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EDITORIAL

The annual publication of NATAIS Journal has not only been regular but also supplemented by three Books of reading emanating from proceedings of NATAIS annual conferences in the recent past. We therefore have cause to glorify Allah and hymn His praises in abundance for His continuous grace and guidance.

This volume contains eleven articles, one of which is lead paper on Global Terrorism and Islamic Scholarship presented at the 23rd National annual Conference of NATAIS in Sokoto 2004, one in Arabic and the other in English. There are five articles altogether in Arabic language. The five dwell on various topics such as terrorism, biography, art of writing and the characterization of the modern culture and its impact on Arabic-Islamic civilization in Nigeria. Two other papers written in English language dwell on the relevance of material resource to the teaching and learning of Arabic Language, and the sociolinguistic factors that are responsible for its stagnation as a foreign language in Nigeria. The four remaining articles in English, dwell on different aspects of Islamic studies namely education, history and adjudication of Islamic law of personal status by an independent *Shari'ah* panel in Lagos State.

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THE SOCIO-POLITICAL EFFECTS OF THE CONFERMENT OF TITLES IN ILORIN EMIRATE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

IBRAHIM ABDULGANIY JAWONDO

Introduction

Since the establishment of Ilorin Emirate in 1823, different categories of titles have evolved, each category serving different but related and complementary roles in the Emirate. The first category is the religio-political titles such as *Imam*, *Ladani*, *Ajanasi*, *Alfa Rabana* and all the honorific titles such as *Waziri*, *Wali*, *Makama*, *Turaki*, etc. The second category is socio-political. This includes the *Baloguns*, *Magajis* and *Daudus*. Although all the categories are mentioned in this paper, attention is paid to the honorific titles. It is important to stress here that some titles like *Balogun*, *Makama*, *Iyalaje*, *Turaki*, *Dan Mazani*, etc., that are not of Islamic origin have been adopted and conferred on Muslims to promote Islam and Islamic culture in Ilorin Emirate.

Historical Origin of Titles

The origin of titles is traceable to God, Who, besides making Prophets the leaders (*Imams*) of their communities also conferred on them some titles in recognition of their strong devotion to their missions. The Prophets conferred with titles were Ibrahim (*Khalilullah* – friend of Allah), Musa (*Kalimullah* – one to whom Allah spoke), ‘Isa (*Al-Ruhullah* – The spirit of Allah) and Muhammad (*Habibullah* – Beloved friend of Allah). Among women honoured by God were Asiat, the wife of Pharaoh (the confidant of Allah) and Mariam (*as-Sidiqat* – A Woman of Truth).¹ During the lifetime of the Prophet of Islam, the practice of conferment of titles became well entrenched. He conferred titles on people for their high sense of devotion to God, justice and fair play, goodness to people and moderation in dealings, continence, self-sacrifice and contentment. The Prophet conferred the title of *Mu’adhdhin* (prayer caller) on Bilal while titles such as *as-saddiq* (the truthful), *al-Faruq* (The distinguisher), *Dhu-Nurayn* (possessor of double light), and *Asadullah* (The Lion of Allah) were conferred on caliphs Abubakar, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali, respectively. Furthermore, during the dynasty and caliphate periods, titles such as *Khalif*, *Imam*, *Wazir*, *Qadi*, *Amir* were prominent³ in the northern part of Nigeria. With the establishment of Sokoto Caliphate in 1809, titles like *Sultan*, *Amir*, *Imam*, *Qadi*, *Mu’adhdhin*, *Wali* were used as against the traditional Habe rulers’ titles.⁴ However, the traditional Habe rulers’ titles seemed to have been shunned temporarily as we shall see later. Among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, the practice of conferment of titles started in the 19th century⁵ and continues till date with some peculiarities, which shall be discussed later in this paper.

