It is a great pleasure to be given the opportunity to write an academic paper for a colleague, a friend who is like a blood brother and an intellectual running mate. We toured a good part of Germany together, from Bayreuth to Berlin, before the collapse of the Berlin Wall. We have traversed Ilorin then we moved to Tsaragi, Lafiagi and Pategi to the north of Ilorin and Iwo, Ibadan, Ikare and Lagos to the south. We drove in his Volkswagen car while in Germany, and in my Peugeot 504 saloon car while in Nigeria. It is our common research interests that have sustained our friendship for over three decades. Our mothers knew about our close ties and were pleased about this development when they were alive. He met my father but I was not as fortunate to meet his, Dr Reichmuth, a medical practitioner and an alumnus of the DAAD Award; he passed away long before Stefan and I met. I visited his house in Berlin where I met Stefan’s mother, a very kind, reserved, generous and respectable lady.

To our siblings, we were like their brothers. For instance, I see his eldest brother David as my own older brother, while his immediate elder brother is about my age and always embraced me along with his family. Our spouses value each other, and they always gladly incorporated our itineraries and mutual visits into their own schedules.

Similarly, our children cultivated friendships at their own level. Johannes, Stefan’s second son, was a friend of Alim, my third son, while Philipp, Stefan’s eldest son, connected with Mumin, my first son. Franziska was close to Adenike, at a time when both of them were still very young. And when Johannes went to Accra (Ghana) about fifteen years ago on a German exchange program, he found it unthinkable not to visit us in Nigeria and see Alim again. Johannes had come to Nigeria with his parents when he was younger but this time he was able to find his way to Lagos by himself, where I picked him up and took him to Ilorin, to my family.

We also acquainted each other with our respective research networks. Through Stefan Reichmuth I became close to his Bayreuth colleagues Prof. Jamil Abu Nasr (who had taught Maghrib history at the University of Ibadan...
during my undergraduate days) and Prof. Jonathan Owens, as well as with Magdi Fouad who, like Stefan, then transferred to the Department of Oriental and Islamic Studies at Bochum University. On the other hand, Stefan became acquainted with my intellectual mentors Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al-Ilory and Prof. Ismail Balogun, both of blessed memory.

## Academic Friendship

I met Dr Stefan Reichmuth for the first time in 1984; by that time, I had presided over the Muslim Students’ Society of Nigeria (1974–75) and finished my doctoral training (1977–80) at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), with Professor Harry T. Norris as my main supervisor, Professor Jack Carnochan as a collaborative tutor, and the eminent critic and Africanist Prof. J.D. Peel (1941–2015)—at that time still based at the University of Liverpool—as external thesis advisor. Stefan had written his Ph.D. thesis on Arabic dialects in Sudan (where he had spent quite some time), and afterwards wanted to do his postdoctoral habilitation on Islam in Yorubaland. In 1984, he came to Ilorin, the city of scholars and saints, in the company of Professor Jamil Abu Nasr. This was how, by divine design, the two of us, two young Ph.D.s in Arabic and Islamic Studies, began our friendship. Stefan was collecting data for his habilitation, while I was enlarging the scope of my research to move on to the level of Senior Lecturer in Arabic, which I attained later that year. Through this academic cooperation between the Universities of Ilorin and Bayreuth I managed to get my manuscript, *Linguistic and Non-linguistic Aspects of Qur’an Translating to Yoruba*, published by Georg Olms Verlag (Hildesheim) in 1986; this book helped me gain promotion to the position of Reader in 1986. Stefan supported me immensely with this work by proof-reading it and reviewing the monograph for the publisher.

Prof. Jamil Abu Nasr generously supported the cooperation between Stefan and myself by recommending me for a three-month DAAD fellowship. During my time in Bayreuth (May–July 1987), Stefan was very busy improving his skills in the Yoruba language, and we developed more areas of joint research. At that time, I also completed my book on Arabic rhetoric. Stefan, Gisela, their children and family were wonderful hosts, and saved me from homesickness.

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