

**A STUDY ON MUSLIM HISTORIOGRAPHY WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO THE WORKS OF *SHAYKH* ABDUL-KADIR BN
MUSTAPHA AL-TORODI**

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Abstract

Islam is a universal and comprehensive religion which contains permanent and universal principles that provides guidance to creature from cradle to graves. Notwithstanding Islam provides historical knowledge for a man to keep records of past events, incidences, stories of different personalities and future direction. The importance attached to this knowledge is very vital for man to study it at all ages and all the times. Muslim historiography is a science that informs stories and records about the early period of Islam, events, incidences and different personalities. This paper examines the origin and the development as well as the concept of Muslim historiography with particular reference to the works of Shaykh Abdulkadir bn Mustapha Al-torodi. Similarly, mentioned has been made of his biography as well as his methods of narrating events. The paper in the final analysis examines the sources of his narration base on the criteria laid down by the Muslim historiographers.

Keyword: Islam, Muslim, Historiography, Works, Mustapha Al- Torodi

Introduction

Muslim historiography is one of the most important disciplines in Islamic knowledge that needs to be given much emphasis like all other branches of Islamic knowledge, such as *fiqh*, *Tafsir* and *hadith*, because most of the deviated sects based their ideologies on the fabricated and concocted history. This justifies the need for securing and editing history in order to safeguard the entire religion.

Qur'an as a divine book of Allah encourages Muslims to go through the history and events that took place in the past to enable them to have a lesson and focus about their present and future endeavors. That is why history of the early nations covers a reasonable portion in the Glorious Qur'an. Allah the exalted in most of the time uses phrases and words (in narrating a story) that draw the attention of listener or a reader to the content of the story to be narrated. Phrases like *alam tara* (Have You not thought) *alam ya'tikum* (Has not the news reached You). Allah (SWT) stated in surat-al-baqrah:

Have You not thought about the group of the Children of Israel after (the time of) Musâ (Moses)? when they said to a Prophet of theirs, "Appoint for us a king and we will fight In Allâh's Way." He said, "Would You Then refrain from fighting, if fighting was prescribed for you?" they said, "Why should we not fight In Allâh's Way while we have been driven out of Our homes and Our Children (families have been taken as captives)?" but when fighting was ordered for them, they turned away, All except a few of them. and Allâh is All-Aware of the Zâlimûn (polytheists and wrong-doers).¹

Also in surat al-Taghabun:

Has not the news reached you of those who disbelieved aforetime? and so they tasted the evil result of their disbelief, and Theirs will be a painful torment.²

Qur'an gives an account of many incidences that happened right from the creation of the universe down to the year in which the noble Prophet (SAW) was born. The creation of heaven and earth(Q.2:29), the creation of man (Q.2:30-39) the story Jalut Dalut and Dawud (Q.2:246-251), Abraham's request on resurrection (Q.2:260), the birth of Maryam and Isah (Q.3:33-58), First murder on earth (Q.5:27-34), Ibrahim and Idol worshipers (Q.6:74-81), History of Nuh, Hud, Salih, Lut, Shua'ib and Musa (Q.7:59-155), Ysuf and his brothers (Q.12:4-103), *As'hab al-kahf* (Q.18:13-26), Musa and Khidr (Q.18:60-82), *Thulqarnain* (Q.18:83-98), Zakariyyah (Q.19:1-15), Lukman

¹ . Qur'an.2:246-251

² . Qur'an.64:5

and his son (Q.31:12-19), *As'hab al-ukhdud* (Q.85:4-10), *As'hab al-fil* (Q.105:1-5) e.t.c.

Likewise the noble prophet (SAW) gives an account of some past and early generations in his traditions, the six collections of *hadith* contained some portions such. The study of history was given much priority by the first generation of this *Ummah*. The companions of the noble Prophet (SAW) used to check any narration, any report in order not to distort the history of this *Ummah* particularly after chaos that resulted to the death of Uthman bn Affan and the emergence of sects (*Khawarij*, *Mu'tazilah* and *shi'ah*). An example of this can be seen in what happened between Umar bn al-Khattab and Ubaiy bn Ka'ab, when Ubaiy narrated a story to Umar bn al-Khattab and Umar requested for a witness on what he was saying; and when he provided the witness Umar proclaimed that “ I doubt not your trust but I want to confirm.”³

Scholars in the early centuries wrote many books of history, *syrah* and *Maghazi* like the book of Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisham, al-waqidi and al-Tabari e.t.c. likewise the later generation of scholars such as Ibn kathir, Al-suyuti and Ibn-Khaldun, using different methodologies and approaches.

