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A DOCUMENT ON PIONEERS OF THE MUSLIM
COMMUNITY IN ACCRA

by K.O. Odoom*

Introduction:

On January 21, 1938 the death occurred at Sabon Zongo, Accra, of one Malam Muhammad Baako who had combined in his person the two offices of Sarkin Zongo and Friday Imām of Accra for some thirty years. The family life of Imām Baako, his death and funeral, together with names and titles of some of the leading personalities in the Muslim Community who attended the funeral, form the subject-matter of an Arabic manuscript, a xeroxed copy of which is deposited within this Institute's Arabic Collection.

The manuscript which is an elegy addressed to Imām Baako and accessioned in our Collection as IASAR/195 is entitled "al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣuḡhrā". It is a five-folio document measuring 16.5 x 20.5 cms and is divided into three sections. The first section is the preface which, after the usual doxology, sets out the reasons for the work, while section two contains details about the life and family of the Sarki and Imām, including the names of all his nineteen male children, who were alive at the time of their father's death in 1938. In the last section the author describes the funeral and inserts the names of various Zongo chiefs who attended it, indicating in the marginal notes the towns from which they had come to attend the funeral. It also records with dates, the death of some members of the Imām's family, including that of his father, his father's brother and the author's own mother.

Like other manuscripts of West African provenance, al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣuḡhrā is heavy with marginal notes, which appear to have been made by the author himself, for they demonstrate quite a degree of intimacy with the Baako family.

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For instance, while the verses on the Imām's male children merely list their names, the marginal notes explain the relationship among them by indicating which of them were born of the same mother. Another illustration: among the nineteen surviving male children were two - al-Ḥusayn and Muḥammad Thānī - whom the author describes as the Imām's step-sons (faṣṭī). In the marginal notes, Muḥammad Thānī's relationship with the Imām is described as follows:

"His mother's name was Ā^Cisha, daughter
of Abū Bakr who died in the year 1320".¹

Although I am not in a position to comment on the quality of the poetry of al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣughrā, I am informed on the authority of Professor John Hurwick that it is in Wāfir metre. Sample verses chosen at random and scanned according to this metre, indicate that the author has kept fairly closely to it with the result that in one instance at least (to be noted in the text), he has sacrificed grammar in order to satisfy the requirements demanded by his metre. This is probably due to the fact that a qaṣīda of this kind was meant for chanting during the funeral ceremonies for Imām Baako.

In addition to this "justifiable" error, there are few others to which I have drawn attention in the notes on the text. It is difficult to pronounce on the origin of these errors, but since they are so obvious from the grammatical point of view, one is tempted to ascribe them to the copyist. However, this will remain an open question as long as the original manuscript remains undiscovered.

The copy of this work which the Institute xeroxed, was obtained in 1963 from Malam Adam b. Malam ^CUthmān Dan Tabarānī of Amakom, Kumasi. Up to now, no other copy of this manuscript has come to my knowledge and, the author himself who is still alive at Sabon Zongo, Accra had forgotten about his work, until one of this Institute's xeroxed copies was presented to him. And though he recognised it as his own composition, he denied the calligraphy as his, which

1. On Malam Abū Bakr, see below.

confirms that the copy in our possession is not the original work.

1. IMĀM MUHAMMAD BAAKO was born in Katsina in Hausaland in 1839 for, according to al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣughrā, he died in 1938 at the age of ninety-nine years. He had accompanied his father, Malam Idrīs Naino and his uncle Malam Abū Bakr (his father's brother), to the Gold Coast and settled in Accra about the middle of the 19th century. Malam Naino who is said to have come as a teacher, secured a piece of land from the chiefs and elders of the then Ussher Town, Accra and on it built a house and made farms. On March 6, 1881, he secured from the elders of Ussher Town a declaration confirming his ownership of the land and the property he had earlier acquired.² Twelve years later, in 1893, Malam Naino died in his Ussher Town Zongo.³

Malam Idrīs Naino is remembered in tradition as the first Hausa Muslim to have come to settle in Accra. He was therefore the first Sarkin Zongo and Friday Imām of Accra, but he was also widely known among Muslim Communities throughout Southern Ghana. He was succeeded in the office of Sarkin Zongo by his son Muḥammad Baako, but the office of Friday Imām was held first by his brother Abū Bakr who died in 1902⁴ and then by the author's father who later resigned and returned to Adamawa.

In October 1899, Malam Muḥammad Baako became the sole owner of his father's land and property at the Ussher Town Zongo. While Malam Naino's name is associated in tradition with the founding of the Ussher Town Zongo, that of his son

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2. The Document in which the declaration was made is in possession of the present Sarkin Zongo, Accra. It was witnessed by the hand of the then District Commissioner, Central Province on 31st May, 1881.
 3. According to al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣughrā, he died on 3rd Shawwāl, 1310 H. = 20th April, 1893.
 4. Friday 27 Ramaḍān, 1320.

