peneplain, or a nearly flat land surface moulded by prolonged erosion, decreasing in altitude from about 750 metres above sea level at its north-eastern border with the Azawagh region, to about 350 metres in the south-western Majiya Valley, towards what today is the national border with Nigeria.<sup>13</sup> Narrow valleys carved into this vast ironstone-capped plateau are covered with vegetation along their bottoms, where rainwater is collected to form seasonal ponds and lakes. The slopes that connect Ader’s valleys to its eroded plateaux change aspect at different altitudes and across seasons. On top they are steep and covered with crushed red rock debris. In the middle, a dense scrub of acacias provides wood and fodder year-round. The bottom layer of Ader’s crevasses consists of hardened glacial soil on which water run-off spreads during violent summer storms, before being captured by dried-up rivers and streams converging in the valleys.

At the end of the rainy season, grass and acacias form a green mantle over Ader’s hilly terrain. After the harvest, between November and February, the Harmattan wind spreads a layer of red dust upon the vegetation that clings to Ader’s slopes like thorny desert ivy. Isolated patches of sandy dunes are not uncommon: they constitute a ‘geographic accident at the heart of this stripped massif that remained uncovered from the invasion of Quaternary desert sands’.<sup>14</sup> The quantity and distribution of rainfall over the four months of the rainy season are critical to farming.

<sup>12</sup> See Note on Language, Names and Anonymisation.

<sup>13</sup> Ader is located in the central part of the Iwellemmeden Basin (Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Nigeria), which entered a prolonged downwarping trend during the Upper Cretaceous–Lower Tertiary geological eras. The Ader plateau consists of a Tertiary layer, known as Continental Terminal, formed by the deposition of sediments (gravels, sandstones and clays, containing vertebrates and plants) following the sea’s final retreat from the Sahara-Mali region in the Upper Eocene. On the Iwellemmeden Basin, see Greigert, *Description*; Moody, ‘Iwellemmeden basin’, pp. 89–103; Furon, *Geology*, p. 58 on Sahara-Mali-Nigeria in the Eocene-Oligocene, and pp. 203–4 on the Ader Douthi; Kogbe, ‘Cretaceous’, pp. 129–86. A detailed study of the geology and soil morphology of the Ader region undertaken by the company Il Nuovo Castoro was commissioned by the Keita Project: see Volume C, *Etude géologique*. Copies of this report are available at the library of the Keita Project in Keita.

<sup>14</sup> Nicolas, *Tamesna*, p. 4.

Scarce and unevenly distributed rains result in crop failure. Soil fertility varies across Ader's diverse landscape and rainfall levels change substantially from year to year. In average years Ader lies between the 400 mm and 300 mm isohyets. Droughts affect farming and herding systems of production alike. In Ader these two worlds are not alien to each other. Nomadic herders are not exotic outsiders in Ader's villages as they are further south, in the heart of Hausaland. A herder in Ader is a farmer's neighbour, a trading partner, a potential ally, or a dangerous enemy too close ever to be dismissed.

Ader is a boundary region between distinct environments. Moving northwards within and out of Ader, towards Air, green valleys disappear and monotonous sands are only interrupted by peaks of volcanic origin: 'this superposition of young volcanic massifs above an ancient, consumed peneplain gives Air an impressive aspect, almost paradoxical'.<sup>15</sup> For centuries the main inhabitants of this dry and sandy world have been the veiled Tuareg, whose stratified segmentary societies gravitated towards the unthreatening arbitration of the sultan of Agadez. Moving southwards, the green Majiya Valley of southern Ader gives way to a fertile land lavishly irrigated by the Sokoto and Rima rivers. Heinrich Barth described inundated rice fields surrounding the town of Sokoto at the time of his second visit, in the rainy season of 1854.<sup>16</sup> Ader lies between these two worlds. At the time of Barth's journey southern Ader was the northernmost extension of the Sokoto Caliphate and northern Ader fell within the sphere of influence of the Sultanate of Agadez. Lying, respectively, at the northern and southern margins of these polities, Ader eluded their control.

The Sahelian ecological frontier was a site of interaction and exchange between economic specialisations that followed ethnic lines.<sup>17</sup> Tuareg herders and nomadic Fulani practised pastoralism, while Hausa-speaking communities were farmers and hunters. Ader's forested crevasses provided a refuge habitat for animist groups identified as Asna.<sup>18</sup> Asna

<sup>15</sup> Chudeau, *Sahara*, p. 57.      <sup>16</sup> Barth, *Travels*, vol. 3, pp. 558–61.

<sup>17</sup> 'A case study of the area which is now Niger and Northern Nigeria demonstrates that the precolonial economies of the Hausa and Tuareg interacted across the Sahelian ecological frontier functioning as two subsectors within a larger regional economy', Baier, 'Economic history', p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> There is confusion on the origin and precise meaning of the term Asna (also Azna, Arna, or Anna). Colonial ethno-historical studies state that the first inhabitants of Ader were Hausa-speaking Asna: see Landeroin, 'Du Chad au Niger', p. 484; Abadie, *Colonie du Niger*, p. 120; Nicolas, *Tamesna*, pp. 45–6 and 48–9. Urvoy thought that 'this term probably

farmers who had resisted conversion to Islam were primary targets for the raids of Islamic emirates in the south. Ader was also on the front line of Tuareg raids from the north. From a Saharan perspective, 'during severe droughts, estates in the extreme south were the most vulnerable, since they were least affected by drought. Here Tuareg could claim a share of the grain reserves of the estate dwellers, and the presence of the nomads constituted a serious burden'.<sup>19</sup> In Ader the categories 'Hausa' and 'Tuareg' are primarily linguistic: while speakers of these two languages display some distinct cultural traits, in Ader they have been integrated in largely overlapping political structures.

Before colonial conquest Ader's distinctive political formations consisted of inter-ethnic hierarchies headed by Tuareg warrior elites. Tama-sheq- and Hausa-speaking subgroups were incorporated in stratified political units adapted to their complementarities in an environment that accommodated both pastoralism and agriculture. Asna farming communities were encapsulated in a political hierarchy at the top of which were the Tuareg Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg in northern Ader, and the Kel Gress in southern Ader.<sup>20</sup> Tuareg elites did not have a fixed abode. They obtained cereals in exchange for protection against the raids of neighbouring Tuareg enemies. Herds husbanded by slaves exploited the lakes and seasonal ponds along the valley bottoms, but did not disdain the fodder available on the rocky hillsides and plateau tops, where farming was less prevalent.<sup>21</sup>

Ethnicity, language, and religion served as markers of identity that could be mobilised opportunistically, depending on the circumstances. Yet no single environment was monopolised along ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines. Even the hard ironstone crust of Ader's plateaux offered

referred to the people of Ader, and has been gradually extended to all pagans [païens]', Urvoy, *Histoire*, p. 252. Sère de Rivières stated that 'it is both an ethnic expression and a religious designation', Sère de Rivières, *Histoire*, p. 47. Guy Nicolas characterised it both in ethnic and religious terms by defining Asna as 'the peoples settled [in southern Niger] before the establishment of Hausa dynasties' (p. 30), followers of the original autochthonous animist religion and distinct from Muslim Hausa; see Nicolas, *Dynamique*, p. 59. Echard argued that in the mid-1970s 'Asna' meant 'people of Ader' as opposed to other Hausawa or Tuareg, Echard, *Expérience*, p. 11. For a discussion of this term in the broader Hausa culture area, see Haour and Rossi 'Hausa Identity', pp. 15-18.

<sup>19</sup> Baier, 'Economic history', p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Capitaine Brescon, *Monographie du Cercle de Tahoua*, 1901, ANN 17.1.3; Capitaine Joly, *Monographie du Cercle de Tahoua*, 1901, ANN 17.1.1; Lieutenant Peignot, *Monographie du Cercle de Tahoua*, 1907, ANN 17.1.4; Capitaine Pietri, *Note sur les Touareg Oulliminden du Cercle de Tahoua*, 1945, ANN 17.1.7; cf. Nicolas, 'Notes', pp. 579-86.

<sup>21</sup> See Müller, 'Herbaceous vegetation'.



FIGURE 2.1 Asna shrine (2005)

pastures to Tuareg herders, ore to Asna smelters, and a home – in the shape of circular stone shrines – to Asna spirits (see Figure 2.1). Hierarchy dictated who had priority access over which resources, and who depended on the protection of a patron to avoid starvation when access was restricted by droughts or wars. Environmental conditions set constraints that everyone had to accommodate; but social and political institutions defined which opportunities were available to whom.

In the nineteenth century Ader fell within two types of boundary zones, political and environmental. South of the village of Djibale, southern Ader was integrated within the Sokoto Caliphate. But by the second half of the nineteenth century Kel Gress elites based in southern Ader were relatively autonomous of Sokoto, whose political strategies had become increasingly defensive.<sup>22</sup> Northern Ader was an intermediate region between Sokoto to the south and the desert to the north. It hosted small Hausaphone chiefdoms and independent villages, over which the Sultanate of Agadez exerted a mild influence. The

<sup>22</sup> Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 229–30; Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, pp. 181 ff.; Jean Les Touareg du Sud-Est, p. 112.

*imajeghen* of the Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg were the actual rulers of this boundary region.

Ader also fell within a transitional belt between two ecological zones.<sup>23</sup> Economic complementarities between the southern savannah, where farming was practised, and the northern steppe, where transhumant pastoralism prevailed, meant that goods produced in these areas were available in Ader's markets. From Ader originated separate networks of long-distance trade specialising in different products, which included important Kel Gress caravans and smaller groups of Hausa traders (*fatakke*). Both the boundary position of Ader and the pluralist nature of its society generated insecurity. Ader's inhabitants faced the omnipresent aggressions of familiar enemies – the threat of distant powers, and the perennial risk of drought.

Ader hosted a variety of interconnected Tuareg and Hausaphone groups. From the perspective of Tuareg warrior elites, the strongest Asna groups were potential military partners and farmers who could be turned into tributaries. Raids were targeted primarily against enemies and their dependants. Allies, tributaries, and one's own dependants had to be protected. The precariousness of existence made alliance with Tuareg warriors expedient for Asna villagers, who accepted political dependence in exchange for protection. Their farming lifestyle imposed some stability of settlement, which in turn exposed them to raids and made them seek the protection of Tuareg warlords. The cost of autonomy was partial subjection (in the form of tributes) to Tuareg warrior elites, and a lifestyle adjusted to defensive imperatives. By contrast, Tuareg slaves could not negotiate political independence. Some followed nomadic masters. Others remained settled in camps while their masters were free to move across pastures and trade routes. Slaves settled on productive lands could be manumitted and turned into sharecroppers. Those who were not liberated continued to act as the unfree keepers of seasonally mobile camps and productive resources.

#### ADER AT THE TIME OF SOKOTO'S EXPANSION

Ader makes its first appearance in a manuscript whose authenticity has yet to be ascertained, Manuscript J of Urvoy's *Chroniques d'Agadez*, the biography of Abou-Bakr son of Attaher-Tachi, born in 1657 AD, which indicates that during the author's lifetime Ader was conquered by the sons

<sup>23</sup> 'The Nigerien Sahel appears like an area of transition: not yet the Sahara, and not anymore the Sudan'. Bernus, 'Evolution récente', p. 137 ff.

Between Sokoto and Agadez

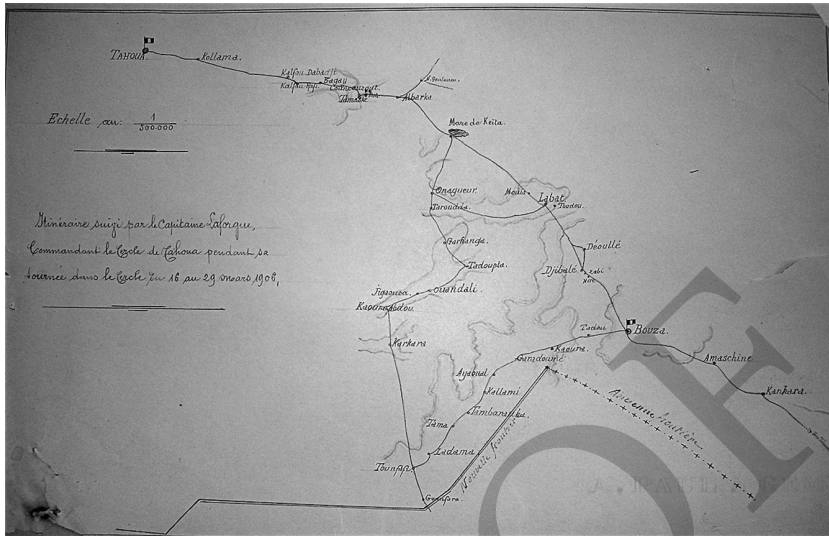


FIGURE 2.2 Agouloum and the Keita Lake in a colonial map (1906)

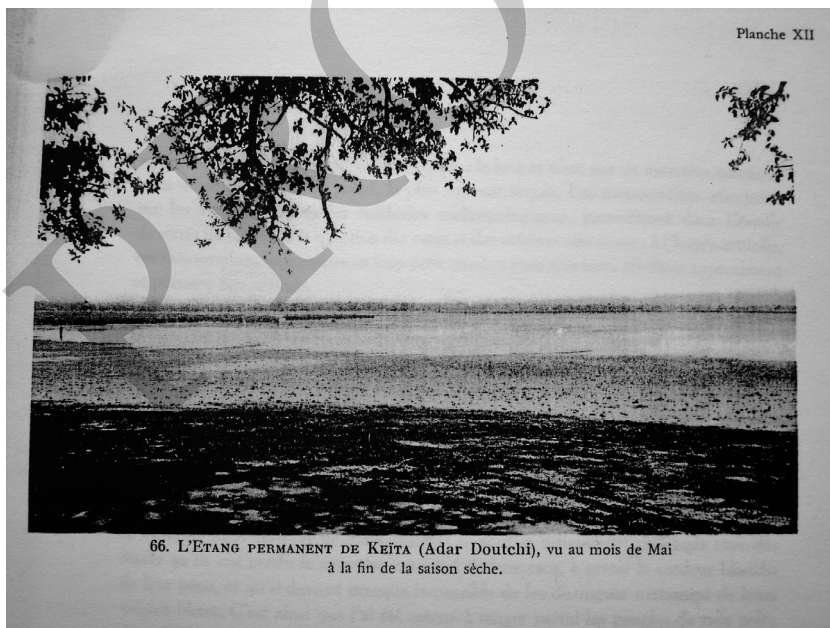


FIGURE 2.3 Keita Lake in the dry season (1920)

of the sultan of Agadez; that on its soil wars were fought between Tuareg and Gobirawa; and that Agadez had diplomatic and perhaps commercial relations with Ader, as the author's profession made him 'travel in Ader'.<sup>24</sup> One and a half centuries later, Ader is attested as a terminus of the Ajjer's trans-Saharan trajectories in the correspondence of the German explorer Ulrich Seetzen. In a letter of 1808,<sup>25</sup> Seetzen reports information he obtained in Cairo from Mohammed, a man in his mid-twenties who had left his native town of Birnin Ader about thirteen years earlier to embark on a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Mohammed specified that the journey from Fezzan to Ader was made on the camels of the Ahaggaren Tuareg<sup>26</sup> ('Hikgaran') and took roughly 30 days.<sup>27</sup> Birnin Ader was

surrounded by walls of red mud, its houses were rectangular and built of the same mud, the flat wooden roof was plastered with mud and they had few windows. The ruler of this place [Birnin Ader] is called Hamidu, and he is subject to the authority of the Sultan of Agadez ['el-Bakry', p. 234]. The inhabitants belong to the ethnic group of the Arab Fulani [*Phellata-Araber*], and are in friendly relations with the Tuareg.<sup>28</sup>

Mohammed states that the inhabitants are Muslim, except for 'Blacks', who are pagan: they adore fetishes, consume fermented drinks, eat 'everything' – including the flesh of 'dogs, wolves, foxes, and snakes'<sup>29</sup> – and are the only local group who use the bow and arrow<sup>30</sup> for hunting and military purposes. He describes Ader as a fertile environment, where crops such as cotton and wheat are grown (the latter through irrigation in the dry season); and where a large variety of wild animals and birds are found, including many ostriches in the desert between Ader and Fezzan.<sup>31</sup> Mohammed, who self-identifies as a Fulani, received news about political events in the central Sudan in the course of his pilgrimage – he mentions

<sup>24</sup> Urvoy, 'Chroniques', p. 174.

<sup>25</sup> Seetzen, 'Über die Phellata-Araber', pp. 225–36. I am grateful to Ezio Martelli for helping me to translate this text from the German original.

<sup>26</sup> Rodd noted that in Air and the south the less numerous Azger Tuareg are usually conflated with the larger constituency of the Ahaggaren (Rodd, *People of the Veil*, p. 350). It is possible – though not necessarily the case – that Mohammed's Hikgaran are, or include, the Azger.

<sup>27</sup> Seetzen, 'Über die Phellata-Araber', p. 234. Mohammed gave two distinct estimates for this trajectory, of 15 and 30 days, respectively. Compared to the other measures of distance provided in his account, only the latter estimate appears plausible.

<sup>28</sup> Seetzen, 'Über die Phellata-Araber', p. 228.

<sup>29</sup> Seetzen, 'Über die Phellata-Araber', p. 230.

<sup>30</sup> Seetzen, 'Über die Phellata-Araber', p. 232.

<sup>31</sup> Seetzen, 'Über die Phellata-Araber', p. 230.

that ‘Osman ibn Phodueh’ was the Fulani suzerain of Zamfara and ‘patriarch of all Black Muslim lands’.<sup>32</sup> His list of cities ‘collectively known as Hausa’ does not include any place in Ader, which he describes as inhabited by Muslim Fulani and Tuareg and by pagan ‘Blacks’, whose language or ethnicity is not specified. His short list of Tuareg groups includes subgroups of Air-Tuareg and of the Kel Gress.

Seetzen’s letters show that at the end of the eighteenth century Ader was under the aegis of the Sultanate of Agadez. Far from the main political centres, Ader appears to have offered refuge to ‘both the ultra-religious and the ultra-autonomous, the rebellious and the runaway’.<sup>33</sup> While Asna clans practised human sacrifice on the shores of the Keita Lake (see below), Ader gave birth to major Islamic reformers: Malam Jibril of the Watsakkawa,<sup>34</sup> Shehu Usman dan Fodio of the Toronkawa Fulani, Ibra of the Tamezgudda, and Eljilani of the Attawari.

At the beginning of Shehu Usman dan Fodio’s jihadist movement, Ader housed both friends and foes of Sokoto. Alliances changed frequently. In his eyewitness account of the Sheikh’s campaigns, the *Infaq al Maisur*, Sultan Muhammad Bello, complained about the treacherous nature of the Tuareg.<sup>35</sup> The apparent instability of ‘Tuareg society’ is a

<sup>32</sup> ‘Schech el Din oder Patriarch über alle mohammedanischer negerländer’, Seetzen, ‘Über die Phellata-Araber’, p. 236.

<sup>33</sup> This is how Murray Last characterised far-away ‘bush’ areas in comparison to towns (Hausa: *birane*) and their farmed surroundings (*karkara*), cf. Last, ‘Ancient labels’, p. 62.

<sup>34</sup> cf. Muhammad Bello, *Infaq al Maisur*, ed. Arnett, pp. 19–20; Hiskett, ‘Islamic tradition of reform’, pp. 589 ff.; Hiskett, ‘Material relating’, pp. 564, 566–7. Last expresses doubts on Jibril’s origins, and mentions his nisba Al-Aqdasi (Agadez), Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 5, note 13. However, Hiskett notes that Jibril lived for a period in Maratta, based on Abdullah ibn Fodio (the brother of the Shehu Usman dan Fodio) in *‘Ida’ al-nusukh man akhadhtu ‘anhu min al-shuyukh*, see Hiskett ‘Material relating’, p. 568. Hiskett does not know the location of Maratta, which should be identified with Maratta near Galma in today’s District of Madaoua in Niger. Stewart states clearly that Jibril was from Adar, ‘Southern Saharan Scholarship’, p. 88, note 36. Djibo Hamani provides extensive information on Malam Jibril, based on Ader’s oral tradition, *L’Adar précolonial*, pp. 136–41. Jibril died before the beginning of the Sokoto jihad. He had ‘contributed substantially to the religious literature of the day ... The Shehu speaks as if Jibril’s doctrines were widely disseminated throughout the Habe towns’, Bivar and Hiskett, ‘Arabic literature’, p. 141; ‘Jibril seems to have taken an extreme reformist position which diverged from the main body of orthodox teaching. From this extreme position the Shehu was emphatic in dissociating himself, in spite of the high regard which it appears he felt for his teacher, by whose learning he had been strongly influenced’ (ibid., p. 143). Yet it is possible that the Shehu changed position, and that by the time he decided to lead a *jihad*, he had come to accept Jibril’s uncompromising views, from which he had initially distanced himself; see Robinson Waldman, ‘Fulani Jihad’, p. 350.

