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A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CHRONICLE
BY IBN AL-MUKHTĀR:
A CRITICAL STUDY OF TA'ŔĪKH AL-FATTĀSH
By N. LEVTZION

1. The manuscripts and the text of Ta'риkh al-fattāsh

In 1853, Heinrich Barth visited Timbuktu, and was so successful as to have an opportunity of pursuing a complete history of the Kingdom of Songhay . . . . These annals, according to the universal statement of the learned people of Negroland, were written by a distinguished person of the name of Ahmed Baba’. With this chronicle at his disposal, Barth was able, for the first time, to present a meaningful outline of the history of the Songhay empire. Circumstances prevented Barth bringing back a complete copy of the manuscript. In the 1890’s, however, following the French occupation, three manuscripts of that chronicle reached Paris, to be edited by O. Houdas and E. Benoist, translated by Houdas, and published in 1898–1900. Houdas proved that this chronicle, Ta’риkh al-Sūdān, had been written not by Ahmad Bābā; but by another scholar of Timbuktu, ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sa’dī, born in 1596. The chronicle ends in 1655, which may be taken as the date of its completion.2

In 1912, M. Delafosse published his magnum opus, Haut-Sénégal-Niger: le pays, les peuples, les langues . . . , which incorporated a detailed synthesis of the history of the Western Sudan, the best at that time. Delafosse made extensive use of the rich evidence in Ta’риkh al-Sūdān. Yet, within a year that history of the Western Sudan required revision, because in 1913 Houdas and Delafosse edited and translated another Arabic chronicle from Timbuktu, Ta’риkh al-fattāsh.3

This chronicle, however, had haunted the mind of scholars since Félix Dubois’s visit to Timbuktu in 1896. There he heard about ‘Mohaman Koti, or Koutou’, who under the title of the Fatassi edited a history of the kingdoms of Ganata, Songhoi, and Timbuctoo from their origins to the year 1554 (950 of the Hegira)’.4 ‘In spite of the most persistent research,’ Dubois adds, ‘I have

1 H. Barth, Travels and discoveries in North and central Africa (Minerva Library), London, 1890, II, 290–1.
4 There is an error in the conversion of the Muslim date. A.H. 950 should be A.D. 1543–4. In fact, the history of Songhay in TF is pursued to 1599 with some references to the seventeenth century. Dubois had access to the first part of the chronicle only, probably to the end of ch. 9 in the translation.
not been able to procure more than fragments of this important work. Everyone knows all about it, but no one possesses it; it is the *phantom book of the Sudan.*

Further search since Dubois's visit was in vain. All that reached French scholars were short fragments almost identical and concerned with the arrival of a great caliph in the Sudan. Muslims in Timbuktu and Jenne pretended that the original had been lost a long time ago, whereas all the copies had been destroyed early in the nineteenth century by the order of Shehu Ahmadu Lobo of Massina.

In 1911 M. Bonnel de Mézières gained the confidence of a prominent 'ālim in Timbuktu, Sidi Muḥammed al-Imām ibn al-Suyūṭī. The latter let de Mézières see an incomplete manuscript, regarded in Timbuktu as the only existing copy of a very important old work on the history of the Sudan. A copy of this manuscript was made for Bonnel de Mézières under the supervision of Ibn al-Suyūṭī, who added the following note: 'A collection of biographies of the kings of Songhay and a fragment of the history of the kings of the Sudan prior to the kingdom of Songhay, such as the Sultan Kayamagha and the Sultan of Māllī Kankan Mūsā; the name of the author is unknown, because of the disappearance of one or two pages at the beginning: this author lived in the ninth century A.H.'. This copy —referred to by the editors as 'MS B'— was deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale (No. 6651).

Some months later Ibn al-Suyūṭī made available his own copy, designated as 'MS A'. Though not the original manuscript of the author, this copy was certainly very old, as was suggested by the condition of the paper and the colour of the ink.

MS A is not only more reliable than its reproduction, MS B, but it also contains some significant marginal notes, as well as three isolated pages in the same hand; one of these is an extract from *Ta'rikh al-Sūdān* and the other two deal with the same subject-matter as the main part of the work, and appear to be fragments of the lost first part of the work.

In May 1912 the French administrator Brévié obtained a manuscript copied for him by Abdulai Wali Bah of Kayes from a very old original in a very bad condition. When this manuscript—designated as 'MS C'—reached Octave Houdas in Paris he identified it as a complete copy of the same work obtained over a year earlier by Bonnel de Mézières in Timbuktu. It contained the missing first chapter and a preface with the name of the author Maḥmūd al-Suddn.

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5 F. Dubois, *Timbuctoo the mysterious*, London, 1897, 301–2. The italics in the final sentence are mine.

6 Copies of these fragments—forged and distributed by Shehu Ahmadu Lobo of Massina—are deposited in the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France in Paris (Fonds de Gironcourt), MS 2405, pièce no. 2; MS 2406, pièce no. 73; MS 2410, pièce no. 174. Another copy is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 5259, pp. 74–8. See J. O. Hunwick and H. I. Gwarzo, 'Another look at the de Gironcourt papers', *Research Bulletin CAD* (Ibadan), ii, 2, 1967, 94–5.

7 *TF*, introduction to the French translation, p. vii; see also the account of a descendant of Maḥmūd Kaṭī in Dubois, op. cit., 303–4.
Ka‘ti and the title Ta‘rikh al-fattâsh fî akhbâr al-buldân wa ‘l-juyûsh wa-akâbir al-nâs. The chronicle of the researcher into the history of the countries, the armies, and the principal personalities.

The first part of MS C, which does not appear in MS A (and therefore also not in MS B, a copy of A), throws light on the tradition which attributes to Shehu Ahmade the destruction of all the copies of Ta‘rikh al-fattâsh he could obtain. The first part contains different prophecies about the coming of the last of the twelve caliphs predicted by Mahammad. He will be Aḥmad of the (Fulani) Sangare tribe in Massina.

It is generally accepted that these passages do not represent a fifteenth-century prophecy which became true, but a nineteenth-century fabrication at the time of Shehu Ahmade to confirm his claim to the caliphate. This would account for the passionate interest of Shehu Ahmade in the text of TF. It would explain also how the manuscript of Ibn al-Suyūṭī was deprived of its first part, and why all those passages of TF collected in different parts of the Sudan were those dealing with the prophecy. Hence, the manuscript from Kayes (MS C) is a version of TF edited at the time of Shehu Ahmade.

In spite of this strongly supported suspicion of the manipulated character of MS C, its authenticity has never been seriously doubted. It was accepted by Houdas and Delafosse, editors and translators of TF, and by all scholars since then as the only complete text of TF.

A critical study of TF should take us back to the manuscripts used by the editors in collating the published text. Unfortunately nothing is known about the location of the two more important manuscripts—MS A and MS C. MS B only—a rough copy of MS A, and therefore the least important—is available at the Bibliothèque Nationale. The following analysis of the Arabic text is based on the excellent apparatus furnished by the editors.

Through this apparatus we may get back to the two texts of MS A and MS C. All the text of MS A is incorporated in MS C, but the latter includes also additional sections, passages, and phrases—throughout the text—which we designate as ‘MS C only’. A complete list of these is given in the appendix.

I argue in this paper that MS A represents the original work, some parts of which are missing. MS C is a copy of the text of A, to which sections, passages, and phrases were added, very probably at the time of Shehu Ahmade, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Those additions—i.e. MS C only—may therefore be regarded as forged. More important, Mahmūd Ka‘ti was not the author of this chronicle, not even of the first part, as has hitherto been accepted.

2. The biography of Mahmūd Ka‘ti—a critical study

Houdas and Delafosse offer the following biography of Mahmūd Ka‘ti:

He was born in 1468, and began the writing of his work at the age of 50, in

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8 TF, introduction to the French translation, pp. viii–xi.
9 TF, p. 13, ll. 16–17, p. 66, ll. 16–18; trans., 18, 127.
10 TF, introduction to the French translation, p. xii. See also Dubois, op. cit., 135–7.
1519, according to his own information. He was a personal friend of al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Askia, whom he accompanied to Mecca. He was also a counsellor of Muḥammad Askia’s successors. He reached a very advanced age, and witnessed the Moroccan conquest, because according to Taʿrīkh al-Ṣūdān he died in 1002/1593. He was then 125 years old.\(^{11}\)

All the evidence for the early part of this biographical sketch is based on MS C only; that Maḥmūd Kaʿtī (M.K.) was 25 years old in 1493\(^{12}\) (and was therefore born about 1468); that he accompanied Muḥammad Askia to Mecca;\(^{13}\) and that he began the writing of the chronicle in 1519.\(^{14}\) This in itself would have been a good reason to suspect the authenticity of the evidence.

