

*The Outburst of Rage and The Divine Dagger: Invective Poetry and Inter-Ṭarīqa Conflict in Northern Nigeria, 1949*¹

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Abstract

This paper discusses the conflict between the political establishment of Sokoto and the Tijanis of the province in the late 1940s, focusing on its literary ramifications in the form of Hausa and Arabic invective poetry (*hijā'*). After locating these poems in their political context, the paper attempts to look at these documents from the point of view of the history of *hijā'* as a literary genre. *Hijā'* has an old history, rooted in the pre-Islamic Arabic literary tradition. Following islamization, however, the genre acquired an ambivalent status and was often shunned by the religious scholars, who considered it as too profane. The two northern Nigerian cases of invective poetry studied in this paper, on the contrary, were composed by religious scholars and were fundamental as instruments of mobilization of their religious group. One of the two poems here analyzed, in particular, has the form of a ritual meant to cause harm to an opponent. This aspect could be read in the light of an

1 I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for his comments on a first draft of this paper, and Franz Kogelmann and the Institut Für Afrikastudien (University of Bayreuth) for giving me the opportunity to spend some time in Bayreuth in the summer of 2017 and work on a revised version.

original hypothesis of Ignaz Goldziher, who had suggested that literary invective in the Arab tradition should be traced back to an original prototype which mainly had a ritual/religious function.

Introduction: Islam and Invective Poetry

“Poetry thrives by war between tribes,” famously wrote the early Basran philologist and critic of Arabic literature, Ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī (d. 845).² In a context such as Muslim northern Nigeria in the mid-twentieth century, where group identity was often defined in terms of belonging to a Sufi order, and where writing Arabic verses was considered as “the hallmark of the accomplished [religious] scholar,”³ Ibn Sallām’s statement could be rephrased as “poetry thrives by competition between ṭarīqa-s.”

Throughout most of the twentieth century, the two most popular Sufi orders in northern Nigeria, the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, were engaged in an all-encompassing competition for public influence. Most of the time, the competition was a peaceful one. Its typical literary manifestation was the downpour of verses of eulogy (*madā’ih*) in praise of the Prophet or of Qadiri and Tijani saints, composed by scholars of the two ṭarīqa-s to animate the devotional gatherings of their respective *zāwiya*-s. As these gatherings often took the form of *mawālīd* (celebrations of the birthday of the Prophet, but also of the major saintly figures revered by the two Sufi orders), they led to a massive production of verses of the *madh* genre, publicly recited during the devotional gatherings of the two orders and of their various sub-networks. This type of literary competition, which was seen by the religious scholars and their publics as an enactment of the Quranic invitation to “compete with one another in good deeds” (Q2:148), had only a minimal, if any, and indirect polemical dimension. Scholars of the two Sufi orders would listen to, read and admire each other’s poetry of this genre and they would find no blame in occasionally collaborating in the co-authorship of

2 Quoted in Geert J. Van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly: Attitudes Towards Invective Poetry (Hijā’)* in *Classical Arabic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), p. 15.

3 John O. Hunwick, “The Arabic Literary Tradition of Nigeria,” *Research in African Literatures*, 28, 3, pp. 210-223, p. 218.

a piece of prophetic *madh*.⁴ In some instances, however, the competition between the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya in northern Nigeria acquired a political dimension and was accompanied by the physical repression of one religious group by the other. Whenever this occurred, the conflict led to literary reverberations in the form of invective verses (*hijā'*).

Hijā' (invective, lampooning, satire) is one of the oldest forms of Arabic poetry, constituting the obvious counterpart to *madh* (eulogy, panegyric), which was the dominant form of poetry. As shown by Geert Van Gelder in his seminal study of this genre, invective had an ambiguous status among pre-Islamic Arabs. On the one hand, it was a standard genre which contributed significantly to the prestige (and the fear) of poets in the wider society. On the other hand, it was often condemned for endangering solidarity and leading to constant tribal warfare.⁵ With the islamization of Arab society, the position of *hijā'* as a literary genre became even more controversial. The poetry of the traditional Arab lampooners (*hajjā'ūn*), in fact, with its personalized attacks and its sexually explicit language, was perceived as being too close to religiously sanctioned vices such as fool speech (*khanā*), slander (*qadhf*) and obscenity (*faḥsh*). The emergence of such a "religious prejudice" against *hijā'*, however, did not translate into the suppression of the genre. On the contrary, *hijā'* continued to flourish in Islamic societies. Muslim poets and their publics navigated between two co-existing kinds of ethos with respect to social and personal conflict: an Islamic one, emphasizing forbearance and patience, and encouraging the pardoning of offences, and a tribal one based on honour and shame, and encouraging vengeance. Arabic poetry, traditionally dominated by panegyric, continued to function as "the chief instrument of distributing honour and dishonour;" a function that "was not essentially altered in this respect by the coming of Islam."⁶

4 This is the case, for instance, of *al-Mawāhib al-aḥadiyya fī madh al-ḥaḍarāt al-muḥammadiyya*, which Abū Bakr al-'Atiq (d. 1974, of the Kano Tijaniyya) composed and Muḥammad al-Nāṣir Kabara (d. 1996, of the Kano Qadiriyya) turned into pentastichs (*takhmīs*). Full text in Muḥammad al-Amīn 'Umar, *al-Shaykh Abū Bakr 'Atiq wa-dīwānuhu Hadiyyat al-aḥbāb wa'l-khillān* (Kano: Zāwiyyat Ahl al-Fayḍa al-Tijāniyya, 1988), pp. 186-95.

5 Van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, p. 15.

6 Van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, pp. 13-14.

In societies that continued to value the power of the word and to cherish honour, invective remained a powerful resource to expose power, mobilize following and cement a group identity in situations of conflict. In this respect, Zoltán Szombathy's following observations on the medieval Middle East are certainly applicable to mid-twentieth century northern Nigeria:

Hijā' was positively capable of causing real social harm, and its social consequences would often, or mostly, go beyond some slight nuisance. [...] In a social arena infinitely appreciative of rhetorical and linguistic feats and characterized by a fiercely competitive atmosphere among courtiers and other intellectuals, *hijā'* could be a lethal weapon, given the right set of circumstances.⁷

This paper discusses one of the most critical stages in the history of the relationship between the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya in northern Nigeria: the year 1949. Most of the historical literature on northern Nigerian Islam makes mention of the “Qadiris vs Tijanis” riots of 1949, as well as of later ones that occurred in 1956 and 1965. However, the chronology and the causes of the crises are at times confused, calling for some corrections. More importantly, while some of the extant literature briefly mentions that invective poetry was produced as a result of these crises, no in-depth study of this genre of literature has been carried out to date. Being part of a larger project on Tijani literature in twentieth-century Nigeria, this paper is aimed at discussing the literary ramifications of the inter-ṭarīqa conflict, in the form of two examples of Tijani invective (the first in Hausa, the second in Arabic): Muhammad na-Birnin Magaji's *The Outburst of Rage*, and Abubakar Atiku's *The Divine Dagger*.

The authors of these two poems, discussed below, were both religious scholars (*fuqahā'*) and Sufis. Their broader public personae were embedded in the cultural ethos of dignified avoidance of personal conflict and abusive

7 Zoltán Szombathy, “Actions speak louder than words: Reactions to lampoons and abusive poetry in medieval Arabic societies,” in Christian Lange and Maribel Fierro (eds.), *Public Violence in Islamic Societies: Power, Discipline and the Construction of the Public Sphere, 7th-19th Centuries CE* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 88.

language which was transmitted as part of Islamic etiquette (*adab*) within the traditional networks of the religious scholars. Their “incursion” into a literary genre such as *hijāʾ*, which (in twentieth-century northern Nigeria just as in the medieval Arab tradition) was associated with the profane world of traditional praise-singers and bards, was not an obvious choice. It is because *hijāʾ* as such was not the preferred genre of the religious scholars that the *Outburst of Rage* and the *Divine Dagger* bear the formal marks of other, more “religious” genres, such as *istighātha* (prayer for protection) and *tawassul* (prayer for intercession). From the point of view of a purely literary analysis, one might even question whether these two poems can be considered as instances of *hijāʾ* at all. Yet, because of their goal and their effect, these poems were indeed regarded as forms of *hijāʾ* by the Nigerian public of the time. Moreover, it is precisely because their authors were members of the class of the religious specialists, the custodians of the Islamic order of society, that the poems were ultimately effective as a critique of power and as a strategy of collective mobilization by a religious group in its self-defense.

Historical Background

The first strain in the relationship between the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya in Nigeria was the controversy over the alleged Tijani affiliation of Muhammad Bello (d. 1837), the son of Usman ʿDan Fodio (d. 1817) and his successor as the Caliph of Sokoto. Bello’s affiliation purportedly occurred during the second visit of al-Hajj ʿUmar (d. 1864), who spent almost seven years (1830-1837) in Sokoto on his way back from a pilgrimage in Mecca to his native Futa Toro (in today’s Senegal).⁸

8 From here, probably aiming at replicating the experiment with Islamic statehood that he had observed in Sokoto, al-Hajj ʿUmar would launch a jihad that led to the establishment of an Islamic state extending from Dinguiraye in Futa Jallon (today’s Guinea) to Timbuktu in the Sahara, and from Jenne and Bandiagara (close to today’s Mali / Burkina Faso border) to the Kayes region along today’s Mali/Senegal border. Politically, al-Hajj ʿUmar’s jihad was largely unsuccessful: torn by conflict with other Islamic political entities of the region, it was ultimately swept away by the French colonial conquest. Culturally, however, al-Hajj ʿUmar’s campaigns left a long-lasting legacy and helped to entrench the Tijaniyya among the Muslim populations of the western Sudan.

