Title: "Introduction" and "Notes." In Baba of Karo: A Woman of the Muslim Hausa, by Mary E Smith.
Author(s): M.G. Smith
BABA OF KARO
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FOREWORD

I feel privileged to have been asked to write a foreword to Baba of Karo which I initially enjoyed reading soon after its publication in 1954. Few books withstand the test of time, particularly in this era of artificially induced production, and even then a second reading is often tedious—events lose their novelty and characters their spontaneity. Mary Smith’s Baba is an exception: it is an original of enduring quality.

Baba of Karo does not fall within the narrow confines of any single discipline, nor does it conform to a conventional academic or literary genre. It is not a historical reconstruction of a dead past, or a comprehensive ethnography, or a political treatise, or a feminist protest, or a book on race, colour, or creed; it is not even a straightforward autobiography. Yet it contains material and insights relevant to each of these interests and issues.

In 1949 when Mary Smith began the interviews on which this book is based, many reputable historians were contemptuous of “oral tradition”; social scientists focussed in general on the analysis of groups, deliberately ignoring, and thereby dehumanising, the individual; women’s studies and other specialised studies by members of increasingly aware and critical minority status groups were not yet admitted into the academic arena. For fieldworkers, it could be described as the era P.T. (pre-tape-recording)—the notebook was the record.

Mary Smith had come to Northern Nigeria with her husband, Michael G. Smith, at the beginning of his anthropological career. The couple worked together closely, complementing each other in their interests and skills. Both became fluent in Hausa, and while he collected material from the men for his subsequent classical analysis of the histories and social systems of Northern Nigerian Emirates, Mary gathered less accessible but equally illuminating information from women in their more secluded domestic domain. Baba, an elderly and wise Hausa woman, became one of her friends and willingly responded to a request to tell the story of her life and speak of things she knew.
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Baba had the gifts of the universal storyteller—a graphic style, a feel for drama, the skill to embellish with song and verse, and an appreciation of an audience. She also had a wide range of experience, a remarkable memory, and a sense of history. In the end, Mary remained with the difficult and challenging task of translating and editing a corpus of rich material for a new public. Each stage in this process is loaded with questions: How literal should translation be? How can one best express the idiom of a culture in a foreign language? What words for which there is no conceptual equivalent must be retained without overburdening the reader? What is meaningful, and for whom? Happily, Mary Smith chose an easy conversational style and the minimum of foreign words to communicate and interpret Baba's text to others.

The story begins with a period prior to British control and carries through to after World War II. Baba died in 1951. Major political and economic changes are mirrored in her personal chronology as she moves from childhood through marriages to old age. Slavery and internecine wars and raids are part of her early life. There is a compelling authenticity in her accounts of cases of kidnapping, the taking of hostages, the giving of ransom, the exodus in face of danger, the establishment of new homes, and the essential adaptations for survival in economic and political crises. The accuracy of Baba's memory is confirmed by the material in Michael Smith's more formal introduction and by the scholarly notes on critical points in each chapter.

Baba's story is one of the most convincing validations of the value of oral history as a resource of social historians. But of course it may be difficult to find or recognise a Baba. It is in some ways easier for the anthropologist living with the people, who is immersed in the culture and for whom the spoken text based on knowledge of the language has long been recognised as an essential tool in the field situation. Individuals stand out, personal relationships develop, and the reliability of individual informants can be tested. The life story of a particular adult, responding as a willing informant, produces not only a wealth of material on the quicksands of relationships, the shifting options, Baba, who did not idealise her life, nor meekly accept and resign herself, confronts the human condition, the existential reality.

Baba's experiences and attitudes as a Muslim Hausa run counter to a number of commonly held stereotypes. African women are frequently described as downtrodden, oppressed, subservient creatures exploited for their labour and biological potential; Muslim women are often described as pitiable or contemptible, mysterious or unimportant, excluded from "real life" by Islamic law which also legitimises the double standard implicit in polygamy. But Baba speaks with pride of her Hausa forefathers, her cultural heritage, and the training she received in dealing with people and in the handling of her affairs. She is at ease in a world in which Westerners might condemn or dismiss, but it is a world of personal relations with men and women of different ages, skills, and social positions, involving her in complex sets of rights and obligations. These she takes, or appears to take, for granted. In some situations she is more free, in others less free, than "liberated" women in Western societies; but "freedom" and "liberation" are subjective interpretations, not easy for outsiders to measure or evaluate.

However, marriage is often used as a testing ground of the degree of autonomy of women within the constraints of custom, and here again Mary Smith's book provides fascinating material. Among the Muslim Hausa, marriage, an essential qualification for admission into adult life, took different forms, and the status of women was further complicated by the availability of slaves, male and female, and the laws regulating inheritance. Divorce was relatively easy for either party and carried no stigma; a divorcée was expected to remarry and bear children. Baba married four times—slightly more than the average. But Baba was barren. This misfortune caused her deep sorrow and had repercussions on close relationships throughout her adult life. But Baba was not rejected or despised, and the public reactions to her reflect a range of cultural resources available to meet a widely recognised affliction: she adopted children, arranged marriages, organised rituals, and in old age acted as honorary midwife for an extensive circle of kin—a highly rated and symbolic role. Baba
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does not idealise or romanticise her life, but it is clear that she was recognised as an outstanding and very attractive individual.

Though presented in the first person, *Baba of Karo* differs from the more conventional autobiography in which the author deliberately presents, and creates, an image of the Self. In this study Baba is responding to questions raised by Mary Smith, questions directed at probing Baba's knowledge of the culture of her people as well as relating her personal story. In this interaction, Mary Smith is the initiator, the Self, and Baba, as informant, is the Other. Both have internalised their own cultural imprints. Baba's information covers a broad cultural spectrum—a virtual ethnographic index—with herself as the reference point, but the frame is designed by the anthropologist. Mary Smith records episodes and beliefs outside her own experience in the matter-of-fact way in which they were related. These are the vital and essential data of firsthand ethnography. Yet we are becoming increasingly aware that even in recording, and more so in the actual writing, the material itself is changed and reflects assumptions that are often implicit and unconscious.

