

To Article III (1984b : “Notes sur le Kawar”)

This modest note was written during my stay in the Niger Republic – where I taught African and Islamic history at the University of Niamey from 1980 to 1985 – at the request of the editors of *Mu Kara Sani* (Institut de Recherches en Science Humaines). It draws attention to a number of medieval sites in order to encourage historical archaeology. In his comprehensive study on the Kawar oasis, Knut Vikør assumes likewise that salt production preceded the trans-Saharan trade.⁹ With respect to individual sites in Kawar, Vikør makes the interesting point that, according to Ibn Sa‘īd, Qaṣr Umm ‘Īsā did not correspond to

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Dirku, as the reading of al-Idrisī suggests, but to Jado. The text of Ibn Sa'īd says *min mudunihim al-madhkūra 'ala al-Jāda Qaṣr Umm 'Isā* "of their towns above mentioned is in Jado Qaṣr 'Isā".¹⁰ A location four days northwest of al-Qaṣaba corresponds well to the distance of 200 km between al-Qaṣaba and Jado and to the north-northwestern direction. This marginal situation with respect to the main north-south trade on the route from Fezzan to Kawar explains well the survival of a Christian community there until the thirteenth century. Furthermore, archaeological research has recently revealed the existence of a Christian chapel in Jado.¹¹ The settlement probably received its name from Jādū in Jabal Nafūsa, south of Tripoli, which was formerly likewise a Christian town. Its foundation cannot have been later than the Arab conquest of north Africa and it most likely preceded the Christianisation of Fezzan in 569 (see above p. 284).