Al-Hajj ‘Umar had been entrusted with the propagation of the Tijaniyya by Muḥammad al-Ghālī, a deputy of Aḥmad al-Tijānī whom he had met in Mecca. In Sokoto, however, the Qadiriyya was considered to be the established Sufi order. Muhammad Bello and al-Hajj ‘Umar, both of whom were Torodbe Fulanis (Bello’s ancestors had migrated to Hausaland from roughly the same area where al-Hajj ‘Umar was born), cultivated a close relationship, and the Sokoto Caliph gave a daughter, Saratu, in marriage to his visitor from the western Sudan. Throughout his public scholarly career, Muhammad Bello wrote as an engaged Qadiri.⁹ A few years after his death, however, al-Hajj ‘Umar wrote, in his book *al-Rimāh*, that Bello had taken the Tijaniyya from him. The same claim was also made by another contemporary of the two, Muhammad Raji b. Ali (d. 1865-6). In a letter possibly addressed to the Emir of Gwandu,¹⁰ Raji, who was also related to Usman ‘Dan Fodio on his mother’s side and who had married Abdullahi ‘Dan Fodio’s daughter, claimed that Muhammad Bello had received the Tijani spiritual training (*tarbiya*) from al-Hajj ‘Umar. In the same letter Raji, who had left Sokoto and settled in Adamawa, also claimed to have kept his own Tijani affiliation secret for ten years, due to his fear of the “suspicions” of the Sokoto establishment.¹¹

The story of Bello’s alleged “conversion” has been transmitted in two different versions by the Qadiri and Tijani communities in Nigeria. As far as the Qadiris are concerned, Bello never accepted the Tijaniyya, and the story was made up by al-Hajj ‘Umar as a strategy to claim the leadership of Sokoto after Bello’s death. In contrast, the Tijanis claim that Bello had taken the Tijaniyya from ‘Umar but kept his affiliation discrete for fear

9 Among Bello’s writings on Sufism with explicitly Qadiri tones, one may quote *al-Durar al-zāhiriyya fī al-salāsīl al-Qādiriyya* (John O. Hunwick, [compiled by], *Arabic Literature of Africa*, vol. 2. *The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1996, p. 116); *Faṭḥ al-bāb fī dhikr ba’d khaṣā’iṣ al-shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī fard al-āḥbāb* (Hunwick, *Arabic Literature of Africa*, vol. 2, p. 117), and *Miftāḥ al-sadād fī dhikr al-awliyā’ al-khawāṣṣ al-awtād* (Hunwick, *Arabic Literature of Africa*, vol. 2, p. 124), in addition to his many poems in eulogy of Qadiri scholars from the western Sudan, such as Mukhtār al-Kuntī, Aḥmad al-Bakkā’ī, etc.

10 As suggested by Murray Last and related by John Paden (*Religion and Political Culture in Kano*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 78).

11 For the text of Raji’s letter, see Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, pp. 77-78.

of political repercussions; after Bello's death, his chief minister Waziri Gidado 'Dan Laima (d. 1851) hid Bello's Tijani affiliation and forced al-Hajj 'Umar to leave Sokoto. The issue has been discussed in an article by Mahmud Minna, who concluded that Bello's affiliation to the Tijaniyya is very unlikely to have occurred.¹²

It is not impossible, however, that Bello might have received from 'Umar an affiliation by *baraka*; in other words, a permission to recite the Tijani *wird* (litany), without the strict obligation to practice it continuously and to comply with the other conditions of full membership. While it was very common at the time, for Sufis of orders other than the Tijaniyya to combine various affiliations, Tijani aspirants are normally required to give up their previous affiliation to other Sufi orders. It is very unlikely that Bello would have agreed to give up his Qadiri affiliation. There is evidence, however, that Tijani Sufis occasionally kept some space to allow flexibility for accomplished scholars who belonged to other orders, and giving them the Tijani *wird* for *baraka*, without requiring them to commit to the conditions of full membership.¹³ If this were the case, it would explain the confusion generated by the spread of the news of Bello's purported Tijani affiliation, giving partial credit (and partial disapproval) to both existing narratives.

At any rate, the Tijaniyya was successfully contained in Sokoto during the second half of the nineteenth and the first two decades of the twentieth century, but it continued to spread among the scholars and the laymen in areas of the Sokoto Caliphate that were outside of the capital's direct control. The order was also embraced by the ruling class of emirates that – for historical as well as for economic reasons – aspired to achieve some degree of autonomy from Sokoto's tutelage. In Zaria,

12 Mahmud Minna, "Bello and the Tijaniyya: Some Light About the Conversion Controversy," *Kano Studies*, 2/3, 1982/1985, pp. 1-18.

13 This was the case, for instance, for important scholars such as the Palestinian Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (d. 1932) and the Saudi Muḥammad al-'Alawī al-Mālikī (d. 2004). Their biographies mention the Tijani *ṭarīqa* as one of the many of which they received the *silsila* during their lives, but there is no evidence that either of the two relinquished their many previous Sufi affiliations; on the contrary, they kept initiating their students mostly into the Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya (Nabhānī) and into the Shadhiliyya Ba'lawiyya (Mālikī).

Emir Muhammad Kwassau (rul. 1897-1903), whom the British dethroned after their occupation of Hausaland, was a Tijani, just like Aliyu Dan Sidi (rul.1903-1921), whom they appointed in Kwassau's place (and whom they would dethrone too, eighteen years later). In Kano, Emir Abbas (rul. 1903-1919) was a Tijani, just like most of his successors through the twentieth century. In Katsina, the Tijaniyya was already publicly promoted during the reign of Emir Muhammad Bello b. Umar Dallaji (rul. 1844-1870), only to be repressed later under the reign of Emir Musa (1882-1887), and finally, to be reinstated as the semi-official Sufi order of the Emirate by the latter's successor, Emir Abubakar (rul. 1887-1905).¹⁴ With the popularization of the Tijaniyya and the diversification of its sources of spiritual and political legitimacy, the controversy over the alleged Tijani affiliation of Bello gradually lost public relevance.

The colonial time was marked by a British policy vis-à-vis the Tijaniyya that alternated containment, surveillance and accommodation, as Muhammad Sani Umar's insightful analysis has demonstrated.¹⁵ At the same time, however, by relatively increasing the autonomy of the various Muslim emirates from Sokoto, the British rule indirectly favoured the re-orientation of many emirs from the Qadiriyya to the Tijaniyya.¹⁶ Many British officials were anxious about alleged links between the spread of the Tijaniyya and the Mahdist groups that had been active in Adamawa until the 1920s.¹⁷ The British feared that a Tijani/Mahdist alliance would threaten a *pax colonial* that, in northern Nigeria, largely depended on the

14 For more on the case of Katsina, see Sulaiman Zaharaddeen, "The Politics of Inter-Ṭarīqa Relations in the Katsina Emirate from the Early Nineteenth to the Mid-Twentieth Century," in the present issue of the *Journal for Islamic Studies*.

15 Muhammad S. Umar, "The Tijaniyya and British Colonial Authorities in Northern Nigeria," in Jean-Louis Triaud and David Robinson (eds.), *La Tijāniyya: Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l'Afrique* (Paris: Karthala, 2000), pp. 327-355. For an exhaustive treatment of the responses to colonialism in the religious and political culture of Islamic northern Nigeria, see Muhammad S. Umar, *Islam and Colonialism: Intellectual Responses of Muslims of Northern Nigeria to British Colonial Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

16 See the observations made in Sulaiman Zaharaddeen, "The Politics of Inter-Ṭarīqa Relations."

17 W. F. G. Sowers, "Mahdia Sect and its Propaganda in Nigeria" (confidential minute by the Lieutenant Governor W. F. G. Sowers), C. 4013 (1923), Kaduna National Archives.

collaboration between the “domesticated” Sokoto authorities and the British administration. It was probably under the influence of biased intelligence received from Sokoto, that some British officials developed the idea of a Tijani/Mahdist link. This is suggested by a report from the Assistant Commissioner in charge of Adamawa Province, who complained how, since his arrival in Nigeria, he had been “given to understand that any person professing the Tijaniyya Tariqah was suspect, that the sect necessarily involved subversive influences, and that its tendencies were distinctively revolutionary.”¹⁸

Although there is no evidence of a political alliance between the Tijaniyya and the Mahdiyya in Nigeria, the two groups were growing at the same time in the same areas, and they were nurtured by a similar disillusionment with the Caliphate, aggravated by the colonial conquest. Already in the nineteenth century, many of the Tijanis of Kano who had protested against Emirate policies, had chosen to migrate to Adamawa,¹⁹ just as Muhammad Raji had left Sokoto to settle in the easternmost emirate of the Caliphate.²⁰ It is also in Adamawa that a Mahdist community emerged, and it is not impossible that for some time, Tijani and Mahdist expressions of Islamic dissent (against colonial rule, but also against the Caliphate) overlapped to a certain extent. The doctrines of the two, however, were never the same. According to a report sent by the French authorities to their British counterparts in Nigeria, during the Mahdist wars of the Sudanese Mahdī, Muḥammad Aḥmad ‘Abd Allāh (d. 1899), Tijani preachers from Sudan traveled to Nigeria to convince the local Mahdists to abandon the movement, for the “real” Mahdī, they said, was destined to appear from among the Tijani *shurafā’* (descendants of the Prophet) of Fes (Morocco).²¹ Such a shift from the Mahdiyya to

18 Quoted in Yasir A. Quadri, “Qadiriyyah and Tijaniyyah Relations in Nigeria in the 20th Century,” *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, 16, 1, 1984, 15-30, p. 16.