Personal histories appear to have a universal appeal, but the modes in which they are expressed are culturally circumscribed. Autobiographies, biographies, case studies, and life histories are essentially constructs introduced from the outside. The complex interaction between an ethnographer and the central character of a study is of relevance to everyone interested in the methods of social research. In *Baba of Karo* we see the direct interaction between two remarkable women, compounded by the less direct participation of an alter ego, Michael Smith. The result is a book of high literary merit as well as a unique and stimulating contribution to social science.

March 1981

HILDA KUPER

INTRODUCTION

The following autobiography was recorded by my wife in Hausa, as far as possible *verbatim*, during a period of six weeks from November 1949 to January 1950, at Giwa and Zaria City in Zaria Province, Northern Nigeria, during the course of an eighteen-month field study provided by the Colonial Social Science Research Council, the assistance of which is gratefully acknowledged here.

How the Story was Written

Interviews with Baba occurred daily, for an average period of three hours, and questions were frequently asked to clarify various points. Prior to the start of the work on this autobiography, we had been living in Baba's community for four months, and my wife had collected more than a dozen case-histories from Hausa women in the village, some of whom were related to Baba. My wife undertook these case-studies to supplement my enquiries into Hausa life, since the practices of purdah marriage and the exclusion of men from compounds prohibited me from studying domestic units myself. In Hausa society, with its custom of secluding wives, it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a man anthropologist to have interviewed Baba daily and to have received such a complete and unreserved account. In the course of these studies, a friendship grew up between Baba and my wife, and when it appeared more valuable to obtain one detailed life-history from a woman of advanced years than to continue recording the shorter life-spans of younger wives, Baba was an obvious choice, for her intelligence, forthrightness, and faith in our good intentions. It may be worth pointing out that even where adults of opposite sex are not segregated as they are among the Moslem Hausa, a document of this character can only be obtained from a woman by a woman field worker. The following translation of an extract from my wife's notebook records the discussion which took place after Baba had been working with her on the autobiography for four weeks, and it became necessary to ask her to accompany us to
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Zaria City and finish her story there; she willingly accepted, but made the following remarks.

Baba: 'I don’t want the people of the town to know I am coming to Zaria because of our work. I have told them “I am going to Zaria to escort her”, only. My kinswoman is there in her house at Tudun Wada, I will stay with her, and when I come back I will tell them I went to see her after we had parted. Don’t let them say we have done anything. You know, the old women are afraid; they don’t come here to see you. They say “Don’t go to the Rest House, the Europeans will pick you up and take you home with them in an aeroplane. Don’t go!”' That was Azumi, Dantsoho’s wife. Then there are his followers (fada-wa—i.e. the District Head, Fagaci’s, agents). They will trouble me, they will say I was always with the Europeans; I shall be annoyed.'

M.F.S.: 'Do you think they would do anything else to you?'

Baba: 'No. He wouldn’t do anything—look at me, an old woman. But there will be words and gossip. When Fagaci (the District Head) came here yesterday, did you show him our book?'

M.F.S.: 'No, I explained to him that we were working together and you were telling me your story from the time before the Europeans came, from when you lived in Zarewa, you were telling me all about your kinsfolk.'

Baba: 'That's good. He won't do anything.'

M.F.S.: 'We have asked Fagaci to look after our friends, and see that nothing whatever bothers them.'

Baba: 'That’s excellent; my mind is at peace now. That is that. When they told me you would pick me up and take me away I said, “Come, come; my father isn’t here, my mother isn’t here, I have no master but Allah; what am I to be afraid of? Ai, I'm going to her —look at her, smiling and liking people, she is a slave of Allah, there is nothing wrong.” Then I came.'

When the issue of the degree to which Baba is typical of Hausa women is raised, therefore, it may be said that she was bolder than many others of her generation at Giwa, but the younger wives, secluded in their husbands’ compounds, also told their life-stories willingly, in private. The interviews with Baba were held in our quarters to ensure the necessary privacy, and also because it is a rule that people of higher rank should receive visits rather than make them. Baba might be regarded as a deviant in that she bore no children, but this is not uncommon among Hausa women.
clientage and ritual behaviour, recur throughout the story. The influence of economic factors associated with the acquisition of new skills and crafts on the acculturation of children of pagan slaves to Hausa culture is indicated, and the symbolic character of the formal exchanges which are associated with different stages in the initiation of all institutionalized relations cannot be missed. The economic basis of wife-seclusion is illustrated, so is the method and sphere of ridicule and social ostracism and the basic element of reciprocity in informal relationships, particularly in relation to the adoption of children between kin. Where kinship norms are broken, the offended person suspends the relationship until the offender shows his penitence in some convincing way. The traditional dependence of markets on the spirits is illustrated in the tale from Old Giwa, and the role of bori in Hausa life as a principle of interpretation and of action on festive occasions, is referred to in several places. Proper behaviour is most strikingly illustrated by contrast in the tale of Hasana, who consistently broke all the rules and manipulated the obligations of kinship to her own advantage.

This autobiography is valuable from two different points of view: as a record of Hausa life it is unique in the detail, the time-span, the variety of aspects and events, and above all in its immediacy; but it is significant also to the social anthropologist with structural interests as a documentation of the extent to which, and the precise way in which, structure governs and shapes an individual life. A great deal has recently been written on a variety of postulated relationships between ‘culture’ and ‘personality’; this record will have served a useful function if it suggests ways in which the individual’s life-process and its relations to the social structure can be studied in greater detail, with a diachronic perspective.

