

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF YERWA IN THE 1920s

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Introduction

Yerwa is the last of the Borno capitals. Although established in the first decade of colonial administration, it cannot be compared with the many other towns like Fort Lamy, Jos, Kaduna, Niamey et al. which all developed about the same time.

Colonial interference with the development of Yerwa appears restricted, mainly, to insistence upon wider roads than a Borno town otherwise would have featured and resettlement schemes, e.g. Mafoni, Ari Askeri. The following is based on the premise that as the town - despite time and political circumstances of its emergence - is a distinctive Borno town, also occupational diversification and structure are distinctively related to urban Borno culture.

Uje District and Kalwa

Although the development of Yerwa can mainly be attributed to the fact of it being the seat of traditional government, the needs and concepts of which formed the town, it appears worthwhile to briefly discuss the general situation of Uje District surrounding Yerwa. The district had been reported by Barth as "one of the finest" of Borno. It is not obvious to which extent the colonial administration maintained the boundaries of the old district of which it is sometimes said that it reached as far as Bama. Jajel, Chabol, Fasher, Fariaram, and Fasher Furramari were included in 1918.¹ Uje was bordered in the north by Mongonu, in the east by Mongonu and Konduga, in the south by Marghi and Kaga, and in the west by Kaga and Magumeri. It was divided into four districts:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Ngumati | - the northeastern part, |
| Muna | - east and northeast of Uje Maiduguri, |
| Dalla | - west of Uje Maiduguri, |
| Uje | - the part south and southeast of Uje Maiduguri. |

Sanda Kura, a brother of Shehu Bukar Garbai, was *ajia* ("district headman") since 1915, three *lawan* in Masba, Dalori, and Chobol and 54 *bulama* formed the core of the district's administration. A district map by Patterson of the year 1920 shows another 80 settlements. The population totalled in 1919 59.290 people. It appears from the source that also in the early 1920s in the southern part of Uje, Kanuri only made up for half of the population - the other half being Gamergu. Patterson stresses that industrial activities in the district are - compared to others - an "important economic factor". He mentions dyeing to occupy the first place which correlates with Barth's account as well as with oral traditions of Kalwa. "Weavers and blacksmiths are found in practically every village" (PATTERSON). The only other occupation specifically mentioned is leather work which is visible from the following table.

Table I: Craftsmen in Uje District in 1919

dyers	1104
weavers	538
tanners	53
leatherworkers	39
shoemakers	35
smiths	79
potters	83
bed makers	3
mat makers	1

Besides those craftsmen listed in above table, eight other occupations are recorded like well-diggers, barbers, tailors, carpenters, thread makers, *feifei* makers, hair makers, and *turmi* makers. Within the trading professions, besides the general traders, specialists dealing in cattle, cola, spices, cloth, salt etc. are listed. It appears from the source that altogether 29 different occupations have been followed. We assume that other occupations were those of farmers, *malamma* and many others.

Having had one source only for this brief survey, and that being colonial assessment/report literature, one has to be careful with regard to generalizations and simplifications on the one hand and on the other one may perhaps assume that surveys for the purpose of tax assessment were ambitious with regard to objectivity and completeness *eo ipso*.²

Yerwa

Patterson's special report on Uje District contains an appendix "Note on Shehuri".³ In this note, occupations of the inhabitants are classified as "farmers" and "industrials". The latter comprising traders and craftsmen among whom dyers, blacksmiths, tailors, tanners, and shoemakers are mentioned as being of importance.

Altogether a similar picture like the one of Uje District's occupational

Table II: Occupations in Yerwa in 1924

occupation	total	occupation	total
boys and followers	822	mat makers	23
farmers	772	money lenders	23
<i>mallams</i>	537	blacksmiths	22
tailors	364	bed makers	18
native administration	291	well diggers	16
cloth and gown sellers	232	saddlers	16
labourers	230	cattle dealers	14
traders	223	horse dealers	14
petty traders	178	sheep dealers	12
shoemakers	167	basket makers	11
firewood and grass	156	herdsmen	11
butchers	131	station	11
skin dealers	115	potash sellers	10
dyers and cloth beaters	95	corn dealers	9
nil	90	carpenters	8
builders	84	potters	6
assistants (working followers)	78	money changers	6
tobacco farmers	76	calabash makers	6
beggars	230	<i>numnah</i> makers	6
tanners	52	date sellers	5
hostel keepers	51	medicine sellers	5
barbers	51	chicken farm	4
rope makers	48	food sellers	3
drummers and singers	43	cloth beaters	3
<i>zana</i> makers	39	washerman	3
tobacco sellers	39	skin bottle makers	2
silver smiths	34	cotton spindle makers	2
kola sellers	32	straw hat makers	2
weavers	32	book sellers	2
trading sites	32	pigeon farm	1
scent sellers	30	gunsmiths	1
government	29	gunpowder makers	1
salt sellers	24	ostrich feathers	1

structure appears. Those referred to as farmers obviously did not all own or operate a farm. The farming activities do not seem to have been on a regular basis. Mention is made of the Shehu urging people to start farming.

The next more detailed account on occupations is contained in Tegetmeier's report on Yerwa which was compiled in 1924. Here we find 66 different occupations listed of which number two do not refer to occupations in the strict sense. One category is described as "boys and followers", mostly the clientage or retinue of the Shehu and another category described as "nil".

The development and function of a town⁴ is based on the specialized occupations: artisan, merchant and trader, and farmer. The latter had to produce supplies of food not only for the artisan and merchant groups but also for a fourth, namely the ruling group which comprised of the ruler and his retinue. This might be considered a universal and historical model of urban occupational structure. The ruling group by virtue of its needs maintaining to some extent the artisan, by virtue of its legitimate power guaranteeing necessary exchange between the three specialist groups and by virtue of military strength providing security of markets and roads.