There is, however, another reference, in MS A,\(^{15}\) to the birth date of the faqīḥ, the qāḍī Maḥmūd b. al-Ḥājj al-Mutawakkil Kaʿtī. He is mentioned, with four other ‘ulamā’ī, as born ‘in the time (fī ayyām) of Muḥammad Askia’. Houdas and Delafosse avoided contradiction by translating it ‘du vivant de l’askia Mohammed’, which is consistent with 1468 as the birth date of Maḥmūd Kaʿtī.\(^{16}\) Yet, not only the accepted use of fī ayyām which, when followed by a name of a ruler refers to his reign, but the evidence on the other four ‘ulamā’ī clearly suggests that they were born during the reign of Muḥammad Askia (1493–1528):

(a) Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Saʿīd, son of a daughter of Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar b. Muḥammad Aqīṭ. According to TS this celebrated scholar, of whom more will be said later, died in 976/1568, at the age of 42.\(^{17}\) He was, therefore, born c. 1526.

(b) Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd, Baghyuʿu. According to TS, he was born in 930/1524 and died in 1002/1593.\(^{18}\)

(c) Aḥmad b. al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. ‘Umar b. Muḥammad Aqīṭ, father of the famous Aḥmad Bābā. According to the evidence of his own son, he was born in 929/1522 and died in 1002/1593.\(^{19}\)

(d) Abū Bakr b. Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar b. Muḥammad Aqīṭ. His father, the famous gādī of Timbuktu, was born in 868/1463.\(^{20}\) The son Abū Bakr—certainly not one of Maḥmūd’s eldest sons—was probably born after Muḥammad Askia’s accession in 1493.

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\(^{11}\) TF, introduction to the French translation, pp. xviii–xviii.

\(^{12}\) TF, MS C only, p. 58, ll. 16–19; tr., 113.

\(^{13}\) TF, MS C only, p. 16, l. 16; tr., 26, 126.

\(^{14}\) TF, MS C only, p. 17, l. 3; tr., 27.

\(^{15}\) TF, p. 82, ll. 1–5; tr., 153. Unless otherwise mentioned the text of MS A appears also in MS C.

\(^{16}\) See tr. p. 153, n. 6, where the translators add that Muhammad Askia was 25 years old in 1468. Significantly, the copyist of MS C has Sambo (سمبو) instead of Kaʿtī (کتی) as in MS A. Perhaps he was aware of the disagreement with his own earlier fabrication that Kaʿtī was 25 in 1493.

\(^{17}\) TS, p. 108, ll. 12–16; tr., 177.

\(^{18}\) TS, p. 46, ll. 19–20; tr., 77.

\(^{19}\) TS, p. 43, ll. 5, 17–18; tr., 70.

\(^{20}\) TS, p. 39, ll. 3–4; tr., 64; see also p. 65, ll. 9–10; tr., 106.
That Maḥmūd Ka’ti was born during the reign of Muḥammad Askia, perhaps in the 1510’s, is supported by other evidence as well. It is said that Maḥmūd Ka’ti together with Muhammad b. Maḥmūd, Baghyu’u (1524–93) and ‘Umar b. Maḥmūd b. Aqīt (who died in 1594 at a very advanced age) attended the teaching sessions of Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Sa’dīd, son of a daughter of Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar Aqīt (who died in 1568 at the age of 42). This Aḥmad, one of the most brilliant scholars of Timbuktu, began his teaching in 960/1553 when he was about 26 years old. If born in 1468—as hitherto accepted following MS C only—M.K. should have been then 95 years old, which is more than unlikely.

In fact, M.K. was not associated with Muḥammad Askia, as suggested by MS C only, but with Dāwūd Askia (who reigned 1549–83), as were the other scholars mentioned above. Dāwūd Askia gave his daughter in marriage to M.K., who could not have been then over 80 years old. On one occasion M.K. asked Dāwūd Askia for a grant to help him in arranging the marriage of his four daughters and five sons, a domestic problem of a man much younger than 80.

In 996/1587–8, M.K. was qādi in Tendirma. Three years later, in 999/1591, facing the advance of the Moroccan invading force, he was in the council of Išḥāq Askia. He died two years later in Muḥarram 1002/September 1593. He was then 70 to 80 years old, and not 125.

Much of the detailed argumentation about the biography of M.K., as presented above, is not new. As early as 1914, only a year after the publication of TF, Father Joseph Brun raised some of these queries. More recently, John Hunwick has elaborated Brun’s arguments. Both Brun and Hunwick suggest

21 TS, pp. 34, l. 19–35, l. 5; tr., 57.
22 TS, p. 170, ll. 9–10, p. 212, l. 10–16; tr., 260, 324. He was appointed qādi of Timbuktu in 1585 (ibid., 31; tr., 52).
23 See above, among those born during the reign of Muḥammad Askia.
24 TF, p. 43, l. 12–15; tr., 71.
26 On Dāwūd Askia’s relations with Aḥmad b. Muhammad b. Sa’dīd and Muhammad, Baghyu’u see TF, p. 113, l. 10–14; tr., 207–8; TS, p. 108, l. 6–10; tr., 176; on Dāwūd Askia and al-Ḥājj Aḥmad, Aḥmad Bābā’s father, see TF, p. 115, l. 6–16; tr., 210.
27 TF, pp. 118, l. 14–119, l. 1; tr., 217.
28 Indeed, the translators were aware of this absurdity, so they offered the following translation: ‘ Aïcha-Kimaré, femme du cadi Maḥmoud Kâti, qui l’emmène à Tombouctou ou elle mourut sans avoir été touchée par lui ’ (my italics); certainly because he was too old. The Arabic text reads: arbahahā ʿila Tinbuktu wa-mūlat fiʾisamatihi, which should be translated: ‘ he took her to Timbuktu, where she died under his marital protection ’. On the meanings of ʾisma, see E. W. Lane, An Arabic–English lexicon, London, i, Pt. v, 1874, 2066–7. See also TS, p. 158, l. 10, fa-karnat fiʾisamatihi, translated (244) ‘ celle-ci demeura sous sa puissance maritale ’.
29 TF, p. 108, l. 11; tr., 199.
30 TS, p. 131, ll. 8–9; tr., 209.
31 TF, pp. 150, l. 5–152, l. 3; tr., 269–71.
32 TS, p. 211, l. 6–10; tr., 322.
34 J. O. Hunwick, ‘ Studies in the Tarikh al-fattâsh. ’ (1) Its authors and textual history ’, Research Bulletin CAD (Ibadan), v, 1–2, 1969, 57–65. I am grateful to Dr. Hunwick for sending me this paper before its publication, and for the reference to Brun’s article.
that there may have been two scholars by the name M.K.: one—the original author of *TF*—was born in 1468, began to write his book in 1519, and died in 1552 or 1553.\(^{35}\) The second was Maḥmūd b. al-Ḥājj al-Mutawakkil Kaṭī, who was born during the reign of Muḥammad Askia, and died in 1593. He took over the writing of the chronicle from the first M.K., a relative of his.

I find it very difficult to accept this proposition, and the text itself does not seem to offer any convincing distinction between two successive contributors by the name M.K. Rather than postulating two M.K.'s, I would reiterate that all the dates concerning 'Maḥmūd Kaṭī the first' appear in MS C only, and may well be false. The author of the additional sections of MS C only laboured hard to make *TF* bear evidence on the expected coming of the twelfth caliph, namely Shehu Ahmadu, an heir to the eleventh caliph, Muḥammad Askia. In order to render the evidence about the prophecy more convincing, the author M.K. should have been in the company of Muḥammad Askia in Mecca and Cairo.\(^{36}\) But, Maḥmūd Kaṭī was not yet born at the time of the pilgrimage in 1495–6; he therefore could not have been sent to Shi Baro, Sonni 'All's son, to call him back to Islam in 1493;\(^{37}\) he was at best an infant in 1519, when—according to MS C only—he began the writing of the chronicle.\(^{38}\)

3. *The author of the chronicle: Ibn al-Mukhtar*

In their introduction to the translation of *TF*, Houdas and Delafosse present the following proposition about the authorship of *TF*: M.K. himself could not have written the whole chronicle, as the account ends in 1599, six years after his death, and there are references to dates as late as 1664–5. In fact, he himself edited a small part of *TF* only, which corresponds to the first six chapters of the translation, up to the end of Muḥammad Askia's biography.\(^{39}\) Even in this section there are certain passages, not edited directly by M.K., but presented as reproductions of notes he had left behind. His sons, some of whom held important positions, also left papers and notes. Finally, a son of one of his daughters used these family documents to complete and co-ordinate the account his grandfather had started. It was this collaboration of the grandfather, the uncles, and the grandson that produced the *TF*.\(^{40}\)

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35 On this date (1553), see Brun, art. cit., 596, and Hunwick, 'Studies'. It is based on Dubois (op. cit., 302) who says that 'Kotī survived Askīya the Great by fourteen years'. As Muḥammad Askia died in 944/1538, Kaṭī should have died in 958/1551 and not 1552–3. Dubois's statement is not a tradition recorded in Timbuktu—as suggested by Brun and Hunwick—but a figure Dubois calculated himself. He says that the history of the *Fatāsī* ends in 1554 (950) [sic], see p. 571, n. 4, above—which he probably took as the date of the author's death. In the following passage where Dubois stresses that Kaṭī was a contemporary of Muḥammad Askia he says, by the way, that Kaṭī survived Muḥammad Askia by 14 years. The basis of Dubois's calculation is certainly wrong, as the chronicle does not end in A.H. 950. Also, Dubois obtained only nebulous information on Kaṭī in Timbuktu, which could not include such precision.

