The Manḍe Hero

Text and Context

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The Mande, center of the great thirteenth-century Mali Empire, is located geographically in that region of West Africa where the Upper Niger River intersects the borders of Mali and Guinea. The modern peoples who trace their ancestry to the Mande, the Mandinka, Maninka, Malinke, Mandingo, Manya, Bambara, Dyula, Kuranko, and Wangara, are dispersed throughout the West African savannah, from the Gambian coast in the west, eastward to Ouagadougou in Upper Volta, and from the Mauritanian border in the north to Abidjan in the south. The present distribution of these groups is largely the result of imperialistic campaigns made during the period of the Mali Empire.

Despite their widespread geographic distribution, the modern descendants of the original people of the Mande speak dialects of Mandekan (Bird, 1970), and all share sociocultural values defining kinship, political organization, and economic activities. That which unifies the Mande peoples culturally, i.e., that which gives coherence to their social structures, is not simply recognition of common ancestry; it is, rather, a system of commonly held beliefs—a philosophy, ideology, or cosmology—which defines appropriate behavior for individual actors and allows in turn the interpretation of the behavior of others.

Our concern in this paper is with a particular aspect of Mande ideology: that which defines heroic behavior and calibrates that against more mundane action. The hero, we will argue, is someone with special powers used to work against the stabilizing and conservative forces of his society; he is someone who, in pursuing his own destiny, affects the destinities of others. He is the agent of disequilibrium.

Because heroic action is defined in contrast to ordinary behavior, the hero cannot be considered in isolation from the social matrix in which he operates. His actions, standing out in relief against the actions of others, point to a system of dynamic tensions holding between groups and individuals, between integrating and disruptive principles, between the ordinary and the extraordinary. To understand the Mande

hero is generally to understand Mande theories of social actor and social action.

Our concerns in this study revolve around the issue of translation of texts. Language in all of its forms reverberates against a background of cultural understanding and assumptions without which it remains vague and imprecise. A text without context is like the message in a bottle washed up on the shore. When the context is filled in, the meanings of the texts become clear, illustrating their value as mediators of ideology and behavior. Texts, we contend, serve to render unambiguous actions in situations, particularly in terms of indigenous theories of person, but texts as modes of expression can only be understood in terms of the ideological matrix (the context) in which they serve to interpret behavior.

The Context

The Mande peoples recognize a dialectic tension between the individual and the group. This tension should not be understood as a polar opposition, but rather as the intersection of two axes: the axis of individuality, referred to as *fadenya* "father-childness," and the axis of group affiliation, referred to as *badenya* "mother-childness."[1] On the *fadenya* axis actions are oriented toward individual reputation and renown. On the *badenya* axis they are oriented toward the total set of rights and obligations provided by the social groups to which the actions are affiliated.

A child is born with a reputation, primarily its father's—and by extension, that of its patrilineage. The reputation is both an impetus to and a constraint on action. A child of a given clan will be expected to perform at a given level according to this heritage, but performing at that level will not be noteworthy. Individuals gain reputations by surpassing the collective deeds of their predecessors and placing their own names firmly in their clans' historical records. In doing so, of course, they make the same achievement that much more difficult for those who follow. In the Mande world, a name must be won not only in the arena provided by one's peers, but also in that abstract arena created by one's ancestors. This conception of the patrilineage as competitor is captured in the proverb: *i fa y'i faden folo de ye*, "Your father is your first *faden*."

The weight of the father's reputation is the first barrier to overcome on the *fadenya* axis. *Fadenya* may thus be seen as a temporal axis measuring the worth of individuals against the actual accomplishments of their predecessors and the anticipated challenges of their descendants. A person's starting point in the social system, then, automatically constrains his chances to make his mark, and simultaneously shapes his assessment of these chances.

The *fadenya*-oriented actor regards obligations to the social group as impediments to his individual quest for reputation—impediments which he must overcome, actually or symbolically, to be recognized as special. In the Mande world *fadenya* is thus associated with centrifugal forces of social disequilibrium: envy, jealousy, competition, self-promotion—anything tending to spin the actor out of his established social force field.

Badenya, "mother-childness," is associated with centripetal forces of society: submission to authority, stability, cooperation, those qualities which pull the individual back into the social mass. Since ideally one cannot refuse the request of a *baden*, an individual's wishes must often be subordinated to the interests of other members of his group. From *badenya* arises social solidarity, security, and assurances that members of a group will act in concert to defend their collective worth. The larger the social collectivity, the greater its social gravity or force.

