CHAPTER 13

WARLORDS AND ENSLAVEMENT: A SAMPLE OF SLAVE RAIDERS FROM EASTERN UBANGI-SHARI, 1870-1920

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Introduction

Although relatively peaceful at the outset, relations between the people of eastern Ubangi-Shari (today's Central African Republic or CAR) and the larger international economy became increasingly violent in the late nineteenth century (Cordell 1985c: 58-63). Intensified contact and increased demands for the region's resources brought the restructuring of local societies. In this part of Africa at this time, the international economy was represented by Muslim traders. To the east, the campaigns of Muhammad ^{c}Ali in the Nile valley beginning in the 1820s had opened Sudan to international trade in a new way. And to the north about the same time, increased exchange between the Mediterranean littoral and such Muslim states in the sahel as Wadai and Dar Fur encouraged the extraction of resources from the non-Muslim hinterland to the south. In the west, the expansion of the Sokoto Caliphate into the region of central and southern Cameroon marked a similar phenomenon there.

Eastern Ubangi-Shari produced ivory and slaves for the international economy. Both were in demand in the Muslim world, while ivory also had a market in Europe. Increasing demands for both slaves and ivory, and increasing imbalances of power which favored Muslim agents and their local clients, undermined peaceful exchange. The slave-raiding frontier spread from the southwestern Sudan in the 1850s, westward for the remainder of the century. Although eastern Ubangi-Shari

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experienced regular raiding and trading in slaves by the 1870s, the production of slaves did not reach its apogee until the 1890s. Indeed in regions such as Dar al-Kuti the most intensive and extensive production of captives did not occur until after 1900! Throughout eastern Ubangi-Shari the unprecedented scale of slave-raiding and violence altered internal social relations and the external orientations of local African societies.

The relatively late spread of large-scale slave-raiding into eastern Ubangi-Shari presents a rare opportunity to document what Lovejoy has referred to as the "structure of enslavement" (Lovejoy, personal communication). Two sets of information make this possible: First, when I did fieldwork in Ubangi-Shari in the mid-1970s, I found informants who could recount much about the slave-raiding era. The first-hand observers tended to be former slaves, people taken captive as young children or adolescents. I learned about slave-raiders from their children or other next-generation relatives; slave-raiders who were young adults or older around the turn of the century had died long before.

The second set of information was provided by Europeans. French and Belgian expeditions reached eastern Ubangi-Shari by the late 1880s. Although the Belgians withdrew in 1894, they continued to follow events there from outposts in the Congo Independent State (the Belgian Congo after 1908) to the south. As for the French, confrontation with the British in 1898 at Fashoda dashed their hopes of an empire from the Niger to the Nile, leading them to redirect attention to eastern Ubangi-Shari and the Chad basin. Hence there were European observers in the region during the height of slave raiding. Their reports, memoirs, and travel accounts offer a unique overview of enslavement: many observed raids or at least the arrival of recently enslaved people in the settlements of warlords; a few, some perhaps unwittingly, some perhaps not, found themselves members of raiding expeditions; still others, particularly those in the region after 1900, tried to stop the raiding which made it impossible to stabilize the population, extract labor, and otherwise integrate eastern Ubangi-Shari into the French colonial economy (Cordell forthcoming).

The broad objective of this essay is to trace the spread of the enslavement frontier from the Nile and Chad basins into eastern Ubangi-Shari in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This movement combined several kinds of raiding by several types of warlords. The unique opportunity afforded by the historical sources on the region allows the identification of a significant sample of warlords who were active after 1880. It is possible to analyze the origins, career strategies, and the impact of those warlords.

Some warlords, like Rahma al-Zubayr, Rabih Fadlallah, and Muhammad al-Sanusi, operated on a grand scale, raiding dozens

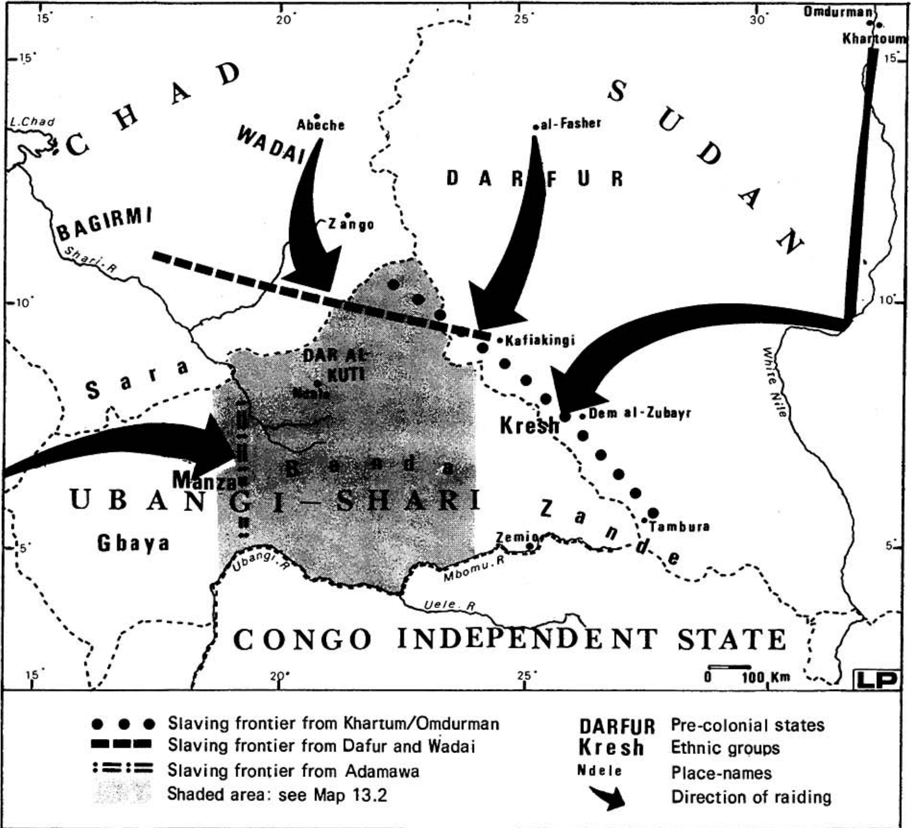
of societies, scattered over thousands of square kilometers, over several decades. A coherent overview of enslavement demands that these (in)famous raiders be included here, although their careers are treated elsewhere in the historical literature (El-Zubeir 1970; Gentil 1902; Dampierre 1983; Julien 1925, 1927, 1928, 1929; Cordell 1985a). Lesser warlords, who raided first among the Zande and Kresh of the Sudan/CAR border region and then farther west among the Banda, comprise the more interesting portion of the sample. Although they modeled themselves after the major raiders and probably shared their grandiose ambitions, they raided on a smaller scale, and their careers were more short-lived. These raiders are treated most prominently, in part because much less is known about them and in part because these little-known individuals may well have had a more profound impact on the peoples and societies of eastern Ubangi-Shari than their more notorious contemporaries. The lack of quantitative data - on the number of slave-raids and the number of slaves taken - makes it impossible to prove this hypothesis, but the qualitative evidence suggests as much. Before examining the warlords of eastern Ubangi-Shari more closely, however, the larger context of the advancing enslavement frontier has to be established.

The Enslavement Frontier

The enslavement frontier in North Central Africa in the late nineteenth century stretched through the sahel and savanna roughly in an east-west direction. From the Chad basin in the north, it followed the Shari River southeast to the present boundary between Chad and the CAR, then dipped south to the Bongo Massif that separates the Shari and Ubangi River watersheds. From there the zone extended east to the Bahr al-Ghazal region of the southwestern Sudan and on to the Nile. Neither stationary nor recent, this frontier was but the latest geographical manifestation of a broader, longer-term process - the incorporation of Saharan, sahelian, and Sudanic Africa into the international economy by way of the Muslim world.

