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## CORRELATION BETWEEN RABIH (THE PLUNDERER) AND *BOKO HARAM* (THE DESTABILIZER) OF BORNO: A REFLECTION OF IMAM ALI RUQAYYAMI'S *DHIKR WUQU'I RABIH AL MAKHTUM*

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### Abstract

This paper examines two historical events to highlight the assertion that history repeats itself. This assertion is so true of the happenings today in the Lake Chad area in general, and Borno in particular, which has for the last dozen years been ravaged by the vicious Boko Haram insurgency, leaving its hitherto proud people in horrifying destitution, plunder, poverty and ultimately cruel death. A little over a hundred years ago, Borno was the theatre of a similar calamity. Then, the Bilad al Sudan adventurer, Rabih ibn Fadl Allah ravaged the entire region; taking over and plundering the once mighty Borno Empire; killing its king and princes, slaughtering the innocent, and enslaving its lavish citizens. The event was aptly captured by a contemporary, Imam Ali Ruqayyami in a poem, entitled: *Dhikr Wuqu'i Rabihal Makhtum*, through which the two historical episodes are captured. Through an analytical discussion of the two events we can appreciate that without an in-depth study and reflection of history, it is difficult to understand the affairs of the human elements in their lives.

## Introduction

For centuries Borno was the supreme and exemplary state in the Lake Chad basin. Its boundaries stretched from present day southern Chad, northern Cameroon, north-eastern Nigeria, eastern Niger and southern Libya. Borno's learned men were renowned and revered throughout the Muslim world. From about the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, it traded with the states of the Maghrib, the Nile Valley, and the Atlantic coast and its home grown culture and footprints greatly influenced the Hausa and other smaller states of the Central Sudan and the Niger valley for a long time.(1)

However, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century things began to take a worse turn; the state had become too large to govern evident from its internal weaknesses, even as vassal states began to assert their independence from central authority. This coupled with the spill-over of the Jihad of Sheikh Usman Ibn Fodio on the Empire shook the very foundation of the state. The authority of the Mai was literally reduced to the boundaries of the capital. Eventually, the state began to crumble with the successive uprising of the Felata Borno, who sacked its capital *Birni Gazargumo*. Consequently, its revered 1,000 year old dynastic leadership, the Mais were pushed into permanent extinction to be replaced by the charismatic Sheikh Muhammad ElAmin El-Kanemi, a returnee young graduate of the famous Al Azhar University who seized the moment, rallied his students and the remnants of the Borno army and repelled the jihadists both in the war and intellectual fronts and established his own dynasty and ruled as over-lord over Borno. Thus, from year 1809, a new dynasty of the Shehus was born with Kukawa on the shores of the Lake Chad as its headquarters as opposed to the old capital whose ruins are still found on the shores of the Yobe River.

There is no gainsaying that El-Kanemi's successors and the immediate generations that came after gave little attention to state craft. Indeed, the revered Sheikh, after the consolidation of his power, withdrew from state affairs and devoted the remainder of his life to scholarship and meditation. Many of his succeeding sons were so weak that their authorities were literally confined to the four walls of their capital where the citizens were engaged more in luxurious living style and indulgence to the detriment of knowledge-seeking, purity and military marksmanship the state was hitherto known. This gave room for smaller states to capitalize on this weakness to the extent of constant raids on the Empire, even as close as

to Kukawa. It was in the midst of this that the invading forces of Rabih undertook their adventurous mission of invasion(2).

### **The Story of Rabih**

The story of Rabih can be traced to when, as a slave raider, warlord and a self-proclaimed Mahdist (follower of the messiah who is believed would come to cleanse the world of its impurities), he separated from his boss the renowned Zubair Basha of Sudan. Imagining the conquest of the enormous resources of the Central Bilad al Sudan so described successively as a source of great wealth would bring honours and riches to him, he assembled an army of willing mercenaries and headed to the Chad Basin in the late 1800s. He ravaged the entire landscape of the Chad Basin from 1890; then fought to a finish the Shehus and princes of

Kukawa and went on to sack the Mandara, the Bade and attempted taking over Katagum and Hadeija, sending apprehensions to Kano. He then retired to govern the land from his port in Dikwa, whose ruins still stand to date. He ruled with an iron fist for nearly seven years, to the extent that the once powerful empire fell in complete ruins until the French ousted him from the land in 1900 before most of the Empire could pick up its pieces under British colonial rule and subsequently in independent Nigeria.(3)

### **Ali Ruqayyami's Account of the Rabih Exploits**

Rabih's story was vividly captured by Ali Ruqayyami, an erudite scholar and erstwhile Imam of one of the mosques in the town of Dikwa, which later became the capital of Rabih's evil rule in a simple but inspiring poem named '*Dhikr Wuqu'i Rabih Al-Makhtum*' - a recollection of the hidden events of Rabih'. Born in 1854 and died in 1917, the Imam witnessed the turbulent years of Rabih's era, which he captured in the said poem. (4)

As the conscience of the society, the 'Ulama of Borno Empire were known to have stood up in difficult times for the truth, speaking boldly against societal ills and misrule by the leaders.

