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Tsibirin Gobir or the Genesis of a Kingdom

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RÉSUMÉ

Tibirin Gobir ne se limite pas seulement à la capitale administrative du Gobir. Il faut voir le sultanat du Gobir dans son ensemble. Il ne s'agit pas de l'empire historique du Gobir mais surtout de l'emplacement actuel de ce qui reste du grand royaume du Gobir dans la République nigérienne. Présentement, avec le découpage administratif colonial, le Sultanat du Gobir englobe grosso modo la région de Tahoua avec les départements de Konni, Malbaza, Madawa et la région de Maradi avec les départements de Guidan-Rumdji, Dakoro et Mayahi. Et même avec les départements précités certains cantons et groupements (Peuls et Touaregs) ne sont pas concernées. Cependant, dans les régions d'Agadez et Tillabéri, on y rencontre quelques cités historiques habitées par des Gobirawa. C'est le cas d'Assodé, Marandat et Bagazan (Agadez), Hamdalaye et Filingué (Tillabéri).

Cette étude va mettre l'accent, par le truchement d'une approche socio-littéro-historique, sur quatre (4) axes principaux: (i) historique des Gobirawa, (ii) pénétration coloniale et changement politico-social y afférent; (iii) découpage administratif et (iv) organisation politico-administrative actuelle du Sultanat.

Mots clés : *Tibirin Gobir, découpage administratif colonial, organisation politico-administrative.*

ABSTRACT

Tsibirin Gobir does not limit itself to only the administrative capital of Gobir. One must see the Sultana of Gobir in its whole. It does not concern the historical empire of Gobir but mainly the present site that remains from the great Gobir Kingdom in Niger Republic. Presently, with the colonial administrative division, the Gobir Kingdom includes grosso modo Tahoua region with the departments of Birnin-Konni, Malbaza, Madawa and Maradi region with the departments of Guidan-Rumji, Dakwaro and Mayahi. And even with the above cited departments, some areas (Cantons, Fulbe and Tuaregs zonal groups) are not concerned. Nevertheless, in Agadez and Tillaberi regions, we come across some Gobirawa historical cities. That is the case of Asode, Marandat and Bagazan (Agadez), Hamdalaye and Filingue (Tillabéri). This paper will put an accent, through a socio-litero-historic approach on four (4) main axes: (i) background history of the Gobirawa, (ii) colonial penetration and its politico-social change, (iii) Administrative division and (iv) Sultanate's present day politico-administrative organization

Key words: *Tibirin Gobir, colonial administrative division, politico-administrative organization.*

Introduction

The *Gobirawa* (constituents of *Gobir* ethnical group) have an ancient and rich historical background. Their history has been discussed and continues to be discussed by many researchers worldwide, mainly from Federal Republic of Nigeria and Niger Republic. This fastidious interest has a link with the richness and diversity of the *Gobir Kingdom* secular history. A kingdom dotted with a highly everlasting life and fortitude.

Many intellectuals have debated on *Gobir Kingdom* on different research areas and in different languages ranking from Arabian and Ajami manuscript to Hausa, French, English, Spanish, and German. Nigerienne writers and Historians like late Boubou Hama have done their best on different aspects of the *Gobirawa's* life. It is the same with the Nigerian Historians with many others that I cannot list here. Added to these specialists, some anthropologists and sociologists like Mahamadou Korao (*Contribution of Hausa language in the search of their origin*) and Gerd Spittler (*Urban-Rural and Rural-Rural Migration in Gobir [Niger]*), have also dealt with the *Gobir Kingdom*.

In this paper, four components of the *Gobir Kingdom* will be discussed ranking from the background history of the *Gobirawa*, the colonial penetration and its politico-social change to the *Gobirawa* Administrative division and the Sultanate's present day politico-administrative organization. Let us start with the background history of the *Gobirawa*.

Background History of the *Gobirawa*

The above map represents the Hausa kingdom or Hausa land

I prefer to let historians discuss the historical background of the *Gobirawa*. Nevertheless, it is necessary to remind the reader just some hints of their history. According to Boubou Hama (1967) *Gobirawa* fall their country of origin to *Gubur*, a town at the North-East of Mecca. *Gubur* is a word composed of two syllables and coded: - *Gub*, Sumerian term, has two meanings: one means "head of beef" and the other "to stand" (Jean Bottero and Marie Joseph Steve, 1993.). The country of origin of the *Gobirawa* is thus in Mesopotamia, Greek word which means "mesos" middle, "potamos" water, what we commonly call Island, and "cibiri" in Hausa. It should be noted that "cibiri", island, derives from another term Hausa "cibira", the place where the Sun made its appearance (*Histoire du Gobir et de Sokoto*).

