PRAGMATISM IN THE AGE OF JIHAD

The precolonial state of Bundu

MICHAEL A. GOMEZ
Department of History, Spelman College, Atlanta

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011–4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Victoria 3166, Australia

First published 1992

Printed in Great Britain at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Gomez, Michael Angelo, 1955–
Pragmatism in the age of Jihad: the precolonial state of Bundu / Michael A. Gomez.
p. cm. – (African studies series)
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0 521 41940 9 (hardback)
1. Boundou (Senegal) – History. I. Title. II. Series.
DT549.9.B68G66 1993
966.3 – dc20 91–43273 CIP

ISBN 0 521 41940 9 hardback

CE

Contents

Maps

Based on drawings by Jeff McMichael, Department of Geography, Georgia State University

1

Introduction

West Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the eruption of several major "holy wars" across the wide expanse of its savannah, from the Senegal River to Lake Chad. Each holy war, or *jihād*, represented the emerging interests of a militant, rural Islamic community, and resulted in both substantial conversion of the peasantry and widespread social change. The leaders of the holy wars were renowned clerics who were committed to the comprehensive Islamization of their respective societies; that is, they endeavored to bring government and social order into conformity with Islamic law (*sharī'a*). While these movements constitute a dominant theme during this period, it is important to note that there were concurrent exceptions to these expressions of militant Islam. The Kunta religious scholars (*shaykhs*) are one example, as they provided leadership for the Qadiriyya brotherhood (*ṭarīqa*) from their base near Timbuktu, and used that influence to support the descendants of one jihadist (Amadu Sheku of Maasina) against the claims of another (*al-ḥājj* Umar). A second example can be found in the policies of the clerical leader al-Kanemi of Bornu, who militantly opposed the expansion of the Sokoto Caliphate in the name of holy war.

The polity of Bundu, located in what is now eastern Senegal along the border with Mali, also ran counter to the grain of jihadic activity. Established in the late seventeenth century, and ostensibly maintaining its form of government until 1905, Bundu was the creation of the confluent or convergent forces of Islam and commerce in Senegambia, but its particular synthesis is unique for its regional and historical context. This is because it was established by Muslim clerics during the jihadic phase as a land of Islam; yet, this was not achieved through the vehicle of holy war. And although the clerical leadership of the state was rural, its behavior more closely approximated that of urbanized clerics. As a result, the principal factor in the development of state policy was that of pragmatism. As it applies to Bundu, this concept must be understood within the context of Senegambian developments from the late seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, and it relates to both external and internal affairs of state. Regarding the former,

pragmatism is a policy in which the pursuit of commercial and agricultural advantage supercedes all other considerations, to the extent that alliances and rivalries with both neighboring polities and European powers are determined by economic expediency, and are subject to rapid and frequent realignment. Foreign policy is not formulated on the basis of advancing the claims of Islam within the region. Concerning domestic affairs, pragmatism promotes a climate of tolerance towards non-Muslims, and seeks neither their conversion nor the rigid implementation of Islamic law in the governance of the ascendant Muslim constituency.

There are several reasons for the emergence of Bundu as a rural yet pragmatic Islamic society within the dominant context of rural, militant Islam. One has to do with the circumstances surrounding its origins, and the character of the individuals associated with its founding. A second cause concerns the nature of the territory itself, as it assumed a frontier-like quality over which it was difficult to impose a normative set of ideological guidelines. These are factors which will be investigated more fully in chapters 2 and 3. But the more salient reason for the moderate posture of the Bundunke *almaamies* (the plural of the dynastic title *almaami*, itself a Pulaarized form of the Arabic *imām*), and one that can be partially addressed at this juncture, was the crucial importance of both commerce and related agricultural productivity. That is, the fortunes of the Bundunke state were so tied to the successful conduct of trade and cultivation of crops (for internal consumption and export), that in their collective wisdom, the Bundunke rulers determined that pragmatism was essential to the state's well-being. Militant Islam represented change, disruption, and uncertainty, and was therefore eschewed.

