

# A SACRED COMMUNITY: SCHOLARS, SAINTS, AND EMIRS IN A PRAYER TEXT FROM ILQORIN

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## *Introduction*

The political structure of the Islamic emirates which belonged to the Sokoto State was to a large extent determined by a close relationship between religious scholars and the military aristocracy. The emirs themselves belonged to families of Islamic scholars and preachers who had been brought to power by that wide range of local religio-political movements which came to be connected with the *jihād* of ‘Uthmān b. Fodiye.

In their early stages these movements had taken shape largely as religious *jamā‘āt* which by virtue of their intense religious life and their struggle against their enemies conceived themselves as treading in the steps of the Prophet and his community.<sup>1</sup> The religious base of the emirs’ position was maintained even after their families had been transformed and absorbed into the military aristocracy which came to rule the newly emerged states. As bearers of the hegemonic culture religious scholars continued to play a key role at the courts and within society at large. As court scholars, administrators and judges they belonged to the state apparatus; as imams, teachers, religious advisers and healers they were closely linked to their respective urban or rural constituencies whose interest they sometimes came to express even against the state and its policies. The ambiguous position of the religious

1 See for this attitude among the Sokoto leaders M. Last, ‘Reform in West Africa: the *jihād* movements of the nineteenth century’, in J.F.A. Ajayi/M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa*, II, 2nd edn, London 1987, 25 and F.H. El-Masri/R.A. Adeleye, ‘Şifofin Shehu: An Autobiography and Character Study of ‘Uthmān b. Fūdī in Verse’, *Research Bulletin, Centre of Arabic Documentation, University of Ibadan*, ii, 1, 1965, 1-36.

scholars, as forces of hegemony as well as of opposition, has continued well into the colonial and postcolonial period of northern Nigerian history.

The prayer text from Ilorin presented here, which was collected in 1987 but dates back, it would seem, to the beginning of the 20th century, clearly expresses the self-perception of the local religious scholars as members and guardians of a sacred Islamic community in the town. This community is traced to al-Şāliḥ Janta, called Shehu Alimi (d. 1823),<sup>2</sup> the founder of the Islamic movement which transformed Ilorin into an emirate and brought it under the authority of Sokoto/Gwandu. In the Ilorin emirate the dual power structure became particularly pronounced, with the emir at the head of both the military aristocracy and the religious dignitaries. The claim of the religious scholars to guardianship of the Islamic community in Ilorin is expressed in the local Yoruba saying *àfàà ni bàbá ọba*, ‘the father of the emir was a scholar’ or ‘the scholar is the father of the emir’.

The scholars’ ethnic diversity paralleled that of the warlords and warriors, and beside the army the religious institutions, mosques and schools became a main factor of social integration in the town. Fulani, Hausa, Nupe, Dendi and Kanuri, and even Arabo-Berbers are attested among the scholars who came to Ilorin before and after the foundation of the emirate. The Yoruba who formed the majority of the population were gradually absorbed into that group of Islamic scholars and imams. A hierarchy of imam offices which paralleled that of the warlords came to reflect the ethno-political balance in Ilorin.

The imam of the Fulani (*imam Fulani*) stood on top of this hierarchy, followed by the *imam Imale* who represented the Yoruba quarters in the west of the town (called Oke Imale), and the *imam Gambari*, the religious leader of the Gambari quarter inhabited mainly by Hausa, Nupe and Kanuri settlers. In recognition of their growing political weight in the town, the Yoruba quarters were later given a second office, that of the official Qur’ān reciter (*ajánásì*) of the emir. This arrangement shows the extent to which the imams and religious scholars had become part of the communal

2 About Alimi, see *ALA*, II, 442f., with further bibliography.

structure of Ilorin.

*The text*

To the present day Ilorin scholars take pride in the large number of ascetics, mystics, preachers and prominent teachers which the town has produced since its beginnings.<sup>3</sup> The text of the prayer presented below can perhaps be seen as the earliest written example of this pride. It was obtained from a photocopy in possession of Imam Yūsuf, the imam of the Popo Giwa Mosque.<sup>4</sup> He said that the text was written to defend the Islamic scholars against their critics and to demonstrate their leading position in the town. As the latest scholar mentioned in the manuscript, Muḥammad Bēgōrē, died in 1913, it seems plausible to relate the document to the tax revolt of the same year in which the scholars of the area from where the text was obtained played a leading role. The grandfather of Imam Yūsuf, Zubairu, apparently belonged to the leaders of that revolt.<sup>5</sup> The original manuscript, its author and its present owner can, however, not yet be traced.

The prayer is a litany of invocations for unspecified requests which have to be ‘filled in’ by its user in those regularly occurring places in the text which are marked by the phrase ‘such and such’ (*kadhā wa-kadhā*). It consists of different parts some of which quite conceivably had been in separate use before. The impression of a composite character is further supported by a number of names which are repeated in different spellings, for

- 3 See for example Ādam ° Abdallāh al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḥāt al-ballūr fī mashāhīr °ulamā° Ilūrīn*, Cairo 1982, 82.
- 4 I wish to express my gratitude to Alfa Yūsuf, Ile Baba Nla, the imam of the Popo Giwa Mosque, Ajikobi Ward, Ilorin, who kindly provided a photocopy of the text on 28 Sept. 1987, and also to Mr. Isa Oke, Kwara State Council for Arts & Culture, Ilorin, who arranged for our meeting and assisted me during the interview.
- 5 For detailed accounts of this revolt, see H.O.A. Danmole, ‘Colonial Reforms in the Ilorin Emirate 1900-1919’, *Odù*, ns 26, 1984, 84-107 and S. Reichmuth, ‘°Ilm und Adab. Islamische Bildung und soziale Integration in Ilorin, Nigeria, seit ca. 1800’, Habilitation thesis, Bayreuth 1991, 105ff., 260ff.

example *al-Jaylānī* (p. 1)–*al-Kaylānī* (p. 4), *Matāsi* (p. 1)–*Matāsē* (p. 2), *Baqawbiri* (p. 1, conjecture, see note 43)–*Baqawbiray* (p. 3), *Bayqawrē* (p. 2)–*Biqawrē* (p. 3). The overall structure can be roughly described as follows:

(I) Introductory invocation of God. The ‘Pole’ (*qutb*) and the saints of the present time are asked to plead for the supplicant with °Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī, °Uthmān b. Fodiye and with four saints from Iḷorin itself, including °Ālimi, founder of the Islamic movement and father of the first two emirs, and three prominent imams of the first period of the town.