Imām Baako is identified with the building of that part of Accra popularly known as Sabon Zongo. Malam Baako was elected Friday Imām of Accra at the turn of the century and held the office for some thirty-five years. In 1933, the man who had combined the offices of Friday Imām and Sarkin Zongo felt too old for the latter office and gave it up to his eldest son Idrīs Baako, known as Tunbi. Five years later he died.

This short note on Imām Muḥammad Baako's family is by way of supplementing the account already given by Malam Zum^catu in his al-Lāmiyatu'l-Suḡhrā, for his is an eye-witness' account of the man who, on the authority of other eye-witnesses⁵ did so much for Islam and Muslims in Southern Ghana in general and those in Accra in particular. There can be no better tribute to the late Imām Baako than this qaṣīda of Malam Zum^catu, in which the man's contribution to Islam is acknowledged with a sense of gratitude to God most High. But perhaps by far the highest tribute paid to the Imām and Sarkin by the Muslim Community was the presence of so many chiefs at his funeral. On the authority of Malam Zum^catu they were forty-one in all and had come from all parts of the Gold Coast.⁶ This is how Zum^catu describes the occasion:

"Indeed the chiefs of the land have met in pomp,
And each one of them a man of courage.
They have come in haste to attend the funeral
As though they were on horse-back.
Mijinyawa has come from Dodowa
And Al-Ḥājj the eloquent, chief of Teteyum,
He has come post-haste for the funeral of
the great man.

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5. For instance, al-Ḥājj Muḥammad ^cAbbās and Malam Mijinyawa, Sarkin Zongo, Dodowa. On the latter, see Translation.
6. It is clear, however, that the author has chosen to emphasise the presence of certain chiefs who had come from towns in Southern Ghana. These were Dodowa, Koforidua, Nsawam, Kpong, Agona Swedru, Winneba and Obrakyire.

And Daafi, chief of Swedru has also come to us with his officers - (all of them) men of great personality.

And Ibrāhīm son of Amīr Wayya has come from Simpa And he is a handsome young man.

And Baba, son of Salaga and also Garba Hausa — They have both come to witness the sorrowful event. There has come to us from Bilākyīrā also Shaykh Baako A man of great learning, God-fearing and shy.

And the people of Kumasi have also come in great numbers, including Shuayb and his people - persons of understanding.

The chiefs who have come to (lament with) us They are forty-one in number, and all of them are fit..."

2. The Author and His Father

The author of al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣughrā, still alive at Sabon Zongo, Accra is Malam Zūm^catu b. al-Imām Muḥammad al-Fulātī. His father known in his life as Malam Fulata Bronu (Bornu) originated from Marwa near Bornu in Hausaland and came to Accra on foot, from Ilorin where he had studied under one Malam Bai Gori. In Accra, Malam Fulata Bornu stayed first with a relative of al-Ḥājj Nūhu⁷ and then with the Baako family, but moved from Accra and later settled at Cape Coast.

As his title indicates, Fulata Bornu became a Friday Imām of Accra while resident in the Gold Coast. This is confirmed by a list of Friday Imāms of Accra supplied by al-Ḥājj

7. Al-Ḥājj Nūhu b. Hama Alfā b. ^cAbdullāh, a Fulani from Masina, now lives in the Accra suburb of Kotobaabi (al-Hamdu). He was chosen Friday Imām of Accra early in 1960 after the C.P.P. Government gave the Imamate to one Malam Jadal. This latter's election was resented by the Accra Muslims who, after some difficulties, elected al-Ḥājj Nūhu to the office. He in turn lost it after the military take-over in Ghana to al-Ḥājj Muḥammad ^cAbbās who was the official Friday Imām of Accra before the confusion of the C.P.P. days (information from both al-Ḥājj Nūhu and al-Ḥājj Muḥammad ^cAbbās).

Muhammad ^CAbbās who, until recently, was Friday Imām of Accra. According to this list,⁸ also confirmed by al-Ḥājj Nūhu, Fulata Bornu was third in line after Malam Naino and his brother Abū Bakr (Garba). He became Imām of Accra at a period when the Muslim Community withdrew recognition from Imām Abū Bakr on grounds of misconduct.⁹

Malam Fulata Bornu was reputed to have been very learned in the Islamic Sciences and it was in view of this reputation that the Accra Muslims invited him from Cape Coast - where he was then residing - to become their Imām. However, two years after his election, he realised that the Accra Muslims were divided for and against him. He therefore resigned from the Imamate and returned to his country and settled at Yola in Adamawa, never to come back again to the Gold Coast.

As for his son Malam Zum^Catu, he did the major part of his studies at Yola where his father had taken him at a young age. His mother Maimunatu Yaawo who had remained behind in the Gold Coast was disturbed at the absence of his son in far away Adamawa. As one of her sons by name ^CAbdullāh¹⁰ was passing through Hausaland to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, she arranged with him to bring along her child on his return journey from Mecca.

