The Queen and the Serpent:

Mythic Structures and Archetypal Transformations in the Hausa Foundational Myth

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KEYWORDS

Bayajidda myth
Hausa foundational narrative
Collective individuation
Serpent symbolism
Depth psychology
Symbolic hermeneutics
Great Mother archetype
Hierogamy
Bòorii spirits
African Islamization
Coniunctio oppositorum
Archetypal transformation
Kusugu well
Anima mundi
Cultural memory

ABSTRACT

This article offers a symbolic-hermeneutic reading of the foundational Hausa myth of Bayajidda and the Queen of Daura, within a Jungian and post-Jungian framework that foregrounds the dynamics of the collective psyche. Rather than treating the narrative as historical legend or ethnographic residue, it is analyzed as a symbolic matrix in which unconscious forces are enacted, transformed, and ritually inscribed in cultural memory. This archetypal triad—the indigenous and chthonic queen, the serpent sarkì, and the foreign prince Bajayidda—situated at the threshold of the Kusugu well, enacts the transition from archetypal inflation to symbolic integration within the collective psyche.

Methodologically, the study integrates depth psychology with symbolic anthropology and onto-ethnography. Drawing on Carl Gustav Jung, James Hillman, and Joseph Campbell, along with field research, it interprets central mythic figures not as folkloric survivals but as active archetypes within the symbolic economy of the Hausa collective psyche. The serpent, Queen Daurama, and the bòorii spirits are read as mediators of psychic thresholds and bearers of cultural memory.

The paper frames the Islamization of Hausa society as a process of symbolic integration rather than external rupture. Islam is interpreted not merely as a historical or doctrinal shift but as a reconfiguration of the collective psyche. The sacrifice of the serpent and the founding of the Hausa sultanate represent the emergence of a new imaginal order grounded in both indigenous depth and Islamic cosmology. Finally, the study rethinks African Islamization as a mode of collective individuation, in which myth serves as the symbolic infrastructure through which a culture negotiates transformation, continuity, and ontological renewal.

INTRODUCTION

The story of Prince Bayajidda and the Queen of Daura is among the most significant foundational myths of West Africa. Like many African Islamicate societies, the Hausa integrate pre-Islamic motifs into Islamic cosmology and broader symbolic frameworks. Within this liminal space, archetypal images of the collective unconscious emerge and are transmitted through oral poetry by the marōƙin zamani—the "singer of time"—as described by Dierk Lange in an archaic form of the Hausa language (Ancient Kingdoms of West Africa, 288). This symbolic structure is central to Batic's version of the fourteenth tale, Maganan baƙo da macijin ruwa, translated as *The Water Serpent and the Stranger* (Batic, 97–106).

A traditional version of the myth[1]

1 The primary sources employed for the reconstruction of this myth include Chapters

can be summarized as follows:

During the night of a new moon, a stranger from the East arrived in Daura. The city, located at the edge of the Sahara, was suffering from a severe drought. Water was scarce, not because the wells were dry, but because the Kusugu well remained closed by the presence of a chthonic serpent known as *sarkì*. The people were allowed to draw water only on Fridays. Daura, both a Sahelian oasis and a regional trading center, lived under the control of this hidden force.

In earlier times, when Daura was still a small settlement, the serpent was believed to dwell at the bottom of the Kusugu well, guarding the water and imposing a strict prohibition on its use. No one was permitted to approach it except on the appointed day. The inhabitants lived in constant thirst under the authority of Queen Magajiya Daurama, descended from the ancient lineage of Canaan. She alone held the right to draw water from the serpent's domain, a power inherited from matriarchs who had maintained contact with the ancestral spirits of the land and the air, the *bòori*.

One evening, under the new moon, a stranger came from the East. His name was Bayajidda. Some traditions describe him as a prince fleeing his homeland; others say he came from the gateway to the sacred precincts. Exhausted from his journey, he asked for water, but no one could provide it, since the well was sealed by the serpent's command. Moved by his condition, Queen Daurama offered him hospitality, though she warned him of the danger of the serpent that guarded the well and punished anyone who trespassed.

That night, Bayajidda took his sword—said in some versions to have been forged in the city of Kano—and went to the well. He descended quietly and confronted sarkì, who emerged from the depths. The serpent was immense and glimmering, animated by the forces of the underworld. Bayajidda struck twice with his sword and killed it. Its blood mixed with the water, and by dawn the city awoke to the sound of flowing water: the curse had been lifted.

When Queen Daurama learned of the event, she summoned the stranger. Recognizing the magnitude of his act, she took him as her husband and she embraced Islam as her religion. From their union was born a son named Bawo. From Bawo's descendants came the Hausa bakwai, the seven legitimate rulers who founded the principal Hausa city-states. Other children were born as well, from a slave of the Queen of Daura, whose descendants became the banza bakwai, the illegitimate lineages, including people of the actual South and West Nigeria. Through this division, order was established, but the trace of conflict remained. Today, the old well of Kusugu in Daura is enclosed within a stone wall. Local tradition maintains that its waters still bear the memory of the serpent's blood and the thirst that once afflicted the city.

