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To cite this article: Tamara D. Turner (2022) Hausa Songs in Algeria: sounds of trans-Saharan continuity and rupture, The Journal of North African Studies, 27:5, 998-1026, DOI: [10.1080/13629387.2021.1898225](https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2021.1898225)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2021.1898225>



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Hausa Songs in Algeria: sounds of trans-Saharan continuity and rupture

Tamara D. Turner

Center for the History of Emotions, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Germany



ABSTRACT


What can North African music, as a system of embodied knowledge, tell us about the trans-Saharan movements of people and practices? What could it mean to listen to such a history of continuity and rupture? This essay details the existence of two bodies of Hausa songs still performed today in Algeria within the *Dīwān of Sīdī Bilāl*, a music and trance ritual tradition that originated, coalesced, and developed out of the trans-Saharan slave trade. These songs, categorised as the Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn suites, feature Hausa ritual objects, song texts, musical aesthetics, and spirit names from the Hausa *bori* (ceremony) pantheon among many other sub-Saharan echoes. However, *dīwān* communities rarely recognise these precise connections and simply consider them generically ‘sub-Saharan’ (*sūdānī*). Nevertheless, because the Hausa repertoires express the most purely *sūdānī* qualities of the entire ritual corpus, they serve as the primary example of *both* admirable ‘black African’ authenticity (and, therefore, ritual power) and risky alterity. Such viewpoints serve as a basis for crises about how practising Muslims should engage with the supposed ‘pre-Islamic’ origins of *dīwān* while preventing ancestors’ histories from disappearing. Informed by recent (2013–2016) first-hand ethnographic fieldwork with *dīwān* communities as well as both primary and secondary historical sources, this essay is not only the first research to document these Hausa songs in Algeria but also highlights how and why these songs matter in Algerian history and to local communities today.

KEYWORDS Trans-Saharan; *bori*; Hausa; music; *diwan*

Introduction

What can North African music, as a system of knowledge, tell us about the trans-Saharan movements of people and practices? What could it mean to listen to such a history of continuity and rupture? In this essay, I detail the existence of two bodies of Hausa songs still performed today in Algeria

CONTACT Tamara D. Turner  turner@mpib-berlin.mpg.de  Lentzeallee 94, Berlin 14195

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2021.1898225>

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with Hausa ritual objects, song texts, and musical aesthetics.¹ As communities in Algeria debate the nature of these centuries-old songs, problematise their texts, and claim or reject them as part of their own lineages in various ritual and festival settings, the contemporary meanings of trans-Saharan movements resound from an emic point of view.

The Hausawiyyin and Migzawiyyin song suites belong to the robust musical repertoire of Algerian *dīwān* communities. *Dīwān*, or *Dīwān of Sidī Bilāl*, remains one of the many *ṭuruq* (paths, pl.) in Algeria grounded in Sufi epistemologies and ritual practices. What makes *dīwān* practice unique, however, is its origins in sub-Saharan Africa and its emergence in North Africa via trans-Saharan trade routes. Hausa songs in *dīwān* represent just one ethnolinguistic category of many suites in the *dīwān* ritual musical corpus. Although most of the songs in the corpus assert sub-Saharan origins, the largest degree of trans-Saharan connection is traceable to Hausa origins through words, phrases, ritual objects, names of spirits from the Hausa spirit pantheon, and musical aesthetics. Hence, one could think of these songs as bridges between chasms of time and space.

McDougall and Scheele (2012), as well as Lydon (2009), have been particularly influential to a shifting view of the Sahara as a continuum and dynamic 'bridge' rather than as a north-south, religious and racial barrier between 'black' and 'white' and 'Muslim' and 'non-Muslim' (Lydon 2009, 41). Such a black-white binary, very much a product of French intellectual colonialism, continues to persist discursively around and within *dīwān* communities in Algeria, who largely consider *dīwān* a sub-Saharan, animist (sometimes 'voodoo'), and pre-Islamic practice prior to its emplacement in North Africa.² While the Sahara in the histories of *dīwān* did function as a bridge to some extent, trans-Saharan passage involved great trauma, loss, suppression, and suffering. As follows, it is important to consider how Saharan crossings not only fostered connections but also how they destroyed them by reconfiguring and obliterating subjectivities.

Indeed, *dīwān* practice and discourse suggest *uneven and fractured* networks of practice and aesthetics, demonstrating *both* trans-Saharan connection and disconnection, remembering and forgetting, construction and destruction, and power and powerlessness. Today, *dīwān* musicians do not understand the non-Arabic language they sing in and most do not recognise the direct, trans-Saharan, Hausa connections in the *dīwān* ritual; rather, they recognise them generally as 'sub-Saharan' (*sūdānī*). Nevertheless, *dīwān* communities vehemently debate Hausa songs and texts and struggles emerge around whether these songs should still be performed and which troupes claim 'authentic', ancestral links that merit the right to perform them. In this way, Hausa songs also map dynamic moral, affective, and religious territories, particularly when the songs begin to circulate outside their original ritual context.

Resonating with James McDougall's call that trans-Saharan studies would do well to consider 'spaces in between' (McDougall and Scheele 2012, 75), these Hausa songs, indeed, lie somewhere *in between* memory and forgetting, in between who ancestors were and who their descendants are, and in between the 'old ways' and the 'new.' That is to say, while Hausa songs in Algeria are valuable sonic and performative vestiges of trans-Saharan movements and histories in Algeria, they are much *more* than this. As follows, this essay draws on recent (2013–2016) first-hand ethnographic fieldwork with *dīwān* communities as well as primary and secondary historical sources to both document these Hausa songs in Algeria while addressing how and why these songs matter today.³

Dīwān background

Dīwān (lit. 'assembly'), a music and trance ritual tradition, originated, coalesced, and developed out of the trans-Saharan slave trade with the displacement of various sub-Saharan ethnolinguistic groups.⁴ During three centuries of Ottoman rule, these communities were heavily influenced by the local, popular religious practices and socio-political organisation of Sufi lineages. Situated in the Ottoman context, *dīwān* developed into a stratified Afro-Maghrebi ritual and music practice predicated on many of the same structures of other musical traditions within the fold of popular Islam in North Africa: saint veneration, trance, and ritual healing.⁵ *Dīwān* insiders, or *ūlād dīwān* (lit. 'children of *dīwān*'), for the most part, descend from these many sub-Saharan ethnolinguistic groups and they identify Bilāl, the first *muezzin* (caller to prayer) and a former Abyssinian slave, as their spiritual father (*al-'abb al-rūḥī*). Following the Sufi pattern of taking the name of the leader or *shaykh*, *ūlād dīwān* refer to their community as 'Bilāliyya'.⁶

The *dīwān* ritual typically lasts six to eight hours and unfolds through dozens of song suites. Ordered by hagiography and ethnolinguistic origin, the suites contain songs for historical figures, saints, spirits, and, some say, the *jnūn* (supernatural entities widespread in Islam). While some of the songs (*brāj*, pl; *borj*, sing) cultivate trance for those adepts so inclined, *all* of the songs require distinct sensory-aesthetic protocols. Particular physical movements or ritual actions must be performed during the *brāj* to depict the character of the song's namesake (e.g. a saint, spirit, prophet) such as donning coloured cloaks (*abāyat*), dancing with special ritual knives or hide whips (*bulālat*), utilising incense, and distributing specific foods (e.g. boiled eggs, hard candies, *rwīna*) that need to be consumed during the *brāj*.⁷

Finally, it is critical to note one very fundamental way in which '*brāj*' differ from 'songs' in English. While some *brāj* narrate the story of a *human*, historical figure like a saint, and, ideally, produce the atmosphere (*ḥāl*) associated with that saint's personality (Turner 2020b), *brāj* for *non-human* spirits or

jnūn function at a different register. In the latter case, these *brāj* sonically invoke or 'call' (*'aīt*) non-human entities. Because *brāj* and non-human entities are made up of the same material – energy – particular sounds resonate non-human entities, materialising them. In other words, non-human entities exist materially *as* their songs: spirit/*jinn* and the sound/music collapse ontologically (Turner 2021).

