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The Founding of Kanem by Assyrian Refugees *ca.* 600 BCE: Documentary, Linguistic, and Archaeological Evidence

*By Dierk Lange**

The history of Kanem-Bornu has received relatively little attention for a number of decades, but recent archaeological research in West Africa has renewed interest in the topic. The unexpectedly early date of the emergence of proto-urban settlements south of Lake Chad in the middle of the first millennium BCE is particularly striking.¹ In the Western Sudan the emergence of the city of Jenne-Jeno along the eastern arm of the Inner Niger Delta in the third century BCE has given rise to the idea that Ghana, supposedly the oldest state in West Africa, was founded at the same period.² If we assume a connection between urbanism and state-building, the foundation of Kanem in the region of Lake Chad (the early nucleus of the Kanem-Bornu Empire) may likewise have been much earlier than hitherto supposed.

Members of the German culture historical school were convinced that states in West Africa originated in pre-Roman times as a result of Near Eastern or Mediterranean influences. They noted surprising similarities between the institutions of surviving traditional states all over Africa and therefore believed in a vast movement of diffusion. However, their historical considerations were highly unsatisfactory in that they referred to northern or eastern origins and vague, undated streams and waves of culture.³ As a consequence of the independence of African peoples in the 1960s, the decolonization of African history put a stop to speculation concerning unspecified cultural influences having reached sub-Saharan Africa from the north or the northeast. Instead, the focus of attention for finding an origin for state development shifted to the Nile valley, where the Egyptian civilization survived in its southern outpost Meroe until the fourth century CE. From here, pastoral migrants—reinforced

* I am grateful to Dr. Klaus Schubert, University of Munich, for his insights on the linguistic aspects of this paper, and to my research assistant Thorsten Parchent for discussions on its historical aspects. Date of submission: 3/9/2009.

¹ C. Magnavita, “Zilum: Towards the emergence of socio-political complexity in the Lake Chad region,” in M. Krings and E. Platte, eds., *Living with the Lake* (Cologne: R. Köppe, 2004), 73–100; P. Breunig et al., [seven more names] “Glanz ohne Eisen: Große Siedlungen aus der Mitte des ersten Jahrtausends BC im Tschadbecken von Nordost-Nigeria,” in H.-P. Wotzka, ed., *Grundlegungen. Beiträge zur europäischen und afrikanischen Archäologie* (Tübingen: Francke, 2006), 255–270.

² R. Oliver and J.D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 6th ed. (1st ed. 1962) (London: Penguin, 1988), 35; C. Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800* (Oxford: J. Currey, 2002), 232.

³ H. Baumann, “Völker und Kulturen Afrikas,” in H. Baumann et al., eds., *Völkerkunde von Afrika* (Essen: Verlagsanstalt, 1940), 56–71; D. Westermann, *Geschichte Afrikas* (Cologne: Greven, 1952), 30–71.

by South Arabian elements—were supposed to have contributed to the transfer of a foreign state to West Africa. As for the period of transmission, a date just prior to the spread of Christianity and Islam was suggested. However, it remained unclear who transmitted which kind of polity in what period: an Egyptian state from the Nile valley, a Semitic state from Arabia, or even a Persian state from Iran?⁴

Ideas proposing migration or diffusion as the main vector introducing the state to sub-Saharan Africa were also met with criticism due to the uncertainties concerning the time and the circumstances of the suggested cultural transfer. Though the structural similarities among surviving African kingdoms still await explanation, historians of the postcolonial period disregard the anthropological evidence and tend to explain the origin of kingdoms and complex societies by three different factors: first, the intensification of trans-Saharan trade due to the introduction of the camel around 300 CE and the need to protect long-distance trade against marauders; second, nomadic encroachments on sedentary societies south of the Sahara as a consequence of climatic deterioration and the conquest of peasant communities; third, the grouping together of various farmer communities in defence against endemic incursions by pastoral invaders from the desert side.⁵ However, these new explanatory factors are based on vague analogies and general suppositions that are not supported by oral or documentary evidence. They are a reaction against the earlier diffusionist approach but do not take into consideration the wealth of internal sources available in regions such as the Central Sudan where the old kingdoms survived into modern times.

Scholars have neglected the local written, linguistic, and anthropological data in the Central Sudan, and have concentrated on the more eventful history of the Western Sudan. However, owing to the destruction of the well-known states of Ghana and Songhay by conquests and the ruin of Mali in consequence of internal dissension, there are no significant documentary and institutional survivals providing insights on the history and organizational structures of these states.⁶ Therefore the glimpses of the sacred kingships of Ghana and early Gao offered by Arab geographers cannot be complemented by any study of remaining state structures. Also, in Ghana and Mali there are no internal written documents that survived the collapse of these states. Such remnant historical texts and ancient organizational structures are however still to be found in the Central Sudan, as the major states of the region have survived until the present day.⁷ Before the coming of Islam the states were sacred or divine

⁴ Oliver and Fage, *Short History*, 31–38; J.D. Fage, *A History of Africa* (London: Hutchinson, 1978), 63–65.

⁵ P. Curtin, “Africa north of the forest in the early Islamic age,” in Ph. Curtin et al., eds., *African History*, 2nd ed. (1st ed. 1978), 73–97; Fage, *History*, 57–72.

⁶ N. Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (London: Methuen, 1973), 43–52, 94–102; S. Trimmingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (London, Oxford: University Press, 1962), 55–60, 144–47; Fage, *History*, 71–72, 76–81, 179–81.

⁷ The best examples are the *Dīwān* of Kanem-Bornu and the *Kano Chronicle*. See D. Lange, *Le Dīwān des sultans du Kanem-Bornu: Chronologie et histoire d'un royaume africain* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1977), 22–82 and H.R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. III (Lagos: Government Printer, 1928), 97–132. The *Dīwān*

kingships based on surprisingly similar institutions and rituals.⁸ The mostly dysfunctional nature of the offices and institutions with regard to administrative needs (the important role of the queen mother being one example) makes it difficult to imagine that these striking similarities arose as a consequence of a common pattern of development in the border zone between the southern Sahara and the Sudan, or as a result of mutual borrowings. Rather, they suggest the existence of some kind of common origin and subsequent spread that is hitherto unknown.⁹ Turning our attention to the rich heritage of written, oral, linguistic, and archaeological sources available for Kanem-Bornu, we will see that the history of the Central Sudan can be based on better evidence than that of the Western Sudan for the origin of state development.

1.1—Narrative Sources: Immigration of the Sefuwa from Baghdad and Yemen

All dynastic traditions of Kanem-Bornu, whether written or oral, place the origin of the ruling Sefuwa dynasty in the Near East, either in Yemen or in Baghdad. Similarly Arab historians like Ibn Qutayba, al-Ya‘qūbī and al-Mas‘ūdī, writing in the ninth and tenth century, mention a great migration from Babylon to Syria and hence to Egypt and to sub-Saharan Africa that gave rise to the kingdom of the Zaghawa in Kanem and other West African kingdoms including Gao (Songhay) and Ghana.¹⁰ Historians of Africa generally dismiss the narrative accounts concerning Near Eastern antecedents as Islamic *feedback*. They suppose that boastful local “keepers of traditions” manipulated the evidence in order to ascribe to their people prestigious but false origins.¹¹ Examining the internal narrative sources of the history of Kanem-Bornu, we therefore have to ask ourselves to what extent were local scholars influenced by Arab notions of pre-Islamic history and whether their references to Near Eastern history are possibly *in toto* derived from Arab sources.

The most authoritative source for the ancient history of Kanem is certainly the *Dīwān salāṭīn Barnū* “the chronicle of the kings of Bornu.” It comprises an instructive Prologue dealing with the dynastic founder and annalistic notes concerning sixty-seven Sefuwa kings

would have been lost in consequence of the fall of the Sefuwa dynasty in the middle of the nineteenth century, if the learned traveler H. Barth had not saved two copies. See Lange, *Dīwān*, 6–7.

⁸ The common features of surviving divine kingships are the backbone of the diffusionist ideas advanced by Oliver and Fage, *Short History*, 31–38.

⁹ Westermann, *Geschichte*, 34–43; Oliver and Fage, *Short History*, 31–33; Fage, *History*, 40–42.

¹⁰ N. Levtzion and J. Hopkins, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West Africa* (Cambridge: University Press, 1981), 15, 21, 31; D. Lange, “Afrika südlich der Sahara: Von den Sakralstaaten zu den Großreichen,” in J. Fried and E.-D. Hehl, eds., *Weltgeschichte der WBG in 6 Bänden*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010), 3: 104–107.

¹¹ Fage, *History*, 64–65; A. Smith, “The early states of the Central Sudan,” in J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa* (London: Longman, 1971), 1: 166–67; D. Henige, *Oral Historiography* (London: Longman, 1982), 81–87. See also D. Lange, “Islamic feedback or ancient Near Eastern survivals? A reply to David Henige,” *Paideuma* 54 (2008), 253–64.

having reigned until the middle of the nineteenth century.¹² From the verifiable chronology of the kings of Kanem-Bornu it would appear that the earliest written version of the *Dīwān* dates from the thirteenth century.¹³ But as we will see below there are reasons to believe that the chronicle in Arabic is based on an earlier text written in another language.

The *Dīwān* calls the ancestor of all the Sefuwa kings Sayf b. Dhī Yazan and thus refers to a minor Yemenite prince of the sixth century CE as the great ancestral king of Kanem.¹⁴ This claim is echoed by several Arab authors beginning with Ibn Saʿīd in the thirteenth century and ending with Ibn Mājid towards 1500 CE.¹⁵ It reflects notions of Arab historiography according to which in universal history the rule of the great Yemenite kings followed upon that of the biblical patriarchs and of the Persian kings, although the late Yemenite prince was no match for his important predecessors.¹⁶

Taking a closer look at the *Dīwān*, it appears that the name Sayf b. Dhī Yazan figures only in the Prologue of the chronicle but not in its main annalistic part. Here the eponymous founder of the Sefuwa is always called Sayf/Sef without the parental affix *ibn Dhī Yazan* “son of Dhū Yazan.”¹⁷ Likewise in the king lists of Kanem-Bornu the hero is known as Sayf/Sef,¹⁸ in the list of the related Bulala kings of Lake Fitri as Muḥammad Sef Allāh,¹⁹ and in oral traditions and in king lists in Kanuri as Sef, Sebu, and Saibu.²⁰ Although Sayf b. Dhī Yazan was the last scion of the great Yemenite kings, the *Dīwān* itself connects him

¹² H.R. Palmer, *History of the First Twelve Years of the Reign of Mai Idris Alooma of Bornu (1571-1583)*, (Lagos: Government Printer, 1926), 84–91; H.R. Palmer, *Bornu Sahara and Sudan* (London: J. Murray, 1936), 89–95; Lange, *Dīwān*, 22–82.

¹³ D. Lange, *Le Dīwān des sultans du Kanem-Bornu: Chronologie et histoire d'un royaume africain* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1977), 155–160; J.C. Zeltner, *Pages d'histoire du Kanem* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1980), 19.

¹⁴ Lange, *Dīwān*, 22–82; id., “An introduction to the history of Kanem-Borno: the prologue of the *Dīwān*,” *Bornu Museum Society Newsletter* 76/84 (2010), 84–85; A. Holl, *The Diwan Revisited* (London: Kegan Paul, 2000), 2–18.

¹⁵ Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 188 (Ibn Saʿīd), 345, 347 (al-Qalqashandī), 353 (al-Maqrīzī), 367 (Ibn Mājid).

¹⁶ B. Radtke, *Weltgeschichte und Weltbeschreibung im mittelalterlichen Islam* (Beirut: F. Steiner, 1992), 9–107; P.K. Hitti, *History, History of the Arabs*, (London: Macmillan, 1937), 65–66; J.-P. Guillaume, “Sayf b. Dhī Yazan,” in H. Gibb et al., eds., *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed. (hereafter EI²) (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2002), 9: 101–102.

¹⁷ Lange, *Dīwān*, 1, 2, 16, 48; id. “Introduction,” 84–85.

¹⁸ M.-A. Landeroin, “Notice historique,” in: J. Tilho, *Documents scientifiques* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1911), 1: 342; Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 94, and 3: 36; H.R. Palmer, *Ta'rikh sultān Idrīs* (Kano: Government Printer, 1930), 7.

¹⁹ H. Carbou, *La région du Tchad et du Ouadaï* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1912), 1: 302.

²⁰ Landeroin, “Notice,” 353; Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 87, and 3: 36.

genealogically with the biblical patriarchs through such Northern Arabian—and not Southern Arabian—figures as Quraysh and Isma‘īl. This would have been a serious error if Sef was really Sayf b. Dhī Yazan. Indeed, the erroneous affiliation is criticized by al-Qalqashandī in the fifteenth century but endorsed by Aḥmad b. Furṭū, the Great Imam of Bornu, in the sixteenth century.²¹ If the genealogical information offered by the *Dīwān* and the Grand Imam is at all valid, it casts serious doubts on the Yemenite affiliation of the dynastic founder.

Furthermore, the notion of a late Yemenite ancestor of the Sefuwa kings is contradicted by the *Dīwān* itself. According to the Prologue of the chronicle, either the dynastic founder himself was “the son of the king of Baghdad,” or his mother was “the daughter of the king of Baghdad.”²² Though the name of Sayf b. Dhī Yazan figures at the very beginning of the Prologue, nothing in the text indicates the presumed Yemenite origin of the hero. Instead, the *Dīwān* refers to the eponymous ancestor of the Sefuwa at the beginning of the Annals as “King of the World in its Four Directions” and the origin-chronicles describe him as “the Great Sultan” or “the Greatest of Sultans.” Certainly these attributes characterize the hero as the ruler of an important empire.²³ They are entirely misplaced with respect to the Yemenite prince Sayf b. Dhī Yazan. Finally, the addition of the reign lengths provided by the *Dīwān* and by the origin-chronicles would date him to the beginning of the fourth century CE and not to the second half of the sixth century, the time of the Yemenite prince.²⁴

These elements clearly contradict the generally held idea according to which the eponymous founder of the Sefuwa dynasty was a figure borrowed from Arabic folktales without any roots in the previous traditions of the state of Kanem.²⁵ It should rather be concluded that the figure of Sayf b. Dhī Yazan corresponds to a scholarly interpretation from the early Islamic period of Kanem, i.e., an *interpretatio Arabica*, resulting in the erroneous identification of Sef, the eponymous ancestor of the Sefuwa, due to homophony of his name with that of a minor historical figure known from Arab writings and Arab folk traditions.²⁶ While the Yemenite Sayf b. Dhī Yazan was an historically insignificant prince of the late

²¹ Lange, *Dīwān*, 65; D. Lange, *Sudanic Chronicle* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1987), 34; Palmer, *Memoirs* 1: 15, 16, 69; Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 345.

²² Palmer, *History*, 84 (son); Palmer, *Bornu*, 90 (daughter); Lange, *Dīwān*, 22, 65 (daughter); id., “Introduction”, 84 (son).

²³ Palmer, *Ta’rikh*, 5; Smith, “Early states,” 45; Lange, *Dīwān*, 23, 66; D. Lange, “The early magistrates and kings of Kanem as descendants of Assyrian state builders,” *Anthropos* 104 (2009), 7.

²⁴ Lange, *Dīwān*, 65–68; Palmer, *Memoirs*, 2: 93–95; Smith, “Legend,” 44–49.

²⁵ Trimmingham, *History*, 114; Fage, *History*, 64; Lange, *Chronologie*, 101–2; R. Law, “The ‘Hamitic hypothesis’ in indigenous African historical thought,” *History in Africa* 36 (2009), 302.