19 Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, p. 104.

20 Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, p. 77.

21 Secretariat of the Northern Provinces, “Confidential memorandum: Sects of the Tijaniya Tarikh,” K. 4692/411 (4 March 1931), Kaduna National Archive. The Sudanese traveller who allegedly engaged in a Nigerian tour to convert the local Mahdists to the Tijaniyya is named in the memorandum as Alhaji

the Tijaniyya could indeed make sense: just as the Mahdiyya in Nigeria was the expression of the disillusionment of many Fulani Muslim clerics with the state of the Sokoto Caliphate at that time, the defeat of the Sudanese Mahdī probably led those who had expected his rule to be the harbinger of the End of Time, to a new disillusionment, favouring their re-alignment with the less overly political, but equally revivalist teaching of the Tijaniyya.

As early as 1923, British officials had become aware of the differences between the two movements. The Sowers' confidential memorandum, for instance, concludes with the observation that "persons who belong to the Tijani order are much more likely to be opposed to, and to refuse to cooperate in the extension of the Mahdia influences than are members of the Kadria (*sic*) or Senusia."²² Nonetheless, confusing reports emanating from the French, as well as, with all probability, information provided by Nigerian informants close to the Sokoto establishment, contributed to persisting confusion among the British authorities.

Of particular concern to the British was the revival, in the 1920s, of the Tijaniyya of Kano around the charismatic Maliki reformist scholar and Tijani *muqaddam*, Muhammad Salga (d. 1938). Documents produced at the time, which the French intelligence shared with their British counterparts, were based on the assumption that the North African Tijaniyya was divided into two, radically opposed branches: an Algerian branch based in 'Ayn Māqī and Tammāsīn (Temacine) and a Moroccan branch based in Fes, Marrakesh and Casablanca. The first "displayed a loyal spirit towards the French cause"²³ and "had always been characterised by the recognition of French authority and respect for the established order,"²⁴ while the second "undertook propaganda of the most violent anti-foreign nature and at

Ismael Baadare (p. 5). Perhaps this Sudanese traveller was linked to Alfa Hashim (d. 1932), a nephew of al-Hajj 'Umar who had settled in Medina and had become the leading Tijani scholar in the Hijaz. Alfa Hashim, in fact, who had many Sudanese students, had released fatwas urging Tijanis not to join the Mahdiyya. The circulation of these fatwas in Nigeria was actively encouraged by the British (Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, p. 84).

22 W. F. G. Sowers, "Mahdia Sect and its Propaganda," p. 7.

23 Secretary of the Northern Province, "Confidential memorandum," p. 2.

24 Secretary of the Northern Province, "Confidential memorandum," p. 3.

the same holding up to the obloquy of Mohammedans the Tijani votaries centred in Ain Madhi and Temasin, representing them as traitors to Islam.”²⁵ The “agitation” of the Tijaniyya in Kano in the 1920s, concluded the report, was the consequence of a visit of “Sherif Alawi, a native of Casablanca” to Nigeria.²⁶ Muhammad Salga’s attempts to reform the local practice of funerary rites, continued the report, “lead to passionate discussions, excite religious feeling, awaken fanaticism and sometimes provoke bitter conflict; they have also the special undesirable effect of recalling the minds of the sectaries to the original Moroccan conceptions” and of attracting “the youthful element with its inclination to disorderly behaviour and its susceptibility to the influence of hot-beds of pan-Islamic Fanaticism.”²⁷

The name “Sharif Alawi” appearing in the report is a reference to Muḥammad al-‘Alamī (d. 1968),²⁸ a deputy of Maḥammad (*sic*) b. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Naẓīfī (d. 1947), who was the head of the Tijani *zāwiya* of Marrakesh and the author of many books on Tijani mysticism. During his visit to Kano, al-‘Alamī had been responsible for opening the first Tijani *zāwiya* in the Kōkī ward of Kano, and had appointed Muhammad Salga as the imam. Only a few years before, another deputy of al-Naẓīfī, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Ujdūd, had travelled to Hausaland and died in 1924 in Katsina. During his trip, Ujdūd had not only initiated the emirs of Kano and Katsina to the Tijaniyya, but he had also spread the belief that al-Naẓīfī was the *quṭb* (pole) and the *ghawth* (succour) of his time.

The position of the *quṭb* as the supreme saint in the Sufi tradition is an esoteric one, devoid of outward political implications. It is usually associated with the idea that the prayer of the “supreme saint” of any given time has special efficacy, and does not result in claims of political authority. The Hausa definition of the term *quṭb* provided by an informant (*wanda shi ke ya mallaki abinda ke cikin duniya*, “the one who owns everything on earth”), however, had been interpreted by the British Resident of Zaria as

25 Secretary of the Northern Province, “Confidential memorandum,” p. 3.

26 Secretary of the Northern Province, “Confidential memorandum,” p. 5.

27 Secretary of the Northern Province, “Confidential memorandum,” p. 6.

28 As al-‘Alamī also claimed to be an ‘alawī *sharīf* (i.e. a descendant of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib), the names ‘Alamī and ‘Alawī are often confused in the many colonial reports that mention him.

implying that al-Nazīfī was believed by the Nigerian followers of his deputy Ujdūd to be “the temporal head of Islam,” prompting him to send an urgent dispatch to the secretary of all the Northern Provinces.²⁹ Occasionally, British intelligence officers added curious details to the already confused picture of the Tijani revival. In one report dated 1928, al-‘Alamī is presented as “a Jewish adventurer [...] acting under orders and receiving funds from sources outside Nigeria” and “being in the pay of persons of anti-British disposition.”³⁰ Salga, on his part, is depicted not only as an agitator, but also as someone who, before joining al-‘Alamī, had “expressed an interest in Mahdism” and acted as “a Mahdist correspondent in Kano.”³¹

The misinterpretation of the claim of Nazīfī’s *quṭbāniyya*, coupled with the concerns expressed by French intelligence ascribing an inherently political nature to the “Moroccan branch” of the Tijaniyya, and with the additional “Mahdist ingredient” contributed by some members of the British intelligence, all led the colonial authorities of Kano to adopt severe measures of surveillance against those who had been personally associated with the two envoys of the Tijani *zāwiya* of Marrakesh. The measures hit Muhammad Salga, in particular, who had been made a *muqaddam* first by Ujdūd, then by al-‘Alamī. Salga was forced to give up the imamship of the Koki mosque and was prevented from speaking to more than five people at a time.³²

29 The Resident, Zaria Province, “Tijani Missionaries in Nigeria,” Memorandum No. 17/25 (9 March 1925), Kaduna National Archive. The name “Mahomet Nasifa” appearing in the memorandum is a reference to Maḥammad al-Nazīfī. After stating that “Abdu Jdud” (Ujdūd) had spread in Hausaland the belief that al-Nazīfī was the *gusu* (*ghawth*), the memorandum ends with the words “This Mahomet Nasifa is reported to be greater even than Yusufan Nabhani, the reputed saint of Mecca and Medina.”

30 T. Hoskyn Abrahall, “Mahdist and Other Religious Revivals in the Northern Emirates of Nigeria – a precis and appreciation from recent correspondence on the subject,” Memorandum No. 17/28 (8 April 1928), Kaduna National Archive (p. 7). As the author of the report does not mention his source, it is impossible to verify whether these claims were the fruit of information received by Nigerian informants or the product of the officer’s own imagination.

31 Abrahall, “Mahdist and Other Religious Revivals,” p. 7.

32 For more on Muhammad Salga and his troubled relationship with the Kano Emir and the British colonial authorities, see Sani Yakubu Adam, “Politics and Sufism in Nigeria: The Salgawa and the Political History of Kano State, Northern Nigeria, 1950-2011,” in the present issue of the *Journal for Islamic Studies*.

The First Sokoto Inter-Ṭarīqa Crisis (1949)

Millenarian expectations were strong in northern Nigeria during the colonial time. For many Muslims, the world order had been turned upside down, and the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate by the *Nasara* (Christians) could only be interpreted as a sign of the Hour. Although the association between the Tijaniyya and the Mahdiyya was certainly exaggerated by the Qadiri establishment of Sokoto and by some of the British officers, the revivalist climate that dominated the Tijani circles of Kano during the 1910s/1920s (the time of Ujdūd, al-‘Alamī and Salga), had indeed some millenarian overtones. The circulation of some of al-Nazāfī’s books, however, helped reframe those millenarian expectations from the hope for the arrival of a political Mahdī into the hope for the arrival of the Tijani *fayḍa*, a “flood” of mystical knowledge that had been predicted by the founder of the order, Aḥmad al-Tijānī, and that in al-Nazāfī’s book *al-Yāqūta al-farīda* was hinted as being imminent.

