

To Article VII (1988a: "Dignitaires bornoans")

This study shows that the two chronicles of Ibn Fuṛṭū use in certain instances general Arabic terms in reference to precise Kanuri titles. Two supplementary points can be made concerning the identification of the *wazīr al-kabīr* with the Digma. It appears from Ibn Fuṛṭū's description of military activities during the Kanem wars, that the Arjinoma was one of the closest officials of the *wazīr al-kabīr*. This information is confirmed by Rohlfs who defines the Arjinoma as the principal assistant of the Digma.¹⁹ As the Arjinoma holds the same position with the *wazīr* as with the Digma, the latter two can be considered identical. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Digma had a residence separate from that of the king (1988: 182). In nineteenth-century Bornu the Digma was a royal slave whose tasks were similar to that of a chief administrator. Among the present Bulala he is the first assistant of the Yerīma (or Hīrima/Īrīma?) and as such he sits among the right-hand officials of the kings, those of the left hand being members of the royal family.²⁰

These elements may be compared with the position of the *Lōwa* in the court of Ife insofar as the latter belongs to the Oduduwa faction of the palace officials and thus deals with the clans of the Oduduwa or netherworld party (2004a: 135-143). Such an analogy seems to be a valid hypothesis, since the etymology of *Digma/Dugma* as *Dugu-ma* “chief of the Dugu” indicates a close relationship with the Duguwa. Historically, this definition of the *Dugma* as the leader of the main court faction gives further weight to the possibility that *malik* Sa’id, who headed the Sefuwa court after the withdrawal from Kanem, was the *Dugma* and hence the most important Duguwa official (1993a: 272; 1993b: 52n). Hence there are good reasons to suppose that the *Dugma* was in the same position relative to the clans of the Duguwa as the *Lōwa* was relative to the clans of the Oduduwa party. However, one should remember that the Sefuwa represented the former clans of the upperworld deities who had pushed aside the Duguwa in the palace revolt of 1068 (see above p. 243). In view of this major political change it would appear that the parallel process of Islamization made a corresponding reshuffle of the palace organization superfluous – a reshuffle whereby the officials linked to the former clans of the netherworld would have been displaced from their pre-eminent positions. As we have seen above, the structural parallels between Chadic and Yoruba court institutions can be explained by a common cultural substratum characterized by an opposition between two clan-families tracing their descent either from the gods of the upper or of the netherworld.²¹

A further similarity between Chadic and Ife court organization is indicated by the parallel position of the king and an important female court official called *Luwa* in the town of Musune south of Lake Chad. The king, belonging to the *Magumi* clan, has an intimate relation on different levels with the *Luwa*, who must originate from the *Ngalaga* clan akin to the *Ngalma Duku*, whose members are related to the *Magumi* by a joking relationship. During the coronation ceremonies, the new king nominates the *Luwa* by choosing her from among the girls of the *Ngalaga* clan, as a mate for his one-week seclusion.²² If the king represents the Sefuwa, and the *Luwa* the Duguwa, it would appear that these two officials of Musune are united by the same cult-mythological relationship as in Ife between *Jaran* and *Lōwa* and perhaps that between the king and *Qbalufe*, and in Bornu between the *Mai* (king) and *Dugma*.²³ Further culture-historical research, taking

²¹ See above pp. 230-235 and charts 2, 3, 10, 12 (pp. 238, 265, 345).

²² Editha Platte refers to the *Luwa* as concubine and wife of the king (*Frauen*, 183, 186-192). The last *Luwa* was nominated in 1936. Therefore, other functions of the *Luwa* – as perhaps the sacred marriage during an earlier New Year festival – have not been recorded.

²³ The fact that the *Luwa* is called *Zamzam* in *Ndufu* (Platte, *Frauen*, 186) lends support to the supposition that the biblical figure of Hagar was originally patterned on a female official

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into account all palace officials and deliberately adopting a comparative perspective, will certainly reveal more significant connections between historical developments and present structural relations.