³. M. Amhazun, *Manhaj Dirasat al-Tarikh al-Islamy*, Maktabat Dar-al-Salam, al-Qahirah, 2011, Egypt, page.49

The Sokoto Jihad leaders were not left behind in this course as *Shaykh* Usmanu bn Fodiyo wrote a book *bayan wujub al-hijrah ala-allbad* which contained the *sirah* of the noble Prophet (SAW) and that of *Khulafa' al-Rashidun*. Malam Abdullah bn Fodio also wrote *Ta'lim al-anam ta'zimi-llahi li-Nabiyyina alaihi afdal-assalat*. Also and thereafter *Tazyin al-waraqat* in which he gives an account of wars fought by the *Shaykh* and his companions as well as the towns established by the Jihadist. Sultan Muhammad Bello also wrote his famous book *Infaq al-Maisur fi tarikh bilad al-tukrur* in which he discussed the history of black race region, and the jihad of the *Shaykh*.

The writings of these scholars served as a legacy emulated by the subsequent generations, which led to the writing of many books of different branches of knowledge. This paper discusses Muslim Historiography with particular reference to the works of *Shaykh* Abdul-Qadir bn Mustapha al-Torodi.

Definition of Muslim Historiography

The term historiography refers to the word “*tarikh*” in Arabic language, which is derived from the word “*Arrakha*” which means recording the time

of an event; as such *tarikh* is actually the time when a particular event took place.⁴

According to the classic Arabic historiographers, history is knowledge pertaining to a country, customs and manners of people, remains of the people as well as an account of the actions of those alive.⁵

Al-Kafiyaji, in his *Mukhtasar fi ilm al-tarikh* define *Tarikh* as: linguistically, the indication of time in the customary usage. Technically *Tarikh* is the general fixation of time, for the purpose of relating to its time-section, either of the past the present or the future.⁶

According to Imam al-Sakhawi:

Tarikh is the indication of time that serves for an accurate establishment of circumstances affecting the transmitters of traditions (*Ahadith*) and religious leaders. It indicates the date of their birth and death, their soundness of mind and body, their travels and pilgrimages, their accuracy and knowledge of traditions the degree of reliability and on reliability ascribed to them and similar matters⁷

Origin and Development of Muslim Historiography

⁴ . N.A, Faruqi, Early Muslim Historiography, Delhi, 1979, page 2

⁵ . Ibid

⁶ . AbdulRahman Al-sakhawi, *Al-Elan bi al-Taubikh liman dhamma al-Tarikh* (Baghdad 1963), p 29

⁷ . Al-Sakhawi Opcit, p 29

Islamic historiography, a highly elaborate and systematic development of historical writing and thought about the past, begins in the seventh century, its first subject being the life and deeds or expeditions (*maghazi*) of Muhammad himself, whose *Hegira* to Medina in 622 C.E. provided a firm date on which to anchor an Islamic chronology. From the very beginning, a zealous effort to record only true statements about or by the Prophet from authoritative testimony, beginning with eyewitnesses, led to careful attention to the chain of transmission (*isnad*) whereby one successive authority passed information, often orally, down to the next: a hadith or report of the words of the Prophet generally consisted of an *isnad* followed by a *matn* (the actual text)⁸

The earliest Muslim historians, many of whose works are only known to us fragmentarily or as part of subsequent works, include Ibn al-Zubayr and his successor, al-Zuhri (d. 742), who was probably the first to combine several accounts into one continuous narrative committed to writing. They were quickly followed by the first great and fully intact biography (*sira*) of the Prophet, by Ibn Ishaq (c. 704–767), and by the more critically and chronologically rigorous treatment of al-Waqidi (747–823), who also wrote several further works on Islamic history. In the early period of Islamic