From this myth, this paper examines the Hausa foundational myth of Bayajidda through the lenses of symbolic hermeneutics and analytical psychology. I want to interpret the narrative as an expression of the "collective unconscious" shaped by archetypal dynamics and indigenous cosmologies. Rather than viewing the myth merely as an oral or political construct, the analysis focuses on its psychic structure, imaginal coherence, and its function as a symbolic drama of cultural transformation. The myth unfolds a foundational tension: a city ruled by a chthonic serpent, a foreign hero from the East, a queen who guards ancestral power, and a well whose waters signify both psychic depth and fertility. These motifs operate not as metaphors but as active images within an ontological drama mediating between psyche and cosmos, myth and history.

The paper also argues that the Bayajidda myth functions as an account of "collective individuation", the symbolic integration of opposites through which a community reorients its psychic order. The coming of Islam, in this perspective, represents not conquest or rupture but the emergence of a new axial orientation of the collective psyche, one that reconfigures rather than erases the deep matrix of pre-Islamic Hausa spirituality.

Methodologically, this research employs symbolic hermeneutics as a cross-disciplinary approach that interprets mythic structures as mediators between psychological, cultural, and cosmological orders. The framework draws primarily on the works of C. G. Jung, J. Campbell, and J. Hillman. Jung's concepts of the collective unconscious and individuation inform the reading of the Bayajidda narrative as a drama of archetypal transformation, while Hillman's notion of the anima mundi situates myth as a mode of collective self-reflection. Ethnographic studies by Dierk Lange, Adeline Masquelier, Joanna Sullivan, and Arthur Tremearne are not treated merely as empirical sources but as interpretive gateways into Hausa symbolic life.

ARCHETYPAL FOUNDATIONS: THE WELL, THE SERPENT, AND THE QUEEN

At the bottom of Kusugu's well resides the serpent sarkì. It is not merely a monstrous guardian obstructing access to water, but an image that articulates the ambivalence inherent in vital energy. The serpent condenses opposites—chaos and vitality, generative impulse and destructive potential. Rather than functioning as a fixed symbol, sarkì embodies the psychic tension between creation and dissolution, the polarity that sustains transformation. It serves as the guardian of a latent indigenous psychic force—the mana of the collective unconscious—whose presence both

XIV and XV of *Tatsuniyoyi Hausa* (2010) by Gian Claudio Batic, as well as Dierk Lange's ethnographical versions of the Bayajidda narrative, published in 2004 and 2012 respectively.

threatens and upholds the order of Daura. The well's depth, as a threshold between visible and invisible realms, materializes a liminal zone where danger and renewal coexist, and where psychic integration becomes possible.

The serpent's association with Queen Magajiya Daurama reveals a relationship of mirroring rather than opposition. She is not merely a sovereign ruler but the custodian of the "water of life," the Selbst—the self in its totality. Her position at the well situates her as a mediator between the social and chthonic orders, much like the serpent that reflects her. Together, queen and serpent configure a dual image of sovereignty and instinct, corresponding to what C. G. Jung identifies as the archetype of the Great Mother—simultaneously nurturing and terrifying, protective and devouring (Jung, CW 14, §168). In this sense, sarkì should not be understood as an adversary to be slain, but as an intermediary within a process of psychic realignment. Its death signifies not annihilation but symbolic integration—the transformation of repressed psychic content into conscious order.

As a chthonic image, the well marks the topos of individuation. It is a site where shadow and vitality converge, and where descent becomes the necessary precondition for renewal. Jung describes the well as an "inverted axis mundi," a descent into the ancestral and primordial layers of the psyche (Jung, CW 5, §577). To drink from it is to reestablish contact with the archetype of the "water of life," the maternal, fluid principle of psychic continuity. The drought afflicting Daura is therefore not merely physical but symbolic—an incapacity to descend, to confront the unconscious obstruction that impedes circulation between levels of reality.

According to Lange, oral genealogies trace the people of Daura to a Canaanite origin. Najib, grandson of Canaan, is said to have led a migration through Egypt and Libya to the Sahel, where his descendants founded Daura. The genealogy culminates with Queen Daurama, under whose reign women ruled while men cultivated and hunted (Lange, Ancient Kingdoms of West Africa, 289–90). Interpreted symbolically rather than literally, this matriarchal structure corresponds to what Neumann terms a "pre-solar" stage of consciousness, governed by the archetype of the Great Mother (Neumann, 223). The queen's preeminence thus signifies a psychic configuration in which the animus—the structuring and discriminating principle—has not yet emerged as the dominant ordering force.