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad Bello, *Infaq al-Maisur*, ed. Arnett 1922, p. 67.

consequence of its segmentary organisation. A common language (Tamasheq) and shared mores across different branches of Tuareg society created expectations of political consistency amongst neighbours. But what, to outsiders, appeared as a single Tuareg entity included several distinct sections, each with its own chief and political inclinations. Tuareg history abounds with circumstances when particular noble sections chose to act independently from the position taken by a paramount chief (*amenokal* or *ettebol*, Hausa: *tambari*) of their own confederation.<sup>36</sup> Maraboutic subsections did not hesitate to deny their allegiance to particular Tuareg chiefs if they resented their choices.<sup>37</sup> The Tuareg of Ader never formed a united front in favour of or against the Sokoto jihadists. One of the closest allies of the Shehu, Malam Agali, was originally from Ader and attempted to rally Ader Muslims to the cause of the Shehu from the earliest stages of the jihad – but he did not succeed.

After the fall of the Gobir stronghold of Alkalawa on 3 October 1808, the strength of the jihadists became apparent. The sultan of Agadez, Muhammad al-Bakri, took a firmer position in support of the Shehu's cause.<sup>38</sup> Hamidin (the 'Hamidu' of Seetzen's report, cited above), emir of Adar at the time, had been fighting against the Shehu together with Kel Gress and Itesan. His brother al-Mustafa sided with the jihadists, however, and sent his two sons to support the Shehu. One of these sons, Muhammadu, carried a flag in the Shehu's army.<sup>39</sup> Thus not only different local groups but also different members of the same family took separate stances in relation to the wars of Sokoto. The Shehu's followers recognised the authority of Agadez over Ader. However, Sokoto's Sultan Muhammad Bello did not hesitate to instruct the sultan of Agadez on how to operate in Ader. On specific occasions, he interacted directly with Ader-based chiefs, disregarding their nominal subjection to Agadez.<sup>40</sup>

Sultan Muhammad Bello addressed the ruler of Agadez as 'Sarkin Musulmi', thereby placing him on a par with himself in Islamic political hierarchies.<sup>41</sup> This was an act of politeness and respect towards a ruler

<sup>36</sup> For a discussion of the notion of 'confederation' in Tuareg historiography, see Brock, *The Tamejirt*, p. 106, note 1.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. lxxvii; pp. 35–6. <sup>38</sup> Cf. Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 39.

<sup>39</sup> Muhammad Bello, *Infaq al-Maisur*, ed. Arnett 1922, p. 69.

<sup>40</sup> See Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, p. 155. Hamani is the foremost authority on Ader's relations with Sokoto, and he appears to have had access to unpublished correspondence between the Sultanate and Ader (for some of which he omits to provide references).

<sup>41</sup> Muhammad Bello, *Infaq al Maisur*, ed. Arnett 1922, p. 120.

who had supported Sokoto's *épopée* from an early stage. It does not imply that Muhammad Bello considered himself and Agadez's sultan as equally powerful. The sultan of Agadez did not constitute a threat to Sokoto. Sokoto's ruler was well aware of the intrinsic instability of the Aïr sultanate, dependent as it was on the support of the most powerful Tuareg warrior sections of Aïr. It was convenient for Sokoto to interact with the unruly Tuareg tribes of Aïr and Ader via the intermediation of a Muslim ruler – the sultan of Agadez – who had proven his loyalty to the jihadists' cause, and who – had he turned into an enemy – would not have posed a serious threat. By contrast, establishing direct political control over desert regions would have involved a major security effort on Sokoto's part. The preservation of good relations with a politically weak sultanate, which had an established tradition of Islamic learning, buffered relations with Tuareg nomadic warrior tribes.

Ader's chiefs were not passive pawns on this political chessboard. At times, Ader's local chiefs respected the broader regional hierarchies in which they were encapsulated. Yet they also took autonomous initiatives, exploiting the nature of Ader's territory, which offered places for dissidents to hide (densely forested areas, hills, crevasses) and constituted a hostile terrain for anyone unfamiliar with the landscape. Although nominally northern Ader fell within the sphere of influence of Agadez, in practice local chiefly groups appear to have ruled the country throughout the nineteenth century. A branch of the Iwellemmeden of Mali had moved to north-eastern Ader, where Heinrich Barth found them in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> This group, which became progressively more powerful, was known as Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg, or 'Iwellemmeden of the east', in contrast to the western Iwellemmeden, the Kel Ataram. The Kel Denneg expanded at the expense of Kel Gress power and of a number of small Hausa-speaking chiefdoms, whose client rulers were left in place, but had to pay tributes either to the kingdom of Ader (*sarauta ta Ader*) – tied to Agadez – or to other locally powerful Tuareg groups. A list of these

<sup>42</sup> Barth talks of the 'Awelimmiden wuén Bodal', Barth, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 291; vol. 1, appendix I, p. 599; vol. 3, appendix XII, p. 724. To my knowledge, the dating of the scission between Eastern and Western Iwellemmeden and the installation of the Kel Denneg in the Ader region is based solely on oral traditions gathered in the twentieth century amongst both groups. Kel Denneg tradition locates these events at the turn of the eighteenth century, while the Kel Ataram place them approximately one century later, toward the end of the nineteenth century. See Richer, *Oullimminden*; Urvoy, 'Histoire des Oullimmiden de l'Est'; Nicolas, *Tamesna*, p. 55; Bernus, 'Récits historiques', pp. 434–5 and note 2.

chiefdoms figures in the oral tradition gathered by Landeroin in the first decade of the 1900s and published in the *Documents Scientifiques de la Mission Tilho*.<sup>43</sup>

The presence of Hausa-speaking groups, whose political and social organisation was shaped by indigenous religion and not, or not solely, by Islam, is confirmed in Seetzen's letters and Bello's remarks to the Sultan of Air on the necessity to impose Islam in the regions under his command.<sup>44</sup> The King or Emir of Ader (Sarkin Ader) ruled over a constantly varying number of villages in Ader. The 'Y-Tarichi' states that the kingdom of Ader followed Air leadership and that its suzerain, originally a descendant of the Agadez chiefly line, resided in Birnin Ader and was elected and deposed by Lissawan chiefs.<sup>45</sup> Seetzen's letters (and other correspondence between Sokoto, Agadez, and Ader reviewed below) confirm Ader's dependence upon the Air sultanate without saying anything on the specific role of the Lissawan. In general, sources are both scarce and scarcely reliable, but they suggest that in the first half of the nineteenth century Ader was a vassal state of Agadez, and that following the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, Sokoto attempted to influence Ader politics both indirectly, through Agadez, and directly. Neither Agadez nor Sokoto had a firm grip over Ader, which by the second half of the nineteenth century

<sup>43</sup> Landeroin, 'Du Chad au Niger', p. 484.

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Bello, *Infaq al-Maisur*, ed. Arnett 1922, p. 121.

<sup>45</sup> The Lissawan are a small Tuareg elite, whose members have held the position of Canton chief (French: *Chef du Canton*; Hausa: *sarki*) over the district of Keita from colonial conquest to the present day. The so-called 'Y-Tarichi', collected in Agadez by Lieutenant André Maurice Peignot in 1907, contains detailed information on the Lissawan. According to Peignot, the 'Tarichi' was 'composed' (we are not told when or how) by a certain Malam Ahmadou ben Detchoukou, cleric at the service of the Sultan of Agadez, who presumably put into writing information he had acquired from oral tradition and Arabic manuscripts available in Agadez. This text was copied in 1907 by Malam 'Zubrina' or 'Djibrina', cleric working for the Lissawan chief Amattaza Ennour, and given to Colonel Peignot, who placed it in an appendix to his *Monographie* under the title 'Y-Tarichi: La chronique de malam Ahmadou-ben-Detchoukou marabout du Sultan Ibrahim Soke – de l'Hegire 1325', Peignot, *Monographie du Cercle de Tahoua*, 1907, ANN 17.1.4. The information contained in the 'Y-Tarichi' is similar, but not identical to information provided by Yves Urvoy in Manuscript B (which Urvoy considers 'very ancient') of the Agadez Chronicles, and to some passages in Palmer's texts no. LVII–LVIII in *Sudanese Memoirs*. The 'Y-Tarichi' argues that the Lissawan had supported Sultan Agabba's 'conquest of Ader' and describes the following electoral arrangements: 'After his departure from Agadez, Agabba rode a Lissawan camel. Agabba asked [the Lissawan] what they wanted in compensation, "Give us a robe that cannot be torn away". "What is a robe that cannot be torn away?" "Give us the right to elect from within your family the chiefs we like and who will never hurt the Lissawane", "Is this all?" The Lissawane said "yes". Agabba granted them their wish', 'Y-Tarichi', p. 35.

was subjected de facto to the power of the Tuareg confederations of the Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg in northern Ader and the Kel Gress in southern Ader.

The Sultan of Agadez, Muhammed al-Bakri, wrote to Sarkin Ader and minor chiefdoms in Ader instructing them to act in accordance with the agreements he made with Sokoto. In order to reward the chiefs who supported him, Shehu Usman dan Fodio transferred rights to the *zakat* of seven villages in southern Ader, who had been paying tributes to Sarkin Mambe and Sarkin Magori of Ader, to clerics (*ineslemen*) of the Kel Gress, including Sheikh Wasshar and Ammuddur Shibo.<sup>46</sup> Sultan Muhammad Bello also tried to influence the election of the Emir of Adar. He opposed the maintenance in office of Hamidin, who had led Ader's armies against him. He had Hamidin replaced by his brother Mohammed, a former ally of the jihadists. However, Mohammed ruled ruthlessly in Ader, and was nicknamed '*mai cinoni*' ('the impaler'), after the punishment he had inflicted on some peasants.<sup>47</sup> Due to Mohammed's brutality, Ibrahim was restored to power by his Tuareg electors, and at Ibrahim's death he was replaced by Ibrahim's brother Hamidin, who also failed to meet Sokoto's agreement. These events are related as follows in the *Infaq al Maisur*:

The Tuareg who were living in Adar at the time when their Sarki went to attack Zurmi received a letter from Sarkin Ahir Mohamadu Bakariyu commanding them to depose their Sarki and appoint Mohamadu dan Mustafa because he was a partisan of the Shehu. They appointed Mohamadu dan Mustafa accordingly but later went back on what they had done and deposed him and reappointed their evil chief Hamidu. The Itesen assisted them in doing this. On this matter I said: 'In truth the minds of the men of Tawantakat are disturbed and their anger aroused, both they and the Itesen. They desire to break the treaty that is between us, and raise up hatred and strife. You who made the peace with us, do you stand fast by this treaty or are you so strong as to have no need of it? As for Hamidu, if you let him remain in the country of Adar the fire that destroys him will destroy you also. Who will take my message to Matiya and tell him in truth, a small matter may stir up a great one. Tell him the wild Tuareg are deceiving you as they deceived you before. They will not help you, but gradually you will know this. If our war comes upon you and the men of Adar you will see the Itesen fleeing and leaving you, they will retreat as far as Aujila or even Tarabulus across the desert which they will leave behind them in their flight.' Now when Sarkin Ahir Mohamadu Bakariyu

<sup>46</sup> Hamani, from whom I take this information, cites as his sources 'a letter of Sarkin Air' (of which he omits to give the date and reference), and a tradition collected by himself in Mambe, see Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, p. 156.

<sup>47</sup> Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, p. 152.

came to the Tuareg he had it in his mind to visit Shehu. He commanded them to repent and desist from opposing the Moslems and fighting against them. They listened to his commands and promised obedience. When he had made his visit to Shehu and returned to his country, their chief Hamidu died. After him the Tuareg appointed his brother Ibrahimu whose evil character surpassed that of his brother Hamidu. Of his reign I say, 'In truth the hardness of heart of the Itesen is increased, by reason of their electing Ibrahim.'<sup>48</sup>

This passage shows that Muhammad Bello wrote to the Sultan of Air concerning the Emir of Ader, and considered the Tawantakat, Itesan, and 'Matiya' (perhaps the Lissawan title Alamtey) as electors of Sarkin Ader. Muhammad Bello also wrote directly to clerics (*ineslemen*) of the Kel Gress and to Sarkin Magori to enforce his decision concerning the transfer of lands in favour of the *ineslemen* and their descendants. At the death of Sheikh Wasshar, he wrote to Sarkin Magori instructing him to respect the rights of Wasshar's son over the lands in question. In this connection, the sultan of Agadez Abdulkader, son of al-Bakri, wrote to the heir of Sheikh Wasshar confirming his control over these territories and stating that he (Wasshar's heir) had a right to 'take *zakat* on their harvests and take taxes [*baraji*] and other resources belonging to the chiefs [of these villages]'. He specified that Mahmud son of Wasshar ruled over the people of these villages 'who farm in the country of Mambe and that of Magori'.<sup>49</sup>

This correspondence, cited by Hamani, indicates that the Emir of Ader, based in Birnin Ader, was a tributary of the sultan of Agadez; that he was elected by the Itesan, Tawantakat, and (possibly) Alamtey Tuareg chiefs; and that Sokoto interfered with Ader's administration, directly or through the intermediation of Agadez. But Ader's political elites remained able to elude the control of Sokoto. In the first half of the nineteenth century, while Sokoto was expanding its control over the largest part of the central Sudan, Ader hosted the reformist movements of Eljilani of the Attawari and of Ibra of the Tamezguedda. Both movements influenced Ader's society directly, and remained broadly outside the reach of Sokoto and Agadez.

Eljilani agg-Ibrahim rose against what he saw as the corrupt mores of Ader's elites. Initially, the first targets of his action were the Tuareg warrior chiefs (*imajeghen*), who ruled without respect for Islamic law. Eljilani confronted Khettutu ag-Muda, paramount chief (*amenokal*) of

<sup>48</sup> Muhammad Bello, *Infaq al-Maisur*, ed. Arnett, pp. 96–7.

<sup>49</sup> Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, p. 157. Regrettably Hamani does not provide the references of the primary sources he consulted.

the Iwellemmeden Kel Deneg, and defeated him. Shortly afterwards, he defeated Sarkin Ader and the Lissawan. His power extended over all of northern Ader.<sup>50</sup> According to local tradition, terror reigned in Ader under Eljilani. ‘Y-Tarichi’ mentions that he forbade the playing of music and that even people close to him could not speak loudly in his presence, but had to whisper in his ear when they wanted to talk to him. To demonstrate his power, he forced people in positions of authority to undergo humiliating acts, such as drinking milk from a cow’s udder on penalty of starving if they refused. Eljilani’s reformist agenda threatened to undermine central aspects of Ader’s political and social organisation: ‘Gélani preached that all men are equal and the noble are the slaves [*Bellab*] of God unique, clement, and merciful. He said that the skin colour of Asna and Tuareg is the same when the sun of Allah shines upon the earth, or the night enfolds it.’<sup>51</sup>

Eljilani asked advice from Muhammad Bello on ‘maintaining a Muslim community amongst nomads’.<sup>52</sup> The advice he received encouraged moderation: ‘the Lord demanded that sometimes followers be drawn to Him little by little, without brutality, so that they may join the Jama’a’.<sup>53</sup> Yet Eljilani did not temper his behaviour, pushing Sarkin Ader and other local rulers to seek the assistance of the Kel Gress and Itesan. In 1814, the warrior chiefs of these groups turned to Ibra, chief of the Tamezgudda.<sup>54</sup> Like Eljilani, Ibra was a fervent Muslim. This led to a series of violent confrontations between the two leaders and their followers, which caused bloodshed and turmoil in the region. Apparently betrayed by some of his own allies, in 1818 Eljilani sought refuge in Sokoto,<sup>55</sup> where Muhammad Bello refused to return him to Ibra.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Alojaly, *Histoire*, pp. 36 ff.

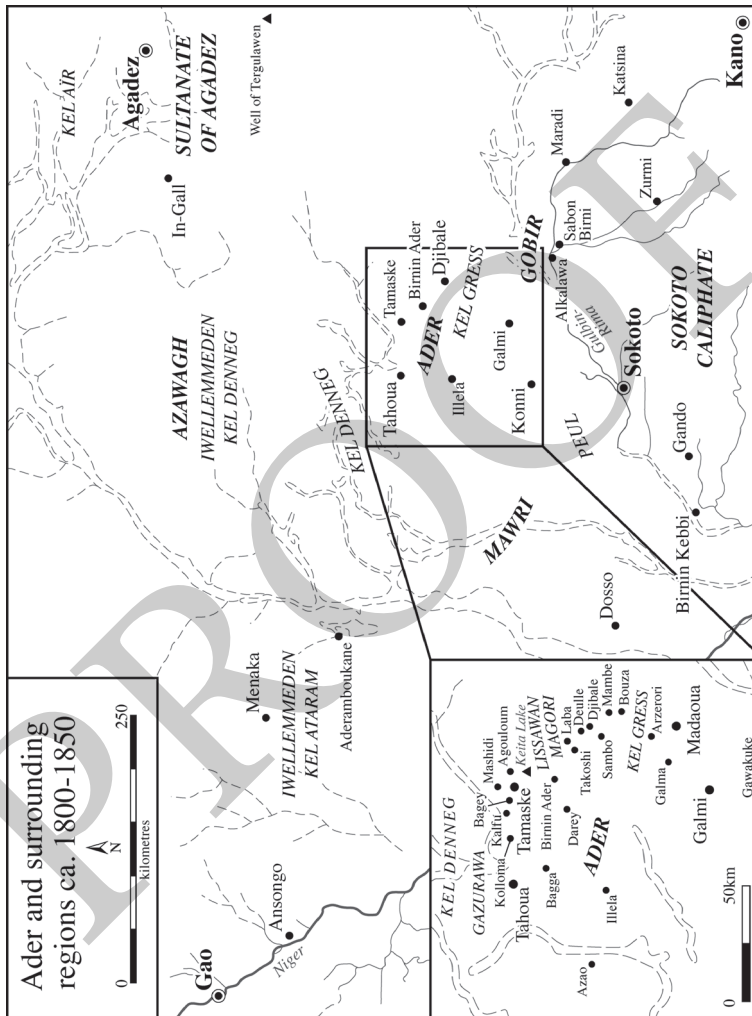
<sup>51</sup> Malam Ahmadou Ben Detchuku in Peignot, ‘Y-Tarichi’, p. 36. Cf. Malfettes, *Monographie du Cercle de Taboua, 1950–1951*, pp. 25–9, ANN 17.1.10.

<sup>52</sup> Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 110. As sources for this information Last cites Muhammad Bello’s *Jawab shafi*, and a text titled *Jumal min al-mabani nasa-ih li-Muhammad al-Jailani* (ibid., note 77). The *Jawab shafi’ wa-khitab minna kafin ila Muhammad al-Jaylani* (A complete and adequate response to Muhammad Eljilani) is listed in Hunwick and O’Fahey, *Arabic Literature*, p. 121, item 30. It appears to be located at the National Archives of Kaduna, and is currently unavailable in translation. According to Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 231, footnote 4, this manuscript is dated 1230/1815.

<sup>53</sup> This and other passages of Muhammad Bello’s response to Eljilani are quoted, without bibliographic references, in Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, pp. 165–6. Hamani is probably referring to the same Arabic texts consulted by Murray Last (see previous note).

<sup>54</sup> Alojaly, *Histoire*, p. 40. <sup>55</sup> Alojaly, *Histoire*, p. 52.