The sub-Saharan musical aesthetics in *dīwān* pointedly reenact *dīwān's* trans-Saharan origins. All of the musical elements, from the instrument construction and sound to the compositional qualities of the songs, stand out as 'other' in their North African context. *Dīwān* aesthetics share substantially more with sub-Saharan African musics than with North African or Arabic musics. For example, the primary ritual musical instrument, the *ginbrī*, is a fully transpierced lute built from a long, rectangular wooden box covered in camel skin, which acts as a resonator for the three gut strings suspended over a wooden bridge tied at the distal end of the neck. The *ginbrī* descends from sub-Saharan lutes like the Hausa *molo*, Bambara *ngoni*, and Fulani *hoddu*, comparable in its construction, tuning (pentatonic melodic modes), sound quality, and technical playing style.⁸

Dīwān brāj, both undetermined in terms of age and composers, diverge in their musical form: rather than employing verses or refrains with forward moving temporality, they are cyclical in nature, utilising repetition as a key musical technique. *Brāj* phrases return again and again, intensifying and gradually accelerating with additional layers of vocal parts or changes in instrument volume, giving *brāj* a spiralling, intensifying quality. The elastic feel of musical time in *dīwān brāj* differs from the Algerian musical milieu: metric cycles (like 'measures') are not evenly divided within beats but offset with a lilt; for example, duple groupings in time may consist of articulations with durations of 47:53 rather than 50:50. Because of this 'lilt', *brāj* can be simultaneously divided into groups of two or three, and, thus, can be heard in different ways depending on how one hears the recurring emphasis.⁹

Second only to the *moqedm* who oversees the ritual proceedings, the *m'alle*m possesses all musical knowledge; he is the 'master' of the quintessential *ginbrī*. Sitting beside the *m'alle*m, the *kuyu bungu* – a term borrowed from Songhay – enjoys the next most important role as the the main singer.¹⁰ The *kuyu bungu* leads the 'call' part of the call-and-response singing while directing the chorus of six to ten response singers (*rqīza* or *genēdīz*). Each response singer also plays a pair of *qrāqeb*, double-headed metal clappers, resulting in a booming choral response driven by sonically piercing percussion. In all *dīwān brāj* (songs), the most important aspect is the main theme, the *rās el-borj* ('head of the *borj*'), responsible for identifying *brāj*, particularly when the name of the *borj* might vary from region to region, as we will see below.¹¹ On this note, while debates fluctuate about the song texts

and meanings of songs, the melodies and themes of songs persist over long distances and periods of time.¹² In this way, musical knowledge accumulates as sonic, embodied knowledge that can sometimes be traced in ways that language cannot be.

Dīwān and its sub-Saharan roots and traces

Because it emerged via the displacement, encounters, and adaptation of sub-Saharan populations in the north, *dīwān* naturally embodies the epistemologies and supernatural worlds that people brought with them. It is well understood that Islam and animism or other spiritual or religious traditions often did, and still do, exist together in various arrangements. Such 'syncretic' amalgamations consistently reverberate in *dīwān*.¹³ For example, several song texts that honour religious figures flow directly into texts about an 'animist' spirit; other songs reference *both* a religious historical figure, such as Moses ('Mūsa'), and a *jinn* by the same name. Nevertheless, despite the long and complex history of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, local discourses both within and outside of *dīwān* communities in Algeria posit that *dīwān*'s origins rest in 'animist, black Africa' but that *dīwān* was modified over time with the gradual Islamisation of sub-Saharan peoples upon their arrival in North Africa and the subsequent 'cleansing' of non-Islamic practices.¹⁴ Because the Hausawiyyin and Migzawiyyin repertoires locally represent the most purely *sūdānī* (sub-Saharan) of all the songs, they serve as the primary vestige of *both* admirable 'black African' authenticity (and, therefore, ritual power) and risky alterity.

Dīwān discourse asserts that its ritual repertoire draws from seven *sūdānī* 'tribes' (using either *tribus* in French or *qabā'il*, plural; *qabila*, singular in Arabic), yet without consensus on which seven groups comprise it. The most commonly cited are Hausa (specifically Katsina in Algiers), Songhay, Bambara, Fulani/Peul, Bornu, Boussou, Gurma, and Zozo, in decreasing order of occurrence. The gradual coalescence of these varying groups from ethnolinguistic formations into somewhat connected 'communities' in Algeria leads us to the term *ūlād dīwān*, *ūlād* being a common referent of tribal affiliation.¹⁵ Despite this narrative, only Hausa, Bornu, and Bambara/Bamana ethnolinguistic groups retain possible connections through *songs* in *dīwān*.¹⁶ On rare occasion, my interlocutors stated that the *borj* duo, 'Gurma-Jayba' (two *brāj* always played back to back), was associated with the Gurma tribe from the inner Niger River Bend, between the Mossi states and the Sokoto Caliphate (Lovejoy 2000, 156). However, Gurma-Jayba is classified by musicians under a special kind of Baḥriyya spirit pantheon of rivers and to some groups qualifies as 'Bambara' (see also Andrews 1903, 9). Jallūl Moṭam, the ritual leader (*moqedm*) of the dominant *dīwān* community in Saida, described Baḥriyya as a 'tribe' (*tribu*, using French), throwing

into question what is meant by the term exactly: assemblages of spirits, humans, or simply qualities or personages?

That said, it is important to note here that politics of ethnicity complicate matters.¹⁷ An identification of ‘tribe’ as such might not necessarily indicate the *origin* of the *brāj*. It could also reference the behaviour and qualities of the spirits or personages *depicted* in the *brāj*.¹⁸ Ethnolinguistic origin can be difficult, if not impossible, to determine because east–west, interior trade, domination, war, and slave raiding was ongoing. Lovejoy (2000, 156) details how slave trading took place across sub-Saharan Africa, so that one found slaves in the Asante Kingdom from as far away as the Sokoto Caliphate as well as Gurma and Mossi states. We know that, with so much interaction, ethnolinguistic groups regularly borrowed ideas, sounds, instruments, and approaches from others. Such integrations can also be seen at the level of religious and occult practices. For example, the Songhay spirit pantheon includes Hausa and Tuareg spirits (Rouch 1989) just as Songhay, Tuareg, North African, and Fulani spirits populate the Hausa *bori* spirit pantheon (Besmer 1983; Masquelier 2001). Despite these complexities of ethnicity, the Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn suites plausibly reveal a Hausa origin for several reasons: the songs’ musical temporality and melodic phrases differ remarkably from all others in *dīwān*, they contain intact phrases in Hausa, call out to Hausa spirits, and use Hausa ritual objects.

In these suites, numerous and still-intelligible phrases in Hausa sing of magic, medicine, and healing. The most common references are ‘*mai*’ (master) and ‘*magani*’ (medicine, magic, or charm) and ‘*bāwa*’, meaning ‘slave’. Furthermore, the term ‘*bori*’ usually signifies spirit inhabitation phenomena in *dīwān*, which links it to the Hausa *bori* ‘possession’ ceremony of present day Northern Nigeria (notably Tremearne 1914; Besmer 1983; Masquelier 2001).¹⁹ Keepers of the *bori* ceremony (see Tremearne 1914; Besmer 1983), the Maguzawa subgroup of Hausa (pronounced by my interlocutors primarily as ‘Migzawiyyn’), have also regularly been described as ‘pagan’ – that is, in direct opposition to Islam – and, quite interestingly, as the ‘oldest Hausa tradition progressively excluded’ from other Hausa groups (Nicolas 1981, 204; see also Khat 2014).²⁰

Hausa *bori* worlds resound throughout *dīwān*. At one time, it seems ‘*bori*’ was the name of one kind of healing ceremony in Mostaganem (Lecomte 2000, 7). The important and potent Dogowa spirits of the *bori* pantheon (see Besmer 1983; Masquelier 2001), also recognised in Songhay pantheons (Rouch 1989), regularly appear in the *dīwān* Migzawiyyn repertoire, most obviously in the *borj* ‘Bani Shawara Dogowa’ (locally meaning, ‘Give me consult, Dogowa’). But many other invocations of Hausa spirits such as Jato, Migzu, and Rima and related terms such as ‘*serki*’ (chief) animate songs, not to mention an entire *dīwān* song suite dedicated to the city of the spirits, ‘Jan Gari’ or ‘Jangare’ (Tremearne 1914; Besmer 1983). This is

especially important here because *bori*, a well-studied ritual practice of great importance to Hausaland, is typically understood as a pre-Islamic, 'animist' ritual that has struggled to survive in increasingly Muslim contexts (see particularly Masquelier 2001). The same holds true in *dīwān*: musicians often make a point about *dīwān* being 'cleansed' of its pre-Islamic roots: musicians spoke of precarious (*w' āra*) songs that were no longer performed and that they had never heard in their lifetimes because the songs had been eliminated ('supprimé') from the repertoire. Even so, the Hausa and especially Migzawiyyn repertoires still push back at this discourse (see more below).

Just like with the Hausa term '*bawa*' (slave) occurring in *all* categories of *dīwān brāj* (not just these two suites), Hausa *bori* traces materialise throughout the entire ritual in other ways. One very popular *borj*, 'Bori ya Bori Mana(n) Dabu' that is *not* classified as a Hausa song in *dīwān* references the Hausa *bori* directly: *bori*, a spirit, and magic, *dabu*. In this *borj*, dancers must lash themselves with *bulālat*, ritual hide whips of Hausa origin. However, despite this abundance of evidence, *ūlād dīwān* rarely recognise an explicit, practical connection to the Hausa ethnolinguistic group or the *bori* ceremony. This discontinuity can be understood in several ways.

