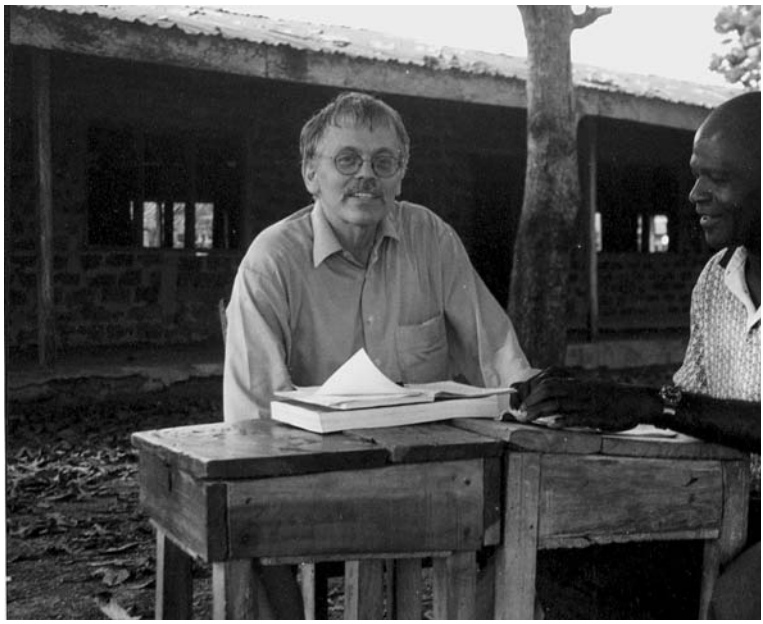
ANCIENT KINGDOMS OF WEST AFRICA

AFRICA-CENTRED AND CANAANITE-ISRAELITE PERSPECTIVES



The author during an interview in the courtyard of a school in Ifẹ

DIERK LANGE

ANCIENT KINGDOMS OF WEST AFRICA

AFRICA-CENTRED AND CANAANITE-ISRAELITE PERSPECTIVES

A collection of published and unpublished studies in English and French

J.H. Röll

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TO MY MOTHER

AND

MY LATE FATHER

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PREFACE

The essays collected in this volume reflect an intellectual adventure. Trained at the Sorbonne by scholars such as Raymond Mauny and Claude Cahen, I initially based my approach to African history solely on written texts – first the more readily accessible reports of European consuls and travellers, later the more difficult writings of Arab geographers and African chroniclers. Consequently, my first publications deal with states, trade and Islam. They assumed that the rhythm of change did not differ significantly in Africa from that in Europe or in the Near East. Field research in Libya, Niger and Nigeria spurred my interest in oral narratives as well as in social and political institutions. Direct contact with traditional officials, court historians and live court proceedings inevitably led to a greater awareness of phenomena of the *longue durée.*

Having tried, like others, to reconstruct African History on the basis of the late medieval paradigm implying spectacular social and political transformations at a relatively late period, I finally recognised the unsatisfactory nature of the results.[1] As an alternative, I turned my attention to the study of cultural remnants of a more distant past which were more faithfully preserved in sub-Saharan Africa than in the societies further north. In written accounts, African features like divine kingship, polytheistic religion and clan structures are barely mentioned and hardly ever described. To reconstruct these long lasting cultural traits, we must turn our attention to ethnographic records. But since most anthropologists themselves have given up their original interests in traditions and ancient survivals, the African historian is obliged to direct field investigations not only towards the collection of oral sources, but also to the observation and description of very stable and – before the onslaught of colonialism and globalization – only slowly changing social and political institutions, cultural patterns and cult-dramatic performances.

On the basis of such new evidence, striking parallels between extant African cultures and written testimonies concerning ancient Near Eastern societies can be detected. From there, it is only a little step to the idea that in the period preceding the textual evidence of the Middle Ages, African societies were not isolated or self-contained, but that instead they took part on various levels in global exchange. Particularly during the Canaanite-Phoenician period, many culture traits of ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies were adopted in African contexts almost unchanged, but others were modified due to local factors, thus giving rise to new cultures with specific forms of their own. Hence it would ap-

[1] See below VIII and X, as well as the corrections in Addenda pp. 545-567. See also 1988c, 1990, 1991b and 1992a.

pear that a number of African peoples living close to the Saharan desert or in proximity to Arabia participated actively in the classical age insofar as they were in intense economic and cultural contact with the Semitic societies of the ancient Near East. With respect to the centres of the ancient world they were peripheral, but with respect to other regions of the African continent they had the role of cultural pioneers.

The first section of the volume comprises three studies with a focus on trans-Saharan relations (I-III). Article I is based on a research trip along the little-known central Saharan trade route between Tripoli and Kawar. Building on this personal experience, I came to the conclusion that the Sahara was not everywhere a barrier beween Sahelian societies and North Africa but that in some regions it provided conditions for easy communication. Furthermore, at various points between Lake Chad and Tripoli, archaeological remains were found that bear witness to a settlement policy of the medieval rulers of Kanem-Bornu designed to ensure the control of communications with the outside world. The second article (II) examines the medieval export of alum from Kawar. In the twelfth century this African commodity was transported by caravans to various ports of the Mediterranean sea and briefly played an important role in the economy of the western world. Article III draws attention to the medieval sites of northeastern Niger, to the alum production of Kawar, and to the earlier, unrecorded exploitation of salt in that oasis.