<sup>56</sup> Ader’s oral traditions on the exchange between Sokoto’s Sultan and Ibra echo the description in ‘Y-Tarichi’: ‘Ibra wrote to Mohamman [sic] Bello: “I do not want to make war against



MAP 2.1 Ader and surrounding regions ca. 1800-1850

The reformist objectives of Eljilani and Ibra targeted institutions central to Ader's social and political life. Unlike Sokoto, where Islam directed government, in Ader strict adherence to religious precepts had remained a prerogative of maraboutic groups. The Tuareg warrior nobility of the Iwellemmeden and Kel Gress upheld ideologies of power rooted in criteria of status superiority that were racially coloured. These elites did not seek religious justifications for their rule. Rather, they relied on an ethos of nobility ultimately conceived of as descent-based. They were able to contain the political aspirations of religious groups. The latter acquired considerable wealth (including slaves) in compensation for their spiritual support of the *imajeghen's* military endeavours. But they appear to have remained subject to the rule of the *imajeghen*.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Eljilani and Ibra challenged this order of things. They operated in a regional context of Islamic revival, following the rise of the Sokoto Fulani. In Ader the activities of Malam Jibril, Eljilani, and Ibra ultimately did not overthrow the power of the *imajeghen*. Their failure was due partly to the extremism of their ideas. They supported a model of reform that alienated from them the majority of the population. Even Shehu Usman dan Fodio (in the case of Jibril) and Muhammad Bello attempted to temper the rigidity of their positions. Within Ader, their views ran against established ideals of the military and political superiority of the *imajeghen*. The weltanschauung of the Tuareg warrior nobility is exemplified by a poem composed by the famous warrior Efellan ag-Hawal, who fought with the Kel Denneg, on the occasion of a battle that opposed Budal (*amenokal* of the Kel Denneg after Eljilani's departure) to Ibra and his allies, the Kel Gress and Asna of Djibale:

This year we experienced, I assure you, a marvellous feat:  
It was Ibra who grew like a mountain thrust against us,  
three-thousand archers accompanied him  
and all the Hausa of Djibale,  
people of the drums and flutes.  
A cry sounded amongst them: By God, kill the brave young man [i.e. Efellan]!  
By God, could it be possible that a brave young man like me,  
one who moves as fast as I,

you. I was hunting and I hit the foot of a guinea-fowl. The guinea-fowl flew away and entered in your home. Return to me my wounded guinea-fowl." Mohamman Bello replied: "Your guinea-fowl entered in the pocket of my robe. He who will attempt to take it will tear my boubou." Malam Ahmadou Ben Detchuku in Peignot, 'Y-Tarichi', p. 37.

whose braid is like the new branch of a tree,  
be harassed and killed by some jades against whom he can't keep up,  
and amongst whom there is not one who has not worn a leather loin-cloth?<sup>57</sup>

This poem reveals the feeling of superiority of the *imajeghen* warriors vis-à-vis *ineslemen* and Hausa groups alike. The thought of a confrontation between Efellan and the opponents caricatured in the poem takes the form of a rhetorical question. In Ader's political imaginary, the rule of the fearless *imajeghen*, represented as children of spirits (*jinn*s) and hence superior to other humans, was opposed to Islamic models of government. The poem also attests to alliances between Asna and Tuareg in war. Many Ader-based Asna groups were not, or not entirely, Islamised. Their practices and beliefs, as described by Mohammed to Ulrich Seetzen, continued to be recorded in the twentieth century. These groups, who had been the primary targets of enslavement by Islamic society, were on the whole more inclined to support the *imajeghen* than jihadist leaders infused by Islamic zeal. Yet, as this poem suggests, temporary alliances between Asna archers and various Tuareg constituencies were more likely to follow opportunistic criteria than entrenched ideological positions. Irrespective of the religious inclinations of leaders, the Asna of Djibale were the natural allies of their Kel Gress neighbours against northern Kel Denneg-Asna coalitions. Settled farmers had to ally with powerful neighbouring nomads, or face the constant menace of their attacks.

#### SOKOTO'S TENUOUS HOLD ON ADER

After the battle of Gawakuke in 1836, Sokoto's influence over Air and Ader was strengthened.<sup>58</sup> At the battle Ibra, who had joined Sarkin Gobir Ali and the Sultan of Katsina, was defeated. He died some time later.<sup>59</sup> In the Caliphate, 'Dundaye district had been given over to Adarawa refugees. They were sufficiently numerous to have a special judge with proceedings in Tamajek. In addition, there was an Adar quarter in Sokoto town, and they were represented at the Caliph's court by the Sarkin Adar, a descendant of Ahmad b. al-Mustafa.'<sup>60</sup> Sultan Atiku, who in 1837 succeeded his brother

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Alojaly, *Histoire*, pp. 54-7.

<sup>58</sup> On Sokoto-Adar relations at this time, see Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, pp. 107-13.

<sup>59</sup> Hadj Said, *Tedzkiret en-Nisian*, pp. 308-11. Here, Ibra appears as 'Aber, le sultan des Maures'.

<sup>60</sup> Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. 111.

Muhammad Bello at the head of the Sokoto Caliphate, wrote two letters to the Kel Gress of Ader. In a letter written soon after his accession to power and cited by Hamani, Atiku reminded the 'Kel Gress-Itesan' that Muhammad Bello 'had established an alliance between them and the Kel Ewey, and later an alliance between them and the Iwellemmeden. He advised them to respect their engagements or they would risk incurring the anger of the Empire.'<sup>61</sup> In a second, undated letter, Sultan Atiku discusses the relations between Kel Gress and Iwellemmeden: 'Know,' he told the Kel Gress, that the peace between you and the Iwellemmeden is not broken, it is established since the reign of my brother Sarkin Musulmi and [unbroken] until our time. Your road bandits never stopped to scheme to interrupt these good relations. They throw themselves against them, attack them, kill their people, take their property, because these bandits ignore the Lord and want to break the ties that keep the Muslim united. You think that these acts are of little importance, but they are important in the eyes of the Lord. Us, we cannot accept this, and we will not ratify this. Because they, the Iwellemmeden, have become our relatives, they are our secret, they are our brothers before God, they are in the truth. He who lives in peace with them is in peace with us. He who fights against us fights against them. Their peace is our peace, their war our war.'<sup>62</sup>

This letter shows that the 'close alliance' between the Kel Denneg and Kel Gress, which Heinrich Barth referred to in his observations on the Iwellemmeden, was probably a result of Sokoto's peace-keeping policy.<sup>63</sup> The support that Sultan Atiku granted the Iwellemmeden was in continuity with Sokoto's earlier protection of Eljilani against Ibra and his Kel Gress followers. In any case, Sokoto exercised substantial influence on Ader's politics. But did this influence extend over the whole of Ader? And how far did it affect people's daily lives? Information recorded by Clapperton and Barth in the second quarter of the nineteenth century shows that Sokoto considered only southern Ader as a province. In Sokoto, where he would die of dysentery, Clapperton obtained the following information in 1826:

Adir is a province also called Tadela subject to the Fellatahs and contains a great number of towns – the inhabitants are for the greatest part by [sic] Negroes the rest

<sup>61</sup> Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, p. 180.

<sup>62</sup> Cited in Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, p. 180. Hamani omits references for this quote. Perhaps the letter is included in 'Abd al-Qadir b. Gidado's *Majmu manaqib Amir al Mu-minin 'Ali*, which, as far as I know, has not been published, cf. Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, p. xxxvii.

<sup>63</sup> 'The most easterly group of the Awellimmeden ... in a political sense have totally separated from the stock [of the Awellimmeden of Mali] and are generally allied with the Kel Gress.' Barth, *Travels*, vol. 3, appendix XII, p. 724.

as a half breed between the Tuaricks and their slaves – the country is full of low rocky hills is well watered by lakes and Streams bounded on the north by the desert on the East by an uninhabited wood dividing it from the Country of Asben or Aghadez on the South by the Country of Sockatoo – from the capital Sockatoo distant three days easy journey – on the west by the country called Tezaght – *lying between it and the country of Timbuctoo it is subject to the Fellaths but governed by its own native Sultan who for the greatest part of the year resides in Sockatoo* – their religion is partly pagan partly Moh-n – there is no town called Adir – this is the Fellatah name for the province Tadena is the name given to the country by its inhabitants.<sup>64</sup>

Clapperton explains that the tribute paid by ‘Adir or Tadena’ to Sokoto consisted of ‘bullocks, sheep, camels, and a coarse kind of cloth’.<sup>65</sup> At the time of Barth’s visit, the Sultan of Sokoto still received tributes from his provinces of Ader, which in 1850 were governed by four emirs. These were Sarkin Ader Hamidu, based in Azaou; Sarkin Ader Mallam, based in Illela; Sarkin Adar Yakoba, based in Tahoua; and Sarkin Adar Sherif, in Sambo. Barth states that all these emirs but the last belonged to a group called ‘Tazamawa’.<sup>66</sup> He also notes that the main marketplace of the ‘province of Adar’ was Konni.<sup>67</sup> The northern limit of Sokoto’s power over Ader in 1850 coincided with the village of Djibale,<sup>68</sup> the southern limit starting ‘just beyond the Gulbin-Rima’ (see Map 2.1).<sup>69</sup>

That only southern Ader fell under Sokoto’s rule is confirmed by Cazemajou’s confusion over the exact location and boundaries of Ader. Cazemajou realised that the term Ader was used both to refer to Sokoto’s administrative province of Ader (‘comprised between Gobir, Mawri, and the Gulbi-n-Birni’) with capital Konni; and to what he vaguely termed ‘Kel Gress country’. He noted that ‘Ader’ was commonly used in Konni to refer

<sup>64</sup> Clapperton, *Records of the Second Expedition*, pp. 290–1, my emphasis. Barth too talks of ‘Adar or Tadlar’ (Barth, *Travels*, vol. 3, p. 121). Perhaps ‘Tadlar’ or ‘Tadena’ is the European explorers’ rendering of their Hausaphone interlocutors’ pronunciation of the Tamasheq word *ettebol*, the political organ of Tuareg chiefship. If this were the case, it would amount to saying that Ader was under Tuareg rule.

<sup>65</sup> Clapperton, *Records of the Second Expedition*, p. 312.

<sup>66</sup> These are probably the ‘Tagzamawa’, of whom the administrator Adelard de Loppinot states, in his inventory of Ader’s ethnic subdivisions: ‘They once were the “domestic slaves” [*captifs de case*] and more or less advisers of the sultan of Agadez, whom they escorted to his throne on the day of his enthronement.’ De Loppinot, *Notes historiques sur les villages du Cercle de Tahoua*, Dactylo, 1950.

<sup>67</sup> Barth, *Travels*, vol. 3, appendix II, p. 636.

<sup>68</sup> After eleven days of travel from Agadez, one reaches ‘Jobeli, a considerable place belonging to the province of Adar, the territory of which begins here. It is the market of the Kel Gerés’. Barth, *Travels*, vol. 1, appendix I, p. 599.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Just beyond the Gulbin Rima, in a northerly direction, the province of Adlar or Tadlar commences’, Barth, *Travels*, vol. 3, p. 121.

to the northern Tuareg area, while ‘Marafa’ ruled ‘the provinces of Konni and Rima’.<sup>70</sup> Cazemajou’s hazy information suggests that at the end of the nineteenth century the Ader region may have contained at least three distinct political entities: (1) Sokoto’s ‘province of Ader’ with Konni as its capital; (2) the kingdom of Ader ruled by Sarkin Ader, based first in Birnin Ader, then in Illela; and (3) independent Kel Gress and Iwellemmeden sections, respectively in eastern/south-eastern and north-western Ader (see Map 2.1).

By the mid-nineteenth century, northern Ader – the focus of this study – was the base of the Kel Denneg, Barth’s ‘Awellimmiden wuén Bodhal’. Budal ‘Balla’ ag-Katami, of the Kel Nan section of the Kel Denneg Iwellemmeden (also known as Eastern Iwellemmeden), had been paramount chief (*amenokal*) of the Eastern Iwellemmeden in the period 1819–40. The ‘Awellimmiden wuén Bodhal’, or children of Budal, mentioned by Barth, were under the power of Budal’s son and successor, Musa ag-Budal (1840–72).<sup>71</sup> Barth knew hardly anything about northern Ader and its inhabitants. Neither he nor Clapperton, nor indeed other members of their expeditions, crossed Ader. The information they received reflected an external perspective that represented Ader as an extremely dangerous place for outsiders. Barth mentioned that the Iwellemmeden were ‘depicted as monsters’ by Annur, the chief of the Kel Ewey.<sup>72</sup> Describing the site of the well of Tergulawen to the south of Agadez, he noted that ‘this locality, desolate and bare in the extreme, is considered most dangerous on account of the continuous ghazias of the Awellimmiden and Kel Gress, who are sure to surprise and carry off the straggling travellers who, if they would not perish by thirst, must resort to this well’.<sup>73</sup> Ader’s societies were semi-autonomous from the will of the main regional powers. Ader’s remoteness from established centres of political authority and the presumed aggressiveness of its population gave it an aura of inaccessibility – and non-conformist elements seeking refuge from the intolerance of dominant regimes found that a distinct advantage.

<sup>70</sup> Entry of 27 February 1898 of Cazemajou’s travel journal, published posthumously under the title ‘Du Niger vers le lac Chad’ in *Bulletin du Comité de l’Afrique Française*. Cazemajou, who never reached Tahoua but enquired about it, concluded that it would be preferable to call Ader the ‘territory of Ouachar’ and ‘Abzin’ Kel Gress country.

<sup>71</sup> On the dates and length of these reigns, I follow Alojaly, *Histoire*, p. 34.

<sup>72</sup> Barth, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 339. <sup>73</sup> Barth, *Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 404–5.

VIEW FROM WITHIN: ENVIRONMENTAL AND POLITICAL  
INSECURITY

The desert-edge location of northern Ader increased the risk of livelihood failure. Ader contained dry rocky and sandy slopes where farming yielded meagre harvests and animals found decent pastures only after the rainy season. Narrow valleys blessed with fertile lands and small lakes made available valuable resources in limited quantities. The rest of the territory consisted of a thick savannah scrub (thick enough in parts to be characterised as a forest),<sup>74</sup> which farmers cleared to plant new fields; where villagers hid during wars and raids; and in which hunters hunted wild game. Wood from these forests was used for iron smelting, conspicuous traces of which are still visible today on the tops of Ader's arid mesas.<sup>75</sup> This diverse environment underwent a transformation in the course of the twentieth century, due to the progressive loss of vegetation and rapid population growth. Early colonial accounts mention permanent lakes, which today have disappeared; and wheat and cotton cultivation in circumscribed zones of northern Ader, which died out more than fifty years ago.

The kinetocratic power of the Kel Denneg (and to a lesser extent of the Kel Gress) did not depend on material wealth, but on their being unencumbered by possessions and yet capable, at any time, of accessing resources held by their political subordinates. The *imajeghen* had priority access over resources produced in Hausa villages and in the camps and villages of their Tuareg dependants.<sup>76</sup> They prioritised access over

<sup>74</sup> See Clapperton's description of Ader, quoted above. Clapperton, *Records of the Second Expedition*, p. 312. In 1904, in a detailed description of his itinerary from Djadjidouna to Agadez, Lieutenant Jean characterised 'Keyta' as a winter-time lake, where water was plentiful, wood abundant, and fodder available in large quantity near the lake, Lieutenant Jean, cahier d'itinéraire de la section montée de Djadjidouna à Agadez du 26 août au 12 septembre 1904, SHD-BAT GR5 H207. On the process of desertification in the first decades of the twentieth century Stebbing quotes information collected in Ader in the 1930s by Adelard De Loppinot, District Officer of the Cercle de Tahoua, Stebbing, *Man-Made Arid Zones*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>75</sup> The last examples of these practices have been documented by Nicole Echard in articles and documentaries, Echard, 'Notes sur les forgerons'; Echard, *Noces de feu*. In a colonial report of 1921, the area of Tamaske is mentioned as one of the main sites of indigenous iron production, Adjoint au Commandant de Cercle de Tahoua (Lieutenant Renaud), *Etude sur l'évolution vers la sédentarisation de l'importante tribu des Kel Gress*, 7 juin 1921, CAOM 11G/28.

<sup>76</sup> Baier and Lovejoy, 'The Tuareg'; Baier and Lovejoy, 'Desert-side economy'; Bonte, 'Esclavage et relations', p. 67.

accumulation. In contexts where land and other valuables are vulnerable to recurrent risks, where even minor shifts in rainfall patterns can induce localised famines, securing access to scattered resources is safer than securing exclusive property rights over volatile capital (land, livestock). The *imajeghen* imposed their predatory rule through their superior military technology and unrestrained mobility. Key to their supremacy was their capacity to assert their freedom of movement; ensure the safety of allies and dependants; and restrict the mobility of enemies.<sup>77</sup>

Insecurity encouraged diversification. Vulnerability of productive resources to recurrent shocks (climatic or political, since harvests and herds were as exposed to droughts as to pillage) imposed diversification in production. Only in recent times has diversification involved the generalisation of agro-pastoralism and labour migration. At the turn of the twentieth century, when unfarmed lands were still available and economic specialisation was a primary aspect of identity, diversification took the form of farming mobility across fields scattered in different locations. Moreover, risk placed a premium on political dependence. It was safer to be the free farming tributaries of a group of powerful *imajeghen* than to be exposed to their raids. The implications of dependence varied across groups. If, for free Hausa farmers, political integration into Tuareg hierarchies implied making a part of their harvests available to the *imajeghen*, for some Tuareg communities settled on scarcely productive lands the implications of dependence were akin to enslavement. Before legal emancipation, slaves had a greater incentive to find benign masters than to seek an unsafe freedom.

Tuareg warrior elites controlled networks of dependent settlements spread along trade axes and grazing lands that fell in their sphere of political influence. These elites were nomadic. While they were not tied to any particular village, each *tawshit*<sup>78</sup> was attached to a particular area of nomadisation. In Ader, these areas contained Hausa villages and villages of free and unfree Tuareg dependants. The farmlands of these villages normally belonged to their inhabitants, if the latter were free. Beyond the farming belt that surrounded villages, Tuareg pastoralists controlled a large proportion of uninhabited land, on which they held two types of rights: individual rights over inherited lands; and collective

<sup>77</sup> Rossi, 'Kinetocracy'.

<sup>78</sup> In his work on the Kel Gress, Bonte defines the *tawshit* as a 'vertical section' in Tuareg social organisation, including elite families and their dependants. The nineteenth-century *tawshit* is 'the minimal unit of articulation of class structures and domestic organization', Bonte, 'Structure de classe', p. 148.

rights exercised by ruling elites and entrusted to their respective chiefs (*amenokal*, *ettebol*, *agholla*, etc.).<sup>79</sup> The *imajeghen*'s herds moved across waterpoints and pastures in these areas, led by dependent herders. Animals were branded with symbols that indicated the identity of their owners. Each symbol had a unique shape and a distinctive name. Groups changed their distinctive brands at turning points in their political history – to signal submission to a new leader, for example.<sup>80</sup> Former slaves who had acquired a degree of autonomy from their masters, either because they lived independently or because they had been manumitted collectively, continued to use their masters' brands on their own animals if they expected the former masters to act as patrons and protectors in the case of raids and incursions. This sometimes gave rise to conflicts over the actual ownership of the animals in question.<sup>81</sup>

Homogeneous slave settlements in areas controlled by particular Tuareg elites functioned as reservoirs of resources (centred on cereals

<sup>79</sup> Ader custom follows the system described in Bourgeot, 'Analyse des rapports', p. 267. The supreme chief of the Kel Gress (Hausa: *Tambari*; French-speaking Kel Gress speak of the Kel Gress 'Sultan' to distinguish him from other Kel Gress section chiefs) belongs to the *Tatmekkarat* group, cf. Jean, *Les Touareg du Sud-Est*, p. 113; see also my field notes and interviews with the *Tatmekkarat* Sultan and his court in Galma Nomade, 21–26 May 2010. The supreme chief (Tamasheq: *Amenokal*) of the *Iwellemmeden* usually belonged to the Kel Nan group, cf. Jean, *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>80</sup> For example, an elder of the *Iklan Eguef* said that the symbol of the *Iwellemmeden* was called '*zad*' and the old *Bayan Tudu* symbol was called '*eker*' and looked like three parallel lines, the middle one longer; he explained that the *Iklan Eguef* symbol today is called '*ehat*' and is similar, though not identical, to the symbol of the *Amattaza*, the chiefly title of *Keita* to which his section of *Iklan Eguef* belongs, interview with Hamada Eferet, Hakimi of *Tchinfaran II*, 3 May 2005. The symbols and names of camel brands used by different groups in Ader and Azawagh are illustrated in Nicolas, *Tamesna*, appendix II, pp. 259–70. Nicolas attributes the '*zad*' symbol mentioned by my *Bayan Tudu* informant to the *Tellimidezt* (or *Tellimidis*) section of the Kel Deneg, p. 260. See also the testimony of Mafa ag Saqqafi (*imajeghen*) on this subject: 'In the east, each [Tuareg] section brands its camels with its own mark: the Kel Nan have their brand (*azwal*, lit: fire), the *Irreulen* have theirs, and the *Tiggimat*, *Tellimidis* and *Ekherkheren* also have [a brand]. The people of the *Azawas* [sic] brand their camels when the camels are still young. They use an incandescent iron to apply a brand on the neck, thigh, anterior shin, side, jaw, or shoulder. Brands have many names: "finger" (*adad*) and "hammer" (*tafadist*), "pennant" (*siləft*), "Mim" (Arabic letter), "Dal" (Arabic letter), "scars" (*tifurawin*), and "tracks of bustard" (*agais*), I don't know ... The people of *Aïr* brand their camels by cutting the [camel's] ear.' In Nicolas, 'Textes ethnographiques', pp. 640–1. The practice of branding camels is mentioned by several authors; see Bonte, 'Structure de classe', p. 148. It is not specific to Ader, or even to Tuareg societies, but is widespread amongst Saharan camel herders, cf. Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails*, pp. 213–14.