The following classification takes into consideration the above discussed model on the one hand and on the other hand one main objective of this study namely to analyse development and specialization of self-employed professional activities in the town of Yerwa.

On the basis of above, occupations in Yerwa are classified in five groups of which the first three

Artisans - Farmers - Merchants

do not need, at this moment, any further explanation. A fourth group comprises of

Dependent Occupations

those who are not self-employed but earn a salary and those, this is the majority in the 1920s, who are clients of the Shehu or other important families. This group is heterogeneous only to a certain point, given different topical interests it would not suffice. Its members comprise "officials", e.g. the traditional ruler, members of his council, the administrators of the town, their traditional following as well as those who are employed as labourers and messengers with the "Native Administration" and the colonial government. A fifth group is called

Malamma

scholars and practitioners of Islam. Another "group"

Unclassified Occupations

is rather dictated by lack of consistent information than specific characteristics and comprises of the category "nil" of the source.⁵ Under artisans we comprehend those who produce or modify objects by manual means with or without mechanical aids as there are loom or potter's wheel etc. Of the different forms of manufacturing we exclusively concern ourselves with the "artisan" systems, the work of artisans and craftsmen at their homes or in workshops, the latter ones usually being in the market. Other forms like "family-use system" or the different levels of factory manufacture are either not identifiable or not relevant altogether.

Table III: Classified occupations per ward in number of taxed individuals

occupation	Shehuri	Afunori	Mafoni	Zongo	Fezzan	total
artisans	704	117	224	145	71	1261
farmers	689	62	110	84	19	964
merchants/ traders	572	246	182	125	93	1218
dependent occupations <i>malamma</i>	868	250	80	140	34	1372
unclassified occupations	324	75	73	45	20	537
	100	165	43	40	4	352

Our main source for the description of occupations in the early twenties does not allow any conclusion whether artisans worked exclusively in their workshops located in the market or worked outside the market or had a residential workshop and another place in the market. From earlier accounts we know that craftsmen have been working in the market.⁶ MacLeod's brief note on Yerwa's market during February 1911 mentions leather workers, saddlers, smiths - each group working in one place. This latter fact can be observed till our days and obviously has been the same practice in the twenties.⁷

Brick makers, *jalabma* (sg.), are not mentioned which omission may be accounted for by the fact that brick manufacturing was in the process of

being revived. The brass-smith, *kulloma* (sg.), is not listed. From oral traditions recorded, brass-smiths came with Shehu Bukar Garbai from Kukawa. As they are working with silver and brass it can be assumed that the source comprises under "silversmiths" the *kulloma* as well.⁸

Furthermore no mention is made of the goldsmith, *usta* (sg.). The source might be correct in this as according to tradition, goldsmiths only moved to Yerwa in the early fifties. Artisans as discussed above account for 22,2 % of the occupied adults of Yerwa.

The social organization of artisans was closely connected with the overall political leadership in Borno. A chief was appointed by the Shehu to a specific craft. He received the title of *zanna*, *mala*, *kazalla* or *mai*. The influence obtained with appointment and title was not restricted to the town only but extended all over Borno.

The system was hierarchic, the chiefs received their legitimation from

Table IV: Artisans in Yerwa in 1924 occupation

Occupation	Total	Occupation	Total
tailors	364	bed makers	18
shoemakers, <i>sunoma</i> (sg)	167	well diggers, <i>baramma</i> (sg)	16
butchers	131	saddlers	16
dyers and cloth beaters, <i>alinma</i> (sg)	95	basket makers	11
builders, <i>kattima</i> (sg)	84	carpenters	8
assistants	78	potters	6
tanners, <i>mundulma</i> (sg)	52	calabash carvers, <i>komosoma</i> (sg)	6
barbers, <i>wanzama</i> (sg)	51	<i>numnah</i> makers	6
rope makers, <i>jema</i> (sg)	48	cloth beathers	3
drummers and singers	43	skin bottle makers	2
<i>zana</i> makers	39	cotton spindle makers	2
silversmiths	34	gunsmiths	1
weavers	32	gunpowder maker	1
mat makers	23		
blacksmiths, <i>kagelma</i> (sg)	222		

the sovereign system. Artisan organizations can be seen as an instrument of administrative integration of a not necessarily ethnically defined group into loyalty towards the ruler. This loyalty primarily was guaranteed through religion, ethnicity, and residence. The social organization concept of which we have sketched essentially belongs to the past.⁹ Tegetmeier states under the heading "Trade Headmen" that "the custom for every trade or occupation to have a headman" has been discontinued. He adds that most trades not even have a "nominal headman". The latter statement might be correct with regard to specialized trades which then had emerged as well as to a rather biased classification than an

investigative one. It certainly excludes artisan groups which still have at least a "nominal" leader.

Tegetmeier's brief notes on social organizational aspects of artisans also state that an appointment was given by the Shehu and that a badge of office was given "usually in the form of a bangle". The only artisan group leader mentioned is Malla Adam. "He is privileged to make the Shehu's seals and rings but enjoys no other advantages beyond the dignity of his rank."¹⁰

In the previous chapter we briefly discussed the individual wards of Yerwa. The description of artisan activities now allows to substantiate the special situation of each ward with regard to its occupations.

Out of the twenty-eight artisan specializations, twenty-five are represented in Shehuri of which number thirteen concentrate in a majority (over 50%) in this ward. Two reasons seem to account for this: firstly, Shehuri by then was larger in size than the other four wards together, nine times the size of Fezzan and four to five times the size of the other three wards. Secondly, the presence of the royal *oikos* with its needs and demands might additionally account for this concentration. Afunori, Mafoni, and Zongo display on the whole a similar situation in the number of crafts not represented. Afunori features a majority concentration of crafts. The only ward which offers a straight opposite picture is Fezzan. Out of all the artisan specializations only eight are represented here. Again, the size of the ward is accountable but more significant is the preoccupation of this ward's inhabitants with trade.

