A SACRED COMMUNITY: SCHOLARS, SAINTS, AND EMIRS IN A PRAYER TEXT FROM ILORIN

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Introduction

The political structure of the Islamic emirates which belonged to the Sokoto State was to a large extent determined by a close relationship between religious scholars and the military aristocracy. The emirs themselves belonged to families of Islamic scholars and preachers who had been brought to power by that wide range of local religio-political movements which came to be connected with the jihād of ʿUthmān b. Fodiye.

In their early stages these movements had taken shape largely as religious jamāʿāt which by virtue of their intense religious life and their struggle against their enemies conceived themselves as treading in the steps of the Prophet and his community. The religious base of the emirs’ position was maintained even after their families had been transformed and absorbed into the military aristocracy which came to rule the newly emerged states. As bearers of the hegemonic culture religious scholars continued to play a key role at the courts and within society at large. As court scholars, administrators and judges they belonged to the state apparatus; as imams, teachers, religious advisers and healers they were closely linked to their respective urban or rural constituencies whose interest they sometimes came to express even against the state and its policies. The ambiguous position of the religious

scholars, as forces of hegemony as well as of opposition, has continued well into the colonial and postcolonial period of northern Nigerian history.

The prayer text from Ilorin presented here, which was collected in 1987 but dates back, it would seem, to the beginning of the 20th century, clearly expresses the self-perception of the local religious scholars as members and guardians of a sacred Islamic community in the town. This community is traced to al-Ṣāliḥ Janta, called Shehu Alimi (d. 1823), the founder of the Islamic movement which transformed Ilorin into an emirate and brought it under the authority of Sokoto/Gwandu. In the Ilorin emirate the dual power structure became particularly pronounced, with the emir at the head of both the military aristocracy and the religious dignitaries. The claim of the religious scholars to guardianship of the Islamic community in Ilorin is expressed in the local Yoruba saying 

\[ àfáà ni bàbá 'oba, \]

‘the father of the emir was a scholar’ or ‘the scholar is the father of the emir’.

The scholars’ ethnic diversity paralleled that of the warlords and warriors, and beside the army the religious institutions, mosques and schools became a main factor of social integration in the town. Fulani, Hausa, Nupe, Dendi and Kanuri, and even Arabo-Berbers are attested among the scholars who came to Ilorin before and after the foundation of the emirate. The Yoruba who formed the majority of the population were gradually absorbed into that group of Islamic scholars and imams. A hierarchy of imam offices which paralleled that of the warlords came to reflect the ethno-political balance in Ilorin.

The imam of the Fulani (imam Fulani) stood on top of this hierarchy, followed by the imam Imale who represented the Yoruba quarters in the west of the town (called Òke Imale), and the imam Gambari, the religious leader of the Gambari quarter inhabited mainly by Hausa, Nupe and Kanuri settlers. In recognition of their growing political weight in the town, the Yoruba quarters were later given a second office, that of the official Qur’ān reciter (ajánási) of the emir. This arrangement shows the extent to which the imams and religious scholars had become part of the communal

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2 About Alimi, see ALA, ii, 442f., with further bibliography.
structure of Ilorin.

The text

To the present day Ilorin scholars take pride in the large number of ascetics, mystics, preachers and prominent teachers which the town has produced since its beginnings. The text of the prayer presented below can perhaps be seen as the earliest written example of this pride. It was obtained from a photocopy in possession of Imam Yusuf, the imam of the Popo Giwa Mosque. He said that the text was written to defend the Islamic scholars against their critics and to demonstrate their leading position in the town. As the latest scholar mentioned in the manuscript, Muhammad Begore, died in 1913, it seems plausible to relate the document to the tax revolt of the same year in which the scholars of the area from where the text was obtained played a leading role. The grandfather of Imam Yusuf, Zubairo, apparently belonged to the leaders of that revolt. The original manuscript, its author and its present owner can, however, not yet be traced.