Where this became difficult, due to censorship and the like; they took to literary expression. This can be said to be true of the poem under reference. Its resultant reaction by the scholars attracted the attention of the then Shehu where the author was consequently charged and only released after a long session of dissection and acceptance of the entire write-up by the learned men of the time to the satisfaction of the Shehu and court. (4)

In the poem, Imam Ali gives a detailed historical analysis and chronology of events leading to the capture of the Borno Empire in the 1890s and the misrule by Rabih who reigned with an iron fist, plundering the land, killing the innocent and spreading fear and destitution. He concurrently attributed the events to the failure of societal values and the reign of lustful pleasure in the Empire, especially in its major cities and towns.

### **The Historical Poem - *Dhikr Wuqu'i Rabih Al Makhtum*'**

Written in simple classic Arabic of his time, the Imam through his poem narrates the major events of Rabih's riotous actions in the Chad Basin. Divided into three broad parts, the poem opens with the assertion that Rabih was preceded by the loss of moral values in the Bornoan society which hitherto was known for its purity, great learning and devotion, to which he attributes the events thus:

When darkness beclouded Borno, and every soul was obsessed in (sin),  
And every person started following His whims, and committed evils,  
Then Allah sent against them Rabih From the land of Khartoum,  
as a conqueror Sudanese cities and countries  
Destroying settlements and towns. He profaned God's country  
with guns with a pagan army, the robbers.

The records preceding the 1890s and oral literature of the time reveal that the former Borno Empire has greatly waned, while indulgence was remarkably noticeable even to the stranger. The loose lifestyle of the people of Kukawa of the time was said to be legendary, even as it is in tradition. (5)(6)

The second part of the poem goes on to narrate, albeit in some details, the tragic events that followed Rabih's invasion. That is, the rise and fall of the tyrant right from his conquests west of the Lake Chad until he gradually and very unpredictably reached Borno, killing the Shehu and destroying their capital, capturing and slaughtering thousands:

Until he came to Bagurmi and laid siege upon the City of the Akkad, then broke in But could not find the Amir Neither did he catch any captive Because he had fled with his army behind the river Thereby escaping from his harshness and slaughter. Then he came to Logone and settled on the land, waging war and occupying cities. A renowned, ancient, long, well-protected and crowded city: it has neither been captured nor entered by any Amir before him. Lived therein for about forty days: leaving behind families and children, fleeing from it like the flow of the river course from the canal without limit. Then he arrived at the resting place of Amjaka, Where our Lord gave him a remarkable victory. When they attacked on a Thursday in rows (troops) He bombarded them with loaded guns. Dispersing and killing their heroes, and made a booty of their properties. He captured the Imam and the big men among his people, What happened on that day was beyond enquiry. The remaining (people) were held captives and marched, with his followers to Ngala. The city of bad omen and disgrace of bloodshed and loss. There he stayed for about forty days, Expecting the arrival of others (left behind). Then diverted attention from them and went out, hurriedly with the intention of fighting them. He slaughtered the Imam on the way, then clashed, With the Muslims on mountain Bala and defeated them. Driving them backward with (gun) fire till he came by Sheikh Umar. Who rode immediately after Asr, And all the people were caught up in difficulty. He faced them personally Fighting on horseback until they fled. Neither cannon nor shield, nor spear, protect, Nor guns could avail anything. The leader and the led ran away, Neither the saddle nor shield dress were helpful. They left behind huge properties, And forgot valuable things behind. What a terrible defeat it was, A great disaster indeed. Rabih remained with the aggressors, Among the arrogant people of Bandi and Kiraysh. Then traced their foot paths, killing many of them by the (Lake) Chad. He reached the city of glory, pride and wealth (Kukawa) (5) The state house of happiness and enjoyment. And found it well populated, And left it ruined. Stayed therein for two months or more, about seventy (days) or so.

Finally, Rabih settled in Dikwa in 1893, becoming his capital from where he reigned for almost seven years, raiding the entire neighbourhood of the now ruined Borno Empire. He pretended to be a religious follower of the Sudanese Mahdi; meting out strange but harsh rule on the people, at the same time forcing them to his religious ways, thus, as narrated by the Imam, then he fell to the superior fire power of the invading French:

Then (he) steered and turned backwards Achieving a great many booty till he arrived Dikwa, the City of Envy The birthplace of many, he headed. Then sent a messenger at dawn with a message collecting horses and money. We were forced out on Saturday, while people in their outing were like plants. It was a day of great war, What a great loss it was. He entered it on Sunday afternoon, On the 12th of *Jumadha Thani*, He ruled the place strangely, And he was able to achieve his wishes. And helped religion and righteous people, He confined them to the mosque for Dhikr. His reign was for six years, And nine month exactly. Then came upon him death and the end, Glory be unto Him who has no ending. And Rabih's power was harmful No power could withstand fighting him. His will power was high and strong Far-reaching, overwhelming and glaring. He was in behaviour like Hajjaj (Bn Yusuf) His generosity to people was like rain fall. He was killed by some Christian forces In a battle called *Wahd Marrat* (once and for all)