8. See Appendix A.

9. Imām Abū Bakr (d. 1902) brother of Malam Naino was accused of aiding and abetting his son Malam Sanūsī to marry the divorced wife of his own student. He was in fact charged with the responsibility for the break-down of the marriage between this student and his wife, both of whom were living in the Imām's house. (Information from al-Ḥājj Muḥammad ^CAbbās).

10. Al-Ḥājj ^CAbdullāh was half-brother to Imām Baako. According to al-Lamiyatu-l-Ṣughrā, he died on Sunday, 22 Muḥarram, 1350 (9 June 1931). It records that his death occurred while he was with his brother Shuayb in Kumasi. He thus seems to have been the only member of the Naino family who died outside Accra before 1938. His residence and that of his brother in Kumasi must have been the cause for the Kumasi Muslims' decision to send a large delegation to Imām Baako's funeral.

Significantly, Malam Zum^Catu is related to the Baako family through his mother Maimunatu Yaawo. Before becoming Friday Imām of Accra, Malam Fulata Bornu - Zum^Catu's father - had married this woman sometime after the death of her husband, Malam Naino, Imām Baako's father. Tradition recalls that the suggestion to Malam Fulata Bornu to marry Maimunatu Yaawo came from the latter's step-son, Imām Baako who was then the Sarkin Zongo. It was out of this union that Malam Zum^Catu was born.¹¹ In the light of this tradition, Malam Zum^Catu's age which he estimates to be ninety-seven, seems somewhat exaggerated, for as already noted,¹² Malam Naino's death, which Zum^Catu himself has recorded, occurred in 1893.

A survey of the works studied by Malam Zum^Catu indicates that his education covered the fields conventional to West African Muslim scholars in general. These included the Qur'ān which serves as the basic text book for Muslim students and the Hadīth literature represented by the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī. For literature, Zum^Catu studied the Maqāmāt of al-Harīrī under Imām Baako and delved into the poetry of the six famous Jāhiliyya poets headed by Imr al-Qays. The Dā'iya of Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. Mas'ūd al-Yūsī has always held an honoured

11. Maimunatu Yaawo who is said to have been of Yoruba origin (from Ilorin) had five children with Malam Naino and one (Zum^Catu) with Fulata Bornu. Her children with Naino were:

- (i) Al-Ḥājj 'Abdullāh (supra).
- (ii) Malam Moro (Umar b. Naino) who is said to have built the house presently occupied by the Sarkin Zongo and who, according to al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣughrā died on 8 Ramaḍān 1330 H. (21 August 1913). See line 61.
- (iii) Maimunatu Daamoni. As a child she had been betrothed to the future Imām Muḥammad 'Abbās and later became the mother of 'Abbās' eldest son, Mukhtār. This latter is now Friday Imām of Accra. According to al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣughrā, Daamoni died in the same year as Umar b. Naino. Cf. line 64.
- (iv) Malam Adam and
- (v) Rābi^Catu.

12. Note 3 above. It is probable that Malam Zum^Catu has confused seventy-seven with ninety-seven.

place in the libraries of West African Muslim scholars. Zum^catu studied this work at the feet of his father in Yola. Like all West African Muslims in search of ilm, Malam Zum^catu studied for knowledge of Muslim Law the ever-popular hand book Mukhtaṣar of al-Khalīl and the Risāla of Ibn Abī Zayd, the latter again under Imām Baako in Accra. This list by no means exhausts the works covered by Malam Zum^catu in the course of his studies which lasted close to forty years. It, however, shows clearly that like his teachers before him, Malam Zum^catu traversed the same path of learning as his predecessors.

Malam Zum^catu is acknowledged by his contemporaries as a fine scholar and an Arabist. He seems to have followed the Fulani tradition of Islamic scholarship, for on his return from Yola, he was commissioned by his half-brother Muḥammad Baako to write the history of the Naino family since their arrival in the Gold Coast. It was from this compilation that he extracted the record of the death of various members of this family.¹³

It may be assumed that Malam Zum^catu grew up in the house of Malam Naino or at least in the company of Imām Baako and his other half-brothers especially after his return to Accra from Hausaland with his half-brother al-Bājj ^cAbdullāh. This accounts for the intimate details which he gives in his al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣuḡhrā about the Naino family of which, of course, he was a member, and especially about the family life of Muḥammad Baako, the Sarkin Zongo and Imām of Accra. It is his membership of this family which is the key to the detailed knowledge he displays about the various Zongo chiefs and other guests who turned up for the funeral of the Imām. As he grew up in the family, Malam Zum^catu must have observed some of these as visitors to the Sarkin Zongo's house; he must have heard their names, where they had come from, where they were going and what kind of occupation they were engaged in.¹⁴

Malam Zum^catu is now too old to remember much of the events of his early days and, even events of 1938 seem to him

13. All attempts to recover this work have so far failed.

14. See text for his description of the Winneba delegation at the funeral.

too far back to recollect clearly. Now an old man with a fading memory, his al-Lāmiyatu'l-Şuġhrā stands as a living testimony to some of those events he now cannot remember with any degree of certainty. His qaşıda is still, to my knowledge, the only historical document written by a Muslim that points, even though indirectly, to the existence of a Muslim Community in Accra and other parts of Southern Ghana in the late 19th and early 20th century.