Bayajidda's arrival under the new moon represents the emergence of this new ordering principle. He embodies the heroic function within the psyche: the impulse to confront darkness and restore equilibrium. As Campbell observes, the hero arises archetypically at moments of symbolic crisis, when the existing order can no longer contain psychic energy (Campbell, 13–15). The timing of Bayajidda's arrival—when lunar light is absent—suggests the appearance of a solar function precisely at the point of disorientation. His confrontation with sarkì thus signifies not conquest but transformation: a descent into the unconscious to release blocked energies and convert instinct into structured vitality.

While certain Hausa traditions identify Bayajidda with Abū Yazīd, a prince fleeing Baghdad (Lange, Ancient Kingdoms of West Africa, 290), the association with Jeddah—the gateway to the ḥaram—introduces a more explicitly symbolic dimension. Jeddah, as a liminal threshold between the profane and the sacred, the terrestrial and the transcendent, situates the hero within a broader cosmology of passage and illumination. His eastern origin signifies the irruption of a solar, axial principle: the emergence of consciousness as a mediating force that reorganizes, without abolishing, the chthonic substrate of psychic life.

As I proposed in El caos necesario, the name Bayajidda itself may preserve Afroasiatic linguistic traces of the proto-root baʕ, denoting "sky," "abundance," or "divine expanse" (De Diego González, El caos necesario, 207). This resonance reinforces the interpretation of Bayajidda as a name-mytheme, a condensation of meanings mediating a shift from a lunar, cyclical cosmology to a solar, hierarchical one. The transition he enacts is both cosmological and psychological: a movement from a symbolic order governed by the maternal and cyclical to one oriented toward differentiation, prophetic transcendence, and temporal linearity.

This structure resonates beyond the Hausa cultural sphere. The Bayajidda narrative parallels the Yorùbá patakí of Òtúrá Méjì (De Diego González, La sombra de los imales, 97–98), particularly in the episode of Imeka—likely a symbolic reference to Mecca near Jeddah. In both cases, a hero confronts a serpent or dragon guarding access to a vital source. These figures, as Jung notes, are not merely antagonistic monsters but manifestations of primordial chaos—thresholds that must be traversed for symbolic order to emerge (Jung, CW 9ii, §13–16). The confrontation culminates in a blood sacrifice, establishing the conditions for cultural renewal and psychic reconfiguration.

Within the Jungian framework, the serpent finds its analogue in what Jung termed the shadow—the repressed content that threatens consciousness yet enables transformation. While Abrahamic traditions have often interpreted such forces as demonic, symbolic anthropology and depth psychology regard them as essential to the process of individuation. From this perspective, the mythic geography of the East—Jeddah and Mecca—marks not only spatial movement but psychic reorientation: a journey toward integration, where the fluid, imaginal dimension of nature and the archetypal presence of the divine become accessible once again (Jung, CW 10, §128).

In this sense, the East signifies not geographical direc-

tion but ontological origin—the metaphysical source of revelation and renewal. Bayajidda's role is thus not that of conqueror but of mediator, a solar impulse responding to an inner necessity and appearing where the psychic system requires rebalancing. Like Jung's hero descending into the unconscious (Jung, CW 5, §157–58) and Campbell's archetypal adventurer (Campbell, 14–20), he acts to restore circulation between the suppressed and conscious dimensions of the psyche. His intervention marks the passage from a matriarchal order to one in which the masculine principle enters into sacred relation with the feminine—a symbolic articulation of individuation, both personal and collective.

Viewed in this light, Bayajidda functions not as a historical figure but as a cultural-archetypal symbol—an imaginal mediator between two religious and cosmological regimes: the indigenous chthonic traditions of fertility and possession, and the emerging Islamic order grounded in transcendence and law. His myth marks a threshold at which older symbolic patterns are reconfigured rather than erased, where the integration of opposites ensures cultural continuity. The queen of Daura embodies this mediating capacity: she preserves ancestral knowledge while facilitating its transformation. Her Canaanite lineage anchors the narrative in the continuity of ancient civilizations, whereas Islam operates as a structuring force that reorganizes—without annihilating—the primordial energies of the land. Together, they delineate a process of cultural and psychic individuation: a passage from instinctual totality to differentiated consciousness, from the chthonic to the solar.

THE FORGE AND THE SACRIFICE: THE EMERGENCE OF THE ANIMUS

The forging of Bayajidda's sword near what would later become the city of Kano—the future seat of the Hausa sultanate—constitutes a decisive symbolic moment in the mythic narrative. This episode is best understood not as a literal event but as an alchemical process, a ritual of psychic transformation. The sword functions as a symbol of the animus, the organizing principle of consciousness, forged in the "fire" of inner conflict. The raw metal represents unshaped unconscious material; the act of forging corresponds to the tempering of psychic energy through struggle and endurance. Within Jungian psychology, the forge mirrors the psychic furnace in which instinctual forces are refined and integrated (Jung, CW 14, §§457–553).