According to Sani Habou Magagi, Regional Office Human Sciences Research Institute of Maradi, the history of *Gobir* has started since 5.000 years with 1.100 years of migration and it seems that they are originated from Bagdad (Iraq), their first capital; the second capital is *Birnin Kudus* in Jerusalem; the third capital is *Birnin Gubur* (Saudi Arabia); the fourth is *Birnin Karbala* (Saudi Arabia); the fifth is *Birnin Masr* (Egypt); the sixth is *Birnin Surukan* (Tunisia); the seventh is *Birnin Tunass* (Tunisia); the 8th is *Birnin Bagazane* (Niger); the 9th is *Birnin Aigadass* (Niger); the 10th is *Birnin Tinliguilit* (Niger); the 11th is *Birnin Marandat* (Niger); the 12th is *Birnin Toro* (Niger); the 13th is *Birnin Lallé* (Niger); the 14th is *Birnin Gororobé* (Niger); the 15th is *Birnin Alkalawa* (Nigeria); the 16th is *Birnin Dakurawa* (Niger); the 17th is *Birnin Gawon Gazaw* (Nigeria); the 18th is *Birnin Maradi*-where they have co-habituated with the *Katsinawa* (Niger). These capitals are listed up to the last which is the 19th called *Birnin Cibirin Gobir*. From Bagdad (Iraq) to *Cibirin Gobir* (Niger), the *Gobirawa* have spent 1.100 years of migration. It is important to note that the capitals of the *Gobirawa* have stayed ten times in Niger area and two times in Nigeria.

The 19th capital, *Cibirin Gobir* (Tibiri Gobir in French) is founded in 1835 by Jibon Tauba after the *Dakurawa* battle between Mahaman Bello and two sovereigns: the first from Katsina (Maradi) named Rauda and the second from *Cibiri* called Ali. According to Sani Habu Magagi, from the first chief Lamido to the 380th present day Sultan of *Gobir* Honorable Alhaji Abdu (Abdurahman) Balla Marafa, one can say that the *Gobir* ascension reaches its top with the reign of *Sarkin Gobir*, Bawa Jangorzo whose fame has reached worldwide, thanks to his mysterious and mystical supernatural power. The decline of the great empires or kingdoms has started with the Alhaji Omar's *jihad* in western Sudan, Usman Dan Fodiyo's *jihad* in central Sudan and the Mahadi's *jihad* in eastern Sudan. These three *jihads* have occurred in the same period, around the 19th century. For the *Gobir* decline, Usman Dan Fodiyo's *jihad* has been its origin with the destruction of the ruling family, thanks to the crisis between the sovereign Yunfa and his brothers. There have been tribal and internal wars between the different states at the beginning of the 20th century. And then, the advent of colonization has destroyed all the great kingdoms of the western Africa.

You will observe that I have not raised the issue of the *Gobirawa* origin of Queen *Magajiya Daurama*. I choose to paraphrase Guy Nicolas (*Journal des Africanistes*, 1969 : 199-232) who has asserted that Hausa history in general and *Gobir* historical past in particular, as reported by oral tradition and Arab manuscripts, has started with the sharing of an empire initially commended by a queen whose capital would have been located in Daura, between her children gotten with a hero (*Bayajidda*) an Arab prince who traveled to the Sahel from Baghdad; he is supposed to be the forefather of the Hausa; he has killed a monstrous snake that oppressed the people of Daura, and he married the queen (www.saylor.org/courses/hist). But some researchers think that it is a myth which does not explain how this State has been constituted inside the Bornu Empire.

Anyway, this myth is used to consolidate the cohesion of a team of sovereignties sharing the same cultural heritage and practices by linking their ruling dynasties to a single common genealogical tree on a friendly base. They are divided into two groups according to their dynasties: the *Hausa Bakwai* (legitimate) including Daura, Kano, Katsina, Zaria (*Zazzau*), Gobir, Rano, Biram [Hadejia] and the *Bazan Bakwai* (illegitimate) composed by Zamfara (state inhabited by Hausa-speakers), Kebbi (state inhabited by Hausa-speakers), Yauri (also called Yawuri), Gwari (also called *Gwariland*), Kwararafa (the state of the Jukun people), Nupe (state of the Nupe people) and Ilorin (was founded by the Yoruba). [Lapidus Ira, 2014].