This introduction does not claim to have done full justice to the historical importance of al-Lāmiyatu'l-Şuġhrā; even so any information gathered here has been made possible by its very existence and by the living presence of its author who prefaced his work with the following words:-

"The reason for composing this poem is that there was an old man - one of the most eloquent and an expert in the art of drafting poems - who came with a poem as a condolence for the death of the imām (Baako) and recited it before those present. I decided therefore to compose these verses by imitating him, even though (I knew that) a lame horse cannot attain the speed of a strong and well-built one. And this is the status of him who writes a few lines and arranges a verse or two of poetry. But it may be that God will grant us success in following the path of the learned men who followed the Sunna of our Prophet - may God bless him and grant him peace! It is but a withered bouquet of flowers which the lowest of the poor gives as a gift to the greatest of chiefs, if it be the will of God, most High, Amen!"

مَنْ لَا نَسِيَةَ وَلَا نَسِيْلَ
بِأَيْدِي قَوْمٍ لَا يَلْمُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّؤُوفِ الرَّحِيمِ

فَدَيْرُ الْأَيْمُونِ لَا يَنْزُولُ

لَهُ فِي مَلِكِهِ جِيْمًا يَرْبِي

مَعْتَمِدًا زَوْجًا عَالِمًا مَسْجُورًا

نُطْقًا الشُّعْرَى ذِكْرُ الْأَمَلِ

أَبْوَالُ دُرَيْسٍ ذُو حَبْرٍ بَدُو

شَقُوقُ لِيْلَ أَمَلٍ وَالْبَلَا مَكِي

كَخَلْقِ جِوَانِبِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

5 وَلَوْلَا كَوْنُهُ فِي أَرْضِ الْكُرَى

لَمَّا لَمْنَا أَمْرَ الْفُجُورِ وَضَمَلْ

لِكُنْزِ الْغَوَايِبِ وَالْأَشْفُوفِ

بِقَلْمِ نَدِيْعَارِ ضَرْفِ الْبَهْوَلِ

أَنْزَحَ حَنْدَسُ الشُّبُهَاتِ عَنَا

بِمَلِكِيَّةٍ بِمَلِكِيَّةٍ أَمْرُ الْفُجُورِ

يُفْقِدُ النَّادِمُ خَيْرَ الطَّقَامِ

فِي عَطْفِ الشُّكْلَاءِ أَمْرُ الْبَهْوَلِ

كَيْسُ الْفَلَاكِ أَنْوَاعُ الشُّبُهَاتِ

تَوَالِيفُ

أَخِي عَالِمٌ

منه ثلاثون وثلاثين

لأنهم واولاد كثيرين نساء والرجال في القرون

نساء هم كبار ام جليل ^{في القرون} والشمس اشهد انهم قول ^{في القرون}

الحمد لله الكبير لنا امير ^{في القرون} عمدة اول كهل جميل ^{في القرون}

فيهم عمدة تاممنا وشمسنا ^{في القرون} فيهم وشمسنا الجليل ^{في القرون}

وسعدنا كذا اللطيف هم ^{في القرون} فيهم فيهم فيهم فيهم ^{في القرون}

وعبد الله شراخوة عيسى ^{في القرون} وانا ^{في القرون} منهم واستاد السليل ^{في القرون}

فتسبب في صلبه واعمدة ^{في القرون} فيهم ^{في القرون} قبلنا ^{في القرون} شركه وهو في جميل ^{في القرون}

لطفوه انهم كبريتي ^{في القرون} عمدة ^{في القرون} وهو له ^{في القرون} فيهم ^{في القرون}

فانزلهم في ^{في القرون} ورايهم ^{في القرون} فيهم ^{في القرون}

فانشأ فيهم ^{في القرون} فيهم ^{في القرون}

اولاد (2) امير (3) خامس ^{في القرون} فيهم ^{في القرون}

فيهم ^{في القرون} فيهم ^{في القرون}

نَجْمُ عِلْمٍ كَطَلْعِ الْبَلَدِ بِحَارِ عِظَامِهِ لَا ذَلَّ الشَّيْءُ

بَابِ جِدِّهِ وَرِثَانِهِ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَفِي خُرَاسَانَ الْخَلْفَاءِ
الِي هَذَا الْفَرَارِ فِي هَمِّ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