So, it operates as a rite of passage, marking Bayajidda's transition from exile to heroic agency. As Campbell observes, in the archetypal hero's journey, the sword embodies dual potential: it can destroy, but it can also reveal, separate, and initiate (Campbell, 227). This ambivalence reflects the essential task of the emerging animus: to differentiate without severing, to impose order while preserving vitality. The setting of Kano—later the political and spiritual center of Hausa civilization—transcends mere historical reference. It becomes a psychic locus in which the symbolic tension between the anima (embodied by the queen) and the shadow (embodied by the serpent) is held and transformed.

The narrative situates Bayajidda's arrival under the new moon, a temporal symbol of absence and potential renewal. The lunar darkness signifies the dominion of the Great Mother but also presages rebirth, when a new principle of order can emerge. His confrontation with sarkì under these conditions represents not the conquest of the unconscious but the reconfiguration of its libidinal flow. The serpent's blood mingling with the waters of the well becomes a sign of transformation—a sacrum facere, a making sacred—that restores the severed link between opposing principles. Jung identifies such moments as instances of coniunctio oppositorum, in which the reconciliation of dualities generates a new psychic synthesis (Jung, CW 14, §§457–553).

The myth's central act is therefore sacrificial rather than heroic in the modern sense. To sacrifice the serpent is to confront the archaic fear that guards the threshold of psychic life—the dread that obstructs renewal. This gesture transforms rather than annihilates the powers it engages. The serpent's death releases the waters—symbols of collective vitality—yet simultaneously exposes the community to danger: what was once contained now flows freely, and the risk of psychic inundation remains. The myth acknowledges that integrating the unconscious is perilous. As Jung notes, opening the depths may result in "inflation," the loss of psychic balance (Jung, CW 9i, §667). The liberation of the well thus entails both regeneration and risk, a movement requiring continual mediation between consciousness and its foundations.

The motif of drinking from the serpent's blood, found in the Eddas and in Richard Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen cycle—both cited by Jung in Symbols of Transformation—illuminates this process by analogy. Siegfried's act of tasting the dragon's blood awakens his ability to understand the language of birds, symbolizing the attainment of higher consciousness (Jung, CW 5, §569). Similarly, Bayajidda's act of freeing the waters of Daura expresses not dominion over nature but renewed participation in its living symbolism. The myth suggests that the imaginal realm is not a passive reservoir of meanings but an ontological field that transforms those who enter it. To drink from the well is thus an act of anamnesis—a recovery of the soul's memory through participation in its symbolic depths.

Within the framework of kundalinī symbolism, the serpent represents latent psychic energy. In The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga, Jung observes that the awakening of the serpent in the mūlādhāra chakra initiates an ascent of consciousness through the subtle centers, culminating in the

integration of higher awareness (Jung, The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga, 65–66). The decapitation of sarkì parallels this process: it signifies the release and redirection of instinctual energy toward spiritual transformation. Likewise, in Jung's commentary on Zimmer's On the Dreams and the East, the completion of the kundalinī path entails confronting and transmuting the residual unconscious forces at the base of psychic life (Jung and Zimmer, On the Dreams and the East, 217–18). Through this act, Bayajidda "liberates the water"—the collective Hausa soul—by affirming the animus as an orienting and structuring principle.

This process may also be interpreted as a form of psychic amplification, analogous to the mandala's function in Jungian analysis: the expansion of the field of consciousness through the integration of unconscious contents (Jung, CW 9i, §667). The serpent therefore operates not only as an obstacle but as a guardian mediating between chaos and order. This symbolic continuity is rendered explicit in the title sarkì, later adopted by the Hausa rulers. The fact that subsequent sultans bore the serpent's name indicates a profound integration of the shadow into cultural consciousness. Power, in this symbolic order, derives not from erasing the chthonic but from assimilating it—acknowledging that legitimacy demands a covenant with the primordial. The serpent's name, once taboo, becomes a sign of transmutation: chaos structured into meaning.

The serpent's death, then, signifies not annihilation but consecration. By breaching the threshold between human and numinous realms, Bayajidda restores circulation between psychic and natural orders. The released water—blood-infused and alive with meaning—becomes the medium of renewal. Yet every renewal entails exclusion. From the union of Bayajidda and Queen Daurama arise the seven legitimate Hausa states, while the banza bakwai—the illegitimate descendants—remain on the margins. The myth thus encodes a social corollary to its psychic structure: individuation produces order only by delimiting what lies beyond it.

This episode enacts the archetypal pattern of katabasis—descent, confrontation, sacrifice, and reemergence. It constitutes a rite of individuation, both personal and collective, through which psychic life acquires renewed coherence. The serpent's blood, far from being a stain, becomes the vehicle of transformation. The reorganization of sexual and generative forces parallels the establishment of political order; both arise from the controlled release of primordial energy. The well, once sealed, now circulates both water and meaning throughout the community. What was once feared as destructive becomes the foundation of renewal.