From the 1930s onwards, the British and the French succeeded in curtailing the travels of Moroccan Tijanis to northern Nigeria. World War II contributed further towards curbing the regional movement of people and ideas for a few years. To counter the influence of the Moroccan Tijaniyya, however, after the war the colonial powers allowed, and at times even encouraged, the movement of its Algerian and Senegalese counterparts, unwittingly creating the stage for the most massive expansion the Tijaniyya had ever witnessed in Nigeria, and in West Africa at large. This expansion would anger the Sokoto establishment, leading to a repression that began in the late 1940s and continued through the 1950s.

The first Tijani traveller of renown to visit Nigeria after the war was Ibrāhīm Niasse (d. 1975). In 1929, Niasse had claimed to be the depository of the expected Tijani flood (*ṣāhib al-fayḍa al-tijāniyya*). This claim had started to have repercussions in his native Senegal and, even more, in neighbouring Mauritania, but was yet to impact existing Tijani networks elsewhere in Africa. In 1945, after repeated denials by the French authorities,³³ Niasse managed to get a travel permit allowing him to go to Kano and visit Emir

33 Rüdiger Seesemann, *The Divine Flood: Ibrahim Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 188.

Abdullahi Bayero, whom he had first encountered in Medina in 1937 while the two were on pilgrimage.³⁴ Niasse visited Nigeria a second time in 1947.

The reason why the French authorities, who had long been suspicious of Niasse, had decided to allow him to travel, is explained in the following passage from the Mangin report, submitted by the French Head of Muslim Affairs during a visit to Nigeria in 1952. Commenting on the repressive measures taken by the Sultan of Sokoto against the Tijaniyya after Niasse's visit, Mangin had the following to say:

The opposition of the Sultan of Sokoto seems to have hidden the fact, which we appreciated by reason of our previous experience, that the development of a Branch of the Brotherhood, is not necessarily dangerous provided that the leader of the movement is not a rabid Moslem and is, in fact, an expression of the vitality of the traditional forms of Islam. It is rather an effective defence against the religious modernism which is always allied to violent nationalism and which, more than Mahdism, constitutes the real political danger of present-day Islam.³⁵

In other words, after years of attempts to curb the extension of Ibrahim Niasse's global links for fear of their pan-Islamic implications, the French had come to believe that the latter could be turned into a tool to counter the spread of nationalist, anti-colonial ideas. The subsequent history will prove that they were wrong: after independence, in fact, Niasse was to express his support for the anti-colonial and pan-Africanist block led by Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah.³⁶

34 Niasse's visits to Kano are discussed in Seesemann, *Divine Flood*, pp. 188-216, where several important corrections are made to the chronology provided by Paden (*Religion and Political Culture*, pp. 94-104).

35 M. Mangin, *Confidential Report by M. Mangin, Head of the Department of Moslem Affairs, on his Visit to Nigeria in March, 1952*, Dakar: Haut Commissariat de la République en Afrique Occidentale Française (Kaduna National Archives).

36 See Zachary V. Wright, "Islam and Decolonization in Africa: The Political Engagement of a West African Muslim Community," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 46, 2, 2013, pp. 205-227.

Although the link that Niasse established with Emir Bayero was certainly important in favouring his first introduction into the city, it was the fact of being acknowledged as the “depository of the Tijani flood” by the students of Muhammad Salga (who had died in 1938) that paved the way for the massive introduction of Niasse’s *ḥayḍa* in Nigeria. The network of Salga’s students consisted mostly of scholars belonging to non-aristocratic lineages, and had cultivated for years an attitude of detachment from the politics of the Emirate. After Niasse’s visit to Kano, some of Salga’s students would travel to Senegal and upon their return, they would contribute to the growth of Niasse’s movement among all social classes in Kano. Among those who submitted to Niasse during his first visit were people closely associated with the “Naḏīfian” network established in the 1910s and 1920s by Ujdūd and al-‘Alamī, including not only Salga’s students, but also Aḥmad Maḥmūd, a brother of Ujdūd who would later settle in Kaolack (Senegal) with Niasse.³⁷

Shortly after Niasse’s visit, in 1948-1949, Nigeria was visited by another Tijani personality, the Algerian Sidi Benamor (d. 1968), who was a descendant of Aḥmad al-Tijānī and, unlike Niasse, an outspoken French loyalist. In this instance, the French interest in not only allowing, but even promoting and funding the visit of this Tijani personality is evident, if we consider the previous history of French attempts to promote the “Algerian Tijaniyya” in Africa vis-à-vis its Moroccan counterpart.³⁸

The great excitement caused in the Nigerian Tijani communities by the visits of Niasse and Benamor was seen by the Sokoto authorities as the last straw coming after a severe series of blows to their political and symbolic authority. Beginning with the Bauchi succession disputes (1880-1890), these setbacks had continued with the Mahdist crisis of 1892 in Adamawa and with the Kano civil war of 1893-1895, culminating in the military

37 Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, p. 84.

38 As Rüdiger Seesemann and Benjamin Soares have shown, the motives of loyalist Muslims such as Benamor cannot be interpreted merely as a collaboration for tangible personal gains, but need to be understood in the light of the relative advantages that religious actors could see for the spread of Islam in the colonial context. See Rüdiger Seesemann and Benjamin F. Soares, “‘Being as Good Muslims as Frenchmen’: On Islam and Colonial Modernity in West Africa,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 39, 1, 2009, pp. 107-109.

defeat at Burmi (1903) that marked the beginning of British colonial rule. In the following decades, the declaration of Tijani affiliation of the now *de facto* autonomous emirs of Kano and Katsina had added a symbolic strike to Sokoto's loss of political power. At the time of Benamor's visit the Tijaniyya, observes Roman Loimeier, "was about to literally remove the ground from the feet" of the Qadiriyya in northern Nigeria.³⁹

In contrast to Niasse, who stayed in Kano during his visit to Nigeria and moved in a carefully diplomatic way, Benamor included the Sokoto Province in his tour; this region was perceived as not only the symbol of the Caliphate's remnant of political authority, but also as the bastion of its Qadiri religious identity. Earlier in 1944, when a local Tijani scholar had started to propagate the Tijaniyya in Zurmi, Kaura Namoda and Gusau, his activities had prompted the co-ordinated action of the District Head of Gusau and of the Sultan of Sokoto to stop him.⁴⁰ Unaware of (or perhaps insensitive to) the political volatility of inter-*ṭarīqa* relations in Sokoto, Benamor visited Gusau, where he publicly gave the Tijani affiliation to many, and apparently refused to respond to a call by the Sultan Abubakar III to pay him a courtesy visit in Sokoto.⁴¹ Soon after Benamor left, the Sultan unleashed his reaction, ordering the demolition of all Tijani mosques in the province.⁴² This act of repression, which primarily affected the Tijani communities of Gusau and Kaura Namoda, is known in the Nigerian oral tradition as *waki'ar Sakkwato ta farko* (the first Sokoto crisis).

The Outburst of Rage

The demolition of Tijani mosques was followed by a reaction in the form of invective verses that helped to mobilize passive resistance and to

39 Roman Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), p. 72.

40 Quadri, "Qadiriyyah and Tijaniyyah Relations," p. 17.

41 Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, p. 109, fn 8. The decision of the British colonial administrators to refuse to allow a younger brother of Benamar, Aḥmad Ben Sidi Muḥammad, to visit Nigeria in 1952 (Paden, *Religion and Political Culture*, p. 111), shows that, while the French continued to support the growth of the global connection of the Algerian branch of the order, the British had grown wary of the possible consequences that their visits might have on internal affairs.

42 Quadri, "Qadiriyyah and Tijaniyyah Relations," p. 19.

consolidate a distinctive Tijani identity in Sokoto. Ibrahim Tahir makes reference to “a campaign [...] waged against the Sultan and the Qadiriyya through qasidas and mass seances,” and to “maverick muqaddams” who “advocated the killing of the Sultan if he failed to convert to the Tijaniyya.”⁴³ Now, it is true that poetry such as the examples discussed in this paper does contain prayers for the death of the Sultan, and was certainly meant to be recited in a group for the mobilization of the Tijanis. Tahir, however, seems to suggest that it was this type of literature that provoked the Sultan’s reaction, while he fails to quote any example of such poetry preceding the 1949 events, or to refer to any Tijani source that called for the Sultan’s assassination unless he “converted” to the Tijaniyya. Contrary to his claim, all indications suggest that this invective literature was prompted by the Sultan’s repression, rather than the other way around. The Sultan’s repression, in turn, certainly stemmed from his anxiety about the expansion of the Tijaniyya after the visits of Benomar and Niase, rather than from a concrete fear of assassination.

Much of the invective poetry composed in Hausa by the Tijanis of Sokoto is probably lost today. At least one of these writings, however, was still circulating in 2008 in the Kano book market, where I purchased it as a second-hand copy. The poem, titled *Bathth al-ḥaniq* (Outburst of Rage), was published anonymously (probably for fear of repercussions on the author) by Northern Maktabat Printing Press (Kano). It featured, however, an endorsement (*taqrīz*) on the front cover page by Shaykh Abū Bakr al-‘Atīq (Abubakar Atiku, d. 1974), who was one of the most senior members of the Salgawa network in Kano. From the latter’s sons, I have been able to gather the information that the author of *Outburst of Rage* was one of Atīku’s students residing in Kaura Namoda, named Malam Muhammad Babba na-Birnin Magaji. The year of composition indicated in the colophon is 1368, corresponding to 1949 of the Gregorian calendar.