The six studies in section two concern the history of Kanem-Bornu (IV-IX). Article IV is a speculative attempt to explain the demise of the Duguwa and the rise of the Sefuwa in the eleventh century in terms of the shift from an internal to an external recruitment of slaves. In the new essay XII an alternative and perhaps more satisfactory interpretation of the same event is offered in reference to the internal clan structure – the clans of the Sefuwa section being more compatible with Islam than the clans of the Duguwa section. Article V is a by-product of field research conducted in Bornu that focused on the identification and elucidation of the place-names mentioned in the chronicle of Ibn Furtɔ. It presents oral narratives pertaining to the death of a fourteenth century Bornu king and compares these surprisingly old and authentic oral traditions to the parallel written information provided by the Chronicle of the sultans of Kanem-Bornu, the *Girgam*. Article VI reconsiders the shift of the Sefuwa from Kanem to Bornu and shows that this event did not correspond to the desperate flight of the ruling dynasty to a foreign land – as intimated by the *Girgam* and assumed by a number of historians – but rather to the loss of one central province due to the onslaught of a dynastic opposition and the compensatory consolidation of the second central province of the bi-focal Chadic empire. Turning to institutional history, article VII analyses the offices and functions of three leading titleholders of the state and shows that these positions,

in spite of the Arabic form of their titles, were all of local derivation. Article VIII examines the relations between the originally foreign Kanuri and the different local groups of Sao and comes to the conclusion that in a long lasting process of Kanurization, the autochthones were first dominated and then either assimilated or eliminated. Approaching the ethnic history of Kanem-Bornu from the point of view of ruling and dethroned dynasties, article IX criticises the widespread assumption that specific people of the Sahelian region founded and developed their own states, and suggests that the present-day ethnic situations are most often the outcomes rather than the starting points of dynastic histories. Thus, the Kanuri of today should be considered as the result of a long process of ethnic homogenization and not as an immutable ethnic entity existing from the time prior to the foundation of the Chadic state.

The history of the Hausa states is the topic of section three (X-XII). On the basis of nineteenth century texts, article X takes the view that the Bayajidda legend is a flexible oral narrative amenable to easy manipulation. As such it shares the widespread assumption of fast and far-reaching changes in pre-colonial African societies. The next article (XI) favours the opposite position by looking at the basic pattern of the Hausa tradition as a phenomenon of the *longue durée* which can be traced back to an Israelite model based on Canaanite antecedents. Mainly using etymological arguments and not proposing any concrete way of cultural transmission, the study is no more than a preliminary attempt to overcome the medieval paradigm in West African history. The new essay XII builds on the results of the preceding article but uses a more structural method of analysis. It compares the cult-mythological system underpinning the Hausa states with that of various other states of the Central Sudan and of the ancient Near East and proposes precise ways and periods for the spread of the Canaanite-Israelite cultural pattern to West and East Africa. Africanists who are reluctant to take non-African phenomena into consideration will find at the end of this chapter a literal translation of the first oral and palace version of the Bayajidda legend as it was told to me in Daura.

The studies of section four concern the Yoruba states and more particularly Ife, their traditional centre (XIII-XV). Article XIII reviews previous theories of Yoruba origins and points out problems with the available archaeological datings for Ife. Alternative solutions to the question of Yoruba origins are put forward in article XIV, a paper presented at the annual conference of the Africanist research group of Bayreuth in 1993. It compares the Yoruba myth of Sango with the Baal-Cycle of Ugarit and the Yoruba myth of Yemoja with the Babylonian Creation Epic and thus implies the existence of cultural influences from the Semitic world in West Africa. Turning to Kebbi traditions, it equates the Kanta legend with the

legend of Sargon of Akkad and hence suggests even more precise and historically retraceable connections to the outside world. Owing to the purely comparative approach, the weight given to etymological arguments, and the neglect of concrete ways of diffusion the paper was received with scepticism. The new essay XV tries to correct the main shortcomings of my previous analysis by concentrating on the African connections between oral narrative, cult-dramatic performance, and related clan organization, thus exploring more in-depth the social conditions of preserving ancient cultural memories (see also 2004a). Furthermore, it uses the concepts and terminologies employed for the analysis of myths and rituals of the ancient Near East and examines precise parallels between the festival of a dying and rising god in Ife with the fate of a similar deity in the Baal Cycle of Ugarit, the best known example of a cult myth within the sphere of the Canaanite culture. Considered to be part of a global social phenomenon inconceivable without the state, the Itapa festival and the related social and political institutions are thought to be related to the early state building process set in motion by the Phoenicians in the region of Lake Chad (see also XII). In spite of their hypothetical nature, articles XI and XIV are included in this collection in order to allow the reader to measure the progress of research accomplished during the last ten years with respect to the attempt of putting ancient Africa into a global context. It is perhaps inevitable that the elaboration of alternatives to the exclusively Africa-centred approach of Africanist research begins in the mode of trial and error. Moreover, the well-disposed reader can find in them a number of important directions for further research.[2]

The five studies of the section five are of a more conventional nature (XVI-XX). Dealing with the history of the kingdoms of the Middle Niger, they are all directly or indirectly based on the evidence provided by the royal stelae of Gao-Saney. The first (XVI) offers a general presentation of these stelae and their inscriptions – the historically most significant dating to the beginning of the twelfth century – and proposes to identify the commemorated rulers as members of a new Berber dynasty. The next article (XVII) maintains this identification but adds a new ethnic dimension to the analysis by suggesting the existence of a Mande ethnic substratum on the eastern Middle Niger. Two further contributions reject the Berber hypothesis and argue in favour of a Mande identity of the kings of Gao-Saney. Article XVIII relates the rise of the kings of Gao-Saney to a dynastic upheaval in Ghana in the course of which the Sisse refugee king of Ghana and his entourage established themselves in Gao. Article XIX explores the history of Ghana more in its own terms. It tries to show that the ancient central

[2] For more advanced studies exploring the ancient history paradigm see 2003, 2004a, 2004b, and 2004c.