36 *TF*, MS C only, p. 16, l. 16, p. 65, l. 18; tr., 26, 126.
37 *TF*, MS C only, pp. 54, l. 16–55, l. 2; tr., 105.
38 *TF*, MS C only, p. 17, l. 3; tr., 27.
40 *TF*, introduction to tr., pp. xvii–xix.
Almost half of the pages (37 out of 82 pages in the Arabic text) said by Houdas and Delafosse to have been written by M.K. are those of MS C only. All but one of the references to records of Mahmūd Kaʿtī ('e.g. qāla Mahmūd Kaʿtī ' M.K. said ' ) in this section appear in MS C only. At least two of these references are functional in introducing additional (and fabricated) passages of MS C only into the original text.

The only reference to records of M.K. in the first six chapters (of the translation) which appears in MS A, and was therefore part of the original work, reads: wā-qaʾltu ḥādith kullahu min kitāb al-jadd al-fā al-Mahmūd ibn al-Ḥājj al-Mutawakkil bi-khaṭṭ baʿda ṭalabatihi min qawlihi ' I have copied all that from the book of my grandfather al-fā Mahmūd b. al-Ḥājj al-Mutawakkil, written down in the hand of one of his students.’ The section copied directly from the grandfather's book is probably the very detailed account of Sonni 'Alī's expeditions.

This reference clearly indicates that M.K. left in writing some records of history. It is probably to this same work that the second appendix to the translation refers: '.... as it follows from what I have read on this subject in a manuscript, in the handwriting of our master the faqīḥ, the qādī Mahmūd b. al-Ḥājj al-Mutawakkil Kaʿtī.' Yet, it is also clear that M.K.'s work was not TF as we know it (not even the first part of TF), which the author, M.K.'s grandson, regards as his own.

The grandson consulted his grandfather's writings together with other written and oral sources. For a much later event, that of the battle of Tondibi in 1591, there is the only other explicit reference to a manuscript by M.K. It is significant, however, that the grandson had some reservations about his grandfather's records when compared with other information he had collected.

It is difficult to ascertain whether M.K.'s manuscript was in the form of a book or consisted of notes only. The fact that the grandson had so little to quote directly from M.K., and that the latter kept records in writing until 1591, or two years before he died, may suggest that these were notes only. Whatever the case, it is clear that M.K. had a keen interest in history, which was inherited by his sons. One of them, the qādī Yūsuf b. Mahmūd Kaʿtī, also kept records in writing, and the nephew consulted Yūsuf's manuscript about the civil war between Ishāq Askia and Balmaʿ Shādiq in 1588.

Another maternal uncle, the qādī Iṣmāʿīl b. Mahmūd Kaʿtī, showed the author a manuscript of the charter given by Muḥammad Askia to the descen-

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41 TF, p. 29, ll. 10–11, p. 53, ll. 12–13; tr., 49, 102.
42 TF, p. 48, ll. 3–5; tr., 92.
43 TF, pp. 45, l. 6–48, l. 3; tr., 85–92.
44 TF, tr., 332. It concerns the islamization of the Dya dynasty in Songhay. On the relationship between TF and the second appendix, see below, pp. 580–2. Only the French translation of the second appendix was available to me (see p. 580, n. 64).
45 TF, p. 152, ll. 3–8; tr., 271–2.
46 TF, p. 129, ll. 14–15, p. 142, ll. 7–10; tr., 236, 257.
dants of Mori Hawguar. The qādī Ismā‘īl Ka‘ti could add that the pledge
given by Muhammad Askia was violated by his successors.
From a third maternal uncle, the qādī Muḥammad al-Amīn b. Maḥmūd
Ka‘ti, the author recorded information about an episode which had taken
place in Jenne in 1540. Muhammad al-Amīn Ka‘ti died in 1555/1646, and
was not an eyewitness of that episode. He may have recorded it from his
father M.K. It was from one of these maternal uncles that the author obtained
information about M.K.’s close relations with Dāwūd Askia.
Among the author’s informants was his cousin Muḥammad Bābā b. Yūsuf
Ka‘ti. His account of the slaying of the ‘ulamā‘ in Timbuktu by Sonni ‘Alī
was undoubtedly drawn from the rich stock of historical knowledge transmitted
in the Ka‘ti family, both in writing and as oral traditions.
The author recorded traditions about Sonni ‘Alī and Muḥammad Askia—
from his father al-Mukhtar Q.n.b.1. (Gambele?). It is because of these
references that we may call the author Ibn al-Mukhtar, as he failed to give any
other indication of his own name. Ibn al-Mukhtar, however, did give some
indication as to the date of the writing. In referring to a certain episode he
says: ‘I have seen it myself . . . at the beginning of the year 1075’. The
chronicle was written, therefore, some time after A.D. 1664.
That the original chronicle as a whole (i.e. the text of MS A) was written
in the seventeenth century, may be proved also by reviewing the written
sources and the informants to whom Ibn al-Mukhtar refers throughout the
work, for earlier as well as later events.
For dates and other evidence on events from the accession of Sonni ‘Alī to
the Moroccan conquest, Ibn al-Mukhtar often refers to a book which has not
yet been recovered, called Durar al-ḥisān fī akhbār ba‘d mulāk al-Sūdān, by
Bābā Gura b. al-Ḥājj Muḥammad b. al-Ḥājj al-Amin Kanū. This author’s
father—Muḥammad b. al-Amin Kanū—escaped the treacherous slaughter of
the ‘ulamā‘ by the Moroccans in October 1593. The author himself is,
therefore, one generation younger than M.K. The latest date quoted from
Durar al-ḥisān is 1594–5, a year or two after the death of M.K. It is clear that
M.K. could not have seen this book, written in the first half of the seventeenth
century.

47 TF, pp. 72, l. 11–74, l. 8; tr., 138–41.
48 TF, p. 75, ll. 2–3; tr., 142. Another reference to Ismā‘īl Ka‘ti as the narrator of an account
(about the grant to the sharifs, following the accidental homicide of a sharif by Dāwūd Askia)
appears in MS C only (TF, p. 116, ll. 15–16; tr., 213): ‘myself, namely the qādī Ismā‘īl Ka‘ti,
I was present’.
49 TF, p. 89, ll. 13–14; tr., 168.
50 TS, p. 276, ll. 16–19, p. 300, ll. 2–5; tr., 421–2, 454.
51 TF, p. 108, ll. 7–8, p. 109, l. 9; tr., 100, 201.
52 TF, p. 49, l. 7, p. 175, ll. 16–17; tr., 95, 308.
53 TF, p. 84, l. 4, p. 70, ll. 14–15; tr., 158, 135.
54 TF, p. 75, ll. 2–3; tr., 142.
55 TF, p. 44, ll. 4–6, p. 52, ll. 5–8, 10–11, p. 85, ll. 4–6, p. 92, ll. 13–15, p. 126, ll. 5–6,
56 TS, p. 170, ll. 6–7; tr., 260.
Ibn al-Mukhtar—and not M.K.—could have consulted Ahmad Bābā's work *Khāyat al-muḥtāj fi mā'rifat man laysa fī l-dībāj*, written in 1603.\(^\text{57}\) Ibn al-Mukhtar met Ahmad Bābā himself.\(^\text{58}\)

Among the many informants of the author we may count Ibrāhīm b. Ahmad, Baghyū'u.\(^\text{59}\) He died in 1048/1638.\(^\text{60}\) The author also recorded a tradition from a student of the qādī Abū l-'Abbās Sīdī Ahmad b. Ahmad b. And-ag-Muḥammad.\(^\text{61}\) The qādī Abū l-'Abbās died in 1045/1635.\(^\text{62}\) It is clear that this information could have been recorded only by Ibn al-Mukhtar. An account of an episode in the time of Dāwūd Askia is related by an informant whose mother's father was an eyewitness.\(^\text{63}\) This informant was of the same generation as Ibn al-Mukhtar whose own mother's father—Maḥmūd Kāṭi—was a close associate of Dāwūd Askia.

Other examples may be quoted to support the argument that the original version of *TF*, represented by MS A, is the work of one author—Ibn al-Mukhtar, of the second half of the seventeenth century—and not a product of three successive generations. *TF* is not, therefore, a contemporary record of Muḥammad Askia or any of his successors. Such a conclusion may disappoint some historians, but this is more than compensated for by the fact that we now have—in MS A—a coherent work of history, the author of which cared to mention his sources and informants. Though no part of *TF* was written down in its present form before the middle of the seventeenth century, most of the data about the preceding two centuries bear the authority of reliable, well-known, sources and informants.