Origins and Development of Titles in Ilorin Emirate

In Ilorin, conferment of titles could be traced back to 1817 when Shaikh Alimi arrived in Ilorin. The 'Ulama group he met on ground which included Shaikh Abdullah Tahir (Solagberu); the leader of Okesunna community, Shaikh Sasini, Shaikh Muhammad Myunabau, Shaikh Sanusi, Shaikh Muhammad Thani, Shaikh Ahmad Sanni, Shaikh Yusuf Al-Mali, and a host of others, conferred on him the title of Chief Imam (Imam Jamiu) for his piety and erudition.⁶ The system of conferring titles became standardised and well entrenched after the establishment of Ilorin Emirate in 1823 and the recognition of Abdulsalam by the Sokoto Caliphate authorities as the Emir.⁷ He conferred some titles on eminent personalities in order to consolidate the religious, social and political gains of the nascent Emirate. The titles awarded were *Imam Fulani*, conferred on Shaikh Ahmad Sanni, who succeeded Shaikh Alimi as the Chief Imam and was the first Imam Fulani. *Imam Imole* was conferred on Shaikh Garuba Yusuf and was the first *Imam Imole* but his father Shaikh Yusuf Al-Mali was until his death the *Ajanasi* (Reciter of Qur'an) to Shaikh Alimi. The third title was *Imam Gambari* awarded to Shaikh AbdulBaki. Since the establishment of these titles, the holders functioned primarily as spiritual leaders and advisers on religio-political affairs in the Emirate. These titles are domesticated by their families except *Ajanasi* that has since shifted to another family.⁸ During the reign of Emir Sulu (Dhul-Qarnay) Gambari (1959-1992) some positions which had not been popular and officially recognised became popularised and officially sanctioned by him. These include *Ladani* (caller to prayers) and *Ajanasi* (Reciter of Qur'an). *Iya Adinni* and *Ajiroba* were introduced and conferred on people by Emir Sulu Gambari.⁹ The position of *Ladani* is rotated between Isale Oja and Agunbiade families while the position of *Ajanasi* is rotated between Oloyin and Bature families. The Sarumi, Asukuti, and Erubu families have also produced one *Ajanasi* each by circumstance. The Sarumi candidate was a student of Oloyin who deputized for him while on his sick bed. Upon the death of his master, he was appointed. The Erubu candidate got it through the magnanimity of Emir Sulu Gambari. Within the above structure there is the *Alfa Rabana* who offers closing prayer at functions. The title is domesticated among the descendants of Alfa Kokewu Kobere, Emir Sulu Qarnaini created and honoured the Kokewu Kobere family with the title.¹⁰

In the second category of titles, there are the Baloguns (Alanamu, Ajikobi, Gambari, and Fulani) whom Danmole described as *Imarat al-Jaysh*, (warlords), and the Magajis and Daudus that could be described as sub-Baloguns. The latter man the sub-wards of the Baloguns, but they are independent of the Baloguns. They are accountable to the Emir who appoints and turbans them. The Baloguns, Magajis and Daudus are the political heads of their different wards and sub-wards respectively.¹¹ These appointments

which were first made by Emir Abdulsalam were meant to reward soldiers who distinguished themselves at war fronts. It equally gave the opportunity of equal representation to the various ethnic groups in Ilorin at the Emirs Council, the highest decision-making body in Ilorin. As the Emir relates with the principal Imams on matters of religion, so also do the Baloguns, Magajis and Daudus relate with principal Imam and other quarter Imams on matters that concern Islamic legislation. This translates into the integration of the different groups. Besides the advisory role of the Baloguns to the Emir, they are also king makers.¹² These titles are also hereditary.

The honorific titles started in Ilorin in 1955 during the reign of Emir Abdulkadir I (1896-1959). He conferred titles on two illustrious sons of Ilorin who were found worthy, for their contributions to the continuous existence and stability of Ilorin Emirate and the socio-political and religio-economic advancement of both the Emirate and its people. The title of *Madawaki* of Ilorin Emirate was conferred on Alhaji Yahaya Popoola while Alhaji Muhammed Aje-Igbe Gobir was conferred with the title of the first *Waziri* of Ilorin.¹³ These two personalities were among the first group of people in Ilorin Emirate that had western education, and they ranked to the peak of their professions as civil servants and politicians. They were believed to have used their positions to advance the cause of the Emirate anytime anywhere. They were the liaison officers between the Emirate authorities and the colonial authorities. All of these qualified them for the titles. By the death of Emir Abdulkadir in 1959, there were only the *Madawaki* and the *Waziri*.¹⁴

Between 1959 and 1992, which coincided with the reign of Emir Sulu Gambari, about eleven substantive titles were introduced and conferred on Ilorin Emirate indigenes by the Emirate council. The titles were that much at that time because the period witnessed array of achievements, progress and advancement of the Emirate indigenes in all walks of life. Many Ilorin indigenes attained enviable heights in their chosen careers – military, civil service, business and politics. Many of them worked dutifully to advance the cause of the Emirate within the limits of their power.¹⁵ The conferment of the titles, beside being a reward also helped to increase their participation in the affairs of the Emirate.