province of the kingdom was situated in the Lakes region of the Niger. Further, it distinguishes between two successive dynastic disruptions in Ghana in the second half of the eleventh century, the first leading to the advent of a Muslim king of the Sisse supported by the Almoravids and the second to the rise of a more radical Islamic party which ousted the Sisse from power. In the name of Islam, the Almoravids exerted considerable pressure on the sub-Saharan state, supporting one party to the detriment of another, and thus contributed to producing dynastic changes. The transmission of power on the Middle Niger from Ghana to Mali and further to Songhay is the subject of the new essay XX. Building on the earlier results of the ethnic interpretation of the Gao-Saney inscriptions, it suggests that the state tradition of Ghana was not only perpetuated by the Keita of Mali on the upper Niger but also by the Zā and the subsequent Zarma on the eastern Niger bend before the Malian expansion resulted in the creation of a vast Muslim empire on the institutional basis of ancient Ghana. In the second half of the fourteenth century, the rise of the Songhay in connection with the anti-Malian struggle of the Mande-derived dynasty of the Sonni reduced considerably the overall Mande influence on the eastern Middle Niger. Although the last dynasty of the eastern Middle Niger, the Askiya, were again of Mande origin, their state became entirely Songhay in the sixteenth century.

Finally I would like to draw attention to the last section of the book, Addenda et Corrigenda. Here I attempt to offer a critical re-evaluation and updating of the different articles republished in the present volume.

I am grateful to the following publishers for permission to reprint the articles in this volume: Cambridge University Press, Dietrich Reimer, Karl Alber, LIT and Walter de Gruyter, and to the editors of *Annals of the Institute of Cultural Studies* (B. Adediran), *History in Africa* (D. Henige), *Journal of African History* (G. M. Austin), *Paideuma* (K.-H. Kohl, Frobenius-Institut) and *Saeculum* (J. Martin). Two articles were reset (II, III).

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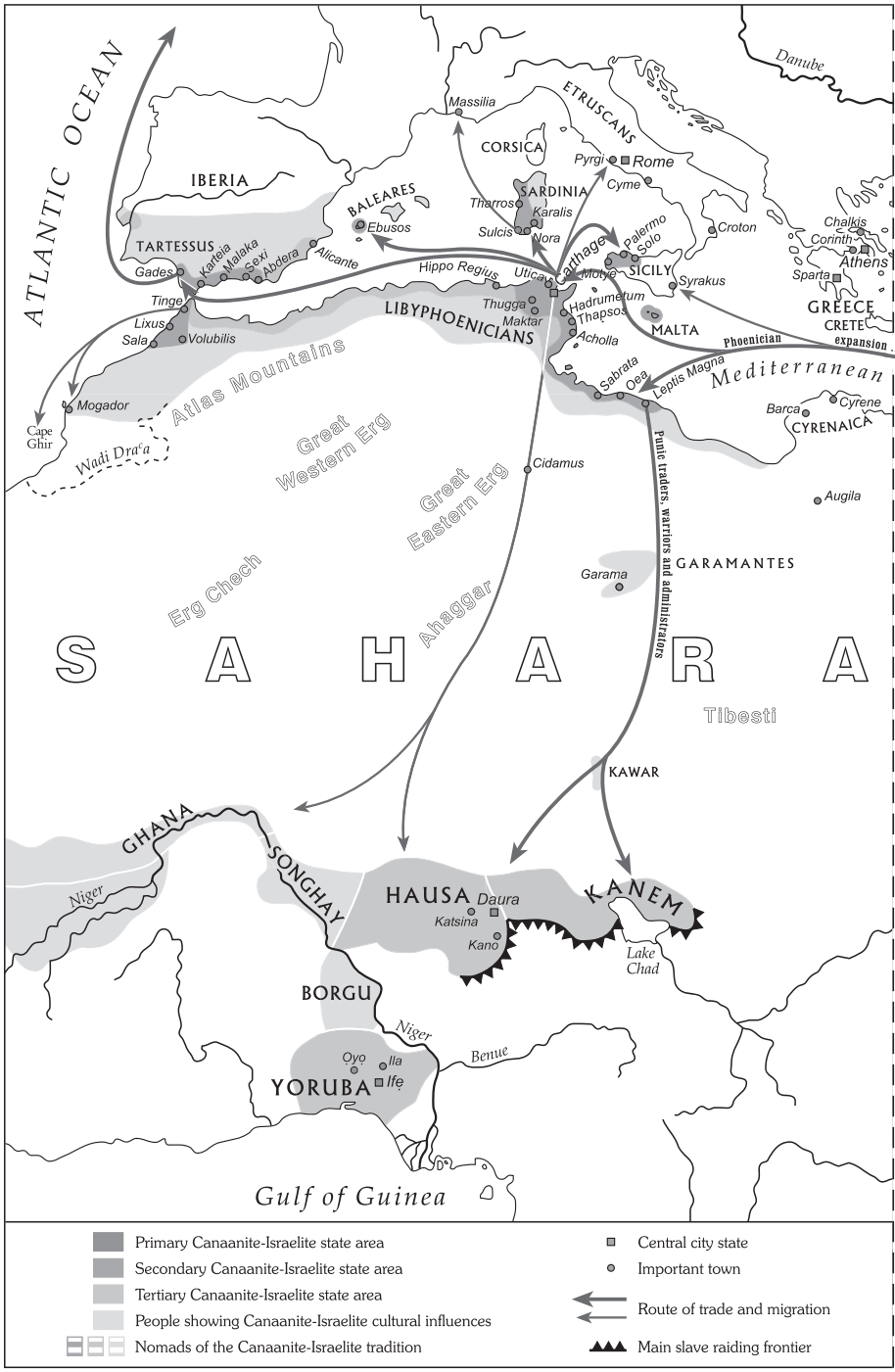
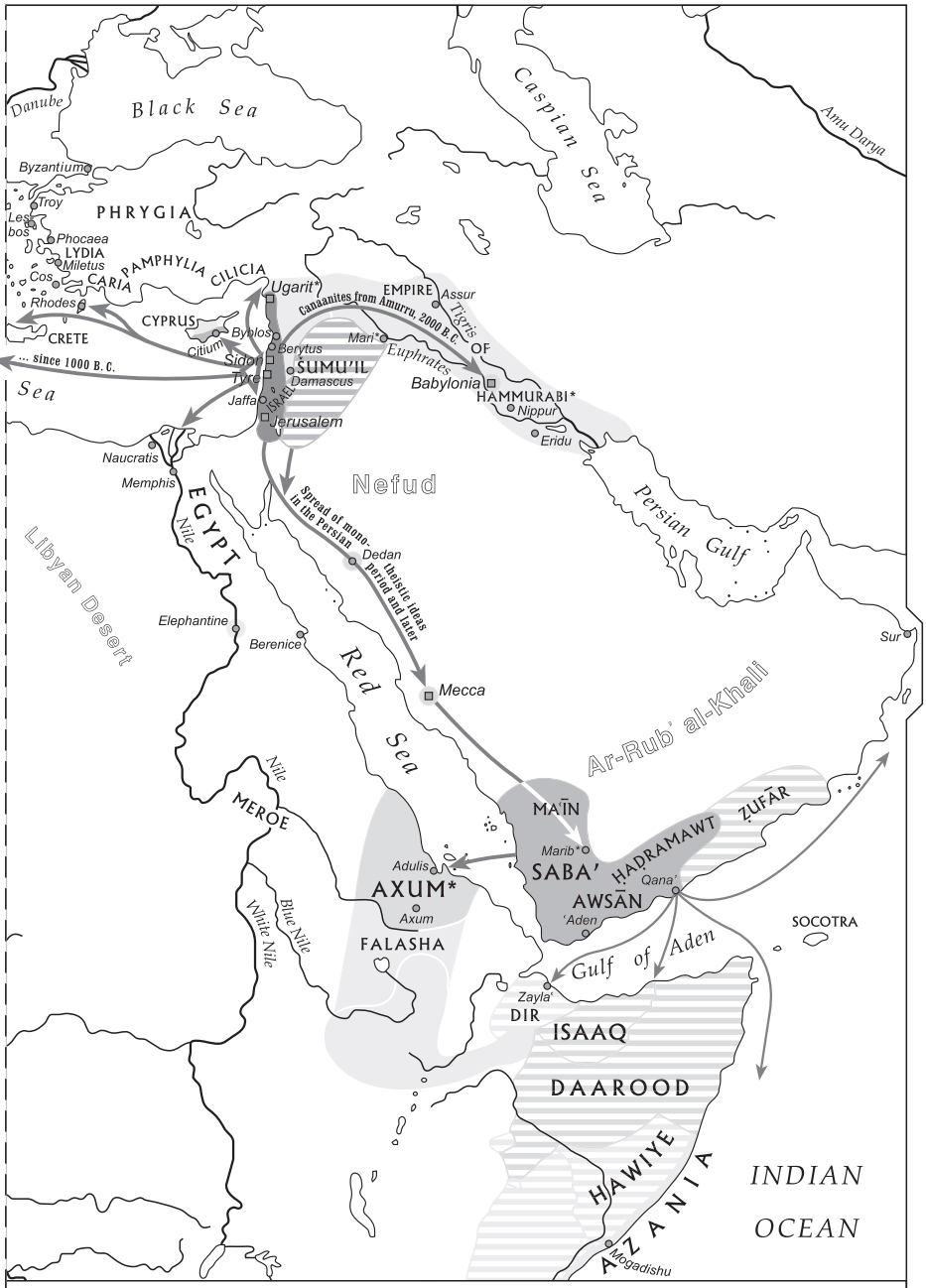


