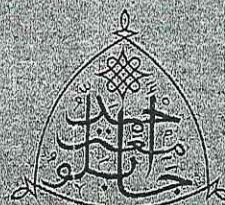


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Contributions of Hausa Traders to the Ilorin Economy since the Beginning of the 20th Century

Saliu Danladi Yusuf

Introduction

Hausa is the name by which the people of the Hausa ethnic group call themselves, according to Adamu. This is also the name by which they are known by various other people. But, of course, different people had different local names for the Hausa people. Again, Hausa is also the name by which the language of this people is known¹. The Hausa people inhabit the north-western and north-central parts of Nigeria and spread further west and north into the Republic of Niger up to the edges of Sahara Desert².

As regards their origin, Abdullahi Smith suggested as cited by Adamu, that the people who lived in Hausa land at the end of the fifteenth century lived in that area from time immemorial and that their distribution within the zone had changed as a result of not only internal migrations, but also migrations from outside Hausa land³. It is however important to note here that, Hausa language is one of the great lingua franca of Africa and is spoken by many people with little or even no Hausa blood in their vein⁴.

The earliest Hausa settlers in Ilorin have undoubtedly become natives over centuries and as such they could only be regarded as settlers in the same manner that the other original ethnic groups in the town would be so regarded. This is because the Hausa people in the Gambari area were among the early people to settle in Ilorin, making

¹ Adamu, Mahdi, *The Hausa Factor in West African History*. Ahmadu Bello University Press, Zaria, 1978 page 1.

² Ifemesia, C.C "States of the Central Sudan" in J.F Ade Ajayi and Ian Espie (Ed) *A Thousand Years of West African History*, Ibadan University Press/Nelson, 1981, page 80

³ Adamu, Mahdi, Op. Cit., Page 2.

⁴ Stride, G. T. and Ifeaka C. *People and Empires of West Africa*, Nelson 1982, page 86.

it one of the three principal communities to which the town is divided right from the time of the first Emir, Abdulsalami. The two others are Fulani and Yoruba. It is in this regard that P.C. Lloyd states that "the first Emir created four Baloguns as war leaders: Fulani representing the Fulani element in the town, Gambari representing the Hausa; Alanamu and Ajikobi representing the Yoruba. Each Balogun oversees that quarter of the town peopled predominantly by the tribal groups⁵. It is however important to note here that the existence of the Hausa under a Sarkin Gambari predated the arrival of Sheikh al-Salih popularly known as Alimi and his group of Hausa slaves in Ilorin as observed by Ismail Saliu⁶. We are also to note at this juncture that the early Hausa community in Ilorin was not confined to the Gambari quarters only as they were also at Ita Ogunbo, Ile Shiru at Ode Alfa Nda, Ile Sabaani at Ode Alausa and Idi Orombo, Ile Jawondo at Ita Ogunbo and Ile Alfa Ajongolo. All these compounds are Hausa by ancestry⁷.

Commercial activities between the Hausa people from the north, as against the descendants of Hausa settlers who were indigenes, had been taking place since the nineteenth century. As a matter of fact, Ilorin succeeded Oyo as an entrepot in the commercial activities between the savannah zone of the north and the forest region of the south following the final collapse of the old Oyo Empire in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century⁸. During the period, articles of trade brought from the north included, but not limited to, horses, cattle, slaves, ivory, cloths, gowns, leather works and natron. Thus, traders and merchants from states like Kano, Katsina, Borno and Tripoli

⁵ Lloyd, P.C. *Sallah in Ilorin*, Nigeria Magazine, No 70. September, 1961 page 267.

⁶ Ismail, Saliu, *Ilorin: From Arcate to Emirate. Towards Revisiting the Rise and Collapse of Afonja*, A Graduate Seminar, HISSTORY Department, University of Ilorin, February, 2003 page 5.

⁷ Jimoh, L.A.K. *Ilorin: The Journey So Far*, Atoto Press Ltd., Ilorin 1994 page 9.