(II) Long litany of scholars from Iḷorin whose ‘rank’ (*jāh*) is recalled as support for the supplication, starting with imams and scholars from the Yoruba wards (Oke Imale), than adding those belonging to the Fulani and Gambari and some others. Finally the sons of °Ālimi and two of his grandsons, the emirs Zubayr (d. 1869) and °Alī (d. 1891) are also mentioned for their *jāh*.

(III) Another invocation of the saints of the time, led by the ‘Saviour of the time’ (*ghawth al-zamān*); invocation of God by the rank (*jāh*) of His prophets, their companions, the righteous and the saints, by the ‘sanctity’ (*hurma*) of the three caliphs (°Umar is missing, presumably just by a lapse) and the Sunna, of the four prophets Mūsā, °Īsā, Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad, and of four wives of Muḥammad, °Ā’isha, Maymūna, Khadija, and Zaynab. Reference is then made to the ‘sanctity’ of thirteen sons of the author who are mentioned by name. This is followed by an invocation of God by the names of four saints, °Abd al-Qādir, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, Ṭayfūr b. °Īsā (that is, Abū Yazīd al-Bistāmī) and Ma°rūf al-Karkhī, then by the four sons of the Prophet, and by the ‘glory’ of °Ālimi. Concluding supplication.

The dogmatic background to this kind of litany would seem to be given by the Islamic concept of ‘intercession’ (*shafā’a*) which in classical Islamic doctrine is not only restricted to the Prophet but also thought of as granted to saints and righteous scholars.<sup>6</sup> Reference is therefore made to their *jāh*, that is the

6 See e.g. al-Bayjūrī, *Tuḥfat al-murīd °alā jawharat al-tawḥīd*, Cairo 1357/1939, 116ff.; the *shafā’a* concept is also expressed in this extended form in some widespread Arabic *wa’z* poems of Nigerian origin, dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; Reichmuth, °Ilm und

‘glory’ or ‘rank’ which they possess in the eyes of God. The concept can also be found in Hausa Islamic literature.<sup>7</sup> A similar reference is later made to ‘sanctity’ (*hurma*). The switch from *jāh* to *hurma* (p. 4) might perhaps also be related to the composite character of the text. The group of saints which is presented at the beginning of the prayer shows a strong Qādirī orientation. °Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī comes first, followed by °Uthmān b. Fodiye and the saints of the town itself, headed by °Ālimi. Ilṛin is clearly conceived to be safely linked to the spiritual world.

A serious problem for which there is no easy explanation at hand is posed by the reference to the ‘sanctity’ of the sons of the author (‘the sanctity of my sons’, *hurmat awlādī*, p. 5). Whether these are really to be regarded as sons or rather as ‘spiritual children’, that is friends, students or adepts of the author, is still open to question. The passage is inserted after the series of the four prophets, the four wives of Muḥammad, and before the four Sufi saints, and the four sons of Muḥammad, thus giving the impression of having been placed in the middle of an otherwise fairly regular sequence for a rather specific purpose.

The litany of Ilṛin scholars and saints (part II) seems to be the most significant part of the prayer. As it starts with the *imam Imale Ṣāliḥ* (see below) and then moves on to other scholars of Oke Imale before touching the Fulani, Gambari and others, the location of the text in the milieu of Oke Imale seems rather clear. The *imam Imale* and another prominent scholar from the area, Ibrāhīm Batūrē (d. around 1865, see below), are each called ‘our shaykh’, which would seem to provide a hint to personal relations of some kind. The latter scholar who is described as ‘famous at his time’, might perhaps be considered as a teacher or at least a personal acquaintance of the author.

Even more significant is the fact that, despite the prominent position of °Ālimi as the leading saint of the town, his sons and grandsons, among them the emirs of Ilṛin, play only a very inferior role in the prayer, being relegated to the very end of the

Adab’, 197f.

7 For Hausa *bi-jaahi*: see M. Hiskett, *The Hausa Kāshif al-Ghumma fī ighātha ahl al-fayḍa of Mijinyawa Na Atiku*, London: SOAS n.d., 15, 19, 42, 47.

lity in part II. The superior spiritual rank which the scholars of Oke Imale ascribed to their own kind could not be expressed in a clearer fashion. It might not be purely incidental that the first emir, °Abd al-Salām (1823-36), was omitted altogether. This might reflect local resentment against him. °Abd al-Salām had established the emirate in 1824 by a military coup against Afonja, the leading warlord of the Oyo empire, who had ruled the town. But he had also destroyed Oke Suna, the Muslim settlement in close vicinity of Ilorin which had supported the Islamic movement but whose leader had clashed with the emir. Many of the surviving inhabitants of this settlement had settled in Oke Imale; and several of the scholars mentioned belonged to it.<sup>8</sup>

That °Alī b. Shita (d. 1891) is the last emir mentioned in the text might have to do with other resentment against Emir Moḡo (1891-95), his successor who had died in a short civil war which he had fought against the town.<sup>9</sup> The next emir, Sulaymān (1895-1915), on the other hand, was probably still alive when the text was composed; and the scholars of Oke Imale were strongly opposed to him.

