



Notes and discussions

A note on the early Kushi rulers

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1. Introduction

The reconstruction of the events that led to the establishment of the group that today identifies itself with the term Goji and occupies the area of the 'Kushi village' on the north-eastern fringes of the Muri Mountains (Shongom LGA, Chonge District, Gombe State, Nigeria, 9°35'33.9 'N 11°11'16.9 'E) relies almost exclusively on oral tradition. The stories of the origins reveal a migratory mechanics whereby the Kushi group of today merged from a series of migrations of groups from neighbouring areas. Kushi identity is thus the result of the separation of segments of society from existing political centres and of their union, in stages and over time, into a new political centre.

The account *Tarehi pire Goji wannan* 'History of the origin of the Kushi' (lit. 'History of the place from which the Kushi came') provided by Malam Samson Waziri (BATIC 2017) is consistent with the model of frontier described by Igor KOPYTOFF (1987): it is indeed possible to identify a multifaceted process based on the reproduction of pre-existing social models, a kin-group model of integration, a legitimation of authority based on the exclusive rights of the firstcomers, and the negotiation of the legitimacy of the new polity within the areal context (KOPYTOFF 1987: 16-17).

2. The first rulers

Oral tradition allows us to reconstruct the succession of sovereigns ruling since pre-colonial times. The list of sovereigns with their clan affiliation is shown in Table 1.



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	RULER	CLAN
1.	Jamtula	Tagonro
2.	Madi	Shonghlo (Gubno)
3.	Baleh	Tagonro
4.	Bandanka	Shonghlo (Gubno)
5.	Tumbang	Pewrang
6.	Landieh	Shonghlo (Gubno)
7.	Nughen	Shonghlo (Gubno)
8.	Garyagh	Dongo
9.	Abubakar	Shonghlo (Gubno)
10.	Ishaku Yarima	Shonghlo (Gubno)

Table 1 – Early Kushi rulers

The reign of each of these traditional rulers is embedded in the Kushi collective imagery through a series of characteristics or events. The late Malam Samson Waziri¹ describes the first ten Kushi traditional rulers as follows:²

(Hausa)

Jamtula

A lokacin zaman sarautan shi mai suna Jambula lallai ne shi kuwa ya yi abubuwan da mutanen gari suka so. Ya biyadda hankulan mutanen shi daidai; har kuwa ya tsufa a cikin zaman sarauta. A nan ne har mutuwar sha na baring ado ba na yin Allah ba, ko shi dai yawan magagganu ne. Wanda masu neman jiran gado suke yi a kan shi. Masu neman shayin hawan gado ne suka mashi mulkin denniya da kuma goda karfi da hayewa. Masu neman hawan gado suna fada masha akan za zai mutu ba, har yausha za su hau nasu wuri kafin mutuwar shi an bijina shi. A nan kuwa shi Jamtula ya nuna wa masu neman hawan gadon, cewa su je, su sake tone inda ya yi rami na binne farin guna nasa kafin su zo su tafi da shi. hakan kuwa wadannan suka aika kamar yadda ya fada shi. daga haka har sun je sun kamo shi da igiyoyin da yake amfani da shi ta wajen kamun naman daji. A nan kuwa suka karyo farin kaya, suka barbasha mashi idonanu

¹ Malam Samson Waziri worked as Rudolf Leger's main collaborator on Kushi language and culture in the framework of the "Kulturentwicklung und Sprachgeschichte im Naturraum Westafrikanische Savanne" (Sonderforschungsbereichs 268, J.W. Goethe University Frankfurt and University of Maiduguri, hence SFB) project carried out in the 1990s. Rudolf Leger (J.W. Goethe University Frankfurt) was in charge of the description and documentation of the southern languages of the Bole-Tangale group.

² The original text is in Hausa. The Hausa spelling is strongly influenced by Kushi phonology. I thank Rudolf Leger for making Malam Samson Waziri's manuscript available to me.