⁸ Baiwo, Adeyinka O. *The Colonial State and Ilorin Emirate Economy 1900-1960*, an Unpublished PhD thesis Department of History, University of Ilorin, 1998. P 63

converged in Ilorin, dealing in variety of commodities listed above⁹. It is important to remark here that Ilorin owe its prominence as an important entrepot to its geographical location which made it a gateway between the savannah north and forest south. Thus, a caravan of something between one thousand and three thousand people were reported, as cited by Banwo, to be leaving Ogbomoso for Ilorin around 1855.

In the same manner, a caravan of about three thousand people and one thousand livestock were reported to be crossing the River Niger at Rabah on their way to Ilorin from the north in 1858¹⁰. Traders from the north utilized pack animals like horses, donkeys, and camels and the Gambari market in the Hausa section of the city served as the major point of interaction for traders from the north and south of the Nigerian region¹¹. At this juncture, we must note that the development of a class of middlemen and land lords since known as *Dillalai* and *Maigida* are, respectively, part of the effect of transnational trade network on Ilorin's economy in the nineteenth century¹². This issue of Dillalai and Maigida shall be extensively treated in this paper

The Contribution of Hausa Traders in the Ilorin Economy in the 20th Century

Hausa Traders and Ilorin Economy

The Hausa traders and merchants that have been contributing to the economy of Ilorin since the beginning of the twentieth century are of two categories: those who started coming to Ilorin to trade from the opening decades of twentieth century and later settled in the town and those who started coming from the 50's but never settled permanently¹³. Whereas the former settled in Gambari/

⁹ Ibid, page 63

¹⁰ Ibid, pp 63-64.

¹¹ Ibid page 64

¹² Ibid page 65

¹³ Hausas in Ilorin are divided into three categories by this researcher in his unpublished M.A thesis. See Yusuf Saliu Danlad, *A History of Hausa Settlers in Ilorin (1900-2000)*, an unpublished M.A thesis, Department of History, University of Ilorin 2009.

Ojagboro/Pake area, the latter preferred their temporary abodes in Kulende area that later became Zango. This residential area was later to become permanent for some Hausa traders too. The story behind this would be explored later in this chapter. As regards the first category of the Hausa traders referred to here, among those traders who were transacting business between Ilorin and Hausa land were those who were ready to stay back in Ilorin and transact their businesses. Among these traders were those who specialized in such commodities as groundnut, beans, cattle and hides and skin¹⁴.

Ilorin was so favoured among many Hausa traders then due to the impression the town had on them. Thus, they referred to Ilorin as *Ilorin Garin Alimi*, *kazo da kayan ciniki*, *ka koma da kudi* which translates thus, "Ilorin, Alimi's abode, come with your merchandise and return with your money". They also refer to the town as *Ilorin Garin Alimi*, *kazo da kaya*, *ka koma da ganmo*, which translates to "Ilorin, Alimi's abode, come with your goods and return with the porter's knot". This means that any merchant or trader who reached Ilorin with his goods there was no doubt about selling such goods or articles¹⁵. One of the most important economic activities of the earliest Hausa traders in the 1900's was trade in cattle. Among the most important players in this field around this time were those who later settled in Ojagboro/Pake axis of Gambari area of the town. These were Alhaji Ali Mumuni. The cattle traders during the period under discussion profited from the cattle trade route that had been in existence before the 20th century. The first main cattle market in Ilorin was around Gambari area and as such, this factor among others explains why these cattle traders settled in Ojagboro/Pake axis. Although the first cattle market in Ilorin was in Gambari area, it was not located in Ipata market where it was known to be before relocation to Kulende area. The first cattle market known as Zango was in Okemagaji in Gambari area. This was where cattle trading really started in Ilorin¹⁶.