Of the names of scholars and personalities from Ilorin mentioned in the text the following can be identified from written sources and oral information obtained in Ilorin:

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*Shaykh °Alīmi Muḡammad Ṣāliḡ: Ṣāliḡ Janta, called Shehu Alimi*

- 8 For the history of Oke Suna and its destruction, and for the religious families in Ilorin which trace their origin to that place, see S. Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, Lagos 1921, 193, 198f., 203f.; Aḡmad b. Abī Bakr Qmoḡ Ikokoro, *Ta'lif akhbār al-qurūn min umarā' balad Ilūrīn*, Ch. II (for this unedited text and its mss, see *ALA*, II, 447) and Reichmuth, "Ilm und Adab", 35ff., 50ff., 520ff.
- 9 See for this civil war H.O.A. Danmole, 'The Frontier Emirate: A History of Islam in Ilorin', Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham 1980, 145-50 and S. Reichmuth, 'Autokratie und religiöser Protest im Vorfeld kolonialer Eroberung in Nigeria: Momo, Emir von Ilorin (1891-95), und seine Gegner', *Periplus. Jahrbuch für Außereuropäische Geschichte*, 1994, 105-18.

(d. 1823), Fulani scholar and preacher, initiator of an Islamic movement in the Oyo Empire, leader of the Islamic community in Ilorin, father of the first emirs.

*Muhammad b. al-Thānī* (also p. 2): Muḥammad Bīsānī (Ile Daani, Ilorin, d. c. 1870), a leading Fulani companion of Alimi, who served as his interpreter and Qurʾān reciter. He became imam of the Fulani (*imam Fulani*) and leading imam of Ilorin after Alimi's death.<sup>10</sup>

*Imam Matāsi* (see also p. 2): ʿUmaru Mátàsé, scholar of Bornu or Dendi origin, first imam of Oke Suna, the Muslim settlement near Ilorin predating Alimi's movement which was mentioned above. His later residence was in Popo Giwa (Balogun Ajikobi Ward). The quarter was named after one of his sons, Lawani Giwa, who became a famous warrior. Mátàsé's family (Ile Baba Nla) also holds the office of imam of Popo Giwa. As mentioned above (footnote 4), the copy of the manuscript was provided by the present imam, Yūsuf.

*Baqawbiri* (also p. 2: *malā* Baqawbiray): Šāliḥ Gobiri/Bagōbirē (Ile Mayaki, Gambari Ward), a scholar and warrior of Gobir descent, who became imam of the *sarkin Gambari*, the early leader of the Hausa community in Ilorin. When power shifted to the *balogun Gambari* he was appointed imam of the *balogun Gambari's* mosque, an office still held by his descendants.<sup>11</sup> As in the case of ʿUmar Mátàsé, Bagōbirē's leading religious position in the town is reflected in the prayer.

*Imam Kabaḥi al-Šāliḥ*: Šāliḥ Masingba b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf Mallē (Masingba, Ajikobi Ward), belonging to a family of scholars and imams claiming Malian origin. According to oral tradition they came to Ilorin from Kogbaye/Kōbayi, a settlement (now extinct) in the west of Ilorin (10 km east of Igboho), with a strong Muslim community which settled in Ilorin.<sup>12</sup> The title is therefore presum-

10 Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḥāt*, 22; G.O. Quadri, 'The role of Imam Fulani as a Spiritual Leader in Ilorin', BA dissertation, University of Ilorin 1985, 68 and Reichmuth, 'Ilm und Adab', 211f.

11 Reichmuth, 'Ilm und Adab', 220.

12 For Kogbaye, its location and its role as temporary residence of the Alaafin, the king of Oyo, see R. Smith, 'Alaafin in Exile: A Study of the Igboho Period in Oyo History', *Journal of African History*, vi, 1965,

ably to be read as *imam Kōbayi*. The office of the *imam Imale*, second in the religious hierarchy of Ilorin, is still held in rotation by the two branches of the family (Fagba, near the emir's palace, Magajin Gari Ward, and Ile Masingba). Šāliḥ was the first of his family to settle in this area in Oke Imale which still bears his name, Masingba.<sup>13</sup> His father, Shaykh °Alī, is mentioned on p. 2.

*Imam Abū Bakr Gharubā* (also p. 2): Abū Bakr b. Yūsuf Mallē, the first *imam Imale*, ancestor of the Fagba branch of the *imam Imale* family. Šāliḥ Masingba's father °Alī (*q.v.*) was his brother.

*Imam Muḥammad Shitan*: perhaps Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Shita, grandson of the second emir Shita (emir 1836-61), who became famous in Ilorin as a specialist for the seven *qirā'āt* of the Qur'ān. His father Maḥmūd b. Shita founded a mosque and a school (Isale Ajasa, Magajin Gari Ward) which is still maintained by the descendants of Muḥammad's brother Aḥmad Yanmā.<sup>14</sup>

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*Ādam*: probably Ādam Alanamu, from Agades, an influential scholar who became the first imam of the mosque of the Balogun Alanamu, an office still held by his descendants.<sup>15</sup>

Al-wā'izī *Mūsā*: perhaps the father of Badamāšī b. Mūsā (Ile Saura, Agbaji, Ajikobi Ward), a famous preacher, author of the first collection of Yoruba *wa'z* poetry (*wākà*).<sup>16</sup> The title might perhaps indicate *wa'z* activities already for the father.