The prayer is a litany of invocations for unspecified requests which have to be ‘filled in’ by its user in those regularly occurring places in the text which are marked by the phrase ‘such and such’ (kadhā wa-kadhā). It consists of different parts some of which quite conceivably had been in separate use before. The impression of a composite character is further supported by a number of names which are repeated in different spellings, for

3 See for example ʿAbdallāḥ al-Ilūrī, Lamāḥāt al-ballūr fī mashāḥīr ʿulamāʾ Ilūrīn, Cairo 1982, 82.
4 I wish to express my gratitude to Alfa Yusuf, Ile Baba Nla, the imam of the Popo Giwa Mosque, Ajikobi Ward, Ilorin, who kindly provided a photocopy of the text on 28 Sept. 1987, and also to Mr. Isa Oke, Kwara State Council for Arts & Culture, Ilorin, who arranged for our meeting and assisted me during the interview.
example al-Jaylānī (p. 1)–al-Kaylānī (p. 4), Matāsī (p. 1)–Matāsē (p. 2), Baqawbiri (p. 1, conjecture, see note 43)–Baqawbiray (p. 3), Bayqawrē (p. 2)–Biqawrē (p. 3). The overall structure can be roughly described as follows:

(I) Introductory invocation of God. The ‘Pole’ (quṭb) and the saints of the present time are asked to plead for the supplicant with ֶAbd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī, ֶUthmān b. Fodiye and with four saints from Ilorin itself, including ֶĀlimi, founder of the Islamic movement and father of the first two emirs, and three prominent imams of the first period of the town.

(II) Long litany of scholars from Ilorin whose ‘rank’ (jāh) is recalled as support for the supplication, starting with imams and scholars from the Yoruba wards (Oke Imale), than adding those belonging to the Fulani and Gambari and some others. Finally the sons of ֶĀlimi and two of his grandsons, the emirs Zubayr (d. 1869) and ֶĀlī (d. 1891) are also mentioned for their jāh.

(III) Another invocation of the saints of the time, led by the ‘Saviour of the time’ (ghawth al-zamān); invocation of God by the rank (jāh) of His prophets, their companions, the righteous and the saints, by the ‘sanctity’ (ḥurma) of the three caliphs (ֶUmar is missing, presumably just by a lapse) and the Sunna, of the four prophets Mūsā, ֶĪsā, Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad, and of four wives of Muḥammad, ֶĀ’isha, Maymūna, Khadija, and Zaynab. Reference is then made to the ‘sanctity’ of thirteen sons of the author who are mentioned by name. This is followed by an invocation of God by the names of four saints, ֶAbd al-Qādir, Ahmad al-Ghazālī, Tayfūr b. ֶĪsā (that is, Abū Yazīd al-Bistāmī) and Ma’rūf al-Karkhī, then by the four sons of the Prophet, and by the ‘glory’ of ֶĀlimi. Concluding supplication.

The dogmatic background to this kind of litany would seem to be given by the Islamic concept of ‘intercession’ (shafā‘a) which in classical Islamic doctrine is not only restricted to the Prophet but also thought of as granted to saints and righteous scholars.6 Reference is therefore made to their jāh, that is the

6 See e.g. al-Bayjūrī, Tuḥfat al-murīd ֶalā jawharat al-tawḥīd, Cairo 1357/1939, 116ff.; the shafā‘a concept is also expressed in this extended form in some widespread Arabic wa‘z poems of Nigerian origin, dating back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; Reichmuth, ֶIlm und
'glory' or 'rank' which they possess in the eyes of God. The concept can also be found in Hausa Islamic literature. A similar reference is later made to 'sanctity' (hurma). The switch from jah to hurma (p. 4) might perhaps also be related to the composite character of the text. The group of saints which is presented at the beginning of the prayer shows a strong Qadirî orientation. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylanî comes first, followed by 'Uthman b. Fodiye and the saints of the town itself, headed by 'Ali. Ilorin is clearly conceived to be safely linked to the spiritual world.

A serious problem for which there is no easy explanation at hand is posed by the reference to the 'sanctity' of the sons of the author ('the sanctity of my sons', hurmat awldî, p. 5). Whether these are really to be regarded as sons or rather as 'spiritual children', that is friends, students or adepts of the author, is still open to question. The passage is inserted after the series of the four prophets, the four wives of Muhammad, and before the four Sufi saints, and the four sons of Muhammad, thus giving the impression of having been placed in the middle of an otherwise fairly regular sequence for a rather specific purpose.

The litany of Ilorin scholars and saints (part II) seems to be the most significant part of the prayer. As it starts with the imam Imale Sali (see below) and then moves on to other scholars of Oke Imale before touching the Fulani, Gambari and others, the location of the text in the milieu of Oke Imale seems rather clear. The imam Imale and another prominent scholar from the area, Ibrahîm Batûrî (d. around 1865, see below), are each called 'our shaykh', which would seem to provide a hint to personal relations of some kind. The latter scholar who is described as 'famous at his time', might perhaps be considered as a teacher or at least a personal acquaintance of the author.