¹⁴ Yusuf Salisu Danlad, Op Cit., p 105

¹⁵ Ibid p 105

¹⁶ Ibid, pp106-107

Cattle were herded from the northern part of the country to Ilorin through the area known as *Asa Iya Dundu*, that is, 'Iya Dundu stream'. The stream was named after the woman who fried yam to sell in the vicinity of the river. The route to this Iya Dundu stream, which was and is still generally known as Duma was also known as *AsanKano*. This cattle route has perhaps been in existence since the latter part of the 19th century¹⁷. When the Hausas started bringing cattle to Ilorin to sell, cows were herded to Ilorin through land route, meaning that the herders had to trek to Ilorin from the northern part of the country. This commercial activity gained momentum in Ilorin during the period of the eighth Emir of Ilorin, Abdulkadir during whose time Zango was moved from Okemagaji to Ipata, around the late 1930's or early 1940's. It was this cattle trade initiated by the Hausas that were based in Pake in Gambari area that gave Opomalu its name. From Asa Iya Dundu, the cows were led to the cattle market in Ipata to sell. Those who wanted to proceed to Yoruba land with their cattle passed through Opomalu and then through the route that would take them to the western part of the country¹⁸. Thus, Opomalu denotes cattle route. The cattle route to western part of Nigeria also passed through Agbo Oba and Oko Erin. The cattle merchants during this period usually made stop-over in these two places to sell. Those who could not buy from the cattle market - Zango- in Ipata had to meet these traders at Agbo, Oba or, if they couldn't meet up, meet them further up at Oko Erin. The buyers may be from Ilorin itself or people from Ijebu or Ibadan who were themselves cattle traders¹⁹.

The pattern of the cattle trade during this period, that is from the 40's through to the sixties was such that when the Hausa merchants trekked down from the northern part to Ilorin, their cattle were displayed at Zango in Ipata where the indigenous business men who were acting as the middle men would buy the cows from them and sell to the final consumer either from Ilorin or Yoruba cattle traders

¹⁷ Ibid, p 107

¹⁸ Ibid, pp110-111

¹⁹ Interview with Alhaji Laaro, Ile Are Compound, Akalambi, Ilorin, Goat trader. Age 85 years; 23/07/2017.

from Ijebu, Ottun, Ikirun or even Ibadan²⁰. Among the Yorubas who came to Ilorin to buy cows, the Ijebu people were the most prominent. And this explains the reason why they had their own residential quarters in Ojagboro area. Of course, Ojagboro is not far from Zango, the cattle market in Ipata at that time. Their quarters in Ojagboro is known as Ile Ijebu. Whereas the Ijebu cattle traders bought cows from Ilorin to sell at home in Ijebu and some other places in Yoruba land close to their base, the indigenous cattle traders from Ilorin herded their own cows to Lagos and Ibadan to sell. It took cow drivers up to six days to herd the cows from Ilorin to Ibadan if they would be resting on the way. If the journey would be without any interruption or rest, then the journey would take them four days²¹. This uninterrupted trek from Ilorin to Ibadan is known as *Kurare* in Hausa language.

When rail transport was gaining ground in the early fifties and sixties, the Hausa cattle merchants started transporting their cattle from the northern part of the country to Ilorin on rail. Then, between 30 to 35 coaches of cattle would enter Ilorin at a go by rail. Train was then known, in the parlance of the Hausa traders, as *Taragɗo*²². From late 70's to early 80's, some indigenous cattle merchants started sending their male children and underlings to the north to purchase cattle in the companies of their Hausa business partners. Some of the major cattle markets were then situated at Illela, Sokoto, Gunku and Kebbi²³. Be that as it may, the Hausa merchants still had virtual monopoly on cattle trade in Ilorin to early nineties. But when we talk of Hausa cattle traders, we also refer to the Fulanis who were, and still are, part and parcel of the trade. From the early nineties, the young

²⁰ Interview with mall. Surajudeen Yusuf, Onitobe Compound, Ojagboro, Ilorin; Cattle trader. Age 42 years; 23/07/2017

²¹ Interview with Alhaji Laaro already cited. Mall Surajudeen also corroborated this.

²² Interview with Alhaji Laaro.

²³ Interview with Mall Taiye Biriji, Ile Alasa, Isale Kannike, Ilorin; Goat trader. Age 54 years, 23/07/2017

indigenous cattle traders from Ilorin started travelling to the north to buy cows and are now a force to reckon with in the business²⁴.