Outburst of Rage is a long poem of 67 quintains featuring the classical rhyming pattern a-a-a-a-b; c-c-c-c-b; d-d-d-d-b; etc, which is very

43 Ibrahim Tahir, “Scholars, Sufis, Saints and Capitalists in Kano, 1904-1974,” unpublished PhD thesis (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1975), pp. 425-426.

common in Hausa poetry. This pattern is particularly suitable for communal singing: the main singer recites the first four verses of each stanza, while the fifth verse, with its constant ending in the same rhyme, is repeated twice (once by the singer and once by the audience), as a chorus. The poem is in the Hausa dialect of Sokoto and is written in ‘*ajamī*’ (Arabic script). In the following pages, I will provide the transliteration and translation of a selection of verses.

The first few quintains contain the conventional introductory formula of praise to God. By referring to God eight consecutive times as *Sarki* (“king” or “sultan”), however, the introduction of the poem also functions as an innuendo hinting at the target of the invective, the *Sarkin Musulmi* (Sultan of the Faithful), Abubakar III. By expressing a praise of God as the *Sarki* who cannot be taken into account for His actions and in front of whom, “if He enacts a ruling, we can only submit,” the author implicitly asserts by contrast, that the *Sarki* of Sokoto will indeed be held to account for his actions, and that the Tijanis have no intention of submitting to rulings that outlaw their religious practices.

Sarkin da in ya so ka ya yi maka taimaka
Ka samu rinjayad da ba mai yi maka
In ya nufe ka da arziki shi isam maka
Sarkin da ya wuce “wane, don mi ka yi haka?”
In yai hukunci gunmu sai idh’āni!

A King who, if He loves you, gives you assistance
 So that you may find a victory no one can dare challenge
 If He allots you a provision, that is enough for you
 A King who is above being asked “man, why did you do that?”
 If He enacts a ruling, we can only submit!

The poem continues with an address by the author to the Tijani community of Sokoto, inviting them to accept God’s decree and bear with patience the repression unleashed upon them. Any positive event that occurs during a man’s life – the author reminds his audience – is a result

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَطَلَى اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ
 اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ الْبَاتِلِ الْأَعْلَى وَالْحَقِّ الْمُنْتَقِمِ
 لِمَا سَبَوْنَا صِرَاحِيًّا وَبِالْحَقِّ وَالْحَقِّ وَالْحَقِّ وَالْحَقِّ
 الْمُسْتَقِيمِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَفَدْرِهِ وَفَدْرِهِ الْعَظِيمِ
 فَكُلُّهُ بِتِجَانِيٍّ مِنْ أَيْدِيهِ مِنَ الشَّرِّ وَصِيْرَهَا مَجْمُوسَةٌ
 أَبْوَعْدَ رِهَا الْعَجْمِيَّةِ الْبَلِيدَةِ الْحَوْسِيَّةِ الْبِجَانِيَّةِ الْطَرِيفَةِ
 يُطَلَبُ بِهَا رِضْوَانُ مَوْلَاهُ الْكَرِيمِ مَعَ رَسُولِهِ
 ذَا الْفَدْرِ الْعَظِيمِ السُّرَّاءِ لِلشَّيْخِ
 الْمَكْتُومِ الْحَقِّ الْمَحْمُودِ رَضِيَ
 اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ وَبِعَدْنَا بِبِرْكَاتِهِ
 ، أَمِيرٌ تَمَّ ، أَمِيرٌ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى مَوْلَانَا النَّبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ
 وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ
 وَبَعْدُ بَعْدُ وَفِيهِ تَمَلُّكُ هَذِهِ الْمَنْظُومَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ
 بِإِلَهِ الْجَلِيلِ نَاظِمًا حَاضِرًا وَسَالَةً أَنْ يَرْزُقَهَا الْقَبُولَ بَيْنَ
 الْمُسْلِمِينَ بِجَاهِ سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَالْمَنْجَعِ يَهْدِيهِمْ فَرَاغًا
 الْمَنْجَعِ التَّلَامُزِجِيَّةِ الْبَنِيَّةِ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ رَاحَ
 حَيْثُهِ مَسْتَعْلَمًا ضَرْبِ الْبِجَانِيَّةِ الْحَقِّ أَبُو بَكْرٍ حَيْثُ
 طَبِعَ عَلَى تَوْفِيقِ مَعْلَمِ أُمَّةٍ حَقَّابِ الْبَلَدِ
 تَعْدِيمُ الْمَوْلَى الْأَشْرَفِ

Figure 1: The title page of *Bathth al-ḥaniq* (The Outburst of Rage).

of God's bounty, while any negative occurrence is but a manifestation of His justice. Muslims, therefore, should not complain about the "unjustness" of their destiny, but should keep praying for God's bounties while accepting His just dealings.

*Ya ḍan uwana amshi zance zan maka
Kada ka yi hushi da rabon da Allah yai maka
In yai ma kyauta shi kai maka har ḍaka
Ka sami girma babu mai amshe maka
Da yai nufinka da 'adlu sai khidhlāni!*

Oh brother, respond to the refrain, I'm talking to you
Do not be in anger over God's decree
If He wants to give you His bounty, He will reach you even in
your room
And you will achieve a status no one can remove from you
But if He decides to act with justice unto you, you will only get
disappointments!

The subsequent quintains are dedicated, as is customary, to the praise of the Prophet. This praise, however, is also followed by a bold statement of the superiority of Aḥmad al-Tijānī over all saints (*awliyā'*). In the context of this poem, this appears to be a challenge aimed directly at the Sultan. In these verses, Aḥmad al-Tijānī is portrayed as the inheritor, in full, of the Prophetic legacy, who completely embodies what other saints embody only partially; he is also portrayed as an ocean which instantly purifies all those who follow in his path, no matter how grave their sins.

*Mu dogarammu tana gare shi mu tsalkaka
Girmansa dutse ne da yaw wuce ḍaḍḍaka
Ya mai biḍas sashe tafo ka ji ga duka
Daga Annabawa sai salihai ḍaukaka
Sai ko waliyyai bai taki Tijjani!*

*Ya mai bidaw wanka ishara zam maka
 Komi yawan daudakka teku tanai maka
 Shiga kan damin babammu yanzu ka tsalkaka
 Shi anka ce muna ba kamatai daukaka
 Dukkan waliyyi na biya at-Tijjani!*

We rely on the Prophet to purify ourselves
 He is like a precious stone that cannot be split
 You go looking for crumbs, but here is the whole!
 From the prophets to the pious, the great ones
 Among all saints, no one is like al-Tijani!

If you want to take a bath — let me give you a metaphor
 No matter how dirty you are, the ocean will suffice you
 Enter the community⁴⁴ of our father and you'll be instantly clean
 That's why we've been told that no one is as great as him
 All the saints are followers of al-Tijani!

Thereafter, the author starts to allude to the predicament of the Tijani community in Sokoto following the restrictive measures taken by the Sultan. The enactment of these measures is compared by the author to the “roar of a leopard,” in whose fear the Tijani communities have learnt to live.

*An ce mu ba da guri dada mun gurgusa
 An ce ku san wada za ku yi kasa ko bisa
 Kullum muna tsoron hararad damisa
 Allah ta'ala ya nufe mu zaman kasa
 Ita kuwa kasan nan ba a son Tijjani!*

*Shi wanda ba iko garai kaka shika yi
 Amma fa Sarkin nan da yay yi shi ya isai
 Kun san fa kullum Rabbana rahama shikai*

44 Literally, “the bundle.”

*Kaka mukai jama'ammu ko hijra mukai
Mu shige kasad da ake bukin Tijjani?*

We were told to give room and we have moved away
We were told we could go anywhere else, on earth or in the
heavens

Everyday we live in fear of the roar of the leopard
But God has willed that we live in this land
Even if in this land, they do not like al-Tijani!

We are powerless, so what can we do?
Yet the King who created us suffices us
You know, God is always merciful
What shall we do, fellow Tijanis, shall we migrate
And go to a land where they love al-Tijani?

In a following section, the poem portrays the Tijanis as being those who authentically love all saints. Their enemies, on the contrary, are presented as those who, by fighting one of the “men of God” (al-Tijānī) with the pretense of defending the honour of another one (‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī), are in reality breaking *ipso facto* their connection with the latter.