The Hausa kingdoms are qualified as legitimate because they “began as seven states founded according to the *Bayajidda* legend by the six sons of Bawo and himself, the unique son of the hero and the queen *Magajiya Daurama* in addition to the hero's son, Biram or Ibrahim, of an earlier marriage” (Lapidus Ira, 2014). These states included only kingdoms inhabited by Hausa-speakers. In opposition to the legitimate states and according to the *Bayajidda* mythology, the *Banza Bakwai* states are called illegitimate because they are founded by the seven sons of *Karbagari* (“Town-seizer”), the unique son of *Bayajidda* and the slave-maid, *Bagwariya*. They are called the *Banza Bakwai* meaning bastard or *Bogus Seven* on account of their ancestress' slave status (loc.cit.). Among the *Hausa Bakwai*, Gobir is well posted as it is the case with Daura, Kano, Katsina and Zazzau. After this brief historical reminding, let us discuss the colonial penetration and its politico-social change in *Cibirin Gobir*- Niger.

Colonial Penetration and its Politico-Social Change

The history of the decline of the *Gobir* Kingdom coincides with the history of the French West African colonization. Though the collapse of the great West African Empires was precipitated by the Fulani jihadists from 1804 to 1808 (Smith, Michael: *The Affairs of Daura*, Berkeley 1978), colonial penetration is also one of the major cause. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia *Gobir* is particularly remembered as the chief opponent of Fulani Islamic reformer Usman Dan Fodiyo. Bawa Jan-Gorzo, a ruler of *Gobir*, appears to have invited Dan Fodiyo to the area in 1774; Dan Fodiyo made his home in the small town of Degel, and began preaching. Dan Fodiyo was given some role in the education of Bawa's nephew and later successor, Yunfa (1803-1808), but also publicly attacked what he saw as the abuses of the Hausa elite, particularly the burden they placed on the poor. The Jihad would not have been done if *Gobir* had not known a changing of sovereign, after the death of the powerful king Bawa Jan Gorzo. During his rule the kingdom reaches its summit. In his life, he has governed with an “iron hand”. (CNRS, *Organisation sociale et appréhension du monde au sein d'une société africaine : vallée de Maradi- Niger*, 1956-1965). The new king Yunfa does not have the authority and the power of his father. Moreover, he has been the disciple of the Islamic reformer Usman Dan Fodiyo who schools him. After the Jihad one part of the *Gobirawa* takes refuge in Tibiri region. Nowadays, the political authority of the present day Sultan concerns only this area which corresponds administratively to the Sultanate of *Gobir*, an administrative division of Maradi Region in Niger Republic, approximatively 3,000 kilometers squares. (CNRS, 1956-1965)