In the last part of the poem, the author reiterates his assertion that if lots of prayers and the combination of ammunition and military force were enough to rout Rabih, he could have been defeated in Borno, the land of the Kanuri, for as their history asserts, they were originally like the guiding light. The contention that their loss of moral value was the primary cause of their conquest by Rabih is here reinforced. He averred that the people should not be surprised by the notoriety of Rabih's horrific actions but their own consequential actions, allowing the floodgate of the horrific events that followed:

Read what was said: Whatever one does unto another, so shall it be done unto him. It is the practice of Allah to suppress an oppressor, with one who is more oppressive. There will exist in every people, Criminals, plotters and traitors. When they forgot the call, then it was opened upon them that which was locked. Until when were overjoyed with what was given them They were held up and died. They were denied every good, The oppressors' backbones were broken. Praise be to Allah even in distress Like praise is to Him in prosperity. The Lord of kings, creator of mankind, who has the knowledge of what is good and bad. The signs in Surah alAnfal is enough a warning unto the careful, the thoughtful. Take lesson from what has happened to you, Accept all that the Merciful has decreed. Time has come to end, Disobedience has appeared and oppression. Do not be surprised at your Rabih for his deeds Rather be surprised at your misdeeds. Among the signs of the nearness of the time is the appearance of Rabih with his followers. If he could be defeated with lots of prayers and lots of ammunition and force out together He would have been easily defeated in the land of Borno, the dwelling place of the Kanuri. And they were called Kanuri, because they were in their origin like the *Nur* (light). Among the wonders in one's life is the appearance of Rabih, O brethren: a pretender to the path of the Mahdi, while he was on his innovative path. Whoever never tries to correct his bad deeds, His statements, but just an enemy to his intelligence. It is not in the Hadith the sale of a Muslim, and the shedding of his blood is protected. All that happens in the form of disasters, annihilation, crushing and destruction. And certainly from Allah, Who has no partner. And this is what the Merciful has decreed, On all people, O brethren. They must be accepted with pleasure (of mind) Then (we) follow the path of righteousness. And know that in your time, O people, The "real people" have gone, and only counterfeits remain. The decree (of God) is nigh, and the time is up, Departure is a reality likewise the end. All of us are equal in evil deeds, and unto Him all of us shall return. He is the protector of all people From the evil of the Iblis, O! brother, Khannas The evils of Rabih, the great plotter, Owner of chain and conspiracy. By the grace of the best of creation (Muhammad). May the continuous blessings of Allah be upon him, on his household, companions, followers, likewise their followers without end. This ends the elegy on Rabih with Allah's praise and best assistance.

### **Correlation with Present Borno Insurrection**

Fast forward to the 21st century, Borno is in crisis again. This time from within - the ravaging terrorism of the Boko Haram (BH for short) and the Imam's write up of the 19th Century events in the Chad Basin seem to resonate in this century. The former Borno Empire or what remains of it is today one of the 36 states of modern Nigeria. During colonialism from about 1900 till independence in 1960, the state then a province in Northern Nigeria was a much respected lot and its educated citizens held sway in the civil service while grand development efforts were put up by the native authority, gradually opening up the landlocked countryside for commerce, trade and farming. Since independence, things have gone well with the oil boom in the country even with military rule.

Nigeria ushered its 3rd Republic in 1999. From then on, things begun to take a turn for the worse - with massive influx into its only major city and capital Maiduguri, not only from the hinterland but from across the north, for Quranic studies for which Borno was known for years as well as for greener pasture. However, with mounting youth unemployment, it was clear that trouble was brewing. With the harsh economic realities of city life on them, jobless youths were easily recruited as political thugs into the infamous ECOMOG, while others took to Islamic religious circles mainly in a newly constructed mosque - the Indimi Mosque.



A group of young men converged around a Sheikh, Ja'afar Muhammad Adam, a puritarian Islamic preacher from Kano who had come to spearhead the spread in Borno of the new brand of puritanical Salafist Islam so anxiously the Saudis want to spread throughout the

Islamic world. The circle expanded and attracted willing young men from across the city. A young man identified as Muhammad Yusuf was selected *Amir al Shabbab* - leader of the youth for the mosque. Very soon his followership expanded and following some doctrinal - and others said economic discrepancies with his mentor - Yusuf soon broke off and founded his own group in his residence around the railway terminus and named it *Markas* (institute) most probably for indoctrination. Soon he and close associates started preaching against societal ills and government misappropriations. He started attracting even a larger following of youth who got attracted to his extreme views and sermons.