*°Abd al-Raḥmān Ba'abā Shāwūrā*: °Abd al-Raḥmān Bāba Saura (Ile Saura, Agbaji, Ajikobi Ward), from a family claiming Chado-

70f.; for its identification with *Kōbayi* which is mentioned in this form by S. Johnson, *History*, 194, and for families in Ilorin claiming Kogbaye/Kōbayi origin, Reichmuth, "°Ilm und Adab", 30, 519f.

13 On the *imam Imale* family, see Reichmuth, "°Ilm und Adab", 225f., with further references.

14 On Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Shita as well as his brother Aḥmad Yanmā and their father Maḥmūd, see Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḥāt*, 30ff.; ALA, II, 444f.

15 Reichmuth, "°Ilm und Adab", 233.

16 *Lamaḥāt*, 36f.; Reichmuth, "°Ilm und Adab", 237f. and ALA, II, 456f.

Sudanese origin, one of the early leaders of the Agbaji community.<sup>17</sup>

*Badiru 'l-Dīn*: Badr al-Dīn (Ile Oloyin, Alanamu Ward), from Bornu, one of the earliest specialists of Arabic grammar in Ilorin, father of Būṣayrī b. Badr al-Dīn (d. 1915), Qurʾān reciter (*ajánáṣi*) of the emir.<sup>18</sup>

*Awjīrabarā*: Ṣalāḥ Ojibara (Oke Apomu, Zarumi Ward), a famous Fulani scholar, first in Oke Suna, then in Ilorin, settled finally at the present site where he built one of the earliest mosques in Oke Imale. He served as Qurʾān reciter for the first emir and is the ancestor of one of the most prominent imam families of the Oke Imale area.<sup>19</sup>

*Ibrāhīm Batūrē*: Ibrāhīm Batūrē from Agades, settled in Oke Apomu, prominent scholar, Qurʾān reciter of the emir after Ojibara's death, died c. 1865; the mosque and school are still maintained by his descendants in Oke Apomu.<sup>20</sup> The present Qurʾān reciter of the emir, Alfa Yūsuf Ḥabību 'llāhi also belongs to this family.

*Ḥawnibūdaw*: perhaps Aḥmad Onfūdó, mentioned as *qāḍī* in Ilorin.<sup>21</sup>

*Abū Bakr Daḡhaw Gharubā al-Ḥāfiḡ*: identical with the *imam Imale*, mentioned above?

*Aḥmad Iwwaw*: Aḥmad Iwo, a scholar of Bornu origin who had settled in Iwo (Oyo State) before he joined Alimi in Ilorin; his family (Ile Iwo, Alanamu Ward) still holds the title of *imam Iwo*.<sup>22</sup>

17 Ādam ʿAbdallāh al-Ilūrī, *Nasīm al-ṣabā fi akhbār al-islām wa-ʿulamāʾ bilād Yūrubā*, 2nd edn, Cairo 1987, 65 and Reichmuth, “Ilm und Adab”, 237.

18 Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḡāt*, 34ff.; Reichmuth, “Ilm und Adab”, 231ff. and *ALA*, II, 457.

19 Reichmuth, “Ilm und Adab”, 520.

20 Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḡāt*, 33f. and Reichmuth, “Ilm und Adab”, 233ff.

21 Aḥmad b. Abi Bakr, *Taʾlīf*; Ch. X and Reichmuth, “Ilm und Adab”, 213. A scholar called ʿAbd al-Raḡīm Onfūdó (*ʿ-w-n-b-d-w*) is mentioned in Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq Imam Agbarigidomó's poem on the Ilorin scholars, *Mafātīḡ al-surūr* (p. 4. For this unpublished text *ALA*, II, 463f.).

22 Reichmuth, “Ilm und Adab”, 231.

°*Abd al-Qādir Awnaqū*: °Abd al-Qādir Onagun, a scholar and warrior from Bornu who first settled in Oke Suna, then in Ilorin where he founded the first Qur'ānic school in Ita Egba (Alanamu Ward), and became the first imam of that quarter.<sup>23</sup>

*Muḥammad al-Bukhārī al-°Ābidu*: Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, also called Mālam Bābā, a Fulani scholar and Qādirī ascetic, imam of the Aḡo Mosque (Ori Oke, Magajin Gari Ward).<sup>24</sup>

*Bayqawrē Abū °Uthmān* (cf. also p. 3): Bēgōrē, a Fulani scholar, perhaps *not* identical with the famous Muḥammad Bēgōrē mentioned below (for whom no son called °Uthmān could be identified).

*Aḥmad Sākē Abū Muḥammad*: from Ile Saké (Ita Ogunḡo, Ajikobi Ward).<sup>25</sup>

*Jawḡī*: Muḥammad Jōḡī b. Maḥmūd, Fulani scholar, preacher (and warrior?) from the Sokoto region, settled in Ile Kasandubu (Isaleḡ Okaka, Fulani Ward) where his descendants still keep the imamship of his mosque.<sup>26</sup>

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Malā *Mūsā*: perhaps Mūsā Ateḡe (d. 1907), a prominent teacher in Oke Lele (Ibagun, Gambari Ward), and a leading Tijānī of his time; his descendants who claim Fulani origin still maintain his school (Ile Kongbari, Ibagun).<sup>27</sup>

*Aḥmadu Mākāna*: apparently from Makana (Fulani Ward), the place of Alimi's first Friday mosque in Ilorin.

*Abū Bakr malā Būbē*: Abū Bakr Būbē, of Gobir or Nupe origin, the leading scholar of mid-nineteenth-century Ilorin whose

23 Reichmuth, '°Ilm und Adab', 521.

24 Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Nufāwī/°Alī Jabatā, *Raf° al-shubuhāt °ammā fī 'l-Qādirīyya wa'l-Tijānīyya min al-shaḡaḡāt*, Cairo 1398/1978, 40 and Reichmuth, '°Ilm und Adab', 212.