This characterization of *fadenya* and *badenya* amounts to a social theory of inertia in which bodies of great mass are difficult to disequilibrate. Bodies of least mass—individuals in this case—are more easily set in motion, but only insofar as they resist the social drag of their *baden* affiliates. Recognizing this, and recognizing at the same time that the forces of *badenya* inhibit the dynamism necessary for society's survival, Mande peoples focus much socialization activity on the fostering of *fadenya* behavior. They know that they depend upon the individual who resists the pull of the established social order, just as they depend upon the individuals who do not resist; they know that they require the individual who will change things, even if these changes are potentially destructive. Their ambivalence toward the *fadenya* actor, of which the hero is a primary example, is reflected in a second proverb: *ngana ma man di fo kojugulon*, "The hero is but welcome on troubled days."

Because the hero, *ngana*, acts as if impervious to the primary in-

strumentality of the *baden* group, which is *malo*, "shame,"[2] he is a threat to the social order. However, because he is shameless, he has the capacity to act when social conventions paralyze others. In times of trouble, the hero may be the only one with the means to reestablish the very social equilibrium that is so abhorent to him. His motivations may be selfish and self-aggrandizing; nevertheless his special powers or means to act may have beneficial consequences for all his people.

The philosophy of action in the Mande world is keyed to the notion of *nya*,[3] "means," a concept more psychological than material. One's birthright, as we mentioned, provides an initial set of means to actions, the ability to perform particular acts and, more importantly, to be protected from the consequences of those acts. A blacksmith is born into a caste which enables him to smelt iron ore, to transform the shapes of iron, earth, and wood, and to survive the forces unleashed by his transformations. A freeman, *horon*, might, through madness or accident, perform a blacksmith's act, but his horon's birthright offers him no protection against its consequences.[4]

The means or powers required to perform an act are referred to as *dalilu*.[5] The dangerous forces released through the performance of *dalilu* are referred to as *nyama*.[6] All acts and their associated instruments have *nyama*. A person's inherited *dalilu* may protect him from the *nyama* of his actions, or he may acquire protective *dalilu* in other ways—by acquiring fetishes and talismans, for example. Much of this protection comes from the *nyama-kala*, "nyama branch," who are casted smiths, bards, and leatherworkers. The inherent *dalilu* of the *nyama-kala* affords protection against the *nyama* they release, and they, in turn, protect their *nya* by practicing endogamy. Hunters, on the other hand, are not *nyama-kala*, and consequently devote much of their early training to the control of *nyama*, manipulating it through ritual and sacrifice, warding it off with special garments and trophies. *Nyama*-laden parts of a hunter's kill—skin, horns, teeth, claws, feathers —are incorporated into his fetishes, his talismans, and clothing. These serve to control the *nyama* released by each kill, protecting the hunter from potential destruction; but they also empower him to perform greater deeds.

Dalilu and its associated *nyama* are dangerous to *badenya*. Maintaining equilibrium requires that activity be rigidly constrained so that the *nyama* associated with action can be kept under control. Willful or inadvertent violation of ritual releases *nyama*; this act threatens

not only the transgressor, but his kinspeople and village as well. In the hunters' epic *Fakuru*, a great warrior-hero returns to his village, bringing with him the *nyama* he has accumulated in the course of many bloody victories.[7] Because he has far exceeded his destiny, the *nyama* he brings back is uncontrolled. Not only does it destroy him, but it causes others to treat the members of his family as outcasts for the next two generations. The epic recounting the exploits of Sunjata, founder of the Mali Empire, contains an episode during Sunjata's exile from the Mande in which one of his hosts sacrifices an unborn child over Sunjata's fetishes.[8] The terrible *nyama* this act releases destroys the host at the same time as it empowers the fetishes and gives Sunjata the power to act.

Because *nya* and *nyama* can be controlled, augmented, or diminished by manipulation, it follows that the devices associated with this manipulation, *dalilu*, should be kept secret. For if the instrumentalities guaranteeing one actor's capacities to perform heroic acts were available to everyone, then either all actors would be able to perform the same acts, which would render them ordinary rather than heroic, or all the actors would be able to counter every other actor's *nya*, which would have the same effect. The hero, seeking every means possible to distinguish himself, cloaks himself and his instruments of action in great secrecy. At the same time, he does what he can to weaken or destroy the *nya* of an adversary, which involves "seeking his means" (*k'a nya nyini*), and attacking them with spells and magic.