The process had begun long before, with the expansion of Islam into North and Northeast Africa in the centuries after the death of Muhammad. Muslims captured labor from non-Muslim societies within and on the fringes of the Muslim world; with time Muslim immigration and local conversion Islamized raided regions, and the boundaries of the Muslim world expanded. The attention of raiders then shifted beyond the new frontier to non-Muslim societies previously protected by distance. By the nineteenth century the frontier had reached the upper Nile as well as the Lake Chad region; by the late nineteenth century, it reached North Central Africa (Lovejoy 1983: 15).

Map 13.1 EASTERN UBANGI-SHARI AND ENVIRONS



Two non-economic aspects of the frontier merit attention. First and most obviously, North Central Africa as elsewhere was divided along cultural-religious lines.[1] To the north, a very large part, if not the majority, of settled local peoples defined themselves as Muslims. To the south, Muslims were much less numerous, tending to be foreign traders or local people who had lived in close association with northern Muslim immigrants. In the southeast, established enclaves of Muslim culture were found in the Zande sultanates of Tambura, Zemio, and Rafai as well as the Bandia/Nzakara state with its capital at today's Bangassou (Evans-Pritchard 1971; Dampierre 1967). Otherwise the people in this region were not Muslims.

Second, the frontier had a military dimension, marking the meeting place of zones characterized by different weapons and differing patterns of military organization. In the north - in the Sudanic states of Wadai and Dar Fur, but particularly in Sudan - standing armies equipped with large numbers of European rifles fielding incorporated slave troops permitted military operations on a wider scale than in the south, where non-Muslim societies relied for protection on small, kin-based levies of warriors armed with traditional weapons and only a few guns (Cordell 1985a: 12-14).[2] Differential military power made it possible and profitable for northern Muslim states and their vassals in the south to extract slaves from local societies.

The chronology of the advancing enslavement frontier is particularly clear for the southwestern Sudan. In the late eighteenth century, Muslim itinerant traders (Arabic: jallaba) migrated into the region to trade with Zande, Kresh, Banda, and other non-Muslim peoples. Originally from lands on the Nile north of present-day Khartoum, these traders had earlier spread west and southwest, establishing a commercial diaspora that linked Muslim lands such as Kordofan, Dar Fur, and even Wadai to the Nile region (Collins 1962: 8-17; 1971: 160; Gray 1961: 65-66; Cordell 1985a: 14-72; Hayer 1972; Barth 1965: vol. 2, 488; Nachtigal 1971: 354).

At first relations between the jallaba and non-Muslims were pacific. These Muslims were not raiders. Lightly armed, they traveled in small groups with a few donkeys loaded with merchandise, depending on the good will of local leaders to supply them with ivory and slaves. During this time, Arabic became the lingua franca of the region, and non-Muslims adopted some aspects of Muslim culture (Collins 1971: 160).

But events gradually undermined peaceful relations between the Muslims and their non-Muslim hosts. The most important of these developments were the Egyptian campaigns in Sudan beginning in 1821 (Holt 1976: 22-50). The Egyptian conquests grew out of Muhammad ᶜAli's drive to modernize Egypt. By purchasing European firearms and importing European mercenaries to train his troops in the latest European military techniques, the Egyptian leader built a force capable of overwhelming African

states to the south. The effectiveness of the Egyptian force was further enhanced by recruiting slaves, a common tactic in the Middle East before the technological revolution in Europe and one that Muhammad ᶜAli retained (Pipes 1981). By 1879, as a result of his campaigns and those of his successors, Egypt controlled the whole of today's Sudan along with portions of Eritrea, northern Uganda, and northeastern Zaire (Holt 1976: 13-50).

Egyptian conquest and control of the Nile region brought increased trade to the south and southwest. Beginning in the 1840s, merchants of diverse nationalities established headquarters in Khartoum, and their agents joined the jallaba beyond the frontier. Known as the "Khartoumers," these traders collected ivory and raided for slaves on an unprecedented scale.

The Khartoumers dominated these areas by combining military power, political alliances, slave incorporation, and the judicious distribution of long-distance trade goods, a pattern of operation that Santandrea (1964: 18-19) calls the "zariba system." An Arabic word meaning "enclosure," zariba in the Sudanese context referred to the many small fortified trading settlements that the Khartoumers founded in the south (Ahmad 1985).

The Khartoumer companies expanded the enslavement frontier. They began by gaining control over regions surrounding their zaribas. Usually a merchant party concluded a pact with a local non-Muslim leader who agreed to supply the station with grain and other staples in return for trade goods and merchant support. Such an arrangmeent satisfied the needs of the outpost; it also provided local non-Muslims with external allies which they often used for their own aggrandizement (Santandrea 1964: 18-19; Modat 1912b: 222-224; Schweinfurth 1874: vol. 2, 410-432; Wilson and Felkin 1882: vol. 2, 162). Approaching leader after leader, the Khartoumers built zariba after zariba, so that when George Schweinfurth (1874: vol. 2, 410-432) visited the Bahr al-Ghazal in the 1860s, posts could be found every twenty miles. Each company controlled its own raiding area from a central zariba through a network of smaller stations manned by subordinates; they agreed not to take slaves or ivory in each other's concessions. Most local leaders and jallaba peddlers attached themselves to one of these trading organizations.

Two factors contributed to this shift of power in favor of the Muslim newcomers in southwestern Sudan. First, the Khartoumer companies were larger and wealthier with better access to greater quantities of long-distance imports than the earlier parties of jallaba (Schweinfurth 1874: vol. 1, 46-47, 175; vol. 2, 365-366, 410-432, 437; Gessi 1892: 50-55). The large scale of their operations attracted prospective non-Muslim clients. In addition, the Khartoumers possessed greater

military capabilities which enabled them to build independent bases of power by incorporating slave troops (Arabic: bazingir) into their armed bands much in the manner of Muhammad ᶜAli. Bazingirs, as Lupton (1884: 246) later noted when he used them in his own forces, were inexpensive and quite effective:

> But the great strength of the government lies in the Basengers [sic] or armed slaves who were formerly in the service of the slave-dealers. Their arms consist of double-barrelled guns, with which they are pretty good shots. They make faithful soldiers, and cost but little; a few handfuls of grain being all they require in the way of food, and clothes they consider quite unnecessary articles. Most of them are recruited from the Niam Niam [Zande] country. They do all the really hard work and fighting of the province.

As the demand for slaves grew, the Khartoumers expanded their raiding. This expansion, in turn, required more raiders, a need the traders met by attacking yet more distant non-Muslim settlements and by incorporating ever larger numbers of captured boys and young men. These young "recruits" usually converted to Islam and adopted a Muslim lifestyle. The Khartoumers settled them around their zaribas, and when they were old enough, supplied them with wives selected from the young non-Muslim women taken in ghazzias. Some became raiders themselves.

Although the Khartoumers reigned supreme in southwestern Sudan from the 1850s to the 1870s, their interests increasingly came into conflict with Egyptian imperial ambitions. Egypt sought to bring all of southern and southwestern Sudan under direct control, and Khedive Ismaᶜil dispatched several expeditions to these regions. Billed as campaigns to suppress the slave trade in order to appease the British, their major aim was the extension of Egyptian suzerainty over the Khartoumers (Collins 1962: 14-15).

Egyptian rule in southwestern Sudan was short-lived. In 1881, the Mahdist revolt, an Islamic millennial movement, engulfed the Nile region, and soon thereafter the Mahdi's forces evicted the Egyptians (Collins 1962: 17-42). The withdrawal isolated Egyptian representatives in the south. At first, they resisted the sporadic Mahdist attacks, but eventually most escaped or surrendered. The years between the Egyptian withdrawal and the British defeat of the Mahdists in 1898 might well be termed an interregnum in southwestern Sudan. Although the Mahdists carried out two lengthy campaigns in the region, they never consolidated their control (Collins 1962; al-Hasan c. 1970). The extensive Khartoumer trading network did not survive the disruption of commercial connections with the Nile Valley.