Even more significant is the fact that, despite the prominent position of 'Ali as the leading saint of the town, his sons and grandsons, among them the emirs of Ilorin, play only a very inferior role in the prayer, being relegated to the very end of the

Adab', 197f.

The superior spiritual rank which the scholars of Oke Imale ascribed to their own kind could not be expressed in a clearer fashion. It might not be purely incidental that the first emir, ʿAbd al-Salām (1823-36), was omitted altogether. This might reflect local resentment against him. Ābī al-Salām had established the emirate in 1824 by a military coup against Afônja, the leading warlord of the Ọyọ empire, who had ruled the town. But he had also destroyed Oke Suna, the Muslim settlement in close vicinity of Ilorin which had supported the Islamic movement but whose leader had clashed with the emir. Many of the surviving inhabitants of this settlement had settled in Oke Imale; and several of the scholars mentioned belonged to it.8

That Ālī b. Shita (d. 1891) is the last emir mentioned in the text might have to do with other resentment against Emir Momo (1891-95), his successor who had died in a short civil war which he had fought against the town.9 The next emir, Sulaymān (1895-1915), on the other hand, was probably still alive when the text was composed; and the scholars of Oke Imale were strongly opposed to him.

Of the names of scholars and personalities from Ilorin mentioned in the text the following can be identified from written sources and oral information obtained in Ilorin:

Page 1

Shaykh ʿĀlim Muḥammad ʾṢāliḥ: Ṣāliḥ Janta, called Shehu Alimi

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8 For the history of Oke Suna and its destruction, and for the religious families in Ilorin which trace their origin to that place, see S. Johnson, The History of the Yorubas, Lagos 1921, 193, 198f., 203f.; Ahmad b. ʿAbī Bakr ʿOmō Ikokoro, Taʿlīf akhbār al-qurūn min umarāʾ balad Ilūrin, Ch. II (for this unedited text and its mss, see ALA, II, 447) and Reichmuth, “Ilm und Adab”, 35ff., 50ff., 520ff.

(d. 1823), Fulani scholar and preacher, initiator of an Islamic
movement in the Oyo Empire, leader of the Islamic community
in Ilorin, father of the first emirs.

**Muhammad b. al-Thani** (also p. 2): Muhammad Bisanî (Ile Daani, Ilorin, d. c. 1870), a leading Fulani companion of Alimi,
who served as his interpreter and Qur’an reciter. He became
imam of the Fulani (imam Fulani) and leading imam of Ilorin
after Alimi’s death.10

**Imam Matasi** (see also p. 2): ‘Umaru Matasé, scholar of
Bornu or Dendi origin, first imam of Oke Suna, the Muslim
settlement near Ilorin predating Alimi’s movement which was
mentioned above. His later residence was in Popo Giwa (Balogun
Ajikobi Ward). The quarter was named after one of his sons,
Lawani Giwa, who became a famous warrior. Matasé’s family
(Ile Baba Nla) also holds the office of imam of Popo Giwa. As
mentioned above (footnote 4), the copy of the manuscript was
provided by the present imam, Yusuf.

**Baqawbiri** (also p. 2: mal Baqawbiray): Šali Gobiri/
Bagobirê (Ile Mayaki, Gambari Ward), a scholar and warrior of
Gobir descent, who became imam of the sarkin Gambari, the
early leader of the Hausa community in Ilorin. When power
shifted to the balogun Gambari he was appointed imam of the
balogun Gambari’s mosque, an office still held by his descend-
ants.11 As in the case of ‘Umar Matasé, Bagobirê’s leading religious
position in the town is reflected in the prayer.

**Imam Kabahi al-Šalihi**: Šali Masingba b. Ali b. Yusuf Mallê
(Masingba, Ajikobi Ward), belonging to a family of scholars and
imams claiming Malian origin. According to oral tradition they
came to Ilorin from Kogbaye/Kobayi, a settlement (now extinct)
in the west of Ilorin (10 km east of Igboho), with a strong Muslim
community which settled in Ilorin.12 The title is therefore presum-
ably to be read as *imam Kobayi*. The office of the *imam Imale*, second in the religious hierarchy of Il’orin, is still held in rotation by the two branches of the family (Fagba, near the emir’s palace, Magajin Gari Ward, and Ile Masingba). Šaliḥ was the first of his family to settle in this area in Oke Imale which still bears his name, Masingba.¹³ His father, Shaykh Āli, is mentioned on p. 2.