25 Information from Alh. Isa Elelu, Ilorin 21.10.89; the name is also mentioned in Abū Bakr al-°iddīq Imam Agbarigidomḡo, *Maḡātiḡ al-surūr*, 3.

26 Information from the present imam, Alfa Shu°aib Muḥammad Jōḡī, Ile Kasandubu, Ilorin 29 August 1986.

27 Information from Alfa Aḥmad Rufā°ī, his descendant, 23 Aug. 1986; Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḡāt*, 34 and Reichmuth, '°Ilm und Adab', 219.

sons Muḥammad Thānī and Muḥammad al-Amīn Nda served as first Senior *qāḍī*s of Ilorin in the colonial judiciary.<sup>28</sup>

*Al-Khaḍīru b. Bābalanī, the imam*: probably Haliru Bībānī, called Afaa Yero (Ile Lapapa, Fulani Ward), the second or third *imam Fulani* of the town.<sup>29</sup>

*Muḥammad Tūqurū b. Munabbahu*: either identical with Muḥammad (al-Amīn) Munabāū/Munabāi (also called Innabāūn), who came very early from Oke Suna and became the first imam of the Munabāi Mosque (Agbarere, Magaji Arẹ Ward), one of the early Friday Mosques of the town,<sup>30</sup> or a son of this scholar who was one of the early Yoruba scholars in Ilorin.

*Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, the imam, son of al-Bukhārī al-Ābidu*: from Ori-Oke, the third or fourth *imam Fulani* of the town,<sup>31</sup> son of al-Bukhārī, the imam and ascetic mentioned above.

*Muḥammad Takūnatī*: Muḥammad al-Tākuntī b. Abī Bakr al-Nufawī, d. c. 1900, a prominent Nupe scholar.<sup>32</sup>

*Muḥammad Biqawrē*: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, called Bēgōrē (d. 1913), Fulani scholar who came to Ilorin from Bunza (Kebbi), a most influential teacher and adviser of the emirs in late nineteenth-century Ilorin.<sup>33</sup>

*Al-qāḍī Ālī b. al-Muṣṭafā*: perhaps a son of al-Muṣṭafā, who is mentioned as fourth *qāḍī* of precolonial Ilorin.<sup>34</sup> There is no indication in other sources, however, that his son also served as *qāḍī*.

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*Shita b. Ālimi*: second emir of Ilorin (1836-1861).

28 See for Būbē and his sons Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḥāt*, 26, 67; Reichmuth, ‘‘Ilm und Adab’’, 220 and *ALA*, II, 449.

29 Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr, *Ta’līf*, Ch. X and Quadri, ‘Role’, 64.

30 Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḥāt*, 21 and Reichmuth, ‘‘Ilm und Adab’’, 521.

31 Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr, *Ta’līf*, Ch. X; Quadri, ‘Role’, 64 and Reichmuth, ‘‘Ilm und Adab’’, 211.

32 Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḥāt*, 28 and *ALA*, II, 448f.

33 Ādam al-Ilūrī, *Lamaḥāt*, 39-42; Reichmuth, ‘‘Ilm und Adab’’, 217 and *ALA*, II, 445f.

34 Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr, *Ta’līf*, *ibid.* and Reichmuth, ‘‘Ilm und Adab’’, 213.

*Abū Bakr b. °Ālimi*: Abū Bakr Bāsambo, one of Alimi's sons whose descendants hold the office of District Head of Maletē.<sup>35</sup>

*Dāniyāl b. °Ālimi*: Dāniyālu Shiaba, another son of Alimi whose descendants (Ile Adifa, Maḡajin Gari Ward) hold the office of a District Head of Ejidongari.<sup>36</sup>

*Zubayr b. °Abd al-Salām*: son of °Abd al-Salām (emir 1823-36). He became the third emir of Ilḡrin (1861-69).

*°Alī b. Shīta*: son of emir Shīta (*q.v.*); he himself was the fourth emir of Ilḡrin (1869-91).

This list shows many scholars from the early period of the town but includes also some who died around 1900 and later. As already stated above, Muḡammad Bēḡōrē who died in 1913 would seem to be the latest scholar to be mentioned. This leads to the proposed dating of the text in its given form. Some of its components, and the basic concept of a sacred community of scholars and saints which underlies it, would seem to be much older. The position of °Ālimi as a patron saint of the town, ranking just behind °Uthmān b. Fodiye, can be seen as crucial for the social and political integration of Ilḡrin. This patron saint appears in the text of the litany strangely detached from his descendants, the emirs. It is also significant that the ethno-political structure of the town should be reflected even in the group of the four saints listed at the beginning: Together with °Ālimi they can be seen as representing the Fulani (Muḡammad b. al-Thānī), Oke Imale (°Umar Matàsé) and the Gambari ward (*malā* Bagōbirē). The order of their names follows exactly the ranking of the leading imams of the town (*imam Fulani–imam Imale–imam Gambari*). The unwritten constitution of Ilḡrin has thus found its expression even in prayer. Apart from this unique witness to the concept of a sacred community which emerged from the *jihād* movement of the early 19th century, the text can be regarded as a highly important source for the history of Islamic scholarship in Ilḡrin.