Many slave raiders and local leaders who had formerly been part of the Khartoumer network remained in southwestern Sudan. Some had caches of firearms and were trained in their use, while most knew of the demand for ivory and slaves in the Muslim north. A few mounted their own raiding and trading operations in the 1880s and 1890s. At the same time, other aspiring "Khartoumers" moved their headquarters west beyond the crest dividing the Nile and Ubangi watersheds to escape the Mahdists.

A Slave-Raiding Diaspora: Warlords, Origins, and Connections

The warlords were a diverse lot in terms of class, ethnicity, and religion. Their operations also varied dramatically in scope, ranging from the activities of people like Rahma al-Zubayr, who was virtually a merchant-prince and even for a time a governor under the Egyptian regime, to the smaller operations of someone such as Ngono, a non-Muslim Banda raider who set up his headquarters at Jagara in northern Ubangi-Shari (Cordell 1985a: 67).

Despite this apparent diversity, the careers of many warlords were linked across space and through time. Indeed the ties between warlords were sufficiently regular that we can recognize a "slave-raiding diaspora." Further research is necessary to sustain this hypothesis, but what is now known suggests that the rise of the Khartoumers in southwestern Sudan initiated a process that continued through the end of the nineteenth century. The early Khartoumers began modestly, but within a decade or so, several had become major warlords, employing and training large numbers of local peoples as _bazingirs_ (Holt 1976: 13-50; Lupton 1884: 246). Some were the children of local non-Muslim leaders, while others were slaves brought from farther afield. After service with a Khartoumer patron, many of these lesser figures sought to gain some automony, either by opening up a new raiding station for their warlords in a distant locale, or by setting up their own operations. Thus these people expanded the enslavement frontier; at the same time, the need to export their captives and to resupply themselves with arms and trade goods fostered continued ties with their former patrons.

The following series of biographical sketches begins with a portrait of a Khartoumer, Rahma al-Zubayr. Although his is the only Khartoumer sketch to be included here, he was not the only one. There were a half-dozen or so major Khartoumer warlords in southwestern Sudan in the 1860s and 1870s. I have chosen to focus on al-Zubayr because he probably was the most prominent of them and because his activities affected eastern Ubangi-Shari both directly and indirectly.

The Khartoumers: Rahma al-Zubayr

Like many Khartoumers, al-Zubayr came from the Nile region. He initially went to southwestern Sudan in 1856 in the employ of another trader. Over the next decade and a half, however, he built his own network of zaribas and by 1870 had become the most prominent warlord in the district. He built his settlements in the classic manner, by settling captives around his centers and integrating some into his armed forces. "He treated the prisoners whom he captured so well that thousands of other slaves flocked to him, to serve in his army, and to be enrolled under his banner" (El-Zubeir 1970: 111). Although most of his raids targeted populations in the Nile basin, his men occasionally raided farther afield. In 1877 or 1878, for example, his forces attacked a Muslim slave-raiding settlement at Kali on the Jangara River in northern Ubangi-Shari, several hundred kilometers west of the Nile-Ubangi divide (Cordell 1985a: 45, 203).

Al-Zubayr was an obstacle to the assertion of direct Egyptian control over southwestern Sudan. Lacking the resources to subdue him, the Khedive sought to coopt him by naming him governor. Shortly after taking office, however, al-Zubayr launched a series of campaigns against Dar Fur to the north, conquering the independent sultanate in 1874. This victory would have provided him with a trans-Saharan commercial outlet that bypassed the Nile and Egypt, perhaps setting the stage for a revolt against Egyptian authority. By means of a ruse, the Khedive enticed al-Zubayr to Cairo where he was placed under house arrest. Back in the southwestern Sudan, al-Zubayr's son Sulayman led a rebellion, but the Egyptians persuaded him to surrender, and then executed him (El-Zubeir 1970: 3-89; Modat 1912b: 188, 122; Collins 1962: 15-17; 1971: 163-164; O'Fahey and Spaulding 1974: 179-183). Although al-Zubayr tended to confine his raids to the Nile basin, he nonetheless had a major indirect impact on eastern Ubangi-Shari through his client Rabih Fadlallah, who moved into the region in the late 1870s.

Khartoumer Clients and Westward Expansion: Rabih Fadlallah

Rabih's origins remain obscure. Arbab Djama Babikir, the son of one his closest aides, wrote that Rabih began his military career in the Egyptian army where he learned to ride and use firearms; he later served for a decade with al-Zubayr in southwestern Sudan (Hill 1951: 312-313). Arriving in Ubangi-Shari in 1876 or 1877 with only several hundred men, he used Egyptian/Khartoumer methods to enlarge his following. He raided local non-Muslim peoples, first the Kresh and Banda peoples living in the neighborhood of the Nile-Ubangi

watershed, and then the western Banda and Sara. Other campaigns took captives in adjacent regions, ranging from Dar Runga in the Chad basin to the north, to the borders of the Bahdia Nzakara state in the south (Cordell 1985a: 54-55). In true Khartoumer fashion, he selected some of these slaves for military training and service in his armed bands. New regiments were organized according to ethnic origins, each headed by officers from the same ethnic group. By 1889, the year before he marched west from Ubangi-Shari (he conquered Bagirmi in 1891 and ultimately Borno in 1894), he had assembled an army of more than ten thousand (Gentil 1902: 258; Babikir 1950: 7-9, 28-29, 62; Adeleye 1970: 225-227; Hallam 1968: 172).

The effects of Rabih's sojourn cannot be measured quantitatively, but the qualitative evidence testifies to an enormous demographic impact. Although concentrated in north and north-central Ubangi-Shari, his raids affected virtually the whole region at one time or another. In many places, everyone disappeared. For example, his raids in the neighborhood of Ndele, the capital of Dar al-Kuti, prompted the flight of the local Banda people; others were killed or carried off. The legacy of this era is still visible today, a 200-kilometer wide band of deserted land around the city (Maistre 1893: 6; Chevalier 1907: 120; Modat 1912b: 230).

But ironically, his campaigns appear to have weighed much more heavily on Dar Runga, a Muslim state. Rabih's raiders pillaged Runga in the early 1880s, again in the middle of the decade, and finally in 1890. Informants of Auguste Chevalier (1907: 356-366, 371) described Dar Runga as a fairly densely populated state in the early 1880s, with real power over Dar al-Kuti. The raids scattered the population. Many Runga fled south to Dar al-Kuti, while others were killed or captured and sold into slavery. Only a few were incorporated into Rabih's army. The sultanate never regained its former population; Rabih left it, like the area around Ndele, an "empty quarter."[3]

With the continuation of Rabih's westward migration in 1890, it might be presumed that eastern Ubangi-Shari returned to normal, as indeed it had after the incursions of al-Zubayr's raiders in the 1870s. In fact, this did not happen. While al-Zubyar's raiders leapfrogged the enslavement frontier to attack Dar al-Kuti in 1877 or 1878, Rabih's intense raiding in the 1880s marked the frontier's advance. He incorporated eastern Ubangi-Shari into the Muslim economy as a source of slaves. This process took several forms, all of which extended the zone and intensity of slave-raiding. First, as in south-western Sudan where al-Zubayr reigned supreme, some local leaders in Ubangi-Shari allied themselves with Rabih, becoming his agents and raiding surrounding societies. Second, other leaders who initially armed themselves for self-defense found themselves raiding their neighbors in order to acquire the firearms and munitions necessary for their security. And

third, Rabih singled out and supported a major client in the region to whom he entrusted his legacy and on whom he relied to act as an intermediary with the Nile region when he migrated farther west.