*Imam Abū Bakr Gharubā* (also p. 2): Abū Bakr b. Yūsuf Mallē, the first *imam Imale*, ancestor of the Fagba branch of the *imam Imale* family. Šaliḥ Masingba’s father Āli (*q.v.*) was his brother.

*Imam Muḥammad Shitan*: perhaps Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Shīta, grandson of the second emir Shīta (emir 1836-61), who became famous in Il’orin as a specialist for the seven *qirā’āt* of the Qur’ān. His father Maḥmūd b. Shīta founded a mosque and a school (Isal’e Ajasa, Magajin Gari Ward) which is still maintained by the descendants of Muḥammad’s brother Ḍham Yānmā.¹⁴

*Ādam*: probably Ādam Alanamu, from Agades, an influential scholar who became the first imam of the mosque of the Balogun Alanamu, an office still held by his descendants.¹⁵

*Al-wāʾizität Mūsā*: perhaps the father of Badamāṣī b. Mūsā (Ile Saura, Agbaji, Ajikobi Ward), a famous preacher, author of the first collection of Yoruba *wa’z* poetry (*wákà*).¹⁶ The title might perhaps indicate *wa’z* activities already for the father.

*ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Baʿbā Shāwurā*: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Bāba Saura (Ile Saura, Agbaji, Ajikobi Ward), from a family claiming Chado-

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70f.; for its identification with *Kobayi* which is mentioned in this form by S. Johnson, *History*, 194, and for families in Il’orin claiming Kogbaye/ Kōbayi origin, Reichmuth, “ʿIlm und Adab”, 30, 519f.

13 On the *imam Imale* family, see Reichmuth, “ʿIlm und Adab”, 225f., with further references.


Sudanese origin, one of the early leaders of the Agbaji community.\(^{17}\)

**Badiru ‘l-Din:** Badr al-Din (Ile Oloyin, Alanamu Ward), from Bornu, one of the earliest specialists of Arabic grammar in Ilorin, father of Būṣayrī b. Badr al-Din (d. 1915), Qur’an reciter (*ajánásì*) of the emir.\(^{18}\)

**Awjirabarā:** Ṣalāḥ Ojibara (Oke Apomu, Zarumi Ward), a famous Fulani scholar, first in Oke Suna, then in Ilorin, settled finally at the present site where he built one of the earliest mosques in Oke Imale. He served as Qur’an reciter for the first emir and is the ancestor of one of the most prominent imam families of the Oke Imale area.\(^{19}\)

**Ibrāhīm Batūrē:** Ibrāhīm Batūrē from Agades, settled in Oke Apomu, prominent scholar, Qur’an reciter of the emir after Ojibara’s death, died c. 1865; the mosque and school are still maintained by his descendants in Oke Apomu.\(^{20}\) The present Qur’an reciter of the emir, Alfa Yūsuf Ḥabību ‘llāhī also belongs to this family.

**Hawnibūdaw:** perhaps Āmad Onibùdó, mentioned as *qāḍī* in Ilorin.\(^{21}\)

**Abū Bakr Daghaw Gharubā al-Ḥāfīz:** identical with the *imam Imale*, mentioned above?

**Āmad Iwwaw:** Āmad Iwo, a scholar of Bornu origin who had settled in Iwo (Oyo State) before he joined Alimi in Ilorin; his family (Ile Iwo, Alanamu Ward) still holds the title of *imam Iwo*.\(^{22}\)


\(^{19}\) Reichmuth, “ʾIlm und Adab”, 520.


\(^{22}\) Reichmuth, “ʾIlm und Adab”, 231.
‘Abd al-Qādir Awnaqū: ‘Abd al-Qādir Onagun, a scholar and warrior from Bornu who first settled in Oke Suna, then in Il’orin where he founded the first Qur’ānic school in Ita Ėgba (Alanamu Ward), and became the first imam of that quarter.23

Muḥammad al-Bukhārī al-‘Ābidu: Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, also called Mālam Bābā, a Fulani scholar and Qādirī ascetic, imam of the Ago Mosque (Ori Oke, Magajin Gari Ward).24

Bayqawrē Abū ‘Uthmān (cf. also p. 3): Bēgōrē, a Fulani scholar, perhaps not identical with the famous Muḥammad Bēgōrē mentioned below (for whom no son called ‘Uthmān could be identified).