<sup>81</sup> Brock, *The Tamejirt*, 190–1.

and livestock) and manpower. Slaves were regarded as capital that could be sold or used as labour. The *imajeghen* ruled by retaining the capacity to access resources and dependants at any time. For commoners, safety lay in productive diversification and alliance. The latter was often skewed and implied dependence. Diversification of resources required mobility across different sites of production. These were wells and grazing lands for herders, and fields in different regions for farmers. Diversification of alliances required ad hoc political arrangements that were sometimes interpreted differently by each party.

The various components of Ader's pluralist society were combined in an inter-ethnic hierarchy headed by Tuareg warrior groups. Hausa and Tuareg societies are each so internally diverse that they might best be approached – so it has been suggested – as pluralist societies in themselves. Hausa society's assimilationist tendency accounts for the conspicuous integration of outsiders and the consequent merging of groups with separate histories.<sup>82</sup> In his comparison of pluralism in pre-colonial Zaria and Maradi, M. G. Smith suggested that social pluralism in Hausaland yielded various outcomes, depending on the nature of circumstantial interactions.<sup>83</sup> Edmond Bernus highlighted the various different perspectives on hierarchy of maraboutic and warrior groups amongst the Tuareg Kel Deneg.<sup>84</sup> In Ader, these already diversified societies merged into one political and social system. Nicole Echard and Pierre Bonte argued that Hausa and Tuareg constituencies in Ader reckoned history in incommensurable ways.<sup>85</sup> They attributed these differences to the diverse social structures of the two groups. At the bottom of Ader hierarchies, slaves have been seen as 'without history', but my work shows that, like any other group, former dependants had their historical perspectives and narratives.<sup>86</sup>

Does Ader's social pluralism preclude a unified analysis of Ader's history? Inter-ethnic relations were interpreted differently by different groups. Free tributaries often emphasised alliance, while rulers emphasised subjection. In spite of these differences, Ader's plural society functioned as a political and economic whole. Integration occurred through multiple institutionalised arrangements: the payment of tributes and the exchange of gifts on particular occasions by different ethnic constituencies to the same paramount chiefs; inter-ethnic military alignments; symbiotic

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Haour and Rossi (eds), *Being and Becoming Hausa*.

<sup>83</sup> Smith, 'Pluralism in precolonial African societies', see particularly pp. 134–6.

<sup>84</sup> Bernus, 'Histoires parallèles et croisées', pp. 31–47.

<sup>85</sup> Bonte and Echard, 'Histoire et histoires'. <sup>86</sup> See Rossi, 'Without history?'

relations between pastoralists, agriculturists, hunters, and artisanal castes; host–trader relations; and slavery, which allowed the incorporation of people from different groups.

#### THE ORGANISATION OF DEPENDENCE IN TUAREG HIERARCHIES

There were two groups of Abzinawa: the Abzinawa of the bush [*na daji*] are the Iwellemmeden; and the Abzinawa of Air [*na Air*] are the Kel Gress . . . Before the Whites came, Ader was divided in two areas. Roughly, the region north of the line Tamaske – Keita – Ibohamane was under the control of the Iwellemmeden. The region that fell south of this line was under the Kel Gress. If you were with one group, it was dangerous to trespass this line. They may catch you and sell you . . . unless you wanted to change allegiance and submit to the other group. Then, they would accept you.<sup>87</sup>

Iwellemmeden and Kel Gress organisation was founded on the hierarchical relation between small groups of *imajeghen* and different dependent sections. Pierre Bonte classified these dependants into three principal categories:<sup>88</sup> (1) semi-permanent camps of slaves working for their patrons (farming and herding), (2) villages of liberated slaves owing their former patrons a share (usually one tenth) of the agrarian produce and various kinds of extraordinary contributions on special occasions in the *imajeghen*'s life cycle (marriage, birth of a child, war), and (3) villages of tributary Hausa or Hausaphone peasants who gave one tenth of the produce of their harvests and paid different kinds of tributes to the *imajeghen*. In fact, dependence appears to have been less clearly structured than Bonte suggests. Status varied along a continuous scale, more than through clearly bounded categories.

Kel Gress livelihoods were more diversified than those of the Iwellemmeden, and included livestock husbandry, agriculture, and caravan trade. Their southern location promoted trade with northern Nigerian cities. The Kel Gress sold animals, salt, and crafts, and bought cereals and cloth. Their herds followed complex migratory patterns. In the summer, roughly between July and September, the salt cure in Tegidda

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Elhadj Alhassan, Jeji, 25 May 2005. The original meaning of the Hausa word 'Abzinawa', sing. 'Baabzine', means the people of Air, 'Abzin' being the Hausa name for Air. However, in Ader today, 'Abzinawa' is used by Hausa speakers as a translation of the Tamasheq term '*imajeghen*', which indicates the status of Tuareg warrior elites and does not have a geographic connotation.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Bonte, 'Structure de classe'.

n'Tesemt was a collective movement. Camels were brought to the In Gall area. From In Gall herds spread out to Tegidda n'Tesemt, Tegidda n'Adrar and Tegidda n'Taguei, where a high concentration of sodium chloride and sodium sulphate in the surface layers of the soil and in wells and springs had a laxative effect on the camels and stimulated the elimination of intestinal parasites.<sup>89</sup> The salt cure was also an occasion for obtaining salt in exchange for southern products brought by the Kel Gress (cloths, cotton, cattle, livestock, millet, butter, and wild honey). Dependent farmers who did not join the salt cure remained in the main Kel Gress area to cultivate the fields in the rainy season. Two other large caravan expeditions to Fachi and Bilma occurred in March and September and were known as *azalai*. These movements were aimed primarily at acquiring dates and local varieties of salt, which were cheaper and of better quality than those of Tegidda n'Tesemt.<sup>90</sup> Southbound Kel Gress caravans sold salt, dates, cattle, and other products of the north to the main markets in Hausaland.

Kel Gress elites owned large numbers of camels and other livestock. When Heinrich Barth visited Agadez in the middle of the nineteenth century, he was told that the salt caravan of the Kel Gress and Itesan, which was in Agadez about to leave for Bilma, numbered 10,000 camels.<sup>91</sup> This he thought an exaggeration, but he confirmed that the caravan was 'very large'. Later in his journal he qualified a caravan of 2,000 camels from Air as astonishingly small.<sup>92</sup> In 1907 Commandant Betrix, on an exploration mission of the route Agadez-Fachi, encountered a Kel Gress caravan of 4,000 camels.<sup>93</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, French district officers used Kel Gress camels for their operations. They noted that Kel Gress elites were their main purveyors of *mehari* (pacy male camels used for racing or transport), and that Iwellemmeden camels were less fit for transport.<sup>94</sup> The Iwellemmeden did not practise caravan

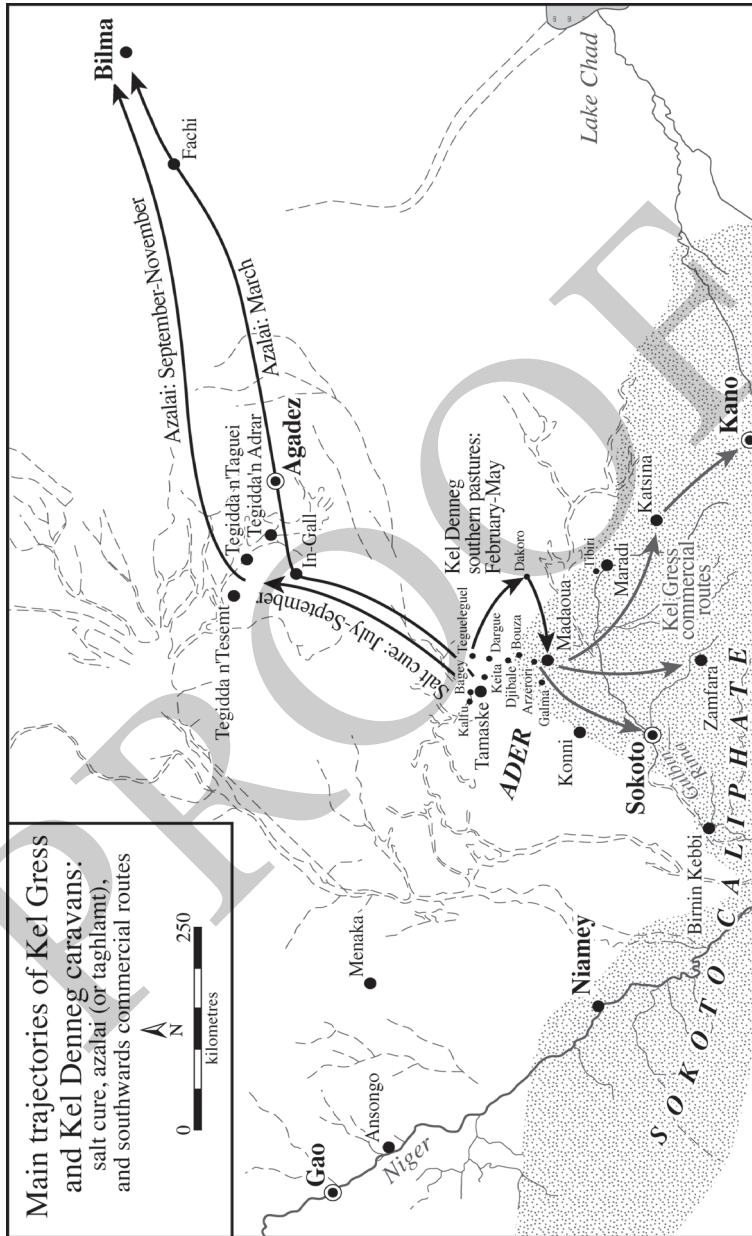
<sup>89</sup> Bernus 'Dates, dromedaries, and drought', p. 163.

<sup>90</sup> Adjoint au Commandant de Cercle de Tahoua (Lieutenant Renaud), Etude sur l'évolution vers la sédentarisation de l'importante tribu des Kel Gress, 7 juin 1921, CAOM 11G/28. Cf. Interviews with Kel Gress elders, Galma, 23-25 May 2010.

<sup>91</sup> Barth, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 341. <sup>92</sup> Barth, *Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 392-3.

<sup>93</sup> Rapport du chef de bataillon Betrix commandant la région de Zinder sur la tournée d'exploration Agadez-Faschi, 29 septembre - 3 novembre 1907, SHD-BAT GR5 H207.

<sup>94</sup> The requisitions or rent (at a nominal fee) of camels from the Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg caused difficulties, because Kel Denneg camels lacked the equipment necessary to transport goods, and the animals were less resistant to fatigue than the ones provided by the Kel Gress, which were also fully equipped for transporting caravan goods, cf. Rapport politique du mois du janvier 1909, Cercle de Tahoua, ANN 17.8.10.



MAP 2.2 Main trajectories of Kel Gress and Kel Denneg caravans: salt cure, azalai (or taghlamt) and southwards commercial routes

trading. They derived their livelihood from dairy husbandry, which they integrated with the consumption of wild seeds and cereals obtained from dependent farming villages.<sup>95</sup> Warfare and raids against free groups gave them access to additional resources. While they did not practise caravan trading, they participated in the summer salt cure, which before the 1970s represented a collective movement of all Tuareg groups.<sup>96</sup>

Neighbouring Kel Denneg and Kel Gress were confronted with different environmental conditions, with consequences for their political structures, and particularly for how they managed dependence. The system of production influenced the nature of political arrangements and marriage alliances. In Kel Gress society, with a large cohort of free and freed tributaries, elite endogamy was necessary for the maintenance of political and economic privilege in the hands of a small minority. The preferred marriage was with cross cousins, which ensured that wealth remained in the same social unit.<sup>97</sup> Endogamy mattered only for free groups, that is, groups who could own property. The freed tributary or sharecropper may have owed a large share of harvest to his/her master but, at least *de iure*, he was economically independent. Marriage with this group would have diluted elite supremacy through the redistribution of capital assets. Instead, from the masters' perspective, marriage with slaves reinforced the endogamous principle, keeping all privileges in the patrilineage. From the slave owners' perspective, a slave concubine was consubstantial with her master; she did not represent a separate lineage.<sup>98</sup> These concerns were less prominent amongst the Iwellemeden, not just because freed

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Bernus, 'Dates, dromedaries, and drought', p. 156; Nicolas, *Tamesna*, p. 197.

<sup>96</sup> 'There were two main migratory circuits. Before leaving, the Abzinawa [Iwellemeden] would beat the drum in different camps, as a sign of departure. The rhythm was different from that of a war. At the beginning of the rains, masters and servants went northwards, toward the Azawagh. Then they started returning southwards, and in the dry season they went toward the valley (*fadama*) of Dargue, Tegueleguel, Dakoro, Madaoua ... they never went beyond Madaoua, the border of Hausaland (*bakin Hausa*). At any time, there were different groups which circulated, and groups (elders, children, a few youths who were tired of travelling around) which stayed in the main camp. At any time some people would return, stay a few days, go back'. Interview with Houssa Atessa, Tinkirana Tounga, 28 October 2005.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Bernus, 'Stratégie matrimoniale', pp. 101–10; Bonte, 'Structure de classe'. For a general discussion of Tuareg kinship, see Murphy, 'Tuareg kinship'; Nicolaisen, 'Structural study'; Nicolaisen, 'Historical change', pp. 290–9; Bernus, Bonte, Brock, and Claudot (eds), *Le fils et le neveu*; Brock, *The Tamejirt*; Claudot-Hawad, 'Analyse sémantique'. The last work, whilst focused on a different region than the one examined here, is of interest for its linguistic focus.

<sup>98</sup> Bonte notes that 'by marrying a slave, one married a classificatory "daughter"', Bonte, 'Structure de classe', p. 159.

slaves were a smaller constituency,<sup>99</sup> but also because elite supremacy was maintained through the monopoly of violence and a related ethos of masters' invincibility.

Kel Gress and Kel Denneg strategies to enforce their rule upon different categories of dependants differed:<sup>100</sup> the former acted more like patrons than like warlords, because in their diversified economy they benefited from their dependants' willingness to collaborate. This balance was reversed for the Kel Denneg, who had fewer incentives to maintain cooperative dependants in the northern arid areas they controlled. Here, resources were scarce, and slaves were valued more as an additional resource (a capital asset) than as producers. Of course, this is a general picture: relations between masters and slaves varied depending on ad hoc biographical circumstances and on the individual nature of the relation.

The Kel Denneg's political supremacy was rooted in their military superiority and knowledge of the desert territory. At the desert's edge, knowing the location of a well and the likelihood of it containing water of drinking quality at various times of the year could make the difference between life or death.<sup>101</sup> Because scarce resources were scattered over large spaces, retaining the capacity to control one's movements was essential.<sup>102</sup> Iwellemmeden elites avoided material accumulation that would constrain their mobility. Rather than investing in productive resources and therefore developing ties to the land, they asserted their military supremacy over villages of farmers and herders tied to different elite families by varying degrees of dependence. The Iwellemmeden ruled by fear. Ader testimonies on the Kel Denneg *imajeghen* convey, without exception, a sense of their invincibility. The views I collected varied on many issues, but they were unanimous on the *imajeghen*'s unchallenged martial power, which in local

<sup>99</sup> It is difficult to reconstruct the pre-colonial proportions of different social strata. For a comparison of Kel Denneg and Kel Gress social structures, see Bernus, 'Dates, dromedaries, and drought', pp. 152-5.

<sup>100</sup> Finn Fuglestad advances a parallel argument: 'The domination of the Kel Dinnik was in essence destructive, and all the more so since the Tuareg proved themselves incapable of maintaining peace. Adar became very much a troubled region, which many groups preferred or were forced to leave [. . .]. Quite the opposite is true in the case of the Gobir Tudu. Here the arrival of the Kel Gress, who actually settled down in the region, sparked off a wholesale "internal colonization", accompanied by a certain economic expansion linked to the extension of farmland.' Fuglestad, *Introduction to the History*, p. 61.

<sup>101</sup> See a detailed description of travel across the desert (in this case, in the company of an administrator) in the testimony of Fezzazi Ag Aboki (Imghad), in Nicolas, 'Textes Ethnographiques (part four)', pp. 137-43.

<sup>102</sup> See Bernus, 'L'eau du désert', pp. 93-104.

views was only curbed by European superior military technology. 'Before the Whites came, only the sight of one of the *imajeghen*'s slaves gave fear to the villagers.'<sup>103</sup> Accounts of the power of the Kel Denneg express fear of their cruelty mixed with admiration for their strength.

Once a Baadere wanted some tobacco from a slave. He told the slave to give him some, but the latter refused. A Iwellemmeden was present, and he cut the Buzu [slave] into pieces.<sup>104</sup>

Even if our grandfathers [of slave status] were more numerous, the Abzinawa were a lot stronger than them in war. Their weapons were superior, and Allah guided their blows – they never missed, they killed, they were strong and protected.<sup>105</sup>

The earliest colonial accounts confirm local testimonies on the fear that Kel Denneg warriors evoked amongst groups politically dependent on them. In a report written in 1904, Capitaine Delestre envisaged the creation of 'mixed military contingents' that would incorporate some Asna in their ranks:

Amongst them there are brave and enterprising men who do not fear fighting against ferocious animals with bow and arrow, but who would not even contemplate the possibility of resisting against a Targui . . . We can hope that soon the Asna will get rid of the impression that the sight of an armed Tuareg still produces on him. When he will have realized the power of our weapons; when he himself will be able to manipulate a rifle and will not fear confronting the Targui; that day, the Tuareg will transform themselves into peaceful herders.<sup>106</sup>

But 'that day' did not come: the French used the power of their weapons to eliminate the Kel Denneg elite before they could convince Asna recruits to join their ranks.

## TRIBUTES, VIOLENCE, AND SLAVERY

### Tributes

The desert's edge, a barrier to societies functioning on settlement logics, served as a protective shield for Kel Denneg warriors. Their raids and incursions terrified settled villagers. Amongst these, sedentary or semi-sedentary villages constituted reservoirs of wealth and resources for the Kel Denneg. Warrior Kel Denneg elites accessed resources through violent

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Mohamed Imboran, Intougouzout Kel Nan, 4 October 2005.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with anonymised speaker, 2005.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Houssa Atessa, Tinkirana Tounga, 6 October 2005.

<sup>106</sup> Capitaine Delestre, Etude préparatoire à la création de 'confins militaires' ou 'marches sahariennes'. SHD-BAT GR5 H207.

extraction (raiding goods and kidnapping people, mostly children), or by mobilising inter-ethnic networks of dependence.<sup>107</sup> In some places, village representatives (Hausa, sing. *wakili*, plur. *wakillai*) acted as intermediaries between the Kel Denneg elites and Hausa communities. Chiefs and representatives of groups who owed allegiance to Kel Denneg elites were more powerful than commoners in the village – or group of villages – they represented, but they were subject to the power of Tuareg chiefs. Few relatively large Hausa villages hosted a stratified system, with commoners (*talakawa*) ranked below the king (*sarki*) and his court of title-holding dignitaries (*masu sarauta*).<sup>108</sup> These lesser kings appear to have entertained direct relations with the representatives of Tuareg chiefs, to whom they paid tribute.<sup>109</sup> In Asna peasant villages responsibility for collective decisions was in the hands of senior men publicly recognised for their courage and skill (as archers), and known as *zarummai* (Hausa, sing: *zarumi*). In multi-ethnic villages Tuareg intermediaries were sometimes selected to represent all village sections, because they were thought to be culturally closer to the Tuareg chiefs and therefore better suited to interacting with them. Alternatively, each group could have a separate representative.

The quantities of tributes in cereals, primarily millet, or other resources (such as butter) varied from year to year. Representatives of Kel Denneg chiefs, usually of artisan status (Tamasheq, *enadan*), brought leather bags (Hausa, sing. *taiki*, plur. *tayukka*) to village headmen, who were responsible for filling them with cereal grains and storing them until collection. Arrangements were flexible. Testimonies vary across groups and villages. People of slave status did not pay tributes because, in the words of an elder of slave descent, they did not own anything, they were owned. Slave settlements and their inhabitants were seen as belonging to particular *imajeghen* or their families. Slaves who lived in autonomous settlements identified some of their male elders as informal leaders, and sometimes

<sup>107</sup> Stephen Baier characterised the Tuareg economy of the Nigerien Sahel as ‘a multi-ethnic system’, whereby ‘ethnicity was related to various occupations within the network’, Baier, *Economic History*, p. 27.

<sup>108</sup> This model appears to have applied in the pre-colonial chiefships of Sarkin Magori, Sarkin Darei, and Sarkin Ader; see Echard, *Expérience*, pp. 45–67, 85–7. Here I translate *sarki* as ‘king’, rather than adopting the common translation ‘emir’, because ‘king’ fits better the specific context in question.