كَيْسَرِ سَابِغِي إِسْمَهُ وَوَلَدَهُ بَاقُوا بِكَلِمَةِ تَهْلُوهُ تَدْعُو الشَّيْءُ

لَا زَوْجَانَهُ فَيُنَابِتُهُ عَظِيمٌ عِنْدَنَا أَمْرٌ تَقِيلُ

وَأَوْلَادُهُ يَطِيقُونَ الْوَالِدِيهِ وَلَا زَوْجٌ لَزَوْجِيهِ تَقِيلُ

لَا تَسِيَانَهُ فَيُنَابِتُهُ تَقُولُ إِذْ أَلَيْسَ لَنَا بِقَوْلٍ

يَقُولُ السُّورِيُّ فِيهِ تَقِيلُ قَوْلُ قَائِلٍ غَيْرِ الْقَوْلِ

فِيهِ إِجْتِهَادُهُ طَيْرُ الْبَلَدِ كَرِيمٌ ذَلُّوا بِهِ هَمٌّ تَقِيلُ

(١) بُوْخَاةُ (٢) وَقَاةُ

الطَّلُوعُ

وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمْ ^{بعد ورايت} قُلُوبَ الَّذِينَ يَرْثُونَ آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ^{بدرغلتهم} وَهُمْ أُمَّةٌ حَكِيمَةٌ

بِأَرْحَامِهِمْ ^{بدرغلتهم} الْأَنْفُوسَ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ لَيْسَ لَهَا فِيكُمْ نَسَبٌ

مُتَوَقِّفٌ ^{بدرغلتهم} بِأَرْوَاحِهِمْ فَذُوقُوا ^{بدرغلتهم} عَذَابَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُقُولُونَ

لَا يَرْثُهَا مَن مِّنْكُمْ ^{بدرغلتهم} وَكَانَ وَالِدًا أَوْ أُخْتًا ^{بدرغلتهم} لَهَا كَمَا كَانَ مَلَائِكَةٌ

لِقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا كُنَّا بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُم ^{بدرغلتهم} فَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِالَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُقُولُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْثُونَ يُخْلَعُونَ ^{بدرغلتهم} فِي ثِيَابٍ مِّثْلَ نَثَابِ رِيَالٍ

مِمَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ^{بدرغلتهم} وَأُولَئِكَ يَرْثُونَ آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ^{بدرغلتهم} الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُقُولُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْثُونَ يُخْلَعُونَ ^{بدرغلتهم} فِي ثِيَابٍ مِّثْلَ نَثَابِ رِيَالٍ

مِمَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ^{بدرغلتهم} وَأُولَئِكَ يَرْثُونَ آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ^{بدرغلتهم} الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ تُقُولُونَ

(١) ذِي الْقَعْدَةِ (٢) وَوَأَهْلُ آبَائِهِ

(٣) أَبُو بَكْرٍ

نما يرد

ثُمَّ يَبْدَأُ بِذَلِكَ فِي شَهْرِ رَجَبٍ فِي الثَّالِثِ وَالْعِشْرِينَ فَاسْتَبْرَأَ لِيَلِدَ

فِي هَذَا الْقَلَمِ مَا نَافَسَتْهُ أَيْ فِي أَرْضِيكُمْ مَرَّةً فَسَوَّاهُ

وَمَا نَسَتْهُ أَيْ نَسَتْهُ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَصَوَّبَ الْأَرْبَابَ فِي الْأَقْدَامِ

وَعَبَّرَ اللَّهُ بِبُيُوتِ الْأَعْدَى فِي يَوْمِ الشَّهْرِ الثَّلَاثِينَ فِي الْقَلَمِ

أَوْ قَبْلَ فِي كَمَا يَبْدَأُ بِذَلِكَ فِي الثَّالِثِ وَالْعِشْرِينَ فَاسْتَبْرَأَ لِيَلِدَ

فَوَالِدَةٌ أَيْ فِي يَوْمِ عَشْرِ مَرَّةٍ مِنَ الدُّوَا حَتَّى قَامَتْ هِيَ وَأَقُولُ

طَلُوغُ الشَّمْسِ فِي يَوْمِ الْكَيْدِ فِي كَمَا مَرَّ بِالشَّيْخِ فِي يَوْمِ جَلِيدِ

سَأَلْنَا رَبَّنَا عَجُوزًا وَعَجُوزًا عَلَى مَرَكَا فِي الْإِسْلَامِ حَيْدِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَحَسْبِ

عَوْنِهِ شَرُّ الْخَلْقِ وَالسَّلَامِ

عَلَى نَبِيِّكُمْ

(١) أَحْتَسِبُ (٢) تَسْعَيْتُ (٣) مِنْ ذِي الْحِجَّةِ

AL-LĀMIYATU'L-ŞUGHRĀ

TRANSLATION

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. May God bless our master Muḥammad, his family and his Companions and grant them peace indeed!