Background to the Story: the Hausa of Northern Nigeria

When we talk to one another, usually we either make brief allusions to certain facts which are relevant to the subject, or completely omit any reference to them. We do this because a relation of such facts would be both tedious in view of their complexity, and unnecessary, since we can safely assume that they are known to our audience. The bulk of such omissions form the stable background of habits, relations and attitudes common to all parties in such a conversation. Such background information forms a large part of the ‘culture’ of a population, in the sense that the anthropologist uses that term, and must be given before the record of events characteristic of one cultural group may be fully appreciated by an audience composed principally of members of different cultural groups. This is particularly necessary with respect to autobiographies of individuals living in cultures widely different from ours. Facts which the narrator assumes that the anthropologist knows, are consequently omitted or briefly alluded to. It becomes the duty of the anthropologist to supplement the document with an outline of the background facts which receive scanty reference, though they form the context of the tale. Similarly, it is necessary to give some account of the method by which the document was collected, and other relevant features of the field-work situation, and possibly to attempt an appraisal of its anthropological value.

The text records the life story of Baba, a Hausa woman who lived in the Nigerian states of Kano and Zaria, between approximately 1890 and 1951. As she tells us, her fathers and their fathers before them were Kanuri (also called Barebare) people from Kukawa, the nineteenth-century capital of Bornu, to the west of Lake Chad. But despite her Kanuri descent, Baba says time and again that she is a Hausa woman, describing herself as ‘Habe’ or ‘Kado’, which she distinguishes sharply from the Fulani, who, since their conquest of this area in 1804, have formed the ruling class in almost all the Hausa states. In fact ‘Hausa’ is a linguistic term referring to those people in Northern Nigeria and the neighbouring French territories who speak the Hausa language by birth; and besides Hausa proper, it includes people of such different origins as Kanuri, Arab and Tuareg where these have adopted the Hausa language and culture, as Baba’s forefathers did. Adherence to the Mohammedan faith, membership of large centralized states, the practice of production for subsistence and exchange in local markets, and a high and varied level of technology are principal characteristics of the Hausa proper, differentiating them from pagan Hausa-speaking groups, who are known as Maguzawa and are scattered throughout the centre of Hausaland.

Environment and Economy

The Hausa live in open, rolling country with numerous rocky outcrops and thickly-wooded watercourses, a type of country
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usually described as 'orchard bush', or open parkland, merging into typical savannah country in the north, where it approaches the southern fringes of the Sahara Desert. The area involved is vast, probably in excess of 100,000 square miles, and the population who speak Hausa as their native language in Northern Nigeria alone must number five million. The climate is hot but dry, except in the months of May to October, when the rains fall and there is intense activity on the farms. From December to February the harmattan wind blows from the desert, and the nights become colder as the days get hotter. In March and April the heat is intense at midday, and the scrub vegetation is parched and brown, while all but the principal watercourses are dry.

Although agriculture is the main economic activity of the Hausa, gathering is also important, and apart from wood and grass for thatch and mats, tree-crops such as those which locust-bean, baobab, tamarind, sheanut, horseradish-tree, deleb-palm, guta-percha and raffia provide are important as food, building materials, oils or commodities sold to European trading firms. Hunting is unimportant, though guineafowl and other birds are trapped, and fishing is an organized activity.

The staple food is grain, of which guineacorn (Sorghum vulgare) and bullrush-millet (Pennisteum typhoidum) are the principal Hausa crops, although varieties of late millets and maize have considerable regional importance. Other cereals include a type of upland rice (iburu) and marshland rice. Root crops, such as sweet potatoes, yam, coco-yam, cassava, rizga (Kaffir potatoes), bambara nuts, gurjiya (Voandzeia subterranea) supplement and give variety to this diet of cereal. A variety of vegetables and spices are also farmed locally, and pulses such as cowpeas are a traditional crop. Farm products which are exported to Europe, such as cotton and groundnuts, are also used in large quantities locally, the cotton being made into thread by Hausa women, and woven on different types of looms by both sexes; while the groundnuts are processed locally to yield both oil and cake, which are put to a variety of uses. Hausa farmers also grow food crops, such as sugar-cane and onions for local markets, and other plants, such as indigo, henna, etc., which are used in craft processes.

Simultaneous cultivation of such a variety of crops requires a well-developed farming technique, in which intercropping and double-cropping are both practised. Cultivation is by hand, two different types and sizes of hoe being used. Manuring with green manure, house manure, and cattle manure purchased from the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, bush fallowing with the slash-and-burn technique, and irrigation along the banks of rivers and in marshes, are practised, as well as farming by means of cattle-drawn ploughs, which have been introduced by the Europeans. Soil-types vary, and planting is adjusted to this, but the principal distinction is between marshland, which permits of continuous cultivation throughout the year, and slope (tudu) farms, which can be cultivated only during the rainy season. The ratio of marsh to slope farms is generally low, so that for practical purposes Hausa farming can be regarded as limited to six or seven months of the year.

Some idea of the complex and varied technological basis of Hausa economy may be gained from the following brief list of traditional occupational specialisms carried on for exchange in market conditions. Men are classified by Hausa as builders, thatchers, hunters, fishers, butchers, tanners, leatherworkers, saddlers, weavers, dyers, dye-beaters, native carpenters (i.e. those who use the adze as their main tool), blacksmiths, brass- and silver-smiths, calabash-decorators, drummers, praise-singers of various types, pot-makers, mat-weavers, malams (that is, Koranic scholars), officials and their agents, etc. Wage labour on farms, and transport by head-loading or by donkeys, are also recognized specialisms. It must be recognized that the preceding list refers only to crafts, and includes none of the trading specialisms, whether on commission or as independent retail or wholesale trade. Even the manufacture of
chewing-tobacco or sweetmeats such as allewa are excluded, since these commodities are usually retailed by their manufacturers. Similarly, only traditional crafts are listed. The principal craft activities carried on by women are in the processing of a variety of foods for sale in the local market as snacks, and the manufacture of cotton thread and coarse-woven cotton blankets; but women also make pots, keep small stock, trade, are purveyors of medicines, devotees of the cult of spirit-possession (bori), praise-singers, and prostitutes (karuwai). Their role in the political system is limited to agency, as the messenger of a chief (the jakadiya) or as head (magajiya) of the prostitutes and bori-dancers of an administrative unit—village or district.

