

Additional information comes from the archives of the French post at Medine during the early 1870s.⁹

TRANSLATION

[25r] This is the book of the second volume¹⁰ of what we have assembled as a corpus whose splendor excels, like pearls but not like purple.¹¹

And this was done in order to make known the characteristic virtues of the one described here, similar to a translation of what was said in beautiful poetry and eloquent speech, in praise of the just sultan who bears the banner of the *mujāhidūn* and is the leader of the contingents of those who believe in one God.¹² Today is the year 1288 [AH]¹³ in the lands of the Sudan. Our *khalifa* is the one who is supported, the one made victorious, the possessor of sound judgment, the famous one, the Commander of the Faithful, Sidi Aḥmad al-Kabir al-Madani. May God aid him, whose justice filled the east and the west,¹⁴ whose excellence appeared like the appearance of the sun. His good reputation and [the news of his] generosity¹⁵ and lofty status spread to all corners of the earth. The days of his rule are pleasant and delightful, and men are submissive and obedient to him. Great men of all races¹⁶ recognize his authority, *sharifs* come from Fez¹⁷ to see him, many of the leading scholars

⁹ Principally ANS 15G 109.

¹⁰ The first volume may well be the corpus of documents about the Kejje victory (Document 7).

¹¹ The sense of the passage is not clear.

¹² *Al-muwahhidūn*.

¹³ March 1871 to March 1872 AD. This date means that 'Uthmān began compiling this corpus before Sa'īd completed his account, which narrates Aḥmad al-Kabir's victorious return to Niore on the 4th of Muḥarram in 1289 AH (14 March 1872).

¹⁴ 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad makes his references clear in Document 7: Aḥmad al-Kabir's authority stretches from "the land of Hausa and the salt sea."

¹⁵ In contrast to Aḥmad's earlier reputation for parsimony. See Documents 2 and 7.

¹⁶ *Al-'uzamā'* *min kullu al-ajnās*. In the Kejje corpus, 'Uthmān distinguishes between "black" and "white" populations in the Western Sudan. See Document 7.

¹⁷ 'Uthmān indicates that recognition of Aḥmad al-Kabir by the learned of Fez, the principal center of the Tijaniyya Sufi order, was particularly important for Aḥmad's claims.

praise him. Great and small follow him because of his great blessing and the loftiness of his power. In his rule he followed the pattern of the early *khalifas* and governed his subjects in the manner of the great commanders. He dealt with them in justice, kindness and equity for which he is well known in all regions and by which qualities he is mentioned and described. It is because of this that he is loved and praised by scholars of the age who excel in both prose and verse, such as the great learned scholar and saint known as Shaykh Yirkoy Talfi of Masina,¹⁸ and the shaykh, the seal of inquiring scholars and shaykh of the Sufis, Sīdī ‘Ubayda ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr ibn Anbūj of Tishit,¹⁹ and other elders and notables who cannot be counted from every generation and group.

In sum, he is the *khalifa* of the time, the commander of the century, the protector of the revealed law,²⁰ the one to whom people submit, who obey him and listen to him accordingly. May God prolong his might to give him long life and through his continued existence may He strengthen religion and protect it. Amen.

And I said, among the amazing signs which indicate his good fortune and the growth of his leadership was the fact that the year in which he conquered Kejje was the year 1285 [AH],²¹ which God inspired me to call "his distinction."²² There is no doubt that his nobility increased in that year because of his obtaining what he aimed at -- the honor of triumph -- and obtaining conquest and victory. To God be grateful praise. The one who said and wrote

See Documents 5 and 6.

¹⁸ Yirkoy Talfī (also known as Shaykh al-Mukhtār ibn Wadī‘at Allāh) was a well known pupil of the Kunta who shifted to Tijaniyya affiliation under the impact of Shaykh ‘Umar’s stay at Ḥamdullāhi in the late 1830s. See Document 3, note 15.

¹⁹ A well known scholar in West Africa, not to be confused with Muḥammad al-‘Ubayda and others using the ‘Ubayda name in Tunisia. See Abun-Nasr, *Tijaniyya*, pp. 84, 161. Sīdī ‘Ubayda wrote an important treatise on the Tijaniyya in 1268 AH (1851-2): BNP, MO, FA 5293, ff. 1-342. Many other Tishit Tijaniyya with the name Anbūj appear in the Segu library.

²⁰ *Al-hāmin himāya al-shar‘*, literally "protector protecting the revelation."

²¹ ‘Uthmān, the principal author of the Kejje corpus (Document 7), reminds his readers of this initial triumph.