⁸ . M. Horowitz, *New Dictionary of the History of ideas*, Charles Scribners' Sons, 2005, page. xlii

historical writing (from the death of Muhammad to the early ninth century), one can identify sub-branches associated with the Western Arabian, Syrian, and Iraqi regions; the outstanding works of this period include the genealogical histories of al-Baladhuri (d. c. 892), the historical geography of al-Ya‘qubi (d. 897) and especially the universal chronicle of al-Tabari (c. 839–923), *Ta’rikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* (History of prophets and kings), which was translated into Persian (the *lingua franca* in much of the region) during the mid-tenth century. By the advent of the Baghdad-based Abbasid dynasty in the mid-eighth century, terminology to express the idea of an account of the past had also developed. A *khbar* (plural, *akhbar*, literally “information”) was an account of the past composed for historical interest rather than to shed light on Islamic law, and often devoted to the relation of a single event. The term *Ta’rikh*, which first appeared about 644 C.E. and is the modern Arabic word for history, was initially used to describe various sorts of writing organized chronologically (it literally means “dating”) whether by annals or by the reigns of caliphs. Both terms were used, often interchangeably, up to the mid nineteenth century.⁹

A Muslim author, the fourteenth-century Tunisian Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), stands as among the most significant historical thinkers of that or any

⁹. Ibid

age, and as the culmination of the philosophical tendencies previously observed in al-Mas‘udi. Although he was the author of a long history, Ibn Khaldun has become better known for his famous *Muqaddimah*, an ambitious attempt to work out the many factors underlying historical change including customs, manners, climate, and economics; it has often led to his being considered the first sociologist of history. “It should be known that history, in matter of fact, is information about human social organization, which itself is identical with world civilization.” So begins the *Muqaddimah*. “It deals with such conditions affecting the nature of civilization as, for instance, savagery and sociability, group feelings, and the different ways by which one group of human beings achieves superiority over another.” Ibn Khaldun’s idea that individuals and groups that come to power are animated by a group spirit or *asabiyya* has counterparts in much later Western writers such as Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), while his belief that regimes once consolidated will almost inevitably become divided or corrupted and fall echoes the cyclical politics of the Greek Polybius.¹⁰

Biography of *Shaykh* Abdul-Qadir bn Mustapha al-Torodi

His geneology: He is Abdulkadir b. Mustapha al-Torodi son of Muhammad Ibrahim son of Musa Ali son of Jibo Muhammad son Ayuba Masirana. On

¹⁰ . Ibid

his maternal side he is the son of Khadijah the eldest daughter of *Shaykh* Uthman bn. Foduye. Her maternal lineage is linked to Masirana mentioned earlier as the seventh grandfather to *Shaykh* Usman bn Foduye, therefore they are both related to Masirana a Fulani by tribe.¹¹

His father Malam Mustapha bn Muhammad al-Torodi was a Famous scholar and chief scribe of *Shaykh* Usmanu bn Foduye; and he studied with Muhammad Sa'ad (the oldest Son of *Shaykh* Usman), *Shaykh* Abdullahi bn Foduye and Zaid bn Muhammad Sa'ad¹²

Shaykh Abdulkadir bn Mustapha was born in the year 1218 A.H, the year in which *Shaykh* and his followers migrated to Gudu.¹³ He was brought up in his father's house. He had his early and advanced education from his father where he studied Arabic language, tafsir, Hadith, fiqh and usul-alfiqh. Among his other teachers were, al-Qadi Haj. Said, his uncles Muhammad Sambo and Muhammad Bello.

He was married to Khadijah Kubra, the daughter of his uncle Muhammad Bello and was blessed with three children namely Mu'aledi, Bukhari and

¹¹ . Salame M.T, *The contributions of Shaykh Abdulkadir bn Mustapha to Arabic culture, the Sokoto Caliphate: A legacy of Scholarship and good governance*, Fahimta Flobal prints, Sokoto, 2005, p. 40.

¹² . B. U. Ahmed, *A brief biography of Abdulkadir bn Mustapha with summaries of nine of his works*, Sokoto State history bureau

¹³ .Ibid

their sister Iya, while his second wife born to him two sons Masirana and Bayero. Others are Muhammad Wali, Dabo and Usman

Shaykh Abdulkadir established an Islamic center in his home town Salame in 13th century A.H, where he teaches different categories of students many branches of Islamic knowledge he also introduced a library that contains a reasonable number of books in many disciplines. This center graduated many students, among them were: al-Shaykh bn Ishaq (the author of *sullam al-ghawamid fi ilm al-fara'id*), al-Qadi Muhtasib, his eldest son Mu'aledi and Mallam Bukhari.¹⁴ *Shaykh* Abdul-Kadir died at Salame in the year 1863 C.E. May Allah grant him Jannah.

The writings of *Shaykh* Abdul-Qadir bn Mustapha al-Torodi.

Shaykh Abdulkadir bn Mustapha wrote a number of books in different branches of Islamic Knowledge which includes History, Fiqh, Tasawwuf, Tauhid, Arabic language, literature, etc. Though some of his books were missing, the following are still available.

