

(DRAFT)

**RIBATS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANTATIONS IN THE SOKOTO
CALIPHATE: A CASE STUDY OF FANISAU**

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Ribat, in the context of the Sokoto Caliphate, is a walled military settlement established for defending and protecting the frontiers and settled agricultural hinterland of any major population center.¹ This type of institution is also well known in the history of Islam. Indeed, the ninth century has been identified as the “golden age” of classic *ribat* construction in the early Muslim world, and at this period several of these structures were established in areas such as North Africa, central Asia and the Byzantine. After this early “golden age,” *ribats* continued to be built in Muslim societies but it was only during the nineteenth century that they became widespread in *kasar Hausa* or what became known as the Sokoto caliphate.² Evidently, the leaders of this Muslim state, apparently the largest state in nineteenth century West Africa, derived the inspiration to foster the expansion of *ribats* in their community from the history and textbooks of the Muslim conquest of Persia, Syria, and North Africa.³

Most writers who have studied the Sokoto caliphate or any unit thereof have recognized the significant existence of *ribats* or at least the importance of these establishments to the state. However, majority of them “devote no more than a paragraph

¹ See John E. Philips, “Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate: Selected Studies, 1804-1903” (Ph.D. dissertation University of California, 1992),? , and Sean Stilwell, “?????” in Paul E. Lovejoy, ed., *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam* (Princeton, NJ., Markus Wiener, 2004),

² Nasiru Ibrahim Dantiye, “A Study of the Origins, Status and Defensive Role of Four Kano Frontier Strongholds (Ribats) in the Emirate Period (1809-1903)” (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1985).

³ Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London, 1967),

or two to this crucially important aspect of the caliphate's defensive strategy, with passing remarks on how the system worked in the emirates."⁴ Of the relatively few works that provide better insights into the *ribat* system of the caliphate, most have been primarily concerned with other themes while majority of these studies do not also acknowledge the close relationship between *ribats* and the development of plantations.⁵ For instance, in his major works on the Sokoto caliphate, Murray Last traced the development of *ribats* in metropolitan Sokoto and argues, among others, that some were populated with slaves and that:

The establishment of ribats was part of the policy of establishing frontiers and providing strongholds round which settlement could flourish... Likewise Bello encouraged the building within frontiers of walled towns where mosques and schools could be opened and trade and workshop started: with scholars appointed to these towns as Imams, judges, muhtasibs (legal inspectors) and teachers, Bello hoped to maintain both the practice of Islam and the military control of the area. Since much of Bello's support had come from cattle owing Fulani, the Fulani clans were persuaded to join the community of the Shaikh... They were taught agriculture and encouraged to breed horses, camels and flocks of sheep and goats and to reduce their herds of cattle. By this means Bello balanced the economy of Sokoto...he thus also reduced the military risk ..."⁶

In spite of such significant contentions, Last did not, however, link the caliphate *ribats* to the growth of plantations. Similarly, although Joseph P. Smaldone also

⁴ Dantiye, "Kano Frontier Strongholds,"

⁵ 'Plantation' is a very ambiguous term but in the context of this paper it refers to large-scale agriculture employing slave labor, often organized in gangs. Most works that focus on the Sokoto caliphate avoid using this term but use equally ambiguous local terms such as *gandu*. For a detailed discussion on the applicability of the term 'plantation,' however, see my "The Growth of Plantations in the Sokoto Caliphate: Fanisau 1806-1903" (Ph.D. dissertation, York University, forthcoming) and Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth-Century Sokoto Caliphate (Islamic West Africa),"

American Historical Review, 84 (1979)

⁶ Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, 80

acknowledged that “many of these new frontier outposts were populated by slaves,” he was more concerned with rehashing what Last has mentioned about *ribats*, than with the role of the institution in the location or expansion of plantations.⁷

The silence on the close association between *ribats* and plantation development in the Sokoto caliphate is certainly not limited to the works that fall within the categories outlined above. In fact, even one of the two major writers that have primarily focused on *ribats* in their various studies has failed to establish such relationship. Rather Nasiru Ibrahim Dantiye principally examined historic developments at Rano, Karaye, Gwarzo and Babura to underscore the point that the rulers of these *ribats* enjoyed several privileges that were similar to those enjoyed by the *murabitun* of the medieval Islamic period. According to him, these privileges included: the retention of tax revenue collected in, and occasionally even around the *ribats*; the subordination of some local state officials under the *ribats*' *dagatai* and *sarakuna*; the authority to deal with cases such as those that pertained to homicide which, under ordinary circumstances, were referred to the emirate's central authority; and the provision by the emirate central authority of the subsistence needs required by the defenders, just to mention a few.⁸

As hinted, not all scholars have failed to acknowledge the close connection between *ribats* and the development of the plantation sector in the Sokoto caliphate. In his study of the governmental system in the Zaria emirate, M. G. Smith first established this relationship thus:

Settlement patterns emphasized defensive values and were based on the compact distribution of population within walled towns, strung out

⁷ Joseph P. Smaldone, *Warfare in the Sokoto Caliphate: Historical and Sociological Perspectives* (London, 1977), 61-62.

⁸ Dantiye, “Kano Frontier Strongholds,”

along the principal caravan routes. Each of these towns had a few smaller settlements near it which owed allegiance to the village chief of the area in which they were sited. Many but not all of these hamlets were slave slave-villages (*rumada*); other *rumada* large enough to form towns of their own, would have the walls and other fortifications typical of a town (*gari*). Most of the large *rumada* with their own fortifications belong to one or other of the dynasties, and several of them were established by kings whose permission was always necessary before settlements could be walled.⁹

Paul E. Lovejoy, whose writings have been on the entire Sokoto caliphate also perceives the *ribat* as a major factor in the growth of the plantation sector. Indeed, he seems to be the most influential exponent of this view. Lovejoy asserts that it was not only in the Zaria emirate that *ribats* influenced the location or growth of plantations and therefore that “ throughout the caliphate plantations were associated with economic and political consolidation and with the maintenance of an active front line for defence and annual campaigns.”¹⁰