²⁶ Parallel to *interpretatio Graeca* and *interpretatio Romana* the concept of *interpretatio Arabica* indicates the identification of foreign personalities and towns according to Arab notions of history and geography. See F. Graf, “Interpretatio,” in H. Cancik and H. Schneider, eds., *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike* (hereafter DNP) (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1996–2003), 5: 1041–43.

sixth century CE, the real ancestor of the rulers of Kanem-Bornu was certainly a much older and much more important historical figure who lived in a more central region of the world indicated by the *Dīwān*'s reference to Baghdad.

By associating the dynastic founder from Yemen with Baghdad and by attributing to him the biblical patriarchs as ancestors, the Prologue of the *Dīwān* certainly provides him with a Near Eastern identity. This attribution is confirmed by the burial place of Sef (1) indicated at the beginning of the chronicle's long annalistic section. According to the more reliable MS H (Halle), the eponymous ancestor of the Sefuwa Sef (1) died in the town of *S.m.n.h* (سمنه), while the less reliable MS L (London) has the name of the burial place as *Sīm.h* (سيه). Neither of the two manuscripts mentions in this instance Njimi, the Islamic capital of Kanem, as generally thought. In fact, the name of the capital of Kanem is written in the *Dīwān* usually in the form of *Shīm.h* (شيهم), and once as *Jīm.h* (جيهم), but never as *S.m.n.h* (سمنه) or *Sīm.h* (سيه).²⁷ Instead the reference here is to a town called S.m.n.n. (سمنن)—or Sumnun, S.min and Saman—which the origin-chronicles (see below) clearly locate in the Near East and which can possibly be equated with Samaria.²⁸ Hence, it was the tendency of the modern historians themselves to identify strange names by familiar ones—while historians should opt for the *lectio difficilior*—which led to the erroneous identification of the burial place of Sef (1) with the Islamic capital of Kanem.²⁹ In view of these different pieces of evidence it must be concluded that the eponymous ancestor of the Sefuwa died in a town situated in the Near East, corresponding perhaps to the capital of Israel.³⁰

The second instance of an apparently local identity concerns Fune (4). According to MS H of the *Dīwān*—MS L omits most of the paragraph devoted to Fune—the king “died at *M.lān* in the land of Kanem.”³¹ This expression is somewhat suspicious since none of the other burial places of the early Sefuwa kings is explicitly located in any country. Moreover, none of the king lists has the same name for the burial place of this king.³² According to the origin-chronicle MS C (*K. al-Barnū*), Fune migrated to Sham/Syria and therefore it is quite possible that the similarity of the two toponyms *Shām* (شام) (= Syria) and *Shīm* (شيهم) (= Njimi) contributed to the substitution of one by the other. King lists following the origin-chronicles attribute the migration from the Near East to *Sīm* (سيهم)/Njimi to one of the early

²⁷ Lange, *Dīwān*, §§ 1, 19, 21, 26, 29 (شيهم) and § 49 (جيهم).

²⁸ H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa* (New York: Harper, 1857), 2:581 (Samina); Palmer, *Memoirs*, 2: 93 (Wanderings); A. Smith, “The legend of the Seifuwa: A study in the origins of a legend of origin,” in Y.B. Usman and M.N. Alkali, eds., *Studies in the History of Pre-Colonial Bornu* (Zaria: Northern Nigerian Publishing Company, 1983), 44 (MS A), 45 (MS B).

²⁹ Palmer, *History*, 84; Lange, *Dīwān*, 66; A. Holl, *The Diwan Revisited* (London: Kegan Paul, 2000), 3.

³⁰ The association of Ibrāhīm/Abraham with this town in the origin-chronicles supports the identification of *S.m.n.h* with Samaria (cf. Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 93; Smith, “Legend,” 45).

³¹ Lange, *Dīwān*, 66; Holl, *Revisited*, 4.

³² Palmer, *History*, 92; Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 116, and 3: 36; Palmer, *Bornu*, 121.

Sefuwa kings, either Duku or Fune.³³ Therefore the reference to a “town in Kanem” in the originally more extensive chronicle, may have corresponded to an explicit indication concerning the exodus and its attribution to this particular king. Such an indication, however, does not provide decisive evidence for a migration having really taken place under this king (see below).

The third instance of a presumably local identity concerns Arku (9), the penultimate pre-Islamic Duguwa king. According to both manuscripts of the chronicle, this king established slave settlements in Dirku and Siggidim in Kawar and further north in Zaylan (Zeila), where he died.³⁴ From the origin-chronicle MS C it indeed appears that Arku (9) was the first of the Sefuwa rulers who did not die in the Near East but in Jilān Adhlan on the way to the region of Lake Chad.³⁵ This locality being obviously the same as Zaylan, it is highly probable that a reviser of the *Dīwān* deliberately reversed the perspective at this point by suggesting a late pre-Islamic expansion of Kanem to the north, while in fact he was dealing with information pertaining to a much earlier migration from the north to the south.³⁶ In the context of all the available internal sources on the early history of Kanem, an earlier more expanded version of the *Dīwān* can therefore be considered to have kept track of immigration from Syria-Palestine via Fezzan to the region of Lake Chad during the period of King Arku.

Though silent on migration from the Near East, the *Dīwān* describes the Sefuwa kings as ethnically distinct from their indigenous subjects until the thirteenth century. With respect to Salmama (1176–1203) the chronicle notes: “From Sultan Sayf to him, no sultan was born black, but they were red like the Beduin Arabs (*al-a‘rāb*).”³⁷ Earlier assumptions of intensive intermarriage between Duguwa kings and women from the “local” clans of Kay, Ḥabasha, Ngalaga, and Tomagira can no longer be sustained, since it appears from the origin-chronicles that the early Sefuwa-Duguwa interacted precisely with these groups in the Near East.³⁸ Ibn Mājid writes in the fifteenth century that Kanem was ruled by descendants of Sayf b. Dhī Yazan, and he adds that these rulers were white.³⁹ At the beginning of the twentieth century, an observer mentions with respect to Kanem that members of the Magumi ruling class are particularly noted for their reddish color. With respect to the Magumi Bulua he states that they are indistinguishable by their appearance from the Arabs.⁴⁰ A contemporary anthropologist notes that intensive intermarriage in the last hundred years has

³³ Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 94 (Wanderings); Palmer, *Ta’rikh*, 10 (Arabic text f. 2).

³⁴ Lange, *Dīwān*, 66–67; Holl, *Revisited*, 4.

³⁵ Smith, “Legend,” 48–49; Lange, *Dīwān*, 67.

³⁶ This text critical point was neglected by earlier research. See Smith, “Early States,” 167; D. Lange, “The Chad region as a crossroads,” in M. Elfasi, ed., *Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century. General History of Africa, UNESCO* (London: Heinemann, 1988), 3:453.

³⁷ Lange, *Dīwān*, 36–37, 71; Holl, *Revisited*, 7.

³⁸ Trimmingham, *History*, 116; Fage, *History*, 63; Smith, “Early States,” 165–67; Smith, “Legend,” 44–49.

³⁹ Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 367.

⁴⁰ Carbou calls the complexion of the Bulua, the Arabs, and the Tunjur “teint rougeâtre” (*Région*, 1:43).

changed the physical appearance of formerly Arab-looking ethnic groups in the region of Lake Chad to that of Black Africans.⁴¹

King lists in Kanuri mention the name of the burial place for each of the successive Sefuwa rulers. With respect to the early kings they all mention Yemen for Sef (1) and Ibrāhīm (2). The names of most of the other burial places of the Sefuwa-Duguwa are provided in the form of strange toponyms, difficult if not impossible to identify and to locate.⁴²

More explicit references to Near Eastern origins are found in a number of related origin-chronicles of unknown date. These present the eponymous ancestor Sef of the Sefuwa as an epoch ruler who successively reigned over fifteen countries, towns and people situated between Syria and Yemen. Among the identifiable entities are Shām = Syria, Aram/Rūm = Aramaeans, Bābil = Babylon, Saman = Samaria, Yemen, and Medina.⁴³ Though it is not clear how the origin-chronicles are related to the *Dīrwān*, they doubtlessly belong to the same dynastic tradition and probably share a common origin with it. The present nature of these origin-chronicles as prefaces to king lists gives some support to the idea that the earlier, common original was the first annalistic part of the chronicle.⁴⁴ Influenced by Islamic history, the available versions extend the exploits of the epoch ruler Sef—comprising in fact those of all the early Sefuwa—to the period of the Prophet Muḥammad and the four rightly guided Caliphs.⁴⁵ Sef supposedly ruled in various places for a period of more than seven hundred years. Significantly, he is said to have dominated Yemen for two hundred years just before the time of the Prophet, but there is no reference to the historical Yemenite leader Sayf b. Dhī Yazan, the later substitute for Sef, who was still alive at the time when Muḥammad was born.⁴⁶ In fact, according to these clearly pre-Islamic beginnings of the Sefuwa, the dynastic ancestor Sef was far too early and he was historically too important to be identified with the minor Yemenite leader who preceded the Prophet Muḥammad by only one generation.

The *Kitāb al-Barnū* “the Book of Bornu,” also called MS C, belongs to the same family as the origin-chronicles and places all the early Sefuwa rulers and their deeds up to

⁴¹ P. Fuchs, “The ‘Arab origin’ of the Tundjer,” in A. Rouard, ed., *Les orientalistes sont des aventuriers* (Saint-Maur: Sépia, 1999), 236.

⁴² Palmer, *History*, 92–94; Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 116–18, and 3: 36–39; Palmer, *Bornu*, 112–55. Yeri Arbasa, the burial place of Duku (3), can perhaps be compared with Arbil/Erbil situated east of Nineveh/Mossul and within reach of the military expeditions of Hammurabi (Roux, *Iraq*, 294; see below p. 13).

⁴³ Palmer, *Ta’rīkh*, 5–6; Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 93–95; Smith, “Legend,” 44–46.

⁴⁴ Two published versions of the origin-chronicles are followed by a king list (Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 93–95; Smith, “Legend,” 46–49 (MS C).

⁴⁵ In spite of the usual transliteration of names, the name of the ancestor of the Sefuwa is in this essay written Sef on the basis of an etymology explained further on and in contradistinction to a derivation from the name of the Yemenite hero Sayf (b. Dhī Yazan) (Lange, *Kingdoms*, 243).

⁴⁶ Barth, *Travels*, 2: 25; Hitti, *History*, 65–66.

Arku (9) in the Near East. In accordance with the Yemenite tradition of origin of the Sefuwa, Sef (1) and Ibrāhīm (2) are said to have ruled over Yemen. Duku (3) is supposed to have moved to the north where he settled in Bādhān (?) and attacked the pagans. Fune (4) is said to have shifted his power to Shām/Syria, whence he conquered many countries. Arsu (5) defeated the Rūm and ruled over them.⁴⁷ Katur (6) fought the Kuburi and Kangu and dominated them. Buyuma/Ayuma (6) raided the Dibiri and subdued them. Bulu (8) was a just and pious ruler. Arku (9) attacked the Tomagira “Arabs”, made peace with them, conquered the Dugu-ti/Duku in Babylon and died at Jilān Adhlan.⁴⁸ Some of these activities might have been spurious, but certainly not all. Also, the tribal names mentioned concern people living in Kanem and Bornu. However, it should be noted that certain clans—like the Kuburi, the Kangu and the Tomagira—claim to have migrated from the Near East.⁴⁹ As we have seen, Arku (9) died at a place also mentioned in many king lists that can be identified with Zeila in the Fezzan, since it is situated by the *Dīwān* north of Kawar.⁵⁰ The burial place therefore seems to indicate a movement towards West Africa.

The origin-chronicles, in fact, refer explicitly to a great migration of the Sefuwa from the Near East to the region of Lake Chad. After a long period of conquests in distant countries and cities such as Yemen, Baghdad, Syria, Rumatun (land of the Aramaeans), Babylon and Medina, the Sefuwa are said in the king list following the account of military exploits to have migrated to Kanem. According to the “Wanderings of the Sefuwa,” they ruled in the Near East under Sef (1) and Ibrāhīm (2) and then “moved to the land of Shami (Njimi)” during the reign of Duku (3). Duku is moreover supposed to have continued to rule in the new country for more than ten years before he died.⁵¹ Another version of the origin-chronicle claims that Fune (4) was the leader of the great migration and that he was the one who “came to the land of Sīm/Njimi.”⁵² MS C of the origin-chronicles even seems to attribute the return (to Yemen or Kanem?) to the last pre-Islamic king Jil b. Siyu (11).⁵³ As for Ibn Furṭū he mentions a tradition according to which the Sefuwa left Yemen only some time after the burial of Ibrāhīm, the second king of the Sefuwa.⁵⁴ On the basis of this evidence it may be supposed that the *Dīwān*’s allusion to Fune’s death in Kanem could indeed be a residual reference to a migration explicitly mentioned in the other dynastic sources of the Sefuwa, although dating it too early.

⁴⁷ Earlier, Bādhān—who was the fifth Persian Satrap of Yemen known for his conversion to Islam in 628 CE (Hitti, *History*, 66)—is said to have ruled between Sef (1) and Ibrāhīm (2). See Smith, “Legend,” 47.

⁴⁸ Smith, “Legend,” 47–49.

⁴⁹ The five sons of Aisa Bugdarimaram (Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 83; Landeroin, “Notice,” 353 n. 3).

⁵⁰ Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 87, 116; 3: 36, 42; Lange, *Dīwān*, 28, 67; fn. 76: 25b (Trauso/Tripoli); 28b (Dirku).

⁵¹ Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 94.

⁵² *Fune jā’a ba’da dhalika ilā balad Sīm* [“Fune came after that to the land of Sīm/Njimi”]. See Palmer, *Ta’rīkh*, 10; Arabic text f. 2.

⁵³ The reference is to an untranslated passage of MS C. See Smith, “Legend,” 50.

⁵⁴ Ibn Furṭū, *K. ghazawāt Kānim* (1578); transl. Palmer, *Memoirs* 1: 15.

The widespread Aisa-legends identify the dynastic patroness of all the Sefuwa kings and the ancestress of the five or seven noble clans of Kanem-Bornu as Aisa Bagdarimaram “Aisa, daughter of the king of Bagdari/Baghdad.”⁵⁵ According to the most significant version, Aisa had her first son, the ancestor of the Ngalma Dukku (Duguwa), with the brother of the king of Baghdad and her second son Sef, the ancestor of the Magumi, with the king of Yemen.⁵⁶ This seems to correlate with the *Dīwān*, which describes, as we have seen, either the dynastic founder himself or his mother as the son or the daughter of the King of Baghdad. No doubt, in both cases the geographical origin of the Sefuwa is located in the Near East.

The Baghdadi origin of the dynastic patroness Aisa precedes the Yemenite connection of her son, the dynastic founder Sef. According to the legends—which might derive from an earlier written account—Aisa married the Yemenite king Abraha in Baghdad, then got pregnant by him in Yemen and subsequently returned to her father in Baghdad where she gave birth to Sef who grew up in that city.⁵⁷ Apparently the legend combines two different traditions, an older dynastic tradition focussing on Baghdad, or a corresponding town in ancient Mesopotamia, and a more recent scholarly tradition—borrowed from Arab writings—concentrating on Yemen. Though merging the two, the Aisa-legends give precedence to the former by having Sef born and raised in Baghdad despite his having a Yemenite father.