Map 1: Canaanite-Israelite expansion in the first millenium BC


Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Danube
Amu Darya
Byzantium
Troy
Lesbos
PHRYGIA
Phocaea
LYDIA
Miletus
Cos
CARIA
PAMPHYLIA
CILICIA
Rhodes
CYPRUS
CRETE
Ugarit*
EMPIRE OF
Assur
Tigris
Canaanites from Amurru, 2000 B.C.
Byblos
Citium
Sidon
Tyre
Jaffa
Berytus
SUMU'IL
Damascus
Israel
Jerusalem
Mari*
Euphrates
Babylonia
HAMMURABI*
Nippur
Eridu
... since 1000 B.C.
Sea
Naucratis
Memphis
EGYPT
Nile
Nefud
Spread of monotheistic ideas in the Persian period and later
Dedan
Persian Gulf
Libyan Desert
Elephantine
Berenice
Red Sea
Mecca
Sur
Ar-Rub' al-Khali
Nile
MEROE
MAʿĪN
ḤAḌRAMAWT
ẒUFĀR
Marib*
SABA'
AWSĀN
Qana'
'Aden
Adulis
AXUM*
Axum
FALASHA
Blue Nile
White Nile
SOCOTRA
Gulf of Aden
Zayla'
DIR
ISAAQ
DAAROOD
HAWIYE
SOMALIA
INDIAN OCEAN
Mogadishu
* Mari (to 1700 BC)
Empire of Hammurabi (1750 BC)
Ugarit (to 1200 BC)
Marib (ca. 750 BC–620 AD)
Axum (ca. 0–680 AD)
The reconstruction of the Canaanite-Israelite culture areas of Africa south of the Sahara is based on oral and cultic traditions. Present ethnonyms and clan names are used to designate these areas.
0 km 500
Design by D. Lange
Cartography by T. Bartsch 04/2004

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I feel greatly indebted to scholars specialising in Ancient History and in the ancient Near East. First and foremost to Otto Kaiser, but also to Jehan Desanges, Klaus Koch, Oswald Loretz, Hans Georg Niemeyer, Erwin Ruprechtsberger, Dietrich Rusam, Jörg Schlumberger, Leonard Schumacher and Paolo Xella. Practical advice and encouragement were further provided by a number of colleagues in African Studies and related fields including Biodun Adediran and Bernhard Streck as well as Mahdi Adamu, Thomas Bargatzki, Bawuro Barkindo, Helmut Bley, Finn Fuglestad, Djibo Hamani, Jürgen and Angelika Jakobi, Georg Klute, M. Mohamed Abdi, Paulo Moraes Farias, Michka Sachnine, Philip Shea and Christoph Winter.