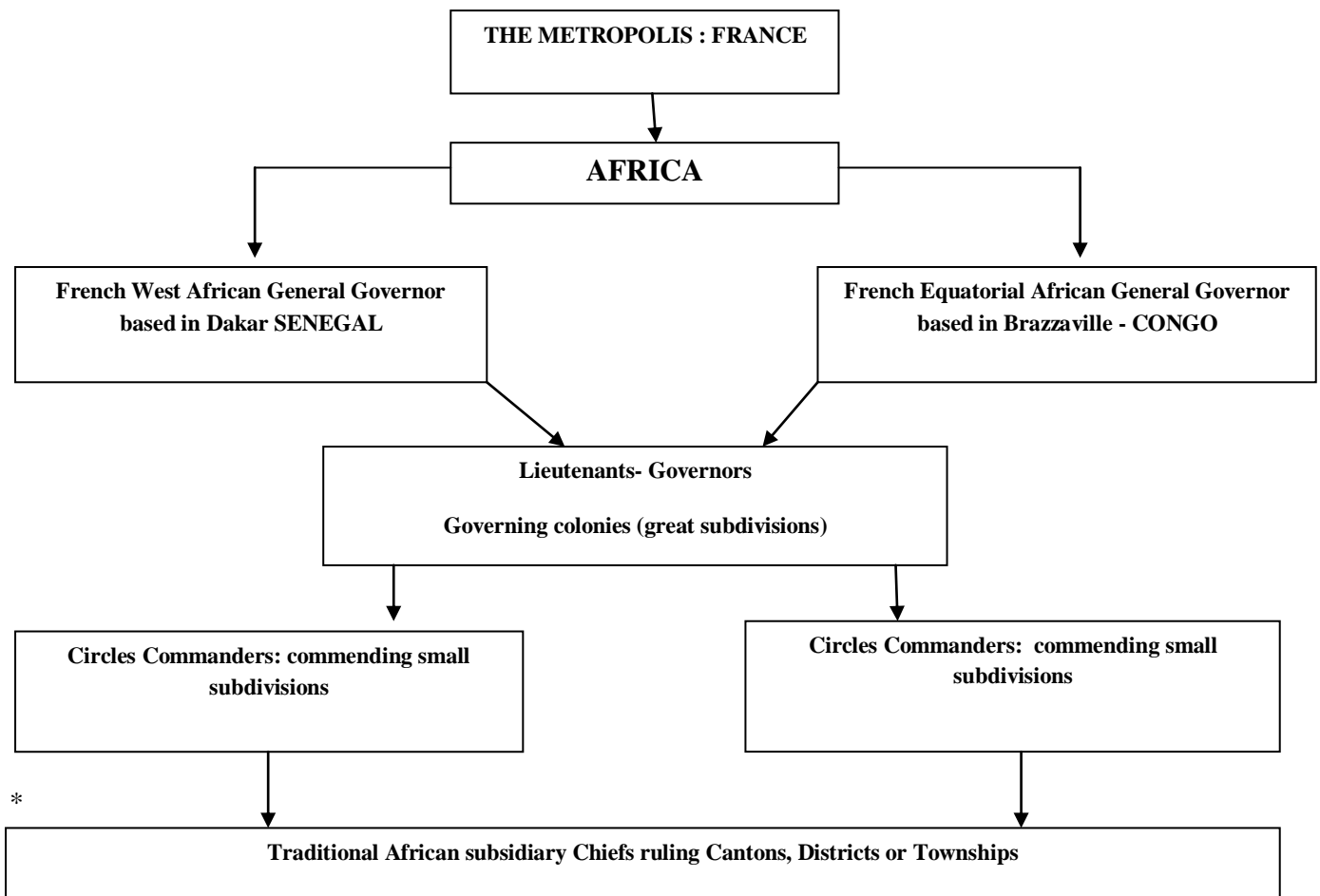
To close this parenthesis on the Jihad memory and continue with the French colonization, it will be helpful to recall the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) where French people try to anticipate their expansion on the Niger loop so that they link and gather their West, Central and South African colonies in one single territory. That is why around 1888 French and British people launched expeditions towards Africa. The colonial forces quickly have shared Africa without any pain, during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, at least on paper. But practically, it was not easy to get these shares. (<http://afriquepluriel.ruwenzori.net/>) Series of autochthones resistances and confrontations have enfolded the colonial penetration. But Africans have paid for their obstinacy and stubbornness. At this point, Gerd Spittler's (1977) assertion is illustrative:

The villages in the valley of *Gulbin* Maradi have been deserted since the military expedition of Voulet-Chanoine. Cazemajou, who has travelled from Sabon Birni to Tibiri in March of 1898, found them inhabited (Cazemajou, 1900). Colonel Klobb, who has followed Voulet- Chanoine in July of 1899, found the villages burnt down by the expedition and deserted by the inhabitants (Klobb, 1931:183).

To rebel against a colonial State, as said by Olivier Bain (<mailto:olivier.bain@club-internet.fr>), was more difficult than to resist to the conquest, because one must, at the same time, organize himself secretly and seriously if one wanted to succeed. Leaders of great armed rebellions (1870-1898) were well known political and military authorities especially where resistance to the conquest was defeated and also where colonial needs in term of lands, taxes and labors were accentuated. The example of the *Bawle* in Ivory Coast was edifying; they have resisted to the French invasion up to 1911; The *Igbo* from Nigeria have also resisted up to 1919; and it was the case with the *Jola* from Senegal who refused to surrender up to 1920. The most important Islamic rebellion against colonial dominance took place in Niger from 1916 to 1917, especially with the *Fulani*, *Tuareg*, *Kanuri* and *Gobirawa*. Tuaregs for example, besieged Agadez at a time where France was in a weak position and when the desert economy turned down.