The Diaspora Becomes Indigenous: Muhammad al-Sanusi

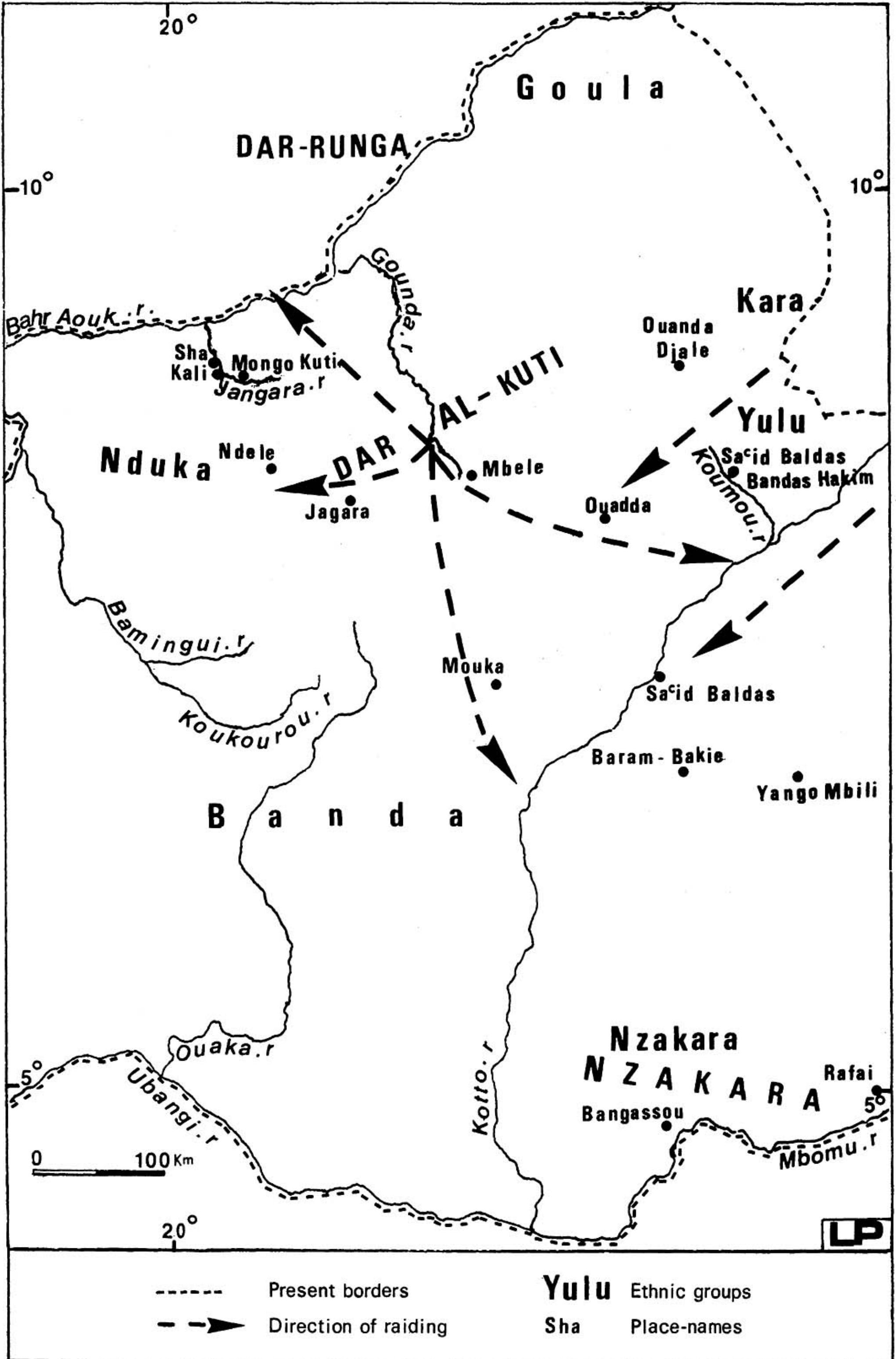
Muhammad al-Sanusi, a Muslim of Runga origins, was a slave raider and slave trader of some reknown in Dar al-Kuti in the 1880s. His father was a brother of Kobur, a Runga trader who was the leader of the major Muslim settlement in northern Ubangi-Shari. When Rabih arrived in the area in the late 1870s, he searched for clients. Although an influential trader, Kobur's worldly ambitions were apparently restrained by a concern for things religious; he was a faqih. He must also have been appalled by Rabih's raiding in Dar Runga, a nominally Muslim land whose inhabitants, according to Muslim law and custom, should have been spared. Whatever the precise set of reasons, Kobur spurned Rabih's advances, leading the warlord to depose him in 1890 in favor of his nephew (Cordell 1985a: 59-60).

Before heading west, Rabih made every effort to solidify al-Sanusi's base of power. First, by annexing Dar Runga in 1890, the Sudanese warlord sought to expand his new client's sphere of influence and to eliminate any challenge that might come from Kobur's supporters. Then he set out with al-Sanusi to translate these claims into reality. From Rabih's camp in Dar al-Kuti they raided together, attacking Dar Runga in the north, Kresh and Goula settlements in the east, and Banda Ngao villages in the southwest. Rabih also supplied al-Sanusi with a small cache of arms and munitions (Cordell 1985a: 60).

A detailed account of al-Sanusi's career, as well as an extensive list of his raids is found elsewhere (Cordell 1985a: Fig. 2, 105-108). It suffices to note here that even though he was not from Sudan, and thus had no direct grounding in slave-raiding operations there, he successfully replicated the Khartoumer experience in eastern Ubangi-Shari. His raids - more numerous, more frequent, and more extensive than those of his patron - assured that Rabih's sojourn was not going to be, like that of al-Zubayr's raiders, as isolated episode (Cordell 1985b: 169-193).

Between 1891 and his assassination at the hands of the French in 1911, al-Sanusi expanded his operations using the same techniques as Muhammad ᶜAli, al-Zubayr, and Rabih. Beyond this, however, his local origins and familiarity with local societies allowed him to put his operations on a more solid base. In the Khartoumer tradition, he was, to be sure, an itinerant warlord. He lived in a camp at Sha in northern Ubangi-Shari until 1894, when it was destroyed by Wadaian raids

Map 13.2 DAR AL-KUTI AND ENVIRONS



from the north. He then wandered for two years until he founded a fortified settlement at Ndele. Although he remained in Ndele until his death, he made plans to leave on several occasions when the expanding French presence threatened. At the same time, the ruins at Ndele suggest a permanent capital, and traditions concerning his incorporation of local earth chiefs and non-Muslim rituals into city activities indicate efforts to institutionalize his rule (Cordell 1985a: 79-102, 151, 161-162).

From Ndele, al-Sanusi's raids redirected the expansion of the enslavement frontier. In the 1890s his bazingers tended to strike Banda and other non-Muslims south and east of Ndele. He refrained from ghazzias in the north and west, the homelands of Runga relatives and non-Muslim Nduka clients respectively. After 1900, his sphere of activities expanded to include Banda to the southeast and Kresh to the far southeast. Expeditions also hit Sara settlements to the northwest for the first time (Cordell 1985a: 105-108).

Hence his men not only continued the westward and southwestward expansion of the enslavement frontier; their raids also struck societies in the direction of Sudan which had escaped annihilation at the hands of al-Zubayr, Rabih, and other warlords. The pattern of Banda migration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is instructive here. From homelands in the Sudan-CAR border region in the 1860s, they slowly shifted south to avoid infrequent but devastating state-sponsored raids from Wadai and Dar Fur. Following the appearance of Khartoumer raiders in the 1870s, they migrated southwest. Rabih's raiding in the following decade pushed them south again, into the Kotto and Duaka river valleys. The dimensions of these migrations are apparent from the markedly greater population densities noted for these regions in the colonial and contemporary eras.

Al-Sanusi's ghazzias intensified the process of displacement. Unable to flee farther west because of the presence of the Gbaya and Manza, many Banda groups disintegrated, fleeing in all directions, sometimes remaining together but more often splitting into smaller bands. The fractionalized pattern of Banda settlement recorded on maps from the early colonial period dates from this time (Cordell 1985a: 26-30; Pantobe 1984: 27-29).