Malam Zam^catu Ibn al-Imām Muḥammad al-Fulātī, the poor and needy of the mercy of his Lord, engulfed in the depth of his ignorance and far removed from the body of learned men and their company said he composed this qaṣīda and named it al-Lāmiyatu'l-Şughrā with which he lamented the death of his late brother Muḥammad Baako, Imām of Accra, who died on Saturday 19 Dhū'l-Qa^cada in the Hijra year 1356 (may his Lord have mercy upon him).

The reason for composing this qaṣīda is that there was a certain old man - one of the most eloquent and an expert in the art of drafting poems - who came with his poem to mourn the death of the Imām and recited it before those present. Hearing his poem we were pleased with its meaning. I therefore decided to compose these verses by imitating him, even though a lame horse cannot attain the speed of a strong and well-built one. And this is the status of him who writes a few lines and arranges a verse or two of poetry. But it may be that God will grant us success to follow the path of the learned men who followed the sunna of our Prophet Muḥammad - may God bless him and grant him peace. It is but a withered bouquet of flowers which the lowest of the poor gives as a gift to the greatest of chiefs, if it be the will of God, Most High, Amen.

1. Praise be to God, who provides sustenance to His servants; He is self-sufficient; none is like Him and He has no equal.

2. He does what He likes In His Kingdom - He is the Almighty Who does not change and Who lives for ever.

3. I have composed the poem in memory of Imām Muḥammad Baako.

A man of knowledge and good reputation.

4. He had compassion and mercy for widows and orphans; The father of IdrīTs¹ had patience and a free hand.

5. Had he not lived in the town of Accra, shade would have over-shadowed its surroundings.

6. And we would have seen error and misfortune; Indeed we would not have attained success in God-fearing.

7. He drove away the darkness of misunderstanding² from amongst us.

With his knowledge which ignorant people could not challenge.

8. He fed people with the best food and drink sweeter than honey.

9. He clothed the naked with clothes of various kinds; And gave as gifts the finest of his horses.

10. You would see healthy men around him and around his house,

With each of them going and coming because of the Imām's kindness to them.

1. IdrīTs Baako. See below.

2. This is probably a reference to the dissension within the Muslim Community over the "Imām Abu Bakr affair" which resulted in the election of the author's father as Friday Imām of Accra. See Introduction.

11. When Imām Baako would sit on his resting mats;
He looked like a lion resting among its cubs.
12. When the Imām died it was indeed a great loss to us -
Then we poured down tears like a heavy rain.
13. We wept until (we realised) that there was no benefit
In weeping,

For surely death is the way (for every person).
14. But yet we preferred his remaining in the world;
And we wished for him good luck and long life.
15. He spoke the truth to his people;
And had no useless words in his speech.
16. How excellent! Our Imām Baako, the son of Naino -
He had a liberal hand and did not keep friends with
miserly people.
17. He had a sincere heart - free from malice and deceit;
A handsome-looking person, not so short and not so tall.
18. Indeed the Imām was a venerable person -
He was gentle, eloquent and high esteemed.
19. He possessed knowledge and had many children.¹
Men and women, possessing understanding.
20. The women among them are like white antelopes²
because of their beauty;

Their men are strong and outstanding personalities.

-
1. Imām Baako's children were thirty-three in number (marginal notes). In verse 28, the number of male and female children alive at the time of his death is put at nineteen and eleven respectively. It is to be presumed that three of the children, including Sa^cada (line 22 marginal notes) died before their father's death in 1938.
 2. Or "long-necked antelopes".

21. A person like IdrTs senior, he is our chief;¹
And Muḥammad Awwal - he is a man of mature age and yet handsome.
22. Muḥammad Khāmis and Hārūn also, and Yūsūf and ^CUthmān - they are men of consequence.
23. And Sa^Cad, likewise Sa^CTd and Mūsā - And Abū Bakr and Sulaymān, the tall.
24. And ^CAbdullāḡ and his brother Issā, And Ādam and Iḡhāq - are his children.
25. Husain² is a step son, so count him among his children. And don't you leave him out, for he is a handsome youngman.

1. IdrTs Baako (alias Tunbi), the eldest of the Imām's children was Sarkin Zongo at the time of his father's death. He had been elected to the office five years earlier. He and Muḥammad Awwal (still alive) were from the same mother Amina. IdrTs Baako died in December 1968 and was succeeded as Sarkin Zongo by his son al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Labo Baako in January 1969. I am very grateful to the Sarki for giving me permission to look at some of his family's papers and for information he so willingly provided.
2. There is no indication of the actual relationship between Imām Baako and Husain who is described merely as a "son" (marginal notes). In the line following the same term faṣṭī is used to describe the relationship between the Imām and Muḥammad Thānt. However, a clearer picture is provided by the marginal notes where the latter's mother is identified as "daughter of Abū Bakr" who was Baako's paternal uncle. Muḥammad Thānt would thus seem to be the nephew of Imām Baako.