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duka biyu kanan suka sa shi a rami rai-da-rai. Suka bijina shi, shi ne kuwa dalilin mutuwar sha har da barin gado.

Madi

A zamanin zaman sarautan shi Madi zamar nashi dai, bai yi da dadewa ba, dun da hawan gado, idon shi Madi ya lalace har zuwa ga mutuwar sha. A nan ne ba a gane ko mai kyau ko mummuna nashi yake ba.

Baleh

Baleh ya hau mazaman shi Madi a baya rasuwar sha, a nan kuwa shi wannan Baleh jarimi ne kwarar a cikin ayuyallan da ya yi shi bisha jama'ar Gari, ko sh idai ba a shan yawan shekarun yawan cikin shi ba har ya mutu.

Bandanka

Wannan sarki kuwa shi ma mutum ne mai kwajo a cikin aiki ko sai dai bai yi shawon shekara ba idon shi ya lallace har kuwa mutane suke yi ta cewa, ai dalilin bata idonanun shi sarki na fari mai suna Jamtula, shi ya sha har wadannan abubuwan yana faruwa, A jin haka kuwa sai har ya nemi hanyar baring ado a dun lalacen idon shi. Akwai wanda a ke kiran shi mai suna Tumbang shi kuwa wannan mataimakan shi ne. Daidai lokacin nan kuma da ba da gado shi ne da lokacin zuwan turawa a wurin nan Kushi.

Tumbang

A lokacin nan kuwa shi mai taimakon shi yah au girma. Tumbang kuwa na nazari da iyawan aiki ne kuma dai abin da ya bata shi dai mai yawan fushi ne, har ma dun fushin shi ne ya sha shi baring ado wa mutanen da suka nema. Shi kansu ne ya bari a kan cewa, dama wannan aiki ba nashu na gidan dangi ba har bisha rashin ransa, har ya kawo ga fada wa yawan shi, cewa duk lokacin da duk mutanen Kushi suke maganar sarauta, kada shu Peurang su tanka bakin su da cewa suna sa don lallai wannan masheyin ba nasu ba ne.

Landhi

Bayan haka mai hawan gadon shi wannan mai barin kujera sai mai suna Landhi. Kafin shi wannan yah au gado ya kasanshi cewa ba wanda suka so sa yin sha, har Turawa suka nemi yaka ma mutanen Kushi. Dun mutane su ga lallai Turawa za su yake su har a gama to su, saish Landhi ya fito ya nuna kansa cewa shi yanzi ya amunshe da zama sarki. Shi ne dalilin da Turawa ba su yaki mutanen ba har mutanen Kushi sun aminshe da zaman shi Landhi.

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Nughen

Daga nan fa sai mai sunan nan ya hau kujera. To abinsha wannan fa shi Nughen mai son kansha ne a zaman sarauta. nan a nan a zamar sarauta sha sai ga batun ciwon agana ya bullo a gari. Ko da cike shi mahaifansa mai suna Kwalink yakan dan taimaka da wannan jinya. A nan fa kafin mutanen gari bata rainshu, dun bisha abubuwan da shi mai kujera da gaske mutane ba su ammunsha da zamar sarauta shi ba. Sai ya kawo ga dalilin barin gade har ma tare da prison.

A wannan gu dai, an yi karan sha zuwa Kaltungo, inda dalilin karan sha ya bayana, cewa akwai wadanda suka sa wata yarinya rai da rai a cikin ramin dushe da kasanshewan fama da ciwon Agana amma shi bai ya wani abu a kan wannan mutani ba. Ko da cike chi mahaifan shi ya gada taimakon ciwon. A nan wuri fa mutanen sun duba da cewa in a bar shi a zaman sarauta lallai za su fare duk a gari. Sa'an nan fa hukuma suka kama shi da shi mahaifa Kwalink an kai su prison har da fafin cewa bayan prison din, kada a sake dawowa da shi garin Kushi ko sai dai mahaifan shi ya dawo gida bayan prison. Shi ne fa dalilin da ya sha aka tube shi.