The role of commerce is of particular importance to the development of Bundu. Indeed, the overall theme of trade is inextricably interwoven into the fabric of West African Islam. Trading networks, established before the introduction of Islam into West Africa *c.* 800 C.E., were expanded during Islam's early development. The forest, savannah, and desert zones became more extensively interconnected, as the majority of long-distance traders were Muslims. The Juula merchants were the principal agents of exchange from the savannah to the forest, and from Senegambia to the Upper Niger Valley. The regional market provided for the exchange of such commodities as salt, cattle products, cereals, fish, and shea butter. Gold and cotton textiles were also among the more sought-after items. The North–South axis, linking West Africa to the Maghrib (North Africa) and beyond, was particularly lucrative. The legendary grandeur of Mali, Songhay, and Kanem-Bornu was to a large extent the consequence of the northern focus of the Sudanic empires' trading policies.

The coming of the European gradually affected this commercial activity. Beginning in the fifteenth century, European merchants established a series of trading posts or factories along the West African coast. By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Atlantic frontier was in

competition with the Sahara as a principal medium of West African international trade. The procurement and exportation of human cargo was a primary industry, but Europe was also interested in such raw materials as gum and beeswax. In exchange, Africans imported firearms, gunpowder, iron, textiles (especially Indian cloth), rum and brandy, horses, brassware, silver, glass beads, and semiprecious stones. As a result of the growth of the Atlantic commercial frontier, new trading networks were established along East–West axes, co-existing with the older routes leading to the Maghrib. New towns evolved into new states, stimulated by both transatlantic and transsaharan exchange. In fact, it is possible to argue that several of the *jihāds* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were either directly or indirectly encouraged by the emergent Atlantic frontier.

Bundu was strategically important to both the Atlantic and Saharan commercial frontiers. While it was a major supplier of rice, maize, sorghum, millet, indigo, and cotton in the Upper Senegal Valley, its principal attribute was its location relative to both the sahel (*sāḥil* or "shore," where the Sahara and the savannah meet) and the Atlantic. Bundu maintained a series of trade routes, over which local products were exported, and across which resources and products of adjacent polities passed en route to either the Maghrib or to the European factories along the coast. To the immediate east of Bundu, across the Faleme, lay the fabled goldfields of Bambuk. Further east was Kaarta, to which the salt of the Saharan regions of the Tagant and the Hodh was carried for subsequent distribution in the savannah. Still further east was the Upper Niger Valley, with its renowned commercial centers such as Segu, Jenne, and Timbuktu. European powers repeatedly attempted to establish ties with both Bambuk and the Niger floodplain well into the nineteenth century, convinced that these areas contained immeasurable wealth, principally in gold. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, peaceful overtures were superceded by military conquests. Up until that point, Bundu was an important gateway to the east. The success of trading expeditions, whether heading east or west, depended upon the good favor of the Bundunke *almaamies* and their ability to preserve order and tranquility throughout the realm.

Another aspect of Bundu's strategic importance was that its northern and southern reaches straddled the Upper Senegal and Gambia Rivers. Kola was cultivated in the densely forested territories astride the Upper Gambia, an important element in the pursuit of religion, medicine, and social etiquette throughout Muslim West Africa. The trade in kola from the Gambia north into the sahel necessarily passed through Bundu in great measure, and reinforced its key role in the commerce of Senegambia. The introduction of groundnut cultivation along the Upper Gambia towards the middle of the nineteenth century would further stimulate Bundu's interest in the area. In time, the Senegal and Gambia Rivers would become the exclusive preserves of the French and the British respectively. Bundu was critical to both powers in their determination to dominate Senegambian trade, and Bundu would continually seek to exploit their rivalry.