This view of the influence of *ribat* on plantation development in every part of the Sokoto caliphate has been expressed in a few relatively recent works such as those of John Edward Philips who primarily studied the *ribats* at Wurno, Takai, and Dambatta.¹¹ Examples of the role of *ribats* in the growth of plantations are also evident in other studies that mainly address non-*ribat* themes related to the Sokoto Caliphate. For instance, in his study of land tenure in the Sokoto sultanate, Ibrahim Muhammad Jumare

⁹ M. G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau, 1800-1950* (London, 1960),

¹⁰ Paul E. Lovejoy, “The Characteristics of Plantations in the Nineteenth-Century Sokoto Caliphate (Islamic West Africa),” *American Historical Review*, 84 (1979) and his “Plantations in the Economy of the Sokoto Caliphate,” *Journal of African History*, 19, 3 (1978)

¹¹ Philips, “Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate,”

perceives the establishment of a significant plantation known as Gidan-Kaya (thornhouse) as essentially a “security formation for both Wurno ribat and Sokoto city.”¹²

Drawing on Fanisau as an example, this essay offers corroborative evidence for the argument that the location of *ribats* was a factor in the development of plantations in the Sokoto Caliphate. It first provides some important background information on the area used as case study. This is followed by a discussion on why Fanisau was made a *ribat* shortly after the successful execution of the jihad in nineteenth century Kano. Next, the paper outlines how the assumption of this status significantly influenced the development of plantations in the settlement. The essay is based on oral data and written sources.

FANISAU: LOCATION AND EARLY HISTORY

The area used as a case study in this paper is also sometimes referred to as Panisau, Fanisoe or Faniso.¹³ Literally, the term Fanisau means the end of atrocities and the settlement itself forms part of what has been described as “Metropolitan Kano”¹⁴ as well as the “Kano closed settled zone.”¹⁵ Fanisau lies occupies an area between latitude 12° 4'

¹² Ibrahim Muhammad Jumare, “Land Tenure in the Sokoto Sultanate of Nigeria” (Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1995),

¹³ Both Fanisau and Panisau are used in H. R. Palmer, “Kano Chronicle,” as well as in several other secondary sources while Europeans travelers who visited Kano during the nineteenth century dominantly used other terms in their journals.

¹⁴ See Ibrahim Ado-Kurawa, *Sullubawan Dabo* (Kano, Kurawa Holdings Ltd. 1990), 11 and B. A. W. Trevallion, *Metropolitan Kano Report on Twenty Year Development Plan 1963-1983* (London: Neame; Label: distributed by Pergamon Press, Oxford; New York [etc.], 1967)

¹⁵ Hence it is not surprising that its ecological conditions are typical of the Kano Closed Settled zone. For a detailed discussion on this particular region see M. J. Mortimore and J. Wilson, *Land and People in the Kano Closed-Settled Zone: A Survey of Some Aspects of Rural Economy in the Ungogo District, Kano Province* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1965) and M. J. Mortimore, “Land and Population Pressure in the Kano Closed Settled Zone, Northern Nigeria,” *Advancement of Science* (1968), 677-686

0" North and longitude 8° 33' 0" East which is approximately sixteen kilometers away from Kano city.¹⁶ It is currently an important unit of Minjibir Local Government Area, and indeed, Minjibir town seems to be the most important settlement to the immediate north of Fanisau. To the west, it extends as far as the Ungogo region, and to the south as far as Gamar Kwari. Finally, to the east of Fanisau is another historic settlement known as Yada Kunya. Largely because of its close association with the emirs of Kano, Fanisau has played a major role in a variety of political and economic contexts at least since the nineteenth century.

I have provided a relatively detailed account of the history of Fanisau before it assumed the status of ribat elsewhere.¹⁷ It suffices to note here, however, that the settlement was founded at about 600 A.D. According to documentary sources, Gambarjado or the son of Nisau, who was in turn one of the subordinate chiefs responsible to the head of the Dala group at this historical moment, was the first individual who first settled at Fanisau.¹⁸ Little is known about the life and activities of this founding father after he occupied the settlement. Nevertheless, we know that Fanisau did not experience any significant immigration up to the reign of the first post jihad Kano ruler, Suleiman. Up to the tenure of this emir the settlement had also not been converted to a ribat while it remained largely an agricultural community. As an agricultural

¹⁶<http://www.calle.com/info.cgi?lat=12.0667&long=8.5500&name=Fanisau&cty=Nigeria&alt=1381> and Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufa'i, *Gidan Rumfa: The Kano Palace* (Kano: Triumph Publishing Co., 1995), 28 indicate these facts.

¹⁷ Mohammed Bashir Salau, "The Growth of Plantations in the Sokoto Caliphate: Fanisau 1806-1903" (Ph.D. dissertation, York University, forthcoming).

¹⁸ Palmer, *Kano Chronicle*, 63. Unfortunately, outside this reference to Gambarjado's residence at Fanisau, we do not know anything more about his biography or activities in the settlement.

community, slavery was an identifiable feature in Fanisau but slave labor was not significantly used in production in this same principal economic sector. Indeed, the area used as case study here was not a plantation society up to 1819.

FANISAU: ASSUMPTION OF THE *RIBAT* STATUS

In 1819, Ibrahim Dabo assumed office as emir in the Kano emirate and it was soon thereafter that he converted Fanisau into a *ribat*. It must be mentioned that Dabo was not the first ruler in kasar Kano to implement the *ribat* policy. Indeed, in terms of the post jihad era, the policy seems to have been in place immediately after the overthrow of Alwali's regime or during Suleiman's reign. However, the *ribat* policy only became institutionalized during the tenure of Dabo. He was, therefore, responsible for establishing several *ribats*.¹⁹ After Dabo's reign, the founding of these institutions continued up to the last decade of the nineteenth century. At least five were established in the reign of Aliyu Babba, 1894-1903. These were Magami, Siti, Kwajali, Sansanin, Kanawa and Kawo Gumbas. Aliyu Babba is also known to have been responsible for rebuilding the *ribat* of Dando, which was sacked and destroyed by the Ningawa.²⁰ In general, a few scholars have significantly shed light on the relevant circumstances that influenced the establishment of *ribats* in Kano emirate as well as the Sokoto Caliphate in general,²¹ in spite of this, it is necessary to provide a summary of the situation as it affects Fanisau, as this will enhance our appreciation of the course of the development of plantations in the settlement.