35 H.B. Hermon-Hodge, *Gazetteer of Ilorin Province*, London 1929, 85.

36 Hermon-Hodge, *Gazetteer*, 86.

*Arabic Text*

[ص ١] بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ \* صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰی مَنْ لَا نَبِیَّ  
[بعده]<sup>37</sup> /

اللّٰهُمَّ يَا اللّٰهُ يَا مَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ يَا مَنْزِلَ / الْآيَةِ مِنْ  
سَبْعِ سَمَوَاتٍ أَسْأَلُكَ وَأَتَوَسَّلُ<sup>38</sup> إِلَيْكَ إِنْ تَهَبْ لِي / كَذَا  
يَا قَطْبَ زَمَانِي وَيَا أَوْلِيَاءَ اللّٰهِ فِي هَذِهِ (sic) الْآنَ إِنْ<sup>39</sup> / فِي  
حِمَاكُم وَتَحْتَ نَظَرِكُمْ وَغَايَتِكُمْ<sup>40</sup> فَوَجَّهُوا إِلَيَّ / عِنَايَتِكُمْ وَالِي  
حَاجَتِي هَذِهِ بَانَ تَهَبْ<sup>41</sup> لِي كَذَا وَكَذَا / وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِي فِي قَضَائِهَا<sup>42</sup>  
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ تَعَالَى وَارْفَعُوا / قِصَّتِي إِلَى رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ ﷺ وَاعْرَضُوا /  
قِصَّتِي عَلَى الشَّيْخِ عَبْدِ الْقَادِرِ الْجِيلَانِيِّ وَعَلَى شَيْخِ / عِثْمَانَ بْنِ  
فَوْدِيٍّ وَعَلَى شَيْخِنَا عَالِمِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَالِحٍ / وَمُحَمَّدِ ابْنِ الثَّانِيَّ وَأِمَامِ

37 Ms: صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰی مَنْ لَا نَبِیَّ الْكَرِيمِ

38 Ms: تَوَسَّلْ

39 Ms: الْآنَ نِي; the two words run into each other at the end of the line.

40 Ms: غَابَتِكُمْ; could also be a mistake for عِنَايَتِكُمْ?

41 Ms: بِأَتَهَبْ

42 Ms: قَضَائِهَا

متّاسٍ ومكلى بقوير<sup>43</sup> /

اللهم اغفرلى وارحمنى وارحمنا وارحم عبادك / المومنين واعطانى  
بجاههم كذا وكذا

وبجاه / شيخنا امام كبح الصالح والامام / ابى بكر غربا والامام  
محمد شتا / [٢] وشيخ آدم وشيخ الواعظى موسى وعبد الر /  
حمان بعبا شاورا المعروف جيران ابجى في بلد / نا الورى وشيخ  
صالح وشيخ هارون وشيخ بدر / الدين المعروف اسم بلد وشيخ  
اوجيربرى / وشيخنا ابراهيم بتورى المعروف في زمانه / وشيخ  
عمر متاسى ولى الله وشيخ حونبودو / وشيخ ابى بكر دعو غربا  
الحافظ وشيخ احمد / اووو لقبه وشيخ عبد القادري عليكى  
وشيخ / على ابى امامنا صالح وشيخ حولدجور وشيخ / شتا  
وشيخ هارون وشيخ عبد القادر / اونقو وشيخ محمد ابن الثانى  
ولى الله / الامام التقى (sic) وشيخ محمد البحار العابد / وشيخ  
بيقورى ابى عثمان ابى عثمان<sup>44</sup> وشيخ / احمد ساكى ابى محمد

43 Ms: بقوير . presumably a confusion between two names, *Bagōbirē* and *Bigōrē* (also occurring in the form *Bēgōrē*), given later on pp. 2f. Because of the consonantal base and the *malā* title, the emendation بقوير is proposed here. This interpretation is further suggested by the fact that, in the text below, *malā* Bagōbirē, but not Bigōrē shares with Muḥammad al-Thānī and ʿUmaru Matāsi/Matāsē the attribute of a saint (*walī Allāh*).

44 Repeated in text.

وشَيْخِ جَوْدِي / [٣] وشَيْخِ عَنَبُو وشَيْخِ مَلَى مُوسَى وشَيْخِ أَحْمَدُ  
 مَا / كَانَ وشَيْخِ عَمْرُ وشَيْخِ عَبْدِ وشَيْخِ إِمَامُ / دَوْتِي مُوسَى وشَيْخِ  
 مُحَمَّدِ الْأَمِينُ وشَيْخِ / أَبِي بَكْرِ مَلَى 'بُوبِي' وشَيْخِ مَالَمُ عَبْدِ وشَيْخِ  
 / الْحَضِرُ (sic) الْإِمَامُ ابْنُ بَابِلْنِي وشَيْخِ صَالِحُ / أَلِدُو الْإِمَامُ وشَيْخِ  
 مَلَى بَقْوَبِرَى وَلِيُّ اللَّهِ / وشَيْخِ مُحَمَّدِ تَوْقَرُو ابْنِ مَنبَهٍ وشَيْخِ مُحَمَّدِ  
 / الصَّالِحِ الْإِمَامِ ابْنِ الْبُحَارِ الْعَابِدُ وشَيْخِ إِبْرَاهِيمِ / النَّجْوِي<sup>45</sup> وشَيْخِ  
 مُحَمَّدِ تَكُونْتِي وشَيْخِ مُحَمَّدِ / بَقْوَرِي وشَيْخِ أَبِي بَكْرِ فُوتَنَكَجَوُ  
 وشَيْخِ / مَالَمُ إِبْرَاهِيمِ دَسُوقِي وَلِيُّ اللَّهِ وشَيْخِ الْقَاضِي / عَلِيَّ ابْنِ  
 الْمَصْطَفَى وشَيْخِ عَثْمَانَ لَلِقَارِي وشَيْخِ / مَالَمُ ضَبَا وشَيْخِ عِمَارُ  
 جَجَّ وشَيْخِ عَيْسَى / الْمُتْرَجَمِ وَتَابِعِيهِمْ<sup>46</sup> بِالْخَيْرِ إِلَى يَوْمِ / [٤]  
 إِلَى يَوْمِ<sup>47</sup> الْقِيَامَةِ