Those who had to endure most of the stress involved in the iconoclastic research presented here are my wife Shamsa Dirie and our daughter Mona. Words cannot express the gratitude I feel towards them.

Dierk Lange
History Department

HAUSA HISTORY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WORLD

Although Hausaland lies in the Sudanic belt just south of the Sahara it is not blessed with many Arabic sources. Instead the historian has to rely on an oral tradition with important implications for pre-Islamic regional history and for the history of ancient contracts with the north. Indeed, the Bayajidda legend of the Hausa is one of the most comprehensive oral narratives of Africa and can be shown to be rooted in institutions of considerable age. Built on the ancient Near Eastern theme of the dragon-slayer and his marriage, it provides a clear statement of foreign antecedents and evidence of long-term Hausa dependency on Bornu, it explains the most important political institutions of Hausaland, and it situates the Hausa states among the societies of the Central Sudan. Although the historical implications of this oral data are not yet fully understood, it is has been suggested that the legend, by distinguishing between the seven Hausā and the seven Banzā states, represents a foundation charter of Hausa society. However, up to now it has been the narrative itself and the events it relates that have attracted most attention. Too little consideration has been given to the social implications of the story.[1] In fact, the legend's character as a foundation charter can only be fully appreciated once its far-reaching cult-dramatic and institutional connections as an earlier cult-myth are recognised. Being fully embedded in Hausa society, the story can neither have been invented for any short term political purpose, nor is it possible that wandering bards transmitted it independently from the festal ceremonies and state offices to which it is linked. Rather it would appear that the oral narrative and the basic institutions of the Hausa state are two faces of one and the same coin.

According to the Bayajidda legend, immigrants from Canaan founded Daura, the oldest town in Hausaland. The first rulers of Daura were successive queens belonging to this group of immigrants and bearing the title of Magajiya. However, with respect to the snake Dodo living in the well of the town, the Magajiya was only a priestess: she led the people in the appropriate worship of Dodo, the

[1] For earlier attempts to use the Bayajidda legend as an historical source see Hallam, "Bayajidda legend", 49-57; Smith, "Beginnings", 340-345; Smith, "Considerations", 335-337; Sutton, "Less orthodox history", 192-199; Smith, *Daura*, 55-59; Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 55-60.

real king (*sarkī*) of the town. Next the legend turns to the story of Bayajidda, the son of the king of Baghdad, who came to Bornu with a strong army. In Bornu he married the princess Magira, or rather the cult-mythological queen of the country, but having put his army under the authority of the king he became vulnerable and finally had to flee. On his way west he left his pregnant wife at the beginning of Hausaland where she gave birth to his first son Biram. Riding with his horse to the west he finally reached Daura at night and asked for water. An old woman told him that water was only available once a week since the snake Dodo did not allow the people to take more. Nevertheless he went to the well, lowered a bucket, pulled it up together with the snake and killed the monster with his sword. The next day people realized that Dodo, the unknown king, was dead. Magajiya promised that she would divide the kingdom between herself and the hero who had killed the snake. Bayajidda came to the palace and it was soon discovered that he was the one who had accomplished the heroic deed. But instead of accepting half the kingdom he wanted to marry Magajiya. The queen finally consented but since she had to remain a virgin she gave him her slave Bagwariya as concubine. After he fathered a boy called Karbagari ("take the town") with the slave, the queen became jealous and after some rituals she likewise became pregnant and gave birth to a boy called Bawo ("return the town to me"). Karbagari became the father of the founders of the seven Banzā states while Bawo had six sons who together with Biram became the founders of the seven Hausā states.[2]

Post-colonial historiography of Hausaland tends to highlight local factors of state development. However, in the light of the Canaanite and Baghdadian origins referred to in this story, local components alone do not explain the full meaning of the legend with respect to Hausa origins. Further, the casual dismissal of the ancient Near Eastern antecedents as boastful and articial feedback is premature considering the weight of the legendary as well as cult-mythological and institutional parallels. Nevertheless, scholarly efforts aiming at African comparisons with non-African cultures should not restrict themselves to an analysis of similarities. They should also take into account differences. By doing so historians will gain precious insights into the particular conditions which brought about modifications of a common pattern.

1. Theories on the Origin of the Hausa States

Current scholarship dates the origins of the Hausa Kingdoms to the middle ages. Arguments for this late emergence of the Hausa polities are based on textual and circumstantial evidence. Arab geographers mention Kanem and Ghana as early

[2] See Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 132-134, and pp. 289-296.

as the ninth century, but first refer to particular Hausa states in the fourteenth century.[3] The most relevant local Arabic source, the *Kano Chronicle*, seems to date the beginning of Kano (according to its unverifiable lengths of reign) to the end of the tenth century.[4] Considerations based on trans-Saharan trade tend to explain such an apparently late emergence of these states by the marginality of Hausaland with respect to major trade routes to the north. Kanem-Bornu and Ghana-Gao, lying close to the terminus of well-known caravan routes through the Sahara, appear to have had the benefit of direct communication to the north, while Hausaland seems to have been dependent on its neighbours for similar connections. Hence many historians assume that the Hausa states rose in consequence of an intensification of the medieval trade of the Central Sudan with North Africa.[5] However, if trade was the most important factor for the rise of the Hausa states, it would follow that these states fulfilled primarily bureaucratic and protective functions. The descriptions of various Hausa states by M. G. Smith and G. Nicolas emphasise the complexities and the composite nature of many political offices.[6] It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to trace the political institutions of Hausaland back to precise political and economic functions.