Al-Sanusi's settlement policies also reproduced the Khartoumer zariba. Following the foundation of Ndele in 1896, he settled many captives in the environs of the city where they produced agricultural goods necessary to support the Muslim ruling class and the more prominent bazingirs (lesser warriors seem to have worked in the fields between raids) (Cordell 1985a: 82-86, 122-129). Then, with the expansion of his operations after 1900, the warlord founded at least two satellite settlements, one at Duadda on the Ippy River, 225

kilometers from Ndele and another at Mouka on the Zamba, 160 kilometers distant. Both supplied Ndele with foodstuffs, and both enabled bazingers to raid more intensively in regions distant from al-Sanusi's capital (Cordell 1985a: 129-130).

Although there is more data on Al-Sanusi than on Rabih, it is still impossible to calculate the number of slaves that al-Sanusi exported. Published estimates are all based on one source. Julien (1904: 38; 1929: 69-70), French resident in Ndele in 1901, suggested that the sultan had taken, and then settled or sold, 40,000 people in the previous decade. He believed that an equal number had been killed, injured, or uprooted during the same period. Reducing the total by 20-25,000, the population of Ndele at this time, yields a total of 15-20,000 exports, or an average of 1,500-2,000 people annually. This calculation is very rough, and does not take into account birth and death rates among the Ndele population, the effects of epidemics which were frequent, and voluntary Muslim immigration from other regions.

There are no export totals at all for the final decade of raiding. Ndele remained the same size and the foreign slave-trader community remained intact. Modat, another French resident in the city, described vast tracts of devastated and deserted land encountered while travelling to Kafiakingi in southwestern Sudan in 1910, which suggests that raiding had not abated, and, in fact, may have expanded. Such a hypothesis is plausible, since al-Sanusi's bazingirs were both more numerous and better armed than earlier. In addition, greater numbers of raids are recorded for this period. It seems reasonable - and indeed a conservative estimate - to conclude that at least 40,000 more slaves were taken between 1901-1911. Given that Ndele did not expand in size, most of these captives were probably exported, yielding an average of four thousand (Kalck 1970: vol. 3, 74-75). Over the entire period, then, al-Sanusi probably exported somewhere between 30,000 people, based on a minimum of 15,000 for each decade, and 60,000 people, based on a maximum of two thousand per year for the first decade and four thousand per year for the second.

The Lesser Warlords: Apprentices to Violence

Not only does the paucity of figures make it difficult to estimate the quantitative impact of such notorious warlords as al-Zubayr, Rabih, and al-Sanusi in eastern Ubangi-Shari, but another whole class of raiders existed about whom very little is known. If the three major warlords can be blamed for transferring the zariba system to eastern Ubangi-Shari, there were many lesser warlords in the region who duplicated the system on a local level. Their raids were perhaps more intensive; if so, they must have had a greater impact on eastern

Ubangi-Shari than their more well-known counterparts. The problem is, of course, that the lesser warlords are correspondingly less easy to document. Not only are statistics lacking on the numbers of people raided and traded, but information thus far collected on these individuals is scattered and limited, suggesting that still other raiders may have escaped the historical record entirely. Nonetheless, an account of the reproduction of the zariba system in eastern Ubangi-Shari is incomplete without a sample of them.

The lesser warlords of eastern Ubangi-Shari acquired experience and influence by serving al-Zubayr, Rabih or al-Sanusi. Some were Muslims from the Sudan who entered the ranks of the Khartoumers as free individuals; others were non-Muslim slaves taken as children or adolescents, encouraged to convert to Islam, and given positions of responsibility which provided opportunities for independent action. These lesser raiders can be divided into Muslim apprentices or Zande, Kresh and Banda warlords, each of which will be considered in turn.

Muslim Apprentices

Nour Angaro, who raided among the Yulu of far northeastern CAR, is a good example of the Muslim apprentice. Like Rabih Fadlallah, he had been a lieutenant of al-Zubayr. Following al-Zubayr's conquest of al-Fasher, the Dar Fur capital, in 1870-1871, his Yulu warriors kept their firearms and fled south to their homeland. Al-Zubayr sent Angaro after them, but by the time he reached them they were well ensconced at Niamba, a fortified village on a hill overlooking the Yata River. Anour lay siege to the village for what turned out to be fifteen months, taking it in 1873. By this time al-Zubayr was too preoccupied with the Egyptian threat to worry about his client. Anour built a zariba and settled there with his men and many of the Yulu who had been conquered. For the next several years he raided local Banda, Goulou, Kresh, and Kara groups. For reasons that are unclear, the new Egyptian authorities in Dar Fur eventually persuaded him to return to al-Fasher, at which point he dropped out of the history of eastern Ubangi-Shari.[4]

Zande Warlords

The warlords were not all Muslims from the Sudan. A second group were the sons of local non-Muslim chiefs who allied themselves with the Muslim Khartoumers. The sons were hostages as well as allies and sealed the alliances between their fathers and the warlords. Several hundred kilometers to

the southeast of Anour's theater of operations, the Zande warlords Rafai and Djabir began their careers in this fashion. Rafai's father Bayangi entrusted him to al-Zubayr, who raised him as a Muslim and enlisted him in his troops (Lotar 1946: 355; Bobichon 1931: 145-155). After al-Zubayr's detention in Cairo, Rafai entered the service of his patron's son Sulayman. An Egyptian force headed by the Italian Romolo Gessi pursued Sulayman, ultimately defeating him in battle. By this time, however, Rafai had thrown in his lot with Gessi, who in the 1880s placed him in control of the Zande lands in the far southeast (Collins 1962: 106; Gessi 1892: 348).

Following the Egyptian withdrawal, and faced with an advancing Mahdist force, Rafai abandoned the Nile basin in 1886 and relocated across the Nile-Ubangi River divide. There he set up camp near Djabir, another Zande warlord. With the arrival of the Congo Independent State in the region in the early 1890s, Rafai began to trade with the Europeans. Under the Belgians and then the French he expanded his power, wealth, and influence (Dampierre 1893: 101, 461-468). Noting that he possessed four or five hundred quality rifles, Liotard wrote in 1895 that "the authority of Rafai is that of an army commander, and his influence is considerable over the small sultanates which lie between him and Wadai and Dar Fur."[5]

Djabir's career resembled that of his neighbor. The son of a Zande chief, but not likely to inherit his father's authority, Djabir became an agent of the warlord ᶜAli Kobbo in the mid-1870s. When his patron was recalled by Frank Lupton, another European working for the Egyptian authorities, Djabir began operating more independently, establishing ties with "Arab" traders. A decade later, in the 1890s, he, too, became an important agent of the Congo Independent State and French in turn, and like Rafai he used such external support to expand his own authority (Santandrea 1964: 289-290; Thuriaux-Hennebert 1962: 563-567; 577; Dampierre 1893: 460-461).

Kresh Warlords

A third contingent of warlords were individuals of Kresh origin, whose villages in today's CAR-Sudan border region were among the earliest Khartoumer targets. Several Kresh chiefs rose to prominence because they entered Khartoumer service either as captives or as local allies. Following the withdrawal of al-Zubayr and Gessi's victory over Sulayman, the Egyptian authorities allowed the black soldiers of the Khartoumers to return home with their weapons. As Junker (1891: 98) noted, many then became "swashbucklers," either freebooting or entering the service of other chiefs. In the 1890s several of the Kresh leaders founded *zaribas* in eastern Ubangi-Shari.

These warlords included Allewali, a former soldier of al-Zubayr, and Arenago and Mbele, who had served with al-Zubayr and Lupton (Lotar 1940: 87; Santandrea 1964: 66). In the late 1880s and early 1890s, they allied themselves with Rafai, assuring the passage of commerce from his headquarters on the river in the south to Wadai in the north. They were also closely associated with the Congo Independent State (Lotar 1940: 37-38). However, by the time the Belgian traveller Hanolet (1896: 272) met up with them in the following year, they had shifted their centers farther north, just into the Chad basin. There they lived in small settlements whose population totalled about two thousand people protected by bazingirs armed with a hundred Remingtons, 150 double-barrelled rifles, and seventy single shot weapons.