FROM THE TERRIBLE TO THE NURTURING: THE ARCHETYPAL TRANSFIGURATION OF THE GREAT MOTHER

The archetypal symbol is never erased; it dissolves, transforms, and mingles with the very water that sustains life. The core of the Bayajidda myth lies in this relationship: the serpent's death opens the way to both the water and the Queen. She is refigured in the new order as a chthonic presence—a priestess and sovereign of the hidden. In Hausa, she is called saniya.

Her image resonates with that of the Queen of Sheba, particularly as portrayed in the Jungian-inspired work of Miguel Serrano, Las visitas de la Reina de Saba (1960), which evokes a symbolic landscape of sacrificial and cthonic energies:

> "The Black Wife begins to speak through her mouth. And the people ask when it will rain. The Interpreter answers:
>
> 'O Mother, the rain will come from below, from the rice field. And the Black Wife will be possessed by her Husband in the midst of her menstrual blood. Only then, only then will it rain…" (Serrano, 58)

Like the Queen of Daura, the Queen of Sheba embodies the enigmatic power of the Afroasiatic Great Mother—at once guardian and initiator. Serrano depicts her not as a historical figure but as an archetypal image, a custodian of ancestral knowledge dwelling at the threshold between visible and invisible realms. Her encounter with King Solomon mirrors the hierogamy (Jung, CW 16, §398) enacted in the Bayajidda myth: a ritual union of solar and lunar, reason and instinct, prophetic word and oracular silence. In both narratives, sovereignty functions symbolically rather than politically, and femininity bears numinous authority—it commands descent, not domination. The Queen of Daura, like the Queen of Sheba, does not vanish upon the hero's arrival. She is transfigured, maintaining her oracular role within the new symbolic order, preserving access to the depths even as the hero ascends.

Serrano's vision evokes an archetypal atmosphere charged by the conjunction of solar and chthonic forces. The "Black Wife," recalling the Terrible Mother archetype found in the Hindu goddess Kālī—whose name in Sanskrit means "the black one"—embodies both destruction and renewal. She unites the annihilation of avidyā (ignorance) with the fertility of the black earth. Here, rain does not descend from the heavens but rises from within—from womb, blood, and soil. This inversion of patriarchal cosmology situates the feminine as the primordial source of

regeneration.

Yet if both Queen Daurama and the serpent sarkì embody this transformative potency, why does the city remain parched? The paradox lies in their coexistence. Together they form a closed, self-sustaining world governed by instinct and numinosity—a unity of feminine sovereignty and animal vitality that lacks motion. The Mother protects plenitude but withholds transformation; she becomes the Devouring Mother (Neumann, 67–69). Inflated by the archetype of the Great Mother, Queen Daurama resists change: no birth, no rupture, no time.

As Neumann observes in The Great Mother, childbirth is not merely emergence into life but the mother's recognition that what she shelters must depart from her (Neumann, 68). This realization confronts the maternal principle with the necessity of separation—the first rupture in the process of individuation. The matriarchal cosmos sustains an eternal, undifferentiated totality, leaving the people "thirsty for the Real." The well remains full yet sealed. The serpent guards it but forbids its flow; she denies possession, birth, and the generative encounter symbolized by the foreign prince Bayajidda.

In this condition, the anima, overwhelmed by the Great Mother archetype, becomes inflated and immobilized. Individuation cannot begin; libido stagnates. Water that does not circulate decays. The serpent thus manifests as the Terrible Mother (M–), a force of devouring chaos, while the queen embodies the nurturing, protective aspect (M+). These are not opposites but two poles of a single archetypal reality (Neumann, 82). When the psyche cannot mediate between them, it regresses into fear and paralysis—a pre-differentiated, timeless condition. Bayajidda's intervention is not an act of destruction but of passage. His sword, forged in Kano, operates as a symbolic instrument of transformation rather than domination. The sacrifice of the serpent signifies the rupture of the amniotic enclosure, releasing the "water of life" and reanimating the collective soul. The hero's act sets libido in motion once again, marking a symbolic rebirth at both individual and communal levels.

The union between Bayajidda—the solar hero and Abrahamic foreigner—and the indigenous lunar queen renews the cosmic cycle. Their hierogamy does not negate the feminine principle but reorients it. The hidden water now flows, not as chaotic numinosity but as structured vitality. The queen becomes genealogical mother of the Hausa bakwai—the seven legitimate heirs. Yet she no longer embodies mystery publicly: female gnosis yields to masculine dynasty, and the future sarkì becomes both ruler and spiritual guide. The chaos of the old world is transposed into a cosmos governed by lineage and law. Still, the myth retains its shadow: the banza bakwai—the illegitimate line. The symbol does not close entirely; something remains outside, still dreaming beneath the damp soil of the well.

Like other great Afroasiatic cosmogonies—from Egyptian to biblical—the Bayajidda myth dramatizes the dialectic between nan, the primordial underworld, and baʕ, the heavenly expanse. From the dark waters of tinyàà, agriculture, society, and law emerge. Yet, as noted elsewhere (De Diego González, El caos necesario, 210–11), the soul never returns unchanged from the night of blood.

