

DEMISTIFYING THE LEGENDARY FIGURE OF KABI EMPIRE: MUHAMMADU KANTA 1516-1554 A. D.

Isa Muhammad Sama

Permanent Secretary, Establishment, Pension and Training Department, Office of the Head of Civil Service, Kebbi State

Corresponding Author's email: isahsama94@gmail.com



Abstract

There are several accounts which are either false, exaggerated, biased or prejudiced on the ancestry of the legendary ruler of Kabi Empire, Muhammadu Kotal Kanta. Each tradition attempted to display knowledge of the origin, status and lifetime of this figure. However, all of these attempts to demystify Kotal Kanta have ended up creating more myths of his origin and ancestry. This paper is yet another attempt at demystifying Muhammadu Kanta, the great ruler of Kabi Empire who ruled between 1516 – 1554 A. D. The paper analyses some of the available historical records to unearth the true picture of Muhammadu Kanta, where he came from and the life he lived before his eventual demise in 1554 A. D. Although there have been attempts by some scholars to discover the origin of Muhammadu Kanta such as the works of Frank Egga (1977), Dirk Lange (2009), and M.B Alkali (1969), the true origin of the first ruler of Kabi Kingdom still remains a mystery. Thus, this study, which is part of an on-going research effort on the pre-history and history of the Kabawa and their rulers, is a continuation of the research effort at finding out, using historical method of enquiry, the true origin of the founder of the Kabi Kingdom which existed between 1516 and 1554 AD. The study argues that at its peak period of rule, the Kabi Kingdom had extended frontiers which by all ramifications became qualified to be referred to as an empire in its own right. The study adopted the use of the term Kabi to refer to the original title of the kingdom before colonial conquest.

Keywords: Kabi, Empire, Muhammadu Kanta