In light of the foregoing, it can be argued that Bundu, together with Futa Jallon and Futa Toro, were in fact novel West African experiments in Islamic government. For while Takrur and Silla (in the Lower Senegal Valley) were militant Muslim polities in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, they were not led by clerics, and were a consequence of the Almoravid movement, as opposed to representing the culmination of autochthonous concerns. Similarly, reformers such as *Askia* Muhammad Ture of Songhay, *Sarki* Muhammad Korrau of Katsina, and *Mai* Dunama Dibbalemi of Kanem tended to limit their efforts to the confines of court life, and in any event their reforms did not affect the larger society. There emerged in Bundu and the two Futas, however, for the first time in West African history, subsaharan Islamic governments administered by clerics and resulting in, by the late eighteenth century, overwhelmingly Muslim societies. The creation of the Bundunke experiment was assisted by elements in both Futa Toro and Futa Jallon, with which the Bundunke leadership enjoyed familial and religious ties. The fledgling Bundunke state would in the course of the eighteenth century repeatedly require the aid of the two Futas to survive various crises. In turn, the success of Bundu as an Islamic polity did not escape the attention of reformers in the Futas, and possibly contributed to their eventual decision to perform *jihād* in their respective homelands.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the rise of militant Islam in Senegambia, first in Futa Jallon in the 1720s, next in Futa Toro in the 1760s, and then under the leadership of *al-ḥājj* Umar in the mid-nineteenth century, presented a conundrum for the Bundunke rulers. Intent upon maintaining an atmosphere conducive to the uninterrupted flow of commerce, Bundu could not afford the disruption that would inevitably follow the attempt to implement Islamic law throughout its environs. At the same time, the state could not insulate its constituency from the penetration of powerful and persuasive views emanating from the militant reformers of the two Futas. As a result, Bundu would experience considerable social and political upheaval during the ascendancy of Abdul Qadir and *al-ḥājj* Umar, who both intervene directly in Bundu's internal affairs. In each instance, the fervor for reform within Bundu will dissipate with the decline of either man's fortunes. The ephemeral nature of militant activity in Bundu strongly suggests that, although there were those who were genuinely committed to reform as defined by the movements in the Futas and Maasina, there was no ongoing, self-sustaining tradition of reform within Bundu itself. The majority of the ruling elite subscribed to the policy of pragmatism. However, the involvement of both Abdul Qadir and *al-ḥājj* Umar in Bundu would have lasting repercussions for the polity's social and political order. Relations between the two ruling branches would become severely strained in the aftermath of Abdul Qadir's tenure. Power and succession struggles between the two branches would also find expression in divergent economic policies. In time, these differences would result in regional divisions within the state itself, as

the two camps underwent a physical polarization consonant with their distinct interests.

Further complicating the internal schisms within Bundu was the intense competition among indigenous states for control of the Upper Senegal Valley's commerce. Bundu's alliances reflected the frequent changes in the political fortunes of the various states; at times those alliances were politically expedient but religiously unpalatable. Eventually the Bundunke political fabric tore at the seams: two civil wars and unending external hostilities were among the consequences.

Moving to the late nineteenth century, Bundu would be directly affected by the reform movement of Mamadu Lamine. Having suffered through the ravages of war under *al-ḥājj* Umar, Bundu was simply unable to withstand another all-consuming conflict. The devastation of the Lamine period brought the era of Bundu's significance to an end.

Precedents exist in both the Islamic and African contexts for the factional disputes which characterized Bundu's history. In Islam, there is the example of the Alfaya and Soriya ruling branches of Futa Jallon, representing the moderate and militant camps respectively. In like manner, the history of late nineteenth-century Kaarta represents a variation of the same theme, as "war" and "peace" parties emerged according to divergent economic interests, culminating in internecine warfare among the offspring of *al-ḥājj* Umar. The central Islamic world also provides an example in the form of eleventh/twelfth century Nishapur. There, the seemingly religiously motivated Hanafi–Shafi'i struggle was actually more of a political conflict. Finally, the competing commercial claims of European powers operating within Senegambia dramatically affected the Bundunke state. John Yoder has demonstrated that nineteenth century Dahomey also experienced the consequences of shifting British trade policies, which resulted in intensified factional strife.[1]