26. If you ask me to disclose the truth to you,
Muḥammad ThānT also is his step-son.
27. And Ibrāhīm the possessor of keen sense,
And Shitu, among the male children he is the youngest.
28. The male children now alive are nineteen;
And of the females there are eleven, O my friend.
29. He showed them the way to good deeds;¹
He led them on a straight path.²
30. Indeed he cleansed their hearts from evil,
Just like clothes that have been purified through
washing.
31. He removed filthy thoughts from their minds through
admonition,
Just like healing coming to a sick person.
32. Through admonition he lit up the dark places in Accra
Like a light illuminating every generation.
33. He removed anxieties from every bachelor by giving out
his daughters in marriage and by providing (the couple)
the things they needed.
34. He never stored away his money in a treasury;
He shared it with all his relations.
35. He was truly devoted to his people,
So that each one of them became a child to him.

-
1. Good deeds here are represented by the Performance of
the Ṣallāt, Fasting during the month of Ramaḍān and
Giving of alms to the poor.
 2. This is interpreted in the marginal notes to mean
"the way of our master Ahmad al-TijānT. Imām Saeko
is said to have been the TijānT Muqaddam for Accra.

36. Strangers were relations to him,
And his enemies became his best friends.
37. The stars of his greatness rose over the town,
And his gifts were many - just like a torrential
stream.

Chapter on his death (of Imām Baako) - may God Most High have mercy on him - and the names of those who attended his funeral and the history of his parents, brothers and sisters who died earlier, may God Most High have mercy on them.

38. I shall cry anytime I hear about the death of
Muḥammad Baako
With the crying of a pigeon calling its young ones.
39. Because his departure from among us is a heavy blow -
It is a matter which weights heavily on us.
40. Because there will be no child obedient to his parents -
And no husband to treat his wife kindly.
41. Because his living with us was a help towards righteous-
ness which we obtained whenever we heard what he had to
say.
42. In speech he told the truth clearly;
He spoke in earnest and not in jest.
43. Indeed the chiefs of the land have met in pomp -
And each one of them a man of courage.
44. They have come in haste to the funeral
As though they were on horse-back.

45. Mijinyawa¹ has come from Dodowa,
And Hārūn² and Garba³ - all people of understanding.
46. And Al-Ḥājj the eloquent⁴, Chief of Teteyum⁵
He has come to us post-haste for the funeral of
the great man.
47. And Daafī, the Chief of Swedru, has also come to us
With his officers - all of them men of great
personality.
48. And Ibrāhīm, son of Chief Wayya⁶ has come from Simpa⁷
And he is a handsome youngman.
49. And Bābā⁸, the son of Salga as well as Chief Garba Hausa.

1. Of the amīrs (Zongo chiefs) at the Imām's funeral whom the author has listed by name, only Mijinyawa of Dodowa is still alive. He has been Sarkin Zongo since 1935.
2. Hārūn was Sarkin Zongo of Koforidua.
3. Garba (Hausa equivalent of Abū Bakr) was the Sarki of Nsawam.
4. Present indications are that it was this 'eloquent al-Ḥājj' whose poem inspired Zum^catu's own al-Lāmiyatu'l-Ṣuḡhrā.
5. Kpong, lying about sixty miles north-east of Accra on the way to the Akosombo Hydro-electric dam, was a prosperous trading town until it was destroyed by floods in 1919. The name 'Teteyum' may originally have been that of the founder of the town.
6. His real name being Yabyā (marginal notes).
7. Winneba, which lies about forty miles west of Accra along the coast.
8. Baba's name was ^cUthmān b. Salga. He was the Sarkin Zongo of Winneba, while Garba Hausa was the town's chief butcher as well as head of the Hausas resident there. (See marginal notes).

50. There has come to us also from Bilakyira¹ Shaykh Baako² -
A man of great learning, shy and God-fearing.
51. Truly, the people of Accra have met
Chiefs and youngmen of great strength.
52. And people from Kumasi have also come in great numbers -
Including [his brother] Shuayb and his people - persons
of understanding.
53. The chiefs who have come to (lament with) us - they are
forty-one in number.
And all of them are fit
54. To spite the nose of the enemy because of his pride
(cruel blow).
So all of them are men possessing strength.
55. (Imām) Baako died in the month of Dhū'l-Q^cada, on the
19th day in the year of the Hijra 1356.
56. But counting his age he was ninety-nine years;
Calculate the years and (you will discover that) he
indeed lived all of them.
57. The death of his father took place on the third day
of the month of Shawwāl,
And it was in the Hijra year 1310, O friend.
58. Abu Bakr died after (Malam) Naino on Friday, on the
27th day of the month of Ramaḍān.
59. He died in the year of the Hijra 1320 by our reckoning -
And do not be heedless of what we are saying.
60. Every soul will taste death -
Because death is the way for everybody.