Five theories try to explain the emergence of the Hausa states without taking into account the impact of medieval trans-Saharan trade. The oldest theory was put forward by anthropologists of the culture-historical school. On the basis of structural comparisons between a great number of African polities, it claims that the Hausa states are best described as divine kingships of the neo-Sudanic type. The many culture traits shared by these kingdoms suggest that they originated from a common source. The geographic point of diffusion of the neo-Sudanic state was variously supposed to have been the ancient Mediterranean world, Pharaonic Egypt or the Semitic cultures of the ancient Near East.[7] In spite of the fact that this idea has been brandmarked as diffusionist and Hamitic, it survives at present in the form of the Sudanic state theory. The proponents of the Sudanic state theory suppose that at some time during the first centuries AD, migrants from the Nile valley carried the idea of the Pharaonic state towards the

[3] Al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Fazārī, Ibn Battūta *in:* Levtzion/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 21, 42, 302; Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 28-98.

[4] Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 99; Smith, "Beginnings", 340.

[5] Smith, "Considerations", 332-333; Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 70-71; Adamu, "Hausa", 269-271.

[6] Smith, *Daura*; id., *Kano*, 511-530; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 203-205. See also Kühme, *Königtum*, 63-92.

[7] Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, 323-351; Baumann, *Völkerkunde*, 56-57, 61; Westermann, *Geschichte*, 34-46.

west.[8] However, five arguments must be raised against this idea. First, there is no evidence for the existence of continued relations between the Nile valley and West Africa. Second, the particular structures of West African kingdoms cannot be shown to be similar to those of ancient Egypt. Third, it is difficult to conceive that nomads, who themselves lived only at the margins of particular states, were the carriers of the idea of the state. Fourth, the spread of divine kingships is much more likely to have occurred during expansionist phases of the core state than during periods of decay. Fifth, the spread of Christianity in Egypt and North Africa must have contributed considerably to the weakening of divine kingship so that any further diffusion during that period appears very unlikely.

A second theory is of an etymological nature and builds solely on the similarity of names. Thus the legendary hero Bayajidda or Abuyazidu is supposed to have inherited his name from the Berber rebel Abuyazidu who fell in 947 AD fighting against the Fatimids. Followers of the Berber and Khārijid leader are thought to have escaped to the Central Sudan where they conquered segmentary Hausa communities thus founding the Hausa states.[9] Three shortcomings of the Abū Yazīd theory are noteworthy. First, although the hero died in North Africa, the theory assumes that his name spread with some refugees to the Sudan. Second, it postulates that the followers of Abū Yazīd were, in spite of their misfortune in the north, able to establish one or several conquest states in the south. Third, the theory very implausibly credits North African Muslims with the foundation of pre-Islamic divine kingships south of the Sahara.[10]

A third theory explains the origins of the Hausa states through the expansion of the Kanem-Bornu empire and the later breakaway of its western provinces. This argument also draws on the Bayajidda legend, as before arriving in Hausaland the founding hero stayed for a long time in Bornu and fathered his first descendant with a local wife there. Building further on evidence that prior to the nineteenth century the Hausa states paid annual tributes to Bornu, it suggests that the Bayajidda legend corresponded to a Bornu tax list.[11] Along the same line certain authors suppose that a number of royal symbols and institutions were borrowed by the Hausa states from the suzerain court of Bornu.[12] Although these

[8] Oliver/Fage, *Short History*, 31-37; Dittmer, "Afrika", 596-618.

[9] Palmer, *Bornu Sahara,* 273; Hallam, "Bayajidda legend", 49-51; Fage, *History*, 63; Hiskett, *Development of Islam*, 69-71.

[10] Hallam is aware of this contradiction when he writes that the Islamic faith of the immigrants lapsed or lay dormant until later ("Bayajidda legend", 59).

[11] Smith, "Beginnings", 347-352; Smith, "Considerations", 336; Sutton, "Less orthodox history", 196-197.

[12] Smith, "Beginnings", 351-352; Lange, "Amt der Königinmutter", 143-144; *id*., "Hausa-Traditionen", 67-70.

ideas are widely shared by scholars, there is disagreement on chronology. While some historians link the Bornu factor to the state building process, others prefer to date the expansion of Bornu to the late medieval period when the states of Hausaland were already fully developed.[13] Nevertheless, most of them subscribe to the idea that the Bayajidda legend provides evidence of Bornoan suzerainty: if it can be shown that the legend is old, then Kanem-Bornu must have had considerable influence on the formation of states in Hausaland, but if the legend is a recent invention, then this would imply that the expansion of the Chadic state towards the west occurred too late to significantly influence the emergence of the Hausa states. Both hypotheses assume the validity of the medieval paradigm.

A fourth theory connects Hausa origins to the desertification of the Sahara and to corresponding or later shifts of populations from north to south. It is based on the Bayajidda story insofar as the legend traces the origin of Daura to the reign of primordial queens from North Africa, and on Gobir traditions which suggest a movement of immigration from Aïr.[14] The nomadic theory gave rise to the Hamitic hypothesis according to which Berber domination of the Hausa had a decisive influence on Hausa state building. The Berbers in question are often thought to have originated from North Africa where they had been acquainted with different types of states.[15] The major problem with this emphasis on long distance diffusion lies in the process of culture transfer. As with the theory of nomads from Egypt discussed above, it is difficult to imagine that camel herders, themselves living on the margins of the state and knowing little about royal urban life, could have transmitted detailed ideas about state structures. The theory is even more difficult to sustain if it supposes that local Berbers established conquest states without drawing on any model of a previously existing complex political organization.

