

DIERK LANGE: *A Sudanic chronicle: the Borno Expeditions of Idrīs Alauma (1564–1576): according to the account of Ahmad b. Fuṭū. Arabic text, English translation, commentary and geographical gazetteer.* (Studien zur Kulturkunde, 86.) 179 pp., 2 plates, 65 pp. [Arabic text]. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1987.

The book under review falls into three distinct parts: Arabic text, English translation, and Geographical gazetteer. The Arabic text is derived from two manuscripts, MSA, now preserved in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Institute, and MS B, one of the Arabic manuscripts in the SOAS Library (no. 41384 (a)). It may be said straightaway that this edition makes obsolete the available English translations of the *Kitāb ghazawāt Barnū*: that by J. W. Redhouse published in 1862, which was none the less a most worthy effort at that date, and that by H. R. Palmer and his assistant(s), first published in 1926 and reprinted in 1970. This latter was hardly satisfactory and the text and translation printed here is a fully worthy, indeed admirable, edition of this important Arabic work from West Africa.

Dr. Lange's reputation is firmly based on his studies of the earlier history of Kanem-Borno and other works on the region of Chad and its Muslim and non-Muslim peoples. Especially important has been his *Le Dīwān des sultans du [Kānem]-Bornu: Chronologie et histoire d'un royaume africain, de la fin du X<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à 1808* (Wiesbaden, 1977), which appeared in the same series. However, the successor marks a departure in several ways from the earlier volume. As Lange says in his Preface (p. 10), after having benefited from the advice and the assistance of Professor John Hunwick, the final draft of the translation was accomplished with the help of Gabriel Shortland in the University of Niamey. 'Without her assistance I could not have dared to present an English translation (rather than a French one), thus making the book more readily accessible to the reader in present-day Borno.' This praiseworthy decision will most certainly be welcomed not only by Nigerian scholars and students but also by many in this country; the whole manuscript is fluently, accurately and idiomatically translated, clearly set out with footnotes where they should be, at the bottom of each page, and the whole book is extremely well printed to a standard that is sadly lacking amongst many publishers in this country.

Another important feature of this edition is the annotated gazetteer of towns and occasionally tribes which figure prominently in the expeditions. Lange explains that both this and the maps are the result of extensive travels on his part. In October 1976, he crossed the Sahara in a joint expedition following the traces of Idrīs Alauma in the Fezzan, in Kawar, Damergu, Kutus, Borno, Kano and other parts of Nigeria and Cameroon, concluding his trip by travelling around Lake Chad. In the early part of 1977 he continued his project to identify towns and villages mentioned by Ibn Fuṭū'. Throughout these journeys, he was accompanied by guides and assistants from Nigeria and Niger. This thoroughness has enabled him to trace out the expeditions in detail in a way quite impossible before. Around seventy entries are found in the gazetteer, giving it a value far beyond the campaigns themselves, undertaken over a period of some ten years in the seventeenth century. The content will be of interest to geographers and archaeologists, and it should be of particular interest to the University of Maiduguri which is now building up a centre for trans-Saharan studies.

The Sultan's expeditions took him, or his officers, into the Sahara during the course of his reign. One of them was to Burāk (Brāk) in the Fezzan. Lange shows that the 'fortress of Fezzān' is the correct reading for the Arabic reference to the main base of the Borno forces, and not 'Qal' at Qrān', which has been an accepted reading to date and which has been the subject of lengthy discussion, more especially in B. G. Martin's article, 'Mai Idris of Bornu and the Ottoman Turks, 1576–78' (*International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1972, 3, 471, 474, 478, 482, 487–9). The exact circumstances and route adopted by Idrīs Alauma in regard to

his punitive operations against the Tuareg of Aïr are less certain (pp. 70–5). This was quite an extensive operation, although Ibn Fuṭū' relies for his account of the expeditions against the Tuareg entirely on hearsay (p. 75, n. 29). However distorted the record, there is no doubt that these events left a permanent memory amongst the scholarly élite of the Aïr Sultanate, one or two of whom deemed this action by the Borno Sultan's forces a divinely inspired retribution meted out to the successors of the Agades Sultan, Aḥmad b. Taluza (with variants) who was accused of having condoned, even engineered, the martyrdom of Sīdī Maḥmud al-Baghdādī, Aïr's greatest saint and Ṣūfī mystic. Lange makes the plausible suggestion that 'Talaḥ' (see pp. 162–4) indicates a confederation of Tuareg tribes and not a town. I would agree now with his view that Tadelīza castle cannot be meant here. The Talza, or Talaḥ, would appear to be a clan from whom arose several Agades sultans, including Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (reg. c. 1494–1503), whose *kunya* was Talzi Tanat, Muḥammad b. Taladha (var. Taluza; reg. 1516–18), and Aḥmad b. Talyaṭ (Taluza and other variants), who took office in 1541 and ruled for some fifteen years. At the time of the Borno raid, it was a brother of the latter, Muḥammad al-Ghudāla b. al-Hājj 'Āqib, who was in office. He ruled for some forty years, seemingly without major upsets, and this raid is not referred to in the Aïr records. Savage disputes within the Aïr Sultanate are indeed referred to in the Aïr records, but these must have taken place at the beginning of the next century. Although Borno is involved, they have no connexion with the expedition referred to here.

Lange does not offer a precise location for the battle of Agalwa, where the host of Talaḥ faced the Borno Grand Vizir, Kursu. He shows both Tādus (en route) and Agalwa on Map I with question marks, the latter seemingly deep within the Massif itself. Francis Rennell Rodd, in his *People of the veil*, (1926, 412—a work which does not appear in Lange's bibliography) discusses this particular expedition, and offers his own version of the route followed. He identifies Agalwa with Eghalgawen, which he mentions several times. His map shows it almost due east of Agades on the southern edge of the Massif. Since he also mentions a village called Tadesa (p. 239), lying near the southern edge of the Massif, it would suggest that Tādus is to be located in the same region.

This is an exceedingly useful edition, the Arabic well printed and, where needed, vocalized. It is to be hoped that Lange will publish further texts from Borno in the same series.

H. T. NORRIS