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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا

## Chapter Twenty One

### On Mention of the Battle of Konni

**K**onni is a village from the nation of the Blacks. It is said that their paternal ancestor was from Gobir and their maternal ancestor was a freed slave from our tribe, the *Turudbe*'. It is also said that our tribe who reside in the land now, were the first to enter and settle the lands of Gobir for a long period before the Hausa joined them. Then, the *Amir* of **Konni**, **Muhammad Damka**, conquered our people and dealt with them treacherously by slaughtering more than forty of the *Qur'an* reciters and scholars in their *masjid*. He enslaved children and seized wealth indiscriminately. Among those virtuous men who were forced to evacuate was **Muhammad ibn Sa`d**, along with the students and people of learning connected with him. He later settled with the *Turudbe*' in **Marratta** in the country of **Ghalmi**, and was appointed as the *Amir* of **Gobir**. The family of Aal fled Konni and settled in the land of **Qulubi**. The family of Tahndu and all those connected with them fled and settled in the land of **Zanfara** and established themselves in **Tawaghama**. Among these later emigrants was the illustrious teacher and proficient erudite, who was famous as **Shekhu**. He studied knowledge from the military judge in **Kano**, the traditionist, **Musa Ghiru**, who took knowledge from the scholarly **Imam Muhammad al-Ba`aawa**. He in turn took knowledge from **Abdullahi at-Thuqa**. **Shekhu**, then traveled to **Agadez** and studied with the two *shaykhs*, **ad-Darfan** and **Sa`id Baasha**. He also studied knowledge with the saintly descendent of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, **Amina**, the *Shareef*. Among those who took knowledge from **Shekhu** was his brother, the erudite and well versed traditionist who was known as **Bello** (my namesake), who the father of the noble learned traditionist, **Ibrahim ibn Bello**. He also left many students in the land Gobir. Let us now return to our original discussion regarding the battle of Konni.

Among its events is that when the Muslim army had returned from the military campaign of **Matankari**, we gathered the war spoils together in order to divide the fifth. The dividing of four parts of the fifth among the warriors was very difficult for us. However, we did it taking as our excuse the need to disseminate the wealth in a timely fashion, but we failed to be exact because there were too many people which made it impossible to record all of their names in the government registrar (*diwaan*), along with the fact that they all dispersed after receiving their share. When they returned each group then left for its own region. However, later we were able to recollect most of this wealth and then placed it with the government treasurer **Umar al-Kamuni**.<sup>1</sup> We then began to reflect on how this wealth should be divided, but we

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<sup>1</sup> Umar al-Kamuni was the first government official to be appointed as trustee of the *Bayt al-Maal* (or Secretary of the Treasury) by *Shehu* Uthman Dan Fuduye'. His responsibilities then included management and organization of the wealth which was obtained during the military campaigns. This

could not come to a consensus. Thus, Umar divided the fifth among us and we then returned to take back the spoils that we were able from those warriors that remained. We were able to correct the previous mistake and brought about restitution between all the warriors.

When we had accomplished this affair, we then dispatched an army against the disbelievers. The army set out on Monday in the month of *Rabi`a al-Awwal*, because we received the reports that the ruler of Gobir was going to head towards us with his soldiers. We then took mutual council regarding this and our opinions were in agreement regarding going out to encounter his army without any delay before he set out from his fortress. Thus, the army of the Muslims set out with its leader who was one of the close companions of the *Shehu*, named **Muhammad Ghayra**. He led the army for the two nights of Wednesday and Thursday and finally arrived that Thursday morning at the fortress of the ruler of Gobir. A great battle ensued in which many Muslims attained martyrdom. Then however, Allah conquered their fortress by the late afternoon prayer (*`asr*) of that same day. The Muslims were able to kill their men and their women and children were captured, however many of their families were killed in the fire that resulted from the war.

When the conquering of the fortress was complete, a Tuareg came to us and said: “You should look out for your own families that you left because the ruler of Gobir has reached them! He left his fortress with his soldiers on Wednesday and camped overnight at a place called **Bu’ri**. He then journeyed on and passed the village called **Ghanbu**.” When **Muhammad Ghayra** heard this report, he immediately roused the Muslim army and refused to camp out over night. They returned on the same day (Thursday). We made every effort to return to our lands that same day. We also tried to divide the war spoils as is necessary but encountered the same difficulties that we had before along with the fact that the constriction of time weighed heavy in us.



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