Dīwān histories, as trans-Saharan histories, are histories of rupture and forgetting as much as they are histories about survival. Even when my interlocutors had clear family ties south of the Sahara, they typically only knew roughly from where their family lineage came and nothing more; these family histories commonly 'began' from the arrival in present-day Algeria. Such personal and social histories and their relation to *dīwān* communities that coalesced out of the slave trade were scantily documented and only partially passed down through the generations. Hausa – not to mention other *sūdānī* languages – is no longer spoken or understood in *dīwān* communities, according to my interlocutors and my own fieldwork observation, and *ūlād dīwān* do not recognise ritual objects as Hausa, nor are they usually familiar with the *bori* ceremony. Some *ūlād dīwān* reject aspects of African history, notably that of the trans-Saharan slave trade. In other words, immense gaps of time, distance, and the trauma of slavery separate *dīwān* adepts today from their sub-Saharan ancestral lineages; thus, it is not surprising that such descriptions as 'Hausa' and 'Bambara' might not (always) be used literally but, nevertheless, do important work to signify *ideas* and imaginaries of who these ancestors were and what they were like. These depictions, then, also have ramifications for how *ūlād dīwān* relate to, perform, and choose to transmit (or not) these songs today.

The Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn repertoires today

All *dīwān* communities perform Hausa songs as part of their musical corpus, from Algiers to Oran and throughout the west from Mostaganem to Relizane

and Arzew to Sidi Bel Abbess. However, Hausa songs are particularly strong in the High Plateau region of Saida and Mascara.²¹ Given that the Northern Nigerian Hausa ‘Maguzawa’ after whom the Migzawiyyin are undoubtedly named, were cultivators (see Besmer 1983), this might help explain why we find these *brāj* here, in some of the richest agricultural regions of Algeria.²² In fact, according to *ūlād dīwān* in Saida, up until about a decade ago, one *dīwān* elder, L’āid Canon, understood Hausa although he refused to speak it.

Muḥammad Amīn Canon, one of his nephews and a respected *dīwān m’allem*, repeatedly told stories about his uncle’s resistance to pass on his Hausa knowledge, seeing it as expertise that must be earned. Muḥammad lamented that only after fifteen years of imploring his uncle did L’āid slowly begin to share some of the song texts – that is, to sing them slowly and clearly enough that they could be recorded for posterity.²³ Quite important here is that ritual knowledge has always been and continues to be transmitted aurally through keen observation and repetition. The tragedies of transmission echo in every *dīwān* locus: ‘ancestors did not share their knowledge openly’ and ‘questions were not welcome.’ As so many musicians explained and as I witnessed in ritual, singers often mumbled ‘*sūdānī*’ words, whether intentionally or unintentionally, making it nearly impossible to understand them and, according to my interlocutors, to prevent others from ‘stealing’ the words’ powers. Like ‘Azzeddīn Benūghef lamented, ‘The elders are gone. The people now, they don’t know. We do not even have the meanings of these songs. We just sing them but we do not know [the meaning]’. Sometimes my interlocutors recounted songs in our conversations that, in three years of attending rituals, I had never heard performed. Indeed, ‘Azzeddīn too noted that his ancestors spoke about songs that he had never heard himself and that have since disappeared from the corpus. Moqedm Jallūl Moṭam of Saida shared a similar grievance, explaining, ‘From Independence, *dīwān* began disappearing. Each time an elder died, he took his knowledge with him’ (*‘Yeddī m’ ā ṣwāleḥ*).²⁴

Dīwān musical and ritual knowledge – and the attitudes about them – pass on through family lines. This means that in both Saida and Mascara, a family lineage asserts their own categorisation and ‘order’ (*tartib or treq*) of Hausa and Migzawiyyin songs. In Mascara, the *Ūlād Meriem* kin group sang for me twenty-nine Hausawiyyin *brāj* and seven Migzawiyyin *brāj*, whereas in Saida, my interviews and ritual observations produced roughly eleven Hausawiyyin and fourteen Migzawiyyin *brāj*. Even between these nearby towns, the song names, orders, texts, categorisation, and the meaning of the songs varied, sometimes quite significantly. The figures below represent approximations of song performance order, pronunciation, and categorisation for particular kin groups in Mascara, Perrigaux, and Saida. Note also that songs in green and red are discussed in depth below (Figures 1 and 2).

	MASCARA, ULAD MERIEM		PERRIGAUX, ZERWALI		SAIDA, MOTAM / CANON
1	Boulal	1	Boulal	1	Boulal
2	Rima	2	Rima	2	Rima
3	Rima Nesskubana (Kobana)	3	Rima Kobana	3	Rima Obana (Kobana)
4	Jangerima	4	Jangerima	4	Jangerima
5	Yurah yay	5	Yurah yay	5	Yurah yay
6	Bawshki	6	Ya Choro (Yajrou, Natiro)	6	Makanjane
7	Bakatcheni (Makanjane)	7	Makanjane	7	Yajrou
8	Habibi yay Herkawa	8	Bawa	8	Bawshki
9	Charabia Bouriliama (Maysama, Baysama)	9	Baysama (Maysama)	9	Jangare Kuba
10	Ina Mariamo	10	Bubakar	10	Maysama (Baysama)
11	Massediri (Natigiri)	11	Rima Kobana	11	Kobana Diki Diki
12	Natchero / Natiro (Yajrou)	12	Kobana Diki Diki		
13	Namanduki Kedadi	13	Mani Magani		
14	Dekori Madendaki (Kobana Diki Diki)				
15	Keri Keri Nachendadi				ending songs (not Hausa):
16	Matikoyo Tchentecheni				Do Allah Do Anabi
17	Babag Dji Dembarki				Ya Moulana Lafu
18	Salem Salem				Rijal Allah (prayer song)
19	Maallem Kougana				
20	Kabra Bouka, Maallem Kabra				
21	Ya Sidi el Madani				
22	Elora Elora				
23	Djouli Ya Djouli (Ya Juli)				
24	Youp Youp Aminiamé				
25	Negri Tchato (Jato)				
26	Dai Dai Yedai Kelani Kenkebu				
27	Dendenek Bounia (Boubounia)				
28	Kelikoulma Djibergerba (Jib el ma, kiri kiri)				
29	Yena Harbawa (Ina Herbawa)				

Figure 1. Hausawiyy comparison chart: Note that Mascara includes in Hausawiyy some songs that are otherwise considered Migzawiyy (Jato, Ya Juli). Parentheses indicate other common names by which the *borj* is known.

Discrepancies in the ritual corpus between towns and between troupes in the *same* town is not a new phenomenon. Even in the 1950s, Pâques noted four different *diwān* groups (*grāba*) in the town of Saida that each specialised in particular song suites (1964, 510–517) associated with spirits from different earth elements of the ritual order: spirits of the water, fire, air, or earth (*ibid.*, 575–586). Given the variety of ethnolinguistic origins constituting *diwān*, and that transmission primarily moves between kin, we might presume that

	MASCARA, ULAD MERIEM		PERRIGAUX, ZERWALI		SAIDA, MOTAM / CANON: with <i>tbel</i>
1	Kirem Mdawa	1	Mikere Obana	1	Mikere Gzawa
2	Aroro Makendawa (maybe with Dayshakay)	2	Mikere 6/8	2	Gay Gay (Day Day)
3	Jaroro Mawakatchi (Jaroro Bawakati, Bawa Katchi)	3	Boubounia	3	Boubounia
4	Mikere	4	Jaroro Mawakashay (Bawa Katchi)	4	Mikere Kobana Nay
5	Migzu	5	Jamarkay	5	Mikere (K)obana Nay 2
6	Bani Shawara Dagomah (Dogowa)	6	Gar Jari Migzawa	6	Migzu
7	Mani Magani (Bani Magani)	7	Rororo Makendawa	7	Jambarkay (Jamarkay)
		8	Migzu	8	Jato
	ending song:	9	Ya Juli	9	Jaroro Bawa Katchi
	Rabi Lafu Ya Moulana	10	Gring Jato	10	Migzu Makanay
		11	Maallem Kougana	11	Ya Juli
		12	Ya kabra maallem	12	Nini Baka
				13	Oba Obana Digiwah
			ending song:	14	Bani Magani
			Bi Lafu, Salat u Salam (prayer)		
					ending songs:
					Do Allah Do Anabi
					Sudani Qaima
					(Jarahyay, Sayou sometimes)

Figure 2. Migzawiyyn comparison chart. As above, these are a sampling of ‘average’ ritual performances, listing the maximum number of possible songs. Parentheses indicate other common names by which the *borj* is known.

certain family lineages *always* specialised in certain repertoires and, unlike today, single troupes did not necessarily perform the entire musical corpus but shared the ritual between groups. Today in Saida, the dominant Canon-Faraji-Büterfās kinship group who built and maintain the impressive Zāwiya Sidī Bilāl are locally considered the experts of the Migzawa spirit pantheon. However, according to Pâques’s notes (‘Busarji’ 1964, 582) and my own research with the Sarji kin in Oran and Mostaganem, the Migzawa repertoire was presumably the specialisation of the Sarji family, who left Saida for Mostaganem decades ago.

