

CAROL V. MCKINNEY. *BARANZAN'S PEOPLE: AN ETHNOHISTORY OF THE BAJJU OF THE MIDDLE BELT OF NIGERIA.* DALLAS: SIL INTERNATIONAL 2019. 265 P. ISBN: 9781556713996

KEFAS LAMAK¹

Carol McKinney presents a study of the origin, history, culture, and religious beliefs and practices of the Bajju people of Southern Kaduna, formerly known as Southern Zaria (in what is sometimes called the Middle Belt of Nigeria). Through an anthropological study of the Bajju people, McKinney gives a comprehensive history, from precolonial to colonial and post-colonial periods (xvii). In the beginning of her book, McKinney acknowledges that the Bajju people are a minority ethnic group in Nigeria with a population of four hundred and eighty to one million and are considered to be among the largest ethnic groups in the modern-day Kaduna state (9). Situating the Bajju people in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, McKinney compares them throughout the book with many other ethnic groups in the area to show where they share a common identity, history, and religion (4-5). This helps give a broader perspective on the peoples of the Middle Belt.

McKinney's work adds to knowledge regarding the origin of the Bajju people who migrated to modern-day Southern Kaduna from Plateau State (5; 19). Perhaps not too many people in the Middle Belt, even among Bajju ethnic group, are familiar with the history of their forefathers among the Jarawa and Miago people of Plateau State. Baranzan, identified as the first father of the Bajju ethnic group, first moved from Jarawa-occupied territories of the Northern Jos Plateau and settled in the Miango area. At this point Bajju people shared the land and a culture with the Afizere people. Baranzan then decided to move from Kwoil Miango because of famine and settled in the location that the Bajju people currently occupy in Kaduna (19-21). Baranzan later had five children who then moved to other areas to form villages and towns within Southern Kaduna (21). This is very significant in studying culture in the Middle Belt and Northern Nigeria. However, McKinney is not precise about when these historic migrations happened, leaving room for archeologists and other historians to continue this research.

McKinney's work also continues the political history of the Bajju people from their precolonial past to the colonial occupation of Nigeria and post-colonial times (166-167). She notes that the Bajju people were enslaved for a long time by the Muslims of Zazzau, from Shehu Usman Dan-Fodio's Islamic jihad (1804) to the arrival of colonialists (166). At the arrival of British colonialists and the annexation of Northern Nigeria, the colonialists sided with the Hausa Fululani Muslims to indirectly rule the Bajju people. McKinney cites the work of Moses Ochonu in what he calls 'colonialism by proxy' (168). What is new in McKinney's argument about Bajju politics

¹ Department of Religious Studies, University of Iowa. Email: kefas-lamak@uiowa.edu

and their oppression by both colonialists and Hausa Fulani Muslims is her discussion of their various attempts and struggles to have a leadership structure independent of traditional rulers from the Zaria emirate and Sokoto Caliphate.

When they approached the British colonialists asking to be granted independence, the British said that unless they had the approval of the emirate of Zaria, they would not grant them their independent chiefdoms. Therefore, they would continue to be answerable to the Sarkin Jama'a, the Hausa Muslim representative of the Zaria emirate (170). Through their elders, the Bajju people sent numerous delegations to the emir of Zaria from the 1930s to the 1960s to seek their approval for traditional independent leadership, to no avail. Instead, this play for independence ended in the persecution of the delegates of the Bajju people by the emir of Zaria. McKinney notes that the Bajju people had their first traditional chief in 1996 during the military rule of General Sani Abacha, under whose government they were also allowed to create multiple chiefdoms (195).

Examining the religious history and evolution of the Bajju people, McKinney shows that Christianity arrived through the Sudan Interior Missions (SIM) missionaries in 1929 (174). Before the coming of Christianity, most Bajju people practiced their forefathers' ancestral religions with strong beliefs in God, spirits, witches, reincarnation, medicines, traditional healers and charms. Today 95% of the Bajju ethnic group are Christians (175). McKinney raises a new argument about early missionary encounters in Bajju land and many parts of the Middle Belt. On her account the usage of Hausa as the language of worship in church led the people to speak more Hausa (176-178). She observes that missionaries could not keep up with translating the Bible for every ethnic group in the Middle Belt and Northern Nigeria, leading them to decide to use the Hausa Bible translation (176-178). As a result, most churches in Bajju territories today use Hausa or English.

Finally, McKinney argues that there have been numerous social changes among the Bajju people. Through missionaries and their religious encounters, most Bajju people worldwide now are Christians, and they no longer practice the ancestral religion of their forefather, Baranzan (99). The arrival of colonialists ended the Bajju people's hostilities with the Muslims of Zaria, though from 1980 to 2000 there were a series of religious crises in which the ethnic group was involved, as well as many other ethnic groups living in Kaduna from all over the country (183; 202-203). Finally, McKinney notes the Bajju people are committed to going to school and searching for a better life, causing their young people to migrate all round Nigeria (198).

I admire McKinney's scholarship and her engagement with the of the culture, religion, and migration of the Bajju people with a deep mastery of their language and history. The book is based on archival sources found in the National Kaduna Archives and on fieldwork among the Bajju people. This book can be used in programs within the Humanities and anthropology in particular to understand the religion and culture of the people of the Middle Belt in Nigeria.

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