

Sarkin Kano

Usman Maje Ringim (1846-1855)

Sarkin Musulmi Aliyu Babba (who was a believer in dynastic succession) appointed Usman the first and eldest son of Sarkin Kano Ibrahim Dabo as the Sarkin Kano in Rabi Awwal 1262 AH (March 1846 AD). His succession was however not without any hitch as it was reported that Galadima Sulaiman Ango lobbied Wazirin Sakwato to appoint Ciroma Mahmud the son of Sarkin Ibrahim Dabo's senior wife instead of Usman the son of Shekara. This was believed to be the reason for deposing Galadima Sulaiman Ango.

The first three years of his reign were peaceful and quite then the *fitna* (sedition) of the notorious syncretistic Hamza escalated. It was reported that Hamza employed unislamic practices such as magic to gain the support of ignorant

people, for he had large group of followers made up of students and venal scholars. Hamza and his followers refused to pay *kharaj* (land tax) (Said 2012-83-85). As a result of this Usman ordered them to leave Kano territory. They migrated to Duwa where they were well received by Dan Daura, Chief of the area. Later Hamza gained the support of the Butawa pagans and ousted Dan Daura, becoming the overall Chief of the pagans. His followers raided the neighboring provinces of the Sokoto Caliphate with impunity. Sarkin Kano Usman had to establish a ribat at Ruma and he appointed Guru as its custodian (Ado-Kurawa 1989: 57).



The next threat to the reign of Usman was the persistent invasion of Kano territory by the combined forces of: Maiyaki Dan Yakubu, the Sarkin Katsina of Maradi and Sarki Ibrahim of Zinder. Gumel also raided Kano up to Fagwalawa, which is near Dambatta. These raiders enslaved and killed many freeborn Muslims. According to Alkalin Kano Zangi, Kano was defeated several times during his reign (Ado-Kurawa 1989: 57). Dr. Hienrich Barth, the European explorer who visited Kano during this period, also confirmed the defeats suffered by Kano and the weaknesses of Usman (Barth 1890: 494-525). But despite these flaws of the Emir, his domain was a flourishing commercial centre with a population of over thirty thousand people. Dr. Barth described Kano as a prosperous beautiful country the “Garden of Central Africa”. The principal produce of Kano was cotton cloth. Other items from North Africa were also available at the Kurmi market of Kano city. *Wuri* (cowrie shells) was the monetary unit but gold was also used in business transaction. Kano was the “commercial entrepot” of the Hausaland therefore the European imperialists could not ignore it. The purpose of Dr. Barth's visit was to prepare groundwork for the future British colonial occupation of Hausaland.





Kasuwar Kurmi Product



Usman was a very cautious Emir. He delegated most of the administrative responsibilities to his more energetic and intelligent younger brother, *Galadima* Abdullahi, who was also the *Waziri* (the Vizier) (Barth 1890: 494-525). Abdullahi was Dan Buram and promoted to Galadima after the deposition of Sulaiman Ango and Dauda their younger brother was made Dan Buram. His other prominent Chiefs were *Sarkin Bai* Muhammad Kwairanga (who succeeded his father, Mallam Dabo Dambazau), *Madaki* Umaru Nayaya, the historian *Alkalin Kano* Muhammad Zangi, *Sarkin Dawaki* Abdu, *Sarkin Dawaki* Danladan and *Dan Iya* Lawal. He appointed his son Dikko to succeed Mahmud son of Dabo as Ciroma, (Ado-Kurawa 1989, Palmer 1928 and Lovejoy, Mahadi and Mukhtar 1993). He died on Sunday 12th Dhi al-Hajj 1274 AH (August 26, 1855) at Ringim hence he was posthumously called *Maje Ringim* (the one who died at Ringim) (Ado-Kurawa 1989: 58 and Last 1966 and Barth 1890).