He preached that the entirety of western education was forbidden in Islam, hence the name *Boko Haram* which was most comforting to his Qur'anic students and illiterate followership. The weekly lesson sessions held around the Monday Market soon became an enormous gathering of his followers said to be partially armed, initially with clubs, which soon attracted the attention of the government and its security apparatus. He now became a regular guest to the secret police stations including a few trips to the headquarters at Abuja. On the other hand, the core Saudi-style Islamic reformers the salafists or Izala minded scholars themselves became uneasy with the even more furious approach of Yusuf and all efforts made to bring him back to their fold through dialogue proved abortive. Now the battle line was drawn and imminent dangers of the young preacher and his followers was the source of discussion all over town and even beyond. A single incident - an altercation with the police in 2009 over the wearing of motorcycle protective helmet - was enough to trigger an uprising in which the BH followers burnt down police stations and broke mayhem on the city of Maiduguri. This, the Nigerian authorities soon crashed, killing the leader of the movement, Muhammad Yusuf, in cold blood and driving his followers out of town.

Before the celebrations on the crashing defeat could die down, from August 2010, the movement now scaled up selected killings and bombings within Maiduguri and environs before the army was deployed and the resultant killings by both sides and round up operations soon depleted the city of its youth before residents took up clubs and drove the miscreants out of the city, after which some relative peace returned to the city. Very quickly the BH elements got a safe haven in the bush and assembled in the forests of the Sambisa

Games Reserve, terrorizing the hinterland and in a short time took over 20 of the 27 Local Governments in the state, spreading terror to the neighbouring states of Yobe, Adamawa and Gombe. Their terror activities soon resonated throughout northern Nigeria like wild fire, with bombings carried out in as far as Abuja.

In Kano, besides the infamous suicide bombings, an assassination attempt on the Emir was carried out in broad day light. To Maiduguri, they sent suicide bombers who terrorized the citizens, the high point being the attempted assassination of the Shehu of Borno and the state Deputy Governor after Friday prayers in 2012. Very soon Boko Haram gained the notoriety of being one of the most vicious terrorist groups in modern history.(7)(8)

Even as we write, the group, now heavily factionalized, is battling the Nigerian military on so many fronts in Borno, while their surprise attacks and routing of entire communities and theft of their animals and other valuables including hostage taking for cash continue unabated. Most of central and northern Borno is today a deserted, no-go war zone, while millions of citizens are refugees living in emergency camps and host communities all over the country and especially in Maiduguri at the mercy of the government, benevolent citizens and international donor agencies.

The situation today is a near exact replica of the ravages caused by the Rabih in the 1890s, bringing to fore the conclusions of the 19th century poem by Imam Ali Ruqayyami- that the root cause of conflict in the Chad basin today as in the past is the lack luster lifestyle of the people, occasioned by the loss of Morality.



## Conclusion

The atrocities of the *Boko Haram* strikingly resembles that of Rabih, the conqueror in all aspects including the unwarranted destruction of innocent lives; literally slaughtering of those considered enemies to their belief and insisting on those people living in their domain ascribing to their harsh brand of Islam. Even in warfare, *Boko Haram* seems to have borrowed the exact tact of Rabih. Who would have imagined that in the 21st century a group of rag- tags would dare hold Nigeria, the giant of Africa with its military might, its 200 Million population, excessive intellectual prowess and excessive religiosity, in a combat for well over 10 years, striking at will and holding the country by its jugular? Any lessons learnt from the poem ‘A recollection of the hidden events of Rabih’?