1. This town, Obrakylre, is within the Winneba district and
lies about 15 miles from Nsawam along the Nsawam-Agona
Swedru road.

2. Shaykh Baako b. Kolo (marginal notes).

61. It was after his death that ^cUmar b. Naino¹ died.
He died on a Thursday just as we are saying.
62. It was on the 8th day of the month of Ramaḍān In the
year of the Hijra 1330.
63. And in that year, many people died -
When a certain epidemic² attacked our country.
64. It was in that year that our sister Daamoni³ died;
She died in the morning of Wednesday, at dawn as we
have said.
65. And Al-ḥājj ^cAbdullāh - he died on Sunday, the second
day of the month of Muḥarram, O friend.
66. His death occurred while he was with (his brother)
Shu^cayb in Kumasī.
In the year of the Hijra 1350, O my son.
67. His mother (mother of the author) died on the 10th of
Dhū'l-hijja;
So listen to what we are saying.
68. She died at sunrise on Friday, the day of the Festival⁴
in the year 1351.
69. We seek the favour and forgiveness of our Lord
On all those who are within Islam.

It is finished with praise to God and His good help.
Blessings and peace be upon the noble Prophet, Amen.

-
1. See Introduction, Note 11.
 2. The disease referred to here must have been the influenza epidemic of 1912. Al-ḥājj ^cUmar of Kete Krachi wrote one treatise in Arabic on the Symptoms and treatment of this disease (Cf. IASAR/23, 131, 305).
 3. Maimunatu Daamoni, daughter of Malam Naino, Baako's father. Her mother, Maimunatu Yaawo, was also the mother of our author, Malam Zūmfatu. (See Introduction).
 4. The Festival referred to here must be the ^cId al-Fitr which is celebrated at the end of the ḥājj.

APPENDIX 'A'LIST OF FRIDAY IMAMS OF ACCRA

No.	Name of Imam	Ethnic Origin
1	Malam Idrīs Baako	Hausa
2	Malam Abū Bakr	Hausa
3	Malam Fulata Bornu	Fulani (from Adamawa)
4	Malam ^c Uthmān	Fulani (from Masina)
5	Malam Muḥammad Baako	Hausa
6	Malam ^c Abdullāh (Muḥammad ^c Abbās as Deputy)	Hausa
7	Al-ḥājj Muḥammad ^c Abbās	Hausa
8	Malam Jadal	Hausa
9	Al-ḥājj Nūhu	Fulani (from Masina)
10	Al-ḥājj Muḥammad ^c Abbās	Hausa

APPENDIX 'B'

LIST OF ACCRA ZONGO CHIEFS SINCE
THE 1850'S

No.	Name of Sarki	Period of Reign
1	Malam IdrTs Naino	c. 1850 - 1893
2.	Malam Muḥammad Baako	1893 - 1933
3	Malam IdrTs Baako	1933 - 1969
4	Al-Ḥājj Muḥammad Labo Baako	1969 -

APPENDIX 'C'

DISTRIBUTION OF IMAM BAAKO'S MALE CHILDREN
AT THE TIME OF DEATH IN 1938, ACCORDING
TO NAME OF MOTHER, NUMBER OF CHILDREN
AND NAMES OF THE CHILDREN

No.	Name of Mother	No. of Children	Names of the Children
1	Amina	2	Idrīs Baako Muḥammad Awwāl Baako
2	Khadīja	1	Muḥammad Khāmis Baako
3	Saamutani	1	Hārūn Baako
4	Hawā	3	Yūsūf Baako Uthmān Baako Sa'ad Baako
5	Dūgara	4	Abdullāh Baako Tisā Baako Sa'ad Baako Ishāq Baako
6	BTbi	3	Mūsa Baako Ibrāhīm Baako Shītu Baako
7	Ā'isha	3	Abū Bakr Baako Adam Baako Muḥammad Thānī Baako
8	Lafage	2	Sulaymān Baako Husayn Baako

APPENDIX 'D'RECORD OF DEATHS IN THE BAAKO FAMILY

No.	Name	Relationship to Imām Baako	Year of Death
1	IdrTs Naino	Father	April 1893
2	Abū Bakr	Uncle	Dec. 1902
3	^C Umar b. Naino	Brother	August 1912
4	Maimunatu Daamoni	Sister	1912
5	Amina	Wife	1920
6	Sa ^C adatu Baako	Daughter	1928
7	Al-Ḥājj ^C Abdu llāh	Brother	May 1931
8	Maimunatu Yaawo	Step-mother	April 1933