*Mu son waliyyai mun sani girmammu ne
Kowak̄ ki su ki shi aboki ko babanka ne
Kowas so su dole mu so shi ko mak̄iyimmu ne
Dukkan waliyyi namu ne mu nashi ne
Sonai mukai wada munka so Tijjani!*

*Mu bi awliyā’ Allāhi barwan Annabi
In sun aza ga mazhaba tasu mui ta bi
Duka wanda kab bi cikinsu ka san marghabi
Hanyassu kowace kab bi za ka ga Annabi
Mis sa a so wasu ba a son Tijjani?*

*Kowa ke sonsu shi san fa Allah yab biya
 Kowa ke kinsu shi san fa Annabi yak kiya
 Shi ne yaba su gwadi ga hanyar an biya
 Sukan waliyyai ba a so kak ko daya
 Koway yi matai darika shayni!*

*Sarkin da ya wuce ai misalinai kawa
 Shi yan nufe su da ba su baiwa mai yawa
 Kowak ki ahlu'Llāhi ba shi da saduwa
 Ya zama da shehun nasa sun saki juna
 Ya cuci kansa shina zaton ihsāni!*

For us, loving God's saints is our honour
 Anyone who hates them we hate, even if he's our friend or our
 father

Anyone who loves them we love, even if he's our adversary
 All saints belong to us and we belong to them
 We love them just like we love al-Tijani!

We must follow God's saints, the servants of the Prophet
 If they put us on their path we have to follow it
 Whoever of them you follow, you know what your goal is
 Whichever of their paths you follow, you will reach the vision of
 the Prophet

Then why do they love some saints, but they don't like al-Tijani?

Whoever of them you love, it is God you are following
 Whoever of them you hate, it is the Prophet you hate
 For he is the one who showed them a path to follow
 You should never insult any of the saints
 Whoever does that, his is the path of shame!

The King who is above any comparison
 Is the one who has chosen them out of His bounties
 Whoever hates the people of God, has no hope of meeting
 His own shaykh, for their connection is cut off
 He has fooled himself, thinking he was pleasing his shaykh!

The author continues by encouraging the Tijanis to be steadfast in their practice of the order's litanies. In yet another instance of innuendo, he alludes to the fact that the aspirant who leaves the Tijani litanies for fear of the Sokoto Sultan, will incur the wrath of the "real" Sultan (God), when he meets him in his court (the hereafter), here contrasted implicitly to the court of Sokoto, which the Tijanis are invited not to be fearful about.

*Ka tsare biyar Allah marece da safiya
Nai ma nasiha kad kace min ka kiya
Kada ko ka yarda ka bar mutanen gaskiya
Kada kai sake ka ki yin darika ko daya
In za ka fada fa ka ga mai sulṭāni!*

*Sarkin da yay yi samaniya kuma yai kasa
Shi yan nufe mu da so ga masu biya tasa
Komi akai muna ba mu fasa biya tasa
An ba mu kashi babu mai ceto kusa
Amma fa ba mu da nesa gun Tijjani!*

[...]

*Ikon ta'ala jalla ya gama ko'ana
Tun can azali shike babu farko Rabbana
Kuma babu karewa da sarki ba'danā
Allahu shi kawo Sidi Mahdi shi bayyana
Shi tafo shi rabke mahassadan Tijjani.*

Be steadfast in your evening and morning devotions
This is my advice, don't refuse to take heed
Never move away from the people of truth
Never change your mind, don't stop following the ṭarīqa
When you will be in His court, you will have to face the Sultan!

The King who has created the heavens and the earth
Has willed that we love those who follow Him
Whatever will be done to us, we'll never stop following Him

We've been given a hard time, and there is no one around to save
 us
 But we are never far from al-Tijani!

[...]

The power of the Almighty encompasses everywhere
 He is, since eternity, our Lord without beginning
 He will not have an end, this King, when we'll be gone
 May God bring forth the appearance of the Mahdī
 Who will give a hard time to those who envy al-Tijani!

In the following verses, there is a first reference to the appearance of the awaited *fayḍa* (flood) at the hands of Ibrāhīm Niasse, who is the Shaykh (*Shehu*) referred to below, while the Pharaoh is, of course, a reference to Sultan Abubakar III, who has “confronted God” by “destroying His houses” (the Tijani mosques).

*Mun gode samun Shehu ya zamano uba
 Ku tafo ku san fayḍi na Annabi ya zuba
 Kowak̄ kiya yak kaurame yas sa gaba
 Sa mai ido yi ta kanka don baka cutu ba
 Ai kowace al'umma akwai Fir'auni!*

*Komi kakai Sarkin sarauta ya shina
 Imma ka bar shi a boye ko fa ka bayyana
 Kowak̄ ki Annabi tashi hanya tai kwana
 Kowaj ja da Allah yak kashe mashi dakuna
 Ya san hakika za shi mugun gani!*

We are thankful for having the Shehu as a father
 Come you all, the flood of the Prophet is pouring out
 If someone refuses to prepare a ditch to welcome it, showing
 enmity
 Watch out, but mind your business, for he will not harm you
 Every community has its Pharaoh!

Whatever you do, the King of kings knows
 Whether you hide it or you display it out
 Whoever hates the Prophet has gone off the road
 Whoever confronts God by destroying His houses
 Let him know that for sure, he will have a bad ending!

Thereafter, the author further encourages and mobilizes his audience by insisting on the solidity of their connection to Aḥmad al-Tijānī through Ibrāhīm Niase, and reminds them that their weapons are the litanies of the order: if they ignore the threat and are steadfast in reciting them, their enemy (here Abubakar III is addressed as “Satan”) will be devoured by his own anger and frustration.

*Mun sami babban ginshikimmu madogara
 Komi muke sonai gare shi muke bara
 Hai'ata ne makiyinsa an masa gafara
 Komi muke so duniyammu da lahira
 Mu taulafimmu shina wurin Tijjani!*

*Ka kiyaye sharadī don ka sadu da salsala
 Makiyinka in ka so ka sa mashi zalzala
 Ka kula da istighfari tare da salsala
 Wuridi wazifa kulla yaumin hailala
 Haushinka sai shi kashe ka ya Shayḍani!*

We have found a solid pillar to rely upon
 Whatever we need, we beg it from him
 How can it be possible that his enemy be pardoned?
 Whatever we need, in this world and in the next
 Our supply is with al-Tijani!

Keep all the conditions so as to be connected to his *silsila*
 If you want to bring your enemy to ruin
 Keep reciting your *istighfār* and your *ṣalawāt* on the Prophet
 Keep reciting your *wird*, your daily *wazīfa*, your *haylala*
 And you, oh Satan, will be killed by your own anger!

After a section, which I will not translate here, in which the author reiterates the special favours attributed to the Tijani path by virtue of the belief that it originated from a direct visionary encounter between Aḥmad al-Tijānī and the Prophet, the following verses focus on the wider implication of the status of al-Tijānī vis-à-vis the founding saints of other ṭarīqa-s. After the appearance of the “seal of saints,” the spiritual paths established by previous Sufis cease to be fully effective, just as the religions of old were invalidated by the appearance of the Prophet Muhammad, “seal of the prophets.”

*An ḅad da tamrari subahin ta zaka
An kare manzanci da Annabi yaz zaka
Hakanan khitām al-awliyā’ shi ma haka
Bayansa ba kingi ḅarīka ta cika
Diba ga dinin Ḍaha gun adyānī!*

*Duka awliyā’ ba su kai gare shi ba ko kusa
Duba cikinsu ka tad da kai bisa ko kasa
Ko can cikin aqṭābu babu kama tasa
Girma ta Shehu da ḅaukakar hanya tasa
Na so ku dubi Jawāhira ta Ma’ānī!*

The stars have disappeared, morning has sprung forth
Prophethood ended when the (final) Prophet came
The same is true for the seal of the saints
No one will come after him, the ṭarīqa is closed
Look at how the religion of Ṭāhā has invalidated all other
religions!

All other saints can’t even get close to him
Look among them, turn your head up or down
Even among the aqṭāb,⁴⁵ there’s no one like him

45 Plural of *quṭb* (pole), the supreme living saint at any age according to traditional Sufi hagiology.

No station like that of the Shaykh, no degree equal to his
Go and read in the book *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī*⁴⁶

With a new reference to the appearance of the *ḥayḍa* at the hand of Niasse, the ensuing section is coloured with some messianic tones. For the author of this poem the *ḥayḍa*, with its flood of mystical knowledge and its expansion of the Tijaniyya, anticipates the second coming of Jesus and the appearance of the Mahdī. Contrary to the coming of the Mahdī, however, Niasse's *ḥayḍa* is not expected to have military or political implications: the sole aim of the war carried out by its soldiers is to ensure the multiplication of *dhikr Allāh* (Sufi litanies meant at increasing absorption of the devotee in the divine). As the appearance of the *ḥayḍa* is a divine matter, however, those who explicitly oppose it are labelled by the author, following the harsh invective style of the poem, as “the community of Satan.” Referring to Ibrāhīm Niasse simply as “the Shehu” is also a device of the poet intended to increase the Sultan's anger. In Hausaland, in fact, the term (when not followed by a personal name), was normally intended as a reference to Usman Ḍan Fodio.⁴⁷ Similarly, *mutanen Shehu* (“the people of the Shaykh”), when used as a reference to the Tijani community, is intended to provoke the Sultan, who considered himself to be the leader of *mutanen Shehu* (i.e., the community of Usman Ḍan Fodio).

The reference to “the rain” hints at the text of a prophetic hadith, “my community is like the rain; you do not know if its best part is the first or the last.” In the context of the millenarian overtones of this poem, this means that the followers of Niasse are believed to be the embodiment of a chosen community expected to revive religion at the End of Time.