Many oddities and contradictions—some of which will be dealt with later in this paper—are disturbing in the published edition of *TF*. This was inevitable because it combines two separate texts, the original seventeenth-century chronicle, and the forged nineteenth-century additions. By separating these two texts—MS A and MS C only—many queries are cleared up. As in every process of sifting, one is left with less material which is, however, of greater intrinsic value.

It now appears that the two important chronicles of Timbuktu—*Ta'riḥ al-Sūdān* and *Ta'riḥ al-fattāsh*—were written about the same time, shortly after 1655 and 1664 respectively. It will be another undertaking of the present writer to compare the character of these two *Ta'rikhs* in view of the different ethnic background of al-Sa'dī and Ibn al-Mukhtar, Berber and Soninke res-

\(^\text{57}\) *TF*, p. 52, ll. 12–15, p. 85, l. 9, p. 93, ll. 1–5, p. 115, ll. 6–10, p. 121, ll. 6–7, 9–11, p. 178, ll. 7–12; tr., 101, 160, 174, 210, 221–2, 312.

\(^\text{58}\) *TF*, p. 91, ll. 8–11; tr., 171.

\(^\text{59}\) *TF*, pp. 182, l. 14–183, l. 1; tr., 318.

\(^\text{60}\) *TS*, p. 296, ll. 11–13; tr., 449.

\(^\text{61}\) *TF*, pp. 33, l. 16–34, l. 7, p. 44, ll. 12–15; tr., 57–8, 84.

\(^\text{62}\) *TS*, p. 295, ll. 12–15; tr., 448.

\(^\text{63}\) *TF*, p. 100, l. 10, p. 107, ll. 16–17; tr., 187, 198.
pectively. Their sources of information, their selection of themes, events, and facts, as well as their interpretations will be carefully studied.

4. Some reflections on the second appendix to TF

More light on the original text of TF comes from a closer study of what is now known as the second appendix to TF. Its anonymous author announced in the preface that he had undertaken the writing of the chronicle at the request of Dāwūd Askia b. Hārūn Askia b. al-Ḥājj Askia b. Dāwūd Askia b. Amīr al-Mu‘minīn al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Askia. Dāwūd Askia b. Hārūn reigned, in Timbuktu, under the tutelage of the Moroccans, in 1657–69. This work was, therefore, written at the same period as Ibn al-Mukhtār’s chronicle (i.e. TF). Indeed, the following comparison of the two texts suggests that these may represent two versions of the same work.64

(1) The first part of the appendix is missing from TF.

(2) Some sections are identical—word for word—in the two texts.

(3) In other sections both texts deal with almost the same topics, but the appendix appears to be a résumé of TF, or TF to be an amplification of the appendix.

Generally speaking the text of the appendix follows that of MS A. It has nothing of the additional material of MS C only, and would support our argument that these additions were not part of the original, seventeenth-century, work. More than that, it is very likely that the first part of the appendix represents the first missing part of MS A, or the original TF.

Following an initial note on the Yemenite origin of some Sudanese peoples, and the preface about the time and the circumstances of this work’s composition, the appendix begins with the history of the Dya and Shī (or, Sonni) dynasties of Songhay.65 This is, indeed, also the arrangement of TS.66 In following the list of the rulers of the Shī dynasty, the author mentions that it was in the reign of Mākara Komsī that Māllī–Koi Gongo Mūsā passed through Gao on his way to Mecca. In a way typical of the style of TF, this seemed to have been an appropriate occasion for a digression to say more about Gongo Mūsā of Māllī: ‘The name of his mother was Gongo . . . ’.67 It is with this phrase that the text of MS A begins, and its isolation is thus broken.

The texts of the appendix and MS A are identical for the account of Gongo Mūsā’s pilgrimage, the descriptions of Māllī and of the provinces of Kanyaga and Diawara, and the account of the traditions about the kingdom of Kāynamagha.68 Then the author is reminded by his digression to go back to the history of Songhay. It was difficult to explain why TF begins in the middle

64 I could not locate the Arabic manuscript of the second appendix, of which the French translation only is given in the published volume. The textual comparison is therefore somewhat deficient.
65 TF, tr., 2nd app., 329–35.
66 TS, 2–6; tr., 4–12.
67 TF, tr., 2nd app., 335; TF, p. 32, l. 15; tr., 56.
68 TF, 33–42; tr., 56–80.
of the list of the Shiʿi rulers.69 It is no longer difficult, because the author resumed the account of the Shiʿi dynasty, which he had interrupted when digressing about Gongo Mūsā. This would strongly support our argument that the first part of the appendix represents the missing first part of MS A.

Is it not therefore possible that the preface to the appendix, in which the author is commissioned to write this history by Dāwūd Askia b. Hārūn, was the original preface of TF? The present preface, which attributes the writing of the chronicle to Maḥmūd Kaʿtī, is found in MS C only, and its authenticity is subject to suspicion. According to that preface the work was undertaken to exalt the name and the deeds of al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Askia.70 In fact, taking the text of MS A, we find more about Dāwūd Askia than about al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Askia.71 In the preface to the appendix, the framework of the chronicle is better defined: the biographies of the Askias from al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Askia to the author’s time in chronological order; in each biography the events of the man’s days, and the eminent religious personalities would be mentioned.72

In some sections of the chronicle the appendix is much shorter than MS A. The date of Sonni ʿAlī’s death is given in the appendix as Muḥarram 898.73 MS A gives the same date, but adds ‘in Durar al-ḥisān fī akhbār baʾḍ mulūk al-Sūdān’ it is said that Shiʿi ʿAlī died in 899’.74 This reference and others,75 indicate that the author of MS A added information from Durar al-ḥisān to the text of the appendix, with which he was acquainted.

Three significant pieces of information are among the additions of MS A to the text of the appendix.

1) A detailed account of the military expeditions of Sonni ʿAlī, which the author says he copied from a manuscript of Maḥmūd Kaʿtī.76

2) An account of the persecution of the ‘ulamāʾ of Timbuktu by Sonni ʿAlī which the author recorded from his cousin Muḥammad Bābā b. Yūsuf Kaʿtī.77

3) The pledge of al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Askia to the descendants of Mori Hawgaru, as related to the author by his uncle the qāḍī Ismāʿīl b. Maḥmūd Kaʿtī.78

It is clear that MS A was enriched by drawing on the historical knowledge of the Kaʿtī family, but the writings of Maḥmūd Kaʿtī had been known also to

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69 TF, p. 42, l. 18; tr., 80.
70 TF, MS C only, pp. 10, l. 17–11, l. 2; tr., 9–10.
71 About 17 pp. of the Arabic text are on al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Askia compared with some 27 pp. on Dāwūd Askia.
72 TF, tr., 2nd app., 327.
73 TF, tr., 2nd app., 338.
74 TF, p. 52, ll. 4–7; tr., 100.
75 Compare TF, p. 44, ll. 2–6 (tr., 83) with TF, tr., 2nd app., 337.
76 TF, pp. 45, l. 6–48, l. 5; tr., 85–92.
77 TF, pp. 48, l. 13–49, l. 13; tr., 94–6.
78 TF, p. 72, ll. 11–12, p. 75, ll. 5–6; tr., 138–9, 142.
the author of the appendix, who quoted from Ka‘ti’s manuscript concerning the date of the islamization of Gao.79

Following the invitation of Dáwwūd Askia b. Hárūn to write a history of the Askia dynasty, the author of the appendix says: 80

‘Je lui avais répondu d’abord par un refus et avais décliné la proposition, éprouvant de la répugnance à pénétrer dans un domaine où je ne rencontre-rais, parmi ceux qui m’y avaient précédé, personne sur qui m’appuyer, à moins de copier ce que je trouverais dans leurs notes manuscrites. Il n’a d’ailleurs rien été fait sur la plupart de ces princes et il n’existe aucun ouvrage traitant de ceux qui se sont réclamés du titre de roi parmi les askia du Dendi’.

One feels the deep concern of the author over the difficulties he may face in getting reliable information for writing this work of history. The appendix may represent an earlier version of the chronicle, which was later revised—in the form of MS A—when through his labours the author got more information. That the appendix and MS A were written by the same author may be supported by the fact that the same informants are mentioned in sections common to both texts as well as in one of them—MS A or the appendix—only.81 The final judgement about the exact relationship between the two texts should await the rediscovery of the Arabic text of the appendix.