In 1962, Alhaji AbdulGaniy Folorunsho Abdulrazaq was conferred with *Mutawali* of Ilorin. Late Alhaji Sanni Olarewaju Ibrahim Okin was conferred with *Turaki* of Ilorin in 1963 (d. 1973). Late Alhaji Saadu Ayinla Alanamu (a.k.a. Gbogbo-Iwe) was conferred with *Waziri* in 1963 after the death of the first *Waziri*. Alhaji (Dr.) Abubakar Olusola Saraki in 1974 was conferred with the *Turaki* of Ilorin after the death of the first *Turaki*. In 1979, Alhaji Abubakar Lah was conferred with *Shetima* of Ilorin. In 1984, the present Emir Alhaji Ibrahim Gambari was conferred with *Ciroma* of Ilorin. In 1986,

Alhaji (Dr.) Amuda Aluko was conferred with *Tafidan* Ilorin. In 1987, Alhaji Mamud Akanbi Oniyangi was conferred with *Wali* of Ilorin. The title of *Iyalaje* was conferred on Alhaja Abebi Akosile in 1987, the title of *Ajiroba* was conferred on Alhaji Abdulsalam Ebun Agbabiaka. In 1990, Lawyer Safi Jimba was conferred with *Samaki* Ilorin.

Subsequent to the death of Emir Sulu Gambari the Ilorin Emirate council has conferred about six titles on individuals between 1992 and 2000. Among the titles were *Dan-Iya*, conferred on Alhaji Folorunsho Kawu, Agaka, *Makama* conferred on Alhaji Ibrahim Oniye; *Magayakin* conferred on Alhaji Idris Mahmud; *Dan-Madami* conferred on Alhaji Adebayo Alaya, and *Dan-Masani* conferred on Alhaji Hassan Abdulkadir, all in 1993. In 1997, Alhaja Salimota Yahaya Ori-Okoh succeeded Alhaja Asimau Gogo Alawo (honoured by Sulu Gambari) as the new Iya Adinni of Ilorin.¹⁶

Furthermore, in the year 2000, Emir Ibrahim Sulu Gambari honoured some illustrious sons of Ilorin with titles for their continued interest in the corporate existence of Ilorin Emirate and as worthy ambassadors of the town. Justice Saidu Kawu, former Chief Judge of Kwara State (1974-1984), Chairman 1994 Constitutional Conference Commission and retired Judge of Supreme Court of Nigeria is conferred with *Madawaki* (the position of late Yahaya Popoola). Justice M.B. Belgore, first Kwara State Solicitor General, 1967-1972, and retired Judge and president of The Federal Court of Appeal is conferred with *Mabudin*. Justice S. M. Alfa Belgore, a retired Judge of the Supreme Court of Nigeria is conferred with *Dan-Iya Gari*. Justice Abdulqadir Orire, a retired Grand Qadi of the Kwara State Sharia Court, Ilorin is conferred with *Marafa*, General Abdullah Muhammed, a Chief of Staff in the Presidency is conferred with *Garkuwa*. Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, former Nigeria representative at the United Nations is conferred with *Wambai*. Alhaji Umar Saro, a successful business tycoon is conferred with *Sardauna*. Alhaji (Dr.) Shaikh Kammalluddeen Al-Adabiy a renowned Islamic scholar and the founder of Ansarul Islam Society of Nigeria, is conferred with the *Grand Mufti*, while Dr. Olusola Saraki, the former *Turaki* is conferred with *Waziri* of Ilorin. These titles, unlike the aforementioned ones, are not hereditary.¹⁷

At this juncture, it is important to note that some Yoruba titles have found their ways into the list of the Emirate titles. They include the *Balogun*, the *Ajiroba*, *Iyalaje* and *Iya Adinni*. Danmole is of the opinion that the first Emir of Ilorin Abdulsalam might have been ignorant of the warning of Shaikh Usman Danfodiyo against the use of pre-Islamic titles when he ratified the use of *Balogun* as a title in Ilorin, or that he ignored the instruction because of the local circumstances in Ilorin.¹⁸ Although, Danmole does not explain the circumstances it is possible that he adopted the use of the title of *Balogun* on the advice of his Yoruba lieutenants, some of whom were beneficiaries of the title. Since they were Yoruba, they must have preferred the title bearing in mind the power of the

Balogun in the political arrangement or structure of the old Oyo Empire.¹⁹ Another reason could be that Shaikh Usman's warning only affected titles that ran contrary to Islamic beliefs and philosophy. It should be noted too that at this period, the pre-caliphate titles had also found their way into the caliphate system, most especially after the death of Shaikh Usman Danfodiyo. Habe titles like *Galadima*, *Ciroma*, *Hakimat*, *Sarki Yaki* and a host of others resurfaced²⁰ but now conferred on genuine Muslims. This might have informed the use of the title *Balogun* by the Emir and for the same reason the caliphate authorities did not challenge the use of the title.