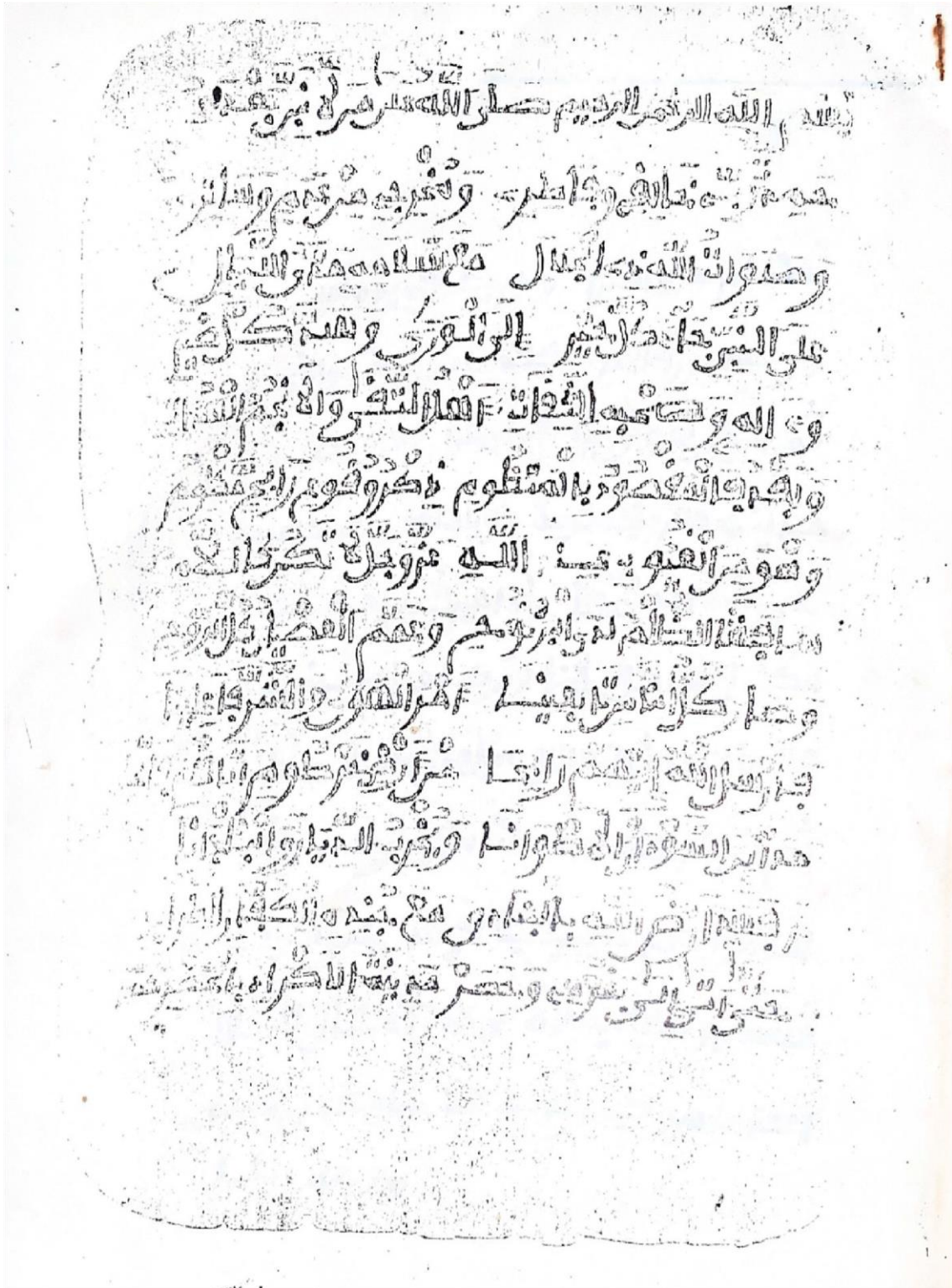
## End notes

\*This article is an updated version of a paper earlier presented by the author at a Conference of the impact of the ulama, CTSS Unimaid, 1991 with the title ‘ the Contribution of the Borno ulama to the preservation of history - A REFLECTION OF IMAM ALI RUQAYYAMI’S *DHIKR WUQUI RAB AL MAKHTUM* \*

1. For a more detailed history of the Borno empire, see Yusuf Bala Usman and MN Alkali (1983): *Studies in the history of pre-colonial Borno*, Northern Nigerian Pub. Co Zaria
2. WKR Hallam (1977): *The Life and Times of Rabih ibn Fadl Allah*, Arthur H Stockwell Ltd
3. Rex Niven (1982) *Nigerian kaleidoscope: memoirs of a colonial civil servant*, C Hurst London.
4. Muhammad Hassan Muhammad (2003): “Al shaykh Imam Ali Rukayyami of Gajibo (a case study of his poems Hamidtu and Rithyatu),” Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Maiduguri
5. For an eyewitness of life in Kukawa around the period, see Gustav Nachtigal (1971): *The Sahara and Sudan, vol 2*, C Hurst and Co London
6. The oral literature of the Kanuri are full of the legendary stories of the lush live of the people of Kukawa (*Kuwawu* in local parlance) of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century
7. See F.A. Olumuyiwa et. al. (2019): *Boko Haram’s Terrorism and the Nigerian State*, Springer Nature Switzerland AG : Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland
8. Freedom C. Onuoha and Samuel Oyewole (2018) *Anatomy of Boko Haram: The Rise and Decline of a Violent Group in Nigeria*, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies [jcforstudies@aljazeera.net#p://studies](mailto:jcforstudies@aljazeera.net#p://studies).