The Texts

There is an extraordinary rich oral literature in the Mande world. The standard folk literature of such things as fables, proverbs, and riddles, is complemented by an extensive heroic literature which focuses on the valiant deeds of hunters and warriors. There is, as well, a highly elaborated tradition of political epics recounting the rise and fall of the great West African kingdoms and empires and the adventures of their associated heroes. The many exciting characteristics of this literature cannot be discussed here. We limit our concern to the general motifs and themes that describe heroic actors and action, the manner in which conflicts unfold, and the manner in which these conflicts are resolved.

Resolution of all conflicts in both political and heroic epics in-

volves the recourse to spells and magic. Often the heroic figure is attacked and must find an antidote to free himself from the spell. The Sunjata epic contains myriad examples of curses and countercurses effected as steps on Sunjata's way to heroic status. The first was the the result of circumstances attending his birth. Sunjata's father had two wives who became pregnant at the same time and gave birth on the same day. Sunjata was born second, but, as his name was announced first, his father proclaimed him as heir. The father's first wife became enraged and, "finding Sunjata's means," had a spell cast on him so that he could not walk for nine full years. Through the intercession of a *jinn* (and in some versions, a pilgrimage to Mecca), Sunjata finds the means to break the spell, makes the appropriate sacrifices, and rises. Striding out to his father's field, he rips a giant baobab from the earth, swings it atop his head, strides back to his mother's compound, and drives the tree into the earth before her house.

While he is involved in this heroic display, his mother, Sogolon Kutuma the hunch-backed sorceress, sings a long series of praise songs for her newly risen son, and in one of the songs she refers to him as "stranger":

Luntan, luntan, o!
Sunjata kera luntan ye bi.

Stranger, stranger, Oh!
Sunjata became a stranger today.

The text of this song equates the hero and the stranger, the powerful and the esoteric, the extraordinary and the unknown. When Sunjata crawled upon the ground, his actions were predictable, and he was incapable of surprises. When he broke the curse placed on him, he did it through means known only to himself. No longer predictable, Sunjata was no longer safe. His secret knowledge made him like a stranger, like someone who does not feel the pull of *badenya*.

The quest for strange or esoteric knowledge, for the secrets underlying an adversary's *nya* defines the content of Mande heroic literature. The degree to which this theme dominates the literature constitutes a striking contrast between European and Mande epic traditions. These differences emanate from very different concepts of action and heroic activity.

We have argued that in the Mande world, to act is to have *nya* or "means." Means are initially created by birthright, subsequently

enhanced by sorcery and secret knowledge, and ultimately bounded by destiny. Once one has the means to act, the actual performance of an act is not of any great consequence, for it follows more or less automatically from attaining the *nya*. As a result of this, the unfolding drama of Mande epics, then, centers more on the acquisition of *nya* than on any kind of physical heroic action in the Western sense of the word.

For Westerners familiar with the Homeric tradition or with the medieval epics like *Chanson de Roland*, where so much of the text is devoted to the instruments and operations of battle, Mande epic texts may seem curious. They contain no extensive references to warfare, and few descriptions of physical prowess, yet they show great attention to detail where the particulars of sorcery and its outcome are at issue and where the tokens of power are described.

Physical descriptions of heroes in the texts frequently elaborate their nonheroic qualities. Sunjata, for example, is portrayed as crippled and infirm until he overcomes the curse placed on him. Fakoli, one of his great generals, is characterized as exceptionally short, with an enormous head and a large mouth. The heroic stature of these men is nevertheless indexed in the *nyama*-laden objects they carry with them. In the *Janjon*, the Hero's Dance, these lines describe Fakoli's garb:

> He entered the Mande
> With skulls of birds
> Three hundred three and thirty
> Hanging from his helmet.
> He entered the Mande
> With the skulls of lions
> Three hundred three and thirty[9]

Sunjata's great adversary, Sumanguru, receives the following awesome description in the Hero's Dance as well:

> Sumanguru entered the Mande,
> His helm of human skin.
> Sumanguru entered the Mande,
> His pants of human skin.
> Sumanguru entered the Mande,
> His gown of his human skin.

