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 Igboo festival of Owo and the myth of Ishtar see Gabriele Weisser, *Königtum 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 Yamm and Tiamat, the great enemies of the weather-god (1999a: 107-116).

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 Kanta and Sango and compares them with the available written narratives of Sargon of Akkad and Baal. While with respect to Kantu considerable partial shift from the priest-king to a confusion between the god and the god (priest-king), assumed in the cult-dramatic enigma seems to be the origins of the king (sango), the king of the king (sango). This paves knowledge but as the

For Africanists use nation involving ancient Canaanite culture of the Canaanite bridge builders should be noted that Caubri to Assyria for the first half of the eighteenth century lasting until the Phoenicians - a as a cultural influence the Phoenicians suppose that the North Africa. Some of these emigrants traders on their way a

Section Five: States of the Northern Nigeria

My interest in this field of the Sorbonne, then foreign common residence in the University of Niamey became a major problem, be useless for historians a major issue, Robert Jean-Pierre Oliver de

37 For the connection in: DCPP, 46, and for the Africa OliveriPage, Sho
Kanta considerable parallels can be shown to exist between the two legends, the shift from the priest-king sangū to the mythological figure Sango presumes a confusion between the divine and the human spheres. The solution to this enigma seems to be the New Year festival, when the king, acting then as sangū (priest-king), assumed the role of the weather-god Bel or Baal. For the people assisting in the cult-dramatic performances of the New Year festival, the king and the god must then have become one and the same being. In other words, in their minds the king changed into the god (Bel) and the god changed into the priestking (sangū). This popular view of things reached West Africa not as abstract knowledge but as the result of personal experiences.

For Africanists used to considering African cultures in isolation, any consideration involving ancient Mesopotamia must appear far-fetched. Contrary to the Canaanite culture of the Phoenicians in North Africa there was apparently no geographical bridge between Mesopotamia and sub-Saharan Africa. However, it should be noted that the Phoenician mother towns on the Levantine coast paid tribute to Assyria from the middle of the ninth century BC, and that from the first half of the eighth century BC they were subject to direct Assyrian administration lasting until the end of the seventh century BC. During the latter period, the Phoenicians — as also the Israelites — were certainly subjected to considerable cultural influence exerted on them by their Assyrian overlords. A number of historians suppose that the Israelites participated in the Phoenician colonization of North Africa.37 Similarly, Assyrians or Assyrian-influenced Canaanites may have established themselves in the North African trading towns of the Phoenicians. Some of these emigrants and refugees might easily have joined the Phoenician traders on their way across the Sahara.

Section Five: States of the Middle Niger

My interest in this field benefited first from the lessons of Raymond Mauny at the Sorbonne, then from numerous discussions with John Hunwick during our common residence in Cairo from 1977 to 1980. But it was not until teaching at the University of Niamey from 1980 to 1985 that the history of the Middle Niger became a major preoccupation for me. Jean Roux who declared the Tārinhs to be useless for historians, Boubé Gado who made the oral traditions of the Zarma a major issue, Robert Nicolai who questioned the linguistic identity of Songhay, Jean-Pierre Oliver de Sardan who uncovered numerous links between Songhay

37 For the connections between the Phoenician and the Assyrian expansions see Bunnens in: DCPP, 46, and for the participation of Israelites in the Phoenician colonization of North Africa Oliver/Pagé, Short History, 42.