The fifth theory is based on the notion of dual institutional structures traced back to the spread of Sudanic trade and Islam. Mainly based on the example of Katsina, the theory supposes that the establishment of a state-like institutional superstructure was the result of an ongoing process of social transformation due to the arrival of Wangara traders and clerics and the corresponding incorporation of Hausaland into the general West African network of long-distance trade

[13] For the first position see Sutton, "Less orthodox history", 195-199; Lange, "Hausa-Traditionen", 55-60, 67-70; and for the second Smith, "Beginnings", 345-349, and Smith, "Considerations", 335-342.

[14] Palmer, *Memoirs*, III, 95-96; Urvoy, *Histoire des populations*, 238-239, 243-245, 251-254, 259-267; Smith, "Considerations", 330-333; Hogben/Kirk-Greene, *Emirates*, 147, 368-369. Similarly but later Last, "Early kingdoms", 189-192.

[15] Palmer, *Bornu Sahara*, 1-3; Westermann, *Geschichte*, 30-32, 126-127; Johnston, *Fulani Empire*, 2-6; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 25-26; Cuoq, *Histoire*, 275-277.

routes. The theory further stipulates that following the conquest of the chieftaincy by members of the Muslim community of traders, the priest-chief was superseded – without being eclipsed – by a king. In the new system of contrapuntal paramountcy established at the end of the fifteenth century, the Muslim conqueror of Wangara origin is not only supposed to have confirmed the power of the earlier pagan priest-chief, but also to have raised him to the second highest position in the realm and to have entrusted him with the privilege of electing the king.[16]

In spite of the cogent connection between the expansion of trade and the rise of states, the dual institutional theory has a number of weaknesses. According to the Katsina king lists, the usurper Korau was a wrestler from Yandoto who killed his predecessor Sanau.[17] Nothing suggests that Korau was a Wangara trader or a Muslim.[18] In fact, the king lists explicitly state that Islam was introduced by Muhammad Korau, the third successor of Korau. Also, it is unlikely that Muslim traders seized power in Katsina by force of arms and it is even more suspicious that they should have bestowed considerable powers on the existing pagan chief. Therefore it is quite unwarranted to connect the elimination of Sanau with the expansion of Wangara trade and the spread of Islam.

Still, the dual institutional theory rightly considers the transition from Sanau to Korau as a pivotal event in Katsina history corresponding as such to more than just a dynastic change. As chief of the Durbawa, Sanau was the leader of the Aznā clan-family, while Korau, the head of the 'Yan Korau, the "people of Korau", was the leader of the Hausā clan-family, the two sections of Katsina society found all over Hausaland. As we shall see, the political prevalence of either the Hausā or the Aznā clan-family provides the decisive criterion for the distinction between the seven Hausā and the seven Banzā states. The Bayajidda legend itself has the character of a foundation charter of Hausa society insofar as it not only explains the difference between the Hausā and the Banzā states but also the distinction between the Hausā and the Aznā clan-families within the two categories of Central Sudanic states.[19] Since the coexistence of the two clan-families is constitutive for the Hausa societies and states, it cannot possibly have been introduced by foreign intruders in the late medieval period.

[16] Fuglestad, "Reconsideration", 326-328; Palmer, "Katsina Emirate", *in:* Tempel/Temple, *Notes*, 472.

[17] Palmer, "History of Katsina", 221-222; Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 65.

[18] The supposition that Korau was a Wangara trader rests mainly on Korau's assumed Yandoto origin which itself is disputed by Usman (*Transformation*, 16).

[19] This is only the case for the oral version of the legend (see below sec. 11), the validity of which is confirmed by independent traditions for Katsina and Gobir (Nicolas, *Dynamique*, 65, 161).

The rise of African history as an academic discipline is charaterized by an emphasis on local developments. From the example of Hausa historiography it can be seen that the dismissal of any important influence from the outside world, disregarding earlier proposals to this effect[20], has led research into a *cul-de-sac*. For more than two decades no significant attempts have been made to overcome these obvious chronological and conceptual shortcomings of the available reconstructions of Hausa history. At present we are therefore reduced to a number of confusing and mutually exclusive theories. The evidence of the following pages will show that placing Hausa society and history in the context of ancient Near Eastern history and culture opens up new perspectives for research.