¹⁹ Dantiye, "Kano Frontier Strongholds," 25-26

²⁰ Dantiye, "Kano Frontier Strongholds," 27

²¹ Philips, "Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate" and Dantiye, "Kano Frontier Strongholds," are the two most significant works in this regard.

The foundation of the *ribat* at Fanisau during the nineteenth century is, as mentioned, closely associated with Ibrahim Dabo.²² As soon as he assumed office as emir in 1819, Dabo faced serious internal rebellion, which he eventually crushed. The motives for the internal rebellion in question are well documented.²³ According to various sources Dabo's appointment as emir of Kano by Sultan Bello caused dissatisfaction right from the onset.²⁴ One of the major figures who became apparently displeased with this appointment was the previous emir's, Suleiman, brother known as Sani. This individual not only resented the idea of not being able to gain the throne but also seem to have influenced the subsequent revolt against Dabo in order to ultimately secure the *sarauta* for himself. Beside Sani, other Fulani aristocrats in the Kano emirate who were not appointed to succeed Suleiman by Bello were also not favorably disposed to accepting Dabo's leadership mainly because the latter had played no leading role in the jihad at Kano. Notable among these aristocrats were Dabo Dambazau (who openly sought the throne by sending gifts and messages to Bello at Sokoto following the death of Suleiman), and Dan Tunku. At a point, when the latter was summoned to make obeisance, *mubaya'a*, to Dabo, he refused, saying that the newly appointed emir had neither been involved in the withdrawal, *hijra*, nor helped in the conquest of Kano. Dan

²² Ado-Kurawa, *The Jihad in Kano*, (Kano: Kurawa Holdings Ltd., 1989), 51

²³ Scholars are, however, not in agreement on what caused the rebellion. For instance, H. R. Johnston in *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1967), 68 attributes the phenomenon to emir Suleiman's ineffectiveness as a ruler while Dantiye, "Study of the Origins" 88 relates the crisis to the dissatisfaction on the part of emir Suleiman's brother, Sani, and other Fulani clan leaders over the appointment of Dabo as emir.

²⁴ Stated for instance in Dantiye, "Study of the Origins" 88 and Ibrahim Ado-Kurawa, *Sullubawan Dabo* (Kano: Kurawa Holdings Ltd., 1990), 6

Tunku's conduct was unquestionably an expression of the attitudes that was widespread and intense among the Fulani clan leaders at this historical moment.²⁵

Dabo not only sensed the opposition to his leadership right from the onset but also took measures to check his rivals. Specifically in response to such leadership problems, Dabo sought the permission of Sultan Bello to execute some specific reforms in Kano. On receiving the Sultan's approval, he made several appointments, which sought to transform the unofficial power of the clan heads into an official authority that depended ultimately on his personal endowments or assent. Also, in order to assert his superior claims to clan territories long since occupied by force of arms, Dabo resuscitated the *prejihad* titles forbidden by the Shehu Uthman dan Fodio. Accordingly, the Fulani clan leaders viewed Dabo's entire reforms as a direct threat to their rights and status and this unquestionably intensified their opposition to his leadership. Probably encouraged by Sani, the Fulani leaders eventually attempted to render the reforms executed by Dabo ineffective and by extension weaken the emir. Their strategy involved withholding the annual tax they received from villages under their jurisdiction from Dabo. Also, according to Smith:

It seems that they also instructed the village chiefs subordinate to them to ignore Dabo's request for military and other supplies. In short, they struck at Dabo's weakest points—his need for supplies and support, and his dependence on the compliance of his senior territorial officials in order to administer the rural areas."²⁶

²⁵ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 225

²⁶ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 230

As soon as Dabo realized the nature of the sabotage activities spearheaded by the Fulani clan leaders, he responded by sending orders throughout the emirate forbidding the levy or payment of tax to village chiefs for transfer to these clan heads. It was this action that immediately sparked off the revolt experienced throughout the emirate.

With the commencement of the rebellion, Dan Tunku emerged as one of the most dangerous threats to Dabo's authority. The emir specially appointed Madaki Umaru Nayaya as the commander of the Kano army that confronted Dan Tunku's men at Danzabuwa and Fagge while other commanders were also appointed to confront the rebel group elsewhere.²⁷ In spite of this, Dan Tunku's military success and diplomacy increasingly influenced dissident Fulani clan leaders to take up arms against Dabo openly. Under this situation, a significant number of raids by rebels were experienced in the northern region of Kano especially regions bordering the strongholds of Dan Tunku mainly at Dambatta and Kazaure. In reaction to these northern incursions and to particularly push Dan Tunku northwards, Dabo decided to fortify Fanisau, Ungogo and Dawaki. As part of this action, he specifically converted Fanisau into a military camp and marshalling center.²⁸ Outside the defensive and pacification imperative posed by the revolt, the visit by Dabo to Muhammad Bello at Lajinge shortly after he became emir also influenced the former's foundation of *ribats* at Fanisau and other parts of Kano. In due course, the status of Fanisau as a *ribat* was also evidently sustained by the

²⁷ Ado-Kurawa, *Sullubawan Dabo*, 6

²⁸ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 232, Ado-Kurawa, *Sullubawan Dabo*, 6, Dantiye, "Study of the Origins", 90-93

harassment experienced by Dabo and his successors from external adversaries especially Damagaram, Maradi and Borno and Gumel.²⁹

In general, the struggle between Dabo and Dan Tunku was protracted many of the engagements were related to the area under study. On January 24 1824, El Wordee and Hat Salah informed Clapperton that the emir occupied Fanisau by 1819 and since then he had made “excursion against the rebels, without ever bringing them to a decisive engagement.”³⁰ On the same date the European explorer became aware of this development, he visited Fanisau to meet Ibrahim Dabo and discovered that “the governor then intended to march against Dantaqua, a former governor of Kano who was deposed, and who, having rebelled, had seized upon a large town and territory called Doura [Daura], only distant one day’s journey, or about twenty-two English miles, according to the common allowance for a day’s journey.”³¹ Subsequently, he reported that “the governor returned to the sansan with his army; and the current report was, that they had entered the capital of the enemy; and, supposing Duntungua to have fled to the forest, they began to enjoy themselves in banquets and carousals, when Duntungua suddenly fell upon them with his army, and killed fifteen thousand men, the rest flying in the greatest confusion to Fanisoe.”³² Two years after making this observation, or in July 1826, Clapperton visited Kano again and at the house the house of Hadje Hat Salah Byoot he learnt that Ibrahim Dabo “had today left town for Faniso the town of the Sansan or gathering place as he is now collecting his army to go against the inhabitants of Doura