Trade is similarly complex and varied. Useful distinctions can be made between full-time specialists, trading with their own capital or for commission on behalf of others, and part-time specialists, some of whom also practise crafts. Generally, full-time specialist traders are found in greatest number at the principal commercial towns, that is, the capitals of the various states, or rural settlements which are very favourably sited in relation to a variety of factors, such as available markets and communications along which supplies are regularly moved. Kasuanai, which means dealing in a particular market, must also be distinguished from fatauci, which is trade carried on by principals over long distances at a number of markets. Fatauci is generally two-way traffic, the merchant taking goods from his own country for sale at his terminus or in the markets en route, and returning with products from the places he has visited. In the nineteenth century fatauci linked Hausaland to Tripoli, Tunisia and the North African littoral, the Tuareg moving the goods across the Sahara by camel caravans. Within Hausaland, fatauci by caravan was also important, and took place along certain well-defined trade-routes, which were guarded and maintained by the heads of the various states through which they passed, in return for tolls levied by such rulers on the traders at established caravanserais. Such long-distance trade enabled Hausa in the nineteenth century to obtain necessary commodities, such as salt and kolanuts, which were not produced in sufficient quantities in the area, and a variety of luxury goods besides. Within Hausaland, such traffic supplied regional deficiencies from the surpluses of nearby areas. The important point to grasp is that, in terms of the traditional scale of needs and market relations, nineteenth-century Hausaland was quite well able to meet all its requirements by its own production, by internal exchange, and by fatauci with neighbouring northern Sudanic communities. The presence of the Bush Fulani supplied the greatest single deficiency of Hausa food production, namely meat and dairy products.

Space does not permit detailed discussion of this complex and varied economy. All that can be done here is to draw attention to certain basic aspects. For instance, in the brief outline of fatauci, economic variations linked with regional differences are implied, with the corollary of the economic interdependence of such communities, and of producers within communities. This in turn implies some degree of participation in the exchange sector of the economy, whether by craft production, trading activity, or cultivation of crops for sale, by all Hausa men. The necessity for a combination of production for subsistence and for exchange is met by farming the bulk of household food requirements during the short farming season, and by plying non-agricultural occupations vigorously during the dry season; but craftsmen and traders whose exchange activity is sufficiently rewarding often engage in these occupations throughout the year. In the nineteenth century, when slave labour was available for farming, gathering, building and other heavy tasks, food production did not suffer from the preoccupation of slave-owners with non-agricultural activity. Generally, also, one finds a variety of such non-agricultural activities carried on to greater or less extent by the same person. Exceptions to this appear when continuous specialist activity is necessary, such as for instance among butchers at important markets, people on fatauci, or wealthy traders handling a variety of interests. Another important quality of this combination of production for subsistence and exchange is the high degree of freedom which it permits individuals, in adjusting their market requirements and degree of participation in the exchange sector to suit their circumstances.

Markets themselves are traditional Hausa institutions of great significance, socially as well as economically. It is possible to distinguish markets of greater or less importance, and the frequency with which they are held. The most important markets, and the largest, meet daily in the state capitals and certain very prosperous rural towns; less important markets usually meet twice weekly on set days, e.g. Sunday and Wednesday, in the walled towns which are the capitals and centres of local communities now given the
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administrative status of village-areas. The markets of neighbouring village-areas are held in rotation on different days, so as to enable specialist traders and craftsmen to attend each in turn. Markets are under the supervision of the appointed head of the local communities in which they are held, and are established under his leadership in a ritual context predominantly associated with the cult of spirit-possession (bori) which is a development from the pre-Islamic Hausa worship of spirits. Diffuse supervision was delegated to heads of craftsmen and commission-traders appointed by the chief for the local community, the head of each craft having limited influence only in relation to persons practising his craft; this is now much reduced since the abolition by the British of taxes on craft and trade. Craft products and services, such as barber-doctoring, form an important part of the turnover of market exchange.

Generally, persons selling the same goods or services sit together in their own part of the market; thus the sellers of pots share one section, the butchers another, the cloth-sellers another, and the measurers of grain and other foodstuffs, the leather-workers and so on are each grouped together in different market stalls. Markets are usually sited in the centre of the town, and are built, cleaned and kept in repair by communal labour under the chief's direction. On market-days, men from the town and the neighbouring communities assemble between ten and twelve o'clock not only to sell their wares and purchase household supplies (a man's job), but also to meet their friends and relatives and to discuss matters of interest. The Bush Fulani are there, their womenfolk selling sour milk and butter while the men, clad in their traditional knee-breeches and loose white shifts, remain a little apart from the crush of the market. There is a notable absence of Hausa women between the ages of about fifteen and forty-five, but apart from the various old women who are trading, the unmarried girls of the market town and of neighbouring settlements are present, usually trading on behalf of their mothers or aunts, but including many who visit the market in their best attire, waiting for the girls' dance which follows at night, where they will meet their suitors. At the market, Hausa find pleasure in the rich variety of manufactured and farm products, which have high value in their culture, in the constant hum of bargaining and gossip, the ethnic diversity of the teeming crowd, in the mobilization of individual contacts, the greeting of

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kinsfolk and friends, and in the handsome girls in their gay cotton prints with their powdered faces set off by necklaces and earrings and headkerchiefs, and in the sober elegance of prosperous men in their flowing robes and shining dark-blue turbans.