Diachronical profiles of four crafts in Borno.

Rope makers:

Rope making as a professional occupation in Borno is usually associated with the blind. The tradition as preserved among the rope makers of Yerwa¹¹ connects the beginning of this craft with Gazargamo and a blind leader with the title of a *mai* and the name Barra Baharemi.¹² All the leaders of the *sanya* of rope making in Kukawa and the subsequent capitals of Borno are remembered. The present holder of this title is Abacha Kingimi. His immediate predecessor was Mai Ali Kumbude. Mai Abacha resides in Mafoni (sub-section Mafoni) and came with his people to Yerwa from the village of Dala, west of Yerwa.

Rope, *je*, is made of *ngarai* (hemp, *Hibiscus cannabinus*) and of *ngelai*, leaves or strips thereof of *ganga* (Dum palm, *Hyphaene thebaica*) and *kerzem* (Deleb palm, *Bopassus aethiopum*). The spectrum of rope products as claimed by the rope makers is subject to decline as fewer animals are kept in the town and as modes of transport over the last decades have changed from animals of burden to motor vehicles and with the latter, traditional containers are being replaced by the ubiquitous

plastic bags and cartons. Products for the keep of animals like *zar* (reigns for a horse), *nzamba* (muzzle), all sorts of special ropes for leading and hobbling animals (*matabu*, *daturam*, *marbi*, *dulo*) and ropes for fixing loads on to animals of burden or making bags (*kaila*, a rope from bark of a plant or *taitai*, a rope used especially to tie slabs of potash and pots) have been the main items. The list of rope products described above could be extended.¹³ The whole spectrum reflects an economy within which up-keep of animals, trade, and transport have been significant.

The rope makers have stalls at Yerwa's Monday Market as have other craftsmen. Supposedly for convenience these are outside the market, around the northeastern entrance. It appears from the rope makers' oral record that they have not always been selling at the market but that they moved there only after a time of intensive business contacts with companies and traders, dealing in hides and skins. The rope makers speak of thousands of ropes which they had to supply on a regular basis.

Besides rope making, begging for alms has always been an additional means of securing livelihood. In their own understanding it was their leader in Gazargamo, Mai Barra Baharemi who taught the blind people the craft in order not to be dependent on charity.

The general decline in production is shared with other traditional crafts. What appears as a remarkable difference between the rope makers and other craftsmen in Yerwa is their organization. It has been mentioned that the leader received the title of *mai* which is the case in some other crafts as well. The *mai*, who is appointed by the Shehu in his own right appoints the *waziri*, *wakil*, *legali*, *mukkadam*, *diguma*, *zaifata*, *mala*, *yerima*, *shettima*, *kaigamma*, et al.

The list of titles includes a *galtima*, residing in Nguru, one *yerima* in Damasak, one *zanna* in Mongonu, and one *mala* in Kukawa. It is a largely historical claim of other crafts as well that the leader in Yerwa is recognized by all craftsmen in Borno.

Female title holders are the *gumsu*, *mairam*, *magaram*, and *duoma*.¹⁴ Two institutionalized meetings are held weekly - on Tuesdays and Saturdays, during which the *mai* sits alone in a small side room, partly concealed from the meeting room by a curtain. He does not speak himself to the congregation but *waziri* Mai Bukar sometimes after a low voice consultation with the *mai* Abacha. All the other titled craftsmen sit around the *waziri* in the meeting room. Women do not participate. The protocol distinctively recalls what, supposedly, also has been the protocol of the Sayfawa court.

Well diggers:

The different types of wells and well-like whaterholes let appear two things obvious: well digging was a highly specialized profession on the

one hand, and on the other hand simple wells could be dug by every able person. The deep well, *baram*, was the work of the professional well digger, *matarema*.¹⁵ The *matarema* usually does not work alone. Depending on the depth of the well to be dug, he has two or three helpers. Their main tool is the *zagir*, a spade-like shovel of about 70 cm length of which the blade is approximately 30 cm and the wooden handle about 40 cm long. The soil is lifted by means of a wooden bowl, *buguru*. The walls of the well, the shaft, are lined with wood and mats. The workers have access to the dug out soil by a rope ladder, *fur barambe*. Deep wells are those above 30 m what in Borno has not been unusual.¹⁶ It could take several months to complete a well if the circumstances were difficult, while a well in Gwange of about 18 m took three workers six days. Traditions told about well digging do mention special danger from collapsing walls as well as, partly due to this, about many deaths. Before work began, a ram was sacrificed where the well was to be dug and citations from the Qur'an were read.

Sunabayas, a village in Mafe District, and Forram, in Magumeri District, seem to have a special reputation for skillful well diggers. Although there is by appointment of the Shehu a headship within the profession, it appears that the title of *kachalla* is only a nominal one.¹⁷

Besides the *baram* there is the *kotara*, a draw well and the *soa*.¹⁸ The latter is not deep and every year is dug near rivers. The same refers to shallow waterholes which are dug near a river or in the dry riverbed, like *daidai*, *ceceno*, and *ngaljam*.