²⁹ Dantiye, “Study of the Origins”, 93

³⁰ E. W. Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger. Volume IV. The Bornu Mission 1822-25, Part III* (London, 1966), 644

³¹ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 644

³² Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 649- 650. This does not however mean that the figures provided by Clapperton should be taken and face Value.

who are in rebellion.”³³ However, a few days thereafter the European traveler also noted that the walled town of Toffa in Kano emirate had been allowed to decay “since the death of Duntungwa,”³⁴ and this fact suggests that the engagement between Dabo and Dan Tunku had ended by 1826.

DEVELOPMENT OF PLANTATIONS

After establishing the *sansani* at Fanisau, Dabo also simultaneously embarked on the policy of sedentarization, which involved the creation of settled farming population who would be self supporting. As part of this relocation policy people were encouraged to settle in Fanisau and other fortified regions of Kasar Kano.³⁵ This fact suggests that another main objective of founding Fanisau as a *ribat* was to enhance the relocation policy executed by Dabo. In a sense, however, the Kano rulers must have also hoped that the presence of settlers around the vicinity of the *sansani* at Fanisau would provide additional loyal population for defense or offense in case of war.

As a *ribat* therefore, it was obviously not residents of Fanisau that were exclusively mobilized as soldiers during relevant moments of need. People/soldiers from all parts of the Kano emirate were often summoned into the settlement whenever necessary. Hence, it is not surprising that in 1824 two “governors” with troops, consisting each of five hundred horse and foot were noted to be on their way or “repairing” to Fanisau.³⁶ Although most, if not all, members of these particular troops may have not been permanently based at the settlement, their description most probably exemplify those of

³³ Paul E. Lovejoy and James Lockhart, eds., (forthcoming)

³⁴ Lovejoy and Lockhart, eds., (forthcoming)

³⁵ Philips, “Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate” 437-445

³⁶ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 646-47

other resident/mobilized soldiers at Fanisau especially during troubled moments and therefore need to be underlined.

According to Clapperton, the foot soldiers were simply armed with bows and arrows.³⁷ The former were mainly slung over the left shoulders along with a small, highly ornamented leather pouch for little necessities, and water containers made out of “a canteen of dried grass” that was “compactly plaited”³⁸. The bows, on their own part, were sometimes unstrung by the foot soldiers and carried in the hand as walking sticks. In addition, many of the soldiers in question carried a little triangular bag on their head for the storage of other essentials while others were adorned with little conical grass caps that had tuft of feathers as decoration. Irrespective of what decked their heads, the foot soldiers were largely dressed with “tanned skin strung with coarse shells, or fringed with tassels, girt round the loins, and pairs of sandals of very simple workmanship.”³⁹

The cavalry were more elaborately dressed and unlike the foot soldiers were armed with swords, shields and spears. Each spear was about six feet long with slender wooden shaft, and the point of iron while the swords were broad, straight, and long. Clapperton suggests that the source of these swords was Malta and that they were transmitted through Tripoli to Borno and ultimately to Kano for distribution throughout “central Africa.”⁴⁰ On their own part, the shields were generally plain and round but covered with the hides of tame or wild animals. Typical of those wielded by the Tuaregs, Borno and other peoples, the shields were also of “remarkable variety, not uncommon, of an oval shape, somewhat broader from below than above, with an edging of blue cloth, forming

³⁷ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 647.

³⁸ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 647.

³⁹ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 647.

⁴⁰ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 647.

six little lappets, one above, one below, and two on each side.”⁴¹ Finally, situated at the mid portion of each shield was a stripe of scarlet cloth “fastened by the same studs that clinch the iron handle.”⁴² Another identifiable feature among the troops was the presence, among their midst, of several camels, loaded with quilted cotton armour, both for men and horses. It is evident that at least one, of the “governor’s” military slaves “wore a quilted helmet of red cloth, very unwieldy, not unlike a bucket in shape, only scooped out in front for the face, and terminating on the crown in a large tin funnel, full of ostrich feathers.”⁴³

Whatever other characteristics were possessed by the soldiers at Fanisau and whatever other objectives might have been instrumental in the foundation of the settlement as a *ribat*, Dabo seems to have equally intended that the institution be settled not only mainly by Muslims but also by loyal free Hausa-Fulani commoners. However, a number of factors made this design unattainable and thereby almost immediately also transformed the *ribat* into a plantation complex. In the first place, the relatively favorable nineteenth century climatic conditions at Fanisau⁴⁴ coupled with the increasing security

⁴¹ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 647.

⁴² Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 647.

⁴³ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 648.

⁴⁴ **Before the nineteenth century Fanisau, and Kano in general, experienced several severe multi-year droughts that probably affected the plantation sector. One major drought lasted for eleven years at the turn of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, the drought of the 1740s and early 1750s, which severely hit all of West Africa, also affected Kano. Another occurred in the 1790s. The nineteenth century was, however, characterized by the absence of severe multi year droughts comparable to that of the preceding century. Except for the droughts experienced in 1847 and 1855, others that occurred in 1830s, 1863, 1873, 1884, 1889 and 1890 were even relatively localized. Moreover, although the droughts of 1847 and 1855, referred to as Dawara and Banga-Banga respectively, were experienced throughout the emirate and even beyond, they were, as compared to the droughts of the eighteenth century, lesser in severity and lasted for a relatively short period that**

provided by the military presence in the settlement made it prone to the establishment of plantations. Also, the difficulty in attracting new free settlers into Fanisau had positive implications for the emergence of large agricultural estates. Outside the post jihad leaders in Kano, only few people wished to move to Fanisau and other *ribats* in the emirate voluntarily.⁴⁵ As John Philips correctly notes although one could apply for free land and other support by moving to a *ribat* and making obeisance (*cappa*), this was not common, and the ordinary *ribat* on the frontier was not popular with commoners. Thus, as the century wore on, Fanisau and indeed “the Sokoto Caliphate, like many other Islamic states, turned more and more to the use of slaves as soldiers and administrators (*mamlūk*) as well as field hands.”⁴⁶