<sup>109</sup> ‘Makhammad, holder of the *ettebol*, raided the entire country; he hated the people of Air and the Kel Gress; our raids (*razzou*) created the desert; This is what Makhammad used to say: “I have brought ruin, to impose [the payment of] tribute or exterminate them”’. Testimony of Alesmaghil Ag Moussa (*imajeghen*), in Nicolas, ‘Textes Ethnographiques’ (part four), p. 147.

appear to have paid tributes, but testimonies vary on this point. Brock found that the tributes paid to their masters by the Tamejirt ‘remained relatively loosely organised and unintensified in the final decades of the nineteenth century. The standard tribute which the Tamejirt gave was one sack (*asamed/isumad* = 80–100 Kg) of millet per harvest [per person].’<sup>110</sup>

The degree of formality of arrangements between masters and slaves who lived in separate agricultural settlements varied. For example, Brock reported that a man of the Tamejirt called Emmawil was selected to act as intermediary between the Kel Nan elites of the Kel Denneg and the Tamejirt communities in north-eastern Ader.<sup>111</sup> But interpretations of the status of Emmawil differed across speakers: Emmawil’s descendants tried to aggrandise the position of their forebear as ‘chief of slaves’, while the descendants of the *imajeghen* downplayed the formality of Emmawil’s role. Khamed Ibrahim of the Kel Eghlel suggested that Emmawil acted as chief (*hakimi*) and collector of tributes from all agricultural captives of the Kel Nan.<sup>112</sup> Testimonies reveal disagreements over the meaning of people’s relative positions in Tuareg hierarchies. Some elders of slave descent thought that the masters of their grandparents did not need intermediaries to access what they saw as their people and resources. One elder who descended from slaves of the *imajeghen* of the Kel Nan, said that at the mere sight of the *imajeghen*’s men, people in his father’s village rushed to collect their most valued possessions, for fear of the consequences of disappointing Tuareg chiefs:

The *imajeghen* had absolute power over the entire area. They had no representatives [*wakillai*] and did not exact taxes [*bodu*] in fixed amounts on a regular basis. What they needed, they took, at any time. They sent their slaves to take anything they needed, for example bags [*tayukka*, sing *taiki*] filled with millet grains. Only the sight of one of their slaves gave fear to villagers. They did not need representatives [*wakillai*]. As soon as a *Ba’abzine* entered a village, villagers rushed to find what they had of most value to give him. Villagers feared him. The *Abzinawa* didn’t do anything, slaves did everything for them. The *imajeghen* just sat. The *imajeghen* lived in tents. When they decided to move, they simply set off, and servants installed their tents. They stayed in a place as long as they wanted, and were looked after by their slaves [*bayunsu*].<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Brock, *The Tamejirt*, p. 176.      <sup>111</sup> Brock, *The Tamejirt*, pp. 200–1.

<sup>112</sup> Brock, *The Tamejirt*, pp. 198–9, 201.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Mohamed Imboran, Intougouzout Kel Nan, 4 October 2005.

Another elder of an Iklan Eguef group, which had been closely associated with the Kel Denneg, described the nature of relations established between *imajeghen* ruling elites and settled communities:

The region going from Dubugu to Izeroa was under the control of the Iwellemmeden. Their chiefs were Mohamed Alkumati and Mohamed ag-Budal, son of Budal ag-Katami.<sup>114</sup> They resided in Kalfu Rahe, but were not settled, they kept moving around. They stayed in this region in the rainy season. Our grandparents [Iklan Eguef] were also scattered in the area. They had a representative *vis-à-vis* the Iwellemmeden chiefs, his name was Eweiss, and he resided in Ibazawane Agoromorom. Also the Hausa had a representative, who was called Killo. They were like village chiefs [*bakimmai*] and canton chief [*sarki*] – they came from the community of the group they represented, but were in charge of dealing with the *imajeghen*. These were no taxes or zakat . . . the amenokal told the representatives what he needed and they provided him with anything he asked for.<sup>115</sup>

In several villages I obtained similar accounts, which suggest that the local contacts of the Iwellemmeden chiefs were issued from the village community itself.

The Abzinawa [Kel Gress] selected a representative amongst the villagers of Tegueleguel. The last one was Amma, who was the headman found by the French. They used to pay a *tamasadak* [10 per cent of the harvest], which remained in the village.<sup>116</sup>

This statement, the only one reported here which mentions the Kel Gress rather than the Kel Denneg, explicitly characterised the tribute as '*tamasadak*', or harvest dime.

The Kel Gress established a more homogeneous system of tributes amongst their farming dependants. In the northern areas that formed the core of Kel Denneg power – the region around the villages of Bagey/Tirima and Kalfu – the Iwellemmeden extracted different types of products from different communities, and the timing of their demands varied. Iwellemmeden rule appears to have been less structured than Kel Gress government. Greater flexibility suited the requirements of nomadic Kel Denneg warriors, whose activities were less influenced by the seasonality of farming. Only in large farming villages did they collect cereals regularly after the harvest. In northern villages and camps closest to their

<sup>114</sup> Ghubayd Alojaly has Makhhammad ag Abdessalam Elkumati and Musa (not Mohamed) ag Budal, son of Budal ag Katami, cf. Alojaly, *Histoire des Kel Denneg*, p. 30.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Malam Yakouba, Dubugu, 23 May 2005.

<sup>116</sup> Interview, Tegueleguel, 7 June 2005.

area of nomadisation they appear to have placed representatives issued from their own dependants:

The Abzinawa stayed in the bush [*daji*]. At their arrival, the Whites took power from the Abzinawa, from Mahamman Tambari father of Baso of Tchinta.<sup>117</sup> They are the descendants of Elkhorer.<sup>118</sup> In turn, the Abzinawa had taken the power away from Sarkin Ader of Illela. The Abzinawa used to be based near Bagey, but they moved around, they were herders, they did not stay put in one place [*makiyaya su ke, ba su zamna wuri guda*]. We were at peace with the Abzinawa. If they came to our village we welcomed them. We paid a *haraji* to the Abzinawa. There was no money then, people used cowrie shells, the white money [*ean wuri, farfarin kudi . . .*] The Abzinawa brought their people here. Their representative in Bagey was Ahambala, a Baabzine. He collected the *haraji* for the Abzinawa.<sup>119</sup>

At the southern edge of Iwellemmeden control, Hausa farming villages paid tributes of cereals to the *imajeghen* after the harvest. These Hausa villages retained a degree of political and economic independence. They selected their chiefs and made their productive and economic arrangements. Testimonies of people belonging to these communities exemplify more structured, formal arrangements for the payment of tributes to *imajeghen* chiefs. Here too, however, the threat of violence produced a sense of constant vulnerability. When the *imajeghen's* demands were not met with alacrity, villages were raided. The son of the first colonial chief of the Canton of Tamaske expressed this situation in words familiar from the accounts of slave descendants:

When the Abzinawa were in power, they maintained their power through force. Whenever the Abzinawa wanted something, wealthy people had to put at their disposition what they had. Anytime, they could come and access people's wealth.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Makhammad ag-Ghabdessalam 'Elkumati', in power 1875–1905 (see Alojaly, *Histoire des Kel Denneg*, p. 34). In Ader, he is known as 'Mahamman Tambari', the last great *amenokal* of the Kel Denneg.

<sup>118</sup> 'Su Elkhorer', meaning, today these are the people who descend from Elkhorer (Elkhorer ag-Arraqqabi, in power 1908–17).

<sup>119</sup> Interview with Elh. Soumaila Ahambala, Bagey, 9 June 2005.

<sup>120</sup> Interview with Alio Aga, Tamaske Sabon Gida, 19 February 2005. I was able to interview Alio Aga a few months before he died. He was the son of the first Canton Chief of Tamaske, who had children until an advanced age. His father had experienced the rule of the *imajeghen* and colonial conquest. His testimony recalls accounts collected in other parts of Niger, in which pre-colonial chiefs are remembered to have extracted what they wanted through pillage rather than tributes. See, for example, a testimony collected by Olivier de Sardan on the south-eastern Niger Bend: 'Before the coming of the whites people didn't give zakat to the chiefs . . . Before, the chief only had his own millet, the rest he had to take by force, no one gave him zakat, he took millet from those weaker than himself. Then the whites came and raiding was abolished. So the chiefs

The elderly chief of one of the neighbourhoods of Tamaske was the grandson of Mai Dawa,<sup>121</sup> the local representative who collected cereals paid as tribute to the Iwellemmeden chiefs. As mentioned above, the quantity was fixed on the basis of the number of empty leather bags that the artisans left with the local representative, and which had to be returned full of cereals:

The Abzinawa were like supreme rulers [*ubangiji*] and the Mashidawa like commoners [*telakawa*]. They feared the Abzinawa. In the past, the Abzinawa of the Gulbi [Kel Gress] used to make incursions here to kidnap and enslave people. Then Musa<sup>122</sup> the chief [*tambari*] of the Iwellemmeden learned about this and stopped the incursions [*ya hana musu*, lit. he forbade them]. So they submitted to Musa and gave him anything he came to collect. He would send here his artisans. After the harvest, they brought leather bags [*tayukka*] and gave them to Mai Dawa, who, in turn, distributed them to the household heads [*ya ba mai gida*]. He gave more bags to wealthier farmers, fewer to poorer ones. As they filled them, he stocked them in the entrance room [*zaure*] of a forge that was located on the road going from Al Hazawa to the site where today there is the sarki's palace. There, filled *tayukka* were stocked until the artisans returned and charged camels with them and brought them northwards. The small hamlets around here did not give anything. Sakole gave, but its bags were stored here.<sup>123</sup>

Tributes were collected in the same way in Gidan Gorey, a Hausa village located near productive farmlands:

The Abzinawa used to collect bags filled with cereals after the harvest [*bayan girbi girbi*]. They went directly to Damboka or other local big men. Each gave according to his wealth. [...] The Abzinawa sent camels, on which they transported the bags filled with millet grains [*tsaba*].<sup>124</sup>

## Violence

The *imajeghen* supplemented wealth obtained through tributes with raids and pillages directed primarily against other Tuareg confederations, or

declared that they had to receive zakat as though it was an ancient custom', Olivier de Sardan, 'Le cheval et l'arc', p. 231.

<sup>121</sup> The name 'Mai Dawa' is probably a nickname derived from his role as collector of tributes in cereals, as *dawa* is the Hausa term for sorghum. This, however, was not suggested by the speaker.

<sup>122</sup> Musa ag-Budal of the Kel Nan, in power 1840–72, Alojaly, *Histoire des Kel Denneg*, p. 34.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Rashidou Issa 'Amanno', Hakimi of Alhazawa (Tamaske), 26 October 2005.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with elhadj Aboka Mousa, Gidan Gorey, 14 September 2005.

villages that were not their allies.<sup>125</sup> Raids and kidnaps were frequent: 'if they raided cattle, they took it away, then they stopped somewhere and every [participant in the expedition] could take some animals [for himself]; if they raided captives, they did the same; if they raided a free man, he would ransom himself [by giving] money, cattle, or slaves'.<sup>126</sup> Punctual kidnaps primarily targeted children, who were easily abducted if left unguarded by adults:

Once two Iwelmedden came to Charingué riding their camels. One of them grabbed a little child. But the child's mother saw this, so she ran and grabbed the hand of the child. The man who held the child hit her on the head with his sword [*takoba*] but she wouldn't let go. So the other Baabzine told him to leave the child. He did . . . the child grew up here and died a few years ago.<sup>127</sup>

Villagers resisted violence as well as they could. Sometimes a mother's courage won her child a free life. Alongside regular kidnapping, war took the form of raids and counter-raids that involved alliances between different groups, which mastered diverse military techniques. Three groups are most often represented as engaged in spontaneous alliance: the *imajeghen*; the Iklan Eguef, or 'Bayan Tudu' in Hausa,<sup>128</sup> who in Ader used to act as specialised military dependants of the *imajeghen*; and Asna archers. Military alliances were established between groups with complementary skills. Supernatural protection was regarded as vital to the outcome of any confrontation, and different groups relied not only on distinct fighting

<sup>125</sup> See description of Tuareg fighting techniques and weapons in Lieutenant Jean, *Les touareg du sud-est*, chapter 24.

<sup>126</sup> Testimony of Alesmaghil Ag Mousa, in Nicolas 'Textes ethnographiques' (part four), pp. 148–9.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with anonymised speaker, 2005.

<sup>128</sup> French researchers of Tuareg society sometimes translate 'Iklan Eguef' (slaves of the hill or dune) literally, as '*esclaves de dune*', and see this as a generic term for slave hamlets living independently from their masters. In Ader I never encountered this generic meaning. I collected a number of interpretations of 'Iklan Eguef', the Hausa form of which means '*behind the dune*' (*Bayan Tudu*), possibly a pun with the Hausa term for slaves, '*bayyi*'. One interpretation suggests that the name derives from Tuareg war strategies: 'during wars the *imajeghen* preferred to fight in the valley [because they were mounted swordsmen and horses were more stable on plains]. Slaves and Iklan Eguef were the first to be hit, they were aligned on the sides of the hills – this is why the Iklan Eguef are called like this, because they were stationed on the slope guarding the area . . . they guarded the hill'. Interview with Housa Atessa, Tinkirana Tounga, 6 October 2005. The *Iklan Eguef* are consistently characterised as free warrior dependants. They continued to practise endogamy more strictly than other groups, and appear to have acted as a warrior caste, not unlike the artisans (*enadan*). For a discussion of the use of the term 'Iklan Eguef' in various sources, see Rossi 'Tuareg trajectories'.

techniques, but also on different types of magic. Wars were not fought by warriors alone: religious specialists played a vital military role, and received a part of the booty in compensation for their services:

The chief of the country will keep one quarter [of the booty resulting from a raid (*razzou*)]; the warriors will divide the remaining part for themselves. The *mrabt*in [Islamic clerics], too, will receive a part of the booty because they prayed for the good fortune of the *imajeghen*'s expedition.<sup>129</sup>

The decision as to whether a battle would or would not be fought was ultimately made by the clerics. A supernatural omen or a marabout's advice was dismissed at one's own risk and peril. The most important quality of a successful warrior was the force of the magic he relied upon.<sup>130</sup> The language of war was inseparable from the language of magic, and weapons and amulets were fused in a single category of war instruments (see Figure 2.4): swords, shields, bows – indeed, any kind of weapon – often incorporated talismans. The value of the most appreciated and costly items of military technology depended to a large extent on their magical properties. Military alliances exploited complementarities in different supernatural powers as much as in distinct fighting technologies.

Hausa archers (claiming Gobirawa origins) from the village of Sakole sacrificed to the spirit of a hill called Sakania Mai Ziza, whose protection was sought particularly for military endeavours (rather than for environmental and production-related reasons). They distinguished between different fighting technologies and supernatural practices:

When the Abzinawa had to fight a war, they came to Sakole to demand the collaboration of the main archers [*zarummai*]. Sakolawa fought with bow and arrow. Their strategies differed from those of the Tuareg. Archers stuck together, because if one of them remained isolated he would be surrounded and killed. So, archers kept united and shot arrows. The Abzinawa fought individually with swords and at a closer range with the enemy. The Sakolawa performed sacrifices for themselves, the Abzinawa had nothing to do with their sacrifices. There were clerics [*mallammawa* and *bokaye*], who had amulets and magical remedies. The Sakolawa sought both protections because if one did not work, the other would. They also had different types of spears: one [*mashi*] was all made of iron; another one [*kasausawa*] consisted of an iron spear on a wooden pole.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Testimony of Baderum Ag Himmi (Imajeghen), in Nicolas, 'Textes ethnographiques' (part four), pp. 144–5.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Interview with Hamada Eferet, Tchinfaran II, 3 May 2005.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with Almoustapha Ada and Asha Idi, Alela, 30 September 2005. On the alliance between Djibalawa and Bayan Tudu, cf. interview with Mano, Intchimiya, 19 May 2005. Mano argued that the Iwellemmeden allied with the Bayan Tudu and the Djibalawa, and the Kel Gress with the Gobirawa.



FIGURE 2.4 Descendant of Bayan Tudu warrior wearing talismans

Iklan Eguef (called Bayan Tudu in Hausa) groups echo the account above of the Hausa of Sakole, from a different perspective:

The Bayan Tudu's weapons were the sword [*takuba*] and the dagger [*mashi*]. Then they had a shield [Hausa: *garkuwa*; Tamasheq: *agar*] in leather behind which they hid while fighting.<sup>132</sup>

In the past, our people were warriors. They fought with the Iwellemmeden . . . The Iwellemmeden used to stay in Izeroa, close to Kalfu. In times of war, the *amenokal* beat the drum. Men left women, children, and slaves behind, took their sword [*takuba*], and gathered, to prepare for war. They fought with swords on horses of the *Bagzam* type, which were numerous.<sup>133</sup> Wars could involve more than 100 people. Some fought on camels, others (the most numerous) on horses, others on foot . . . Some warriors were known for their bravery, and were like 'generals' [in French in the text]. These warriors were so strong that they could stop the arrows of twenty Djibalawa archers with their shield. Their magic power was such that arrows would not even reach them, they fell on the ground before getting to them.<sup>134</sup>

The power of a particular chief or warrior is often said to have depended on the support he was able to obtain from different categories of religious specialists. Hence, the political success of Sarki Tuba dan Aga, the second chief of the district of Tamaske under colonial rule, was associated with the magic power of Arnei, a magician apparently of slave status:

The most powerful magician, who used to go to war with Sarkin Tuba, was Arnei. Arnei was a Buzu. His mother was a slave, called Tambidikka. She had been bought by Tagalafi, our neighbour. Slaves were sold at the market, but Tagalafi had gone to see some Abzinawa in person and had bought Tambidikka directly

<sup>132</sup> Interview with Hamada Eferet, Tchinfaran II, 3 May 2005.

<sup>133</sup> *Bagzam* horses are considered the best kind of horse, usually associated with past warfare and with the Iwellemmeden nobility. See testimony of Bazo ag Elkhorer (*imajeghen*), 'The people of the Azawagh love noble horses very much, their price is high! A *Bagzam* horse (*un originaire de Bagjan*) or a horse of Kidal: these are horses of a pure and ancient race. There are only few of them in the camps. The Arabs, the [Iwellemmeden] *imajeghen*, and the Kel Gress still possess [this type of horse]; they are not sold anymore, they cannot be obtained at markets . . . [you can only get one of these horses] if a chief (*amenokal*) gives it to you, or if one such horse were to become part of human dowry (*taggalt n awedam*). They drink milk, and they are tied in the middle of a camp until their master wishes to hunt ostriches or oryxes', in Nicolas, 'Textes ethnographiques', p. 645. See also the poem composed by El-Hadj (Amajer of the Irreulen) around 1895 and recited by the author himself to Francis Nicolas in 1938: 'Elbab has abandoned the black horse to whom is not attached/because he obtained the horse who descends from a stallion/the *Bagzan* [sic] horse which everybody admires'. In Nicolas, 'Poèmes touareg', p. 51.