The distinctive technology, well adapted to ecology and economy, was in the thirties succeeded by a policy of well-sinking along main roads and in administrative centres. These cement lined wells were sunk at great administrative and technological expenses. Their depths of about 100 m and more proved too deep to draw water for herds.¹⁹

Brick makers and builders:

Before discussing the professions of the *kattima*, the builder, and the different specialists involved in the brick complex, a few remarks on traditional architecture and settlements should be made:

One of the characteristics of pre-colonial Borno architecture is a diversity in form, material, and technology. This diversity is socially and culturally significant and as such not confined to the different types of settlements. These are the *birnyi*, the large town, the capital, and the political centre. Although *birnyi* can mean large town in general, it appears that it has been and is to a fairly exclusive extent applied to the Sayfawa towns Gazargamo and Kafela. *B@la* means town in general. Kukawa, although the centre of political power in the 19th century, is not referred to as *birnyi* but as Kukawa, which name might be abbreviated from *b@5la* Kukawa. The two twin towns of Kukawa after the middle of

the 19th century were known as *b @la futebe*, the western town, and *b @la gedibe*, the eastern town.

Distinct from the *b @la* in size, defense system, economy, and settlement continuity is the *b @ladega*, the village. In these three different settlements, principally the same architectural forms have been co-existent with one notable exception: the brick-built compound of the mai or high functionaries of Sayfawa rule in the *birnyi* or in another town. The royal compound, it appears, has in some cases not been connected with a settlement at all. These latter structures are mostly referred to as palaces.²⁰

There is no distinctive town architecture, even if it is only to mean the prevalence of e.g. mud-built houses. Speaking of town architecture, the discrepancy comes to mind which exists between the brick structures in Gazargamo and the earthen rampart of 6,28 km length, in its sheer size magnificent but, nevertheless, lacking any indication of structural sophistication.²¹ This is the more surprising as Borno towns are of great antiquity and, this refers especially to Gazargamo, yielded great political and economical influence.

What has been said about towns refers to palaces as well. Comparing the three royal compounds of Gazargamo, Gambaru, and Machina,²² one has to realize that not a building is referred to but a fortified system of courtyards and corridors with most likely one double storey house in approximately the centre. The larger courtyards supposedly were built up with *njim*, the round hut, the lower part of which is made of *segdi* mats and the roof of grass or the *bongo*, the round hut with walls and a grass roof. One of the courtyards, usually close to the entrance, is always referred to as *muli* or the mews.

These palaces with regard to their use of burnt bricks are an example of adapting a complex technology to the cultural, social, and economic needs of those who commissioned them. Palaces are *eo ipso* but the use of bricks as well appears to be a monopoly of the Sayfawa for which last not least accounts the discontinuity of brick-making in the 19th century.

Brick makers:

Production and use of burnt bricks must be considered one of the older industrial occupations in Borno.²³ The origin, the social organization of workers and the technology by which bricks were made and laid are only reconstructable by oral tradition, by retrospective conclusions based on observation of contemporary brick-making, and data from archaeological sites.

The name for brick in Borno is *jalab*. This name is in most traditions linked with the Jallaba, as people from east of Borno were called, who supposedly introduced this technology. Other tradition insists that

specialists from Tripolis had been invited to build e.g. Gambaru.²⁴ The question about the origin of brick technology is not important *per se* but derives its legitimacy from what appears an exclusive use of this technology by the Sayfawa.

In a synopsis of crafts in Borno, brick-making and brick-laying occupy a special place. Not only for reasons of its antiquity and special association with a ruling dynasty, but even more by the complex nature of the art.²⁵

Whether the production of bricks and their application to buildings have ever been two or one specialized profession(s) is unknown. Contemporary understanding suggest rather two different professions. The *jalabma*, the brick maker, is not a builder. Bricks are made where clay, sand, and water are found. The clay mixture is rolled in the sand before it is slapped in the mould (*mol* or *jalab kamtaram*). The mould is removed and the brick is left to dry for approximately five days. The firing is done in kilns and clamps. Kilns are exclusively used in the Metropolitan Brickyard, the successor to the Native Administration Brickyard which was started after the first decade of colonial rule. Clamps are used outside the brickyard by "contractors".²⁶ The quality of the bricks fired in kilns and clamps differs considerably. Those in the clamps are partially underfired or less sufficiently fired.²⁷ The workers in the brickyard are employed by the Metropolitan Council. Most of them claim descent from Liberty Village which was, before 1942, located in the closest vicinity. Accordingly most of them reside today in Gambaru. The manager who works there in the second generation is of Shuwa origin. The "private contractors" originate partly from outside Nigeria, others are from Borno. Their helpers are exclusively seasonal migrants from Cameroun.²⁸ So far a brief sketch of contemporary brick works.²⁹

It has been said above, the tradition of brick work discontinued in the early 19th century. There are possible restrictions to be made. The burial places of the 19th century *shehus* in the palace of *b@la gedibe*, the eastern town of Kukawa, were built of burnt bricks. Oral traditions which insist on these bricks having been carried from Gazargamo are not consistent with results of analytical investigations.³⁰ There is no surface evidence of the production and use of burnt bricks in Kafela, the last capital of the Sayfawa. However, there is the brick site of Garu Kime, southwest of Kafela. The vicinity of Garu Kime to Kafela and the absence of any data are not considered arguments for Garu Kime being a Sayfawa site in the beginning of the 19th century. The latter being a remote possibility is just to qualify the statement of a discontinued technology.

Soon after Shehu Bukar Garbai had completed his move from Kukawa to Kalwa, brick work was taken up again under British supervision. The first brickyard was close to Yerwa (opposite the Post Office and

Provincial Office) and in 1935 moved to its present site, south of the Women Teachers College.

One of the first buildings was "the Shehu's brick house". The work was, in fact, executed by artisans from the coast.³¹ Tradition and technology reflect this new impact, the name for the bricklayer is *birikila*, the Kanuri name of *jalab tandoma* is, though understood, not used.