APPENDIX A

ORIGINAL ARABIC COPY OF THE POEM *DHIKR WUQU RAB AL MAKHTUM*



لکنہ امجد الامیرا و تم بحرفیہ اسیرا  
 جزینہ و راء البحر جفہ جاسر طشہ و انحر  
 ثم اطلقوا فونوا نزل في امير الزار و فروع حقل  
 مدينه مفر و فة فية طويله حرو و سة بسيمه  
 ثم رفا اندر حقا و ه امير فية يد ماها  
 مکت و بها مثل لينا و ترک اعيال و لينينا  
 و انسل منها فل انسلان نسل من انوار بلا کلال  
 ثم اتر متجها لا سفا اناه جيه رفا صرافا  
 لها انوار يوم خميس رجا لفيهم چند و مزجا  
 ناسم و فز لا يظالا و جملا الا فوار الة فلالا  
 انتم مام و كبار قومہ بلا سلفه اجري سومه  
 و اسرارنا



واسرايا فيرتم الزحلا مشمر اساعاده الزغلا اسم البيا  
 مدينة اشوم وهنك السر وهو انما ثمة مشمر  
 وجدنا خالية من الاما مشروكة فارعة من اسما  
 افام وها نوارينا منتظر افو عشم يينا  
 وجدناك مل عشم فخره معا بلا كرم لافرم  
 نام مام في الطريق التي وبنا مسامير ووهار التي  
 صروهم بنار هار انوري مشراي حوم شبع عصرا  
 وركب الشيخ عبيد النصر وانما كلهم اسرا القسر  
 وايضهم بنار هار بنفسه حتى حير راكلا  
 مريوع اهد وجر واسرامر واخره السيود وابنا في  
 نرد باع كذا طبوع لم يفهم بيولده روم

3

قد تركوا مائة كثيرة وعذبوا نكيسة بحطيرة  
 وكان ما كان من الشهيرة ووقفنا قصية عظيمة  
 وبنات راجع السفاك من أهل نجد وكريش على  
 ثم ركبنا في آثارهم ووقفنا قتل كثيرا حتى تأدوا وصل  
 موية العرو وعرونا دار الامارة وجردهم وهنأ  
 ووجهها ممررة منطورة صيرها من روكمة ميسرة  
 بنس شغرتيرها اواضرا كمثل سبغير على ما في  
 ثم اشرفنا على ما كابره وعلما غنيمه من قيسرو  
 حتى اتى ابي كوا مينة الهمة وعلنا لفظ الروي ميرة اصد  
 بجانعه فذرا سلا وجمع الجبل والري بال  
 اخربنا كرها يوم السبت واناس من نمر وبنهم كالب  
 ويوم

تاريخ

تاريخ



وَيَوْمَهُ كَرَفَعَهُ عَظِيمَةً قَبْرَهُ مِنْ حَشْرِ عَيْسَى  
 دَبَطَهَا بِالْحَدِ وَفِي الْعَصْرِ وَهِيَ ثَمَانُونَ عَشْرًا فَادْرَأَ الْعَلَمَ  
 مَكْرُمًا فِيهَا الْمَجْدَ الْأَعْلَمَ وَنَارَ قَانَانَ أَمْرًا مُسْرَمًا  
 وَنَصْرًا لَدَيْرًا وَأَهْلًا الْخَيْرَ أَنْزَلَهُمْ لِمَسْجِدٍ لَدَى كُر  
 وَمَلِكُهُ سِتُّ مِثْرَ الْعَوَامِ وَسَكَنَهُ الْأَشْهُرُ بِالنَّهَامِ  
 فَمَاتَ اللَّهُ الْمَوْتُ وَالْبَقَاءُ سَبْعِينَ لَيْسَةً الْفَضَاءُ  
 وَرَأَى شَوْكَةَ مِصْرَةَ وَلَا يَطْفُرُ حَيْثُ دَوْمَةُ  
 هَمَّتْهُ فَوَيْتُهُ عَالِيَهُ فَيَجِيءُ جَارِفَةً قَلْبَهُ  
 مِثَالَهُ فِي الْكَارِ كَالْجَائِمِ عَطَاؤُهُ لِلنَّاسِ كَالْجَائِمِ  
 فَتَلَهُ بِسِرِّهِ مِنَ النَّصْرِ فِي غَزْوَةِ سَمُوْسَانَ وَبَدْرِ مَرْوَانَ