1. *Al-fituhah al-rabbaniyyah* (a book on Tasawwuf)
2. *Kashf al-Ghita' wa al-raib fi dhikr anwa' mafatih al-ghaib*
3. *Al-qaul al-asna fi sharh asma'u Allah al-Husna*

¹⁴ . Salame M.T opcit, page 42

4. *Fak al-kunuz wa hal al-rumuz*
5. *Muarif tafasil al-Alam*
6. *Durat al-lataif fi anwar al-ma'arif*
7. *Sharh manzummat Amir al-Mu'aminina Muhammad Bello*
8. *Mausufat al-sudan*
9. *Ta'alim al-wazir ma lahu wa ma alaih min qibali al-Amir*
10. *Tanbih ahl al-wa'ayi ala aqsam durub al-wahy*
11. *Al-uhud wa al-mawathiq al-multazamah*
12. His elegy on his father
13. *Al-hikam al-al-aqliyyah*
14. *Musamirat al-habib wa muairat al-habib*
15. *Qataif al-jinan fi dhikr ahwal ard al-sudan*
16. *Raudat al-afkar wa al-asma'*
17. *Tarajum al-Ulama'*
18. *Al- Abd al-faqir ila maulahu alghaniyy*
19. *Al-firasah hawla inqirad al-daulah al-Islamiyyah al-USmaniyyah al-Sukutiyyah*
20. His elegy on his uncle Muhammad Sambo Wali.
21. *Masail al-Khilaf*
22. *Ilm al-mura'I al-tabassur*

An analysis of his Historical works

Shaykh Abdul-kadir bn Mustapha as a historian devoted in putting into writing what he learned and information he gathered from his teachers the history of bilad al-sudan generally and that of Hausaland. He also wrote books on personality of some individual scholars that lives and contributed to the development of Islam before and during his time. The following are some of his historical works:

Mausufat al-Sudan

This work was originally written by Nana Asma' the daughter of *Shaykh* Usman bn Foduye in Fulfulde version titled "*filtago*" Isa mai-Kware popularly known as *Autan* Shehu (the last born of *Shaykh* Usmanu) translated it into Hausa and name it "*Wakar gewaye*". *Shaykh* Abdul-Kadir Mustapha translated the work into Arabic with some developments, he titled the work "*Mausufat al-Sudan*". The work is about the history of the Jihad (of *Shaykh* Usman) till the time of Sultan Ahmad bn Atiku. It covers a longer period than Nana's original poem.

The book contains an introduction and seven chapters as post script and conclusion.

The introduction: contained the responsibilities placed by Allah on *Shaykh*, the Shehu's life teaching and preaching which led to conflict with Hausa rulers and *Hijra*. **Chapter one:** the travels of Shehu from Gudu to Magabci. **Chapter two:** The travels of Shaykh from Sokoto to Mane (near Goronyo); the martyrdom of the Shehu's followers at Tsuntsuwa. **Chapter three:** The travels of Shehu to Zamfara and his stay at Sabon Gari. The fall of Birnin Kebbi. Some Emirs appointed and characters of Malam Abdulla. **Chapter four:** the travels of Shehu to Gwandu, the conquest of Alkalawa. More Emirs appointed and the land for administrative purposes divided between Muhammad Bello and Mallam Abdullahi. **Chapter five:** Shehu's settlement in Sifawa, the campaigns into Nupe, Ilorin etc. **Chapter six:** the travels of Shehu from Sifawa to Sokoto, his death and the installation of Muhammadu Bello as Amir- Al-Muminin. The establishment of the frontiers (*Ribats*), the characters of Muhammadu Bello. **Chapter seven:** The events in the Caliphate during the reigns of Abubakar Atiku and Aliyu bn Muhammad Bello and the reign of Ahmadu bn Abubakar Atiku, Some useful accurate dating of various events, and the conclusion.¹⁵

Qata'if Al-Jinan Fi Dhikr Ahwal Ard Al-Sudan

¹⁵ . *tarihi*, Bulletin of Sokoto State History Bureau, Ilmi Industries Limited, 1982, Volume 1, page 7

The book contained introduction and three chapters. In the introduction the author explained that he was motivated in writing the book by the lack of available literatures in the area, and the needs of the people of the area to the knowledge of their land.