To conclude the discussion of brick industries, the attempt is made to review the pre-nineteenth century brick work. The size of bricks varies slightly between samples measured.³² Often the proportions relate to the formula 1:2:4 (Gazargamo, Garumele, and Machina samples). These proportions relate to the size of the human hand.³³ Thus, it was possible to lay the brick with one hand. It is obvious that moulds were used. More difficult is the question with regard to the modes of firing. One tradition suggests that a sort of kiln was used, built of *tubali*.³⁴ But microscopic observation on "colour, amount of preserved organic material, porosity, and mineralogical composition"³⁵ suggest different temperature and firing periods which all comply easier with other firing technologies than a kiln.

The discontinuity of brick making in the 19th century and the re-introduction of some in the early 20th century must have modified and distorted the traditional knowledge. But, nevertheless, it remains a contrast between the high social prestige invested in a brick building and the numerous traditions associating these with the Sayfawa rulers on the one hand and the little what is known about the makers. Traditions speak of a *mai jalabvube*, the leader of the brick makers in Gazargamo, what is practically all. One feels tempted to attribute also the labour of making and laying bricks to foreigners or slaves which could account for lack of own traditions. As much as the 20th century staffing of brick work would support this hypothesis, the 19th century in Borno with its ultimate interference from outside and all its social and economical impact could equally well account for the discontinuity of a special technology.

The builder: The verb which describes the activity of building *tandeskin* is translated by Lukas with "to compose".³⁶ It relates to building of walls, houses, pots, and to weaving of mats. The *garu tandoma*, the wall builder, and the *katti tandoma*, the mud builder, are both referred to as *kattima*. This latter term is more used today. The semantic association with pottery is justified by the technology.

Mud (*katti*), grass, and water are mixed and left for two or three days. This procedure is repeated. The mixture is used directly. The portion of the mixture which the *kattima* holds in two hands is rolled in the sand before being shaped in the wall. When the wall reaches the height of one foot, it is left to dry for two days, after the wall has reached three feet, the structure is left for three days to dry. The rectangular house, *soro*, is roofed with wooden beams, covered with mats on which a layer of *katti* is put, grass and again *katti*. The plastering of the walls is done with a mixture of *katti* and dung.

It appears that the traditional Borno mud architecture did not apply *tubali*, although they are known and, of course, have been built with. Colonial sources state that not only the first *birikila* were craftsmen from outside Borno, but also builders of the first non-domestic buildings, the mosque, were sent from Katsina or Katagum.³⁷ Whether this decision was based on ignorance of the British administration about the situation of building crafts or whether this indicates a deficiency in manpower and experience with regard to more elaborate non-domestic architecture is difficult to decide. This is the more the case as it is not known whether the great buildings of Kukawa and Dikwa have been built by *kattima* or by foreign artisans. The latter cannot be excluded as there were no boundaries in the overall restrictive sense as they were imposed in the beginning of the 20th century.

Farmers

Farmers account for 15,3% of the citizenry. The vast majority of them (87%) had their residence in Shehuri. This time it is not the size of Shehuri's population which accounts for these figures but the fact that Shehuri developed around the hamlets of Kalwa. For this reason no statement can be made to which extent this percentage of resident peasants in a town could be considered a typical feature of Borno towns or whether it is an accidental coincidence of a capital town emerging on the strata of farming hamlets. Guinea corn, maize, and sorghum were planted after the rains. The cultivation of a tobacco plant, the red blossoms of which (*fura*, sg.) are chewed by women whose teeth become stained a dark red colour, was of great importance.

"Formerly the headmen exercised great influence in this industry and, owning large farms themselves, restricted the area under tobacco cultivation and the amount of flowers marketed. Today they only arrange the tobacco sales, which are very carefully organized. Each day of the week is allotted to a number of growers who are not allowed to sell their produce on any other day. The flower is brought to certain fixed places and disposed of to the retailers who are waiting for it. Tobacco flowers are bought by practically every woman in the town and its cultivation is an important local industry."³⁸

The source has classified those as farmers who live principally of farming including side activities as occasional grass selling, *zana* mat making (*zana*, H.) etc. Small scale farming in addition to a principal trade or occupation was widespread but is not recorded in detail.

The keeping of livestock in town or at least livestock owned by residents and kept at near-by farm places was common.

The source lists eleven herdsmen among the occupations of Yerwa.

Table V: Livestock in Yerwa (39)

	Shehuri	Afunori	Maifoni	Zongo	Fezzan	Total
cattle	480	48	130	44	49	751
mares	48	11	26	11	2	98
stallions	589	85	57	59	54	844
donkeys	472	113	152	56	52	845
goats	1237	157	298	114	101	1907
sheep	846	152	221	105	79	1403
camels	28	-	-	-	24	52

Given a fairly high degree of terminological inaccuracy there could be resident pastoralists. This assumption is confirmed to some extent as jangali obviously has been collected in Yerwa (a sum about 4% of the general tax). Jangali derived mainly from Shehuri and Mafoni wards, both also the residences of the herdsmen.

Merchants and Traders

This category comprises of all those whose occupation is trade and whose work is connected with trade, such as hostel keepers, money changers and money lenders.

It is obvious that this group is heterogeneous. It includes the wealthiest of Yerwa's citizens as there were Kiari Kurda and the Tripolitans Ahmed Al-Baff and Yussuf Duweir.⁴⁰

Not only a great difference in the standard of wealth has to be attributed to this group of merchants and traders but also a wide spectrum of trading activities: from the sale of food and commodities obtained from the town's environment to long-distance-trade. The latter clearly shows the effect of the imposition of colonial administration and boundaries. No trade with the north is mentioned at all as it was the case in the early years of this century.⁴¹ Besides the Tripolitan group three of the merchants appear to originate from Bilma. Among the trade destinations of the "leading traders" (TEGETMEIER) figure Wadai, Kano, Lagos, Ilorin, Bida, and Nile markets. The latter destination refers to only one of the merchants.

