attention to the geographical closeness of the first centre of ancient Ghana, in the Lakes region of the Niger, to Gao and the eastern Niger bend. It further tries to define Songhay ethnicity on the basis of the royal Donga/Sango cult (see also 1994b: 217-222).

The article is flawed by several misconceptions. The Zā are still linked to a supposed pre-Zāghē Mandé substratum on the eastern Middle Niger, and the Songhay are seen as late eastern immigrants from Kebbi. On the level of dynastic history, the Zāghē are still identified as Berbers and the Sonni are considered to be their descendants. A related misinterpretation concerns the long-lasting duality of a Zā and a Sonni royal clan. The Zā are supposed to have called in Mali protection against an alliance between the Sonni and the Sokko and the Songhay. This leads to the question of the circumstances under which the submitted Zā could possibly have been able to call in the Keita and thus throw off the Zāghē/Sonni leadership. There is little support in the available documentary and oral data for such multi-faceted and momentous medieval history for the eastern Middle Niger. The disconnection between the Zāghē and the Zā is in particular undermined by the appearance of the Zā/Zuwa title on the Gao-Saney inscriptions.  

To Article XVIII (1996a: “Chute des Sisé”)

The study proposes a re-evaluation of Songhay history on the basis of a greater geographical proximity between ancient Ghana and the Gao state. For various reasons the Zāghē are now seen to be Soninke and not Berber by origin. The article tries to show that the Zāghē are identical with the Zā of the Tārikhs and that they correspond to Sisè refugee kings from Ghana. It considers the Zā to be a homogenous ruling house which first ruled in Ghana, then experienced a palace revolt with a Muslim branch coming to power, and finally were expelled from Ghana by non-Sisè Muslims. This reconstruction makes it possible to conceive the Zāghē as refugee Zā from Ghana who established themselves under the umbrella of local Massūfa on the site of Gao-Saney. It further makes it possible to identify the ancestors of the Zarma from Tend Trim as Sisè having originated from Ghana. The idea of a timeless Mandé substratum on the eastern Niger bend is now replaced by the conception of a dynastic link between the Sisè from Ghana and the Zāghē from Gao by way of the Zā.

Misconceptions concern the matrimonial policy of the Zāghē with respect to the local vassal dynasty of the Qanda and the eastern origin of the Songhay (1996a: 157, 164). Having been former suzerains of the Qanda, the Zā did not need to practice a matrimonial policy with respect to the local kings. The epi-

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39 De Moraes Farias, Inscriptions, §§ 20, 29.
graphic evidence rather suggests that the *malika* ("queen") of Gao-Saney was not the wife but the legal counterpart of the king, or rather a former high priestess reduced to the status of constitutional supervisor.\(^{40}\) As such her office resembled that of the Magira of Bornu and the Magajiya of the Hausa states (see below XIX).

To Article XIX (1996b: "Almoravid expansion")

Written in conjunction with the previous study, this essay reverses the perspective by dealing mainly with Ghanaian and incidentally with Gao history. It builds on an earlier attempt to throw light on the geographically and historically overlapping histories of Ghana and ancient Mali (1992b). On the basis of written, oral and archaeological evidence it argues that the centre of the Ghana kingdom was not in Kumbi Saleh but at Tendirma in the Lakes region of the Niger. The essay further suggests that Islam was not implanted in the Ghana state as a consequence of a Lamtūna conquest but as a result of a palace revolt in 1076 facilitated by Almoravid pressure. Hence, the fall of the pre-Islamic Sisse rulers is thought to have been brought about by a *coup d'état* staged by the Muslim party of the Sisse under Kema-Magha. It supposes that in 1087, following the death of the Almoravid leader Abū Bakr b. 'Umar, Kema-Magha was in turn overthrown and that he withdrew with his royal household to the provincial town of Gao.

A major correction of this article concerns the role of the Lamtūna in the fall of Kema-Magha. There are some difficult assumptions involved in the postulated Lamtūna conquest of Ghana in 1087 (1996b: 338-342). If the Almoravids conquered Ghana after the death of Abū Bakr b. 'Umar — and supposedly established themselves there as a ruling elite — where then did the 'Alid kings of Ghana come from who were paying allegiance to the 'Abbāsids at the beginning of the twelfth century?\(^{41}\) Why does an external source associate the date 1076 with an Almoravid conquest and not the date corresponding to the death of Abū Bakr b. 'Umar, 1087?\(^{42}\) How is it conceivable that Kema-Magha got support from other Almoravids in Gao after his supposed expulsion from Ghana by the Lamtūna? Therefore it seems preferable to interpret the oral indications of a Berber presence in Ghana restrictively in terms of some king with temporary influence in Ghana and not in terms of the establishment of a Berber dynasty. It is more likely that Muslim mulattoes from inside Ghana, and Almoravid preachers from outside, conjointly criticised the surviving institutions of divine kingship. Under un-

\(^{40}\) De Moraes Farias, *Inscriptions*, § 421.


\(^{42}\) Al-Zuhri *in*: Levzioni/Hopkins, *Corpus*, 98.

known political circumstances they sought refuge in the Lamtūna.

Evidence for the survival of the "Queen" of Gao-Saney or Zaghī of Gao-Saney does not indicate a special role in reference to official correspondence noted between the "official queen" of a queen-mother's family and a chief or king.\(^{43}\) These configurations, usually called Magajiya and Kema-Magha, not only played an important role in the formation of the Fulani Jihadists aboli-shing religious conceptions of the blacksmiths as the formerly divine blacksmiths, but were eventually absorbed by the royal houses of Ghana, their country, and the Gao-Saney should be understood as a key institution of divine kingship and funeral rituals.


\(^{45}\) Smith, *Zieze*, 130.

\(^{46}\) Smith, *Zieze*, 131.