many respects a perfect example of the cult-dramatic re-enactment of a festal
myth similar to the Ugaritic Baal Cycle through the performances of a New Year
festival (2003: 9-26; XV). For similar conclusions concerning the Igbo festival
of Owo and the myth of Ishtar see Gabriele Weisser, Königstum der Owo-Yoruba.

To Article XIII ("Ife - origin of the Yoruba")

This survey of previous theories concerning the origins of the Yoruba insists on
the strong influence of ideology on African historiography: Before independence,
scholars thought that African societies were highly influenced by cultural
inputs from the outside world, after independence this tendency was reversed
by the insistence on internal factors of development. In spite of a number of
valid cultural comparisons pointing out the existence of Mediterranean and
Canaanite-Israelite culture traits among the Yoruba, authors of the colonial
period supposed that these elements were transmitted from north to south by way of
fanciful long-distance migrations for which there is no evidence in the historical
records. Postcolonial scholarship on the other hand dismisses such unwarranted
reconstructions, but instead of pursuing research in all directions it relies heavily
on the results of archaeological excavations. For Ife and the history of the Yoruba,
the late medieval datings of archaeological sites and finds led to the conclusion
that the emergence of towns and the state building process itself belong to this
period. This new orthodoxy disregards the fact that nearly all the available dates
are based on the strictly circumscribed excavations of art objects. Certainly, more
relevant and ancient dates would have been obtained if it had been possible to
extend archeological research to sites like the Palace, the temple of Obatala and
the grove of Oduduwa in the middle of the town of Ife.

A minor detail which needs to be corrected concerns the confusion between
Yemoo, the partner of Obatala, and Yemoja, the great primordial goddess (1995b:
393-394). While the first can be equated with Anat, the partner of Baal, the
second corresponds to Yam and Tiamat, the great enemies of the weather-god

To Article XIV (1995b: "Links West Africa")

On the basis of field research in Kebbi and published studies on Oyo, this
article proposes detailed comparisons between West African and Mesopotamian
legends, myths and cult-mythologies. More precisely, it considers the oral
accounts of the legendary figures Kantu and Sango and compares them with the
available written narratives of Sargon of Akkad and Baal. While with respect to

Kantu considerable parallels may be seen with the shift from the priest-king (singa) to
a confederation involving ancient Canaanite culture, the Phoenician bridge between
Europe and North Africa should be noted. For Africanists use of the Old Assyrian
trade with the Phoenicians - and other cultural influences extending far beyond
North Africa.37 Similarly, traders from the eastern Mediterranean, traders on their way to

Section Five: States of Africa

My interest in this field is a direct result of the Sorbonne, then joined the University of Niamey,
became a major preoccupation for historians. In a major study, Robert Piot, Jean-Pierre Oliver de

37 For the connection in: DCPP, 46, and for the
Africa Oliveri/Page, Shur