If, as now suggested, the second appendix may fill in the missing beginning of MS A, we face a difficulty in placing the isolated two pages attached to MS A, and written in the same hand.82 These isolated pages were incorporated in the first chapter of MS C. They deal with two subjects: (a) rules prescribed by Muḥammad Askia in his court and privileges granted to Muslims; 83 (b) the origin of the kings of Songhay, a version of the tradition about the arrival of the ancestor of the Dya dynasty from the Yemen.84 This version is somewhat different from the one presented in the second appendix.85 TS has yet a third version of the same tradition,86 which suggests that several versions were current in the middle of the seventeenth century. Perhaps, in revising the text of the appendix Ibn al-Mukhtār preferred to replace the version of the appendix with the one found in the isolated pages. The account of the early Songhay dynasties in the second appendix is introduced by a short paragraph on

79 TF, tr., 2nd app., 332–3.
80 ibid., 328. Without the Arabic text at my disposal, I prefer to quote the French translation, rather than risk a double translation.
81 e.g.: Mori Bakr ibn Ṣāliḥ Wangarabe in TF, p. 36, l. 17, tr., 62–3 (common to MS A and the appendix) and in TF, tr., 2nd app., 335 (in the appendix only); the qāḍī Abū l-’Abbās in TF, pp. 33, l. 11–34, l. 1; tr., 57–8 (common to both texts) and in TF, p. 44, ll. 13–14, tr., 84 (in MS A only); al-faqīḥ al-Ṣāliḥ al-Sīlanke in TF, tr., 2nd app., 338 (in the appendix only) and TF, p. 181, l. 6, tr., 316 (in MS A only).
82 Introduction to the translation of TF, p. x. A third isolated page is an extract from TS.
83 TF, p. 11, ll. 6–17, p. 12, ll. 5–7; tr., 13–14, 15.
84 TF, pp. 29, l. 11–31, l. 1; tr., 49–51.
86 TS, pp. 4, l. 3–5, l. 5; tr., 6–9.
Muhammad Askia which may be regarded as parallel to the paragraph about the rules prescribed by Muhammad Askia in the isolated pages of MS A. It is difficult, at this stage, to say more about the reconstruction of the missing part of MS A, probably mutilated by the nineteenth-century author of MS C. We have tried, however, to indicate its contents by using the second appendix and the isolated pages of MS A.

5. A textual analysis of MS C only

For over half a century the authenticity of considerable parts of one of the most important documentary sources for African history has not been seriously challenged, though all were suspicious of the famous prophecy. I believe that distinguished scholars like Houdas and Delafosse accepted the authenticity of MS C (with due reservations about the prophecy) because it fitted so well the already available MS A, which seemed to have been mutilated. Also, the fact that MS C represented a text already known to Felix Dubois added to its reputation.

In translating the published text, a collation of the different MSS, Houdas and Delafosse endeavoured to reconcile some contradictions. Also, the author of MS C integrated his additions into the text with great skill. For informants of Mahmud Ka’ti he selected personalities who had lived under Sonni ‘Ali and Muhammad Askia, such as the qadi Ḥabib and Mur Sadiq b. al-Faqih Mūr. The qadi Ḥabib died in 903/1497–8 and could have been Ka’ti’s informant only according to MS C which claims that Ka’ti was born in 1468. That the other informant, Mur Sadiq, was a contemporary of Sonni ‘Ali and Muhammad Askia is confirmed by MS A. This proves only that the author of MS C did a scholarly work in studying the texts of TF and TS to use their information for his own fabrication. This may be further demonstrated by a textual analysis.

Muhammad Askia’s pilgrimage to Mecca is of great importance for the author of MS C, because it was in Mecca that Muhammad Askia was declared caliph of al-Takrūr, and it was there that the prophecy about the coming of the twelfth caliph was first pronounced. The account of the pilgrimage occurs in TS and in MS A. In MS C this account is given twice. The following is an analysis of the second—and more detailed—version to demonstrate the eclectic character of this account pieced together from TS and MS A.

MS C only, p. 65, ll. 9–10; tr., p. 124, ll. 6–13: this is taken word for word

87 e.g.: fi ayyam translated ‘ du vivant ’ (TF, p. 82, l. 1; tr., 153, see above, p. 574); fi ‘ismatihi translated ‘ sans avoir été touchée par lui ’ (TF, p. 119, l. 1; tr., 217, see above, p. 575, n. 28 and also below, p. 586).
88 TF, MS C only, p. 14, ll. 3–6; tr., 19.
89 TF, MS C only, p. 62, ll. 8–11; tr., 119.
90 TS, pp. 74, l. 19–75, l. 1; tr., 123.
91 TF, p. 51, ll. 8–13; tr., 98–9 (put in prison by Sonni ‘Ali), and p. 71, ll. 11–14; tr., 137 (given a charter and gifts by Muhammad Askia).
92 TS, pp. 72, l. 12–73, l. 17; tr., 119–21. TF (MS A only), p. 64, n. 1; tr., 124, n. 3.
93 TF, MS C only, p. 16, ll. 12–20, pp. 65, l. 8–68, l. 15; tr., 25–6, 125–31.
from MS A, p. 33, ll. 8–9, tr., p. 57, ll. 6–9, about the preparation of Mansa Mūsā for the pilgrimage.

MS C only, p. 65, l. 10; tr., p. 124, ll. 13–15: the date—Şafar—is from TS, p. 72, l. 12; tr., p. 119, l. 2.

MS C only, p. 65, ll. 11–12; tr., pp. 124, l. 15–125, l. 4: money for the pilgrimage from Sonni ‘Ali’s treasury—taken word for word from TS, p. 73, ll. 4–5, tr., p. 119, ll. 27–32.

MS C only, p. 65, l. 13; tr., p. 125, l. 5: 800 soldiers with Muḥammad Askia—cf. MS A, p. 64, n. 1, l. 3, tr., p. 124, n. 3, l. 6.

MS C only, p. 65, ll. 13–16; tr., pp. 125, l. 5–126, l. 2: the list of those who accompanied Muḥammad Askia to Mecca is a skillful combination of information from TS, p. 73, ll. 3–4, tr., p. 119, ll. 26–7, and MS A, p. 64, n. 1, tr., p. 124, n. 3.

According to MS A, Muḥammad Askia was accompanied by seven fuqahā', for which MS C only added the names. Significantly, two of these—alfā Šāliḥ Jawara and alfā Muḥammad Ţall—are confirmed by TS and MS A.94 Two others—Mori Muḥammad Hawgaru and Maḥmūd Ka‘ti himself—could not have been there, on the evidence of MS A, because the former was very probably already dead in 1497, and the latter was not yet born.95 The other three fuqahā' are known from MS C only.96

MS C only, pp. 67, l. 16–68, l. 5; tr., 129–30: an account of the miracle performed by Šāliḥ Jawara in the desert, on the pilgrimage, is taken again almost word for word from TS, pp. 72, l. 15–73, l. 2. Certainly, the other anecdote about the meeting of Šāliḥ Jawara with Shamharūsh, the sultan of the jinn—pp. 65, l. 18–67, l. 11; tr., 126–9—is among the additions of MS C only.

This account of the pilgrimage in MS C only which, as demonstrated, was pieced together from TS and MS A, is rendered by the author of MS C as related by Maḥmūd Ka‘ti, in the first person, as an eyewitness.

We may now analyse the text of MS C only concerning the appointment of Muḥammad Askia as caliph, to find out how it is related to the accounts of TS and MS A.

MS C only, p. 12, ll. 16–17; tr., p. 16, ll. 20–4: the Sharīf of Mecca robed Muḥammad Askia with a green cap, a white turban, and a sword. These

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94 TS, p. 72, ll. 13–14 (tr., 119), on Šāliḥ Jawara; and TF, p. 82, ll. 5–8 (tr., 153), on Muḥammad Ţall.

95 On the birth date of Maḥmūd Ka‘ti, see above. The great-grandsons of Mori Muḥammad Hawgaru were contemporaries of Sonni ‘Ali—TF, p. 51, ll. 8–9 (tr., 99)—and of Muḥammad Askia—TF, pp. 72, l. 17–73, l. 1 (tr., 139). It is very unlikely that he himself was still alive to go with Muḥammad Askia to Mecca. Indeed, the concession of MS C only that he was then very old is too liberal.

96 One of these, Gao Zakariyā’, is mentioned again by MS C only—pp. 116, l. 15–117, l. 1 (tr., 212–13)—among the ‘uḷamā’ consulted by Dāwūd Askia. The other ‘uḷamā’ mentioned there were second generation to those who made the pilgrimage in 1497, such as the sons of Šāliḥ Jawara and Muḥammad Ţall.
are mentioned in MS A—p. 86, ll. 6–11 (tr., p. 161, ll. 19–22). According to the second appendix (TF, tr., 329) the cap and the turban were yellow. MS C only, p. 12, l. 8: tr., p. 16, l. 4: the Sharif of Mecca is called al-Sharif al-Hasani Mawlai al-Abbâs. J. O. Hunwick noted that the Sharif of Mecca at this time was Muhammed b. Barakât (reg. 859–11 Muharram 903) and there was never a Sharif of Mecca called al-Abbâs.97 Indeed, I suspect that the title given by MS C is a manipulation of what is found in the text of the second appendix (and may have been in the first missing part of MS A)—TF, tr., 329—al-Sharif al-Hasani, and in TS—p. 73, l. 12 (tr., p. 120, l. 19)—al-Sharif al-Abbâs.98

For MS C, the investiture of Muhammed Askia as the eleventh caliph is an introduction to the prophecy announcing the coming of the twelfth caliph. The prominent authority for this prophecy was Sidi 'Abd al-Rahman al-Suyuti.99 For the meeting of Muhammed Askia with al-Suyuti, the author of MS C could rely on MS A, where it is said also that al-Suyuti made a prophecy about the fate of Gao, Timbuktu, and Jenne.100 This is repeated by MS C only.101 In his treatise Ta'rikh al-khulafa', al-Suyuti indeed says that ten out of the twelve caliphs promised by the Prophet Muhammed have already reigned, and the remaining two are awaited.102 In another work, quoted by 'Uthman dan Fodio, al-Suyuti fixed the beginning of the thirteenth century of the Hijra as the date for the appearance of the twelfth caliph, who will be the expected Mahdi.103 The author of MS C had, therefore, enough authentic material to use for fabricating a prophecy which identifies Shehu Ahmadu as the twelfth caliph.