As early as May 1902, I. R. Cochrane, Acting Resident of Borno, had complained to Lugard about the insecurity of the eastern boundary and its implications for the trade. The High Commissioner's answer stated that such a concern is absurd as trade should remain in the British territory.⁴² Despite of this ruling, trade connections with the lands east of Borno never ceased.

At several occasions Tripolitans have been mentioned. It appears that a

Table VI: Trades in Yerwa in 1924

Occupation	Total	Occupation	Total
cloth and gown sellers	232	cattle dealers	14
traders	223	horse dealers	14
petty traders	178	sheep dealers	12
firewood and grass sellers	156	potash sellers	10
skin dealers	115	corn dealers	9
hostel keepers	51	money changers	6
tobacco sellers	39	date sellers	5
kola sellers	32	medicine sellers	5
trading sites	32	food sellers	3
scent sellers	30	straw hats	2
salt sellers	24	book sellers	2
money lenders	23	ostrich feather sellers	1

number of them in the twenties have been involved in the Wadai trade, buying cattle there and selling in Kano, Ilorin, and Lagos "the whole transaction being carried out by themselves and without the intervention of any broker or middlemen" (TEGETMEIER).

Others of this still very influential group by this time had obviously become agents of other Tripolitans in Kano and Lagos. Again, another part of them had taken to open canteens in Yerwa.

"There are about a dozen Tripolitan canteens in Yerwa. The bulk of their stock is cloth and scent but sugar, soap, clocks, sweets, olive oil, cloves, looking glasses etc. are usually included. They also stock articles supposed to be Tripolitan ware, such as silk gowns and silver saddlery, but as they inform me that they obtain these items from Lagos, they may be of British manufacture."⁴³

Fezzan Ward in the twenties seems to have been the richest of the quarters of Yerwa with approximately 4,5 % of the male population contributing approximately 10 % of the general tax revenue.

This despite the fact that this group of traders, through colonial interference, had been cut off from what supposedly for centuries had been *raison d'être* for their life in Borno and their part in and contribution to Borno economy.⁴⁴ The traders so far mentioned have been residents of

Yerwa. But a considerable part of the trade was carried on by Hausawa. They came with donkey caravans from Kano and most of them stayed between two and six months in Yerwa and returned with new stock to their home markets.

During the time a trader from outside Borno spent in Yerwa, he stayed

Table VII: Hostels and their capacities in Yerwa in 1924

	Shehuri	Afunori	Mafoni	Zongo	Fezzan
number of hotels	1	21	1	6	4
„huts“	17	402	8	59	33

in a hostel, the majority of which were located in Afunori and Zongo Wards. It seems that no rent was charged but that payment was based on merchandise sold as well as bought for the home journey.

"A hostel keeper will, for example, receive six pence for every gown the trader sells, three pence for each length of cloth and 1% on kola nuts. The latter, known as fatomarum, is paid in kind and a particularly good nut is selected. The trader is accompanied to the market by an agent of the hostel keeper who keeps a careful check on his sales. A stranger also pays to the hostel keeper two pence on each price of cloth he buys in the European canteens. The hostel keeper also receives commission on the merchandise in which a trader invests his money on leaving Yerwa, usually obtaining 2/6 - 3/- per head of cattle, 1/- per horse, and 1/- per donkey."⁴⁵

The hostel keeper not only provided accommodation but often also had own stalls in the market for his clients. A continuous patronage of one hostel by the trader obviously was as common as the fact that special hostels were exclusively visited by traders and travellers from one particular area or ethnic group.

The source does not specify what "hut" stands for. Whether it is accommodation for one single person or for one traveller or trader and his apprentice, relative, or companion what seems more likely. What is important is the capacity of the town to accommodate strangers and in the same instance to facilitate trade exchange.

Dependent Occupations

The extremely heterogeneous character of this group had been pointed out. The largest group of all, not really an occupational group as the majority within it is just not occupied in our sense, is characterized by two different types of dependency. The first one would be employment for salary or wage. Employers were the Native Administration and the Government - both employing administrative and clerical staff, teachers,

health workers, technical staff, and labourers. Employment within the private sector is not conclusive from the source. This part of the group which is tentatively named "dependent occupations" is about 37% of the whole.

The major part are what the colonial source terms "boys and followers", a term which was continuously used till the forties. What is meant are the followers, the retinue, the clientel of the traditional ruler. This included the descendants of the Kanemi family, descendants of the families of leaders and administrators of the old Borno State and of slaves holding important court or administrative positions. The source comprises under the heading "boys and followers" only those who depend for their livelihood on support from the Shehu or others, not those - although nominally members of this group - who are employed or support themselves by farming. The source takes a negative attitude towards this group, discarding the social, historical legacy which it represents. It cannot be the objective of this study to justify kingship with its social and economical implications but to understand processes of social change and adaptation of traditional pre-colonial government and administration to "indirect rule" which prepared the way for the constitutionally confined monarchy.

Malamma

Besides the artisans, farmers, merchants, and traders, and dependent occupations, Koranic teachers and scholars form a distinctive group. Not counting itinerant *malamma* in 1924 there have been 537 resident teachers and scholars of Islam in Yerwa or 9,6% of the male resident population. Their duties were mainly connected with religious instruction and ceremony. 53 schools for instruction of children were maintained and a few of the *malamma* ran schools exclusively for the benefit of other *malamma*.