Where the descriptions of power objects are fulsome, descriptions of confrontations are, as we mentioned before, marvelously laconic. In one version of the Sunjata epic we collected, the bard telling the story sings for three hours about Sunjata's quest to discover his adversary's *nya*, then describes the war ensuing between them in three lines.

> The Mande and the Soso came to battle.
> The laughs went to the Mande.
> The tears to the Soso.

In the twelve other versions of this epic which we examined in detail, none devotes more than fifty lines to describing Sunjata's final battle against Sumanguru, but all devote thousands of words to Sunjata's search for the source of Sumanguru's *nya*. This is not at all atypical, as Mande epics tend to follow the same general pattern:

A. The hero and the adversary confront each other with no resolution.
B. The hero consults seers, wisemen, diviners and/or fetishes to determine a course of action.
C. The hero is informed that his adversary's power emanates from an occult source (fetish, talisman) which the hero must obtain.
D. The hero, usually with the help of a woman, discovers the occult source of power and separates it from the adversary.
E. The hero returns with the source of power to the wisemen who develop an antidote, usually in the form of various sacrifices and/or *dalilu*.
F. The sacrifices are performed, the *dalilu* engaged, and the adversary falls.

Two of the greatest Mande epic poems are astonishing variants of this theme in that they are reflexive: heroes' songs about heroes' songs. The *Janjon* praises the exploits of Fakoli, nephew of Sumanguru, the blacksmith king of the Soso and Sunjata's powerful foe. The *Janjon* tells how Sunjata wages campaign after unsuccessful campaign against Sumanguru to no avail—until Fakoli comes to join him. When Fakoli enters the camp, he finds bards singing the *Janjon* for Sunjata. He offers to help Sunjata defeat Sumanguru in exchange for the song, an offer which sends the entire camp into gales of laughter at the dimin-

utive hunter with the huge head and the great mouth. Nevertheless they decide to put him to a test and, therefore, ask him to kill one of Sumanguru's fiercest generals. Fakoli returns the next day with the general's head, asking for his song. Another test is posed, and Fakoli meets it too. This time when he asks for the song, Sunjata's hesitation angers him and his anger swells in him until he grows so large that the roof of Sunajata's hut sits on his head like a bush hat. Recognizing Fakoli's terrible power, Sunjata's bards sing the *Janjon* for him and the song becomes his forever.

The Duga, "Vulture," tells the story of two enemy heroes who have become kings: Da Monson, King of the Segou Empire, and Duga Koro, great warrior and hunter, King of Kore.[10] At the beginning of the story the Duga is sung only in praise of Duga Koro, who, sure of his power and spoiling for a battle, insults his enemy, Da Monson. Da Monson marshals his forces and besieges Kore, but cannot breach the walls even after many efforts. Duga, Koro's senior wife who is bribed into betraying him, reveals the secret of his magic to Da Monson, who then successfully attacks and seizes his fortress. Duga Koro commits suicide before he can be captured, but Da Monson's warriors sack the town for booty and slaves, and Da Monson claims the Duga song for himself.

That Mande heroes risk so much for praise songs is the whole point of Mande praise songs. A great song guarantees the hero's renown, guarantees his immortality. A great praise song stirs his blood, heats up his heart, spurs him on to heroic accomplishments. A great praise song has *nyama*. It is a paean to *fadenya*.

Interplays of Text and Context

Literature in a literate culture becomes fixed in a given historical period. Jane Austen's style is quintessentially nineteenth-century, and —heretical as it may sound—Homer's concerns are not concerns of our day and age. Reading these authors and gaining access to their insights and sensibilities does not come naturally. It requires training, work, and patience, which many people do not have. Oral literature is constantly reshaped to its contemporary context—at least in its interpretation. The origins of heroic poems that we have been discussing might well date back several millenia, but these songs mark ideologies and behaviors that have current relevance.

Heroic poems are sung continually in the Mande world. Bards sing them for all social ceremonies—births, baptisms, marriages, funerals. You hear them over the radio daily—with their traditional musical phrasing or in Afro-Cuban dance rhythms, with pachanga and charanga beats. In the capital cities and in the remotest villages, Sunjata's praise song is sung, Fakoli's hero's dance is sung, the praise of Tira Magan is sung, Duga Koro's praise song is sung.