Similarly, the socially embedded Bayajidda legend claims that the founding hero of the Hausa states came from Baghdad with his army, which he lost in Bornu, a name designating in this context Egypt (which we will see was an ally of Assyria in its final struggle).⁵⁸ In fact, the well-known town of Baghdad was only founded in 762 CE during the early Abbasid period, and it is hardly conceivable that the Kanuri and Hausa traditions refer to a migration from that city during the Islamic period. There is no evidence for such a migration and if a minor migration had occurred—in the Islamic period—it could not have given rise to a sacred kingship, which pre-Islamic Kanem certainly was.⁵⁹ According to the Kebbi chronicle, the dynastic founder of the state of Kebbi came from a Near Eastern city called Madayana/Madā’in, Aram, “the towns.”⁶⁰ In view of these different designations it would appear that some reshaping of the information concerning origins took place in terms of better understood Arabo-Islamic geographical notions. While in the more recently

⁵⁵ Lange, *Dīwān*, 65; Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 83, 87.

⁵⁶ Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 83–84 (Five Tribes).

⁵⁷ Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 83, 87. Other Aisa-legends have no details concerning the birth of Sef. See Landeroin, “Notice,” 353 n. 3.

⁵⁸ Palmer, *Memoirs* 3: 133; Lange, “Magistrates,” 11; D. Lange, “An Assyrian successor state in West Africa: The ancestral kings of Kebbi as Ancient Near Eastern rulers,” *Anthropos* 104 (2009), 364.

⁵⁹ Hitti, *History*, 292. For sacred kingship in Kanem, see the translation of the account of al-Muhallabi (ca. 985 CE) in Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 171.

⁶⁰ Lange, “Successor State,” 364. Palmer pointed out that Baghdad corresponds in the traditions of Kanem-Bornu to a Muslim name for Mesopotamia. Palmer, *Bornu*, 99 n. 3.

Islamized Kebbi the original designation survived in spite of its obscurity, it was transformed by an *interpretatio Arabica* in Kanem-Bornu and in Daura. In all likelihood the original reference was in all cases to an older Mesopotamian town such as Nineveh or Babylon, the latter being referred to by al-Ya‘qūbī and other Arab historians.⁶¹

Baghdad and Yemen are therefore geographical designations borrowed from Arab historiography. Neither these geographical labels nor proper names referring to historical figures correspond however to “forged” claims of ancestral homes and personalities.⁶² In the case of Kanem-Bornu history it can be shown that they result from scholarly re-interpretations designed to revitalize valid but obscure earlier traditions.

1.2—Documentary Evidence Referring to the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Historians generally suppose that external sources in Arabic provide the most valid information for the pre-Islamic history of the Sefuwa. They believe that Arab authors writing from the ninth century onward offer authoritative evidence on matters of their own time but not on earlier periods. Therefore they dismiss traditions recorded by al-Ya‘qūbī and others concerning a great migration of the Zaghawa from Babylon as a fictive construction.⁶³ Historians view the state-founding Zaghawa as a people who came from the southeastern Sahara and who dominated the sedentary agriculturalists of the Lake Chad region. They supplement the meagre information provided by the contemporary but external sources with data on the ten Duguwa kings derived from the dynastic records of Kanem-Bornu, believing that they refer to the period immediately preceding the time of Hume (1068–1080), the first great Muslim king.⁶⁴ A critical approach to the available sources in the light of comparative research on the history of the ancient Near East will reveal whether these assumptions concerning the pre-Islamic history of Kanem are acceptable.

In fact, there are good reasons to believe that the material included in the first section of the *Dīwān* is derived from a written source having ancient antecedents. Onomastic analysis of the nineteen patriarchal names (from Adam to Abraham) appearing in the beginning of the text as ancestors of the Sefuwa makes it evident that they could not have been transmitted to the Central Sudan by Arabic textual intermediaries. These names, comprising in five cases valid epithets unknown to the Arabs, reveal such precise genealogical knowledge of Israelite history that they must have been written down in this form in the pre-Christian period. In conjunction with the usage of a Hebrew grammatical

⁶¹ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *K. al-ta’rikh*, 1: 191; transl. Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 21.

⁶² Lange, “Feedback,” 253–64; D. Henige, “Imported intelligent design, or autochthonous dynamic equilibrium?” *Paideuma* 54 (2008), 265–9.

⁶³ Trimmingham, *History*, 85, 111; Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 377 n. 1.

⁶⁴ Barth, *Travels* 2: 581–82; Y. Urvoy, *Histoire de l’empire du Bornu* (Paris: Larose, 1949), 25–26; Trimmingham, *History*, 110–15; Smith, “Early States,” 164–71; B. Barkindo, “Early States of the Central Sudan: Kanem, Borno and some of their Neighbours to c. 1500 A.D.,” in J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa*, 3rd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 1985), 1: 226–32; Lange, “Crossroads,” 445–50.

feature in the *Dīwān* such as the *he locale* not known in Arabic, this evidence presupposes translation and perhaps modification of an earlier written text.⁶⁵

With respect to early literacy in Kanem, it should be noted that the original name of the chronicle preserved in Kanuri—which likewise designates king lists in various other kingdoms of the Central Sudan—is *girgām*. Derived from the Sumerian-Akkadian term *girginakku* “box for tablets, library,”⁶⁶ it has apparently been replaced by the Arabic *dīwān*, which differs from the usual term *ta’rīkh* for a written historical account, at the time of translation towards 1100 CE.⁶⁷ Indeed, the Arabic word *dīwān* designating a “collection of written leaves or papers, register of accounts” implies connotations similar to those of the Sumerian-Akkadian term *girginakku* and indicates careful translation into Arabic.⁶⁸ On the evidence of original patriarchal names, a Hebrew grammatical feature and a Mesopotamian designation for “chronicle” it may be supposed that the first section of the *Dīwān* corresponds to an amended translation of a chronicle written in Hebrew which we may call *Girgam*. The assumption of a pre-Islamic residual literacy in the Central Sudan is not at all surprising, since the neighboring Tuareg societies have preserved the Tifinagh script, which has Near Eastern antecedents, up to the present day.⁶⁹

Among the information of the *Dīwān*, which resisted an *interpretatio Arabica* and the localizing tendency, is first and foremost the title of the dynastic ancestor Sef (1) *malik al-arḍ fī zamānihi bi-’arba’ qibla* “King of the World in his time in its Four Directions.”⁷⁰ It resembles the titles of the founders of the Sumerian and the Semitic empires of the third millennium BCE “King of the World” and “King of the Four Quarters (of the universe),” the second being assumed by the Akkadian and subsequently by the Assyrian kings.⁷¹ The awkward term *qibla* “south, direction of prayer” of the Arabic form of the title would seem to be an attempt to render the Akkadian expression *kibrāt* “regions” of *šar kibrāt arba’i* “King

⁶⁵ D. Lange, “Biblical patriarchs from a pre-canonical source mentioned in the *Dīwān* of Kanem-Bornu (Lake Chad region),” *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 121 (2009), 595; Lange, “Successor State,” 379; W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik* (Leipzig: Renger, 1842), 55, 170–71.

⁶⁶ E. Unger, “Bibliothek,” in E. Ebeling and B. Meissner, eds., *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, (hereafter RLA) (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1932–2011), 2: 24; D. Lange, *Ancient Kingdoms of West Africa* (Dettelbach: J. Röhl, 2004), 244–45.

⁶⁷ Instead of the term *dīwān* in MS L (London), the MS H (Halle) has *tawārīkh*, the plural of *ta’rīkh* “history.” For the meaning of *ta’rīkh* see E. W. Lane, *An Arabic English Lexicon*, 8 vols. (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1863), 1: 46.

⁶⁸ Lane, *Lexicon* 3: 939.

⁶⁹ N. Van den Boogert, “Tifinagh,” *EL*², 10: 476.

⁷⁰ Lange, *Dīwān*, 23, 66. All modern histories of Kanem ignore the title of Sef claiming domination of the world.

⁷¹ H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: University Press, 1948), 228; J.-M. Seux, *Épithètes royales akkadiennes et sumériennes* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1967), 305–308; A. Westenholz, “Lugalzagesi,” RLA, 7: 155–57.

of the Four Quarters.”⁷² Such a title, echoed in the origin-chronicles by the “Great Sultan” or the “Greatest of Sultans,” does not make any sense for the presumed founder of a small kingdom, but it is highly significant if it refers to an important ancestral king who ruled in the ancient Near East.⁷³ Subsequently Katur (6) is designated by the important title “King of the World.” He thus seems to be singled out as another great ruler of the ancient Near East whose status was slightly inferior to that of the eponymous ancestor Sef.⁷⁴

The onomastic analysis confirms the ancient Near Eastern identity of the early Sefuwa kings intimated by the different versions of the origin-chronicle. Indeed, for each of the ten names of the first annalistic part of the *Dīwān*, we can propose an identification with a specific ruler of the Fertile Crescent. Sef (1)—called Sayf in Arabic and Saibu in oral traditions—is a nickname apparently derived from the well-known Sumerian royal title *sipa* “shepherd” held by many ancient Near Eastern kings; it is here probably applied to the most important of them, Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279), as an incarnation of Dumuzi.⁷⁵ Ibrāhīm (2) is Abraham of Israel on account of his mother *Ghafalū*/Sarah (Ar.: “they ignored”) and his maternal grandfather Harā/Haran.⁷⁶ Duku (3) is an abbreviated form of *Mār-duk*, the “son of Duku,” the dynastic god of the Amorites of Babylon.⁷⁷ The name probably stands in particular for Hammurabi (1792–1750), the most important Amorite king. Fune (4) is the diminutive name Pūl for Tiglath-pileser III (744–727), the Assyrian conqueror of Syria-Palestine. Arsu (5) is Rusā/Ursā (787–766), the sixth Urartian king. Katur (6) is Kuter-Nahhunte (1730–1700), the twenty-second king of Elam. Buyuma/Ayuma (7) is probably Bunuma-Haddu (c. 1770), the oldest king of Niḥrija, the later Nairi, situated northwest of Assyria. Bulu (8) is a diminutive name for Nabopolassar I (626–605)—omitting the theophoric part of the name (like Belesys, the Greek form of the name)—the conqueror of

⁷² Lange, *Dīwān*, 23; I.J. Gelb et al., eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago* (hereafter CAD) (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1964–2006), 8: 331; A. Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français*, 2 vols. (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1860), 1: 667.

⁷³ Holl (*Revisited*, 3, 4) realized that these titles did not tally with his presumed small beginnings of Kanem and therefore changed the French “roi” (Lange, *Dīwān*, 66) into English “master,” without taking account of Arabic *malik* “king” (Lange, *Dīwān*, 23, 26).

⁷⁴ The Sumerian title is *lugal kalam.ma*. See W.W. Hallo, *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1957), 18–20. The Akkadian title is *šar kibrāt arba’ī* (see Seux, *Épithètes*, 305–308).

⁷⁵ Seux, *Épithètes*, 441–46. According to the Sumerian king list Dumuzi, the fifth antediluvian king, had the title of *sipa* [“shepherd”]; see T. Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University Press, 1939), 72–73. Similarly the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus calls Daonos/Dumuzi a “shepherd”; see S.M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu: Undena Publ., 1978), 19.

⁷⁶ Gen 11:29; Lange, *Dīwān*, 24 § 3 n. 3; 66.

⁷⁷ D.O. Edzard, “Marduk,” in H.W. Haussig, ed., *Wörterbuch der Mythologie* (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1965), 96.

Table 1. COMPARISON OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SECTIONS OF THE KING LISTS OF KANEM-BORNU AND KEBBI			
Ancient Near Eastern kings	Identity of the kings	Kings in the Kanem-Bornu list	Kings in the Kebbi list
<u>KINGS REPRESENTING THE EARLY ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN EMPIRES</u>			
		I st SECTION	II nd SECTION
			Tāmau (15)
Lugalzagesi (2359-2334)	Founder of the Sumerian Empire		Zaudai (16)
Sargon of Akkad (2334-2279)	Founder of the Akkadian Empire	Sēf/Sipa (1)	*Kanta na Makāta (17)
Abraham	Legendary Israelite patriarch	Ibrāhīm (2)	[Batā-Mūsa (27) = Moses]
Hammurabi (1792-1750)	Founder of the Amorite Empire	Dūkū (3)	Ĥamarkūma (19)
<u>KINGS STANDING FOR THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE</u>			
		II nd SECTION	IV th SECTION
Pûl/Tiglath-pileser III (744-727)	Founder of Neo-Assyrian Empire	Funē (4)	Fūmi (28)
Rusâ/Ursâ I (730-713)	6 th Urartian king	Arsū (5)	
Kuter-Nahhunte (1730-1700)	28 th Elamite king	Katūr (6)	
Bunuma-Addu (c. 1770)	1 st king of Niḥrija/Nairi	Buyūma (7)	
Kandalanu (647-627)	Assyrian viceroy of Babylonia		Kotai/Kulai (29)
Assurbanipal (668-631)	113 th Assyrian king		Ganbi (30)
Sarakos/Sin-shar-ishkun (627-612)	118 th Assyrian king		Sakai (31)
<u>KINGS REFLECTING THE FALL OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE</u>			
		III rd SECTION	V th SECTION
Nabopolassar (626-605)	1 st Neo-Babylonian king	Bulū (8)	Maru-Tāmau (32)
Assur-uballit II (612-609)	119 th and last king of Assyria	Arkū (9)	Maru-Kantā (33)

Assyria and founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.⁷⁸ Arku (9) is Akk. *arkû* “second,” a nickname of Assur-uballit II (612–609), the last Assyrian king, based on his identity as the second holder of the name Assur-uballit.⁷⁹ Sū/Siyū (10) called in Arabic Ḥawwā’ seems to correspond to the Assyrian queen Sammuamat/Semiramis who served as a regent during the infancy of her son, the king Adad-nirari (810–783).⁸⁰

These identifications, suggested by the similarity of names and supported by the historical significance of their bearers, are further supported by the understanding that in Central Sudanic king lists, Mesopotamian royal names represent either historical sequences or ethnic identities of the ancient Near East.⁸¹ Two of the proposed equivalences are supported by the royal titles attached to the corresponding figures. Since Sargon of Akkad was the first and most important holder of the title “King of the Four Quarters/Regions (of the universe)” it seems plausible that Sef (1), designated as “King of the Four Directions of the World” in the *Dīwān*, is indeed identical with him.⁸² Of the three minor kings mentioned here, only the great Elamite king—and not an Urartian or Nairite king—could possibly be singled out as “King of the World.”⁸³

Moreover, besides the precise equivalences of names in the *Dīwān* with those of the ancient Near Eastern rulers, the sequence in which the names follow each other has to be given due consideration. According to the design that the first chronicler of Kanem apparently had in mind when he drew up the *Girgam*, three historical sections can be discerned within the list of nine Sefuwa kings from Sef (1) to Arku (9). By comparing these sections with those of the particularly revealing king list of Kebbi, it appears that in spite of the different names mentioned, several figures follow each other in nearly the same order. If we place the columns of names side by side, we can discern the overlapping of two principles: the notion of a chronological sequence of the rulers and the idea of ethnic diversity. While the first is only related to the history of the ancient Near East, the second reflects both: different ethnic groups established in Syria-Palestine and the variety of communities participating in the building of the two states of the Central Sudan.

⁷⁸ Lange, “Magistrates,” 7–11 (with some divergent identifications); G. Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, 3rd ed. (London: Penguin, 1992), 243 (Kuturnahunte); 310 (Pulû), 314 (Rusâ/Ursâ); 375–77 (Nabopolassar), 376 (Assur-uballit II); W. Hinz, “Kuter-Nahhunte,” RLA, 7: 383–84; M.P. Streck, “Niḥrija,” RLA, 9: 315; Diodorus II, 24 (J.A. Brinkman, “Nabopolassar,” RLA, 9, 16).