Ahmad Sākē Abū Muḥammad: from Ile Saké (Iga Ogunbọ, Ajikobi Ward).25

Jawdı: Muḥammad Jōdī b. Maḥmūd, Fulani scholar, preacher (and warrior?) from the Sokoto region, settled in Ile Kasandubu (Isa’e Okaka, Fulani Ward) where his descendants still keep the imamship of his mosque.26

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Malā Mūsā: perhaps Mūsā Ateře (d. 1907), a prominent teacher in Oke Lele (Ibagun, Gambari Ward), and a leading Tijānī of his time; his descendants who claim Fulani origin still maintain his school (Ile Kongbari, Ibagun).27

Ahmadu Mākāna: apparently from Makana (Fulani Ward), the place of Alimi’s first Friday mosque in Il’orin.

Abū Bakr malā Būbē: Abū Bakr Būbē, of Gobir or Nupe origin, the leading scholar of mid-nineteenth-century Il’orin whose

23 Reichmuth, ‘‘Ilm und Adab’, 521.
25 Information from Alh. Isa Elelu, Ilorin 21.10.89; the name is also mentioned in Abū Bakr al-Šiddiq Imam Agbarigidomo, Maḥātīḥ al-surūr, 3.
26 Information from the present imam, Alfa Shufiaib Muḥammad Jōdī, Ile Kasandubu, Ilorin 29 August 1986.
sons Muḥammad Thānī and Muḥammad al-Amīn Nda served as first Senior qādīs of Ilorin in the colonial judiciary.28

\textit{Al-Khaḍiru b. Bābalanī, the imam}: probably Haliru Bībānī, called Afaa Yero (Ile Lapapa, Fulani Ward), the second or third \textit{imam} Fulani of the town.29

\textit{Muḥammad Tūqurū b. Munabbahu}: either identical with Muḥammad (al-Amīn) Munabāū/Munabāi (also called Innabāūn), who came very early from Oke Suna and became the first imam of the Munabāī Mosque (Agbarere, Magaji Are Ward), one of the early Friday Mosques of the town,30 or a son of this scholar who was one of the early Yoruba scholars in Ilorin.

\textit{Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, the imam}, son of al-Bukhārī al-‘Āhidū: from Ori-Oke, the third or fourth \textit{imam} Fulani of the town;31 son of al-Bukhārī, the imam and ascetic mentioned above.

\textit{Muḥammad Takūnati}: Muḥammad al-Tākuntī b. Abī Bakr al-Nufāwī, d. c. 1900, a prominent Nupe scholar.32

\textit{Muḥammad Biqāwër}: Muḥammad b. Abī’Amād, called Bāgār (d. 1913), Fulani scholar who came to Ilorin from Bunza (Kebbi), a most influential teacher and adviser of the emirs in late nineteenth-century Ilorin.33

\textit{Al-qādī ‘Alī b. al-Muṣṭafā}: perhaps a son of al-Muṣṭafā, who is mentioned as fourth qādī of precolonial Ilorin.34 There is no indication in other sources, however, that his son also served as qādī.

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\textit{Shīta b. ‘Ālimi}: second emir of Ilorin (1836-1861).

29 Ādam b. Abī Bakr, \textit{Taʿīf}, Ch. X and Quadri, ‘Role’, 64.
Abū Bakr b. Ālimi: Abū Bakr Bāsambo, one of Alimi’s sons whose descendants hold the office of District Head of Malet.\textsuperscript{35} 

Dāniyāl b. Ālimi: Dāniyālu Shiaba, another son of Alimi whose descendants (Ile Adifa, Magajin Gari Ward) hold the office of a District Head of Ejidongari.\textsuperscript{36} 

Zubayr b. ʿAbd al-Salām: son of ʿAbd al-Salām (emir 1823-36). He became the third emir of Ilorin (1861-69). ʿAli b. Shīta: son of emir Shīta (q.v.); he himself was the fourth emir of Ilorin (1869-91). 