The texts and the melodies are not purposefully modified, but the musical arrangement may be. Lyrics may be modified by bad exegesis, but the ideology they celebrate, the very basis of their esthetic tension—the pullings and tuggings of *badenya* against *fadenya*—remains unchanged. These praise songs thus constitute a conservative record of Mande ideology, which, by virtue of its constant exposure and repetition, guarantees an effect in the socialization of Mande youths.

Socialization recapitulates much of what we have discussed here. Raised in large and extremely close-knit families, youths nevertheless learn that their culture lavishes esteem and adulation on its rebels. The figures preserved in history are those who broke with the traditions of their village, severed the bonds of *badenya*, traveled to foreign lands searching for special powers and material rewards, but just as importantly, they are also the ones who returned to the villages and elevated them to higher stations. This image of the rebel hero who breaks with, but ultimately returns to his people is not without relevance to the modern Mande child. It has probably always been this way and will probably always continue to be so. The pull of this great literary tradition is to *fadenya*, and its effect has been to spin the headstrong youth out in to the world of adventure.

The adventures do not have to be as stupendous as Fakoli's, for what counts is the impression the adventurer thinks he is creating among his *baden*. In Mali, for example, less than 30 percent of the children attend school. In many areas of the bush, this figure is less than 10 percent. A child entering school is treated as a hero-rebel, breaking with the traditional behavioral patterns of his village. He presents himself as a young person of destiny, and his villagers respond by suspending many of the obligations required of his agemates. The school child is in many respects held at arm's length away from his village. He often does not undergo the traditional education proffered through various initiation societies after circumcision. He is in essence forced to define his life outside the village. The role

models for his extra-village life are nevertheless traditional models, as they abound in the traditional literature. A youth may not be called *ngana*, but he is led to believe that he is on the right road, and that he is a person of destiny.

The Mande migrant workers in the Ivory Coast and France share much the same psychology. They live and work in unspeakable conditions, their hope sustained by the image of themselves they project to the people back home. The brief one or two week periods in which they return home are times of intense joy and congratulation for all concerned. The prodigals are adulated and praised. They distribute their hard-won savings munificently among their friends and kin. They return to their miserable conditions on the streets of Paris or Abidjan, revitalized for several more years of back-breaking, soul-crushing labor. The further out they are flung in their search for adventure and fortune, the more important becomes the group which cast them out.

Bazin's study of the history of Segou (Bazin, 1971) demonstrates that this process has long been the rule in the Mande world. Bazin shows that the Segou region was always labor poor, able to produce the surplus to pay its taxes only with continual infusions of slaves. One contributing factor is that the young men of the local villages all preferred the adventures of war and trade to the *badenya* activities of farming. For them glory lay in returning booty and slaves to the village, not in producing themselves the agricultural surplus necessary for the village's general economic survival.

If a person's *fadenya* activity ceases, as would happen, for example, should adventurer-rebel-hero seek to settle down, the collectivity closes in around him. An ever expanding set of *baden*, all with serious and pressing needs, eat at his meager resources. Hard-won prizes are spread through the group, and the once heroic actor sinks back into the social mass.

The Mande system of *fadenya-badenya* is structured so as to assure the prevalence of *badenya*. The system spins out its potential heroes, but their dynamic energies are dissipated by the inertia of the group. The system remains in relative equilibrium. The societies defined therein are relatively secure, but often the individuals that constitute them are resentful of demands made upon them and suspicious of the activities of their co-citizens and kin. It is not a high risk system in the sense that normal activities will be supported by an extensive collectivity. If in the course of normal activity one should come upon

misfortune, the collectivity will uphold the unfortunate, maintaining equilibrium. The risks are taken, not by the collectivity, but by the individual hero-rebel-adventurers, the *nganas* of Mande culture. When they succeed, the group will reap the benefits, and the hero is rewarded with adulation and praise. When they fail, the group forgets them.

The crucial thing to note here is the mutual interdependence of the hero and the group. The *baden* group casts individual members forth, encourages them, supports them, covers them in glory when they return, but they rig the whole system so that the hero *must* return. The hero is not an altruist, he performs his deeds to gain reputation for himself and to insure his own immortality. Still, he cannot sing his own praises in life any more than he could sing them in death. His *baden* group holds the key to the real treasure he seeks.