Secondary literature

For the purposes of this study, secondary literature is to be distinguished from primary information in that the former is compiled by scholars who are not themselves witnesses to any of the events they describe, nor did they live during the time of said events. Their approach to the subject matter is within the parameters of modern social scientific inquiry. In contrast, primary data is that information left by either the participants, their descendants, or those collectors who witnessed some aspect of the history they purport to narrate. With this distinction in mind, the present monograph is the first comprehensive analysis of Bundu's history. There are, however, several studies which relate to Bundu and its involvement in both regional and Islamic developments. The most recent and important is the work of Boubacar Barry (1988) on the region of Senegambia, a cogent examination of those political, economic, social and religious forces which coalesced to bind the region

together via a shared historical experience. Barry's emphasis on the deleterious effects of the Atlantic commercial frontier's emergence is related to his dissatisfaction with the earlier work of Philip D. Curtin (1975), itself a study of commercial activity in Senegambia that tends to ignore Europe's culpability in the underdevelopment of the region. A critical issue concerns the relative importance and impact of the slave trade in the region, for which Barry allows a much more prominent role than Curtin. Abdoulaye Bathily's work on Gajaaga (1989) is in some sense also a rejoinder to Curtin's inadequate treatment of the regional slave trade, and in any event is a significant contribution to the monographic materials. Cissoko Sékéné-Mody has likewise made a study of the regional role of Khasso (1986). Useful theses at the monographic level include those of John Hanson (1989) on Kaarta, and Abdel Wedoud ould Cheikh on Mauritania (1985).

Beyond political syntheses and works focusing on individual polities, there are the studies of the Jakhanke (Malinke clerical communities), who maintained an extensive presence in Bundu. Lamin Sanneh (1979), Thomas Hunter (Ph.D. thesis, 1979), and Pierre Smith (1968) have all worked on the Jakhanke within Bundu, and Curtin has also published his findings concerning their activities (1971).

The larger theme of Islam has benefited from the recent discussion of rural-versus-urban categories by Nehemia Levtzion (1987), which provides a useful framework for the present study. Regarding the impact of the eighteenth and nineteenth century jihadists on developments within Bundu, Robinson (1985; 1975), Bathily (1989; 1970), Saint-Martin (1970), and Nyambarza (1969) are the most germane. However, an adequate analysis of the Futa Jallon *jihād* has yet to appear, to the detriment of all scholarly activity relating to Senegambia.

Primary sources

This section will initially focus on categorizing the various types of sources available for the history of Bundu, and will essentially be descriptive in nature. Upon completion of an adequate framework of organization, an analysis of the reliability of the sources will follow. The discussion at this juncture will turn upon such matters as the conditions of transmission and the period of collection of information, as these issues directly impact upon the utility of the data base.

In his work on *al-ḥājj* Umar, Robinson has effectively demonstrated the need to categorize primary materials with regard to their relative proximity to the subject matter.[2] That is, documents, whether oral or written, should be distinguished on the basis of whether they represent the indigenous perspective, or whether they are the observations of non-participatory witnesses. The resulting divisions of internal, external, and "mixed" bodies of information are much more useful to a critical analysis of the data than the customary dichotomy of oral and written sources, often a false (or at least

misleading) distinction. In view of this persuasive approach to source materials, I have divided the primary sources on Bundu into endogenous, exogenous, and intermediate genres. Endogenous materials include indigenous Arabic documents and oral recordings, the latter ranging from interviews with informants of varying social backgrounds, to the highly stylized accounts of oral historians. Also included in this category are the traditions of singular episodes or individuals found within traveler accounts. In such cases, the traditions stand out in bold relief vis-a-vis the preceding and ensuing text – the recorder has simply written down the tradition. Any personal commentary is duly noted, and is easily dissociated from the tradition itself. The time frame is not a determinant in selecting the data for this category, as it all tends to reflect the view (collective, individual, or elitist) of the Bundunkobe ("people of Bundu").