Mbele was the most prominent of these three Kresh warlords. Following the move to the Chad basin, he strengthened ties with Wadai. Indeed an official Wadaian representative resided at his center on the Gounda River (Hanolet 1896: 271; Grech 1924: 22-23). The settlement was quite large. Chevalier (1907: 177-178), a French visitor who visited the ruins of the city in early 1903, noted the remains of 200-300 mud brick houses; presumably there were many more dwellings of straw. Mbele's compound was a large square that the Frenchman estimated to be 100 meters on a side.[6]

Mbele's forces raided throughout the region, bringing people back to the zariba where some were settled and others sold. Along with slaves, Mbele and the merchants who gathered at his center also apparently traded in cattle. In 1897 the French representative on the Mbomu River to the south reported that traders from Mbele's center regularly appeared with cattle that they traded with Bangassou, ruler of the Bandia/Nzakara.[7] He identified Mbele's zariba as one of the three great markets of eastern Ubangi-Shari and the Bahr al-Ghazal, along with Chekka (sic) in Dar Fur and Dem al-Zubayr.[8] How many people lived in Mbele's zariba remains unclear, though Chevalier (1907: 177-178) estimated that it had had a population of 10,000.

Events surrounding Mbele's fall are also murky, although it is linked with the rise of al-Sanusi. Following Rabih's departure for points west, al-Sanusi realized that his success hinged on the completion of two tasks: first, he had to make peace with Wadai, which was accomplished by 1895; and, second, he had to attract trade from rival Kresh centers. His efforts were successful. In 1896 he built his fortified zariba at Ndele, and Julien (1925: 153) reported shortly after 1900 that merchants were abandoning Mbele for Ndele:

> [T]he capital was becoming the only obligatory destination for traders in the region [états Senoussiens],

> whereas [the zariba of] Mbele, slowly losing population to Ndele, was becoming a secondary stopping point.

But peaceful commercial competition was not the accepted way of dealing with rivals among warlords. The same year that he founded Ndele, al-Sanusi attacked Mbele's zariba, taking women and children captive. A merchant from the city reported, however, that he did not attack Mbele's fort - perhaps because he feared retribution from Wadai, whose sultan Yusuf had recently sent a shipment of arms to his Kresh ally.[9] As noted above, traders from Mbele's zariba continued to make their way south in 1897, and Liotard recommended opening a French commercial post in the town the following year.[10] The settlement finally succumbed to al-Sanusi's attacks sometime in 1897 or 1898, but al-Sanusi neither killed nor captured Mbele himself (Chevalier 1907: 177-178). Like many of his fellow Kresh, Mbele responded to al-Sanusi's increased raiding by shifting his headquarters back to the east, all the while launching guerilla attacks against his rival. Mbele definitely abandoned eastern Ubangi-Shari in the dry season of 1903-1904 (Santandrea 1964: 153-154, 219-223).[11] Alewali and Arenago, on the other hand, were taken prisoner and ultimately threw in their lots with al-Sanusi (Kalck 1970: vol. 2, 453).[12]

Other prominent Kresh warlords included Bandas Hakim, also called Sanjak Bandas, and Bandas Mjaou, who served as bazingir to al-Zubayr and Frank Lupton, Egypt's governor in the southwestern Sudan just before the Mahdist uprising in 1881.[13] During the ensuing turmoil, Bandas Hakim gathered a mixed group of Kresh, Banda, and Arabs, migrated west to Ubangi-Shari, and set up a zariba. Armed with a small supply of firearms, and at the head of a following that included veterans of military service in southwestern Sudan, Bandas Hakim became a potent force among the small-scale, self-governing lineage societies of the Banda and Kresh who lived between the Zande states and Wadai.[14]

Bandas first settled near the northern borders of the Zande sultanates but received a hostile reception from Rafai, whose forces compelled him to flee farther north, where he founded a settlement on the Koumou River. The Kresh warlord located his center on a major north-south trade route with hopes of controlling commerce in the region. In the years that followed, Banda and Kresh living in the area joined him, much in the manner that non-Muslims had gathered around Khartoumer centers in the Sudan. His capital eventually grew to several thousand people, of "all nationalities."[15]

West of the Khartoumer trading system that had nurtured al-Zubayr, Bandas hitched his economic fortunes to Wadai's rising star. Early in the century a new caravan route to Libya had provided Wadai with its first direct link to the North African littoral, but this discovery only began to yield

economic benefits after 1850, when the Sanusiya brotherhood brought security to this part of the Sahara. European intervention in Egypt and the Maghrib, along with disruption along the trans-Saharan routes to the east and west, also diverted trade to Wadai (Cordell 1977: 21-36).

Bandas' relations with Wadai had political, economic, and religious significance. Wadaian traders dominated long-distance commerce in Bandas' capital on the Koumou. The Kresh warlord must have relied on Wadai for arms and ammunition, since the other northern routes were closed, and the Europeans and Zanzibaris, purveyors of weapons to adjacent areas of northeastern Congo later in the century, had not yet appeared. Ties of religion and perhaps kinship also linked Bandas to Wadai. He apparently had become a Muslim during his service in the zaribas of southwestern Sudan, passing his faith on to a son, Sa^{c}id Baldas. Sa^{c}id grew up in Abeche, the Wadaian capital, and Prins described him as the "frère du lait" of the future sultan Ibrahim of Wadai - intimating that Bandas' son and the Wadaian heir were nursed by the same woman.[16]

When Bandas Hakim died in 1899, Sa^{c}id took control of his father's zariba and immediately faced threats on two fronts. In the west, al-Sanusi plotted against him, part of his larger scheme to make Dar al-Kuti and its capital at Ndele the major entrepot between Wadai and the southern states of Rafai, Zemio, and Bangassou. In the east, Mahdist bands, isolated in southwestern Sudan following the British conquest of Omdurman in 1898, also menaced the Kresh settlement.[17]

Bandas sought security by reaffirming his ties with Wadai. In January 1901, he journeyed to the Wadaian capital to declare his loyalty to Sultan Ibrahim. Ibrahim pledged his support, supplying Baldas with a few horses and some rapid-fire weapons. He also ordered al-Sanusi, a sometime vassal, to refrain from attacking Baldus. In return, the Kresh chief agreed to pay an annual tribute of twenty female slaves accompanied by twenty heavy tusks of ivory. He also allowed Wadaian commercial agents and religious figures to direct trade and serve as scribes in his domains.[18]

When Prins (1925b: 137-141) visited the region in early 1901, the Kresh chief presided over a settlement of between 4,000-5,000 people who lived in and around a fortified core village. Built on a site protected by a stream and high cliffs, this central area was encircled by a clay wall five meters thick at the base and topped with bamboo spikes. To ensure still greater security, a wide and deep moat surrounded the complex. Sa^{c}id Baldas, major chiefs, and his riflemen lived permanently within the walls, while the Wadaian merchant community and commoners lived outside. Extensive plantations of sorghum and finger millet lay around the city.

Baldas' settlement was as stratified socially as the earlier zariba communities of southwestern Sudan. A group of

foreign Muslims and local converts ruled the city. Beneath them were subservient groups with differing degrees of liberty, wealth, and power. At the bottom were slaves who worked fields for Baldas and his lieutenants as well as themselves. Prins reported that slaves could earn their freedom by converting to Islam and learning to write a few verses from the Qur'an. This policy made the settlement attractive to runaway slaves from other settlements. Similarly powerless, but free people, who were resettled refugees, also owed labor to the prominent groups in the city. The more privileged groups included Baldas' bazingirs, who, while subject to his command, possessed slaves themselves.[19] Muslim Kresh chiefs commanding Bandas' warbands constituted another privileged class, as did the foreign Muslim residents.