William Brodford, John Winthrop and the theologian Cotton Mather were the first writers of the 17th century to discuss the history of some colonies. The word colony is used to qualify a group of men who have left their area in order to live and exploit another country. And the colonization is the fact of transforming countries into colonies for social, political and economical exploitation. In 1923, for example, Albert Sarraut “presents colonies as the decisive recourse that will raise France of war miseries”. (Ki-Zerbo, 1972: 429) Indeed, if Europeans had developed and kept the colonial system, it was for a question of pride, socio-political and especially economic interests. It was necessary to find a transient and compensatory structure in view of the economic reconstruction after the two great wars (1914-1918 / 1939-1945) and the economic crisis of 1929. The common denominator of the colonizers is to conquer colonies in Africa for the sake of getting profit in the future. That is why the colonial administration is purely based on the direction of military operations. ‘Peace keeping’ by any means is the colonial administrator’s first assignment- even by a prompt or punctual use of violence. His second duty is to reach his aim at a least cost. That is to say, to learn to know his district, his population and also to keep an eye on them. But the District Commissioner (DC) should never disturb his hierarchical superiors and he has the right to collect the taxes. He is very proud of his main task: to judge people and to apply the law. The colonial administrator has destroyed the African jurisdictions in favor of the colonial rules and he even affirms that he is the only person to pronounce the death sentence. At this point, it is compulsory to point out that the French system under which the colonies were administrated was the “Direct Rule”. It was the direct command; at the place of the African authorities, the French colonist managed directly the colonies. The traditional chiefs were annexed, dismissed, deported, constrained to exile or suicide; that was the case of Sarawnia, the queen of the Aznas of Lugu (Dogon – Duchi); Dan-Kulodo, chief of Province of Maradi (deported to Fada- Ngourma in Upper-Volta, the present day Burkina - Faso) [Labo, 2015].

For Kholer and Taylor (1985), the French administration was highly centralized. The African west colonies that formed a blocks, were managed from Dakar, the capital of French West Africa (AOF- or FWA). Every colony had a Lieutenant - Governor (delegated by the Governor - General based in Dakar) who applied politics as defined by Paris. A similar grouping of colonies formed French Equatorial Africa (AEF- or FEA) administered from Brazzaville. Every colony was straight forward directed by French at all levels. The traditional chiefs, seen or considered as ‘nothing else in general apart parasites’, to use William Ponty’s word (French West African General Governor), were attributed only subordinate roles. Let us have a look on the follow map of the colonial administration.



French colonial administration ruling system in Africa

Above is a synthetic diagram of the French colonial administration ruling system in Africa. It is important to note that in the 'direct rule' system, all the Commanders, the Lieutenant-Governors and the General Governor are white people or non-Africans. Their main preoccupation is to protect and save the interest of the metropolis, France. The traditional chiefs, who were the lords before the colonial penetration, are reduced to simple executors if they accept to collaborate. Otherwise, they are deported, extradited, jailed or executed. In fact, they belong to the second-degree of the Commander's courthouse. Governor Van Vollekhoven even declared: "only the Commander is responsible. The indigenous chief is only an instrument, an auxiliary."

The introduction of the French "Direct Rule" has radically changed the Politico-Social organization of the traditional rulers before the coming of the colonizer. The *Gobirawa* located in the west, were the "Chiefs of war" and were mainly responsible for protecting the empire from the invasive Kingdoms of Ghana and Songhai. They were providers of soldiers and protectors of the Hausa land from invasion. Unfortunately, they were reduced to nil and were annihilated by the French colonizer. He imposed his own system of management though injuries against them were increased. Sometimes, disable autochthones and small chieftaincies locally rebelled; but in the main they lacked adequate organization which can embarrass European control.

According to Olivier Bain (1998-2001), the way a colonial administration enrolled, trained and controlled its African employees determined mainly its character. Hence, this was more function to circumstance rather than principles. Littoral West African small colonies in the middle of the nineteenth century were mostly governed on the European model. (<mailto:olivier.bain@club-internet.fr>). Here, it is clear that the "French Direct Rule" is imposed to the African political system which is bound to be accommodated to this amazing model. The monarchs are forced to hand over their places to warrant townships chiefs.

After this overview on the colonial penetration and its politico-social change, let us see what has remained on the *Gobirawa* administrative division and the Sultanate present day politico-administrative organization.