However, we must note here that the commercial activities of Hausa traders in Ilorin were not limited to cattle trade. Apart from trade in cattle, sheep and goat, these Hausa traders were also involved in grain commodities like beans, *maiwa*, *jero* and guinea corn. Unlike the cattle market (Zango) that started in Okemagaji in Gambari area and later relocated to Ipata and then Kulende and finally to Okeose, the first goat market in Ilorin was the Emir's Market. This was for a very long time the central market in Ilorin and it has been in existence since the colonial period, around the same time as the cattle market in Ipata. To this market, the Hausa goat traders brought sheep and goat to sell. It was a big market that catered for all categories of goods and merchandise found in central markets. In this very market, Hausa traders were also involved in businesses as varied as grains, dried fish and dried meat. These goat merchants came to Ilorin from various towns and villages scattered in the present day Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara and Katsina states. It is however interesting to note here that the goat trade section of the market was only for the goats and sheep brought to Ilorin by the Hausa traders to sell. There was a separate market for the 'native goats' known as *eran ibile* by the local people. The native goats are the type that is domesticated by the local people for economic reasons. Thus, the native goats' market was in the site of the present day Oja Tuntun (New Market) in Baboko. When the site of the then Emir's Market was earmarked for the city's central mosque and all sections were expected to relocate, the sheep/goat section of the market had to relocate to the former cattle market in Ipata market in 1974 as the cattle market had relocated to Kulende in 1957. In the same year (1974), the native goat market had to relocate to Ago market where traders dealing in grains and other raw food items also relocated to. Right from the early days of Hausa goat trading in Ilorin, traders from Omuaran, Ottun, Osogbo, Ikirun and even Ibadan have been patronizing Ilorin goat market. Ilorin is their own northern Nigeria²⁵.

²⁴ Interview with Mall. Surajudeen, already cited.

²⁵ Interview with Mall Surajudeen Yusuf.

As stated above, Hausa trader's involvement in economic activities in Ilorin was not limited to cattle and goat trade as they are also involved in the grain business like beans, corn, guinea corn, *jero* and *mewa*. They are also involved in dried meat and dried fish businesses. The trade in grain was dominated, right from the very beginning, by the ever-mobile Hausa traders who did not settle down in Ilorin but rather returned to the north whenever they sold their commodities. The Hausa traders that were actively involved in *Eran Egbe* (dried meat) and *Eja Egbe* (dried fish) business were the Hausas that later settled in Ilorin. The most notable of such Hausa business men that later settled were Alhaji Jika and Alhaji Audu Bakabe who was to later become the second *Sarkin Hausawa* (Head of the Hausa community) in Ilorin. Whereas the former came from Katsina, the latter came from Argungu in the present day Kebbi State. These two prominent Hausa business men were able to make fame as well as money for themselves as they became prosperous in that line of trade. This trade too began in the old Emir's Market that had already been referred to above. This dried meat and dried fish business still goes on in Idiape market and what is now left of Emir's market.²⁶ That is to say, whereas the traders in grain commodities relocated to Ago market and those that specialized in sheep and goat relocated to Ipata market when they were all asked to move in 1974, the dried meat and dried fish business men stayed close to the Emir's Market in Idiape and in the vicinity of the old market.

Merchant Brokers and Hausa Traders

The *Maigida* - *Dillalai* relationship with the Hausa merchants from the north is key to understanding the economic relationship between the early Hausa traders in Ilorin and their native hosts. Whereas the former term stands for Landlord, the latter stands for Middlemen. As a matter of fact, the *Maigida*/*Dillalai* and Hausa merchants' relationship had been in place since the nineteenth century. In this business arrangement, the *Dillalai* (Middlemen) served as trade agents or brokers to the long-distance merchants who brought their merchandise to sell in Ilorin. As Banwo observed, "part of the effect of the transnational trade network on the emirate's economy in the

²⁶ Yusuf Salu Danlad, op cit., pp 111-112.

nineteenth century was the development of a class of middlemen and landlords known as *Dillalai* and *Maigida* respectively". Whereas the middlemen used their knowledge of Ilorin business environment to obtain a good deal for the travelling Hausa merchants, making their own profit in the process, the Landlords provided the merchants with lodging and accommodation. We must note here that in some cases, the *Dillalai* also served as the *Maigida*²⁷. This *Dillalai*/*Maigida* system is not restricted to Ilorin as it is a system that is common to other Yoruba towns with sizable number of Hausa traders and settlers.