Sometimes, the Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn suites fall *together* under the single umbrella term: ‘Khelā’wiyyn’ from *el-khelā*, the wilderness, void, or desert.²⁵ Some of my interlocutors emphasised that the term, *el-khelā*, indexes the intrigue, mystique, and precariousness of this ‘old’ repertoire from ‘black Africa.’²⁶ In other areas, the two suites of songs are conceived of as separate.²⁷ These latter groups typically consider the appellation

'Khelā'wiyyn' to refer *only* to Migzawiyyn. In my circuitous efforts to try and clear up these boundaries, one female ritual leader (*moqedma*) from Sidi Bel Abbess explained that 'Khelā'wiyyn' indicates the *musical* suite whereas 'Migzawiyyn' specifies the name of the *tribe (tribu)* to which the suite belongs. In general, while the 'Hausawiyyn' suite is considered by *ūlād dīwān* to be of Hausa origin, most do not recognise Migzawiyyn as also being 'Hausa'. Given that historically, the term 'Hausa' referred quite broadly to many states, peoples, and diverse practices, it is no wonder that this produced a pixelated historical memory around 'Hausa' in Algeria. These different ideas also emerge in the regional variations between song names and classification.

However, despite their suite names (Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn), both ostensibly reveal a Hausa origin. The musical aesthetics of *both* suites significantly differ from the rest of the *dīwān* repertoire and are thus considered exceptional by all *dīwān* adepts. Whereas most songs in the *dīwān* corpus feature long, virtuosic, layered *ginbrī* phrases (four to eight bars of musical time) followed by soaring vocal calls and responses, the Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn songs consist of short (two-bar) musical phrases on the *ginbrī*, followed by brief sung responses. Whereas other songs develop over twenty minutes through various stages of phrases and refrains, both the Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn songs utilise remarkably simple musical material, typically lasting a couple minutes or less. In both these suites, the *ginbrī* plays a repeated, fairly restricted accompaniment line, sometimes called the 'Hausa groove' (*sūg*, to drive); two versions of the Hausa *sūg* from Mascara dominate audio example number two below, *Ūlād Meriem* performing *Yurah* (from 0:00–2:48; and 2:48–5:30). These specific musical aesthetics, which emphasise constrained, repetitive instrumental accompaniment to slightly more embellished singing, can arguably be traced to sub-Saharan roots, if not at least rural roots of *dīwān* before it developed in urban centres.²⁸ The further south one travels in Algeria, the more one finds such increasingly restricted musical material with emphasis on accompanied singing.²⁹

The two suites are mainly differentiated by their places in the *dīwān* pantheon and their associated ramifications.³⁰ As briefly mentioned above, the Migzawiyyn *brāj* carry a distinctive, unanimous reputation for being the most 'wild', non-Muslim, and 'pagan' personages: they were described to me as half-man and half-spirit, qualities that seem to reflect the appellation *Khelā'wiyyn* (again, 'wild', 'other'). On the other hand, even though the Hausawiyyn *braj* reference Hausa spirits like *Rima*, they do not necessarily depict 'non-Muslim' or 'pagan' personages and, thus, attract less suspicion. Nevertheless, *ūlād dīwān* consider *both* the Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn repertoires to be 'the oldest' or most authentically *sūdānī* songs of the musical corpus.³¹

Absolutely critical to the mystique and intrigue surrounding these repertoires is the nature of their texts: both suites are mostly sung in a language that *ulād dīwān* identify as ‘Kuria’. Kuria is quite probably an extinct, hybrid *sūdānī* language that might have been spoken between the slaves of various ethnolinguistic groups and their descendants.³² While Hausa terms populate Kuria – and this is particularly important – many *other* terms appear to be Songhay or perhaps Kanuri (personal communication with Dr. Yusuf Baba Gar of Humboldt University, 4 September 2020).³³ Today, Kuria indexes a secret and powerful language that can call the *jnūn*. Given its name, it may connect to the Bānū Kūrī spirit pantheon of the Bornu region (see Jankowsky 2010, 84–88). While Hausa and Songhay words can be identified in the musical texts, translations of the texts are difficult if not impossible. This is important to emphasise.³⁴

In addition to this linguistic intrigue, Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn suites are also considered somewhat scarce. This has much to do with their temporal place in the *dīwān* ritual. While the average ritual begins at around nine in the evening, the Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn repertoires typically occur towards the end of the ritual, usually around three or four in the morning.³⁵ At this point, sometimes even the die-hard connoisseurs (*muḥebbīn*, lit. ‘lovers’) begin to tire and depart so that the musicians abridge or bypass large sections of the corpus. With so few people still in attendance at this point, rarely is an adept present who masters these songs in trance. Only in Saida and Mascara did I witness a ritual commitment to these songs and their specific ritual requirements: special ritual knives that must be stabbed into the trancer’s thighs in the Hausa *borj* ‘Yajrou/ Natiro’ (discussed below), the Migzawiyyn incense *kajiji* used only in Migzawiyyn songs, or the once alcoholic ritual drink, *doghnu*, only served during Saida’s annual *w’āda* (*dīwān* gathering).

The Hausawiyyn suite

The first *borj* of the Hausawiyyn repertoire is ‘Bilāl’, the spiritual father of *dīwān*. Despite the fact that Bilāl was not Hausa, this position critically ties Bilāl to these quintessential ‘black African’ songs. Given that many singers pronounce it ‘Bulāl’ or Bulālī’, it is also possible that the song once referenced the Bulala ethnolinguistic group of the Fitri region; this might explain its place in the sub-Saharan ‘Hausa’ repertoires. In Saida, the *borj* contains many Hausa words but, overall, references the spiritual father, Bilāl. In any case, this *borj* is absolutely mandatory. Almost always, *dīwān* troupes go straight from Bilāl’s *borj* into the sub-suite for the Hausa spirit, Rima consisting of three songs: Rima, Rima (K)obana, and Jangerima. What follows, however, depends on the ritual needs and preferences of the ritual actors. Like all the other *brāj* suites in *dīwān*, the ‘best of’ or favourites in the Hausawiyyn grouping dominate the ritual time.

In my efforts to collect information about these elusive songs and notorious use of 'Kuria', I heard the most compelling and detailed description about the Hausa song, Yurah, that is still remarkably intelligible to Hausa speakers I later consulted. One afternoon in 2015, Bel 'Abbess Zerwālī, an elder of Perrigaux best known for his knowledge of the local *ṭreq*, elucidated that, 'Yurah is a poor, black, Fulani slave who travels selling (*miga*) *leben* (*chanunu*), a yogurt drink: 'Hadi, Yurah, 'abd hāda, kḥal meskīn, ydūr f dūr ybī'a lben'. Zerwālī sang it as such (see audio example 1):

Yurah yurah yurah yay
Yurah miga chanunu
Fulani miga chanunu,
Yurah miga chanunu.
Ay Yurah yay ko ya kama
Yurah miga chanunu (x2)
Fulani miga chanunu
Yurah miga chanunu

Considering Zerwālī's explanation of the song's meaning, '*chanunu*' must come from '*sha nono*', in Hausa, meaning 'drink milk'. Based on the audio recording I provided to Hausa speakers, I present below an educated approximation of the song's orthography and meaning when written in Hausa:

<i>Yurah yurah yurah yay</i>	[possibly vocables to get the audience's attention]
<i>Yurah Maiga sha nono</i>	Yurah, drink the milk of Maiga Fulani
<i>Fulani Maiga sha nono (x2)</i>	Fulani Maiga, drink his milk
<i>Yurah Maiga sha nono</i>	Yurah, Maiga, drink his milk
<i>Ay Yurah yay ko ya kama</i>	Ay Yurah, he has [the milk]
<i>Yurah Maiga sha nono x2 Yurah</i>	Yurah, Maiga, drink his milk, Yurah
<i>Fulani Maiga sha nono</i>	Fulani Maiga, drink his milk

Hausa speakers Ibrahim Saani and Emily Williamson had this to say about the song's probable background context:

There are references in this song to both the Fulani (the ethnic group that the original singer belongs to) and the Hausa. We believe the reasoning behind this is that the Fulani and Hausa often have a joking relationship. The Fulani milk seller is calling out to the Hausa people in a playful way to come and buy his product. For example, there is a line in which the singer calls to a Hausa man named Abdullah saying, 'I am calling to Abdullah. You are not coming.' Likely, he is being playful with the man (at least in the original context).³⁶

If this is correct, Yurah might be a striking example of a popular or folk song from one of the many ethnolinguistic groups who historically came to constitute *dīwān* communities and their largely-shared musical corpus. Indeed, *dīwān* music not only consists of pantheons but, precisely, also references sub-Saharan and trans-Saharan histories, such as in the *borj*, Gafla (*qāfila*), referencing the infamous caravans.³⁶ While Zerwālī sung the text quite clearly, ritual acoustics and amplification prioritise sonic force and affective

impact such as in the performance by the Ūlād Meriem group of Mascara (see audio example 2).