Kinship and Marriage

Hausa kinship is markedly bilateral—that is, traced through persons of either sex—both in terminology and behaviour. Marriage is virilocal, the woman coming to live with the man, usually in his father's compound if it is the man's first marriage. Cross-cousin marriages of both types are now made, though matrilateral cross-cousin marriage (i.e. that between a man and his mother's brother's daughter) was probably the traditional form. Parallel-cousin marriages of both types are also found, the marriages between children of brothers, which is preferred in Islam, being far more frequent than the marriages between children of sisters. Adoption is an important feature of Hausa kinship, and is most frequent for the first-born, being either maternal or paternal according to circumstances. Usually adoption takes place after weaning at two years. A rigid lifelong public avoidance is observed between parents and their first-born child of either sex, and use of their parents' names is forbidden to all children. The last-born child is the playmate of its parents, and has a special name—auta, the child of old age. Joking relationships, expressed by privileged behaviour such as teasing, and the right to appropriate certain possessions of the other party, obtain between children and their grandparents, and between children of a sister and a brother, in both cases the first-named parties being privileged to tease and take things from the last-named, who retaliate with good-natured abuse and more teasing. There are also certain other joking relations, such as a man and his elder brother's wife, who behave in a similar way.

As marriage is virilocal and usually patrilocal, the core of the co-residential unit is a group of males linked by ties of kinship traced through males. Where such a group exploits large resources together, or where important political office is vested in the patriline, groups emerge with greater or less degree of lineage structure, corporateness, and size. At the highest level, for instance in the case of the three principal Fulani dynasties of Zaria state, genealo-
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gies with a depth of seven generations are remembered, but generally the rule is that where trace of office is lacking, genealogical memory is shallow, and bilateral kinship connections with extensive lateral ramifications are emphasized, rather than unilineal descent beyond three generations.

Domestic groupings fall into two main types, extended and single families. Extended families may jointly hold and exploit economic resources, such as land, or they may not; when there is joint exploitation of such resources by two or more adult males on behalf of their wives and dependants, such a unit is described in modern Hausa as a gandu. In the nineteenth century, however, the gandu, which was the principal type of organization for farming, included slaves and their descendants. These were assimilated in some degree as kinsfolk of the gandu-head by employment of certain kinship terms between slaves and their owners. Sometimes the slaves’ huts were situated within the same walled or fenced enclosure as those of the owners’ family, though in a different section. Where holdings of slaves were large, the gandu ceased to be contained within a single compound, though it still functioned as a single unit for the production and consumption of food, the payment of tax, the provision of farm tools, and seed, the common exploitation of land, economic trees, and other resources, and the provision of brides for members of the group. When not working on the gandu farm, members were free to cultivate smaller plots allotted to them by the head of the gandu, or to practise craft or trade for their own individual profit, but the gandu head was traditionally responsible for meeting the group needs outlined above from the group resources over which he had control. An important aspect of the Hausa division of labour is the exclusion of Moslem Hausa women from active farming, in contrast to the pagan Hausa women, who participate in farming. Formerly when slavery obtained, free Hausa women and concubines neither farmed nor gathered firewood, though women of slave status were compelled to do both tasks. With the abolition of slavery under British rule, women formerly of slave status withdrew from the farms and as far as possible from wood-gathering, as an assertion of their new legal status as free persons, and in imitation of the traditional role of free Hausa women. Linked with this development is the spread of purdah-type marriage throughout the rural areas of Hausaland in recent years, for the seclusion of wives is closely connected with their refusal,

wherever possible, either to farm or to gather sylvan produce, and their preference for the more rewarding craft and trade activities which they can carry out in their leisure time at home.

Despite the great variation between Hausa compounds, they follow a basic pattern, elaborations of which merely indicate differences of wealth and status of the household head, or structure of the domestic group. The compound (gida) is a rectangular enclosure; if the householder is wealthy or the compound is in the capital, it is surrounded by high mud walls; more common in rural areas are fences of guineacorn stalks. It is entered through a round mud hut with a conical thatched roof known as the zaure or kofa (see sketch plan, p. 36). Important men build elaborate two-storeyed entrances, with mud roofs and raised arabesques on the white-washed walls, wooden windows and European-type doors. The zaure leads into a fenced or walled forecourt, which contains one or more round thatched huts as sleeping-quarters for the adolescent youths of the household, or male guests. Entrance to the interior of the compound (eikin gida), the women’s quarters, may be through another hut, either circular or rectangular in shape, but with a partition preventing a direct view, or through a succession of such forecourts in the homes of wealthy or important men, or merely through a gap in the fence. The eikin gida itself may be partitioned by fence or wall, and the different sections, known as sassa, contain separate though closely-related families, sometimes forming a common unit of domestic economy, sometimes not. The partition itself may be taken into the forecourt, but if it is carried to the outer compound wall, there is a division into two compounds. The wives’ huts are to be found in the eikin gida, and it is an important rule that each wife should have her own hut in which she keeps her possessions, and in which her young children sleep. The husband in a polygamous marriage may or may not have a separate sleeping-hut of his own, opposite those of his wives. Where he has such a hut, known as the turaka, his wives visit him in turn for two nights each, on the days when each is responsible for preparing the household food. When not occupied in preparing food for the common household, co-wives engage in craft activity, such as spinning, weaving, the making of processed foods for sale in the market by young girls, and so forth. Complete wife-seclusion (auren kulle) is only possible where the husband either fetches the water required by the household, or has it fetched, or has a well inside his com-
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repair; well-digging and repair is a traditional Hausa craft, with a wide market.