However, the adoption of the titles *Ajiroba*, *Iyalaje* and *Iya Adinni* could be explained from the point of view of the influence of the Yoruba on Ilorin. Since Ilorin is geographically a transitory zone, it borrows ideas from both the northern and the western parts of Nigeria. The Yoruba of western Nigeria instituted Islamic titles in the 19th century to aid the spread of Islam in Yorubaland.²¹ However, the titles are indigenized and some were coined from the traditional political structure. The titles so far conferred in Yorubaland include *imam*, *Noibi*, *Onitafusiru*, *Baba Adinni*, *Balogun*, *Otun-Balogun*, *Osi-Balogun*, *Eketa*, *Ekerin-Balogun*, *Ajanasi*, *Seriki*, *Parakoyi*, *Sarumi*, *Asipa* and *Ladani*.²²

Other titles awarded by the league of Imams and Alfas in southern Nigeria include the *Baba Adinni* of Nigeria conferred on Alhaji Abdulwahab Folawiyo, *Aare Musulumi* of Yorubaland awarded to Alhaji AbdulAzeez Arisekola Alao, *Baba Adinni* of Yorubaland conferred on late Alhaji Mashood Abiola. Others are *Iya Adinni* of Yorubaland, Alhaja Sekinat Adekola²³ and *Iya Adinni* of Nigeria, Alhaja Bolajoko Kadir.

At this juncture, it is important to stress that although one cannot ascribe total perfection to the system of conferment of titles in Ilorin Emirate to a large extent, it is sanitised. Unlike in the South-west where titles are said to be conferred on people of less religious understanding, for socio-political and economic reasons, the Ilorin Emirate authorities so far have conferred titles on people of proven integrity and outstanding contributions to Islam and humanity.²⁴ According to Adekunle, titles are conferred on Muslims in Yorubaland to discourage them from taking unIslamic titles, inculcate in their minds Islamic orientation and awareness, and to maximize the use of their influence and financial buoyancy in the course of Islam.²⁵ The system has aided the spread of Islam in Yorubaland. The titleholders have been contributing their quota immensely to the religious, educational, social, political, economic advancement of the Muslims and Islam in their areas through the use of their political and financial powers.²⁶

Socio-Political Effects

The titleholders have remained the centre point to which the Emirate authority and its people recourse in terms of need. They have been contributing individually and collectively to the advancement of the Emirate, socially, politically, economically, and most importantly religiously. For instance, on religious programmes like sponsoring of Islamic programmes on the radio and television (most especially during Ramadan fast) and in the newspapers as well as mobilising people for religious activities names like Dr. Olusola Saraki (The *Turaki*, now *Waziri*, of Ilorin), Alhaji Adebayo Alaya, (The *Dan-Madami* of Ilorin), Alhaji Ibrahim Oniye, (The *Makama* of Ilorin) and Alhaja Salimota Yahaya Ori-Okoh, the (Iya Adinni of Ilorin) are prominent in this regard.²⁷ They usually donate their widows' mite to the construction or renovation of mosques and Quranic schools. Educationally, it is on record that Dr. Olusola Saraki, the *Turaki* of Ilorin was the largest donor in the establishment and running of Ilorin Grammar School and Ilorin Comprehensive High School Ilorin all belonging to the Ilorin community. Alhaji A.G.F. Abdulrazaq, the *Mutawali* of Ilorin, saved Ilorin from the problem of admissions into secondary school in 1967 by solely establishing Ilorin College, Ilorin (ICI) now called Government High School, Ilorin, beside his donations to the establishment of Ilorin Grammar School.²⁸ This school not only provided opportunity for secondary education to Ilorin indigenes and other Muslims, but also provided employment opportunity for a number of qualified indigenes both at the academic and non-academic cadres. Late Alhaji Saadu Ayinla Alanamu, the second *Wazir* of Ilorin and the ninth Balogun Alanamu of Ilorin, was said to have laid water pipes from a distance of about two kilometres to the Ilorin Grammar School compound while Dr. Amuda Aluko placed his hospital, Gari Alimi Hospital, at the service of the school community free of charge.²⁹