Queen Daurama, as priestess of the hidden and guardian of the bòorii cult, does not disappear with the hero's arrival. She remains as witness to transformation, assuming an oracular and healing role. Her union with Bayajidda does not conclude the narrative but complicates it: the Hausa bakwai and the banza bakwai signify not only social differentiation but psychic polarity—remnants of an original fracture. It is within this split, between the legitimate and the illegitimate, the luminous and the obscure, that consciousness unfolds. Consciousness is not born pure but wounded; it matures through its capacity to coexist with its shadow.

The queen cannot be understood apart from the imaginal world of pre-Islamic Africa. Her figure resonates with the bòorii tradition—a spiritual system centered on women, trance, and healing. As described by Adeline Masquelier in Niger (2001), the bòorii cult constitutes a domain of symbolic female agency. The saniya—the spirit medium or priestess—acts as a bridge between human and spiritual realms, entering trance to negotiate, mediate, and heal. These practices, however, stand outside the normative Islamic framework of Hausa orthodoxy.

For practitioners, the bòorii are never mere deities or ancestors; they are presences that mediate—unpredictably—between the cosmic and the mundane (Sullivan, 271–82). Their role parallels that of the òrìṣà among the Yoruba, who, in some Hausa genealogies, are counted among the banza bakwai, the descendants of knowledge eclipsed by Bayajidda's dynastic order. In this sense, the bòorii preserve a pluriversal cosmology, maintaining equilibrium between natural and spiritual planes. Women who invoke these entities—becoming the "horses" of the spirits—forge a link between worlds, enabling transformation and communal healing.

Each bòori manifests distinct attributes and affects associated with psychic or somatic states. Auta relates to maternity; Buba to sorrow and confusion; Barhaza to paralysis. These spirits map interior psychic processes through symbolic embodiment. Like Jungian archetypes, they externalize universal experiences—birth, loss, illness, and trauma (Tremearne, 104–5). Through ritual performance, these tensions are enacted and reintegrated. Some spirits, such as Bagwariya, bring both illness and healing; her association with black animals, sacrifice, and transformation connects her with the symbolism of darkness and regeneration. Others, like Barade (blood and war) or Danko ɗan Musa (a serpent spirit linked to infertility), mark thresholds between

life and death, reproduction and sterility (Besmer, 68–81). These figures dramatize unconscious conflicts in archetypal form.

The wasani ceremonies—ritual enactments of possession—function as collective catharses. Through dance and trance, possessed women embody the spirits, allowing the community to confront psychic fragmentation (Masquelier, 134–35). These rites do not merely represent social roles; they externalize the group's unconscious life. They operate like dreams or myths—symbolic processes through which the psyche articulates its needs and restores balance.

From a Jungian standpoint, the bòorii may also be understood through the principle of synchronicity (Jung, CW 8, §§816–958). These entities do not emerge through causal logic but through meaningful coincidence: they appear when the psychic system reaches a threshold of tension or necessity. Like archetypes, they are not representations of the unconscious but its manifestations within consciousness. They function as vehicles of transformation, mediating between the conscious and unconscious, the personal and the collective.

In this framework, the serpent sarkì should not be read as an antagonist but as a central figure within the myth's symbolic ecosystem—a custodian of the threshold between chaos and form, instinct and consciousness. Far from personifying evil, she embodies vital chaos, the generative force that resists premature assimilation into order. Her presence at the bottom of the well signifies both blockage and potentiality. She is the archetypal guardian of the liminal, protector of the Selbst, the "water of life." In this, she parallels the bòorii spirits with which she shares both structural and symbolic affinities.

Within Hausa cosmology, sarkì and the bòorii inhabit the margins of visibility, mediating between primordial disorder and cultural structure. They are not vestiges of superstition but active archetypal energies dramatizing the psychic work of transformation. The serpent embodies the ambivalent power of the unconscious—poison and cure, death and renewal, obstacle and guide. Her association with the still waters of the well underscores her role as guardian of psychic depth. Water here is not inert matter but an ambivalent medium: at once dissolving and fertilizing, erasing boundaries while generating new form.

This dual nature of water mirrors the structure of the unconscious itself. As Jung observed, the unconscious is not a mere repository of repressed material but the source of symbolic life—the wellspring of renewal. In this sense, sarkì is not an enemy to be destroyed but a force to be integrated. Her death is sacrificial, not eliminative; it marks the conversion of undifferentiated libido into conscious symbolic expression. She is the dark threshold that must be traversed for psychic life to reorganize itself.

By placing the serpent at the heart of this symbolic network, the myth affirms a cosmology in which the dark, the feminine, and the instinctual are not denied but transfigured. Sarkì is the fertile darkness from which all light emerges. She represents that which cannot be bypassed, only ritually traversed. Her blood in the well is not pollution but consecration—the necessary wound through which new order is born. The Bayajidda myth, therefore, is not a moral allegory but an ontological drama: it enacts the archetypal necessity of descent before renewal, of sacrifice before sovereignty.