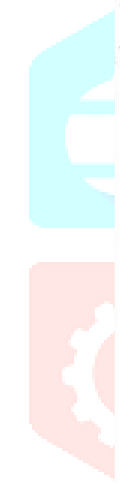
أَفَلَمْ يَنْتَهِ الْيَقْمَرُ جَمِيعَ مَرَجِهِ يَسْتَرْفِدُ بِسِرِّهِ  
 بِزَارَتِ أَحْسَرَ اجْرَاءِ بِرَمَّةِ ابْتِي وَالْأَوْسِيَاءِ  
 فَلَنْفَرُ وَأَمَّا فَيَا مَرْفَلُ شَيْءٌ لَفِيهِ عَلَيْهِ فَمَقِيلُ  
 مَرَعَاءُ اللَّهُ انْتِغَامِ الْأَلِيمِ بِطَالِمِ يَكُوفُ مَرَعَاءُ  
 بِكُنَا سِرِّ عِنْدَ الْكَابِرِ مَرَجِ مَيْسَمِ قَائِدِ رَوَاعِدِ زَوَا  
 نَهَا سَوَامَاةَ كِرْوَاةَ فَيَحْتَمِلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَبُو ابْنِ مَاهِدِ نَائِلُ  
 مَحْتِي إِذَا مَا لِي رَوَا بِمَا لَأَنْتُوا عَزَمْتُمْ بِحُجَاةٍ وَمَلَأْتُوا  
 مَرَكَلِ فِرَايِسِيرِ مَعْمُومُوا قَطَعْتُمْ أَبْرُقُومِ مَقْلَمُوا  
 وَكَهْمُ لِلَّهِ عَنِّي أَحْسَرَ كَمَا لَمْ أَحْمَدُ عَلَى اسْتِرَائِي  
 رَبِّ الْمَشْهُوكِ تَمَّ الْوَالِيَاءُ مَقْدِرِ الصَّلَاحِ وَالْبَسَاءِ  
 وَابْنِ الْأَنْجَالِ يَكْفِي عَيْرَهُ لَمْرِيَّةً تَأْمَلُ وَيَكْتَرُهُ  
 فَاعْبُرُوا مَا تَأْتِيكُمْ مِنْ أَوْجَانِ فَارِخُوا بِمَيْمَانِ الْفَرِيقِ  
 جَانِ

وَإِنَّهُ تَانْتَرَانِ مَا نِ وَظَهَرَ الْفَسَادَ وَالْعَدْوَانَ  
 لَا تَأْتِيكُم مِّنْ أَرْجَائِكُمْ وَيَمَا يَفْعَلُ بِرِجَالِكُمُ أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 وَمِنْ عِلْمِهِ أَنْ تُرَآهُ السَّاعَةَ تَظْهَرُونَ رَآيَهُ أَجْمَاعُهُ  
 تَوَكَّرَ مَقْرُونًا بِحُكْمِهِ إِذْ قَالَ وَكَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِيَوْمَ تَقُومُ  
 السَّاعَةُ أَنْ تُسْأَلَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ لَأَنَّ  
 وَرِثَتُهُمْ وَأَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُهُمْ  
 وَبَنَاتُهُمْ وَمَنْ بَنَوْا أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ  
 مَّهْمًا يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهَا مُؤْتَمَرَةٌ وَمَنْ بَدَّلْتَنَّهُمْ  
 لَمَّحَاتِلٍ فَظَنُّوا هُنَّ أَمْوَالُهُمْ مُتَّكِفَةً فِي  
 الْكُرْسِيِّ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهَا أَسْرَابُ الْبَطْرِ  
 وَطَيْرٍ مَّيْمُونٍ أَوْ سَمَكٍ الْمَرِيحِيِّ  
 وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهَا أَسْرَابُ الْغَابِغَةِ وَالْهَيْبَةِ  
 وَالْمُكْرِمَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِهِ  
 لَمَّاعِينَ

وَإِنَّهَا  
 لَكُنَّ



وعلية فم حكم انتم ان علي جميع الناس بالحق  
 جواب رفاوه بالقلب وانه نقيه نظريه الصوب  
 فلتعرفوا انكم يا ناس هب ناس ويخوننا من  
 فم فرب الافر وعلا اوفك وتوا انتم ارفوت  
 وكنتاه اسو مستور وكنتا به رايه  
 انه يستر جميع اناس من شر ابيهم اناس  
 ومتر رايه كير الكيد عليك سنة سار به انهم  
 بجاه غير علفه محمد صار عليه اسو من الامم  
 واه واه كير والاباح وتايههم به انهم  
 بي اسايه كير ابياه  
 نعم ثماره الثمانية



## APPENDIX B

## THE TEXT IN TRANSLATION

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.  
Peace be Upon him, after whom there is no Prophet.

I praise my Lord, Creator and Originator, my maker from the state of nothingness,  
my protector.

May the salutation of Allah, the Owner of Glory and His Peace descend all night.  
Upon the Prophet who brought every good, and guarded mankind from what is harmful.  
And (upon) His companions, the trust-worthies, the God fearing , and the guiding stars.

After that, the aim of the poem:

“A recollection of the hidden events of Rabih.” Is that it is concealed with Allah,

Great and Exalted be He, and do not be unmindful.

When darkness beclouded Borno, and every soul was obsessed in (sin).

And every person started following, His whims, and committed evils.

Then Allah sent against them Rabih,

From the land of Khartoum, as a conquerer of.

Sudanese cities and countries destroying settlements and towns.

He profaned God's country with guns with a pagan army, the robbers.

Unti he reached Bagirmi and laid siege,

Upon the city of Akkad,(a siege) breaking it.

But could not find the Amir, neither did he catch any captive.

Because he had fled with his army behind the river

Thereby escaping from his harshness and slaughter.

Then he came to Logone and settled, on the land waging war and occupying  
cities.

A renowned, ancient, long, well protected and crowded city.