Garyang

A lokacin zaman sarauta wannan mutum. An dai tabbatar da shi, shi kam mai mulkin deniya kama karya, shin-hanshi, goda karfi da hayewa. A kan zamar shi har ma ya kawo ga dalilin yawan magagganu sakanin shi da mutanen shi. Yaka ma mutanen shi deniya ta abubuwan kamar haka, dabobi, kudafe, dawa, matayen mutane, da sauran abubuwa da yawa wanda ba fafin shi. Karya kuwa yana wa babban Sarki na Kaltungo.

Daga nan fa mutanen da suka ga abi da yake yi ba daidai ba, sai abin ya kai ga karan shi abisha tarin kudi mai yawa da ya tara a hannun talakawan sha da cewar Sarkin Kaltungo ne ya aiko masha ya tara gare su. Da haka karan ya faru sai ya kasanshe mai girma Sarkin Kaltungo ya ce bai sa kome a kan wannan kudafen da yake tarawa ba. Daga nan ne aka tube fular girmar sha. A nan kuma an mina masha dama zaman Sarautan nan ba na juriyar su ba, ko sai dai an ba shi da dalilin abokin da zaman kawu.

Abubakar

Wannan sarki Abubakar dai sarki ne mai kwajo da yawan aiki, shi fa mutum ne wanda a ba munin abu ya hadashi da mutanen gari ba. Shi fay a yi zaman sarautan Kushi na kimanin shekaru talatin da shida a yawan lokacin aikin shi. Shi fa mutuwar shi na ciwon ajali ne, ba ta mutum ko kuma ta mota ba.

A nan fa kafin malam Abubakar ya bar mu fa mutanen sha kwarai sun yi bakin cikin bisha rasuwar shi, don lallai mutanen sha amminshe da shi kwarai.

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Ishaku Yarima

Wannan sarki dai, sarki na zamani ne wanda shi ma ya ɗaya daga cikin wanda suke kwajo da aikin gari. Lallai kam mutanen gari suna kuka da shi, a kan mulkin shi denniya da koda da hayewa. Yana nan a zaman sarauta har yanzu ne kimanin shekaru goma sha uku. A nan dai ko da cike ya yaro ne amma tun da yana nan a zaman sarauta za a zo a gane yadda zamar yake da mutanen sha.

(English)

Jamtula

During his ruling, Jamtula ruled according to his people's need and decisions, bringing them together. He became old while ruling. He was killed mystically – not by the wish of God but by the wish of his predecessors. He died because of the bad things said about him by those who were awaiting his death and wishing to become the next rulers. Those awaiting his departure overruled his life mystically: they always used to ask why he wasn't dying and eventually took things in their own hands. Jamtula was taken and buried alive. Jamtula had told them where he had buried the white melon which carried his soul, so they went to the place and dug it out. Then they went back to Jamtula and, with a rope used for hunting, tied him up. They put white thorns in his eyes and hands and buried him alive.

Madi

The rule of Madi did not last long: he had eye-related problems which eventually led him to death. Therefore, it is not possible to tell whether his reign was good or not.

Baleh

Baleh came next after the death of Madi. He was a hero and a great warrior. Much has not been said about him, not even how long he ruled.

Bandanka

This ruler was a courageous one: he did whatever he wanted. The people believed that he was the one who charmed the first ruler, Jamtula, and that he is the cause of all those problems. This is why some people started charming him, so that he lost his sight. His assistants called Tumbang asking him to become the next ruler. This was just when the Europeans arrived in Kushi.

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Tumbang

When Tumbang became the ruler, he had good plans and intended to do good for the people. His only weak point was his bad temper. It was because of his temper that he resigned from the throne. He resigned voluntarily, arguing that he did not inherit the throne from his ancestors. He told his people that he would never again show any interest in power and that neither they nor their children should contribute to reigning, as this task is not the responsibility of the Pewrang.