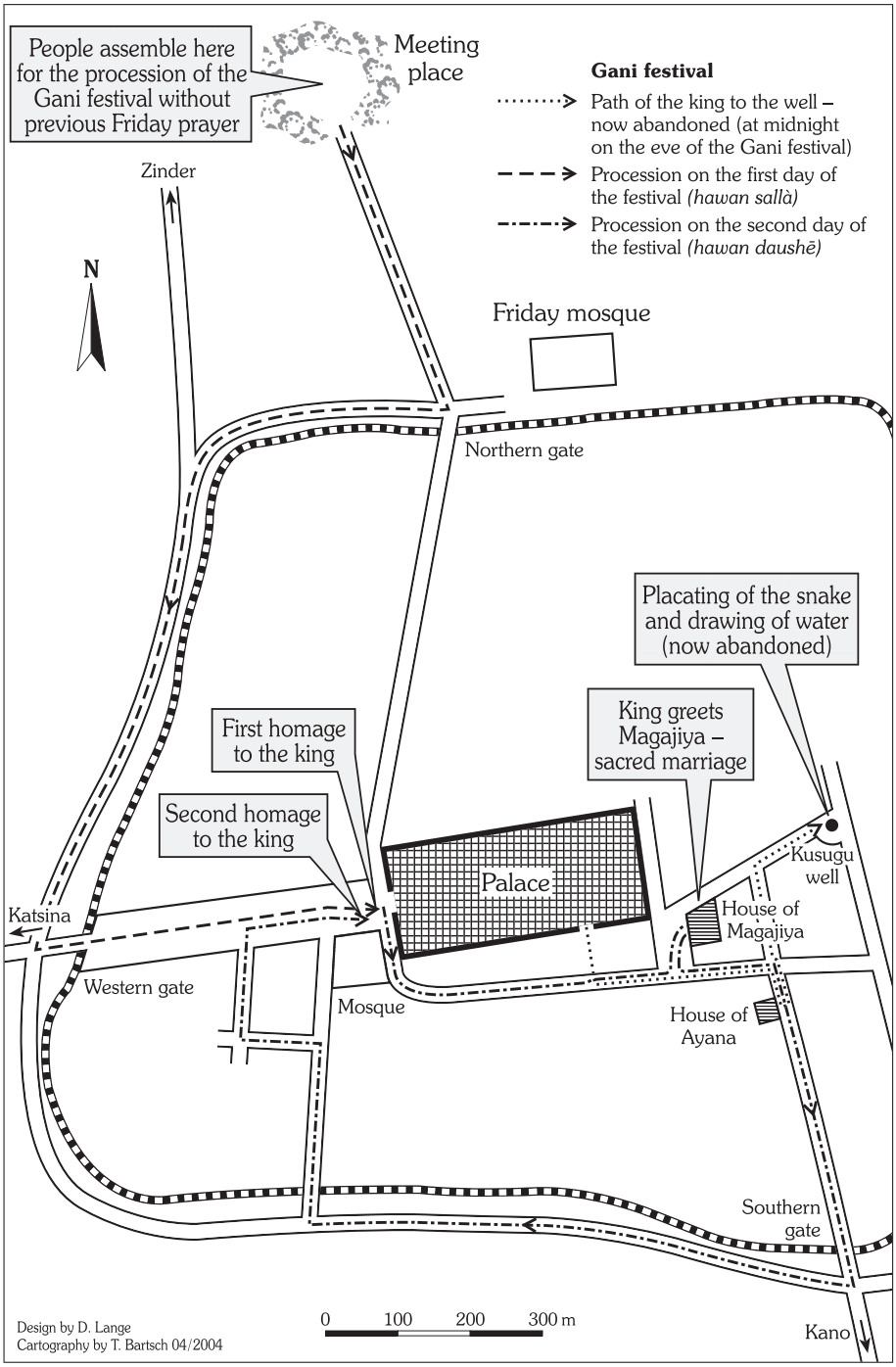
2. Cult-Dramatic Re-Enactments of the Bayajidda Legend During the New Year Festivals of Hausaland

The most obvious link relating the Bayajidda narrative to Hausa tradition as a whole consists of its annual re-enactments during the festal ceremonies in the royal towns in Hausaland. However, as a result of the Fulani *jihād* at the beginning of the nineteenth century many institutions and other survivals from the pre-Islamic period were abolished. Only in the kingdoms which remained under Hausa domination have these traditions survived almost unchanged. This is particularly true for Daura, where the British colonial administration reinstated the original Hausa dynasty in 1906. It is also the case in Gobir, where the Hausa rulers were able to resist the Fulani *jihād*. In Zaria the Hausa ruling class was expelled but they founded the refugee kingdom of Abuja, the present Sulleja further south. After their conquest of the Hausa kingdoms, the Fulani specifically abolished the royal offices given to women. Apparently they recognised that these offices were of decisive significance for the pre-Islamic heritage of the Hausa states.[21]

The Gani festival of Daura as a whole consists of the systematic re-enactment of the Bayajidda legend. Today most of the participants of the festival content themselves with the idea that they are celebrating the fully Islamic *mawlūd* or birthday of the Prophet Muḥammad. Only a few insiders with historical interests are aware that the legend and the corresponding festival belong to an ancient Hausa tradition rooted in the pre-Islamic past. Superficial observers may think that the Gani festival takes place in the same way as the two other great Islamic festivals celebrated by processions on horseback, the *bàbbar sallà* (*ʿīd al-kabīr*) and the k*àramar sallà* (*ʿīd al-saghīr* or *ʿīd al-fiṭr*). In fact, the more complex and

[20] Frobenius, *Und Afrika*, 488, 561-563; Tremearne, *Ban of Bori*, 392-426; Hallam, "Bayajidda legend", 57-58.

[21] Smith, *Zazzau*, 131; id., *Daura*, 276; id., *Kano*, 206, 231.



Map 2: The Gani festival of Daura

Photo 1: The king of Daura during the great procession of the Gani festival, Daura 1995

more original *sallàr GMnī* provided the original model for the other two more islamized festivals.

What then are the most important features of the Gani festival? Above all it has to be noted that the king acts on the three outstanding days of the festival as an incarnation of Bayajidda, his legendary ancestor. The first performance, which is now obsolete, was very secret. It was enacted on the eve of the festival at midnight by four persons: the king himself, his close advisor Shamaki and two Dakama singers.[22] The king then went to the well of Kusugu, listened to the song placating the snake and drew holy water from the well.

The second performance is staged in the form of a great procession (*hawan sallà*) in the afternoon of the first day of the festival, leading from a place north of the town to the western gate and then to the palace. At the centre of the parade we find the king sitting on horseback holding in his hands the sword and the knife used by his ancestor to kill the snake and to cut off its head. Close to the king are, as the night before, Shamaki and the Dakama singers. All participants

[22] On the functions and social background of these officials see Smith, *Daura,* 42, 137, 315.