The Gobirawa administrative division and the Sultanate present day politico-administrative organization

To paraphrase Guy Nicolas (1969) in his work titled “Political Power Magic and Religious Basis inside the Hausa Princedom of Gobir” [« Fondements magico-religieux du pouvoir politique au sein de la principauté Hausa du Gobir » (*Journal des Africanistes*, 199-232)], one can say that since French Colonization, the *Sarauta*- kingship continues to exercise its functions of agent in charge of taxes perception. But the territory of the Gobir Kingdom has been divided into cantons, administrative districts governed permanently by some dignitaries of the royal court. The power of these chiefs is henceforth handed over to their heirs, in fatherly line. These new territorial chiefs have taken the title of *sarki* and consider themselves, inside their circumscription, as vassal sovereigns. Living in the head town of their canton, they are assisted by their royal court. Nevertheless, there are under the authority of the *Sarkin Gobir* (Sultan), nowadays designated by the President of the Niger Republic, after the choice of the high council composed by nine (9) members known as *Tarar Gobir* or the *Gobir Council of Nine*.



The acting Sultan of *Gobir* His Royal Highness Alhaji Abdou Balla Marafa and his traditional security forces.

The traditional schema has highly transformed because the *Gobir* Court is composed by palace officers destitute of territorial commandments and constituting the general staff of the *Sarkin Gobir* on one hand; and on the other hand, the chiefs of cantons having also the title of *Sarki* and constituting a new category or class of subaltern chiefs. From the genesis made on the colonial penetration and its politico-social change, it is evident that *Gobir* kingdom like the other West African great empires has lost the greatest part of its authority and administrative organization. An emphasis will be put on the several attributions (*Sarauta*- kingship) made by the Sultan to the members of his royal court and the different responsible of the Sultana. The *Sarauta* is organized on the basis of offices hierarchy; the holders have particular titles and occupy various functions determined by a meticulous and rigid label. Most of these titles are the inheritance of certain families inside which the *Sarki*, where the highest notables choose their holder. This hierarchy constitutes the framework of the *Sarauta*; all the members claim for an eminent office and assist the

chosen notables. The actual list of the *Gobir* Court has one hundred and fifty (150) titles, divided into ten (10) classes. (Guy Nicolas, 1969: 199-232) But for a better understanding, a graphic of the *Gobir* Court will be made below.

Graphic of the *Gobir* Court

First group (9 members) headed by the *Sarki*- King

Sarki Inna Sarkin Fulani Sarkin Zango Sarkin Kaya 4 members of the Sarkin anna Liman high council

Second group (18 members) headed by the *Dan-galadima*- leader of the princes

Dan-galadima and 17 members of royal lineage among whom by order: Bunu, Sarkin Baura and

Third group (9 servants' offices) headed by the *Galadima*-the main servant

Galadima, member of the high council and the rest of the servant designated by the king for their behavior

Fourth, fifth and sixth groups are concerned by forty (40) titles of servants

Seventh group: composed by six titles (6) of marabouts

Group eight contains five (5) titles of praise-singers or griots

Group nine includes six (6) titles of princesses

Group ten comprises ten (10) offices constituting the court of Sarkin Mazu. Two of them are by accumulation members of the high council or *Tarar Gobir*.

It is good to note that within this graphic, there is no specific group for the High Council. The *Tarar Gobir* or *Gobir* Council of Nine is dispatched in some of the above groups according to the importance and the quality of its members. Designated by the *Sarki*, they constitute the elections committee and the throne council. Moreover, they assist him in his traditional ruling. After the *Sarki's* death, they have the duty of choosing the new chief on the basis of divination or prediction practices. In the old days, they had the power of dismissing the incompetent or invalid chief. This High Council or *Tara Gobir* or also Throne Council is an essential organ of the *Gobir* Princedom ruling system. Three (3) of the High Council belong to the *Sarki's* family; four (4) other members have the status of "servants" among who, two (2) represents the ancient local chieftaincy of *Mazu*. Two (2) others are the King's slaves.