NOTES

The data upon which this paper is based are drawn primarily from fifteen years of research concerning Mande language and culture. It would be impossible to cite all those to whom we owe appreciation for their assistance. We cannot help but cite Seydou Camara, Bourama Soumaoro, Massa Maghan Diabaté, Mamadou Kanté, and Yamuru Diabaté, his family and friends in Keyla, all of whom have contributed immeasurably to our understanding of the Mande world. To each we owe a different debt, and none is responsible for the particular analysis at which we have arrived.

1. The orthography used is the official orthography of the Republic of Mali. The values of the symbols are in general similar to those of French with the exception that the mid vowels *e* and *o* are always closed and tense, whereas *è* and *ò* are open and lax. Tone is not marked in the orthography. Where tone distinctions are relevant, they will be discussed in the notes. Readers who wish to ascertain the tones of particular items may consult the *Lexique Bambara* (Education de Base, Bamako, 1968). Readers familiar with the literature on Mande ethnography will find far-ranging interpretations of the Mandekan vocabulary items in this paper. These differences in interpretation may result from differences in the level of abstraction of the inquiry, as they may result from inaccuracies in both linguistic and ethnographic analysis.

2. Both *fadenya and badenya* axes exploit the instrumentality of *malo* "shame." The *ngana* is called *malobali*, "shameless," by those with *badenya* orientation because the *ngana* does not respect the supportive rituals of *badenya*, violations of which would be the cause of shame to a *badenya*-oriented actor. The *ngana* is not in the least impervious to *fadenya*-generated shame, related, for example, to notions like courage.

3. It is not unlikely that the word *nya*, translated here as "means" is

the same as the word for "eye, fore, front." This would likely be a metaphorical extension where it is understood that the eye is the primary avenue to intelligence, understanding, and hence to action. To control someone's "eye" would be in this sense a clear domination of means.

This analysis gains support in the complex verb forms:

nya labò	have its eye come out, hence explain, clarify
nya lamini	have its eye twist, hence confound, confuse
ko nya nyini	seek a thing's eye, hence understand completely
mogo nya nyini	seek a person's eye, hence understand a person completely, hence manipulate [cast a spell on, charm] that person

Cissé (1964) seems to treat the two words as homophones, *nya* "means" being related by Cissé to *ni* "soul, life force," perhaps by the adjunction of the abstract suffix *-ya, whence ni-ya* > *nya*. This analysis is not entirely implausible and it accords with the tonal behavior of the word.

4. This is a jural projection. The *nyamakala* groups are now and have always been permeable. The major path of accession to *nyamakala* status is elevation from slavery into occupations such as smithing or bardship.

5. The reader is invited to consult MacNaughton (1978) for a more detailed discussion of *dalilu* with specific reference to blacksmiths.

6. The literature dealing with *nyama* is quite extensive. In spite of the many efforts, *nyama* has no clear etymology relating it to *nyagaman* "chaff" hence "waste, garbage," or *ni* "soul, life force, spirit." The tone of *nyama* is low, whereas *ni* is high. The reader is invited to consult Dieterlen (1951), Cissé (1964), Tauxier (1942), Monteil (1924), Labouret (1934), and Delafosse (1912) for various treatments of this concept.

7. We recorded this version sung by Seydou Camara in Bamako during the spring of 1974. It is currently being prepared for publication.

8. The version of the Sunjata epic to which we refer in this paper was sung by Fadigi Sisoko in Kita in 1968. It has been transcribed and incorporated in Johnson (1978). It will be revised and expanded for publication in 1979. The recording is available at Indiana University's Archives of Traditional Music. There is an increasingly important body of scholarship on the Sunjata epic and the Mali Empire. The reader is invited to consult, for example, Niane (1965), Pageard (1961), Levtzion (1963), and Monteil (1929).

9. The extracts of the Janjòn come from a performance by Yamuru and Sira Mori Diabaté in Keyla, Mali, 1972. A literary version of the Janjon is presented in Diabaté (1970).

10. The version of the Duga to which we refer was performed by Ba Koné in Segou, 1968. The reader is invited to consult Monteil (1924), Tauxier (1942), and Bazin (1971) for details relating to the reign of Da Monson and the Segou Empire in general.

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