²² *Sharafahu*, with a letter value of 1285.

this is the one needing the mercy of God, 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad al-Dāri al-Wiyāwī of Labe, in the year 1288 [AH].

[36v] Sa'īd ibn Cerno Aḥmad ibn Cerno Wocce said [this] in recounting the journey of the Commander of the Faithful Aḥmad al-Kabir al-Madanī (may God support him and give him victory) to do battle against Gemukura.²³ He gave a most complete account and wrote revealingly in prose whose weaving was elegant and the understanding of which was simple and easy. He mentioned the dates of his traveling and the battles with their names as well as the path which he traveled, both going and returning, a description of the fighting and other matters, such as mentioning the dates and whatever else might be desired, about those events. These are his words.²⁴

Henceforth, among the beautiful things of the kindness and the gentleness of the creation of God Most High is that God, when He wanted to establish His religion and raise aloft His word, sent His Messenger (may God's blessing be upon Him). He gave him victory over them. He gives victory to whomever follows His example until the day of encountering Him. God's enemies, the Massassi²⁵ and their allies, revolted in order to extinguish religion and destroy it at that time. They established their polytheism. They hunted down Muslims as hard as they could and attacked them time after time until the hypocrites and polytheists, both men and women, believed that they had been victorious over the Muslims and defeated them.²⁶ They did not know that God was the Master of His affairs and that He is always with those who fear him, for as God said: "And certainly Our word has already gone forth to Our servants, that they will indeed be helped and that Our troops will definitely be the victors."²⁷

²³ *Qanamukura*, the standard Arabic rendering of Gemukura in this document and throughout the corpus.

²⁴ This introductory paragraph does not appear in the second version (BNP, MO, FA 5713, ff. 37-8). It was probably written by 'Uthmān.

²⁵ *Ahl al-Māša*, "people of Māša."

²⁶ The Massassi had used Gemukura for some time as a base from which to harass Umarians, particularly those traveling between Segu and Nioro.

²⁷ Qur'ān 37:171-2.

And when the Commander of the Faithful Aḥmad al-Kabir al-Madanī al-Manṣūr²⁸ heard about that [the revolt of the Bamana], the fervor of the people of God welled up in him along with the fury against the enemies of God. Thereupon he began to prepare the armies and to dispatch them to make *jihād* against them and to gain victory for God Most High and His Messenger and the believers by fighting them. He ordered all of the people to prepare themselves to encounter them. But they held back because it had been a long time since they had fought.²⁹ He did not cease to spur them on, to prod them, to plead with the weak-willed and drive on the ignorant and give help to the weak until they were all united in obedience to him and obeyed his commands. They agreed to that voluntarily and handed the leadership over to him and put the reins in his hands, moving when he moved and remaining still when he was still.³⁰ When that was established he enjoyed a blessed day with God's support and victory, on a Thursday, with 14 nights remaining in Ramaḍān in the year "thanks and praise be to Him"³¹ [37r] of the *hijra* of the best human being (may the best prayers and peace be upon him).

Then he [Aḥmad al-Kabir] reached the town of Madina.³² The people followed and rushed to join him. And there assembled a great many people, among them the disciples of Futa³³ and others too numerous to count. After staying there seven days he rode from Madina and made for the center of polytheism and unbelief and of the people of oppression and injustice, that is

²⁸ "The victorious one," or "the one to whom victory is given." This epithet may have been added as a result of the Kejje and/or Gemukura victories. See Document 6, note 2.

²⁹ Veiled references here to the resistance of the Umarian community at Nioro. See the Introduction to Section II.

³⁰ The submission to the Commander of the Faithful's authority was short-lived, as most Umarian disciples living in Karta refused Aḥmad's subsequent request that they accompany him back to Segu. See Soleillet, *Voyage à Ségou*, pp. 376-8.

³¹ *Shukruhu wa-ḥamduhu*, with a letter value of 1288. This date corresponds to 2 December 1871.

³² *Madina* (without the *tā' marbūṭa*). This is probably a reference to Nioro Madina, a settlement of Umarian disciples just south of Nioro; Soleillet gives Nioro as the staging area in *Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375.