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Iklan Eguef informant, camp on the way from Keita to Toumboulana, 26 April 2005.

from them. Arnei was very powerful, and did a lot of magic work for Sarkin Tuba. I do not know if Arnei was ever freed, but his children grew up with the children of his master Tagalafi.<sup>135</sup>

Arnei was involved both in *bori* and in the performance of sacrifices necessary to propitiate certain spirits (*iskoki*) and obtain their support for the political and military strategies of Sarkin Tamaske in the first colonial decades. The force of Tuareg religious clerics was of a different type. It was based on specialist knowledge of the Quran and the identification and extraction of powerful verses from it. These verses were written on papers wrapped in leather and worn by Tuareg warriors together with other magic charms, such as parts of animals (a lion's teeth, for example, or an eagle's beak) that were thought to confer some of the animals' qualities to whoever carried them. Maraboutic groups offered their services to the *imajeghen*. Their reputation for holiness protected them and their dependants from attacks. Some *ineslemen* sections obtained large numbers of slaves from the *imajeghen* in return for their religious services, primarily their support in times of war. Sometimes the oral traditions of maraboutic groups illustrate direct confrontations between rival religious specialists, in which victory reflected depth of religious knowledge:

Eljilani was a great warrior of the Attawari. Once he arrived close to our camp in Loudou and settled there without greeting. Our [Kel Eghlel Ennigger] forebears understood that he was going to make war against them. The imam [i.e. the cleric who led them in prayer] consulted the main scholars, since Eljilani was so powerful a warrior and they, instead, did not fight. He too, was a malam, but not as powerful as them. They decided they would send him food. With it, a note with some Quranic verses, difficult ones, carefully selected. If he could read them, he would understand the extent of their knowledge and leave them in peace. If he could not, he would still understand that they were more powerful and leave them in peace. He could not understand these very difficult verses. He was surprised to find someone so much stronger than him – he could not even understand the verses they had selected! He left and all they found on the following day were the empty dishes of the food they had sent him.<sup>136</sup>

Anecdotes such as this one reveal that the criteria of prestige amongst religious specialists differed from those of warrior elites. The *imajeghen's*

<sup>135</sup> Interview with Alio Aga, Tamaske, 26 October 2005; cf. interview with Elh. Aboka Mousa, Gidan Gorey, 14 September 2005; interview with Hakimi Idi Falkari and Elh. Hama, Agouloum, 20 September 2005; interviews with Tchamma Djibo, Tamaske, 2–3 October 2005.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Kel Eghlel Ennigger informant, 25 March 2005.

military might resounded across the vast extent of Ader's dry mesas and forested valleys through the beat of the drum. The drum was an insignia of command, and stood metaphorically for the chief who detained it. The chief decided when it would be played to declare war or signal the onset of other collective activities, such as departure for the salt cure. He was identified with it, as 'drum' was a chiefly title: *ettebol* in Tamasheq, *tambari* in Hausa. In a world where power manifested itself as control over one's own and other people's movements (kinetocracy), the most obvious manifestation of such power was the prerogative to use sound to reach instantly all of one's dependants, whose precise location, in the case of nomads, might have been unknown. But sound, which knows no barrier, could instantly reach a scattered population which knew how to interpret the meaning of different rhythms. The chief's power resided in his ability to project the sound of his drum across space and dictate his dependants' behaviour, reassure allies of his omnipresence, and intimidate enemies. The drum of war could be heard over long distances:

The Iwellemmeden played the drum of war from the area of Dimbutan, toward Abalak, where they were based. Their drum could be heard all the way to here. People could press the ear against the ground and hear it. Horses heard it, too. Upon hearing the drum's beat, all the men, slaves too, would take their weapons and leave.<sup>137</sup>

Different rhythms signalled different activities. The drum was played to signal collective departure for the transhumance, to signal peril, or to communicate other information:

The *ettebol* beats on certain days, now it does not beat anymore: two ... and two ... and two: departure for transhumance; three ... three: halt; one ... one ... someone is missing, people should reassemble; four ... four: enemies; banners, their colour: green, red, black ...<sup>138</sup>

During wars, different named rhythms distinguished different groups. A descendant of a renowned Iklan Eguef warrior said that the sounds of the Kel Denneq's and the Iklan Eguef's drums had distinct names:

The war of Izeroa was fought between the Ahaggaren on one side, and the Iwellemmeden *imajeghen*, and their allies the Bayan Tudu [that is, Iklan Eguef], and the Asna. Slaves did not join the fighting. The drum [*ettebol*] of the Imajeghen and the Bayan Tudu played two different rhythms at times of

<sup>137</sup> Interview with Ghalio and Itegan elders, Kirari nomade, 28 April 2005.

<sup>138</sup> Testimony of Alesmaghil Ag Moussa (*imajeghen*), in Nicolas 'Textes ethnographiques' (part four), p. 147.



FIGURE 2.5 Tambari of Tawantakat Kel Gress with drum, Galma Nomade (2010)

war. The rhythms were called, respectively, *egedum* for the Iwellemeden, and *egelum* for the Bayan Tudu.<sup>139</sup>

Apparently, the chiefs of dependant mercenary groups, the Iklan Eguef, also had distinctive cries of war, and their strength is immortalised in their capacity to project their voice across great distances:

The Iwellemeden used to stay at Izeroa, close to Tahoua. When they played the drum, everybody mounted their horse and reached them, ready to fight . . . The *ettebol* could be heard anywhere. One of our ancestors could make a cry of war in Tsaunaye [a distant village], and they heard him here.<sup>140</sup>

Lina Brock, who in the mid-1970s conducted research amongst the Tamejirt servile dependants of the Kel Denneg, noted that ‘for the Tamejirt, the image of following the sound of the *ettebol* across the

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Nissa dan Eweiss, camp between Agoromorom and Latchiwa (Kalfu area), 9 June 2005.

<sup>140</sup> Interview with Hamada Eferet, Tchinfaran II, 3 May 2005.

Awazagh on transhumance was the favourite metaphor for their political relation to the nobles. As one elder put it, adding a high-pitched resonant cry to dramatise his point:

The Tamejirt follow the *ettebol* . . . Timmm! Timmm! Timmm! If you take it [the *ettebol*] today, we would all follow you.<sup>141</sup>

Memories of colonial invasion attribute a particular sound to the French troops, too. In the following testimony, the second passage of the French army is recognised by its sound:

When the French arrived, the first thing they did was to get information. They went in all the villages, asked about the types of people, their activities . . . [T]he White man brought sugar and bracelets and necklaces. He asked: 'what do you make war with?' The ones he talked to showed him their weapons, he wrote and measured. Some time passed, then one day . . . *rididididi* . . . *rididididi* . . . the white came back. They had already studied all the villages, they knew who was where.<sup>142</sup>

In Ader organised violence did not lead, as in centralised states, to the development of a sedentary military apparatus whose permanent presence exemplified state power. Rather, it consisted in the power to mobilise dependants – in the literal sense of setting in motion – for the ruler's purposes.<sup>143</sup> Political subordination confined a group's ability to move independently, and by such movement defy the rulers' authority. Tuareg warrior elites saw raiding as a distinctive characteristic of their superiority and felt free to raid at any time. The first raid of a young *amazigh* is sometimes represented as a rite of passage into adulthood, an essential skill that, once acquired, signalled the achievement of manhood:

Abzinawa youths kidnapped people also to prove that they were ready to get the turban [ready for transition into adulthood]. A youth may have had animals and slaves, already. He was given weapons and a horse or camel. To prove that they were ready to wear the turban, he and his best friend had to abduct animals or people. Then they sold them and got married with the money they earned [from the sale].<sup>144</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Brock, *The Tamejirt*, pp. 161–2.

<sup>142</sup> Interview with Alhassan of Allambaya, Keita, 25 September 2005.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Rossi, 'Slavery and migration'.

<sup>144</sup> Interview with Alhassan of Allambaya, Keita, 25 September 2005. According to one of the testimonies collected by Francis Nicolas amongst the Iwellemmeden, a youth would usually wear his first turban around the age of seventeen, and would continue wearing it until the time of his death; see testimony of Tehokka Ulet Adem (Enadan), in Nicolas, 'Textes ethnographiques', p. 154.

Poems composed by the great Kel Denneg warriors of the nineteenth century celebrate the speed of their raids. The *imajeghen* are often likened to birds, as in Efellan's description of the battle of Derkatin (1847), at which the Iwellemmeden Kel Ataram attacked the Kel Denneg. Celebrating the ardour of his companions, Efellan describes the arrival of a large contingent of 3,000 Kel Ataram warriors, marching slowly into Denneg country, and planning to stop and rest after having raided the area. But, Efellan says, 'we were for them like a storm of birds of prey at the time of the midday prayer'.<sup>145</sup> Focused, self-directed movement is synonymous with power; uncontrolled movement, such as escape driven by fear, a source of dishonour: in the same poem, Efellan describes himself, 'I am a hardy warrior, a man with a muscular body, for me escape is unthinkable, just as seeking refuge in some low hill'.<sup>146</sup> Dependant mobility is a symptom of subordination: in Tuareg poems, contingents of Hausa archers and liberated slaves 'accompany' and 'follow' Tuareg leaders. Even in death the warrior's body is scattered in space, it does not lie composed and immobile:

It is God's will that I deserve  
to see myself scattered  
on the high plateau of Masshaghar  
ranged next to Inzebar,  
my weapons like a broken broom, my hand thrust far away;  
and that I have the vulture as undesirable host  
who rips me apart by the shoulder  
and the folds of the chin.  
It was not written that I should be a young man  
who dies lying on leather pillows.<sup>147</sup>

Constant war and raiding shaped the way in which people lived. Settled villages were preferably located in concave spaces surrounded by low hills. The architecture consisted of small buildings made of the same red-golden earth that paves Ader's slopes. Huts and granaries, intermixed with trees, did not stand out in the landscape. Even today, travelling in Ader, one can be struck by the sudden appearance of a village that had remained invisible at a distance of 200 or 300 metres, depending on the time of day and weather conditions.<sup>148</sup> Oral testimonies are filled with

<sup>145</sup> Alojaly, *Histoire*, p. 66.      <sup>146</sup> Alojaly, *Histoire*, p. 65–6.

<sup>147</sup> Poem by Budal Ag Katami, Amenokal of the Kel Nan (1819–40) quoted in Alojaly, *Histoire des Kel Denneg*, p. 58.

<sup>148</sup> I describe defensive strategies in Rossi, 'Being and becoming Hausa in Ader'.

stories of villages inhabited by powerful magicians who could make themselves or their village invisible to enemies: 'the Gazurawa were a very powerful group. They could make themselves invisible. If they showed themselves, the one who saw them could die';<sup>149</sup> and 'Kirari was not attacked because the sacrifices they made (*tsaye-tsaye*) rendered the village invisible.'<sup>150</sup> Representations of the landscape never omit references to hiding places, such as caves and forests, or to places that offered selective protection to particular groups, usually because of alliances that humans maintained with the spirits who resided there. The frequent displacement of villages in pre-colonial times functioned as a defence strategy. The result, today, is that elders of each Hausa subgroup have layered mental maps of the landscape. One layer maps contemporary places and roads.<sup>151</sup> Another layer maps the location and interconnection of sites meaningful for their supernatural characteristics, sites peopled by spirits who lead an existence not unlike that of their human counterparts (they have a home, they travel certain roads, they visit other spirit-relatives) and who can be contacted by humans familiar with the formalities of interaction with the spirit world. Yet another layer maps the many sites where the ancestors of a group had stopped, in the course of itinerant lifestyles as shifting cultivators at a time when more land was available.

Frequent migrations of Hausa villages in the past were not only integral to their farming system. They functioned as a preventive defence against the incursions of Tuareg warriors. If potential enemies identified the location of a farming village they knew where to direct their raids. Frequent resettlement prevented the fixing of raiding patterns. Abandoned villages punctuate the mental map of Hausa landscapes and carry names such as '*kofon gida*', 'empty home', or, for example, 'Agouloum Kofai', 'empty Agouloum', to mark the previous emplacement of the village of Agouloum. Countless testimonies evoke the strategies of Hausa and Tuareg commoners confronted with war and violence. A case in point is an anecdote about a Tuareg man called Achana, who had a large family and lived in the bush with his herd. His camp stood on a forested hill, from which he could see potential enemies

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Idi Falkari and Elhadj Hamma, Agouloum Toudou, 20 September 2005.

<sup>150</sup> Interview with Aoubakar Keitawa, Keita, 7 September 2005; see also interview with Ibrahim Hakimi and elders of Zangarata, Zangarata, 26 May 2005; interview with Mushe Halilou, Keita, 14 September 2005.

<sup>151</sup> See Masquelier, 'Road mythographies'; Masquelier, 'Of headhunters and cannibals', pp. 102–6.

approaching at a distance. At each sighting, he urged his children to hang all their clothes on the tree branches and move around visibly so that a small party of marauders would expect resistance from a large settlement, when in fact he lived alone with his family.<sup>152</sup>

Patches of thick vegetation offered a place to hide from the incursions of Tuareg warriors. Hiding strategies are evoked in traditions of settlement: when a certain Addana migrated into Ader with others from the Kurfey region, at some point 'he saw a beautiful wooded valley where one could hide easily in case of war', and encouraged his companions to settle there.<sup>153</sup> And hiding strategies are remembered as a constant concern of ancestors who lived in the pre-colonial past: 'the past was a very difficult time: people had to hide in the trees. It is only when the Whites came that they stopped fearing the power of the Abzinawa.'<sup>154</sup> Hiding was not the only defensive mechanism that recurs in the testimonies of Ader's farming communities: the water of wells could be poisoned so that it would kill raiders and their horses; trenches could be dug and covered with straw, so that riders would fall in and their horse or camel would be injured; and magic charms offered safety from countless threats, provided that the attacker did not rely on superior magic, in which case his victim faced death or enslavement.

### Slavery

Insecurity put a premium on dependence. Dependence exposed people to exactions, but afforded protection from greater risks, ultimately enslavement and death. In this context, the opposite of slavery was not freedom, but regulated and willingly accepted dependence. From the perspective of subordinate groups, Hausa and Tamasheq-speakers alike, dependence offered protection from enslavement. The *imajeghen* satisfied their wants and needs without having to settle in one place and negotiate their legitimacy with local populations. Anyone they could raid at will was a potential dependant to them – ultimately, a potential slave. Slavery functioned as a core metaphor of subjection and influenced the conceptualisation of all identities. Those who could enslave at will held legitimate power. Those who could resist enslavement turned resistance into a

<sup>152</sup> Unpublished notebooks of Aghali Assadeck, Keita historian of the Lissawan ruling family.

<sup>153</sup> Samama Dan Alio, cited in Echard, *Expérience*, p. 144.

<sup>154</sup> Comment made by elderly woman during interview, Albaraka, 16 June 2005.

characteristic of their identity. Those who could not resist enslavement tried to turn dependence to their advantage, by claiming protection in exchange for subservience. Chiefs, patrons, and masters had obligations towards dependants, which changed according to the nature of the relationship. A free tributary falling in the sphere of influence of a particular section of the Kel Denneg expected military protection from the attacks of other groups. A domestic slave expected to be fed and clothed. Expectations were not always met.

The slave category was stratified internally into gradations of dependence.<sup>155</sup> In theory if not always in practice, masters were responsible for their basic needs. The most marginal slaves could be sold. These were recently captured slaves, who had not been integrated in the society of the masters. The two main slave categories differed in their relative functions.<sup>156</sup> The *bayun murfu* ('slaves of the hearth'), who took care of the everyday domestic needs of masters, were bound physically to their masters' existence. They served their masters, whether this meant following them along their incessant travels, building their tents, looking after their cattle, taking care of their goods and families in their absence, or attending to the needs of an important guest.<sup>157</sup> In contrast, allotment slaves lived in settled or semi-nomadic camps where their lives were relatively autonomous from those of their owners. While domestic slaves were fed and clothed by the masters, allotment slaves were responsible for their own food, clothing, and shelter. The masters could take them away or appropriate the resources they used at any time. Domestic slaves could not move independently, for their residence and activities were bound to those of their owners. Allotment slaves, on the other hand, led a quasi-autonomous existence. Yet their mobility in space was restricted to the camp and its vicinities: 'If there is a slave village and there is no master in the village, even if the master is away, he controls what is going on.'<sup>158</sup> If found outside the areas controlled by their masters, slaves were likely to be returned or recaptured. The movements of free tributaries,

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Baier and Lovejoy, 'Tuareg of Central Sudan'; Baier and Lovejoy, 'Desert side economy'.

<sup>156</sup> This distinction, based on my enquiries in Ader, matches the observations of Bernus, 'Evolution récente', p. 142; see also Bernus and Bernus, 'Evolution de la condition servile', pp. 33–5.

<sup>157</sup> Some of these tasks are also mentioned in the testimony of Rabi ag Elibdar (*imajeghen*), in Nicolas, 'Textes ethnographiques' (part three), pp. 655–6.

<sup>158</sup> Interview with the village chief of Intchimiya, Intchimiya, 11 April 2005.

such as Hausa traders, were less confined, but migration was dangerous, especially outside the region of influence of allied *imajeghen* sections.<sup>159</sup>

It is impossible to provide a unified description of slavery in Ader. Enslavement has been experienced differently by men and women whose relations with their masters varied, whose living conditions differed, and whose sense of self gave them a unique understanding of their relations with others. Anafaran (a pseudonym), a man of slave descent, spoke with the dignity of someone who lived through many situations and acquired valuable skills, including knowledge of Arabic language and script. Like Diogenes, who thought that a slave's art consisted in knowing how to rule one's master, Anafaran often spoke about former masters and political elites with detachment, even superiority. Whenever I met him, Anafaran tried to convey accurate information, clarifying points of doubt, stating clearly what he did not know, situating the views of others. This is how he explained how slavery worked:

The *imajeghen* had two types of slaves. Those who followed them around, and those who lived in separate villages. The latter were more independent, but also poorer and had less to eat; they were more vulnerable. Those who were with their masters [*bayun murfu*] had no freedom whatsoever, but were always looked after. We were the 'far ones'. This group does not have a generic name, it is called the respective names of the slaves' tribes, like Izzanezafan or Iboyeran. They were in charge of themselves. They ate what their fields produced, and bought their own clothes by selling their own animals, when they had to. They had few rights and obligations toward the *imajeghen*. When a male slave from this group wanted to marry a woman, his master had to give him authorization to do so, but the master did not contribute to bridewealth or marriage expenses.

Children of the *bayun murfu* did not inherit from their parents. The *bayun murfu* were always attached to the masters. They married mostly with other slaves of their masters. When they married 'outside' the group of their master's slaves, the master of the potential bride was contacted, usually by her father<sup>160</sup> if he was with her. The father of the female slave went to inform the potential groom's master that one of his slaves wanted to marry one of his female slaves, and he agreed. They would agree on the terms of the union. The master of the groom had to pay bridewealth for his slave's future wife. The bridewealth went to the master of the bride. The husband, who was a slave, would spend the night at the camp of his wife's master, with the wife, and the day in the camp of his master. But when the

<sup>159</sup> Interview with Moussa (a pseudonym), Tinkirana Tounga, 28 October 2005.

<sup>160</sup> This is possibly an anachronism based on contemporary practice. Other testimonies suggest that a slave father only acted as *genitor*, not *pater*, and did not play official roles in relation to his offspring.

marriage was between slaves of the same master, most frequently they did not give bridewealth at all. When bridewealth was paid, it was an undetermined amount.

Not all slaves were treated in the same way and had the same status. The slaves captured in war, they had to pay ransom [*fansa*] if they wanted to be freed. But the greatest part of the slaves were 'slaves of hunger' (or of famine) [*bayun yunwa*], people who put themselves under the protection of someone powerful during a famine, because of need. [At emancipation], the *imajeghen* let all these subordinate people go without asking for ransom, because they had not captured them in war. Also, they were not domestic slaves [*bayun murfu*], and they had not been bought at the market. Ransom is necessary only for those you caught in war and those you bought.

The slaves of the Kel Eghlel Ennigger ... it was a famine that made them ask protection to the Kel Eghlel Ennigger who had a lot of animals and were rich, but needed people to work for them, as they themselves did not work at all. The Kel Eghlel Ennigger had *bayun yunwa*, but they told their slaves that if they could, they should pay ransom, and they have the habit of taking *fansa* from their slaves. [He recites words in Arabic, possibly a Quranic surah, then adds:] In taking them in charge at the time of famine, the Kel Eghlel Ennigger did something which deserved God's reward. But in asking them to pay ransom for their emancipation, they did something against God's will.<sup>161</sup>

Details on slave marriage vary across testimonies. The old Moussa and his son Mohamed (two pseudonyms) descend from the slaves of the maraboutic group mentioned in Anafaran's testimony, the Kel Eghlel Ennigger. I met them on my first visit to Ader in 1995, when they showed me the ways in which people in their village, settled on dry and barely productive lands, coped with a hostile environment. Eventually, they spoke openly about past dependence and their ongoing relations with former masters. These relations were an unavoidable consequence of the nearness of their former masters, and could be turned to one's advantage in times of hardship. But they were also a source of shame. Moussa and Mohamed had led independent lives, travelling to many countries and doing many jobs. Their testimonies express resentment at the harsh treatment of the past, of which today's masters' ongoing scorn for former dependants is a constant reminder.

MOUSSA: Slaves did not celebrate marriage between them. The master would tell them to take this one or that one and that's it. He or she may not agree and eventually be together with someone else.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Anafaran, Kourega, 29 October 2005.

MOHAMED: You see that cattle? Slave marriage was like the union of cattle: a couple would get together and breed, then they more or less hung together – that’s how it was.

MOUSSA: This is what happened among the slaves of the same master. They could not even talk to the slaves of other masters. When a slave woman got pregnant, the master would give her to a male slave, just to find a father for the kid. Children born from slaves did not belong to their father. There may or may not be a naming ceremony, depending on the master’s will. Anyway, it is the masters who named slave babies. Some named them real names, but most of them gave them names that were different from the ones of free people. They named slaves after plants or animals or other funny Tamasheq names, or the name of the day on which he was born.<sup>162</sup>

Slaves were sold at markets,<sup>163</sup> in exchange for other goods such as cereals or cattle. Female slaves had their hair shaved before being displayed for sale and their faces smeared with ashes. At the marketplace slaves sat down, tied to each other by the ankle, with one leg bent if they were still unsold, or stretched if their sale had been agreed.<sup>164</sup> This custom, which was mentioned to me on several occasions, perhaps explains the Hausa expression ‘*mike kafa*’, to stretch one’s leg, which indicates a slave’s protest against his master’s ill treatment. Ibrahim Hamza reports that an abused slave in Kano could go to the main market, Kasuwar Kurmi, and ‘stretch his leg’, that is, offer himself to any other master, thereby heaping ridicule on the master who had offended him.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Interview with Moussa, Tinkirana Tounga, 28 October 2005.