That the author of MS C consulted TS is proved by the fact that a chapter from TS, about Sonni 'Ali, was incorporated in the text of MS C.104

I have already mentioned that in describing the preparations of Muhammed Askia for the pilgrimage the author of MS C copied, word for word, the account in MS A about the preparations made by Mansa Musa for his pilgrimage. But, this is not the only case of such direct borrowing; Daud Askia's regret at killing a sharif by mistake in MS C only105 is identical, word for word, with Mansa Musa's regret at killing his mother by mistake as related by MS A.106

98 Mawluy al-Abbâs sounds like a Maghribi name for a sharif.
99 TF, MS C only, pp. 12, l. 19–14, l. 3; tr., 16–19.
100 TF, pp. 68, l. 19–69, l. 3; tr., 131–2.
101 TF, MS C only, p. 14, ll. 6–10; tr., 19.
104 Introduction to the translation of TF, p. xi. This chapter has not been reproduced in the published text.
105 TF, MS C only, pp. 116, l. 13–117, l. 4; tr., 212–13.
106 TF, p. 33, ll. 2–7; tr., 56–7.
In a recent stimulating article, J. O. Hunwick suggests that passages of MS C only, concerning the servile castes, had first been excised from the MSS and then restored in the time of Shehu Ahmadu.\textsuperscript{107} The contents of these passages will be dealt with later in this paper, but even a textual analysis proves that the additional passages of MS C only had never been part of the original text, represented by MS A, and that these were inserted into an existing integrated text.\textsuperscript{108} The author of MS C was very careful in this operation, though these intrusions into the text sometimes resulted in contradictions.

In MS A we read: 'According to this account Dāwūd Askia's reign was 33 years, whereas others say just over 34'. At this point MS C only, comes in: 'and in that year, that is the thirty-third year, \ldots'.\textsuperscript{109} Following the usual style of TF, this should be read 'in that year, that is 933', but Dāwūd Askia did not reign then. The French translation reads 'during that year, that is the thirty-third year (of his reign)'. But this is a poor way to save the author of MS C from his own failure. The author certainly assumed that the figure 33 refers to the year 933, which he adopted for his own insertion. In fact, the preceding passage has no record of a year which the author of MS C could have referred as 'in that year'.

Another inconsistency in MS C is found in references to Muhammad Askia, supposedly by Mahmūd Ka'tī. Muḥammad Askia's name is followed once by rahmahu 'illāh ' may Allah have mercy upon him',\textsuperscript{110} as if he were dead, and then by atāla 'illāhu ḥayātahu ' may Allah prolong his life ',\textsuperscript{111} as if he were still alive. This inconsistency is understandable in a fabrication which tries, but sometime fails, to speak for a contemporary of Muḥammad Askia.

In some cases we find that a marginal note in MS A appears as part of the text of MS C.\textsuperscript{112} One may suggest, though inconclusively, that this MS A was with the author of MS C when he edited TF in his own way. This may explain also the circumstances of the mutilation of MS A.

6. The contents of MS C only

The prophecy about the coming of the last caliph, namely Shehu Ahmadu, is undoubtedly the most important topic from the view-point of the author of MS C, and the principal reason for the fabrication. This author, however, introduced other themes as well.\textsuperscript{113}


\textsuperscript{109} e.g. pp. 61, l. 15–62, l. 2 (tr., p. 118, ll. 7–12); pp. 62, l. 3–63, l. 17 (tr., pp. 119, l. 1–121, l. 8; pp. 140, l. 10–141, l. 10 (tr., pp. 225, l. 6–256, l. 9); p. 143, ll. 2–5 (tr., p. 253, ll. 11–16); pp. 144, l. 8–144, l. 10 (tr., pp. 258, l. 26–260, l. 16).

\textsuperscript{108} TF, p. 116, ll. 11–13; tr., 212.

\textsuperscript{110} TF, MS C only, p. 15, l. 4; tr., 22.

\textsuperscript{111} TF, MS C only, p. 23, ll. 11–12; tr., 37–8.

\textsuperscript{112} e.g. TF, p. 121, l. 4–6; tr., 221: 'During his—namely, Dāwūd Askia's—reign died the qādī al-‘Āqib \ldots His—namely, al-‘Āqib's—birth \ldots'.

\textsuperscript{113} For a review of the passages of MS C only see the appendix, below.
(1) Some additional notes on the pilgrimage of Muḥammad Askia and his investiture as caliph of al-Takrūr, which was the occasion for the prophecy.

(2) An account of the servile groups—referred to as zanj—their traditions of origin, and their legal status as confirmed by great scholars such as al-Suyūṭī and al-Maghīlī.

(3) The shurafa’, the Prophet’s descendants, in Songhay, and gifts of servile groups given to them by the Askias.

(4) Gifts of villages of servile groups to two ‘ulamā’—Ṣāliḥ Jawara and Muḥammad Tālā.

What follows is an attempt to offer partial explanations of possible motivations for the fabrication.

(a) The caliphate

The jiḥād of Shehu Ahmadu in Massina is sometimes described as an extension of the Fulani jiḥād in Hausaland under ‘Uthmān dan Fodio, as if Shehu Ahmadu was one of the standard-bearers, as were the jiḥād leaders in different parts of Hausaland and in Adamawa. But, even if at the beginning Shehu Ahmadu looked to Sokoto for inspiration, he soon regarded himself as independent of Sokoto, and even criticized the Sokoto rulers for laxity.114 Shehu Ahmadu assumed the caliphal title of amīr al-muʾminīn, as did the Sokoto sultans.115 To the tension and competition between Sokoto and Hamdullahi a rivalry about the claim for the caliphate in the Sudan was added. The revised edition of TF by the author of MS C may represent an attempt to prove that Shehu Ahmadu was the only legitimate caliph, on the authority of al-Suyūṭī, of al-Maghīlī and of Shamharūsh, the sultan of the jinn.

‘Uthmān dan Fodio based his teaching on the reformist tradition of the sixteenth century in Timbuktu, that of al-Maghīlī and Aḥmad Bābā.116 Shehu Ahmadu turned to the same period by claiming to be successor to Muḥammad Askia, whose investiture as caliph was on record in TF and TS.

When the Sharīf of Mecca, according to MS A, appointed Muḥammad Askia, he said: anta amīrī wa-nāʾibī wa-khalīfatī fī iqṭlimika wa-anta amīrū ‘l-muʾminīn ‘ you are my commander and my deputy in your country, and you are the commander of the Faithful ‘. In 1537–8, Muḥammad Askia invested his son Ismāʿīl Askia with this title, saying: anta khalīfatū khalīfatī ʿl-sharīfī ʿlādīhī huwa khalīfatu ʿl-sultānī ʿl-ʿazam al-ʿuthmānī ‘ you are the deputy of the deputy of the Sharīf who is, himself, a deputy of the great Ottoman sultan ‘.117


115 For references to ‘Uthmān dan Fodio as amīr al-muʾminīn, see e.g. Tāziyīn al-warqūt, ed. and tr. by M. Hiskett, Ibadan, 1963, 59, 61, 62, 80, 81 (Arabic); 112, 114, 115, 129 (English trans.).

116 On al-Maghīlī, see M. Hiskett, ‘ An Islamic tradition of reform in the Western Sudan ’, BSOAS, xxv, 3, 1962, 577–96. For Aḥmad Bābā as a source of authority, see ‘Uthmān dan Fodio, Bayān wa-nfūd al-hijra ‘alā ʿl-ibād (MS at the University of Ibadan, 82/33).

117 TF, p. 86, ll. 11–16; tr., 162. The recognition of the Ottoman sultan followed the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517.