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَارْحَمْهُمْ وَاجْعَلْنِي / فِيهِمْ وَاسْأَلْكَ بِجَاهِ شَيْخِ  
 عَالِمِ وَشْتِ ابْنِ شَيْخِ / عَالِمِ وَأَبُو بَكْرِ ابْنِ شَيْخِ عَالِمِ وَدَانِيَالِ ابْنِ  
 شَيْخِ / عَالِمِ وَزَبِيرِ ابْنِ عَبْدِ السَّلَامِ وَعَلِيَّ ابْنِ شْتِ كَذَا / وَكَذَا  
 يَا غُوْثَ الْوَقْتِ الْآئِنِي يَا أَوْلِيَا اللَّهِ فِي زَمَانِي / هَذَا فَهَلْ فَتَى فِيكُمْ

45 Error for النحوى ?

46 Ms: وَتَابَ مِيْهِمْ, apparently a copyist's error.

47 Repeated in text.

من الفتیان له مكانة لدى / الرحمان يحملنى فيما ارى من شانى  
حتى يكفنى / من الاحزان في امرى كذا وكذا  
اللهم بجاه انبىا / نك والمرسلين وباصحابهم وباصحاب رسو / لك  
محمد وبالصالحين: والاولياء اغفر لى / وافعل لى كذا وكذا  
اللهم بحرمة الصحابة / ابى بكر وعثمان وعلى وبحرمة سنة<sup>48</sup>  
المصطفين / بحرمة موسى كليمك وعيسى روحك<sup>49</sup> وابراهيم /  
خليلك ومحمد رسولك وعبدك ﷺ / وبحرمة زوجات<sup>50</sup> النبى  
عائشة وميمونة / [٥] وميمونة<sup>51</sup> وخديجة<sup>52</sup> وزينب<sup>53</sup> وبحرمة  
اولادى / عبد القادرى وشيخ محمد وشيخ ابراهيم وشيخ /  
موسى وشيخ عيسى وشيخ يحيى وشيخ صالح / وشيخ ابى بكر  
وشيخ عبد الله وشيخ عبد الو / هاب وشيخ عبد العزيز وشيخ عبد  
الجبار وشيخ / عبد الرازق اسالك كذا وكذا

48 Ms: اسنة .

49 Ms: ورحك .

50 Ms: زواجات .

51 Repeated in text.

52 Ms: حديجة .

53 Ms: زاينب .

واتوسل<sup>54</sup> اليك / يا الله بعبد القادر الكيلاني واحمد الغزالي /  
 [و] طَيْفُورُ بن عيسى ومعروف الكرخي<sup>55</sup> ان تهب لي / من الخير  
 كله ما علمت منها وما لم اعلم<sup>56</sup> / وتحفظني من حسد كل حاسد  
 ومكر كل ماکر / وتجعل شبكة الخادع مساقا اليه عنى / يا رب  
 العلمين وتوسع لي رزقي وتحفظني / من كل ذى شر وتجلب لي  
 خير وتجيّب من اسأ / لك بلساني باسمك الحى القيوم اللهم /  
 [٦] اللهم<sup>57</sup> اسالك باولاد نبينا محمد ابراهيم / والطيب والطاهر  
 والقاسم ولد<sup>58</sup> المصطفى / وان تجيرني فيما ار من شانى<sup>59</sup> حتى  
 تفكنى من / الاحزان في امرى كذا وكذا وبجاه شيخ ولى / الله  
 محمد الصّالِحُ عَالِمِ اللهم افعل كذا وكذا /  
 والحمد لله اولا وآخري (sic) اللهم يا ارحم<sup>60</sup> الرا / حمين : يا  
 واسع بالجوود لى وللمغفرة / اغفر لى ذنوبى واقضى حاجتى كذا

54 Ms: توسل.

55 Ms: الكرنى .

56 Ms: عالم.

57 Repeated in text.

58 Ms: ولدا .

59 Ms: ساني .

60 Ms: رحم.

انك / انت السميع البصير : وصلى الله على / محمد وعلى آل  
 محمد النبي الامين<sup>61</sup> الحمد / لله رب العالمين : الصلاة والسلام  
 على / المرسلين والحمد لله رب العالمين : الصلاة والسلام / على  
 الرسول<sup>62</sup> الكريم / وعلى من اتبع / الهدى / آمين

*Translation*<sup>63</sup>

[I] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. May God bless [the man after whom] there is no other Prophet.

O God, there is no other god but You, the Living, the Everlasting, Who has sent down His sign from Seven Heavens! I ask You and beseech You to grant me *such and such*.

O Pole of this time, you saints of these days! I am in your protected sphere, under your eyes and your consideration. Therefore concern yourself with this cause of mine to be granted *such and such*. Ask for God's forgiveness on my behalf for its fulfilment. Raise my case with the Messenger of God—my He bless him and grant him peace. Present my case to Shaykh °Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī and to Shaykh °Uthmān b. Fodiye and to our Shaykh °Ālimi Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ and to Muḥammad b. al-Thānī and to Imam Matāsi and *malā*<sup>64</sup> Baqawbiri.

O God forgive me and have mercy on me and on us. May You have mercy on Your servants, the Believers. Grant me by their glory *such and such*.

