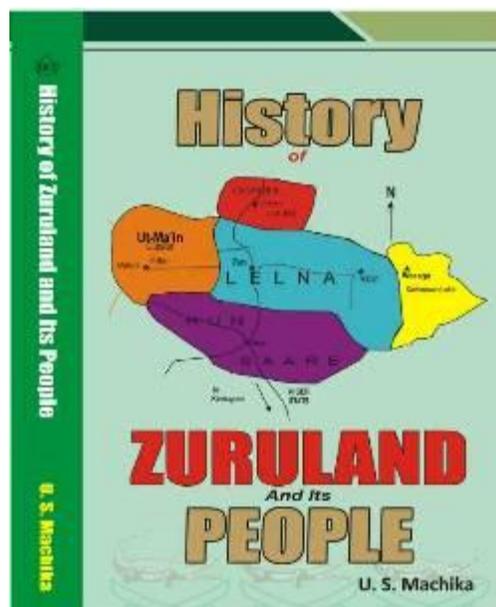


Preface

In undertaking ‘Project Zuru’, much of the materials were obtained from *MACHEKA: The Reconstruction of Historical Dearth*, a small work on the history of Macheke. Writing the history of Macheke has never ever crossed my mind. It all started after my first book – *Nigeria’s Founding Fathers: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times*, which I gladly presented to my Mother. She was amongst the first batch of pupils from Macheke to be enrolled into the primary school in Wasagu. She kept running back home from school because according to her, C’doko, her mother, “was left with so much work to do at home, and no one there to help her.” So she vehemently refused to remain and eventually even go to school.



It was this woman, my mother without formal Western education, who nudged me into writing the book on “MACHEKA”. With *Nigeria’s Founding Fathers: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times* in her hand, she solemnly said, “Ayimi”, as she fondly called me, “you wrote this big book on Nigeria? It is good, but you did not write about our ancestors – your people of Macheke”. At that moment, the words of Marcus Garvey struck me – “a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots”. There and then, I responded that God willing, someday, I will write the history of Macheke. She was my first source of the oral history of Macheke.

This was how the seed of acquiring material on the history of Zuruland began. It was planted by my late mother, Sa’adatu Takena Danhalbi (KAKEYA). While she planted the seed, it was nurtured by the few aged members of Zuru still alive. A lot of archives were later researched in Zaria and Kaduna as well as through the internet. Thus, the study is based largely on primary and secondary material derived from official documents, private papers, books and oral data.

Little did I then know that the numerous interview sessions on the history of Macheke would evoke great passion in the small exogamous clan. The reconstruction of Macheke’s history intends to outline the origin, peopling and formation of each of the five identified clans and the immigrants. It was astonishing how the historical exercise assumed political undertones. Each of the five clans has one or two things that underscored their importance and which ‘must’ be captured, while others feel inserting such would undermine their significance. The trend signifies how politics permeates scholarship. It is true that ‘the production of all knowledge is a political issue laden with heavy dosages of value judgements’.

This book attempts to give the history of indigenous people of the five Chiefdoms of Zuru Emirate and the immigrants who augmented its formation. The project would enable the people to come to terms with their past. Fortunately, Zuru Emirate Development Society, (ZEDS) has laid a solid foundation when it commissioned the *Studies in the History of the People of Zuru Emirate*, (1990), edited by A. R. Augi and S. U. Lawal. In his foreword, the then National President of ZEDS, Mr Nathaniel Zome succinctly posits that “we want all aspects of our history good or bad, gleaned or synthesised for us. Thus, we are not averred in coming to terms with our past”.

This was proven to be more true because some stories which many would have preferred buried, were unearthed and they were sincerely found to be like the salting or icing or the spicing of the history of Macheka, so would it be for the Zuru Emirate. After all, such were all true stories of our ancestors which were all captured. While some stories were told with pride and a lot of emphasis, others were reluctantly narrated after some nudging and prodding. Again, as Zome states, the work provides “us with the humble beginning of knowing our past, learning from it and using our informed position for the benefit of our land and its people”. This work, like the other works before it has also proved another gospel truth. “Our other intent in this exercise was to arouse and develop interest in research and scholarly works on the Zuru people and society”, Zome (1990).

It is a fact that there is a paucity of literature on the history of the Zuru Emirate. However, important works like the *Zuru History Project* and *the Ascension of a General* by Michael Gujiya, *Peoples and Empires of West Africa* by G. T. Stride and Caroline Ifeka and other extant literatures were studied and applied. This is where ZEDS actually fell short on one point. The extant literatures which were used for their commissioned project were not jealously guarded. Such sacred documents on the history of Zuru should have been multiplied and kept in the ZEDS library, but they were not. ZEDS needs to embark on a special project of sourcing and retrieving valuable and rare documents from archives of national and international libraries, museums and personal homes of noble and outstanding personalities. This should be the first point of call for any research on the place and people of Zuru. The interpretation of scholarly documents varies, as such, every researcher possibly needs to examine primary sources directly, rather than relying on the interpretations of other scholars. Despite that, a platform was actually put in place as a milestone for examining the history of Zuru.

This work may not meet the standard of an academic Historian. This tall ambition was not the set objective. The goal is simply to tell the story of Zuru as told by the people of Zuru and reconstructed as perceived and interpreted by K’lela. In the course of stumbling on some historical facts, I felt that the project was a little belated. Two factors informed this position. First, the demise of Zome and Gujiya. Many unanswered questions could have been answered by these two passionate patriots of Zuru. They were both acclaimed custodians of the history and

culture of Zuru. Both were writers with deep understanding of the culture of Zuru. Secondly, a recent encounter with a General, who, in a passing remark, intoned 'that is verbal history'. After a lot of thought, it became clear that with the exception of divine scriptures, all history started by oral recollection. It depends on how soon that oral recollection is first documented. One cannot even be very sure that the truth was actually what was first recorded. But we are all fed that a written source is more valuable than the oral even though on many occasions, it is never the case. And I think the case of Zuru is ONE!

The attempt here is to add a feather to the history of Zuru. It was high time the history of Zuru was brought to the front burner. All the elements of history are today at their peak amongst the people of Zuru. There abound outstanding leaders and classical scholars in various facets of life. The Emirate can compete with any other Emirate in the federation in this regard. The cultural revival is opening up National Tourism Centres and so forth. All it takes is for us to tell our own story by ourselves. This modest attempt aims at that!