Vol. xxxiv. Part 3. 39
According to TS, Muḥammad Askia was appointed by the Sharīf of Mecca as ‘his deputy in Songhay’.\(^{118}\) According to Nuzhat al-ḥādī, it was the ‘Abbāsid caliph in Cairo who made Muḥammad Askia his deputy (nāʾib) in the Sudan.\(^{119}\) Through the prophecy of al-Suyūṭi and Shamharūš, who made Askia the eleventh caliph and Shehu Ahmadu the twelfth and last caliph promised by the Prophet, MS C promoted Muḥammad Askia from the rather modest rank of the Sharīf’s deputy to the highest status, in line with the ‘rightly-guided caliphs’.

Muḥammad Askia, though a champion of Islam, could not escape the elements of the Songhay traditional heritage. This is reflected in the rules he established as his court etiquette. These rules, recorded in the isolated pages of MS A and incorporated in MS C,\(^{120}\) were non-Islamic practices associated with the traditional concepts of kingship. The author of MS C, aware of this, adds: ‘This all was at the beginning of his reign, in order to win over his people. But once his authority was established he departed from all these [practices]. He then sought the advice of the ‘ulamā’ who adhere to the sunna of the Prophet. He followed their teaching so that all the ‘ulamā’ of his age consented that he was a caliph’ .\(^{121}\) For the author of MS C, Muḥammad Askia should be presented as a perfect Muslim ruler, who did not mix pre-Islamic customs, to be worthy of the caliphate. It was important to make this clear if Shehu Ahmadu was to be Muḥammad Askia’s successor to the caliphate.

(b) The servile groups

The account of the servile groups which the Songhay rulers inherited from Māllī was highly valued by modern historians as shedding light on the social structure and the economic basis of the Sudanese empires.\(^{122}\) All but one of the references in TF to the servile groups appear in MS C only. If my thesis that passages in MS C only were fabricated early in the nineteenth century, at the time of Shehu Ahmadu, is valid then almost nothing is left on the servile groups in what we regard as the original, seventeenth-century, text of TF.

In the Western Sudan there is a clear distinction between slaves and members of occupational groups. The latter were legally free, though of inferior social status; clients to the nobility to whom they rendered services. Also they were not allowed to marry outside their occupational group. The distinction between slaves and occupational groups is clearly implied in MS A.

\(^{118}\) TS, p. 73, l. 12; tr., 120.


\(^{120}\) TF, p. 11, l. 6–17; tr., 13–14.

\(^{121}\) TF, MS C only, pp. 11, l. 17–12, l. 3; tr., 14–15. J. O. Hunwick (‘Religion and state in the Songhay empire ’, in I. M. Lewis (ed.), Islam in tropical Africa, London, 1966, 309) suggests that what fell into abeyance as the power of Muḥammad Askia increased were the privileges he had granted to the Muslims. Our argument, based on the separation of MSS A and C, is that the pre-Islamic customs are said to have been abolished.

MS A has a long section on slavery in Songhay. There were slave villages across the country, where under the supervision of slave chiefs crops were raised for the granaries of the ruler. The slave chiefs were sometimes wealthy, and owned slaves themselves. Slaves could be set free by their masters.\textsuperscript{123}

MS A also refers to the origin of blacksmiths and drummers (‘griots’) in Songhay, as maternal cousins of the founder of the Dya dynasty.\textsuperscript{124} Here the emphasis is on the relations between the ancestors of the rulers and those of the occupational groups, as well as on the services rendered by the latter. MS C introduces a more aggressive attitude towards the occupational groups, with an emphasis on their inferior and servile status, and on their being possessed as property.\textsuperscript{125}

It seems as if the author of MS C forced a servile status upon the occupational groups. Without those elements of servitude and possession the account of MS C applies better to occupational groups. Indeed, the tradition about the five occupational groups which descended from ‘Uj as related in MS C\textsuperscript{126} is almost identical with an oral tradition recorded recently about the origin of a group of blacksmiths.\textsuperscript{127}

Among the letters of Shehu Ahmadu there is one in which he gave permission to enslave zanj, and he quotes TF as his authority.\textsuperscript{128} One may now assert that TF could serve as an authority only after it had been re-edited by the author of MS C, who produced the legal advice of such eminent authorities as al-Suyūṭī and al-Maghīlī.\textsuperscript{129} The skilful redactor could have done this in following two authentic documents.

(a) TS says that on his way back from Mecca Muḥammad Askia ‘met many of the ‘ulumd’, among them al-Jalāl [sic] al-Suyūṭī, may Allāh have mercy upon him. He asked them about some affairs of his kingdom, and they gave him legal advice’.\textsuperscript{130} MS C suggests that this advice concerned the servile groups.

(b) In the existing texts of al-Maghīlī’s ‘Replies’ to Muḥammad Askia a general question on inheritance of those termed ‘slaves of the sultanate’ is put, and al-Maghīlī gives approval to this as a hubs (i.e. waqf), unless the inherited slaves were originally seized by force. Those who have always been in this condition could be inherited.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{123} TF, pp. 94, l. 10–105, l. 1; tr., 179–94.
\textsuperscript{124} TF, pp. 30, l. 3–31, l. 1; tr., 43–51.
\textsuperscript{125} cf. TF, p. 142, ll. 4–6 (tr., 257), where even a slight difference in the texts of MSS A and C indicates that the redactor of MS C was anxious to emphasize possession over occupational groups, where MS A suggests authority only.
\textsuperscript{126} TF, MS C only, pp. 27, l. 10–28, l. 6; tr., 45–6.
\textsuperscript{128} Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France, MS 2406, pièce, No. 46 (ii); See Hunwick, ‘Some notes on the term zanj’, 49.
\textsuperscript{129} TF, MS C only, pp. 14, l. 10–15, l. 10; tr., 19–22.
\textsuperscript{130} TS, p. 73, ll. 15–16; tr., 257.
\textsuperscript{131} Quoted from Hunwick, ‘Some notes on the term zanj’, 51.
Though there is nothing in al-Maghili’s legal advice which indicates that he was referring to the occupational groups, the author of MS C adopted it for his purpose. A condition to valid possession is that those groups should have been servile previously, and not freemen who were enslaved (*qabila ariqqā* lahu lā ahrār uṣūriqqā).\(^{132}\) In order to prove beyond doubt their servile status, MS C was anxious to relate the traditions of the origin of these tribes.\(^{133}\)

In a charter given to the descendants of Mori Hawgaru, Muḥammad Askia allowed them to marry whomsoever they wished. A child born to them from a woman slave would be free together with his mother. This privilege, Muḥammad Askia added, did not extend to the Sorko and the Arbi, ‘because they are my property’.\(^{134}\) This is the only reference to servile groups in MS A—and, therefore, in what I regard as the original text of *TF*. It could have served the author of MS C as a hook on which to hang his elaborated accounts of the servile groups, whom he termed *zanj*.\(^ {135}\)

The attitude of Shehu Ahmadu’s followers towards the Sorko is borne out by Barth’s eyewitness evidence: ‘next morning there arrived a troop of fugitives. . . . They belonged to the tribe of Surk, who, from being the indigenous tribe on that part of the Niger which extends on both sides of the lake Debu, had been degraded, in the course of time, to the condition of serfs, and were threatened by the fanatical Sheikho Ahmadu with being sold into slavery’.\(^{136}\)

Why was Shehu Ahmadu so interested in confirming the servile status of some groups in that region? In his comments on the abstract of the present paper, Dr. William A. Brown, whose intensive studies on Massina and Timbuktu make him the foremost authority on the period of Shehu Ahmadu, suggests some motives:

‘First, there is evidence that the Niger boatmen—Somono, Bozo and Sorko—resented, and probably resisted, their continued reduction to servile status under Hamdullahi. After all, many among them had long been Muslim, according to their definition, before the advent of Ahmad Lobbo. Second, there is some evidence that Fulbe castes and slaves bulked large among Ahmad Lobbo’s followers at the time of the *jihād*, and that some among them expected, and probably sought, abolition of their inferior status as a reward for their support. Clearly this did not occur, and the evidence suggests that the numbers of inferior persons grew and that they bore a heavy burden of taxation; although admitted to participation in

\(^{132}\) *TF*, MS C only, p. 55, ll. 14–15; tr., 106.

\(^{133}\) cf. the detailed account of the twelve tribes and their origins in *TF*, MS C only, pp. 55, l. 15–58, l. 14; tr., 108–12. See also the traditions of the origin of different Sudanese peoples as related by Damir b. Ya’qūb, a disciple of Shamharūṣ, in *TF*, MS C only, pp. 24, l. 20–29, l. 11; tr., 40–8.

\(^{134}\) *TF*, pp. 73, l. 13–74, l. 3; tr., 140–1.

\(^{135}\) Hunwick (‘Some notes on the term *zanj*’) is concerned with the relationship between the terms *zanj* and *sorko*.

\(^{136}\) Barth, op. cit., ii, 335.
Hamdullahi's wars and permitted individual mobility through scholarship. Finally it appears that Ahmad Lobbo sought the support, or at least neutrality, of the old urban and rural Muslim aristocracy in the Niger Bend through generous gifts of slaves and other servile persons'.

