Magumi clan composed of Duguwa and Sefuwa lineages, and the present-day distinction between the Magumi Duguwa and the Magumi Sefuwa, bear witness to a certain degree of governmental continuity beyond the Duguwa-Sefuwa cleavage. Furthermore, the comeback of the Zaghawa/Zaghay to power in the fourteenth century shows that the two ruling groups can neither be conceived as dynasties nor as ethnic groups (1993a: 271; 1993b: 52). In all likelihood, they were clan-families assuming specific functions within the cultic, the ceremonial, and the administrative sphere of the state. Humé was probably a member of an oppositional local clan associated with power who was more open towards Islam than the Duguwa. The main objective of the identification of the supposed clan ancestor Sef with the Yemenite hero Sayf b. Dhi Yazan, might have been the deliberately-attempted transposition of a divine into a legendary figure (see above p. 243). Altogether it would seem that the overthrow of the Duguwa was the consequence of religious incompatibilities between Islam and the cults of the Duguwa, rather than the result of economic changes such as a decreasing demand for slaves. Also, enslavement practices in an ancient and well-organized state should be seen more in terms of military activities against aliens and tributary levies, than in terms of internal recruitment (Meillassoux 1991: 51-52). Therefore it seems more appropriate to consider the process of Islamization in connection with the cult-mythological as opposed to an economic context.

To Article V (1979a: “Lieux de sépulture”)

This study hopes to encourage research on oral traditions as a complement to available written evidence. This is still a very promising field, especially in those Islamized regions of West Africa where the basic institutions of pre-colonial states have survived. However, the research schedule should be more deliberately aimed at key questions of historical reconstruction. Major topics for the medieval history of the Chadic state concern the pre-Islamic state of the Duguwa, the shift from the Duguwa to the Sefuwa state, the Islamization of the institutions of divine kingship, and the agents of the territorial administration during the Sefuwa period (Kanuri clans and subgroups, Karde and other slaves). In fact, the available written sources provide only limited insights into these matters. It should also be recognized that the Arabic chronicles themselves present a one-sided picture of the past, in particular with respect to the pre-Islamic cultural and organizational


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To Article V

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14 Jäger, "Ursprungstra 15 The Kagha hypoth Connah and Barkindo + place Kagha on the Kon
16 Nachtrigal, Sahara, I
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Magumi Sefuwa, bear witness that the Duguwa-Sefuwa
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Palmer, Memoirs, II,
heritage of the Chadic state. The work undertaken by Frauke Jäger promises to
reverse the current perspective by considering the longue durée in conjunction
with North African cultural parallels.14

To Article VI (1982: “Éviction des Sefuwa”)

Dealing with the most dramatic territorial change in the history of the Chadic
state, this study shows that the Sefuwa ruled over two separate states, Kanem and
Bornu, from the middle of the thirteenth to the second half of the fourteenth
century. Environmental degradation was probably the single most important
factor explaining the on-going westward movement of people from Kanem to
Bornu (1982: 329-330). However, the final withdrawal of the Sefuwa from
Kanem towards 1380 was the consequence of a military confrontation between
the Bulala and the Sefuwa precipitated by dynastic and clan conflicts. There is
no doubt that the Bulala were the main oppositional force against the Sefuwa in
Kanem. They belonged to the same population as the Sefuwa (1982: 328) and
they were even descendants of the first ruling clan (1993b: 268-269) or rather
clan-family, the Duguwa. The weakening of the Sefuwa as a consequence of the
dynastic feuds between its two branches, the Idrisids and the Dāwûdids, gave the
Bulala the opportunity to assert their authority over the people of Kanem. The
royal establishment of the Chadic state was torn apart by these conflicts to the
extent that the first ruler to gain ascendancy after the withdrawal from Kanem
was an outsider who belonged to neither of these branches (1977a: § 32).

With respect to the regional extension of the medieval Bornu state it should
be noted that the area north of the Komadugu Yobe in the present Niger
Republic, where Kanuri settlements extend up to 500 km west of Lake Chad, probably
lay in the centre of the state. It is most likely to this region, easily accessible for the
inhabitants of Kanem, that the Sefuwa and their loyal courtiers withdrew under
the onslaught of the Bulala (1980: 174), and not to the Bornu province of Kagha
southwest of Lake Chad (1989: 207-208).15 Wudi, close to Lake Chad, was
apparently the major capital during this period.16 The later southward shift of the
Kanuri was mainly the consequence of further environmental degradation in the
sub-Saharan region of northern Bornu.

15 The Kagha hypothesis was first expressed by Barth, Travels, II, 587. It is followed by
Connah and Barkindo (Three Thousand, 225; “Early states”, 245). Zeiner and Maikorema
place Kagha on the Komadugu Yobe (Pages, 64; Contribution, 35-36).