⁷⁹ Akk. *arkû* “second” is used for rulers who are second to another. Thus Sargon II is called LUGAL.GI.NA EGIR-ú (= *arkû*), and in Greek Arkeanos (Gelb et al., CAD, 1/II: 286), a name well known in Egypt in later times; see Burstein, *Babyloniaca*, 38.

⁸⁰ Roux, *Iraq*, 301–302; M. Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*, 2nd ed., (London: Blackwell, 2007), 244–45.

⁸¹ Lange, “Magistrates,” 7–18; Lange, “Successor State,” 369–77.

⁸² Frankfort, *Kingship*, 228; Seux, *Épithètes*, 308 n. 233.

⁸³ W. Hinz, “Kuter-Nahhunte,” RLA, 6: 383–84; Roux, *Iraq*, 157–58.

The first section of the *Dīwān* concerning ancient Near Eastern kings extends from Sef (1) to Duku (3) and concerns the rise of Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279) and the foundation of the great Akkadian Empire, the grandeur of which was never forgotten by the subsequent Mesopotamian rulers.⁸⁴ On the basis of the Sargon/Nimrod legends and on account of the later importance of Israel it apparently associates Abraham with this development.⁸⁵ To these two names it joins the figure of Duku/Marduk, representing it would seem the Amorite dynasty and in particular Hammurabi (1792–1750).⁸⁶ The king list of Kebbi reveals a similar emphasis on the beginning of imperial history of Mesopotamia, triggered by Semitic nomads, by the sequence of five names constituting its second section: Tāmau (15) = Tammûz/Dumuzi, the predecessor of Sargon and most prominent legendary figure of pre-imperial Babylonia; Zaudai (16) = Lugalzagesi (2359–2334), the predecessor of Sargon of Akkad, founder of the Sumerian Empire and last king of Uruk; Muḥammadu/Kanta of Makāta (17) = Sargon of Akkad (2334–2279), the Semitic founder of the Akkadian Empire; Sulaymāna (18) = Shulgi (2094–2047), the main king of the following Ur III dynasty or Solomon of Israel (tenth century); Ḥamarkuma (19) = Hammurabi (1792–1750), the main king of the subsequent Amorite dynasty of Babylon.⁸⁷ The amazing parallelism between the dynastic records of Kanem-Bornu and of Kebbi with respect to the first imperial period of Mesopotamian history, reflected in the *Dīwān* in the first and in the Kebbi list in the second section, seems to provide important evidence for the significance of ancient Near Eastern history for the state builders of the Central Sudan.

The second section of the *Dīwān* extends from Fune (4) to Buyuma (7) and appears to refer in terms of the historical list tradition to the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and to the resettlement of various deported communities in Syria-Palestine. Fune (4) corresponds to Pûl or Tiglath-pileser III (744–727), the conqueror of the major polities of Syria-Palestine and the founder of the Western Assyrian provinces, and inaugurator of mass deportation of rebellious people on a large scale.⁸⁸ His name is followed in the *Dīwān* by that of three kings who were apparently designed to represent the conquered people of Assyria, of whom several hundreds of thousands were deported to Syria-Palestine. Therefore it is not the chronological position of these three kings that should be considered but the deported communities they represent within the Neo-Assyrian Empire: thus, Arsu (6) would seem to refer to Urartians, Katur (6) to Elamites, and Buyuma (7) to Hittites.⁸⁹ In fact, the principal of representing ethnic groups by important historical figures can also be observed in the biblical Table of Nations (Gen 10:2–27) and in the ethnonyms of the Central Sudan where the Kanuri name

⁸⁴ W. Sommerfeld, “Sargon von Akkade,” RLA, 12: 48–49.

⁸⁵ See Y. Levin, “Nimrod the mighty, king of Kish, king of Sumer and Akkad,” *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002), 350–66; E. Frahm, “Nimrod,” DNP, 8:950–1.

⁸⁶ See Roux, *Iraq*, 195–207; Van de Mieroop, *History*, 111–19.

⁸⁷ Lange, “Successor State,” 370, 373.

⁸⁸ Roux, *Iraq*, 307; Van de Mieroop, *History*, 248–51.

⁸⁹ B. Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1979), 26–32.

Afno for the Hausa is apparently derived from Pul/Tiglath-pileser III and the Kanuri name Bolewa for the people of Fika from Nabopolassar. The Kebbi king list likewise has a section where specific royal names refer to different ethnic communities: Kassites, Urartians, Hittites, Babylonians and Elamites. However, by placing this section at the beginning of the entire list, the author of the Kebbi list apparently emphasizes the primordial importance of members of these groups for the building of a new state in Africa.⁹⁰ Seen in conjunction, both records indicate that members of various ethnic groups, whose ancestors were deported by the Assyrian authorities from the eastern and northern provinces of their empire to Syria-Palestine, seem to have left their new homes in large numbers—perhaps more than one hundred thousand—after the collapse of Assyria, and settled in sub-Saharan Africa.⁹¹

The third and final section of the ancient Near Eastern part of the *Dīwān* has only the two names Bulu (8) and Arku (9). The names designate Nabopolassar (626–605), the Chaldean conqueror of Assyria and founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, and Assuruballit II (612–609), the last Assyrian king. Significantly, we find exactly the same figures at the end of the ancient Near Eastern part of the Kebbi king list: Maru-Tāmau (32) “son of Tāmau/Tammûz” standing for Nabopolassar and Maru-Kanta (33) “son of Kanta” for Assuruballit II.⁹² By naming the same historical figures in the same order at the end of all the ancient Near Eastern kings, the authors of the two lists emphasize the importance of these rulers for the immigrants.⁹³ Thus, having arrived in the Central Sudan, in Kanem and in Kebbi, refugees from the collapsing Assyrian Empire remembered the Babylonian conqueror of the Assyrian Empire and the last scion of the Assyrian ruling house in precisely the same sequence.⁹⁴ By consigning these names independently of each other to the same place in their respective king lists, the early chroniclers apparently wanted to preserve an accurate record of the historical context in which the refugee groups departed from Syria-Palestine.

It appears from this comparative analysis of the two dynastic lists that ancient Near Eastern history was cogently recorded in very similar ways in Kanem and in Kebbi. For both state-building communities their “prehistory” in their original home-countries comes to an end with the fall of the Assyrian Empire. Moreover, the lists seem to indicate that the crucial period of the disintegration of Assyria and the rise of Babylonia—referred to by the last two kings in the ancient Near Eastern part of both dynastic lists—was the time when the founders of Kanem and Kebbi left Syria-Palestine and migrated to the Central Sudan. Apparently, substantial numbers of the migrants to Africa belonged to those ethnic groups referred to by

⁹⁰ Lange, “Successor State,” 369–73, 378.

⁹¹ Oded uses statistical calculations to estimate a total of 4.5 million Assyrian deportees in three centuries (*Deportations*, 19–21, 116–35). See also D. Lange, “Immigration of the Chadic-speaking Sao towards 600 BCE,” *Borno Museum Society Newsletter*, 72/75 (2008), 102; Lange, “Successor State,” 375–80; Lange, “Afrika,” 106–107.

⁹² In Akk. *māru* means “son” and is used frequently as such in king lists. See Gelb et al., CAD, 10/I: 308–316.

⁹³ Lange, “Successor State,” 374, 378.

⁹⁴ For the fall of Assyria, see Roux, *Iraq*, 375–77; Van de Mieroop, *History*, 267–68.

specific royal names in a similar way in both dynastic lists. According to the last names mentioned, they left Syria-Palestine after the victory of Nabopolassar and the defeat of Assur-uballit II and prior to the enthronement of the unmentioned Nebuchadnezzar II in 604 BCE. Thus, the two documents appear to have been drawn up as historical foundation charters once various immigrant clans had been successful in establishing an Assyrian successor state on African soil, allowing them to project their Near Eastern past as an organized community into an African future.

If the preceding onomastic analysis is correct, the cogently arranged incorporation of important ancient Near Eastern royal names in historically significant sections reflects a clear idea of ancient Near Eastern history. According to this analysis, the authors of both lists appear to have been members of immigrant groups which reached the region of Lake Chad and settled there shortly after the collapse of Assyria in 609 BCE. Apart from sound knowledge of ancient Near Eastern history, they must have had several ancient written king lists at their disposal. Combining the knowledge of Mesopotamian list science and the Hebrew concept of onomastic scholarship, such as is expressed in the Table of Nations (Gen 10), they apparently took account of the new situation in Africa to compose highly original list records of their countries of origins. The analysis of the Kebbi king list in particular shows that the author of the list must have had written documents available to him.⁹⁵ Therefore it would appear that scholars travelling on foot, in horse-drawn chariots, or riding on horses or camels had brought such texts with them on their migration to the Central Sudan, covering a distance of about 4000 km. The survival of ancient and valid documentary evidence in Bornu and Kebbi concerning ancient Near Eastern history can hardly be explained otherwise.

1.3—Linguistic Evidence for Ancient Semitic Influences in the Central Sudan

It has long been noted that the region of Lake Chad is characterized by an intriguing juxtaposition of various Chadic languages and Kanuri-Kanembu, the Saharan language of Bornu and Kanem. Today, Chadic languages are spoken in an area extending from the western border of Northern Nigeria to close to the eastern border of the Chad Republic.⁹⁶ They belong to the Afro-Asiatic language phylum and are thus cognate to Semitic, Egyptian, Cushitic, Omotic and Berber.⁹⁷ To the north of Chadic we find the group of Saharan languages comprising, besides Kanuri-Kanembu, Teda-Dazza and Zaghawa-Beria spoken by pastoral people.⁹⁸ This family belongs to the Nilo-Saharan phylum extending from the Middle Niger southeastward to Lake Victoria. Hence there is a clear distinction between the

⁹⁵ Lange, "Successor State," 369–75, 378.

⁹⁶ J. Lukas, "The linguistic situation in the Lake Chad area of Central Africa," *Africa* 9 (1936), 333–348; Smith, "Early States," 163–64.

⁹⁷ J. Greenberg, *The Languages of Africa* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), 42–51; H. Jungraithmayr and D. Ibriszimow, Jungraithmayr H. and D. Ibriszimow, *Chadic Lexical Roots*. 2 vols. (Berlin: Reimer, 1994), 1: 195 (map).

⁹⁸ Greenberg, *Languages*, 130–32, 177; Ehret, *Civilizations*, 42–44, 63.

Afro-Asiatic connection of Chadic and the purely African family of Saharan.⁹⁹ One of the first linguists who investigated the Chadic languages was of the opinion that they were the remnants of important immigrations of Chado-Hamites—as he called them—from the east with a considerable pushing force.¹⁰⁰ This idea has been abandoned due to the fragility of the hypothesis, its branding as Hamitic, and the absence of textual support.¹⁰¹

By applying the method “words and things,” especially with respect to terms referring to features of social complexity such as kingship and urbanism, it may be possible to get some idea of the importance of some Semitic components of Chadic and their historical relevance for the Central Sudan.¹⁰² There are two different ancient Semitic roots for “town” to be distinguished in the languages of the region with slightly different meanings. First we find the word *birni* designating a fortified town or a fortification in the Chadic languages Hausa and Kotoko and in the non-Chadic languages of Kanuri, Gulma and Songhay.¹⁰³ Remnants of the word are recognizable in the Central Chadic languages Gudu, Nzangi and Bachama, where *vura* and *v̄ara* refer to a “town,” the equivalent in Mandara being *b̄are*.¹⁰⁴ Similar forms are attested in some West Chadic languages where they have the meaning “hut” and “place.” The word is apparently cognate with the Akkadian *bīrtu* (pl. *birānātu*) meaning “city, citadel, castle (as part of a city), fort.”¹⁰⁵ In Hebrew and Aramaic it exists as a loanword in the form *bīrā* (pl. *birāniyôt*), while in middle Hebrew and Judaic-Aramaic we find the singular forms *bīrnīt* and *bīrnitī*.¹⁰⁶ It seems to be very likely that the Chadic *birni* and related forms are connected with this Akkadian-Aramaic root.¹⁰⁷ With respect to Bornu, it should be noted that Ibn Furṭū calls the capital of the empire *Burnī*,¹⁰⁸ that the ruling dynasty is known under the name *b̄arnyima* and that the centre of the Bornu province being situated in the land of the “walled towns,” the whole province seems—in contrast to Kanem—to have received its name from this characteristic feature.¹⁰⁹

⁹⁹ Lukas, “Situation,” 333–48; Ehret, *Civilizations*, 79.

¹⁰⁰ J. Lukas, “Der hamitische Gehalt der tschadohamitischen Sprachen,” *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen* 28 (1937/8), 286; R. Oliver, *The African Experience* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), 42.

¹⁰¹ Fage, *History*, 63–65; Law, “Hamitic Hypothesis,” 302–303.

¹⁰² For the method “words and things,” see R. Anttila, *Introduction, An Introduction to Historical and Comparative Linguistics* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 133–53, 291–92.

¹⁰³ N. Skinner, *Hausa Comparative Dictionary* (Cologne: R. Köppe, 1996), 22.

¹⁰⁴ V.E. Orel and O. Stolbova, *Hamito-Semitic Etymological Dictionary* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 359.

¹⁰⁵ CAD, 2: 261–63.

¹⁰⁶ W. Baumgartner et al., eds., *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon* (hereafter HALAT) (Leiden: Brill), 1: 119.

¹⁰⁷ Orel and Stolbova, *Dictionary*, no. 359; Skinner, *Dictionary*, 22.

¹⁰⁸ Lange, *Chronicle*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ N. Cyffer and J. Hutchison, *Dictionary of the Kanuri Language* (Dordrecht: Foris Publ., 1990), 18; Lange, “Immigration,” 93.

A second Semitic root for “town” corresponds to the root *ger* in Chadic languages. In Hausa we find the reflection *gārī*, in Bole *ngúró* “ward, quarter,” in the Kotoko dialect of Logone *γo*, in the Central Chadic language Boko *xura’a* and in Eastern Chadic Jegu *gēr*, in Migima *gēger* “village,” in Mubi *gir*, in Bidya *geeru*, in Dangla und Migama *ger* “house.”¹¹⁰ It seems to be related to the Semitic root *gīr*, designating “town” which is attested in Ugaritic, Hebrew, Aramaic, Phoenician, and Punic.¹¹¹ Moreover, in Tuareg the root appears as *āgrem* “town” and as the designation of the Garamantian capital *Garama* situated in the Fezzan, which gave rise to the classical ethnic name Garamantes. The term is also used in old Kanuri and in Tuareg as the name for the oasis of Fachi or Agram. In modern Kanuri the root has the form *ngúro* and means “quarter of a town, forsaken village.”¹¹² In connection with the similarities of central features of the towns, these elements suggest that the emergence of the *birni* cultures, considered to be characteristic of the Central Sahara, was possibly related to the spread of the Chadic languages.¹¹³

The linguistic evidence for the wide distribution of terms of kingship with Semitic correspondences is also abundant. In Chadic languages there are four roots for “king,” which are attested in more than one branch of the language family and all of them have apparently Semitic cognates. First we consider *mai*, which on account of the powerful Kanem-Bornu Empire, is thought to be a loan from Kanuri *māi* “king.” It is found in the following Western Chadic languages: in Sura as *mīš-kágám*, in Yiwon as *mōi*, in Tangale as *mai*, in Kirfi as *me*, in Bole as *moi*, in Ngizim as *māi* and in Hausa as *māi* “owner” (*māi* “oil”). In Central and Eastern Chadic languages we have in Buduma/Yedina *mei* and in Mokolu *mōytá*.¹¹⁴ In Bagirmi, where a Nilo-Saharan language is spoken, the root became *bay*, *boy* and *mbang*. Its Semitic parallels seem to be the Hebrew and Judaic-Aramaic term *māšīh* (Messiah), the “anointed.” In the Old Testament, the title is applied to Israelite kings and also to the Persian ruler Kyros.¹¹⁵ The second consonant appears in Sura *mīš-kágám* and in Tuareg *mašš* “lord, master, proprietor.”¹¹⁶ This apparent derivation of the royal Sefuwa title from Hebrew gives

¹¹⁰ Orel and Stolbova, *Dictionary*, no. 1012. It should be noted that due to lack of some special symbols, the quoted transcriptions in the present article are not always fully identical to the original.