The mythic imagination does not regard life as the negation of chaos but as its transfiguration (De Diego González, El caos necesario, 207–9). The serpent's death represents a transformation. Her blood seeps into the well, and the people drink from it. The community is sustained by the symbolic digestion of the shadow. Likewise, the banza bakwai—the illegitimate line—represent not rejection but continuity: the necessary remainder reminding us that every origin remains incomplete.

HAUSA MYTH AND ISLAMIZATION: A PROCESS OF COLONIZATION OR COLLECTIVE INDIVIDUATION?

Bayajidda may be read as the irruption of the animus—the masculine principle of spiritual direction and differentiation—into a psychic landscape where the anima, embodied by Queen Daurama, has become inflated and possessed by the shadow of the Great Mother. The Queen no longer mediates access to the unconscious but guards it jealously, fused with the serpent in a stagnant unity that prevents individuation. Bayajidda's actions are not acts of conquest but symbolic interventions: by forging the sword and confronting the serpent, he enacts the transcendent function, restoring the flow of libido and reestablishing symbolic order. His victory frees the anima from regressive entanglement, transforming her from devouring Mother (Neumann 56–57) into the sovereign matrix of a renewed lineage. Their union, rather than hierarchical, is hierogamic—an archetypal reconciliation through which the collective psyche begins to individuate.

The indigenous anima, represented by the Queen, joins with an animus force embodied in the cultural configuration of Islam introduced by Bayajidda. As a symbolic system, Islam here functions as an architecture of the animus—a framework of law, transcendence, and solar orientation that reorders the psychic landscape and channels collective libido.

From the perspective of depth psychology, Bayajidda does not appear as an external invader imposing a foreign structure on indigenous reality, but as an image arising from within the culture's own psychic depths—an archetypal figure summoned by crisis. Just as the psyche calls forth symbols in moments of transformation, a society confronted with unresolved tension between the hidden and the manifest, the archaic and the emergent, generates narratives that reconfigure its inner architecture. Bayajidda's arrival at the threshold of

night and new moon signifies not domination but mediation: the emergence of a symbolic principle capable of reconciling opposites that threaten to divide the cultural psyche. The myth of Bayajidda is therefore not merely a tale of origins but the ontological dramatization of a collective movement toward psychic integration—a mythic individuation.

The Islamization of this narrative, far from a religious imposition, can be read as a symbolic reordering of consciousness driven by deep currents of the collective unconscious. In Jungian terms, Islam does not function primarily as a codified institution or external authority, but as a vessel of psychic form—a symbolic container capable of integrating and reorganizing archetypal energies. As James Hillman argues in City and Soul (2006), individuation is never solely an interior or personal process; it is also civic and imaginal, through which the soul takes form in relation to public symbols, shared myths, and cultural environments. Within the Hausa symbolic landscape, Islam thus emerges not as a force of erasure but of transformation, establishing a new axial orientation that allows disparate archetypal figures—the Terrible Mother, the serpent guardian, the Queen, and the Hero—to coexist within a restructured mythopoetic order.

Abrahamic monotheism—and Islam in particular—does not extinguish older symbols; it reframes them within the horizon of fiṭrah, the primordial state of being. It channels chthonic forces into new rites and meanings, endowing them with coherence rather than denial. The depth dimension of the myth—the well, the serpent, the Queen—remains intact but gains new resonance within the Islamic symbolic field. The bòorii, far from eradicated, persist as residual energies of a prior imaginal order, still active at the margins of the sharīʿa. They inhabit dreams, health ceremonies, and the communal imagination—much like unintegrated complexes within the individual psyche. The Queen of Daura is not conquered; she is transfigured into a matrix of feminine sovereignty that continues to shape the mythic and unconscious life of the people. Following Islamization, some Hausa women even assumed the role of shaykha within Sufi brotherhoods of the Sahel, preserving continuity between feminine authority and spiritual transmission.

The advent of Islam in the Hausa sphere—both revelation and civilizational frame—should therefore not be understood as a rupture with the indigenous symbolic substratum, but as a collective metamorphosis. This transformation operates not through iconoclasm but through symbolic alchemy, in which the mythic structure is transfigured rather than dismantled. The pre-Islamic symbolic economy is neither negated nor erased; instead, it is rearticulated within a new configurational horizon where ancestral images persist, refracted through a renewed metaphysical axis. Unlike the individualized process of analytic individuation, what unfolds here is a communal reorganization of the imaginal, wherein traditional archetypes are reimagined within an emergent cosmological grammar. Islam, in this sense, functions less as a force of suppression than as a medium of integration—a vessel through which preexisting archetypal structures acquire renewed coherence and ontological depth.