Prins' arrival marked a new phase in Baldas' struggle to survive. Realizing that the growing French presence in the south constituted a closer source of assistance than distant Wadai, the Kresh leader sought to impress his French visitor with his importance, maintaining that he had 100,000 followers scattered over three degrees of latitude, figures that Julien thought were greatly exaggerated.[20] The bid for French support became even more crucial when news arrived of a coup d'état in Abeche that toppled Ibrahim. Moreover, a Mahdist force occupied the Salamat region just south of Wadai about the same time, thereby disrupting communications with the north.[21]

Prins responded to Baldas' overtures, signing a treaty of protection and trade on 14 March 1901. The Kresh leader assured Prins that agents of French commercial companies would be welcome. Prins replied by encouraging him to relocate his capital sixty kilometers farther south on the left bank of the Kotto where it would be better protected from al-Sanusi's raiders. But the treaty was never ratified. In late March, in the wake of the turmoil in Wadai, the French colonial government adopted a wait-and-see attitude in eastern Ubangi-Shari. Prins received instructions not to pursue political negotiations. In hopes of being able to aid Baldas eventually, Prins continued to urge resettlement farther south. In mid-April, a suitable site was located, and the Kresh moved. Prins left Baldas shortly thereafter.[22]

Without assistance, the new Kresh settlement lasted just over a year. Perhaps encouraged by Wadai, which was annoyed with Baldas' flirtations with the Europeans, al-Sanusi raided eastern Ubangi-Shari in early 1902. His armed bands forced Baldas to surrender. Despite an agreement to pay tribute to Dar al-Kuti, conflict continued throughout the next year. Eventually, Saᶜid Baldas fled east to southwestern Sudan, which had by now become the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, where he submitted to the British.[23] Abandoned by fortune and his following, he returned to the lands his father had left so many years earlier.

Banda Warlords

The career patterns of the Banda warlords resembled those of the non-Muslim groups mentioned above, although since they lived farther west, the zariba system reached them later. Most Banda raiders were taken into slavery as children or adolescents by other warlords, acquiring military experience as bazingirs. Some then struck out on their own.

The first Banda warlords were those roughly contemporary with Rabih. These raiders operated west of the Nile-Ubangi divide, fully in the Ubangi-Shari basin. This area fell outside the districts controlled by the Khartoumers, and, although Rabih's raids crossed the region, he never made a permanent camp there. These early Banda warlords hence found a niche between more powerful neighbors.

Ngono and Ara of the Banda Ngao were perhaps the most famous of these early warlords, although their origins are obscure. Some sources report that they gained their experience in the ranks of al-Zubayr or Rabih (although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish truth from what must have become a cliché in the biographies of slave-raiders in the region). In any case, Ngono and Ara were major warlords by the 1870s when they attacked Kobur, al-Sanusi's predecessor, at Kali in Dar al-Kuti.[24]

Oral accounts suggest that Ngono and Ara began raiding from zaribas in eastern Ubangi-Shari, shifting their operations farther and farther west. By the 1890s, Ngono's major settlement was at Jagara, a rock outcropping about fifty kilometers south of today's Ndele. Ara commanded several smaller centers. They sold ivory to the Bandia Nzakara sultanate of Bangassou in the south, obtaining firearms that ultimately came from the Belgians in return. From the north they received long-distance trade goods in exchange for slaves taken in raids against other Banda groups (Cordell 1985a: 211 fn).

Ngono and Ara raided throughout central Ubangi-Shari and rivaled both al-Sanusi and the Kresh warlord Mbele. As in the case of Mbele, al-Sanusi saw Ngono and Ara as competitors to be eliminated. He tried to convince them to join him, an invitation which implied that they should become his clients. The Banda raiders rejected his entreaties, leading al-Sanusi to attack and destroy Jagara and nearby villages in 1897. Ngono was killed in the melée, and the surviving Banda Ngao were removed to Ndele. Ara agreed to become a blood partner of al-Sanusi, a symbol of his acceptance of client status, and Ngono's son Ngouvela became a bazingir in the sultan's forces (Cordell 1979: 379-394).

A second group of Banda warlords appeared in northern Ubangi-Shari after 1890. Most of these made their fortune not

by opposing al-Sanusi but through service with his bazingirs. Allah Jabu was perhaps the most prominent of these raiders. Taken captive as a child, he was raised in al-Sanusi's household, attended Qur'anic school as a convert to Islam, and ultimately became his patron's major military commander (Cordell 1985a: 65, 112-113). Indeed when al-Sanusi was under pressure from the French in 1910, he sent Allah Jabu east to locate a suitable site for a new zariba between the zone of effective French control in eastern Ubangi-Shari and the Sudanese border. Allah Jabu found a site at Kaga Duanda-Djale, a rock outcropping on the caravan route to Sudan that was a perfect location for the continued export of slaves, but he had to dislodge the Yulu who lived there. Al-Sanusi was assassinated before he could flee, but Allah Jabu, others of al-Sanusi's commanders, and his son Kamoun relocated at Duanda-Djale, where they resisted French forces until 1912 (Cordell 1985a: 74-75, 213 fn).

At least one Banda warlord of the 1890s was not a subordinate of al-Sanusi. A report from Cairo in 1906, for example, includes information on Zango, at that time a Banda warlord whose zariba had become an important secondary commercial center on the southeastern fringes of Wadai (Oppenheim 1968: 134). Taken into slavery by Rafai in 1888, Zango first became one of the Zande chief's major raiders and then began operating on his own account in 1898. About the same time he reportedly allied himself with Hadj Mohammed el-Fellatta, a Fulani merchant then active in Wadai. Together they traded into Sudan and as far southeast as the Congo Independent State. Finally in 1903 al-Sanusi forced them both to flee to Sudan.

The third group of Banda warlords raided other Banda peoples south of Dar al-Kuti and north of the limits of Bandia-Nzakara control. They became active after c. 1900. Banda raiders such as Baram-Bakie and Yango Mbili set up small zaribas, raided neighboring Banda groups, and sold captives to traders in the Bandia Nzakara sultanate, Dar al-Kuti, or southwestern Sudan (Kalck 1974: 172-176, 178).

This group of warlords is particularly difficult to classify. They raided into the 1910s, and thus their careers overlapped with the onset of colonial rule. They also raided in lands that after 1898 were part of the territory of the Compagnie des Sultanats du Haute-Oubangui, a concessionary company that opposed their activities. Although the company professed concern about ending the slave trade, it was as much, if not more, worried because the raiders' connections with the Muslim world to the northeast which made it more difficult to integrate the region into the French colonial economy (Cordell forthcoming). While these warlords raided for slaves, and thereby represented a continuation of precolonial policies, they also were important as leaders of early Banda resistance to colonial rule.

Conclusion

The series of warlords discussed in the preceding pages is by no means complete. Oral traditions, colonial reports, the travel literature, and memories of the period include the names of several dozen other aspiring potentates. The biographies and career strategies for most of these individuals cannot be reconstructed from the limited information available. Despite these gaps, a clear picture emerges of the expanding enslavement frontier emanating from southwestern Sudan. The maps accompanying this chapter suggest steady expansion of the frontier from bases in southwestern Sudan in the 1860s and reaching eastern Ubangi-Shari in the 1870s. Quite another picture may be inferred from the career patterns of the warlords. This sample of biographies demonstrates that the expansion was, in fact, very irregular and decentralized. To be sure, there were a few major warlords, but they had to rely on associates who did much of the raiding. These people do not seem to have been particularly preoccupied with systematically expanding their patron's zones of enslavement (and influence). Their biographies suggest rather that they were constantly on the lookout for opportunities to break away and begin their own operations.

This pattern seems to be in marked contrast with the earlier systematic raiding sponsored by the northern Muslim states of Wadai and Dar Fur. Instead the pattern associated with the expanding enslavement frontier from Sudan eventually prevailed. Rabih's sojourn in eastern Ubangi-Shari and his sponsorship of al-Sanusi seem to have seriously undermined Wadaian hegemony in the region. Although Wadai remained influential and continued systematic annual raiding in the Salamat in the southeastern Chad basin, there is only one known major expedition that penetrated Ubangi-Shari after 1890. This raid came when Wadaian forces devastated al-Sanusi's settlement at Kali-Sha in 1894 as punishment for his alliance with Rabih (Cordell 1985a: 64-66). The enslavement frontier reached its greatest extent in eastern Ubangi-Shari in the first decade of the twentieth century, with the campaigns of al-Sanusi in the central Banda lands and with the raids of the Banda warlords among their own people.