Other fundamental factors that influenced the transformation of the *ribat* at Fanisau into a plantation complex, or at least stimulated the emergence of the royal estates (which constituted the majority of the estates at Fanisau) were related to the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade⁴⁷ and the need to provide the subsistence requirements of the full time soldiers at the settlement. Added to this there was the need to provide sustenance for

most probably did not extend beyond a year. In view of these, it is unlikely that the nineteenth century droughts retarded the development of the plantation sector as those experienced in the preceding period did. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the fact that the nineteenth century droughts caused a lot of hardship for residents of affected regions while they lasted. As Michael watts, *Silent violence*, 101; and Gowers note: “the 1855 drought is particularly noted, for instance, to have resulted in the disappearance of gero, dawa, wheat and rice in the Kano city market for thirty days thereby forcing residents to eat vultures” NAK SNP 17 K2151.

⁴⁵ Philip, “Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate” 322, and his “Slavery in Two Ribats in Kano and Sokoto”,

⁴⁶ Philips, “Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate” 322-323 and his “Slavery in Two Ribats in Kano and Sokoto

⁴⁷ The abolition of the Atlantic slave trade by the British from 1807 led to the contraction of the external markets for slaves produced by Fanisau, and Kano in general, as well as the eventual slackening of demand for slaves across the Sahara. All these facilitated the growth of plantations in Fanisau, as elsewhere in the Sokoto caliphate.

new free settlers at the *ribat* who in turn introduced new capital that facilitated the growth of the plantation system. More importantly, there was also the need to meet the nineteenth century expanding demand for agricultural products particularly by the merchants, industrialists and aristocrats in Kano emirate and the Sokoto caliphate in general.

The main agent in the emergence and expansion of the plantation sector at Fanisau was the state. After converting the settlement to *ribat*, and in an unprecedented manner at least in the context of the settlement, it immediately began to use its long-standing position as the principal administrator of land to parcel out land for large-scale agricultural production there. Following the jihad, the land tenure policy in the Sokoto Caliphate and Kano emirate in particular became intimately based on Muslim laws.⁴⁸ In spite of this, as in other parts of the central region of Kano it is not unlikely that the land distribution in nineteenth century Fanisau involved forcible seizure of land from commoners in the society.⁴⁹ Such acts of confiscation were essentially based on the perverted belief of the post jihad leaders that just as the overthrow of the Alwali's government entitled them and their descendants to take over power in Kano, their take over of the control of land also entitled them to seize any land in the state. The practice of dispossessing commoners of land probably intensified with the increasing number of

⁴⁸ See pages ? and ? below for more details on the land tenure situation and Fanisau. Also, for more details on the land tenure policy in the Sokoto Caliphate in general see, for instance, see Ibrahim Muhammad Jumare, "Land Tenure in the Sokoto Caliphate of Nigeria" (Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1996), Murray Last, *Sokoto Caliphate*, 77 and Hussaina J. Abdullahi and Ibrahim Hamza, "Women and Land in Northern Nigeria: The Need for Independent Ownership Rights" in L. Muthoni Wanyeki, ed., *Women and Land in Africa: Culture, Religion and Realizing Women's Rights* (London; New York: Zed Books Ltd. 2003), 145-147

⁴⁹ For further discussion on land confiscation in nineteenth century Kano see Mahadi, "State and the Economy," 459

masu sarauta (especially district heads), who were mandated to establish bases at Fanisau, and the increase in the rate of sedentarisation of the nomadic Fulani who required land for both cultivation and for grazing some of their animals. Another factor that must have contributed to the seizure of land from commoners was the need for large agricultural estates by the rich merchants, *attajirai*, some of who were Arabs or of North African origin. The expropriation of land at Fanisau could generally not have been problematic due to several reasons including the absence of any historically significant forces resident at the settlement on the eve of the jihad as well as due to the absence of any intensely nucleated center in the settlement.⁵⁰

The state awarded grants of land at Fanisau to its officials not only to enhance loyalty but also to, among several other factors, enhance the emirate's economy. Similarly, it was only those non-state officials who were considered to benefit the economy and society of Kano that mostly received grants of land in the settlement. These non-state officials obviously consisted of immigrant merchants, cattle herders and other professionals.⁵¹ The state generally assigned strips of land either following the receipt of application from individuals or simply as gifts to favored individuals. The latter transaction is known as *kyauta* and the land so acquired was considered the permanent property of the person to whom it was given. *Kyauta* was basically associated with several factors including the individual qualities of a person.⁵² On top of the list of those

⁵⁰ Of the numerous important clans that spearheaded the jihad at Kano, non was for instance resident at Fanisau.

⁵¹ Scholars including Hamza, "Slavery and Plantation Society," and Hill, "*Population, Prosperity and Poverty*" have outlined the modes of land acquisition in Dorayi and other parts of the Kano emirate which are typical to that obtained at Fanisau as discussed in the following paragraphs.