Exogenous documents concern the observations of individuals from outside of the community in question, who do not attempt to represent that community's historical self-perception; rather, such individuals seek only to report on the community as external, non-participatory witnesses. This category is largely filled by French materials, consisting of reports filed by people either passing through Bundu on special assignment, or by officials residing in such fortified posts as Bakel and Senoudebou. Although necessarily informed by members of the community, the documents of this genre nevertheless reflect the opinion, assessment, and conclusions of the external observer, with all of the attendant problems of bias, ignorance, and misinformation which are a matter of course.

The intermediate variety of source materials is the most challenging in that it consists of witnesses who have both recorded local accounts of historical events, and who have then proceeded to complement that data with either exogenous materials, their personal observations, or both. An attempt is made to investigate persons or events from a variety of informants, and to then present their statements in synthesized form. The obvious problem concerns the process of separating the original transmission from the subsequent reflections of the recorder. In some instances the recorder clearly indicates when he is adding his own commentary. In all cases it is necessary to compare these traditions with others of the same type, and with those of the endogenous genre, to achieve a sufficient level of control. Differences between intermediate and endogenous traditions are overwhelmingly the result of varying times and conditions of transmission. Singular traditions, either uncorroborated or at variance with the view presented by a preponderance of other primary sources, must necessarily be approached with great caution.

Andre Rançon (1894) is by far the most prominent example of this genre. His ethnography of Bundu has been critical to any subsequent study of the area. In addition to Rançon, the records of Moussa Kamara, the early twentieth century scholar of Futa Toro, must also be placed into this category. More will be said about these two individuals later.

Endogenous materials. The relative scarcity of clerical writings on Bundu's history suggests that the Bundunkobe regard their history as the proper preserve of oral historians, or *griots*, of whom the *awlube* (s. *gawlo*) are principal in Bundu. This is entirely consistent with a widespread, time-honored conviction throughout subsaharan Africa that the past is to be experienced and relived through the spoken word.[3] Indeed, the past expressed orally is shared by all, whereas the written word has certain mystical properties understood by only a select few.[4] The use of letters is consequently often limited to areas such as religious legal texts and amulets (protective charms). With this in mind, the first one hundred years or so of Bundu's existence is largely revealed through oral sources.

The oral materials of the endogenous variety were recorded for posterity in various languages, including Pulaar, Soninke, and French. The earliest accounts derive from European travelers passing through the area, who took an interest in the Bundunkobe, and proceeded to record traditions of singular events or persons, especially those revolving around the probable founder of the Bundunke state, Malik Sy (d. *c.* 1699). The first to do this in any systematic way was Anne Raffenel (1847; 1843), who was followed by Carrère and Holle (1855). Although their accounts are brief and their sources unspecified, what they have written is very consistent with later, better substantiated collections. Two additional collections were made just prior to the colonial era: Bérenger-Feraud (1885), and Diakité (published in 1929, but gathered in 1891). During the colonial period, four more collections of oral data were accomplished: Adam (1904), Djibril Ly (1938), Brigaud (1962), and Dieng Doudou (quoted in Brigaud). Finally, the post-colonial period saw the assembly of two collections: Curtin (1966) and Alfa Ibrahim Sow (1968).

It is not always known where the traditions were recorded, nor from whom they were taken.[5] Curtin's collection was for the most part made in Bundu, with some interviews held in Saint Louis, Bakel, and Dakar. His data cover a wide range of topics over a vast period of time. Interviews were conducted in Pulaar, Soninke, and Malinke with informants from a variety of social strata: *awlube*, clerics, Sissibe (descendants of Malik Sy and the ruling dynasty of Bundu), and members of traditional occupational castes (e.g., a leather worker, or *gayahke*). The informants were all celebrated for their knowledge of the Bundunke past. Curtin is careful to give the status of his informants and the circumstances of the interviews. Many of his informants were well advanced in age (some of their parents were either eyewitnesses of or participants in the wars of Mamadu Lamine towards the end of the nineteenth century), but the problem of senility is never encountered, whereas faulty memories can be assisted with other, more established materials. The basic form of the accounts was a presentation lasting from ten minutes to one hour; the *awlube* were accompanied by the *hoodu* (musical instrument in Fulbe areas) or the *kora* (in Malinke-speaking areas).