Another popular Hausawiyyn *borj*, known as *Natiro* (pronounced *nah-teero*) in Mascara and as *Yajrou* (*yah-juru*) in Saida and elsewhere demonstrates intelligible Hausa words (*serkin*, *magani*) alongside many other unclear or unknown words. Even while the distance between Mascara and Saida spans approximately only seventy-five kilometres, variations of pronunciation and thus, potential meaning, vary considerably. Again, such discrepancies, although highly contested between troupes, might be explained by different family lineages, Hausa dialects, and quality of transmission. I most often heard the song pronounced ‘*yajrou*’ or some close variation of these sounds. Given the difficulty of capturing song texts during ritual, the clearest representation of this version I collected was in a written text supplied to me by Muḥammad Amīn Canon:

Yajrou albarka dami
Yajrou banajrounia
Yajrou matelbigui jrou

However, in an extended, audio recorded conversation in 2014 with *ūlād dīwān* in Mascara, ‘Azzeddīn Benūghef, a beloved *kuyu bungu* (lead ritual singer), sang it as such (see audio example 3):

Natiro, Natiro Nana Da, Natiro (Natiro Lalla Daima)
Natiro Alberka deni (Natiro Nana Da)
Natiro Serkin Magani (Natiro Nana Da)
Natiro Alberka deni (Natiro Nana da)
Natiro, Natiro Nana Da ...
Natiro Serkina, Natiro Nana Da,
 [And later]
Natiro, Sarkin dagani

Consulting with Hausa speakers on several versions of these songs, many *dīwān* ‘terms’ contradict standard Hausa orthography or are unintelligible in Hausa.³⁷ Familiar with ritual practice and fluent in multiple languages, Ibrahim Saani believed that ‘*natiro*’ was closer to Hausa orthography and pronunciation while ‘*yajrou*’ did not strike him as resembling any formulations of Hausa with which he is familiar. He presumed that ‘*natiro*’ was possibly from the Hausa ‘*na ciro*’ (pronounced *nah cheero*) or ‘I nominate him’, which also gestures at the ‘*ch*’ sound in the common ‘*yajrou*’ pronunciation. Translations here prove especially difficult: again, the singers do not speak Hausa and claim to simply repeat what they heard over many years in ritual, that which has been passed down from their ancestors. In such a context where pronunciation shifts over time, meaning becomes even more difficult to parse out. Moreover, the many dialects of Hausa – a tonal language – vary considerably and can be influenced by neighbouring languages in the

region, shifting the use of consonants.³⁸ Finally, adding to these complexities stands the issue mentioned previously around musicians mumbling lyrics and the possibility that many of these words indicate origins in languages other than Hausa.

With all of this in mind, based on audio recordings of multiple performances, the following renders an educated guess at the original text of ‘Natiro’:³⁹

Na ciro, na ciro, na ciro.	I nominate [him], I nominate [him], I nominate [him]
Na tuno albarka da ni	I remember that I am blessed [because of him]
Na ciro Sarkin Magani	I nominate the Chief of Medicine/Chief Healer
Na naɗa	I appoint [him]
Na ciro Sarkina	I nominate my Chief
Na ciro Sarkin Daji ne	I nominate the Chief of the Forest

What struck me about this possible interpretation of *Natiro* was that it emphasises medicine (*magani*) and the forest (*daji*),⁴⁰ two unanimous themes collected in my fieldwork about these repertoires. Interestingly, when I contacted ‘Azzeddīn in September 2020 and mentioned the other version I was consulting, ‘*yajrou*’, he replied that ‘*yajrou*’ was in fact the proper pronunciation. In any case, the point here is that texts are flexible: musicians improvise, change their minds, and texts evolve with time.

The Migzawiyyn repertoire

The Migzawiyyn song suite is the least well known of all of the ritual suites, even compared to the Hausawiyyn suite. Being the concluding suite of the night, and because the musical phrase lengths are even shorter than most Hausa songs, Migzawiyyn *brāj* are the easiest to cut short. They can be as brief as thirty seconds if need be. Even when these songs are not cut short, most *dīwān* rituals only deliver the favourites, if any are played at all. That is, some rituals entirely skip this repertoire altogether. The rarity of the full performance of this suite and the fact that it is not well known contributes much to its reputation as being particularly ‘special’, ‘exotic’, and sometimes more valuable than other suites. Indeed, like the Kuria words within, some consider the suites to contain secret knowledge.

Like other songs of Hausa origin, the forest looms again as a common theme. In fact, Migzu, the namesake of the *brāj* suite and the chief of the Migzawa, is declared ‘Lord of the Forest’, *Sīd al-Ghāba*. As noted above, in *dīwān* communities, the Migzawiyyn songs embody pagans, and, as ‘Azzeddīn Benūghef put it, ‘[American] Indians’. I often heard this description from my interlocutors, just as Dermenghem (1954) and Pâques (1964) did. Indeed, ‘Azzeddīn had the most to say about Migzawiyyn of all the *dīwān* musicians I met. He considered them as a clan of ‘expert lion hunters’ within the larger grouping of *Khelā’wiyyn*, what he called ‘black Apaches’, who were from either Guinea or Mali and who played some kind of *ginbrī*.

Given this discussion, I sought to confirm that the Migzawiyyin personages evoked in *brāj* were humans and not spirits. However, ‘Azzeddīn clarified that, ‘they are spirit-like’, referring to the fact that the Khelā’wiyyin wore black face paint.⁴¹

‘Azzeddīn indicated that the Migzawiyyin *borj*, Kirem Mdawa, announced by a blown animal horn, instigates a two- to three-day hunt after which the Migzawa hunters bring back their live prey in cages. Indeed, today during the Migzawiyyin *brāj* in *dīwān*, we see a great deal of ritual theatre having to do with hunts. Migzu, the namesake, happens to prefer wild rabbit and, in one ritual I observed in 2016, a live rabbit was turned loose and chased down by a woman in trance. Both in ritual and in stage settings, dancers ‘depict’ the Migzawa by carrying bows and arrows, and feign hunting prey. During this *borj*, according to tradition, hunters release live prey, hunt them with bow and arrow, and eat them raw without their hands.⁴²

Aside from these qualities, the meanings of these *brāj* evade documentation. Some of my interlocutors considered them as a mixture of spirits or *jnūn* of wild places like the Sahel – such as the spirit Jato of Peul origin whose song classifies as Migzawa. Jato has received some attention in previous scholarship: he is a genie who, in one of the legends, eats human excrement (e.g. Rouch 1989, 64). Finally, many Migzawiyyin *brāj* share the same names of Bānū Kūrī songs and spirits in Tunisian *ṣṭambēli*: Migzu, (Baba) Kūrī, Jamarkay (also Joumarki), and Nikiri (see Jankowsky 2010, 86). Like in *ṣṭambēli*, those in the *dīwān* Migzawiyyin repertoire represent blackness and a definite connection with sub-Saharan Africa: Migzawiyyin *brāj* also correlate with the colour black. Furthermore, when these *brāj* resound in a *dīwān* ritual, the typical ritual incense (*bkhūr*) is removed and distinctive ritual props come out: feathered headdresses, spears, bells, and animal pelts, black cloaks (*abayat*), and sometimes *kajiji*, special Migzawiyyin incense (Figure 3). These ritual materials must always remain separate, kept in a different trunk (*maḥalla*) from the ritual materials of the other songs, lest they pollute them.

The meaning and mattering of Hausa songs in ritual today

Today, one could argue that the bulk of *dīwān* songs sung in Arabic praise the Prophet Muḥammad, Muslim saints such as ‘Abd el-Qādr Jilānī, and the ‘Companions of the Prophet’ (‘Soḥāba’) such as Abū Bakar and ‘Alī ibn ‘Abī Ṭālib. Many *ūlād dīwān* make this precise point: that *dīwān* has been cleaned up, even ‘whitened’. However, even these songs for prophets and saints (personages held in high regard) pose problems for some *ūlād dīwān* because their texts sometimes contain unknown (Kuria) words. Furthermore, spirits may take Muslim names like ‘Alī (also the name of a Hausa spirit), making it simple to ‘mask’ and confuse *who* a song means to praise.⁴³ At other times, songs that seem to be about a human personage such as a prophet (e.g.



Figure 3. ‘Shaykh Moqedm Hūsīn Dāijāi of Mascara / Arzew and ‘Hāja Rāma’ of Saïda donning the ritual dress for Migzawiyyīn during a ritual. Photo by author, 2013.

Moses or Mūsa) slip into a song for a sub-Saharan spirit or *jinn* of the same name. In an attempt to sort this out, some of my interlocutors emphatically stated that *dīwān* is an assembly of the saints and holy ‘people’ (sometimes referred to as *awliya’* other times as *en-ness eṣ-ṣaliḥīn*) and *not* a *dīwān* (assembly) of the *jnūn*. Still others speak decisively about two worlds (*‘ālamīn*) within the *dīwān* repertoire: some songs praise the *awliya’* – personages of the *human* world – and other songs call the *jnūn*, or other personages of the *Unseen (al-ghayb)*. Even if one accepts a supernatural dimension to the ritual – as this, too, is contested – these different worlds are meant to be kept separate musically, textually, temporally, and materially.