⁵² Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabi'u, July 13, 1975.

that benefited from the state allocation of land was the emir. As the ultimate administrator of all lands in the emirate this office holder easily acquired land at Fanisau. Such land was mainly attached to his office. Consequently as all other lands attached to political offices in the settlement, the property changed hands whenever a new official/ruler was enthroned.⁵³

Assisting the emir to administer the land at Fanisau during the nineteenth century were the *liman* and the *galadiman Shamaki*. These officials allocated land to eligible individuals in the settlement but it was the former who was responsible for the collection of fees from those relevant free people granted the usufructary rights of occupation.⁵⁴ On his own part, the *galadiman shamaki* was the responsible for the internal distribution or allocation of land in the emir's property particularly to the slaves therein. Gang leaders, *gandu*, often assisted the *galadima* in carrying out this responsibility. Often, they allocated plots of land to slaves without prior consultation with their immediate boss. However, such actions were, in due course, usually reported to the *galadiman shamaki* for ultimate approval. Failure to do that might result in the revocation of such land allocation.⁵⁵

Beside the direct acquisition of land from the state there were also other means of obtaining land at Fanisau. Among the free community, *saran daji*, bush clearance might have continued while household heads also usually gave out plots of land to sons and slaves as gifts, *kyauta*. This often involved the division of the extended family land holding or the acquisition of new plots from outside the family. Irrespective of the source

⁵³ Rufai, *Gidan Rumfa*, and Yunusa, "Slavery in nineteenth century Kano"

⁵⁴ Yusuf Yunusa collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabiu

⁵⁵ Yusuf Yunusa collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabiu

of the relevant plot, witnesses were required to make gifts legally binding among the concerned parties.⁵⁶

Another important means of land acquisition was through *gado*, inheritance. Islamic principles demands that on the death of the *maigida*, the family property including land be divided among those entitled to inherit him. This principle was increasingly applied at Fanisau during the nineteenth century. Hence children and other free members in the family were usually accorded land on the basis of Islamic norms. However the actual practice of inheritance of land was somewhat problematic because of disagreements over the procedures associated with the disbursement of the deceased estate. The larger the inheritance and the greater the number of individuals involved in the inheritance the more difficult it was to settle the estate. Women generally did not inherit land or the houses of their deceased parents, sons or close relations while in a few cases heirs might have agreed to own the plot jointly instead of dividing it.⁵⁷

Land could also be acquired through pledging, *jingina*. This usually involved a household experiencing financial difficulties. In such circumstances a landholder pledges his property for a specified period in exchange for a certain amount, which had to be paid back before the right of ownership was restored. Basically it was the commercial value of the land that determined the amount to be paid for the land. This system of land acquisition at Fanisau might have been prone to the same type of complications noted elsewhere in the Kano emirate.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Hamza, "Slavery and Plantation Society"

⁵⁷ Hamza, "Slavery and Plantation Society "

⁵⁸ Hamza, "Slavery and Plantation Society"

Leasing, *aro*, also facilitates land occupation at Fanisau.⁵⁹ This practice often involved a stranger who had no family support or was too weak or poor to clear land for cultivation or settlement elsewhere. In most cases such disadvantaged individual may approach a landholder who is unable to work all his land to borrow some of it for a specified duration of time. Due to legal complications associated with this system the consent of Dagachi (village head) was always sought for proper certification. A person who borrows land may ultimately purchase, saye, the property as soon as he acquires sufficient wealth to do so and if the lender wishes to engage in such transaction. In any case, households with the necessary means usually increased the size of their landholdings through purchase hence such transaction was another important means of land acquisition at Fanisau. Although land purchase transactions were mainly between the relevant parties, the approval of the relevant state official was usually sought while the knowledge of the general public was also highly valued in cementing agreements as in other parts of the emirate.⁶⁰

Finally, at Fanisau land could also be acquired under the system of trust, *riko*. Usually this transaction took place when a plot owner migrated (for instance, to partake in caravan trading) or for some other reason wished to avoid selling or pledging the plot, which he/she was finding difficult to independently cultivate (for instance, as the result of death when the children or inheritors were unable to cultivate the farm.) More importantly, *riko* involved the transfer of land to mainly a relative or friend hence plots were often acquired without any specified fee.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabiu

⁶⁰ Hamza, "Slavery and Plantation Society at Dorayi"

⁶¹ Hamza, "Slavery and Plantation Society at Dorayi"

The dominant influence of the state in the development of the plantation sector at Fanisau was not only felt in the sphere of land distribution but is also reflected in the episode of slave acquisition. Until the end of the reign of emir Suleiman the state unquestionably played little or no direct role in the introduction of slaves into the settlement.⁶² With the conversion of Fanisau to a *ribat*, however, the state became directly involved in the issue of slave acquisition in the community. Although the mixture of factors that influenced the state's involvement and initiatives have already been largely outlined elsewhere, it is necessary to reiterate that Islam was one of the major components. Specifically, the law of this religion not only sanctions slavery but also approved enslavement through holy war, jihad, against heathens.⁶³ It was therefore natural that the nineteenth century jihad movement and the subsequent wars of consolidation involving Fanisau influenced slavery in the settlement. The initial jihad wars fought were largely confined to the region of Kano and its environ and these wars probably provided opportunity for those already enslaved to secure their freedom or to escape from their masters⁶⁴ but it unquestionably did not occasion the introduction of slaves by the state into Fanisau. As indicated, during the period from the commencement of the Jihad to the end of the reign of the first Emir, Suleiman, who was himself known to have personally possessed very few slaves in his palace and did very little to encourage

⁶² Suleiman is not known to have embarked on any significant project of economic consolidation and indeed had relatively inconsiderable number of slaves at his service himself. Besides, none of Suleiman's policies were directly associated with Fanisau.

⁶³ J. S. Hogendorn, "Slave Acquisition and Delivery in Precolonial Hausaland," in R. Dumett and B. K. Schwartz, eds., *West African Culture Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspective* (Mouton, 1980), 477-493 and, Philip Burnham, *Raiders and Traders in Adamawa: Slavery as a Regional System*," in James L. Watson, ed., *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Berkeley, 1980)

⁶⁴ Smith, *Government in Kano*, 201

the development of the city's economy, virtually no slave was received directly from state sponsored raids in the settlement. Rather, the majority of slaves from this source were first received during the reign of the second Emir, Ibrahim Dabo. The, already discussed, severe political and economic problems that confronted this ruler largely encouraged his reliance on slavery in the city as well as in other parts of the emirate. Needless to say, most of the slaves introduced into Fanisau during Dabo's reign were products of the vigorous campaigns he undertook to consolidate the emirate. In addition to fighting external foes, Dabo campaigned for nine years before he succeeded in subduing the earlier mentioned resistance spearheaded dominantly by rebel Fulani clan chiefs throughout Kano emirate. In total, outside minor battles and military expeditions, he and his war captains fought battles against Jirima, Gaskole, Jijitar, Sankara, Sintalmawa, Malikawa, Danyaya, Dambatta, Garun-Gudunya, Dagurawa, Kunya (twice), Yasko, Kamanah, Dagara, Danpai, Damri, Arbado, Jiratawa, Rimi, Daraja, Almawa, Dutse Dan Bakurshi (twice), Ladin Makole, Dabi (twice), Karaye, Kanoma, Anka, Maina, Ririwai, Gwangaram, Chammo, Babuye, Tsuburi (twice), Fusatawa, Gandayu, Marma, Lalo, Matazu, Warji (twice), Kazaure, Zariya, Maradi (twice), and Gazawa.⁶⁵ Fanisau was, of course, never the only ribat involved in these raids, but it was continually involved as other such establishments located elsewhere in the emirate.⁶⁶