This list shows many scholars from the early period of the town but includes also some who died around 1900 and later. As already stated above, Muḥammad Bəγərə who died in 1913 would seem to be the latest scholar to be mentioned. This leads to the proposed dating of the text in its given form. Some of its components, and the basic concept of a sacred community of scholars and saints which underlies it, would seem to be much older. The position of Ālimi as a patron saint of the town, ranking just behind ʿUṯmān b. Fodiye, can be seen as crucial for the social and political integration of Ilorin. This patron saint appears in the text of the litany strangely detached from his descendants, the emirs. It is also significant that the ethno-political structure of the town should be reflected even in the group of the four saints listed at the beginning: Together with Ālimi they can be seen as representing the Fulani (Muḥammad b. al-Thānī), Oke Imale (ʿUmar Matāsē) and the Gambari ward (malā Bagōbīrē). The order of their names follows exactly the ranking of the leading imams of the town (imam Fulani–imam Imale–imam Gambari). The unwritten constitution of Ilorin has thus found its expression even in prayer. Apart from this unique witness to the concept of a sacred community which emerged from the jihād movement of the early 19th century, the text can be regarded as a highly important source for the history of Islamic scholarship in Ilorin.

\textsuperscript{36} Hermon-Hodge, \textit{Gazetteer}, 86.
اللهُمَّ يا اللهُ يا من لا الله إلا هو يا حي يا قيّوم يا منزل/ الآية من
سبع سماوات إسالك واتوسَل 38 البقاء أو تهيب لى / كذا
يا قطب زمناني ويا أولياء الله في هذى (sic) الآن انى 39 في
حماكم وتحت نظركم وغابتكم 40 فوجهوا إلى / عنايتكم ولي
حاجتى هذى بان تهيب 41 لى كذا وذا / واستغفرللى في قضائىها
عند الله تعالى ورفعوا / قضتى إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم واعرضوا
قضتى على الشيخ عبد القادر الجيلاني وعلى الشيخ / عثمان بن
فؤد وعلى شيخنا عالٍ محمد صالح / ومحمد ابن الثاني وامام

37 Ms: صلى الله على من لا نبي الكريم
38 Ms: توسَل
39 Ms: الآن نى; the two words run into each other at the end of the line.
40 Ms: عنايتكم; could also be a mistake for غابتكم?
41 Ms: بالتهيب
42 Ms: قضائها
الله‌ام اغفرلی وارحم‌نی وارحم‌نا وارحم عبادک / المومنین واعتنی

بجاهم کذا وکذا

ویگاج / شیخنا امام کبّح الصالح والأمام / ابی بکر غربی والأمام

محمد شیتای / [٢٧] وشیخ آدم وشیخ الوعظی موسی وعبد الر

حَمّان بعیبا شاورا المعروف جیران آییچی فی بلد / نا الٍوری وشیخ

صالح وشیخ هارون وشیخ برّ / الدین المعروف اسم بلد وشیخ

عَمَر مَتَاسی ولى اللّه وشیخ خونبودو / وشیخ ابی بکر دعو عَرَبًا

الحفاظ وشیخ احمد / اووو لقبه وشیخ عبد القادیر علیکی

وشیخ / علی ابی امامًا صالح وشیخ حولَدجور وشیخ / شیتًا

وشیخ هارون وشیخ عبد القادیر / اووو وشیخ محمد ابن الثاني

ولي اللّه / الامام المتچی (sic) وشیخ محمد البحار العابید / وشیخ

بیقوری ابی عثمان ابی عثمان ٤٤ وشیخ / احمد ساکی ابی محمد

Ms: presumably a confusion between two names, Bagobirë and Bigorë (also occurring in the form Bëgorë), given later on pp. 2f.

Because of the consonantal base and the malā title, the emendation is proposed here. This interpretation is further suggested by the fact that, in the text below, malā Bagobirë, but not Bigorë shares with Muhammad al-Thānî and ‘Umaru Matāsi/Matāsē the attribute of a saint (wali Allāh).