Mun gode samun Shehu baban Failatu
Shi gausuna Barhamu shi ne Failatu

46 Written by 'Alī Ḥarāzīm Barāda, the *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī* is the foundational text of the Tijaniyya.

47 To avoid confusion, most Tijanis in the following years started referring to Ibrāhīm Niasse using a similar loanword from the same Arabic word shaykh, *Shehi*, to distinguish him from *Shehu* (Ḍan Fodio).

Yaḳinsa dhikru'LLāhi shi ne 'uddatu
In ba ku labarin alamun Failatu
Taron mutanen Shaikhina al-Tijani!

Mu kam mutanen Shehu dai shukra muke
Mun sami faḍlu'LLāhi kullum sha muke
Duka wanda yash shiga mazhabammu da shi muke
Shi wanda yaḳ ḱi shiga ruwammu ina shike
Sai dai shi kama Jamā'at al-shayṭāni!

Kai mai farautam martaba da halin tsiya
Sarkin ga shi ka rabon uwa balle ḁiya
Laifinka ya dawo kana bege ḁiya
Sarkimmu ya fi kula da halin zucciya
Da yawa ghaniyyi kāmili 'l-'irfāni!

Wadadai mutan farko akwai su da martaba
Hakanan mutan ḱarshe suna da manāqiba
Shi ummati ka'l-maṭari fihi munāsaba
Isa da Mahdi a yanzu su muka rāqaba
Ga gausuna Barhamu mai fayḁāni!

We are thankful for having the Shehu, the father of the *fayḁa*
 Our succour Barhama, he is the *fayḁa*
 His war is making *dhikr* of God in big amounts
 If you want to know the sign of the *fayḁa*
 It's the expansion of the people of Shaykh al-Tijani!

We, people of Shehu, we are thankful
 We have received God's favour and every day we benefit
 Our address is for those who want to enter our way
 As for those who refuse, what should we care about them?
 Let them enter in the community of Satan!

You go hunting for authority just like a miser
 The King gives everyone a mother, let alone children

Your mistake is that you focus on wanting children⁴⁸
 But our King gives more importance to the state of the heart:
 This is the wealth He has granted to the complete gnostics!

The Muslims of the first generation had honourable status
 Likewise, those of the end of time have special stations
 “My community is like the rain,” in this is a paragon
 Jesus and the Mahdī, it’s them we are waiting for
 Here is our succour, Barhama the depository of the flood!

This section of the poem is followed by a few quintains that summarize the preceding sections and motivate the audience to persevere in its steadfastness. The poem concludes with the customary prayers and salutation to the Prophet.

The Divine Dagger

The first Sokoto crisis immediately resonated in Kano, producing more literary ramifications. Upon receiving news of the Tijani repression, the leading Kano scholar of the *ḥayda*, Abubakar Atiku (to whose network many of the *zawiya*-s in the Sokoto Province were linked)⁴⁹ wrote a 55-verse Arabic invective against the Sultan of Sokoto.⁵⁰ The poem, entitled *al-Khanjar al-rabbānī fī dhabḥ a’dā’ ṭarīqat al-Tijānī* (The Divine Dagger, slaughtering the enemies of the *ṭarīqa* of al-Tijānī), has the literary form of a prayer for intercession (*tawassul*). However, as the object of the author’s prayer is explicitly mentioned as being the destruction of Sultan Abubakar III, it can be regarded as being a true representative of the

48 This could be a reference to Abubakar III, who had fifty-two sons and daughters. It is also possible, however, that this was a reference to Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, who had no children. In this case, the innuendo should be intended in the opposite sense.

49 Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change*, pp. 73-74.

50 The translation of three verses from the *Khanjar* appears in Ibrahim Tahir, *Scholars, Sufis, Saints and Capitalists*, p. 428. The same verses are mentioned in Loimeier, *Islamic Reform and Political Change*, p. 74; Yasir A. Quadri (*The Tijjaniyyah in Nigeria*, PhD thesis, Ibadan: University of Ibadan, 1981), pp. 216-217 provides a slightly different translation of the same verses. The issue is also discussed in Rüdiger Seesemann, *Nach der «Flut»: Ibrāhīm Niasse (1900-1975), Sufik und Gesellschaft in Westafrika* (Habilitation thesis, Bayreuth: University of Bayreuth, 2005), pp. 612-613.

invective genre, of which it is perhaps the most outstanding example, in literary terms, from twentieth-century Nigeria.

The poem is an Arabic *urjūza* with a hammering rhythm. The first twenty verses invoke in rapid succession all the objects of the author's intercession, while the remaining section prays for the protection of the Tijanis and the destruction of the Sultan in very graphic terms. As the poem is quite long, I will only provide the transliteration and translation of a selection of verses.

Yā Rabbanā bi-dhātika al-'azīmi
 wa-bi'smihi wa-waṣfihi al-fakhīmi
 Wa-bi-nabiyyika wa-mā anzaltahu
 'alayhi bi'l-sirri alladhī awda'tahu
 Bi-ṣaḥbihi wa'l-āli wa'l-azwāji
 wa-kulli man sāra 'alā al-minhāji
 Bi'l-anbiyā wa'l-rusli wa'l-amlāki
 bi'l-'arshi wa'l-kursī wa-bi'l-aflāki
 Yā Rabbanā bi'l-lawḥi thumma al-qalami
 wa-mā ḥawā kitābunā min ḥikami
 Bi-jumlati 'l-Qur'āni yā ilāhī
 wa-mā ḥṭawā fīhi min al-nawāhī
 Bi-mā ḥawat Fātiḥatun wa'l-Basmala
 ad'ūka yā Rabbi bi-sirri 'l-ḥasbala
 Bi-mā ḥawā al-Tawrātu wa'l-Injīlu
 wa-mā ḥawā al-zabūru yā Jalīlu
 [...]

Yā Rabbi yā Rabbi a-yā Jabbāru
 yā Llāhu yā Allāhu yā Qahhāru
 Fal-tahlukan Rabbi amīra Ḥawsā
 sultāna Ṣukkutū 'man'u al-awsā
 Zalzil umūrahu wa-afsid ra'yahu
 kharrib diyārahu wa-'ajjil na'yahu
 Wa-'slubhu mulkahu wa-bi'l-faḍīḥa
 kharribhu yā Rabbi wa-bi'l-qabīḥa

Wa-'nzil 'alayhi Rabbanā ṣā'iqatā
 tahlukhu wa'l-tanzilan māḥiqā
 Tamḥuqhu wa-lā tubaqqī atharā
 fī baytihi fa-lā yarā wa-lā yurā

[...]

Bi-sūrat al-Tawbati dhāti al-sayfi
 fal-taqtu'anna 'unqahu bi'l-sayfi
 Bi-sūrat al-Ra'di wa'nzilanna al-ra'dā
 fī dārihi fa-lā ya'ishū abadā
 Rabbi kamā haddama al-masājīdā
 fa-'hdimhu yā Rabbi yakūnu bā'idā
 Rabbi kamā qad shattata al-jamā'a
 shattit lahu al-'iyāla wa'l-jamā'a
 'Āmilhu yā Rabbi kamā qad yastaḥaqq
 wa'l-ta'khudhanhu Rabbanā ukhdata ḥaqq
 Wa-khudhhu ukhdata 'Azīzin Muqtadir
 fa-'hlukhu yā'Llāhu halākin muqtadar
 Wa-'ghriqhu fī baḥri'l-'adhābi 'l-mu'limi
 wa-mazziqanhu Rabbanā wa-qaṣṣimi

[...]

Yā Rabbi hādhā al-'abdu qad tajabbarā
 yā Rabbi hādhā ṣālimun takabbarā
 Haddama rukna dīnika al-qawīmi
 'ajjilhu yā Rabbi ilā al-jahīmi
 Dammirhu dammir kulla man a'ānahu
 wa-min ṣawāban qad ra'ā ṭughyānahu

[...]

Fa-arriḥ al-'ibāda wa'l-bilādā
 min sharrihi yā khayra man yunādā
 Wa-baddilan fī arḍinā sulṭānā
 yakūna fī ṭarīqinā mi'wānā.⁵¹

Oh Lord, by your majestic essence
 and by its name, and its noble attributes
 By your Prophet and what you have revealed
 unto him, and by the secret you have entrusted to him
 By his companions, his family and his wives
 and by all those who have walked on their path
 By the prophets, the messengers and the angels
 by the Throne, the Footstall and the planets
 Oh Lord, by the Tablet and the Pen
 and by all the wisdom encompassed in your Book
 By the entire Quran, oh God
 and by all the prohibitions it contains
 By what is included in the Fātiḥa and the Basmala⁵²
 I pray to you, oh Lord, and by the secret of the Ḥasbala⁵³
 By what is in the Torah and the Gospel
 and by what is in the Psalms, oh Majestic

[...]

Oh Lord, oh Lord, oh You who coerce
 Oh God, oh God, oh You who subjugates
 Destroy, oh Lord, the chief of the Hausas
 the Sultan of Sokoto, avert from him any bounty
 Smash his affairs and bring decay to his intellect
 destroy his houses and hasten his dethroning
 Take power away from him in a humiliating way
 destroy him, oh Lord, in the worst of ways
 Send down on him, oh Lord, a thunderbolt
 that will destroy him and annihilate him
 Erase him, remove any trace of him
 in his house, may he not see or be seen

52 The introductory formula of all Quranic suras but one, *bismi'LLāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (in the Name of God, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful).