Landhi

The next ruler after the one who resigned is Langhi. The reason for which he became the next ruler is because no one was more suitable than him. When the people of Kushi saw the intentions of the white men to fight them, they give up. Langhi came, declaring himself and agreeing to become the next ruler. Langhi was accepted and this is why the white men did not fight the people of Kushi. At that period he continued ruling because the white men liked and trusted him. He never did anything bad to the people. He resigned because he had leprosy: he informed the people and chose one of his sons, Nughen. The people accepted his offer.

Nughen

Then Nughen became the next ruler. It happened that Nughen was a selfish person. During his reign meningitis broke out, although his father Kwalink helped him with advises as well as assisting the sick ones. People then became very angry with the ruler because of his carelessness over the issue of the meningitis that was pestering the town. They insisted for him to resign, up to a point that he was dethroned and put in prison. He was called for at Kaltungo because a girl with meningitis was put in a cave alive and he did not do anything to the one who did such a thing, even if his father was helping the people with the medicine (herbs). The people thought that if they allowed him to continue ruling, they will all end up dead. Therefore, they were all arrested; Nughen and his father were taken to prison, and the law told Nughen that even after his period in prison he will not be allowed to return to Kushi – Only his father could have returned to Kushi. This is the reason why Nughen was dethroned.

Garyang

During his ruling, it was found that Garyang was corrupt, a cheater and a wicked ruler. His reign resulted in hatred and many bad words were said due to his evil character. He used to cheat his people by seizing their animals, money and crops as well as their women and many other things. He was always telling lies to the paramount chief of Kaltungo. Finally, the people decided that this was too much to

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bear with. He collected a lot of money from the people saying that the Chief of Kaltungo had asked him to do so, but when they reported this to the Chief they discovered that it was a lie. He was dethroned. It was told him that he had the chieftainship not by inheritance but because of the good relationship with the men of his clan.

Abubakar

Abubakar was a courageous and hard-working ruler. There was never a misunderstanding between him and his people. He ruled Kushi for about thirty-six years. He worked very hard and died naturally – not because of men or a car accident. His people were not happy about his death, because they loved and trusted him.

Ishaku Yarima

This sarki is a modern ruler. He is hard-working and courageous, yet people consider him a great deceiver and a corrupt ruler. He is the incumbent ruler and has been on the throne for about 13 years. He is still young and therefore people will get to know him.

3. A hypothesis on the historical timeline

This account can guide us in determining the foundation period of the Kushi group. Malam Samson Waziri's text is not dated, but belongs to a collection of texts produced in the very early years of the SFB project (1991-1992). From the information in our possession, we know that: a) when Malam Samson Waziri wrote the account of the history of the Kushi rulers, Ishaku Yarima had been on the throne for 13 years; b) Abubakar, Ishaku's predecessor, reigned for about 36 years; c) Nughen was the incumbent ruler when the meningitis epidemic broke out (presumably the severe epidemic that devastated northern Nigeria in 1921, cf. KWAMBANA-ADAMS et al. 2018); d) Landhi was accepted as ruler by the British (British forces visited Kushi four times between 1909 and 1913, see ADELBERGER 2009); e) Tumbang became ruler when Europeans arrived in Kushi. Knowing also that the fourth ruler, Bandanka, had to abdicate the throne for health reasons and that Madi's reign was particularly short, and also considering life expectancy at birth (not counting any extraordinary cases), it is plausible to place the foundation of the Kushi group in a period no earlier than 1860.

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	Ruler	Approx. duration (until 1991/92)	
1.	Jamtula	- (long reign)	} 1860?- 1909
2.	Madi	- (brief reign)	
3.	Baleh	-	
4.	Bandanka	- (presumably brief reign)	
5.	Tumbang	1909-	
6.	Landieh	1910/13-	
7.	Nughen	-1921-	
8.	Garyagh	-	
9.	Abubakar	1942/43-1978/79	
10.	Ishaku Yarima	1978/79-1991/1992	

Table 1 – Early Kushi rulers: a timeline

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