Alhaji Sanni Okin, the first *Turaki* of Ilorin, was extolled for his role in the United Primary School, Ilorin in the establishment and administration of the first community primary school in Ilorin in 1944. Besides, he facilitated government scholarship to Ilorin indigenes to pursue western education. In the same vein, the *Wali* of Ilorin, Alliaji Mahmud Akanbi Oniyangi, is also believed to have granted private scholarship to Ilorin indigenes for the pursuit of western education.³⁰

On the advancement of the course of Ilorin, it is noted that the *Mutawali* of Ilorin, Alhaji A.G.F. Abdulrazaq, in 1957 single-handedly, and successfully too, prevented Ilorin Emirate merger with the western region at the Willink Commission.³¹ He has since then being called defender-of-no-merger. In 1974, Lawyers Mustapha Akanbi, Mahmud Akanbi Oniyangi, and Ibrahim Gambari (present Emir) successfully defended the community's interests against illegal acquisition of some sections of the Emirate land by the State Government at the Soladoye Commission of 1974.³² Furthermore, in 1988,

the *Samaki* of Ilorin, Lawyer Safi Jimba, successfully defended Ilorin Local Government Area edict that prohibits the manufacturing and sale of liquor within the indigenous areas of Ilorin, which was challenged at the law Court by the Kwara State Beer Dealers.

On welfarism, Dr. Olusola Saraki, the *Turaki* of Ilorin, reigns prominently, not only in Ilorin but all over Kwara State. He spends lavishly to assist the masses and embarks on community development projects, like sinking of boreholes, construction of water tanks, laying of water pipes etc. He also contributed financially into the construction of Pakata road in Ilorin and a number of mosques within and outside the Emirate. He sends some Muslims (from among the masses) to Mecca for the holy pilgrimage annually.³⁴ All these, some people believe, are done for political relevance as he donates money to the Christians too. Of note also is the worthy effort of the *Iyalaje* of Ilorin, Alhaja Abebi Akosile at making food available and affordable to the masses. The *Iyalaje* is the architect of food revolving scheme in Ilorin. In order to check the unprecedented hike in food prices in Ilorin and Kwara State as a whole, in the 90s, she, in conjunction with some private businessmen and organizations and the State Women Commission, bought food items (in commercial quantity) and sold them to the masses at an open market at a reduced price.³⁵

Furthermore, many of the titleholders have used their multifarious influences to assist the unemployed graduates of Ilorin to secure employment at all levels of government and at private firms. Some have also provided employment to indigenes in their private businesses. Dr. Amuda Aluko (*Tafidan Ilorin*), established his Garin-Alimi hospital, Ilorin, where about seventy percent of the work-force is from Ilorin. A number of Ilorin indigenes also work at the various branches of the Societe Generale Bank of Nigeria, to which Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki (the *Turaki* now *Waziri* of Ilorin) was a principal partner before it went distressed. On the part of the titleholders, the titles conferred on them socio-political and economic relevance, not only within the Emirate but also in Nigeria and beyond. In fact, people respect them wherever they go and see them as ambassadors of their community. The positions give them the opportunity to be known and heard in the society. The titles enhance their personal, social, political and religious status and those of their families.

People associate with them, extend to and seek marriage relationship with them and their families, in order that their social status too would be enhanced. Little wonder then that the turbaning ceremonies are usually characterised with funfare, pomp and pageantry. It is important to note, and in fact stress that the Emir remains the rallying point for all the titleholders. There seems to exist a wide gap among the titleholders. There is no visible collective development project, rather each one on his/her own

project. The causes of these are beyond the scope of this work. This situation, no doubt, has its implications on the prosperity of the Emirate.

Conclusion

The conferment of titles in Ilorin Emirate is as old as the Emirate itself. It started as a means to consolidate religio-political and socio-economic gains of the then nascent Emirate. It grew gradually and steadily, through the ages, to become a powerful tool to reward selfless individual efforts towards community development. The titles ranged from religio-political to socio-economic ones. The first two are hereditary while the latter is not.

The holders of these titles commit themselves to the upliftment of the Emirate by contributing their quotas within the limits of their powers. Today their visible contributions have boosted the socio-political standards of Ilorin Emirate.

Notes and References

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