Repeated in text.
A SACRED COMMUNITY

Shaikh ’Abd al-Muhsin bin Abī Bakr ibn Mālik, Sheikh Ahmad bin Ṣaʻdūq / 
The abu Ṭālib as-Sa‘di (sic) / 
the preacher of the Imam of the Imam ibn Bakr / 
Sheikh Sallāh b. ’Abd al-Rahmān / 
Sheikh Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Mahdi / 
Sheikh Muhammad / 
Sheikh Muhammad bin Abū Ṭālib / 
Sheikh Ahmad bin Ṣa‘dūq / 
Sheikh Ahmad bin Ṣa‘dūq / 
Sheikh Ahmad bin Ṣa‘dūq

45 Error for

الله اغفر لهم وارحمهم واجعلني / فيهم واسألل بجاه الشيخ عالم وشتم ابن الشيخ / عالم وابو بكر ابن الشيخ عالم ودانيال ابن Sheikh / عالم وزبير ابن عبد السلام وعلى ابن شت كذا / وكذا / يا غوث الوقت الآتى يا أوليا الله في زمني / هذا فهل فتى فيكم

46 Ms: , apparently a copyist’s error.

47 Repeated in text.
من الفتيان له مكانة لدى الرحمن يحملني فيما ارى من شاني
حتى يكفني / من الأحزان في أمرك كذا وكذا
اللهم بجاه انبئا / تلك المرسلين وابحابهم وبالباحب رسو / لى
محمد وبالصالحين: والأولباء اغفر لى / وافعل لى كذا وكذا
اللهم بحرم الحج الساحابة / ابني بكر وعثمان وعلى وحرمسنة
المصطفين / بحرم موسى كليمك وعيسى وروحك وابراهيم / خليلك ومحمد رسولك وعبدك / وحرم زوجات النبي
عائشة وميمونة / [5] وميمونة وخديجة وزينب وحرم
اعلادي / عبد القادري وشيخ محمد وشيخ ابراهيم وشيخ
موسى وشيخ عيسى وشيخ يحيى وشيخ صالح / وشيخ بكر
وشيخ عبد الله وشيخ عبد الو / هاب وشيخ عبد العزيز وشيخ عبد
الجبار وشيخ / عبد الرزاق اسالك كما وكذا

48 Ms: سنة.
49 Ms: ورحلك.
50 Ms: زوجات.
51 Repeated in text.
52 Ms: حديجة.
53 Ms: زينب.
واسع بابجدلى وله المغفرة / اغفر لى ذنوبى وقضي حاجتي كذا

54 Ms: توصل.
55 Ms: الكرنی.
56 Ms: عالم.
57 Repeated in text.
58 Ms: ولدا.
59 Ms: ساني.
60 Ms: رحم.
I] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. May God bless [the man after whom] there is no other Prophet.

O God, there is no other god but You, the Living, the Everlasting, Who has sent down His sign from Seven Heavens! I ask You and beseech You to grant me such and such.

O Pole of this time, you saints of these days! I am in your protected sphere, under your eyes and your consideration. Therefore concern yourself with this cause of mine to be granted such and such. Ask for God’s forgiveness on my behalf for its fulfilment. Raise my case with the Messenger of God—my He bless him and grant him peace. Present my case to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī and to Shaykh ʿUthmān b. Fodiye and to our Shaykh ʿĀlimi Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ and to Muḥammad b. al-Thānī and to Imam Matāṣī and malāʾı Baqawbiri.

O God forgive me and have mercy on me and on us. May You have mercy on Your servants, the Believers. Grant me by their glory such and such.

[II] And [also] by the glory of our Shaykh Imam Kabaḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, the imam Abū Bakr Gharūbā, the imam Muḥammad Shitan [p. 2] and Shaykh Adam, Shaykh al-wā’iẓī Mūsā and