¹¹¹ HALAT, 3: 776–77; Orel and Stolbova, *Dictionary*, no. 1012; Skinner, *Dictionary*, 78–79; C.R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 776–77.

¹¹² Lange, “Immigration,” 93.

¹¹³ Trimmingham, *History*, 127; Lange, “Immigration,” 93–104.

¹¹⁴ Jungrathmayr and Ibrizimow, *Roots* 1: 34; 2: 72–73.

¹¹⁵ Jes 45:1; HALAT, 2: 609–10.

¹¹⁶ Lange, “Immigration,” 98 (reading Tuareg *māšš* for *māssh*). If the interpretation of the term *mīš-kágám* is correct, it would show the plausible combination of the recognized root *mkm*, Jungrathmayr and Ibrizimow, *Roots* 2: 72, with the root *mai/māšīh*, thus signifying together “the anointed resurrector” (see below the root *mkm*).

some support to the claim of an Israelite heritage expressed in the Prologue of the *Dīwān* by the Israelite genealogy of the eponymous ancestor.¹¹⁷

The second most widespread root in Chadic designating a king is said to be *mlb*. In Western Chadic it is found in Geruma as *malbu*, in the Northern Bauchi languages as *málvəna*, *múwùn*, *málvú* and similar forms, in Central Chadic in Gidar as *múlya* and in Masa as *mùllà* and in Eastern Chadic in Kwang as *mùlà:tə*.¹¹⁸ By deriving the Central Chadic forms *malak* and *mulak*, which in Sukur and Gisiga mean “stranger,” from the same root, some authors suggest that the Semitic root *malik* is cognate to it.¹¹⁹ The apparent root *mlb* may therefore be related to Semitic via the oral form of address for a king *malik ba‘lī* “the king, my lord.”¹²⁰

The third root in Chadic for “king” to be considered is *mkm*. In Western Chadic it is found in the Southern Bauchi languages as *guñ*, *pañ-kwàl*, *gung*, *kung* and *gùñ*, in Central Chadic in Higi as *mbəgə* and as *ñgə*, in Bata as *həmə* and *həmin*, in Laamang as *mbagam* and in Dghwede as *màgàmə*.¹²¹ Moreover, in Bornu the generic name for the different ruling clans is Magumi.¹²² In all likelihood these forms are cognate to the Canaanite and Phoenician-Punic designation *mīqim* ‘*elīm* “resurrector of the deity” of the *suffet* in charge of the dying and rising god.¹²³ Though the causative participle of the root *qwm* “stand” does not primarily refer to royalty, it should be considered in the context of its Phoenician usage as a title referring to one of the *suffet* magistrates.¹²⁴ In the course of transformations leading to institutional concentration, the main *suffet* seems in the Central Sudan have risen to the position of a royal holder of supreme authority.¹²⁵

The fourth root in Chadic for “king” to be taken into account is *sar*. It is attested in the Western Chadic languages Daffo-Butura as *sàrà̀m* “governor” and in Warji as *cāra*

¹¹⁷ Lange, *Dīwān*, 65; D. Lange, “The Mune-symbol as the Ark of the Covenant between Duguwa and Sefuwa,” *Bornu Museum Society Newsletter* 66/67 (2007), 15–25; Lange, “Biblical Patriarchs,” 588–98. Derivation from Sum. *me* (Akk. *mū*) “office, cultic ordinance,” seems to be less likely. See CAD, 10/II: 156.

¹¹⁸ Jungrauthmayr and Ibrizimow, *Roots* 1: 30; 2: 72–73.

¹¹⁹ Orel and Stolbova, *Dictionary*, no. 1791.

¹²⁰ Lange, “Immigration,” 99.

¹²¹ Jungrauthmayr and Ibrizimow, *Roots* 1: 30; 2: 72–73.

¹²² Smith, “Early States,” 165, 176; B. Barkindo, “Early States of the Central Sudan: Kanem, Borno and some of their Neighbours to c. 1500 A.D.,” in J. Ajayi and M. Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa*, 3rd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 1985), 1: 236–37.

¹²³ C. Bonnet, *Melqart: Cultes et mythes de l’Héraclé tyrien en Méditerranée* (Leuven: Peeters, 1988), 174–79; C. Bonnet and E. Lipinski, “Miqim elim,” DCPP, 294–95.

¹²⁴ Bonnet, *Melqart*, 178.

¹²⁵ Lange, “Magistrates,” 6, 19–20.

“king.”¹²⁶ In Hausa the “king” is called *sarkī* “king,” with an additional suffix *-kī*, the queen *sarauniyā* and the abstract for office and kingship is *sàrautà*.¹²⁷ The latter forms are paralleled in Daffo-Butura by *sàrà̀m* “governor” and *sàrà̀m-át* “government, kingship.” Furthermore, the royal designations *liksé*, *tlàksa* and *tidi* in the Central Chadic languages Wandala, Glavda, and Sukur are thought to go back by metathesis to *sarkī*.¹²⁸ The suffix *-ki* of *sarkī* reflects apparently the Assyrian royal epithet *šarr KIŠI*, which can be read as *šarr kiššati* “king of the totality” or as *šarr Kiši* “king of Kish.”¹²⁹ In view of Chadic forms like *sàrà̀m* and *cāra* devoid of the suffix *-ki*, they seem to be ultimately derived from Akkadian *šarr-um* “king,” *šarratu* “queen” and *šarrutu* “royalty, kingship.”¹³⁰ The connection of this Chadic root with terms designating Mesopotamian and more particularly Assyrian kings suggests an influence of people from the ancient Near East on the emergence of the early polities of the Central Sudan.¹³¹

For the purpose of dating the Semitic inputs into Chadic, it is important to consider the root for “horse.” In Chadic the only root attested in all three branches is *pārsi*, which in Kanuri-Kanembu appears as *fār*.¹³² The same word can also be traced to Hebrew and to Aramaic in contexts as old as 800 BCE, although in both languages the common term is *sūsu*.¹³³ Another root for “horse” in West Africa is *seso/so*, of which reflections are found in languages from the Senegal to the lower Niger.¹³⁴ It was thought to derive from Phoenician *ssw*, therefore its spread to sub-Saharan Africa has been linked to Carthaginian trade and dated between the fifth and the second centuries BCE.¹³⁵ However, it should be noted that

¹²⁶ Orel and Stolbova, *Dictionary*, no. 386; Jungraithmayr and Ibrizimow have *tsaará* and *malvəna* for Warji, *Roots* 2: 72. For *sàrà̀m* as an Akkadian root, see H. Jungraithmayr, “Ancient Hamito-Semitic remnants in the Central Sudan,” *African Language Review* 7 (1967/8), 19–20.

¹²⁷ Greenberg considers *sár-(ki)*, Akkadian *šarr* “king,” and Egyptian *šr* “high official” as cognate terms inherited from Proto-Afroasiatic, J. Greenberg, “The linguistic evidence for the influence of the Kanuri on the Hausa,” *Journal of African History* 1 (1960), 207 n. 6. It should also be noted that *sarauniyā* is according to the law of Klingenheben generally considered to go back to the form **sarakniyaa* (I am grateful to Klaus Schubert for this information).

¹²⁸ Jungraithmayr and Ibrizimow suggest a reverse influence. See Jungraithmayr and Ibrizimow, *Roots* 1: 34.

¹²⁹ Seux, *Épithètes*, 308–12; Lange, *Kingdoms*, (“Links,” 347–369), 319–342.

¹³⁰ CAD, 17/II: 72–75, 76–123. Jungraithmayr comes close to this solution. See Jungraithmayr, “Remnants,” 19–20.

¹³¹ Seux, *Épithètes*, 308–310; Lange, “Immigration,” 98–100.

¹³² Jungraithmayr and Ibrizimow, *Roots* 1: 95; 2: 195–6; Lange, “Immigration,” 93–94.

¹³³ HALAT, 3: 704, 919; H. Donner, and W. Röllig, eds., *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* (hereafter KAI) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz), 2: 202 B 2.

¹³⁴ R. Law, *The Horse in West African History* (Oxford: University Press, 1980), 6.

¹³⁵ Ehret, *Civilizations*, 223; Law, *Horse*, 2.

sīšû is also the most common Akkadian word for “riding horse.”¹³⁶ In the eighth and the seventh centuries BCE, war chariots in the Assyrian army were progressively replaced by cavalry.¹³⁷ According to historical consensus the horse reached West Africa during the first millennium BCE from the north or the east.¹³⁸ In view of the absence of the root *frs/prs* from the Phoenician vocabulary, it is very likely that the Chadic *parsi* is derived from a dialectical form of Hebrew or Aramaic.¹³⁹ Moreover, according to traditional evidence conquerors from the Near East such as Bayajidda, Kisra, Šango and Ōranmiyan came with horses to West Africa.¹⁴⁰ Therefore the introduction of horses into the region of Lake Chad was more likely the result of long distance migrations from Syria-Palestine from the seventh century BCE onward than the consequence of trans-Saharan trade.¹⁴¹

Currently, Semitic roots in Chadic languages are considered in connexion with the general hypothesis that Proto-Chadic spread to the region of Lake Chad in the period from 6000 to 2000 BCE.¹⁴² This is not the place to argue about the exact relation between Semitic, Chadic and Afro-Asiatic. Suffice it to say that elements of complex society like the state, the town and the horse which are known by words cognate to Semitic terms are unlikely to have spread to the region of Lake Chad prior to the first millennium BCE. Some of the terms considered here betray Akkadian, Aramaic, and Hebrew, but not Phoenician influences. Seen in conjunction with the phenomena they designate, it is difficult to imagine how they could have reached West Africa in a general and early process of diffusion. The spread of terms rooted in Mesopotamian languages to the Lake Chad region seems to be best explained in the context of a migration subsequent to the fall of Assyria, suggested by textual evidence. Terms of royalty derived from the Assyrian title *šarr kiššati* surviving in several Chadic languages can hardly be accounted for otherwise.

1.4—The Emergence of Proto-Urban Settlements in the Chad Basin around 500 BCE

In recent years the historical archaeology of West Africa has been significantly advanced by the findings of German researchers from Frankfurt. On the western and southern fringes of the *firgi* clay plains of Lake Chad, archaeologists discovered proto-urban settlements dating from about 500 BCE. In the case of Zilum, situated 70 km north of present-day Maiduguri, a ditch surrounding the settlement indicates the former existence of a wall. The ditch was up to 6 m wide and 3 m deep. The settlement at Maibe, dated to the same period and to the south of

¹³⁶ CAD, 15: 330; Roux, *Iraq*, 249.

¹³⁷ F. Starke, “Reiterei,” DNP, 10: 867; Roux, *Iraq*, 307.

¹³⁸ Law, *Horse*, 2–3; Fage, *History*, 47.

¹³⁹ HALAT, 3: 919; KAI, 2: 209–210. The opinion sometimes expressed that the Chadic root *parsi* “horse” is derived from Arabic *faras* implies an introduction of the horse to sub-Saharan Africa as late as 1000 CE, an unacceptable date for historical reasons (Jungraithmayr and Ibrizimow, *Roots* 1: 95; Law, *Horse*, 1–8).

¹⁴⁰ Law, *Horse*, 17–21; R. Kuba, *Wasangari und Wangara* (Hamburg: Litt, 1996), 132–41, 153–59.

¹⁴¹ See Law, *Horse*, 2–7.

¹⁴² Oliver, *Experience*, 40–42; Jungraithmayr and Ibrizimow, *Roots* 1: p. XII; Ehret, *Civilizations*, 79.

the clay plains, has an elongated form and was apparently not surrounded by a wall. Due to the availability of more trees further south, it may however have been protected by wooden palisades. Both settlements cover an area of more than 10 ha. On the basis of the remaining traces of huts and compounds, the archaeologists estimate that Zilum was inhabited by more than 3,500 and Maibe by more than 6,000 people.¹⁴³

At first sight it appears that the two settlements were mainly inhabited by local people. The use of the same type of ceramics as in earlier phases of the Gajigana culture indicates considerable cultural continuity. However, there are several indications of a cultural change with important innovations accompanying the emergence of proto-urban settlements. The change in food habits is particularly relevant: while in the period before 500 BCE, domesticated animals were the most important providers of protein, the inhabitants of the new settlements lived much more on agricultural products including cow peas. The increase in agricultural production is particularly evident from the use of storage pits and large thick-walled pots (later called Sao pots¹⁴⁴), the remains of which were both found in great numbers in Zilum. In comparison to the previous period, the vegetable component in the diet of the inhabitants was five times greater.¹⁴⁵

Other signs of a sudden change in social complexity include the appearance of certain specialized craft tools found in Zilum. Most apparent is the presence of mushroom-pestles or tampers used for ceramics showing that pottery was produced in the southern part of the settlement. Furthermore, grooved stones (found in concentrations in the eastern part of Zilum) are believed to have been used in the manufacture of beads or bone points. While in earlier periods most instruments were made from sandstone, now granite imported from more distant sites became the preferred material for producing tools. Several joined and lined basins containing remnants of sulphur in the northeastern part of Zilum have been assumed to be tanning pits. Of these elements, only grooved stones were discovered in Maibe.¹⁴⁶ Thus it would appear that by the middle of the first millennium, craft specialization was well under way in the region southwest of Lake Chad.

Other mid first-millennium settlements reaching a similar size were found in the same region. Archaeologists discovered several small sites surrounding each of the proto-urban settlements apparently dating from the same period. They consider them to have been part of the same system, reflecting a hierarchical form of sociopolitical leadership.¹⁴⁷ The absence

¹⁴³ Magnavita, "Zilum," 87; Breunig, "Glanz," 262. According to Oliver, Afro-Asiatic-speakers, represented in the Central Sudan by Chadic-speakers, were the first fully food-producing people of West Africa. Oliver, *Experience*, 42.

¹⁴⁴ G. Connah, *Three Thousand Years in Africa: Man and his Environment in the Lake Chad Region of Nigeria* (Cambridge: University Press, 1981), 48, 55–57, 154, 179, 191, 239.

¹⁴⁵ Magnavita, "Zilum," 86–91; Breunig, "Glanz," 259–260, 266.

¹⁴⁶ Breunig, "Glanz," 260–66.