³³ Sa'īd is at pains to emphasize the role of Umarians, and especially Futanke disciples, in this campaign.

the people of Diawara³⁴ who had not accepted him or given their obedience. He stayed at the town of Yerere³⁵ and spent only Friday night there. The next day he went after the refractory devil, the stubborn disbeliever in God,³⁶ whose harassment availed him nothing. He gathered all his forces (may God disgrace him) and made them swear to prevent us from entering among them, but God insisted we should enter among them and have access to their property. Thus did the word [of God] prove true against them and we entered [the town of] lying and falsehood, Diara.³⁷

We stayed there for the remainder of Ramaḍān, all of Shawwāl and Dhu'l-Qa'da and the early days of Dhu'l-Ḥijja, until there assembled at that time what God had decreed and made easy for us to assemble.³⁸ The day after the assembling was finished he went on the attack against Gemukura. God destroyed it and laid it waste on a blessed Monday, the ninth of the sacred [month of] Dhu'l-Ḥijja.³⁹

³⁴ Sa'īd intentionally juxtaposes *jawr* ("injustice") with *jāwara* (Diawara). Although Diawara leaders had welcomed Shaykh 'Umar to Karta, some later turned against him and earned the reputation as unbelievers in the Umariān historiography. See Documents 4 and 15D.

³⁵ *Yarāra* in the Arabic text, *Yère* in Soleillet and Yerere in contemporary Mali. It is located immediately east of Niōro and marks the beginning of villages inhabited by Diawara during the Umariān era. Soleillet, *Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375; Blanc, "Notes sur les Diawara," *BCEHSAOF* 7 (1924), p. 87.

³⁶ Written *lājj*. This is probably a Diawara leader who led the resistance to recruitment at Diara.

³⁷ Soleillet has the Umariāns camping at Diara for three days, between two visits to Yerere in *Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375.

³⁸ Sa'īd again communicates the difficulty of mobilizing an army by referring to a three month period for recruitment. Soleillet (*Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375) suggests that it took six months.

³⁹ Sa'īd confuses two dates falling on a Monday in Dhu'l-Ḥijja 1288 AH. Aḥmad departed from Diara on Monday, the ninth of Dhu'l-Ḥijja (19 February 1872) and destroyed Gemukura on Monday, with seven nights remaining in Dhu'l-Ḥijja (4 March 1872).

They stayed in the village of Yerere to celebrate the Feast⁴⁰ there. Then the next day, after he had finished celebrating on Tuesday, he went and stayed at the village of Diabige.⁴¹ The day after, Thursday, was the 12th of that month. They went to Wadi Konko, a place where renegades come and thieves congregate. He arrived there after the midday prayer. He stayed on Friday and spent the night traveling until the forenoon, arriving at Wadi Biri⁴² on Saturday, the next day. He stayed there in order to count his forces and examine the situation.⁴³ Then, when he knew what God had provided him in the way of men he distributed all the powder and weapons; then he moved resolutely from there and encamped at Wadi Tinkare.⁴⁴ He journeyed from there Friday after noon.

He made for his major goal and highest aim, which was the victory of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) and the victory of the *shari'a* in order to destroy what had to be destroyed, by way of proof. He launched himself against the unbelievers,⁴⁵ firm in his resolution and imbued with determination. He asked for the help of God and His Messenger and he went out depending on His strength and might. He submitted his fate to his Master since he knew that no one shares with God in His dominion [37v] and that He does whatsoever He wills. He came to Gemukura in the early morning. How terrible a morning⁴⁶ it was for those warned by God. Praise be to God, Lord

⁴⁰ *Al-'id*, referring to *'Id al-Aḍḥā* (or Tabaski) which falls on the tenth of Dhu'l-Ḥijja). Presumably Aḥmad arrived at Yerere from Diara on the ninth of Dhu'l-Ḥijja 1288 AH and then celebrated there on Tuesday the tenth.

⁴¹ A Diawara village located not far to the east of Yerere. Blanc, "Diawara," p. 87.

⁴² Soleillet gives it as Wadi Benibane in *Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375. Clearly Aḥmad was making a kind of forced march.

⁴³ BNP, MO, FA 5713, f. 143, offers a figure of 10,606 troops on Sunday (presumably at Wadi Biri) and then 12,000 soldiers on the following Friday.

⁴⁴ See Soleillet, *Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375.

⁴⁵ *Wa-hamma bi'l-kuffār*.

⁴⁶ Probably a reference to the fact that Aḥmad attacked at dawn, setting fire to Gemukura while its inhabitants were sleeping. See Soleillet, *Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375. Sa'id creates a parallel between Segou, at the time of its capture in 1861, and Gemukura. This prepares the way for the renewed consecration of Aḥmad al-Kabīr as Commander of the Faithful.

of the worlds. God assisted the Muslims and protected the faithful and humbled the infidels and their allies. For God is the Lord of those who believe, while for the infidels there is no lord.