Translation

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61 Ms: التهال

62 Ms: رسول

63 The proposed divisions into parts I-III are marked within the text

64 Apparently a frequent variant of the mālam title which also occurs in the ms.
Abd al-Raḥmān Baḥbā Shāwūrā, the well-known people (lit. neighbours) of Abajī— in our town Ilawrī, and Shaykh Ṣāliḥ, Shaykh Hārūn and Shaykh Badiru Ṭ-Dīn, the well-known—name of a town—and Shaykh Awjīrābarā and our Shaykh Ibrāhīm Batūrē, well-known in his time, and Shaykh ʿUmaru Maṭāsē, the saint, and Shaykh Ḥawnibūdaw, Shaykh Abū Bakr Daghaw Gharubā al-Ḥāfīz, Shaykh ʾAbd al-Muḥammad Iwwaw—his laqab—, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAlaykī, Shaykh ʿAlīyyu, the father of our imam Ṣāliḥ, and Shaykh Ḥawlādiyawrī, Shaykh Shītā, Shaykh Hārūn, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Awnaqū, Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Thānī, the saint, the godfearing imam, and Shaykh Muḥammad al-Buḥārī (sc. al-Bukhārī) al-ʿAbīdu, Shaykh Bayqawrī Abū ʿUthmān, Shaykh Ahmad Ṣākē Abū Muḥammad, Shaykh Jawdī [p. 3] and Shaykh ʿAnbaw, Shaykh malā Muṣā, Shaykh Ahmadu Mākāna, Shaykh ʿUmaru, Shaykh ʿAbdu, Shaykh ʿImām Dawtiya Muṣā, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīnu, Shaykh Abū Bakr malā Būbē, Shaykh Mālam ʿAbdu and Shaykh al-Ḥaḍīru b. Bābalanī, the imam, and Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Alīdū, the imam, and Shaykh malā Baqawbiray, the saint, and Shaykh Muḥammad Tūqrū b. Munabbahu, and Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, the imam, son of al-Buḥārī al-ʿAbīdu, and Shaykh Ibrāhīma al-Najwē, Shaykh Muḥammad Takūnātī, Shaykh Muḥammad Biqawrē, Shaykh Abū Bakr Fūṭinkajaw and Shaykh Mālam Ibrāhīma Dāsūqī, the saint, and Shaykh al-qādī ʿAlī b. al-Muṣṭaṭfā, Shaykh ʿUthmān Lāliqārī, Shaykh Mālam Dabā, Shaykh imārū Jaṭī and Shaykh ʾĪsā al-Muṭarajami, and all those who follow them in righteousness till the Day [p. 4] of Resurrection.

O God forgive them and have mercy on them and place me among them. I am asking You by the glory of Shaykh ʿĀlimī and Shīta b. Shīya ʿĀlimī and Abū Bakr b. Shīya ʿĀlimī and Dānīyāl b. Shīya ʿĀlimī and Zubayr b. ʿAbd al-Salām and ʿAlī b. Shīta such and such.

[III] O you Saviour of the Present Age, O you saints of my time, is there a worthy hero among you, close to the Merciful God, so that he could take me to what I am aiming at and end my troubles concerning such and such?

This, O God, by the glory of Your Prophets and Messengers and by their Companions and by the Companions of Your Mes-
senger, Muḥammad, and by the Righteous and the saints. Forgive me and do such and such for me.

O God, by the sanctity of the Companions Abū Bakr, ʿUthmān, and ʿAли, and by the sanctity of the sunna of the Chosen Ones, by the sanctity of Mūsā Your Spokesman, ʿĪsā Your Spirit, Ibrāhīm Your Friend, and of Muḥammad Your Messenger and Servant, may God bless him and grant him peace, by the sanctity of the wives of the Prophet, ʿĀʾishah, Maymūna, [p. 5] Khadija and Zaynab, and by the sanctity of my children, ʿAbd al-Qādirī, Shaykh Muḥammad, Shaykh Ibrāhīm, Shaykh Mūsā, Shaykh ʿĪsā, Shaykh Yahyā, Shaykh Ṣāliḥ, Shaykh Abū Bakr, Shaykh ʿAbdallāh, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rāziq, I am asking You such and such.

And I beseech You, O God, [in the name of] ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Kaylānī, Ahmad al-Ghazālī, Ṭayfūr b. ʿĪsā and Maʿrūf al-Karkhī, that You grant me all [Your] blessings, those I know and those which I do not know, and that You protect me from envy and from machination. Let the net of the crafty turn back upon himself! O Lord of the Worlds, extend my livelihood to me, save me from every evildoer, provide for my well-being, and answer my prayers by Your name[s], ‘the Living’ and ‘the Everlasting’.

[p. 6] O God, I am asking You by the sons of our Prophet Muhammad, Ibrāhīm, al-Ṭayyib, al-Ṭāhir and al-Qāsim, the sons of the Chosen One. Give me protection in my plight, so that You relieve me from my troubles such and such. By the glory of the shaykh, the saint, Muhammad al-Ṣāliḥ ʿAlīmi, do such and such.

Praise be to God, at the beginning and at the end, O God, You Most Merciful. O Bountiful of gifts and forgiveness! Forgive my sins and lead my cause such and such through. You are The All-hearing, The All-seeing. May God bless Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad, the faithful Prophet. Praise to God, the Lord of the Worlds. Blessings and peace upon the Envoys, praise to God, the Lord of the Worlds. Blessings and peace upon the noble Prophet and upon all those who follow the guidance. Amen.