¹⁴⁷ Magnavita, "Zilum," 89–94; Breunig, "Glanz," 162. Breunig mentions six small contemporaneous settlements around Zilum. See Breunig, "Glanz," 167.

of habitation deposits in Zilum suggests that the settlement did not exist for long. The situation is different in Maibe, where the excavators estimate that continuous habitation lasted for about 140 years.¹⁴⁸ Evidence for the use of iron tools or weapons has not been found at either site. In spite of the remarkable increase of social complexity associated with striking innovations, the following period is again characterized by settlements of much smaller size. Surprisingly it is in this period, when urbanization was suffering a setback, that iron appears for the first time in the Lake Chad basin.¹⁴⁹

The rise of proto-urban settlements has to be seen in the context of other significant innovations. Most important and best studied is the emergence of iron technology before the middle of the first millennium BCE at sites in Niger (Agadez sites and Termit), Nigeria (Taruga and Shwa Kiva), and Cameroon (Doulo). The dates obtained from radiocarbon dating range from 678 ± 120 BCE to 591 ± 104 BCE.¹⁵⁰ The dates indicate a movement or diffusion from north to south, a pattern that of course could be due to sample error. The “lost wax” technique of bronze casting may have been associated with the iron technology. Other archaeologically significant innovations were the production of glass beads and widespread potsherd pavements. It has often been suggested that these methods of production spread from North Africa to the south of the Sahara during the Phoenician period.¹⁵¹ The Phoenicians themselves introduced these techniques to North Africa, with the exception of the famous mosaic floors called *pavimenta poenica*, from their Levantine homelands.¹⁵²

How can one explain the emergence of proto-urban sites connected with important technical and agricultural innovations around 500 BCE in the Lake Chad basin? Archaeologists first considered climatic deterioration (i.e., increased aridity) as the main factor for these developments.¹⁵³ However, this hypothesis could not be confirmed by the analysis of animal bones found at Zilum. It now appears that most of the animals used for consumption continued to originate from an aquatic environment. Although the retreat of Mega-Chad undoubtedly made the southern *firgi* lands suitable for settlement from about 1000 BCE, in the middle of the first millennium BCE there was apparently sufficient water in

¹⁴⁸ Breunig, “Glanz,” 259, 266.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 268. Earlier, Magnavita supposed that the emergence of Zilum was associated with iron. See Magnavita, “Zilum,” 90–91.

¹⁵⁰ S. MacEachern, “Western African Iron Age,” in J.O. Vogel, ed., *Encyclopedia of Precolonial Africa* (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 1997), 426–27.

¹⁵¹ T. Shaw, *Nigeria: Its Archaeology and Early History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 159–63; D.W. Phillipson, *African Archaeology*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1993), 173–180; MacEachern, “Iron Age,” 425–29.

¹⁵² Niemeyer, “Pavimenta poenica,” DNP, 9: 453.

¹⁵³ P. Breunig and K. Neumann, “Continuity or discontinuity? The first millennium BC-crisis in West African prehistory,” in T. Lenssen-Erz, ed., *Tides of the Desert* (Cologne: H. Barth Institut, 2002), 499–501; Magnavita, “Zilum,” 85, 93.

the region of Zilum for fish to be caught to the same extent as before.¹⁵⁴ In the absence of important environmental changes it is difficult to see how climate could have been a causal factor in the sudden emergence of proto-urban settlements.

Archaeologists have not yet taken into account the possible influence of long-range migrations from the north or the east. Indeed, Maibe and even more so Zilum were situated so close to the southern end of the Garamantian route that repercussions from immigrations reflected in the Kanem-Bornu records are likely to have also affected the region south of Lake Chad. Moreover, proper consideration should be given to the language distribution. At present the inhabitants of the region of Zilum are Kanuri-speaking Ngumati. But from the location of the site on the western edge of the *firgi* mud plain south of Lake Chad, and the on-going process of Kanurization in all the western *firgi* plains, it may be assumed that earlier they were speakers of a Chadic language akin to Kotoko. This supposition is supported by the survival of the originally Ngōma clan of the Kotoko among the Kanuri of Ngumati.¹⁵⁵ The process of Kanurization itself was probably the consequence of the expansion of the Kanem-Bornu Empire, beginning in the medieval period.¹⁵⁶ In view of their supposed earlier Afro-Asiatic identity, the inhabitants of Zilum and neighboring sites should be considered as immigrants from the north or the northeast who arrived at some as yet unspecified time.

Other important results of archaeological research concern the Sahel between Lake Chad and the Niger bend, where evidence for a discontinuous transition between two different stages was found. Stage one comprises the final Stone Age with villages and temporary camps, pastoralism, and initial agriculture. Stage two consists of the fully developed Iron Age from the middle of the first millennium BCE onwards, with larger villages and towns, iron archaeology, and diversified agricultural systems.¹⁵⁷ In the absence of northern luxury goods, trans-Saharan trade may be excluded as a factor that precipitated these developments. Instead of solely looking for climatic explanations, archaeologists should also take into consideration the arrival of immigrants from Syria-Palestine, as suggested by the written records. Long-distance migration cannot easily be detected by means of archaeology. Nevertheless, significant features of material culture, such as large storage vessels perhaps also used as urns (the “Sao pots”), should be compared with similar objects found in sites in the Fertile Crescent.¹⁵⁸ In fact, in ancient civilizations large pot graves are particularly known from Mesopotamia and Elam, but also from Palestine. They were uncommon in Egypt, Greece, Rome, and North Africa, though in the latter case small

¹⁵⁴ Breunig, “Glanz,” 259.

¹⁵⁵ Lange, “Immigration,” 102–103.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 100–104; Lange, “Magistrates,” 4–5, 19.

¹⁵⁷ Breunig and Neumann, “Continuity,” 496–501.

¹⁵⁸ Breunig, “Glanz,” 266; Connah, *Years*, 239–240.

pots were used for infant burials.¹⁵⁹ It would be premature to evaluate the immigration theory on archaeological grounds, in the absence of comparative research.

1.5—Sefuwa Origins and Internal Oppositions in the Light of Onomastic Evidence

From the previous analysis of the dynastic records of Kanem-Bornu it appears that the first ten kings of the Sefuwa were rulers of the ancient Near East. Their names are arranged in such a meaningful way in the dynastic records of Kanem-Bornu that the author of the *Girgam* must be credited with considerable knowledge of ancient Near Eastern history. Moreover, all categories of available sources refer in one way or another to a former rule of the Sefuwa in Mesopotamia or Arabia, and to a migration of people from that part of the world to the region of Lake Chad. Insufficient source criticism and strict reliance on the prevailing local paradigm of African history have contributed to concealing the Near Eastern origin of the state-building people of Kanem up until now.

The apparently local orientation of the annalistic section of the *Dīwān* has been shown to result from misunderstanding and recent manipulation. The meaning of four passages formerly taken as evidence for the local identity of the Sefuwa has to be conceived differently than before: Sef (1) did not die in Njimi but in a town called Saman located in the Near East; Ibrāhīm (2) is not an unknown figure but the Israelite patriarch Abraham and his mother was the famous Aisa “daughter of the king of Baghdad” of the Aisa-legends (not an unknown ‘Ā’isha); the alleged burial of Fune (4) in Kanem is contradicted by the king lists; and the burial of Arku (9) in Fezzan (confirmed by the king lists) indicates in fact a movement towards Kanem, not away from it. Instead of solely relying on a truncated text of the *Dīwān*, historians should approach the chronicle critically by taking into account its two manuscripts and by comparing its text systematically with the other dynastic records of Kanem-Bornu. An important result of such a critical approach to the text is the realization that the first section of the *Dīwān*—contrary to the origin-chronicles and the king lists—was affected by manipulation in favor of an obviously more familiar local setting of the ten ancient Near Eastern kings.¹⁶⁰

However, some of the original information available to the translator of the Hebrew *Girgam* into the Arabic *Dīwān* escaped the manipulatory amendments. Most striking in this respect are the important titles attributed to two early kings, which indicate considerable power. The eponymous ancestor Sef (1) is by his title “King of the World in its Four Directions”; he is not depicted as the petty king of an emerging chiefdom, but rather as the mighty ruler of an empire. Similarly, Katur (6) is said to have been “King of the World” and therefore must also have corresponded to a great ruler of the ancient Near East. The origin-chronicles confirm the imposing title of the epoch ruler Sef by calling him “Great Sultan”

¹⁵⁹ E. Strommenger/W. Orthmann, “Grab,” “Grabgefäß,” RLA, 3: 582–602, 609; S. Hayworth, “Bestattung,” DNP, 2: 587–9; C. Gómez Bellard, “Tombes, Tophet,” E. Lipinski, *Dictionnaire de la Civilisation Phénicienne et Punique* (hereafter DCP) (Brepols: Turnhout, 1992), 457–463.

¹⁶⁰ Similarly, on account of oral traditions, the Kebbi Chronicle presents the dynastic founder Kanta/Sargon of Akkad himself as a local figure. See Lange, “Successor State,” 365–66).

and “Greatest of the Sultans.”¹⁶¹ In view of the titles implying domination of the world and the Israelite identity of the second Sefuwa ruler, it is far more likely that the kings concerned reigned in the ancient Near East rather than in Kanem. In fact Sef (1), the bearer of the title “King of the World in its Four Directions,” seems to be the same as Sargon of Akkad, the first ruler called “King of the Four Quarters.”¹⁶² Similarly Katur (6), designated as “King of the World,” appears to have been a great ruler such as the Elamite king Kuter-Nahhunte, the conqueror of Babylonia. In connection with royal names, the names of ancient ethnic groups and the names of burial places, this type of information based on a long tradition of written historical records provides precious evidence for the ancient Near Eastern identity of the early Sefuwa kings.

Results of the onomastic analysis of the Duguwa royal names provide some precise information on the early history of the Sefuwa and hence on the composition of the groups of Magumi invaders on their arrival in Kanem. From the names Fune (4)/Tiglathpileser III and Arku (9)/Assur-uballit II it can be deduced that the forebears of the Magumi were integrated into the Assyrian state as foreign deportee groups that had been subjected to considerable violence. The ethnic identity of these Magumi clans is revealed by five items: the names Ibrāhīm (2) and Duku (3) point to highly respected Israelites and Babylonians, while the names Arsu (5), Katur (6), and Buyuma (7) are indicative of less preeminent people from Urartu, Elam, and the land of the Hittites. By contrast, the two Assyrian names—Fune and Arku—do not essentially refer to ethnic origins but to the historical context of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in which the ancestors of nearly all Magumi clans were living as descendants of former deportees.

Apparently the individual Magumi groups that settled in Kanem were conscious of their own identity and history distinct from that of Assyrians. Apart from their common experience as subjects of the Neo-Assyrian kings, they claimed the patronage of the great Akkadian Empire builder Sargon of Akkad (2234–2179), they cherished individually various ancient Near Eastern kings older than the Neo-Assyrian rulers, and they praised the Chaldean conqueror Bulu/Nabopolassar (8) of Assyria and founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. They therefore appear to have been integrated into the Assyrian Empire only by force and oppression. Cooperation with the Assyrian elite never obliterated the memory of their own ethnic origins.

We can derive an idea of the period when the emigration from the Near East took place from the last three names of the list. In particular the name Bulu/Nabopolassar (8) followed by that of Arku/Assur-uballit II (9) suggests that the fall of the Assyrian Empire was the decisive event that precipitated the flight of many people from the Assyrian heartlands and from Syria-Palestine towards Egypt and beyond in 605 BCE. According to Sefuwa tradition, Arku/Assur-uballit II died in Fezzan and was replaced by the legendary queen Siyu/Semiramis (10), the last figure of the first section of the *Dīwān*. It is in fact a minor issue to know whether Assur-uballit II personally led the great migration to the Central

¹⁶¹ Palmer, *Ta'rikh*, 5; Smith, “Legend,” 45.

¹⁶² Frankfort, *Kingship*, 228; Seux, *Épithètes*, 308 n. 233.

Table 2. ASSYRIAN KINGS REMEMBERED BY ASSYRIAN, HEBREW, GREEK, ARAB, KEBBI AND BORNU AUTHORS						
N°	Assyrian king list 725 BCE and other documents	Bible 550, 400 BCE	Greek authors 430, 280, 30 BCE, 160 CE	al-Ya'qūbī 873 CE	Kebbi list	Bornu list
1-17	“Kings living in tents”					
9	Didānu				Dundun-	
10	Ḥanû				-Fānu	
11	Zuabu					
12	Nuabu					
13	Abazu				‘Abdū <i>d’an</i>	
14	Bel				Bawa-ka	
15	Azarah					
16	Ušpia					
17	Apišal					
17-26	Reverse order					
18	Ḥalê				‘Alû	
19	Samāni				‘Usmān	
	Šarru-kīn I (=Sargon) (2334-2279)	Nimrod			*Kanta I	Sef/Sebu
27-72	Old-Assyrian kings (2010-1364)					
73-98	Middle-Assyrian kings (1365-912)					
78	Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243-1207)		Ninos			
97	Tukulti-apil-Ešarra II (965-936)			Pālūs		
100	Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884)			Ninūs		
101-117	Neo-Assyrian kings (883-609)					
101	Aššur-nāšir-apli II (883-859)			Lāwasnasir		
	Sammuramāt (810-806)			(Shamīram)		
108	Tukulti-apil-Ešarra III (744-727)	Tiglath- pileser = Pūl	Por(os), Phul(os)	Tiglatfilasr	Fūmi	Funē
109	Šulmānu-ašarēd V (726-722)	Shalmaneser	Iloulai(os)			
110	Šarru-kīn II (721-705)	Sargôn	Arkean(os)		(*Kanta II)	
111	Sin-aḥḥē-eriba (704-681)	Sanherīb	Sanacharib(os)	Sanḥarīb		
112	Aššur-aḥa-iddina (680-669)	Esarhaddon	Asaradin(os)			
113	Aššur-bāni-apli (668-631)	Asnappar	Sardanapall(os)		Ganbi	
116	Sin-šar-iškun (627-612)		Sarak(os)		Sakai	
	Nabopolassar (626-605)		Bupolassaros, Belesys		Maru-Tāmau	Bulū
117	Aššur-uballiṭ II (612-609)				Maru-Kantā	Arkū

Sudan before he died in Fezzan, or whether his name continued and was used to designate one of his lieutenants after his possible death in Syria-Palestine. More important is the dating of this great migration—which seems to have had such tremendous influence on African history—to the fall of the Assyrian Empire at the end of the seventh century BCE.

The results of the onomastic analysis are supported by intriguing correlations between the raids undertaken (according to the origin-chronicles) by the early Sefuwa kings in the Near East and those of their suggested historical prototypes. MS C of the origin-chronicles mentions that three Sefuwa kings were particularly great conquerors: Fune (4) submitted Syria, Katur (6), the Kangu/Israelites, and Arku (9), the Arabs known as Tomagira. Inserted in a general narrative reflecting possibly the Neo-Assyrian expansion, this information corresponds to a large extent to the activities of the proposed prototypes of these figures: Fune's conquest of Syria seems to reflect Neo-Assyrian expansion to Syria-Palestine under Tiglath-pileser III (744–727), Katur resembles the Elamite conqueror Kedor-Laomer mentioned in the Bible—identifiable perhaps with Kutur-Nahhunte I (1730–1700)—and Arku, the conqueror of the Tomagira Arabs, appears to be Assur-uballit II (612–609), the last Assyrian king. Since the deeds of these Sefuwa kings correlate largely with those of their supposed historical homologues, the results of the onomastic analysis are largely confirmed by this and indirectly also by the other versions of the origin-chronicles.¹⁶³ It is not improbable that information concerning the activities of these ancient Near Eastern rulers was faithfully transmitted by the *Girgam* before it was translated in an amended and distorted form into Arabic, thus surviving in various historical writings.