While discussing landlord system in Ibadan, Salamone observes that "The landlord is a pivotal figure in the life of the Hausa settlement of Sabo. He must know the dealers who trade there intimately. Additionally, he controls lodging in Sabo"²⁸. In the early decades of the twentieth century for instance, the first Hausa cattle traders in Ilorin started by bringing their own cattle to sell in the town. They later started hosting the other Hausa cattle merchants from the north in their own bases in Ilorin. These first cattle traders helped their counterparts from the north to sell their cows. One of such cattle traders was Alhaji Ali Mumuni, the first *Sarkin Hausawa* in Ilorin. He started by selling his own cows and he was later hosting some other Hausa cattle traders from the north, helping them to sell their cows and acting as both their landlord and middleman in the process²⁹.

This role of middle man landlord was not restricted to the Hausa traders that had settled in Ilorin alone as some indigenous businessmen were also actively involved. For instance, the people known as the *Andarawas* brought *Goga* cows from Bornu to sell in Ilorin during the trekking era. Their middlemen and hosts who provided them with lodging were the indigenous businessmen based in Itagoma which is not far from Gambari from one direction and from the Emir's Palace from another. Mallam Sule Maito, a prominent indigenous businessman who was to later acquire fame in

²⁷ Banwo, Adeyinka, O. op cit p 65.

²⁸ Salamone, Frank A., *The Waziri and the Thief: Hausa Islamic Law in a Yoruba City; A Case Study from Ibadan, Nigeria in African Studies Review* Vol. 39, No 2, September 1996 page 129

²⁹ Yusuf Salu Danlad, op. cit., pp 107-108

Ilorin politics was one of the early middlemen to the Hausa cattle traders. The other prominent indigenous middlemen in the cattle business were Alhaji Maigidansanma, Mallam Dare Oketa and Alhaji Toyin Baruba. Other middlemen were scattered in Itagoma, Ile Seriki, Isale Kannike and Gambari environs. These middlemen, *Maidillalai* were also known as *Maisadawa*. From the 70's the latter term gave way to *Onisaari*, a Yoruba term which still emphasizes the *Maidillalai* concept³⁰.

Another Yoruba term with which the landlords are identified apart from Maigida which is, of course a Hausa term, is its Yoruba equivalent *Baale*. Thus, there were, and even today there are, middle men in cattle, goat, grains, dried meat and dried fish businesses in Ilorin. Between 70's and 80's, such cattle merchants like Alhaji Maigari from Gusau; Alhaji Musa Sokoto from Sokoto, Mallam Garba Busu from Taghaza, the Republic of Niger were prominent and all of them had their middlemen and landlords in the ranks of the indigenous cattle traders³¹. Among the goat/sheep merchants from the north in the 70's and 80's was Mallami and Mallam Diskua from Sokoto³²; Alhaji Audu Rijau and Alhaji Kasau from Rijau in Niger State and Mallam Mamman Barkeji from Barkeji, Sokoto State³³. Whenever it was the period of Eid Kabir these goat merchants would shift their attention to ram/sheep business and many Hausa traders from the north were usually involved. These days, indigenous goat traders and even seasonal ram traders are now actively involved in this business. Even though, the traditional goat traders (the Hausas) are still found in this seasonal business.

As stated earlier, cattle market in Ilorin as in the other Yoruba towns is known as zango. The zango head, known in Hausa as *Sarkin Zango* was from the beginning not just the head of the cattle market, but also the head of the goat market in Ilorin. Initially, the Alangua

³⁰ Interview with Alhaji Laaro, already cited

³¹ Interview with Mall Taiye Biriji already cited.

³² Mallam Bale Oke magaji, Gambari area; Goat trader. Age 47 years; 23 /07 /2017.

³³ Mallam Egbon Serkin Zango Compound, Isale Kannike; Goat trader. Age 48 years; 23/07/ 2017.

family in Ilorin produced the Sarkin Zango. But the Kannike people in Gambari area have been occupying the position ever since. Both the Alangua family and the Sarkin Zango family of Isale Kannike were only able to occupy the position by the virtue of their roles, from the very beginning, as middlemen and landlords to the cattle and goat merchants³⁴.