[II] And [also] by the glory of our Shaykh Imam Kabaḥi al-Ṣāliḥ, the imam Abū Bakr Gharubā, the imam Muḥammad Shītan [p. 2] and Shaykh Ādam, Shaykh *al-wā'izī* Mūsā and

61 Ms: الامن .

62 Ms: رسول .

63 The proposed divisions into parts I-III are marked within the text

64 Apparently a frequent variant of the *mālam* title which also occurs in the ms.

°Abd al-Raḥmān Ba°bā Shāwurā, the well-known people (lit. neighbours) of Abajī— in our town Ilawrī, and Shaykh Ṣāliḥ, Shaykh Hārūn and Shaykh Badiru 'l-Dīn, the well-known—name of a town—and Shaykh Awjīrabarā and our Shaykh Ibrāhīm Batūrē, well-known in his time, and Shaykh °Umaru Matāsē, the saint, and Shaykh Ḥawnibūdaw, Shaykh Abū Bakr Daghaw Gharubā al-Ḥāfiz, Shaykh Aḥmad Iwwaw—his *laqab*—, Shaykh °Abd al-Qādirī °Alayakī, Shaykh °Aliyyu, the father of our imam Ṣāliḥ, and Shaykh Hawladijawrī, Shaykh Shitā, Shaykh Hārūn, Shaykh °Abd al-Qādir Awnaqū, Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Thānī, the saint, the godfearing imam, and Shaykh Muḥammad al-Buḥārī (sc. al-Bukhārī) al-°Ābidu, Shaykh Bayqawrē Abū °Uthmān, Shaykh Aḥmad Sākē Abū Muḥammad, Shaykh Jawdī [p. 3] and Shaykh °Anbaw, Shaykh *malā* Mūsā, Shaykh Aḥmadu Mākāna, Shaykh °Umaru, Shaykh °Abdu, Shaykh Imam Dawtiya Mūsā, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīnu, Shaykh Abū Bakr *malā* Būbē, Shaykh Mālam °Abdu and Shaykh al-Ḥaḍīru b. Bābalanī, the imam, and Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Alidū, the imam, and Shaykh *malā* Baqawbiray, the saint, and Shaykh Muḥammad Tūqurū b. Munabbahu, and Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, the imam, son of al-Bukhārī al-°Ābidu, and Shaykh Ibrāhīma al-Najwē, Shaykh Muḥammad Takūnatī, Shaykh Muḥammad Biqawrē, Shaykh Abū Bakr Fūṭinkajaw and Shaykh Mālam Ibrāhīma Dasūqī, the saint, and Shaykh *al-qāḍī* °Alī b. al-Muṣṭafā, Shaykh °Uthmān Laliqārī, Shaykh Mālam Ḍabā, Shaykh °Imāru Jaji and Shaykh °Īsā al-Mutarajami, and all those who follow them in righteousness till the Day [p. 4] of Resurrection.

O God forgive them and have mercy on them and place me among them. I am asking You by the glory of Shaykh °Ālimi and Shita b. Shaykh °Ālimi and Abū Bakr b. Shaykh °Ālimi and Dāniyāl b. Shaykh °Ālimi and Zubayr b. °Abd al-Salām and °Alī b. Shita *such and such*.

[III] O you Saviour of the Present Age, O you saints of my time, is there a worthy hero among you, close to the Merciful God, so that he could take me to what I am aiming at and end my troubles concerning *such and such*?

This, O God, by the glory of Your Prophets and Messengers and by their Companions and by the Companions of Your Mes-

senger, Muḥammad, and by the Righteous and the saints. Forgive me and do *such and such* for me.

O God, by the sanctity of the Companions Abū Bakr, °Uthmān, and °Alī, and by the sanctity of the *sunna* of the Chosen Ones, by the sanctity of Mūsā Your Spokesman, °Īsā Your Spirit, Ibrāhīm Your Friend, and of Muḥammad Your Messenger and Servant, may God bless him and grant him peace, by the sanctity of the wives of the Prophet, °Ā°isha, Maymūna, [p. 5] Khadīja and Zaynab, and by the sanctity of my children, °Abd al-Qādirī, Shaykh Muḥammad, Shaykh Ibrāhīm, Shaykh Mūsā, Shaykh °Īsā, Shaykh Yaḥyā, Shaykh Šālīḥ, Shaykh Abū Bakr, Shaykh °Abdallāh, Shaykh °Abd al-Wahhāb, Shaykh °Abd al-°Azīz, Shaykh °Abd al-Jabbār and Shaykh °Abd al-Rāziq, I am asking You *such and such*.

And I beseech You, O God, [in the name of] °Abd al-Qādir al-Kaylānī, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, Ṭayfūr b. °Īsā and Ma°rūf al-Karkhī, that You grant me all [Your] blessings, those I know and those which I do not know, and that You protect me from envy and from machination. Let the net of the crafty turn back upon himself! O Lord of the Worlds, extend my livelihood to me, save me from every evildoer, provide for my well-being, and answer my prayers by Your name[s], ‘the Living’ and ‘the Everlasting’.

[p. 6] O God, I am asking You by the sons of our Prophet Muḥammad, Ibrāhīm, al-Ṭayyib, al-Ṭāhīr and al-Qāsim, the sons of the Chosen One. Give me protection in my plight, so that You relieve me from my troubles *such and such*. By the glory of the shaykh, the saint, Muḥammad al-Šālīḥ °Ālimi, do *such and such*.

Praise be to God, at the beginning and at the end, O God, You Most Merciful. O Bountiful of gifts and forgiveness! Forgive my sins and lead my cause *such and such* through. You are The All-hearing, The All-seeing. May God bless Muḥammad and the Family of Muḥammad, the faithful Prophet. Praise to God, the Lord of the Worlds. Blessings and peace upon the Envoys, praise to God, the Lord of the Worlds. Blessings and peace upon the noble Prophet and upon all those who follow the guidance. Amen.