Hausa distinguish between marriages in two different ways: firstly, according to the degree or lack of wife-seclusion; secondly, according to the circumstances and relations of the spouses and their kin. It has been pointed out above that the reported increase in the practice of wife-seclusion is directly correlated with the abolition of slave-status, and the differentiation in the division of labour linked with different legal statuses; but this is not how the Hausa see the matter. To them, purdah marriage—complete seclusion of wives—is sanctioned by religious values and teaching, and the liberty of wives to go anywhere outside the compound is by implication an act of religious ignorance. But the necessity that wives should visit their kinsfolk and close friends, and receive visits from them, is incompatible with this rule ascribed to religion, and such visits, which usually take place with or without an escort, after dark, between compounds of the same village, or by day with an escort over long distances, are both frequent and obligatory on certain ceremonial occasions, such as marriages and naming ceremonies. It is significant that husbands permit their wives to go visiting after dark, despite the very great and well-founded suspicions that spouses entertain of each other's fidelity; night-time is the period when wives everywhere rest from their labours of grinding and cooking the household food, and are free to receive guests, while they spin or weave. That is to say, the general conditions of wife-seclusion among Hausa are more easily understood in terms of the economic interests and role of Hausa wives than the ascribed religious injunction, although prestige factors are of great importance, and the wives of chiefs and wealthy traders are permanently confined to their husband's compound.

The second classification of Hausa marriages distinguishes primarily between marriages of kinship or quasi-kinship and marriages between unrelated persons. The former type (auren zumunci, auren dangintaka) includes all forms of cousin-marriage, and holds between members of different occupational or even ethnic groups which are defined as joking relations, such as the Fulani and the Kanuri (Barebare). Apart from this, daughters are sometimes given by their parents in a marriage of alms to a selected man as a representative of the Prophet, no request being made for marriage-payments; this act of religious piety ensures local prestige. Infant-

betrothal and marriage were sometimes practised, but the most singular of the remaining marriage types is that in which the wife lives in a separate compound and often in a separate village, and receives visits from her husband.

Unmarried girls are courted privately and at public ceremonial give-aways, over which certain praise-singers and drummers preside, both with a view to marriage and the institutionalized pre-marital love-making known as tsarance. Girls are married between the ages of thirteen and fourteen, and probably re-marry two or three times, on average, afterwards. The first marriage is always arranged by the bride's parents, her consent being purely formal, and later marriages may often be made at their behest also. Similarly divorce, which is frequent among Hausa, is often instigated by one or other of the wife's kinswomen, with a view to arranging a future marriage to somebody preferred by the instigator—often in discharge of some obligation. No linguistic distinction is made between divorcees and widows. The important social distinctions are between unmarried girls, married women, and women previously, but not at present, married.

Women of child-bearing age in this last group are known as karuwai if they remain unmarried after the termination of mourning or Iddah, the three months' period of celibacy enjoined on divorced Muslim women. The term karuwa is not adequately translated by its nearest English equivalent, prostitute, as it is also applied to adult males who are not married and are reputedly profligate. Female karuwai, besides practising prostitution, engage actively in craft and trade, and are the traditional supporters and exponents of the cult of spirit-possession (b ori), for which their status suits them. As karuwai they are deviants from the Islamic norm of marriage for all adults, and as social deviants they are the traditional custodians of religious deviance in the spirit-possession cult.

A girl's first marriage is established by a rite de passage, and this is also carried out for a man's first marriage. By means of this rite, an individual exchanges the status of a youth or girl for that of an adult. To be an adult, it is therefore necessary to have been married. Consequently by definition, all Hausa prostitutes have been previously married, as the Hausa distinguish between tsarance (pre-marital love-making) and karuwaenei (prostitution) according to the status of the female concerned, both relationships being identical.
in their economic and sexual aspects. Another *rite de passage* of critical importance takes place on the occasion of a woman's first childbirth. After the Muslim naming ceremony on the seventh day, the mother returns to her parents' home with her baby, and remains there for a period of six months or longer, during which she performs the prescribed post-natal ablutions daily for five months. This custom, known as *bangwalle*, has many different variations, but its performance for the first birth is normative. On completion of *bangwalle* the mother returns to her husband's compound loaded with gifts from her kin, and for the first time in her husband's home will suckle her infant without any pressure or compulsion being necessary. But throughout their lives, a parent of either sex and the first-born child observe a rigorous avoidance-relation, which is hardly relaxed even in private and when the child is fully grown. As the very full account in the text illustrates (pp. 138 sqq.), social sanctions compel conformity to this behaviour, both during the period of ablutions and thereafter. The entire complex is best understood as a *rite de passage*, marking the transition in status to parenthood and full social maturity, and the lifelong avoidance-relation, which is extended by Fulani to the second and third child, and by Hausa-speaking Habe and Fulani to the next-born in greater or less degree, if the first child dies in infancy, gives a permanent expression to this new status. Similarly the post-natal ablutions, which are carried out for successive births, are probably best understood as extensions of ritual activity on the first childbirth rather than as measures of preventive hygiene (which the Hausa declare them to be), since such ablutions are not performed for stillbirths or miscarriages, and may be brought to an early conclusion if the mother is unable to bear the washing with nearly boiling water; if this happens, alternative 'medicines', herbal and Islamic, are employed.