Composition and role of each member of the *Tarar Gobir* or *Gobir* Council of Nine

The *Gobir* Council of Nine is a little beat changed according to the areas and the time. It is composed as follow: (1) Sarkin Rahi Babba; Sarkin Rahi Karami; (2) Sarkin Tudu Babba; Sarkin Tudu Karami; (3) Ubandawaki; (4) *Saraki*

Cunciana; (5) *Magaji- Kada Giwa* ou *Magagin Gari*; (6) *Sarkim Mazu* or *Kyawre*; (7) *Galadiman Gari*; (8) *Ara*; (9) *Ubandoma*. (Guy Nicolas, *Journal des Africanistes*, 1969: 199-232) Some of all these dignitaries have a peculiar importance according to Guy Nicolas (1969) and Abou Magagi (1981). Let us see them one by one:

Sarkin Rahi or Rafi (Babba and Karami): They are the veteran of the *Tarar Gobir* and stand for the experienced persons who lead the other members of the Council of Nine. They sit down in front of the Sultan.

Sarkin Tudu (Babba and Karami): They come after the *Sarkin Rahi* and play as the same role as they (*Sarkin Rahi*) do. They are also sitting down in front of the Sultan once at the royal court.

Ubandawaki: He plays an important role in time of war. He is always at the front line accompanied by *Sarkin Mazu* and *Ara*. He is free to everything which comes to his mind in front of the Sultan. For any common earning of the royal court, he takes the biggest share. He stays on the left side of the Sultan with his sword. And even when a new Sultan is elected, he is the one who will ask for the share of the Council of Nine. *Ubandawaki* is assisted by six (6) persons nominated by the Sultan. They are respectively *Lifida*, *Dan Gara*, *Baramaka*, *Sarkin Konni*, *Masaurari*, and *Masa*.

Saraki Cunciana: He is in charge of carrying the Sultan's sword during all the ceremonies. He sits at the right hand of the Sultan near the *Sarkin Rafi*. During the enthroning of the new Sultan, he gives a flick to the chief for the sake of reminding him that he now occupies a new function; and he has to forget the past.

Magaji- Kada Giwa ou Magagin Gari: In the old days, this character was powerful because his role consists of pronouncing the destitution or even the killing of the *Gobirawa* inefficient, incompetent, worthless and useless kings, once the Council of Nine asked him to do so. That is why he has the sobriquet of *Magaji-Kada Giwa*, meaning in Hausa language, "the heir who throw down the elephant". This title mainly belongs to sons of princesses. He is managing the *Sangerawa* or charlatans of the *Sarkin Saye*, the chief of healers. In collaboration with the *Galadiman Gobir*, they have to look after the town. The day of feast, he stays with the Sultan in the sacred hut where he attaches the turban to the Sultan and other talismans or lucky charms.

Sarkim Mazu: He represents the ancient local chieftancy of *Mazu*; he is *Anne* not *Bagobiri*. Two of them are part of the Council of Nine. The *Mazu* represent a group of hunters coming from Bornou and who settle down in *Naya* before the *Gobirawa*. One of their chiefs welcomes the Sarki *Naya* and concludes an alliance with him to fight back Usman Dan Fodiyo. The settlement of the *Alkalawa* court in *Tibiri* has reduced the importance of the *Sarkin Mazu*. This same *Sarkin Mazu* has also the title of *Kyaure* (front gate in Hausa). He deserves this title thanks to his ancestor who has accepted to welcome *Gobir* Kings in his kingdom when their kingdom has been occupied by the *Fulani*. During the annual festival of seers or charlatanism, *Sarkin Mazu* takes care of the *Kurukuruki*. He welcomes all the charlatans who come from everywhere to the sacred area reserved for the yearly special event.

Galadiman Gari: *Galadima* is the trustworthy or reliable man of the Sultan. He is not among the pretenders or aspirants of the throne. If the *Sarki* is not around, he is the one who governs on his behave. He can even direct the Muslims feasts or ceremonies.

Ara: He plays also an important role in the royal court and has eight (8) assistants among who *Lifida*, *Dan Gara*, *Baramaka*, *Sarkin Konni*, *Masaurari*, and *Masa*, *Nacini* and *Gâto* ou *Gâ tuwo* who is in charge of the distribution of food (*tuwo* in Hausa). Note that the first six assistants are used by both *Ubandawaki* and *Ara*. The entire assistants are intrepid, fearless warriors who are always on the frontline.

Ubandoma: Nicknamed the brother of the Sultan, *Ubandoma* is sitting on the left of the *Sarkin Fulani* at the royal court. He is in charge of distributing kola nuts every Friday and during the feasts and other important ceremonies.