Of the precolonial accounts, Mamadou Aissa Kaba Diakité was a Soninke

cleric living in Nioro, and was descended from a family originally living in the Bakel area.[6] He himself is a source, his accounts having been produced at the request of a Commander Claude in the *cercle* of Nioro in 1891. Ten years later, at the age of 36, Diakité recounted the story of Malik Sy to Adam, so that both of these sources hail from outside of Bundu.[7] For the colonial collection, the account of Djibril Ly originated from Futa Toro, where he was the principal interpreter at Kaedi.[8] In contrast, Brigaud was informed by Sy Amadou Isaaga, a grandson of Abdul Sega, one of Rançon's sources.[9] It is in Brigaud that we also find Dieng Doudou's account; nothing is said concerning Doudou's background.

As for my own 1984/87–88 collection of oral data, for which I spent eight months in Senegambia (and most of that time in Bundu itself), I approached informants with the conviction that the existing corpus of oral materials, collected by Rançon, Kamara, Curtin, and others, provides the larger, stylized, more sweeping accounts of the Bundunke past. I was therefore more interested in either accounting for the historical lacunae created by these collections, or with investigating specific, unresolved issues arising from said collections. All of my informants were associated with the court in one way or another, a reflection of the emphasis of my research at the time. For the most part, I confined my inquiries to the second half of the nineteenth century, and focused on the reign of Bokar Saada. At the same time, most of the Bundunkobe preferred to talk about Malik Sy, who retains a place of prominence in the Bundunke collective memory.

All of my interviews were conducted in French. In the large towns (e.g., Goudiry and Bakel), many informants spoke French, so that the need for an intermediary was minimal. However, in smaller villages such as Gabou and Kidira, intermediaries were indispensable. In the smaller villages, it was difficult to arrange exclusive sessions with informants – this was possibly the result of the brevity of my visits (two to three days on average), which tended to attract considerable attention. On the other hand, it was much easier to limit the number of people present during the interview in the larger towns, and the length of the sessions tended to be shorter due to the fact that many of the Sissibe hold important government posts and so maintain busy schedules. All of the sessions were tape-recorded, and complemented with written notes. The most useful interviews are listed in the bibliography.

The Bundunkobe express wariness in the matter of sharing their historical traditions with outsiders. In a number of villages and towns, it was remarked that others had preceded me, asking similar questions for similar purposes, never to be heard from again. It is therefore probable that these earlier experiences conditioned the responses of informants, especially in areas of heightened sensitivity. In particular, questions concerning Bokar Saada's relations with *al-ḥājj* Umar produced noticeable discomfort, even more so in cases where an associate of the court was answering queries in the presence of Sy family members. In some instances, individuals actually said that they did not know the answer to a given question; in others, informants were

evasive. Given that such lines of inquiry constituted my primary interest, my own data is most effectively employed in conjunction with other supportive sources. Otherwise, in cases where there is conflict between my sources and the archival records, I have sided in most instances with the contemporary accounts. This decision is both in light of the preceding discussion, and for reasons which will become clear at subsequent points. A lack of confidence in some of my informants' replies has necessarily created the need to carefully distinguish between what informants said and what I deem credible.

The majority of Arabic documents retrieved from Bundu belong in the endogenous category, and are to be found in the *Fonds Curtin*. Interestingly, I uncovered no such documentation in the Fulbe towns of Bundu, with the exceptions of Senoudebou and Koussan. Even then, as was true of the various libraries in the Jakhanke villages of southern Bundu, the documentation consists primarily of genealogies and *tā'rīkhs* ("histories") of the Jakhanke clans, shedding little light on the larger Bundunke context, and in any event are represented in the *Fonds Curtin*.