The preoccupation of Hausa women with these two rituals is not to be ascribed merely to the facts of polygamy and motherhood, but to their importance in determining the status which women hold. One of the conditions of polygamous marriage is the ranking of co-wives within the household by seniority, in terms of their marriage order to the common husband. That is to say, ranking obtains between Hausa women in domestic polygamous units. As mentioned before, divorce occurs on average two to three times during a woman's life. Thus the domestic ranking of co-wives is impermanent, and provides no basis for the public ordering of their relative status; nor is it possible to extend such ranking to cover women of different households; nor, furthermore, does the rank of the husband apply to his wives, since divorce is so frequent. Consequently the statuses of marriage and parenthood define the adult Hausa women as a group within which further distinctions are made on grounds of age. In this context, parenthood includes adoptive as well as biological parenthood. The normal expectancy is, of course, that a married woman will have children of her own; but where, as in Baba's case, this does not occur, her kinsfolk or husband will provide her with children to foster and adopt, and she fulfills the role of their mother throughout her life. Thus one aspect of adoption is the provision of substitute offspring, which enables barren women to fulfil the normal expectations of parenthood, ritualized for those who bear children themselves in *bangwalle* and post-natal ablutions, and linked to the marriage ritual by annual gifts from the bride's parents to her until her first child is born.

**The Political System**

In Muslim law women are minors, but this is not a sufficient reason for their exclusion from the system of ranks which governs the political relations of men. Traditionally, before the Fulani conquest, women held titles and offices such as those of *Iya, Magajiga, Mardami* in the various Habe states, and have continued to do so in the Habe state of Abuja. The husbands of such women acted on their behalf as agents in administrative affairs.

It is simplest to describe the political system from the territorial aspect, beginning with the smallest units. Local communities, as mentioned above, are territorial units centred on a walled town (*gari*) at which the chief resides, the market meets, the prayer-ground for the great annual Muslim festivals, *Id-el-fitr* and *Id-el-kabir*, is sited, and the community mosque and appointed Muslim priest are found. Bush hamlets, situated within the area under the administrative control of the town chief, are the parts of the community in which farming is most intensively practised; such bush hamlets are classed administratively as wards, though they may be of different status, some being settlements of free persons, and others having been privately owned slave villages, such as Anguwan...
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Karo in this story. Within the town itself, further administrative sub-divisions exist, also known as wards. Ward-heads are appointed or confirmed by the town chief, and may be dismissed by him. Usually the heads of bush hamlets reside there, but in the towns the ward-head does not always live in his ward. Ward-heads are given titles on appointment, and can be classified as kinsmen of the chief, or as non-relatives, who are always his clients. Succession to chieftainship of local communities varied formerly; in some cases it was based on patrilineal descent, in others not, and in the same community different criteria of eligibility frequently obtained at different times. But the formal rule of patrilineal succession, where it obtained, only served to limit and define the field of effective competition since the chief was chosen from the patrilineage, with the result that patrilineal groups claiming rights of succession to hereditary chieftainship are split up by their rivalry into segments with great mutual independence as competitive units, and low corporate solidarity.

In the last century, as today, the main function of the chief was the collection and remission of the authorized tax to his superior, who in turn passed it on to the ruler of the state. Salaries were formerly unknown, but officials retained prescribed portions of the tax they had collected, as remuneration, and owing to lack of supervision, were free to over-collect and retain the surplus. The ward-heads were responsible for collecting the tax from their wards, and for the maintenance of good order and discipline in those units. The chiefs, traditionally, had limited judicial powers in civil cases such as marriage, divorce, debt, etc., which did not involve punishment by imprisonment, mutilation and so forth. They were also responsible for the repair of the town wall and defences, the mosque, and the markets and paths throughout their areas. In the nineteenth century the great majority of local communities had settled Fulani as their chiefs, consequent on the Fulani conquest of the Habe states in the jihad of 1804–10.

An interesting feature of Haussa community organization is the distribution of titles among the various occupational groups. These titles, like those of the ward-heads, repeat the principal ranks of the central political system, such as Sarki (chief), Madaki, Galadima, Dangaladima, Cirona, etc. The particular titles and their order of precedence varied slightly from state to state, and over the years within the same state, but the principal distinction was that be-

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tween royal ranks (i.e. titles held by kinsmen of the chief of the unit concerned, whether a state, local community, or occupational group at either level), and those held by non-relatives. In the nineteenth century an important duty of occupational title-holders was the collection of particular taxes from members of their occupational groups within the community, and remission of the prescribed portion to the heads of such groups throughout the state, at the capital.

The same principles and processes of political organization which have been described at the community level operate on a larger canvas for the state as a whole. From the perspective of the state, the local communities were administered in the last century as fiefs allotted to title-holders appointed by the king on bases of kinship or clientage. Certain trusted slaves were also given titles and fiefs as rewards for military and household services, and the territorial basis of rank held also for judicial and religious appointments in the central political system. Under British administration, fiefholders resident in the capital cities, administering their territories through agents known as jakadu (s. jakada), have been replaced by District Heads responsible to the Emir for compact areas, and resident in their districts; the traditional titles remain in use for these as for other officials of the state. Rulers of Hausa states are referred to in English as emirs; in the present text, however, the Hausa Sarki Zazzau, Sarki Kano etc., have been translated 'king of Zaria', 'king of Kano', as reproducing Baba's sense more clearly.

Variations in the pattern outlined above between different states are linked with the historical circumstances of their conquest by the Fulani during and after the jihad of 1804; thus, for instance, Kano emirate has one dynasty, the Suleibawa, from which all its kings are drawn; Zaria, on the other hand, has four dynasties, three of which had provided all the Fulani rulers except one. In a system of multiple dynasties such as that of Zaria, the different patriline are permanently the effective units of political competition for the throne and the main subordinate offices of the central system. The situation is similar in a single-dynasty state, though not so permanently structured, and in 1898–4 a bitter war of succession was fought in Kano between the sons of two brothers. Katsina emirate provides another variation on the general structure, linked with historical factors; there, hereditary Fulani chiefs of large districts
are recognized by the king, with a consequent reduction of his effective control.