"After about three years study a boy is considered to become a mallam and after ten years he is supposed to have considerable learning and be skilled in the writing of charms and remedies for the sick and troubled. While studying the boys live by begging and at dusk their cries for alms echo through the town as they wander from door to door. Many mallams detail to each boy every morning the amount he is to bring in that day. The boys endeavour to earn the money by begging and by carrying loads to and from the market. Corporal punishment is administered to defaulters. Mallams who farm obtain all the labour they require from their boys. A conspicuous sign of every school is the ashes of the bonfire by the light of which the boys read their prayer boards until the late hours of the night."⁴⁶

The majority of the *malamma* earned their livelihood by leading prayers at religious ceremonies and administering charms. Some of the "leading mallams" (Tegetmeier) had held offices in the Native Administration

before and some like Mallam Bello and Mallam Abdulahi were on their way to Mecca when asked by Shehu Bukar Garbai to stay.⁴⁷

Yerwa has been a cosmopolitan town from point of view of its resident population and perhaps even more so if one considers the thousands of pilgrims and merchants visiting the town annually. Although most of the *malamma* lived in Shehuri Ward and, presumably, have been Kanuri, it appears that ethnicity played a minor role in comparison to other groups. Many of the most reputable *malamma* were Hausawa, Fulbe or Shuwa.

Conclusion

The early twenties are in yet another aspect significant. Borno Province was only about to become part of Nigeria. The first motorcar had arrived in 1917 and the first plane was to land on the polo field in the Government Residential Area in 1926. The development of Yerwa from 1907 and the unfolding of occupations with their numerical and functional relationship can, therefore, not be attributed to new external stimuli but to internal traditions and needs. The largest single category of occupation we had classified as dependant - unproductive in economical terms with the exception of those who engaged in the nascent bureaucracies of Emirate Council and Government. Though unproductive, this group gave legitimacy and status to others: the nominal title for the leader of a particular craft, safety for the itinerant *malam* and trader and for his goods were guaranteed by the traditional ruler and his ever large following. The group of specialists/artisans/craftsmen depended on market for supply of raw materials and patronage of court and citizens alike.

There is only a small numerical difference between the above two groups and the one of merchants and traders which points at significance per se. The economic importance of this group has, however, to be seen in the light of itinerant merchants whom to accommodate Yerwa possessed quite a capacity. One is tempted to identify trade as the thriving economic force in the development of Borno's last capital: this being both historical legacy and adaptation to the "optimal zone: the West African savanna" (CONNAH).

The group of farmers includes, supposedly, the residents of the former Kalwa hamlets. Many of high rank had statutory access to farmland and labour. It appears the agricultural needs of Yerwa in the 1920s, with its about 15.000 inhabitants, still could draw from pre-colonial land use and production patterns.

The significance of religion, of scholarship of Islam is reflected in the specialist group of *malamma*. Nearly ten percent of the male residents

were *malamma*.⁴⁸ In addition to the routine links and duties of this group with the court it appears that also the traditional ruler took personal interest in encouraging learned scholars to take up residence in Maiduguri which soon became a place where pilgrims called on their way to Mecca: at first in Afonori and in the early twenties a pilgrims' camp was built outside Yerwa (later followed by three others).

The occupational structure: necessary interdependence and interaction of occupational groups, the market as place for all and the linkages with markets far away, a multi-ethnic population and a legitimate traditional government have been the constituent elements in the development of Yerwa.

NOTES

1. Patterson, Report on Uje, NAK SNP 10 698/1921
2. Hausa has quickly gained influence as lingua franca: note the use of *faifai* (H) instead of *felai* (K) and *turmi* (H) instead of *kur* (K), the production of the latter would have been the work of the Kurma. The use of terms *lakka* and *nauro* for "ward of a town" has never been observed and seems to have been abandoned in favour of *ungwa*, pl. *ungwoyi* (H) or the English word "ward". In the comments on Tegetmeier's report the advice is found to make use of English terms. Although we are referring to a report of four years earlier, the same inaccuracy occurs, e.g. leather worker (*njirima* K): no indication is given whether this includes or excludes *kerwima*, the maker of large leather bags of cow hide, the *naeraema*, the maker/seller of goat skins for water etc. LUKAS (1937) mentions ten different types of footwear, all of these the work of the shoemaker (*sunoma*):

<i>sunu wangara</i>	- sandal of cow hide;
<i>sunu balga</i>	- flat leather sandal;
<i>sunu babus</i>	- slipper;
<i>sewade</i>	- hide-shoe of lower classes;
<i>mashayi</i>	- short leather boot for cold season;
<i>markub</i> (Ar.)	- oval-shaped leather shoe for old people;
<i>kup</i>	- short, leathern riding boot;
<i>mesek</i>	- woman's leather shoe;
<i>sogorok</i>	- high wooden sandal;
<i>felefele</i>	- low wooden sandal of the Shuwa for rainy season;
<i>sunu kuntura</i>	- (mentioned by Tijani, 1981)
3. It appears that in 1919/1920 the name of Shehuri was still frequently used along with Yerwa
4. cf MABOGUNJE, 1968
5. USMAN (1981:60) identifies six different occupational groups in Katsina of the late 18th century: farmers, pastoralists, artisans, merchants, officials, and intelligentsia. This classification is largely congruent with ours. Pastoralists are as a residential group in the town, if identifiable at all, insignificant, "intelligentsia" could supposedly also read "ulama" and "officials", rulers and administration.
6. MACLEOD, 1912:245