<sup>163</sup> ‘The main slave markets of the Eastern Iwellemeden, who before colonial times used to live most of the year around Tahoua, were on the edge of Ader, at the border between the nomadic and the sedentary zones, or to the north in the market of Agadez, which was visited by caravans coming from both sides of the Sahara.’ Bernus and Bernus, ‘Evolution de la condition servile’, p. 32. Well into the colonial era most transactions on Ader markets took the form of exchanges in kind, and French administrators decried the complete ‘disappearance’ of any cash they introduced: ‘money must be hidden or drained outside the area, because transactions on local markets are always in kind’, Rapport commerciale deuxième trimestre 1908, Cercle de Tahoua, ANN 17.8.10.

<sup>164</sup> Interview with Ibrahim and three other speakers, Loudou Toyamana, 2 May 2005; cf. Interview with Raki Ahmed, Ibohamane, 8 April 2005; interview with Tchimmou, Tinkirana Tounga, 4 May 2005.

<sup>165</sup> ‘If a slave felt cheated or maltreated by his master he could protest in two ways, either through instituting a legal case before the emir or by going to the main city market, Kasuwar Kurmi, where he would “stretch” his legs, an act called *mike kafa*. This act signified a slave’s protest, and that he was offering himself to any other prospective master who would treat him better. Reputedly, his master faced public ridicule and hence this was considered an act of intimidation, in which the usual power relationship

Tamaske was [the Kel Dennege's] market, although the market itself belonged to the Hausawa. They also visited Insafari, but Tamaske was the most important market. Slaves were sold at markets like animals ... They could also be sold at home: someone could come to the place of a *Baabzine* and ask them to buy a slave, and they would sell them. Everybody except a slave could buy a slave. There was no fixed price. The *imajeghen* were sometimes more pressed to sell quickly and leave the market than to bargain over the price. They obtained slaves at no cost to them, so the price was not stable, it varied a lot, it is impossible to quantify ... Slaves were not necessarily acquired through wars and kidnapping. There were also so-called *bayun yunwa*, who were acquired in two ways. If you had slaves but had nothing left to eat, you could sell one. Or some people who had nothing to eat could go to a rich person and offer themselves as slaves in exchange for food. Then these people would have to pay a ransom if they wanted to marry and be free.<sup>166</sup>

In Tuareg society individual slaves, or entire slave villages, could not be liberated from their servile condition. Freed slaves fell into two categories, the *ighawellan*, who had enjoyed free status for a long time, and the more recently freed *iderfan*. *Ighawellan* could not (except, for female slaves, through marriage) be assimilated to *imghad* free vassals. Slaves or ex-slaves were considered ethnically different from 'real' Tuareg, and denied full human status by members of the elite. The ethnic criterion functioned so as to differentiate them from freemen (*ilellan*), even after they had been freed.<sup>167</sup> In Tuareg society, a slave could only aspire to become a 'freed slave'. Unless s/he found ways to manipulate or escape this system of classification, s/he could not become 'free'. This is one of the reasons why in Ader a large number of people of slave descent changed ethnicity and 'Hausaised' as an emancipation strategy. This process lasted two or three generations and involved moving to a Hausa settlement and adopting Hausa language and lifestyle.<sup>168</sup> To be sure, slavery existed in the Hausa society of Ader, but social mobility was easier than in Tuareg contexts.

The Keitawa [Hausa] had slaves ... the grandmother of his father [points to someone present] was a very rich woman, she had much wealth, and slaves too. But they did not capture them themselves, they bought them at markets ... They were sold at the market and they were tied at the ankles to one another. They were

was reversed. The practice was known as *mike kafa*. If the master wanted to win back the confidence of the slave, he could go to the *yan bayi* section of the market and enter into negotiations with him. The case would be declared settled if they reconciled, but the slave could still insist on changing masters.' Hamza, 'Slavery and plantation', pp. 139-40.

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Keitawa elders in Keita, 8 September 2005.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Bernus and Bernus, 'L'évolution de la condition servile', pp. 31-2.

<sup>168</sup> I provided a detailed example of this process in Rossi, 'Being and becoming Hausa'.

kidnapped as young children by *jajaye* [lit. ‘the reds’, Tuareg of free status but usually excluding the ‘white’ *imajeghen* or warrior elites] ... Afterwards, the slaves of the Keitawa were treated like members of the family, it was virtually impossible to tell who was a slave and who was a family member.<sup>169</sup>

Until the recent past, slavery was widespread. All groups were confronted with it. Free people had all kinds of relations with slaves. They bought them and sold them; they assigned various tasks to slaves, who provided labour in all spheres of production; they had sexual relations with slave women, had children with them, and married them upon emancipation. They recognised ties of milk kinship with the kin of slave women who had breastfed them or their close freeborn relatives. They befriended some slaves, who became the lifelong companions of their freeborn peers. They could afford to mistreat them and exploit them beyond what was considered acceptable for free people. They accumulated them as a form of capital that could be turned into other goods. They inherited them and bequeathed them as gifts. The omnipresence of slaves reminded the freeborn of the constant threat of enslavement. Slavery was so common that before colonial conquest, ‘if one had food, one had slaves’ (*in kana da abinci, kana da bayu*).<sup>170</sup>

As slavery was central to Ader’s social organisation, it died slowly in a process of emancipation described at length in the following chapters. While the sale of slaves on markets ended almost completely after French legal abolition in 1905, people continued to be the object of private economic transactions until the 1940s and 1950s. Relations between the descendants of former masters and slaves became less exploitative, but did not disappear. In Islamic contexts, slavery’s reconfigurations are partly founded on an expectation that the relationship between a former master and his/her manumitted slave will continue, and that denying past relations would be not just unfair, but immoral. Self-ransom, and the ransom of wives of slave descent, on the part of slave descendants was still a widespread practice in the 1980s and 1990s.

#### ASNA SOCIAL AND SUPERNATURAL HIERARCHIES

The category ‘Hausa’ in Ader includes many groups who historically are intertwined more closely with particular Tuareg groups than with other Hausa speakers, within and outside Ader. Recently Hausaised people (ex-slaves, for example) define themselves as simply Hausa, or Hausawa.

<sup>169</sup> Interview with Abubakar Keitawa, Keita, 7 September 2005.

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Moussa in Tinkirana Tounga, 6 October 2005.

The category 'Hausa' does not indicate a historically or culturally unified group. Groups that have long been Hausa-speaking belong to specific, named, subgroups (in Ader, these include groups like the Magorawa, Djibalawa, Gazurawa, Tarimawa, Kirarawa, Keitawa, and others) that share a number of sociological characteristics. The category 'Asna' stands out, as it incorporates a subset of groups commonly credited with being the autochthonous Hausa inhabitants of the region. Today the name Asna has acquired primarily religious connotations. Students of the Hausa world distinguish between 'dynastic' Hausa and Asna (also Arna or Anna).<sup>171</sup> The political structures of so-called 'dynastic Hausa' centre on kingship (*sarauta*); ideological references to the tradition of the 'Seven Hausa'; and Islamic religion. By contrast, Asna groups are organised according to kinship criteria and follow idiosyncratic religious practices and beliefs. This analytical framework requires some qualification in relation to Ader society.

In Ader long-term interaction with Tuareg society altered Hausa institutions, and vice-versa. In the region of north-eastern Ader that constitutes my main focus, some Tuareg chiefs ruled through political structures that followed the model of Hausa 'dynastic' institutions (*sarauta*). The *sarauta* of Ader in south-western Ader was regarded as a cadet branch of the Agadez sultanate, and resembled a Hausa kingdom in structure and function.<sup>172</sup> The *sarauta* Magori, located in south-eastern Ader where Magorawa and Djibalawa groups are settled, is possibly the only example of a 'dynastic' Hausa society in Ader with no recognisable Tuareg traits prior to the nineteenth century.<sup>173</sup> With some exceptions, most of the Hausa-speaking communities of northern Ader fit into the Asna model of Hausa society. As we have seen, in the nineteenth century these groups were integrated in political systems headed by Tuareg nomadic warriors, the Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg and the Kel Gress.

Asna groups settled in Ader regard themselves as being 'one kind' of people (*iri guda*, or 'one seed'). While they have distinct myths of origin and historical traditions, they share the same institutions and religious beliefs. Asna social structure was kinship-based and relatively egalitarian, especially when contrasted with the rigid stratification of Tuareg society.

<sup>171</sup> The best discussion of this distinction, in relation to the region of Maradi, is provided by Guy Nicolas in his extensive study *Dynamique sociale*. Marc-Henri Pialt discusses the Asna of the Dallol Mawri region in his *Histoire mawri*. Adeline Masquelier documented recent developments in the religious identity of the Asna of Dogon Douchi; see Masquelier, *Prayer*.

<sup>172</sup> See Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, pp. 108–25 and 191–205.

<sup>173</sup> See Echard, *Expérience*, pp. 55–67.

Asna history is characterised by limited interest in political power and a constant effort to establish peaceful living conditions, in which people devoted themselves to activities deemed more useful than politics. This attitude could not be explained in terms of military weakness, as Asna archers were renowned for their prowess and skill, and participated in wars alongside various Tuareg groups.

The Asna worldview (a generalisation, certainly, but not a meaningless one) was apparently less preoccupied with political rule than with establishing the right set of relations between humans and the natural and supernatural world. Natural and supernatural domains were seen as inextricably linked. Various features of the environment were seen as animated by spirits (*iskoki*, sing. *iska*), with whom humans entertained relationships informed by reciprocity and exchange.<sup>174</sup> All social relations (of production and reproduction, of trade, of war, of politics) were seen as resulting from the establishment of balanced relations with spirits inhabiting the supernatural realm. Political power granted its holder greater influence over human affairs only. From an Asna perspective, this was less desirable than a greater power, which could be achieved by dealing not with other humans, but with the *iskoki*, and which was potentially conducive to control over both the human and natural world. Political power could only derive from arrangements made with the ultimate source of (supernatural) power, and therefore the Baasune who sought to become politically influential negotiated with the *iskoki* for access to skills that would allow him to fight potential antagonists, or find out whether s/he could safely undertake a particular endeavour. Political power was regarded as a specialised occupation that required a disproportionate investment of time in relation to the benefits it granted its holder.

Asna political authority was primarily an authority to represent and take important communal decisions. Authority was held primarily by *zarummai* (sing. *zarumi*), a category that refers to mature men, who were supposed to distinguish themselves for their courage, honesty, and success in their activities.<sup>175</sup> The main unit of production was the household (*gida*), composed of a man, his wife or wives, and his unmarried sons and daughters. People could reside temporarily or permanently in a different home from that of their own parents. A head of household could have

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Nicolas, *Don rituel*.

<sup>175</sup> 'Elders', commonly found in Hausa historiography, is not a satisfactory translation. The *zarumi* is characterised as endowed with physical strength and courage. In descriptions of past wars, the *zarummai* are the main warriors. This term is distinct from *lattijo* (plur. *lattijiyoyi*) and *tsofo* (plur. *tsofi*), which indicate old age. Bargery defines *zarumi* as 'a tried warrior; a very courageous man', *Hausa-English Dictionary*, p. 1135.

hosted his grandchildren or the children of brothers and sisters. Members of the same patrilineage (*dangi*) shared their parents' inheritance (*gado*), which included material possessions as well as relations with particular *iskoki*, technical and magic abilities, and ritual prohibitions. While every family unit at the *gida* level conducted sacrifices (*tsafe-tsafa*, sing. *tsafi*) in order to propitiate production and protect its members, higher-level sacrifices were performed for the entire community by the elders of one particular *dangi*. Those responsible for the sacrifices that protected the community had to be the heirs (*gadadde*) of these sacrifices, and of the privileged relation with the *iskoki* to whom the sacrifice was directed, within a particular *dangi*. The importance of sacrificial rituals amongst some Asna of Ader is reflected in their common appellation 'Asna *matsafa*' ('Asna of the sacrifices'),<sup>176</sup> which has now become obsolete under the pressure of an Islam increasingly intolerant of heterodoxy and syncretism.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, networks of allied and inter-marrying Asna polities were encapsulated in inter-ethnic hierarchies headed by Tuareg *imajeghen*. In the economic and military fields, these two constituencies were complementary: 'self' and 'other' specialised in different domains, and alliance ensured access to those resources and/or skills that 'self' lacked and 'other' had. Self-realisation in each of these societies followed different logics. The Asna's conception of political power resulted in willingness to delegate political rule to other groups, whom they saw as more concerned with worldly affairs than themselves. The *imajeghen*, on the other hand, conceived their identity as absolute, non-relational, independent of the will of others. They thought of other groups as dependent upon them. This view was not entirely shared by free Asna tributaries, who saw themselves as free allies of powerful Tuareg warriors. In the Asna's view, the payment of tribute reflected the political and military primacy of Tuareg rulers. They thought of their communities as less powerful free allies, but not necessarily as the clients of Tuareg chiefly sections. In contrast to Sokoto, Ader was not dominated by religious groups (*ineslemen*) and Islamic law. Free Asna archers and farmers were not classified generically as enslavable pagans. Under the *imajeghen's* rule, Asna remained free to practise their religion, which they perceived as conducive to a certain type of power. Low population density and the nomadic lifestyle of the *imajeghen* also ensured that Tuareg ruling elites would not

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Echard, *Expérience*, p. 187; Hamani, *Adar précolonial*, pp. 40–52.

compete over productive resources with Asna constituencies, thereby contributing to the integration of Asna and Tuareg societies.

### Keita, the Lake

In Hausa, *keta* means 'evil'.<sup>177</sup> At first, Keita was the name of a lake. At the beginning of the 1900s, the Keita Lake gave its name to a town, which became the seat of a newly founded canton chiefship. And in the 1980s the town and homonymous district lent their name to a project to fight desertification. By then the lake was not permanent any more, but dried up completely for about half of the year.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a loose network of Asna groups lived around the Keita Lake and had distinct social, productive, and religious institutions. The Keitawa and Kirarawa<sup>178</sup> belonged to this network. Today the Keitawa live in the Keita neighbourhood called Ideoran, which until a few decades ago used to be called Keita Asna. The Kirarawa live in Kirari, a separate village south-east of Keita. These two groups have different traditions on the displacements that led them to their current location, where their traditions are joined in the legend of the formation of the Keita Lake.

The first settlement in the area is said to have hosted the forebears of the Keitawa and Kirarawa living together in a village located at the site where an inundation created the lake, killing most of the families which lived at its bottom. An old man<sup>179</sup> – usually characterised as an Islamic cleric – asked a group of local women if they could give him some water to drink or (depending on the version) to perform his ablutions. All the women refused except for one girl who shared her water with him. Grateful, the elder warned the girl that overnight a torrential rain would invade the entire area and kill everyone, and that she should escape with her family. The girl warned her own family and the family of her in-laws, urging them to seek refuge on the top of the

<sup>177</sup> 'Wanton or deliberate mischief, injury, wickedness', Bargery, *Hausa-English Dictionary*, p. 597.

<sup>178</sup> It is possible that before the twentieth century, when these names are documented, other names were in use for the groups which call themselves Keitawa and Kirarawa today. This section reports evidence based on oral testimonies and largely unverifiable. I have retained the ethnonyms used by informants in their accounts of their history.

<sup>179</sup> Sometimes a Lissawan. Other times a madman (*mahaūkaci*). Other versions of the tradition of the Keita Lake have been recorded by Dr Oumy Thiongane in her PhD thesis, *Anthropologie de la méningite*.

surrounding hills. The two families followed her advice, and saved themselves. These families were the ancestors of the Keitawa and the Kirarawa, respectively.

Kirari has been wrongly assumed by French researchers to be associated with the Hausa name for flattering cries praising important persons or places (*kirari*).<sup>180</sup> But, according to Keitawa and Kirarawa, the name comes from ‘*tsirari*’, meaning the ones who escaped (the inundation),<sup>181</sup> and the name Keitawa refers not to ‘evil’ (*keta*), but to the act of crossing, going to the other side (*ketare*),<sup>182</sup> which represents the Keitawa’s movement following the inundation. The first settlement of the Keitawa next to the lake, called Gidan Tsofo from the elder who founded it, was located north of the lake, on the slope of a hill on the other side of which lay the old village of Agouloum. Others, mostly non-Asna, argue that the name ‘Keita’ comes from the Hausa word for evil or meanness (*keta*). The name is attributed either to the refusal to share water with the Muslim pilgrim; or to how those who saved themselves qualified the inundation (*wannan keta ce!*, this is a great evil!); or to the nature of the religious rituals practised at the Keita lake. These rituals involved the sacrifice of a young member of one of the two leading families of the Kirarawa and Keitawa, who inherited these sacrifices (becoming ‘inheritors’, or *gadadde*) and alternated between them the task of providing the sacrificial child every year. It is tempting to interpret these names, attributed to groups who controlled the performance of non-Islamic rituals, as a reference to the act of escaping from – or crossing the border of – the Sokoto Caliphate, which rose against animist practices like an inundation. But this hypothesis is entirely my own, and was never advanced by anyone in Ader.

### The Sacrifice

Until the beginning of the twentieth century Keita Lake was surrounded by trees of different species, some of which require humid conditions

<sup>180</sup> Bargery, *Hausa-English Dictionary*, p. 608.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with Kalla Zambo, Kirari, 14 June 2005.

<sup>182</sup> Bargery translates the verb *tserewa* or *tsirewa* as ‘escape’, *Hausa-English Dictionary*, pp. 1035, 1039; and *ketare* as ‘cross over’, p. 597. *ketare* and *keta* have the same semantic origin, and the verb underwent metaphorical extension from ‘crossing over’ to ‘transgressing order’.

and have now disappeared.<sup>183</sup> The sacred tree of local Asna communities was the *giyayye*.<sup>184</sup>

The *giyayye* is a sacred tree here. There were people who had branches of it in their houses and they put earrings on it, and a cloth, and jewels, and spoke with it, every day, asked for things . . . There must still be people doing this, they have it in their houses. There were a number of animist strongholds [in this region]. Now Islam imposed the cessation of these practices. There was also a large Gao [*Faidherbia albida*], people brought millet porridge [*fura*] to it, poured it in circle around the tree, and performed some rituals.<sup>185</sup>

The leader who conducted the human sacrifice was chosen by the *iskoki* amongst the elders of the family who inherited responsibility for these sacrifices. The choice was made manifest through signs that only the elders knew how to interpret. When the sacrifice was made, words were pronounced in a ritual language known to few. The sacrificial knife had the shape of a long dagger. After an animal was slaughtered, the knife was planted in the earth, to bear witness to the ritual accomplishment. The meat was distributed to those present, members of the two families that had inherited the sacrifices, and ultimately descended from the same family. The senior branch of the Kirarawa provided a boy. Its sacrificial site, to the south of the lake, was called *wurin duki*, or the place of the *duki* tree (*Celtis integrifolia*). The Keitawa were the branch that detached itself from the senior section of the family and moved to the place that became the neighbourhood of Ideoran Tudu (Keita), following an elder

<sup>183</sup> See photo of the 'permanent lake of Keita' at the end of the dry season in Abadie, *Colonie du Niger*, p. 71, plate XII. I obtained a list of the tree species that used to grow around the Keita Lake from Kalla Zambo (interview of 29 November 2008, Kirari), and confirmed the list with Augustin, who had been a colonial forestry guard (*forestier*) in the 1950s (interview with Augustin, Keita, 30 November 2008). The list included the following trees: *giyayye* (*Mitragyna inermis*); *duki* (*Celtis integrifolia*); *marke* (*Anogeisus leiocarpus*); *tsamiya* (*Tamarindus indica*); *marje* (*Acacia nilotica*); *bagaruwa* (*Acacia scorpioides*); *erehi* (*Acacia seyal*); *borey* (*Ficus gnaphalocarpa*); *kiriya* (*Prosopis africana*); and *gajirka* (aquatic weed similar to papyrus).

<sup>184</sup> *Mitragyna inermis* (Mijinguini, *karamin kamus*, p. 182). Bargery translates *giyayya* or *giyayye* as 'a large tree', *Hausa-English Dictionary*, p. 393. According to one informant in the Keita Valley *giyayye* trees could reach a three-metre diameter. In his detailed study of the forests of Niger, Aubreville noted that the '*Mitragyna inermis* tree can reach fifteen metres of height, sometimes more. It usually forms thick groves around lakes. It is also a species characteristic of the inundated plains of the southern and more humid areas which, nowadays, surround temporary lakes in the Sahel', Aubreville, '*Les forêts*', p. 17. Aubreville does not mention the Hausa term *giyayye*, but instead gives '*kabe, diaye*' as Hausa translations of *Mitragyna inermis*.