Regardless of the wars that the soldiers permanently based at Fanisau were involved in, the settlement's primary military importance was as a *ribat* against Dantunku and secondarily against Damagaram. Some of the relevant skirmishes between Kano and

⁶⁵ Ado-Kurawa, *Jihad in Kano*, 53

⁶⁶ Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabiu, Philip, "Ribats in the Sokoto Caliphate" 430

these forces but involving Fanisau have been recorded. For instance, in January 1824, Clapperton who visited Kano reported that he met Dabo at Fanisau preparing a major assault on Dan Tunku's new headquarters at Kazaure. Before moving west, Clapperton learned that having broken into the town, Dabo was surprised by Dan Tunku's counter attack and driven back to Fanisau with heavy losses.⁶⁷ In another related development, the forces of Damagaram intensified their long-standing aggression against Kano⁶⁸ during the reign of emir Aliu especially in 1898-1899. During one engagement between the two old enemies, emir Aliu sent his forces against emir Ahmadu of Damagaram at Damargu against the advice of his malams. In the ensuing battle, the Kano forces were defeated and seriously disorganized and this provided an opportunity for Ahmadu and his troops to move to Fanisau apparently for further military engagement. On arrival at the settlement, Ahmadu discovered that the famous ribat was also deserted by Kano troops. However, this did not stop him from seizing some of the inhabitants of Fanisau including the emir's slave, Kilishi.⁶⁹ It follows from the various accounts on the military engagements involving Fanisau, therefore, that the settlement lost some of its permanent and temporary residents as a result of the numerous military activities. However, to replace those who lost their lives and to foster other socioeconomic programs the state also increasingly settled slaves primarily derived from warfare at Fanisau.⁷⁰ Not only this, as a major base

⁶⁷ Bovill, ed., *Missions to the Niger*, 649-50, and cited in Smith, *Government in Kano*, 232

⁶⁸ One of the earlier skirmishes during the reign of Mohammed Bello is also associated with Fanisau as will be highlighted further in the next chapter.

⁶⁹ Alhaji Abubakar Dokaji, *Kano ta Dabo Cigari*, 69

⁷⁰ Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabiu

against the enemies of the emirate the settlement also became a major source of slaves for Kano and traders that dominated especially the desert edge sector.⁷¹

The sex and age characteristics of the plantation slaves at Fanisau is not clear but in terms of their ethnic and religious background/origin a closer examination of the major wars fought by Dabo and subsequent rulers of Kano is revealing. Dabo's engagements, for instance, indicate that most, if not all wars were fought against internal enemies who were largely fellow Muslims as well as Fulani and Hausa elements. Also, the foreign wars were also dominantly against this same category of peoples. Thus, contrary to Islamic social law, which stipulates that believers in the faith should not be enslaved, a considerable number of those generally recruited, as slaves into Fanisau, especially during Dabo's reign, were Muslims and this partly explains why traditions refer to the first slaves/residents introduced by this ruler as "*cucunawa*"⁷² This loose adherence to the Islamic principle of enslavement seems to have persisted in the subsequent part of the nineteenth century although on a relatively smaller scale.⁷³

The majority of the foreign wars fought after the outbreak of the jihad took place after Dabo's regime. These skirmishes introduced more slaves, predominantly non-Muslims, into Fanisau. It appears that the bulk of the non-Muslim slaves received in the settlement during the late nineteenth century originated from the Ningi region, which was

⁷¹ Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabi

⁷² Interview with Muhammadu Rabi also Smith, *Government in Kano*, 233-35. See, also, Mohammed Bashir Salau, "Slaves in a Muslim City: A Survey of Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano," (Behnaz al Mizra, Ismael Musah Monatana and Paul Lovejoy eds., forthcoming)

⁷³ Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Mallam Idrisu Danmaiso, Hausawa ward, Kano, August 7,

constantly raided by Emir Usuman and his successors⁷⁴ Estimates on those enslaved through foreign wars that Kano executed, especially against the Ningi region, are discernable in some source materials and these facts suggest a high level of enslavement through external warfare. For instance, it is on record that in 1871 Emir Abdullahi and his allies attacked Warji and enslaved 5200 people while in 1895 C. H. Robinson noticed about 1000 enslaved Ningi peoples brought back to the city from a single campaign.⁷⁵ Certainly, Fanisau was not the only region of Kano emirate where the slaves derived from wars against the Ningi were settled. But we know that over the course of time a considerable number of these elements were introduced into the society to the extent that during the course of the nineteenth century they constituted the majority among slaves at estates in Fanisau.⁷⁶ The predominance of the slaves of Ningi origin at Fanisau could also be partly explained by the large-scale loss of Muslim and Hausa-Fulani slaves to enemies by Dabo during his early campaigns. Apart from the wars with peoples of the Ningi region, late nineteenth century rulers of Kano also fought other significant wars

⁷⁴ For more details on the raids on the Ningi region see Adell Patton, Jr., "An Islamic Frontier Polity: The Ningi Mountains of Northern Nigeria, 1846-1902," in *The African Frontier*, ed. Igor Kopytoff (Bloomington, Ind., 1987) and M.G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 274-277

⁷⁵ This is not to suggest that all those enslaved through foreign warfare were retained at Fanisau. However, the specific evidence on those introduced into the settlement indicate that a significant number of enslaved prisoners ended up there even though in most cases temporarily. See also, Paul Lovejoy, Abdullahi Mahadi and Mansur Ibrahim Mukhtar, "C. L. Temples 'Notes on the history of Kano'," *Sudanic Africa: A Journal of Historical Sources* 4 (1993), 7-76 for details on the Warji raid cited above.

