

To Article XVI (1991a: “Rois de Gao-Sané”)

This study is based on the discovery that the early twelfth century rulers of Gao-Saney are identical with the first Muslim kings of the Zā dynasty known from the Timbuktu chronicles (1988b: 8). It correctly stipulates that the rulers of Gao-Saney were newcomers who imposed their authority on the earlier Qanda kings of Gao. It is also right to suppose that the rulers of Gao-Saney, in spite of their Caliphal loan names, were not the first Muslim kings of Gao. It is further well-founded that Kukiya was not the first capital of the Zā and that Gao was not a Songhay state from the beginning.

The major shortcomings of this article concern the identification of the Gao-Saney rulers as Berbers and the notion of a pre-dynastic Mande ethnicity on the eastern Niger bend. Further, I now disclaim the idea that the use of the “Caliphal metaphor” indicates the existence of a non-dynastic mode of succession, and that the prominent position of certain queens is the result of a concerted marriage policy aimed at the integration of a foreign dynasty into the local establishment (1991a: 262, 263; XX: 514). De Moraes Farias supports the first idea by hypothesising that the “Caliphal metaphor” expresses a pact between powerful groups in the area leading to a rotational system of succession. With respect to the second he cogently argues that the queens were part of a system in which “official queens” performed important constitutional roles.<sup>38</sup> From the perspective of divine kingship these offices once had priestly functions in connection with the great *magna mater* goddess (1999b: 129-149). They were only abolished at a relatively late stage in the process of Islamization (1990: 145-147).