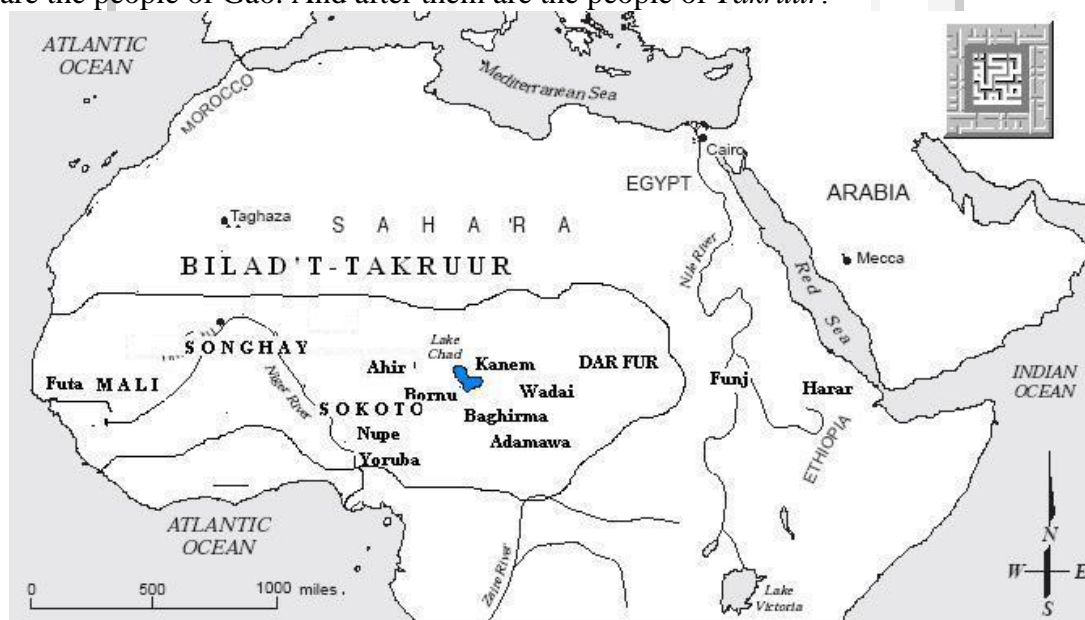


## Chapter One

### On the Definition of the Name “*Takruur*”<sup>1</sup>

Realize that this name, *Takruur*, is the designation of the western region of the southern *Bilad as-Sudan*, based on what we have been made to understand from the historical narratives. This name has pervaded all the lands of the Two Sacred Places, Egypt, and Abyssinia. The name was so well entrenched in its place that the people of these lands are unawares of its origin. They encountered this name from the pilgrims who were named this in the Two Sacred Places as well as in Egypt. I saw in the *al-Qamuus* of Maajid‘d-Deen al-Fayruzbaadi<sup>2</sup>, “It is a land located in the west. It is the opinion of their people that the term *Takruur* designates the lands of Kano, Katsina and those lands of the *bilad’s-Sudan* bordering them. It designates the lands of Tankeet and the lands bordering it in the lands of *Takruur*.” And Allah knows best. Ibn Khaldun said in his *Tarikh ‘l-Kabeer*<sup>3</sup> when speaking about the narrations of the kingdoms of the *Sudan* neighboring Morocco, “The people of the *Sudan* are Tarjanat, adjacent to them are Kanem. Adjacent to them on the west are the people of Gao. And after them are the people of *Takruur*.”



Map of the *Bilad t'-Takruur*

However, my aim here in recording the history is to include the entire region from the lands of Fur to the lands of Futa and beyond and the lands neighboring them, as much as possible. As we have mentioned, the recording of the history of the regions was originally unattended to. It is for this reason that al-Hassan ‘l-Yuusi<sup>4</sup> said in his *al-Muhaadarat*, “Among the customs of the *shaykh* of our *shaykhs*, Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn ‘l-‘Arabi ibn Abi ‘l-Muhaasin Yusef ‘l-Faasi, whenever he met a person he would ask from which land he came. When he informed him he would ask, ‘Whom do you have from among the people of knowledge and righteousness?’ Whenever he would be told something about that he would record it.”

<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive appreciation of the meaning of the term *Takruur* see Umar al-Nagar, ‘*Takruur: the History of a name*’, *Journal of African History* vol. X, 3, 1969, pp 365-374.

<sup>2</sup> He was Abu Tahir Muhammad ibn Ya‘qub al-Fayruzbaadi, known as Maajid‘d-Deen, died 817 *hijra*. The text referenced here is his famous *al-Qamuus al-Muheet wa‘l-Qaabuus ‘l-Waseet*, one of the most renowned dictionaries of the Arabic language.

<sup>3</sup> He was the famous judge and historian Abd‘r-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Hadrami al-Maliki, known as Ibn Khaldun, died 808 *hijra*.

<sup>4</sup> He was Abu Ali al-Hassan ibn Mas‘ud al-Yusi al-Magribi, known as Nur‘d-Deen, died 1111.

The concern with historical narratives, events and documentary is very weak among the people of the western lands. They are overcome with an interest in fabulous tales over true historical narratives. Besides this they have no strong endeavor for beneficial knowledge.

The above mentioned Abu Abdallah said in his book called Mir'at 'l-Muhaasin, "How many benefits have been lost in the west due to the lack of concern they have for historiography! This is the reality. I once asked our *shaykh*, the Professor Abu Abdallah ibn Naasir, may Allah be merciful to him and be pleased with him this day, about the chain of transmission of some of what I had received from him. He said to me, 'We received no authoritative narration in that and we had no real concern about it.' He went on to say, 'I was amazed at the people of the east and their concern with recording narratives, even to the point that when I entered Egypt everyone who took from the covenant of the *Shadhiliyya*<sup>5</sup> would write down the litany, the chain of transmission, the time, the place and the event which occasioned the transmission.' This was with regard to the *deen*, knowledge and reason. So what can we say now, when we are residing on the edge of civilization and in the lands of the *Sudan* whose people are, for the most part, underdeveloped caught up in the darkness of ignorance, passion and disbelief? Their beginning was in the same state."



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<sup>5</sup> The term *Shadhiliyya* here refers to the spiritual *Sufi* brotherhood named after *Shaykh* Abu'l-Hassan Ali ibn Abdullahi al-Magribi as-Shadhili al-Maliki, died 656 *hijra*.