The sonic performance of ‘Kuria’ is considered to invoke particular powers that cannot be mustered with song texts in Arabic. As mentioned, the Migzawiyyīn songs in particular are seen as especially ‘other’ and exotic, because sound and summon animist or ‘pagan’ people or spirits. It was precisely due to this debate that one ritual elder insisted on the importance of

dīwān musicians being extremely careful when singing in Kuria – or perhaps not singing at all – because they may inadvertently call forth the supernatural world through sound. Occasionally this argument leads *ulād dīwān* of all levels of status to insist that *no one* should sing in anything but Arabic, even if that means the end of Hausawiyyn and Migzawiyyn repertoires altogether.

* * *

In March of 2015, I interviewed M'allelem Tūfiq 'Abd Es-Salam in Algiers. Tūfiq, a well-known ritual musician, was particularly interested in *dīwān* texts that supposedly contain Kuria words. Like so many others told me previously, Tūfiq particularly emphasised that certain words contain inherent agency to invoke worlds and call forth the *jnūn*, with or without the knowledge or intention of those singing the words. The idea that words manifest magical and/or healing effects, whether or not they carry a direct relationship with a supernatural world, prevails in West and North Africa, but has also been explored in numerous other anthropological sites and studies (e.g. Malinowski 1935; Ong 1967; Tambiah 1968). However, Stoller's (1984, 1996) examination of the power of sound for the Songhay most closely echoes this thesis.⁴⁴

'I'm against all the *brāj* in which there is not Arabic [the language]', M'allelem Tūfiq began. 'I don't trust them.' He went on to explain how it was problematic that certain people in *dīwān* continue to sing in a language that they do not understand or speak: 'If you know Kuria well, you understand it! But later when you ask [those who sing it], "What did you say?" they respond [inadequately], "From the old times, they sang it like that" [*bekrī kânū gūlūha*]. And that's serious [dangerous]! (*et ç'est grave!*)' Here, Tūfiq means that even people who appear to sing well in Kuria do not know the words' meanings and fall back on the explanation of 'that's how I learned it' or 'this is what people have always sung'. This anxiety abounds among *kuyu bungu-s* (ritual lead singers), *moqedmīn* (ritual leaders), and *muḥebbīn* (connoisseurs); I encountered such worry in nearly every conversation with ritual experts, especially when we discussed specific '*sūdānī* words' that turned up in otherwise Arabic texts about saints and holy people.

For example, the text for the *borj* Sidi 'Alī, the nephew of the Prophet, contains the word '*dodo*'. While none of my interlocutors knew the word's meaning or history, according to Besmer's work on the Maguzawa *bori* spirit pantheon, it means 'evil spirit' in Hausa (1983, 6, 158). Tūfiq used the namesake Migzawiyyn song, Migzu, to demonstrate his point. He sang the main theme (*rās el-borj*) in what appeared to be Hausa: 'Migzu, nama, ay nama bani: Migzu! Meat! Hey, give me meat!

Referencing those words, Tūfiq continued. 'That [first] line, you cannot deviate from it (*ma truḥsh*) because it's the key (*la clé*) of the song'. That is, the line has to be sung in order for the *borj* to be the *borj*. It is, after all,

the identifying theme. 'But later', Tūfiq added, 'you have to cultivate something [the words] that the public knows', meaning that, after the main theme, the text should switch to Arabic. Since no one really knows the text's meaning, other than the words 'Migzu' and 'meat', translating 'the rest of the text' would be impossible. But to argue these details would be to miss Tūfiq's point.

To illustrate his reasoning Tūfiq went on to tell a story about a *dīwān*. During the *borj*, Bū Derbāla – another name for 'Abd el-Qādr Jilānī, arguably the most beloved saint in Islam – a well-known elder from small, western hinterland city began singing in Kuria. Tūfiq complained that, first, the singing was not in rhythm with the *ginbrī* and *qrāqeb*. He demonstrated the singing, how it stumbled in time because there were too many *sūdānī* words to fit into the *ginbrī*'s melodic cycle which singers must follow. In this case, Tūfiq was bothered by the performance because one should sing about such a noble, Muslim saint in *Arabic*, not in Kuria. In other words Arabic, as the language of Islam, represents morality while Kuria represents *sūdānī* precariousness.

Furthermore, part of Tūfiq's argument was that the significations of words possess power to affect circumstances whether or not those singing them realise this. If someone sings in Kuria or Hausa or a language he does not understand, he could inadvertently attract spirits or energies called by those words. Tūfiq's voice became pinched and nervous, almost seeming to scold his audience, as he explained,

You can sing to [the *jnūn*] with certain terms! Why did I tell you that you have to know [what you are singing]? There's something like fifty percent of the terms [like this in *dīwān*]. There are terms that call them [the *jnūn*] without your awareness! You're calling them! Because [the words] are theirs, theirs! It is their domain! And they come and hang out with you. There are *brāj* that are theirs.⁴⁵

The lack of mastery of texts – or disregard, or otherwise 'mixing' of them – poses a particular problem when words that reference the world of the *jnūn* interweave or collide with words that reference the Prophet Muḥammad. During one of the several *brāj* for the Prophet Muḥammad within the musical suite *Sema'wiyyn* ('of the sky'), and just after singing, '*Ṣalou Nabī, Nabīna Muḥammad*' ('prayers upon our prophet Muḥammad'), singers go immediately into a new phrase, singing, '*Yay, Janari Nyam-Nyam*' on the same melody without pausing (see audio example 4).

According to *dīwān* musicians, *Janari Nyam-Nyam* calls a non-Muslim spirit. Although *Janari* arrives earlier in the ritual within a different song suite, some claim it belongs to the *Migzawiyyin*. In this *borj*, one of the *jedebbīn* might eat raw meat, tearing it with his teeth 'like a wild animal'. The important point here is that to go from singing about the Prophet Muḥammad to singing about eating raw meat (forbidden in Islam) without skipping a beat poses a

serious problem for not just Tūfiq, but for the majority of ritual experts I spoke with. In accordance with *diwān* discourse, some Hausa dictionaries list '*nyam-nyam*' as implying meat or a wild animal. Yet even more striking is that, as mentioned in Bovill's critical volume, *Caravans of the Old Sahara*, *nyam-nyam* was a 'common name for cannibals generally in the Western Sudan' (1933, 62, fn).⁴⁶ Related to Bovill's footnote, he described a 'primitive forest tribe' 'armed with bows and arrows', known to the Arabs as Lemlem or Demdem (ibid): *just as ūlād diwān also describe and enact the Migzawa today*. Thus, the song *Janari Nyam-Nyam* demonstrates a particularly intact example of embodied knowledge without a conscious connection to history.

About this *borj* and some of these same issues, Shaykh 'Abbess Zerwālī of Perrigaux sang for me his version of the text in question (see audio example 5).

Ya janari yo yay kuri
Ya janari kuri ya Bornu
Yay janari nyam-nyam ya bawa
Yay janari yo ay kuri
Janari kayba ya kuri
Janari kuri, koye
Ay janari baba ya kuri
Yah kuri m Bornu ya kuri
Yay kuri madi, kuri

No translation was given: again, the text was conveyed as the now-extinct and thus unintelligible language of 'Kuria'. We can spot certain terms, however. The Arabic *bābā*, for 'father', the Hausa term *bawa* for 'slave', Bornu the region, and 'Kuri' a sub-Saharan spirit, often Hausa, that appears in various pantheons (Monfouga-Nicolas and Bastide 1972; Besmer 1983; Jankowsky 2010; Khiat 2014). But regardless of some 'original meaning' even if we could arrive at one, the *debates* over Kuria texts between *diwān* experts points to a more pressing social mattering.

Lineages, ownership, and territories of knowledge: some concluding thoughts

Perceived in recent memory as the most 'sub-Saharan' of the ritual corpus, the least well known and understood, these song suites have accumulated a certain social capital and mystique. The Hausa and, in particular, Migzawa song suites sometimes function as proof of a family's or troupe's authentic connections to sub-Saharan ancestors from which ritual power and potency come, despite anxieties around non-Arabic texts and non-Muslim or pagan origins (as we saw with Tūfiq above) that might threaten one's reputation as a 'good Muslim'. While I have so far focused on ritual contexts, it is important to mention that the Migzawa repertoire is also performed in semi-

private and, increasingly, in openly public contexts; that is, spaces particularly ripe for the claiming or rejecting of mythical musical territory. These two additional contexts are the semi-private, annual Saida *wāda* (large multi-day gatherings of *dīwān* troupes from across the country) and the annual, state-sponsored *Dīwān* Festival of Béchar.