Some accounts of the servile groups in MS C only are associated with generous grants of villages inhabited by these groups given away by Muhammad Askia and Dawud Askia to the shuraifa and to the Muslim saints Salihi Jawara and Muhammad Tall. The largeness of these gifts—1,700 and 1,500 zanj or 70 villages—seems exaggerated compared with evidence in MS A about gifts of slaves. Muhammad Askia gave 10 slaves to the descendants of Mori Hawgaru. To his close associate Mahmud Ka‘ti, Dawud Askia once gave a farm with 13 slaves, and gave five slaves on another occasion out of gratitude for a wise counsel. Ishaq Askia gave Mahmud Ka‘ti 10 slaves.

As an express act of generosity, wishing to surpass the generosity of his own slave Misakul Allah, Dawud Askia distributed 500 slaves to Muslim dignitaries—‘ulama’ and shuraifa’—giving each of them 27 slaves. It is clear that the Askia’s knew well the value of their slaves, and grants of 1,500 or 1,700 serfs, as related by MS C, are at least doubtful.

Why was the author of MS C concerned with these generous—and exaggerated—gifts of zanj to shuraifa’ and to two saints? Why did he pay so much attention to the shuraifa’? What interest had he in building up the image of two of the saints of Muhammad Askia’s time—Salihi Jawara and Muhammad Tall?

These problems and others should now be investigated in the context of the

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137 Letter from Dr. Brown, dated 17 November 1969.
138 TF, MS C only, pp. 23, l. 13–24, l. 3 (tr., 38–9), 1,700 zanj to the shari‘ Ahmad al-‘saqi‘; p. 117, l. 10–19 (tr., 214–15), 1,500 zanj to the shari‘ Ibn al-Qasim; p. 32, l. 4–7, and p. 71, l. 6–10 (tr., 53, 136–7), some 70 villages of zanj to alfi‘ Muhammad Tall; p. 32, l. 9–11 and p. 71, l. 3–5 (tr., 54, 138), villages of zanj to alfi‘ Salihi Jawara.
139 TF, p. 71, l. 15; tr., 137.
140 TF, p. 109, l. 6–8, p. 113, l. 6–7; tr., 201, 207.
141 TF, p. 151, l. 14; tr., 271.
142 TF, pp. 106, l. 9–107, l. 12; tr., 197–8.
143 TF, p. 103, l. 16–17; tr., 182–3.
144 The shuraifa’ are mentioned twice only in MS A (TF, p. 11, l. 16, p. 107, l. 1–4; tr., 14, 197). MS C deals in great detail with the shari‘ al-‘saqi‘ (TF, MS C only, pp. 16, l. 20–23, l. 19; tr., 27–37) and with his descendants (see n. 138, above). MS C also mentions servile groups which were the property of Moroccan shuraifa’—TF, MS C only, p. 64, l. 1–7, p. 123, l. 9–19; tr., 122, 125.
145 These two scholars are mentioned in TS, 72, 74, 78 (tr., 119, 121–2, 130), and in MS A, 72 (tr., 154), as respected scholars, who were closely associated with Muhammad Askia. Of both Salihi Jawara and Muhammad Tall, MS A says that they left no descendants worthy of notice (TF, p. 72, l. 5–9; tr., 153–4). Yet MS C—which also contains the above information—regards Musa son of Salihi Jawara as mukashif, who sees what other people cannot (TF, MS C only, p. 67, l. 10; tr., 128). Elsewhere MS C—pp. 116, l. 7–117, l. 1; tr., 213—mentions Nia Dyawara son of Salihi Jawara and Yusuuf son of Muhammad Tall among the prominent ‘ulama’ consulted by Dawud Askia. MS C is again self-contradicting.
early nineteenth century, if my arguments that MS C was produced at the time of Shehu Ahmadu are at all valid.\textsuperscript{146}

\textit{Appendix: MS C only}

pp. 9–11; tr., pp. 6–13, l. 3: the author’s name; doxology; the purpose of writing the chronicle to honour Muḥammad Askia; the title of the chronicle.

pp. 11, l. 17–12, l. 5; tr., pp. 14, l. 20–15, l. 14: Muhammad Askia abolished pre-Islamic customs, sought the advice of the ‘ulamā’, and was recognized as caliph.

pp. 12, l. 7–29, l. 11; tr., pp. 16, l. 1–49, l. 1: Muḥammad Askia granted land to the sharīf al-Ṣaqli; he was invested as caliph by the Sharīf of Mecca. The prophecy of al-Suyūṭī about the coming of the twelfth caliph, and his prophecy about the fate of the cities of the Sudan. Al-Suyūṭī’s legal opinion about the 24 servile tribes. Al-Maghili concurs with al-Suyūṭī. Muḥammad Askia’s regulations concerning the servile tribes. Muḥammad Askia’s letter to the twelfth caliph. An account of Muḥammad Askia’s pilgrimage. The arrival of the sharīf al-Ṣaqli, and the gift of zanj to him. Dāmīr a disciple of Shamharūsh sultan of the jinn, related legendary traditions about the origin of the Songhay, the Soninke, the Wangara, the servile tribes, and the Berbers.

pp. 31, l. 1–32, l. 15; tr., pp. 51, l. 3–56, l. 3: the descendants of the sharīf al-Ṣaqli; Muḥammad Askia’s respect for two ‘ulamā’—Muḥammad Ṭall and Šāliḥ Jawara—and gifts of servile villages given to them. Gongo Mūsā, king of Mâlî, his piety and generosity.

pp. 53, l. 12–58, l. 19; tr., pp. 102, l. 14–113, l. 6: Muḥammad Askia had sent three ‘ulamā’—one after the other—to Shī Baro before waging war against him. Shī Baro defeated. A detailed account of the 24 servile tribes, and their duties. The age of Muḥammad Askia, and some of the ‘ulamā’ in the year of his accession.

p. 59, n. 1; tr., p. 114, n. 4: a long genealogy of Muḥammad Askia’s mother.

p. 59, ll. 11–13; tr., p. 115, ll. 15–18: Muḥammad Askia appointed qādis in Timbuktu, Jenne, and other cities.

pp. 59, l. 13–61, l. 13; tr., pp. 115, l. 19–118, l. 4: a passage which appears in MS A only about the meeting between Muḥammad Askia and the qādī of Timbuktu.

pp. 61, l. 15–62, l. 1; tr., p. 118, ll. 7–12: Muḥammad Askia captured five hundred masons in Zagha.

pp. 62, l. 4–63, l. 16; tr., pp. 119, l. 2–121, l. 77: the Jewish colony in Tendirma.

pp. 64, l. 1–68, l. 15; tr., pp. 121, l. 23–131, l. 11: the story of the Sorko of

\textsuperscript{146} An abstract of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association in the United States and the Committee of African Studies in Canada in October 1969 in Montreal. I am grateful to my colleagues in this field, R. Mauny, V. Monteil, J. Hunwick, and W. Brown who sent me their comments on the abstract of this paper.
Tendirma; he was the property of Mawlāy Aḥmad of Marrākush. The account of Muḥammad Askia’s pilgrimage; those who accompanied him. Miracles by Ṣāliḥ Jawara and Muḥammad Ṭall on the way to Mecca. Their meeting with Shamharūsh, who repeated the prophecy about the coming of the twelfth caliph.

pp. 70, l. 17–71, l. 10; tr., pp. 136, l. 4–137, l. 10: gifts of servile villages to the two ‘ulamā’, Muḥammad Ṭall and Ṣāliḥ Jawara.

pp. 116, l. 12–117, l. 19; tr., pp. 212, l. 21–215, l. 9: Dāwūd Askia killed a sharīf by mistake; as compensation he granted the sharīfs three groups of zanj.

p. 119, ll. 5–12; tr., pp. 218, l. 7–219, l. 4: zanj captured in Wagadu by al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Askia were given to sharīfs.

p. 123, ll. 7–19; tr., pp. 224, l. 31–225, l. 24: a letter to the qādī al-‘Āqib from a Moroccan sharīf concerning his zanj in Tendirma.

pp. 140, l. 10–141, l. 10; tr., pp. 255, l. 6–256, l. 9: zanj captured by Shī ‘Ālī in the town of Anganda.

p. 141, ll. 12–13; tr., p. 256, ll. 14–16: the date of Shī ‘Ālī’s conquest of Anganda.

p. 143, ll. 3–5; tr., p. 258, ll. 11–16: Ishāq Askia spared Anganda because the zanj there were the property of the sharīfs.

pp. 143, l. 9–144, l. 10; tr., pp. 258, l. 27–260, l. 16: Ishāq Askia sent zanj back to their master, a sharīf.

p. 149, ll. 4–18; tr., pp. 266, l. 25–268, l. 19: on the eve of the Moroccan invasion Mawlāy Aḥmad al-Dhahabī advised his brother, the sharīf Ibn al-Qāsim, to leave the country. The latter ordered his zanj to leave the country, but on their refusal he let them stay.