Chapter one: Deals with the location and boundaries of the *bilad al-Sudan* chapter two talks on the *tukrur* reign. Chapter three: described the scholars and meritorious people of *Bilad al-Tukrur* from earliest to the present time. The book is about fourteen pages of twenty eight lines each.

Raudatu al-Afkar wa Al-Asma'- Tarikh al-Bilad Al-Hausiyyah

The book was dated 1825 C.E and it is all about the history of the Hausaland and the neighboring states (which includes the history of the kings and other prominent personalities). In the book the author divided *bilad al-sudan* geographically into three: *al-Awali* (the upper region) which covers Borno, Ahir, Zabarma and Songhai, *al-Ausat* (the middle region) which also covered the entire Hausaland both Hausa bakwai and banza bakwai, then *al-Sawafil* (lower region) which covers Bebe area. The author mentioned that nobody ever had power over the three regions at ones. He also talks on the history of the seven most powerful empires in these regions, namely: Borno, Korarrafa, Zak-zak, Songhai, Kabbi, Zamfara and Usman empire.

The Hausa version of the book can be found in *Labarun Hausawa da Makwabtansu* book 1¹⁶

Salwatu al-Ahzani fi dhikri al-Khawas min ahali hadha al-Zaman

Shaykh in this book gave the biography of his uncle Muhammad Sambo bn *Shaykh* Usmanu bn Foduye and other distinguished personalities of his time which includes Abdullahi Mujanne, Muhammad Kwairanga, Aliyu Demba, Muhammad al-Bukhari, Malam Ibrahim, Umaru Garba and Aisha the authors maternal grandmother. The author finally mentioned the date of its composition which was the night of 26th of Rabi'ul-awwal 1242 A.H (1826 C.E)¹⁷

The methodology of the Author

The author used a method that usually used by later historians like his uncle Sultan Muhammad Bello and Malam Abdullah, He usually used to start by giving the geographical outlook of the area he is analyzing. As he divided the Sudan region geographically into three in his book *Raudat al-afkar* , followed by the description of people and the tribes living in that geographical location, than followed by the account of empires and dynasties as well as the kings ruled in such empires, the battles as well as expeditions that took place in the area

¹⁶ . Ibid page 9

¹⁷ . ibid page 12

Shaykh Abdulkadir as an Islamic scholar he didn't hide his identity as a Muslim intellectual used to give information on belief religion and the culture of the particular area he narrates about, and give his opinion and at times the Islamic injunctions on that.

The historical works of *Shaykh* Abdulkadir does not contain much references or citation as observed by the early books of *Tarikh*. In some occasions he used quote directly from a scholar as he quoted *Shaykh* Usmanu *Shaykh* Waliyu al-Deen in his book *Kata'if al-jinan*, he also make a reference to Ibn al-Arabi and *Shaykh* al-Hassan al-Yusi in the same book. And he often uses phrases like according to scholars (without mentioning their names) or it was said e.t.c. *Shaykh* in some of his writings used to categorically mentioned the source in which he will build his work, as he indicated at the beginning of his book *tarajum ulama'una*.

Shaykh as a historian he used to write at the end of his books the date in which he composed the book

Conclusion

Muslim historiography as a science that dealt with the information of a particular generation, individual, events, incidences, battles and any other related information recorded, is considered by Muslim *Ummah* as a religious obligation. That can be used to study our past and plan for our future.

Muslim Scholars right from the first generation played a vital role in preserving the history. Muslim historian like ibn jarir al-Tabari, Ibn Hisham, Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi, Ibn Khaldun, al-Sayudi and others wrote many books in which they provide people with historical sense, they lay down canons for evaluating historical data to eliminate doubts and errors. It led them to explore the traditions of religions allied to their own which had preceded the mission of the Prophet (SAW).

Leaders of Sokoto Jihad were not left behind in promoting history and historiography during their period. *Shaykh* Usmanu Mal. Abdullahi of Gwandu, Muhammad Bello and some of their descendants have written many works to that respect. *Shaykh* Abdulkadir bn Mustapha as one of their descendants serves as example to their commitment in advancing the course of history and historiography. *Shaykh* Abdulkadir bn Mustapha as an Intellectual Scholar and historiographer displayed his intellectuality in his work where he gives an account of the history of Hausa towns, their rulers, belief, geographical locations, battles and many other social and economical engagements among them. Thus he didn't limit himself to the history of hausland only but he futher gave Imformation about the entire *bilad al-sudan*. His books mentioned earlier ascertain that.

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