The preceding reconstruction of early Sefuwa history is buttressed by the results of onomastic investigations into the dynastic records of other Central Sudanic states. With respect to the sources of Kebbi history, it appears that the original version of the Kebbi chronicle described Maru-Kanta (33) as the leader of the migration across the Sahara and as the founder of a new state.¹⁶⁴ The more explicit account of the Daura legend relates the story of the founding hero Bayajidda. It depicts the hero's retreat with many troops from Baghdad/Nineveh to Bornu/Egypt, his lonely trip to Daura, his victory over the dreadful snake, his marriage to the queen and the subsequent foundation of the Hausa and Banza states.¹⁶⁵ Considering that the three legendary foundation heroes are identical to Assur-uballit II, we have to take into account as far as possible the preceding figures mentioned in

¹⁶³ Though the three other versions of the origin-chronicle attribute all the expeditions in the Near East to the epoch ruler Sayf/Sef or more generally to the Bani Sayf, it is quite likely from the long durations of these expeditions extending often over fifty and sixty years and from their parallelism in the different versions that originally they corresponded to the lengths of reign of successive kings. See Palmer, *Ta'rikh*, 5–6; Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 93–95; Smith, "Legend," 44–49.

¹⁶⁴ In the chronicles *Asalin Kabawa* and *Ta'rikh Kabi* Ganbi/Assurbanipal (30) and Sakai/Sin-shar-ishkun (31) are said to have crossed the Sahara. See P.G. Harris, *Sokoto Provincial Gazetteer* (Sokoto: typographed, 1938), 231–33. Since in the older king lists they are followed by Maru-Tamau (32) and Maru-Kanta (33), the reference to the migration should also apply to them. See Lange, "Successor State," 370.

¹⁶⁵ Palmer, *Memoirs* 3: 133; Lange, *Kingdoms*, 291–92.

the dynastic records in order to get a realistic idea of the state-founding process. In all three cases the last Assyrian king can be shown to have been nothing more than the emblematic figure used by groups of people who were in fact opposed to the Assyrian leadership: The Kebbi king list mentions only one Assyrian figure among the fourteen ancestral kings, the Kanem-Bornu records depict the Assyrian rulers as historically minor figures and the Daura tradition considers the Assyrian hero as the powerless royal husband of the queen of Daura.¹⁶⁶

The precise information pertaining to ancient Near Eastern history recorded in the Kanem and Kebbi sources was most likely written down in the first place by chroniclers who could avail themselves of historical documents such as king lists and synchronistic lists of their Syrian-Palestinian home countries in different languages. The reliance on precise sources including the patriarchal list of the Bible and the Assyrian king list is apparent from the Prologue of the *Dīwān* and from certain compound names in the king list of Kebbi.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the Akkadian derived name *Girgam* for the *Dīwān* referring originally to a collection of written documents, also suggests a reliance on ancient Near Eastern models of historical writing. Therefore, these elements were most likely drawn up by two immigrant chroniclers on the basis of similar scholarly texts and subsequently transmitted in a written form in Hebrew before they were translated into Arabic at the time of Islamization. In view of the amount of verifiable exact and thoughtfully arranged information concerning the history of the ancient Near East in both historical records, such a conclusion can hardly be avoided.

1.6—Assyrian Refugees and the Alliance between Duguwa Conquerors and Local Warriors

The onomastic analysis of Central Sudanic king lists allows us to infer that Near Eastern people reached sub-Saharan West Africa claiming descent or at least connections with Babylonian, Elamite, Assyrian, Urartean, Amorite, Aramaean, and Israelite kings (See Table 2). As shown by different records, they departed from Syria-Palestine at the time of the last Assyrian king at the end of the seventh century BCE.¹⁶⁸ According to linguistic evidence, speakers familiar with Semitic languages of the ancient Near East seem to have migrated to the region of Lake Chad and introduced important innovations such as the state, the notion of urban settlements, and horse riding. From the archaeological record of the region of Lake Chad, it appears that urban settlements and a number of technical innovations including iron working emerged in the region towards the middle of the first millennium BCE. The combination of these different types of evidence confirms the message of the documentary

¹⁶⁶ Alhasan emphasizes Bayajidda's secondary position with respect to Magajiya and his omission from the king list. See D. Lange, Field Notes (hereafter FN) (later to be deposited in Bayreuth, University Library), 1995: 2, 16.

¹⁶⁷ Lange, "Patriarchs," 591–94; Lange, "Successor State," 369–74.

¹⁶⁸ Arku (9) in the *Dīwān*, Maru-Kanta (33) in the Kebbi list and Bayajidda in the Hausa legend. See Lange, "Successor State," 374–75.

testimonies that refugees from the collapsing Assyrian Empire reached the Central Sudan towards 600 BCE and contributed significantly to the sudden rise of social complexity.

Some brief notes on the rise and fall of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and the supposed subsequent developments in the Central Sudan should help to set the previous considerations in their historical context. The main artisan of the Neo-Assyrian expansion to the west was Tiglath-pileser III (744–727). He conquered most cities and kingdoms of Syria-Palestine, including Israel, and incorporated them into the newly created western provinces of his empire. Subsequently, the ethnic composition of these countries was considerably altered through application of a policy of mass deportations, which involved the displacement of large numbers of people from one end of the empire to the other.¹⁶⁹ From 616 BCE onward, the assault of the Babylonian and Median armies began to greatly destabilize the Assyrian Empire and in particular it led to the retreat of the Assyrian army from the western provinces. After the destruction of Nineveh in 612, Assur-uballit II fled to Harran 350 km west of Nineveh, where he was crowned as the last Assyrian king. The Pharaoh Necho II intervened militarily in his support and together they forced the Babylonian troops to withdraw and thus briefly consolidating the situation in Syria-Palestine. However, the Egyptians were defeated in the great battles of Carchemish and Hamath in 605, in which the Assyrians doubtlessly participated, although the Babylonian Chronicle does not mention them any longer.¹⁷⁰ The remaining Egyptian soldiers had to retire to their home country from Syria-Palestine after these crushing defeats. Before the Babylonians were able to establish their own rule over most of the former western provinces of the Assyrian Empire, the towns and districts of Syria-Palestine were for some time left to themselves.¹⁷¹ During the anarchic period ensuing the collapse of the Neo-Assyrian Empire and the retreat of the Egyptian forces, the physical survival of the remaining Assyrians of Syria-Palestine, their local allies, and most of the deported people from other Assyrian provinces was seriously threatened. Indeed, the local population associated the former deportees with their Assyrian oppressors and wanted to take revenge on them, while the advancing Babylonian soldiers in turn distrusted the deportee communities, even those coming originally from Southern Mesopotamia.¹⁷² Surely the best way to escape from this dangerous situation was for the new settlers to follow the retreating Egyptian troops to Egypt. Settlement of large groups in the narrow Nile valley being

¹⁶⁹ Oded, *Deportations*, 33–40; Van de Mieroop, *History*, 230–33.

¹⁷⁰ A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (New York: J. Augustin, 1975), 98–99; J. Oates, “The fall of Assyria,” in J. Boardman et al., eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., vol. III, 2 (Cambridge: University Press, 1991), 178–183; Roux, *Iraq*, 376–77.

¹⁷¹ D.B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: University Press, 1993), 445–55.

¹⁷² Oded emphasizes the loyalty of the deportees to the Assyrian empire and the hostility between the deportees and the local population. See Oded, *Deportations*, 46.

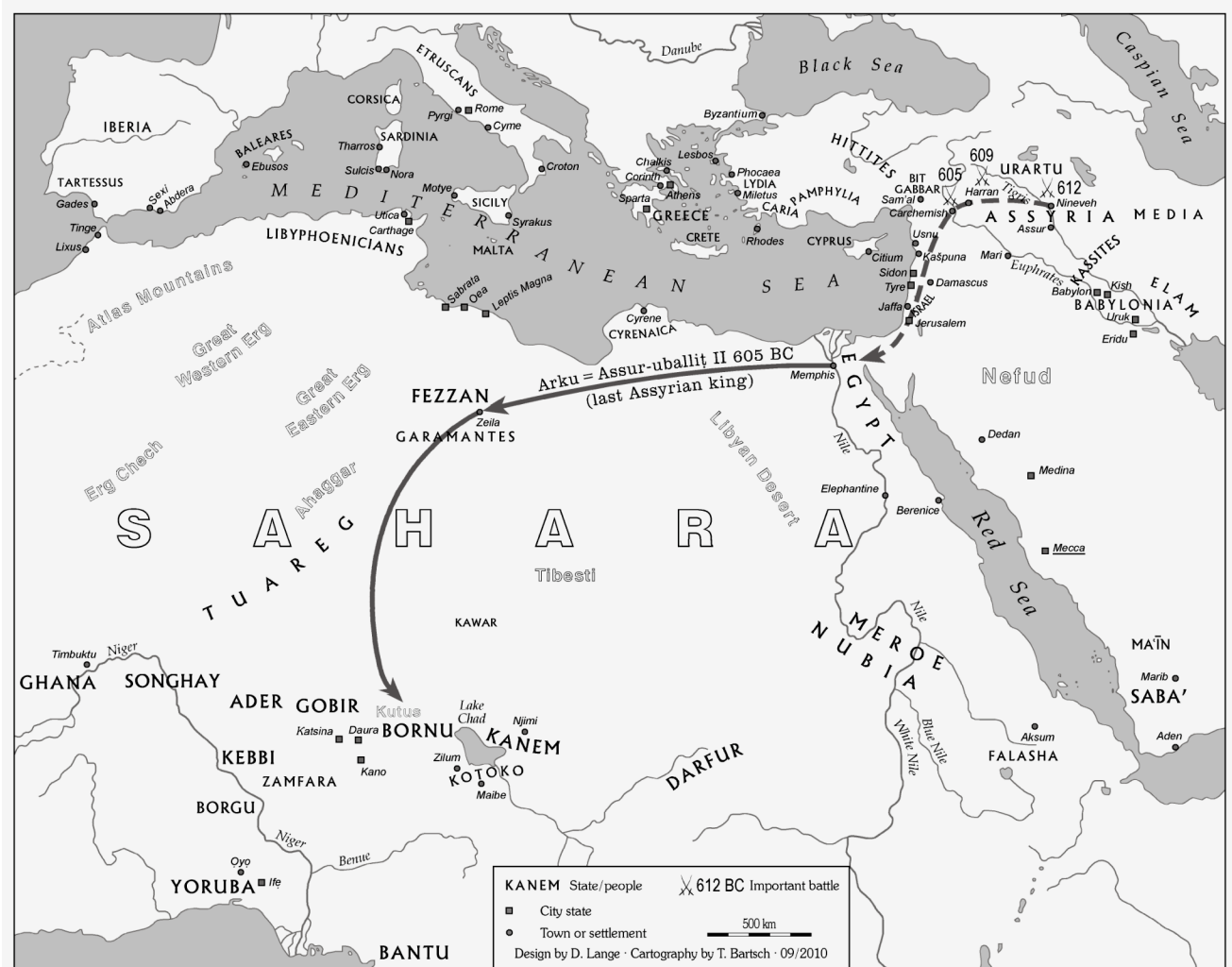


Figure 1. The great exodus of the state founders of Kanem from the western provinces of Assyria.

however impossible, the refugees may have either followed the Nile valley or continued westward to the Libyan coast and turned southward across the Sahara.¹⁷³

There is little contemporary evidence concerning a mass migration to Africa following the fall of the Assyrian Empire, but this should not come as a surprise. The horizon of the Babylonian sources is for this period restricted to Mesopotamia and Syria, and therefore the available chronicles do not record information concerning the fate of the Assyrians after the defeat of Assur-uballit II and his Egyptian allies in Harran in 609 BCE. They take no note of the events following the annihilation of the Egyptian forces in Hamath in 605 and only casually refer to the abortive expedition of Nebuchadnezzar against Egypt in

¹⁷³ The first route of migration is indicated by Yoruba tradition and the latter by the Hausa legend. See Palmer, *Memoirs* 3: 132; Lange, *Kingdoms*, 289; Muhammad Bello, *Infāq al-maysūr*, ed. C. Whitting (London: Luzac, 1957), 21; transl. E.J. Arnett, *Rise of the Sokoto Fulani* (Kano: Government Printer, 1922), 16.

601.¹⁷⁴ Neither Greek nor Hebrew authors provide any information on the consequences of the Babylonian victories in Syria-Palestine with respect to the local and deportee communities.¹⁷⁵ Yet, the biblical Book of Kings mentions predatory attacks by Chaldean (Babylonian) and Aramaean raiders on Juda that might have been part of the general unrest among the deportee and local communities following the Assyrian collapse (2Kgs 24:1, 7). As for the Egyptian sources it must be noted that they are silent on the entire period of Assyrian occupation from 671 to 652 and on all details concerning the Egyptian support of the Assyrians in their final struggle and especially their own military defeat in Syria.¹⁷⁶ They therefore cannot be expected to have recorded the passage of refugees following the retreating Egyptian army, especially if these people did not stay for long in the Nile valley.

Some traces of a great migration to West Africa survive however in later narrative sources. Ibn Qutayba, al-Ya'qūbī and al-Mas'ūdī mention a great exodus of people from Babylon leading to the foundation of kingdoms in West and East Africa.¹⁷⁷ The different versions of the origin-chronicle of Kanem-Bornu indicate a rule of the early kings in the Near East and the dynastic records suggest that Arku (9)/Assur-uballit II died during his retreat to West Africa in Fezzan.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, the chronicle of Kebbi refers to a retreat of the Kabawa from Madayana/Madā'in (Nineveh and Assur), the rule of ancient Near Eastern kings—not easily recognized as such—in Egypt and the crossing of the Saharan desert by these people.¹⁷⁹ The Hausa tradition of Daura mentions an immigration of many people from Palestine under the leadership of Najib/Nimrod and an exodus involving the retreat of half of the army from Baghdad, i.e., Nineveh, under the leadership of Bayajidda/Assur-uballit II, thus distinguishing between the deportee communities and the Assyrian military elite.¹⁸⁰ Notable is also the reference by Muḥammad Bello at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the flight of the Yoruba from the land of Nimrod (= Babylonia and Assyria).¹⁸¹ It echoes the great tradition of Oyo according to which the Yoruba left a Near Eastern town which an *interpretatio Arabica* identifies as Mecca and crossed the Sahara before arriving at the present localities.¹⁸² Though followers of the *feedback* theory consider these legends to result from manipulations, their basic message supported by onomastic evidence cannot be

¹⁷⁴ Grayson, *Chronicles*, 99, 101; Redford, *Egypt*, 448–58.

¹⁷⁵ Josephus mentions only the extension of Babylonian power to the borders of Egypt. See F. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (transl. H. Clementz, 13th ed., Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 10, 7, 1.

¹⁷⁶ Redford, *Egypt*, 360–64; W. Helck, *Geschichte des Alten Ägypten* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 242–49, 253–54.

¹⁷⁷ Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 15, 21, 31.

¹⁷⁸ Smith, “Legend,” 48–49; Lange, *Dīwān*, 67.

¹⁷⁹ Lange, “Successor State,” 363–64.

¹⁸⁰ Lange, “Magistrates,” 11; Lange, “Successor State,” 364.

¹⁸¹ Bello, *Infāq*, 21; transl. Arnett, *Rise*, 16.

¹⁸² D. Lange, “Das hebräische Erbe der Yoruba: Israelitische Geschichte und kanaänäischer Kult, Teil II,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 149 (1999), 82–105; Lange, *Kingdoms*, 239–42.

dismissed as purely fictitious.¹⁸³ To do so would mean to deprive African history of a huge corpus of only slightly amended ancient traditions.