The scarcity of Arabic documentation is a reflection of several factors. First, writing within the West African Muslim community tended to focus on matters of religion – treatises and commentaries; such matters were not of immense importance to the ruling elite of Bundu. Second, there is no evidence that much effort was expended to create records regarding tax revenues, judicial rulings, and the like. Third, even the Jakhanke Arabic documentation only dates back to the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, and most of it was written in the twentieth. The latter quarter of the nineteenth century in Bundu saw a great deal of destruction and ruin; Bundu was severely depopulated for significant stretches of time. The catastrophic experiences of the state could therefore also account for the absence of written records.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, some of the Arabic manuscripts are useful. Several concern the emigration of the Jakhanke to the Upper Gambia, following the flight and demise of Mamadu Lamine, and thus indirectly give some information on Bundu during this period. Other documents list Bundu's heads of state and their respective tenures in chronological order.

Exogenous materials. Most of the documentation in this category consists of archival records produced by European travelers and officials who made little attempt to transmit the indigenous view of Bundu's history or society, but who rather sought to record their own observations. To be sure, this involved the use of informants, but the substance of the reports clearly conveys the opinions and sentiments of the foreign observer, to the virtual exclusion of internal assessment and perspective. Such records become much more substantial, as would be expected, in the nineteenth century. With regard to traveler accounts, those of David (1744), Rubault (1786), and Mungo Park (1795) tend to be the more useful for the eighteenth century, as

they do reveal somewhat careful observation of and interaction with the Bundunkobe. Mollien (1818), and Gray and Dochard (1818–19) also attempted to describe early nineteenth century Bundunke towns. None of these travelers, in either century, bothered to record local traditions.

In addition to traveler accounts, there also exists a body of reports on the Upper Senegal Valley by officers of French commercial and military posts. Prior to 1820, the French were able to monitor events in the Upper Senegal from their posts in Gajaaga (or Galam, directly north of Bundu along the Senegal River). With the establishment of French forts at Bakel (1820) and Senoudebou (1845), information reaching the French concerning activity within Bundu greatly increased. As was the case with the travel literature, much of the information obtained by the French posts was filtered through local agents. However, because an official would sometimes spend several years at a given post, he would be less dependent on the discretion of such sources than would someone simply passing through the area. The official could cultivate more substantial relationships, and come to a more refined appreciation of the politics and customs of the people. At the point that the official, or the traveler for that matter, began to record traditions to the degree that they are identifiably autochthonous, or began to create a synthesis of personal observation and internal perspective, is the point at which his contribution would be categorized as either endogenous or intermediate.

Intermediate materials. The sources in this category represent the first attempts to develop a coherent history of Bundu. Lamartiny (1884) and Roux (1893) produced brief narratives of Bundu's past, in which traditions and synthesis are interspersed. Of the two, Roux is the more important, having served as commander of the French fort at Bakel, during which time he conducted interviews. Concerning Lamartiny, it can be assumed that he spent some time gathering data in Bundu itself, since he was commissioned to write a monograph on Bundu by the Société de géographie commerciale de Paris. But Rançon's contribution to this genre is the most critical, as he toured the Upper Senegal and Gambia Valleys twice towards the end of the nineteenth century. He benefitted from the work of Roux and Lamartiny, citing them extensively, and combining their accounts with official reports emanating from the various posts of the Upper Senegal. But Rançon also collected oral data of his own, his principal source having been Abdul Sega, a Sissibe leader from Koussan in Bundu. The French ethnographer creates an encompassing blend of all these sources as he writes on the Bundunke past; he is also the first to discuss the larger Bundunke society and culture, in which some attention is given to the role of Islam. In short, his is a more complete picture of the whole.

Having stated the foregoing, it should be made clear that there are several serious shortcomings in Rançon's work. First of all, he has a tendency to uncritically accept the testimony of Lamartiny and Roux, and to even "borrow" numerous passages from their efforts without benefit of citation. This is important in that it reveals a mindset that is more interested in