

PREFACE

This book could not have been completed without the help and assistance of many friends and colleagues. First and foremost, I am in deeply grateful for all the help and support I have received from my friend and colleague Alhaji Mumuni Sulemana (Afa Sulley). Not only did he open many doors in Ghana but also read and commented on various versions of my texts. It was upon his advice I started to embark on my search for the history of the Muslim community in Northern Ghana, a journey that took far too long to complete. Another key person for my research was Afa Razaq from Tamale: he stood by my side and assisted me every day when I was conducting my fieldwork. I am also grateful for the assistance of my two research assistants, Hussein in Tamale and Yunus in Accra, as well as my landlord ('Secretary') in Tamale. My debts to the scholars I interviewed in the North and in Accra are legion and due to their open-mindedness, our meetings developed into learned dialogues where I was the junior and they the senior partners. In Accra, I was able to present my project to National Chief Imam Uthman Nuhu Sharubutu, and had an interview with his aide. I am also grateful for the very open discussion I had with the National Imam of the Ahlus-Sunna, Shaykh 'Umar Ibrahim Imam. To all of those scholars mentioned and unmentioned: thank you for sharing your time and thoughts with me!

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I visited several archives, whose personnel did their utmost to assist me. I received the best possible – and quick – assistance from the staff of the Public Records and Archives Department (PRAAD) in Accra and Tamale. The service at the National Archives in Kew and at Rhodes House in Oxford was as always forthcoming and Paul Jenkins at the Basel Missionsarchiv in Basle made my stay at his archive a most pleasant one. Furthermore my kindest regards to the various librarians who assisted me: the librarians of the University of Helsinki Library, especially Liisa Koski, the various libraries of the University of Ghana (Balme Library, Institute for African Studies, Faculty of Law) and at a later stage, Åbo Akademi University.

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Two persons deserves a special mention who contributed to the final form of the manuscript. Salla Jokela draw all the maps. The Finnish artist Henrika Lax produced a special input by painting the four thematic plates for my manuscript: the front cover picture as well as the three pictures before each of the three parts of the book.

In Europe, there are many friends and colleagues who have in one or another way assisted or commented upon my research. I have received valuable comments and advice from colleagues at research seminars in Uppsala and Åbo. The final impetus to divide my manuscript into two separate studies came from colleagues at Åbo Akademi University, especially Joachim Mickwitz and Nils Erik Villstrand. As always, I am indebted to Roman Loimeier, Franz Kogelmann, Margot Stout Whiting and my publisher, the Finnish Oriental Society, especially Kaj Öhrnberg and Lotta Aunio. Last, but not least: thank you Minna, Rasmus and Anni for the endless support and joy in life you have given to me!

My Ghana project started in 1999 and has now come to an end. At first, I was based at the Institute of Development Studies at University of Helsinki, where my good friend, the late Michael Cowen, gave me all his support for the research. For two years I was at the Department for Asian and African Studies as a lecturer (2001–2003): at this point, I still hoped to be able to finish my study “by next year”. However, my shift to Åbo and being in charge of the chair of general history delayed me from the completion of the manuscript. Most of the chapters were ready by 2005, but as usual in Academia, students and colleagues pushed me in other directions. Therefore, I guess I myself am the most surprised person to realize that my original plans eventually materialized. It is now up to other colleagues to continue the research!

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