53 The Quranic formula *ḥasbunā Allāh wa-ni'ma 'l-wakīl* (God is sufficient for us, and what a Guardian is He!), often used in Islamic apotropaic prayers.

[...]

By the sura al-Tawba, with its 'verse of the sword'
 cut off his neck, cut it with a sword
 By the sura of the Thunder, let a thunder descend
 on his house, that they may not live afterwards
 Oh Lord, just as he demolished the mosques
 demolish him, oh Lord, that he may perish
 Oh Lord, just as he has dispersed our community
 disperse his family and his community
 Do unto him what he deserves
 seize him, as it is appropriate
 Seize him as befitting to a Majestic, appointer of destiny
 and destroy him according to his appointed destiny
 Let him sink in an ocean of painful torment
 tear him apart and break him into pieces

[...]

Oh Lord, this slave of yours is a tyrant
 oh Lord, he is an arrogant oppressor
 He has demolished the pillars of your upright religion
 so hasten, oh Lord, his way to the Fire
 Demolish him and all those who assist him
 As well as those who see any justice in his tyranny

[...]

Give your people and this country a rest
 from his evil, oh best of those who are called upon
 And give our land a new Sultan
 who will be a help for our ṭarīqa.

The *Divine Dagger* was never published during the life of its author, and would only appear in a posthumous *dīwān* of his poetry.⁵⁴ The

54 'Umar, *al-Shaykh Abū Bakr 'Atīq*, pp. 126-129.

poem, however, did circulate and was even mentioned in a letter of 2 October, 1949, from the British Resident of Sokoto to the Secretary of the Northern Province.⁵⁵ Upon completing the poem, Atīku had several manuscript copies made and asked Alhaji Uba Ringim to post them to the emirs of Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, Bauchi and Daura, as well as to the Shehu of Borno and, more importantly, to the Sultan of Sokoto. He also asked a photographer to take a picture of him holding a spear, requiring his contacts among the book-sellers of Kurmi market in Kano to print hundreds of copies and distribute them through the various *zawiya*-s. This picture (shown here as figure 2), became one of the most famous photos of Abubakar Atīku in the country.⁵⁶ When Abubakar III required Abdullahi Bayero, then Emir of Kano, to arrest Atīku on his behalf, the Emir, who had already started to play a leading role in the promotion of the Tijani *fayḍa* network, answered that he would not dare touch his religious scholars.⁵⁷ At that point, Abubakar III refrained from insisting.

The Sultan's decision to refrain from punishing Atīku or from inflicting additional harm on the Tijani community of Sokoto, can be explained in two, not necessarily mutually exclusive ways. Firstly, in colonial northern Nigeria, the Sultan had virtually no authority over the emirates outside of his Province. As Atīku was a resident of Kano, he had no power to force the Emir of Kano to enact a ruling against him. Secondly, the Sultan might also have considered the possible repercussions of his reaction in terms of popular opinion. Atīku was a well-known and widely respected religious scholar. As the symbolic authority of the Caliphate relied mainly on religious grounds, the victimization of a scholar would have been counter-productive for the Sultan, at a time when his legitimacy was already being jeopardized by widespread Tijani dissent. In such a context, refraining from imposing punishment could be seen as a display of the Muslim virtue of tolerance (Ar. *ḥilm*. Hausa *hakuri*), ultimately restoring

55 Cited in Tahir, *Scholars, Sufis, Saints and Capitalists*, p. 428, fn 1.

56 It has to be stressed, however, that despite all the virulence of his invective against the Sultan, the militancy of Shehi Atīku remained only symbolic: throughout the twentieth century, the Tijanis would never be known to have established any armed wing or militia in Nigeria.

57 Lāwī Atīku Sanka, telephonic interview with author, August 2017.

his honour (Ar. *ʿird*, Hausa *mutunci*) more than insisting on vengeance. Once again, an observation made by Szombathy in his study of the various possible reactions of the aristocrats who were victims of *hijāʿ* in the medieval Middle East, makes perfect sense also in the context of mid-twentieth century northern Nigeria.

The basic expectations for the behaviour of an aristocrat on the receiving end of *hijāʿ* seem to have been within the discourse of honour rather than that of religion. It was expected that perceived insults should be avenged publicly in order to demonstrate the offended party's capacity to defend his honour. That said, secondary factors – such as the existence of state authority, which prohibited, at least theoretically, the murdering of someone for a reason not justifiable according to religious law – might intervene to modify this basic pattern. Thus, clandestine revenge or no revenge might often have to do with state authority: not everyone had the authority to silence an offending poet by drastic, violent means. Popular opinion also mattered: whether a particular act of retribution was likely to be viewed with approval by the public would almost certainly affect the choice of a clandestine or publicized revenge. In the light of our source material, it cannot be assumed that a resounding, brutal and public act of retaliation for *hijāʿ* would necessarily be the option that would bring the maximum benefit for the honour of an offended aristocrat.⁵⁸

Conclusion: *Hijāʿ* and Religion, a Full Circle?

With the emergence of party politics in the early 1950s, the erosion of the authority of Sokoto in the former territory of the Caliphate continued. Kaduna, the seat of the Northern Nigerian government, became the centre of power of the ruling elite aligned with the NPC

58 Szombathy, "Actions speak louder than words," p. 100.



Figure 2: Shehi Abubakar Atifu holding a spear (1949).

(Northern Peoples' Congress), while Kano, the commercial hub of the region, became the centre of the opposition party NEPU (Northern Elements Progressive Union). The conflict between the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya re-emerged twice before the mid-1960s, when it took on a different form as the two ṭarīqa-s became partly enmeshed in party politics and regional power struggles.⁵⁹ Finally, with the emergence of the anti-Sufi reformism of Abubakar Gumi (d. 1992) and the Salafi-oriented activism of *Izala* (an organization established in 1978), the Qadiris vs Tijanis polemics became less relevant in the religious public sphere of northern Nigeria.

The Sultan Abubakar III spent the last ten years of his life incapacitated and unable to move, because of a severe case of elephantiasis. Upon his death in 1988, the Caliphate was marred by a dispute that resulted in his line of the Dan Fodio family (the direct descendants of Muhammad Bello) losing power to Ibrahim Dasuḳi (rul. 1988-1996), a descendant of Muhammad Buhari (a cadet son of Usman Dan Fodio). Muhammad Bello's descendants would ultimately regain control of the Caliphate in 1996, with the succession of Abubakar III's son Muhammadu Maccido (rul. 1996-2006); he in turn was followed by his brother Sa'adu Abubakar. By that time, however, the Caliphate had already lost most of its political and religious legitimacy. For the local Tijanis, Abubakar III's sad ending was God's answer to the prayers made by Atīku in his *hijā'* poetry.

Ignaz Goldziher has argued that the Arabic term used for the poetic rhyme (*qāfiya*) reveals the ultimate root of the Arabic poetic tradition in an archaic, magico-religious ritual of invective (*hijā'*).⁶⁰ Originally, argues Goldziher, the main intention of *hijā'* was not to humiliate an opponent; instead, the goal was actually to strike him on the neck (*qafā*) with the help of a supernatural power. In other words, Goldziher suggests that in its archetypal form, the *qāfiya/hijā'* was a pre-Islamic ritual intended

59 For a discussion of inter-ṭarīqa conflict in northern Nigeria in the period 1950-1965, see Andrea Brigaglia, "Party Politics, the Post-Colonial Order and Inter-Ṭarīqa Conflict in Northern Nigeria: From the Second Sokoto Crisis (1956) to the Argungu Riots (1965)," forthcoming.

60 Ignaz Goldziher, "Über die Vorgeschichte der Hiǧā'-Poesie," in Ignaz Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur Arabischen Philologie* (Leiden: Brill, 1896), pp. 105-121.

to mobilize supernatural agents to harm an enemy. This ritual was accompanied by the performance of a symbolic act by the poet, such as the donning of special clothes.

The concept of *hijā'* as a prayer to harm an opponent finds perfect resonance with the Nigerian examples studied here; in particular, with Abubakar Atiku's *Dagger of God*. Atiku's photograph in which he poses with a spear in concomitance with his release of the poem, also suggests the presence of a ritual aspect to his performance, similar to the one Goldziher posits for the pre-Islamic poets. My study does not aim to verify or falsify Goldziher's hypothesis,⁶¹ a goal which would require a different set of premises and, more importantly, literary materials from a different age. However, if Goldziher's suggestion is true, then our samples of Islamic *hijā'* from northern Nigerian religious scholars would provide evidence of a fascinating journey made by *hijā'* as a literary genre in Islamic cultures: shunned for centuries by Muslim religious scholars because of its often mundane connotations, the latent potential of the archetypal *hijā'* as an essentially religious literary form would re-emerge in Abubakar Atiku's religious verses, bringing the history of the genre to full circle.

61 Various authors have expressed their critique of Goldziher's hypothesis on the origins of the *hijā'*. See, for instance, Edouard Fares, *L'Honneur chez les arabes avant l'Islam: Étude de sociologie* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1932), pp. 214-218. For a convincing attempt to combine the two hypotheses (*hijā'* as magico-religious ritual, and *hijā'* as attack on the honour of an opponent), see Van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, pp. 4-5.