In terms of Hausa traders' involvement in grain trading in Ilorin, their involvement was, and is still, far more pronounced in beans business. The Hausa beans traders had been actively involved in grains business in Ilorin right from the era of Emir's Market before relocating to Ago market in 1974. The Hausa traders are still active in beans business in Ilorin today. Among the Hausa merchants that were actively involved in the beans business at the Emir's Market and after were Alhaji Muazu, Alhaji Salele, Alhaji Ado, Alhaji Maharaju, Alhaji Abdul Azeez, Alhaji Lawan, Alhaji Salisu and Alhaji Saminu, all from Katsina State. Also prominent among these beans' merchants were Alhaji Audu Baki from Gombe and Alhaji Sanni from Sokoto³⁵. As stated earlier, the landlord/middleman system cut across all the businesses that the Hausas were involved in, be it cattle, goat dried meat, dried fish or beans business. Its application was, and is still, more or less the same across all these businesses. In the beans dillalai business for instance, the beans merchant would bring a truckload of beans from Katsina or any other part of northern Nigeria or even Niger Republic to Ilorin to sell. The beans would be sold in bags and the business of selling was none of the merchant's business. It was, and still is, the business of the merchant's middleman who in most cases, doubled as his landlord. The merchant's indigenous business partner would sell to the local traders in bags as his middleman, hand over cash to the merchant at the end of each business transaction and collect his commission from the buyer. In some cases, depending on the business arrangement, the merchant himself would still pay his middleman some commission. As the merchant's landlord (maigida), the indigenous partner would provide the merchant with lodging in

³⁴ Yusuf Saliu Danlad, op. cit p 110

³⁵ Interview with Mallam Isiaka Omolabi, omolabi compound, Gambari. Beans trader. Age 49 years; 30/07/2017

the same premises as his own family or in the vicinity. The dried meat and dried fish business follow virtually the same pattern with only minor variation which is a result of the nature of the business. All these are as witnessed by this researcher himself.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, we tried to show how the Hausa merchants and traders have been part and parcel of commercial activities in Ilorin right from the beginning of 20th century. Some of the earliest Hausa traders who started coming to Ilorin at the turn of 19th century eventually settled down in Ojagboro/Pake axis of Gámbari quarters. Cattle trade was so important in those early years as indigenous businessmen and traders were also actively involved in the business. Added to the cattle business were the goat/sheep trade, dried meat and dried fish business and trade in grain commodities, especially beans. Underpinning these various businesses is the Maigida/Dillalai (landlord/middleman) system that defines the relationship between the Hausa merchants dealing in various kinds of goods and their business partners who were at hand to assist them in getting their goods sold. All the above-mentioned businesses and the landlord/middleman system continues, with minor or major changes, to date. This depends to a large extent on the business.

The Mahdi Tradition and its Impact on the State of Borno and Adamawa: The Case of Hayat Bn Said and Rabeh in the 19th Century

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"Mahdi ideology indicates a divinely guided deliverer who would appear and fill the world with equity and justice for a short period before the End of Time"

Introduction

Man, by his inherent nature has over time devised diverse strategies to contest and combat tyranny and exploitation engendered by the circumstances and conditions he found himself from antiquity to the present time. This response, should be noted, is not only limited to heavenly revealed religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism),¹ but applies to a struggle that had cut across humanity depending on the time, culture, orientations, religious beliefs of any giving society.² The

¹ The idea of the appearance of a deliverer is not confined to Islam, it has been observed in the Jewish, Christian, Iranian and Pagans beliefs systems, which will usher or restore the golden age of Islam. For more details, see P. M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898: A study of its Origins and Development and Overthrow*, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1970, pp.22-24, see Also, M. A. Al-Haji, *The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria*, M.A Thesis, 1975, p.167

² It has been established that different societies over the ages have organized beliefs of awaited deliverer. This was noticeable among the Jews beliefs in the expectation of the day of Yahweh, among the Christians beliefs on the second coming of Jesus Isa (messiah), even within the African traditions traces can be found on the expectation of a deliverer, for instance, Bakango in the Congo traditional beliefs system, which later metamorphosed into a movement under Simon Kimbango (20th c). Others also included the Mumbo cult among the Kenyans. There was also the Tuka movement of Fuji Island, the Milne-Bay prophet movements of New Guinea. In the Philippines you found the Sakdal movements, described as the messianic movement.