Roman, at Taradjihiba 300 km south of Fezzan and 3,5 km to the west of the well of Madema. Other findings include a sword with a broad blade and fine green beads. The latter discovery is confirmed by Chapelle who mentions a rectangular stone structure and ancient blue pearls found at Taradjihiba near Madema on the old caravan route. Although no archaeological research has yet been undertaken in al-Qasar/Guezebi, the main archaeological site of Kawar, these elements give further support to the idea that the central Saharan trade route from Tripoli to Lake Chad was – since classical times – one of the most active lines of communication between sub-Saharan Africa and the outside world.

To Article II (1983: “Alun du Kawar”)

More detailed studies of the alum of Kawar confirmed that pure alum is found in that oasis. The chemical composition of another four samples of alum from the site north of Bilma largely confirms the data of the analysis of 1977 (1982: 23 n. 14). Further alum deposits are likely to have existed in northern Kawar in the form of numerous Quellhügel (source-hills). But owing to the continuous action of sand the original composition of the minerals is no longer detectable. The analysis of mineral samples from the north of Kawar, likewise termed kolob shaeb, revealed that they were actually natron (1991: 228-229). With respect to the economical significance of alum exports from Kawar during the time of the Crusades, Cahen points out that alum from Kawar was an article of trade which the Egyptian authorities supplied to the Christian merchants on a contractual basis. In exchange for this and other articles, Saladin obtained wood for his fleet and weapons to use against the crusaders.8

To Article III (1984b : “Notes sur le Kawar”)

This modest note was written during my stay in the Niger Republic – where I taught African and Islamic history at the University of Niamey from 1980 to 1985 – at the request of the editors of Mu Kara Sani (Institut de Recherches en Science Humaines). It draws attention to a number of medieval sites in order to encourage historical archaeology. In his comprehensive study on the Kawar oasis, Knut Vikør assumes likewise that salt production preceded the trans-Saharan trade. With respect to individual sites in Kawar, Vikør makes the interesting point that, according to Ibn Sa‘id, Qasr Umm ‘Isa did not correspond to

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7 Deberes in: Bohlsø, II, 204 n. 174; Chapelle, Nomades, 30, 246.
8 Cahen, Orient, 146.
9 Vikør, Oasis, 141-142, 147.