⁷⁶ Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabi'u and Interview with Hamidu Galadiman Shamaki, April 3, 1975, in the same collection

especially with Maradi and Damagaram and these also resulted in the introduction of more slaves into Fanisau and other parts of the emirate.⁷⁷

Irrespective of whether they were captured in the course of internal or foreign wars, enslaved prisoners brought into Fanisau were generally treated in accordance to Islamic theory. Thus some of them may have been publicly executed as in Dorayi and other parts of Kano while Muslim captives were mainly ransomed.⁷⁸ In the case of those eventually enslaved, they were theoretically distributed in a manner whereby the Emir took one-fifth while the officers who took part in the campaign shared the rest. This division of war booty was called *humusi* in Hausa. At Fanisau and other parts of the Sokoto Caliphate the strict application of this booty distribution principle, however, often proved abortive for several reasons. For instance, some title holding war captains such as the *Sallama*, *Dan Rimi* and *Shamaki*, who were supposed to keep part of the slave booty, were also slaves and hence their share inevitably went to the emir(s). Also, since the latter were often absent from the war front individual non-slave warriors exploited such opportunity and kept a few of their captives whom they later appropriated as their personal slaves on the grounds that they were private booty.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Yusuf Yunusa, "Slavery in the nineteenth century Kano" (B.A essay, ABU Zaria, 1976) and M. G. Smith, *Government in Kano*, 276-78

⁷⁸ Yusuf Yunusa collection: Interview with Malam Isyaku, Dorayi Village, Kano Emirate, 17 September, 1975 Interview with Dan Rimi in Kano

⁷⁹ Yusuf Yunusa collection: Interview with Dan Rimi in Kano and also indicated in Mahdi Adamu, "The delivery of slaves from the Central Sudan to the Bight of Benin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" in H. A. Gemery and J. S. Hogendorn, eds., *The Uncommon Market. Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York, 1979), 167

Although slaves were acquired mostly through state sponsored raids at Fanisau, there were other means through which the state derived the slaves that it introduced into the settlement. Firstly, the emir, as the ultimate ruler of the Kano emirate, usually received different forms of gifts from his subjects and patrons.⁸⁰ Such gift was known as *gaisuwa* and often consisted of slaves and were partly made to indicate loyalty to emir and for his protection. As soon as the emir was given slave(s) as *gaisuwa*, he usually distributed them to his top palace slave officials who in turn redistributed them to the various royal estates including Fanisau.⁸¹ Secondly, inheritance, *gado*, also provided the state with slaves that were either retained at Fanisau or channelled therein. For instance, whenever a district head, *hakimi*, died, his slaves were shared in accordance to established traditions. Consequently, of the total number of slaves one third was given to the emir, one third to one of the three top slave officials namely Shamaki, Dan Rimi and Salama, who was the specific intermediary between the emir and the deceased noble and the last one third was usually inherited by the successor of the deceased district head. Following such division, the emir's share and that of his slave officials were usually pulled together and redistributed to Fanisau and other relevant plantations in the emirate.⁸² Thirdly, the state also acquired slaves at Fanisau through breeding. Evidently, there was considerable slave reproduction experienced among state owed slaves at Fanisau. In all cases, the child of a slave was also a slave and his or her birth merely enhanced enslavement and the state's property in the settlement. Partly for this reason, especially the perceived enhanced productivity that could arise from enslavement through birth, the state encouraged

⁸⁰ See Mahadi, "State and the Economy," 325-327 for further details on such gifts or *gaisuwa*

⁸¹ Yunusa, "Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano" 56

⁸² Yunusa, "Slavery in Nineteenth Century Kano" 57

marriage between slave men and women at Fanisau. Outside the slaves born at Fanisau, the state also introduced slaves born into slavery at other parts of the emirate into the settlement. In fact, oral data indicates that these were the first “trusted” elements that constituted the settlement.⁸³ Fourthly, the state obtained some of the slaves it introduced into Fanisau through purchase from merchants. In the nineteenth century these traders brought slaves and other merchandise directly to the emir either at Kano city or at any other location he was then temporarily based including Fanisau. These predominantly Muslim merchants, whose business was enhanced due largely to the unprecedented level of state intervention that followed the establishment of the jihad regime in Kano and the Sokoto Caliphate in general, traversed neighbouring and distant settlements such as Borno, Adamawa, Bida, Bagarmi and Gonja for business activities and in the process imported slaves into Kano.⁸⁴ By the mid nineteenth century the merchants that particularly patronised Kano city had transformed it into a great depot of slaves as well as a centre of slave trading, to the extent that one estimate reveals that by 1862 between 2,500 and 3,000 slaves were being displayed daily for sale at the Kano market.⁸⁵ Although the majority of the slaves were ultimately re-exported, a sizeable number were retained in the emirate and at Fanisau for plantation development.⁸⁶

⁸³ Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Muhammadu Rabiu

⁸⁴ See Abdullahi Mahadi, “State and the Economy,” 628-742 for more details on the role of the state in trade during the nineteenth century.

⁸⁵ Yusuf Yunusa, *Slavery in nineteenth century Kano*, 10. It should be stated however that the number of slaves displayed for sale at Kano did not remain constant through time.

⁸⁶ Yusuf Yunusa Collection: Interview with Mohammed Rabiu

CONCLUSION

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to strengthen the argument that ribats were intimately related to the location and growth of plantations in the Sokoto caliphate. This has been accomplished by using Fanisau as a case study. The paper has revealed that this highlighted society was only converted to a ribat in 1819 by emir Ibrahim Dabo, and it was immediately after this that the state became actively involved in land distribution as well as slave acquisition in the settlement. As a result of this involvement large land were parceled out to few individuals while this same beneficiaries of the system, especially the emir, also acquired vast numbers of slaves that were ultimately used to set up plantations in Fanisau. The establishment of these estates was also influenced by the need to feed the residents of the ribat, the relative security the institution provided, the need to satisfy the commercial and industrial needs of estate owners and other Kano industrialists, relatively favourable climate and the abolition of the slave trade.