Apart from the Council of Nine, there are some other very important personalities such as: *Inna*, *Sarkin Fulani* and *Sarkin Abzin*. These personalities are the only one who can sit on chairs like the Sultan. The rest of the dignitaries are sitting on the ground at the royal court. Another peculiar dignitary is the *Sarkin Anna*. Let us write some lines on him.

Sarkin Anna: He occupies high functions at the Royal Court of *Gobir*. He is considered as the King's brother of the no longer existing kingdom of *Rano*. He is the commandant in chief of the oldest populations of the *Anna*. That is why he deserves the title of "the *Sarkin Anna*" or simply *Anna*. He also must not live in the Capital and for that he is always living in the village. He governs on all the *Anna* of the kingdom. Nevertheless, *Anna* must share his power with another chief named *Sakin Mazu* who is ruling on the *Anna* of *Tibiri* region before the advent of *Gobir* founders

and who is claiming to be also *Anne* (singular of *Anna*). Nowadays, only those who maintain the ancestral cults and refuse any adhesion to Islamic religion are considered as *Anna*.

Innar Gobir: Apart from the *Gobir* Council of Nine, there is another very important personality among the princesses of *Gobir*: the one who is named *Innar Gobir*. *Inna* ranks second after the Sultan. She is the first assistant and adviser of the *Sarki*. Her administrative authority covered women and adepts of possession cult or *Bori* (in Hausa language) which she is the priestess in chief. Her equivalent or alike are named *Iya* with the *Katsinawa*, *Magaram* among the *Kanuri* and *Magagiya* for the *Daurawa*. Her character has a link with traditions where power initially has been exercised by women. The example of *Tawa* in *Gobir* (*Birnin Lallé*), *Magagiya* in *Daura* and *Tiytiy* in *Kantse* is edifying. This famous lady organizes and directs all the sacrifices and ritual ceremonies in order to conjure maledictions and natural calamities such as drought, disease, hunger and starvation that devastate the kingdom.

To talk true, the *Gobirawa* administrative division and the Sultana's present day politico-administrative organization is copied from their secular traditional organizational system even though the Europeans have attempted to change it. Most of the members of the *Sarauta* continue to keep their role inside the royal court. Dignitaries such as *Sarkin Fulani*, *Sarkin Abzin*, *Dan Galadima*, *Bunu*, *Sarkin Baura*, *Magagi Rogo*, *Magagi Yado*, *Magagin Dawaki*, *Masari*, etc. are playing also significant roles. All of them greatly contribute to the steady governance of the *Gobir* Kingdom.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is noticeable that *Gobir* Kingdom has been subjected to changes after the nineteenth century's Jihad and the colonial encounter. *Gobirawa* known as great warriors have succeeded to save their remaining kingdom from disappearance or loss. Though they are dispatched in two countries, belonging to two different colonial masters (British and French), they develop a good relationship. Wherever they are, they always claim their unity and friendship.

In this paper, I do not insist on their historical background; I used it to refresh reader memory since many historians have done it. However, I have to attract people attention on the fact that sometimes, some researchers prefer to put an accent on the *Daura* connection. It is noticeable as I have mentioned that there are sources more plausible; especially the *Gubur* link. Factually, colonization has distorted the trend of the *Gobirawa*'s history but not as in a way of nothingness. The change brought by the colonizer has not forbidden the reconstruction of the *Gobirawa*'s past. The colonial administrative division does not deeply harm the traditional organization of the *Gobirawa*. In both Nigeria and Niger, the *Gobirawa* have the same traditional ruling system. I do not make an allusion to the colonial way of governing: the French Direct Rule and the British Indirect Rule. I am talking about the internal royal court division as I mention in the Sultana's present day politico-administrative organization.

The Sultanate present day politico-administrative organization seems to be heavy and one has the impression that his power is shared between the members of the royal court. With the pressure of the administration and the politicians, the *Gobir* Council of Nine is becoming powerless in favor of rulers will. Instead of letting the divinities to decide on who will become chief, through rituals and seers' divinations, Politicians tend to corrupt the *Tarar Gobir* for a fake election. And with this practice, people will assist, sooner or later, to the progressive decline of the system. Perhaps one day *Gobir* people will abandon a candidate who will not have any political or financial support. I think that the real threat of the *Gobir* traditional power is the new class of political administrators. I say so because the image of today's administration is closely related to the different forms of practices, issued from a political phenomenon. And you know that power is related to the sum of values, deities and beliefs around which the organization is structured.

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