7. For more discussion about the importance of markets in the formation of specialized crafts reference is made to Seidensticker, 1983
8. Reference is made to critical discussion of source above; although there is the profession of the silver smith, *livelama*, mentioned in Lukas (1937), I have never been able to meet a single representative of this craft; it seems that silverworks have been important part of the profession of the *kulloma*.
9. cf craft profiles below
10. Tegetmeier, Report on the Town of Yerwa, NAK 117/1925
11. Fieldnotes 1972, 1979; questions during the interview of September 1979 were mainly answered by *waziri* Mai Bukar Mallambe.
12. The pronunciation also could be transcribed as Baraba Haremi; the successors of mai Barra Baharemi are named Mai Terami and Mai Mommodu Faunarammi.
13. *Kolto*, a rope for drawing water from the well, also *Je barambe*; a rope to tie hides and skins, also used to tie kola nuts wrapped in leaves; *dabfala*, especially for calves to prevent them from feeding; *njedi*, *kodum*, *damba* refer to rope-based containers of different sorts.
14. cf NUR ALKALI 1983:125; no meaning of *dooma* has been obtained.
15. Although not in Lukas (1937), the term *baramma*, well digger, exists. Modu Baramma, a well digger in Limanti Ward of Yerwa informed me that the *matarema* digs the deep wells (40 - 80 yards) and the *baramma* the ones which are not as deep (4 - 10 yards). The contradiction, namely that *matarema* digs the *baram* and not the *baramma*, is noted.
There are two other terms for the deep well, *kolkol* and *kataqar*. Both correspond with the names for *Acacia senegal* or *melliflora* (*kolkol*) and *Combretus hypopilium* (*katagar*).
16. Fieldnotes; cf CONNAH 1981:249
17. About the function of the *kachella* Modu Baramma stated:
 1. the Shehu contacts all well diggers through the *kachella*;
 2. it appears that the *kachella* has a special responsibility in case of any accident while digging a well;
 3. it appears as well that the title is for the whole of Borno.
18. Both terms are given by Lukas (1937); so as a type of well was not mentioned by Modu Baramma also not *kofara*. The latter one was mentioned by Ibrahim Walad.
19. NAK Maiprof 2716
20. Recent observations, however, suggest settlement activities as both sites of Lergam and Gambaru - and particularly Gambaru - feature a scatter of potsherds whether concurrent with the habitation of the royal compound or not. cf SEIDENSTICKER, 1983, 1991, fieldnotes 1992
21. The walls of the *birane* of Hausa land are partly or even to a greater part built with *tubali*, the cone-shaped sun-dried brick.
22. The three structures originate from different periods of Borno history. While Gazargamo and Gambaru are ruins, the palace in Machine is still used by the Mai Machinama, whose ancestors supposedly have been vassal kings to the Sayfawa. Hence the attempt to use the Machina palace as an interpretative model for the understanding of architectural remains of the two others.
23. cf. SEIDENSTICKER, 1980; cf. SEIDENSTICKER et al., 1982
24. Fieldnotes

25. This could rather suggest to treat the entire complex not under artisan work but under a sort of factory system. It is included here as brick industry is considered a "character fossil" of Borno culture history.
26. These were referred to by the workers of brickyard as *talaga*, commoners. The writer cannot resist the temptation to interpret this statement as a reflex of a remote knowledge of a once exclusive occupation.
27. O'BRIEN, 1969, estimates that of 100.000 bricks over 50 % are underfired and/or break when dry and in the process of firing.
28. Fieldnotes, 1978
29. In recent years two modern brickyards have opened north of Yerwa. Brickyards and brickfield have been located in the valley of the Bagazume, south of Yerwa.
30. SEIDENSTICKER et.al., Zaria Archaeology Papers, vol IV, 1982:15
31. NAK SNP 7 1090/1911
32. SEIDENSTICKER, 1976
33. cf JANSEN, 1982:54
34. Fieldnotes
35. Seidensticker et.al., Zaria Archaeology Papers, vol. IV, 1982:15
36. Lukas (1937):

<i>nje tandoma</i> (= <i>njema</i>)	the potter;
<i>bazam tandoma</i> (= <i>bazamma</i>), <i>bazam</i>	high vessel of clay to keep corn and also furnace;
 <i>beji tandoma</i> , <i>beji</i>	 mat.
37. NAK/SNP 7 1024/1908; NAK/SNP 7 4188/1908; Palmer had sent builders from Katsina; the other source mentions the mosque being completed by mid-1908 by builders from Katagum.
38. Tegetmeier, op. cit.
39. The number of cattle given for Fezzan is in document 349 which is not congruent with *jangali* and total sum. It must read 49 rather.
40. The source does not mention any estimate of an annual income but the tax which was drawn from the three merchants, namely L 8,--. To appreciate the extreme wealth which is signified by this amount, attention could be given to a list of estimated maximum annual income of 1944, NAK/Maiprof 3064: of 68 different occupations only 28 had an income over L 8,-.
41. In December 1902 a caravan from Kawar arrived at Mongonu, SNP 15/1 Borno Rep. no. 3, and about 1904 ALEXANDER (1907:269) reports a trade caravan in Maiduguri.
42. NAK/SNP 15/1
43. TEGETMEIER, op. cit.
44. About seven European trade firms had in the early twenties settled in or applied for trading plots: Niger Company Ltd.; Paterson, Zochonis and Co.; A.J. Tangalakis and Co.; L. Ambrosini; Tin Areas of Nigeria Ltd.; G.B. Ollivant and Co., Ltd.; London and Kano Trading Ltd. (NAK Maiprof 1093).
45. TEGETMEIER, op. cit.
46. TEGETMEIER, op. cit.
47. Between 1904 and 1910 more than 10.000 pilgrims passed through Borno Province on their way to Mecca and in the same time about 1.000 returned from Mecca; since 1907 all were registered in Yerwa. The number, presumably, was higher as only three Annual Reports and one Quarterly Report could be consulted.

48. A survey of occupations in 1972 revealed that while the population had increased to about 150,000 and the occupational spectrum changed, the ulama still occupied 10 % of the population; author, unpublished.

NB. For the spelling of Kanuri names Lukas has been largely referred to. The author regrets that neither the Standard Kanuri Orthography nor the Dictionary of the Kanuri Language, both by Norbert Cyffer and John Hutchison, were at hand when final revision was under way.

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