It has neither been captured, or entered by any Amir before him. and lived  
therein for about forty(days),

leaving behind families and children.

Fleeing from it like the flow of the river course from the canal without limit.

Then he arrived the resting place of Amjaka, where our Lord gave a remarkable  
victory.

When they attacked on a Thursday in rows (troops) he bombarded them with  
loaded guns.

Dispersing and killing their heroes, and made a booty of their properties.

He captured the Imam and the big men among his people,  
what happened on that day (to him) was beyond enquiry.  
The remaining (people) were held captives and marched,  
with his followers to Ngala.

The city of bad Omen and disgrace of bloodshed and loss.

There he stayed for about forty (days), expecting the arrival of others (left  
behind).

Then diverted attention from them and went out, hurriedly with the intention of  
fighting them.

He slaughtered the Imam on the way, then clashed, with the Muslims on mountain  
Bala and defeated them.

Driving them backward with fire (gun) till he came by Sheikh Umar.

Who rode immediately after Asr, and all the people were caught up in difficulty.

He faced them personally, fighting on horse back until they fled.

Neither canon nor shield, nor spear protect, nor guns could avail anything.

The leader and the led ran away,

Neither the saddle nor shield dress were helpful.

They left behind huge properties, and forgot valuable things behind.

What a terrible defect it was, a great disaster indeed.

Rabih remained with the aggressors, among arrogant people of Bandi and  
Kiraysh. Then traced their foot paths,

Then killed many of them by the (Lake) Chad.

He reached the city of glory, pride and wealth, the state house of happiness and  
enjoyment.

And found it well populated, and left it ruined.

Stayed therein for two months or more, about seventy (days) or so.

Then (he) steered and turned backwards achieving a great many booty.

Till he arrived Dikwa, the city of Envy, the Birth place of many, he headed.

Then sent a messenger at dawn with a message collecting horses and money.

we were forced out on Saturday,  
while people in their outing were like plants. It was a day of great war, what a  
great loss it was.

He entered it on Sunday afternoon, on the 12th of Jumadha Thani,  
He ruled the place wonderfully, and he was able to achieve his wishes. And  
helped religion and righteous people, he confined them to the mosque for  
Dhikr.

His reign was for six years, and nine month exactly. Then came upon him  
death and the end, Glory be unto Him who has no ending.  
And Rabih's power was harmful no power could withstand fighting him. His  
will power was high and strong

Far-reaching, overwhelming and glaring.  
He was in behavior like Hajjaj (Bn Yusuf)  
His generosity to people was like rain fall.  
He was killed by some christian forces in a battle called: Wahd Marrat.

Read what was said: Whatever one does, unto another, so shall it be done unto  
him.

It is the practice of Allah to suppress an oppressor, with one who is more  
oppressive.

There will exist in every people, Criminals, plotters and traitors.

When they forgot the call, then it was opened upon them that which was locked.

Until when were over joyed with what was given them they were help up and died.

They were denied every good,  
The oppressors backbones were broken.

Praise be to Allah even in distress like praise is to Him in prosperity.

The Lord of kings, creator of mankind, who has the knowledge of what is good  
and bad.



The signs in Surah al-Anfal are enough a warning  
unto the careful, the thoughtful.

Take lesson from what has happened to you,  
accept all that the Merciful has decreed.

Time has come to end,  
Disobedience has appeared and oppression.

Do not be surprised at your Rabih for his deeds rather be surprised at your  
misdeeds.

Among the signs of the nearness of the time is the appearance of Rabih with  
his followers.

If he could be defeated with lots of prayers and lots of ammunition and force out  
together.

He could have been defeated by the afore-mentioned in the land of Borno, The dwelling place  
of Kanuri.

And they were called Kanuri  
Because, they were in their origin like the Nur (light).  
Among the wonders in one's life  
Is the appearance of Rabih, O brethren.  
A pretender to the path of the Mahdi,  
While he was (actually) on his innovative path.

Whoever never tries to correct his bad deeds,

His statements, but just an enemy to his intelligence.

It is not in the Hadith the sale of a Muslim,

And the shedding of his blood is protected. All that happens in the form of  
disasters, Annihilation, crushing and destruction. And certainly from Allah

Who has no partner.

And this is what the Merciful has decreed, On all people O brethren. They must  
be accepted with pleasure (of mind) Then (we) follow the path of righteousness.

And know that in your time, O people,

The 'real people' have gone, and only counterfeits remain. The decree (of God) is  
nigh, and the time is up, Departure is a reality, likewise the end.

All of us are equal in evil deeds,

And unto Him all of us shall return.

He is the protector of all people

From the evil of the Iblis, O! brother Khannas. The evils of Rabih, the great  
plotter, Owner of chain and conspiracy.

By the grace of the best of creation (Muhammad)

May the continuous blessings of Allah be upon him. On his household,  
companions, followers, Likewise their followers without end.

This ends the elegy on Rabih,  
withAllah's praise and best assistance