Conversion, then, is not negation but symbolic passage—a transition from one mode of consciousness to another, a crossing into a newly configured imaginal order that integrates rather than abolishes the past. It is a metamorphosis that reorients a culture's symbolic architecture without destroying its ancestral foundations. Yet this passage is fragile and perpetually at risk of regression. As both Jung (CW 13, §335) and Hillman (City and Soul 60) observe, collective individuation—unlike its personal analogue—is never complete or secure. It requires continual symbolic work, ritual renewal, and cultural memory.

When a society loses its symbolic horizon—its sustaining myths, ritual practices, and sacred language—it becomes vulnerable to dissociation, fragmentation, and collective neurosis. These symptoms often manifest not as chaos but as excessive formalism, rigid orthodoxy, or a desacralized rationalism that suppresses the imaginal strata of experience. The soul, deprived of archetypal nourishment, becomes rootless. This condition may well describe the psychic malaise of the globalized age: cultures adrift in flattened symbolic landscapes, severed from the deep wells that once sustained interior life. In such a context, the symbolic memory embedded in myths like that of Bayajidda and the serpent offers not only historical insight but a path of psychic reorientation—a call to return to imaginal depths where renewal remains possible.

The sexual union between Bayajidda and Queen Magajiya Daurama—the solar stranger and the chthonic sovereign—reenacts the archetypal hierogamy (Jung CW 9.1, §199–258) of opposites. Their coupling is not a political alliance but a symbolic synthesis: the meeting of prophetic and Semitic logos with indigenous chthonic eros. From this union arises a new psychic configuration—not through conquest but through symbolic integration. The myth thus stages a profound reordering of reality, in which the archaic is not obliterated but transformed.

And still, beneath the well, the serpent's blood endures—a living residue of the primal unconscious, of instinctual energy and numinous power. It seeps into dreams, trance states, and moments of rupture and insight. It is the depth dimension of the cultural soul, preserved within the imaginal strata, resisting complete rationalization or historical domestication.

CONCLUSIONS

A hermeneutic and symbolic reading of the Bayajidda myth allows us to move beyond historiographic or ethnographic interpretations toward a deep anthropology of the "collective psyche". Rather than depicting the hero's arrival as an episode of conquest or cultural imposition, Bayajidda emerges as an archetypal figure summoned by the need for transfor-

mation. He does not enter as an external agent but manifests as the symbol of a solar principle mediating between chthonic chaos and emergent order.

The serpent *sarkì,* far from an evil antagonist, embodies vital chaos and original libidinal energy. Her death is not annihilation but ritual sacrifice enabling psychic integration. The act of killing does not purify the waters but mingles them with blood—blood that signifies not pollution but the cost of renewal. Likewise, Queen Daurama is not displaced by patriarchy but transformed into the symbolic matrix of a renewed sovereignty. The hierogamic union between the foreign hero and the indigenous queen reconfigures archetypal structures, inaugurating a new cosmological and political order.

Within this symbolic development, the Islamization of the narrative is best understood as a process of collective individuation analogous to Jungian psychic integration but operating at the level of culture. Islam functions not merely as law or external authority but as a symbolic system that channels and reorganizes ancestral energies. It does not eradicate pre-Islamic symbols; it reorients them around a new spiritual axis. The bòorii, the serpent, and the well do not disappear—they persist, transformed into jinn-like presences at the margins of the new sacred order.

This collective individuation marks a metamorphic passage from undifferentiated mythic consciousness to a more integrated symbolic structure. Islam acts not as an iconoclastic force but as a catalyst for reordering, transfiguring latent energies of the collective unconscious into a new symbolic economy. Archetypal figures such as the Great Mother and the Hero assume new functions within this emerging cosmological framework. Yet this process, though historically transformative, remains precarious. The loss of symbolic horizon can trigger regression, unleashing unintegrated forces in fragmentary or pathological forms. When cultures cease to renew and ritualize their symbolic foundations, they risk forfeiting the very structures that sustain psychic coherence and social continuity. The Bayajidda myth does not merely recount origins; it gestures toward the ever-unfinished conditions through which collective individuation may unfold—or falter—in ways that resist any definitive reading.

In the contemporary world, where globalization undermines traditional cosmologies, recovering such symbolic architectures is not a nostalgic act but a critical necessity. The serpent's blood still circulates in Kusugu's well, reminding us that the energy of transformation remains latent beneath the surface of collective consciousness. The myth, far from obsolete, continues to offer a framework through which cultures may reimagine their relation to the unconscious, to history, and to the sacred. Only by sustaining and engaging these imaginal resources can societies resist symbolic disintegration and rediscover the path toward psychic and cultural wholeness.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is part of the research project "Identidad cultural y religiosa en el sufismo de Marruecos y Senegal (siglos IX-XX): Hagiografías, cuestiones de género y simbología" (Cód. PID2023-151079OB-100), funded by Spain's Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities and the State Research Agency (Agencia Estatal de Investigación), both under the Government of Spain. The author thanks Leandro Pinkler for his comments, the article's anonymous reviewers for their careful feedback, and the participants in the seminar of the same title held at the Fundación Vocación Humana (Buenos Aires, Argentina).

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