In the nineteenth century the various Hausa states under Fulani rule themselves had the status of fiefs in relation to the empire administered by the sultan of Sokoto in north-western Nigeria, whose title was based on direct descent in the male line from the inspirer of the jihad, Shehu dan Fodio. The heads of these various states were appointed by the sultan from the principal candidates for office in the dynasties. In this way the sultan was able to control the chiefs under him, and frequently to order their deposition, with the certainty of support from their rivals. The efficacy of this administrative method is proven by the retention of effective overlordship by Sokoto from 1804 until the British occupation in 1900. In return for appointment, the chiefs of states paid tribute and gave allegiance to Sokoto, and provided military contingents when required. In their relations with their fiefholders or hereditary chiefs of vassal states, the kings of the principal Hausa-Fulani states acted in a similar manner and enjoyed similar rights. In the same way fiefholders, apart from collecting tax, stores, labour and military detachments from their fiefs, had the right to appoint or depose the community chiefs, as they in turn could do with their ward-heads. Thus there was a continuous chain of loyalty from Sokoto through the kings, their fiefholders or vassals, to the community chiefs and the ward-heads, and the principal relations of loyalty between subordinate and overlord were those of kinship or clientage. Before the British occupation an important distinction between vassal-chiefs and fiefholders, apart from the hereditary principle on which vassal-chieftainship was held, and the superior rights and status it involved, lay in the fact that fiefholders remained permanently in the capital, whereas vassal chiefs resided in their own country. Fiefholders administered distant territories by appointed and often titled intermediaries, known as jakada (s. jakada) who carried their instructions to the community chiefs and supervised their execution.

Finally, the structural nature of the titles merits attention. Traditional titles are permanent corporations, to which territorial areas are attached for administration, as are permanent possessions such as farms, official residences, praise-songs and subordinate titles. Consequently it is common to find persons attached as clients to the title, as a permanent corporation, rather than to any par-

**Clientage and Bond Friendship**

The term 'clientage' has been used frequently above: it designates a variety of relationships, which all have inequality of status of the associated persons as a common characteristic. Only the main types of clientage will be distinguished here. In the political field, clientage as a permanent association between individuals and the titles as corporations has been instanced. Title-holders are themselves clients of their superior, and have subordinate community chiefs as their clients; thus chieftainship is itself a type of clientage, with limitation of the field of eligibility as a characteristic of hereditary chieftainship at any level. Similarly, a fiefholder's agents were bound by ties of clientage, kinship, slavery, or a combination of these to their lord and distinguished according to their specific function as jakada (intermediaries to fiefs), fada (s. bafada, agents at the lord's court) and barori (s. bara, a term which describes all forms of clients, including menial attendants who farm and run errands at their lord's direction). A wider area of clientage is covered by the term cafka or traditional allegiance of territorial and kinship units to titles or dynasties.

**Barantaka** is the term used to denote any form of clientage, the domestic as well as the political. It will be seen that nowadays, with the prohibition of slavery, there is an overlap of domestic and political clientage in the associations centred on chiefs or holders of lesser offices. But domestic clientage can be distinguished as a separate type of relation when both parties are commoners, and may be of the same or different occupational class. Omitting for the moment ties of clientage involving wealthy merchants or...
women, domestic clientage can be summarily described as an
association in which men not originally linked by ties of consanguinity of affinity adopt the relative statuses and roles of senior and junior kinsmen; that is, of father and son where the difference in age is pronounced, or of elder and younger brother where it is not. As such, domestic clientage is substitute kinship, and the junior or client (bara), in several cases which were studied, invariably lacked effective support from kinsfolk in the community, and was usually an immigrant. But whereas kinship is a permanent relation, clientage is an association terminable at the wish of either party. Enduring clientage, whether political or domestic is rewarded by the superior as best he can, with office and title if these are in his power, or with wives if he is a commoner. In both political and domestic clientage of proven value, the superior often gives his kinswoman, a daughter or a sister, in marriage to the client, thus changing the nature of their association and strengthening the bond. The same principle of marriage linkages is used between members of descent groups with hereditary claims to chieftainship.

Clientage with a specifically commercial function is a distinct class; two main types can be distinguished, that between a wealthy merchant (the ubandaki or ubangida) and his agent (danarziki), who trades independently at a distance with capital in cash or goods provided free of interest by the principal, which is paid off by deliveries of local products which the latter wants. Such an arrangement, if enduring, implies high standards of mutual loyalty and goodwill. Merchants are usually in subordinate relations of clientage to important officials charged with administration or supervision of their areas of interest. Such a superior is referred to by the merchant as his ubandaki or ubangida.

Clientage also obtains in a different form between women, whose diverse economic spheres and lack of political interests severely reduce the functional value of the association. In two forms described fully in the text, institutional relationships between women not linked by ties of kinship have aspects resembling certain features of male clientage, possibly in deliberate imitation. These relationships are firstly that in which the yaya (elder) occupies the senior status, and the kanwar rana (younger sister of the day) is the junior, and that in which the uwar daki (mother of the hut) or uwar rana (mother of the day) is senior to her 'yar arziki (daughter of fortune). Three factors are present in these formalized asym-
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and Islam, which incorporates animistic elements as *jinn* and magical elements in the charms and divinatory practices of learned scholars (the *malamai*), and subordinates both these to the will of Allah in terms of the concept of predestination and fate (*H. rabo*), in accordance with the teachings of the Kadiriya sect, which is the predominant Muslim teaching in Hausaland.

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M. G. Smith

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For “dowry” read “wedding presents” throughout the book.

The Hausa word *gara*, which I mistakenly translated as “dowry” in 1950, refers to the traditional gifts of cooking utensils, household effects, and small sums of money which the bride’s family and friends collect for her, especially on her first marriage, and which they carry in a procession to her new home as part of the wedding festivities.

M. F. S.

1981