Yet, it has to be admitted that the narrative sources are desperately uninformative on the arrival of the Assyrian refugees in the Central Sudan. The *Dīwān* designates all the early kings as Duguwa (in Arabic: *Banū Duku*) and connects the last Assyrian king Arku (9) and his legendary successor Hawwā'/Siyu (10)—corresponding to Assur-uballit II and to Semiramis—directly to 'Abd al-Jalīl (11), the first Muslim ruler of Kanem who reigned from c. 1064 to 1068 CE, thus omitting a great number of African kings.¹⁸⁴ Descending from the third king Duku, the ruling Duguwa may on account of their dynastic ancestor be supposed to belong to the posterity of Babylonian deportees from Syria-Palestine. In view of their identity as ancient Near Eastern rulers, the Duguwa kings figuring in the *Dīwān* are therefore with one exception non-African rulers. Another African king of the first dynasty was Kāk.r.h, mentioned by al-Ya'qūbī in the ninth century.¹⁸⁵ Probably omitted from the dynastic records because of the apparent uneventfulness of the reigns, the names of the Duguwa rulers in Africa are with these two exceptions—Kāk.r.h and 'Abd al-Jalīl—lost forever.¹⁸⁶ Hence, the internal records are affected by the tremendous chronological gap of more than one and a half millennia.

Contemporary Arabic sources dating from the ninth and tenth century call the people of Kanem by the name Zaghawa. It should be noted that this and similar names not only appear with respect to Kanem-Bornu but also to other major kingdoms of West Africa. Prior to the twelfth or the fifteenth century—depending on the regions—the Arabic authors used it to designate either certain rulers or specific people of the Western and Central Sudan. As rulers we have Zaghī b. Zaghī in Ghana and Zāghē/Zāghay in Gao-Saney, and as people the Zaghawa in Shāma (which seems to be Tendirma in the Lake District), the Zaghāy in Hausaland, and the Zaghawa/Zaghāy in Kanem-Bornu.¹⁸⁷ One might have thought that the name is the Arabic rendering of a widespread designation referring to related kings and hence to their people. In fact, before receiving its ethnic connotation, the term seems to have referred to some kind of royal office within rather uniform states visited by Arab traders between the Niger and Lake Chad and by extension to the people attached to it.¹⁸⁸ Since the disappearance of the term was apparently linked to the Islamization of the major Sudanic

¹⁸³ Fage, *History*, 63–65; Henige, *Historiography*, 81–87.

¹⁸⁴ For the earlier chronology, see Lange, *Dīwān*, 83–94, and for its amendment, see Lange, *Kingdoms*, 552.

¹⁸⁵ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1960), 1: 193; transl. Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 21.

¹⁸⁶ See Lange, *Kingdoms*, 242–43; Lange, "Magistrates," 12–21.

¹⁸⁷ Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 17 (al-Khurradādhbih), 119 (al-Idrīsī), 332–33 (Ibn Khaldūn), 354 (al-Maqrīzī); Lange, *Kingdoms*, 498–509 (Zāghay/Zāghē of Gao-Saney). To this list one may add the Zagwe of Ethiopia. See Ehret, *Civilizations*, 294–95.

¹⁸⁸ For a first survey, see Lange, *Kingdoms*, 499, 512, 525, 555.

states between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries, it would seem that the royal institution concerned was itself part of the basic cult-mythological features of the former sacral states. In Kanem, the Zaghawa of the external sources correspond to a large extent to the Duguwa of the dynastic records.¹⁸⁹

A look at the Phoenician *suffet* states extending from the Near East to North Africa may help to explain the curious diffusion of the name Zaghawa. Here we find two magistrates charged with tasks that were in all likelihood more closely linked to cult-mythological functions than the rational Greek and Roman authors supposed.¹⁹⁰ There was first the magistrate bearing the title *mqm 'lm* “the resurrector of the (dying and rising state) god” and the second magistrate called *'dr 'zrm* “head of the helpers,” in Latin *praefectus sacrorum* “leader of the holy ones.”¹⁹¹ In the Central Sudan the *suffet* magistracy seems to have developed into kingships characterized by their dual institutional or bicephalic structure in which the main king stood in ritual opposition to a minor or second king. In Kanem-Bornu the first king was the Magumi king leading most of the immigrant clans, while the second king was the Duguma or Zaghāwī who was presiding over a few Duguwa immigrant clans and over numerous local clans.¹⁹² In Hausaland, where the dual institutional structure is in some states still observable today, the *Sarkin Hausa* ruled over the mainly urban immigrants and the *Sarkin Azna* led the mainly rural Azna, Arna or Anna, i.e., the people of the *'dr 'zrm*, the Zaghāwī.¹⁹³ From these names and functions it may be deduced that the state of the immigrants from Syria-Palestine was characterized by a remarkably flexible dualistic structure by which the autochthonous people were absorbed into the foreign state by being progressively grouped behind the magistrate leading the “holy ones” (*'zrm*), i.e., the many local clans defined by their individual deities.¹⁹⁴ In all likelihood the Zaghawa were composed of a few foreign Duguwa and many people of the local nobility following the leadership of a magistrate whose office changed progressively into that of a king.

¹⁸⁹ On the similarity between the Duguwa and the Zaghawa, see Lange, *Dīwān*, 151–54; Lange, “Crossroads,” 454–60.

¹⁹⁰ S. Gsell, *Histoire ancienne de l’Afrique du Nord*, 9 vols. (Paris: Hachette, 1921–8), 2: 193–201; G. Ch. Picard, “Les sufètes de Carthage dans Tite-Live et Cornelius Nepos,” *Revue des Études Latines* 41 (1963), 269–81.

¹⁹¹ Gsell, *Histoire* 2: 201 n. 3; Krahmalkov, *Dictionary*, 363–64; Bonnet, *Melqart*, 174–79; Lange, “Magistrates,” 19–20.

¹⁹² The Zarma/Jarma—or “leader of the *'zrm* ‘helpers”—was closely associated with the Duguma and may have been the name-giver of the Zaghawa. See also Lange, *Kingdoms* (“Dignitaires,” 180–87), 104–111.

¹⁹³ It should be noted that the three consonants of the different forms of the name—*z*, *r*, *m*—reproduce largely the three consonants of *'zrm* “helper.” See G. Nicolas, *Dynamique sociale au sein d’une société hausa* (Paris: Institut d’Ethnologie, 1975), 53–218; F. Fuglestad, “A reconsideration of Hausa history before the Jihad,” *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), 323–30.

¹⁹⁴ For the *suffet* magistracy in Israel, see J. Dus, “Die Sufeten Israels,” *Archiv Orientalni* 31 (1963), 444–69.

The model of the bicephalic state may also be helpful in explaining how the Afro-Asiatic state of the Assyrian invaders from Syria-Palestine became a state of the Nilo-Saharan speaking Kanuri. The linguistic map of the Lake Chad region suggests that Afro-Asiatic-speaking immigrants must have clashed with the local speakers of Niger-Congo and Nilo-Saharan languages. The immigrants, composed of various ancient Near Eastern ethnic communities, conquered the local groups, imposed their mixed languages on them, and built their states and towns.¹⁹⁵ As we have seen the founders of the Kanem state, though aware of their common origin in the Assyrian Empire, were clearly motivated by strong anti-Assyrian feelings.¹⁹⁶ In that situation the Babylonian Duguwa seem to have set up a minority government by marginalizing not only the remaining Assyrian elite but also the other immigrant communities. In order to compensate their numerical weakness, they apparently turned to the local Nilo-Saharan warrior groups for support. The submitted local people therefore appear to have adopted the urban culture and state organization of the Near Eastern invaders by benefiting from the internal divisions of the foreigners. They supported the minority Duguwa against the majority of the foreign clans and thus were able to impose their language and most likely also their military leadership.¹⁹⁷ Arab traders did not distinguish between immigrants and indigenees, but they called the ruling elite as a whole Zaghawa irrespective of their foreign Duguwa and local warrior identity.

Previous identification of the historical Zaghawa with present-day Zaghawa semi-nomads of Darfur is not convincing. In fact, the name Zaghawa is given by neighboring Arabs to people who call themselves Beri.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the descriptions of the Arab geographers reveal a progressive shifting of the term Zaghawa from Kanem to the region of Darfur between the eleventh and the thirteenth century in connection with the rise of the Sefuwa-Humewa.¹⁹⁹ Therefore it is much more likely that the present Zaghawa retained their ethnonym from their previous participation in the ruling elite of the state of Kanem since ancient times than *vice versa*. The idea of the foundation of the state of Kanem by nomads should therefore be discarded as anachronistic. Similarly, the ten Duguwa kings who were supposed to have reigned at the very end of the pre-Islamic period were in fact rulers of the ancient Near East separated from the Sefuwa-Humewa by a period of more than 1600 years. Corresponding to the “floating temporal gap” observed in oral traditions, the same

¹⁹⁵ Lange, “Africa,” 106–107. Oliver considers Afro-Asiatic speakers as cattle-owning food producers. See Oliver, *Experience*, 42.

¹⁹⁶ According to Oded the Assyrians took care to preserve the national and ethnic affinities of the resettled deportees. See Oded, *Deportations*, 23–25.

¹⁹⁷ If the name Afno given by the Kanuri to the Hausa is derived from Fune/Tiglath-pileser III and that of Beriberi designating the Kanuri from Abraham, the early Kanuri considered the Hausa as descendants from the Assyrians.

¹⁹⁸ M.-J. Tubiana, *Survivances préislamiques en pays Zaghawa* (Paris: Institut d’Ethnologie, 1964), 9. As for Beriberi, the name given by the Hausa to the Kanuri, Beri might derive from Abraham.

¹⁹⁹ Lange, *Chronologie*, 120–29; Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus*, 171 (al-Muhallabī), 114 (al-Idrīsī), 189 (Ibn Sa’id).

chronological hiatus between ancient Near Eastern rulers and local Muslim kings is attested in the dynastic records of Kebbi, Katsina, Kano, and Oyo.²⁰⁰ It is therefore not surprising that comparison between the *Dīwān* and other dynastic records of Kanem-Bornu shows that nearly all information attributed to the Duguwa kings with the exception of ‘Abd al-Jalīl (11) refers in fact to the ancient Near East and not to medieval Kanem.

A supplementary remark is needed to emphasize the importance of the state-building period for the subsequent history of the Central Sudan. From the linguistic and archaeological data examined above, it appears that innovations introduced by the Near Eastern invaders led to the general rise of social complexity in the region of Lake Chad. Some of the terms referring to kingship and urbanization are cognate to words used in languages of Mesopotamia and thus suggest influences from polities situated in that region. Together with particular roots for “town” and “horse,” they are likely to have been transferred to the region of Lake Chad by immigrants who were exposed to Aramaic, the spoken Semitic language of Assyria. From the results of archaeological research it can be deduced that urban civilization and other features of complex society emerged in the region of Lake Chad not later than 500 BCE. Some if not all of the loanwords considered above seem to have reached the Central Sudan precisely at that time. In addition to the documentary evidence these elements give weight to the assumption that the rise of social complexity in the region of Lake Chad was a consequence of the fall of the Assyrian Empire.

Moreover, a combination of onomastic and linguistic evidence leads to the conclusion that social complexity was not imposed on the indigenous societies by a unified phalanx of Near Eastern invaders who oppressed the local population. Rather, the available sources suggest that one of the immigrant groups allied itself with the local warrior communities in order to assert its domination over all the other foreign invaders. Through this association to power the local forces were able to impress their own cultural and linguistic label on the newly founded conquest state of Kanem. In the early medieval period the successful synthesis of foreign and local elements was the decisive factor, which contributed to the expansion of Kanem and its transformation to the Kanem-Bornu Empire. Henceforth, the Africanized Nilo-Saharan hegemonic power dominated the surrounding Afro-Asiatic polities of the foreign invaders in spite of important modifications during the period of Islamization, and not the other way round.

1.7—Conclusion: Fall of the Sefuwa-Duguwa and Rise of the Sefuwa-Humewa

Islamization of the court of Kanem in ca. 1064 led to the destitution of the Duguwa four years later. Although Hume (ca. 1068–1080) himself, the first great Muslim king of Kanem, may on account of his name have been connected with the Duguwa, his successors show, by their Assyrian and Israelite derived names, some proximity with the former opposition groups.²⁰¹ It therefore appears that the removal of the Duguwa and hence of the Zaghawa

²⁰⁰ J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (London: J. Currey, 1985), 23–24 (“floating gap”); Lange, “Successor State,” 369–75; Lange, *Kingdoms*, 239–41, 248–49, 251.

²⁰¹ Lange, “Magistrates,” 12–14 (Hammurabi > Hume; *šarru dannu* > Dunama; Abraham > Biri).

from power was the result of a political reshuffle organized by the Magumi opposition groups including that of the Assyrian Magumi Arigwa descending from Arku/Assur-uballit II in connection with the rise of Islam.²⁰²

However, the loss of power by the Duguwa did not entail serious consequences as long as the ruling groups of Kanem participated in the common Mune cult corresponding to that of the Israelite Ark of the Covenant.²⁰³ It is only the abolishment of this cult by Dunama Dibbalemi (1203–1242) that led to general disturbances. From now on the Bulala became the most serious opposition force against the Sefuwa-Humewa. Like the successors of Hume in Kanem-Bornu they claim descent from Sef (1) and the nine other ancient Near Eastern figures; they continue to be considered as close relatives of the Kanuri and they are said to belong to the stock of Kay (Babylonians).²⁰⁴ As supposed descendants of Chaldeans they were closely connected to the leading Babylonian-derived Duguwa clans. As for the Duguwa elite as such, their historical identity seems to have been moulded prior to that of the Sefuwa-Humewa by their descent from their two eponymous ancestors Sef (1) and Duku (3). Thus being also Sefuwa, they should be called Sefuwa-Duguwa in contradistinction to the Sefuwa-Humewa.²⁰⁵

When the Duguwa-related Bulala were able to expel the Sefuwa-Humewa from Kanem at the end of the fourteenth century, obliging them to withdraw to their western province of Bornu, they re-established for some time a regime akin to that of the Sefuwa-Duguwa, in spite of their adoption of Islam. History, at that point, seemed to repeat itself in the Chadic state in spite of Islamization.

More generally it should be noted that the focus on dynastic history in connection with ancient immigrant groups is of course greatly encouraged in the case of Kanem-Bornu owing to the availability of a variety of written, oral, and anthropological data. New results of linguistic and archaeological research further support this approach. Western Sudan history, though better covered by external Arabic writings, does not benefit in this respect from the same trustworthy and valid internal sources. It is therefore to be expected that the early history of Kanem will in the future be considered to be at least equally important for the history of Africa as a whole as that of ancient Ghana and Mali.

²⁰² Palmer, *Memoirs* 3: 30; Lange, "Magistrates," 10–11.

²⁰³ Lange, *Kingdoms*, 556–57; Lange, "Mune-Symbol," 15–24.

²⁰⁴ Barth, *Travels* 2: 545; Carbou, *Region*, 1: 302; Palmer, *Memoirs* 2: 51 (Bulala Girgam); Palmer, *Bornu*, 135, 136 (Magi Zigidam). According to Alhaji Bukar, the Imam of Ngigmi, the ancestor of the Kay immigrated from Baghdad (Ngigmi FN 77:136).

²⁰⁵ Versus Lange, *Chronologie*, 145–160. For the Magumi Duguwa, see Palmer, *Memoirs* 3: 30.

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- DNP: H. Cancik und H. Schneider, eds., *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, 15 vols., (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler), 1996-2003.
- El²: H. Gibb et al., eds., *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, 2nd ed., 12 vols. (Leiden: Brill), 1960–2002 (from vol. I to vol. V in French, from vol. VI to vol. XI in English).
- HALAT: W. Baumgartner et al., *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon*, 3rd ed., 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill), 1967-1996.
- KAI: H. Donner and W. Röllig, eds., *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz), 1964.
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