Every year, *dīwān* fans and family groups come from all over Algeria for the five-day *wāda* in Saida, hosted by the Canon-Farajī-Büterfās kinship group. An entire afternoon is dedicated to the full performance of the Migzawiyyin repertoire. Priding itself on a deep knowledge of the repertoire, the kin group utilises two sizes of barrel drums (*ṭbel*), the *qrāqeb* (metal clappers), and the usual call-and-response singing rather than the *ginbrī*, which only animates night rituals. Furthermore, the *wāda* cultivates a carnival-like atmosphere where attendees dress up in costumes, including face masks, and parade in a circle through the courtyard. At the end of the dancing line, the troupe's *shawsh* (ritual helper), holds a bottle of *doghnu*, the legendary Migzawiyyin fermented drink that was formerly alcoholic. I was told that, in the absence of journalists, we may see an enactment of a rabbit hunt, the quintessential prey of Migzu.⁴⁷ Although many other troupes in Algeria claim to bear Migzawa knowledge and even family ancestry, no other family group or *zāwīya* (ritual space) in Algeria gives a full-day performance of the repertoire, particularly with percussion only (see video example 1).

The second, most recent and most crucial public site for Migzawa performance and rivalry is the annual Béchar festival. Both a coveted and heavily critiqued format for the staged performances of *any* category of *dīwān brāj*, the festival hosts troupes from all over Algeria. Troupes need not be from a *dīwān* family lineage or possess any ritual experience. In fact, the many young contestants who acquire the songs through amateur, circulated audio recordings of rituals sustain bitter criticism. In combination with the aspect of competition, such controversies about transmission give the festival a particularly contentious quality. In order to show their knowledge of the repertoire and increase their chances of winning, *dīwān* troupes choose what they consider to be the most impressionable, even shocking, songs. Indeed, since 2013, more and more troupes deliver the 'rare' and 'exotic' Migzawiyyin *brāj* on the festival stage. Playing off of the 'authentic' Migzawiyyin mystique, this strategy is also fuelled by a growing trend amongst urban, Algerian youth (but also *ulād dīwān*) to 'look south' for inspiration. In other words, a steadily growing tendency to champion 'African' (read: 'black') culture and embrace such Africanness as valuable parts of Algerian worlds eclipses the former tendencies to 'look north' to France and Europe.

At the Béchar festival, these motivations result in what one might consider caricatures of the Migzawiyyin, designed to appeal to a popular imagination of 'black Africa': different troupes have donned mock animal-hide pelts or brightly coloured costumes with geometric shapes, supposedly to depict

'African' textiles. Most of these troupes, even the Sarji kin group, the historical guardians of this repertoire, enacted hunts on stage by dancing with spears, jangling bells, and walking circles around the stage, pretending to stalk prey (see video example 2).

On the one hand, such public depictions smack of exoticisation of 'black Africa' and one's own ancestors – let's remember, most performers are black Algerians in a highly racialised 'black-white' context. And yet, on the other hand, when speaking to *ūlād dīwān* about these choices, such enactments mean to embody the fractured myths and stories of these Migzawiyyn hunter personages. This does not mean, however, that *ūlād dīwān*, as primarily black Algerians, always consent to representations of *dīwān*'s origins in 'black Africa'. In 2015, in an effort to depict Migzu, a troupe from Béchar brought a live rabbit on stage and feigned hunting and killing it, provoking an uproar among the audience and journalists present and condemnations from *dīwān* elders (see Turner 2017).

Just as musicians revise their texts, as 'Azzeddīn did regarding Natiro/Yajrou, I want to posit that the meanings and matterings of these songs continue to develop and change. While these songs embody dynamics of centuries-old movements of peoples across the Sahara, still containing words, objects, ideas, and aesthetics of *dīwān* ancestors, they are not static, historical objects. As *dīwān* musicians and dancers en-sound and embody these Hausa songs decade after decade, they also map the forgetting and rupture of their histories, imagining and living these sonic legacies with today's concerns in mind.

On a final note, a tribute is due here. On 17 September 2019, the beloved octogenarian Meriem Bel 'Arabī of Mascara passed away. Meriem was one of the last of her generation of *dīwān* families in Mascara, and the only adept I encountered who had been afflicted by Migzu for most of her life. Meriem's family explained that, because she had spent a great deal of time in the wilderness when she was a child, she would often fall quite ill (*mriḍa*) so that only a *dīwān* could comfort her. During these spells, I was told, she spoke with the deep, rattling voice of Migzu. Although I never witnessed this phenomenon, I spent several afternoons with Meriem over the course of my fieldwork between 2013 and 2016, benefiting profoundly from her inexhaustible knowledge and tenderness. When I think of Meriem now in relation to the questions posed by this essay, I am reminded that however *ūlād dīwān* might remember or forget, claim, revise or reject this embodied heritage of trans-Saharan continuity and rupture, the *raison d'être* of *dīwān* ritual obliges the recognition of one additional *non-human* agent: Migzu himself, inhabiting human bodies across time, the atemporal, spectral transmission of these transient and more-than-human worlds.

Notes

1. This research was funded by a Saharan Crossroads grant from the American Institute for Maghreb Studies (AIMS) and the West African Research Association (WARA). This is the first research to attend to these songs as well as the *dīwān* musical corpus in general. Much of this data is contextualised in the comprehensive study of *dīwān* in Turner (2017). Previous anthropological work for consultation: Andrews (1903); Dermenghem (1954); Pâques (1964); Lapassade (1982); Khiat (2014).
2. Numerous Algerian outsiders to the ritual considered it similar to 'voodoo' and cited other traditions like Brazilian and Cuban possession ceremonies or referenced 'black magic', '*la magie noire*'. See also Khiat (2014) where he connects *dīwān* to voodoo and Yoruba *oricha* ceremonial traditions.
3. Fieldwork was based in Oran, Algeria and the western corridor cities south to Béchar, supported with regular travel across Algeria to study other *dīwān* communities, including those in the Mزاب valley, Algiers, and the east. Fieldwork spanned eighteen months total between 2013, 2014–2015, 2016. Data gathered included participant-observation and attendance of *dīwān* rituals or other *dīwān* spectacles (stages, weddings, festivals), as well as ongoing conversations, informal and formal interviews with musicians, ritual experts, ritual attendees, and friends. All interviews were conducted by myself primarily in Algerian Arabic, occasionally in French, and were transcribed and translated primarily by myself, sometimes with the input of Algerian friends. I chose my fieldwork sites based on the most active ritual communities, particularly those with strong traditions of the Hausa and Migazawa repertoires.
4. Note: For transliteration, I use the system of the International Journal for Middle Eastern Studies with some minor adaptations with place names and in order to represent local pronunciation in Algeria.
5. The politics of what is considered 'Sufi' and what is considered 'popular Islam' would require a lengthy discussion. In brief, because Bilāl did not descend from the Prophet and did not produce a lineage (*silsila*), the Bilāliyya are not considered an official Sufi *ṭarīqa* (path, order) although their ritual epistemology, vocabulary, and practice parallels that of other *ṭuruq*.
6. *Dīwān* can be considered a sister tradition to the Moroccan *gnawa* and Tunisian *ṣṭambēli*. Unlike these other two traditions, however, research on *dīwān* is scant and what little documentation exists (Andrews 1903; Dermenghem 1954; Pâques 1964; Lapassade 1982; Khiat 2014) does not go into depth about musical worlds and their meanings.
7. Both women and men can and do engage in trance of all types. While the rituals are gender separated, they are mixed except in areas such as the M'زاب where women hold their own rituals. There is a vast anthropological and ethnomusical literature on music and trance phenomena that is simply not possible to cover here. However, see Turner (2017) and (2020a).
8. E.g. plucking and strumming the three strings while sometimes also hitting the skin face as percussion.
9. This phenomenon has been widely studied in ethnomusical scholarship of sub-Saharan musical aesthetics and practices in North Africa, particularly concerning the *gnawa* in Morocco (e.g. Fuson 2009) but also in other similar traditions (Jankowsky 2010; Polak 2010).