During the late nineteenth century a rival enslavement frontier developed farther west, and by 1900 the two frontiers came in contact. From the perspective of Ubangi-Shari, this western frontier was a mirror image of the Sudanese one. Its origins lay in the Fulani conquest of Adamawa in the mid-nineteenth century, a part of Usman dan Fodio's *jihad* in the central Sudan which resulted in the consolidation of the Sokoto Caliphate. The conquest gave rise to the emirates of Banyo, Ngaundere, Tibati, Koncha, and Tinyer. These new emirates made it possible to raid still farther southeast among peoples such

as the Gbaya who were beyond the Islamic frontier. By the later decades of the century, Fulani raided the Gbaya annually. They set out in the dry season, and once near target populations built fortified military camps (sangyeere) from whence they raided surrounding settlements for two or three months before returning home (Burnham 1980: 44, 52-53).

Although the Fulani never raided as far as central Ubangi-Shari, non-Muslim peoples fled before this expanding frontier. For example, Gbaya and Manza peoples living in northwestern Ubangi-Shari fled southeast where they clashed with Banda peoples fleeing raiders from the northeast (Cordell 1985a: 64-66). The resulting confusion and upheavals were ideal conditions for taking slaves, until the imposition of French rule in central Ubangi-Shari halted raiding from both directions in the 1910s.

Unfortunately, the Pax Gallica did not bring real peace. The economic reorientation of the region proved to be more difficult than the French had anticipated. While they worked to end slave-raiding and the export of people to the Muslim north and northeast, the Compagnie des Sultanats du Haut-Oubangui introduced forced collection of rubber, wax, and ivory in an effort to amass a supply of the only products from the area that were in demand on the international economy (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1972).

French policy produced its own violence and excesses as agents of the company abused the local population. Not only was the quantity of products that had to be gathered by each village increased over the two decades following 1910, but company agents often extorted multiple payments. When people resisted they raided their villages. Many were killed or held hostage until members of their families produced the requisite goods. In addition, people were required to furnish a specified number of days of labor to the company (and, later, the colonial administration). It is probable that in the 1910s the people of eastern Ubangi-Shari made little distinction between the settlements of policemen and conscripted laborers around company settlements and the earlier zaribas operated by the warlords.

Faced with what probably looked like a similar threat, people responded in a similar fashion. They fled, either to inaccessible places like the Koukourou River region south of Ndele, or, now, to neighboring colonies. The result was, of course, further depopulation (Cordell, Gregory and Piché forthcoming). A glance at a map reveals the dimensions of this set of catastrophes (Pantobe 1984: 27-29, maps). The part of Africa that remained blank on late nineteenth-century European maps because Europeans did not know who lived there became once again a white spot, this time because people no longer lived there. Even today the region is largely deserted, though large tracts of land are still leased to companies who bring in

heavily-armed people who carry off the inhabitants.[25] But these companies sponsor safaris not zaribas, and hunt animals, not people.

NOTES

1. For other studies of the Islamic frontier see Lovejoy and Baier 1975: 551-581; Smaldone 1971: 151-172; Baier and Lovejoy 1977: 391-444. Useful comparative studies are included in Thompson and Lamar 1984. On the relevance of frontier theory for the study of eastern Ubangi-Shari, see Cordell 1985a: 12-14.
2. On the firearms trade and links with the commerce in slaves in the eastern Sudan, see Fisher and Rowland 1971: 221-224, 233-239. The sultans of Dar Fur sent expeditions to the far south as early the mid-eighteenth century; see al-Tunisi 1851.
3. "Documents et études historiques sur le Salamat, reunis par Y. Merot: Rabah et Senoussi au Dar Rounga," W53.9, Archives nationales du Tchad (ANT). Also see Carbou 1912: vol. 2, 223; Modat 1912a: 196; 1912b: 228; 1912c: 271; Martine 1924: 23-24.
4. "Rapport du capitaine Tourencq," December 1912, W53.5, ANT.
5. "Renseignements sur la position des Mahdists," Rafai, 29 May 1895, 4(3)D4, Archives nationales françaises, section d'outre mer, Aix-en-Provence (ANF-SOM (Aix)).
6. Both Hanolet and Chevalier claim to have visited Mbele. The explorers reported different locations for the two sites of Mbele's zariba, which has led Dampierre to suggest recently that Chevalier was not led to Mbele, but rather to Jagara, the zariba of the Banda warlord Ngono; see Dampierre 1967. However, warlords frequently shifted the locations of their settlements, giving their names to a succession of settlements. It is conceivable that Mbele relocated his headquarters in the nine years between the visits of the two Europeans.
7. Liotard, Letter No. 129, 27 October 1897, ANF-SOM (Paris), Gabon-Congo I.
8. Report by Grech, 1897, ANF-SOM [Paris] Gabon Congo II, dossier 5.
9. Liotard, Letter No. 137, 1 November 1898, ANF-SOM [Paris], Gabon-Congo I, dossier 61a.
10. Ibid.
11. "Rapport de tournée . . . Dar-el-Kouti," 26 March 1914, ANF-SOM [Aix-en-Provence], 4[3]D21, Schmoll.

12. Oral Accounts 3.2 and 15.2/16.1, Yadjouma Pascal, Ndele, 16 May and 30 June 1974 (see Cordell 1985a: 247, 249, for further details regarding oral accounts).
13. Pierre Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage de Raphai à Said Baldas et de Said Baldas aux Djebels Mella et Guyamba du 3 fevrier au 15 mai 1901," 13-14, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I, dossier 3. Prins' published articles on eastern Ubangi-Shari do not include much biographical information on Sa^{c}id Baldas or his father; only this unpublished report provides such information. For a lengthy geographical report on the journey, see Prins 1925a: 109-117; 1925b: 117-170.
14. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 13, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I. Prins reported that the Kresh were very able *bazingirs*, forming the most effective combat detachments in the forces of al-Zubayr, Rabih, Rafai, Zemio, and al-Sunusi. Modat and Santandrea agreed. See Prins 1907a: 167; Modat 1907c: 286; Santandrea 1964: 66, 193-199, 215.
15. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 13, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I, 67. For details, see Cordell 1977: 21-36.
16. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 13-14, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I; 1907a: 163; Bruel 1933: 265; Prins 1907b: 131.
17. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 14, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I.
18. *Ibid*., 14-15; Prins 1907a: 163-67; Julien 1928: 56-57.
19. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 171, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I. Prins 1907b: 131; 1907a: 168.
20. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 17, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I. Julien 1928: 92-93.
21. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 18-19, 25, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I; Prins 1907a: 166.
22. Prins (Administrateur du Cercle de Rafai), à M. le Délégué du Commissaire-Général dans le Ht-Oubangui, "Résumé du rapport sur l'inspection du Cercle de Rafai, sultanat de Said Baldas," 12 March 1901; ANF-SOM [Aix], 4[3]D8. Lieutenant-Gouverneur de l'Oubangui-Chari-Tchad, "Ancien groupement de Said Baldas," 25 June 1909 4[3]D15. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 25-28, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I, Prins 1907a: 156.
23. M. le Secretaire-Général de la société antiesclavagiste de France au M. le Ministre des colonies, Paris, Letter, 20 June 1908; ANF-SOM [Paris], Gabon-Congo II, dossier 9. Lieutenant-Gouverneur de l'Oubangui-Chari-Chad, "Ancien groupement de Said Baldas," 25 June 1909; ANF-SOM [Aix] 4[3]D15, Julien 1928: 76, 82; 1929, 60; Modat 1907c: 286; Santandrea 1964: 220, 264, 278.
24. Almost all the information on Jagara comes from oral sources, but sparse written evidence corroborates a number of crucial details concerning Ngono and Ara. For a

detailed listing of written and oral sources, see Cordell 1985a: 211, fn.

25. Eastern CAR north of the Mbomu River region is all but deserted, with population densities of less than 0.5 persons per square kilometer in the 1970s; see Pantobe 1984: 27.

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