For it did not take long until flags were fluttering in the village and their houses were burning. God drove them out of it despite their unwillingness and aversion. [As God said]: He it is Who caused those who disbelieved of the people of the book to go forth from their homes at the first banishment. You deemed not that they would go forth, while they thought that their fortresses would defend them against God. But God came to them from a place they expected not and cast terror into their hearts -- they demolished their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers. So take a lesson, O you who have eyes!⁴⁷ When the town of the Massassi was finished and they were calling out to their absconding friends, then God drove them out of there on that Saturday, when they perished.⁴⁸

They entered the village of Kagoro⁴⁹ together with the remainder of those who were with them, including children, chiefs⁵⁰ and women. Then we besieged the remainder of them that day, and Sunday, with the aid of the One God. When God brought the finest of the mornings, and they despaired of escape and Iblis despaired of success, then the Muslims attacked them as one man, at about midday, just before the prayer. God gave the victory to the Muslims in order that truth might triumph and falsehood be brought to nought, though the evil doers were averse. The people who do evil were eradicated -- praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds.

By the time we performed the sunset prayer God had allowed us [to seize] all of their slaves and had destroyed all of their men. We uprooted them all by enslaving or killing [them].⁵¹ There was great joy and delight on the day of

⁴⁷ Qur'ān 59:2.

⁴⁸ Dama, the Massassi mentioned in the introduction, was one of those who escaped and returned to the upper Senegal valley. Galliéni, *Voyage au Soudan*, pp. 38-9.

⁴⁹ A village next to Gemukura which the Bamana had built, and where they took refuge after Aḥmad's attack. Soleillet, *Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375. Kagoro also refers to a subgroup of Bamana and to a sub-region of Karta-bine. See Document 4.

⁵⁰ *Aqwwāl*, which we have read as *quwwād*, "commanders, leaders."

⁵¹ Soleillet (*Voyage à Ségou*, p. 375) states that the Bamana had ninety killed and 150

victory -- thanks be to God Most High -- on the blessed Monday when seven nights remained in Dhu'l-Ḥijja in the year "we give Him thanks"⁵² of the *hijra* of the best of mankind (upon Him from God the Most High be the finest of prayers and purest peace).

Then we stayed -- praise be to God the Most High -- in their town taking possession of their goods and the injured prisoners during the rest of that day and Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Then the next day we traveled, returning to our lands⁵³ on Saturday, the last night of the sacred [month of] Dhu'l-Ḥijja. We stayed in the town of Farabugu⁵⁴ -- may God the Most High protect it [38r] and preserve its utility for us and to all those who proclaim the unity of Him, who is exalted. Amen.

On the morning of Wednesday we went from there and camped in the town of Kolomina. We stayed there the rest of that day and night, then we traveled from there on Thursday and came to the city of light and excellence⁵⁵ on a day of joy and delight, in the morning of Wednesday, after the 4th night of the sacred [month of] Muḥarram, in the year "polytheism disappeared"⁵⁶ of the *hijra* of the best of mankind (upon Him from God Most High be the most excellent of prayers and the purest peace).⁵⁷

wounded.

⁵² *Shakarānā iyyāhu*, with a letter value of 1288. This date corresponds to 4 March 1872.

⁵³ *Awṭāninā*, "our countries," with the implication that the northwestern reaches of Karta formed part of the Umarian domain, but not Gemukura and the southeast.

⁵⁴ An Umarian fortress in southern Karta. See Document 15F.

⁵⁵ Niuro (*al-nūr* or "the light" in Arabic). Soleillet (*Voyage à Ségou*, p. 376) states that Aḥmad did not receive a warm reception, because he pressed the Futanke to move to Segou, but this resistance came later, after the first flush of victory.

⁵⁶ *Zāl al-shirk*, with a letter value of 1289. The date corresponds to 14 March 1872.

⁵⁷ The second manuscript (see note 2 above) adds the following at the end (38v): "Troops from Futa Jalon came to the Commander of the Faithful, Sīdī Aḥmad al-Kabīr al-Madanī (may God assist him). He was in the city of Niuro (may God protect it). The leader of it was the unforgettable one whose name was 'Abd Allāh Ṭālib, one of the descendants of Cerno Masegan, the eldest of the children of Alfa Mo Labe. This occurred in the first ten days of Ṣafar [10-20 April 1872], two months after our return from the battle of Gemukura. By my hand, Kūsā Dārī Lābī [that is, 'Uthmān Kūsā]. At the time of welcoming them messengers from Segou and Kundian also came to meet with him. They came from afar."