10. About the origins of the term *kuyu bungu*, see Turner's (2017, 72) analysis of Souag (2013).
11. On this note, Pâques's (1964) oversights demonstrate why a musical ear is important. Because she does not recognise melodic identity, she often lists *brāj* by the first few words of the text and does not seem to recognise that the same *borj* is pronounced slightly differently from group to group so that, for example, what is today's 'Rima' she sometimes calls 'Yarima' or 'Arima'.
12. I consulted what little, musical documentation and sonic data was available, including the oldest musical transcriptions of songs (Andrews 1903), and recordings from Biskra (Poché 1996) and Mostaganem (Lecomte 2000), as well as many unpublished, personal audio and video recordings from the 1960s that I had access to in my fieldwork. It was remarkable how consistent the songs' melodic themes had been maintained over time in comparison with their sound today. I would argue that this has much to do with how humans remember and forget musical information. While song texts (thus, song meanings) change over time, musicians nearly always remember melodies with more accuracy.
13. Algerian outsiders to *dīwān* sometimes used the word 'syncretism' or 'bricolage' to describe these layers. For scholarly attention to syncretism and its usage, see Stewart and Shaw (1994).
14. In 2016, one 'white' (of Berber, Amazigh ancestry) *moqedm* (ritual leader) was accused by some of 'whitening' his rituals, meaning he was attempting to remove any 'African' elements, sticking only with songs about the Prophet and Muslim saints. Of course, given how intertwined the pantheon is with figures in Islam, this would be impossible.
15. See Turner (2017) on these sub-Saharan communities (the *grāba* and *villages nègres*) and the lineages comprising them.
16. While no Songhay songs are identified, there are also a number of important Songhay loans in *dīwān* vocabulary. The most common is '*bania*' ('slave' in Songhay) used to reference an adept of *dīwān*.
17. Ethnicity across the Sahara and Sahel is a topic of significant and diverse scholarly attention (e.g. see Nicolas 1978; Sutton 1979; Scheele 2013; Jourde 2017).
18. Like in Algeria, terms like 'Bambara' in Morocco, for example, can be used to simply mean 'sub-Saharan' or 'slave' among other notions (Goodman 2003). I found this in my fieldwork with the Moroccan *gnawa* as well (Turner 2012).
19. I use the term 'inhabitation' and put the term 'possession' in quotes for three reasons: (1) inhabitation is the closest translation of the local, Arabic terminology; (2) such supernatural incorporation is rarely total and is often much more nuanced than the common understanding of the word 'possession,' and; (3) in order to explicitly resist the Orientalist, pathologising legacy of the term 'possession'.
20. There is simply not space to engage with the extensive anthropological literature on Hausa bori ceremonies, notably that of Besmer (1983); Djedje (1984); Erlmann (1982, 1986); Last (1971, 1976); Masquelier (2001); Nicolas (1978); Okagbue (2008); and Tremearne (1914).
21. I owe a special thanks to Algerian anthropologist, Salim Khiat, for his advice early on in my fieldwork in 2013 to head west and make a point of studying these repertoires about which so little is known and understood, even among *dīwān* communities.

22. Caravan routes up the western corridor also had something to do with this. See Turner (2017).
23. To my amusement, in the spirit of his uncle, Amīn was quiet in front of my recorder and only sang me the texts when we were speaking casually, never in circumstances where I could take notes.
24. See a complete transcription of this 2013 interview in Turner (2017).
25. The *dīwān* family group, Ūlād Meriem, in Mascara categorise the two suites together this way, for example.
26. See also Khiat's (2014) discussion of 'kh'lawiyin' and 'Mingzawa' amongst *dīwān* communities in Algiers, the latter of which is a different pronunciation I also heard in the west, referring to the same pantheon group that I label here as 'Migazawa' from the Hausa group 'Maguzawa'. Drawing from Monfouga-Nicolas's (1972) study of the *bori*, Khiat makes multiple connections in the *dīwān* pantheon between the Hausa group, Asna, of the Maradi region in Niger, (as 'Anna' in the text). Despite rich Asna pantheons, he cites that black communities in Algeria now only perform the songs for Nana-Aïcha, Kouré, Dogouwa-Baka, Dogwa- Fara, and Serkin-Rafi (319).
27. In the west, the two sets are usually played back to back while, in Algiers, Hausawiyyn takes place closer to the beginning of the ritual.
28. Quite helpful on this point were my conversations with the anthropologist and emeritus professor, Murray Last, who is quite knowledgeable on the Maguzawa, having done decades of fieldwork with them in northern Nigeria, witnessing and recording many bori ceremonies. I was able to listen to these recordings at the British Library (Last 1971) and make comparisons of *garaya* playing with *ginbrī* playing. While approaches to playing the lute instrument are similar (accompanied singing aesthetics), and while there is still an idea of the Maguzawa being 'pagan' or nominally Muslim, I was not able to make any further connections in terms of musical repertoire that would clearly tie the two. Professor Last reported that the term Maguzawa comes originally from 'magus', the singular of 'magi' for magic. This could potentially be a connection in that this repertoire in Algeria is understood as the most 'wild', 'dangerous', and ominous.
29. For example, I documented songs in Biskra, Adrar, Ouargla, and the Mزاب where musical aesthetics changed noticeably. See Turner (2017).
30. For an approximate list of these repertoires in Oran, Saida, Mascara, and Perrigaux, see Turner (2017), appendix 3, 'Treq Comparisons'. The repertoires are rarely performed in their entirety and, as noted, typically these repertoires are cut short. Musicians were reluctant to verbally list their pantheon and despite years of attending rituals, I observed no definite pattern: song names and orders varied and shifted. In other words, it is more accurate to mention which songs/spirits are typical and what 'common' orderings can be heard.
31. The terms 'Hausawiyyin' and 'Migzawiyyin' are adjectives as much as labels. To be clear, I will call these two repertoires by these names – as my interlocutors did – even though I argue that they are both Hausa in origin.
32. My attempts to clarify if Kuria might have been a form of Hausa were unsuccessful. However, since Hausa was a common trade language and because there are still intelligible phrases in Hausa in the Hausawiyyin *brāji*, such a connection is likely. In Morocco with the sister tradition, the *gnawa*, a mini-language or *ghos* developed between slaves of various sub-Saharan origins. Many of the words here also appear to be Hausa although the language was viewed as a

kind of pidgin and private language. Personal communication, Tim Abdellah Fuson, September 2020.

33. After hearing my recordings and consulting the texts of the songs Natiro and Yurah, he suggested that there may also be Kanuri words or other languages spoken in Niger.
34. *Diwān* is not the only case in Algeria where we find that '*sūdānī*' words in otherwise Arabic texts contain mysterious abilities to summon entities. Champault's brilliant monograph on the small community of Tabelbala in the Algerian southwest features discussion on a unique dialect, *kora n-die*, that primarily utilises Songhay vocabulary, Berber forms, and Arabic roots. It explains that neighbouring groups consider the Songhay language to be 'of the spirits' (*jnūn*) because of its unintelligibility (1969, 43).
35. This is the typical song order of rituals in western Algeria. In Algiers and in the east, Hausa songs might also occur earlier.
36. 'Gafla' is the Western Algerian pronunciation of *qāfila*, or caravan, convoy.
37. I primarily consulted with Ibrahim Saani and Emily Williamson but also had brief exchanges with Dr. Yusuf Baba Gar at Humboldt University also regarding these two songs. Dr. Baba Gar was also able to give the most information on Yurah whereas the word(s) 'natiro' did not strike him as Hausa. He suggested that perhaps there are Kanuri or other words mixed into the texts.
38. For example, Emily Williamson gave the example that Hausa speakers in Ghana use 'f' in some words elsewhere pronounced 'h' so that the word 'hira' becomes 'fira'. Personal communication, Emily Williamson, 26 August 2020.
39. I thank Hausa speakers Emily Williamson and Ibrahim Saani for this interpretation and their hard work at making educated guesses on these words and meanings.
40. In the sung version, 'Azzeddin actually pronounces the word '*dagani*' with a hard 'g' as in goat whereas the Hausa would be pronounced as 'j'. This change was part of Mr. Saani's educated guess on the interpretation.
41. It was not entirely clear why black face paint would make these hunters more spirit-like. However, it brings to mind the popular notion that sub-Saharan 'spirits' are typically associated with the colour black, just as they are in *diwān* as well as in Moroccan *gnāwa* and Tunisian *ṣṭambēlī* (see Jankowsky 2006, 2010).
42. However, he adds that now people are required to cook their meat and that there are new words in Migzawa *brāj* texts to reflect this. He adds that they danced on all fours, might have been cannibals, and might have once lived in trees.
43. I frame 'people' in quotes because the distinction between human, *jinn*, or other spirit is often blurred.
44. It must be pointed out that, in Islam, sound is an exceptionally valent medium. Of course, it is the preferred medium through which divine knowledge is conveyed--such as the Qur'ān which must be recited and heard. The idea of healing through sound is also germane here. It is upon this idea that *ruqqā* works, the method of reciting holy words over a person afflicted by harmful forces, such as a *jinn* or black magic. In Algeria, this is taken for granted. Sound vibration does things, it is not only meaningful because of the associations it is given by humans but rather, words are constituted by energetic forces. We can see this in daily practices where one must recite certain words in order to fend off bad luck or misfortune: *bismillāh*, *el-hammdoullillah*, and *masha'* Allah.

45. 'Kayn des terms, ntā ta'itelhūm, ble ma 'ala belek. Teta'itelhūm! Parce que ent'āhūm, ent'āhūm, had el-domain ent'āhūm! Ījī yrihū m'ak ū a'itelhūm ū g'ā. Kaynīn brāj ent'āhūm.'
46. Indeed, 'Azzeddīn Benūghef precisely described this song as being about cannibals, but, as a *kuyu bungu*, he referred to it by its key sung phrase, 'yop yop in a maniyama'.
47. In former times ('bekri'), before the Islamisation of *dīwān*, individuals inhabited by Migzu would capture the rabbit and kill it by biting its neck. Eating raw meat and ingesting blood is forbidden in Islam, therefore such ritual acts are said to also be forbidden although they are not completely unheard of even today.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

The research for this article was funded by a Saharan Crossroads Fellowship received from AIMS-WARA (American Institute of Maghrib Studies and the West African Research Association at Boston University).

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