<sup>185</sup> Interview with anonymised speaker, 2005.

known as Tsofo.<sup>186</sup> In alternate years, the Keitawa provided a girl as sacrificial victim. They made their sacrifices on the site called *turmin douchi* (block of stone) or *giyayye*, to the north of the lake. The victim was selected on a rota basis amongst the main families of each group.

The *iska* indicated who was to be the sacrificial child through supernatural signs. On the day of the sacrifice, adults and children went to the lake with the sacrificial ram. There was much excitement and expectation amongst children, who knew that the meat of the slaughtered animal would be distributed to them. When everybody had gathered, the elders gave children permission to play in the water. Children took their clothes off and left them on the shore, together with any toys or other possessions that they had brought with them. After a while, adults called children back and told them to gather their things and go home. The child selected for the sacrifice inevitably left something behind, something valuable to him, such as one of his favourite toys. On his way back, the child would realise he had lost a prized possession and tell the adults, who would allow him to go back to retrieve it. When he reached the shore, a wave came out from the lake and took him away in the water. Sometimes a child came back alive after having retrieved his forgotten object, but he never reached home alive. Before he got home, 'the *iskoki* had already drunk his blood'. According to the testimonies I gathered, the child was never slaughtered by a human hand, and the performance of this sacrifice was necessary for the protection of the entire group:

The sacrifices were made in the dry hot season, some time before the first rains. But they were not meant to propitiate the rains. They were performed primarily to protect the village from war and other dangers. In the past there were many more dangers than today. There were wild animals like hyenas, who attacked villagers, and Abzinawa incursions ... The sacrifices were not made to obtain political power, because our ancestors were not interested in political power. Our group still has the heritage of the sacrifices, but we stopped performing them because the chain was interrupted. The last child designated to be sacrificed was the only son of a woman (this child had half-brothers on the father side, but was his mother's only child). It is a specific person of a specific family, which has to be sacrificed and this person cannot be replaced. In our family it was always a boy.<sup>187</sup>

I collected several testimonies on the sacrifices. One speaker<sup>188</sup> specified that the mother whose only son had been designated instructed her son not to look for the sacrificial knife when he returned to the lakeshore, but

<sup>186</sup> Their first settlement was called Gidan Tsofo, or 'Tsofo's Home'. 'Tsofo' is a nickname, which means 'old man' in Hausa.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with anonymised speaker, 2005.

<sup>188</sup> Interview with anonymised speaker, 2005.

to run to the village of Bagey instead. The sacrifices of the Keita Lake are not a secret. Just as the descendants of the Tuareg warrior elites take pride in their past military prowess, so the power of the Asna sacrifices, which served to protect Asna communities from impending dangers, is a source of pride to their descendants. These practices were not unique to Ader's Hausaphone groups. Early studies of Hausa society reported the practice of human sacrifice in a number of nineteenth century Hausa communities.<sup>189</sup> In Ader, the performance of sacrifices is but one distinctive trait of the identity of Asna groups that in the nineteenth century were encapsulated in inter-ethnic hierarchies headed by Tuareg warrior elites.

Many nineteenth-century villages comprised neighbourhoods that hosted different ethnic constituencies,<sup>190</sup> sometimes with separate political representatives vis-à-vis Tuareg paramount rulers, and inter-marrying in practice, if not in theory. As one conducts research in Ader and follows narrative threads of war, hierarchy, religious belief, or migration, s/he is directed to representatives of separate groups in the same village, groups which were seen, and saw themselves, as ethnically different but politically and socially unified. Their late-nineteenth-century history can be traced back to the detail of genealogies, intermarriages, displacements, and inheritance. It is of considerable complexity, as shown by the reconstruction provided below of inter-ethnic relations in the area around Keita Lake and the plateaux of Agouloum.

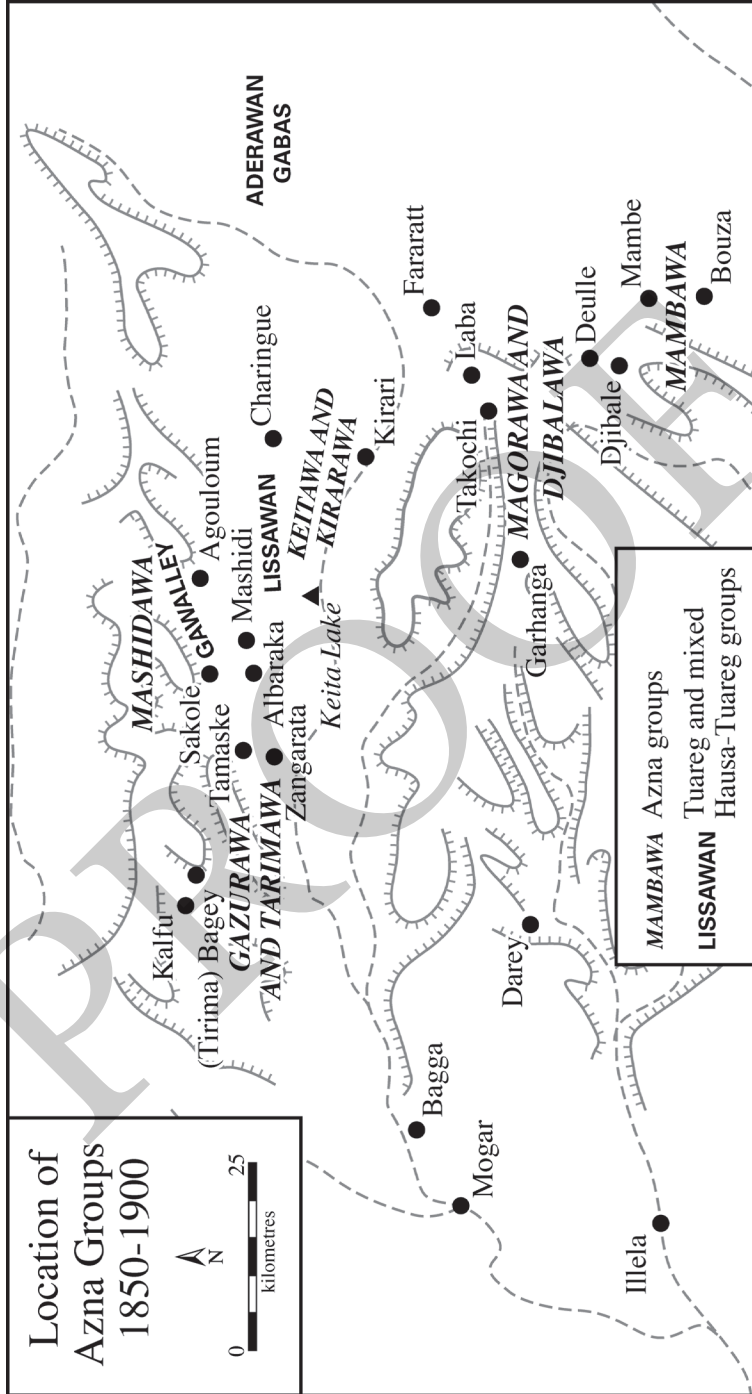
#### ASNA-TUAREG NETWORKS

In the second half of the 1800s, one Asna network in north-eastern Ader included the Kirarawa and Keitawa, settled closest to Keita Lake and responsible for the lake's sacrifices. Some sections of this Asna network included the branch of Gidan Tsofo that originated from Djibale. The Asna of Keita had close relations with Asna groups settled in Bagey (Gazurawa and Tarimawa of Bagey), some of whom resided in Bagey, while others had moved to Mashidi, first, and then to Agouloum.<sup>191</sup> The village of Bagey, called 'Tirima' by Tamasheq-speakers, was located at the heart of the Kel Denneg area of nomadisation. Asna and Tuareg (elites and dependants)

<sup>189</sup> Tremearne, 'Bori beliefs', p. 23; Greenberg, *Influence of Islam*, p. 30; Leroux, 'Animisme', p. 627.

<sup>190</sup> There are parallels with Paden's analysis of urban pluralism in Kano, see Paden, 'Urban pluralism'.

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Elhadj Maliki, Kongo, 18 October 2005.



MAP 2.3 Location of Azna groups, 1850-1900

were in constant contact. They lived in the same regions. Their interactions occurred through payment of tributes, establishment of military alliances, trade at the same markets, peaceful or violent exchange of slaves, and mixed marriages. In Mashidi, the Bageyawa cohabitated with another Asna group, thought to have come from Tchibiri in Gobir under the leadership of a certain Danfan. The Gobirawa Asna of the Tamaske-Sakole area are said to have left Gobir following a crime that involved killing a pregnant woman to establish whether the meat that she had eaten had affected the foetus which she carried in her womb.<sup>192</sup>

This and similar traditions are mobilised to explain the installation in Ader of groups coming from what was then the Sokoto Caliphate following the perpetration of acts incompatible with Islamic law. Danfan and his people settled in Mashidi for a short time, but a fight with a Lissawan woman – it is said – forced them to move on. When they left Mashidi, they founded the neighbourhood of Sabon Gari in Tamaske. From Sabon Gari, Danfan and a few followers are said to have moved again, this time to found the village of Sakole, where Danfan is buried and his descendants are still living. In the same period, two groups of Djibalawa and Magorawa reached Tamaske, escaping from a war that hit Djibale – possibly the same war that led to the flight to Keita of the Djibalawa branch of Gidan Tsofo. Magorawa and Djibalawa groups moved to Tamaske with their own Asna religious traditions and spiritual alliances, and created the neighbourhoods of Tamaske that today are called Tamaske ‘Magorawa’ and Tamaske ‘Djibalawa One’ and ‘Djibalawa Two’. The important market of Tamaske, the main market of the Iwellemeden Kel Deneg, is located in Tamaske Magorawa, next to the shrine of the *iska* Tamaske. Like their human counterparts, spirits are thought to have formed families and networks. In the spirit world of the *iskoki*, Tamaske and Mai Ziza (the spirit of the Gobirawa followers of Danfan in Sakole) are the two younger sisters of Mashidi,<sup>193</sup> whose shrine still exists, in spite of the pressures of an Islam increasingly intolerant of syncretism. The spirit called Mashidi had given her name to a multi-ethnic village which is now abandoned by all but the buried corpses of its former inhabitants.

The old village of Mashidi was located to the west of Agouloum, close to today’s village of Albaraka. Mashidi appears to have hosted a loose set of groups of different origins, including Tuareg families, which followed

<sup>192</sup> Interview with Danfan’s descendants, Sakole, 27 May 2005; cf. interview with Elhadj Himo, Sakole, 22 September 2005.

<sup>193</sup> Interview with Tchimma Djibo, Tamaske, 5 May 2005.

established patterns of interaction, based on mutually recognised specialisations. Mashidi had been founded as a camp for Asna hunters who came to this forested region to hunt.<sup>194</sup> This is how Djibalawa hunters had first reached this area from their southern location. Mashidi eventually turned into a permanent village, which hosted Asna of Gobir, who resettled in Tamaske and Sakole when Mashidi was abandoned; Asna of Bagey (including Gazurawa, Tarimawa, and Gawalley subgroups), who moved to Agouloum and Keita; and some families of Tuareg Lissawan. Mashidi was probably abandoned around 1860, a casualty of war.<sup>195</sup> Mashidi's Bageyawa (Gazurawa and Tarimawa), in conjunction with some Lissawan and Gawalley families, were the founders of the first village of Old Agouloum, now called Agouloum kofai (or 'Empty Agouloum'). The Asna Bageyawa of Agouloum Kofai enjoyed good relations with the Tuareg Kel Denneg chiefs. They lived next to Lissawan families based in Agouloum. In the dry season, they allowed seasonal migrants of slave status, who depended directly on the Kel Denneg *imajeghen*, to camp on their farmlands. Places like Agouloum exemplify the social complexity of Ader's ethnic pluralism, and its integration within a single society:

Fadama, Gaggabo, Chabako, Mullela, Erub, Akala, and Izanna ... were the [the names of the] lands where the first Gazurawa elders had their fields. Today, they have been divided into smaller fields and redistributed, and the original boundaries do not exist anymore. Tesey and Abbagi, also called Tudun Issou and Tudun Ichaman, were lands of the Lissawan. They did not cultivate them, but used them for herding. There were also some Buzaye, called Izanazzafan, who were the slaves of Ichezi and Ataman [of the Tellemédés section of the Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg]. They came here as seasonal migrants and built their huts on the farms of Ikanna, Chabako, and Mullela. They carried out small works for the Bageyawa, such as making ropes ... After the Lissawan had settled in Agouloum, Mahama

<sup>194</sup> Interview with Rashidou Issa 'Amanno', Tamaske, 26 October 2005; interview with Alio Aga, Tamaske, 19 February 2005.

<sup>195</sup> This date is mentioned in the writings of the Lissawan historian Aghali Assadeck. Alhassan Anafaran, whose family had resided in Mashidi, and who must have been in his 80s when I interviewed him, reported that when Mashidi was dispersed, his own grandfather was so young that he had been unable to carry a container of water to the village of Albaraka, a short distance away. Assuming that the father of my informant may have been in his 30s or 40s when my informant was born (1930s?), his father's father may well have been a child around the 1860s; cf. interview with Alhassan Anafaran, Albaraka, 15 September 2005. The cause of Mashidi's dispersion is disputed. Some informants attribute it to a fight between a Lissawan woman and an Asna elder, sometimes identified with Danfan.

Tambari<sup>196</sup> gave chiefship [*bakimtaka*] over Agouloum and power over a larger area to the Lissawan.<sup>197</sup>

After each harvest, the ancestor of the Gazurawa Asna of Agouloum, a man called Mousa Babba (who met the French on their arrival in 1900) collected various amounts of cereals, which were not fixed, from the household heads of Agouloum to fill the leather bags of the Kel Denneg. However the Lissawan, who were Tuareg like the Kel Denneg, had a closer relation than the Asna with the Tuareg Kel Denneg chiefs, and appear to have been granted authority over the area comprising Agouloum, Keita, Tamaske, and Albaraka by the chief of the Kel Denneg (Maps 2.3 and 2.5).<sup>198</sup>

The Lissawan *Amattaza*<sup>199</sup> did thirteen years under the rule of the Iwellemmeden (Tambari Mahamman). When the French arrived, they massacred the Iwellemmeden. The Lissawan had already started to exploit the lands of Keita for farming. For some years they had Hausa farmers cultivating in Keita for them and they stayed in Agouloum. But it was difficult to transport the produce from Keita to Agouloum. Men had to carry on their heads up to 2,000 bundles of cereal stalks. Eventually the Lissawan moved to Keita [where they ruled as canton chiefs for the French].<sup>200</sup>

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Lissawan appear to have assumed an intermediary role between the Kel Denneg paramount chief (*amenokal*) and a small group of Hausaphone villages to the north/north-east of Keita Lake.<sup>201</sup> This favourable geographic position was the backbone of Lissawan wealth in animals and cereals. The Lissawan were a small group. Some of their elite branches originated from the area of Ghat in the Libyan Fezzan, and first reached Ader by operating in a trade network that linked Ghat to Agadez and In Gall.<sup>202</sup> In north-eastern

<sup>196</sup> Makhāmmād āgg Elkumati, paramount chief of the Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg in the period 1875–1905, Alojaly, *Histoire des Kel Denneg*.

<sup>197</sup> Interview with Maliki, Tambari and third elder (grandson of Mousa Babba), Agouloum Sabon Gari Kaora, 19 September 2005; Interview with Anafaran, Kourega, 30 September 2005.

<sup>198</sup> This interpretation is also supported by some colonial administrators, see Nicolas, *Tamesna*, p. 83: ‘the Illissawan of Kayta (sic) commanded the Kel Ader under the suzerainty of the Imajeghen Iwellemmeden of the Kel Nan tribe, since the time of Muraha’.

<sup>199</sup> Lissawan chiefly title, Tamasheq term meaning disciplined man (*elalāmāttāžāy*).

<sup>200</sup> Interview with anonymised speaker, 2005.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Capitaine Delestre, Etude préparatoire à la création de ‘confins militaires’ ou ‘marches sahariennes’, Tahoua 28 June 1904, Vincennes GR 5H 207.

<sup>202</sup> The Lissawan of Keita contain sub-groups with different origins. In one of the earliest colonial studies on Keita’s Lissawan, we find that ‘the Lissawan are Berbers from Rhatt, more exactly from Albarka, a small village to the south of Rhatt where some of their

Ader, they relied on local labour for the cultivation of the important lakes of Aduna, Illela, and Keita. They sold part of the cereals produced in Ader at regional markets. In Agouloum, the Lissawan are said to have paid tribute to the Iwellemmeden Kel Denneg, until (it is possible to assume) the latter started recognising Lissawan chiefs as representatives of an area including several Asna villages. The view that for some time before the colonial invasion some Lissawan families had been acting as intermediaries between the Kel Denneg and local Asna groups is widespread in Ader. It is corroborated by the particular events that took place at the sack of Keita of 1917, which can be interpreted as an act of reprisal of the Kel Denneg 'rebels' (as the French saw them) against former allies whom they regarded as traitors:

descendants are still living today. [...] Their tribe is composed of three sections, formerly clearly differentiated, although intermarrying and peacefully living together: the Tirizei, the Araman, and the Illemteyen. Did these three factions exist before their arrival in Air? In Rhatt, the memory of the Tirizei, the Araman, and more generally the Lissawan did not survive. By contrast, some Illemteyen are still based there and until relatively recently they were in contact with their relatives of Ader', Souchet, *Les lissaouan*, p. 6. In Ghat the Illemteyen were a section of the Kel Agzer or Kel Ajjer, cf. Rodd, *People of the Veil*, p. 355. The Azger or Ajjer confederation in which Duveyrier classes the Illemteyen were commercial intermediaries, who maintained relations with 'part of the black populations of Central Africa', Duverier, *Les Touareg du nord*, p. 343. The Illemteyen of Ghat must have established connections with other Tuareg groups at various stations along their trade routes. Some of these groups were probably the ancestors of part of the Lissawan of Keita, and were known as Kel T'ilimsawin or Kel Telamse from the homonymous valley in Auderas, north of Agadez, which they inhabited. Rodd discusses the Alamtey, ('Ilemtin') and the Lissawan ('Kel T'ilimsawin' or 'Kel Telamse') separately. Of the latter, he says that they are a subgroup of the Itesan and that their name derives from the name of a village near the Auderas Valley (north of Agadez in the Massif of Air). Rodd, *People of the Veil*, p. 432. I am grateful to Dr Paulo Fernando de Moraes Farias for his suggestion that the ethnonyms 'Kel T'ilimsawin' or 'Kel Telamse' could derive respectively from 'Tilemsi' and 'Telämse', the former being the Moorish/Saharan Arabic form, and the latter the Tamasheq form, of the same name 'given to valleys rich in vegetation, in which water only runs immediately after the rains', de Moraes Farias, e-mail dated 9 March 2011. Other Lissawan branches had bases in In Gall, Tegidda, and further south in the Hausa area. The oral testimony of Yakoub Madayé on the origins of Tegidda links the traditions of Tegidda's Isawaghen with those of the Lissawan: 'The names of the sections of our ancestors were Inoussoufan, Imiskikian, Iwantakam, Ilissawan, Itéssen, Kel Owi'. Bernus and Bernus, *Du sel et de dattes*, p. 107. See also S. Bernus and P. Gouletquer. 'Du cuivre au sel', pp. 7-68. This independent evidence collected in Tegidda matches testimonies obtained in Ader which connect the Lissawan and Gawalley dependent sections to salt production in In Gall and Tegidda-n-Tesemt, see interview with Halilou Ada and Harouna Hammada, Sabo Gidan Doli, 12 December 2008.

There was an alliance between the Abzinawa and the Lissawan. Because [the Lissawan] were respected by the most powerful [the Kel Denneg], the Asna placed themselves under [Lissawan] protection. The Blacks of Keita accepted the Lissawan. At the arrival of the Whites the Lissawan obtained political power, because the Whites took away the power from the Abzinawa. The village of Keita had not been hit by wars until the arrival of the French, because the Abzinawa did not attack the Lissawan [when the Lissawan accepted their power]. But when the Lissawan collaborated with the French, the Abzinawa sought revenge against them. The French protected the Lissawan, but when the French were away, the Abzinawa had their revenge. That's when the war struck Keita.<sup>203</sup>

At the turn of the century, French conquest restructured Ader's political organisation.

#### CONCLUSION

Many characteristics of the pre-colonial political and social organisation are fundamental for understanding Ader's twentieth-century dynamics. Although progressively under colonial rule dependence could no longer be enforced and ex-captives became free to act independently from their former masters' will, people's position in previous hierarchies continued to shape identities and influence economic and political opportunities.

<sup>203</sup> Interview with anonymised speaker, 2005.